

Relocation: Uncovering Realities of Development and Wildlife Conservation of Kerala

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The Adivasis of Kerala have historically been left out of the state's development model, despite constitutional and legal protections. This has led to conflicts between the state and Adivasi communities. To understand this issue, the paper employs an ethnographic, decolonial methodology to center the voices and perspectives of the Adivasis themselves. The paper analyses how the state's conservation policies and development planning fail to account for Adivasi aspirations and rights. It surveys different stakeholder perspectives - environmentalists, the government, and the Adivasis themselves - to identify points of convergence and divergence. Overall, the research aims to elucidate how Adivasi livelihoods are shaped by exclusionary state, corporate, and market forces, using the case of the Kattunayakan community in the Wayanad wildlife sanctuary.

Keywords: Relocation, Kattunayakans, constitutional and legal rights, land alienation.

Before the British colonial regime, Adivasis of the country were self-governed and ruled as 'First Nations'. Though myriad kingdoms existed, the rule and governance of Adivasis in their territory were decided by themselves. Their politico-administrative apparatus was distanced from outsider's rule of the realm. In other words, the Adivasis invariably blocked any infringement of political invasion upon them. With the coming of British colonialism in India, the Adivasis first faced the attack on their self-governed political set up through legislation on the forests and land use. (Bijoy, 1999).

The invasion of Adivasi land and their territories that started during the colonial period intensified in the post-colonial era. The Adivasi lands were claimed by both colonial and post-colonial states. The interests of claim were different in these periods, therefore the size of their marginality differed over the periods. The colonial period was in pursuit of revenue, whereas in the later period, it was the 'national' interest of state building. Therefore, Adivasis have been continuously marginalised and displaced to make way for the imperial interests of the British and developmental projects such as industries, mines and dams of independent India. In India, over 3000 dams are located in Adivasi areas, and a number of minerals, such as coal, iron ore, magnetite, graphite, uranium and bauxite are located in and around Adivasi habitations. More than half of the nation's working mines are situated in Adivasi areas. The forests have been one of the major income-generating sources for the nation for decades. This revenue has been estimated from 5.6 million in 1869-70 to

more than 13 billion in the 1970s. Now it can be doubled or many times higher. In other words, the nation's backbone lay in the Adivasi territories. Consequently, it is also a fact that Adivasis have been driven out from their lands through the very processes of 'national development' (Bijoy, 2003).

Research Setting and Methodological Understanding

This study exclusively details land alienation in the name of voluntary relocation, which has been happening in the state of Kerala for more than a decade in an organised manner with the help of the state. Therefore, the nature of this study is mostly descriptive and analytical, and it is entirely supported by primary data as well as secondary data. Dispossession of Adivasis from forests has been a part of history for ages for a variety of reasons. However, in recent years, the policy of the government on relocation has been completely dependent on the government's strategy of assimilation of Adivasis into the mainstream without considering Adivasi's lives, cultures, and customs. It has been taking place over the entire nation. As a result, this paper has attempted to comprehend various aspects of relocation, such as how state-initiated relocation affects adivasis and the consequences on their lives. The paper will also explore the violation of laws and constitutional mechanisms that are in place to protect the lives of Adivasis undergoing relocation. The Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary has been chosen for this study because it is home to the Adivasi population, who completely rely on the forest for at least part of their subsistence. As a result, the study has clearly outlined the various viewpoints and arguments for relocation.

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the relocation process by displaying violations surrounding it in order to explain how the state's Adivasi legislation has been violated. The study will also investigate whether adivasis wish to relocate for better living and development opportunities, as well as the consequences of relocation for individuals who have previously relocated from the sanctuary to the sanctuary's outskirts. The research on Adivasis, in general, discussed their way of life, culture, and development. The expulsion of Adivasis from their native habitat has not been a major part of the existing studies. The relocation of Adivasis happened for various reasons. Some of these are voluntary 'coming out of the forest' in search of better resources and access to the mainstream. However, not all relocations are voluntary. Many of these involve the coercive intervention of various agents. This paper starts with different forms of dispossession of Adivasis; land alienation and dispossession are focal points of discussion, and how those displacements affect them. Furthermore, through the act of relocation, the issue of dispossession becomes a significant and comprehensive concern. The challenges associated with relocation have been thoroughly examined to gain a deeper understanding of the gravity of dispossession and the violation of the aspirations of the Adivasis in the state.

Forms of Displacements

In the modern state, the displacement of Adivasis from their traditional abode occurs due to various factors. Conservation-induced displacement, mining, industrial development, dam construction-induced displacement, and policy-driven displacement are major factors of displacement in India.

The philosophy of management and conservation of forests is inherited in the country purely from the Western concept of conservation. This Western practice is

mainly built upon the exclusion of people from the use and management of forest resources, where only bureaucratic capability through a centralised management system is accepted with no or minimal participation of local community knowledge on conservation. Therefore, the modern state in India, as well as others, practise exclusionary methods of relocation in order to make forests human-free.

As mentioned above, land alienation and displacement of Adivasis from their ancestral lands occurred due to industrial development, mining and dam constructions. Since the introduction of economic liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG), the indigenous communities of the country have been subjected to incessant poverty and deprivation resulting from the destruction of their traditional sustainable subsistence livelihood due to the free flow of global capital to these areas eyeing, exploring and exploiting rich mineral resources. Therefore, Adivasis invariably are in conflict with the state because of this exploitation (Meher, 2009).

It is a fact that the free flow of globalisation has set a trend of homogenisation of developmental processes in developing countries throughout the world, depending on their rich mineral resources. The LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation) model of development produces wealth under the pretext of providing benefits and modernising economically disadvantaged countries, particularly those in the third world. However, this often comes at the cost of the livelihoods of indigenous communities residing in these regions. The elite notion of development professes that investment of multinational companies (MNCs) in mineral rich areas will provide export earnings and economic growth and will also, in turn, facilitate infrastructural development and huge economic transformation of backward indigenous communities. Therefore, India also invited such investment to mineral-rich areas hitherto unexploited, where indigenous and other forest-dwelling people extensively inhabit (Meher, 2009). This has led to forest lands being diverted or converted to non-forest uses extensively. According to a forest survey of India (1987), 4.238 million hectares of land were diverted to non-forest uses between 1951 and 1981. The major part of this diverted forest land is used to build dams, industries and roads. The indigenous communities affected by these projects were displaced and not rehabilitated properly (Asher, 2019).

According to Padel and Das (2016), “the mining and metals industry is obviously a key driver for big dams, and lion’s share of hydropower goes to metal factories and other heavy industries in India and worldwide”(p. 225). Their argument is corroborated by global and regional examples. For example, the Aswan dam turned the Egyptian Nile into different canals, creating Lake Nasser, which has already displaced lakhs of indigenous people. Though its hydropower supplies the whole country, a major part of the output is supplied to Nag Hammadi Smelter. Similar events occurred in China also; the Gorge dams supplied its hydropower mainly to 13 out of 16 smelters in the former Soviet Union. A similar connection between dams and smelters has been made in several countries, including India (Padel & Das, 2016).

Moreover, the case of Odisha reveals that the planning of the state for further industrialisation included new dams, though Odisha already has more than enough dams. The present plan aims to supply refinery smelter complexes; therefore, authorities are gearing the construction in Bolangir district to supply a refinery near Gandhamardan and the damming of Polavaram to supply the refinery smelter of

Jindal in Vishakhapatnam. The bauxite business started in Odisha with a huge aluminium smelter built next to the Hirakud dam on the Mahanadi. The above connection between industry and dam can be strongly seen here (Padel & Das, 2016). Like other large dams in India, the Hirakud dam was built with aims like flood control, electricity generation, and providing irrigation. However, the stated objectives were not fully achieved in reality. For example, the goal was to irrigate 800,000 acres through canals, but only 400,000 acres were irrigated. The irrigation also occurs mostly in non-*adivasi* areas, so the benefit to *adivasis* is much less. Meanwhile, the proposed generation of electricity is 270 MW, but the dam only generates 120 MW. Primarily, the dam was proposed on these higher estimates, but these objectives failed miserably even decades after its completion (Dansana, 2021; Padel & Das, 2016). The number of displaced people by this project is more than one lakh, half of whom are *Adivasis*. According to a statement by Budi Anchal Sangram Samiti (BAAS), an organisation of people displaced by the Hirakud dam (reported in the Times of India on March 28, 2011), report that even after decades, the displaced families are struggling to get compensation from the government. Those who received compensation are negligible (Mundu, 2011).

Further, the outcome of this project and its effects on people is concerning. During the initial stage of resettlement and rehabilitation, the government offered surplus lands to farmers and other *Adivasis* for cultivation, but when the project came in full swing, reservoir authorities stopped leasing these lands. Later, the displaced families were seen as encroachers on reservoir lands. The displaced are struggling with their daily needs and trying to assert their rights in the rehabilitation process (Dansana, 2021). It is obvious that the Hirakud Dam's hydropower was majorly supplied to Alcan-Indal's smelters, and it was actually the major reason for the construction of the dam in the said place. Studies also show that the desired result of development failed miserably, and the project cost millions of lives. It is true that this is not just any regional problem but a pattern that can be seen around the world, where an unholy nexus operates between big dams and aluminium smelters and power at the cost of people and their lives.

The other form of displacement is policy-driven displacement. This one is not much talked about as a form of displacement in literature. It is true that in all kinds of displacements and land alienations, the state shoulders either a direct or indirect role. But when the state plays a direct role in the displacing process either by stopping or denying *adivasi* legislation or by making new laws against it, then this must be considered as policy-driven displacement. There are many examples of this kind of displacement. When the constitution came into existence, it strictly mandated that any form of discrimination against *adivasis* of the country is prohibited. But India continued to follow colonial conservation strategies as the bible of conservation, which excluded *adivasis* and reduced their rights to mere privileges. The ghost of the Indian Forest Act of 1927 is still visible in the Indian Forest Policy of 1952, the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act of 1980.

After independence, the Indian state invited suggestions and measures through various committees and commissions to strengthen policies for *Adivasis*. The Dhebar Commission (1960) recommended that, as an independent state, the lands taken from *adivasis* should be returned to them, as this is the only way to stop land alienation and serve justice to them. Therefore, different state ministers discussed the recommendation and passed a resolution stating that specific state legislation should

be passed in order to restore the alienated lands and prevent further land alienation. It was also decided that each state should monitor this periodically for better implementation. In this context, Kerala passed the Kerala Scheduled Tribes (Restriction on Transfer of Lands and Restoration of Alienated Lands) Act 1975. According to this act, all transactions of Adivasi land during the period of 1960 to 1982 became void, and these lands were ordered to be restored to the original owners, the Adivasis. The KST Act, 1975 of Kerala was not the only legislation; different states enacted legislation to stop land alienation on the recommendation of the Dhebar commission. For example, the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code and Tenancy Laws (Amendment) Act, 1974; Karnataka SCs and STs (Prohibition of Certain Lands) Act, 1978; the Maharashtra (Restoration of Lands to Scheduled Tribes) Act, 1974; the Sikkim Revenue Order, 1977 and the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reforms Act, 1977, to name a few. The states have initiated such legislation at different intervals, but the result has remained as unsatisfactory as always (Bijoy, 1999).

Though there are a number of policies and legislations enacted after the independence against land alienation, the plight and vicious cycle of injustice continued unabatedly so far. Let us take the KST Act of 1975 as an example; the essence and goal of the act was to restore the alienated lands of Adivasis. But the same state thwarted the act by placing new legislation, making the earlier counterproductive. This new legislation passed by the Kerala government is 'The Kerala Restriction on Transfer by and Restoration of Land to Scheduled Tribes Bill, 1999'. According to this bill, only land in excess of two hectares will be restored, while for claims less than two hectares, alternate land would be given somewhere else. The government predetermined that the claim of land in excess of two hectares would be minimal, and so restoration demands would be much less. Thus, it was just a gimmick to save the interests of landholders. Moreover, according to the KST Act of 1975, all transactions of lands since 1982 are prohibited, while the 1999 bill exempts this 1982-86 up to two hectares. Therefore, it is evident how the state thwarted a very promising policy by another to save the interests of land grabbers (Bijoy, 1999). This is one of the examples of a state that claims that land reforms are implemented and that social justice is delivered to weaker sections of society in comparison to other states.

The major cause of the failure of all pro-Adivasi legislations in Kerala is either loopholes in the laws themselves or the pressure of political power of settlers who migrated from the low lands to the highlands of Kerala in different spans of time (Kjosavik & Shanmugaratnam, 2021). In Kerala, indigenous communities live in forest areas, and the Adivasis who inhabit these regions do not have *pattas* or land titles. Thus, they face several problems in the absence of documents. At the same time, those who encroached and settled in Adivasi territory had the *pattas* for their lands. This contrast shows the acumen of settlers and the lack of the same with Adivasis in acquiring the help of political leaders and forest officers. The unholy nexus between them makes encroachments in Adivasi areas easily regularised. As far as the KST Act of 1975, this nexus is obvious. The government did not implement the Act in its pure essence but under the pressure of non-tribals to save their lands. Even in that, as per the KST Act, only three cases were considered among many by the government. The resistance from settlers and the lackadaisical approach from the state to give lands to Adivasis have diverted the crucial legislation in the history of Kerala (George & Sreekumar, 1994).

Therefore, the failure of the KST Act of 1975 cannot be simply forgotten as a policy failure; it is an organised and systematic effort of the state. The incidence of violation of rights of Adivasis and their displacement from their land are not a negligible occurrence. The state-initiated ousting of Adivasis from reserved forests and protected areas in the name of conservation, grossly violating the rights of Adivasis. This is very much a form of displacement, but the state never takes the onus of such action. The dispossession of Adivasis is simply depicted as a policy failure, and in reality, it is not; it is a systematic state effort to drive out indigenous people from forests like other forms of displacements.

Relocation: Contradiction of Definitions, Voices for and Against

The colonial conservation methods followed an exclusionary philosophy, which put indigenous people and forest resources on two different poles. The post-colonial exclusionary philosophy advocates a much more severe step of relocation as a strategy and solution for conservation. With the dispossession, deprivation and marginalisation, the colonial state invariably developed and continued the policy of isolation in the conservation paradigm. This colonial paradigm is practised all over the world. Lara Domínguez and Colin Luoma (2020) contend that through an examination of the distinct experiences of the Batwa (DRC), the Ogiek and Endorois (Kenya), and the Adivasis (India), a common legacy of colonial practices emerges. This legacy, rooted in the ideology of conservation, resulted in the alienation and marginalisation of indigenous people from their lands across these countries. The conservation philosophy of total relocation of people has had the same fate all over the world. The idea of carrying out relocation in Kerala follows very much the colonial strategy where conservation dominates state policy and facilitates dispossession and displacement. Present conservation methods and ideology are still dominated by colonial knowledge and deeply embedded in policy makings. As argued by as argued by Domínguez & Luoma (2020), “They are the legacies of a colonial world view that shaped systems of knowledge creation and law with far-reaching consequences that reverberate today” (p. 2).

Over the decades, different sets of arguments, either supporting people-oriented conservation or people-free conservation, put agendas of either people or nature on the top priority. The agendas of arguments vary as per the dimensions. However, research in this direction argues that the effective conservation strategy and method is very successful where sharing benefits among resources and depending communities is practised. In contrast, it is not well understood and mostly overlooked in the policies of India. The question here is, are people-oriented conservation methods bad for forests? Or is it wrongly perceived by conservationists and adopted by policymakers? How can the excluded model facilitate better conservation? Is there an alternative model to that? The answer to what constitutes a sustainable conservation policy for forests and their resources is inherently subjective, as there is no universally correct approach.

So far, the conservation of forests and Adivasi lives have been viewed from a top-down policy perspective. Government policies have viewed people as beneficiaries and the state as patrons rather than recognising people’s rights and understanding the practice of customary rights. This is where state and adivasis fundamentally battle each other. This happened in the district of Wayanad in Northern Kerala, where the policies focused on the modernisation of Adivasi communities relocated them

from forests in the name of conservation of forests. This article mainly focuses on the issue of Adivasi-forest-conservation conflict by discussing the day-to-day engagements of Kattunayakans (one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, still dependent on forest and its resources for living) and where and how the state's conservation aspirations and adivasi lives and aspirations conflict, how Adivasis see the conservation and how the state provides for it.

As part of the modernisation project for the Adivasis of Wayanad, a resettlement colony scheme was initiated in 1948 by the Madras government. The main objective of the scheme was the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen, ex-I.N.A. Personnel, tribals, and various landless labourers. The main idea of the scheme was to give grants for agricultural purposes, allocation of lands, improvement of agriculture and promotion of cooperative spirit. Each was given land and a stipulated amount for meeting their expenses. The amount given to non-ex-service men, including Adivasis, was considered a loan and needed to be repaid in twenty instalments. Though the recovery of payment continued for twenty years, the tribals were forced to repay the loan, for which they either mortgaged or sold the allotted land for the repayments. Soon after the independence, there was an unprecedented influx of migrants from different communities like Wayanadan Chettis, Nairs, Muslims, and Christians to these areas. These communities encroached on the land once allotted to adivasis, became land owners, and sold the same land to new immigrants, who eventually owned the possession of these lands. (Mathur, 1977). The aftermath of these developmental and modernisation programmes was the alienation of Adivasis from their traditional lands. Later, with the creation of a wildlife sanctuary, the situation worsened. The problems of restrictions on forests and collection of forest products accelerated with the relocation of people because the problems of dispossession eventually reached their completion with relocation.

Discussion on Kerala/ Wayanad

In Wayanad, the relocation process was initiated in the late 2010s. The Wayanad district is one of the largest Adivasi-populated areas in Kerala, with 18.76 per cent of the total population being Adivasi communities, which in totality constitutes one-third of all Adivasi population of Kerala (Government of Kerala, 2013). Though there are other protected areas in Kerala, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is the only place where the relocation programme is going on. This is because of the strong presence of NGOs facilitating relocation in Wayanad. The other protected areas are yet to commence the relocation programme.

In Wayanad, for the relocation, an intensive survey was conducted by the Kerala Forest Research Institute in 2009. As per this survey, 48 per cent of families wanted to relocate outside their traditional forest habitations. The conservationists indicate this percentage as justification for relocation. The interesting fact of this study is that there are a number of people who are of the opinion that the forest and wildlife should be protected without affecting the people. The conservationists never see this fact while advocating relocation. Moreover, in the survey, people included were not only adivasis; those who migrated and settled in forest areas in different spans of time, as discussed above, were also involved, like Muslims, Christians and Chettis. Therefore, those who were surveyed and opted to relocate were not completely Adivasis.

Primarily, the relocation programme being implemented in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary had three objectives: first, providing better infrastructure and livelihood for adivasis; second, human-free places making forest resources available and giving animals a better living space by stopping animal slaughtering and hunting; third, freeing people from animal attacks and giving them better living space. The relocation from Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary has been going on per the guidelines of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) of 2008. It has notified that the relocation is subjected to villages connected to tiger reserves. However, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is not notified as a tiger reserve or a critical wildlife habitat. But relocation occurs here on the guidelines of NTCA. The NTCA is the supreme authority to oversee the management and conservation of tiger reserves in the country. The NTCA has been providing funding for rehabilitation programmes for families evicted from protected areas. The primary objective of the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) is to enlarge protected areas, ensuring they remain inviolate and devoid of human presence. Therefore, tiger forests have doubled and expanded rapidly in the last decades. As stated by Bijoy (2011), in 2007, the sq. km of the tiger reserve was 25,551 and increased to 32,878 sq. km in the last twelve years. The government of India also has a plan to create more tiger reserves in the country in the coming years.

Here, more importantly, the fact that needs to be checked is whether these kinds of conservations save tigers in the country or not. Literature no longer reflects any development on this conservation model; these conservation models have failed to save tiger lives even after years of fortress exclusionary conservations. This has been criticised by Bijoy (2011); what the government is offering now is the exact old wine in a new bottle. Governments were acting as minions of imperial colonial governments and other royal kings, where they used forests exclusively for recreation activities. The same model of fortress conservation for saving tigers is reported as a failure because, after more than thirty years of Project Tiger, the number of tigers in the tiger reserves is down to 1411 from 1827. The fact that the state still facilitates the exclusionary fortress model is subject to question.

According to the guidelines agreed by NTCA, relocations are regulated only from tiger reserves. The other protected area relocations are not approved by NTCA so far. Contrary to that, relocations have been carried out in wildlife sanctuaries. Therefore, the relocation repeatedly reported from different wildlife sanctuaries, including the wildlife sanctuary of Wayanad in Kerala, Barnawapara and Boradeo in Chhattisgarh, and Chandaka-Dompara and Debrigarh in Odisha, do not subscribe to the regulation. Following the absence of guidelines on relocations, it is still unclear how and why the relocations are being carried out in these areas (Fanari, 2019).

Here, a very pertinent question on conservation methods is raised by Bijoy (2011), which needs to be urgently discussed and debated. The question is, who said tigers and humans cannot coexist? If tourists can enter tiger reserves, why is it not possible for the indigenous inhabitants? Have tigers and humans not shared habitations so far? The policy of the state is based on making forest areas tourist homes, where the forest officials and tourists who never coexisted with tigers become wild lifers. On the other hand, the indigenous communities who cohabited for centuries do not qualify as wild lifers. The eminent environmental action group Kalpavriksh filed an RTI to NTCA seeking document of evidence of the impossibility of coexistence and the need for relocation of indigenous populations from tiger reserves, but NTCA

could not provide any evidence in proving coexistence harms tigers (Kothari et al, 2010). Moreover, this does not end only with tigers; those who profess exclusionary strategies consider the same strategy for all wildlife conservation. This is the basic philosophy followed in the relocation process, which believes that humans and animals cannot coexist and cohabit together and that this coexistence damages the equilibrium of animals and forest resources and creates serious threats to people's lives, especially adivasi. Therefore, relocation is the only panacea possibly available.

As mentioned earlier, Bineet Mundu (2011) challenges the concept of relocation for the enhanced conservation of forests and animals in protected areas. He questions the notion by suggesting that the traditional ways in which communities have coexisted with wildlife for generations may not be solely responsible for the decline of tigers and other wildlife in these protected areas.

Through the same argument, one can also raise doubts about how wildlife suddenly becomes a threat to Adivasi's lives after centuries of coexistence. As forest dwellers, Adivasis have been living in proximity to wildlife for centuries. If they perceived animal attacks as a problem, they would have left their forest abodes centuries ago. Though Adivasis, as the Kattunayakans of Wayanad, were of the opinion that wild animal attacks were on the increase in recent times, the state and forest departments did not discuss how and why these man-animal conflicts were on the increase in recent times. Vijayan from Ponkuzhi settlement shares an interesting view on this,

“For us kattunayakans, we have been living in the forest for centuries, we and animals are a family. In earlier times, when we go to forests, if an animal like the elephant comes in front of us, they will go without harming us because they know we both are living in same place, we need to find our livelihood, they need to find their livelihood. We have a bond, they consider us as one of them, because we gather our food together. Therefore, there is always an equilibrium kept between us, that made us live in the forests for centuries. What made wild animals like elephant and tigers attack us now is only because of the government policy, the tourism which provided ample freedom to people to click photos of wild animals, they see animals as something they can entertain with and make fun. This has made the animals uncomfortable and scared. When the animals feel insecure and scared, they act in defence, and come to our places and damage our crops, they see us as outsiders. They feel we will scare them as outsiders do. Moreover, the increasing attack of tigers in our sanctuary was not the case in earlier times, the tigers of our forest mostly did not attack us because, they know us, we know each other. Now, those attacking tigers are tigers dumped by forest department, they trained and lived outside this forest or in circus camps, they are strangers to this place, for them this is a new place, for them we are strangers, therefore, when they see us, they usually attack. In order to avoid animal-man conflict in this forest, what government should do now is free our forest from dumping those tigers, because those tigers not only attack us, they attack other tigers from our forest also. The prime reason being that, every tiger has a certain territory while living, if any other tigers come to that territory they will attack each other, these are the natural forest laws, which is not considered by forest department. Likewise, there are a number of forest laws traditionally followed by both humans and animals who shared the forest space and lived together, whereas the forest department with its singular focus on conservation have failed to understand the very dynamics of

conservation”.

From the above narration, it is well understood that Adivasis do not see animals as a threat to their lives. They see animals as their family members. The bond and the feeling expressed show their centuries-long coexistence. This is explained by Bird-David (1999, 1992), where she speaks of the kattunayakans as always sharing their space with surrounding things, both human and others. They make an appropriate environment for living and do not differentiate other beings vis-a-vis themselves. Therefore, they absorb everything surrounding them into *we-ness*, which kattunayakan calls as *nama sonta* (our own). This engagement and relationship of kattunayakans make the forest their parent. On the other hand, Adivasis also argue that the recent man-animal conflicts happening in wildlife sanctuaries are not because of their coexistence but because of tourism and poor ‘conservation’ strategies of the state, like dumping tigers and other animals into different forest areas. In other words, conservation will fail if it is done without considering indigenous forest knowledge.

Moreover, Adivasis recalled that when elephants and other wild animals came to their settlements or saw them in their earlier days, the people would make some sounds and animals could understand these sounds and leave the place. This simple technique has been used for a long time in order to avoid animal threats. Animals know people’s voices; they both know each other’s footstep vibrations. Therefore, they both had a mutually connected life together for centuries. Thus, the question of the menace of wild animal attacks on people in recent decades is a matter of serious discussion and very much debatable in terms of relocation justifications.

The other important reason for relocation that forest departments and conservationists raise is the slaughtering and hunting of animals inside the wildlife sanctuaries and forests. The depletion of animal resources is much debated, and the Adivasis and forest-dwelling people are seen as responsible for it. Vijayan from Ponkuzhi village voiced some interesting points on this situation in explaining whether they deplete animal resources or not,

“During the earlier times, we with our fathers and family members practised hunting, but now no one hunts because of the restriction made by the forest department. Our practice of hunting is different from what the forest department perceives. When we go as a group for hunting, we usually hunt with a certain understanding of the balance of conservation and consumption, we do not just go and kill whatever we want and cook it; we stop the daily hunt after a certain quantity of catch and we do not hunt daily and unnecessarily. What is more important is whatever we hunt, we keep some portion of it to the wild animals in the forests, as we all depend on the same food resources. They know the place we keep food for them. They have their food on that day and do not hunt or kill any other animals for their food. For us, hunting is not mere killing the animals, that is our food, therefore no one will take or hunt unnecessarily, sometimes we hunt during our ritual days as part of ritual sacrifices. We do not hunt for any materialistic gain or to sell anyone anything of animals. There is always an equilibrium and sustainability in our livelihood pursuits; our hunting and food gathering is also a part of our religious and spiritual engagement with the environment. On the contrary, the forest department views hunting exclusively as killing of animals and sale for commercial purposes; for us this is not the case. We do not consider animals

on monetary values. No animals and animal resources get depleted by our hunting because they are our family members too.”

Vijayan further added that,

“Usually in the forests, the wild animals might hunt something and keep the remaining flesh tucked away in the forest for another days, we know those places and will not touch the meat when we see it. But the department does not understand this and removes this food/flesh when they find it. This thoughtless act goes against conservation as the wild animal that stored this food does not find it and is forced to hunt again, eventually leading to the so-called depletion of animal resources. The relocation of our people is initiated to save so called animals, but forest department does not understand the dynamics of this relationship. As I said above there are some rules and traditions followed by animals and people in the forest, forest department does not acknowledge the existence of these practices and continues to make mistakes again and again in the name of animal conservation. If anyone wants to conserve forests and animals wholeheartedly, they should know about them, and conservation should be sustainable, here we know how to conserve forests and animals, we know their traditions and life, forest department and government do not listen to us, then how can they understand forests and animals, how can they conserve both”.

As discussed, the state and forest departments operate the relocation programme on conservation concerns. However, the concern that Adivasis has for forests and their resources is far beyond. They believe that when they take or pluck any flora from the forest, they have to replant another nearby. They think plucking or taking something from forests is destroying the forest resources. Therefore, until or unless they replant something new, no one is allowed to take anything from the forests. It shows their concern over forests and their resources.

The relocation programme intends to provide better livelihood and infrastructural development. Therefore, as part of rehabilitation, a monetary compensation of ten lakh rupees is assigned to each person in the family. The state and forest department think that the compensation of ten lakh for a person in a family is enough to buy new land and construct a new house and for other necessities when people relocate. In that, the question is how the government decided that ten lakhs would be enough to compensate for the rehabilitation process and meet necessary needs? On what criteria is this measured? Moreover, why is the government continuing with the same ten lakh as compensation, which was decided years ago? These markers set by the state need to be justified, but the yardstick of ten lakhs shows that the government is more concerned with relocation than better rehabilitation and development.

The traditional practices followed by the Adivasi communities were never prioritised in considering the relocation process. For example, the Kattunayakans always followed community living; their life and livelihood were constructed on this community ecosystem. But, during the relocation, these were not considered, and it scattered them. The Kattunayakans have lost their very ecosystem of living and their livelihoods. The dissenting voices of Adivasi from different settlements on relocation mainly refuse relocation as the current relocation disturbs or thwarts the very essence of their life. As argued by the people of the Manimunda settlement,

“We kattunayakans never equated our lands on monetary values, therefore

we lost all our land to British and other landlords in the past. The total lands of this Wayanad largely belongs us. When people come from outside to our land, we have lost our lands to them. We did not know what they will do with our lands. For us land is to live in and survive. So, valuing lands on monetary terms is strange for us, we do not know how much we will get for a piece of land and those measures of land, market prizes and all. Therefore, getting compensation for land which we lived for centuries and getting new land for future is actually alien for us.

Moreover, we live as a community, you can see (he shows number of houses) all houses belong to our family members, we usually live like that, we do not separate each other. We believe in an extended family living. If anything happens to us, we together pray to god and plead for help, if we get separated across different relocation settlements, our life and this community life will perish and our god will not listen to us, because when we are together, we are able convince our gods, and can live a peaceful life, that is why we prefer a family life together, we do not know where we will be placed after relocation”.

Like Adivasis' land concept, their concept of territory is also different. They believe that each of their community members is entitled to live in a separate territory under the guidance of the village headman. The village headman will have complete control of the surrounding territory. So, they believe that leaving that territory might cause both physical disruption and mental havoc. Here, it is very pertinent to note that there are Adivasis who have already relocated from forests to outside areas and returned to neighbouring forest areas as they struggle with the psychological disorder of being uprooted. This is one of the many untoward consequences of relocation that is never discussed. Adivasis, especially Kattunayakans, also believe that leaving their traditional place and territory goes against their religious beliefs, as their beliefs and gods are connected with forests and ancestors. Each kattunayakan house has a dedicated space for their deities (*Daivappura*), which they keep with utmost respect and esteem. As explained by the village headman of the Manimunda settlement,

For us kattunayakans, there are territories controlled by Moopans (village headman). All matters related to that territory will be handled by village headman. Even if it's the place where honey is collected during which if any inconvenience takes place, it is the village headman who can propitiate the deity with the appropriate ritual and facilitate successful honey collection. The headman is the only entitled person to do that. Likewise, in every settlement, a territorial limit is fixed for village headman, if any one or if all people are relocated from these places to other places, it will disrupt this territory and control, which will cause our death. If we move out from this place to another, the village head will not have control on that place, if any illness or any other hiccups come, our deities will not listen to us, as we abandoned them and left our place. Our beliefs and our life are connected to the forest, we cannot survive outside this territory, our gods will not save us if we move out. There are other adivasi communities who keep some medicinal plants with them when they go to forests, we kattunayakans do not keep all that, because for us, our gods always keep us from all dangers, if we keep medicine along with us, gods will not be happy, this is our tradition. This is how

we survived for centuries here. We live on our beliefs, that is the reason.

Moreover, you can see our *Deivappura* (a separate god house adjacent to every house). Though, government made us new concrete homes here, we kept our *Deivappura* as it is in traditional way, because we do not think our gods will come to newly constructed houses. Therefore, we still keep a separated *Deivappura* adjacent to every house. If we move out from this settlement to other, this will be disintegrated. Then, our god's protection on us, our beliefs, rituals everything will get dismantled. We do not believe that our gods will come inside the newly constructed *Deivappura*, then how will they come to a newly moving place. We do not want to go anywhere, we need all development here, and will live here forever.

These are the perspectives and voices of both the Adivasis and the state regarding the formulation of their optimal conservation strategies and the promise of an improved life before the process of relocation. The state and forest department recommend relocation solely focussing on conserving forests and wildlife. On the contrary, the Adivasis see relocation not as a solution to their so-called better living and infrastructural development but as a death trap to their cultural extinction.

Relocation primarily aims to provide better job opportunities and infrastructural development for Adivasis. But how a community like Kattunayakans, as explained by Nurit Bird-David (1990), a hunter-gather community, themselves see forest and its resources as a space to live with reciprocal sharing of give and take, and their economy of living is also characterized or constructed through this reciprocal sharing of nature. Given this relationship they share with the forest and territory, how can they construct new a mode of living by total relocation from forests and its resources? So, moving them out in the name of better living is actually placing them on the brink of their own very destruction. This is the reason, the above explained mental trauma and disorder occurs to those who already relocated. Therefore, Kattunayakans mostly oppose relocation. In contrast, other indigenous communities in Wayanad hold the view that they can move and relocate outside the forest. This perspective stems from the belief that, despite residing in the forest, their lives and livelihoods are not as intricately connected to the forests as is the case for the Kattunayakans. Consequently, they find it easier to adapt to life and culture outside the forest.

The Blur of Manipulations and Violations

The state and government invariably took divergent positions towards Adivasis regarding land ownership and assertion of rights in the larger political scenario. The constitutional protective mechanisms and specially formulated policies never arrested dispossession and land alienations of indigenous communities in the country. This consistent history of dispossession has created a persistent marginalised identity even in the post-independent era. Historically, various strategies have been employed in the process of relentless dispossession, with state-sponsored relocation emerging as the prevalent method in contemporary times. Furthermore, almost all these relocations have not met the promises laid down by law. Violations, both procedural and structural, have surrounded such relocations, where people become victims of dispossession repeatedly. The violations and manipulations of the law in the relocation are not uniform across places and stages. In looking at how the violations and manipulations of law played a role in completed

relocation programmes, one can understand how the dispossession and relocation happened in protected areas of the country.

The Maldharis, the traditional forest dwellers of Gir forests (categorised as a Scheduled Tribe) were relocated from the Gir National Park, the only home of the Asiatic Lion. As a forest-dependent community, they were pastoralists. This relocation was never voluntary. The relocation occurred based on the view that Maldharis were considered a threat to biodiversity, particularly to Asiatic lions. Moreover, the resettlement programmes promised for the Maldharis were not implemented. The promised relocation lands were not given, and as pastoralists, they struggled with resettlement because of a lack of skills in other livelihood generation. Forced to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and compelled to settle in one place, the Maldharis, a pastoralist community, experienced disastrous consequences, as noted by Choudhary (2000). Choudhary (2000) and Patil (2016) argue that the resettlement outcome has failed to yield the intended results, leading to the reduction of Maldharis to dependent labourers. Nearly half of the families resettled left the place. Most of them went back to the forest where they originally belonged. For them, it was not easy to cope with new life and new livelihoods. Most of the families sold their homes given by the government. The Maldharis say that they need to travel kilometres to find food for their livestock, therefore, the relocation for them is a severe risk. The government and forest department are currently troubled by the coming back of Maldharis and are pressuring them to move to fringe areas of the Gir National Park. Satapura National Park and Bori-Satapura-Pachmarhi Tiger Reserve are also protected areas where relocations occurred in the name of tiger protection and forest conservation. The relocation process and rehabilitation were not satisfactory due to the lack of participation of villagers and transparency in the relocation. The rehabilitation was also inadequate; the relocated place lacked basic amenities such as water and livelihood (Wani & Kothari, 2007).

Another important protected area is the Kanha National Park and Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, which commenced relocation and displacement of Adivasis soon after the independence. The forest department's argument on the relocation was that it was participatory with indigenous communities and transparent in pre- and post-rehabilitation at each stage. However, the studies and reports show that the relocation was not in tune with the participation of people. Consequently, the relocation seriously followed discontent and conflicts with indigenous communities. According to Gourav Jaiswal (2016) the communities, especially the Gond and Baigas, opposed the government's relocation plan on the grounds of loss of their living space and livelihood ways. But the government evicted around 450 families in 2014; despite forcefully evicting the Adivasis, the state called it voluntary relocation. Moreover, Kanha is an example of a ruthless institutional management regime. The main agenda of state forestry institutions is to keep hostility with communities living in forests and remove residents from the territory of wildlife. Kanha National Park and the people dependent on forests have always been in contention with the forest department. The strict bureaucratic regime pushed the indigenous people to meet their subsistence and livelihoods by resorting to illegal activity, leaving the community and forest officials antagonistic to each other. The corruption and vested interests of different actors (state functionaries) in exploiting forests and their resources made communities scapegoats in Kanha National Park. Therefore, Kanha is also an example of both how powerless indigenous people have to bear the brunt of

unsuccessful conservation programmes and corruption, and how they unite together against the state's agenda of conservation (Mukherjee, 2009).

Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary is also one of the homes of the Asiatic Lion. The relocation from this sanctuary started in the mid-1990s. The relocation from Kuno in terms of rehabilitation was not satisfactory to the Adivasis because the land allocated for them was not suitable for their living, and the participation and inclusion of people and families were very minimal in the relocation process. There was poor assistance to livelihood generation and other immediate needs of Adivasis. The immediate change from rich resourced forest to outside crippled adivasis with a shortage of livelihood and disrupted their established food pattern. Moreover, the relocation was not purely voluntary; it was both induced and forced (Sharma, 2003).

Sariska National Park and Tiger Reserve is also a place where relocation happened in the name of tiger conservation. The relocation carried out in this reserve was forceful. Similar to other instances, the conservation efforts in Sariska National Park proved to be a complete failure due to issues such as corruption, mismanagement, and inadequate protection of wildlife resources. However, the blame was unfairly placed on the local people residing within the reserve. Therefore, these failures covered the translocation of tigers and the relocation of villagers, this is considered one of the best tools of wildlife conservation in Sariska. The relocation process was not participatory; the new site made available for villagers lacked basic facilities like water and livestock grazing. Traditionally, the communities that lived inside Sariska were pastoralists, and relocating them without proper rehabilitation forced them to shift from their traditional livelihoods to others, which was detrimental to life and livelihoods, visible in their annual income (Meena, 2015).

The report cited by the NGO Survival (2019) on the relocation explains myriad cases of violations and contrasting narrations produced by forest department by field studies and reported voices of adivasis on displacement and exploitation in the name of relocation. The report tells the story of Achanakmar Tiger Reserve, where Baiga communities do not want to relocate, where it is reported that, forest department released poisonous snakes and bears to throw them out. Moreover, they do not inform that they are free to stay in their land, if they prefer. Therefore, by the pressure and problems inflicted upon them, they agreed to relocate against their wishes. The report explained the case of Similipal Tiger Reserve and it was claimed that the villagers from the reserve were relocated voluntarily by the authorities in 2015. But, the enquiry with people revealed that as most of the people were illiterate, they signed the relocation documents unknowingly. Only after the relocation did they become aware that they signed up for relocation. The forest authorities did not explain about relocation, but it was used against them as consent for relocation. The case of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve relocation also had a similar story by the report of Survival NGO. The Survival report, based on conversations with people from the reserve, revealed that the eviction was entirely coercive and forcefully implemented. The forest department alleged false charges on adivasis, as responsible for loss of forest cover, and killing of animals, therefore they didn't allow them to procure anything from the forest. Moreover, people were misled on the relocation packages, people only understood about relocation package after the consent agreement, that provided much less than their expectation.

The above are some of the cases of relocation. Several other cases with similar

situations are present. It is clear from the above cases that such relocations are completely against the aspirations of indigenous people and negates the goal of relocation itself. Here it can be seen that the guidelines of NTCA and FRA provisions are totally violated, because these guidelines protect the rights of indigenous communities, but the forest department does not want that to be protected. The same kind of violations are happening in the wildlife sanctuary of Wayanad also.

As mentioned, different states facilitate relocation on the guidelines of NTCA. So, according to NTCA guidelines, for relocation, people should be given the choice of staying or not. The forest department should direct them in finding housing, livelihood security and other necessary assistance in the post-rehabilitation process. Moreover, from village to district level, committees should be set up to oversee the relocation process and solve grievances. But the example cited above clearly shows that nothing as such was followed in any case, people were displaced totally against procedures promised to keep in these circumstances.

The violation regarding relocation does not end here. The provisions and securities entitled to Adivasis in the national laws like The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (known as the FRA), The Wildlife (Protection) Act, Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, commonly known as PESA and Constitutional securities on life and livelihood are clearly violated in all cases. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, recognises Adivasi rights on their both individual and community rights. In Wayanad, community rights have often been overlooked in favour of individual rights to utilise the forest for livelihood and gather forest products. While the Forest Rights Act (FRA) acknowledges the habitual rights of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups like the Kattunayakan as a vulnerable community, similar rights are applicable to the communities mentioned above. Unfortunately, the forest department has not permitted them to maintain their habitat. As per the FRA, Adivasis have the right to protect, manage, and conserve community forest resources which they have been traditionally protecting and managing. But the forest department does not allow or consider provisions of FRA when it comes to relocation. The village headman of Manimunda settlement has opinions in this regard

The forest department and concerned persons facilitating the relocation and NGOs working on relocation come to our settlements, convincing people about relocation. As far as I know the Forest Rights Act, (most of the people in the settlement don't know about the FRA) stipulates discussion and grouping for relocation through Gram Sabhas by including all people of the settlement. But what the officials are doing, is convincing some people on relocation and creating a ruckus in the settlement in between those who want relocation and those who do not. They did not follow anything through proper channel. They are not even giving satisfactory answer about how these ten lakhs are enough for us to relocate outside. So, relocation in the name of better life will be a tragedy for us, especially for Kattunayakans”.

The section 4 (2) of FRA states that, the forest dwellers can be settled from critical wildlife habitats only if the following conditions are met; The rights must be recognised; Government has concluded that coexistence is not possible at any cost; Resettlement package must be prepared for the community; Free and informed consent of

community for resettlement and rehabilitation; Resettlement and rehabilitation process should be done through gram Sabha; Rehabilitation and land allocation must be complete before relocation.

The experience of better coexistence, the experience of procedural violations of FRA on relocations explained from Wayanad wildlife sanctuary shows that no conditions required were met for relocation. Therefore, it can be said that the relocations are illegal.

In Kerala, and other southern states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the implementation of forest rights act has been very abysmal and slow. Adivasis were not given any titles in these states. In the protected areas of these regions, the forest department and state machinery often neglect Adivasi claims on land and forest, in clear violation of the law. Yet, the Adivasis await leniency of the forest department to protect and guarantee their right to forest lands and their resources despite the law in place. (Bijoy, 2014).

According to the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) of 2006, section 38V, "Scheduled Tribes or other forest dwellers shall be resettled or have their rights adversely affected for the purpose of creating inviolate areas for tiger conservation unless certain conditions are met" (p, 10). These conditions mentioned in this act are the same as in FRA. The act prescribes that the government or concerned authority should seek expert opinion on ecological and social impact to reach a conclusion that coexistence is impossible and that coexistence could cause damage to the tigers and their habitat. As long as it is not proven that coexistence is impossible, the eviction and relocation cannot be carried out according to FRA and WLPA. Moreover, not only are the provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) violated, but the conditions outlined in the Wild Life Protection Act (WLPA) provisions are also disregarded entirely during the relocation process. The provision of seeking expert opinions on ecological and social impact was much needed in relocation sites in order to conclude whether coexistence was possible or not, but the forest department never sought anyone's opinion in the case of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.

Despite these numerous violations, the response from various states regarding the proper implementation of PESA (Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act) and its provisions has been notably inadequate. Some states are very reluctant to amend panchayat raj laws under PESA. Number of provisions of Forest Rights Act 2006, like control of Gram Sabhas over forest produce, consultation of Gram Sabhas before land acquisition and resettlement, and rights of Gram Sabhas to preserve community resources are extremely good on paper, but states have no interest in its implementation on ground level. The unwillingness of departments and the internal conflict among departments cause improper functioning and a lack of capacity building of gram sabhas. The result of these is that despite having PESA in force for years, Adivasis are still marginalised from their rights, including the right of self-governance recognised by PESA. As a result, displacement, distrust, and unrest towards the state have increased among Adivasis (Bijoy, 2012).

The violation that occurs through relocation does not end here; it manifolds in many ways. The stories of relocation show that people are either threatened or manhandled by the forest department if they resist. The reluctance or stopping of all developmental activities is another form of harassment in forest areas. In Wayanad, the proposed areas of relocation are not receiving any governmental assistance for

infrastructural developmental activities. The orders have already been given to Gram Panchayats from the state machinery. The village headman of the Manimunda settlement has a serious take on this. He states

The government is not ready to take up any developmental activities here, when we ask them, they say that, you are already directed to go out, if you go out, you will get better infrastructure than this. We know that, the aim of government is to stop all kind of developmental activity here and forcing us to leave this place. The construction of the road was not permitted by forest department. But as per FRA we have a right to it, but forest department does not allow it, they do not see FRA as a legislation, because it secures rights of adivasis. But when we approached the court, it gave a verdict for speedy construction of the road to the settlement. That is how road was made there. This is how development happens in our settlement. Moreover, the ward members and other panchayat officials who take pro adivasi stands are always being targeted by forest department in fake cases, on violation of forest rules. Through all these provocations and harassments, the government plans to force us to leave the place

These kinds of threats and forcing of Adivasis to relocate from forest areas is also a clear violation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. According to this Act, section 3 (2,3,4,5) clearly states that anyone forces or causes a member of a scheduled tribe to leave his/her place or village, wrongfully dispossesses a member of a scheduled tribe from his/her land, wrongfully occupies the land and or interfere in their enjoyment of rights are violations of this act. Therefore, the nature of relocation that occurs here is completely in violation of the provisions of the act. Therefore, it can be said that relocation by violating the act is illegal in nature.

Moreover, apart from these, children from forest areas are denied free and compulsory education envisaged by the Right to Education Act of 2009. In Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, children have to walk miles to reach the school. Necessary arrangements are not allowed inside the sanctuary. Therefore, dropouts are many among kattunayakans. The scenario in the post-relocation is also no different. The situation is quite similar in every protected area or relocated area in the country. For example, according to a report of Survival (2020), the community that relocated from Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary did not get the promised school in the relocated village even after nine years, denying children their fundamental right to education.

More importantly, international laws and obligations are also violated in these relocation programmes. The indigenous people's constitutional, legislative and administrative rights and international obligations to consider their concerns are seemingly interesting and impressive on paper. The Indian law and policy on the rights of indigenous people are equally impressive on paper, but implementation violates all aspects. Though some states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka have, to a comparative extent, recognised the rights of indigenous people, they have largely failed in implementing legal and constitutional instruments for indigenous people, thereby denying their rights (Bijoy, 2014).

Apart from the violation of laws, manipulations to bring justification and easy facilitation of relocation are widely seen from the side of those actively involved NGOs and conservationists. In their social media campaigns and academic writings,

those who have already relocated are projected as those who escaped the wrath of poverty; they urge others also to follow. There are people relocated from forests who have gained material advantages and economically progressed, but they are completely not Adivasis; among them are Chettis, Christians and Muslims and their voices were projected as Adivasi voices, used as justification for relocation of others. For them, relocation is a beneficial programme because their life and livelihoods do not depend on the forests and their resources. Therefore, moving out with monetary benefits is advantageous for them. There is always a misconception that those who live in the forests are Adivasis or other indigenous people. Therefore, projecting or demonstrating their voice as Adivasis in order to make a smokescreen on relocation is a clear case of manipulation. This portrayal gives the impression to broader society that adivasis support or benefit from relocation. So, this projected narrative is characterized as a “manipulation” that relocation benefits adivasis, rather than reflecting their true perspectives. Meanwhile, the relocated adivasis have a different story to tell, that is, abandoning the new place, going back to forests, and hiding with their family members. As mentioned above, Adivasis also struggle with mental illness and other diseases; that is their story of relocation.

There are several Adivasi families, especially Kattunayakans, who already left the relocated places and are living scattered in the forest. They are like ‘nomads’ now, staying at one place for a week or month and then leaving that place, fearing that forest officers will find them. Forest officers do not allow them to live in forest areas, as they are already relocated. But already relocated Kattunayakans still depend on forests for their living. As stated by Ravi from Kurichiyad settlement,

I have already gone out from the forest to outside area; life is good there with infrastructural development and other amenities. But not as comfortable as in forest, because in the forest water and other basic necessities are easily available. Outside the forest, everything has to be paid for, life is so expensive, we do not have that kind of life so far, we do not know that. Moreover, we are prone to illness in the relocation site. In our forest settlements because of the water and air around us the illness was less, and we had the protection from gods. Moreover, though, I am living outside of forest, I am still dependant on the forest, because we Kattunayakans cannot run away from that, our life is very much connected to the forest, therefore I still choose forest clearance jobs and other jobs related to forests offered by the government as it satisfies me more than any other job even if it is, economically less profitable

The arguments and experiences discussed above show how importantly Kattunayakans prioritise their life based on forests and their resources. Their wish to stay in forests is linked to many aspects of their life. Primarily, it is focused on their life and livelihood and on their religious beliefs, which they fear will be severely affected if they do not preserve. But more interestingly, the Kattunayakans have understood how the state views conservation. Therefore, they are quite adept at expressing their aspirations and advocating for themselves, a quality that is evident in their formulation and articulation of conservation strategies.

Conclusion

The paper discusses the relocation programme that is taking place at the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. As can be seen, the concept and conception of relocation

considered by the people and the states contradict each other. As a result, the desired outcome in the programme could not be achieved by state agencies. The major findings of the study are detailed as follows: the Adivasi communities do not play an active role in the relocation planning; the process of relocation does not adhere to the provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA); the Adivasi concept of life and development contradicts the relocation efforts; resettlement is generally unsatisfactory for the people involved; the relocation adversely affects the sustainable livelihood of the community; the relocation leads to increase in the cost of living, making it difficult for them to meet their needs; there is a lack of employment generation programmes and training at the relocation sites; resources that were easily accessible in the forests for daily life become either inaccessible or less accessible outside; physical and mental health issues become prevalent among the relocated people; traditional religious routines disintegrate; wage labour becomes primary means of livelihood; furthermore, many of Kattunayakans leave their relocated places and return to the forest, living with relatives while evading forest officers; and engaging with the market economy becomes their only means for sustenance in the relocated places, even though they are unfamiliar with the process of such engagements and the tools for mastering market economy.

Therefore, the forthcoming suggestions are formulated based on incorporating the opinions of individuals who wish to participate in the relocation process, as well as those who do not. Additionally, individuals who have previously relocated to areas outside are also considered in the development of these suggestions. As a result, various stakeholders' perspectives were taken into account when formulating these suggestions. The relocation itself within the wildlife sanctuary of Wayanad is illegal; however, if the government chooses to proceed with relocation, certain suggestions should be considered. Key suggestions from various stakeholders include: relocating settlements to the periphery of forests, avoiding the relocation of communities in areas with already well-established living and livelihood mechanisms of non-*adivasi* population, framing separate legislative measures specifically for relocation, as different departments currently follow different policy measures, initiating measures to strengthen Forest Rights Act (FRA) provisions, ensuring that relocation is a voluntary decision for the people involved, involving *adivasi* communities in the planning of the relocation and resettlement process, providing relocated land conducive to their traditional livelihood mechanisms, allowing relocated individuals the opportunity to reconsider whether they prefer to live outside or return to the forests even after the relocation process, implementing regular monitoring and follow-up by the government or concerned departments at the relocated places, advocating for a gradual relocation process rather than a sudden shift, discussing with people the problems identified by the government as justifications for relocation to ascertain whether they share the same concerns, and ensuring that the relocated place is conducive to their traditional and religious activities.

By analysing the relocation exercises of the state and government in the country with special focus on Kattunayakans of Wayanad, this paper has exemplified how the relocation process is taking place in a protected area in the country. Across the nation, in the name of conservation, the relocation policy has actually caused only dispossession and displacement of people from forests. The outcome of the project

has shown that this is totally against what Adivasis need. Thus, it is very obvious that, people are suffering from this that is not going to be benefit them anyway. The idea of relocation has been presented as a 'better living' opportunity for Adivasis by emphasising various livelihood generation programmes and infrastructural development, which, in fact, is the living concept of non-advasis. However, the government's efforts in relocation, resettlement, and rehabilitation have proven to be detrimental to the lives of the adivasi people. The primary reason is that their understanding of land, livelihood, and resource appropriation differs significantly from that of non-advasi people. Therefore, most of the Kattunayakans are not ready for relocation. However, they need sufficient development and infrastructure in their living atmosphere. The government is not ready to provide anything in their settlement as developmental schemes. Instead, the government is looking towards the relocation policy as the alternative to all those developments, which is a top-down approach which does not account for its impact on the people and their lives.

The only objective which the state has considered here is to assimilate Adivasis to mainstream developmental apparatus. Therefore, they have identified myriad so-called problems to show that the Adivasi life is at risk. Yes, it is true that they face problems and marginalities, but the state does not find suitable answers for that except this relocation. The problems identified by the government, such as wildlife animal attacks, have multiple potential solutions. For instance, addressing the issue of wild animal attacks and the perceived challenges in deep forests could involve planning relocations on the fringes of the forest. However, the government often overlooks such considerations. The 'solutions' identified by the government disregard the perspective of the affected people, and the long-term impacts of these 'solutions' on people's lives are not adequately considered. Therefore, in brief, development should happen in a sustainable way, and it should be people-centric, not state-centric. Therefore, the conservation policy has to be developed in accordance with indigenous people's knowledge and their value system; only this approach can actually bring sustainable equilibrium in their lives and forest resources. This gap that exists between the state and the people should be resolved with a new policy framework. For Adivasis, the consequences would be high compared to other communities because, for them, leaving the forest is like severing the umbilical cord, which could cause their death like what is happening in the wildlife sanctuary of Wayanad.

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