

Paper to be presented at the 11th biennial IASCP conference at Bali, June 19-23, 2006.

**RELOCATION BLUES: COMPROMISES LOCALS HAVE TO MAKE FOR
CONSERVATION**

- Rucha Ghat¹

Abstract:

Increasing global concern for threatened biodiversity has resulted in many countries offering total protection to large areas of forests, declaring them as 'protected areas'. Such exclusive management of forests and wildlife therein has been the predominant management strategy in India. It necessitates various restrictions on, and in some cases removal of forest communities residing within and on the peripheries of forests. The approach envisages no role for the locals in conservation of natural resources and invariably results in the local communities getting alienated from the entire process of conservation. This paper presents a case of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, located in a backward region of Maharashtra State in India. Six villages within the reserve have been awaiting their inevitable resettlement for the past 20 years. The villagers have lost their income source, are denied access to forest produce and every infrastructure development is stalled. It is only recently that process of actual relocation has been started for one of the six villages. Study of this process has brought to fore the loopholes, inadequacy of relocation package and provisions therein, absence of coordination between various government agencies involved, and continued lack of communication between the community to be relocated and the implementing agency responsible for the relocation.

Key words: protected areas, exclusive management, relocation, and compensation, India.

¹ Director-Projects, SHODH: The Institute for Research and Development, Nagpur-440033, India. Website: www.shodh-research.org Email: shodhngp@dataone.in

RELOCATION BLUES: COMPROMISES LOCALS HAVE TO MAKE FOR CONSERVATION

- Rucha Ghate

Background

This paper is a link in a chain of papers based on our study over the time period of past 10 years. It raises certain issues in the context of the ongoing study of six communities located inside Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Central India. The context is proposed relocation of the communities, declared twenty years ago. In last two years, some momentum has gathered for actual shifting of two of the six communities. Beginning with assessment of the extent of forest dependence of approximately 527 households on surrounding forests within TATR (Ghate, 1999a), we tried to bring out the impact of the inordinate delay in actual relocation resulting in halting of development for the six communities (Ghate 1999b). I had presented a paper at the 9th IASCP at Zimbabwe in which the main issue raised was the price the locals have to pay for conservation-related global concerns because the area-specific local 'collective choice' is weaker than the global 'collective choice'. I had argued that while global concerns can influence construction of constitutional choices, through various means both coercive and persuasive, local concerns rarely find expression (Ghate, 2003). In 2004 we conducted another field study to compare the current level of forest product use at the present location with the likely forest product use at the relocation site, by studying plant diversity at both the places (Mehra, 2004); and pointed out the prolonged relocation exercise, adding to the agony of the local populace (Ghate, 2005).

In this paper I try to bring out some issues related with three dimensions of problems generally faced in the process of relocation from any Protected Area (PA). I then discuss those with the help of the case of TATR. The three dimensions are: conceptual/philosophical basis on PAs; legally defined process of declaring PAs and provisions under rehabilitation act; and functional or operational dimension of actual process of relocation.

Conceptual basis of Protected Areas

Over the last few centuries there has been continuous biodiversity loss to an alarming level. This has led to a search for effective ways of conserving wildlife and biodiversity all over the world. The general acknowledgement that the current unprecedented rates of reduction in biological diversity are largely due to human activities and they pose a serious threat to continued human development (UNCED 1992: 15.1), has paved way for adoption of various conservation techniques. For human beings, species are economically important for two reasons. Firstly, genetic properties make distinct species that are of direct value in both human consumption and production. Secondly, both floral and faunal species are useful for the functions they perform in generation of ecological services that are themselves of value to human society. This understanding has been the basis for the traditional focus of conservation of both species and genetic diversity. Prevailing wildlife conservation models are based on the notion that in order to

protect natural environment, in particular forest and the wild life, human dwelling within such forests have to be excluded. According to ecologists and wildlife experts such exclusions are necessary because otherwise the tremendous pressure on forests due to biomass removal by locals, including rampant grazing, would adversely affect the sanctuaries and parks. Biotic pressures, encroachments and diversion of forestland for various developmental purposes result in destruction of wildlife habitats, corridors, and basically breeding grounds of small and large mammals, especially in case of those animals that need inviolate large spaces to grow.

However, the method of 'exclusion' has negative externalities for those who have been living in forest areas declared as 'Protected'. The disproportionate costs on the local populace due to the environmental pressures leading to bio-reserves, and pressure from human activists for preservation of the rights of the local people are leading to serious conflicts. The 'environment versus development' debate has varying connotations for developing and developed countries. Adoption of 'exclusive' model of conservation, culturally rooted in American conservation history (Guha 1989), has resulted in social uprooting of human population in case of developing economies like India. Basically, the practice of equating nature conservation with the establishment of PAs under the Forest Department's exclusive control, leading to the banning of subsistence uses of living resources, has been based on false premises: only the state machinery can protect biodiversity; conservation of biodiversity is no concern of development agencies but is a monopoly of Forest Department; creation of new protected areas will enhance the prospects of protecting biodiversity; exclusion of subsistence demands is essential to biodiversity conservation; existing protected areas do effectively conserve biodiversity; and bureaucratic and technical experts know best how to conserve bio diversity (Gadgil 1998). Not surprisingly, "locking up biodiversity in small parks, while ignoring wider social and political realities, has been an ineffective strategy" (Colchester 1997: 107). Although, of late, the fragmented thinking of inappropriate disjunction of 'conservation' and 'development' is being replaced by more adaptive thinking, in case of many developing countries, displacement and resettlement due to Protected Areas, is still a reality.

Protected Areas in India

India has a long history (twenty four centuries) of reserved forests (Bishop *et al*, 1995). In pre-colonial India, there were several hunting preserves maintained by kings with restrictions on human resource use. The concern expressed internationally, that ecologically forests regulate local and global climate and influence the earth's energy budget, and more species of plants and animals live in forests than in any other ecosystems, are well recognized in Indian Forest Policy (1952 & 1988) statements. Conservation of the resource, especially in environmentally strategic areas like mountains and river origins, is specifically mentioned in the policy documents and are clearly reflected in forest-related legislation. This concern for conservation has resulted in reserving large areas of natural forests in various regions of the country under following four categories: national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, reserved forests and protected forests, and closed areas (Mitra 1999). The Constitution of India clearly states, 'The State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country' (Article 48A). The Indian Board of Wildlife (IBW) defines a national park as an 'area dedicated by the statute for all time to conserve scenery, natural and historical objects of national significance and wildlife, and where provision is made for the enjoyment of all the same by the public'. By

adopting a traditional conservation model, lot of emphasis has been placed on custodial management such as parks and reserves, since 1935, banning most of the human activities within the boundary.

According to a recent Tiger Task Force (TTF) report, 2005, at present there are 90 National Parks and 501 wildlife sanctuaries covering 1,56,934 sq km, which works out to 5 percent of land area of India. Of these 28 protected areas have been declared as Tiger Projects. Although there is no clear assessment of total number of persons/households that need to be relocated from the PAs, TTF has worked out that almost 273 villages with 19,215 families constituting of 101,077 persons need to be shifted from only core areas of Tiger Reserves. These figures triple when it comes to overall tiger reserves. Although the present relocation package grants an unreasonable amount of INR 100,000 per family, some actual costs of relocation from PAs have been INR 402,000 exclusive of alternate land cost and INR 830,000 inclusive of land cost (TTF report, 2005). It is easy to comprehend the magnitude of expenses that would be required to relocate all the 273 villages from the core areas of existing Tiger Reserves. Another major issue related with the problem is that of finding alternate land for carrying out these relocations. If these are going to be found from other forest areas, the whole issue of ecological implications: deforestation, destruction of corridor and landscape as habitats of wild animals will have to be addressed.

Legal provisions

Declaration of protected area is preceded by an enquiry process, acquisition of land and then rehabilitation. It is pertinent to note how weak the provisions are in this regard.

Land Acquisition and Project affected People's Rehabilitation Act, 1999

In India the colonial state passed the first land acquisition act in 1894, enabling them to expedite the divesting of land and property from people in the name of public purpose. But the 'public purpose' - who is to benefit and at whose cost - was neither defined then, nor is it now. The colonial legislation was amended in 1984 to streamline the process of acquisition. A time limit on declaration of land for public purposes was fixed to be three years. To streamline the process further, a provision is made to ostensibly reduce the various time limits. But then, this also means that the people would have less time to question and oppose the acquisition process. While the efforts seem to be concentrated on speeding up the land acquisition for undertaking various developmental projects, there seems to be no hurry and no worry about timely rehabilitation of the displaced in order to end uncertainty.

India does not have a defined policy on rehabilitation and relocation of people affected/displaced by projects undertaken by the government. A National Rehabilitation Policy and Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill was prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development in 1998, which was extensively discussed by NGOs and social workers five years ago. Although the bill takes into consideration several aspects of the displacement trauma, it does not recognize that the people whose lands are acquired should have the first say in deciding the 'public purpose'. Also, the policy draft does not provide for the losses that are caused to the affected people due to

administrative delays in the process beginning with ‘declaration of intention’ to ‘actual rehabilitation’.

There are only three states in India that have comprehensive rehabilitation and relocation policies. Maharashtra State is one of them and among other projects it applies to the 5 national parks and 34 wildlife sanctuaries, covering 15,319.94 sq. kms of area all together (Kutty *et al* 2001). The Maharashtra Project Affected People’s Act (MPAPA) was passed in the year 1999 (Maharashtra Act no. XI of 2001) for the rehabilitation of people affected due to projects like irrigation projects, universities, oil and natural gas, national parks, sanctuaries etc. All the major provisions of the National Rehabilitation Policy and Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill have been incorporated in the MPAPA. It has taken into consideration the role of common-property resources in tribal lives; the effects of displacement on cultivators, like co-dependents such as tenants, sharecroppers, and landless labor; and others engaged in other trade; occupation, etc. A general guideline of provision of facilities for the people at the rehabilitation site is mentioned in the Act. Some of the important provisions of the Act include permanent drinking water supply, school with playground and toilet facility, internal metal roads and tar approach roads, electricity supply with street lights, land for cattle shed with water cistern, land for threshing floor, pasture land (if govt. land is available), developed land for market, land for future expansion of *gaathan* (settlement area), land for secondary school and dispensary or Public Health Center, bank, Post office, garden for children, etc. Depending on the population of the new settlement, land for registered bodies for public purpose at the old *gaathan* has also been mentioned. Specification of priority quota of not less than five percent for employment to the nominees of the affected people in all class III and class IV category has also been made. This employment provision applies to State government departments, public sector undertakings, local self-government, government aided institutions, societies, companies, factories etc., For the area of plot at the *gaathan*, that is the area to be made available for making their house, it has been stipulated that a minimum of 370 sq. meters and maximum of 740 sq. meters should be provided for the land-owners while for the landless it is minimum of 185 sq. meters and maximum of 370 sq. meters.

A Maharashtra government resolution (GR) was passed on 17th July 2000 regarding the rehabilitation of affected people. The provisions under the GR are as per the act. However, there are a few explicitly defined provisions other than what have already been defined in the act. For example: “Land for Land”. It mentions that each agriculturist household whose land is within the boundaries of a wild life sanctuary or a National Park would be given as much as the area of land that he held or a minimum of 1 ha. Further more, the landless, as per relocation act 1999, schedule-Part III, is to get 1 acre irrigated or 1 ha un-irrigated land. Facilities to level the land and make it ready for cultivation have also been provided. Assistance of government vehicle is to be provided to the people to help shift their belongings from the old site to the new site. The State takes advantage of a centrally sponsored beneficiary oriented Tribal Development scheme under the ‘Project Tiger’ of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, for relocation of villages from inside PAs. The scheme approves a total of Rs. 1,00,000 as a package for each tribal family affected by relocation.

Inquiry Process for Protected Areas

In India where many forest areas are inhabited, declaring any area as 'Protected' involves lengthy and complicated procedures. Due to which the history of land acquisition and rehabilitation for a variety of developmental works in India has been stranded at various stages of the process. Notification of national parks or sanctuaries is often delayed due to ambiguity and lack of clear understanding of the provisions of the existing two acts namely the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), 1972, amended up to 2002, and the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, amended up to 1984. This brings in complications and therefore delays. In the case of PAs, a perfect coordination and clear communication is essential between the Forest Department and the Revenue Department, especially since the Collector is the inquiry officer. For declaration of any area as 'protected' following steps are to be followed:

Under Section-18 of the WLPA, proclamation is to be issued for the intention of declaring area as sanctuary. For declaring any area as National Park, proclamation is to be issued under section 35 of WLPA. Following this, Section-19 of WLPA automatically authorizes the Collector of the district to determine the rights of any person in and over the land comprised within the limits of that area. A time period of two months for accepting written claims of any rights of the people is provided. According to Section-26, the collector can delegate his power of inquiry to a sub divisional officer or any officer specified. Section-20 specifies that after declaration of intention, no new right should be acquired and is not to be considered by an inquiry officer during the course of inquiry. Section-21 provides for the proclamation to be published in the regional language in every town and village in the neighborhood of the area comprised. Section-22, 23, and 24-1 & 2 (a) and (c), and section-24 (2-c) {applicable only to sanctuaries and not to national parks}, are for inquiry and determination of rights and property of the people who are going to be affected, and for passing an order admitting or rejecting the rights in whole or in part. It also provides for exclusion of any disputed land from the limits of the proposed Sanctuary or National Park if the inquiry officer finds sufficient evidence and reason for doing so. He can do so after exhausting the option of 24-(c), i.e. after consulting the Chief Wildlife Warden. Preparation and submission of the inquiry report to the Revenue and Forest Departments of the state, with a copy to Wildlife wing of the Forest Department. This is followed by either acceptance of the report or solicitation of further comments from the inquiry officer. Using the provisions under section 25(a) & (c), the inquiry officer can proceed under Land Acquisition Act (LAA), 1894 Section-9. According to its provision, the inquiry officer is to issue notices to the right holders or affected people, giving them a minimum of 15 days time for raising objections. Under Section-11 of LAA, an award is passed or recommended for each and every individual with a copy to the State Government and Wildlife wing of the Forest Department. Then the completed report of the whole inquiry, from Section-19 to 25, and all relevant enclosures are submitted. Final notification is issued under Section-26 A & (a) for Sanctuaries and Section-35 for National Parks (Ghate *et al*, 2005)

Although this whole process is well defined, delay in its implementation is a common experience. It has been found that during this delayed period, wildlife interests suffer substantially. At the same time people, who are kept waiting for years, are perplexed and develop animosity towards government in general, and the Wildlife Wing of the Forest Department in particular. It is very clear that if the villagers perceive that declaration under Wildlife Act is only going to create problems and harassment to them, being on cutting edge of hand to mouth existence, they cannot be expected to appreciate the need for preservation of gene pool and bio-

diversity. Therefore it is essential to ensure that at least the relocation does not adversely affect their life situation (TISS, 1997). Uncertainty about ‘when’ relocation would take place is another major cause of anguish for the uprooted persons. The root cause of delay between declaration of intention and final notification is confusion and lack of clarity regarding some of the provisions contained in the two acts. In many cases, the inquiry officers think that under LAA, they will have to start the procedure from Section-4 as in the case of land acquisition for roads, buildings, or other such developmental activities. The difference between any other land acquisition procedure and that of the Wildlife Act is not perceived, which is a major cause of delay. The case of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is one example of this kind of confusion.

Ecological importance of TATR

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is situated in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, (see maps at the end) and has a long history of formation. The very first notification for Tadoba Sanctuary, comprising 116.55 sq. kms, was issued way back in 1931. It was converted into Tadoba National Park in 1955. The park was established in accordance with the then-policy of creating specie-specific reserves, devoid of human intervention. It was thought that at least some forest area should be preserved as a natural habitat for wildlife, specially the tiger. Existence of human beings was considered ‘unnatural’ and it was decided to rehabilitate the villages, which came within the national park area. Relocation of two such villages, which were within the Tadoba National Park, was done promptly. Since the declaration of the park, the area has been excluded from the prescriptions of working plans (Management plan, TATR 1997). To create a buffer area for Tadoba National Park, the reserved area was extended as Andhari Tiger Sanctuary in February 1986, comprising 509.27 sq. kms. Ever since the ‘public purpose’ was declared, relocation of six villages within the notified sanctuary area is in the offing. In the meantime, after receiving approval from the central government in 1993, the state government declared the whole area under Tadoba National Park and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary as the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (625.40 sq.kms.) in 1995.

The first declaration of Tadoba as a sanctuary and its subsequent upgradations and extensions is because the area is considered a ‘pristine and unique ecosystem’ with forest under the classification of the sub-group of *5A-CI-1B Southern tropical dry deciduous forests* (Management Plan TATR, 1997). According to the Management Plan, the dominant specie is teak (*Tectona grandis*), and there are number of other species. The ‘dense forests’ of the reserve supports a rich diversity of fauna too. The faunal diversity of the reserve, as been recorded in its management plan, is indicated by the presence of 41 species of mammals, 195 species of birds, 74 species of butterflies, 26 species of spiders, 30 species of reptiles, 5 species of amphibians, and 23 species of fishes. The landscape of the Reserve has been divided into five categories: woodlands, grasslands, riparian zones, wetlands, and unique habitats. It is this diversity that provides an ideal habitat for species like Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*).

However, forest area earmarked at TATR is not an isolated patch but a part of larger forest. There is reserved forest on all the four sides of the PA, but there is no tree cover on the western side. The authority that manages TATR is different from the one managing adjoining forest. The dependence of local communities on forest is no different for those located inside, from the ones located on the fringes of TATR. Yet the rules regulating their uses are different. In case of

villages on the north western boundary of TATR, which has maximum number of villages located on fringes, the forest area kept for the sustenance use of local communities, in the category of protected forest, has been taken over by TATR without releasing alternate forest area for their use. In this situation the communities have no other option but to sneak in the tiger reserve for their basic needs of fuel wood, fodder and small timber. The impact of use is perceivable in degraded condition of forest area on the core area close to the border (Nagendra *et al*, 2006). Villages located on the southern and western side of the park are regular users of Bamboo. Bamboo baskets and mats are regularly made and sold in the nearby town of Chandrapur by the villagers. The fact that there isn't much bamboo available in the forest area on these sides makes it quite obvious that the bamboo used for bamboo-based manufacturing comes out of TATR. But since the villages are located outside the park, park authorities cannot do much about it unless the poachers are caught red handed, and the territorial forest authority doesn't have sufficient manpower to deal with these 'petty' crimes. While the communities located on the fringes of TATR are legally allowed to collect tendu (*Diospyros melenoxylon*) leaves, moha (*Madhuca longifolia*) flowers and other NTFPs, the villages located within TATR are banned from these activities. Apparently there is very little control over the collection activity of communities on fringes, it is difficult to establish whether PA forest is being used or territorial forest is used for collecting these NTFPs. There is a high demand for forest resources in the more densely populated Chandrapur town. In such a situation the communities located on the fringes act as easy conduit for transfer and sale of forest products illegally harvested from the park (Nagendra *et al*, 2006). This has been experienced in case of TATR even in case of wildlife poaching. Most of the cases of tiger poaching reported in last two years are from the villages on the eastern side of the park, which are close to a state highway. In most of the 53 villages situated within 5 kilometers of the park boundary, residents complain of crop raiding and are totally antagonistic to park authorities. In the given situation it is difficult to understand how an exclusively managed tiger reserve is ecologically justified, moreover how, and for how long is it going to sustain amongst illicit felling, trading, poaching on the one hand and meager park staff on the other. If relocating six communities is taking more than two decades, and if no substantial harm is done to TATR in these many years, why is there no rethinking regarding the decision? Why are ways and means not explored to make the local communities (both inside and on fringes) as stakeholders? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed by the policy makers at some point of time. Moreover, the area selected for relocating the three villages, in the first phase, is a patch of forest belonging to Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra. The area was procured and cleared of all the vegetation for settling the communities. This has not only resulted in loss of biodiversity, as our study finds that the plant diversity was better than that of the area surrounding *Botezari* (Mehra, 2004), but also defeats the overall purpose of conservation since one patch of forest is cleared to save another patch of forest.

Legal issues

The six communities that happen to fall in the sanctuary area were never consulted before declaration of the tiger reserve, nor were they given a choice in deciding the form of compensation for the larger "public purpose". No assessment was done on the extent of forest dependence of these communities to ensure compensating them on this count. Referring back to the steps elaborated earlier regarding declaration of a reserve, in the case of TATR, the intention was notified in 1986, and progress of the inquiry process stopped at the step of submission of the

report, for several years. The inquiry officer submitted his report in December 1997, more than 11 years after the intention was notified, to the chief wildlife warden determining the rights and property of the people who were to be affected. The process once again topped at this point due to lack of coordination between concerned officials in Revenue and Forest Departments. The process has started moving forward once again since November 2003, with a new officer taking charge and taking interest in relocation issue. Since then money has been received from central government for relocation of three villages. Why was the decision to move only three villages was taken, and why not all the six villages at a time, is a question that nobody answers. Who selected the three villages that would move out first, and on what basis, is another intriguing question.

As has been mentioned earlier, the amount of Rs. 100,000 per family for rehabilitation is too small to ensure good quality of work. The state authority and the forest department officials responsible for rehabilitation of the three villages are taking steps to pool in resources from other schemes to provide at least basic facilities like potable water, electricity connection, roads, housing etc. But it is important to realize that this is 'personalized' administrative decision, not a part of policy. The great danger is in case the concerned officers are transferred midway in the process of relocation. Despite the best efforts put by the present authority, there are serious issues related to insufficiency of grazing area, insufficient water for irrigation, allotment of agriculture land between the two communities and then between individuals within a community, and potential areas of conflict between the communities already residing in the vicinity with the communities that will move in from outside, especially over sharing of natural resources. These are some of the issues that are difficult to address, and over which the state machinery has little control, nor is it equipped to deal with. Often the forest officials argue that migration and relocation are not unique, and society has only developed because of such moves. The basic fact that such migrations for better opportunities are 'willing', and in expectation of 'better life', while relocations from PAs are not necessarily willing, and do not ensure 'better life' after relocation, is ignored.

Functional level problems

The six communities that are living in TATR for at least three generations, had adjusted their lives to small patches of land for cultivation, and forest based economy. Major requirements were met from abundant forest products in the close vicinity – timber for housing, bamboo for fencing, fodder in forest for grazing, fuel wood, employment as forest labor for the forest department's activities, NTFPs for substituting nutritional requirement as well as cash income. Although all the basic civic amenities like all weather roads, fair price shops, primary health centers, schools, public transport and the like were not available, there always was a possibility of getting these amenities in course of time. But with declaration of National Park and then Tiger Reserve, forest department abandoned most of its activities under 'working plans', thereby not requiring any labor force. Loss of employment opportunities was the first casualty for the six communities. Along with the declaration of PA came restrictions on use of forest products. The two major sources of income were thus lost. Keeping area inviolate in the reserve also meant stalling every developmental activity, resulting in no improvement in supply of civic amenities. Even the developmental departments e.g. Department of Tribal Development, stopped approaching these six communities, refusing to invest in people who were likely to move away.

Since relocation did not actually take place, the status quo brought great suffering to the villagers.

After being in limbo for two decades, in last 2-3 years some movement for relocation has started. It is interesting to note that as the authorities approached these communities in 2003, one community completely refused to shift saying that it is their ancestral homeland and they do not want to move out under any pretext. Two communities came up with charter of demands, conditionally agreeing to move out. The demands included compensation for loss of income, one government job for each family, irrigated land developed and ready for cultivation etc. The total value of their demands ran in multiples of what has been sanctioned by the government. Relocation Project authorities promptly dumped these villages and did not continue to hold a dialogue with them. One community, which is on the fringe of TATR on northern side, is yet to be approached by the project authority due to pending legal issues. Another community has a fractured mandate on relocation. While the land owners in the village have refused to move and are demanding much higher compensation, the landless are interested in shifting, lured by the possibility of getting at least one acre of land in their name. The competent authority is waiting for that faction of the community to gather courage and approach them, so that they can be moved, hoping that the remaining households would feel left behind and will ultimately agree to move out too. Only one village, namely *Botezari*, agreed to shift and authorities started planning for this very village's relocation. After watching the moves of the Relocation Authority, seeing that this time the department really intends to move the villages, another village, namely *Kolsa*, is now ready to shift too.

Despite the fact that the relocation authorities have tried to provide as many facilities as possible, the communities are concerned about few issues. The design of house to be provided at the new place was major issue for a long time. At the one hand, the project officials were finding it very difficult to accommodate a house with given specifications regarding dimension and area within the allotted amount of Rs. 36,000. Whatever was feasible in that amount did not come to the liking of the villagers. After compromises from both the sides, a model was finalised and construction work was started two months ago. At present the major issue is regarding timing of actual moving in. There is lot of pressure on the *Botezari* and *Kolsa* community to shift immediately (May-June 2006). The communities are neither very well acquainted with the provisions in the Maharashtra Project Affected People's Act (MPAPA), nor are they in the position to insist on completion of the civic amenities before shifting.

Water availability is another area of concern. Although sufficient provision for drinking water has been made, community is not satisfied with the arrangement made for water for irrigation. A dam has been proposed on the *Kaislaghat nallah*, passing through the relocation site, but as was reported by the locals, the source totally dries up completely in the non-monsoon months. Some have expressed apprehensions about the suitability of soil for agriculture, finding it sandy and inappropriate for agriculture. The land-owners are not sure whether they will get the same amount of land as that they currently own, since the area that has been set-aside at the new site will be insufficient for agricultural land. There is ambiguity in the minds of the people about the inter-community and intra-community distribution of land. *Botezari* residents do not rule out possibilities of clashes if they are not given the patch of land they prefer. People of *Kolsa*, on the

other hand, are very confident that no one will get the land near the stream other than *Kolsa* village, as they were the first among the three villages to be shown the site.

The relocation package does not provide for employment/livelihood security. There is no employment guarantee or even information from the authorities on this issue. Although the MPAPA does talk about quotas for employment of some of the households affected by relocation, it becomes applicable only after actual relocation takes place, that too as and when vacancies are created in government departments.

Apart from the fact that the process of relocation suffers from the interest and efficiency level of the officer in-charge, there are serious coordination problems as well. The Project Director has to coordinate activities that are to be undertaken by several government departments like revenue department, department of agriculture, department of irrigation, building and construction etc for whom working for relocation of a small number of villages may not be a priority. The inadequacy of the amount of money made available in the relocation package is also a serious hindrance in the quality of work that can be undertaken. As has been mentioned earlier, the present relocation package grants INR 100,000 per family, which is an unreasonable amount. In case of TATR also, the actual amount spent for relocation is likely to exceed Rs. 500,000 per household. Relocation of remaining villages is going to face an additional problem since no balance revenue land is available in the whole Chandrapur district. In case forestland is sought, the procedure to convert forestland for non-forest purposes is very lengthy and cumbersome. Also, it will once again mean clearing one patch of forest to save another.

Concluding Remarks

Declaration of Protected Area, by cordoning off some area of land from public use, is a major land-use decision. Taking into account the situation of land availability there is a need to question the feasibility of clearing large patches of forest of human interference. The logic of treating localities inside a PA and on the fringes of the PA differently needs to be based on systematic impact assessment studies. Otherwise the purpose of preserving 'inviolable' zones would possibly be defeated in practice. The basic concept of managing a protected area in isolation from other adjacent forest areas is questionable. With separate authorities to protect a 'Protected Area' and 'adjoining territorial forest', wherein the 'PA authority' has an aura of special importance, it is likely that villages surrounding the park have easy access to forest products from within the PA as well as to market with increasing demand for forest products. To arrest the relatively high incidence of poaching of timber, bamboo and wildlife in adjacent villages, there is necessity of perfect coordination of PA and territorial officials.

If we assume that the decision to segregate some forest areas as 'Protected Area' is representing the aspirations of majority of citizen's in the country, the important concern in this regard would be how the affected population is dealt with. The major concern of the policy makers, therefore, needs to be to look for ways for minimizing the social (uprooting) and psychological (trauma of displacement) costs, and totally annihilate the economic cost through substantial rehabilitation package including employment and income earning opportunities. Although, the World Bank urges that displaced persons should be assisted in their efforts to improve their livelihoods and

standards of living or at least to restore them, in real terms, to pre-displacement levels or to the levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project implementation, whichever is higher (World Bank, 2002: 1), ground experience has been entirely different. Environmental protection leading to eviction of people has had an unfortunate outcome of feeling of alienation, helplessness and powerlessness amongst the displaced (Mathur 1995: 18).

Over the past decade, a growing recognition of the difficulties associated with implementing unpopular conservation policies and strategies has resulted in an increasing push, nationally and internationally, towards enhancing the involvement of resident peoples in the management of local resources. Most environmentalists no longer believe that the removal of people is the key to biodiversity conservation (Schmidt-Soltan 2003; Saberwal *et al.* 2001; Gadgil 1998; Kothari *et al.* 1996), and adaptive co-management of humans and wildlife is possible (Ghate, 2004). Fortunately, India is also responding to the changed understanding of human-environment relationship. A marked paradigm shift is apparent from the latest amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002, which envisages community participation in Protected Areas that have been insulated from human intervention until recently. But these changes are yet to come into practice and may not be applied to the protected areas that are already in the process of relocating people. In such cases it is imperative on the government to minimize sufferings of relocation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is based on several visits and long association with the six communities in TATR, funding for which has been made available by more than one source. SHODH: The Institute for Research and Development, a revisit study in 2004 funded by International Forestry Resources and Institutions research program, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA, and the Forest Department, Government of Maharashtra have been the major sources. The author would like to thank the P.C.C.F (wildlife), C.F. (North Chandrapur Circle), Collector (Chandrapur), A.C.F. (TATR), and Range Forest officer (of *Kolsa* range) for providing all the necessary information. I would like to especially thank Ms. Deepshikha Mehra for her help on and off the field.

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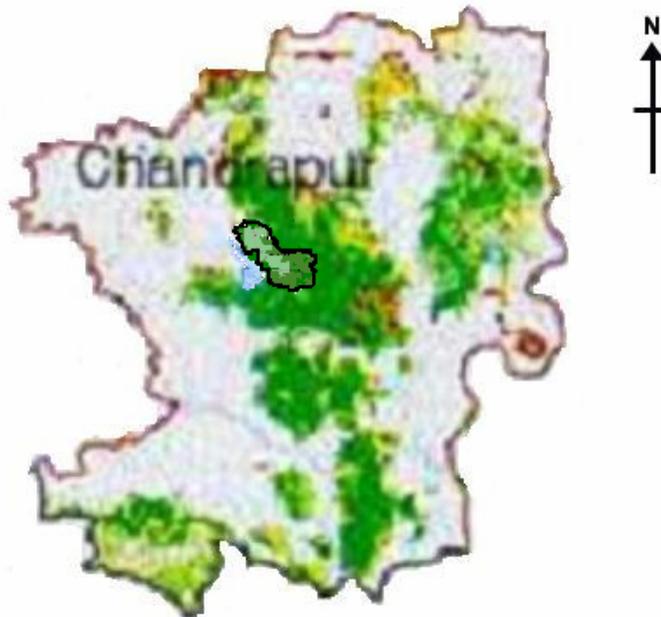
Map-1: Location of Maharashtra State in India

Map-2: Location of Chandrapur district and TATR in Maharashtra State



Map-3

FOREST COVER MAP OF CHANDRAPUR DISTRICT



MAP NOT TO SCALE

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS