

Paper presented in

Seventh Biennial Conference

**Indian Society for Ecological Economics
(INSEE)**

***Global Change, Ecosystems,
Sustainability***

December 4-8, 2013



Host:
Tezpur
University



Cohost:
OKD Institute
of Social
Change and
Development

Biodiversity Conservation and Rehabilitation of Tribal's from Kudremukh National Park

Abstract

The importance of Biodiversity has a great relevance to communities who depend on it for subsistence, and of late its significance has been recognized globally, for scientific and economic reasons. The conventional approaches to Protected Areas, National Parks and Wild Sanctuaries are at the forefront of modern effort to conserve biological diversity has been in crisis. In recent years there has been a steady rise in the number and size of protected areas in India. The protected areas are often arenas of resource struggle because the local population faces systematic restrictions of access rights and frequent relocation with or without compensation to make way for the protected areas.

The article explores the contradictions between Biodiversity Conservation and exclusion of tribal population regarding access to natural resources through the specific experience in the Kudremukh National Park. The local population have faced restrictions in their use of common property resources for food gathering, harvest of medical plants, grazing, has often turning them from cultivators to “encroachers”. Thus the establishment of National Parks often creates direct conflict with the economic interests of local communities, as the conservation efforts are likely to affect their very existence. Unraveling the connections between the local, regional, national and the global sphere of politics, we examine the contesting claims of different actors like the forest department, tribal population and Non-Government Organizations in matters of conservation. The people who have been living in and around these areas have been overlooked quite completely in both the planning and management phases of conservation projects.

Key words: encroachers, enclosures

I

Biodiversity Conservation

The “biodiversity conservation” movement argues that the resources must be set aside and “protected” from the people.¹ Biological conservation must be based on science but scientific investigation is not the only output required for effective conservation and even when there is substantial information, prudent conservation policies are not assured. Conservation of Biological diversity has become an important issue for most of the Third World Countries. The development process worldwide which has resulted in large-scale destruction and conversion of natural habitats and ecosystems has become alarmingly rapid in recent times. Biodiversity found in a particular area is a product of the physical environment; it is the abiotic components of the ecosystems that shape up the diversity of life and vice-versa.² The significance of biodiversity conservation viewed in three ways. Firstly, biodiversity provides enormous economic benefits in the form of food, medicine and industrial raw materials and has the potential for generating more. Secondly, it supplies an array of essential services to humanity such as clean air, modification of climatic extremes, degradation of wastes, recycling of nutrients, creating of soils, controlling of diseases, and regulation of hydrological cycles. Finally, the ethical and aesthetic values, that is plants and animals that are independent of monetary valuations are a source of irreplaceable wonder, spirituality and inspiration to humanity.³

¹ T.P Sreedharan, (2004): “Biodiversity Diversity of Kerala: A survey of Kalliasseri Panchayat, Kannur District”, Discussion Paper No.62, *Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development*, Thiruvanthapuram, p-11.

² Dunu, Roy (2003): “Emerging Paradigms in Environmental Conservation and Management”, *Social Change*, June-September, Vol.33, No.2&3, pp-2-3.

³ L.K. Arun, B.Jayashankar, Kurian Mathew Abraham (2001): “Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood of Tribesfolk: A Case study of Periyar Tiger Reserve”, Discussion paper No.37, *Centre for Development Studies*, pp.5-8

II

Geographical Profile

The Western Ghats comprise a total area of 160,000 sq.km containing two biosphere reserves, eight national Parks and 39 Wildlife sanctuaries in six states: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This region is broadly grouped as northern (covering Surat in Gujarat to Goa, Central (Goa to Niligiri mountains in Tamil Nadu and Southern Western Ghats (south of Palghat). The Western Ghats is rich in biodiversity and is recognized as one of the 18 mega-biodiversity centers of the World and comprises unique species in the two rich 'Hotspot' areas that is Eastern Himalayas (part of Indo-Burma and the Western Ghats (part of tropical forest)⁴. The Kudremukh National Park comes under the Global Tiger Conservation Priority-I, under the format developed jointly by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and World Wide Fund-USA.⁵

In kudremukh forests are incredibly beautiful because of the grasslands and *shola* forests, rolling hills, peaks, gushing rivers and streams. The greater portion of the state belongs to the plateau land also known as *Maidan* or open country (*Bayalusime* or *Mudalasime* in Kannada). In Kannada language the Western Ghats means *Malanad* (literally means hill country), lies to the west, and is confined to the tracts bordering or resting on the Western Ghats. *Malanad* is adorned with some of the well-known peaks- *Mullayangiri* (1,913m), Kudremukh (1,892m) and Kodachadri (1,343m). The Western Ghats cover 38,019 sq. km in the state of Karnataka and has 5 national parks and 15 wild life sanctuaries and a part of Nilgiri Biosphere reserve.

⁴ Anja, Nygren (2000): "Environmental narratives on Protection and production: Nature-based conflicts in Rio San Juan, Nicaragua", *Development and Change*, Vol.31, p-809.

⁵ Ullas, Karanth (1985): "The Primate Conservation: The Newsletter and Journal of the IUCN/SSC", *Primate Specialist Group*, Number 6, July, pp. 73-84.

NATIONAL PARKS IN KARNATAKA

Place	Location	Area notified (sq Km.)	Year
Anashi	Uttara Kannada	250.00	1987
Bandipur	Chamarajanagar	874.20	1974
Bannerghatta	Bangalore	104.27	1974
Kudremukh	Chikmagalur, Udupi and Mangalore	563.00	1987 and 2001
Nagarhole (Rajiv Gandhi)	Mysore and Kodagu	643.39	1983

Source: Kudremukh Wildlife Division

III

Kudremukh National Park

Kudremukh National Park lies to the southwest of Karnataka state and is just 50 kms from the west coast between the (latitudinal range 13°01'00" to 13°29'17" N, longitudinal range 75°00'55' to 75°25'00" E). The conservation of forests, grasslands, and wetlands, which have become National Parks and Sanctuaries after independence were also the old hunting grounds of Indian princes, which were developed under the British colonial rule. Hunting was also an important past time and the integral life of the princely states and wild animals like tiger, lion, and leopard were not protected and their hunting was a valued sport.⁶ The introduction of 'scientific' forest management in the nineteenth century initiated a uniform, centralized and bureaucratic system upon a diverse range of ecosystems. The overall conservation programme in India can be divided into three main areas: creation and management of protected areas, protection of wildlife in protected forests and control and management of wildlife trade.

The KNP is spread over an area of 563 Sq. Kms. and falls in three districts namely, Dakshina Kannada district (158 Sq. Kms.), Udupi district (89 Sq. Kms.) and Chikmagalur district (316 Sq. Kms.). (In 1997, Dakshina Kannada district divided into Mangalore and Udupi districts and Mysore district was divided into Mysore and

⁶ Divyabhanusinh (1998): "A Princely Bequest", *Seminar* 466, June, p-42.

Chamarajanagar districts). It falls approximately at the middle of mid-Western Ghats (the stretch between Goa and Nilgiris).

The National park is administered and protected under the Karnataka Forest Act 1963, Karnataka Forest Rules 1969 and Wildlife Act 1972. The management plan of the national park is under the direction of the Wildlife Warden and Conservator of Forests. The Deputy conservator of forests, Kudremukh wild life division with headquarters at Karkala, administers the national park. There are four ranges located at Belthangadi, Karkala, Kerekatte and Kudremukh. There are two sub-divisions one at Kudremukh and one at Kundapur. All these offices newly created and the executive staff drawn from the respective territorial divisions, which contribute to the area of the national park. In Kudremukh, K.Ullas Karanth undertook a systematic survey of the distribution of endangered *lion-Tailed Macquae* region during 1983-84 and based on his report declared it as a National park in 1987. The *lion-tailed macques* was used as a 'flagship' species to conserve the entire wildlife population in the region and conservation plan for the survival of other wildlife population in the region.⁷

The major policies on reserved forests were declared during the period 1914-16 with reference to Kudremukh National Park (KNP) which included two Reserved Forests and three State Forests, which were brought together to constitute the national park⁸

Reserve Forests of Kudremukh National Park

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Name of the Reserved Forest and State Forest	Notification No. & Date	Extent (in acres)	Remarks
1	Udupi	Andar Reserved Forest	G.O.No.26 Rev., dated 14-03-1891	19445.22	U/S 16 of Madras Forest Act.
2	Udupi & Dakshina Kannada	Naravi Reserved Forest	G.O.No.96 Rev., dated 28-02-1900	58954.85	
3	Chikmagalur	South Bhadra State Forest	R.1777-80-FT-87-13-14, dated 29-08-1914	20914.78	
4	Chikmagalur	Tunga Bhadra	G.O. No. R.296-9-	49838.60	

⁷ Government Order.No.AHFF.42.fwG.87, dated 2nd September 1987.

⁸ The bio-diversity in Kudremukh includes several endangered and globally significant wildlife species like the tiger (*Panthera Tigris*), Malabar civet (*Viverra megaspila*), Leopard (*panthera pardus*), Wild dog (*Cu* Government Order.No.AHFF.42.fwG.87, dated 2nd September 1987.*on alpinus*), Sloth bear (*Melurus ursinus*) and possibly several of which are endemic to the area.

		State Forest	FR.96-15-6, dated 07-07-1916		U/S 17 of Mysore Forest Regulation
5	Chikmagalur	Narasimhaparvatha State Forest	R-8426-29-FR-94-15, dated 01-03-1916	16745.00	
		Total		165898.45	

Source: N0. C3/CR/30/KNP/99-2000 Office of the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Kudremukh Wild Life division, Karkala.

The myths that surround modern conservation concept include population pressure, ignorance and lack of education on part of the local communities as factors of environment degradation. The social scientists argue more in favour of equity and justice from the sociological and historical perspective. The economically poor and socially disadvantaged groups have criticized the environmentalist for their elitist approach to conservation. Biodiversity conservation initiatives do not acknowledge the important role that tribal communities play in conservation. The knowledge of the various tribal people is often on the side of conservation and clean environment even though they do not claim to be Environmentalist. This is because they have been treated as enemies, and not as partners in conservation efforts which are pursued as a bureaucratic effort.⁹

IV

Tribal Population in KNP

In KNP, there are three tribes: *Gowdlu*, *Malekudiya* and *Marathi Naiks* traditionally living in the interior forest area. The *Malekudiyas* who speak *tulu* language which is a dialect spoken by all communities in the region of Dakshina Kannada. The tribals are employed as agricultural labourers on bigger farms and derive certain income from the forest produce.¹⁰ The *Marathi Naiks* and *Gowdlu* have Multipurpose Societies like livelihoods through Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS), which ensure a stable

⁹ Gadgil, Madhav (1992): "Can Conserving India's Biodiversity be turned into a People's Movement?", Back ground paper prepared for the expert groups consultation on conservation of biological diversity, *India International Centre*, December 3rd, New Delhi.

¹⁰ V, Vijyalakshmi (2003): "Schedule Tribes and Gender: Perceptions from Karnataka", Working paper No.128, *Institute for Social and Economic Change*, Bangalore, p-2.

remuneration for the Non-timber forest produce (NTFPs) that they collect.¹¹ KNP consists of 90 hamlets belonging to 40 revenue villages, with 1299 families stay within the purview of national park. The Assistant Commissioners under the Wildlife Protection Act initiated the ‘settlement processes’. The process involves conducting an inquiry into the rights (habitations, agriculture, use of forest resources etc) exercised by people in or over extinguishing these rights after giving compensation. The local tribals constructed this as a process of land acquisition for the national park intending complete evacuation of dwellers from the park area. The issue also got interconnected with the agitation against Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited¹² and gradually picked up momentum. The tribals have questioned the forest department regarding the formation of National park.¹³ The Government of Karnataka handed over the park according to the map as there was no proper survey conducted to locate the habitation of tribals and hence their areas have left out of the park.¹⁴

¹¹ Lamp Sahakara Sangha (2007): Annual meeting of the livelihoods of Adivasi through Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS), Koopa Taluk, on 23/9/07, Chikmagalur.

¹² Most of our minerals are located in the tribal areas mainly of Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Chattisgarh. There have been conflicts between the miners and industrialists one side and the tribal communities and social activists on the other. For example Kashipur block which is a dense forest area inhabitant by majority of tribals, in Rayagada district (earlier part of undivided koraput district in Orissa state has been the scene of severe conflicts between the tribal communities on the one hand and Multi-national and large Indian corporations on the other. The issues of the tribals and minerals have also taken to the Supreme Court Judgment in the case of Samata Vs State of Andhra Pradesh in July 1997 held that land in the scheduled areas of Andhra Pradesh (including Government lands) cannot be transferred to non-tribals were absolutely void and impermissible. The Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited is located in the Kudremukh-Aroli Gangamoola range of the Western Ghats of Chikmagalur district is a 100% Export Oriented Public sector Unit undertaken by Government of India under the Ministry of Steel and Mines. It is engaged in production and export of iron ore concentrate and pellets. See Martinez, Alier (2005): *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p-XII

¹³ Interview with group of villagers in Adikesu, Sringeri Taluk, Chikmagalur on 15/11/2006.

¹⁴ A forest area called Narasimhaparvata, traditionally used very lightly by kigga and neighboring villages, incorporated in the KNP. The villager’s immediate reaction to this move was to stockpile large quantities of timber before their access was abridged. Madhav, Gadgil (1998): “Conserving India’s Biodiversity: Let People Speak”, Centre for Ecological Studies, *Indian Institute of Science*, Bangalore.

VILLAGE WISE DETAILS OF PEOPLE RESIDING INSIDE KUDREMU KH NATIONAL PARK

ABSTRACT OF THE NATIONAL PARK

SL.No	Name of the district	Total No. of Villages	No. of house holds	No. of people	No. of Cattle's
1	Chikmagalur	16	243	1150	847
2	Udupi	6	294	1611	1576
3	Dakshin Kannada	10	762	3407	4508
	Total	32	1299	6168	6931

Source: Kudremukh Wild life Division, Karkala, Dakshin Kannada.

There is a general belief that tribals are responsible for the destruction of natural resources and are responsible for vanishing forests. However, there is no database for this belief. The human settlements inside the forests with agricultural fields has fragmented the habitat for wildlife, especially for large fauna such as tigers, hornbills, and lion-tailed macaques that are habitat specialists requiring vast stretches of undistributed forests for their survival in terms of dietary habits and home ranges. The high rate of human population growth has stimulated small landowners who are unable to make a satisfactory living on small fragments of agricultural land (less than 2 hectares). They encroach nearby forest or common lands as their families grow and in turn result in expansion through illegal forest clearance and encroachment is the most serious threats for integrity of the reserve forest.¹⁵ The other issue in conservation considerations is not depended on ecological considerations, but by the rural politics on which basis people have demanded facilities like hospitals, schools, roads, communication and bridges.¹⁶

¹⁵ Interview with B.P.Ravi, Koppa Divisional Forest Officer, 18/8/2007, Chikmagalur.

¹⁶ Karanth, Ullas.K and Praveen Bhargava (2005): "De-fragmenting Nature", *Seminar* 552, August, pp.59-62.

Encroachment

The extent of encroachment in ‘revenue/protected forests’, that is, forests are not in the control of the forest department are yet to be accurately assessed. In Karnataka reserve forests have been relatively more difficult to encroach upon given the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act 1980, but the same cannot be said about forest lands that come under the ‘protection’ of the Revenue department. The forests reserves like revenue forests, district forests, protected forests, have been clearly defined access to and exclusive control of the resource by local users, which endowed with flora and fauna and widely distributed network of pastureland, which have been extensively encroached and remained only in name.¹⁷

The monopolization of Land by the smallholders under coffee cultivation during 1980-81 was 17,894, which have doubled by 32,035 in 2001-02. The main reason for increasing the land fragmentation was due to expansion of coffee cultivation by the encroachment of adjoining forestlands. During the last two decades “encroachment” of adjoining forest land in order to increase production by big land owners has increased, but the majority of the coffee growers belong to small land holdings.

¹⁷ *Betta lands* or *Soppina betta* are an individual owning an acre of areca plantation was given privilege over to mulching material in their arecanut gardens. *Kans* are protected forests which is given for the privilege for coffee, pepper, Gum and Honey and also Green Manure as per the section 134(3) and 138(3) of the Karnataka forest Manual. *Paisari lands* are revenue wastelands under the control of the revenue department, allotted to the landless for housing and crop cultivation under ‘*Darkhast*’ (literally meaning ‘request’) grant of land to the landless on request. *Kharab land* is a wasteland; non-arable land that is in possession of the Government. *Bhane lans* is part of the protected forest land granted for service of holding of wet land which is allotted to be held free of revenue by cultivator for grazing and to supply leaf manure and fire wild and small timber required for agricultural and domestic purposes of the cultivator. *Kumki/ Hadi* (Hadya) lands are also government forestlands under the private control and use of the local farmers. *Gomals/ Gauchars* are revenue/village lands used and managed by the local communities by the village as common grazing grounds belong to all. *Amrut Mahal kavals* are government lands used and control by the Animal Husbandry Department (AHD). *Devara Kadu/ Sacred Forests* are forests set apart for some object of worship are still managed and used by the local committees, through temple committees. The revenue department in order to spread cultivation has been a facilitator because as revenue is linked to taxation and the extent of land under cultivation. Syed Ajmal Pasha (1994): “Uncultivated lands: Institutional Aspects of their Use and Management in Karnataka”, *Institute for Social and Economic Change* (ISEC), Nagarbhavi, Bangalore. Nagaraja, S (2002): Karnataka Forest Department Report, Reconstituted Expert Committee-I, Aryana Bhavan, Bangalore.

The highest number of households encroaching on forest land between 1978 and 2002 came from three districts- Uttara Kannada (35,604), Shimoga (23,994) and Chikmagalur (11,540). A total of 138,382 people had encroached on 117,556 ha of forestland in the state. Some of the encroachers belong to the ruling party and the issue has been turned against the labourers by arguing that it would adversely affect the job opportunities and uncertainty for the workers in coffee estates.¹⁸ The reserve forest are under the control of Forest Department while the district forests may fall under legal categories other than those defined in the Karnataka forest Act are under the Revenue Department. The physical status of these lands varies from forest to open tree savannas to grassland to barren lands have been classified as grazing land (*gomaal* in the Karnataka Land Revenue Act) which have been regularized to various categories of households in the post FCA.¹⁹

The Supreme Court²⁰ had directed that 1978 should be the cut-off year for legalizing encroachment and those who encroached later should be evicted. The pressure of the encroachers on Karnataka Government led to petition to the Government of India to regularize about 17,007.23 hectares (in 21,569 cases) of forestland encroached upon prior to April 1978. The Centre has the areas surveyed and in order dated May 15th 1996, agreed to the regularization of 14,848.83 ha (involving 19,348 cases), by the following categories of persons shall be regularized but subject to certain conditions. It was only to be done to an extent of 3 acres or 1.2

¹⁸ The Karnataka forest department identified a senior political party member and his father-in-law as prime offenders for having encroached upon 31.12 acres of Tathkola Reserve forest for coffee cultivation in the Mudigere range. The value of the land is estimated to be about 1.24 crores. Over 3,300 acres of prime reserve forest in the Chikmagalur district of the Western Ghats has been illegally appropriated mainly for coffee plantations. There were 416 cases of encroachment were booked between August and November 1997. An FIR was lodged against a member and with a few days A.M. Annaiah, IFS the man behind the crackdown was shifted from the post of Deputy Conservator of forests, Chikmagalur Division. See Sanctuary Asia (1998): *Tiger Link News*, Vol.VIII, No.2, Mumbai, pp. 80-81.

¹⁹ Lele Sharachchandra (2002): "A Defining moment for forests", *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 23, p-2381.

²⁰ The Supreme Court has constituted the Central Empowered Committee as an advisory for the Honourable Court orders and to place the non-compliance cases before it, including in respect of encroachments removals, implementations of working plans, compensatory afforestation, plantations and other conservation issues. The Empowered Committee consists of five members and their main task is to monitor and ensure the compliance of the orders of the Supreme Court. The CEC may decide its own procedure for dealing with the pending affidavits filed by the states.

ha in individual cases (including forest encroachment), and in the case of persons belonging to the Schedule castes and Scheduled tribes (SC/ST), Landless marginal agricultural labourers and those holding an insufficient extent of land- up to 3 acres of agricultural land.²¹ The person concerned should be a domiciled for at least 10 years in a village adjacent to which the forestland encroached by him lies. In the case of landless marginal agricultural labourers the encroacher or his family should not hold or own any agricultural land anywhere in Karnataka and the total annual family income should not exceed Rs. 8,000. The order of the Government of India had decreed that encroachments should not be regularized in the midst of forests, on steep slopes or in the middle of national parks or sanctuaries.²²

VI

Rehabilitation Package for Tribals

The wildlife protection through giving incentives to relocate human population to less ecologically sensitive areas is seen as a magic solution which benefits both human and wildlife and a new paradigm of site-specific, incentive driven through participatory voluntary settlement.²³ The forest department maintains that scientific expertise and central control over forests is vital for conservation while NGOs smaintain that their involvement is crucial to ensure projects and programmes sensitive to local conditions.²⁴

The District Conservator of Forests (DCF) submitted a rehabilitation package for voluntary resettlement of 201 families, under Phase-I. This has been submitted by the State Government to the Government of India for necessary funding.²⁵ The NGOs like wild life organization argues that locals are desperate to move closer to markets and job opportunities, should ensure attractive voluntary rehabilitation package. This sensitive approach by acquiring such lands and rehabilitate the concerned persons

²¹ Thippaiah, P (2005): "Encroachment of Community property resources in Karnataka: Magnitude, Causes and Consequences", *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol.23, No.4, pp.124-41.

²² Karanth, Ullas.K and Praveen Bhargava (2005): "De-fragmenting Nature", *Seminar* 552, August, pp.59-62.

²³ Interview with Praveen Bhargava, a conservationist on 5/12/06, Bangalore.

²⁴ Shaker Dattari (2007): "Wildlife Films do they have a future in India", *Sanctuary Asia*, Vol. XXVII, No.1, Mumbai, pp. 18-29.

²⁵ Anita, Arekal (2004): "Acquisition and Rehabilitation, Phase-I in Kudremukh National Park", *Kudremukh Wildlife Division, Karkala*, Karnataka Forest Department.

outside the Park so as to minimize their adverse impact on the Park. The Wild life organization was willing to consolidate or purchase the land from the tribals and for this purpose it was prepared to commit an amount of Rs 30 Lakh as a pilot project. The matter was examined by the State Government but was not accepted by the Government.

Budget Expenditure for rehabilitation

Total cost	Rs. 147.95 crore
	Rs. 122.33 crore for land acquisition
	Rs. 25.62 crore for rehabilitation
Total villages	32
Families	1299 (6168 persons)
Total land enclosure within KNP	1129 hectares

Phase –I	
Families	201 (671 persons)
Cost	Rs. 18.35 crore
Ex-gratia	Rs. 4.81 crore
Acquisition	Rs. 16.86 crore
Rehabilitation	Rs. 5.45 crore

Source: Karnataka Forest Department

The national park was reduced to 563.29 sq. kms, from the original 600.32 sq. kms which does not include any of the *patta* lands, revenue lands, *gomal* lands and such other areas, which do not form any part of the above mentioned state forests and Reserve Forests. KNP covers about 61,000 hectares spread over three districts- Dakshin kannada (Belthangadi), Udupi (Karkala) and Chikmagalur (Mudigere, Koppa and Sringeri). The legal land holding at the time of notification of Reserve Forest was treated as enclosures and these enclosures are located within the overall areas which are not notified for the purpose of the National Park. This allows the legal landowners staying within the enclosures and need not be displaced or relocated.²⁶

²⁶ The weakening of the Central Government due to coalition politics has led the states staking claims to regularize encroachment on forest land. In another example the Government of Assam and

Details of Enclosures and Villages inside the Protected Area

Sl. No	National Park/Sanctuary	Name of the Range	Number of Villages	Number of Enclosures
1	Kudremukh National Park	Karkala village	10	27
2	Kudremukh National Park	Belthangady Village	10	51
3	Kudremukh National Park	Kudremukh Wildlife Range	03	11
4	Kudremukh National Park	Kerekatte Wildlife Range	19	19
Total			42	108

Source: Kudremukh Wildlife Division, Karkala, Dakshin Kannada

The final notification of the national park was issued in June 2001, the forest department suggests that rehabilitation needs huge resources, and net outcome will be social and cultural displacement of the people.²⁷ The decade -long struggle by various organizations against the eviction of tribal people from the national park taken by the naxalites under the banner of “Maoist”.

VII

Naxalite Influence in KNP

The CPI (Maoist) rejects parliamentary democracy and has been working underground and there is no direct mobilization on these issues in the field. The eviction of tribals from KNP became the central plank of the Maoists demands who uphold their cause²⁸ and few of them have also joined the movement. The CPI

Maharashtra obeying the Supreme Court began eviction drive were the Assam’s forest department used elephants to raze down huts and homesteads on land recorded as forest. Akhileshwar, Pathak (1994): “State, Environment and Law”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 10th, pp. 3138-41.

²⁷ Niren, Jain (2003): “The Kudremukh Experience”, *Sanctuary Asia*, Vol. XXIII, No.4, pp 18-29.

²⁸ Ramachandra, Guha (2007): “Adivasis, Naxalites and Indian Democracy”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 11, Vol.XLII, No.32, pp. 3305-12.

(Maoist) in the Western Ghats also invited a team of journalists to express their concerns to the Government. Their main demands were:

- a. Kudremukh National Park should be abolished.
- b. All activities incidental to the National Park should be stopped immediately.
- c. Tribals should be given the right to self-determinism.
- d. All forest encroachments should be regularized and title deeds issued.
- e. Rural development programmes should be restored to full-scale.
- f. All cases booked against their supporters should be withdrawn.
- g. Locals should be given full rights and authority over the forests and other natural resources, the government should not interfere in any way.

Anti-Naxal Squad

The State government in May 2005 has set up Anti-Naxalite Force (with 543 officers and men), a special force reconstituted from the Special Task Force to apprehend the sandalwood smuggler Veerappan. The police-led operations only intensified, and each encounter followed by a retaliatory strike. The biggest loss to the party was the killing of Saketh Rajan, who was the main architect to the political and organizational growth of the party, and his associate Shivalingu (Arun) in Menisinahadiya of Chikmagalur district. The Citizens Initiative for Peace (CIP) has strongly condemned the killing as an alleged "encounter" and immediate suspensions of the police officials involved in the killing and end the combing operations in the Western Ghats.

The Maoist strategy has come under serious criticism from within for not having mass action in any form and the use of violence as the first option, but without any evidence that the masses politicized in any genuine revolutionary strategy. The increasing involvement of anti-naxalite squad in forest protection is due to discontent with the exclusive forest management system, despite the commitment to social forestry in some parts of Karnataka. The Constitutional provisions have enacted number of acts in order to uphold tribal rights ranging from land tenancy acts and revenue codes to the Panchayat (Extension to the Schedule Areas) Act of 1996 which have not been implemented in Karnataka. According to PESA, gram sabhas are empowered to preserve their cultural identity, community resources, modes of dispute

resolution, and equally importantly the right to approve government plans, programmes and projects within their jurisdiction. The PESA has remained largely unimplemented, as land and decentralization are state subjects. States, in their attempts to invite investment, have been reluctant to uphold legislation such as PESA that could discourage such investment.

VIII

Conclusion

The alienation of communities is an important factor and the focus on tiger conservation in national parks and sanctuaries have been on paper but in reality there are lot of pressures, which the state and forest department are not able to manage, and the communities around or inside the park are constantly fighting a battle with the state enforcement. In biodiversity conservation the local people need to get significant benefits such as fuel wood, and Non-timber forest products, as well as benefits from tourism which will help in improving the living standards without jeopardizing the resource sustainability and overall conservation goals. The study reveals that government properties are prone to encroachments (illegal occupation) like tank, forests, grazing lands, (pastures), wastelands, drainages, rivers, graveyards and farmlands belonging to fisheries, horticulture and animal husbandry departments. Encroachments on these properties were limited in the past as the community had some control on them and community guided by some ethical values and was interested in preserving them for the future generation. These types of encroachments have further accelerated over a period due to commercialization of agriculture as well as improved irrigation system in rural areas and increasing value of land particularly in urban areas.

The prevailing forests encroachments are directly depriving many privileges to communities, which depended hitherto on forests for grazing their cattle, free removal of dry firewood etc. The process of land distribution has not settled the issue of landlessness; instead, it has resulted in litigation and court cases confirming that land is crucial issue and is the cause of disagreement in rural politics. The menace of encroachment has put the issue of tribals and their livelihood in question. Therefore the concerned departments under whose control the particularly property comes have

to collaborate with the department of surveys, Settlement and land records and conduct surveys of boundaries of the properties. Conservation and development issues are not only technical or economic in nature but also political. Development and politics are no longer separate entities. Politics is not only a part of the solution but is itself a problem that needs to be addressed.

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