



Institute for Social and Economic Change

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Golden Jubilee Lecture Series

Is Relocation an Answer to Conservation? Experiences from the Kali Tiger Reserve, Uttara Kannada District

by

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Abstract

Relocation of forest based communities to alternate locations has often been projected as the most effective way of conserving forest resources. Increasing human habitations in forest regions and development driven interventions have caused serious disturbances not only for flora and fauna, but also for human well-being. Human animal conflicts, reducing forest cover, encroachments, widespread grazing, forest fires, destruction of people's livelihood bases and food resources by animals, neo-capitalist forces making inroads in forests for felling trees or poaching, are but a few of the visible impacts of the invasion of natural resources. In order to mitigate the damage to forests, which have sustained human societies in multiple ways, shifting human settlements out of forest regions and relocating residents in alternate locations is seen as a viable solution. The relocation exercise has generally been projected as 'voluntary' and the term 'rehabilitation' is often used synonymously with relocation. But there are certain basic questions which need to be addressed vis-à-vis relocation, which this lecture seeks to examine. A few of these questions are:

- How voluntary is the relocation programme?
- What is the nature of impact of relocation on the forest?
- Has relocation improved the quality of life of families which moved out of the forest?
- What is the nature of intersectionality between caste, gender, location and socio-economic profile of relocated families?

The presentation is set in the Kali Tiger Reserve in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka.