

Displacement and Rehabilitation of an Adivasi Settlement

Case of Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh

This paper describes the process of relocation and rehabilitation of villages populated primarily by sahariya tribals in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh. It examines the rehabilitation package offered, the process followed for relocation and resettlement and the impact that this shift has had on the livelihood of the affected people. While the rehabilitation package and the general attitude of the agency that carried out the relocation has been a significant improvement over previous such experiences, the shift has nevertheless had a negative impact on the livelihood of the people, at least in the short run.

ASMITA KABRA

I Introduction

Wildlife Protected Areas (PAs), comprising of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, now constitute about 5 per cent of the land area of India, while their core areas cover about 1 per cent of the land mass [Kothari et al, WII, 1989]. The designation of wildlife protected areas has been the principal conservation strategy adopted in most parts of the world, including India. Protected areas were meant to create spaces relatively or even wholly free of human presence or biomass extraction, where evolutionary processes could carry on uninterrupted [Rangarajan 2001a]. This conservation paradigm has had significant implications for communities that derive their sustenance from designated protected areas, as also for the conservation of the PAs. Firstly, restrictions have been placed on resource use from PAs. Apart from such restrictions, there have also been instances of people being asked to vacate areas that they had traditionally inhabited, and that had been designated subsequently as PAs. Provisional estimates put the number of people living in and around PAs at around 4.5 million [Kothari et al 1996]. According to a survey of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries carried out by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in 1999-2002, 21 of the 30 PA managers (70 per cent) responding to a question on displacement stated that people had been relocated from their PA [IIPA 2002].

Thus, on the one hand, PA managers are increasingly taking recourse to displacement as a tool for safeguarding PA from pressures on resources that are generated by forest-dependent communities, and this method is strongly supported by many conservationist and wildlife biologists [Kothari et al]. On the other hand, supporters of movements for social justice and rights of marginal communities, particularly tribals, have been emphasising the destitution that such conservation-induced displacement wreaks on forest-dependent communities, particularly adivasis.

They stress on the well-documented fact that the state apparatus in India has been incapable of adequately looking after people who have been uprooted from their original places of residence. This school of thought has also questioned the very rationale of relocating people from PAs and has urged for a more inclusive conservation paradigm that would permit latitude for local communities as well as wild flora and fauna to coexist [Saberwal 1994, Rangarajan 2003].

These two polar schools of thought have frequently been at odds on the issue of displacement and its ecological and social impact. Wildlifers have stressed how displacement has had a beneficial impact on PAs and how it has offered to hitherto isolated communities the opportunity of integrating with mainstream society. Some have even argued that such relocations, if planned and executed efficiently and transparently, can improve rural livelihoods while simultaneously helping habitat recovery. The anti-displacement viewpoint, on the other hand, has stressed that the urge to 'integrate' rural communities, particularly adivasis, with the so-called mainstream is a patently urban and paternalistic phenomenon that exhibits ignorance about the lifestyles of such communities. These lifestyles are intricately linked to their surrounding landscapes and have over time developed a fine balance with nature. Any disruption of this equilibrium, they argue, irreparably damages not only the livelihood of these communities, but also natural systems of the area. Further, the track record of official attempts at recreating livelihoods for displaced people is so poor that this alone is cited as reason enough to abandon any further plans for relocating people [Kothari et al 1996].

Subsequently, attempts have been made to reconcile the two approaches. For instance, the Indian Board of Wildlife tried to reach for a middle ground by accepting there would be no forced displacement from PAs in India [Rangarajan 2001: 111]. However, a major lacuna in this discourse is that there is still a lack of site-specific independent studies of the social impact and consequence of relocation. These are essential not only to provide sound

empirical foundations for the debate but also to help test views against the evidence. Moreover, even the ongoing debate about the impact of involuntary displacement has tended to focus on displacement generated by industrial and infrastructure projects, and very little material is available on conservation-induced displacement.

The present study is a step towards addressing this lacuna, and to take forward the debate on the complex inter-linkages between conservation, development and displacement. In this study, we examine the social costs and benefits arising from the relocation of sahariya tribals from the Kuno wildlife sanctuary in northern Madhya Pradesh. The study touches upon the relief and rehabilitation (R and R) package offered to the displaced community, the processes adopted by the forest department (specifically the Kuno sanctuary management), and the lessons and best practices emerging from the implementation of this package. An attempt is also made to shed light on reasons for deviation from the original plan and/or best practices. We then attempt to evaluate the impact of this R and R programme on the livelihood of the displaced community, and also briefly touch upon the other social and political impacts of the displacement. It must be pointed out right at the outset that our work does not focus on the biological impact of the displacement on the protected area itself, which, despite its importance, lies beyond the scope of the present study.

Background of Displacement

The ministry of environment and forests (MoEF), upon the recommendation of the Wildlife Institute of India [WII 1995] took up an ambitious project to translocate a pride of Asiatic lion from the Gir national park in Gujarat to the Kuno wildlife sanctuary in MP. Through this project, it was hoped to establish a second free ranging population of Asiatic lion,

which would serve as insurance against various extinction threats that face the Gir lions. Kuno was part of the area chosen for the first ever lion introduction in India, in the early 20th century by the then Maharajah of Gwalior. The experiment failed as the lions and their offspring attacked cattle as well as people. In the 1950s, predation on cattle by lions was possibly the major reason for poisoning incidents in Chandraprabha wildlife sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh, where lions were translocated from the Gir forest [Rangarajan 2001b]. The MP forest department is executing the present project with financial assistance from the MoEF at the centre. According to the Wildlife Institute of India, the proper resettlement and rehabilitation of the people living inside the Kuno sanctuary was a precondition for introduction of lions into the sanctuary. This was considered vital for minimising the probability of conflicts (in the form of cattle depredation and attacks on human beings) between a large predatory carnivore like the lion and the local people. Predation on domestic cattle has been a persistent feature of large carnivore-human interaction in many parts of India [Madhusudan and Mishra 2003], and the recommendations of the WII were aimed at avoiding or minimising a repeat of failures of lion relocation in the past.

Kuno: The Region

Kuno wildlife sanctuary is located in Sheopur district in north-west Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh has a sizeable scheduled tribe population, constituting 23 per cent of the total population of the state. The concentration of the tribals is mainly in the undulating hilly districts in the southern parts of the state.

The newly constituted district of Sheopur was created in the year 1998 through the bifurcation of the district of Morena. The district is 43rd in the state terms of population. The recent census data states that the district has a total population of 5,59,715, which works out to 0.93 per cent to the total population of the state.

The Lion Reintroduction Project being implemented in Kuno wildlife sanctuary has resulted in relocation of 24 villages to the outskirts of the sanctuary. Over 5,000 people resided in these 24 villages inside the sanctuary prior to the initiation of this project. A majority of these inhabitants comprised of sahariya tribals, a primitive tribal group that has historically been almost completely dependent upon forests for survival. In addition to the sahariya, the affected villages were also home to other caste groups, including jatav (SC), brahmin, gujjar, kushwaha, yadav, etc.

The sahariya tribals, who have been the prime focus of Samrakshan's interventions in this region, have historically inhabited the belt along the Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh border, especially the districts of Gwalior, Shivpuri, Morena (including Sheopur) and Bhind. Traditionally forest-dependent for meeting their livelihood needs primarily through food gathering and hunting, the sahariya have begun, for the past generation or two, to undertake marginal agriculture to meet a part of their livelihood needs, particularly for items that cannot be directly obtained from the forest. Their agricultural practices have predominantly been primitive and rain fed, and precarious as far as livelihood security is concerned [Debnath and Yadav nd].

Table 1a: The BoTD Package Offered

Heads	Specified Norms (Rs Per Family)	To be Spent by
Land development (for 2 hectares per family)	36,000	Forest dept
House construction (on 5,000 sq feet per house)	36,000	Beneficiary
Community facilities	9,000	Forest dept
Fuel and fodder plantation	8,000	Forest dept
Pasture development	8,000	Forest dept
Transport of household goods	1,000	Beneficiary
Cash incentive for shifting	1,000	Beneficiary
Miscellaneous expenses	1,000	Forest dept
Total	Rs 1,00,000	

Table 1b: Break-Up of Expenditure under Land Development Head

Items of Works	Expenditure (in Rs)
Clearance, deep-ploughing and bunding of the crop-land	20,000
Farm-yard manuring	5,000
Sinking of dug-wells (one among five families)	10,000
Other miscellaneous works in this head.	1,000
Total	Rs 36,000

R and R Package Offered

Rehabilitation was carried out in accordance with the provisions of a scheme of the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) called the Beneficiary Oriented Scheme for Tribal Development (BoTD). As part of this package, every male above the age of 18 years is considered a separate family and is entitled to services worth Rs 1 lakh, as described in Table 1a and b.

The package adopted for Kuno is a significant improvement over many other relocation packages adopted so far in various R and R projects across the country. It does not suffer from the obvious lacunae of 'land for land' type compensation packages, which have had a history of marginalising the most vulnerable strata of rural society, particularly the landless.¹ Moreover, in the implementation of this package, the Kuno sanctuary management has also managed to address some gray areas that the BoTD guidelines are not very clear about, for instance, treatment of female heads of the family. It has been found that at the ground level, many of these problems have been and are in the process of being addressed through suitable modifications and inclusions in the list of displaced families to include eligible families.

The BOTD package fixes the compensation for each affected family at Rs 1 lakh. This is an arbitrary figure, and when it is applied at the ground level under varying circumstances, this amount may or may not be sufficient for re-establishing access of each family to various livelihood resources lost due to relocation. In the present case, for instance, the total amount earmarked for 'land development' is Rs 36,000 which is meant to pay for various activities like clearing and deep-ploughing of land, removal of stones and boulders, bunding of plots, as well as provision of irrigation facilities. However, given the prevailing cost of these activities in this region, the earmarked amount leaves little or no surplus for the provision of irrigation facilities. This leaves the government in a situation where it has promised irrigation facilities to the displaced community as part of the relocation package, but is unable to finance it from the budget allocated to it for relocation.

As a stopgap measure, the Kuno sanctuary management has tapped other funds from the central government schemes of the ministry of environment and forests for provision of irrigation in the form of wells and lift irrigation schemes. However, a more permanent solution to such problems needs to be found, which could involve modification in R and R policy/package, as well as efforts to dovetail regular development schemes of the state to meet some unfulfilled rehabilitation needs. In the case of the rehabilitation exercise in Kuno, the latter part, that is, coordination between the developmental efforts of multiple state agencies to ensure service delivery without duplication has been most challenging and difficult.

II Impact of Schemes

This section focuses on the social impact of relocation and displacement and not the biological effects, which are significant but outside the scope of this paper. Our work has focused primarily on looking at the impact of relocation on the livelihood of the affected community. Due to limitations of time and resources, we have only peripherally addressed other areas of

impact, particularly those related to social and political aspects, which remain areas for future investigations.

Impact on Livelihood²

Livelihood impacts have been assessed in terms of : (i) Land possession, quality and encroachment; (ii) agriculture; (iii) NTFP; (iv) hunting; (v) livestock; and wage labour

Land: Inside the sanctuary, the villagers possessed title deeds or 'patta' for a part of the land that they were cultivating. Thus, these villages came under the purview of the revenue department by virtue of owning patta land. However, they also habitually cultivated non-patta land that was cleared and brought under the plough [IIFM undated]. The degree of such encroachment depended upon need, as well as availability of manpower with a household. The agricultural land available to villagers inside the sanctuary was of a very high grade in terms of soil depth, fertility and moisture content. Drainage inside the sanctuary was excellent, as is also shown up in GIS studies of the area commissioned by the forest department [MPCST 1999].

Most of the villages that have shifted out have already been allotted land, and in most cases, they have also started cultivating this land. An immediate consequence of relocation has been the emergence of complete equality of landholdings, due to the very nature of the rehabilitation package (which provides for two hectares of land per family). Thus, the situation can be compared with a sweeping land reforms exercise, where landlessness, as well as inequality in size of landholdings has largely ceased to exist.

There is no homogeneity in quality of land allotted, and even within the same village, often different grades or quality of land can be found, depending on factors like slope, soil and rock formation, degree of degradation and soil erosion, proximity to source of water and so on. This has been documented extensively by the local voluntary agency, and also by the committee appointed by the collector to look into problems of poor quality land. The quality of land allotted to the displaced families is by and large low, especially when compared to the land in their original villages. Although agricultural experts have certified most of this land as potentially cultivable, in general the soil depth and soil moisture conditions are much poorer than what was available inside the sanctuary. While there are instances of allotment of alternative land in lieu of poor agricultural plots, the forest department finds this an uphill task, since the number of such cases is quite large and there is very little extra land available.

Land Changing

The process of changing rocky plots has been controversial right from the start. There have been instances of four or five plots having been changed in a village, but other villagers were left out of the process because things were proceeding on a case-by-case basis and many people either did not come forward or their claim did not get due attention [Samrakshan Trust 1999]. Effectively, despite assurances, very little was actually done on this front till the end of August 2001. Matters came to a head by early September 2001, when five of the worst affected villages served notice to the sanctuary management of their intention to return to their old villages inside the sanctuary for collecting non-

timber forest produce to ease their economic distress. The important thing to note here is that the desperation to go back to the sanctuary was found to be the greatest in villages where problems relating to land quality are more severe.

To redress these complaints, in September 2001, the district collector instituted a committee consisting of officials from three departments (forest, revenue and agriculture) as well as village representatives to look into complaints of poor land quality arising from the displaced villages. The committee surveyed all the villages and conducted detailed visits to each agricultural plot for which complaints had been received. In its report, the committee officially identified over 300 families that have been suffering from very poor to zero agricultural output for the past two to three years due to allotment of poor quality land. Meanwhile, the sanctuary management began clearing fresh land to re-allot to those individuals recommended by the committee. However, due to various administrative delays, the actual process of land changing could not take place before the onset of rains in 2002. As a consequence, the affected families have lost another rainy season without appropriate land for their livelihood, and this may result in irreparable indebtedness or even permanent distress migration away from the relocation site.

Agriculture

The main source of livelihood inside the sanctuary was agriculture. Most farmers depended on rainfall, but a few that had fields along rivers or streams also used diesel pumps to meet irrigation needs. The main crops grown were bajra and tilli (kharif), and mustard, black gram, wheat, corn and some pulses (rabi). While a part of the food crop output was used for self-consumption, the rest, as well as the cash crop output was either exchanged for cash or bartered for other commodities. Crops were usually sold to the village middleman (who also doubled up as the shopkeeper and moneylender). However, some villagers also sold their surplus at village Agraa or the mandi at Vijeypur town (both of which lie outside the sanctuary).

A majority of people inside the sanctuary, particularly the tribals, followed primitive agricultural practices that were not necessarily geared towards maximising agricultural yield and surplus. This can be understood in the context that the sahariya are traditionally not an agricultural community. It is only over the past 40-50 years that they have begun to take to agriculture [Debnath and Yadav: 45], mainly as a consequence of their increasing exposure to the money economy outside the sanctuary.

After relocation, the crop-mix has not changed much in the displaced villages, as emerges from PRA studies as well as surveys. Our studies indicate, however, that the yield of most crops has gone down significantly after relocation. For instance, in a survey of 14 displaced villages in November-December 2002, it was found that only 19 out of 715 families (2.6 per cent) have been able to produce more than 40 kg of crop output on their plots of two hectares each. Two factors likely to have contributed to this are lack of soil moisture and irrigation facilities, as well as poor quality of land. This is largely because the land allotted to the displaced families was under scrub forest, or was degraded forestland.

Hunting: Anecdotal accounts reveal that in earlier years, hunting and gathering was a major source of nutrition and sustenance. The evidence generated through PRA exercises also corroborates this. Though there is no definitive information available on poaching by the sanctuary dwellers, either for self-use or for sale outside, anecdotal information on the sahariya reveals their affinity for a meat diet. It has been reported that prior to declaration of the sanctuary in 1981, both the local tribals as well as game hunters from outside used to regularly hunt animals. However, after the area was notified as a sanctuary, punitive action was taken against a number of sanctuary dwellers for hunting wild animals, and it is reported that since then, gradually, poaching by at least the locals has diminished. However, one could still find snares and traps meant for wild animals if one left the main road and ventured into the forest. Interactions with the sahariya also reveal that trapping and hunting of small game was prevalent on a fairly large scale even till the time of relocation of villages.

NTFP collection: A vast variety of non-timber forest products (NTFP) like honey, tendu (leaves, sal gum, honey, 'safed musli', 'ber' (zizyphus), 'bilaiya', 'hadjudi' and so on were harvested extensively. This activity was engaged in mainly by tribals, who used the NTFP both for self-consumption as well as to supplement their income. The sahariya are known to have exhaustive knowledge about medicinal plants. However, since none of this knowledge is documented, a lot of it is being lost due to rapid depletion of forests throughout the range of the sahariya. The Kuno wildlife sanctuary and its surrounding areas are probably the only healthy forests that the sahariya of this region have access to. It is interesting to note that almost all of this forest area is under some sort of legal protection, ranging from reserve forests to protected forests to a wildlife sanctuary. Along with NTFP, the other significant dependence of the people (both tribals as well as non-tribals) on forest resources was for firewood and fodder.

A major change that has occurred after relocation of villages is the highly reduced access of the community to the forest. As a result, many of NTFP collection activities have now disappeared from the activity chart of the community, and this has resulted in significant loss of livelihood.

In addition to agriculture, people also kept livestock in order to meet their needs of milk, ghee, etc. Milk yield was restricted to the monsoon months, when fodder was abundant. Cattle were left to graze freely in the forest, and this meant that there were no limitations as such on the number of livestock that people kept. However, as far as the tribals were concerned, the produce throughout the year was sufficient only for meeting their own consumption needs. Thus, sale of milk and allied products was not an additional source of income in the tribal economy. Here again the difference between the resource use practices and lifestyles of the tribals and the non-tribals is stark. Some non-tribal families reared livestock as an additional source of income and regularly sold dairy products in Vijeypur and Karahal [Personal communication, Debnath and Yadav nd]. For this segment of the displaced population, loss of access to the sanctuary is likely to represent a greater loss of livelihood.

Our PRA studies and surveys reveal that after relocation, most families have had to leave their cattle inside the sanctuary, because of lack of immediate sources of fodder at the relocation

site. At best, some families have been able to get their bullocks with them to the new settlements, and in some cases, even this has not been possible. Moreover, most families have had to shift from cows to goats as their source of milk. This has had an additionally damaging impact on the surrounding natural resource base of the relocation site, due to greater damage caused by goats to small trees, shrubs and so on.

Wage Labour

A regular pattern of seasonal migration has emerged from our studies as far as tribal families are concerned. After harvesting the monsoon crop, many tribal families migrated regularly to neighbouring areas like Sheopur and Karahal as casual/agricultural wage labourers for the rabi harvest. This system is known in local parlance as 'chait' (in reference to the months of March-April in the Hindi calendar). A well-established system of sharing of agricultural produce existed between the chait cultivator/landowner and the tribal labourers. Contracts were taken for harvesting a fixed area of land, irrespective of the number of person days of labour involved. In return, the landowner gave the labourer a fixed amount of wheat (the main rabi crop) as wage (the current rate is around 40 kg of wheat per bigha of land harvested), irrespective of the total amount harvested. Again, the degree of dependence of a family on income from such migratory labour depended mainly upon whether they were engaged in taking a second crop on their land inside the sanctuary. This in turn was mainly a function of availability of irrigation/soil moisture in their fields inside the sanctuary, degree of indebtedness and so on.

Wage labour generated locally the forest department was another important source of employment frequently availed of by the villagers when living inside the sanctuary.

After relocation, seasonal migration for agricultural labour has continued to be important, but the motives and the pattern have shown some changes. For instance, two villages, Laddar and Chapraith migrated for a much longer duration than the chait period during 2000-01, because of poor quality of agricultural land allotted to them. Other factors operating in this case were poor availability of water for drinking as well as irrigation purposes in these villages, as well as non-availability of NTFP as an additional source of income. As far as employment generated in the sanctuary by the forest department is concerned, there has been an obvious decline in this now, because of the much greater physical distance between the habitation of these villages and the Kuno sanctuary.

An important point to note here is that the relocated villages have access to some ready cash from activities like digging wells, instalments for house construction and so on, they tend not to migrate. This implies that once the forest department utilises the rehabilitation funds, the possibility of tiding over the lean season without migration would recede, and the problem is likely to re-emerge with severity.

Broad Social Impacts

Social impacts have been assessed very sketchily in terms of access of the displaced community to social infrastructure such as law and order, communications, education, health, electricity and so on, prior to and post relocation.

Kuno sanctuary is a part of the infamous Chambal region and dacoity was a major problem faced by the people inside the sanctuary. There were frequent instances of violence against the villagers in the event of their failure to meet the demands of the dacoits. After relocation, the more compact nature of settlements and proximity to other villages like Agraa has resulted in some improvement in the law and order situation. However, a clear regression can be observed during periods of economic distress, when there are increased instances of looting and intimidation by dacoits. Moving away from the isolation of the sanctuary and in proximity of the Agraa police station has also reduced the threat perception of the community.

Modern health care facilities were virtually non-existent in the villages inside the sanctuary [Debnath and Yadav undated]. This was a specifically articulated concern of the people prior to relocation. This problem became particularly severe in view of the near absence of transport facilities connecting the sanctuary villages to the nearest medical centre, especially during rains. This situation was further aggravated because of the unreliability of local health traditions. Although a few elderly local healers do possess knowledge about the curative powers of some herbs, mortality on account of relatively innocuous ailments was visibly high.

On this front, relocation has made a distinctly positive impact on the community's access to the formal health care system. However, it needs to be stressed that even now, accessibility of medical facilities is difficult for the villages that have been settled at a distance from Agraa. Moreover, the quality of medicines made available through the PHC at Agraa is abysmally low, as a result of which the efficacy of the medical officer is severely constrained.

Transport and communications facilities inside the sanctuary were very poor, and people had to depend on a dirt track to access the 'outside world'. Inhabitants had to walk at least 20 km to catch buses in the open season, while during rains this distance increased to over 35 km on an average. The impact of this was felt on all spheres of life inside the sanctuary, and particularly on education, health and the economy.

In this sphere too, there has been a marked improvement after relocation. However, a major problem in connecting the area to the nearest tehsil town of Vijaypur is that there is only a fair-weather road from Agraa to village Arrod, which is 9 km from Agraa en route to Vijaypur. During monsoons, bus services on this stretch come to a standstill, thus reducing the region's connectivity by a significant extent.

None of the villages inside the sanctuary were electrified, and people depended on kerosene lamps and wood for illumination and heating. However, as part of the relocation package, electrification of villages has been progressing at a slow but steady pace.

Inside the sanctuary, only two villages had school infrastructure. Even where physical infrastructure of schools was available, access of children to education was hampered by the absence of regular teaching staff in the schools, attributable to the isolation of these villages. After relocation, these villages have come closer to the formal education system, and there has been a gradual improvement in access of the community to schools. Village Agraa, which lies at the nucleus of the relocation site, has education facilities up to the high school level. Moreover, some primary schools are also under construction in the relocated

villages. Additional education facilities are also being made available by the locally active voluntary organisation.

Conclusion

The most significant question that the present study tries to address relates to the impact of relocation on the living standards and livelihoods of the affected community. Our experience suggests that in the short run, there has been a very significant decline in livelihood security, directly attributable to displacement from a resource-rich forest, and disruption of a well-established livelihood pattern. While the rehabilitation package offered in this case, as well as the overall attitude of the agency that carried the relocation out seems to have been a significant improvement over previous recorded instances of such exercises, it emerges that displacement has nevertheless had a significant negative impact on the livelihood of the people, at least in the short run. Serious efforts would need to be undertaken by all relevant state agencies to address this issue urgently. It would require sustained investments by government and non-government agencies, in the medium to long run, for the displaced community to be able to reconstruct livelihoods and regain levels that prevailed inside the sanctuary (and perhaps even improve upon them). Another important lesson emerging from the Kuno experience is that trauma to the community could be mitigated if the implementing agency concentrates right from the start on genuine mobilisation of the community, and investment in building its capacity to deal with the drastic changes that displacement entails. Participation and continuous dialogue with the community would be critical to this process.

Linked to this is the issue of low capacity within the implementing agency for handling a R and R programme. Rehabilitation in the present case has generated significant lessons for the implementing agency, which have been accumulated through trial and error, causing numerous avoidable hardships to the displaced community. Thus, the need to suitably equip and train the concerned personnel prior to initiating projects of this nature emerges as a most salient lesson from this experience. Another finding of our work is that selection of a competent officer to lead the entire exercise, and ensuring autonomy, continuity and back-up support to the officer goes a long way towards success in carrying out a complex task like rehabilitation.

Clearly, unless the issues outlined above are addressed, the 'voluntary' displacement based conservation paradigm will succeed in relocation but not really rehabilitation of forest-dependent communities. Such displacement will, often for reasons that are eminently avoidable, fail to enable the relocated persons to have a materially better life than they did before. Forest-dependent communities whose livelihoods are dependent on rainfall-reliant agriculture, animal husbandry, wage labour and NTFP collection are especially vulnerable, given the fact that traditionally, they have anyway tended to be marginalised from the mainstream economy and polity. Ensuring sustainability of livelihoods of these communities after relocation is crucial not just from a humanitarian perspective, but is also intricately linked in the long term to success of wildlife conservation in India. [EWW]

Address for correspondence:
asmita@samrakshan.org

Notes

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- 1 For an assessment of other R and R packages and their implementation in India, see Dreze, Sampson and Singh (eds), *The Dam and the Nation*, OUP, Delhi
- 2 This section is based on the findings of the team from Samrakshan Trust that has worked in the villages displaced from Kuno wildlife sanctuary since 1999. An account of these findings is available in Samrakshan Trust (1999): *The Kuno Project: Progress Report I—December 1997- September 1999*; Samrakshan Trust, New Delhi, as well as subsequent Progress Reports released by the Trust.

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