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## Socio-economic Impact of Relocation: A word Cloud Analysis Approach

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### Abstract:

*This research explores the thematic dimensions of forest-dweller relocation from Bhadra Tiger Reserve (BTR) through word cloud analysis, offering visual and interpretive insights into community experiences and policy outcomes. Using qualitative data from interviews, FGDs, and open-ended surveys, five key themes were analyzed: Wildlife Relocation Problems, Human-Wildlife Conflict, Future Outlook, Government Initiatives, and Sustainability. Prominent terms such as relocation, fear, and skepticism highlight emotional resistance and uncertainty, while destruction and safety reflect persistent livelihood and security risks in forest areas. Positive shifts are evident in terms like improved, opportunities, and community, indicating better living conditions and increased aspirations post-relocation. Terms such as planning, infrastructure, and direct underscore the significant role of governance and institutional mechanisms. The prominence of conservation, organized, and access in the sustainability theme suggests successful integration of ecological goals with socio-economic development. The findings affirm that relocation, when ethically implemented and systematically supported, can achieve both conservation and community resilience, contributing to sustainable development goals.*

**Keywords:** Word Cloud Analysis, Forest Relocation, Human-Wildlife Conflict, Community Resettlement, Sustainable Development

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### Introduction:

The Bhadra Tiger Reserve, a critical conservation area in Karnataka, India, is a cornerstone of biodiversity preservation, yet it is home to significant socio-cultural challenges. For decades, the forest-dependent communities residing in the area have faced numerous hardships in accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, police, and other urban facilities due to the remote nature of their settlements. These residents, while integral to the region's history and ecosystem, have been subject to relocation efforts aimed at mitigating human-wildlife conflicts and supporting wildlife conservation initiatives, especially tiger protection. This article delves into the pre-relocation challenges encountered by the Bhadra community. With vast distances to crucial services, daily life posed a daunting struggle for the residents. Children had limited access to education, healthcare

was a far cry from reality, and essential administrative services like police stations and post offices were virtually inaccessible. These conditions compounded the already fragile relationship between human settlements and the protected wildlife, eventually contributing to the decision to relocate.

By exploring these pre-relocation dynamics, this article sheds light on the socio-economic fabric of the Bhadra community and the complexities of balancing conservation needs with the well-being of indigenous populations. Understanding these challenges is crucial for shaping more effective relocation and rehabilitation strategies, ensuring that future conservation efforts are not only ecologically sustainable but also socially just.

The existence and nurturing of forest resources are necessary for maintaining this hormonal relationship. The conservation of biodiversity is a global priority,

often achieved through the establishment of protected areas such as tiger reserves. However, these PAs can create conflicts when they overlap with traditional territories and when forest-dwelling communities are resource dependent. This intricate relationship between conservation and the well-being of forest dwellers necessitates strategies that balance both objectives. The Bhadra Tiger Reserve in India serves as a compelling case study for exploring this complex dynamic. Forest dwellers within the reserve rely on its resources for subsistence, and restrictions imposed for tiger conservation can significantly impact their livelihoods. This paper investigates how socioeconomic rehabilitation programs and a sustainable livelihood approach can address this challenge. Socioeconomic rehabilitation programs aim to mitigate the negative impacts of conservation on forest communities by providing alternative income sources and improving living standards. This research delves into the effectiveness of such programs in the Bhadra Tiger Reserve, particularly focusing on resettlement initiatives. Furthermore, this paper explores the concept of a sustainable livelihood approach. This approach empowers forest dwellers to develop income generation activities that are compatible with forest conservation. Examples include nontimber forest product cultivation and marketing and ecotourism initiatives. By analyzing the Bhadra Tiger Reserve case study, this research aims to offer valuable insights for policymakers and conservation practitioners. We examine the limitations of resettlement-centric approaches and emphasize the importance of comprehensive support for relocated communities. This study highlights the potential of sustainable livelihood options for fostering a harmonious relationship between conservation efforts and the well-being of forest dwellers in protected areas.

## **Forest Dweller Relocation and Rehabilitation:**

Das and Behera (2018) noted that many PAs in Asia, particularly in India, house a large number of people (Dash & Behera, 2018). These residents rely heavily on PA forests for their daily livelihoods (Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015a, 2015b;

Misbahuzzaman & Smith-Hall, 2015; Rayamajhi et al., 2012). This can lead to forest degradation, harming both plants and animals. Additionally, conflicts frequently arise between these residents and wildlife, resulting in crop and livestock damage, injuries, and deaths on both sides (Karanth et al., 2013, 2018; Lasgorceix & Kothari, 2009). Tensions are further heightened by disagreements over forest use rules, ownership rights, and mistrust between PA managers and local communities (Behera & Engel, 2005; Kumar & Kant, 2005; Lasgorceix & Kothari, 2009).

These threats to conservation posed by human activity have led to the idea of creating "inviolable" or "people-free" zones within PAs to achieve better biodiversity conservation outcomes (Kabra, 2009). To implement this concept, policymakers across Asia have increasingly turned to displacing local communities from biodiversity-rich areas as a strategy to reduce human pressure (Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015b; Kabra, 2009; Karanth, 2007; Li et al., 2014; Peng et al., 2020). This represents the extreme version of the prevalent "fortress" or "exclusionary" conservation paradigm (Kabra, 2009). The displacement of native populations for environmental conservation is sometimes referred to as "ecological migration or relocation" (Li et al., 2014; Peng et al., 2020). This displacement can be voluntary, forced, or induced (Lasgorceix & Kothari, 2009).

While policymakers view relocation as a necessary and effective tool for ecological restoration and preservation, some scholars argue that it should only be used in specific contexts (Karanth, 2007). Numerous studies have highlighted the negative impacts of relocation on livelihoods (Dash & Behera, 2018; Lasgorceix & Kothari, 2009; Platt et al., 2016; Sharma, 2003) particularly for poor people (Kabra, 2009). Relocation also disrupts social and cultural aspects such as traditional rights, social justice, culture, history, and identity (Dash and Behera 2018). In contrast, there is little research on the impact of resettlement on improving biodiversity conservation through better PA management (Shahabuddin & Shah, 2003). Furthermore, displacing forest communities does not always guarantee better conservation

outcomes; it may even create new challenges (Singh et al., 2022). Therefore, the decision to relocate people is often based more on speculation than on evidence (Kabra, 2009).

In India, the relocation of forest dwellers from PAs has recently become a central issue in debates among academics and policymakers concerning biodiversity conservation (Kabra, 2009; Rangarajan & Shahabuddin, 2006). The number of national parks and sanctuaries in India has grown dramatically over the years. In 1970, there were only six national parks and 59 wildlife sanctuaries. As of December 2021, 5.26% of India's total landscape was protected through 106 national parks (1.35%), 564 wildlife sanctuaries (3.73%), 99 conservation reserves (0.14%), and 218 community reserves (0.04%) (ECoWPA 2022). The National Tiger Conservation Authority reported that there were 53 tiger reserves encompassing 75,796.83 square kilometers established by 2022 (NTCA 2023). The Tiger Task Force (2005) estimated that the core and buffer zones of the Tiger Reserves alone contained nearly 1500 villages with approximately 65,000 families (Tiger Task Force 2005). Forest managers have traditionally viewed local biomass extraction by forest dwellers as the most severe threat to biodiversity conservation. To address this perceived threat, village relocation has become a top priority in Indian PA management, often without adequate field-based research (Shahabuddin et al., 2005).

Researchers have identified several knowledge gaps regarding the displacement of forest dwellers in India (Kabra, 2009; Shahabuddin et al., 2005). Few studies have examined the specific processes of relocation efforts (Dash & Behera, 2018; Sarma & Barpujari, 2023; Shahabuddin et al., 2005), the impacts on livelihoods (Kabra, 2009; Karanth, 2007; Sharma, 2003), the effectiveness of conservation (Platt et al., 2016), or communities' attitudes and motivations toward relocation (Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015a).

Furthermore, existing research is limited to a small number of sites, including the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Kuno Wildlife

Sanctuary, Kanha National Park, Simlipal Tiger Reserve, and Satpura Tiger Reserve. While some studies have reported positive outcomes from relocation, such as improved access to basic services and increased income (Dash & Behera, 2018; Kabra, 2009; Karanth, 2007), others have highlighted negative consequences, including food insecurity, impoverishment, and even worsened conservation outcomes (Dash & Behera, 2018; Kabra, 2009; Karanth, 2007; Platt et al., 2016; Shahabuddin & Shah, 2003; Sharma, 2003). Singh et al. (2022) documented the long-term impoverishment of pastoral communities displaced from Khangchendzonga National Park (Singh et al., 2022).

Despite the mixed success of relocation projects (Jain & Sajjad, 2015a, 2015b), many poor communities face the threat of displacement in the name of conservation (Kabra, 2009, 2013). To address this critical issue, researchers need to better understand the livelihoods, challenges, and perspectives of forest dwellers before relocation. Additionally, more research is required on the factors influencing their willingness to relocate.

This study aims to contribute to this knowledge gap by focusing on the Bhadra Tiger Reserve (BTR), where relocation is one of the most successful projects in the name of Project Tiger. Despite long-standing efforts to relocate villages to create safer habitats for tigers, only one village has been completely displaced from the BTR. The recent sighting of a Royal Bengal Tiger in 2022 has intensified relocation efforts (The Third Pole 2022). In this context, understanding the livelihood patterns, motivations, and factors influencing the willingness of BTR communities to participate in relocation is crucial for developing effective resettlement policies.

## **Factors influencing the willingness to relocate forest dwellers**

Several studies have explored the factors influencing households' decisions to relocate from protected areas (PAs) (Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015b, 2015a; Li et al., 2014). Here, we examine several key considerations.

**Age:** Age plays a significant role in relocation willingness (Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015a, 2015b; Li et al., 2014). While Dash and Behera (2018) and Li et al. (2014) found a negative association between age and willingness to relocate. They also observed a positive but no significant relationship. Younger people, drawn to modern lifestyles, may prefer to leave isolated areas and connect with broader society. Conversely, older residents may be more emotionally attached to their homes due to years spent there, making them less willing to move.

**Education Level:** Education level significantly impacts residents' attitudes toward relocation programs. A higher education level of the household head is positively correlated with relocation willingness. This can be attributed to the limited opportunities in remote locations. Relocation can potentially offer access to better employment opportunities, whereas those with less education may rely more on forest products and subsistence farming (Das & Chatterjee, 2017; U. Das & Behera, 2023; Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015b, 2015a).

**Family Size:** Family size is another factor that is positively associated with relocation willingness. Studies by many previously (Das & Chatterjee, 2017; U. Das & Behera, 2023; Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015b, 2015a) suggest that larger families are more likely to relocate than are smaller families. While Dash and Behera (2018) found family size to be a significant influence, other studies reported an insignificant effect (Dash & Behera, 2018).

**Elderly Dependency Ratio:** The number of elderly dependents in a household can affect relocation decisions. Li et al. (2014) suggested that uncertainty about post relocation livelihoods, particularly for households with high dependency ratios and limited labor availability discourages relocation. A higher elderly dependency ratio can make households more vulnerable to negative environmental conditions due to a lack of labor. Consequently, households with a higher elderly dependency ratio may be less willing to relocate (Li et al., 2014). **Forest Dependency:** Jain and

Sajjad (2015) and Dash and Behera (2018) indicate that people who rely heavily on forest products are less likely to relocate. Their livelihoods and daily needs are tied to nearby forests, making them hesitant to move (Dash & Behera, 2018; Jain & Sajjad, 2015a, 2015b). This study measured household dependency on forest resources for fuelwood collection and livestock grazing.

**Ecotourism and Forest Department Work:** Participation in ecotourism activities can influence relocation decisions. Ecotourism offers employment and livelihood benefits to local residents (M. Das & Chatterjee, 2020). Therefore, households involved in ecotourism may be less likely to relocate from the PA. This study estimated household income from ecotourism and work with the Forest Department (FD). **Environmental Changes:** Environmental degradation can significantly influence residents' willingness to relocate. Li et al. (2014) reported that people who perceive worsening problems such as vegetation deterioration or land salinization are more likely to consider moving than people who do not (Li et al., 2014). Similarly, Harihar et al. (2014) identified declining forest productivity as a key factor driving the resettlement of Gujjar pastoralists in India. Residents may be less inclined to relocate if the forest conditions are good (Harihar et al., 2014).

**Human-wildlife conflict:** High levels of human-wildlife conflict can also motivate relocation decisions (Karanth et al., 2018). Households may choose to relocate to escape these conflicts.

## Research Methodology:

As part of the research on the socio-economic outcomes of the Bhadra Tiger Reserve (BTR) relocation program, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with relocated community members at M.C. Halli and Kelagur. These discussions offered valuable insights into the positive impacts and ongoing challenges of the relocation, supporting the survey findings and personal stories.

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) showed that the impact of relocation from Bhadra Tiger Reserve was

multi-dimensional. A key positive outcome mentioned by all groups was better access to education. Earlier, children had to walk through forests and face dangers from wildlife to attend distant schools. Now, with schools nearby, attendance has increased and families are hopeful about higher education. Education was seen as the most important benefit of relocation.

Economic conditions also improved. Families who once relied on forest-based activities and subsistence farming now earn more through wage labor, small businesses, and jobs in nearby towns. Although farming remains important, dependence on the forest has reduced. Better access to electricity, LPG, mobile phones, and vehicles reflects higher living standards.

However, some issues remain. Many participants said that while most families received land and housing, irrigation facilities are poor, affecting farming. Electricity supply is irregular, and although healthcare

is better than before, access to specialized treatment is still lacking.

Socially, families have moved from joint to nuclear households due to the limited size of plots and changing lifestyles. While some miss the traditional support system, community bonds remain strong through festivals and shared events. Emotionally, many people still feel attached to their forest homes. Despite early fear and doubt, most now believe that relocation has brought more opportunities and a better life.

Overall, the FGDs confirm that the Bhadra relocation program managed to balance conservation with human development. It helped families move from survival mode to planning for a better future. Still, to maintain and grow these gains, there is a need for continuous support in healthcare, education, irrigation, and income opportunities.

## Themes Generated:

Themes	Subthemes
<b>Wildlife Relocation Problems</b>	Emotional attachment to ancestral lands Inadequate initial infrastructure (electricity, irrigation, healthcare)
<b>Human-Wildlife Conflict</b>	Crop damage and insecurity due to wildlife before relocation Dependence on forest resources for survival
<b>Future</b>	Improved access to quality education Growth in income levels and diversification of livelihoods Aspirations for better living standards among younger generations
<b>Government Initiative</b>	Provision of land and housing (95% received both) Development of schools, roads, basic amenities near settlements Structured compensation and relocation plans with focus on minimizing hardships
<b>Sustainability</b>	Shift from forest dependency to agriculture, business, and wage labor Improved household asset ownership (electricity, LPG, mobile phones) Continued social cohesion through community gatherings and festivals

### Data Analysis: Word Cloud Analysis:



theme. The prominence of “fear,” “skepticism,” and “hesitation” reflects widespread apprehension among forest dwellers. “Attachment” and “ancestral lands” underline the cultural and emotional resistance to leaving familiar territories. “Healthcare” appearing in this context suggests concern over continuity and adequacy of medical facilities in the new settlements. This highlights the **initial distrust and emotional toll** experienced by communities during the transition.



## Word cloud: Human Wildlife Conflict

Key Words (Large in Size):

Forest, wildlife, destruction, safety, crop, struggles, daily, livelihood

Interpretation:

This word cloud presents a vivid picture of the daily risks and hardships experienced by communities

before relocation. “Forest” and “wildlife” dominate, reinforcing the environmental setting. “Destruction” and “crop” indicate recurring economic losses due to wildlife depredation. “Safety” and “struggles” suggest threats to life and well-being. The word “daily” implies these were routine experiences, not isolated incidents. Overall, it reinforces the urgency of relocation as a protective and stabilizing strategy for both people and ecosystems.



## Word cloud: Government Initiatives

Key Words: Relocation, financial, planning, direct, accounts, infrastructure, design, allocation

Interpretation:

This word cloud showcases the **governance and institutional mechanisms** behind the relocation effort. The central word, “relocation,” appears again,

now in an administrative context. Terms like “financial,” “direct,” and “accounts” emphasize **direct benefit transfers (DBT)** and transparency in monetary compensation. “Planning,” “design,” and “infrastructure” point to structured execution involving layout planning (e.g., CAD mapping), roads, and public amenities. This reflects that relocation was not ad hoc but **systematic, data-driven, and policy-backed**.



## Word cloud: Future

Key Words: Improved, conditions, living, opportunities, economic, healthcare, community, long-term, diversification

Interpretation:

This word cloud reflects the aspirational dimension of the relocation. The most prominent word, “improved,” signifies a broad acknowledgment of better living

standards post-relocation. Terms like “economic” and “opportunities” point to enhanced livelihood options and financial stability. The presence of “healthcare” and “community” suggests improved access to

services and preservation of social ties. Collectively, this indicates a forward-looking outlook where relocated families associate the move with development, empowerment, and long-term gains.



## Word cloud: Sustainability

### Key Words (Large in Size):

**Conservation, community, access, organized, agricultural, sustainability, settlements**

### Interpretation:

This word cloud highlights the integration of ecological and community goals. “Conservation” is

the central theme, emphasizing biodiversity and habitat protection. “Community” and “organized” suggest that resettlement did not fragment but restructured and perhaps empowered social units. “Access” and “agricultural” reflect improved service delivery and sustainable land-based livelihoods. The presence of “sustainability” itself indicates both awareness and pursuit of long-term ecological and social balance, aligning with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

Theme	Dominant Words	Implications
<b>Future</b>	Improved, living, opportunities, healthcare, community	Aspirations for development, quality of life, and long-term stability
<b>Wildlife Relocation Problems</b>	Relocation, fear, skepticism, attachment, healthcare	Emotional barriers, mistrust, and cultural loss during the transition
<b>Human-Wildlife Conflict</b>	Forest, wildlife, destruction, safety, struggles, daily, crop	Constant threat to life and livelihoods, validating need for relocation
<b>Sustainability</b>	Conservation, community, organized, access, agricultural	Balanced integration of conservation with structured, eco-sensitive development
<b>Government Initiatives</b>	Planning, financial, direct, infrastructure, accounts, allocation, design	Evidence of organized state-led efforts with financial and institutional support

## Discussion:

The word cloud analysis conducted in this study offers meaningful insights into the multi-dimensional experiences and perceptions of forest dwellers

relocated from Bhadra Tiger Reserve (BTR) to settlements in M.C. Halli and Kelagur. This qualitative visualization tool allowed for the thematic synthesis of focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews, and open-ended survey responses, shedding light on recurring

terms, emotions, and priorities among the participants. The dominant words across different thematic word clouds not only reflect the frequency of specific experiences but also help interpret the evolving socio-economic and ecological realities following the relocation.

The "Future" word cloud is anchored by terms such as improved, conditions, living, opportunities, and economic, highlighting the optimistic outlook among the relocated communities. Respondents consistently recognized the post-relocation environment as offering better infrastructure, education, economic possibilities, and healthcare. The presence of words like community, healthcare, and diversification indicates both tangible improvements and an emerging vision for sustainable growth. These findings are consistent with the quantitative data which indicated increased income levels, better school attendance, and improved access to essential services. The word cloud affirms a collective shift in aspirations—from mere survival in forest-based settings to upward mobility and long-term development.

Contrasting this future-focused optimism, the "Wildlife Relocation Problems" word cloud underscores the emotional and psychological complexity surrounding the relocation process. The prominence of terms such as relocation, fear, skepticism, attachment, and hesitation reflects initial resistance and anxiety among families. The inclusion of ancestral lands, isolation, and healthcare suggests that concerns extended beyond economics, touching deeply on cultural dislocation, emotional trauma, and uncertainty about service continuity. While these feelings diminished over time as communities adapted, their initial intensity demonstrates the importance of transparent communication, community engagement, and psychological preparedness in large-scale resettlement programs.

The "Human-Wildlife Conflict" word cloud clearly reflects the everyday hardships experienced prior to relocation. Words like forest, wildlife, destruction, crop, and safety were dominant, illustrating the severe impacts of human-wildlife interaction—primarily

through crop loss, property damage, and threats to human life. The frequent appearance of terms such as daily, struggles, and livelihood underscores that these were not rare occurrences but routine and deeply destabilizing experiences. The emphasis on this theme strongly supports the ecological rationale for relocation, as it highlights how continued human habitation in core wildlife habitats was unsustainable and hazardous.

The "Sustainability" word cloud presents a well-balanced integration of conservation priorities and social development. The key terms—conservation, community, access, organized, and agricultural—indicate that the relocation did not lead to fragmentation but instead created structured and cohesive settlements. The prominence of sustainability, education, and self-help further reflects the shift toward empowerment and resilience. These words suggest that the new settlements enabled the communities to access resources and infrastructure previously unavailable, while also supporting biodiversity goals. This aligns with India's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Finally, the "Government Initiatives" word cloud emphasizes the critical role of governance, planning, and financial systems in the success of the relocation. The dominance of words such as relocation, financial, planning, direct, accounts, and infrastructure highlights how systematic implementation—particularly the use of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanisms and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) for plot allocation—was central to building trust and ensuring transparency. The frequent reference to schools, roads, and construction reinforces the idea that relocation was not merely geographic movement but a complete transformation of living conditions supported by state institutions.

Together, these word clouds reveal a transition narrative: from fear to adaptation, vulnerability to resilience, and isolation to inclusion. They collectively

show that the relocation process, while initially fraught with emotional and logistical challenges, ultimately enabled the forest-dwelling communities to access improved quality of life and participate more meaningfully in the socio-economic mainstream. However, the concerns related to healthcare, irrigation, and long-term livelihood security, as reflected in several word clouds, remind us that sustainable relocation is not a one-time event but a long-term commitment requiring continuous monitoring and support.

## Conclusion:

The relocation of forest-dwelling communities from the core areas of the Bhadra Tiger Reserve (BTR) represents a critical intervention at the intersection of biodiversity conservation and human development. Through the lens of word cloud analysis, this study has provided rich, visual, and thematic insights into the socio-economic and emotional journey of these communities post-relocation. The five dominant themes—Relocation Problems, Human-Wildlife Conflict, Government Initiatives, Future Aspirations, and Sustainability—highlight the complexities, challenges, and achievements associated with conservation-linked rehabilitation. The word clouds underscore a significant transformation in community life. Initial fears, skepticism, and emotional resistance were gradually replaced by hope, resilience, and aspirations for a better future. Improved access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and diversified livelihoods has shifted the relocated families from a state of survival to one of progress and opportunity. Simultaneously, reduced dependency on forest resources and minimized human-wildlife conflict have contributed meaningfully to ecological restoration and wildlife protection in the Bhadra region.

The success of this initiative was supported by robust government planning, transparent financial mechanisms, and well-organized infrastructure development, demonstrating that relocation, when ethically implemented and systematically supported, can lead to both human well-being and conservation gains. However, the persistence of issues such as

inadequate healthcare, poor irrigation, and irregular electricity points to the need for sustained institutional engagement and long-term investment in post-relocation support systems. Ultimately, this research affirms that relocation must be understood not as a mere logistical shift but as a multi-dimensional, continuous process of integration, adaptation, and empowerment. The Bhadra model offers a valuable blueprint for future conservation efforts—one that respects human dignity while advancing ecological goals. Moving forward, the emphasis should be on designing inclusive, participatory, and sustainable frameworks that harmonize environmental priorities with the socio-economic rights of indigenous and forest-dependent communities.

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