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Nagarahole Tiger Reserve Tribes Protest for Forest Rights Amidst Displacement
Tribal communities have been fighting for their rights and demanding an end to forced displacement in the name of wildlife preservation in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve.

Shivangi Rai Updated 29 March, 2023 4:28 PM IST

Protest march reaches Range Forest Office in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve

The forest serves as a lifeline for the Betta Kuruba, Jenu Kuruba, and Yerava tribal communities residing in the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve. These indigenous communities have been fighting for their rights and demanding an end to forced displacement in the name of wildlife preservation.

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The Nagarahole Adivasi Forest Rights Establishment Committee, which is dedicated to fighting for Adivasi rights, recently led a march or padayatra inside the forest, which ended in front of the Range Forest Office in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve.

Since Nagarahole was declared a tiger reserve in 1999, many Adivasi residents have been displaced. The younger generation among these communities has now formed Community Networks Against Protected Areas (CNAPA), which includes activists from Tiger Reserves across India.

The residents of Nagarahole believe that, as the original inhabitants of the forest land, they should have community ownership and should be allowed to reside in their villages without fear of eviction.

Despite filing claims under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which recognizes the Adivasis’ relation with the forest and provides a set of community and individual rights to use the forest produce, nearly 84 percent of claims filed under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) have been rejected in Karnataka.

However, the community continues to oppose eviction attempts, and those communities that were relocated earlier continue to enter the forest every year to claim their land ownership rights.

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The residents of Nagarahole firmly believe that they have historically safeguarded the forest and should have the right to continue doing so without interference from the government and wildlife conservation organizations.

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