

SITE INSPECTION REPORT

The proposal is for diversion of forest land of Lai KRF and Pailapathal RF in Latehar Range of Latehar Forest Division for relocation of Kujrum, Latu and other villages from core area of Palamau Tiger Reserve (PTR), Daltonganj, Jharkhand. Proposed site was inspected on 17-09-2021 and 18-09-2021 with Mr. Mukesh Kumar, Deputy Director, South Division, Palamau Tiger Project, Medininagar (User Agency). Total area under consideration is 166.00 ha of Reserved Forest land in the villages of Lai (17.05 ha) and Pailapathal (148.95 ha). (Reserved Forest land- 166.00 ha, Deemed Forest land- 0.00 ha, Non-Forest land- 0.00 ha).

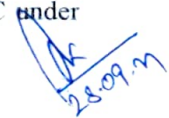
Referred points are –

- *Whether any rare endangered/unique species of flora and fauna found in the area-if so details thereof.* – **No**
- *Whether any protected archaeological heritage site/defence establishment or any other important monument is located in the area. If so, the details thereof with NOC from competent authority, if required.* – **No**
- *Whether the requirement of forest land as proposed by the user agency in col. 2 of Part-I is unavoidable and barest minimum for the project. If no, recommended area item wise with details alternatives examined.* – **Yes**
- *Whether any work in violation of the Act has been carried out (Yes/No). If yes, details of the same including period of work done, action taken on erring officials, whether work in violation is still in progress.* – **No**

Background of the proposal:-

In the case of village relocation from core area of Tiger Reserve as per the provision, when revenue land is not available, diversion of degraded forest land may be obtained after due clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Also the land identified for relocation/rehabilitation should not result in fragmentation of forest/wildlife habitat and the extent of land dereserved/denotified for relocation shall not be more than the extent vacated by the settlers in the core area. However in the present case of village relocation the proposed site for relocation of Kujrum, Latu and other villages from core area of Tiger Reserve is a dense Reserved Forest land. The reason for this is (as communicated by Deputy Director, Palamau Tiger Project, South Division) this being a voluntary relocation, a representative group of villagers was actively engaged by Palamau Tiger Project, South Division in selection of suitable site. Letters issued by DC Latehar and DC Palamau inform about the non-availability of suitable alternative non-forest land for relocation. Though degraded forest land is available in the Latehar forest division, but this being a voluntary relocation scheme, upon the insistence of villagers, the proposed site of Lai-Pailapathal RF is found desirably suitable among the alternatives being considered and therefore applied under FCA, 1980 by Palamau Tiger Project, South Division. Alternative sites considered and surveyed by Palamau Tiger Project, South Division along with villagers were: forest land of Domakhar PF (Garu East Range, South Division, Palamau Tiger Reserve) and non-forest lands of Deobar (Latehar) and Barahi, Baraudhi and Lurgumi Khurd villages (Mahuadanr range). However, these sites were rejected as unsuitable by them due to various reasons. Lai-Pailapathal Reserved Forest is also a neighbouring area of Palamau Tiger Reserve and falls under the notified Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of Palamau Wildlife Sanctuary, Betla National Park and Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary.

Total required area of 166 ha is based on the calculation of 2 ha per family (68 families need 136 ha) and 30 ha for community facilities for villagers. Record of rights (approved by DLC under


28.09.21

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FRA) of villagers amounts to 331.67 ha (36.25 ha of individual rights and 295.42 ha of community right). Thereby Deputy Director, Palamau Tiger Project, South Division has communicated that relocation of Latu and Kujrum villages will result in making available more than 300 ha land from these two forest villages in core area of Palamau Tiger Reserve free from human interferences. Being a large area of 166 ha, representative sample plots of 01 ha each were selected and enumeration was done to get the estimation of total number of trees on the proposed area under consideration. A total of 17 sample plots of 01 ha each were selected and enumeration of trees was done by the team. Based on these sample plots an estimated 52,876 trees of different species (number of trees on 17 ha of sample plots extrapolated for 166 ha) were found on the proposed site. Deputy Director has submitted an undertaking that complete enumeration will be carried out before actual felling of trees, as required after laying out of plots according to the settlement plan.

Site Visit:

In the background of these facts the inspection was carried out of the proposed area on 17-09-2021 and 18-09-2021. The proposed land also includes a 50 ha plantation in Pailapathal RF (Silvicultural Operation Scheme of 2019-20). The proposed area has two major patches of land separated by Chaupat river providing a microclimate suitable for a plethora of flora and fauna making it a rich biodiversity area. Predominant flora are Sakhua (*Shorea robusta*), Mahua (*Madhuca indica*), Piyar (*Buchanania lanzan*), Asan (*Terminalia tomentosa*), and Kendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*). Fauna frequently sighted in the area are Hyena (*Hyaenidae*), Jackal (*Canis aureus indicus*), Barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjac*), Wild pig (*Sus scrofa*), Langur (*Semnopithecus*), Rhesus macaque/monkey (*Macaca mulatta*), Mongoose (*Herpestidae*), Wild cat (*Felis silvestris*), snakes, birds etc. Being the neighbouring area of PTR (within the notified ESZ), it is itself a rich faunal diversity area and big mammals like Elephant (*Elephas maximus indicus*) were also sighted in and around the area in past. Pailapathal part of applied area is having dense forest with average density of 0.6 and Lai part is relatively lesser dense with average density of 0.5, thus making the average density of complete applied area as 0.5 to 0.6. A rich regeneration of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) can be seen almost everywhere in the area. Many rivulets/nalas (Dungdugia nala, Ambasakhua nala, Pujarahi nala, Khakhadohra nala, Tehada nala, Durjandubwa nala, Puranpani nala, Bankheta nala, Kumbhi nala, Kusum nala, Mahua nala, Nagrahi nala, Semra nala etc) are passing through the proposed area. The area contains many Mahua trees, which provide locals with valuable NTFPs. The terrain is undulating. Works under Integrated Watershed Management Project have also been done which has improved soil moisture and water regime in the area while also arrested soil erosion. The area is having good connectivity with all-weather road passing nearby. Pailapathal RF plantation of 50 ha and Integrated Watershed Management Project works have enriched the area and improved the vegetative cover.


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