

### III. Since 1990



# We Will not Leave the Forest. We Will not Leave the Land. Internally Displaced Persons from Chhattisgarh to Khammam District: Inhuman Living Conditions in a Degraded Environment

Brigitte Sebastia

The deprivation of tribes of lands and forest resources, started in colonial period and continuing today, has opened the way to the Maoist activism which uses repressive methods with extremely controversial impacts on tribal populations. On the one hand, Maoists help them to defend or to regain their lands, and to compensate the government failures in terms of development and social welfare.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they abuse the tribal people, forcing them to join their battle and support their activities. The extensive activity of the Maoists, called Naxalites or Naxals in the North-Eastern and Central part of India, has led this region to be dubbed the *Red corridor*. It includes the state of Chhattisgarh, the southern part of which, extensively inhabited by tribes, has experienced, in June 2005, the emergence of a counter-insurgency movement, called Salwa Judum, which has benefitted from the support of the Chhattisgarh and central governments. This anti-Naxalite movement has not only been unable to protect the tribal populations, but it has seriously endangered their life. Caught between the

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1 Sundar quotes an extract of the Maoist's book *New People's Power in Dandakaranya* (Kolkata: Biplabi Yug, 2000) which claims that in South Bastar and Gadchiroli, "they have established 135 people's clinics, started six primary schools, 10 night schools, built 25 huts for government teachers to persuade them to come, set up 10 village libraries, etc." Sundar, Nandini (2006): Bastar, Maoism and Salwa Judum. In: *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, 29. 3187–3192. 3189. The report *Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas* by an expert group set up by the Planning Commission analysed by Sumanta Banerjee mentions that the Naxalite movement works as "surrogate state". It has been able to help tribes to regain their old rights on lands, to increase the wages of tribal people in agriculture and to fight the practice of forced labour obliging the low caste and tribal people "to provide free labour to upper castes" which it was "abolished by the government under Articles 14 to 17 of the Constitution." Banerjee, Sumanta (2008): On the Naxalite Movement: A Report with a Difference. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43, 21. 10–12. 11.

cross-fires of Naxalites and anti-Naxalites, tribal people have been forced to flee to another state, or to join the *relief camps* founded by Salwa Judum. It is estimated by various humanitarian organizations that tens thousands of them have been displaced since 2005.<sup>2</sup> Many of those who lived in southern part of Chhattisgarh have fled to Andhra Pradesh (now Telangana),<sup>3</sup> mainly to Khammam district, the neighbouring region of South Chhattisgarh.

These migrants are called *Internally Displaced Persons* (IDPs), a terminology defined by the United Nations guiding principles as: “Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.” The United Nation guidelines of 2008 emphasise that: “Becoming displaced within one’s own country of origin or country of habitual residence does not confer special legal status in the same sense as does, say, becoming a

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2 The report of Ramachandra Guha points out that “apart from the official figure of 45,958 villagers displaced and living in camps by the main roads, media reports also mentioned that some 40,000 people from the southern part of the district had fled to Andhra Pradesh and other neighbouring areas.” Guha, Ramachandra (et al.) (2006a): War in the Heart of India: An Enquiry into the Ground Situation in Dandewara District, Chhattisgarh. [http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc\\_387.pdf](http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_387.pdf). 8. Since this report published 20 July 2006, displacement and migration to Andhra Pradesh have continued. The website of Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre based on various sources informs that: “As of 2013, it was estimated that 50,000 IDPs remained living in 23 relief camps in Bastar (Aljazeera, 2013). As of 2014, there were 20,000 IDPs living in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (which was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014) states (Action Aid-report on file with IDMC, April 2014).” <http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/india/figures-analysis>.

3 The boundary change of Andhra Pradesh which led to the creation of the state of Telangana was approved by the union cabinet 3 October 2013. This present study having been conducted in June 2013, I will use Andhra Pradesh rather than Telangana to designate this state which Khammam district belongs to. Regarding the creation of Telangana, which terminated a long period of political debates and violent protests, see Pingle, Gautam (2014): The Fall and Rise of Telangana. New Delhi. This author traces the history of Telangana region, and the relentless agitations demanding a separate Telangana state that emerged from annexation of this region to Andhra Pradesh at the Indian Independence.

refugee.”<sup>4</sup> The living condition of the IDPs is thus dependent on the good will of the state government where they are settled. In India, while the displaced people who are victim of development projects or natural disasters are eligible for benefitting from resettlement and rehabilitation measures such as housing, lands, ration and identity cards, social welfare, etc., at least in principle,<sup>5</sup> the condition of IDPs who fled armed conflicts is worse. Although Indian citizens, they are ignored in the state where they seek refuge and deprived from any help. Considered *illegal* in Andhra Pradesh, many Chhattisgarhi IDPs have been obliged to build a new live inside the forest, in areas situated sometimes more than eight km from a road.

The present chapter is based on the ethnography of settlements founded by Internally Displaced Persons’ (IDPs) inside the forest of Khamman district, Andhra Pradesh. The IDPs belong to Dorla and Maria/Muria tribes, and come from the southern part of Bastar comprising the Konta and Sukma blocks, a region severely affected by an armed conflict opposing Maoists and anti-Maoist movement.

The study, conducted in June 2013, was commissioned by the French NGO Médecins du Monde (MdM).<sup>6</sup> With the objective to be financially supported by ECHO (European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection) in order to implement a program of mobile clinics in IDP set-

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- 4 Kālin, Walter (2008): Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Annotations. The American Society of International Law. Studies in Transnational Legal Policy 38. Washington.
  - 5 While the government approved the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy 2007 (see <http://www.dolr.nic.in/nrrp2007.pdf>), many articles denounce its poor implementation. Sharma, R.N. (2010): Changing Facets of Involuntary Displacement and Resettlement in India. In: Social Change 40, 4. 503–524. Sharma, R.N./Singh, Shashi (2009): Displacement in Singrauli Region: Entitlements and Rehabilitation. In: Economic & Political Weekly 44, 51. 62–69.
  - 6 MdM was created in 1980 following the ideological dissensions within the French NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), notably about the involvement of media during its medical interventions in Vietnam for denouncing human right violations. MSF and MdM intervene in emergency situations, such as armed conflicts and natural disasters, but MdM privileges long term interventions in order to constrain governments to strengthen their health policy. MdM’s objectives are clearly specified in the proposal they submitted to ECHO for funding, to which I had access: “MdM (...) want to build a progressive intervention scheme in the three coming years. The roadmap aims to reinforce the Indian national NRHM [Nation Rural Health Mission] plan – instead of developing a parallel health system –, and to simultaneously advocate for IDP rights.”

tlements, MdM had inscribed in its project an anthropological for which I was appointed. A preliminary survey carried out by MdM had revealed that the IDPs consulted rarely the government medical services. My mission was to document the health conditions of the IDPs and their behaviour regarding care and hygiene including their perception of health and diseases and interpretation of symptoms, and to identify if the IDP's scarce recourse to medical services was due to them, the tribal people being often regarded as ignorant and superstitious,<sup>7</sup> or to the discriminative attitude of the medical staff towards them.

In this article, I wish to draw a picture of the squalid living conditions of the IDPs in their new environment which endangers not only their live, but also weakens the forest environment of the Bhadrachalam region, already very damaged by coal mines and encroachments by communities living nearby the forest. The Dorla and Maria/Muria tribes are familiar with, and attached to, the forest, as the title drawn from an IDP quotation emphasises. However, in Andhra Pradesh, they are constrained to take refuge inside the forest and are obliged to use strategies to keep going there. These strategies on the one hand, mitigate the reason of migration as strictly intrinsic to the violent climax in Chhattisgarh, and on the other hand, accentuate the forest's degradation. The history of settlements' foundation inside the forest and the health and living conditions in these sites will form the core of this chapter which aims at analysing the impact of armed conflict on humans and their environment. In preamble, I will provide perspectives on the legislation on the forest and its dwellers, and insights into the armed conflict opposing Naxalites to anti-Naxalites, as these two subjects, tightly linked, form the background of the IDP settlements in Andhra Pradesh.

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7 In India, like in numerous countries, tribal people are perceived by the non-tribal as the *others*, those who are uneducated and ignorant, and consult traditional healers (seen as quacks) rather than to turn to biomedicine. In the case of IDPs, the recourse to traditional healers, who use both plant-based medication and magical rituals, is the most common. It is justified not only by the belief in bad evil as agent of diseases, but also by several factors such as healer's accessibility inside the settlements; his ability to understand the patient's language (sharing of idioms and representation of the disease); gratuity of his treatment; and relation of power in the cases when, in absence of an expert, the settlement's head occupies the function of the healer, the patient's recourse to the medical centre might be interpreted by the head as a lack of confidence and recognition.

### *1. A Long Story of Alienation of Lands and Violation of Rights of Forest Dwellers*

The displacement of tribes in India has a long story, but the control over wide forest tracts and their resources by the British Empire is held accountable for their massive displacement as well as for significant transformations of the ecosystems. As pointed out by Gupta/Gadgil: “It has been suggested that British rule marks an important watershed in the ecological history of India.”<sup>8</sup>

Legislation on the forest was enacted late, not before the second mid-nineteenth century. But when it came in force, it was detrimental for both forest and forest dwellers. In order to ensure the control over high valued forest resources, notably timbers as commodities essential for implementing developmental projects of the Empire (railway line, wagons and sleepers, ships, etc.) and for their commercial value at exportation, the British created the first Forest Act in 1868. A decade later, after the establishment of the Forest Department, they enacted the Indian Forest Act, 1878. This act, reinforcing the first one, divided the forest areas into reserved, protected, and village forests. Forest dwellers were forbidden in reserved forests; those living in protected forests were restricted to collect only forest minor produce and were banned from practising pasture and hunt in the forest and selling forest produce;<sup>9</sup> and those living in village forests were constrained to pay dues on forest produce including crops cultivated inside the forest, and on grazing.<sup>10</sup> Regarding Bastar region, from where the IDPs come from, Sundar mentions that the reserved forests constituted two-third of the total forest area of the state, excluding the area under the

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8 Guha, Ramachandra/Gadgil, Madhav (1989): State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India. In: *The Past and Present Society* 123. 141–177. 142.

9 Guha/Gadgil (1989). Prasad, Archana (2003): *Against Ecological Romanticism. Verrier Elwin and the Making of an Anti-Modern Tribal Identity*. New Delhi.

10 Sundar defines the three categories as: “reserved forest which are generally completely closed off to the local public, protected forests in which people had *privileges* liable to be changed at state discretion, and in some provinces, village or *nistari* forests from which people could draw their basic needs, usually on the payment of commutation dues.” Sundar, Nandini (1997): *Subalterns and Sovereigns. An Anthropological History of Bastar 1854–1996*. Delhi. 106.

*zamindari* authority.<sup>11</sup> The classification of forest areas was based on their resource in commercially valuable tree species such as the *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) or the teak, and on the intensity of shifting cultivation. Shifting cultivation was deemed by the British as destructive and in conflict with their need of wood and timbers; the classification of areas under intense shifting cultivation as protected forests, allowed them to eliminate such a competition.<sup>12</sup> Moreover control over, and classification of, forest areas by the colonial power, tribal people had to share their territory with outsiders, whose the venue was facilitated by the development of transport, attracted by employs in projects or by availability of lands. They bought lands from tribal people against a meagre compensation in consumable products, or fraudulently appropriated lands leased from tribal people.<sup>13</sup> Such abusive transactions continued after independence,<sup>14</sup> until the recent Forest Rights Act, 2006, banned the transfer of lands from tribes to non-tribal people.

Dispossessed from lands, or jeopardised by the restrictions and degradation of the ecosystem resulting from deforestation and plantation of highly valued trees, or by taxes, the tribes were forced to reconstruct their life in other places, sometimes conflicting with other forest dwellers. Such a situation entailed revolts of forest dwellers against the British regime, outsiders and British-allied local rulers, forcing the British to compose with them. Bastar region knew such rebellions, notably in 1910, when the tribes and lower castes reacted violently against the policy of forest reservation, restriction on shifting cultivation on hilly slopes and taxes on grazing and land, instituted by the colonial power allied to the rulers.

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11 Introduced in 1793 by Cornwallis in eastern parts of British India, the *zamindari* system accorded full ownership on lands to the landowners, and rights to rent the lands to peasants and to fix the rent amount, the 10/11 being handed down to the British Empire. Meena, Hareet Kumar (2015): Land Tenure Systems in the Late 18th and 19th Century in Colonial India. In: American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences 9, 1. 66–71.

12 The justifications of the British for condemning shifting cultivation were that this technique deprived them of timbers, and that, after cultivation, the growth of *sal* trees was hindered by the transformation of the undergrowth, and the presence of ash and of grass which grown back. Prasad (2003).

13 Rupavath, Ramdas (2015): The Persistence of Land Alienation. The Experience of Tribal People of Andhra Pradesh. In: Journal of Asian and African Studies 50, 3. 259–275.

14 Sundar (2006).



The second important Indian Forest Act 1927, largely based on that of 1878, consolidated the control on areas covered by forest, or having significant wildlife, and regulated movement of forest produce, notably of the timbers, on which duties were levied. This act, amended in 2010 to take into account the seventy-year changes in terms of money value, is now called Indian Forest (Amendment) Act, 2012. As this act does not address the forest dwellers, a new law, based on the periodical guidelines defined by the Ministry of Environment and Forests since 1990, has been enacted in 2006 to fill the void. Called the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (full name: Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006), it aims to recognise the rights to the forest of tribal people and other traditional forest dwellers (OTFD) which are essential to ensure their livelihood, as well as to give back the rights of these communities which were despoiled during the classification of forest areas by the colonial and post-colonial policies. Kundan Kumar et al. argue that this law “represents a political, demand-based effort to reform forest governance through recognition of rights of forest-dependent people.”<sup>15</sup> But despite its relevance to improve the conditions of forest dwellers, the law is denounced as been badly implemented,<sup>16</sup> and grossly violated in all the regions possessing significant forest communities. According to the sites, the livelihood of forest dwellers is jeopardised by the priority given to the projects, governmental as well as private, which generate amount of money.<sup>17</sup> It is estimated that the development-related projects (dams, roads, special economic zones, industrial sites, mines, electricity plants, etc.) have provoked the displacement of fifty millions of people comprising

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- 15 Kumar, Kundan/Singh, Neera M./Kerr, John M. (2015): Decentralisation and Democratic Forest Reforms in India: Moving to a Rights-Based Approach. In: Forest Policy and Economics 51. 1–8. 2.
  - 16 Social Change 41, 1 (2011). Implementing Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. A Seminar Report and Recommendations. 121–154. Saxena, K.B. (2011): Militant Left Radicalism, State and Civil Society. The Centrality of Tribal Land Rights. Recommendations of a National Seminar. In: Social Change 41, 3. 473–4832.
  - 17 Regarding Bastar, Ilina Sen mentions the conflict in 2001 which opposed the *gram sabha* of the village Nagarnar to the National Mineral Development Corporation, following the falsification of its registers by district authorities to acquire lands for starting the project. Sen, Ilina (2011): Distorted Development and Possibilities of Alternatives in Chhattisgarh. In: Berthet, S./Kumar, G. (eds.): New States for a New India. Federalism and Decentralization in the States of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Delhi. 147–166. 156.

more than forty percent of tribal people.<sup>18</sup> The lives of tribes may be also jeopardised by armed conflicts. Quantifying the volume of IDPs resulting from armed and communal conflicts is difficult; the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) evaluates that, at the end of 2013, there were at least 526,000 persons. According to its website, “in central India, more than 148,000 Adivasi people remained displaced as a result of recurring conflict over land and mineral resources. The fighting pitted government forces and allied militias against Maoist insurgents claiming to fight on behalf of the Adivasis. Clashes in May [2013] displaced another 10,000 people.”<sup>19</sup> This refers to the southern region of Chhattisgarh.

## 2. *Overview of the Cause of Displacement: the Armed Conflict in Chhattisgarh*

The ex-Dandewada or southern Bastar district of the Chhattisgarh state is the seat of Maoist activities the most violent in India. This region is a part of the Bastar district which formed with the Dantewada district, the princely state of Bastar founded in the early 14th century. After the independence in 1947, the princely state of Bastar merged with that of Kanker to form Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh state, which was then divided in three districts in 1999, Kanker, Bastar and Dandewada. These districts, situated in the eastern part of Madhya Pradesh, compose the southern part of Chhattisgarh, state created in 2000 from the division with the former.<sup>20</sup> The Dandewada district was redrawn in 2007 with the creation of the Bi-

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18 See, the Reference Note of the Lok Sabha Secretary (December 2013) “Displacement and Rehabilitation of People due to Developmental Projects” <http://164.100.47.134/intranet/DisplacementandRehabilitation.pdf>; the report of worldpress.com: <https://socialissuesindia.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/tribal-displacement-in-india.pdf> (retrieved on 09.11.2015) as well as Meher, Rajkishor (2009): Globalization, Displacement and the Livelihood Issues of Tribal and Agriculture Dependent Poor People. The Case of Mineral-based Industries in India. In: Journal of Developing Societies 25, 4. 457-480. Negi, Nalin Singh/Ganguly, Sujata (2011): Development Projects vs. Internally Displaced Populations in India. A Literature Based Appraisal. In: COMCAD Arbeitspapiere, Working Papers No. 103. Bielefeld. Sharma (2011).

19 <http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/india/summary>.

20 The creation of Chhattisgarh was enacted at the same period than that of the states of Jharkhand and Uttaranchal. It results from the request of “big landowners and traders turned industrialists” (Sen 2011, 151) and from the great potential of

japur district, and again in 2012, with the formation of Sukma district. This district was then subdivided into three blocks or *tenshil-s*, among them those of Sukma and Konta, located in the South, which form the area where the most IDPs settled in Khammam district come from. These blocks, widely covered by forest and hills, and seldom urbanised, are inhabited by tribes, mostly the Dorla and the Muria/Maria communities. According to the statistics of the Census of India 2001, quoted by Berthet,<sup>21</sup> Bastar is the region with the highest percentage of tribal people: 66.31 percent with 71.60 percent living in non-urban areas.

Belonging to the Gond group, Dorla and the Muria/Maria tribes have been well documented during the colonial period, especially by Grigson (1938), and Elwin (1937, 1947), and after Independence, by von Fürer-Haimendorf (1948, 1979), Mehta (1984) and Sarkar/Dasgupta (1996).<sup>22</sup> On the website of the District Administration<sup>23</sup> of Sukma district, they are presented as “(...) innocent Tribes [who] are totally happy and content with whatever little facilities they are provided,” the website, however, adds: “(...) in the greater interest of the area and the country it is necessary to bring the tribes in the main stream of development where from

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Chhattisgarh in natural resources rather than from identity demands or a willingness to improve the situation of tribes, See also Lefèbvre, Bertrand (2011): Mapping the Scheduled Tribes. Questioning the Creation of New States in India. In: Berthet, S./Kumar, G. (eds.): *New States for a New India. Federalism and Decentralization in the States of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh*. Delhi. 191-208. Due to this, on contrast to the formation of the previous states, it was supported by the national political parties and the ruling government of this epoch, the National Democratic Alliance. Chhattisgarh has been considered as a tribal state, but Berthet argues that the tribal represent 31.8 percent of the population, confined especially in the North, South and in Central-West. Berthet, Samuel (2011): *Chhattisgarh. Redefining the Role of the State?* In: Berthet, S./Kumar, G. (eds.): *New States for a New India. Federalism and Decentralization in the States of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh*. Delhi. 87-115.

21 Berthet (2011), 102.

22 Grigson, W.V. (1938): *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*. London. Elwin, Verrier (1936): *Leaves from the Jungle: Life in a Gond Village*. London. Elwin, Verrier (1947): *The Muria and their Ghotul*. London. Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph von (1948): *The Raj Gonds of Adilabad: A Peasant Culture of the Deccan - Myth and Ritual*. London. Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph von (1979): *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh Tradition and Change in an Indian Tribe*. New Delhi. Mehta, Behram H. (1984): *Gonds of the Central Indian Highlands*. Two volumes. New Delhi. Satkar, Amitabha/Samira, Dasgupta (1996): *Spectrum of Tribal Bastar*. Delhi.

23 See: <http://www.sukma.in/profile.php> (retrieved on 13.09.2015).

they will start thinking of new necessities and strive to achieve them which will set a greater revolution of changes for the betterment of this area.” This message takes over the rhetorical figure used by the colonial government of Madras in 1874 quoted by Kumar: “[a] happy and contented population is better than flourishing forests.”<sup>24</sup> Like in the colonial time, the post-independent governments of India have to jungle between the management of tribal in a manner efficiently satisfactory to avoid rebellions, today their affiliation to the Maoists, and the exploitation of forest resources in tribal areas, today those of the underground. The website is silent on the hard reality of tribal people. Not only they have not benefited from the development in terms of employment and implementation of social welfare schemes,<sup>25</sup> but also are trapped in cross-fire between the Naxalites and anti-Naxalites militia: the former charge the tribal with betrayal of trust, and the later accuse them to help Maoists. Using the same means, both Naxalites and anti-Naxalites are composed of tribal people, quite often forced to join either the battle of Naxalites against the development’s evils, the state and private companies, or the battle of anti-Naxalites against the development’s enemies (anti-Naxalites/Salwa Judum).<sup>26</sup>

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- 24 Kumar, V.M. Ravi (2012): Community Forest Management in Colonial and Post-colonial South India. Policy and Practice. In: South Asia Research 32, 3. 257–277. 257.
- 25 Asian Centre for Human Rights (2006): The Adivasis of Chhattisgarh. Victims of the Naxalite Movement and Salwa Judum. Delhi.
- 26 The literature denouncing the exactions caused by Naxalites and Salwa Judum is abundant, especially that reports violation of human rights by Salwa Judum and police force. For articles reporting violence by Naxalite Prasad, Archana (2010): The Political Economy of Maoist Violence in Chhattisgarh. In: Social Scientist 38, 3-4. 3-24. For those reporting violence by Salwa Judum and Reserved Police: Balagopal, K. (2006): Physiognomy of the violence. In: Economic and Political Weekly. 10-14. Guha, Ramachandra (et al.) (2006b): Salwa Judum: War in the Heart of India: Excerpts from the Report by the Independent Citizens Initiative. In: Social Scientist 34, 7-8. 47-61. Kumar, Himanshu (2009): Who is the Problem, the CPI(Maoist) or the Indian State? In: Economic and Political Weekly 44, 47. 8-12. Miklian, Jason (2009): The Purification Hunt: the Salwa Judum Counterinsurgency in Chhattisgarh, India. In: Dialectical Anthropology 33. 441–459. For those describing escalating exactions by both Naxalites and anti-Naxalites caused since the formation of Salwa Judum: Bahree, Megha (2010): The Forever War: Inside India's Maoist Conflict. In: World Policy Journal 27, 2. 83–89. Gupta (2006a).[http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc\\_387.pdf](http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_387.pdf). Human Right Watch (ed.) (2012): Between Two Sets of Guns. Attacks on Civil Society. Activists in In-

Naxalite or Naxal is a term which originates from the Naxalbari movement which emerged in May 1967 in the Naxalbari area of northern West Bengal and expanded in districts with a significant tribal and lower castes population.<sup>27</sup> The movement resulted from the confrontation of the police with armed villagers, mostly tribal, which caused the death of a police inspector, and in reprisal, the killing of six women, one man and two children. The revolt of peasants was spurred by their determination to eradicate the *jotedari*, a feudal agrarian system imposing that the labourers pay heavy taxes on the crops to the landowner. The attack of young tribal who reclaimed his rights on a land served as a pretext to the dissidents of the CPI(M) to fight the *jotedari* system. The dissidents of the CPI(M), led by Charu Mazundar and Kanu Sanyal, promoted the power of the weapons as a means more efficient to defend the poor (tribe and lowest caste), than the parliamentary representation. Allying to revolutionary groups, the dissidents formed the All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries in 1967, and then, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist ML) in 1969. Reconsolidated after a period of decline due to loss of leadership, this party formed, in 2005, the CPI (Maoist) or Naxalism in association with the Maoist Communist Centre India. The term Naxalism is used more specifically in tribal areas, reinforcing thus the link between tribes and alienation of lands. Compare to the Naxalbari movement which “was an organised peasant attack against peculiar feudal land relations,” the Naxalites in Chhattisgarh “draw on displacement of the local people due to zealous support of the state for quick development through *forced* industrialization.”<sup>28</sup>

According to Berthet<sup>29</sup>, from the creation of the state of Chhattisgarh, its diverse governments have relied on the private investment for developing infrastructures (transports, education) and have encouraged the venue of private companies, both national and international, to develop industrial

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dia’s Maoist Conflict. USA: Human Right Watch. Navlakha, Gautam (2006): Maoists in India. In: Economic and Political Weekly 41, 22. 2186–2189.

27 This area, located at the border of Nepal and Bangladesh (ex-East Pakistan), is dominated by tribal population working in tea plantation.

28 Chakrabarty, Bidyut (2014): Maoism, a Recalcitrant Citizenry and Counterinsurgency Measures in India. In: Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, 1, 3. 289–317. 294.

29 Berthet (2011).

and mining plants necessary to increase the state economy.<sup>30</sup> Sen mentions that the ecological zone of Bastar, rich in forest produces (*sal* trees, *amla* or India gooseberry, tamarind pods, *chironji* nuts, *mahua* seeds and flowers, etc.) is also rich in ores such as mica, manganese, iron and bauxite. The government policy to attract investors by “selling off the natural resources of the state,”<sup>31</sup> and its failure to provide basic public amenities, notably in tribal areas, has offered a fecund battlefield to the Maoists, present in the Telangana region (Andhra Pradesh) who entered Chhattisgarh in 1980s.<sup>32</sup> The penetration of Naxalites into Chhattisgarh and intensification of their activities are interpreted as a response of the government failure to implement the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> Schedules of the Indian constitution. Despite of the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, little tribal advisory councils of scheduled tribes living in the reserved forests or in scheduled areas of the states have been formed so that the state governments continue to administer the reserved forests and are prone to lease some areas to private mining and industrial companies, entailing the eviction of tribes; the redistribution of lands from upper castes to landless peasantry stipulated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Schedule is poorly observed.

In reprisal to the intensification of Naxalites’ activities, a counter-insurgency movement called Salwa Judum, signifying in Koya *Peace Marc*’ or *Purification hunt*, was formed in June 2005 under the leadership of Mahendra Karma, a tribal leader, Member of the Indian National Congress, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Chhattisgarh from 2000 to 2004. This movement, supported by the state and central governments which deployed paramilitary troops (National Security Guard commandos, Nagaland Armed Police, Central Industrial Security Forces and Central Reserve Police Forces), caused a civil war situation endangering the tribes. Accused by either Naxalites or Salwa Judum, tribal people have had been repeatedly the target of attacks destroying the infrastructures symbolising the development such as school, roads, electricity, etc. (Naxalite side), or creating a climate of fear by using arson, abductions, rapes, murders, etc. (Salwa Judum side). The terror atmosphere forced the tribes to flee their

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30 Navlakha, Gautam/Gupta, Asish (2009): The Real Divide in Bastar. In: Economic and Political Weekly 44, 33. 20–21. Sen (2011).

31 Sen (2001), 153.

32 Pingle (2014) and Asian Centre for Human Rights (2006). In her conclusion, Sundar (1997) relates an attack of a special Bastar battalion by Naxalites which occurred in 1989.

village for seeking protection in another state. In addition to this migration, numerous villages have been abandoned by their dwellers to join what it is called *relief camps* or *Salwa Judum camps*, either voluntarily for protection against Naxalites or for advantages promised by Salwa Judum, or forcedly displaced by the militia in order to weaken the relationships between tribal and Naxalites.<sup>33</sup> These camps, under the control of the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), Indian reserve battalions, and SPOs (Special Police Officers), served as base for forcedly enrolling tribal, notably youths and women. The authors of the report of Asian Centre for Human Rights argue that “the temporary relief camps have been turned into centres for military training and anti-Naxalite indoctrination education. As on 4 March 2006, 3,200 Adivasi boys and girls have been recruited as Special Police Officers (SPO) in Dantewada district alone at a fixed honorarium of Rs. 1500 to each per month. Many SPOs have not been paid any honorarium. Many have joined in the SPO with the promise of regularization in the State Police Force.”<sup>34</sup>

While in the first years of their creation, these camps were covered by a food programme, food distribution was suddenly stopped, leaving the tribes deprived of their lands without any resources,<sup>35</sup> except to join the Salwa Judum movement, or to escape secretly during the night. The pressure applied to tribal by these two opposite armed groups is not only destructive for the livelihood of individuals, but also for the tribal relationship as many families and village communities are divided between those adhering or supposed adhering to Naxalites and to Salwa Judum. Such a

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33 The report of Asian Centre for Human Rights quotes a camp dweller who explains: “We have shifted to the Arrabore relief camp just about 15 days ago. We have been told that my husband will be employed as Special Police officer if we shift to the relief camps started by the Salwa Judum and that he will get a monthly salary of Rs. 1500/ plus free ration.” Asian Centre for Human Rights (2006), 16.

34 Asian Centre for Human Rights (2006), 4.

35 Information of the person who housed me during my short stay in Chhattisgarh (July 2013). He took me on a tour of five camps, among which, he intervenes as a Registered Medical Practitioner for delivering free medical services. In all these camps, I noticed the numerous abandoned huts or houses, their dwellers having succeeded to escape according to information provided by neighbours. During my period of fieldwork corresponding to the collect of, many tribal of these camps were engaged in the collection of *mahua* seeds that they sold and partly transform in oil used for cooking.

situation leads to suspicion. As a chief of an IDP settlement replied when I asked him to explain the history of his displacement from Chhattisgarh:

“I am here because my village has been destroyed by Naxalites. I succeeded to escape into the forest where I hid. After two days, I returned to the village. There had some died people who were laid; there had no longer anything, my house was burnt and my cattle had disappeared. I have never related this story. Here, nobody speaks about this; we don’t know who is Naxalite or who is against Naxalite. This is better to never speak about that, we have to live together...”

The denunciation by the academic and activist milieu of the Human right violations perpetrated by Salwa Judum to the Supreme Court,<sup>36</sup> resulted on 5 July 2011 by the order declaring Salwa Judum illegal and unconstitutional and demanding the disbanding of the special police officers.<sup>37</sup> The condemnation of Salwa Judum, however, does not put an end to the armed conflict, nor to the violence, as the CRPF and Indian battalions continue to control the roads and ex-Salwa Judum camps and intervene in Naxalite-affected zones, and SPOs are still active.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. *The Survey of IDPs Settlements*

The anthropological study commissioned by MdM was conducted in ten settlements located in the three revenue divisions of the Khammam dis-

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36 See Open Letters to Government and Maoists (2006). In: Economic and Political Weekly 41, 27–28. 2977–2979. It appeals the government to stop the violations of human rights perpetrated by Salwa Judum and police force. See also criticism by Balagopal on the results of the National Human Right Commission (NHRC), commissioned by the Supreme Court to write a report on allegation of violations of human rights by both Naxalites and Salwa Judum, which condemned mostly Naxalites. The appointment of police by the NHRC for examining allegations and conducting enquiries is denounced by the author as an “unfortunate choice (...) The report makes no pretence of neutrality or objectivity. It has a 13-page introduction which is mostly a harsh comment on the Naxalites, described at the very outset as a *menace*, followed by a five page chapter titled *Human Rights Violations by the Naxalites*. The third chapter of just one and a half pages is on *Human Rights Violations by Salwa Judum* and another one and a half pages on the *Role of the Local Police, Security Forces and SPOs*.” Balagopal, K. (2008): The NHRC on Salwa Judum. A Most Friendly Inquiry. In: Economic and Political Weekly. 2183–2186.

37 See: [http://www.countercurrents.org/Supreme\\_Court\\_judgm\\_679794a.pdf](http://www.countercurrents.org/Supreme_Court_judgm_679794a.pdf).

38 See: [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-07-24/news/32827923\\_1\\_spos-salwa-judum-contempt-petition](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-07-24/news/32827923_1_spos-salwa-judum-contempt-petition) (retrieved on 26.11.2015).



trict, Bhadrachalam, Palwancha and Kothaguten, among them seven are situated inside the forest (see the map). For carrying out the study, I benefited from the help of a local NGO selected by MdM as partner in its project of mobile clinics which selected the settlements, organised the transport, and food when I requested to stay the night in the settlement, and provided the translators. In each settlement, I conducted the survey in two steps: at the arrival, with the *pedda* (settlement chef), and then with all the IDPs of the settlements. In the situation of displacement where the chef's function is very unlikely be hereditary, the *pedda* is either the person who founded the settlement, or was selected by a group of IDPs who founded the settlement for his ability to speak Telugu and/or his educational level necessary for dialoguing with, and obtaining support from, local administration. The door-to-door survey has collected information from 116 persons (forty two families) residing in six settlements, and from two focus groups of eight to ten persons in the two remaining settlements due to lack of time.<sup>39</sup> Although my mission was to investigate the IDP's health and their perception on health care, it appeared essential to enlarge the study on their living conditions in the settlements, as these conditions impact significantly their health. In addition to open discussions with the *pedda-s* and IDPs to investigate their migratory trajectory and their difficulties and needs in the settlement, an exploration of the surrounding milieu was conducted. It comprised the water bodies used by the IDPs, lands for cultivation, kitchen gardens and the forest from where they collect food, medicinal plants, and some commercial products such as *mahua* flowers and seeds, resins, wood, etc. Several medical centres mentioned by IDPs during the discussions were visited: two primary health centres (PHC), four community health centres (CHC) and the government hospital

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39 Three week fieldwork to conduct such a survey was definitively too short, notably in taking into account the time necessary to reach the settlements. That obliged to work intensively in each settlement in order to visit all the residents; a task far from being easy as the interviews required two language translators English/Telugu and Telugu/Koya, and at my request, a male and a female for Koya language. After around ten interviews, it was often difficult to capture translators' attention. These conditions to carry out the survey have obviously hindered the collect of information, notably, regarding the IDPs' behaviours related to hygiene and health including pregnancy and delivery that MdM expected amazingly to obtain. To compensate the short duration, I requested that several nights were spent in settlements.

of Bhadrachalam. Interviews with a register medical practitioner (RMP),<sup>40</sup> two auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) in charge of IPD settlements,<sup>41</sup> and the staff of the department of nutrition of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency located at Bhadrachalam were also carried out.

To get a better estimation of the IDPs' living conditions in the settlements, it needed to have an insight into those of the tribal people residing in the region from where the IDPs came. This comparison was all the more relevant so as a large part of IDPs, as it will be shown later, pointed out Andhra Pradesh as a state more developed than Chhattisgarh. Welcome and supported by a colleague of the local NGO's responsible; I spent a week in Chhattisgarh to visit several villages and Salwa Judum camps, situated around Konta and along the road Konta-Sukma. It was not possible, however, to reach the villages situated inside the forest that some IDPs had mentioned as their native place. According to my host, the tracks to go to the villages were impracticable because of rain, but I think that it was consequent to an order from the police who visited him the second day of my stay. The previous day, on my host's recommendation, I was gone to Sukma, with a document attesting that I conducted a comparative study on food pattern of Koya tribes in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, to be registered by the police station and collector.

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40 The category 'rural medical practitioner' or RMP was established by the Government of Andhra Pradesh the 26.09.2008. The registration in the AP Para medical Board demands a full process of training, examination and certification. The RMPs use biomedical tools, but they are authorised to prescribe or use the medicines only sold *over the counter*. They are classified as paramedics and cannot use the title of *Doctor*. See: <http://cm.ap.gov.in/excmysr/26sep08press2.asp> (relieved on 24.07.2013).

41 The name of the IDP settlement is quite often the name of the closest village. When the settlement is established for several years and easily reachable, it may be recognised by the PHC and visited by the ANMs. However, the IDPs mention that the visits of ANMs who are in charge of monitoring the IDPs' health and implementing food scheme to pregnant and delivered women, are very irregular, and that food comprising rice, dhal and eggs, is rarely distributed.



1-Gaggaran (from 2006)

2-Gaddiguppa (from 2012)

3-Motey (from 2010)

4-Bandala Patu (from 2010)

5-Regada (from 2012)

6-Kothur (from 2006)

7-Pusuguvagu (from 2010)

8-Buchirai (from 2010)

CHC: Community Health Centres

PHC: Primary Health Centre

Hosp: Hospital

Map drawn by MdM

#### *4. Foundation of the Settlements: Impact on the Forest*

The approach of IDP settlements is far from an *enchantment*. After a more or less long (2 to 8 km) and difficult way in 4X4 vehicle and by foot, through the forest, one enters a wide area, from where emerged from place to place burned trunks, a few trees and small patches of grass and shrubs which have survived cutting or fire. Then, one reaches fallow and

ploughed lands that indicate the proximity of the settlements. The settlements are composed of twenty-five to forty huts of diverse sizes, organised in several groups of habitations ordered according to the relationship of the inhabitants and to their arrival in the settlements. Huts' walls are built, according to the sites, with branches or bamboo sticks plastered with mud, and topped by a roof made of grass or leaves of the palm tree. In the oldest settlements, the huts are more elaborated with a roof of tiles bought from Koya villagers living nearby, and walls well plastered and, for Dorla huts in particular, decorated with white drawings. The groups of huts, including some shelters for cattle and goats and a kitchen garden are sometimes enclosed by a barrier of bamboo or branches closely stuck into the soil for protecting the inhabitants from wide animals (snakes, tigers, bears etc.). If such a habitat inside the forest corresponds to the ecological universe of tribes, in Andhra Pradesh, it results from the impossibility of these displaced tribal people to find another environment to live.

The migratory stories of the *pedda-s*, which present numerous similarities, reveal how they were constrained to found the settlement inside the forest. Forced by Naxalites or anti-Naxalites to quit their villages or Salwa Judum camps, they fled to Andhra Pradesh in the hope of finding help from the Koya families which employed them for seasonal labour in agriculture. The Koya-s constitutes an important tribal community in Khammam district, and especially in the region concerned by this study. They live essentially from settled agriculture on lands more and less close to, or encroached on, the forest, from which they draw some food produces.<sup>42</sup> The Dorla and Maria/Muria IDPs consider them as relative,<sup>43</sup> and rely on this to obtain the solidarity of Koya *sarpanch-s*.<sup>44</sup> In two cases, the *pedda-s* obtained, a piece of land to erect their huts, but in general, they were

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42 Mis'ra, Kamal K./Bondla, D.J. Narendra (2010): Cultural Dimension of Biodiversity. Conservation among the Tribes of the Eastern Ghats. In: Indian Anthropologist 40, 1. 1-20. This tribal community conducted several rebellions against the colonial power and the Nizam rulers to defend their rights on the forest. Organised under the banner of the Communist Party of India, they obtained from the landowners, in the 1950s, the redistribution of a part of their lands, notably paddy fields, and of their cattle. Rupavath (2015).

43 This relationship is confirmed by several authors such as Mis'ra/Bondla (2010), and Mukherjee, Sonali (2014): Mining and Women. The Case of the Maria of Chhattisgarh. In: Social Change 44, 2. 229-247.

44 The *sarpanch* (H) is an elected member of a village who is at the head of the *pañcāyat*, the administration of the village. His function concerns the management

badly received. On the one hand, the Koya-s fear that the IDPs' presence intensifies Naxalites' activity in this region, and on the other hand, they are not willing to share their lands and resources with the IDPs. In the first step, the *pedda-s* tried to stay close to the Koya village they knew, but they were pulled out by the Forest Department staff. Obligated to remain hidden during the day for avoiding to be discovered by the police, they recount that forest became the only means to survive. However, it did not prevent them from harassment by the Forest Department. The *pedda-s* of settlements located deeply in the forest mention that, before succeeding, they were displaced several times, by the Forest Department staff who burnt their hut. The strategy they found to thwart a new displacement was to identify IDPs in quest of living place in order to form a community sufficiently large to be able to clear a large area of the forest and to construct a good number of huts in a short time. This strategy echoes the attitude of the Forest Department when new IDP settlement is discovered. The officer of this department at Kothagudem I interviewed told me: "If we imprison or send a case to court, the human rights members intervene immediately and the people [IDPs] are released. We can do nothing, except to burn the huts when we discover a new settlement under construction. But when a large part of the forest has been already clear, it is too late. If we burn the huts, they will go to another place, and another area will be devastated."

In this region, the forest bears the traces of the numerous attempts to establish a settlement. On the way that led to settlements, it was common to go through two or three areas more or less wide clear of trees. The agricultural system used by tribal people in Chhattisgarh is shifting cultivation which has survived despite its condemnation by the colonial rulers and by Indians after Independence. The change this agricultural method has experience has been the use of wooden plough. But in Andhra Pradesh shifting cultivation is seldom possible. The shift of lands, after three-five years of cultivation, will generate inevitably conflicts with the Forest Department. In this context, the IDPs privilege permanent agriculture. It prevents from displacements by the Forest Department, and the surface of land gained from the forest allows for compensating the feeble yield during the first years of cultivation. But in counterpart, it accentuates the degradation of

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of the village infrastructure (road, electricity, water, school, etc.) and the development of the villagers (cards for various social schemes, schooling etc.) He acts as an intermediary between the state government and the villagers.

the forest milieu of this region as tens of hectares are deforested to fit the requirement of the settlements' dwellers.

In the objective to establish their settlement, the *pedda-s* used two means for finding IDPs: they visit the tribal weekly markets, places of transaction for commodities as well as of meeting between tribal people, and call their relatives and acquaintances living in Chhattisgarh. The number of families residing in these settlements during the ethnography who declared to be come on the invitation of the *pedda* was high, certainly more than fifty percent in certain sites. This questions the identity of these persons: are they IDPs? Indeed, discussions revealed that their venue was not motivated by insecurity and violence issues, but by attraction to a better life: the state of Andhra Pradesh was perceived as more developed than Chhattisgarh; they expected to benefit from its socio-economic advantages and social schemes. Such motivations, however, do not deprive them to be classified IDPs as the definition of United Nation (1998) includes also persons who leave their residence "in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict." The venue of this population, not directly affected by the conflict, increases obviously pressure on the forest milieu. Such a damaged environment raises important ethical issues about two realities which cannot match: that of the degradation of the forest while the preservation of environment has become a world priority; that of populations which, to survive, are obliged to live in the forest and to clear the trees for insuring partly their food security. The conditions in which they have to live are inhuman. Their life is constantly at risk, as much by diseases related to their living conditions as by those inherent to the environment in which they are forced to live.

### 5. *Living Conditions as Precarious as Inhuman*

After opening the discussion with the *pedda-s* and the IDPs on their migratory history, my first question to evaluate their living conditions was to ask them to list their needs according to the priority. This question allowed for investigating if health was perceived by IDPs as an issue, and what were the main obstacles they met in this new environment. Although the IDPs knew that my venue was related to the project of mobile clinics, no one of the 116 interviewed persons mentioned health services. The two major needs which emerged were bore well (100 times) and ration card (80 times).

In all the settlements targeted by the study, access to water and availability of drinking water was a major issue. The water was drawn from streams located often far from the settlement (one to two km). The quantity of the water depends on the season, and its quality is dubious. At the period of study which coincided with the beginning of rainy season, the streams were well supplied, but the water was muddy, even when drawn from some wells dug along the water bodies. Moreover to be mixed with mud which, according to the areas, is charged in particles coming from mining activity, the water was contaminated by faecal matters coming from cattle and sites of defecation used by the IDPs. The water conditions have important consequences on IDPs' health. When they were questioned on their health conditions, skin diseases and diarrhoea that they attributed to the quality of water were mostly mentioned. The lack of immediate access to the water affects also the general state of health, notably that of women in charge to go to the stream, twice a day, the morning and afternoon, for bathing, washing dishes and clothes, and bringing water back for cooking and drinking. This task adding to the intensive daily activities concerning land (deforestation, agriculture, cattle care, kitchen gardening), construction of huts, house work (pounding cereals, cooking, children care, etc.), requires energy which that the food is not really able to provide.

Except for the settlements established in 2006, most of those covered by the study were too recent to have lands capable to feed the communities. The lack of cattle to plough the land and of seeds was mentioned as hindrances. In the most of new settlements, some huts, with only a few furnishing, were closed. Requesting the reason, I heard quite often that the families were returned in Chhattisgarh to obtain cattle and seeds from their relatives.<sup>45</sup> The IDPs were constrained to buy rice, pulses and spices from

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45 These families concerned those who had migrated for socio-economic reasons. In order to convince their relatives to give cattle, they are forced to stay two months and more in Chhattisgarh. The interest to get seeds from Chhattisgarh is not with regard to the symbolic attachment to the native place (nostalgia, identity construct), as mentioned in numerous studies of migration in which 'ethnic' foods serve to maintain the link with the culture of origin. Holtzman, J.D. (2006): Food and Memory. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35. 261–278. Mannur, Anita (2007): Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora. In: *MELUS* 32, 4. 11–31. Nyman, Jopi (2009): Cultural Contact and the Contemporary Culinary Memoir: Home, Memory and Identity. In: Madhur, Jaffrey/Abu-Jaber, Diana



the Kirana stores (governmental low cost shop)<sup>46</sup> and, when they had a little of money, vegetables from the tribal market. The way they got money was limited. Some got seasonal work in Koya or Lambada lands for a meagre salary, 80 to 100 INR per day according to the task; women were less paid, and the number of work days rarely more than ten per season. IDPs living close to a paper factory might be employed, but the hard work conditions prevented them to be regular: they worked 24 hours (8AM to 8AM) with two breaks for meals, for which they were paid 200 INR. In order to save the 40 INR requested for the rickshaw, they left the settlement at 4.30 AM and returned the next day around noon. Low wages and work conditions testify their exploitation by the population of the region. Moreover, the milieu in which they were living, due to its high degradation, offered little possibilities to complement their revenues. According to the location of settlements, IDPs might collect flowers and seeds of *mahua* tree, resin of *sal* tree, honey or timber, but the amount they got mirrors again their exploitation by brokers. In one of the settlements where men were squaring off some trunks, the *pedda* explained that, for each timber resold between 2000 to 3000 INR, they were paid between 600 and 800 INR.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, the IDPs installed since 2006, had more opportunity to get money, notably by selling cattle, pigs and goats.

The food pattern of Dorla-s and Muria-s/Maria-s is based on two meals a day, one between 9 and 11 AM and the second after 7 PM. IDPs' eating pattern follows this rule, but some families complained to be obliged to skip one meal, and sometimes, to beg rice from hut to hut. "If we have money, we buy a few onions, tomatoes, potatoes, aubergines, lady fingers,

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(eds.): Auto/Biography Studies 24, 2. 282–298. Srinivas, Tulasi (2006): As Mother Made It. The Cosmopolitan Indian Family. *Authentic Food and the Construction of Cultural Utopia*. In: International Journal of Sociology of the Family 32, 2. 191–221. Sutton, David E. (2001): Remembrance of Repasts. An Anthropology of Food and Memory. Oxford. In this context, it was related to the adaptation of seed varieties to cultivation in the forest milieu (soil poor in micronutrients, rain-fed cultivation) and, regarding rice, to its higher nutritional quality.

46 In June 2013, they bought rice at 15 INR per kg and *tur dhal* (pigeon peas) at 45 INR per kg. In a settlement whose the IDPs had benefited from the help of the *sarpanch* of a village to establish temporary themselves, they bought rice and grains from the Koya farmers of this village, who employed them seasonally.

47 This transaction is entirely illegal. When we left the settlement, we crossed some rickshaws at top speed which transported several pieces of wood destined to house building. The severe regulation on the tree cutting which causes high wood cost, has favoured mafia networks which use tribal or forest dwellers.



and rice, but if we haven't, we have to look for bamboo stem, *boddu kora* (wild green leave), tubers, and wild animals (deer, rabbit, rat, varan, and red ants)." The kitchen gardens, present in all the settlements, provide some green leaves and vegetables. However, during the survey, conducted at the end of summer, no vegetables were available. The visit of huts confirmed the scarcity of food storage and the poor diet, quite often composed of rice and *boddu kora*.

The main food-related issue is much more scarcity than unbalance, notably for IDPs established in 2006 as the cereals they cultivated from their traditional seeds are more nutritional than the rice bought in Kirana shop. On the one hand, the cereals are more varied, and on the other hand, they are de-husked manually so that they retain a large part of their nutritive quality. They attributed to the rice from Chhattisgarh nutritive values: "If we eat this rice in the morning, we are not hungry for the whole day, but if we eat PDS rice, we have no energy to work." However, the cereals and grains they cultivate in Andhra Pradesh' forest are only red rice, maize, and *thur* dhal, while in Chhattisgarh, they grew a large range of varieties: red rice, maize, sorghum, small millet, pigeon peas, black gram, red lentils and green gram dhal. The abandonment of cereal and pulse varieties, for which I did not succeed to know the reasons, is obviously detrimental to their diet, as it deprives them from diversified micronutrients and amino-acids. Such a diet, poor in proteins and micronutrients, is not compensated by animal proteins: milk, considered the food of the calves, is not drunk and used by these tribal people, and meat from domesticated animals (beef, pig, hens) is consumed only occasionally at biographical and religious celebrations. The hunting, essentially practised at periods corresponding to the sowing of lands, provides some protein resources, but in such a degraded environment, the availability of animals remains very feeble. Interestingly, when I questioned a group of ANMs in a CHC about IDPs' hygiene, all their responses revolved around the food habits that they qualified as unclean, and denounced as responsible in diarrhoea. The foodstuffs they mentioned were dried fishes and meat of wild animal. These food items, when they were present in the huts, were preserved hung above the stove and exposed to the smoke fire. While these nurses have also the role to educate the people on health including nutrition, their perception on tribal food, obviously, questions their knowledge of nutrition. Their representation of the IDPs as *Others*, those who hold "a non-

normative and socially subordinate status,”<sup>48</sup> was decipherable in their remarks, not only on food, but also on health-related subject and delivery.

Although food was mentioned as a main need, conditions such as scrawny bodies and children’s swollen bellies weakness were never uttered. Symptoms of weakness, headache and dizziness, as well as complaints of low blood pressure were never related to a state of undernourishment. According to the literature on these tribes, these symptoms are perceived as caused by evil spirit attacks.<sup>49</sup> Interviews of doctors and the lab technicians of CHCs and Bhadrachalam hospital revealed that the haemoglobin concentration in the blood of the IDPs who consult with complaints of weakness, headache, dizziness, etc. is on average half of the normal level (in India), i.e., 5 to 6g/l. It is worth mentioning that these tribal populations are identified as being subjected to have genetic disorders favouring anemia, such as to be bearer of the Dully-negative phenotype, a condition which does not protect from the infection of *Plasmodium falciparum*,<sup>50</sup> or to have sickle cell trait, a genetic abnormality of haemoglobin resulting by curved shape red cells, more prevalent in Marias than in Dorla-s.<sup>51</sup> Food scarcity, in such conditions aggravates anaemia, and consequently, favours infections and mortality, notably of infants and children.<sup>52</sup>

Among the sample, the main infections which were identified, except for wounds sometimes seriously infected, are tuberculosis (two cases, both treated by CHCs’ medical staff) and respiratory infections. As the rainy season was begun, many people complained on fever, that they related to malaria, a disease that they feared due to its high mortality. The mortality caused by malaria is all the more high so as the people are weakened by undernutrition coupled with hard work, and may have genetic blood ab-

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48 Seidman, Steven (2013): Defilement and Disgust: Theorizing the Other. In: American Journal of Cultural Sociology 1. 3–25.

49 Grigson (1938).

50 Varma, Ishwar C./Archana, Thakur (1993): Duffy Blood Group Determinants and Malaria in India. In: Journal of Genetics 72, 1. 15–19.

51 Negi, R.S. (1962): The Incidence of Sickle-Cell Trait in Two Bastar Tribes. In: Man 62. 84–86. Negi, R.S. (1964): New Incidence of Sickle-Cell Trait in Bastar. In: Man 64. 171–174.

52 Arnold, Fred /Parasuraman, Sulabha/Arokiasamy, P./Kothari, Monica (2009): Nutrition in India. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) India, 2005–06. Mumbai. The HUNGaMA Survey Report (2011): Fighting Hunger & Malnutrition. Hyderabad.

normality. Two IDP deaths caused by malaria were mentioned during the survey. While the number of deaths mentioned by IDPs was of four adults, that of infants and children were higher. Two families declared having lost a baby, four a child, and one, three children among them, two in Andhra Pradesh. It was difficult to know the cause of the death. The mothers mentioned fits, fevers or respiratory distress, symptoms they related to evil spirit attacks for which they consulted only the traditional practitioner. The traditional practitioner (*wadde*), when he is available in, or close to, the settlement, is always consulted. Only if the treatment fails and the disease is too debilitating for working, they turn to medical centres. But IDPs were reluctant to visit them. They complained that the medical staff was little attentive to them and have to wait hours before being treated. Some mentioned that they were obliged to be accompanied by an IDP who speaks Telugu, and other emphasised that they had to go to another centre, because the centre had not the means (doctor, exploratory tools, medications, etc.) to treat them. This last point was confirmed while I was in a CHC: an IDP youth with a leg seriously inflamed up to the groin caused by a snake bite, arrived from a PHC where he was refused and, without the intervention of the president of the NGO partner of MdM, would have to go to Bhadrachalam Hospital (20 km away) under the pretext that the centre did not have anti-venom serum. The local NGO's responsible, finally, succeeded to convince the CHC's staff to hospitalise the young patient who was put on a drip containing anti-venom. If I did not get any response about the reason the CHC's staff attempted to refuse the young patient, it seems to me that it was to avoid the occupation of a bed which would have necessitated more care and surveillance, notably during the night.

As I could experience in the PHC and CHC I visited, I was never invited to see the wards, simply because they were empty. Such medical attitude and limitation is not only detrimental to the patient's health, but it also increases the transportation expenditure. The cost of transportation, in a situation of total deprivation, is an obstacle to visit medical centres. In addition to these difficulties, their *illegal* presence in Andhra Pradesh, even though they never mentioned this criterion, might be also a reason that thwarts the recourse to medical centres. The medical staff of the diverse visited centres did not show any empathy to the IDPs, and seemed ignored their living conditions. They considered IDPs as *bad patients*:

“They come only at the last stage of the disease, so that they complain that our medicines are not working. They are not confident in our medicines and

they do not take them properly. As soon as they leave the PHC, they throw them away and go to their traditional practitioner.”

The medical staff perceived them as “not civilized” people:

“they want to live as they always lived, inside the forest, far from our word.”

## 6. Conclusion

Despite the multiple difficulties to survive in such a hostile environment, the *pedda*-s were optimistic on the improvement of the living conditions of their settlements. The fact that NGOs (MdM, ECO and NGO partner of MdM) helped them, even though their programme does not cover their need in food and water, allowed them to feel protected from the repressive attitude of the Andhra Pradesh government, and to expect some social advantages attributed to the people of Andhra Pradesh. IDPs consider Andhra Pradesh as a living place better than Chhattisgarh. This is not only that they feel more in security, but especially, as commonly pointed out during the interviews with those who came on the invitation of the *pedda*, for its development and its social welfare policy. Although dwelling inside the forest, the IDPs are not isolated. They maintain the contact with the outside world through cell phones recharged in the village close to their settlement or, in some cases, thanks to a solar panel they brought from Chhattisgarh, or through weekly tribal markets. In these markets, they come in contact with IDPs, installed in Andhra Pradesh since several years, who have benefited from governmental advantages (bore well, ration cards, *anganvadi*,<sup>53</sup> integration in schools, etc.), through the NGOs’ plea. The IDPs do not call themselves Dorla or Muria/Maria, they adopt the name of Guttikoya. This name, supposedly stemmed from human right defenders (NGO, academic or lawyer),<sup>54</sup> defines a scheduled tribe refer-

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53 An *anganvadi* is a crèche for pre-school children until five year old. Launched by the Indian government in 1975, it is a part of the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) scheme aiming to combat child hunger and malnutrition. The programme, in principle, provides nutritious food to children as well as to girl adolescents, and pregnant and lactating women.

54 Despite my attempts, I did not succeed to know how the change of name was done. Remarkably, these IDPs are called in Khammam district, Guttikoya, not only by NGOs and local people but also by official people such as those of the Forest department.

enced in the list of notified tribes of Andhra Pradesh and, in principle, covered by welfare schemes. By this way, they expect not only to get social and economic advantages, but also the right to live in the forest and cultivate the land they cleared out. However, in waiting to get recognition from the Andhra Pradesh government, they have to survive in a harsh environment which deprives them from essentials such drinking water and food, and for the children, from schooling, and affects their health weakened by hard work, and notably for some women, by psychological distress resulting from traumatic events experienced in Chhattisgarh (murders, rape, beating, etc.), during the migration (repetitive displacement, police's enquiry, rejection, disease and death) and in the new settlement (death and disease, difficulties to find food, family separation).

The Andhra Pradesh/Telangana government is not willing to provide assistance to the recent settlements as IDPs represent a source of problems in terms of security due to the spectre of Naxalite activity and of environment degradation. Its solution is to control the frontiers with Chhattisgarh and to ignore the IDPs' living conditions. Facilitating their integration into the welfare programmes would definitively attract more migrants from Chhattisgarh, due to the fact that the state of Andhra Pradesh is perceived as more economically and socially developed. Such afflux of population would endanger the stability of the region, Khammam is not only one of the most backward districts of the state with around 20 percent of tribal and 80 percent of rural populations, but also a region which was the siege of many political dissensions around rights to land, and is today in the heart of a debate about the Polavaram irrigation project, several times stopped by financial constraints, and disagreement between the three concerned states or by activists (Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh/Telangana). The dam on the Godavari River at Polavaram, once completed, is expected to displace 276 villages with a population of 300,000 persons among them half are tribal people. While 56% of the project is completed, activists and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes are already fighting the Telangana government against its failures to compensate displaced people which contravene the the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and the Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Act, 2013. They renounce the low quality of lands when they are distributed and the localisation of tribal people which deprive them to access to the forest produces. Such a displacement of population belonging mostly to the tribes as well as its exploitation by government officials and decision makers leads obviously to

the development of activist movement and Naxalite reprisals, and thus, to a tribal people's future ever more precarious and insecure.<sup>55</sup>

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