# Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) & Satkosia Tiger Reserve Issue

# **□**Context

- The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has sought detailed reports from the Forest and Revenue Departments and the Angul District Collector regarding alleged irregularities in village relocation within the Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR).
- The relocation was part of efforts to create a safe and undisturbed habitat for tigers, but complaints have emerged regarding compensation, rehabilitation, and procedural violations.

# **□** About Satkosia Tiger Reserve

#### 1. Location:

- Situated in central Odisha, spanning four districts:
  Angul, Cuttack, Boudh, and Nayagarh.
- Lies along the Mahanadi River, which flows through the middle of the reserve.

#### 2. Constituent Sanctuaries:

- Formed by the Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary (1976) and Baisipalli Wildlife Sanctuary (1981).
- Both sanctuaries were notified together as Satkosia Tiger Reserve in 2007 under Project Tiger.

## 3. **Geographical Significance:**

- Lies at the junction of the Deccan Peninsula and Eastern Ghats, resulting in a unique ecosystem and high biodiversity.
- The **Mahanadi River gorge**, extending ~22 km, forms one of the most beautiful natural river gorges in India.

#### 4. Area:

∘ **Total Area:** ~963.87 sq. km

Core Area: ~523.61 sq. km

• Buffer Area: ~440.26 sq. km

#### 5. **Part of:**

• The **Mahanadi Elephant Reserve**, which provides habitat continuity for elephants across central Odisha.

## **□** Flora and Fauna

• **Vegetation Type:** Moist deciduous forest with sal, teak, bamboo, and mixed species.

## Key Wildlife:

- Mammals: Tiger, Leopard, Elephant, Gaur, Sambar, Wild boar, Spotted deer.
- Reptiles: Mugger crocodile, Indian python.
- Birds: Indian skimmer, Malabar pied hornbill, various raptors.
- The riverine ecosystem supports aquatic biodiversity, including freshwater crocodiles and fish species.

# **□** Tiger Conservation Background

- Declared a Tiger Reserve in 2007 under Project Tiger.
- Aimed to protect tiger population and maintain ecological balance.
- Faced setbacks due to **poor tiger density** and **unsuccessful tiger translocation** (notably the tiger translocation project from Madhya Pradesh in 2018, which failed due to conflicts and management issues).

# **□□ V**illage Relocation Issue

## 1. Objective:

 To relocate villages from the core area to ensure undisturbed habitat for wildlife and reduce human-animal conflict.

## 2. Allegations:

- Irregularities in the process of relocation.
- Inadequate or delayed compensation to displaced villagers.
- Lack of proper rehabilitation facilities.

 Violation of human rights and Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 provisions.

## 3. OHRC Intervention:

- The Odisha Human Rights Commission has sought:
  - All records and reports from the Forest and Revenue Departments.
  - An explanation from the **Angul Collector** on the relocation procedures and grievances.

# **☼ Significance of the Case**

- Brings focus on human rights in wildlife conservation.
- Highlights the **need for balance** between **ecological preservation** and **livelihood security** of local communities.
- May lead to **policy review** in relocation processes within tiger reserves.
- Reinforces the importance of following FRA 2006 and NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) guidelines on voluntary relocation.

# **□**[Key Takeaways for UPSC

- **Satkosia Tiger Reserve**: central Odisha, Mahanadi River, rich biodiversity, Deccan-Eastern Ghats junction.
- **Constituents**: Satkosia Gorge + Baisipalli Sanctuaries.
- Part of: Mahanadi Elephant Reserve.
- **Current Issue**: OHRC inquiry into irregularities in village relocation.
- Relevance:
  - Environmental governance
  - Human rights in conservation
  - Implementation of Forest Rights Act
  - Role of statutory bodies like OHRC

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