The villagers of Revojipet, Petherpu and Kotha Maddi Padaga in Kadem mandal of Nirmal district are happy that authorities will soon relocate as many as 96 aboriginal Raj Gond and Naikpod families from Maisampet and Rampur villages from the core area of Kawal Tiger Reserve (KTR) to a site close to their habitations. They are expecting the incoming Adivasis to work as labourers in their fields and help them tide over the severe shortage of farm hands they are constrained with.

The expectation would certainly come true as the aboriginal people are being trained in such work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) at the cost of their traditional livelihoods. While the Raj Gonds are adept at farm work, the 37 Naikpod families of Rampur cultivate just over 13 acres cumulatively and have been asked to shun the traditional livelihood through making of bamboo mats and baskets and instead adapt themselves to physical labour.

Authorities are also relocating over 190 Raj Gond and Naikpod Adivasi families from Allinagar and Dongapalli from Jannaram mandal of Mancherial district to a site about 3 km away from the mandal headquarters close to river Godavari. The relocation, involving offer ₹10 lakh per family as lump sum compensation in cash or offer of cultivable land and residential houses in a properly constructed housing colony are part of the KTR management plan to make the habitat safer for tiger movement. Of the 37 families of Rampur, 10 have already left the village.

Gade Narsavva was in fact ready to adopt agriculture as a livelihood activity as it holds better income prospects. “The tribals should adjust to new realities as bamboo extraction from KTR cannot be allowed in the interest of its management,” observed Jannaram Forest Divisional Officer V. Tirumal Rao.