

JOIN THE LCW COMMUNITY


Exclusive monthly policy briefs, stories from the ground, quarterly analytics report, curated expert talks, merchandise and much more. Support our work!

[SIGN UP TODAY](#)

Kasargod solar park's capacity reduced from 200MW to 50MW amid protest


Reported by **Anupriya S**
 Legal Review by **Priyansha Chouhan, Anmol Gupta**
 Edited by **Anupa Sagar Kujur**

Published on October 31, 2023



State
Kerala

Ambalathinkara Near Velluda Sri Durga Bhagavathi Temple,
Kasargod
Kasargod



Sector
Power

Reason or Cause of Conflict
Renewable Power

Land Area Affected (in Hectares)

242 ha

Starting Year

2017

Land Conflict Summary

The Kerala government [slashed the capacity](#) of its ambitious solar park in Kasargod from 200MW to 50MW amid stiff opposition by residents. In 2015, the government had [announced](#) its plan to set up solar power parks in three localities of Kasargod district with a total capacity of 200MW in a bid to achieve its renewable energy target of 21% by 2022. The government decided to generate 200MW from 1,086 acres spread across three areas in Kasargod: Ambalathumkara in Madikai panchayat; Paivalike and Meeja panchayats; and Kinanur-Karinthalam panchayat. The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) signed two tripartite arrangements in this connection. The first one was with the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) and Tehri Hydroelectric Development Corporation India Limited (THDCIL) for a 50MW project. And the second one, which was also for a 50MW plant, with KSEB and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA). On 13 February, 2015, an MoU was signed between the THDCIL and SECI, while a deal with IREDA was signed on 31 March, 2015. This apart, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) had proposed another 100MW solar power plant to be set up in the Kasargod under its proposed 2,000MW viability gap funding (VGF) scheme of the Centre. The entire project was eligible for a central government assistance of Rs 40 crore. The central government offers up to Rs 50 lakh per megawatt to every recognised solar park. A solar power plant with 200MW capacity is categorised as a solar park by the central government. A land survey for the acquisition of land for the project took place in July 2015. The project, however, hit a roadblock as residents strongly opposed land acquisition at such a large scale and claimed that the move would affect their livelihoods, disrupt connectivity with neighbouring villages and result in the loss of commons like playgrounds. They also alleged that the implementation of the project would have a negative impact on their access to water. Opposition from CPI(M)-ruled Panchayats also made the land transfers challenging. A media [report](#) stated that water pipes and roads were damaged during the implementation of the project, affecting normal lives in the area. For the entire solar park, the Renewable Power Corporation of Kerala Limited (RPCKL) - the joint venture between KSEB and SECI - took on the state-level land acquisition responsibility. In 2016, the state government [transferred](#) land to KSEB in Karinthalam (169 acres) and Paivalike (430 acres) for the project. The original area comprised 484 acres of leased revenue land in Velluda, Ambalathara village located in the Madikai Panchayat. In October 2017, the Kerala government scaled down the solar power park's capacity due to the inability to acquire more lands. The parties involved constructed a new public road around the large solar park and developed a playground in Kundara, which is located about 3-4 km from the old one. Those affected were also given rehabilitation packages. While there is no government data available for the number of people who were affected, a research [documented](#) how the Adivasi families living in the area without land titles lost their small pieces of lands due to the project. One stakeholder noted, "they surveyed this land by informing us as re-survey of land for the distribution to landless. Our house also included in this survey. We don't have land title to this land and we put forward some demands, but they didn't agree. This area is highly populated area and it is a tribal settlement. Because of protest they left now". "We have lost our small piece of land because of this project." Another stakeholder said, "Many people lost their land because of big projects... In this area 9 people lost land and among them five people don't have title. They first told that they will give land, but till now they didn't give ... There are many households residing in this solar park area, they were shifted to the side of the solar park, company only did this. There is nothing done from the part of the Government." Since the project had to be scaled down, the Kerala government [lost central assistance](#) to the tune of Rs 900 crore for the solar park. The solar power plant (spread across 250 acres) built by IREDA and SECI became operational in a phased manner starting from December 15, 2016, after a delay of seven months. With a change in electoral government, the LDF-led state went ahead with the 50MW project by THDCIL. The solar power plant spread across 250 acres was inaugurated by PM Modi on February 19, 2021.

Fact Sheet

Demand/Contention of the Affected Community
 Demand to retain/protect access to common land/resources
 Refusal to give up land for the project
 Opposition against environmental degradation

Other Demand/Contention of the Affected Community
 Demand to modify the project

Region Classification
 Rural

Type of Land
 Common and Private

Type of Common Land
 Non-Forest (Other than Grazing Land)

Status of Project
 Project completed

Whether the Project has been Delayed
 Yes

Significance of Land to Land Owners/Users
 Government or community-regulated urban commons, Residential area

Whether the project was stalled due to land conflict
 No

Source/Reference

Total investment involved (in Crores):
 ₹590

Type of investment:
 Cost of Project

Has the Conflict Ended?
 Yes

Why did the conflict end?
 Project/scheme was cancelled or modified
 The land area initially proposed for acquisition for the Solar Park was reduced following the reduction in the capacity from 200MW to 50MW. A new playground was constructed in Kundara, around 3-4 kms from the site and a stretch of road was constructed around the solar park for commuting purpose.

Legal Data

Legislations/Policies Involved
Kerala Solar Energy Policy, 2013
 Para 10 [The state government must assess suitable land for development of solar installations. For tribal lands, a revenue sharing mechanism based on power generated is envisaged under the policy. The willingness of the land owner is mandatory. Only land that does not have an immediate productive use shall be identified.]

Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013
 Section 4(1) [Whenever the Government seeks to acquire land for any public purpose, it shall consult the panchayat in the affected area and conduct a Social Impact Assessment]
 Section 5 [A public hearing shall be conducted at the affected area to ascertain the views of the affected families, which shall be recorded in the SIA Report]

Kerala Survey and Boundaries Act, 1961

Whether claims/objections were made as per procedure in the relevant statute
 No

Legal Processes and Loopholes Enabling the Conflict:
 Controversial land acquisition by the government

Whether any adjudicatory body was approached
 No

Whether criminal law was used against protestors:
 No

Additional Information

Nature of Protest
 Objections as part of official procedures
 Public campaign

Government Departments Involved in the Conflict:
 Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB)

PSUs Involved in the Conflict:
 Renewable Power Corporation of Kerala Limited (RPCKL), Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI), Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Limited (THDCIL), Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)

Did LCW Approach Corporate Parties for Comments?
 No

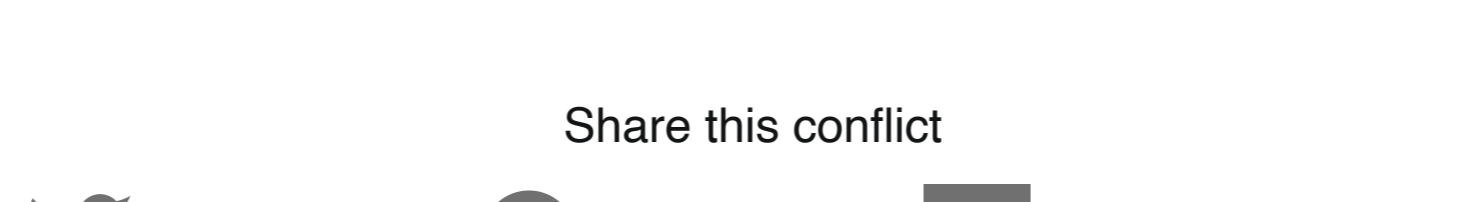
Information on the use of criminal law

Resources















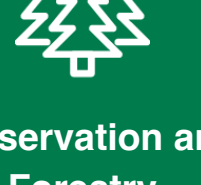

Resources Related to Conflict

- News Articles Related to the Conflict: [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)
- Documents Related to the Conflict: [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)
- Links Related to the Conflict: [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

Share this conflict



Other Land Conflicts in Kerala

<p>Canal rejuvenation project set for a rollout despite opposition from community members in Kochi, Kerala</p> <p>Perandoor Ernakulam</p> <p> Infrastructure Sector  Kerala State</p>	<p>Road Project in Kerala Violates CRZ Norms, Encroaches Wetland Declared Ramsar Site</p> <p>Kollam</p> <p> Infrastructure Sector  Kerala State</p>	<p>Kerala Government Allows IREL To Continue Sand Mining in Alappad Despite Protests</p> <p>Alappad Kollam</p> <p> Mining Sector  Kerala State</p>	<p>Farmers in Kannur Protest Against Land Acquisition for Highway Project</p> <p>Keezhattur Kannur</p> <p> Infrastructure Sector  Kerala State</p>
<p>Families in Chengara Await Land Titles for 12 Years</p> <p>Chengara Pathanamthitta</p> <p> Land Use Sector  Kerala State</p>	<p>Illegal land holding by Harrisons Malayalam Ltd in Kerala</p> <p>Kollam, Thrissur, Waynad Pathanamthitta</p> <p> Industry Sector  Kerala State</p>	<p>Residents Protest Against Sand Mining in Beach Alappuzha</p> <p>Thottappally Alappuzha</p> <p> Mining Sector  Kerala State</p>	<p>Adivasis continue to fight for land rights in Wayanad, 15 years after the Muthanga agitation</p> <p>Valavayal Wayanad</p> <p> Conservation and Forestry Sector  Kerala State</p>