



**Land Conflict
Watch**

Project Sneak Peek

**Exclusive Insights into
our Future Work**

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Renewable Energy and Land Conflicts

India has policies in place to govern the ownership, control and regulation of private lands. The same cannot be said for vast areas of common lands that mostly remain devoid of protection. Most common lands are collectively owned and used by communities. This collective ownership results in the absence of proper documentation of the tenorial nature of these lands making them vulnerable to takeover, by governments and industries, without adequate compensation or legal protection to communities. While most industries like coal and other mining industries seeking mineral-rich areas go after dense forest land, renewable energy projects are often set up on grazing lands or so-called wastelands. 'Wastelands' that are also of immense value to the community.

Unlike forest land, these wastelands have little or no policies governing them, which is what sets apart conflicts around renewable energy projects.

By the end of this decade, India plans to increase its renewable energy capacity by more than three times to reach its 500 GW (gigawatt) goal by 2030. The renewable energy industry has large investments set aside to facilitate its expansion but experts warn that the main concern is now the availability of land for these projects. Solar and wind power plants require large tracts of land and India's renewable energy plans will increase the stress on its land availability.

And to meet its net zero emission targets by 2100, India hopes to exponentially increase its renewable energy generation. According to experts, up to 6% of India's total land would be required to achieve this target — nearly the size of the state of Gujarat. This is predicted to cause a huge spike in the demand for land and an increase in conflicts with communities dependent on these lands.

As stories of resistance to individual projects get reported as isolated cases, we decided to document and analyse more such case studies from across the country. Until now, we have managed to document 15 cases of land conflicts caused due to renewable energy projects.

Snippets from our ongoing research

Across India, upcoming or even proposed solar and wind projects are already witnessing opposition from land users and owners. So far, we have recorded 15 cases of conflict across the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka and Gujarat. These conflicts are:

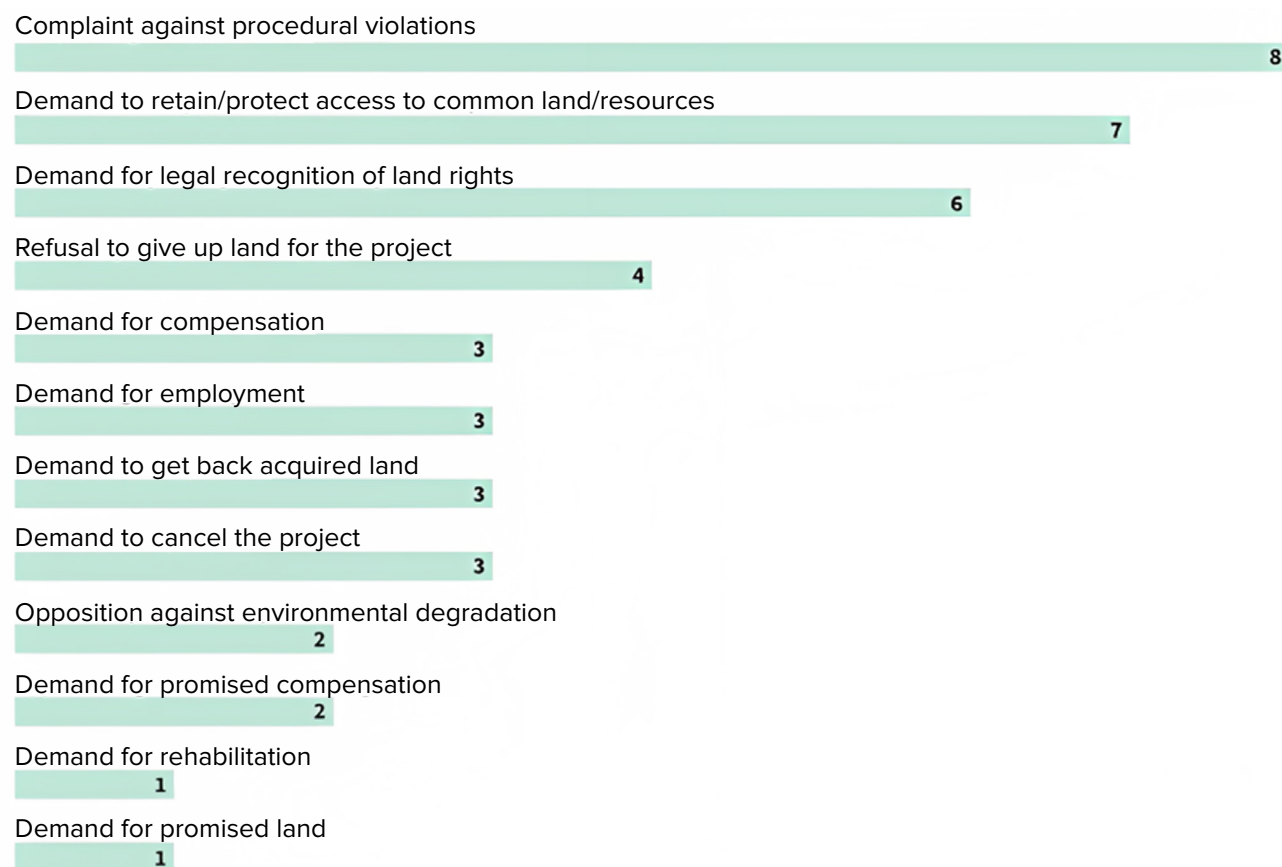
- » spread across an area of 21,425.12 hectares
- » involve investments worth at least Rs.58,638 crores

Seven of these conflicts alone affect 8,352 people (data was unavailable for the remaining eight conflict cases).

Findings from the study till now:

Why are these Projects Being Contested by Communities?

In many cases, communities allege that due procedure was not followed during the takeover of land. Another common contention is the denial of communities' right to retain access to common land and resources. In two cases, communities even alleged that the project poses a threat to the local environment.



Contention or demands of the affected communities

