



Failure to settle forest claims is leading to tree-felling

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Keri: Trees near and even inside protected areas in Goa are becoming casualties of strained relations between forest officials and the dwellers of these areas. Post Goa's liberation, concrete efforts were not taken up to rehabilitate the residents living near and inside protected areas in the state.

For ages, villagers of Sattari, Sanguem, Dharbandora and Canacona engaged in slash-and-burn cultivation known as kumeri sheti. After 1961, these practices were banned in the forested regions, but simultaneous effort to rehabilitate those dependent on such cultivations was not taken up. This resulted in kumeri farmers developing cashew plantations in the areas.

In recent years, increasing incidents of deforestation in various parts of forested areas and also inside the wildlife sanctuaries are being found, which pose a threat to wildlife. "The villagers, who are owners of the properties inside the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, are not allowed to enjoy the fruit of their hard work and this is resulting in unrest among them," Ranjeet Rane from Sonal-Sattari told TOI.

Activities of deforestation inside wildlife sanctuaries and other forested areas result in soil erosion, causing siltation and sedimentation in the rivers and rivulets. Though forest settlement officers were appointed to settle claims and rights of the forest dwelling communities, so far no concrete steps have been taken to resolve the issue.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/failure-to-settle-forest-claims-is-leading-to-tree-felling/articleshowprint/78482387.cms>