

CFR Mapping in Kerala - the Central Kerala (including Kadar PVTG) experience

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CFR Mapping in Kerala - the Central Kerala (including Kadar PVTG) experience

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A. Background

The claiming of Community Rights (CR) and Community Forest Resource Right (CFR) of nine villages including eight Kadar (PVTG) and one Malayar, recognition of these claims and issue of titles to these rights was the first such instance in the State of Kerala². 33 titles were issued by the Thrissur DLC during 2012. Titles were not issued to other villages because of lack a scalable map for issuing a proper title.³

The Anamalai part of Kerala in Western Ghats is home to five tribal groups namely the Kadar, Malayar, Malasar, Muthuvan and Malamalasar. The Kadar and Malayar are the major tribal groups in Anamalai; the other tribal groups are in very few villages in the Kerala part of Anamalai. The Kadars are endemic to the landscape and are listed as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) and are the major tribal group in the region residing in 24 forest villages of which 19 are within the Kerala part of Anamalai. The area include Central forest circle (four Forest Divisions - Thrissur, Chalakkudy, Vazhachal and Malayattur) and (Protected Areas) PAs like the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve in Palakkad district, and Peechi-Vazhani wildlife Sanctuaries within the Thrissur district.

As a total the 36 Gram Sabhas (GSs) of Thrissur district listed under FRA by Govt. of Kerala claimed the CRs and CFRs for the 52 habitations or settlements and some, where the maps were prepared and verified by GSs (33 out of 52), have been recognized by SDLC and DLC during 2012; others were pending at DLC and SDLC. The successful CFR process by Kadar GSs of Vazhachal with the support of Hornbill Foundation, and the subsequent post-CFR support for functioning of Malakkapara Kadar GS with the constitution of CFR management committee (CFRmC) has created a

¹Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation

² The Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation (Hornbill Foundation) has been working with the Kadar for their rights, right-based conservation, inclusive education and empowerment since 2000. It became formal with the development of Kadar Ethnic Community Based Monitoring of Hornbills and Hornbill nesting trees along with the forest department in 2004. This collaboration to experiment and understand various issues related to conservation, ecological monitoring, local language based education and rights of the indigenous communities in Kerala led subsequently to the Grama Sabhas of the Kadar community to claim Community (CR) and Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights.

³ This has been resolved now with the support of Hornbill Foundation under a research programme supported by Centre for Environment and Development (CED), Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)- Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) Western Ghats Small Grants, supporting the ST Department, SDLC and DLC and GSs for preparation of CFR maps and conversion into scalable maps with GPS readings resulting in preparation and/or issue of a total of 52 titles in the district

model. At the same time, progress of recognition of CR and CFR rights in other parts of the state (table 1) has not advanced because of three major reasons

- i. The authorities under FRA (GS, SDLC and DLC) are not properly aware of the importance of the Act and the procedures under it as the time allotted for most of the meetings on FRA was less than an hour,
- ii. Lack of proper claims, resolutions, evidences and CFR maps, and
- iii. Lack of a scalable CFR maps for DLC to know the actual extent and boundaries of CFRs to issue proper titles, and also for keeping it as record of right.

The intervention by Hornbill foundation to support and empower DLC, SDLC and GSs for conversion of provisional maps, which are prepared, accepted and submitted by GS, to a scalable map using toposheets and GPS readings along with proper evidences and claims became fruitful. As a result 52 CFR rights were conferred by the DLC and titles are being issued in the Thrissur District of Kerala which covers about 70% of the Kerala part of Anamalai in Western Ghats. The lead role played by SDLC and DLC (apart from GSs), especially that of Chairman of SDLC and DLC, and also the Tribal Department were the key reasons for this success.

B. A brief Status of CFR in Kerala

The progress in recognition of CFR was very slow and pathetic so far in Kerala. The major reasons are the lack of clarity regarding the CRs and CFRs in the beginning, defunct Gram Sabhas (GSs) at a practical level, direct and indirect opposition from Forest Department and lack of conversion of provisional maps submitted by GSs to a scalable map helpful to keep as record of right as well as clarity regarding the boundaries and extant to be provided in the final titles. The main reasons for opposition from forest department are:

- i. Desire to give titles to Participatory Forest Management (PFM) bodies⁴ whom they can control rather than the GS,
- ii. Weakening of PFM bodies in both (Minor Forest Produce) MFP and Forest management activities in the tribal areas, loss of power to the GSs, and inadequate or no

⁴ These are village level bodies constituted by the Forest Department from the local communities called *Vana Samrakshana Samithy* (VSS) in the territorial divisions and Eco Development Committee (EDC) in the Protected Areas. These bodies are controlled by the Forest Department with a forest officer designated as its Secretary. These bodies are the lower level bodies to carry out the activities envisaged by the State Forest Development Agency (SFDA), a body registered under the Societies Act, created by the Forest Department.

support in CFR mapping or GS strengthening activities by other departments including Scheduled Tribe (ST) and other organisations.

These have resulted in the refusal to sign titles sighting various reasons not legitimate under Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) and its amended rules 2012.

District	No. of FRCs constituted	No. of claims passed by Grama Sabha	No. of claims rejected by Grama Sabha	No. of claims passed by SDLC	No. of claims pending with SDLC	No. of claims passed by DLC	No. of claims pending with DLC	Number of villages where final mapping process is completed(i.e. using GPS or any other tool)	No. of Titles issued	DLC passed but titles not issued
1	2	6	7	9	11	12	14	0	15	16 (12-15)
Thiruvanthapuram	36	19	0	2	17	2	0	0	0	2
Kollam	14	14	0	14	0	14	0	0	3	11
Pathanamthitta	18	20	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	0
Kottayam	12	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	0
Idukki	93	26	0	26	0	0	26	0	0	0
Eranakulam	14	14	0	14	0	14	0	0	3	11
Thrissur	36	52	0	52	0	52	0	52	9	43
Palakkad	91	71	9	44	27	0	44	0	0	0
Malappauram	28	55	0	45	0	32	0	0	0	32
Kozhikodu	2	4	0	4	0	4	0	0	4	0
Wayanad	109	195	171	24	171	23	0	0	0	23
Kannur	57	31	0	29	0	27	2	0	0	27
Total	510	503	180	271	215	170	87	52	21	149

Out of the total 510 GSs designated⁵ all over the state, only 170 CR and CFR claims out of the 503 claims passed by GS have been approved by the DLC. Another 87 are pending with DLC. Out of the approved claims, titles were yet to be issued in 149 claims awaiting proper mapping or conversion of maps to a scalable map. Only 9 out of the 21 titles issued in the Vazhachal area of Thrissur District have map and proper details in the titles given to GS, the legitimate body. The remaining 43 titles in Thrissur

⁵ By Kerala Govt (Panchayats) on 15th July 2008 (G.O.(Ms)No.74/2008/SCSTSS dated07-07-2008

district are almost ready with DLC (waiting for signature from DFOs). All these were properly done with intervention and empowerment of the GS⁶. The

Both the GS and the Ward Sabha under the Panchayat Raj Act 1994 in the State is unwieldy in terms of population comprising nearly 1000 people of mixed nature where ST population is a minority. The decision to designate hamlets or cluster of small hamlets as villages and their gatherings as GS based on the Working Group⁷ recommendation was in conformity with FRA considering that the STs constituting just 1.48% of the total population of the state are also dispersed all through the hill ranges. However, this was not translated in practice with the state Government preferring to consider only the 'forest settlements' as villages instead of considering forest dependence rather than the status of the land, whether forest or revenue. Many forest dependent people have been pushed out of forests as part of the 'historical injustice'. According to the FRA and its amended rules of 2012, if the communities have traditional access to forest resources they are also eligible for "Rights" and they have the right to be designated as eligible GSs under FRA. In some earlier cases of 'encroachment', the forest department pushed them into forest fringes in the name of 'settling of rights' prior to 2006 and through 'developmental and tribal rehabilitation programmes' of ST department which also led to the continuation of the 'historical injustice' (Bachan *et al* 2014).

At the same time, after the lapse of 6-7 years since the designation of these habitations as GSs for the purpose of FRA, not a single GS started functioning as statutorily designated authority under FRA. It was considered as one among the nearly six kinds of hamlet level gatherings or beneficiary bodies operated by various departments including Forest, Tribal and Panchayat and other organisations. Most of the Forest Rights Committee (FRC) members do not know the powers and responsibilities vested in the GSs and FRCs or Community Forest Resource Management Committees (CFRmCs) under FRA (Bachan *et al* 2014). The Malakkappara Kadar GS may be the only exception where the GS meetings, providing public notices, maintaining their own minutes book, constituting FRCs and CFRmCs, claiming CRs and CFRs, developing a bylaw, opening an account in the State Bank of India, and also signing agreement with District Authorities took place. This process was facilitated since 2010 and the post-CFR process was after February 2013.

⁶ By research scheme carried out by Hornbill Foundation supported by CED and CEPF-ATREE Western Ghats Small Grants Programme .

⁷ Report of the Working Group (G.O.(Ms)No. 62/2008/SCSTDD

C. The CFR process in Thrissur District of Kerala

The Hornbill Foundation started looking at traditional forest dwellings and the resource collection areas of the Kadar community, and used the terrain knowledge as well as the Kadars' knowledge on species and ecosystems (and its functions) initially for monitoring of Hornbill Nest trees; later this was extended to cover other endangered resources including some non-timber forest produces (NTFPs) from 2004-05 onwards which continue till date (Bachan 2006, Bachan *et al* 2011 and Bachan and Anitha 2013). Hornbill Foundation has been using the traditional forest dwelling routes and location names for making community based resource / hornbill monitoring protocol and mapped with Global Positioning System (GPS) for making it systematic and to scientifically validate monitoring.

Initial process in Vazhachal area of Thrissur District

Awareness programs and campaigns on CFRs commenced during 2009. Claims were made for CRs and CFRs in 9 villages in Vazhachal Forest Division including 8 Kadar (PVTG) and one Malayar (non PVTG) villages in 2010-11⁸. The Hornbill Monitoring team of Kadars facilitated the Gram Sabhas in empowering them for resource use mapping and demarcating the area. This began with holding GS meetings, discussions, listing of CRs (NTFPs, fish, firewood, cattle grazing and other resources), mapping, and support to FRCs and GS for preparing and filing claims and collecting evidences. In addition, the CFR area associated with their habitations was demarcated which essentially (refers to their present use of habitat), intellectual property and the Section 5 through Section 3(1)i (CFR management) were claimed. The trained tribal hornbill monitoring team from each village verified and carried out the ground truthing of the maps made using GPS.

However, contrary to FRA that CR and CFR rights be recognized as rights of each of the GSs, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) pushed for a single combined CR and CFR area for all the 9 settlements including PVTG as well as non-PVTG villages which were 5 – 50 km apart. But this was opposed by the Gram Sabhas as well as Hornbill Foundation. Consequently both the individual maps and combined maps were put together with the claims and they got recognition. The authorities were implored to provide titles with description of boundaries of the area. The titles issued were in English and not in the regional language, Malayalam. Titles for CRs were issued

⁸ World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) joined to support Kadars in this programme.

separately. There were no rights for firewood collection. A single CFR titles was issued for eight PVTG habitations and one non-PVTG habitation. WWF selected a few members into a single CFRmC for all the nine GSs and went ahead to register it as a society / trust. This was again opposed by GSs and a complaint was filed jointly by all the 8 Kadar GSs with the authorities. Hornbill Foundation supported the legitimate model also looking at the current practices of management at the micro level by each of the GS and their area. Some of the criticisms with the joint CFR which artificially attempted to incorporate remote villages as well as PVTG and non-PVTG villages were discussed in a state level workshop⁹ (Bachan *et al* 2014).

The Workshop was followed by discussion with state authorities, viz. the ST Department. The DLC and SDLC focused on just the Malakkappara Kadar GS in Vazhachal for the post-CFR process. By-laws for GS for its official functioning was developed based on FRA. Letterhead and seal (basically to get rid of misuse of GS identity), and opening bank account to function as an official body were the next steps carried out. They have signed agreement with district authorities for crop management and bamboo based craft training. The GS requested support from forest department for MFP collection and forest management, but these were yet to be addressed.

Facilitation of CFRs through strengthening of Authorities under FRA (GSs, SDLC and DLC)

Hornbill Foundation¹⁰ had earlier organized various training programmes and released a book in the regional language, Malayalam, on FRA that included interpretation and translations of FR Act 2006, Rules 2012, various forms, model maps, claims and also FAQ published by MoTA. Original act and rules was also provided as appendix in the book. This has been used widely by officials as well as tribal people (Bachan *et al* 2013).

The second and parallel step undertaken was the facilitation of CFR declarations, CFR mapping and post-CFR agenda in the area through empowering the authorities such as GSs, SDLC and DLC to carry out their statutory duties as provided for in the law and its Rules. These included briefing of DLC and SDLC on the importance of the

⁹ This workshop held at Thiruvananthapuram on 3-4 November 2014 was organized jointly by Hornbill Foundation and CED with the support of the GSs and organisaions across state after holding four regional workshops.

¹⁰ Under *Facilitation of CFRs in Southern Western Ghats*, a project jointly carried out between Hornbill Foundation and Centre for Environment and Development (CED) with support under CEPF-ATREE 2012. Hornbill Foundation began collaborating with ST Department, Kerala, the nodal agency for FRA.

FRA and its various provisions, the amended Rules of 2012, and also the importance of the powers and functions of GSs. Empowerment of Officials as well as GS members and village level facilitators, helped the SDLC and DLC through ST department to scrutinize CR and CFR claim forms for the necessary requirement including resolution, maps, evidences etc. The maps submitted by the GSs were converted to scalable maps with traditional boundaries recorded through GPS.

Peculiarities of the traditional boundaries of tribal communities

All the tribal communities in Kerala have traditional boundary demarcation for their CFR such as MFP collection area. These are usually associated with the following:

1. Topographic features such as mountains, rocks, valleys etc
2. Hydrological features such as rivers, rivulets etc
3. Ecosystems and big trees, some species domain, caves etc
4. Their places of traditional worship or previous residence etc

All these above said features are further associated with an adjective that refers to a sub-feature indicating their lives, some incidents or persons or nature of the terrain such as open forest, degraded area, sacred area etc. For example, the Kadar land mark name “*Orukombankootty*” located in the boundary of Parambikulam actually indicates the name of the place “*Orukomban*” with an adjective “*Kootty*” generally referring to the point of the confluence of tributaries of the three major tributaries of the Chalakkudy River. The term “*Pural*”, for instance, refers to open rocky places in the evergreen forests.

The traditional resource use and dwelling area of the tribes of Kerala are usually forest lands. More than 50% of the traditional forests were converted into tea, coffee and such monoculture plantations through leasing and also for developing timber as well as softwood plantations by forest department. Forest lands as in Wayanad and Idukki were given to private persons for agriculture; large tracts of forests were cleared for dams and reservoirs. There have been restrictions for MFP collection in the PAs directly or indirectly. But tribes are still depending on MFPs and fish for their livelihood and they have to access these forest lands.

Generally Kerala does not have forests outside ‘forest land’, within revenue lands, private or community lands. Hence the CR and CFR provisions are applicable almost in all the forest hamlets and forest areas. Traditional access to and use of forests reduced in the last many years because of direct and indirect restriction by forest department especially in PAs.; but there is a regular outflow of forest produce to the open market.

Bamboo is collected by the Kerala State Bamboo Corporation Ltd., a Government of Kerala undertaking; other MFPs are collected and marketed by 'Vanasree', the cooperative society set up by the Forest Department, the PFM bodies under SFDA, and/or directly marketed through private people even till today.

Community Forest Resource Delineation and Mapping methodology

The CR and CFR mapping process were completed in the Vazhachal area for eight Kadar and one Malayar settlements. This was the first such initiative in Kerala. The exercise actually looked at resource collection customary boundary of each village using the support of the hornbill monitoring team and GPS recording of the traditional landmarks already recorded for the hornbill monitoring process. But the experience threw up practical and legal challenges which required further inputs to improve the methodology in order to ensure a simple process without hurdles for claiming CFR, its declaration and recognition covering actual traditional use-area of the tribal communities.

Some of the draw backs of the mapping in the Vazhachal area

1. WWF suggestion for a combined CFR map (fig. 1) for eight PVTG (Kadar) villages and one non-PVTG (Malayar) in the area where most of the settlements are 5-45 km away.
2. The northern boundary of the common CFR boundary was adjusted with the Forest Division boundary keeping the Parambikulam Wild Life Sanctuary area outside the CFR (Fig.1). This is contrary to FRA which applies to Protected Areas also.

Fig. 1. Combined CFR map.



3. In the combined CFR as recommended by WWF, more area was demarcated for one community, the non-PVTG (no. 5 with blue dotted line) over a PVTG (Kadar) CFR area, actually four time larger than they traditionally enjoyed. But it was resolved by producing the individual CFR area map by GSs as facilitated by Hornbill Foundation. The titles were provided with both the maps (Fig. 2)

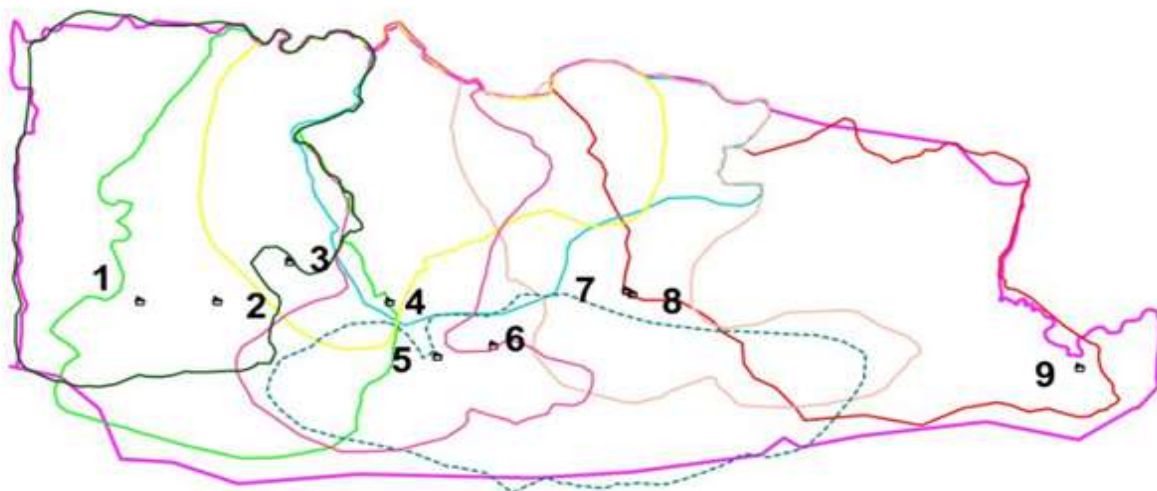


Fig 2 individual CFR area overlapped with combined CFR; settlement no. 5 is a non PVTG and their area is indicated by the blue dotted line.

5. The combined map was not converted into GIS based in order to calculate the exact area. (It was a copy of the toposheet on which the boundary was drawn using sketch pen almost following the boundary of the Vazhachal Forest Division. Therefore the area specified in the titles were not exactly correct).

6. The combined map (for detailed analysis see Bachan *et al*, 2014) provided exclusive right for the nine villages in an area; however the surrounding Kadar villages from adjacent areas (Parambikulam, Chalakkudy and Malayattur) too have rights and traditional access to these areas. (Fig. 3 - overlapping CFR areas shall be claimed and mapped later).

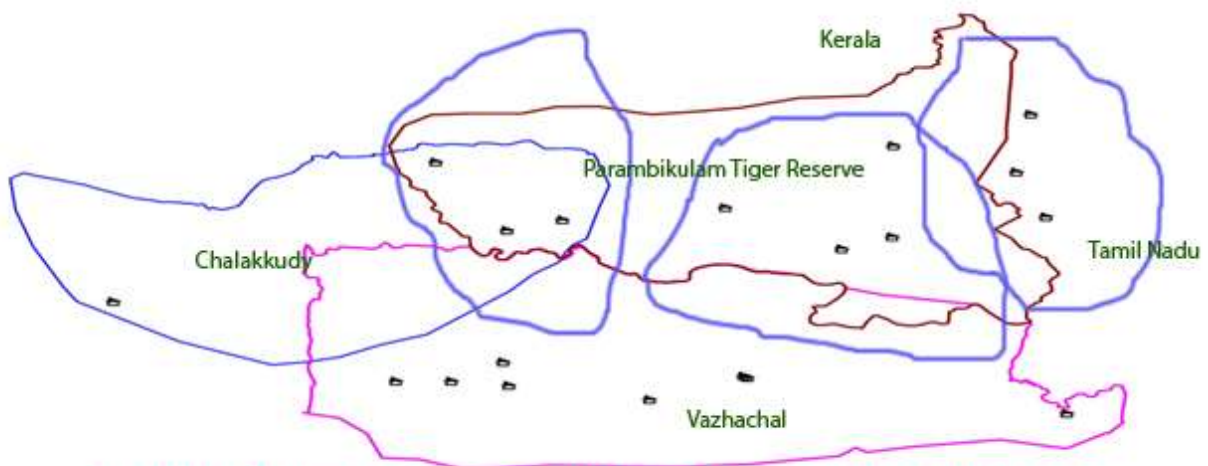


Fig. 3. Kadar PVTG villages, possible overlap in future CFRs for Kadars over the title given in Vazhachal

This issue was overcome by the GSs when the GS specific CFR areas along with constitution of CFRmC at their Grama Sabha level was carried out.

Improved Mapping methodology for Kadars as well as other 43 hamlets/villages (total 52) in the Thrissur district of Kerala

Facilitation of Community level CFR delineation (customary resource use boundary)

A critical analysis of the claims filed, maps prepared by GSs and submitted to SDLC and also some of the supporting maps provided by Forest Department indicated the following problems:

1. Claims were not complete, some claims were without Form C, no maps in some cases, no evidences and no resolutions of GSs or not properly done or written.

2. Some of the maps submitted by the GSs were correct as their traditional access area, but the Forest Department at SDLC or DLC level refused to accept them for reasons such as hand drawn over paper, not to scale, cover different forest areas, covers all of the forest division etc.

3. Maps provided by Forest Department (FD) were either maps of the management area of the PFM units (Vana Samrakshana Samithy/Eco-Development Committee) demarcated by the forest department during the preparation of management plans of the PFM units after 1998. These are very small areas, less than 50-100 ha. Or they were administrative maps of the department without indicating the traditional resource use areas.

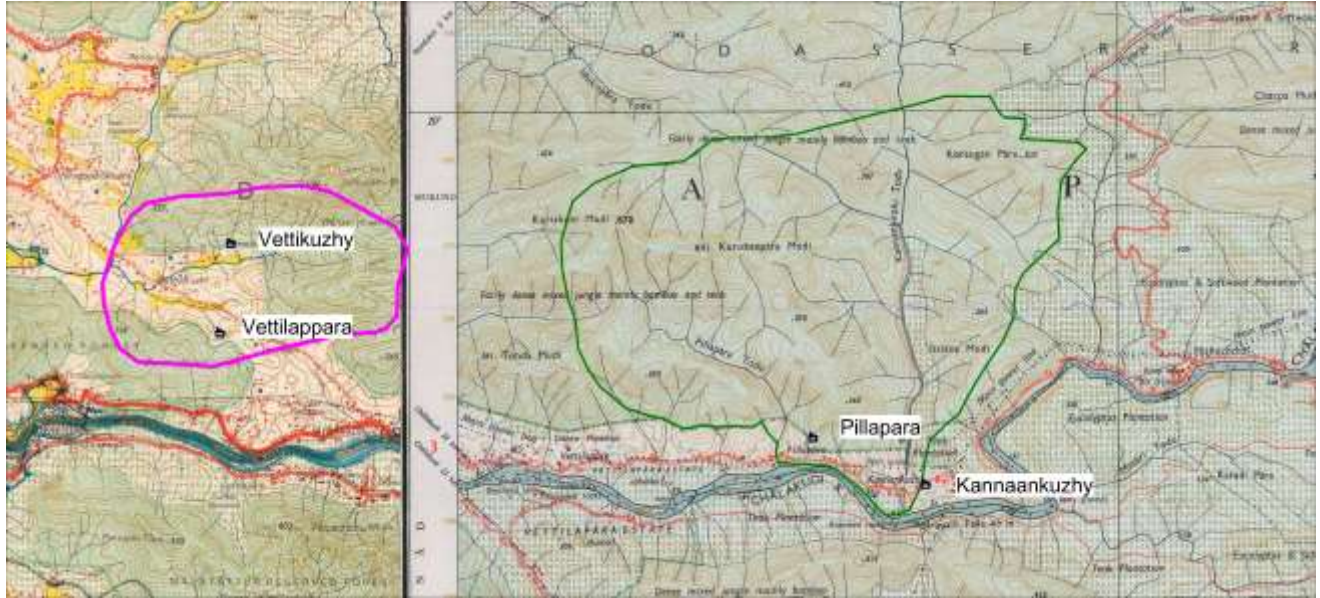
Therefore, community level mapping had to be adopted as the first step of the mapping exercise which then is converted to a GIS based scalable map over the toposheets.

Community level mapping

Traditional resources use boundaries were demarcated by chiefly looking at traditional landmarks, recording of the local names and developing a map while the community themselves placed the traditional land marks on paper.

Honey is the most common MFP collected by the community. In order to collect the honey, they traverse wide areas within their traditional habitat to the maximum extent. The landmarks for honey collection became the most important component of mapping on which areas where other MFPs such a black dammar, wild nutmeg, medicinal herbs etc, fish and other forest produces were accessed were demarcated.

In all the cases except two, a single CFR per habitation was adopted. The communities suggested demarcation of separate CFRs for each habitation. An area where more than one hamlet of different communities and different origins were designated to be a single GS under FRA by Government merely on the basis of low population. Later it was proved true that the CFR areas of the individual settlements were different. Two CFRs maps were prepared and submitted by Vettikuzhy GS which include 4 habitations (Vettikuzhy, Pillappara, Kannankuzhy and Vettilappara) of which three are of Malayars and one is of Ulladars.



Three villages (Mettippadam, Manalai and Kamalakatty) requested for single CFR (Mettippadam GS).



The political and administrative boundaries were suggested by the forest department for demarcating CFRs merely so that it would then be easy for the forest officials to demarcate and recognize CFRs. However, this was not acceded to.

Verification and Conversion of Community prepared maps to scalable map to provide titles

Arrangement for GS gathering

The Tribal Promoter¹¹ of the tribal department and the GS members were given two days training and a discussion was held at district Tribal office for scheduling dates for community gathering for verification of maps. GS meetings were planned along with Tribal Department officials under a direction from SDLC and DLC. Two kinds of meetings were conducted:

1. Gathering of a cluster of habitations where maps were already prepared by the community and submitted, i.e. gathering of forest dwellers, honey collectors and FRC members from 2-3 adjacent villages at a suitable location, mostly a Panchayat Hall, Forest Office, Community hall or an accessible village.
2. Gram Sabha meetings of habitations or villages where maps were not properly drawn or where claim process was yet to be completed at the village level.

Community mapping process

The procedure followed for mapping was by first listing out all the traditional landmarks of the MFP collection area and other resource use and land use, and marking these land marks on the maps using Participatory Appraisal Approach (PRA) methods. These were later converted onto a large sheet of paper. Care was taken to have maximum landmarks for more clarity. Photocopies of the toposheets or computer images (GIS) were used for more clarity for the facilitation team. The maps prepared by community involved traditional landmarks, CFR boundary, various resources and their collection areas, their status such as resource rich and depleted areas and sometimes a general land-use of the forest landscape.

GPS reading of the traditional landmarks

The Survey of India toposheets were used for mapping because -

- i. There are no cadastral maps for forest areas in Kerala, except forests lands converted into revenue.

¹¹ Tribal Promoters are identified from within the habitation/ward (usually within every 50 households) and appointed by the Tribal Department to liaise between the Department and the community. The Tribal Promoter is to ensure better access to the welfare and development measures offered to Scheduled Tribes by the Department.

- ii. The forest officials usually use toposheet as a base for mapping of forest administrative boundary as well as for preparation of various thematic maps including vegetation.
- iii. There was an updating of toposheets up to late 1970s; hence many of the landmarks were already available in the toposheets
- iv. The 1:50000 scale maps are more useful since the CFR or the traditional MFP collection area of tribes extend over large areas ranging from 1,000 ha for settled agriculture tribes to 25,000 ha for non-settled and PVTG tribes.
- v. Many names of forest areas available in the toposheets are of tribal origin.

Methods for GPS recording of the Traditional Landmarks

1. Landmark names already available in the toposheets or other maps were taken
2. Some traditional landmarks were already available with previous research works (eg. Hornbill and resource monitoring) or report (PFM microplans) and also in forest working and management plans
3. Ground level verification using GPS to empower community (The recent model of Garmin etrex GPS was used for better accuracy and satellite connectivity under evergreen forest canopy. Highly sophisticated and costly equipments are not required because the CFR landmarks are mostly large land marks such as mountains, hills, rivers, rocks etc where 20-100m accuracy does not matter and is sufficient, otherwise it becomes a hurdle for the community to afford)
4. Point GPS data was preferred for traditional landmarks because of (i.) the traditional landmarks are not an exact single point, but are usually hills, mountain tops, rivers etc., (ii.) It is not possible for a person to go along the exact CFR boundary using GPS to get a polygon data, especially in a highly undulating terrain. iii. The areas to be mapped are large, extending 30-100 kms in most of the cases.
5. Facilitated GPS recording for maximum landmarks for an efficient CFR map

Preparation of the GPS coded CFR map

- i. The traditional landmarks were marked in the toposheets and the GPS points were plotted using GIS software. The landmarks were labeled both in Malayalam and English.

information from various reports, especially old forest working plans, research reports really helped the community prove their traditional access rights. These, in addition, also constituted evidences for the claims.

Preparation of Final scalable CFR maps

- i. Corrections were made and incorporated into each map based on the verification process.
- ii. A common layout was used for all the final CFR maps that included title, index for symbols, symbols, dates of submission to GS and verification, signature of GS members, total area and perimeter.
- iii. Separate maps were prepared for each GS and also for each hamlet if there were more than one hamlet in the GS.
- iv. The final Maps were submitted to District Level ST department, supported them to ensure that the claims are properly made with forms, resolutions, evidences, list of GS members etc.
- v. These maps were submitted to GSs and then to SDLC for approval, or directly given to SDLC or DLC if the provisional maps submitted by the GS are already approved.
- vi. A copy of final maps as approved by DLC, was given to the GS in a large print.
- vii. Softcopy of the maps were given to ST department, the nodal agency for FRA, and also to DLC along with GIS vector layers suitable for future record keeping and management.

The present institutional structure

Permission and support for mapping was provided by ST department to Hornbill Foundation. The process was facilitated through analysis of the existing situation and briefing the DLC and SDLC, especially District Collectors and Sub-Collectors by Hornbill Foundation. The meetings are scheduled through the district ST department, whose officers are the member secretaries of the SDLC and DLC, and empowering tribal promoters and GS members simultaneously. Support of the forest field level staff and tribal forest watchers were also obtained.

The overall process was monitored by Sub-Collector with support from tribal department officials. The listing and constitution of GS were done by Panchayats with support of DLC, constitution of FRCs were facilitated by ST department. The process of preparing claims and processing was facilitated by ST department. Hornbill Foundation provided training and necessary help to the authorities under FRA ranging from the GSs to the SDLC and DLC. Hornbill Foundation facilitated community level mapping, ground-truthing using GPS and conversion of community prepared map to a scalable map superimposed on toposheet using GIS with technical support from CED. The post-CFR process facilitation begun is now continued with the support of ST department and District Authorities.

The critical involvement of DLC and SDLC, especially the Collectors and Sub-Collectors were critical because:

- i. The power vested in District Collectors and Sub-Collectors provided an inclusive platform in which indirect and illegitimate objections from the Forest Department were neutralized.
- ii. Briefing and enlightening on the importance of the FRA and the powers of GS provided a platform for proper empowering of officials in DLC and SDLC taking proper time.
- ii. It helped the ST department officials to learn the process and also placing everything in systematic and proper manner.

Result of the overall CFR facilitation and mapping

A total of 52 CFR maps and titles, including the earlier nine in the Vazhachal area (8 Kadars and one Malayar), have been prepared. DLC approved all these titles, along with maps; the titles were awaiting signature from District Collector, District Forest Officer, and Tribal Development Officer. When titles are distributed to the remaining 43 settlements, then Trissur district will become the first district in Kerala where CFR titles have been conferred to all settlements in the district listed as eligible by the government. The 52 CFR titles would cover nine Kadars (PVTGs), 38 Malayar, three Muthuvan and one Ulladar hamlets or villages. The CFRs cover forest land including that of the PAs. 36 FRCs were constituted for 52 hamlets or villages in the district.

Generally the GSs preferred individual CFRs for each village except in some cases. Three villages (Mettippdam, Manalai and Kamalakatty) requested for single CFR (Mettippadam GS). Pillappara GS in Athirapilly Grama Panchayat requested for two different titles for four hamlets (Vettikuzhy, Pillappara, Kannankuzhy and Vettilappara) since they are inhabited by two different communities (Malayar and Ulladar). In the above two cases in which the community asked for common CFR the settlements are closely living together (within two km radius) and belong to same community.

In general the CFR mapping has three stages, namely:

1. Community mapping of traditional boundaries drawn on a paper for claiming and DLC decision.,
2. Conversion of the community map into scalable map using GPS recording and superimposing over toposheet with support of technical expertise for the DLC to issue titles and keeping the record of rights.,
3. Detailed maps of the overlapping CFRs, its resources, vegetation etc in a minute scale using GIS; this can be used by forest and revenue department for planning and management.

The first one is a pre-requisite for claiming recognition and DLC decision while the second one is required for issuing of titles and keeping record of rights. The third one can be used for post-CFR management for the Government Departments. A similar map can be prepared at community level which can be used for the CFR Management Plan preparation and management by the community GSs. A complicated mapping process and making it a requisite for claiming, recognizing and issuing of CFR titles can delay the process of right recognition.

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