

COMMERCIALISATION OF FORESTS¹

The colonial policy on forests and forest dwellers during the early 19th century has not been explored extensively and has not been placed under scrutiny.² Studies so far have mainly focused on how the forest acts progressively curtailed the rights of forest dwellers but failed to assess the direct impact on their economy/rights.³ However, some studies attempted to give a bird's-eye view of the impact of the forest acts on the different categories of population.⁴ But they were centred on areas other than Madras Presidency.⁵

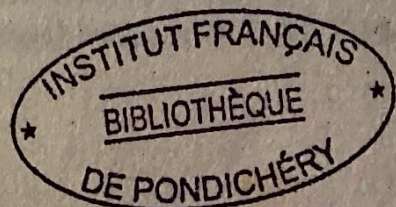
Further, the colonial forest policy on environment for the early 19th century has not been explored, and studies are focused on the period immediately after the first Forest Act 1865. Guha argued that the 1865 act had been enacted mainly to ensure control over forest supply for railways, and environmental issues had been neglected by not enforcing the rules. While drafting the Forest Act 1878, the debate on environment had taken place among the Forest Department officials at the centre and presidency level. At the central level, the emphasis was on controlling the forest by the state, whereas at the presidency level, particularly in Madras, the district administrators, while opposing the central views, wanted the needs of the local people to be considered. Ultimately, the presidency-level protest was suppressed by the colonial administration.⁶ According to Guha, the debate on environment had taken place within the Forest Department while drafting the Forest Act 1878.

Grove has argued that the debate on environment had taken place among the British colonial surgeons during the early colonial period. His claims based mainly on private papers, published records and imperial-level archives were that the British colonial surgeons have discussed the issues arising out of deforestation and its consequences on environment.⁷ Whether his claims were reflected in practice in Madras Presidency has to be ascertained with the help of presidency-level archival sources. During

the early 19th century, whether any importance was accorded for maintaining ecological balance and environmental protection or only a crass commercial forest policy was followed is of great importance.

The colonial government claimed that the forests were destroyed mainly by the forest dwellers, and hence, it had to restrict the tribal rights over forests, including their right over common property resources. Is this true? Has not any other factor led to the denudation of forests? Has the colonial administration really emphasised forest conservation or was it more interested in commercialisation of forests? While restricting tribal rights on forests, has any measure for their development been initiated by the British during the 19th century? Towards answering these queries, Salem and Baramahal region has been chosen, as it had the largest forest cover and forest dwellers in the whole of Madras Presidency.

In Madras Presidency, neither conservation was emphasised nor the tribals' access to forests was restricted during the pre-colonial as well as the early colonial period. In the 1830s, the tribal land and forest of Shervaroy hills were taken for coffee cultivation and, subsequently, several restrictions were imposed on the customary use of the forest. No other hill tribes have met with such problems in Madras Presidency. Until 1882, the colonial government did not have a concrete forest policy for Madras Presidency as a whole. In most parts of Madras Presidency, forest cover was invariably destroyed by contractors, traditional industries, neighbourhood towns and villages until the early colonial period.⁸ With these pre-colonial and early colonial factors, establishment of the British iron-making industries, Madras Railways and introduction of commercial crops in the hill areas, a large extent of prime forests was destroyed. In the early 19th century, conservation of forests was completely neglected by the colonial government. The second half of the 19th century witnessed a little importance being given for conservation, that too mainly for supplying fuel wood for Madras Railways and British iron-making industries. Without considering the factors responsible for the denudation, the colonial state imposed several restrictions on the tribals' traditional rights without initiating any measure for their development/welfare in the Salem and Baramahal region.⁹ Whenever, the tribals revolted against the appropriation of their rights, they were suppressed by the colonial military power.¹⁰ This chapter attempts to analyse commercialisation following the colonial forest policy and the alienation of tribals' rights on forest in the hill areas of Salem and Baramahal region of Madras Presidency in the period between colonial intervention (1792) and introduction of the Madras Forest Act 1882.



Early colonial forest policy

The colonial rulers had neglected the forests and their conservation during their early period.¹¹ They did not have a concrete forest policy till the sixth decade of the 19th century. Instead of maintaining ecological balance and protecting the environment by preserving forest resources, they leased them out for a meagre amount. Until 1835, they levied a duty on woodcutting in the different parts, namely Denkenecottah and Namakkal of Salem district. Forest and forest produce were used without any constraint by paying a little amount both by the hill people and by those from the plains. Woodcutting rights were not rented/leased out until 1835 in the Salem and Baramahal region. The collector of Salem states, 'The right of cutting wood has never been hitherto rented in this district.'¹² It was, therefore, left to the common sense and economic compulsion of the people to protect their own interests.

In addition to the utilisation of forests by the locals and neighbours, the British Iron and Steel Company was accountable to a great extent for the annihilation of forest cover in the different parts of Madras Presidency. Prior to 1835, the Iron and Steel Company got a lease of woodcutting rights from five taluks (Chidambaram, Virudachallam, Cuddalore, Elavanosoor and Bhuvanagherry) in South Arcot district, three taluks (Wodiarpolliam, Aragalore and Voleondapooram) in Trichinopoly district and one taluk (Sheally) in Tanjore district.¹³ Privileges were given to entertain the forest resources in favour of the companies without considering the importance of protecting natural resources.

To extract more revenue, a separate system of leasing was followed for the different forest products since 1834. There was a separate renting system for sandalwood (see this chapter) and other forest products. In Salem district, some parts of the jungles were rented by the natives for cutting bamboos and other timber; in some other areas the right of cutting sandalwood had been rented.¹⁴ Kolli hills of Salem district was rented out, for the exclusive right of levying a duty on woodcutting for timber and bamboos, at Rs 78 per annum. In 1835, Heath proposed to take the lease of Kolli hills for a period of 21 years and, if approved by the Court of Directors, for 20 more years.¹⁵ For the first five years, he offered it at the rate of Rs 156 per annum. During the second and third five years, he proposed to take over the whole district at the rate of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 per annum, respectively; for the subsequent period of six years, the rent was at the rate of Rs 1,500. On renewal, he offered to pay at the rate of Rs 2,000 per annum for the entire lease period.¹⁶ But the collector refused to accept Heath's offer to obtain monopoly rights of cutting

wood in Salem district on the ground that it would produce great public inconvenience as

it would not only interfere with the supply of the country furnaces and other manufacturers requiring machinery now existing or which may be established, but it would completely put a stop to the preparation (except by Mr. Heath) of that useful article, magnesia cement, for which large quantities of charcoal are required, and bids fair soon to become a valuable article of export from the district.¹⁷

He further stated that the right of levying a duty on cutting wood had already been rented out in two taluks, that is Denkenecottah and Namakkal.¹⁸ In addition, the collector had earlier called a separate lease for sandalwood cutting rights for the different hills. Consequently, the collector opined to give monopoly rights for cutting wood except for those hill ranges with sandalwood, which existed in 6 taluks, namely Attur, Namakkal, Salem, Denkenecottah, Tripatoor and Tengrikota, of the 14 taluks.¹⁹

In the same year, Heath applied to the Board of Revenue for a grant of exclusive right of cutting wood for fuel for the use of the Iron and Steel Company from the government wastelands and jungles of Salem district for a period of 21 years. He assured that the existing rights of the natives and the revenue sources of the government would not be disturbed. Also, he offered to pay two *annas* per 128 cubic feet quantity of fuel wood.²⁰ Based on the collector's recommendation, the government ordered 'not to permit fuel to be cut in the government woodlands of his district for the use of iron works on the European plan, except those belonging to the Indian Iron and Steel Company'.²¹ Between 1858-59 and 1875-76, Rs 829,134 was received from the forest sources other than sandalwood in Salem district.²² This indicated that the tribals did not destroy the forest as the government had encouraged felling by traders and contractors for a meagre amount.

Colonial policy on sandalwood

Sandalwood had been preserved and utilised only by the rulers during the pre-colonial period. For example, Tippu Sultan had preserved sandalwood in the hills of Dhanaiguncottah for more than ten years while using the buildings. And it was guarded by about 200 peons. Immediately after colonial intervention, these trees were entirely cut down by a body of armed Nairs of Calicut. Later, the colonial government prohibited felling

of sandalwood in all the mountains. But the intention was not to preserve but to extract more revenue in future.²³

Sandalwood in Salem district was cut down not only by the neighbourhood merchants/inhabitants but also by merchants from distant places like Tanjore. One such group led by a Brahmin, a native of Tanjore, had cut down and carried away 1,000 bags via Gujelgutty pass, but this was seized and sent to Madras for being exported to China.²⁴ With a view to tap the Chinese market, which the government considered as important, it took some steps to preserve sandalwood in the forests.²⁵

After colonial intervention, the demand for sandalwood increased not only within India but also in foreign countries, especially in China. In fact, the price of sandalwood was determined by the Chinese market demand.²⁶ While middlemen were encouraged, the official machinery was also used to hew sandalwood from the different parts of Madras Presidency.

Sandalwood was largely found in the hills and forests of the north-western parts of Madras Presidency, namely Salem and Baramahal, Coimbatore and South Canara regions. In 1800, British middlemen sought permission to purchase/procure sandalwood from these regions to export it to China. Accepting the proposal, the government gave the instruction for purchase of sandalwood being entirely open in Mysore and Canara regions. It also recommended that the place of sandalwood purchase should be within the company's territory.²⁷ In response, the middlemen also assured,

The terms of purchase can be settled on the arrival of the sandalwood, having every reliance on the liberality of the Board in the settlement. . . . the first sort of sandalwood should be free from any marks and the larger the pieces the better.²⁸

Consequently, the government sent a communication to the collector to inform the agent regarding the amount of sandalwood that was ready for cutting, charges of carriage to Madras, different kinds of quantity and the amount of quantity readily available at hand.²⁹

Favouring the agents, the government instructed collectors regarding the sandalwood cutting:

The larger and heavier the pieces are the better they (agent) are calculated for the market, . . . it also will save the wastage and expense of cutting, and can be more conveniently packed upon the backs of the bullocks for the purpose of conveying it to Madras.³⁰

The collectors were directed that the sandalwood pieces were to be cut into three-foot-long pieces and the roots in small sizes.³¹ The government

also invited 'one Candy of several sorts (of sandalwood) and . . . specify the probable proportion of each'.³² To collect and export sandalwood to China, collectors were instructed not to interrupt the bullock cartload. In 1812, the Board of Trade requested the Board of Revenue to give instructions to the collectors for transmitting 600 *candies* (20 *mounds* equals 1 *candi*) of sandalwood from Canara.³³ It also decided to advertise purchase of sandalwood.³⁴ Later, in 1836, advertisements were made in newspapers for attracting sandalwood supply.³⁵ Thus, the colonial government provided privileges and necessary facilities to the middlemen for exporting sandalwood to China.

The colonial government had received a large amount of money through sandalwood export to China. For example, in 1800–1801, about 3,776–30–48 *Star Pagodas* was received by the collector of Salem for sandalwood supply to the Board of Trade.³⁶ From Coimbatore district, 62,984–11¾ *mounds* or 3,144–11¾ *candies* of sandalwood was delivered to the Board of Trade between 1799 and 1809, and it was worth 104,915 *Star Pagodas* 9 *fanams* 8 *cash*.³⁷ The collector also ensured supply of a probable quantity of 2,537 *mounds* from 3,214 trees for the year 1810. For the years 1817–20, 6,817 *mounds* of sandalwood was supplied from the 8,691 trees.³⁸ A large quantity of sandalwood was auctioned in Coimbatore district. The revenue from sandalwood progressively increased: Rs 3,826–13–3 in 1834, Rs 15,063–8–9 in 1835 and Rs 22,554–1–1 in 1836.

Even after the permanent settlement (1802–3), the colonial government reserved the right to collect the woodcutting tax against the *mittadar*. For example, in the Sankary-Droog, the government rented out woodcutting rights for three years at the rate of 205 *Star Pagodas* per annum, exclusive of the permanent settlement amount.³⁹ In July 1800, Salem district collector transported 309 *mounds* consisting 1,743 pieces to the Board of Trade. Of this, 165 *mounds* had been cut within a month from the forest, 117 *mounds* was from the different villages and 27 *mounds* was recovered from those who clandestinely plundered from the jungle.⁴⁰ Sandalwood was found in big sizes in Salem and Baramahal region. For instance, 165 *mounds* of good sandalwood was produced from 40 trees. In other words, 4 *mounds* of good sandalwood was derived from each tree. According to the collector, 200–400 *candies* could be supplied annually from Salem district.⁴¹ The price of the sandalwood per *candy* was between 18 and 20 *Star Pagodas*. By and large, the commercial forest policy was the root cause of the destruction of sandalwood in the Salem and Baramahal region during the early 19th century.

Sandalwood was sold directly by the collector in the region during the early 19th century. The rights to cut down sandalwood were not leased/rented out to private contractors. In the later period, only some parts

were rented out. As such, the Denkenecottah jungles were leased out for every three or four years for Rs 400 in 1821, Rs 2,100 in 1822, Rs 2,100 in 1823 and Rs 2,000 in 1832 and 1833.⁴² In the other parts of the district, sandalwood cutting rights were under the control of the collector. But sandalwood was cut down without restraint by the plains people. These sandalwood trees were 'clandestinely sold at a considerable extent in bazaars of Salem, Namakkal and Attur'.⁴³ In addition to the colonial commercial forest policy, the merchants and neighbourhood plains people were responsible for the destruction of sandalwood in the Salem and Baramahal region.

The collector gave a proclamation prohibiting felling sandalwood on 25 June 1835. He sent a direct communication to all the principal merchants and also announced this through beating of tom-toms throughout the villages in Salem taluk.⁴⁴ Accordingly, plains people were not allowed to cut down sandalwood from the hills/forests and at the same time the merchants were to refrain from buying it. In spite of this, the merchants purchased about 18 mounds of sandalwood. The collector imposed some penalty to prevent clandestine sale in future.⁴⁵ In the Tengrikota taluk, about 100 mounds of sandalwood was seized. As a measure to avoid all these illicit fellings, the government proposed to rent out sandalwood in the Salem district as a whole. Two persons were appointed to ascertain the quantity of sandalwood in Salem, Attur and Namakkal taluks.⁴⁶ The intention behind this was to earn more revenue through leasing out sandalwood cutting rights, and conservation was never a concern of the colonial administration.

Sandalwood in the hills

Sandalwood was abundant in the hill areas of Salem and Baramahal region (see Table 5.1), and no revenue was obtained from the Shervaroy, Kolli

Table 5.1 Numbers of sandalwood in different hills of Salem district: 1837

Hills	I sort	II sort	III sort	Trees cut down	Young	Total
Shervaroy	1,190	4,373	5,365	—	2,081	13,009
Neiyamalai	1	15	4	—	—	20
Aranuthumalai	10	508	941	—	1,317	2,776
Pachamalai	2,575	3,145	2,830	—	2,942	11,492
Chitteri	316	1,535	2,603	41	—	4,495
Kollimalai (Namakkal)	240	888	6,201	92	6,065	13,486

Source: Board of Revenue, Vol. 1587, 11 December 1837, pp. 15047-56, TNSA.

and Pachamalai hills between 1820 and 1835. In 1830, only Rs 280 was collected from Attur taluk.⁴⁷ Felling was absent in many hills except Kolli and Chitteri hills, where only a few trees were cut down. It categorically shows that the tribals were not behind the destruction of sandalwood in the hill areas. Expecting a large amount of revenue, a separate renting auction was publicly invited by the collector in 1835. Only two offers were made to have exclusive rights for cutting sandalwood at the rate of Rs 300 and Rs 340, respectively. The former wanted the lease for 15 years and the later for 8 years. Not satisfied, the government refused to lease out for this paltry amount for a period of 10 or 15 years.⁴⁸ Again, the collector urged the government to lease out the hills to prevent illicit felling of sandalwood in the extensive forest of Kolli hills.⁴⁹ It evidences that the government did not emphasise the conservation of forests.

In 1835, the collector invited proposals to lease out sandalwood cutting rights in Shervaroy hills. The offer came for ten years at the rate of Rs 300 per annum. But the government refused to accept it. Consequently, a new proposal was invited in 1836, and the offer was Rs 340 per annum for five years.⁵⁰ The collector urged the government to accept the offer, failing which no revenue for sandalwood would be received from the hills.⁵¹

Accepting his recommendation, the government ordered to appoint two persons to ascertain the quantity of sandalwood in the different hills and paid them Rs 30 each for two months.⁵² Finally, sandalwood cutting rights in Kolli hills were leased out at the rate of Rs 340 for eight years. Between 1862-63 and 1875-76, Rs 147,537 was received from sandalwood in Salem division Forest Department.⁵³

- Indigenous and company industries

The indigenous industries, namely iron-smelting and sugar-boiling industries dependent on forests for fuel wood to some extent, were responsible for the denudation of green cover in the different districts of Madras Presidency during the pre-colonial and early colonial period. Absence of coal in Madras Presidency made these industries completely dependent on the forests for their fuel needs.

Iron beds were largely found in Salem, and according to the Geological Survey of India, there are five groups, namely Kanjamalai, Kodumalai, Singapatti, Thalamalai-Kollimalai and Thirtamalai groups.⁵⁴ Indigenous iron-smelting furnaces were found in many villages of the district. According to Brandis (1883), 10 villages in Attur taluk, 33 in Salem taluk and many villages in the Namakkal and Uttankarai taluks were engaged in iron-smelting works.⁵⁵ These industries were also to some extent responsible

for the destruction of forest in the hill areas of Salem and Baramahal region during the pre-colonial and early colonial periods.

Colonial intervention saw the closure of the iron-smelting industries in places where they were unable to face the competition of iron from England and the gradually increasing scarcity of fuel wood, which had led to high prices.⁵⁶ On the contrary, the colonial government encouraged the British iron-making industries and had given some exclusive privileges during the 19th century. In 1830, J.M. Heath set up iron-making industries at Porto Novo in South Arcot and availed the right of cutting trees for fuel in the government wasteland. Then he had made agreements with various collectors to obtain lease for 21 years to raise ore and cut down trees for fuel. Under this lease, the industries did not pay any rent for the first five years, subject to the payment of a small annual rent for the remaining lease period. The government also provided financial assistance to these industries. In 1853, the East India Company was started with a capital of Rs 400,000. Exclusive rights of cutting ore from the government wastelands in South Arcot, Salem, Malabar, Canara and Coimbatore were granted to it for a term of 30 years, subject to an annual payment of Rs 500 as rent.⁵⁷ The company erected new works at Tirnomalai in South Arcot district and Pulampatti in Salem district. Due to scarcity of fuel, the company's iron-making industry at Pulampatti was closed in 1858. Porto Novo operations came to an end in 1866 and Beypore and Tirnomalai in 1867. Again, in 1875, the company's iron-making industry established in Madras secured rights to make charcoal in 42 square miles of forest land in North Arcot on paying a small seigniorage, and it was discontinued in July 1877.⁵⁸

In addition to the native iron-smelting industries and British iron-making company, the sugar-boiling industries in the different districts of Madras Presidency consumed a large quantity of fuel wood during the early colonial period. After colonial intervention, the British sugar factories also accentuated denudation of forests. For example, Messrs Parry and Co., sugar factory at Tiruvennanallur, had consumed annually about 3,500 tons of wood, and the same group's sugar factory at Nellikuppam consumed more than that of the first one.⁵⁹ In some places, only a meagre amount was collected as tax for supplying fuel wood to the sugar factories. The Aska Sugar Factory in Ganjam paid Rs 1 per licence to cut down an unlimited quantity of firewood until 1879. This sugar factory had felled about 10,000 tons annually from the forest.⁶⁰ It proves beyond doubt that the native iron-making industries during the pre-colonial period and the colonial policy on the colonial iron-making industries and sugar-boiling industries during the 19th century resulted in the destruction of the hill forests to a greater extent in the different regions of Madras Presidency.

Establishment of Madras Railways

Establishment of Madras Railways in Madras Presidency witnessed a large extent of forests being wiped out. The Madras Railways had used fuel wood more than coal during the third quarter of the 19th century. While coal had to be purchased from outside for a heavy price, wood was largely available within Madras Presidency at a cheaper rate. The consumption of fuel wood by the railways had increased remarkably from 9,821 tons in 1863 to 54,358 tons in 1868.⁶¹ In 1878, locomotive superintendent of Madras Railways estimated that the average cost of coal and wood per ton, for the five-year period (1873-77), was Rs 28-2-11 and Rs 5-15-11, respectively (see Table 5.2). The average consumption of wood per engine mile for the same period (1873-77) was 89.53 pounds, whereas for coal it was only 26.75 pounds. In other words, the quantity of coal required per

Table 5.2 The average prices of coal and wood: 1873-77 (Rs)

Year	Cost per ton					
	Coal			Wood		
	Rs	As	Ps	Rs	As	Ps
1873	28	14	6	5	15	4
1874	32	6	5	5	13	6
1875	28	12	2	5	13	11
1876	24	6	7	6	1	6
1877	25	5	10	6	1	1
Average	28	2	11	5	15	11

Source: GO No. 373, Public Works Department (Railways), 26 April 1878, TNSA.

Table 5.3 Fuel wood purchased for Madras Railways: 1873-77 (tons)

Year	Total quantity purchased
1873	44,693
1874	55,107
1875	57,466
1876	77,731
1877	119,924
Total	354,921

Source: GO No. 373, Public Works Department (Railways), 26 April 1878, TNSA.

engine mile was only 1.00 pounds and for wood 3.35 pounds. Though the required wood per engine mile was high, the price was very low when compared to that of coal. The average (1873-77) cost of coal per ton was Rs 28-2-11, while 3.35 tons of wood cost only Rs 20-1-4. The amount expended on fuel wood consumption by Madras Railways during 1873-77 was Rs 1,736,482. Of this, 40 per cent, equal to Rs 694,593, was saved with the consumption of wood instead of coal.⁶² Against this background, Madras Railways preferred to use wood rather than coal. Between 1873 and 1877, about 354,921 tons of wood was purchased for railway fuel (see Table 5.3). Subsequently, fuel wood requirement of Madras Railways had increased every year.

In 1878, the agent of Madras Railways stated that the approximate requirement of wood for fuel was about 91,000 tons.⁶³ In 1881, railways consumed about 68,420 tons of wood. Of this, about 55,760 tons had come from the private forests and the rest was drawn from the government forests (see Table 5.4). The colonial government had also purchased a large quantity of fuel wood for railways from the private forests.

The idea of protecting forests was initiated as early as in 1865 in the different districts of Madras Presidency. This was not for maintaining ecological balance and protecting the environment but for the future requirement and constant fuel wood supply to Madras Railways. To put it differently, protection of forest was to further commercial interests. About 3,482 acres of forests was protected in the different districts of Madras Presidency between 1865 and 1874 (see Table 5.5). These protected forests were cut down between 1875 and 1882, and about 12,536 tons of

Table 5.4 Sources of fuel wood supply to Madras Railways (tons)

Districts	Government	Private	Total
Nizam's dominions	-	2,550	2,550
Bellary	-	1,120	1,120
Cuddapah	8,860	1,800	10,660
North Arcot	2,750	23,440	26,190
Mysore	-	850	850
Salem	650	10,750	11,400
Coimbatore	400	-	400
Malabar	-	15,250	15,250
Total	12,660	55,760	68,420

Source: Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration*, p. 40.

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Table 5.5 Protected forests in different districts

District	Reserve	Protected since	When cut	Area cut (acres)	Out-turn (tons)	
					Total	Per acre
Cuddapah	Ballipalle I	1867	1876	3	59	19.6
Cuddapah	Ballipalle II	1871	1876	3	35	11.6
Cuddapah	Kodur hill	1871-74	1880-81	135	1,919	14.25
Cuddapah	Yerraguntlakota	1873	1880-81	155	958	6.25
Cuddapah	Vakaticonah	1874	1880-81	200	1,248	6.20
North Arcot	Not stated	1865	1875	1	11	11
North Arcot	Mamandur	1871	1880-82	1,777	4,952	2.8
Salem	Varigampatti	1866-67	1876	100	455	4.5
Salem	Varigampatti	1866-67	1875-79	886*	2,255	2.8
Salem	Morur	1866	1882	100	384	3.8
Salem	Pothur	1868-69	1877-78	112	140	1.25
South Arcot	Gingee	-	1876	10	120	12

Source: Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration*, p. 45.

*One hundred acres cut in 1876 from part of the 886 acres cut in 1875-79.

wood was consumed. Prior to the Madras Forest Act 1882, some forests were protected/reserved only to be cut down for the railways' fuel and berths.

Due to the laying of Madras Railways, a large number of valuable trees were cut down in the forest areas of Salem and Baramahal region. In 1859-60, seigniorage amounting to nearly Rs 23,500 was realised on berths alone and the number of berths supplied in 1859-60 was about 245,743.⁶⁴ The colonial government did not take any action against these forest fellings. In 1866-67, hundreds of thousands of trees were cut illicitly by the cattle drivers for the railways. The government was helpless as the magistrates refused to convict them for theft.⁶⁵ In 1870, the Conservator of Forests stated that the government should look at the amount of timber being taken out freely from Salem jungle alone and come to terms that no forest could possibly stand the drain of that nature.⁶⁶ The fuel wood supply to railways stated to have come from private forests was, in fact, cut on the government land, and the forest officers had neither the establishment nor the resources to prevent it.⁶⁷ Brandis, Conservator of Forests in Madras Presidency (1881-83), recommended that the railways should be encouraged to extract the maximum from private forests, and once it exhausted that, then the government forest may be used.⁶⁸ But it is evident that the colonial government did not take any measure towards

conservation. The railways continued, as ever, to consume a large quantity of trees from both the private and government forests during the late 19th century.

Consumption of neighbourhood towns

A considerable extent of the hill forest cover was denuded by the villages in the vicinity and thickly inhabited towns in Madras Presidency. In Salem and Baramahal region, most of the hill slopes were cleared by the neighbourhood plains inhabitants.⁶⁹ Firewood demand of the two major towns, namely Salem and Attur, was largely supplied from the neighbouring hill slopes and also from distant places. The fuel wood demand of Salem town was met from (i) Topur forests, which was about 24 miles away from where the wood was brought in carts; (ii) the southern slopes of Shervaroy hills, off 3 miles, and mostly brought through headloads; (iii) forests adjoining Manjavadi pass, off about 12 miles, the wood brought on cartloads; (iv) headloads from Bodamalai hills, about 5 miles away; and (v) Jarugumalai, about 2 miles away. For headloads, a certain amount, that is one pie to four pies, was paid according to the description of the wood.⁷⁰ Until 1870, there was no tax on the fuel wood supply to Salem town.⁷¹ Brandis (1883) estimated that about 10,000 acres of well-stocked forests were required to meet the fuel wood demand of Salem town alone.⁷² The thickly inhabited towns and villages were also accountable for the destruction of the forests during the pre-colonial and early colonial regime of the 19th century.

Coffee cultivation

The British initiated coffee cultivation in different hill regions during the early 19th century. In southern India, coffee plantations were established on the highlands of the west coast regions, namely Mysore, Coorg, Travancore, Wynaud and Nilgiris, during the 19th century.⁷³ Of this, Wynaud and Nilgiris belonged to Madras Presidency. To some extent, coffee plantations were set up in the Shervaroy hills of Salem district. In Madras Presidency, the coffee plants/plantations were introduced in different periods between the late 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. The first coffee plants were introduced at Tripatoor in Baramahal towards making large-scale plantations by Colonel Read, collector of Salem and Baramahal, in 1795. But these plants perished due to lack of maintenance.⁷⁴ Later, a small tract of land was brought under coffee cultivation, in Jawadhi hills near Tripatoor by the natives. In 1825, coffee plants were introduced in the Shervaroy hills by M.D. Cockburn and in

Wynaud, around 1833, by Major Bevan. The first regular plantation was opened by Mr Glasson in 1840 on the hills at Manantoddy, followed by others. In these regions, coffee was cultivated in the grass or bamboo land, making the venture unprofitable. Therefore, coffee plantations were transferred to south Wynaud. In 1855-56, the number of estates increased in these regions. In 1857, about 12,000 acres was under coffee cultivation, of which 10,000 acres or 83.33 per cent was held by 32 European colonists and the rest by the natives. In the Nilgiris, coffee plants were introduced in 1846. In the beginning, plantations were established in the eastern slopes, which got extended to the southern, northern and north-western slopes. During the first half of the 19th century, coffee estates were mostly held by European colonists.

In 1885, coffee plantations existed only in eight districts, of which seven belonged to the southern districts of Madras Presidency and the rest to the northern districts. Coffee plants were largely found only in Malabar with 52,964.97 acres, Nilgiris with 35,128 acres and Salem with 10,769 acres. In the remaining districts, it was considerably less. Large-sized coffee plantations were found only in the Nilgiris and Malabar districts, whereas the smaller ones were found in Madura district. During the 19th century, increase in coffee cultivation prevailed in Malabar, Nilgiris and Salem districts. In 1885, of about 108,358.77 acres under coffee in Madras Presidency, 53,917.724 acres (49 per cent) was under mature coffee plants and 9,208.996 acres (8.49 per cent) under immature plants. The rest - 45,232.05 acres (41.74 per cent) - was taken up for planting, which had to commence yet.⁷⁵ In the second half of the 19th century, only a large tract of hill lands with dense forest was chosen for coffee cultivation in Madras Presidency.

In Salem and Baramahal region, coffee introduced by Colonel Read in 1795 did not succeed.⁷⁶ In 1825, plantations were established in the Shervaroys, with about ten European colonists being engaged in that business at the end of the first half of the 19th century.⁷⁷ According to John Shortt (1864), of the 27 planters involved in cultivating coffee in the Shervaroys, 25 were British colonists and the remaining 2 were Indians from the plains.⁷⁸ In 1885, there were 331 coffee plantations covering about 10,769 acres; of this, 4,440 acres or about 41 per cent was with mature plants, 1,649 acres or 15.31 per cent was with immature plants and the remaining 4,680 acres or 43.46 per cent was taken up for planting which was yet to be planted.⁷⁹ In the Salem and Baramahal region, coffee plantations mainly belonged to the British, and large tracts of land were cleared for coffee cultivation during the third quarter of the 19th century. This resulted in the denudation of dense forests in the highlands due to the introduction of commercial crops in the hills of Madras Presidency.

Tribals and forest act

While non-tribals were behind the large-scale destruction of forests, it was accentuated by the colonial commercial forest policy during the early period of the 19th century. Instead of restricting the non-tribals, the colonial government imposed several conditions on the tribals through the Madras Forest Act 1882. The forest-oriented tribal economy was disrupted by these conditions, which deprived them of their common property rights. Their mode of production was disturbed, and their economic conditions deteriorated over the period.

With the establishment of the Forest Department in 1856, the first Indian Forest Act came into effect in 1865. The Madras Forest Act 1882 (Madras Act No.V of 1882) was the first Forest Act in the presidency. This restricted the unlimited access the tribals had over the forest. The tribals could claim only a right of way, watercourses, pasture and forest produce (Section 10). These also were not, wholly or partly, allowed by the Forest Department (Section 11). Furthermore, these rights were granted intermittently, and with quantitative restrictions (Section 12). Fresh clearings for cultivation or any other purpose were also curbed (Section 7). If prohibited items were used by the tribals, they were liable for imprisonment for a period of six months or a fine of about Rs 500 or both (Section 21). Grazing rights on the forest land were limited and liable for suspension (Section 22). If the tribals grazed their cattle in the closed land, they would be imprisoned for a month or fined Rs 200 or both (Section 28). Apart from these, the tribals were forced to render free services for the forest and police officers.

Impact on the tribals

The first notification of Forest Reserve was published in 1883, which covered an area of 550,614 acres or 222,830.43 hectares in Salem and Baramahal region.⁸⁰ Subsequently, a large extent of the hills was notified as reserve forest. Coupled with this, many restrictions were clamped on the tribals for using the forest and forest produce.

The Forest Department extended the reserve forest in the Kalrayan hills without considering the interests of the hill inhabitants, namely Malaiyalis. For instance, in the Kalrayan hills, the public worship and *car* festival of Kariyaswamy temple⁸¹ was stopped, following the inclusion of the temple and surrounding *inam* lands, within the reserve and forest extension.⁸² Some *inam* lands of *Jagirdars* were also included in the reserve forest. A *Jagirdar* stated that the reserve forests were demarcated without considering the interest of memorialists; nor were they consulted in extending

the forest, which resulted in a lot of lands belonging to the memorialists, including *inam* lands, being taken away. The memorialists were put to great hardship, loss and inconvenience.⁸³ As the tribals faced a lot of problem, they did not celebrate the festival because the forest boundary ran only a few chains from the Kariyaswamy temple. This hardly left any place for such a large festive gathering.⁸⁴ This was one of the many instances of how the Forest Department restricted the tribals' rights.

The government came forward to reformulate the boundary line regarding the temple. But the collector objected to the exclusion of the *inam* lands. He said, 'Even if the fields were cultivated, it is doubtful that the revenue would come to the Government, instead of the *poligar*, as ryots of the *poligar* villages only would cultivate them.'⁸⁵ The collector stated categorically that no income would come to the government, if *Jagirdar's inams* were excluded from the reserve forest.

The unrestricted rights of the tribals over forests were curtailed by the Forest Department in manifold ways from time to time. For example, the Shervaroy hill inhabitants were allowed to cut only small quantities of firewood, wood for housing and agricultural purposes. Certain trees were prohibited from being cut down.⁸⁶ The Forest Department also restricted cutting a maximum of three bandy-loads a month. To take away wood from the hills, a person was required to obtain a free pass from the tahsildars. For the prohibited trees, three *annas* was collected per headload.⁸⁷ These restrictions were opposed by the people of Shervaroy hills. To contain the resentment, the government issued an order in 1870 stating that the Malaiyals 'can obtain free passes for firewood and timber for their own requirements on application to the Deputy tahsildar'.⁸⁸ As per the order, the hill inhabitants could collect the required material without any limitation. The Kalrayan hill Malaiyals were also asked to collect the free passes from the tahsildar for using the forest produce and for grazing their cattle. *Jagirdars* and inhabitants of the Kalrayan hills raised their voice against these formalities. In response, the government ordered, in 1881, allowing

free use, with reasonable facilities, of the village jungle for procuring what they require for building purpose, for agricultural implements and for fuel; certain classes of trees of a superior description being restricted and payment required for their use for such purposes.⁸⁹

Considering the revenue, the colonial administration tried to bring the tribal private forests under government control. Towards achieving this, the government followed all possible irregularities. The hill chieftains

were brought under custody, and divisions were created among them. Ultimately, the tribal private forest was brought under government control through lease. Failing to realise the expected revenue from the private forests, the government finally returned them to the hill *Jagirdars*.⁹⁰

Alienation of some traditional rights was the direct impact of the introduction of commercial crops into the hill areas. Most of the rights, like common property resources, were indirectly alienated attendant to the introduction of coffee plantations in the Shervaroy hills of Salem and Baramahal region during the 19th century as well as the early 20th century.

Land was granted to the British settlers for coffee cultivation under the Government Order of 7 April 1833.⁹¹ Under this, a lease agreement was made between British settlers and the government for 21 years. Some more concessions were provided to them to extend coffee cultivation: first, the land was given rent-free for the initial five years; second, the land rent was low, that is Rs 1 per acre per annum for the remaining 16 years of the lease period.⁹² In this way, the colonial government paved the way for the tribal land alienation in the Shervaroy hills.

Due to the encouragement and concessions given to them, the British settlers desired to establish more coffee plantations in the Shervaroy. A large extent of the land was purchased from the native tribals for a meagre price. In addition, the British settlers tried to use some unoccupied lands and forests, which were used by the tribals as common property rights without any restriction. The government, nevertheless, claimed that the tribals were consulted and their assent was obtained before the lands were taken up for coffee cultivation.⁹³ Actually, the tribals were not aware of all the formalities entered into by the colonial government. Until 1841, the government did not initiate any measure to protect the tribals from the planters. As a result, 'most of the old planters, obtained their lands from the Malaiyalis and received *pattas* for them prior to the circulation of the government rules'.⁹⁴ In 1842, the government ordered that the land should not be taken by the settlers in such localities so as to cause an inconvenience to the inhabitants, that is Malaiyalis, or those lands, which the latter might be willing to occupy.⁹⁵ Though certain areas of land were reserved for the Malaiyalis under this act, the planters, however, had obtained these lands wherever they were fertile and conveniently located.

It was not the British planters alone who had taken away tribal lands; the colonial administrators, including collectors and judges, took possession of them. Mr Cockburn, collector of Salem, had taken land by force, seized and appropriated all the best lands of the chief village of the Mootoo Nadu and expelled the proprietors thereof. Mr Neave, judge of Salem, got possession of more than 400 or 500 acres of land between 1838 and 1841 under not very dissimilar circumstances.⁹⁶ The colonial

government not only encouraged the British planters to settle in the hills but also could not prevent its officers from misusing their power to occupy tribal lands in the Shervaroy hills to further their private interests.

In order to grab tribal lands, the British planters created many problems to the Malaiyali inhabitants. To cite one instance, in 1864, Hunter, a British planter, tried to obtain the Malaiyali lands in the village of Patapadi and Kurdyoor. But the Malaiyalis refused to sell their lands. He then attempted to drive them out through every possible means and pressed the other planters to do likewise. Besides closing every public path of Malaiyalis running through his land, the planter also shot down their cattle. The British planters also used colonial officers to threaten the Malaiyalis, to obtain their land.⁹⁷ While ignorant tribals badly suffered at the hands of British planters, the colonial administrators always acted in favour of the British planters. The officialdom was never seriously concerned about the plight of the tribals or the threat to ecology and environment. In short, due to the introduction of commercial crops in the hill areas, tribal rights, to some extent, were alienated directly, while most of their rights on common property resources were indirectly alienated as in the case of coffee plantations in the Shervaroys of Salem and Baramahal region during the 19th century.

Conclusion

The forest and its produce had been used as a common property rights by the highland people as well as those of the neighbourhood plains. The right over the forest was never a big question, which fulfilled their requirements. It indeed became a question, when it was denuded for commercial purposes. During the pre-colonial period, felling existed to some extent, to meet the demand of the traditional industries as well as the needs of neighbourhood towns. After colonial intervention, the government did not pay any attention to protect the environment and maintain ecological balance. Instead large tracts of prime forests were denuded by middlemen/contractors/government for exports and further by the British iron-making industries and Madras Railways besides the introduction of commercial crops. Instead of restricting this commercial exploitation, the colonial government, without initiating any development/welfare measures, curbed the tribals' common property rights through the Madras Forest Act. In other words, denudation of forest was the fruit of the colonial forest policy during the 19th century. The idea of forest conservation for environmental protection was ignored not only during the pre-Forest Department period in Madras Presidency but also after that, until the introduction of the Madras Forest Act 1882, during

which commercialisation of forests was predominantly practised by the colonial government.

Historically, tribals' subsistence was met with agriculture, forest produce and hunting. Over the period, bio-geographical customs have changed due to conflicts between human beings and wildlife in the landscape, resulting in the elimination of larger and more dangerous animals, hunting of wild mammals and birds for food and direct destruction of habitat.⁹⁸ As indicated earlier in Chapter 1, a wide range of fauna was found in the Salem and Baramahal region, and those resources were wiped out during the 19th century. For example, in the Jawadhi hills, the last tiger was shot in 1882 and a pair of elephants with a calf were shot dead by European officers in 1882. Indeed, destruction of wild animals was encouraged by the colonial government and in fact reward was given. For instance, Rs 7,830 was disbursed between 1895 and 1905 under this head. About 45 panthers' skins were brought annually. A tiger skin was presented for the award at Hosur in 1896, 1906 and 1909. In fact, only 1 in every 50 kills was reported to the authorities because most of the tigers and panthers were shot in the reserve forest.⁹⁹ It is to be pointed out that bringing revenue collection under the direct control of the government also facilitated control over natural resources. In extracting forest resources, the colonial administration also extinguished the fauna. Even as there was no change in the cropping pattern (see Chapter 4), increasing population and revenue collection forced the tribals to find a fresh area for cultivation as well as hunting during the 19th century. Precisely, the colonial government policies were not only aimed at garnering more revenue from the tribals at the cost of their traditional system but also wiped out the rich flora and fauna in the hills of Madras Presidency.

Notes

- 1 This chapter was originally published in *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2. Copyright 1998 © The Indian Economic and Social History Association, New Delhi. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of the copyright holders and the publishers, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.
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COMMERCIAL FOREST POLICY AND TRIBAL PRIVATE FORESTS¹

As I indicated in Introduction, the debate on environmental history, with its focus on the forests and pastorals, has ignored the private forests until recently. The few studies on private forests are largely confined to the Himalayan region and Bengal, Central and Bombay Presidencies. While suggesting that forests were denuded for the purpose of extending cultivation and commercial exploitation, literature on environmental history acknowledges the fact that the tribals and pastoral communities were disturbed during the pre-colonial as well as the colonial period in different parts of the country. Although this phenomenon was present in most of the regions, there were still some forest and hilly regions where neither the pre-colonial rulers nor the early colonial administration had intervened. The tribals themselves had, without any external intervention, managed themselves until the mid-19th century. The tribals of Kalrayan hills in Salem and Baramahal region of Madras Presidency enjoyed an autonomous system (see this chapter) without paying any revenue to any ruler during the pre-colonial period as well as the colonial period. The entire hill regions, including all forest resources, were managed/controlled by the tribal headman, known as the *Jagirdar*. During the second half of the 19th century, the colonial administration had intruded into these hills mainly to obtain control of the tribal private forests. This chapter attempts to highlight the colonial forest policy vis-à-vis tribal private forests in the Kalrayan hills of Madras Presidency during the late 18th and 19th centuries (1792–1881).

Important research questions here are as follows: why did the colonial government not enter into the hills during the early 19th century? What was the motive behind its intervention? Had the colonial government attempted to annex the tribal private forests for conservation or for commercialisation? How had the colonial government established control over hill areas and tribal private forests, and what were the strategies adopted? What kinds of interventions were made to dismantle the traditionally managed system, and how had that wrought havoc on

the environment? Had the colonial government given any importance to environmental protection or merely expected more revenue? Had it disturbed the traditional tribal system itself? What were the changes effected in the colonial policy and the motives behind them? These questions might be helpful in understanding the colonial forest policy during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Madras Presidency.

Private forests in Madras Presidency

A sizeable extent of forests was privately managed in different parts of the country before the advent of colonialism, and, in fact, this practice had continued till the late 20th century.² In British India, during the late 19th century, the colonial government had attempted to bring them under state control. Vast tracts of forests in various parts of the subcontinent were managed privately both by zamindars and by tribals.³ Different strategies like lease, purchase and contracts were employed to annex these forests. However, the colonial government had failed in imposing complete control over them. For example, right from the early 20th century to the end of the colonial rule, attempts to exert control over private forests in Bengal and Bihar have failed.⁴ The zamindars' managed private forests came under state control only after independence, through separate private forest acts of the respective states.⁵

The pre-colonial rulers, both Hindus and Muslims, had control over certain trees, and the remaining forest items were left unclaimed for the use of the common people. For example, Tipu Sultan had control only over sandalwood trees in the forest areas. Recognising this fact, the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue observed on 5 August 1871:

There is scarcely a forest in the whole of the Presidency of Madras which is not within the limits of some village, and there is not one in which, so far as the Board can ascertain, the state asserted any rights of property, unless royalties in teak, sandalwood, cardamoms, and the like, can be considered as such, until very recently. All of them, without exception, are subject to tribal or communal rights which have existed from time immemorial, and which as difficult to define and value as they are necessary to the rural population.

It further stated,

The forests are, and always have been, common property, no restriction except that of taxes, like the Muturpha and Pulari,⁶ was ever imposed on the people till the Forest Department was created, and such taxes no more indicate that the forests belong to the state.⁷

However, circumstances had changed over the period. In 1882, the committee appointed by the government to frame the Forest Bill did an about-turn, with far-reaching consequences. They claimed, 'There are no Communal Forests distinct from State Forests in the Presidency of Madras.'⁸ Substantiating this claim, Brandis has said:

The villagers are in the habit of collecting firewood, thorns for fences, and of pasturing their cattle on, driving them across, and themselves passing over waste lands, so long as these are not required by the Government for cultivation or other purposes; and to this extent they may be said to exercise rights of pasture or other rights of user in the waste and forest lands included in their village areas, but this is nothing else than what we find in public forests of all countries. Such rights of user are vastly different from proprietary rights, and their existence does not constitute the forests in which they are exercised Communal Forests.⁹

Despite stating that unclaimed areas of communal and proprietary forests belonged to the state, the government had recognised communal and proprietary forests within the actual revenue payment areas. In Madras Presidency, the common people have invariably collected forest produce from both the government and private forests, without any restrictions till the establishment of the Forest Department.

There was a large extent of unoccupied land, consisting of forests and wastelands, in the different districts of Madras Presidency during the 19th century. In 1880-81, Brandis estimated the occupied and unoccupied lands of both government and others, that is Zamindari, Shrotriom and *inam* lands, in 18 districts of the presidency. According to the estimate, the total area of the 18 districts was about 82,337,280 acres, of which Zamindari, Shrotriom and *inam* lands accounted for 32,852,135 acres (39.9 per cent). Government-occupied dry and wetlands were to the extent of 14,973,099 acres (18.19 per cent); government-occupied wasteland was about 3,076,551 acres (3.74 per cent), and the remaining 31,435,495 acres (38.18 per cent) was unoccupied lands (Table 6.1). The total unoccupied and government-occupied wasteland was 34,512,046 acres, which formed about 41.92 per cent in the presidency.¹⁰ In 1880-81, Brandis estimated that about 20¼ million acres of forests and wastelands in the 18 districts belonged to zamindars and other landholders. In other words, about 60 per cent of the forests and wastelands belonged to the category of private forests and wastes. In addition to this, over 4 million acres in Malabar, Nilgiris and South Canara districts was private forests. Thus, about 25 million acres of forest and wastes was under private control in Madras Presidency during the 19th century.

Table 6.1 Occupied and unoccupied lands in different districts of Madras Presidency

S. no.	Districts	Zamindari, Shrotriom and inam lands	Government lands			Total area of districts	
			Unoccupied		Occupied		
			Wet	Dry	Wet		Waste
1.	Ganjam	3,814,880	1,176,605	145,802	165,574	5,319,040	
2.	Vizagapatnam	8,159,503	2,879,256	23,169	52,617	11,123,200	
3.	Godavari	1,804,800	2,138,622	291,929	241,565	4,700,800	
4.	Kistna	1,758,080	1,886,173	186,133	1,239,324	5,421,440	
5.	Anantapur	662,028	1,888,771	61,113	762,258	3,466,880	
6.	Bellary	826,750	1,456,151	31,271	1,014,368	3,472,640	
7.	Sandur*					104,960	
	Karnool	1,038,408	2,820,589	21,684	865,865	4,821,120	
	Banganapalli*					163,200	
8.	Cuddapah	772,480	3,658,658	100,749	910,886	5,592,320	
9.	Nellore	3,136,640	1,486,668	171,848	578,103	5,592,960	
10.	North Arcot	2,308,210	1,731,886	196,633	353,413	4,669,440	
11.	Chingleput	518,670	760,348	283,988	143,462	1,818,880	
12.	Salem	1,390,912	2,557,781	83,824	810,325	4,946,560	
13.	South Arcot	176,129	1,734,728	258,106	812,985	3,118,720	
14.	Trichinopoly	641,920	508,856	126,353	664,338	2,119,680	
15.	Tanjore	628,480	649,881	703,889	219,433	2,338,560	
	Puducotta*					704,640	
16.	Madura	3,774,835	803,448	127,982	530,835	5,376,640	
17.	Tinnevely	1,127,672	928,542	177,022	811,852	3,413,840	
18.	Coimbatore	351,738	2,348,532	81,510	1,722,891	4,994,560	

(Continued)

Table 6.1 (Continued)

S. no.	Districts	Zamindari, Shrotriom and inam lands	Government lands			Total area of districts	
			Unoccupied	Occupied			
			Wet	Dry	Waste		
19.	Malabar	Correct details for this district not available					
20.	Nilgiris	Correct details for this district not available					
21.	South Canara	Correct details for this district not available					
22.	Madras	17,280				17,280	
	Total	32,852,135	31,435,495	3,073,005	11,900,094	3,076,551	90,125,440

Source: Dietrich Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration in the Madras Presidency*, Madras: Government Press, 1883, p. 272.

Note: Figures in column 4 are the difference between the total areas and government-occupied lands, Zamindari, Shrotriom and inam lands. * These are the tributary states, for which the details not available.

The unoccupied lands were largely found in the northern districts of Madras Presidency, namely Vizagapatnam, Godavari, Kistna, Anantapur, Karnool and Cuddappah. In other words, about 19,391,493 acres (61.69 per cent) of the unoccupied land was spread over the northern districts, whereas the southern districts had only about 12,044,002 acres (38.31 per cent). Salem, Coimbatore, South Arcot and North Arcot districts accounted for a large chunk of them. In fact, about 2,577,781 acres or 21.4 per cent of the unoccupied lands in the southern districts was found in Salem district.¹¹ Of the total area in Salem district (4,946,560), about 2,557,781 acres (51.71 per cent) was unoccupied. Distribution of a small extent of unoccupied land was also found in the other southern districts like Chengalpattu, Tiruchinopoly, Tanjore, Madura and Tinnevely. It shows that even before the Forest Department came into existence, a vast area of forest cover was under private control in different parts of the presidency. One can safely assume that most of the private forests and hills were controlled/managed by the tribals.

The private forests, in different parts of the country, were exploited extensively for commercial purposes during the second half of the 19th century. Establishment of the railway network in the subcontinent gave a new thrust to deforestation, carried out on a large scale for fuel wood and construction of timber sleepers.¹² In fact, the Indian Forest Act 1865 was enacted to fulfil the requirements of railway supplies.¹³ Indiscriminate felling continued unabated in private forests in various parts of the presidency to meet the fuel wood demand of Madras Railways during the third quarter of the 19th century. For example, in 1880-81, about 68,420 tons of fuel wood was supplied to Madras Railways. Of this, about 55,760 tons (81.49 per cent) came from the private forests and the remaining 12,660 tons (18.51 per cent) was drawn from the government forests.¹⁴ Among the private forests, which supplied fuel to the railways, North Arcot district provided the lion's share of about 23,440 tons, half of which came from Kalahastri and Karvetnagar, while 7,200 tons came from the Kangundi Zamindari. In Salem district, the total fuel supply was about 11,400 tons, of which 10,750 tons or 94.3 per cent was availed from the lands of *mittadars*¹⁵ between Mallapuram and Jolarpet. Only 650 tons came from the government forests (Table 6.2). The hills in the Kadatur *mitta* in Uttankarai taluk had been almost completely denuded because of indiscriminate felling for fuel for Madras Railways.¹⁶ Out of the government supply, the forests of the Cuddappah district yielded about 8,860 tons. Here, it becomes evident that the private forests were denuded to meet the fuel wood demand of Madras Railways.

Table 6.2 Sources of fuel supply to Madras Railways (tons)

S. no.	Districts	Government	Private	Total
1	Nizam's dominions	—	2,550	2,550
2	Bellary	—	1,120	1,120
3	Cuddapah	8,860	1,800	10,660
4	North Arcot	2,750	23,440	26,190
5	Mysore	—	850	850
6	Salem	650	10,750	11,400
7	Coimbatore	400	—	400
8	Malabar	—	15,250	15,250
Total		12,660	55,760	68,420

Source: Dietrich Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration in the Madras Presidency*, Madras: Government Press, 1883, p. 40.

Tribal private forests in the early 19th century

Forests were owned privately not only by plains people but also by the hill people. Until the early 19th century, the Kalrayan hills of Salem and Baramahal region had an autonomous tribal system under which the entire forest was controlled. The Kalrayan hill range is spread over an area of 600 square kilometres, with an elevation ranging from approximately 2,700 feet to 4,576 feet above sea level. It lies between northern latitude $8^{\circ}27'30''$ and $11^{\circ}19'45''$ and between eastern longitude $78^{\circ}42'$ and $80^{\circ}2'$. It was endowed with a number of plant species and fauna, as well as a large variety of trees with great commercial value like sandalwood and teak and several medicinal plants and herbs.¹⁷ The Kalrayan hills was divided into five *Jagirs*,¹⁸ namely Periya-Kalrayan, Chinna-Kalrayan, Ariyakavundan, Kurumbakavundan and Jadayakavundan *Jagirs/paliyaputs*. Of these, the first two *Jagirs* came under the Salem and Baramahal region, the area of the present study, while the remaining belonged to South Arcot district.¹⁹

The Malaiyali tribes were the original inhabitants of the Kalrayan hills. According to the manuals, gazetteers and government reports, they are Tamil-speaking people who have migrated from the plains in comparatively recent times.²⁰ However, these people are quite different from the Malayalam-speaking people of Kerala, although both are called by the same name.²¹ They are not treated as untouchables either by the plains people or by the hill inhabitants. For example, the Kotas tribes in the Nilgiris are treated as untouchables by the Todas who, unlike the Malaiyali, still follow a pastoral economy.

There are different versions of the origin of the Malaiyalis in the Kalrayan hills.²² The Baramahal Records do not give any account of their

origin except this tiny note: 'no tradition'.²³ According to the Periya-Kalrayan hill inscriptions, these people have been residing there right from the beginning of the 11th century.²⁴

The Kalrayan hills was divided into two *Jagirs* – Periya-Kalrayan and Chinna-Kalrayan. The former was subdivided into Keel Nadu and Mel Nadu, comprising 19 and 17 villages, respectively. The latter, consisting of 45 villages, was divided into Vada Nadu and Then Nadu.²⁵

Private forests here are controlled by the tribal headman/*Jagirdar*. For administrative purposes, Kalrayan hills was divided into *Jagirs/nadus*,²⁶ which consisted of many villages or hamlets. Each *nadu* had a four-tier administrative set-up: *Pattakaran*²⁷ or headman, *Maniakaran*,²⁸ *Ur-Kavundan* or *Moopan*²⁹ and *Kangani*. The *Pattakaran*, chieftain of each *nadu*, had diverse functions, both religious and judicial (according to local laws), and enjoyed the revenue collected from the estate after giving a portion to the local deity. To meet the expenses of such requirements, he decided the amount of tax to be collected from the tribals. The rate of tax was not always consistent as the assessment was adjusted according to the prevailing situation at that time.³⁰ The *Maniakaran* assisted the *Pattakaran* with these works.³¹ If the *Ur-Kavundan* failed to settle any dispute, it would be left to the *Pattakaran*, who was treated as the chief guest at harvest and wedding functions. Further, he controlled all the *Ur-kavundans*.

The *Ur-Kavundan* administered the tribals directly with the help of the *Kanganies*, who also functioned like the police. Each and every transaction, namely marriage, divorce, harvest and festivals, took place in the presence of the *Ur-Kavundan*. When disputes, like the partition of property between brothers or divorce, were brought to his notice, he summoned the *panchayat*, consisting of the elected members of the clans or family groups, for consultation and then pronounced his decision. Penalties were imposed according to the nature of the offence or dispute.³² The main duties of the *Kangani* were guarding houses and crops, assisting in revenue collection, keeping an eye on strangers and thieves and recovering stolen property.³³ Further, he had to collect information about every incident in the villages and pass them on to the *Ur-Kavundan* who took necessary action. This shows that the tribals had a well-established administrative system during the pre-colonial period.

The Kalrayan hill tribes had an autonomous system. There are no records throwing light on any formal land/forest grants ever being made either by the colonial rulers or by the previous rulers in/of Kalrayan hills.³⁴ In fact, the colonial rulers were under the impression that a separate ruler administered the Kalrayan range,³⁵ since the hill inhabitants and headman there had not paid any revenue to the rulers of the plains during the pre-colonial period. All that they paid as tax was a certain fee to their

chiefs for maintenance of a proper state and dignity, and a portion of this fee was used by the *Jagirdar* for performing ceremonies at the temples, sacred to the Tirular deities.³⁶ The hill inhabitants did not pay any tax to the colonial government or Hindu rulers,³⁷ and they had been left entirely to themselves.³⁸ There is no revenue account for the Kalrayan hills in the records for the 19th century. At the time of colonial intervention, the government collected leases from leaseholders, who had exclusive rights to purchase goods and articles from the Kalrayan hills. In other words, the only mode of drawing revenue from this hill range was by selling this exclusive privilege. In 1793, 40 *Star Pagodas*,³⁹ 13 *fanam*,⁴⁰ 64 cash⁴¹ was collected by leasing out these rights.⁴² According to official reports, the existence of the hills came to the notice of the colonial administration only in 1838.⁴³ But this was not true as Colonel Alexander Read had been aware of the hills thought that they were independent.⁴⁴

Even after 1838, the hill range was not brought under the colonial government, and it was never mentioned in the official records pertaining to the different revenue period. In fact, it was neither surveyed nor assessed either during the Read settlement (1792-97) or during the permanent settlement (1802-3). It was left out even in the annual settlements since 1819-20 and during the direct management of different hills between 1829-30 and 1854-55. It was further substantiated by the Inam Commission Report, which stated that the hills 'were never surveyed owing to their unhealthy climate and they were not included in the jamabandi (*jummabandy*) returns, nor is any information to be gathered regarding them in the records'.⁴⁵ The Periya-Kalrayan *Jagirdar* further strengthened it in 1838,

He (*Jagirdar*) and his ancestors have been the hereditary *poligars* of the Malaiyals of the Periya-Kalrayan hills. That they (*Jagirdars*) exercised amongst them the functions or religious, justice according to their laws; that he has been ruling the land as a duly installed chief and has enjoyed the revenues of the state himself, giving a portion to the deity.⁴⁶

The *Jagirdars* collected many taxes, namely taxes on ploughs and hoes, poll tax, tree tax and forest rent, during the early 19th century. In fact, the hill chieftains had also collected widow tax,⁴⁷ and kavali tax or tax on unmarried persons. These taxes were collected with an eye not only to obtain revenue but also to maintain discipline within the community. Apart from these regular collections, the headmen or chief extracted goods and services from the tribals on an *ad hoc* basis during festivals and other emergencies. From the Inam Commission Report (1838), we learn that the

Jagirdars collected at the rate of Rs 1-2-0 per plough and 10 *annas* per hoe. They also imposed some *kaval*⁴⁸ fees. Consequently, there was an increased incidence of cess on ploughs to Rs 2-4-0 and Rs 1-4-0 per hoe. The poll tax was Rs 2-4-0 on each married couple and Rs 1-2-0 on each widower, while that of unmarried children and widows went unassessed.⁴⁹ The *Jagirdars* utilised the revenue for the maintenance of temples and festival celebrations, and they never remitted any tax to the colonial government.

The Inam Commission Report (1838) also confirms the fact that the colonial administration had not collected any revenue from the tribals.⁵⁰ In 1841, total revenue collected from the Periya-Kalrayan hills was Rs 972 on ploughs and hoes, tax on bamboo cutters and rent on tamarind besides Rs 372 for the *Devastanams* and *Kaliammal*. From Rs 600 in 1838, it had increased to Rs 972 in 1841, and the *Pattadar* stated in 1867 that his income stood at Rs 1,100 per annum.⁵¹ In 1869-70, revenue collection had increased to Rs 2,614, of which Rs 536 was from the forests and Rs 2,078 from land revenue.⁵² A large amount of revenue was obtained through forest products in the Periya-Kalrayan hills. For example, from April to December 1870, Rs 561-15-6 was received. Out of this, timber accounted for Rs 106-6-0, Rs 136 from bamboos, Rs 13-14-0 from firewood, Rs 68-14-0 from charcoal and Rs 170 from tamarind and *kuplidye*.⁵³ However, revenue collection continued to fluctuate every year. Revenue from the Chinna-Kalrayan hills in 1869-70 was estimated as Rs 2,213, including Rs 1,513 through land revenue and Rs 700 from the forest.⁵⁴ It categorically shows that the Kalrayan hill inhabitants had their own autonomous system until the early 19th century. Even later, they did not pay anything as tax to the colonial government.

The Kalrayan hill *Jagirdars* not only had an autonomous system but also effectively exercised control over the forests in the hills. They even had the right to collect revenue from the *kombe* or adjoining villages of the hills.⁵⁵ Even in the Kalrayan hills of South Arcot, the *Jagirdars* had control over the slopes as well as the areas contiguous to the foothills. The collector of South Arcot says:

For certainly up to this time both the slopes and lands at the foot have been enjoyed by him without let or hindrance, and until the organisation of the Forest Department, such right had never been questioned, and so far as I can ascertain from my records, the revenue authorities of the district have always recognized the right of the *Poligar* to the slopes and the lands at their immediate foot.⁵⁶

The Kolli hills of Salem and Baramahal region offers further substantiation. The tribals there controlled the *kombe* villages. Towards the close

of the 18th century, granting independent status to the *kombes* while the survey and settlement was introduced resulted in conflicts between the tribals and colonial administration.⁵⁷ The *Jagirdars* had traditionally controlled the entire hills, including the slopes. In the early 19th century, the rights over the revenue collection of the *kombes* of the Kalrayan hills were handed over to the *kombe* villages. The *Jagirdars*, considering the hardships involved, might have conceded the revenue collection rights to the headman of the *kombes*. However, the right over the slopes of the hills was retained by the Kalrayan hill *Jagirdars*.

Until 1868, only the *Jagirdars* controlled the Kalrayan hills and their slopes. When the survey activities for the first settlement (1871-72) of Salem district began in 1859, the government did not lay any claim to the Kalrayan range and its slopes. The collector's letter of 1868 stated, 'The survey department placed their marks near the foot of the slopes, the opinion was entertained that, beyond these boundaries, towards the Kalrayan hills at least, the Government did not make any claim.'⁵⁸ In short, the tribals owned the land not only on the top of the hills but also in the slopes. Their subsistence needs centred on forest produce, the collection of which was never restricted or curbed.

Management of tribal private forests

Though the *Jagirdars* controlled and managed the private forests, they did not collect any revenue from the tribals/forests during the pre-colonial and early colonial period. The tribal private forests were left free for the use of tribals. Only a nominal amount was collected on the number of instruments, for example, *koduval* used for collections/cutting forest produce. Even this was collected on a yearly basis. According to the records, until the middle of the 19th century forest resources were utilised only by the tribals and were not subjected to commercial exploitation. Later on the *Jagirdars* leased out the forests for commercial exploitation to the contractors. Despite being leased out, the forests were never out of bounds for the tribals.

Even the colonial administration took into consideration and recognised the distinctive characteristics of the tribal private forest. During the 1850s and 1860s, there were attempts to take over the tribal private forests on rent/lease by all possible means; however, the *Jagirdars* refused to budge. The collector in his letter states:

(on) enquiries made, from time to time during the last two years, I am quite sure the Jaghiredar is not willing to rent his estate to Government; all endeavours made both by myself and my predecessor to communicate with the Jaghiredar having failed.⁵⁹

The *Jagirdars* were reluctant since they feared that the government might not return the properties.

On the other hand, the *Jagirdars* were interested in leasing out the forests to the contractors/middlemen so that they could get their forest back without any inconvenience. In 1863, the *Jagirdars* of Kalrayan hills leased out the hill forests to contractors from the plains. The Periya-Kalrayan hill forest was leased out for 20 years at the rate of Rs 100 per annum and the Chinna-Kalrayan hills for five years at the rate of Rs 120 per annum.⁶⁰ Both the tribal private forests were leased out to the same contractor, and lease agreements were exchanged. The contractor had earned about Rs 1,000 per annum by drastically cutting the timber and firewood within a span of four years (1865-69).⁶¹ However, even after the private forests were leased out, there was no restriction on the tribals using the forest and forest produce.

Colonial policy on tribal private forests

Until the early half of the 19th century, the colonial government did not disturb the Kalrayan hills in general and the tribal private forests in particular. Conservation of forest cover was not a priority in Madras Presidency even after the establishment of the Forest Department. However, the Conservator of Forests tried to bring more forest land under government control. In the process, the conservator claimed that the slopes of the hill forests belonged to the government, stating that the lease agreements between the contractors and *Jagirdars* did not mention these slopes specifically. Of course, the copy of the lease document contained no separate clause regarding the slopes.⁶² It is interesting to note that the colonial government had no documentary evidence to claim that previous rulers had managed these hills. In the end, the government managed to extend its authority to the slopes of the Kalrayan range. In 1867, the Deputy Conservator of Forests said, 'The timber growing on the slopes of the hills belonged to the Government and were not even claimed by the Puttagars as being cut.'⁶³ Despite the government's claim over the slopes, the contractors had gone to the extent of felling trees in the forests controlled by the former.⁶⁴ This prompted the government to take over the control of tribal private forests.

In the absence of any evidence of deforestation to justify the takeover, the government decided to control the tribal private forests through a lease. In fact, expecting huge revenue from the forest, the government had forced the tribal headman to accept the lease on its terms. This was because the Kalrayan hills had abundance of commercially valuable trees that had not only an Indian market but also an export market. In the Periya-Kalrayan hills, about 25 *kandagams*⁶⁵ of *kuplidye* was procured annually, since there

was a heavy demand for this in England and it also fetched a good price.⁶⁶ Besides the constant pressure, the *Jagirdars* were threatened to accept the lease. In 1868, the Periya-Kalrayan *Jagirdar* agreed to lease out the forests to the government at the rate of Rs 1,500 per annum with a stipulation of 90 acres of rent free in three villages.⁶⁷ Although the *Jagirdar* had accepted to lease out his forests to the government, the contractors refused to give up their agreement, which would have continued for 17 more years (up to 6 August 1885). A contractor had even filed a suit against the colonial government;⁶⁸ however, he was forced to accept the lease agreement. A compromise was finally reached, with the government offering him Rs 5,600.

On the contrary, the *Jagirdar* of Chinna-Kalrayan hills was not in favour of leasing his forest for lease to the government and even avoided meeting the government officers. Despite adopting various strategies, the government officers could not establish any communication with the *Jagirdar*. All the attempts to persuade him to accept the terms of lease proved futile.⁶⁹ The collector said,

The late Collector proceeded to the Kalrayans, and endeavoured to obtain an interview with Puttagar, but failed in doing so as the Puttagar fled from the hills as soon as he heard that Collector had come up. Attempts were also made in vain subsequently to see the Puttagar, and arrange about renting his *Jaghir*. He is very averse to give the *Jaghir* on lease, and he therefore keeps away from officials.⁷⁰

This statement clearly indicates the colonial administration's determination to take over the forests at any cost. In 1873, the government ordered:

Further endeavours should be made to induce him to rent the estate to Government on similar terms to those which were accepted by the Periya-Kalrayan *Jagirdar*, or, at any rate, an effort should be made to obtain the lease of the forests from the contractor, if he has obtained it on favourable terms, and is willing to transfer it for a moderate sum.⁷¹

To take over the tribal private forests, the colonial administration misused its power to the maximum extent. Finally, two civil and magistrate summons were issued against the Chinna-Kalrayan *Jagirdar*. After arresting and detaining him under the custody of the magistrate, he was forced to sign the agreement. Thus, the *Jagir* was brought under British control.⁷² The government offered to pay him Rs 2,000 per annum apart from 90 acres of rent-free land in three villages.⁷³ The contractor was given

a compensation of Rs 12,500.⁷⁴ This would be a classic instance, and it exposed the strategies adopted by the colonial government to encroach the hill areas during the late 19th century.

The government took control of these hills apparently to protect the forests from the illicit felling the contractors resorted to. It subsequently imposed several curbs on the tribals' traditional use of forest resources, restricting, among other things, clearance of even the old *Ponakkadu*⁷⁵ lands and the use of wood for implements. This was despite the Deputy Conservator of Forests himself admitting that 'the felling of timber and bamboos by the tribals on the plateau for their own use cannot do any serious harm and that no restrictions are necessary so long as nothing is allowed to be brought down to the plains'.⁷⁶ Cattle grazing was also brought under government control: the tribals were not allowed to graze their cattle without permission from the government. In the process, the government introduced the free pass system in 1881, under which the tribals had to collect a pass from the tahsildar and hand it over to the forest authorities. These practices made life very difficult for the hapless tribals. Strokes, acting collector of Salem (1880), had stated: 'These process are probably regarded by the Malaialies as inconvenient interference, and the rules must operate in practice as a considerable, if not complete, restriction on the freedom of helping themselves as, and how, they pleased which the Malaialies formerly enjoyed.'⁷⁷ The government had issued yet another order, which stated that the tribals could use the inferior forest produce for building purposes, agricultural implements and fuel, while certain superior classes of trees remained reserved, with payment required for their use.⁷⁸

After taking over the private forests, the Forest Department had imposed several conditions on the customary use. The colonial administration also threatened the *Jagirdars* with attacks on their property in the event of any violation on the part of the tribals.⁷⁹ Unable to comply with these restrictions, the Periya-Kalrayan *Jagirdar* filed a suit against the government so as to retain the estate. In his suit, he had complained about certain grievances, such as

the constant interference by Forest peons with the Malaialies, who cannot get wood for implements, &c., and are strictly prevented from clearing even old *ponakkad* lands; the insufficiency of the tract (90 acres) assigned to him rent free; the farming of the collection of the *kapilapodi*⁸⁰ outsiders; and the loss of dignity which he suffers as the chiefs of the other hill nadus⁸¹ will not now admit him to equally with them.⁸²

The Chinna-Kalrayan hill *Jagirdar* also filed a suit against the government. He stated that 'the document was not executed of his own free

will, but was obtained from him under arrest, he was in custody under a magisterial warrant'. He further adds, 'The estate is the ancestral and common property of themselves, and the Pattagar who are members of an undivided family, and that the Pattagar was not competent to alienate it without their consent to the prejudice of the family and for illegal consideration.'⁸³

Actually, the Forest Department, which expected a large income from the tribal private forests of Kalrayan hills, failed to realise the expected revenue. The arrears had also mounted. For example, during 1876-77, the total demand made by the government in the Chinna-Kalrayan hills was Rs 3,704-12-0, of which total collection was Rs 2,279-0-2 or about 62 per cent. The remaining Rs 1,425-11-10 or about 38.49 per cent was the balance. The establishment charges were Rs 272-14-9 or 7.37 per cent, and the net revenue was Rs 2,006-1-5 or about 54.14 per cent.⁸⁴ The net revenue from the Chinna-Kalrayan hills was negligible and even negative during 1877-78. The total revenue demand was Rs 3,191-12-8, of which only Rs 208-2-0 or about 6.52 per cent was the collection, with the remaining Rs 2,983-10-8 or about 93.48 per cent being the balance. The establishment charges were more than the collections. The net revenue was 4.11 per cent.⁸⁵

Due to the loss incurred in the Chinna-Kalrayan hill private forests, the Forest Department had no hesitation in returning them to their owners. The collector had stated, 'The revenue to government from felling forest timber has been only rupees 43 the lease will relieve us not only from this unprofitable speculation, but from further disputes arising on account of *kapilapodi*.'⁸⁶ This clearly reveals the real intention of the colonial government - extracting more revenue from the tribal private forests and not protecting the environment from the contractors as claimed earlier. After getting the forest back, the *Jagirdars* revived the old agreements with contractors. The contractors of the Chinna-Kalrayan executed a bond to the government, agreeing to repay Rs 12,500 with interest at 6 per cent per annum within nine months.⁸⁷ This forest continued to remain under the control of the contractors.

Though the income from Periya-Kalrayan hills was profitable, the colonial government returned the private forests to the contractors on the reasoning that 'the court would hold that the lease was for the family advantage and can be upheld on that ground'.⁸⁸ It becomes clear that this forest was under the control of the contractors till 1973.⁸⁹ It becomes clear that the colonial government's intrusion into the forest areas to protect the environment was a mere pretext, as the real objective was to generate more revenue through exploitation of the forests.

Conclusion

During the pre-colonial period, forests in Madras Presidency were controlled both privately and by the rulers. Similarly, in the hills, the tribals controlled the forests privately. The rulers of the plains had never attempted to encroach the tribal private forests during the pre-colonial period. After colonial intervention, the British government adopted different methods to encroach upon private forests with the sole intention of extracting revenue. To ensure their control over the forests, the colonial administration had trampled upon the traditional rights over forests, and other common property rights. The legitimacy of these age-old rights was questioned and, ironically, evidence was sought to prove them. How are the unlettered tribals expected to possess written document?

Colonial intrusion into the tribal areas was accompanied by the imposition of several restrictions which were in utter disregard of the inconveniences and difficulties they pose to the hill inhabitants. It was mere aggrandisement, and in the process, both the common property and occupational rights were usurped and traditional rights were ignored. The main aim of the colonial government was neither protection of the forests from illicit felling by greedy contractors nor protection of the tribals from exploitation at the hands of these contractors. Direct control of the forests and forest resources was only to extract more revenue. This being its prime concern, the colonial government tried to bring the tribal private forests under its ambit through every conceivable irregularity. The hill chieftains were detained in custody, their legitimate claims were disregarded and divisions were created between them. Ultimately, the tribal private forests were brought under the total control of the government through lease. But when the expected revenue was not realised, the forests were returned to the *Jagirdars*. In short, the British administration intruded into tribal areas to control the forest resources mainly for commercial purposes and not to protect them from the contractors.

Notes

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- 3 Sivaramakrishnan, 'Landlords, Regional Development and National Forest Projects', pp. 78-84; Skaria, *Hybrid Histories*; Saravanan, 'Commercialisation of Forest, Environmental Negligence'; Hardiman, 'Forming in the Forest'.
 - 4 Sivaramakrishnan, 'Landlords, Regional Development and National Forest Projects', p. 83.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
 - 6 A tax on pasturage.
 - 7 Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (hereafter PBR), No. 3284, 5 August 1871, Tamil Nadu State Archives, Chennai (hereafter TNSA).
 - 8 Dietrich Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration in the Madras Presidency*, Madras: Government Press, 1883, p. 20.
 - 9 *Ibid.*
 - 10 The details of occupied and unoccupied lands for the tributary states, that is Sandur, Banganapalli and Pudukotta and the districts of Malabar, Nilgiris and South Canara, were not available.
 - 11 Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration*, p. 172.
 - 12 Ramachandra Guha, 'Forestry in British and Post-British India: A Historical Analysis', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1983, 28(44): pp. 1883-84; Ramachandra Guha, 'An Early Environmental Debate: The Making of the 1878 Forest Act', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1990, 27(1): p. 66; Guha and Gadgil, 'State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India', p. 145; Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Western Himalayas*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 37; Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 120.
 - 13 *Ibid.*
 - 14 Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration*, p. 40.
 - 15 Owner of the *mitta*.
 - 16 Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration*, p. 175.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 173-75.
 - 18 A tenure common under the Muslim government, in which the public revenue of a given tract of land was made over to a servant of the state. The Kalrayan hills was administered by the *Jagir*.
 - 19 F.J. Richards, *Madras District Gazetteers*, Vol. I, Part II, Madras: Government Press, 1918, p. 299.
 - 20 E. Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes in Southern India*, Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1909, p. 406.

- 21 F. Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, London: Directors of the East India Company, 1807, p. 197.
- 22 Saravanan, 'Economic Transformation of Tribals', chapter 2.
- 23 Baramahal Records, Section III, *Inhabitants*, TNSA (year is not mentioned).
- 24 Collector Letter to the Board of Revenue, 31 October 1867, TNSA.
- 25 Integrated Tribal Development Project Report *Kalrayan Hills*, 1976-77, pp. 3-4.
- 26 A division of the country; a division of the hills also called a *nadu*.
- 27 The headman of the estate or hills. He is the chief administrative and judicial officer of the estates or *nadus*.
- 28 A subordinate native revenue officer employed in the collection and management of the revenue under the *Pattakaran*, by whom he is appointed and to whom he is responsible. All *Moopans* were controlled by the *Pattakaran* with the help of *Maniakaran*.
- 29 The headman of the hill village.
- 30 A. Aiyappan, *Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, Madras: Government Press, 1948, p. 143.
- 31 Board of Revenue (hereafter BOR), Vol. 1769, 23 September 1841, p. 12109, TNSA.
- 32 Richards, *Madras District Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 154.
- 33 Their role is like the traditional police, namely the *Taliaris* and the *Kavalkars* in South India.
- 34 Board Petition No. 148 of 1871, TNSA.
- 35 R.K. Puckle (epitomised and annotated), *Colonel Read's Report on the Original Settlement of Salem in 1791-1796*, Salem: Collectorate Press, 1868, p. 13.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Richards, *Madras District Gazetteers*, p. 301.
- 38 GO No. 1028, Revenue, 10 June 1871, TNSA.
- 39 A money measurement that prevailed in Madras Presidency during the early colonial period. One *Star Pagoda* was equal to 45 *fanams* or 3,600 cash.
- 40 Eighty cash equals one *fanam*; 45 *fanams* equals 1 *Star Pagoda*.
- 41 This is the lowest money measurement in Madras Presidency during the colonial period. Eighty cash is equal to one *fanam* and 45 *fanams* equals 1 *Star Pagoda*.
- 42 Baramahal Records (n.d.), *Imposts*, Chennai, p. 44, TNSA.
- 43 Letter from G.J. Longly, Collector of Salem to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue (hereafter BOR), 31 October 1871, No. 3146, Salem, TNSA.
- 44 Colonel Alexander Read, *General Report on Salem*, 1800, para. 247, TNSA.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Board Petition No. 148 of 1871, TNSA.
- 47 It shows that the earlier practices of widow remarriage, even before disposing of corpse, have disappeared in the hill areas of Salem district at the time of the colonial intervention.
- 48 The duty of the village watch.
- 49 Richards, *Madras District Gazetteer*, 1918, Vol. I, Part II, p. 302.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 GO, No. 654, Revenue, 13 May 1900, TNSA.
- 52 BOR, Nos. 63-64, 4 February 1875, TNSA.
- 53 BOR, No. 2191, 1871, 3932, TNSA.
- 54 BOR, Nos. 63-64, 4 February 1875, TNSA.
- 55 GO, No. 1028, Revenue, 10 June 1871, TNSA.
- 56 GO, No. 185, Revenue, 30 January 1872, TNSA.
- 57 See Chapter 2.

COMMERCIAL FOREST POLICY AND TRIBAL PRIVATE FORESTS

- 58 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 1 September 1968, in GO, No. 2821, Revenue, 11 November 1868, TNSA.
- 59 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 12 March 1873, in GO, No. 548, Revenue, 29 May 1873, TNSA.
- 60 GO, No. 2977, Revenue, 14 December 1867, TNSA.
- 61 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 21 April 1869, in GO, No. 2942, 10 November 1869, TNSA.
- 62 GO, No. 2826, Revenue (Press), 11 November 1869, TNSA.
- 63 Letter from the Acting Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 26 April 1880, in PBR, 13 May 1880, TNSA.
- 64 GO, No. 2166, Revenue, 14 August 1868, TNSA.
- 65 A dry grains measurement. One *kandagam* is equal to 40 *bullas* or *puddies* or 7,248 cubical inches.
- 66 GO, No. 2942, Revenue, 10 November 1869, TNSA.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Revenue, Nos. 172-74, 22 November 1872, TNSA.
- 69 GO, No. 548, Revenue, 29 May 1873, TNSA.
- 70 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the Officiating Inspector of Forests, Salem, 7 October 1872, in GO, No. 1609, Revenue, 22 November 1872, TNSA.
- 71 GO, No. 548, Revenue, 29 May 1873, TNSA.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 GO, No. 77, Revenue (Press), 14 January 1875, TNSA.
- 74 GO, No. 389, Revenue, 9 March 1875, TNSA.
- 75 *Ponakkadu* means the lands cleared, cultivated for a few years and abandoned, and covered with a fresh growth of jungle, in other words, a land in the hill areas capable of cultivation after long intervals with particular kinds of grain sown in holes dug with a spade.
- 76 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 16 November 1800, in PBR, No. 1791, 24 November 1880, TNSA.
- 77 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 20 October 1880, in GO, No. 150, Revenue, 18 January 1881, TNSA.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 16 November 1880, in PBR, No. 1791, 24 November 1880, TNSA.
- 80 A forest product. It is used for dying purposes.
- 81 A division of the country or province or hills.
- 82 Letter from the Acting Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 28 June 1880, in PBR, No. 919, 7 July 1880, TNSA.
- 83 PBR, No. 1015, 3 March 1877, TNSA.
- 84 Letter from the Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 20 October 1877, in PBR, No. 4895, 1 November 1877, TNSA.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Letter from the Acting Collector, Salem, to the BOR, 26 April 1880, in PBR, No. 654, 15 May 1880, TNSA.
- 89 Saravanan, 'Economic Transformation of Tribals', chapter 5.