

PLANTATION COLLISION AND APPROPRIATION OF TRIBALS¹

The debate on the environmental history in general and the desiccation theory in particular, which claims that forest conservation for environmental protection was shaped in Madras Presidency during the 1830s, has failed to address the issues conterminous with the establishment of coffee plantations in the Shervaroy hills of Salem and Baramahal region of Madras Presidency. While analysing the emergence of the plantation sector and its disastrous consequences on environment in terms of destruction of forests and alienation of common property resources (CPRs), this chapter attempts to explain how the market forces irreversibly changed property rights and the tribal socio-economic administrative system during the 19th century. Prior to the establishment of coffee plantations, the tribal economy remained a subsistence one, with collection of forest produce and traditional cultivation being the dominant activities.² Being a non-market economy was its most distinctive feature, and the community itself managed it without the intervention of external forces.³ Introduction of the market economy, an inevitable consequence of external intervention – the arrival of the British and other non-tribal coffee planters, drastically altered the customarily managed non-market tribal economy, besides weakening the hill inhabitants' hereditary rights and unfettered access to CPRs.⁴ In the Central Provinces, for instance, official policies facilitated the growth of market economy, which penetrated deep into the hill areas, leading to the decline of the tribal economy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁵ In fact, the penetration of market forces was not confined to the economic sphere alone as it permeated the entire socio-economic, cultural and administrative set-up of the tribal community.⁶ In this chapter, an attempt is made to analyse the impact of the intervention of external market forces on the tribals' tradition-bound non-market economy, as well as consequences of this intervention on the CPRs, socio-administrative structure, environment and ecosystem during the 19th century.

While discussing the consequences of deforestation in the early 19th century, particularly in the 1830s in Madras Presidency, an appraisal of the role of colonial officers who presided over the establishment and expansion of coffee plantations would be an important contribution in enriching the current environmental debate. The strategies adopted to exert control over the forests and encroach tribal lands for coffee plantations, a colonial project, require a rigorous analysis. The establishment of plantations through subjugation of the hill inhabitants and its disastrous consequences in Salem and Baramahal region of Madras Presidency is the focal point of the chapter.

Whether the colonial rulers contained deforestation by making conservation a priority or whether they colluded in the destruction of the green cover is a pertinent question in this context. Whether the traditional system, especially that of the tribals, was respected and taken into account or disregarded would also be an integral part of the study. Studies pertaining to some regions, North-East India in particular, show that colonial intrusion and the attendant commercialisation progressively curtailed communal rights, pushing the tribal society into the path of disintegration. Large-scale land alienation crippled the tribal economy, forcing the hill inhabitants to become dependants of the planters as cheap labourers.⁷ Further, the colonial administrators extended privileges to their fellow countrymen for establishing plantations in the Shervaroy hills during the 19th century.

Tribal socio-political, administrative and economic system: pre-plantation period (until the 1820s)

Socio-political and administrative system until the 1820s

The inhabitants of the Shervaroy ranges are called Malaiyalis, which means 'inhabitants of the hills'. For the purpose of administration, the Shervaroy hills was divided into several *nadus*,⁸ each having a four-tier administrative set-up: *Pattakaran*⁹ or headman, *Maniakaran*,¹⁰ *Ur-Kavundan* or *Moopan*¹¹ and *Kangani*. The *Pattakaran*, chieftain of each *nadu*, had extensive powers and collected the contributions for the *guru* besides acting as a mediator between the tribal people, while the *Maniakaran* assisted the *guru*.¹² If the *Ur-Kavundan* could not settle a dispute, it would be left to the *Pattakaran*, who was treated as the chief guest at harvest and marriage functions. Further, he controlled all the *Ur-Kavundans*.

Installation of the *Pattakaran*, a hereditary office, was held in a lavish manner with a lavish feast and animal sacrifice.¹³ If the *Pattakaran's* son was a minor at the time of the former's death, his brother was appointed

to that post. The decision of the *guru* would be final and binding in any dispute relating to *Pattakarship*. One among the *Pattakarans* in the *Sher-varoys* would be nominated as the *Periya-Pattakaran*,¹⁴ who functioned as an arbitrator in any disputes involving two or more *nadus*.¹⁵ He performed diverse functions, both religious and judicial, according to local laws and enjoyed the revenue of the estate after giving a portion to the local deity. Depending on his own needs, he decided the amount of tax to be collected from the tribal people. The rate of tax was not consistent as assessment was adjusted according to the situation.¹⁶

The *Pattakarans* appointed officials to protect the properties of the tribal people, especially from thieves, and to check the entry of strangers into the hills.¹⁷ Their main duties were guarding houses and crops, assisting in revenue collection, keeping vigilance over strangers and thieves and recovering stolen property. In the plains, the lower castes in the Hindu social order performed these traditional policing activities.¹⁸ The *Pattakaran* was almost a petty *raja*, since nothing transpired in the hills without his knowledge.¹⁹ The tribal people were brought under the control of the rulers of the plains only during the reign of Achuthadeva Raya of Vijayanagar Kingdom around the 16th century (1532). They, however, continued with the existing system of revenue collection through the *Periya-Pattakaran*.²⁰

The *Ur-Kavundans* administered the tribal people directly with the help of the *Kanganies*, who also functioned like the police. They collected information about development in villages and passed it on to the *Ur-Kavundan* who took necessary action. Each and every transaction, namely marriage, divorce, harvest and celebrations, including festivals, took place in the presence of the *Ur-Kavundan*. When disputes like the partition of property among brothers or divorce were brought to his notice, he summoned the *panchayat*, consisting of the elected members of clans or family groups, for consultation and pronounced judgement. Penalties were imposed according to the nature of the offence or dispute.²¹ This shows that the tribals had a well-established administrative system during the pre-colonial period.

The tribal villages, mostly located near a rivulet or a water source, were so small that each had not more than ten families.²² A fence to confine the wild animals from destroying the crops surrounded each village. Instead of mud walls, the houses were built of *tatties* (mats) of split bamboo and thatched with jungle grass.²³ All the materials for the hutments were collected from the hills. Every house had a five-foot-high deck, used for sleeping. During winter, fire was kept under the deck to protect them from the cold. Even though the Malaiyals celebrated *Pongal*, *Adi* and *Deepavali*, the annual festival of their chief God of the hills was the most popular in which all congregated.

Pre-plantation tribal economy: until 1820

The tribals' subsistence economy was mainly dependent on agriculture and forest produce. A number of plant species and fauna were found in abundance in the hills. Trees like sandalwood, teak, *vengai*, *kadukai*, tamarind and *karungali*, besides several medicinal plants, were in plenty in the hills.²⁴ The Sangam literature refers to the tribal people cultivating *ivanam* paddy²⁵ in the wetlands and raising *thenai* in the dry lands.²⁶ Pepper was grown to some extent along with banana and jackfruit.²⁷ Apart from this, they collected honey to a large extent.²⁸ They followed multiple cropping patterns,²⁹ practised weeding and removal of insects from the crops.³⁰ Hunting was practised in groups and distributed evenly among the villagers and groups.³¹ Though revenue was paid on the basis of the extent of land cultivated, information is not available on the share of agricultural produce.³²

For livelihood and other requirements like housing materials, agricultural implements, fire wood and grazing, the tribals were entirely dependent on the forests which also provided them with social and cultural identities. No restrictions were imposed on collecting forest produce, namely jackfruit, gallnut, tamarind, soap nut, lime and spices, until the establishment of coffee plantations. Thus, it becomes evident that the tribal economy cannot be isolated from the forest.³³ Guha asserts that in the pre-British period, 'there was little or no interference with the customary use of forest and forest produce'.³⁴

Until colonial intervention or even a little after, the tribal people followed both shifting³⁵ and settled cultivation. On the one hand, shifting cultivation led to soil erosion and thereby affected the flow of water in the rivers downstream. This negative fallout on the ecology and environment was a threat to sustainability.³⁶ On the other hand, it increased the area under cultivation and created more space for grazing, thereby enhancing the process of establishing permanent and semi-permanent agricultural production.³⁷ Consequently, there are two different views on shifting cultivation.³⁸ One school of thought argues that the expansion of shifting cultivation caused large-scale denudation of forest cover. The other school contends that the development projects of the government and the timber lobby were mostly responsible for deforestation. The latter claimed that the effect of shifting cultivation on the forest cover was overstated.³⁹

Further, the consequence of shifting cultivation largely depended on the density of population and other external factors. Recent studies prove that shifting cultivation, practised in different pockets of tribal areas over the centuries, did not affect the sustainability of forest resources.⁴⁰ The British

policy of restricting shifting cultivation was intended not only to bring forests under state control for generating more revenue but also to facilitate commercialisation of forests.⁴¹ After the Company Raj, direct rule under the British crown also discouraged shifting cultivation and served the cause of the empire.⁴² Low population density would not have caused any damage to the hill ecosystem.⁴³ The density of population being very low and scattered in the Shervaroy range, the damage this type of cultivation could cause to the ecological balance would be very minimal.

Land value was not much in the Shervaroys until the introduction of coffee plantations. Land revenue was paid on the basis of the number of implements, namely ploughs and hoes, used for cultivation.⁴⁴ Once land revenue was paid, the tribals were free to cultivate as much land as they could. Given the meagre population density and the abundance of land resources at their disposal, they were not aware of the value of land. Moreover, external demand for lands never existed in the hills until the coffee plantations appeared on the scene.

The tribal men, women and children were all engaged in agricultural activities. Clearing forests by felling of trees, procuring materials, building huts and grazing cattle were some of their other occupation. After the main work was over, odd jobs like weeding out and protecting the crops fell on the womenfolk, while the men generally indulged their leisure smoking, chatting, and sleeping.⁴⁵ Women thus played a major role in agricultural production.

The tribal people rarely sought any services from outside since labour requirements were met by family members and relatives. The labour market was almost non-existent, and the whole population depended on their own lands for their subsistence. Being self-reliant in economic transactions, their other requirements were also very few and limited. Except for clothes and salt, they were not dependent on outsiders during the pre-plantation period.⁴⁶

Growth and development of plantations

The British settlers introduced coffee in the Shervaroys during the second quarter of the 19th century. In 1825, steps were initiated in this direction, and a few Britishers then attempted to occupy vast tracts of tribal lands and CPRs like tanks, creating a lot of inconvenience/problems for the tribal people whose access to the CPRs was restricted in the process.⁴⁷

Consequently, in 1833, the government of Madras enacted a law to regulate coffee cultivation in the Shervaroys. This made it possible for the British planters to obtain the required land on lease for 21 years by entering into an agreement with the government. Land was given free of rent

for the first five years and on a nominal rent for the subsequent period. It was Rs 1 per acre per annum for the remaining 16 years.⁴⁸ Due to this largesse, many Britishers were attracted to this venture. In 1883, about 9,210 acres was under coffee cultivation. Of this, the Britishers held 7,776 acres or 85 per cent, and the remaining was with the Indians, mostly non-tribal people.⁴⁹ It shows that the colonial government's approach had accentuated the pace of tribal land alienation.

Alienation of tribal land, CPRs, administrative system and decline of tribal economy

The Shervaroy hills of Salem and Baramahal region was brought under the British administration on 17 March 1792 following the Srirangapatnam peace treaty between Tipu Sultan and the East India Company.⁵⁰ While establishing coffee plantations in the early 1820s, the colonial administration alienated the tribal land and CPRs, wrecked the indigenous administrative structure and encouraged non-tribal settlements in the Shervaroy hills. As a result of this, the tribal economy started declining and was on the verge of collapse in the Shervaroy hills during the 19th century.

Alienation of tribal land

The British settlers purchased large tracts of land from the native tribal people at throwaway prices. In addition, they started taking control of the unoccupied lands and forests, hitherto used by the tribal people without any restriction, as CPRs. The colonial government claimed that the tribal people were consulted and their consent was obtained before the lands were taken up for coffee cultivation. Actually, the hill tribes were not even aware of the formalities and the details documented in the official records. They neither had access to the gazette notification nor could understand its contents, even if it reached them, as they were illiterate. Until the survey and settlement (1904), the native tribal people practised cultivation according to their customary rights. It was ironic that the tribal people could not claim any legal right for their lands during the 19th century while the planters were given *pattas*⁵¹ for their landholdings. Before 1842, 'most of the old planters, obtained their lands from the Malaiyalis, and received *pattahs* for them prior to the circulation of the Government rules'.⁵² This is a clear evidence of favouritism shown to the British settlers since the same legal rights over landholdings were denied to the tribal people.

In 1842, the colonial administration initiated certain steps to protect the tribal people, but in practice, it either curtailed or encroached upon

their earlier customary rights. The government ordered that the settlers in such localities should not occupy lands as it inconvenienced the natives. Thus, even if the tribal people were willing to part with their lands, the settlers waiting to occupy them could not do so.⁵³ This indirectly restricted the extension of cultivation by the natives, since as mentioned earlier, the tribals who did not enjoy ownership rights over their lands were also denied access to natural resources. The British planters clandestinely usurped even their access to the limited fertile lands. Consequently, the agriculture and forest-based tribal economy disintegrated, and the Malaiyals were forced to become plantation labourers.

British settlers were not alone in this land-grabbing spree. The colonial administrators, including collectors and judges, also joined them. Cockburn, collector of Salem, by the power of force and authority, appropriated the best lands of the chief village of Mootoo Nadu by expelling the proprietors thereof. Neave, judge of Salem, took possession of about 400 or 500 acres more within the three years (1838-41) under not very dissimilar circumstances.⁵⁴ Not only did the colonial government act in favour of British planters, but also its officers encroached and alienated tribal lands in the Shervaroys to further their private interests.

In 1864, when Hunter, a British planter, attempted to buy tribal lands in Pattapadi and Kurdyoor villages, the native tribal people refused to sell it. He then made efforts to drive the natives out by disturbing them in every possible way and pressed the other planters to do the same. Besides closing down every public path running through his land that the tribal people used, he shot and killed their cattle.⁵⁵ The British planters also used the colonial officers to intimidate and harass the hill inhabitants so they would dispose of their lands. When the tribal people were subjected to such harassment, the colonial administrators always favoured the planters and were not concerned with the plight of the tribals.

During the first half of the 19th century, the colonial administration did not enact any legislation to protect the native inhabitants from the British planters and others; in fact, they encouraged the latter. After the mutiny, the subcontinent, hitherto under the control of the East India Company, came under the direct rule of the British crown in 1858. Even under the British Raj, most of the economic and revenue policies of the East India Company remained unchanged for a long period. However, in the process of expansion of the modern state during the post-mutiny period, certain changes took place in the tribal areas of Madras Presidency. In 1866, the 'village green' system was introduced in the Shervaroy hills to protect the tribal people from the coffee planters. Under this system, a certain portion of wastelands was demarcated on the outskirts of each village for the tribals to cultivate. On the other hand, no restriction was imposed on

the British planters from buying lands within the village green. Subsequently, most of the village green lands stood alienated by the planters. Non-tribal settlers of 13 villages in the Shervaroys had occupied about 40 per cent of them.⁵⁶ In 1871, the village green areas were expanded further.⁵⁷ The apparently protective measure had in practice severely restricted the availability of cultivable land and made the collection of forest produce more difficult. Moreover, due to the increasing pressure from non-tribal people, the tribal communities gradually lost their lands and became agricultural/plantation labourers towards the end of the 19th century. As indicated earlier, about 10,000 hectares of tribal and forest land was brought under coffee cultivation. Consequently, 28 per cent of the total workforce came under the category of labourers in the 1871 Census, and it further increased to 45 per cent in the 1901 Census.⁵⁸

Alienation of CPRs

An instance narrated here would show how the British planters encroached upon the tribal CPRs in the Shervaroy hills during the 19th century. A natural tank located high up at the source of two streams at Yercaud, now a popular hill resort in the Shervaroys, served the drinking water needs of neighbouring villages and of devotees of the Perumal Koil⁵⁹ on certain festival days. It also provided drinking water for the cattle but was never utilised for irrigation purposes even by the tribals.⁶⁰ In fact, no individual had any right over this, since only the *Pattadars*⁶¹ managed the wastelands, including tanks, as a common property for the community's use.⁶² As such, it remained a CPR until the early 19th century.

Let us now analyse how the British planters tried to appropriate the CPRs. Of course, the available data would not give any account of the quantity of water used by the tribal people and the quantity of water diverted by the planters for their gardens and coffee plantations. The problem here cannot be reduced to mere diversion of water by the British planters to the detriment of the Malaiyalis. More important, it concerns the mindset of the British planters and administrators as to how they looked at this issue in the context of alienation of CPRs.

After the introduction of coffee plantations, this tank was expanded and repaired by the collector at the government's expense, but was notoriously used for his personal benefit. This tank was desilted and deepened by digging 3,130 cubic yards at a cost of Rs 342⁶³ and 5 *annas*,⁶⁴ and loose stones were laid for 183 cubic yards at an expense of Rs 57 and 7 *annas* between 17 December 1823 and 24 April 1824.⁶⁵ This renovation was not intended to provide more water supplies to tribal people but to irrigate the collectors' large gardens and coffee plantations through pipelines.

Incidentally, the pipeline burst in the first trial itself due to faulty construction.⁶⁶ These facts show how the colonial authorities indulged in personal aggrandisement at the cost of the exchequer.

Even as late as in 1825, no attempt was made to divert the tank water for irrigation by the British planters/officials. In fact, the tank was of great help to the people during the summer as well, for its clay was collected and used to make bricks for construction of houses in the hills.⁶⁷ The tribal people had used the tank without any apprehension until 1839, when the government announced withdrawal of interference from all internal arrangements in the Shervaroys. As a result, the whole land of Perumal Koil, including the tank, was attached to the temple's property.⁶⁸ On the contrary, the agent of Neave, a British planter, claimed that the tank granted by the *Pattadar* in perpetuity to the late Johns in 1842 and transferred to Neave in 1843 continued to be in the same name.⁶⁹ Further, the agent claimed that he had paid a rent of Rs 4-3-2 for the land comprising the tank.

Contesting this, the *Curnam*⁷⁰ of Mootoo Nadu stated that the tank, entered as a *poramboke*⁷¹ land of the government, was not included in any *pattah*⁷² granted to private individuals.⁷³ He further clarified that the tank was neither entered in the name of Neave for one year nor excluded from his *pattah* subsequently.⁷⁴ However, the agent continued to claim ownership rights over the tank and, since 1842, Neave started collecting soil from the tank bed with the permission of the collector.⁷⁵ In 1847, Leacher requested the agent to permit him to use the tank water for his gardens, stating that the late Neave and his agents had allowed him to do so.⁷⁶ The agent permitted him to use the tank water for one year from 17 September 1847.⁷⁷ That same year, he also permitted another person to take water from the swamp contiguous to the sacred wood, and from the tank bed for one year.⁷⁸ Moreover, he built a wall around the lower part of the tank with the objective of enclosing it within Neave's ground.⁷⁹ He further claimed the right to dig clay and soil beneath the tank for construction purposes, as well as the right to enjoy valuable pasture around the tank during summer, and the orange and coffee trees on its bank.⁸⁰ To retain the tank and protect the coffee plants on its embankment, Neave's agent expressed his readiness to refund the cost of repairs and renovation to the government in 1824. He was also prepared to pay rent for the rocky and uncultivable land excluded from land rent.⁸¹ However, contrary to the earlier assertions, he further attempted to get the tank repaired at government's expense⁸² and intended to approach the court to retain his hold over the tank.⁸³

The colonial administrators also attempted to appropriate CPRs such as tanks. For instance, in 1847, the collector, after purchasing the land

below the tank, planned to raise the tank bund and repair it at his own expense to irrigate his fields. Considering the heavy expenditure, he dropped the proposal at that time.⁸⁴ Faced with criticism, he changed his earlier idea of extending irrigation to his gardens. In 1847, he decided to repair the tank at a lower estimate to benefit not only his kitchen and garden but also the tribal community and their cattle.⁸⁵ Even when the colonial administrators intended to do something for the tribals, it was always accompanied by some personal benefit for the British settlers.

Disintegration of traditional administrative system

The traditional indigenous administrative system of the Malaiyalis and their hereditary rights were the other casualties of colonialism. An instance of British intervention into their traditional hereditary rights was the dismissal of the Moha Nadu village *Munsiff* in 1897.⁸⁶ This drastic action taken was for his failure to complain about the theft of coffee belonging to the British planters, to the police and sub-magistrate, and for having conducted searches in houses beyond his administrative control.⁸⁷ The theft had actually occurred in two adjoining places of the same village, of which one was directly reported to the police station and the other was reported to the *Munsiff*. He had gone to the Station House and duly reported it. The Station House officer asked him to proceed to the other village and investigate the matter, which he did readily.⁸⁸ Instead of appreciating his service, the planters alleged that the *Munsiff* was responsible for some careless lapses and secured his dismissal by using their influence.

Let us briefly have a look at the tribal administrative system in the Shervaroy hills. Each *nadu*⁸⁹ had its own hereditary chief or *Pattadar*, who collected revenue from the ryots (with the help of the village headman) and remitted it to the rulers. This practice continued until the fourth decade of the 19th century. In the event of the *Pattadar* not having a son or he being a minor, his brother could take over the *Pattadar* rights. Generally, this right was conferred by the *guru*⁹⁰ in the presence of members of the community.⁹¹ Once the hereditary *Pattadar's* son became a major and was interested, he would be appointed to the office by the *guru*. In some cases, if the *Pattadar* was found to be ineffective in disposing with his functions, he would be stripped of his office and the post given to his brother by the *guru*. Since the *guru* was the supreme head of all activities in the different *nadus* in various hills of Salem district, his verdict was final and binding in disputes between any two *nadus* and among *Pattadars*.⁹² *Guruship* was also hereditary. On the demise of the *guru*, his son/brother would take over the office accordingly. This administrative system has prevailed in the Shervaroys prior to British intervention as well as during the early

colonial period. Colonial intervention had a debilitating effect on this indigenous system and led to its eventual collapse. This was accomplished with a view to garner more revenue during the fourth decade of the 19th century.

Since colonial intervention (1792), land revenue in the hills was settled annually with the *Pattadar* or headman of different *nadus*. The highest amount of the last six years (1793–99) was fixed as permanent assessment during the permanent settlement period (1802–3). Under this, Rs 11,695–15 or the average of Rs 1,299–8–10 per annum was the arrears between 1802–3 and 1818–19. Subsequently, it was remitted.⁹³ In 1819, this hill range was brought under the collector's management, which continued until 1821. Even at that time, there was a balance of about Rs 500. Considering this, the collector handed over revenue collection back to the *Pattadars* in 1822. However, the Malaiyals agreed to pay only Rs 3,193–12–0 or Rs 1,234 less than the amount fixed during permanent settlement. The Mootoo Nadu *Pattadar* made an appeal for reduction in his revenue since others took away some of his lands. Consequently, the revenue demand for Mootoo Nadu was fixed at Rs 656–4 or Rs 212–2–1 less than the permanent settlement amount. An agreement was made and *muchilika*⁹⁴ exchanged between Mulliah Goundan, Moodoopoocar Andee Goundan of Mootoo Nadu and the government.⁹⁵

From 1821, Mulliah Goundan collected the revenue on behalf of the government, and he looked after the business concerning only Mootoo Nadu. Between 1822 and 1839, Rs 3,695–6 was the balance, of which Rs 2,776–10 was remitted in 1834, with Rs 918–12 remaining unadjusted. Of this, Rs 683–7 was the dues from Cockburn, Rs 122–8 from Gay and other planters and only Rs 112–13 from the tribal people. Actually, from 1826 to 1841, Cockburn had not paid the land rent worth Rs 2,187.⁹⁶ In 1833, Orr, the principal collector of Salem, demanded the arrears due for the period 1826 to 11 July 1831 worth Rs 579–9 from Fisher, who held the original grant. But he refused to pay, saying that the land was transferred to Cockburn. He added that it was transferred again to Orpwood, who had died soon, and he (Cockburn) had no acquaintance with Orpwood's representative.⁹⁷ In 1833, the government decided to collect the revenue from the actual holders.⁹⁸ In fact, the land was under the control of Fisher, to whom it had been mortgaged by Cockburn. Fisher subsequently re-transferred the land for which Cockburn did not pay the land revenue. He was requested by the government to remit his outstanding (14 years) dues of land revenue.⁹⁹ In favour of Cockburn, the government passed an order to limit the demand for the period of five years antecedent to the date on which he was called up to pay the arrears.¹⁰⁰ In sharp contrast, the native subordinates (farmers) were tortured and harassed to

pay the dues.¹⁰¹ Though the British planters had not paid land revenue for more than 15 years (1826–41), the government took no action against them to collect the arrears. On the other hand, it forced the tribal *Pattadars* to pay the balance due from the planters and succeeded in creating divisions among the Malaiyals and finally withdrew the *Pattadarship*, a symbol of authority for the community.

On 14 March 1840, Mulliah Goundan, the hereditary *Pattadar* of Mootoo Nadu, appealed to the government to restore the community headship that was dispensed by the collector in 1839. He stated that several parties, mainly Britishers, who did not pay the land rent, had taken over a large tract of land for coffee plantations. When asked, the planters not only refused to pay the dues but also denounced and assaulted him.¹⁰² Substantiating this further, the collector said, 'Although the renters hold a *pattah*, the settlers refuse to pay him the amount due on their lands and more than one complaint has been brought against them for assault and ill usage when he demanded his due.'¹⁰³ The enquiry made by the assessors with the help of the taluk *cutchery*¹⁰⁴ records also proved that one Moya Goundan had taken upon himself the right to collect rent from the tribals of Mootoo Nadu by claiming *Pattadarship* without authority. It was ordered that the collections made by him should be given to Mulliah Goundar Vellaiah Goundar, the acknowledged *Pattadar*.¹⁰⁵ While the government recognised his office as the headman of Mootoo Nadu, it rejected his claim to have permanent possession of the payment of fixed *beriez*.^{106,107} Further, the government brought the Shervaroy hills under the *amani*¹⁰⁸ management, and the collector recommended that *Curnams* and *Manigars*¹⁰⁹ from the plains be brought for this purpose, as was the case with the other hills.¹¹⁰ Conceding his proposal, the government sanctioned one *Manigar*, one *Curnam* and two *Kanganies*¹¹¹ for Mootoo Nadu under the *amani* management.¹¹²

The division of the British settlers into two groups, both creating a wedge within the tribal community to retain land they had occupied/encroached upon, was the sole cause for the dispute and dissension in Mootoo Nadu. European and native non-tribal settlers occupied about 452 acres in 90 spots in Mootoo Nadu. Of this, 105 acres of 40 spots was under cultivation, while 347 acres of 50 spots remained uncultivated.¹¹³ A large extent of land was occupied by a particular planter Fischer, Mootadar of Salem, with the help of Moya Goundan, who claimed *Pattadarship* for Mootoo Nadu. He was patronised by Fischer, who oppressed the others. This created apprehension among the other planters regarding the prospect of Fischer emerging as a landlord.¹¹⁴ Consequently, they were divided into two groups, one headed by Fischer and the other led by Gay.

The planters, who obtained most of the land through Moya Goundan, were insecure since they had occupied land without prior permission of the government. Further, they did not pay the land rent for their holdings. In June 1841, certain coffee planters complained to the government that they were unable to pay the rent since two persons were claiming *headmanship* of Mootoo Nadu.¹¹⁵ They were aware that if any one of the two objected on behalf of the tribals, their unauthorised lands would be disposed of.

To save their occupied (unauthorised) land, the coffee planters created divisions in the tribal community's administrative system. Let us have a cursory look at how the British settlers were instrumental in creating a dispute over the office of *guruship*. Tanaudee Goundan of Chitteri hill, the *guru* of the tribal people, was assisted by Latchma Goundan, his brother's son. The British gave the latter employment in government service and used him as a weapon to create a dispute to dispense with the office of *guruship*. Latchma Goundan claimed that it was he who had appointed Mulliah Goundan, the original *Pattadar* of Mootoo Nadu, in 1822, when he was only in his mid-20s. In an attempt to clarify the matter further, he said that he had never visited Mootoo Nadu before the appointment of Mulliah Goundan, who died in 1831 leaving behind his brother, Mulliah Goundar Vellaiah Goundan, and a minor son, Chinna Goundan. Expressing ignorance about having any idea of Mulliah Goundan's family, he claimed that he had conferred *Pattakarship* on Moya Goundan, a descendant of Mulliah Goundan's father's brother.¹¹⁶ The sons who executed an agreement with the government, Chinna Goundan, s/o Mulliah Goundan, and Chinna Goundan, s/o Andee Goundan, also supported this view.¹¹⁷

Contradicting this, the *guru* Tanaudee Goundan, aged over 60 years, said that on the death of the original *Pattadar*, his brother Mulliah Goundar Vellaiah Goundan was appointed as *Pattadar*; he continued to be in service until 1839.¹¹⁸ The British administration accepted the version of the young man, who always favoured them, and ignored the view of the aged *guru*. Such were the means adopted by the British settlers to create divisions among tribals and wreck their administrative set-up.

The colonial government intended to put on hold the land disposal rights of the tribal *Pattadars* so as to provide more lands to the British planters and thereby garner more revenue from the hills. The government disregarded the views of the *guru* of Chitteri hills and others, who were strong advocates of these hereditary rights. The government claimed that no such right had been given since 1825 when the original *Pattadar* died. To put off any claim made by the hereditary *Pattadars*, it forced them to pay the long-outstanding land rents that had accumulated for over 19 years, and were mainly from the British planters.¹¹⁹ Invariably, it

approached all those who were related to the original *Pattadar*. The son of a former *Pattadar* submitted an application stating that he could take the rights for either one or three years if rent for the lands occupied by Cockburn and other Britishers was reduced to Rs 177-8-4 from the original *bereiz* of Rs 868.¹²⁰ Without considering the hereditary tribal *Pattadar* system, the collector called a tender for revenue assessment. A person from the plains made an offer for the lands other than those granted by the government at Rs 750.¹²¹ Avaricious as it was, the colonial administration, in its attempt to garner more revenue, deliberately divided the tribal people, created dissensions within the traditional system and eventually withdrew the hereditary titles of *Pattadarship* and *guruship*.

Right from the days of colonial intervention (1793), land revenue in the Shervaroy hills was collected through the *Pattadar*. During the Read settlement (1793-97), land revenue was collected even annually through the *Pattadars*, and it continued till the Permanent Settlement period (1802-19). In 1819, the hills were brought under the direct management of the collector, and this system continued until 1822. After this, Mulliah Goundan alone performed the duties of the *Pattadar*.¹²² In 1823, the government executed an agreement for the assessment of Mootoo Nadu with Mulliah Goundan and Andee Goundan for Rs 650-4.¹²³ Even after the agreement lapsed, Mulliah Goundan continued to collect the money as *Pattadar* and looked after the affairs of Mootoo Nadu, assisted by Andee Goundan.¹²⁴ Mullia Goundan died around 1825, leaving behind a brother, Vellaiah Goundan Mulliah Goundan, and a minor son, Chinna Goundan. Since then, the government did not have any agreement with the succeeding *Pattadars*.¹²⁵ It is evident that the land disposal rights were under the control of *Pattadars*. The administration's claim that the *Pattadar* was merely a community head of the tribal people, which was contrary to facts, and was intended to vest the land disposal rights with the government.¹²⁶

Non-tribal settlement

In the early 19th century, the presence of non-tribal people in the hill areas was insignificant. After the settlement of the Britishers, plains people also migrated in large numbers. Until the 1871 Census, there was no separate data for them in the hills. According to the Census of 1871, the population of the area was 10,745, of whom 1,943 people or about 85 per cent of the non-tribals were Pariahs¹²⁷ (a scheduled caste); 6 were Chetties; 22 were Muslims, who introduced the usurious rate of interest; and the remaining 318 belonged to the other castes.¹²⁸ Of the rest, about 100 people including children belonged to European stock.¹²⁹ Migrants in the later

period were mostly scheduled castes, who had fled the plains to escape the tyranny of oppressive traditional systems. The non-tribals migrated to the hill areas to take advantage of the low prices of land. Hence, it might be safely assumed that during the early 19th century, land alienation, though negligible, was due to the British settlers, Pariahs and the other backward classes and not because of the moneylenders and traders, who arrived on the scene only during the second half of the 19th century.

Before colonial intervention, people from the plains refrained from settling down in the hills due to fear of malaria. It was only after British intervention that some non-tribal people made their settlements. But this could not be the reason for large-scale alienation of tribal lands. The initiatives of the British planters gave an initial thrust to the problem, and non-tribal people followed the suit to aggravate it.

Impact of forest acts

Under the Madras Forest Act, certain rights were given to the tribal people subjected to the approval of the Forest Department with quantitative restrictions. Extraction of any prohibited forest product and grazing cattle in the closed lands could lead to imprisonment of six months and one month and penalty of Rs 500 and Rs 200, respectively. In addition to that, they were forced to render free services to Forest Department officers.

In the early 19th century, a very large part of tribal lands was alienated and its traditional administrative structure was dismantled, while during the last quarter of that century all the CPRs were taken over by the Forest Department. About 68,751 acres or roughly 107 square miles was brought under the reserve forest in Shervaroy hills in 1892.¹³⁰ Even while holding the tribal people responsible for deforestation, the government encouraged non-tribal people, particularly Britishers, to settle down and take up cultivation on the forest lands. For example, in 1925, there were 15 coffee estates, spread over 3,613.48 acres of land, the lease for which was also extended.¹³¹ Hence, it becomes clear that to satisfy the requirements of non-tribal people, especially the British settlers, all the rules and regulations of the Forest Department were flouted.

Decline of tribal economy

Consequent to the decline of the tribal economy, the Malaiyalis who were cultivators earlier were reduced to being agricultural and plantation labourers during the 19th century. In 1836, the entire tribal population in Salem and Baramahal region was brought under the occupational category of 'cultivators.'¹³² Later on, further deterioration set in, with their

occupational position having taken an irreversible downward slide. On the one hand, the British and other non-tribal settlers brought a large extent of the tribal-managed lands under coffee plantations since the early 19th century, and on the other, vast tracts of forest area were notified as reserve forest under the Madras Forest Act in 1883, which crippled the growth of the tribal economy.

Within the four decades, about 10,000 acres was brought under coffee cultivation, which resulted in nearly three-fourths of the total population (10,745) being classified as non-workers in 1871. Since then, the category of non-workers increased steadily over the period in the Shervaroy hills. The introduction of coffee cultivation, besides drastically changing the tribal modes of production, degraded the Malaiyalis from a position of cultivators to that of agricultural labourers. The British planters, who indirectly held a huge extent of unoccupied lands, which were used as CPRs, directly occupied a large extent of tribal lands. Consequently, large proportions of the tribal people were forced to either depend on the lands of their own community people or turn to the planters as labourers.

In the 1871 Census, 3,016 were classified as workers, of whom 68.46 per cent of the tribal people were classified as cultivators and 31.54 per cent as labourers. It indicated that about one-third of the tribal people had lost their land at the onset of coffee plantations. In 1891, the proportion of cultivators had further decreased to 55.27 per cent, while there was a rise leading to a total ratio of 44.73 per cent in the category other than cultivators, predominantly agricultural and plantation labourers. This was because, as already noted, after the introduction of the Madras Forest Act 1882, a large extent of forest land was brought under the reserve forest category at the end of 1891. As a result of this, there was hardly any possibility of extending cultivation into the forests. Hence, the growing population was forced to become agricultural/plantation labourers.¹³³

Although the percentages of agricultural and other plantation labourers increased, the wage rate did not increase correspondingly in the Shervaroy hills. Even though the coffee estates were established around 1830, the earliest available wage account is only for 1864. The wage rate for the plantation workers was four *annas* four *pies* per diem in the Shervaroy hills in 1864.¹³⁴ In 1870, for the coffee plantation works, the male workers earned from one *anna* eight *pies* to three *annas*; the female workers received one *anna* six *pies*; and the children under 12 years earned one *anna*.¹³⁵ In 1872, the wage rate in the Shervaroys was Rs 1 for six days.¹³⁶ In other words, it was only two *anna* eight *pies* per day. The settlement report (1905) said that the wage rate was Rs 1 to Rs 1-2-0 for six days' work.¹³⁷ It shows that the wage rate did not change during 1862-1905. However, the wage rate had increased slightly in the plains of the district

in general during the 19th century.¹³⁸ Not only did a large proportion of the tribal people become agricultural/plantation labourers, but also their wage rate remained almost constant during the 19th century, a clear indication of the collapse of the tribal socio-economic system.

Conclusions

Interpretations of 19th-century environmental history, particularly those concerning coffee plantations, clearly show that the colonial administration, which disregarded the welfare of the tribal people, also ignored the conservation of the ecology and environment of the hilly regions of Madras Presidency. On the one hand, the colonial medical practitioners expressed grave concern over consequences of deforestation; on the other hand, the colonial administration as well as the British settlers established planters' Raj by alienating the tribal lands and appropriating the CPRs. In other words, in spite of the commendable talks on conservation, the colonial government had actively encouraged the British planters to engage in large-scale denudation of forests for setting up coffee plantations, leading to ecological and environmental degradation in the Shervaroys.

Vast tracts of forests were cleared not only to establish the plantations but also to lay roads to the estates in order to transport the produce and process it. Due to large-scale alienation of tribal lands and CPRs, the self-reliant agrarian economy and the traditional socio-political and administrative system started crumbling slowly and disintegrated beyond redemption. Subsequently, the forests were notified as reserve forest by the Madras Forest Act 1882. All these culminated in forcing the tribal people to become wage labourers, an issue unknown to them in their history. Quite clearly, tribal development was never on the agenda of the colonial rule, despite the conditions of the hill inhabitants worsening in the 19th century.

The CPRs became out of bounds for the tribal people, and with the introduction of the Madras Forest Act 1882, the restrictions effectively curtailed their access even to the natural resources. Even prior to this (since 1825), these rights were restricted in the Shervaroys with the arrival of the coffee plantations. Most of the lands and forests, which were used as CPRs with unfettered freedom, fell prey to the planters' Raj. Land alienation and ecological degradation were the direct consequences of the introduction of coffee plantations in the hills coupled with the demise of the tribal institutions. Intervention of market forces into the non-market tribal economy irreversibly altered the ground realities wherein the customary tribal rights on the use of CPRs were made redundant in favour of private property rights that benefited non-tribal

people, leading to the collapse of the traditional system and steady decline of tribal economy during the 19th century. Stated briefly, the interpretation of the unexplored areas of 19th-century environmental history nullifies the imperial environmentalist's claim as far as the hill areas of Madras Presidency were concerned.

Notes

- 1 This chapter was originally published in *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 4. Copyright 2003 © 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.
- 2 Velayutham Saravanan, 'Economic Transformation of Tribals in Tamil Nadu: Subsistence to Commercialisation 1976-1995', *Review of Development and Change*, 1997, 2(1): p. 159; Velayutham Saravanan, 'Thamizhaga Malaival Makkalin Nila Urimai' (Land Rights of Tribals in Tamil Nadu), *Uzhavan Urimai* (Special Issue), 1999, p. 54.
- 3 Saravanan, 'Economic Transformation of Tribals in Tamil Nadu', p. 158.
- 4 See Chapters 5 and 6.
- 5 David Baker, 'State Polity, the Market Economy, and Tribal Decline: The Central Provinces, 1861-1920', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1991, 28(4): pp. 341-70.
- 6 See Chapters 3 and 5.
- 7 Ranajit Das Gupta, 'From Peasants and Tribesmen to Plantation Workers: Colonial Capitalism, Reproduction of Labour Power and Proletarianisation in North East India, 1850s to 1947', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1986, 21(4): p. 3.
- 8 A division of the country; a division of the hills also called a *nadu*.
- 9 The headman of the estate or hills. He is the chief administrative and judicial officer of the estates or *nadus*.
- 10 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*.
- 11 The headman of the hill village.
- 12 Board of Revenue (hereafter BOR), Vol. 1769, 23 September 1841, p. 12109, Tamil Nadu State Archives, Chennai (hereafter TNSA).
- 13 A. Aiyappan, *Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, Madras: Government Press, 1948, p. 143.
- 14 The head among the *Pattakaran* in every hill.
- 15 F.J. Richards, *Madras District Gazetteer, Salem District*, Vol. I, Part I, Madras: Government Press, 1918, p. 154.
- 16 Aiyappan, *Report on the Socio-Economic Conditions*.
- 17 Their role is like the traditional police, namely the *Taliaris* and the *Kavalkars*, in South India.
- 18 David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras 1859-1947*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 17. see also Captain Alexander Read's General Report on Salem, 1800, TNSA.

- 19 BOR, Vol. 1027, 18 July 1825, pp. 6307-38, TNSA.
- 20 R. Vidyasagar, 'Debt Bondage in South Arcot District: A Case Study of Agricultural Labourers and Handloom Weavers', in Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney (eds), *Bondage and Slavery in India*, Madras: Sangam Publishers, 1985, p. 155.
- 21 Richards, *Madras District Gazetteer*, p. 154.
- 22 Baramahal Records (hereafter BR), Section VI, *Land Rent*, p. 123, TNSA, and Public (Sundries): Vol. 121, 1792-99, p. 157, TNSA.
- 23 Richards, *Madras District Gazetteer*, p. 108.
- 24 Brandis, *Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration*, pp. 173-75.
- 25 *Kurunthogai* (Tamil), poem 371.
- 26 *Ibid.*, poems 133 and 198.
- 27 *Ibid.*, poem 288; *Natrinai* (Tamil), poem 222.
- 28 *Kurunthogai* (Tamil), poem 392.
- 29 *Natrinai* (Tamil), poem 108.
- 30 *Kurunthogai* (Tamil), poem 100.
- 31 *Ibid.*, poem 392.
- 32 K.A. Neelakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, Geoffrey/Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 128.
- 33 See Chapters 3 and 4.
- 34 Quoted by Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan (eds), *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 11.
- 35 In Tamil, it is known as *Ponakkadu*; lands cleared, cultivated for a few years and abandoned, covered with a press growth of jungle; in other words, land in the hill areas, capable of cultivation after long intervals with particular kinds of grain sown in holes dug with a spade.
- 36 C.J. Jepma, *Tropical Deforestation: A Socio-Economic Approach*, London: Earthscan Publications, 1995, pp. 3-4.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 William D. Sunderlin, 'Shifting Cultivation and Deforestation in Indonesia: Steps toward Overcoming Confusion in the Debate', *Network Paper 21b*, London, Rural Development Forestry Network, summer 1997, p. 2.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 M.D. Subash Chandran, 'Shifting Cultivation, Sacred Groves and Conflicts in Colonial Forest Policy in Western Ghats', in Richard H. Grove, Satpal Sangwan and Vinita Damodaran (eds), *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 678-80 and 700; Dennis P. Garrify and Chun K. Lai, 'Innovation in Shifting Cultivation in Asia: Indigenous Fallow Management', <http://www.oneworld.org/ileia/newsletters>, September 2000, pp. 5-6; Eric Meyer, 'Forests, Chena Cultivation, Plantations and the Colonial State in Ceylon 1840-1940', in Richard H. Grove, Satpal Sangwan and Vinita Damodaran (eds), *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 797.
- 41 Jacques Pouchepadass, 'British Attitudes towards Shifting Cultivation in Colonial South India: A Case Study of South Canara District 1800-1920', in David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha (eds), *Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 135; Guha and Gadgil, 'State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India', p. 152.
- 42 Pouchepadass, 'British Attitudes towards Shifting Cultivation', p. 148; Chandran, 'Shifting Cultivation, Sacred Groves', p. 688.

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- 43 Meyer, 'Forests, Chena Cultivation', p. 797; Chandran, 'Shifting Cultivation, Sacred Groves', p. 675; Jepma, *Tropical Deforestation*, p. 86.
- 44 BOR, Vol. 1817, pp. 10130-31, TNSA.
- 45 John Shortt (ed.), *The Hill Ranges of Southern India*, Madras: Higginbotham's and Co., 1870, p. 41.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- 47 BOR, Vol. 1012, p. 1689, TNSA.
- 48 BOR, Vol. 1886, p. 614, TNSA.
- 49 H. Le Fanu, *A Manual of the Salem District in the Presidency of Madras*, Vol. II, Madras: Government Press, 1883, pp. 21-24; Velayutham Saravanan, 'Tribal Land Alienation in Madras Presidency during the Colonial Period: 1792-1947', *Review of Development and Change*, 2001, 6(1): pp. 73-104.
- 50 BR, Section XXI, *Miscellaneous*, p. 25, TNSA.
- 51 Land deed or ownership rights of land.
- 52 BOR, Vol. 2310, p. 16470, TNSA.
- 53 Richards, *Madras District Gazetteer*, p. 47.
- 54 BOR, Vol. 1838, p. 16685, TNSA.
- 55 Letter from Arbuthnot to the Board of Revenue, 23 May 1866, TNSA.
- 56 Government Order (hereafter GO), No. 714, Revenue, 19 March 1900, TNSA.
- 57 GO, No. 262, Revenue, 19 January 1871, TNSA.
- 58 Census of India 1901, *Village Statistics, Salem District*, Madras: Government Press, 1902.
- 59 Sacred place or temple.
- 60 BOR, Vol. 2091, p. 10017, TNSA.
- 61 Holders of the land deed.
- 62 BOR, Vol. 1809, p. 7266, TNSA.
- 63 One company rupee is equal to 16 *annas* or 172 *pies*.
- 64 In Madras Presidency, this is the lowest money measurement, which existed during the early 19th century. Twelve *pies* equals one *anna*; 16 *annas* or 172 *pies* equals 1 company rupee.
- 65 BOR, Vol. 2135, p. 7348, TNSA.
- 66 *Ibid.*, p. 7344, TNSA.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 BOR, Vol. 2125, p. 4439, TNSA.
- 69 BOR, Vol. 2135, p. 7358, TNSA.
- 70 Village accountant.
- 71 Land reserved as required for purposes other than those of cultivation.
- 72 Land deed or ownership rights of land.
- 73 BOR, Vol. 2135, p. 7356, TNSA.
- 74 *Ibid.*, p. 7357, TNSA.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p. 7347, TNSA.
- 76 BOR, Vol. 2125, p. 4446, TNSA.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 4447, TNSA.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 4446, TNSA.
- 79 BOR, Vol. 2135, p. 7345, TNSA.
- 80 BOR, Vol. 2125, p. 4440, TNSA.
- 81 *Ibid.*, p. 4441, TNSA.
- 82 BOR, Vol. 2135, p. 7348, TNSA.
- 83 BOR, Vol. 2125, p. 4440, TNSA.
- 84 BOR, Vol. 2135, p. 7349, TNSA.

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- 85 Ibid.
- 86 In Tamil, known as *Maniakaran*. He was a subordinate native revenue officer employed in the collection and management of the revenue under the native *Pattakaran*, by whom he is appointed and to whom he is responsible. In other words, he is a kind of head peon, who, in consonance with the heads of villages, superintends collection, cultivation, reaping and selling of a crop, when the revenue is paid in kind, and settles petty disputes.
- 87 Petition No. 286, Revenue, 1 February 1900, TNSA.
- 88 GO, No. 789 (Misc.), Revenue, 19 March 1900, TNSA.
- 89 A division of the country or province or hill.
- 90 Spiritual leader.
- 91 BOR, Vol. 1769, p. 12124, TNSA.
- 92 BOR, Vol. 1809, pp. 7264-68, TNSA.
- 93 Ibid., p. 7265, TNSA.
- 94 A counterpart of lease conversant on the part of the proprietor's or cultivator's document agreeing to the rates of assessment imposed by the government.
- 95 BOR, Vol. 1769, p. 12129, TNSA.
- 96 BOR, Vol. 2067, p. 1751, TNSA.
- 97 Ibid., p. 2755, TNSA.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 BOR, Vol. 1769, pp. 12080-85, TNSA.
- 100 Ibid., p. 12090, TNSA.
- 101 See Government of Madras, *Report of the Commissioners for the Investigation of Alleged Cases of Torture in the Madras Presidency*, Chennai: Government of Madras, 1855, TNSA.
- 102 BOR, Vol. 1838, p. 16684, TNSA.
- 103 BOR, Vol. 1809, p. 7273, TNSA.
- 104 Office of the revenue administration.
- 105 BOR, Vol. 1769, p. 12126, TNSA.
- 106 Total assessment of a village for land revenue.
- 107 BOR, Vol. 1769, p. 12315, TNSA.
- 108 During the early 19th century, the colonial government had followed/experimented various methods of land revenue settlement, of which *amani* settlement is one. *Amani* settlement is known as direct land revenue settlement system or sharing system. In fact, this simply consists in taking the actual share of the grain by the government officers directly, in short, land and other sources of revenue held and managed directly by the government.
- 109 A subordinate revenue officer.
- 110 BOR, Vol. 1809, p. 7273, TNSA.
- 111 Inspector/watcher of crops/villages.
- 112 BOR, Vol. 1847, p. 1581, TNSA.
- 113 BOR, Vol. 1809, p. 7278, TNSA.
- 114 Ibid., p. 7272, TNSA.
- 115 BOR, Vol. 1760, p. 8090, TNSA.
- 116 BOR, Vol. 1769, pp. 12111-15, TNSA.
- 117 Ibid., pp. 12115-19, TNSA.
- 118 Ibid., pp. 12105-11, TNSA.
- 119 Ibid., pp. 12103-23, TNSA.
- 120 Ibid., p. 12099.
- 121 Ibid.

- 122 BOR, Vol. 1809, p. 7268, TNSA.
 123 BOR, Vol. 1769, p. 12127, TNSA.
 124 BOR, Vol. 1809, p. 7269, TNSA.
 125 BOR, Vol. 1817, p. 10130-31, TNSA.
 126 BOR, Vol. 1769, p. 12096, TNSA.
 127 'In times prior to colonial rule the whole of the Pariah community, without exception, were the slaves of the superior castes' (*Census of India 1871, without of Madras Presidency - A Report*, Vol. I, Madras: Government Press, 1874, p. 169).
 128 *Census of India 1871, Census Statement of Population of 1871, Salem District*, Madras: Government Press.
 129 Shortt, *The Hill Ranges*, p. 7.
 130 Board Proceedings (hereafter BP) No. 117 (Misc.), Chief Conservator of Forests, 5 February 1892, TNSA.
 131 GO, No. 1505 (Misc.), Revenue, 29 September 1925, TNSA.
 132 BOR, Vol. 1537, 10 November 1836, pp. 18133-36.
 133 E.W. Wilkins, 'The Shervaroy Hills', in Somerset Playne (ed.), *South India*, London: The Foreign and Colonial Compiling and Publishing Co., 1914-15, p. 407.
 134 D. Hamilton, *Notes on the Shervaroy Hills*, Madras: Fort Saint George Gazette Press, 1862, p. 6.
 135 Shortt, *The Hill Ranges*, p. 42.
 136 S. Srinivasa Raghavaiyengar, *Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency during the Last Forty Years of British Administration*, Madras: Asian Education Service, 1988, Appendix CC.
 137 GO, No. 605, Revenue, 30 June 1905, p. 13, TNSA.
 138 M. Atchi Reddy, 'Trends in the Agricultural Wages in Some South Indian Districts: 1800-1980', *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 1986, 28(4): pp. 343-49; Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency during the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965, p. 163.