CHAPTER - VI

ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP

A study of the forest administration in Tirunelveli district will be incomplete without a study of its administrative setup. Therefore, an attempt is made in this chapter to describe the administrative setup, the powers and functions of the officials of the forest department in Tirunelveli district from 1950 to 1995 in the light of some available records.

The term administration has been derived from the Latin word administrare. It denotes the organisation, powers, duties and functions of public officials and public agencies of all kinds.\textsuperscript{1} India has a long administrative history of the early monarch up to the Britishers.\textsuperscript{2} The Britishers, who later became the rulers of India had left a well-organised system of administration in many departments. In connection with forest administration, there appears to have been no particular efforts in India to organise forest administration or management prior to the nineteenth century. Individual officers or staff were assigned duties as the occasions called for, in connection with disposal of forest produce, particularly standing timber and collection of revenue or preservation of the forest for its value of fauna and flora and also as royal hunting grounds.\textsuperscript{3} Due to the considerable increase in felling during 1805, a doubt arose for the first time to supply timber for the British Navy. Therefore, in 1806, the first Conservator of Forests namely Watson, a police officer, was appointed with Malabar and Travancore as his jurisdiction. Due to the growing discontent among timber merchants and private owners, the Conservatorship was


\textsuperscript{2} J.D.Shukla, State and District Administration in India (New Delhi, 1976), p.224.

\textsuperscript{3} 100 Years of Indian Forestry, Vol. 1, p.113.
abolished in 1823.\textsuperscript{4} Almost another quarter of a century passed before any staff was appointed for taking care of the forests. In 1856, Cleghorn was appointed as the first regular Conservator of Forests in the Madras presidency.\textsuperscript{5} Forest law was enacted in 1882 in respect of Madras presidency. The forest department became a separate entity of the Government of Madras only from 1919, when Cox was appointed as the first Chief Conservator of Forests.\textsuperscript{6}

In 1935, due to the political changes, forests became a transferred subject. The Chief Conservator of Forests in the State became independent head of the forest department, responsible only to the provincial administration. The year 1947 marked a most important milestone in the history of India. In that year, British authority was voluntarily withdrawn to leave it to Indians themselves to shape the future destiny of their country. Therefore, all senior British officers left India. It meant unexpected advancement of career to many of the Indian officers. It resulted in the latter having to shoulder heavy responsibilities especially because of the lacuna in the succession to lower posts in the officer ranks caused by the stoppage of all recruitment during the depression years and later.\textsuperscript{7}

**Organisation**

Forests constitute a State subject. However, the Government of India is concerned primarily with forest policy, legislation, planning and forest education. The protective influences of forests or deleterious results of deforestation extend far beyond the frontiers

\textsuperscript{4} Even the Rajah of Nilambur found if necessary to complain Watson.

\textsuperscript{5} 100 Years of Indian Forestry, Vol.1, p.113.

\textsuperscript{6} First Centenary of Forest Administration in Madras State : Souvenir, 1856-1956 (Madras, 1959), p.vi.

\textsuperscript{7} 100 Years of Indian Forestry, Vol.1, p.119.
of individual States. Again, the Central Government required wood and wood products for industrial development, transport and communications and for defence purposes. Hence, the Central Government has given special attention to the initiation of policy so that the local pressures would not militate against the wider interests of the nation. So the Ministry of Environment and Forests in the Government of India coordinates forest activities in State administration. The Inspector General of Forests is the technical head of forestry administration in India.\(^8\) Tamil Nadu has a separate forest department headed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

For administrative purpose, the territorial forests are divided into forest circles. Prior to 1881, there was only one circle under the Conservator of Forests in the Madras presidency. Brandis in his visit to Madras presidency pointed out that it was impossible for one Conservator of Forests to control twenty eight forest charges and therefore, he suggested the formation of two circles-the northern and southern-with a Conservator of Forests for each circle.\(^9\) Accepting his suggestions, the Government of Madras divided the presidency into two circles, each under a Conservator of Forests.\(^10\) By 1945, the presidency was divided into four circles namely Bellary, Salem, Coimbatore and Ootacamund.\(^11\) In the year 1989-90, the forest department was divided into seven territorial circles.\(^12\)

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9 Brandis, Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration, p.87.


Prior to the formation of the Madurai Circle on 1 February 1957, Tirunelveli Division was under Coimbatore Circle. From 1 February 1957, Tirunelveli North and South Divisions came under the jurisdiction of the Madurai Circle. Tirunelveli Forest Division came into existence with effect from 1 April 1977. After this, the Tirunelveli Circle came into existence. Subsequently, the nomenclature was changed as Wildlife Southern Region, Tirunelveli, with effect from 1991 which continued upto 1999. From 1 May 1999, the name was again changed back to Tirunelveli Circle.

Each circle, in turn, is divided into divisions under a District Forest Officer. A division could cover the same area of a district or more than one district or form only part of a district. Each division is sub-divided into ranges, each in charge of a Forest Ranger. The range constitutes the unit for execution of forest works, including felling, removal and sale of forest produce. It may be truly called the backbone of forest organisation. The lowest administrative unit is a forest Beat. From the point of view of protection of the forests from illicit felling and other abuses as well as for purpose of more efficient supervision of felling, cultural operations, maintenance of boundaries, roads, buildings, each range is divided into required Beats. Each Beat is manned by a Forest Guard and a Forest Watcher.


17 100 Years of Indian Forestry, Vol.1, p.148.
The old Tirunelveli-cum-Ramanathapuram Forest Division became too heavy when the several zamindari forests were taken over by the forest department in 1951 and 1952. It was all the more unwieldy when 170.5 square miles of class I forest in Kanyakumari district and Shencottah taluk came over to Madras State from the Travancore-Cochin State in 1956 as a result of States reorganisation. So the Tirunelveli North and Tirunelveli South Divisions were formed for easy administrative purposes.

The Tirunelveli North Division was formed on 15 November 1958. It consisted of four ranges namely Ambasamudram, Kuttalam, Shencottah and Sankarankoil. It should be noted here that the ranges were not constituted in an equitable manner. Shencottah range covered an area of 9028 acres, whereas 28050 acres of Singampatti forest, inspite of their importance were not given the status of even a section. Rajasingh, the working plan officer, suggested the amalgamation of Kuttalam and Shencottah ranges into one Kuttalam range with headquarters at Kadayanallur and the entire Singampatti forest falling under Tirunelveli North and South divisions to be constituted into a separate range called Singampatti range with headquarters at Manimuthar. Therefore, it was expected that it would greatly increase administrative convenience and produce a normal sized homogenous range with all facilities. The workload of the Ambasamudram range was very heavy with 450.5 square kilometre of forests including 113.60 square kilometres of Singampatti ex-zamin forests while that of Shencottah range was only 57.11 square kilometres. It was suggested either to transfer the ex-zamin forests to Shencottah range or to form a separate range called Singampatti and transfer this range to Tirunelveli North Division, so that the workload of the District Forest Officer, Tirunelveli South Division, would be equitable to that of the District Forest Officer, Tirunelveli North Division.


The Chief Conservator of Forests examined the proposal and ordered the continuance of the status quo.\textsuperscript{20}

The Ambasamudram range consisted of fourteen beats; Kuttalam fifteen beats; Shencottah six beats and Sankarankoil ten beats. According to Rajasingh, “the existing distribution of beats had worked satisfactorily without complaint.” Except in Shencottah range, the beats in the other three ranges had a Forest Guard and Watcher. But in Shencottah range, beats like Vellakaltheri, Molagarachanparai, Mekkarai and Kannupuli had two Forest Guards instead of a Guard and a Watcher. In Thondi beat of Shencottah range, there was only one Forest Guard. So Rajasingh wrote, “it is high time these anomalies are set right and Shencottah range is integrated and brought in line with the general setup of the department”.\textsuperscript{21} The Government accepted the suggestion and in order to achieve uniformity the system followed in Travancore-Cochin State of having two Forest Guards in the joint charge of the beat is abolished in 1971.\textsuperscript{22}

The establishment of the division is given below:\textsuperscript{23}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Forest Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range Officers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresters on special duty</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Guards</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchers</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Clerk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{21} Rajasingh, Working Plan, p.34.

\textsuperscript{22} G.O.No.2385, Agriculture, 28 Aug. 1971.

\textsuperscript{23} Rajasingh, Working Plan, p.34; Srinivasan, Working Plan, p.41.
Besides, junior accountant, assistants, draughtsman, junior assistant, stenotypist, jeep driver and peons were working in the division. Srinivasan, the working plan officer wrote, “the staff both in the office and in the fields is not quite adequate, considering the present work load.”

The Tirunelveli South Division was formed with effect from 1 February 1956. It had four ranges namely, Tirunelveli, Nanguneri, Azhagiapandiapuram and Kulasegaram. In 1974, the Boothapandi range was formed with headquarters at Boothapandi reorganising the existing ranges for better protection and administration of forests. The Tirunelveli range had thirteen beats; Singampatti zamin forests six beats, Nanguneri Range nine beats, Kulasegaram range five beats and Azhagiapandiapuram range thirteen beats.

Rahmatullah, the first working plan officer for Tirunelveli South Division, wrote, “although the bulk of the office work in the District Forest Office had increased enormously consequent on the addition of Kanyakumari forests with their peculiar problems and unprecedented scale of regeneration and exploitation works undertaken recently, the strength of the office staff is more or less the same as in 1948 when the activity of the department was at its lowest”. So he suggested the appointment of additional staff.

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26 G.O.No. 8, Forests and Fisheries, 3 Jan. 1974; With the addition of five panchayat reserves in 1951-52 and also with the taking over zamin forests of Singampatti and Ettayapuram in 1952 and 1954, it was necessary to form one more range. The old Singampatti range was continued from 19 February 1952. As per the orders of the Chief Conservator of Forests working fuel coupes were stopped in the Singampatti forests. So it was considered proper to utilise this Ranger by forming the Tirunelveli Range with Ettayapuram forests, panchayat forests and the Teri and Vallanad reserves. Accordingly Tirunelveli Range with headquarters at Palayamcottai was formed on 14 October 1953. Order, Chief Conservator of Forests, Mis. No.234/53, 10 Apr. 1953; Proceedings, Chief Conservator of Forests, No.21750/53, 4 Sept. 1953; G.O.No. 3880, Development, 27 Aug. 1953.

staff. As regards Tirunelveli range, one additional Forester was necessary as 150 acres of cashew plantations and fifty acres of fuel plantations were to be raised in teri. He added that the section Forester was always kept busy in protecting work “as illicit felling and illicit grazing was quite common in this reserve”. 28

Kadakshamani pointed out that the division was unwieldy spreading over two revenue districts. There were five territorial ranges, one farm forestry range, two timber depots and in addition two ranges were engaged on special works such as timber extraction and plantation operations. The District Forest Officer with headquarters at Palayamkottai administered the division with the help of an Assistant Conservator of Forests at Nagercoil who had no separate office. He further pointed out that the District Forest Officer was hard pressed for time in paying attention to the following: 29

i) new plantations raised each year in various places under different schemes;  

ii) maintenance of older plantations;  

iii) extraction of timber;  

iv) conducting sales in the two timber depots;  

v) tackling numerous encroachments and litigations;  

vi) maintenance of public relationship through two Collectors;  

vii) attending to office works which had a heavy load of financial transactions and routine correspondence and  

viii) the most important aspect of protection of the forests.

28 Ibid., p.163.  

29 Kadakshamani, Working Plan, p.56.
He further pointed out that “very valuable timber forests and plantation are in Kanyakumari District. Within the forest area there are numerous enclosures and Kani settlements.\textsuperscript{30} The protection of these forests from encroachments has defeated successive District Forest Officers who are handicapped without maps and valuable records and permanent demarcation on the ground; so it is absolutely essential for a District Forest Officer to be at Nagercoil to tackle these problems as the remote control from Palayamkottai is not so effective”.\textsuperscript{31} Thus, he justified the bifurcation of the division.

The establishment of the Tirunelveli South Division:\textsuperscript{32}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Forest Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Conservator of Forests</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresters</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Guards</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Watchers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation or Depot or Office Watcher</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division Clerk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Division Clerk</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draftsman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peons</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{30} There were forty seven Kani settlements in Kanyakumari Division.

\textsuperscript{31} Kadakshamani, Working Plan, p.56.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p.50; Rahmatullah, Working Plan, p.30.
In 1977, the Government of Tamil Nadu reorganised the territorial divisions of Tirunelveli North and South. It created four divisions namely Tirunelveli Forest Division, Kanayakumari Forest Division, Kalakad Wildlife Sanctuary and Mundanthurai Wildlife Sanctuary. Tirunelveli range and part of Nanguneri range of Tirunelveli South Division formed part of the Tirunelveli Forest Division. In the meantime, the Government of Tamil Nadu had bifurcated the Tirunelveli district into Tirunelveli Kattabomman and V.O.Chidambaranar districts. Because of this development a few reserved forests and reserved lands of Tirunelveli range were brought under Chidambaranar district.\textsuperscript{33}

Particulars of establishment of Tirunelveli Forest Division in the late 1980s\textsuperscript{34}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Forest Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Accountant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Assistant</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steno typist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draughtsman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeep Driver</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office assistant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office watchman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranger</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresters</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Guard</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest watcher</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{33} Balakathiresan, Working Plan, pp.95-96.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p.513.
Conservator of Forests

By the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, the position of the Conservator of Forests was defined as that of the professional head of the forest department, the adviser to the Board of Revenue and Government of Tamil Nadu in forest matters, the officer responsible for the finance of the department and organisation of the staff. The appointment, posting and promotion of Sub-Assistant Conservators, Forest Rangers and Foresters were vested with the Conservator of Forests.\textsuperscript{35}

From the earliest days of scientific forestry in India, the post of Conservator of Forests was the primary administrative union. Before the close of the nineteenth century, a Conservator of Forests had many officers under him in the districts but he had himself to carry out executive jobs also. With the formation of forest divisions, executive duties devolved progressively on the Divisional Forest Officers leaving Conservator of Forests free for administrative and supervisory work.

Prior to the creation of the posts of Chief Conservator of Forests, the Conservator of Forests dealt directly with the Inspector General of Forests and the Government of Madras. They had complete control of forest matters in their own circles. On all subjects having a bearing on the public of the district, the Conservator had to correspond with the Divisional Forest Officer through the Collector and vice versa and the District Forest Officers were subordinate to the Collector in such matters. Conservators were the controlling authorities in matters of subordinate services and departmental discipline. On all subjects of a purely departmental or professional nature, the District Forest Officer was directly responsible to the Conservator of Forests.

When visiting the districts, the Conservator of Forests was expected to confer with the District Magistrates or Collectors on matters connected with his departmental inspections in order to learn their views and to bring to their notice any matters which were important. His touring and inspection duties involved attention to survey and settlements, working plans, forest boundaries, communications and building, staff condition, protection of forests and works of regeneration. He was also responsible for enforcing sound financial regulations among the various officers under him, ensuring that the officers and staff under him were conversant with their duties, maintaining discipline and supervising the progress of various works in the forests. In 1919, the post of Conservator of Forests was elevated as the Chief Conservator of Forests. Now, the authority of the Conservator of Forests was completely subordinated to the Chief Conservator of Forests in all forest matters. Thus, protection and conservation of the forests under his control are the main functions of Conservator of Forests.\(^{36}\)

**Chief Conservator of Forests**

The Chief Conservator of Forests became officially the head of the provincial forest department and the technical adviser to the Government of Tamil Nadu in forest matters. He was empowered to deal on his own authority with professional questions. He was also required to supervise all works regarding the compilation and sanction of forest working plans. He had to secure uniformity of policy and exercise control throughout Tamil Nadu as regards methods of silvicultural improvements, sale of produce, staff requirements in the forest department and the conduct of forest research and training of staff in communication with the President of the Forest Research Institute and College at

\(^{36}\) *100 Years of Indian Forestry*, Vol.1, pp.117-18.
On 5 April 1988, the post of Chief Conservator of Forests was elevated to the rank of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. The administrative head of the department continued to be the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.38

**District Forest Officer**

The Forest Division became the unit of management from the very beginning. The District Forest Officer exercised control over the whole of the Government forests in his charge but exercised such control subject to the orders of the Collector. All the works of sale, exploitation, regeneration, tending, protection, buildings, roads and bridges were to be undertaken according to his direction and under his personal supervision. He was responsible for budgetary and accounts control over all revenues from the division and expenditure on staff, works and so on. The District Forest Officer was fully entrusted with the day-to-day management of the forests in his division and had complete powers to control all the staff in the division.39

**Forest Rangers**

Range is the basic unit of the forest administrative machinery and the official in charge of the range is called Ranger. In 1877, Brandis suggested a cadre of executive officers above the grade of the subordinate of the protection establishment and below the officers of the inspecting and controlling branches of the service. This gave rise to the formation of the cadre of Forest Rangers. In fact, in the beginning the engagement of Forest Rangers was left entirely to the discretion of the local District Forest Officers or

37 Ibid., p.117.
Conservator of Forests. Brandis pointed out that “the executive management of the Government forest domains will eventually be entirely in the hands of Forest Rangers and hence obviously a staff of trustworthy, efficient Rangers is the first condition of good forest administration.”

With the objective of imparting systematic technical training to the Rangers, a Forest School was founded at Dehra Dun in 1878. In 1884, the Government of India took over the management of the school from the Government of North West Provinces and renamed it as the Imperial Forest School. In the beginning only practical instructions in the forest were imparted. In 1881, two courses were conducted namely the Ranger’s Certificate and the Forester’s Certificate respectively. Sometime later, the Forester’s course was discontinued and the training of Forest Rangers was continued. In 1912, the Government of Madras started a Forest College at Coimbatore. The college provided training for Rangers in English. It was closed in 1939 for want of adequate number of students. The college was reopened in 1945. From 1 July 1948, in pursuance of their policy of centralising forestry education, the Government of India took over the college. On 1 April 1955, its name was changed as the Southern Forest Rangers College. Those who got training in forestry in the Forest School and Forest College were appointed as Forest Rangers. Fifty per cent of the Rangers are directly recruited from among those who got training in the forest colleges at Dehra Dun or Coimbatore and the rest by promotion. They were responsible for all forest operations within the range.

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40 Brandis, Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration, pp.97-98.

41 100 Years of Indian Forestry, Vol.1 p.111.

Forest Guards

Beat is the basic unit of forest protection and the person who is in charge of the Beat is called Forest Guard. The bulk of the field staff in the early stages consisted of Forest Guards who possessed neither education nor technical attainments of any kind. In the early days, the power of appointment, posting and promotion of Forest Guards was vested in the Collector. At that time, the forest offices were branches of the Collector’s headquarter offices.\(^{43}\) Regarding qualifications, the Forest Guards needed local knowledge, a strong physical constitution, active habits, honesty and general intelligence. If these indispensable qualifications are combined with the ability to read and write in their own language and to keep simple accounts, such additional qualifications are an advantage; but at the outset there may be many Forest Guards who are unable to read and write and who may yet be very efficient protective officers.\(^{44}\)

The duties of the Forest Guard are classified into two, namely general duty and special duty. The general or the basic duty of the Forest Guard is to protect the reserved forests, reserved lands, forest produce, forest plantations, documents, buildings, wells, equipment for forest work, maps and relevant registers. He has to prepare weekly reports, fire reports and forest offence reports regularly and submit them to the concerned Ranger through his section Forester. The special duty of the Forest Guard is to extract work from the daily wage workers employed for the forest works such as laying roads, maintaining forest buildings, cleaning, pruning and thinning. The Forest Guard should expertise in fire


\(^{44}\) Brandis, Suggestions Regarding Forest Administration, p.97.
controlling activities. Moreover, he must have a thorough knowledge of the people in the abutting villages.\textsuperscript{45} At present, sixty per cent quota is allotted for direct recruitment and the candidates sponsored by employment exchange have been selected and appointed as Forest Guards in Tirunelveli Division.\textsuperscript{46}

**Forester**

A Forester is in charge of two or more Beats. His jurisdiction is termed as section. He is basically a protective staff member to ensure the protection of the forest under his control. He is empowered to do cash transaction for executing different works, for which he may get funds from the Ranger and maintain cash account. He is also empowered to collect rent on rest houses, sell grazing permits and so on. It is noted that the nature of work of the Forester is differed from unit to unit.\textsuperscript{47}

**Wildlife Management**

Wildlife management acquired importance with the creation of the post of Chief Wildlife Warden, Wildlife Warden, Shencottah, Wildlife Warden, Kalakad and three more Wildlife Wardens and six Rangers in 1976 and 1977 for the integrated management of wildlife and forestry.\textsuperscript{48} The Wildlife (Protection) Act and the Tamil Nadu Rules made

\textsuperscript{45} Government of Tamil Nadu, Thamizh Nadu Vana Saraka Nirvaka Nadaimurai Nool (Tamil) (Madras, 1963), pp.16-17.


\textsuperscript{47} C.M.Maduranayakam Pillai, A Manual For Forest Guards and Foresters (Madras, 1955), part III.

thereunder should be enforced within and without the State forests. The jurisdiction of each Wildlife Warden was distributed so as to cover the entire State. To satisfactorily enforce every aspect of the law, the six Rangers had to cover among themselves the entire State. The Sixth Five-Year Plan on Forestry (1978–1983) noted that “this has not proved satisfactory. It is necessary, for an earnest implementation of the Act, that there should be at least one Ranger, two Foresters and four Forest Guards for each revenue district.”

In 1978, there were two Forest Range Officers in Kalakad Sanctuary who were stationed at Kalakad and Tirukkurangudi. There were two Foresters under the control of the Forest Range Officer, Kalakad with headquarters at Chermadevi and Kalakad. Chermadevi Section consisted of Therkuveeravanallur, Kolundumamalai and Padmaneri. Kalakad Section consisted of Vadagarai, Kalakad and Sengaltheri. The Forest Range Officer at Tirukkurangudi had two Foresters under his control with headquarters at Kalakad and Tirukkurangudi. The Kalakad Section consisted of Malayadipudur Beat and Nambikoil Beat. Tirukkurangudi consisted of Tirukkurangudi Beat and Valliyoor Beat. Ramanathan pointed out that besides the above-mentioned personnel, one Forester, two Forest Guards and two Reserve Watchers might be sanctioned for making surprise raids to prevent poaching, forest fires and so on. Ramanathan stated that an efficient network of protective staff should be organised for enforcing protection of wild animals from poaching. They should be provided with weapons for sufficient protection.

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49 Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Sixth Five Year Plan on Forestry, p.115.
50 Ramanathan, Management Plan, pp.68-69.
51 Ibid., p.69.
52 Ibid., p.63.
Details of establishment:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kalakad 1989-90</th>
<th>Mundanthurai 1989-90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Warden</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Guards</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Watches</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were three ranges in the Kalakad Sanctuary in 1989-90. They were Kalakad Range, Thirukkurangudi range and headquarters range to implement Wildlife (Protection) Act at Tirunelveli. The Kalakad Sanctuary was divided into eleven Beats of four sections for effective administration.  

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests had instructed to submit proposals for division of the Beats in such a way that each Beat should be of ten square kilometers. Accordingly, proposals were submitted dividing the existing Beats into twenty four. Likewise, in Mundanthurai Sanctuary, there were nineteen Beats and a proposal was made to increase it to thirty.

Joseph Jogindranath noted that the “mode of communication is very primitive ….” There were no telephone connections to residences of Wildlife Warden, Range Officers and rest houses. Therefore, he emphasised the need to establish wireless, walkie talkie as

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well as net work of telephone link. He also suggested that a “special anti-poaching squad will have to be created to further tighten this clandestine activity.”

Doraisamy also noted that, “the communication is an important subject which needs special attention in the sanctuary management and protection. Without proper communication no work will be successful. The present communication is very poor … The sanctuary may be provided with wireless sets and walky talkie sets to the staff for quick and early communication.”

As early as 1978, Ramanathan suggested, “as far as possible, staff trained in wildlife management only will be posted for the management of the sanctuary. The lower staff may be trained in the field and must have aptitude for wildlife work”. Joseph Jogindranath emphasised, “the very special nature of job in the sanctuary discourages staff. The difficult terrain in which they have to work and the risk factors involved in moving in habitats having dangerous animals are other adverse factors which influence the staff to avoid working in sanctuaries.” He continued, lack of training in wildlife management of the staff creates communication gaps. Most of the staff simply exist. They do not know what to do and are not aware of what is expected of them to be done. Some develop inferiority complex when they have to communicate with naturalists. They are a pathetic set of untrained staff who feel themselves as fish out of water when technical management executive instructions are issued. Persons who have an acumen and interest in wildlife should be selected for working in sanctuary areas. Their option should be obtained and in service training given to them and then posted to work in the sanctuary. And their stay

58 Joseph Jogindranath, Management Plan, pp.82-83.
59 Ibid., p.106.
60 Doraisamy, Management Plan, p.81.
in the sanctuary should be for a reasonably long period as three to five years. Only then they may be expected to deliver the goods.\textsuperscript{62} He further stated “fringe benefits such as special perks in the form of allowances, medical aid facilities, risk insurance and other incentives such as providing warm clothing, rain coats and rent free quarters and such other attractions will prompt in the staff to come forward towards this noble cause of conservation of the dumb-denizens of the land.”\textsuperscript{63}

He also suggested the creation of a mobile flying squad which would function as an anti-poaching squad and protect forests from illicit felling. In order to intensity patrolling and give effective protection, the existing eleven beats would be further divided into twenty four beats of viable units for protection. “When the proposals materialise”, he wrote, “it is hoped that the cooperation of staff who man these posts with sincarety will result in forest protection. If the staff manning these sacred posts are not above the board, then perhaps it is a futile attempt to aim protection of the forests and the days of such beautiful Kalakad forests will be only numbered and vanish in obscurity”.\textsuperscript{64}

Doraisamy also pointed out that “only selected and interested staff may be posted, probably young and they may be trained adequately for sanctuary management. Forests in the past, primarily have served the more pressing demands of timber, grazing and water. Now the wildlife conservation has become the primary object and all other operations have been stopped. Now operations like water and soil conservation measures, habitat improvement works, recreational needs of the public, educational and interpretational programmes, etc. have come into being as a secondary object. To handle the management

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p.111.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p.117.
easily only trained staff may be posted in the sanctuary”. As far as Mundanthurai was concerned Doraisamy informed that the staffing is not only inadequate but the workload is heavy and most of the prescriptions of the management plan for the period 1978-87 and the annual Government sanction could not be implemented. In fact the annual achievement has been only twenty per cent of the annual provision. This is due to the prescribed works being scattered over large areas and individual provision for works also too heavy”. He further wrote “there are two check posts at present … These check posts are not manned properly for want of adequate staff.” He pointed out that the staff was inadequate to do the regular protection work. To carry out the new works which needed technically skilled personnel, it was really impossible with the same strength of staff. The staff should be provided with adequate arms and ammunition with adequate powers to act on the enemies and forest intruders. Otherwise, he cautioned that it would be imaginary to develop this sanctuary which had severe threat from all sides. He further wrote that strength of the staff was not adequate to control the poaching incidence in total. Hence, he suggested the appointment of at least one Forester with two Forest Guards in each range separately for detecting poaching cases and dealing with related matters.

The twin sanctuaries of Kalakad and Mundanthurai were declared as a Tiger Reserve in 1988. The Tiger Reserve was transferred to the administrative control of the Conservator of Forests, Wildlife Southern Region, from the Conservator of Forests, Tirunelveli, with effect from 18 January 1988. The Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife and Chief Wildlife Warden based at Madras exercised overall administrative

65 Doraisamy, Management Plan, p.98.

66 Ibid., p.78.

67 Ibid., pp. 92-93 and 98-99.

control over entire wildlife within his jurisdiction which included Tirunelveli territorial circle. One Conservator of Forests for Project Tiger in the Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve was under the control of the Chief Wildlife Warden, Madras.69

At present, the Field Director is the over-all controller of the Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, who is assisted by two Deputy Directors and various other officials based at Ambasamudram and Kalakad. The Tiger Reserve consists of seven Ranges namely Kalakad, Mundanthurai, Thirukkurangudi, Ambasamudram, Papanasam, Kadayam and Upper Kodayar. Each range is divided into beats for administrative and protective purpose.

**Eco Development Officer**

The Eco Development Project was headed by the Eco Development Officer in the rank of Deputy Conservator of Forests. He was supported by four Assistant Wildlife Wardens in the rank of Ranger and nine Foresters.70 It should be noted here that in the year 1990, the Government of Tamil Nadu accorded sanction for the post of Research Officer in the cadre of Deputy Conservator of Forests for Project Tiger, Kalakad Mundanthurai Wildlife Sanctuary.71 In 1994, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests stated that, according to the World Bank Staff Appraisal Report for Forestry Education and Extension Project, an Eco Development Officer in the grade of an Assistant Conservator of Forests should be appointed to coordinate micro planning and the implementation of the Eco Development Programme. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests had, therefore,
requested the Government that the existing post of Research Officer might be redeployed and redesignated as Eco Development Officer. The Government accepted the proposal and the post of Research Officer was redesignated as Eco Development Officer.

The Village Forest Committee played an important part in the Eco Development Project. The guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests described Eco Development as a package of programmes that will demonstrate the concern of the forest department for the socio-economic development of the fringe or buffer zone villages leading to promotion, cooperation of the villagers in the conservation and the management of wildlife. It is proposed to take steps to ensure that cooperation between villagers and the forest department is institutionalised to give it greater permanency and wider applicability. The village forest committee is the most important institute to achieve this objective. The village forest committee would be formed for a hamlet / cluster of hamlets / revenue village consisting about 250 house holds. The Ranger would convene a general meeting of all households. After explaining the duties and responsibilities, the Ranger would constitute a village forest committee. The concerned Forester should be ex-officio secretary of the village forest committee. Every village forest committee should have an executive committee whose tenure should be one year. The executive committee consisted of not more than seven elected representative from the village forest committee, at least half of them being women as members, the concerned Forester as member secretary, the concerned Forest Guard as member and one representative of a voluntary agency as member. The executive committee would elect the chairperson of the village forest committee. Upon receipt of the proposal from the secretary of the village forest committee.

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73 Annamalai, Eco Development, pp.171 – 72.

committee, the Eco Development Officer might accord recognition to it. The village forest committee so recognised would be required to be registered under the Societies Act. The members of the village forest committee, individually and collectively, would ensure protection against grazing, fires and thefts of forest produce; make other villagers aware of the importance of forests; assist the forest officers in carrying out forestry development works and identify beneficiaries in accordance with the approved eco-development plan.

The Ranger would have the freedom to attend the village forest committee, general body and executive committee meetings, to participate in the discussions and tender advice. If any member is found indulging in acts against forest laws or sound principles of forest conservation, such member could be debarred from the committee by the Range Officer after taking into consideration the recommendations of the executive committee. An appeal may lie with the Eco Development Officer. The Eco Development Officer for sufficient reasons might supersede an executive committee or the village forest committee. An appeal against his orders lies with the Field Director whose decision should be final. At the same time, the Field Director, the Eco Development Officer or the Range Officer might give directions from time to time for smooth and proper functioning of the committee.

In 1993, the Government of Tamil Nadu constituted a State Project Implementation Committee as suggested by the Government of India for implementing and monitoring the project Eco Development in and around Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. The committee consisted of the Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu, Environment and

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75 Annamalai, Eco Development, p.188.
76 Ibid., p.189.
77 Ibid., pp.189-190.
Forest Department Chairman, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, the Field Director, Project Tiger, Tirunelveli and Deputy Director, Project Tiger, Ambasamudram as members and Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife and Chief Wildlife Warden as member secretary. Dr. Paran, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, was the non-official member. In 1995, five non-official members were added to the committee. In 1996, the Government included one representative each from Indian Institute of Public Administration and Wildlife Institute of India. In the same year, the Field Director and Conservator of Forests, Project Tiger, Tirunelveli, requested the Government to include the Collector of Tirunelveli as one of the members of the State Project Implementation Committee. The Government accepted the proposal and nominated the Collector of Tirunelveli as one of the members.

Social Forestry Wing

The Chief Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry, functioning in Madras exercised overall administrative control over the entire social forestry wing within his jurisdiction which included six circles, viz, Social Forestry Monitoring at Madras and Social Forestry Circles with headquarters at Salem, Tiruchi, Madurai, Chengalpattu and Tirunelveli. The Social Forestry Division in Tirunelveli Circle is headed by the Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry. This division controls its six ranges namely Palayamkottai, Nanguneri, Sankarankoil, Tenkasi, Ambasamudram and Kadayanallur and each range is controlled by a Ranger.

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82 Administration Report of Tamil Nadu Forest Department, 1994-95, p.11.
Forest Protection Squad

Besides, one Forest Protection Squad is functioning in the Tirunelveli Circle. The squad consists of an Assistant Conservator of Forests, one Ranger, two Foresters and four Forest Guards. The Assistant Conservator of Forests with his party has to conduct surprise inspection of forests, enquire petitions, check the vehicles under Timber Transit Rules and collect intelligence regarding forest and wildlife offences.\(^3\)

To sum up, a devoted band of District Forest Officers, Rangers and Forest Guards toiled incessantly to build up truly valuable forests in Tirunelveli district. The progress of forests was phenomenal. From mere protection and passive conservation, the forestry is moving towards a dynamic policy of expansion, extensive planting and forest production to meet the needs of the people. Now the officials try to carry out the good work and endeavor of their predecessors to excel the past achievements.

\(^3\) District Forest Officer, Short Notes on Tirunelveli Circle (Tirunelveli, 2000), p.3.