CHAPTER – V

THE FOREST POLICY

The forest acts, policies and management introduced by the British in India have been a subject of considerable debate among the historians and ecologists both in India and abroad. In the 1980s and 1990s two important questions kept the environmental historians on their toes: firstly, what was the real history of protest against State forestry in India and in what ways was it connected to the broad history of nationalist protest? And secondly, what was the ideological history of the State agency that was threatening the ecology of India?\(^1\) The researchers in India concentrated on the history of resistance to colonial forest policy and the ideological content of that policy.\(^2\) Representing the Western approach, Richard H. Grove through his writings, propounded the idea of Green Imperialism and popularised it.\(^3\)

Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha in their articles and books asserted that in the pre-British period there was little or no interference with the customary use of forest and forest produce. They viewed colonial forest policy and conservation as primarily driven by materialistic considerations—of serving the strategic and revenue interest of the British Empire. Further they argued that imperial needs for timber and shipbuilding propelled scientific forestry with its associated bureaucracy.\(^4\) Ramachandra Guha wrote that the thesis (propounded by himself and Gadgil) that the coming of British rule was a watershed in the ecological history of India has not gone uncontested. Perhaps the most vigorous denial can be found in the writings of the Cambridge scholar Richard Grove.\(^5\)
Grove argued that the British forest officials were not as vulgarly commercial as some Indian scholars suggest. In fact, quite a few of them demonstrated a precocious environmental consciousness, alerting their superior authorities to the impact on soil erosion and climate change of the massive clearing of forests in the early phase of colonial rule. Grove further held that colonial conservationism was based on humanist concerns motivated by growing deforestation and drought. In his view, it was desiccationism that promoted the idea of forest conservancy in the colonies. Desiccationism draws on the connection between deforestation and drought, shrinking water resources, soil erosion, and productivity. Officials of the European trading companies were able to take note of them. These people systematically developed desiccationist discourses and sought state intervention in the protection of forests. In the process Grove played down the importance of imperialist or colonialist greed behind the forest policy and focuses on other considerations, which were more humane.

Grove also argued that state intervention and environmental destruction were not the monopoly of the British alone. The clearing of the forest in pre-colonial period shows that the Indians were not exactly incapable of ecological profligacy. He also pointed out that state control over woodlands was a feature of many Indian political regimes. Grove rejected the idea that colonialism was an ecological watershed in India’s environmental history.

It is pertinent to note that Grove, like the other Cambridge historians who upheld the continuity thesis with regard to the second half of the eighteenth century, held that what the British did in the area of forestry was to continue with the forest practices which existed in Pre-British India.
Mahesh Rangarajan did not see simple polarities between the two sets of ideas and suggested that a convergence of ideas was indeed the case. He argued that the desiccationist fear had only a limited impact and was only one of the influences that shaped the course of the early nineteenth century Indian forestry. Ajay Skaria viewed forest conservancy which emerged out of the desiccationist discourses also as a part of the broader ‘civilising mission’ of imperialism. Skaria disagreed with Grove and said that the agenda of forest conservancy was not ‘innocent of colonial domination’.  

D. D. Dangwal followed up the view of Skaria and showed how desiccationism was frequently used by the State to extend control over the central Himalayan forests or the Uttarakhand region.  

Ranjan Chakrabarti says: “I see the problem essentially an integral part of a broader strategy of power which was geared primarily to ensure the domination of the Indian colony by its white rulers. To the British rulers, the colonisation of India seemed to be incomplete without the pacification of the jungle. To them the Indian jungle alone had the wilderness to match the valour of the masculine occident”.  

The Forest Acts, in a single stroke, made government’s claim over the forests legitimate, and hunting, food gathering, or cutting trees became illegitimate. The main group of offences was that of hunting, wounding or stealing of animals, and poaching or fishing. In this manner was created a whole new legal category of forest crimes. The boundaries of forest crimes extended, and what constituted forest crime remained fluid. The new forest policy was geared to generate a new sensibility as to the use of forests. There is no disagreement on the point that the forests were destroyed due to the policy of
ruthless commercial exploitation adopted by the colonial government. The British first destroyed the forests and then became the self-styled protectors of the same forests. Ranjan Chakrabarti has argued that the English were the real poachers but they used the game law to brand the indigenous forest people, who earned their livelihood from the forest, as ‘poachers’. Thus, having destroyed the animals the European hunters later emerged as self-styled conservationists and went flat out to romanticise the tropical rain forest and its animals.13

Grove rejects the Guha thesis as “a golden age” approach to South Asian environmental history and questions the assumptions about the existence of pre-colonial common property and communal customary forest use. The recent research of Rangarajan, Skaria, Damodaran and others certainly takes some of its cues from the early works of Tucker and the subalternists. But it has been also influenced by the globalist approach of Alfred Crosby and the revisionism of Christopher Bayly. Bayly has encouraged environmental historians to treat colonial rule not as a watershed but as a period in which continuities with the pre-colonial period were to be regarded as important. Grove also sees the bias in South Asian environmental history caused by an overemphasis on the post-1857 period. Both Rangarajan and Grove rightly point to the significance of the forest policies pursued by the successor states to the Mughals. Grove in particular draws our attention to the need of a comprehensive history of drought, famine, and climatic changes.14

Jacques Pouchepadass exhorted historians not to contrast the colonial forestry and its effects on environment with the nationalist myth of the pre-colonial “golden age” of equilibrium between society and nature in India. Further Pouchepadass pointed out that this is because independence has not put a stop anywhere to the
exploitation of forests and environmental destruction. Thus, to Pouchepadass the need of
the hour is a radical critique of capitalist expansionism, of which the colonisation of nature
has been one of the major objectives. The observations of Pouchepadass are crucial, for he
does not mean that one should systematically minimise the importance of the colonial
impact on natural environments.\textsuperscript{15} He asserted that from many points of view, it
represented a radically new phenomenon. In this study, we follow the approach of Gadgil
and Guha with regard to colonial forest policy and its impact on the forests, economy,
people and the environment.

The imperial needs dictated the British interest in the Indian forest resources,
which resulted in the establishment of control over the forest resources. In this context, an
attempt is made to review the colonial forest policies in Uttara Kannada and their impact
on the inhabitants of the region.

\textbf{Use of Forest Resources:}

In the pre-British India, the forest played a vital role in the well being of the
people. The inhabitants settled on the banks of the rivers or small valleys, where they
cultivated rice, sugarcane and in some cases garden crops that were surrounded by the
thick forest.\textsuperscript{16} The agricultural activity was highly dependent upon the forest. The ryots
depended upon the forest to build ordinary houses of inferior kind, huts and cottages for
their residence, to prepare agricultural implements and to carry out several works in
connection with the cultivation. To watch and supervise the cultivation, they built watch
houses near the cultivated areas. The cattle sheds were constructed close to their houses for
their own convenience and for the safety of the cattle. The ryots had to erect sheds in the
summer season in front of their residences to protect themselves from the heat. In the rainy season they had to make temporary additions to their roofs to protect their mud walls from the heavy rains. The garden cultivators had to erect chappara to dry their garden produce. To manufacture the alemane, they required woods. Other than the ryots or agriculturists, fishermen, cobblers, potters, professional grazers and artisans were highly dependent upon the forest for their raw materials. From the leaf of tali palm, palm umbrellas were prepared, and canes were used for making baskets, and other goods used for agricultural purposes. The fishermen depended upon forest to prepare small boats and other implements from woods. The tanners were using matti wood for preparing tanning materials, and the kumri cultivators used to extract minor forest products and sell them to the villagers. The interior villagers depended upon the forest for constructing bridges and boats in the rainy season. Thus the inhabitants for one or the other purposes, highly depended upon the forest and its products for their day-to-day life. W. Wedderburn, who gave a report on the betta land in 1862, recognised that the gardeners used the leaves of the trees surrounding their gardens from time immemorial. Prior to the British rule in India, the inhabitants relied upon the forest resources as an essential element of their survival. Traditionally the cultivators enjoyed the forest produce, obtained timber, firewood and foliage without any cost in such quantities as they required for house building and agriculture. The gardeners and cultivators enjoyed the liberty of cutting leaves and pollarding trees for manure. Further, in times of necessity, the trees were also cut. All these enabled the agriculturists to cultivate not only rice and food crops, but also garden crops like arecanut, coconut and variety of spices. In the meantime, they managed the ecological balance by reserving huge areas of the forest in each village as kan forest.
By around 1800, Britain had emerged as the world leader in deforestation, devastating its own woods and the forests in Ireland, South Africa and North-Eastern United States to draw timber for shipbuilding, iron-smelting and farming. Occasionally, it is said that the destruction of forests was used by the British to symbolise political victory. The onslaught on the forest was primarily because of the increasing demand for military purposes, for the British navy, for local construction (such as roads and railways), supply of teak and sandalwood for export trade and an extension of agriculture in order to supplement revenue.22

It took about three quarters of a century for the British government to create a forest administration which was independent of the Revenue Department. The British government began to control the forest resources in the year 1806. On 10th November 1806, Captain Joseph Watson was appointed as the first Conservator of Forest in India to facilitate the extraction of teak, a timber noted for its superior quality and available in the southern region of Malabar and Travancore.23 By the Proclamation of 1807, the British government vested authority in the hands of the conservator over the forests of Malabar and Travancore, and thus teak monopoly was in place. Eventually, this monopoly was spread to other species as their commercial value was recognised. During the time from 1820 to 1865, blackwood, ebony, anjili, and sandalwood were added to the list of species reserved for extraction and use by the colonial government.24 Immediately after taking over the administration of the Uttara Kannada district in 1799, the colonial government made an attempt to increase the revenue from the forest.
Forest Establishment:

In order to secure monopoly over the forest resources, the British government established a well-organised forest department. The establishment of the forest department in the district was done as suggested by Dietrich Brandis, Inspector General of Forest, in his letter No. 209 of 18th June 1870 to the Government of Bombay, and approved by the British Government in the R. No. 637 F. of 21st October 1870. The entire executive responsibility in connection with the forest management in each district vested in the hands of the Collector. The officers under him included the Assistant Conservator, who helped him in the forest management. The duties of Conservator were confined to a General Inspector. He was required to give advice on all forest matters regarding which he might be consulted by the government or the Revenue Collector. The Conservator did not exercise any control or supervision over the executive management of the forest. The subordinate forest establishment was attached to each taluk. One inspector and number of foresters were appointed to each taluk. These subordinate officers were under the orders of the Mamlatdar. The new forest establishment was formed in the year 1873-74.

Table 5:1
Forest Establishment in the year 1882:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of officers</th>
<th>Forest Department</th>
<th>Salary (per month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deputy Conservator</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assistant Conservator</td>
<td>1st grade-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd grade-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sub-Assistant Conservator</td>
<td>1st grade-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd grade-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd grade-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1 with-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 with-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 with-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forest Rangers</td>
<td>1 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Forester</td>
<td>4 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Forest Guards</td>
<td>20 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40 on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English Writer</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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There was a separate establishment for the Forest Depot. The following tables show details about coastal depot and inland depot.

### Table 5:2
Coastal Depot Establishment in the year 1873-74

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Salary in rupees per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>100-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Store keeper</td>
<td>100-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>25-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Measurer</td>
<td>25-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Peons at Rs. 7 each</td>
<td>14-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Peons at Rs. 5 ½ each</td>
<td>22-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5:3
Inland Depot Establishment in the year 1873-74

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of posts</th>
<th>Inland Depot</th>
<th>Salary in rupees per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Store keepers at Rs. 30 each</td>
<td>90-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Store keepers at Rs. 20 each</td>
<td>60-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Foresters at Rs 8 each</td>
<td>48-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, in order to enforce the Forest Act of 1878, which was amended in 1890, extra temporary establishment was created.

### Table 5: 4
Extra Establishment to implement Forest Act of 1890:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of posts</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Salary per month in rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>20-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>25-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>40-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Peons</td>
<td>10-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kanara Forest Permit Rule (1864) and Indian Forest Act of 1865:

The first nation-wide forest regulation was introduced in India when the British government passed the Indian Forest Act of 1865. It was the first attempt towards the legalisation and bureaucratisation of the forest landscape to meet the timber requirements of the colonial state in India. One of the important features of the Forest Act of 1865 was that it categorised the Indian forest landscape into reserved forests and unreserved forests. Under this scheme, the reserved forests were declared as state property, wherein people’s access was prohibited. In the unreserved forests too people were allowed to access forest produce with certain restrictions. The object of this categorisation was to impose state monopoly on the forest resources in India. However, the Forest Act of 1865 had initiated a new policy in the history of forest management in India. The Forest Act aimed at regulating the community control over the forest and reducing the extraction of timber.

In the Uttara Kannada district, the forest laws were framed even before the enactment of Indian Forest Act of 1865. The colonial government framed the rules for granting of permit to cut timber, bamboos etc in the Kanara Collectorate in the year 1864 with these rules, the Bombay Government tried to cut timber through the forest officials, and supply timber through the government depots from time to time through public auction. At the same time, the inhabitants were given right to take bamboos and woods for personal use and not for sale. The same were published in the Government Gazette, and included the following: The ryots according to the customary usage could cut and collect wood from the government forest except in the cases specially reserved for the growth of timber or other conservancy purpose. The following sorts of forest produce could be used.

1. Bamboos of sort.
2. Jungle wood for small houses, huts, chappara, cattle sheds etc.,
3. Dry-wood for fuel.
4. Leaves and grass for manure.
5. Thorns and brushwood and stakes for hedges and dams, woods for agricultural implements.
6. Dead sago and other palm trees for water courses etc.
7. To clear away brushwood within 50 feet of cultivated lands, and
8. The brushwood so cleared may be made use of by the people.

The last two rules needed mamlatdar’s permission. The ryots were prohibited from taking squared timber for houses of a superior description, planks for solid wheels of carts, and wood for rice mills. If anyone was found clearing wood of any description without the written permission of mamlatdar, he was prosecuted by law. In the requisition for permission, the ryots had to mention the reason for what purpose they needed wood. In some cases, cutting of trees like sandalwood, teak, blackwood, ebony, honnay, sirhony, mutty, bulghay, korrymottol and sawnee special permission of the Collector was required, and special rates were fixed to cut such trees. The permission was not granted to cut trees from 31st May to 31st October. No person was permitted to cut trees after expiry of his permit rules, but he could apply for the extension of permit. The permissions were not given to the ryots to cut the woods from government forest, who were able to purchase the timber and other articles required from the depots by paying the prescribed fees. The cultivators who had suitable trees to cut, other than fruit trees, standing in their own estates were not permitted to cut trees from the government forests. If any inhabitant failed to follow these rules, he was prosecuted under the criminal laws. The ryots could cut and collect leaves and grass for manure as per customary usage. They could use jungle wood for constructing small houses like cattle shed. The inhabitants could take fuel including
firewood for preparing jaggery, stakes for hedges and wood for agricultural implements. Grazing was permitted in the open forests on payment of fee.  

When the survey officers reached the district in 1871 they saw the free use of forest and wanted to curtail the privileges of the ryots. A resolution was passed by the government in the year 1871 (No.5114, dated 13th October 1871), and the Kanara Permit Rules were amended and published in 1871. It restricted the inhabitants from looping of trees from definite areas known as betta lands. These rules prohibited the inhabitants from enjoying many privileges which were in vogue from time immemorial. This act empowered the government to declare the land covered with trees or jungles as government forest by notification. Before passing of Indian Forest Act of 1878, attempts were made to introduce the forest settlement in Uttara Kannada. The district forest was divided into special reserve, ordinary reserve and district reserve. The first two categories were opened to commercial exploitation, while the district reserve was open to the local inhabitants.  

**Indian Forest Act of 1878 and Kanara Protected Forest Rule:**

As the forest Act of 1865 was introduced hurriedly, it failed to meet the needs of the British government. Therefore, a more detailed Indian Forest Act of 1878 was passed. It is claimed that it facilitated the development of scientific forestry in India. It provided for the construction of the reserved and protected forests. The reserved forests were considered as state property. Before declaring any area as reserved forest, it was surveyed, demarcated and subjected to a regular settlement carried out by a Forest Settlement Officer. Accesses to these forests were restricted, and one could use their products only
through the official privilege granted by the government. These forests could only be exploited commercially by the Forest Department itself. These forests were temporarily left open to public use with certain restrictions. The reserved forests that were established in the areas already owned by the government was intended to provide ecological stability and maintain the supplies of commercial timber to fulfil the British strategic and development goals. The reserved forests established in areas with large compact stands of commercially valuable species could sustain long-term exploitation. Moreover, the primary objective of these forests was to fulfil the British strategic and development goals.

The second category was that of the protected forests, which could be converted into reserved forests in the future, once they were demarcated and covered by the working plans. The protected forests were controlled by the colonial government through provisions that reserved access to the inhabitants to commercially valuable species, and imposition of restrictions on the activities such as grazing.

The Indian Forest Act of 1878 provided the Forest Department with an authority to effectively control the cultivators’ access to the forest lands. The act increased the number of species listed as reserved, 19 kinds of trees were declared as reserved under the G.R.No.19, dated 1st March 1879. These species could not be used by the cultivators even when they were located within their own betta lands. The act had the provision for trail of the offences of breaking the forest rules instead of the Panel Code. This act provided the legislation that would enable the forest department to establish forest reserves within which cultivator’s activity could be curtailed. Under section 4 of the Indian Forest Act of 1878, certain lands in Kumta, Supa Peta, Yellapur taluk, Ankola taluk, Karwar taluk, Honnavar, Sirsi and Siddapur taluks were included into reserved forest.
After the promulgation of the Act of 1878, the customary usage of forest was not recognised. The fallen dead woods of unreserved trees could be collected only by head loads. The villagers could use forest only if special provision was prescribed in the forest settlement. The more durable kinds of woods used for preparing agricultural implements and all other better class trees were reserved. The people of Ankola, Kumta, Bhatkal and Honnavar taluks complained to the Conservator of Forest, Southern Circle, that they were not allowed to cut the *kajara* tree (*Sutrychnosnux-voomica*) which was used for making of ploughs, and green leaves for manuring the rice fields. After the passage of this act, minor forest products could be used except soap nuts or *shigekai*, honey, wax, minerals and myrobalans or *hirdas* only for personal use and not for sale. In the year 1883, to remove the conflict of interest between forest officers and ryots, some new rules were framed by Pyton, the Conservator of Forest in consultation with Candy, the Collector of North Kanara. They included the following:

1. The ryots could cut and use certain kinds of shrubs, jungle wood and prickly trees either for hedges or firewood.

2. They might cut and remove leaves for manure from trees of any kind except of the six reserved kinds.

3. They could use dead woods lying in their *betta* lands for firewood. But they could not prepare firewood from fallen dead trees which were fit to use as timber or which could be converted into square timber. They could not use those timbers for house building, if they wanted timber they could purchase it from auctions held from time to time by forest department.

4. The ryots could use the twigs as fuel which they could cut and remove for manure, but they could not cut large branches of trees for fuel.
5. Only the *betta* lands which were allotted by the survey department could be used for grazing cattle, and

6. The ryots were banned from removing *hirdas* and *shigekai* and other fruits grown in *betta* lands for trade and exportation, they had to pay 1/8 or ¼ per *maund* tax for house use.\(^{59}\)

In the year 1883, order was issued prohibiting the ryots from cutting the green leaves of trees not only in reserved forests, but also in the protected forests. These rules restricted the ryots from collecting thorns and brushwood which were required for hedges and dams.\(^{60}\)

The implementation of the various provisions of the 1878 Act in Uttara Kannada resulted in confusion. According to the permit rules, the cultivators could loop trees for manure and remove *jungle* wood, whereas the Indian Forest Act of 1878 considered these actions as an offence.\(^{61}\) Section 31 of the Indian Forest Act (VII) of 1878 dealt with the privileges in the protected forests of Kanara district and it was amended under the G.R.No. 5652, dated 13\(^{th}\) August 1890.\(^{62}\) The draft rules were framed by the Conservator of Forest, Kanara and sent to the Under Secretary to Government of Bombay, and were published in the government gazette.\(^{63}\) As these proposed rules were not translated into the vernacular languages, it became difficult for the uneducated ryots to understand the same and send their objections on them to the government. With this amendment, many lands were listed under the reserved forest.\(^{64}\) The *Betta* lands which formed protected forest were brought under the orbit of the Act of 1878.\(^{65}\) The reserved kinds of trees were raised from six to nineteen in the *betta* lands which were assigned as auxiliary land. It was said in this draft rule (a) that any tree above 32 inches in girth at the base would not be cut by the
cultivators. According to the new rule 5 (1), some rights were excluded in the allotted betta lands. The same are stated below:

1. Loop of unreserved trees and shrubs on the betta lands was disallowed
2. The grazing on the betta lands was prohibited, and
3. Use of minor forest produce on such lands was also prohibited.

According to the new rules, the forest products could not be used for the purposes of trade or for the manufacture or preparation of any products for sale and barter. The cultivators who were accompanying the cattle for pasturing were forbidden from carrying an axe or any other cutting instrument in the forest. The inhabitants were informed to send their objections before 3rd January 1891. Many petitions were sent to the government from all the taluks of the district, stating that the ryots of Kanara had become liable to a variety of untold oppression and incontinence due to the introduction of the stricter forest rules. They had the opinion that the proposed draft rules were more oppressive and would lead to more inconvenience and loss to the ryots. They observed that the proposed rules had the intentions to bring more misery to the agriculturists and horticulturists of Kanara. Subsequently, the government introduced some modifications in the draft rules, and were implemented in 1901 and named as Kanara Protected Forest Rules. These rules came into effect on 1st January 1903.

In the year 1905, the government decided to amend the Kanara Protected Forest Rules when there was an illicit cutting of the trees in the Pala village of Mundgod peta. The government felt that the privileges granted under the Protected Forest Rules were liberal in nature and were extremely liable to abuse without much chance of control by the
forest department. Therefore, the government decided to grant the Collector with power to order temporary suspensions of privileges.  

The Kanara Forest Privilege Rule and Forest Act of 1927:

Horsley was appointed as the First Forest Settlement Officer in 1879 and he divided the forests of the District into two categories; protected and reserved. In due course of time, all the forests in the Uttara Kannada district were considered as Reserved forests, excepting the betta lands. Therefore, the existing Kanara Protected Forest Rules became unsuitable for reserved forest. It became necessary to revise the new rules to impose the sanctions on the minor forests and legalise them as in the protected forests. The Kanara Protected Forest Rules were revised in the year 1910. It was sanctioned under the G. N. No. 779 of 16th April 1924. But several residents of the district complained that the existing rules had minor defects, and prevented some agriculturists from availing themselves of the full benefits intended to be conferred. Therefore, certain privileges were sanctioned. Under these rules the rice cultivators of coastal region were granted permission to remove leaf for manure from the minor forests. These rules excluded 41 species from cutting for the purposes of fencing.

The Forest Act of 1927 was passed by the government and made applicable to the whole of India. It divided the forests into Reserved forest, Protected forest and Village forest. This act was also made applicable to the Kanara district. This act resulted in the misery of the inhabitants. Therefore, they sent many petitions to the government. Consequently, government appointed a committee under the G.R. No. 3449/33 dated 22nd February 1935. The committee had official and non official members and A.W.W. Mackie,
was the chairman. The committee met twice in the year 1935. It drew up a list of grievances which came to its notice, and submitted its recommendations on each grievance. The principal recommendation of the committee was concerned with the reduction in grazing fees. The committee recommended cutting green leaves for manure from minor forests throughout the district. The committee also recommended carrying cart in the forest to bring earth, stones and leaves for agricultural purpose throughout the province. As per this amendment, the rice cultivators of above ghat regions were allowed to collect green leaves for manure. But those cultivators with betta allotments were not allowed to take green leaves from the forests for the cultivation of rice. They could use the green leaves of betta lands for their rice fields. The cultivators were given certain privileges to collect and remove dead leaves for manure. The cultivators could remove grass for the fodder. The existing privileges to take barren sago, and other palms for water courses and other agricultural purposes with the prior permission of Mamlatdar from any reserved forests in their villages or in the neighbourhood of their villages were continued. Except, such species especially reserved from time to time by the forest department with the approval of the Collectors. The Kanara forest Privilege Rule was amended in the year 1939, and permission was granted to use shige for domestic use, which was used as a substitute for soap by poor villagers of the district.

The Indian Forest Acts were implemented through special rules prescribed for Kanara. From time to time restrictions on the inhabitants of the district through its forest rules specially promulgated for Kanara. Many acres in the Uttara Kannada district were converted into reserved forest. Only limited privileges were granted to the inhabitants in the case of betta lands. It is said that the betta land sanctioned for the cultivators was not sufficient to fulfil their daily needs. There was always demand from the cultivators to
section more areas as betta lands. The life of the cultivators, artisans and the masses in the villages became miserable due to the strict implementation of the Indian Forest Acts, and the special forest rules framed for the region.

**Forest Divisions:**

For the purpose of administration, the Kanara forests were divided into two divisions, Balaghat and Payenghat, with reference to the upper and lower ghats. These divisions corresponded to those used by the revenue department. In 1864, when the only Assistant Conservator of Forest was posted, the district was divided into three zones:

1. The upper ghats – north of Yellapur-Mundgod line, including Supa and Haliyal.
2. The Southern taluks of the upper ghats (Sirsi, Siddapur), and
3. The coastal zone, below ghats region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Divisions</th>
<th>Taluks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Haliyal, Supa, Karwar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Yellapur, Mundgod, Ankola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Sirsi, Siddapur, Honnavar, Kumta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Haliyal, Supa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Yellapur, Mundgod, Sirsi, Siddapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Karwar, Ankola, Honnavar, Kumta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Haliyal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Sirsi, Siddapur, Honnavar, Bhatkal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Yellapur, Mundgod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Karwar, Ankola, Kumta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Haliyal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Sirsi, Siddapur, Honnavar, Bhatkal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Yellapur, Mundgod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Gudi and Supa range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Ankola, Kumta, Sirsi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Haliyal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Sirsi, Siddapur, Honnavar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Yellapur Mundgod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Gudi and Supa range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Costal</td>
<td>Karwar, Ankola, Kumta Bhatkal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Haliyal, Supa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Yellapur, Mundgod, Sirsi, Siddapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Karwar, Ankola, Kumta, Honnavar, Bhatkal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forest Settlement:

The forest settlement was the major surveying enterprise whereby each plot of state forest was surveyed, mapped and classified. In these settlements, strict rules were framed to use and access of forest resources. Unless individuals could prove their private ownership on the forests, the forests were considered as state forest. The previous rights were transformed into privileges, and the forest officials had the authority to terminate privileges, in case of any violation. Although attempts have made to demarcate the forest zones in the initial years, it was only after passing of the Forest Act of 1878 that the forest settlement was systematised with clear objectives and procedures of application precisely defined by law. The purpose of forest settlement was two-fold:

1. To ascertain and define the extent of the state’s proprietary rights over the forest lands and clearings, as well as over forest produce as defined in the Forest Act of 1878.

2. To enquire into and record the existence of eventual private rights which interfered with those of the state and subsequently, to negotiate the prerogative of the latter to ensure that the property would be managed in the general interest so as to obtain the best possible yield presently and in future.

The greater part of the first phase of forest settlement, was carried out by various officers between 1888 and 1907. All the best forests with high value of timber were classified as reserved forest, which could be harvested only by the government. In the protected forest, all the betta lands and the forests which could hardly classify as reserved forest were included. Much of the lands were converted into forest lands during the time of original forest settlement. From 1892 to 1897, the district forest was not simply reserved,
but sub-divided into forest proper, fuel and fodder reserves and pasture reserves. These different categories created confusion and promoted the occurrence of disputes between officials and inhabitants. Therefore, these were discarded in 1897 and the following two classifications were made:

1. Reserved Forest
   i. Forest Proper
   ii. Minor Forest

The following rights were considered during the time of forest settlement:

i. Right of way from village to village
ii. Right of way to place of public resort in the forest (temple), to tanks and water courses.

The minor forests represented the areas in which villagers were allowed to cut the trees for their domestic and agricultural requirements. In these forests, privileges were granted to collect thorns and fallen dead wood for fuel and graze the cattle as per the Kanara Forest Privilege Rules.

2. Protected Forest
   i. Betta
   ii. Kumri or Hakkal.

A special category was made for sacred groves. A sacred grove is a grove of trees of great religious importance to a particular culture. There were many sacred groves in the Uttara Kannada district during the colonial period. The groves were present in varied ecosystems like evergreen and deciduous forests, hill tops, valleys, mangroves, swamps and even in agricultural fields. But simultaneously the government introduced a
deplorable contract system for collection of non-wood products, particularly spices, from the Kans as observed by Wingate in 1889. Wingate said: “I am still of the opinion that the system of annually selling by auction the produce of kans is a pernicious one. The contractor sends forth his sub-contractors and coolies who hack about the kans just as they please: the peppier [sic, pepper] vines are cut from the roots, dragged from the trees and the fruit then gathered, while cinnamon trees.. are all but destroyed. I was greatly struck with the general destruction which has taken place of late year’s amongst Kumta evergreens. They were in a far finer state of preservation 12 or 15 years ago.”

The colonial forest policies and actions destroyed many kans of the district. The British government permitted felling trees from these kans. Under the Kanara Permit Rules, the ryots could cut and hack the large areas of the kan forests as they did in their own betta lands. More than 769 hectares of kans from Sirsi taluk was converted into soppinabetta lands. The forest based industries, and the forest department itself exploited a large quantity of timber. All these led to decline of kans in large numbers during the British period.

In some of the kan forests, permission was granted to cut trees for leaf manure which adversely affected the kan forests in further years. In the view of these developments the conservator of forest, Macgregor had opined that “speaking generally, it appears desirable that the exercise of privileges should be confined to special portions of the forests, so as to ensure the better portion of the rest of the forest.”

The Bombay government treated these sacred groves as state reserved forests primarily on an ecological basis in the year 1923.

From the above, it is clear that the British government classified the forests into different categories such as reserved, protected, village, kans etc. Certain areas were limited for grazing only. The colonial government had not provided sufficient grazing
grounds for each village and sufficient leaf manure for each garden. Most of the forests in
the district were declared as reserved, and the forest settlement officers provided grazing
facilities in the reserved forests with many restrictions. All the hereditary forest rights
enjoyed by the inhabitants were converted into privileges under the new forest rules and
settlements. The government could withdraw these privileges whenever the violation of
rules occurred.

**Working Plan:**

The colonial government introduced Forest Working Plans to deal with the forests
and from time to time such plans were prepared. References to plans of Honnavar Tali
Palm Forest Working Plan of 1906, Kalinadi Slopes WP, Block XXVI of 1908, The
Ankola Kumta Coast Working Plan of 1908, WP report of Ankola high forests, Block
XXIV and XXV of 1910, WP for the Karwar Fuel Reserves, and WP for Casuarina
plantation in WD of 1910 are available in the records of forest departments. In these WPs,
objects of the plan, agricultural wants of the people near to these forests, the privileges
granted for the nearby inhabitants in these forests, the works of forest staffs, market, timber
depots, export of wood, place of export etc. were mentioned. Most of the WPs explicitly
stated their chief objectives to be the extraction of all valuable marketable timber, firewood
and bamboo from the forests and the clear felling of areas for replanting with teak.
Honnavar, Ankola and Sadashivgad in Coastal Uttara Kannada were chosen by Colonel
Gilbert for teak plantations.

The government paid much attention for developing firewood plantation in the
district. The firewood from the district was exported to Bombay which was a good source
of revenue for the government. In the year 1868-69 some places of coastal belt of the district namely Karwar, Ankola, Kumta and Honnavar were chosen for planting casuarinas (Casuarinas equisetifolia) from which firewood was extracted. Gradually this plantation was extended to Honnavar areas and the firewood was exported to Mangalore.

**Forest Revenue:**

The British government extracted maximum revenue from different areas in Indian economy. Apart from land revenue, another area where they could extract surplus revenue was the forest department. This was done through the effective control that they had established on the forest resources; major forest products and minor forest products. The trade in these forests contributed considerably to their exchequer.

**Table 5:6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bombay Presidency (in Rupees)</th>
<th>Kanara (in Rupees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1110215</td>
<td>4064406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1828117</td>
<td>329063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>3288220</td>
<td>571101</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>23799729</td>
<td>922456</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>433569</td>
<td>1112004</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>7493563</td>
<td>2015904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>5673847</td>
<td>1930933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>4452748</td>
<td>2446074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kumri Cultivation:**

Shifting cultivation is commonly known as slash and burn agriculture and is a system persuaded by the people living in hilly regions of India. It is popularly known as
*kumri* cultivation in the Kanara region. It is also known by different names in different parts of India. It is known as *jhum* in Madhya Pradesh and other areas, *pannam* in Malabar, *punakad* in Salem and so on.\(^9\) As per this system, a certain tract of forest was cut down and burnt and the same ground was used for cultivating crops for one or two years, after which a new tract of forest was similarly treated. Regular agricultural field was not suitable for this kind of cultivation. A hill side was always selected on the slopes of which a space was cleared during the months of November, December and January. The fallen trees were left to dry until the months of March and April. Hot sun and easterly winds which prevailed during the season made the dead branches and brushwood highly combustible. When they were burnt, they generated fierce fire, from which varying depth of three to six inches ashes formed on the soil.\(^10\)

In most part of the district, seed was sown in the ashes. Only in Bekal taluk of South Kanara (now in Kerala State) the ground was ploughed before seed was sown. When the young plants began to appear after rainfall, the *kumri* field was fenced. *Kumri* cultivation needed less capital and little skilled labour. But the *kumri* cultivators had to watch their clearings day and night to protect from wild animals, which required long continued hard labour. In South Kanara, crops like paddy, cotton, and castor oil plants were grown. In North Kanara crops like *ragi* and paddy were grown. Francis H. Buchanan who travelled through North Kanara in the year 1800 found that *ragi* (*cynorsurus*), *tovary* (*cytisus cajan*) and *haralu* (*ricinus*) were grown by *kumri* cultivators in the first season after burning woods.\(^10\)
In South Kanara, *kumri* cultivation was carried out, in the same plot up to 7, 10 or 12 years. In contrast to this, the system adopted in the North Kanara district was that each year a fresh forest was selected for *kumri* cultivation.\(^{102}\)

The Marathas were professionals in *kumri* cultivation in North Kanara (both above and below the Ghats) and also in Goa. Kunbis and Karevakkals were also involved in this profession. F. H. Buchanan found that in the hilly parts of the country, many people of Maratha origin used the *kumri* or *cotu-cadu* cultivation.\(^{103}\) It is difficult to ascertain the extent of area under *kumri* cultivation and the number of inhabitants who depended on it. In the Supa *peta* of Haliyal taluk, V. D. Yennemadi, the Special District Deputy Collector of Kanara in 1899, proposed allotting lands specifically for *kumri* cultivation not only to distressed Kunbis and Marathas, but also to small numbers of Delvis, Mahars, Hanbars, Madivals, Kumbars, Bhandaris, Gowlis, Bandis, Bavas, Sattarkars and Ghadis, who were all dependent on *kumri* cultivation, though their traditional occupations were quite different.\(^{104}\)

In North Kanara, crops were reaped in the months of November and December. In almost all the taluks of North Kanara, the *kumri* cultivators were always under the mercy of the landlords living in the immediate neighbourhood. The *kumri* cultivators had to depend on these rich or influential people for their immediate needs like clothes, beads which decorated their women and children, and for the money required for marriages and other religious ceremonies. These factors invariably kept the cultivating class under the subjection of the rich. The isolation of the *kumri* cultivators kept them ignorant about the market value of their products, and those articles furnished to them in exchange or loan. This resulted in the abuse of the *kumri* cultivators by wealthy and influential families, who gave very less amount to the *kumri* cultivators’ articles, and charged very high price for...
supplies needed by them. This affected the livelihood of the *kumri* cultivators to such an extent which made them to live with financial difficulties and die in debt. This practice continued for generations hereditarily from father to son, and consequently made them the slaves. The landholders residing in the Ghats encouraged *kumri* cultivation which increased their local influence by placing additional men at their command that helped them to bring more waste lands under cultivation.

The regular agricultural practice was not palatable for these people, who always migrated from one place to another. When the British government tried to ban the *kumri* cultivation from 1847 onwards, the *kumri* Marathas were forced to work either as tenants or as labourers in agricultural estates. Eventually, some of them had to give up *kumri* cultivation.

**Tax on Kumri Cultivation:**

All the *kumri* cultivators had to pay tax for their produce. F. H. Buchanan did mention about the *kumri* tax. He said that the hills were not private property, and pay no land tax; but those who sow them paid, for the right of cultivation, a poll-tax of half a *pagoda*. On account of poverty, many of them were exempted from this tax. The *kumri* tax paid in the year 1847 was as below:

- A man and his wife = Rs. 2.
- A single able bodied man = Rs. 1 ½.
- An old man or a lad = Re. 1.

However, the government rent was increased to Rs. 17 per acre in the year 1863.
Restrictions on Kumri Cultivation:

The British forest policy affected the practice of shifting cultivation. The colonial government felt that the land which was used for *kumri* cultivation could not grow trees of valuable timber for railways and their royal navy. The British tried to achieve this feat through massive clear felling of species, and rich natural forest for raising teak plantations. Monoculture of deciduous teak along the evergreen forest belt dates back to the very beginning of the British occupation of Uttara Kannada. In 1804, small teak plantations were raised in Honnavar, Ankola, Sadashivgad in coastal Uttara Kannada by Colonel Gilbert. These plantations were revisited by Cleghorn in 1861, and were found to be utter failure. The great demand for teak timber for ship-building, and later for expansion of railways, encouraged the British to initiate large-scale vegetation changes in favour of teak. Most of the forest working plans explicitly stated their chief objectives to be the extraction of all marketable timbers, firewood and bamboos from the forest and the clear-felling of areas for replanting with teak. The *kumri* cultivation also made it harder for the government to calculate taxes as it was shifting in nature. The colonial government was also against *kumri* cultivation as it involved burning of dry leaves, etc. and polluted the environment. The forest tracts with much valuable timber were prohibited from *kumri* cultivation in the district. The Supa and Yellapur taluks had much valuable timber tracts which provided good revenue for the government, and therefore *kumri* cultivation was banned there. According to M. D. Subash Chandran, most of the hardwood which sustained in the British forestry was unrecognised contribution of the *kumri* cultivators as a result of vegetation changes through ages of *kumri*. However, the government perceived it as a wasteful system. As a result of the government policy towards *kumri*, many communities were forcibly displaced from their habitations. Meanwhile, the coffee, tea
and rubber plantations came up in the Southern Western Ghats during the 19th century, and they required large number of labourers. The government by banning *kumri* cultivation wanted to introduce these *kumri* cultivators into plantations which were more profitable for them than the *kumri* cultivation. The Order passed on 3rd December 1847, authorised the then Collector to restrict *kumri* cultivation in North Kanara. The restrictions were first imposed in *fusly* 1259 (1849-50). According to the circular, the felling of the *jungle* for *kumri* cultivation within nine miles from the sea shore, or within three miles from the banks of any river was restricted. Since then, the Madras government continued the effort to reduce the extent of forest clearing for tillage.117 In the year 1860, all kinds of clearings were prohibited.118 When the district was transferred to Bombay Presidency in the year 1862, this rule was relaxed to some extent, and *kumri* cultivation was permitted under certain restrictions.119 The lands which were not cultivated for eight years were granted for *kumri* cultivation.120 The *kumri* cultivation was strictly prohibited in the forest area. The peasants who cultivated other lands that were under the government or other proprietors were prohibited from *kumri* cultivation. Those peasants who paid land revenue of more than Rupees 20 were also restricted from practicing *kumri* cultivation.121 The regions above the ghats, places with useless forest, and areas where there were no wood of any kind were granted for *kumri* cultivation. In the region below the ghats, *kumri* cultivation was limited to certain distances from sea, highroads, and large rivers, to make it impossible for *kumri* cultivators to bring any kind of wood from the jungle.122 The result of these restrictions was that there was reduction in the extent of land brought under *kumri* cultivation. The following two tables reflect the same.
Table 5:7

Extent of *Kumri* in North Kanara for the year 1862

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Caste or Tribe</th>
<th>Number of applicants</th>
<th>Total Number of these families</th>
<th>Number of acres granted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kunbi</td>
<td>2,308</td>
<td>19,920</td>
<td>5.880 ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maratha</td>
<td>2,034</td>
<td>12,216</td>
<td>4.709 ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Tribes</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>2,979</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,599</td>
<td>35,115</td>
<td>11.351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:8

Extent of Land used and not used for *Kumri* Cultivation in the year 1862

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the taluks</th>
<th>Number of acres granted</th>
<th>Area of land (in acres) where <em>kumri</em> was carried out</th>
<th>Area of land (in acres) where <em>kumri</em> was not carried out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supa</td>
<td>5,222</td>
<td>4858</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellapur</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirsi</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>239½</td>
<td>65½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankola</td>
<td>33700</td>
<td>31536½</td>
<td>216½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honnavar</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>2157½</td>
<td>41½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,351</td>
<td>10600 ½</td>
<td>750 ½</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *kumri* cultivation was banned in Aversa village of Ankola *peta* of Kumta taluk in the year 1862. The peasants had no other means of livelihood to support their large families and themselves. Many petitions were sent by the peasants to the Collector but were of no use. M. J. Shaw Stewart, the Collector of Kanara found that they were very poor and had no inherited land, and therefore, recommended to allot *kumri* cultivation. However, it was not implemented. The government prohibited peasants from *kumri* cultivation by saying that their villages were situated near the main highway, and they lived near to the coast. It also viewed that in these villages, the labourers were highly paid and one could easily obtain labour. It was of the view the *kumri* cultivators could cultivate the uncultivated field for low assessment with the help of *taccavi* grants or loans which
were given to purchase agricultural implements. However, in reality no one stood security for them to borrow the loan. Also, the amount paid was meagre. Besides they were not used to the requirements of field work. They were neither capable of paying money for occupancy price of waste land nor to purchase cattle and agricultural implements.

In the year 1869, the forests with inferior timber tract and of less economic importance were granted for *kumri* cultivation. The permission was granted only to those who habitually depended only upon the *kumri* cultivation for their livelihood. The distribution of land for *kumri* cultivation was granted by the government to afford the people with bare means of subsistence only. It allotted ½ an acre or 20 *guntas* to each adult male or female member of the family, and ¼ acre or 10 *guntas* to each child in the family. Subsequently, the family which engaged in other modes of subsistence was completely banned from *kumri* cultivation. The *ragi* which was grown by *kumri* cultivators in Kumta, Bhatkal and Honnavar was not the staple food of *kumriwalas* but they used it to purchase dried fish, salt and other such commodities. The *ragi* so grown was used by the *kumriwalas* in the form of liquidation of debts to their *sawkars*. However, the government did not want to accommodate the needs of the *kumriwalas*, and facilitate them. Therefore, it denied the people of Kumta, Bhatkal and Honnavar taluks the privilege of *kumri* cultivation. In the Supa *peta* of Haliyal taluk, measures were taken by the government to avoid destruction of the forest without causing serious distress to the *kumriwalas*. The measures taken were found to be impracticable which forced the government to stop *kumri* cultivation altogether in Supa *peta* in the year 1887. Some low-lying forest lands near the villages were allowed for *ragi* cultivation, but the result of the cultivation was found to be unsatisfactory in terms of yield by the *kumriwalas*. They thought that during the time of forest settlement, the government would make some
concessions in their favour, but their expectations were not met by the government. For several years, they managed to carry out kumri cultivation in the Goa territory, but the Portuguese government in Goa passed the rule in 1894 that none, but those domiciled in Goa should be allowed to carry on kumri cultivation.\textsuperscript{131}

\textbf{Kumri Agitation:}

Many petitions were sent by the kumri cultivators to the Collector stating their poor condition. When the kumri cultivation was completely banned by the government in the Supa peta it is reported that many inhabitants of the region died of starvation. When the kumriwalas had no other means of livelihood, they got frustrated with the colonial policies, and took the law in their own hands and cut the jungles in several villages of Supa peta. More than 450 acres of forest was cut down by the agitators. They were prosecuted by the government, 63 cases in Supa peta and 4 cases in Karwar taluk, were decided. Hugh Murray, Divisional Forest Officer of Northern Division, Kanara, who visited the region during the agitation of kumri cultivators in 1895 reported: “I paid a hurried visit to the scene of operations and was so much impressed by the poverty of the inhabitants and the straits they were put to owing to the want of land for the cultivation of their staple food ragi, that I made my strong representations on the subject to the Collector, Mr. Davidson, subjecting that forest land should be given out to them with a view to ameliorating their miserable condition.”\textsuperscript{132} An enquiry was held by the government which suggested the assignment of forest land for dry-crop cultivation. A special officer, Rao Bahaddur Yennemadi was appointed to assign forest land for dry-crop cultivation. This type of dry-crop cultivation was termed as hakkal land in Kanara. Under the G.R.No. 4709 dated 27\textsuperscript{th} July 1900, Supa peta was selected for assignment of hakkal land, and under the G.R. No.
8454 dated 1st November 1904 Bhatkal peta was sanctioned for the allotment of hakkal land. However 3 villages of Bhatkal peta were omitted from the concession of hakkal land by saying that they could obtain the work of labourers and were not in need of special attention. In Bhatkal peta, 381 families of whom 565 were men, 408 women and 242 children, were selected and registered by the local authorities and were allotted hakkal lands.133 Supa peta contained 136 villages, of which V.D. Yennemadi had made assignment of hakkal lands for dry-crop cultivation in 49 villages consisting of 200 hamlets.134 These families had obtained the lands in each hamlet or group of hamlets, equal to five times the annual requirements of kumriwalas. The plots assigned abound in tangled brushwood and karvi contained the trees of which kumri cultivators could use as rab materials. Only in few cases, the matti and bayani trees which had no capacity to produce timber were found.135 These plots were divided into five blocks of equal area. Each block was marked with boundary lines. According to this system, the lands cultivated for one year were kept uncultivated for four years, and they were again cultivated in the sixth year. By the end of the year 1905, the kumriwalas gradually overcame their predilection for kumri and tried to adopt regular agricultural practice.136 The kumriwalas of the Honnavar taluk were considered as the same as three exempted villagers of Bhatkal peta, but their condition was very bad. The kumri Marathas of Honnavar were denied from any concession as the authorities considered them lazy and isolated. Further, the conservator of forest had the opinion that they did not suffer from starvation, and had many opportunities for getting labour and earning livelihood.137

A meeting of kumriwalas residing on the southern side of Gersoppa river was held at Sympolli on or about 10th April 1908. It was decided to cut kumri without permission for three days, that is, from 13th to 15th April 1908. Approximately more than
200 people participated. The news reached the villagers residing on the northern side of the Gersoppa (Sharavati) river a week later, and the Kunbis of the region followed the same. The offenders were prosecuted by the government, and sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from a week to six weeks. However, they were not capable of paying the fines. Thus, the movement of the *kumriwalas* was completely suppressed by the government.

The Forest Working Plan of government permitted the *kumriwalas* to cut freely certain number of palm trees, *tali* (*Corypha umbracultifera*), the core of which, converted to flour, was traditionally a nutritional supplement. The leaves were also used in the construction of roofs. When the government observed that these *tali* plants were also used as raw material in the dye factory at Honnavar, the foresters of the government prohibited their felling, and intended to regulate their exploitation with the Forest Working Plan. In the Working Plan, it was said that the palm trees were not indispensible for *kumri* cultivators. Trees of mediocre quality with unusable leaves were allotted to families who had no other option but to wait for the next season or simply violate the forest law.

M. D. Subash Chandran, a botanist, opines that in Uttara Kannada the ban on shifting cultivation was largely motivated by the need to release labour force for the new plantations that were coming up in South India. Further, he states that *kumri* was not really a vagrant form of cultivation involving enormous destruction of timber resources. Instead it amounted to a sophisticated combination of cultivation and conservation. The remains of sacred groves which still enshrine in them considerable biodiversity are believed to be a legacy left behind by *kumri* cultivators of the Western Ghats. These farmers deserve a
prime place in the annals of conservation. They were, on the contrary, not only denied any such honour, but described as uncivilised and barbaric.140

According to M. D. Subash Chandran, *kumri* was carried out with a great caution and according to a specific land use plan, which reflected a well balanced use of grazing lands, arable fields, and forest bodies. There were conservationist elements also in this plan as every village settlement had sizeable sacred groves (*kan*). The trees were not allowed to cut in these areas. But permission was usually given to collect its produce, either used as fuel wood or medicinal plants. When the colonial government banned *kumri* cultivation, regeneration of evergreen forest was not appreciated by it. The regenerated timber was considered as ‘worthless timber’ and government wanted to save the teak of evergreen vegetation and completely banned *kumri* cultivation. The rehabilitation measures introduced to alleviate the grievances of the *kumri* cultivators were not satisfactory. In fact they resulted in the distress of *kumri* cultivators.141

The British government discouraged shifting cultivation without any appropriate alternative scheme. To compensate for the losses of source of livelihood, the tribals were forced to explore alternative avenues of engagements. In Kanara too, the younger generation of *kumriwalas* was attracted towards remunerative labour works in garden and rice lands.142

After the prohibition of *kumri* cultivation, the *jungle* became so thick and created unhealthy condition to live. As a result people had become prey to innumerable diseases and great many inhabitants became victims of it.143 The census reports give testimony to the decrease in population. Many lands were left uncultivated, and the
peasants relinquished their lands. These uncultivated lands were further converted into government waste. Thus the restrictions on *kumri* cultivation, and its ban in certain areas resulted in severe hardship to the *kumriwalas*, poor ryots and inhabitants in and around the forest.

**Betta Land:**

*Betta* is a Kannada word meaning a hill. The cultivators of *supari* and pepper gardeners used the leaves of many trees, twigs, plants, etc. from the hill sides near their gardens as manure for plants. Such type of hill was locally called as *soppinabetta*. The branches of the tree with leaves were cut down and laid over the ground some two feet in depth. The branches were not burnt but left to decay and enter in to the soil. The *soppu* (leaves) was renewed for every three years and once in six years soil was placed over it to a depth of six to eight inches. This practice preserved the moisture in the soil, and kept the plant cool, thereby protected the soil from soil erosion, impoverishment and degradation. Even in rice cultivation, the *soppu* was used as manure. In rice cultivation, it was used in different ways. It was used directly as in garden cultivation. Further it was stored in a pond, and cow dung was spread over the leaves and kept for fermentation. The fermented leaves were used as manure during the time of cultivation. Besides the cultivators spread the green leaves under the feet of the cattle, the leaves trodden by the cattle and mixed with urine and cow dung were used as manure. The rice cultivators collected this *soppu* from nearby hills and forests. They used inferior kind of brush leaves, which was also known as *dorku* or *tarku* in local language. The foliage was obtained from the trees, chiefly of matti and kindal. The *betta* lands were marked by the peculiar appearance of the trees. The colonial government, in the name of conservation, began to impose restrictions on the use of forest resources. W. Wedderburn, Second Assistant
Collector of Kanara was appointed to give report on betta land. In 1864, he expressed the opinion that ‘a proper supply of foliage for manure is absolutely indispensable for the cultivators and where a serious obstacle thrown in the way of such supply, the cultivation of areca gardens would have to be abandoned’. The firewood was very much necessary for the garden cultivation in large quantity. The large quantity of firewood was required for boiling the arecanut and also for drying arecanut and cardamom. The gardeners collected soil for their gardens, and woods for agricultural implements and house building from the betta lands. Thus the betta or soppinabetta served as auxiliary land to the cultivators.

As seen earlier, the British government desired to exploit the forest resources, and earn more revenue from the available timber. The timber was extensively grown in betta lands, and to exploit timber the government had to control the betta lands. In 1864 Shaw Stewart, the Collector instructed enquiries to find the origin of the custom of pollarding trees to manure spice and supari gardens. The government appointed W. Wedderburn to send a report on betta lands. He reported that the ryots actually used the leaves and branches of the trees for manure, and each acre of garden land annually required 500 coolies’ loads of leaves, and one acre of betta produced an average of only 50 loads in the year. Therefore, he opined that for proper cultivation of one acre of garden land in the Sirsi taluk, not less than eight to ten acres of betta land was essential. He expressed that the garden cultivation required much skill and care, if the foliage of green leaves was not properly supplied for the gardens for one year, it affected the yield of the garden land for the succeeding years. Therefore, he proposed allotment of betta lands for each garden, with marked boundary lines. He suggested that for an acre of garden, eight acres of betta lands could be allotted with four to eight annas assessment. All the superior quality
timbers were reserved and the gardeners were allowed to use all the other trees for foliage, firewood, and for those minor requirements like manufacturing agricultural instruments. They were also allowed to take earth or mud (soil) from the betta lands for their gardens. This proposal was sanctioned under the G.R.No. 5020 dated 17th December 1864. On 8th June 1867, it was recognised and introduced in the taluks of Sirsi and Siddapur. The government recognised that the owners of the gardens enjoyed a prescriptive right to a large extent of betta, and this proposal continued till the general survey of lands.

Colonel Anderson who was the survey and settlement officer for Kanara, after full local enquiry wrote a letter to the Collector of Kanara in 1868 and proposed certain rules for the guidance of survey officers who were about to commence their work. He said that eight acres of betta land was the maximum area that could be allotted to an acre of garden land. If any gardener used more than eight acres of betta land, he might be restricted and if any gardener used less than eight acres of betta land, he could be permitted to use four more acres of betta land. Two classes of betta lands were created: one with assessment of eight annas per acre as originally proposed, and another at reduced rate of four annas per acre. In 1869, the government decided to levy some assessment on the betta lands to create a feeling of ownership among the ryots, but later on the government decided to allot certain extent of lands to each gardeners, and include the assessment in garden lands. Under the G.R. NO. 663 of 1869, the gardeners were allowed to cut trees which were unreserved, however, changes were made after the suggestion of local authorities that the occupants could only pollard the trees, if they wanted to cut trees they had to take permission from the Mamlatdar. The reserved trees were considered as an absolute property of the government. The government wanted to show that the betta lands were allowed for the gardeners as long as they paid revenue of the garden lands. It proved that
the betta assignment was granted for occupants only for the improvement of their holdings and house, and not for sale or exportations. Later on the forest department objected to cutting of trees under the orders of Mamladars in betta lands. The government decided under its R. No. 5114 of 13th December 1871 that with the exemption of the reserved kinds of trees, the ryots were permitted to cut the trees within their customary betta lands. It was clear that the betta lands were inseparable parts of the gardeners, but the gardeners had no right to pollard any reserved kinds of trees, they could use only unreserved kinds of trees from their betta lands.

The inhabitants believed that the government controlled the betta lands to develop teak plantations on them. Though Wedderburn had recommended about eight acres of betta land per acre of garden land, at the time of survey settlement, generally only two to three acres of betta lands were allotted per acre of garden land. Only in some cases, five to six acres of betta lands were allotted to the gardeners. Thus due to reduced size of the betta lands, and frequently changing forest rules, the cultivators failed to get sufficient manure for agriculture. Therefore, no improvements were made on cultivable lands. Many lands were left uncultivated, and in some cases ryots began to relinquish their lands. The general complaint of garden cultivators was that the allotment of betta lands made at the survey and settlement was not sufficient.

The forest acts and their provisions imposing restriction on the betta lands became so intolerable that in 1891 the ryots represented their problems to the government and pointed out that the betta land had lost its meaning to the cultivators. They also complained that they were no longer allowed to take soil from the betta or from the forest lands in order to sustain the fertility of the gardens. Further, they stated that they were
allowed to take leaves from the government forest that adjoined the betta lands, or to clear
the land up to 100 yards around the garden lands in order to protect the garden from the
wild animals, flood and fire.166 Besides, they reported that they were prohibited from
digging ditches around their betta lands in order to prevent the entry of cattle. A new
grazing fee of two anna per head of cattle was levied.167 The ryots also sent many petitions
to the Assistant Collector at Sirsi. However, the restrictions were relaxed only to six kinds
of reserved trees which were listed in 1881 for the betta lands.168 Rules were framed to
restrict use of soppu manure in the betta lands as per the newly amended Kanara Protected
Forest rule in 1890. The branches longer than nine inches could not be cut.169 The
government declared that all the forest products were the property of the State. Not
contended with the stand of the government the ryots again sent many petitions to it. The
petition forced the government to form a Committee of three officers. Consequently, the
government constituted a Committee comprising of R. A. Lamb, Acting Collector of
Kanara; W. D. Sheppard, Forest Survey Officer, Kanara; and G. K. Bentham, Divisional
Forest Officer, Southern Division, Kanara, to investigate into the condition of the garden
cultivators.170 The gardeners suggested an experiment to be conducted whereby half of the
garden to be managed using techniques of the ryots, and half according to the notions of
the forest officials.171 The final report of the Committee was submitted in the year 1893.
The Committee was of the opinion that the gardeners generally required nine to ten acres
of betta land per acre of garden.172 The Committee also recommended the assignment of
bena or grass producing lands for gardeners. The Committee proposed two changes, that is,
to clause 5 (a) and (b) of Kanara Protected Forest Rule. The new rules stated thus: “ any
garden cultivators may between June 1st and October 31st cut and remove without payment
and licence for use as manure or cattle-bedding such green leaves and twigs of all the trees
(except teak, sandalwood, blackwood, matti, honi, hirda, abnus, shigekai, surhoni and
karimuttal) as he may require from those portion of the protected forest outside his betta assignment which are set aside by the government for this purpose, provided that this privilege shall not be exercised by any individual possessing nine acres and upwards of betta land per acre of garden."  

Davidson, the Collector of Kanara approved these rules as a temporary measure until the betta assignments were revised and pointed out that the rules only covered the existing practice and were not new.  

The report of the Committee was discussed by a number of officials over the next two years. R. C. Wroughton, Conservator of the Forest for Southern Circle, expressed his disagreement with the proposal of the committee. Further he said that their proposal to assign 10 acres of tree covered land for each garden was almost preposterous. He also proposed that 5 acre was sufficient for the gardens in Sirsi and Siddapur. He also opposed the assignment of bena or grass producing land. Macgregor, the forest officer was also not satisfied with the committee’s recommendation. He was not convinced that 10 acres of forest were needed for an acre of garden land. He recommended that the assignments were to be made with reference to the character of the ground and the quantity of material that it was capable of supplying for garden lands. Both officers had the opinion that the terrible condition of the betta lands was entirely due to their being misused by the cultivators.

In the year 1894, Nugent, Commissioner for Southern Division, sent a proposal to the government and reiterated that most shortages in soppu were direct consequences of the misuse of betta lands by the gardeners themselves. In such a situation, the commissioner suggested that the forest department should make up the shortages by allowing cultivators to remove soppu from the protected forest, but on payment per-head
load. The commissioner argued that additional betta assignment should be granted only where it was proved beyond doubt that the original assignments were insufficient.\textsuperscript{177}

Nugent thought that such a re-survey could usefully be undertaken in Yellapur, since the earlier survey had been somewhat faulty. In the Sirsi and Siddapur taluks, however, he did not see the need for the revision, as in those taluks, the betta lands were allotted with far greater care and more scientifically. In some instances, the average of betta given may, as stated by the committee, have been comparatively small—“5, 4 ½ or even only 4 acres per acre of garden, but the quality of the land must be borne in mind as well as the quality, and I see little ground to doubt that originally the quantity was adequate, and that if it is now sufficient, this is the result of the reckless improvidence and wasteful habits of the garden-holders.\textsuperscript{178}

The betta lands were known as hadi lands in the coastal strip. These were the small patches of jungles near to rice fields. The occupants allowed collecting dead woods for fuel and dry-leaves for cattle bedding and graze their cattle freely in these areas.\textsuperscript{179} The Kanara Permit Rules (1864) recognised the right to remove leaves and grass for manure purpose from the adjoined forest of rice lands in the coastal taluks. However, as per the R. No. 8205 of 1902, under the Kanara Protected Forest Privilege Rule the word dry leaves was used for the first time and removal of soppu or green leaves was prohibited except within 66 feet from the rice filed. But the 66 feet adjoined to rice field was not sufficient to provide enough soppu. Moreover, many rice fields of coastal taluks did not adjoin the forest. V. D. Yennemadi, District Deputy Collector had the opinion that it was a general belief of the cultivators, that the manure made of green leaves had more fertilising properties than the manure prepared with dry leaves. They collected green leaves during
the months of June to November and the fresh leaves were used as litter. The fresh leaf manure was believed to be more fertile than the artificial manure. The forest resettlement officer for Ankola taluk (1908), Macgregor opined that the rice tract in the coastal area came under the evergreen forest belt and, if the rice cultivators were granted betta land, they would ruthlessly cut the forest. He also opined that because of this reason from the beginning of the survey settlement operations, the rice cultivators of coastal lands were not allotted hadi or betta lands by the forest department and he recommended the suppression of the practice. The dry-leaves were universally used by the below ghat region cultivators. In some places the green leaves were not used because the forest was in far distance from the rice fields and in such places cultivators collected sufficient quantity of dead leaves to use in the rainy season. They collected dry leaves from December to May. Dry leaves were brought in nets for cattle bedding, by occupants accompanied by women and children of their family with one or two head load per day. The rich cultivators brought leaves occasionally in carts and the inhabitants near to riversides, used to send fisherman to bring dry-leaves. He convinced the people of Ankola taluk to take up hadi lands on tenure system. In some villages of Ankola taluk, it was impossible to grant hadi lands individually, because, the rice lands were not always adjoined to forests. In such places, community hadi lands were allowed. In parts of Kumta, Honnavar and Bhatkal taluks, portions of forest lands were allowed to the individual occupants, under hadi tenure. In some villages of Ankola and Kumta, the villagers claimed their right on the hillsides adjoining near to their villages. Some villagers combined themselves, and appointed a Muslim man to keep off outside villagers. In spite of many restrictions the cultivators continued with the practice of removing green leaves for manure from their adjoining forests. Therefore, V. D. Yennemadi suggested legalising this practice which could not be prevented by law. He had the view that if this concession which was of great use for the
cultivators, it would help the government to obtain the cooperation of the peasants. However, his proposal was not recommended by H. Murry, the Conservator of Forest, Southern Circle. Though the ryots frequently memorialised to government to allow the use of green leaves for manure purpose from forest, the strenuous opposition of forest department came in the way of granting the concession.

The enforcement of the forest laws had become so unbearable to the inhabitants of the region that they organised themselves and formed Vana-Dukha Nivarana Sabha in 1886-1887, and Vana-Dukha Nivarana Sammelana in 1917 and protested against the government. The local press also supported them.

Thus from the mid-19th century onwards, there was a dispute between cultivators and government. It was on the matter of rights and privileges of the inhabitants to use forest resources. The ryots always claimed that it was their right to take green leaves for manure from the forest. But the government in the name of conservation tried to curtail the privileges of the cultivators. There was a difference of opinion among the British officials about the betta lands and their allotment. However, nothing much was done to alleviate the grievances of the ryots. This dissatisfaction led to the Forest Satyagraha during the time of Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement. Thus the forest grievances provided the much needed prop for the rise of anti-colonial sentiments in the region. In fact fight against the forest Act became a part of the nationalist movement in the region of Karnataka.
Restriction on the use of Tali Palm:

The *talipot* or *talipalm* (*Corypha umbraculifera*), is found in the Uttara Kannada and the Western Coast as in the East Coast of India up to West Bengal, and also in Srilanka and Mayanmar. The leaves of the trees were used by the inhabitants for making basket, umbrella, mat, fan, and for thatching the roof. The *talipot* flour was used as food substance by *kumri* cultivators and poor inhabitants. Once *tali* palm was used for writing, the ancient *talipalm* writings are still found in ancient temples, households of the traditional scholars and medicinal men of the district.

When agriculture suffered in the district due to many reasons during the time of colonial rule, the need of *talipalm* starch shot up phenomenally among the forest dwellers as well as poor people of the coast. The pith of tali palm traditionally collected by the *kumri* marathas was made into flour and formed subsidiary elements in the diet of the Marathas and of the fishermen of the coast. In the earlier days, the *Kunbis* of Honnavar and Bhatkal did a great business in *tali* flour, used some for their own consumption, and supplied large quantities to the coastal population. For some people, the removal of *tali* palm was the occupation for their livelihood. In Honnavar more than 270 people depended on this occupation. The condition of the *Kumri* Marathas of Bhatkal was worse than that of the Kunbis of Supa. Many of the Kunbis owned rice lands, but the Marathas of Bhatkal possessed no rice lands of their own except of Supa in one or two cases. They cultivated rice lands which belonged to others, but it is stated that their habit of indolence and poor physique came in the way of efficient cultivation. They lived in the forest and consumed pith of talipot palm which was found in the jungles of Honnavar taluk. They also consumed wild roots and fruits, and ragi which they used to get in exchange for their
scanty share of the paddy grown in the rice fields. Lived in poverty, and had insufficient food and clothing. The forest department decided to step in and assumed the control on the species in the name of conservation. To alleviate their miseries, certain concessions were allowed by the British government. In 1903 the Kumri Marathas of Bhatkal were allowed to take one palm each every year free of charge. A total of 1477 families of Kumri cultivators of were granted tali palm. But soon the policy was changed, and according to the new rule, one palm to an adult and 1/3 of a palm to every child under 12 years of age was permitted free of charge. If any family wanted extra tree, it was charged at Rupee one per tree, whereas Rupees two was charged to any family other than the Kumri Marathas. About 15,000 palms, yielding an estimated 15,000 head loads of pith, were cut down in the Honnavar taluk during 1899-1901. Consequently, the Bombay government appointed a forest officer, R.S. Pearson to prepare a plan for conservation and suitable use of tali palm. Pearson commenced his work in 1906, but it was completed by P.E. Aitchison in 1908. Pearson classified tali palms of Honnavar into four classes as given below:

Class - I: Palm consisting at least 8 head loads of pith

Class - II: Full grown palm with less than 8 head loads of pith.

Class – III: Half grown palm.

Class – IV: Young palm past the seeding stage.

From many decades or even more than 200 years the inhabitants used tali palm to thatch their houses and cattle shed with grown tali leaves. 99 % of the houses of the fishermen communities who did not possess their own coconut trees depended upon tali palm leaves for thatching. The cattle sheds were also thatched by tali palm in the district. These grown tali palm fell naturally during hot seasons. But the government started to collect tax on such leaves, 14 annas for 100 leaves. The forest guards informed the ryots
that if the fee was not paid, their thatched roofs would be removed and *panchanama* would be made during the next rainy season. These palm roofs were thatched much before passing of these regulations, and it was an illegal act by the forest department. The restrictions on the use of *tali* palm by forest department also affected the traditional industries which were based on the same. Due to the strict regulations on the exploitation of *tali palm*, the poor inhabitants suffered from starvation and other inconvenience. It is an irony that the simple *tali* palm leaves which were used by the poor inhabitants from the ancient time was also not spared from the revenue policies of the colonial government. Attempts were made to extract revenue from the *tali* palm with forest rules enforced strictly by the colonial authorities.

**Restriction on the use of Gun:**

The district was covered with extensive forest, and the agricultural fields were scattered in isolated patches surrounded by forests. It was very necessary for the inhabitants to possess extra means of protection. The mere possession of gun often gave them a feeling of security when they lived in a forest or near the forest with family and a few tenants and servants. In some cases, the houses were located far away from each other, and therefore, nobody was available in the immediate neighbourhood for help in case of emergency. The Arms Act (XXXI of 1860) passed by the Bombay government came into force when the district was transferred to Bombay Presidency in 1862. There was always complaint from the ryots of the district that they were not granted sufficient licences to possess guns to protect their crops and cattle. The wild animals always destroyed their crops and attacked their cattle. From the commencement of the cultivating season, the wild hog and other animals ate the seeds. As soon as seeds germinated, the dear and antelopes
destroyed them. Even after careful watch and their protection of their crops day and night, they could not save them from pig, monkeys and other animals.\textsuperscript{194} Collins, in his report highlighted the destruction of crops by the monkeys and said: “Monkeys are the worst animal pest of the garden area where the big ditches and steep banks of the gardens often keep out other wild animals. In the gardens situated at a distance from the houses, which are now all too numerous, they have the field for themselves. It is not an exaggeration to say that they eat quarter of the plantain crop, and in the coconut gardens in the Western Ghats villages of Yellapur and sirsi, they destroyed the large portion of the nuts, while they throw down large number of small supari nuts when they are forming”\textsuperscript{195} A very few landholders were given gun licences to protect their crops. There were no sufficient guns to protect their cattle and crops from wild animals. When hunting was prohibited under the Forest Acts, number of wild pigs increased considerably and they destroyed the crops. The arms held without licences were confiscated from time to time, and temporary use of these weapons was granted. The government had the feeling that for cultivators it was not necessary to keep these weapons permanently.\textsuperscript{196} M. J. Desai, in his report on the economic condition of the garden lands in Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapur taluks including Mundgod mahal in 1935, provides some statistical details about the gun licences in the district in the year 1934.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Gun Licence granted for Siddapur Taluk\textsuperscript{197}}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Group} & \textbf{No. of Villages in each group} & \textbf{No. of villages with crop licences} & \textbf{No. of licences} \\
\hline
I & 31 & 24 & 109 \\
\hline
II & 41 & 32 & 117 \\
\hline
III & 120 & 85 & 209 \\
\hline
IV & 10 & 5 & 14 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
Grazing:

The ryots required a large supply of cattle not only for their household needs like milk and its products, but also for their agricultural purposes which needed bullocks for ploughing and cattle for manure. Cattle were considered as the backbone of the agriculture. Before the colonial rule, the ryots allowed to graze their cattle in any jungle without paying any grazing fee. But the colonial government with the colonial forest conservancy rule, many restrictions were imposed on grazing. The Cattle Trespass Act – I of 1871 restricted the cattle grazing in the restricted forest areas. The official reports stated that unrestricted grazing would harm the young trees from growing. In 1881, grazing fee of two annas was imposed for grazing. Even though in some places facilities were given for free grazing, they did not help the ryots much, because the areas allotted were stony and less grass producing areas. In some of the cases, such areas were allotted near the protected or reserved forest areas and if, accidently the cattle passed the boundary lines of the protected or reserved forest areas, the cultivators were prosecuted under the law. The Dhanger Gowlis’ were also restricted from grazing their cattle in the forests of the district. The grazing fee was a real burden for the ryots. Normally each ryot possessed from 10 to 100 heads of cattle, and it became difficult to pay fees at the rate of 2 annas per head of cattle. As seen earlier, the ryots prohibited from carrying any cutting instruments while pasturing their cattle in the forest. As a result, it was very difficult for the ryots to protect themselves and their cattle from the sudden attack of wild animals. The cutting instruments were necessary for them to cut veins or thorns particularly when their cattle got entangled with them. All these problems and hardships inspired the inhabitants to organise satyagraha known as hullubanni during the time of national movement. The hullubanni satyagraha was one of the unique protest movement against the forest laws enforced in the
district by the colonial authorities. The above discussion reveals that the British colonial
forest system aimed at controlling the forest in India by completely excluding the agrarian
pollution. This resulted in considerable profit for them. However, the Forest Acts and
regulations and their strict enforcement resulted in hardships to the ryots, tribes and
masses, and ultimately forced them to oppose the government.

2 Ibid, p.21;The Western approach is best represented by Richard Grove and others. See Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan (Eds.), *Nature and the Orient, Essays on the Environmental History of South and South-East Asia*, Oxford, 2000, See http://www.sussex.ac.uk/cweh/people/richardgrove ;http://www.sussex.ac.uk/history/people/peoplelists/person/7389;The Indian point of view is best represented by Guha and Gadgil in their combined as well as individual research works.
4 Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, Delhi, reprint1887, Chapters IV to VIII.; Gadgil and Guha, “State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India”, in *Past & Present*, No.123 (May 1989), pp. 141-77.
6 Ibid, p.216.
8 Ranjan Chakrabarti (Ed.), pp.21-22.
10 Ranjan Chakrabarti (Ed.), p.22.
11 Ibid, p.22.
12 Ibid, p.22.
13 Ibid, pp.22-23.
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