Chapter 2

THE EVOLUTION OF COLONIAL FORESTRY

In this chapter an attempt is made to trace the evolution of colonial forestry in the U.P. hills. How did the idea of colonial forestry emerge? How did it change over time and what shape did the policy finally assume? In the first section I discuss the debate among historians on colonial forestry. In the second section I trace the evolution of the policy with special reference to the U.P. hills. In the third section I examine the experiences and responses of the people to the policy and how this led to adjustments and modification in the policy. This chapter only seeks to outline the broader shifts within the policy and the debate, without exploring in details the themes debated. Other chapters of the thesis develop the points raised here.

Debate Among Historians

The debate among historians has centred around two issues. First: the motives behind or the factors responsible for the emergence of the colonial forestry. Second: the link between colonial forestry and the practices of the past. Ramachandra Guha has argued that commercial and strategic interests played a crucial role in the evolution of colonial forestry. Initially the demand for teak for the navy
and later timber for railway sleepers led to a large scale destruction of forests. Pre-colonial governments did not strictly regulate, control and exploit forests. People had free access to forest resources except that the village community had devised customary restraints on users. The industrial mode of production has been generally identified as ecologically disastrous since it makes heavy demand on natural resources. Colonial rule, argue Gadgil and Guha, marks 'a crucial watershed in the ecological history of India'.

Some historians have questioned this sharp break between the pre-colonial and the colonial period. David Hardiman has rejected the view that people lived in total harmony with forests in the pre-colonial period. Society, he argues, was hierarchically divided and an individual's access to resources depended on his status within the hierarchy. He has shown that the Bhil chiefs allowed cutting of forests on payment in the pre-colonial period. However, he agrees that the colonial state decisively intervened in forest management and exploited forests for com-


3. Gadgil and Guha, This Fissured Land, pp. 51-2, tables 1.1 to 1.4.

4. Ibid., p. 5.
mercial purposes. The Guha and Gadgil thesis has also been strongly criticized by Richard Grove in his recent book, *Green Imperialism*. Grove makes two propositions. One: the pre-colonial period also saw a large scale deforestation; second: colonial forestry was dictated more by a genuine concern for conservation rather than just material concern. Deforestation, argues Grove, has taken place since the early period of Indian history. Special instances of deforestation have been shown by Grove between AD 1500-1760. The period of late 17th and 18th century was, in fact, a period of state intervention and exploitation of forests. Marathas, Amirs of Sindh and other rulers controlled forests. So Grove concludes that 'periods of relatively rapid change did take place in pre-colonial times'. Grove goes on to argue that depletion of coastal forests caused by high demand for timber for ship building and the general shortage of timber and fuel prompted the initial demand for conservation, but more 'scientific conservation propaganda' emerged out of the ideological commitment of the East India Company surgeons who established a link between deforestation and drought and famine, seeing conservation as essential for the long term interest of agriculture and consequently significant for the stability of the empire. William Roxburgh, Nathaniel Wallich,


7. Ibid., pp. 386-90.
Alexander Gibson, etc., were influential surgeons and botanists who systematically developed the idea of conservation and were able to get the attention of the company government. Grove's arguments appear persuasive as far as the emergence of the ideas of conservation are concerned but he has not been able to establish the link between ideas and policy that took practical shape in the second half of the 19th century. Rangarajan has suggested that the actual impact of such ideas on policy was limited, even in the period from the 1830s to the 1850s. For the later period, when commercial interest become important, this argument is more difficult to sustain.

Mahesh Rangarajan explains the differences between Guha and Grove in terms of differences in the chronological focus of their research: the former focuses on the late 19th century and the latter on the early colonial period. He argues that there was no simple polarity between ideological and material influences on policy. The desiccation fear had only a limited impact and was only one of the influences that shaped the course of early 19th century Indian forestry. While Indian forests were undergoing significant changes long before the British entered the picture, the validity of colonial rule as an ecological watershed, argues

8. Ibid., Chapter 8.
10. Ibid., p.148.
Rangarajan, cannot be denied.\textsuperscript{11}

No doubt deforestation has a long history. But it is difficult to know its scale and dimension. In the medieval period \textit{zamindars} were encouraged to bring more and more land under cultivation. Forests were cut on a large scale for strategic reasons and during the march of the army.\textsuperscript{12} Many medieval towns often felt the scarcity of fuel and fodder, which had to be transported from long distances. During the reign of Akbar a large amount of fuel was brought from outside the town for the royal kitchen.\textsuperscript{13} Fodder was sold by professionals to marching Mughal army. High price of timber for house construction due to its shortage invited state intervention in control of prices.\textsuperscript{14}

Scarcity of timber, fuel and fodder, however, was not widespread, nor were forests receding rapidly. Chetan Singh shows that many areas within the Mughal empire were densely forested and were ruled by autonomous \textit{rajas} and \textit{zamindars}.\textsuperscript{15} Uncultivated and forested area under the Mughals was

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 165-7.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Singh, \textit{`Forests, Pastoralists and Agrarian Society'}, p. 44.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 44-7.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 23-4.
\end{itemize}
considerable.  

Arable expansion was not continuous, there were periods of recession as well when cultivated area retreated.  

From the above discussion it follows that the pre-colonial period was not characterised by ecological equilibrium. Yet the state, in the pre-colonial period, does not appear to have directly exploited forests on a large scale for commercial purposes or intervened decisively in regulating rights of the people in the forests. Forest exploitation intensified in the 19th century due to increased demand for timber and fuelwood. This increased the possibility of generating a large revenue from forests; the state did not miss this opportunity.  

The evolution of colonial forestry and the nature of its implementation varies from region to region depending upon accessibility and quality of timber. While the teak forests of Malabar were depleted for ship building in the early period of the colonial rule, the Himalayan pine forests started being exploited for railways in the second half of the 19th century.  

16. Ibid., pp.23-4. See also foot note no.5: 'During the reign of Akbar the gross cultivated area was unlikely to have been more than 55 per cent of the gross cultivation in 1909-10 in large part of north India. When compared to the geographic extent of the Mughal subas of this region, this amount would be even less'. (based on Shireen Moosvi, The Economy of the Mughal Empire, C. 1595: A Statistical Study, Delhi, 1987, pp. 65-6). Further Bernier has also been quoted saying, 'Of the vast tract of country constituting the empire of Hindustan many are little more than sand and barren mountain badly cultivated, and thinly peopled and even a good portion of the good land remains untilled for want of labourers...'  

17. Ibid., p.42-3.
Evolution of the Policy

In this section I examine the factors that contributed to the evolution of the forest policy in the UP hills. The evolution of the policy is discussed in two phases.

Phase I: Farming out to Takeover In the early colonial period the British made no serious attempt to manage forests. They continued the pre-colonial policy in which the role of the state was confined to levying certain duties on the export of forest products. The writings of the early British administrators suggest that rajas levied two types of taxes. One was on the export of the forest products, and another was on the cattle coming from the plains for grazing in the Tarai in the summer.18 In the pre-colonial period it appears that local thokdars collected these duties along the border and passed on a najrana as the share of the raja 19. The Gorkhas attempted to systematize the duties 20 but the British made them more systematic and farmed them out to contractors.21 Grazing tax was made more

20. Ibid.
broad based by imposing duty on the hill cattle coming into the Tarai as well. All cattle were subjected to a uniform annual tax of three anna (16 annas constituted a rupee) for each female buffalo, two annas for each cow, and one anna for each bullock.\textsuperscript{22} However, perhaps due to social opposition cattle of some privileged people of the hills like kamins, sayanas, thokdars and village headmen and permanent residents of the Bhabar were later exempted from grazing tax in 1823.\textsuperscript{23}

Some officials, however, questioned the utility of the duty on forest products and argued for its abolition. They saw it as an obstacle to the growth of timber trade.\textsuperscript{24} The growth of timber trade they argued would lead to the clearance of the unhygienic Tarai and pave the way for its cultivation.\textsuperscript{25} The emphasis at this stage was on clearance and cultivation of Tarai which, it was thought, in the long term would generate revenue.

The validity of these arguments was questioned by the Senior Assistant Commissioner of Garhwal. He suggested that demand of timber was regulated by the market and the abolition of the duty would not make much difference in the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Batten, 'Report on Bhabar', p.213; HDNWP, vol. I, part II, p.847.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid. Batten argued that exemptions were unjust. All Bhabar residents temporary or permanent be exempted. He also underlined anomaly that in the Tarai attached to plain districts grazing tax was not collected. He justified the tax on the basis that perhaps Kumaun due to its poor tax base needed more revenue. See Batten, 'Report on Bhabar', p.214.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Henry Huddlestone, SAC, Garhwal to G.T.Lushington, Commr, Kumaun, no 5, 11-3-1841, RLI vol.10, PMR, Coll. Pauri, RA Dehradun.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid.; Batten, 'Report on Bhabar', p.209.
\end{itemize}
long term.²⁶ He further argued that there existed little possibilities of expanding cultivation in the Tarai.²⁷ Batten similarly felt that extension of cultivation in this tract was not possible as the tract was unhygienic and lacked water.²⁸

There were others who opposed the abolition of the duty and saw it as the government share in 'public property'. Traill, writing in the early British period, supported this view.²⁹ Batten saw the duty as 'seigneurial dues on account of wood or other jungle produce.'³⁰ He thought that the British inherited the duty which justify its continuance. If it was abolished like in the pre-British period, local zamindars would collect some sort of tax.³¹

The duty was thus retained and efforts were made to expand the revenue base of the government. The state wanted a 'legitimate' share in the income drawn from the export of the forest products. For this purpose more and more forests were opened up for lease. However there were certain constraints. First, leases of all forests were not attractive as attractiveness depended on the possibilities of returns. Second, it was not easy to get a lessee. The lessee was expected to have a certain amount of capital base so as to pay security money, an advance and ar-

²⁷. Ibid.
³¹. Ibid.
range for the collection of dues.

Until the 1840s leases were not very attractive except for rich and accessible forests, from which the government got good revenue. Leases were auctioned annually as well as for longer periods. The rapid growth of timber trade in the 1840s was reflected in an increase in the extent of area under leases which gave good revenue to the government. But there was a feeling among officials that contractors were making good 'profit' and the government not getting a fair share in it. This gave rise to a debate in the official circles over the take over of the forests by the government.

Before the takeover of the management of the forests, the government claim to sovereign right over forests remained largely theoretical. In practice it had hardly any control over it. The pre-colonial village boundaries which customarily included large tracts of forests were recognized by Traill and formalized in his 1823 settlement and since then were known as san assi boundaries (means boundaries of year 80 as it correspond to samvat 1880). Batten was the first to claim in 1842 that all forests belonged to the government irrespective of their inclusion within the village boundaries. He asserted this right of the government in the light of the tea planters' demand for land. However nothing was changed before the takeover of forest management. There was neither any effort to 'protect'  

32. Traill, 'SSK'.


34. For details see chapter 6 below.
forests nor any restrictions on people for the use of forests. 35 There was only one exception to this when in 1826 the right to cut sal on the *thaplas* (raised plateau lands in the Tarai which usually contained sal) was restricted to ensure supply of sal to the government. These restrictions were lifted soon when people of the surrounding areas in the Tarai began to desert the area.36

The policy of farming out brought revenue to the government without incurring any expenditure. At the same time the government could never know about the real collections. Officials made their own estimates of the collections by contractors and felt, particularly from the 1840s when timber trade picked up, that the collection was much larger than the amount of lease. This was particularly applicable to the rich and accessible forests like Dehradun. Dehradun forests were on lease to one Atmagir between 1839 and 1844 on an annual payment of Rs 33,500 while according to an official estimate he was collecting about Rs 80,000.37 Such official estimates made a strong case for the takeover of the collection of timber

duty of Dehradun forests in 1844. Vansittart was made incharge of these forests.

The result of takeover was encouraging as the average annual revenue from these forests was between Rs 80,000 and 100,000 from 1844 to 1855 and prompted officials in other districts to demand similar takeover. But there was skepticism as well. For instance, the Senior Assistant Commissioner, Garhwal, felt that revenue might decline after the takeover. Thus careful estimates of possible collections were required. J.S.Strachey, the Senior Assistant Commissioner Garhwal, later estimated that the receipts of Padam Singh from the Patlee Dun forest lease in Garhwal Bhabar were not below Rs 14000 per annum as against the rent of Rs 2750 per annum he paid.

Apart from the consideration of revenue other factors also influenced the decision of takeover. The concern for reckless felling of trees was one of them. It was often argued that there was no control over traders and they felled trees recklessly. In the absence of a clearly defined policy, officials vacillated. Some sort of control was often sought on fellings but it was said that this might go against the

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38. J.Thorton, Secy Govt NWP to H.M.Elliot, Secy Sudder Board of Revenue, no 3614, 26-8-1845, in Correspondence Relating to Forests and Forest Dues, vol. 84 ( file 17 II), PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun. See also Vansittart to Commr Meerut, no 84, 19-4-1845,ibid.


41. Strachey to Batten, no 9, 4-8-1853, vol. 9,ibid.
spirit of the contracts.\textsuperscript{42} H.Huddleston, the Senior Assistant Commissioner, Garhwal, even suggested that some foresters be appointed to supervise the work of traders as only that could prevent damage to forests.\textsuperscript{43} However, at the same time it was feared that prohibition on the cutting of trees would lead to a decline in receipts.\textsuperscript{44}

Other factors also influenced the decision of takeover. The government was facing difficulty in obtaining large scantlings for various purposes.\textsuperscript{45} Roads, essential to make forests accessible and thereby increase trade, were not being built. Contractors were neither interested in investing nor in a position to invest enough money on road building. The government, it was argued, would invest forest revenue on road building which would improve communication, make timber cheap and give a boost to trade.\textsuperscript{46}

Considerations of revenue dominated the discussion on the state takeover of forest though other issues also emerged in the debate. Unlike Bombay

\textsuperscript{42} Vansittart to W.Jameson, Supdt Botanical Garden, NWP, Saharanpur, no 4, 1-1-1843, Correspondence related to Forests and Forest Dues, vol. 84 (file 17 II), PMR, Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun. See also Vansittart to Commr Meerut, no 84, 19-4-1845,\textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{43} Huddleston to Lushington, no 25, 6-8-1844, RLI, vol. 10, PMR, Coll. Pauri, RA Dehradun.

\textsuperscript{44} Strachey to Batten, no 73, 6-11-1854, \textit{ibid}, vol. 12.

\textsuperscript{45} Strachey to Batten, no 9, 4-8-1853, vol. 11, \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{46} Strachey to Batten, no 9, 4-8-1853 and no 73, 6-11-1854, vol 12, \textit{ibid}. See also strachey,'Memorandum Regarding the Forests of Patlee and Kotree Doons in Garhwal', dated 22-8-1854, (hereafter Memorandum on forests of Patlee and Kotree Doons) \textit{ibid.}
and Madras presidencies where concern with scarcity led to an interest in conservation, in the UP hills no such linkage was established by forest officials. 47

The leases were not renewed after the decision was taken for the government takeover. In Garhwal Bhabar the Patlee Dun lease was for 20 years and was to expire in 1859. After a prolonged discussion in 1853 the government decided to purchase the lease from the leasee, Padam Singh, for Rs 15,000, 48 and given over the charge of the forests to Captain Read, the Deputy Superintendent of the Roorkee Workshop, who was engaged for a long time in procuring timber from these forests for public works and had a good knowledge of these forests. 49

Under the new system forests came under the direct control of the government and the concern was no longer confined to revenue. As the Superintendent, Read was to give permission for cutting wood, to grant contracts, oversee felling of timber and its removal, 50 construct roads and bridges to made forests accessi-

47. See for instance Strachey, 'Memorandum on forests of Patlee and Kotree Doons'. Strachey discusses various reasons for takeover but does not discuss fear of desiccation.

48. Strachey to Batten, no 9, 4-8-1853, no 4, 24-3-1854 (see also attached translated resignation letter of Padam Singh) and no 73, 6-11-1854 all in vol. 12, ibid.

49. Strachey, 'Memorandum on forests of Patlee and Kotree Doons'.

ble. Read was later accused of excessive fellings. He could not transport out all the timber felled, the left over was later exported out by Henry Ramsay. The system under Read focused solely on these problems of fellings and transportation of trees, not on other issues.

There were critics of Read within civil administration who resented his autonomy from the district officer. After the mutiny, in 1858, the over all charge of the forest was taken over by Henry Ramsay, the Commissioner, Kumaun, who became the first Conservator of the hill forests. He continued as Conservator of Forests till the Forest Department started and later G.F. Pearson took the charge in 1867-68. Colonel Baugh helped Ramsay in management of forests.

Unlike Read, Ramsay issued various regulations for forest management.


Felling without license was banned; trees were marked for fellings; fine was imposed on felling of unmarked trees; cattle were excluded from the submontane forests and cultivators were given alternative sites outside these forests. He also introduced fire protection. Constructed roads to make forests accessible. G.F. Pearson, during his tour of these forests in 1869-70 found them very well 'conserved'.

Thus Ramsay made the first efforts to impose restrictions. Though restrictions were wide ranging their application was limited to the submontane sal forests. These efforts were basically directed to the reproduction of sal, whose demand for railway sleepers was increasing. These efforts for 'conservancy' were hardly in response to desiccationist propaganda; they were directed to the reproduction of forests to ensure better supply of timber in anticipation of future requirements. Strachey, Ramsay and Pearson in their reports talked about the future prospects of timber supply from these forests which were indicative of the future trend towards 'scientific forestry'. In the first phase, thus, there was a marked shift in the official policy towards forests from farming out of revenue to state takeover.

**Phase II: 'Scientific Forestry' and Its Agenda** A whole regime of 'scientific

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56. Ibid.


58. Discussed in details in chapter 3.
forestry' was unfolded to manage and increase the productivity of forests. The emphasis was on exclusion of people from forests. With the enactment of the forest acts of 1865 and 1878 there was a major shift in forest policy. These acts empowered the state to reserve any forest and determine rights and privileges of users in them. Redefinition, curtailment and denial of users' rights created hardship for people. These measures were not only resisted by the people but opposed by a section of colonial bureaucracy as well. In this section I discuss various aspects of the policy and examine the extent to which the policy was modified through this criticism.

'Protection' of forests was essential for production of timber and its regeneration: it was required against fire, unauthorised grazing, fellings and cultivation.59 For 'protection' forests were to be reserved. Many forests in the UP hills were declared reserved in 1879. Initially forests of the submontane tracts constituting mainly sal trees were reserved. Deodar forests of the Bhagirath, the Yamuna and the Tons valleys, most of which were on lease from the Tehri kingdom, were also brought under the Forest Department. Forests around Naini Tal and Ranikhet were initially declared to be protected forests but later were reserved in 1892.

Fire protection had a significant place in colonial forest conservancy. Fire was considered harmful by foresters for regeneration as it killed saplings. This

was directly in conflict with local perceptions in which firing of forest was essential to get new grass and to clear forest floors of pine needles which made hill sides slippery and dangerous for cattle as well as people. While people opposed and protested against the measures, many officials questioned the usefulness of the fire protection. The Deputy Commissioner of Almora wrote: 'I emphatically express the opinion that fire protection in hill forests is not only unnecessary, but actually pernicious. That annual fire do not damage even a young forest...'.

N. Hearl, the forest officer, however, disagreed and argued: 'the forest fires are pernicious is accepted as an axiom by all forest officers...and whenever there is a danger of such a fire occurring, they took stringent measures to prevent them...'.

He further argued that reserved forests of Ranikhet which were fire protected were superior to civil forests which were burnt annually.

Fire protection, however, remained a difficult task. After a prolonged debate the Forest Department adopted a policy of selective and controlled departmental firing of forests around March when inflammability remained low. This

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60. The Deputy Commissioner Almora quoted in APRFD, NWP & O, 1897-98, p. 17.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., p.18.
63. Ibid.
64. APRFD give annual figures of the fire protected area. The rate of success varied annually. See also Guha, Unquiet Woods, pp. 51-3.
was to prevent extensive damage caused by uncontrolled firing. But this did not solve the problem since firing was important for villagers only in May when pine needles covered the forest floors. Despite the measures and penalties people continued to fire forests. Rangarajan argues that later generation foresters had a critical view of the earlier policy of total prohibition of fire. In the UP hills the shifts were more complicated. On the one hand, rules were made more stringent in later years: first in 1907 after extensive firing of forests by the people, then in 1918. On the other hand role of fire in forests came under scrutiny, fire protection in some forests was seen by many foresters as a problem since it made regeneration of some species like sal and teak difficult. So fire protection was given up in many forests but retained in others. Osmaston wrote: '...in many forest types full fire protection remained an essential part of management. In these forests controlled burning, involving early burning before the time of greatest inflammability, became a fairly common feature'.


66. Rangaragan, Fencing the Forest: Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces 1860-1914 (Delhi, 1996), p.89.


68. See Notification no 76/xiv-51 of 1918, in February 1918 prog 6, serial 4, FD file 51/1917, box 222, UPSA, Lucknow.

69. Osmaston,' Forest Protection', pp.69-70.
Similarly there were conflicting views on the impact of grazing on forests. Many foresters thought that protection against cattle grazing was essential for 'scientific' management of forests. But local people strongly resented the exclusion of cattle from reserved forests. So many foresters felt that total exclusion of cattle was not politically feasible. Measures of restricted entry were worked out and limited grazing rights were settled after a prolonged debate. Problems faced by the people on account of grazing restrictions constituted one of the most serious grievances of the people against the Forest Department.\footnote{70}{For details see chapter 5.}

Successful reproduction of timber and promotion of selective species necessitated exclusion of cultivation and restrictions on cultivation in reserved and protected forests.\footnote{71}{For details see chapter 6.} Sal, deodar and chir were promoted at the cost of other species which were often preferred and widely used by villagers. This not only adversely affected the peasant economy but had serious consequences for the ecology of the region.\footnote{72}{For details see chapter 4.}

Scientific forestry sought to exclude rural timber users from reserved forests. Total exclusion was difficult, however, certain limited rights were granted in the reserved and protected forests. Quantitative specification of these rights - rights to timber for house construction, wood for agriculture implements, fuel-wood, bamboo, and charcoal - was not a simple task and gave rise to a prolonged
debate on the criterias. Initially when Colonel Garstin settled these rights he just mentioned them and quantitative specification was taken up later. Oakeshott specified the rights in certain reserved forests.73

Fear of popular opposition delayed settlement of these rights. B.D. Joshi, who was assigned the task of specifying rights, found Oakeshott's specification which he was expected to follow problematic and defective. Joshi argued that the timber granted annually to an entire village was not sufficient to build even a single first class house. The difference in the durability of sal and chir (the durability of chir is half to that of sal) was not taken into account. The temporary houses and cattle sheds actually lasted only three years instead of six years as assumed by Oakeshott.74 Consequently the scale of demand was seriously underestimated by Oakeshott.

Joshi's views led to an extensive official debate on the criteria to be followed in timber allotment. D'Archy, the Conservator of forests, objected to Joshi's view and thought that Oakeshott’s specification was 'quite liberal'.75 After a prolonged discussion some of the points raised by Joshi were accepted,76 and Joshi

74. Ibid., p.4.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., pp.5-6.
proceeded to specify rights by modifying earlier scales.\textsuperscript{77}

The emphasis of 'scientific forestry' on exclusion of people and redefinition of their rights gave rise on the one hand to a debate within the bureaucracy and, on the other, to a discontent among people. Many officials criticised the forest policy for its harshness. Captain W.G. Murray, Assistant Surveyor General, wrote to the GOI that while touring Jaunsar he found simmering discontent among Jaunsaries against fire protection, exclusion of cultivated land from forests and denial of grazing right.\textsuperscript{78} Colonel A. Frazer responding to these charges on behalf of the Lt. Governor wrote that these complaints were exaggerated.\textsuperscript{79} Fire protection and grazing restrictions, he wrote, were essential and people would gradually become accustomed to them. The Forest Department, he argued, was not harsh on people but was taking care of them.\textsuperscript{80} Ramsay, who initiated forest 'conservancy' in the hills, criticised the Forest Department for highhandedness:\textsuperscript{81} most of the forests being reserved people were left with only a small area to meet their requirements.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{77} Joshi, 'Narrative of Forest Settlement in the Reserves of the Kumaun, Garhwal and Ganges Divisions', in Basta, 1891-95, FD file in ERR Coll. Pauri Garhwal, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{78} Col. A. Frazer, Offg Secy Govt NWP, PWD to Secy GOI, no 8FC, 4-1-1873, February 1873 A progs 18-9, RAC (For.), NAI.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81} Ramsay to SAC, Kumaun, 24-4-1877, file 7/1882-83, box 53, COR, RA Naini Tal.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
There was awareness of the hardship caused to the people by forest regulations at every level of the colonial administration. D.Ibettson, Secretary GOI, wrote: "There is no doubt that, in certain provinces, the strict forest administration which have prevailed of late years have given rise to serious discontent among the agriculture classes." The government had to remove these grievances. This he felt would, "do much to strengthen the reliance which the people repose on the Government and to confirm their feeling of attachment to it." He wrote:

But apart from the benefit that must ensure to Government from the general promotion of contentment among the classes which are its mainstay, there is a very special benefit to be derived from a relaxation to the restrictions that have hitherto been too often imposed on grazing.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Secretary of State. He expressed satisfaction over the progress in demarcation of the reserved forests in certain regions including Kumaun and Garhwal and argued that the operation would be beneficial "so long as the wishes of the people were taken care of." He further argued that

84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. See Comments by the Secretary of State on the Annual Report of the Forest Department, no 12, 16-9-1872, February 1873 A progs 15-7, RAC (For.), NAI.
in the unreserved forests 'immemorial and hitherto undisputed rights' of the people be respected along with Government's right. But these should be compatible with 'conservancy'. 87 A meeting was held at Simla to considered these issues and a Resolution was passed by the GOI on October 19, 1894 recommending a relaxation of policy. 88

One way of achieving the goals of forest policy, some officials thought, was to extend control over forests and implement regulations slowly in stages. When Jaunsar forests were being reserved, in accordance with the advice of Brandis, the Conservator of Forest wanted the closure to be gradual. He argued that the 1872 settlement had already created discontent among people and they could not be alienated further: 89 'We are of the opinion that it would be wise to not upset them again so soon by depriving them of a large area of grazing land all at once.' 90 Any harsh measure, he argued: '...would rouse the whole country against us, and that is what we particularly wish to avoid, for, without the goodwill of population, our fire conservancy, & c., would be almost impossible'. 91

There was nothing wrong in going slow, admitted A.O. Hume, but the suggestions

87. Ibid.
88. See Resolution no 22F of GOI, Deptt RAC (Forest), in Deptt IVA file 244/ 1863-81, box 27, Post Mutiny Records of Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun, pp. 349-55.
89. Cons. NWP to Secy, Govt NWP, PWD, no 24, 21-4-1876, July 1876 A progs 9-10, RAC (For.), NAI.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
made by Brandis should not be disregarded. Commenting on the suggestions made by the Conservator, Brandis pointed out that going slow was alright, 'but, as I happen to know (this) country well, I cannot help feeling that the Conservator will find the task more difficult if its accomplishment is delayed too long'.

Delaying, he argued, would not reduce the number of sheep and goats and increase area under the Forest Department and 'where the area is so small it is not good to defer settlement too long'.

For a while the process of redefining of rights slowed. However, the debate recurred later as the Forest Department extended control over other forests. In 1893 all 'unassessed lands' in the hills of UP was constituted as the 'District Protected Forests'(DPF) and placed under the Deputy Commissioners. Justifying the elaborate rules and restrictions the Forest Department said:

The first and immediate effect of placing these lands under the Forest Act has been to arrest the reckless fellings and clearings for sporadic cultivation (especially potato cultivation), which formerly prevailed to so large an extent throughout the Kumaun and Garhwal hills, and to introduce at least some degree of order into the fellings and utilization of the produce by the people. What remains to be done is to mark off all those areas which by their size, their situation,

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92. Hume, Secy GOI, RAC to Secy Govt NWP, PWD (For. Branch), no 641, 17-7-1876, *ibid.*

93. Comments by Brandis dated 8-7-1876, *ibid.*


96. *Ibid.*, appendices B & C.
their content, call for permanent upkeep, and consequently a special from (sic) of treatment, either because they are commercially important, or because they constitute the only available source of wood supply in the locality, or because they are climatically or physically indispensable. Where convenient such areas could then be handed over to the Forest Department; where this would not be convenient the forest would have to be still managed by the Deputy Commissioners with such assistance as the Forest Department could give. In either case, if the demand on such forests was considerable, it would be necessary to either reserve them, or to introduce a very different set of rules for their management, the present rules being incompatible with the permanency of the wood supply. 97

As is evident various reasons were given for constituting the DPF. These included, to 'arrest reckless fellings' and protect forests for climatic or physical reasons. Thus desiccationism also emerged as a reason. But the question arises whether forests were really preserved. This we would examine later in chapter 3. Desiccationism was often used as an argument to legitimise the exclusion of local communities from forests and then use the timber commercially. Commercial considerations as is evident in the above quote were never concealed. And it was said, 'Eventually it might be found desirable to convert the commercially important among these forests into reserves and hand them over to the Forest Department'. 98 To extend control, the DPF were first divided into 'closed' and 'open' civil forests in 1903, and finally a large part (about 36 per cent, 3311 sq.miles out of a total 9225 sq.miles) of the DPF was brought under the reserved category in

97. Ibid., p. 33.

98. Ibid.
1911. Among other reasons, improvement in resin distillation techniques and the possibility of cheap chemical treatment of chir for sleepers by the early 20th century which made chir, widely found in these forests, commercially valuable also prompted this reservation.\(^{100}\)

Before the new reservation only forests of submontane tracts and forests around cantonments and hill stations and some leased forests were in the reserved category. The main hill forests were largely unreserved and were under the civil administration. The new reservation encompassed them and considerably reduced the area of civil forests, which were used by the people for day to day requirements. Increased hardship led to strong opposition to the new settlement by the people which finally developed into the 1921-22 forest agitation.

A section of colonial bureaucracy also considered the new reservation harsh on the people and bitterly criticised it. V.A. Stowell, the Deputy Commissioner of Garhwal, opposed the idea of the new reservation from the very beginning. He wrote, 'The more I consider the question, the more convinced I am that making the main hill forests into reserves will be very grave error of policy, especially if carried out on the wider lines....'\(^{101}\) He further argued that he fully supported the desire of the Forest Department to 'get profit from forests' but in the hills villages


\(^{100}\) Guha, *Unquiet Woods*, pp.43-4.

\(^{101}\) Stowell to J.S. Campbell, the Commr, Kumaun, 17/31 July 1911, FD file 163/1916, box 218, UPSA Lucknow.
and forests were closely linked and `the economic life of the former essentially bound up with latter everywhere' which made it difficult to separate them. 102 He ridiculed the Forest Department for their lack of concern with the rights of the people:

I write with no hostility to the Forest Department whatever, but I must say that their boasted sympathy with the people is 99 per cent theory and 1 per cent practice; this attitude is perfectly natural and I do not blame them for it; if I were a forest officer I also should regard the villagers as nuisances, consuming a lot of valuable produce, reducing profit, damaging the forests and giving a lot of trouble. 103

In reserves, he argued, revenue consideration become prominent and `every-thing becomes secondary to the idea of the profit'. 104 Accusing the Forest Department of bias and lack of political understanding, he wrote:

The Forest Department looks at whole question from a restricted and biased point of view. If you meet their wishes in full and introduce a reserved forest system, similar to that in the outer hills, over all the areas they want, you will produce a very serious political effect on a people now loyal, peaceful, free from sedition and a source of military strength. 105

Disagreeing with the course of the policy he argued:

You can do one of the three things in the hills; you can make the interest of the people paramount, or you can make the interest of the

102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
forest paramount or you balance the two. Until 1893 the first was done and the forest left without protection; you are now doing the second; in my opinion I am for the third course, and it is no easy course to even the scales in practice between the villagers and the experts.106

There was thus a rivalry between the civil and forest officials over the control of forests. Civil official in general were against handing over forests to the Forest Department because they thought that the Forest Department was not sensitive to the problems of the people. And dissatisfaction of the people might result in political unrest. For instance P.Wyndham, the Commissioner of Kumaun, argued:

The idea on paper (of the Forest Department and Government) is to have these reserves treated as ordinary reserves, but, as far as the rules permit, I have told the Deputy Commissioner that they must control the actions of their forest officers. The practical independence of the Forest Department which now exist in old Imperial forests, must not be established.107

There was a broader concern for the hardship people faced and the political implications that it might have. E.C.Allen, the District and Session Judge of Moradabad, while touring the area came across various complaints against the new settlement and argued in his letter to J.S.Meston, the Lt. Governor, that it was harsh on the people. Meston was particularly worried about the reactions of the sepoys of Garhwal Battalion.108 The Deputy Commissioner Garhwal, Clay, was

107. See letter dated 18-3-1916, ibid.
108. Meston to Wyndham, 5-3-1916, ibid.
sent to meet Garhwal sepoys who had returned from the front after the War. He wrote that the settlement was as 'unpopular with them as with every one else.' He assured them that it was not the final settlement and can be reconsidered in the next revenue settlement. Wyndham also toured the villages which supplied sepoys. He disagreed with the manner in which the settlement was being carried out. He felt that people were not given sufficient time to appeal and in many instances they could not appeal due to a `failure to comprehend what it all meant'. He found these forests `second rate' and thought that "a large part of these forests will never pay within a reasonable time, and before we turn them into reserves we should ask the Forest Department to justify their acquisition. We want something more than Clutterbuck's 6 lakhs -4 lakhs estimate". These forests, he argued, had no prospects of providing timber for export and the Forest Department could `only make the forests pay by charging high price locally and bleeding the villagers and pilgrims.' He totally disagreed with the claim that these forests were being preserved for `benefit of Kumaun'. Against the demarcation of reserves he wrote:


110. Ibid.

111. Wyndham to Meston, 26-6-1916, ibid.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.
Osmaston has demarcated them as if the world were made for growing trees and men were vermin to be shut in. His demarcation must go. I feel we are doing the Sepoys a very bad turn over this settlement, but it is not too late to put things right.\textsuperscript{114}

Commenting on Wyndham's letters, Lt. Governor Meston wrote: "How glade I am that you propose tackling this forest scandal in Garhwal. I will need a little careful handling but the grievance must be got rid".\textsuperscript{115}

As a consequence of this extensive criticism, a meeting of officials was called by the Lt. Governor at Naini Tal on August 28, 1916 to discuss the new settlement. Wyndham argued that the Forest Department was overstaffed which put burden on people for \textit{utar} (forced labour). It was necessary, he argued, to specify whether the new settled areas were to be reserved or protected forests, for reservation would not allow "expansion of population and cultivation". As the reserves extended the cultivated chaks within the forests and arable on the borders were swallowed up.\textsuperscript{116} There should be, he argued, more control of the Deputy Commissioner over the forest staff and that "We are not prepared to enforce forest rules by a set of subordinate forest officials, and then protect them from a dissatisfied people or to protect the people from them - better do without the forest subordinate here at all".\textsuperscript{117} The Forest Department, he argued, should be used

\textsuperscript{114. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{115. Meston to Wyndham, 15-7-1916, ibid.}
\textsuperscript{116. See letter dated 14-8-1916, ibid.}
\textsuperscript{117. Ibid.}
here, not for 'conservancy', but only for extraction of timber, and it should leave after performing the work. He made various suggestions on what the Forest Department in the hills could be like. It ought not to make money by sale of petty produce but only through export of timber. Grazing, lopping and firing rules recently issued during the settlement was to be regarded as tentative and open to amendment. He emphasized that the list specifying rights, especially in the case of number of cattle and sheep need not to be interpreted rigidly. Where villagers through 'slackness' failed to obtain petty rights, e.g. slates, gules, etc. the Deputy Commissioner ought to be given power to grant such rights.\textsuperscript{118}

At the meeting Meston found two groups: antireservationist (mainly civil officials) and reservationist (mainly forest officers except J.S. Campbell, a former Commissioner of Kumaun). Most of the issues discussed above reappeared in the debate. Meston argued that he was not questioning the 'wisdom' of his predecessor John Hewett who 'knew things better' and since the decision for the settlement had already taken place 5 years back it could not be rolled back now.\textsuperscript{119} He suggested that present faults of the settlement be removed after consultations with the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioners. He, however, ordered a re-demarcation of the northern Garhwal.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118. Ibiid.}
\textsuperscript{119. See Report on the Meeting by Meston. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{120. Report on the Meeting by Wyndham, ibid.}
After the meeting, Meston went on a tour of north Garhwal and came across various complaints of the people. He realized that regulations were not suited to the conditions of Kumaun. Not much land was left for expansion of cultivation, and herders were hard pressed. He found that forests were not fit to be 'exploited commercially' and thus 'scientific management' was not 'desirable'.

Meston argued that the settlement was unnecessarily harsh on the people. He wrote:

Villagers only misbehave, they generally not, by default and they were not given chance to cooperate with us in management of forests. Some of the demarcation I saw were absolutely oppressive and provocative of retaliation by the cultivators; this however I trust will now be set right by Mr Clay.

He further argued that fines should not be imposed initially as people took time to understand regulations. The situation should be reviewed after 5 years.

Before such a review could take place, the dissatisfaction of the people snowballed into forest agitations. Consequently a committee was set up to examine the new reservation.

Resistance and Protest

Some scholars have emphasized the role of resistance and protests in the

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121. See a note by Wyndham dated 9-1-1917, ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
shaping of colonial policies.\textsuperscript{124} No doubt the pressure of resistance and protests influenced the implementation of colonial policy. Forest officials faced many difficulties because of the non-cooperation of the people. Due to complaints, petitions, resistance and protests many rules could not be implemented and had to be amended.

Local people always saw a curtailment of their rights as unjust. Thus villagers complained that although forests belonged to them they were given small trees in far away places while large trees were given to the contractors.\textsuperscript{125} Many villagers complained that their cultivated land, summer residences, water sources etc. were included within the reserves.\textsuperscript{126} The villagers' lists of complaints were long. In Jaunsar Bawar almost all villages flooded the government with complaints.

B.B. Osmastan, the Deputy Conservator, Jaunsar-Bawar, classified these complaints broadly into 27 categories. These included lack of timber, allotment of

\textsuperscript{124} See Sivaramakrishnan, "Colonialism and Forestry in India: Imagining the Past in Present Politics", in \textit{Comparative Studies in Society and History}, 37, 1 (1995), pp. 3-40. Sivaramakrishnan suggests that there is a dialectical relationship between discourses of rule and discourse of protest. p.3. See also Neeladri Bhattacharya, 'Colonial State and Agrarian Society' in R. Thapar and S. Bhattacharya (eds.) \textit{Situating Indian History} (Delhi, 1986), pp.106-45. Neeladri Bhattacharya writes, 'Thus the nature of resistance to state regulation and pressure of social attitude and actions had a significant influence in shaping the form in which colonial policies were implemented', p.131.

\textsuperscript{125} Cantonment Magistrate and Assistant Spdt Chakrata to Spdt Dehradun, 16 May 1920, File 7/1918-32, Box 26. PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun.

\textsuperscript{126} See Coll. Nainital Records : File 58/1911-13, Box 154; File 1/1880-93, Box 1; File 95/1909-11, Box 155. And COR : File 3/1902-03, Box 58; File 1/19-1-02, Box 68. All in RA Nainital.
poor quality of timber, lack of pasture, stringent lopping restrictions, allotment of rights in far away forests, etc.\textsuperscript{127} There were similar complaints from other areas.\textsuperscript{128} The Bhotiyas complained against the rules which allowed them only a few halting places and small grazing areas during their seasonal movements.\textsuperscript{129} When the Lt. Governor visited Nainital in 1916, the Kumaun Parishad presented him a petition listing local grievances against the Forest Department. The petitions referred to shortage of pastures, closure of reserves, insufficient supply of timber and fuel.\textsuperscript{130} Local newspapers also wrote frequently about the forest grievances of the people.\textsuperscript{131}

Apart from submitting petitions and registering complaints villagers also actively resisted the forest regulations by frequently breaching them. The resistance was not always in the form of a direct confrontation but constituted some of

\textsuperscript{127} Dy. Cons. to Assistant Spdt no. 483, 19 March 1900, File 244/1863-81 (series), Box 27, PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun, pp.153-63.

\textsuperscript{128} See petition of residents of the Bhabar and Tarai to the Lt. Govr., Progs. 17, File 7/1906-07, Box 159, COR RA Nainital; Spdt. to Commr., 19 May 1891, File 10/1880-93, Box 118, Coll. Nainital Records, RA Nainital.

\textsuperscript{129} Petition of Bhotiyas to Commr., File 12/1896-97, Box 62, COR RA Nainital.

\textsuperscript{130} See extracts of the letter of Commr. dated 18 Sept. 1916. FD File 164/1916, Box 218, UPSA Lucknow.

\textsuperscript{131} For instance see the following issues of the Garhwali: July 1909; Feb, March, April 1910; August 1912. The issues raised were shortage of pastures and fuelwood, depletion of forests; not allowing arable expansion and poverty as people lost forests. See also G.B. Pant, The Forest Problems in Kumaun (Allahabad, 1922).
the tactics James Scott discusses, like false compliance, feigned ignorance, arson, sabotage and so forth.\textsuperscript{132} According to the forest laws villagers were expected to inform forest officials about forest fire and assist in putting it off but there were frequent instances when villagers did not inform forest officials of fire nor did they cooperate in extinguishing it. For this villagers were punished through a suspension of their rights in the forests.\textsuperscript{133} Similarly villagers were expected to inform forest officials whenever they saw drift-wood. But they did not inform forest officials, although non-compliance could lead to fines or even imprisonment. Sometimes people were imprisoned even for thefts of small drift-woods. Nevertheless theft of drift-wood was widespread.\textsuperscript{134}

Villagers breached forest laws which they considered unjust. They illegally lopped trees, cut grass, collected fodder and fuelwood. Forest produce were mainly collected by women and children and they were frequently found breaching laws. But they could not be easily produced before the courts since villagers disapproved of women and children going to the courts.\textsuperscript{135} F. Beadan Bryant, the Working Plan Officer, found frequent instances of breach of laws. He found the


\textsuperscript{133} Dy Cons. to Cons., 5 June 1889. File 46/1882-84, Box 53, COR, RA Nainital.

\textsuperscript{134} See UP Govt. Notification, 24 Nov. 1902, File 2/1902-03, Box 68, COR, RA Nainital. See also Guha and Gadgil, 'State Forestry and Social Conflict in British India'.

\textsuperscript{135} RKFGC, June 1922, A progs. no.19-24, Agri. Rev. Commr. (Forest), NAI, para 16.
Bhotiyas most 'intransigent': they violated forest regulation adamantly.\textsuperscript{136} When the grazing rights of villagers were wrongly recorded they refused to obey any forest laws.\textsuperscript{137} When Airdeo forests were closed depriving people of their rights, people uprooted the fences and grazed cattle.\textsuperscript{138} There were frequent instances of people cutting trees which were protected.\textsuperscript{139}

Villagers also protested in other ways. They often attacked symbols of colonial forestry. Forest officials became targets of attack: they were frequently beaten up and killed. When eight persons of village Debiranpur were accused of beating up a forest guard, the 'privileges' of the entire village were suspended for two years.\textsuperscript{140} But such attacks continued. In the Tehri Kingdom there were various instances of even senior forest officials being beaten up.\textsuperscript{141}

Villagers also set fire to forests. The perception of villagers and forest officials differed on the significance of firing. Villagers considered it essential to get new grass and to clear hill slopes from pine needles which made it slippery; while forest officials thought that it damaged forests, and forest laws termed it a 'crime'.

\textsuperscript{136} WP for the Garhwal FD, compiled by F. Beadan Bryant (1896, place n.m.), p.19.
\textsuperscript{137} Cons. to Spdt Dehradun, May 11, 1936. File 10/1938-41, Box 72, PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun.
\textsuperscript{138} Cons. to Commr. September 1892. File 24/1891-92, Box 57, COR, RA Nainital.
\textsuperscript{139} File 77/1888-89, Box 54, COR, RA Nainital.
\textsuperscript{140} File 14/1901-82, Box 68, COR, RA Nainital.
\textsuperscript{141} Guha, Unquiet Woods, pp.69-79.
Elaborate rules were made for fire protection but it was always difficult to prevent people from firing forests. Villagers sometimes deliberately fired forests as it was the most direct way of protest against the Forest Department. The When villagers could not be prevented from setting forests on fire, as discussed earlier, controlled departmental firing was started by the Forest Department. But firing forests as a means of protest continued.

Breach of forest laws and forest 'crimes' increased rapidly after 1916 when the new forest settlement completed. The spate of 'crimes' culminated into the 1921 forest agitation. On an average there were 1350 cases per annum of breach of forest laws in the Kumaun circle between 1911-12 to 1915-16 which increased to 2049 cases between 1916-17 to 1920-21. The people convicted in these cases on an average per annum increased from 4210 to 11224 in the corresponding periods. Some, if not all, increase could be because of better detection and recordings. After the success of the begar agitation in 1920-21 leaders of the agitation concentrated on the forest problems. People were exhorted to breach forest laws. Forests were consequently fired on a large scale causing massive

142. Dy Cons. to Cons., 20 April 1892, File 24/1891-92, Box 57, COR, RA Nainital.

143. Dy Conservator to Conservator, No.81, 6 July 1891, File 300 A, Box 24, Deptt. Forest Block, A Series, UPSA Lucknow. See APRFD, UP for forest fires and breach of laws. See also R. Ghua, The Unquiet Woods, pp.100-30.

144. RKFGC, June 1922, A, progs. No.19-24, Agri, Rev. Commr. (Forest) NAI, New Delhi, para.19; Guha, Unquiet Woods, pp.53-4.

145. Computed from the APRFD, UP for relevant years.
damage. On 10 July 1921, Reading, the Viceroy, reported to the Secretary of State that 250,000 out of 400,000 acres of forests in the Kumaun Division of UP had been burnt down.

Attempts were made to reconcile the interests of the people where possible without harming the overall imperial interest. There were many instances of de-reservation of forests and granting of more rights in the reserve forests. Departmental firing of forests was adopted. Moreover in many cases rules were not strictly enforced. When the breaches of forest laws increased after 1911-17 settlement and culminated in the forest agitation of 1921 the government was compelled to reconsider the new reservation. The Kumaun Forest Grievances Committee (KFGC) was formed in 1921 to enquire into the grievances of the people and suggest modification in the policy.

Various grievances of the people were brought before the Committee. Most of the grievances were of long standing and have already been discussed. In various instances it was found that restrictions were very tough and regulations impractical, leading to the repression of the rights of the people and corruption. It

148. RKFGC, June 1922, A, prog. no. 19-24, Agri, Rev., Commr. (Forest), para 7.

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was found that reserved forests had come very close to the cultivated area.\textsuperscript{149} The Committee suggested various measures to solve the problems of the people. Finally the Committee divided the newly reserved forests into three categories. Thus the 3311 sq. miles area was to be divided as follows: 1986 sq. miles under class I; 1090 sq. miles under class II; and 178 sq. miles was to revert back to the civil forest category.\textsuperscript{150} In class I only some restrictions were retained while in class II which were commercially exploitable the control of the Forest Department was to be wider.\textsuperscript{151}

Class I forests were later handed over for management to the people and were constituted into panchayat forests in 1930 inspite of serious opposition from some forest officers. Panchayats were to control grazing, supply green leaves from shrubs for manure, arrange and sell fuel, enquire into the offenses and report. Out of 144 panchayats constituted, later 126 were reported to be successful, 13 moribund and 5 failed.\textsuperscript{152} It was officially stated that panchayats planted a large number of trees and they were well preserved. By 1934 there were 20,000 acres of forests under panchayats.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., There were large number of grievances recorded by the Committee.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, RKFGC, para 32-3 and other follow up correspondence in the file.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{152} See R.H. Saloway's Note on Kumaun Revenue Problem, FD, file 366 (A)/1924, Box. 336, UPSA, Lucknow.

\textsuperscript{153} APRFD, 1933-34, UP, pp. 1-2.
Changes were made in the policy without compromising the overall imperial interest. In many instances the changes reduced the hardship of the people but did not remove it. The rights enjoyed by the people in the forests were substantially altered under the colonial rule.

Conclusion

I proceeded in this chapter to examine the main factors responsible for the evolution of the colonial forestry. Until the middle of the 19th century the British continued the pre-colonial policy of confining the role of the state to collecting forest dues. The collection was made through the contract system. There were neither any restrictions on users of forest resources nor were there any efforts at forest 'conservation'. In the 1850s there was a shift in the policy from farming out of revenue to state takeover of the forest management. Various factors influenced the decision of takeover: a concern for 'reckless fellings' by traders, difficulty in securing timber supply for government requirements, inability of contractors to build roads to make forests accessible. However, the consideration for revenue and the possibility of extracting timber to meet the ever increasing demand in the market were the most crucial factors. Desiccation fear had little or no role in the decision of takeover. The official discussion did not use the language of 'desiccationism'.

After the takeover of the forest management, Read mainly concentrated his efforts on making forests accessible by constructing roads and supplying timbers.
Ramsay continued these efforts but at the same time he issued rules and regulations to manage forests. He started fire protection, excluded cattle and banned cultivation in the submontane forest.

The enactment of the forest acts marked a major shift in forest policy. All forests which were important for timber production were reserved and the rights of users were settled in them. The emphasis was on exclusion of people from the potential timber producing areas. This led to redefining, curtailment and denial of rights, and gave rise to discontent. People circumvented the regulations where possible but they also resisted, and protested against them. Protests slowly developed into the forest agitations of 1921-22.

The policy was opposed not only by the people; a section of the colonial bureaucracy also criticised it. The criticism of the policy, particularly by the revenue officials, compelled forest officers to reconsider some of their positions. This resulted in various adjustments in the policy.