

Unfolding the Organized Extraction and Consequent Utilization of Reserved Forests of Colonial Coorg (1884-1912)

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The present article has for its main highlighted discussion the Forests of Coorg which attracted colonial attention of regeneration and extraction from 1884 onwards and the process continued in full swing till 1912. Here an attempt has been made to study the timber resources of the reserved forests of Coorg. The forests of Coorg have been studied to identify the development of a reductionist trend that became noticeable in the regeneration and production of only timber growing trees. This reductionism simplified the complex and diverse ecosystem and created a kind of mono-cultured ecology that featured only timber growing trees and their extraction.

Keywords: Forests, Timber, Reserved Forests, Revenue, Regeneration.

Introduction

India being a diverse land of tremendous variance in ecological parameters, support varied cultural forms, which significantly collate to distinct agro and vegetative zones. These cultural identities convey diverse technologies, resource use and also other social modes of resource control. Thus, local conditions such as climate, topography, soil characteristics, which can be more particularly called *environmental determinism*, lay at the very root of the evolution of regional cultural practices. These regional cultural practices got totally destroyed with the onset of Scientific Forestry during the colonial period. A different form of environmentalism was established, which totally ignored the traditional environmental practices and structures. This denouncing of traditional environmental practices was only to accelerate a detailed extraction process. The forests of Coorg are no exception to this. Use of forest resources for utilization purpose, engaged the forest officials to identify the forests of Coorg. This consequently highlighted various modes of extraction which were intertwined under a shared frame of 'Scientific Conservation'. The paper shall try to unravel a major strand, namely, the official recognition of an organized extraction process - as implicated in the theory of 'Colonial Forestry' and the technologies of power that it spawned. The discussion of construction of Reserved forests in Coorg, that emerged from the increased trending of mode of extraction of forest resources, is believed to be integral to the article, which suggests that there is dialectical relationship between the concept of 'Scientific Forestry' and extraction of forest resources under the aegis of this theory. Coorg possessed fascinating reserve of Teak and other timber woods. A very organized mode of forest resource extraction has been carried out with utmost efficiency. The diverse timber resources of Coorg region provided a justification for a detailed study of its resources on a grand scale.

Underlining the Forests of Coorg

In 1887, the Indian Forest Act of 1878 was introduced into Coorg Forests. The Forests of Coorg was declared reserved under section 34 of the Act, subject, however to an enquiry into and record of all rights and privileges, to be made hereafter by a Forest Settlement Officer.¹ Since 1868, when Sir Dietrich Brandis (Sir Dietrich Brandis, 1824-1907 was a German-British botanist, forestry academic and administrator, who worked with the British Imperial Forestry Service in Colonial India) visited the Province, the forests of Coorg had not been specially inspected or reported upon by the Inspector-General of Forests. Dr. William Schlich (1840-1925), was a German born forester who worked extensively in India for the British Administration) included Coorg in his list of Provinces to be visited in 1884-85. But his visit was postponed and B. Ribbentrop (Berthold Ribbentrop was a pioneering forester from Germany who worked in India with Sir Dietrich Brandis and others) was allowed to carry out the inspection around 1889-90. The area of forests of Coorg, under the control of the Forest Department around 1889-90 included ²

FORESTS	Square miles
Reserves	241
Proposed reserves	7
Ghat forests (Protected)	303
Urudves, paisaries, and Devarakadus (protected)	08
	859
	Square miles
Deciduous forest	225
Evergreen forest	350
	575

The whole of the forests and waste land at the disposal of Government had been brought under the Forest Act. (Act. VII of 1878) either as reserved or protected forests.³ The former comprised mostly of the chief compact blocks of deciduous forest forming a more or less continuous belt along the eastern frontier; but they also included two groups of reserves in the evergreen forests of the Western Ghats, where other areas too had been preliminarily proposed as Reserves. The protected forests included the compact tract known as the Ghat forest, as well as other scattered lands known as *Urudves*,⁴ *Paisaries*⁵ and *Devarakadus*.⁶

There was another class of appropriated waste lands, over which the Government retained certain rights. These were known as *Bane* lands⁷ and were attached to *wargs* or permanent rice lands. The Wargdars, who might not dispose of the timber, use these lands.

In the Annual Report for 1887-88, the Government of India expressed a hope that all forest or waste lands of Coorg whatsoever, deemed expedient to maintain permanently for the supply of forest produce, should be placed under chapter II of the Act as reserves.⁸ The Chief Commissioner⁹ had since communicated to the Supreme Government the view of the Commissioner that, except perhaps the Mercara fuel plantation¹⁰ and three smaller plantations, no tracts of land outside reserves already notified should be dealt with.

When the reserves were first formed in 1870-71, they were so selected and demarcated as to exclude all lands over which the people could claim to have perspective rights, and of necessity considerable tracts of good forest land burdened with rights were in this way excluded from the limits. After the work of reservation was completed, the people complained that grazing lands had been included in the reserves, and on this an order was issued securing to the people any grazing rights that might have been affected by the reservation. Those rights were allowed in a general way.¹¹ The extension of existing reserves was made in order to include, for instance, especially valuable sandal or teak growing lands,¹² or to improve the boundary of the reserves, or to extend protection to the *Bane* or *Urudve* lands in view of an increased production of fuel and fodder.¹³

General Description of the Forests.

The deciduous forests formed a more or less continuous belt running from north to south along the eastern limits of Coorg. They were more extensive towards the south, the belt in a northerly direction being more broken and made up of less compact blocks of forest. They covered gently sloping hills or undulating country, generally lying at 2,000 to 3,500 feet above sea-level. They grew on a soil resulting from the disintegration of granitic rocks, varying in depth and richness of vegetable mould. The marketable trees of these forests were – teak, sandal, *Pterocarpus Marsupium*, *Dalbergia Latifolia*, *Terminalia Tomentosa* and *Panicitlata*, *Lagersiraimia Microcarpa*, and a few others of less importance. The forests to the north of the Mercara-Fraserpet road¹⁴ were generally dryer, and on poorer and shallower soil, than the forests to the south. Sandal was more plentiful in the northern forests, and the growth of teak and other important trees was less vigorous. In the southern forests, teak and other trees attained to fine dimensions, but here again there was a marked difference between the forests on the eastern and western sides of the belt of reserves. On the east, where the rainfall is 30 to 35 inches a year and the soil were always somewhat inferior, the forests (first reached from the Mysore side) were originally more heavily worked. Once opened out, the regularly recurring fires and unregulated grazing have brought about a gradual deterioration of the soil and reduced the forest to a state of incompleteness which contrasts in a striking manner with the forests 10 miles further west, where the rainfall is 10 to 15 inches more. In these, fires have been of rare occurrence, grazing has been slight or confined to the water-logged grassy blanks, and heavy fallings have not been made. As a consequence, the soil is loose, friable, and rich in loam; the stock is complete; bamboos (*B. arundinacea*) grow luxuriantly and evergreen species become common. Teak is scarcely found, barring the few specimens which bear the mark of the favourable conditions under which they have grown up. In these west portions of the southern forests, sandal is not found growing naturally. The evergreen forests were confined to the Western Ghats, at an elevation of less than 1,000 to 5,000 feet, where the rainfall varied from 130 to 180 inches a year. These forests generally developed on granite soil. The lower portions of Western Ghats often had an overlying forest of very inferior soil.¹⁵ There are other important forest zones in Coorg which need a thorough discussion.

The principal valuable trees in Coorg were the *Calophyllum* sp., *Autographs hirsula*, *Mesua ferrea*. In all, 18 kinds of trees were declared reserved in post 1884 phase, through the probing of

Colonial Scientific Forestry. Species such as *Dalbergia Latifolia*, *Pterocarpus Marsupium*, *Terminalias* and *Lager-stremia microcarpa* were marked as timber. There was an absence of self-sown teak seedlings. Old sandal trees were but rarely met with the process of regeneration. Sandal was however found growing naturally in or near most of the Reserves, north of the 'Fraserpet-Mercara road'. Though occasionally plentiful, teak of this area was of much smaller dimensions than in the southern Reserves, parts of which were much moist than the forests to the north. As teak was the most valuable product in these forests, the chief efforts of the Forester were directed to increasing to the utmost, the proportion of this species in the growing stock.¹⁶ This was done almost exclusively by the formation of regular plantations. Weeding by killing of useless trees had benefited the suppressed teak and aided the reproduction of other timber trees.

Anekadu-Atoor Forests, North Coorg

The field work of these two deciduous forests, of an area of 12,543 acres, was commenced from the end of September 1892, and was completed in December 1892. Most parts of the forests were situated on low undulating hills. In Attoor, there were two hills of fairly good height with Conical tops and the gradients were somewhat steep - elsewhere the gradients were easy. The country, not being much cut up by ravines, road making was easy and cheap and thus, produce can easily be extracted.

The area of these forests was 12,543.25 acres. They were distributed as follows:¹⁷

Area wooded	...	12,39825 acres.
Area blank	...	145 acres.
Total	...	12,543.25 acres.

Composition

The forests were comprised of Teak, mixed with Matti (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Honne (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), Biti (*Dalbergia latifolia*) Naudi (*Lagerstrma microcarpa*) -these were the most important and valuable species. The other and inferior species were Dindiga (*Anogeissus latifolia*) Ulwe (*Terminalia paniculata*) Bilwara (*Albizzia odorotissima*) and Jende (*Kydia ea1yei*) and among these, Dindiga and Jende were found more. Bamboos of the two species common in Coorg were viz., *Dendrocalamus strictus* and *Bambusa arundinacea*, were plentiful, covering 30 to 40 per cent of the area. The teak found in these forests was not of the best quality. There was a fair proportion of good sound trees which eventually yielded valuable timber. The re-production of teak and the other valuable species was poor, the chief obstacles to seedling growth being fires, wild elephants and grazing.¹⁸

Artificial reproduction of teak and sandal had been attempted both in Attoor and Anekadu in four areas aggregating 140 acres. For sandal, the dibbling of seed in large quantities, was done in May and throughout the first rainy season, the young plants were constantly weeded, and kept clear of all grass. ¹⁹

Arkeri forest

This forest in Coorg was situated in the Hatgatnad of the Kiggatnad Taluk. It also forms a part of the continuous belt of deciduous forest lying along the eastern frontier of Coorg. The boundaries of the tract are:- North – Mysore Cannanore road; South – Lakshmantirtha river; East – Mysore frontier; West – A cut line 70 feet wide.²⁰

The forest is deciduous. As regards to composition, the forest may be divided into two zones, the eastern or teak zone and the western or mixed zone.²¹ In the former the important species is Teak mixed with Matti (*Terminlia tomentosa*), Honne (*Piero-carpus marsupium*), Beti (*dalbergia latifolia*), Nandi Lagerstramia micro-carpa), Dindiga (*Anogeissus latifolia*) and *Dendrocalamus strictus*, the admixture being roughly as follows per centum: Teak 10, Honne 8, Beti 4, Matti 17, Nandi 2, and Dindiga, Bamboos and other inferior species 59. In the western zone Teak is nearly absent, only represented by a few trees in small patches. The valuable trees, in the order of abundance, are Matti, Honne, Nandi and Beti, while *Dendrocalamus strictus* is almost entirely replaced by *Bambusa arundinea*. The accessory species consist of Dindiga, Bendi (*Kydia Calycina*), Tari (*Terminlia balerica*), Jala (*Shorea laccifera*), Sangade (*Schleichera trijuga*), Thadasal (*Grewia tiliaefolia*), Udi (*Bignonia xylocarpa*) Uuwe (*Terminalia paniculata*), and few others.²²

DEVAMACHI-MAWKAL FORESTS

The area was situated on the low hills which separate Mysore from Coorg, and the rest part was comprised of undulating land to the west of them.

The boundaries of the tract were:

- North. The Sidapur-Periyapatam road.
- South. The Mysore – Cannanore Road,
- East. The Mysore boundary.
- West The Maldare, ChenLarkote Hosahalli and Hebbala Patna Villages.²³

The total area to be dealt with was:- ²⁴

	Acres	Sq.Miles
Devamachi	9,392	
Mawkal	8,282	27.61

Of this area half was well wooded, one-fourth incomplete and one-fourth blank and unproductive.

The forest was deciduous, rather one (the density being on an average about 37.00) of very irregular growth and contained hardly any sound exploitable trees of the 1st Class. The pole growth was good and in places very dense. The eastern portion of the forest, occupying the higher parts of the frontier range of hills, was composed of bamboos surmounted here and there by forest trees. In the Western and central portions, the crop contained a fair proportion of valuable species which, though healthy and flourishing, did not attain a large size.²⁵

The forest was a mixed one, and the principal marketable species in the order of abundance were Honne (*prerocarpus marsupium*), Matti (*Terminalia tome, tosa*) Teak, Beti (*Dalbergia*

latifolia), and Nandi (*Lagerstroemia micro-carpa*). The accessory species, forming 50 per cent of the tree growth, consisted of Sagade (*Schleichera trijuga*), Jala (*Shorea lacifera*), Nasara (*Accopetalum tomentosum*), Dindiga (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Ulwe (*Terminalia paniculata*), Udi (*Bignomia xylocarpa*), Kadijala (*Stephegyne parrifolia*), and a few others.²⁶

The percentage of the principal marketable species was as follows:-²⁷

Teak	7 percent
Honne	18 percent
Beti	6 percent
Nandi	4 percent
Matti	15 percent

Bamboos (*Bambusa arundinacea* and *Dendrocalamus strictus*) were plentiful.

The Dubare forest

This forest in Coorg, running along the eastern frontier of Coorg, appeared to be a very compact wooded block. It was situated in the Ammatti Siddapur of the Yedenalknad taluk, and forms a portion of the continuous belt of deciduous forest that runs along the eastern frontier of Coorg.²⁸ There were fair proportion of trees with a girth of 4 feet and under. The growth in the Teak zone is not dense, except on the extreme east, where a belt of thick pole forest, comprised principally of Dindiga, Matti, Jala, Bende, Ulwe and Bilwara was mainly found. The reproduction of teak is poor, but was better here than in the forests of south Coorg.²⁹ The chief obstacles to seedling growth were fires, bamboo cover and the constant presence of wild elephants which tampered the seedlings. The rest of the forest, a mixed zone, lying to the west and south, was composed of an irregular mixed pole crop containing in order, Dindiga, Matti, Honne, Beti, Ulawe, Nandi, Bilwara. Others were inferior species. There are a few big trees, generally over-mature of Honne, Beti, Matti and Nandi and a good many second class stems between 4 and 5 feet girth.³⁰

The Ghat forests of Coorg

This formed another major forest cover of the province of Coorg. As their name implies these forests were situated on the Western Ghats, and roughly speaking they comprise all that part of the province which lies to the west of the crest of the ghats.³¹ They form a continuous belt running from Pushpagiri Hill at the north-west corner of the province to the Brahmagiri Hills at its most southerly point. This belt is about 85 miles in length and varies from 1 to 8 miles in width. The forests were bounded on the north by the Mysore state, on the east generally by the crest of the ghats (though in the south of the tract, the eastern boundary runs along the foot of the Bramagiri and adjoining hills) and on the south and west by the Malabar and South Canara districts of the Madras Presidency.³² The marketable products of these forests were timber of the species and bamboos, firewood, reeds, canes, sigekai (fruits of *Acacia concinna*), antucaladaka (fruits of *Sapindus emarginata*), seed of honge (*Pongamia glabra*), seed of Kasarika (*Strychnos nux vomica*), ramgolu and rampatre (fruit of *Myristica malabarica*), dupa or dommar exuded by veteria Indica,

pindikai (fruits of *Myristica canarica*), oil extracted from *Hardwickia pinnata*, honey and wax.³³

Thus, timber production was given special attention in Colonial Coorg. This attention was Scientific forestry that worked to regenerate the timbers. But, the regeneration was done, not to develop a diversified eco-culture, that was prevalent. If that would have been so, then the weak and soft wooded sandal trees would have also been regenerated.

The average Receipts of profits and Charges of regenerating the timbers, under main heads for the past five years have been as follows: -³⁴

Receipts	Rs.	Charges	Rs.
I-Timber and other produce	74062	A.- I.- Timber and other produce &e. and other produce	24210
&e. and other produce		II. Timber, &e. and other produce	312
II – Timber and other produce	32341	VI. – Live-stock, &e. and other produce	1185
&e. and other produce	6621	VII – Communications and building	2278
V. – Miscellaneous other produce		VIII – Demarcation, improvement, &e. and other produce	16139
		IX. – Miscellaneous	429
TOTAL	113024	TOTAL	73007

The table is a clear indication of forest timber extraction. This extraction however was not always fruitful as they often extracted more than what was needed. The table however shows a net income of Rs. 40,017, (113024-73007), in a year. The statistics shows that the profit from timber extraction was always more than the cost of regenerating those timbers on the part of the colonial foresters. So, it is apparent that they regenerated only few timbers but extracted a huge number of natural growing timbers.³⁵

Timber, however were mostly extracted for revenue. The main sources of revenue were timber brought to depot by Forest departmental Agency. Apart from this, sandalwood and cardamoms were also profitable. Though, the latter two divisions were not capable of any development of revenue. So it was for the natural hard timbers, that the department looked for increased receipts.

List of Timber Trees found in the Reserved Forests of Coorg³⁶
South of The Mercara – Fraserpet Road

Tree Name	Scientific Name	Tree Name	Scientific Name
Teak	<i>Tectona Grandis</i>	Honne	<i>Pterocarpus Marsupium</i>
Biti	<i>Dalbergia latifolia</i>	Matti	<i>Terminalia tomentosa</i>
Nandi	<i>Lagerstreomia microcarpa</i>	Arsantega	<i>Adina cordifolia</i>
Kadiala	<i>Stephegyne parviflora</i>	Udi	<i>Bignonia xylocarpa</i>
Ulwe	<i>Terminalia paniculatn.</i>	Dindign	<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i>
Alale	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Thadsal	<i>Grewia tiliacfolia</i>
Jala	<i>Shora laccifera</i>	Betta hone	<i>Ongeinia dalbergiodes</i> (on hill sides)

Tree Name	Scientific Name	Tree Name	Scientific Name
Noga	Cedrela Toona	Nella goda	Garuga pinnata
Some	Soymida febrifuga (near Murkhal, rare).	Goda	Odina Wodier.
Antwalla	Sapindus emarginatus.	Amti	Spondias mangifera.
Kaanchwala	Bauhinia purpurea	Kaanchwala	Bauhinia racemosa
Bage	Albizia Lebbek	Bilwara	Acacia Odoratissima
Hunase	Tamarindus indicus	Gandha	Santalum album (a few on the outskirts of the forests)

Not used for timber (Soft Wood) ³⁷

Tree Name	Scientific Name	Tree Name	Scientific Name
Bande	Kydia calycina	Bande	Flacourtia sepiaria
Buraga	Bombax malabaricum	Kalsoge	Sterculia villosa
Kouri	Helicteres Isora	Goomchi	Eriolana quinquelocularis
Thadsal	Grewia oppositifolia	Kokosma mulu	Zixyphus exlocarpa
Sagade	Sahleichera trijuga	Bandarike	Dodonaea viscose
Gera	Semecarpus anacardium	Muruku	Buchanania latifolia
Kechige	Erythrina stricts	Kechige	Erythrina subersosa
Palwan	Erythrina indica	Honge	Pongamia glabra
Mutuga	Butea frondosa	Kakke	Cassia Fistula

Besides most of the above, the following were found in North Coorg³⁸:-

Tree Name	Scientific Name	Tree Name	Scientific Name
Bel	Feronia Elephantum	Bilpatre	Aeagle Maremelos
Karridi	Chickrassia tabularis	Kal mara	Homalium travancoricum
Yelachi	Zizyphus Jujuba	Kal mara	Heptapleurum venulosum
Gandha	Santalum album	Bakkala	Mimusops Elengi
Cheninge	Lagerstroemia parviflora	Hole tupra	Diospyros Embryopteris
Hillangi	Casaria varians	Shadle	Olea Sp.
Kalakkai Kal mara	Carissa Dalzellii Zeylanicum Homalium	Garji	Carissa Carandas
Hale	Wrightia tinctoria	Hale	Wrightia wallichii
Hulichellu	Mallotus philippinensis	Tsapassi	Ulmus integrifolia

Trees grown in the Evergreen Forests of the Ghats of Coorg³⁹

Used for timber

Tree Name	Scientific Name	Tree Name	Scientific Name
Sampige	Michelia Ghampaca	Poon	Calophyllum elatum
Atha	Mesua ferrea	Bhima	Paeciloneuron indicum
Betta hone	Eurya Sp	Urapu	Hopea odorata
Kadgundha	Dysoxyulon binectariferum (Bedd.)	Noga	Cedrela Tonna

Trees not used for timber (Soft Wood) ⁴⁰

Tree Name	Scientific Name	Tree Name	Scientific Name
Kanagala	Dillenia pentagyna	Kanagala	Wormia bracteata
Kokkare	Scolipia crenata	Niralata	Hydnocarpus inebrius
Ponapuli	Garcinia Cambogia	Divarike	Garcinia Sp. large ovate leaves
Divarike	Garcinia Sp. obovate 3” – 4” leaves	Kachampuli	Garcinia pictorial
Nella mawu	Xanthochymus pietorius	Nella mawu	Eurya Japonica
Yenne mara	Dipterocarpus leaves	Im	Hopea parviflora
Dupa	Vateria malabarica	Buraga	Bombax malabaricum
Tembadi	Sterculia foetida	Kume	Ehaeocarpus tuberculatus.
Kume	Ehaeocarpus oblongus	Kume	Ehaeocarpus Sp.
Kume	Evodia triphylla	Kume	Zanthoxylum tetraspermum (climbing shrub)
Shettiga	Aeronychia laurifolia	Karri dupa	Canarium striatum
Kaikolakadda	Heynea trijuga	Helmara	Mappia foetida
Kumatti	Euphoria lougana	Kanji Noga	Meliosma Arnottiana
Metta	Meliosma pungens.	Mawu	Mangifera Indica
Kek	Holigarna, Sp.	Kek	Holigarna, longifolia
Palwan	Erythrina Indica	Palwan	Cassia Roxburghii
Hotebage	Albizzia stipulate	Panerale	Eugenia Montana

Thus, the trees which can yield timbers were classified and labeled as hardwood and were reserved for regeneration. This was the very essence of Scientific Forestry. These tables show the cost of artificial regeneration of the timbers in various forested zones of Coorg.

Statement showing the year of formation and cost to end of 1888-89 of the different plantations 41.

Opening Year	No. of Plantations	Name of Plantations	Costup to end of								Total Cost	Total Average	1884-85	1885-86	1886-87	1887-88	1888-89	Remarks	
			1884-85	1885-86	1886-87	1887-88	1888-89	R	R	R									R
1867-68	1	Karmad Teak plantation	2308	189	456	161					189								
1883-84	2	Irumani (Hatgat) Teak Plantation	277	23	16	22	220	24445	197	8									
1868-69	3	Kutompolle Teak Plantations	2699	3468	1622	4548	2966	42595	453	231	30	82	80	30					
1872-73	4	Karepura Teak Plantations	1981					19312	14	14									
1867-88	5	Tittimatti Teak Plantations	875	106	81	98	117	1277	24	24									
1879-80	6	Anekadu Teak Plantations	2354	256	333	343	420	2806	60	40	10	5	5						
1872-73	7	AMalle (Nalkeri) Teak Plantations	1803	96	375	99	99	2272	17	24									
1879-80	8	Haukodu (Dubare) Teak Plantations	497	30	57	160	136	2171	28	10									7 acres found short on measurement
1880-81	9	Chirikere Teak (Dubare) Plantation	1146	40	105					6									
1881-82	10	Maladare Teak Plantations	452	48	50	240	229	1019	18	10									
1883-84	11	Huralikal (Atturu) Teak Plantations	818	34	87	80	165	1184	19	13									
1879-80	12	Mercana Fuel Reserve	9421	84	387	447	63	10948	125	85									
1872-73	13	Gangawara Sandal Reserve	8231	685	734	771	1196	11617	121	80	10	7	12	12					
1877-78	14	Fraserpet Holegeri	881		4	3	21	909	5	5									
1881-82	15	Fraserpet-Gandadaguni Reserve	901	83	110	99	169	1362	29	23									
1878-79	16	Herikeri Reserve	4062	255	501	417	590	5825	79	50									
1880-81	17	Nagarholle (Nalkeri) Reserve	2134	67	93	49	45	2388	12	12									
1880-81	18	Balumani (maw'kal)	1757	96	74	59	98	2084	22	22	2	1							3 acres found short on measure 6 acres transferred
1880-81	19	Dubare (Bungalaw)	660	26	194	72	15	967	2	18									
1880-81	20	Eargodu (Malambi)	897	48	91	179	263	1478	27	12									
1882-83	21	Banawra (Nitadia)	568	14	27	16	51	676	10	10									8 acres transferred to teak

Another group of forests, which was the Ghat Evergreen Forests as discussed previously also had timbers that led to the formation of Reserved Forests. These reserved forests were considered of high value with saleable timbers. The fine evergreen forests occupy the hills and valleys which was between the Coorg plateau and the plains of Malabar and were generally at an elevation between 3,000 and 500 feet. They covered an area of some 300 square miles, about half of which was believed to contain mature saleable timbers. Practically, among the other timbers of Western Ghats only the following kinds of timber were saleable:- ⁴²

Scientific name	Local Name	Cubic Feet
Hopea parviflora	Tirpu,	16000 (average export per annum)
Dysoxylum malabaricum	Agil	15000 (average export per annum)
Artocarpus hirsute	Aini	13000 (average export per annum)
Dipterocarpus indicus	Painee	18000 (average export per annum)
Calophyllum Inophyllum	Puna	3000 (average export per annum)

The average revenue from these timbers during the year 1912 had been about Rs. 7,000. There were many other valuable species in these forests, such as Cedrela Toona, Artocarpus integrifolia, Lagerstrcemia, and Xylia dolabriformis, which were also saleable.⁴³

	Cubic Feet
Pterocarpus Marsupium Honn,	18500(average annual export)
Dalbergia latifolia (the black Biti, or rose-wood of South India).	10500(average annual export)
Tectona grandis Teak,	27500(average annual export)
Temminalia tomentosa (very Matti, little saleable ; Chiefly in the form of poles).	12000(average annual export)

The Deciduous Forest lying north and south of the Cauvery River also was reserved for production of Timbers. To the south, the forests occupied a belt of varying width, 5 to 12 miles, running conterminous with the Coorg – Mysore boundary in a South Easterly direction. They contained a number of species of trees of which, practically only the following were saleable:⁴⁴

During the two years of 1910-11 and 1911-12, there had been an increase in demand and the following average amounts of timber were exported annually:⁴⁵

	Cubic Feet.
Teak	50,000
Honne	39,000
Biti	13,500
Matti	15,000

Colonial State Forestry

The forests of Coorg underwent thorough regeneration and conservation. But what actually was this regeneration? Undoubtedly, the regeneration process was achieved with the help of ‘scientific forestry’. Scientific forestry promoted reservation of forest lands and prevented any trespassing or usage of forest resources. Does this simply explain what scientific forestry is all about? Or was

scientific forestry emerged only as a tool to achieve extraction? The question of extraction however, appeared to be much concealed and scientific forestry appeared to project only regeneration of forest lands through procuring reserved forests. This process of forest reservation and branding of forests for commercial purpose, however, appeared not to be very novel as pre-colonial forestry also witnessed such reservation of forests, particularly those of great commercial value similar to the Mauryan period, which witnessed the reservation of teak and sandalwood trees.⁴⁶ But this concept of scientific forestry appeared to be very distant when colonial state depended totally on agricultural revenue and expansion of agriculture perpetrated extensive onslaught of forest lands.

The serious dearth of woods due to extensive depletion of Oak forests in England and Ireland led the initiators of 'scientific forestry' to turn their attention to the teak forests of Western Ghats. The Anglo- French wars and maritime expansion made extensive use of the durable teak timbers for preparing ships.⁴⁷

Even then, 'scientific forestry' marked its absence when extensive exploitation of teak and other timbers continued for the manufacture of ships. So, what actually turned to start the process of scientific forestry that became the major tenet of scientific management of Indian forests as well as that of the colonial state forestry? The waiting ended however with the establishment of railway tracks. It demanded more woods and that needed steady supply of timbers. These timbers were to be protected and regenerated. This led to the creation of reserved forests with the help of the act of 1878. Common men were prohibited to enter those forests. So, the blame of previous deforestation was shifted tactically to indigenous agents who were projected as destroyers of forests and hence their entry was prohibited. This prohibition also appeared to be 'scientific' and was included within the process of scientific conservation. Scientific forestry also became the major postulate of forest department, established in 1865, to secure a steady supply of timbers for the increasing building of railway track (extended from 7,678 kilometers in line in 1870 to 51,658 kilometers in 1911).⁴⁸

So, prohibition, artificial regeneration of only timber yielding trees and consistent neglect of other soft wood trees specially Sandal (Coorg had a huge reserve of Sandal Wood trees) appeared to be truly unscientific. Coorg faced this unscientific 'Scientific forestry' through increased regeneration of roundwood timber trees. In fact, application of scientific forestry was done to identify and classify the timber trees. This identification and classification were necessary for regeneration and consequent extraction for the building of railway tracks. So, more application of scientific forestry meant more extraction of timbers. The list of woods that were reserved for importation however were all hardwood, that were regenerated. This took place only when shameless exploitation of Malabar Teak continued in the early part of 1800 for ship building purposes. The destruction of Malabar Teak reserves and demand of timbers for railway track construction in post 1853 phase forced British Administration to move their attention more towards forest regeneration through the establishment of a forest department. But this idea of regeneration by the Department was nothing but mere identification and searching of hardwood trees that could yield hard timbers other than Teak. So, two expressions - 'regeneration' and 'scientific forestry' were vague and acted as major concealers to British motive of forest extraction.

British forest policy adopted a monocultured eco-setting that was directed towards regenerating timber yielding woods only. The Reserved Forests thus, significantly neglected the regeneration of Sandalwood. Sandalwoods were regarded to be outside scientific conservation as 'it was found growing abundantly in the comparatively poorer stands of Timber forest which are Paisari Lands. In this way Sandal Tracts were left unreserved.....'.⁴⁹

This monocultured eco-practice of reserving only timber yielding trees spearheaded by Colonial state forestry, destroyed a diversified eco-culture which was the major notion of 'environmental determinism' of Indian subcontinent. This determinism had community entanglement with major shifts of nature as its basic principle. The concept of a simultaneous managing of forests and replenishing the resources that often gets depleted only came from community management of forests, who thrive on forest resources. But colonial ecological overtones thoroughly destroyed those possibilities. So, colonial forest extraction emerged as multifaceted recourses that vowed to destroy a total community centric eco-culture. The Coorg region and the Western ghats previously had evergreen forests with varied vegetation but planting of only trees of high commercial value, thoroughly deprived the villagers of their rights over forests. Even if rights were granted, timber yielding trees were of no help to the villagers as the byproducts of timber yielding trees were of little use to the villagers.

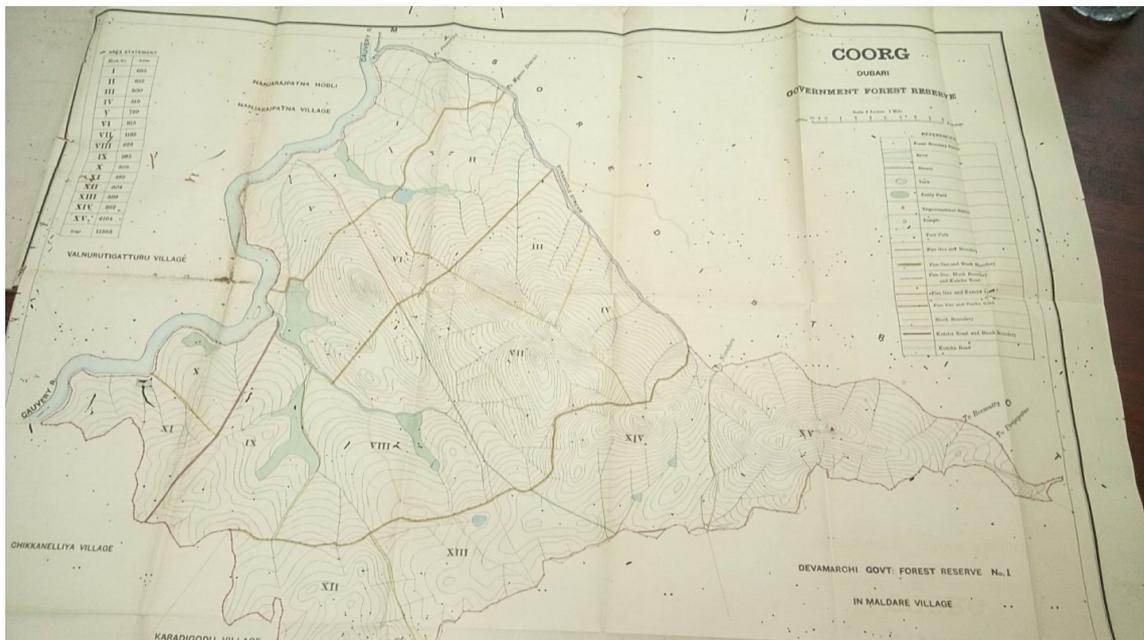
Mark Poffenberger⁵⁰ pointed out those conflicts between state forest management policies and locally operating forest-use systems as a major cause of forest land mismanagement system throughout South Asia. This seems to be very true with regard to colonial Indian Forestry. With Colonial regimes, forest departments in India were designed to generate revenue for the state rather than provide direct benefits to rural communities. Radical changes in tenure rights and lack of clarity over ownership of tree and forest products are key factors in understanding the speed with which South Indian Forests have been depleted and Coorg forests emerge as an excellent example of such depletion. Further, the colonial authorities manipulated the process of settlement and forest clearance with constant collusion between the government authorities and wealthy individuals helping to transform the colonial economy based on ecological resources.

Such unscientific was the motive behind the colonial initiative called 'Scientific Forestry'. It was directed only towards heavy timber trees those were abundantly utilized for railway track construction. In this respect other trees which were ecologically valuable but weak, were regarded as not fit for regeneration in the reserved tracts. On the other way round, they are condemned as evidently unhealthy. This profit-oriented motive shaped such Ecological moves that are very peculiar of Colonialism. Ecological resources were utilized to make it the capital base of the imperial economy. Thus, the timbers were nothing other than economic variable that were extracted with the help of an organized forest management system. Forest science however failed to be true scientific to bring about greater benefit for the indigenous forest dependent population of Coorg.

Conclusion

Timber resource extraction went on in Coorg with the help of 'Scientific Forestry'. Though such mode of resource conservation was claimed by Ribbentrop to be very scientific,³¹ it was nothing

but development of forestry in the commercial sense of the term. The process only convinced that creation of reserved zones, complete exclusion of humans and their animals from the wooded areas, the removal of pastoralists, peasants and other such groups for whom access to forests and forest resources is crucial to their survival, would smoothen the extraction process. The colonial foresters can also be charged with the criticism of simplifying the diverse ecosystems in the direction of commercially valuable but biologically impoverished monocultures. This naturally, evoked much discontent and resistances among the forest dependent communities. The yield for state interest was neither sustained nor was for the interest of the people. The Forestry management led to a transition from conservation to extraction. This also led to a shift from ad-hoc holism to reductionism. The growing emphasis on reductionist science reinforced a mental framework inimical to conservationist arguments based on indirect benefits and increased insistence on appeals for precaution. Terms such as ‘Scientific Forestry’ and ‘rational land management’ euphemism for state control and commercial timber production were rapidly replaced by noble sounding phrases such as ‘community management’, ‘participatory development’ and ‘joint forest management’. However, these concepts drew its sustenance and legitimacy from the effort of making the state more sensitive to the just claims of forest dependent communities. Here-in lies the efficacy of a sound Forestry management system, which any system of Government should uphold and try to implement them for the benefit of mankind and animal world. An extractive forestry system however fails to be responsive to the interest of the people. This was very true to the case of Coorg forests.



Coorg Forest of 1898

H.C.Hill- ‘Suggestions For The Administration Of The Forests In Coorg’ 1890.

Notes and References

1. *Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner Of Coorg*, (Forest),No-2179-41-94,dated Bangalore,5th December 1894. p.2
2. H.C.Hill- '*Suggestions For The Administration Of The Forests In Coorg*':Calcutta,Office Of The Superintendent Of Government Printing, India: 1890. p.1.
3. Ibid.p.2
4. Urudves-This was waste land at the disposal of Government,but over which the villagers were allowed to exercise, free of charge, certain rights of grazing and to unreserved trees.For further details please see '*Suggestions For The Administration Of The Forests In Coorg*' by H.C.Hill(officiating Inspector general of forests to the Government Of India):1890.Ibid.
5. Paisaries-These were unallotted waste lands absolutely at the disposal of Government.please see *.Suggestions.....Forests..*by H.C.Hill. Ibid.
6. Devarakadus-These were sacred groves or in some cases forests of considerable area,preserved by the people around their temples. Ibid.
7. Bane lands-These were waste lands over which the Government retains certain rights. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Colonel Tredway Clarke was the Commissioner of Coorg who gave useful information to H.C.Hill regarding the various Forest questions in Coorg. Ibid
10. Mercara Fuel Plantation-The Fuel plantation of Mercara was inspected by H.C.Hill during the preparation of the forest report of 1890.In this he was assisted by Mr.Dickinson, Deputy Conservator of Coorg Forests since 1876.pls see *Suggestions For the Administration of Forests*. Ibid.
11. Though in 1889 significant progress was not made to secure to the cattle raisers grazing rights but in 1916-1917 eighty six percent of the reserved forests was opened to grazing for half the year.The number of cattle admitted on payment was 3,781 against 4,166 during the previous years. For further details please see '*Progress Report on Forest in Coorg For 1916-1917*' by H.Tireman,(Deputy Conservator of Forests) With a Review by the Chief Commissioner And Orders by the Government Of India For Bangalore: printed at the Mysore Residency Press 1918.p.3.
12. The forest reserves were increased mainly to sow Sandal and Teak seedlings as during the later years or more particularly during 1916-17 a further area of 50 acres was sown in Kargode in Coorg. For further details pls see '*Progress Report on Forest in Coorg For 1916-1917*' by H.Tireman. Ibid .p.6.
13. A portion of the *Urudves* was absorbed as reserves , and the smaller and more scattered areas was made protected forests in the interest of greater production of fuel and fodder. Pls see *Suggestions.....In Coorg* by H.C . Hill. *op.cit*.p.5.
14. Significant colonial reserves were found along the eastern boundary and south of the Mercara-Fraserpet road.pls see *Suggestions.....In Coorg* by H.C .Hill.Ibid.p.1.
15. Ibid.p.5
16. Mr.Hole a Forest Botanist made significant identification of the problem of the growth of Lantana and drying of lateral and terminal twigs as injurious to the growth of Sandal and Teak seedlings. Pls see '*Progress Report on Forest in Coorg For 1916-1917*' by H.Tireman. *op.cit*.p.4.
17. *Preliminary working plan of the Anekadu-Attoor Forests,North Coorg.1894*:Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Coorg ,(forests),-No 2179-41-94,dated Bangalore, 15th December 1894.p.1
18. Ibid;p.4.
19. Ibid;p.5.

20. *Working plan of the Arkeri Forest, Coorg, 1894*; Proceedings Of the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, (Forests), -No 1848, Dated Bangalore, 4th October, 1898. p.1
21. Ibid; p.3
22. Ibid.
23. *Working Plan of the Devamachi-Mawkal Forests*; Proceedings Of The Chief Commissioner of Coorg, (Forests). -No.2066, dated Bangalore 26th August 1899. p.1
24. Ibid; p.3.
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26. Ibid.
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28. *Working plan of the Dubare Forests*, 1899; Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, (Forests), - No.2705, dated Bangalore, the 18th November 1899. p.1.
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31. *Working plan for the Ghat Forests of Coorg*; Residency Press; Bangalore; 1916. Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, (Forests) -No.2053, dated Bangalore, 13th July 1916. p.1.
32. Ibid. p.12
33. Ibid.
34. H.C.Hill- '*Suggestions For the Administration of Forests*'. *op.cit.* p.31.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid. p.35.
37. Ibid. pp.35-36.
38. Ibid. pp.36-37
39. Ibid. p.38.
40. Ibid.
41. F. Beadon Bryant - '*Note on an Inspection Tour In The Forests Of Coorg*' ; printed at Government monotype press; Simla; 1912. p.1
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. *Working Plan For The Eastern Forests Of Coorg* : Residency Press, Bangalore-1914; p.15.
46. For Mauryan elephant forests, see Thomas R. Trautmann, "Elephants and the Mauryas", in S. N. Mukherjee (ed.), *India: History and Thought: Essays in Honour of A. L. Basham* (Calcutta, 1982). Quoted in Ramchandra Guha and Madhav Gadgil- *State Forestry and Social Conflict In British India: Past & Present*, May, 1989, No. 123 (May, 1989), pp. 141-177: Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Past and Present Society: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/650993>: Accessed 10th August, 2021.
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50. Mark Poffenberger-*Keepers of The Forests: Land Management Alternatives In South East Asia*: Kumarin Press : 1990 : West Hartford. p.XX (Introduction Part).