EPRA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS REVIEW

Online Journal ISSN : 2347 - 9671 www . epratrust.com

March 2014 Vol - 2 Issue- 3

EXPLOITATION OF FOREST ECONOMY UNDER BRITISH RULE IN CUDDAPAH DISTRICT OF ANDHRA

V. Raj Mahammadh*

**Assistant Professor &Head, Department of History, Govt. Degree College, Kadiri, Anantapur Dist, Andhra Pradesh, India,*

ABSTRACT

Forests play a crucial role in social, cultural and economic development of a country and in maintaining ecological balance. They are the resource base for the sustenance of its population and a storehouse of balance. Humans depend on forests from times immemorial but the colonial government regulations deprived them of their customary user rights on forest resources. The attention of the British towards the vast forests of India from 19th century was, primarily, because of the imperial demand for the oak, timber needed for shipbuilding for the Royal Navy and huge demand for the rapid construction of Railways etc. Thus, they designed the forest policies, Acts and concentrate on the conservation, extension and proper utilization of forest. The voluble items from the forests of Cuddapah district were exploited and it's disturbing the social and cultural practices of the local people and finally it causes for forest uprisings in colonial Andhra.

KEY WORDS: Forests, Ecological Balance, Forest Policies, Cuddapah, Forest Uprisings, Colonial Andhra etc.

INTRODUCTION

Cuddapah is one of the Ceded Districts in Rayalaseema. Now it is called as YSR Kadapa. It is a municipal corporation as well as the district headquarters. It is situated South central part of Andhra Pradesh. The city is surrounded on three sides by the Nallamala and palakonda hills. The forest area is 5,050 km². It is 32.87% of the district area. Once upon a time, the Elephants are also supplied to the Golconda army from these forests. Red Sanders is an endemic and endangered tree species is available in this area. This is the only area in India, where Red Sanders, often referred to as 'Rakta-chandanam' or 'Yerra-chandanam' (Red Sandalwood) is available. A National park is set up in Seshachalam hills for prospecting wild animals. The main rivers in this district are Penna, Chitravathi, Kunderu, Papagni, Sagileru, Bahuda and Cheyyeru. The other rivers are the Pincha, and Mandavya fed by numerous hill streams in the South-West useful for growing forests. There are numerous tanks useful for irrigation for wet crops. Timber was one of the rich components in this area. Under the British rule, the timber and other valuable forest resources were exploited and exported to other European countries. There was a timber business in Rayachoty of Cuddapah district in the nineteenth century.

FOREST ECONOMY AND FOREST PRODUCE

The forests where the key role played in socioeconomic, political and cultural aspects. Our ancestors in ancient times worshipped trees and lived in harmony with the environment. They are depending on the forest and forest products. Cuddapah district depends primarily on Agriculture and allied occupations. The forests of the district supplied the ordinary requirements of the local population and meet the grazing and fodder of the livestock. In fact, forest, pastures provide grazing facilities to thousands of cattle in every season. The district is almost self-sufficient in its requirements of timber, fuel and fodder and allied products. These forests provide a substantial volume of employment. The small timber required for making agricultural implements and meeting domestic requirements, particularly furniture is obtained from the fuel and small timber coupes. The more important of the species used are Rakhta Chandanam (Pterocarps Santalinus),Yelama(Anogeissus Latifolia), Yepi (Hardwickia binata), Neruddi (Dolichandrone Crispa), Billudu (Chloroxylon Swietenia), Somi (Soyamida febrifuga), Wodisha (Chistanthus Collinus), Neeredue (Eugenia Jambolana) and Nemiladugu (Vitex attissima).

The Britishers were designed the forest policies and concentrate on the conservation, extension and proper utilization of this species. During this period villager were used for different purposes. Due to its manifold uses the trees have been cut down all through these decades. Consequently the extraction of red sanders was made a government monopoly. Among the other timber species, the Billudu is used in making furniture and Cart pins, the Vepi used for house posts and Utensils used in the kitchen and also for the extraction of fiber for making ropes. Kodoma and Somi are used for making combs. The forests of the district meet the fuel requirements of Cuddapah, Rayachoty and Proddatur towns. The district is one of the important suppliers of fuel to Madras city. Bamboo, the poor man's timber, has a number of uses both at home and in the fields as stays for

sugarcane and betel vine. Bamboos are not only locally utilized, but also exported to the other countries.

The minor forest produce of the district includes Tooki leaves, Tangedu and Rela barks, leaves of Thands, Moduga and ficus, Palmyra leaves, Kondapathipullalu, Musti or Nux Vomica seeds, Karakki, Thandrakai, Usirikai-all Myrobaloans; The edible Mango, Palmyra, Kalivi, Regu, Nerudu,Velaga(Wood Apple)Seethaphalam (Custard Apple); Sarapappur (it seed used in sweets, betel-nut powder etc), Tamarind, Neem, Ippa, Kanuga all used in oil seeds; Kunkudukai is used in Soaps and Seekai used for cleaning and washing purposes and other commercial forest products using by villagers. The Tooki leaves are exported to Malabar. These forest products are selling at Tanning centers in Ambur, Ranipet, and Vaniyambadi in North Arcot district and to the other places in Madras. So, the villagers are freely using these forest resources from the ages. But, the arrivals of Britishers, these forests are slowly occupied and framed several restrictions on forests. They slowly started the exploitation of forest resources.

EXPLOITATION OF FOREST RESOURCES

From 1856 onwards the Britishers were introduced various forest policies and started the Scientific Exploitation of forest resources. Dr. Cleghorn, M.D., was an Assistant Surgeon to the Madras Government. He reported that "The Cuddapah is, I believe, pretty well stocked of forests". In 1858 onwards steps were taken to conservation of forests and appointed staff in the forest areas. For instance, the forest conservators were appointed in Balapalle to Duvvuru forest in 1860. In this period the red sanders was cut in great quantities under licenses'. A seignior age of Rs.3 for a cartload of timber and eight Annas for one of the fuel was levied with the option to cut the produce anywhere in the forests. The people's life depended on forests in a number of ways. From ages onwards forests were supplied wood for fuel and agricultural implements, leaf-mould for manure and grass and leaves for grazing animals. But the establishment of colonial rule, with its strict forest conservation policy in favour of government needs, disturbed this system of people's dependence on forests for their long-term as well as day to day needs.

Britain had emerged as the world leader in the middle of the nineteenth century. During this period England was used wood for various purposes like timber for ship building and construction of railway lines, etc. After 1850s, the colonial government started exploitation in the Cuddapah district. By the 1880s the British government had framed many forest rules under the forest Act to constitute forests and un assessed waste lands into reserves on which the rights of exploitation were rested solely with the government. Even the smallest village forests were also swallowed up by government reserves by the beginning of the twentieth century. Once the forest and Porambokes or government lands were declared as reserved areas, the cattle were not only denied grazing facilities, but were also impounded. The Governments control over the forest resources and constant interference in the daily life of villagers. The official monopoly of fodder extraction and seriously restricted the peasants' grazing rights. The enhancement of rates charged for grazing in all most of all districts of Andhra from 1915 onwards. The enhancement in Kurnool and Cuddapah for ordinary cattle was from 3 to 8 annas per cow or bullock,

and in Vizagapatnam from 4 to 8 annas for cow and 4annas per sheep. After that it was increased 12 annas to Rs.2 per buffalo and Rs.1 per cow, and 8 annas per sheep, and 1 anna 6 paisa per goat. In 1919-20 as many as 8,900 cases of forest crimes were reported. These perennial forest crimes on offences were the symbols of social protest against the colonial forest policy.

EXPLOITATION OF RED SANDERS

The largest and best Red sandars trees are cut and exported to England, France, and other foreign countries for various purposes. For instance, in 1882-83, 15, 582 tonnes were exported with value was five and a half lakhs of rupees. The Red Sanders belt is irregularly cut up by the evergreen growth along stream beds. In parts with in its zone it entirely disappears, especially in the Seshachalam, Palkonda, Lankamalai hills, Veligonda, Nallamalai hills, Badvel, and Rayachoty taluk ranges.

CONSERVANCY OPERATIONS

Conservancy operations were first began in 1860 and was chiefly confined to the South-East portion of the district. The Madras Forest Act of 1882 framed many rules. The introductions of Modern Railways have done much to reduce the limits of the forests. The requirements of the fuel supplies of the railway department and other purpose, they adapted two plans. One is the portions of the natural forest have been reserved and are known as Firewood reserves, and new plantations had been formed near the railway line. There are five forest reserves, namely Bellampally forest reserve area about 2,000 acres taken up and fenced round in 1867. The value of timber was Rs.70, 000. Sullakunta Chando had 2,000 acres in 1871, Balla Pally reserve had 1,730 acres in the same year. Yerragoonta Kota reserve had 3,000 acres Commenced in 1873, and Codoor Hill reserve had 1,500 acres in 1874, it is situated three miles away from Codoor station. These are fully fenced in with a ditch 3 feet deep and a bank in front 3 feet high, topped with aloes. The total amount of forest, thus reserved for railway purposes is 9,230 acres, or 14 27/64 square miles. Colonial Beddome, Conserator of Forests, submitted his report on 27th January 1877gives the history of the plantations and fuel reserves controlled by the forest department. According to him,

There are five in number, viz., the Red sanders plantation at Kodur and the four fuel plantations at Upparapalle, Pullampet, Reddipalle and Kamalapuram with 105, 402, 924 and 247 acres commenced in 1868, 1871, 1869 and 1870 respectively. The Red Sanders Plantation was close to the railway line near the Kodur station with 50 acres, surrounded by a ditch and also fenced over an area of 20 acres. There are some twelve to fifteen thousand red sanders trees growing and spent Rs.5, 839 in 1865. These plantations are located at near the railway stations in the Cuddapah, Coodoor, Rajampet and Kamalapuram contain with 1,678 acres.Mr. Yarde's, Deputy Conservator of Forests, the report says that these plantations are useful for the requirements of railway demands. It used as coal, coke and patent fuel in England. But the people who had a license for charcoal fell on the forests and take away the heart wood timber. That is why the colonial government abolished free license system and introduced an auction system in 1869. The main objective of the British Government was not to derive revenue from the forests but to ensure to the country a permanent supply of timber. Thus, the restrictions were made in the customary system of free license to Ryots.

Engine Firewood is also one of the major items, which is also exported to England for use as railways. In 1873, 17,430 tons of firewood were supplied to the railway on payment of Rs.39, 043. The Britishers were paid very cheap rate for contractors. This will give an idea of the vast drain in the forest areas in Cuddapah. Amroy Topes are another forest resource in this area. The government derives as much profit from these topes. These consist of productive trees growing on government waste lands, and are annually leased out to the highest bidder. They are generally rented by the villagers, and the sale was always conducted in the village where the tope is situated. When sold, the purchaser is not allowed to cut the trees, but only to enjoy the produce. Ryots are constantly putting forward claims to these trees, urging that they have been planted their ancestors, and that they are entitled to their enjoyment free of charge. But the government has not given any concessions. A Manual of the District in the Presidency of Madras, 1875 says that the government leased Tamarind, Mango, Eginia (Neredu), Regoo (Indian Apple), and Wood Apple, Coconut, Acid lime, Kanuga, Jack trees and Judy in Rayachoty taluk. The total amount of revenue derived from the sale of these Amroy topes in the main and sub-divisions are Rs.7, 66,270. Proddutoor, Sidhout, Pullampett, Cuddapah, Jammalamadugu and Pulivendula are the main divisions and Rayachoty, Kadiri, Voilpaud and Madan Palli are the subdivisions in the Madras Presidency.

WORKING PLANS

In 1908, the different forest products in the district began to exploit systematically under working plans. During this year, the working plans for the supply of fuel were sanctioned. East Cuddapah circle consists; Ballapalle (East and West series), Kodur (East and West), Rajampet, Pullampet, Badvel (East and West series), Lankamalais, Porumomilla (North and South), Sancherla, Nandalur, Vantimetta, Polkonda Bullmen, Lankamalai Bullmen, Sidhout and Kanamalapalle. North Cuddapah circle consists of Palakonda (Maddimadugu East and West and Makillapalle series), Lankamalais (Bainapalle and Pattur) and Nallamalais (Dasari Palle North, East, South and West). A preliminary working-plan for the bamboo and fuel are framed in the Lankamalais of Vonipenta range. A trained working-plan party worked under an experienced officer in each circle. The preparation of revised working-plans for improvement of felling and fuel working series in Kodur and Ballapalle range was started in 1920s. A report says that 26,498 acres of the Palakondas in West Cuddapah were prepared maps by the colonial government. The main objects of these working plans are broadly to conserve, protect and improve the existing forest growth with suitable Silvicultural treatment; rehabilitate and reforest those areas which had been overworked during the control of the Panchayat's. The other aim is to meet the demand for fuel, small timber, bamboo, grazing, minor forest produce, grass and manure, leaves, in a manner calculated to do the least harm to the forests; and secure without prejudice to the other objectives. The other object was to get the maximum financial return from the forests.

TIMBER EXPLOITATION

Timber was one of the best products from these forests. Three timber working circles was opened one each in the Lankamalas and the Nallamalas in 1908 and another at Seshachalams in 1909. The first

two were working on a selection cum-improvement system.It had to be abandoned owing to the fires that grew and the theft of trees left as standards that occurred. In 1920-21, there was a heavy demand of timber for navy and ship building.That's why,specimens of important Madras timbers were sent to the British timber exhibition held in London in July 1920. It is learnt that as far as Indian timbers are concerned, the exhibition has been a very great success. The total output of timber during the year (1921-22) under review was 108,400 tons and 20,825 tons were extracted by departmental agency and 81,675 tons by purchasers. The output of timber during the year (1922-23) under review was 131,225 tons and 29,375 tons were extracted by departmental agency and 95,200 tons by purchasers. The total cost of production was Rs.81, 811 and the value of the timber sold and of the closing stock was Rs.1, 08,871. The colonials purchased at cheaper prices and sell at higher rates in European countries.

EXPLOITATION OF FUEL AND BAMBOO

In South Division of Cuddapah, four fuel working plans were sanctioned in 1908. All the plans prescribed a rotation of thirty years, adapting the system of Coppice with standards. In all the circles, the felled coupes were closed to grazing. Contract system was adopted. In 1921-22, the Madras Presidency extracted Fuel and Bamboo from Cuddapah Division for utilizing the Bamboo for the paper-pulp industry and other purposes. So, the contractors were allowed to remove from specified blocks. The number of cart loads of Bamboos on permits issued at rates fixed on auction. In 1929, North Division 1,54,380 acres and South Divison 3,07,890 acres of forest resources were exploited.

EXPLOITATION OF PALMYRA

In the North Division of Cuddapah, Palmyra is systematically exploited by the Britishers, for instance, at the Rameswaram (973 acres),Appaya Palle (98),Kamalapuram (358), Vedurur (606) and Tallaproddatur (113), all these forming the Palmyra working circles. The effective area was only 934 acres with 3,387 mature trees. The exploitation was on a selection system with a felling cycle of fifteen years with a view to arrest sand drifts in the topes. It also improves the stocking, systematic under-planting.

The Palmyra working circle in the South Division of Cuddapah is confined to the Idupulapaya tope occupied 653 acres and containing 12,580 mature and 17,240 immature trees. The yield is roughly 600 a year and was exploited through the agency of contractors.Thus the British Government ties up with local contractors had exploited the forest resources. That's why; the villagers were discontent and led to do many forest crimes. The British administration treated the cattle grazers as criminals and thief's, and peasants began to see for forest officials as their enemies. So, peoples started taking away the grass, forest products, grazing their cattle unlawfully.

An important point is that peasants and pre-colonial rulers did not develop a commercial attitude towards the forest; the control of tribal groups over the forest was recognized by the rulers as their unquestionable natural right. The forest cover in Andhra districts was not altered radically until about the mid-nineteenth century; only from the 1850s did the deliberate policy of the Madras government to develop both private and state commercial interests in teak, and other varieties of timber begin the depletion of forest resources. The mid-nineteenth

century, the systematic extension of colonial juridical control over the entire minor and major forests brought new pressures on the forests. In other words, the entire ecosystem was transformed under the influence of the colonial model of private property. The forests also converted into reserved forests and charged at higher rates. The pre-colonial method of a collective village regulation of grazing lands was banned. That's why many forest cases had been registered in 1919-22. During the Non-Co-operation Movement, the villagers were inspired by the Non-Co-operation lecturers and enter into the forest without any paying the taxes. Cattle and goats were driven into the forests to graze without permits. The boundary cairns were removed in many places and people began to trespass into the forest. The forest troubles were more serious in the Rayachoty. Thus the forest resources are highly exploited from the district and its causes for forest uprisings were started in colonial Andhra against British economic policies in the beginning of the twentieth century.

REFERENCES

1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India. (1985), Provincial Series, Vol-I, USHA Publications, Madras.*
2. *C.F. Brackenbury. (1915), "Madras District Gazetteers (Cuddapah)", Government Press, Madras, P.P:215-219.*
3. *C.F. Brackenbury. (2000), "Madras District Gazetteers (Cuddapah)", Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, & Madras, P.P:90-99.*
4. *J.D.B.Gribble. (1875), "Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteers: A Manual of the Cuddapah District in the Presidency of Madras (Reprint)", Government Press, P.P:342-346.*
5. *Sivasankarnarayana.(1967), "Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteers Cuddapah, (Revised Edition)", Government Press, Hyderabad, P.P:32-250.*
6. *C.D.Maclean. (1987), "The Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency", Vol-I, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, P-315.*
7. *Mr. Gamble. (1975), "Manual of Indian Timbers", Bishen Singh & Mahendra Pal Singh, Dehra Dun.*
8. *Atluri Murali. (1996), "Whose Trees? Forest Practices and Local Communities in Andhra, 1600-1922" in David Arnold and Ramachandraguha, ed, "Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia", Oxford University Press, New Delhi, P.P:120-125.*
9. *G.O.No.1974, Revenue Department, Dated 13th June 1877.*
10. *Annual Administration Report of the Forest Department for the Year ending 30th June 1920, P:16.*
11. *G.O.259, 15th February 1921, Forest Administration Report, Government of Madras,Development Department, P.P:2-4.*
12. *Ch. Acharya. (2005), "Rayalaseema Swathanthra Samara Charitra", (Telugu) Swathanthrodyyama Cahritra Parisodana Samsta, Hyderabad, P.P:91-92 &488-489.*
13. *Sivasankarnarayana.(1967), "Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteers Cuddapah", Government Press, Hyderabad, P.P:251-52.*
14. *G.O.No.259, 15th February 1921, Development Department, Government of Madras.*
15. *Report on the Administration of the Forest Department for the Year ending the 31st March 1922; Statistics of British India No.II, Financial Statistics, Part-II, Forests, P:183.*
16. *Annual Administration Report of the Forest Department for the Year ending 30th June 1920, Central Circle, P:21.*
17. *Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha. (1993), "This Fissured land: An Ecological History of India", Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1993.*
18. *Annual Form No.70, Forest Department, Madras Presidency. Central Circle, 1919-20.*
19. *Annual form No.74, Forest Department, Madras Presidency. P:24*
20. *Forest Administration Report for the Year 1919-20, Government of Madras, P: 7.*