

COLONIAL FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN MADRAS

PRESIDENCY (1857-1882)-A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Before the advent of the Europeans particularly the British, there was no systematic approach towards scientific forestry/forest management. After the Industrial Revolution, there was heavy demand for the raw materials world over. When there was resource depletion for oak timbers in London, they realized the need for proper forest management. But in India the British government thought the woods that available were inexhaustible and so exploitation was continued.

After the 1857 Revolt, due to the construction of railroads and development activities the demands for these resources were high. Initially they did not realize the importance of conservation. After the huge loss of forest wealth only, they were thinking of introducing forest management and so the appointment of Dietrich Brand is, the well trained forester from Germany. Slowly they enacted forest laws not only in British occupied territories but also implemented by appointing trained foresters in Princely states also.

Initially Chief Conservators were the British; only training was given to Indians for subordinate posts. The British government also started forest rangers college to train rangers. By all their dints they classified Indian forests into three categories and permission to entry was denied in Reserved forest area even for the local chieftain. Denial of their rights led to the revolt of local people against British government. Though there was opposition the system they followed continued till India got independence. Moreover the level of exploitation was high during two world wars due to the heavy demand of wood logs for ship building and other works. After independence, Indian government realized the importance of forest resources and so policies were formulated accordingly.

KEYWORDS: Forests, Conservation, British Supremacy, Classification of Forests, Timber, Teak Plantations, The Indian Forest Act of 1865, Madras Presidency, Madras Forest Act of 1882