

Shifting Cultivation And Colonial Forest Policy In Assam

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Abstract: *Shifting cultivation is a way of life of the hill tribes of northeast India and has direct bearing on their socio-cultural systems which is linked to their religious rites and festivals. The colonial expansion in the Northeast frontier and its further occupation of Assam marks a great landmark in the history of forest conservancy and shifting cultivation. The tribal community were deprived of their rights over land as to colonial government forest destruction was caused by shifting cultivation. During the colonial regime shifting cultivation became prominent and was an important problem to deal with the conservation of forest. The study examines the implementation of colonial forest policies and how it affects the life of the tribes depending on forests during their rule.*

The paper attempts to understand the colonial views on shifting cultivation and how far they extended their concern for forest conservancy without considering the interest of the tribes who practised shifting cultivation during the period of their colonisation.

The sources used for the purpose are both primary and secondary. It includes Proceedings of Revenue Department, Forest Department, Progress Report of Forest Administration in Assam, journals and relevant related books.

Keywords: *shifting cultivation, forest policy, hill tribes, colonial*

I. INTRODUCTION

The colonial Assam includes all those areas viz. the states of Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and present Assam comprising the two valleys of Brahmaputra and Barak valley, Tripura and Manipur. The forests of Assam had undergone significant changes after the advent of the colonial rule. The colonial intervention in Assam as well as in India was a consequent product of British industrialization which was subjected to fulfilling the imperial interests and the needs of the growing empire. Prior to the coming of the colonial rule the forests of Assam did not serve as a significant source of revenue. Except on few forest products like ivory, aloes wood etc., revenue was not collected from other sources. After Assam was colonised, every bit of available land was sought to be brought under imperial control for imperial gains. "The development of the idea that forests were source of revenue and that the forest produce could be commercially exploited, changed the very outlook of the government as well as the people towards the hitherto imperially unexploited virgin forests of Assam." This change of outlook marked a radical

departure from the prevalent opinion regarding forests and resulted in drastic change in the overall development of Assam as the province was full of forests at the time of colonial occupation.

Forests play a vital role in sustaining the life of the hill tribes. The livelihood activities of the tribes centre on the forests in which they live. Shifting cultivation was the main form of agriculture and is an integral part of the economy in tribal culture. Apart from this cultivation the tribes collected varieties of edibles, fruits, honey, creeper etc. and raw materials like bamboo, gums, canes and so on from the forests. These hill tribes as were dependent on forest and its produce have specific relation with the forests. They try to recreate the forests with their traditional conservation method. But with the colonial intervention it marked a watershed in the ecological history of the land. This turning point in forestry occurred because of the colonial introduction of railway network. Prior to this the Indian forest was exploited by them for their Royal navy too. Large number of trees was felled for railway sleepers and thus great forests were destroyed to meet the demand. At this point the intensity of forest destruction was so

high that the colonial came to realized that the Indian forest was not inexhaustible. This realization led to the establishment of Imperial Forest Department in 1864 with the assistance of a German forester, D. Brandis.

II. SHIFTING CULTIVATION: A WAY OF LIFE OF THE HILL TRIBES

The term shifting cultivation refers to slash and burn, jhum or swidden agriculture. Shifting cultivation locally known as jhuming is the predominant form of agriculture in the hill areas of North-east India. It is a process of cutting down natural vegetation, letting it dry and burning it off for cultivation. In this method of cultivation there is no permanent field for cultivation where a plot of land is cleared and cropped once or twice and then abandoned under forest fallow. Cultivators then move on to a new land abandoning it when productivity starts declining. The land is common property and is controlled by social groups, usually tribes. The chieftains or land priest designates land to the individual families for their use. There is no permanent field for cultivation, a plot of land is cleared and cropped once or twice and then abandoned under forest fallow. Labour is carried out by the family and is designated according to a culturally specific division of labour. Usually, the men clear the land whereas the women are responsible for planting, cultivation and harvesting etc.

The origin of shifting cultivation could be traced back to the Neolithic period dated to c.7000 B.C on the basis of archaeological data. The practice of shifting cultivation is accepted as an early stage of the agricultural evolution. The system is regarded as the first stage in the evolution of agriculture-transitional stage from hunting and gathering to settled cultivation. The cultivators use very simple agricultural tools such as, digging stick, hoe and iron knives. It is labour-intensive form with extensive use of land. This form of cultivation is still widely practised in different parts of the world. Although, shifting cultivation is primitive as well as labour intensive and ecologically imbalance farming system, it is also considered to be one of the primary agents of transforming- the forested landscape into cultivable and cultural one. Therefore, jhum cultivation has been one of the processes transforming wild, forested landscape into cultural landscape

This method of cultivation was practised by the tribal groups of north-east India as a source of their livelihood. Some of the ethnic tribes of north-east who practised shifting cultivation are the Adi, Garo, Nagas, Mizo etc. The steps involved in this cultivation are –

- ✓ Selecting the forested hilly land
- ✓ Clearing the forest tract by cutting down the jungle
- ✓ Burning the dried forest into ashes
- ✓ Worship and sacrifice
- ✓ Sowing of seeds
- ✓ Weeding
- ✓ Protecting the crops
- ✓ Harvesting
- ✓ Threshing and storing
- ✓ Ceremony and merry making

✓ Fallowing

Some of the usual processes in shifting cultivation are selection of the plot near the hill side or forest. After selecting the plot, forest is cut in the months of January or February annually for cultivation. In some tribes, community as the whole is responsible for clearing the selected piece of land where as in others the cutting of the trees and shrubs is made by the respective family to whom the land is allotted. The allotted area per family varies. In the month of March, after the jungle that has been cut for jhum is dry, it is burn for cultivation. In this case the cultivators take care that the fire should not spread into the forest. After burning the forest, the unburned rubbish are collected in one place for complete burning. Then the ashes are scattered over the fields and dibbling of seeds begins.

Some of the tribes practices worshipping of evil spirits by making sacrifices before sowing the seeds. It is believed among “the Ao Nagas” that the priest who performs this sacrifice is to go half-way down to the new fields with a fowl of either sex and some grains of rice. “He clears a little space and sows the rice and fences it round. Then he kills the fowl by cutting its throat with a sharp bamboo and takes the omens”. The next day is sowing, where all the members of the family gathered in the field and sow their seeds. The seeds are sown either by broadcast or dibbling. After sowing is done the next task is weeding the field. They select the best location within the field and build a hut there so that they can take shelter on rainy days or when the weather is too hot. They also fence the fields with bamboo in order to protect it from wild animals and cattle.

Some of the crops grown by the tribes are food grains, millets, maize, potatoes, taro, Job’s tears, yams, beans, pumpkins, chillies etc. Besides these they also grow cash crops such as cotton, sesamum, jute, ginger, tobacco etc. They follow mixed cropping where they aimed at growing everything to meet the needs of their family. They mainly grow crops for consumption purpose. After abandoning the land to recuperate some crops are collected from the abandoned fields.

For the tribal groups shifting cultivation was a way of life encompassing beyond the narrowly economic, social and cultural spheres. Among the tribes the customary use of nature was governed by traditional systems of resource use and conservation which involved a mix of religion, folklore and tradition. Almost all of the festivals celebrated by the tribes of this region are related to good harvest, the direct outcome of their jhum practices. Their philosophy of life is a product of this system of economy. The tribes of these regions depend on shifting cultivation for livelihood.

III. BEGINNING OF COLONIAL FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

By the middle of the 19th century, due to the over exploitation of forest resources for ship building and railways etc, forest in India began to face depletion. This marked a turning point in the history of Indian forestry. The British introduced the railway network and for the expansion large number of wooden sleepers was necessary. Large chunks of

forests were felled without provision. This was in response to open vast market and to meet the needs of colonial trade after the mutiny by export and imports. The British Government thus realized that forests in India are not exhaustible. So in order to keep check in the forest depletion, they appointed various officers from time to time to report on forest areas. They emphasised on the need for conservation. "In 1863 Charles wood, the secretary of state for India, showed keen interest in the organisation of the forest department in India and the preservation of the forests." In 1864 Brandis was appointed as the first inspector general of forests of India. During his office he travelled through the forest tracts of India extensively and visited Sind forest in 1867, Berar forest in 1869, Bombay forest in 1870 and Madras forest in 1881. His account resulted to lay the foundation of systematic forestry in India and the rest of the province. Colonial Assam refers to the period of History of Assam between the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo and Independence of India when Assam was under the British colonial rule. During the British colonization indigenous people were engaged in primitive method of agriculture known as shifting cultivation which according to the colonial government exploits soils and forests. In order to check this cultivation the colonial government try to controlled forest and regulated effective protection against natural and human destruction. They established number of scientific agencies and set up forest departments in order to study forestry.

The Imperial Forest department was established in 1864 and only in the year 1868 Forest Department was formed in Assam. The department was entrusted with the responsibility of identifying the sources of supply of strong and durable timbers to be used as railway sleepers. An assistant conservator of forest was appointed to look into the forest resources of Assam in 1868 and was placed directly under the order of the Bengal government as at that time Assam was under the provincial administration of Bengal. Since then the colonial government under the supervision of the Forest Department, began to survey the forest resources of the region. Gustav Mann, a German officer had extensive knowledge of the Burma forest and he was entrusted with the task of preparing a report on the condition of the forest resources of Assam. He conducted extensive survey of the Assam forest during 1868 and 1869. During his survey he submitted two detailed reports on the condition of the forest of Assam. One report was apprehended with the Bengal forest Administration report of the year 1869.

When Assam was under the Bengal administration, in 1871 the Bengal conservator of forest proposed for the transfer of forest in Assam to the Forest Department but there was no demarcation or boundaries. The government brought only better forests under the Reserve forests so it recommended for selection and demarcation of better forests which was to be placed under the Forest Department and the rest tract of forest to be managed by deputy commissioner. Further it appointed four assistant conservators along with office staff to meet the increasing demands of the Forest Department. In spite of it there was lack of seriousness in conserving forests. This made the Board of Revenue in Bengal in 1873 enthusiastic to know how the foresters work in Assam in spite of the establishment of forest in the province. Though there was demarcation of

forest area but there was no proper infrastructure. Experiments on plantation of teak and cautchouc was carried out which was more or less successful. Thus in 1872, the commissioner proposed to the Bengal government for the establishment of forest Department in the province. In the same year the proposal was sanctioned by the Governor General in Council. Accordingly, Gustav Mann was appointed as the Assistant Conservator of Forest in charge of Assam in 1873. This was the beginning of the career of Forest Department in Assam.

Assam was declared a separate Chief Commissionership in 1874 and eventually the department of Forest became an independent wing. In 1874, Gustav Mann became the deputy conservator and held the office along with two assistant conservators and one sub-assistant. The chief commissioner in the same year sanctioned five forest divisions which comprised of Tezpur, Golaghat, Guwahati, Goalpara and Cachar. Under the Tezpur division the forest reserve of Darrang falls with its headquarter at Bhairabighat. It also included the Naduar reserve without any boundary demarcation. The Golaghat forest division comprised of the Nambor reserve in the Sibsagar and Naga hill districts and the Mikir hill reserve. This was under the supervision of the Naga hill district. But there was alteration of the boundary in which some portion of Nowgong and Sibsagar was under the Naga hill district. It also helped the Mikir hill Reserved forest which was part of Sibsagar came under the Naga hill districts. The Guwahati division comprised the reserve forest of entire Kamrup district and the western part of Nowgong district. The forests of these areas had good quality of sal and also had experimental plantation of rubber, teak and sissu. The Goalpara division had a good quality of sal trees and headquarter is situated at Goalpara. Under its division the Garo hills were included. The Cachar division comprised the forest reserves of cachar and Sylhet. This division of forest remained till 1879.

Dietrich Brandis, the Inspector General of Forest in India visited Assam in 1879. His visit in 1879 signalled the final culmination of the long years of apprehension about the future of the forest in Assam. By that time he is well known as forest conservation. Brandis in his account gave a clear elaboration on the distribution of the forest wealth of Assam and suggested for forest conservation in Assam. For achieving the goal he suggested that both the civil and forest administration should work together. The boundaries of forest division must coincide with the civil administration boundaries and that a district forest officer would look after the affairs forest within a district but would be subordinate to the deputy commissioner. In doing so he emphasized that economic consideration must be given in establishing the Forest Department. He put up four aspects, firstly, the Forest Department was ensure a permanent supply of timber for the Bengal market from Goalpara and Kamrup districts. Secondly, the department was also to ensure permanent supply of timber as well as firewood and charcoal for local requirements. Thirdly, the department should also work for the increase supply of India rubber by planting by planting in some selected tracts. Fourthly, the department must work as a catalyst for other colonial departments.

"The annual administration report of the forest of 1878-79" highlighted the principles under which the Forest

Department managed the affairs. Foremost important was given to secure all the better forests from further abuse by having them gazetted and properly demarcated. Secondly, by legitimate means it tried to increase the revenue from the forests government as financial success of forest management was the only way to establish and maintained the forests. Thirdly, to protect the areas that were to be maintained as forest from all that intended to interfere with their highest productiveness. Fourthly, survey should be taken on the nature and contents of each forest accurately. Fifthly, in order to ensure remunerative economy and systematic forest management forests were divided into well defined and manageable divisions, ranges and beats. Finally, by sowing and planting it will improve income as expenditure on these forests was likely to prove most remunerative.

In 1889, Ribbentrop visited the forests of Assam as Inspector general of forest. In his visit he noticed that the sal forest in western Assam was completely devastated by the zamindars. The rights enjoyed by the zamindars became a constant worry for the Forest Department. Large scale of forestlands was also owned by the private owners in which the tea planters benefitted the most. In order to control encroachment of forestlands by the tea planters the government imposed restrictions on the forest resources. In this way the Forest Department executes its administration by formation, maintenance and improving large government forest estates. This brings closer both the Forest Department and the civil administration in the affairs of forest administration.

The department get more effective control over forest by the Indian Forest Act of 1878. Under this act a proposal was submitted to the chief commissioner for framing rules during 1879-80. The individual forest officers could prosecute those who violated the forest rules as their power was by now well defined. Elephant hunting and poisoning of waters was defined by the new forest rules. The chief commissioner also approved new rules regarding the valuation of timber which was under the Waste Land Lease Rules. The department also faced problem with the tea gardens as they often took up forestlands for plantation and the tribal groups who took up land for shifting cultivation. This increased the responsibilities of the department to examine the forest carefully, valuation, demarcation, improving the existing demarcation, clearing the boundary lines and protecting the forest from various kinds of damage.

In the nineteenth century Forest Department became more relevant and powerful with the promulgation of various Forest Acts. The Act of 1865 wanted to establish the State's rights over the forestlands without eroding the rights of the people. But it emerged into different viewpoints among the colonial officials. In 1874 a conference was held to look into the defects of Act of 1865, which emerged out as the intellectual path finder for the Act of 1878. In 1879 the Act came into effect in Assam. The Acts of 1865 and 1878 were important because it brought the statutory rights of the Forest Department over the forest resources and the debates on the State right over forest resources and the encroachment of land into common property.

But there was a question among the forest officials as the Act turned out to be impractical in Burma. In 1889,

Ribbentrop the Inspector General of forests visited Assam and criticise the Act. His opinion was that there could not be justification for the two demarcated government forests because while they are constituted the greater areas of forests remain unprotected and without any provision the local government cannot protect the trees and cannot extract forest produce. Following the Act of 1878 the local government has to protect the local forest but because of the impracticality of the act the foresters often complained. There was also a problem in the forests of western Assam in Garo hills because of the growing petty trade networks. This led the government to regulate rules on trades. The department was empowered with the Garo Hills Regulation in 1882. It restricted timber trade from Bengal and non- Garo traders cannot engage in trade without permission in timber, collecting wax, rubber, ivory or any forest products and hunting. This witnessed in Assam for making Forest Acts along with the framing of Assam Land Revenue Regulation in 1886. Following the model of Upper Burma Forest Regulation of 1887, the Assam Forest Regulation of 1891 was framed based on the specific region and clearly states that "the practice of shifting cultivation conveyed no right and could be abolished at the pleasure of the government." The draft was sanctioned by the Indian government in December 1891 and came to effect in April 1892. With the new forest regulation forestlands were divided into three categories; Reserved Forests, Village Forests and unclassed forests. The Protected Forests which were under the Indian Forest Act of 1878 were now reclassified as unclassed State forest. The regulation also declared that inside any tracts if shifting cultivation was done it would be brought under the Reserved forests. The cultivable land should be only a privilege and not as right. With prior permission only the agrarian practices in the tracts such as pasture or collecting forest produce. Not only shifting cultivation but also forest trades were also regulated by the State and there was no longer private control of forests. This empowered the Assam Forest Department as the sole authority of forest resources.

Since the early days of the East India Company's rule, forest in Assam came under their supervision and most of the forested areas are mapped. The Imperial Forest Department became aware of the revenue potential of the forests in Assam and commercial exploitation became the predominant agenda of the colonial forest policy. Thus, forestry emerged as the forerunner to provide the department with continuous financial profit.

But by the end of the nineteenth century colonial attitudes towards forest undergo changes. During their colonization the indigenous people were engaged in primitive method of agriculture which according to them exploits soils and forests. In order to manage the landscapes of their empire, the colonial government established number of scientific agencies. They started to take part in scientific research and set up forest departments in order to study forestry. Several recent works have highlighted the complex nature of the engagement of science with the Indian forests and several scientific experiments were carried out inside the forests. The application of science became identical with varieties of experiments with forest plantations, silviculture, regulation of forest fires or insects and so on. With scientific forestry the

foresters in Assam took recourse to the local experiences and scientific management and commercialization of forests began to shape the history of conservation of forests in Assam.

IV. VIEW OF COLONIAL STATE ON SHIFTING CULTIVATION

With the advancement of imperial forestry, the traditional agrarian practices emerged as the major concern for the science of forestry. "Shifting or jhum cultivation was the characteristic form of agriculture over large parts of north-eastern India, especially the hilly and forested tracts where plough agriculture was not always feasible." The colonial government held shifting cultivation to the most destructive of all practices for the forest. This was because the area cultivated under jhum often contained the most valued timber. Steps were taken to protect forest resources. However, in the case of Jhum cultivation the colonial government had always maintained an ambivalent policy. The forests were considered as an obstruction to agriculture rather than otherwise and consequently a bar to the prosperity of the Empire.

In the opinion of Gustav Mann, the first Conservator of Assam, "jhuming had nothing to be said in its defence, except that ignorant and simple people could not be made to change suddenly the mode of cultivation inherited from their forefathers for a better one without causing hardship." Therefore increase of population definitely led to extension of cultivation most often at the cost of forest cover. In the district of Nowgong forests where jhum or shifting cultivation was practised widely it was noticed that large areas of sal forest were destroyed by jhumming prior to their reservation by the Forest Department. The jhumias were allowed to practise jhum as a privilege subject to control, restriction and abolition by the provincial government. Large areas of forests had been depleted because of this environmentally unfriendly method of cultivation. Efforts were being made to encourage hill tribes to sow fast growing trees and shrubs in their jhums in order to shorten the period within which the same jhum could be worked again and again and thus circumscribe the area which the system of jhum cultivation destroys.

However, shifting cultivation remained in practice even after the restrictions. There was no other option but of the shifting cultivation to retreat as jhuming or shifting cultivation had no such inherent value in itself which could support its continuance. The chief commissioner of the province issued a circular as early as 1875 to protect the forest, which were yet to be brought under the reserved category against the impending danger of shifting cultivation. These restrictions imposed resulted in increased taxes for those villages practising shifting cultivation. In the Naga hills, the Naga villagers opposed against the department as their land claimed larger portion of reserve in which they were practising shifting cultivation.

According to Fredrick Beadon Bryant, 'the practice of ...shifting cultivation does great harm in any country and this becomes more pronounced on steep hill-sides with unstable soil.' He also argued that apart from destroying forests, shifting cultivation was the principal cause of landslides, silting up and drying up springs and rivers and causing floods.

In order to control such damages the department was trying to understand the relationship between the forest and the retention of the atmospheric moisture and soil moisture.

Another problem caused by jhuming was artificial fires. The Assam Bengal Railway line also posed a serious threat for the safety of the track from fire. This threat forced the department to prohibit shifting cultivation along the track without the permission of the deputy commissioner of Cachar. Thus within a mile of one quarter from the railway line shifting cultivation was made illegal.

In view of the revenue officials, shifting cultivation was in favour. They argued that forest conservation was necessary so attention had to be paid that the cultivators did not suffer. Though the Forest Department had control over vast forest tracts but there was no such potential for forestry. These areas were rather suitable for shifting cultivation.

After the passing of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, the government took serious interest in the expansion of the agrarian front. For the colonial state expansion of agrarian front meant the plantation sector in particular. This created an obvious conflict of interest with the Forest Department as it stood in the way of extending cultivation. The two successive chief commissioner of Assam – William Ward and Henry Cotton attended to the subject where both put their interest on the revenue department to that of the Forest Department. Ward was of the view that European tea-planter or ordinary cultivators would be allowed in the areas of reserved tracts if necessary. Cotton was of the same view that the forested area was unlimited in the Brahmaputra valley and hence the question of deforestation did not arise. He was of the opinion that whenever there was an effective demand for land, cultivators without encroaching on Reserved Forests could extend for cultivation.

The Forest Act of 1927 put control on shifting cultivation with certain special provisions where the Forest Settlement Officer was to record the claims relating to the practice of shifting cultivation and inform the state government together with his opinion whether to permit or otherwise the practice. . Final decision whether to issue permission or prohibit the practice was given by the state government. The Forest Settlement accordingly arranged for the appointment of land whether permitted wholly or in part. The Act also made a special mention that the practice of shifting cultivation was in all cases deemed to be a privilege subject to control, restriction and abolition by the state government. Shifting cultivation was discouraged without any appropriate alternative scheme. This led to migration of tribal communities to different parts of the province. It was a major traditional subsistence activity that got banned from the reserved forests. These shorten the fallow cycle or otherwise cultivated on a designated patch of land until deteriorated. Thus the Act curtail communal ownership of forests and traditional conservation and management systems. It also undermined the subsistence economy of the hill tribes.

This resulted in migration of people from one place to another exploring new cultivable land. This can be seen from mizo tribes migrating from Chin Hills to present state Mizoram, Chittagong, Cachar, Manipur, Tripura and other areas. The colonial government at the same time established their commercial centre in the plain areas in Cachar Valley,

Chittagong, Sylhet and Surma valley for tea plantations. Due to the East India Company tea plantations, migration came to an end in Lushai hills. In course of time the colonial government brought large tracts of forests which were hunting ground of the tribal chiefs. These resulted in plundering the colonial subjects by the Mizo warrior. The main agenda of the colonial government was to protect its commercial tea gardens. But the hill tribes continued with their raids and looted and plundered the colonial government. So, the colonial government implemented legal policies in northeast province in order to control the hill tribes. At that time Assam was part of Bengal province and it included the eastern areas between the hills and plain. The Inner Line Regulation was introduced which drew an imaginary line or unilateral boundary with the frontier tribes. The regulation prohibited the colonial subjects from entering beyond the line without permission.

In 1912, Major W.M. Kennedy, the Second Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, speaks about the great harm done by shifting cultivation in Lushai Hills. It causes landslips, silting up and drying up of springs and rivers and of disastrous flood. The areas under shifting cultivation should be examined and whether to permit or save "valuable forest areas from destruction, either by forming forest reserves or by prohibiting shifting cultivation over specified areas". This is because large trees were burnt and killed which would have been available for trade purposes. But what the people believed is that within the period of jhum cycle the forest will regain its growth. But it is the matter of time when jhum field will be abandoned. Along with the bamboo in the bamboo land there are certain number of trees growing but are destroyed when the jhums are burnt. Fire also cause great harm to the surrounding jungle as it set alight and burn for days.

Forest laws and its impact on the Tribes practising shifting cultivation

The forest laws introduced by the British affected the life of the tribal in a big way, as the livelihood of the tribes mainly depend upon the forests and forest produce. The forest laws gave the British total control over the forest, which are classified as reserve forests and became a colonial property. The whole Tribal populace who once used to dwell freely in the forest was hit hard by the new forest laws. Their movement within the reserve forests has been restricted, they were not allowed to practice shifting cultivation, collect fruits, hunt animals or graze their cattle. As a result many tribal started to migrate in search of livelihood. This created a problem of labour as the colonial government could not find labour to work in forest cutting. This resulted in the establishment of Forest Village by ensuring the tribes small patches of land for cultivation and in return had to work for the colonial government.

V. CONCLUSION

Throughout the work it is observed that the colonial forest policies were implemented to fulfil their own economic

interest. When compared the amount of forest destruction caused by the colonial for construction of railway alone was far bigger than the destruction of forest caused by shifting cultivation. Shifting cultivation which was a major source of livelihood for the tribes got banned from the Reserve forests. There was also restriction on grazing cattle. Reservation of forest by the colonial government resulted in considerable hardship to the tribal communities as they were restricted from entering the forests and use of forest resources.

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