

भारत के स्वाधीनता संग्राम में उत्तराखण्ड का योगदान



संपादक
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HISTORY OF FOREST MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL MOVEMENT IN THE UTTARAKHAND

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The history of forest management and deforestation in the Kumaun Himalayas before the British occupation of Kumaun in 1815 is little known. There is nothing to show that any kind of control or regulation of forests existed except the planting of temple groves, the ones seen around important temples and such groves were protected. This appeared to be responsible for extension of *deodar* east of its natural one (Joshi, 1985). Before 18th century Kumaun was ruled by "Katuri" and "Chand" dynasty. In the reign of Katuri and Chand dynasty, the management of forest was based on the principle of *Manusmriti*. Wells, ponds, temples and trees were regarded as the wealth of public and all people had a similar right on it. In the last decades of 18th century, Kumaun was attacked by "Gurkhas" and they ruled here till 1815. They destroyed forest badly not only for timber use but also to safeguard themselves from the public. The limit of the grazing animals was also uncontrolled. This also posed a great danger.

However, the British occupation of Kumaun started when the Gurkhas were driven out in 1815. For a long time British Government also remained negligent towards forests. The British paid attention towards forests in 1823 for the first time. Later, Mr. Traill, the Kumaun commissioner, presented a detailed report in the year 1880, which is known as "Settlement of year 80". This settlement fixed nominal village boundaries within which each village could exercise the right of pasture and wood cutting.

The History of deforestation and forest administration in the area may be divided into four periods: The first period lasted from the advent of the British rule to the passing of the Indian Forest Act, in 1878. During that period the village

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saplings were planted here, the area is now replete with natural resources and water is available throughout the year. Mahila Mangal Dal played a key role in maintaining the ecosystem of this region.

Forests are one of the basic geographical elements and any alteration in forest resources and wealth means alteration in environment. With the growing pressure on forest resources, various forms of environmental degradation are evident in different regions of Uttarakhand. Certainly, deforestation is an outcome of various development activities. Thus, there is a considerable truth in saying that deforestation is a havoc brought out from thoughtless destructive activities of development (Singh, 1984).

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