

no responsibilities for protecting it. From the lessee, ie. the paper industry, one need not expect any consideration by way of land protection as they are only a commercial party. Revenue Dept, the rightful owner of the land, believes that these lands are now under the possession of the Forest Dept. and, therefore, Revenue Dept. have no right or business to intervene in the contract signed between two other parties. Nothing could be more ironical nor unfortunate. It is seen again and again that these are the lands most prone to be encroached upon and are actually encroached upon. Furthermore, the Courts taking a legalistic view expect 'the rightful owner', ie. the Revenue Dept. to exercise its claim against an encroacher. But the Revenue Dept. in most cases surrenders its responsibility. This scenario benefits the land grabber. Any number of examples are available including those of resorts constructed on such lands where encroachers have obtained indefinite stay from the Court and continue to enjoy the public land.

If the actual demand from the paper mills is looked at, it is amply clear that harvested *Eucalyptus Grandis* in this area is supplied not to the paper mills in the State alone as the amount of *Eucalyptus Grandis* harvested from here is much, much more. *Eucalyptus Grandis* harvested from encroached lands are passed off as *Eucalyptus Grandis* from lands leased to paper industry. Much of it is taken away to demand centres in Tamilnadu and places like Perumbavoor. So any number of Shola forests are destroyed in Kerala to feed the demand for *Eucalyptus Grandis* in the neighboring States and private entrepreneurs. That there is the need to discontinue this practice of Forest Dept. signing contract for Revenue lands with a third party has been taken up with the Forest Dept. again and again (including in the report of the undersigned on Munnar); but this has always been ignored or has got sidelined and no decision has been taken by the Government.

The notification declaring part of Vattavada and Kottakamboor Villages as Kurinjimala Sanctuary was issued in 2006. The Sanctuary comprises of the