

## **Making of the Rowther Empire: Timber Hegemony on the Hills of Travancore**

**Sebastian Joseph**

Assistant Professor & Head  
PG Department & Research Centre in History  
U.C. College, Aluva, Kerala  
&

**Lekha Pillai**

Assistant Professor & Head  
Department of History  
N.S.S. College, Pandalam, Kerala

### **Abstract**

*Angoor Nynar Rowther, an influential timber trader had controlled the timber trade of the native state in the closing decades of the 19th and opening decades of the 20th century through a well organised network and a rapport effectively established with the native government officials and even European agents. Timber regulations, trade agreements and forest policies of the government were made subservient to the interests of this trader. The European companies never challenged his position but benefitted out of the monopoly established by him for effecting a continuous supply of superior quality timber for the British empire. Amazing was the personal relationship that Rowther maintained with top officials in the native state and even had access to the Maharaja of Travancore. Through the relationship that was built up by him, Rowther virtually controlled the timber trade of the native state. In due course we see the emergence of a timber trading zone in Travancore, where the word of Rowther became a reference point for any new comers to the area. The forest department leased out forest lands to the Rowthers and he became the King of timber trade in Travancore.*

**Keywords:** timber trade, forest department, teakwood.

### **Introduction**

Travancore state had maintained very close relation with private timber contractors in the early 19th century owing to reasons – political, economic and ecological. Amazing was the extent to which these contractors enjoyed royal patronage. This is revealed through a number of letters and other correspondences between them and the state authorities. Fixation of agreements relating to timber extraction and trade

were determined within this context of the rapport that these traders enjoyed with the native rulers. Construction of roads and other openings in the regions in and around Kumili, Peermade and adjoining areas was facilitated by the timber contractors. Opening up of these inaccessible areas was highly essential for the traders in maximising their extraction of commercially valuable timber like teak and ebony. Angoor Nynar Rowther and his timber trade operations in the area stand out as unique episodes to uncover the levels of influence a timber contractor enjoyed in deciding timber trade contracts and to a greater extent, even the forest policy of the native state.

Timber trade in Travancore had a long chequered history. Though the native state carried on timber trade from very early period, we have clear evidences of brisk timber trade only from 18thc onwards. The luxurious timber wealth of the princely state was mainly exploited for ship building, railway expansion, for making tea chests, and other domestic purposes. The main species of timber exported from Travancore were Teak, Black wood, Anjily, Ebony and various kinds of jungle woods and soft woods. These timbers were mainly worked from the forests of Konni, Ranni, Shendurney, High Ranges, Malayattur, Shencotta etc. The main channel of export of timber in the state, which has a splendid water resource, was of course rivers themselves.

Rowthers were an influential Muslim family who settled in Travancore and carried on trade in different forest produces. They hailed from Rajapalayam in Tamil Nadu<sup>1</sup>. The earliest known member of this family was Meeravoo Rowther, father of Angoor Nynar Rowther. As early as 1036 ME (1861) he carried on trade in Arecanut and pepper through Kumili and Peermade with the aim of settling himself with his family in Travancore. He also induced others to follow him and to settle themselves in those parts after clearing the jungles by rendering them all help in more than one way<sup>2</sup>. Meeravoo Rowther had four children. They were C. A. Mohammed Nynar Rowther, C. A. Asanuk Khani Rowther, C. A. Angoor Nynar Rowther, and Anumanthamkudi C. A. Meera Rowther. Among them the two younger brothers had actively carried on timber business in Travancore<sup>3</sup>.

### **Angoor Nynar Rowther**

Angoor Nynar Rowther was an influential timber contractor of Travancore who undertook the business from the middle of the 19th c. It is said that most of the lands in Kumili and Peermade belonged to him, which was handed over to him by the Raja of Travancore as reward for his services. The Raja also granted Pattas for these lands.

This is evident from the fact that most of the lands in these places have two pattas. One in the name of Angoor Rowther (Angoor Pattayam) and the other in the name of persons who got the land during the land reform act introduced in 1971<sup>4</sup>. The issue of 'Pattas' evidently points to the influence of Rowthers in Travancore state. Angoor Pattas are living data in providing evidence to the great extent that he decided the forest policy of the native state, which in turn put him in a comfortable situation wherein he extracted timber resources as if its legal custodian.

According to the heirs of Angoor Rowther, the Maharaja of Travancore had granted him 2500 acres of land for Cardamom cultivation and in their view the first organised cardamom cultivation was started in the 1880's by him<sup>5</sup>. According to the survey plan of central vernacular department, Trivandrum, it was found that the land was assigned to Angoor Rowther during the period of 1060-1087 M. E. and he was given pattas for the same land<sup>6</sup>.

Even in issues like boundary disputes between the British and the Travancore state over the High Ranges, Rowthers played a crucial role in resolving them in favour of Travancore by producing critically relevant documents. The boundary dispute between the British government and Travancore regarding the inclusion of the High Ranges with the Kodaikanal hills was settled in favour of Travancore in 1845 because of the evidences produced by him and his family<sup>7</sup>. This proved to be an important evidence for legitimizing the claim of the native state. Thus he and his family acted as the revolving axis which connected the trade between North Travancore and the British territories of Madura and Tinnevely<sup>8</sup>.

He was a tax payer to the British government to the extent of Rs.1100/- yearly and Rs.600/- to the Travancore government<sup>9</sup>. With the opening of roads at Peermade in about 1050 M E (1875) he had taken the contract of supplying cardamom from the hills to the Alleppy Commercial department. Cardamom was also exported to London through Cochin<sup>10</sup>. As soon as the construction of public offices and buildings began he opened shops to supply daily necessities to the people including the coolies. He also brought large number of cows from Madurai to provide milk and meat. When he found that the government gained no profit from the jungle trees he put forward the idea to the then conservator of forest Mr. C. R Vernede to allow him to cut the timbers on the hills at his cost, and sell the same to himself on payment of the premium fixed by them. On the suggestion of the conservator the government approved the contract. Two depots were opened for the

purpose. By this the government began to realize a fair revenue of 10 lakhs of Rupees per annum without incurring any expense<sup>11</sup>. Since then he had been serving the Forest department and the government in different ways besides being a mere contractor. He carried his business in the high range division especially of the Ayyappancoil forest. He was a reliable contractor of the department and fulfilled the terms of his contracts to the full satisfaction of the department even during the period of Mr Vernede and that of Mr Bourdillion<sup>12</sup>. This is clear from the letter of the Supt: of the Cardamom Hills to the Chief Secretary to government, Travancore, which reads as follows:

Angoor Nynar Rowther has been holding the timber contract at Kumili for the last 21 years both when the forest branch of this department was under the conservator and since. He has considerably explored the country and worked honestly and satisfactorily<sup>13</sup>.

It is said that he had been instrumental in colonising the Peermade district and the present prosperity of the district can be owed to him<sup>14</sup>.

He played an important role in the development of Peermade and Kumili. Besides opening the cart roads he was responsible for opening the Kumili- Kottayam Road, Cumbam- Cumbam mettu road upto Kattappana etc mainly for the transportation of timber<sup>15</sup>. Apart from this, it is said that he had played an important role in the construction of Mullaperiyar Dam in 1884. When the government decided to put an end to the construction of the dam owing to certain financial problems it was Angoor Rowther who organised a group of peasants in the Periyar region and moved a petition to the Madura collector for completing the dam work. Though the dam project was initially started as a work for Madura he was well aware of its benefits to the natives and it was due to his efforts that the construction of the dam was restarted<sup>16</sup>.

He possessed lands in different parts of Travancore like Kottayam, Changanasserry, Kanjirappally, Peermade, Kumili, Chakkuvalam, Vandanmedu, Pampadumpara, Mlappara etc. In Kumili alone he possessed 510 acres of land<sup>17</sup>. He had established guest houses in Trivandrum, Peermade, and Kottayam for carrying his timber business. In Cumbam alone he used to store timber in four places. The place where timber was stored was known as 'Petta'<sup>18</sup>. From the forests the timber was brought to Kumili in Pothuvandies (The cart drawn by buffalo). According to Haji A. M. Sultan about 10-15 Pothuvandies came at a time to Kumili<sup>19</sup>. He worked the forests of Ayyappancoil, Cheruthuruthy, Upputhurai, Kakkathodu, Peermade etc<sup>20</sup>. It is said that he had donated 15 cents of land equally to a temple, a church and a

mosque in Kumili town. Donation of lands can be seen as a strategy in winning over those influential religious segments in Travancore state and effectively carrying forward timber trade without challenges from any groups. A village in the name of Angoor Rowther exists even today in Goodalloor known as 'Angoor Village'<sup>21</sup>.

Angoor Nynar Rowther had submitted a petition to the government to grant him and his family 101 acres of land free of tax on Kudumba Poruthi tenure in the cardamom hills as a token of His highness appreciation of the loyal services rendered to the state by the petitioner and his father<sup>22</sup>. The Sarvadhikaryakar had written to the government that it was not a usual practice to give the land free of tax as requested by the petitioner. He added that 101 acres of waste land could be given to him, taxed at the rate of 8 chukrams per acre<sup>23</sup>. But the petitioner pointed out that His Highness the Aiyilliam Maharaja was pleased to grant 500 acres of land to Mr. Maltby the late commercial agent at Alleppey in consideration of his services rendered to the state by his father. His Highness the Raja had sanctioned 101 acres as applied by him. The letter from the Chief Secretary reveals this.

As a token, His Highness the Maharaja on appreciation of the loyal services rendered to the state by Mr. Angoor Rowther of Kumili on several occasions, His Highness had been pleased to sanction a gold bangle being awarded to him and the grant of 101 acres of land<sup>24</sup>.

Mr Rowther had developed a strong rapport with the government of Travancore which was evident from the testimonials provided to him by different personalities, especially the government guests like important officers of the state, the governors of Madras and several European and native officers from other parts who visited the high ranges. One of the testimonies given by Sankara Soobiyer, retired Dewan of Travancore on 1st February 1904 reads thus,

...I have known for several years how he has been making himself useful to the Travancore government in matter of providing supplies and coolies in connection with the visits of Governors and other distinguished personages to the Peermade Hills. During my Dewanship when Lord Wenlock visited those hills as the guest of His Highness the Maharaja, this Rowther was employed to arrange the needful and he gave full satisfaction to the whole party. Last year during my journey to the high range he accommodated me at Vandy Periyar and Kumili and commands considerable local influence and resources, which he uses in a commendable way...<sup>25</sup>

Another testimonial given by O H Benseley, Superintendent of

police on 21st January 1904 was as follows:

On three occasions upon which I have been entrusted with arranging shooting expeditions for governors of Madras, Mr Angoor Rowther has done all the work providing coolies and supplies and has done the business in a thoroughly satisfactory way. Also on several occasions when I have had to make similar arrangements for myself and friends he has undertaken the arrangements with equal success. His Excellency Lord Amphill was pleased to mark his appreciation of Mr. Angoor Rowther's services by bestowing upon him a handsome souvenir.<sup>26</sup>

It seems that Rowther was making frequent arrangements for the visits of governors of Madras to shooting camps in Travancore which could be again seen from the words of O. H. Benseley which goes as follows:

This is, I think, the fourth time you have assisted me in making arrangements for visits of governors of Madras to shooting camps in Travancore. The immense difficulties of providing coolies, supplies for both guests and camp followers and transport, have on all these occasions been overcome by you without a hitch, and I have always found you ready and able to cope with every emergency as it arose. In thanking you for your good work<sup>27</sup>.

Rowther was sent gifts by the governors of Madras for the valuable services provided by him during their visits to the hills. This is evident from the letter sent by Benseley on 19th March 1907, Trivandrum. The matter of the letter was as follows:

I am sending by registered post a Gold and Enamelled Charm which has been sent to me to be presented to you from His Excellency the Governor of Madras, as a souvenir of his visit to the Periyar. Please acknowledge receipt.<sup>28</sup>

The testimonial given by H. A. B. Vernan, Secretary, Board of Revenue, Madras was as follows:

I have been on a shooting trip for the last six weeks and during that time C. A. Angoor Nynar Rowther of Kumili looked after my supplies, most satisfactorily. He is not only a good supplier but also exceedingly friendly and obliging and I have much pleasure in giving him this Testimonial.<sup>29</sup>

Roscoe Allan, Executive Engineer on Rowther,

Angoor Rowther Sahib of Kumili has taken under me one or two large contracts since I came here such as supplying firewood for the tunnel and timber for the works. He has done almost exceedingly well

and always given satisfaction. I always consider myself very fortunate in securing his services as he is a man of vast influence in Travancore and his position sufficiently attests his business capabilities.<sup>30</sup>

These testimonials reveal the vast resources and command which he enjoyed in the hill stations, and how he managed his relationship with the people of high office for getting concessions in the extraction of sylvan resources in the area. It seems that Rowther was running a parallel administration in the hills, like an uncrowned king.

As a contractor of the Kumili depot he had opened several forest roads leading to Kumili depot, which made the high range forest accessible to carts<sup>31</sup>. Between 1076 and 1078, M. E. (1901 and 1903 ACE) he had opened a new cart road from Kumili to Chengra and to Ayyappancoil, a distance of 25 miles, at the cost of Rs 12,000. This made the Kumili depot attractive now to bidders in auction<sup>32</sup>. Hence, the Travancore government had given great consideration in all the dealings with him and his family. In all the business he had actively engaged his brother C.A. Meera Rowther and both carried the business together till the death of Angoor Rowther. The government and the Forest department were actively engaging them by providing all facilities for the exploitation of the forest in the high range division.

One of the agreements entered into with Mr Angoor Rowther was for the collection and delivery of Teak, Blackwood and other jungle wood from the forest of the Thodupuzha range, Kottayam division. The contract was given for an approximate amount of Rs 38,000.<sup>33</sup>

An agreement was entered into with Mr. Angoor Rowther, for the collection and removal of teak timber on payment of mel-labhom<sup>34</sup> for three years from 1088<sup>35</sup>. Even after the execution of the agreement it was evident that the government and the forest department were very eager to make changes in the agreement on demand of the contractor. Here in the above agreement Rowther made a demand on the change of the size of various timber parts which depends upon the local demand that regulate the business and profit of the contractor.<sup>36</sup>

Another example was the request made by the conservator of forest Rao Sahib M Rama Rao Garu to the government to approve the arrangements involving a deviation from the terms of the contract entered into with Mr. Angoor Rowther. Here the original agreement was for the delivery and purchase of 96,000 c.ft a year among which he had to supply and purchase the timber in proportion of 75% of Teak and Blackwood and 25% of jungle wood. But later the contractor had given a petition to the conservator requesting the conservator to allow

him to supply and purchase of Teak and Blackwood instead of 25% jungle wood as per the agreement. The reason he stated for the above was that the collection of jungle wood would be a loss to him due to the following reasons<sup>37</sup>:

- 1) There was a wide distance between the felling area and the consumption centre.
- 2) Lack of transport facility
- 3) Low price for jungle wood due to competition from Messer's Aspinwall and co.

Therefore the conservator begs to the government that Mr. Rowther was one of the most energetic of their contractors and he had not been known to shirk a work he had undertaken to perform, so that the approval for the above changes should be considered positively. He also stated that

There are now lying in the forests about Ayyappancoil large quantities of Teak out in previous years which are getting deteriorated by exposure and is liable to be destroyed by fire. As it is more advantageous to government to work down this timber to the depot than felling green jungle wood, I have ordered the Divisional Forest Officer to allow the contractor to work down these old teak timbers to the depot in lieu of the jungle wood<sup>38</sup>.

The total quantity of jungle wood timber he had to work down during the two years according to the original agreement was 16000 c.ft against which he had delivered only 4515c.ft in 1085. For the year 1086 1000 c.ft of jungle wood trees were marked for felling which will give a total of 5515 c.ft of timber leaving a deficit of 10485 c.ft for the 2 years. The conservator further states that if the old teak referred to above does not make up this deficiency the contractor would be allowed to fell fresh teak and Blackwood, though he pointed that cutting of valuable trees alone from a mixed forest is not desirable from a sylvicultural point of view<sup>39</sup>.

Such favours could be seen in changing even the methods of extraction. During the time of Kadir Sheik Meera Rowther and his partner they had complained that coupe sale system proved to be a great loss to them while working in the High Ranges. On the petition from him, the government cancelled the coupe sale system and sanctioned the working on the previous Mel-labhom system. The contract was for three years and they were allowed to remove 25,000 c.ft of timber every year paying a Mel-labhom at annas 9 and pies 6 per c.ft for teak



and Blackwood sawn and Annas 3 and pies 9 for teak and Blackwood axed and Re 1 and anna 1 per dozen of teak fellows<sup>40</sup>.

When Angoor Rowther complained about the hardship and heavy cost due to the levy of toll at Kumili frontier, the conservator had made a recommendation to the government for some concessions as a result of which the government allowed a deduction in the Mel-labhom due by the contractor, to the extent of toll paid by him<sup>41</sup>. But later during the time of his brother Mr. C. A. Meera Rowther the conservator requested the sanction for concession to the inhabitants of Kumili in the matter of payment of tolls, which was purely aimed at mitigating the sufferings of the contractors<sup>42</sup>. This can be understood from the words of the chief engineer, Kumili in response to the letter from government who enquired him about the need of the concession. He stated that Kumili was a small village with everything contained within the two gates and the residents of the village other than the timber contractors had no business or public avocation to conduct outside the gates. Timber contractors were the only men who suffer any hardship. The best way out of the difficulty was that the conservator of forest should give rebates to the contractors to whom it pressed hard<sup>43</sup>. If we analyse all the correspondence between the government and the forest department it is clear that conservators often make recommendations on behalf of the contractors to get sanction from the government on matters which make conditions favourable and profitable to the contractors.

In between the correspondence of the Forest department with the government regarding the issue, Angoor Rowther died on 27th May 1913<sup>44</sup> even before the first sanction for the reduction in the Mel-labhom came. So another letter was sent to the government by the conservator to sanction the amount of Rs. 220 being reduced from the Mel-labhom of the late contractor's legal heir Mr. Anumanthamkudi Meera Rowther<sup>45</sup>. Another example of the breach of agreement was that one document spoke of the contractor cutting more quantities than those prescribed in the agreement. As per the agreement the contractor could remove a minimum of 40,000 c.ft of timber and a maximum of 50,000 c.ft<sup>46</sup>. Contrary to the agreement the contractor and his agents had removed 56,108.396 cft of timber for which no action was seen to have taken in the records against the late contractor's brother, who had later taken over the contract of Angoor Rowther<sup>47</sup>.

On 7th Kanny 1089 M. E. (23rd September 1913) a contract was entered into between Anumanthamkudi Meera Rowther and the conservator of forest on behalf of the Travancore government. According

to the agreement the contractor could collect from the Nagarampara and cardamom hills reserves in the high range division, 40,000 c.ft of teak axed and 50,000 c.ft of teak sawn annually for two years on payment of Mel-labhom rate at 7 annas 7 pies per c.ft for axed logs and 8 annas per c.ft for sawn materials<sup>48</sup>.

### **Suggestion to change the Mel-labhom to coupe sale**

This (1914, 1915) was the period of the First World War. During this period the conservator frequently wrote to the government for making changes in the existing timber trading system. A keen analysis shows that during this period there was a great demand for timber and the Forest department was very eager to get outside contracts and increase maximum profit. One suggestion from the part of the conservator was to change the existing Mel-labhom system of timber sales. He stated that this system was an antiquated and wasteful one. This should be withdrawn and introduce a more modern and popular system of selling tree-stands in coupe.<sup>49</sup> A letter from divisional forest officer showed the limitations of the system. The letter reads:

I went and inspected his felling area as also the materials collected by him. The timber is felled from a place 6 miles from Ayyappancoil and 25 miles from Kumili. The forest here is very rich and abounds in teak, Blackwood, Venteak, Irul and other species. But at present teak alone is felled by the contractor as there is no demand for any other species in the British market. Even in the case of teak, as the contractor has only to pay the Mel-labhom at the depot, only the best portion of a tree is converted and taken to the depot. The top ends and other smaller or slightly unsound portions being in most case rejected.<sup>50</sup>

The contractor enjoys the monopoly of collection and purchase of timber under the Mel-labhom system. Under this system he had to pay only fixed rates of royalty to government on the timbers actually removed through the depot, either in logs or in materials<sup>51</sup>. The financial aspect of this system was not advantageous to the government. So its continuance could not be justified even on consideration of income or profit<sup>52</sup>.

### **Coupe sale system**

Under the coupe sale system, also called the Lump sum sale system, the contractors had to pay for the whole of the marked trees in a coupe. As the purchaser pay for the whole of the marked timber it was his interest and look out to attempt the maximum utility of the purchased timber<sup>53</sup>. In the words of the conservator “to secure fair competition and give petty contractors and small capitalists, a chance of

purchase, the coupe may be had in one or two small lots, and sold away”<sup>57</sup>. Until this time, the period of contract was for 2 or 3 years. But now the conservator raised the objection for selling the coupe contracts for several years in advance. He states that “the whole world is in demand of timber and timber value is day by day increasing and if we bind ourselves at a fixed rate for so many years the government may be losing heavily”<sup>55</sup>. From analysing the documents, one can understand that other contractors were also coming into the business against which Meera Rowther had sent a long petition to the government along with a testimony of Angoor Rowther. In the petition he stated the services rendered by him and his family, especially his brother Angoor Rowther, to the government of Travancore<sup>56</sup>.

In 1918 the Maharaja had sanctioned an agreement with Anumanthamkudi Meera Rowther for the purchase of 701 marked trees from a compact block opposite Thattathicooty in the Ayyappancoil forest for a lump sum of British Rupees 32,000<sup>57</sup>. In the same year another contract was sanctioned by the government regarding the sale of marked teak trees in the Ayyappancoil forest and at Perinjerkutty in the Vandanmedu range of the High range division to Anumanthamkudi Meera Rowther and Messer’s Kadir Sheik Meera Rowther and Kala Rowther respectively for lump sum offers.<sup>58</sup> In 1915 His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore granted a contract for the purchase of 800 teak trees in a coupe in Ayyappancoil forest in the high range division to Meera Rowther at the rate of 15 annas and 9 pies per c.ft<sup>59</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The paper explains how Angoor was able to establish his timber trade hegemony in the regions of Peermade and Kumili. It may be their involvement in the boundary dispute of Travancore that made the Raja of Travancore ‘at their will’. From there onwards we can see the Raja of Travancore freely donating lands to the Rowthers which reached amazing proportions during the times of Angoor Rowther. How he maintained his relation with the government is evident from the testimonials provided to him by Governors of Madras and other officers and guests of the Travancore government. Rowther was making inroads in to the personal and private spaces of the powerful elites, native and foreign in building a rapport that was solid and unquestionable. It was through these relationships that he tried to penetrate into important government policies regarding timber extraction and thereby getting these policies manipulated according to his whims and fancies.

It is crucial in placing the activities of Rowther against the broad

contextual background of global trade in timber which was controlled by British administrative networks, western scientific notions and principles designed and conceived for catering demands from the colonial industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth century. The period when Rowther was operating his timber trade in Travancore coincides with the relentless search for timber in the colonies by the British. Travancore, the native state which was having a vast reserve of sylvan resources was very much revealed through the gaze of the colonial authorities and a system which was to serve the imperial interests was put in order there. Regulations were enacted by the native raja in the forest administration in tandem with the policies of the Empire. As we are aware, these regulations resulted in the consolidation of the authority of the state over forests and caused severe forest destruction purportedly aiming at progress. The whole Indian scenario was obviously moving in the direction of commercialisation of forest resources under the pretext of conservation. Angoor was able to tap this structural opportunity and turned the timber trade of the region as a personal domain with unconditional patronage from the raja.

Progress in the hills was cited as a reason by Rowther for getting more and more concessions in timber trade from the native state and these claims when certified by letters and other correspondence of the forest department won for him free and uncontrolled access to these pristine lands and complete sway over the extraction of valuable timber in the area. This idea of progress comes into the same line with claims of the British, who were also of the view that clearing of forests for plantations and other timber extractive activities were a sign of 'progress'. Maharaja of Travancore certainly was impressed with such claims, thereby facilitating brisk timber trade in the native state through contractors like the Rowthers in the Kumili- Peermade regions. What was emerging beneath these developments in the hills of Travancore was the *Rowther Empire* of timber trade.

#### Notes

1. Personal testimony with Haji A M Sultan, Kandathil Veedu, Kumili. Interview conducted on 09/07/2016
2. Humble petition of Angoor Nynar Rowther, Periyar Bungalow Kumili, to His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore..StateArchives ,Trivandrum. Here after SAT
3. Personal testimony, with Haji A M Sultan, op.cit.
4. Ibid.

5. Personal testimony with Mushtaq Ahmed, grandson of C. A. Meera Rowther. Interview conducted on 9/07/2016.
6. Personal testimony with Haji A M Sultan, op.cit.
7. They have shown the evidence that the cardamom in the high range were collected and handed over to the government of Travancore for the kudevila. This served as important evidence in the determination of the dispute in favour of Travancore.
8. Petition from C. A. Meera Rowther, op.cit.
9. Ibid.
10. Personal testimony with Mushtaq Ahmed, op.cit.
11. Ibid.
12. Petition from Angoor Nynar Rowther, timber depot contractor , Kmili, to the Maharaja. SAT
13. Letter from the Supt: of the Cardamom Hills, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Travancore, letter No.734 dtd 21st July 1908. SAT
14. Petition from C. A. Meera Rowther to the Maharaja. SAT
15. Personal testimony with P. H. M. Salim, Retired DFO, Rose Dale Kumili. Interview conducted on 9/07/2016.
16. Personal testimony with Mushtaq Ahmed, op.cit.
17. Personal testimony with Haji A. M. Sultan, op.cit.
18. Personal testimony with Mushtaq Ahmed, op.cit.
19. Haji A. M. Sultan op.cit.
20. Personal testimony with P. H. M. Salim, op.cit.
21. Personal testimony with Jaffar Khan. Interview conducted on 9/07/2016
22. Petition of C. A. Angoor Nynar Rowther, op.cit.
23. Letter from Ayyappan Pillai the Sarvadikaryakar, to the government No.6457/1907. SAT
24. Letter from the Chief Secretary to the government, to the superintendent and Magistrate of Cardamom hills No.6559, dated 28/10/1907. SAT
25. Testimonials on C. A. Angoor Nynar Rowther, Cumbam & Kumili, 1911, Sri Sarathambal press Madura. SAT
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.

## Making of the Rowther Empire

31. Petition of C. A. Angoor Nynar Rowther, op.cit.
32. Ibid.
33. Letter from the conservator, to the chief secretary to government No: 882, dtd 22/11/1904. SAT
34. Mel-labhom is calculated as the tariff value minus the kole-vila due to the contractor.
35. Conservators letter to chief secretary to government, Trivandrum No: 2292/89 dtd 10-06-14. SAT
36. Ibid.
37. Letter from the conservator of forests, Rao Sahib M. Rama Rao Garu, to the Chief Secretary to Government Trivandrum. Letter No.5806/1086 dtd 29 May 1911. SAT
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Conservators letter, Development file No:272/23 B No: 23..SAT
41. Conservators letter, op.cit., No: 2292/89
42. Conservators letter to the chief secretary to government Trivandrum No: 1327 of 1090 dtd 4-6-1915. SAT
43. Letter from the chief engineer, Kumili to the chief secretary to government No:879 dtd 15-5-1915, SAT
44. Conservators letter,op.cit.,No:2292/89
45. Conservators letter to chief secretary No:5349 of 1089 dtd 10-06-14. SAT
46. Conservators letter, op.cit., No:2292/89
47. Ibid.
48. Agreement between Meera Rowther and the conservator of forest, Travancore. SAT
49. Letter from the conservator, to the chief secretary to government, Trivandrum NO:3334 of 1090 dtd 4-10-1915.SAT
50. Letter from the DFO, High Range Division, to the conservator No: 5137 of 1090. SAT
51. Letter from the conservator, op.cit.,NO:3334of 1090. SAT
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Letter from the conservator to the chief secretary to government TVM