Chapter 5

STATE, FORESTS AND GRAZIERS: IMPACT OF COLONIAL FORESTRY ON PEASANTS, GUJARS AND BHOTIYAS

To the people of UP hills cattle rearing was as important as agriculture. The settlement officer of Garhwal wrote:

the people of Garhwal are no less pastoral than agricultural, and in the parts of the north the former is their predominant character. Thus at the last settlement it is noted that Harmal in Pindarpar is a bher ka mulk (sheep country) while Jhaliya in the same patti is bakriyon Ka gaon (goat village).... ¹

Cattle rearing requires extensive grazing and the use of far away pastures. Forests were extensively used for this purpose. With the reservation of forests entry into the forests became restricted. Rules were formulated to regulate grazing. Grazing rights were specified and recorded. This chapter will discuss these rules and their impact on the people. Apart from villagers who were agriculturists, Gujar pastoralists and Bhotiya traders also grazed their cattle in the forests. They were also covered under the new grazing rules. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first will discuss the impact of grazing rules on the agriculturists. The second will discuss how colonial forestry affected Gujars. And the third section will account for the impact of grazing rules on the Bhotiyas.

¹. SRG, 1896, para 25.
Graziers and Meadows: Seasonal Vertical Movements:

People of the UP hills practised seasonal migration. People living in the lower Himalayas migrated with their cattle to Tarai-Bhabar in the winter and people living in the interior used highland pastures in the summer.

In Garhwal, wherever high pastures were available, it was the usual practice to take village cattle there in the summer. People built their summer cattle stations variously known as *kharak*, *chhan* etc., in these pastures. Cattle were lodged in these summer stations during the hot weather. These *kharaks* were widespread throughout the middle Himalaya. In the extreme north there are some famous meadows known as *bugyals* and *payars*. These are above 10,000 feet and lie between the forest frontiers and the snowline. Baidani near Wan and Badrinath are amongst the famous *payars*. A large number of cattle grazed in these *payars* during the summer. When village cattle moved to their summer stations the grass around the villages was carefully preserved.\(^1\) This grass was cut and stored for the winter when pastures were snow-covered. Thus the vertical migration was a strategy to preserve scarce resources for lean seasons and to regenerate grazing grounds around villages.

A similar practice of vertical migration but in the opposite direction was

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practised in Nainital district. Nainital was in the lower Himalaya. From here the people of hill pattis took their cattle down to the Bhabar in the winter. There they were to remain in the temporary sheds from October to May. Similarly, cattle migrated to the Tarai from the neighbouring plain areas. In the Tarai there were two types of graziers. First, there were those who seasonally migrated there and erected temporary sheds. Second, there were the residents of the area who drove their cattle daily to the grazing grounds and returned to their villages at night.

The Jaunsaris, the residents of Jaunsar-Bawar in Dehradun district, migrated down to the Kalsi block between November to March each year and built their temporary sheds (Chapper) there. In the later colonial period this migration was directed more to the areas where there were less restrictions. The Jaunsaris were in the habit of roaming with their cattle over an extensive area.

These seasonal migrations were practised without adversely affecting agricultural activities. Migrations to the Tarai-Bhabar took place after the sowing of the rabi crop. Migration to the summer cattle stations in the middle Himalayas was usually after the sowing of Khari. These were short distance seasonal migrations undertaken usually by only a few members of a family. Since the distances


4. Spdt., Tarai district, to the Commr., Kumaun Division, 23-10-1884, file 20/1889-90, Box 50, COR, RA Nainital.

were small, members of the family shuttled between two sets of dwellings.

This practice of seasonal migration was affected by colonial forestry. With the reservation of forests access to pastures was restricted. As early as 1867 Major Ramsay, the Commissioner of Kumaun and the first Forest Conservator in the region, wrote:

As yet cattle have not in all cases been excluded from the tract recently made over to the Forest Department, because some time must be allowed to the villagers to make other arrangements. A great many cattle sheds have been removed from the vicinity of the sal forests of the outer range between Haldwani and the Sarda river and the cross road has been declared the boundary nearly the whole way.\(^6\)

In his 1868 report he wrote: "In another year or two I hope that all Kumaun valuable sal forests will be as free from cattle as those of Garhwal."\(^7\) Thus all efforts were made to exclude cattle from forests and restrict their movements right from the beginning. Later strict rules were framed to control seasonal migrations. Temporary summer and winter cattle stations were excluded from forests. Rules provided for the closure of *Kharaks* for extended periods. Any village could be excluded from using *Kharak*. For erection of cattle sheds, particularly in the *chir* regeneration areas, permission was to be taken from the Divisional Forest Officer (hereafter DFO). Cultivation around cattle sheds in the forests was prohibited.\(^8\) In the long run these restrictions discouraged people from taking recourse to seasonal

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\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) See Notification no. 761/xiv-83 of 1914, quoted in the *WP for the North Garhwal For. Div.*, 1921, p.87.
vertical migration with their cattle. However, restricting cattle movements to faraway pastures was only one aspect of the new forest regime. It introduced a much wider range of restrictions. Grazing rights were thoroughly redefined. The number of cattle allowed for free grazing in the forests was specified.

The Regime of Controls

Customary Practices: When cattle were not taken to distant pastures they grazed in the forests around the village. The pastures around a village was commonly shared by all residents. Every morning village herds were driven to the ridges of the neighbouring hills and at sunset they were brought home. When pastures dried up cattle were fed on stored grass. After crop harvests the straw was stored. Grass and straw were stacked on poles or nearby trees to be used during scarcity. Cattle also grazed on the fields after harvesting. Loppings supplemented fodder supply.9

Sparse population and the large distance between villages meant that pastures were extensive enough to be commonly shared. But when outside herds came in, then a situation of conflict arose. Some times the locals taxed outsiders. But this was confined to famous meadows like the Baidani payar which attracted people from large distances. The people of Wan levied a tax of one rupee per animal on the ponies which were brought here. But in return they also tended the ponies. This arrangement broke down when owners of ponies started sending their own men to look after the ponies. Ponies were also brought from as far as Srinagar.

(Garhwal) to graze in the famous payar of Badrinath. These animals sometimes destroyed crops of the Mana people, and this created bitterness. Other payars were mostly grazed by sheep and goats.\(^{10}\)

Large areas of pasture and sparse population made it impractical to control grazing. There was a tax known as ghikar under the Raja. It was a tax on cattle and was not a grazing tax. The nomenclature suggests that it was a tax on the milk yield of cattle. There were other cesses as well, like gobar and puchchiya. Thus the purpose was not to regulate grazing but to tax the yield of cattle. In the Tarai-Bhabar, however, a grazing tax known as gai-charai was collected but only from the plains people who brought their cattle to graze. Under British rule this tax also began to be collected from the hill people migrating to the Tarai-Bhabar.\(^{11}\)

**Impact of Grazing on Forests:** This situation continued till the 1860s. It was in the 1860s and 70s, well after half-a-century of rule, that the British began controlling grazing. It was now argued that grazing was harmful to forests. Animals were perceived as a threat to young saplings. Grazing was intensely opposed in the regeneration areas. There were, however, some British officials who had different ideas. They argued that exclusion of grazing from forests resulted in the growth of tall grass which retarded natural regeneration. The tall grass also hindered the

\(^{10}\) Ibid.

\(^{11}\) HDNWP vol.I part II pp. 846-47.
growth of new saplings. The Deputy Conservator of the Tons Forest Division, observed that in areas open for grazing there was a magnificent crop of seedlings of all ages in comparison to areas which were closed for grazing for as long as 10 years.\textsuperscript{12}

The tall grass in the closed forests, it was argued, was also sensitive to fire. Fires were more damaging to forests than light grazing and it required costly fire-control measures.\textsuperscript{13} The Conservator of Forest, Western Circle, found light grazing advantageous particularly in the \textit{deodar} regeneration areas. Restriction on grazing, he complained, had produced heavy and luxurious weeds in many areas.\textsuperscript{14}

These arguments did not influence the dominant view of the Forest Department. Grazing continued to be strictly regulated in the reserves and virtually excluded from the regeneration areas. More than conservation it allowed the state to strengthen control over forests. This was seen as essential for effective commercial exploitation of forests.

\textbf{Grazing Rights:} The Indian Forest Act of 1878 created the basis of new grazing rights. It provided a broad outline of rules on which different Provinces based their laws. Accordingly, the government of the North Western Provinces and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} E. Mac Moir, 'Note' in \textit{IF}, Vol V (1882) pp. 274-77.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Anon., 'Note' in \textit{IF}, Vol. XI (1885) pp. 560-61
\item \textsuperscript{14} E.A. Smythies to Spdt., Dehradun, 4-5-1936, file 55/1933-38, Box 106, PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun.
\end{itemize}
Oudh issued detailed rules to regulate grazing.\textsuperscript{15} It provided that a list of cattle was to be prepared for every village and the maximum number of cattle to be allowed free grazing was to be determined. The number thus determined was to be apportioned among the individual rightholders and they were to be issued passes. For every 100 cattle there was to be a herdsman. In case of infringement of rules cattle was to be impounded.

In UP hills Colonel Garstin carried out an enquiry into the grazing rights.\textsuperscript{16} It was a difficult job since it was not an easy task to determine how many cattle were to be allowed free grazing and where they were to be given grazing rights. To the colonial state these were simple legalistic questions involving rights and privileges. But to the people these were complex issues. The entire system of recording of rights was beyond their comprehension. This was the first time that such rights were being recorded in forests where they earlier had free access. The process of recording of rights, in fact, had a deep psychic impact on the people. It was because of this impact that this question remained alive and was debated for long. The feeling of dispossession later contributed to the rise of forest protests.

The Officiating Deputy Conservator of Forest, Ganges Forest Division, found many serious mistakes in the list of rights recorded by Garstin. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
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15. See rules attached to Goudge's letter, Dec. 1896 proceedings no.5 in File 6, Box 61, COR, R.A. Nainital.

\end{quote}
Several villages, notably in Udepur forests, had always exercised rights of grazing in certain forests but had not taken the trouble to get themselves recorded in Colonel Garstin's list. Of the existence of right there could be no doubt. On the other hand villages with no rights at all, and far from the forests, had got themselves recorded. Consequently when an excess number of cattle were found grazing prohibitive dues in accordance with the Government orders were levied, and these could only be exacted from those villages which were recorded as having rights, though, as a matter of fact they, never grazed cattle there at all, consequently they desired to get their names expunged.17

This underlines the difficulty faced by the people. The Deputy Conservator suggested that the names of the real rightholders should be entered in the list of rights. But the Conservator was of the opinion that since the villagers had been entered as rightholders by Garstin no changes could be made and that they had to bear the consequences of their action.18

The recording of rights by Garstin gave rise to many controversies. Later many corrections were made in the list and it was updated after cattle censuses, but many fundamental questions remained unresolved. One of the questions was: how many cattle were to be allowed free grazing in the reserved forests? This calculation depended on an estimate of the number of cattle a family required. J.E. Goudge was assigned the task of resolving these questions in Nainital and Ranikhet forest divisions.

Goudge had to work out figures of the area cultivated by one plough and the number of cattle that were necessary for this. Free grazing right in the reserves

18. Ibid.
was to be given only for cattle necessary for cultivation. After observation Goudge found it difficult to arrive on an uniform figure per plough for the entire region as it depended on factors like quality of soil, availability of irrigation, etc. On well-watered fields the soil was heavy and difficult to plough while dry fields on high mountains had light soil which was easy to plough. Goudge decided that on an average one plough was required for cultivating 2 acres of land.19 He convinced his senior officers with great difficulty that unlike in the plains where one plough can cultivate 5 acres in the hills only 2 acres could be cultivated.20 However, it was difficult to ascertain the number of cattle that should accompany one yoke of oxen. The number of cattle were not related to family size and landholding. Ultimately he decided in favour of an average of five animals per plough. The animals were to be two oxen, two cows and one buffalo or one cow and two buffaloes.21 The question remained contentious. And as Table 5.1 shows, the number of cattle allowed for free grazing varied by applying different criterias. It was argued that the number of cattle should not be decided on the basis of the number of plough but on the average number required per family. People demanded more cattle per family to be allowed free grazing. N.C. Stiffe, the Forest Settlement


20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.
### Table 5.1

List Showing the Total Number of Cattle Which Would have the Right to Graze in the Forest of the Naini Tal Division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Patti</th>
<th>According to the specification of enumeration of 1890</th>
<th>According to the specification of enumeration of 1895</th>
<th>Allowing 5 animals per plough</th>
<th>Allowing 5 animals per 2 acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walla Athaguli</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malla tikhun</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1641</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>2365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaligarh</td>
<td>3299</td>
<td>2477</td>
<td>2310</td>
<td>3260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kairaraw</td>
<td>2511</td>
<td>2091</td>
<td>2780</td>
<td>2405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walla Boraraw</td>
<td>2810</td>
<td>2965</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>3125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talla Sinnara</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhurabhtu</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malli Doti</td>
<td>2396</td>
<td>3370</td>
<td>2305</td>
<td>3050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chauthan</td>
<td>3046</td>
<td>3031</td>
<td>2985</td>
<td>3450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talla Koshyan</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>1130</td>
<td>1815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Talla</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>1005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malla Koklasen</td>
<td>3879</td>
<td>3759</td>
<td>3425</td>
<td>3335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malla Silaur</td>
<td>3441</td>
<td>2840</td>
<td>3485</td>
<td>3655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talla Silaur</td>
<td>1713</td>
<td>2491</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>3185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walla Athaugli</td>
<td>2980</td>
<td>1503</td>
<td>2715</td>
<td>4255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruini</td>
<td>1663</td>
<td>1413</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarson</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td>1109</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaugan</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanarkhoo</td>
<td>2449</td>
<td>1667</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malla Tikhura</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talla Tikhura</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahar Chakhata</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>2914</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhanaikot</td>
<td>1536</td>
<td>2692</td>
<td>1375</td>
<td>1235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43593</td>
<td>44265</td>
<td>41695</td>
<td>48850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** See Letter no. 42/F.S.O, 20 Sept. 1896 of J.E. Goudge, Forest Settlement Officer, Naini Tal to Commr, Kumaun Division, December 1896 progs. 4 in file 6, Box 61, COR, RA Nainital.
Officer of Almora wrote in 1915 that people wanted 7 cattle per family.\textsuperscript{22}

In the Tarai-Bhabar the criteria for ascertaining the number of cattle to be allowed free grazing was different. Before 1886 all plough cattle used in the Bhabar for agriculture purposes, and all cattle belonging to tenants cultivating over 20 bighas (6.4 acres) of land grazed free of all dues.\textsuperscript{23} Other cattle belonging to village artisans, hillmen (who brought down cattle, but did not take up cultivation in the Bhabar), carriers, plainsmen from Moradabad, Bareilly and Bijnor districts, etc., grazed in the forests on payment of a fee.\textsuperscript{24} In 1886, H.G. Ross, the Commissioner, argued against allowing free grazing to the cattle of tenants in case their number exceeded a specified limit and suggested that the number specified should be based on the area under cultivation.\textsuperscript{25} Accordingly, grazing fee was increased to restrict entry and the number of cattle to be allowed free grazing was determined. The grazing rate per annum for buffalo was increased from 6 annas to 8 annas and for cows & bullocks from 2 to 4 annas. For every 20 bighas of cultivated land 5 buffaloes or 10 cows or bullocks and one pony were allowed free grazing. All young cattle under one year of age were allowed free grazing.\textsuperscript{26} These

\textsuperscript{22} Stiffe, to Commr., no 15, 9-10-1915, FD file. 177/1916, Box 218, UPSA Lucknow.

\textsuperscript{23} The Tarai-Bhabar Forest Settlement Report, in file 32/1899-1900, Box 32, COR, RA Nainital, p.6.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p.6.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p.7.
rules continued till 1896 when tenants cultivating over 20 bighas of land were allowed to graze some cattle at half-rates, in addition to those which were allowed free grazing. Of 1,23,316 heads of cattle belonging to tenants in the Bhabar estate 46,506 paid grazing dues and 53,910 were allowed free grazing.\textsuperscript{27} The number of cattle allowed free grazing declined drastically between 1892 and 1902: in the Bhabar buffaloes from 10,966 to 2,768, cows and bullocks from 64,889 to 47,865 and ponies from 3,443 to 3,277; in the Tarai buffaloes from 20,403 to 10,711, cows \& bullocks from 1,18,984 to 73,153 and ponies from 1,501 to 750.\textsuperscript{28}

**Control over Cattle Movements:** For the Forest Department controlling the number of cattle in the forest was just not enough. Control over their movements in the forest was also essential, otherwise there remained always the possibility of cattle trespassing into prohibited territories. Therefore a system of herdsmen was introduced. Grazing rules clearly prescribed that for every 100 cattle there was to be a herdsman no younger than 16 years of age. He had to have passes for the cattle he was incharge of. The herdsman was liable to be fined if the cattle under him were in excess of the number specified in his passes. Cattle grazing without herdsman or infringement of any regulation was punishable: the cattle could then be impounded by forest officials.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}, p.47.

\textsuperscript{29} For grazing rules see, Dec. 1896 progs.5, in file 6, Box 61 COR, RA Nainital.
Keeping a herdsman was new to the hills. Unlike in the plains there were no herdsmen among the agriculturists in the hills. Often children accompanied the cattle. And cattle were free to roam around and graze in the forests. Sometimes the herds were just left in the forests only to be collected in the evening. The compulsions of the new rules were therefore vehemently resented. Many officials were themselves skeptical of the new rule. I.D. Campbell, the Superintendent of the Tarai-Bhabar wrote that it was impossible for a single herdsman to keep an eye on and control so many cattle. Even if cattle stray, he argued, they hardly did any damage.30

The new rules allowed the misuse of power by forest officials. The Forest guards were given a wide range of powers which made it easy for them to blackmail herdsmen. It was very difficult for a herdsman to prove his innocence. Some administrators felt that if these rules were to be strictly enforced it would give rise to bitterness between the peasants and the Forest Department.31 Therefore, it was suggested that these rules should be implemented in stages.32 Henry Ramsay, the Commissioner of Kumaun Division, suggested that there should be no punishment

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., see Letter of Commr. to Secy NWP&O, 10 April. 1901.
for trespassing. 33

The Forest Department overlooked such suggestions. After a prolonged discussion it agreed to reduce the number of cattle under a herdsman from 100 to 50. 34 However, this did not satisfy the people. Even the subsequent changes made in this rule in 1914 were found unacceptable. Mr. Tara Datt Gairola, Legislative Council member from Garhwal, in his speech at the floor of the house, expressed great anger against grazing rules. He argued that in hill villages small children were usually sent with the cattle, and it was not possible for such children to keep all the passes safely, show them to forest officers and render assistance in enumerating cattle. 35 Gairola's statement in 1917 shows that children were still being sent to herd cattle. The Forest Department perhaps found it difficult to implement this provision.

There were proposals to exclude cattle altogether from the forests. One way of keeping flocks away from the forests was to substitute grazing by grass-cutting. It was argued by forest officials that grass-cutting had various advantages. Apart from excluding cattle altogether from the forests it could furnish additional

33. See Letter to Secy NWP&O, 24 March 1879, file 2/1889-90, Box 55, COR, RA Nainital. Ramsay also expressed the view that herdsman could not take care of all cattle in the hills. Strict enforcement would lead to bitterness and embittered people could set forests on fire.

34. See Amendment Rules in file 7/1901-03, Box 142, NT Coll. Record, RA Nainital.

35. See Mr. Gairola's speech on 10 Oct. 1917 in the Legislative Council, pp.1122-23, quoted in FD file 112/1917, Box 225, UPSA Lucknow. Similar sentiments were expressed by other leaders as well. See. Pant, Forest Problems.
revenue. A detailed enquiry showed that substitution of grazing by grass-cutting would indeed be extremely advantageous to the Forest Department. It would protect the forest from 'undesirable encroachments' of villagers, help in the regeneration of areas, and save forests from undesirable lopping. However the move was opposed by some officials.

It was argued that a substantial enhancement of the grazing fee would eventually force people to opt for fodder cutting. The government discussed this issue at the provincial level and found the proposal difficult to implement. High grazing fees would have been seen by the people as an infringement of their grazing right. And this would have caused resentment and resistance.

**Lopping Restrictions:** Closely associated with grazing was lopping of trees. Whenever there was a shortage of grass trees were lopped for fodder. The Forest Department considered lopping 'harmful' for trees and therefore imposed many


37. Ibid., See Opinion of the Director, Land Record and Agriculture. He advised against entertaining any such idea. See also the Government Letter, 8 June 1911.

38. See Letter no.579 of B.B. Osmaston to chief Secy UP, 14 Feb 1909 in August 1909 progs. 14, and April 1909 progs. 12 to 17 in FD file 112/1908, Box 55, UPSA Lucknow. The issue of substituting grazing by grass cutting was discussed in the Board of Forestry meeting in March 1913. The meeting discussed this issue in details but finally found its implementation difficult. See letter no.44, of Deputy Conservator of Forest, Kumaun Circle to Lt. Gov. 12 Aug. 1913 in Feb. 1914 progs. 52, and Feb. 1914 progs. 66, in FD file 143/1913, Box 156, UPSA Lucknow.
restrictions. There were rules which prescribed the species, and the height and girth of trees to be lopped. Against these restrictions some officials argued that lopping was not harmful. Non-lobbing of broadleaved trees, they pointed out, obstructed growth of conifers which were commercially viable species.39 Lopping restrictions continued and at times lopping privileges were totally withdrawn. When withdrawal of lopping privileges were proposed in some forests of the Tarai-Bhabar, the Superintendent of the Tarai-Bhabar opposed the move. He argued that lopping was essential for people and while protecting the haldu tree was justified there was no need to protect 'valueless' species.40

To develop plantations large areas were closed to grazing. At times closed areas ranged from 5 to 10 percent of the total area of the forests. The duration of closure depended upon the nature of the crop. But this was always decided after considerable debate amongst the officials. Often alternative sites were provided for grazing to villagers, but they frequently complained about such measures.41 Sometimes people were deprived of grazing rights as punishment. When the Bhowali forest block in the Naini Tal Forest Division was set on fire, villagers


40. See comments of spdt. on the proposal of the Conservator, 15 Nov. 1905, See also his other comments, in file 8/1903-07, Box 143, Nainital CR, RA Nainital.

41. See Letter no. L.G. 38 of Officiating Conservator of Forest, Western Circle to Chief Secy. UP, Oct.1916 progs. 9 to 16 in FD file 107/1916, Box 214 UPSA Lucknow.
were denied grazing rights for 20 years.\textsuperscript{42} Sometimes no specific reason was given for closures. One-third of Chandipur forest in Dehradun Forest Division (664 acres of the 2209 acres) was suddenly closed. Instead of giving alternative sites for grazing the number of cattle allowed to graze was reduced. For Sahenpur village the number of buffaloes allowed was reduced from 108 to 70 and cows and bullocks from 500 to 350. A similar reduction was made in the case of 5 other villages.\textsuperscript{43}

Grazing rules introduced by the colonial state thus created a lot of problems for the people. There were complaints against the mode of recording grazing rights. Many villages were omitted from the list.\textsuperscript{44} In the case of others the number of cattle recorded was wrong. For Baseri village, for instance, 56 cows and 236 sheep and goats were recorded in the list instead of 236 cows and 56 sheep & goats. This was simply because of an interchange of columns.\textsuperscript{45} In many cases

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{42} See Letter, of Conservator, Central Circle to UP Govt. 25 Aug. 1911 and G.O. of 14 Sept. 1913 in File 104/1909-11, Box 155, Nainital CR, RA Nainital.

\textsuperscript{43} See Letter no. 888-C/X-2, of Offg. Conservator of Forest, Western Circle to Secy., UP Govt., 10 May 1922 Box. 290, UPSA Lucknow. See Also Letter of Sptd no. 846/XXVI-41, 27 Jan 1922 and G.O. 829/XIV-100, 28 Aug. 1922, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} There were many cases of omission. See Letter of Senior Assistant Commr. to Commr. Kumaun, 25 Oct.1884, in file 20/1889-90, Box 55, COR, RA Nainital. Letter of Spdt., 1908 in FD file 31/1908, Box 57, UPSA Lucknow.

\end{flushleft}
there was no grass in the area allotted for grazing. When the Viceroy visited Chakarat, in Dehradun district, he was flooded with complaints against the system of forest reservation.

Pastures contracted rapidly under British rule. Arable expansion and competitive claims over the commons increased the pressure on pastures. Problems became critical with the reservation of forests. With reservation some villages virtually lost their pastures while others found it considerably reduced. A continuous increase in the population of cattle compounded problems. In 1822 G.W. Traill estimated the total cattle in Kumaun and Garhwal to be 2,41,314 (1,24,635 cows, 65,484 bullocks, 51,195 buffaloes) which rose to 12,13,974 in 1898-99 and 17,44,618 [6,51,858 cows, 4,59,259 bullocks and bulls, 2,24,479 buffaloes, 4,08,922 calves (cow and buffalo)] in 1912-13. The high incidence of grazing on contracting pastures had serious ecological consequences.

46. See complaint dated 22 Nov. 1933, in file 17/1932-38, Box 105, PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun. Many other complaints were received which were listed in Letter of Dy Conservator Forest to Assistant Spdt. Jaunsar Bawar, 19 March 1900, in file 244/1863-81, Box 27, PMR Coll. Dehradun RA Dehradun, pp.156-63.

47. See petitions in Deptt. of Revenue Forest File 610/1290, Sep.1890 Frogs 86-87, Box 50, UPSA Lucknow.

48. Traill, 'SSK'. Figures are not above doubts as no systematic enumeration was done.

49. Figure are taken from the annual volumes of Agricultural Statistics of India. Quinquennial cattle census did not take place in the UP hills. Cattle were separately enumerated in the hills like in 1897-98 and 1912-13. After this no cattle census took place in the UP hills in the pre-Independence period. In 1982 there were 21 lakh cattle in the UP hills (excluding districts of Tehri, Uttarkashi, and Dehradun). 13th Indian Livestock Census 1982, vol.II, part I, pp.545-608.
Colonial Forestry and the Gujar Pastoralists

Gujars are a pastoral as well as agricultural community to be found all over northern India. There are various theories about their origin. According to William Crooke they took their name from the Sanskrit word Gurrjara, the original name of the state now called Gujarat. According to another theory this community in early times used to feed gajars (carrots) to their cattle and was thus called Gujar. One theory links them to white Huns who were called 'Gurajaras'. The Gujars themselves, according to Crooke, claim to be descendents of Nand Mihir, foster-father of Krishna, who was a buffalo-keeper.

Gujars were converted to Islam in large numbers. Crooke writes that according to a legend prevalent among the Avadh Gujars, Timur was responsible for their mass conversion to Islam. Another legend refers to conversion during Aurangzeb's time. Crooke gives details of the distribution of the Muslim Gujars.

50. See Census of India, 1931. According to 1931 census they were 2038692. While the Sikh Gujars numbering 2321 were in Punjab the rest, Muslim and Hindu Gujars were widely distributed.


53. For details of these theories see Crooke op. cit. and Amir Hasan, A Tribe in Turmoil.


55. My interviews with the Gujars in the Rajaji National Park in December 1993.
in UP.

In this study we are only concerned with the Jammu Gujars or van Gujars of UP who were residents of the Tarai-Bhabar tract of Naini Tal district, Pauri Garhwal, Bijnor, Saharanpur and Dehradun districts. These Gujars lived in these areas in the winter and migrated to the hill areas of UP as well as neighbouring HP in the summer.56

The Gujars are nomadic pastoralists. In the 19th century they began their eastward migration from Jammu. This eastward shift is traced to the shortage of pastures and curbing of their movements by the state. According to Hutchison political persecution in Jammu and Kashmir and other Himalayan states forced Gujars to seek new pastures in Chamba (HP) in the mid 19th century.57 According to a legend current among the Jammu Gujars of UP, about 300 years ago, a marriage of the ruler of Sirmaur in Himachal Pradesh was settled with the daughter of a Raja of Jammu. As the bride insisted that she would go to Sirmaur only when her Gujars also accompanied her, the ruler of Sirmaur had to agree and thus


57. Hutchison quoted by Veena Bhasin, Himalayan Ecology, Transhumanance and Social Organisation: Gaddis of Himalaya, (Delhi; 1988), p.27. According to MacA Moir, the Deputy Conservator of Forest, Jaunsar-Bawar, the number of Gujars was increasing in Kashmir and Punjab which led to their eastward movement for pasture. Moir quoted by W.R. Fisher in his letter no.34 to Secy Govt. NWP & O, 10 Jun. 1884, Deptt. of Revenue Forest File 32, Box 6, UPSA Lucknow, para 120A.
Gujars made their entry into Himachal Pradesh. The shortage of pastures and the curbing of their movements by the state perhaps compelled Gujars to enter the UP hills. The exact date of their arrival is not known. They probably arrived in the third quarter of the 19th century. H.G. Ross, the Forest Settlement Officer of Jaunsar-Bhabar, writing in 1883, informs us that Gujars had started coming into Jaunsar-Bawar 6 to 7 years earlier. He suggests that it was the Forest Department which first invited Gujars. However, others did not agree with Ross. W.R. Fisher the Officiating Conservator of Forest, School Circle, wrote that Ross was 'misinformed on the issue'.

Whatever the date of their first entry, by the 1880s Gujar immigration had become a subject of debate among forest officials. There were two opposite opinions. One supported their entry into the forest and the other opposed it. To the first, Gujars were a source of revenue. Their exclusion would result in wastage of surplus grass on the pastures. They provided milk and ghi necessary for the towns and rural areas. Those opposed to Gujar entry argued that the revenue collected


59. See his letter no. 10/1-2 to Commr., Meerut Division, 14 Jun. 1883, in Deptt. of Forest Revenue File 32, Box 6, UPSA Lucknow, para 119.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., Letter No.34 to Secy. govt. NWP and O, 10 Jun. 1884.

62. Ibid., Ross's Letter 10/1-2 to Commr., Meerut Division, 14 Jun. 1883, para 120A.
was meagre. No more than Rs.680 was collected from the Gujars in Jaunsar-Bawar, while 4,000 buffaloes crossed Jaunsar-Bawar annually on their way into the neighbouring Kingdoms. The Gujars were blamed for introducing man-eating tigers and cattle disease in Jaunsar. To the advocates of 'scientific forestry' the presence of Gujars was harmful for the forests. After a prolonged debate control over their numbers and their movements was preferred to a ban on their entry.

The Gujars practised transhumance. In the summer they migrated to the highland pastures and in the winter they came down to the Tarai. At the onset of summer every year, Gujars would gather in the forests of Saharanpur, Bijnor, Dehradun and the Tarai-Bhabar to migrate to the hills of Garhwal and Kumaun and the adjoining kingdoms of Himachal Pradesh (erstwhile Punjab hills). They moved in Kafilas (a group of families constituting a caravan), led by an experienced old man. The Gujar herds constituted of buffaloes. Some rich Gujars also kept horses and mules to carry their belongings. They took various routes to the hill pastures. For entering the Tehri Kingdom and the kingdoms of adjoining Himachal Pradesh, Gujars had pass through Jaunsar-Bawar. They chose their routes carefully to avoid potential conflict with peasants. Wherever they found good grass they halted for a day or two. On reaching their destination they roamed around and grazed their cattle. After spending some time there they would start

\[63. \text{Ibid., Fisher's letter no.34 to Secy. Govt. NWP \\& O, 10 Jun. 1884.}\]
their return journey to their winter abodes. However, this freedom of movement was considered inconsistent with the practices of 'scientific forestry'. With the consolidation of colonial forestry a need to control the movements as well as the numbers of Gujars was felt.

Jaunsar-Bawar Forest Division of Dehradun district was an important centre of Gujar activities. This Forest Division was a link between the kingdoms of Himachal Pradesh, Tehri Garhwal and the British territory. A large number of Gujars usually spent their winters in the plains of Dehradun, Saharanpur and surrounding areas. At the onset of summer in March-April they gathered at various entry-points of the Jaunsar-Bawar Forest Division. Some of the important routes to the highland pastures passed through this division. Two types of Gujars entered this division. There were those who grazed their cattle in this division throughout the summer, and there were others who passed through this division to enter the neighbouring kingdoms. All their movements were strictly regulated by the Forest Department.

To control the number of Gujars passing through Jaunsar-Bawar to the neighbouring kingdoms of the Punjab hills an agreement was signed with the Punjab Government. The agreement was to control the number of animals and fix the routes. It was agreed that the number of cattle allowed to graze in the British


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part of Bushahr was not to exceed 500. These Gujars had to enter the Sirmur state by the Giri river without entering into British territory. To enter the Taroch state cattle were to follow the west bank of the Tons river, up to the Shalu river outside of British territory. The same routes were to be followed for entry into Jubal and Kuental states.\textsuperscript{65}

The number of cattle allowed into the Punjab hill states and the routes they followed in 1885 were as follows:\textsuperscript{66}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of state</th>
<th>No. of the cattle</th>
<th>Routes through which cattle usually passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sirmur</td>
<td>4500</td>
<td>Via the Giri, Tons and Chur Dhar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuental</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Via Chakrata and Sirmur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubal</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Via Sirmur, Haripur, and Sangota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taroch</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Via Kalsi, Chakrata and Sangota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumarsen</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Via Lohri, Churdhar, Phagu, Theag and Sirmur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaneti</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Via Jubal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkoti</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Via Jubal road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{65} Fishers letter no. 34 to Secy. Govt. NWP & O, 10 June, 1884, in Deptt. of Forest Revenue file 32, Box 6, UPSA, Lucknow.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid. See Letter No.20 of the Deputy Commr., Shimla, to Deputy Conservator of Forest, Jaunsar division, 7 Jan. 1886 in Jun. 1886 proceedings.
The State of Bushahr had declined to allow any cattle in 1885. Thus a total of 7111 cattle (buffaloes) were allowed.

Gujars who passed through Jaunsar-Bawar to enter the Tehri Kingdom were subject to similar controls. Movements of the Gujars coming into Jaunsar-Bawar were also regulated.

Some forest officers suggested very tough measures against Gujars. W.R. Fisher wrote:

If my plan of excluding Gujars from Jaunsar and Bawar be adopted to the limited extent I have already explained, it will be necessary to establish police guards at Songota bridge on the Tons river, and at Lakha Mandal on the Jamuna river, during the months of March and April, when the Gujars go up into the hills; and to prevent them from passing through Jaunsar on their return, a police guard should be stationed at the Tenni bridge, over the Tons river, during the month of October. Passes for the number of buffaloes which will be admitted will be issued in October when Gujars leave the hills, by the forest Officers of the Tons and Jaunsar Division.67

It was suggested that only a limited number of Gujars were to be allowed. They were to get passes in advance and their movements were to be strictly regulated. Accordingly the government formulated strict rules for Gujars.68 Only 150 buffaloes of Gujars and other wandering herdsmen were to be allowed to graze annually in Jaunsar, Tehri Garhwal, Raegarh and Dandi portions of the Jaunar Forest Division. In the Bushahr portion of the Jaunsar Division only 500 buffaloes

67. Ibid., Fisher's Letter no. 34 to Secy., Govt., NWP & O, 10 Jun 1884.

68. Ibid., see Government Notification no. 33F/32-12, 15 Jan. 1885.
were to be allowed in accordance with the agreement with the Punjab government. The 150 buffaloes to be allowed in the Jaunsar Division were to proceed to grazing grounds via the Chakrata and Tons route and those going to Bushahr were to proceed up the Giri river. Cattle straying off the road were to be immediately seized and their owners were to be persecuted for trespassing. Grazing dues were to be paid by Gujars. In their return journey Gujars were to follow the same routes which they had followed in going up to the grazing grounds. A list of halting places was prepared. A twenty-four hours stay was allowed in each halting place. The areas on both sides of the route which could be used by the graziers was clearly defined. Similarly, areas used for grazing in halting places were also specified. The owners of cattle who wanted to take their cattle to the grazing grounds of Jaunsar and Bushahr forests were to apply for passes to the Deputy Conservator of Forest, Jaunsar Division, between 15 February and 15 March every year.

The logic of such tough measures was beyond the comprehension of Gujars. They could not understand why they were suddenly being treated so harshly and why the government was interested in excluding them from the forests. They could not be convinced by the argument that their presence in the forest was harmful. Forests were a source of their livelihood. How could they harm them? Many Gujars felt that the measures were because of some tough officer. So they kept on coming in large numbers to get passes in the hope that some day some


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sympathetic officer would allow them entry. But their hopes never materialised. The situation deteriorated year after year. The influx of Gujars increased because of the strict implementation of rules in Kashmir and Punjab. In 1884 the Tehri Raja also refused Gujars entry into his territory. Consequently, a large number of Gujars gathered every year in the month of March at Kalsi, the entry-point to Jaunsar. But since the forest officials issued passes only to a few Gujars the rest could not migrate. Not in the habit of living in the hot weather of the plains, their cattle suffered from a variety of diseases and they perished in large numbers. The Forest Department found it difficult to tackle the situation. W.R. Fisher suggested that to discourage Gujars to come a fee of one rupee per cattle should be charged at Kalsi.

Some Gujars grazed their cattle in village pastures. Villagers welcomed Gujars because they wanted manure. Villagers also charged a grazing fee of one rupee 8 annas per buffalo from the Gujars. While villagers invited Gujars to the village pastures, they opposed their entry into the reserved forests. The relationship between Gujars and the villagers was generally good.

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70. Ibid., see Fisher's Letter no.128 to Spdt. Dehradun, 26 July 1887.

71. Ibid., see Notes by Fisher, proceeding no.21, pp.24-25.

72. Ibid., see Fisher's Letter no. 128-to Spdt Dehradun, 26 July 1887.

Gujars were also subjectd to lopping regulations. Lopping regulations dif-
fered from area to area since plant species varied everywhere. Even in the Dehra-
dun Forest Division there were extensive lopping regulations. Lopping was pro-
hibited except in the areas which were open to grazing. There was a total ban on
lopping of *Khair* and *sal* but other species could be lopped. Trees under 8 inch
diameter at breast height could not be lopped except in the case of *ber*. The upper
one-third of the crown of a tree was not allowed to be lopped. No branch of trees
over 4 inches diameter or 12 inches girth was to be cut. Lopping fees was charged
on Gujars. Only those Gujars who paid fees were allowed into areas open for
lopping.\(^74\)

Grazing tax on Gujars was heavy and was frequently hiked. Till 1902 the
rates of tax were as follows:\(^75\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Buffalo</th>
<th>Cow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grazing per annum</td>
<td>0 8 0</td>
<td>0 4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent of Chappers</td>
<td>0 8 0</td>
<td>0 4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopping fee</td>
<td>0 4 0</td>
<td>0 2 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total per animal</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 4 0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0 10 0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1902 the grazing tax on Gujars was doubled. It was increased from 8
annas per buffalo to Re 1 annually and from 4 annas per cow to 8 annas

\(^74\). *WP for Dehradun For. Div., 1931-32 to 1940-41*, compiled by

\(^75\). See Letter no.122, of Conservator of Forest, Central Circle
to Govt. of NWP & O, 18 Sept., 1902, Dec.1902, Progs 16, in De-
partment of Forest Block File 260, Box 16, UPSA Lucknow.
annually.76

Apart from grazing tax, Gujars were also to pay security money. This was first proposed by the Conservator of Forest, Central Circle, in 1902. He argued that Gujars were careless and violated regulations. To ensure their proper behaviour he suggested a security rate. This security was to be returned if Gujars behaved properly, otherwise it was to be retained by the Forest Department.77 The government initially expressed doubts about the viability of the proposal. It was argued that Gujars were poor and were not in position to pay security.78 The Conservator, however, felt that Gujars were not poor since they possessed large stocks of cattle and they were in a position to pay security. He wrote, 'I wish not to be hard on these people, but they were difficult to deal with and we must have a monetary hold over them.'79 The government ultimately accepted the proposal and charged a security of 8 annas per cattle from the Gujars.80

Thus Gujars were continuously harassed and over burdened with taxes. The grazing fee was again raised in 1921 to an annual rate of Rs 2 per buffalo, Re

76. Ibid., see the Govt. Letter 651/XIV-260, 26 Oct. 1902.

77. Ibid., see Letter no. 122, Conservator of Forest, Central Circle, to Govt. NWP & O, 18 Sept. 1902, Dec 1902 progs. 16.

78. Ibid., See Letter no. 686/XIV-260, of the Govt. NWP & O, 27 Nov, 1902.

79. Ibid., see Letter no. 90, 10 August 1903, August progs. B.

80. Ibid., see Govt. Letter 547/XIV-260, 25 August 1903, August 1903 progs. no.17.
1 per cow, 8 annas per pony and donkey, and 8 annas per sheep and goat. However this fee now allowed Gujars grass and wood for sheds free of charges; earlier they had to pay separately at the rate of 8 annas per buffalo and 4 annas per cow.\textsuperscript{81}

Gujars were always charged at rates higher than villagers. Professional graziers like Gujars were charged Rs 2 per buffalo and Re 1 per cow per annum while the village community in Dehradun district was charged 12 annas per buffalo and 6 annas per cow. For those villagers who had concessions the rate was half.\textsuperscript{82}

Gujars were thus harassed under colonial rule. Their freedom of movement was subjected to regulation. Large number of Gujars were denied entry into the forests and those who were allowed access were subjected to strict regulations. Their routes of migration were determined by the Forest Department. The number of halting places were prescribed. They were given limited freedom to graze on their routes. They were subjected to strict lopping regulations. And above all they were to pay a heavy tax on grazing. Any infringement of rules was severely punished. The condition of Gujars even today is not very different. They are still troubled by the Forest Department. Their seasonal migration has become more and more difficult due to an expanding population and constricted pastures in the hills.

\textsuperscript{81} Letter to Conservator, 13 May, 1921 in File 1/1918-32, Box 25, PMR Coll. Dehradun, RA Dehradun.

\textsuperscript{82} WP for Dehradun FD, 1932, appendix VIII.
There is a trend towards sedentarisation among Gujars. But it is difficult for them to get land. Many of them are also facing problems because their settlements are within the area recently constituted as the Rajaji National Park.

**COLONIAL FORESTRY AND THE BHOTIYA TRADERS**

Bhotiyas are a community of traders. They traded between Tibet and India (mainly in the UP hills). Various products were taken by them to sell in Tibet. They also brought back many items for sale in the UP hills and plains. They carried their goods on the back of their animal. Since they were continuously on the move they grazed their cattle on their routes and around the places where they halted. This practice of grazing was cause of concern for the Forest Department. By the 1890s the Forest Department started imposing restrictions on the Bhotiyas. This section discusses the nature of such restrictions and the consequent difficulties faced by the Bhotiyas.

Due to their language, physical traits, customs and traditions the Bhotiyas


84. The term 'Bhotiya' is used for various groups of people in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region. Here I am using this term for the people who lived on the borderland of Tibet in the UP hills and were primarily engaged in trade with Tibet. For a similar application of the term see R.P. Srivastav, 'Tribe-Caste Mobility in India and the case of Kumaun Bhotiyas' in Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf (ed.), *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon: Anthropological Studies in Hindu-Buddhist Contact Zones* (Bombay, 1966) pp.161-212.
are assigned a Tibetan origin. All but the Darma Bhotiyas trace their origin to some Tibetan villages. However, some claim that they were Rajputs who crossed over to Tibet and returned to India after some generations. Historically, it is also argued that in the past part of the region inhabited by the Bhotiyas may have been part of Tibet.\textsuperscript{85}

They are known by different names: Marchas, Sakpas, Jadh etc. in the different areas of the UP hills. They lived in the high reaches of the Himalayas, often confined to the passes in the mountains. The main passes are Mana, on the Saraswati and Niti on the Western Dhouli, both tributaries of the Ganges. Jewar pass is on the Gauri, Darma on the Dhouli, and Byans on the Kali, all tributaries of the Sarda. All these passes are above 15,000 feet.\textsuperscript{86} In the 1820s there were 59 villages of the Bhotiyas spreading over these passes. On the Mana pass there were 3 villages with 125 houses. On the Niti pass there were 10 villages with 219 houses. On the Jewar pass there were 13 villages with 455 houses. On the Darma pass there were 24 villages with 342 houses. And the Byans pass there were 9 villages with 184 houses. Thus there were a total of 1,325 houses. No enumeration was done but on the basis of an estimated average number of persons per house it was worked out that there were about 9,000 Bhotiyas.\textsuperscript{87} In 1881 the population of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{86}. Trail, 'Statistical Report on the Bhothea Mehals of Kumaun', in Batten Official Reports, pp.70-106, reproduced from Asiatic Researches, vol.XVII.
\textsuperscript{87}. Ibid., p.63.
\end{flushleft}
parganas Juhar and Darma in Kumaun and Painkhanda in Garhwal was 21,937. These parganas were basically inhabited by the Bhotiyas.\textsuperscript{88}

The Bhotiyas were economically and socially stratified. The Bhotiyas of Juhar were more wealthy than other Bhotiyas. The rich Bhotiyas had large livestock and carried on extensive trade and visited faraway markets like Delhi, Kanpur, and Calcutta during the winter. The poor Bhotiyas had small livestock, limited trade and frequently worked as herdsmen and labourer to the rich Bhotiyas.\textsuperscript{89} The usual caravan of well-to-do Bhotiyas consisted of 100 to 125 goats and sheep, 10 to 12 mules and jibus, and 3 to 5 ponies.\textsuperscript{90} Socially the Marchas of Niti and Mana and the Sakpas of Juhar considered themselves superior and looked down upon on the Bhotiyas of the Darma patti. They did not eat and intermarry with the Darma Bhotiyas.\textsuperscript{91} In social, religious and cultural terms the Bhotiyas resembled Tibetans although they shared many customs and traditions with their neighbours in the hills.\textsuperscript{92}

Not much could be cultivated on the high reaches; only one crop was obtained annually. The crops produced were \textit{phaper} and \textit{ugal} (two varieties of buckwheat), \textit{va jao} and \textit{jao} (beardless and common barley). Wheat and \textit{marsa} (a spe-
\textsuperscript{88} HDNWP, vol.III, part I, p.152.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., vol. III, part I, p.112.
\textsuperscript{91} HDNWP, vol.III, part I, p.113.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., pp.114-6.
cies of amaranthus) were also cultivated. Therefore, Bhotiyas basically relied on trade for subsistence. Trade was carried on across the passes every year from June to October. This trade was discontinued after the 1962 Indo-China war. Attempts are being made to revive this trade again as some passes have been opened recently after an agreement between India and China.

The Bhotiyas had two sets of residences. A winter residence was used for trade in India and a summer residence for trade in Tibet. The winter residences were in the lower and the middle Himalaya and the summer in the high Himalaya. The winter residences of the Bhotiyas were in Sabla, Thal, Darchula, Tejam, Galanti, Niglopani, Askot, Sera, Gangoli etc. During the winter Botiya families cultivated lands, reared cattle, spun wool and wove cloth. Meanwhile male members were engaged in trade. They visited markets in the Bhabar like Ramnagar, Haldwani, and Kotdwar. The rich traders visited places as far as Delhi, Kanpur, Calcutta, and Bombay. During the winter two trips were usually made by the traders to the Bhabar and other markets in which wool and other items were sold and grain, sugar etc. were bought. The Bhotiyas also sold salt, borax etc in the

93. Traill, 'Bhotea Mehals', p.64.

94. Haimendorf has shown in case of Nepal that the Sherpas, the Bhotiyas etc. who were earlier engaged in trade with Tibet, later shifted to tourism industry, when trade stopped after Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1859. See Haimendorf, Himalayan Trade : Life in High Land Nepal (London, 1975); idem The Sherpas of Nepal : Buddhist Highlanders (London, 1964) idem, The Sherpas Transformed : Social Change in Buddhist Society of Nepal (Delhi, 1984).
hill marts like Bageshwar, Almora, Ranikhet, and Joshimath. They bartered salt for grain in the villages of the UP hills. All merchandise to be taken to Tibet was collected in the winter dwellings. By the middle of April preparations were made to take these merchandise to the summer dwellings. Initially traders marched with merchandise on goats and sheep and in the case of rich Bhotiyas also on mule, jibus and ponies. Two trips were made to transport merchandise to the summer dwellings. By the middle of June family migration started, and this required elaborate preparations. Packing all belongings was done and men, women and children moved together along with laden animals on an auspicious day. Goats and sheep started their move with the shepherds a day before the families set out. The other pack animals - the ponies and jibus - accompanied the families. Often all families of a village moved together. Every day the march started early in the morning around 4 o'clock. Often a distance of 3 to 8 miles was covered and the caravan stopped around 9 o'clock in the morning for the day's halt. A place which was level, close to a water source and provided sufficient grazing ground was chosen for the halt. Tents were used to create temporary dwellings. Animals were unloaded and were taken for grazing by children. Fuel and fodder was collected and women prepared meals for the afternoon and evening. The evening meal was over by 8 o'clock when the Bhotias went to bed. The same routine started the next morning.95

On reaching the summer residence animals were unloaded and sent with herdsmen to the bugyals (highland pastures) for 15 to 30 days. Herdsmen were mostly poor Bhotiyas who received cash payment and a portion of the wool of the flocks. Meanwhile fuel was collected and stored for the family. The pack animals were brought back from the pastures and were loaded for Tibet. The passes to Tibet were opened in the end of June and the first Indian batch usually crossed the passes between July 1 to 15. The march into Tibet was preceded by an elaborate ceremony and festivity. Before the opening of the passes Tibetan authorities sent a subordinate official to the villages on the passes to enquire into the existence of any contagious disease among men or cattle. The official was presented with a stone and the Bhotiyas promised to forfeit its weight in gold should they introduced any disease into Tibet. He also collected some customary taxes from the Bhotiyas. Only after this were the passes declared open and the Bhotiyas led by their heads, the phungia, crossed them. There were five main passes in the UP hills which opened into Tibet. The Johari Bhotiyas used the Untadhura pass which led to Kungri-Bungri in Tibet. The Tibetan marts visited by the Joharis were Gynema (Khargaon), Chakra, Shivachilam, Darchan and Gartak. However, the Johari Bhotiyas (unlike the others) had a special right to visit any mart in Tibet. The Joharis had this privilege because their ancestors had served in the Tibetan army. The Darma Bhotiyas used the Darma pass and visited Gynema and Kuinlang. The Byans and the Chaudhan Bhotiyas used two passes, the Lankhpaya-Lekh and the Lepuka-Lekh; the former led to Gynema and the latter to Taklakot and Darchan.
The Niti Bhotiyas used the Niti pass which had two branches, Hoti and Charhoti, and visited Doba and Shivachilam. The Mana Bhotiyas used the Mana pass and visited Chaprang and Toling. The Basahiri Khampas and Jadhs used the Nilang pass and visited Tasparang or Chaprang. All these passes were at a height above 16,000 feet from sea level. Gartok at a height of 15,100 feet was a busy trading centre in Tibet and traders from India, Mongolia, Turkistan, Lahasa, and China proper visited this place for trade. Gartok became the headquarters of the British Indian Trade Agent from 1918. Taklakot and Gynema were just 8 and 25 miles respectively from the Indian border. The movements of the traders were regulated by elaborate rules. They had to visit only specified markets and each of them had a specified trading partner in Tibet with whom transactions were to be made. Violations of rules was taken seriously. Usually the Bhotiyas made two trips to Tibet. The first trip was over by the end of July. The flocks were back with wool, rugs, skins, salt, borax etc. The arrival of wool was eagerly awaited as it was followed by extensive spinning and weaving activities, mostly by women. The second trip was usually completed by the end of August. However rich traders remained in Tibet till as late as October. After about a fortnight’s rest, the preparation started for the downward journey to the winter dwellings. By the end of October all the activities of the Bhotiyas shifted to their winter residence.96

The Bhotiyas carried their goods on jubu, yak, sheep and goat which were

96. Ibid.
specially suited for this environment. *Jabu* is a cross between the *yak* of Tibet and Indian cow. It is used for bulky articles. A sheep and goat were used for grain, salt and borax. A Sheep could carry from 5 to 8 sers and a goat 8 to 10 sers of 80 tolas each, and march about 5 to 6 miles a day and make about five trips across the passes each year. This meant that a flock of 30,000 sheep was required to transport 25,000 maunds.\(^{97}\)

The Bhotiyas were engaged in brisk trade with Tibet. The main items exported to Tibet were foodgrain, sugar (*gur* and refined sugar), spices, tobacco, cotton cloths, hardware, corals, beads etc. The main items of import were borax, salt, wool, gold-dust etc. Western Tibet depended on the Bhotiya trade for its foodgrain supply. The salt brought by the Bhotiyas from Tibet was in high demand in the UP hills and was bartered for grain, although it had to later compete with the cheap Sambhar salt brought from the Indian plains.\(^{98}\) Borax was an important item imported from Tibet. It was exported to Europe where it was in high demand. When the British occupied the hills they bought lots of borax from the local market thereby pushing up its price from Rs 3-8-0 to Rs 14 per maund.\(^{99}\) Later, when substitutes of borax were discovered in Europe its demand declined. Atkinson reported a decline in the import of borax and an increase in the import of salt. Wool was also an important item of import. Most transactions were carried on

\(^{97}\) *HDNWP*, vol.III, part I, p.143.


through the barter system. Trade with Tibet fluctuated annually. G.W. Traill had estimated that the import of salt from Tibet averaged 15,000 maunds annually between 1815 and 1822. In 1868-69 it was just 9,000 maunds but rose to 32,190 maunds on an average between 1877 and 1883. Import of borax was 15,000 maunds on an average between 1815 to 1822 and rose to 24,012 maunds annually between 1877 and 1883. Between 1877 and 1883 on an average 3408 maunds of wool and wool manufactures were imported annually. India exported cotton and some woollen stuff costing Rs 10,000 annually on an average between 1815 and 1821 which rose to an average of Rs 21,333 annually between 1877 and 1883. The average annual export of foodgrains was estimated to be 20,000 maunds between 1815 and 1822 and rose to 42,441 maunds between 1877 and 1883. The export of gur and sugar was on an average 1,000 maunds and 100 maunds respectively between 1815 and 1822. Export of gur, sugar and spices rose to an average 4,536 maunds annually between 1877 and 1883. Between 1877 and 1883 the annual average export to Tibet was of Rs 1,50,444 and import from Tibet was of Rs 3,32,374.100

Besides trade with Tibet Bhotiyas also carried on brisk trade in the interior of Garhwal and Kumaun.101 They grazed their beasts of burden on the trade routes. The Forest Department viewed this with concern. It began to restrict graz-

100. Ibid.
ing and regulating movements. Extensive regulations to control movements of the Bhotiyas were introduced in 1896. But these were found insufficient\(^{102}\); therefore, new regulations were issued in 1918. Under the new regulations Bhotiyas had to graze their cattle only in the areas which were not prohibited for grazing. They were provided a long list of places in the reserved and protected forests where they were allowed grazing and lopping. For grazing in the rest of the reserved and protected forests they were to get passes. Passes were only issued on payment of the grazing fee. They were to pay the following grazing fee annually: 8 annas per buffalo, 4 annas per cow, \(jib\) or bullock, 6 paisa per sheep and goat and 4 annas per pony, mule or donkey. Passes were to be issued only for one year and the fee was the same for a year or a part of it. A pass was valid for all the districts of the Kumaun civil division. Lopping in all non-concession areas was prohibited.\(^{103}\)

Rules were framed to regulate movements of the Bhotiyas. They were to strictly follow regulations regarding routes and halting places. The distances they had to travel daily and the places they could halt were all specified. Grazing areas around routes were strictly defined. Thus a long list of halting places was issued. In the West Almora Forest Division 16 halting places were given. A halt for more


\(^{103}\) Ibid., See G.O. no. 596/XIV-155, 16 Dec. 1918.
than two nights was prohibited except at Deolikhel and Ganiadeoli, where a halt of 4 nights was permitted and at Bageshwar and Chitai where the halt could be extended until herds and flocks were required to move on. In the East Almora Forest Division 42 halts were given but at none of the places was one allowed to halt for more than two nights. At the time of the Bageshwar fair grazing in the Phalianti reserve was allowed for three weeks. In the North Garhwal Forest Division no halting places were prescribed. Camping was allowed in all places except those areas closed to rights of grazing. In the South Garhwal Forest Division 7 halts were specified but the stay could not be more than two nights. Similarly there were 7 halts in the Nainital Forest Division, 5 halts in the Haldwani Forest Division, 6 at Ramnagar, 4 in Kalagarh Forest Divisions.104

The Bhotiyas were also subjected to extensive lopping regulations. Lopping rules gave details about species allowed to be lopped and their height and girth.105

Grazing rules for the Bhotiyas were altered again in 1932.106 Now the Commissioner was empowered to stop lopping in any area which he considered had already been damaged. The commissioner also had the right to close any route with the consent of the Kumaun Forest Grievances Committee if an alternative

104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid. See G.O. dated Nov. 8, 1932.

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route was available. The KFGC was formed after the 1921-22 forest agitation in the UP hills. Apart from officials it also had some local representatives as members.

Bhotiyas suffered enormously because of these strict regulations. They frequently complained to the KFGC against these regulations. One of their complaints was that their camps (halting places) were too far apart. They wanted this distance to be no more than 6 miles. Travelling more than this distance strained their cattle. They wanted that in case of emergency like wet weather, sickness, etc., the strict rules of halting should not be enforced. The KFGC found their complaints reasonable and recommended to the government that the demands of these people be met. Another complaint of the Bhotiyas was that in the valley of Darma and Johar a fee was being charged on all their cattle even when they were not involved in the carrying trade. The KFGC recommended that these people be treated like the residents of Garhwal. All Bhotiyas, Tibetans, Danpuris and residents of Garhwal, it recommended, should be charged a fee only when their packs were being used for the purpose of carriage. One more complaint of Bhotiyas was that they were not allowed to take sickles or axes to the forests. The KFGC recommended that they be allowed to take sickles like other villagers but not axes.

Living on a small margin of profit, the Bhotiyas suffered the heavy taxes they had to pay. Pandit Hargovind Pant, the representative of this region in the

107. Ibid., See RKFGC, para 39. See also the petition of Bhotiyas addressed to Commr., file 12/1896-97, box 62, COR, RA Nainital.
Provincial Legislative Assembly, frequently raised the question of double taxation on Bhotiyas. He argued that first they had to pay tax on their pack and then were required to pay a grazing tax for entering certain parts of the forests.⁠¹⁰⁸ Besides, some Bhotiyas who had brisk trade in borax and salt were required to pay income tax.⁠¹⁰⁹ Mr B.D. Pandey, another member of the Legislative Assembly from this region also frequently raised various questions in the house relating to the problems of Bhotiyas.⁠¹¹⁰

While there were strained relations between the state and the Bhotiyas the relationship between the villagers and the Bhotiyas was generally cordial and based on mutual need. The villagers did not object to the use of their open forests by Bhotiyas. In fact they wanted Bhotiyas to make their paraos in their fields so that a supply of rich manure could be secured.⁠¹¹¹ There were instances when the villagers paid the Bhotiyas for squatting for a few days in their fields. Such a practice was particularly prevalent in areas where there was shortage of manure.⁠¹¹²

From the above discussion it is clear that the Bhotiyas were subjected to

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108. See summary of these questions in FD file 132/1924, Box 319, UPSA, Lucknow.
109. Ibid., see answers in the assembly.
110. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
various rules and regulations which constrained their freedom of movement. On the one hand the colonial state wanted to increase trade with Tibet as it brought in revenue, and on the other it curtailed the freedom of movement of the Bhotiyas. But regulating movements through the issue of passes also meant revenue for the Forest Department.

The colonial period saw a transformation in the economic and social life of the Bhotiyas. As we have already discussed the discovery of borax substitutes led to a decline in the demand for borax. The cheap salt from the Indian plains was replacing Tibetan salt in the hills. Bhotiya wool and woollen manufactures were being replaced by cheap woollen and cotton clothes. Similarly there was tough competition from new trade items easily available due to improved communication.\textsuperscript{113} Pant wrote in the early 1930s:

Recently the migration of both the Bhotiya and the Khamba have shown a decided tendency to decrease in volume. A small number of Bhotiya families now leave for the highest habitations, and fewer traders cross the Tibetan borders.\textsuperscript{114} However, this trade came to an end only after the India-China War in 1962. The Bhotiyas of the UP hills did not get alternative means of subsistence as the sherpas of Nepal had got from the Tourism industry.\textsuperscript{115} Nevertheless, in the course of time, they have tried to develop an alternative trade in carpets, blankets and other woollen manufacture. Now after the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to China

\textsuperscript{113} Pant, \textit{The Social Economy of the Himalayans}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid
\textsuperscript{115} Haimendorf, \textit{Himalayan Trade}. 

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efforts are being made to revive the border trade with Tibet.

Socially and culturally the Bhotiyas were being Hinduised. Traill wrote about the process of Hinduisation among the Bhotiyas. The belief systems of their forefathers had survived, according to Traill, beacause of annual trips to Tibet.116 Srivastav has shown how the Bhotiyas due to their interaction with the surrounding Hindu population had adopted the caste system in an effort to sanskritize. Some of them claimed Brahman and Rajput status, adopted various Hindu practices, and even invited priests to perform marriages.117

Conclusion

Peasants, Gujar pastoralists and Bhotiya traders - all enjoyed a relative freedom to graze their cattle in the forests before the beginning of colonial forestry. Under colonial forestry, forests were to be preserved only for commercial exploitation. This meant excluding people from the forests. Therefore, large areas of reserve forests were closed for grazing, in some areas people were given limited grazing rights. Recording of these grazing rights created lot of problems. These were instances of entire villages being omitted from the list of rights, and there were instances of grazing rights being wrongly recorded. There were regulations to control the movements of cattle, and restrict lopping. And above all there was

117. Srivastav, "Tribe-Caste Mobility".
the ever increasing grazing tax. The freedom of movement of the Bhotiyas was curtailed. They were to strictly follow the routes prescribed by the state, halt in specified places, and pay high levels of fees.

Thus due to colonial forestry graziers were to operate within new parameters. The traditional practices got substantially dislocated.