In the last two chapters I have drawn attention to the fact that with the restrictions over dhaiya subsistence forms, the survival of adivasi communities becomes dependent on their relationship with other communities. Conversely, with capitalist intrusions into the forest, the subsistence of non-adivasi, like the lac craftsmen, gets integrally linked with the forest dweller's gathering activities. Thus the inter-linkages between the subsistence of forest and other communities is vital to the fulfilment of all subsistence needs.¹

There are two problems in studying the relationship between adivasi and non-adivasi subsistence systems. First is the question regarding shared subsistence experiences of communities and their adjustments with each other in changing situations. In this context the nexus between the forest based and agriculture based economies (referred to earlier) can be explicated further. Second is the problem of studying methods of conflict resolution and changing patterns of natural resource management. This theme has become especially relevant with the increasing intensity of conflict between adivasi and non-adivasi communities.

Here I consider these questions with special reference to grazing rights in forests. Grazing was essentially restricted to communities of peasants and professional graziers, since the forest dwellers then had hardly any livestock except for hens. This activity took place either in the form of individual grazing or grazing in herds. In both cases, the peasants ventured into forests and came into contact with forest communities. Professional graziers, like the Banjaras, also acted as traders, bringing food, oil and salt to the adivasis during their

¹ Works like Ingold, Riches and Woodburn eds., Hunters and Gatherers (1988, Berg) show that the economies of forest dwellers are not 'closed' economies and that outside influences are structured within these economies. Thus their relationship with the outside world forms a part of the subsistence system.
seasonal visits. The type of relations that peasants and forest communities established with each other were determined by the nature and location of the forest.

'Wastelands' and the 'Commons':

Official classifications of land in the 19th century: 'Wastelands' acquired political and economic importance in the mid-19th century Central Provinces. The political potency of this term arose from the imperial desire to control land and expand state control over the people using the resources of these lands. Its economic importance arose from the categorization of land according to its utility in the realization of colonial objectives. The definition of what was considered 'useful' thus changed with changing imperial objectives.

The term 'wasteland' was used in two ways by administrators in the mid-19th century. First, it was used for land that was "unoccupied" and "uncultivated" by the peasant cultivators. The term 'wastelands' was used for land over which peasant rights had not yet been established. These lands though "uncultivated", were not necessarily unfit for the use of the plough. Thus wastelands could be divided into: land on which of plough cultivation could take place (i.e. 'culturable' land); and land which was unfit for plough cultivation (i.e. 'unculturable' land).²

Secondly, this term was applied by the British administrators to non-revenue yielding lands whose defining feature was their apparent 'uselessness'. Rita Brara has shown that this notion of 'wastelands' was often based on a description of their physical features like the lack of top soil and toxicity towards plant growth or its

stony, gravelly, sandy or saline qualities. In the 1860s the Central Provinces administration often described wastelands in terms like "rugged" and "impenetrable" with a "thick undergrowth of vegetation" which was difficult to clear. The terrain was described as one that was interspersed with patches of mixed forests with some valuable trees. The term 'forests' was distinguished from 'wastelands' on the basis of vegetation: it was defined as "land covered with tree, brushwood or jungle." In contrast 'wastelands' had no uniform system of vegetation like the 'forest'. They were also different from forests in terms of their revenue generating capacity. In the early and mid-19th century the official classification considered 'wastelands' useful for only nistar and grazing purposes. But their commercial value was considered negligible in comparison with forest lands. In contrast the forests were considered to be of great commercial value, especially from the point of view of the export of timber. Further the revenue generating potential of the wasteland tracts was seen as minimal. Till the 1890s the official attempt to expand permanent cultivation on "culturable wasteland" was the solitary effort to extract revenue out of these lands. The revenue generating potential of these lands was expressed in the usage of terms like 'culturable' and 'unculturable' land. 'Culturable' land was capable of yielding land revenue from plough cultivation, while no land revenue could be extracted from 'unculturable' lands.

In the mid-19th century the attributes of 'uselessness', 'wastefulness' and 'ruggedness' of terrain were ascribed to wastelands. Such a classification of land

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3 Rita Brara, 'Are grazing lands 'wastelands'? in Economic and Political Weekly, 22 February 1992, pp.411-418. See p.411. Brara shows that 'wastelands' are crucial to the existence of the villagers. She examines their alternative perception of the usefulness of these lands and argues that social forestry projects are harmful to local subsistence interests.

4 Many early official documents describe the wastelands in this manner. The reports of the early settlement officers and divisional forest officers particularly mention the wastelands in this fashion.

5 Baden Powell, Forest Laws, p.197.
types implied that the use of land for grazing and nistar purposes resulted in 'wasteful' practices. They were lands that had little relevance for the attainment of colonial objectives. However by the turn of the century the British perception of these lands had altered considerably. As the notion of 'the culturable' changed, forests were classed as culturable land. The 'excision policy' of the 1890s showed this. The revenue potential of unculturable wastes was now reassessed. The British realized that grazing and nistar lands had an extraordinary capacity to generate revenue. Henceforth an effort was made to regulate rights in forests and other pasture lands. Thus by 1890 the term 'wastelands' was used by officials to refer to nistar and grazing lands which included forested tracts and unforested pasture lands demarcated for grazing purposes. It no longer implied that these lands were useless in the attainment of wider colonial objectives.

For the local communities, the expression 'wastelands' was inappropriate to describe these lands. Forests and other pasture lands were an important part of the subsistence strategy of the peasants and graziers. Forest lands on the fringes of ryotwari villages were shared subsistence zones of peasant graziers, forest dwellers, and professional graziers like the Ahirs, Gowaries and the Banjaras. Of these the Ahirs and Gowaries were cowherds who grazed peasant cattle in the forest. Writing about the Ahir, Russell and Hiralal state:

In former times Ahirs had the exclusive right of milking the cow, so that on all occasions he must be hired for this purpose, even by lower castes....This rule is interesting as it shows that the caste system was maintained and perpetuated by the custom of preserving to each caste the monopoly over its traditional occupation....The village cattle are entrusted

6 The political potency of the term and the process of essentialization in the process of the classification of 'wastelands is discussed in detail by V.K Gidwani. See V.K. Gidwani, "Waste' and permanent settlement in Bengal’ in Economic and Political Weekly, 25 January 1992, pp. PE39-46.
jointly to one or more graziers for grazing purposes. The grazier is paid separately for each animal, a common rate being one anna for a cow or bullock and two annas for a buffaloe per month.\(^7\)

An Ahir's relationship with the villagers were based on a transaction between him and the peasant families. Peasants acknowledged his position and importance as a cow herd: when a calf was born the Ahir was the first to milk it in the name of his deity, and he received his customary due in return.

The Ahir's relationships with the forest dwellers were based on their daily excursions into the forest to graze peasant cattle. Russell notes that in Chanda, the Ahirs had developed intimate links with the Gonds. They not only employed Gonds to graze cattle but also admitted them within the Ahir caste. In fact the origins of the Gowerie community of Chanda were traced to the inter-marriage between Gonds and the Ahirs. In Mandla, Ahirs were scarcely considered Hindus as they lived in Gond villages.\(^8\) Thus close social relations existed between the Gonds and Ahirs.

The relationships of the Banjaras with the peasant and forest communities followed a different pattern. In British records the Banjaras were described as a caste of carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks. They derived their subsistence from the sale of salt and oil to the forest dwellers and the transportation of goods. Ethnographers have given instances of the Charans and the Banjaras carrying loads for the Rajput and the Maratha armies.\(^9\) There was hardly any evidence of the nature of relationship between the forest dwellers and the Banjaras. But the nature of Banjara settlements and their social customs indicated something about

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\(^7\) Russell and Hiralal, *Tribes and Castes of C.P* Vol. 2, p.36.


their position in the forest. According to Sleeman, the Banjaras preferred paths that were along the jungles and had abundant water, grass and wood supply. They made their settlements far away from any village by the side of the stream so that they could get enough water and grass for their cattle. The Banjaras favoured lonely settlements as they were treated as 'outcasts' by the forest dwellers because the adivasis feared their witchcraft. Cumberledge describes the process by which Banjara jantas, (doctors or sorcerers), cured disease, and were feared amongst the Gonds because they were seen as having "evil" powers. Banjaras were also feared because they were perceived as people who stole children and sacrificed them to their goddess. Banjara jantas were held in awe because of their powers to cure disease. Despite the conflicting feelings towards the Banjaras, their movement was essential to adivasi survival. They provided the forest dwellers with their daily necessities like oil and salt.

So we see that pasture lands provided a shared context for the subsistence of diverse groups. Through subsistence activities social relations were established between different communities. Thus any displacement of the graziers from their context was bound to affect the social life of many communities. The official classification of land did not take this into account.

The 'wastelands' as 'common land' : Writing a history of the forest laws in India, Baden Powell suggested that the origins of the term 'wastelands' lay in the birth of private property and asserted that 'wastelands' were state property, not communally owned property resources. The 'commons' denoted not community pastures and forests (as Jodha defines them), but pastures and forests that the

11 Cumberledge, Monograph on the Banjara Clan, pp.19-23.
village community was allotted by the state for common village use. Members of the community had usufruct rights and coequal access to such resources.\textsuperscript{13}

There is little evidence of the status of these lands in pre-British Central Provinces. The early 19\textsuperscript{th} century official construction of this period shows that the patel or the village headman had acquired control over wastelands. As early as 1832 Crawford, a member of the Sadar Board of Revenue, recognized the patel's rights to collect forest and grazing dues from wastelands. He also pointed out that the patel had no legal rights over such land, but had acquired these rights through custom. The British government wanted to continue this 'custom'.\textsuperscript{14} In the case of zamindari areas it was easier to argue for the possibility of communally controlled wastelands because of the inaccessibility of these areas. The difficulties in administering zamindari lands ensured that the actual control over resources by forest dwellers in wastelands of these areas. Numerous recorded instances show that the forest dwellers had the freedom of movement and free access to resources in these lands. In lieu of these rights they gave the zamindar some produce and labour.\textsuperscript{15}

The British constructions of 'custom' and state-owned 'commons' in pre-colonial India were used to justify later colonial measures. The first forest rules of 1865

\textsuperscript{13} The idea of 'wastelands' as state property was emphasized by colonial writers like Baden-Powell, Ribbentrop and Stebbing. Later it was emphasized by government sponsored research and the legitimacy of Post-Colonial organizations such as National Wasteland Development Council was derived from the notion that the government was responsible for development and management of wastelands. Thus the relationship between the state and wastelands has been an intimate one since the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{14} SBRNWP, 23 October 1834.

\textsuperscript{15} The Records of the Bastar State show that in return for access to forests, the adivasis had to put in \textit{Bhat begar} of 3 days a week. Sometimes they also had to give some \textit{chironji} and other produce as tribute. At first the British tried to extract \textit{begar} like the previous rulers, but they failed because the people did not accept them as their legitimate rulers. The next chapter elaborates this point. As a consequence of this \textit{begar} was abolished by law. However this does not mean that the extraction of \textit{begar} stopped totally. In fact instances of these were recorded in later years, but as offences. \textit{Begar} was prevalent, not only in Bastar but also in other zamindaris and princely states of the Central Provinces.
declared all forests as property of the state. In the same year the wasteland rules were also enacted. These rules stressed the continuation of 'custom' and the 'customary rights of ownership' that the state held in these lands. The officials argued that since ancient times the kings were in possession of these lands. This meant that the 'commons' were state property demarcated for village use by the rulers. Thus the state possessed legitimate power to regulate peasant rights in these lands. In keeping with this precept the forest rules of 1865 created a category known as 'village forests'. These forests and wastelands were demarcated for local use for villages which had no access to private malguzari forests. The village could use the demarcated lands for grazing and nistar purposes without any restriction. The settlement officers were to determine how much each village was to pay for the use of such forests. The levy, if at all, was to pertain not to the individual, but to the village. In all other wastelands the villagers were to have no usufruct rights.\textsuperscript{16}

The British attitude towards the customary rights of communities was influenced by developments in their own history and the broad contours of European history. The development of the common law (as elucidated by Pocock), the movements for enclosing cultivated and pasture lands and the allotment of wasteland as common pasture land, all point towards this. The conviction that all laws originated in custom and could be traced back to the 'ancient constitution' vindicated the British construction of the prevalence of the 'commons' in pre-British India. A logical outcome of this thinking was the perception of a future whose cornerstone was the creation of enclosed pasture lands for collective use. The village thus consisted of arable land used for private cultivation and non-arable land used collectively. The Parliament and the government had the right to intervene in the collective decision

\textsuperscript{16} Baden Powell, \textit{Forest Laws}, p.196.
making process of the commons. A comparison of Dalhman and Pocock's expositions with the official perception of wastelands in mid-19th century Central Provinces shows that the terms of description are similar to those in 17th and 18th century Europe. The government intervened in the local level decision-making and supply of wastelands to villages was curtailed sufficiently.

It is significant that writings on common property resources in post-British India have tended to concentrate on questions concerning the depletion of such 'common property' resources. Yet they have seldom bothered to see whether common ownership or usufruct rights existed in actual practice. In other words they assume that all pre-colonial management of the 'commons' was based on coequal access to resources. For example, Jodha overstresses the notion of 'coequal access' to pasture lands and forest resources. By this he means that all people of a "village, tribe or community equal access to non-exclusive resources". In the last two chapters I show that this is not really true. In Baiga and Maria societies the unequal access to resources was institutionalized. Access to natural resources was influenced by factors such as age and sex.

In order to maintain the centrality of subsistence forms in the study of grazing rights, there is a need for the reconsideration of official classifications of land. Subsistence activities are accorded a marginal status in the classification of forests and wastelands. The relevance of grazing and nistar rights for adivasi subsistence depends upon: the location of the forest determining the

18 For an elaboration of this point see Gidwani, 'Waste' and the permanent settlements in Bengal', pp.PE 41-42.
19 N.S Jodha, 'Rural common property resources' in Economic and Political Weekly 30 June 1990, pp.A-65 to A-77. For Madhav Gadgil and Ramchandra Guha the import seems slightly different. By this term they mean a system of resource use which is a result of mutual adjustment between different castes and is ordered by caste factors. See Gadgil and Guha, This Fissured Land, pp.103-109.
extent to which there is a spatial overlap between peasant and forest dwellers subsistence; and the overall effect of the forest laws resulting in shared subsistence areas. Keeping these in mind two zones of peasant subsistence may be visualized. First there are areas exclusive to peasant subsistence as in 'village forests'; and second there are areas where forest dwellers and the peasants have shared interests.

**Grazing Rights and Forest Economies**

The relationship between grazing and forests was discussed at length in the mid-19th century official discourse. At first grazing was seen as wholly detrimental to the forest, but later it was contended that limited grazing would benefit and not harm the forest. Grazing activities involved two kinds of subsistence groups: peasants who grazed their cattle themselves and professional graziers like the Banjaras, Tandas and the Ahirs. The relationship of the forest dweller with these subsistence groups was only affected if the grazing reserves were on the fringes of the forest villages. These relationships were also affected if grazing rights were granted in forest reserves where adivasi, peasant and grazing communities enjoyed limited rights. It was only by the 1880s that the revenue raising potential of grazing and nistar rights was recognized. Hence, the importance of controlling these rights was felt.

Before the 1880s grazing was done in 'village forests' as 'reserved forests' were closed for this purpose. After the 1890s a new system was worked out for the regulation of grazing rights. In the working plans of 1890s all forest ranges were divided into blocs, each of which was systematically open to grazing. Grazing was a seasonal activity for groups like the Banjaras, but for those who formulated the working plans, the cycle of tree regeneration seemed to be more important than the
cycle of peasant subsistence. Grazing was permitted in the forest for the removal of excess grass or the loosening of the soil to facilitate tree growth. If a circle had a lot of grass or lacked trees of commercial value it was declared to be a grazing circle. But such a circle was also open to graziers for only 10-15 years.²⁰

Spatial control was not only confined to the demarcation of areas for grazing. The movement of animals was also controlled. The animals were to be divided into two classes: 1) cattle belonging to agriculturists and grazing for agricultural purposes; and 2) cattle belonging to professional graziers and traders. The first category was further divided into local privileged graziers and cattle coming from other localities. The cattle of professional graziers were classified as follows: 1) agricultural cattle of peasants including milk kline for private use; 2) milk kline cattle used for profits and 3) other cattle used for profits by pastoral people.²¹ As a result of this classification the officials drew a sharp separation between commercial and subsistence forms. However in actuality the nature of the grazing and milking activities was such that it was difficult to distinguish between commercial and subsistence needs. In the case of the Ahirs I have already shown that they derived their income by providing peasant families milk for home consumption. The officers failed to specify whether activities such as milking cattle would be considered as 'commercial' or 'subsistence' activities.

Apart from this there was also an effort to bring about a commercialization of subsistence forms. The grazing rates were ample evidence of this. While there was hardly any dispute on what constituted agricultural cattle, the issue of imposing rates on Banjaras and Tandas was hotly debated in the 1880s. The Banjaras and the Tandas were graziers who moved through the forest in a seasonal cycle and

²⁰ Most working plans of the 1890s show this. There were not more than one or maximum two grazing circles in one forest. In over populated areas this was not enough.
²¹ CPSR Forest Department, Case File Progs. 'B' No:96-113 of 1904 and 'A' Progs No: 11-22 of 1911, p.2.
sold grain, salt and oil - things which the forest dwellers needed for their survival. Some officials emphasized that the Banjaras be treated as commercial traders whereas the others insisted that they be treated as privileged graziers. In 1881 the Commissioner of Jabalpur stated that the Banjaras should be exempt from the levy of any grazing dues but should pay a transit fee every time they pass through a government forest. While he saw Banajra grazing as a subsistence activity, their sale of salt and oil to the adivasis was considered a commercial activity. This view was criticized by many. The Commissioner of Nagpur asserted that the duties on the Banjara’s were justified. He contended that if only transit duties were to be imposed on the Banjaras, it would be difficult to distinguish between ‘subsistence’ and ‘commercial’ interests. The opposition was based on the fact that the government would not profit if the Banjara’s were allowed free access to the grazing reserves. It was also believed that this plan would be impractical in forests that were not contiguous as it would require a large number of forest officials to supervise Banjara movement. The Nagpur Commissioner suggested a plan where in the Banjara’s would be given a license of 1 anna for a period of 8 months between 1 November and 1 July. If they settled down in the middle of a government forest they would be charged ordinary rates. The rates in zamindari and malguzari forests would be lower than those in government forests. The forests were to be shut 4 months a year during the rainy season. The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces agreed with these views.\textsuperscript{22}

In this plan grazing, rather than trading, was seen as their main subsistence activity of the Banjaras. By allowing the Banjaras a regulated access to forests the British government was attempting to make their subsistence an integral part of the colonial economy. The opening of the grazing forests just after the rains was

\textsuperscript{22} CPSR Forest Department, Compilation No:80 of 1881-82, pp.1-10.
significant. At this time the grass was most suited for grazing and the Banjaras had to pass through the forest in their cycle of seasonal movement. This was also the time when the government had the best chance to collect in the maximum amount of revenue from grazing. If the Banjaras were found in the forest during the rainy season, (i.e between 30 July and 30 October), they would have to pay a fine to the forest department.

The grazing rates in forested areas were to be determined on the principles of: the estimated consumption of each animal in the forest; and the nature of the forest. The commercial rates for grazing were - Re. 1 for each buffalo, Re. 0-8-0 for cow, bullock, horse and pony; Re. 0-2-0 for goat and Rs. 0-1-6 for sheep. The communities included in this category were Gowalies, Ahirs, Gondalias, Kassias, Telis, Banjaras, Ghosis, Barudas, Hobaalas and Desawalis. But if these castes possessed agricultural land they were to pay the same rates as agriculturists.23 The variation in the ordinary rates paid by graziers is shown below:

**TABLE 3.1:** THE GRAZING RATES PAID FOR LICENSES BY GRAZIERS IN 1895:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>BUFFALOES Re-a-p</th>
<th>COWS Re-a-p</th>
<th>GOATS Re-a-p</th>
<th>SHEEP Re-a-p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sagar</td>
<td>0·4-6</td>
<td>0·2-6</td>
<td>0·1-3</td>
<td>0·0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damoh</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandla</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betul</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narsingpur</td>
<td>0·6-0</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoshangabad</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>0·3-0</td>
<td>0·1-6</td>
<td>0·2-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardha</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimar</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>0·1-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>0·5-0</td>
<td>0·2-0</td>
<td>0·1-6</td>
<td>0·1-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhindwara</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raipur</td>
<td>0·4-0</td>
<td>0·2-0</td>
<td>0·1-6</td>
<td>0·0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoni</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanda</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: CPSR Forest Department, Case File Progs. 'A' 11-12 August 1911 Nagpur)

23 CPSR Forest Department, Case File 'A' Progs No:11-22, p.2.
The ordinary rates for grazing were classified according to the animals to be grazed. Of these goat and sheep were considered the most harmful to tree growth whereas cattle grazing was sometimes considered beneficial for the growth of trees. According to Ostmarton the effects of grazing were only beneficial when the undergrowth of grass was very thick and there is a danger of the growth of weeds. Excessive grazing was harmful especially for sal growth. It hardened the soil thus disallowing the water to penetrate and also affected its aeration by stopping the flow of oxygen. These effects were not momentary, but lasted for many years. The hardening effect of sheep and goat grazing was far more than that of cattle.24 Therefore with these views the strictest control was kept on goat and sheep grazing.

The control over cattle, (especially Banjara cattle), was felt in an oblique way by the forest dwellers. As I have mentioned earlier, the Banjaras carried salt, oil and grain to the forest. In the Central Provinces such Banjara movement has been identified in the Chanda and Berar regions. The relationship between Banjaras and adivasis could have been either monetary in nature or one established through exchange of goods. In either case the imposition of levies could strain relations with the Banjara's adding these overheads to their selling price. If the Banjaras maintained their income levels by increasing the selling price of commodities, the forest dwellers suffered. If the sale price was constant then the dues cut into Banjara income.

The effects of grazing laws on peasant and grazier subsistence were more direct. Sometimes the quantity of fodder was inadequate, and at other times its quality was bad. Whether this had any effect on the health of the cattle is a question worth

exploring. The disruption of the grazing cycle due to the reservation of and the limited access to forests could have led to a loss of clientele. This would be especially true of graziers who took peasant cattle out to graze - i.e castes like the Ahirs and Gowaries. The displacement of graziers was therefore far more than that of peasants. Social displacement compelled them to look for newer occupations. Hiralal noted that many Ahirs had either become field labourers or had taken up cultivation in the 20th century, and 'criminality' amongst the Banjaras had increased considerably in the late 19th century. According to him, the Banjaras had started stealing and selling peasant cattle.25

By the turn of the century and the first decade of the 20th century, 'illicit grazing' was regarded as the most common 'forest offence'. In 1901 the Chief Conservator of Forests, highlighted the need to control grazing offences if the "forests were to be saved". Grazing in a closed forest without a license was an offence. The offender was liable to pay a fine or be dealt by a procedure laid down by law. If graziers broke the law in the South Circle, they were liable to pay a fine equivalent to the grazing due. When the same offence was repeated the fine was four times the amount. In the North Circle, the fine varied from twice to six times the amount of forest dues.26

The notion of legality is crucial to understand the nature of the peasant and adivasi response to grazing rules. Bernard Cohn has shown that British law was distinct from customary law in two ways. First, it differed in that it was impersonal and objective and follows the cardinal principle of 'equality before the law'. All cases were to be decided by a standard procedure which took into account the individual merit of the case. It did not discriminate between individuals on the

26 CPSR Forest Department, Case File, Progs 'B' No:19-42 of March 1901.
basis of caste, creed or religion. This was in contrast to personalized efforts to resolve conflicts in pre-colonial India. For example N.B. Basu has shown that the village headman had an important role in solving inter-caste and intra-caste disputes. He has also shown the role of the caste-based Gond panchayat in Chhindwara district in mediating social disputes. In either case inter and intra-community laws formed the basis of jurisprudence. Secondly, Cohn states that there was a marked shift from status to contract in the colonial period. Within a contractual system, all relationships in the legal framework are agreements, if broken which once, constitute a 'breach of law'. The judge who mediates disputes and resolves conflicts does so by contract with the government and derives his position and power are derived from law. The person who abides by the law has a contractual relationship with the system he is a part of. This contract itself is not always a result of mutual agreement between equals. It can also be a bond that is coercive in nature reflecting the position of power and domination of the superior partner. The British annexation of areas belonging to the Bhonsles of Nagpur and the Scindias between 1818 and 1854 was the beginning of one such coercive relationship. The grazing rules, like other forest laws, were an illustration of this. The rules bound the peasant and grazier to graze their animals in particular fields, confined to specific areas and specified the number of cattle each person could graze. The identity of each animal and its owner was transformed into a license number which was a proof that they were participants in the legalizing process.

This was the British legal structure. It could function only if the adivasis and the peasants shared the same feelings about jurisprudence. Did they? If they did, why did they commit the same offence repeatedly? There could be many

27 See Bernard Cohn's two essay's 'Notes on law' and 'From Status to contract' in Cohn, An Anthropologist amongst Historians. For the description of the Gond headman see N.B. Basu, 'Tribal village headman', pp.1-6.
explanations for this: possibly they did not consider their actions as offensive; possibly they were ignorant of the law or indifferent towards it. But the offences were also modes of protest. By persisting with their routine life, the graziers questioned and disrupted the implementation of the grazing rules. The forest satyagraha of 1930 showed this.

**The Politics of Grazing and the Settlements of 1930:**

In the 1930s two important developments took place with respect to grazing. The Congress started a forest satyagraha in the Provinces to protest against the oppressive nature of the forest laws. With this protest a momentary link between Congress politics and the adivasis was finally forged. The grazing settlements (1930-33) also took place during this period. These settlements systematized the control over the graziers and regularized the basis on which grazing was to be allowed in a forest range.

The forest satyagraha: Till the second quarter of the 20th century, issues concerning forestry did not enter the dominant nationalist discourse in the Central Provinces. In 1930 the forest satyagraha was organized by the Congress. The main aim of the Congress was to expand its mass base for the civil disobedience movement. The Congress base in the Central Provinces was limited to the middle

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28 For this point see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak*, (1986, New York), and the application of Scott's framework in the work of the subalterns and Guha, *Unquiet Woods*.

29 David Baker in 'A serious time - forest satyagraha in Madhya Pradesh, 1930' (*Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Volume 21, No:1, 1984) seems to suggest that these protests were caused by the long-term effects of the forest laws, but it hardly dwells on the motivation of the Congress in launching them. The social perception of the nationalists is missing in his analysis of the protest. It is in this sense that his essay remains incomplete in drawing a picture of the nationalist-adiwas relationship. Who were the 'tribals' that the nationalists spoke of and which issues concerning these communities were they interested in? In the limited sources that exist they are clubbed under the blanket category of 'Gond'. Insights such as these, show us that the nationalist thinking on issues concerning adivasis was limited - a point elaborated in chapter six.
classes. Reflecting upon the condition of the Congress party in the Provinces the
Mahakaushal Pradesh Congress Committee president wrote in 1936:

Only four districts, Jabalpur, Rewa, Raipur and
Saugor have been able to maintain district
offices. In the remaining eleven districts the
Congress offices remain in the pockets, drawers
and almiras of some one gentleman of the
district.\textsuperscript{30}

The statement above gives us a hint about the Congress base in the Province. In
Congress terminology Mahakaushal comprised of the Hindi speaking regions of the
Central Provinces and most of the \textit{adivasi} areas came under the perview of the
Mahakaushal Congress Committees. The lack of organization and leadership was
described as the main cause of the Congress failure to expand its base in these
Provinces. Further the nature of the Congress contact was "infrequent" and was
expressed in the lack of constructive work in the Provinces.\textsuperscript{31}

The 1930 \textit{satyagraha} was one of the first attempts by the Congress to make contact
with the \textit{adivasis}. This effort was marred by the divisions within the Congress
about the nature of the movement. In the Central Provinces the Congress was
divided on a linguistic basis: Hindi Congress and the Marathi Congress.\textsuperscript{32} In 1930
the Marathi Congress formed a 'war council' to decide the strategy for civil
disobedience. The forest \textit{satyagraha} was initiated by the Hindi Congress and found
half-hearted support with the Marathi Congressmen who were called the
'responsivists' during this period. The main leaders of the Hindi Congress were D.P
Misra, Seth Govind Das and Ravi Shankar Shukla. The leaders of the Marathi
Congress were N.B Khare and M.S Aney. While the leaders of the Hindi Congress

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p.68.
\textsuperscript{32} For further details see Baker, \textit{Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province: The Central Provinces 1919-
1939}, 1979, Delhi. Also see Home Political Fortnightly Reports, Central Provinces and Berar, National Archives of
India, (hereafter FRCPB), 18/V, 1st April 1930, p.72.
initiated the move for a *satyagraha* against forest laws, the Marathi Congress expressed its reservations about initiating such a movement. R.D. Tripathi, a responsivist, wrote:

> We (the responsivists) have given our consideration to the proposed breach of forest laws and have come to the conclusion that it is not a step calculated to advance the cause of the sponsors of the movement. In the first instance, the grievance is not common to a sufficiently large section of our population. People living on the fringes of the reserved forests only have this grievance. The support of this cause shall thus not be countrywide. Another feature of the satyagraha against forest laws is that it requires cattle to graze, the volunteers themselves being unable to do so. The Mahatma has not given his seal of approval to the other form in which materials may be removed from forests.\(^{33}\)

The main issues picked up by the Hindi faction were temperance and grazing. The 'responsivist' concern over the limited impact of the grazing rules was born out of their desire for a mass-based movement that incorporated the whole population of this region. By asserting that the issues focused upon (by the Congress of Hindi-speaking areas) were of limited concern, Tripathi showed that the aim of expanding the mass-base of the Congress could not be fulfilled by the 'breach of grazing laws'. He implied that if the forest *satyagraha* was to have a wide appeal, the 'breach of laws' should also include taking other kinds of the produce from the forest.\(^{34}\)

The Hindi Congress, which initiated the forest *satyagraha* resolution, ruled out protest against gathering laws in forests. This reluctance was born out of the leadership's acceptance of the aims of conservation. Just before the start of the

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\(^{33}\) *Hitavada*. 24 April 1930, Nagpur.

\(^{34}\) Baker has shown the influence of Tilakite politics on the Marathi section of the Congress party. He has also shown the successful attempts by the Tilakites to marginalize the Gandhians within this politics. See Baker, *Changing Political Leadership in C.P.*, pp.75-79.
movement Motilal Nehru, the then president of the Congress sent a warning to the satyagrahis in which he said:

Their (the forest law's) application maybe no doubt inconsiderate and harsh but nevertheless it gives considerable economic and agricultural protection to thousands of people and controls the conservation of the natural wealth of the Province. The penalties for its breach will be so drastic and so summary that majority of the people will get demoralized and bring disgrace to the organizers.35

This assumption that the ideals the forest department stood for, justified its policies showed that the Congress's ideas of conservation were not so different from that of the colonial government. In keeping with this the leaders of the Hindi Congress appealed to the people to confine themselves to the cutting of grass. A leader of the Hindi Congress, D.K. Mehta, is reported to have said that the forest was natural wealth and destroying it would be like "cutting your nose to spite your faces".36

Both Mehta and Nehru recognized the opposition of interests between the peasant, the grazier and the adivasi in the forests. They contended that excessive exploitation of forest resources would be harmful to the agriculturists interests. According to them the main aim of the movement was to protest against arbitrary grazing rules without hampering the protection of forest resources in any way.37 In this context, the choice of the grazing satisfied the Congress nationalists because the number of protesters would be small and therefore the damage to the forest

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35 *Hitavada* 1 May 1930.
36 *Ibid.*, 24 August 1930. The Congress Chief Minister of Bihar echoed the same views on the necessity of conservation of forests nine years later. For this see R.P. Papers 1-M/1939, p.17.
37 In his message Motilal Nehru had stated that the Congress protest "against the law is not it's administrative and economic harshness, but the ethical and material inequity inherent in affecting the liberties of the subject of the state, that has no public sanction behind it." (*Hitavada* 1 May 1930).
could be controlled. Further, the nationalists would be able to protest against the colonial government without harming the forests. Thus the main aim of the satyagraha would be fulfilled.

In 1930 the varied and widespread protest in forested areas showed the intensity of the discontent against the forest laws. Some were protests that were confined to the cutting of grass in the forests as token of resistance against the forest laws. These were a result of sustained Congress propaganda and were considered part of civil disobedience. The first signs of success came in the second half of June when the 'responsivists' were persuaded to give whole hearted support to the movement initiated by the Hindi Congress. Thereafter the Congress started achieving some success in the Berar regions. The leader of the protest, Aney was to flag off the movement on 10 July by going to a reserved forest and cutting some grass. The Berar movements were launched in Yavatmal, Pusad, Arviand Talegaon. However in each case the plans moved according to the Congress instructions and the satyagrahis courted arrest after cutting grass. In the Mahakaushal region (or districts under the Hindi Congress), the Congressmen were fast loosing their hold. In Sagar when a number of Palm trees were cut down, the Congress called off the movement.

By August 1930 the Congress had lost the leadership over the protest in the northern parts of the Province. Here the adivasi protest against forest laws did not

38 The Hitavada 28 August 1930 stated "Nowhere has the Congress ever made a statement that it will send hundreds of people in protest against the forest act". This shows that the aim of the Congress movement was limited to a symbolic protest against the colonial government's administration. They did not want to lead a protest of general discontent against the forest laws.
39 FRCPB 18/VII, 15 June 1930, p.78. The officer incharge did not seem unduly worried about the Congress's intentions. He is reported to have remarked "As the intended breach is cutting of grass, of which there can be little or none at that date, it is doubtful if the move, at the start at any rate be more than a demonstration."
40 FRCPB 18/VIII, 1 July 1930, pp.25-26. Also see Hitavada 17 July 1930; 20 July 1930; 3 August 1930; 10 August 1930 and 27 August 1930.
require Congress leadership. In Berar too, the *adivasis* started a series of protest actions against the forest department. The first incident occurred in Mandla where forest officials were assaulted and the Gonds at Mukas Chapra took from the forest what they considered was 'rightfully theirs'. Thereafter a chain of incidents occurred, the most famous and serious one being in Betul on the 28. August 1930. At Banjridhal, Betul district, about a 100 Gonds marched to the police station to protest against the arrest of their leaders. The demonstration resulted in a confrontation between the Gonds and the police. One constable was killed and two forest guards injured.\(^{41}\)

There were many movements against the forest laws. The nature of these protests was markedly different from the Congress sponsored protest. The difference was described by the *Hitavada*, in August 1930, as:

> The forest movement seems to be taking root in the rural areas of our Provinces. In these areas it is acquiring a somewhat serious aspect. The incidents at Betul should make the Congress reflect on its decision. If things go on as in the present, the movement will become a serious menace to the people. The Gonds and other people may not understand satyagraha principles and if encouraged to break laws may continue to break them once negotiations succeed.\(^{42}\)

The Congress and the *adivasis* differed in their conception of protest. One of the main aims of the Congress was to register its protest and demonstrate the power of non-violence in overthrowing foreign rule. The notion that violence would lead to repression and endanger the survival of the movement led the Congress to condemn the Gond struggles. The Congress disowned any responsibility for the

\(^{41}\) FRCPB 18/IX Second half of August 1930. Also see Home Political, File No:253 of 1930 (National Archives of India) and *Hitavada* 28 August 1930. Other incidents reported between the period of July and October 1930 were at Raipur, Seoni, Betul, and Jabalpur. The Betul incident of July became noticeable because it involved the greatest number of people.

\(^{42}\) *Hitavada* 28 August 1930.
movements to restore the *adivasi* rights in forests. The Hindi Congress President, D.K. Mehta, reminded the *adivasis* that they were not fighting for "mastery over the forest, but for Swaraj."\(^{43}\) There was an attempt to explain to the government that the Gonds were giving the Congress a bad name. This itself was proof of the political mileage that the Congress had extracted from the protests. By September 1930, both, the nationalist press and the government had begun to see the Congress as a political force which was more moderate than the *adivasis*.\(^{44}\)

What did *swaraj* mean for the Gond, Baiga, or the Korku? The "mastery over the forest" was what the forest communities aimed for. There's was a fight not for *swaraj* but for *bewar swaraj*. Perhaps from this point of view, the politics of *swaraj* and the politics of *bewar* were the same thing. In the second chapter I have shown how *bewar* and access to the jungle were synonymous with freedom. Keeping that context in mind it is not difficult to explain why the Gonds acted the way they did. The method of protest was simple. The villagers moved about together with their axes taking forest produce and attacking forest officials whenever they were stopped. However, it is quite difficult to say whether the Gonds acted on their own or whether they were galvanized into acting in this way.\(^{45}\)

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\(^{43}\) *Hitavada* 7 September 1930.

\(^{44}\) The government spokesman issued a statement saying "Amongst the Gonds there are clear signs that of the pernicious misrepresentation of the Congress Party addressed to the aboriginal population, which led to the clash reported last fortnight from Betul district is not confined to a single local area."(FRCPB, 18/X First half of September 1930, p.18). The Press to had similar opinions. The *Hitavada* 7 September 1930 opined that if the movement was to continue it should be under the direct control of the Congress leadership. Thus the Congress was considered moderate as compared to 'aboriginal' protest.

\(^{45}\) Baker in 'A serious time' has posed the same question, but perhaps provided an answer that is too simplistic. Baker emphasizes the role of economic factors as a cause of the protest. But in drawing a long argument about the causes and effects of the movement, he falls short of discussing the sociological composition of the people affected by forest and grazing laws. While it is true that the entire population of the province was affected by forest laws, the statement is too general. I have shown earlier that some people lost their subsistence while new and more lucrative, subsistence forms were generated for other communities in the province. Yet some continuities in behavioural patterns remained. So while economics answers an important part of the question it does not elucidate the vital difference in the perception of the Congress and the *adivasis*. In one sense the Gonds were also fighting for *swaraj* as interpreted in their own terms. Perhaps the Congress had not anticipated this.
suggest that the Gond struggles were neither 'unorganized' nor 'sporadic' as the nationalist, press and the government suggested. All movements were in fact organized village-wise. There is no evidence of any attempt by the Gonds to forge one unified movement as in the case of the Bastar movement of 1910. This shows that the Gonds were protesting against specific grievances of their villages with respect to forest laws. In cases like those of the Banjridhal Gonds, it is quite evident that the leaders of the struggle were chosen by the villagers. The use of the axe was considered a symbol of protest against the restrictions on bewar. Some adivasis like the Baigas considered the axe a symbol of their freedom.

Clearly grazing had become an important issue in the provincial nationalist discourse. The 'breach of grazing laws' was seen as an important mechanism for mobilizing the rural population of the Provinces in order to achieve the Congress aim of swaraj. By 1936, it was evident that this aim was achieved in a limited way. The president of the Mahakaushal Congress Committee held that even though the party had come into "contact with the masses", it had failed to build a sustained mass base.46 In a Province where over half the population was adivasi, the logic of populist politics dictated that both Congress and official behaviour were (at least in part) governed by issues concerning adivasi welfare. While the nationalists felt that the adivasi welfare would be served best if they joint the nationalist movement, the forest communities aimed at the restoration of their 'legitimate rights' in forests.

Forest settlements, 1930-33: Even as protests were being organized against the forest and grazing laws, the government was initiating measures to systematize the management of grazing in forests. The first grazing settlements took place

46 R.P Papers IX/1936 Collection I, p.68.
between 1930-33. Congressmen contended that the grazing movement in the Provinces was successful because of the immediate effect of these settlements. These were the first settlements of their kind and their significance lay in that they substantially altered subsistence relationships between communities. The aftermath of the movement and the settlements also showed that the colonial regime was willing to make concessions on the issue of grazing and nistar rates if protests threatened the viability of forest control. A full review of the working plans took place in 1932-33.

The scope of the settlements extended to the ryotwari, private and reserved forests. The forests were settled on the 'working plough system'. The Standing Committee on the subject of forest rules raised many questions about the procedure by which a 'working plough' was to be determined. The definition of the term 'working plough' differed on a regional basis. For example in the Narmada Division the Commissioner held that the 'working plough' was the number of ploughs recorded in the khasra, i.e the number of ploughs which actually ploughed the field. Grazing concessions would be granted exclusively to cattle which were actually ploughing their fields. In Mandla district the patwari was to make a list of those ploughs "which were necessary for the proper cultivation of land". Under this system the nature of the soil, the type of land, the crops grown and the health of the cattle were important for determining what the conditions of 'proper' cultivation should be. Here the term 'work' was used in a more qualified way than in the first case. It implied, not merely the act of ploughing but the act of carrying out this task 'efficiently'. Thus the notion of 'efficiency', as defined by the officials, of agriculture was important in determining the criteria for the 'working plough'. The third way of determining the 'working plough' was the area basis. In Sagar 10

47 MPSR Forest Department, 'A' Progs No:7-66 of May 1924, p.7.
acres were equal to one 'working plough'. The revenue potential of these lands was far greater than in forests of the other two categories. All people holding lands were considered as plough owners and these people outnumbered the people in the other two categories. In the 1930 settlements it was the opinion of all foresters that the third method employed in Sagar was preferable to others. At the same time the variables of 'proper' cultivation under the Mandla system were also to be taken into account.\textsuperscript{48}

The main objective of these settlements was to reproduce 'conditions of appropriation' in order to meet ever-increasing revenue obligations. This meant that the 'revenue forests' were to be given the same importance as 'timber forests'. Plans were to be made to ensure the regeneration of forest produce in a manner that would lead to the fulfilment of long term revenue goals. Simultaneously, the social imperatives and consequences of colonial policy were also to be taken into account by the officer making the plans for the working of these forests.\textsuperscript{49} For this purpose a discussion of the rights of people and their social positions acquire an important position in the settlement. The factors used to determine the nature of rights and its compatibility with the reproduction of pastures were: 1) the population of the cattle; 2) the amount of land available for grazing; 3) the type of cattle grazing; 4) the state of the forest and 5) the incidence of forest grazing. The relationship between these variables can reveals the linkages between different subsistence groups.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p.8 and p.10-11.

\textsuperscript{49} Studies such as those of the subalterns and others have emphasized that the actions of the state are to be seen in terms of their legitimizing intent as different from their 'economic' intent. In the case of the Central Provinces it is possible to show that no such clear-cut divide between economic objectives and need to create a legitimacy. The stability of the state is a crucial factor for achieving long term economic aims - relief works and the incorporation of people's interest being an important part of it.
### Table 3.2: Grazing Incidence and Rights in Mandla, Balaghat and Nimar Districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Grazing Incidence (^{50}) (Acres per cattle)</th>
<th>Number of Forest Villages</th>
<th>Rights of Forest Dwellers</th>
<th>Rights of Commercial Cattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nimar</td>
<td>3.5 (including govt. and private forests)</td>
<td>101 forest villages exist mainly for labour.</td>
<td>They get 8 acres plough free. Surplus cattle are allowed to graze in areas of light grazing.</td>
<td>All Gowari cattle have limited rights. Camps established twice a yr. in light grazing areas and location is shifted every 2 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandla</td>
<td>2.76 (acre per plough)</td>
<td>Total area of forest village is 52 miles.</td>
<td>At present the village wastes are open for grazing but the government plans to close them soon. Since these villagers have rights in other pastures village wastes, according to the government, are not required.</td>
<td>Gowaries are allowed to graze their cattle in lightly grazed areas but no camps are held for them as in Nimar. Jabalpur cattle also come to graze in Mandla forests but efforts are made to confine them to lightly grazed areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>2.8 (in govt. forest)</td>
<td>There is evidence that lots exist but number not given</td>
<td>No rights of grazing exist, but if village waste is exhausted than rights are granted. Goats allowed to graze in only village wastes.</td>
<td>Commercial Cattle are only allowed to graze in this forest if excess grazing land exists. Cattle from Mandla villages near Balaghat can graze their cattle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: MPSR Forest Department, Progs 'A' No: 8-2 & 8-7 of 1932, 8-2 of 1933, Bhopal)

\(^{50}\) The incidence is worked out by the formula Total grazing area/ Total number of animals grazing. The lower figure of grazing incidence, the heavier the grazing.
The study (Table 3.2) of three districts - Nimar, Mandla and Balaghat - shows that the system of closure of grazing lands can have a profound impact over already existing subsistence relationships. The inclusion or exclusion of cattle from grazing lands depended upon how 'commercial' cattle were defined at that point of time. In a previous section we have seen that Gowarie cattle were categorized as commercial cattle in the late 19th Century. In the 1930s though commercial cattle did not have access to pasture lands, Gowaries were included in the settlements. Did this mean that the Gowarie cattle were considered subsistence cattle?

The conditions under which the Gowarie was allowed to graze require some scrutiny. First let us study the case of Nimar district. In Nimar the settlement officer reported that the number of cows had gone up by 81 per cent and buffaloes by 26 per cent. The area occupied by grazing animals had gone up by 90,000 acres and consequently the number of 'working ploughs' had gone up by 8000 which makes the incidence about 5.7 acres per plough. While the cultivators held that surplus cattle were a part of 'essential needs' as they are used for manuring and breeding, in official perception they were excess cattle. The official view of subsistence was clearly limited to those cattle which were used for ploughing the fields. Excess grazing was reported to have resulted from the expansion of sedentary cultivation especially in the Narmada alluvial plains. As a result the village area decreased by 32.53 per cent and the forest area by 13 per cent. Due to the increase in pressure on the government forests, the grazing incidence (1926 - 1929) was 4.8 acres per cow. The main reason for this lay in the influx of cattle from border areas. During the settlement it will be seen that the grazing incidence was brought down to 3.5 acres i.e more than one acre per animal. The incidence

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51 MPSR Forest Department, Progs. 'A' No:8-7 of 1932, pp.26-28.  
52 Ibid., pp.37-38.
was brought down primarily by controlling the influx across the borders and it is here that the role of the Gowaries acquires importance.

In Nimar Gowaries had no grazing rights in areas where daily graziers grazed their cattle. Settlement officers classified them as: people who had been grazing for more than three years; and those grazing their cattle for less than three years. The former were provided no facilities of grazing as they were professional graziers who settled in tracts and took their animals to private lands. For the latter, the government provided some concessions by holding camps twice a year after every monsoon. But the biggest drawback of these camps was that they shifted location every two years.53 In Mandla, on the other hand, the situation was slightly different and Gowarie subsistence was not given the privileged treatment that it got at Nimar. Here the cattle were described as that of a “poor type and good for nothing”. The area of government forest was very small and the number of cattle were increasing every year. The cattle coming from Jabalpur raised the grazing incidence a great deal, restricting the grazing for local cattle. The Jabalpur cattle, along with the Gowarie cattle, were allowed in the forests once in two years on commercial rates.54

Thus we see that the Gowarie cattle of Mandla were seen as commercial cattle whereas in Nimar they were given the status of 'privileged cattle'. The crucial difference between the two was the provincial government's willingness to make arrangements for the Gowaries of Nimar. In contrast no such efforts were made in the case of the Gowaries of Mandla. The reasons for this were many. In Nimar the land was more fertile from the point of view of sedentary cultivation than in Mandla. The cattle were healthier and the communications better. The possibility

53 Ibid.
54 MPSR Forest Department Progs. 'A' No: 8-2 of 1932, pp.21-29.
of bringing the Nimar lands under regular settlements was far greater than in Mandla. This explains why the partial incorporation of Gowarie interests took place in Nimar. Healthy cattle was one of the components of an 'efficient' agricultural system which in turn was essential to increase land revenue and trade in the region.55

The inclusion of one group and the exclusion of another created new zones of potential conflicts between communities and individuals. The relations between Gonds and Gowaries had been quite intimate. Russell and Hiralal suggest a kinship relationship between these two castes. 56 Further there was also a subsistence relationship that existed between various communities. I have referred to this relationship in the discussion on the Banjaras. The relationship between the Banjara trade and adivasi subsistence was quite close, but this was obviously affected by the exclusion of the Banjaras from grazing reserves. In this context it is pertinent to mention the possibilities of change that may exist due to the different manifestations of policy initiatives. In the case of Nimar we see that the survival of customary ties and relations was at least partially possible. While the limited access of the Gowaries was significant in this regard, the displacement of graziers due to the closure of grazing reserves is equally important to consider. The breakdown of kinship ties can also be visualized in the case of villages whose grazing had been totally stopped. In the case of Mandla this was more relevant than anywhere else. The Jabalpur cattle were totally banned from coming into North

56 Russell and Hiralal suggest that the Gonds and the Gowaries came together through marital ties to form a distinct caste - Gond-Gowari. The origins of this caste are said to be the same as that of the 'pure' Gowari caste. The mythological origin of the caste illustrates the close connection between the Gonds, Ahirs and Gowaries. The legend is that an Ahir was tending the cows of Krishna and was in need of a helper. He found a small Gond boy in the forest and brought him up. The boy was given the task of grazing the animals and the Ahir stayed at home and made milk and butter. This Gond boy was the ancestor of the Gowaris. See Russell and Hiralal, Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, Volume 3, p.143 & p.160.
Mandla. Not only would this have led to the loss in subsistence of the peasants who depended on these cattle, but also broke some social ties. Further the inconvenience caused by these closures would vary according to the distance peasants had to move to reach pasture lands. The loss in subsistence could have occurred due to the effect of the regulations on the health of the plough cattle which may have become weak. The quantity and quality of milk and butter produced would also depend on the effect of intensive grazing on the growth of grass. There is no evidence to provide conclusive answers to any of these statements, but the possibilities seem to be real ones. The settlements created new conflicts in subsistence societies. The intensity of the conflict over the access to resources was dependent upon the severity with which the effects of these laws are felt in different areas. In Nimar the laws were applied more leniently than in Mandla. In this district the term 'subsistence' was given a wider scope by the settlement officer and it included more people in than in Mandla.

The response of the people to the settlement was similar in almost every area. The Special Revenue Officer for Mandla observed in 1932 that:

The people are opposed to all closures and entirely because of the consequences. They rarely protested against the reduction of area available for grazing. They only fear prosecution. In a number of cases villages are situated so close to the boundary that strayal is inevitable.\(^57\)

This sympathetic attitude towards the people was a direct consequence of the satyagraha. The Settlement Officer observed that the peasants were deliberately settling on the fringes of the forests so that their cattle could stray in the forest. It was held that this was a consequence of the lack of the 'spirit of conservation'  

\(^{57}\) MPSR Forest Department, Prog 'A' No.8-2 of 1932, p.30.
amongst the peasants.\textsuperscript{58} Apart from this there was considerable discontent over the rates that were imposed on the people. The political importance of grazing can be gauged from the scathing critique of them by S.M. Joshi, an M.L.C in Nimar. Joshi said that the division between the classes of 'privileged' and 'commercial' cattle did not exist as milch cattle were essential for subsistence. He recommended that grazing rates should be reduced by 25 per cent.\textsuperscript{59} Coming in the aftermath of the \textit{satyagraha}, Joshi's criticism showed that the Congress movement had a limited impact on the administration and the \textit{adivasis}.

\textbf{Conclusion:}

In this chapter I have attempted to show the relationship between grazing activities of peasants and graziers and the forest. I have shown that these activities are important in as much as they supplement and support other subsistence forms. The grazing economies are responsible for structuring the inter-relationships between forest and peasant communities. The shared subsistence spaces and interests of peasant, grazier and \textit{adivasi} communities are determined by many factors like: the location of the forest and the villages; the nature of forest and forest use; the commercial viability of the forest; the expansion of permanent cultivation; and the restriction of the access to forest resources. Depending on these situations of conflict or cooperation may arise between communities.

The category of 'common property' is a heuristic device used by the British officials to distinguish private property from other 'pre-capitalist' property forms. Its main

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p.22. In 'A serious time' Baker has suggested that the \textit{satyagraha} of 1930 was a consequence of the forest offences that were taking place. But he fails to how and why the protests took place in the form that they did. I have shown in the analysis of the movement that the logic of two processes was at work: that of national and provincial politics and the long term logic of the forest laws. Perhaps the \textit{adivasis} took advantage of the nationwide movement to achieve their ends in faster and more emphatic ways. In this sense the protest was a break in the pattern of Gond responses to forest laws.

\textsuperscript{59} MPSR Forest Department, Prog 'A' No:8-7 of 1932, pp.88-91.
feature is that the village holds all property communally and decides its future communally. The chapter shows that this proposition needs to be further qualified. In the first chapter we saw that property rights belong to the household, all decisions being taken by the male head of family. Further the relations between households were mediated through priests, headmen and village elders. The relationships of power were important mechanisms of natural resource management in the *adivasi* societies, and therefore terms like 'common property resources' need to be used with skepticism. Such property rights were also not opposed to realization of commercial objectives. In fact the discussion of grazing rights has shown that the creation of grazing and nistar commons by the British was the key to their limited success in achieving colonial aims. The grazing 'commons' were not lands where communal usufructuary rights were granted. They were lands where subsistence rights were regulated and subsistence interests subordinated to commercial interests.