
Land Settlements and Cattle Ecology in the Princely State of Cooch Behar, 1872-1940

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Abstract: *The Princely State of Cooch Behar was predominantly an Agricultural State. The Condition of the State people depends on their agricultural production. Its recognized that in the colonial period of India, agricultural was the main source of revenue. For the agricultural peoples, we know what the importance of cow, Bullock was. This region was not different. But, after the treaty in between Cooch Behar State and British (1773), various land settlements like the first settlement(1872); Patit Charcha Settlement(1884-86); Rakam Charcha Settlement(1890) and Final Settlement (1912-27) has drastically reduced the Khas land, and converted it into agricultural land. This policy led to environmental degradation and harmed the animal world in the State. This paper particularly investigates how the different land settlements impact the cattle ecology of the State. This study will try to show light on this aspect.*

Keywords: *Agricultural, Cattle, Cooch Behar, Colonial India, Ecology, Land Settlement etc.*

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Introduction

Cooch Behar was a princely State in North-Eastern region in Colonial India. It was purely agricultural State due to its environment. According the surveyor General Captain Lewin, 'Koch Bihar forms a large well cultivated plain of a triangular shape, intersected by numerous rivers'.¹ The soil of region is of alluvial formation and has a large admixture of sand. It is light loam that can retain moisture and easily give it out, and does not become water-logged. Ploughing is thus not difficult. The main resource of the State was land revenue.² On 5th April of 1773, British concluded the treaty with Cooch Behar State, after that State become a tributary State of the British, according to the treaty condition Raja of the region agreed to pay one-half of the annual revenues to the English East India Company.³ In this connection British always tried to improved revenue collection in this State. Whereas land was main sources of revenue in the State, all pressure was made on it. This led to an impact various aspects of the State. This Study will light on how the British intervention on land in the State changed the cattle ecology in the region.

Since the treaty in 1773, the administration of Cooch Behar State has not for many years been that of a purely native State; indirect rule gradually increased in the State. The British Government has been powerfully acted upon by European Ideas. Its proximity too Rangpur, and the fact of all the *amlah*(Officials) being natives of Bengal proper, assimilated many of its institutions to those of British India.⁴ This *amlah*(Officials) looked at how the State revenue collection could be increased or maximised. In this aspects, the State tried to land management system in good way. State tried to convert wasteland into cultivated land. In 1797 Mr. Richard Ahmuty (Commissioner of the State) gave great encouragement to turn off waste land into cultivated land.⁵ According to Ahmuty (Commissioner of the State) more than one-third of this region consists of wasteland. A great land revenue settlement reformation in the State was taken place during the first Settlement in 1872. Before that no accurate data land revenue was made in the State. Mr. J.H.O'Donnel, (1886-70) Deputy Superintendent of Revenue Survey, Who was specially deputed by the British Government for surveying State. The Survey was concluded in 1870 and started a new process of implementation in the State.⁶ In this settlement the standard measurement area of land unit

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was *bighas*, *kathas* and *dhurs*. The Settlement was made for 12 years. First Settlement (1872), made on demarcation the State by the Taluks, Parganas.⁷ After the tenure of First Settlement State introduced a petty Settlement named *Patit Charcha* Settlement, at 1884-86. The main aim was to expand agricultural land. In this operation brought various new field come into agricultural land, which before was *patit* or waste land. After the *patit charcha Settlement* (1884-86) in the State, a general resettlement was commenced in March 1886.⁸

Table:1:During the First Settlement 1872, quantity of lying waste and uncultivated land was, 7,16,756 *bighas*(unit of land).

Name of Parganas(Sub-division)	Total assessed and khas Lands	Quantity of Waste land	Percentage
Mekligunj	3,44,220	94,034	30
Mathabhanga	4,03,940	1,08,119	26
Lalbazar	3,14,937	74,625	24
Dinhata	3,83,755	89,774	24
Cooch Behar	5,62,057	1,70,963	30
Tufangunj	3,55,578	1,79,241	50
Total	23,34,487	7,16,756	30

(Source:Choudhury,H.N, *Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement*, Cooch Behar, Cooch Behar Press,1903, p. 504.)

It will showed that the quantity of *patit* lands 7,16,756 *bighas*(Unit of land) or 30% was waste and uncultivated. Wasteland or uncultivated land ware kept by the people to graze their cattle. As the population increases, and it becomes difficult to obtain lands for agricultural purposes, it is natural that the junior members of a family will try to look for lands elsewhere. It is in this way that cultivation has gradually extended to tracts covered over with jungle.⁹ During the *Patit Charcha* Settlement (1884-86), a large wasteland or jungly tract was brought

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into cultivated land. The State wanted to increase more land revenue in the State, this led to clearance of Jungle and convert into agricultural land. State used to clear Jungle by burning down the grass and weeds, so far as that was practicable. The big stumps and roots were used to be out with the spade. The ground was then tilled, or rather scratched with the plough. In the first year of operation heavy tilling was neither necessary nor possible. The farmer make it a point to any how raise a crop on the clearance and of making some income on the capital outlay; and in this they were generally successful without a thorough ploughing owing to the innate richness of the virgin soil. Large clearances were not effected all at once. At first a plot of open ground was used to selected according to the requirement of each individual case, clearance then continued slowly, year after year a small patch being added every year with the broken area.¹⁰

Pai System

Different kind of jungle clearance practice was running in Cooch Behar State, this was 'PAI' system. In this practice of giving jungle lands to *royts* for clearance free rent for first few years of the tenancy was in vogue in the country. This was called 'PAI' system means 'PAI' or remission of rent, generally varied from 1-5 years, according to the nature of the jungle to be dealt with. After the expiration of that period the land was brought under assessment.¹¹ The revenue policy of the British was to colonize land aggressively for agriculture even at the expense of forest tracts and to exterminate all wild and dangerous game.¹² Similarly, in Cooch Behar State it used to infest the country around Patlakhawa, Pundibari, Guard Hat and Mahiskhuchi; and, although owing to the spread of cultivation and human habitation in those tracts, the bigger games become rare. Leopards and black-bears were still to be found in these parts in large numbers. The State used to offer a reward of Rs.10 for each beast killed, the rate of tigers being Rs. 20 per head.¹³

In connection when resettlement survey operation (1886 onwards) were completed, we seen then waste land was, 6,44,991 *bighas* in the State.

Table:2.:Below the Table shown the picture in details:(in *bighas*)

Name	of	Total assessed and	Waste lands	Percentage of waste
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<i>Pargana</i> (Sub-division)	khas lands		lands
Mekligunj	3,25,851	77,218	23
Mathabhanga	4,11,498	1,07,461	25
Lalbazar	3,16,530	59,444	19
Dinhata	3,94,649	78,464	20
Cooch Behar	5,67,113	1,74,087	30
Tufangunj	3,62,726	1,48,319	40
Total	23,78,367	6,44,991	27

(Source: Choudhury, H.N, *Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement*, Cooch Behar , Cooch Behar Press,1903, p.505.)

From the above table, we seen decrease of waste land from first Settlement(1872) to Re-settlement(1886) (7,16,765-6,44,765) 71,765 *bighas* in the State and increased total assessed and khas land (23,78,367-23,34,487)43,880 *bighas*. Similarly when final survey settlement (1927)was completed in the State, we seen the agricultural land was increased.

Table:3: This table depict: The Settled areas in *bighas* (Unit of Land) in different Settlement

<i>Pargana</i> (Sub-division)	First Settlement (1872)(in <i>bighas</i>)	<i>Rakamcharcha</i> Settlement(1890) (in <i>bighas</i>)	Present resettlement (1927)(in <i>bighas</i>)
Mekligunj	2,99,789	2,97,265	3,05,327
Mathabhanga	3,89,460	3,82,172	3,96,075
Lalbazar	2,93,584	2,87,802	3,01,147

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Dinhata	3,68,101	3,61,599	3,68,049
Cooch Behar	5,24,918	5,08,614	5,24,334
Tufangunj	2,89,768	2,86,244	3,09,170
Total	21,65,620	21,23,696	22,04,102

(Gunguli, K.C, *Survey and Settlement Report in Cooch Behar State, 1912-27*, Cooch Behar, Cooch Behar Press, 1930, p.52.)

The above table shows the State maximise the agricultural land in various land settlement in the State. This increase of agricultural land also impacted on Cattle ecology in the State. Next paragraph of the paper will focus on this aspect.

Historical background of Cattle in India

Ancient Times

Since the ancient time, India has been agricultural country, and cattle are important part of Indian agriculture. Cattle are an important resource of the society specially in an agricultural society. But its utilization was changed time to time. Cattle are a good source of milk, meat, cow-dung (Manuring fields), leather etc. In the ancient times, possession of cattle many wars occurred between the tribes. During the Rig-Veda period, the term “Gavishti” search for cows reveals its importance.¹⁴ Cattle’s rearing is noted in great Indian Epics: likes Ramayana, and Mahabharata, during this time it was important for the framing.¹⁵ It is learnt from Kautilya’s Arthashastra that veterinary surgeons for the cows, horses, buffaloes, goats, etc were employed to treat the animals with several medicines of the nature of disease.¹⁶

Colonial Period:

During the British India, they changed the use of land, which was traditionally meant for cultivation of grains and fodder crops. Which impact in cattle grazing, slowly by many

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villages lacked suitable grazing ground, which indirectly impact on the cattle rearing in the Country.

Importance of Cattle for the State People

আছে গোরু না বয় হাল, তার দুককো চিরোৎকাল।

A lazy man is never well off. If the man in spite of possessing cattle does not till his land, he comes to grief always.¹⁷

In the State more than 50% people belong to Rajbanshi Community. The above folklore was famous in the sub-Himalayan areas. Cooch Behar State is purely agricultural area, due to its geographical position. So cattle's were more important in the State mainly for tilling land, milk, cow-dung for manure etc. Cows are largely employed for tilling the land. The Cows supply milk in addition. Very few of the cultivators can afford to buy a few pairs of buffaloes. The males are used for drawing carts and the female for the milk. Buffalo milk is greatly relished by the Village people. It is cheap. Contains larger quantity of fats and proteins and it makes very good curd.¹⁸

In the State Cattle mainly rearing by the people's for agricultural purposes. For the State people's cattle is more important than their own home. Here a report by the Dewan of the State, which shows the reality: 'Many poor ryots were deeply involved in debts during 1884-85. They found it impossible to extricate themselves from their difficulties, unless they took some bold steps. Under this circumstance, it was but natural that the thought of setting in the Duars jotedars, who offered to give those lands on very favourable terms, and all that they had to do was to fly from their homes with their bullocks in the dead night. Several Taluks from which the ryots fled left deserted houses'.¹⁹ Disease amongst cattle prevailed in many places during the rainy season, and it interfered with agricultural operations to a certain extent. Particularly in the Sudder and Dinhata Sub-division. The *Naib Ahilkar* (A native officers) of Dinhata goes so far as to say that the rice field could not be prepared as well as could be wished.²⁰ In this perspective it's clear that cultivation was depending on cattle health. In a place like Cooch Behar where the people live chiefly on agriculture, and their welfare therefore depends greatly on the well being of their plough, bullocks, it is necessary that State should pay attention to the important subject of improving the condition of cattle.²¹ Dewan Calica Das Dutt said in his report that, In the Cooch Behar

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State, the cultivated ryots prosperity was depending on, how many cattle belong in his cow shed. Surapati Chatterji, *Naib-Ahilkar* of Dinhata, said that “The loss of a plough bullock is looked upon as a disaster almost equal to the loss of any member of the family”.²² A report about cattle in the State also shown the importance in materially prosperity of the people depend on, “Cattle disease prevailed in different parts of the State and particularly in the Suddar and the Dinhata Sub-division. The heavy rains of the year served to increase the spread of the disease and number of death amongst the cattle was very large. Not only did agricultural operation suffer on this account but there was a large falling off in the supply of milk required for children”.²³ An investigation was made to find out the cause of cattle death in the State. State notice some causes for the heavy mortality among the cattle, i.e. disease-foot and mouth disease, small-pox & starvation, poisoning of some other suspicious cause, and last of all natural death.

The man made cause of death cattle was Starvation. The principal tobacco growing district only, where large number of cattle is required to be kept up for the sake of their manure. The grazing in these districts is next to nothing, as well the land where tobacco does grow is taken up for the crop and the grass on even the small patches of land that might be left for the purpose gets scorched up.²⁴ After the scarcity of grazing ground of cattle, Lord Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the State, take an initiative to reduce the death of mortality of cattle by the cause of starvation to open some khas lands in every Taluk for grazing purposes.²⁵ An attempt was made during the minority of His highness Mahraja Nripendra Narayan to improve the breed of cattle, and a cattle-breeding farm was established, and strong bull and cows are imported from the Upper Provinces. The trial was not, however fully successful. There are at present some up-country bulls at suddar, and several in the interior, the services of which are willingly availed of by the people.

Cattle was very important in the state, in this perspective sale and buy procedure was registered.²⁶ During the floods man and cattle was suffering in the State, during the rains the embankments remain out of water during the rains, when they are used by the people for grazing their cattle.²⁷ In the State occasionally happened floods, for this reason many cattle lost and few deaths by drowning also.²⁸ Cattle were used as trap to catch the wild animals.²⁹

Type of cattle

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The cattle are of the ordinarily Bengal type, small in stature but hardly. There are breeding bulls in every village, sometimes the exclusive property of some individuals, and occasionally belonging to the public, having been let loose after dedication to gods. Cattle from the north-west provinces are now largely imported; but these are generally plough-bullocks or carts bullocks. Bulls and cows are but seldom brought in. A cattle-Breeding Farm were supplied to some of the Sub-divisional towns, where their services are eagerly availed of by the people living in the neighbourhood. With all this, however, the effect of the climate on the growth of animal life cannot be counteracted to any appreciable extent.³⁰

Cattle Pounds

Many times cattle destroy the peasant's agricultural land, entered person property and maybe even injured them. Then who will responsible for them? The Bengal Cattle Trespass Act, (Act III of 1857) was acted up to in the State from early time. Subsequently the spirit of Act I of 1871 was followed.^{31 32}

Damage by cattle of the unknown property is called Cattle trespass and the liability of any damage would be on the owner of the Cattle; Cattle trespass is very prevalent in the Country from very early time. Because its mainly an agricultural country. Damaged was caused by cattle on agricultural land. From this perspective Cooch Behar State started to flow the Bengal Cattle Trespass Act and Cattle pound system. When a cattle is stray and it trespasses the property of a neighbour or the property of government, they are confiscated or seized in a pound which is a place of shelter for these stray animals as long as their owners do not claim them back. In the meantime, the pound keeper would be responsible for managing the cattle, by providing fodder and water. When the owner came then the charge will apply during this time for the save keeping and feeding. These pounds was controlled by the State Superintendent, State leased the Cattle pound in various areas of the State to the highest bidder. Cooch Behar State was got good some of money from the Cattle pounds. In 1878-79 total cattle pound in different parts of the States was 35, and net profit was Rs.2645-12.³³ The Cattle pound was became very popular day by day in the State, and profit of the State was increased similarly. In 1889-90, there were 15 permanent pounds and 40 experimental pounds in the State, and gross collection was 6865-12-9. An important changed was happen during the year, State was started farming system in Cattle pound of the State.³⁴ From that time

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management of the pounds had hitherto rested with the Superintendent of Police, subject to the general control of the *Fouzdary Ahilkar*, (A native officers) but from the time State Council look at the matter and the pounds were leased out to the highest bidders with the exception of those which failed to find purchasers, and which had therefore to be kept under State management.³⁵ The System of farming out Cattle pounds as it obtained in British India was introduced in the State beginning of the year 1889A.D. Out of 54 pounds then in existence, 50 were farmed, and rest which did not elicit any bid at auction, kept under the State management as experimental pounds.³⁶ In year 1909-10A.D. showed that, there were 87 pounds in the State and the gross receipt from the pound was Rs. 13550, mainly some expenditure was made by the maintenance and establishment inclusive of rewards paid for killing rabid and stray dogs. State also expenses this pound fund to distribute various town committees to constructing and improvement of the town. Like in 1909-10 a bridge over Giria Naddi and a pucca well at Balairhat was constructed by the pound fund.³⁷ After the one decade latter (1919-20) total Cattle pounds were 109. Total amount Rs. 13164+Rs. 6300 was paid during this year to the several Town Committees and sub-divisional towns in State towards effecting improvement of the places and the town concerned.³⁸ According to the Annual Administrative report of the Cooch Behar State the Cattle Pounds was increased day by day and profit also increased from it. Mainly maintained expenditure in every year was rewards for kill rabid and stray dog. The Cattle pounds profit was utilize to improvement of various town committee. In 1940-41, there were 120 pounds in the State, and total amount collection from was Rs. 14,515.³⁹

Table. 4. Details number of the State Cattle pound in 1940-41.

Name of the Pargana	Sudder (Cooch Behar)	Tufangunj	Dinhata	Mathabhanga	Mekligunj	Total
Number of Pounds	18	23	26	34	19	120

(Source: *Cooch Behar State Annual Administrative Report 1940-41*, p. 91.)

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It is very noticeable point that, the cattle pounds were very popular and number of pounds increased due to the enacted of Bengal Cattle Trespass Act and the lack of grazing ground in the State. After the first Settlement (1872), state was took various survey and settlement for increasing the cultivated land and revenue. For this aspect, various time wasteland and grazing ground also converted day by day in cultivated land. During the Patit Charcha Settlement, State was assessed it in cultivated land. Before the *Patit Charcha* Settlement this land were used by the people for the purpose of grazing their cattle without any cost. But after the settlement it was not possible.⁴⁰ In this aspect many cattle were destroy the *ryots* crops. Due to a lack of grazing ground, State imposed tolls for grazing in khas land in the Talook Falimari. *Naib Ahilkar* also collected tolls on buffaloes Rs. 8 anna per hate.⁴¹

Grazing Fees

Below table shows scale of grazing fees for khas lands in Pergunah Toofangunj:

Table:5: Rates of grazing fees in Tufangunj pargunah.(Rs=Rupees; As=Annas; P=Paisa; Different monetary unit)

Class of Cattle	For permanent Herds Rs.----As.-----P.	For animals brought for a time only Annually Rs.-----A-----P.
Buffaloes (both male and female)	0-----8-----0	0-----6-----0
Buffalo calves	0-----2-----0	0-----2-----0
Cows and bullocks including bulls	0-----5-----0	0-----3-----0
Cow calves	0-----1-----0	0-----1-----0

(Source: *Cooch Behar State Annual Administrative Report 1902-03*, P. 14, Para. 30)

In 1911, from the revenue officer of the State, solicits sanctions of His highness in council to the exemption from tolls of cows, bullocks and Cow-calves grazing on the 60bighas of land

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recently made khas for grazing purposes near Nagrurhat in Talook Bara Salbari. Dewan of the State said that for the exemption for the granted, the income from the toll will not materially suffer. The tools were mostly realised from the owners of buffaloes grazing on khas land.⁴²

Cattle Breeding Farm

In 1878-79, G.T. Dalton, Deputy Commissioner of the State, given a proposal to purchase cattle and open an experimental cattle-breeding farm in each sub-division. Cattle mainly bulls and cows were purchase from Tirhoot.⁴³ Lord Ulick Browne, Commissioner, Being struck with the wretched appearance of the cattle in Cooch Behar, determined to make an effort to improve the breed by opening an experimental cattle breeding farm and improving bulls and cows from Behar, so as to place good bulls within the reach of the people, and at the same time to breed young bulls of good stock for distribution, throughout the State. The idea was given effect to in 1879-80, and a Committee composed of the *Dewan*, the Fauzdari Ahilkar and the Superintendent lent of works was appointed to supervise the experiment. Some cows were given to private parties, who promised to look after them and produce the stock for inspection.⁴⁴ In 1880-81, the following table shews the distribution of bulls and cows in the different farms in the State:

Table No.6: Details number of cattle on State farms during 1880-81.

Name of Farms	Bulls	Cows	Bull-Calves	Cow-calves
Sudder(Cooch Bethar)	3	8	5	5
Dinhata	1	3	3	2
Mathabhanga	1	4	2	2
Mekligunj	1	4	1	4
Total	6	19	11	13

(Source: *Cooch Behar State Annual Administrative Report, 1880-81*, P. 67)

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The total expenditure incurred during the year in connection with the experiment was Rs. 1691-9-11, and the price of milk sold at the Sudder and Mekligunj farms amounted to Rs. 66-8-6. The cows brought to the farms by the ryots are not as a rule strong in the State. This experiment has not yet become popular among the resident ryots. Then State took an initiative, a good supplementary extension of the experiment would be to put a good bull in each cattle pound throughout the State under the care of the pound-keeper. The ryots will thus have good bulls near their houses, and the inconvenience of taking their cows long distances, and which is the great bar to the popularity of the scheme, will be partially remedied.⁴⁵ The success of the cattle-breeding enterprise in this country is still an open question. The following weighty remarks of Mr. Dalton on this Subject recorded in 1882-83 will be found instructive:-

‘My own opinion is that we can do little to force on an improvement in the breed of cattle in these parts, and, as I have often before said, I do not think a superior and consequently a higher priced description of cattle altogether suited to the wants of people in a country where tigers and leopards often commit great ravages. As cultivation improves and civilisation progress the people themselves gradually importing and breeding bulls for cross-breeding with the small Cooch Behar cows; but so long as the country bulls and cows herd together all over the State the impression produced by our imported bulls will be small country cows, nor does it make such good butter. Probably the pasture which the Sate affords is more suited to the smaller breed than to the larger.’⁴⁶

The experiments in this Farm also were not successful. The resident *ryots* seemed to be averse to avail themselves of the services of the bulls, and it was the foreigners only who appreciated the advantage. Many cattle were gradually sold off and some were distributed amongst known persons of respectability, who promised to take care of them. In 1884-85, the Sub-divisional Farms were closed. Only the Sudder(Cooch Bethar) Farm now remained. Owing to want of encouragement by the Cooch Behar public, the experiment did not flourish and expenditure was gradually reduced. The stock of animals gradually dwindled by distribution, sale and death, till there were only two bulls in 1891-92. In the following year

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Kumar Gajendranarayan was transferred to Government service for learning the police work, and the cattle-breeding farm was abolished, the two bulls attached to it being placed under the supervision of the officer in charge of the Jail. From that time the cattle breeding farm were placed under the Fouzdari Ahilkar.⁴⁷

Conservation of Cattle

After the State understands the importance of Cows, State took some initiative and this result Various Act and bill introduced in the State. Act I of 1899, An Act to provide punishment for cow-killing in the State and Bill V of 1898, To prohibit the slaughter of cows in the State.⁴⁸ The killing of cow is prohibited in the State, it being an offence punishable with imprisonment and fine. The practice is looked upon with abhorrence even by the Mahomedans of this country.⁴⁹ Here the Council notification of the 26th of March 1898 Draft.⁵⁰

- I. Any person infringing the law as laid down in the council resolution of the 25th march 1885, by killing a cow shall be punishable on conviction before a magistrate with simple imprisonment which may extend to one month, or with fine which may extend to Rs.200 or with both , that being the punishment provided in the first part of section 188 of the penal code.
- II. Offences under this act shall be considered to be non-cognizable, and shall only be entertained on complaint lodged before a Magistrate, as provided in section 198 of the criminal procedure code.
- III. In this act the word cow includes ox, steer, heifer and calf and excludes buffaloes.

Cattle Census in the State

The grass was abundant in every part of the State, and the cattle were generally well-fed. Pasture was not regularly kept by the people. There were, however, pieces of khas land, and dangas or high lands in every part of the country. These were not cultivated, and used for grazing purposes. The straw of Haimanti paddy was preserved, and it was a nourishing food of the cattle.⁵¹ Abundances of river, *nala*, water bodies, and cattle never felt scarcity of good drink. The epidemics or small pox and hoof-disease were very common and annually kill a large number of cattle. There was no veterinary surgeon in the country treatment of cattle-

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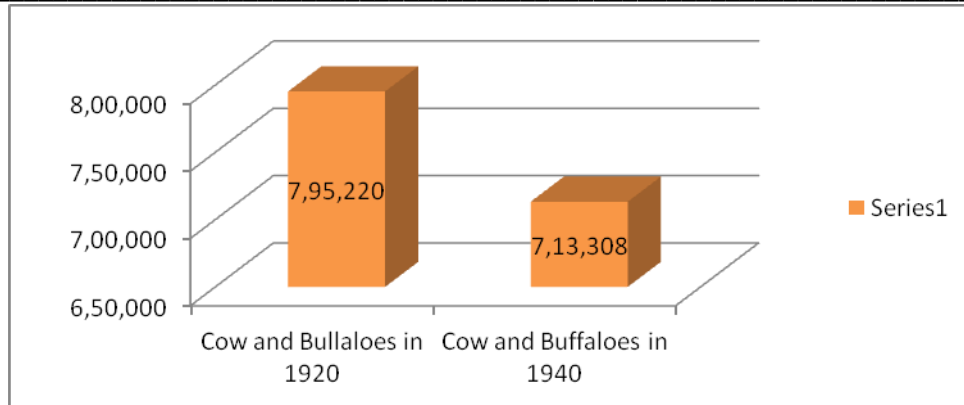
disease and administers medicines himself or gets an old and experienced neighbour to do it for him. The want of professional knowledge was keenly felt at the same, and was perhaps responsible for the high rate of mortality among the cattle every year.⁵² For the agriculture purpose the manure especially cow-dung was largely utilized.⁵³ Four pairs of cattle were used to separate the grains from the stalks. The animals were tied to each other by the neck, and made to go round and round the *maddi* until the seeds entirely fell off from the stalks.⁵⁴ The average ryots leads an easy and simple life. He lives in the present and has little care for the future. Living on his own land and subsisting on the produce of his field, he was secure if his cattle, which were the only wealth, he possesses or cares for, keeps health and works well.⁵⁵

The cattle used for agricultural purposes were ordinarily small country bullock though in some cases they have been replaced by buffaloes. The breed of indigenous cattle was distinctly of a inferior type. Possibly this inferiority was the result of too much in breeding of an originally poor stock and possibly the climate of the place would cause even the best cattle to deteriorate.⁵⁶ In British India, the first livestock census was concluded 1920, simultaneously in the State a cattle census was also taken during the year, there were altogether 7,95,220 cattle including 23194 buffaloes.⁵⁷ After the two decade later when the cattle census also held in the State in January 1940, simultaneously with the livestock census, 1940 held by the Government of Bengal. A comparative study of the figures for 1921 and 1940 would show a net decrease of 81,912 in combined cow and buffaloes population which in the 1940 census stood at 7,13,308.⁵⁸

This figure shows the Cattle Statistics in 1920 and 1940

Figure :1: Decrease of Cattles in the State in between 1920-1940.

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It also clear that the importance of cattle in the State for agricultural purposes. Expansion of agricultural land in the State, had an indirectly impact on cattle ecology. Dewan (Calica Doss Dutt) of the State find out the cause of large cattle death in the State, one of them was lack of the grazing ground. In connection in 1885-86, he proposed to keep some land khas in every Taluk for grazing purposes.⁵⁹ According to Karali Charan Gunguli, “The people of the State take no sufficient interest in the breeding of the cattle. It seems they have no knowledge about efficiency of sound breeding. There were many places where great herd of cattle and pastured together and promiscuous and totally unregulated breeding takes place. After the concluded various land settlements in the State, grazing ground of good quality was decreased. Because, all these settlement officer always tried to increase the cultivated land. The spread of cultivation which has been rather rapid during the past few years has brought the question into prominence” He also thought to set apart grazing fields in every village. And another cause for deteriorate of cattle was disease, named Rinderpest and foot and mouth disease.⁶⁰

Cultural Ecology

They practice a puja which popularly known as Dangdhara⁶¹. Dangdhara is a forests deity⁶² in Sub-Himalayan North Bengal.⁶³ The Rajbangshi people of Koch Bihar had various religious beliefs. They used to worship cows. They were basically a farming community. To protect this cow-property, they used to worship a deity named Dangdhara. Dangdhara was a tiger deity. This deity had a rod in his hand. The belief of the people behind this worship was

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the fear of tigers. Hindus and Muslims of this region used to perform this worship for the welfare of cattle. After the calf was born, first 10-12 days, the cow's milk was collected, mixed with yoghurt, chira and banana and made into a kind of nadu. They believe that for this ritual the newborn calf will not be harmed.⁶⁴ When cows were lost, the people of this region used to worship Goraksanath in the hope of getting the cows back.⁶⁵

Conclusion

In 1773, when Cooch Behar became a tributary State, after that all mechanism of the State administration was continued by the European ideas. Whereas land was main resource in the State, then they looked on it. After the treaty State officers all were tried to increase agricultural expansion without any hesitation. This led to a decrease of khas land and increased of agricultural land. And which impact on the State live-stock specially cattle. Here Simultaneously due to lack of grazing ground cattle pound popularly increased. And most noticeable point is that, lack of grazing also decrease of cattle in the State.

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