

Chapter – VI

Resource Distribution and Ethnicity in Sikkim

The emergence of educated elite is normally viewed as a catalyst of change in society. Sikkim too is no exception. With the introduction of a democratic set up and its merger with India, the development process in the State has accelerated. There soon arose a distinguishable group of educated elite, eager to play a lead role in socio-economic and political domain. Representing the middle- and upper classes, this neo-elite does play the role of a sub-elite to use Mosca's terminology. But if we fall back on Marxian analysis, this neo-elite can either carry forward the ruling class ideology (thereby playing a reactionary role) or lead the society toward enlightenment through progressive movements. But the neo-elite in the three major ethnic groups may not be equally equipped to take advantage of the new opportunities. There may thus be an ethnic dimension to resource distribution and an unequal access to education, occupational opportunities and other developmental opportunities. Centering this, there may be a growing competition for resources as well as a sense of relative deprivation. Attempt has therefore been made to show the representation to the higher level of bureaucracy and material and human resources. The access to politics of the emerging class representing various ethnic groups has been discussed in chapter IV.

The continuous migration changes both the demographic and economic balance among the ethnic groups. Hence, the inter-ethnic relations in Sikkim have to be understood in terms of migration of people belonging to different ethnic groups. The Lepchas are indigenous people. But the immigration of Bhutias and the Nepalese had its own repercussions in the political, economic and social arena. Besides, the economic and territorial distribution of resources accentuates the ethnic competition. In this chapter, I would look into the relative control over the material resources by the ethnic communities and how the resulting feeling of deprivation breeds ethnic tension to influence Sikkim politics. Since land holds an important place in agrarian economy of Sikkim, a discussion of the control of land by the ethnic communities will be highly relevant here.

Land Distribution

Physically, an enclosed basin, the greater Himalayan region in the north is a snow desert, where highlanders graze their yak and other herds during summer and lead a nomadic-cum-pastoral life. While the cold northern slopes of the Inner Himalayan zones are used for pastorate, the southern slopes are marked by slash and burn type of rotational dry cultivation.¹

North Sikkim, with its pastoral and dairy economy is a Bhutia reserve. Happy with trade and commerce across the Himalayas, the inhabitants are highlanders of the cold and dry climate. The Lepchas are normally found in the inner Himalayan region, mostly on the southern slopes of the hills and are engaged in subsistence type of dry slash and burn type of rotational maize, millet and buckwheat cultivation,² with very little left for commercial transaction. With the penetration of other communities, the compact and exclusive Lepcha settlements are found only in the Lepcha reserves of Dzongu, the private estate of ex-Chogyal. This cardamom growing region is controlled mainly by the Kazi-aristocracy of both Bhutia-Lepcha stocks.³ The southern slope that produces rice, maize, potato and ginger in small terraced fields, along with some tropical and perishable fruits, is inhabited by the Nepalese.⁴

The Lepchas were the original inhabitants of the State and they controlled most of its land. After enthronement of Bhutia ruler, the landed property changed hands, the Lepchas got exposed to outside world and thus a primitive community got transformed into a peasant society. Since then the ownership of cultivable land had been transferred to the Bhutia ruler, who used to gift portions of it to his chattels, courtiers, Kazis etc. in return of their services.

The British rule in India revolutionized the entire land management system by introducing the land-lease system and consolidation of landlordism. Consequently, a three-tier land ownership⁵ pattern emerged: (i) the private estates, owned by the ruler and other members of the ruling house personally; (ii) monastery estates-land owned by five big monasteries; and (iii) public estates, in which lands were distributed to the leasee land-lords.

After 1951 land settlement programme, there were 108 estates in Sikkim, divided into three categories: (1) Government estates, numbering 90, which included the old leased land areas as well as the private estates of the Kazi and Thikadar families; (2)

Monastery estates, numbering 5; and (3) 13 Royal family estates. Thus, nearly 85 per cent of the total land was under the government estates, 11 per cent of the land was controlled by the Royal families and 4 per cent was under the monastic estates.⁶

To understand the pattern of land ownership, a peep in retrospect is necessary. The Kazis and the nobles, mainly drawn from the Bhutia ethnic group, were the landlords and higher officials in Sikkim. The cultivators were mostly the Lepchas,⁷ who had no title to the land they cultivated. As the Lepchas were mainly tenant-cultivators rather than traders or herdsmen like the Bhutias, the monopoly over arable land had shifted from the hands of the Lepchas to the Bhutias.⁸

Due to availability of land in abundance, the question of tilling right of individual and settling on a certain plot of land permanently did not emerge as a crucial question earlier. The Lepchas enjoyed relative independence in tilling any plot of land by paying certain amount of tax.⁹ However, the emergence of lessee landlordism had added an important milestone on the question of land and ethnicity. A fixed amount of *khazna* (land tax) was collected from the cultivators through the village headman (Mandals). The lessee could settle as much revenue in the initial payment of *nazaranas*,¹⁰ known as *chardam*,¹¹ which literally means four *paise*, paid as a kind of *salami*. It refers to the grant of the right to serve on specific land as a *bustiwala*. Such practice was however abolished in 1950. All registrations of land transactions were accomplished through the lessee landlords, who were invested with magisterial power.¹² The tenants had no security of tenancy rights and were under the mercy of the lessee.

As the Nepalese were considered industrious and better cultivators, the Nepali Thikadars and pro-immigration Kazis promoted Nepali immigration and settlement in forest areas, for easy earning and to gain favour of the British government. With the land in abundance, acquiring wasteland for farming from the Lepchas and Bhutias was not a problem at the beginning. The Lepchas and the Bhutias had confined themselves to fertile lands and they had little interest in infertile waste lands.¹³ The continued influx resulted in significant change in population balance in favour of the Nepalese, which subsequently caused scarcity of cultivable land. Coupled with this, the newly introduced terracing technique of cultivation had also contributed in the claim of individual's right over a certain plot of land,¹⁴ which gradually emerged as a basic question in the traditional society of Sikkim.

By the time migration of the Nepalese had started the Bhutia-Lepcha combine emerged as a composite ethnic group,¹⁵ as the 'original inhabitants of Sikkim. It had become customary for the Chogyal to refer to Sikkim as a Bhutia-Lepcha homeland.'¹⁶ By virtue of being the original inhabitants of Sikkim they were identified as the 'Sikkimese'. A threat perception grown out of increasing Nepali population had brought the Bhutias and the Lepchas together. The combine also wanted to retain their hold over the land and the power in the State. However, the inter-tribal fusion of the Bhutias and the Lepchas, as one composite ethnic group could not be achieved at all levels. The degree of social distance between two ethnic groups appeared more strongly among the peasants. There were, however, increasing incidents of intermarriages in the educated professional circles.¹⁷ The Bhutia-Lepcha combine was not totally free of tension. The dominance of the Bhutias was so strong that the Lepchas in general remained the poorest and the most neglected of the peoples. Confined mostly to the Dzongu area, these Lepchas lived their life of indolence and negligence amidst exploitation by the Bhutias.¹⁸ Although, there were under-currents of political intrigues and fights at the beginning, the problems between these two ethnic groups disappeared in course of time and the Bhutias being dominant had the opportunity to include the Lepchas within one bracket of the 'Sikkimese'.

Sikkimese Vs. Non Sikkimese

There were fissures in the relationship between the Sikkimese and the Non-Sikkimese. Unlike the Bhutia-Lepchas, the Nepalese were not considered Sikkim subjects. This was expressed in the discriminatory policies followed by the Chogyal in matters of Land Revenue and Administration. During the period of lessee landlordism, the lease of land was given on ethnic basis; while the Kazi families were granted lease for a period of 15 years, a Nepali *thikadaar* was given for a period of 10 years.¹⁹ Such practice continued till the implementation of 1950 Land Reform Programme. The Revenue Order No.1, a law still in practice for long and renewed form time to time, prohibits land alienation by hereditary state subjects (Bhutia-Lepcha) in favour of non-hereditary subjects e.g. Nepalese.²⁰ The Bhutia-Lepcha combine also enjoyed the right of exclusive acquisition of land and residence in North Sikkim vide Royal proclamation of Sir Tashi Namgyal, dated 30th August 1956. Even

after the land reform programme, the ethnic basis continued in the revenue assessment imposed upon the cultivators, belonging to Bhutia-Lepcha and the Nepali communities. The Nepali cultivators in general were assessed at a higher rate than the Bhutia-Lepchas, for the same quantity and quality of land. This discriminatory practice continued till 1966, when the rate at which the Nepalese were assessed was imposed upon the Bhutia-Lepcha as well²¹ irrespective of ethnicity, but on the basis of quality of the plot.

The commencement of the decadal survey of land management in 1951 was an important step forward in maintaining land records in the State. It led to the registration of all landowners and were conferred the tilling right. The arable land, which was once with the Lepchas, shifted to the Bhutias and subsequently to the Nepali settlers, who attained the individual tilling right. The conferring of tilling right was viewed as crucial, since the Sikkimese identity and status particularly of the Nepalese was determined on the basis of such right subsequently.

The discriminatory treatment of the Nepalese had stopped with coming into effect of the Sikkim Subject Regulation of 1961, by which the Chogyal recognized all the earliest settlers as legal settlers and conferred the 'Sikkim subject status' on them. Initially, the attainment of such recognition of the Sikkimese (the original Sikkim subjects) was easier for the loyal Bhutia-Lepcha people, who were automatically recognized as Sikkimese by the regulations. But the Nepalese were recognized and granted this status in 1961, after the initial resistance by a group of anti-Nepali ruling elite.

The Sikkim Durbar had maintained a register of all such legal settlers who were the Sikkim subjects.²² The motive behind such recognition was to safeguard the economic and political interests of the ruling elite and to monopolize their grip over the limited resources, mostly the arable land and forest. As the ownership of individual tilling right was the basis and eligibility for Sikkim subject recognition, those Nepalese, whose names appeared in the individual proprietary rights registration were automatically bestowed the status of Sikkim subject by the Sikkim Subject Regulation Act, 1961. The question of land ownership became so important that the Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1965 conferred the voting right to those who owned landed property and paid land revenue or local tax to the government.²³ The right over a plot of land was necessary for enjoying certain privileges meant for the Sikkimese only. The notification No. 105 of Land Revenue Department, dated 25th February 1961,

stated that the 'Non-Sikkimese are not entitled to acquire any immovable properties in Sikkim' and the Nepalese or other non-Sikkimese cannot alienate property from the Lepcha-Bhutia community even by marrying their women.

After Sikkim's merger with Indian Union the legal cultivators, i.e. those with the tilling-cum-proprietary rights, automatically obtained the individual ownership rights over the arable land they cultivated for many decades.²⁴ The Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975, issued by the Indian Union government, provided that 'Every person, who immediately before the 26th day of April, 1975, was a Sikkim subject, under the Sikkim Subject Regulation, 1961, shall be deemed to have become a citizen of India on that day'.²⁵ Accordingly, only those persons, whose names were entered in the earlier Sikkim Subject Register, 1961(now repealed) were deemed to have become Citizens of India.²⁶ Therefore, many who had domiciled in the territory of Sikkim, but whose names were not entered in the Sikkim Subject Register for various reasons like ignorance, administrative lapses and political consideration virtually became stateless overnight following the merger.²⁷ They were mainly the Nepalese. But a compromise-formula was worked by the ruling forces, on electoral considerations, which made it possible for many of them to acquire "Sikkim subject" status.²⁸ The land helped one to be declared 'Sikkim subject' which in turn qualified him to be an Indian Citizen too.

The Sikkimese identity, which was used to refer to the Bhutia-Lepchas only, has been broadened to include the Nepalese as well. The Sikkimese identity has now assumed an inclusive and accommodative connotation. It is now a socio-political identity, which synthesises the ethnic, cultural, social and political interests of the earliest settlers belonging to Lepcha-Bhutia and the Nepali communities. Thus, the legal recognition of the 'Sikkimese' has been aimed to protect the interest of the earliest settlers in this agriculture-based economy, where land holds an important place as a productive source of livelihood.

The Nepalese of Sikkim identified themselves as 'Sikkimese', as distinct from the Nepalese of neighbouring areas of Darjeeling District that falls within West Bengal. To check the continuous and overwhelming influx, the state government has formulated various rules for issuing Sikkimese identity from time to time. The Sikkim Government Gazette No. 198 dated 8th December, 1995, in compliance with the notification of the Home Department Vide 66/Home 195 dated 29.11.1995, has laid down the eligibility criteria for granting of local Sikkimese identification certificate.

Apart from those, whose names have been entered in Sikkim Subject Register and the holders of Indian Citizenship Certificate under the Sikkim (Citizenship) Order 1975, as amended in 1989, those who hold agricultural land in the rural areas are entitled to the identification certificate. The fourth group entitled to the certificate includes those, whose father/husband had been in government service on or before 31.12. 1969.

Land Reforms

The demand of land reforms in Sikkim began in the late forties with the establishment of democratic forces. The government, through a notification dated 20th August 1949, abolished the intermediaries in the land management system.²⁹ This revenue order, however, was not accompanied by tenancy reforms or imposition of ceiling on land held by those Zamindars and Thikadars in their respective areas in Sikkim.³⁰ The 15 private estates of the Maharaja of Sikkim and five estates under the monasteries continued to be managed directly by the Chogyal and monasteries.

As per the Survey and Settlement Report of 1958, 13% of the total i.e., 3658 out of 27,694 land holdings were within private estate. It was also found that out of 2,23,314 acres of agricultural land, 66727 acres were owned by 8% of the families,³¹ which being financially strong and socially influential were likely to influence the decision making process of the government. Hence, with the preponderance of political power, enjoyed by the land owning class of Sikkim, any drastic change in land management was not forthcoming.

A number of land reform legislation have been enacted by the Government of Sikkim since 1975, the most important being (a) The Sikkim Cultivators Protection Act, 1975/85; (b) The Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reforms Act, 1978/85; (c) The Sikkim Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act, 1978.

A scrutiny of all legislation would reveal that these Acts are passed to (a) eliminate intermediaries; (b) enforce ceiling on land holdings and to distribute surplus land; and (c) protect tenancy rights. In the same rhythm, 'The Sikkim Transfer of Land Regulation Bill of 1989, and 'The Sikkim Alienation of Land Regulation Bill' commonly known as Bill No. 5 of 1989 were introduced, prohibiting land alienation from Sikkimese-Nepalese and Bhutia-Lepchas. However, for an agrarian structure that had been under feudalism for centuries, change is not a simple and short process.

Reaction of Bhutia-Lepcha on the Legislations

Limiting the size of holdings and protecting the tenancy right have become issues of great concern for the Bhutia-Lepchas who had traditionally been the big landowners. The issue of land had become so important that it figured in the main agenda of various tribal organizations like Denzong-Lo-Men-Chodul, Rong Tarjum, and Denzong Yargay Chogpa (1984-85). The Joint Action Committee of Bhutia-Lepcha tribals feared that the imposition of the Sikkim Land Ceiling and Reforms Act 1978, that envisaged the distribution of excess lands above ceiling, would not only make them partial loser of the holdings but such lands would go to the non-tribals. The Sikkim Transfer of Land Regulation Bill 1989, which not only elaborates the Revenue Order No. 1 of 1917, but also incorporates certain provisions that were a matter of great concern for the tribal population. The tribals found the term 'competent authority' as vague and objectionable, as it had not been specified the authority and had given an over-riding power to allow alienation of land belonging to Bhutia-Lepcha in favour of other communities.³²

The Bhutias were to be the most affected by the land reform measures, as could be seen in the following Table- 6.1.

Table 6.1: Community-wise holdings and excess land likely to be acquired (in acres)

Community	No. of holdings	Excess land likely to be acquired (in acres)
Bhutia	187	2795.01
Lepcha	60	645.46
Nepalese	201	1352.83

Source: Dhamala and Bhaumik, 1985 p. 121.

As indicated in the Table 6.1, the implementation of Land Ceiling Act would affect the Bhutias most. Although the Nepalese had the largest number of holdings, the Bhutias had the excess land that was likely to be acquired. However, acquisition of such land had reportedly succeeded only partially.

The issue of land had come to the forefront in 1989, when a High Court judgement allowed Mr. L.D. Kazi, the first Chief Minister of democratic state, to 'gift' a piece of prime urban land to Mr. N.B. Khatiwada, a Nepali.³³ This was a clear departure from the Royal Proclamation of 1917 by the Chogyal, which prohibited such inter-community land transfer. The judgement drew adverse reaction from the Bhutia-Lepcha community and drew the tribals together to form a Joint Action Committee in their attempt to protect their interest. They pleaded that it would open the door for further alienation of their land in the guise of 'gift'.

The Land Politics

The issue of Sikkimese vs. Non-Sikkimese identities, the concept of the 'sons of the soil' has been so much embedded in Sikkim; it holds an important place in the election manifestos of various political parties, since the merger. In 1979 election manifesto, the Sikkim Janta Parishad promised 'to frame rules whereby no land would be given to non Sikkimese' and sought to protect the interest of the original inhabitants of Sikkim.³⁴ While implementation of 'sons of the soil' policy has become the pet slogan of all political parties these days. The present ruling government is committed to protect the 'Revenue Order No.1', that prohibits alienation of land of Lepcha-Bhutia communities to others. To a large extent, such an electoral promise stemmed out of the fact that the majority Nepalese community outscored the original Sikkimese i.e., Bhutia-Lepchas in respect of land ownership as indicated by the Settlement Report of 1958.

The settlement report, 1958, shows that the Nepalese controlled 66% of the total land, the Bhutias owned 20% and the Lepchas had only 14% of total cultivated areas (Table 6.2). But, as has already been indicated, although the Nepalese own the largest number of landholdings, the Bhutias had the highest amount of excess land. The present data on community-wise land distribution is not available. A tentative estimate by the Land Revenue Department in 1999 gives the following in formations about the community-wise holding of land. However, it is nesseary to mention here that the data does not take into account of the total land area of Sikkim.

Table 6.2: Community-wise ownership of land (in acres)

Ethnic Groups	Private Estates	Monas-tery Estates	Regular Estates	In acres Total	Cultivated land (in hectare)			Total
					Private	Monas-tary	Regular	Percen-tage
Bhutias	2927	2602	7140	12669	10527.12	.9242.62	24075.50	43852.24 (20%)
Lepchas	1551	1432	8471	11454	4498.48	4021.73	23185.29	31705.51 (14%)
Nepalese	8819	4024	65290	78133	16818.81	8723.76	122022.17	147564.74 (66%)

Source: Report on Sikkim by Yogamber Singh Bhandari, UPCD Settlement Officer, Sikkim. 1958, as quoted in Dhamala and Bhaumik, 1985 'Land Reforms in Sikkim,' p. 126 (Appendix).

Table 6.3: Community-wise areas of cultivated land owned by individual families (in hectares)

Ethnic	Total No. of holdings	Paddy Field	Dry Field	Waste Land	Cardamom Field	Total Cul-tivated Area	Total Reve-nuein (Rs)
Bhutia	7794 (17.6)	3180.6800 (27.3)	10444.0010 (16.2)	2837.4285 (24.37)	5886.5045 (27.4)	22348.6140 (20.45)	154084.07 (40.23)
Lepcha	6735 (15.2)	1755.8825 (15.07)	11960.8045 (18.5)	1574.6605 (13.5)	7121.4520 (33.2)	22412.7995 (20.5)	45707.96 (11.93)
Nepali	29632 (67.09)	6706.2170 (57.6)	42049.0006 (65.2)	7275.3145 (62.2)	8468.7835 (39.4)	64499.306 (59.03)	183204.38 (47.83)
TOTAL	44161 (100.00)	11642.7795 (100.00)	64453.8061 (100.00)	11687.4035 (100.00)	21476.7400 (100.00)	1029260.7291 (100.00)	382996.411 (100.00)

Source: Land Revenue Department, 1999 (Tentative Estimate)

Table 6.3 shows that the Nepalese control 59.03% of the cultivable land. The Bhutias and Lepchas control 20% each. One striking feature of the data is that although the Nepalese constitute 67.09% of land holding families, they only control 59.03% of total cultivated area. On the other hand, although the Bhutias and Lepchas own only 32.8% of the number of holdings, their share of land together is 41%. Classifying the land according to the major crop cultivated, the data shows that the highest share (57.6%) is that of the Nepalese, whereas the Bhutias and Lepchas together own nearly 43% of the paddy field. The same trend is noticed in terms of

control of dry field, where the Nepalese own the highest percentage of 65.2% of total area. The Bhutias and Lepchas together own 34%. A striking feature shown by the Table is that the Nepalese have the lowest percentage of lucrative cardamom field. They own 39.4% of such land, whereas the Bhutias and Lepchas together have a share of 60.6%. The column on the total revenue reveals an interesting picture. The Bhutias, with 20.45% of total cultivable land, contribute 40.23% of the total land revenue, whereas the Lepchas with almost the same areas contribute only 11.93%. This clearly indicates that the hold of the Bhutias over the quality land with prospects of lucrative production is much greater.

A comparative analysis of 1958 settlement report and the above Table (based on recent tentative figures) would indicate that the share of the Lepchas in the total cultivated areas has grown from 14% to 20.5%. This might be attributed to the stern and hard stand being taken by 'Renjong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum' - The Sikkim Lepcha Association, which is vigilant against the alienation of Lepcha land. However, the share of quality land has not increased significantly for the Lepchas, since their share of land revenue has not grown much. The majority Nepalese constituting more than 60% of total population almost has an equal share of land revenue with the Bhutias, who constitutes 16% of the population in the state.

All these provided enough reasons and ground for growing ethnic consciousness among the young generation Lepchas. The Renjong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum has been demanding amendment of Land Revenue Order No.1 of 1917, which allows Bhutias and Lepchas for inter/community transfer of land. Since, its formation in early 90's, the organisation has been pressing for the amendment to limit the land transaction with Lepchas only, in order to check alienation of Lepcha land to Bhutias, who are economically, socially and politically better placed.

The discussion so far highlights the way land is related to the question of ethnicity in an industrially backward under-developed agrarian economy like Sikkim. The historical factor of large scale Nepali immigration had a lot to contribute to subtle tension, that exists between the majority Nepalese controlling the largest share of land and the indigenous Lepchas and the Bhutias. Coupled with this the new awakening among the Lepchas, the active functioning of Renjong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum in recent years has added another dimension making the question of land and ethnicity a triangular one.

Industries

Among the growing industrial units in Sikkim are the liquor industries, the fruit preservation units, tannery, paper pulp industry, mining and other small-scale industries. The work force in these enterprises is almost exclusively of Nepalese origin.³⁵ The following Table gives the community-wise ownership of small-scale industries in Sikkim.

Table: 6.4: Community-wise owners of small-scale industries in Sikkim

Ethnic Group	Districts (Number and Percentage)				
	North	East	South	West	Total
Nepalese	02 (33.3)	101 (44.88)	38 (71.6)	17 (58.62)	158 (50.47)
Bhutias	02 (33.3)	63 (28.00)	08 (15.09)	08 (27.05)	81 (25.87)
Lepchas	-	10 (12.4)	02 (3.77)	-	12 (3.83)
Others	01 (16.6)	29 (12.88)	05 (9.43)	04 (3.79)	39 (12.46)
Govt. of Sikkim Undertaking	01 (16.6)	02 (0.88)	-	-	03 (0.9)
Non-Identified	-	20 (8.88)	-	-	20 (6.70)
Total	06 (100.00)	225 (100.00)	53 (100.00)	29 (100.00)	313 (100.00)

Source: Based on the data collected from Industry Department, Gangtok, 1999

The Table-6.4 shows the exclusive monopoly of Nepalese and Bhutias in the field of small-scale industrial unit in Sikkim, comprising 50.47% and 25.87% respectively. The Lepcha enterprises constitute only 3.83% of the total industrial unit in Sikkim. Even in the industrially dominated east district, Lepcha comprises only 12.4% of total enterprises. While 0.9% of industrial units are government of Sikkim undertakings, 12.46% are owned by others i.e. the plainsman community. The ethnic group of 6.7% industrial entrepreneur could not be identified.

Besides, with the new developmental trend in post-merger era, dairy farming, piggery, poultry, experimental cash crop farms etc. in the modern scientific way are being carried out by the state government, where the Bhutias and Lepchas enterprises

are negligible, as compared to the Nepali farmhands and employees for animal husbandry. The road construction and transport operation is largely manned by the Nepalese,³⁶ whereas the Nepalese, who comes on work permit, exclusively holds manual transport.

Business Activities

To run the business in the urban and commercial centers as Mangan, Gangtok, Singtam, Rangpo, Namchi etc. is an exclusive domain of Marwari settlers, who trade between Indian plains and Sikkimese towns. Since the closing of Indo-China borders for commercial transaction, the Bhutia traders have taken to petty trade in woolen and dairy products in the urban centers. Lastly, there are Deswali or Madesia petty hawkers consisting of the males from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who have migrated to Sikkim in search of a new market.³⁷

A Developmental Profile of the post-merger era

Since the merger with Union of India in 1975, large-scale developmental activities have taken place in Sikkim. The rapid growth of the economy, modernisation and expansion of administrative structure and social service have created new avenues of employment opportunities for the Sikkimese as well as the outsiders. The question is how are the ethnic communities in the state responding to new opportunities of development.

Table 6.5 is an indicator of the state economy, which shows a remarkable hike in the net state domestic production from Rs. 4898 lakh in 1980-81 to Rs. 25644 lakh in 1993-94. The extent of increase between 1980-81 and 1992-93 being 396.27%, which has again shown an increase of 5.50% in 1993-94. Similarly, the per capita income has shown a substantial rise from Rs. 1571 in 1980-81 to Rs. 5870 in 1993-94, indicating an increase of 264.23%, within a span of a decade between 1980-81 and 1992-93, which has again increased by 2.59% in 1993-94. The degree of emphasis

Table 6.5: Indicators of the State Economy

Particulars	Unit	1980-81	1992-93	1993-94
Net state domestic product (at current prices)	Rs. in Lakh	4898	24306 (P)	25644 (Q)
Extent of increase	Percentage	-	396.27	5.50
Per-Capita income (at current prices)	Rs. In Lakh	1571	5722 (P)	5870 (Q)
Extent of increase	Percentage	-	264.23	2.59
Per Capita income at current prices (1980-81)	Rupees	1571	-	-

P = Provisional
Q = Quick estimate

Source: Sikkim at a Glance – 1995, Bureau of Economic & Statistics, Gangtok

laid by the state government in the development and growth of the economy could be understood from the following Table-6.6.

Table 6.6: Sector-wise annual plan outlay (Rs. in Lakhs).

Particulars	1979-80	1994-95
Agriculture and allied services	409.20	1291.80
Rural Development	29.74	235.80
Irrigation and field control	90.74	216.00
Energy	208.74	2275.00
Industry and Minerals	143.68	430.00
Transport	466.70	1620.10
Science, Technology and Environment	-	68.50
General Economic Service	35.59	195.50
Social Services (Education, health and welfare)	366.72	3554.00
General Services	28.81	312.90
Non-plan account deficit	-	3300.00
Total	1779.72	13500.00

Source: (i) Sikkim - Statistical Profile (1979-80 and 1991-92).
(ii) Sikkim at a Glance 1995, Bureau of Economics & Statistics.

Table 6.6 gives us some idea about the initiative of the state government for the development of state economy. The annual plan outlay has increased from

Rs.1779 lakh in 1979-80 to 13,5000 lakh Rupees in 1994-95. The major emphasis being on modernization of agriculture and allied sectors, rural development, energy, transport and social service sectors like education, health, public welfare etc. which is indicative of the state government's efforts on rapid economic development.

Educational Infrastructure

Education has been viewed as an important vehicle of social transformation. Hence a major emphasis in the post-merger era was laid on educational development of the state.

Table 6.7: Educational Institutions in Sikkim 1975-199

Types of Institution	1975	1996
Primary	228	1263
Jr. High School	29	122
Secondary School	-	79
Higher Secondary School	07	32
Degree College	-	02
Law College	-	01
Teachers' Training Institute	-	01
State Institute of Education	-	01
B.Ed. College	-	01
Total	264	1502

Source: 1). An Economic Survey 1991-92, Bureau of Economics & Statistics.
2). Directorate of Education, 1996.

Table 6.8: Stage-wise enrolment and number of teachers

Stages	Particulars	1979-80	Teacher-Student Ratio	1994-95	Teacher-Student Ratio
Pre-Primary	Enrolment	2550		16232	
	Teachers	85	1 : 30	723	1 : 22
Primary	Enrolment	22081		79086	
	Teachers	1106	1 : 19	4288	1 : 18
Jr. High School	Enrolment	10202		21309	
	Teachers	476	1 : 21	1129	1 : 19
Secondary	Enrolment	10242		N.A.	
	Teachers	566	1 : 18	739	-
Sr. Secondary	Enrolment	5367		N.A.	
	Teachers	1999	1 : 26	290	-

Source: i) Sikkim – A Statistical Profile, P: 105
Sikkim – At a Glance, 1995, Bureau of Economics & Statistics.

Table 6.9: District-wise distribution of educational institutions

Particulars	1979-80					1994-95				
	N	E	S	W	Total	N	E	S	W	Total
Pre-Primary School	24	61	-	-	85	76	235	205	207	723
Primary School	32	112	84	81	309	60	162	144	159	525
Jr.High School	08	14	13	09	44	11	42	37	29	119
Secondary School	01	12	05	06	24	08	21	21	17	67
Sr. Secondary School	01	05	01	01	08	02	15	03	04	24
Total	66 (14.04)	204 (43.4)	103 (21.9)	97 (20.6)	470 (100)	157 (10.8)	475 (32.6)	410 (28.1)	416 (28.5)	1458 (100)

Source: i) Sikkim - A Statistical Profile, P. 105. ii) Sikkim - At a Glance 1995, Bureau of Economics & Statistics.

An analysis of the above information (Tables-6.7, 6.8,6.9) reveals that there has been a significant increase in the number of educational institutions as well as students. The number of teachers too has grown over the years. Table 6.7 indicates an enormous increase in the educational institutions of all types from a total number of 264 in 1975 to 1502 in 1996. There was no institution for higher education in 1975 but now there are two degree colleges, one law college and one B.Ed. college in Sikkim. The similar information could be found from Table 6.7. Besides, the Manipal University of Medical Science and Technology has been started in Sikkim. The Government also sends the meritorious students for higher professional and academic qualification in other parts of the country.

Although there is district-wise variation, the number of educational institutions has increased from 470 to 1458 within a span of fifteen years. Table 6.9 reveals that despite the largest concentration of educational institutions and increase in number of educational institutions, there has been a fall in the percentage share in north and east districts. The south and west districts have shown the increase both in terms of number and percentage.

Table 6.8 suggests that there has been an overall increase in enrolment of students at all stages and the number of teachers has also increased. This is indicative of the fact that the people are responding positively to government's efforts to universalisation of education, which is a necessity for keeping pace with economic development of the state.

Health Infrastructure

A major emphasis has been laid on the development of health infrastructure in the state. Table 6.10 gives the comparative figures between 1979-80 and 1984-95.

Table 6.10: Health Infrastructure

Particulars	Year	East	West	North	South	State
Primary Health	1979-80	4	1	1	-	6
Sub Centres	1994-95	47	40	19	19	144
	1979-80	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Hospitals	1994-95	1	2	1	1	05
Auxiliary	1979-80	-				109
Nurse Midwives	1994-95	169	87	48	104	408
Staff Nurse	1979-80	-	-	-	-	05 70
	1994-95	57	04	03	06	
	1979-80	-	-	-	-	35 140
Doctors	1994-95	92	18	10	20	
Population	1979-80	-	-	-	-	-
per Doctor	1994-95	2176	6118	3504	5531	3257

Source: 1) A Statistical Profile (1979-80 and 1991-92), P. 112.
2) Sikkim-At a Glance, 1995, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok.

Table 6.10 shows that there has been a substantial increase in the number of primary health sub-centres, the health centres and the number of doctors and nurses. The population ratio per doctor for the state stands as 3257. Hence there has been a massive increase in terms of health amenities. The improved health infrastructure has its reflection in the remarkable fall in the birth rate, infant mortality and death rate.

Table 6.11: Vital statistics on birth rate, infant mortality rate and death rate

Year	Birth Rate	Infant Mortality	Death Rate
1981-83	32.4 (33.8)	-	9.8 (12.1)
1983-85	33.1 (33.6)	-	10.6 (12.1)
1987-89	32.8 (31.5)	88	9.8 (10.7)
1988-90	30.4 (30.7)	71	8.8 (10.3)
1989-91	26.6	56	7.9
1990-92	23.6	46	6.9
1991-93	22.7	45	6.6

Source: 1) Sikkim – A Statistical Profile, Ibid, p. 8
 2) Sikkim - At a Glance – 1995, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok.

(Figures in Parenthesis indicate all India figures).

A careful analysis of Table 6.11 would show a notable improvement in the form of declining birth rate, infant mortality rate and the death rate, all indicative of improving health status. The improvements are particularly remarkable after 1988-90, the figures in the state present a better picture compared to all-India standard.

Agricultural Sector

In the post-merger period, a conscious attempt has been made by the state to develop the agriculture sector, which is the mainstay of state economy. Table 6.6 would show that there has been an increase in annual plan outlay from Rs. 409 lakhs to Rs. 1291 lakhs within a span of 15 years. The figures in the Table 6.12 would also be illustrative of state's efforts towards modernization of agriculture.

Table 6.12: High Yielding Variety Coverage (in Hectares)

Crops	1979-80	1991-92
Rice	32,000	70,670
Wheat	6,400	11,300
Maize	10,000	18,500
Total HYV Coverage	19,600	40,470

Source: Sikkim – A Statistical Profile, Ibid, p. 20

Table 6.12 shows the steady increase in the use of high yielding variety of seeds of rice, wheat and maize in the state. There has been an increase in areas from 19,600 hectares in 1979-80 to 40,470 hectares in 1991-92, covered by the high yielding crops. Another sector closely related to the agriculture is animal husbandry, which provides an important means of livelihood to many villagers. The state government has taken care in improving the infrastructure in this sector as well (Table 6.13).

Table 6.13: Veterinary Services

Particulars	1981	1994-95
Veterinary Hospitals	7	14
Veterinary Dispensary	35	23
Stockman Centers	-	60
Veterinary Doctors	24	57

Source: (a) Sikkim At a Glance, 1981

(b) Sikkim At a Glance, 1995

The Industrial Growth

An important indicator of economic growth is provided by the industrial growth. Due to the ecological constraints the expansion of large-scale industries is difficult in Sikkim. There is however scope for the growth of small-scale production units. Table 6.14 would show how the small-scale industries have grown in the state.

Table 6.14: Small-scale Industrial Units in Sikkim

Item	Unit	1979-80	1991-92	1994-95
Permanent small-scale industrial units (Registered)	No	22	220	289
Provisional registered small-scale units	No	N.A.	N.A.	1491

Source: i) Sikkim –A Statistical Profile, Ibid, p. 47.
Sikkim At a Glance – 1995.

The post-merger era has witnessed a rapid growth of small-scale industries in Sikkim from an insignificant number of 22 in 1979-80 to 289 in 1994-95, thus contributing to the state income and creating more employment opportunities for the citizens.

Power

Alongside the modernization and industrialization, the power resource and its consumption is also an indicator of economic growth. Table 6.15 would give us some idea about the state of the energy sector in the state.

Table 6.15 : Power Generation in Sikkim

District	1979-80		1994-95	
	Installed Capacity (M.W)	Power Generation (MKWH)	Installed Capacity (M.W)	Power Generation (MKWH)
North	-	-	4.30	6.18
East	14.5	22.54	25.00	50.55
South	-	-	-	-
West	0.6	0.57	1.60	1.81
Total	15.1	23.11	30.90	58.58

Source : 1) Sikkim – A Statistical Profile, Ibid, p. 58
2) Sikkim At a Glance, 1995.

The installed capacity has shown an increase from 15.1 M.W. to 30.9 M.W. between 1979-80 and 1994-95. Similarly, the power generation has gone up from 23.11 MKWH to 58.58 MKWH during the same period, thus laying the foundation for modern economy. A vital achievement in this regard is the rural electrification, which has covered 100% of all revenue blocks in 1994 as compared to 16.6% in 1981 (shown in Table 6.16).

Table 6.16: Electrified Towns and Revenue Blocks

Districts	Towns	In %	Revenue Blocks	In %
	1981	1994-95	1981	1994-95
North	100.00	100.00	13.3	100.00
East	100.00	100.00	27.1	100.00
South	100.00	100.00	7.5	100.00
West	100.00	100.00	18.0	100.00
Total	100.00	100.00	16.6%	100.00

Source: i) Sikkim At a Glance, 1981,1995,
Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok.

Transportation and Communication

Transportation is regarded as a lifeline of the modern economy. The importance of transportation and communication in the modernizing Sikkim cannot be overstressed in assessing its economic growth and development.

Table 6.17: Length of road by type (in Kilometers)

Types of Roads	1979-80	1991-92
National Highway	40	40
State Highway*	584	937
Major District-roads	347	446
Other District-roads	321	820

*Includes roads maintained by the GREF

Source: Sikkim: A Statistical Profile, (1979-80) and (1991-92), p. 59,
Bureau of Economics and Statistics.

The increase in the length of state highways, major district roads and other district roads indicates the expansion of transportation facilities and even to remote areas. Along with the improvement in the transportation, the simultaneous increase in the number of fleet and means of communication in post-merger Sikkim has virtually provided the backbone for modernization and economic growth.

Towards a new class – Educational Scenario

In the foregoing section, a brief profile of development in the post-merger era has been presented. It has been observed that after the merger the allocation of the state's resources and state created opportunities has begun to be carried out in new democratic way. As an obvious manifestation of this process a new class of educated officials, the bureaucrats, teachers and professionals has emerged. In the absence of modernised agriculture and not so significant industrial sector, the state government itself has been the main agency of employment for local educated people, whose number has increased tremendously in the post-merger era. There has been a competition among the ethnic communities to equip themselves educationally and make most of the new opportunities made available to them. This section, therefore, deals with how the three predominant ethnic communities of Sikkim have been able to accrue the real benefits of the educational development, which is directly related to the employment opportunity in Sikkim.

Before going into the educational scenario, it would be worthwhile to have a look at the population distribution. The Census of 1981 has given the categorization on the basis of the languages spoken.

Table 6.18: District-wise distribution of population by language mainly spoken in the household, 1981.

Languages	District-wise Percentage				Total in Sikkim
	North	East	South	West	
Lepcha	34.6	24.0	15.4	26.0	22,391 (7.2)
Bhutia	16.7	46.3	18.00	19.00	21,548 (6.9)
Gorkhali/Nepali	3.7	46.9	27.00	22.4	1,92,891 (62.6)
Limbu	10.00	7.1	11.00	71.9	17,922 (5.8)
Sherpa	10.1	25.5	35.00	29.4	10,726 (3.5)
Tibetan	12.7	57.7	18.6	11.00	4,149 (1.3)
Other Languages	11.5	42.2	27.9	18.6	18,899 (6.1)
Other Schedule VIII languages	-	-	-	-	19,570 (6.3)

Source: Census of India, 1981

Table 6.19: District-wise distribution of Scheduled Tribes in Sikkim,
1991 Census.

State/District	Total Population	S.T. Population	S.T.% to Total Population
Sikkim	4,06,457	90,901	22.36
North	31,240	17,301	55.38
East	17,845	37,632	21.09
South	98,604	16,671	16.91
West	98,161	19,297	19.66

Source: Sikkim At a Glance, 1995 Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok

Table 6.18 indicates that the Lepchas, as a linguistic group, constitute 7.2% of total population and the Bhutias constitute 6.9%. The Nepalese are numerically dominant with 62.6%, although for general analysis the Limbus are clubbed with the Nepalese. It is worthwhile to mention that according to the Sikkim Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order of 1978 the 'Scheduled Tribes' include the Lepchas, the Bhutias, including Chumbipa, Dophapa, Dukpa, Kagatey, Sherpa, Tibetan, Tromopo, Yolmo. Hence the Sherpas and Tibetans are incorporated in the Scheduled Tribes category. The Table also shows that North Sikkim has the highest concentration of the Lepchas (34.6% of the total) while the Bhutias are dominant in east district. The Nepalese are dominant in east, south and west districts.

Table 6.19 shows that 22.36 per cent of the total population is Scheduled Tribe population as per 1991 Census and a large majority (55.38 per cent) is concentrated in North district. The South district has the least tribal population.

Education Scenario

A look at the literacy rate and community-wise enrolment of students would give us a bird's eye view of the educational achievement of three different communities. The enrolment figure as provided by the planning section of Education Department puts the share of Scheduled Tribe students in government schools at 17.1% (Table 6.20).

At the Senior Secondary and Secondary educational levels the percentage of their enrolment is more (27.8 & 33.3 %) than their population ratio, which according to 1991 Census was 22.36%.

Table 6.20: Total enrolment of students and percentage of Scheduled Tribe students (1997) in Government Schools

Educational Level	Total No. of Students	Scheduled Tribes	% of S.T. students to total enrolments
Pre-Primary	23,538	5,329	22.6%
Primary	84,986	10,828	12.7
Middle-Level	23,949	5,093	21.3
Secondary	6,777	2,257	33.3
Sr.Secondary	3,331	926	27.8
Total	1,42,581	24,443	17.13

Source : Directorate of Education, Gangtok, 1997.

Table 6.21: District-wise Percentage of Literacy rate of General and Scheduled Tribe

State/District	General		Scheduled Tribe	
	1981	1991	1981	1991
Sikkim	34.05	56.94	33.13	48.40
North	29.73	53.57	30.30	44.48
East	41.38	65.13	40.18	55.64
South	32.48	54.08	31.23	44.29
West	23.61	45.62	23.25	41.35

Source : District Census Handbook, Census of India, Sikkim Series, 1981-1991.

Table 6.21 shows that literacy rate among all sections of population in the state has increased significantly between 1981 and 1991. In this decade the literacy rate in the state has recorded an increase from 34.05% to 56.94% against the national literacy rate of 52.11% during 1991 Census. The state thus occupies nineteenth position in respect of literacy. The literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes has also shown a considerable improvement from 33.13% to 48.40% during the period. The

highest literacy rate has been recorded in East district, 55.64%. The North district, which has the highest concentration of the Lepchas, records a literacy rate of 44.48%, not much behind the state average and ahead of West district. A comparative analysis of (Table 6.9) on district-wise distribution of educational institutions with the literacy rate (Table 6.21) would show that even the North district with least percentage (10.8 %) of educational institutions is not lagging behind in terms of literacy rate. In fact, it is ahead of West district, which has comparatively higher share of educational institutions.

The community-wise break up of student's enrolment was not available during my field survey. However such breakup for the year 1983 was available, which is cited here for reference and to understand the trend of ethnic-wise concentration in a particular district.

Table 6.22: Community-wise breakup of student's enrolment (From Class I to XII in Government Schools – 1983)

Ethnic Group	District (enrolment and Percentage)				Total and Percentage
	North	East	South	West	
Nepalese	1,160 (2.89)	18,697 (46.6)	11,308 (28.2)	8,882 (22.1)	40,047 (100.00)
Limboo	342 (6.63)	1,132 (21.96)	827 (16.04)	2,844 (55.18)	5,145 (100.00)
Bhutia	1115 (12.69)	5,093 (57.98)	1,394 (15.87)	1,181 (13.44)	8,783 (100.00)
Lepcha	1706 (32.26)	1,610 (30.44)	977 (18.47)	995 (18.81)	5,288 (100.00)
Sherpa	175 (6.45)	991 (36.55)	688 (25.37)	857 (31.64)	2,711 (100.00)
Scheduled Caste	170 (4.22)	2,183 (54.20)	978 (24.28)	696 (17.28)	4,027 (100.00)
Others	199 (4.94)	2,787 (69.25)	656 (16.30)	382 (9.49)	4,024 (100.00)
Total	4,867 (6.95)	32,493 (46.40)	16,828 (24.03)	15,837 (22.61)	70,025 (100.00)

Source: Planning Section, Education Department, Gangtok.

The Table 6.22 suggests that the highest concentration of Lepcha students could be found in North and East districts, whereas Bhutias predominate in East district with 57.98%. The Nepali students account for a mere 2.89% of the pupils in

the North district, although they predominate in East, South and West districts. The students belonging to Limbu community, who are generally counted among the Nepalese, are numerically dominant in West district. If we see the overall enrolment figures, the East district has the highest share with 46.40%, followed by South (24.03%), West (22.61%) and the North (6.95%).

The enrolment data in government schools a decade later also present the same trend.

Table 6.23 : District-wise Percentage of Educational Institutions and Enrolment as on 1992

Particulars	North	East	South	West	Total
Educational Institutions	10.5	32.5	28.00	29.00	100.00
Enrolment of Students	6.7	46.9	23.9	22.5	100.00

Source: Directorate of Education.

The analysis so far shows that the state government has accorded the highest priority in spreading mass literacy, which is generally considered as a vehicle of social reconstruction and economic resurgence. The figures cited above unequivocally suggest spread of literacy among all sections of state population, even among the Scheduled Tribes. The district level data on literacy rate shows that the North district (with highest Lepcha concentration) is not much behind the state level figures. Does the increase in literacy rate correspond to spread of higher education? Do the Lepchas – the indigenous, the Bhutias with the background of royal aristocracy and the numerically dominant Nepalese have equal access to higher education, which is the powerful means to entry into the service market? As a matter of fact despite high rate of literacy, Sikkim has the lowest proportion of literates in the non-technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree and above categories, according to 1981 Census comprising only 3% of national literacy level (Table 6.24).

Table 6.24: Distribution of Population by Level of Education

Educational Level	1981
	Persons/Percentage
Literacy Rate	1,07,738 (34.05%)
Literates (without educational level)	44,487 (41.62%)
Primary	37,457 (34.77%)
Middle	10,724 (9.95%)
Matric/Secondary	7,926 (7.36%)
H.S./Intermediate/Pre-University	3,532 (3.28%)
Non-technical degree or certificate not equal to degree	03 (0.00%)
Technical diploma or certificate equal to degree	269 (0.25%)
Graduates and above	2,973 (2.76%)

Source: Census, 1981

The low progress in higher education may be attributed to the lack of higher technical and professional institutions in Sikkim. However, things have changed a lot since the merger. For higher technical and professional qualification, the meritorious students are sent to other parts of the country.

Institutions of Higher Education

The Government Degree College at Gangtok, which was established in 1977 with Humanities, Science and Commerce faculties, is the oldest institution for higher education in the state. Another Degree College has recently been set up in South district headquarter, Namchi, in 1994. Besides, there are a Law College and one B.Ed. College. Manipal University of Medical Science and Technology has started functioning very recently. A glance at community-wise enrolment in the Government Degree College at Gangtok would help us to peep into the world of higher education and its trend among different ethnic communities.

Table 6.25: Total enrolment of students and percentage of S.T. students at Government College, Gangtok.

Particulars	1995			1996			1997		
	Total	S.T.	% of S.T.	Total	S.T.	% of S.T.	Total	S.T.	% of S.T.
B.A.	378 (69.3)	91 (87.5)	24.07	462 (72.00)	67 (65.0)	14.50	359 (62.9)	100 (71.9)	27.85
B.Sc.	116 (21.3)	11 (10.6)	9.48	121 (18.8)	23 (22.3)	19.00	153 (26.8)	27 (19.4)	17.64
B.Com.	51 (9.4)	02 (1.9)	3.92	59 (9.2)	13 (12.6)	22.03	59 (10.3)	12 (8.6)	20.33
Total	545 (100.00)	104 (100.00)		642 (100.00)	103 (100.00)		571 (100.00)	139 (100.00)	

Source: Government College, Gangtok

A notable feature is the steady increase of enrolment in all faculties, although a little fall in enrolment in Arts Faculty was recorded in 1997. The share of Scheduled Tribe students has also gone up over the years except in Faculty of Arts in 1996. The downward trend in Arts Faculty may be attributed to the opening of another Government Degree College at Namchi, the South district headquarter. In popularity the Arts stream ranks on top, followed by the Science and Commerce streams. This has been true in case of Scheduled Tribe students too. The marked improvement of Scheduled Tribe students in Science and Commerce stream is noticeable over the years. A pragmatic career planning and increasing demand for these subjects in the job market may have prompted the students of younger generation to opt for these subjects. The demand for technical education like medical science, engineering, agricultural science etc. is sharply on the rise. It is worthwhile to mention here that the education department, which is supposed to be the largest department in terms of employment potential in Sikkim, has now been saturated with local graduates in Arts stream, whereas there is still job potential for graduates with mathematics and science

subjects. At present one can see many unemployed local graduates in Sikkim, who were absent a few years back.

A community-wise distribution of students in B.Sc. Degree course would give us some idea about the access of three predominant communities to the most aspired stream.

Table 6.26: Community background of the students enrolled in B.Sc. Degree level at Government College, Gangtok

Communities	1996-97	1997-98
Lepcha	03 (2.5)	06 (3.9)
Bhutia	13 (10.7)	17 (11.1)
Nepalese	91 (75.0)	108 (70.6)
Sherpa	03 (2.5)	04 (2.6)
Others	11 (9.1)	18 (11.8)
Total	121 (100.00)	153 (100.00)

Source: Degree College, Gangtok.

The Table above shows that among the students enrolled for B.Sc. degree the Lepchas were only 2.5 per cent and 3.9 per cent in 1997 and 1998 respectively. The Bhutias had a much healthy share with 10.7 per cent and 11.1 per cent in the respective years. The Nepalese recorded the highest percentage in both the years with 75 per cent and 70.6 per cent respectively. The Government Degree College at Gangtok is the only college in the state that offers Honours Degree in a number of subjects. Honours degree provides the window to post graduate degree. A look at the community-wise break up of students enrolled in Honours course in science subjects like Botany, Zoology and Chemistry also reveals no different trend.

Table 6.27: Distribution of students enrolled in B.Sc. (Honours) according to community

Communities	1995	1996	1997
Lepcha	-	02 (5.4)	01 (2.6)
Bhutia	02 (6.7)	06 (16.2)	01 (2.6)
Nepalese	24 (80.00)	23 (62.2)	35 (89.7)
Others	04 (13.3)	06 (16.2)	02 (5.1)
Total	30 (100.00)	37 (100.00)	39 (100.00)

Source: Degree College, Gangtok.

The Table 6.27 shows that the share of Lepcha students among the students enrolled in Honours course in science subjects is very negligible. The percentage of Bhutia students had gone up to 16.2 per cent in 1996 but fell to 2.6 per cent in 1997. The Nepalese here predominate and their percentage went up to 89.7 per cent in 1997. 'Others' here represent the plainsmen.

However, the analysis so far gives only a partial story. Sikkim still has inadequate infrastructure for higher education. Hence, the meritorious students are being provided scholarships and seat reservation for higher educational and professional training in various parts of the country. Table 6.28 gives the community-wise breakup of students, who were awarded scholarship and seat reservation in the year 1996-97.

It is important to mention here that the quota provided by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for various courses like B.V.Sc, B.Sc.(Agriculture) and Horticulture, Agricultural Engineering has been stopped since 1997. Since then only those, who managed to get seat through open competition are being allotted scholarship by the State Government. This is the reason for non-allotment of students in these courses in 1997.

The norms for seat reservation for various courses for different communities are as follows:

- 23% for Scheduled Tribes,
- 6% for Scheduled Castes,
- 21% for Other Backward Classes,

(The bifurcation of Other Backward Classes and non-Backward Classes for seat allotment has been done since 1997. Hence the Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes are clubbed together as Nepalese for the study) and 15% for domicile holders from other communities, who have been residing and serving in Sikkim for long.

From Table 6.28, it is apparent that the indigenous Lepchas have not yet been able to accrue the real benefits of reservation meant for them for higher studies. Out of 180 students nominated in the year 1996 the Lepchas constituted an alarmingly low share of 5%, which is far below their population ratio. The year 1997 did not prove a blessing for them, with a marginal increase to 6.5% only. In the most highly aspired sphere of medical science, the Lepcha students accounted for only 3.8% in

Table 6.28 : Community-wise break-up of the students selected for scholarship and seat reservation for studies outside the state, 1996-1997

Sl. No.	Name of Courses	1996						1997					
		Lepcha	Bhutia	Sherpa	Scheduled Caste	General	Total	Lepcha	Bhutia	Scheduled Castes	OBC	General	Total
1.	MBBS & BDS	01 (3.8)	09(34.7)	-	01 (3.8)	15 (57.7)	26 (100.00)	--	09(42.9)	1 (4.8)	7(33.3)	4(19.00)	21(100.00)
2.	Bachelor of Engineering	04 (10.5)	09(23.7)	02 (2.6)	02 (5.3)	22 (59.9)	38 (100.00)	04 (9.1)	14(31.8)	5 (11.4)	6(13.6)	15(34.1)	44(100.00)
3.	B.V.Sc.	-	02(40.00)	-	-	03(60.00)	05 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	B.Sc. (Forestry)	-	01(100.00)	-	-	-	01 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	B.Sc. (Agril.)	-	-	-	-	02(100.00)	02 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	B.Sc. (Horticulture)	-	01(100.00)	-	-	-	01 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Agril. Engineering	-	-	-	-	01(100.00)	01 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Hotel Management	-	01(25.00)	01(15.00)	-	02(50.00)	04 (100.00)	01(20.00)	01(20.00)	-	-	03(60.00)	05(100.00)
9.	Printing Technology	-	-	-	-	02(100.00)	02 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Handloom Technology	-	01(100.00)	-	-	-	01 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.	B. Pharmacy	-	-	-	01(100.00)	-	01 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	01(100.00)	01(100.00)
12.	Dairy Technology	-	-	-	-	01(100.00)	01 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	B.A.	01 (4.8)	12 (57.1)	-	02 (9.5)	06 (28.6)	21 (100.00)	02(11.8)	12(70.6)	-	-	03(17.6)	17(100.00)
14.	B.Com.	-	02 (33.3)	-	01 (16.7)	03 (50.00)	06 (100.00)	01(8.3)	07(58.4)	-	01(8.3)	03(25.00)	12(100.00)
15.	B.Sc.	-	02 (25.00)	-	01 (12.5)	05 (62.5)	08 (100.00)	-	02(33.3)	-	01(16.7)	03(50.00)	06(100.00)
16.	BA(LL.B)	01(16.7)	02 (33.3)	-	-	03 (50.00)	06 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	BP.Ed.	01(5.6)	03 (16.6)	-	-	14 (77.8)	18 (100.00)	01(10.00)	03(10.00)	-	03(30.00)	03(30.00)	10 (100.00)
18.	C.P. Ed.	-	01 (33.3)	-	-	02 (66.7)	03(100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Diploma in Engineering	-	09 (30.00)	-	02 (6.7)	19 (63.3)	30 (100.00)	01 (2.7)	11 (29.7)	02 (5.4)	11 (29.7)	12 (32.5)	37 (100.00)
20.	Sashtri	-	-	-	-	04(100.00)	04(100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
21.	M.Sc.	01(100.00)	-	-	-	-	01(100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
22.	Total	09 (5.00)	55 (30.6)	02 (1.9)	10 (5.5)	104 (57.8)	180(100.00)	10(6.5)	59(38.6)	08(5.2)	29(19.00)	47(30.7)	153(100.00)

Source: Directorate of Education, Gangtok

1996 out of total 26 candidates nominated. The picture was more dismal in the year 1997 with no Lepcha nominee out of 21 students nominated for the MBBS.

Another highly aspired profession, engineering, also presents a grim scenario for the Lepchas, with only 10.5% in 1996 and 9.1% in 1997 of total students nominated. In the general courses like B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com also, the share of Lepcha students is not proportionate to their share of total population. In contrast the Bhutias, who are clubbed with the Lepchas as Scheduled Tribes, have the lions share of the reserved seats meant for the tribals. With a share of 30.6% in 1996 and 38.6% in 1997 of the total students nominated, the Bhutias apart from the reserved seats for Scheduled Tribes, have been able to corner a share of the seats meant for general categories too. They have dominant share of 34.7% and 42.9% respectively in 1996/97 in the M.B.B.S and BDS Courses and 23.7% and 31.8% in 1996/1997 of the nominated seats in Bachelor of Engineering courses. The Bhutia students have a high share of 70.6%, 58.4% and 33.3% in general courses like B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc. respectively in 1997.

Another course, where the state government nominated the maximum number of candidates is Diploma in Engineering. Here too, the neglect of the Lepchas can well be gauged from the fact that out of 30 students nominated in 1996, the share of the Lepchas was nil and in 1997 they had the lowest share at 2.7% of 37 students nominated.

Apart from a very few plainmen, the general category comprises the Nepalese alone. Thus, taking the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes together, the representation of Nepalese was also significant.

The reasons for Bhutias snatching most of the MBBS and Bachelor of Engineering seats as against the Lepchas are obvious. These professions demand merit as well as steady financial condition from the students. The Bhutias, most of whom occupy key positions in state bureaucracy have sound economic background, have their children educated in good public schools. Answering why small number of Lepchas are nominated- the Assistant Director of Scholarship Section, Education Department Mrs. A. Bhutia said, 'the selection is done on merit basis and normally they don't get the eligible Lepcha candidates'.

The analysis so far indicates that in the sphere of higher education, which is directly linked to the employment market, the indigenous Lepchas are trailing behind the Bhutias and the Nepalese. The Bhutias have made most of the reservation of quota

meant for the tribals in higher studies, leaving the Lepchas in the lurch. Because of their overall backwardness, lack of motivation and lack of competitive spirit, the Lepchas have not been able to make any significant headway in the sphere of education despite some special measures taken by the government. Universalization of education, which is provided free, is still a far cry inspite of significant development in educational infrastructure. The indigenous Lepchas have not succeeded in availing these incentives as compared to the Bhutias and the Nepalese. Although, interest for primary education has grown among all the communities, the momentum to avail the fruits of educational development does not seems to have taken a firm root among the Lepchas.

Employment and the People: A brief profile

Since ethnicity involves competition and conflict for political power, economic benefits and social status, an examination of the employment profile of the three ethnic communities would help to understand the inter-community relationship in the state. As state government is the biggest source of employment avenues, a general profile of employees in the government sector is presented here.

Table 6.29 : Total Number of Employees

Sex	1978		1994		Percentage Variation
	No.	%	No.	%	
Male	6205 86.18		15431	78.99	148.69
Female	995 13.82		4105	21.01	312.56
	7200 100.00		19536	100.00	171.33

Source: Census of Government Employees, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok.

Table 6.29 shows that the total number of employees in 1978 was 7,200, whereas the Census report of 1994 puts the figure at 19536, i.e., an increase of 171.33% over the year. The percentage of women employees also increased from 13.82% to 21.01% of the total employees during the period. However the 1994 Census does not cover all the employees of Department of Education, Health and Family Welfare.³⁸ Had they been included the number of employees indicated should have been slightly more than what it is.

Table 6.30: The Percentage Distribution of Government Employees in the district
1978-1994

Class	East	North	South	West
	1978	1978	1978	1978
	1994	1994	1994	1994
Gazetted	4.97	0.26	0.58	0.32
	2.09	0.10	0.21	0.17
Non-	60.64	7.67	11.33	13.75
Gazetted	52.55	7.80	17.56	15.11
Total	65.61	7.93	11.92	14.08
	54.64	7.90	17.77	15.28

Source: Census of Government Employment, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Gangtok, 1995, p. 6.

Table 6.30 shows that in 1978 there was the highest (65.61%) concentration of government employees in East District followed by West (14.08%), South (11.92%) and North (7.93%). The picture has slightly changed in 1994, the East District's share has declined to 54.64%, whereas the South District has shown a considerable increase. The North and West have remained more or less static. Another significant trend noticed was a slight fall in the percentage of Gazetted class in all districts.

Community-wise Distribution of Government Jobs

The census of government employees, conducted by the Planning and Development Department in 1994 does not provide the community-wise break-up. The categorization has been done on the basis of social group like Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. However, 1978 Census of government employees provide the community-wise distribution.

Table 6.31: Distribution of State Government Employees according to community, 1978.

States	Community				Total & %
	Nepalese	Bhutias	Lepchas	Others	
Gazetted	179 (2.49)	92 (1.28)	34 (0.47)	140 (1.94)	445 (6.18)
Non-Gazetted	4128 (57.33)	1294 (17.94)	661 (9.18)	672 (9.33)	6755 (93.82)
	4307 (57.82)	1386 (19.25)	695 (9.65)	812 (11.28)	7200 (100.00)

'Others' means those who are treated as plains people

Source: Bureau of Economics and Statistics, 1985 as quoted in Amal Dutta, *Sikkim since Independence*, p. 14.

Table 6.32: Total Number and Percentage of SC/ST/Non-SC/ST Employees

Category	1978	Percentage	1994	Percentage
Scheduled Tribe	2093	29.06	5390	27.6
Scheduled Caste	435	6.04	1092	5.6
Non-SC/ST	4672	64.9	13054	66.8
Total	7200	100.00	19536	100.00

Source: Census of Government Employees – 1994 Bureau of Economics and Statistics, P. 5.

Table 6.31, based on the figures of state-government employees in 1978, shows that the Nepalese had the highest share of the employees at 57.82%. The Bhutias had a share of 19.25%, not low as compared to their population ratio, and the Lepchas constituted only 9.65%. The plainsmen, with 11.28 per cent of the employees had a larger share of the government jobs than the Lepchas. Another important feature to be noted is the lowest percentage of Lepchas in Gazetted category with an insignificant 0.47% only.

Table 6.32 on number and percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees shows the increase in Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees in terms of number but in terms of percentage, there is a fall in 1994 as compared to 1978. The Scheduled Tribe employees who constituted 29.06% of the total employees in 1978 declined marginally to 27.6% in 1994. The same trend has been noticed in case of Scheduled Caste employees. However, there has been an increase in non-Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees.

The New Class and Hierarchy

The State Civil Service Commission came into being in 1981.³⁹ There is now State Civil Service, State police service and Forest Service, each having junior officers in junior scale and senior officers in senior scales and senior most officers in the selection grade. As such, the gazetted employees of the government may be categorized into two hierarchical categories of Grade A and Grade B by the Fourth Pay Commission, which has replaced the earlier categorization of Class I and II. Both groups include the higher officers and professionals in the occupational hierarchy. While Group C category means the non-gazetted employees with relatively lower position in occupational hierarchy, low rank professionals (like school teachers, junior engineers etc.) and white collar workers – clerks, assistants, technicians, kindered and inspectors.⁴⁰

The emerging new class in Sikkim is conceived as the most privileged class for whom pay is the prime index of prestige. The inter-class upward mobility is possible through promotion, open competition and possession of required skills, which may be through open selection, conducted by the State Public Service Commission. Hence judging from the above criteria, the bureaucracy includes a series of higher-level professionals and officers, arranged in a hierarchical order, who are regarded as the power behind the administration.

Representation of Ethnic Communities in State Bureaucracy

Table 6.33 gives the community-wise break up of officers belonging to grade A and B in various State Departments.

Table 6.33: Distribution of Group A and B Officers according to Community in 1997.

Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled Castes	Other Backward Castes	General	Total
325	43	232	449	1049
(31.00)	(4.7)	(22.1)	(42.8)	(100.00)

Source: Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms and Training, Tashiling Secretariat, Gangtok, December 1997.

The Table 6.33 puts the share of Scheduled Tribe officers at 31%, which is a satisfactory figure in terms of their population ratio. Clubbing Other Backward Castes (the OBCs), Scheduled Castes and the General Category together, the Nepalese are seen occupying a dominant position. Mention must be made of the plainsman community, which constitutes a part of the general category. Their share of government jobs could not be ascertained from the above Table but the general understanding is that their share has not been allowed to go up, since the state government has adopted the policy of preference for locals for all government services. The 'Bhumiputra' or 'the sons of the soil' policy has been the general consensus among all major political parties, which has been adopted by the state government.

Despite the commendable presence of Scheduled Tribes in the higher level of bureaucracy, the backwardness of the Lepchas is pronounced in their relatively low representation in the higher posts in state bureaucracy. The inaccessibility of the Lepchas or their poor representation can be judged from Table 6.34, which gives the community-wise distribution of the prestigious State Civil Services as on December, 1997.

Table 6.34: Community-wise breakup in State Civil Service Cadre (1997)

Community	Category and Percentage				Total	%
	Group A	%	Group B	%		
Lepchas	12	6.7	03	4.9	15	6.3
Bhutia	88	49.4	16	25.9	104	43.3
Nepalese	77	43.2	43	69.3	120	50.00
Others	01	0.6	-	-	01	0.4
Total	178	100.00	62	100.00	240	100.00

Source: Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms and Training, Gangtok, December 1997

Table 6.34, based on representation of the communities in State Civil Service, which is regarded as the most lucrative job in terms of salary, prestige, status and other privileges, provides an interesting insight. The Lepchas are poorly represented with 6.7% in Grade A and 4.9% in Grade B, thus constituting a mere 6.3% in total State Civil Service Cadre. The Bhutias, on the other hand, have the highest representation at 49.4% in Group A and 25.9% in Group B, thus constituting 43.3% of total State Civil Service Cadre. The Bhutias, with adequate representation, are the most dominant community in the state bureaucracy. The Nepalese, who are numerically the majority community, have the highest share in Group B with 69.3% share. They also constitute 50% of the total State Civil Service Cadre.

An important insight provided by the above information is the plainsmen have a share of 0.6% in Grade A and 0.4% in total. This shows a diminishing trend of this community in higher state level bureaucracy, as compared to Table 6.31, when it represented 1.94% of gazetted Officers and 9.33% of non-gazetted employees in 1978. The obvious reason is the 'policy of preference for the locals'. It is also a fact that in the post-merger period, the locals have come up to develop their human resources and have prepared themselves for higher jobs in state bureaucracy.

The higher representation of the Bhutias and the Nepalese in the highest level of state bureaucracy and very poor representation of the Lepchas can well be assessed from the following Table too.

Table 6.35: Community background of officers in National bureaucratic cadre.

Communities	Number of Officers and Percentage			
	I.A.S.	I.P.S.	I.F.S.	Total
Lepcha	-	-	-	-
Bhutias	12 (44.5%)	04 (17.4%)	05 (21.7%)	21 (28.8%)
Nepalese	06 (22.2%)	05 (21.7%)	06 (26.1%)	17 (23.3%)
Others	09 (33.3%)	14 (60.9%)	12 (52.2%)	35 (47.9%)
Total	27 (100.00%)	23 (100.00%)	23 (100.00%)	73 (100.00%)

Source: Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms and Training, Gangtok, December, 1999.

Table 6.35 shows that there is no Lepcha officer in the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service posted in the state. The Bhutias, in contrast have the lion's-share of the Indian Administrative Service category constituting 44.5% of the officers. They represent 17.4% and 21.7% in the Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service category, respectively.

The Nepalese comprises 22.2% in the Indian Administrative Category followed by 21.7% in Indian Police Service and 26.1% in Indian Forest Service category, thus sharing 23.3% in the total officers belonging to all India level. Here, an interesting feature of the information is the largest percentage of 47.9% of plainsman community. Here they include those on deputation from the Center. They represent highest in the Indian Police Service (60.9%), followed by Indian Forest Service (52.2%) and Indian Administrative Service (33.3%) respectively. However, the Bhutias and the Nepalese representing nearly 52% of All India Service Category is indicative of the fact that the local Sikkimese are coming up to shoulder the responsibility of these high administrative posts.

A glance at the ethnic background of the top level administrative officers in the Indian Administrative Service category that consists of mostly the Secretaries of various Departments in the year 1992 would bring to light almost the same trend.

Table 6.36: Ethnic Composition of Top-Level Administrative Officers, 1992

Communities	Number	Percentage
Lepchas	02	7.1
Bhutias	13	46.5
Nepalese	11	39.3
Others	02	7.1
Total	28	100.00

Source: Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms and Training, Gangtok, 1992.

A few years back, in 1992 the Bhutias comprised 46.5% of the top administrative officers followed by Nepalese with 39.3%. The share of Lepchas was

the lowest at 7.1%, a percentage equivalent to that of the plainsmen. A comparative analysis of Table 6.35 and 6.36 would show a declining representation of the Lepchas in the higher posts in state bureaucracy; a fall from 7.1% in 1992 to no representation in 1997. The retirement of two Lepcha officers in the All India Administrative Service during this period has caused this decline.

Ethnic Composition of Employees in Education Department

The Census of Government Employees 1994 has shown that 6585 or 33.71% of the total state government employees are employed in the Education Department of the Government of Sikkim. It has also been revealed that the Education Department, the largest Department in terms of employment potential, has the highest number of post-graduates and graduates. In 1994 this Department had 77.09% of its employees with post-graduate degrees and 53.68% with graduate degree. From the Census Report, we could also know that there were 1670 Scheduled Tribe employees in Education Department, the highest in a single Department. Hence, a look into the community background of the school teachers, who constitute the largest number of employees in Education Department, would provide a valuable insight into how the ethnic communities are responding to the opportunities of employment thrown to them by the development activities in the post-merger period.

Table 6.37: Scheduled Tribe Teachers in Government Schools

Category of Teachers	Scheduled Tribes	Total
Pre-Primary Teachers	143 (18.8)	761 (100.00)
Primary Teachers	538 (19.8)	2721 (100.00)
Middle School Teachers	358 (21.5)	1662 (100.00)
Secondary School Teachers	330 ((21.7)	1523 (100.00)
Senior Secondary Teachers	180 (17.0)	1057 (100.00)
Total	1549 (20.05)	7724 (100.00)

Source: Directorate of Education, Gangtok (as on September 1997).

Table 6.37 shows that 20% of all school teachers in 1997 were from various Scheduled Tribes. They had relatively greater representation at middle school and secondary school level with 21% in each level.

It is important to mention that 'The Sikkim Official Languages Act, 1977', recognizes Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha languages as the official language.⁴¹ These subjects are being taught upto class XII levels in all schools recognized by the Central Board of Secondary Education as the vernacular subject of the respective communities. This may have been the cause of higher representation of the Scheduled Tribe teachers, who mostly constitute the language teachers teaching Lepcha and Bhutia languages.

Table 6.38: Lepcha/Bhutia Language Teachers as on March, 1998

Languages	Categories of Teachers			
	Primary Level	Secondary Level	Sr.Secondary Level	
Lepcha	400	40	05	445 (52.2%)
Bhutia	338	54	15	407 (47.8%)
Total	738	94	20	852(100.00%)

Source : Language Section, Education Department, Gangtok, March 1998

The Table 6.38 shows that there is good number of teachers teaching Bhutia and Lepcha languages at all levels of school education. Of the total Bhutia and Lepcha language teachers, 52.2 per cent are Lepchas and 47.8 per cent are Bhutias. Besides language teachers, the number of Lepcha teachers teaching other general subjects is insignificant compared to teachers belonging to Nepali and Bhutia communities. A further evidence of lower participation of Lepcha and Bhutia teachers in general subjects could be found from the Table 6.39.

I could not collect data on graduate and post-graduate teachers in the secondary and senior secondary schools of South and West districts, since those were under compilation. However, I had access to the data on two other districts, North and East, with highest Lepcha and Bhutia concentration. The Lepchas constituted 7% of total teachers in North and East districts. Although, they were 12.4% in North district, it still was low compared to the percentage share of the Bhutia and the Nepali teachers. The Bhutias constituted 16.2% in North and 17.1% in East district, thus comprising 16.9% of the total graduate and post - graduate teachers, taking two

Table 6.39: Ethnic Composition of Graduate and Post-Graduate Teachers including Heads of Schools in North and East Districts.

Ethnic Group	Districts		Total (%)
	North (No. and %)	East (No. and %)	
Lepcha	23 (12.4)	52 (5.8)	75 (7.0)
Bhutia	30 (16.2)	152 (17.1)	182 (16.9)
Nepalese	69 (37.2)	510 (57.3)	579 (53.9)
Others	63 (34.1)	175 (19.7)	238 (22.2)
Total	185 (100.00)	889 (100.00)	1074 (100.00)

Source: Planning Section, Education Department, July 1998.

districts together. The Nepali teachers were the largest in this category with a share of 53.9% of the teachers in two districts.

Another revealing feature of the above Table is that 34.1 per cent of the teachers in the North district and 19.7% in the East district were from among the plainsmen. The high presence of plainsmen in teaching profession is all the more significant particularly when the State Government is serious in pursuing the policy of “sons of the soil” in distribution of jobs. The situation therefore could be explained by the fact that although local graduates have come up to take the teaching assignment in Arts and Science subjects, there is still scope for outsiders for teaching subjects like mathematics and other science subjects. Teachers belonging to plainsmen community have the greater presence in North district, which has the shortage of educated manpower.

If we see the position of college teachers, where higher academic qualification is needed, the trend is not different. Table 6.40 indicates that only 23.6% of the college teachers are from Sikkim, while the remaining 76.4% are from other states. Although the Nepalese are numerically dominant with 63.7% of the total college teachers, only 20% are from Sikkim, the remaining teachers are from the neighbouring Darjeeling district and other states. The Bhutias constitute 3.6% of the

Table 6.40: Ethnic Composition of the Teachers of Sikkim Govt. College, March, 1998

Ethnic Groups	Teachers in Total	College Teachers from Sikkim			
		Male	Female	Total	Percentage
	-	-	-	-	-
Bhutia	02 (3.6)	01	01	02	3.6%
Nepalese	35 (63.7)	05	06	11	20.00%
Others	18 (32.7)	-	-	-	-
Total	55 (100.00)	06	07	13	23.6%

Source: Sikkim Degree College, Gangtok, 1998

teachers, whereas there is none representing the indigenous Lepcha Community of Sikkim.

Conclusion

The development process, which has been intensified in the state in the post-merger period, has opened up new opportunities for the indigenous Bhutia-Lepchas as well as the Nepalese settled down in the state. The people from the plains too have migrated into the state to avail of the new employment opportunities. A new environment of competition for resources has also been created. People belonging to various ethnic communities and occupying differential social and economic status are preparing themselves to make use of the opportunities. Two distinct manifestations of the development process have been: (1) a new class of neo-elite has emerged, and (2) the competition for resources and opportunities have given birth to uneven competition among the three predominant communities of Sikkim.

Unequal control of resources and opportunities by the communities has resulted into a sense of relative deprivation particularly among the Lepchas.

The land, which forms the basis of agrarian economy, is no longer the monopolistic domain of the indigenous Lepchas. With the passage of time, it has changed hands from the Lepchas to the Bhutias and the Nepalese.

The ecological constraints have hindered the large-scale industrial growth in the state. But the small-scale industries, which have multiplied in the post-merger era, are in the hands of the Nepalese and the Bhutias. The Lepchas hardly control industries in the state.

Business in the urban and commercial centers is largely controlled by the Marwari settlers. The state has achieved all round development in all sectors of economy; the net domestic product has risen and the sector-wise annual plan outlay has increased. The government has invested more on development of educational infrastructure, health facilities, modernization of agriculture and veterinary services, industrial growth, power generation and transportation and communication. The new class has benefited the most from these developmental activities.

The adverse impact of the development process has been that the intercommunity inequality has grown and the resources have changed hands from one community to other. The Lepchas, the indigenous tribes of Sikkim, have not been able to take the fruits of development equally with the Bhutias and the Nepalese. Unequal control over human resources such as education, power, access to information by these communities may have been the reason. The Lepchas have a very low representation in all sectors like education, employment and in higher level of state bureaucracy as compared to the Bhutias, who forms the creamy layer in state bureaucracy, and the Nepalese, who by virtue of numerical strength have dominated the scene. The unequal distribution of opportunities, coupled with the social and cultural differences among the communities, has provided enough ground for ethnic group formation. With the emergence of new educated class, the scope for mass mobilization and politicization of issues on ethnic line has widened to give impetus to ethnic politics in Sikkim.

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