

## Chapter 6

### The Views of the People

To obtain the views of the people of Darjeeling Hills on the working of the District Administration and DGHC a cross section of the people were interviewed who comprised of four categories: the (1) Politicians, (2) Administrators, (3) Professionals and (4) People from various associations and organizations.

The first category were the prominent leaders of the ruling party of DGHC (i.e. the GNLF) as well as the prominent leaders of the opposition parties of the hills (i.e. the AIGL, CPRM, GNLF(C), CPM, Congress, BJP, etc). They included the M.P, ex- M.P., M.L.A.s, ex-M.L.A.s, ex-Councillors of DGHC, and Councillors and ex-Councillors of Municipalities.

The second category included the administrators and retired administrators of both District Administration and DGHC.

The third category comprised of professionals like lawyers, doctors, teachers, former headmaster/principal of school/college, journalists, freelance writers and business people.

The fourth category were members of different Associations and Organisations like Sherpa Association, Pradhan Association, Tamang Anila Association, British Gorkha Army, (former members of) Pranta Parishad, Gorkha National Women's Organisation, INTUC, Shramik Sangha (Trade Union Wing of AIGL), Darjeeling District Kissan and Khet Mazdoor (Congress) Committee, National Union of Plantation Workers, Himalaya Plantation, Tea Board, Darjeeling Himalaya Railway, Bar Association, Indian Science Congress Association, Indian Medical Association, Rural Development Committee, Employment and Labour Committee, Rotary Club, Sai Samiti, Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sangh, Sahitya Sammela (a literary association), Gorkha Sangeet Academy, Splastic Society, T.V. Control Board, Bharat Scouts, Nehru Youth Kendra, Study Forum, Consumer Forum and various NGOs.

#### People's views on the limitation of the powers of DGHC

The respondents were asked if the following factors limited the powers of DGHC. To which the response were as follows:

Out of a sample of 50 people, 68 per cent of them said that the lack of power on the part of DGHC to levy tax or raise revenue limited the powers of DGHC, 12 per cent said that this factor did not limit the power of DGHC while 20 per cent did not comment.

One respondent said that the fund allotted to DGHC by cash strapped State Government was meager and that it would help if DGHC had a share in the revenue generated in the hills. Second respondent said that from Tourism little revenue was generated and from Forest seized items were confiscated. In this way DGHC had little finance. Third respondent suggested that if DGHC was to be given the power to levy tax there should not be misuse and miss-appropriation of fund – that there should be honesty otherwise this power would be futile. Fourth respondent emphasized the power to levy tax and raise revenue as being necessary for self-governance and self-reliance for DGHC in the long run. The view of the fifth respondent was different from the others as this respondent said that DGHC had total economic freedom and that money was freely spent in DGHC. The provision to levy tax was there in the DGHC Act 1988, but that provision was never implemented.

Out of a sample of 50 people, 64 per cent of them said that the absence of independent rule making power for DGHC limited its powers, while 14 per cent said this factor did not limit the powers of DGHC, 22 per cent did not provide comment.

One respondent said that without the rule making power DGHC's autonomy would be farcical. Another respondent said that DGHC should have competent people with ability to formulate laws if legislative powers were to be conferred on DGHC. Yet another respondent said that DGHC did have the power to make bye-laws but that this power was not exercised. Helm of affairs did not understand how to make and implement bye-laws so bye-laws made by DGHC was nil.

Out of a sample of 50 people, 48 per cent said that absence of control over the Home Department by DGHC limited the powers of DGHC while 28 per cent said that this factor did not limit the power of DGHC, 24 per cent refrained from giving comments.

One respondent said that certain degree of control over the Home Department by DGHC was warranted – however those enforcing the same should have the maturity to use it judiciously. Another respondent said control over police by DGHC was not required to do good work – to perform development work police was not required. A respondent pointed out that political influence over the police by the ruling party of DGHC was there although there was no such written power. Police was used against the opposition while protecting the interest of the ruling party.

Out of a sample of 50 people, 40 per cent said that the power wielded by the District Magistrate limited the powers of DGHC while 38 per cent said that this factor did not limit the power of DGHC, 22 per cent refrained from giving comments.

Many respondents said that District Administration and DGHC had their own sphere of work. A respondent said that over administrative matters DGHC had nothing to do. Another respondent said that for all practical purposes District Magistrate's Office had hardly any work in the hills in the present scenario. This created confusion which should have been resolved long ago. One respondent said that the Principal Secretary of DGHC was more powerful than the District Magistrate as the present Principal Secretary (of 2006) happened to be an ex- DM.

Out of a sample of 50 people, 56 per cent said that dual agencies due to existence of DGHC and District Administration limited the powers of DGHC while 20 per cent said that this factor did not limit the powers of DGHC, 24 per cent refrained from making comments.

Many respondents said that there was no interference between District Administration and DGHC and that each worked in their own sphere. One respondent said that due to duality people were confused about the role of DGHC on development and that this duality of power center were instrumental in the administrative grey areas.

Out of a sample of 50 people, 60 per cent said that DGHC's power to appoint only 'C' and 'D' grades of employees but not the higher level officers – limited the powers of DGHC; 20 per cent said this factor did not limit the powers of DGHC and 20 per cent refrained comments.

One respondent said that DGHC could not create new posts and that it could only make casual appointments. Second respondent said that DGHC's appointments were all

on adhoc and temporary basis. Third respondent suggested the setting up of an impartial appointing body like the Public Service Commission in DGHC. Fourth respondent suggested that proper co-ordination and clear division of power should be defined in all categories of appointment while another respondent said that DGHC in practice appointed high and low workers in the Transferred Departments of DGHC.

Out of a sample of 50 people, only 22 per cent said that the presence of Governor nominated members in the General Council limited the powers of DGHC whereas 58 per cent said that this factor did not limit the powers of DGHC, while 20 per cent refrained comments.

Some respondents said that nominated members in General Council enhanced the ability of DGHC as people from various walks of life were represented. That the purpose behind members being nominated was to check dictatorial tendencies in DGHC. Some other respondents said that nominated members had virtually no say in the running of the present dispensation, that they were 'persona non grata' and even elected Councillors had no powers for that matter. An ex nominated member of DGHC said that the nominated members had only the right to discuss in the Council without the right to vote or to know about the Budget. Some respondents said that the number of nominated members should be reduced otherwise the State Government would control DGHC from back-door.

#### People's views on the performance of DGHC

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Road construction, out of 50 people, 42 per cent said DGHC's performance was a success, 30 per cent said it was a failure and 28 per cent abstained from giving comments.

Positive comments of the respondents about road construction done by DGHC were:

In remote areas like Bungkulung, Barbattey, Shivakhola, Today Tangta, Lodhoma, Dabai Pani, Balason, Rohini, Manju, etc some very old people had not seen motor vehicles. They had seen 'Company Saraks' of British times. DGHC connected those remote areas. Sick people in those areas had to be carried by men to health centres, now vehicles plied on the road. Roads were constructed in remote rural villages (in

interior of Darjeeling/ in far flung area) which were inaccessible to Motor Vehicles. Roads have facilitated students, farmers, sick people, tourists, etc and have led to overall development of these areas eg. Bungkulung once very remote and backward has now become a model village with roads, electricity, schools, guest-houses, fish ponds etc.

One respondent suggested that the involvement and participation of the local community in maintaining the roads, (for example by keeping the drains clean) would go a long way to keep road networks in good condition. Here education/ advice given to villagers by NGOs would help. DGHC's requirement could be mobilized through NGO support. This way DGHC's program (in this case road construction) would be meaningful.

Negative comments of the respondents about road construction done by DGHC were:

Roads constructed were bad and did not last one season.. At the time of road construction no soil testing were done. The geography, topography of the area before construction of roads were not taken into account. So bad engineering led to landslides. Standard of road was questionable. There was no sustainability of roads. Roads were constructed arbitrarily without proper study and technical expertise. Experienced contractors were not employed to construct DGHC roads. Without formal tenders Emergency Construction Cell employed contractors (usually GNLF supporters) as a result there were no registered construction. Maintenance of roads were in deplorable condition. Post construction, roads were in poor state. Some roads were left incomplete or abandoned half-way. In some areas only patchwork was done. Construction of road were not to the expectation of the people and that it was not satisfactory. There was no planning and no priority set for road construction. Example, there was no planning as to which road were to be newly constructed or which road required maintenance only. Sometimes two roads were made but a connecting road would be missing. Sometime bridge was made but without connecting roads. Sometimes roads were constructed without supporting wall resulting in landslide. One respondent questioned how much the Rohini road benefited the people of that area in terms of agriculture, farming, poultry, etc.

Proper planning and coordination were required before undertaking any development work. For example in Darjeeling, road was constructed, then the PHE dug

the road to lay down water pipes or the Telephone Department or Cable Line Men dug the road to lay the wires, but did not cover it up properly. The end result would be damage of the roads, where a lot of money, time and effort was wasted.

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Education, out of a sample of 50 people, 26 per cent said DGHC's performance was a success, 46 per cent said it was a failure and 28 per cent abstained from commenting.

Positive comments of the respondents on Education were:

Education was given priority. Number of Primary Schools, Junior High Schools, High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools had increased. Maximum effort was put by DGHC to increase the number of schools and to upgrade schools (example from High School to Higher Secondary and so on). The aim of having at least (minimum) one Higher Secondary School in each of the 28 constituencies of Darjeeling Hills followed by having more number of Higher Secondary Schools wherever possible were fulfilled. Adhoc teachers were appointed by DGHC thereby providing employment. The pick up in education was good – the results produced were good so standard of education was good. There were lot of scope for having Technical Colleges and Higher Education under DGHC and more vocational institution were to be established..

Negative comments of the respondents on Education:

A large number of respondents pointed out the Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan Scam (a Multi-Crore-Scam which involved more than 5.5 crore of money) as a failure of DGHC with regard to education. Some respondents said that there was corruption in the money received in the Midday Meal Scheme and Shishu Shiksha Kendra of Education Department. School teachers of Pembong village under Mim Tea-Estate were accused of embezzling Midday Meals meant for students and the matter was flashed out in newspapers also. There were many instances of money for Midday Meal Scheme being misused and bad quality food being supplied for distribution to children under this Scheme. Primary School had become a hotbed of corruption. Many respondents alleged that teachers did not go to school as they were engaged in doing the work of Contractors. Instead they would send some substitutes in their place, with some money given to them. Teachers appointed by DGHC on adhoc basis were not trained. They would get a meager

amount of Rs. 3,000 per month in comparison to regular teachers who got Rs. 10,000 per month. So the adhoc teachers had to supplement their income by doing side business. This resulted in the lowering of the standard of education. Further, teachers of the hills, who cleared School Service Commission (of West Bengal) were denied a job. Appointments to teachers were not given on the basis of merit but on the basis of party consideration, resulting in bad quality of teachers. School education was in complete mess. In the competitive age Darjeeling hills were becoming even more backward. There was not a single Engineering College, Medical College, Agricultural College (farmer's training institutes) or training Colleges in Tea, Timber and Tourism. There was the allegation that at times projects were abandoned halfway, example, Rimbick Dara Gaw School was now (in 2006) in a bad state and part of it had become a cowshed.

*The Telegraph* on 28 June 2006 reports a survey conducted by DGHC which shows that the number of students in the Primary Schools were inflated by 3,000 in a single year, indicating that there was a sinister design to embezzle crores of rupees from funds meant for various National Education Programs. These figures are used to distribute food-grain for Midday Meal Scheme, free textbooks and uniforms for girls of the primary school. The Education Secretary (Mr. C.T.Bhutia) commented that a major scam was averted.

**Table VII**

Number of Schools, Students and Teachers in DGHC areas in the year 1995 and 2005

	1995	2005
Number of Schools in DGHC area (from Primary to Higher Secondary).	826	904
Number of Students in these Schools	1,34,909	1,41,441
Number of Teachers in these Schools	3695	3995

Note: In the year 1995 number of Primary Schools under the Municipality were 50, number of Students in these Schools were 9714, and number of Teachers of these Schools were 246. All Primary Schools under the Municipality were handed over to the DGHC with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1997.

After November 1997 no regular appointment of teachers was made in DGHC areas (except in Missionary/Minority Schools) due to stalemate between DGHC and the School Service Commission.

(Source: (i) D.I.Office Primary, November 2006 (ii) Municipal Office Darjeeling, November 2006 (iii) D.I.Office Secondary, November 2006)

**Table VIII**  
Literacy Rate in the year 1995 and 2005

	Persons	Males	Females
Literacy Rate in 1995	68%	37%	31%
Literacy Rate in 2005	44%	20%	24%

[Note: The figures provided are approximate figures.

Source: (i) Project Report for Total Literacy Campaign in DGHC, DGHC Shaksharata Samity, Department of Mass Education, DGHC, 1995, p. 22.

(ii) Annual Administrative Report 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, Mass Education Extension Department, Government of West Bengal, p. 3.]

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Employment out of a sample of 50 people, 20 per cent said that DGHC's performance was a success, 52 per cent said DGHC's performance was a failure and 28 per cent did not comment.

Positive comments of the respondents about employment done by DGHC:

Everywhere the problem of unemployment existed though DGHC's endeavor to check unemployment was there, even if employees of DGHC were employed only on adhoc basis and even if it was not able to satisfy everyone. One respondent suggested that employment generation in village had vast scope if specific and correct agricultural programs were undertaken in the context of people's participatory activities such as Small Tea Grower, Organic Vegetable and Dairy Farming.

Negative comments of the respondents about employment:

DGHC's performance in Employment was not worth mentioning, not satisfactory at all. Appointment in DGHC was partial and done on party basis. Appointment was not done through advertisement, examination, interview and fair selection. Few were employed in DGHC but Lakhs of people remained unemployed. Besides DGHC's employees were employed on adhoc basis – on contract basis. Their work was temporary which had to be renewed after every 6 months. DGHC was not able to generate permanent employment. So DGHC had large number of daily and casual workers without regularization of job. There was no job security for that reason the employees had to toe party lines. Those working in DGHC would one day face age bar but they would not be made permanent employees – herein laid the betrayal element. In DGHC if a 'D' grade employee got Rs. 1800 per month, in other Government service they got Rs.7000 per month. Further DGHC's employees were not entitled to gratuity and pension

One respondent said that employment should be given importance above everything else for if employment needs of the people were fulfilled other development would follow. The educated youths of Darjeeling Hills were going to foreign countries to work as domestic helps or going to work in call centers in various parts of India, as there were no jobs for them in Darjeeling Hills.

Another respondent said that in earlier times Umbrella making, wrist-watch making trades were there in Darjeeling hills which have disappeared now. This respondent suggested new avenues to be concentrated upon like Marketing business, Sewing and Knitting, etc. Cinchona and Tea Workers were in bad state though Darjeeling tea was still being exported to foreign countries but tea workers could not get a share of the benefit. Another respondent said that no job was generated in agriculture, horticulture and small scale industries. Another respondent pointed out that the State Government did not sanction enough staff, example the DGHC Chairman's two drivers were transferred from Zilla Parishad. But the Vice Chairman and other Councillor's of DGHC did not have regular drivers – except contract service drivers.

One respondent suggested that there were many areas where employment could have been generated. "Hill region could be job-givers and not job-seekers". High class Vegetables, Rice, etc could have been grown. This respondent questioned why vegetables

were bought from the plains? By setting up food-processing Factory like Oranges/Garandle's Juice Factory, jobs could be created. Chances of employment was there but no such opportunities were created. Unemployed rural people were in miserable condition than the unemployed urban people, for they had to depend on nature and its variation. They had no fixed source of income, no family planning, no economic planning, no knowledge of scientific technology ever reached them to improve or raise their economic situation. So they were frustrated and left to fend for themselves.

Table IX

Employment figures of Darjeeling sub-division in the year 1997 and 2005

	Male	Female	Total	Placement
December 1997 Live registered	18340	8197	26537	
Vacancy notified	5	3	8	Nil

December 2005 Live registered	29216	15085	44301	
Vacancy notified	24	10	34	Nil

(Source: Employment Statistic Monthly Return. Sub-regional Employment Exchange Darjeeling, 2006)

The Employment Statistics of Darjeeling sub-division showed that in the year 1997 those who registered live totaled to 26,537 but the vacancy notified was a meager 8 and the placement (i.e. those employed) was nil. In the year 2005 the number of live registered increased to 44,301 but the vacancy notified was a meager 34 and the placement remained nil. These figures reflect the pathetic and frightening state of

employment of the hill people. These figures also reflect upon the economic backwardness of the people of the region and show that crippling unemployment is still a major problem.

(Note: The researcher also wanted to show the number of regular employees and contract service employees employed in DGHC in the years 1995 and 2005, but was denied access of these figures by the DGHC Office. However an Official in the Department of Finance, DGHC gave an approximate figure of Regular Employees in DGHC as between 9,000-10,000 and Contract Service Employees between 5,000-6,000 and the total number of Employees between 15,000-16,000, in the year 2006.)

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Cultural Activities out of a sample of 50 people, 52 per cent said that the performance of DGHC was a success and 20 per cent said it was a failure, 28 per cent did not comment.

Positive comments of the respondents about Cultural Activities done by DGHC were:

Traditional (Forefather's) culture of the people were revived. At one time culture and identity of the hill people were disappearing. Now people were made conscious of their traditional culture – their tribal lifestyle. DGHC had revived and improved upon the cultural activities of the hills. The ethnic culture enshrined in the most interior parts of the hills considered very rare and almost forgotton were regenerated. Culture was better projected, instances were the Bonbo festival, Badar Deo Puja, traditional songs and dances. Lot of cultural troops reflecting hill culture were sent to other states. Traditional musical instruments like 'Madal' and 'Damphu', which were being forgotton, were revived and preserved. DGHC 's effort to preserve hill culture was there. A suggestion by one respondent was that DGHC should provide fund for students interested in engaging themselves in cultural activities.

Negative comments of the respondents about Cultural Activities done by DGHC:

Cultural activities in the hills have been politicized. Too much importance given to Bonbo culture which did not suit present time and was not progressive. General people made to do stone-worship and monkey worship against their wish. The celebration of Buddha Jayanti by the old tradition of carrying Pustaks (holy books) on heads was

stopped, instead people were forced to worship pictures of (living) Buddha. This was seen as an interference on religion and culture and criticized sharply.

One respondent said that the values advocated and initiated by our ancestors, nurtured and developed by our forefathers were vanishing – these needed to be preserved. For that Cultural Research Centre/Institutes and Cultural Institution/Museum were required – for these were non-existent. The demands of modern society were Knowledge Society/ Knowledge Centres that would keep the society well informed.

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Tourism, out of a sample of 50 people 38 per cent said that the performance of DGHC was a success, 32 per cent said it was a failure and 30 per cent abstained comments.

Positive comments of the respondents on Tourism of DGHC were:

DGHC's attempt to improve tourism was there. Various tourist spots were set up like Gangamaya and Rock Garden, Shrubbery Nightingale Park, Tiger Hill Pavilion, Jorepokhari, Delo, Rambhang Park, Kalimpong Park, etc, and from some of them revenue generated was good. Way side Inns, Tea Houses, Tourist Lodges, Guest Houses, Trekker's Hut, Rafting had come up. New places like Rohini, Rangbhang, Lava, Reily, Chitra, Shiva Khola etc had come on the tourist map of the Darjeeling Hills. Construction of guest houses in remote places having natural background with flora and fauna was a success example Sukhia Pokhri, Görubathan, etc.

Many virgin areas of Phalut, Sandhakphu were yet to be developed for tourism under DGHC, provided there was no obstruction from NGOs, the Forest Department and Wild Life Departments. There were scope for developing Eco-Tourism and Village Tourism in villages of Takdah, Pokrebung, Teen Mile and Chimney. Kurseong subdivision though not on the tourist map also possessed potential for developing into a tourist destination. Directly or indirectly most people were employed under Tourism.

A respondent suggested that old heritage sites like Darjeeling Mall Roads, Jawaharlal Road, Jalapahar, Tiger Hill, Dowhill, Creg's Hill, Kalimpong Town, Homes were to be conserved and preserved and not tampered with. Municipal Acts were to prohibit construction of high rise building that would vandalise and destroy the natural

beauty of Dajeeling. Further Horticulture and Floriculture could serve as added Tourist attraction.

One respondent said that Darjeeling with its natural beauty, exquisite Himalayas and snow capped mountains was a heaven for tourists. Tourists of different income group, different age groups and different interests like student tourists, business tourists, scientist tourists and religious tourists could be attracted if there were good infrastructure. After all tourism was the main source of income of the people of the hills. If there was Medicinal Institution set up in Darjeeling, from all over the world students would come. Tourism could be boosted by using modern science and technology.

Negative comments of the respondents on Tourism of DGHC:

Tourism not up to the mark due to bad infrastructure and missing of the required paraphernia like shortage of drinking water, bad roads, bad car parking areas, bad electricity, bad accommodation in hotels and bad treatment of tourists by hotel touts. International tourists and tourists in high budget category could not be attracted to Darjeeling due to bad infrastructure.

Many respondents pointed out that comparatively Sikkim afforded better facilities to tourists in terms of infrastructure and marketing – where Sikkim had aggressive marketing and publicity to woo the tourists, in comparison DGHC's Tourism lagged behind.

Some respondents said after formation of DGHC, State Government neglected Tourism in Darjeeling and promoted Tourism only in Dooars. Tourism in Kurseong and Mirik remained neglected.

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Health, out of a sample of 50 people 24 per cent said the performance of DGHC was a success and 44 per cent said it was a failure while 32 per cent did not comment.

Positive comments of the respondents on Health (DGHC)

New Hospital was built (Eden Hospital) and number of beds increased which accommodated and benefited more people. The bed charge was Rs.100 and Rs.50 per bed. The hospital charge of Rs.28 was not collected. Urine test, Blood Test, Cough test and X Ray were done at low rates thereby benefiting the poor.

Besides number of Hospitals, Rural health units, Block Primary Health Centers and Primary Health Centers have increased.

Regular Immunization Schemes under DGHC were going on, compared to other districts there were lower rate of HIV patients (as people in the hills were well informed about AIDS).

Negative comments of the respondents on Health (DGHC)

DGHC did nothing significant about Health. Basic facilities were maintained but there was no further development. Earlier Medicines, Saline, Injection, Oxyzen were provided free of cost. Now people had to buy them. Doctors of Government Hospitals tended more to private practice. Private patients were given more attention and preference.

Development in the Health front was not up to the mark – it was unsatisfactory. Some respondents questioned why did Siliguri Nursing Homes flourish? (Due to absence of Health facilities in the Hills) One respondent said that expensive treatments like C.T. Scan, Dialysis, Life-saving drugs which were not available in Darjeeling Hills were beyond the reach of poor people.

Regarding health, traditional age old system of health cure, based on superstition existed and the leaders of the Ruling party of DGHC encouraged superstition based recovery methods.

Health was a relative term depending on many factors, like good food, good nutrition, good economic condition for everyone in the region. But the general health of the people was very poor where most suffered from malnutrition. Whereas Darjeeling climate required special food for the people, there was no provision for that. People were generally poor and their food intake was not of quality. According to a survey done by Hayden Hall in 1980s 90% of people suffered from Tuberculosis. Large number of people suffered from Cancer because the vegetables contained traces of pesticides and insecticides, that altered the physiological system of the body. Pesticides and insecticides got into human system through the tea leaves because several tea gardens regularly used pesticides for obtaining better yields in tea gardens. People in bad health had direct impact on their performance of activities. In view of the above it could safely be said that

because of health reasons the output of the people had declined by 50%, which meant that in terms of the activities carried out the economy declined by 50%.

Table X

Name and number of Hospitals, Health Centers and Doctors in DGHC areas in 2005.

Hospitals and Health Centers in the DGHC area in the year 2005	Number of Hospitals and Health Centers in the DGHC area in the year 2005
District Hospital (Eden Hospital)	1
Sub Divisional Hospitals (in Kurseong and Kalimpong)	2
T.V.Hospitals (in Ghoom and S.B.Dey Sanatorium in Kurseong)	2
Block Primary Health Center (BPHC) (in Takday, Bijanbari, Sukhe Pokhri, Mirik, Sukna, Rambi, Pedong and Gorubathan)	8
Primary Health Center (PHC) (Singringtam and Takling in Takdah; Lodhoma in Bijanbari; Sónada; Ghoom and Pokrebung in Sukhe Pokhri; Soureni, Duptin and Panighatta in Mirik; Bagorak, Sittong and Gayabari in Sukna; Samthar, Teesta Bazaar in Rambi; Gitdubling and Algora in Pedong; Jaldhaka and Sherpa Gaon in Gorubathan)	18

Hospitals and Health Centres in the DGHC area in the year 2005	Number of Doctors in the year 2005 (excluding private Doctors)
District Hospital	30
Kurseong Sub-Divisional Hospital	15
Kalimpong Sub-Divisional Hospital	25
T.B.Hospital Darjeeling	3
Kurseong Sanatorium	5
Takdah BPHC and PHC	6
Bijanbari BPHC PHC	10
Sukhe Pokhri BPHC and PHC	8
Mirik BPHC and PHC	8
Sukna BPHC and PHC	11
Rambi BPHC and PHC	6
Pedong BPHC and PHC	6
Gorubathan BPHC and PHC	6

(Source Chief Medical Officer's Office, Darjeeling, November 2006)

(Note: The data of the year 1995 and before that was not available. The researcher was told that in 1995 too the number of Hospitals and Health Centers were more or less the same – there was only slight changes in the number of Doctors)

**Table XI**

Birth Rate and Mortality Rate in the DGHC area in the year 1995 and 2005

	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate
1995	18 per 1000	7 per 1000
2005	15 per 1000	6 per 1000

On the question of the performance of DGHC regarding Rural Development, out of a sample of 50 people 40 per cent said DGHC's performance was successful, 32 per cent said it was a failure and 28 per cent refused comments.

Positive comments of the respondents on Rural Development:

Many respondents said that commendable job done in this sector was that of building Community Halls which could be used for all kinds of social purposes and for social gatherings. Community Halls provided much needed benefit to the people.

Commendable job was also done by Self Help Groups in Self Employment Programs.

There were areas like Schools, Health Centers, Drinking Water, Irrigation, Community Development, Sports in rural area where development with limited budget were undertaken. One respondent said that if the development graph of rural areas during pre and post DGHC time were seen comparatively, the rural development of post DGHC time had hiked up.

Negative comments of the respondents on Rural Development.

Some respondents said that in Agriculture, development was Nil. Some respondents said that there was corruption in Poverty Alleviation Programs and that the government aid did not reach the people for whom it was meant. Example cited was of Indira Awas Yojana where it was alleged that beneficiaries were not given their full share of money. That Central Schemes were not fully and properly implemented.

Some respondents said that single tier of Panchayat was to the disadvantage of the general people since the fund coming for the Hill Panchayat (Gram Panchayat) was less compared to the plains (where 3 tier Panchayat institutions existed). Also stalling of Panchayat Elections from 2005 onwards had stopped development programs at the Gram Panchayat level. Gram Panchayat's functions had been limited to issuing of Birth Certificates, Death Certificates and Residential Certificates and that some rural people were instead going to the Courts for Birth, Death and Residential Certificates.

**Table XII**

Schemes done by the Rural Development Department DGHC in the year 2005

Nature of Schemes	Number of Schemes
(1) Construction of Schools (Sampu Junior High School, Rangpoo Primary School, Batasia Primary School)	3
(2) Supply of furniture for Schools	3
(3) Toilet Water Connection and Protection Wall for Primary School	1
(4) Additional Work at Primary School	1
(5) Inaguration of Primary School (at Gairibas)	1
(6) Protection Wall at Bhalukhop (Ghoom)	1
(7) Construction of Community Halls, Additional Work of Community Halls like Kitchen construction, Ceiling Work, Toilet Work, etc	15
(8) Inaguration of Community Hall (at Mane Dara and Singla)	2
(9) Construction of Generator House and Supply of Generator at Teesta Valley	2
(10) SGRY Roads (Yok Pritam, Maney Dara, Sansary Dara, Limbu Busty, Sonam Yolmo to Jamuna Dewan's House, Lava to Ladam, Vir Gaon, Rohini Road,	34

Tagathay to Pitamchin, Dukpa Gaon Balason, Lava Dara, Chamong Tea Estate, Beneck Burn Tea Estate, Majwa, Lami Naya Busty, Lepchey Khop, Gairi Gaon, Dhusari, Lungse to Suntlay, Chotta Ging to Gairi Gaon, Bijowa Gaon, Glenburn, Pussimbeng Tes Estate, Garlang, Happy Valley, Patlaybash, Gok and Jamuray, Bhaktay Busty, Beni, Sackfari, Dabaipani, Chottatingling, Chungthung, Bhutia Gaon to Lepcha Gaon.
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The total money spent for the above mentioned rural development Schemes amounted to Rs.31,11,91,265 that is Rupees Thirty One Crores, Eleven Lakhs, Ninety One Thousand, Two Hundred and Sixty Five Only.

(Source: Office of Rural Development Department DGHC, September 2006)  
(The data for the year 1995 and before that were unavailable)

People's views on whether DGHC was successful in bringing about development in the Darjeeling Hills.

On the question of whether DGHC was successful in bringing about development in the Darjeeling Hills, the answer out of a sample of 50 people 48 per cent were positive and 40 per cent were negative and the remaining 12 per cent did not comment.

Positive:

Respondents said that in Darjeeling hills between 1947 to 1987 (40 years pre-DGHC) and 1988 to 2006 (18 years post DGHC) if comparatively seen, much was done

in the last 18 years than what was done in the 40 years before that. Since independence the hill were neglected and people's aspirations remained unfulfilled. At the initial stage of DGHC's existence there was lack of experience on the part of elected representatives, lack of expertise and manpower, infrastructure was non-existent. Inspite of these limitations DGHC performed well. Within a short period, with minimum fund, maximum development was done. On social, economic, cultural and educational front DGHC was successful to a large extent – that it did many good works but there was no adequate publicity for it.

Respondents said in certain areas like Rural Development, Tourism, Education, Communication, DGHC had done good work and its work in other areas were average. Every government that came to power would have its own share of success and failure. So to an extent DGHC was successful but that over all development (holistic development) was still awaited and that DGHC had still lot more to do.

#### Negative:

The weaknesses of DGHC as pointed out by some respondents were lack of planning and priorities, bad execution, bad infrastructure, lack of know-how, lack of comprehensive blueprint for development, lack of specialist and technical experts.

Before the setting up of DGHC, development in Darjeeling hill had been done through various Government departments. DGHC had done a few things that it was obliged to do. But DGHC's development was not done on priority basis and that fund were used for religious purposes whereupon it could have been utilized for development purposes. There was lopsided emphasis on inconsequential aspects. The basic drinking water problem was yet to be solved by DGHC.

Tea-gardens (Industry) were in bad condition, Cinchona factory had closed down, there were no new industry coming up – all these resulted in high rate of unemployment. The respondent said that DGHC should be able to do something about this. Here it can be said that many wanted Tea and Cinchona to be placed under the control of the DGHC.

One respondent said that if Center and State failed to provide adequate funds to DGHC – DGHC could not be considered a failure in bringing about development, but if DGHC received adequate funds but could not utilize it properly, then it could be considered a failure.

### People's rating of DGHC

On asked to rate the overall performance of DGHC out of a sample of 50 respondents, 12 per cent rated DGHC's performance as being Excellent, 26 per cent rated DGHC's performance as being Good, 30 per cent rated DGHC's performance as being Average, 18 per cent rated DGHC's performance as being Poor/Bad, and 14 per cent did not comment.

### People's suggestions on Measures that could have made DGHC successful:

More powers to DGHC so that it could be equipped with legislative, executive and economic powers to the optimum. Transferred departments (development departments) to be given to DGHC with full legislative powers. More administrative powers like recruitment of staff, full control over officers and staff, full control over Panchayats and Municipalities. DGHC to have its own Directorates and Secretariats. It was to have full authority with regard to appointment, transfer, promotion, pension and other establishment authority. DGHC was also to have more financial power. Revenue earning departments and projects to be under it. DGHC be given power to raise revenue and taxes from land, road, transport and other resources or DGHC be entitled to revenues collected by Central and State Government in the Hill areas. Financial packages like State grants, Central grants to be pre determined for each year. Special packages as provided to North East Council to be provided as backwardness of DGHC was similar to that of North East States. Adequate and continuous flow of fund to be provided directly from the Centre, and it should also be entitled to funds from the State.

Financial prudence required. Funds to be utilized appropriately and misuse of fund curbed. Strict financial accounting on expenditure to be there. For curbing corruption financial auditing to be done. Regular check by CAG to be mandatory. Transparency in every sphere solicited. Functioning and execution of DGHC's work to be made transparent. DGHC's Budget to be made public and open discussion on DGHC's Budget was to be there. The DGHC's Budget was to be made keeping in view the fact

that the hill's geography, topography, altitude and engineering incurred more expenses for making infrastructures – so more funds were required compared to the same work done in the plains.

Development Policy was required. Development work be done without discrepancy of political parties, it should not be done on political criteria – funding and spending not be done on political basis. Ordinary people were to be able to reap the benefits from DGHC. Development work also to be done in areas which were inhabited by people belonging to Opposition parties. DGHC should come out of narrow parochial interest and have maturity for development. DGHC's development program should be need based and environment friendly and should be sustainable. Responsibility and accountability of development should be there. Public accountability of DGHC required (in other words DGHC be accountable to the people/public). There should not be autocratic functioning in the DGHC. Development be in tune with the changing time, keeping the global situation in mind. Above all people's participation was indispensable for like democracy "Development was of the people, by the people and for the people".

Planning paradigm/model required. Planning should be done bottom up (and not be arbitrary). Planning should be short term and long term. It should be relevant and need based. The drawing up of objectives resulting in long, medium and short term plans were vital. Micro and Macro level planning should be there. Priorities and targets be fixed and a clear road map set up. Plan and proposals should be prepared by a reputed body like the Planning Commission. Once the plan was approved the Annual Action Plan could be submitted for release on year to year basis. The existence of a Planning Cell with qualified and experienced personnel was of paramount importance. There was the need for a Planning Cell, Advisory Board and Development Authority comprising of qualified and competent experts from various fields like IAS, WBCS, retired government officials, educationalist, judicial officers, agriculturalists, engineers, etc. Along with experience new ideas were to be welcomed. DGHC was to have self-authority for planning and development, identifying areas of improvement. DGHC was to be at par with other North East Councils in regard to preparation, estimation and formulation of schemes and projects for over all development of the area.

The executing agencies were to be highly qualified, for which Human Resource Development was extremely necessary. There was also the need for Research and Development Cell to carry out research or intensive study on existing or emerging problems faced by the people in the field of development. New idea and perceptions were to be found not only in terms of the present but also futuristic perspective. It was also to undertake periodical monitoring and evaluation of development acts under way. Regular Meetings, Symposia, Seminars and Conferences to be organized in which people from different strata of life were to participate.

DGHC be absolutely autonomous and be allowed to work independently. The interference of the State Government should be minimum. There was to be a change of approach of Center and State towards DGHC region. Their help and aid should not be on political lines. They should genuinely address the problems of the people, like problems of unemployment and un-development. They were to have practical and human approach and not only patronize and pamper those in power in DGHC.

DGHC should work logically and according to rules. There was to be proper definition and explanation of powers and functions of DGHC. DGHC be run strictly as per the DGHC Act. The Act was to be implemented/executed/exercised properly so that the powers conferred on DGHC would remain utilized. Adherence to statutes required, example General Council's Meeting and election to the Council to be held regularly and on time and not be by-passed so that DGHC could be participatory and democratic.

Many respondents said that DGHC as an institution was good, but that there was room for improvement in the administration and administrative set up of DGHC. Better inter-department coordination was required. DGHC was to generate among the employees a sense of duty and sense of belongingness. Some employees were on deputation in DGHC as such they owed no loyalty and allegiance to DGHC. Their appointment, promotion, pension were to be brought under the aegis of DGHC. Honesty and sincerity of office bearers both political and administrative was required. Leadership with vision, responsibility and accountability to the people was required.

Single administration in place of dual administration required because dual administration led to lack of understanding and co-ordination and caused confusion. Respondent suggested that District Magistrate be incorporated into DGHC or that the

D.M. be made the Principal Secretary. If this was not possible then D.M. to be given one portfolio of DGHC. The entire administration to be under DGHC. Mid-term appraisal for assessment of aims and objectives was required to find out how far aims achieved.

Many respondents emphasized the need for constitutional guarantee for DGHC, and that DGHC be brought under Sixth Schedule. They added that even this demand was not upto the demand made for a separate state – that ultimately DGHC be upgraded to a state.

Respondents also stated that DGHC should be able to tackle the burning problem of Darjeeling hill areas like Drinking Water, Stable Power Supply, Road Communication and Bus/Motor Stands, and that the three T's considered the backbone of Darjeeling economy – Tea, Tourism and Timber should all be under DGHC.

#### People's views on the relationship between District Administration and DGHC

On asked about the relationship between the District Administration and DGHC out of a sample of 50 respondents, 38 per cent agreed that the relationship between the District Administration and DGHC was cordial whereas 22 per cent disagreed and 40 per cent were undecided. Respondents commented that since District Administration and DGHC had their own sphere of work they remained confined to their own work. Some respondents attributed the cordial relationship between District Administration and DGHC to the good relationship shared between the heads and leadership of the two institutions. One respondent emphasized the need to have good relationship between District Administration and DGHC in order to promote development.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents 26 per cent agreed that there was conflictual relationship between District Administration and DGHC and 38 per cent disagreed whereas 36 per cent were undecided. Some respondent said that there was hardly any communication between the two institutions – that each had its own demarcated work so there was no out-right conflict and that they worked peacefully together. Both were cautious not to step on each other's toes. Distance was kept between the two.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents only 6 per cent said that there was competition between District Administration and DGHC and 52 per cent disagreed whereas 42 per

cent were undecided. One respondent commented that when it came to demanding money both came forward but when anything went wrong both blamed the other.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents 38 per cent said that the relationship between District Administration and DGHC was co-operative, 24 per cent disagreed and 38 per cent were undecided. Some said that to some extent there was cooperation between the two institutions whereas some said that since each worked in its own sphere without consulting the other there was no question of co-operation.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents, 22 per cent said that the relationship between District Administration and DGHC was interdependent, 44 per cent disagreed and 34 per cent were undecided. Respondents said that District Administration and DGHC were interdependent for law and order and development work and that they needed interdependence to an extent. The administration was advised to keep DGHC in good humor and not to antagonize them. At times the two depended on each other for successfully finishing a task, for example in the Tourist Fests organized by DGHC, District Administration helped with the law and order and traffic.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents, 20 per cent said that there was superior-subordinate relationship between District Administration and DGHC and 30 per cent disagreed and 50 per cent were undecided. Each claimed to be superior in its own field – District Administration in regulatory work and DGHC in development work. Some respondent said that DGHC was superior as it was an elected body (and that the bureaucrats were sub-ordinate to the people's representatives) and that it was working in its own soil/domain. Some respondents alleged that DGHC sought to bring the District Administration under its sway. One respondent said that after the formation of DGHC the D.M. was reluctant to work though his power was not reduced.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents only 12 per cent agreed that there was co-equal relationship between District Administration and DGHC, 38 per cent disagreed and 50 per cent were undecided. Respondents pointed out that the sphere of activities of District Administration and DGHC differed, that they were not co-equal, the former was powerful in respect of general administration and DGHC was powerful in respect of development.

Out of a sample of 50 respondents 38 per cent agreed there was parallel relationship between District Administration and DGHC, 28 per cent disagreed and 34

per cent were undecided. At certain times in some area parallel administration was there but most of the time District Administration and DGHC had their own sphere of power/work which they exercised/did within the given framework. Some said that District Administration and DGHC had closed doors to each other as they did not know what the other was doing. In this way they worked unilaterally.

People's views on whether District Administration was successful in maintaining Law and Order

On the question of whether District Administration was successful in maintaining Law and Order, out of a sample of 50 people 66 per cent answered in the affirmative and 28 per cent answered in the negative and 6 per cent did not provide an answer.

Positive:

District Administration had done a reasonably good job in maintaining law and order and peace. Law and order problem in Darjeeling hills was meager compared to other areas of West Bengal and India. There was peace in the hills. There were no communal tensions. Abduction and terrorist activities reported during Gorkhaland Agitation had become things of the past. Alcoholism, drug menace and rowdism were present but manageable.

Negative comments:

Some respondents alleged that District Administration was biased/partial towards the Ruling Party and that it was unfair to those who opposed the Ruling Party (the Opposition Parties of the Darjeeling Hills). Examples cited were Public Meetings called by AIGL and PDF in 2006 but opposed by GNLF were stopped by the district administration by the imposition of Section 144. The Superintendent of Police requested the Opposition political parties to call off the Public Meetings and the District Magistrate did not grant permission for the same. So Opposition party members maintained that "Goondas were sent to stop Public Meetings but police force to stop the goondas were not send". So District Administration in this way succumbed to political pressure/influence. It could not be effective due to political interference. District Administration could not say "No" to the Ruling Party of DGHC nor to the State

Government. It was further alleged that the state Government in turn defended the misdeeds of the Ruling Party, and protected their interest only, example cited was the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Scam (of 2006). The administration was also blamed for its failure in not being able to arrest the main accused persons of the Scam.

#### People's rating of District Administration

On asked to rate the overall performance of District Administration out of 50 respondents, 8 per cent rated District Administration's performance as being Excellent, 20 per cent rated District Administration's performance as being Good, 42 per cent rated District Administration's performance as being Average, 8 per cent rated District Administration's performance as being Poor/Bad, and 22 per cent did not comment.

**Table XIII**  
**Crime Figures**

#### Crime Figures of 3 Hill Sub-Division for the Year 1995 and 2005

Head of Crime	Total Case Reported in 1995	Total Case Reported in 2005
Dacoity	2	0
Robbery	6	2
Burglary	4	2
Theft	309	82
Murder	34	20
Culpable Homicide	14	2
Rioting	15	12
Crime against Women	31	51
Others	688	410

Total	1103	581
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(Source: Reader to S.P. Darjeeling 2006)

From the crime figures of the 3 Hill Sub-Divisions for the year 1995 and 2005 we see a decrease in the number of crimes whether it be dacoity, robbery, burglary, theft (in 1995, 309 theft cases were reported which was greatly reduced to 82 theft cases reported in 2005), murder, culpable homicide, rioting and others. Only crime against women had gone up from 31 reported cases in 1995 to 51 reported cases in 2005. (The researcher wanted to show the crime rate figures of the 1980s and 1970s to show the crime rate of the hills in the years before the setting up of DGHC, but they were not available.)