

Chapter - 4

NGOs IN DARJEELING- THEIR EMERGENCE, GROWTH, TYPES AND DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

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History, Society, Economy and Polity of Darjeeling District

4.1 Introduction

A land of immense natural scenic beauty, Darjeeling is imbued with a mystic aura steeped in legend and history. It is a frontier District, running between Nepal and Bhutan and stretching from the plains of Bengal in the south to the state of Sikkim in the north. Darjeeling District lies between 26° 31' and 27° 13' North latitude and between 87° 59' and 88° 53' East longitude. The hill areas cover the three hill subdivisions of the District i.e. Darjeeling (Sadar), Kurseong and Kalimpong. The foothills of Darjeeling Himalayas come under Siliguri subdivision and are also known as Terrain. The District is divided into two parts- the hills and the plains. Darjeeling Himalayan region is popularly known for the place of its biological and cultural diversity. There are four subdivisions in the District. The subdivision of Darjeeling (Sadar) consists of Darjeeling city and three Community Development Blocks: Darjeeling Pulbazar, Rangli Rangliot and Jorebunglow Sukiapokhri. Kalimpong subdivision consists of Kalimpong city and three community development blocks: Kalimpong -I, Kalimpong -II and Gorubathan. Kurseong subdivision consists of Kurseong town and two community development blocks: Mirik and Kurseong. Siliguri subdivision consists of Siliguri city and four community development blocks: Matigara, Naxalbari, Phansidewa and Kharibari. Darjeeling is the district headquarters of the District. There are 17 police stations, 12 development blocks, 3 municipalities, 1 Municipal Corporation and 134 Gram Panchayats, 1390 Gram Sansad, 640 inhabited villages, 708 Mouzas, 12 Panchayat Samiti in the District. Each subdivision contains one municipality (Siliguri has a municipal corporation instead) along with community development blocks which in turn are divided into rural areas with gram

Panchayats and census towns. In total there are 9 urban units: 3 municipalities, 1 municipal corporation, 1 notified area and 4 census towns in the District.

4.2 Main Features

There are many unique features of Darjeeling District and because of its uniqueness the area is very popular within the state. A special feature of this area is the cultivation of tea on varying slopes covering about 18000 hectares of land (O'malley, 1907; Chaudhuri, 1978; Starkel & Basu, 2000). The unique features of Darjeeling district are as follows:

Geography

The Darjeeling district lies between 26° 31' and 27° 13' north latitude and between 87° 59' and 88° 53' east longitude. It contains a total area of 1,164 square miles. Geographically, the district can be divided into two particular divisions, the hills and the plains. It is in irregular triangle shape. It is bordered by Sikkim and Bhutan in the North, Uttar Dinajpur and Purnea Districts in the south, Nepal in the West and Bhutan, Bangladesh and Jalpaiguri in the East. Darjeeling District has four subdivisions namely Darjeeling (Sadar), Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri with District headquarter located at Darjeeling town. Except Siliguri, rest of the district is situated on hilly terrain of mountain Himalaya. Siliguri, the only subdivision located on plain, serves as the gateway to Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh as well as all north-eastern states including Sikkim.

Weather

The climate of Darjeeling is a temperate one and has spring, summer, autumn, winter, and the monsoon seasons. Summer starts in May and continues till June. Summers are mild, with maximum temperatures rarely crossing 25 °C (77 °F). The monsoon season is from June to September is characterised by intense torrential rains often causing landslides that block Darjeeling's territorial access to the rest of the country. In winter temperature averages 5-7 °C (41-44.6 °F). Occasionally, the temperatures drop below freezing; snowfalls are fairly common. During the monsoon and winter seasons, Darjeeling is often

enveloped in mist and fog. The weather of hills and plains areas are different in different seasons.

Natural Vegetation

The vegetation of the Darjeeling District is peculiarly rich in the number of species and peculiarly varied in its character, as might be expected from a consideration of its climate and physiography. Broadly speaking, the vegetation of the District shows two well-marked zones- a tropical zone from the plains up to about 6,000 feet, and a temperate zone from about 6,000 to 12,000 feet (O'malley, 1907).

Important Rivers

The Teesta is the largest river of the District. The other important rivers of the District include the Great Rangit, the Ramman, the Little Rangit, the Rangnu, the Mahanadi, the Balason, the Mechi, the Relli, the Jaldhaka, etc.,

Architecture

Colonial architecture is witnessed in many buildings in Darjeeling; many Tudor residences, Gothic churches, the Raj Bhawan (Governor House), Planters' Club and various educational institutions are the examples. Buddhist monasteries display the pagoda style of architecture.

Tourist place

Some places in Darjeeling that are worth visiting include the Tiger Hill, the zoo, monasteries and the tea gardens. The panoramic beauty attracts many tourist and trekkers seeking to explore the Himalayas. Tibetan crafts like carpets, wood and leather work are displayed in the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Center. Several monasteries like Ghum Monastery (8 km from the town), Bhutia Busty monastery, and Mag-Dhog Yolmowa preserve ancient Buddhist scripts. Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park is home to the Siberian tiger, Himalayan black bear, red panda, snow leopard and many other animal and bird species.

Economy

The most significant contributors of Darjeeling economy are tourism, tea and timber industry. Darjeeling tea is regarded as one of the best teas and is widely popular all across the globe. The remuneration of workers is often benefited

with cash and other necessities like accommodation, subsidized rations, free medical benefits and so on. An ever-growing population of the region has harmfully affected the District's forests and other natural resources. Tourism has contributed greatly to the economy of Darjeeling. Darjeeling is a popular film shooting destination. One of the striking features of the district is more than 60% of workers in the tea gardens are women. The District is famous for its tea, timber and tourism.

Transport

There are two ways of transport facilities in the district. Darjeeling town can be reached by covering the 50 miles (80 km) long Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. This railway has heritage train called the "Toy Train" that commences its journey at Siliguri (NJP) and chugs along the Hill Cart Road (National Highway 55) that follows the railway line. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is a narrow-gauge railway and was declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999. Regular bus services and other vehicles connect Darjeeling with Siliguri, Kurseong, Kalimpong and Gangtok. The nearest airport is at Bagdogra near Siliguri, located about 93 km (58 miles) from Darjeeling. The closest major railway station is New Jalpaiguri, which is connected with almost all the important Indian cities. Within the town, people usually travel from one place to another on foot. Residents also use two-wheelers and hire taxis for short distances.

Agriculture

Agriculture of the region is varied because of its physical configuration. The foot hill contains alluvial soil and is suited for rice cultivation. Agriculture in this region is grossly rain dependent. Almost all the region is forest areas; tea plantations and native agriculture. Maize, rice, millet, and wheat are the most important grain crops grown in the Darjeeling District. Potatoes, barley, and other cold-tolerant grains, sweet potatoes, and amaranths are important bulk crops grown in selected areas. It should be noted, however, that specific areas within the hills and plains region depend on different crop mixes. Dozens of varieties of lentils, soybeans and beans, mustard, sesame and other oilseeds, as well as numerous vegetables, fruits, and spices contribute to nutritional

balance and are grown as complementary food crops. Medicinal plants, both cultivated and gathered, citrus fruits, ginger, turmeric, and hashish contribute minor cash income when transported to market and sold. Ploughing, levelling, harrowing, and other field preparation is done primarily with yoked oxen and with human labour with simple hand-made tools. Buffalo, Bulls, and occasionally humans pull ploughs, harrows, and field levelers. Agricultural implements are made locally from iron blanks shaped and tempered into the metal parts of tools by indigenous craftsmen. Ploughs have a single iron reinforced cutting tooth and are shallow drawing. This total dependence on human labour matches the high level of agricultural intensity that occurs in the District. Throughout hills human power is used to carry compost to fields, fodder and fuel from remaining forest areas, and agricultural production to home storage areas. Although the hills and plains of the District are characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity, many striking agricultural characteristics are strongly influenced by local agronomic and ecological factors. Frequently members of different ethnic groups are found following cropping systems and rotations and using agricultural technologies that are essentially identical. In addition to this lack of sharply defined ethnic agricultural specialization, sometimes members of single ethnic groups live in villages in a range of agronomic and ecological situations growing different crops, following different farming systems, and using different agricultural tools.

Subdivisions

Geographically, the district can be divided into two particular divisions, the hills and the plains. The entire hilly region of the district covers the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling (Sadar), Kurseong and Kalimpong. The foothills of Darjeeling Himalayas come under the Siliguri subdivision and are also known as Tarai. Siliguri lies at the foot of the hills, which is bounded on the north by the mountains, on the south by the Purnia district of Bihar state, on the east by Jalpaiguri district and on the west by Nepal. Darjeeling district has a length from north to south of 18 miles (29 km), and a breadth from east to west of 16 miles (26 km).

People

Darjeeling contains a polyglot population. The region is the mosaic of diverse ethnic groups. The original inhabitants of Darjeeling were Lepcha but they constitute a minority of the population in present Darjeeling. In contemporary Darjeeling, Nepali (Gorkhas) constitutes the majority of the population. They hail from different castes and dialect groups like the Gurung, Mangar, Limbu, Tamang, Newar, Rai, Sherpa and Thami, Brahmin, Chettri and so on. The ethnic and social plurality is perhaps the most powerful demonstration of Darjeeling District. The social groups of diverse ethnic and linguistic background create a cultural mosaic with ethnic distinctiveness. Various racial groups mostly of Mongolians constitute the social contour of the region. Majority of them are of Nepali speaking caste and tribe groups along with some Lepchas, Bhutias, Bihari, Bengali and some Marwari families are also accommodated within the social contour of the hills.

Religion

Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are the main religions practiced by the people of Darjeeling. In Darjeeling, one can find inter-faith places of worship like the Mahakal Temple, the Hindu temple at Dhirdham or the various Tibetan Buddhist monasteries like Yolmowa Buddhist Monastery, Bhutia Busty Monastery, Yiga Choling Monastery.

Education

Christians Missionaries heralded the education system in the district. Education in Darjeeling has a strong foundation since ages. The schools in the district are either run by the state government or by private and religious organisations. The medium of instructions used in schools are mainly English and Nepali, although the national language Hindi and the official state language Bengali are also given much importance. The schools are either affiliated with the ICSE, or the CBSE, or the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. Institutions such as St. Joseph's College (School Dept.), Loreto Convent, St. Paul's School and Mount Hermon School attract students from all over India and South Asia. Many schools are more than a hundred years old.

4.3 A Brief History of Darjeeling District

The history of Darjeeling is in the state of obscurity. To the ancient histography of India, Darjeeling as a locality never came to the fore. The Darjeeling District has a colonial history which starts in the late thirties of the 19th century. The region lies in the range of the Eastern Himalayas, and prior to British annexation belongs to Sikkim and Bhutan historically. But, the history of Darjeeling before the annexation from the kingdom of Sikkim into British Bengal is buried in the past due to lack of records. It is however, believed that indigenious hill tribes (Lepcha) were the first people to set foot in these hills, their livelihoods consisting of fruit gathering and hunting (O'Malley, 1907; Biswas, 1990). On the facts assimilated from the archeological relics found in Badamtam it can be assumed that there was a mixed culture in the undivided Sikkim which dates back to the 12th Century where we found the traces of the Magar, the Lepcha and Limbu Kings ruling in this part of the universe. Mr. Hooker believed that the Lepchas, Limbus, Magars and Murmis (Tamangs) were the aboriginal inhabitants of the undivided Sikkim (H.B. Bura Magar, 1994).

The history of Darjeeling dates to the era when, the present area of Darjeeling was a buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan. Upto the beginning of the 18th Century, Darjeeling was a part of the dominions of the Raja of Sikkim. Sikkim at one time extended far the west and included Limbuan (Nepal). The aggressive Gorkhas of Nepal took over the rule to the present day Darjeeling for long time. The Raja of Sikkim later became engaged in unsuccessful war with Gorkhas who had seized power in Nepal and they invaded Sikkim in 1870 and marched as far as east as Teesta River and annexed Terai and the Gorkha Army who did not return Nepal after celebrating victory over Sikkim settled there and became the part of Sikkim (H.B. Bura Magar, 1994).

But, later on, due to a disagreement, the East India Company declared war against Nepalese in which latter were defeated (Anglo-Nepalese War, 1814). In 1815 a treaty was signed at Seagoulie and with that the tract which Nepalese had wrested from Raja of Sikkim, was ceded to the East India Company. And due to the treaty of Titalya between Sikkim and the East India

Company in 1817 the whole area between Mechi and Teesta was restored to the Raja of Sikkim and his sovereignty was accordingly guaranteed by the Company (Chhetry, S. 1999). Under this treaty the Raja was bound to refer to the arbitration of the British Government all disputes between his subjects and those of neighbouring states. The treaty, thus, established a complete British influence in Sikkim. In 1827, a border dispute arose between Sikkim and Nepal, and Sikkim referred the matter in accordance with the treaty of Titaliya to the East India Company. Two Officers - Captain Lloyd and Mr. G.W. Grant were deputed in 1828 to deal with the disputes and they penetrated into the hills as far north as Rinchingpong. Captain Lloyd spent six days in 1829 in the Old Gorkha Station of Darjeeling and was deeply attracted by its advantages as site for a Sanatorium and the area was important from the military viewpoint too because of its location (Dash, 1947). So the East India Company negotiated with the King of Sikkim to lease the area.

Captain Herbert, the Deputy Surveyor General was sent to the area to examine the country. The court of Directors of the British East India Company approved the project. General Lloyd was given the responsibility to negotiate a lease of the area from the Chogyal of Sikkim. The lease was granted on 1 February, 1835.

This deed of grant, which is commendably short, runs as follows:-

" The Governor-General having expressed his desire for the possession of the hills of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I the Sikkimputtee Rajah out of friendship for the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is, all the land south of the Great Runjeet river, east of the Balasun, Kahail and Little Runjeet rivers, and west of the Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers" (Moktan, R., 2004).

This was an unconditional cession of what was then a worthless uninhabited mountain. After that, General Lloyd and Dr. Chapman once again

were sent in 1836 to explore and investigate the climate and importance of the place. In 1836 a road had been made from Pankhabari. In 1839, Dr. Campbell, British resident in Nepal, was transferred to Darjeeling as superintendent. He was an able administrator and had established friendly relation with Sikkim. He gave much encouragement to immigrant cultivators and population arose from about 100 in 1839 to about 10,000 in 1849. "Whatever has been done here" wrote N. B. Jackson, an Inspecting Officer in 1852, has been done by Dr. Campbell alone. He found Darjeeling an inaccessible tract of forest, with a very scanty population, by his exertion and excellent Sanatorium has been established for troops and others, a Hill Troop was established for the maintenance of order and improvement of communications, no less than 70 European houses had been built with a bazar, jail and buildings for the accommodations of the sick in the depot, a revenue of Rs. 50,000 had been raised and was collected punctually and without balance, a simple system of administration of justice had been introduced. The system of forced labour formerly in practice has been abolished and labour with all other valuables has been left to find its own price in an open market. Roads had been made, experimental cultivation of tea and coffee had been introduced and various European fruits and grapes planted. At the same time the various tribes of inhabitants had been conciliated and their habits and prejudices treated with a caution and forbearance which will render further progress in the same direction an easy task (K. Pradhan).

The increasing importance of Darjeeling under free institution was a source of loss and frustration to the leading men of Sikkim. Frequent kidnapping and demands for return of slaves took place and the climax was reached when in 1848 Sir Joseph Hooker and Dr. Campbell were made prisoners while travelling in Sikkim with the permission of the Raja of Sikkim and the British Government. So slowly and gradually relation with Sikkim deteriorated (Dash, 1947).

To punish Sikkim a small force entered into Sikkim in 1850 and the

portion of the Sikkim Hills bounded by the Rammam and the Great Rangit on the North, by the Teesta on the East and by the Nepal frontier on the West including Tarai annexed. For some years after the annexation, the relation between Sikkim and British was good but raids on British territory had taken place frequently. The British Government decided to take possession of the portion of Sikkim north of Rammam and west of the Great Rangit until British subjects were released. Dr. Campbell with a small force of 160 rank and files crossed the Rammam in November 1860. He was attacked and forced to fall back on Darjeeling. Later on, Col. Gawler with Sir Ashley Eden as envoy and special commissioner moved with artillery and entered Tumlong, the then capital of Sikkim in 1861. The Raja abdicated in favour of his son and Dewan had to flee. A treaty was signed on the 28th march, 1861. It finally put to an end the frontier troubles with Sikkim secured full freedom across Sikkim border (Mitra, 1991). Kalimpong was ruled by the Bhutanese government after wresting from Sikkim since 1706. In 1706 the King of Bhutan annexed what are now Kalimpong and Rhenock (Sen, J. 1989). In 1780 Gorkhas invaded and conquered Kalimpong. After the Anglo-Bhutan War in 1864, the Treaty of Sinchula (1865) was signed, in which Bhutanese held territory east of the Teesta River was ceded to the East India Company.

In other words, the whole territory came under the British occupation in three phases during the thirty years from 1835 to 1865. During the first phase, in 1835, by a deed of grant, the Raja of Sikkim ceded to the British rulers a portion of the Sikkim hills which covered the areas south of the Great Rangit River, east of the Balasan, Kahel and Little Rangit River and west of the Rangnu and Mahananda rivers. The second phase followed a war with Sikkim which resulted in the annexation of Sikkim 'Morang' or 'Terai' at the foot hills as well as a portion of the Sikkim hills which was bounded by the Rammam river on the north, by the Great Rangit and the Teesta River on the east, and by the Nepal frontier on the west. This area had always been under Sikkim, excepting the Morang or Terai in the foot hills which was for a time (1788-1816) conquered by Nepal. However, following the East India Company's victorious

war with Nepal, this tract was ceded through the Treaty of Segauli (1815) to the British rulers who, in turn, temporarily returned it to the Raja of Sikkim by the Treaty of Titaliya (1817) indicated above, the British soon began a war with Sikkim and the ceded territory was annexed by them which was ratified by the Treaty of Tunlong (1861). The third phase was marked by the outbreak of the Anglo-Bhutan war which ended in the Treaty of Sinchulia (1865) and led to the British annexation of the hill tract which was situated to the east of the Teesta river, the west of the Nechu and Dechu rivers, and the south of Sikkim (Dasgupta, 1999).

The Darjeeling Municipality was established in 1850. Tea estates continued to grow. By 1860s peace was restored in the borders. During this time immigrants, mainly from Nepal, were recruited to work in construction sites, tea gardens, and on other agriculture-related projects. Scottish missionaries undertook the construction of schools and welfare centres for the British residents in the district so the Loreto Convent was established in 1847, St. Paul's School in 1864, Planters' Club in 1868, Botanical Garden in 1878, St. Joseph's School in 1888, Railway Station in 1891, Town Hall (present Municipality Building) in 1921. With the opening of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in 1881, smooth communication between the town and the plains below further increased the development of the region. Darjeeling Municipality took the responsibility of maintaining the civic administration of the town from as early as 1850.

At that time the District was divided into two subdivisions after Kalimpong had been brought under British Administration, i.e., the Headquarters Subdivision and the Terai Subdivision. The Headquarter Subdivision covered an area of 960 sq. miles including all the hills on both the side of the Teesta and the Terai Subdivision covered an area of 274 sq. miles which included the whole area at the foot of hills. The Headquarter of the Terai Subdivision was at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa and later on it was transferred to Siliguri.

In 1891 Kurseong Subdivision was made which included both the Terai and the lower hills of the west of the Teesta. Later in 1907, Siliguri was made a Subdivision. In 1916, the Kalimpong Subdivision was created. The passing of the Constitution of India 1950 brought to an end the administrative segregation of the District. This established a uniform administrative pattern of administration in the District as in the rest of Bengal

After Independence of India

After the independence of India in 1947, Darjeeling was merged with the state of West Bengal. A separate District of Darjeeling was established consisting of the hilly areas of Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and some parts of the Terai region. The population rose by leaps and bounds. The growth rate has touched the sky height of about 45% in the 1990s and thus is far above the national, state, and District average. The colonial town of Darjeeling was designed for a mere population of 10,000. So the population spurt has made the town more prone to the environmental problems in recent decades. The rise in tourism also affected the ecological balance of the area. A diverse ethnic population gave rise to socio-economic tensions, and the demand for the creation of the separate states of Gorkhaland popular in the 1980s. The issues came to a head after a 40-day strike called by the Gorkha National Liberation Front, during which violence gripped the city, causing the state government to call in the Para-military to restore law and order. Political tensions largely declined with the establishment of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988 under the chairmanship of Mr. Subash Ghising.

The decade of 1990s saw radical changes on the political, social, economic scenarios of Darjeeling. The DGHC consisted of councilors elected by the people of Darjeeling. This body was granted autonomy to function as an independent body. However, with the passage of time, over-confidence set in among the councilors of Darjeeling. Easy win in Elections ensured the councilors lethargy to work. Moreover, many councilors were illiterate or uneducated. There was frequent funds mismanagement.

Thus, the functioning of DGHC became sloth. Development of the area took a back seat. The economic conditions of the local folk became worse from bad over the period of time. Under the circumstances the movement for Gorkhaland re-emerged with the formation of Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha by a dissident GNLFF leader Bimal Gurung in the month of September 2007. The party was officially announced with a public gathering at chowk bazaar in Darjeeling on the 8th day of October 2007. Later on the tripartite agreement of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was signed on the 18th of July, 2011 at Pintail Village, Dist. Darjeeling in presence of the Union Home Minister- Shri P. Chidambaram, West Bengal Chief Minister- Miss Mamta Banerjee and Shri Bimal Gurung, President, GJM.

4.4 Society

Darjeeling Himalaya is a blend of diverse ethnic and cultural elements and the region is the abode of a large variety of inhabitants. When the British first acquired the hill territory in 1835, it was almost entirely under forest, and what small population it had, had been driven out by the oppression of the petty ruler whom they replaced. It was, in fact, estimated that the whole of this tract, comprising 138square miles, contained only 100 souls (O'Malley, 1907). The then superintendent Dr. Campbell had reported the population of Darjeeling to be 1900 in 1850 and 2200 in 1869. The years that followed saw the rapid growth in the population of the District. Darjeeling District offers the most remarkable example of growth of population stemming mainly from immigration from outside. Since the inception of immigration into the District, people from Nepal belonging to various castes, tribes, religions and speaking various languages have always been in majority. It can be said that Darjeeling is an ethnographic museum and a cultural melting pot.

Darjeeling Himalaya is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-lingual area. The society in the area is made up of various elements drawn from diverse origin. The social diversity is perhaps the most powerful manifestation of the area. The social groups with diverse ethnic and linguistic origins, representing various racial stocks and social status have found a place for

themselves at different points of time adapting themselves to the different ecological niches offered by the physiographic and climatic setting of the area. The waves of immigration have drawn the ancestors of the majority of the present population of the area from the surrounding territories across the Himalayas. Their dispersal has resulted in a creation of a social mosaic with ethnic distinctiveness. Approximate ethnic group wise composition of the population of Darjeeling District may be mentioned as follows –

- Nepalis (this is a generic term and subsumes more than 20 ethnic groups under it. Various castes and tribes (like Sherpa) that immigrated to the area in the 19th and early 20th century from Nepal are subsumed under this group)
- Lepcha (they are the autochthonous tribes in the area)
- Bhutia (tribal that includes both Bhutanese and Sikkimese Bhutia)
- Tibetan (refugees that came to the area after 1961)
- Bengali (includes both permanent residents and migrants of south Bengal and refugees from Bangladesh)
- Other Indians

The Nepali community is again subdivided into different categories. Notable among them are Khambus or Rai, Murmis, Limbu, Chhetri or Khas, Brahmin, Mangar, Gurung, Newar, Yakas, Gharthi, Kami, Damai, Sarki, Bhujel, etc. The following table represents the group of Nepali people of the District.

Table No. 4.1: Nepali Groups in the District of Darjeeling

Nepali Race	1901	1951
Khambus or Rai	33133	63745
Murmis	24465	49890
Limbu	14305	19838
Chettri or Khas	11597	30463
Bahun or Brahmin	6470	11317
Mangar	11912	19413
Gurung	8738	17864
Newar	5770	14827
Yakas	824 (1941 Census)	-
Gharthi	3448	998
Kami	9826	30713 (1991 Census)
Damai	4643	8482 (1991 Census)
Sarki	1823	6611 (1991 Census)
Bhujel	6312 (1931 Census)	5745

(Source: Rajib Chatterjee & Sekh Rahim Mondal, 2011)

Arthur Jules Dash has categorized Nepali communities into the caste and tribe groups while writing the District Gazetteer in 1947. According to him Rai, Sherpa, Chettri, Brahmin, Sanyasi, Bhujel, and Yogi are the caste groups. Manger, Newar, Tamang, Damai, Gurung, Limbu, Kami, Sunwar, Yakha, Sarki, and the Ghati are the tribe groups. Hierarchically Brahmins are called as Bahuns who rank top in the caste hierarchy.

It is very fact that the population of the District is steadily increasing since its inception. The following table gives the details of population growth in the last few decades.

Table No. 4.2: Population Growth rates in Darjeeling District

Year	Population	Decadal Growth	Increase	Percent
1872	94712	-	-	-
1881	155179	-	60467	63.84
1891	223314	3.71	68135	43.91
1901	249117	1.75	25803	11.55
1911	265550	0.52	16433	6.6
1921	282748	0.50	17198	6.48
1931	319635	1.22	36887	13.04
1941	376369	1.64	56734	17.75
1951	459617	1.63	83248	22.12
1961	624640	3.11	165023	35.90
1971	781777	2.77	157137	25.16
1981	1006434	2.56	242492	31.2
1991	1335687	-	275650	26.91
2001	1609172	-	309253	

Source: Dash 1947; Census of India of respective years

The population growth is not static. It is fluctuating in nature. The above table shows that the total population of the people of Darjeeling district in 1891 was 223314 which increased to 249117 in 1901 with the decadal growth of 1.75. On the other hand, the decadal growth rate was comparatively much low in 1911 and 1921. Again, from 1931 it started increasing and reached its highest point in 1961. The political independence of Bangladesh has ushered a lot in the increase of population in the District as compared to the other parts of the state.

Majority of the population of the District are the inhabitants of the rural areas and the unique feature of the District is sex ratio is high in the rural areas than the urban areas. The following table represents the population by sex and sex ration in the District.

Table No. 4.3: Population by Sex and Sex ratio

Area	Persons	Male	Female	Sex Ratio
Rural	1088740	556633	532107	956
Urban	520432	274011	246421	899
Total	1609172	830644	778528	937

Source: Census of India, 2001

As per the Census of India, 2001 the male and female population of the district was 830644 and 778528 respectively. The male population is comparatively higher than that of the female as the sex ratio stands as 937.

There are multi-lingual people in the society who are residing in the District. The district under discussion displays a prominent Linguistic Breakup among its inhabitants. The variation in the use of daily language by the people of Darjeeling is shown in the following table:

Table No. 4.4: Linguistic Breakup

Sl. No.	Area	Bengali	Nepali	Lepcha	Bhutia	Others
1	Sadar	1688	227836	1193	970	13520
2	Kalimpong	1964	118163	8330	2859	3222
3	Kurseong	2130	87284	1135	90	9594
4	Siliguri	56567	23363	415	54	121400
Total		162349	456646	11073	3973	147736

Source: 1971 Census, Government of India.

According to table, the number of people speaking Nepali as their mother language is 227836 in the Sadar subdivision, whereas 1688 people speaks Bengali, 1193 speaks Lepcha, 970 speaks Bhutia and about 13520 speaks languages other than these. Again ,the census in Kalimpong sub-division shows 118163 nepali-speaking people whereas, people speaking Bengali, Lepcha, Bhutia and others numbers in 1964,8330,2859 and 322

respectively. In Kurseong sub-division, 2130 people speak Bengali, 1135 speaks Lepcha, 90 speak Bhutia and 4594 speaks other languages such as Marwari, Bihari and others. Whereas, majority of people i.e. about 8,7824 speak Nepali as their regular speaking language. Siliguri also shows 23363 people speaking Nepali and 56567, 415, 54 and 121200 speaking Bengali, Lepcha, Bhutia, and others respectively. Therefore, according to the 1971 Census report, in total, a majority of 456646 people speaks Nepali, whereas, 162349 people are Bengali speakers, 11073 are Lepcha speakers, 3973 speaks in Bhutia and 147736 people use other languages like Bihari, Marwari and so on. Thus, if we exclude the people of Siliguri sub-division, we will find that major portion of the population of the district contains Nepali speaking people whose number is noticeably high.

The society of Darjeeling District represents multi-religious culture. The main religion of the District includes Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and so on. The following table represents the population by religion in the District of Darjeeling.

Table No. 4.5: Population by religion in the District of Darjeeling

Sl No.	Religion	1991		2001	
		Population (Number)	%	Population (Number)	%
1	Hindus	1013310	77.95	1237714	76.92
2	Muslims	59140	4.55	85378	5.31
4	Christians	65605	5.05	99232	6.17
5	Sikhs	1251	0.10	2229	0.14
6	Buddhists	155295	11.95	1078	11.02
7	Jains	802	0.06	5507	0.07
8	Others	4516	0.34	707	0.38

Source: Census of India, 1991 & 2001

According to table, majority of the people of the district are Hindus followed by the Buddhists whereas people belonging to other religions are comparatively less.

Apart from the linguistic and religions diversities, Darjeeling District also displays a distinct categorisation among its population namely the

Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Their proportion to the total population of the district is shown in the following table as:

Table No. 4.6: Population of SCs and STs and their proportion to the total population

Area	Total Population	SCs	%	STs	%
Rural	1088740	207422	19.1	178878	16.4
Urban	520432	51459	9.9	25289	4.9
Total	1609172	258881	16.1	204167	12.7

Source: Census of India, 2001

The people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes categories comprise of a noticeable percentage of population- be it in the rural or in the urban areas. Table shows that the rural areas of Darjeeling district have a total population of 1088740 people among which 207422 (19.1%) belongs to the Scheduled Caste category. In the urban areas too, the total population being 520432, the Scheduled Caste categorised people numbers in 51459 (9.9%). Hence 16.1% of the total population comprises the Scheduled Caste people and 12.7% are those belonging to the Scheduled Tribe category.

The number of households in the rural areas is high in comparison to the urban areas in the District. The following table represents number of households, population and the size of the households in the District.

Table No. 4.7: Number of Households, Population and Households Size

Area	No. of Households	Population	Households Size
Rural	219401	1088740	5.0
Urban	99336	520432	5.2
Total	318737	1609172	5.0

Source: Census of India, 2001

In the district under study there are 318737 households 219401 in the rural and 99336 in the urban areas. The household size is 5.0 and 5.2 in the rural and urban areas respectively.

The total literacy rate of male and female of the District is 80.1 and 62.9 according to the Census of 2001. The literacy of women is less as compared with men in the District. The following table represents the literacy rate of by sex and gender and gender gap in literacy rate in the District.

Table No. 4.8: Literacy rate by Sex and Gender and Gender gap in literacy

Area	Population		Literacy Rate (%)		Gender Gap in Literacy
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Rural	556633	532107	76.1	55.4	20.7
Urban	274011	246421	87.7	78.5	9.1
Total	830644	77528	80.1	62.9	17.1

Source: Census of India, 2001

Discussing about the literacy rate among the male and female inhabitants, Darjeeling differs from other Districts of the state. The gender gap in literacy between the male and female in the rural area is 20.7 whereas in the urban area, it is 9.1 and in total, it is 17.1. Most strikingly, this is much higher than the other states of the country.

The population of the state-both rural and urban consists of both working and non-working people. The Distribution of Population by Workers and Non-workers by Sex and work participation rate is shown in the following table as:

Table No. 4.9: Population by Workers and Non-workers by Sex

Area	Total Workers (Main & Marginal)		Non-Workers		Work Participation Rate (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rural	266736	136503	289897	395604	47.9	25.7
Urban	136234	29969	137777	216452	49.7	12.2
Total	402970	166472	427674	612056	48.5	21.4

Source: Census of India, 2001

Here also, another striking feature that attracts our conscience is that the non-workers numbers in more than the workers, both in the main and

marginal viewpoint. A more attentive study shows that female workers are less in number than that of the males. The work Participation rate of the females is 21.4% whereas that of the males is 48.5%.

These workers consist of cultivators, agricultural labours, workers in household industries and in other fields. The distribution of total workers by category in Percentage is figured in as:

Table No. 4.10: The distribution of total workers by category in Percentage

Area	Total Workers		Cultivators (%)		Agricultural Labourers		Worker in Households Industries (%)		Others Workers (%)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Rural	266736	136503	21.7	22.0	13.3	16.3	2.7	3.5	62.4	58.3
Urban	136234	29969	0.3	1.1	0.3	0.6	1.9	3.9	97.5	94.4
Total	402970	166422	14.4	18.2	8.9	13.4	2.5	3.6	74.3	64.8

Source: Census of India, 2001

Women, though number less in the field of service, lead as labourers. The 2001 census report shows that the number of female is more than the males working as cultivators, agricultural labourers, and workers in households industries and as other workers. They lead the males in 0.3% as cultivators, 3% as agricultural labourers, 0.08% in household labourers in rural areas only. In the urban areas too their percentage is higher by 0.08 %, 0.3%, and 2.9% as cultivators, agricultural labourers, and household labourers respectively. But in the other fields of work, male workers are more than females as the total percentage of the male workers is 74.3% whereas that of female workers is 64.8%.

4.5 Economy

Environmental conditions play a major role in conditioning the livelihood and economy of any place and Darjeeling Himalaya cannot be an exception. The topography, climatic variations, soil condition have all influenced human occupancies. Subsistence agriculture, livestock, forestry, plantations and allied activities are the major activity of the rural folks of the District. Darjeeling Himalaya has only over 13% cultivable land in proportion to its total geographical area. Physiography in the area has made agricultural conditions extremely diverse. Agriculture is greatly impacted by altitude and slope aspect. Such situation in Darjeeling Himalaya has made cultivation extremely difficult. Large section of people who are living in Khasmal areas are practicing traditional agriculture, more than 35 % of land falling under such category. Bare rocky and steepness restrict agriculture operations to a great extent. Broadly, agricultural crops in the Himalaya can be grouped into two categories- Food crops and Cash crops. Food crops include rice, maize, potato, wheat, barley etc. while the cash crops are tea, cinchona, ginger, cardamom, etc. The methods of agriculture change with the crops. Fruits such as orange, papaya, peaches, guava, plums and even mangoes are grown in the valleys and in areas with low altitudes. Livestock and animal husbandry engages a measurable proportion of rural folks in the area. Grazing of livestock is a regular practice in the valley area of the Darjeeling Himalaya. Livestock supply draught power and serve as the primary and perhaps the most important

source of fertilizer. The villagers use the pairs of oxen to cultivate the terraced fields. Animal manure is indispensable for field fertilization as artificial fertilizers are hardly used. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Darjeeling. Some people are engaged with the tea industry and cinchona plantation. Tourism in the District is another source of income of the people. But the majority of the people of Darjeeling District have to depend on the agriculture. The following table represents the area of vested agricultural land in the District.

Table No. 4.11: Area of vested agricultural land

Sl. No.	Upto	Area of land distributed (hectare)	Number of Beneficiaries			
			Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	Others	Total
1	30.09.99	12385.81	18840	13714	17688	50242
2	30.09.00	12388.65	18940	14172	17788	50900
3	30.09.01	12490.58	19840	14222	17888	51950
4	30.09.02	12491.00	19840	14222	17888	51950
5	30.09.03	12575.00	19881	14222	17888	51991

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Darjeeling (2004)

The above table shows that an average of 12466.21 hectares of cultivable land involves about 51406.6 numbers of beneficiaries cultivating various crops.

The distribution of cultivable, uncultivable, etc. lands in different blocks of the District are varies. The following table is showing the use and distribution of land (in Hect) in different blocks of Darjeeling.

Table No. 4.12: Use and distribution of land (hect) in Blocks of Darjeeling for the year 2003-04

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Reporting Area	Forest Area	Area under Non-Agri. use	Barren & uncultivable land	Permanent pastures & other grazing land
1	Darjeeling Pulbazar	40887	18392	2066	584	-
2	Sudhipokhri Jorebunglow	39086	22171	945	519	48
3	Rangli-Rangliot	19811	6171	567	-	-
4	Kalimpong-I	33997	16119	6214	2553	221
5	Kalimpong-II	26986	11626	2667	203	608
6	Gorubathan	44372	29169	3703	881	2
7	Kurseong	26952	7292	2335	49	9
8	Mirik	10688	2463	934	-	-
9	Matigara	17413	5723	3595	88	6
10	Naxalbari	19514	4888	2684	24	9
11	Kharibari	14469	-	2456	-	6
12	Phansidewa	31294		5610	24	-

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Darjeeling (2004)

According to the report showing the use of these lands in the year 2003-04, among a total of 325469 hectares of reported lands, 124014 were used as forest areas whereas 33776, 4925, 909 hectares are used as area under non-agricultural use, barren and uncultivable lands and permanent pastures and other gazing lands respectively.

There are different type of farmers in the District which includes Bargadars, Patta holders, small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and in each and every blocks their size and numbers are varies. The following table is representing the population features of farmers in the blocks

of Darjeeling for the year 2003-04.

Table No. 4.13: Population features of Farmers in the Blocks of Darjeeling for the year 2003-04

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Bargadars	Patta Holders	Small Framers*	Marginal Farmers*	Agricultural laboures (2001)
1	Darjeeling Pulbazar	2331	12730	2560	8005	5201
2	Sudhipokhri Jorebunglow	27	881	5	1285	2696
3	Rangli-Rangliot	132	5479	510	3780	3952
4	Kalimpong-I	1111	7815	2030	8510	4400
5	Kalimpong-II	1221	737	1240	4475	4596
6	Gorubathan	144	3529	1160	2730	3742
7	Kurseong	212	956	510	1580	2323
8	Mirik	23	252	16	479	1240
9	Matigara	1007	8665	455	6860	1888
10	Naxalbari	1617	9522	770	7340	3961
11	Kharibari	803	7147	1435	12495	10591
12	Phansidewa	2221	19258	3185	17180	13229

Note: 1. Marginal farmer possesses agricultural land measuring upto 1 hectare.

2. Small farmer possesses agricultural land measuring more than 1 hectare and upto 2 hectares. 3. *= According to Agricultural Census (W.B.), 2001

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Darjeeling (2004)

The above table shows that 10849 numbers of bargadars, 76971 patta holders, 13876 small farmers and 74719 marginal farmers constitute the population features of farmers in the Blocks of Darjeeling for the year 2003-04. According to the Census of 2001 there were 57819 farmers in the district. There are some commercial and gramin banks in the District and are as follows:

Table No. 4.14: Commercial and Gramin Banks in the Blocks of Darjeeling for the year 2003-04

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Name of Banks offices		Population Served per bank office Commercial & gramian (No. in 000)
		Commerical Bank	Gramin Banks	
1	Darjeeling Pulbazar	2	2	29
2	Sudhipokhri Jorebunglow	3	2	20
3	Rangli-Rangliot	2	2	16
4	Kalimpong-I	4	2	11
5	Kalimpong-II	3	2	12
6	Gorubathan	1	2	18
7	Kurseong	3	3	14
8	Mirik	3	2	8
9	Matigara	2	3	26
10	Naxalbari	6	1	21
11	Kharibari	2	2	20
12	Phansidewa	5	2	25

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Darjeeling (2004)

According to the table, 36 commercial banks and 25 gramian banks served a total number of 220000 people in the different blocks of the district. The intensity of population in different blocks varies. A close analysis of the report shows that the number of people does not depend upon the number of banks of that particular area. There are 4 commercial and gramian banks in Darjeeling-Pulbazar block which serves about 29000 people, whereas 5 banks in Sukhiapokhri-Jorebunglow block serves 20000 only. Similarly, if we compare Mirik and Matigara blocks, we can see that both having the same number of banks vary in their service targets i.e. the former serves about 8000 people whereas the latter serves about 26000, the difference being of 18000.

Apart from banks there are some co-operative societies in the District and the following table represents the same.

Table No. 4.15: Co-operative Societies in the Blocks of Darjeeling for the year 2003-04

Sl. No.	Name of Block	No. of Co-operative Societies	No. of Members	Working capital (No. in 000)
1	Darjeeling Pulbazar	107	4015	25797
2	Sudhipokhri Jorebunglow	133	6700	28293
3	Rangli- Rangliot	97	2822	18044
4	Kalimpong-I	80	7453	30604
5	Kalimpong-II	86	5023	50857
6	Gorubathan	41	2648	8193
7	Kurseong	109	5100	30253
8	Mirik	46	1017	10088
9	Matigara			
10	Naxalbari	103	9684	72272
11	Kharibari			
12	Phansidewa	102	5889	10466

Note: Excluding Co-operative Societies of Milk, Sericulture, Weavers & Industries.

(Source: District Statistical Handbook, Darjeeling (2004))

On the other hand, the above table reads that the number of co-operative societies and their members in every block is more or less the same. But the difference lies between their working capitals i.e., it is the amount of funds that varies. The capital in the co-operative societies of Gorubathan block is about 8193000 which are much less than that of its immediate following block, Kurseong which records an amount of 30253000. The reason of this discrimination may be lack of knowledge and difference in the source of income.

The economy of the District is dependent on agriculture. Tea is the backbone of the District and is cultivating since long time. Apart from tea, Cinchona and other medicinal plants have its base here. Sericulture is another section which has been spreading with time. The best of Indian quality mulberry silk is being produced in Darjeeling Hills. Forestry is an important occupation of the people of Darjeeling. Darjeeling has about 38.91 % of its area under forest. Many forest-based industries have come up and there is huge potential for further development. Cultivation of aromatic medicine, and exotic plants and orchids has been a source of income in the regional economy. Tourism is another promising industry in Darjeeling. Darjeeling Himalaya is a familiar place for tourists since historical past. It attracts a large number of tourists from all corners of the country and even from abroad. So, in short, the economy of the District is based on its famous three (3) Ts (Tea, Timber and Tourism).

But over the years, with the increase of population, faulty agricultural practices, overgrazing of the hill slopes in the catchments areas, cutting and lopping of natural forests for fuel, fodder and timber, the continuous and regular practice of grazing, unplanned growth of tourism all has led to deterioration of environment and ecosystem and is yielding many problems. Darjeeling is excluded from the industrial map of the country. The small and cottage industries that have great potentialities in the region have not been brought in as required.

The deep-rooted poverty and ignorance have become chronic over the period of time. Besides, the people are living in a very underdeveloped infrastructure. A house-to-house survey in the rural villages will reveal the real picture as to how people are struggling for their livelihood. Many villages are without proper transport and communication facilities. The rural folks have to walk day long to sell their produce in the nearest town. The situation becomes worse during the rainy season with frequent landslides. Safe drinking water, educational institutions, primary health centre, power supply etc. face similar fate in the rural hills.

As a result, rural Darjeeling in the last few decades has been witnessing a notable out-migration for better jobs and earnings opportunities. The migration is mainly taking place towards the urban areas of the District and to the major cities of the country like Delhi, Kolkata, Madras, Mumbai and so on. Population pressure, degradation of the Common Property Resources, forests, long neglect of the region, backwardness of the economy and society, low agricultural productivity, lack of opportunity etc. have played prominent role in this regard. The drain of the labour force has causing dual impacts-damaging the local economy and discouraging self-reliance in the villages. The unavailability of market, ecological constraints, inadequate manpower, low technology and traditional agriculture does not provide the local folks in the District with adequate income to meet their basic necessities.

The tea industry has absorbed the large number of workers, both males and females and is the principle source of income and employment in the District. But this industry is facing large number of problems nowadays. Thus, it appears very necessary to go deeper into the past and present of the tea industry of the District because there is a close connection between the tea industry and the growth of large numbers of NGOs in the District.

4.6 The Tea Industry- Origin, Growth and Present Condition

Darjeeling Tea Industry: An Introduction

Tea played an important role in the British balance of payments. The government of Great Britain and British India rendered all sorts of help for the promotion of tea industry in India. The Court of Directors made all efforts to develop the tea industry in India (Sir P. Griffith). The establishment of the tea industry in Darjeeling is due to the enterprise of Dr. Campbell. In 1834 the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, had appointed a committee for the purpose of submitting a plan for the introduction of tea culture in India. In 1840 Dr. Campbell was transferred from Katmandu to Darjeeling, and there started the experimental growth of tea. It was soon found that the plant throve readily at this altitude, and others began to follow Dr. Campbell's example, seed

being distributed by Government of those who desired to cultivate the plant (O'Malley, 1907). But these plantations appear to have been merely experimental plots, but by the year 1856 the industry began to be developed on an extensive scale, especially on the lower slopes, as it was believed that the elevation of Darjeeling was too high for the plant to be productive. The year 1856 may accordingly be taken as the date at which the industry was established as a commercial enterprise. In that year the Alubari tea garden was opened at Kurseong by Darjeeling Tea Company, and another on the Lebong spur by the Darjeeling Land Mortgage Bank. In 1859 the Dhutaria garden was started by Dr. Brougham and between 1860 and 1864 four gardens at Ging, Ambutia, Takdah and Phubsering were established. Darjeeling Tea Company has started a garden at Takvar and in Badamtam by the Lebong Tea Company. Other gardens which were started at this early period were those now known as the Makaibari, Pandam and Steithal tea estates (O'Malley, 1907).

Among the teas cultivated in India, the most celebrated one comes from Darjeeling Himalaya. The best of India's prize Darjeeling Tea is considered the world's finest tea. The region has been cultivating, growing and producing teas for the last 150 years. The complex and unique combination of geo-environmental and agro-climatic conditions characterising the region lends to the tea grown in the area a distinct quality and flavour that has won the patronage and recognition all over the world for the last 1.5 century. The tea produced in the region and having special characteristics has for long been known across the globe as 'Darjeeling Tea' (Kumar, R. and Vasundhara Nair). It is an undisputable fact that the economic development of the region coincided with the development of the tea plantations. The establishment of the first commercial tea plantation, Tukvar Tea Estate, by the British-owned East India Company in 1856 was believed to have heralded the beginning of a new era in the Darjeeling Hills by bringing about much needed economic growth (O'Malley, 1907; Eden, 1965).

4.7 Historical Profile

According to the Darjeeling Planters Association, the story of Darjeeling Tea started around 1850 when a Dr. Campbell, a civil surgeon, planted tea

seeds in his garden at Beechwood, Darjeeling, situated at 7,000 ft above sea level as an experiment. Dr. Campbell and Major Crommelin are said to have first introduced tea in Darjeeling Himalaya during the period of 1840-50 on experimental basis out of the seeds imported from China. Darjeeling was then a very sparsely populated region and was only used as a hill resort. Tea being a labour intensive industry needed sufficient number of workers to plant, tend, pluck and finally manufacture the produce. Hence, people from the neighbouring regions, mainly Nepal, were encouraged to immigrate and engage as labourers in the tea gardens. The number of gardens and land under cultivation began to increase only after 1854, when the existing restrictions on the leasing out of land to European planters were relaxed by the promulgation of Wasteland Rule 1854. This attracted many big sterling companies, and during the following five years the tea in India a steadily progress (Edward Money, 1974).

4.8 Geographical Distribution

The Darjeeling Tea Industry is playing a pivotal role in view of its contribution to building state economy. Employing large number of workers it as earned a niche in generating employment opportunities. The Darjeeling tea is famous in the world and among the 45 countries in the world which are producing tea; apart from China no other country in the world has been able to produce the delicately flavoured teas except Darjeeling. This is mainly due to its geographical location, proximately to the Himalayas, China Jat (variety) of plants, elevations, soil, rainfall etc. (O'Malley, 1907). Majority tea gardens are located in Sadar Darjeeling and Kurseong sub-divisions. There are only four tea gardens in Kalimpong Subdivision. Kalimpong is largely agricultural in character and agriculture forms the backbone of the regional economy of Kalimpong. There are in general 87 registered gardens producing Darjeeling Tea in Darjeeling Hills spreading across the geographical area of 20,200 hectares out of the total 114 tea gardens located in the District of Darjeeling. They comprise about 5 percent of the total area under tea plantation in the country.

4.9 Growth of Tea Gardens in the District

The history of Darjeeling Tea started around 1850 when a Dr. Campbell, a civil surgeon, planted tea seeds in his garden at Beechwood, Darjeeling, situated at 7,000 ft above sea level as an experiment. Dr. Campbell and Major Crommelin are said to have first introduced tea in Darjeeling Himalaya during the period of 1840-50 on experimental basis out of the seeds imported from China. According to the available records, the first commercial tea gardens were planted in 1852. Since then the tea gardens in the District are increasing slowly and gradually and the following table depict the same.

Table No. 4.16: Growth of Tea Gardens in the District

Year	No. of tea gardens	Tea cultivation land (in hectares)	No. of labourers employed
1852	1	433	N.A.
1866	39	3000	6859
1870	56	4400	8347
1874	113	11000	19424
1896	186	16230	-
1943	142	21075	-
1951	138	16569	69590
1971	97	18258	56990
1982	84	18000	44052
1986	86	18000	-
2000	86	18000	-

(Source: Tea Board Statistics, 2001)

The period between the establishment of first tea estate in 1852 and India's Independence saw an unprecedented expansion of the tea gardens. In 1866 there were 39 tea gardens and 6859 tea labourers in the district. From 1870 to 1951 large numbers of tea gardens established in the district. But since 1971 slowly and gradually number of tea gardens and labourers decreased. As a result large numbers of people become jobless.

It has been noticed that the average daily number of labour employed in the tea Gardens of the District had remained more or less static. During the same period, the employment potentials of the tea gardens of the neighbouring areas (Terai and Duars) have moderately increased.

Table No. 4.17: Daily numbers of Labourers in Tea Gardens

Year	Darjeeling	Terai	Duars	All Bengal	All India
1961	42432	17310	129900	189642	816262
1965	42236	18067	130459	191762	806152
1970	45549	19177	135554	200280	759646
1975	44021	20050	136059	200130	774897
1980	45987	23290	149571	218848	846659
1985	46275	24893	161563	232563	892954
1990	48116	37875	162680	248671	986781

Source: Tea Statistics of Different Years, Tea Board of India.

According to the tea statistics of different years conducted by tea board of India, the number of labourers working daily in the tea gardens of Darjeeling was 42432 in 1961 which, by the year 1990, increased to 48116. The increment in this case is only of 5684. The fact is that if we compare with other tea producing areas, the number increased by 20565 in the Terai region; 32780 in the Duars; 59029 in the other tea cultivating areas all over Bengal and 170519 all over India. The point which astonishes us the most is that Darjeeling being the leading tea productive and exporting place (in terms of its quality), requires a vast quantity of labourers and thereby a havoc increment in their number which lacks as per the report says.

The following table represents the productivity of tea per hectare (in Kg):

Table No. 4.18: Productivity of Tea per Hectare (in kg)

Year	Darjeeling Hills	Terai	Duars	All Bengal	All India
1961	546	878	1161	990	971
1965	519	921	1191	1015	1072
1970	557	1117	1337	1150	1182
1975	596	1197	1470	1338	1341
1980	659	1383	1666	1424	1494
1985	652	1815	1853	1606	1641
1990	723	1583	1684	1480	1729

Source: Tea Statistics of Different Years, Tea Board of India.

Quantitatively, the productivity of tea in Darjeeling is also less. Tea production per hectare is increased by 159 kgs in the period between 1961-1990 whereas this increment is comparatively high in other regions of our country as it increased by 705 in the Terai region, 523 in the Duars, 490 in the other parts of Bengal and 758 all over India. This reveals that Darjeeling is facing a continuous failure in merging both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of its tea products simultaneously. The following table represents the productivity of tea per labour (in KG) in various tea producing areas.

Table No. 4.19: Productivity of Tea per Labour (in kg) in various Tea producing areas

Year	Darjeeling Hills	Terai	Duars	All Bengal	All India
1961	234	529	505	447	425
1965	222	509	522	454	454
1970	221	624	584	505	551
1975	243	656	647	559	629
1980	276	681	699	609	673
1985	279	882	755	677	735
1990	301	558	702	602	730

Source: Tea Statistics of Different Years, Tea Board of India

Same wise, the increment in the production of tea per labour is also low in Darjeeling as compared to the other parts of India. According to the tea statistics conducted by the tea board of India, this increment in the period

between 1961-1990 figures in 197 in the Duars region, 29 in the Terai, 155 all over Bengal and 305 all over the country.

Labour force is necessary in each and every tea garden for its preparation. The following table depicts the estimated average number of permanent workers on Darjeeling tea estates from 1991 to 2008.

Table NO. 4.20: Estimated average number of permanent workers

Year	No. of Workers	Share In % 1999	% fewer or more than 1999
1993	46 568	91.41	- 8.59
1994	58 814	115.40	+ 15.40
1995	58 887	115.55	+ 15.55
1996	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1997	49 783	97.67	- 2.33
1998	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1999	50 964	100.00	0.00
2000	51 515	101.08	+ 1.08
2001	51 938	101.91	+ 1.91
2002	52 671	103.35	+ 3.35
2003	52 547	103.11	+ 3.11
2004	53 363	104.71	+ 4.71
2005	53 412	104.80	+ 4.80
2006	53 492	104.96	+ 4.96
2007	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2008	55 000	107.92	+ 7.92
2009	61 397	120.47	+20.4

(Source: Tea Board of India up to 2008; estimated for 2009 on the basis of the Report of the Committee on the Competitiveness of Indian Tea [Government of India, 2009])

There are 87 estates of sizes ranging from 23.20 to 506 hectares according to a Tea Board of India source, and from 113 to 580 hectares according to the producers. The total area under tea is 19 500 hectares on the 87 estates, so that the average estate size is 224.14 hectares. The average production of each estate is approximately 136 300 kilograms of made tea. Each estate is equipped with a processing unit or factory where green leaves undergo various stages of processing to prepare 'made tea'. There are various categories of worker from leaf-pickers to factory workers. The current

workforce in the industry exceeds 55 000 people employed on the 87 estates on a regular basis, while a further 15 000 are employed on a casual basis for nine months during the tea picking season (from March to November) (<http://darjeelingnews.net/tea facts.html>).

The following table draws the real picture of tea estate, area, production and average yield of Darjeeling tea in 1991 to 2008.

Table No. 4.21: Tea estates, area, production and average yield

Year	No. of Tea Estates	Area under production (hec.)	Total production (thousand kg)	Average yield (Kg per hec.)
1991	102	20 085	13 932	694
1992	102	19 309	12 355	640
1993	102	19 324	13 026	674
1994	88	19 280	11 092	575
1995	83	18 932	11 298	597
1996	80	17 551	10 614	605
1997	80	17 760	10 054	566
1998	85	17 830	10 253	575
1999	85	17 604	8 653	492
2000	85	17 228	9 281	539
2001	85	17 453	9 841	564
2002	85	17 463	9 180	526
2003	85	17 580	9 582	545
2004	85	17 522	10 065	574
2005	85	17 539	11 312	645
2006	85	17 542	10 854	619
2007	85	17 818	10 007	562
2008	85	17 818	11 586	650

(Source: Tea Board of India)

It is clear from the above table that the tea estates, area, production and average yield of Darjeeling tea is more or less decreasing day by day.

4.10 Present Condition and its impact

With the decline of the tea industry, livelihood is challenged because no other large industries, except tourism are established in the region. Day by day the number of tea gardens is decreasing. Some estates have been locked up and

some others are in a very critical condition. The large numbers of threats hurdles to the tea industry that exist today are as follows:

1. The population in these tea gardens has increased by leaps and bounds and it is the major cause for worry. Most plantation workers are migrants from Nepal who were initially encouraged by the British. Salt to the wound, there is no provision of sending back the retired labourers.
2. The production cost of Darjeeling tea is high because of the physical structure of the region. The hilly terrain also increases input costs. Procurement costs for workers' rations, maintenance of supply lines, higher fuel costs, frequent power cuts, high costs for transporting the picked leaves from the plantation to the factory, transportation of the dried leaves from the processing site in the hills to warehouses in Kolkata are some of the reasons behind the high cost of production. The average Darjeeling yield per hectare is as low as 400 to 450 kilograms, compared with the national average of 1 800 kilograms. Taking all these factors into account, production costs at estate level (according to estate sources) amount to Rs 200 to 225 per kilogram. In addition, Rs. 100 to 125 per kilogram is spent on administrative costs, including the payment of various taxes (Khawas, Vimal 2006).
3. In a liberalised world market about 50 million kg is sold as 'Darjeeling Tea' though the total production of genuine Darjeeling Tea is less than nine million kg (Khawas, Vimal 2006). The extra teas that are illegally tagged as Darjeeling Tea come from Sri Lanka, Kenya and even Nepal of late. Further, Japan, a largely orthodox tea-growing country, has already discovered the chemical constituents of the Darjeeling variety. In all, such a situation has led to a degradation of the international reputation of Darjeeling Tea. In an effort to stop this market and sustain its intellectual property rights, the Darjeeling logo was created as early as 1983 and registered in the UK, the US, Canada, Japan, Egypt and Spain. A Certification Trade Mark Scheme for Darjeeling Tea was also launched in 2000 to stop this market and sustain its Intellectual Property Rights.

However, Darjeeling tea is still not recognised by World Trade Organisation (WTO) as a Geographical Indicator.

4. Lack of firm policy prevents the tea companies from undertaking the task of uprooting and replanting. Generally, the tea bush has a long gestation period of eight to ten years in the Darjeeling Hills, thus growth of tea-plant from the nursery to a full mature bush is another problem. On the plains however, this gestation period is only three years.
5. The areas for the expansion of tea gardens in the District are limited which is prohibiting the increase in viability of the tea gardens. There is simply no land available for expansion.
6. The tea gardens are dependent on cheap labourers because the companies have to pay low wages to them. Unlike today, there was a time when these cheap labourers were available from Nepal. More than this the tea grown in the Darjeeling area is quite specialized and the prices for this high-grade good quality tea are high but the market is small and this has caused serious problems.
7. Tea plantation takes a long time for its maturity. It takes at least five years to reach a stage when leaves can be plucked. It is this gap of five years that companies fear most because they have to pay workers and invest huge amount in re-plantation venture, without getting any money in return.
8. The tea bushes in Darjeeling Hills are old because about 66 per cent of the shrubs are over 50 years out of which more than 50 per cent have been there for over 100 years. Further, there are bushes that are over 140 years old. According to a recent study by the Tea Board of India, only eight per cent of the old bushes have been uprooted and new ones planted in their place. This has seriously impacted the productivity of the tea gardens.
9. The political situations are sometimes creating a matter of concern. Interference of the local political parties is producing a bad end.
10. There is unhealthy relation between the management and the union of the tea gardens. We know that there are workers' unions in the tea

garden and their affiliation is with political parties. And there is frequent tussle between the unions and the management and as a result hampering the smooth functioning and working of the tea gardens.

11. The misappropriation of the name is still taking place. In the absence of adequate regular monitoring, tea of Nepal is entering India both in processed and unprocessed form, flooding Indian markets. Tea of Nepal resembles Darjeeling tea and is sold under the name Darjeeling, thereby receiving the benefits of the reputation of genuine Darjeeling tea.
12. The steepness of the slopes has made the area very prone to environmental hazards in the form of regular soil erosion and occasional landslides. Soil fertility is reduced as a result of the erosion of topsoil, while the massive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the past has reduced topsoil quality and fertility, further affecting the overall natural and environmental condition of the area. Moreover, the population growth rate is very high, and Darjeeling and the surrounding area face deforestation as a result of the increasing demand for fuel-wood and timber to build houses.
13. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951, was formulated with a view to improve the living and working conditions of the workers and associated persons in the gardens. The Act, however, is featured with several pitfalls. Empirical evidence shows that the management violates most of the provisions. Moreover, there is no room for punishing the culprit. Tea estates have very poor or no provisions for drinking water facilities, housing, latrines, health care, electricity and education even for the permanent workers. Further, the Act needs a through revision in the context of the changing social, economic and political scenario.
15. The erratic rainfall pattern causes frequent landslides in the hilly terrain causing huge damage and heavy losses to the estates. When a landslide occurs in a particular area, workers are afraid of working there during heavy rains for fear of further landslide. As a result, a great deal of valuable picking time is lost in the process.

4.11 Polity

The politics of the District is based on 'popular sentiment and one's man show.' It is very hard to predict the nature of politics of the District because it is the 'agenda' that determines the direction and the way of politics. From 1907 to till date the politics of Darjeeling is shaped by the demand of separate land for Gorkhas. The complexities of the ethnic problems were embedded in the demands and the resultant movements for autonomy which came to the surface from time to time in the district of Darjeeling in West Bengal (Dasgupta, 1999). In 1907, the Hillman's association had demanded special safeguards for the Nepali speaking people of Darjeeling. In the early forties the Gorkha League was formed and from that time they are demanding a separate land for Gorkhas. They then indicated that they were willing to accept any of the three options which were being mooted "(i) that the District be a separate administrative unit directly administered by the centre, (ii) that a separate province be set up comprising the District of Darjeeling and neighbouring areas and (iii) that the District of Darjeeling with a section of Jalpaiguri viz. the Duars be included in Assam" (Akbar, 1986).

However, the autonomy claim was the central theme of Darjeeling politics long before independence. Repeated demands were raised in 1907, 1917, 1920 and 1934 by different local political groups. Demand for a separate statehood of Darjeeling including the adjoining Duars areas of Jalpaiguri (where over 50% were Nepali inhabitants) was raised by GNLF in the true sense during 1980s. The issue was promoted in 1980 by invoking article 3 (a) of the constitution of India for the first time by GNLF.

It is true that according to the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty (1950), which allows the Nepalese of Nepal to cross over to India, reside and own property and also participate in trade and commerce. The GNLF alleged that the clause of the treaty (clause VII) had jeopardized the position of Indian Nepalis, for they would be confused with the Nepalese of Nepal and face eviction. To stress the distinction between the Indian Nepalis and Nepalese of Nepal the term 'Gorkha' and 'Gorkha Bhasha' were increasingly being used in place of Nepali and Nepali language, respectively. The movement headed by Gorkha National

Liberation Front (GNLF), formed in July 1980, turned into a mass movement of the Nepali Speaking people in the three-hill subdivisions of the District. The primary demand of the agitation were -

- A separate state of Gorkhaland outside the administrative control of West Bengal;
- Abrogation of clause VII of Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950;
- Recognition and inclusion of Nepali language in the eighth schedule of the constitution in India;
- Employment and economic development of the local people and the region respectively.

The period between 1986 and 1988 saw a series of violence and counter violence in the hills of Darjeeling, parts of Terai and Duars of Jalpaiguri District. The agitation was brought down to standstill on the 22nd of August 1988 with the formation of DGHC. The GNLF supreme Mr. Subash Ghising signed a peace agreement in the presence of the then Union Home Minister Mr. Buta Singh and the Chief Minister of West Bengal Mr. Jyoti Basu, promising not to proceed with the agitation for Gorkhaland henceforth. In return Darjeeling hill was granted with Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) consisting of the three hill subdivisions to look after the interest of the hill people with some independent powers. A majority of the local folks were not happy with the decision and put forward their voices against it but their voices were silenced by the iron hands.

The decade of 1990s saw radical changes on the political scenario of Darjeeling District. The DGHC consisted of councilors elected by the people of Darjeeling. This body was granted autonomy to function as an independent body. However, with the passage of time, over-confidence set in among the councilors of Darjeeling. Easy win in Elections ensured the councilors' lethargy to work. Moreover, many councilors were illiterate or uneducated. There was frequent funds mismanagement, corruption and nepotism in this Council.

Thus, the functioning of DGHC became sloth. Development of the area took a back seat. The economic conditions of the local folk became worse from bad over the period of time. Funds earmarked for development projects were

diverted to pay for overheads. Over the years, the situation gained momentum. It is alleged, in spite of the formation of DGHC, Darjeeling is still a neglected region. Development work has failed to yield desired results. In 2001 Subhash Ghishing was attacked on the way from Siliguri to Darjeeling. The general mass of the area say it was nothing but the outburst of the long and widespread discontentment of the hill people against the monopoly of GNLFF under Ghishing. Bandhs have become a regular feature and its effects have begun to reflect on the economy.

Under the circumstances the movement for Gorkhaland re-emerged with the formation of Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha by a dissident GNLFF leader Bimal Gurung in the month of September 2007. The party was officially announced with a public gathering at Chowk Bazar in Darjeeling on the 8th day of October 2007 and the movement for the separate state of Gorkhaland is still going on.

In short, the politics of Darjeeling can be summarized in the following chronological order:

4.12 Chronology of politics of Darjeeling District

- 1907** A memorandum is submitted to the government, on behalf of the hill people, demanding a 'separate administrative unit'.
- 1917** Selected elites of Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali speaking community in Darjeeling, put forward a 'humble memorial from the representatives of the Darjeeling district' to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.
- 1919** Montague Chelmsford Reforms – nomenclature changed from scheduled district, to backward tract.
- 1928** Simon Commission report put forward two alternatives with regard to the Darjeeling District
- Constitutional amalgamation with the rest of the Province (of Bengal)

- Exclusion from Bengal and the placing of the District under the administrative authority of the Government of India; the government of Bengal acting as its agent.

- 1930** A fresh memorandum titled “the humble memorial of the Gorkhas settled and domiciled in British India” is submitted to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State of India. The signatories included, H.P. Pradhan, President of the Hillmen’s Association, N. B. Gurung and P.P. Pradhan, respective secretaries of the Kalimpong and Darjeeling.
- 1934** A fresh memorandum submitted by the Hillmen’s Association entitled “the humble memorial of the Hillmen’s association of the District of Darjeeling in the Province of Bengal”.
- 1935** The status of partially excluded area was given to Darjeeling, & emphasis was laid on its being treated as a Backward Frontier Tract by the British; with a future scope for provincial autonomy.
- 1943** The All India Gorkha League (AIGL) spread to Darjeeling under the aegis of D.S. Gurung became the first party intrinsically comprising of Gorkha people. They put forward the demand for recognition of the Gorkhas as a separate minority community.
- 1947** A representation is made to the Constituent Assembly of India which highlighted the issues of regional self-government and Nepali nationality in Darjeeling and adjacent areas.
- 1947** Ganeshlal Subba and Ratanlal Brahmin (members of the yet undivided CPI) submit a memorandum to the Vice President of the Interim Government for the creation of Gorkhastan- an independent nation. August 15th – Darjeeling becomes a part of independent India and the state of West Bengal

- 1949** After the sudden death of D.S. Gurung, AIGL came under the leadership of Randhir Subba who was unhappy with the inadequate demands made earlier by D.S. Gurung. Subba raises the demand for separate state, within the framework of the Indian Constitution, called Uttarakhand, composed of either of the following territorial distribution;
- Darjeeling district and Sikkim only or
 - Darjeeling district only
 - Darjeeling district, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar
 - Darjeeling district, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Dooars and Coochbehar
- 1950** Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty, guaranteeing hospice to all Reciprocal Nepali citizens and allowing them to avail land and labour rights.
- 1961** Recognition of Nepali as an official language by the Government of West Bengal, within the state by West Bengal Official Language Act of 1961.
- 1968** Subhas Ghising forms the Neelo Jhanda Party. He was earlier a member in the AIGL, but had broken away to form his own party, with a reinforced agenda.
- 1976** The Calcutta Gazette publishes the first official Constitution of an institutional framework for the hill areas named, "The Darjeeling Hill Areas Development Council Act, 1976."
- 1977** The West Bengal legislature passed a resolution requesting the Parliament to amend the Constitution and include Nepali as a scheduled language.
- 1980** Gorkha National Liberation Front, (GNLF) formed under Subash Ghising and with this renewed the demands for Gorkhaland with the following demands:

- A separate state of Gorkhaland outside the administrative control of West Bengal;
- Abrogation of clause VII of Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950;
- Recognition and inclusion of Nepali language in the eighth schedule of the constitution in India;
- Employment and economic development of the local people and the region respectively.

1981 The West Bengal State Assembly resolved in favour of a statutory autonomous authority.

1981 The AIGL submits a memorandum to Zail Singh, the Home Minister, demanding the constitution of a separate state outside West Bengal, to which the creation of Sikkim as the 22nd state added substantial weight.

1981 The Prantiya Parishad (or Pranta Parishad) submits a memorandum to PM Indira Gandhi, demanding the creation of a new state for the Nepali speaking population residing in the Northern part of West Bengal.

1985 CPI (M) comes back to power in Darjeeling; but ineffectual in attaining a constitutional amendment to create the autonomous council for Darjeeling. Anti-outsider Movement triggered in the entire North-east of India. Mizoram, Manipur and Assam force an exodus against the Nepalese residing in these states, as they were deemed as foreigners.

1986 Darjeeling Congress Committee (DCC) recommended Rajiv Gandhi to push for the creation of a separate state to the people of Darjeeling, with dire predictions of “present maladies now fast developing in a wrong direction, should not be viewed as a passing phase”.

1987 The 40 day general strike, also blocking the National Highway NH31A, the only road leading to Sikkim.

- 1988** Mr. Ghising accedes to tripartite talks. Which would ensure greater economic development; educational and land rights; preservation of the socio-cultural and ethnic identity and language. The DGHC was formed to appease the Gorkhas with most of their demands that arose from the threat to their identity and also gave them greater confidence by allowing them to implement their own developmental prospects in the hill districts. Short of granting them statehood, the central and the state government of West Bengal, gave them most rights by according autonomy.
- 1992** Subash Ghising sends a telegram to the PMs of India and Nepal to clarify the implications of Article VIII within the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty regarding the legal status of Darjeeling and its contiguous territory up to the Bangladeshi border. He emphasizes on a precise agreement failing which he threatens to make Darjeeling a no-man's land, owned by the Gorkhas residing there.
- 1992** Nepali (not Gorkhali) included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, along with Konkani and Manipuri. The Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samiti spearheaded this campaign, and for the first time uniting all Nepali speakers flung throughout the country.
- 1994** Supreme Court ruled that the GNLFF's petition on the status of Darjeeling was a 'political issue' within the province of the Parliament.
- 1994** Ghising refuses to allow elections at the Gram and Zilla Panchayats level, claiming that the rise of such grassroots level leaders shall derogate the functions of the DGHC and create dual authority.
- 1999** West Bengal Government and GNLFF decide to review 1988 Accord, as according to GNLFF there were various discrepancies that needed addressing through State and Constitutional amendments. The repeated pleas and bandhs and the approaching elections, forced both Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Subhas Ghising to reconsider the Darjeeling quotient and offer something new to the Gorkha

population. DGHC's title is suggested to be changed to Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council (DGAHC).

- 2005** DGHC (mainly Subhas Ghising) signs an agreement for inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution; with the West Bengal Government represented by Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Government of India, represented by Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil. But, the majority people were against of this.
- 2007** The emergence of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) as a separate party with Bimal Gurung as its chief.
- 2008** Succumbing to the pressure exerted by the political parties and the will of the people of the various Hill communities, the Central government decides to indefinitely postpone matters related to the Sixth Schedule.
- 2009** With the GJM's support, BJP fields Jaswant Singh in the Lok Sabha election from Darjeeling. Jaswant Singh and Sushma Swaraj along with common BJP consensus declared that smaller states like Gorkhaland and Telangana would become a reality if BJP wins the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. BJP loses on the national level, but Jaswant manages to become the MP from Darjeeling.
- 2010** Madan Tamang, the Chief of AIGL hacked to death in broad daylight, allegedly by GJM workers, leading to a spontaneous shutdown in the three Darjeeling hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong.
- 2010** Bimal Gurung tries to placate the tribal of Duars and Terai with the proposal of naming the new state as Gorkha Adivasi Pradesh. This was his final offer to the Tribal while asking them to join the Gorkha demand for statehood.
- 2010** West Bengal government submits the proposal on the Interim Hill Council to the Central Government.
- 2011** The tripartite agreement of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was signed on the 18th of July, 2011 at Pintail Village, Dist. Darjeeling in presence of the Union Home Minister- Shri P.

Chidambaram, West Bengal Chief Minister- Miss Mamta Banerjee and Shri Bimal Gurung, President, GJM (Sources: Moktan, R., 2004; Different dailies; Government Gazette; Internet).

After having discussion on history, economy, polity and society now I am discussing the details of NGOs of the District.

4.13 History and the growth of NGOs in the District

Darjeeling is the northernmost District of the state of West Bengal in India. It is located on the lap of the Himalayas. The District comprises of four subdivisions namely, Darjeeling (Sadar), Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri. Darjeeling Himalaya, strictly speaking, consists only of the first three subdivisions of the district and forms a significant part of Eastern Himalayan System. The fourth subdivision Siliguri is mainly characterised by the Tarai portion and foothills of the District.

The deep-rooted poverty, illiteracy, political disturbances, natural calamities and ignorance in the District have become chronic over the period of time. Besides, the people are living in a very underdeveloped infrastructure. As one may do in many parts of the country, the economic structure cannot be analyzed in the Queen of the Hills merely by observing the towns and roadside developments. A house-to-house survey in the rural villages will reveal the real picture as to how people are struggling for their livelihood. Many villages are without proper transport and communication facilities. There is no proper and easily accessible market facilities in the District for that rural folks have to walk day long to sell their produce and to purchase the necessary items in the nearest market. The situation becomes worse during the rainy season when frequent large-scale landslides which result road blocks, loss of life, property and many more. There are no proper facilities of safe drinking water, educational institutions, primary health centre, power supply etc. With these, since long time there is political turmoil in the District and creating many problems without any solutions.

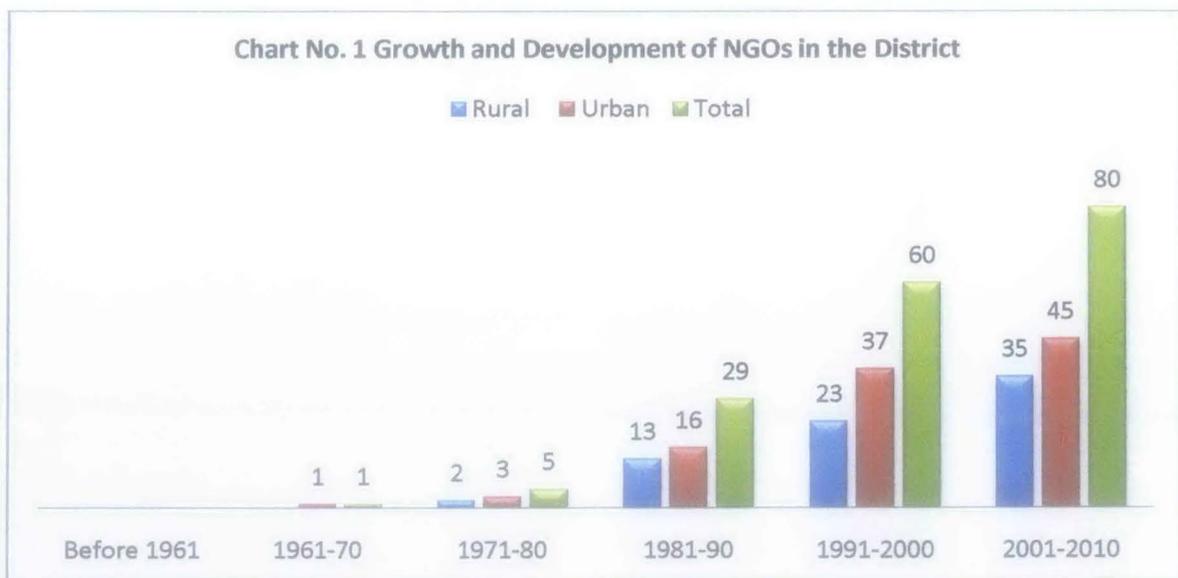
Under the circumstances, Non-Governmental Organisations in Darjeeling District has gained momentum. They have emerged as a viable institutional framework and a well-defined 'third sector' next to government sectors and market enterprises, to serve as a catalyst for development and change. The NGOs in Darjeeling vary widely in terms of size, form, objective, methodology, vision and characteristic.

So, as far as the history of NGOs is concerned there is no perfect and written document about the history of NGOs in Darjeeling District. It is believed that the idea of voluntarism was first introduced by the Christian Missionaries in the District. We can treat Hayden Hall Institute as the first NGO in the District in terms of legal status. Now-a-days there are total 80 registered NGOs working in the District. There are many organisations which are doing their activities voluntarily without any valid registration. The following chart represents the growth and development of NGOs in the District.

Table No. 5.22: Number of NGOs located in the District

Sl. No.	Year of registration	Rural	Urban	Total	Remarks
1	Before 1960	-	-	-	There was no such organisation. Only religious activities were active in the region. The Christian Missionaries they had their centre in the urban areas but were conducted their activities in the rural areas.
2	1961-70	-	1	1	-
3	1971-80	1	2	3	-
4	1981-90	3	6	9	-
5	1991-2000	7	10	17	-
6	2001-2010	13	17	20	-

Source: Responses received from mailed questionnaire



Source: Compiled through the data collected from the mailed questionnaire

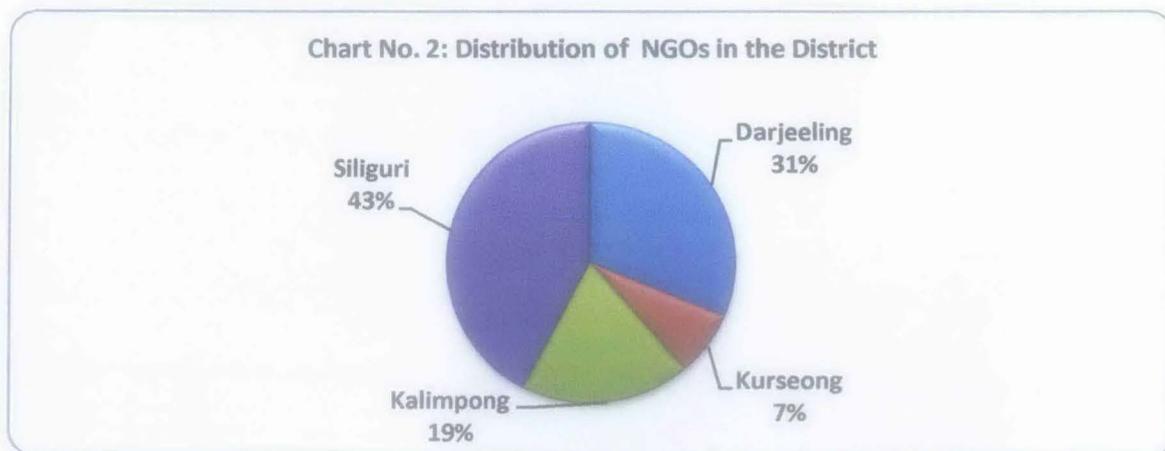
Before 1960 there was no such organisation (in terms of legality) in the District. Only religious activities were active in the regions. The Christian Missionaries had their centre in the urban areas but conducted their activities in the rural areas. They used to visit the remote villages for preaching the religious principles and provide some sorts of help to them. It is clear from the above chart that the numbers of NGOs are increasing day by day. In 1960s the number of NGOs in the District was only one. In 1970s there was considerable increase in the number of NGOs and it was 3 are urban and 2 are rural based. But, during 1980s because of the agitation for Gorkhaland and as a result of unemployment problem NGOs in the District increased at large scale. There were 13 and 16 rural and urban based NGOs in the District respectively. There were 60 NGOs in 1990s, 23 rural and 37 urban based. And in 2001s there are 80 NGOs 35 are rural based and rest 45 are urban based ones.

The distribution of NGOs is not same in different subdivisions of the District. The number NGOs are more in Siliguri subdivision of the District followed by Darjeeling (Sadar) subdivision. In Kalimpong and Kurseong subdivisions the number of NGOs are less in comparison to the others two subdivisions of the District. The following table and chart represents the distribution of NGOs in different subdivisions of the District.

Table No. 23: Distribution NGOs in the District

Sl. No.	Name of the Subdivision	Total No. of NGOs
1	Darjeeling (Sadar)	25
2	Kurseong	06
3	Kalimpong	15
4	Siliguri	34

Source: Responses received from mailed questionnaire



Source: Compiled through the data collected from the mailed questionnaire

The table and chart shows that there are 80 registered NGOs in the District. The concentration of NGOs is large in Siliguri Subdivision (43%) followed by Darjeeling (Sadar) (31%) subdivision. In Kurseong subdivision there are only 6 (7%) NGOs and in Kalimpong Subdivision there are 15 (19%) NGOs as on 31.12.2010.

4.14 Features of NGOs in the District

The NGOs in Darjeeling depicts some features and are outlined below:-

1. There exist some regional variations in terms of the number of organisations and actions. For example, the concentration of NGOs is not same in different subdivisions. The number of large-sized NGOs is few in the District and they are mainly urban based.
2. The large number of NGOs in the District is found in the field of social welfare so far their function is concerned.

3. The flow of funds from national and international levels to the NGO sectors has been increasing over the years and as a result of which, a growing number of developmental NGOs have appeared in the District and are actively participating in various government programmes particularly in the rural development and social welfare programmes.
4. There are many NGOs which are active in the rural areas but have no legal entity or in other words, they are not formally registered under any Act.
5. Some big NGOs (in Size) are religious affinities and sometimes along with social welfare they are preaching religious and moral values too in the District.
6. There has been a growing professionalism and specialization in the NGOs sector. Earlier, one organisation used to perform multiple activities. Nowadays, NGOs in the District are performing more or less specialized and professionalized functions for which they are formed.
7. There are some urban-based registered NGOs in the District and even though they are working in the rural areas, have their offices located in cities and towns.

4.15 Types of NGOs in the District

The types of NGOs in Darjeeling are more diversified, exploratory and evolving. It is very difficult to draw a conclusion by using single parameter to understanding the wide range of NGOs that exist today in the District. Because, the NGOs that exist today in the District are distinguished in terms of their form, size, origin, philosophical, ideological or religious affinities or sources of inspiration, economic strength/ funding, target groups, forms of control and governance, functional diversity, activity, legal status, level of operation etc. They may be grouped on the basis of motives ranging from love of humanity, religious faith, political freedom, welfare of the needy, neglected and destitute, poverty alleviation, development and empowerment of the weaker sections of society, social justice, equity, human rights etc. Nowadays, NGOs are covering a

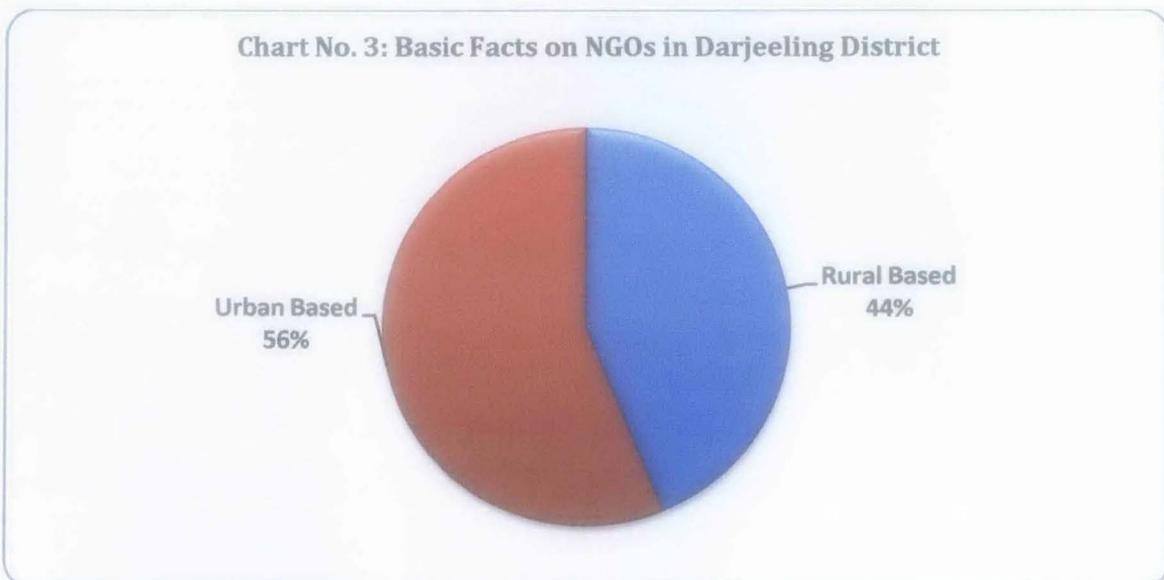
wide spectrum that ranges from small to large organisations, from durable to short lived organisations, from local to national and international NGOs and from weak to strong. After observing all the details of NGOs in the District the present study preferred to group NGOs of Darjeeling District into the following categories i.e. Action Groups, Research and Consultancy Groups, Religions Organisations, Service Organisations, Development Organisations, Sustainable Systems Development Organisations.

There are both urban and rural based NGOs active in the District. The following table and chart depicts the fact of NGOs in the District.

Table No. 24: Basic Facts on NGOs in Darjeeling District

Area of operation	Total
Rural Based	35
Urban Based	45

Source: Responses received from mailed questionnaire



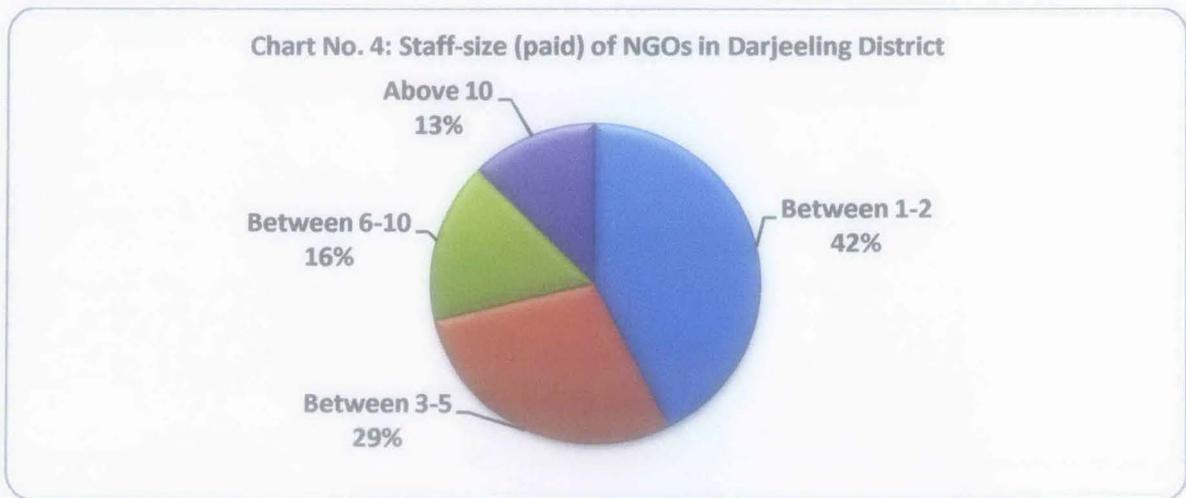
Source: Compiled through the data collected through the mailed questionnaire

The above table and chart shows that 44% NGOs in the District are rural based. The 56% NGOs in the district are urban based.

Table No. 4.25: Staff-size (paid) of NGOs in Darjeeling District

Staff members	No. of NGOs	Total No. of NGOs
Between 1-2	34	N=80
Between 3-5	23	
Between 6-10	13	
Above ten	10	

Source: Responses received from mailed questionnaire



Source: Compiled through the data collected through the mailed questionnaire

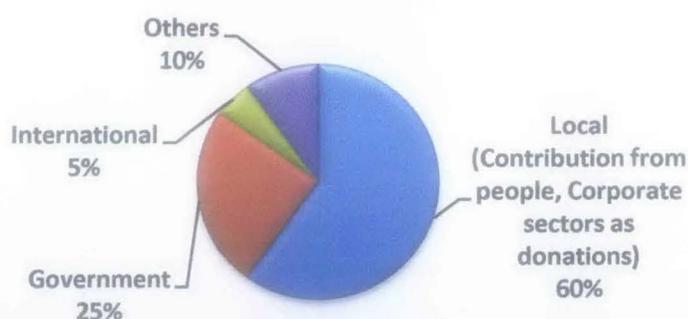
It is clear from the above chart that 34 (42%) NGOs in the District have between one to two paid staff. Only 23 (29%) NGOs are carrying out their activities with 3-5 staff. 13 (16%) NGOs in the District have between 6-10 paid staff members. 10 (13%) NGOs in the District have more than 10 paid staff members.

Table No. 4.26: Sources of Funding in Darjeeling District

Sources	Total
Local (peoples contribution and Corporate Contribution)	48
Government	20
International	4
Others	8

Source: Responses received from mailed questionnaire

Chart No. 5: Sources of Funding in Darjeeling District



Source: Compiled through the data collected through the mailed questionnaire

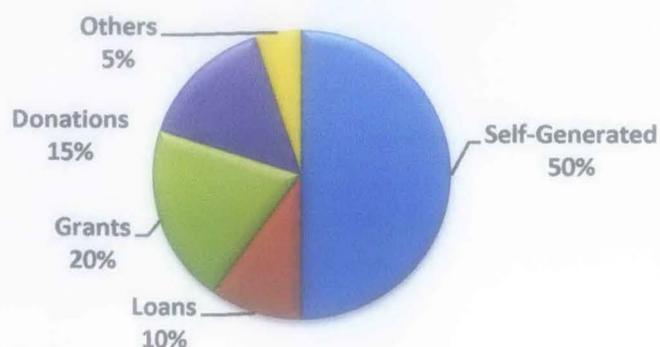
It is very clear from the above chart that 60% fund of the NGOs in the District are coming from the contribution from local people and corporate sectors as donations. The contributions of governmental, international and other sectors are 25% and 5% and 10% respectively.

Table No. 4.27: Types of Funding in Darjeeling District

Types	Total
Self-Generated	40
Loans	8
Grants	16
Donations	12
Others	4

Source: Responses received from mailed questionnaire

Chart No. 6: Types of Funding in Darjeeling District



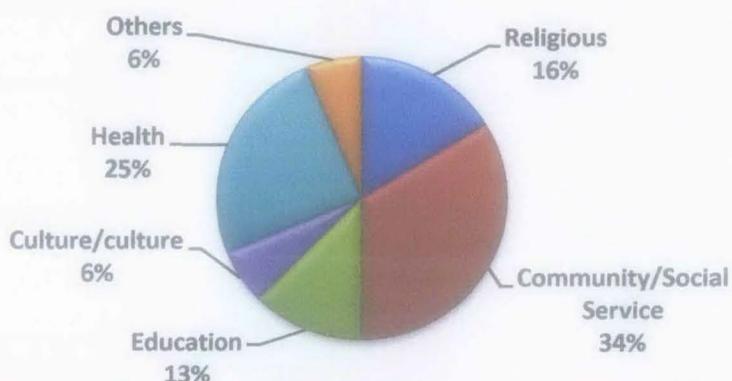
Source: Compiled through the data collected from the mailed questionnaire

In the district 50% fund of the NGOs are self-generated. Loans and grants contribute 10% and 20% respectively. 15% funds are generated from the different sources of donations and 5% from others.

Table No. 4.28: Dominant activities of NGOs in Darjeeling District

Type of Activities	Bases	Total
Religious	13	N=80
Community/Social Service	27	
Education	10	
Sports/Culture	5	
Health	20	
Others	5	

Chart No. 7: Dominant activities of NGOs in Darjeeling District



Source: Compiled through the data collected through the mailed questionnaire

The different activities of NGOs include religious, social service, education, culture/sports, health and so on. In the District 16% NGOs are doing different activities in the field of religion. Social service and educational activities include 34% and 13% respectively. 25% NGOs are carrying out their activities in the health field. Culture/sports and others constitute 6% each.

4.16 Factors responsible for the growth of large number of NGOs in Darjeeling District

There are many factors responsible for the growth of large number of NGOs in the District and they are as follows:

1. At the present time, the number of tea estates has shrunk to about 87 but the average of plantation land has remained constant, exerting additional pressure on the local ecology and economy. Moreover, the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers has caused contamination of rivers/streams and degradation of land (Raina, 1992). As a result many workers are jobless nowadays.
2. The role of tea plantations in sustaining the communities has been declining and the growth population has resulted in increased unemployment in tea gardens.
3. The tea plantations in the Darjeeling District find themselves at the crossroad and the competition among the tea producing countries increasing. The tea price is declining but the cost of production is increasing (Moitra, 1991).

Table No. 4.29: India's Share of Exports in World Market for Tea

Year	Production of Indian Tea (Million Kgs)	Export of Indian Tea (Million Kgs)	Share in World Exports (%)
1960	321	103	36
1970	419	202	31
1980	569	224	26
1986	625	202	22
1990	715	210	N.A.

Source: Neelanjana Mitra (1991)

The table above reveals a clear picture of India's share in the world tea-market. The country's share in the world exports has been deteriorating gradually since 1960 and Darjeeling, being a vital zone producing as well as exporting world-class tea, cannot be an exception.

4. The potential loss of tea gardens is having a direct impact on the people of the area under study. In the event of job uncertainty rural out migration frequently seeing in the District.
5. Because of rural out migration urban area has become over crowded causing ecological hazards by increasing space-shortage, water scarcity

and drainage problems (Sarkar & Lama, 1986). This is another cause for the growth of NGOs in the urban areas of the District.

6. In India no other plantations provides large employment as done by the tea (Duncan, 2002). But with the increasing of population and many other reasons the plantation is no longer able to support the livelihood of the people of the District.
7. In Darjeeling District most of the households obtain their wages and other benefits from plantation work and for most households that forms the only livelihood source. And, since tea workers have no ownership right to the land they occupy, they may not be able to engage in agriculture nor raise livestock to diversify their livelihood sources (Subba, 1984).
8. Large scale unemployment problem is another cause for the development of large number of NGOs in the district.
9. The political problems sometime may hamper the developmental activities of those particular areas. The district is facing the political problem since long time.
10. The Christian Missionaries from the very beginning have been doing their best and carrying out large number of welfare activities in the district. By observing their activities people have the faith in such organisation.
11. Frequent accident and natural calamities because of the topographical or physical structure of the district may be the one cause for the formation of large number of NGOs in the area under study.
12. There are heterogeneous people living in the District. The people of one race trying to protect their customs and traditions. Sometimes this factor also playing a crucial role for the formation of an NGO.
13. There are many private schools in the District. The students come from different parts of the country and also from foreign countries. Sometimes, some parents do not know each and everything about their children. The students, because of frustration, sometime opt wrong

tract and become the victim of drugs addiction and some organisations in the District are carrying out their activities in this particular field.

14. The District is situated in the international border areas. Human trafficking, drug smuggling etc. are the regular phenomena of the areas. There are some organisations which are doing their activities in this particular field.

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