

CHAPTER VIII

THE INTEGRATED OUT LOOK OF THE MARWARIS IN THE DISTRICTS UNDER STUDY

The Marwaris are philanthropic by nature and this rare human quality is one of the chief reasons for success of Marwari entrepreneurship anywhere in India. Their cool-headed and amiable temperament, their power of adaptability and adjustability to any kind of circumstances, environment, whether regional or local, their exceptional sense of conciliation and assimilation - all these traits of their character helped them considerably in doing business in distant and unknown places, far away from their native land.

However, human factors are conditioned, to some extent, by compulsions. The Marwaris are aware that good public relations are a requisite for business transactions and that a rapport with the general public can best be established by making cordial gesture. Their quick adoption of the local language helps them immensely in establishing this rapport. Initially, they used to migrate to a place in search of subsistence alone, keeping their womenfolk at home. So there had always been an identity crisis which they suffered from at the place of migration and to over-

come this crisis they thought it wise to mingle with the local people by participating in local festivals and attending social gatherings of other communities who lived there. Thereby they tried to join the mainstream of the society. At times, this attempt at social merger was perhaps only half-hearted in view of the fact that a sense of uncertainty in business always occupied their minds which were also filled with concern for their families particularly for their womenfolk at their native place. However after they consolidated their position in business, and became acquainted with the new socio-economic environments, they began to live with their families at the places of their migration. At this stage, their relation with the native place was just mental and a matter of formality. Sometimes, it was confined to one or two fugitive visits annually. This long absence from the native land largely increased their affinity to the place and society they migrated to and through long associations with the alien folk, both came nearer to each other and began to imbibe each other's thoughts and customs. This assimilation was spontaneous and came through a give and take process. They brought in their trail their rich culture, customs, social habits, religion and a glorious heritage which came into confrontation with a local or a regional culture, the consequence of which is a synthesis. The policy of toleration is the basis of this synthesis which is still on in a society where the Marwaris migrated and came in close contact with the masses of that society.

There are many instances of such toleration. The Marwaris are now participating in local festivals and social gatherings. Again, people of other communities of the places of Marwari migration are also attending Marwari festivals and religious and marriage ceremonies. And one should not be surprised at the news that marriages between members of the Marwari and other communities are also taking place. These are good examples of social synthesis. At least three cases of inter-communal marriage have come to my knowledge—two solemnized at Cooch Behar and one at Mainaguri. (1)

A few instances of social assimilation between the Marwari and other communities may be cited here. A souvenir of Uttar Banga Sahitya Sammelan, held in Dinajpur states that at the 6th conference of the said Sammelan, the Marwaris showed exemplary enthusiasm by attending it. Having migrated from Marwar, they took Bengal as their own. That is why, now they are sharing largely their weal and woe, hopes and confidence, prosperity and decadence with the Bengalees. The souvenir further states that the Marwari brothers do not always hanker after money. At this platform of literary pursuits, their sincere and spontaneous participation reveals a great truth that, though they are ever favourite sons of Goddess Lakshmi, they are now seriously desirous of having the blessings of Goddess Saraswati. " This is a good sign for the country and this is also a matter to be alluded to with glory at this

little conference." (2) Similar incident of peaceful co-existence between the Marwaris and the Bengalees are also referred to by a reputed educationist of Jalpaiguri in a souvenir that there was a 'Pathsala' at Dinbazar (Jalpaiguri). It was called 'Kainya' School. At the break of the school, the author and all his mates went to the residence of Prabhudayal whose wife fed them 'DahiBada.' The Marwari boys also ate with Childish delight at the residence of his Bengali mates. Then there was no difference between the Bengales and the Marwaris in respect of inter-dinning among them. (3) These are two very good examples of social synthesis between the Marwaris and the Bengalees at Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri.

The systhesis is still taking place. The process is on as is in evidence in different fields of social reforms and welfare, different philanthropic activities, different cultural programmes, establishment of academic institutions, cultural clubs, 'Dharmasalas', publication of magazines or Patrikas, little magazines, even newspapers and participation in politics, both local and national. However, Marwari charity began at home. Initially, those Marwaris who migrated first this region and settled here, encouraged the migration of other members of their families whom they left behind in their original homeland. After all members of their families had fully settled in business here, they thought of helping the neighbours of their native place. They extended readily a helping hand to

their neighbours who also came here in search of livelihood. The new comers were not only provided with free food and lodging at their 'Gadis' or 'Basas' by the fore-runners, but also with a minimum sort of business occupation by which a Marwari might start his career here. Sometimes, even the fund and space for setting up a business were provided by their senior counterparts. Sometimes again, temporary employment would also be offered to the late-comers.

The Marwaris migrated from time to time to the three districts of North Bengal under study, i.e., Cooch Behar Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling and played the same role, as they did elsewhere, as the pioneers of missionary activities, besides their economic ventures. Let us first take the case of Cooch Behar. Here, the relations between the Marwaris and other communities, particularly the Rajbansis and Bengalee are mainly determined by two factors — (1) the historic matrimonial relations between the Koch - Raj family and the Rajput families ; and (II) the spirit of toleration between a reformed and semi - Hinduised population. In 1596, Prabhabati Devi, a sister of Majaraja Lakshminarayan of the Cooch Behar Raj was given in marriage to Ambarraj Mansingh, a Rajput by caste. (4) Again in 1940, the Maharaja of Jaipur married Gayatri Debi, the second sister of Cooch Behar Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. Both marriages were solemnised according to Hindu rituals. (5) Secondly apart from the Saroigi and Oswal sects of the marwari community, all other sects are

semi - Hinduised. So there cannot be any bar for the Marwaris and the Hindus to attending and participating in each other's social gatherings like marriage ceremonies, funerals, Holis, Rakhibandhans and religious festivals like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Diwali and so on.

The earliest sign of the Marwaris' concern about social welfare in the district was manifested in the foundation of a 'Dharmasala'. It was founded by Idan Oswal and opened by the Cooch Behar Maharaja Nripendra Narayan on 8th May, 1889. It was named after its founder and came to be known as 'Idan Panthasala'. A contemporary administrative report has this to say about this Panthasala : " There are travellers who do like to accept alms and come to the Dharmasala, But who still want to place where they can pass the night ; for such people this house will be very useful ". (6)

In this district, the Marwaris patronised education and in this field a great role had been played by Giridhari Baid, a member of the famous Marwari Firm known as the Chhoto-kuthi. He was a patron of learning and one of the founding members of the present Rambhola High School. He used to make regular donations to this School. His love for education helped him to be an elected member of the Cooch Behar Hitaishini Sabha which was founded under the auspices of the Cooch Behar Maharaja. The next generation of the Baid family founded a Hindu High School at Cooch

Behar town. Again, the entire land on which the present Cooch Behar College now stands belonged to this famous Kuthi. (7) Another Marwari family, associated with the advancement of education in the district, was the Lakhotia family whose first member Nathmal Lakhotia, founded two schools at Sonapur and two at Pundibari to commemorate the greatness of his forefathers. Mr. Lakhotia came to Cooch Behar in the 1890s. (8) So also, Srichand, Shovanlal and Dhanraj Chhagmal founded the Soni Devi girls' High School at Dinhat in memory of their beloved mother Soni Devi in 1944. (9) Several Hindi Primary Schools of the district are presently being run by Marwari managements (10) Sometimes when a Marwari could not bear the entire cost of founding a school, he gave donations to the school fund, e.g., Babu Joharmal Oswal, a rich Marwari merchant and a jotedar of Mekhligunj, promised to pay Rs. 5/- a month as subscription to the school fund of the Mekhligunj Sub-Divisional School. (11) Accordingly, Mr. Oswal paid his subscription of Rs. 5/- per month to the said school fund. (12)

In politics the Marwaris also did not lag behind in the Cooch Behar District. They are now taking part in the active local politics. In this context mention may be made of the Bhadani family of Mathabhanga. Babu Sobhanlal Bhadani was a member of Mathabhanga Town Committee. Mr. Bhadani is now an active left front leader of Mathabhanga Sub-division. (13) Likewise, Babu Hazarimall Bagri was a

member of the Board of the Town Committee of Haldibari during the period 1931-32. (14) In the Cooch Behar Municipal Election, the brother of Motilal Lakhotia took part. (15) Similar trends of Participation in politics by the Marwaris are now noticed in all the Sub-divisional towns of the District. Other kinds of humanitarian work done by a few Marwaris included giving donations to St. John's Ambulance, and different religious institutions and relief work for refugees coming from erstwhile east Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after independence. They were given both food and shelter. Donations were also made by the Marwaris to various cultural and sporting clubs. The total land for the construction of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan club was donated by a famous Marwari family of Cooch Behar town. This family also gifted some land to the Ramkrishna Ashram and also to Vinoba Bhave who launched the 'Bhoodan Movement'. (16)

The interaction between the Marwari culture and other community cultures through long associations have brought about a significant change in the Marwari orthodox culture, religious practices and social habits or customs. The spread of education among the Marwaris and their contacts with different communities, castes, social practices or customs, and religions rituals have largely contributed to broaden their outlook. Their rigid social and religious customs, traditions and habits are now on the brink of slackness. The practices of inter dining, inter

caste marriage, ^{even} inter community marriage and widow remarriage are knocking heavily and repeatedly at the door of Marwari conservatism. The dowry system, practice of vegetarianism, divorce, etc. are now on their last legs. Marwari children are exchanging 'Rakhi Bandhan' with other community mates. Bengalee girls are wearing clothes and garments in Rajasthani fashions and using 'Mahendi' on their palms. Marwari girls are also initiating Bengali styles and fashions in their dress, etiquettes, food habits, etc. The Marwaris are now well conversant with the local languages or rather local colloquial languages. Thus they have partly submerged their culture in the mainstream culture of the district under review.

In the district of jalpaiguri, the Marwari mission of philanthropic activities was much more extensive than in Cooch Behar. Here the missionary work included the spread of education, town building, construction of Dharmasalas, donations made to various social welfare Institutions, formation of Marwari Panchayets, sporting and cultural clubs, organisation of relief committees, publication of magazines, participation in both national and local politics, and so on.

In 1923, the Marwari Seva Samity took the initiative in founding a Balika Pathsala at Dinbazar. Later it came to be known as the " Kainya School ". Matilal Sharma was its teacher ; this pathsala imparted education till 1936. Its

fund of Rs. 2313.75 is still lying deposited in the custody of local 'Gosala'.(17) In 1946, the Marwari Boys School was founded on the land of Dhana Singji at the town with financial assistance from Rameswar Das Singhanian. (18)A library for the supply of text and reference books to the students was established in 1930 in a rent free compartment in the town provided by Rameswar Das Singhanian. (19) In 1956, another library named " Asoka Pustakalaya " was also founded at the town under the Marwari management. (20)

In town building, the contributions of the Marwaris were not less significant. According to available records, one Fatehchand Marwari constructed the first brick - built house in the Duars of Jalpaiguri. (21) After the formation of the district in 1869, the importance of Jalpaiguri as a commercial centre grew largely. So the native and foreign merchants began to crowd in the district. They badly needed food and lodging and to fulfil this need, at least three Dharmasalas were constructed in the town by the Marwaris as they thought that this would increase business transactions in the district. The first one was established at the Saodagar Patty (Dinbazar) in 1907. In 1912, it was converted into a 'Go sala'. In 1910 another Dharmasala, 'Saha Dharmasala' was founded by mansukh Roy Saha, father of Kisorilal at Dinbazar. And at a much later period, i.e., in 1941 Lachhmi Narayan Chaodhury, father of Niranjana choudhury, built, the "Chaodhury Dharmasala" at

Dinbazar. (22) In 1928, a branch Ashram of Belur Ram Krishna Mission was opened by Swami Bimalananda at Jalpaiguri. A reputed merchant family of the town, the Daga family, donated land in the race-course area on which the foundation stone of the Ashram was laid and the Ashram started functioning to serve the people. At a later period, a " Matrimangal Pratisthan " grew with the financial donation of a magnanimous Marwari merchant of the town.

(23) In 1923, at the southern end of the district town, Shri Ram Krishna Ashram was constructed. Dulichand Mahesree and Ramananda Daga donated both land and money to this Ashram. Duli chand Mahesree donated 6 bighas and 12 Kathas of land. (24) Electricity is an indispensable factor in town-building. So its necessity was badly felt. At the time of formation of the Jalpaiguri Electric supply company, the Daga family of Jalpaiguri donated a large amount of money to the company for constructing the power house. It was named "Mohan lal Ramchandra Daga Power house" later on. For the construction of Jalpaiguri Sadar Hospital, Kanairam Agarwal and his family gave non refundable financial assistance. In the 40s of the present century, two prominent businessmen of Jalpaiguri Town opened 'Naba Jeevan Bima Company' in the Arya building, located by the side of Kotwali police station. (25) Besides, their efforts in town building are worthy of mention.

The Marwaris were like foreign immigrants in Jalpaiguri.

Naturally they felt the necessity to live with a separate identity of their own community on a foreign land by forming associations or Panchayets. But in the primary phase of their migration here, their presence was negligible and in view of this fact, the formation of Marwari Panchayets was hardly possible. But in the last half of the 19th century, when communications and a transport system were largely developed, particularly after the opening up of the railways, the number of Marwari migrants in the district largely increased. This created a favourable atmosphere for forming associations or Panchayets. Thus the 'Marwari Panchayet' came into existence in the town and the persons who projected and executed the whole plan into reality were S. Dulichand Daga, Sardarmal and Jeevanram Gohalyan and Rameswardas Singhanian, the motto of this Panchayet being the general uplift of their community in the district. (26) In 1922, Marwari Seva Samity was born. Its secretary was Chhagmal Khadoria and the Samity aimed at helping the distressed and supplying drinking water at the railway stations. In 1923, the 'Agarwal Sabha' was established and its chief architects were Prahlad Roy Kshetriwal, Mushdi Lal, Jibanram, Rameswardas Singhanian, Prahladchand Sahu, Bajrang Gupta and Kaluram Kithania. The Sabha intended mainly to stop child marriage and to help the widows. This Sabha celebrated the 108th birth Anniversary of Maharaj Sree Sree Agra Sen with much enthusiasm and gaiety. The "Marwari Sangha" was established at the town in 1930 in order to organise social reforms.

The Samgha stood against social evils like Communalism, superstition, Child and old age marriages, Pardah system, taking meals at funeral party, etc. and this movement was led by Tansukh Roy Mahesree, Bajrang Gupta, Fateh Chand Gupta, Jamuna lal Chaodhury and Ram Chandra Chachan. In or around 1936, Niranjana Lal Sharma established "Marwari Dramatic Club". Similar clubs such as Marwari yogas' club and "Bharatiya Natya Parishad" sprang up in the town in 1938 and in 1954 respectively. The former staged many dramas at Darjeeling, Siliguri and other adjoining places and got applause for dramaturgy. Madan Lal Lakhotia led the 'Natya Parishad'. The Marwari Yoga Association was formed in 1940 and the enthusiastic personalities who graced this association were Ramdayal Singh, Ramchandraji, Raghunath Singha, Gaurisankar Kalyani, Motilal Mahesree, Kisorilal, Sukhdev Prasad Agarwal and Brijlalji. This Association was intended to practise eloquence, debate, games and sports, etc.. With similar motives, the 'Marwari sporting club came into existence in 1941. The club won renown by sending volunteers to the 'Marwari Sammelan' held in 1941 at the town. The notable members of this club were Fulchand Singhania, Prahladchand Chaodhury, Mongal Chand Bajaj, Matadin Kidhania and Jadu prosad Rajgaria.

(27) On 15th August, 1947, "Adarsha Sudhar Samity" was founded. The famous cloth merchant Babulal Kondai was the heart of the Samity. Other members, associated with it were Bhadarmal Chaodhury, Gajananda Nakipuria, Madan Lal Kondai and Babulal Sharma. It was dead against various

social evils like the Pardah system, child marriage, etc. and supported child widow remarriage. Its members also distributed milk of Gosala. (28)

The establishment of the Marwari relief Committee in 1947 was another landmark in the history of Marwari initiative and enterprise in the sphere of social welfare in the district. Babu Dwip Chand Nahata was its chief patroniser and other members were Tamsukh Ray Mahasree, Fateh Chand Kalyani and Ganesh Prasad Sitani. The chief object of this Committee was to help the refugees coming from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after partition of the Country. At that time, the committee really served the refugees by providing food and shelter to them. (29) According to another source, the relief committee fed the unfed and clothed the unclothed and the whole management was done by Ganesh Prasad Agarwal, Babulal Sharma, Maturam Singh, Ram Chandra Dhangga. They formed a 'Sevadal. This Committee opened a Service Centre at Alipurduar Rly Station and for a long time served the distressed. It also made quick arrangements for their rehabilitation. On 12-13 June, 1950, the Town of Jalpaiguri was inundated by a devastating flood. The relief Committee at once came forward to distribute relief materials. Again in 1962, when an anti Bengalee movement started in Assam and thousand of distressed and oppressed people rushed into the Jalpaiguri town, the Marwari Relief Committee swung into action.

Relief camps were opened at Falakata, Angrabhasha, Madhavdanga, ,Maynaguri, Mal, Jayanti, Alipurduar, and so on.

(30) In this context, it should be kept in mind that a Marwari Committee of a similar kind had been formed at Jalpaiguri during world was II. That Committee was known as the Marwari Relief Society. In 1939, World War II created an artificial famine in East Bengal. So innumerable unfed and famished people crowded into Jalpaiguri from Neelfamari, Domar, Debiganj in Rangpur. Some workers and the Marwari Relief Society opened a 'langarkhana' (community feeding centre) in Bhatia building and Patgola for supplying food to them regularly. (31)

To keep Marwari humanitarian work going three more 'samities' (societies) such as the Marwari Balak Samity, Marwari Mitra Samity and Samalochana Samity were set up in the town in 1947, in 1954 and 1955 respectively. The Samalochana Samity was connected with debate, lecture, publication of a monthly magazine, etc. Chiranjilal Chaodhury, Nanda Kishore Sharma, Harish Chandra Chaodhury and Gopal Mahasree were the chief patrons of this Samity. This samity published a written magazine, named "Renu", under the editorship of Mahavir Chachan. Shri Gopal Mahasree edited "Pratap" and shri Rajmangal Pandey edied "Ashoka". Ashoka was a monthly Patrika (magazine) published from Jalpaiguri. Those who were connected with this patrika were Shri Harish Chandra Chaodhury, Shambarmal and Kejriwal. A Hindu weekly, named "Pathik", was also

published from its head office at Jalpaiguri and from its branch office at Kalimpong. Its editor was Chiranjilal Chaodhury and the co-editors were Shri Harish Chaodhry and Shri Arjun Agarwal. Its manager was Nanda Lal Sitani. (32)

The Marwaris in the district also did not keep themselves aloof from the political turmoil of those days. Many of them joined the national movement launched by the Indian National Congress. A Branch office of the Indian National Congress was opened for the first time in the town in 1893. (according to another source, in 1920-21). (33) The Marwari community at once took part in the various programmes launched by the district congress. On 13th March, 1927 Shri Tansukhlal Mahesree was one of the members of the Congress executive Committee. (34) When at the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi, the movement of rejection of foreign goods and acceptance of 'Khadi' garments made by spinning wheels throughout the country was in full swing, many Khadi Bhanders in the district town were opened. It goes without saying that many of the " Khadi Bhanders " were under Marwari Managements. (35) At that time Sheudeo Sharma was the chief representative of " Bideshi Bastra Bahiskar Samity. " (36) In 1885, the Jalpaiguri Municipality was formed. In 1931, two Marwari members of the Municipality were Indraajmal Agarwal and Ramdin Daga. (37) In June, 1931, two elected members of the executive samity of the District Congress Committee were Badrinarayan Daga and Sheudeo Sharma. (38) In June,

1933, the Harijan Sevak Samity was formed under the auspices of the municipality. Shri Ramdin Daga was the nominated member of this Samity. (39) In the same year, a branch of the Arya Samaj was opened in the town and Shri Ramdin Daga was elected president of the Executive Committee of this Samaj. However, members of other communities such as Bengalees, Hindusthanis, etc. also became members of this Samaj. (40) In 1942, the conference of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha was held at Jalpaiguri. The venue of this Mahasabha was the local Arya Natya Samaj. Shri Padam Raj Jain delivered a speech at this conference. The Hindu Mahasabha was formed in 1940. (41) After the "quit India" movement spread to Jalpaiguri in 1942, burning of foreign garments became one of the programmes of the district congress. Shri Satyanarayan Kanodia, who is now a notable Marwari merchant in the district town, actively participated in this programme (42). Shri Naren Daga a reputed merchant of Alipurduar also took part in the "quit India" movement in his locality. He along with his co-worker Jagannath Biswas dismantled the telephone wires at Falakata. Sometimes, meetings of the district Congress were held at his residence. (43) Naren Daga was one of the celebrated men of the district. To commemorate his name, a prize worth Rs. 750 and a Silver medal are awarded to the top students of the district every year. The award is named after Naren Daga and is called "Naren Daga Memorial Award". (44)

The Marwari participation in various kinds of cultural activities, their contribution to social welfare and humanitarian work, and their role in the spread of education have had a definite impact on socio economic and political fields. All these activities have gradually shaken the orthodox and conservative outlook of the Marwari Community in the district. The spread of education among their children have raised the iron curtain from their vision which began to be more and more progressive. They began to free themselves from the shakles of conservatism and began to interact with members of other communities spontaneously.

Marwari children began to go to School in increasing number. This tendency is authenticated with appropriate statistics furnished by the "Samalachona Samity". According to this Samity, in 1951, the number of Marwari Students, who passed Matriculation Examination and above, was 0.72 percent. This figure increased upto 1.77 percent in 1961. For gauging the importance of this increase, a comparison of the rate of proportion with that of the all India percentage could be shown here. In 1958, the rate of literacy in India was 18.75 percent. In Bengal, it was 26.33 percent while in Rajasthan, the original homeland of Marwaris , it was 9.14 percent. Likewise, in the same year the rate of students, passing the Matriculation Examination or above was 0.95 percent in India, 2.97 percent

in Bengal and 0.10 percent in Rajasthan. So in comparison with these figures in India, in Bengal and in Rajasthan the figure of Jalpaiguri is revealing and may be of some interest.

We can further substantiate this case with the help of another set of statistics. On 30th June, 1960, the total Marwari Population in Jalpaiguri was 3,954 (Male 2,233 and female 1,721) of which 34 were matriculates, 20 had passed the intermediate examination, 6 were graduates, 8 had studied up to the post graduate standard (without passing the final examination) and 2 were post graduates who had passed the final examination, total number being 70 on 1st August, 1960. (45)

The spread of education brought forth some highly educated persons in the district. Babu Kisori lal Mahesree was the first commerce graduate passing the final examination in 1901. Babu Bhagawan Das Daga, son of the late Ram Chandra Daga, was another graduate of this district. The late Sitaram Kalyani was the first M.A.B.L. degree-holder. He started his Law Practice at Jalpaiguri court. He later joined the Tea industry and became a member of the executive Committee of the Indian Tea Planter s' Association. In 1976, Ashoke Kumar Agarwal, son of Sagar-mal Agarwal, passed the M.Com examination from the North Bengal University with a first class first in ranking. This is, indeed, a great achievement. Those who became

chartered Accountants were Rajendra Kumar Singhi, Sntosh Kumar Singhi, Narendra Behani and so on. To become a chartered accountant is a rare success which these persons achieved. International fame was ^{attained} by the great son of the late Dwip Chand Agarwal, Dr. Ramgopal Agarwal, who ^{attained} the glory of becoming an economist of the World Bank. This is, indeed, a rare achievement which the Marwaris as well as other communities of the district are proud of. (46)

The population composition in the district of Darjeeling looks like a multi coloured mosaic with Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Nepalis, Bhutias, Lepchas, Tibetans, Anglo Indians, Europeans, Punjabis, Hindusthanis and obviously Marwaris. Perhaps in no another districts of West Bengal, such a picturesque combination of so many ethnic and linguistic groups of people could be found. (47) Since this was the demographic picture of the district, the interactions between ^{the} Marwaris and other ethnic and linguistic groups of people was inevitable. And since the Marwari population in this district is by far the largest among the three districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, the interactions in this district had been greater than in other two districts.

In the town building and urbanisation of the Terai, the Marwaris played a great role. In 1887, Siliguri Hat came within the jurisdiction of Darjeeling Improvement Fund. At

this, the importance of Siliguri increased largely. So the Marwaris constructed a few buildings here. In 1907, Siliguri was recognised as a Sub-division. So a few other shops were again constructed at the present Hat and adjoining places of Mahabiristhan by a few Marwaris. The first hardware shop, opened here was that of Balchand Tejmal. (48) In 1935, the Union Board was formed at Siliguri and among its 8 members, two were marwaris named Hanuman Prasad and Shewmongal Sharma. (49) In 1939-40, the then S.D.O of Siliguri, Shri Sishir Gupta, convened a public meeting to consider the feasibility of formation of the Siliguri Municipality. Representatives of all communities like Beharis, Pubjabis, Jotedars, and Marwaris were invited to attend this meeting. However, the anti municipality institution was the Union Board, the president of which was Geogre Mebert and three Marwaris joined hands with Mr. Mebart. They were Mangtaram Agarwal, Shri Ramlal and Hanuman Prasad. In 1949, the Siliguri Municipality was atlast formed and the two bonafid^{de} Marwari members were Shri Mantulal Agarwal and Shri Bindeswari Michhir. (50) Shri Manturam Agarwal was a Philanthropist. He donated 15/16 bighas of land to the Ramkrishna Vedanta Math at the bank of the Mahananda. Later on, a Dharmasala and a Gymnasium were built here, leading to more people coming to the area and the formation of a locality. (51) The present New market constructed at Siliguri is also an outcome of Marwari enterprise. (52) However, the greatest achievement of siliguri town plan-

ning and urbanisation was the construction of the Kunchan-
junga Stadium by utilising a fund provided by the Federa-
tion of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of North Bengal
(FOCIN). A gate of this stadium is named after this great
Merchants' Association. The bulk of the members of this
Association are Marwaris. (53)

In the realm of education too, their contributions are
praiseworthy. In 1935, there was only one Hindi Madhyamik
School-Siliguri Hindi High School. A primary section was
attached to it. Later on, this School was converted into a
Higher Secondary School. Now at Siliguri, there are one
Hindi-Medium Higher Secondary School, two Hindi-Medium
Girls' High School, two Hindi Junior High School and a few
Hindi Primary Schools. There is also a Girls' College
where the IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University)
syllabus is taught. (54) Needless to say, all these
Schools were mainly established by the Marwaris and other
Hindi-Speaking Communities. However, the Marwaris also
took part in establishing Bengali and English-medium
Schools. In 1929, a Girls College was founded at the
premises of the Local Kalibari. Initiatives for building
this college were taken by Shri Hanuman Prasad, Shri Sohan
lal Agarwal, etc. apart from, by the other intellectuals
of Siliguri. Shri Meghraj Brahman and Shri Hanuman Prasad
were elected members of the Managing Committee of that
College. (55) In Feb., 1949, Terai Adarsha Vidyalaya
held classes for the first 6 months in a jute godown at

Babupara. The site of this School was transferred again and again and at last it was built on a land measuring 16 bighas, purchased from the Kairi Jotedars of Deshbandhupara at a price of Rs. 10,000. The kairi babus themselves donated Rs. 10,000 to the School fund. In 1953, this school was converted into a Higher Secondary School. The marwaris along with others made generous donations to this Schools time to time (56) An English-Medium School was founded at Pradhan Nagar By an 'Indian Padri' with the assistance of Kulcha Brothers and Shri Piarilal. Many merchants and industrialists donated liberally a total sum of more than one lakh rupees. But at one time, this school faced a cricis. A managing committee was formed to save this School from impending closure. Two Marwari members of this Committee were Sri Piarilal Agarwal and Fulchand Agarwal. A few Marwari students were then admitted to this School. But after a few years, this school was shifted to a place owned by Manturam Agarwal, at the Bank of the Mahananda and the School was named Margarate School. (57) After Independence, another School Nilnalini Vidya-mandir was established at Siliguri. The Marwari financial assistance was as usual available to this School (58) Books are the medium of learning in School. So, side by side with the establishment of many schools, the Marwaris felt badly the need for libraries for both text and reference books. Accordingly, in 1935, " Sri Hindi Pustakalaya " was opened in the Hindi High School on manturam Road. Later, it was shifted to a first floor compartment

of the "Mahabir Temple" at Mahabirasthan. (59)

In the socio-cultural arena of the Terai-Darjeeling, Marwari talent is manifest in the publication of many progressive magazines, journals, souvenirs and even newspapers. The Hindi dailies, published from Siliguri, are the 'Janapath Samachar' and the 'Purbanchal Bharat Darpan.' Its editor was Mangtaram Chaudhry. Two weekly newspapers published from here are the 'Purbanchal' and the 'Samadhan Varta'. However, the 'Samadhan Varta' is no more published. Its editor was Lakshminarayan Sharma and it was issued for the first time in 1957 and then in 1981 after a long gap. Another magazine of highly literary taste published from Siliguri since 1984 under the editorship of Dr. Veekhi prosad was 'Naya Akash'. This magazine made an assimilation of the Bengali and the Hindi literatures. It was published in 5 series - Bengali literature, Rabindra literature, Little story, Modern poem, and Geet Gazal series. Writers from various states of India would contribute articles and poems to these series. The hindi versions of the stories and poems written by the modern writers and poets of Bengal were frequently published in this 'Patrika' (magazine).

Apart from these newspapers and magazines, there are many other magazines (mostly little magazines), journals, souvenirs, and periodicals which are also published under Marwari patronage. In 1960, Shri Kamakhya Goyal and Shri

Balakrishna Dhanuka jointly published a quarterly 'patrika'- 'Nabagata'. Only three issues of this Patrika were published. During the same period 'Siliguri Samachar'- a weekly was published under the editorship of Sri Rajendra Baid. In 1967, another monthly 'Patrika'- 'Binimaya' was brought out. Its editor was Dr. Gopal Mahesee and co-editors were Shri Debi Prasad Pandey and Shri Shib Prasad Chattopadhyaya. Both the local and non-local writers would send contributions to it. It had several columns such as 'Sthania Sahayoga', 'Bishes Sahayoga' 'Adan-Prodan' etc. Among the local writers, the notable, were Ashrukummar Sikdar, Mahendra Singh, Mayasankar Pandey, Ramnaresh Sukla, Prabhakar Mishra, Veekhi Prasad, Birendra Jeevan Singh Kapoor, Harish Chaudhury, Shekhar and Debesh and among the alien writers, the notables were Bhagirath Bhargav, Dr. Rama Singh, Birendra Mishra, Nanda Chaturbedi, Jugmandir Tayal, Sudha Gupta, Chetan Parasar, Bishanswarup and Bimalesh. After publication of a few issues, it was named 'Anam'. This 'Patrika' exemplifies a sort of cultural synthesis among the various communities, living in Siliguri and thus it assumes a cosmopolitan character. 'Pabas' was the Hindi magazine, edited by Saonwarmal Nemani and Published by the 'Hindi Seva Sangha' in the 1960s. Its first issue was formally put into circulation by the famous Hindi writer Seth Govinda Das. In 1974, a souvenir was published by Ram Niranjana Goyal and Saonwarmal Nemani under the authorship of 'Khalpara Yubak Parishad'. In the same year was published 'Naya Sabera'.

Its editor was Sudarshan Gupta and its publisher Rabindra Kumar. 'Banga Maitra' was a little magazine, published by Sushil Kumar Goyal, edited by Om Prakash Agarwal and managed by Mahesh Kumar Sahu. A few other little magazines published from Siliguri are 'Dhuan' (1988), 'Samachar Pratap' (1988) and 'Naba Jagaran'. Mukunda Behari Pandey was the editor of 'Dhuan' and 'Samachar Prapat'.

In the 1980s, a great wave of cultural awakening swept the minds of residents of Siliguri. During this period, many cultural and sporting clubs or associations came into existence. However, many associations had come into existence before the 1980s. In 1952, the 'Hindi Natya Parishad' was formed at Siliguri. It staged a Hindi Drama named 'Veer Abhimanyu'. In 1953, the 'Naba Yubak Mondal' was formed. Apart from staging three dramas, it arranged a few indoor games. In 1954, 'Bhatri Sadan' came into being. The various cultural programmes undertaken by these association were (1) Staging of Dramas, (2) Participation in a Drama Competition by the Government of West Bengal, (3) arrangement of eye-operation camps, (4) Participation in a football tournament opened by Y.M.A, (5) formation of Badminton and Volly Ball teams, (6) opening of an Ayurvedic Charitable dispensary, (7) Celebration of the birth anniversaries of savants and eminent persons, (8) Conducting music competitions, (9) establishment of libraries, and so on. At the time of the then Prime-minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru's stop over at Bagdogra Airport,

this association was required by the district administration to set up a stage for a meeting to be held there. In 1976, 'Sanskriti Parishad' was established. However, its blue print was chalked out a few years back at the residence of Sri Harish Chandra Singhal and its other associates were Sri Jagadamba Sukla, Satyen Banerjee, and some others. But this Parishad remained defunct for several years. Later on, Shri Gopal Mahesree, Kamakhya Goyal, Saonwarmal Nemani, Satyen Banerjee revived this association and conducted various cultural programmes such as arrangement for monthly literary gatherings, cultural functions, get-together of poets, staging dramas, story-writing competitions, etc. Renowned poets like Niroj Omprakash Aditya, Madhup Pandeyo, Bimalesh Rajasthani, Govinda Bash, Bed prakash Suman, Anjum Rahabar, Narendra Mishra, Kiran Bharati graced its literary and poets' gatherings. A few famous drama clubs of Calcutta like 'Arohi,' 'Rangakarmi', 'Swar-Lahari', 'Panchabati' and 'Saurav' staged their dramas under its patronage. Famous artistes of devotional songs Shri Hariom Saran and Mrs. Nandini Saran, famous Dancer Amita Dutta put up their respective performances at functions organised by this association. But the greatest achievement of this parishad was to hold a gatherings of different languages, castes and communities to exchange and share each other's thoughts, philosophies, ideas and cultures. What a classic example of socio cultural unity, the 'Sanskriti Parishad' has fostered in Siliguri, a cosmopolitan city. In 1980,

'Uttar Banga Hindi Prachar Samity' was constituted. It held a few functions off and on. In 1982-83, "Hindu Yuba Sangathan" was formed. Its founding members were satyendra Arya, Sanjoy Golchha and Rajesh Jain. It published an annual magazine "Yuba chetana" by name. It had a library at Janjodia market. In 1985, this organisation broke up and was revived as 'Yuba Yagriti Samgha'. Its annual magazine was also renamed 'Naba Chetana'. 'Mahesree Yuba Samstha' came into existence in the same year and its publication was 'Nabaranga'. 'Jaysawal - Biahut Yuba Parishad' was formed in 1989. Its annual publication was 'Rashmi' edited by Rakesh Jaisawal. Another organisation was 'Uttar Banga Bhogpuri Parishad'. However its activities are not noteworthy. But 'Sanskritik yubak Sangha' is an organisation of recent origin with its souvenir 'Sanskritik Chatana' edited by Karan Sing Jain. Another such organisation is "Skylark" which has to its credit the publication of a souvenir, named 'Odan'. 'protyush' was a literary organisation founded in 1985. Hindi Vidyalaya Siksha Samgha, founded at Jalpaiguri in 1981, opened its branch office at Siliguri. Siliguri Arya Samaj is also a cultural foundation which holds cultural functions. (61)

What should be kept in mind, is that these, Samghas, clubs and organisations or associations were all non-political bodies which were mainly aimed at holding cultural functions arranging various tournaments, publishing souvenirs, journals, magazines, etc., and constituting a common

platform where people of all communities, castes, races and linguistic groups could gather and thereby to exchange and share each others' thoughts, customs, cultures, and heritages. That this was so also revealed by the fact that the members of these Samghas and associations were not only Marwaris but also men of other communities living in the district. Again, participation in the various functions and programmes arranged by the Marwari associations by people of all communities also highlights the cosmopolitan character of these functions. A classic example of socio-cultural assimilation could be cited here. In January 1941, a great fair was organised in the big field of Khalpara which then belonged to Shri Manturam Agarwal. Shri Agarwal gave fraternal permission to hold this fair on his land. Not only that, the executive heads of the 'Mela' Committee were well known Marwaris like Shri Manturam Agarwal, Shri Kajarilal Agarwal, Shri Megharaj Brahman, and Sri Hanuman Prosad. But the committee was open to other communities of Siliguri as well and hence it was a collective venture. The main attractions of this fair were the magic shows of P.C.Sorcar, Opera-shows of Natto Company, theatre shows of Calcutta drama parties, dance programmes, a programme with film star Nilima Das and so on. (62)

But the establishment of a branch Office of the " All India Marwari Yuba Mancha" in 1985 at siliguri has brought about a revolution in the field of multi-cultural affinity of the district. The 'Manch' has also estab-

lished a Branch at Darjeeling town. Though, it is a organisation of the Marwari community, through and through, its socio cultural and philanthropic activities are intended for people of all communities.

It is a voluntary youth organisation. All persons, aged 18 to 40 years, having adopted the life style, language and culture of Rajasthan, Haryana, Malwa in Madhya Pradesh or nearby regions, who themselves or whose fore-fathers living in India or any other part of the world identify themselves as Marwari, could be members of this organisation. The fundamental objectives of this 'Mancha' are organisation of the Youth force, scattered all over the country to make them duty-bound to attempt an all-round development of the nation at social, economical, political, physical as well as moral levels. The 'Manch' has a well-formulated philosophy known as the "Manch Darshan"- which has five basic contents : (I) Manch Base : Public service, (II) Manch Insight : Social Reform, (III) Manch Strength : Individual development, (IV) Manch desire : Social dignity and self- security, (V) Manch Goal : National Development and Unity. Manch renders public service irrespective of caste, creed or religion and emphasises social reforms through self - reform. Man derives his strength through development of inherent qualities within himself and the community derives strength from that man belonging to the community and the nation from the communities, taken together, living within the nation. This are the vows for which the Manch aims at individual develop-

ment. Self-discipline and self-control at the individual level promote social dignity and self security at the community level. It encourage other communities and thus becomes beneficial to the nation. And "National Development and Unity" have been chosen as the prime goal of the Manch because no other alternatives pave the way for peaceful survival and glory amidst the community of the nations of the globe. The Manch gives awards to eminent persons for their distinguished achievements in the fields of National Integration (Vivekananda award for National Integration), social service (Ishwardas Jalan award for public service), Literature (Bhanwarmal Singhi Memorial award), Journalism/art and culture (Ram Monohar Lohia award). Each of these awards carries a Rajat Patra and a cash amount of Rs. 11,000/- (63)

The Marwari Yuba Manch came into existence on 10th October, 1977 at Gauhati in Assam and since then it has expanded to 23 towns/cities of North Eastern states by the year 1983. Its first national convention came off at Guwahati on and from 18th to 20th January, 1985, second at Delhi on 9th April, 1988 and the third at Siliguri on and from 23rd to 25th February, 1991. The national programmes under taken by the Manch are (I) National unity and Integrity, (II) Welfare programme for the handicapped, (III) Ambulance and deadbody carrying van services, (IV) drinking water supply, (V) Self-employment, (VI) relief during Natural calamities (VII) voluntary seven - point marriage code, (VIII) fight against bride torture and bride burn-

ing, and (IX) Yuba Manch foundation.

Some of the Major community welfare activities undertaken by the branches in their respective areas as per local needs are (i) environment protection, (ii) spread of education and knowledge, (iii) health services, (iv) talent development, (V) cultural programmes and (vi) Providing civic amenities. At present, the Manch has more than 200 branches throughout the country with its headquarters in Delhi. Recently, it has opened a new platform in the name of 'Tarun Manch' whose membership is offered to the youngsters upto 18 years of age. (64)

In 1985, a branch of the All India Marwari Yuba Manch was opened at Siliguri and since then, the branch 'Manch' has taken a firm vow to realise the aims, philosophy and programmes undertaken by the main branch of the Manch. The following are the great achievements of the branch 'Manch' at Siliguri : (1) Table tennis competition among sub-junior boys and girls was organised first in 1986 and lastly in March, 1992. So far, five competitions of this sort of tournament the eminent local political and chairman of the Siliguri Municipality was invited as the chief guest.

(2) During the Nehru Gold Cup Football Tournament held in the Kunchanjungha Stadium at Siliguri in 1988, the Manch built a passengers' shed on the main road of the town. It is still bearing the cost of its maintenance.

(3) Twice, once in 1990 and a second time in 1992, the 'Manch' opened transplantation of artificial limbs. In the

first instance, 166 and in the second, 175 artificial legs with callipers, were distributed to physically handicapped and disabled persons. Sometimes, sticks, baisakhies, shoes, tricycles, wheel chairs and medicines were also donated to the disabled needy persons. Mr. Indrajit Khullar, M.P. graced the occassion.

(4) In 1990, the ambulance service for the general public was introduced. It was inaugurated by the then chief minister in charge of West Bengal, Sri Binoy Krishna Chaudhury.

(5) In 1991, the Manch started cremation of dead-bodies. Shri Ashoke Bhattacharyya initiated the opening ceremony. This kind of philanthropy was a first ever attempt in North Bengal.

(6) Mahendi composition has been a part of Marwari culture. So the 'Manch' arranged a Mahendi composition contest at Siliguri. Though this competition was open to all, only Marwari girls participated in this contest.

(7) In 1992, both Jalpaiguri and Siliguri were inundated by a devastating flood which made at least 10,000 people homeless. The Manch at once started relief work and fed and clothed the distressed people. Medicine was also provided to them. Relief work during the natural calamities is very much within the purview of the 'Manch'.

(8) Under the patronage of the branch 'Manch', a cold water machine was installed at Kiran Chandra Memorial Burning Ghat by the Chairman of Siliguri Municipality, in

1992. This is a rare achievement, attained by the Manch at Siliguri.

(9) In Sept., 1991, the 'Manch' donated Rs. 21,000 to the Hakimpara Bengali Girls' School for construction of an additional class room. Thus the Manch not only made a notable contribution towards the advancement of learning but also promoted communal harmony.

(10) The 'Manch' awards a monthly scholarship of Rs. 250 to a poor and distressed student of merit to help him pursue his study of Computer Science at Calcutta. To this end, the Manch had already spent more than Rs. 6,000 and the monthly grant is still being offered.

(11) Supplying of Oxygen cylinder and providing monetary help to the distressed and dying patients are among the social welfare activities of the Manch at Siliguri. It once donated Rs. 5000/- to a patient who had been suffering from an incurable disease.

(12) Social reform is also a motto of the 'Manch'. It took up several cases that arose in the town regarding the dowry system, trying to eradicate this social evil.

(13) Another goal of the 'Manch' was to uphold and regenerate the ancient Marwari heritage and traditions. So it arranged few cheng competitions which are absolutely in conformity with that tradition. This type of competition has been a regular practice of it.

(14) The 'Manch' has been publishing a quarterly magazine named 'Pukar'. Its editor is Nanda Kishore Agarwal, Co-editor Ghanashyamdas Malpani, Adhakshaya - Bala - Kishen Saraf and Secretary Sushil Gidra. It is a cultural magazine intended to acquaint the common people in general and the Marwaris in particular with the aims and philosophy of the "All India Marwari Yuba Manch."

(15) For human resource development, it organizes various cultural competitions such as debates, essay competitions, and holds tournaments in various games and sports like Badminton and Table Tennis. They are mostly open competition in which people of any community can take part.

(16) The Manch celebrates 'Holi' and 'Dipawali' every year with much gaiety and enthusiasm. Various socio-cultural programmes are usually organised on these occasions. Eminent persons of all communities irrespective of religion, caste or creed, attend these social gatherings. (65)

(17) The greatest achievements of the branch 'Manch' since its inception at Siliguri, was the celebration of the 3rd National convention of "All" India Marwari Yuba Manch". It was a convention of unity and named 'UNICON' 91. UNICON '91 is an allegory. 'U' stands for unity, 'N' for nation, 'I' for image, 'C' for calibre, 'O' for Oath, and 'N' for nationalism. '9' stands for 9 P.C. of your time and 1(one) for 1 P.C. of your funds. (66) Over 1000 delegates attended the convention. The Chairman of the reception Committee was P.R.Lohia, Chairman of the finance Sub-

Committee was Hansraj Bafna, and the President of the Convention was Niranjan Agarwal. (67)

The proceedings of the UNICON were in full conformity with the country's great tradition of unity and integrity. The convention made arrangements for video show and exhibition of local handicrafts. The convention arranged many cultural programmes such as a quiz contest, lectures on India's freedom struggle, discussions on Indian Art and Architecture, dance, music, education and culture, science and technology and so on. There was a session for women's welfare. In the evening, a cultural function exhibited national unity. The venue of UNICON was declared as "Vivekananda Nagar". The Manch urged the youths to be inspired by the thoughts and ideas of Swami Vivekananda (68)

The "All India Marwari Yuba Manch" regularly publishes a quarterly- 'Manchica' issued from its head office in Delhi. The chief editor is Promod Sahu, the executive editor Ramesh Pasari and other members of the editorial board are Krishna Kumar Lohia and Rajkumar Jhanjhari. A special issue of 'Manchica' was published during the celebration of UNICON' 91. The proceedings of UNICON'91, its plans and programmes, etc. are recorded in this issue. This issue also contains several columns such as editorial, preface, Manch Darpan, Manch Sandarva Manch Darshan, Sangathan Sutra, Paricharcha, Itihas, Special column and so on. (69)

Some future plans and programmes of philanthropic nature were taken as vows at the thrid national convention or UNICON' 91. They are as follows : (1) A Yuba chhatrabas (hostel for male students) will be constructed at Siliguri and the doors of this hostel would be opened to students of any community going in for higher education. The Manch has already purchased a plot of 6 Kathas of land to construct the proposed hostel on it. Another hostel is proposed to be constructed in Delhi. (11) Artificial limbs or Callipers, sticks, baisakhies, shoes, tricycles, wheel-chairs, etc. were to be distributed to physically handicapped or infirm persons. (111) Major emphasis will be laid on ambulance and dead-body carrying van services, supplying of drinking water in the locality, eye and blood banks and similar other social services. (70)

The UNICON' 91 did set a great example of universality by inviting people of all communities , irrespective of religion, caste or creed, such as the Hindus, Muslims, Christans, Sikhs and so on. National Unity and Integrity were its chief slogans, Philanthropy was its heart and social service and social welfare were its hands. So UNICON' 91 was absolutely a non-communal social and a cultural gathering which really exhibited unity in diversty, harmony in society and non - communality in multi nationality. This great example of synthesis animates other communities, their associations or clubs to come forward and launch social welfare programmes. So the

"All India Marwari Yuba Manch" has been a shining example to any country, any race and any time for its Philanthropic, cosmopolitan and integrated outlook.

In the political life of the town, the Marwaris, not also did not lag behind. Under the banner of the district congress, many Marwaris participated in the political movements against the British. Sri Seumongal Singh was then the undisputed congress leader of the district congress party. He once became the president of the district congress. He was agreeable to many top congress leaders of all India fame and standing like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Basu, Chittaranjan Das, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, and by many other lesser lights like Shyam Sunder Chakraborty, Brajendra kumar Basu Roychaudhury, etc. Mahatma Gandhi spent a night at his residence. Under his leadership, the civil disobedience, non-violence, non co-operation and Quit India movements were launched in the district. In 1932 and 1942 he was twice imprisoned for his participation in the non-violence, non- co operation and Quit India movements. (71) At his clarion call, the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Beharis, Bengalees, native Rajbansis and obviously the Marwaris gave ready response and joined the national movements. Shri Seumongal Singh celebrated the 15th August, 1947, at Siliguri. Again at this celebration many Marwaris took part along with the people of other communities. (72) At that time, two important Marwari leaders of the district congress were Sri Kedar Prasad Agarwal and Indra Chand Agarwal. (73) Even after

Independence, the Marwaris did not distance themselves from the political scene. Sri Hanuman Prosad was a member of the District Union Board. (74) In 1949, Siliguri Municipality was formed and two Marwari members of it were Sri Manturam Agarwal and Sri Bindeswari Michhir. (75) This tradition of Marwari participation in politics remains so even today. Sri Ram Kumar Agarwal was Commissioner of Siliguri Municipality in recent times. (76)

The Marwaris are out and out a bania community. Naturally, their traditional way of life was to worship Goddess 'Lakshmi' and to earn her favour. But presently their way of life is otherwise. They are now eager to have blessing of Goddess 'Saraswati, as well, and for this reason, they are laying more and more stress on education and cultural advancement. Their immense contribution to the spread of education and cultural advancement are very good examples of a phase of transition for them. This has been a direct outcome of their interactions with people of other communities at the place of their migration. However, their newly developed striving for education was not always intended for a new kind of livelihood but only for knowing business techniques which would help them a lot in their professional life and that is why they generally opt for commerce-oriented education. Apart from their urge for education, they also lay stress on cultural uplift through which a community could emerge to compete in the family of nations, and that is why they organise cultural associations and clubs to increase their cultural

awareness. Their integrated outlook, indeed, pushed them a step further in this prolonged effort. This change from their traditional attitude has also been a direct consequence of their interactions with people of many communities in the district.

The Marwari urge for the cultivation of education and culture does not go fruitless. Their presence in the professions, other than business, has been a conclusive proof of it. After having higher education in various disciplines, they are now taking practice in Law, medicine or entering into high-ranking services. Some eminent lawyers are Sri Tulsiram Agarwal (B.Com. B.L), Shri Radha Kisan Agarwal (B.A. B.L), Shri Ratan Kumar Ghatani (M.A. B.L.), Shri Mahendra Kumar Agarwal, (Lawyer sales and income tax), Shri Suresh Kumar Agarwal (L.I., Medalist), Shri Pushkar Lohia (Advocate), Shri Nanda Kishore Agarwal (Advocate). Some reputed medical practitioners are : Dr Pawan Agarwal (M.D Arogya Niketan), Dr. Deoyat Nakipuria (M.S., Arogya Niketan), Dr. Shyam Mantri (Child specialist, Jeevan Jyoti), Dr. Ram Niranjana Lohia (M.D., Mitra's clinic), Dr. Rajendra Kumar Agarwal (M.D. Mitra's clinic), Dr. Kailash Chandra Mopal (Orthopaedic surgeon). A few chartered Accountants are : Shri Mahesh Kumar Agarwal, Shri Ram Niranjana Goyal, Shri Ram Babu Mantri, Shri Ram Niwas Chandak, Sri Promod Saroigi. So also, some high ranking service holders are Shri Sajjan Agarwal (L.I.B. Development Officer, United Indian Insurance Company),

Shri Chadnirman Agarwal (M.Com. Additional Divisional Manager Oriental Insurance Company), Shri P.K. Sau (C.A., Officer, Punjab National Bank).

But the Marwari venture for philanthropic activities and socio-cultural assimilation between them and other communities as seen in the Terai Darjeeling is not worth mentioning in the hills of Kurseong, Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The reason seems to be incongruent socio cultural atmosphere in the hills. Here, the hill tribes such as the Nepalis, Lepchas, Bhutias, Tibetans, Gurungs, Newars, etc. hold strong numerical position. Their indifferent life style, food-habits, languages, religion, social customs, culture, etc., obviously provided stumbling blocks on the way of synthesis. So the only plainsmen from the other parts of India, i.e., a few Marwaris and the man of the 'bania' or shop-keeper class, who chiefly settled here under British protection ever since the opening of the hill station, decided to concentrate mainly on money matters. That is why, they retained their own system of culture and social customs still to this day. (77) . However, the Darjeeling branch of 'All India Marwari Yuba Manch' has been launching various social welfare programmes like health services, talent developments, relief works to the distressed, and so on. The branch has also successfully conducted a few national and state level seminars of academic importance (78)

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61. Ibid, PP 22-27
62. Prodyot Kumar Basu, op. cit., PP 59-60
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