

CHAPTER - III

Sikkim: A Review of Its Literature

A sincere attempt is made over here to review some of the publications available on Sikkim. It may benefit and interest both readers and researchers. It does not present any critical comments on the works of the authors.

The Gazetteer of Sikkim¹ presents the facts on Sikkim in a lucid manner on its geographical position, history laws, marriage customs, agriculture, vegetation, butterflies, reptiles, birds, mammals, Lamaism, monasteries, temples, village priests, rites, Mandala, divination, talismans, amulet charms, prayer flags; demons, exorcism systematically. The study includes an introduction by Risley H.H. on Sikkim.

The Author Claude White, J² penetrates into the very heart of this part of the world namely Sikkim and brings to the light the minutest details. The geographical position and general features of the state, the people, expeditions, art and industries, their laws, marriage customs, fauna and flora and habitat of Sikkim.

Coelho, V.H.³ tries to assemble in his own views the historical and cultural data to reveal a sympathetic description of the lands and their peoples. The work also gives an idea of the present administrative and political structures which would serve to enlighten any reader who wishes to know something and understand more about these unusual Himalayan counties – in particular Sikkim.

Grover, B.S.K's⁴ work is a timely publication covering all happenings in the state. A comprehensive study to portray the history and socio-political development of the people of Sikkim and he has diligently documented the relationship between Sikkim and India from 1947 to 1974. The book provides a wealth of interesting materials and dependable description of the Sikkimese

processes and of Sikkim's transitional and fledging transformation. Indeed it is a work published before the merger of Sikkim into the Indian union.

Basnet, L.B.⁵ summarizes the events in Sikkim following upon independence of India. It is primarily Sikkim's political history that inspired his work and presents the political history of Sikkim from the point of view of the masses. The first part of the book deals with the period antecedent to 15th August 1947 and the second part of the study deals with the interplay of political parties and the Government of India on the political stage in the post 1947 period until the end of May 1973.

Sinha, A.C.⁶ provides the background story, the analysis and evaluation of the actors involved in the political struggle relating to amendment to the constitution of India which merged Sikkim with India and gave it the status of the 22nd state of the Indian union. While the Chogyal and his followers were making efforts to strengthen the bonds of theocratic monarchy, the politically awakened elites were aspiring and struggling to lead Sikkim towards constitutional democracy. It also deals with the social forces and giving a direction to the politics of Sikkim leading to the realization of the Sikkimese people's aspiration of merger with India.

Many questions like, since the time India took measures to integrate Sikkim in April 1975 or even a little earlier, there had persisted a lurking belief in the minds of a section of people, both India and abroad that India was going to annex a small country Sikkim, little realizing that Sikkim has been a Princely state of India since way back in the British days. How was this confusion about Sikkim's independence created? Who fostered this wrong idea and why? Etc., were answered by Shukla S.R.⁷ He also presents the early history of Sikkim, beginning from its hoary past to the last fight of its people against the feudal order and in a vivid, lucid and absorbing style right up to the day it became 22nd state of the Indian federal polity.

Chib, S.S.⁸ describes the physical environment, mineral resources, power, agriculture handicrafts, people, cultural heritage, economy, problems and prospects of the state of Sikkim.

Mishra R.C.⁹ highlights the issues in connection with the Sikkim's political development and the decisive role played by the Government of India on the questions. Could it be anticipated that the 1973 democratic movement would further make the road smooth for the democratic force?

How it became possible, over night, for the leader of Sikkim Congress, Kazi Dorji, in wielding power taking the bridle of the whole administration into his own hands?

What made the Chogyal to rush to New Delhi every now and then despite putting signature on the Sikkim Bill?

What made the Chogyal to resent repeatedly against steps taken by the Government of India?

Why did Chogyal ignore the directives of Kazi Dorji while going to Nepal for attending the Coronation Ceremony?

Finally, India's Himalayan Policy in general and Sikkim in particular.

Rao Raghunadha, P.¹⁰ highlights not only the struggle of the people of Sikkim for democratization of their administration and closer political association with India, but also the international intrigue to embarrass India by siding with feudal regime. This book is full of political and historical facts which are amply supported by a list of appendices containing all the treaties.

Round Kanchenjunga by Douglas. W. Freshfield¹¹ was written at the turn of the present century. It still remains a classic in Himalayan literature. It epitomes an accomplished scholars appreciation of nature, mountain exploration and the event when a distinguished explorer approached a mountain. The author's views on mountain glaciations had aroused much academic discussion and he had contributed greatly to the furtherance of geography as a scientific discipline through this work.

In this narrative, Freshfield reverts frequently, rather too frequently as he himself admits, to Alpine comparisons. To give a few examples: Kanchenjunga massif between the Kosi and the Teesta is compared to the Bernese oberland between Rhone and Reuss, Kangchenjunga summit itself to Monte Rosa (as seen from Italian lakes), Siniolochu as Jungfran, Twins Grande Jorasses, Jubonu as Murren, Kangbachen as Vispthal, Chomolthari as cina Tosa, Chungthang as Stalden, Lhonak as Engadine and so on. Kangchenjunga thus still remains one of the most tempting and challenging of the world's highest peaks. Round Kangchenjunga is not merely a superb travelogue but its details on extent of glaciers could be a basis for scientific study on their process through time. Glaciers have definitely receded, but the political climate on the tri-junction represented by Kangchenjunga has not yet been conducive to systematic exploration and research.

The states of our union: Sikkim by Sunil C. Roy ¹² explains about Sikkim, the youngest state of the Indian union, conjures up the visions of the Sangrila. He describes the merger and beginning of an era of democracy and progress of the state. Besides geographically describing the land and the people of Sikkim the author Roy has brought into focus the progress achieved by the state in various spheres since it became part of India.

Was merger necessary? Was there a popular uprising against the Chogyal in 1973? Could not provisions of the 1950 Treaty have been used to protect India's vital interests? What was Delhi's role in it? Did the May 8, 1973 Agreement not adequately meet the requirements of a democratic set up? Finally what has India gained in the ultimate analysis? Das, B.S¹³'s, work is a first hand report of the period of turmoil in Sikkim from 1973 till Sikkim's merger with India in 1975 answers the above questions. A story of three ladies namely Indira Gandhi, Hope Cook and Elisa Maria and also a faithful portrayal of Chogyal of Sikkim.

Duttu-Ray Sunanda.K.¹⁴ attempts to analyse neither Chogyal's life nor attempts to give a comprehensive account of Sikkim's Buddhist Polity. That is

a history describing what happened, and how, will not change the present or future. Further the work summarises the vision of Chogyal that Sikkim's transformation from a primitive principality into a modern nation.

Both writers Jha and Mishra¹⁵ present the profile of the state of Sikkim, its early history, ethnic complexity, customs, contours of political development, evolution of political parties, status of protectorate, popular movements, Elections in Sikkim Since 1979, State Administration, popular movements and trends with reference to growing sub nationalism, centre-state relations etc.

Sengupta. N.¹⁶ attempts comprehensively the study of politics and government in Sikkim. The study provides an in-depth account of the political process and the working of Government in Sikkim with reference to developments which led to the merger of Sikkim with India based on Sikkim's political history and the cross currents of ethnic, social and religious factors.

Chopra. P.N.¹⁷ presents in his work 'Sikkim' with a limited range and in a reasonable manner, a comprehensive view of Sikkim, its people pertaining to the physical features of the state, history, social, cultural and religious life.

The Eastern Himalayan: Environment and Economy by Sarkar and Lama Mahendra, P¹⁸ emphasizes that, Eastern Himalaya is best known but still remains undiscovered on so many horizons of knowledge. Darjeeling and Sikkim are considered to be the prominent sub Himalayan regions. This volume gives light on almost all issues related to environment and economy of the region. The work is a collection of articles edited by the above authors to contribute a great deal to arouse the interest of the researchers and the concerned governments to streamline a proper strategy in their development. It will be quite useful to the scholars, planners, policy makers, nature lovers and scientists of the day to understand and study the region.

Sikkim: A Himalayan Realm by Tulsiram Sharma Kashyap¹⁹ is a superb poetical presentation and depiction of Sikkim's rich history, culture, varied natural beauty and political development. Through the introduction of two fictitious characters Lakpa and Rajani – both belonging to different ethnic

groups, the poet Tulsiram Sharma, with commendable touch of imagination narrates the creation of Sikkim. The work essentially and effectively emphasizes the vital need for national integration through communal amity. Further, it also picturises and explains a just and meaningful representation of the simple Sikkimese folk and their roles in building up modern Sikkim. The author who was a Kavi, Minister, Speaker of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly and a Sikkimese Nepali provides an intense analysis of the psyche of the birth place. Above all, this volume would help readers in starting the process of knowing this sacred and ancient land Sikkim more intimately and correctly. The book *Himalayan Realm* is the English version of the original work in Nepali *JANMABHUMI* translated by P.B. Chakraborty.

Sikkim: A Himalayan Tragedy by Nari Rustomji²⁰ is not a history of the erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim but a biographical sketch of Palden Thendup Namgyal, the last ruler of Sikkim. The work is an account of the struggle of the last ruler Palden Thondup to preserve his country's identity. It was a human story and a story worth telling. The special interests in this book and account are the ruler's letters to the author from the time they first met as young men at threshold of their careers. The book is thus, in the author's words 'as much the Chogyal's book as mine'.

Lepcha, My Vanishing Tribe by A.R. Fonning²¹ presents an inside view of one of the lesser known Himalayan Tribal Population. He recounts his personal experiences and gives vivid descriptions of events and ceremonies in which he was involved as a participant. His approach is autobiographical in style. He devotes a considerable space to a discussion of the decline of ancient cults resulting from the takeover of the Lepcha's land by foreign settlers. The conversion of Lepchas to Christianity is also treated in detail. Future generations of Lepchas, whether Buddhists, Christians or members of any Hindu sect will be able to learn from this volume, how their ancestors lived, what gods and spirits they worshipped and how it came about that 'Mayel

Lyang', their sacred homeland fell into the hands of aggressive immigrants from other lands.

Verdict in Sikkim 1979-85, (1988 & 89 Editions) by K.R. Chakaravathi²² reviews general and bye-elections to Sikkim Legislative Assembly and Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency between 1979 and 1985. The author aptly puts on record some of his own observations and some of those episodes in his provoking and factual narrative work.

An extremely valuable work titled, Ecology culture and change: Tribals of Sikkim Himalayas (Tribal studies of India T133) by Dr. Veena Bhasin²³ who carried out a field work during 1981-83 in North Sikkim. The work records the complex pattern of two diverse cultures of the Lepchas and Bhutias of North Sikkim. Firstly, a micro approach has been used to explore indepth, the myriad aspects of life at Dzongu reserve habited by the Lepchas and Lachen, Lachung valleys dominated by the Bhutias. Their social organizations, religious beliefs, economic structure and social control have been well dealt with. Secondly, the book would acquaint the reader of an archaic culture in an intact state that lies wholly outside of Hindu culture and ideology which is in fact, different and distinct in many ways from the peasant economy of India. It also provides insight into how both Bhutias and Lepchas are getting involved in the Government sponsored development programmes and undergone changes.

The study by Bhadra Madhumita²⁴ examines the following questions. What are the factors and forces that have led to the transformation of Sikkim from Monarchy to Democracy while two other Himalayan states are monarchical in nature? Can we possibly theories the political process in Sikkim in terms of nation building, popular participation, modernity, social mobility, identity and integration etc? Is democracy compatible with the Sikkimese tradition?

Who and what are the agents of social change in Sikkim? Is there any special problem of adaptability and stability in Sikkim? What is the role of different social and economic classes in Sikkim's quest for political

development? The main thrust of the work will be exploratory – to explore and gain understanding of the factors of socio-political changes in Sikkim.

The book titled ‘Sikkim : Problems and Prospects of Development’ by Dr Manas Das Gupta²⁵ emphasizes that due to ecological variations, ethnic diversity and poor infrastructure, Sikkim has faced different set of problems resulting in extremely poor development all along. Sikkim has remained isolated for a long time owing to difficult terrain and topography. Dr Gupta discusses the problems Sikkim is facing and the measures initiated by the State and Central Governments for the proper development of the State of Sikkim especially after its merger with the Indian Union in 1975. It also highlights some of the major issues and their solutions. It is hoped and presented for the use of planners, administrators and researchers to work for the betterment of the state of Sikkim.

A guide to Sikkim – Darjeeling – Kalimpong and Bhutan by Verma & Verma²⁶ provides latest and authentic information on Sikkim – the best available book on Sikkim and other regions to guide the tourists.

People of India Sikkim (Volume XXXIX) edited by K.S. Singh²⁷ is an Anthropological study on Sikkim. This comprehensive work on Sikkim offers a bio-cultural and linguistic profile of all the 25 communities identified in the state. It includes different aspects of Sikkim’s life and culture, demography, dress agriculture, food, religion, language, arts, crafts, industry, settlement, house pattern, festivals and fairs, socio-political organizations and institutions, rituals and ceremonies, process of development and change relating to the above 25 communities.

Kazi Jigme N. brings into focus in his popular work *Inside Sikkim: Against the Tide*²⁸, how the political system in the last one and a half decades before 1993, leaving the people of the strategic border state completely defenseless, insecure and exploited. He articulates well the struggle of the people to live in a free and democratic atmosphere, where the right to live with respect, dignity and to preserve the unique and distinct identity of Sikkim.

M.P. Lama²⁹ studies Sikkim in four broad sections viz., Society, Polity, Economy and Environment. It depicts that Sikkim today stands to be a model state of India in terms of economic development, social harmony and political stability. It is a collection of articles of varied interests on Sikkim by different authors.

The study by Rai, Sundriyal and Sharma³⁰ in about 53 articles analyses the physical background, culture, socio-political, educational, resource status, bio-diversity, agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture, energy, health, food, economy, ecology, environment, perspective planning and industry of post development Sikkim. A collection of articles on Sikkim's progress presented by different experts.

Bajpai G.S.³¹ analyses and presents a brief history of the situation as it prevailed in Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal in the early eighteenth century and also the efforts made by Hastings to open Tibet for trade. His work further deals with the British inroads into Sikkim, the role played by the East India Company and finally Sikkim becoming a British Protectorate. An examination is also made in the book on the implications of Anglo-Chinese convention of 1840 and the regulations regarding the trade etc. An extensive study is attempted in the work on the forward policy of Lord Curzon and the harmony and conflicts of interests between Sikkim and India. Further an endeavour is made in the study about the pattern of Chinese propaganda and psychological warfare launched on Sikkim. Tibet border alongwith the height of China's arrogance – their unprovoked heavy firing at Nathu-la and Cho-la.

Bhattacharya, Aparna³² studies the impact of Buddhism on the political process in Sikkim and contributes to our understanding of tiny Sikkim and its complex entity alongwith contemporary politics in Sikkim.

The book *Garuda and Winged Horses : A journey through Sikkim* by S. Guha³³ depicts a journey through a land where everything is sacred, where peaks are worshipped, lakes are held in awe, tree cutting is considered a sin, birds carry the wisdom of saints, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist seers share the same

pantheon, politicians reconcile themselves to dharma, independence of the soul rather than the body is paramount, people belong to antiquity and eternally wait for that ultimate journey that will take them to their promised Land ... Bayul Denzong. The author has presented his experiences of journey through Sikkim in a lucid language which attracts any reader.

Lahiri, Chattopadhyay and Basin's work, *Sikkim – The People's Vision*³⁴ is about the people and for the people of Sikkim. It talks about the substantive example of transparent functioning of the State. The document envisages the state government with the purpose of setting specific goals in the medium term, for the state to achieve in the 21st century. It is the greatest aspect of this book and exercise. The work is not looking at economic development per se but the overall improvement of the quality of life of the people of Sikkim. The work stands primarily for a new paradigm of development. It also covers widely the background and emerging issues and the strategy to fulfill the vision. The document covers and sets the goals in thrust areas of Roads and Bridges, Power, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Industries, Education, Health and Fiscal Reforms.

First of its kind for the state of Sikkim the document was released by Prime Minister of India in September 2001. Lama Mahendra, P's *Sikkim: Human Development Report*³⁵ studies population, poverty and planning to build human capabilities in health, education and status of women, land and agriculture, forest and environment, infra-structure development, industry, power and state finance, the road ahead to governance for sustainable human development. The HDR is a useful document that contains district – specific information, which is essentially and critically needed for decentralized planning and implementation. It also highlights the challenges which are ahead in the state of Sikkim. It is also first of its kind in the state of Sikkim on Human Development and it was released by the Prime Minister of India at New Delhi in September, 2001.

In the book *Development Banking and Industrialisation* the author Purkayastha³⁶ discusses the role of state industrial development corporations in the industrial development of the north eastern states of India.

The object of this study is to examine how far industrialization has been taking place in Sikkim. The study addresses itself in particular to the following questions: What was the general state of economy? What were the sectors developed in consonance with financial credit policies and sustainable ecological balance?

The pioneering research oriented study on industrial development of the state will prove highly useful and informative to academics and Policy Planners alike. The author attempts to study in an exhaustive manner the working of SIDICO in Sikkim.

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