

MATERIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN DARJEELING
HILLS (1835-1947): A REREADING IN HISTORY
OF THE COLONIZED LANDSCAPE

THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY

BY

TAHITI SARKAR

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

PROFESSOR (DR.) BIJOY KUMAR SARKAR

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY

APRIL, 2017

DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that the Thesis entitled, **Material Transformations in Darjeeling Hills (1835-1947) : A Rereading in History of the Colonized Landscape**, submitted to the North Bengal University for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, is a record of original and independent research work done by me during 2012-2016 under the supervision and guidance of Professor (Dr.) Bijoy Kumar Sarkar, Professor of History, Department of History, North Bengal University, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other Degree or Diploma, Associate ship or Fellowship or any other similar Title to any Candidate of this or any other University.

Tahiti Sarkar

TAHITI SARKAR

Doctoral Research Student
Department of History
North Bengal University

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



ENLIGHTENMENT TO PERFECTION

P.O. North Bengal University
Raja Rammohunpur, :: Dist. Darjeeling
West Bengal, India, Pin. - 734013

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the Thesis entitled, **“Material Transformations in Darjeeling Hills (1835-1947): A Rereading in History of the Colonized Landscape”**, is a record of original research work done by Tahiti Sarkar during 2012-2016, at the Department of History, North Bengal University, under my guidance and supervision for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History. I further certify that this research work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other Degree or Diploma or Associateship or Fellowship or any other Title to any candidate of this or any other University.

Professor (Dr.) Bijoy Kumar Sarkar

Research Supervisor

Professor of History

Department of History

North Bengal University

Place:

Date:

A B S T R A C T

MATERIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN DARJEELING HILLS (1835-1947): A REREADING IN HISTORY OF THE COLONIZED LANDSCAPE

The study of the interrelationships of cultural-anthropogenic, politico-economic and environmental factors in the process of colonial state/institution making in Darjeeling hills has remained hitherto unattended. The general notion of modernity presupposes that nineteenth century colonial state making and the unquestionable colonial right over colonized land was powerfully influenced by the emergence of modernity. However the impact of such general notion of modernizing process must be varied in variegated regions and different patterns of landscape in different environmental settings. While applied to Darjeeling hills, this dimension of academic research has remained still unaddressed.

No study has attempted to explore the fact that forest conservancy in Darjeeling received priority at a later juncture when forested land was adequately depleted and cleared for the purposive efforts of colonial mode of resource use in augmenting revenues and resource extraction. No study has attempted either to trace the root of land-man relationship in Darjeeling Hills. No study has so far been attempted to understand how did British 'imagined landscape' begin to get shape in Darjeeling Hills and how did such European notion of Nature, culture and development exert influence on the indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills? No study has also been attempted to trace the history of change in the mode of resource use which played most crucial role in bringing corresponding material and cultural changes in the colonized landscape of Darjeeling Hills. The present study proposes to address such research gaps.

The Eastern Himalayas environmental history, especially, Darjeeling Himalaya has remained almost as a maiden field of research.

Few landscapes in India have attracted as much least attention by the post-colonial scholarship in terms of material transformations and environmental enquiry as Darjeeling Himalaya.

The history of material transformations in the colonized landscape of Darjeeling has not been well served and addressed by published or unpublished academic materials. Here lies the justification of the proposed study. A consideration of the Darjeeling hills tract in the face of colonial interventions would help understanding the roots of economy, politics and society of contemporary Darjeeling

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the colonial phase of the history of Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling Himalayas, which had become a part of India at the culmination of colonial encounter, has had its specific histories and its unique concomitant material transformations giving birth to new and contrasting patterns of a colonized landscape. Principally speaking, an attempt has been made here to study such historical specificities of colonial Darjeeling independent of any general history of colonialism in India. While attempting to understand transformations of the Darjeeling hills under colonialism, it has been explored how the definition and management of boundaries between wildness and civility in the hill society and the relation of ideas of nature to different aspects of socio-political and material life- labour, aesthetics, politics, capital, commerce, tea plantations, forests and agriculture are interconnected historical processes that inform environmental history.

While making a conscious attempt to stay away from environmental/ecological determinism, this doctoral dissertation, nevertheless, has been tied together through the rubric of ecological premises that defined and structured the socio-economic and political history of Darjeeling hills. The colonial occupation of Darjeeling tract in the mid-thirties of nineteenth century had ushered in momentous

changes in the economy, politics, and socio-cultural milieu, land, forests, natural resources and the landscape in the historically transformative years 1835-1947 by the colonial encounters. This study has attempted to unfold the intrinsic connections between the various socio-economic, cultural, historical and political factors and forces of colonial encounters and the underlying theme of inter-linkages between Nature of Darjeeling and the colonially constructed territoriality and governability.

The study focuses primarily on the history of Darjeeling hills covering a period spanning the beginning of British rule in the early thirties of the nineteenth century till the independence of India. The primary thrust has been to understand the intricacies of the dynamics of state making, institution building, socio-economic formations, factors and forces, civic-political structural formations, power relations and application of colonial knowledge in using the natural resources by paying attention to environmental conditions of Darjeeling hills. Precisely, the study has investigated the nature of colonial interventions and colonial mode of industrial resource use which helped building and transforming the politico-economic structures, socio-cultural institutions of Darjeeling under colonial dispensation. The study attempts to inquire in details how such material transformations were taken place in Darjeeling and how such transformed institutions did reshape the landscape of Darjeeling from its pre-colonial primordial natural setting to the colonially cherished ideas and institutions of modernity and its unique development path heralding the 'proto-modern' phase - a period that witnessed intensification of commercial expansion and inaugurated European knowledge revolution.

The colonial mode of resource use had ushered in new production relations and brought fundamental material transformation in the landscape of Darjeeling which in turn replaced the pre-colonial mode of resource use and traditional production relations. The old clan

based communities, traditional class hierarchies got dismantled in the process of material landscape transformation. The imported labourers principally migrated from eastern Nepal and such other neighbouring areas to work as wage earners for tea gardens, railways, road construction and forest conservancy formed a new working class, being majority however, had no meaningful voice.

All these new modes of resource use induced transformations in the landscape of Darjeeling resulted to a strong colonial political regime, installations based military regime, colonial forest regime, colonial planters' regime, and missionary based neo-cultural regime and middle class urban regime in Darjeeling hills. All these regimes were mutually corroborative to each other and in aggregate gave rise to a new ecological regime and eco-imperialist bureaucratic order which drastically replaced the indigenous ecosophical order in the landscape of Darjeeling. Such a colonially articulated socio-cultural and politico-administrative power regime engineered by the European notion of modernity, attempted to invest the idea of 'difference' in the minds of natives of Darjeeling. The natural difference between the people of the hills and the plains was thus purposively indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling as a unique socio-economic and cultural zone and finally as a separate 'other'.

The study of the colonized landscape history holds promise when Darjeeling hills landscape did develop in increasingly complex and materially meaningful ways. This region under study has been viewed as point of entry and place of departure for a larger sense of the environmental history of the peripheral India associated intimately with south-east Asian environmental history. Colonization has a vital decisive role to play in the evolution of material landscapes of Darjeeling hills. The colonization of Darjeeling hills initiated in the thirties of the nineteenth century can be described as the transformation of a desolate country seen into an organized, densely

settled and intensively exploited landscape through the mode of industrial resource use. The pressure of population on natural resources and on new modes of resource use reached unprecedented levels with material interests participating in the colonization process.

Darjeeling has had a primordial/feudal history of material landscape in pre-change, pre-explosion and pre-transformation period. In such a landscape, the system of land use must have been influenced by the agricultural politics of the tribal chieftains of the kingdoms of the Eastern Himalayas such as Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. After colonial occupation of Darjeeling the demand for constructional/civic services activities for new lifestyles as well as for physical infrastructure implies new driving forces, new demands and new perspectives on the land. Such colonial interventions brought radical changes, with new regimes, and kinds of explosions that create new meaning system. We have lack of information what had been happening in the vast mountain ridges that surround Darjeeling during the long pre-historic period and obscured pre-colonial past. The Darjeeling landscape did not create from scratch; it has its history that could assist in forming sustainable landscapes. This will help us in answering why are landscapes and their development paths in similar environmental, socio-economic and political conditions different? The development path of each landscape depends also on local situation, political decisions and practices.

The quantum of economic and material changes that ushered in colonial Darjeeling gradually resulted corresponding dispossession of the indigenous people and created new land holding class of tea planters at the one end and tea labour on the other. The Planters enjoyed Government patronage. There developed intermediary sections, lumpens and English educated enlightened middle class service people too. The material linkage of life with forest came under complete strain with the advent of colonialism in the landscape of Darjeeling. Agrarian changes, concomitant state making and institution building, clearance

of forests for making connecting roads and rails with the plains, commercial plantation of tea through private British players, invitation to the aristocracy of the neighboring plains for investment in making summer resorts by providing land at a concessional rate, state sponsored cinchona plantation, establishment of sanatoriums, resorts, military installations, introduction of scientific forestry, commercialization of natural resources and etc, had been the economic and social changes that had ebbed and flowed across Darjeeling territory under colonial control.

As a part of grand imperial project, the nature and character of British interests in the Himalayas in general, reflects two distinct phases in the development of colonial economy: the first being the mercantile exploitation under the Company, and the second being the expansion of commercial agricultural investment under the civil administration of the Raj. Thus, the major influences of British rule-land settlement, roads construction forest settlement and tea plantation settlement, governance structure were firmly put in place.

The study has been organised in seven chapters. The introductory chapter initiates with the statement of the research problem focusing specific academic thrust, principal concepts, literature review identifying research gaps, hypotheses, research questions extracting there from the objectives of the study cautiously dealt with by the methodology of research duly supported by both primary and secondary sources of historical information essentially relevant for the study. The second chapter entitled 'Colonial Occupation of Darjeeling Hills' examines the evolution of different phases of British occupation of this eastern Himalayan hill tract, the reasons behind such occupation, the resultant unquestionable proprietary hold over the entire forested hilly tract and terai plains. This chapter also examined how under British rule, lands of the commons, usually a pasture, waste land or forest or both had disappeared as a result of direct political intervention and regularization of the lands of the

commons by the colonial interventionist state. The third chapter, 'Colonization of Darjeeling Forest', examines how commercialization and commoditization of forest as mode of resource use were introduced in colonial Darjeeling at a later stage.

By then massive forest clearance was taken place for expanding tea industries, cinchona plantations, roads constructions, railways and physical infrastructural developments for its geopolitical and strategic importance as a military station and for its climatic value as sanatoria, and as colonial growth centre. This chapter explored the material-social, cultural-economic, political and ecological transformation of forests and corresponding social relations of people living in Darjeeling. The British introduced rapid, widespread and irreversible changes at the cost of forest in making and shaping Darjeeling a location of importance which had concomitant ecological and social ramifications. The chapter further reviews whether imperial forest policy efforts were socially unjust, ecologically insensitive and legally without a basis in past practice.

The fourth chapter 'Expansion of Commercial Tea Plantation in Colonial Darjeeling' has extensively dealt with the history of plantation in Darjeeling hills and in its Terai part revealing the effects on the demographic profile of Darjeeling and on the nature of its economy. The fifth chapter entitled 'Urbanization and Development in Colonial Darjeeling', has principally focused on the processes, factors and forces actively operated behind the growth and development of Darjeeling as a colonial hill station and its corresponding effects on the society, economy and polity; as well as corresponding ecological consequences on Darjeeling hills under colonial rule. The sixth chapter named 'Indigenous and Exogenous People in Colonial Darjeeling' has elaborately discussed different historical situations in colonial Darjeeling wherein such populations witnessed the high dozed imperatives of colonial interventions in their livelihood, society and economy. Finally, chapter seven has dealt with the 'conclusion' of the

study. Conclusions have been reached on the basis of research questions and hypotheses verified and addressed by the different chapters of the study and have been placed systematically in the concluding chapter. This study explored the basic facts that due to colonial encounter, Darjeeling hills experienced rapid changes in her landscape and in social relations accompanied by equally sweeping ecological transformations. Rapid commercialization of forests in the name of scientific forestry, colonial capitalistic formation of tea industry, construction of roads and railways, urban economic formation, settled land revenue administration and strong civic and military administration all these introduced rapid, widespread and in some respects, irreversible changes which had both ecological and social dimensions. However, such effects of British colonial encounters were not sudden; this study has argued that other important function of British rule had been to provide the enabling tools for the social and political integration of the Darjeeling hill tract with the emerging Indian nation. The introduction of monetized economy in Darjeeling hills by colonial capitalist investment in tea plantations, establishment of military installations, construction of communication systems, creation of hill station, land and forest settlements, establishment of courts, schools and colleges, the stabilization of political relations with the neighboring hill states had become such enabling tools.

This does not necessarily mean that in this study we have attempted to eulogize or undermine the importance of the colonial impact on natural environments of Darjeeling hills. Unquestionably, however, from many points of view, the colonial encounters in Darjeeling hills, since the mid of nineteenth century, represented a radically new phenomenon unleashing material transformations of vivid description and directions. First, it was an intrusion on the world scale, corresponding to the phase of expansion of western merchant and industrial capitalism. Second, the colonizers had means of conquest at their control which was generally out of all proportion to those of the

local dormant society of Darjeeling hills once subjected to Sikkim, a tiny Himalayan kingdom. Third, the offensive was battered by overwhelming modern ideology according to which both the then existing primordial natural society and nature ceased to be the sacred order or the abode of the gods.

Darjeeling hills, thus, had become an object to be mastered, exploited, transformed, and commoditized, a means of speculation, merchandise, a space for natural resource extraction and abode of profit maximization. Fourth, the colonizers carried with them techniques and tools, introduced crops and forms of animal husbandry, opened up routes for diffusion and exchange, which irreversibly altered the local socio-ecological configurations. And finally, to serve their own interests, they set up everywhere an increasingly efficient framework of governmental control, which gradually denied the local populations free access to their traditional natural resource bases, at a time when their numbers were beginning to increase. Although the ecological stresses and traumas resulting from European colonization were not by any means the first event of their kind in the colonies, but for Darjeeling hills, such encounters were altogether unprecedented. The predominant colonial encounters by means of commercial and industrial capital on the natural resources of Darjeeling, and the unbridled colonial resource extraction had fundamentally altered the nature and character of Darjeeling hills positing for a continuous rereading in history to understand the present from the perspective of its colonial past.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The primary purpose of this study, entitled *Material Transformations in Darjeeling Hills (1835-1947): A Rereading in History of the Colonized Landscape*, is to explore the colonial phase of the history of Darjeeling hills. My interest in the colonial history of India with special reference to the colonial Darjeeling hills was developed during PhD course work, when I had to work on a research paper for the partial fulfillment of research course work examination. I decided to study the history of material transformations of Darjeeling Himalayas under the aegis of colonialism. Darjeeling Himalayas, which had become a part of India at the culmination of colonial encounter, has had its specific histories and its unique concomitant material transformations giving birth to new and contrasting patterns of a colonized landscape. Principally speaking, an attempt has been made here to study such historical specificities of colonial Darjeeling independent of any general history of colonialism in India. While attempting to understand transformations of the Darjeeling hills under colonialism, it has been explored how the definition and management of boundaries between wildness and civility in the hill society and the relation of ideas of nature to different aspects of socio-political and material life-labour, aesthetics, politics, capital, commerce, tea plantations, forests and agriculture-are interconnected historical processes that inform environmental history.

While making a conscious attempt to stay away from environmental/ecological determinism, this doctoral dissertation, nevertheless, has been tied together through the rubric of ecological premises that defined and structured the socio-economic and political history of Darjeeling hills. The colonial occupation of Darjeeling tract in the mid-thirties of nineteenth century had ushered in momentous changes in the economy, politics, and socio-cultural milieu, land,

forests, natural resources and the landscape in the historically transformative years 1835-1947 by the colonial encounters. This study has attempted to unfold the intrinsic connections between the various socio-economic, cultural, historical and political factors and forces of colonial encounters and the underlying theme of interlinkages between Nature of Darjeeling and the colonially constructed territoriality and governability.

After successful completion of the PhD course work, Professor (Dr.) Bijoy kumar Sarkar, Professor of History, Department of History, North Bengal University, had kindly consented to act as my Research Supervisor. I am most grateful to him for giving me scope to work under his supervision. The submission of this work in the form of a thesis would not have been possible without his incessant inspiration, succinct academic insights, proper guidance, help and support. I take the opportunity to express my indebtedness and gratitude to all the Faculty Members of the Department of History, North Bengal University who have provided me academic space and inspiration for the completion of my research work.

I have benefited from a number of sources in the preparation of this work. I am grateful to those revered scholars of repute, academicians and authors whose works I have studied and used extensively during the course of the study. I also owe my gratitude to the Library Authorities and Research Institutions located in different parts of the country. I express my special gratitude to the staff members of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, Indian National Archives , New Delhi, Library of the Institute of Advance Study, Simla, Forest Research Institute Library, Dehradun, Library of the Centre For Urban Studies, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, National Library, Calcutta, Forest Department Library, Aranya Bhaban, Salt Lake, Kolkata, Library of the Centre For Environmental History, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Library of the Institute of Local Government and Urban

Studies, Salt Lake, Kolkata, Cultural Research Institute Library, Kolkata, West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, Forest Office Library, Darjeeling, Planters' Club Library, Darjeeling, Collectorate's Record Room, Darjeeling, Library of the Centre For Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University, and North Bengal University Library for their kind help in locating documents for this study.

I am personally grateful to Shri Ajoy Mishra, Documentation Officer, Centre for Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University for his untiring academic support and kind help always with a smiling face. I place on record, with gratitude, Shri Subir Das Mahanta, for his kind zest to translate my handwritten scripts in computer version with much hardship.

Tahiti Sarkar
Doctoral Student
Department of History
North Bengal University

C O N T E N T S

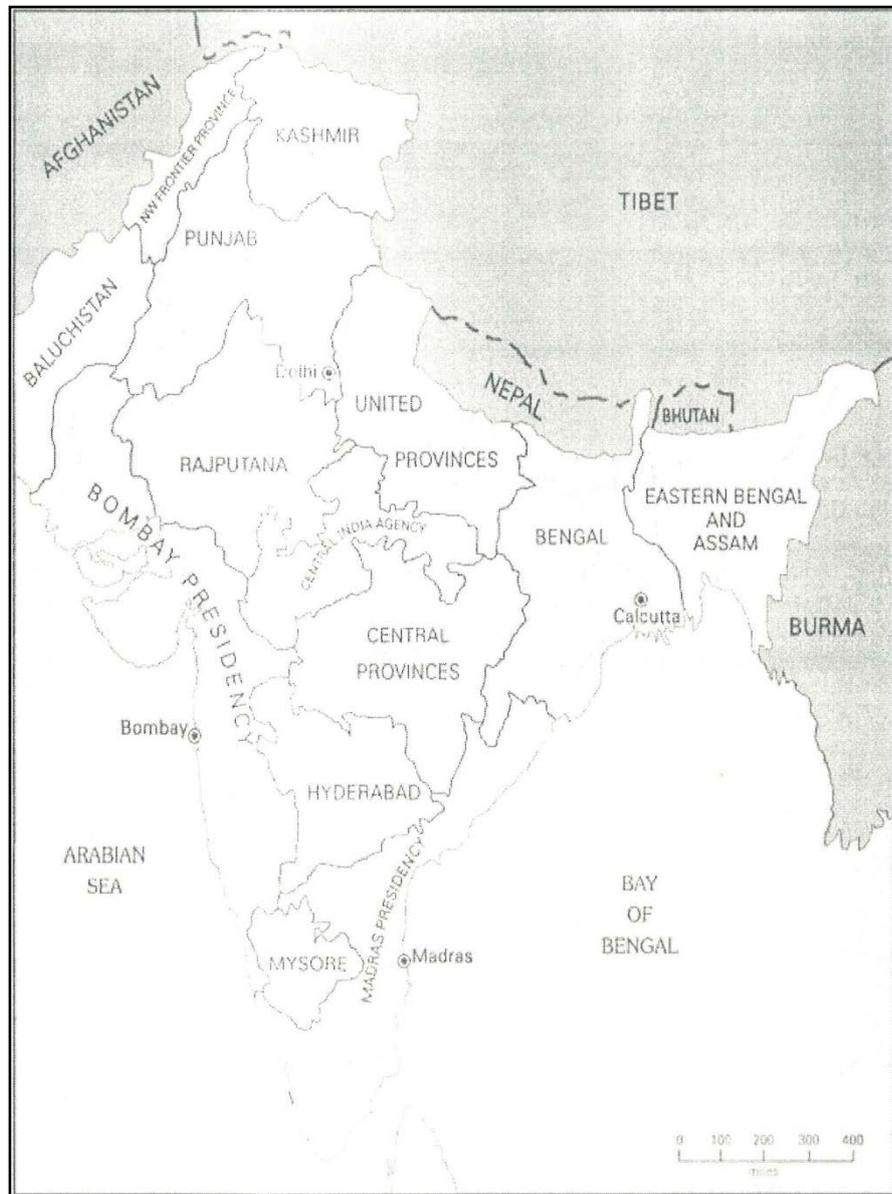
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G L O S S A R Y

<u>Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
<i>Begar</i>	: Compulsory labour provided by the subjects to the rulers
Hela Begar	: Begar which was given under special occasions to the royal family
Raj	: Rule
Usufruct	: Legal right to use and derive profit from property which does not belong to one.
Vakeel	: Refer to Attorney, Agent or even Ambassador
Khas Mahal	: Land owned by the Government
Sanad	: Treaty Document between the British and the Hill State, confirming their subsidiary status and recording the terms of relations.
Mulki-Ain	: Law of the Land.
British Sikkim	: A name formerly given to the hill territory of Darjeeling. It was originally applied to the hill territory ceded by the Raja of Sikkim in 1835. It was further extended in 1850
Morung	: Foot-hill or Tarai/terai/Turaee
Daling	: An old Bhutanese fort situated in the south-east of the Kalimpong tract to the east of Tista. The fort was stormed by the British in the Bhutanese war of 1864-65.
Senchal	: A mountain situated six miles to the south-east of Darjeeling at a height of 8163 feet above sea-level.
Duars	: Gate way
Dak bungalow	: Rest-house for travelers maintained by the Government.
Jhum	: Shifting Cultivation/ Slash and burn cultivation, under which a tract is cleaned by fire, cultivated for a year or two, and then abandoned, for another tract where a like process is pursued.

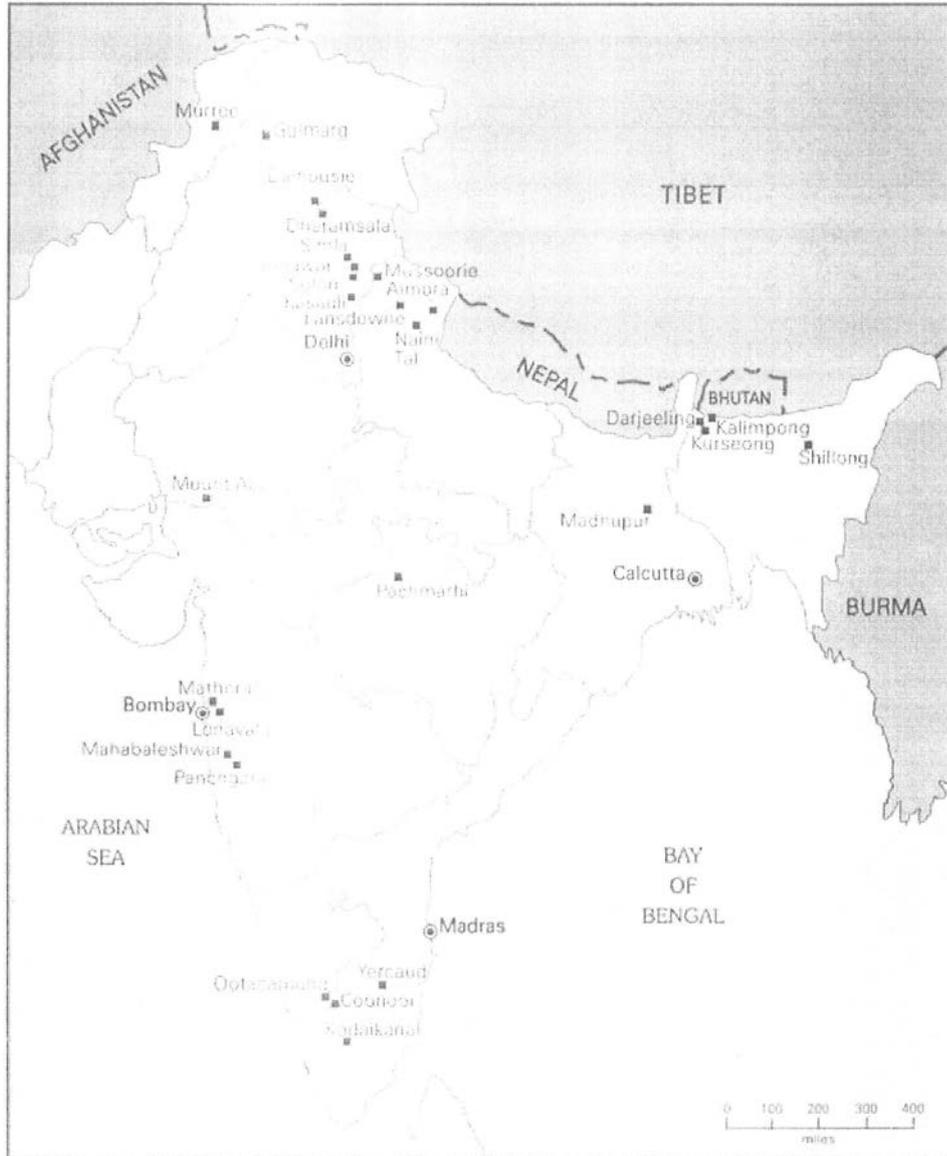
Toungya	: Sowing/ of forest trees species in conjunction with agricultural crop.
Zamindar	: A hereditary collector of revenue.
Pattah	: Land deed.
Raiyat	: A cultivator.
Bathan	: Cattle Station inside a forest.
Cooli	: Labourer who carry goods.
Kazi/Kazee	: Land lord in Sikkim.
C.ft	: Cubic Feet.
PRFALPB	: Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Lower Provinces of Bengal.
PRFAB	: Progress Report of Forest Administration in Bengal.
Mandal	: Village Chief.
Mound	: Forty Kilogram.
10 lbs	: 4.55 kg.
Kutchery	: Court house.

Map 1. British India (1909), with provincial boundaries and major railway routes.



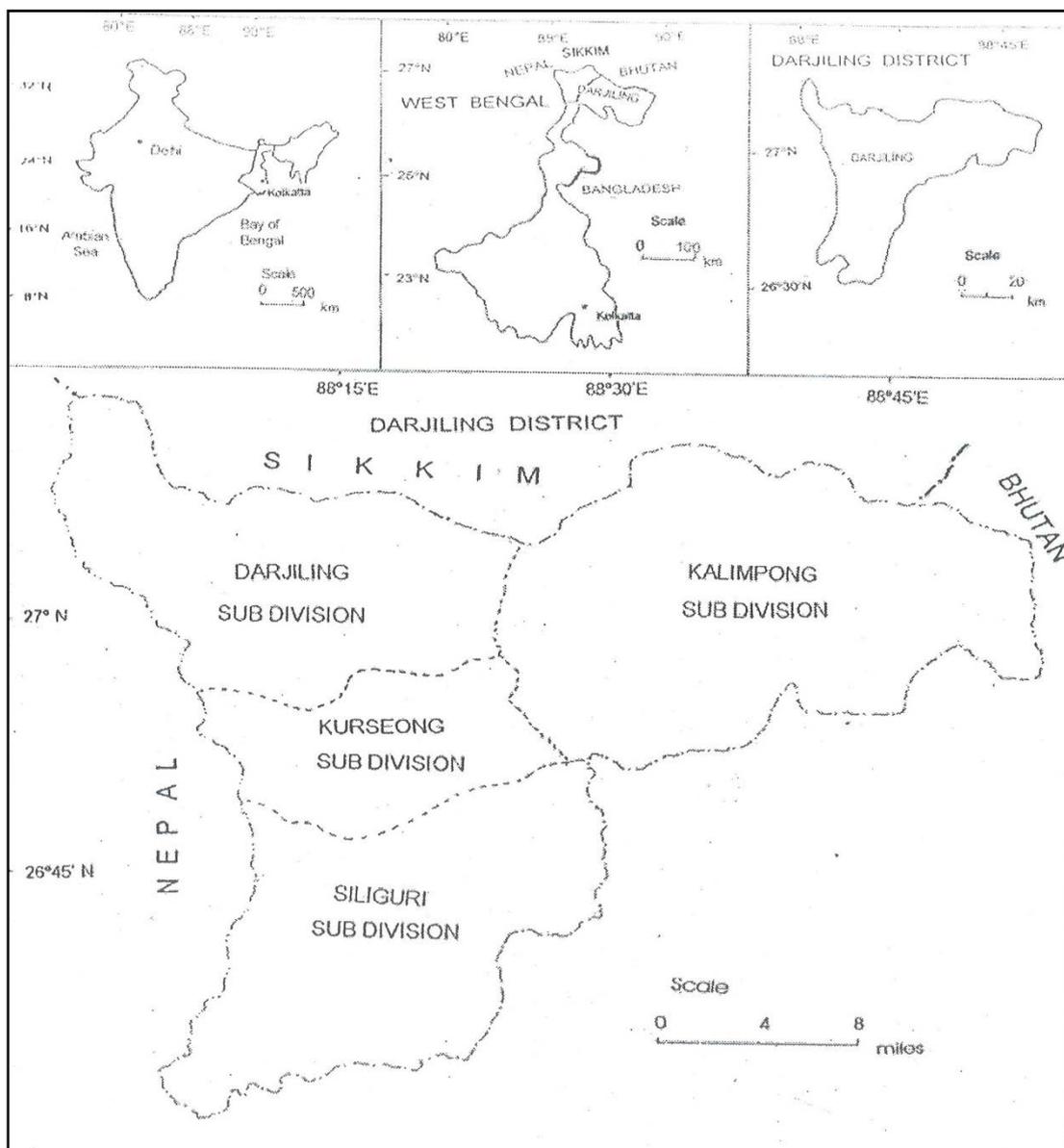
Source : Mennedy, Dane Keith, 'The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1996, p.XIV.

Map 2: The principal hill stations of British India.



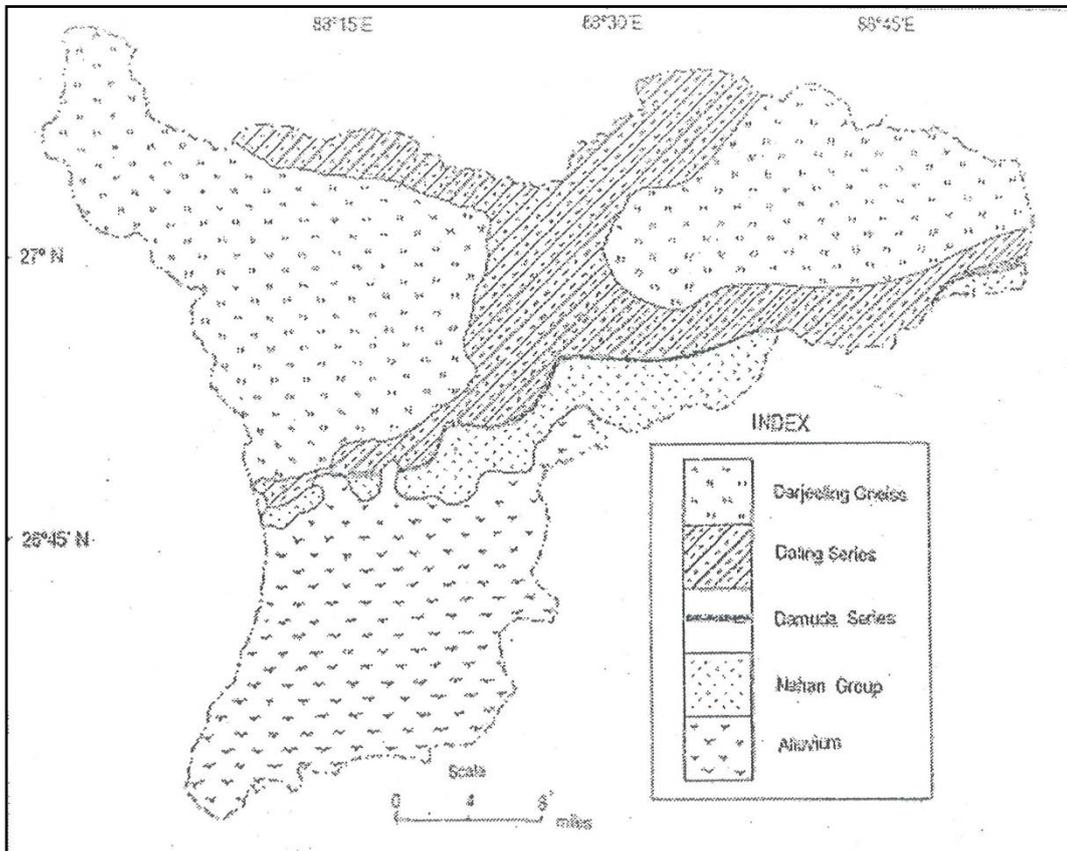
Source : Ibid., p.XV.

Map 3 : The location map of the Study Area



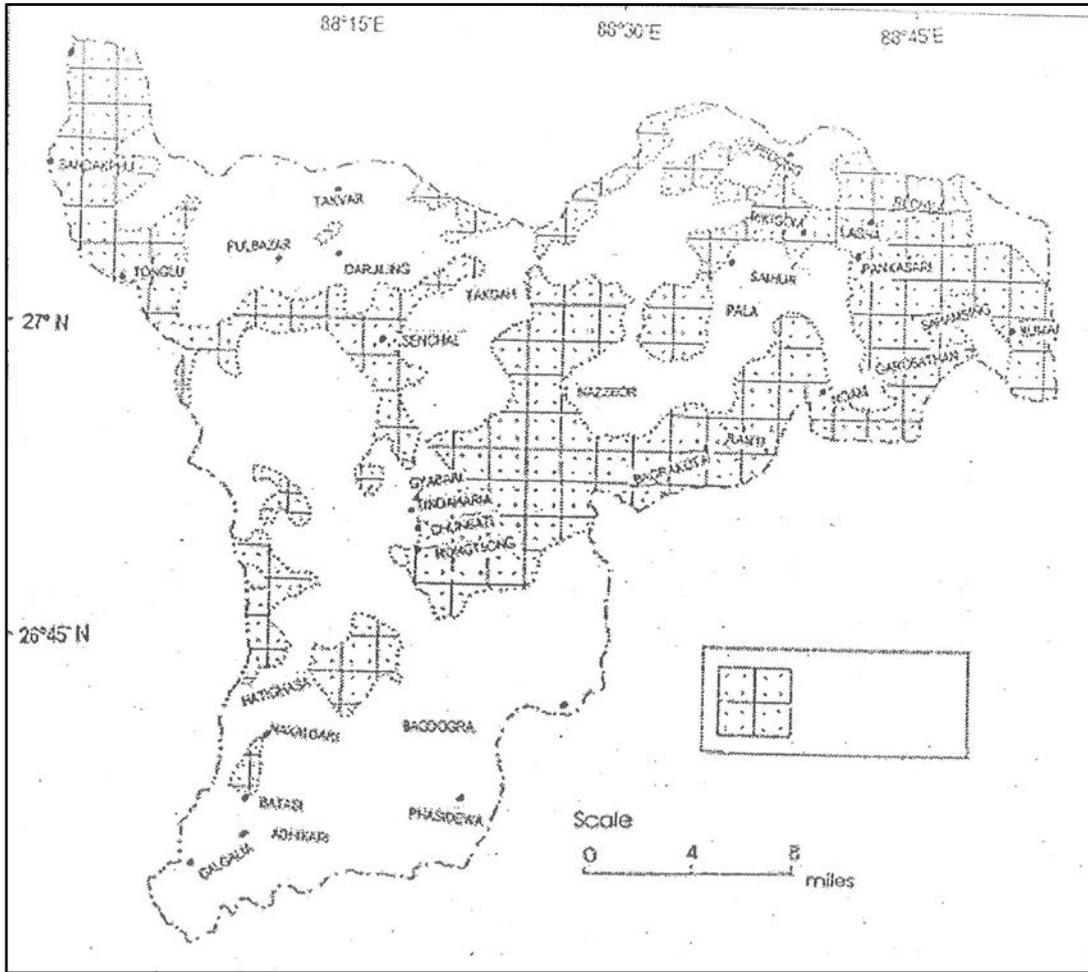
Source : Department of Geography, University of North Bengal.

Map 4: Geological map of Darjeeling



Source : Department of Geography, University of North Bengal.

Map 5: Natural Forests of the three Forest Divisions of Darjeeling in 1926



Source : Shebbeare, E.O. PRFAB. 1926.

Map : 6 Present Map of the District Darjeeling



Source : www.mapofindia.com accessed on 04.06.12.

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem:

At the very outset, it is submitted that the present study does not claim to be a comprehensive review of the subject matters of Environmental History and all the issues it deals with. This study is also limited in scope in terms of time span and geographical area, with a focus only on Darjeeling hills and a specific time period or different moments within a specified time span. The discourses of modern Environmental History cover such a wide area that it is impossible to cover all these in a single dissertation. Accordingly, this study restricts to explore the impact of humankind on the natural world and the influence of the natural world on human history that is the all comprehensive transformation processes and their impact on the landscape. Putting nature back to the historical studies, this study explores the ways in which the biophysical world has influenced the course of human history of the region under study in a given time frame, and the ways in which people have thought about and attempted to transform their surroundings creating thereby a material landscape as a product of human history. The relevance of the present study lies in exploring how British colonialism made an overwhelming impact on the natural world of Darjeeling hills and held responsible for ushering in material transformations.

This study focuses primarily on the history of Darjeeling hills covering a period spanning the beginning of British rule in the early thirties of the nineteenth century till the independence of India. The primary thrust has been to understand the intricacies of the dynamics of state making, institution building, socio-economic formations, factors and forces, civic-political structural formations, power relations and application of colonial knowledge in using the natural resources by paying attention to environmental conditions of Darjeeling hills.

Precisely, the study has investigated the nature of colonial interventions and colonial mode of industrial resource use which helped building and transforming the politico-economic structures, socio-cultural institutions of Darjeeling under colonial dispensation. The study attempts to inquire in details how such material transformations were taken place in Darjeeling and how such transformed institutions did reshape the landscape of Darjeeling from its pre-colonial primordial natural setting to the colonially cherished ideas and institutions of modernity and its unique development path heralding the 'proto-modern' phase- a period that witnessed intensification of commercial expansion and inaugurated European knowledge revolution.¹

The landscape of Darjeeling forming a part of the Eastern Himalayas is characterized not only by its distinctive climate, rainfall, soil, topography and ecological fragility but also by a deep historical, demographic, geographic and strategic sensitivity. The colonial official records inform us that Darjeeling tract had been sparsely populated if not "uninhabited". Captain Herbert described Darjeeling as a place "completely clothed with forest from the top to the bottom".²

However, Col. Lloyd reported that the spot so identified as Dorjeeling "was formerly occupied by a large village or town (an unusual circumstances in the country) and some shops were set up in it; one of the principal Lepcha Karjee's resided here, and the remains of his house, and also of a gombah or temple built of a stone are still extant; also several stone tombs or chatyas of different forms, Karjees and Lamas."³ Captain Herbert reappraised the fact that twelve hundred able bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim, have been forced to fly from Dorjeling and its neighbourhood, owing to the oppression of the Raja".⁴

There has been unanimity among the Historians, Anthropologists and Imperial Officers that Lepchas (Rong) are considered to be the most

ancient of all communities and may be described as original indigenous tribe of Darjeeling and Sikkim. L.A. Waddel informs us that the mountainous tract of Darjeeling belonged to Lepchas. Historians like Gorer, E.C. Dozey, G.B. Mainwaring, J.C. White and many others have agreed to this argument. However, Lepchas in Darjeeling had been reduced to minority through the gradual process in the whole course of colonization phase. The census of 1891 is a good pointer of the rate of Nepali settlement under British patronage (mostly tea labourers and a few construction labourers and forest labourers). By 1931 Nepali population in Darjeeling constituted 52 percent whereas, Lepchas formed 4 percent of the population. The census of 1941 further shows the steady growth of Nepali population (67.6 percent) and gradual decline of Lepcha population. Till Darjeeling tract was brought under colonial control, the indigenous people were continued to be governed by their customary rules, rituals and practices. This material linkage of life of the native people with Nature came under strain with the advent of colonialism in Darjeeling Hills.

Being convinced by the Reports separately submitted by Captain Herbert, Deputy Surveyor General and Mr. Grant, the Commercial Resident at Maldah, the Court of Directors of the East India Company issued instruction to Colonel Lloyd to open negotiation with the Raja of Sikkim for the cession of Darjeeling to the British Government for the establishment of a Sanitarium and to create a permanent Cantonment for the British Regiment. Darjeeling was ultimately occupied by the British through a Deed of Grant issued by the Raja of Sikkim during early February, 1835. The British occupation of 640 sq. miles area of Dorjeling from the Raja of Sikkim was made complete with the inclusion Terai during 1850. The Daling sub-division of which Kalimpong was the headquarters together with Duars areas were annexed from Bhutan Raja under the Senchula Treaty on November 11, 1865 and the Kalimpong hill areas were included in Darjeeling constituting a total Darjeeling tract of 1164 sq. miles.⁵

The British occupation of Darjeeling and their unbridled interventions in this landscape had significantly altered the nature of subsistence of the indigenous people. The infusion of colonial capital in the expansion of tea gardens had replaced the physical and material nature of Darjeeling's landscape. The replacement of barter economy by the monetary economy ushered in new pattern of livelihood. The change in the mode of resource use had brought fundamental changes in the society and economy of this colonized landscape. The application of colonial knowledge of science accelerated the process of transformation. Colonel Lloyd's Proclamation on October 12, 1838 is well apt to quote here while it reads, "*the people settled on the Darjeeling tract were now subjects of the Company and the Laws of Sikkim would not apply to them.*"⁶ Immediately in the next year Dr. Cambell's appointment as the superintendent, Darjeeling in 1839 was not only a new phase of officially asserting British political rights over Darjeeling but also had created an administrative space for the initiation of colonial state making and institution building.⁷

Immediately after the occupation, the entire Darjeeling tract was brought under the direct administrative control of the East India Company. The defined and designated Darjeeling land was initially administered by following the tradition of large 'non-regulation provinces' in which local level officials were given with huge executive discretionary powers to govern. Initially, Darjeeling was kept under the control of Bengal Presidency and was primarily administered by a Superintendent having tremendous executive discretionary powers within the broader legislative framework of Bengal Province and was kept under the control of the Court of Directors being Governor General on the Chair.⁸

It is to be noted that the nature of administrative governance witnessed several changes throughout the colonial period.

The advent of colonialism in Darjeeling and the application of Rules and Procedure to establish the institution of governance did always remain a hazard free exercise. The British established unquestionable legal proprietary hold over the entire forested tract of Darjeeling. The reasons are not far to seek. Neither the whole mountain tract including forest land was pre-defined as Zamindari Khas (self-cultivated holdings or under Raiyati (pre-defined occupancy rights of the cultivating tenants) nor the indigenous people of Darjeeling in the pre-colonial setting did even hear of the system of land holding under Permanent Settlement Act, 1793 or Bengal Tenancy Act 1885. The notion of land of the indigenous people was completely a different issue for they lived in and lived with nature. To them, land was not a commodity but a gift of Nature and a natural property of the commons.

The proprietary right over land and forest was a concept traditionally alien to the indigenous people. The forest based traditional subsistence economy was run on barter system and taxes due to the Raja of Sikkim were paid in kind or through labour. Hope Namgyal informs us that the land was not assessed and the subject was only obliged to give a small share of his labour, or the result of his labour to the state.⁹ This system of paying the government through labour was prevalent in all the Himalayan Kingdoms till the close of nineteenth century. In such a historic juncture, the British held absolute proprietary rights over the entire land and forests of Darjeeling. The quantum of economic and material changes that had ebbed and flowed across the landscape of Darjeeling under colonial rule resulted corresponding dispossession of the indigenous people and creation of new land holding class of tea planters. The material linkage of life with forest came under complete strain with the advent of colonialism in Darjeeling hills and Terai (foot hills).

Neither any official records on colonial Darjeeling nor any folk narratives would have us believe that there had been forests conflicts or intensive local opposition to the colonial state sponsored forest

conservancy at the one end and forest clearance on the other. However colonial administrative records inform us that there had been occasional violations of prohibitory forests rules by the local/settled populations in and around the forests of Darjeeling which may be seen as 'everyday forms of resistance'. In the name of development activities in surface and tea garden expansion in sublime, the colonial extraction of Darjeeling forests went unabated. Tea being designated as "imperial cash crop" had been the driving force of colonial efforts of materialising and modernizing Darjeeling landscape. What the indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills had to witness as dormant spectators was the expansionist power play of the colonial state in reorganizing and reshaping the landscape by way of infusion of colonial capital. Roads and railways, buildings and offices, private hotels and resorts, military installations, government and private houses, bungalows, massive tea plantations and tea factories, cinchona plantation, forest governance structures, urban civic constructions, missionary educational institutions, social institution structures by way of forest clearance had impacted heavily on the flora, fauna and human land use in general and on the environment in particular.

The colonial mode of resource use had ushered in new production relations and brought fundamental material transformation in the landscape of Darjeeling which in turn replaced the pre-colonial mode of resource use and traditional production relations. The old clan based communities, traditional class hierarchies got dismantled in the process of material landscape transformation. The imported labourers principally migrated from eastern Nepal and such other neighbouring areas to work as wage earners for tea gardens, railways, road construction and forest conservancy formed a new working class, being majority however, had no meaningful voice.

All these new modes of resource use induced transformations in the landscape of Darjeeling resulted to a strong colonial political regime, installations based military regime, colonial forest regime,

colonial planters' regime, and missionary based neo-cultural regime and middle class urban regime in Darjeeling hills. All these regimes were mutually corroborative to each other and in aggregate gave rise to a new ecological regime and eco-imperialist bureaucratic order which drastically replaced the indigenous ecosophical order in the landscape of Darjeeling. Such a colonially articulated socio-cultural and politico-administrative power regime engineered by the European notion of modernity, attempted to invest the idea of 'difference' in the minds of natives of Darjeeling. The natural difference between the people of the hills and the plains was thus purposively indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling as a unique socio-economic and cultural zone and finally as a separate 'other'.¹⁰

The history of material transformations in the colonized landscape of Darjeeling has not been well served and addressed by published or unpublished academic materials. Here lies the justification of the proposed study. A consideration of the Darjeeling tract (usually referred as "British Sikkim" by the colonial officers at the early years of colonization) in the face of colonial interventions would help understanding the roots of economy, politics and society of contemporary Darjeeling. Darjeeling hills experienced rapid transformations since the mid of nineteenth century owing to the massive expansion in the agro-based industrial frontier- a flourishing tea industry, cinchona plantation, military installations, urbanization, health resort, timber trade and tourism, labour import causing migration to Darjeeling hills from neighboring princely hill states from Sikkim, Bhutan and principally from eastern parts of Nepal. All these were taken place at the cost of forest. The official documents informed us too that the changes began with the incorporation of Darjeeling into the East India Company in 1835 and onwards, which stimulated such growth. Under the colonial rule, both roads and rails as means of communication with the plains were developed along with newly

evolved unique administrative governance under the strong colonial government.

The study of the colonized landscape history holds promise when Darjeeling hills landscape did develop in increasingly complex and materially meaningful ways. Here lies the relevance of historical and ecological enquiry of Darjeeling Himalayas. This region under study has been viewed as point of entry and place of departure for a larger sense of the environmental history of the peripheral India associated intimately with south-east Asian environmental history. Colonization has a vital decisive role to play in the evolution of material landscapes of Darjeeling hills. As colonial expansion proceeded, the environmental experiences of Europeans and settlers living at the colonial periphery played a steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of new European evolutions of nature and in the growing awareness of the distinctive impact of European knowledge and economic activity on the people and environments of the newly 'discovered' and colonized Darjeeling hills. The mid-nineteenth century emerging global framework of trade and communication as well as commercial industrial use of natural resources provided the conditions for a process by which European notions about Nature were gradually transformed, or even submerged, by a plethora of information, impressions and inspirations from the wider world. In this way the commercial and utilitarian purposes of European expansion produced a situation in which both tropical and alpine environment was increasingly utilized as the symbolic location for the idealized landscapes and aspirations of the western imagination.¹¹

The colonization of Darjeeling hills initiated in the thirties of the nineteenth century can be described as the transformation of a desolate country seen into an organized, densely settled and intensively exploited landscape through the mode of industrial resource use. The pressure of population on natural resources and on new modes of

resource use reached unprecedented levels with material interests participating in the colonization process.

Reviewing the Concepts:

The Eastern Himalayas:

The Eastern Himalayas (EH) lie between 82.70°E and 100.31°E longitude and 21.95°N to 29.45°N latitude, covering a total area of 524,190 sq. km. The region extends from the Kaligandaki Valley in central Nepal to northwest Yunnan in China, and includes Bhutan, parts of India (North East Indian states, and the Darjeeling hills of West Bengal), southeast Tibet and parts of Yunnan in China, and northern Myanmar. These five countries have different geo-political and socio-economic systems as well as diverse cultures and ethnic groups.¹²

The Eastern Himalayan region, with its mountains, valleys, and flood plains, is physiographically diverse and ecologically rich in natural and crop-related biodiversity. It is also significant from geopolitical, environmental, cultural, and ethnic perspectives, and in terms of its ecosystems. The region reflects its position as a globally significant region for ecosystem biodiversity, and the enormity of its services command area in geopolitical, demographic, and socioeconomic terms. For all these reasons and more, the EH region warrants attention of Environmental history. The Eastern Himalayas are considered multifunctional because they provide a diverse range of ecosystem services (provisioning, regulating, cultural, supporting); this also makes them useful for studying the relationship between loss of biodiversity and loss of ecosystem services. At the same time landscapes and communities in mountain regions were being affected by rapid socioeconomic changes. A part of the latter has been the principal concern of this study.

Material Transformation:

Before delving the history of material transformations in colonial Darjeeling let us have a quick browse on the idea of ‘transformation’ and ‘landscape’ so as to understand the material landscape transformation. Transformation is the creation and change of a whole new form, function or structure. To transform is to create something new that has never existed before and could not be predicted from the past. Transformation is what happens when people see the world through a new lens of knowledge and are able to create a material world, never before envisioned, to the future. Transformations represent a specific type of social change that may be grasped as an alternative way of formational change. Transformation occurs through a system of continual questioning, challenging, exploring, indoctrinating new knowledge and learning system, applying newly discovered science and technology, verifying and testing and creating new structure and function. It is a plural direction of system change.¹³

Transformation is a kind of social determinism inherent to the logic of history that shape individual and collective consciousness, and when necessary, justifies any act of violent or silent opposition. Transformation has been the continuous process of organic change in the structure of society as being propelled by several parallel factors. Transformations represent a specific type of social change, an alternative way of formational change like the formation of new governance structure, a new land-man relationship and evolving new political economy. Darjeeling hills under colonial rule witnessed post-feudalist transformations. In the process of ushering systemic changes, the role of British bureaucratic and military institutions, European planters and missionary institutions played a major role. Transformation of a particular space cannot take place in isolation rather it is intimately associated with external processes and forces including historical, structural, socio-cultural as well as extra-societal conditionality.¹⁴

While understanding material transformation over space and time, historical context matters inescapably for giving shape the localized socio-economic, geographic, anthropogenic processes into a trans-historical localized state formation. In fact, the range of transformation shapes the state-citizen relations involving extraction-resistance-settlement cycle wherein authority tries to extract resources to support its own activities from population living under its jurisdiction. Such extractions always subordinate survival of the local population. Sometimes, local population shows manifest or tacit resistance through their everyday form of resistances. Such struggle ensues in the transformed settlement producing synergic effects.¹⁵

Societal transformations possess specific *process structures* with own temporalities. Important elements are the *dilemmas of simultaneity*. These dilemmas refer to the complexity and the attempt of radical, holistic and fastest possible social change the transformations aim at. The politico-societal cycles are embedded in an overarching *three-period structure* of transformations.⁵: (1) the period of *breakthrough* or *the change of power*; (2) the period of *institutionalization* of the new order and (3) the period of *re-structuring* for the long-term processes of materialization as well as culturalization of the formally implemented new institutions.

The focal points of the theory of transformations are :(1) *Societies are always in flux*: (2) The centrality of actors and institutions as well as the attempts to control or steer the radical change of society; (3) *The complex dimensionality and contextuality of societal transformations*; (4) *Modes of transformation and transformation paths*.¹⁶

If one accepts the politically projected character of societal transformations and the crucial role of macro- and mezzo-actors in (trans-)forming formal actor-institution-complexes by borrowing or transferring from hegemonic model-societies and re-combining them with remnants of the old order, it is conclusive that any transformation

theory must focus on these processes including their historical, structural, socio-cultural as well as world-societal conditionalities.

Apart the general distinction of *types of transformation* with respect to the formational starting point as well as the target envisaged, the (re-) construction of modes of transformation and transformation paths represent one of the crucial goals a theory of transformation aims at.

Taking the idea of transformation into consideration, it may be argued that from the beginning to the end of colonial Darjeeling, the process of transformation belonged to history of the period duly cushioned by the then contemporary factors and forces. Such process of history had taken two closely related forms. In the first, the courses of mediations and military conquests had brought British East India Company to power in Darjeeling hills. Soon after the occupation of Darjeeling hills, the British military and administrative officials involved heavily in gathering resources and extraction thereof by evolving colonial mode of resource use. In such process of resource extraction, the newly created imperial authority imposed taxes, settled lands and extracted revenues. In the second variant, a group of European Tea Planters, administrators and traders drew riches from mercantile activities and from commercial tea cultivation. In both versions of the subordination process of the local/settled people, critical mechanisms inhibited direct political and administrative control over the supply of resources required for the reproduction of British rule in Darjeeling.

Landscapes:

In common parlance, landscape denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience in a way that neither region nor area immediately suggest. Landscape is not merely the world seen; it is a construction, a composition of that world. Cosgrove writes, "Landscape is a social product and an ideological concept. It represents

a way in which certain classes of people have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature, and through which they have underlined and communicated their own social role and that of others with respect to external nature.”¹⁷

Thus, one can have three distinct dimensions of landscape: (i) a territory involving geographical stakes and a boundary, or a political structure with centers, cores and margins; (ii) an ecological and geographical structure, namely soils, vegetation, hydrology, climate, human density and communication networks; (iii) a geo-symbolism or the symbolic structure of a geographical setting or its signification – All these together with represent the spirit of a place.¹⁸

Till nineteenth century, the idea of landscape came to denote the artistic and literary representation of the visible world that is what is viewed by a spectator. In the twentieth century, landscape denotes the integration of natural and human phenomena which can be empirically verified and analyzed by the methods of scientific enquiry over a delimited portion of the earth surface.¹⁹

In his book Mcinig (1979) has elaborated the concept of landscape. To him, ‘Landscape is a unity of people and environment which opposes in its reality, the false dichotomy of man and nature which has been regarded as a Victorian aberration. Landscape is to be judged as a place for living and working in terms of those who actually do live and work there. Finally Mcinig exposes two structural elements of the landscape – the individual dwelling as the primary landscape element and the prototype of the larger world in a culture, and a primary attention to the vernacular in landscape. Landscapes undergo change because they are expressions of society, itself making history through time.’²⁰

Environment and Landscape:

While the term environment is composed of the objects that we encounter in the world: hills and valleys, trees and fields, towns and

villages, houses and streets that is the physical perspectives. A landscape, however, is a culturally produced model of how the environment should look like. Thus, landscape is not merely an environment but the projection of socio-cultural and material mosaic in a given time frame engineered by politico-administrative power. Environment gets transformed into landscapes as people of a given society transform them. Sometimes landscape models get complicated because they can escape their original cultural and historical origins. Cultural and historical contexts and often political ideological texts alter the text of a particular landscape over time and space.²¹

Biographical and Path Dependency Approaches

Since late twentieth century, there has been marked change discernable in the interpretation of landscape. For example, Sharon Zukin (1991) writes, “landscape stretches the imagination from physical surroundings to an ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation.”²²

Mike Crang in his ‘Cultural Geography’, writes, ‘landscape above all implies a collective shaping of the earth overtime. Landscapes are not individual property, they reflect a society’s – a culture’s – beliefs, practices and technologies. Landscapes reflect the coming together of all these elements just as cultures do. Landscapes are seen as both a product of cultures and as reproducing them through time’.²³

For historians, landscape is a treasure full of information having culture-political antecedents in a flux of continuity and change over time and space depending on the development of material culture and its corresponding transformation. The material transformation of the landscape of colonized Darjeeling needs to be reviewed from this point of view along with two principal methodological tools of cultural biography and path-development approaches such as (i) Landscape biographical approach and (ii) the Path-dependency approach.

As a reaction to large scale transformations of land tenure systems, scholars in the late 19th century saw a growing need to reflect on the past in relation to the specific values of local, regional and national environments. Pioneering studies like those of Meitzen in Germany, Maitfield in England, Vidal de la Blache in France and Sauer in the United States laid the foundations for long and successful traditions of both historical geographical and landscape research. After the ecological deterministic and ethno-centric approaches of the 1920s and 1930s, historical geography of the post-war period mainly focused on morphological and morphogenetic approaches, in which the interpretation of settlement and perceliziion pattern played a major role.²⁴

A major change came in the 1980s. Since this period, modern cultural landscape research mainly focused on landscapes as a social construct, with emphasis of study focused on the values, meanings and attitudes that people connect to landscapes as well as the key related roles of power, justice, wealth and gender.²⁵

The British method of Historic Landscape characterization (HLC) focuses on the material landscape.²⁶ But, biographical landscape approach focuses that the idea of cultural landscape bears the multi-layered imprint of numerous generations of human “authors”, landscape as a palimpsest. From this point of view, landscapes may be explored from three ontological dimensions:²⁷

First, there is the physical dimension of the landscape. The immediately tangible landscape around us is called ‘matterscape’. Second, there is the social dimension of landscape which may be called ‘socioscape’ or ‘powerscape’ comprising all the invisible norms, values, meanings and attitudes which surround the physical landscape or matterscape. Third is the individual dimension, the ‘mindscape’ in which individual perception of the landscape is the key. It is reflected

through art, literatures, music and such other forms of creative expression of the human mind.²⁸

In this interpretation, a cultural landscape biography is both a description of the history of the material landscape and of the world of social meanings and individual ideas grafted onto that landscape during various periods. There developed an interdisciplinary dimension of regional landscape study by taking into considerations biographical approach and by combining geological, archaeological, historical, geographical, linguistic and anthropogenic approaches. While dealing with the landscape of the Darjeeling hills situated in Eastern Himalayas, one has to consider the colonial imprint in such landscape. Landscape thus consists of different time layers that are separated by time barriers. In order to understand the functioning of a particular layer one has to rely on the political situations of the time that created the very landscape. Lotman calls these borders or boundaries – a ‘cultural explosion’. Rapid landscape change is precisely such an explosion.²⁹

Another way to look to landscape change is the path-dependency approach.³⁰ Path dependency in Zarina’s words, “*describes the stability of landscape in relation to changes, its development in accordance with the continuing traditions of previous generations, inherited meanings and the creations of a similar social geographical space*”. She concludes that “by using path-dependence theory it is possible to understand a processes, where landscape is created by a complex interplay of necessity and chance and by social practices.”

Material Landscape Transformation

Darjeeling has had a primordial/feudal history of material landscape in pre-change, pre-explosion and pre-transformation period. In such a landscape, the system of land use must have been influenced by the agricultural politics of the tribal chieftains of the kingdoms of the Eastern Himalayas such as Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. After

colonial occupation of Darjeeling the demand for constructional/civic services activities for new lifestyles as well as for physical infrastructure implies new driving forces, new demands and new perspectives on the land. Such colonial interventions brought radical changes, with new regimes, and kinds of explosions that create new meaning system. We have lack of information what had been happening in the vast mountain ridges that surround Darjeeling during the long pre-historic period and obscured pre-colonial past. The Darjeeling landscape did not create from scratch; it has its history that could assist in forming sustainable landscapes. This will help us in answering why are landscapes and their development paths in similar environmental, socio-economic and political conditions different? The development path of each landscape depends also on local situation, political decisions and practices.

The quantum of economic and material changes that ushered in colonial Darjeeling gradually resulted corresponding dispossession of the indigenous people and created new land holding class of tea planters at the one end and tea labour on the other. The Planters enjoyed Government patronage. There developed intermediary sections, lumpens and English educated enlightened middle class service people too. The material linkage of life with forest came under complete strain with the advent of colonialism in the landscape of Darjeeling. Agrarian changes, concomitant state making and institution building, clearance of forests for making connecting roads and rails with the plains, commercial plantation of tea through private British players, invitation to the aristocracy of the neighboring plains for investment in making summer resorts by providing land at a concessional rate, state sponsored cinchona plantation, establishment of sanatoriums, resorts, military installations, introduction of scientific forestry, commercialization of natural resources and etc, had been the economic and social changes that had ebbed and flowed across Darjeeling territory under colonial control.

As a part of grand imperial project, the nature and character of British interests in the Himalayas in general, reflects two distinct phases in the development of colonial economy: the first being the mercantile exploitation under the Company, and the second being the expansion of commercial agricultural investment under the civil administration of the Raj. Thus, the major influences of British rule – land settlement, roads construction forest settlement and tea plantation settlement, governance structure were firmly put in place. Moreover, the summer transfer of the Bengal provincial administration to Darjeeling in 1879, lent its social space glamour and urgency. The British interest of establishing a hill station nearer to Calcutta was also accomplished at the cost of wilderness of Nature of Darjeeling forested tract. It was not only the shift in mode of production but also changes brought in the mode of resource use that transformed the lands and the matterscape of Darjeeling.

The Darjeeling hills under British occupation had been subject to sea-change owing to infusion of colonial capital in extracting resources positing thereby material transformation of the landscapes including lands and forests. Transformations, so taken place, had been in the form and functions, human settlements, social ethnic formations, rural and urban formations, commercial tea plantations, cinchona plantations, reorganized land tenure system, scientifically reserved forestry etc. The human contributions to the material landscape transformations form the subjects of academic concern of this study. While reviewing landscape transformations, this study presents a generalized history of colonized Darjeeling territory that encompasses the record of colonized society's interaction with the land and corresponding material transformations under British rule. This study explores the impact of humankind on the natural world and the influence of the natural world on human history that is the all comprehensive transformation processes and their impact on the colonized landscape of Darjeeling. Putting nature back to the historical

studies, the present study searches the ways in which the material perspective has influenced the course of human history in Darjeeling and the ways in which the colonizers had thought about and tried to transform their surroundings creating thereby a unique 'other' nature of Darjeeling as cultural and political product of colonial history.

Modes of Production and Modes of Resource Use:

Modes of production posit a combination of a system of productive forces with a system of relations of production. Mode of production presupposes the manner of appropriation of nature, while relations of production indicate the manner of appropriation of the economic surplus. The system of productive forces encompasses not only the means of production such as technological skill or knowledge but also social relations.³¹ Productive forces refer to three essential facts: first, the personal activity of man, i.e, the work itself; second, the subject of that work; and finally, its instruments. The means of production include the subject and instruments of labour.³²

Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP):

There are scholars who hold that the pre-British India's mode of production was that what Karl Marx called, 'Asiatic Mode of Production. The principal ingredients of AMP are: (a) the absence of private ownership in land and so the non-existence of antagonistic social classes, viz, landlords and tenants; (b) the existence of self-sufficient village economy marked by an absence of commodity production, markets, etc.; (c) the stagnation of social formation because of the unity of agriculture and handicrafts, and because of the absence of antagonistic classes (d) oriental despotism of the king as the state.³³

Modes of Resource Use:

While a large section of scholars denounced the applicability of Marx's mode of production and Asiatic mode of production theses in interpreting India's pre-colonial and colonial social formation, Madhav

Gadgil and Ramchandra Guha have proposed an alternative mode to complement the concept of modes of production with the concept of modes of resource use. For them, *“most analyses of modes of production have ignored the natural contexts in which the field and factory are embedded—the contexts to which they respond, and which they in turn transform. The concept of modes of resource extends the realm of production to include flora and fauna, water and minerals. It asks very similar questions. With respect to relations of production, for example, it investigates the forms of property, management and control, and of allocation and distribution, which govern the utilization of natural resources in different societies and historical periods. And with respect to productive forces, it analyses the varying technologies of resource exploitation, conversion and transformation that characterize different social orders.”*³⁴

The modes of resource use differs from the Marxian mode of production in one fundamental respect, as they argued, *“the industrial mode of resource use includes both capitalist and socialist societies, while there are significant differences between socialist and capitalist paths of development- for example, with respect to property and the role of the market- from an ecological point of view the similarities in these two developmental paths are more significant than the differences. For instance, there are structural similarities in the scale and direction of natural resource flows, the technologies of resource exploitation, the patterns of energy use, the ideologies of human-nature interactions, the specific resource management practices, and ultimately, the cumulative impact of all these on the living environment in capitalist and socialist societies. Consequently, it makes sense to treat industrial socialism and industrial capitalism as being, logically speaking, simply two variants of one industrial mode of resource use.”*³⁵

This study proposes to argue that the historical significance of material transformation in Darjeeling hills lies in the dependent development of industrial resource use under the aegis of colonialism.

Literature Review:

The new genres of writings on India's Environmental History have received impetus either from Annals School or from Post- Marxian Critical School and have been designated as Post- Colonial Critical scholarship on Environmental History. A good number of research works has been undertaken on North Western, Central Himalayas and Southern Hills relating to environmental issues which include colonial and pre-colonial forestry, forest rights of the indigenous forest people, development and displacement, colonial state making, socio-economic and politico-cultural changes. The Eastern Himalayas environmental history, especially, Darjeeling Himalaya has remained almost as a maiden field of research. Few landscapes in India have attracted as much least attention by the post-colonial scholarship in terms of material transformations and environmental enquiry as Darjeeling Himalaya. The history of material transformations in the colonized landscape of Darjeeling has not been well served and addressed by published or unpublished academic materials. Here lies the justification of the proposed study. A consideration of the Darjeeling hills tract in the face of colonial interventions would help understanding the roots of economy, politics and society of contemporary Darjeeling

The contemporary environmental history writing in India has attacked the imperialist notion and presented counter-opposing notion by initiating pioneering ideas and serious insights in this area. Ramchandra Guha and Madhab Gadgil in many of their articles and books challenged the central premises of the imperial scholarship. The works of Guha and Gadgil opens new area of interpretation and placed the subject closer to the central concerns of Indian History. Some of their arguments, however, have been criticized by Richard Grove, V. Damodaran, Mahesh Rangarajan, K. Sivaramakrishnan and few others. M. Rangarajan in his Book 'Fencing the Forest' and other essays argued that Guha's emphasis on the disjuncture owing to colonial rule

tends to neglect ecological changes in the period preceding British rule. In his recently edited book, Mahesh along with Vandana Shiva & Sivaramkrishnan attempted to provide a definite linkage between pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial environmental history of India.

Grove questioned the key assumptions made by Guha. He argued that as colonial expansion proceeded, the environmental experience of European and indigenous people living within the colonial periphery together, played a steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of the new European evaluation of nature and in the growing awareness of the destructive impact of European economic activity on the peoples and environments of the colonized lands.¹⁶ Some new interpretations came up in the recent years about different environment related issues vis-à-vis the role of the colonial government and the indigenous people.

The Book, 'The Origins of Himalayan Studies: Brian. H. Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling, 1820-1858' (2006), edited by David M. Waterhouse, has critically examined Hodgson's life and achievement, within the context of his contribution to British historiography of Nepal and Darjeeling. Brian Hodgson was a nineteenth century administrator and scholar who worked in Nepal from 1820 to 1843 and worked as an independent scholar in Darjeeling until 1858. The Book has been an example of serious scholarship in exploring Hodgson's writings which laid the foundations for the study of the Eastern Himalayan region especially Darjeeling. The Book consists of twelve chapters and each Chapter is well presented by covering different aspects of history, culture, ethnography, religion and ornithology of Eastern Himalaya including Darjeeling with reference to Hodgson's contributions. The Book is no doubt an addition to scholarship; however, it is restrictive to the form of a biography.

Widely most read Book of Fred Pinn, 'The Road of Destiny : Darjeeling Letters 1839' (1986), has been a strenuous exercise of his

decade long research in India Office Library, London and has filled up a major research gap in deciphering the early history of British occupation of Darjeeling. Starting from the Introduction to the Epilogue, the Book exposes to be a repository of original documents and official correspondences. Such documents speak for themselves. The Book is unique in its approach and presentation, however, is restrictive in providing message based on theoretical premises and is even inconclusive in content for purposefully making a balance of scale between colonizers and the colonized indigenous and exogenous people of Darjeeling hills. The Book has failed to relate the issues and events and material morphosis that took place in Darjeeling Hills under colonial rule.

In his Book, 'Modernizing Nature: Forestry and Imperial Eco-Development', (2008) Ravi. S. Rajan explores environmental history, analyzing forest discourses, policies and practices in continental Europe and the British Empire. The Book is divided into two parts; the first is a historical description of the development of colonial scientific policy and its application for commercial use in India. The second part examines the Empire Forest Conferences and shows the successes of such Conferences in establishing Forestry as a pan-colonial enterprise. Rajan's investigation clearly reveals the importance of colonial forestry and foresters in establishing a forest science in India, however, Rajan does not elaborate on the state-people conflict in his exercise. The principal limitation of the Book is it has avoided the existing theoretical debates on colonial forestry and it has been written on a macro scale, therefore, is devoid of any micro experiments.

In his Book entitled 'Becoming India: Western Himalayas under British Rule' (2008), Aniket Alam has attempted to explore the history of the Western Himalayan kingdoms, later to become the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Covering a period spanning the beginning of British rule in the early 19th century, Alam has shown the way the local society, economy and politics have been transformed and shaped

through colonial intervention within the regional environmental conditions. In his book, Alam focuses on the dynamics of socio-economic and political structures, institutions and power relations in the Western Himalayas under British rule. Alam makes a strong argument for the historical distinctiveness of the Western Himalayan states, geographically, culturally and socially. He argues that it was British rule that provided the “enabling tools for the social and political integration of the region” into the Indian nation. The author has tried to establish a link between the social and cultural landscape of the Western Himalayas and the plans of India. While doing so, Alam has failed to establish the intricacies of cultural identity dynamics with his functional interpretation. Alam’s Book is therefore remains ambiguous in focusing tensions between distinctness and belonging.

In her Book entitled ‘Landscapes and the Law: Environmental Politics, Regional Histories, and Contests Over Nature’ (2008), Cederlof Gunnel has examined the role of law in consolidating early colonial rule from the perspective of people’s access to nature in forests and hill tracts and is concerned with the social history of legal processes and the making of law. Based on archival documents and field work, in her Book, she has focused on the colliding claims to land and resources, and the complex ways by which customary rights in Nature are redefined and codified for securing colonial sovereign rule with reference to Nilgiri Hills. The Book is a major contribution to research on changing spatial relations and transactions, transformation of hill-plain relations and collisions between synoptic political visions and local knowledge systems and their implementation on particular landscape and people. The Book, however, fails to provide a general theoretical premise to be used to understand the notion of imperial law making and the response of indigenous societies having indigenous social orders of the pre-colonial times. Variations of regional histories and the corresponding contests over Nature have not been properly addressed.

Foning's Book on 'Lepcha, My Vanishing Tribe' (1987) is one of the serious academic venture ever undertaken by the scholars on Lepchas. In his exercise, Foning has attempted to delve into the details of the past, present and future possibility of the Lepchas as the original tribe of the Eastern Himalaya. Locating such area as 'Myel Lyang', Foning equates the land with the Garden of Eden. Throughout the chapters of his Book, Foning has attempted to explore how the Lepchas through ages have been the targets of exploitation, firstly by the pre-colonial Himalayan principalities and thereafter by the colonial rulers and even by the postcolonial state. Precisely, the Book presents the historical processes of marginalization of the Lepchas. However, the Book lacks methodological inquiries and is conditioned by subjectivity.

In her Book entitled 'Contested Landscapes: The Story of Darjeeling', (2007), Aditi Chatterji has attempted to explore the contested landscapes of the Indian hill station of Darjeeling ranging from the period of British occupation of Darjeeling to contemporary times as a form of urban and socio-cultural construction. In this Book, landscape has been viewed as a symbolic representation that developed due to power relations among the various ethnic and migrant groups who settled in Darjeeling at different period of time. In differently poised six chapters of her Book, the theoretical postulates have been unable to reach a definite conclusion that what led the altered landscape formation in Darjeeling. Her emphasis on urban Darjeeling to understand the processes of transformations is a kind of one-sided method of presenting the argument. The changed method of resource use, the altered propriety hold over land and forest, the infusion of colonial capital, the altered demographic pattern, the settlement change, the immigrated people from Eastern Nepal, the emergence of a renewed local language, primarily Nepali and thereafter Gorkhali, emergence Gorkha nationalist identity have not been given deserving due attention.

The widely read and referred Book of E.C.Dozey, 'A Concise History of Darjeeling District Since 1835 With a Complete Itinerary of Tours in Sikkim and the District' (First published in 1916, Reprinted in 1989), is an important repository of information to the researchers interested in British historiography of colonial Darjeeling. The principal purpose of the Book is to provide a guide to the visitors interested to visit Darjeeling. In fact, the Book is the collection of governmental documents guiding researchers to know the past. Indeed the Book reflects the institution building in colonial Darjeeling and expresses unequivocally that everything in colonially constructed early Darjeeling was unquestionably positive in nature.

The well researched Book of Prafull Goradia and Kalyan Sircar, "The Saga of Indian Tea", Vol.I, (2010), is primarily based on materials collected from British Library, British India House, London, Centre For South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, The James Inchcape Tea Library and other such august tea sources in the U.K. In this Book the authors have painstakingly explored an all India scenario of tea with a focus on Darjeeling as well. The British interest involved in the expansion of tea in India, the British ethos and the Indianisation have well been explored by the authors. The authors inform us that the credit for bringing tea to Darjeeling goes to Dr. Campbell. In 1841, there was successful cultivation of the plant at an altitude of 213.36 metres. The Book has presented extensive data on Tea gardens of Darjeeling since beginning of the tea plantation in Darjeeling and has analysed the techno-economic survey data on Tea of Darjeeling. This Book is indeed a store-house of information for the researchers working in the tea field. The Book remains silent on the tea workers working in Darjeeling Tea gardens and their uniqueness. The book has avoided to present any theoretical insights in its whole exercise.

In his Book, entitled "Contested Belonging: An Indigenous People's Struggle for Forest and Identity in Sub-Himalayan Bengal", (1997) Karlsson describes the development of the Rabha people, their

ways of coping with the colonial regime of scientific forestry and the depletion of the forests, as well as with the present day concern for wilderness and wild-life restoration and preservation. The principal argument of this Book relates to the question of identity as a form of subaltern resistance. The principal theoretical problem dealt with in the Book concerns the agency/agencies involved in the making of cultural or ethnic identities. Such theoretical issues can well be tested in identifying the ethnic identity issues of both the Lepchas and the other ethnic communities immigrated in Darjeeling Hills under British rule. The basic limitations of the Book is to identify Rabha people in a specific location of Jalpaiguri which is basically a misconception. Secondly, the Book suffers from theoretical dilutions in focusing cultural identity of Rabha people in isolation of other ethnic realities.

Thus, the study of the interrelationships of cultural-anthropogenic, politico-economic and environmental factors in the process of colonial institution making in Darjeeling has remained hitherto unattended. The general notion of modernity presupposes that nineteenth century colonial state making and the unquestionable colonial right over colonized land was powerfully influenced by the emergence of modernity. However the impact of such general notion of modernizing process must be varied in variegated regions and different patterns of landscape in different environmental settings. While applied to Darjeeling hills, this dimension of academic research has remained still unaddressed. No study has attempted to explore the fact that forest conservancy in Darjeeling received priority at a later juncture when forested land was adequately depleted and cleared for the purposive efforts of colonial mode of resource use in augmenting revenues and resource extraction. No study has attempted either to trace the root of land-man relationship in Darjeeling Hills. No study has so far been attempted to understand how did British 'imagined landscape' begin to get shape in Darjeeling Hills and how did such European notion of Nature, culture and development exert influence on

the indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills? No study has also been attempted to trace the history of change in the mode of resource use which played most crucial role in bringing corresponding material and cultural changes in the colonized landscape of Darjeeling Hills. The present study proposes to address such research gaps.

Research Questions:

1. How does landscape as an organic part of environmental history hold promise when the specific landscape did develop in increasingly complex and materially meaningful ways?
2. What were the motives of the British to occupy Darjeeling tract from the Rajah of Sikkim?
3. What were the colonial motives behind the early clearance of forests in Darjeeling?
4. How the colonial scientific forestry did meshed with imperial agenda influence one another?
5. What was the impact of colonial forest policy on the indigenous people of Darjeeling?
6. How did fundamentally altered mode of resource use bring changes in the demographic pattern and in the society, economy and politics of Darjeeling hills?
7. How did institution making take place in Darjeeling under British rule?
8. How did massive expansion of Tea Plantation and Urbanization impinge on the lives of indigenous people and exogenous immigrated labour force?
9. How did capital formation of colonial economy take place in Darjeeling?
10. Was there any continuity and change for Darjeeling landscape under colonial rule?

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. Colonization has a vital role to play in the material transformation of the landscape of Darjeeling hills. Colonialism had been the principal driving force in shaping and reshaping the landscape of Darjeeling hills. The colonization of Darjeeling hills can be described as the transformation of a desolate and partly devastated countryside into an organized densely settled and intensively exploited landscape.
2. For Darjeeling, colonial equilibrium between natural and social systems remained harder to sustain. Darjeeling witnessed sharp transformations in agrarian relation with noticeable and potentially irreversible changes in all other attendant relations due to fundamentally altered mode of resource use under British rule.
3. Agrarian changes in Darjeeling hills within the framework of colonial state making and corresponding ecological consequences and environmental implications should not be taken as a radical dispossession of the indigenous people, rather the establishment of unquestionable colonial proprietary hold over Darjeeling tract, colonial science based forest conservancy, commercialization of forest resource and lands, expansion of tea gardens, continuous immigration of Nepalis from the neighbouring states, imposition of prohibitory rules on shifting cultivation and grazing, cinchona plantation, rapid urbanization and such other corresponding politico-economic and cultural-anthropogenic changes that had ebbed and flowed across the colonial landscape.
4. The commercial and utilitarian purposes of British expansion produced a situation in which Darjeeling tract was increasingly used and utilized as the symbolic location for the idealized landscape and aspiration of the British imagination.

5. As colonial expansion proceeded, the environmental experiences of colonizers and colonized living at the colonial periphery played a steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of new European evaluations of Nature and in the growing awareness of the implying impact of colonial material transformations on the people and environment of the colonized landscape of Darjeeling.
6. The differences between the hills and plains were implanted and indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling landscape as a unique other.

Methodology:

A methodology is the theory of knowledge that tells us how to organize an academic discourse. In particular it lays the format for expressing the explanations. It is distinct from a method which is only a tool in the application of methodology. The methodology applied in this study has been somewhat eclectic borrowing ideas and concepts from different branches of social science and natural science which would share many ideas among them but are mostly consistory in nature regarding their positioning vis-à-vis social formation and the ideological structure within it. While applying such methodology, the specific methods used in this study have been historical and analytical taking both primary and secondary sources of information into cognizance. Primary source of information has been collected from archival documents, government records, rules and proceedings, working plans, unpublished documents, dispatches, acts etc., while the secondary materials have been collected from the published academic materials such as Books, Memories, Articles, Monographs, Newspapers, Census Reports, Gazetteers, Specific Forest Acts and Rules, Reports, unpublished Ph.D. Theses, Websites materials and such other relevant academic materials.

About the Chapters:

The study has been organised in seven chapters. The introductory chapter initiates with the statement of the research problem focusing specific academic thrust, principal concepts, literature review identifying research gaps, hypotheses, research questions extracting there from the objectives of the study cautiously dealt with by the methodology of research duly supported by both primary and secondary sources of historical information essentially relevant for the study. The second chapter entitled 'Colonial Occupation of Darjeeling Hills' examines the evolution of different phases of British occupation of this eastern Himalayan hill tract, the reasons behind such occupation, the resultant unquestionable proprietary hold over the entire forested hilly tract and terai plains. This chapter also examined how under British rule, lands of the commons, usually a pasture, waste land or forest or both had disappeared as a result of direct political intervention and regularization of the lands of the commons by the colonial interventionist state.

The third chapter, 'Colonization of Darjeeling Forest', examines how commercialization and commoditization of forest as mode of resource use were introduced in colonial Darjeeling at a later stage. By then massive forest clearance was taken place for expanding tea industries, cinchona plantations, roads constructions, railways and physical infrastructural developments for its geopolitical and strategic importance as a military station and for its climatic value as sanatoria, and as colonial growth centre. This chapter explored the material-social, cultural-economic, political and ecological transformation of forests and corresponding social relations of people living in Darjeeling. The British introduced rapid, widespread and irreversible changes at the cost of forest in making and shaping Darjeeling a location of importance which had concomitant ecological and social ramifications. The chapter further reviewed whether imperial forest policy efforts were

socially unjust, ecologically insensitive and legally without a basis in past practice.

The fourth chapter 'Expansion of Commercial Tea Plantation in Colonial Darjeeling' has extensively dealt with the history of plantation in Darjiling hills and in its Terai part revealing the effects on the demographic profile of Darjeeling and on the nature of its economy. The fifth chapter entitled 'Urbanization and Development in Colonial Darjeeling', has principally focused on the processes, factors and forces actively operated behind the growth and development of Darjeeling as a colonial hill station and its corresponding effects on the society, economy and polity; as well as corresponding ecological consequences on Darjeeling hills under colonial rule. The sixth chapter named 'Indigenous and Exogenous People in Colonial Darjeeling' has elaborately discussed different historical situations in colonial Darjeeling wherein such populations witnessed the high dozed imperatives of colonial interventions in their livelihood, society and economy. Finally, chapter seven has dealt with the 'conclusion' of the study. Conclusions have been reached on the basis of research questions and hypotheses verified and addressed by the different chapters of the study and have been placed systematically in the concluding chapter.

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CHAPTER II

COLONIAL OCCUPATION OF DARJEELING HILLS

Darjeeling hills are situated between 28°21' – 27°13' North and 87°59' – 88°53' East in the Eastern Himalayan region of India. Forming an intrinsic part of the Eastern Himalayas, Darjeeling tract stands distinct in respect of climate, topography, flora and fauna. Darjeeling hills have always been considered as a distinct phyto-geographical region with its distinctive climate and ecological system. Lulled in the lap of Singalila range, down through ages, Darjeeling hills thus form a distinct ecological zone in terms of specific variables of elevation, vegetation, climatic category, soil, topography, slope contours, precipitation and patterns of socio-economic adaptation. The vegetation and forests in Darjeeling Himalayas due to distinctive climate, rainfall, soil etc. gave birth to tropical rain forests to mountain temperate forests. The Darjeeling tract, till thirties of the nineteenth century, was covered with forests from the bottom to the top, characterized not only by ecological fragility but also deep historical and geographical sensitivity. Such a distinctive part of the Himalayas needs to be traced back in historical search taking as a peripheral border zone affected by colonial encounter in general and the anthropogenic and archeological historical processes in such colonially cherished and materially transformed landscape in particular.

While writing on 'British Conquest of the Western Himalayas, Aniket Alam, has rightly observed that *"the generic cases of territorial conquest by the British East India Company can be understood and explained through the global context of colonialism based on the requirements of ascendant British capital, which first needed to monopolize trade and latter the source of raw material and captive markets for emergent industries. Any account of colonial conquests in one particular region needs to base itself on these in the first instance,*

otherwise it has a tendency to become a study of colonialism without perceiving colonialism”¹ The history of Darjeeling hills under British rule may be placed in line with the above arguments.

Some major political and economic concerns made the British East India Company (EIC) interested in the Darjeeling hill tract. Establishment of political control by subjugating local/regional rulers of the Himalayan Kingdoms and extension of the geopolitical boundary had been the primary concern of the British ruler. The British wanted to control and to have direct access to trans-Himalayan trade for extracting profit and for the establishment of strategic control over trans-Himalayan border. The king of Nepal had an exclusive control over this trade because of its geo-political location and military might. The hill tract of Darjeeling had been a buffer location of such trade route. As a part of greater imperial power project, the British policy intended to curtail the power of the Gurkha King of Nepal. British and Gurkhali rivalries in the Himalayas came to a head chiefly over the desire to control the major trans-Himalayan trade routes, and the immediate cause of the war of 1814-15 between the British and the Gurkhas were some border disputes between the latter and some Indian States under British paramountcy.²

It was not just only the control over the natural resources but also the attraction of climate, physiographic and some major political and economic concerns that led the East India Company interested in the Darjeeling hill tract. Notwithstanding the attraction of the natural scenic cite and healthy ‘other’ of the dirty diseased plains of India, Darjeeling was actually conceived as a part of the colonial mainstream and was included into the greater colonial politico-economic project. The natural spatial features of colonial Darjeeling can well be identified with respect to its link with colonial political economy in which the Nature’s resources of all sites, however scenic, were subject to colonial capitalistic utilization. Therefore, a constant inherent tension between

Darjeeling's natural exotic and its functional elements persisted throughout the colonial period.³

The East India Company officials identified the potentiality for a sanatorium town at the site of a Lepcha village (Dorje-ling) in the eastern Himalayas. In 1828, Captain Lloyd, an army official, and J.W.Grant, the Commercial Resident, Maldah, under the instruction of the Governor General, arrived at Chongtung near Darjeeling and found the place ideal for the establishment of a sanatorium. Lloyd reported that the spot so identified as Dorje-ling "was formerly occupied by a large village or town (an unusual circumstances in the country) and some shops were set up in it; one of the principal Lepcha Karjee's resided here, and the remains of his house, and also of a gombah or temple built of stone are still extant; also several stone tombs or chatyas of different forms, Karjees and Lamas."⁴ In 1829, the EIC Board of Directors sent Captain J.D. Herbert, Deputy Surveyor General, to the site to explore possibilities for the establishment of a sanatorium for British Troops. Herbert described Dorje-ling as a place "completely clothed with forest from top to the bottom" and pleaded for the establishment of a sanatorium. Herbert reported, "twelve hundred able bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim, have been forced to fly from Darjeeling and its neighbourhood, owing to oppression of the Raja."⁵

The British encounter with tropical environment of Gangetic plains of Bengal gave rise interest in Darjeeling hills. The principal reason for seeking sanctuary in the Indian highlands was to escape from the heat of the plains and corresponding health hazards. J.T.Pearson, an Army Surgeon, who arrived in Darjeeling in 1839, informs "there is an elasticity of the air in these mountains, and freshness..., exercise gives all the pleasant glow of an English walk on a frosty morning."⁶ The tropical plains had divested the English physique of its natural self. The mountains were posited to restore it. The temperate climate, and the familiarizing and domesticating of the

mountains and dense forests rendered the British engaged in India, similar to British landscapes and to the Alps, an availability of leisure pursuits added to the appeal of the Darjeeling sanatoria. Brian Hodgson, formerly the British Resident at Kathmandu, and a polymath on eastern Himalayas, who spent a considerable period of retired years at “Brianstone”, Jalapahar, Darjeeling, wrote, “The fearful epidemics of the plains seldom penetrate the Himalayas, which, moreover, seem to have a positive exemption from epidemic diseases. For forty years cholera has ravaged the plains continually...But in all that period Nepal has been visited only twice and Darjeeling scarcely at all.”⁷ Hodgson’s view validated the need for high altitude sanatorium town for the British in India. Hooker endorsed the rejuvenating qualities of Darjeeling for Europeans. The British health authorities, however, were not able to proclaim the highlands fully free from the so called diseases of the tropics.

To put the argument differently, the nostalgic sense of loss of European vision of Nature and) natural beauty of the landscape came to be identified with the beauty of Nature of Darjeeling hills which was marked as an insulated colonial retreat both for the Europeans and civic personnel engaged in East India Company affairs with Calcutta at its Headquarters.⁸ However, with the passage of building Darjeeling with its administrative and commercial possibilities, the British sense of making European landscape were gradually intruded upon by the neighbouring natives settled widely in and around Darjeeling. Thus, the political control and extension of the geopolitical boundary had been the primary principal concern of the British ruler keeping aside the issue of Nature. The British wanted to control and to have direct access to trans-Himalayan trade for extracting profit and for establishment of strategic control over trans-Himalayan border by making Darjeeling a buffer zone.⁹

Before the beginning of colonial conquest, there had been a process of nascent society-state formation in Darjeeling Himalayas

viewed in terms of small scattered settlements of native Lepcha population, more specifically culturally distinct Tibeto-Burman language speaking population of Mongolian racial stock, principally out of Hindu religious and cultural fold.¹⁰ These people practiced shifting cultivation, herding and a small portion was directly or indirectly occupied with trans-Himalayan trade. Originally belonging to Sikkim, Darjeeling tract was conquered by Nepal and was kept under Nepali occupation till 1816. However, whatever small in number the population of Mongolian racial stock available in Darjeeling were associated culturally and religiously with the Buddhist Monastic principality of Sikkim. The Buddhist ruling institution of Sikkim had received back the Darjeeling hill tract from the British soon after the defeat of Nepal in the Anglo-Gorkha War. The Raja of Sikkim derived allegiance of this non-Hindu Population living in Darjeeling tract and extracted revenues largely from yielded agricultural produce or physical labour.¹¹ Land in Sikkim including land of Darjeeling tract was not defined but was attached to monastic estate control and down-level management was vested with Kat zees.¹² There had been presence of sub-infeudation in pre- British Darjeeling. In this sense, there were landlords to whom Raja of Sikkim granted lease of lands which they further subject to the peasants. The chief whip of the landlords was the 'mandals' who acted according to the desires of the landlords. Such an attachment provided the basis for political consolidation of the Raja of Sikkim.

Col. Lloyd informs us, "*Lepchas are migratory in their habits and quit the spot they have been cultivating at the expiration of the third year and take up a new location, often many miles from their former one on fresh land where they clear the forest and jungle and remain for three years after which they consider the soil exhausted and remove again to a third place. The institutions of the country are feudal, and the people belong to the same one or other chief or lama, or to the Rajah. To whomever they belong or are attached, they pay whatever revenue they*

have to pay, and do feudal services. In fact, the people are taxed and not the land, and each family is subservient to its own feudal chief, and no other but under him; to the Rajah the revenue they pay is a mere nominal one, generally in kind, as a man's load or two of paddy, and fermented murva for making shiab. Sometimes it is in money to about the value of eight annas per family, but the chief imposition is the necessity of giving personal services in whatever way the chief requires.”¹³

From British historiography on early colonial phase of Darjeeling, it has been assumed that in pre-colonial Darjeeling, there were two centers of political authority. Whatever little might be the number of native Lepcha population inhabiting in Darjeeling tract, the population were associated with two kinds of political authority—the Sikkim Rajah and the clan deity, while the latter ruled over population belonging to clan or clans, living in different parts of the territory, the former had control over territory. There was no direct rule of the Rajah of Sikkim over the population inhabiting in Darjeeling tract but rather one which was mediated through the relation between his patron God and the clan deity, was a clear reflection of the vulnerability of the state and its institution in pre-colonial Darjeeling. The nature of the revenue and labour demands on the peasantry were made by the deity and the Sikkim state. Land belonged to the commons and there was no personal proprietary hold over land. Thus, this was not based on the peasant's ownership of land or even on his ability to produce and harness various use values, but was based on his belongings to the clan which had certain obligations towards its protectors and patron, the clan deity, and towards the overlord of his deity. It was for this reason the Sikkim Rajas like other Himalayan Kings were always either personifications of some divinity or its regent on earth designating the nature of rule as “divine kingship”.¹⁴

Owing to very low level technology of primitive conventional mode used in shifting cultivation, the low amount of yielded production was not even equal to the necessities of the communities informing that

there were only very little that could be appropriated by the Sikkim Raja or clan deity. There were two principal forms of appropriating the surplus produced – in kind and through labour. Begar or labour service, was an integral part of the demand on the peasant family by the Sikkim state and the local deity. There were basically two types of “Begar” that are classified in British records. The first was called ‘athwara’ beggar used for portage, including carrying the revenue collected in kind to the ruler’s household or the store of the deity, meaning the choukis along travel routes and defending the resources of the ruler or deity, providing labour, food and other requirements for officials of the state and the deity, and service in the household of the ruler or the temple of the deity. The second form is called ‘hela begar’. This was the demand made on the subjects on specific occasions like birth, marriage, death, and festivals in the ruling family, or some special ceremony of the deity. This consolidation included labour, goods, and cash.¹⁵

Prior to the British inroad to the region, the process of nascent state formation in Darjeeling tract, forming part of the eastern Himalaya, can be viewed in terms of the gradual settlement of aboriginal population (principally out of Hindu fold) belonging to culturally distinct Tibeto-Burman language speaking Mongolian racial stock. These people practiced shifting cultivation, herding and a small portion was occupied with trans-Himalayan trade. Except the conquered part of the eastern Himalayas by the Gorkha rulers of Nepal, the Buddhist monastic principalities that controlled access to the high mountain passes along the Himalayan periphery remained independent of Hindu Domination. The Buddhist ruling institutions of these principalities derived their support largely from trade revenues and to a lesser extent, from tribute yielded by agricultural tenants and artisans attached to monastic estates. However, only the Sikkim and Bhutan Rajas were successful in extending their control over lowland tribal

groups. Revenues extracted in terms of yielded produce provided the basis for more extensive political consolidation.¹⁶

The rivalries between British and the Gorkha Rulers in Nepal have been rooted in the British imperial political and economic motives of expansion, intervention and revenue generation through extraction of resources. The British desire to control the major trans-Himalayan trade routed through Kathmandu valley and eastern Nepal to have access to unexplored settlements to market British manufactured goods in Tibet and China, which precluded the interest of revenues used to be earned by the rulers of Gorkha. It is to be mentioned, however, while the British troops succeeded in containing ambitions of Nepal rulers early in the 19th century, but not without conceding the broader demands of the Gorkhas for their territorial sovereignty. By restricting the Gorkhas within their territorial limits, the British had a larger intention to constitute the Gorkha Brigade which played very important role in extending British Empire to the entire Himalayan territory and for political consolidation and for expansion of British colonial economy.¹⁷

The British East India Company started functioning actively in India early in the Seventeenth Century as a syndicate of merchants with a royal charter for the exclusive trading rights in the Orient.¹⁸ By the mid-eighteenth century, the EIC over powered the French interest in eastern India and achieved revenue entitlements and trading concessions to territories within the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the ruling Mughal rulers. By the late eighteenth century, the EIC usurped the Mughal ruling authorities and successfully introduced an integrated revenue administration and agricultural and industrial capitalist development.¹⁹ As a part of imperial project, the nature and character of British Interests in the Himalayas reflects two distinct phases in the development of colonial economy in India: the first being the period of mercantile exploitation under the company,

and the second being the expansion of commercial agricultural investment under the civil administration of the Raj.²⁰

Newall (1887) discussed the strategic importance of Darjeeling and strongly advocated the military colonization of the hills. He referred to the views of Clive, Warren Hastings, Wellington, Munro, Bentinck, Metcalfe, Ellenborough, Dalhousie, Malcolm, Canning, Lawrence and others, all of whom had favoured hill colonization. According to him, *“The occupation of a ridge of mountain forming water parting whence issued the rivers which fertilise that adjacent lowlands must at once strike the eye of the military critic as the true line of domination of the plain country embraced within those rivers”*.²¹ He therefore argued that the troops in the mountain ranges of Garhwal and Kumaon should command the Doab, through Dehra Dun, as far as Allahabad. The group of hill stations encompassing Almora, Nainital and Ranikhet should command Rohilkhand, Oudh and the area as far as the Ganges. Troops at Darjeeling should command south-east Tirhut and Bengal as far as the Brahmaputra. Moreover, in the event of war with Nepal, Newall believed that Darjeeling would constitute the refuge of the whole district and might find it difficult to maintain itself.

There were several splendid plateaus in Darjeeling and across the Tista suitably adopted for this purpose. Newall suggested that an arrangement could be made with the Raja of Sikkim according to which the country up to the frontier might be acquired in return for a pension or money gratuity. Newall hoped that *“The country up to the granite walls of Thibet would then be ours, and available for settlement, and I scarcely know of any country more calculated to form a refuge or “military circle” such as I have suggested. In this fine hill district, then, since Nepal and Valley of Khatmandoo cannot be availed of, I would suggest the establishment of a Grand Southern Military Reserve Circle for Bengal”*.²²

It is evident that Darjeeling occupied a very important strategic location in the British Indian defense parameter. The cantonments at Jalapahar and Katapahar developed as a spatial response to the need for defending the British Indian Empire.²³

Much of the development of commercial agriculture in the Himalaya was concentrated in its eastern parts primarily due to their close proximity to Calcutta and other ports on the Bay of Bengal. From the initial years of the 19th century, the EIC began to take active interests in Darjeeling. The entire Darjeeling tract came under British occupation in three phases spanning from 1835-1865. Darjeeling had been a military garrison of the Gorkhalis and also the director recruitment centre of the Gorkha Brigade military personnel before Darjeeling was restored to the Chogyal of Sikkim. The first phase of colonial occupation of Darjeeling began during early February 1835 when by a Deed of Grant, the Sikkim Raja 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, Kehel and Little Rangit rivers and West of the Rangnu and Mahananda rivers.²⁴

The second phase of colonial occupation was resulted in the annexation of Sikkim's 'Morang' or Terai at the foot hills and a portion of the Sikkim's mid-land hills which was bounded by the Rammam river on the north, by the Great Rangit and Tista rivers on the east, and by the frontier of Nepal on the west. This area of Sikkim was conquered by Nepal and was under the possession of the latter from 1788 to 1816. Only in 1816, after the defeat of Nepal at the hand of EIC this tract was ceded to EIC by the Treat of Segauli (1816). However, the EIC returned this tract to the Raja of Sikkim by the Treaty of Titaliya (1817). Ultimately, however, this territory was annexed with British India followed by a war with Sikkim and was ratified by the Treaty of Tunlong (1861).²⁵

This phase of colonial occupation of Darjeeling Hills was marked by the British annexation of the hill tract, a portion of which originally belonged to Sikkim but wrested by Bhutan and a considerable portion of land belonging to Sikkim. Such annexation of Bhutanese land and or a portion of land possessed by Bhutan were the outcome of Anglo-Bhutan War which ceded in the Treaty of Sinchulia (1865). This tract was situated to the east of the Tista river, the west of the Ne-Chu and De-chu rivers, and the south of Sikkim.²⁶ Thus, the history suggests that the land of Darjeeling Hills originally belonged to Sikkim and Bhutan and there is no recorded historical evidence that Darjeeling Hills was ever a part of Nepal. The Terai portion of the Siliguri and Kurseong sub-divisions was for the time being conquered by Nepal from Sikkim, but was restored by the British and was returned back to Sikkim in 1816.

Principally, based on English utilitarian ethos of imperial expansion the EIC had the desire to control the major trans-Himalayan trade routes through the Kathmandu valley and principally through the Eastern part of Nepal. The British had in mind to tap the markets of Tibet and China for the British manufactured goods. The geopolitical importance of Darjeeling Hills safeguarding the northern border of India against China and Tibet turned out to be the guiding parameters in the policy of the EIC towards the principalities of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. In this effort, Sikkim came into prominence as it held the strategic position as its borders touched China, Nepal, Bhutan and India. The historic Kalimpong-Lhasa trade route was the shortest one from India to the heart of Tibet. Two main ranges of the Himalayas – the Singalila range and the Chola range – enclosed Sikkim on the North of Darjeeling and it was bounded on either side by Nepal and Bhutan.²⁷

Thus, with Sikkim and Darjeeling hills being a part of the former, the commercial compulsions of the British were also closely associated. By occupying Darjeeling tract from Sikkim and Bhutan, the English traders started to increase trade with Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet through

Darjeeling. While the export items consisted of European piece-goods, rice, salt, indigo, brass, copper wares, tobacco etc., the import items included horses, blankets, tar, tea, coal, wool, musk, musical instruments and shoes. Throughout the nineteenth century, the volume of trade through Darjeeling went on increasing and the prospects of the central Asian trade through Darjeeling via Sikkim, Darjeeling Himalayas appeared to be more promising. The consecutive war defeats with the British had compelled Nepal to be kept low and to be satisfied with the restrictively defined independent territory. For her political existence felt, Nepal maintained a friendly relation with the British from the mid of nineteenth century.²⁸

The apparent compatible relationship between British India and Nepal provided a congenial political ambience which can well be treated as a major factor for the British thought towards Darjeeling. During the Prime Ministership of Jung Bahadur Rana (1846-77), the Gorkha king of Nepal was ceased to become a titular head, when Rana being Prime Minister had become the de-facto Head of the State, the process of subservience to the British rulers was set in motion. Jung Bahadur paid tributes to the British by directly providing military support to the British Government at different was fronts. Jung Bahadur not only provided military support to British in the Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49), but also physically presented as the head of nine thousand Nepali soldiers²⁹ to help the British to suppress the Great Sepoy Revolt in 1857 and rescued Lucknow from the rebel hands.³⁰

Darjeeling then became an important centre to recruit Gurkhas and to enlist them in the British Army along with Gorakhpur in view the capacity, potentiality and endurance to fight in the difficult terrain, and the unquestionable resistance free loyalty of the Gurkhas. Thus while Nepal remained independent of direct British rule, their subjects constituted an army of reserve labour. Since, Nepal disallowed any British Military recruitment centre within their territorial limits, Darjeeling had become the principal location of such recruitment. The

availability of Gurkha personnel in British Army at a very cheap rate due to weak agrarian system in Eastern Nepal as well as the eviction of the low caste Nepali from eastern Nepal added additional momentum in such process. With the occupation of Darjeeling by the EIC, such recruitment centres in and around Darjeeling grew in number.

E. Drummend, the then Magistrate of Dinajpur, urged upon the Government of Bengal to accelerate the process of recruitment as *“they would in every way be more efficient, courageous and trustworthy body of men than any to be held in the plains”*.³¹ Indeed, this was the beginning of the formulation of “martial race” theory, which Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army (1885-1983), subsequently made the corner-stone of the British recruiting policy in armed forces. The Commander-in-Chief must have had in his mind the bitter experience of Sepoy Rebellion largely shared by the Hindusthani Sepoys, Marathi and Tamil and Telegu speaking sepoy. To Lord Roberts, *“the first step towards improving the quality of army was to substitute men of more warlike and hardy races for the Hindusthani sepoy of Bengal, the Tamils and Telegus of Madras and the so-called Marathas of Bombay.”*³²

Above all, the Gurkhas were devoid of any incipient nationalist feelings, however, loaded with orthodox religious taboos. Infact, low caste Nepali Gurkhas living in the eastern part of Nepal was out of the higher caste Hindu hierarchical order. These entire factors led the Bengal Government to respond positively for the increase of Gurkhas recruits in British Army. Resultantly, the increase in the number of the Gorkhas battalions was dramatic, from five in 1862 to twenty in 1914. Darjeeling became an important recruiting centre for these battalions because the Nepali rulers in Kathmandu did not initially favour recruitment of Gorkha soldiers for Indian Army from within Nepal. The privileges and benefits provided to the Gurkhas and the post-retirement benefits had been the principal attractive force which made Gurkhas interested to join in Indian Army. The uninhabited Terai and Darjeeling

hills became the abode of retired military personnel belonging to Gurkha community (all categories of Nepali speaking recruits were known as “Gorkha” in the British Indian Army).³³

Darjeeling had remained as a military garrison of the Gorkhalis as well as also the direct recruitment centre of the Gorkha Brigade of the British Indian Army before Darjeeling tract was restored to the Chogyal (Raja) of Sikkim from Nepali’s occupation at the end of Anglo-Gorkha War in 1816. Darjeeling tract including hills, Terai and Doars parts were brought under direct colonial control through three distinct phases. The first phase of colonial occupation of Darjeeling was thus initiated during February 1835.³⁴ When Col. Lloyd was directed by the Governor General to negotiate with the Rajah of Sikkim to have Darjeeling, a place of land as grant for the establishment of a sanatorium. Col. Lloyd was empowered by the East India Company to work in three capacities, firstly, as the Government Agent-in-charge of relations with the Rajah of Sikkim; secondly, as in-charge of the establishment of a sanatorium or hill station of Darjeeling, and thirdly, as the in-charge for the construction of Darjeeling road.³⁵ As a mark of respect to British ruler and on receipt of a proposal for establishing a sanitarium and to create a permanent cantonment for the British regiment by a Deed of Grant, the Chogyal of Sikkim ceded to the British rulers a portion of Sikkim hills which covered the areas south of the Great Rangit river, east of the Balasun, Kahel and Little Rangit rivers and West of the Rangnu and Mahanadi rivers.³⁶

The third phase of colonial occupation of Darjeeling was marked by the annexation of Kalimpong hills and Doars, a natural forested and agricultural and mercy land space which originally belonged to Sikkim but wrested by Bhutan excepting a small tract still belonged to Sikkim. By virtue of the Treaty of Sinchulia (1865) concluded immediately after Anglo-Bhutan War, the Kalimpong Tract both hills and doars was brought under British rule. This tract of land situated to the east of the Tista river, the west of the Ne-Chu and De-Chu rivers and the south of

Sikkim. The most important institution which continued even after this part of the region came under the British Control was 'mandali' or headman.³⁷ His duty was not only to collect rents from the raiyats or peasants but also settled the disputes between the villagers on behalf of the Bhutan King. After all these three phases of occupation the British occupied Darjeeling constituted a total land-mass of 1164 sq. miles.³⁸

Till Darjeeling tract was brought under colonial control, the pre-colonial Darjeeling was thus a forested landscape of differentiated mountain ridges, grasslands, wastelands, mercy lands and pastures of low, medium and high ridge mountains and terai lands of undulated nature. As Jhoom or shifting cultivation was the mode of agricultural produce, there was in fact no defined agricultural land and codified system of land tenure. The indigenous people were continued to be governed by their customary rules, rituals and practices. These people lived in and lived with nature. In fact, the notion of land of the indigenous people was intrinsically linked with Nature. To them, land was not a commodity but a gift of nature and was a natural property of the commons. Since this forested tract was never measured and defined, there was no personal proprietary hold over this entire forested land.

Immediately after the cession of Darjeeling, the British ruler established unquestionable supremacy over the entire Darjeeling tract. Col. Lloyd issue a Proclamation on October 12, 1838, which reads, "the people settled on the Darjeeling tract were now subjects of the Company and the laws of Sikkim would not apply to them".³⁹ With the declaration of such Proclamation, Lloyd imposed revenues on the native Lepchas. However, the intention of the East India Company was markedly different. Instruction was issued to Lloyd by His Honour in Council which stated clearly, "Your purpose of it was intended merely to fix the term on which settlers of native tribes should be permitted to locate would have been sufficiently answered by a notice addressed to such persons in a different form requiring them, when desirous of

settling, to state their intention and obtain from you an order for permission of the lands selected by them. The terms on which locations ought to be assigned to settlers of this description must depend upon the purposes for which they come to settle as well as upon the localities selected by them.”⁴⁰ Certain points crop up from the Instruction of the Company Government, for example, the Government did not appreciate the hasty imposition of revenue and such unilateral action of Col. Lloyd. Since there was no land map or no land settlement in pre-colonial Darjeeling, the East India Company’s Agent was given the authority to allow people to settle with an affirmation of the Agent only. The Proclamation of Col. Lloyd thus remained non-ratified. Lloyd could no longer remain in the good book of the Company Government due to complaints against him from various corners. After Lloyd had initially organized the labour for building the road to and market in Darjeeling, he was replaced by Surgeon Major, Dr. Arthur Cambell, formerly and Assistant Resident in Nepal. Dr. Cambell was vested with the civil charge of Darjeeling as Superintendent and was empowered with wide ranging fiscal, civil and judicial and land tenure powers for the expansion of Darjeeling. Dr. Cambell remained in office for a long twenty two years at a stretch. The efforts of Cambell in land revenue administration made Darjeeling a station fit for leisure seeking Europeans and an important trading centre and tea producing zone.

In pre-colonial setting, the Darjeeling tract was neither pre-defined as Zamindari Khas or self-cultivated holdings nor was put under Raiyati (occupancy of the cultivating tenants). Moreover, there had been the absence of Jungle Zamindars. For Darjeeling, the system of land holding under Permanent Settlement Act, 1793 or under Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 had always remained as misnomers. The proprietary right over land and forest was a concept traditionally alien to the indigenous people of Darjeeling. People were only obliged to give a share of their labour or the result of his labour to the Raja of Sikkim. This system of paying the state through labour was prevalent in all the

Himalayan principalities till nineteenth century.⁴¹ The material linkage of life of the indigenous people with Nature came under strain with the advent of colonialism in Darjeeling hills.

The application of colonial knowledge of science and administration based on utilitarian philosophy initiated the process of transformation of human-nature relations in Darjeeling hills. Immediately after the occupation, the entire Darjeeling tract was brought under direct administrative control of the East India Company. The British established unquestionable propriety hold over the entire land of Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling was initially administered by following the tradition of 'non regulation scheme' in which local level officials were provided with huge executive discretionary powers to govern. Darjeeling was kept under the control of Bengal Presidency and was primarily administered by a Superintendant who was given huge executive discretionary powers within the broader legislative framework of Bengal province. The Superintendent was kept under the control of the Court of Directors being Governor General on the Chair.

From 'Bengal Hurkaru', it is known that most of the plots of the 'identified station', Darjeeling, were initially distributed by the EIC Government from Calcutta. The Company Government attracted the attention of the European officials, traders, hoteliers and indigenous elites, Rajas, Zamindars and aristocrats to purchase plots at a very low cost in the form of revenue by projecting the possibilities of Darjeeling as a health station. People of social and administrative rank and file started responding to the call. The grantees/lessees of such plots formed Darjeeling Association Committee. To put differently, the members of such Committee were the principal stake holders of Darjeeling station. The Editor of 'Hurkaru', Samuel Smith was the grantee of two plots of land at Darjeeling; Prince Dwarkanath Tagore had been the lessee of location no. 11 along with Darjeeling station's main street.⁴² Major E. Grastin, the Chief Executive Engineer of the Lower Provinces was the lessee of two locations of Darjeeling.⁴³ From

the sketch plan of Darjeeling drawn in 1840, it is shown that out of forty five identified locations forty three plots were granted to thirty two numbers of grantees. Col. Lloyd, Grastin, Martin and Sam Smith owned two plots each. Dr. Pearson had three plots and Mr. Hepper four. Twenty eight plots of Lebong, the northern extension of Darjeeling were provided to Mr. Hepper and one Mr. Martin. Most of the grantees and lessees of Darjeeling plots were interested in speculation and gamble with the plots.⁴⁴

In his Report, usually called Grastin Report, submitted to H. M. Low, Esq., Secretary to the Darjeeling Committee, Major Grastin stated, inter alia, "...all such ground as may be required for public purposes be at once resumed and set apart, and that to prevent future disputes a committee be formed to mark out all the allotments and to see that their boundaries are clearly defined, and to settle the ground rent to be paid for the same."⁴⁵ Mr. Low forwarded the Grastin Report in its entirety with his observations. The response of the Government was positive as was discerned from its subsequent actions. Two of first applications for grants of land to reach Dr. Cambell, the newly appointed officer in civil charge, Darjeeling, came from H.M.Low and Col. Lloyd. The Officer in civil charge sent those applications to the Government for consideration. In reply to Col. Lloyd's application asking for a land of more than one square mile at Kurseong, the Secretary of the Political Department wrote, "... I am desired to state that the President-in-Council declines to interfere with the discretion necessarily vested in the Officer in Civil Charge of Darjeeling with respect to the admission of claims to particular localities, and likewise in respect to the extent of land which a single individual is to be allowed to occupy on any spot favorable to the erection of houses, for farming or garden purposes. This Officer has been called upon to frame and submit for the approval of the Government a detailed set of rules applicable to grants of all description and you will be entitled to the full benefit of them, but His Honor-in-Council declines to make any pledges

as anticipated as to hold out to you the hope of many more than will be offered to all".⁴⁶

From the above Communication, it transpires that Lloyd's hope of getting a square mile land at Kurseong was not realized. The Government was sincere to establish a civic system in granting lands through a set of rules. Dr. Cambell was authorized to frame such rules and to work upon it with the approval and authority of the Government. Accordingly, on 1st August 1839, Dr. Cambell sent his draft rules for regulating the assignment of building locations and grants of lands in the hill tract of Darjeeling for the consideration of Government. The draft was sent by the Government to Darjeeling Association Committee, with negligible amendment, the Committee sent back the draft to the Government expressly showing its satisfaction. The Government approved the draft rules and issued Notification duly signed by H .T. Prinsep, the Secretary, Political Department, dtd., 4th September 1839 and the Rules came into force from the date of issuance of the Notification.⁴⁷

For the first time in the land settlement history of Darjeeling, Rules for Regulating the Assignment of Building Locations and Grants of Lands in the Hill Tracts were put in place. By virtue of the above promulgation, Dr. Cambell was provided with huge revenue power and police and magisterial authority to settle any dispute on land. In order to maintain a status quo the said Rules expressly stated that "it will not apply to ancient Residents and parties in possession at the time when the territory of Darjeeling was made over by the Rajah of Sikkim."⁴⁸ To elaborate the rule further, the Officer on Civil Charge was vested with huge authority in assigning/granting lands on the basis of revenue defined and fixed by the Rule. Thus the principal source of Nature-the land resources were administered, preserved, reserved, distributed, granted and leased out by the British sense of justice as codified through the rules ignoring naturally customized traditional methods

and practices followed through centuries in the eastern Himalayan principalities.

As a part of greater imperial project, the nature and character of British interests in the Himalayas in general, reflects two distinct phases in the development of colonial economy: the first being the mercantile exploitation under the Company, and the second being the expansion of commercial agricultural investment under the civil administration of the Raj. Thus, the major influences of British rule – land settlement, roads construction forest settlement and tea plantation settlement, governance structure were firmly in place. Moreover, the summer transfer of the Bengal provincial administration to Darjeeling in 1879, lent its social space glamour and urgency. The British interest of establishing a hill station nearer to Calcutta was also accomplished at the cost of wilderness of Nature of Darjeeling forested tract.

Immediately before British annexation of the entire Darjeeling tract, the Gurkha ruler of Nepal and Bhutanese ruler kept the possession of such territories concurring the Sikkim ruler for a considerable period of time. It is therefore indeed important to have at least a glimpse of the then existing land arrangement excavating the agrarian history of Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. Even before the coming of Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim, the Kazis used to hold grants of land from the earlier Kings on hereditary principle. The Kazis were bound to the land for payment of revenue for the whole term of settlement. The holders were not allowed to sell the land under the terms of contract they entered into.⁴⁹ During early Tibetan rule in Sikkim, the raiyats were directly controlled by the palace. These raiyats were of two types- Nangzans and Zimchungpas, while the former referred to the constant palace attendants and the latter served the King on the tours.⁵⁰ The latter group constituted of the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis. In those periods, the country Sikkim was divided into 12 administrative areas under twelve Bhutia Kahlons (Ministers) and 12 Lepcha Heads of

Dzongs (Castles). Arguably, the Monastries had no land holdings and depended on gifts and donations from the people. Darjeeling, once being a part of Sikkim used to be administered by a Kazi who paid rent amounting to Rs. 20 every year to the Raja of Sikkim.⁵¹ After occupation of Darjeeling, the old system experienced both change and continuity by the British rule of land grants without taking away the land right of the native people living in the tract.

After the annexation of Terai part of the tract in 1850, the British both retained and continued the old Nepalis land tenure system in the cultivation areas of terai plains and at the same time brought substantial changes to cope with the expanding tea gardens in terai area. Immediately after the annexation in 1850, the southern part of terai (foot hills) was placed under the Collector of Purnea and the Northern portion was attached to Darjeeling. The settlement of the land revenue for three years had been effected by the Purnea Collector with the original inhabitants of the lower terai, mostly Muslims, Rajbanshis and low caste Nepalis and few other tribes. However, the inhabitants of Southern terai had shown exasperation not to be attached with Purnea. Ultimately, the EIC Government decided to attach the whole tract to Darjeeling. Meanwhile, Dr. Campbell, Superintendent, Darjeeling had made a settlement for three years of the upper terai, chiefly inhabited by Meches. The cultivated portion of the whole terai area was first regularly settled in 1853 and was updated in subsequent periods. Besides the area thus settled, over 28,000 acres were granted in the years 1865-67 on thirty years leases for tea cultivation under the former Waste Land Rules. This was renewed for a term of thirty years in 1897. Thus there evolved two classes of tenants in the Terai were holding their lands directly from the Government- the Jotdars who held leases of land for ordinary cultivation and the Tea-planters holding grants of land for tea cultivation. The rights of both these classes are heritable and transferable.⁵²

Land granted to Chebu Lama by the British comprising an area of 115 square miles in the north-west of the Darjeeling tract between the Nepal and Sikkim boundaries and Little Rangit river had been an unique occasion in the early colonial land history of Darjeeling. This tract was annexed by the British in 1850 and Chebu Lama received a lease of the whole tract for an immediate term of three years in recognition of his service he had rendered during the troubles of the British officers under captivity of Sikkim. In 1862, Chebu Lama appealed for holding the land under the grant Fee-simple (1861) or in perpetuity. The Government acceded to his request by making a grant of the land to him and his heirs forever. As per British records, this is the only permanently settled estate in the District. However, in 1882-83, part of this estate, containing forests of the Singalila range and covering 66 square miles, was sold to the Forest Department; and the remainder had been partitioned among the descendants of Chebu Lama.⁵³

Land system of Kalimpong was different in pre-British period as this part of the tract was ruled by the Bhutanese rulers for over a century after subjugating Sikkim. The travel report of Markham⁵⁴ informs us that local inhabitants of the said area were divided into three sections- priests, government officials and landowners. But the land was never defined and documented. After British annexation, Kalimpong was divided into 48 blocks and each was kept under a Mandal who used to collect rents from raiyats and paid revenue to the British on tenure basis as fixed by the Government. Out of total 401 square miles of land so annexed, 213 square miles were kept occupied by reserved forests and 10 square miles by four tea gardens, while 178 square miles were reserved for native cultivation.⁵⁵ In fact five-sixth of the inhabitants was settled on this Khas Mahal or State lands. However, there had been some rent free lands belonging to Monasteries and a few Mandals. Such arrangements were continued even after British annexation. The British reserved a huge forest and cultivable

land both on the western and eastern side of Tista as Khas Mahals under the management of Kalimpong Government Estates. In the whole tract of the district there was a bewildering variety of land tenure such as Revenue- paying tenure; Free-hold tenures and Lands held by the Government.

Under Revenue-paying tenures, locations of lands were settled in perpetuity under the building location Rules of 1839; locations of lands were settled for 99 years under the same Rules as amended in 1840; Farming leases were settled under the Rules of 1859; Cultivation leases for thirty years were put in place under the Rules of 1864; Lands granted to Chebu Lama, firstly on tenure and subsequently in perpetuity in the mid fifties and early sixties of nineteenth century; Tea-cultivation leases under the Waste Land Rules of 1882 as modified time to time; Other leases of different sorts and Government Khas Mahals under direct management. Under Free-hold tenures, Land locations were commuted into fee-simple under Rule 10 of the Rules of 1859; Lands (a huge size of 48476 acres) were brought under Rule 1 of the Rules of 1859; Lands commuted under Rule 9 of the Rules of 1859 and Lands brought under Fee-Simple Rules of 1862. Lands held under the Government were: Lands held by the Forest Department for forest reserves (a huge landmass occupying 278400 acres covering 435 square miles); Lands held by the Military Department; Lands held by the Government for Cinchona plantation; Lands for Jail Department; Municipal Grazing lands; Other lands including waste lands, bazaar lands, development area, etc.⁵⁶

Tea production and commercialization of tea had been a major driving force which motivated both the company officials and British rulers towards Darjeeling. The expansion of tea industry both in Darjeeling hills and in its Terai part served immensely the commercial purpose of the British rulers. The growing production of tea with the expansion of tea gardens had made British ruler competitive with China in the international tea market. Again Nepali people fulfilled the

gap of this labour intensive tea industry. Tens of thousands of Nepali subjects migrated to British Darjeeling and Terai during the course of nineteenth century to take work as plantation labourers. In 1866, the total number of tea gardens in Darjeeling was 39 which raised to 186 in 1895. This resulted in a considerable number of recruitment at the level of plantation workers and majority of them came from eastern part of Nepal as the migrants. The British planters had an inclination to encourage settlement of the Nepali migrants as the plantation workers in the tea gardens on the ground that these labourers were hardworking and could adapt themselves to the working conditions and natural climatic conditions of the tea gardens which were situated in the high attitude in the hills of Darjeeling. Moreover, tea labourers were available at a very low remuneration throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁷

The saga of Darjeeling tea labourers available at a very cheap rate needs to be viewed from the then existing political-economy of Nepal. The massive migration of labourers principally from Eastern Nepal had fundamentally altered the ethno-demographic composition of Darjeeling Hills. Such migration was taken place principally for the push factor of agricultural based poor economic situation that existed in Nepal and the pull factors of Darjeeling hills under British rule which attracted the population of Nepal to join in labour intensive moneytised economy that gradually developed in Darjeeling principally in the British effort of tea garden expansion, roads and railways constructions and British scientific forest management. Besides, three major factors caused heavily for such massive migration from Nepal to British occupied Darjeeling throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁸

The second half of nineteenth century Nepal witnessed the rise of Prithvinarayan Shah, the founder king of Gorkha dynasty of Nepal, Kathmandu being the capital. This high caste Hindu Monarchy had made aggressive drive for centralization, expansion and consolidation. Such drive caused heavily the socio-economic balance of Nepalis

society and economy. The king imposed a series of repressive measures to ascertain the domination of high caste Hindu Nepalis over the Buddhist and other non-Hindu Nepalis tribes and communities. The Kirat region in eastern Nepal mostly inhabited by tribal communities had a unique system of landholding. Such tribal land tenure was marked by the system of 'Kipat' landholding which was a kind of community land ownership system.⁵⁹

More specifically, land holding system was based on the principle of commons. It was known as "Kipat" landholding which was a kind of community landownership system. In such a system, the holding of Kipat vested in a particular tribal/ethnic group could not alienate any individual belonging to such group from land. The Gorkha rulers altered this system of landholding soon after they established their unquestionable supremacy over the entire eastern Nepal. The collective pattern of land ownership was replaced by the Royal possession of land, making thereby the tribal/ethnic communities as landless. The Nepal low caste category of people living in Eastern Nepal such as the Rais, the Limbus, the Gurungs and the Tamangs were treated as Shudra people in the Hindu hierarchical structure of Nepali's society and were vulnerable to oppression and repression of the Hindu higher castes such as Kshatriya (ruling class) and the Brahmin. Non-compliance of the Hindu religious scriptures and social practices by the lower castes and aboriginal tribes caused exemplary punishment usually known as "Panchakhat", which included "confiscation of property, banishment, mutilation, enslavement and even death sentences".⁶⁰ Life of the low caste people living specially in eastern Nepal became intolerable; their subsistence was put to question and existence was in crisis owing to tremendous repression and oppression. Resultantly, a large number of Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Tamang and other low caste people used to be call Mongers opted out/or pushed out from eastern Nepal and migrated to neighbouring Darjeeling Hills and Terai

occupied by the British. To them, Darjeeling hills was accessible and convenient for settlement.

Secondly, the growing expansion of tea gardens in Darjeeling Hills created an economic space of labour intensive economy which created in turn demands for labour. The roadways and railways constructions added momentum to such demand for labour and certainly for cheap labour. These pull factors attracted the destitute population of eastern Nepal to respond to such growing demands for labour. Being aware of the fact that Nepali migrants were hardworking and could adapt themselves to the working conditions of the tea gardens situated at different difficult high attitude in the hills of Darjeeling, the European planters encouraged settlement of the Nepali migrants as plantation labourers. What encouraged the British rulers and planters was the availability of cheap labour from the poverty stricken low caste Hindu population of the eastern part of Nepal. For Terai area, the British preferred bringing tribal labour with low remuneration from chotonagpur part of central India. Thus the throughout the second half of nineteenth century and early few decades of twentieth century witnessed a steady flow of population in the form of cheap labour force from eastern part of Nepal to Darjeeling hills on the ground mutually convenient hypothesis of getting employed for the hapless people immigrated in Darjeeling and the availability of easily accessed labour force at a very cheap rate. Furthermore, the ancillary economic activities in Darjeeling created a demand for more immigrants who took part in agriculture, orchards, forestry, livestock, construction, mining, trading and such other various service oriented activities. The British rulers encouraged the Nepali migrants for recruitment in the police as well as in various construction works which were connected with the growth process of Darjeeling as a sanatorium and a tourist centre.

The third major factor which accelerated the process of Nepali migration to Darjeeling hills was the opportunity to get entry in Indian

army through the recruitment centres situated in Darjeeling hills. As has been explained before that the British military administration had a positive perception on the masculinity, loyalty and honesty of the Gurkhas as potential mercenary force. The Gorkha loyalty to British was adequately proved during Sepoy Revolt of 1857. The British official records suggest that in 1863, the Sappers and Miners stationed at Darjeeling were composed almost entirely of the migrant Nepalis. Cumulatively, the Census data indicated that, in 1881, out of 1,55,179 of the total population of Darjeeling hills, 88,000 people were recorded to have been born in Nepal. It is to be further noted that according to 1881 census data, the total number of Nepal born population in India was 2,23,314.

It is to be noted that the British encouragement to Nepali migration to Darjeeling hills in the mid-nineteenth century originated from the colonial political perception to outbalance the original ethnic domination of the indigenous people like Lepchas and Bhutias in Darjeeling tract. The British perception was that the Lepchas and Bhutias were Valikely to shift their loyalty from Tibet as they were strongly integrated by a common heritage, religion, language and culture. These indigenous people belonged to the Tibeto-Burman language group and were religiously indoctrinated by the Lamaist Buddhism. On the other, the nepalis migrated from Nepal were mostly Hindus were loyal to British. Dr. Campbell pointed out this Hindu religious anchorage of the Nepalis and wrote in his diary in the middle of 19th Century: "The British were keen that the Nepalis should settle in newly acquired land in Darjeeling because they were considered to be traditional enemy of the Buddhist Tibetans and the Buddhist Bhutias".⁶¹ The British anticipated Nepali immigrants a group of loyal subjects whose allegiance would lie with the British Indian Government and not with the Dalai Lama of Tibet. In Bhutan and Sikkim, the British with the help of local landed aristocracy usually enemical to Sikkim/Bhutan Kings, sought to create a subservient Nepali

agricultural labourers subsequently turning into land-owning class in order to counteract the traditional predominance of the Tibetan and the Bhutia landed aristocracy. H.H. Risley in his Gazetteer of Sikkim (1894) spelt out the colonial objective underlying the British sponsored migration of the Nepalis: "Influx of the hereditary enemies of Tibet is our surest guarantee against revival of Tibetan influence. Here the religion will play a leading role. Hinduism will assuredly cast out Buddhism."⁶²

It is to be noted that there are two important paradoxes in accepting the above arguments in its entirety. Firstly, the population of Eastern Nepal, mostly belonged to the lowest of the ladder of Hindu hierarchical caste system. Moreover, they used to be punished for not following the upper caste Hindu practices. They were oppressed and repressed. Being depressed, they had to leave their original place of living and must have been frustrated with the upper caste Hindu way of life. This migrant Nepali labour force was not in a position to be proud enough to be a Hindu. Secondly, even if the British opted for Lepchas or Bhutias as their potential labour force, the demand part would have been remained always inadequate due to inadequate number of indigenous Lepchas and Bhutias in Darjeeling. The migration of Lepchas to Darjeeling from Sikkim or Bhutia migration from Bhutan could have been proved to be a misconception on the ground that there had been no push factors operated both in Sikkim and Bhutan. Lepchas in Sikkim used to be the ruling class and land owning class and the same was with Bhutias of Bhutan. Thus the complexities of diversified ethnicities in Darjeeling hills had been the result of various factors and forces which resulted in a composite culture and was not a planted mission of British colonial wisdom. However, the British always intended to inject an objective 'other' in the minds of the people of Darjeeling cutting across religions, castes and multiple communities.

Despite the dominant ethnic presence of Nepalis in Darjeeling, a section of Bengali speaking educated population of the plains was also encouraged to join in different administrative managerial and clerical services and educational institutions situated mostly in the urban spheres of the Hills of Darjeeling. The Biharis, the Marwaris the Punjabis and a few section of non-Bengali, non-Nepali speaking trading (both in wholesale and retail) people settled in Darjeeling throughout the nineteenth century and fist few decades of the twentieth century. However, by 1941, the population figures of the Bengalis, non-Nepali and Non-Bengali speaking people coming from the plains did not constitute more than 5.1 percent of the total population of Darjeeling District, while 86.8 percent of the population were Nepali speaking. The other hill men constituting of indigenous tribes and castes formed another 8.1 percent. Darjeeling hills did never experience the exodus of refugee population coming from erstwhile East Pakistan and thereafter from Bangladesh. On the other hand, in the Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district, which mostly included the plains and a part of the Terai forests and a segment of the tea gardens, the Bengalis constituted majority of the population which tended to increase further after the influx of the refugees through phases following the partition of Bengal in 1947.

Notwithstanding, the attraction of the natural scenic cite and healthy 'other' of the dirty and diseased plains of India, the study posits that Darjeeling was conceived as a part of the greater imperial project and for the larger imperial cause was included into the greater colonial economic project. Therefore, a constant tension between its natural exotic and its functional elements persisted throughout.⁶³ It has been argued that the natural spatial characteristic of colonial Darjeeling needs to be identified with respect to its link with colonial political economy in which the nature's resources of all sites, however scenic, were subject to colonial capitalistic utilization.

The nostalgic sense of loss of European sense of Nature and Natural beauty of the landscape came to be identified with the beauty of nature of Darjeeling hills and was marked as an insulated colonial retreat both for the European and civic personnel engaged in EIC affairs with Calcutta at its headquarters. However, with the passage of building Darjeeling with its administrative and commercial possibilities, the British sense of making European landscape were gradually intruded upon only the neighbouring natives settled widely in around tea gardens, settled retired soldiers of British Indian Army and middle class and affluent Indians from the plains. J.T. Pearson, an army Surgeon who arrived in Darjeeling in 1839 commented “there is an elasticity of the air in these mountains, and a freshness....., exercise gives all the pleasant glow of an English walk on a frosty morning”.⁶⁴

The tropical plains had divested the English constitution of its natural self. The mountains were posited to restore it. Brian Hodgson, formerly the British resident at Kathmandu stated, “*The fearful epidemics of the plains seldom penetrate the Himalayas, which, moreover, seem to have a positive exemption from epidemic diseases. From forty years cholera has ravaged the plains continually.... But in all that period Nepal has been visited only twice and Darjeeling scarcely at all.*”⁶⁵ Hodgson’s view validated the need for high attitude sanatorium towns for the British in India. Hooker endorsed the rejuvenating qualities of Darjeeling for Europeans. Health authorities however, were not able to proclaim the highlands fully free from the so called zygotic diseases of the tropics.

The temperate climate, and the familiarizing and domesticating of the mountains and dense forests that rendered them similar to British landscapes and to the Alps, an availability of leisure pursuits – and once the custom of sending women and children to the hill stations for most of the year was established – the charms of a viable social life with the family all added to the appeal of the mountain sanatoria. Moreover, the summer transfer of the provincial administration of the Governor of

Bengal to Darjeeling during 1879 lent its social space glamour and urgency. In addition, the successes of the tea plantation industry made Darjeeling critical to the colonial economy, notwithstanding the scenic landscape. The introduction of tea industry contributed most to the transformation of the economic base and geographical space of the entire Darjeeling hills.⁶⁶

Primarily, Lt. Col. GWA Lloyd was empowered by the East India Company at its head office Calcutta in three different capacities – firstly as the Government Agent-in-Charge of relations with the Rajah of Sikkim, Secondly, as in-charge of the establishment of the sanatorium or hill station of Darjeeling and thirdly as the in-charge for the construction of Darjeeling Road.⁶⁷

It is to be noted that the nature of land revenue administrative governance experienced several changes throughout the colonial period on the premise that the British ruler had an objective mind to administer Darjeeling differently from the general land revenue administration of British Indian Plains. Darjeeling was a part of the non-regulation areas since British occupation till 1861. It was kept under the direct responsibility of the Governor General in regard to legislation from 1870 to 1874. After this, it brought within the purview of the Laws Local Extent Act 1874 known as the Scheduled Districts Act. It was a Scheduled District from 1874 to 1919. The Scheduled District Act provided that in the listed districts the normal legislation and jurisdiction were in force only in part or with modifications, if necessary, of any enactment in force at the time in any part of British India. Thus, Darjeeling was not placed with the ambit of the general laws in application over the rest of India. Darjeeling was designated as a backward tract by the Government of India Act 1919 and remained so till 1935. Darjeeling as a backward tract was subject to special law usually prescribing simple and elastic forms of judicial and administrative procedure. Darjeeling remained as a Partially Excluded Area from 1935 to the end of the British rule. Thus, under British rule,

the Acts and Regulations of the federal or provincial legislatures were not implemented in Darjeeling District unless specially extended. Only Act X of 1859 and Act V111 of 1879 regulated the rights and liabilities of land holders on tenure or perpetuity basis. ⁶⁸ The officer in civil charge, be the Superintendent or District Collector/Magistrate was vested with huge authority in assigning/granting lands on the basis of revenue defined and fixed by the Rule. Thus the Natural land resource of the hill tract of Darjeeling was distributed and governed by the British administration of justice and without any local negotiation.

Lord William Bentinck, Governor General of India, proposed in his famous Minutes to the Court on the East India Company in 1833, that a committee should be formed to investigate the possibility of growing tea in India. Bentinck informed, immediately after his appointment to India, one John Walker had made his acquaintance and given his considered views regarding the possibility of tea culture in the Nepal hills.⁶⁹ Although, Hodgson, the Resident of Nepal, made no claim to be botanist, had introduced tea cultivation into the Himalayas, establishing a plot in the Residency garden using seeds obtained from China by Kashmiri merchants.⁷⁰ Latter on Dr. Cambell, who left Nepal where he was Assistant Resident and took charge of Darjeeling as superintendant in 1839, repeated the experiment leading to the establishment of Commercial tea estates there by 1852. In 1841, there was successful cultivation of tea plant in Darjeeling at an altitude of 213.36 metres, from the seeds of a Chinese variety brought from Kumaon. Out of the other early planters in Darjeeling were Dr. Whitecombe, a civil surgeon and Major Crommelin, a civil engineer. It was established that land around Lebong, a little below Darjeeling was particularly suitable within a short period, Pankhabari and Kurseong gardens were developed by pioneers like Martin and Captain Samber, the latter founded Makaibari garden at Pankhabari-Kurseong road. By the mid 1850s, the commercial potential of Darjeeling was proved beyond doubt and several other gardens were established. All the tea

gardens were promoted either on the basis of proprietorship or as joint stock companies. In 1856, the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company opened the Alubari garden. The Dhutana garden owned by Dr. Brougham was opened in 1859. During the early 1860s, several reputed companies like Darjeeling Tea Company and the Lebong Tea Company opened a number of gardens. In 1862, James White, the owner of Singel tea garden, opened the first garden in the Terai at a place called Champta. The new Champta Tea Garden was established in 1883. By 1874, tea in Darjeeling had proved to be a profitable venture and there were 113 gardens. By 1905, tea was grown in 148 gardens covering an area of 20,000 hactores – nearly 80 square miles.⁷¹

The basic ownership structure of the tea industry was of two types – (i) the typical unit was a sterling company registered in UK having plantations in India; (ii) the plantation company registered under the Indian Companies Act with India rupee capital. The overwhelming majority of shareholders of both these companies were British nationals.⁷² Most of the Darjeeling tea garden were under European ownership. Till 1901, there developed 71 gardens within Darjeeling police station, 46 gardens under Kurseong Police Station and 32 garden under Siliguri Police Station. About one seventh of the district of Darjeeling was covered with tea and no less than one third of the population lived off the tea industry. The census of 1901 recorded that 64000 persons were engaged as tea plantation workers. Being backed by capital is it sterling or Indian rupee, the tea plantation industry was essentially labour intensive industry which required considerable number of labour. The labour population mostly from eastern part of Nepal began immigrated and settled at Darjeeling plantation area which was instrumental in bringing change in the demographic profile of Darjeeling. The Nepali settlers ultimately outnumbered all other native or exogenous population settled at Darjeeling hills.

With the expansion of tea gardens in Darjeeling hills, the natural forest wealth had been subjected to virtual plunder. A large area of forestland was alienated by government for tea plantation. Natural forests, at the initial years of colonial expansion was considered as an obstruction to development be it in the name of construction of roads, provision making for urban basic services and commercial production of tea or agricultural goods and above all the general well being of the population settling at the hill tract of Darjeeling. The realization of optimal revenue was the priority. Resultantly, 60 percent of the forest cover had been cleared for development purposes. The rapid and continuous depletion of forested zone, extensive deforestation invited irreconcilable balance in the human-nature relations and gave rise to continuous soil erosion, innumerable landslides, devastating floods in the foot hills and the plains.

Colonization has a vital decisive role to play in the evolution of material landscapes of Darjeeling hills. As colonial expansion proceeded under the aegis of the British East India Company (EIC), the environmental experiences of Europeans and indigenous people and settlers living at the colonial periphery played a steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of new European evolutions of nature and in the growing awareness of the distinctive impact of European knowledge and economic activity on the people and environments of the newly 'discovered' and colonized lands like Darjeeling hills. The emerging global framework of trade and communication provided the conditions for a process by which European notions about nature were gradually transformed by a plethora of information, impressions and inspirations from the wider world. In this way the commercial and utilitarian purposes of European expansion produced a situation in which both tropical and alpine environment was increasingly utilized as the symbolic location for the idealized landscapes and aspirations of the western imagination. The colonization of Darjeeling hills initiated in the thirties of the nineteenth

century can be described as the transformation of a desolate country seen into an organized, densely settled and intensively exploited landscape. The pressure of population on natural resources and application of new modes of resource use reached unprecedented levels with material interests participated in the colonization process.

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CHAPTER III

COLONIZATION OF DARJEELING FORESTS

A consideration of ecology, environment and the colonial interventions in natural and socio-economic landscape, pattern of interaction between indigenous people, immigrated settlers and British colonizers invites us to rethink the landscape of Darjeeling hills not only in the standard evolving narratives of forest history but also on the ownership of natural resources and resource extraction under the aegis of colonialism. In suggesting a (re) reading, it has been attempted to make use of available documented sources. Such evidences would help us to read the pattern of transformation that took place in all wakes of life, to read the changing landscape of Darjeeling hills at the cost of forest clearance and forest depletion from eco-historical perspective. The principal purpose of the chapter is to understand the material-social, cultural-economic, political and ecological transformation of forest landscape of colonial Darjeeling assumed to be as a sub-space of scale from the perspective of south Asian environmental history.

Commercialization and commoditization of forest as a mode of resource use was introduced in colonial Darjeeling at a later stage. By then massive forest clearance was taken place for expanding tea industries, cinchona plantations, roads constructions, railways and physical infrastructural developments for its geopolitical and strategic importance as a military station and for its climatic value as sanatoria, and colonial growth centre. The British introduced rapid, widespread and irreversible changes in making and shaping Darjeeling a location of importance at the cost of forests which had concomitant ecological and social ramifications.

There is no government record about pre-colonial forestry in India. The different narratives suggests that pre-colonial rulers did not disturb the indigenous people living in and around the forests and their political aspiration were restricted to fertile agricultural lands, country

sides and towns. Even till the end of 18th century, the East India Company administration did not pay attention to Indian forests and people living in those forests.¹ The beginning of nineteenth century witnessed a different British approach to land and forest usage in India. Indian forests were declared as Crown's land. In 1855, Lord Dalhousie issued the historic Forest Charter establishing unquestionable supremacy over forests in India and out rightly rejected the rights and practices of the Indigenous people such as grazing, collection of forest produce, shifting cultivation as the basis for ownership of the commons. Precisely, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, India's forests were continuously being reserved and nationalized, depleted and the natural rights of the indigenous people had been eroded through a series of legislations.² Forests of Darjeeling were also brought directly under British hold and control to realize the grand imperial utilitarian aspiration. British forest policy was drafted for the realization of maximum revenue in perpetuity. The wealth of the commons was ceased and was declares as 'revenue' which belonged to the Crown.³

The basic edifice of colonial forest policy in India can well be traced back to a Memorandum of the Government of India dated 3rd August, 1855. The Memorandum was principally framed on the basis of the report prepared by Dr. McClelland and submitted to the government of India in 1854. This Report raised concern on unrestricted forest clearance by the private parties and set forth the responsibility of the Government to prevent such unlicensed extraction of forest resources.⁴

In 1855, Lord Dalhousie issued the historic Forest Charter enumerating for the first time an outline of permanent program of Forest in India, where he proclaimed that timber standing on a state forest was state property to which individuals had no rights or claims. The colonial forest policy in the form of a Resolution No.22F of the Government of India came into being on October, 19, 1894. The main

thrusts of colonial forest policy had been to promote the general well-being of the country, to preserve climatic and physical conditions of the country and to fulfill the needs of the people, but the actual agenda of the British was to usurp the forest for imperial cause.⁵

The first attempt at asserting monopoly over forest was through the Indian Forest Act of 1865. By this Act, the colonial state was empowered to proclaim any land covered with trees or bushes as state forest and to make rules regarding the management of the same by notification. Punishments for the breach of the provisions of the Act were categorically prescribed. The Act, for the first time attempted to regulate the collector of forest produce by the forest dwellers. The establishment of absolute proprietary right of the state was debated within the colonial officials and at the end, it was resolved to consider the customary use of the forest by the forest natives as based on 'privilege' and not on 'right'.⁶ The Forest Act of 1878 was much more comprehensive and detailed in its layout. The Act, for the first time, divided forests into reserved forests, protected forests and village forests. The forest dwellers were to record their claims over land and forest produce in the designated reserved and protected forests by the provisions of the Act. The Act prohibited/regulated trespassing and pasturing of cattle in the reserved and protected forests. A provision was also made to impose duty on timber. The Act of 1878 extended the policy of establishing total colonial control over forests.⁷

From all the colonial legislations, it was clear that commercial interests were the primary consideration in declaring forests reserved. The colonial Indian forests had been the central place of strategic raw materials crucial for imperial interest such as timber for shipbuilding, sleepers for the Railways, forest based industries such as pulp, paper and plywood.⁸ With this background of the evolution of state propriety over forests in colonial India, an attempt is made hereunder to review the experience of such change and transformation with specific reference to Darjeeling Hills.

The forests in Darjeeling hills due to its distinctive climate, rainfall, soil, topography and other habitat factors gave birth to tropical rain forests to mountain temperate forests. When the entire Darjeeling forested tract was occupied by the East India Company through a Deed of Grant from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835, there had been no personal proprietary hold over the forested land. Darjeeling tract was not either predefined as Zamindari Khas (self-cultivated holdings) or did remain under Raiyati (occupancy of the cultivating tenants). Unlike plains of South Bengal, there had been the absence of Jungle Zamindars in Darjeeling. Agrarian changes and concomitant state making, material and ecological transformation that took place in Darjeeling under colonial control could only have been possible due to the total possession of British over the whole tract of land of Darjeeling covered with forests.⁹

In this Chapter, two principal points have been attempted to be explored: (i) In Darjeeling Hills, the scientific and technical discourse on forest had been shaped by the historical legacy of colonial knowledge building on forest; (ii) The forest development discourses had been continuously under production in specific political-ecological settings. It has been attempted to explain how the uniform forest policy of the British failed to work properly because of the regional socio-physical variations. That is why effective protection of forests and forest products required local people's knowledge and historic experiences to be utilized and given priority over imported forest management techniques.¹⁰

The British notion of Nature as indoctrinated in the mindscape of the colonial officials engaged initially in colonial Darjeeling was fundamentally different from the notion of Nature of the indigenous people who in fact lived in and lived with Nature. Unlike Europeans, forest to the indigenous people was their natural abode and means of subsistence and was certainly not a source of profit extraction. The debate on the issue of ownership/ entitlement of forests in India was

emerged only after the establishment of the Department of Forest. Such a debate has been well analyzed in three broad categories, the first of which they call “annexationist” implying absolute state control over forests. The second one is the “pragmatic” favouring arguably state management of ecologically sensitive and strategically valuable forests keeping apart the areas to remain under communal system of management. The third category as they termed “populist” refers to rejection of state intervention, holding that tribal and peasants must exercise sovereign rights over the woodlands.¹¹ However, none of these categories can be well founded when applied to colonial Darjeeling for the purpose of explanation.

The official correspondences of East India Company and thereafter those of the British India Government as the principal source of historiography of colonial Darjeeling would have us take the stand that it was not forests of Darjeeling Hills which attracted the preliminary attention of the British. Poor accessibility and high cost of transportation might have discouraged them from commercially exploiting the forest timber of the Tract. Therefore, the primary intention was to create a social space in the physical space of Darjeeling equitable to European environment wherein the Company officials would take refuge and would feel at home. The strategic location of Darjeeling as a military space had received adequate attention too. The ceded part of Kalimpong Hills (once owned by Sikkim) from Bhutan at a later years (1865) reapproves the argument that it was not forests but the consideration of strategic location prompted the British to annex the entirely forested hilly part of Kalimpong with the District of Darjeeling.

The British forester E.P. Stebbing informs us that the forest conservancy in Bengal was first initiated in British Sikkim. Forest conservancy began in Darjeeling in 1864 when Dr. T. Anderson was appointed temporarily as Conservator of Forests, Lower Provinces (which included Darjeeling Hilly Tract). The Forest Act of 1865 provided

impetus to the British local authority in Darjeeling.¹² Under the newly appointed Conservator, a hierarchical bureaucratic structure was established for the proper management and conservancy works. Till 1870, Darjeeling forest was kept under Bhagalpur Division. From 1870 to 1876, it was administered under Cooch – Behar Forest Division. In 1877, the Darjeeling Forest Division was established with three sub-Divisions such as Darjeeling, Teesta and Kurseong. In 1879, the Teesta Division was reconstituted as Kalimpong Division.¹³ In all these three sub-divisions forest conservancy was initiated with the help of working plans having ten years in perspective. Since 1892, such working plans began to operate in all the Forest Divisions of Darjeeling with the help of a structured forest bureaucracy having enormous powers of discretion at its hand.

The most serious consequence of colonial forestry was the diminution of customary rights as well as the decline in traditional conservation and management systems.¹⁴ The curtailment of communitarian ownership of forests of Darjeeling by the colonial state had severely undermined the subsistence economy of the indigenous Lepchas. Collection of Bamboos, Wax and Lac from the Darjeeling forest was prohibited by issuance of licenses. Like all other British India forests Jhuming or shifting cultivation was discouraged without providing appropriate alternative arrangement or land to the Lepchas for settled agriculture. As a consequence, there had been displacement of Lepchas from their natural forest land habitats. Restrictions on collection of forest produce imposition of prohibitory norms on grazing and gradual dwindling of grazing grounds of different seasons affected badly the indigenous people of Darjeeling hills.¹⁵ Nowhere in the British forest policy or in the colonial Acts, had the rights of the indigenous Lepchas been specifically mentioned? Ultimately Lepchas had to leave Reserved Forest of Darjeeling and they were instructed to move south-west part of the District, between the hilly tract and the plains. Again during 1920s, Lepcha tenants were evacuated and

resettled. For their resettlement due to expansion and construction of Kalimpong as an urban area, deforestation of 999 acres of forest land in Lolegaon Reserved Forest was proposed and sanction for such deforestation was granted by the colonial government. As a consequence the Lepchas became refugees in their own land.¹⁶

Prohibitory rules in the name forest conservancy, prohibitions on the use of forest resources and grazing were randomly imposed by the local forest government.¹⁷ Rules relating Grazing were modified time and again in Darjeeling Forest Division from 1913 to 1925. All these put the indigenous Lepchas to an extremely pitiable condition and they were destined to be displaced.¹⁸ The letter of A.A. Wace, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, addressed to Commissioner of Rajshahi Division, bears the testimony of such plights. The letter reads, *“Anxious as I am to secure permanently the interest of Lepchas in this district, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that, as they exist in our unsettled tract, they are an obstacle to all improvement cultivation or increase of revenue. They settle in a forest, clear a bit and sow it, and then pass on to cut down new forests, without giving in return for the valuable timbers destroyed. What we should aim at is to see them as they can afford to pay an easy rent for. As regards the Lepchas on the tract under reference, I would give them the option of building on 15 to 20 acres each where they now are, securing their interests by giving them one of our Kalimpong Leases, or moving to the Lepcha blocks north of Kalimpong on payment by Planter of a liberal compensation for removal”*.¹⁹

In response to the above official communication, the Government ordered the local authority at Darjeeling to take action. Accordingly, the Lepchas were driven to the Kalimpong range of the Hills. Ultimately, there was displacement time and again in the face of growing development area and Tea Plantation in that area. Lepchas were sent again to lower elevation of the Kalimpong tract where they lost both of their subsistence and livelihood. Lepcha resettlement issue in Darjeeling hills was left much to be desired. Lepcha displacement was

indeed caused by colonial capitalist development unknown to the indigenous people. Despite such displacement and destitution, the Lepchas could not go beyond memorandum, and submission of petitions.²⁰ The numerical stream of the Lepchas, demographic changes in the process of colonial state making in Darjeeling which made them minority, the social and economic incapacity of the indigenous people to raise voice against the over archaic colonial power structure, the omnipresence of British military installations are some of the fundamental historically corroborated reasons behind the absence of resistance and rebellion in Darjeeling hills during colonial phase. Although there had been the exertions of everyday forms of resistance, at least discontents were never brought to public surface. On the other the beginning of monetary economy and infusion of colonial capital in tea, forest policies forced Lepchas to change their traditional forest based lifestyle based on Jhum cultivation and natural forest produce.²¹ The imperatives of colonial state making in Darjeeling were comparatively so large and huge that the small indigenous people were not at all in a position to intensify any resistance against the colonial order except in few cases of occasional negligible breaches of the forest law in some areas in the name of 'everyday form of resistance'

Precisely, the study has attempted to explore the interrelationship of regional, geographical, environmental, socio-economic and political and strategic factors in the development efforts of the British Government in shaping forests and making Darjeeling a location of importance. The study has attempted to demonstrate the lapses, failures, shortcomings, set-backs and successes in the colonial forest policies adopted in Darjeeling. The study has addressed the question whether there had been conflicts of interests between the colonizer and the colonized concerning environment and forest issues.

Alienation of Forest Land:

In 1862, cinchona found its way to Darjeeling for experimental purposes. Even though its cultivation was not as extensive as that of the tea, cinchona too contributed to alienation of forest land in Darjeeling hills. The first nurseries were tried at Senchal a place near the station of Darjeeling with the expectation that Cinchona, which was an equatorial crop might do well in that place with its over-wet climate. But contrary to the expectation, the Senchal experiment ultimately proved to be a failure and the plants were transferred to Lebong which too proved unsuitable. Finally a suitable location for a permanent plantation as found at Rungbee on a spur projecting from Senchal in a south-eastern direction. The plantation at Rungbee was gradually extended over the whole ridge lying between the Rungbee and the Tiyang valley. Between 1861 and 1869 the main preoccupation was with scientific and technical problems connected with the preparation and the after-care of the plants.²²

The initial difficulties overcame, and a small harvest of bark began to come in from the year 1869-70. By the year 1875 there were about 2,000 acres of Government cinchona plantation. The total number of trees planted out between 1864 and 31st March 1875 amounted to 32,85,592.. In 1887 an area at Sittong on an adjoining ridge to the south of the Riyang valley was taken in. These two ridges now constituted the Mangpu plantation with total area of 12,000 acres and a standing crop of 4,000 acres.. Almost at the same time private estates were also started, and it was made possible through State encouragement. But the private enterprise did not however continue for long, due to a temporary slump in bark.²³

In view of the failure of the private entrepreneurs in cinchona cultivation, the government pursued a policy of extended cultivation of cinchona as needed for the public welfare and in 1900, a new plantation was started in Munsong under the reserved forest. This

plantation then occupied a total of 6000 acres of forest land. In 1938 a third plantation was opened in the Rongo block of the Kalimpong Forest Division where it is expected to plant 1,600 acres of cinchona. A fourth plantation was started in the Latpanchar group of blocks in the Kurseong forest division.²⁴

Most tea and cinchona plantations were established by clearing natural forests on land acquired or purchased from the Government of India. Whenever markets for tea and cinchona were strong enough to enable expansion of plantation acreage, great cover correspondingly got reduced. For many years, the tea planters held dominant financial and political leverage in Darjeeling and prevented the Forest department from gaining control over the wide forest area of the district. Higher ups in the forest department wanted to prevent greater alienation of forest areas to the tea planters as well as to those who indulged in land speculation. The large scale alienation of forest land for plantations and speculation as was indulged in at that point of time spoke of the great concern with which the forest department viewed the growth of the planters' interest in the district of Darjeeling.²⁵

By the late nineteenth century, the forest department exerted complete control over the forest of Darjeeling. The period also witnessed an increase in the level of commercialization of the forest resources of Darjeeling. However, in the governance of forest administration and conservancy in Darjeeling, there was no departure from the main system of managing forests in Bengal.

Objectives of the Forest Department in Darjeeling:

The objectives of the forest department in Darjeeling since inception appeared as follows:

1. To secure all the commercially useful forests as rapidly as possible from further depletion, by having them gazetted and properly demarcated.

2. To enhance the revenue from the government forest by all authorized means, since the financial success of forest management is the only sound basis on which it can be permanently established and maintained.
3. To protect the areas to be maintained as forest from all that tends to interfere with their highest productiveness.
4. To ascertain by survey as soon as possible the nature and contents of each forest location accurately.
5. To divide the forests as much as practicable into well-defined and manageable divisions, ranges, and beats for systematic management.
6. To improve, by sowing and planting as much as the income may permit those forests in which expenditure on such work is most likely to prove remunerative.

These basic objectives of the Forest Department did not change in any significant way throughout the colonial period.²⁶

The basic problems faced by the forest department of Darjeeling had been to deal with dense forests on moderately steep terrain in the Himalayas from 500 feet to 12,000 feet and consequent difficulties of extraction. Initially, there was no developed transport and communication system. Unhealthy climate, and scarcity of labour had augmented the problem. Initially the basic underdevelopment of the district and the limited revenue that was collected by the forest department was not sufficient for a large establishment causing hindrance for operation of forest conservancy.²⁷ The only way to overcome the problems was to maintain a small establishment to increase the revenue and, for decades together, that was always the motive of the Forest department. In addition to the problem of inadequacy of the establishment, there had been huge scarcity and high cost of labour, as well as the general unhealthiness of forests of Darjeeling. The labourers from other parts of the plains were not willing to come to the hills. The Nepalese were however an exception to

that as they were able to do forest related work. The difficulty of procuring labour used to be overcome only by paying higher wage.

The floating of timber from Darjeeling and Kurseong Forest Division was not possible as there was no river system. Only the timber from the Teesta Division was floated through the Teesta River to Siliguri and Jalpaiguri in the plains. The systematic exportation of the timber of other areas had to wait till the construction of Darjeeling Himalayan railway. The improvement of the transport and communication system later on helped in the exploitation of the commercially valued timber in the remote areas of the district. Despite problems and consequent hardship and initial imbalances, professional forest conservancy had steadily progressed in Darjeeling. Initially the forest establishments were limited according to income and the resources available at the disposal of the Forest Department. Thus, on account of the small revenue, and consequently limited forest establishment, the demarcation of 'reserve' could not be extended to all the divisions simultaneously. The report of the forest department in Bengal for the years 1873-74, together with a review thereof by Lieutenant-Governor gives evidence of steady progress in the systematic examination of the forests under the control of the forest department and in the demarcation of the reserves. Initially the forests in Darjeeling were placed under the Cooch Behar Forest Division. This area was stated to include the hill forests in the British Sikkim and 31 Square miles of Terai and lower hill forest, within which area is comprised the Mahanuddy Terai Forest with hill tract, adjoining the former to the north, with 10,240 acres.²⁸

Establishment of colonial hegemony through 'Reserved' Forests

Rules for the better management and preservation of the Government Forests in the Lower Provinces of Bengal were drawn up under Act VII of 1865 which had been confirmed by the Viceroy and the Governor General in Council, and were in accordance with section 6 of

the Act, published in the Gazette of India. The government forest Act VII of 1865 was promulgated and under Section II of that Act a Notification dated the 13th July, 1865, was published in the Calcutta Gazette of 2nd August (page-1, 288), declaring certain tracts in Cooch Behar and Darjeeling forest under the said Act. Again, a Notification, dated the 23rd January was published, strictly reserving certain tracts of land in Sikkim Terai for forest purpose. These publications covered the whole of the area of Kurseong Division except such blocks which were subsequently added. Among those blocks added subsequently included Tukriajar and part of the Dalkajar and Mechi forests. These were purchased from the Government by the Forest Department. The Bamanpokri block was resumed for default of rent and the Pagalajhora block was originally acquired by the Public Works Department and subsequently handed over to the Forest Department. The draft of the amended Rules for the administration of the Government Forest in British Sikkim and Bhutan, prepared by the Board of Revenue in personal resolution with Conservator of forests were presented by T.B. Lane, Esq. Officiating Secretary to the Board of revenue Lower province to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 24th July 1865. These rules were drawn up under Act VII of 1865, had been published for the administration of the Government Forest in British Sikkim and Bhutan.²⁹

According to these Rules the Government Forest in Darjeeling District comprised all lands covered with forest, brushwood and jungle, which are the property of the Government and within the tract bounded and limited in the following manner.³⁰

1. All Forests situated at and above an elevation of 6000 feet above sea, including the cantonment lands of Senchal.
2. The Forest in the great Rangeet and Teesta Valleys to an elevation of 8000 feet above the sea.
3. The forests on the outer hills up to an elevation of 3,000 feet and bounded by a line drawn along the base of the hills.

4. The forests of the Terai as defined on the map of the district, and demarcated by boundary pillars of the Forest department.

According to this rule no lands covered within the meaning of Act VII of 1865 were allowed to be sold or leased out except under the orders of the Commissioner of the District. Further passing an order Commissioner was required to communicate the matter to the Forest Department and in case of difference of opinion between him and forest department, it was to be referred to the government. According to section 1 sub-clause 4 of the above Act, all lands within this limit, not being reserved tract as per section 3, and not covered with Forest were allowed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the district Officers, and are not under the Forest Department. The Officers appointed under this rules for the administration of the forests were the Conservator of Forests, the Deputy and Assistant Conservators and the subordinate employees. Further, the administration of the government forest throughout the whole of the province was vested in the Conservator of Forests. Divisions and Sections were placed under the management of Deputy and Assistant Conservators.

The section II of the Rules for the administration of the government Forests in British Sikkim and Bhutan Forest devoted some attention for the general protection of forests and forest produce in the unsettled forest tracts. No person was permitted without the permission of the Conservator of forests to mark, cut, girdle or fell or in any way injure, any of the trees reserved or protected. On the Indian forest Act VII of 1878 superseding the Government Forest at of 1865, a fresh notification was issued under section 14 of the Act; more accurate description was given therein against each reserve. A reliable figure of area could not be found until a complete survey was made by the Survey of India in 1902. Rights were enquired into between the years 1890 and 1896, after which the Government of Bengal, in their letter No.996-T-R; of 29th October 1896, to the conservator of forests, approved of the proceeding of the forest settlement officer in regard to

the forest reserved under section 34 of the Act of 1878. This Act of 1878 remained in force till the passing of the government of India Act (Act xvi of 1927). Although the management of the forests in Darjeeling started in 1864, a well defined forest policy was promulgated only in the year 1894. All the regulations related to forests under the Indian forest Acts of 1865, and 1927. According to these regulations and rules, all reserved forests were placed directly under the charge of the Forest Department.

It was obvious that the British Government from the very beginning of forest administration was progressively increasing its hegemony over the forest resources of Darjeeling. The rights acquired by the government were absolute. Apart from the Acts and rules mentioned above, the British government also enacted rules for regulating the various other activities of the Forest Department which were framed from time to time in accordance with the relevant rulers of the Indian forest acts. Among them the Waste land sale rule of 2nd February 1874, Fire Protection rules, Darjeeling grazing Rule of October 1895 under section 75(d) of Indian Forest Act 1878, Cattle trespass Act of 1871, Rules to regulate hunting, shooting and flashing within reserved forest of 18 May 1895 and April 1907 deserves special mention. These rules will be dealt in details in the relevant parts of the present work.

Forest Settlement in Darjeeling District:

The proprietorship of the forest land at the time of British occupation varied in accordance with the historical and political development of the Darjeeling hill tract and its Terai part.³¹ This condition of things was probably quite in accordance with the nature of society and polity previous to British occupation, when everyone was accustomed, without hindrance to get what he wanted from the forest, and when consequently no demand.³² It soon became evident that if the prevailing state of affairs was allowed to continue unchecked, in the

same proportion as cultivation increased and forest was cleared, the government forest property would not only become valueless, but might also be diminished to such degree as to be incapable of supplying the demands of the tract. It was considered as the duty of the colonial government to secure.³³ In order to effect the required changes, it was necessary to legalise the settlement and the reservation of the forest areas as well as the assumption of the complete control.³⁴ Before British acquisition of Darjeeling, the Sikkim Raja from whom the British government occupied its forest property never recognized a prescriptive right.

The details of the settlement of forest in Darjeeling are found in the Letter No.1449G dated Darjeeling, the 26th March 1896. This Letter was written by R.T. Greer, Esq; Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to the Commissioner of the Rajashahi Division.³⁵ The settlement of forest in the Darjeeling District to be declared reserved forest was made by a government notification dated the 4th February 1890.³⁶

This notification reached the Deputy Commissioner's office only on 14th of March 1890. Under the above notification the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling was appointed as settlement officer to determine the relevance, nature and extent of any rights alleged or found to exist in the reserved forests of the Darjeeling civil district, comprising the Darjeeling, Teests and Kurseong Forest Divisions to expedite the settlement work which had been dragging on for about five years, and to bring it to completion before the end of forest year of 1895-96. The forest settlement officer had the power to enquire into the existence of any rights within the gazetted boundaries of the government reserved forest. A proclamation was duly issued in English, Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali and Bengali under section 6 of the Act, on the 15th December 1891, giving time to prefer claims up to the 14th March 1892.³⁷

After this proclamation numerous applications were filed. Altogether forty two claims were preferred. Out of these twenty one were related to the rights and the possession of lands, two for cattle stations and 19 for dispensation for houses and crops, fruit trees, etc. The claims for land and cattle stations were rejected. No claims were preferred in respect of the forests blocks noted below in Table:³⁸

Table : Forest blocks for which no claims were preferred

Senchal	Loolagaon	Manjha	Bamonpokri	Choktong
Mahaldiram	Dhobijhora	Mechi	Lamazumba	Sibhok
Ging	Sibakhola	Balasan	Sukna	
Kill	Manjua	Dalkajhar	Mahanadi	
Dumsong	Kohein	Pantapari	Champasari	

Source: A letter from R.T. Greer, Esq. Deputy Commissioner Darjeeling to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No.1449 G; dated Darjeeling, 26th March 1896.

The proceedings were carried out by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Ritchie, and his successor, Mr. Waller, Mr. Waller, on his transfer from the district, carried away the records in order to pass final orders. These records were received back in the Darjeeling office only on 13th September, 1893. Ultimately all such reports and documents were taken over by the Conservator of Forests, Bengal.³⁹

The area under the control of the Forest Department of the district of Darjeeling was progressively increasing ever since the beginning of the Forest Department. The reserves in the Lower Province of Bengal at the close of 1873-74 consisted of 106 square miles in the Darjeeling and 14 square miles in the Jalpaiguri Division. In the corresponding year about 10.46 percent of the Reserved Forests of British India belonged to the province of Bengal. In the corresponding year about 10.46 percent of the Reserved Forest of Bengal was in Darjeeling. Rules for the administration of the Government Forests in the Lower Province of Bengal, drawn up under Act VII of 1865 had been

confirmed by the Viceroy and Governor General and were in accordance with section 6 of the Act, published of the Gazette of India. It was under the dynamic leadership of the new conservator, William Schlich that intensive activity in the formation of Reserve Forest began in Bengal. His successors like J.S. Gamble, (from 1872-1882) and A.L. Home (1882-1890) took forest reservation to a new height. So much so reserved forest area in Darjeeling District increased to 442 square miles. About 30 percent of the total geographical area of Darjeeling district was covered with reserved forests at that time.⁴⁰

The increasing hold of the Forest Department in Darjeeling might be gauged from the extension of the area under the control of the Forest department and the government. There were three classes of forests in Darjeeling, viz. the reserved forests, protected forests and the tea garden forests. Tea garden forests were outside the strict control of the forest department. The extent of protected forests was very limited and they were confined to the Cantonment area of Jalapahar and Birch hill area in the Lebong spur. The Birch Hill Park was brought under the Bengal Public Park Act 1904, under Bengal government notification Nol.87M dated the 10th January 1916. This Act later extended to Lebong and two outlying areas of Ghum and Patlaybas. All these forest areas contained only 248.84 acres. But there was a doubt whether the Park Act could be properly be applied to them. The Forest Department was asked to address the matter to the Municipal Department after consulting the Commissioner of the Rajashahi Division.⁴¹

The area under Reserve increased steadily in Darjeeling especially in the last quarter of the 19th century. Thereafter, the increase or decrease of the reserve forest was nominal. The figure in the following table taken in random would testify the above statement.

Areas under the reserve forests taken in random order

Years	Darjeeling	Teesta	Kurseong	Total
	Area in sq. m.			
1881-82	40	221	90	351
1882-83	191.5	250	89.5	441
1887-88	102	250	87	439
1895-96	114	213	109	436
1923-24	110	209	112	434
1927-28	110	209	112	431
1938-39	111	210	112	432
1940-41	111	210	112	433

Source: Annual Progress Reports of Forest Administration in Bengal
(Respective years)

There was sudden increase of forest reserve in Darjeeling Division in the year 1882. It was due to the purchase of 700 hundred acres of Gumpahar Forest from the Municipality of Darjeeling and 60 square miles of forest from descendants of Cheboo Lama in the Singalila Range. The total area added from these two sources was 64.5 square miles of forest on 22nd September 1882. There was also an increase in the Forest reserve in the Teesta Division because the forest on the right bank of the Teesta, south of the Riang River had been transferred from Kurseong Division.⁴² It was done by a Government Notification of August 30th, 1881. Similarly, the Northern Tondu forest, which previously had been included in the Teesta Division transferred to Jalpaiguri Division. After this exclusion and addition the total forest area of Teesta Division remained at 161255 acres. The area of Kurseong Division had been reduced by 14,202 acres by the transfer to the Teesta Forest Division.⁴³ The decrease in the area of the forests under reserves was also mainly because of the transfer of the same to other uses. For example an area of 48 acres was included from the Dhobijhora Forest in the Kurseong Division and transferred to the Education Department, for the construction of a new Government school for boys at Dow Hill, by Notification No.2419 dated the 3rd July 1896. Similarly 500 acres had been excluded for the cultivation of tea

under notification No.3599; dated the 5th September 1896. Similarly Mal forest had been excluded for the cultivation of tea under notification No.3599, dated the 5th September, 1896.⁴⁴

From the initial years, the Forest Department in Darjeeling provided protection to those forest areas which were sources of revenues. Protection of forests included the endeavour of the forest department to provide general protection to the forest areas from unauthorized felling, injury by forest fire, removal of saplings, illegal jhumming or unauthorized grazing. As early as 1880, the forest authority of Darjeeling contemplated the need to issue fixed rules and enforce them strictly to ensure to stop lopping branches and cutting saplings which the graziers adopted. The first comprehensive Grazing rules were enacted in the year 1880 for the Darjeeling Division. In the Kurseong Forest Division grazing was permitted in most of the forests, except during the season of jungle fires. In Teesta Division, grazing rules were framed in 1882-83 restricting grazing principally in upper hills.⁴⁵

It was found in many forested zones of Darjeeling that a number of young Sal seedlings and poles die and disappear. The death of seedlings was due to weeds and over head shade. Accordingly, provisions were made to keep natural regeneration of Sal free from weeds and to give overhead lights. Climber cutting programmes were undertaken to save poles. Cutting of creepers and weeding also constituted an important component of the protection of forests.⁴⁶

The Darjeeling Himalayan region is well known for its biodiversity. From the point of view of fauna alone, it is unparalleled, representing a variety of planting a variety of interesting species, particularly the avifauna. The varied ecosystems distributed along different latitudinal and altitudinal limits include an immense variety of forest types and harbor a good representative flora and fauna of several biographic zones with their own unique biodiversity. The British official

records identified 80 to 90 types of mammals, 550 types of birds 125 types of fishes and approximately 51 types of snakes which constituted the fauna of Darjeeling forests.⁴⁷ Many of them are extinct or endangered species. This process of their extinction actually began with the British occupation of this region and with the clearing of forests for developmental purposes.

In spite of the existence of a comprehensive rule for the protection of wild life since 1912, available evidence points out that the Forest department was not serious about the reservation of wild life in Darjeeling forests. With the exception of a few cases reported by the forest department, no action had taken under the Act to protect wild animals in Darjeeling forests. Even after the notification of the rules for regulating hunting and shooting in 1912, requests came from the Noyce, Esq; Under Secretary to the Government of India to the government of Bengal in 1913, asking allotment of special areas of forest land near cantonment for British soldiers to shoot and hunt in the reserved forests of Darjeeling.⁴⁸

Forest Villages and the Forest Department of Darjeeling:

For Darjeeling, forest villages in suitable situations were artificially established in suitable locations where foresters felt acute labour shortages. The availability of labour had to be ensured for forest conservancy works in the face that the native Lepchas were unwilling to do any work unknown to them and under the control of the foresters. Moreover, during the tea season when plucking of the tea leaves used to be in progress, it was very difficult to obtain any labour at all. The establishment of Forest villages was thought to be a way out to solve the labour crisis

All the three divisions had some such villages by 1911-12. Forest village was an administrative term that refers to village situated inside the reserved forest and under the administration of the forest department. After the forest was reserved, some people were allowed to

stay on in exchange for their services to the Forest Department. Gradually, this agreement was turned into a formal contract that provided privileges (not rights) and duties of the forest labourers.⁴⁹

Forest villages were designed for the purpose of supplying a source of suitable local labour or in the case of temporary cultivation, with a view to restocking the areas so cleared and cultivated with valuable species of trees on the taungya method. Accordingly forest villages were established within the limit of any reserved forest on sites where felling series or cutting sections in those working circle in which the regeneration by planting or by natural areas was aided by intensive weeding. Forest villages were also established for protection and other works. Forest villages were classified into two forms such as permanent and temporary. The temporary villages were shifted according to the needs of the forest department and the area of forest operations. Forest villagers employed in forest operation works on payment. The works include climber cutting, plantation, nursery works, repairing of forest roads, bridges, fire line clearing, extinguishing accidental fires, making coups and such other related works. The permanent forest villagers occasionally provided free labour for the creation of plantation and other works, in return, they were permitted to grow field crops on the areas planted and also graze their cattle and collect woods and thatch for the purpose of domestic fuel without payment.⁵⁰

Conservation Measures in Darjeeling

The principal purpose of the forest department in Darjeeling was the production of large and sound, and commercially valuable timber. Therefore, silvicultural operations were given primary importance. Silviculture is a package of inputs applied to the forest crop throughout its life with an objective of giving the forest a predefined character. The selection of Silvicultural system for any type of forests necessitates consideration of certain factors. Such factors in most of the cases were unique for Darjeeling forests. The factors are: condition of regeneration

and growth in the forests; nature of terrain and soil; protection consideration; nature of forest produce and ecological services required; economic consideration and such other related social and climatic factors. In fact, several silvicultural systems practiced in Europe were adopted in Darjeeling forests with little modifications. The systems which were adopted in Darjeeling district forests were clearing – felling system, selection system, shelter wood system or uniform system and coppice system.⁵¹

The study of various Working Plans in all the divisions reveals that no particular system was adopted in any one Forest Division or Range. The general objects of forest management in Darjeeling district forests were firstly to maintain a sustained supply of timber, fuel, fodder; etc. to meet the local demands. Secondly to increase the production of valuable timber by converting the present irregular forests which were poorly stocked and over-mature into a regular forests fully stocked with valuable timber trees and finally to maintain protective forests wherever necessary to check soil erosion and land slip or to regulate water supply.

Evolution of Working Plan in Darjeeling District Forests:

The first regular working plan for the forests of Darjeeling Division was prepared by Mr. H. Mansion. It came into effect from the year 1892-93.⁵² This plan along with its revision had continued for twenty years. The first Working Plan for Singalila forest was compiled by Mr. Trafford in 1908 and its prescription followed more or less those of Mr. Manson's Plan. Mr. Grieve's Plan was introduced in 1912 mainly with the motive of avoiding the second felling which had, in so many cases, destroyed the regeneration established after the first felling. His plan excluded altogether from his scheme all open areas to grazing as being unworkable, he then put all areas previously regenerated under Mr. Manson's and Osmaston's plans into a separate plantation working circle. He then divided what remained into a high forests and a Coppice

Working Circle. The Coppice Working Circle was to be worked on a 30 years rotation, for the supply of fire wood to tea gardens. For the High Forests Mr. Grieves original intention was to prescribe the selection system on a rotation of 150 years with a 25 years felling cycle. It was determined by the number of trees in a working circle. During the felling cycle one half of the first class trees were removed in groups. It was also supplemented by planting where necessary. Grieve's plan was followed by Baker's plan.⁵³

Baker's plan of 1921 was based on the realization that the natural regeneration was too slow, uncertain and insufficient in quantity and could not be relied upon as a method of generating the forests after exploitation. The Long Rotation Working circle included forests to be worked in production of timber and short rotation working circle included areas conveniently wanted on the Hill Cart road and the Ghum-Sukiapokri cart road for the supply of fire wood in Darjeeling, and an area in Hum and Linding for the supply of Takdah Cantonment.⁵⁴ The rotation fixed was 125 years for the long Rotation working circle and 60 to 40 for the short rotation circle. The rotation of 125 years in the long rotation working circle was divided in a five periods. The first period was deemed to have started from 1912 the prescriptions of this plan were carried out almost in full in all felling series except Batasi. Baker's Plan was succeeded by Chaudhuri's plan.⁵⁵

Chaudhuri's plan was prepared for the period 1929-30 to 1936-37. This plan provided for the continuation of the clear felling and artificial regeneration system in all accessible areas kept in the bulk of the Teesta valley and Rangit valley forest where the main prescription was selection felling. One feature of the plan was the formation of a *Cryptomeria* Working rule, confined to part of the ridges in the Ghum Simana Range, Tapkedara block, and the eastern end of the Lopchu spur. The rotation as fixed at 60 years except Lopchu and ending where it was only 40 years. Macalpine's plan was the last plan of the study

period which lasted from 1940-41 to 1959-60.⁵⁶ The plan of Macalpine provided for clear felling in strips along the contour with artificial generation and provided for short rotation, long rotation and other working circles. The plan provided for clear felling in sal and miscellaneous forests in Teesta valley range and also in the remaining areas below 8500 feet in Tonglu and Singalila ranges.⁵⁷ But these two ranges could not be worked as expected due to remoteness and lack of communication.

Working Plans of Teesta Forest Division:

Prior to the introduction of regular working plan, only the Sal bearing forests between the Teesta and Lethi rivers were worked under the permit system. The felling was unregulated and resulted in full sized trees being left only in inaccessible places. Other areas remained practically un-worked. The first scheme for working these forests were made by Sir Dietrich Brandis in 1880 when these forests were included the forests of Darjeeling Division. According to the suggestion of Brandis from 1886-87 to 1890-91, only a few trees were removed from the east bank of the Teesta under the selection system. Mature trees above 7 feet in girth at 4 feet from the ground were marked and purchasers paid a fixed sum per tree according to girth.⁵⁸

The first regular working plan for this division was devised by Mr. French for the years 1905. It principally dealt with Sal bearing areas which were divided into 2 working circles viz. the Teesta Working Circle comprising the Sal forests along the Teesta north of the Mongpong block, and Chel Working Circle consisting of the Sal forests between the Teesta and Lethi rivers. Here Selection felling were prescribed on a cycle of 10 years, each working circle were divided into 10 annual coups, each containing roughly one-tenth of the sal bearing area in the Working Circle.⁵⁹

The second working plan of this division is popularly known as the Thinne plan (1906-1920). This plan divided the whole division into

6 working circles, viz. Teesta, Chel, Lish, Neora, Jaldhaka and Pankasari. Sal forests in Kalimpong and Chel Ranges were proposed for working under Selection Felling with a felling cycle of 15 years. In Neora and Jaldhaka Ranges, coppice system with a 20 years rotation supplemented by artificial regeneration was prescribed. In the Jaldhaka and Pankasari ranges forests were open for the felling of exploitable trees by selection at any time. As a result there was over cutting in the more inaccessible localities where there was demand.⁶⁰

The third working plan of this division aimed at the conversion of implementing irregular forests into a regular forest with clear felling followed by regeneration by taungya wherever possible. The whole forest division was divided into eight working circles. (i) the lower Hill Uniform Working Circle consisting of the Sal bearing areas suitable for taungya. (ii) the Sal selection working circle covering the remaining Sal rating areas, (iii) the Miscellaneous Selection Working Circle consisting of the Lower hill forests which do not contain Sal, (iv) the Kalimpong fuel Working Circle covering those areas in the Pankasari Range nearest to Kalimpong, (v) the Upper Hill Timber working role comprising the remaining workable portions of the Pankasari Range, (vi) The Tea Garden Long Rotation Working Circle covering the flat area in the East Nar and Khumani forests in the Jaldhaka Range where the demand for fuel was small, (vii) the Tea garden sort rotation Working Circle comprising the flat area in the Chel and Neora ranges where to demand for fuel was heavy, and (viii) the protection and unworkable Circle comprising to inaccessible areas in the Division.⁶¹

Even though the third working plan was devised for a period of twenty years, it had to be revised in 1934 due to following reasons. Firstly, the cultivable areas in the Kalimpong range which form the Lower Hill uniform Working Circle were under-estimated; secondly the lower Hill Uniform, the sal selection and Miscellaneous Selection Working Circle in the Chel range were thoroughly intermixed and could not be verifiable on the ground; thirdly, the annual yield in the Sal

selection working circle was based on the total number of Sal enumerated which calculated the Sal standing in the miscellaneous working Circle. Finally, in the tea garden working circle felling were carried out where the demand was greater to the supply, but the subsequent restocking was done in most areas with valuable rates like Champ, Panisaj, Chickrassi and Malagiri which required 60 years to reach the exploitable size. This necessitated a rewriting of the plan midway.⁶²

The fourth working plan began in 1934-35 for the next ten years. It is also known as the Pal's plan. In this plan, clear felling by artificial regeneration by taungya was prescribed with a 60 years rotation for growing soft-wood in teesta working circle and for tea gardens, long rotation working circle with a rotation of 10 years was prescribed. Besides this after growing miscellaneous hill species was prescribed with a rotation of 100 years for upper hill areas.⁶³ After the completion of this plan there was a break in the plan period and the next plan began only in 1947-48 which mainly followed the salient features of the fourth plan.

Working Plan for Kurseong Forest Division:

About the time of reservation of this forest in 1865, the government granted a monopoly right to one Mr. Dear for working the forests for supply for railway sleepers. This grant of right was stopped in 1867 when it was found that most of the sound big Sal trees were extracted from the plain forests. About 1870 the Government of Bengal laid down that no trees should be felled except by the direct agency of the forest department. Subsequently removal of Sal trees on the basis of exploitable girth limit on permit at a fixed price per tree under the supervision of a responsible forest officer was introduced. This system could not be properly supervised for shortage of staff.⁶⁴

In 1882 Mr. Gamble prepared a working scheme for the Sukna Working Circle⁶⁵ which comprised of few blocks namely Champta,

Adalpur, Kyananuka, Rungdong, Sukna, and few small blocks. His scheme prescribed small thinning improvement thinning and selection of trees along with cultural operations such as freeing the plant from climbers and artificially working blanks. The yield was fixed by volume combined with area, except for the section feeling for which yield was determined by the number of trees with an area check. His scheme of gamble worked for seven years with certain modifications consequently on the realization that the yield had been fixed too high and was abandoned in 1890.⁶⁶

From 1902 the forests of Kurseong Division were worked out under Mr. Hatt's Plan which prescribed Selection-felling and improvement felling to be done simultaneously in a fixed annual coup. There was one felling series in the terai forests. The felling cycle adopted was 15 years, being the half the period required by a second class tree to become first class. The yield was determined by number of trees. For this purpose, enumeration of all Sal trees over 1 foot 6 inches to 2 feet diameter or second class and over 2 feet diameter or first class. During the felling cycle one-half of the first class and one fourth of the second class trees were prescribed for removal. In the selection feeling all first class and the unsound and ill grown second class trees were to be removed in the first instance; second class trees might be removed by thinning if required to make up the yield.⁶⁷

The last plan of this forest division toward the end of the study period of the present work was the Datta's plan for the years 1926 to 1946. This plan for the forests of this division including the upper hill forest was drawn up with the object of converting the irregular forests into a normal forests of valuable species arranged in compact block to facilitate extraction. In order to provide different treatment for the various types of forest, seven working circles were formed in the following manner (1) Plain Sal, (2) Hill Sal, (3) Miscellaneous, (4) Riverain, (5) a forestation, (6) protection, (7) undeveloped. Under this plan, in all plain forests clear felling followed by artificial regeneration

was prescribed. Yield was prescribed by area-cum volume. There was provision for selection felling and improvement felling. The exploitable girth for selection felling was fixed at seven feet for sal, eight feet for Champ, Panisaj, Gamar, Toon, Chikkrassi and Mandana and 6 feet 4 inches for all other species. The rotation was fixed at 80 years for sal working circle and at about 60 years for miscellaneous working circle. In Kundong, Punding and Bamanpokri blocks experiment by controlled burning to induce natural regeneration of Sal was prescribed. For Revarine working circle selection with improvement felling was prescribed. The exploitable girth fixed for Kahir 3 feet and for Sissu 6 feet 4 inches. A feeling cycle for five years was fixed and yield was regulated by volume.⁶⁸

The British forest policy basically served to bring the forest resources of the district under imperial use. The laws and regulations which were promulgated and implemented in the district served to provide legitimacy to the exploitative operations of the Forest Department. There were several steps taken by the government and the Forest Department to increase the yield of the forests of Darjeeling. The Forest Department in colonial Darjeeling engaged a lot of its energy and effort to protect and regenerate the commercially valuable species.

Commercialisation of Darjeeling Forest and Environmental Degradation

The process of commercialization began with the colonial penetration into the forests of Darjeeling. The principal purpose of the colonial government was to extract maximum revenue out of forest produce, particularly in respect of major produce. Darjeeling being the first forest tract to be reserved in Bengal, it experienced heavily the colonial plunder. The colonial forest regime in Darjeeling in between the years from 1864-1947 can be summed up into three main stages, namely, initial stage; advanced stage and more advanced stage of commercialization. At the initial stage, forest products were subjected

only to marginal processing like cutting and shaping of timber for different local purposes including meeting demands of railway sleepers, etc.,. With the growing demand for specified timber of colonial economy, the need for a systematic management of forests began to be felt both to regulate local use and to encourage regeneration of commercially more valuable forest produce. Initially, the felling operations were operated by private parties. In 1870-71, the Government made rules whereby no tree should be felled except by the direct agency of the Forest Department. This became the genesis of departmental operation. However, H. Leeds, Conservator of Forests, Bengal Lower Province, did not agree with the government on the ground of poor personnel arrangement for undertaking huge felling operation which would result poor generation of revenues. Leeds sent his views to Government.⁶⁹ The Government, in response, allowed the adoption of the permit system in Darjeeling forests. However, the contractors having permits had made serious inroads into forests in as much as they felled even small trees in disregard of the girth limit rules. To prevent such random felling forest areas were identified for supplying wood and fuel for different areas and sectors. For Darjeeling supply, Jalapahar area of forest was identified which include Rangu, Senchal, Rangirum, Dawipani, Rangio, Tiger Hill and Rangbu. For Kurseong supply, the forests of Sepoydhura, Mamrim and Sureli were identified. Forest areas of Chattackpore, Poomong, Hoom, Takdah, Balasan, Chongtong, Parmagiri, Palengdong, Pagraibong and Rongbong were earmarked for Railway and Tea plantation supplies. Sureli and Rishap forests were identified for supply to Cinchona plantation.⁷⁰

The initial years of the twentieth century heralded advanced stage of commercialization of Darjeeling forest resources replacing merchant capitalism by industrial capitalism. At the turn of twentieth century, British India was on the threshold of considerable industrial expansion. The Forest Department of Darjeeling had started responding to the needs of industrial economy. Forests had been the repository of

raw products vital to the industrial needs. Darjeeling foresters evolved new methods of marketing the forest resources by becoming a part of larger industrial expansion. As early as 1910, the then Conservator of Bengal, F. Trafford had a consultation with Mr. Summonds, an agent of Messrs. Burns and Company for leasing certain areas of forests of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong for the extraction of pulp from bamboo. The Government responded positively to the proposal of the conservator.⁷¹

In a letter No.608F-3-9, dated 15th August, 1912, the agreement was approved by the Governor General in Council.⁷² According to the Agreement, Burns and Company were allowed to extract timber and bamboo in Singalila Range and Teesta Valley Range in Darjeeling Division, Chel Jaldaka and Punkasari Range in Kalimpong Division and Sukna Range in Kurseong Division. During the same year, C.E. Muriel Esq., the Conservator of Forests of Bengal, executed an agreement with a big match and tea box factory for the extraction of timber from Singalila Range and other parts of Darjeeling, Teesta and Kurseong Divisions.⁷³ In the year, another important event took place when Forest Department of Darjeeling entered into an agreement with Mr. Grazebrook, Chairman, Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company for the extraction of 1500 Sal trees from the Rinkinpong Block in the Teesta Forest Division.⁷⁴ The Company asked for an extension period up to February for such extraction but was denied principally due to World war urgency.⁷⁵

On war footing the Forest Department of India was called upon to take part in the First World War⁷⁶ and Darjeeling Forest was no exception. The Forest Department was instructed to supply required timber and such other forest produce to the military authorities. The quantum of timber and fuel wood extracted from Darjeeling district forests during the First World War, 1914-1919 may be found in the Annual Administrative Reports of the respective years. For example, 1081443 c.ft. Timbers, 4831214 c.ft. Fire Woods, and 5912657 c.ft.

T&F Woods had been extracted. The Forest Department realized the need for expansion and enrichment of forest resources to cope with the enhancing demands of the larger sector of industrial economy and introduced mechanization in the extraction of forest resources and had developed strong and effective transportation system. As a result, mechanized logging methods were introduced by Mr. Shebbeare, the then Conservator of Forests and Houlding, a forest Engineer in Kurseong in 1922 on account of shortages of labour for toungya work and exploitation operation. The mechanized logging operation made logging cheaper and the returns higher. Saw mills were started in different divisions of the District.⁷⁷

The introduction of new technology and improved mechanization in extraction and generation of forest resources had ushered in more advanced level of commercialization of forests in Darjeeling. For example, at Sukna in Kurseong Division, a high lead yarning was introduced for hauling logs from tree stumps to the railway line. Through this method huge Sal logs could be handled by the machinery. Portable circular saw mill operated through portable steam engine were put in operation. The mechanized logging operation made logging cheaper and the returns higher. At Tung, in Kurseong Division, logs were hauled up to the road side, both from uphill and downhill by means of an American steam logging engine with main and rehaul cable set up at convenient places along the road. The logging engine was mounted on skids and could haul itself from one position to another under its own steam. The logs dumped along the road were then transported by bullock carts to the American portable saw mill, for their conversion.⁷⁸ The sawn timber was then hauled down hill over a distance of 1067 meters, through an Ariel Rope Way to the depot along Darjeeling cart road. In fact, construction of rope way had been a modern innovation in Darjeeling forests. Inaccessible forests areas were accessed through rope way transportation. Primarily two rope ways were approved for Takdah, Chattakpur and Nagri. To ease the timber

transportation, a Rope Way Company was formed in 1928 between the town of Kalimpong and Darjeeling-Himalayan railway in the Teesta valley. This rope way connected the Railway at Rilli with Nazeok, Kamesi and Kalimpong.

During the Second World War, the demands made on the forests of Darjeeling were of much greater magnitude than the demands during the First World War. Timber and Fire Woods were extracted from all the Divisions of Darjeeling, From Darjeeling Division, during 1940-45, timbers of 1044334 c.ft., fire woods of 9055576 c.ft., T&F wood of 10119890 c.ft. were extracted, For Kurseong, 2704600 c.ft. Timber, 485100 c.ft. Fire Wood and 7555600 c.ft T&F Wood were extracted. For Teesta Division, the quantum was for Timber 1471334 c.ft, 7014800 c.ft. for Fire Wood and 8486134 c.ft. of T&F Wood were extracted.⁷⁹

This huge quantum of extraction of forest resources had adverse ecological and socio-economic implications for Darjeeling. Excepting few initial years, the Forest Department of Darjeeling had always remained as revenue surplus department. The revenue used to be collected from major produce, minor produce and from the miscellaneous heads. Timber remained the chief component of the revenue. Revenues were collected also from the sale of charcoal, cane, bamboo, fodder grass, grazing fees and etc. Thus the basic objective of realizing maximum profit out of Darjeeling forests was fulfilled. Expansions of commercial tea plantations in Darjeeling at the cost of forest lands, waste lands, grazing lands and bush lands had caused heavy harms to the entire natural ecological balance due to rapid depletion of forests. The natural flora and fauna were largely disturbed and had been rapidly extincting. Construction of railways and roadways were made by clearing forest areas. Large quantity of timbers for making railway sleepers caused rapid clearance of forests. The emergence of forest based industries, construction works of Public Works Department and private contractors, growing local needs for fuel, fodder due to rise of population, huge quantum of requirements of

forest resources both during the First and Second World Wars, rampant corruptions in the forest department, unholy nexus between the tea planters, revenue officials and forest officials to extract forest resources had been the major factors contributing to depletion of the forest cover in Darjeeling and thereby, to the degradation of this ecologically most fragile region.

Another important most issue was that far from applying themselves to an understanding of the complexities of the forest ecosystem, colonial foresters were under considerable pressure to immediately change the species composition of the Darjeeling forests in favour of commercially viable and valuable trees. From the very beginning, the foresters gave priority to those valuable trees and concentrated on regenerating them through artificial cultivation. Monocultural plantations were thus initiated that soon replaced the natural forests of the district that highly affected the flora and fauna of the district. Such preferential treatment to some tree species over the other natural tree species had disturbed largely the natural biodiversity of the Darjeeling forests. Throughout the colonial period, in all the forest divisions of the district, unscientific extraction of trees was carried out either by the private permit holders or by the direct departmental operations. Due to such large scale fellings, climbers and weed used to grow causing natural disturbances to the growth of new trees. At the same time, the indigenous fauna had been largely affected by the rapid clearance of forests. The Rules provided by the Act of 1878 and subsequent rules for the protection of wild life (1912) had never been put into force by the Darjeeling foresters. On the contrary, the foresters afforded facilities for shooting at reasonable rates. For example, rights to catch elephants were leased out to individuals on payment at a fixed amount. The rapid clearance of forest caused change in the habitats of various animals and birds and ultimately led to their extinction. It has been observed from the colonial forest documents that no serious effort was given by the forest officials for the

protection of wild life as they did for the other forest resources for their immediate gains.

Unquestionably, rapid deforestation along with high intensity rainstorm accelerated soil erosion, mass movement of the exposed soil in the upper catchment and massive flood in the lower plains of the catchment area.⁸⁰ In 1918, Rakti and Chel rivers broke out a new channel into Ghish and caused immense damage to the cultivation in the plains. Lands were silted over by the rivers Chel and Ghish combined and the Bengal Duars Railway embankment had been swept away close to Udlabari.⁸¹ In fact, quarrying on the Himalayan immature geology triggered the disaster, huge and complex, never encountered before the colonial advent.

Earthquake induced landslides had been a compelling issue on the question of land degradation during colonial period. Although landslides prior to 1899 were not recorded, Joseph Hooker mentioned such scars in his memoirs in 1854. On 24th and 25th September, 1899, due to unprecedented rains, Darjeeling was badly damaged and nearly 219 persons had been perished under the falling debris or land slip.⁸² On the issue of soil erosion, the Divisional Forest Officer, Darjeeling observed:

Apart from supplying local needs for forest produce, the forests in Darjeeling hills have a very great indirect effect on the people of lower Bengal. No year passes without land slip occurring to a greater or smaller extent in these hills... Though the wood-cutter on the hills hardly realizes the effect of felling trees and laying bare the hill slopes, the people hundreds of miles below suffer hardship. It is a great pity that the indirect effect of the existence of forests was not appreciated in olden days and instead of creating reserves on the hills tops and laying bare the whole hill down below, a more even distribution of the forest was not aimed at to prevent soil erosion and its deleterious effect on the rivers of

*Bengal. The real measure of the importance of the hill forests should always be in terms of their effect on water supply to the springs and on their prevention of soil erosion.*⁸³

A Committee was appointed in the year 1910 to investigate the mischief caused by deforestation in Darjeeling to suggest remedial measures too.⁸⁴ Darjeeling Safety Committee submitted its detailed recommendations in June, 1911. Some of the recommendations were: (a) to reforest those locations of the hill-side which have slipped or likely to slip; (b) to prohibit rice cultivation on any but the easiest slopes; (c) to prohibit cardamom growing as much as possible practically everywhere; (d) to restrict grazing on steep and unprotected slopes; (e) to reserve a protective belt of land along the banks of all main streams to a width varying with the size of the stream.

The Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division was asked to furnish his opinion on the recommendations made by the Darjeeling Safety Committee. The Commissioner was further asked to consider the question of how far the remedies proposed were politically, administratively and economically viable and by what means the necessary regulation could be imposed upon the holders of different classes of property in the District of Darjeeling.⁸⁵ In his response, the Dy. Commissioner urged upon that any practical scheme for applying remedies for deforestation, etc, must be necessarily be framed with reference to the conditions and of the ownership and tenure of land prevailing in the area concerned. Finally a Draft Bill was pioleted in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. A copy of the proposed Act, together with a request to express opinion on its provisions was sent to the prominent citizens of Darjeeling.⁸⁶ Despite differences of opinion on the various provisions of the proposed Act, ultimately, the Darjeeling Hill-Sides and Rivers Conservation Bill received sanction of the Government of India in 1917. But the principal provisions of the act were never implemented due to counter pressure of conflicting interests of different stake holders having tremendous influence.

As a result plundering of forests of Darjeeling without paying heed to the ecological consequences went unabated throughout the colonial period. The question of forest policy as pursued by the colonial Government had been largely contested. At the one end, the colonial forest policy has been criticized as profoundly statist, productionist and revenue earning motif; on the other, the colonial scientific forest policy has been praiseworthy on the ground that such policy restricted the unrestricted timber felling by the local traders, forest dwellers and mafias. The argument of William Beinart and Lotte Hughes is well matched with the experience of colonial forestry in Darjeeling to understand the intricacies of such contestations. In their exploration of environmental change in the British Empire, they argue that the “crafting of specifically imperial environmental relationship was crucial. The empire acted to, on the one hand, pursued the exploitation of natural environments by commoditization and, on the other, sought to practice restraint on consumption through environmental regulation. Thus the twin attempt to commodity and regulate nature gave the empire a peculiar character and unity. That is, exploring the linked themes of exploitation and conservation.”⁸⁷

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CHAPTER-IV

EXPANSION OF TEA PLANTATIONS IN COLONIAL DARJEELING

The purpose of this Chapter is to explore the impacts of commercial tea plantations on the forested lands and the landscape and on the socio-economic and material conditions of people living in Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling had been the first location in Colonial Bengal to have been penetrated by the tea plantation on a large scale since the mid of the nineteenth century. In the initial years, the growth was simply phenomenal in the wake of large colonial capital investment. The expansion and growth of tea plantation in Darjeeling had been a moment of history created in the mid-fifties of nineteenth century; credit must go to imperial science, European entrepreneurship, knowledge, wisdom and management skill at the one end as well as innumerable hardship of neighboring human labors on the other. Till then, tea continued to be the backbone of the economy of Darjeeling hills and Terai (Foot hills) with the resultant consequences on the lands, landscape and demographic configurations.

With the expansion of commercial tea plantations in Darjeeling hills, the natural forest wealth had been subjected to virtual plunder. In fact, the idea of forest conservation and application of scientific forestry reached in Darjeeling at later decade, when a large area of forest land was alienated for tea plantation. Natural dense forest at the initial years was considered to be as an obstruction to development of physical infrastructures and commercial expansion of tea. The realization of optimal revenue had been the priority of the East India Company. Consequentially, by the late fifties of the nineteenth century, sixty percent of the forest cover had been cleared for development purposes including expansion of tea gardens. The rapid and continuous depletion of forested zone, extensive deforestation produced irreconcilable balance in the human-nature relations giving rise to

continuous soil erosion, innumerable landslides, devastating floods in the foot-hills and the plains. The depletion of forests resulted massive degradation of the ecologically fragile Darjeeling hills.¹

The establishment of first commercial tea garden, Tukvar tea Estate at the Lebong spur by the British owned East India Company in 1856 heralded the beginning of a new era in the Darjeeling hills by exercising new mode of natural resource use necessary for much needed economic growth.² The then prevalent nature of subsistence economy, mostly based on barter economy, with few exceptions of briskly Tibetan trade and a few of East-West Himalayan mountain trade, was radically transformed to monetized economy due to infusion of colonial capital in commercial tea plantations. Tea plantation capitalism in the mid of nineteenth century Darjeeling had substituted the landless labors to wage earning workers.

Brief Review of History of Tea Plantations in Colonial India

The history of tea in India is intrinsically associated with England, however, at the initial few centuries, the British imperial science and knowledge system did not have contribution to the development of tea plantation or tea manufacturing but England was proved to be the number one country as consumer of tea exported from China. It was the Dutch traders who first brought Chinese tea to European in 1606. The first written British reference to tea dates back to 1615 as made by an agent of the East India Company in Japan.³ Garraway's Coffee House in Exchange Alley, London, has been credited with being the first public place to serve tea. By 1660's, the East India Company as the biggest trading company got interested in tea trading with China and had arrived in Canton and Amoy and initiated direct tea trade with China by 1669. At the initial years tea drinking had been purely restricted to the British royal and aristocratic society. By the mid of 18th Century social gatherings called 'tea parties' became common among the middle classes. The agricultural and industrial

revolutions of the 18th and 19th Centuries helped improve the living standards of many people in England. One index of rising domestic comfort was the habit of tea drinking among these people. As the popularity of tea increased gradually among all classes in society more tea was imported. By the beginning of nineteenth century, the habit of tea drinking by all classes was firmly established. Till such period, china remained as the only source of supply.⁴

With the passage of time, the danger and vulnerability of the exclusive dependence on China tea became apparent. It was to overcome the growing subordination to China that the East India Company turned to India and deployed company officials having knowledge of Botanical science, agro climatic conditions and the tropical and temperate condition of soil fit for the growth of tea for ensuring a steady and reliable supply of cheap and uncontaminated tea. The primary concern of the East India Company was to assure its commercial interest as it had enjoyed the monopoly of tea import from China into England since 1715. The EIC's problems with China tea were essentially three-fold: (i) uncertainty about regular supply; (ii) unsatisfactory price structure and (iii) deteriorating quality.⁵

In China, tea could only be purchased at Canton and the entire tea market in the port was in the hands of a few Chinese merchants forming 'Kong-soo' or guild flanked by powerful local Chinese Officials. The East India Company regarded this arrangement very unsatisfactory and experienced with humiliating situations. The occasional suspension of trade by the Chinese authorities with East India Company had made the issue worst. The matter reached its culmination when EIC tea trading monopoly with China was withdrawn in 1833. Another problem was with the China had been the growing price of tea at the whims of monopolistic traders in China, mostly Hong Merchants. As a result, the price of tea in England along with the other parts of the British Empire experienced an unprecedented rise. The sharp deterioration in China tea was considered inferior.⁶

In addition to the above problems, the EIC had to face growing threat of American competition in China trade – a trade in which the East India Company and a few British merchants had been the sole distributors of Chinese goods throughout the world for many years. When in 1832, Isaac Mckim, a Bultimore merchant built a vessel, specially designed for China trade, the British felt threatened. What made the matter worst was that the American duty was remained always lower than the British duty. Americans traders could offer a better price than the British to the Chinese. In a memorial to Sir Robert Peel, the East India Association of Glasgow laid down the growing menace of American competition:

“formidable and increasing competition with American Merchants to which British interests are exposed in the China market, not only as regards the cheaply manufactured cotton goods of America, of certain fabrics, but more especially in connection with the subject of this memorial as competitors in obtaining teas for return. In the U.S. the duty on tea is trifling: consequently American can afford to purchase teas at higher prices for their manufactures in bartering them for teas, a mode of dealing common in China. It has indeed long been a matter or notoriety that the American merchants have the choice of all the better qualities of green teas whether by barter or by purchase: this is therefore a point of which importance, connected with the tea duties, as justly merits on the part of the Government the most solicitude”.⁷

All this was very disconcerting, especially at a time when the demand for tea was increasing not only in England but throughout the Empire. The EIC did have no option in finding alternative places in the Empire especially in India for tea cultivation. Meanwhile, investigations were conducted in different parts of the Himalayan region to find areas suitable for tea cultivation. In 1815, Colonel Latter of the British Army, then posted in Upper Assam, reported on the tea drinking habits of the

Singpho tribes. At about the same period, Dr. Gordon, Superintendent, Botanical Garden at Saharanpur, North West Provinces, suggested the district of North West Bengal to be suitable for tea plantations. Nearly half a century's efforts, sporadic and unsystematic, had so far been proved unsuccessful. Ultimately, after roughly a decade, the desired objective was gained to find out ideal site for the tea plant in India.⁸

The soil and climatic conditions in the UK were quite unfavourable for tea cultivation. Since tea formed such an important item in the British consumption, the British government and traders had taken a more direct and intensive interest than in the case of most other tropical products. Because of its importance in the British balance of payments, the governments of Great Britain and British India rendered all sorts of direct help for the promotion of tea industry in India. The policy of the British government was to make Britain independent of foreign, that is, non-imperial supplies of tea. The court of directors of the East India Company made all efforts to foster the tea industry in India, where, from all respects, the condition was supposed to be the best for its cultivation and manufacture. In 1838 the first Indian consignment of 488 lb of tea was sent to the UK and received high praise and attention.

The number of gardens and land under cultivation began to increase only after 1854, when the existing restrictions on leasing out of land to European planters were relaxed by the promulgation of Waste Land Rules of 1854 by the government of India. It lured many big sterling and rupee companies, and during the following five years the tea industry in India made a steady progress. The successful working of these companies and the nominal rents charged for the waste lands engendered in time a spirit of speculation. The speculation and the rapid extension of cultivation between 1863 and 1865 led to a depression during 1865-75. Thereafter, the industry took a favourable turn, and the companies which paid due regard to cultivation and management of gardens made handsome profit. By the 1880s the

drinking of Indian black tea was firmly established in the UK and by producing better quality with a relatively low price India displaced Chinese black tea and became a leading tea producer and exporter in the world market. The unique aroma of Darjeeling tea provided for additional momentum to this growth.

British government recognised that Indian tea planting community had been one of the most important factors in the Empire and their voice was worthy of being heard in the Council of States in 1893. The government of British India offered more easy terms of land settlement in the rules of 1861 than the Waste Land Rules of 1854 to the British planters. Labour Emigration Legislation Acts of 1863, 1865, 1873, 1882 and 1901 empowered the British tea planters in India to recruit the labourers for gardens as indentured labour. The availability of land at very low price to the planters placed an elastic limit on the size of the tea estates. From the very beginning of tea plantation in India both central and provincial governments of Bengal and Assam bore the major part of expenditure on scientific research and were constantly pressed by the ITA to increase their annual grants. Moreover, the claims of the agriculture and industry to representing the planting interests in the Viceroy's Legislative Council were recognised by the Indian Council Acts of 1892.⁹

Before 1886 there were sporadic and transient attempts to advertise Indian tea, but real co-operative effort to advertise Indian tea in America was started in connection with the Chicago Exhibition of 1893. India's co-operative publicity campaign began at Brussels Exhibition in 1888, while it was started in Ceylon in 1879. From 1894 British tea planters of India and Ceylon jointly started to push sales of their teas in America. Meanwhile, India's voluntary foreign market (market which developed without any special effort on behalf of the Indian tea industry) was meeting with less and less support and agitation began really about 1897 in favour of cess, the proceeds of which would be used for market development. In 1899 India

discontinued all advertisements in America except for some general advertising of India tea with that of Ceylon tea in the newspapers only, for which a contribution was made by the planters.¹⁰

The initiative of developing tea within the British Empire in India came from the highest office, Lord William Bentinck, Governor General of India. In 1833, he proposed in his famous Minutes to the Court on East India Company, that a committee should be formed to investigate the possibility of growing tea in India. Resultantly, a Tea committee with all nominated members by the Governor General was appointed on February 1, 1834. The Committee members were chosen primarily from the officials of the East India Company in Calcutta and five Indian and British businessmen. The Indian businessmen in Calcutta such as Ram Kamal Sen and Radha Kanta Dev were nominated in the Committee as members.¹¹ The terms of references of the Committee were: (1) There were in India areas with climatic and soil conditions similar to Chinese tea growing regions. (2) Once these regions were identified, cuttings of true and best descriptions of tea plants brought from china should be cultivated there. (3) For the cultivation and preparation of tea, it was essential to obtain skilled labour and implements from China.

Accordingly, local officials stationed in the mountainous regions were asked to supply the necessary information to the Committee. At the same time, George Games Gordon, the Secretary of the Committee, was sent to China for the purpose of securing tea plants, seeds, skilled technicians and tea manufacturing equipments. The East India Company sent another expert, R. Fortune to China for further study of the tea cultivation and manufacturing processes in China. In fact Fortune was sent twice in China, first in 1848 and second was in 1856 and he reported back to the Government that soil condition and climate of western and Eastern Himalayas suit well for tea.¹² Out of many replies in the form of information sent by the officials from different parts of India, the most interesting one was of the reply of Captain

Francis Jenkins, then Agent to the Governor General for the North Eastern Frontier Province, where he claims that tea plants could be indigenous to that part of the country. In the meanwhile, from China, Gordon was able to send seeds of tea plants that the tea committee distributed for cultivation in Assam, Kumaon and its neighbouring hill districts and the Madras Presidency. The next task was to act on Jenkin's suggestion. A team of Scientists was nominated by the committee for the purpose of visiting Assam not only to confirm the indignity but also to collect on the spot the greatest variety procurable of botanical, geological and other details before ulterior measures may be successfully taken with regard to the cultivation of the tea shrub in India. ¹³ The Committee appointed C.A. Bruce, then Commander of Gunboats in Assam, as Superintendent of Tea Culture to take charge of the government's experimental nurseries for developing tea plantations in Upper Assam. Tea Cultivation in India by the East India Company had thus become a successful venture.¹⁴

From the very beginning, the suggestion of the Tea Committee was readily accepted by the Government that after ascertaining the practicality of producing tea fit for commercial purposes, it could safely be left to individual enterprise to pursue the business as an object of speculation. Meanwhile, the resources of the state were to be devoted to initiating, nursing and developing the tea industry. Accordingly in May 1836, C.A. Bruce was promoted to the post of Superintendent of tea forests on a salary of Rs.400 per month.¹⁵ After many months of superhuman toil in the unhealthy forest regions, Bruce was able to send his first tea sample with the help of a batch of Chinese tea manufacturers. By March, 1838, the Tea Committee was in a position to inform the Government of India that 12 Boxes of Assam Tea were ready to be sent to the Court of Directors in London and in the first auction of Indian tea held in London, India made tea was sold at a price much above that of comparable Chinese tea.¹⁶ When the commercial possibility of tea cultivation in India was established, there had been

excitement among businessmen in Calcutta and London. Two merchants from Assam and Dwarkanath Tagore formed Assam Company in 1839 as the first joint stock company. Tea cultivation in British India depended greatly on the action of the Government of Bengal in relation to labour, and it is to be believed that they were fully aware of the importance of fostering, instead of obstructing, the cultivation of the tea plant. Considering the amount of capital engaged in its development, and the revenue derived from what was a few years ago mere waste land, it was assumed that the recommendations of the committee appointed on the tea cultivation of India would be carried out, and the competition between the Government engineers making roads, &c., and the planters cease. The Government imports the labour they require for their works, and the rate of wages had become nearly reduced. The planters in the upper provinces including Darjeeling hills have only to abandon the senseless competition hitherto existing, to benefit likewise. The employment of machinery for manufacture of the tea and the cultivation of the soil, together with rigid economy in the expenditure, was now being generally introduced and enforced, and the cultivation of tea in British India ought to have the future.¹⁷

Expansion of Tea Plantations in Darjeeling

For Darjeeling, with the development of commercial tea plantations, the economic development of the region had been coincided. From economic viewpoint, the idea of making Darjeeling hill station as a sanatoria and military station was placed in the back seat, let alone the triumphant tea as a commercial cash crop connecting Darjeeling with European market if not with global market. By 1861 both railways and roadways connecting Darjeeling with the plains and subsequent arteries roads connecting tea gardens were put in place. Tea Plantation opened up new employment opportunities in a land once clothed with forests where a very low number of people lived a life on natural subsistence economy.¹⁸

The credit for bringing this obscure place onto India's economic map goes to the British led tea industry. Not only small numbers of indigenous inhabitants were engaged in employment in tea gardens, but also thousands of people from neighboring Eastern Nepal immigrated to Darjeeling hills for accessing new employment opportunities in the tea plantation. For assuring uninterrupted labour supply in the expanding labour intensive tea industry, the system of having indentured labour was never adopted in Darjeeling, on the contrary the system of indentured labour was practiced in Assam tea plantations because for them, labours had to be imported from different parts of central India.

For the plantations in Darjeeling, mostly, immigrant workers came from Nepal. The chronic unemployment prevailing in Nepal due to overthrow of large chunk of Nepali population belonging to the lowest strata of hierarchically structured caste driven society of Hindu Nepal; the age old tradition of the landless Nepalese leaving home in search for employment in India, the proximity of Darjeeling to Eastern part of Nepal and the similarity in the climatic and physiographic conditions – all combined to facilitate movement of labour from Nepal to the plantations of Darjeeling. The Nepalese labourers immigrated on their own initiative being affected by push factors and attracted by the pull factors. The plantation management did not have to engage recruiting agency. At the initial few years, a good chunk of immigrated labours went back to Nepal, but in course of time, being assured to live with families, majority of them settled down in Darjeeling as permanent residents.¹⁹

Such immigration had remained continuous and rapid in between the decades of 1850's and 1930's. Most of such people started working as unskilled labour force as plantation workers. A good number of skilled labours was engaged in tea plantation as clerks, managers etc. Tea provided ancillary employment opportunities in the making of chest tea, ply wood and tea packaging and such other

businesses and trades linked with the tea industry. ²⁰ In fact Nepali population in Darjeeling had outnumbered all other population settled there since the beginning of 1880's.

Despite the contribution of tea plantation to the economic development in Darjeeling hills, the expanding tea plantations had huge adverse impacts on geo-ecological and socio-economic condition of people. The enhancing expansion or the rapidly growing tea gardens – just from one estate in 1856 to thirty-nine in 1866, one hundred and thirteen in 1874 and one hundred eighty six in 1905, had led to large-scale deforestation, landslides, soil erosion, loss of wild life, adverse changes in the Darjeeling's bio diversity.²¹ Darjeeling hill tract was once a land with extensive vegetation and dense forests were deforested with the clearance of forests as the rapid expansion of tea plantations in the region began.²² Around the same time, the construction of hill cart road connecting Siliguri Terai and Darjeeling upto Lebong Cantonment and construction of cobweb of link roads connecting tea gardens by earth cutting, blasting of rocks had weakened the slopes of the hills, soil erosions and landslides causing large scale environmental degradation.²³ Moreover, the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers caused contamination of river/streams and degradation of land.²⁴

The maximum growth of immigrated population resulted in increased unemployment in tea plantations and affected adversely the sustainable livelihoods of all plantation workers. The population overgrowth led to massive depletion of natural resources such as forests, vegetations and land. Random cutting of forest wood for fuel and slope lands were indiscriminately used for cultivation, thereby accentuated further damages to local ecology. Additional pressure on land and water resulted environmental degradation²⁵ and deteriorated the socio-economic conditions of hill people.²⁶ The increased human settlement added to the vulnerability of Darjeeling hills.²⁷

By 1840's, Darjeeling, an obscure piece of hill tract did no longer remain a land of anomaly as the British established firm political consolidation on Darjeeling. By 1839, Col. Llyod, the first Agent of the East India Company and the Chief Officer to negotiate with the king of Sikkim, was replaced by Dr. Cambell as the First Superintendant of Darjeeling. Along with other designated officers for tea plantation research elsewhere in India, Dr. Cambell, a Member of Company's Medical Service was eager and interested to experiment tea plantation in Darjeeling hill area. It is important to mention that Brian Houghton Hodgson, the Resident of Nepal, introduced tea cultivation into the Himalayas, establishing a plot in the Residency garden using seeds obtained from China by Kashmiri merchants. Dr. Campbell remained Assistant Resident, Nepal at that time till he joined as Superintendant, Darjeeling in 1839. Dr. Campbell's repeated experiment in Darjeeling leading to the establishment of commercial tea estates by 1852.²⁸

Dr. Cambell's successful experiment with tea plants in the backyard of his Bungalow and the achievement in implementing first tea plantation for commercial purposes heralded a new era of colonial political economy in Darjeeling. We find from report dated 28th April 1853 of Dr. Campbell that he was pleading with the government all along for establishment of experimental plantations directly by Government or for extension of trials by the native residents, in the Darjeeling region. The following extracts from his report manifest that the tea cultivation was purely at the initiative of Dr. Campbell. He wrote:

"In my report on the new settlement of this district, dated 30th March, 1853, No.123, I expressed a hope that the board would assist me in bringing the subject of tea cultivation in the Hills around Darjeeling to the favourable consideration of government, as it appeared to me that the general introduction of that plant held out a better prospect of improving the value of land in the hills than now exists, while grain alone is grown on their poor soils. In

addition to this consideration, itself of sufficient importance, I think to obtain the favourable notice of government of introducing the tea into the Himalayas elsewhere, and this locality from its greater proximity to Calcutta, with the water carriage available, gives it in that respect great advantage over the Kumaon and Gurhawal mountains.”²⁹

Dr. Campbell’s experiment was followed by the plantations of Dr. Withcombe, Major Cromelin in the lower valley, called Lebong.³⁰ In 1856 tea industry developed on an extensive scale at Takvur by Captain Masson, at Kurseong by Mr. Smith, between Kurseong and Pankabari by Captain Samler. The year 1856 was a landmark in the history of Darjeeling tea industry. The year marked the opening of Alubari tea garden by Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company and another on the Lebong spur by Darjeeling Land Mortgage Bank. In 1859, Dr. Brougham started the Dutaria garden. Between 1860 and 1864 four gardens at Ging, Ambotia, Takdah and Phubsering were established by the Darjeeling Tea Company. By the end of 1866 there were no less than 39 gardens with 10,000 acres under cultivation producing 4,33,000 Lbs of tea and in 1874 the number of gardens had increased to double. The area under cultivation rose to 18888 acres, the out turn to 3,928,000 lbs; and labours increased to 19000 persons. Between 1866 and 1874 the number of gardens under tea was almost exactly trippled, the area under cultivation increased by 82 percent; while the out turn often was multiplied nearly ten times.

The rapid growth of tea plantation in Darjeeling during the colonial period was due to certain convenient factors and congenial circumstances. These are : (a) Availability of cheap labour of the neighboring territories, especially from eastern part of Nepal; (b) Availability of free hold land in abundance; (c) convenient revenue policies; (d) Availability of forest wood and timber for fuel and for such other infrastructural purposes at a very low price or without price; (e) Physical and spatial status of Darjeeling congenial to the growth of tea

plantation and quality tea production; (f) Special status of Darjeeling to establish European planters' raj restricting non-European to own tea garden in Darjeeling; (g) Emerging interest among the Europeans to invest capital in tea industry of Darjeeling.

Since Tea industry was primarily the labour intensive industry, the requirement of labour both skilled and unskilled had largely been felt, however did never remain as a problem due to aspiring unskilled labour force was readily available in the neighboring territories. The Nepali emigrants had kept the supply of labour flowing to the Darjeeling tea plantations. Unlike the Assam Planters, the European planters of Darjeeling did not have to introduce the system of indentured labour. It was not a single labourer but the family of labourer was encouraged to settle in Darjeeling tea plantations to ensure sustainability of labour and to make child labour and women labour available at a cheaper rate. There had always been a steady supply of Nepalese labour force during the whole period of colonial Darjeeling. From the recorded information, it is seen that during the decades between 1850-1870, there was steady supply from 30,000 per decade till 1871 to 75000 per decade till 1951 (in 78 tea plantation)³¹

The phenomenon of long-distance labour migration, within India and overseas cannot be simplistically described as a voluntary process. There never was and never had been anything like a 'free' market in labour functioning in India. And rarely ever, for that matter, were labourers 'freed' in the simple Marxist sense, of being, at one instance forced off the land and compelled to sell their labour. More often a process of gradual immiseration was at work, with migrant labour being one of a variety of options open to peasants and tribals in which they might attempt to resist the pressures which they were under. As such, they undoubtedly exercised a choice, but that choice was exercised in an environment heavily structured by other features of the culture, society and, above all, economy in which they lived. To speak of this as 'free' choice therefore makes no sense at all. At no stage

where they entirely able to escape exploitation, and often that which they subsequently endured was far more systematic than any which had governed their previous existence. If at the end of the day these labourers prospered, it was frequently despite rather than because of the opportunities open to them. Nonetheless many migrants were able to build for themselves a space within the interstices of the colonial labour market, taking the initiative, saving money to support their relatives, resisting or otherwise adapting to their circumstances. Many became jobbers, gang-leaders and recruiters themselves. The role of returnees as recruiters was sometimes deliberately engineered by plantation owners and other employers, although featuring little in official Documents of Indentured Labour.³² Equally often however the process was initiated by the migrants, seeking to build for their relatives a friend a better life, in order to reunite divided families, or in other ways to prosper. As such, it is a tremendous testimony to the individual genius of migrants, to the new world which they built for themselves, and to the enduring links that they were able to maintain, often over vast distances, with their culture, kith and kin at 'home'. In the process new identities were constructed to enable them to bridge this gap between the old and the new and to somehow maintain their links with both.³³

Initially, while encouraging European businessmen to invest in tea industry, pound-sterling based companies were allowed to register as Joint Stock Company and local administration had made land available at low prices, even arrangement was made to sell the wasteland through open auction. However, with the passage of initial years, thirty years lease system for cultivation of tea was established. All these opened accesses, governmental patronages and supports resulted positive expansion of land as well as number of tea estates in colonial Darjeeling as evident from the following table.

Expansion of Tea Acreage in Colonial Darjeeling

Year	No. of Tea Plantations	Tea Cultivation Land
1852	1	433 hectares
1866	39	3000 hectares
1870	56	4400 hectares
1874	113	11000 hectares
1896	186	16230 hectares
1943	142	21075 hectares
1947	138	16569 hectares

Source : Tea Statistics, 2001

The expansion of tea plantation in Darjeeling was rapid during early years of colonial rule due to extraordinary special powers and huge discretionary powers vested in the Superintendent, Darjeeling by the East India Company Board of Directors located in Calcutta. The patronization and encouragement went to the extent whereby the planters could grow tea without paying revenue taxes, normally imposed on agricultural land. It is found that “146 tea estates were revenue free covering an area of 74286 acres as compared to revenue paying tea estates of 82127 acres. These revenue free tea estates consisted mainly of land, the revenue of which were committed under the Wasteland Rules of 7th May 1859. So grant of wastelands put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.10/acre. As a result, between 1859-62 more than 9000 acres of land were sold in the hills by public auctions at a average rate of about Rs.12/acre. Only after the passing of West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953, all the erstwhile freehold rights have been extinguished and all the tea estates have been made revenue paying”.³⁴

Campbell gave special encouragement and inducement to attract settlers in Darjeeling. With a view to encouraging the growth and

expansion of the tea industry in Darjeeling the British government offered land on especially favourable terms, under various sets of rules introduced from time to time. But a time soon came when Government had to devise ways and means to regulate the settlement of prospective tea planters. Land management rules in respect of plantations thus evolved according to the requirement of circumstances. There were at least twenty different tenures mentioned in the papers under which land cultivated with tea was held. But only three of which had practical importance to Darjeeling. They were the Old Assam rule also known as 99 years lease Rules, Fee Simple Rules of 1862 and the Cultivation Leases given under the Orders of the Government of Bengal issued on 22nd July 1864.

For some time after Early in 1854, the Board of Revenue proposed to extend to Darjeeling the rules for leasing waste lands under the Old Assam rules. But Dr. Campbell successfully opposed their introduction, chiefly on the ground that the public were satisfied with the existing rules. What kind of existing rule Campbell referring was not very clear. Probably it was a discretionary power which he had been vested with, of granting leases. The leases of 1853 expired in 1858, and many correspondences were granted with the Board of revenue on the subject of their renewal. Some of them were primarily renewed for 1859, and then nothing seems to have been done until 1860.³⁵ Immediately after the acquisition of the Darjeeling territory in 1835, there was not much demand for land; and the application which were made were dealt with by the Superintendent at his discretion. In 1838 a large number of applications for land for building sites led to the issue by Government of a set of rules for the grant of lands, dated 4th September 1839.³⁶ Prior to 1850 Dr. Campbell did not find it practicable to report any land revenue from the aboriginal inhabitants of the Darjeeling territory. It is quite clear from a report of Dr. Campbell, to the Board of Revenue in August 1850. In 1850, however, he tried the experiment of settling defined tracts upon the headmen of

the communities living within such tracts, for a period of three or five years. Up to 24th December 1850 he had given twelve leases, ten of which were for three and two for five years. In 1853 all these leases were renewed for five years.³⁷ At that time there was not much demand for land in Darjeeling territory. A second lease was granted in 1853 and the demand for land in Darjeeling increased in view of tea cultivation. The leases of 1853 expired in 1858, and much correspondence granted with the Board of revenue on the subject of their renewal. Some of them were primarily renewed for 1859, and then nothing seems to have been done until 1860.

Meanwhile a new set of rules for the grant of wasteland in the Darjeeling territory was issued by the Board of revenue with the approval of the Government on 7th May 1859.³⁸ The most important provisions of these rules were:

- 1) Grant of wasteland should be put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.10 per acre.
- 2) That the sale at such auction should convey a freehold title; that existing leasehold grant might be commuted to freehold at the option of the grantee.
- 3) Building locations might be commuted at the rate of 20 years purchase of the annual rent.
- 4) Between the introduction of these Rules in 1859 and their abrogation on the introduction of the Fee-Simple rules in 1862, over 9172 acres of land were sold in the hills by public auction at an average rate of about Rs.12 per acre.

The Fee-Simple Rules: In October 1861 Lord Canning published a resolution, in which he sanctioned the alienation of wastelands in fee-simple and the redemption of the land revenue of waste lands already granted on leasehold tenure. The resolution also contained an outline of the rules which Lord Canning proposed to make.

Lord Canning's minute of the 17th October 1861³⁹ laid down three main principles on which grants of wastelands were to be made in future. These were, firstly, that such lands should be granted in perpetuity as a heritable and transferable property, subject to no enhancement of land revenue; secondly, that all prospective land revenue would be redeemable at the grantee's option by a payment in full when the grant was made, or a sum might be paid as earnest at the rate of 10 percent, the remainder being paid later; and thirdly, that there should be no condition obliging the grantee to cultivate or clear any specific portion within any specific time. The minimum price for the fee-simple was fixed at Rs.2-8 per acre, so that by anything 10 percent of this or four annas per acre, a title was obtained. Lord Canning's rules were considerably modified at the instance of the Secretary of State, and on the 30th August a fresh set of rules was issued by the government of Bengal. This modified version of Lord Canning's rule is called the fee-simple rule of 1862.⁴⁰

They provided that all un-assessed wastelands, in which no right of proprietorship or inclusive occupancy was known to exist, should be available for purchase unless specially reserved by the government. Ordinarily, no lot was to exceed 3,000 acres, but there was no calculation to the number of lots any one person might obtain. Each lot, if available for purchase, was to be put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.2-8 an acre. The price might be sold in installment within ten years of the completion of the purchase. Thus these estates were held in fee-simple or as revenue-free lands, the right of the Government to rent having been hold out. Under these rules, 24 holdings, with an area of 11,152 acres, were sold for about Rs.13 per acre. The most important point of difference between these rules and Lord Canning's is that under the latter the land was given to the applicant at fixed rates, ranging from Rs.2-8 to Rs.5, while the fee Simple rules required that it should be put up to auction. This provision was very much disliked by the speculators, who complained that after they had spent time,

trouble, and money in searching for a suitable piece of land, they were liable of lose it altogether, or to have to pay more than its value for it at the auction sale. There was an agitation for the re-introduction of leasehold tenure, which had been discontinued under a clause in the fee-simple rules. Another provision, which was much objected to, was one requiring the demarcation and survey of each lot previous to sale. Gradually the Government had to suspend the survey prior to the sale. The result was disastrous. It happened on many occasions that the grantee had purchased one piece of land and got a title deed describing one quite different.⁴¹

Cultivation Leases: The agitation against the auction clause of the fee-simple rules prompted the government to permit lands to be taken up on thirty-year leases for the purposes of cultivating tea. When orders to this effect were passed by the Government of Bengal in 1864, the Board of Revenue drew up a set of rules. In 1864 a new tenure was introduced under Government order, No.1765 T, of the 22nd July of that year; by which lands were granted on cultivating leases for a term of thirty years at 6 annas per acre, with a right of re-settlement at the end of the term at half the rates paid for land cultivated with the ordinary crops of the District. These holdings were not commutable to fee-simple tenures. There was no efficient provision made for the survey and demarcation of the leaseholds, or in the protection of native interests. In Darjeeling much land had been taken up on this future. In the tea growing areas of the Bengal presidency, under the old rules of 1854 about 30,000 acres held by different tea planters. Similarly 320,000 acres were held under the simple rule and 1,00,000 acres were held under cultivation lease. In a statement of the state of tea culture in the District of Darjeeling E.W. Whinfield the deputy commissioner on 27th February 1873 gave an account of the land held in different tenure in Darjeeling.⁴²

“In 1873 a total of 70,395 acres of forest land were in possession of various tea companies and individuals. Only 7,015 acres (9.97 percent) were under cultivation of tea. About 91.13 percent of land alienated for tea remained uncultivated. Out of these 34.33 percent of land were fit of cultivation but not cultivated. Remaining percentage of land was unfit for cultivation but remained in possession of the companies or individuals. Applications were frequently made for large chunk of forest land by parties who had neither the means nor the mention of bringing more than a few hundred acres under cultivation. Land speculation went on in Darjeeling encouraged by imperial interest.”

The practical result of those grants was large-scale alienation of forest land (which would otherwise have been state property) by government than was actually required for the extension of tea cultivation. A large quantity of charcoal was required then in the tea factories of Darjeeling for firing and drying the tea. In fact the tea industry initially relied a great deal only on Charcoal as the source of fuel. Another very important requirement of the tea industry was wooden boxes used for packing manufactured tea. All these were taken place at the cost of forest wood.⁴³

Thus, it may be stated that most tea plantations were established by clearing natural forests on lands acquired or purchased from the government of India. Whenever markets for tea were strong enough to enable expansion of plantation acreage, forest cover correspondingly was reduced. There was also attempt by the Forest department to prevent greater alienation of forest land to the tea planters as well as those who indulged in land speculations. However, most of them were of the view that encouragement of a steady increase in the area under tea would serve the interest of the general public. In the interest of the government and the forest administration of Darjeeling, it was felt that the grantees of forested lands should be made to pay for the timber standing on the land thus obtained in such a manner so as to

ultimately check the insidious tendency to acquire large areas of forest land, not with the view of planting it with tea, but to keep the land for sale in the future. Thus, the tea industry contributed significantly to deforestation of the natural forest of Darjeeling.

To provide the planters further legal and administrative protection, the district administration of colonial Darjeeling created a Touzi (distinct land revenue) Department primarily to look after the interests of the European planters by setting apart the tea plantations from the agricultural sector and thereby from the jurisdiction of the general land revenue administration too. This explains why the Touzi Department is having its existence only in the two tea producing districts namely Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling to provide special privileges.⁴⁴ Effectively, there had been none in between the tea planters and the East India Company Authority except the single layered bureaucratic frame headed by the Superintendent/District Collector. This arrangement also explains how the nexus was built between the private European planters and the District administration in Darjeeling. The Touzi Section under District Administration dealt with land matters of the tea garden land, renewal of the lease of the tea garden, collection of land cess/salami/penalty/fine etc., it also dealt with giving no objection certificate for the development purpose, permission for uprooting and replanting/felling of shed trees. Touzi was also held responsible for the resumption of the retained land of the tea garden. Interestingly, the post-colonial independent state government administration continued this colonial arrangement and Touzi section under District Magistrate Darjeeling still continues to operate.

As it has been cited in the study that soon after the annexation of Darjeeling from the king of Sikkim (through a Deed of Grant), Darjeeling was given a special status by the East India Company administration under which it was designated as a non-regulated district and the land laws of Bengal did not apply.⁴⁵ Such unique arrangement provided opportunities for bringing a huge portion of land

under tea cultivation. Consequently, the rapidly growing tea industry played the major role in the initial development of the entire hills of Darjeeling. As a matter of fact, once conceived as sanatoria or as a military station, Darjeeling had been brought under the fold of tea economy and had been designated as tea land being tea designated as the colonial cash crop. The period between the establishment of first tea estate in 1852 and till 1947, the entire Darjeeling hills (principally restricted to Darjeeling Sadar and Kurseong sub-Division and only five tea gardens in the western part of Tista under lately annexed Kalimpong sub-division), experienced an unprecedented growth in tea plantation. The number of tea estates and the area under tea cultivation increased steadily from just one estate (1856) with an area of 4.33 hectare under tea cultivation to one hundred and thirteen tea estates covering 11,000 hectares of land under tea cultivation in 1874. In 1895, the total number of tea garden rose to 186 and the area occupied under tea cultivation as recorded in 1943 rose to 21075 hectares.⁴⁶ However, the periods from 1896 to 1943, experienced the decrease in the number of tea gardens due to closure, suspension of works, declaration of sick garden, or merger with the big group of tea companies, and increase in the area of land under tea plantation. There had been other factors too for the expansion of tea area and reduction of number of tea gardens.

In 1873, the first General Meeting of the Darjeeling planters was convened in Darjeeling to discuss on the issues and problems confronted by the planters. After the passage of roughly two decades, Darjeeling planters Association was formally formed in 1892 and was associated to Indian Tea Association in 1910.⁴⁷ A separate association called the Terai Planters' Association was formed in 1928. This association faced friction between some Indian and European members due to lack of trust between planters. Simultaneously, another important event of technology transformation was taken place in Darjeeling tea plantation. Mr. O'Brian an engineer, first time applied

the power driven tea roller and tea sorter in the processing of tea in 1872 by installing turbines. This resulted positive impact both on the quantity and quality of tea processing in Darjeeling and held responsible for rapid growth and expansion of tea plantation.⁴⁸ Rapid expansion of tea plantations in the second half of the nineteenth century created major employment opportunities and served as the impetus for initial economic development of the entire hill tract of Darjeeling.

Cinchona Plantation and Alienation of Forest Land:

In 1862, cinchona found its way to Darjeeling for experimental purposes. Even though its cultivation was not as extensive as that of the tea, cinchona too contributed to alienation of forest land in Darjeeling hills Cinchona is known commercially as Jesuit's Bark' and Peruvian bark.

The first attempt to cultivate cinchona in India was undertaken at Ootacamund (Ooty) in the Madras presidency by McIvor. In Bengal the cultivation of this exotic species was trusted to Dr. Anderson, then Superintendent of the Royal Botanic garden Calcutta. Anderson was sent to Java to study the method of cinchona cultivation adopted by the Dutch. He returned with a large number of healthy plants. The Bengal experiment started with the plants from Java and Ootacamund (Ooty).

The first nurseries were tried at Senchal a place near the station of Darjeeling with the expectation that Cinchona, which was an equatorial crop might do well in that place with its over-wet climate. But contrary to the expectation, the Senchal experiment ultimately proved to be a failure and the plants were transferred to Lebong which too proved unsuitable. Finally a suitable location for a permanent plantation as found at Rungbee on a spur projecting from Senchal in a south-easterly direction. The plantation at Rungbee was gradually extended over the whole ridge lying between the Rungbee and the Tiyang valley. Between 1861 and 1869 the main preoccupation was

with scientific and technical problems connected with the preparation and the after-care of the plants. The initial difficulties overcame, and a small harvest of bark began to come in from the year 1869-70. By the year 1875 there were about 2,000 acres of Government cinchona plantation. The total number of trees planted out between 1864 and 31st March 1875 amounted to 32,85,592.⁴⁹

Gradually the plantation at Rungbee was extended over the whole ridge lying between the Rungbee and the Riyang valleys. In 1887 an area at Sittong on an adjoining ridge to the south of the Riyang valley was taken in. these two ridges now constituted the Mangpu plantation with total area of 12,000 acres and a standing crop of 4,000 acres. In 1883 a plantation of 300 acres was started in Rungjong valley, but this plantation as abandoned in 1884 due to heavy rainfall. Later, a plantation of 500 acres at Nimbong in the same tract was purchased 1893 from the Bhutia Cinchona Association.⁵⁰ Almost at the same time private estates were also started, and it was made possible through State encouragement. But the private enterprise did not however continue for long, due to a temporary slump in bark.

After the failure of the private entrepreneurs in cinchona cultivation, the government pursued a policy of extended cultivation of cinchona as needed for the public welfare and in 1900 a new plantation was started in Munsong then under the reserved forest. This plantation then occupied a total of 6000 acres of forest land. In 1938 a third plantation was opened in the Rongo block of the Kalimpong Forest Division where it is expected to plant 1,600 acres of cinchona. A fourth plantation was started in the Latpanchar group of blocks in the Kurseong forest division.⁵¹

Cinchona was a tree for which it was very difficult indeed to find suitable land. Initially its cultivation had been tried in an immense number of sports all over British India, and it had proceeded only in three localities, viz. British Sikkim, the Nilgiri hills. Experience in India,

Java, Ceylon, and in South America (the cultural home of the plant) had proved that it cannot possibly be grown on flat land. Cinchona plantation required hill-sides with suitable soil, exposure, and climate. It was for these reasons and its extending demand that George King superintendent of Royal Botanical Garden Calcutta, who was in charge of cinchona cultivation asked the government of India to set aside in the Kalimpong Division a sufficient land for the extension of cinchona cultivation. Kalimpong Division in Darjeeling District was the only land suitable for cinchona cultivation within the province of Bengal and indeed in the northern part of India. In March 1883 C.S. Bayle Esq; Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal, revenue department wrote a letter to Mr. King the Superintendent of the Royal Botanical Garden, Calcutta and in charge of cinchona cultivation in Bengal to give an opinion regarding the proposed transfer for the cultivation of tea of a small plot of the cinchona land called the Engo Plateau in the Kalimpong sub-Division. When there was a proposal to give up the land in Engo block or Kalimpong Forest division which was set aside for cinchona for tea cultivation Mr. King said:

“It ought to be borne in mind, in connection with this question, that the production of the cinchona alkaloids at a cheap rate is a matter of importance to the whole of India. A great proportion of the febrifuge now manufactured at Mungpo being consumed beyond the province of Bengal. It is a matter of little difficulty to find land suitable for tea or native crops, and it would, in my opinion, be a great Economical mistake to give up for these cultivations land which is suitable for cinchona. I trust, therefore, that the deputy commissioner’s proposal to give up the entire Engo Block will not be entertained.

I regret that I am unable to agree with the proposal of the Commissioner of Cooch Behar that the Small Engo Plateau at the south east corner of the block should be given for tea.

The priority in providing suitable land for the cultivation of cinchona by the government of India could be seen from the opinion of Mr. King. Besides, the superintendent of the Cinchona Department was given the power to select any part of the Tista Forest Division for cinchona cultivation, on giving a notice to the Forest Department. Further he was allowed to cut trees from the Tista Forest Division for cinchona purposes, free of charge.” ⁵²

Thus it may be stated that most tea and cinchona plantations were established by clearing natural forests on land acquired or purchased from the Government of India. Whenever markets for tea and cinchona were strong enough to enable expansion of plantation acreage, great cover correspondingly got reduced. For many years, the tea planters held dominant financial and political leverage in Darjeeling and prevented the Forest department from gaining control over the wide forest area of the district. Higher ups in the forest department wanted to prevent greater alienation of forest areas to the tea planters as well as to those who indulged in land speculation. The large scale alienation of forest land for plantations and speculation as was indulged in at that point of time spoke of the great concern with which the forest department viewed the growth of the planter's interest in the district of Darjeeling. The dichotomy of interests between government foresters and private planters went unabated throughout the colonial period. The Colonial revenue officials had always tilted their balance to private planters in view of their revenue paying capacity.

Taking legitimate control over the forest land was the acknowledged policy of the British Government from the very beginning of the establishment of the Forest Department. British Government gradually realized that if the prevailing state of affairs was allowed to continue unchecked, in the same proportion as cultivation increased and forest was cleared, the government forest property would not only become valueless, but might soon be diminished to such a degree as to be incapable of supplying the just demands of the country, which it

was considered as the duty of a civilized government to secure. It was also recognized as practically impossible for a government to undertake the systematic management of a vast state property from which every individual could supply his or her wants free of charge, and frequently yielded no income from local sale. It was also soon became evident that in order to effect the required changes, it was necessary to legislate in order to legalize the settlement and the reservation of forests areas as well as the assumption of the complete control of their management.

It was consequently necessary to discern, in the first instance, between forests in which the control of the state was still absolute; forests which were the property of the state, but which were burdened with legal rights, prescriptive or granted. It was found that the forest Act of 1865 drew no distinction between the forests which required to be closely reserved, even at the cost of more or less interference with private rights, and those which merely needed general control to prevent improvident exploitation. It also provided no procedure or inquiring into and settling the rights which it so vaguely saved, and gave no powers for regulating the exercise of such rights without appropriating them. The forest Act of 1865, of such reasons, lent itself badly to the constitution of the state reserves. As a matter of fact, the Indian Forest Act of 1878 which was subsequently passed, did not per se accept the forest settlement work done under the earlier enactment.⁵³

The credit for bringing tea to Darjeeling goes to Dr. Cambell who was appointed in 1839 to the post of Superintendent. In 1841, there was successful cultivation of the plant at an attitude of 213.36 metres, from the seeds of a Chinese variety brought from Kumaon. The other early planters were Dr. Whilecombe, a civil surgeon and Major Crommlin, a civil engineer. It was identified that the land around Lebung – a little below Darjeeling north side, was particularly suitable. By the beginning of 1850's, on the way up from the plains, the Pankhabari and Kurseong gardens were developed by pioneers like

Martin and Captain Samler. The commercial potential of Darjeeling as a tea cultivation zone with its unique kind tea aroma was proved beyond doubt and several other gardens were established. These tea gardens were promoted either on the basis of proprietorship or as joint stock companies. In 1856, the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company opened the Alubari Garden. The Dhutana garden owned by Dr. Brougham opened in 1859. Dr. Campbell attempted to inspire the local indigenous people by way of distributing tea seeds; however, his attempts were proved to be a failure.⁵⁴

With the initiation of tea cultivation on commercial basis, by 1860's several concerns like the Darjeeling Tea Company and the Lebong Tea Company opened a number of tea gardens at the high mountain ridges of Darjeeling hills. But soon there was interest in opening estates at lower levels in the Terai region. In 1862, James White, owner of Singel tea estate of Singel near Kurseong, opened the first garden in the Terai at a place called Champta. In 1872, the property was registered and the partners were W. Lloyd, G.A. White, S. Cochrane, A. Smallwood and R.S. Wright.⁵⁵ The business was converted into a joint stock company called the Champta Tea Company, in 1883. This huge estate was reorganized and the New Champta Tea Company was created in 1889 under the managing agency of Davenport and Company.

In 1866, 14 years after the first commercial planting, Darjeeling district had 39 gardens producing a total of 21,000 kg. of tea. In 1870, the number of gardens increased to 56 producing about 71000 kg. of tea. By 1874, there developed 113 gardens in the district covering an approximated area of 6000 hectares under tea. Tea was proved to be a highly profitable venture and by 1905, tea was grown over some 20,000 hectares – nearly 80 square miles and the production had risen to about half a million kg. The following chart shows the expansion of tea in Darjeeling between 1874-1907.

Year	Number of Gardens	Tea cultivated area (ha)	Output (kg)
1874	113	7643	1781700
1885	175	15380	4123359
1895	186	19705	5313720
1907	148	20485	5646172

Source: Tea Statistics, Darjeeling.

The table approves the fact that during years both land under tea cultivation and output of tea had always an upward tendency, however the number of gardens experienced a downward tendency while compared to the figures of 1895 and 1907. This was due to the fact that a number of adjoining gardens were amalgamated for economic management and changes in the ownership deed of registration from personal proprietorship to Joint Stock Company. Over and above, tea flourished both in the hills and terrain plains of the district.

Interesting to note that Indian entrepreneurs were allowed to open a number of gardens in terrai part of Darjeeling after 1907. They were however allotted land with less favourable soil. However, the rest of the Darjeeling gardens located in hills were still kept under European ownership. The expansion of tea cultivation in Darjeeling went unabated till it faced notable crisis during the world wars. Till then, there were 71 gardens across 10,117 ha within the jurisdiction of Darjeeling Thana, 46 gardens across 6,889 hectares under Kurseong Thana, and 32 gardens across 3197 hectares under Siliguri Thana. Thus about one seventh of the district was covered with tea and no less than one third of tea population lived off the industry.⁵⁶ The Census of India showed that 64000 persons were engaged as plantation workers. Darjeeling tea imbued with fine unique aroma became famous by 1870's for this flavour and realized higher prices.

The tea industry in Darjeeling continued to progress satisfactorily between 1901 and 1940. There had been the decline in the numbers of tea gardens, however, area under tea cultivation in Darjeeling district continued to increase from 20485 hectares to 25520 hectares and the output grew from 5,464,292 kg. to 10,760,072 kg. The district grew both black and green varieties of tea and the 1942 output was 12,010,420 kg. and 563371 kg. respectively. However, in the post World War II period, the tea industry in Darjeeling suffered a decline. The area under cultivation fell and production remained virtually stagnant. The tea industry in Darjeeling started suffering from starvation of capital. The recurring depression in World tea price, falling profitability of investment in tea in India in general and Darjeeling in particular, devaluation of rupee and the problem of repatriation of dividend and remuneration had been the causing anxiety to investors and made the British capital problematic.⁵⁷

The penetration of colonial capitalism in India led to the growth of a wage-earning industrial labour force divided into several segments in the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. A major segment was the plantation labour force formed and maintained essentially on the basis of unfree labour. In view of all this and also in view of the multi-tribe, multi caste and multi-lingual composition of the labour force and the subsistence of primordial tribal/caste linguistic ties can such a labor force be viewed and identified, if not in the subjective sense but at least in terms of objective content, as a working class or a segment of Indian working class? This leads to the broader issue of ambiguities in the process of class formation under conditions in which the capitalist sector emerges and grows but the capitalist relations are not sufficiently generalised in the economy as a whole. This suggests once more that the plantation labour force was very much a phenomenon of unfinished capitalist relational process of history. All this had also very important bearing on

the process of development of class struggle and labour and for class consciousness among the plantation workers.⁵⁸

The last few years of colonial Darjeeling experienced organized trade union movement which penetrated into the tea gardens around 1943. The Provisional Committee of the Communist Party of India (CPI) delegated Sushil Chatterjee to organize a unit in the Darjeeling district. Mr. Chatterjee came into close contact with Ratan Lal Brahmin, a local popular person commonly acceptable among the labours of the gardens. R.L. Brahmin was drawn gradually into organized Leftist politics and won the National Assembly constituency seat in 1946 as a Communist candidate. The rift between other emerging trade unions of the Gorkha League, Congress and the Communists had widened as a result.

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CHAPTER – V

URBANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN COLONIAL DARJEELING

The historical trajectories of colonially cherished and built hill stations in India would have us believe that the formations of urban spaces in the plains and of the hills were altogether of two different processes. For the making of the hill stations, the considerations like racial distinctions and climatic value received priorities. Principally, colonial urban sites situated at mountain ridges away from the tropical plains, the hill stations were built to facilitate the recuperation of European bodies from the heat and diseases of the plains.¹ The growth of Darjeeling town as an important colonial Hill station had been a milestone to this direction. Researches on hill stations have well approved the fact that colonial hill stations in India evoked a nostalgic sense of loss at the contemporary violation of their idyllic beauty through the rise of population and gradual overcrowding as an inevitable urban phenomenon. Urban hill station Darjeeling like such other hill stations has been understood as a specific development of colonial social history. Primarily, it was viewed as an urban space of colonial leisure and recreation; temperate place that represented socially, culturally and architecturally, derivations of metropolitan and imperial symbols of leisure.²

While focusing on Darjeeling as a defined space of colonial urbanism, two features seem discernable. Firstly, there had been the spatial segregation between the native and European residential areas, although such European residential sanctity was intruded upon by affluent Indians in the late colonial period. Thus there had been continuous overlapping of urban spaces and were constantly negotiated.³ However, such negotiation of sharing distinct urban spaces sometimes created tensions and evolved out an urge for exclusively for the Europeans. As it has been observed, “In the absence of clearly

defined separation the colonizers created discrete containments for both public and private sociability”.⁴

Secondly, the urban space of Darjeeling was integral to the colonial political economy in which the resources of all sites were subject to the mode of colonial resource use leading ultimately capitalistic utilization of resources. Dane Kennedy’s exploration for the eventual ‘despoiling’ of the hill stations in the late colonial period is worthy to mention here. He argues that “colonial sustenance required legions of subordinates and attracted the aspiring Indian elite, whose presence subverted their pristine quality dislodging the private public distinction between the cities in the plains and the hill stations in British India”.⁵

The expansion and growth of Darjeeling subverted another spatial dichotomy; that between the idyllic hills and the disease-ridden plains in official discourse and public culture. This subversion was not only occasioned by the accommodation of Indians in menial and clerical capacities within the municipal limits of the exclusive hill station. Such subversion was intrinsically linked with Darjeeling as a colonial space, whose function being not only to serve as a site of medicalized leisure for the British and the Indian elites, but also to transform the surrounding newly colonized districts into commercial, revenue yielding settled economic sites. Once this was accomplished, the integration of its resource pull into the larger colonial economy sustained the expansion and consolidation of the town. Thereafter, the Indian elite sought exclusive urban spaces within the hills station, emulating the status and privilege available to the British in India resulting thereby a gradual process of the development of anglo-sanskritocracy.⁶

Bhattacharya further argues, “*Colonial administrators planned the hill stations in the 19th century to create an idyllic social space away from the tropical climate and the Indianized cities in the plains.*

Therefore, the hill stations represented topographical, climatic, social and architectural ideals that were radically different from the cities in the plains. But the process of colonizing what were after all remote tropical mountain villages and establishing and sustaining a urban centre which, by the turn of the century, hosted an entire colonial administration for half the year subverted these ideals, and rendered the urban spaces in Darjeeling politically and economically contestable.” Thus, at the one end, the tropical mountain location, air and water of Darjeeling deluded Europeans; they looked similar to the Alps; on the other, the urbanized, lively, lucrative Darjeeling hill station attracted investments, labour and visitors. In the process, the segregation and social exclusivity were both violated and contested by the British residents as well by affluent Indians.

The process of urbanization under British rule is intrinsically linked with the economic policy of the colonial rulers. Such process has been appropriately periodized by R.P. Dutt into three phases – the mercantilist (1757-1813) phase, free trade industrial capitalist (1813-1850) phase and financial imperialist (1850's onwards) phase.⁷ The historical process of urbanization in Darjeeling falls in between the last two periods of the colonial rule, wherein the colonial primary urbanization transformed 'little tradition' (as was existing in the name of indigenous population and culture) into great traditions (as claimed by the colonial power of their own) expanding thereby the normative zone for territorial integration by way of universalizing colonial cultural consciousness. More specifically, during colonial urbanization, there developed a hiatus of communication between the town and the country, living apart from each other. Urban influence did not filter much beyond its immediate environs into the areas of its administrative jurisdiction. Urbanization refers to the twin processes such as 'orthogenesis' and 'heterogenesis'. While pre-colonial India represents 'cities of the moral order, the colonial cities were the results of foreign intervention representing "cities of the technical order."⁸

Due to military installations, sanitariums, expansion of tea gardens, there had been in Darjeeling growing number of Europeans and rapidly growing migration, due to labour encouragement, and expansion of service sectors. The process leading to monetized economy facilitated the social and economic integration of the region. Tea profit, timber extraction were other ways of bringing money to the Himalayan Darjeeling. Darjeeling was shaped by the specific characteristics of late 19th century British colonialism. Darjeeling expanded at a time when the British were far more concerned about immediate extraction of natural resources as well as agricultural revenue and international trade; both of these were reflected in the growth of the town.

In the contemporary researches on urbanization and material transformations, the dialectic of space and time; the dual socio-economic processes have assumed a renewed significance.⁹ Researches have been conducted on the construction of the urban landscape by capitalism as amply corroborated by the writings of Harvey, David, (1985); *The Urbanization of Capital*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA; Lefebvre. H. (1991), *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, U.K.; Castells, M, (1989), *The Information City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban Regional Process*, Blackwell, U.K. that have helped to develop a thorough understanding of the urban system with distinct temporal, functional and spatial forms being integrally associated with the historical process of development of various modes of production .¹⁰ During colonial phase of Indian history, capital rebuilt space and reconstructed environment in its own image, giving rise to a distinctively urban space of Darjeeling and its resultant transformation. Central to the theme is the link between ideology and socio-spatial formations and the role of power in controlling such urban space. The colonial historiography suggests that ideology, around with power, went on to create patterns of domination and intensified class divisions and appropriated space. In the Marxist analysis, resistance is integral to such domination (read

restructuration) which may also get shaped in distinct forms while in Foucauldian framework, resistance (read counter domination) is near absent as there can be no such effort without power.¹¹

Unquestionably, both coloniality and colonial power had been largely represented in the urban landscape images of colonial Darjeeling. As Zukin argues, landscape not only denotes the usual geographical meaning of “physical surroundings” but also refers to an ensemble of material and social practices and their social representation. Ultimately, like other colonial urban settlement, colonial urban Darjeeling had become the landscape of the powerful and that of the powerless. Darjeeling town along with two other hill sub-divisions Kurseong and Kalimpong had been essentially the colonial creation which had undergone three conglomerated circumstantial events such as ‘Alien superimposition’, ‘the Anglo-Sanskritocracy’ and ‘Colonial notion of modernity’.¹²

The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines urbanization as ‘the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or slowly with agriculture to other communities, generally larger whose activities are primarily centered in government, trade, manufacture, or allied interest’. Urbanization is a two way process. It involves not only movement from village to towns but also involves change from agricultural occupation to business, trade, service and behavior patterns. The United Nations, after taking note of the variations of the nature of urbanization from one country to the other, has attempted to provide certain principal comprehensive criteria of urbanization. Five main criteria have been attempted to provide in defining the term ‘urban’: (a) administrative functions; (b) population size; (c) local self-government; (d) certain urban characteristics like sewerage, public water supply, electricity, civic administration, police station, hospital, market, educational institutions, judicial institutions, metal roads, transport etc.; predominant non-agricultural avocations. Over two-

thirds of the people in the area should be engaged in industry, commerce, transportation etc.

An urban centre is basically an interaction between large scale political and social processes. It is characterized by the size of its population, its types and magnitude of economic activities, and its level of political authority and cultural influence. A network of flows of people, money, commodities, regulations and ideas links the settlement within an urban system. Several economic, social and political dimensions influence the structure of an urban settlement. For colonial Darjeeling, urbanization was not the expression of a process of modernization but the manifestation of the level of socio-spatial relations, of the accentuation of the social contradictions inherent in the mode of development determined by a specific dependence within the monopolistic capitalist system.¹³ Interestingly, the neo-Marxists, like Hebert Marouse [1964], Andre Gunder Frank [1969], Castells [1977], Harvey [1982] have viewed urbanization and corresponding urban settlement as instrument of capitalist domination, and they function as centres of power of the regional, national and international bourgeoisie'. The development and wealth of the urban centre depend on the effective exploitation of the material and human resources of their peripheries.¹⁴

Scholars like Ballahatchet and Harrison have drawn our attention to the need for historical studies of the development of urbanism in India. They emphasized the importance of the role of politics in determining the location, growth and even decline of Indian cities through history.¹⁵

Referring R.J. Johnston, Professor S.K. Munshi provided a three part model of urbanization in the Eastern Himalayas. The first model relates to upward quantitative demographic change, involving enhancement in the proportion of population living in urban areas in which migration is a stimulating factor behind urban growth. The

second model deals with the structural change in society resulting out of the development of capitalism in which towns grow as centres of production, distribution and exchange processes. The third model connects with the psycho-behavioural urbanization, bringing in changes in attitudes in behavioural patterns and in values giving rise to a form of urbanism distinctly different from what a rural society holds.¹⁶ In this three part model of urbanization, demographic changes are the dependent variable driven by material structural imperatives and specified context of time period and the place or location. This three-part model while applied in Darjeeling seems highly relevant with the qualifiers that the identification of Darjeeling as a prospective location for the establishment of military installations, sanatorium, leisure and health resort had been essentially the decision of the imperial powers to create a socio-political space what they imagined to be identical with the European notion of nature. However, with the creation of Darjeeling as a hill station and with its designation as the world's best quality tea production settlement, Darjeeling in the Eastern Himalayas got closely linked with the colonial urban processes since mid-thirties of the nineteenth century and had become the most urbanized settlement in the Eastern Himalayas.¹⁷ Throughout the colonial period, tea, tourism, transportation, health resorts, missionary led English educational institutions grew in pace resulting in a distinctively different urban cultural coloniality for Darjeeling.

The political economy approach to the third world urbanization focuses on the dependent nature of capitalist development in the third world which places more emphasis on external economic forces in the study of the town and changes that occurred in the structure of town as a result of the shift from pre-capitalist mode to capitalist mode of production, the resulting heterogeneous class structures of the town as well as the role of the state in shaping the process of urbanization by lending support to the power of the elites and the changing modern sector of the urban economy. A study of colonial urbanization and

urban development in Darjeeling based on political economy approach¹⁸ is indeed academically considered to be valid for the unique history, ecological positioning and its distinctive British colonial identity.

The colonial administrative officials of the East India Company, at its head quarters in Calcutta had the desire to have a hill station nearer to Calcutta and Darjeeling was their ultimate choice. The British East India Company Officials primarily noticed the possibilities for a sanatorium town at the site of a Lepcha village (Dorje-ling) in the eastern Himalayas. Under the Instruction of the Governor General, in 1828, Captain G.A. Lloyd, an army official, and J.W. Grant, the Commercial resident at Malda arrived at the Dorje-ling site with adequate hardship and separately reported back to the company Authority on the merit of the site as an ideal location for a sanatorium town.¹⁹ In 1829, the EIC Authority sent Capt. J.D. Herbert, Deputy Surveyor General to the site to explore possibilities for the establishment of a sanatorium for British troops.²⁰ On behalf of the East India Company, in 1835, Lloyd had leased the Darjeeling tract from the king of Sikkim for an annual payment of Rs.3000/-.²¹

For the first five years Capt. Lloyd, under the authority of EIC, had organized the labour for building the road to Darjeeling, however the EIC replaced him with Surgeon Major Archibald Campbell, formerly, Assistant Resident in Nepal²². Campbell was vested with wide-ranging fiscal, civil and judicial powers and oversaw its expansion.²³ Darjeeling town was established to provide a place of rejuvenation to British troops and civilians away from the heat and dust of the plains of Northern and Eastern parts of Gangetic plains.

Military or defense strategic functions formed a significant factor towards the development and growth of Darjeeling town. Darjeeling being located in a frontier zone, adjacent to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, the EIC military officials had an anxiety of intrusion by the regional/local mountain rulers. The principal intention of the British to

provide assistance to Sikkim in 1817 was to reduce the possibility of Nepal-Bhutan intrigues against the East India Company. In 1838, Lloyd, then Officer on Special Duty, North East Frontier, informed the Company Government in Calcutta about a Nepali Mission to Bhutan. The EIC resolved that a local corps of sappers and miners would be formed for Darjeeling. The Asiatic Intelligence wrote in 1839: "We hear sad accounts of the state of affairs at Darjeeling, arising from the neglect of government to furnish the inhabitants with the security expected. The people have got into their heads that the Goorkhas are arming and collecting in great force in the neighbourhood of intended sanatorium a sort of panic in the result..."²⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that after 1835, no attempt was made by Goorkhas and so to speak no other ruler of the hills to intrude into the Darjeeling frontier, however, sense of anxiety did prevail.

By 1857, the prospect of Darjeeling as a centre for the recruitment of Gorkha soldiers attracted the attention of the Government. The initiative of E. Drummond, Officiating Magistrate, Dinajpur is not out of place to mention while in his letter dtd. 10th Sept., 1857, he suggested to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that "the Sebundie Corps at Darjeeling should be raised to the strength of ten full companies with British Officers...". He further pointed out that "they would in every way be more efficient, courageous, and trustworthy body of men than any to be had in the plains."²⁵ The importance of Darjeeling rose significantly higher as the Head Quarters of the Eastern Zone for the recruitment of Gorkha Soldiers. The Annual Reports of the Dy. Commissioner, Darjeeling, stated that during 1891-92, 1000 hill people from Darjeeling were recruited²⁶ for different military purposes and were sent different frontier districts for military transport purposes, building works and direct military expedition. The importance of Darjeeling as a potentially vulnerable strategic location was highlighted by A. Eden, Secretary to the Government of Bengal in a

Communication No.1458T dtd. 11 July, 1864 sent to the Secretary, Military Department, Government of India:

“Darjeeling needs protection. It is in an exposed position Darjeeling has in fact come to be regarded by the inhabitants of the hills of Nepal, of Sikkim, of Bhutan, and of Tibet (Lhasa) not only as a centre of British wealth and civilization, but as a point of which the the British Government is most easily assailable unless protected by an adequate Military Force. There are now no Native Troops at Darjeeling. The sappers are no longer maintained as a Military Body or subject to articles of war The convalescent Depot ... is empty in the cold weather, and is not at any time (to) be relied on for other duty. And there can be no doubt that, while the cantonment at Senchal affords an admirable Sanitarium for European troops, the presence of the Detachment there gives a feeling of security to the whole of the scattered European inhabitants of the District, impresses the native population both of British Sikkim and of Foreign countries by which it is surrounded with a wholesome sense of the power of the government, and renders attack from any quarter hopeless and practically impossible”.²⁷

In 1865 there was a proposal to construct a cantonment and barracks for European troops in Darjeeling. The committee appointed to select the site for this purpose recommended ‘Bryanstone’ in order to combine the whole complex in one ring fence with the Convalescent Depot at Jalapahar. However, Cecil Beadon, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, argued in a Minute of 28 December 1865 that the civil station of Darjeeling formed only a small part of the British interest to be protected on the Sikkim hills. Numerous tea factories and other private settlements where Englishmen stayed with their families were scattered throughout the district. These were more vulnerable as far as hostile attacks were concerned than the hill station itself. The headquarters of the Darjeeling sappers was located in the hill station and the police reserve was nearby. The Convalescent Depot occupied a commanding

position in Jalapahar. Taking all these facts into account, the hill station of Darjeeling was the very last place to be attacked. Although there was no danger of attacks by the Lepchas, Sikkimese and Nepalis and Bhutan was too far for danger, Beadon suggested that any patrol in Darjeeling would have to be nearer the frontier than Jalapahar. Senchal was considered advantageous as a military position. There were road linkages, accesses to the defence of all points likely to be attacked and good communications with the plains. The land belonged to the government, the climate was healthy and there was abundant space for building, exercise and recreation. Beadon felt that :

“...as a military position, it is on the whole as good as any other, if not the very best, in the hills, that it affords equal protection to Darjeeling as it stands – to the extended sanatorium, which, in all probability will be established on the Tukdar spur, to Kurseong, to Hope Town, to the Cinchona Establishment in the valley of Rungbe and to the tea plantation throughout the province. The barracks of Sinchal command a view of the whole of British Sikkim as much as of Independent Sikkim, of nearly all the newly acquired hill territory of Bhutan and of the ridge which divides Darjeeling from Nepal; and there are conspicuous and well-known marks for many miles in every direction. Among barbarous and ignorant tribes the site of a British Cantonment ever present to their view and ever reminding them of the existence of a power which is irresistible cannot fail to produce – as it undoubtedly does produce – a great moral effect”.²⁸

The Commander-in-Chief recommended the proposal and the Governor General-in-Council considered the matter and directed the adoption of necessary measures for early and permanent construction of accommodation at Senchal for a wing of British Infantry and a Battery of Garrison Artillery. It was suggested that the Senchal barracks should be arranged so as to be defensible in the event of a crisis so that a portion of the troops could move out for offensive operation.²⁹

Newall wrote in 1873 that this Report of 1872 had pointed merely to a defence of the Town and Station of Darjeeling but as much valuable property was included within the district, he had thought it expedient to acquire a knowledge of the frontiers where it was possible that an enemy might be met with advantage, so as, if possible, to keep the enemy at arm's length and out of the district. There was a belt of dense bamboo forest clothing the crest of the hills bounding the western or Nepal frontier which formed an effectual barrier to any possible invasion from the quarter but there was one weak point: behind the ridge forming the British Indian boundary called Tongloo existed the Fort of Elam in Nepal about eight miles from the frontier, dominating a fertile valley, where the Nepal government possessed a considerable garrison, with granaries, store-houses and several field guns. The fortress was about eight hours or less from the British Indian frontier pillar or post no.17, which was situated at the point where the British Indian boundary line of road turns north along the Nepal frontier and was about equidistant from the British position at Jalapahar by an easy, level road. Three roads converged on Pillar 17 from the Fort of Elam and the Nepal Government could send troops along these roads and in the course of one long night throw a force of 5,000 or 6,000 men, with a couple of mountain batteries, right across British communications with the plains, thereby occupying the ridge from "Lepchajuggut" to "Senchal", the key of Darjeeling, by an army twenty or thirty times the strength of the garrison. He recommended that a block-house which could hold 50 to 100 'native' police in an emergency should be constructed there. Post no.17 could be held by police or volunteers placed in telegraphic communication with the main position of Jalapahar and would form a valuable outpost on the line of least resistance into Indian territory.³⁰

Newall (1887) discussed the strategic importance of Darjeeling and strongly advocated the military colonization of the hills. He referred to the views of Clive, Warren Hastings, Wellington, Munro, Bentinck,

Metcalfe, Ellenborough, Dalhousie, Malcolm, Canning, Lawrence and others, all of whom had favoured hill colonization. According to him, “The occupation of a ridge of mountain forming water parting whence issued the rivers which fertilise that adjacent lowlands must at once strike the eye of the military critic as the true line of domination of the plain country embraced within those rivers”.³¹ He therefore argued that the troops in the mountain ranges of Garhwal and Kumaon should command the Doab, through Dehra Dun, as far as Allahabad. The group of hill stations encompassing Almora, Nainital and Ranikhet should command Rohilkhand, Oudh and the area as far as the Ganges. Troops at Darjeeling should command south-east Tirhut and Bengal as far as the Brahmaputra. Moreover, in the event of war with Nepal, Newall believed that Darjeeling would constitute the refuge of the whole district and might find it difficult to maintain itself.

There were several splendid plateaus in Darjeeling and across the Tista suitably adopted for this purpose. Newall suggested that an arrangement could be made with the Raja of Sikkim according to which the country up to the frontier might be acquired in return for a pension or money gratuity. Newall hoped that “The country up to the granite walls of Thibet would then be ours, and available for settlement, and I scarcely know of any country more calculated to form a refuge or “military circle” such as I have suggested. In this fine hill district, then, since Nepal and Valley of Khatmandoo cannot be availed of, I would suggest the establishment of a Grand Southern Military Reserve Circle for Bengal”.³² It is evident that Darjeeling occupied a very important strategic location in the British Indian defence perimeter. The cantonments at Jalapahar and Katapahar developed as a spatial response to the need for defending the British Indian Empire.

Economic functions assumed significance from the 1840s. In 1835, the original village of Darjeeling had scarcely 100 inhabitants. The population grew to over ten thousand in 1849. Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker visited Darjeeling in the middle of April 1848 and stated “At the

former period there was no trade whatsoever, there is now a considerable one, in musk, salt, gold dust, borax, soda, woolen clothes and especially in ponies.” He also reported that many thousands of natives flocked from all quarters to the fair established by Dr. Cambpbell at the foot of the hills, exercising a beneficial influence throughout the neighbouring territories.³³ Trade became a major form of economic activity in Darjeeling. W.B. Jackson of the Bengal Civil Service submitted an encouraging report on the trade between Darjeeling and Tibet, published in 1854. Despite many restrictions and duties, the trade with Tibet on the Sikkim route had a value of Rs.50,000 annually. The report suggested that British manufactures could be exchanged for Tibetan gold, salt and wool. In 1857, The Calcutta Review published an account of Darjeeling. The market was on the whole well arranged and well stocked. The traders were all from the plains. The shops were erected by and remained the property of the government. Prices were not regulated by the authorities and trade was free. Traders were encouraged to settle at Darjeeling. The value of import from Lhasa to Darjeeling by the Sikkim route was about Rs.50,000 annually. Imports consisted of salt, gold, silver, precious stones and doarse woolen stuffs. The principal import was wool. The Calcutta Review hoped that Darjeeling was the gateway through which the commerce and culture of the west could reach Central Asia. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Waddell found Nepali women dressed in ‘English broad cloth’ with gaudy handkerchieves of European manufacture thrown gracefully over their heads at a Sunday market in Darjeeling. Waddell also saw that Kalimpong was a flourishing trade centre.³⁴ Charles Bell (1928) also mentioned that half the entire trade between Tibet and India had passed through this thriving town. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Dozey saw in the Darjeeling market a diverse ethnic mix: Marwaris (engaged in the money lending business), Kashmiris and Punjabis (dealers in silks, skins and furs), Nepalis (dealers in turquoise-ware, coral, amber,

jade ornaments, kukris, knives and brass-ware) Parsis (dealers in Japanese silver-ware and oilmen's stores) as well as grocers from the plains and Bhutia pawn brokers and cheap jacks.³⁵

On 20 May 1864, the Bengal Government wrote to the Superintendent of Darjeeling, pointing out that the Indo-Tibetan trade would be greatly promoted if a suitable place near Darjeeling was assigned to the Tibetan traders where they would find proper accommodation for themselves and their cattle during their stay and suggesting that land at the end of the Lebong spur was a good site. The government wanted the Superintendent to prepare a report on trade between Darjeeling and Sikkim and Tibet and also wanted details regarding trade with Nepal and Bhutan. The reply of the Superintendent mentioned that the items imported from Sikkim were horses, cattle, sheep, goats, blankets, salt, musk, wax, ghee, oranges, millets, rice, lime and copper. The imports in 1863 were nearly double those in 1860. The money earned during 1860 to 1863 amounted to Rs.89,535 of which Rs.19,450 was returned to Sikkim as goods. The articles of export to Sikkim included English cloth, metal utensils, tobacco and coral. It was hoped that improved communications would lead to great quantities of tea being exported to Sikkim and Tibet, replacing brick tea imported from Lhasa and China. Trade with Tibet consisted of the import of horses, blankets, tea, turquoise, wool, musk, ox-tails, musical instruments and shoes. The imports increased greatly during 1860 to 1863. The total price of goods sold amounted to Rs. 64,005, of which Rs.43,700 was spent in Darjeeling for the purchase of goods for export. The balance of Rs.20,305 was taken away in cash. Articles exported to Tibet included tobacco and indigo. There was a steady demand for English cotton goods, cloth and luxury items in Sikkim and Tibet, due to improved Anglo-Sikkimese relations. Trade with Nepal did not show a steady annual increase and trade with Bhutan was small though there was a large demand for cloth and cotton goods in Bhutan. The Superintendent reiterated his suggestion

for the institution of an annual fair at Darjeeling. This was the first comprehensive report on the trans- frontier trade of Darjeeling and it was of great importance. The Bengal Government was convinced that trade could be expanded considerably, especially with Sikkim and Tibet. The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling was instructed to facilitate the enlistment of a serai and bazaar on the Lebong spur and repair important communication links through Sikkim. The Bengal Government was also most interested in the potential of tea trade. The country beyond Sikkim was one of the greatest tea consuming countries in the district.³⁶

Darjeeling became a major social meeting place for the British. Clubs such as the Darjeeling Planters' Club and the Gymkhana Club were established, while there were numerous activities such as racing at the Lebong race course, counter spurs, picnics and parties. The hill people were considered intention and mostly employed as labour in the town and the adjoining plantations. Darjeeling was also a seat of missionary activities.

After the formation of the Darjeeling district by 1866, the British government considered it a non-regulated district, not a regulated one. The difference between regulated and non-regulated districts lay in the fact that in the case of the former all laws and regulations relating to land and land revenue were enforced while in the case of the latter, all such powers were in the hands of the executive. Subsequently, the terms 'excluded' and 'scheduled' area was also applied to the Darjeeling district.³⁷

In the midst of the process of eventualities taken place in Darjeeling keeping both of its spatial and functional specificities for the first fifteen year, the Municipality of Darjeeling was established in 1850 and initially, the Municipal physical delimitations were interestingly co-extensive with those of the tract ceded in 1835 – the tract extended from the hills below Pankhabari to the borders of Sikkim to the North.

The primary intention was to bring Darjeeling under a municipal cantonment model so as to provide fund for conservancy and police establishment in the station of Darjeeling and the maintenance of roadways. With the passage of twenty-five years following the establishment of Municipality, the municipal boundaries of Darjeeling were proposed to bring in a manageable size. On 22 July 1873, the Chairman laid before the Meeting a minute of a meeting held by the Lieutenant Governor on 31 May 1873 and asked for the necessary compliance of the Direction of the Lt. Governor. Accordingly, the proposal was sent to the Government for rescheduling the boundary of Darjeeling municipality. The proposal was read as under:

“Beginning from the junction of the Rungbee and Cart Roads, the South boundary of the Ghoom-Pahar Forest reserve to a point due South of the South West angle of the boundary of the Municipal grazing ground; thence a line through the Reserve joining the two points above mentioned. Thence the West and North boundaries of the Municipal grazing ground to the Cart Road; thence the Cart Road to the boundary of location No.99 (Rose Bank) with the South and West boundaries of which the Municipal boundary will coincide. From the North West angle of the Rose Bank boundary, the Municipal boundary will be a straight line to the South West angle of location No.121. From here it will coincide with the west boundaries of locations 121, 98, 100, 139, 77, 80, 79 and 78 to the North West angle of the last mentioned location. Thence a straight line to the South West angle of No.107. Thence the west boundary of that location and the South and West boundaries of No.122; from the North West angle of 122 a straight line to the South West angle of 142. Thence the boundary of that location to the North West angle, thence a straight line to a point 182.8 metres due west of the North Western angle of location No.136. Thence a line connecting the above points to the North and East boundaries of that location. From the South East angle of No.136 a line to the North East angle of 110; then the East boundary of that location; then a line connecting its South East angle

with the North East angle of location 43: then the North East boundary of that location. Thence a line from its eastern angle in a south direction to the Birch Hill Road. Thence that road to its junction with the Lebong road; the Lebong road to its junction with the Rungeet road; and the Rungeet road to the Pandam Jhora. Thence a straight line to the Chaurasta; thence the Calcutta Road to its junction with the Cantonment road; and thence a straight line to the point where the Rungbee road cuts, the East boundary of Harrington location; thence the east boundary of Harrington location as far as the north boundaries of Graham's town location and the East boundary of Enfield location to the Cart Road. Thence the west boundary of the Cart Road reserves to the junction of the Rungbee and Cart Roads." This was to be submitted to government.³⁸

On 25 July 1882, the Chairman moved "that certain departments of Municipal works be put in charge of sub-committees or individual members, and proposed that one Committee be appointed to consider all subjects connected with conservancy, one Committee for Buildings and the Bazaar, one for Assessments, and one for Finance. After considerable discussion it was proposed by Colonel Stansfield and seconded by Mr. Clerk "that the Municipality should be divided into Sections, the Bazaar to form one section in charge of three members and that the Commissioners of each division should be authorized to draw the Engineer or Nuisance Inspector's attention to any matter requiring prompt notice, that all applications of private persons should be recorded in office, and then referred to the members in charge of the Section from which it came, if necessary, on whose Report the Executive (would) as a rule act".

Various issues discussed included the Municipal vegetable garden near the Botanic Garden. In 1875, it was resolved that the Municipal garden should be largely increased and that a sum up to Rs.70/- a month could be spent on the garden establishment. The cost of the new extension and the seeds expected from Britain were to be

met for current receipts not included in Rs.70/-. Two gentlemen were put in charge and it was also agreed to accept yearly subscribers at Rs.60/- and monthly subscribers at Rs.7/8.

On 19 March 1877 the Vice-Chairman proceeded to read the following statement showing the loss incurred in the garden since its commencement. Mr. Balmer proposed, and Dr. O'Brien seconded that considering that the Municipal Vegetable Garden had not been self-supporting in the past, nor likely to be so in the future, and considering the infinitesimal support which it received from the Rate Payers and the public generally, thereby showing that it is unappreciated and an unnecessary burden upon the Municipality, and also taking into consideration the fact that all such subsidized institutions, have a tendency to check the healthy development of private enterprise, the garden, as a Municipal Garden, should be at once discontinued.

In response, Mr. Macfarlane moved the following amendment, seconded by Dr. Purves, that the Municipal Garden be continued for one year, as it meets a great want in the station which there is no other means of supplying. The amendment was carried and the original motion withdrawn. In 1878, there was a move to append part of the Municipal garden to the Lloyd Botanic Garden. Dr. King was placed in charge of the Municipal Vegetable garden in 1879.³⁹

In 1866, rates of lands were discussed and it was proposed and carried unanimously that the Municipality levy a tax estimated to cover the cost of Police and that for the present a tax of 3 percent of houses be levied from May 1867. It was also proposed and carried unanimously that a house tax should be levied on all houses within the Municipal limits whose estimated rental exceeded Rs.40/- a year. It was also proposed and carried that such portions of the Convent Buildings as were used for educational purposes should be assessed for house tax. In 1879, it was resolved that the annual value of a house should be held to be the highest rent paid for it by the owner or

occupier during the year except as provided in section 99 of the Municipal Act. In 1881, the proceedings of the Assessment Committee were brought up and it was resolved that the committee be requested to suggest certain rates of rent, which might apply to houses at different elevations along the hillside and to different kinds of houses. It was pointed out that it would tend to encourage the building of substantial houses, to give the builders such favourable terms for Ground Rent. In 1881, the resolution of the Assessment Committee recommended the following charters be made for the use of Municipal Baracks and Stables and the land outside it and opposite Chunderbari by persons for lodging, stabling and tethering ponies. Charges for ponies tethered in the open air were 1 paise per day. For cart and 2 bullocks or the Cart and Bullocks alone : 1 anna per day. For Europeans' ponies using the serai stables : 2 annas per day or night. For person using the upper of the Serai : 1 anna per day or night, and an extra charge of $\frac{1}{2}$ anna per day or night to be levied from any person who uses the serai for the deposit of any bulky articles of merchandise of which a schedule shall be made. The changes were to be sanctioned from 1 February 1882.

Attempts were made to delineate 'status' of neighborhoods. In 1883, the report of the Assessment Sub-committee and their recommendation to raise the rates of rent for land within certain boundaries were read. It was proposed by the Chairman that the Sub-committee's recommendation of a rate not lower than one rupee per month should apply to all leases issued for occupation within the next financial year within the following boundaries: East Auckland Road, West Victoria Road, North Hospital Jhora, South the Beechwood property, and the Jhora, skirting it on the north.⁴⁰

In 1907, the area of the Municipality was 12.5 square kilometers. It began at Jorebunglow to the south and extended to a point on the road to Tukvar below St. Joseph's College to the north. It was bounded by the Calcutta Road and some land below it to the east. The boundary line ran past and below the Chaurasta and Bhotia Basti until it joined

the boundary below St. Joseph's College. It was bounded by the Cart Road and land below it to the west and the boundary line continued past and below the bazaar through the Happy Valley Tea Estate until it reached the boundary below St. Joseph's College.⁴¹ Activities undertaken by the Municipal authorities in the nineteenth century included church improvements, the division of the town into wards, matters relating to forests and the supply of wood, the improvement of the 'Native town', the rates of rent of lands, the improvement of roads, the construction of the new Town Hall and water supply.⁴²

O'Malley informed us that the administration of the Municipality was governed by the Bengal Municipal Act and by a Special Act [Act I (BC) of 1900], which was introduced to prevent the recurrence of landslips such as those of 1809. The municipal law in force in Darjeeling until then was the ordinary Municipal Act, III (B.C.) of 1884, which was in many respects in suitable to hill conditions. It was found that the landslips were in many cases due to defects which the Municipality had no power to deal with, such as the defective supervision of building sites and drainage, neglect to reduce or protect steep slopes and quarrying in unsafe localities. A Bill was introduced which passed into law as Act I of 1900, to give the Municipality the power to take measures necessary to ensure the safety of the town as well as control all roads, bridges, drains and building construction, particularly where construction threatened the security of a hill-side or bank. A complete set of building rules was also provided.⁴³

In 1907, the Municipality was administered by a Municipal Board consisting of 25 members, with the Deputy Commissioner as Chairman: 22 members were nominated by Government. Nearly all the Commissioners were Europeans. The town was divided into nine wards for administrative purposes and a Committee consisting of Commissioners reported on and attended to the affairs of each ward. There were a number of consultative committees formed for the various departments of the administration, such as the Appeal, Legal, Audit

and Finance, Assessment, Executive and Works, Sanitary and Conservancy, Water Supply and Electric Light Committees. The total number of rate payers was 2,035 or 12 percent of the population within municipal limits. The average income of the Municipality for the decade ending 1901-1902 was Rs.2,19,000. The main sources of income were a rate levied on holdings in the town at 7 percent of their annual valuation; the rents of lands and houses owned by the Municipality, including 18.2 hectares of land in the bazaar, buildings leased out as shops and residences, a Town Hall rented by the Amusement Club and two covered markets where sites were let out for the sale of meat, fish, poultry, vegetables and other items; a lighting rate, water rate, conservancy rate and the municipal market.⁴⁴

The Municipality building on the present Laden La Road was built in 1917. The foundation stone was laid by the Earl of Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal. By 1939, the number of European Commissioners had decreased. Prominent names such as D.E. Avari, B.M. Chatterjee, C. Tenduf La and J.N. Mitra featured on the list of members while the Chairman remained A.S. Larkin. Matters discussed ranged from the pony allowance and construction of a new motor stand to supplying the public with ice. Detailed reports were kept of deaths due to diseases, the quality of food and water and the T.B. Hospital. The opening of more roads to vehicular traffic was sanctioned and Brabourne Park laid out.⁴⁵

In 1947, the average income of the Municipality was about Rs.6,50,000 from rates and taxes, markets and slaughter houses, rents of lands and buildings, hydroelectric receipts and other sources, while the expenditure was the same. The Municipality borrowed from Government and private sources. One of its most important activities was the generation of electricity and provision of water from the Senchal Lakes. The Municipality was regulated by the Bengal Municipal Act (XV of 1932).⁴⁶

Ever since the beginning Darjeeling exhibited all the ancillary forms of a colonial urban hill station having distinct plural features. There had been distinct urban spaces essentially meant for colonial military and administrative officials forming colonial zone of the hill station. There also developed a distinct urban space, an intermediate zone, within the limit of the town meant for educated, enlightened native officers and labour engaged in the lower ranks and files of administration including traders and businessmen. The third layer of the town was formed with indigenous and immigrated natives living in the peripheral zone, which was mostly poor, unskilled labour providing various form menial services according to the needs of the colonial town. Anthony King, while describing such colonial features of the hill town argued that the primary functions of Darjeeling town under British rule were political or military and therefore mostly administrative having colonial development economies and colonially cherished social modernity functions.

As a part of larger colonial development process, Darjeeling was made connected both with Roadways and Railways. During the years 1839-1842, Lord Napier of Magdala, then a young lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, was assigned with the duty to lay out the station of Darjeeling and to make a road through the virgin forest to the Terai. This road, used to be called 'old military road', was proved to be both too narrow and too steep for wheeled traffic, and it was recognized that, in the interest of Darjeeling and for the development of frontier trade, a road broad enough for carts and with an easy gradient was required for. The construction of the Darjeeling cart road subsequently known as 'Hill Cart Road', was accordingly begun in 1861 to establish uninterrupted traffic with the plains.⁴⁷

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was put in place in 1881 reducing the travelling time for passengers/visitors as well as providing for the transport of tea and timber.⁴⁸ The importance of Darjeeling as an economic and strategic centre accelerated the implementation of the

DHR as the main mode of transport in the Himalayan foothills of Northern Bengal. At the time of its inception, the DHR was a commercial railway carrying freight and running regular mail trains serving the new needs of the region as it developed as a military base and tea production centre. The DHR was introduced in 1881 into the hills of Darjeeling as a vehicle for the economic and social development of colonial India

In 1878, Franklin Prestage, an agent of Eastern Bengal Railway proposed a hill tramway of 2ft gauge following the alignment of the Hill Cart Road. The construction started in 1879 under the name of the Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Co and the work was carried out in a simultaneous process on unconnected sections. In March 1880, the then Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, visited the line. The same year in August, the line opened for public use between Siliguri and Kurseong. The line was connected to the Darjeeling main station and the title of the company was changed to the DHR Co. in September 1881. In the following years, the DHR developed remarkably with the introduction of loops and reverses to ease the gradients and with the B-class locomotives brought on to the line in 1888. By 1914, the DHR was carrying an annual average of 250,000 passengers and 60,000 tonnes of freight. The intense traffic of World War I led to an all time peak of 300,000 passengers. The famous 'Batasia Loop' was constructed in 1919, eliminating problems by creating an easier gradient on the ascent from Darjeeling. During World War II, Darjeeling became a 'rest and recuperation' centre for the British armed forces and thus, the traffic on the DHR line increased significantly.⁴⁹

Since then, the DHR has evolved both as a mode of transport and as a form of heritage. In December 1999, the DHR secured World Heritage Status at the 23rd Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Morocco. In the brief description of the DHR, the World Heritage Committee report (UNESCO 2009) stated that: 'The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is the first, and still the most

outstanding example of a hill passenger railway. Opened in 1881, it applied bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problems of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great beauty. It is still fully operational and retains most of its original features intact’.

Weise tries to put this in some detail: “*The railway begins on the plains of Bengal and soon begins climbing through a remnant of lowland jungle, including stands of teak. As the railway climbs, so the flora changes and its upper sections are dominated by enormous Himalayan pines, which in misty weather give a surreal quality to the landscape. It frequently hugs the ages of hillsides with drops, often of thousands of feet, to the plains and valleys below. Towering over the entire scene is the perennially snow-covered bulk of Kanchenjunga, at 28,146ft (8579 m) the third highest mountain in the world. From Kurseong (31 miles or 49 km from Siliguri at an elevation of 4846ft or 1524 m) the railway offers frequent views of this stupendous mountain, which by Ghoom dominates the entire landscape. Thus from the tiny train, the passenger can look down on the stifling tropical plains of Bengal or up into the eternal snows of the highest peaks of the Himalaya. No railway anywhere else offers such sight.*”⁵⁰

In accordance with the colonial objectives, military garrisons, cantonments were first established in the top hills of Jalapahar at the South East end and at Lebong situated at the North End after keeping space at the middle locations meant for administrative centre, residence of the British officials, church institutions, missionary educational institutions, hospitals, post-offices, markets, the mal area at the top hills of the middle section of the demarcated urban space of Darjeeling. The social scape of Darjeeling witnessed the initiation of sports and game by the Army and British administration, the Gymkhana Club, Lebong race course ground for example. The social scape experienced the creation of plantation culture as an extension of European social life. The consolidation of British rule led to the

establishment of temporary summer residence of the Governor General. The corresponding administrative offices and other social institutions were created. New systems of water supply, sanitation, civic amenities and urban electrification were kept in place.

Like other British built hill stations, Darjeeling was established by the British from the scratches to provide variety of functions, principally to serve British troops and administrative officials. Urban formation of Darjeeling was primarily responsible for two purposes; establishment of sanatorium and installation of strategic military station. Eden sanatorium meant for Europeans and Lowis Jubilee Sanatorium for the natives were established in 1882 and 1887 respectively ⁵¹ and for the latter the land for such erection was gifted by Maharaja of Cooch-behar, located down to Railway Station The sanatorium of Darjeeling served as a refuge to British officials from the burning heat of the plains. Darjeeling was shaped as a healthy location for European troops and officials. It was designated as a defense outpost in a strategically important border area of India and China via Tibet at the one end and Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim on the other to guard the nearly built British imperial frontier in mountain zones of the Eastern Himalayas. From the economic point of view, Darjeeling evolved gradually as a growth centre of trades and services and marketing centre of tea and cinchona plantation produce.

Christian missionaries played most pioneering role in institutionalizing basic education for common people both in vernacular and Hindi in the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic Darjeeling. The municipal authorities as well as the Government reposed faith on the Church of Scotland Mission and the government fund for education had been entrusted to the Mission for expenditure. Except Darjeeling High School, all the primary schools were kept under control of the Church of the Scotland Mission. Lower primary, upper primary Schools and middle vernacular schools and two training schools were established in the late eighteen sixties for spreading education amongst

the lower class and tea labour children and working class people under the apt leadership of Mr. Macfarlane who had to face extreme hardship to bring working class children to the class-room. Mr. Macfarlane remarked in 1873, "...All that the hill people care for their boys to learn are the merest element of reading, writing and arithmetic. ...Accordingly, we find that many boys, as soon as they have gone through the primer, consider their education finished. They can read and write to their own and their parents' satisfaction and that is all they care for."⁵² However, since the beginning of twentieth century, primary education scenario had shown a positive tilt in the face of well established European system of education.

Darjeeling High School was raised to the status of a High School in 1892 originally used to be known as Bhotia School. It was made open to common people children composed of immigrants from the plains, such as the Government clerks, Bengali and Hindustani residents in Darjeeling, while the rests were mostly Nepalis and very few Lepchas and Bhotias. The school was practically divided into two departments, one being a High School, and the other an elementary school for boys in belonging to the hill tribes.

Once Darjeeling town was connected with plains attempts were made to make it the home of European Education in India. Bishop Cotton advocated for the establishment of hill schools for Europeans in and around Darjeeling. His efforts were supported by Lord Canning and he pointed out in his Minute, "how the domiciled English and Eurasians would, if neglected, become profitless, unmanageable, and a glaring reproach to the Government, while, if properly cared for, they might become a source of strength to British rule and of usefulness to India."⁵³ As a result of such movements from the highest office, several English medium schools were established. The Loreto convent, the oldest school in Darjeeling, was founded by the Loreto nuns in 1846. St. Paul's School was transferred in 1864 from Calcutta to Darjeeling and became premier educational institution both for the Europeans

and Eurasians. Another chief educational institution was the St Joseph's College under the management of the Jesuit Fathers was founded in 1888. There established two girls' schools, the Diocesan Girls' School for Protestants and the Loreto Convent School for Roman Catholics and St. Michael's School for girls, under the management of the Sisters of the Order of St. John Baptist was founded in 1887. Mount Hermon School conducted by Methodist Episcopal Church of America was founded in 1895. By the end of nineteenth century, there were at least ten schools committing European education were opened in Darjeeling town.⁵⁴

By 1857, Darjeeling attracted the attention of the British as a centre for the recruitment of Gorkha soldiers. The British drew bitter experience from the Sepoy Revolt of 1857 and reposed faith in the unquestionable loyalty of the Gurkhas as British soldiers. From 1886 to 1904, as many as 27428 Gurkha soldiers were recruited there over. Newall remarked, "the Highlands of India', strongly advocated for the military colonization of the hills and felt that Darjeeling could become a 'reserve circle' of British troops to protect Bengal" (Referred in Sen, 1989). Cantonments were established at Darjeeling situated on the ridges of Katapahar and Jalapahar above the main town and on the spur of Lebong below it.⁵⁵

Resultantly, Darjeeling town was grown and established as a prerequisite of East Indian Company, at its head-quarters at Calcutta, in the mid of nineteenth century. Darjeeling hill station was considered to be nearest to East India Company head-quarters, for example, Shimla at the North and Shilong at the East, which were developed as hill stations before Darjeeling, were situated reasonably far off Calcutta. In the establishment and growth of Darjeeling, the discourse and praxis of climate, health and commerce were inseparable; the expansion of its trade was achieved by poaching territories from Sikkim and Bhutan. The area of Darjeeling tracts were primarily annexed from the Gorkha

kingdom of Nepal ⁵⁶ and the Kalimpong hills and Dooars parts were annexed from Bhutan.

Like other British Indian Hill Stations, Darjeeling was established around the nucleus of a church, Cutchery (administrative office), bazaar and a few houses.⁵⁷ Initially, Darjeeling was considered as a frontier zone opening opportunities to enterprising Europeans. There arrived the Wernicke-Stolke family, for instance, in 1841 as Morevian Missionaries, one of three families.⁵⁸ “The development of Darjeeling as a hill station, sanatorium and cantonment offered chances for anyone with initiative”.⁵⁹ Johann Wernicke began supplying timber from the nearby forest to government, and then providing bricks from his own kilns for building construction. He prospered with the town. His grandson was sent to England to receive an expansive public school education.⁶⁰ Gradually, Darjeeling had become the base for the exploration of the eastern Himalayan frontiers of the British Empire in India, both for its rich natural history as well as untapped resources and trading networks.

Joseph Dalton Hooker, a botanist of repute visited Darjeeling in 1848 and found it a pleasant town with a resident European population. During his eventful visit of long two years, he compared Darjeeling’s growth with Australian colony, “not only in amount of building, but in the accession of native families from the surrounding countries”.⁶¹ Hooker argued further, “At the former period there was no trade whatsoever; there is now a very considerable one, in musk, salt, gold dust, borax, soda, woolen cloths and especially in ponies.... The trade has been greatly increased by the annual fair which Dr. Cambell has established at the foot of the hills, to which many thousands of natives flock from all quarters, and which exercises a most beneficial influence throughout the neighbouring territories”.⁶² Thus, while Darjeeling had been proved popular with convalescent or leisure seeking Europeans, the efforts of Campbell further established its position as a trading centre for the surrounding areas. Such trades also

encouraged immigration from Nepal.⁶³ J.T. Pearson, an army surgeon who arrived in Darjeeling in 1839, observed, “there is an elasticity of the air in these mountains, and a freshness,exercise gives all the pleasant glow of an English walk on a frosty morning”.⁶⁴ Thus the well established common assumption was that the tropical plains had divested the English constitution of natural self. The mountains were posited to restore it.

Brian Hodgson, formerly British Resident at Kathmandu, who spent a considerable number of years of his retired life in Darjeeling, explained clearly, “The fearful epidemics of the plains seldom penetrate the Himalayas, which, moreover, seem to have a positive exemption from epidemic diseases. For forty years cholera has ravaged the plains continually. But in all that period Nepal has been visited only twice and Darjeeling scarcely at all.”⁶⁵ Hodgson’s observation validated the need for high altitude sanatorium towns for the British in India. Hooker also endorsed the rejuvenating qualities of Darjeeling for Europeans.⁶⁶ The Jalapahar convalescent depot for British troops was built in 1848 located on a narrow ridge above the Mall in Darjeeling. By 1859, it included barracks, a hospital and officers’ quarters.⁶⁷ A second cantonment was built in 1844 at senchal, close to Darjeeling.⁶⁸ The Senchal cantonment was abandoned in 1867 and was shifted to Jalapahar owing to its isolation and bitter cold.

The nineteenth century colonial urbanization in Darjeeling characterized all the dichotomies either reflected through race and climate or hill plains differences. Like other important colonial hill station, Darjeeling experienced a conflation of the spatial and the racial dichotomies characterized through hill plains dichotomy and white versus native dichotomy in terms of habitational location and functional privileges. However, at the same time, they had their limits and were often breached. The cherished dichotomies have been widely reflected in the writing of Hill Stations of Kennedy while he argued, “the rush for these hill stations in the nineteenth century reflected the need

to carve out a social space that was European and sanitized, as the towns in the plains of India increasingly came to be identified with dirt and filth. There was an architectural and social distancing between Indians and Europeans in these towns: the native bazaars were always located separately, and at a lower elevation from the European habitations. Physical distance was expressive of social distance.”⁶⁹ The Urban Darjeeling replicated sites of leisure in Europe but was ultimately subverted by colonial realities arising out of colonial commercial and revenue enterprises.

The colonial hill station Darjeeling had been the abode of the realization of the notion of leisure revolving round the clubs offering European company, whisky, beer, gin, afternoon tea, bridge, tennis and occasional cricket match, amateur theatre, walking on Mall. The forests around Darjeeling also inspired sporting men as much as it did naturalists. When the Darjeeling Natural History Society was founded in 1923, the articles mostly comprised hunting anecdotes. With its characteristic architecture and topography as a distinct urban colonial space, Darjeeling carried forward a tradition of European segregated space from the Urban spaces in the plains. In the nineteenth century colonial mind, the idea of sport was associated with leisure and a sporting world came to constitute the various outdoor pursuits of ‘hunting, racing, shooting, angling, cricket, walking’⁷⁰. Urban settlements like Darjeeling embodied ideal conditions for recreation, leisure as well as rejuvenation for the European elites. After 1857, medical opinion and political and administrative expediency encouraged the sustenance of hill stations like Darjeeling. Although functionally similar to the ‘white towns’ of the plains, the topographically unique hill stations like Darjeeling evoked a romantic idyll that was scenic and yet were intensely urban. The temperate climate, and the familiarizing and domesticating of the mountains and dense forests that rendered them similar to British landscapes and to

the Alps. Moreover, the summer of the provincial administration to Darjeeling town lent its social space glamour and urgency.⁷¹

During colonial rule, Darjeeling retained its reputation as a sanatorium town where leisure, governance and a healthy lifestyle all appealed to the British and, eventually, to the Indians as well. The Eden Sanatorium Hospital was founded in 1882 to cater exclusively to Europeans and the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium for Indians was set up in 1887⁷² with donations from the Indian landed aristocrats. Thus the contest for social space in health occasionally brought tussles between European and Indian elites. For example, in 1906, the Civil Surgeon of the town of Darjeeling ruled against a 'Pthisis Ward' in the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium on the grounds that the climate of Darjeeling would make consumptive patients worse. The Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser, endorsed his opinion. As a reaction, objections were raised in Bengal Legislative Assembly. 'The Bengalee' demanded, "Are we to understand that what is good for the Eden Sanitarium, to which only Europeans are admitted, is not good for the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium which is resorted to by 'natives' only?"⁷³ Ultimately, the Government gave in and the 'Pthisis Ward' was retained.

By the end of nineteenth century, the Bengalees principally the landed aristocrats, successful professionals like doctors, barristers, business men and bureaucrats had made their stake felt in Darjeeling. Both the Maharajas of Cooch-behar and Burdwan possessed their respective summer palaces in Darjeeling.⁷⁴ Many others visited during summer, staying at one of the several boarding houses that sprang up to cater to Indian visitors.⁷⁵ The demography of the entire Darjeeling area as well as the town itself changed drastically due to large immigration from Eastern Nepal. This was the consequence of a policy adopted by Campbell to populate and settle the entire district and to provide the labour to sustain the European habitation in the town. Thus, Darjeeling kept expanding in concert with extension of imperial control over eastern Himalayan economy and trade. The town of

Darjeeling became the hub of Material transformation of the entire region. The British encouraged trade between the borders and even fuelled dreams of a trans-Tibetan trade the subject of many treaties with Nepal as well as with Tibet.⁷⁶

Nepali immigration received tremendous momentum, when the tea plantation - a labour intensive industry, took off commercially in the Darjeeling tract by 1856. The rise of tea industry and the growth of immigrated Nepali population went hand in hand and had exposed Darjeeling critical to the colonial economy, apart from its distinctive landscape. Indeed, Tea industry and its growth contributed most to the transformation of the functional and spatial bases of the entire Darjeeling hills. Tea industry brought about the demographic transformation and encroachment within the town itself. Cambell recounted, ‘when I took charge there were not more than fifty families in the whole tract ... In 1861, when I left Darjeeling, the total population was estimated at 60,000.’⁷⁷

Nandini Bhattacharya has arguably stated that “*the fundamental tension between the romantic sanatorium town and the colonial hill station was heightened in magnitude from the turn of the century, when its absorption within the larger colonial economy was entrenched with the successes of the tea and timber industry, its popularity as a resort and the ever increasing business of the colonial bureaucracy. These tensions were played out in negotiations for urban spaces within the town.*”⁷⁸ By the beginning of twentieth century, Darjeeling, as a colonial urban settlement, had started suffering from ‘overcrowding’ as was reflected in the writings of the British administrators and of the Indian elite. Along with more British settlements, residences, clubs of the tea planters, summer retreats of the Indian elite, there was steady rise of Nepal population immigrating to Darjeeling in search of better livelihood. The issue of European exclusivity was put in question.

Located on a Y shaped ridge, the town of Darjeeling had 70 'villas' and few large houses in 1870 and by 1922, this number rose to 351.⁷⁹ The Mall, the highest point in the town, skirted the Government House while parallel roads would follow below, accommodating European hotels, villas and offices. The end of the Mall followed a path to the Bhotia Monastery, flanked by 'Bhotia busti' at the bottom of the ridge; where the local Lepchas as well as immigrant labourers lived. The commercial road largely comprised of European establishments, including the Senchal Dairy Farm, Ottewill's Millinery Establishments, Smith-Stani street (Pharmacists), the Post Office and the Planters' Club and led down the hill side of the Cart Road and market square (the bazaar). The market square accommodated Indian commercial concerns, including Marwari wholesale grocers and suppliers. The location of market remained very nearer to Railways station of Darjeeling. Down beyond the bazaar was 'Chandmari', the Indian quarter of the town, occupied by Bengali clerks and professionals. The Indian boarding houses and hotels were located at the bottom of the ridge.⁸⁰

Indian Aristocrats and land lords of the plains such as Zamindars of Darbhanga and the Maharajah of Koch Behar owned large houses located on the road skirting the Mall. By the 1920s, 'Southfields' was the property of the Bengali Industrialist Sir R.N. Mukherjee. By the 1920s, the Cooch-Bihar mansion was transferred back to the Government.⁸¹ While Indian Zamindars such as the Rajah of Digpatia or the Maharaja of Burdaran preferred to build palaces with reasonably huge land at a distance from town centre, affluent Bengalis preferred residences closer to the Mall, the European part of the town. The enhancing numbers of the population composing of residents and seasonal visitors presented a critical multi-cultural character of the population of the town. Growing number of visitors both Europeans and elite natives, managers and babus of the burgeoning tea plantations, constellations of huge number of Nepali migrant labourers in Darjeeling town gave rise to a critical demographic character. During

World War I, Darjeeling became an important strategic location from defence point of view the town was designated as military and air base for British troops.⁸²

Retention of social exclusivity of Darjeeling played a major role. One way of retaining such exclusivity of the town of Darjeeling for the Europeans and affluent India elites was to develop alternative hill sanatoria for them. In 1903, the municipal Commissioner of Kurseong, a small location at a lower height, appealed to the government to develop it as a hill resort (Address presented to the Lieutenant Governor by the Municipal Commissioner of Kurseong and Reply.⁸³ The Government responded positively and stated that Darjeeling was 'greatly in need of relief from overcrowding' and that the climate of Kurseong' is better adapted than that of Darjeeling'.⁸⁴ Indeed, Maharaja of Burdwan contributed Rs.20,000 for the extension of the hill cart road to Kurseong and offered further assistance.⁸⁵

British as well as the Indians attributed to deforestation within the town. As a result, the 'native' settlements within Darjeeling were pushed to new areas. In 1906, the district officials appealed to the Government for permission construction at the Toong Soong Basti as declared condemned as an unsafe area by the Landslip Committee.⁸⁶ The Government flatly denied the proposal of new construction or reconstruction on the said area (Ibid). Despite restrictions, the town of Darjeeling continued to grow unabated at the ridges. The perceptions of the 'overcrowding' of Darjeeling brought about comparisons with the typical urban problems of towns in the plains. For instance, in 1918, the Municipal commissioners of Darjeeling thought it necessary to raise the fine for begging in the town to put an end to professional beggary to Rs.50, a sum that exceeded the monthly income of a clerk.⁸⁷

Despite population exodus at the turn of twentieth century, Darjeeling remained as an exclusive urban space represented through well maintained roads, provisions for sewerage, and electricity with a

generous grants to maintain the facilities. In 1921, the Government noted that ‘improvements were effected in the water-supply, drainage, electric lighting and municipal buildings’.⁸⁸ The same year witnessed Government making special efforts preserving greenery of Darjeeling towards making it more environment friendly, ‘arboriculture, as carried out in the town of Darjeeling differed from that work as done elsewhere in Bengal. The Darjeeling Improvement Fund devoted attention to planting up the slips and other bare areas, with a views to ensuring safety of the hill slides [which] have added to the beauty of the town.’⁸⁹ In 1923, facilities within the municipal area of Darjeeling were extensive, ‘Improvements were effected in water supply, drainage, electric lighting and municipal buildings’.⁹⁰ The town of Darjeeling grew with its unique institutions like the Eden and Lewis Jubilee Sanitoriums, the Governor’s summer residence, Gymkhana Club, Mall, Planters’ Club and some sprawling European hotels and race course field at Lebong and educational institutions of European structures.

Darjeeling remained as exclusive both in administrative and political and social terms. The colonial state maintained the difference of the hills from the plains for politico-economic reasons. The hill people of Darjeeling from the very beginning of colonial days were thus trained in the logic of difference but hardly realized the hidden colonial design of exploitation camouflaged as differential politico-administrative arrangements.⁹¹ The development and expansion involved related corresponding developments by way of integration with larger colonial economy making Darjeeling as the nodal centre of trade of the region. Taking all the socio-economic and demographic dynamics into consideration Darjeeling witnessed large natural transformation which it turn ushered in ecological and landscape changes.

Thus Darjeeling under British rule did no longer remain purely as an exclusive space for the Europeans, it was also meant for the colonial elites for leisure’s, planters for making money, common people for subsistence and babus and clerks for making fortunes. Darjeeling

thus famed as a sanatorium towns and a socio-economic hub of the elite, inhabited by coolies (labours), clerks, railway men and traders as well as surrounded by the tea plantations. The hill town of Darjeeling, thus, needs to be seen as a part of the continuum of colonial urbanism and its unique place in colonial urban history.

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CHAPTER – VI
INDIGENOUS AND EXOGENOUS PEOPLE IN COLONIAL
DARJEELING

The term 'indigenous people', randomly used in this Chapter, refers to a group of people or a community having cultural distinctiveness, living in a defined space/ region, a sense of belonging together, having its own knowledge production system which is distinctly different from modern positivist knowledge system. Thus, endogen provides for a distinctive cultural system, a place and her people different from place, people and culture system of the 'Other'.¹This sense of 'other' in respect of the majority population settled in colonial Darjeeling has been conspicuously absent. Such emigrant population settled in Darjeeling principally from eastern part of Nepal had only a thin veneer of Hinduism. The 'Mulki Ain' in Nepal, which codified Hindu Caste laws and incorporated Tibeto-Burmese speaking minority population basically non-Hindu minorities practicing animism into the caste hierarchy in Nepal, was promulgated in 1854. The immigrated Nepali populations in Darjeeling had therefore fewer barriers between them.²Thus the exogenous Nepali population settled permanently in Darjeeling for over generations has had so many commonalities in terms of place and culture system with the indigenous people.

The study attempts to unravel the impact of colonial interventions on this maiden hilly tract which largely affected her indigenous people and immigrated population settled permanently in Darjeeling tract. An attempt has been made to understand the status of both the indigenous and immigrated exogenous population, forming majority Nepalis population of the Darjeeling tract, penetrated by colonial modernity. As far as the records show the Lepcha are the original inhabitants of Sikkim as well as of the district of Darjeeling which was at one time a part of Sikkim. Bhotias of Sikkim had come

from Tibet in the 17th Century A.D. and converted the indigenous animistic Lepchas into Tibetan Buddhism and established monarchy as a centralized theocratic political system in Sikkim.³ These immigrant Bhotias freely intermarried with the Lepcha and the native population was welded to the wider system of the greater Tibetan civilization. The native Lepcha population started to wear Bhotia dress and hold annual festival according to the Buddhist calendar and today, they and the Bhotia constitute one religious and cultural entity, thus producing one of the distinctive frontier cultures within the Tibetan cultural area.⁴ In the early part of the 19th Century the Nepalis migrated to Sikkim in waves from their relatively infertile and overpopulated land of Nepal. They worked as a dependent tenant under the Bhotia or Lepcha land lords and gradually made their entrance into the socio-political scene of Sikkim and Darjeeling, ultimately becoming a major force to reckon with. The trilingual setting of the region has given the native people the advantage of social and economic contacts with Nepali and Tibetan speakers. This helped them to interact with different cultures. In such a social system, interaction did not lead to the liquidation of ethnic differences through acculturation; cultural differences persisted despite interethnic contact and interdependence.⁵

In the pre-colonial setting, the Lepcha could maintain ecological equilibrium with their environment. They lived in the zones of abundant natural resources to support a relatively small population, which they successfully exploited with a low level technology of hunting and gathering. As the number grew, a primitive form of cultivation like slash and burn or shifting hill cultivation was adopted. In course of time as population further increased and the Nepali immigrants settled in the area in large numbers the land gradually became scarce and the Lepcha were somewhat compelled to take up settled plough agriculture in the terraces and thus began the era of better use of natural resources with pre-modern technology.⁶ But the Lepchas had never been in a position to compete with the immigrant Bhotia and Nepalis.

First the Bhotia and later the Nepalis, as stronger groups had intruded in the region in search of better economic prospects. With a higher level of technology they took control of the better resources and the Lepcha subsisted on poorer and scanty natural resources. In Darjeeling except a few villages in Kalimpong sub-division Lepchas' control over the natural resources were being minimized by the Nepalis. However this competition for resources acted in a different way in the case of the immigrant Bhotia who had come earlier than the Nepalis. Bhotias were fewer in number and they did not really compete for land rather they controlled the political structure of the region (Sikkim) till 1864.⁷ In the economic sphere Bhotias preferred to work more in trans-Himalayan trade and trans-humans than to settle down in one place and till the soil. The tremendous amount of in-migration of the Nepalis in the hills of Darjeeling badly affected the ethnic composition, ethnic balance and both social and power structure of the region. The end result of such processes, as encountered by the Lepchas, was what Stavenhagen has called "ethnocide".⁸ Ethnocide for the Lepchas also meant the almost total replacement of their traditional values, beliefs, festivals, rituals and even language. Although few of them restricting them to the remote corners had been retaining their culture and language, the overall impact was devastating.⁹

The British notion of Nature as indoctrinated in the mindscape of the colonial officials engaged initially in the making of colonial Darjeeling was fundamentally different from the notion of Nature of the indigenous people who in fact lived in and lived with Nature. Unlike Europeans, forest to the indigenous people was their natural abode and means of subsistence and was certainly not a source of profit extraction. The colonial rulers ruthlessly avoided if not ignored the life process of the indigenous people of staying in and staying alive with nature in their zeal of civilizing mission and extracting natural resources in sublime.

The change of demographic complexion in colonial Darjeeling has been the product of a long and complex process of migration not only from Sikkim, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan but also from countries of South-East Asian region and China. The aboriginal people have been broadly recognized as the Kiratas as justified by the best known scholar Suniti Kumar Chatterjee. To quote Chatterjee, “ *It is the consensus of opinion among Indologists that in Sanskrit the term Kirata indicated the wild non-Aryan tribes living in the mountains, particularly the Himalayas and in the North eastern areas of India, who were Mongoloid in origin.*”¹⁰ Primordial people living in this area mostly held Mongoloid culture and civilization and remained far away from Aryan/ Dravidian civilization/ cultural fold. All this has created high degree of ethnic and cultural differentiation positing thereby a vital historical links between the subcontinent and those of South and South East Asia.

In the pre-colonial period, frequent subjugation to invasions and conquests by the neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan vying each other to hold possession made life of the native population in Darjeeling tract unsettled which originally belonged to Sikkim.¹¹ During pre-colonial phase, the Rajah (King) of Sikkim, Phuntshog Namgyal, divided the country into twelve regions (Dzongs). One of such Dzong was the sparsely populated forested tract- Darjeeling- in which Bongthing (Lepcha Priest/Kazee) supported by a council of monks had the authority. The Monks(Lamas) induced the Dzongpens (people living under the Dzong) to symbolically surrender their lands to the Rajah of Sikkim.¹²

Every Lepcha family in Zongu was supposed to have an ingzong across the border in Tibet. This was a formal relationship with a religious sanction and the two ingzongs were regarded as brothers and inter-marriage between their descendants was forbidden. The Lepcha used to set up the trading relationship only with the Tibetan Bhotias and Bhutanese but never with the Nepalis. Bhotias were basically traders and trans-humans so there was less conflict. The Lepcha and

Bhotias mutually lived in the same niche with mutual exploitation of allocated resources. Moreover the Bhuddhist Bhotias (the King belonged to this class) converted the animistic Lepcha into Buddhism which helped them to maintain a brotherly relation with them. But the Lepcha fled from the invading Nepalis, whom they considered war-like enemies, representing death and slavery, at the least, loss of their possessions.¹³ Lepchas were unable to compete with the more industrious and competent Nepalis. Consequently they developed “a way of life suitable for isolation; neither in war not in competition could they stand up to other people”¹⁴

When the tribes from Tibet, and later from Nepal, came into Lepcha territory to settle down permanently and had taken the land from them, there was no account of their resisting the Tibetan colonization because the Lepcha had a symbiotic relationship with the Tibetan – Bhotia. The Bhotia used to give them salt and dress materials in exchange of forest produces and animals supplied by the Lepchas. It was at that period the institution of trading friendship called *ingzong* had been established between the Lepcha and Bhotia at the individual level. Every Lepcha family in Zongu was supposed to have an *ingzong* across the border in Tibet. This was a formal relationship with a religious sanction and the two *ingzongs* were regarded as brothers and inter-marriage between their descendants was forbidden.¹⁵

At the time of colonization, Darjeeling was a ground of contestation between the Rajah of Sikkim and Gorkha rulers of Nepal. The British East India Company Troop was engaged in skirmishes against the Nepalese throughout the entire length of its northern frontier. The British conquered the entire contested area confirming its holdings. The Treaty of Sagauli was concluded with Nepal in 1815.¹⁶

The British reinstated the Rajah of Sikkim to power in 1817 in the conquered territory covering Darjeeling tract and later in 1835, the Rajah of Sikkim gifted Darjeeling back to the British EIC for “enabling

servants of the Government suffering from sickness to avail of its advantage.”¹⁷

Immediately after colonial occupation of Darjeeling tract in the mid- thirties of of nineteenth century, it was the Lepchas that the British first came into contact which followed, by the Tibetans, the Bhutias and finally the Nepalese. As reported in the British official records, Darjeeling tract had been sparsely populated if not “uninhabited”.¹⁸ Captain Herbert described Darjeeling as a place “completely clothed with forest from the top to the bottom”. However, Lloyd reported that the spot so identified as Darjeeling “was formerly occupied by a large village or town (an unusual circumstances in the country) and some shops were set up in it; one of the principal Lepcha Karjees resided here, and the remains of his house, and also of a gombah or temple built of a stone are still extant; also several stone tombs or chatyas of different forms, Karjees and Lamas”. Captain Herbert reapproves the fact that twelve hundred able bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim, have been forced to fly from Dorjeling and its neighbourhood, owing to the oppression of the Raja”.¹⁹

Lloyd, the EIC’s Agent in Darjeeling was assigned with the responsibility to persuade Lepcha Kazee (Chief) and his followers to return from Nepal to their former place of residence at Darjeeling. However, Lloyd’s mission of persuasion had been a failure. Lloyd dispatched the EIC Authority at Calcutta a list of Lepchas who still remained in Darjeeling tract living in four specified places in twenty three settlements having fifty-one males and thirty-seven females.²⁰

To the indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills, respect for Nature was reflected in their attitude to land.²¹ To them, land was not a commodity but a gift of Nature and their allegiance to the King, the Raja of Sikkim, was without question. The proprietary right over land and forest was a concept traditionally alien to them. The traditional

economy was run on barter system and taxes due to the Sikkim Raja were paid in kind or through labour. Hope Namgyal informs us that the land was not assessed and the subject was only obliged to give a small share of his labour, or the result of his labour to the State.²² This system of paying the government through labour was prevalent in all the Himalayan kingdom's throughout nineteenth century.²³

Till Darjeeling tract was brought under colonial control, the indigenous people were continued to be governed by their customary rules, rituals and practices. The British occupation of Darjeeling and their concomitant interventions in forests significantly altered their vision of life and pattern of subsistence of the indigenous people. The replacement of barter economy by the monetary economy brought about fundamental changes in their life and pattern of livelihood. The imposed political boundary fundamentally altered new system of economy prevented indigenous people from natural inner transmigration which was essential both for shifting cultivation and cattle grazing and even for small trade.

The colonial notion of rights over forest land had been a contested issue between the indigenous people and the colonial state with its temporal powers as self-proclaimed guardian of Darjeeling and her forest. Col. Lloyd's Proclamation on 12 October, 1838 is well apt to quote here while it reads, "the people settled on the Darjeeling tract were now subjects of the Company and the laws of Sikkim would not apply to them...".²⁴ Immediately in the next year Dr. Campbell's appointment as the Superintendent, Darjeeling in 1839 was not only the phase of officially asserting British political rights over Darjeeling but also ushered in a new phase of colonial state making.

An attempt has been made to present the impact of colonial absorption of Darjeeling and her forests and corresponding dispossession of the indigenous people and their consequent disruption due to economic changes that had ebbed and flowed across the

landscape of Darjeeling since the middle of nineteenth century. On the other end, the indigenous people were gradually outnumbered by the growing number of people migrated principally from the Eastern part of Nepal. Resultantly, the outnumbered and marginalized indigenous people had failed to establish any social voice or consciousness to be created by sustained socio-religious, cultural and economic institutions. These material historical processes and their mutual intersections gave rise to a unique state-society relationship in Darjeeling Hills.

The British historiography approves the fact that Lepchas (originally called “Rong”) are considered to be the most ancient of all communities and are the original people inhabitants of Sikkim-Darjeeling. Historians like Gorer, E.C. Dozey, G.B. Mainwaring, J.C. White, and many others have agreed to this argument. Campbell informs us, *“Lepchas are most interesting people, and I believe the undoubted origins of the mountain forests surrounding Darjeeling.”*²⁵ Hooker writes, *“The Lepcha is the original inhabitant of Sikkim and the prominent character in Darjeeling...the race to which he belongs is a very singular one; still he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly as from the Nepalis and Bhutanese between whom he is hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely 60 miles in breadth.”*²⁶

In his account of the principal aboriginal tribes and races, Hunter describes, *“The Lepchas are considered to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the hilly portion of the district. At all events they are the first known occupiers of this tract and of independent Sikkim.”*²⁷ Gorer observes, *“The Lepchas are a Mongoloid people living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slope of Mount Kanchanjunga. It seems certain that they were originally the only inhabitants of this large tract of mountain land, but during the last three centuries, or possibly longer, their land has been taken from them by conquering invaders, the Tibetans, the Nepali, and finally the English.”*²⁸

L.A. Waddell informs us that the Mountainous tract of Darjeeling belonged to Lepchas.²⁹ Lepchas call their homeland 'Mayel Lyang' which was spread over a large areas of land initiating from Arun, Tamor and Koshi rivers in the west up to Tagong La, Thong La and Rudok river in the east. In the north, the land included Kanchanjunga, Gopmochi peaks and Chumbi Valley and was extended up to Titalia in the south.³⁰ Due to power struggles and politico-geographical reorganizations at different phases of history, Lepchas were subjugated by different exogenous rulers and were divested from their own homeland. Lepchas experienced Tibetan Rule in Sikkim, Bhutanese Rule in Sikkim, and Gorkha Rule and finally colonial occupation of Darjeeling from Sikkim and subsequent occupation of Kalimpong had segregated Lepchas in their homeland. The original Mayel Lyang of the Lepchas has been divided among five countries: India, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and Bangladesh.

The indigenous people of Darjeeling had an intimate association with forest and forest played the most important role in their material and social life cycle. Forest played an inclusively crucial role in their social, economic and religious life too. Lepchas living in and around the forests had their religion which was a sort of animism or nature worship what was distinctively different from the religious practices of the people living in the plains. It has been claimed that Lepchas are agriculturist by nature. However the method of cultivation was not settled plough culture; instead, their method of cultivations was Jhuming (shifting cultivation) by burning down the forest. However, cultivation did not provide them with even a basic subsistence as they were found to subsist on wild roots, mountain spinach, fern tops, fings etc. ³¹

To the indigenous people, Livestock husbandry was not an appendage to agriculture, but a significant component of their economy.³²

Lepchas used to rear animals to supplement agriculture like cows, buffaloes, pigs, goats, sheep, country chicken etc.³³ Lepchas became familiar with the forest ecology from their childhood as they spent their life time with the forest zone for shifting cultivation and grazing the cattle. Thus the indigenous people depended fully on forest and forest produce for their subsistence. Lepchas used forest products- roots, leaves, fruits and tubers- for everyday life. Fruits and tubers provided nutrition to their family members. Herbs were used for medicinal purposes. The oral knowledge of such use of herbs transmitted through generations. Besides the use of wood for fuel and house building purposes, wood was used for agricultural implements like yokes and plough. Bamboos made excellent fences, baskets and umbrellas. Leaves were used as disposable plates and for different other purposes such as fuel and fodder. Creepers were used as ropes and thorny barks were used to grate vegetables. This material linkage of life with forest came under strain with the advent of colonialism in Darjeeling Hills. The functioning of the Lepcha subsistence agricultural system had received jolts within an increasingly changing environment which resulted transition of this indigenous population from hunting-food-gathering and shifting agricultural stage to settled agriculture resulting complex production system.

The British held absolute proprietary rights over forests. The Forest Act of 1865 reads, “the local government may from time to time constitute any forest land or waste land which is the property of government, or over which the government has proprietary rights, or to the whole or any part of forest produce of which the government is entitled, a reserved forest.” The provisions of the said Act provided for management and preservation of forests and regulated exploitation of forest resources. Regulations were imposed on the dwellers of forests on the collection of forest produce. The Act provided for a series of prohibitions but nothing was there regarding the principles of managing the forests. The Forest Act of 1878 was more comprehensive

than 1865 Act and divided the forests into (a) Reserved; (b) Protected; (c) Village Forests. Local Governments were given the right to notify any forest or land as protected forest. The Forest Act of 1927 consolidated further the state control over forest. Duties were levied on transit and forest produce such as timber and other forest products. The Forest Act of 1878 was more stringent and ruthlessly restricted the users of forest. Grazing, pasturing of cattle, shifting cultivation by burning woods was also strictly prohibited in the Reserved forests. The Government held unfettered rights of ownership in reserved forests and their products were not to be used by forest dwellers unless specifically permitted by way of grant of privilege and not as a matter of entitlement. In the meanwhile cattle-trespass Act, 1871 prohibited pasturing of cattle in the reserved forests.

The most serious consequence of colonial forestry was the diminution of customary rights as well as the decline in traditional conservation and management systems. The curtailment of communitarian ownership of forests of Darjeeling by the colonial state had severely undermined the subsistence economy of the indigenous Lepchas. Collection of Bamboos, Wax and Lac from the Darjeeling forest was prohibited by issuance of licenses. Like all other British India forests Jhuming or shifting cultivation was discouraged without providing appropriate alternative arrangement or land to the Lepchas for settled agriculture. As a consequence, there had been displacement of Lepchas from their natural forest land habitats. Restrictions on collection of forest produce imposition of prohibitory norms on grazing and gradual dwindling of grazing grounds of different seasons affected badly the indigenous people of Darjeeling hills. Nowhere in the British forest policy or in the colonial Acts, had the rights of the indigenous Lepchas been specifically mentioned. Ultimately Lepchas had to leave Reserved Forest of Darjeeling and they were instructed to move south-west part of the District, between the hilly tract and the plains.³⁴ Again during 1920s Lepcha tenants were evacuated and

resettled. For their resettlement due to expansion and construction of Kalimpong as an urban area, deforestation of 999 acres of forest land in Lolegaon Reserved Forest was proposed and sanction for such deforestation was granted by the colonial government (proceeding of the Government of Bengal in the Revenue/forest Department for the month of April, 1921).³⁵ Being displaced time and again, the Lepchas became refugees in their own land.

No official records on Colonial Darjeeling or oral narratives would have us believe that there had been forest conflicts or intensive indigenous opposition to the colonial state sponsored forest conservancy at the one end and forest clearance on the other in the name of scientific forest management. What the indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills had to witness as a dormant spectator was the expanding power play of the colonial state in reorganizing and reshaping the landscape by way of infusing colonial capital in tea cultivation. In fact, forest clearance had taken place for Tea Plantation well before scientific forestry initiated in Darjeeling. Massive expansion of commercial tea cultivation, Cinchona Plantation, Forest Management, Military Installation and Civic Urban formation, Roads and Railways construction impacted heavily on the people, flora, fauna and human land use in particular and on the environment in general. Curbing of local access to forests brought fundamental changes in traditional pattern of resource use and resulted diminution of the rights of indigenous people of Darjeeling.

Prohibitory rules in the name forest conservancy, prohibitions on the use of forest resources and grazing were randomly imposed by the local forest government. Rules relating Grazing were modified time and again in Darjeeling Forest Division from 1913 to 1925. All these put the indigenous Lepchas to an extremely pitiable condition and they were destined to be displaced. The letter of A.A. Wace, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, addressed to Commissioner of Rajshahi Division, bears the testimony of such plights. The letter reads, "*Anxious as I am to*

secure permanently the interest of Lepchas in this district, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that, as they exist in our unsettled tract, they are an obstacle to all improvement cultivation or increase of revenue. They settle in a forest, clear a bit and sow it, and then pass on to cut down new forests, without giving in return for the valuable timbers destroyed. What we should aim at is to see them as they can afford to pay an easy rent for. As a regards the Lepchas on the tract under reference, I would give them the option of building on 15 to 20 acres each where they now are, securing their interests by giving them one of our Kalimpong Leases, or moving to the Lepcha blocks north of Kalimpong on payment by Planter of a liberal compensation for removal.³⁶

In response to the above official communication, the Government ordered the local authority at Darjeeling to take affirmative action. Unfortunately, however, the Lepchas were driven to the Kalimpong range of the Hills. Ultimately, there was displacement time and again in the face of growing Tea Plantation in that area and governmental declaration of 'development area'. Lepchas were sent again to lower elevation of the Kalimpong tract where they lost both of their life and livelihood. Lepcha resettlement issue in Darjeeling hills was left much to be desired. Lepcha displacement was induced by colonial capitalist development unknown to the indigenous people. Despite such displacement and destitution, the Lepchas could not go beyond memorandum, and submission of petitions. The low numerical strength of the Lepchas, demographic changes in the process of colonial state making in Darjeeling which made them minority, the social and economic incapacity of the indigenous people to raise voice against the overarchic colonial power structure, the omnipresence of British military installations are some of the fundamental historically corroborated reasons behind the absence of overt indigenous resistance and rebellion in Darjeeling hills during colonial phase.

At least discontents were never brought to public surface. On the other, the beginning of monetary economy and infusion of colonial

capital, forest policies forced Lepchas to change their traditional forest based subsistence based on Jhum cultivation and other natural forest resources. The imperatives of colonial state making in Darjeeling were comparatively so large and huge that the small indigenous people were not at all in a position to intensify any resistance against the colonial order except in few cases of occasional negligible breaches of the forest law in some areas in the form of everyday resistance.

The experience of colonization of Darjeeling Hills largely transformed the socio-economic profile of this sparsely populated hill tract. The fundamental change replaced the primordial pre-capitalist traditional production relations and had brought forward modern capital based production relation economy. The old clan based communities, traditional class hierarchies got dismantled in the process of material landscape transformation. Darjeeling witnessed fundamental ecological changes too due to growing tea plantation, roads and railways construction, making of towns and military institutions.. The imported labourers, principally Nepalis, Bhutias and Sikkimese from the neighbouring areas as wage earners forming a new working class could not form any meaningful voice. The new eco-imperialist order drastically replaced the indigenous ecosophical order and attempted to invest the idea of “difference” in the minds of the inhabitants through all possible channels of social engineering. The “natural” difference between the hills and the plains was purposively indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling as a unique socio-economic and cultural zone and finally as a separate ecological region as a whole. ³⁷

Such a colonially articulated socio-cultural and politico-administrative powerscape of colonial Darjeeling provided for strong predicament to develop any sub-altern consciousness of resistance against the over archaic colonial state.

As a fall out, the nineteenth century colonial state making and the unquestionable colonial right over natural resources was powerfully influenced by the emergence of modernity, a constellation of ideas and institutions, as a world-wide phenomenon.³⁸ But the generalization of the impact of such notion of modernity can never be similar over every space and region. Variegated regions/local spaces and patterns of environmental and landscape change suggest qualifications that have serious implications. A close look at the colonizing process of forested Darjeeling hills would have us believe that colonized Darjeeling had been a unique experience of environmental landscape transformation devoid of any consideration for the indigenous population whose existence and survival were in the face of crisis. It may be argued that under colonialism, though the Lepcha subsistence economy had changed from hunter food gatherer to the terrace agricultural type through the intermediate stage of shifting cultivation, but the social structure of the Lepcha society, during initial years of colonial intervention, did not change considerably to accommodate the economic transformation which caused a 'cultural lag' in the Lepcha society.³⁹ Rapid change in the economic or subsistence part created strains and disturbances in the other closely related parts like social, political and religious asserting 'cultural lag' in lepcha society.

In the changing situation of the Lepcha economy, the paradoxical question of the position of the Lepcha in the tribe-peasant continuum had been issue to reckon with. The common observation is that under colonialism, the tribal communities in India were shifted from ideal tribal pole towards a peasant pole. Scholars like Risley, Bose, Ghurye, Sinha, and others have conceived the transformation of tribal society into a peasant one in relation to the Brahmanic Varna-Jati model, as a part of the broad spectrum of Indian Hindu peasantry. Sinha while reviewing the position of Indian tribes in the context of their articulation with caste based Hindu Civilization states, "*these essentially pre-literate groups, which were apparently outside the*

threshold of Brahmanic hierarchic civilization, were labeled as tribe – in their isolation the tribal societies are sustained by relatively primitive subsistence technology such as shifting cultivation and hunting and gathering and maintain an egalitarian sedentary social system. In Indian context peasant societies are further characterized specifically by Varna-Jati system of birth ascribed status hierarchy and hereditary division of labour”. ⁴⁰

But the above paradigms do not help us in understanding transformation of tribes into peasants, who belong outside the fold of Varna-Jati based Hindu civilization, such as the Lepcha. Their marked incoherence with the caste based Hindu society is significant. These scholars did not explain what would happen to the tribes who belong outside the threshold of the Varna-Jati based Hindu civilization. How to ascertain the transformation of these tribes towards a peasant pole? The Lepcha a Mongolian tribe of the Darjeeling originally of Sikkim, are mostly Buddhist in religion and in no way interested in adopting the life style of the hierarchically arranged Hindu Varna Jati civilization as a model despite their close association with the caste oriented Nepali society. However, in the process of cultural assimilation, Lepchas had been provided with tribal status in the colonial form of governance despite their different religious affinity.⁴¹

In an agrarian society, the ownership and non-ownership of land provides an important basis for social cleavage and conflict.⁴² But the dichotomy does not fully explain the complex agrarian class structure as there are some land owners owning small amount of land while others with large amount of land. In some areas of Darjeeling conflict of interests exists between the landless Nepalis and land owning Lepchas on one hand and within the Lepcha society between the large land owners and small landowners on the other.

The understanding of cultural transformation of the people who are living between two great civilization viz. Indian Hinduism and

Tibetan Buddhism, and aspiring to link themselves with values other than that of the Varna Jati based Hindu great tradition is somewhat different, because India is not under any single 'great tradition', rather two or even more 'great traditions' are operative in the Indian sub-continent. The sub-Himalayan regions like Sikkim, Bhutan and a portion of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, like many other regions of India, are under the influence of Buddhist great tradition in addition to dominant Hindu tradition. ⁴³

Importantly, on the other, Nepali settlers in Darjeeling under colonial rule did face both the processes of peasantization and proletarianization. Provided with the lowest rank in the Hindu Caste hierarchy, majority of the Nepalis in the Eastern part of Nepal, due to their extremely pitiable socio-economic position, did not have much mixing with the Hindu cultural fold rather they felt more affinity with people having tribal mongoloid background. The landless Nepali labour force got migrated to Darjeeling and started working as wage earners. At the economic level, the presence of market oriented cash economy and a complex land tenure system along with other peasant features brought them nearer to the peasant pole of the continuum. The transformation from tribe to peasantry, outside the Hindu society, had taken place without caste being a referent group.

From the observations as depicted above, it has been largely established that Tibetans, Bhutias and Nepalese came later after their conquests and majority of the Nepalese came as immigrants. The term 'immigrants' or 'exogenous population' referring people settled in Darjeeling has been randomly used to distinguish Lepchas as indigenous people being fully aware of the fact that the colonial Darjeeling emerged out of Sikkim which was partly ruled by Bhutan and partly by Nepal for a considerable time in history. Thus, people coming from such conquering countries cannot be termed as 'immigrants' or 'exogenous' population. ⁴⁴ Having said this, the recognizable fact is that within a passage of few decades, Lepchas in

colonial Darjeeling presented themselves as minority. O' Malley informs us, "Beyond a few Lepchas and Limbus with their little clearing in the forests, an occasional raid from Nepal, or a stray visitor from the tablelands of Tibet, the Darjeeling hills were practically uninhabited.⁴⁵ About the brisk transformation and the change of demography in Darjeeling, Risley writes in his "The Gazetteer of Sikkim, "The settlement of Darjeeling advanced rapidly, its population having risen from not more than 100 souls in 1839 to about 10,000 in 1849 chiefly by immigration from the neighbouring states of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan..."⁴⁶

It is to be noted that the census of 1891 is a good pointer of the rate of Nepali Settlement under British patronage. The Census recorded a population of 30458 for Darjeeling of which 18814 were Nepali. The Lepchas became a minority in their own place. By 1931, Nepali population in Darjeeling constituted 52 percent, 21 percent were of the Scheduled castes and Tribes from Indian Plains, Lepchas and Sikkimese Tibetans formed 4 percent, Bhutanese 1 percent and the rests were the upper caste Hindus, Muslims and non-tribal Christians. The census of 1941 further shows the steady growth of Nepali population (67.6 percent) and gradual decline of Lepcha population (3.2 percent). Gorer observed that the "Lepchas are a dying race".⁴⁷

The requirement of labour to be engaged for building of roads and other infrastructures for making Darjeeling a health and military station was largely felt by the East India Company official deputed for the purpose. It was indeed an uphill task to find and depute labourers at this hazardous hilly forested rain-clawed terrain. Scarcity of labour had remained a constant headache due to low number of people and their expressed unwillingness to work without the consent of the ruler of Sikkim. It was due to the constant encouragement of Dr. Campbell to invite people from the neighbouring eastern part of Nepal, the first Darjeeling road connecting Darjeeling hill station with the plains was built in 1839. In addition, the EIC Officials encouraged migrant

labourers from Nepal to cultivate the fertile hills. Thus well before coming to work as tea garden labourers, a large number of people from eastern Nepal toiled on British road building projects, in the making of buildings, in menial activities as supporting staff and above all in the British army as soldiers had settled down in Darjeeling.⁴⁸

Thus, immediately after the political consolidation, the British Raj encouraged migrant labourers from Eastern Nepal to settle in Darjeeling tract where a level of economic success and social mobility appeared within the reach that would be unimaginable in the caste-constrained traditional Nepal society. The permanent settlers in Darjeeling represented Nepali ethnic groups such as Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Rai, Tamang or Thami and few such other groups. Historically, migration from eastern Nepal began on a small scale as a response to the Gurkhali conquest of both the terai and hilly tract of Darjeeling originally belonging to Sikkim. Such area of Sikkim was inhabited mainly by Kiranti population. The Gurkha ruler conquered the Darjeeling tract and a portion of Western part of Sikkim in 1780 and held on to these territories until 1816. The peasant cultivators, principally landless peasants belonging to lower rung of the Hindu caste hierarchy of Nepal (Rai and Limbu), were encouraged to migrate to the less densely-populated conquered land.⁴⁹ The Rais and Limbus emigrated in large numbers. The term “emigrated” is purposefully used keeping in mind that for most of such people, the distance involved would have been only a few score miles and that too at a time when nations were less clearly conceptualized and national boundaries had remained porous.

The British absorption of Darjeeling in 1835 had accelerated the emigration of the Nepalese population. The colonial state-making processes along with expansion of commercial tea plantation within two decades of such absorption had created job opportunities and cash wage earning for the unskilled labour force and primarily for those who were landless in their homeland of Nepal. By 1876, Darjeeling tea

industry (both terai, mid-hill and uphill) absorbed 19000 workers of whom over ninety percent came from eastern Nepal. The settlement of Nepali community based on tea industry in Darjeeling has appeared to have taken place between mid-fifties and end of nineteenth century.⁵⁰ Resultantly, the inhabiting indigenous Lepchas' control over the land was being minimized by the Nepali emigrants who proved themselves far better cultivators and laborious people than the Lepchas. It has been estimated that between twelve and fifteen percent of the total kiranti population emigrated from eastern Nepal to Darjeeling Terai between 1840 and 1860⁵¹.

Not only the attraction of works in tea gardens, "the body of men formed to build and maintain roads in Darjeeling district in 1839 was composed almost entirely of Nepalis".⁵² Another major pull factor which augmented Nepalis emigration in Darjeeling had been the recruitment of Gorkha soldiers into the British Indian Army. Such recruitment process was initiated immediately after the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1816. 4500 able-bodied Nepalis got themselves enlisted being attracted by the fact that the British paid in cash and not in kind. The Gurkha rulers of Nepal, due to inevitable loss of manpower having potentials to fight in the war fronts in the upper Himalayan front, imposed restrictions on the recruitment of British army inside Nepal. As a part of strategy the Nepalis were encouraged to settle in the British part of the hills remained outside the borders of Nepal for recruitment in the British army.⁵³

Despite restriction, the British recruited soldiers from inside Nepal through their agents. Between 1887 and 1902, Gorakhpur in India's plains having close proximity with Nepal and Ghoom near Darjeeling along with close proximity with eastern part of Nepal had been the formal centers of recruitment of Gurkha soldiers. These recruitment centers attracted mostly Rais and Limbus of the Nepalis origin. By 1908, approximately, 55000 men had been enlisted. Most of the Nepali soldiers got permanently settled in and around the

Darjeeling district after their retirement and wrested lands from indigenous Lepchas.⁵⁴

Interesting to note that in order to provide a generic name to the people migrating from Nepal representing different sects and communities, the British authority in their official communication started using the term 'Nepali' moving away from the use of 'Gorkha' or 'Gorkhali'. The Nepali Sahitya Sammelan (Nepali Literature Association) founded in Darjeeling in 1924, was the first social institution to use the term 'Nepali', while in Nepal, 'Gorkha Bhasa Prakashani Samiti (Gorkha Language Publication Committee) established in 1913 was renamed as Nepali Bhasa Prakashani Samittee in 1927. The emergence of a cohesive ethnic identity among Nepalis in India became consolidated during mid-twenties of the twentieth century.⁵⁵

Significantly, majority of the Nepali emigrants in Darjeeling tract who founded the Diaspora communities were of Tibeto-Burman extraction. It has been well approved by the British historiography that the majority of the emigrants in Darjeeling tract had come from eastern part of Nepal. Such emigrant populations had only thin veneer of Hinduism. It has been referred to that the 'Mulki Ain', 1854, in Nepal, codified Hindu caste laws and incorporated Tibeto-Burmese speaking minority population basically non-Hindu minorities practicing animism into the Hindu caste hierarchy in Nepal. The emigrated Nepali population in Darjeeling had, therefore, little barriers to accommodate with indigenous people Lepchas practicing animism having Tibeto-Mongoloid origin.⁵⁶

In colonial Darjeeling, a little more than eighty percent of the Nepali population included Rais, Limbus, Tamangs, Magars, Gurungs, Sunwars and Newars, while Lepcha, Bhutia, Tibetan constituted altogether nine percent of the population. These latter groups had adopted Nepali language as a medium of social expression and made common cause with the Nepalis for over the years. Thus the language

'Nepali' became an essential ingredient in the emergence of a cohesive ethnic identity. The deep-seated sense of insecurity felt by the emigrant Nepalis had added momentum for such ethnic consolidation. However, other exogenous people settled in Darjeeling under colonialism, such as few Europeans, Bengalis, Marwaris, Biharis, Punjabi, Persians and a few other communities did never identify with the Nepali majoritarianism in terms of language and culture.

Interestingly, colonial Census Reports (initiated from 1872) initially enumerated the different caste varieties of the Nepali population keeping Lepcha, Bhotia and Tibetans apart. From such enumerations, the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling district, at the end of colonial rule, had altogether a huge Nepali population of 445000 forming more than eighty percent of the population. Another interesting point is that originally, among the Nepali caste groups, Bahuns (Brahmins), Thakuris, Chetris, Kamis, Sarkis and Damias used to speak Nepali as ancestral mother tongue, however, they constituted only twenty percent of the Nepali population in the three sub-divisions. In due course of colonial phases Nepali as a lingua franka had been adopted not only as a language but also as the symbolic reproduction and representation of a nation combining all races of Nepal mostly settled permanently in the Eastern Himalayas of which Darjeeling hills forms a part. In this process of consolidation, the communities/ groups such as Magars, Gurungs, Kirati, Newars and Limbus were merged with Nepali ethnic consolidation.

Since the beginning of their early settlement in Darjeeling, as emigrant workers Nepalis suffered hardship and faced extreme form of exploitation under colonial dispensation. The emigrants Nepalis not only belonged to the lower castes but also lower classes. Most of them were petty agriculturists of artisans who could not cope up with the growing strain on their employment opportunities. No other option left for them except emigrating Darjeeling to serve as minimum wage earners. Notwithstanding the fact that Nepalis constituted majority of

the workforce, they were not the owners of production process. At the last phase of colonial rule, Nepalis comprised 25 % of the clerical staff and lower cadre officers in the forest offices but 85% of the menials, e.g. orderlies, drivers, watchmen, tour operators and tea labours etc. Barring few, most of them lived in tea gardens land and through generations of their settlement they have become the natural population of colonial Darjeeling overcoming the exogenous components diluted by colonial modernity. The hill people as a whole taking both Lepcha, Bhutia, Tibetans and Nepalis together gave birth to a form of cultural insularity in the Darjeeling hill society which had gained patronage of the colonial ruling class represented by planters, missionaries and colonial state apparatus.

It is reiterated further that the ethnic consolidation in Darjeeling hills had its deep seated colonial roots of governance. In order to enjoy Darjeeling hills for bodily comfort and to extract her natural resources to augment revenues, the colonial rulers attempted to invest the idea of natural 'difference' in the minds of hill people through all possible channels of social, administrative communications that distinguished Darjeeling as a separate administrative unit, as a unique economic formation, as a distinctive cultural and linguistic zone and a separate region having distinctive topography, climate and ecology. The idea of 'other' or the cultural insularity invested in the minds of the hill people of Darjeeling had gained patronage, if not a tacit approval of the colonial masters represented by the assemblage of the planters, foresters, bankers and above all the colonial state apparatus. Thus the 'aporia of self-rule of the hill people in Darjeeling, the origin of which was rooted in colonial governmentality, had become manifest since the beginning of twentieth century. The term 'governmentality' has been used here in Foucaultian sense. To Foucault, 'to govern means to govern things or to govern human beings by turning them into 'things'. To fulfil this task, the governmental rationalities embark upon an assemblage of institutions, procedures, calculations, tactics, strategies

etc. which are being used for governance and thereby to transform the ruled into 'things'. These complex institutional processes backed by knowledge of science of governing constitute in essence what is called as governmentality.⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, colonial Darjeeling used to be administered by certain unique forms of governance system. For example, initially administered as a non-regulatory area with waste land grants where the normal regulations could not be acted upon without specific sanction of the Governor General, Darjeeling had become a district in 1869. From 1907 to 1917, Darjeeling was administered as Scheduled District. Then the District was administered as Backward Tract till 1934. Till the end of colonial rule, Darjeeling remained as Partially Excluded Area. As a natural corollary, the idea of separate administrative arrangement for Darjeeling had been indoctrinated in the mindset of the enlightened hill people. In 1907, the first ever demand for separate administrative set-up was placed before the colonial government by the leaders of the hill people representing Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali communities. Thus the basic foundation of hill ethnicity was developed. Again in 1917, the representatives of the Darjeeling District submitted a memorandum to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal demanding creation of a separate unit for Darjeeling by way of inclusion of some areas of North-Eastern Frontier Province.⁵⁸

The Hillmen's Association was formally formed in 1921 to "safeguard and advocate the legitimate interests of the hill people in the sphere of politics."⁵⁹ This Association, in collaboration with Darjeeling Planters' Association and the European Association, had resolved in a joint meeting to fight for the exclusion of Darjeeling district and Dooars from Bengal.⁶⁰ On October 25, 1930, the Hillmen's Association along with other local associations, sent a memorandum to Sir Samuel Hoare positing "*the district of Darjeeling, where the Gorkha population predominate, should be excluded from Bengal and be treated as an*

*independent administrative unit with the Deputy Commissioner as an Administrator vested with much more powers than that of District Magistrate assisted by a small Executive Council (like the Provincial Governor's Executive Council), representatives of all interests, in the administration of the area.*⁶¹ This was for the first time, the concerns for the interests of the Gorkhas were raised. All the hill people were subsequently brought under a single umbrella in the name of Gorkha ethnicity. The difference between indigenous and exogenous hill population got diluted. Within a passage of a decade, the Hillmen's Association was defunct and in its place, All India Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha Association was born in the early March, 1943. However, under the leadership of Damber Sing Gurung, in May 15, 1943, this Association was renamed as All India Gorkha League. The League convened three consecutive conventions at Darjeeling, Kurseong and Shilong and had become a consolidated force to the cause of Gorkhas.⁶² The League received a jolt due to premature death of its leader D.S.Gurung. The League's subsequent attempt to join hands with the leaders for the creation of a new Uttarakhand Pradesh could not make much head way. ⁶³However, the sentiments of the Gorkhas were so deeply founded that even the undivided Communist Party of India, Darjeeling District Committee, after keeping aside the principal motive of the emancipation of the working class through class struggle, had demanded in 1947 (06.04.1947) for the establishment of Gorkhasthan, the homeland of the Gorkhas to be constituted of three contiguous areas of Darjeeling District, Southern Sikkim and Nepal. However, within four years, such demand was revised and the asking was for complete regional autonomy of the Gorkhas settled predominantly in Darjeeling hills throughout the colonial period. ⁶⁴

Thus Nepalis settled in colonial Darjeeling or elsewhere in British India for generations together strived hard to popularize Gorkha identity as a replica of Indian identity for the Nepalis of Indian identity and origin and such categorization would separate them from the

Nepalis of Nepal. These differentiated community identities of the Nepalis, the Lepchas and Bhotias had been ultimately converged into a generic identity called Gorkha identity at least at the superficial level to realize the socio-economic and political aspirations living within the colonial fold. The colonial governmentality and the corresponding material transformations had significantly brought changes in the socio-political demographic consolidation in colonial Darjeeling which continued unabated in different forms of ethnic convergence and assertions in the post-colonial period.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The present study has attempted to explore and identify the intricacies of the different facets of colonial encounter in the Darjeeling hills and has sought to find out answers to the research questions raised in the Introductory Chapter. While striving to locate transformations of Darjeeling hills under colonialism, the study has shown how the definition and management of boundaries between wildness and civility in Darjeeling hill society situated in the border zone of the Eastern Himalayas, and the relation of ideas of nature to different socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of life are interconnected historical processes that inform environmental history. The primary purpose of the study is to substantiate why Darjeeling hills should be separately dealt with from the conventional historical discourses of colonialism in India. Unquestionably, for Darjeeling, it was colonialism which tied it with British India positing therefore an alternative lens to view Indian history of the peripheral zone under colonial rule.

The study has attempted to verify the hypotheses formulated on the basis of the research questions. Beside presenting Chapter wise conclusions, precisely, the study posits that landscape, as an organic part of environmental history, holds historical significance specifically when landscape of Darjeeling did develop in increasingly complex and materially meaningful ways under the aegis of colonialism. The motive of the British East India Company to occupy Darjeeling tract from the Rajah of Sikkim was not an accident of history, rather such occupation was a calculative move for strategic and political interests, as well as for resource extraction and revenue generation of the British Empire from the colonial periphery.

The colonial motives behind the clearance of forests in Darjeeling were directed by the forces of natural resource extraction and profit

maximization. The colonial scientific forestry in India, as a matter of coincidence, was first initiated in Darjeeling during early sixties of the nineteenth century. By then, Darjeeling forests were started depleting for extension of colonial development activities, valuable timber extractions and expansion of commercial tea plantations. As a corollary, scientific conservation of forests was meshed with imperial agenda of extraction of resources out of forest resources, principally, timbers of high value. However, in materializing the principal objectives of scientific forest policies, both the forest officials and revenue officials in Darjeeling worked hand in hand where the forest officials had to play a subordinate role in relation to revenue administrative officials being the Superintendent at the helm of all affairs of Darjeeling who was bestowed with huge discretionary powers. Even after 1869, when Darjeeling was designated as a District under directly administered British Bengal Province, the District Collector/Magistrate of Darjeeling continued to enjoy extra-administrative prerogatives due to its unique kinds of administrative status in different phases of the colonial period. The impact of colonial forest policy on the indigenous people of Darjeeling had multipronged effects which fundamentally altered the basic nature of society and economy and the modes of natural resource use of Darjeeling hills.

In order to usher in scientific forest conservation in Darjeeling, the colonial forest policy had been pursued with the primary objective for the dispossession of land, the restriction of use and access to resources, the imposition of codified rules ignoring traditional customs, the prohibition of local trade in forest produce for the purpose of basic sustenance by indigenous populations, imposition of levies and taxes, prohibitory rules for grazing and cattle raising, and prohibition of shifting cultivation. In view of the absence of any legally documented proprietary hold of the native population over forested lands of the Darjeeling tract, the British established unquestionable proprietary hold and supremacy over such forested tract. Thus for colonialists,

lands became nature's prizes. It has been initially shown in our study that in the name of forest conservation or scientific forestry, the forest working plans were drawn to enable the selective manipulation of certain plants to regenerate only monoculture of commercially valuable species.

It has been established in our study that the imperatives of colonial forestry in the Darjeeling hills were essentially commercial. Broader social and environmental considerations were subjugated by the commercial and strategic utility of the colonizers. However, such a conclusion from the point of view of academic objectivity is incapable of providing the other side of the picture. Despite their imperial utilitarian ethos, the British Indian forest administrators had equal concern for long term environmental effects of deforestation caused by illegal and indiscriminate logging by the local contractors and mafias and shifting cultivation practiced by indigenous population. This concern of the British foresters and officials would prompt us to a different conclusion that environmentalism and British imperialism have a shared past. Both the British Acts were enacted and Rules were framed with the environmental concern along with the expansion of state apparatus in Darjeeling hills. In this way colonial foresters and administrators mothered environmentalism by the system of evolving techniques of governability.

The study has further revealed the fact that in many of the occasions, the colonial conservation policies were continuously undermined by their conflicting priorities. Thus, the strict policy of forest conservation armed with Acts and Rules could not be followed because of unique local situations, paucity of labour and various indigenous everyday forms of resistance. In effect, both the colonial foresters and the people in and around forests tended to follow an accommodative middle path of mutually shared interests of ecological ideology. Amidst such circumstances, both the native and settled natural population of Darjeeling hills started acknowledging the

preeminence of colonial conception of state owned natural resources and colonially defined private holdings.

Most importantly, the study unravels the basic fact that Darjeeling, as a hill station, a military garrison, a sanatorium, a tea zone, a tourist destination, an area of valuable forest produce, was out and out a colonial construction. It witnessed simultaneous colonial state making and institution building processes and governance consolidation throughout the period of the colonial rule. Darjeeling forested territory did not form part of the pre-colonial India. The British East India Company did not only bring Darjeeling under British Indian fold, but also had made required Indian mainstreaming of Darjeeling through various parameters of governability. Ordering of lands by a set of rules and procedures, land grants and settlement rules, administrative codes and procedures, forest rules are some of the examples of such colonial governance having pan Indian colonial features. Thus, shaping and making of Darjeeling was an uncontested colonial politico-economic project directly linked with grand imperial political economy ethos of British utilitarian philosophy.

This study has attempted to project the colonial encounter in the Darjeeling hills being a regional sub-space which was never a part of the historical accounts of colonial India till the occupation of the Darjeeling tract by the East India Company in the mid-thirties of the nineteenth century. The present study has discerned the different politico-administrative processes by which Darjeeling hills had been integrated into the larger colonial political economy of British India. Such integration had been momentous event of history for this peripherally situated border zone, so to say, an anomalous zone, remained outside the civilization centers of India. The transmigration within inner Himalayas, (taking Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet) through Darjeeling tract, till the beginning of the nineteenth century was a spontaneous course of historical event. It was taken place not only because of inner Himalayan trading or economic reasons, but also of

climatic and physiographic affinity of this part of Himalayas. As a corollary of such climatic affinity cultural accommodation and assimilation could have been possible. However, with the advent of the British, such inner Himalayan migration was questioned by the political boundary issues. Notwithstanding the all pervasive colonial encounters and corresponding role of the migrated population from the plains, the critical role of the natural Himalayan population in shaping and making Darjeeling had remained always a decisive factor in the history of this hilly region.

So far as this study is concerned, what are ostensibly material transformations have been viewed against the backdrop of concomitant changes in patterns of the utilization of natural resources of the Darjeeling hills. Here the significance of the colonial intervention lies in the unique modes of natural resource extraction made possible by the political dominance of the Raj and such tools or technologies previously unknown to the people of this peripheral Himalayan zone. Unfortunately, however, the transformations that came in the wake of colonial rule could not touch upon the principal area of concern of essential interdependence or required reconciliation of the ecological changes and transformation. On the contrary, while asserting formal rights of ownership over various forms of natural resources, the colonial government brought to bear on their management a highly developed legal and administrative infrastructure.

The massive expansion of commercial tea plantations and urbanization had greatly impinged on the lives of indigenous people and migrant labour force settled permanently in Darjeeling. Colonial capital investment in tea plantation had fundamentally altered the edifice of the subsistence based traditional pre-colonial economy of Darjeeling. Such interventions had certainly disturbed, destroyed and reconstructed both the natural landscape and matterscape of Darjeeling tract as existed in pre-colonial situation, but such pre-colonial situation, for Darjeeling, has not been revealed by our study as

“golden age of equilibrium” which was destroyed by the colonizers. Our study runs counter to the established arguments treating the environment as either static or the existence of pre-colonial natural harmony which experienced dramatic rupture under colonial interventions. Our study establishes the fact that under the aegis of colonialism, the witnessed ecological transformations had been one of negotiated nature of colonial encounter. However, for Darjeeling, the local contestation was very much bleak in nature. Hence, a complex picture of environmental impacts emerged rather than a one way narrative about exploitation, extraction by the colonizer. However, the massive impact of colonial environmental encounter on Darjeeling hills has left a permanent mark in the process of production of material transformation.

The designed interrelated hypotheses of this study have been intrinsically tested in the respective relevant Chapters. While tested academically, most of the hypotheses have been stood valid and a few of them have been modified while making chapter wise presentation. It has been amply approved by this study that colonization had a vital and decisive role to play in the material transformations of the landscape of Darjeeling hills. For Darjeeling, colonial equilibrium between natural and social systems remained harder to sustain due to intricacies of evolving dialectical relationships. Agrarian changes in Darjeeling hills within the framework of colonial state making and corresponding ecological consequences and environmental implications had been instrumental for the radical dispossession of the indigenous people. The establishment of unquestionable colonial proprietary hold over land of Darjeeling had augmented the unfettered process of colonial state making and institution building in this hill tract. The commercial and utilitarian purposes of British expansion produced a situation in which Darjeeling tract was increasingly used and utilized. As colonial expansion proceeded, the environmental experiences of colonizers and colonized living at the colonial periphery had started

playing steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of new European evaluations of Nature. The differences between the hills and plains were implanted and indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling landscape as a unique 'other'.

The thrust of the English East India Company on Darjeeling was motivated by several factors principally emanated from the geo-political importance of Darjeeling as being a part of Sikkim with which the British political and commercial compulsions were closely associated throughout the 19th century as the buffer northern border of India against China and Tibet. Sikkim was of special interest to the English rulers because of its strategic position. The apparent amicable relationship between British India and Nepal, after consecutive wars followed by treaties, gradually became a subservient one which provided another major factor for the British thrust towards Darjeeling hill tract. The British compulsion in the post-Sepoy Revolt period was to recruit "loyal" Nepali soldiers who were not affected by the incipient nationalist feelings as was distinctly found among the Indian sepoys during the Revolt of 1857. Darjeeling became the principal station of recruitment. Thus, while Nepal remained independent of British India, its subjects constituted an army which played a crucial role in both the political consolidation of the Indian sub-continent and the development of the British colonial economy. Thus by keeping Nepal outside of direct colonial rule and at the same time by using subjects of Nepal as soldiers for colonial expansion and political consolidation provided for a unique feature of colonial encounter hardly observable in any other part of colonial India.

Another factor which drove the British rulers towards Darjeeling was the rapid growth of tea industry in Darjeeling hills and adjoining plains. Commercial tea cultivation at a larger scale began in the Darjeeling from 1856 onwards and the industry flourished rapidly which attracted the British planters in considerable number. Along

with tea plantation, the prospects of forest products for commercial utilization and cinchona plantation had also attracted the attention of the British. Another important factor which had initially encouraged the English East India Company to move towards Darjeeling was the possibility of setting up a sanatorium and health resort for the British officials and businessmen in the cool climate of Darjeeling hills.

Thus, while viewing Darjeeling under colonial occupation, the present study agrees with the arguments of Richard English when he observes, *“the character of British interests in the Himalaya reflects two distinct phases in the development of the colonial economy in India: the first being the period of mercantile exploitation under the Company, and the second being the expansion of commercial agricultural investment under the civil administration of the Raj”*. It has been revealed in our study that from the initial days of Company Raj, the British were interested in trade between Tibet and British possessions in Bengal. The rise of Gorkha rulers in Nepal was seen by the British as a threat both to their own trans-montane commercial prospects and to their zamindari holdings bordering Nepal plains. Despite initial failures, in 1815, the British defeated Nepal and restored the lands east of Nepal’s Mechi River to Sikkim and could establish a direct route to Lhasa from Calcutta to realize their mercantile trade activities.

The second phase of commercial expansion of the Raj was to integrate Indian colonial economy with the world economy. During this phase, Darjeeling was brought under commercial plantation such as tea. Darjeeling was given priority because of its proximity to Calcutta and other ports of on the Bay of Bengal.

The British notion of Nature as indoctrinated in the mindscape of the colonial officials, since the beginning of colonial rule in Darjeeling was fundamentally different from the notion of Nature of the indigenous people who in fact lived in and lived with Nature. Nature to them was a strong cultural space and loosely defined political territory. The

ecologically distinct attitude manifested the inter-communities ties with the natural world. The animist religious practices celebrated nature and natural objects. Unlike Europeans, forest to the indigenous people was their natural abode and means of subsistence and was certainly not a source of profit extraction. Colonial interventions brought about decisive changes in the ecology and society of the native hill population of the Darjeeling tract.

It has been shown in the study that the debate on the issue of ownership/entitlement of forests in India was emerged only after the establishment of the Department of Forest in the early sixties of the nineteenth century. Such a debate has been well analyzed by the scholars in three broad categories, the first of which they call “annexationist” implying absolute state control over forests. The second one is the “pragmatic” favouring arguably state management of ecologically sensitive and strategically valuable forests keeping apart the areas to remain under communal system of management. The third category as they termed “populist” refers to rejection of state intervention, holding that tribal and peasants must exercise sovereign rights over the woodlands. However, this study has established the fact that none of these categories can be well founded when applied to colonial Darjeeling for the purpose of explanation.

It has been exposed in our study that the colonial government brought out a comprehensive forest policy that clearly spelt out the colonial interest over that of interests of the commons. Here, the colonial forest policy was perceived and chalked out with three dimensional mandates to organize sustained-yield timber production for the long future; to preserve the forest cover of remote and unstable watersheds; to ensure that the people living in forests have adequate supplies of wood and fodder for their subsistence needs. In reality, however, policy pursued by the colonial government was mostly centered round the first mandate and the second mandate was pursued to fulfill the first one, whereas, the declared third mandate was never

pursued in reality as it directly confronted with the colonial notion of ownership over forests and extraction of forest resources to the maximum extent possible.

Thus, our study has approved the fact that the imperatives of colonial forestry in Darjeeling hills were essentially commercial. Broader social and environmental considerations were subjugated by the commercial and strategic utility of the British. However, such observation would reveal half-truth from the perspective of academic objectivity. The colonial forest administrators had deep concern too for long-term environmental effects of deforestations caused by illegal and indiscriminate logging and timber fallings. The regeneration of plants, silviculture, and monoculture of valuable timbers through various working plans, and different measures of forest protection are some of the references of the colonial foresters operating in Darjeeling forests. It is therefore argued that environmentalism and colonialism have a shared past. However, the British Acts and Forest Rules were enacted and framed with the environmental concern along with the expansion of imperial powers. In this way, colonialism in the Darjeeling hills mothered environmentalism by the evolving system of governability.

From all the colonial legislations, it was clear that commercial interests were the primary consideration in declaring forests reserved and Darjeeling forests were of no exception. When the entire Darjeeling forested tract was occupied by the East India Company through a Deed of Grant from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835, there had been no personal proprietary hold over the forested land. Darjeeling tract was not either predefined as Zamindari Khas (self-cultivated holdings) or did remain under Raiyati (occupancy of the cultivating tenants). Unlike plains of South Bengal, there had been the absence of Jungle Zamindars in Darjeeling. This was the principal reason why Colonial scientific forestry under the Indian Forest Act, 1865, was first adopted in Darjeeling hills.

Agrarian changes and concomitant state making, material and ecological transformation that took place in Darjeeling under colonial control could only have been achieved due to the total possession of British over the whole tract of Darjeeling. It has been shown in our study that the codified colonial holding over forests in Darjeeling and application of colonial forestry along with its 'scientific' management has had congealed effects and consequences at different historical conjectures. Thus, there is no doubt that the environmental history of Darjeeling Hills is essentially linked with forest and is intrinsically tied up with the history of colonialism. In Darjeeling Hills, the scientific and technical discourse on forest has been shaped by the historical legacy of colonial knowledge building on forest; the forest development discourses had been continuously under production in specific political-ecological settings resulted in the development efforts of the British Government in shaping forests and making Darjeeling a location of ecological importance.

It has been argued that our study does not share with the argument that pre- colonial relationship between societies and their environment as a golden age of 'equilibrium' which colonial conquest disturbed and destroyed. Two principal points have come to the light: (i) In Darjeeling Hills, the scientific and technical discourse on forest has been shaped by the historical legacy of colonial knowledge building on forest; (ii) The forest development discourses had been continuously under production in such specific political-ecological settings. It has been revealed in our study that the imperatives of colonial forestry in Darjeeling were essentially commercial and was largely profit motive oriented. Its operations were dictated more by the commercial and strategic utility of different valuable species than by broader social and local environmental considerations. Thus, such strategy ran counter the main objectives of forest policy, envisioned in 1894, "*to promote the general well-being of the country, to preserve climatic and physical conditions of the country and to fulfill the needs of the people.*"

The most serious consequence of colonial forestry was the diminution of customary rights as well as the decline in traditional conservation and management systems. The curtailment of communitarian ownership of forests of Darjeeling by the colonial state had severely undermined the subsistence economy of the indigenous Lepchas. Collection of Bamboos, Wax and Lac from the Darjeeling forest was prohibited by issuance of licenses. Like all other British Indian forests, Jhuming or shifting cultivation was discouraged without providing appropriate alternative livelihood or land to the Lepchas for settled agriculture. As a consequence, there had been displacement of Lepchas from their natural forest habitats. Restrictions on collection of forest produce, imposition of prohibitory norms on grazing and gradual dwindling of grazing grounds of different seasons affected badly the indigenous people of Darjeeling hills. Moreover, the British forest policy or in the colonial Acts, had not ensured the rights of the indigenous population. Ultimately, the native Lepchas had to leave Reserved Forest of Darjeeling and they were directed to move south-west part of the District, between the hilly tract and the plains. Again during 1920s, the Lepcha tenants were evacuated and resettled from that part too due to expansion and construction of Kalimpong as an urban area. Deforestation of 999 acres of forest land in Lolegaon Reserved Forest was proposed and, sanction of such deforestation was granted by the colonial government. As a consequence the Lepchas became refugees in their own land.

The official correspondences of East India Company and thereafter those of the British India Government as the principal source of historiography of colonial Darjeeling would have us take it that it was not forests of Darjeeling Hills which attracted the preliminary attention of the British. Poor accessibility and high cost of transportation might have discouraged them from commercially exploiting the forest timber of the Tract. Therefore, the primary intention was to create a social space in the physical space of Darjeeling equitable to European

environment wherein the company officials would take refuge and would feel at home. The strategic location of Darjeeling as a military space had received adequate attention too. The ceded part of Kalimpong Hills (once owned by Sikkim) from Bhutan at a later years (1865) reapproves the argument that it was not forests but the consideration of strategic location prompted the British to annex the entirely forested hilly part of Kalimpong within the administrative fold of Darjeeling.

It has been explored that the development of Darjeeling hills as a region of tea plantation had acquired its credential since the beginning of the mid-nineteenth century. It was only with the abolition of the East India Company's trading monopoly of tea with China in 1833 that a quest for tea in British India acquired urgency. The imperial objective for tea was to grow it in territories under British control rather than importing tea from China on a competitive scale. The British Scientists and Botanists under the leadership of Nathaniel Wallich had noticed that the tea plant succeeded best on the sides of mountains. During the same period, the coincidence was that including Darjeeling hill tract along with extensive tracts of the Himalayan foot-hills had been brought under Company's direct control as the end results of wars with Burma, Nepal and Sikkim.

Darjeeling's potential and possibilities as a zone of tea cultivation had attracted the immediate attention of the EIC officials who sought to transform the almost uninhabited forested tract of Darjeeling into a tea region with several lasting repercussions on its physical and social landscape. Large tracts of virgin forest and grass lands were cleared by British Planters and cultivated with tea. In establishing and cultivating their estates it is apparent that the planters were initially able to secure labour from the neighbouring Nepal hills. Pertinently, eastern part of Nepal remained predominant among migrant workers on Darjeeling till plantations situated mostly in the middle and upper hills. The terai part of the plantation was dependent upon the labourers from the central Indian tribal population like their counterparts at Doars

plantations and Assam tea plantations. However, unlike Assam, indenture system of labour was never adopted in Terai tea plantations.

In fact, tea as commercial plantation in Darjeeling since early fifties of the nineteenth century had been a sheer coincidence which was taken place as a part of larger imperial project. Since then tea continued to be the backbone of the economy of Darjeeling hills and Terai area. The expansion of tea industry in Darjeeling had fundamentally altered the nature of political economy of Darjeeling hills and Terai and that too at the cost of forests, ecology and environment in particular. Not only had the material landscape, but also the natural landscape of Darjeeling witnessed a fundamental change due to rapid expansion of commercial tea plantation at the cost of depletion of forests.

For Darjeeling the concern for development and environment appeared as a general phenomenon of imperialism/colonialism at a certain juncture of history. The turning point event was the introduction of new modes of resource use into the colonized Darjeeling hills with the infusion of colonial capitalist investment replacing the subsistence based traditional mode of production. Here a new method of production in the form capitalistic plantation agriculture was introduced by colonial/ foreign capital investment from the middle of the 19th century. Colonial capital infusion in tea plantation created a situation which was projected to believe that protecting nature necessitated that indigenous forests be transformed into the tea gardens which imperial science and commerce required.

It has been further observed in our study that the colonially induced expanding tea plantation lovably called 'imperial cash crop', owned and engineered by the British planters under the patronage of British East India Company gave rise to an insular economy hitherto unknown by the indigenous people lived in so far on tradition based subsistence economy. The substantial quantum of profits accrued from

Darjeeling tea used to be siphoned out to Europe and tea labourers had to be kept satisfied with wages only. Such a situation gave rise to a kind of dependent development economy in Darjeeling. In this context, the study has unfolded that the historical focus should be on the complex set of processes that generated relevant factors, forces and events leading to drainage of capital and environmental concerns of development.

The present study has adequately disclosed the facts that Darjeeling hills had largely been penetrated by the commercial plantation agriculture through colonial capital since the mid of nineteenth century. Till then, the whole part of the present district were least inhabited and a few indigenous people was engaged in shifting cultivation. Indeed, the entire tract of land was covered which forests and wild bushes. A major portion of forested land and bush covered hilly tract of land came to be subsequently interspersed with the plantation agriculture where growth was simply phenomenal in the wake of large capital investment. The unique aroma of Darjeeling tea attracted huge demand worldwide.

In this way, as a part of grand imperial political project, Darjeeling hill was drawn into the world capitalist system. The incorporation was also part of the expanded reproduction so essential to the workings of the capitalist mode of production corroborated with colonial mode of natural resource use. Experiences of early nineteenth century have approved the fact that the British falling of profits in Europe (at home) due to increased foreign competition and faced by many other severe crises, British capitalism had no real alternative to expansion of capital which was therefore forthcoming for investment in tea plantation estates in Darjeeling as well as other plantation belts. This brought along with it a new mode, viz., mode of resource use by way of infusion of capital and capital induced technology and corresponding changes in the relations of productions in this hilly tract. The class structure that came to emerge hence approximated to

those found in the modern industrial sector. At the helm of the hierarchy, there had been a small group a tea gardens' managers (sometimes manager-proprietor), whereas, the unskilled plantation labourers formed the bottom of the hierarchy. In between, there was the class of intermediaries known as babus which comprised the skilled workers, mostly brought from the plains.

For Darjeeling, such class differences were uniquely coupled with ethno-cultural and anthropogenic differences, for example, proprietors were European, managers were either European or Anglo-Indians; the Bengali Babus having skill and expertise represented the intermediary class and the unskilled labourers forming the lowest rung of the class structure were drawn mostly from neighbouring parts of Nepal, some were drawn from Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet having heterogeneous languages and culture, customs and ethnic identities. Such distinct class segregation along ethnic lines was an objective product of colonial plant capitalism. Implanting ethnic cleavages among the plantation labourers to resist class consciousness and regimenting class solidarity among the managers and Babus had been the dual objective of the colonizers to sustain unabated exploitation.

The colonially led processes of development in Darjeeling hills since the mid-nineteenth century had created new occupational differentiations, rural-urban differentiations, cultural and educational differentiations, ultimately culminating to class divisions. On the contrary, the levels of income at the neighbouring rural labour market remained strikingly at a low stage of development. The colonial disinterest in investing capital in conventional agriculture, absence of modern agricultural farming, and absence of effective and organized socio-economic institutions other than tea and road and rail constructions gave rise to the misery of the common people living in rural Darjeeling. Thus the arte fax of colonial nature of development did not match with the natural condition of soil, climate or even population

which resulted far-reaching structural consequences that were brought about by the colonial capitalist investment.

This study has attempted to explore the fact that throughout Darjeeling hills whatever little amount of land left for ordinary cultivation was resettled and new method of settled agriculture was put in place by discarding shifting cultivation. The ownership of cultivable land was also to be resettled in view of the absence of zamindar in this new tract originally clothed with jungle where indigenous Lepchas and few other primordial communities used to live on subsistence agriculture by clearing forests through jhum cultivation. These indigenous communities living in and around forest were also largely disturbed due to the initiation of scientific colonial forestry since the mid of 1860's. The agriculturist indigenous communities had to shift from one area to the other both from the internal pressure of expanding tea plantation, newly identified development areas, expansion of military cantonment, and spread of urbanization and extant rules of protected and reserved forests. The provisions of Land rules not disturbing the indigenous communities were violated time and again both by the revenue officials and foresters.

Under British rule, no effort was made to modernize traditional agriculture and as a result agriculture remained unaltered with its primitive conventional feudal mode which eventually culminated in the rampant practice of infeudation and sub-infeudation of the same piece of land due to inbuilt scarcity of land. This was because of two reasons; (i) growing population and dislocation of handicraft industry; (ii) absence of any alternative source of livelihood. Such a subsistence economy with a unique variety of pre-capitalist relations of productions continued to exist amidst phenomenal growth of plantation enterprise that was modern in character.

While reaching agreement with the theorists of underdevelopment, it is pertinent to observe that the colonial Darjeeling

did experience with a kind of dialectic unity in a dualistic economy purposively indoctrinated by the British by way of investing capitalist farming keeping apart, in isolation, the conventional agricultural sector based on tradition based subsistence economy. To agree with Evans Barbara, this unique dual economy, as created by the colonizers, had divided the economy of Darjeeling into two economic sectors; for example, *“tea plantations were part of the western capitalist export oriented sector which was characterized by its dynamic and progressive nature, and the Asiatic, subsistence, domestic sector said to have possessed social and cultural traits which inhibited its own economic development.”*

It has been adequately approved by the study that the hill station of Darjeeling was a unique form of colonial urbanism. Colonial administrators planned the hill stations in the nineteenth century to create an idyllic social space away from the tropical climate and the cities in the plains. Therefore, the Darjeeling hill station represented topographical, climatic, social and architectural ideals that were radically different from the cities in the plains. Like other colonial hill stations as visualized by occidental imaginations and built under the aegis of colonialism, Darjeeling had shown major shifts in its nature and form from major urban centres of the plains of colonial India. Darjeeling was a part of the colonial mainstream. Its urbanization and inclusion into the greater colonial economy was effected ever since its establishment followed by subsequent material transformations. Therefore, a constant tension between its exotic and its functional elements persisted throughout the colonial period.

The study has extensively substantiated the fact that colonial urbanism had two characteristics. First was the spatial segregation between the native and ‘European’ residential areas, although the latter were intruded upon by affluent Indians in the late colonial period. The second was its integration within colonial economy. It has been argued in this study that the spatial characteristic of colonial urbanism as

reflected in Darjeeling has to be identified with respect to its link with colonial economy. With the extensive details of colonial Darjeeling, this study argues that this British built town in the Eastern Himalaya was integral to the colonial political economy in which the resources of all sites were subject to capitalistic utilization.

Dane Kennedy has provided us an explanation for the eventual ‘despoiling’ of the hill stations in the late colonial period. He has argued that “*their sustenance required legions of subordinates and attracted the aspiring Indian elite, whose presence subverted their pristine quality dislodging the ‘private–public distinction’ between the cities in the plains and the hill stations in British India.*” Our study suggested for a different argument that the change of character that Kennedy has referred to was not anomalous, rather symptomatic of urbanization of the Darjeeling hills. The expansion and growth of Darjeeling subverted another spatial dichotomy; that was between the idyllic hills and the disease ridden plains in official discourse and public culture. This subversion was not only occasioned by the accommodation of settlers in menial and clerical capacities within the municipal limits of this exclusive hill station. It was intrinsic to Darjeeling as a colonial outpost; its function being not only to serve as a site of medicalized leisure for the British and Indian elite, but also to transform adjacent newly colonized areas into commercial, revenue yielding, settled economic sites. Once this was achieved, thereafter, the integration of its resources into the larger colonial economy sustained the expansion and consolidation of the town. Thus colonial town of Darjeeling has been projected in this study as a part of the continuum of colonial urbanism from the mid of nineteenth century in the context of its colonial urban history.

While delving critically, this study has revealed the fact that under colonial rule, Lepcha subsistence economy had passed through hunting gathering to shifting cultivation stage and finally to settled agriculture in terraces because of constraints of nature and application

of prohibitory rules. Under the changed situation the Lepchas had to give up their primitive form of production technology and to take up advanced technology of cultivation which affiliated them with the more prosperous communities living in the neighbourhood. Thus the Lepchas could no longer remain as self-contained as they happened to be in the pre-colonial days. The production of cash crops can be taken as an indication of social change. Thus the self-contained subsistence economy of the Lepchas came in contact with the market economy.

The evolution of the Lepcha subsistence economy has been seen through the evolution of the system of land tenure. Land tenure had been the rules regulating how land was owned and used. It was a combination of land tenancy and land labour management, making allocation of land resources for agricultural purpose a major facet of organization which British imposed in Darjeeling. Moreover, there had been internal dichotomy as there were land owners owning small amount of land while others with large amount of land. In some areas of Darjeeling, conflict of interests existed between the landless Nepalis and land owning Lepchas on one hand and within the Lepcha society between the large land owners and small landowners on the other.

The study has highlighted the uniqueness of the cultural distinctiveness of the hill people of Darjeeling while understanding their cultural transformations. These people lived between two great civilizations, the Nepalese Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism, and aspired to link themselves differently with values other than that of the Varna Jati based Hindu great tradition. The Himalayan regions like Sikkim, Bhutan and the Darjeeling hills have been shown as the ground of cultural contestations, assimilations, compromise and accommodation. Christian Missions and Churches also had a definite role in such cultural transformations. The study has revealed further that at the economic level, the presence of market oriented cash economy and a complex land tenure system along with other peasant features brought them nearer to the peasant pole of the continuum.

For the Lepchas, the transformation from tribe to peasantry, outside the Hindu society, had taken place without caste being a referent group. For the immigrated Nepalis, such transformation represented a process of depeasantization to repeasantization and simultaneously for the chunk of immigrated Nepalis, to proletarianization as wage earners labours in the enclaved and insular tea plantation industry.

As a matter of fact, the study has established that the peoples of Darjeeling hills amidst colonial encounters were placed in different economic and ecological situations. The socio-economic changes and adaptations that had taken place among them during colonial rule had been enormous and far reaching. Fundamental changes had taken place in the subsistence sphere of their life. Within a span of a little more than one hundred years of colonial rule, the indigenous people had to transform their subsistence economy from hunting – food – gathering- shifting cultivation to settled plough cultivation.

It has also been revealed by the study that in the early part of the 19th Century the Nepalis migrated to Sikkim in waves from their relatively infertile and overpopulated land of Nepal. They worked as a dependent tenant under the Bhotia or Lepcha land lords and gradually made their entrance into the socio-political scene of Sikkim and Darjeeling, ultimately becoming a major force to reckon with. From the mid nineteenth century, the immigrated Nepalis mostly from eastern Nepal had largely settled in the commercial tea plantations in Darjeeling. The trilingual setting of the region had given the native people the advantage of social and economic contacts with Nepali and Tibetan speakers. This helped them to interact with different cultures. In such a social system, interaction did not lead to the liquidation of ethnic differences through acculturation; cultural differences persisted despite interethnic contact and interdependence.

In the beginning, the Lepchas could maintain ecological equilibrium with their environment. They lived in the zones of

abundant natural resources to support a relatively small population, which they successfully exploited with a low level technology of hunting and gathering. As the number grew, a primitive form of cultivation like slash and burn or shifting hill cultivation was adopted. In course of time as population further increased and the Nepali immigrants settled in the area in large numbers the land gradually become scarce and the Lepcha were somewhat compelled to take up settled plough agriculture in the terraces and thus began the era of better use of natural resources with an improved technology. But then they could not compete with the immigrant Bhotia and Nepalis. First the Bhotia and later the Nepalis, as a stronger group, had intruded in the region in search of better economic prospects. With a higher level of technology they took control of the better resources and the Lepcha subsisted on poorer and scanty natural resources.

In Darjeeling except a few villages in Kalimpong sub-division Lepchas' control over the natural resources were being minimized by the Nepalis. However this competition for resources acted in a different way in the case of the immigrant Bhotia who had come earlier than the Nepalis. Bhotias were fewer in number and they did not really compete for land rather they controlled the political structure of the region (Sikkim) till 1864. In the economic sphere they preferred to work more in trans-Himalayan trade and trans-humans than to settle down in one place and till the soil. The tremendous amount of in-migration of the Nepalis in the hills of Darjeeling had enormously affected the ethnic composition, ethnic balance and power structure of the region with a unique inter-ethnic convergence and consolidation. However, such converged ethnicity formation was no substitute for class consciousness in uniting hill people against colonialism.

Though the Lepcha and Nepalis followed the same technology of cultivation, Nepalis were able to accumulate more wealth than the Lepcha. Given the same population with the same resources the productivity of the Nepalis was always much higher and their

consumption is much lower than that of the Lepcha. They had taken for granted their low level of production. Lack of competitive zeal among them did not give rise to any conflict or tension which is generally expected in this type of situation. Their lack of competitive zeal indirectly influenced their mentality as a losing community in the struggle for existence. This was evident from little occupational mobility among them. Their deep attachment to land also prevented them from accepting new types of occupation. It has been exposed in this study that livelihood strategies were built around indigenous knowledge and traditional practices of ecological sustainability in natural resources management. Unfortunately, these practices lost their relevance as a result of global wide imperial project, at the expense of customary rights to ecosystem services. Without legal recognition of traditional practices, indigenous hill people were thus confronted with limited livelihood options and less incentive to stay in balance with surrounding ecosystems.

The study has established further that while understanding material transformations of colonial Darjeeling, historical context mattered inescapably for giving shape the localized socio-economic, geographic, anthropogenic processes into a trans-historical localized state and civic society formation. In fact, the range of transformation that took place in colonial Darjeeling hills had shaped the state-subject relations involving extraction-resistance-settlement cycle wherein colonial authority extracted resources to support its own activities from population living/settled under its jurisdiction. Such indiscriminate resource extractions always subordinated the survival question of the local/natural population. Sometimes, native population had shown manifest or latent resistance through their everyday forms of resistances. For Darjeeling such forms of tacit resistances and general form of acquiescence ensued in the colonially cherished and materially transformed settlement had produced synergic effects favouring the colonizers to order the lands of the tract, bringing modes of resource

use in colonial terms and shaping Darjeeling by ushering in overall colonial material transformations.

Explanations have been substantiated to understand the material transformations that took place in colonial Darjeeling- an ecologically distinct regional sub-space of the Eastern Himalayas. With the emergence of distinctively modern colonial encounters driven by the imperatives of resource extraction, state-making, new modes of resource use, colonial urban formation, establishment of colonial absolute rights over the whole occupied lands, colonial capital investment in commercial tea plantations, scientific forest conservation, extraction of forest resources by application of European knowledge, science and wisdom, Darjeeling hills had occupied separate urgency for the colonial power to be treated separately with larger sensitivity. The entire study has explored the exercises of colonial state-making and corresponding changes that occurred out of such processes of state-making in the form of establishing colonially cherished governability and cultivating natural resources in a specified ecological setting. The study has also addressed in details the question of how colonialism came to be exercised through the forcible transformation of Darjeeling's forests and waste lands into industrial tea plantation, thereby making Darjeeling a unique sub-region, a zone of intensive and profitable commercial plantation, tied closely to global capitalist market. The social and environmental transformation that took place in Darjeeling under the aegis of colonial governance gave birth to a new form of inequalities based on the proprietary hold and material consumption of the landscape. The old clan based communities and traditional religion based hierarchic social order got dismantled in the process of material landscape change and impending social relations impelled many of these changes. Darjeeling hills witnessed changes in production relations and modes of resource use.

The study has further revealed that Darjeeling Hills, under colonial rule, had largely transformed its socio-economic, cultural and

political profile thitherto dissociated from British Indian mainstream. The fundamental change replaced the primordial pre-capitalist traditional production relations and had brought forward modern capital based production relation economy. Darjeeling witnessed fundamental ecological changes too due to rapid depletion of forests, growing tea plantation, roads and railways construction, making of towns and military institutions. All these colonial capital based development induced transformations resulted to a strong colonial political regime, colonial ecological regime, colonial planters regime, installation based military regime, colonial forest regime, Christian missionary led neo-cultural regime and newly in migrated middle class regime in Darjeeling Hills. The imported labourers principally Nepalis, Bhutias and Sikkimese from the neighbouring areas along with as wage earners forming a new working class witnessed both peasatization and proletarianization categorized as toiling hill men, could not form any meaningful voice.

Resultantly, the new eco-imperialist political and social order drastically replaced the indigenous eco-philosophical order and had attempted to invest the idea of “difference” in the minds of the inhabitants of Darjeeling, irrespective of religion, sect and culture, through all possible channels of social engineering. The “natural” difference between the hills and the plains was purposively indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling as a unique socio-economic and cultural zone and finally as a separate ecological region as a whole. Such a colonially articulated socio-cultural and politico-administrative powerscape and matterscape of colonial Darjeeling provided for strong predicament to develop any sub-altern consciousness of resistance against the over archaic colonial state.

Our study explored the basic facts that due to colonial encounter, Darjeeling hills experienced rapid changes in her landscape and in social relations accompanied by equally sweeping ecological

transformations. Rapid commercialization of forests in the name of scientific forestry, colonial capitalistic formation of tea industry, construction of roads and railways, urban economic formation, settled land revenue administration and strong civic and military administration- all these introduced rapid, widespread and in some respects, irreversible changes which had both ecological and social dimensions. However, such effects of British colonial encounters were not sudden; this study has argued that other important function of British rule had been to provide the enabling tools for the social and political integration of the Darjeeling hill tract with the emerging Indian nation. The introduction of monetized economy in Darjeeling hills by colonial capitalist investment in tea plantations, establishment of military installations, construction of communication systems, creation of hill station, land and forest settlements, establishment of courts, schools and colleges, the stabilization of political relations with the neighboring hill states had become such enabling tools.

This does not necessarily mean that in this study we have attempted to eulogize or undermine the importance of the colonial impact on natural environments of Darjeeling hills. Unquestionably, however, from many points of view, the colonial encounters in Darjeeling hills, since the mid of nineteenth century, represented a radically new phenomenon unleashing material transformations of vivid description and directions. First, it was an intrusion on the world scale, corresponding to the phase of expansion of western merchant and industrial capitalism. Second, the colonizers had means of conquest at their control which was generally out of all proportion to those of the local dormant society of Darjeeling hills once subjected to Sikkim, a tiny Himalayan kingdom. Third, the offensive was battered by overwhelming modern ideology according to which both the then existing primordial natural society and nature ceased to be the sacred order or the abode of the gods. Darjeeling hills, thus, had become an object to be mastered, exploited, transformed, and commoditized, a

means of speculation, merchandise, a space for natural resource extraction and abode of profit maximization. Fourth, the colonizers carried with them techniques and tools, introduced crops and forms of animal husbandry, opened up routes for diffusion and exchange, which irreversibly altered the local socio-ecological configurations. And finally, to serve their own interests, they set up everywhere an increasingly efficient framework of governmental control, which gradually denied the local populations free access to their traditional natural resource bases, at a time when their numbers were beginning to increase. Although the ecological stresses and traumas resulting from European colonization were not by any means the first event of their kind in the colonies, but for Darjeeling hills, such encounters were altogether unprecedented. The predominant colonial encounters by means of commercial and industrial capital on the natural resources of Darjeeling, and the unbridled colonial resource extraction had fundamentally altered the nature and character of Darjeeling hills positing for a continuous rereading in history to understand the present from the perspective of its colonial past.

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Appendix – I

Text of the Treaty of Sugaulee, 2nd December 1815 between East India Company and the Country of Nepal

TREATY of PEACE between the HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND MAHA RAJAH BIRKRAM SAH, Rajah of Nipal, settled between LIEU1ENANT-COLONEL BRADSHAW on the part of the HONOURABLE COMPANY, in virtue of the full powers vested in him by HIS EXCELLENCY the RIGHT HONOURABLE FRANCIS, EARL of MOIRA, KNIGHT of the MOST NOBLE ORDER of the GARTER, one of HIS MAJESTY's MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL, appointed by the Court of Directors of the said Honourable Company to direct and control all the affairs in the East Indies, and by SREE GOOROO GUJRAJ MISSER and CHUNDER SEEKUR OPEDEEA on the part of MAHA RAJAH GIRMAUN JODEBIKRAM SAH BAHAUDER, SHUMSHEER JUNG, in virtue of the powers to that effect vested in them by the said Rajah of Nipal, 2nd December 1815.

Whereas war has arisen between the Honourable East India Company and the Rajah of Nipal, and whereas the parties are mutually disposed to restore the relations of peace and amity which, previously to the occurrence of the late differences, had long subsisted between the two States, the following terms of peace have been agreed upon :-

ARTICLE 1st.

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable East India Company and the Rajah of Nipal.

ARTICLE 2nd.

The Rajah of Nipal renounces all claims to the lands which were the subject of discussion between the two States before the war; and acknowledges the right of the Honourable Company to the sovereignty of those lands.

ARTICLE 3rd.

The Rajah of Nipal hereby cedes to the Honourable the East India Company in perpetuity all the under mentioned territories, viz.-

First -The whole of the low lands between the Rivers Kali and Rapti.

Secondly -The whole of the low lands (with the exception of Bootwul Khass) lying between the Rapti and the Gunduck.

Thirdly - The whole of the low lands between the Gunduck and Coosah, in which the authority of the British Government has been introduced, or is in actual course of introduction.

Fourthly - All the low lands between the Rivers Mitchee and the Teestah.

Fifthly - All the territories within the hills eastward of the River Mitchee including the fort and lands of Nagree and the Pass of Nagarcote leading from Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between that Pass and Nagree. The aforesaid territory shall be evacuated by the Gurkha troops within forty days from this date.

ARTICLE 4th.

With a view to indemnify the Chiefs and Barahdars of the State of Nipal, whose interests will suffer by the alienation of the lands ceded by the foregoing Article, the British Government agrees to settle pensions to the aggregate amount of two lakhs of rupees per annum on such Chiefs as may be selected by the Rajah of Nipal, and in the proportions which the Rajah may fix. As soon as the election is made, Sunnuds shall be granted under the seal and signature of the Governor- General for the pensions respectively.

ARTICLE 5th.

The Rajah of Nipal renounces for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claim to or connexion with the countries lying to the west of the River Kali and engages never to have any concern with those countries or the inhabitants thereof.

ARTICLE 6th.

The Rajah of Nipal engages never to molest or disturb the Rajah of Sikkim in the possession of his territories; but agrees, if any difference shall arise between the State of Nipal and the Rajah of Sikkim, or the subjects of either, that such differences shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government by which award the Rajah of Nipal engages to abide.

ARTICLE 7th.

The Rajah of Nipal hereby engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American State, without the consent of the British Government.

ARTICLE 8th.

In order to secure and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two States, it is agreed that accredited Ministers from each shall reside at the Court of the other.

ARTICLE 9th.

This treaty, consisting of nine Articles, shall be ratified by the Rajah of Nipal within fifteen days from this date, and the ratification shall be delivered to Lieutenant-Colonel Bradshaw, who engages to obtain and deliver the ratification of the Governor-General within twenty days, or sooner, if practicable.

Done at Segowlee, on the 2nd day of December 1815.

PARIS BRADSHAW, Lt.-Col., P.A

Received this treaty from Chunder Seekur Opedeea, Agent on the part of the Rajah of Nipal, in the valley of Muckwaunpoor, at half-past two o'clock p.m. on the 4th of March 1816, and delivered to him the Counterpart Treaty on behalf of the British Government.

D. D. OCHTERLONY,
Agent, Governor-General

Appendix – 2

TREATY OF TITALYA BETWEEN EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE COUNTRY OF SIKKIM, 10TH FEBRUARY 1817

TREATY, COVENANT, or AGREEMENT entered into by CAPTAIN BARRE LATTER, AGENT on the part of HIS EXCELLENCY the RIGHT HONORABLE the EARL of MOIRA, K.G., GOVERNOR-GENERAL, & C., & C., & C., and by NAZIR CHAINA TENTIN and MACHA TEINBAH and LAMA DUCHIM LONGDOO, Deputies on the part of the RAJAH OF SIKKIMPUTIEE, being severally authorized and duly appointed for the above purposes -1817.

Article 1.

The Honorable East India Company cedes transfers, and makes over in full sovereignty to the Sikkimputtee Rajah, his heirs or successors, all the hilly or mountainous country situated to the eastward of the Mechi River and to the westward of the Teesta River, formerly possessed and occupied by the Rajah of Nepaul, but ceded to the Honourable East India Company by the Treaty of peace signed at Segoulee.

Article 2.

The Sikkirnputtee Rajah engages for himself and successors to abstain from any acts of aggression or hostility against the Goorkhas or any other State.

Article 3.

That he will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between his subjects and those of Nepaul, or any other neighbouring State, and to abide by the decision of the British Government.

Article 4.

He engages for himself and successors to join the British Troops with the whole of his Military Force when employed within the Hills, and in general to afford the British Troops every aid and facility in his power.

Article 5.

That he will not permit any British subject, nor the subject of any European and American State, to reside within his dominions, without the permission of the English Government.

Article 6.

That he will immediately seize and deliver up any dacoits or notorious offenders that may take refuge within his territories.

Article 7.

That he will not afford protection to any defaulters of revenue or other delinquents when demanded by the British Government through their accredited Agents.

Article 8.

That he will afford protection to merchants and traders from the Company's Provinces, and he engages that no duties shall be levied on the transit of merchandize beyond the established custom at the several golahs or marts.

Article 9.

The Honorable East India Company guarantees to the Sikkimputtee Rajah and his successors the full and peaceable possession of the tract of hilly country specified in the first Article of the present Agreement.

Article 10.

This Treaty shall be ratified and exchanged by the Sikkimputtee Rajah within one month from the present date and the counterpart, when confirmed by his Excellency the Right honorable the Governor- General, shall be transmitted to the Rajah.

Done at Titalya, this 10th day of February 1817, answering to the 9th of Phagoon 1873 Sumbut, and to the 30th of Maugh 1223 Bengallie.

Barre Latter
Nazir Chaina Tinjin Macha Timbah
Lama Duchim Longadoo

(Sd) MOIRA
" N . B. EDMONSTONE
" ARCHD. SETON
" GEO. DOWDESWELL.

Ratified by the Governor-General in Council, at Fort William, this fifteenth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and seventeen.

(Sd.) J. Adam,

Acting Chief Secy. to Govt.

Appendix – 3

SUNNUD GRANTED TO THE RAJAH OF SIKKIM DATED 7TH APRIL 1817

The Honorable East India Company, in consideration of the services performed by the Hill tribes under the control of the Rajah of Sik.kim, and of the attachment shown by him to the interest of the British Government, grants to the Sikkimputtee Rajah, his heirs and successors, all that portion of low land situated eastward of the Meitche River, and westward of the Maha Nuddee formerly possessed by the Rajah of Nepaul, but ceded to the Honorable East India Company by the Treaty of Segoulee, to be held by the Sikkimputtee Rajah as a feudatory, or as acknowledging the supremacy of the British Government over the said lands, subject to the following dominions.

The British Law s and Regulations will not be introduced into the territories in question, but the Sikkimpunee Rajah is authorized to make such laws and regulations for their internal government, as are suited to the habits and customs of the inhabitants, or that may be in force in his other dominions.

The articles or Provisions of the Treaty signed at Titalya on the 10th February 1817, and ratified by his Excellency the Right Honorable the Governor-General in Council on the 15th March following, are to be in force with regard to the lands hereby assigned to the Sikkimputtee Rajah, as far as they are applicable to the circumstances of those lands.

It will be especially incumbent on the Sikkimputtee Rajah and his officers to surrender, on application from the officers of the Honorable Company, all persons charged with criminal offences, and all public defaulters who may take refuge in the lands now assigned to him, and to allow the police officers of the British Government to pursue into those lands and apprehend all such persons.

In consideration of the distance of the Sikkimputtee Rajah's residence from the Company's Provinces, such orders as the Governor-General in Council may, upon any sudden emergency, find it necessary to transmit to the local authorities in the lands now assigned, for the security or protection of those lands, are to be immediately obeyed and carried into execution in the same manner as coming from the Sikkimputtee Rajah.

In order to prevent all disputes with regard to the boundaries of the low lands granted to the Sikkimputtee Rajah, they will be surveyed by a British Officer, and their limits accurately laid down and defined.

Appendix – 4

Translated Deed of Grant making over Darjeeling to the East India Company, dated 29th Maugh, Sumbut 1891, A.D., 1st February 1835.

The Governor-General having expressed his desire for the possession of the Hill 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 to 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 Rungno and Mahanuddi Rivers.

(Translated.)
(Sd.) A. CAMPBELL,
*Superintendent of Darjeeling,
and in charge of Political relations with Sikkim.*

Seal of the Rajah prefixed to
the document.

Appendix – 5

TREATY WITH NIPAL REGARDING THE RESTORATION OF THE WESTERN TERAI, 1st NOVEMBER 1860

"During the disturbances which followed the mutiny of the Native army of Bengal in 1857, the Maharajah of Nipal not only faithfully maintained the relations of peace and friendship established between the British Government and the State of Nipal by the Treaty of Segowlee but freely placed troops at the disposal of the British authorities for the preservation of order in the Frontier Districts, and subsequently sent a force to cooperate with the British Army in the re-capture of Lucknow and the final defeat of the rebels. On the conclusion of these operations, the Viceroy and Governor-General in recognition of the eminent services rendered to the British Government by the State of Nipal, declared his intention to restore to the Maharajah the whole of the lowlands lying between the River Kali and the District of Goruckpore, which belonged to the State of Nipal in 1815, and were ceded to the British Government in that year by the aforesaid Treaty. These lands have now been identified by Commissioners appointed for the purpose by the British Government, in the presence of Commissioners deputed by the Nipal Darbar; masonry pillars have been erected to mark the future boundary of the two States, and the territory has been formally delivered over to the Niparese Authorities. In order the more firmly to secure the State of Nipal in the perpetual possession of this territory, and to mark in a solemn way the occasion of its restoration, the following Treaty has been concluded between the two States :-

ARTICLE 1

All Treaties and Engagements now in force between the British Government and the Maharajah of Nipal, except in so far as they may be altered by the Treaty, are hereby confirmed.

ARTICLE 2

The British Government hereby bestows on the Maharajah of Nipal

in full sovereignty, the whole of the lowlands between the Rivers Kali and Raptée, and the lowlands lying between the River Raptée and the District of Goruckpore, which were in the possession of the Nipal State in the year 1815, and were ceded to the British Government by Article III of the Treaty concluded at Segowlee on the 2nd December in the year.

ARTICLE 3

The boundary line surveyed by the British Commissioners appointed for the purpose extending eastward from the River Kali or Sardah to the foot of the hills north of Bagowra Tal, and marked by pillars, shall henceforth be the boundary between the British Province of Oudh and the Territories of the Maharajah Dheraj Soorinder Yikram Sah Bahadoor Shumsbere Jung, shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Khatmandoo within thirty days of the date of signature."

Appendix – 6

Treaty between the British Government and The Maharajah Of Sikkim, 28th March 1861

TREATY, COVENANT, or AGREEMENT entered into by the HONORABLE ASHLEY EDEN, ENVOY and SPECIAL COMMISSIONER on the part of the BRITISH GOVERNMENT, in virtue of full powers vested in him by the RIGHT HONORABLE CHARLES, EARL CANNING, GOVERNOR-GENERAL in COUNCIL, and by HIS HIGHNESS SEKEONG KUZOO, MAHARAJAH of SIKKIM on his own part - 1861.

Whereas the continued depredations and misconduct of the officers and subjects of the Maharajah of Sikkim, and the neglect of the Maharajah to afford satisfaction for the misdeeds of his people have resulted in an interruption for many years past of the harmony which previously existed between the British Government and the Government of Sikkim, and have led ultimately to the invasion and conquest of Sikkim by a British force; and whereas the Maharajah of Sikkim has now expressed his sincere regret for the misconduct of his servants and subjects, his determination to do all in his power to obviate future misunderstanding, and his desire to be again admitted into friendship and alliance with the British Government, it is hereby agreed as follows:-

1. All previous Treaties made between the British Government and the Sikkim Government are hereby formally cancelled.
2. The whole of the Sikkim Territory now in the occupation of British forces is restored to the Maharajah of Sikkim, and there shall henceforth be peace and amity between the two States.
3. The Maharajah of Sikkim undertakes, so far as is within his power, to restore, within one month from the date of signing this Treaty, all public property which was abandoned by the detachment of British Troops at Rinchinpoong.

4. In indemnification of the expenses incurred in 1860 by the British Government in occupying a portion of the territory of Sikkim as a means of enforcing just claims which had been evaded by the Government of Sikkim, and as compensation to the British subjects who were pillaged and kidnapped by subjects of Sikkim, the Sikkim Government agrees to pay to the British authorities at Darjeeling the sum of 7,000 (seven thousand) Rupees in the following instalments, that is to say :-

May 1st, 1861	1,000
Nov. 1st, 1861	3,000
May 1st, 1862	3,000

As security for the due payment of this amount, it is further agreed that in the event of any of these instalments not being duly paid on the date appointed, the Government of Sikkim shall make over to the British Government that portion of its territory bounded on the south by the River Rumnam, on the east by the Great Runjeet to the Singaleelah Range, including the monasteries of Tassiding, Remonchi, and Changacheling, and on the west by the Singaleelah Mountain Range, and the British Government shall retain possession of this territory and collect the revenue thereof, until the full amount, with all expenses of occupation and collection, and interest at 6 per cent per annum, are realized.

5. The Government of Sikkim engages that its subjects shall never again commit depredations on British territory, or kidnap or otherwise molest British subjects. In the event of any such depredation or kidnapping taking place, the Government of Sikkim undertakes to deliver up all persons engaged in such malpractice, as well as the Sirdars or other Chiefs conniving at or benefiting thereby.

6. The Government of Sikkim will at all times seize and deliver up any criminals, defaulters, or other delinquents who may have taken refuge within its territory, on demand being duly made in writing by the British Government through their accredited agents. Should any delay

occur in complying with such demand, the Police of the British Government may follow the person whose surrender has been demanded into any part of the Sikkim territory, and shall, on showing a warrant, duly signed by the British Agent, receive every assistance and protection in the prosecution of their object from the Sikkim officers.

7. Inasmuch as the late misunderstandings between the two Governments have been mainly fomented by the acts of the ex-Dewan Namguay, the government of Sikkim engages that neither the said Namguay, nor any of his blood relations, shall ever again be allowed to set foot in Sikkim, or to take part in the councils of, or hold any office under, the Maharajah or any of the Maharajah's family at Choombi.

8. The Government of Sikkim from this date abolishes all restrictions on travellers and monopolies in trade between the British territories and Sikkim. There shall henceforth be a free reciprocal intercourse, and full liberty of commerce between the subjects of both countries; it shall be lawful for British subjects to go into any part of Sikkim for the purpose of travel or trade, and the subjects of all countries shall be permitted to reside in and pass through Sikkim, and to expose their goods for sale at any place and in any manner that may best suit their purpose, without any interference whatever, except as is; hereinafter provided.

9. The Government of Sikkim engages to afford protection to all travellers, merchants, or traders of all countries, whether residing in, trading in, or passing through Sikkim. If any merchant, traveller, or trader, being a European British subject, shall commit any offence contrary to the laws of Sikkim, such person shall be punished by the representative of the British Government resident at Darjeeling, and the Sikkim Government will at once deliver such offender over to the British authorities for this purpose, and will, on no account, detain such offender in Sikkim on any pretext or pretence whatever. All other British subjects residing in the country to be liable to the laws of Sikkim; but such persons shall, on no account, be punished with loss of limb, or

maiming, or torture, and every case of punishment of a British subject shall be at once reported to Darjeeling.

10. No duties or fees of any sort shall be demanded by the Sikkim Government of any person or persons on account of goods exported into the British territories from Sikkim, or imported into Sikkim from the British territories.

11. On all goods passing into or out of Thibet, Bhootan, or Nepaul, the Government of Sikkim may levy a duty of customs according to such a scale as may, from time to time, be determined and published without reference to the destination of the goods, provided, however, that such duty shall, on no account, exceed 5 per cent, on the value of goods at the time and place of the levy of duty. On the payment of the duty aforesaid a pass shall be given exempting such goods from liability to further payment on any account whatever.

12. With view to protect the Government of Sikkim from fraud on account of undervaluation for assessment of duty, it is agreed that the customs officers shall have the option of taking over for the Government any goods at the value affixed on them by the owner.

13. In the event of the British Government desiring to open out a road through Sikkim, with the view of encouraging trade, the Sikkim Government will raise no objection thereto, and will afford every protection and aid to the party engaged in the work. If a road is constructed, the Government of Sikkim undertakes to keep it in repair, and to erect and maintain suitable travellers' rest-houses throughout its route.

14. If the British Government desires to make either a topographical or geological survey of Sikkim, the Sikkim Government will raise no objection to this being done, and will afford protection and assistance to the officers employed in this duty .

15. Inasmuch as many of the late misunderstandings have had their foundation in the custom which exists in Sikkim of dealing in slaves, the Government of Sikkim binds itself, from this date, to punish

severely any person trafficking in human beings, or seizing persons for the purpose of using them as slaves.

16. Henceforth the subjects of Sikkim may transport themselves without let or hindrance to any country to which they may wish to remove. In the same way the Government of Sikkim has authority to permit the subjects of other countries, not being criminals or defaulters, to take refuge in Sikkim.

17. The Government of Sikkim engages to abstain from any acts of aggression or hostility against any of the neighbouring States which are allies of the British Government. If my disputes or questions arise between the people of Sikkim and those of neighbouring States, such disputes or questions shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government, and the Sikkim Government agrees to abide by the decision of the British Government.

18. The whole military force of Sikkim shall join and afford every aid and facility to British Troops when employed in the Hills.

19. The Government of Sikkim will not cede or lease any portion of its territory to any other State without the permission of the British Government.

20. The Government of Sikkim engages that no armed force belonging to any other country shall pass through Sikkim without the sanction of the British Government.

21. Seven of the criminals, whose surrender was demanded by the British Government, having fled from Sikkim and taken refuge in Bhootan, the Government of Sikkim engages to do all in its power to obtain the delivery of those persons from the Bhootan Government, and in the event of any of these men again returning to Sikkim, the Sikkim Government binds itself to seize them, and to make them over to the British Authorities at Darjeeling without delay.

22. With a view to the establishment of an efficient Government in Sikkim, and to the better maintenance of friendly relations with the

British Government, the Maharajah of Sikkim agrees to remove the seal of his Government from Tibet to Sikkim, and reside there for nine months in the year. It is further agreed that a Vakeel shall be accredited by the Sikkim Government, who shall reside permanently at Darjeeling.

23. This Treaty, consisting of twenty-three Articles, being settled and concluded by the Honorable Ashley Eden, British Envoy, and his Highness Sekeong Kuzoo Sikkimputtee, Maharajah, at Tumloong, this 28th day of March 1861, corresponding with 17th Dao Neepoo 61, Mr. Eden has delivered to the Maharajah a copy of the same in English, with translation in Nagri and Bhootiah, under the seal and signature of the said Honorable Ashley Eden and His highness the Sikkimputtee Maharajah, and the Sikkimputtee Maharajah has in like manner delivered to the said Hon'ble Ashley Eden another copy also in English, with translation in Nagri and Bhootiah, bearing the seal of His Highness and the said Hon'ble Ashley Eden. The Envoy engages to procure the delivery to His Highness, within six weeks from this date, of a copy of this Treaty, duly ratified by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, and this Treaty shall in the meantime be in full force.

Seal.

(Sd.) SEKEONG KUZOO SIKKIMPUTTEE.

(Sd.) ASHLEY EDEN,

Envoy.

(Sd.) CANNING.

Seal.

Seal.

Ratified by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Calcutta on the sixteenth day of April 1861.

(Sd.) C. U. AITCHISON,

Under-Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Appendix – 7

The Treaty of Sinchula – 1865

After preliminary negotiations, a treaty was signed at Sinchula on 11 November 1865. The treaty is also known as the Ten-Article Treaty of Rawa Rani. By it, the Bhutanese Government ceded to the British Government both the Assam and Bengal Duars. It also agreed to surrender all British subjects, as well as those of Sikkim and Cooch Behar detained in Bhutan. Mutual extradition of criminals was agreed upon, as also the maintenance of free trade between the two countries. The British Government on its part agreed to pay to the-Bhutan Government an annual sum of 25,000 rupees on the fulfilment of the terms of the treaty, 35,000 rupees on 10 January following the first payment, 45,000 rupees on 15 January following, and 50,000 rupees on every 10 January following. By this treaty, Bhutan lost considerable territory approximating 2,750 sq. miles comprising of the whole of the tract known as the Assam and Bengal Duars. It also lost Ambari Falakata and the hill territory on the left bank of the Teesta to such point as may be laid down by the British Commissioner appointed for the purpose. It secured exemption of levy of duty on goods imported into British territories on a: reciprocal basis. It also subjected to British arbitration all its disputes with Sikkim and Cooch Behar.

Appendix – 8

Rules for the Sale of Waste Lands in Darjeeling

I. Lands Available for Sale under These Rules

1. By "waste land" is meant land covered with jungle, or uncultivated, and of such character, or in such a position, that it is not likely to be taken up for the cultivation of the ordinary native staples of the country within a reasonable time.
2. All sales shall be subject to the General conditions of sale appended here to as annexure A.
3. Waste land the property of Government which does not fall within any of the exceptions specified below may be sold by the District Officer as herein provided.
4. The Exceptions are the following:- land bearing valuable Timber, land which is especially valuable for grazing, for the supply of fuel or for any other reason, and land known or supposed to contain valuable mineral, will be reserved from sale. The collector will be careful not to sell without special report and orders any land which may be claimed by wild tribe on the borders of the district, or over which either the inhabitant of neighboring villages, or such wild tribes, may claim any privilege and it shall be within his discretion to reserve any land which in his opinion, for any other special reason, should not be sold, and to reject any application for such land, provided that such reserve refused shall be reported for the orders of the commissioner of the Division.
5. A strip of land, sixty feet wide, is to be reserved on each side of every considerable public road.
6. When the Government shall, on political or other grounds, except any district or part of a district from the operation of these Rules, or of any part thereof, the waste land of such excepted tract shall not be sold under these rules, or shall be sold subject to such special reservation as may be laid down.

7. In any district to which the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (approved by the Governor general in council in 1873, under Act XXXIII Vic; cap.3) shall be extended, no application for the sale of land lying beyond the boundary line defined under section 2 of the said Regulation shall be entertained without the special sanction of Government; any proceedings taken without such sanction will be null and void, and may be immediately, and at any time, set aside by the Commissioner, with or without appeal.

II. Application and procedure before Advertisement.

8. The Collector shall require intending purchasers to submit to him an application containing the following particulars:-1st. The estimated area in acres of the land applied for, with its character and description; and 2nd. The situation of the land and its boundaries accurately ascertained, and described as full as possible.

9. All application will be entered at once in a register, of which the form will be prescribed by the Board of Revenue.

10. Every lot applied for must be compact; including no more than one tract of land such as might be enclosed in a ring fence. If the land touches a public road or a navigable river, the length of the road or river frontage must not exceed one-half the depth of the lot; but if, any special reasons, the Board of Revenue see fit to relax this restriction, it may do so.

11. No greater area of land than fifteen hundred acres will be sold in one lot without the express sanction of the Government. If in particular localities a lower maximum area than fifteen hundred acres should be determined upon, further instruction against the same person applying for two or more lots of land, provided that each application comprises no more than the prescribed maximum. But the Collector may refuse to comply with an application made by the same parties for a second lot, unless it is satisfactorily shown that the applicants really have immediately available the means of cultivating

the lot applied for, and that they intend to cultivate both the lots applied for.

12. On receipt of an application, the collector shall take measures to satisfy himself by local inquiry that it complies with all requirements of these rules, and that the land is such as can properly be sold. Should he find any persons settled on the land, or otherwise using it with any semblance of right, he will refuse to sell, and will report the matter for the orders of the Commissioner. In no case shall any cultivated or inhabited land be sold as waste nor shall any land may appear to have been cultivated within twenty years be so sold without special report to the Commissioner. In all doubtful cases the Commissioner will report for the orders of the Board of revenue.

13. If the land has not been previously surveyed and demarcated, the foregoing inquiry may be made either before, or simultaneously with, the survey required by the next rule. If, on completion of the survey, it appears that the land applied for exceeds the maximum area prescribed for the district, or if at any time before the sale the inquiries of the Collector so that the lot as applied for does not fulfill the requirements of these rules, the Collector may call for an amendment application; and in the event of a revised application not being given in within fifteen days the application may be cancelled, and the deposit returned to the applicant Jess the amount of expense actually incurred for survey, demarcation and advertisement: provided that in any such case it shall be in the discretion of the Collector to extend the period within which a revised application will be received.

14. No lot will be sold until it has been surveyed and demarcated. When the application is for land which has not been already surveyed, the applicant will be required to deposit the estimated cost of survey.

15. The cost of survey payable by the applicant will be at the rate of eight *annas* for each acre, unless for special reasons a higher rate is required. The sum to be deposited before survey will be calculated at the required rate on the area which the lot is estimated to contain, the

payment being subsequently adjusted by a refund or a further payment, according to the area which is actually ascertained by survey.

16. When a survey is required, it shall be made by such agency as the government may from time to time direct, and shall, before it is finally accepted, be tested on the spot by an officer appointed for such purpose.

17. Where the lot has not already been demarcated, the applicant may be allowed to demarcate its boundaries himself in the manner required by the collector, or the collector may undertake to demarcate for him. In the latter case the applicant shall deposit the cost of clearing and demarcating the boundaries as estimated by the Collector. This deposit will be in addition to the amount deposited as cost of survey, where a survey is necessary, and will also be subject to adjustment, when the actual cost of the clearance and demarcation shall have been ascertained.

18. When the land has not been previously defined by permanent marks, the demarcation to be required under Rule 17 need only be of such a description as clearly to identify the boundaries of the land on the spot, and such as will suffice as a sure guide for the erection after the sale of the permanent marks required by clause 17 of the general condition of sale.

19. If the area of the lot applied for exceeds one hundred acres, the applicant shall further be required to deposit Rs 16 for expenses of the advertisement, prescribed in Rule 23 below.

20. In the event of the land being purchased by any person other than the applicant, the amount paid by the applicant for survey, demarcation, and advertisement, when recovered from the purchaser under Clause 9 of the general conditions, will be repaid to the applicant.

21. In the event of the land for any reason not being sold, applicant will have no right to a refund; but it may, as a matter of consideration, be allowed him by the Commissioner in special cases, and in any case the Collector may refund any money not expended.

III - Issue of Notice of Sale

22. When the land has been surveyed and demarcated, and the Collector is satisfied, from the inquiry made in the matter above prescribed, that it may properly be sold, he shall issue a Notice of sale in the form given in ANNEXURE B.

23. The notice of sale will be published at the Collector's Office, at the Court of the principal Judicial Officer or the District, at the Sub-Divisional Office, at the Munsif's Court (if there be one), and at the Police station within the limits of which the lands are situated. A copy will be sent to the Commissioner. Where the area of the lot to be sold exceeds one hundred acres, an advertisement of the proposed sale in the form set forth in Annexure C will also be published in the Calcutta Gazette.

24. In framing the notice, the Collector must be careful to state precisely a possible all rights which will be reserved, such as the roads and waterways which will be held available for the use of Government and the public use (Vide Clause 2 of the General conditions), the strips of land on each side of public roads required by Rule 5, Section I, above, and all other particulars which are peculiar to the lot in question, and are not covered by the permanent boundary marks which the purchaser will be required to erect should also be specified either by referring to Clause 18 of the Conditions of sale, or by special description if necessary.

25. The upset price to be entered in Clause 3 of the notice should be calculated on the whole area of the lot without any deduction whatsoever. Ordinarily, it will be calculated at the rate laid down for each district in the Schedule appended to this Rule; but if any portion, not exceeding two-thirds of a lot, be uncultivable, the upset price of such portion shall be fixed at one-half the rate contained in the schedule. In special cases the Collector may, with the sanction of the Commissioner, put a higher upset price to be fixed, Collectors will not overlook the value of the trees on the land applied for. When any portion of the land is

described as uncultivable, the Collector must satisfy himself as well as he can by due inquiry that it is unfit for cultivation.

Schedule of Rates of Upset Prices

District of the Assam Division	Rs. 8
District of Cachar and Sylhet	Rs. 8
District of Chittagong Division	Rs. 6
District of Chotanagpore Division	Rs. 5
The Soonderbuns	Rs. 5
All other District	Rs. 10

26. Under Section 1, Act XXIII of 1863, the day fixed for the sale must be not less than three months after the publication of the Notice, and it is desirable that three clear months shall intervene between the publication of the advertisement in the Gazette (when such an advertisement is required) and the day of sale. Subject to these conditions, the day should be fixed as early as is practicable. When there are several applications for waste land, sale days should be fixed at intervals of not more than two months.

27. When for any reason a sale is deferred from the date originally fixed in the advertisement and notices, intimation of the date to which it is deferred must be given by a public notice affixed at the Collectors Office.

28. If the day to which the sale is postponed be more than fifteen days after the date originally fixed, the date to which it is differed must be published for the space of one month at least in the manner prescribed by Rule 23 for the original notification of the day of sale. In this case the expenses of the publication of the advertisement (if any) will be born by the Government.

29. If after the issue of the notice, and before the day of sale, any claim be preferred or objection taken, the Collector must proceed as directed in Act XXIII of 1863.

30. If the Collector shall consider that any claim or objection is

established, he will stop the sale as directed by Section 4, Act XXIV of 1863, and will make a special report to the Commissioner; if the objection be such as can properly be got over by an arrangement, without proceeding to formal trial under Section 6 of the Act, the Commissioner may, with the approval of the Board, order the arrangement to be made and the sale to be held.

31. Should the sale have been stopped or postponed in consequence of any claim or objection having been made, and should such claim or objection be eventually disposed of and it be determined to proceed with the sale, the Collector must issue a second notification of sale. This notification is to be issued, in the manner prescribed for the first Notice by Rule 23, at least one month before the day fixed for the sale. The cost of advertisement will be borne by the Government.

IV. Sale

32. If no claim to proprietary or other right in the land be preferred or discovered before the day of sale, and if the sale be not stayed for any other reason, the lot will be sold in accordance with, and subject to, the conditions of sale of waste lands set forth in Annexure A, and in the Notice of sale of which the form is given in Annexure B.

V. Procedure After Sale

33. On being in possession of a lot which has not been previously defined by permanent marks, the purchaser will be bound, under clause 4 of the Notice of sale, to demarcate such lot by such durable marks to the satisfaction of the Collector as may be specified in that Clause; but the Collector need not require stone marks or mounds to be erected between platform when the boundary runs along a river, well-defined nullah, or made road: and it will be within the discretion of the collector to dispense with stone boundary marks and to cause demarcation to be made in such other manner as he may see fit.

34. When a lot is resold on default of the first purchaser, the Notice of such re-sale shall be published locally, and, if the District Officer

considers it necessary, an advertisement shall be inserted in the Calcutta Gazette, sufficient notice being given to ensure publicity.

35. Lands bought in for Government at re-sales, if they still are entirely waste, may be considered available for resale under these rules. If any portion has been cleared, the case is to be submitted for the orders of government through the Commissioner and the Board, with a recommendation as to how the land should be disposed of.

VI. Miscellaneous

36. All sales of waste lands, and all payments and other processes until the full amount of purchase-money is paid up, shall be recorded in registers to be kept in such forms as the Board of Revenue may prescribe with the approval of Government.

37. The Board of revenue will issue any subsidiary instruction and forms which may be required to give effect to these rules.

38. Forms of the deeds of conveyance and of hypothecation, as required by Clause II of the general Conditions of sale, will be supplied to Officers who are authorized to sell.

Appendix - 9

Draft of the Rules for the Administration of the Government Forests in British Sikkim and Bhootan.

Section 1

1. These Rules, drawn up under Act. VII of 1865, are published for the Administration of the Government Forests in British Sikkim and Bhootan.

2. The Government forests in the Darjeeling District shall comprise all lands covered with forests brushwood and jungle, which are the property of Government, and within the tracts bounded and limited as follows:

- All Forests situated at and above an elevation of 6000 feet above the sea.
- The Forests in the Great Rungeet and Teesta valley to an elevation of 3000 feet above the sea.
- The Forests on the outer hills up to an elevation of 3000 feet, and bounded by a line drawn along the base of the hills.
- The forest of the terai as defined on the map of the district, and demarcated by boundary pillars of the Forest department.

3. No lands covered with Forest within the meaning of Act VII of 1865 shall be sold, nor shall Grants or Leases in such lands be given within these limits, except under the orders of the commission, who should, before passing final orders, communicate with the forest Department, and in case of difference of opinion between him and that department, with the Government.

4. All lands within these limits, not being reserved tracts as per Section 3, and not covered with Forest are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the District Officers, and are not under the Forest department.

5. The Officers appointed for the Administration of the Forests are:-

1st - The Conservator of Forests

2nd ^{γ¹} - The Deputy and Assistant Conservator

3rd - Subordinate employees

6. The Administration of the Government Forests throughout the whole of these provinces shall be vested in the Conservator of Forests. Divisions and Sections will be placed under the management of Deputy and Assistant conservators, at the recommendations of the Conservator on the approval of the Government of Bengal.

Section 2: Protection of Forests.

7. Within the above limits no person is permitted without the permission of the Conservator of Forests, to mark, cut, girdle or fell, or in any way injure, any of the trees named below, large or small:-

- Names of trees to be reserved or protected.
- White magnolia, Champ, (*Michelia Exccla*)
- Red Magnolia, Champ, (*Magnolia, Canphellii*)
- Chesnut, Kattoos (*Castaneea sp*)
- Oak, Borke (*Querens Camekasa*)
- Walnut, Acrote (*Juglans regia*)
- Sal, (*Shoera robusta*)
- Urjun, (*Dalbergia latifolia*)
- Sissoo, (*Dalbergia Sissoo*)
- Chalaunee, (*tropical godonia Wallichii*)
- Oak, Badjirat (*Quereus sp*)
- Chalaunee, (*Gordonia sp*)
- Cherry Puddum (*Cerasus Puddum*)
- Lali (*Phoebe sp*)
- Acacia Elata, Sect
- Acacia Catechu, Khair,
- Acacia stipulate, Amluki
- Acacia Farnesiana guyahabula
- Bombax malbaricum

- Semul bamboos
- Gmclina arborea Gumbir

8. The timber or trees, not herein specified, is unreserved; but the Government may from time to time add to this list or reserved trees, and may authorize the levying of duty on the felling and cutting, or otherwise using of trees of other kind, as also of any forest produce from the Government forests. It shall also be lawful for the Conservator of Forests and his Assistants to prohibit the felling, cutting, or otherwise using trees which they may have marked or girdled.

9. The Commissioner of the Division shall, however, have authority, with reference to the timber, brushwood, or forest produce of any forest not reserved, situated within the boundaries specified in Rule 2, to order that any rights or privilege, hitherto enjoyed by the inhabitants of any village, of cutting for their own use, or appropriating to their use, any timber, or forest produce within such forests, shall be continued to and be enjoyed by them. The Commissioners order shall be precise as to localities where these privileges may be enjoyed and as to the nature of such privileges; and a copy of the order shall be sent to the District Forest Officer, who, if dissatisfied with it, may appeal through the Conservator of Forests to the Government, refraining meanwhile from any opposition to the order. It is to be understood that the privileges here referred to, do not include the right to cut timber for sale.

10. Whosoever shall set fire to any Government forest, by which injury to the forest will be liable to punishment for breach of forest rules.

Section 3 : Of reserved forests.

11. Certain tracts of Forests or waste lands within the limits above described will be reserved as the exclusive property of the state. Such lands will be termed, "Government Reserved Forests". Within the boundaries of these reserve no tree of any kind is to be felled, nor is forest produce of any kind, such as fire wood, leaves, oils, gums, resins to be collected or removed without the authority of the conservator of Forests or his assistant. Application for permission to graze cattle and

for collection of Forest produce must be made to the Forest Officer in charge.

12. Cultivation of all kinds within these reserves is also prohibited, except with the permission of the Forest Officer in charge, to whom application must be made for permission to enter the reserved forest.

13. The right of the public to the use of existing roads through these reserves will be maintained where proved, but the Conservator of Forest, with the sanction of the government of Bengal, shall be at liberty in reserved forests to close existing roads to which the public have no rights.

14. The boundaries of every Government Reserved Forests must be clearly marked off by substantial marks when no decided natural boundaries exist. Should any villages be included within the tract, they will, if allowed to remain, be subject to such conditions as may be determined, and the boundaries around their lands must be demarcated in the same manner as the Government Reserved forests, and by the same agency at government expense.

15. Whenever a tract of land been finally reserved and demarcated as a government reserved Forests, a proclamation will be published and issued to the villages around mentioning the boundaries of the tract and warning the villagers against trespass or mischief. This proclamation will be issued by district Officer on information obtained from the District forest Officer, and a copy will be forwarded to the District forest Officer.

16. The conservator of Forests may, with the consent of the commissioner of the Division, reserve any tract of land within the forest limits not exceeding 100 acres, provided that all existing rights be maintained or compensation be accepted for them. Larger tracts can only be reserved under the sanction of government.

17. When the conservator or Forests wishes to reserve a tract exceeding 100 acres, he shall have a sketch map made of the tract or shall define it by an unmistakable description. He shall also prepare

a report, specifying the villages, rivers, or hills, within the tract. This report and map shall be sent through the district Officer to the Commissioner, and be returned by him with his remarks. The Conservator will forward his report and map or description of boundaries, and the commissioner's remarks, to the Bengal government for final orders.

Section - 4: Use of streams and Marking hammers.

18. The right of floating timber by natural streams and artificial canals is reserved in all cases, subject to the control of the District officer. A list of streams in each District, which must neither be blocked up nor closed for fisheries, irrigation or other purposes, will be forwarded to that officer by the district Forest officer, and it will be his duty to see that passages, through fisheries for the floating of timber are left open in these streams. These lists may be added to from time to time, as occasion may require.

19. No timber of the reserved kinds which are subject to the control of the Forest Department, whether in the Forests or found adrift or stranded in the rivers and creeks of the country, shall be marked until disposed of by the Forest Department; neither shall it be removed or disposed of in any way without the orders of the Forest Department, or an order or decree by a competent court; such order or decree being, in every instance, forwarded to the Forest department officer for execution.

20. The disposal of timber from the Government forests will be in accordance with regulation exhibited in schedule 1.

21. All timber disposed by the Forest Department must be stamped with such marks as the conservator may from time to time direct. All brands or marking hammers used in the marking of timber must be registered in the forest office of the division in which they are to be used. A fee of Rupees 10 must be paid for every mark registered, and a certificate will be granted on payment of fee. The use by private persons of any Government timber mark, or any other timber brand, or mark already registered, or other than his own, is strictly prohibited.

22. All foreign timber brought into British territory must be reported at such stations as the government of Bengal may from time to time direct. Such timber will, after examination, receive a pass in the form exhibited in schedule 3, and will be liable to detention and fine, if found without pass.

23. All drift timber of the reserved kinds mentioned in these Rules within these provinces will be considered the property of Government, unless proof of ownership be given.

24. Parties who have saved such drift timber are bound to deliver the same to such persons as are authorized by the conservator of forests to receive it. On receipt of the salvage rates exhibited in schedule 4.

25. From time to time, as the collection of drift timber may render it advisable, public notices, inviting claimants to come forward, will be issued at the chief stations of the District, and in the nearest towns where the timber is lying, stating the number of logs collected.

26. Six months notice will be given for reception, by the Forest department, or by the local courts, of claims to drift timber, after which the timber will be sold on behalf of Government. Claims to drift timber must first be sent in to District Forest officer, with particulars of marks by which it may be recognized. The District Forest officer will enquire into the claim if the claim to be a single one, he may, on being satisfied of its validity, release the timber after expiration of the term mentioned in the Notice. If the claim be a disputed one, he may arbitrate on it, provided all the parties signing in writing their assent to his arbitrating.

27. Timber awarded to claimants must be redeemed by payment of the salvage rates exhibited in schedule 4, and other expenses which may have been incurred on account of such timber.

Section - 5: Procedure and Penalties in cases of breach of these Rules

28. It is the duty of all the forest officers and subordinates, and of all police officers, to see that these rules are not violated; and should they,

in any case, be infringed, to report the same without delay to the nearest Forest Officer in the Division or subdivision in which the offence took place; and it shall be lawful for any forest or police officer to take into custody, without warrant, any person who commits a breach of these rules, or hinders or obstruct him in the discharge of his duties under these Rules, provided that the person thus apprehended be brought before a magistrate within three days from the date of his apprehension.

29. Any person who infringes any provisions of the Forest Rules will be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred rupees, and in default of payment, may be imprisoned, without labor for a term not exceeding six months. In cases where the infringement involves fraud or theft, or any other offence provided in the penal code, the offender will be liable to be proceeded against in a criminal court under the provisions of the penal code.

30. Any marking hammers, or other tools or implements used in an act which constitutes an offence against these Rules, and all timber that has been marked or obtained in a manner contrary to these Rules, or that has not been reported and passed in accordance with these Rules, whether entire or cut up, or sown up, may be seized by any officer of the Forest department or police officer, and such tools or implements and timber be confiscated by the orders of the magistrate of the District or any forest officer exercising the powers of a magistrate, or of a subordinate magistrate.

31. The Conservator of forest shall have the powers of a subordinate Magistrate of the First class, but shall exercise those powers, subject to such limitations, as may from time to time be imposed by the government of Bengal.

32. The government of Bengal may invest any deputy or assistant Conservator of forests with the powers of a subordinate magistrate of First or second class, subject to such limitations as may be deemed proper.

33. Officers of the Forest department shall be liable to suspension or dismissal for willful neglect of their duties, and of the Rules laid down for their guidance.

34. All cases of violation of these rules may be tried and determined by the magistrate of the District, by the conservator of Forests, or any deputy or assistant conservator, who may have been with the powers of a magistrate, or a subordinate magistrate. The mode of procedure in the trial of Forest cases will be that provided in Act XXV of 1861, and appeals in cases decided by officers having Magisterial powers must follow the procedure of that act, subject to the procedure of that act, subject to the extension of time allowed for appeals by section 16 of Act VII of 1865.

35. A monthly register of all cases tried and determined by each forest officer in any division or district is to be submitted to the Appellate Court. The register is to be kept in the form given in schedule VI.

Source: Draft of Rules for the Administration of the Government Forests in British Sikkim and Bhootan Proceeding volume 118 August 1868 No. 23-24.

Appendix : 10

Rules Regarding Establishment of Permanent Forest Villages

1. (a) there should be a forest village for each Felling Series or cutting Section in those working Circles in which the regeneration is (a) by planting after clear felling, or (b) natural means aided by intensive weeding, etc. (b) In such a village there should be one house for each acre of annual plantation or for an average of one acre per annum of natural regeneration completed in a period of 10 years, c.g.; (i) for planting up 10 acres annually there should be 10 houses and (ii) if a block of 50 acres of forest is taken in hand at a time for regeneration naturally in 5 years, 10 houses will also required.
2. Forest village may also be established for protection and other works.
3. Forest villagers are to be considered as tenant at will to be allowed to stay so long as required for forest works.
4. Permanent forest Village settlement shall be subject to the following conditions. Those villages which have been settled previous to the issue of this order shall be brought under its conditions.

Conditions

A. In areas where wet cultivations is allowed (plain Forests).

1. The area of homestead land allotted to each household shall not exceed half an acre.
2. The area of wet cultivation allotted to each household shall not exceed 3.5 acres, or as the total area of land allotted for homestead and cultivation may not exceed 4 acres.
3. Each household will be allowed to keep not more than 2 plough cattle or draught animals, 2 milch cows or buffalos and 4 calves; 2 goats or sheep may also be allowed provided that they are stall-fed always.

In certain cases a villager may keep a greater number of cattle than he is allowed above, provided that the average for the whole village

does not exceed the maximum given above.

Grazing for the cattle allowed in these rules is permitted free in such parts of the Reserved forests as may be specially prescribed by the Divisional Forest Officer, or the cattle should be stall-fed if the Divisional Forest Officer so prescribes.

B. In areas where no wet cultivation is possible (Hill Forests)

1. The area of Homestead land allotted to each household shall not exceed half an acre.
2. The area of dry cultivation allotted to each household shall not exceed 3.3 acres, or the total area of land allotted for homestead and cultivation may not exceed 4 acres. The land must be terraced for cultivation.

Where the working plan permit cultivation in the plantation area each household may be required to grow field crops in one acre of new plantation area and in another acre of one year old plantation.

3. Each household will be allowed to keep not more than 2 plough cattle or draught animal, 2 milch cows or buffaloes and 4 calves; 2 goats or sheep may also be allowed provided that they are stall-fed always.

In certain cases a villager may keep a greater number of cattle than he is allowed above, provided that the average for the whole village does not exceed the maximum given above.

Grazing for the cattle allowed in these rules is permitted free in such parts of the Reserved forests as may be specially prescribed by the Divisional Forest Officer, or the cattle should be stall-fed if the Divisional Forest Officer so prescribes.

C. In areas where villagers are allowed grazing and no permanent cultivation.

1. The area or homestead land allotted to each household shall not exceed half an acre.
2. Where the working plan permits cultivation in the plantation area,

each household may be required to grow a field crop in one acre of new plantation area and in another acre of 1 year old plantation.

3. Each household shall be allowed to keep not more than 8 head cattle with 4 calves; 2 goats or sheep may also be allowed provided that they are stall-fed always.

In certain cases a villager may keep a greater number of cattle than he is allowed above, provided that the average of the whole village does not exceed the maximum given below.

Grazing for the cattle allowed in these rules is permitted free in such parts of the Reserved forests as may be specially prescribed by the Divisional forest Officer, or the cattle should be stall-fed if the Divisional Forest Officer so prescribes.

D. Mandals or headman of the village will be allowed not more than 1.5 times the area of land for cultivation and 1.5 times the number of cattle allowed to a villager in each case.

E. No person shall be considered for the privilege of a Mandal unless he has settled and has control over at least 10 houses of approved villagers.

(Source: Government of Bengal Rules Regarding Establishment of Permanent Forest Villages, dated 21st January, 1944. No.10. Paragraph 59, P.19 (Manuscript material))

Appendix – 11

Statement of the Land held by Tea Companies during Different Tenure in Darjeeling District

No.	Name of Proprietors	Held in the grant under old rule	Held in fee-simple under new rules	Under cultivation leases or rent-paying pottahs	Total extant of land	Cultivated	Uncultivated land under the possession of the proprietors
1	Darjeeling Company Ltd.	7901		646	8547		
2	Lebong Company Ltd.	3350	120	2280	5750	1109	4641
3	Tukvar Company Ltd.	574			574	574	
4	Soom Tea Company Ltd		1252		1252	403	849
5	Dr. Brougham (Dooteria)	3027			3027	700	2327
6	Land Mortgage Bank Ltd.		1750		1750	500	1250
7	Ditto		1150		1150	250	900
8	Ditto		1200		1200	250	950
9	Ditto		258		258	250	8
10	Ditto	1585		1760	3345		
11	Ditto						
12	David Wilson, Esq.			210	210		
13	Estate C.H. Barnes		1816		1816		
14	Moonshee Torikoollah	278			278		
15	C.R. O'donoghue, Esq			300	300		
16	W. Lloyd, Esq			520	520		
17	S. Mackintosh, Esq		80		80		80
18	J. Stoelke, Esq.	19		26	45	25	20
19	Estate A. King	50			50		
20	W.C. Taylor, Esq		318		318		
21	John Taylor, Esq		1526	100	1626	274	1352
22	B. Dickenson, Dsq.		700		700		
23	John Stalkartt, Esq		920	1058	1978		
24	J. Tweedie, Esq	180			180	40	140
25	Messrs, kennady and Fleming	156			156	52	104
26	A.C. Ward, esq	50			50	5	45
27	F.J. Muller, Esq.		1284	138	1422		
28	Estate C.H. Barnes			429	429		
29	Kurseong and Darjeeling Com		680	2050	2730		
30	Estate T. Stenhouse	228			228		
31	Sengell Tea Company Limited	1300			1300		
32	Messrs. Partridge and Daniel			1007	1007		
33	Indian Tea Company Limited	600		258	858		
34	Punchanoi Tea Association			130	130		
35	Punkakabaree Tea Company	534			534		

36	Kalabarri Garden			244	244		
37	W.S. Patreson, esq.	2188			2188		
38	H.M. Hancock, Esq			60	60		
39	R.S. Wight, Esq			138	138	70	68
40	Tollodhi Tea Association		4452	1171	5623		
41	Adulpore Tea Company Ltd			303	303		
42	Central Terai Tea Company Ltd			2684	2684	300	2384
43	Messrs. Martin and Mandelli			644	644	185	468
44	Selim Tea Association Ltd		2039		2039	600	1439
45	Darjeeling Terai Tea Comp			550	550	200	350
46	Darjeeling Terai Tea Association			413	413	250	163
47	Captain James Garden			281	281	80	201
48	R. Southby and Estate C.H. Barnes			234	234	100	134
49	Champta Tea Company Ltd			701	701	60	641
50	Balapun Tea Estate			200	200		
51	Holloway Esq.			950	950		
52	Messrs. Wernicke			740	740	60	680
53	Messrs. Stocke and Sinclair			500	500	50	450
54	Indian Terai Tea Company Ltd			837	837		
55	A. Mackenzie, Esq			1119	1119	110	1009
56	Colonel Briggs, Garrett & Jeare			177	177	68	109
57	Colonel W. Briggs		334		334		
58	G. Kennady & Company		804		804		
59	New Terai Tea Association			3250	3250	400	2850
60	Rupun Tea Association			83	83		
61	Chougton Tea Association			500	500		
62	J. Holt, Esq			326	326		
63	G. Archer, Esq			70	70		
64	Dajea Garden			605	605	50	555
	Total :	22020	20683	27692	70395	7015	24167

Appendix – 12

Memorandum on the PROBLEMS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT and Neighbouring Areas and Suggestions for their Solution submitted by the ALL INDIA GORKHA LEAGUE

To,

The Hon'ble Sree Jawaharlal Nehru Prime Minister of India.

Camp: Kalimpong.

1. This memorandum summarises the demands made at different times during the last 45 years, firstly by the local organization of the Hill people including Hillmen's Association of which the Lepchas and the Bhutias were enthusiastic supporters, and, in the recent years, by the All India Gorkha League.

HISTORY OF THE DEMANDS

2. (a) As long ago as 1907 before the Morley-Minto Reforms, the leaders of the Hill people of Darjeeling submitted a memorial to the British Government demanding a separate administrative set-up for the District of Darjeeling.

(b) In 1917, a deputation of Hillmen of the district waited on Mr. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, and Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy, and pressed the demand that in laying down plans for the future, the Government should aim at the creation of a separate unit comprising the present Darjeeling district with the portion of Jalpaiguri district which was annexed from Bhutan in 1865. The possibility of the creation of a still wider North Eastern Frontier Province to include, in addition to this, the Assam Dooars and the Hill territories which lie to the east of Bhutan, whose people have affinity with the Hill people of Darjeeling, was strongly emphasised by the deputation as not being beyond the scope of practical politics and urged for its explorations.

(c) This demand was reiterated when Simon Commission visited India in 1929.

(d) Before the Govt. of India Act of 1935 was passed on 6th August, 1934, the Hillmen's Association of Darjeeling submitted under the signature of Late Sardar Bahadur S.W. Ladenla, its President, a Memorial to Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India, demanding ... "that the District of Darjeeling should be totally excluded from Bengal and an independent administrative unit created with an administrator at the head of the area, assisted by the Executive in Council." Memorials making a demand for the same nature were submitted at that time and later on too recognized and none but the Gorkhas and resident hillmen shall have the right to stand as candidates for elections. The reasons for this are obvious.

4. Committee of Representatives:

A Committee with above nine representatives, to be called the Committee of Representatives, shall be formed to render advice to the Legislature on the following subjects without whose advice and consent to the Legislature no Bill in regard to the following subjects shall be passed into Law: (a) Agriculture (which naturally include agricultural lands), (b) Industries, (c) Tea Industry (which must be completely nationalized), (d) Education and (e) Public Health and Local Self Government. The Committee shall have the right to initiate Bills on the subjects enumerated herein provided the majority of the members of the Committee agree to the same.

The Committee shall elect a Chairman who shall co-ordinate the administration of the district with that of the Province as a whole and shall also be responsible to the people as well as the Provincial Legislature for the administration of the district.

(a) **Schools and Colleges:** With the view to ameliorating the backward cultural conditions of the Gorkhas and other hill tribes the Communist Party of India demands that more schools, colleges and one technical institution must be at once opened in the district of Darjeeling.

(b) **Grant of Scholarships:** The backward hill students do not get any

opportunity to develop their intellectual faculties for reasons of their extreme poverty and no provisions have been made so far for their education outside this district and abroad not any special grant has been made in the Provincial Budget in this respect. The Communist Party of India demands that special scholarships must be granted to deserving students for their education outside the district and abroad and the same shall be arranged through the Committee of Representatives.

(c) Use of Nepali Language and other local Vernacular as medium of instruction in Schools, Colleges and other Public Institutions: Nepali Language must replace English and other languages as medium of instruction in schools and colleges as Nepali, the language of the Gorkhas, is the common language in this district. Local vernaculars such as Tibetan should also be used as medium of instruction in the case of Tibetan students.

NEPALI must also replace English and other languages in the Court, Government Offices and other Public Institutions.

(d) Right to start Newspapers, Periodicals Magazines etc: There cannot be any cultural development of the Gorkhas and other hill tribes if there are no newspapers in the Nepali language to mould public opinion. At present there is only one fortnightly journal called the "Gorkha", the organ of the All-India Gorkha League, coming out of this district. Full facilities must be granted to the Gorkhas and other hill tribes to start daily, weekly and other newspapers in Nepali and other local Vernaculars and Government must give encouragement in this respect. Existing Press Laws must be rescinded or amended to facilitate the development of newspapers in this district.

Problems of the Gorkhas living in the other parts of India

It has already been pointed out that the problem of the Gorkhas is not confined to the district of Darjeeling alone. They live in other parts of India as well, such as Assam, United Province and Punjab in substantial

numbers. The Communist Party of India reminds the honourable members of the constituent Assembly that their question cannot be shelved and it must be solved in order to effectively solve the general problem of minorities in India. If the principles of ADULT SUFFRAGE and PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION is introduced in the country as a whole, the Gorkhas living in Assam, U. P. Punjab etc., can get representation in the Legislature of the province concerned. The Communist Party of India thinks that the Constituent Assembly can make provisions for their representation so said herein.

If the Gorkhas of Darjeeling district are backward no less but more backward are their brothers, living in other parts of India. The Communist Party of India demands that the Constituent Assembly provisions in the constitution to include all the cultural safeguards in Para (ii) herein above with necessary modifications to suit the conditions of the localities concerned.

The Communist Party of India demands the above safeguards not in a separatist spirit or to encourage separatist tendencies but with a view to rapidly bring the Gorkhas and other backward hill people in line with the advanced peoples of India so that the dreams of a free and happy India - where the general prosperity of all is ensured might be realized in practice. It will be not only surprising but a supreme tragedy if the main political organization of the country continue the British Imperialist legacy of keeping the Gorkhas and other hill peoples in backwardness and ignorance in a new India of their vision. If they give the Gorkhas encouragement and support in their fight for democracy, self determination and a creation of a single union out of the feudal states of Nepal and Sikkim and the British administered district of Darjeeling as laid down herein above, the Communist Party of India feels sure that the Gorkhas will not only join the All-India Union but will become the best defenders of the common freedom of the peoples of India as a whole. Their superb fighting quality is universally known and if given proper facilities and opportunities for safeguarded by the

constitution of the newly formed union. But this plan of the reunion of the Gorkhas living in Darjeeling district, Sikkim and Nepal can materialize only in the really free India when she has done away with the last vestiges of the British imperialism and its satellites, the medieval feudal regimes of Nepal and Sikkim. Thus it depends in the politico-national development of the Gorkha people as a whole so in the interim period i.e., until "GORKHASTAN" is formed adequate safeguards must be provided for the Gorkhas living in British India. The Communist Party of India recognizes the limitations of the present Constituent Assembly and the British imperialist maneuvers to sabotage the emergence of an agreed constitution. However, ...

The Communist Party of India vehemently opposes the sinister British imperialist plan of excluding the district of Darjeeling from the rest of India and its constitution into a separate Chief Commissioner's Province as has been put forward by the Hillmen's Association in its memorial to Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, in December 1941. This association represents none but the local agents of the British imperialism. The Communist Party of India is also opposed to any such plan that might be put forward by the local agents of British imperialism in a modified form. It has reasons to apprehend that the British imperialists are hatching a plot to place the district of Darjeeling with other tribal peoples of Assam and Dooars in an altogether new Province to be called the North-Eastern Himalayan Hill Province.

The Communist Party of India demands that an immediate end must be made of the present status of the district of Darjeeling described in the Government of India Act 1935, as a "partially excluded area" and with it all the special powers of the bureaucracy as a preliminary step to further the political, economic and cultural conditions of the Gorkhas and other hill tribes living in this district.

1. **Principle of Franchise:** The principle of ADULT SUFFRAGE must be introduced so that all persons who have been deprived of their right of franchise, but who are eligible for the same, might be

enfranchised. In the last General Elections only about 27 thousand had the right to vote i.e., little over 7% of the population. Of these, 25 thousand were in Darjeeling Rural Constituency and 2100 in the Darjeeling Sadar Tea Garden (Labour) Constituency. There are 105 Tea Gardens with a total population of over 21 lakhs and out of these 89 gardens are with complete Gorkha population and in the rest 16 also they live and work although they are in minority there. In the last election only 12 of these gardens inside the Darjeeling Sadar Sub-Division were grouped together to form the Tea Garden Labour Constituency.

If the principle of ADULT SUFFRAGE is introduced at least 60 thousands in the rural area and one lakh in the tea gardens will have the right to vote.

2. **Proportional Representation:**

Under the present constitution there is no provision for the representation of the three lakhs Gorkhas of Darjeeling District in the Provincial Legislature although on the basis of proportion and even under the present constitution, they claim two seats in a house of 250 members. In a vast country like India where the problem of minorities has become the problem of problems, the most democratic form of representation is undoubtedly Proportional Representation. The Communist Party of India demands that the principle of Proportional representation must be introduced so that the smallest minorities like the Gorkhas do not go unrepresented.

3. **Special Representation & grouping of constituencies:**

In view of the extreme backwardness of the Gorkhas and other Hill Tribes living in the District of Darjeeling and with a view to speedily bring them in line with other advanced peoples of India, they must get special representation and the constituencies formed in the following manner:

(a) **Tea Garden Labour:** We have seen above that there are 50 tea gardens in the district with a population of over two lakhs of which one lakh are eligible for vote if ADULT SUFFRAGE is introduced. THERE 105 Tea Gardens should be grouped in six constituencies of 16 -17 gardens with 6,250 votes in each so that we get six tea garden about constituencies and accordingly 6 seats must be reserved for them in the Province Legislature.

(b) **Rural Area:** Under the present system the whole of the district of Darjeeling is grouped into one single constituency from the Bhutan border in the east to the Nepal border in the west. On the basis of Adult Suffrage there will be over 60,000 voters and they can easily be grouped into two constituencies, Darjeeling and Kurseoug sub-Divisions into one and Kalimpong sub-Division into another. Accordingly in the Provincial Legislature two seats must be reserved for the representation of the rural areas of the district of Darjeeling.

(c) **Railway Labour:** The number of workers in the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is 7 thousands and majority of them are Gorkhas who have no right to vote at the present. They cannot be unrepresented in the coming elections in the future. They can easily be grouped to one constituency to be called the Himalayan Railway Labour Constituency and one seat must be reserved for them in the Provincial Legislature.

The rights of the Gorkhas and persons belonging to the resident hill tribes alone to stand as candidates to stand as candidates for elections must be should be placed directly under the Central Government, the Governor of Bengal acting as Agent to the Governor-General. No legislation passed by the Central Government should apply to the Area unless certified by the Administrator in consultation with his Executive Council. As the financial aspect of the proposal, the Area not being self-supporting, your memorialists submit that in view of the Military importance of the area the communications in the area should be an imperial charge for the same reason as the Central Government is maintaining the Highway Road to Tibet in Sikkim, which is outside

India. The Communications in this area are actually an integral part of the Highway to Sikkim and Tibet and as such should be an Imperial Charge. The services of the Area in all its Administrative Departments such as Executive, Judiciary, Police, Forests, Education etc., should also be locally recruited and should be independent of the Bengal Provincial Service. This is however an outline: the details will be worked out when required. The town of Darjeeling may still continue as the Summer Capital of Bengal as is the case of the Punjab Government who have their Summer Capital at Simla. Delhi is another instance of a small Administrative unit in British India.

10. Your memorialists therefore humbly and respectfully pray that adequate provisions be made in the Statute Book for the protection of the interests of the hill people by way of safeguards suggested in this memorial or in the alternative the prayer in para 9 above. And for which act of kindness your memorialists ever pray.

SONAM WANGEL LADENLA
President,
Hillmen's Association, Darjeeling.

GOBARDAN GURUNG
Vice-President,
Hillmen's Association, Darjeeling.

MADANTHAPA
Hillmen's Association, Darjeeling.

Darjeeling
The 6th August, 1934

Appendix – 13

Memorial of the Darjeeling District Committee of the Communist Party of India for a Free Gorkhastan submitted to the Constituent Assembly on 6 April 1947

In the opinion of the Communist Party of India, the District of Darjeeling belongs to the Gorkhas and it is their homeland. Further it is the considered opinion of the Communist Party of India that the Gorkhas living in Darjeeling District, the adjoining state of Sikkim and the so-called independent state of Nepal where their number is 3 lakhs, 1 lakh and 60 lakhs respectively, constitute a distinct nationality having a common language, a common culture and common historical tradition that date back to the days of Buddha and Ashoka. These three areas are contiguous to each other and here the Gorkhas on the whole, constitute the overwhelming majority, nearly 85 % of the total. It is the British who have, since the conquest of India as a whole forcibly divided the Gorkhas, disrupting their growth and checked their national development in their own imperialist interests. Besides their homeland as enumerated herein the Gorkhas live as an interspersed minority all over India, in Assam, Punjab, the United Provinces etc. Thus they are important minority whose legitimate interests must be safeguarded in the new constitution of India. So, any decision that is taken in regard to the future of the district of Darjeeling must be done in consultation with the trusted representatives of the Gorkha people to whom the district legitimately belongs.

It is the opinion of the Communist Party of India that the only way to further the national development of the Gorkha people is by granting them the right of self determination on the basis of complete democracy which rilesans that British imperialism and all its satellites, the medieval feudal regimes of the native states of Sikkim and the so called independent state of Nepal, must be ended.

The Communist Party of India, therefore, demands that after making necessary revisions of the existing boundaries, the three contiguous areas of Darjeeling district, Southern Sikkim and Nepal be

formed into one single zone called "GORKHASTAN". On the basis of Adult Suffrage a Plebiscite may be held in all these areas on this issue and if the overwhelming majority of the Gorkha population living in these areas decide to reunite with each other in a single unit, it must be accepted. The other hill tribes and minorities belonging to other nationalities permanently residing in this zone shall have their rights and all legitimate interests safeguarded by the constitution of the newly formed union. But this plan of the reunion of the Gorkhas living in Darjeeling district, Sikkim and Nepal can materialize only in the really free India when she has done away with the last vestiges of the British imperialism and its satellites, the medieval feudal regimes of Nepal and Sikkim. Thus it depends in the politico- national development of the Gorkha people as a whole so in the interim period i.e., until "GORKHASTAN" is formed adequate safeguards must be provided for the Gorkhas living in British India. The Communist Party of India recognizes the limitations of the present Constituent Assembly and the British imperialist maneuvers to sabotage the emergence of an agreed constitution.

The Communist Party of India vehemently opposes the sinister British imperialist plan of excluding the district of Darjeeling from the rest of India and its constitution into a separate Chief Commissioner's Province as has been put forward by the Hillmen's Association in its memorial to Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, in December 1941. This association represents none but the local agents of the British imperialism. The Communist Party of India is also opposed to any such plan that might be put forward by the local agents of British imperialism in a modified form. It has reasons to apprehend that the British imperialists are hatching a plot to place the district of Darjeeling with other tribal peoples of Assam and Dooars in an altogether new Province to be called the North-Eastern Himalayan Hill Province.

The Communist Party of India demands that an immediate end must be made of the present status of the district of Darjeeling described

in the Government of India Act 1935, as a "partially excluded area" and with it all the special powers of the bureaucracy as a preliminary step to further the political, economic and cultural conditions of the Gorkhas and other hill tribes living in this district.

1. Principle of Franchise: The principle of ADULT SUFFRAGE must be introduced so that all persons who have been deprived of their right of franchise, but who are eligible for the same, might be enfranchised. In the last General Elections only about 27 thousand had the right to vote i.e., little over 7% of the population. Of these, 25 thousand were in Darjeeling Rural Constituency and 2100 in the Darjeeling Sadar Tea Garden (Labour) Constituency. There are 105 Tea Gardens with a total population of over 21 lakhs and out of these 89 gardens are with complete Gorkha population and in the rest 16 also they live and work although they are in minority there. In the last election only 12 of these gardens inside the Darjeeling Sadar Sub-Division were grouped together to form the Tea Garden Labour Constituency.

If the principle of ADULT SUFFRAGE is introduced at least 60 thousands in the rural area and one lakh in the tea gardens will have the right to vote.

2. Proportional Representation:

Under the present constitution there is no provision for the representation of the three lakhs Gorkhas of Darjeeling District in the Provincial Legislature although on the basis of proportion and even under the present constitution, they claim two seats in a house of 250 members. In a vast country like, India where the problem of minorities has become the problem of problems, the most democratic form of representation is undoubtedly Proportional Representation. The Communist Party of India demands that the principle of Proportional representation must be introduced so that the smallest minorities like the Gorkhas does not go unrepresented.

3. Special Representation & grouping of constituencies:

In view of the extreme backwardness of the Gorkhas and other Hill Tribes living in the District of Darjeeling and with a view to speedily bring them in line with other advanced peoples of India, they must get special representation and the constituencies formed in the following manner:

(a) Tea Garden Labour: We have seen above that there are 50 tea gardens in the district with a population of over two lakhs or which one lakh are eligible for vote if ADULT SUFFRAGE is introduced. THERE 105 Tea Gardens should be grouped in six constituencies of 16-17 gardens with 6,250 votes in each so that we get six tea garden about constituencies and accordingly 6 seats must be reserved for them in the Province Legislature.

(b) Rural Area: Under the present system the whole of the district of Darjeeling is grouped into one single constituency from the Bhutan border in the east to the Nepal border in the west. On the basis of Adult Suffrage there will be over 60,000 voters and they can easily be grouped into two constituencies, Darjeeling and Kurseong sub-Divisions into one and Kalimpong sub-Division into another. Accordingly in the Provincial Legislature two seats must be reserved for the representation of the rural areas of the district of Darjeeling.

(c) Railway Labour: The number of workers in the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is 7 thousands and majority of them are Gorkhas who have no right to vote at the present. They cannot be unrepresented in the coming elections in future. They can easily be grouped into one constituency to be called the Himalayan Rail way Labour Constituency and one seat must be reserved for them in the Provincial Legislature.

The rights of the Gorkhas and persons belonging to the resident hill tribes alone to stand as candidates to stand as candidates for elections must be recognized and none but the Gorkhas and resident

hillmen shall have the right to stand as candidates for elections. The reasons for this are obvious.

4. Committee of Representatives:

A Committee with above nine representatives, to be called the Committee of Representatives, shall be formed to render advice to the Legislature on the following subjects without whose advice and consent to the Legislature no Bill in regard to the following subjects shall be passed into Law: (a) Agriculture (which naturally include agricultural lands), (b) Industries, (c) Tea Industry (which must be completely nationalized), (d) Education and (e) Public Health and Local Self Government. The Committee shall have the right to initiate Bills on the subjects enumerated herein provided the majority of the members of the Committee agree to the same.

The Committee shall elect a Chairman who shall co-ordinate the administration of the district with that of the Province as a whole and shall also be responsible to the people as well as the Provincial Legislature for the administration of the district.

(a) Schools and Colleges: With the view to ameliorating the backward cultural conditions of the Gorkhas and other hill tribes the Communist Party of India demands that more schools, colleges and one technical institution must be at once opened in the district of Darjeeling.

(b) Grant of Scholarships: The backward hill students do not get any opportunity to develop their intellectual faculties for reasons of their extreme poverty and no provisions have been made so far for their education outside this district and abroad not any special grant has been made in the Provincial Budget in this respect. The Communist Party of India demands that special scholarships must be granted to deserving students for their education outside the district and abroad and the same shall be arranged through the Committee of Representatives.

(c) Use of Nepali Language and other local Vernacular as medium of instruction in Schools, Colleges and other Public Institutions: Nepali Language must replace English and other languages as medium of instruction in schools and colleges as Nepali, the language of the Gorkhas, is the common language in this district. Local vernaculars such as Tibetan should also be used as medium of instruction in the case of Tibetan students.

NEPALI must also replace English and other languages in the Court, Government Offices and other Public Institutions.

(d) Right to start Newspapers, Periodicals Magazines etc: There cannot be any cultural development of the Gorkhas and other hill tribes if there are no newspapers in the Nepali language to mould public opinion. At present there is only one fortnightly journal called the "Gorkha", the organ of the All-India Gorkha League, coming out of this district. Full facilities must be granted to the Gorkhas and other hill tribes to start daily, weekly and other newspapers in Nepali and other local Vernaculars and Government must give encouragement in this respect. Existing Press Laws must be rescinded or amended to facilitate the development of newspapers in this district.

Problems of the Gorkhas living in the other parts of India

It has already been pointed out that the problem of the Gorkhas is not confined to the district of Darjeeling alone. They live in other parts of India as well, such as Assam, United Province and Punjab in substantial numbers. The Communist Party of India reminds the honourable members of the constituent Assembly that their question cannot be shelved and it must be solved in order to effectively solve the general problem of minorities in India. If the principles of ADULT SUFFRAGE and PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION is introduced in the country as a whole, the Gorkhas living in Assam, U. P. Punjab etc., can get representation in the Legislature of the province concerned. The Communist Party of India thinks that the Constituent Assembly can make provisions for their representation so said herein.

If the Gorkhas of Darjeeling district are backward no less but more backward are their brothers, living in other parts of India. The Communist Party of India demands that the Constituent Assembly provisions in the constitution to include all the cultural safeguards in Para (ii) herein above with necessary modifications to suit the conditions of the localities concerned.

The Communist Party of India demands the above safeguards not in a separatist spirit or to encourage separatist tendencies but with a view to rapidly bring the Gorkhas and other backward hill people in line with the advanced peoples of India so that the dreams of a free and happy India where the general prosperity of all is ensured might be realized in practice. It will be not only surprising but a supreme tragedy if the main political organization of the country continue the British Imperialist legacy of keeping the Gorkhas and other hill peoples in backwardness and ignorance in a new India of their vision. If they give the Gorkhas encouragement and support in their fight for democracy, self determination and a creation of a single union out of the feudal states of Nepal and Sikkim and the British administered district of Darjeeling as laid down herein above, the Communist Party of India feels sure that the Gorkhas will not only join the All-India Union but will become the best defenders of the common freedom of the peoples of India as a whole. Their superb fighting quality is universally known and if given proper facilities and opportunities for development they will become a cause for India and fear for the enemies of India's freedom. To minimize their importance, to ignore their problems and to spurn their legitimate demand is to play into the hands of India's enemies and their age-long game of Divide and Rule.

The Communist Party of India, therefore, places this memorandum before the Constituent Assembly and the country's main political organization through the Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on minorities that has been sent here for gathering reports

on the excluded and partially excluded areas. And it hopes that it will receive their due attention and serious consideration.

Sd/- Ratanlal Brahmin M.L.A
Sd/- G.L. Subba
For DARJEELING DISTRICT COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Submitted on the 6th April, 1947

Copy to: (1) Pandit Jawaharlall Nehru,
Vice-President of the Interim Government.
(2) Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan,
Finance Member, Interim Government,
Leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party

Appendix – 14

Chief Conservators of Bengal Forest (1864-1948)

Years	Name of the Chief Conservator
1864-1870	T. ANDERSON
1870-1872	H. LEEDS
1872-1879	W.SCHLICH
1879-1882	J.S. GAMBLE
1882-1890	A.L. HOME
1890-1894	E.P. DANSEY
1894-1894	H.H. DAVIS
1894-1902	A.E. WILDE
1902-1903	J.H. LACE
1903-1908	A.L. MCINTIRE
1908-1910	G.S. HART
1910-1913	C.E. MURIEL
1913-1914	H.A. FARRINGTON
1914-1916	C.E. MURIEL
1916-1921	H.A. FARRINGTON
1921-1924	R.C. MILWARD
1924-1935	E.O. SHEBBEARE
1935-1941	W.MEIKLEJOHN
1941-1945	T.M. COFFEY
1945-1946	T.M. COFFEY
1946-1948	S.J. CURTIS

SOURCE: APRFAB of Respective year.

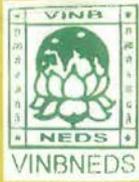
Appendix – 15

Range-wise Area in Three Forest Divisions of Darjeeling

Divisions	Range	Area in Acres
DARJEELING	Senchal (6 blocks)	3334
	Mahalderam (4 blocks)	4136
	Takdah (9 blocks)	7509
	Ghoompahar (11 blocks)	9309
	Singalila (13 blocks)	41254
	Total	65542
TISTA	West Tista (17 blocks)	21822
	East Teesta (26 blocks)	40738
	Pankasari (19 blocks)	65452
	Chel (7 blocks)	32175
	Total	160187
KURSEONG	Kurseong (4 blocks)	2747
	Balasan (10 blocks)	22341
	Manunppokri (2 blocks)	2055
	Sukna (6 blocks)	30224
	Total	57367

Source: Home, AL. APRFAB. 1884-85, pp.53-55.

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**TRANSFORMING LAND IN COLONIAL DARJEELING:
A STUDY IN RETROSPECT****TAHITI SARKAR***

Darjeeling hill tract is situated between 28°21' – 27°13' North and 87°59' – 88°53' East in the Eastern Himalayan region of India. Forming an intrinsic part of the Eastern Himalayas, Darjeeling tract stands distinct in respect of climate, topography, flora and fauna. Darjeeling hills have always been considered as a distinct phyto-geographical region with its distinctive climate and ecological system. Lulled in the lap of Singalila range, Darjeeling hills thus forms a distinct ecological zone in terms of specific variables of elevation, vegetation, climatic category, soil, topography, slope contours, precipitation and patterns of socio-economic adaptation. The vegetation and forests in Darjeeling Himalayas due to its distinctive climate, rainfall, soil etc. gave birth to tropical rain forests to mountain temperate forests. The Darjeeling tract, till thirties of the nineteenth century, was covered with forests from the bottom to the top, characterized not only by ecological fragility but also deep historical and geographical sensitivity. Such a distinguished part of the Himalayas needs to be traced back in historical search taking as both land and landscape of colonial encounter in general and the anthropogenic and archeological historical processes in such colonially cherished and materially transformed landscape and the land.

While writing on British conquest of the Western Himalayas, Aniket Alam argues, “the generic causes of territorial conquest by the British East India Company can be understood and explained through the global context of colonialism based on the requirements of ascendant British Capital, which first needed to monopolize trade and latter the source of raw materials and captive markets for emergent industries. Any account of colonial conquests in one particular region needs to base itself on these, in the first instance, otherwise it has a tendency to become a study of colonialism without perceiving colonialism.”¹ The history of colonial conquest on Darjeeling hills may well be placed keeping in line with the argument of Alam.

It was thus not just only the control over the natural resources but also the attraction of climate, physiographic and some major political and economic concerns that led the East India Company interested in the Darjeeling hill tract. Notwithstanding the attraction of the natural scenic cite and healthy ‘other’ of the dirty diseased plains of India, Darjeeling was actually conceived as a part of the colonial mainstream and was included into the greater colonial politico-economic project. The natural spatial features of colonial Darjeeling can well be identified with respect to its link with colonial political economy in which the Nature’s resources of all sites, however scenic, were subject to colonial capitalistic utilization. Therefore, a constant inherent tension between Darjeeling’s natural exotic and its functional elements persisted throughout.²

¹ Aniket Alam, *Becoming India, Western Himalayas under British Rule*, Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd. Under the Foundation Books imprint, New Delhi, 2008, p.305

² Bhattacharya N, *op.cit.*, p. 447

The East India Company officials identified the potentiality for a sanatorium town at the site of a Lepcha village (Dorje-ling) in the eastern Himalayas. In 1828, Captain Lloyd, an army official, and J.W.Grant, the Commercial Resident, Maldah, under the instruction of the Governor General, arrived at Chongtung near Darjeeling and found the place ideal for the establishment of a sanatorium. Lloyd reported that the spot so identified as Dorje-ling "was formerly occupied by a large village or town (an unusual circumstances in the country) and some shops were set up in it; one of the principal Lepcha Karjee's resided here, and the remains of his house, and also of a gombah or temple built of stone are still extant; also several stone tombs or chatyas of different forms, Karjees and Lamas."³ In 1829, the EIC Board of Directors sent Captain J.D.Herbert, Deputy Surveyor General, to the site to explore possibilities for the establishment of a sanatorium for British Troops. Herbert described Dorje-ling as a place "completely clothed with forest from top to the bottom" and pleaded for the establishment of a sanatorium. Herbert reported, "twelve hundred able bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim, have been forced to fly from Darjeeling and its neighbourhood, owing to oppression of the Raja."⁴

The British encounter with tropical environment of Gangetic plains of Bengal gave rise interest in Darjeeling hills. The principal reason for seeking sanctuary in the Indian highlands was to escape from the heat of the plains and corresponding health hazards. J.T.Pearson, an Army Surgeon, who arrived in Darjeeling in 1839, informs "there is an elasticity of the air in these mountains, and freshness..., exercise gives all the pleasant glow of an English walk on a frosty morning."⁵ The tropical plains had divested the English physique of its natural self. The mountains were posited to restore it. The temperate climate, and the familiarizing and domesticating of the mountains and dense forests rendered the British engaged in India, similar to British landscapes and to the Alps, an availability of leisure pursuits added to the appeal of the Darjeeling sanatoria. Brian Hodgson, formerly the British Resident at Kathmandu, and a polymath on eastern Himalayas, who spent a considerable period of retired years at "Brianstone", Jalapahar, Darjeeling, wrote, "The fearful epidemics of the plains seldom penetrate the Himalayas, which, moreover, seem to have a positive exemption from epidemic diseases. For forty years cholera has ravaged the plains continually...But in all that period Nepal has been visited only twice and Darjeeling scarcely at all."⁶ Hodgson's view validated the need for high altitude sanatorium town for the British in India. Hooker endorsed the rejuvenating qualities of Darjeeling for Europeans.⁷ The British health authorities, however, were not able to proclaim the highlands fully free from the so called diseases of the tropics.⁸

To put the argument differently, the nostalgic sense of loss of European vision of Nature and natural beauty of the landscape came to be identified with the beauty of Nature of Darjeeling hills which was marked as an insulated colonial retreat both for the Europeans and civic personnel engaged in East India Company affairs with Calcutta at its Headquarters. However, with the passage of building Darjeeling with

³ H.V Bayley, *Dorje-ling*, Calcutta, G.H. Huttman, Bengal Military, Orphan Press, 1838,p.12

⁴ Waddell L. Austine, *Among The Himalayas*, Constable Press, London, 1899,p.21

⁵ Bhattacharya, N ,op.cit, P. 33)

⁶ David M.Waterhouse, *The Origins of Himalayan Studies, Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling, 1820-1858*, Routledge Curzon, London,First Indian Reprint, 2005,p.217

⁷ Joseph Dalton Hooker, *Himalayan Journals: Notes of a Naturalist in Bengal, The Sikkim and Nepal Himalayas*,1854 p.9

⁸ C.A.Bayly ,*Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India,1780-1870* ,Cambridge University Press,1997,p.36

its administrative and commercial possibilities, the British sense of making European landscape were gradually intruded upon by the neighbouring natives settled widely in and around Darjeeling. Thus, the political control and extension of the geopolitical boundary had been the primary principal concern of the British ruler keeping aside the issue of Nature. The British wanted to control and to have direct access to trans-Himalayan trade for extracting profit and for establishment of strategic control over trans-Himalayan border by making Darjeeling a buffer zone.⁹

Before the beginning of colonial conquest, there had been a process of nascent society-state formation in Darjeeling Himalayas viewed in terms of small scattered settlements of native Lepcha population, more specifically culturally distinct Tibeto-Burman language speaking population of Mongolian racial stock, principally out of Hindu religious and cultural fold.¹⁰ These people practiced shifting cultivation, herding and a small portion was directly or indirectly occupied with trans-Himalayan trade. Originally belonging to Sikkim, Darjeeling tract was conquered by Nepal and was kept under Nepali occupation till 1816. However, whatever small in number the population of Mongolian racial stock available in Darjeeling were associated culturally and religiously with the Buddhist Monastic principality of Sikkim. The Buddhist ruling institution of Sikkim had received back the Darjeeling hill tract from the British soon after the defeat of Nepal in the Anglo-Gorkha War. The Raja of Sikkim derived allegiance of this non-Hindu Population living in Darjeeling tract and extracted revenues largely from yielded agricultural produce or physical labour.¹¹ Land in Sikkim including land of Darjeeling tract was not defined but was attached to monastic estate control and down-level management was vested with Kat zees.¹² There had been presence of sub-infeudation in pre- British Darjeeling. In this sense, there were landlords to whom Raja of Sikkim granted lease of lands which they further subject to the peasants. The chief whip of the landlords was the 'mandals' who acted according to the desires of the landlords. Such an attachment provided the basis for political consolidation of the Raja of Sikkim.

Col. Lloyd informs us, "Lepchas are migratory in their habits and quit the spot they have been cultivating at the expiration of the third year and take up a new location, often many miles from their former one on fresh land where they clear the forest and jungle and remain for three years after which they consider the soil exhausted and remove again to a third place. The institutions of the country are feudal, and the people belong to the same one or other chief or lama, or to the Rajah. To whomever they belong or are attached, they pay whatever revenue they have to pay, and do feudal services. In fact, the people are taxed and not the land, and each family in subservient to its own feudal chief, and no other but under him; to the Rajah the revenue they pay is a mere nominal one, generally in kind, as a man's load or two of paddy, and fermented murva for making shiab. Sometimes it is in money to about

⁹ Atis Dasgupta, *Ethnic Problems and Movements For Autonomy in Darjeeling* in *Social Scientist*, Vol-27, No.11/12, Nov-Dec, 1999, pp.47-68

¹⁰ Richard English, *Himalayan State Formation and the Impact of British Rule in the Nineteenth Century* in *Mountain Research and Development*, Vol.5, No.1, Feb. 1985, pp.61-78). Stable URL; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3673223>, accessed: 04.06.14, 01.55

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.62

¹² Hope, Namgyal, *The Sikkimese Theory of Land Holding & the Darjeeling Grant* in *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 3, November, 2, 1966, p.56

the value of eight annas per family, but the chief imposition is the necessity of giving personal services in whatever way the chief requires.”¹³

From British historiography on early colonial phase of Darjeeling, it has been assumed that in pre-colonial Darjeeling, there were two centers of political authority. Whatever little might be the number of native Lepcha population inhabiting in Darjeeling tract, the population were associated with two kinds of political authority—the Sikkim Rajah and the clan deity, while the latter ruled over population belonging to clan or clans, living in different parts of the territory, the former had control over territory. There was no direct rule of the Rajah of Sikkim over the population inhabiting in Darjeeling tract but rather one which was mediated through the relation between his patron God and the clan deity, was a clear reflection of the vulnerability of the state and its institution in pre-colonial Darjeeling. The nature of the revenue and labour demands on the peasantry were made by the deity and the Sikkim state. Land belonged to the commons and there was no personal propriety hold over land. Thus, this was not based on the peasant’s ownership of land or even on his ability to produce and harness various use values, but was based on his belongings to the clan which had certain obligations towards its protectors and patron, the clan deity, and towards the overlord of his deity. It was for this reason the Sikkim Rajas like other Himalayan Kings were always either personifications of some divinity or its regent on earth designating the nature of rule as “divine kingship.”¹⁴

Owing to very low level technology of primitive conventional mode used in shifting cultivation, the low amount of yielded production was not even equal to the necessities of the communities informing that there were only very little that could be appropriated by the Sikkim Raja or clan deity. There were two principal forms of appropriating the surplus produced – in kind and through labour. Begar or labour service, was an integral part of the demand on the peasant family by the Sikkim state and the local deity. There were basically two types of “Begar” that are classified in British records. The first was called ‘athwara’ beggar used for portage, including carrying the revenue collected in kind to the ruler’s household or the store of the deity, meaning the choukis along travel routes and defending the resources of the ruler or deity, providing labour, food and other requirements for officials of the state and the deity, and service in the household of the ruler or the temple of the deity. The second form is called ‘hela begar’. This was the demand made on the subjects on specific occasions like birth, marriage, death, and festivals in the ruling family, or some special ceremony of the deity. This consolidation included labour, goods, and cash.¹⁵

Darjeeling had remained as a military garrison of the Gorkhals as well as also the direct recruitment centre of the Gorkha Brigade of the British Indian Army before Darjeeling tract was restored to the Choggyal (Raja) of Sikkim from Nepali’s occupation at the end of Anglo-Gorkha War in 1816. Darjeeling tract including hills, Terai and Doars parts were brought under direct colonial control through three distinct phases. The first phase of colonial occupation of Darjeeling was thus initiated during February 1835,¹⁶ when Col. Lloyd was directed by the Governor General to

¹³ Fred Pinn, *The Road of Destiny, Darjeeling Letters, 1839*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1986, pp.14-15

¹⁴ A. Alam op cit, p.71

¹⁵ Ibid, p.77)

¹⁶ A. Dasgupta, op cit, p.47

negotiate with the Rajah of Sikkim to have Darjeeling, a place of land as grant for the establishment of a sanatorium. Col. Lloyd was empowered by the East India Company to work in three capacities, firstly, as the Government Agent-in-charge of relations with the Rajah of Sikkim; secondly, as in—charge of the establishment of a sanatorium or hill station of Darjeeling, and thirdly, as the in-charge for the construction of Darjeeling road.¹⁷ As a mark of respect to British ruler and on receipt of a proposal for establishing a sanitarium and to create a permanent cantonment for the British regiment by a Deed of Grant, the Chogyal of Sikkim ceded to the British rulers a portion of Sikkim hills which covered the areas south of the Great Rangit river, east of the Balasun, Kahel and Little Rangit rivers and West of the Rangnu and Mahanadi rivers.¹⁸

The second phase was resulted in the annexation of Sikkim's 'Morang' or Terai at the foot-hills and a portion of Sikkim's mid-land hills which was bounded by the Rammam river on the north, by the Rangit and Tista rivers on the east, and by the frontier of Nepal on the West. It is to be noted that this portion of Darjeeling hills and terai (raiyyatwari- mahalwari area) originally belonged to Sikkim but was conquered by Nepal during 1788 and was under possession of Nepal. Only in 1816, this tract was ceded to EIC by the Treaty of Sagauli (1816) following the defeat of Nepal in Anglo-Gorkha War. However, the East India Company returned this tract back to its original beholder that is the Raja of Sikkim by the Treaty of Titaliya (1917). Ultimately, however, this territory was occupied by the British by a war with Sikkim followed by the Treaty of Tunlong (1861).¹⁹

The third phase of colonial occupation of Darjeeling was marked by the annexation of Kalimpong hills and Doars, a natural forested and agricultural and mercy land space which originally belonged to Sikkim but wrested by Bhutan excepting a small tract still belonged to Sikkim. By virtue of the Treaty of Sinchulia (1865) concluded immediately after Anglo-Bhutan War, the Kalimpong Tract both hills and doars was brought under British rule. This tract of land situated to the east of the Tista river, the west of the Ne-Chu and De-Chu rivers and the south of Sikkim. The most important institution which continued even after this part of the region came under the British Control was 'mandali' or headman. His duty was not only to collect rents from the raiyats or peasants but also settled the disputes between the villagers on behalf of the Bhutan King. After all these three phases of occupation the British occupied Darjeeling constituted a total land-mass of 1164 sq. miles.²⁰

Till Darjeeling tract was brought under colonial control, the pre-colonial Darjeeling was thus a forested landscape of differentiated mountain ridges, grasslands, wastelands, mercy lands and pastures of low, medium and high ridge mountains and terai lands of undulated nature. As Jhoom or shifting cultivation was the mode of agricultural produce, there was in fact no defined agricultural land and codified system of land tenure. The indigenous people were continued to be governed by their customary rules, rituals and practices. These people lived in and lived with nature. In fact, the notion of land of the indigenous people was intrinsically linked with Nature. To them, land was not a commodity but a gift of nature and was a natural

¹⁷ F.Pinn, op cit,p12

¹⁸ E.C.Dozey, *A Cincise History of Darjeeling District Since 1835*, Jetsun Publishing House, Calcutta, 1922, reprinted version 1989, p.81

¹⁹ Ibid,p.79

²⁰ Ibid,p.79

property of the commons. Since this forested tract was never measured and defined, there was no personal proprietary hold over this entire forested land.

Immediately after the cession of Darjeeling, the British ruler established unquestionable supremacy over the entire Darjeeling tract. Col. Lloyd issue a Proclamation on October 12, 1838, which reads, "the people settled on the Darjeeling tract were now subjects of the Company and the laws of Sikkim would not apply to them".²¹ With the declaration of such Proclamation, Lloyd imposed revenues on the native Lepchas. However, the intention of the East India Company was markedly different. Instruction was issued to Lloyd by His Honour in Council which stated clearly, "Your purpose of it was intended merely to fix the term on which settlers of native tribes should be permitted to locate would have been sufficiently answered by a notice addressed to such persons in a different form requiring them, when desirous of settling, to state their intention and obtain from you an order for permission of the lands selected by them. The terms on which locations ought to be assigned to settlers of this description must depend upon the purposes for which they come to settle as well as upon the localities selected by them."²² Certain points crop up from the Instruction of the Company Government, for example, the Government did not appreciate the hasty imposition of revenue and such unilateral action of Col. Lloyd. Since there was no land map or no land settlement in pre-colonial Darjeeling, the East India Company's Agent was given the authority to allow people to settle with an affirmation of the Agent only. The Proclamation of Col. Lloyd thus remained non-ratified. Lloyd could no longer remain in the good book of the Company Government due to complaints against him from various corners. After Lloyd had initially organized the labour for building the road to and market in Darjeeling, he was replaced by Surgeon Major, Dr. Arthur Cambell, formerly and Assistant Resident in Nepal. Dr. Cambell was vested with the civil charge of Darjeeling as Superintendent and was empowered with wide ranging fiscal, civil and judicial and land tenure powers for the expansion of Darjeeling.²³ Dr. Cambell remained in office for a long twenty two years at a stretch. The efforts of Cambell in land revenue administration made Darjeeling a station fit for leisure seeking Europeans and an important trading centre and tea producing zone.

In pre-colonial setting, the Darjeeling tract was neither pre-defined as Zamindari Khas or self-cultivated holdings nor was put under Raiyati (occupancy of the cultivating tenants). Moreover, there had been the absence of Jungle Zamindars. For Darjeeling, the system of land holding under Permanent Settlement Act, 1793 or under Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 had always remained as misnomers. The proprietary right over land and forest was a concept traditionally alien to the indigenous people of Darjeeling. People were only obliged to give a share of their labour or the result of his labour to the Raja of Sikkim. This system of paying the state through labour was prevalent in all the Himalayan principalities till nineteenth century.²⁴ The material linkage of life of the indigenous people with Nature came under strain with the advent of colonialism in Darjeeling hills.

The application of colonial knowledge of science and administration based on utilitarian philosophy initiated the process of transformation of human-nature

²¹ Bayley, op cit, pp.21-22

²² Consultations, Fort William, 16th January, 1839, No. 61 (r/195/Vol.7) cited in Fred Pinn, op cit, p.16

²³ Bhattacharya Nandini, op cit, p.21

²⁴ H. Namgyal, op cit, p. 59

relations in Darjeeling hills. Immediately after the occupation, the entire Darjeeling tract was brought under direct administrative control of the East India Company. The British established unquestionable propriety hold over the entire land of Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling was initially administered by following the tradition of 'non regulation scheme' in which local level officials were provided with huge executive discretionary powers to govern. Darjeeling was kept under the control of Bengal Presidency and was primarily administered by a Superintendant who was given huge executive discretionary powers within the broader legislative framework of Bengal province. The Superintendant was kept under the control of the Court of Directors being Governor General on the Chair.

From 'Bengal Hurkaru', it is known that most of the plots of the 'identified station', Darjeeling, were initially distributed by the EIC Government from Calcutta. The Company Government attracted the attention of the European officials, traders, hoteliers and indigenous elites, Rajas, Zamindars and aristocrats to purchase plots at a very low cost in the form of revenue by projecting the possibilities of Darjeeling as a health station. People of social and administrative rank and file started responding to the call. The grantees/ lessees of such plots formed Darjeeling Association Committee. To put differently, the members of such Committee were the principal stake holders of Darjeeling station. The Editor of 'Hurkaru', Samuel Smith was the grantee of two plots of land at Darjeeling; Prince Dwarkanath Tagore had been the lessee of location no. 11 along with Darjeeling station's main street.²⁵ Major E. Grastin, the Chief Executive Engineer of the Lower Provinces was the lessee of two locations of Darjeeling²⁶. From the sketch plan of Darjeeling drawn in 1840, it is shown that out of forty five identified locations forty three plots were granted to thirty two number of grantees. Col. Lloyd, Grastin, Martin and Sam Smith owned two plots each. Dr. Pearson had three plots and Mr. Hepper four. Twenty eight plots of Lebong, the northern extension of Darjeeling were provided to Mr. Hepper and one Mr. Martin. Most of the grantees and lessees of Darjeeling plots were interested in speculation and gamble with the plots.²⁷

In his Report, usually called Grastin Report, submitted to H.M.Low, Esq., Secretary to the Darjeeling Committee, Major Grastin stated, inter alia, "...all such ground as may be required for public purposes be at once resumed and set apart, and that to prevent future disputes a committee be formed to mark out all the allotments and to see that their boundaries are clearly defined, and to settle the ground rent to be paid for the same."²⁸ Mr. Low forwarded the Grastin Report in its entirety with his observations. The response of the Government was positive as was discerned from its subsequent actions. Two of first applications for grants of land to reach Dr. Cambell, the newly appointed officer in civil charge, Darjeeling, came from H.M.Low and Col. Lloyd. The Officer in civil charge sent those applications to the Government for consideration. In reply to Col. Lloyd's application asking for a land of more than one square mile at Kurseong, the Secretary of the Political Department wrote, "... I am desired to state that the President-in-Council declines to interfere with the discretion necessarily vested in the Officer in Civil Charge of Darjeeling with respect to the admission of claims to particular localities, and likewise in respect to the extent of land which a single individual is to be allowed to occupy on any spot favorable to the

²⁵ Fred Pinn, op cit, p. 27

²⁶ Ibid, p.37

²⁷ Ibid, p.180

²⁸ Ibid, pp.37-62

erection of houses, for farming or garden purposes. This Officer has been called upon to frame and submit for the approval of the Government a detailed set of rules applicable to grants of all description and you will be entitled to the full benefit of them, but His Honor-in-Council declines to make any pledges as anticipated as to hold out to you the hope of many more than will be offered to all".²⁹

From the above Communication, it transpires that Lloyd's hope of getting a square mile land at Kurseong was not realized. The Government was sincere to establish a civic system in granting lands through a set of rules. Dr. Cambell was authorized to frame such rules and to work upon it with the approval and authority of the Government. Accordingly, on 1st August 1839, Dr. Cambell sent his draft rules for regulating the assignment of building locations and grants of lands in the hill tract of Darjeeling for the consideration of Government. The draft was sent by the Government to Darjeeling Association Committee, with negligible amendment, the Committee sent back the draft to the Government expressly showing its satisfaction. The Government approved the draft rules and issued Notification duly signed by H.T.Prinsep, the Secretary, Political Department, dtd., 4th September 1839 and the Rules came into force from the date of issuance of the Notification.³⁰

For the first time in the land settlement history of Darjeeling, Rules for Regulating the Assignment of Building Locations and Grants of Lands in the Hill Tracts were put in place. By virtue of the above promulgation, Dr. Cambell was provided with huge revenue power and police and magisterial authority to settle any dispute on land. In order to maintain a status quo the said Rules expressly stated that "it will not apply to ancient Residents and parties in possession at the time when the territory of Darjeeling was made over by the Rajah of Sikkim."³¹ To elaborate the rule further, the Officer on Civil Charge was vested with huge authority in assigning/granting lands on the basis of revenue defined and fixed by the Rule. Thus the principal source of Nature—the land resources were administered, preserved, reserved, distributed, granted and leased out by the British sense of justice as codified through the rules ignoring naturally customized traditional methods and practices followed through centuries in the eastern Himalayan principalities.

Importantly, immediately before British annexation of the entire Darjeeling tract through phases, the Gurkha ruler of Nepal and Bhutanese ruler kept the possession of such territories concurring the Sikkim ruler for a considerable period of time. It is therefore indeed important to have at least a glimpse of the then existing land arrangement excavating the agrarian history of Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. Even before the coming of Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim, as already referred, the Kazis used to hold grants of land from the earlier Kings on hereditary principle. The Kazis were bound to the land for payment of revenue for the whole term of settlement. The holders were not allowed to sell the land under the terms of contract they entered into.³² (Sikkim Agricultural Census, 1976-77:8, referred in Subba, T.B., The Quiet Hills, 1985, ISPCK, Delhi, P.36).³² During early Tibetan rule in Sikkim, the raiyats were directly controlled by the palace. These raiyats were of two types- Nangzans and Zimchungpas, while the former referred to the constant palace attendants and the

²⁹ 24th July-Consultations, Fort William, 24 July, 1839, No. 114 cited in Fred Pinn, Ibid, p.182

³⁰ Ibid, p.207

³¹ Ibid, p.207

³² Sikkim Agricultural Census, 1976-77:8, referred in Subba, T.B., The Quiet Hills, 1985, ISPCK, Delhi, P.36.

latter served the King on the tours.³³ The latter group constituted of the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis. In those periods, the country Sikkim was divided into 12 administrative areas under twelve Bhutia Kahlons (Ministers) and 12 Lepcha Heads of Dzongs (Castles). Arguably, the Monastries had no land holdings and depended on gifts and donations from the people. Darjeeling, once being a part of Sikkim used to be administered by a Kazi who paid rent amounting to Rs. 20 every year to the Raja of Sikkim.³⁴ After occupation of Darjeeling, the old system experienced both change and continuity by the British rule of land grants without taking away the land right of the native people living in the tract.

After the annexation of Terai part of the tract in 1850, the British both retained and continued the old Nepalis land tenure system in the cultivation areas of terai plains and at the same time brought substantial changes to cope with the expanding tea gardens in terai area. Immediately after the annexation in 1850, the southern part of terai (foot hills) was placed under the Collector of Purnea and the Northern portion was attached to Darjeeling. The settlement of the land revenue for three years had been effected by the Purnea Collector with the original inhabitants of the lower terai, mostly Muslims, Rajbanshis and low caste Nepalis and few other tribes. However, the inhabitants of Suthern terai had shown exasperation not to be attached with Purnea. Ultimately, the EIC Government decided to attach the whole tract to Darjeeling. Meanwhile, Dr. Campbell, Superintendent, Darjeeling had made a settlement for three years of the upper terai, chiefly inhabited by Meches. The cultivated portion of the whole terai area was first regularly settled in 1853 and was updated in subsequent periods. Besides the area thus settled, over 28,000 acres were granted in the years 1865-67 on thirty years leases for tea cultivation under the former Waste Land Rules. This was renewed for a term of thirty years in 1897. Thus there evolved two classes of tenants in the Terai were holding their lands directly from the Government- the Jotdars who held leases of land for ordinary cultivation and the Tea-planters holding grants of land for tea cultivation. The rights of both these classes are heritable and transferable.³⁵

Land granted to Chebu Lama by the British comprising an area of 115 square miles in the north-west of the Darjeeling tract between the Nepal and Sikkim boundaries and Little Rangit river had been an unique occasion in the early colonial land history of Darjeeling. This tract was annexed by the British in 1850 and Chebu Lama received a lease of the whole tract for an immediate term of three years in recognition of his service he had rendered during the troubles of the British officers under captivity of Sikkim. In 1862, Chebu Lama appealed for holding the land under the grant Fee-simple (1861) or in perpetuity. The Government acceded to his request by making a grant of the land to him and his heirs forever. As per British records, this is the only permanently settled estate in the District. However, in 1882-83, part of this estate, containing forests of the Singalila range and covering 66 square miles, was sold to the Forest Department; and the remainder had been partitioned among the descendants of Chebu Lama.³⁶

³³ Namgyal, T, and Mahasain, D, *History of Sikkim*, Gangtok, Loose Leaf [Type written], 1908, P.107.

³⁴ Dozey, E.C, 1922, *A Concise History of the Darjeeling District Since 1835*, Reprinted, 1989, Jatsun Publishing House, Calcutta, P.10.

³⁵ O'Malley, L.S.S, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling*, 1907, Reprinted, Logos Press, New Delhi, 1985, P.147.

³⁶ *Ibid.* P.148-49.

Land system of Kalimpong was different in pre—British period as this part of the tract was ruled by the Bhutanese rulers for over a century after subjugating Sikkim. The travel report of Markham³⁷ informs us that local inhabitants of the said area were divided into three sections- priests, government officials and landowners. But the land was never defined and documented. After British annexation, Kalimpong was divided into 48 blocks and each was kept under a Mandal who used to collect rents from raiyats and paid revenue to the British on tenure basis as fixed by the Government. Out of total 401 square miles of land so annexed, 213 square miles were kept occupied by reserved forests and 10 square miles by four tea gardens, while 178 square miles were reserved for native cultivation.³⁸ In fact five-sixth of the inhabitants was settled on this Khas Mahal or State lands. However, there had been some rent free lands belonging to Monasteries and a few Mandals. Such arrangements were continued even after British annexation. The British reserved a huge forest and cultivable land both on the western and eastern side of Tista as Khas Mahals under the management of Kalimpong Government Estates. In the whole tract of the district there was a bewildering variety of land tenure such as Revenue- paying tenure; Free-hold tenures and Lands held by the Government.

Under Revenue-paying tenures, locations of lands were settled in perpetuity under the building location Rules of 1839; locations of lands were settled for 99 years under the same Rules as amended in 1840; Farming leases were settled under the Rules of 1859; Cultivation leases for thirty years were put in place under the Rules of 1864; Lands granted to Chebu Lama, firstly on tenure and subsequently in perpetuity in the mid fifties and early sixties of nineteenth century; Tea-cultivation leases under the Waste Land Rules of 1882 as modified time to time; Other leases of different sorts and Government Khas Mahals under direct management. Under Free-hold tenures, Land locations were commuted into fee-simple under Rule 10 of the Rules of 1859; Lands (a huge size of 48476 acres) were brought under Rule 1 of the Rules of 1859; Lands commuted under Rule 9 of the Rules of 1859 and Lands brought under Fee-Simple Rules of 1862. Lands held under the Government were: Lands held by the Forest Department for forest reserves (a huge landmass occupying 278400 acres covering 435 square miles); Lands held by the Military Department; Lands held by the Government for Cinchona plantation; Lands for Jail Department; Municipal Grazing lands; Other lands including waste lands, bazaar lands, development area, etc.³⁹ Ibid.PP. 154-155).³⁹

As a matter of fact, the agrarian history of pre-British Darjeeling was characterized by the Raja (King) on the top, the Kazis below him, the Mandal below the Kazis and the Raiyats in the lowest rung. After British occupation of Darjeeling, the top was replaced by a strong centralized bureaucratic administration. In most of the cases, where gradual conversion of cultivation area into tea plantation area was taken place, the Kazis were replaced gradually by the European tea planters. However, the British allowed the continuity of Mandals and Raiyats in the agricultural zones. In his book ,‘The Quiet Hills’, 1992, Prof. Subba succinctly argued, “ *Though a few isolated cases of zamindars were found in the District, officially recognized as a Mahelwari or Raiyatwari area, an extensive form of Zamindari*

³⁷ Markham, C.R, Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning of Lhasa, New Delhi, Manjushri, 1971, Reprinted, PP.34-36.

³⁸ O’ Malley, opcit 195.

³⁹ Ibid.PP. 154-155.

system could not perhaps evolve there, as the whole area was almost covered with forests."

It is to be noted that the nature of land revenue administrative governance experienced several changes throughout the colonial period on the premise that the British ruler had an objective mind to administer Darjeeling differently from the general land revenue administration of British Indian Plains. Darjeeling was a part of the non-regulation areas since British occupation till 1861. It was kept under the direct responsibility of the Governor General in regard to legislation from 1870 to 1874. After this, it brought within the purview of the Laws Local Extent Act 1874 known as the Scheduled Districts Act. It was a Scheduled District from 1874 to 1919. Darjeeling was designated as a backward tract by the Government of India Act 1919 and remained so till 1935. Darjeeling remained as a partially Excluded Area from 1935 to the end of the British rule.⁴⁰ Precisely, under British rule, Darjeeling district was regarded as a 'Non-Regulation District till March, 1937 meaning the Acts and Regulations of the Government were not implemented in Darjeeling District unless specially extended. Only Act X of 1859 and Act V111 of 1879 regulated the rights and liabilities of land holders on tenure or perpetuity basis.⁴¹ (Roy Burman, B.K, Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India, Census of India, New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1961, PP. 330-331).⁴¹

Lord William Bentinck, Governor General of India, proposed in his famous Minutes to the Court on the East India Company in 1833, that a committee should be formed to investigate the possibility of growing tea in India. Bentinck informs, immediately after his appointment to India, one John Walker had made his acquaintance and given his considered views regarding the possibility of tea culture in the Nepal hills.⁴² Although without being a botanist, Hodgson, the Resident of Nepal, introduced tea cultivation into the Himalayas, establishing a plot in the Residency garden using seeds obtained from China by Kashmiri merchants.⁴³ Later on Dr. Cambell, formerly, Assistant Resident of Nepal, who was given the civil charge of Darjeeling as the first Superintendent in 1839, repeated the experiment at Darjeeling, which led to the establishment of commercial tea estates initially at Lebong area adjacent to northern part of Darjeeling. In 1841, there was successful cultivation of tea plant in Darjeeling at an altitude of 213.36 metres, from the seeds of a Chinese variety (Camellia sinensis), brought from Kumaon. Out of the other early planters in Darjeeling were Dr. Whitecombe, a civil surgeon, and Major Crommelin, a civil engineer. It was established that land around Lebong, a little below Darjeeling was particularly suitable. By the mid of 1940's, Pankhabari and Kurseong gardens were developed by pioneers like Martin and Captain Samler. In fact, Samler founded Makaibari garden at Pankhabari- Kurseong road. By the 1850's, the commercial potential of Darjeeling was proved beyond doubt and several other gardens were established.

⁴⁰ D.B. Gurung, 'Darjeeling District: Struggle for Administrative Status', in the compiled volume, eds., Pradhan Rukeshmani, "Continuous Political Struggle for a separate Constitutional Status of Ceded Land of Darjeeling and Leasehold Land of Kalimpong, Mahakali Press and Publication, Darjeeling, 1996, p.310

⁴¹ Roy Burman, B.K, Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India, Census of India, New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1961, PP. 330-331.

⁴² P.Goradia and K. Sircar, *The Saga of Indian Tea*, Vol.1, Contemporary Targett Pvt. Ltd., Vadodara, 2010, p.630

⁴³ Waterhouse, op cit, p.7.

The uniqueness of the process of commercialization of tea in Darjeeling was that all the tea gardens were promoted either on the basis of proprietorship or as joint stock companies. The colonial Government offered land on favourable terms to entrepreneurs of European origin. In 1856, the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company opened the Alubari garden. Captain Samler was principal pillar planter of the Company. This Company further established Ging, Ambotia, Takdah and Phoobsering tea gardens between 1860 and 1864. The Dhutana garden owned by Dr. Brougham was opened in 1859. During the early 1860's, several reputed companies like Darjeeling Tea Company and the Lebong Tea Company, opened a number of gardens at Badamtam and Takdah. In 1862, James White, the owner of Singel tea garden, opened the first garden in the Terai at a place called Champita. The New Champita Tea Garden was established in 1883. By 1880's, tea in Darjeeling had proved to be a profitable venture and there were 113 tea gardens. By 1905, tea was grown in 148 gardens covering an area of 20,000 hectares—nearly 80 square miles.⁴⁴

With the expansion of tea gardens in Darjeeling hills, the natural forest wealth had been subjected to virtual plunder. A considerable portion of forest land was alienated by government for tea plantation. The growing pressure of population had a direct bearing on nature. Forest wood was largely used as fuel both for tea factories and for house hold purposes. The primary purpose of house building materials was served by forest wood. Interestingly to note here that at the initial three decades of colonial expansion, natural forests were considered as an obstruction to development. In fact, scientific forestry or concern for preservation of nature came at a later stage. Such concern for Nature in the form of forest policy/Acts and rules for protection of flora/fauna and such other natural resources became operational since the mid sixties of the nineteenth century.

The quantum of economic and material changes that ushered in colonial Darjeeling gradually resulted corresponding dispossession of the indigenous people and created new land holding class of tea planters at the one end and tea labour on the other. The Planters enjoyed Government patronage. There developed intermediary sections, lumpens and English educated enlightened middle class service people too. The material linkage of life with forest came under complete strain with the advent of colonialism in the landscape of Darjeeling. Agrarian changes, concomitant state making and institution building, clearance of forests for making connecting roads and rails with the plains, commercial plantation of tea through private British players, invitation to the aristocracy of the neighboring plains for investment in making summer resorts by providing land at a concessional rate, state sponsored cinchona plantation, establishment of sanatoriums, resorts, military installations, introduction of scientific forestry, commercialization of natural resources and etc, had been the economic and social changes that had ebbed and flowed across Darjeeling territory under colonial control.

As a part of greater imperial project, the nature and character of British interests in the Himalayas in general, reflects two distinct phases in the development of colonial economy: the first being the mercantile exploitation under the Company, and the second being the expansion of commercial agricultural investment under the civil administration of the Raj.⁴⁵ Thus, the major influences of British rule – land settlement, roads construction forest settlement and tea plantation settlement,

⁴⁴ Goradia and Sircar, op cit, pp. 57-59

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.62

governance structure were firmly put in place. Moreover, the summer transfer of the Bengal provincial administration to Darjeeling in 1879, lent its social space glamour and urgency. The British interest of establishing a hill station nearer to Calcutta was also accomplished at the cost of wilderness of Nature of Darjeeling forested tract. It was not only the shift in mode of production but also changes brought in the mode of resource use that transformed the lands and the matterscape of Darjeeling.

*Tahiti Sarkar, Registered Doctoral Student, Department of History,
North Bengal University.

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EXPLORING HISTORY

*A JOURNAL OF MODERN INDIAN AND
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BOOK REVIEW

INDIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY: FROM ANCIENT
TIMES TO THE COLONIAL PERIOD, VOL. 1

Mahesh Rangarajan

INDIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY: COLONIALISM,
MODERNITY, AND THE NATION, VOL. 2

K. Sivaramakrishnan

*Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2012, pp.VI+464. & pp.IX+614.
ISBN 81-7824-316-4.(For a Set of two volumes)*

This edited Book having two Volumes, under review, belongs to the new genre of South Asian environmental historiography. It offers a historical cut-out of India's ecological past ranging from pre-historic period to the end of twentieth century. India's environmental history is relatively a new field of History that has emerged over the past few decades. Scholarship on Environmental History has been concentrated principally in the Euro-American world. The intellectual origin of environmental history as a domain of enquiry, write Richard Grove and Vinita Damodaran, 'can be traced to the encounter of 17th and 18th century WesternEuropeans...' A new phase of global environmental history began with European decolonization from the 1950s onwards. The latter 1950s saw the spread of environmental history to the scholars belonging to Africa and South Asia. Environmental history writing in India took a concrete shape in 1980s and 1990s. Till the mid of 1980s, historians concentrated mostly on the urban and arable parts of the landscapes. The non-arable forest, pastoral, mountains, marshes, forest dwellers, forest

desiccation, animals, flora and fauna, gender and such other anomalous zones etc., were ignored. The issues of differences between indigenous and colonial constructions of Nature were also ignored. Historians belonging to Cambridge School, Nationalist School, Marxist School and even the Subaltern School neglected such issues. David Arnold is probably right, while he writes- 'Subaltern historians of tribal and peasant protest have, until recently, neglected the ecological implications of different systems of ownership of production.' From the late 1980s, a series of books and essays brought forth the quest for environmental history. A good number of scholars stationed in India, the Duke University and Oxford approached the subject principally concentrating on agrarian changes, land use in the tropics and its impact on environment, flora, fauna, forest, indigenous people and their ideological content.

Both Mahesh Rangarajan and K. Sivaramkrishnan, -the Editors of this two volumes Book, belong to the group of environmental historians who treat the colonial rule not as a watershed but as a period in which continuities with the pre-colonial period should be regarded equally important. By accommodating the essays concerning India's pre-colonial, colonial ecological pasts and post-colonial present, the editors have made required bridge building between Environmental History of India and India's Environmental History. The edited Volumes should be credited as a pioneering attempt in assembling thirty three Articles of the scholars of repute.

The Editors, in their scholarly introduction, have attempted to address the need of assimilating the essays by placing their arguments on the three basic premises of the idea of an India in slow or long equilibrium. The first premise was the limited reach of states beyond the cultivated arable land and rulers were not seen as intruding extensively in resource control or appropriation. The second premise about the past was the virtual eclipse of states as actors in the arena of landscape change. The popular notion regarding this has moved in recent decades from one extreme to the other. The third premise was that the self- governing local communities had been seen as having control over resources in the pre-modern era. However, such a premise may ignore the wider power relations within which village societies existed. With these basic premises, the Editors have identified such essays in these volumes so that a reader can understand the continuity, departure and dichotomies of various facets of India's past from the present traversing pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial ecological history of India.

Under the first section entitled 'Ecology and Archaeology', of the first Volume, the first essay of M.L.K.Murty on 'Sheep/Goat Pastoral Cultures in the Southern Deccan :The Narrative as a Metaphor', examines the evolving relations between nature, landscape, animals and pastoral culture, sometimes conflicting and at times cooperative. The second Essay on 'Climate, A Factor in the Rise and Fall of the Indus Civilization: Evidence from Rajasthan and Bengal' by V.N.Misra shows a complex picture of conflicting evidences. To him, the local impact of Harappan culture on the floral-faunal complex need to be set against wider changes in the ecological mosaic. Makhan Lal's Essay on 'Iron Tools, Forest Clearance, and Urbanization in the Gangetic Plains', leads to the debate on the role of iron tools in land clearance in the Gangetic valley. Contradicting the common notion that the urbanization was possible only because of the widespread use of advance iron tools, he has placed adequate first hand materials to conclude that the notions are nothing but myth. The Essay on 'Settlement pattern and the Spatial Organisation of Subsistence and Mortuary Practices in the Mesolithic Ganges Valley, North Central India' by Umesh C. Chottopadhyaya has been drawn on evidence from three sites in the middle region that helped the human presence in the ancient Gangetic valley in a wider context.

In the second Section entitled 'Literary Images and States of Nature', Romila Thapar's Essay on 'Perceiving the Forest: Early India' has captured the multiple and changing meanings of the forest over time'. To her, there are many varieties of forests with multiple meanings attached to different places at different times. Aloka Parasher- Sen's Essay on ' Of Tribes, Hunters and Babbarians: Forest Dwellers in the Mauryan Period', presents a unique interpretation that an ancient empire, however, powerful, it always had difficulties in containing diverse ethnically powerful populations. She has shown how the state perceived the forest dwellers and sought to subordinate and assimilate them. She suggests that the lands of the black antelope were seen as purer than others in cultural and not merely ecological terms. Thomas Trautmann's Essay on 'Elephants and the Mauryas', sketches a picture of Mauryan India with the help of Arthashastra and the Greek Accounts. He has gone so far as to identify the availability or the absence of supplies of war elephants as a strategic factor in Indian history. Daud Ali's Essay on 'Gardens in Early India Court Life', shows how critical gardens were to early Indian Court life. Ali says that human-nature relations were not only about conflict and co-existence, they could also be about mutual change and adaptation. At a larger scale, the author draws attention

to anomalous spaces and grey zones.

Under the third section entitled 'Animals, Places and Politics', the first Essay of Jos Gommans on 'The Silent Frontier of South Asia, c.1100-1800 c.e.', looks at animals, war and conquest together and relates the supply line of animals as war logistics. He argues that India and its ecologies and politics are seen as integral to a wider world of continental Asia by positing India as the meeting place between arid and monsoon lands-'the Silent Frontier'. Simon Digby's Essay on 'The Supply of War Horses', provides a close look at animals, war and conquest during Delhi Sultanate'. To Digby, the trade overland as well as commerce in horses across the seas changed in scope and value over the centuries. The Essay of Divyabhanu Sinh on 'At the Court of the Great Mughals', has brought to light the pictorial and literary evidence of changing human relations through the studies of hunting during the Sultanate period. Although the texts or paintings of the period reflect the strategic or military interest, he shaped such sources to present how nature and cultures interacted at the time in the geographical locations of hunts and the revealing landscapes of the past. In his Essay on 'Claims on the Commons: Political Power and Natural Resources in Pre-colonial India', Sumit Guha argues that hunts were taken place in a larger backdrop of far-reaching changes in pre-colonial India. He concludes that rulers and so to say the power elites had privileged control and access to rural-urban resources and scarce biomass and had claims on the commons.

Section IV entitled 'The Company State and India's Environments' includes three Essays. To begin with, Richard Grove's Article, 'The East India Company, the Australians, and the El Nino: Colonial Scientists and Ideas about Global Climatic Change and Teleconnections Between 1770 and 1930', has shown that how the new legal and land systems worked their way in a hill region divided between different jurisdictions, the Nilgiris. Michael Mann's Essay on 'Forestry and Famine in the Chambal-Jamna Doab, 1879-1919' examines the imperial control over Indian forest by 1900. He has shown in details the direct deforestation/desiccation not simply as an enclosure but that made a huge shift in forest and country side in the late colonial period.

The companion Volume of this Book includes seventeen Essays in different five Sections. Under the first Section captioned 'Agrarian Change/ Forest Transformation', Indu Agnihotri, in her Essay on 'Ecology, Land Use, and Colonization: The Canal Colonies of Punjab', looks at the landscape in the throes of unprecedented changes that had taken place with the creation

of canal colonies in the Indus Basin. Such changes displaced the older systems of pastoral production and dry land farming. David Ludden in his Essay on 'Investing in Nature around Sylhet: An Excursion into Geographic History', has shown how did changing administrative perceptions and practices create impact on the mapping of the landscapes of the hills of Sylhet as well as on production, settlement, and the wider ecology of a region. The Essay of Mahesh Rangarajan on 'The Raj and the Natural World: Dangerous Beasts in Colonial India, 1875-1925,' sketches the conflicting and different attitudes of peasants, herders and tribesmen to carnivores (dangerous beasts) targeted for elimination during the period. David Arnold in his Essay, 'Disease, Resistance, and India's Ecological Frontier, 1770-1947', establishes linkages between Nature and the disease and the response of the state and reactions of the commons located in ecological frontier over a period of time.

Under the second Section entitled 'Environment Identity and Power', Rich Freeman in his Essay on 'Folk Models of the Forest Environment in Highland Malabar', examined the sacred groves on the ground showing that rural society is as many layered as an onion. In the event of protection of flora and fauna, entailed exclusions of lower castes or women and change in demography could propel the landscape as a whole into change at a faster rate. K. Sivaramkrishnan in his Essay on 'Transition Zones: Changing Landscapes and Local Authority in South West Bengal 1880s- 1920s', has cited the transition zones of anomaly. To him, state forestry had its limits even as it tried to regulate the use of fire or usufruct rights. In her Essay on 'The Political Ecology of Swidden Cultivation: The Survival Strategies of the Baigas in the Central Provinces, India, 1860-1960', Archana Prasad has examined how changes in the forest had a deep impact on local societies and indigenous people.

Under Section III titled 'Animals, Poetics and Politics', the Essay of Neeladri Bhattacharya on 'Pastoralists in the Colonial World', deals with the pastoralists, and their sedentarization under revenue conscious colonial state. Paul Greenbush in his Essay on 'Bio-ironies of the Fractured Forest: India's Tiger Reserves', has questioned the conventional notions that equate policing and the absence of resident people with the recovery of carnivore populations. He rather argues, it is the removal of such forest based peoples that could expose imperiled animals to ominous threat. Ann Grodzins Gold and Bhoju Ram Gujar's Essay on 'Wild Pigs and Kings: Remembered Landscapes in Rajasthan', traced the oral memory with the landscape changes in Rajasthan

and shown the huge shifts in the past few decades.

Under Section IV titled 'Environment, Dearth and Development', the Essay of Sajal Nag on 'Bamboo, Rats, and Famine: Famine Relief and Perception of British Paternalism in the Mizo Hills' traced the ecological histories of India with a special focus on bamboo famine of the Lushai Hills in the late 1950s and placed such events of dissents and discontents between the people and the government in a longer term historical setting. Darren C. Zook's Essay on 'Famine in the Landscape: Imagining Hunger in South Asian History, 1860-1990', deals with details of sources and concludes that such sources do remain silent on the issues and socio-economic causes of hunger. The Essay on 'Common Property Resources and the Environmental Context: Role of Bio-physical versus Social Stress' by Narpal S. Jodha, has attempted to show how dry land and hill ecologies and common property system have done much to the marginal peoples living today since centuries.

The Companion Volume ends with Section V entitled 'Contested Landscapes of Development'. Under this Section the Essay of Bina Agarwal on 'Gender, Environment, and Poverty Interlinks: Regional Varieties and Temporal Shifts in Rural India, 1971-1991', bridges the gap by bringing gender dimension in ecological studies. She has shown how social and political relationships deny property right and access to forests for women with their regional variation and ecological diversity. Amita Baviskar in her Essay on 'Written on the Body, Written on the Land: Violence and Environmental struggles in Central India', sketches out how a private company with state support try to push through a large dam in Madhya Pradesh in the face of non-violent resistance of the local people. Rohan D'Souza in his Essay on ' Damming the Mahanadi River: The Emergence of Multi-Purpose River Valley Development in India (1943-1946)', has traced into details of the facts and events and the impact of technological interventions on the people and the landscape as made by the state-sponsored nationalist capital. The Essay on 'Disaster, Development, and Governance: Reflections on the Lessons of Bhopal' by S. Ravi Rajan has traced the causes of disaster of Bhopal in an urban industrial setting of violent environment.

A curious reading of the essays included in this two volume Book establishes the fact that the Editors have attempted to show the fluctuations between stressing continuities as well as major departures with the past. All these facts and events do have abiding consequences of varied nature on the dynamics of India's environmental history through ages. The Book suffers

from the principal limitation as it has failed to present a coherent logic to perceive India's environmental history through a specified method of history. The Essays so included cover a wide span of time and issues of different dimensions sometimes create zones of anomaly at the perception level of a general reader due to their methodological diversities. Despite analytical variation, diversification of issues of enquiry, random time period, discrete scales and levels of analysis, conceptual heterogeneities and methodological complexities, this two volume Book generates a very rich literature possibly of the best scholarship on India's environmental history. The learned provocative intellectual exercises made in this Book have been an eye-opener to those readers and scholars committed to undertake research in any aspect of India's environmental history.

Tahiti Sarkar

*Research Scholar, Department of History
North Bengal University*

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Post Graduate Department of History

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A Note on the Contributors

Dahlia Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of North Bengal

Tahiti Sarkar, Ph. D Research Scholar, Department of History, University of North Bengal

Sakul Kundra, Research Scholar, CHS, JNU, New Delhi.

Nirmala Shah, Research Scholar, ZHCES, JNU, New Delhi

Malyaban Chaaopadhyay, Whole Time Lecturer (Contractual), Post-Graduate Department of History, Fakir Chand College, Diamond Harbour

Biresh Chaudhuri, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Satwati College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

Saurav Kumar Rai, Research Scholar, Department of History, University of Delhi, New Delhi

Akhil Ray, Assistant Professor (Govt. Approved), Department of History, Malda College, Malda

Swapna Mitra, Ph. D Research Scholar, Department of History, Assam University, Silchar

Manas Dutta, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol.

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Interrogating “Staying Alive; Women, Ecology and Survival in India”: Applicability of Vandana Shiva’s Eco-feminism on the Lepcha Women in Colonial Darjeeling

Tahiti Sarkar

While understanding Vandana Shiva’s alternative critique on eco-feminism, the present study is restricted to the seminal Book, “Staying Alive ...”, and attempts to (re)present the principal arguments in establishing her claims that women and nature are intrinsically linked with each other and play a continuous mutually corroborative role in their eternal struggle for survival against exploitation, marginalization and extinction. The principal thrust of the book, identifying the pivotal position of women in relation to nature – the forests, the food-chain and water supplies with reference to India and their unique survival strategies based on ecological path of harmony, sustainability and diversity, constituting a non-violent and humanly inclusive alternative to the dominant paradigm of contemporary scientific and development thought, has been attempted to be interrogated both conceptually and empirically on a specific historical space and time span. Finally, Shiva’s principal propositions, while applied to struggling indigenous Lepcha women lived in and with the nature in Darjeeling hills under colonialism, have not been proved totally validated in the wake of colonial development replacing primordial /feudal mode of production by capitalist mode of production projected through capitalist agricultural farming replacing tradition based shifting cultivation. At the end, it has been argued that if the struggle for femininity is a struggle for a certain basic principle of perceiving life, the cog of the conviction of Shiva can serve not just women but all human beings. The experience of Lepcha women in colonial Darjeeling convincingly approves Shiva’s conviction with this qualifier.

Taking three important most interrelated issues of principal concern, development, ecology and gender, Shiva’s book, under introspection, argues

for the inexorable undercurrent of relationship between the marginalization of woman and the degradation of nature caused by economic development, in Shiva's word "mal-development". The degradation of women would eventually lead degradation of nature. The basic ingredients constituting un-development are science, technology and politics van guarded by patriarchy which exerts influence and exploitation in every area of human activity. Such ever active notion has always a tendency to marginalize and burden nature. Shiva argues that there is only one path to survival and liberation for nature and women and that path is the ecological one, "of harmony, sustainability and diversity, as opposed to domination, exploitation and surplus." She explores unique place of women in the environment of India in particular, both as its saviors and as victims of mal-development. Shiva's enticing analysis is a unique statement of the challenge that women in ecology movements are creating and how their efforts constitute "a non-violent and humanly inclusive alternative to the dominant paradigm of contemporary scientific and development thought."

With a foreword presented by none other than Professor Rajni Kothari and with a short introduction depicting the principal purpose, Shiva's book contains seven chapters. In her introduction to the Book, Shiva Writes, "Seen from the experiences of the Third World Women, the modes of thinking and action that pass for science and development, respectively, are not universal and humanly inclusive, as they are made out of to be : Modern Science and development are projects of male, western origin, both historically and ideologically. They are the latest and most brutal expression of a patriarchal ideology, which is threatening to annihilate nature and the entire women species. The rise of a patriarchal science of nature took place in Europe during the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries as the scientific revolution. During the same period, the closely related industrial revolution laid the foundations of a patriarchal mode of economic development in industrial capitalism. Contemporary science and development conserve the ideological roots and biases of the scientific and industrial revolutions even as they unfold into new areas of activity and new domains of subjugation".¹

Arguably, Shiva's Introduction goes beyond a statement of women as special victims of the environmental crisis, it attempts to capture and reconstruct those insights and visions that Indian women provide in their struggles for survival, which perceive development and science from outside the categories of modern western patriarchy. These oppositional categories are simultaneously ecological and feminist; they allow the possibility of survival showing how ecological destruction and the marginalization of women are not inevitable, economically and scientifically.

Shiva argues that "everyday struggle of women for the protection of nature take place in the cognitive and ethical context of the categories of the ancient world view in which nature is Prakriti, a living creative process, the feminine

principle from which all life arises. Women's ecology movements, as the preservation and recovery of the feminine principle, arise from a non-gendered based ideology of liberation, different both from the gender based ideology of patriarchy which underlies the process of ecological destruction and women's subjugation and the gender based responses which have, until recently, been characteristic of the west.²

While dealing with 'Development, Ecology and Women', Shiva traces the historical and conceptual roots of development as a project of gender ideology, and analyses how the particular economic assumptions of western patriarchy aimed exclusively at profits, have subjugated the more humane assumptions of economics as the provision of sustenance, to make for a crisis of poverty rooted in ecological devastation. Shiva has viewed 'development' as a new project of western patriarchy which undermines feminine principle. Shiva claims, "the recovery of the feminine principle allows a transcendence and transformation of these patriarchal foundations of mal-development. It allows a redefinition of growth and productivity as categories linked to the production, not the destruction of life."³

Shiva addresses to the myth of the neutrality and universality of modern science tracing its beginnings in the scientific revolution which, on the one hand, subjugated nature, and on the other, excluded women as knower's and experts. In her deliberations on "Science, Nature and Gender" she takes the stand that modern science is also a patriarchal project which endangers ecology and purposefully divides natural and unnatural. The structure and methodology of modern science is reductionist. Shiva has shown how reductionism as a patriarchal mode of knowing is necessarily violent to nature and women.

Chapter III, entitling "Women in Nature", describes the world that Indian women inhabit, both philosophically as a world view, and in their daily practice in the production and renewal of life. For the women who are leading ecological struggles, the nature they protect is the living Prakriti. It is the awareness of nature as a living force and of themselves as partners with her in the production of sustenance that guides their ecological struggles. These movements depending on women's insights are not based on a gender ideology, and make for an oppositional category. To Shiva, "Prakriti" is a popular category, and one through which ordinary women in rural India relate to nature.⁴

While understanding "Women in Forest", Shiva argues for Aarnyani (forests) as the feminine principle and has shown how colonial masculinity led forestry has underestimated women and brought tragedy of the commons as well as caused harm to diversity. With Indian experience, Shiva argues here that scientific forestry is actually a narrow reductionist view of forestry that has evolved from the western bias for maximization of profits. Shiva views 'Chipco Movement' and the role of women as a response to this paradigm. To Shiva, "destruction of forest eco-system and the displacement of women who

generate survival through the forests are structurally linked to this reductionist paradigm of forestry." She further affirms, "Women's initiatives at forest protection and regeneration always remain sustainable and just, recovering both the diversity of forests as well as sharing the wealth that they produce."⁵

In her discussion on "Women in the Food Chain", Shiva views Green Revolution as a western paradigm which displaces women from food production. From Green Revolution to the application of Biotechnology and from White Revolution to Hybridization and patent control have largely caused adversities to soil, nature and women. Shiva analyses the food crisis as rooted in masculine's agricultural science and development which have destroyed nature's capital and have excluded women as experts and producers of food. The violence inherent in the green revolution for food-crops and the white revolution for dairying is located and lined to shifts in the perception of food as a commodity, produced and exchange for profit.⁶ On the issue of "Women and the Vanishing Waters", Shiva argues that water crisis is threatening the survival of the plant, animal and human life on a cataclysmic scale. It is related to land and water use for profit. Land and water are diverted from survival needs to the imperative of profit maximization. Water sources have been growingly disappearing. The reductionist view of water and water management is contrasted with the holistic knowledge women have for conserving and using water for survival.

Shiva's conviction has been rightfully reflected in "Terra Mater: Reclaiming the Feminine Principle", where at the end Shiva recapitulates the rationale behind the dominant science and technology and development paradigm that is responsible for the current economic and ecological crisis, and posits the reclaiming of the feminine principle as a non-violent, non-gendered and humanly inclusive alternative. Women of the third world have conserved those categories of thought and action which make survival possible. Shiva convincingly concludes that "Ecology movements, women's movements and peace movements across the world can draw inspiration from these categories of western patriarchy which rule the world today in the name of development and progress."⁷ Indeed, millions of women in India have been struggling for a life that is ecologically sustainable, peaceful and just.

Professor Rajni Kothari argues, "By establishing an intrinsic relationship between Nature and Femininity, Shiva takes both ecology and women as natural allies. They form part of larger struggle for endogeneity in a world threatened by the homogenizing thrust of modernity. While the former respect diversity, the latter undermines and destroys diversity".⁸ Unlike the older vintage of feminists, cultural feminists and radical feminists, imploring the state to treat them on a footing of 'equality' with men, Vandana Shiva has searched for deeper meanings of femininity and Prakriti and asserted them as far more humane and natural than the dominant 'scientific' paradigm which is essentially

macho in its conception. A larger implication may be drawn of Shiva's effort to organically relate the concerns of ecology with the feminine principle. While doing so, she has broadened both the areas of environment and the feminist movements and has given a composite intellectual meaning to both.

Shiva's principal propositions have not remained uncontested. To Rajni Kothari, "the issue of class is central to the historical process as are the issues of femininity, ecology and ethnicity. Such a large spectrum of women hood generally (including in the agricultural sector), and in particular in the wake of the new national and international division of labour, is exploited by the capitalist mode of production. But it is not just a question of women. It is a much larger issue of a new technological basis of economic and cultural exploitation which is crying for a new spirit of democratic resistance against what is undoubtedly a considerably changed (trans-nationalized, corporate, computerized, militarized and televised) model of capitalist growth and integration."⁹ Kothari further argues, "The feminist movement will continue to be castigated as petit bourgeois in its thrust unless it comes out of its present uni-dimensional derailing and make a common cause with the struggles of the world proletariat and the proletarianised lower classes of all societies."¹⁰ It is, therefore logical to argue that any approach to the liberation of any segment of society that is based on a polarized view of social reality (men versus women, majority versus minority, centre versus state) is at once unreal and to create a dualist situation. If the struggle for femininity is a struggle for a certain basic principle of perceiving life, the philosophy can serve not just women but all human beings. Femininity may be conceived as an all encompassing value and be viewed from shared perceptions of gender, class, ecology, ethnicity, and here lies the future for the feminist movement. Feminist and social ecologist Janet Beihl has criticized Shiva's ecofeminism for focusing too much on a mystical connection between women and Nature and not enough on the actual conditions of women.¹¹ Rosemary Radford, Ruchel joined Janet Beihl in critiquing this overemphasis on mysticism as made by Shiva.¹²

Despite criticisms and contestations, Shiva's argument remains presciently relevant, and illuminates how women, more than surviving the crises brought on by development, are creating and safeguarding vital sources of knowledge and vision on not only how to stay alive, but why primarily one. Shiva's analysis is an innovative statement of the challenge that women in ecology movements are creating and she shows how their efforts constitute a non-violent and humanly inclusive alternative to the dominant paradigm of contemporary scientific and development thought.

Shiva's propositions, when applied in colonial Darjeeling, to understand the struggles of Lepcha women for existence and subsistence despite destitution and repeated displacement in the face of colonially crafted new land holding rules, new modes of settled cultivation replacing shifting cultivation, infusion

of capital in expanding tea plantations by clearing forests, restrictions and prohibitory rules to live in forests in the name of scientific forest conservancy, roads and railways and corresponding urbanism developed through colonially cherished modernity, technology and missionary led education, would have us believe that the women in Lepcha society had been staying alive and had been contributing to protect nature and were protected by nature for their subsistence and existence. However, history suggests that such struggle of Lepcha women for staying alive was never taken place in isolation of their male counterparts in the families and clans across gender. Such an observation needs a little elaboration of the Lepcha society and Lepcha women in particular in Darjeeling under colonialism.

British historiography informs us that Lepchas have been the original indigenous people of Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas.¹³ In pre-colonial Darjeeling, the Lepchas used to live in their "*Mayel Lyang*" meaning "Land of Hidden Paradise" or "Delightful Region on Abode".¹⁴ Their land was situated on the vast forested tracts in the Eastern Himalayan region covering the middle and the up hills of Sikkim, Sub-Himalayan Bhutan, a part of eastern Nepal and the entire hilly tract of Darjeeling originally belonging to Sikkim.¹⁵

Lepchas being autochthones of Darjeeling and Sikkim are claimed to be the children of nature. They used to live in and live with nature and natural forests belonging to the property of the commons. Lepchas were semi nomadic people (it was the British who ascribed them as the tribe for administrative convenience) used to live in forests or in adjacent forests with each family clan in specified geographical location.¹⁶ Unlike indigenous people living in western hills forests (Shiva's experimental zone), Lepchas of Darjeeling did never belong to Hindu religious and cultural folds. On the contrary, Lepchas were animists and their god was mother earth.¹⁷ The fact is that the Lepchas had to succumb to cultural invasions both in pre colonial and colonial period. Firstly, the Tibetans forced Buddhism into them. Secondly, the missionaries infused Christianity and Thirdly, outnumbering the minority Lepchas, the immigrated majority Nepalese infused Hindu folk culture and traditional practices into the Lepchas. Despite cultural invasions and economic onslaughts, the Lepchas had not totally assimilated with the majority Nepalese settled in Darjeeling and preserved their identity.¹⁸

Lepchas have never been a warrior race. They form an egalitarian society, as Foning writes, "Lepchas have no class, creed and ranking among themselves."¹⁹ Such a society, an admixture of matriarchal and patriarchal values, did have no gender oppression or inequality among genders. While endorsing the view of Foning, that all Lepchas are equal, Tamsang argues, "they assembled and appointed a strong leader to guide, protect and defend them... and conferred upon him the title of "Pano", which means king. And thereafter again two divisions of social classes came into existences among the

Lepchas called *Rangboo and Mangboo*, which means the Patricians and the Plebian's. The Patrician Lepchas belonged to the nobility and settled permanently in the cleared forest zone. On the other the Plebian's belonged to the common Lepchas who were mostly farmers, some potters, carpenters etc.²⁰

The pre colonial history of the Darjeeling forested tract as drawn by Chambell suggests that the Lepchas were principally agriculturist and they depended on a unique method of agriculture production called Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation. They used to restrict their cultivable ground for not more than three years and find different zones of cultivations by clearing forests and bushes.²¹ Money economy was a misnomer to them and they lived on subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing and on such other forest based resources. Lepcha women used to participate in shifting cultivation, domestic works and food-gathering. They took active part in cleaning, ploughing, leveling, pulverizing, ridge making, transplanting, mud-playing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, and drying, plucking, weighting, carrying, stacking, cede conserving and storing. Women had the art of collecting fuels from forest woods and conservation of water without causing harm to Nature. Lepchas, especially women, knew the use of various plants for various purposes, some for food, some for medicines and some for making poisons for making arrows.²²

In general, women used to be respected and honoured in the Lepcha society. This coupled with the institution of "*Mun*"- the female priest being more powerful than the "*Hongthing*" i.e., the male priest implying that there was the prevalence of matriarchal society among the Lepchas. Furthermore, unlike Hindu society, the widows in Lepcha society enjoyed greater freedom and better social status. Widows could remarry without any inhibitions. In Lepcha society marriage being a perpetual bond and divorce was an alien concept.²³

Lepchas, in general and women in particular, had to pay heavily to the colonial system of governance in Darjeeling since 1835. The colonially settled new land rules divested the Lepchas at large. They became unwanted people in their own land and forests. The absolute proprietary hold of the British over Darjeeling tract provided the colonizer to adopt colonially cherished policies of resource use. Despite codified assurances in the land rules that indigenous people would not be disturbed, Lepchas became marginalized and had to face continuous displacements due to growing expansion of capitalist farming in tea plantation industry and extension of town areas. The massive rate of clearance of forests for expansion of tea gardens, construction of urban infrastructure including roadways and railways communication networks had forced indigenous Lepchas, primarily, to inaccessible forested tracts. The Lepchas received further jolts when colonial scientific forestry and forest conservancy were initiated during 1860's in Darjeeling along with prohibitory

rules for the use of forest resources. To add further to their plight, in the name of forest conservancy, the colonial authority put ban on shifting cultivation which perhaps fundamentally altered the basic life vision of the Lepchas and they had to accommodate settled agricultural farming. The majority of the Lepchas under British rule, had to shift to Kalimpong sub-division, few under Darjeeling Sadar and Kurseong sub-division principally in Mirik area.

As a result of reservation of forests and prohibitory rules²⁴ on the use of forest based resources, the very basic socio-economic life of the Lepchas did undergo a tremendous metamorphosis which had its adverse impact on the relationship between nature and the women. The colonially patronized notions of development and application of colonial science and technology in modernizing Darjeeling- an imperial project of "civilizing the savages", marginalized the minority Lepchas and so their women. Thus, it was not just a question of Lepcha women, who along with Nature were heavily impacted only negatively, it was rather a larger issue of colonial resource, extraction and exploitation, which cutting across gender and ethnic boundaries had impacted negatively in a holistic way. However, in their struggle for existence, the majority of the Lepcha agriculturist women living in and around forests maintained an intrinsic relationship with Nature in perceiving life through their indigenous natural form of everyday resistance. In this process of struggle for existence, women stay alive and help Nature to sustain.

Precisely, this article has attempted to disclose the fact that if the struggle for femininity is a struggle for a certain basic principle of perceiving life, the cog of the argument of Shiva under reference can serve not just women but all human beings. The history of Lepcha women in colonial Darjeeling convincingly approves Shiva's propositions with such qualifiers keeping in mind the unique form of experience of colonial modernity in Lepcha society. Gender inequality in Lepcha society did exist even prior to colonial period, however, colonialism accelerated the pace of inequalities in the natural social order. Lepcha women were largely restricted to domestic household activities and maintenance of everyday sustenance. Such feminization of work was the result of colonial notions of making use of forced labor ('begar') for colonially cherished development projects for the making of Darjeeling hill station that pulled Lepcha males out of villages and into wage labor through the system of outmigration. Lepcha males were compelled to be associated with new economic livelihood and culture. With their cash source accrued through physical labors, Lepcha men were enabled to purchase resources according to their capacities instead of gathering resources from nature. On the contrary, Lepcha women were left with subsistence livelihood amidst mounting restrictive pressures of colonial prohibitory rules on the use of forest resources. Thus colonization with all its accompanied factors and forces undermined the role of Lepcha women in nurturing nature and nurtured in return, which ushered in a dichotomy between nature and culture in the social order of the Lepchas in colonial Darjeeling.

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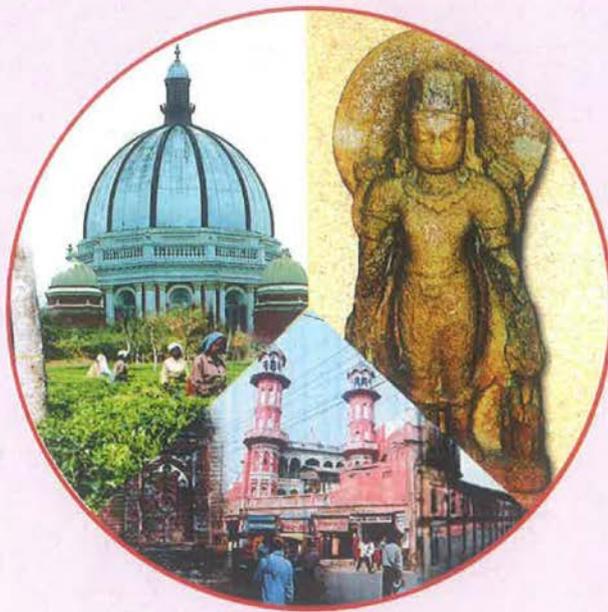
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Dr. Bijoy Kumar Sarkar

Associate Editor
Dr. Sankar Kumar Das



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
University of North Bengal
Raja Rammohunpur, Dist. Darjeeling - 734013
West Bengal, India
Telephone: 91-353-2776351

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Colonizing Darjeeling Forest Without Indigenous Resistance: An Overview of Colonial Darjeeling

Tahiti Sarkar

Most of the seminal writings on colonial forest history of India have unfurled the mega and micro narratives of resistances of indigenous people living inside or in the peripheral zones of forests that took place during colonial regime. Such studies are mostly restricted to the forests situated in Central Gangetic plains, Southern valleys, Central, Western Himalayas and Southern plains of India commonly known as tropical rain forests and a few of alpine forests. The Eastern Himalayan forests of which Darjeeling forms a part has still remained almost an unexcavated academic zone in terms of the attempt of historical enquiry of knowledge production so as to explore the impact of colonization and the nature of resistance of the indigenous forest dwellers and corresponding colonial encounter, if any.

In order to understand the presence or the absence of such resistance in colonial Darjeeling and related colonial encounter, it is required to know the nature of colonial state making while colonizing forests in Darjeeling Hills which comprised of two parts—the British Sikkim and the British Bhutan. Both these parts were mostly covered with forest at the beginning of colonial intrusion. This forest place was sparsely populated. It is also required to know the nature of society, the subsistence economy and the landscape in which the indigenous people of Darjeeling, although small in number used to inhabit for over centuries.

Without delving deep into the roots of epistemological and anthropological details, the phrase 'indigenous people' randomly used in this study refers to a group of people or a community having cultural distinctiveness, living in a defined space/ region, a sense of belonging together, having its own knowledge production system which may be seen as an alternative to modern positivist knowledge system. Thus, indigeneity provides for a distinctive cultural system, a place and her people different from place, people and culture system of the 'Other.'¹

Atul Saklani (1987)², Guha (1989)³ Rangarajan (1992)⁴ and many more other scholars have shown that the Himalayas perpetuated an established tradition of protests and agitations. Between 1817 and 1940, major peasant rebellions took place in the Western Himalayas. The Paik Rebellion of 1817 in Orissa, the Santhal Rebellion of Chotonagpur in 1855, the Gudden-Rampa Rebellion in 1879, the Tribal rebellion of South Ranchi in 1899 led by Birsa Munda, the Garhwal hills protests and resistances during 1900 to 1924. Such subaltern rebellions or resistances to colonial rule were conspicuously

system of paying the government through labour was prevalent in all the Himalayan kingdom's throughout nineteenth century.⁹

Till Darjeeling tract was brought under colonial control, the indigenous people were continued to be governed by their customary rules, rituals and practices. The British occupation of Darjeeling and their concomitant interventions in forests significantly altered their vision of life and pattern of subsistence of the indigenous people. The replacement of barter economy by the monetary economy brought about fundamental changes in their life and pattern of livelihood. The imposed political boundary, fundamentally altered new system of economy prevented indigenous people from natural inner transmigration which was essential both for shifting cultivation and cattle grazing. The colonial notion of rights over forest land had been a contested issue between the indigenous people and the colonial state with its temporal powers as self-proclaimed guardian of Darjeeling and her forest. Col. Lloyd's Proclamation on 12 October, 1838 is well apt to quote here while it reads, "the people settled on the Darjeeling tract were now subjects of the Company and the laws of Sikkim would not apply to them..."¹⁰ (Immediately in the next year Dr. Campbell's appointment as the Superintendent, Darjeeling in 1839 was not only the phase of officially asserting British political rights over Darjeeling but also ushered in a new phase of colonial state making.

Unfortunately, however, such contestation¹¹ in the form of resistance did never take shape in Darjeeling Hills. This paper is a cursory attempt to respond to such why question of the absence of resistance or rebellion to colonial absorption of Darjeeling and her forests and corresponding dispossession of the indigenous people and their consequent disruption due to economic changes that had ebbed and flowed across the landscape of Darjeeling since the middle of nineteenth century. On the other end, the indigenous people were gradually outnumbered by the growing number of people migrated principally from the Eastern part of Nepal. Resultantly, the outnumbered and marginalized indigenous people had failed to establish any social voice or consciousness to be created by sustained socio-religious, cultural and economic institutions. These material historical processes and their mutual intersections gave rise to a unique state-society relationship in Darjeeling Hills. The presence or absence of indigenous resistance to colonial interventions in Darjeeling in general and forests in particular has been intended to be perceived here from the broader frame of Environmental History.

The official correspondences of East India Company and thereafter those of the British India Government as the principal source of historiography of colonial Darjeeling would have us take it that it was not forests of Darjeeling Hills which attracted the preliminary attention of the British. Poor accessibility and high cost of transportation might have discouraged them from commercially exploiting the forest timber of the Tract. Therefore, the primary intention was to create a social space in the physical space of Darjeeling equitable to European environment wherein the company officials would take refuge and would feel at home. The strategic location of Darjeeling as a military

space had received adequate attention too. The ceded part of Kalimpong Hills (once owned by Sikkim) from Bhutan at a later years (1865) reapproves the argument that it was not forests but the consideration of strategic location prompted the British to annex the entirely forested hilly part of Kalimpong with the District of Darjeeling.

The fact is well discernible from a letter of Lieutenant Colonel G.W.A. Lloyd dated 18th June, 1829, addressed to Lord William Bentinck, Governor General. H.V. Bayley in his Book "Dorje-ling",¹² claims that the stated letter has been "the first official record connected with "Dorje-ling". Lloyd writes, "I ... have little doubt the advantages it ("Old Goorka Station called Darjeeling") possesses as a Sanitarium". Lloyd's intention to establish military installation in Darjeeling is well apparent when he further writes "this position would be a check by commanding an entrance into Nepal and Bootan". Bayley tells us that Mr. Grant, the Commercial Resident at Maldah, had about the same period brought frequently to the notice of the Governor General, the numerous advantages promised by the establishment of a Sanitarium at Darjeeling. On receipt of such correspondences, the Governor General requested Captain Herbert, the Deputy Surveyor General to explore the tract of the Sikkim hills in company with Mr. Grant.

As Bayley reports us the journey was undertaken by them accordingly and they separately reported back to the Governor General wherein Captain Herbert strongly advocated specially for the occupation of the tract for a military position as the key of a pass into the Goorka territory. The EIC (East India Company) Court of Directors expressed hope to hear from the Reports and was convinced that the local Government had found it practicable and advisable to establish a Sanitarium at Dorjeling and to create a permanent Cantonment for an European Regiment. Accordingly instruction was issued to Colonel Lloyd to open a negotiation with the Raja of Sikkim for the Cession of Darjeeling to the British Government in return for an equivalent in land or money as might be deemed reasonable. Dorjeling was ultimately occupied by the British through a Deed of Grant issued by the Rajah of Sikkim during February 1835. The British occupation of 640 sq. miles area of Dorjeling from the Raja of Sikkim was made complete during 1850. The Daling sub-division of which Kalimpong was the headquarters together with Duars areas were annexed from Bhutan Raja under the Senchula Treaty on November 11th, 1865 and the Kalimpong hill areas were included in the District of Darjeeling, thereby increasing the area of the District from 640 to 1164 square miles.¹³

As reported in the British official records, Darjeeling tract including Kalimpong had been sparsely populated if not "uninhabited".¹⁴ Captain Herbert described Darjeeling as a place "completely clothed with forest from the top to the bottom". However, Lloyd reported that the spot so identified as Darjeeling "was formerly occupied by a large village or town (an unusual circumstances in the country) and some shops were set up in it; one of the principal Lepcha Karjees resided here, and the remains of his house, and also of a gombah or temple built of a stone are still extant; also several stone tombs or

chatyas of different forms, Karjees and Lamas". Captain Herbert reapproves the fact that twelve hundred able bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim, have been forced to fly from Dorjeling and its neighbourhood, owing to the oppression of the Raja".¹⁵

There has been unanimity among the Historians, Anthropologists and Imperial Officers that Lepchas (originally called "Rong") are considered to be the most ancient of all communities and are the original people / indigenous tribe of Sikkim-Darjeeling. (Historians like Gorer, E.C. Dozey, G.B. Mainwaring, J.C. White, and many others have agreed to this argument. However within a passage of few decades, Lepchas in Darjeeling presented themselves as minority in the whole course of colonized phase. About the brisk transformation and the change of demography in Darjeeling, Risley writes in his "The Gazetteer of Sikkim, "The settlement of Darjeeling advanced rapidly, its population having risen from not more than 100 souls in 1839 to about 10,000 in 1849 chiefly by immigration from the neighbouring states of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan..."¹⁶

It is to be noted that prior to 1891, there has been no recorded census for Darjeeling. The census of 1891 is a good pointer of the rate of Nepali Settlement under British patronage. The Census recorded a population of 30458 for Darjeeling of which 18814 were Nepali. The Lepchas became a minority in their own place. By 1931, Nepali population in Darjeeling constituted 52 percent, 21 percent were of the Scheduled castes and Tribes from Indian Plains, Lepchas and Sikkimese Tibetans formed 4 percent, Bhutanese 1 percent and the rests were the upper caste Hindus, Muslims and non-tribal Christians. The census of 1941 further shows the steady growth of Nepali population (67.6 percent) and gradual decline of Lepcha population (3.2 percent). Gorer observed that the "Lepchas are a dying race".¹⁷

L.A. Waddell informs us that the Mountainous tract of Darjeeling belonged to Lepchas.¹⁸ It has been already referred that the whole tract of Darjeeling was covered under forest from the bottom to the top. The indigenous people had an intimate association with forest and forest played the most important role in their material and social life. Forest played an inclusively crucial role in their social, economic and religious life too. They had their religion which was a sort of animism or nature worship what was distinctively different from the religious practices of the people living in the plains. It has been claimed that Lepchas are agriculturist by nature. However the method of cultivation was not settled plough culture, instead, their method of cultivations was Jhuming (shifting cultivation) by burning down the forest. However, cultivation did not provide them with even a basic subsistence as they were found to subsist on wild roots, mountain spinach, fren tops, fings etc.¹⁹ To the indigenous people, Livestock husbandry was not an appendage to agriculture, but a significant component of their economy.²⁰ Lepchas and Bhutias used to rear animals to supplement agriculture like cows, buffaloes, pigs, goats, sheep, country chicken etc.²¹ Lepchas became familiar with the forest ecology from their childhood as they spent their life time with the forest zone for shifting cultivation and

grazing the cattle. Thus the indigenous people depended fully on forest and forest produce for their subsistence. This material linkage of life with forest came under strain with the advent of colonialism in Darjeeling Hills.

Immediately after the occupation of Darjeeling usually called 'British Sikkim', the entire tract was brought under the administrative control of the East India Company. The area was initially administered by following the tradition of large 'non-regulation provinces' in which political Agents/Superintendent/District Officials to be governed with tremendous executive discretion at the local level. To adumbrate, the nature of colonial governance in Darjeeling had been an admixture of two traditions of administration – the Bengal Tradition and the Punjab Tradition, while the former was based on British Home Model of due process and the Punjab Tradition of non-regulation provinces in which political agents did have predominant role to play.²² In fact, Darjeeling Hills were kept under the control of Bengal Presidency and was initially administered by a superintendant having tremendous executive discretionary powers within the broader legislative framework of Bengal Province and under the control of the Court of Directors chaired by the Governor General. The advent of colonialism in British Sikkim and the application and implementation of the Rules and Procedure of the British Government did remain almost a hazard free exercise. The reasons are not far to seek. Neither the whole tract of Darjeeling was pre defined as Zamindari khas (self cultivated holdings) or under Raiyati (predefined occupancy rights of the cultivating tenants). Both the Darjeeling tract and her indigenous people did not hear the arrangement of land under Permanent Settlement, 1793 nor did the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 ever operate in Darjeeling. Consequentially, the British administrative march and establishment of rules and procedures in Darjeeling went unabated. For building sanitarium, military station, civic system, construction of roads and bridges, tea plantation and cinchona plantation, establishment of tourist resort required significant forest clearance and the import of labour from neighbouring zones, where reservation of forests was under way, forest conservancy received prominence at this juncture.

The British held absolute proprietary rights over forests. The Forest Act of 1865 reads, "the local government may from time to time constitute any forest land or waste land which is the property of government, or over which the government has proprietary rights, or to the whole or any part of forest produce of which the government is entitled, a reserved forest." The provisions of the said Act provided for management and preservation of forests and regulated exploitation of forest resources. Regulations were imposed on the dwellers of forests on the collection of forest produce. The Act provided for a series of prohibitions but nothing was there regarding the principles of managing the forests. The Forest Act of 1878 was more comprehensive than 1865 Act and divided the forests into (a) Reserved; (b) Protected; (c) Village Forests. Local Governments were given the right to notify any forest or land as protected forest. The Forest Act of 1927 consolidated further the state control over forest. Duties were levied on transit and forest produce such as timber and other forest products. The Forest Act of 1878 was more

stringent and ruthlessly restricted the users of forest. Grazing, pasturing of cattle, shifting cultivation by burning woods was also strictly prohibited in the Reserved forests. The Government held unfettered rights of ownership in reserved forests and their products were not to be used by forest dwellers unless specifically permitted by way of grant of privilege and not as a matter of entitlement. In the meanwhile cattle-trespass Act, 1871 prohibited pasturing of cattle in the reserved forests.

The British forester E.P. Stebbing informs us that the forest conservancy in Bengal was first initiated in British Sikkim²³ forest conservancy began in Darjeeling in 1864 when Dr. T. Anderson was appointed temporarily as Conservator of Forests, Lower Provinces (which included Darjeeling Hilly Tract). The Forest Act of 1865 provided impetus to the British local authority in Darjeeling. Under the newly appointed Conservator, a hierarchical bureaucratic structure was established for the proper management and conservancy works. Till 1870, Darjeeling forest was kept under Bhagalpur Division. From 1870 to 1876, it was administered under Cooch – Behar Forest Division. In 1877, the Darjeeling Forest Division was established with three sub-Divisions such as Darjeeling, Teesta and Kurseong. In 1879, the Teesta Division was reconstituted as Kalimpong Division (No.124F, dated Calcutta, 1st February, 1879, B.43 PR, NAI, New Delhi). In all these three sub-divisions forest conservancy was initiated with the help of working plans having ten years in perspective. Since 1892, such working plans began to operate in Darjeeling Forest Divisions with the help of a structured forest bureaucracy having enormous powers of discretion at its hand.

The most serious consequence of colonial forestry was the diminution of customary rights as well as the decline in traditional conservation and management systems. The curtailment of communitarian ownership of forests of Darjeeling by the colonial state had severely undermined the subsistence economy of the indigenous Lepchas. Collection of Bamboos, Wax and Lac from the Darjeeling forest was prohibited by issuance of licenses. Like all other British India forests Jhuming or shifting cultivation was discouraged without providing appropriate alternative arrangement or land to the Lepchas for settled agriculture. As a consequence, there had been displacement of Lepchas from their natural forest land habitats. Restrictions on collection of forest produce imposition of prohibitionary norms on grazing and gradual dwindling of grazing grounds of different seasons affected badly the indigenous people of Darjeeling hills. Nowhere in the British forest policy or in the colonial Acts, had the rights of the indigenous Lepchas been specifically mentioned. Ultimately Lepchas had to leave Reserved Forest of Darjeeling and they were instructed to move south-west part of the District, between the hilly tract and the plains.²⁴ Again during 1920s Lepcha tenants were evacuated and resettled. For their resettlement due to expansion and construction of Kalimpong as an urban area, deforestation of 999 acres of forest land in Lolegaon Reserved Forest was proposed and sanction for such deforestation was granted by the colonial government.²⁵ As a consequence the Lepchas became refugees in their own land.

No official records on Colonial Darjeeling or oral narratives would have us believe that there had been forest conflicts or intensive local opposition to the colonial state sponsored forest conservancy at the one end and forest clearance on the other in the name of scientific forest management in surface and tea garden expansion in sublime. What the indigenous people of Darjeeling Hills had to witness as a dormant spectator was the expanding power play of the colonial state in reorganizing and reshaping the landscape by way of infusion of colonial capital. Tea Plantation, Cinchona Plantation, Forest Management, Military Installation and Civic Urban formation of Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and few other localities, Roads and Railways construction impacted heavily on the flora, fauna and human land use in particular and on the environment in general. Curbing of local access to forests brought fundamental changes in traditional pattern of resource use and resulted diminution of the rights of indigenous people of Darjeeling. The absence of any intensified conflict in the form of protest, resistance or rebellion between the colonial state and the indigenous people was perhaps due to the incapacity of the indigenous people to make their presence felt in a meaningful manner.

Prohibitory rules in the name forest conservancy, prohibitions on the use of forest resources and grazing were randomly imposed by the local forest government. Rules relating Grazing were modified time and again in Darjeeling Forest Division from 1913 to 1925. All these put the indigenous Lepchas to an extremely pitiable condition and they were destined to be displaced. The letter of A.A. Wace, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, addressed to Commissioner of Rajshahi Division, bears the testimony of such plights. The letter reads, "Anxious as I am to secure permanently the interest of Lepchas in this district, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that, as they exist in our unsettled tract, they are an obstacle to all improvement cultivation or increase of revenue. They settle in a forest, clear a bit and sow it, and then pass on to cut down new forests, without giving in return for the valuable timbers destroyed. What we should aim at is to see them as they can afford to pay an easy rent for. As regards the Lepchas on the tract under reference, I would give them the option of building on 15 to 20 acres each where they now are, securing their interests by giving them one of our Kalimpong Leases, or moving to the Lepcha blocks north of Kalimpong on payment by Planter of a liberal compensation for removal²⁶

In response to the above official communication, the Government ordered the local authority at Darjeeling to take action. Accordingly, the Lepchas were driven to the Kalimpong range of the Hills. Ultimately, there was displacement time and again in the face of growing Tea Plantation in that area. Lepchas were sent again to lower elevation of the Kalimpong tract where they lost both of their life and livelihood. Lepcha resettlement issue in Darjeeling hills was left much to be desired. Lepcha displacement was indeed by colonial capitalist development unknown to the indigenous people. Despite such displacement and destitution, the Lepchas could not go beyond memorandum, and submission of petitions. The numerical stream of the Lepchas, demographic changes in

the process of colonial state making in Darjeeling which made them minority, the social and economic incapacity of the indigenous people to raise voice against the overarching colonial power structure, the omnipresence of British military installations are some of the fundamental historically corroborated reasons behind the absence of resistance and rebellion in Darjeeling hills during colonial phase. At least discontents were never brought to public surface. On the other the beginning of monetary economy and infusion of colonial capital, forest policies forced Lepchas to change their traditional forest based lifestyle based on Jhum cultivation and natural forest produce. The imperatives of colonial state making in Darjeeling were comparatively so large and huge that the small indigenous people were not at all in a position to intensify any resistance against the colonial order except in few cases of occasional negligible breaches of the forest law in some areas.

The experience of colonization of Darjeeling Hills largely transformed the socio-economic profile of this sparsely populated hill tract. The fundamental change replaced the primordial pre-capitalist traditional production relations and had brought forward modern capital based production relation economy. The old clan based communities, traditional class hierarchies got dismantled in the process of material landscape transformation. Darjeeling witnessed fundamental ecological changes too due to growing tea plantation, roads and railways construction, making of towns and military institutions. All these development induced transformations resulted to a strong colonial political regime, colonial ecological regime, colonial planters regime, installation based military regime, Christian missionary led neo-cultural regime and newly in migrated middle class regime in Darjeeling Hills. The imported labourers principally Nepalis, Bhutias and Sikkimese from the neighbouring areas as wage earners forming a new working class could not form any meaningful voice. The new eco-imperialist order drastically replaced the indigenous ecosophical order and attempted to invest the idea of "difference" in the minds of the inhabitants of Darjeeling (cutting across religion, sect and culture) through all possible channels of social engineering. The "natural" difference between the hills and the plains was purposively indoctrinated through the system of colonial governability that distinguished Darjeeling as a unique socio-economic and cultural zone and finally as a separate ecological region as a whole.²⁷ Such a colonially articulated socio-cultural and politico-administrative powerscape of colonial Darjeeling provided for strong predicament to develop any sub-altern consciousness of resistance against the overarching colonial state.

The nineteenth century colonial state making and the unquestionable colonial right over colonized forest was powerfully influenced by the emergence of modernity, a constellation of ideas and institutions, as a world-wide phenomenon.²⁸ But the generalization of the impact of such notion of modernity can never be similar over every space and region. Variegated regions/local spaces and patterns of environmental and landscape change suggest qualifications that have serious implications. Academically customized discourses of Nationalist Political Economy School or Nostalgic Idealist

School on colonial deforestation and concomitant resistance of the indigenous people often lack explanatory power when applied to Darjeeling case. A close look at the colonizing process of forested hills would have us believe that colonized Darjeeling had been a unique experience of environmental landscape transformation devoid of any indigenous resistance and could have never been qualified as a “landscape of resistance” in colonial period.

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