

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.

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