

CHAPTER – I

GEO-HISTORICAL PROFILE OF DARJEELING TERAI

Before we enter into a detailed study of our problem, we have to determine the area or field over which our investigation is concerned. This chapter will attempt to give a description of the geographical area of Darjeeling Terai and its features, whose area and shape have changed in course of time i.e. during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period. The plains of Darjeeling district is popularly known as the Darjeeling Terai, extending from the foot of the mountainous tract of the northern border of Purnea district. It lies between $26^{\circ}36'48''$ and $26^{\circ}49'45''$ north latitude and between $88^{\circ}8'51''$ and $88^{\circ}29'$ east longitude. It forms a trapezoid with a length from north to south of eight miles and breadth east to west of ten miles, covering a total area 229.95 square miles or 147, 17019 acres, excluding the forest land. It is bounded in the north by Kurseong sub-division of the district, in the south by West Dinajpur (Now North Dinajpur), in the east by Jalpaiguri district and in the west by independent state of Nepal.¹ Darjeeling Terai situated in the foothills of the Himalayas and about eight hundred and forty two feet above the sea level is now a part of the sub-division of Siliguri in the state of West Bengal as shown in the map (Appendix A). Darjeeling Terai which is a unique in itself and has very little in common with the of Purnea and Jalpaiguri. The northern parts are high and stony, only the hollows between ridges being fit for growing paddy and other food crops with profit; the general portion, too, is more or less undulating and partakes in a less marked degree of nature and character of the northern parts; the fringe bordering on the districts of Purnea and Jalpaiguri are level to a degree but where stony ridges and undulations are by no means absent. It is not possible to divide the tract into different blocks according to the texture, level and fertility of the soil because the different kinds of soil are so much interlaced with one another and are subject to so constant changes owing to fresh deposits carried down by washings from the hills every year as to defy all attempts at such divisions .But it is true to a certain extent that the southern parts of Darjeeling Terai resemble to a certain extent the northern parts of the district of Purnea and north-western parts of the district of Jalpaiguri , but that resemblance is rather superficial.² During the colonial period there were three police stations under Siliguri sub-division i.e Siliguri, Phansidewa and Khoribari. But after the

Independence of the country in 1947 police stations were increased to six in number. The three additional new police stations are Naxalbari, Matigara and Bagdogra.

Tarai, tarei or tareiani, is defined as lowlands, swampy tract at the base of the hills, seems to be genuinely a Turanian word. As defined by Hodgson that "...if we carefully examined the Indian map many more such pre-Arian terms would probably be discovered to prove the universal spread over the continent of that earlier race, which is now chiefly confined to the Deccan. Tar in Tamil, Tal in Canarese means to below, and the affixes i.e Tar-ei and ni of Tareia-ni are the former, Tamilian, and the latter, very general, in or ni being the genitival and in flexional sign of several Southern and Northern tongues of the Turanian group of languages. The that of Cutch is a term precisely equivalent to our Tarei and is the merely aspirate form of Canarese Tal."³ Joseph Dalton Hooker, the first European who visited the Terai said that low malarial belt which skirts the base of the Himalaya from the Sutlej to Brahma-Koond (river Brahmaputra) in Upper Assam is known as Terai.⁴ For these reasons the term Terai is applicable to all the areas below the Himalayan mountainous ranges, in Uttar Pradesh⁵ and Assam⁶ or Bengal and Nepal⁷. The *Encyclopedia* describes Terai as a strip marshy malarial tract below the Siwalik hills, along the northern margins of the Indo-Gangetic plains, formed by the reappearance of the streams which have seeped underground in gravelly bhabar, at the foot of the hills. It is generally covered with dense jungle, which includes good *sal* forest in the east or with tall coarse *savannah* grasses, in the Bengal Doons⁸ it has been largely cleared for cultivation of Tea and in Uttar Pradesh for agriculture.⁹ During the colonial period in India the western borders of Nepal touched the British district of Kumaon, and joined to it and overlapping its northern boundary the British district of Garhwal, the river Sarada fixed the boundary between Kumaon and the western district of the Nepal kingdom. Lower Kumaon was a very charming district of Sub-Himalayan hill country, the lowest slopes of these foot hills about on the plains of India and many merged into the great Terai or forest belt, which was almost continuous from the Duns of Dehra and Sirhind to the Brahmaputra. Indeed these foot-hills were clothed in sub-tropical jungle, which though not so luxurious as in the more humid climate of the eastern Himalaya.¹⁰ In between these two i.e. from Nepal Terai to Assam Terai the British-Sikkim, which were acquired by the Colonial Government during first half of the 19th century, form a well defined and distinct tracts, plain and mountain, the latter rising abruptly out of the plains to 6,000 and 10,000 feet. The mountains are a

portion of the Morung or Terai, the great band of forest running along the foot of the Himalayas.¹¹In short it is to be said that the strip land fringing the base of the hills(i.e Himalaya) is recognized as Terai (damp) in Darjeeling district and in Jalpaiguri district as Dooars (passes)¹², which is flat open forest and grass covered tract¹³ separated the plains from the foot of the hills.¹⁴On the other hand the great Himalayas, the Inner – Himalayas and the foothills and the bordering Sub – Himalayan ‘piedmont plain’ locally called Terai in Nepal and Dooars in Bhutan.¹⁵Joseph Dalton Hooker, the great naturalist who visited the Terai area in 1848 , had left an account of his visit which says that, Terai is a name loosely applied to a tract of country at the very foot of the Himalaya, it is Persians and signifies damp. Politically, the Terai generally belong to the hill-states beyond it, geographically, it should appertain to the plains of India, and geologically, it is a sort of neutral country, being composed neither of the alluvium of the plains nor of the rocks of the hills, but for the most part of alternating beds of sand, gravel, and boulders brought from the mountains .Botanically it is readily defined as the region of forest-trees, amongst which *sal* ,the most valuable of Indian timber. The Terai soil is generally light, dry and gravelly and varies in breadth, from ten miles along the Sikkim frontier, to thirty and more on the Nepalese,in the latter country it is called the Morung.¹⁶ It is to be noted that Terai region has been referred in some of the accounts either as Morung or Kiratland. Yet, Darjeeling Terai was almost an unknown area to the people living in the mainland of India before the British annexation. Hence, Morung was the old name of Nepal and Sikkim Terai (i.e Darjeeling Terai).The name is an old one, being mentioned more than once in the Alamgirnamah and in the annals of the Koch King. It is shown in Vanden Broucke ‘s ma’ as comprising the whole Himalayan tract from Bihar to Assam, and in Rennell’s map of 1779 the Nepal Terai between Muzzafarpur and Jalpaiguri is under this name.¹⁷

The name of Terai was also associated with terrible diseases like Terai fever, malaria, *kala-azar* which were of dread fear for the Europeans and many of the Europeans and natives had died from their attacks .Besides, there are heavy rainfall averaging sometimes 120 inches in the year.¹⁸ For this reason the Darjeeling Terai remained as unhealthy area as ever.¹⁹ Not only that the Terai forest, which stretched along the foot of the Himalayas through Nepal, Bengal, the Bhutan Dooars and still further east in Assam, however, the jungles are so extensive and dense, and the grass and reads so high, that unless Tigers are marked down, it is in many places utterly useless to

look for them .Even if they are found, they could not be killed in the dense beds of reeds which frequently prove a safe asylum for the Buffalo, Tigers, Baisan, Elephant etc.²⁰ Therefore, hunters were not much attracted to the area because the penetration into the forest was not so easy.

1:1 SOME DIFICULTIES IN WRITING THE HISTORY OF DARJEELING TERAJ

The above mentioned facts make it much clear that Terai was a place where inhabitants could not reside in large numbers. Therefore, the chronological history of the area could not developed since it was always covered with dense forests and full of dangerous wild animals. In fact, Darjeeling Terai never came into prominence during ancient, medieval and even in early part of modern period. It is a well known fact that a civilization flourishes more when it comes in contact with other or more civilizations. The absence of emigration and immigration appears to have deprived Terai of any intercourse with other civilization and thus its own civilizations remained somewhat blunt. The widespread fear amongst the outsiders about the unhealthy climate of Terai is the main reason for that .It is due to this reason that when it came under the sovereignty or control of the various powers i.e Cooch Behar, Sikkim and Nepal, it did not get any importance rather it was neglected. The main motive of these powers was to collect revenue as much as they could get. Besides, it was a frontier of all the above mentioned powers, so the importance of the area in the context of development was not convinced by any of the powers. Hence, when the English East India Company annexed the Terai in 1850, no *mandir*, masjid or big ponds were found. As stated earlier, since there was no proper human habitation the development of a powerful *zamindar* or dynasty of any princely power did not come up. Therefore, in tracing the archeological remains of the area, no proper temple, mosque, *math* etc cannot be found. In fact, the non-existence of any rule of dynasty or princes and *zamindars* deprived the area of any proper architecture of temple, mosque or *math* because the kings and *zamindars* were the builders and patronizer's of such religious construction .Thus there were no proper architecture during the ancient, medieval and even in early colonial period. Though a close social and cultural connection was present between Terai, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri but it is seen that while constructing the history of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri enough evidences from archeology is available but it totally negligible in the Darjeeling Terai.²¹ Yet,there were inflow of people from other areas into this region but the accounts of the immigration

and settlement have not been documented.²² Nevertheless, when the British captured the region in 1850 it shot into prominence and contact with other parts of India began. During the Great Munity of 1857 Mr. Yule, the than Commissioner of Bhagalpur waits in Terai (mid Nov-end Dec1857) in a post between Siliguri and Pnkhabari to arrest the sepoys who were expected to hide themselves in the dense forest of Terai.²³ It is said that in early 1858 numbers of fugitive rebels took refuge in the Terai, among them who come subsequently ,were the Begum of Lucknow and his son, Brijis Kadr, Nana Sahib, Bala Rao, Mammu Khan, Beni Madho and about fifty more of the principal leaders of the rebellion. The rebels suffered greatly in Terai from sickness, and in September, 1858 Nana Sahib was said to be fallen a victim of Terai fever.²⁴ Though by the middle of the 19th century Terai was regarded as one of the parts of India's unknown world, it was gradually explored and brought into the commercial map of the country under the British rule.

1:2 OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF DARJEELING TERAJ DURING ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The authentic history of the northern bank of the river Mahananda of Darjeeling Terai commences in the limelight of modern Indian history from early part of the 18th century. So, it is impossible to unravel the tangled web of Hindu and aboriginal myths belonging to an earlier period .Because they do not form even a semblance of a connected narrative. Yet, we can only observe that the fundamental ideas on which they are based and the personages with whom they deal, are derived from the Kiranti people who lived to the east and north of the Kusi and Karatoya. The stories relate, for the most part, the struggle and conquest of Kirat, Kichak, and other petty chiefs, who were, to be said represented to have been Rais of pure Rajput descent, but who were really of Kooch origin. The earliest of the Hindu tradition refers to the Pandava war, but there are many other legends, evidently borrowed from the western people, who ruled in Mithila or northern Behar, west of the Kusi, for many centuries before the Christian era.²⁵ In this connection some passage in the Mahabharata (*Sabha-Parva,Adhyaya-30*)gives a description of the conquests of Bhima in eastern India ,furnish further information about the inhabitants of this part of the country. Bhima, it is said, conquered Mahanja king of Kausikikacheha, a tract lying between Modagiri (Monghyr) and the lands of the Pundras, which is thus identifiable with south Purnea. He also defeated Karna, the king of Anga, and conquered the hill tribes whom, he killed in the battle of Modagiri (Monghr), and

next subdued the powerful Pundra king, Vasudeva, who is described as the king of the Vangas, Pundras and Kiratas. The Pundra land appears to have been bounded on the east by the river Karatoya; on the west by the modern Mahananda, which separated it from Anga; on the south by the modern Padma; and on the north by the hills, which were inhabited by aboriginal hill tribes, such as Kiratas. Local tradition still speaks of the struggles and conquest of the Kiratas, and a Kirata (Kiranti) woman from the Morung or Terai is said to have been the wife of Raja Virat, who according to legend, gave shelter to Yudishthira, and his four Pandava brothers during their twelve years exile.²⁶

Nevertheless, it is to be said that before the coming of the Limbus in the Terai region during the 5th Century, this Kirat land was divided into eight feudal chiefs i.e Honden Hang²⁷ Yaketed Hang, Chesbi Hang, Laraso Pangbo Hang, Khesiwa Hang, Ekango Hang, Khadi Hang and Eme Hang. Eme Hang, the most powerful chief and the leader of Lepcha tribe had spread or migrated from river Deo Mai to river Tista in the east; and further Daling places of Kalimpong and Bhutan. Those who spread towards north settled Darjeeling and Sikkim. Khadi Hang, the leader of Bodo Kirat people who had spread from Mechi hill of Elam district to Terai land of Jhapa, Siliguri, Mainaguri and Mahakalaguri of present West Bengal. The rest of the chiefs had spread as far west as river Dudkoshi.²⁸ At that time, the Shah Mokwan people who were known to be originated "Tai class" of Chinese nationality came into present North Bengal and then went to the hilly place of eastern Nepal and began to settled with earlier Kiratas as mentioned earlier.²⁹ But within a very short time in the beginning of the 6th century A.D, a more powerful Kirat people Kachin or Chingpho by name invaded the land of Shah Mokwan from the northern direction. The Shah Mokwan people resist their enemies from occupying their land. But the enemies were more dangerous and stronger than the Shah Mokwan people. As a result in the battle of Hukkang³⁰, near the bank of the river Sittang the Chingphos or the Kachins killed thousands of Shah Mokwan people and drove them out from their land. Then Shah Mokwan people fixed their northern boundary in Tibet, southern boundary in the Indian plain at Jalalgarh near Purnea, eastern boundary at river Tista and the western boundary at river Dudkosi.³¹ During that period Soi Yak Lado Hang was elected as the king of *Chaubis* or Bodhey district who ruled over Chemjong, Song Yok, Vaji or Waji, Tharu, Dhimal, Koches and other tribes. He built his fort at Shanguri and fixed his northern and southern boundaries in Samba Wa and Jalalgarh near Purnea. This shah Mokwan people later decided to name their

nationality and changed the name of Shah Mokwan into Limbu.³²In this connection it is to be mentioned that, these Kiratas were connected with the Chinese, the Bhotias or the Tibetans, and other Mongoloid people. They were distinguished from the wild or primitive tribes of Austric origin who were known specifically as Nisads, Subaras, Pulindar, Bhills and Kolls. Ideologists also said 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.³³In the beginning of the 7th century A.D, a second batch of Shah Mokwan people under the leadership of Mung Maw Rong came to eastern Nepal from the south China via north Burma. They crossed Assam and reached North Bengal. They cleared the dense forest of Himalayan Terai and made their permanent settlement there and named the locality after the name of their leader Maw Rong, which later became the famous Morung or Terai.³⁴After the conquest of all the Kirat land of eastern Himalayan region, king Maw Rong Hang divided his country into four provinces or parts i.e Khombuwan, Limbuwan, Lapchan and Mawrong (Morung) and ruled the state according to feudal system. The Lapchan lied between river Mechi and river Tista in east. King Maw Rong made his capital town at Radok near Khampajong and his winter capital was at Shanguri or Jhamaguri near Bijaypur of east Nepal.³⁵ The lands conquered and annexed by him were popularly named as Morung. The king Maw Rong had no male issue, so he nominated one of his Minister (i.e Tумыangs) called Mokwan Shan to rule his kingdom after him.³⁶

During the early medieval period i.e under the reign of the Palas, the Senas and the Sultans of Gaud Terai was controlled from Gaud.³⁷ The Pal Rajas possessed the whole of Mithila and confined the Kiratas within the limits of their mountains.³⁸ After the decline of the Palas, Terai was dominated by the Senas till the death of the Lakshman Sen.³⁹ It is said that since then Maithili was adopted as official language of both the Kiratas and of the areas directly under the Sena rulers. As a result, several documents, sanads, stamped, and letters also written in Maithili, which supports this statements.⁴⁰ Except the above mentioned information no written documents are available for writing the history of Terai under the Palas and Senas. Nevertheless, though Terai was situated in the frontier place of these kingdoms it did not received much importance of the rulers. Even it is assumed that they might not have showed any urgency to dominate the place.

1:3 TERAI UNDER THE KOCHES

In the Turko-Afghan period of Indian history, except the futile expeditions of Muhammed Bakhtiyar Khalji to Tibet⁴¹ the northern frontier of Bengal had no particular importance in history. During the last decade of the 15th Century (1498), Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah, the Afghan king of Gaud invaded Kamrupa. The whole kingdom of Kamrupa was eventually conquered by Hussain Shah and subjugated to Gaud.⁴² But unfortunately for Gaud, the invasion of Kamatapur did not extend their frontier up to the eastern part of the river Karotoya. The Khen dynasty declined but the historical importance of Kamatapur was not lost. In the first half of the 16th Century, a new kingdom, Cooch Behar, found its place⁴³ in the map of North Bengal on the old side of Kamatapur Kingdom. Cooch Behar reached its high watermark of glory during the time of its first two rulers, Viswasinga and Narayanan and at that time Cooch Behar was the master of North Bengal. According to the testimony of Muslim historians, during the reign of Akbar, about 1595, Lakshman Narayan, the Raja of Cooch Behar was the sovereign of a territory bounded on the east by the river Brahmaputra, on the south of Goraghat, on the west by Trihut (present north Bihar i.e Muzaffarpur) and on the north by the mountains of Tibet and Assam.⁴⁴ According to Abul Fazl the kingdom extended from Trihut in the west to Brahmaputra in the east and the Himalayas in the north⁴⁵ and it was in this period Terai became a part of Cooch Behar kingdom, was administrated by the Raikats of Baikunthapur branch of the royal family of Cooch Behar based in the present Jalpaiguri town. On the north western part of Rangpur was situated the *Parghana* of Baikunthapur or 'Battrish Hazari'. As a permanently settled area Baikunthapur comprised approximately 450 square miles⁴⁶ surrounded by the Himalyas in the north, river Tista in the east and Mahananda in the west, the Raikats of Baikunthapur lived. They were the collateral branch of the Cooch Behar family⁴⁷ and held umbrella over the king of Cooch Behar at the time of installation. The Raikats were the hereditary grant ministers of the kingdom of Cooch Behar and ruled or used to guard its western frontier, which is known as Terai. They lived an area which was inaccessible for ordinary enemies during a great part of the year. From this reason whatever the fate of Cooch Behar was by the repeated attacks of the Mughals could be avoided in the case of Baikunthapur. But being isolated it was not possible for Baikunthapur to protect the western part of Cooch Behar for a long time. But due to some unknown reason, it became isolated from the whole kingdom and became helpless. It was not in a position to

keep under control the Terai land of the west of Mahananda river. As a result the land between the river Mahananda and Mechi (270 Sq.miles) which is known as Darjeeling Terai was annexed by Sikkim, whose presence in the history of North Bengal was not anticipated in those days.⁴⁸ Though the exact date of the annexation of Terai by Sikkim is not known, but it can be ascertained that the event did not take place before the end of the first half of the 17th century and not in any case before the accession of Phuntsog Namgyal in Sikkim, because Father Cabral and Father Diaz of the Jesuit order, passing in the course of their journey to Shigatse in 1628 through the Terai region in Sikkim to avoid the longer route through Bhutan, found Sikkim without a regular government and very unsafe for a traveler without the support of a armed escort.⁴⁹ Sikkim had extended her domination far south into the district of Purnea, and possessed the low country on the west of Mahananda to east as far upto Kisangunj. But later Sikkimese were derived by the Muslims and they confined their domination between Mechi-Mahnanda region.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, before the Sikkimese regime in the Terai area, it was about in the year of 1608 that one of the king of Shah Mokwan people or the Limbus was Lo Hang Sen of Mokwanpur laid a big army with Baja Hang Rai, another Kirat king and conquered all the Terai land up to river Mahanadi (Mahananda) of Siliguri. They also conquered a Lepcha Kirat king of Kurseong hill.⁵¹ They then fixed their eastern boundary at river Mahananda.

1:4 TERAJ UNDER THE SIKKIMESE DOMINATION

It was during the middle of the 17th Century that Sikkim could strengthen their position under first Chinogyal Phuntsog Namgyal. It is presumed that the distracted state of affairs in Cooch Behar and the secluded life of the Raikats of Baikunthapur offered Sikkim an opportunity of expanding herself into the plains and occupying the Terai lands between the river Mechi and the Mahananda. Though, the exact date is not definitely known as we have said earlier. The Raikats were not worried by the expansion of Sikkim. Dharmadev, the thirteenth Raikat (1709-24) left Baikunthapur and settled at Jalpaiguri. Probably he was tired of the jungle life of his predecessors. But the results of the shifting of the capital was not happy for Baikunthapur in future.⁵²

The history of Terai under Sikkim since the 17th century is almost in un-written form. The dearth of the sources could be the prime reason for the unavailability of the history of this region during this age. It is to be said that Sikkim's sovereignty over Terai

was not as strong as it was expected and their administration was feeble. Being a frontier area the control of Sikkim over it was not so strong and sometimes it was so weak that Bhutanese soldiers conducted raids and loots in this area. They even carried the people of Terai to make them slaves in their homeland.⁵³ This incident states that there was no practical administration in Terai. Under this circumstance it can be assumed that in one sense the region practically enjoyed self rule. The main reason for weak administration in this region was the plain land of Terai was far from the Sikkim hills. There was trouble to contact with the Terai from the Sikkim hills especially in the rainy season and in the winter. Moreover Sikkim's financial gain from this region was not too much; may be only a few thousand rupees (although the exact figure could not be secured from any contemporary record) but the fact of that annexing this region, Sikkim could exercise control over the trade routes passing through it was an overriding factor in the subsequent struggle for occupation.⁵⁴ But apart from these difficulties Sikkim wanted to control this region for maritime trade route through river Mahananda, because through river Tista it was impossible to trade at that time. Under this situation Raja of Sikkim felt it better and easier to collect revenue creating *jotedars* and ex-officials of Cooch Behar State offices. Sikkim started collecting revenue through officials named *Choudhury* in Phansidewa area, outskirts of Siliguri they had established an office. Recruiting officers from Sikkim would have been difficult and therefore, such an arrangement was set up. In the second half of the 17th Century the Kirat chiefs of all the Kiratlands were agreed to pay the king of Sikkim a nominal tribute. The rising king of Sikkim Phunchho Namgyal divided the Kiratland into three divisions, of which one division was for the present Darjeeling including Siliguri (Darjeeling Terai).⁵⁵ After the death of king Phunchho Namgyal, his son Tensong Namgyal became the king of Sikkim state in 1670 A.D. His youngest queen was the daughter of a Limbu Kirat king Yung Ya Hang of Arun Kosi district whose name was called Thungwa Mukma. The third king of Sikkim state Chhyagdor Namgyal succeeded his father, king Tensong Namgyal in 1700 A.D. At that time Sikkim was invaded by Bhutan king Dev Zidar and took possession of eastern Sikkim. King Chhyagdor Namgyal fled away to Lhasa. The Bhutanese took the king's regent Yuk Thing Arup captive to Bhutan and ruled Sikkim for eight years. King Chhyagdor Namgyal was succeeded by his son Gyurmi Namgyal on the throne of Sikkim 1716 A.D. He ruled for 17 years, owing to the weak administration of Sikkim as mentioned earlier. About 1725 A.D a Lapcha chief Tasso Bidur by name of Chyahung estate conspired against the Sikkim's king with a Magar chief and tried to stop to pay the

revenue of the present Darjeeling Terai region. He managed many Lepcha and Magar soldiers behind him to revolt against the Bhutia king of Sikkim. But he was timely checked up and put to death by the king at a place called Badamtam of Darjelling district. Though at the end, in the year of 1741 the Limbu chiefs of northern Limbuwan ceased to regard the Sikkim king as their over lord and stopped to pay him tribute and declared themselves independent.⁵⁶ King Kamadatta Sen of Bijaypur (1761-1769) also gave autonomy to all the chief of hill area as well as Terai area extending from Bhutan to Nepal valley, in the north and river Mahananda to Betiya in the south.⁵⁷ In this connection a question arises where these Sens came in Nepal Terai or they were the descendents of the Sens of Bengal? In this context it is to be said that about 1306 A.D., the Mohammedens had destroyed Chitaur and expelled from there the Chauhan tribe, often called Sisasudhiyas. Then the Chauhans moved towards Nepal and managed to conquer some parts of south and eastern area of Nepal. Ajil Ray, son of Buddhi Ray of Chitaur was the founder of this dynasty. From Tula Sen, son of Ajil Sen, they were called themselves as Sen.⁵⁸ After the death of the Kirat king Kamadatta Sen, who was assassinated in Terai in 1769 A.D., anarchy prevailed all over Kirat state and every district claimed independence with their own king which certainly paved the way for the more able and ambitious Gurkha king Prithvi Narayan Shah to establish a Nepalese empire in this region. Raghunath Sen, a distant relative of king Kamadatta Sen, tried his best to be the king of Bijaypur Morung, but Budhi Karna Rai, who arranged everything for the assassination of the king Kamadatta Sen and went away in a hiding place, came out and usurped the power of Bijaypur. He expelled Raghunath Sen from there and began to rule Morung (1769-1773). In this way after rule of seven generations, the Kirat king of Shah Mokwan dynasty of Morung or Terai came to an end.⁵⁹

1:5 GURKHA INVASIONS IN TERAI IN THE LAST HALF OF THE 18th CENTURY

The coming of the Gurkhas in Nepal strangely coincided with the East India Company's coming to power in Bengal. Like Sikkim, Nepal was also interested in coming down towards her south in the plains.⁶⁰ The southern Terai region separating Nepal from the plains of India was also a natural barrier. It was covered with thick forests and grassy marshes. A virulent type of malaria called the "*awl*" was endemic in the Terai and people were unwilling to cross the forest regions except through established paths along perennial water courses and forest clearing. This malarial fever

of Terai was one of the main factors which prevented closer relationship between Nepal and southern neighbors.⁶¹ Nevertheless in the year of 1769, the two countries of Gurkha and Nepal were united into one kingdom under one name and one ruler, Prithvi Narayan Shah. After establishing the power in Nepal Prithvi Narayan crossed the Dudh Kosi river, the eastern boundary of his new dominations and entered the country of the Kiratas and Limbus. Then he extended his territories to the river Mechi in those days which separated the Limbu country from Sikkim. In 1772 a great battle was fought between the Gurkhas and the raja of Tanbu. Thousands of Gurkhas were slain on the field of battle. Tanbu was incorporated in the Gurkha dominions as a result of this.⁶² On the other hand the Sikkim Government was just resting from the Bhutanese invasion to its boundary, when it was informed about the occupation of Limbuwan including Morung of Bijaypur by the Gurkhas. The Sikkimese force had determined to attack the Gurkha force, and at the same time the rumors had already spread that the Sikkim prince himself came to fight the enemies and thus they started fighting. After some battles, a treaty was concluded at Bijaypur between Sikkim and Nepal in 1775 as Gurkha power was greatly reduced by continuous campaigning. By this time Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah was dead and his son Pratap Singh had succeeded him on the throne (1776).⁶³ By this treaty Nepal fixed her eastern boundary up to the river Kankai in the Terai land. Any breach of the above treaty would entail the party who broke it should give an indemnity fine of one hundred *dharnis* of gold (250 seers of gold). But the same year (1776) or next year the new Gurkha Raja Pratap Singh Shah broke the treaty and invaded Sikkim⁶⁴ and annex the eastern part of Morung i.e. from the river Mechi to Mahananda in the east (present Darjeeling Terai). This territory measuring 230 miles touched the boundaries of Purnea, Dinajpur and Rangpur and was under the Sikkim's regime at that time.⁶⁵ Thus the Gurkhas captured the Darjeeling Terai in 1779-80 without any strong resistance by the Sikkimese under the leadership of Ganguram Thapa.⁶⁶ A news reached to Ganguram that Sikkim had taken some immediate action against him. This kind of information flourished in some official documents of Sikkim but not in any British sources. Nevertheless, in order to foil this move and legitimize his hold on Morung he came into contact with the leaders of *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs*, most prominent among them was Majnu Shah who had previously secured five *jotes* from the Sikkim ruler, was given five more *jotes* by Ganguram to enlist his support.⁶⁷ In this connection it is to be noted that almost immediately after an attack into Sikkim, the Lepchas held up the Gurkhas for nine long years until in 1788 the ruling prince was defeated and fled to Tibet. When the Gurkhas

finally returned, they were able to conquer Sikkim territory up to west of the Tista river.⁶⁸

1:6 INVOLVEMENTS OF THE SANNYASIS, THE FAKIRS, THE GURKHAS AND THE ENGLISH DURING 18th CENTURY IN THE TERAI

During the second half of the 18th century the *Sannyasis*⁶⁹ and the *Fakirs* came in large numbers in Terai. But from where did they come in Terai is still unknown. Dr. Arun Bhusan Majumdar, an eminent scholar and former I.C of N.B.U said that, after the defeat of Mirqasim, Nawab of Oudh and the Mughal king in the battle of Buxar against the English in 1764, their soldiers became helpless and tried to leave the place where they be safe and wanted to get rid of the English. But the question was where the soldiers would go. At that time Oudh was not a safe place to them, and neither were even not Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. Therefore they had to select a place where the English had no influence and they decided to stay at Terai jungle which was somehow free from English influence. After coming Terai, some of these soldiers took services under the Raikats, Cooches and the Bhutanese. They became to be known as *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs*. These people later fought battles against the English in favour of Bhutan, the Raikats and the Koches. Many of them plundered Suba Bengal from this region. Mostly they are called as *Giris*.⁷⁰ Among these *Sannyasis*, many of them were engaged in trading activities and commerce with Bhutan through the route of Tibet. The prominent name in such activities are Purnna Giri Gossain, who is better referred as Puran Giri Gossain in British records.⁷¹ This type of theory also supported by an eminent historian, Prof. Amalendu Dey in his book '*Sirajer Putro O Bangsodherder Sandhane*'.⁷² It is to be said that the *Sannyasis* came to Bengal principally to take part in bating festivals. After passing through the territory of the Nawab of Oudh, they followed a route generally through the north Bihar and the borders of Nepal Terai. The *Sannyasis* usually crossed the river Mahananda by several routes. So, it was in the late 18th century that eastern Morung or present Darjeeling Terai became the permanent home of the *Sannyasis* which was at that time under the rule of Sikkim.⁷³ Moreover to save his country from the invasions of the *Sannyasis* and the *Fakirs*⁷⁴ the Sikkim Government provided them land for settlement in order to keep peace in the region .Some of them were literary *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* in true sense but most of them were not sages or ascetic. The landowner of Purnea, Dinajpur, Rangpur used to fear them and maintained some distant from them. On the other hand the poor and needy people were much closer to them because they were the

friends of the sufferers .Among them many of them worked in King's army in lieu of wages. The East India Company observed that in the battle of Cooch Behar, Baikunthapur and Bhutan with the English there were forces composed of hired soldiers from among the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* as stated earlier.⁷⁵ Dr. Buchanan Hamilton also observes that '...they (*Sannyasis*) plundered with the utmost barbarity and when pursued went to retire to Morung in the dominations of Nepal, where they found shelter and sale of their booty.....Many still reside in Morung.'⁷⁶ But it is interesting to note that during the struggle of Prithvi Narayan Shah with Newar king, the *Gossain* and the *Fakir* merchants sided with the Newar *Raja*, Jayprakash. Even Muktananda and *Fakir* Ramdas were sent as emissaries to solicit English help on behalf of the Newar Raja in June 1767 against the ambitious Gurkha King, Prithvi Narayan. The Kinlock expedition was accordingly sent against Prithvi Narayan with the hope that adequate concessions for Trans-Himalayan trade and for trade in Terai would be obtained from the Newar Raja. After the Nepal route was virtually closed, it was found that the commodities of Bengal used also to be conveyed into Tibet through the Terai.⁷⁷ The *Sannyasis-Fakirs* attitude towards Prithvi Narayan Shah was presumably for his opinion that they (*Sannyasi-Fakirs*) sucking all the profits of Nepal. He therefore, never allow the *Gossains* and *Fakirs* who used to carry on a highly profitable trade between Bengal, Tibet and Nepal, to stay in his country. Rather they were ruthlessly expelled.⁷⁸ In this connection it is to be mentioned that in 1766, Mr. Myrtle, an English official engaged by the Company in fir trade was killed along with his men by the *Sannyasis-Fakirs* in the Terai region.⁷⁹ So, from the above mentioned facts it is evident that the entire zone was rife with discontent during the late 18th century due to the new revenue and commercial policies of the Company, which occasioned serious economic and social dislocation by unseating some established *zamindars*, depeasantizing the settled agricultural communities, endangering the textile and silk industries and ruining the economic interest of the peddlers and itinerant traders. Armed depredations by the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* within the Company's territory, were a regular feature during the 1780-86 and it continued till 1800.⁸⁰ During this period the British East India Company still could not provide internal security and administration of the region. In the August 1776, the Fauzdar of Rangpur Jainal Abedin had informed Reja Khan that for maintaining peace and internal security, though there was a *Kotwal* in Rangpur but it was difficult for maintained to pay attention beyond the area of two miles. Reja Khan ,had written a letter to Warren Hastings, the than Governor of Bengal informing him about the helpless condition of security and internal

administration of the area .Yet, Warren Hastings did not have any other option ,but to use forces against the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* to maintain law and order. The strong measures of suppression of the East India Company had gradually stopped the raids of the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* in the region .But in the western part of Baikunthapur a new problem was been created with the progress of Prithvi Narayan Shah and his Gurkha army who crossed the Mechi river and entered the Terai area of Darjeeling. Prithvi Narayan Shah had earlier made contact of Warren Hastings and expressed his wishes to occupy the Terai region knowing totally well about the problem faced by the Company regarding the *Sannyasis*. He had mentioned that the *Sannyasis* will no more create tensions in the region once it would be occupied by the Gurkhas. But Hastings was doubtfull and did not agree to the pretext of the Gurkhas to occupy the region in the name of the *Sannyasis*. But very soon the Company become engaged in Cooch Behar-Bhutan war and could not pay attention towards the activities of Nepal. Taking an advantage of the situation the Gurkhas occupied the region of Terai.⁸¹The frequent incursions of the Gurkhas and the *Sannyasis* in the Rangpur frontier alarmed the Britishers. Warren Hastings is said to have contemplated a campaign against Nepal, but that did not materialize. In 1784 he decided to send a friendly mission under Foxcroft to Nepal to know the real intention of the Gurkhas. But with the few months of it, the Governor General left India and nothing more was heard about the mission. The Nepal Government however, in a letter of 13th May 1786, to the Collector of Rangpur professed peace and amity with the Company's Government and also gave an apologetic explanation for the violence committed by the Gurkha Jamadar Gungaram Thapa within the territories of Baikunthapur.⁸²During the latter half of the 18th Century the Gurkha forces crossed the border of Tibet and captured 275 miles. But within a few days China and Sikkim had extended their help to Tibet which remove the Gurkha forces.⁸³ The Lasha authorities have requested the English to remain neutral. Nepal on the other hand, being encouraged by the commercial treaty with the East India Company concluded in March 1792, appealed to the Governor General for help. But the policy of neutrality pursued by Lord Cornwallis in the Tibeto-Nepalese conflict neither satisfied the Nepalese, nor the Tibetans. This dashed the hopes of a Trans-Himalayan trade route of Warren Hastings. Since the Tibeto-Nepalese war British interests in the Himalayan and reaction of China towards them became a major factor in the eastern Himalayan politics. The English realized that they had to formulate a definite policy with regard to the

northern frontier. A Himalayan frontier rather than Himalayan trade became now their objective at that time.⁸⁴

1:7 INTRODUCTION OF COMPANY'S RULE IN TERAI

The political background of Terai region mentioned above reveal how the British tried to take possession of the whole area. The East India Company could not ignore the importance of the Terai region from the very beginning for political, diplomatic ,and economic reasons.⁸⁵ From 1768-1770, when the Company first started to show an interest in the Terai, the Gurkhas had already began a campaign to establish their supremacy, not only in the Nepal but in the *moffusil* territory of North-Eastern India where administration had been transferred by the Mughal Emperor to the Company in 1765 and the Company's *zamindars* accused the Gurkhas for encroaching on their lands. In this reasons, Lord Cornwallis, in 1795, went out of his way to assure the Raja of Nepal that he was prepared to define the long uncertain border between the Terai and Purnea in conformity with the Raja's representations. At that time, the Gurkhas showed themselves anxious to have this disputes settled.⁸⁶ But from the early part of the 19th century the Company tried to strengthen their hold in the northern Himalayan range, close to the frontiers of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. As Company's relation with Bhutan and Nepal was not cordial, the English wanted to develop friendly relationship to strengthen its hold in the Himalayan frontiers and to look after the movement of both Bhutan and Nepal in the near future. Nevertheless, after some time the Gurkhas threatened British interests in the north eastern district of Kheri in the province of Avadh (Oudh) better known as Gorakhpur Terai. Lord Moira pointed to the Gurkha advance westwards towards the Sutlej and eastwards far into Sikkim as posing a certain threat to the British interests.⁸⁷ At that time it was rumored that Bhutan and Nepal separated by a small kingdom of Sikkim, were about to conclude a military alliance against the Company. The Company therefore wanted to isolate Nepal and prevent it from getting assistance from any quarter, especially China, since the latter exercised suzerainty over Nepal from 1792 onwards. Thus it was the political and military necessity of the Company to opening a relationship with Sikkim. The alliance with Sikkim seemed to promise to the Company three advantages, namely) facilitate communication with China via Tibet ii)prevent Nepalese-Bhutanese intrigues against the Company and iii)level an attack on the Gurkha flank. In view of this advantages the Company instructed Captain Barre Latter of the Bengal Army to establish contacts with Chungpud Namgyal, the than ruler of Sikkim⁸⁸On the

other hand there was evidence to suggest that the Gurkha ambassador at the Imperial Court in Peking has asked the Chinese authorities for military aid in 1813 against the Sikkimese. So it was the most crucial question facing Lord Moira at the outbreak of the Gurkha war was what would be the Chinese attitude if the British annexed Nepalese territory, an event which the war might indeed make necessary?

So from the above circumstances in March 1815, Barre Latter, with a force of 2000, entered the Terai and established a contact with the Sikkim Darbar. Lord Moira, however, was well aware that although the Raja now governed his truncated kingdom from Gangtok, he had before the Gurkha invasion possessed as discussed earlier "...a territory to the southward, including a portion of the lowlands adjoining the Zillah of Purnea". He wanted it to be made clear to the Raja that there would be no questions of this particular piece of land reverting to the Sikkim Darbar at the end of the war. So, Latter did not find it too difficult to persuade the Raja of Sikkim to co-operate and in return for some modest supplies of ammunition, the Raja himself offered that when the British "...commence hostilities in the low country, we will attack the Gurkhas in the hills". He also made a spontaneous gesture of offering to open up a channel of communication with the administration in Lhasa. In return for Sikkim's help, David Scott assured Raja Tsug Phud Namgyal that he could rely on British support in his attempts to recover the territories lost to the Gurkhas.⁸⁹ In 1814 the Gurkhas raided the south-eastern part of Sikkim. Then the King of Sikkim had applied to the British Government for the help. The East India Company was looking for this opportunity and took the venture to attack the Gurkhas. The Gurkhas neither had the strength nor the capability to fight against the East India Company and were compelled to sign a treaty.⁹⁰ Thus by the treaty of Segauli, on 2 December 1815 signed between the Company and Nepal, the war came to an end. By the treaty of Segauli, under Article III all the lowland between the river Mechi and Tista (i.e Darjeeling Terai) and all the territories within the hills eastward of the river Mechi, including the fort and lands of Nagri, the pass of Nagrakot leading from the Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between Nagrakot and Nagri, were ceded to the East India Company in perpetuity to Nepal. On the other hand under Article VI, the Raja of Nepal had to promise not to molest or disturb the Raja of Sikkim in the possession of his territories, and to agree that in the event of any differences arising between Nepal and Sikkim, the dispute would be referred to the arbitration of the British Government, by whose award the two side

(Nepal and Sikkim) would be abide.⁹¹ A few months after the Segauli treaty, news reached to Company that a large Chinese force was on its way towards Nepal. Lord Moira was totally averse to involving the Company in any disputes that Nepal might have with China. But within some period the Chinese crisis was over. But still today it is unknown to us that way 2000 Chinese troops suddenly descending on Lhasa.

Following the political settlement after the Gurkha war, relations between the Company and Sikkim was further extended. During the war, the Company's intentions had been to isolate Nepal and towards that end, to use Sikkim to facilitate communication with China if the need arose. To ensure that the Raja kept to his side of the bargain until the war was successfully over, the Company decided that the Nepalese territorial conquests in Sikkim should be surrendered.⁹² Lord Moira therefore, authorized Barre Latter to hand over the territory lying between the rivers of Mechi and Tista to Sikkim on certain conditions. The Raja of Sikkim accepted the conditions by signing a treaty with the Company at Titalia on 10th February 1817. The treaty of Titalia ran into ten articles. Under Article I "The Honorable East India Company cedes, transfers and makes over in full sovereignty to the Sikkimputtee Rajah, his heirs or successors, all the hilly and mountainous country situated to the eastward of the Mechi river and to the westward of the Tista river, formerly possessed and occupied by the Rajah of Nepal, but ceded to the Honorable East India Company by the Treaty of peace signed at Segauli". The Raja for his part agreed i)not to commit aggression on the Gurkhas or any other state (Article II); ii)to submit to the arbitration of the Company his disputes with Nepal and other neighboring states(Article III); iii)to render military assistance to the Company in case of need when they engaged in war in the hills(Article IV); iv) not to allow any European or American to reside in his kingdom without obtaining the permission of the Company (Article V); v)to deliver up British- Indian dacoits who may take refuge in his kingdom (Article VI); vi)not to afford protection to the British-Indian revenue defaulters or other delinquents(Article VII); vii)not to levy transit duties on British merchandize and to afford protection to merchant and traders from Company's provinces (Article VIII).In return of this privileges, the Company under Article IX guaranteed to the Raja and his successors to preach able possession of the territory made over to him in Article 1. The parties agreed to ratify the treaty within one month of its signing (Article X).⁹³ The political significance of the treaty of Titalia could not be over emphasized. Firstly, it helped to check the Nepalese expansion towards the east. With the restoration of the

territory between the rivers Mechi and the Tista to Sikkim, the latter became be a strong buffer state between Bhutan and Nepal. Secondly, it brought Sikkim for the first time under the influence of the Company as Articles II to VIII had limited the freedom of action of Sikkim to a large extent .Thirdly, the Company gained many trade privileges , the most of them was the right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier. For the first time the Company acquired a clearly defined right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier through the territory of a friendly kingdom. Moreover, Sikkim was found to “afford a more ready communication with Lassa and China than that through Bootan”. The treaty of Titalia thus marked the beginning of British interest in Sikkim as trade route to Tibet and as a factor in India’s security.⁹⁴ But the ulterior motive of the Company behind this treaty was to establish its hold over the entire Himalayan territories. Two months after the signing of the treaty of Titalia Lord Moira, on the recommendation of Baree Latter granted to Sikkim an additional territory of the Terai,i.e the low lands lying between the rivers Mechi and the Mahananda. The Darjeeling Terai area was granted to the Raja of Sikkim under certain conditions, namely, that (i) the articles of the treaty of Titalia were to be inforce in the Terai also, (ii) that Sikkim was to surrender to the Company all the British-Indian criminals and other public defaulters who make take refuge in the Terai and to allow the police officers of the Company to pursue them in to those lands so as to arrest them and (iii)that in time of emergency the Governor General’s order to the local authorities were to be obeyed in the same manner, as those coming from the Raja of Sikkim. In a word, Sikkim allowed the Company to exercise suzerain right over the Terai.⁹⁵

1:8 THE CESSION OF DARJEELING

The English were not satisfied until they got a total foothold in the Himalayas. An opportunity come soon in 1827 when a frontier disputes arose between Sikkim and Nepal regarding the jurisdiction of a piece of land called Ontoo, which was situated in the eastern side of the river Mechi. In pursuance of the terms of the treaty of Titalia in 1817, under Article III the Government of Sikkim referred to the matter to the Company for arbitration.⁹⁶ In 1828, the Company deputed captain G.W Lloyd and G.W Grant to investigate the dispute and it was during their investigation they came across a small village called ‘Dorjeling’.⁹⁷ They realized that it was ideally located both for a Sanatorium and a military station. Their observations were brought to the notice of the Governor General, Lord Bentinck. Lord Bentinck decided to send Captain Herbert, the

than Deputy Surveyor-General for further survey of that area and the second report being actually favorable.⁹⁸ Thus in 1830 Lord Bentinck proposed to his council that they should open negotiation with Raja of Sikkim for transfer of Darjeeling to the East India Company. But at that time Charles Metcalfe, opposed the proposal on the ground that, it would involve the Company in a dispute with the Raja of Sikkim who would suspect that they had plans to annex the territory of Sikkim. Furthermore, Nepal also considered the Company's possession of Darjeeling, which was very near to their frontier as a preliminary step to British invasion of Nepal. Metcalf's opinion was to prevail for the time being, but when (in 1835) he was no longer a Member of Council, Lord Bentinck revived the question of the transfer of Darjeeling in exchange for an equivalent either in land or money and therefore Lloyd was deputed to negotiate with the Raja of Sikkim.⁹⁹ This opportunity occurred in 1834-35, when some Lepcha refugees in Nepal having been made an inroad into the Terai. The refugees were obliged to return to Nepal, and after certain terms and conditions fixed by the Company and the Raja of Sikkim, the negotiations ended in the execution of the Raja of Sikkim¹⁰⁰ of a deed of grant on 1st of February 1835 in the following way: "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 east of the Rungpo and Mahanadi Rivers".¹⁰¹ In 1841, the Company sanctioned an yearly allowance of Rs.3000 to the king of Sikkim in the form of compensation for transferring Darjeeling to the British and the grant amount was doubled in 1846.¹⁰² What the Chogyal immediately got in return was a gift parcel, one double-barreled gun, one rifle, one 20 yard bale of red broad cloth, two pairs of shawls, one of inferior quality and the other superior.¹⁰³ "Darjeeling provided numerous facilities for free trade in mercantile commodities and in labour; its extensive forest lands, which could be reclaimed for cultivation, attracted large number of the Lepchas and Nepalese to migrate and settle there. Such developments not only threatened the privileges traditionally enjoyed by certain Bhotia families of Sikkim-for instance, their monopoly of trade in this part of Himalayas-but also disturbed the age-old population balance and inter-tribal relations in Sikkim, and became a source of embarrassment to Sikkim in her relations with Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet".¹⁰⁴ The cession of Darjeeling says Lamb "...was

an event of the greatest importance in the history of the northern frontier of India. Not only did it place the British in close contact with the hill states, their peoples and their politics, but also it provided a constant reminder of the possibilities of trade with Tibet.”¹⁰⁵ But within few time the British experienced difficulties in reaching Darjeeling as the road from Rangpur to Darjeeling went through Terai, which was still under Sikkim. The Company naturally depended on the goodwill of the Sikkim to reach Darjeeling. This forced the British to undertake a programme for the development of Darjeeling and to take up the task of (various) road construction up to Darjeeling. Not only the government of Nepal viewed the construction with suspicion, Sikkim also did not take it with good grace till then but also disturbed the population in Sikkim¹⁰⁶ and on the Bhutan’s point of view it was threatened the traditional privileges enjoyed by the certain Bhutia families living in Sikkim, which had enjoyed a monopoly of trade. Sikkim did not appreciate the presence of the English so close to its border for it might bring them into confrontation with the Company. The English, in fact wanted a pretext to occupy the whole of the Terai region which once they had restored to Sikkim.

1:9 THE ANNEXATION OF TERAI BY THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1850

The development and urbanization of Darjeeling became a serious concern for Sikkim, because a huge number of labourers and farmers migrated from Sikkim to Darjeeling and initiated the urbanization process which led to the scarcity of labourers in Sikkim. These labourers had also accepted the citizenship of the British-Indian Government. As a result of which the Dewan Namgyal of Sikkim who was popularly known as ‘Pagla Dewan’ had placed a petition demanding the return of the labourers from the British regime of Darjeeling to Sikkim. Sometimes raids were conducted by the Sikkim to capture forcefully the workers and agricultural labourers from Darjeeling and they were sold as slaves in their own kingdom. The British Government thus cited the instances of these raids and the illegal activities of the Sikkim Government towards the labourers and farmers as a reason for their migration from the region of Darjeeling. These incidents led to the growth of tension in the Anglo-Sikkim relation during the first half of 19th Century.¹⁰⁷ By 1846, relations between Campbell and the Sikkim Darbar had steadily worsened, and finally he warned the Raja that if he persisted in his unfriendly attitude towards the British Government, they would be compelled to annex the Terai,¹⁰⁸ though it was their motivation for last decade. Then the opportunity

presented itself when Sir J.D Hooker(an English Naturalist) and Dr. Campbell, while traveling in Sikkim with valid documents were arrested on 7th November 1849 and kept confined by the Government of Sikkim. Campbell, in his diary, mentioned that he was subsequently tortured in the hopes of forcing him to agree that the British would refrain in the future from interfering in the Sikkim affairs.¹⁰⁹ The news of Campbell's arrest caused considerable panic at Darjeeling. After failing all the attempts to release them and the Raja, Chumpud Namngyal, refused to comply the demand of the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie for the release of Campbell and Hooker on the ground that the letters of the Governor-General did not bear proper seals. Therefore, the Government felt it indispensably necessary to crash the power of the Sikkim Raja and feel the power of the Government with which he had to deal.¹¹⁰ C.H Lushington was appointed to act as the superintendents of Darjeeling and was instructed to procure the immediate release of the prisoners, failing for which he had asked to advance and occupy the country. Lushington posted a huge army near the river Rangit and addressed a letter to the Raja of Sikkim demanding the release of the prisoners. Even the letter reached the Raja, the prisoners were released on 9th December 1849.¹¹¹ The next development was the *Raja* sent presents to the captives, and the Rani sent Campbell a fan and other trifles to give to his wife. Finally, they set off under guard and accompanied by *Dewan*, who calmly going to visit Darjeeling to sell ponies, for the British frontier. On 24th Dec, 1849 they reached Darjeeling.¹¹² But to punish Sikkim the British had stopped the payment of tribute Rs.6000 per annum to the Sikkim Government and under the initiative and steps taken by Dr. Campbell the British captured a large portion of Terai region of Sikkim¹¹³ which he had originally received as a free gift from the British and which was the only lucrative or fertile estates he possessed. This area bounded on the north by the rivers Ramman and Rangit, east by river Tista, west by Nepal and south by district Purnea.¹¹⁴ These annexations brought about significant changes in the relation between Sikkim and British- India. Previously the district had been an enclave in Sikkim territory and to reach it the British had to pass through a country acknowledging the rule of a foreign though dependent, potentate.¹¹⁵ Hence, the entire operation has been graphically described in the Political Consultation, 1850, an expert from which may be quoted:

“The seizure was quietly effected four policemen taking possession the treasury , which, it was said, contained exactly six rupees, and by announcing to the villagers the confiscation of the territory to the British Government. At that same time there was annexed to it the portion of the Sikkim hills(Darjeeling Terai).....a tract of country containing about 5,000 souls. The result was to confine the Raja to the

mountainous hinterland and to cut off all access to the plains except through British territory. The change was welcomed by the inhabitants, for it only involved the payment of a small fixed tax in money to the treasury at Darjeeling, instead of a fluctuating one in kind, with service to the Raja and liability to...the Dewan.”

The decision was never reversed; after the Anglo-Sikkim war of 1861 the British Government decided to reinstate the Sikkim king in power, but Morung remained for ever a part of the British territory. It is interesting to note that, even after ceding this territory by the treaty of Segauli, as mentioned earlier, Nepal maintained its claim to it and retained manned outposts in Siliguri. A letter dated 1831 from Puskar Shah, the than Executive Officer of Nepal Government here, and addressed to Bhim Sen Thapa attests that whatever might have been the original position, the Nepali officials posted in Terai continued to believe that it was a Nepal territory.¹¹⁶ In this connection one question arose in our mind that why the Company did not annex the whole of Sikkim, probably in the one hand the Company thought that the political expediency of maintaining the kingdom as a separate entity was huge. On the other hand Sikkim was not wiped out of the map because of its strategic situation between Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and British dominion in India. But interestingly enough, the non annexation of the whole of Sikkim did not result in the increase of British influence there. This was due to the strength of Tibetan faction in Sikkim.¹¹⁷

Thus the process which was actually initiated in the late 1760s was completed in the late 1850 to the satisfaction of the Calcutta authorities as well as of the Court of Directors. Although during the late 18th century the British might not have contemplated the permanent annexation of the Terai, the fact that it was always occupying an important place in their frontier policy beyond doubt. Their consistency in this regard flowed partly from military considerations as Nepal was disruptive of the British northern frontier policy, but primarily because Terai was important for its timber wealth and provided an appropriate trade route to Tibet. The annexation of Terai was considered useful by the English for preventing Bhutan from establishing direct contact with Nepal and for helping India to negotiate with Bhutan, if necessary, on convenient military terms. This incident is not of paramount importance in the history of British expansionism in India, but it serves the purpose of revealing the functioning of the imperial mind in which the major motivations were power and profit. It was broadly true

in the larger context of colonial politics, but in specific situations as well as this one, all the contrapuntal are harmonized with the diapason cerebral.¹¹⁸

The Darjeeling Terai, soon after annexation, was placed under a Superintendent. It later came under the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling district from 8th May 1850. The Deputy Commissioner was fully in charge of the Darjeeling district. According to A.J Dash “After this annexations British territory in Darjeeling was continuous with the British Districts of Purnea and Rangpur in the plains and the Sikkim Raja was cut off from access to the plains except through British territory”.¹¹⁹ Due to the result of the Anglo-Bhutanese war (1864), Kalimpong had been brought under British administration and the district was divided into two Sub-divisions, the Headquarters(*Sadar*)subdivision with an area of 960 sq. miles including all the hills on both sides of the river Tista and the Terai subdivision with an area of 274 sq.miles which included the whole of the country at the foot of the hills. The headquarters of the Terai subdivision were at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa from 1864 to 1880 when they were transferred to Siliguri. In 1891, when Kurseong was elevated to the status of a sub divisional headquarters it included both the Terai and the lower hills west of the river Tista. The Deputy Magistrate at Siliguri worked under Sub-divisional Officer of Kurseong and looked after the Terai estate under the Deputy Commissioner. Darjeeling district including Terai was first placed under the Rajshahi division until October 1905 and after the Partition of Bengal it was again transferred to the Bhagalpur division but following territorial re- arrangements it came back again to the Rajshahi division of Bengal in March 1912. In this meantime Siliguri got status of a sub-division in 1907.¹²⁰ From 1919-1935 Darjeeling district including Terai was considered as a backward tract, under which ‘the Governor of a province under the direction of the Governor General in Council, shall have the sole responsibility of administering the backward tract and the Governor was to determine, whether any law of the provincial legislature would give effect in such area’. Between 1935 to end of the British rule in India in 1947, Darjeeling district remained a ‘partially excluded area’, for which the Governor was to consult the Council of Ministers.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the East India Company did not have any particular policy of expansion in Darjeeling Himalayan region before 1768, but due to the circumstantial events the Company gradually went to adopt a policy of imperial expansion in the Terai region of Darjeeling. Before the annexation of Darjeeling by the British in 1835 the East India Company had two kinds of interest in the region, in

the first place a trade route through Sikkim to Tibet and secondly, to connect Nepal and Bhutan, Terai became the only region which could make a base for connecting these two kingdoms. Many historians believe that the forest and rich timber resources did not attract the British so much the trade routes towards the Terai. Terai was important to the British as it was by now necessary for the East India Company to travel from Darjeeling to Calcutta very often. Terai would reduce the time of 30 days to cross the rivers and mountains. As a part of Terai was under the rule of Sikkim Government and it often created problem while crossing it, therefore Dr. Campbell repeatedly emphasized on the annexation of Darjeeling Terai. Thus, if we critically analyze the situation, it can be derived that the release of Hooker and Dr. Campbell as captured by the Sikkim Government was just a pretext to annex Terai but the real reason was basically commercial. The most prominent among these was to established a connecting road way towards Darjeeling by establishing footholds in Terai and Kurseong. Many historians and scholars have mentioned that the Darjeeling and Terai were under the hold of Nepal from ancient period, but from the above discussion it becomes clear that Nepal had captured Sikkim Terai not as a part of its kingdom's but as a part of expedition. The annexation of Nepal was never permanent and since the treaty of Segauli (1816), many treaties and agreement were signed between Nepal and British but Nepal never placed any demand for Terai region in any of the agreement .Even if Nepal had demanded for Terai chances of acquiring it was less, because the British were very strict and strengthen their hold over the region and moreover the demand of Nepal would have been illegitimate. Furthermore, Terai was under the hold of Sikkim since latter part of the 18th Century but it was clear from the above discussion that the continuity of Sikkim's position was not maintained. During the Mughal rule the political boundary of the Himalayan region could not be properly drawn rather it was neglected but it was under the East India Company's rule that the political demarcation was cleared accomplished in 1850 by annexing Darjeeling Terai. It was due to the policy of expansion adopted by the British in India was reflected in the establishment of a clear cut political boundary in the Himalayan Terai region.

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5. During colonial period the British district in the Kumaun Division of the North-Western provinces, lying between 28⁰50'30'' and 29⁰22'30'' north latitude and between 78⁰46' and 79⁰47' east longitude covering an area 938 Sq. miles. The district was bounded on the north by Kumaun district, on the east by Nepal and the district of Pilibhit, on the south by the district of Bareilly and Moradabad and the native state of Rampur and on the west by Bijnanur (Bijnor).The chief town of the district is Kasipur, but the administrative head quarters during the summer was at Nainital. For further informations see, W. W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol-XIII, Trubner & Co,London,1887,pp.207-211.
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Cherrung and Bagh. The Assam Dooars were: Booree-Goomah, Kalling, Ghurkhalla, Banska, Chappagoorie, Chappa Khamar and Bijni.

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