

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Introduction

Darjeeling Himalaya looms like a sentinel from the heat shimmering plains of North Bengal. Nestled in the range of Eastern Himalayas, the territories of Darjeeling Himalaya historically belonged to Sikkim and Bhutan. The interests of British East India Company allow the whole region under its occupation in three phases during the thirty years from 1835 to 1865. The coming of Colonials into the areas of Darjeeling Himalaya was motivated by the several factors. One of the main reasons was the geo-political importance of strategic location and overland trade with Tibet and Central Asia (Dasgupta, 1999). This small frontier region situated on the Eastern Himalaya soon became the sanitarium for the treatment of injured European soldiers of warfare, and also became the summer headquarters of the Bengal Governor in the then colonial period.

The ethnic composition of the three hill subdivision of Darjeeling Himalaya witnessed the sharp changes in its demographic pattern in the mid of 19<sup>th</sup> century, which completely alters the geography of this region. It was evidently caused by the waves of massive migration from Nepal emanated, from the three major factors. The first factor is the ascendancy of Gorkha ruler Prithivinarayan Shah Policy of conquest ensuring the domination of the high caste Hindu over the Buddhist and Non – Hindu Nepali tribe, resulted in the alienation of tribal *Kipat* into royal possession and making them landless. The tribal communities of Kirat region such as the Limbus, Rais, Gurungs and Tamang were socially downgraded to the position of Sudras. The vulnerable

position faced with severe atrocities in the name of ‘*Panchakhat*’ confiscated their property if they refrained to accept their rules. Faced with repressive measures, large chunks of Limbu population along with the fellow groups banished the Kirat region of Eastern Nepal. These communities entered into the British ceded portion of Darjeeling which became their enclave for new accessible place for resettlement. The second reason of welcoming immigrants was to boost up the tea industry with the free source of cheap labours. Lastly, the third one is to recruit them in British battalion of Gorkha regiment for their bravery, courage and loyalty to strengthen their army infantry. Historically, the Limbus in Eastern Himalayas was the landowners and their land was known as Kipat, which is non-transferable. Thousands of them were killed during Prithvi Narayan Shah’s unification campaign to land reform act of 1774 A.D. They became landless and were forced to live an exiled life by migrating to different parts of Assam, Sikkim and Darjeeling. Thus, the arrivals of Limbus in Darjeeling Himalaya trace their ancestral roots in Eastern Nepal of Limbuwan Kingdom. Later this Limbuwan kingdom was incorporated into greater state of Nepal by the then ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah’s.

### **Background of the Study**

Limbus the tribal communities of Darjeeling Himalaya trace histories in the kingdom of Limbuwan. Their Kingdom got fragmented into two portions during the course of political conquest in the Eastern Himalayas. With the passage of time, Limbus straddles between the two countries of modern Nepal and India (Darjeeling & Sikkim Himalaya) with their fluid identity. Though the Limbu population is spatially distributed in the mainland of India and Nepal, the present research work completely focuses on the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya.

The Darjeeling Himalaya is a perfect blend of social, cultural and religious diversity, creating an interesting facet for understanding the dynamic society

of Himalayan communities. The present research is an ethnographic and exploratory study of the Limbu community of Darjeeling Himalaya. An effort has been made to understand and examine the economy, society and culture of the Limbus along with their habitat through an extensive field work. The three different villages of Darjeeling Himalaya namely Teesta Valley Tea Garden, Dungra Khasmahal and Bungkulung are studied. The study helps us to understand the social and cultural aspects of Limbu community and their struggle to retain their cultural heritage and homogeneity in the heterogeneous society of Darjeeling Himalaya.

The serene and pristine environment of Darjeeling Himalaya is a homeland for various tribal communities belonging to Mongoloids racial group. Limbu is one of the communities of this racial group having its own unique culture, customs and traditions. The ethnicity and tribalism of Limbus is at crossroads. The process of Hinduization among Limbus is quite common and is clearly visible in their socio-cultural sphere of life. The changing trend in their environment, economy, society, and culture has pushed them into oblivion from their cultural identity. The rich intangible heritage of this Himalayan community is fading away. A very less research work has been done on them compared to other ethnic groups. They are overlooked and obscure in the main stream of tribal affairs and development in Darjeeling Himalaya. Therefore, the studies seek to understand the society and cultural aspects of Limbu community of Darjeeling Himalaya in a holistic manner.

## **1.2 A Note on Limbus**

Limbu community is an Indigenous ethnic group of Indo-Mongoloids family (Sanyal, 1979). Linguistically they belong to Tibeto- Burman Himalayan language of Sino-Tibet family and had their own written script known as *Srijunga lipi*. The word Limbu means an Archer. Limbu people are called by

different names like ‘*Yakthungba*’, ‘*Tsongs*’ and ‘*Monpa*’ in the different parts of Eastern Himalayas.

The oral narratives of Limbus claimed Limbuwan as their ancestral homeland. Limbuwan is said to be conquered by them through the use of bows and arrows. Later the Province of Limbuwan was divided into seventeen *thums* (districts) and was ruled by the ten powerful chiefs. The armpit of Limbuwan holds its extension from Eastern Nepal to Western Sikkim including the modern day Darjeeling Himalaya. Their homeland was traversed by mighty Himalayas and swift flowing rivers which occupies an important place in their myths, folktales and oral narratives. The reverence of Mount Khangchendzonga by the Limbus itself certifies that this community has been living in Darjeeling Himalaya, since the time immemorial. Mount Khangchendzonga occupies an important place among them. The mountain is worship by this people on all their occasions, like religious rites, agricultural *pujas* and in the sermons of *Mundhum* recitation. Even the Limbu *phedangba* talks about the presence of their ancestral homeland in the areas around this holy mountain.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The Eastern Himalayan region is inhabited by a number of ethnic communities. These communities have their own history and ethics. In this socially and geographically diversified society, there are some regional pockets in this Himalayan belt having such groups and communities who had not achieve socially sanctioned position in the broad spectrum of the society so far. Due to unavoidable reasons like geographical impediments, socio-cultural isolation, lack of communication and transportation such communities could not get any identifiable and definable position in the society and remained in a state of backwardness for a long time. There are still such communities in India who are beyond the experienced and knowledge not only of the common

masses but also from the reaches of the social scientists. They are very few in number to attract the attention of politicians, social workers and policy makers. Due to the lack of proper representation and leadership such communities could not come in the limelight of the society.

Darjeeling Himalaya, in this context, is not an exception. It, even today, has adhered to and concealed so many ethnic groups who are geographically isolated and confined within the hilly, forested and remote far-flung areas of the Darjeeling Himalaya. The numerically large number of Scheduled Tribes of India is at cross-roads today. While some tribes have come to avail the benefits of development and have become socio-economically advanced, there are also many tribal groups who find it difficult to maintain their livelihood. Being in the inaccessible and underdeveloped periphery of Darjeeling Himalaya, Limbus are economically and educationally one of the backward Himalayan community. Their primary occupation is agriculture though some of them practice a little trade as well. They are also in the armed services in India and abroad because Limbu are considered as one of the martial communities favoured by the British for their army (Subba, 2006).

The change in the political boundaries, occupation, shifting of the village and the process of acculturation made the Limbus to secure different identity in the modern era. With the influx of Nepalis labour force by the British for raising the state revenues, the Limbus began to get acculturated into their fold. Moreover, with the improper representation and efforts of sustaining their social conditions in the State intervention policy and programmes by the authorities, the Limbus began to lose their distinct identity and finally got submerged into the Nepali fold.

Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya is influenced especially by the Hindu caste members through the process of Hinduization. The adoption of a new way of life among the Limbus replaced their tribal faith whose oral tradition could not

legitimize their tribal religion of *Yumaism*. Apart from the course of assimilation and acculturation, the influence of modernization is evidently visible among this ethnic group.

The Limbu communities are spread in both the urban and rural areas of Darjeeling Himalaya. The majority of concentration is mainly found in rural areas where they sustain their livelihood in a relative isolation. The literature review clearly suggests that the social and cultural researches on Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya are very scanty. Besides this, the aforesaid studies on Limbu were basically conducted at the Eastern part of Nepal and Sikkim. Thus the study on Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya is very negligible and Limbu culture is in need of preservation in Darjeeling Himalaya. The present study is very necessary, both for academic as well as for practical needs as there is a wide gap research on the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya from social science aspects.

#### **1.4 Conceptual Framework Used for the Present study**

The systematic and meaningful research work carries the concepts, approaches and paradigms to examine the society and culture of the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya. For this study, Structural Functionalism and Ethnographic approaches have been adopted. The major concepts used in the study are noted below.

##### **1.4.1 Structural Functionalism**

*A.R Radcliffe Brown* formulates the concept of Structural functionalism. Structural functionalism / functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex organization whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions.

Functionalism seeks to address society as a whole in terms of their function and its important parameters like traditions, customs, social norms and institutions. The structural functionalism approach is an anthropological and sociological analysis, with a broad focus on social structures that shape society as a whole (Srinivas, 1988). The study of the economy, society and culture of the Limbu community of Darjeeling Himalaya is basically related to communities who are nature worshipper and confined to the Darjeeling Himalaya since time immemorial. The perspective of the present study is based on the context of Limbu people. The emphasis on understanding the Limbu society from grassroots helps to fill up the gap between textual knowledge and so far contextual ideologies regarding their belief, faith, ritual and Limbu society. Structural functional approach is adopted for this study for which empirical field data are collected for understanding the Limbu community of Darjeeling Himalaya.

#### **1.4.2 Economy**

An economy is the total aggregate sum of all transactions of value between two agents, such as one individual to one other individual, or between groups of individual activity, such as in organizations to other organizations, and between one nation and another nation. In tribal society people live close to the physical environment which supports them and determines their economic activity and economic organization showing how potential energy in the habitat and in the human population is utilized for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Vivelo, 1978).

#### **1.4.3 Society**

The term society is often used in various senses. According to Cole (1920), “Society is the complex of organized associations and institutions within the community”. MacIver (1959) has given a succinct definition of Society. In his words, “Society is a web of social relationship”. Society usually, an entity

defined as some combination of the following (a) a group or population of people, (b) who share a similar language and set of customs, beliefs, institutions and traditions, and (c) who have a strong sense of distinct group identity (Vivelo, 1978).

#### **1.4.4 Culture**

It is the possession of culture that differentiates man from others and labels him a cultural animal. Man is able to recreate the natural environment by this peculiar endowment, called culture. His social life is governed by culture. Culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society” ( Tylor 1874). Culture is shared patterns of learned belief and behavior constituting the total life way of a people; the totality of tools, acts, thoughts and institutions of any given human population (Vivelo, 1978).

#### **1.4.5 Cultural Ecology**

Cultural Ecology is the study of human adaptations to social and physical environments. In Etic terms, the study of culture as an adaptational device; i.e., the study of the interrelationships between sociocultural systems and their habitats. In Emic terms, the study of the people’s cognitive orientation toward their habitat and their adaptation to it (Vivelo, 1978).

#### **1.4.6 Habitat**

Habitat is an ecological context, as an area in which the requirements of a specific animal or plant are met (Monkhouse, 2008). Habitat is the area in which an organism can live and which affords relatively favourable conditions for existence. Habitat is immediate surroundings, social and physical, in which a population lives it, is the external milieu to which population adapts (Vivelo, 1978). The environment comprises the resource base of a community’s most basic activities and the people manipulate and mould it in an effort to meet

their needs. Therefore, the study of the Habitat where a community lives and leads its life is essentially important particularly for knowing about the economic, social and cultural aspects. Because these aspects have direct and indirect concern with the environment of a given society, it is, therefore, essential to be acquainted without knowing the different component of the environment the economy, society and culture cannot be understood properly (Clapham, 1981).

### **1.5 Review of Literature**

In this section some relevant literatures are reviewed. These reviews of literatures are on some important ethnic communities of Indian Subcontinent in general and Darjeeling and places adjoining Eastern Himalaya focusing especially on Limbus in particular.

Beteille, (1971 ): In his book *Caste, Class and Power : Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village* is a well researched book based on the field work experiences in sripuram village in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu. The author has shown a descriptive analysis of the three caste group and agrarian classes and interaction between them. He discussed the caste structure of Tanjore district into three segments Brahmins, Non-Brahmins and Adi-Dravidians from one another. According to him castes are enduring groups, fairly well defined boundaries governed bu complex principles. Class on the other hand meant a category of persons occupying a specific position in the system of production. In the context of power Beteille reiterated the fact that it was difficult to define power in formal terms inspite of its location in formal structure such as panchayat and parties.

Bose, (1977): In his book *Tribal life in India* gives some insight into the tribe's social life. Tribes differ from others in their social system. They have retained their own marriage regulation. Almost all marry within their restricted local group, and are sometimes guided by their own elder or political chief in

external and internal affairs. In other words they form socially distinct communities who have been designated as tribes in the schedule for special treatment, so that within a relatively short time they can come within the mainstream of political and economic life of India.

Bisht, (2001): In his book *Ethnography of a tribe* is the first ever study of the little known Anwal community of Indo-Tibetan border, who are confined for a long time to hilly, forested and remote areas of Uttarakhand Himalaya. The centuries old isolation of the Anwals has made their identity undefinable in the broad spectrum of Indian social systems. The Anwal people reside in the higher reaches of the border of Kumaun Himalayas their settlements lie in Dharchula tehsil of Pithoragarh. The author has deeply studied the Anwal society and tries to evaluate their social position in the broad spectrum of the Hindu social organization. Keeping the view of nature and objectives the study is done in more scientific manner using purposive random sampling method. The main findings of the study shows the Anwal community is still backward and underdeveloped. Though they bear the common traits found in the Indian tribes yet not classified as a tribe, or in OBC category neither in the Scheduled caste. Therefore, the Anwal community has remained obscure for centuries.

Biwas, (2008): In his article *The Dhimals- A little known tribal group of Sub Himalayan West Bengal Historical perspective* study the Dhimals of Naxalbari Block of Darjeeling district. Dhimals the lesser known community are in marginal number. The author uses the secondary data for his present study to trace down the historical accounts and has highlighted the list of the ethnography of Dhimals done on the various aspects of their culture, economy, society and culture. The author has done a comparative study on the Dhimals of West Bengal and Nepal. The finding of the study shows that the condition of the Dhimal in Nepal is better than those of Dhimals who are residing in the Naxalbari, India. Even though Dhimals are included in OBC's but still faces

difficulties with their counter part of the same status due to their socio-economic background.

Brouah, (2011): In this article *Sustainable Tribal Development: A Case Study in Nagaland* the author focus on the health conditions among the Ao's tribe of Nagaland. Ao's are the tribe who lives in isolation where the Jhum cultivation is still a predominant occupation. The inaccessibility of infrastructure in the study area is one of the reasons of poor socio-economic conditions of the people. The health awareness among the Ao is negligible. The improper sanitation and lack of proper food have resulted in the outburst of many diseases/illness in their health. The conditions of child and womenfolk are very vulnerable during the time of pregnancy and child delivery. The absence of medical facilities and primary health centers shows the risk in the life of the patient during the hours of need. Moreover the idea regarding vaccination is absent among the people except few educated. Lack of regular checkup and burden of work in the domestic chores has lead to deplorable health conditions of the rural womenfolk, though the Christian missionaries are trying to improve the conditions of the Ao's. But due to the geographical and social constraints development is lacking far behind. Therefore, there is a need of good and effective effort from the Government to uplift them.

Caplan, (1970): *Land and social change in East Nepal* examines the relations between the indigenous tribal Limbus and the immigrant but now dominant Brahmans of the Ilam District of eastern Nepal. He argues that Limbu-Brahman relations are characterized by cleavage and interdependence. The two groups are divided by competition over land, by cultural differences, and by differences of caste rank. Two systems of land tenure, *Kipat* and *Raikar*, exist side by side in eastern Nepal. With the formation of the Kingdom of Nepal in the latter half of the eighteenth century large numbers of Hindu immigrants were encouraged to enter eastern Nepal. Many of the immigrants received grants of land from the Limbus. Until 1886 these lands continued to

be regarded as *Kipat*, subject to Limbu, but in that year the government allowed non-Limbus to convert to *Raikar* tenure any lands which they had been or would in future be given by Limbu owners. The main beneficiaries of these conversions have been the immigrant Brahmans. Brahmans are now the wealthiest and largest caste in the region. The economic position of Limbus is further weakened. Members of many tribal groups in eastern Nepal have adopted some of the Sanskrit customs of the dominant Brahmans. Limbus, however, has resisted Sanskritization and has attempted to maintain their distinct and separate identity. In a brief but suggestive discussion of the politics of culture Caplan analyses the relations among land tenure, the structure of the Limbu community and Limbu identity.

Chemjong, (1963): *Kiratkalin Bijaypur Ko Sankshipta Itihasa* The book highlights the History of Bijaypur and the role of Kirat King. Bijaypur was located in the Eastern side of Nepal before Limbuwan came into being. At that time it was popularly known as Kirat desh. In ancient time it was whole Kirat but after 600 years it was divided into two parts Limbuwan and Khambuwan due to interior hostility. In the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the lowland of Limbuwan state Morang was ruled by a Kirat king whose name was Sangla Ing. His ancestors had come from Kamrup and his Kingdom was stretched from Teesta River in the east to the Kosi River in the west to Sagurigadi in the north to Jalalgad in the south. After his death his son PunglaIng who succeeded him on the throne and adopted Hinduism and called himself by the name of Amar Rai which means the immortal king. The Bijaypur town remained capital of Limbuwan and Morang states up to 1774 A.D. It was founded and named Bijaypur by kirat king Bijaynarayan Rai of Sanglaing family himself in 1584 A.D. It was captured by another Kirat king Lo Hang Sen of Shan Makwan dynasty in 1609 A.D his descendents ruled it for seven generations. In 1769 A.D Dewan Bhudikama Rai, the Chief Minister of Bijaypur succeeded his King Kamdatta Sen and ruled Morang state from 1769

to 1773 A.D and from 1774 A.D this town fell into hand of Gurkha King Prithivi Narayan Shah.

Chemjong, (1978): *Kirat Mundhum* The Limbus, one of the main branches of the historic Kirat dynasty inhabiting the major part of eastern Nepal after the takeover by the Lichchhavi Kings, have their own distinct language, culture, tradition, religion and oral literature called Mundhum. The Mundhum is a common religious oral narratives of all Kirat people – Limbu, Rai, Yakkha, Sunuwar and Athpaharia in which Limbu is the one who designate themselves as “Yakthungba,” they call their language “*Yakthungbapan*” and their script “*Srijunga*”. They have a long tradition of narrating or reciting *Mundhums* and performing rituals and ceremonies in their own distinctive ways. *Mundhum* is a holy oral scripture transmitted verbally from one generation to another. This book explores into rites, ritual and customs of Limbus. The *Mundhum* occupies great value in Limbu culture. The book consists of legend, folklores, sermons, and prehistoric accounts, moral or philosophical exhortations in poetic language.

Das, (1964): *The Koras and some little known communities of West Bengal* have briefly studied the social and cultural life of Koras. He has also partly studied the some ethnic Nepali communities of West Bengal inhabiting the Darjeeling Himalaya. Regarding the study of Limbus he has studied the social and cultural aspects of this community. He also gives the rough sketch of their spatial distribution in Darjeeling. Where he mentioned Limbus are found largely in the Darjeeling district mainly in the Tea gardens, Khasmahal areas and Kalimpong subdivision. On the account of demographic data they numbered around 19835 in 1951 and were mostly an agriculturist people.

Dahal, (2003): In his article *Dhimal Culture: continuity and change* shows the Dhimal culture and their norms, rituals with the very social life in the modern era of continuity and change. Author in his article tries to trace their origin and

history mentioning the references of various researches done on them. The Dhimals fall into the category of janjati in Nepal but are no longer in isolation. Though there is a change in their society due to new economic opportunities but at the same time they have maintained continuity of their language and cultural practices among them.

Dutta, (2014): In this article *Limbus: An outline of their Music and Culture* the author has sketch down the cultural and musical aspects of Limbu rituals and tradition. The author tries to examine and understand the folk Limbu songs and its importance with the very social and cultural life depicting the social stories, dreams and daily affairs of everyday life.

Fitzpatrick, (2011) in his book *Cardamom and Class: A Limbu Village and its Extensions in East Nepal* has studied about the history of class formation in the traditional Limbu village of Mamangkhe. It discusses about the how the cardamom plantation and production change the village economy and distribution of wealth and resources in the village. He also explained how the migration of non-Limbus led to lose the land of Limbus in the hand of the non-Limbu population. This work sketches the details of the cardamom cultivation and the surfacing of economic differentiation in the socio-cultural and economic life of the Limbus in the village of eastern Nepal.

Gautam and Magar, (1994): *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal* Volume II has thrown some light on interesting and colourful culture of the Limbus. Emphasizing on their historical background the authors traces the genealogy of Limbus as *vamsavali*. Subba synonym to Limbu was the title given to them by the then ruler Prithivi Narayan Shah. The author also delineated the spatial geographical distribution of Limbus from past to present time. The authors have contributed a significant study on Limbus regarding their physical features, language, clan, family and life cycle rituals.

Gustavsson , (2013) : In this dissertation *Religious Change and Identity Construction among the Limboos of Sikkim* focussed on the impact of religion and religious change in construction of cultural identity and identity politics of a small marginalized tribal group of Sikkim. The author has made an attempt to understand the role of different ethnic Limbu outfits and association working as a cultural engineer for promoting the Limbu religion *Yumanism* for the identity construction to show clear drawn borders between them and others. In the contemporary ethno political landscape competing assertions of ethnic identities as a part of the desire to be desire to be recognized and visible to their surroundings is very important among Limbus. Because they have been politically ignored in the then colonial rule and for now in the present contest also are politically marginalized. Therefore, the author has shown how the tribal religious identity is no longer a sign of subalternity but rather a political consciousness, and in the same way how Limbu are emphasizing themselves as a distinct community with a respected religion.

Haimendorf, (1979): *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh: Tradition and Change in an Indian Tribe* in his anthropological monograph the author has shown the changes that have occurred over a few decades in the Gond society. In this book he outlines the consequence of events affecting the position of the Gonds in between four decades and the policy on the succeeding governments could fill the whole volume. He also highlights the phratries as the main pillars of their social structure. To sketch their communal structure he describes their clan and kinship system. He devoted 30 pages in his volume to enumerate their Feudal system past and present context. Afterwards he has mentioned about the Brads, chief of the Gond, and their tribal justice and its social values in their life.

Jones, (1976): in his book *The Himalayan Woman: A study of Limbu women in marriage and divorce* studies the place of women occupy in a society dominated by men. The book mainly highlights the diversity of the feminine

condition based on material collected from the Limbus of the Terhathum region of Eastern Nepal. The authors start out from the initial observation that divorce among the limbus is frequent. At first sight, then, limbu marriages seem unstable. But these statistics are not helpful if one wants to find out the reality. The authors study successively the rules of inheritance, particularly in real properties, the definition of lineage and of clans and the three types of Limbu marriages. In their study of marriage the authors show that the Limbus of Therathum contrary to their brothers who live farther north, mostly practice arranged marriage. The young girl is consulted regarding the choice of her husband, but initiative remains with the boy. The authors have new elements at their disposal in explaining the divorce question. Though the men take the initiative in the marriage, the women have all the authority to accept it or not. True divorces after several years and after several children are rare. The Limbu marriage is therefore more stable than it would appear at first glance. And it is this stable marriage that is once again the women choice.

Jones, (1977): in his article *Courtship in an Eastern Nepal community* has described the courtship of Limbu community. According to author Limbu recognize three kinds of legitimate marriages magi biha or arranged marriage, choribiha or marriage by theft and Jaribiha or adulterous marriage. In all these marriage ceremony an institution of courtship known as the Dhannach plays an integral role. This courtship dance is unique among the various castes and ethnic groups of Nepal. In case of Limbu community it provides potential marriage partner an opportunity to exercise freedom of choice in the selection of spouse. A dhannach is an informal dance which is performed in festivals, markets and carnivals between boys and girls of marriageable age. It is a Limbu form of dating. There are certain rules in the dance which doesn't permit the members of the same clan of opposite sex to participate. Though, the *dhannach* seems unique to the Limbus of Eastern Nepal but Hindus look upon the dhannach as somewhat shocking form of behavior. Because of this

dance Limbu marriage has built the flexibility in the selection of a spouse that is not found among the non-limbus. But looking into the positive side the dhannach allows Limbu women to gain knowledge of available males that other Nepali women are unable to acquire. Finally the dhannach highlights the cultural differences between the Limbu, Hindu and Buddhist people in the Eastern Nepal. It reflects the conservative nature of Limbu kinship and social institution is experiencing rapid social change. Thus dhannach may represent an adaptive mechanism to the forces of change that tends to divide and segregate limbu communities among Hindu enclaves.

Jones, K. S., (1994): in her article *Limbu Spirit Possession- A case study* deals with her experience regarding Limbu spirit possession in a lady who used to do her household work. Author along with her husband hired a lady named *Kanchi* a limbu women who was often possessed by a limbu deity *Yuma*. The author briefly describes the condition and on what circumstances she was possessed by a limbu spirit. Another incident the author narrates was a story of *Sahili* who too possessed by a spirit but a evil one. Therefore Author tries to find out reason for this spirit possession in a limbu woman. She came to conclusion that that as such cases are not unusual in Nepal because quoting to Lewis statement author found that these spirit possession was done in order to gain attention, respect from a deprived section of women.

Kainla, (2010): in his article *Comparative study of the Limbu Folk Deities* studied the folk deities of Kirat Limbus and describes their origin, works, features, rites and rituals as well as the emergence of Priesthood and its long term effect on Limbu society. He made an attempt to classify Deities on the basis of gender, altars and food habits of deities along with necessary offerings required in their worshipping. He shows how the dominance of big traditions is deviating limbu recently from their religion and traditional values with the changing pace of life. With the emergence of a new a sect of Limbu religion Satyahangma with ideals of Hinduism influencing Limbu by giving new

names and meanings to the traditional deities in which the Limbu are losing their identity along with the loss of their link and continuity with their past.

Limbu, (1989): *Kirat parampara Limbu ritithiti ra Sanskriti* The book deeply explores into the rich, authentic traditional rites and rituals which Limbu people performed in their social, cultural and religious affairs of day to day life. The author has categorized the book into three parts starting with the Origin of Kirat and concluding with the significance of Mikwa Tongsing Mundhum. According to Limbu myth when Princess of Kush Island named Kangati was married to Mahadev (*Lord Shiva*) and from them a son was born whose name was Kirat. The very first King of Kirat was *Yalamber* later the King himself named as Kiratishwar.

Author has deeply thrown a light on many ceremonial limbu rituals like Metkhim (*marriage*), YangdangFangma (naming ceremony), Takshi (*Food feeding ceremony of baby*) and Khauma (*rites that has to be performed in one's death*). Thus, the book gives a good knowledge to insight oneself into the customs of Limbus.

Limbu, (2011): In her M.phil thesis *Practices of Resource Management in a Limbu Village* aims to find out the relation of Limbu with nature and the role of Government and NGOs in resource management. The study was conducted in Maunabuthuk VDC of Dhankuta district of East Nepal. The households were selected basically on the availability of people in their house and snow ball sampling method was applied. The agriculture was the main economic activity with only few of people who are associated with off farm activities. The agricultural land is divided into upland and lowland. Orange plantation is the main source of income. Limbus of the study area has established their own local system of management of their resources and shared a special relationship with the nature. The role of the government for resource management has been minimal in comparison to the NGOs while the role of

women in resource management has also been encouraging. Though Limbu people are managing their resources as per their needs and with their local Knowledge, still they have their own challenges to deal with and they also need to further develop their management strategies.

Limbu, D. K., (2008): In his Project report *Indigenous Knowledge of Limbu on Ecology, Biodiversity and Ethnomedicine* made an exploratory survey of Indigenous knowledge on ecology, biodiversity and ethno medicine taking Chokmagu and Ranita VDC of Panchthar district of East Nepal. The study revealed that Limbu people use over 200 plants for a number of purposes. Almost all the plants (96%) studied had Limbu names, which implies that the native has been close association with these plants from the past. Limbus of the study area copes with natural calamities by traditional methods. They use prophylactic measures utilizing local resources and indigenous ideas. Women were found to possess an astounding wealth of knowledge about medicinal plants and their use, often surpassing their male counterpart. Since this tradition of orally transmitting the knowledge has its own serious disadvantage, a parallel documentation practice must be encouraged.

Limbu (2008): *The status of women in Kirat religion* is a final report submitted to SIRF, Secretariat, Nepal is the study which made a humble attempt to explain the status of women in the Kirat community. Limbu, Rai, Yakhas and Dewan come under Kirat confederation because four of them are perfectly blended into the same customs, rituals and practices. Their main religion is Kirat guided by the principles of Mundhum which is the holy text book for them. In Kiranti society women has respect and power to their mate. The findings of the study shows that the status of women in Kirat society is good compare to average Nepali women. Their educational backwardness is the main reason for women underdevelopment. In today's context they feel equal to their male counterparts but to a certain extent they are excluded from the religious dimension for some socio-cultural affairs.

Mondal, (2001): In his article *An Ethnic Profile of the Himalayas* present an ethnic and tribal profile of the Himalayas both of western and eastern region in a comparative perspective where the emphasis has given on their economy, society and culture. The author has also traces down the historical background of these groups and has studied their cultural matrix in the Himalayas. The findings reveal that the people bear physical features of two major groups namely Caucasoid and Mongolioids. They mainly speak in Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman languages, but have their specific tribal dialect too. On the basis of their economic activities two cultural areas has identified mainly the cultural pastoral area and Jhum cultural area. The author concludes saying owing to natural and environmental peculiarities the Himalayan people are less exposed to outside world. Lastly, an emphasis has stress on the holistic and sustainable development by harnessing the local mountain niches which are compatible with the mountain specification.

Mondal and Chatterjee, (2010): In their article *People of Darjeeling Himalaya: A profile* presents the ethnic profile of Himalayan communities in aspect of their economy, society and culture. The authors have trace down the origin of different ethnic communities on the basis of their history, folklore and beliefs. The authors have studied the Nepali society in a broad spectrum along with major economic activities of the people. The paper is very informative and shows the transition and changes occurred among the major ethnic groups.

Mallick, (2009): *The Bhujel of Darjeeling Himalaya: a Bio-Social Study* has studied the anthropological profile of the Bhujel of Darjeeling Himalaya who has migrated from the Karnali region of Western Nepal. The term Bhujel was used frequently only after the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century and before it was termed as Ghanti. The study is holistic in orientation covering both biological and cultural aspects of Bhujel. In his study author has made an attempt to present the Bhujel life, activities, morphological and genetical features. The

area of Kalimpong subdivision namely Suruk, Samthar and Yanmakun has taken into consideration for the study purpose. The thesis is divided into two parts with twelve chapters. In part I the physical characteristics of the Bhujel has been examined and also an attempt had been made to examine their affinity with other Mongolioids group. In part II attempt has been made to illustrate an economic profile of the Bhujel through highlighting their economic status, conditions, pursuits and livestock. The material culture, festivals, rites and rituals of this community is studied along with their political organization and the changing nature of their culture. The author also emphasized and highlights the major problem of this community i.e. Social suppression, living in very isolated areas where infrastructural facilities are not properly developed. He tries to show how the rich material traits and indigenous knowledge system of this people has been vanishing very fast. Therefore author has stress on the need of documentation of this indigenous community and its endangered culture.

Mipun, (1987): In his book *The Mishings of Assam* is an auto ethnography work which deals with very sensitive plus interesting study on socio- cultural change among Mishing tribe of Assam. Socio-cultural changes because of culture contact through different media are inevitable in the modern dynamic world. Dynamism is a sign of progress. The Mishing is a major tribe of Assam. There has always been socio cultural as well biological interaction among the tribal and non-tribal population, and as a result the tribes are at different levels of modernization. The influence of Hinduism is very strong among many tribes. The Mishings were originally hill dwellers in Arunachal Pradesh. After their shift to plains of Assam, they became the part of the regional Assamese culture. Therefore, the author has made a modest attempt to study and analyze the interrelationship between acculturation, communication and development with special reference to the Mishings.

Nembang, (2007): In his project report, a study on the *Socio-Economic Condition of Limbu Community* in Nepal studied about socio-cultural aspect with economic consideration of two wards of Limbu households of Panchthar and Jhapa districts. His main objectives of the study were to understand economic aspects of the villagers in relation to their living conditions. The income analysis along with the migration and remittances of the respondents are carefully discussed in the research work.

Northey and Morris, (1987): In their book *The Gurkhas their manners, customs and country* briefly studied the history of Nepal. The book is divided into 6 parts. The first and second part deals with general information about Nepalese people and their customary laws and rituals. The authors have in detailed studied the various ethnic communities residing in the eastern, Western and Central Nepal. Therefore, the authors have attempted to give a picture of the country as a whole, and a description of the manners and custom of the various races inhabiting Nepal at that time. The part fifth section of the book is devoted towards the study of two Kirati people Rai and Limbu. The author has explained the gotra of Limbus along with the narration of wars between Limbus and other kings. The book deeply explores into the Limbu rituals of marriage, death rite and other expect of shamanism practices among Limbu. The material culture of Limbu is well studied along with the socio-economic setting.

Pradhan, (2014): In this article *Marital Rituals and Customs of the Limbus* marriage is studied with descriptive and analytical perspectives. The paper discussed the various forms and rituals highlighting the internal cleavages in terms of their social – cultural set up. The most common form of marriage among Limbus is elopement marriage. But the traditional Limbu ritual associated with the arranged marriage is well underpinned in this article. How this traditional marriage customs and rituals bind the both marital parties in a more reciprocal value is shown by the author. The paper highlights the status

of Limbu women who enjoys absolute freedom and liberty as compare to other groups in choosing her partner. Thus, the author has made a very good approach to understand certain cultural codes of the traditional Limbu marriage.

Panda (2015): In her book *Culture, Heritage and Identity – The Lepcha and Mangar Communities of Sikkim and Darjeeling* is about the documentation of the cultural pursuits and quest for identity issue among Lepchas and Mangar. Based on research experience of more than one and half year the author has shown how this two communities perceive their cultural identities through roots and routes of tradition and heritage. The study is primarily based on field trips supplemented by the available written documents representing the two varied sets of examples of the processes of cultural construction or reconstruction.

Rai, (2012): This M.phil Dissertation *Social structure, cultural value and Transformation – A study of Rai community in Sikkim* is an ethnographic research work carried out in the three villages of Sikkim. The study basically focused on the changing social and cultural environment of Rai community. Where she has used some fundamental concepts and has related it with the works of Srinivasan, Karl Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Dipankar Gupta to justify her work in relation to social change. Her findings reveal many new things among which emerging of new religious sentiment among Rai community is very important. Regarding social change new generation are keener to adapt and follow popular culture. But the old generation wants to attach with traditional norms and rituals. She showed how the state had played a prominent role in preserving the traditional and cultural roots of Rai community by constructing Kirat temples and observing major Rai festivals. The introduction of Rai language in elementary school and the revival of old aged traditions of keeping three hearth stones in every household.

Roy, (2003): *Dynamics of Social Formation among the Lepchas* has studied the social formation among the Lepchas with land as the central unit of attention. He deeply studied the different Lepcha villages of Darjeeling District along with their Geographical and Historical perspectives. He further analyzed the changing economic parameters in Lepcha traditional agricultural method by means of various factors like labour, transfer, ownership and landscape along with the institutional sources of capital and how the adaptation of new technique and innovation has helped Lepchas to sustain a better livelihood. Author has also shown how the major agricultural products mainly food items besides being utilized for consumption are distributed to meet the obligation i.e. social and ritual. Thus the entire work and relating chapters of the Thesis tried to establish a link to identify the type of Lepcha social formation.

Sanyal, (1965): *The Rajbansis of North Bengal* is the first empirical documentary of the Rajbansi community which presents a demographic account of this people. The author's describes their social, economic and religious life. He also highlights their material culture, social structure on the basis of their relationship, mode of exclusion from this community. He throws light on their dialect and outlines their grammar. He also makes an outstanding documentary on their songs and dances. To examining their religious and festive life he traces out a remarkable sign of Sanskritization in this community. In this book he draws a careful discussion about the continuity and change of their traditional culture.

Sanyal, (1973): *The Meches and the Totos-Two Sub-Himalayan Tribes of North Bengal* In this book the author has studied about the two Sub-Himalayan tribes Meches and Totos of North Bengal. The Meche tribes are sparsely distributed in Assam valley, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Duars areas. He has studied the different aspects of their social and cultural life. He further insight into their daily functioning of life and thus presents the vivid

picture of their day to day activities like sports etc and the description of their possessed material culture in which they are shaping their life. Meches are isolated tribe having their own traditional culture, and rituals of ceremonial to death rite in which author has highlighted their ethics and moral values in terms of religion and their term of relationships. While studying another primitive tribe Totos author has taken into consideration of Toto dominating area of Totopara in Jalpaiguri. Toto are the most backward and secluded tribes of North Bengal. He analyzed their Social and Economic life where they mostly depend on forest for their Livelihood. They are away from the modern materialistic life hence their living condition is simple. He studied the material aspects like dress, food habits of the Totos and says their conditions improve when this tribe came into limelight for their intense study and research work. Under the initiative of West Bengal Government to a certain extent their condition has improved by the maintenance of roads and establishment of shops, schools and other services. The social organization of Toto is very rigid they prefer to marry within their own community but some exception are there i.e. they cannot marry if they belong to same gotra or sib and like this author has describes their language, ceremonial function, religious rites and death rites.

Sanyal, (1979): *The Limbus-A South Eastern Himalayan Kirata People* In this book author has studied the Kirata race Limbus regarding their origin by giving account of their historical past and how these tribe flourished in South Eastern Himalayan region of India. He highlights their social and cultural aspects by throwing some light on their Language, Religion and cultural ceremonies and different ritual performed in marriage and mortuary rites. He focused on the social and domestic life of Limbus and their relationship with the nature, people and places.

Sagant, (1996): *The Dozing Shaman-The Limbus of Eastern Nepal* this book is collection of essays on the Limbus of eastern Nepal, a Tibeto-Burmese

speaking group who live in the valleys located between Mount Everest and Mount Kanchenjunga. The book revolves around two main subjects. The first concerns the shamans-their healing power, their command over the elements, and their power to legitimize local headmen. The second theme deals with the residues of traditional political organization which, until recent times, were characterized by a system of 'great men' chosen by the gods and recognized by the community. A number of themes concerning traditional life are also dealt with in this book such as children's independence, 'marriage by abduction', and integration within the Nepali nation. The book also questions certain notions of ethnography such as the cultural conditioning of the observer, and the relation between myth and reality.

Sharma, (2010): In his master thesis entitled *Socio- Economic Conditions of Limboo in Sikkim – A case study of Lunchok Salangdang Gram Panchayat unit* has made a humble attempt to study the Limboo community. Sikkim is one of the small Himalayan kingdom's in the colonial time ruled by Namgyal dynasty. The western Sikkim portion was ruled and populated by dominant Limbu tribes. After the post colonial rule Sikkim subject was under Indian government which declares it as the one of the state of Northeast India. Limbu are called as Tsong in Sikkim. The main concentration of the study is focused in small Limbu hamlet a micro unit of Luchok Salangdang gram panchayat. The main objectives of the study are to understand the socio-economic conditions and the interpersonal relationship with non-limbu of the village. The major findings of the study reveal that male population is more than female. The impact of modernization and globalization has influenced the Limbus. The main economic activities are farming and despite of their reservation position they have not been able to do wellbeing in their social sphere. Majority of the households are encircled with the vicious circle of poverty.

Subba, (1990): in his article *Clear Mountains, blurred horizons-Limbu perception of their physical world* shows the belief of limbu in indigenous knowledge especially regarding management of natural resources with the help of ethnographic materials an attempt has made to study the physical environment with their social and spiritual aspects. He analyzed who are the limbus and compare their ecological condition with other groups of people living in the same habitat. He shows the importance of Mundhum in the religious affairs of Limbus while performing various rituals. He describes the economic history of limbus and their sustaining strategy for livelihood showing pastoralist as their main occupation and landownership system of Kipat among limbus. Lastly he states that though the limbu conception of their physical world is interlinked with their spiritual and social worlds but they lack the scientific knowledge of interdependence between the various elements of physical environment and thereby cause great harm.

Subba, (1990): in his article *Limbu Ethnicity at Crossroads* has analyzed the formation of Limbu Ethnicity in Eastern Nepal and Adjoining parts of Western Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills. Limbu being the member of Kirata origin racially belongs to Indo-Mongoloids family and linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman family. The author has shown the formation of ethnic identity among kiratas and how Sarva Kirant Chumlung or All Kirata Association tries to bring them in one roof but indeed of cultural similarities, the linguistic and geographical barriers have played important role in preventing the growth of the Kirata Nationality. There was a strong sense of nationalism among Limbus of Eastern Nepal in favour of Limbuwan or Limbu kingdom but whereas the Limbus residing in western Sikkim and Darjeeling hills were completely aloof from this sentiment because they were never part of Limbuwan though they have similar socio-cultural linkages. Whereas the Limbus of Sikkim were part of another ethnic association called *Lhomentsonsum* during 17<sup>th</sup> century formed of coalition of Bhutia ,Lepcha and Limbu This was completely a political

move of the then ruling Bhutias to strengthen their rule in Sikkim as they always felt threatened by Non-Bhutia communities. But this association couldn't really pick up its gears due to many reasons and thus Lhomentsongsum remain as an underground organization. Lastly Gorkha identity flourished and distracted many of them from the Limbu nationalism. But it is still doubtful if Limbus will remain satisfied with the Gorkha nationalism because there are chances they may fall back upon the Kirata Nationalism.

Subba, (1999): *Politics of culture: A study of three Kirata communities in the Eastern Himalaya* has tried to reconstruct the social and cultural life of the three communities of Kirata-the Limbus, the Rais and the Yakhas living in the Eastern Himalayan on the basis of various historical and well as ethnographic data. His work describes about the present situation of active process of reinventing linkages not only within one's own groups but also at the level of cognate concepts like 'Kirata', 'Janjati', and 'Mongol'. The author has describes the culture of the Kiratas from birth to the death rituals in relation to the Tagadharis. The language and the religion is another aspect shown here, like the dialectical variations across the different places and regions are more pronounced among the Rais then among the Limbu and Yakhas. Binding all the Kiratas groups together by one Kirat Language is not easy as imposing one language over the other had always proved to be counter-productive but rather it is the common sense of having lost their respective language over the one Nepali language that binds these groups. The study further states that the Kiratas cannot afford to ignore those Tagadharis elements which have over the time fused with their own culture as it could also affect their own culture but this will not certainly help the process of internal homogenizations and external differentiation at National and State levels. Subba's literature has overall traced the similarities between the Limbus and other Kiratas belonging to Nepal as well as those in Sikkim (northeastern region of India). It presents the process of various organizations (family, kinship, political, socio-

economic, religion, linguistic, culture) and their role in bringing together the Kiratas. The gradual socio-cultural degradation of these communities explains their need to reconstruct their identity.

Subba, (1999): in his article *Limbu Nationalism and Integration* has analyzed the marginalization of Limbus by King of Nepal on the ground of subjugating in July 1774 conforming the customs and traditions, rights and the privileges of the Limbus but the fact that it was not honored and has become a major cause of the resurgence of Limbu nationalism in Nepal. In 1866, The Nepalese government passed a discriminatory legislation to all such Kipat lands converted into government land and even could not be reconverted into Kipat even if the original owners cleared the mortgage. The Limbu revolted against this legislation and orders were passed between 1902 and 1903 banning of the transferable of land. The Kipat system a form of communal landownership of Limbus was finally abolished during the 60s of the present century. The Limbu nationalism in the Eastern Himalayas resembles the formative state of nationalism where Limbus are yet to delineate the boundaries of their nation from those of the neighboring nations which consists of confronting dense assemblage of cultural, racial, local and linguistic categories. Limbus may strive for a confrontation with the nation states either singly or in association with other such marginalized nations or will be more sensitive to geographical and cultural peripheries of Nepal due to the state arrogance.

Subba, R. J., (1998): *The Philosophy and Teaching of Yuma Samyo (Yumaism)* describe about the belief system and philosophical doctrines of Yuma Samyo (Samyo = religion) or *Yumaism* of Limbus. *Yuma Samyo* is a way of life for the Limbus, the belief system is traditionally handed over to the descendants, generations to generations through ThungsapIam (oral *Mundhum* or Scripture). It provides brief account of the creation of the Universe and the human race by Goddess *Tagera Ningwaphuma*. It further describe the eighteen Dens (loks) of the Universe in which the highest, sacred place is *Sangram Pedang den* where

*Tagera Ningwaphuma* resides (top of the Universe) to *Khemading Yongsong den* (bottom of the Universe) surrounded by flames of fire (hell). Thus, according to this study, the Limbus believes that there are nine worlds (loks) above the earth (inclusive) and nine worlds (loks) below the earth in this universe. The earth is between the two worlds. Yumaism believes that there are two supernatural powers –Malevolent and Benevolent to reattribute and reward the vicious and virtuous deeds of human beings. This study describes the origin of religious priests, their ranking, their heredity and vocation. The *Phedangba, Sambas, Yeba', Satyahangma and Yuma* are the Limbus religious practitioners who fulfill both the role of a religious priest as well as local healers. The heredity linkage is important because if the individual cannot indicate his heredity, he is not recognized; both patrilineal and matrilineal affiliation is recognized. It shows four kinds of different religious priests and their functional differences and their gears.

Subba, R. J., (2012): *Yumaism, the Limboo Way of Life* in his book the author has presents the ancient religion of Limbu tribal society Yumaism. The book documents the evolution and ideology of Yumaism which plays an effective role to strengthen the social and religious institution of Limbus. A structured approach is attempted by the author to explore the conceptual beliefs, ethnic ideas, and folk ideas. The book studies Yumaism from a philosophical point of view and seeks to resolve some philosophical problems of incoherency.

Subba, (2015): In this article *Relevance and Significance of Proverbs among the Limboos of Sikkim: A Socio-Cultural Perspective*. The author has shown the importance and relevance of proverb in the day today affairs of Limboos. Based on the three process of methodology she has collected these Limboos proverbs from the western portion of Sikkim by formal and informal methods. She had shown how these proverbs can be interrelated in everyday life. These proverbs are the source of Knowledge, wisdom and how the way of life is often guided by it. Furthermore, proverb provides an insight into their socio-

cultural life and gives a glimpse of inner complexity of Limboo people.

Subba, (2015): In her article *Shamans and their ethno medical practices among the Limboo tribe of Sikkim* Subba talks about the degrading status of Limbu shaman in the Himalayan state of Sikkim. Her paper explores as how the developmental strategy has led to the loss of indigenous medical knowledge among Limboo tribe of Sikkim.

Sarkar and Dasgupta, (2000): *Ethno-Ecology of Indian Tribes* In this book the author has studied how tribal cultures flourish in the specific ecological niche. The present volume deals with the Indian tribal situation in varied geographical settings. To understand this situation, selected tribes from Chotanagpur of Bihar, Bastar of Madhya Pradesh, Malkangiri of Orissa and Andaman and Nicobar are taken as samples in the present study. The author attempts to shows how the natural environment plays an important role. The traditional knowledge of treatment of various diseases and the conservation of biodiversity as well are also discussed in the perspective of ethno-science of the tribal people of India. The authors have tried to depict how eco-friendly development planning and programme could be possible in the light of the existing ecological conditions.

Sharma (2001): *Society and Economy of the Lhops (Doyas) of Bhutan* has intensively studied the Lhops of Bhutan regarding their social and cultural life. He focuses on their habitation along with the social setup and their daily economic activities to sustain their livelihood and showed how transition has occurred in their activity due to impact of modern education system. While studying their social organization he found it to be matrilineages having distinct titles, origins and associated ancestral deities. Lhops being a minority community have been over shadow by the dominant other tribal group living in the Bhutan. Thus the author work has stressed on the need of good environment for the development of Lhops without any cultural prejudices

from outside in order to be treated as equals to recognize and appreciate their distinct cultural identity.

Thapa, N. (2017): *Phedangma among Limboos of Sikkim: Change and Continuity*, in this dissertation the author has done the ethnographic research work on Limbu Shamans and their role in the society. She has examined the changing the status of Phendangma in Limbu society and their importance in preserving the cultural essence of Limbus through the art of Shamanism.

Yonghang (2011): *Intra Socio-Cultural dimension of Exclusion – A study of Limbu Women* this is the project report submitted to SIRF Secretariat, SNV Nepal, Lalitpur on the issue of discrimination against women and their subjugation of exclusion in socio-cultural spheres of life. In every part of the country women are subdued by male authorities. They are treated as the most vulnerable and are always placed in the subordinate position. Nepalese society is rooted in discrimination based on religion and culture which has perpetuated mainly on the exploitation of less access group in national mainstream and partially on the exploitation of women. Traditional barriers prevent them for going out, studying, working outside. Even they don't have legal rights over the property. Their only sole responsibility lies on the domestic chores. Limbu women are defected mostly in four ways women, as Janjati, as Janjati women and as Poor. Limbu women have to face socio-cultural exclusion. Gender discrimination within own group and the poverty are the main factors responsible for their exclusion. This exclusion is forcefully imposed upon them both knowingly and unknowingly.

### **1.6 Research Gap:**

Limbu has been overlooked and obscure from the mainstream of tribal affairs in Darjeeling hills because very few research works has been done upon them in comparison to other dominating tribal groups of Darjeeling Himalaya. In the various account and writings of foreign scholars like Vansittart, Caplan,

Hamilton and others Limbus are acknowledged as Indigenous Tribe of Eastern Himalayan region. In their writing the emphasis and study was focused on Limbus of the Eastern Nepal. The Limbu population is mostly concentrated in the Eastern Nepal but Limbu also inhabits the hills of Darjeeling and Sikkim from 17<sup>th</sup> century after migrating from the rural parts of Eastern Nepal. Hardly any attempts have been made to study and explore the rich and authentic lifestyle of Limbus in Darjeeling hills in comparison to Limbus of East Nepal. The Limbus of both India and Nepal comes under the same race and language group but yet there is a vast difference between them due to geographical and socio-economic factors. The main research gap lies in understanding their Social and Cultural aspect in relation to Habitat. The proposed study on Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya was not done earlier. Therefore, this study will fill up the research gap in understanding the different aspects of economy, society and culture of Limbus in Darjeeling Himalaya.

### **1.7 Aims and Objectives of the Study:**

- i. To examine the spatial distribution of Limbus in Darjeeling Himalaya.
- ii. To examine the basic demographic attributes of the limbus on the basis of field study.
- iii. To examine and analyze the economic conditions of the Limbus in Darjeeling Himalaya.
- iv. To delineate the social and cultural behavior of the Limbus with particular reference to the aspects of their material culture, family, marriage and kinship system.
- v. To highlight the religion, religious practices and festivals of the limbus along with the contemporary changes in their religion and culture.
- vi. To examine the identity dynamics including their adaptation process in the local, natural and social environment.
- vii. To study the status of women in Limbu society.

### **1.8 Research Questions:**

1. What are the main economic activities of Limbus in Darjeeling hills?
2. What changes has occurred among the limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya in terms of socio-economic conditions?
3. How are they trying to adjust their traditional belief system and forms of worship with growing impact of Hinduism and other forces?
4. What changes have occurred in their dress, housing pattern, tools and implements due to the impact of the regional culture?
5. How Limbus in urban setting distinct themselves from other communities through their cultural practices?
6. What role does Limbu/Kirati association plays in shaping the identity of this community?
7. What was the ethnic and social history of the limbu on the basis of their oral traditions?

### **1.9 Research Methodology**

The main purpose of this research study is to gain insights on the Limbu community. The design of this research work has been formulated on the basis of its nature depending on the study area, the informants or respondents and the tools and techniques for data collection. The research work is purely exploratory and analytical based on the principles of structure – functional approach with diagnostic outlook. For getting a perfect picture of the Limbu community the data from both the primary and secondary sources are taken into considerations. The facts relating to Limbu society, culture and traditions has been gathered through analyzing the textual materials focussing on the various regions of Eastern Himalayas mainly Nepal and Sikkim. The empirical facts are mainly collected through rigorous field investigations among the three dominated Limbu villages of Darjeeling Himalaya.

### **1.9.1 Sources of Data**

The Present research work is explanatory and descriptive one. The field work is conducted on the three Limbu villages of Darjeeling Himalaya. The information required for the study is collected from both the primary and secondary data. Various published and unpublished materials were consulted for better understanding the Limbu community. While empirical facts were collected through intensive field work.

#### **1.9.1.1 Primary Sources**

The primary data for the study was collected through intensive field work among the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya. Standard tools and techniques were adopted for the same. An interview schedule was prepared for conducting household census survey and basic socio- economic data was collected. There after key informants were interviewed both in the form of structured and unstructured. Case study method was used for collecting primary data regarding the rite de passage, women status and other cultural aspects. Finally participant observer was an important tool to collect the oral narratives, myths in revealing the social and economic condition of the Limbu communities living in the fragile terrain of Darjeeling Himalaya.

#### **1.9.1.2 Secondary Sources**

Secondary information from various published and unpublished materials were collected to incorporate in writing of the thesis. Published books, book chapters, journal articles, unpublished Ph.D thesis and various census reports along with some statistical hand books were considered as secondary sources for the study.

### **1.9.2 Tools and Techniques of the Data Collection**

The information for this study were collected both from the primary and secondary sources. The data on ideal concept of society and culture along

with the social history of the Limbus were gathered from the published materials. The information furnished by the various departments in the context of this study reflecting the Limbu society and culture has also been taken into consideration. Various published and unpublished materials were also consulted for better understanding the economy, society and culture of Limbu habitat both from the cultural and historical perspectives. While the empirical facts were collected through intensive field work on three selected villages of Darjeeling Himalaya.

The primary data were collected through conventional anthropological and geographical tools and techniques, viz households' survey, interviews, case studies, group discussions and observations. The location and physical maps are drawn with the help of Geographic Information System (GIS).

The study is based on data collected through intensive field investigation. Both primary and secondary data has been collected. Simple random sampling method is adopted. The basic primary data is gathered from house to house census survey. Conventional tools and techniques like census survey, interview, key informant interview, group discussion and participation observation etc was adopted for data collection.

To obtain inclusive data standard interview schedules were prepared for the respondents for collecting the required information. A census schedule was also prepared for collecting basic demographic and socio – economic characteristics of the selected villages. Though the questions were in English, the informants were interviewed in Nepali. Information was also obtained through informal discussion from the members of the family and locality elderly persons. Formal group discussions were also arranged for data collection with the member of Limbu associations and Development board. The bulk of data for this study were collected through the households' survey, direct observation, case studies, and by interviewing

the selected informants having the knowledge regarding the Limbus with the help of structured interview schedule.

At the initial stage of field work, the pilot survey was conducted on the selected villages to have an idea of the basic demographic attributes. The second stage was to collect the data through intensive study. The depth study was made through the case studies. The interview were conducted by taking prior – appointment with the respondents. On an average each interview took about an hour depending on the type and nature of the respondents. Informants who were absolutely illiterate or had a very little education faced a problem to responds the queries. Difficulties were also faced with regard to accumulation of data relating the past history of villages from old people because of lapse of memory and recall.

### **1.9.3 The Field and the Study Area**

The study has grown out of field research in three Limbu villages selected from each subdivision of Darjeeling Himalaya namely Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong and Kalimpong. Thus out of three villages Teesta Valley Tea Garden is selected from Darjeeling, Dungra Khasmahal from Kalimpong and Bungkulung from Kurseong. The research study is limited to these areas because the Limbu population is found dominantly. The study areas are different from the basis of economic activities and geographical impediments. The people are ready to share their opinions with more comfort and ease. Considering these realities, the researcher has carefully selected those areas as regional representation is necessary for understanding the local variations. Where the informants are well acquainted and have the maximum number of Limbu households. This was important for bringing out the reliable information and creating a comfortable environment for talks and discussions with the household members. Though ultimately Limbu population is the criterion, yet it

cannot be said that the selected villages are only inhabited by the Limbus. While selecting the villages certain adjacent hamlets were also included for the sake of this study.

The fieldwork was conducted from November 2013 to February 2017 with the help of a local friend. On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2013 the pilot survey was conducted in Darjeeling Subdivision to select the villages for field work. The researcher met with the president and General Secretary of All India Limbu Association on 13<sup>th</sup> May to collect the information regarding the Limbu settlements. On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2013, researcher met with the President of *Yakthung Soong Choomvo* of Kalimpong on his invitation for *Manghoop Puja*. The meeting with the Association executives was very fruitful because the researcher could collect the ample information regarding the Limbu habitation and thereby selected the study areas.

The first field work was conducted in the Teesta Tea Garden from 30.11.2013 to 17.12.2013 followed by March – May 2014. The Last final phase of collecting information for data gap was done in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August 2014. The researcher then moved on to his next study area Dungra Khasmahal for collecting information. The first phase of field work started from 24.8.2014 to 8.9.2014. The second phase of field work was done from 23.05.2015 to 27.05.2015 followed by last phase of field work on 18.02.2016 to 22.02.2016 in Dungra Khasmahal. This time the West Bengal Limbu Development was already formed and the head office was itself in Dungra Khasmahal of Kalimpong. The researcher had the meeting with the Board Chairman regarding the functioning of Board and its implications towards the weaker section of the Limbus. The field work was stopped after visiting the Dungra Khasmahal because of deteriorating health of the researcher. On March 2016 the researcher had his major operation for which the fieldwork was halted till the fully recovery of the health.

From 11.07.2016 the last village for the field work was initiated in Bungkulung. The field was done for almost a week in the village. Since the village was comparatively smaller than the other two surveyed villages. The second and the final phase of field work was started from 29<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February 2017.

In addition to these demographic and social attributes, the physical and locational features of the villages were also studied to understand the geographical pattern in varied ecological aspects relating to Limbu habitat. The selected villages thus represent the interior and fringe villages. In terms of location Teesta Valley Tea Garden and Bungkulung are interior villages and Dungra Khasmahal is the fringe village. In this research emphasis on village studies has given because village is the most important unit of geographical and anthropological investigation of understanding the rural area. Although most of the primary data were collected from the above mentioned villages, but many observations were made in course of the study related to wider areas.

#### **1.9.4 Rapport Establishment**

The present empirical study was primarily depended on the informants. Naturally rapport establishment is the most vital to carry the research smoothly. Being from the same region, there was no problem to conduct the survey because of the language familiarity. But in some cases, it required a help from the locals to understand and examine the relevant situation of the Limbus. In the beginning the researcher faced some of the difficulties in doing the fieldwork. The main difficulty was to convince them regarding the study purpose. At first they felt that the researcher is the member of development board who had come to see their problems.

But when they later come to know the truth they were reluctant to answer. The villagers at first were so reluctant to share their views and opinions.

Then, the researcher had explained them the aims and objectives of the study for conducting the survey. To tackle the problem, the researcher had to convince the people by stating the fact that their information is purely for academic purposes. With this assurance, they agreed to extend their co-operations. The friendly relations and support was developed with them in due course of time. They happily responded the queries. Then, the researcher frequently visited the study areas to collect data relating to the study purpose.

#### **1.9.4.1 Selection of Informants**

It was determined to conduct empirical and holistic study on every Limbu households of the selected villages. Information on Limbu households of the selected villages was obtained from the village official's i.e. the members of the panchayat, Limbu associations and also from the knowledgeable senior persons of the village. In most of the cases the information provided by these two categories of people did not tally. Therefore, to gather necessary basic information and data the household surveys were conducted among the Limbus living permanently in the villages. To map out the households or families of the Limbu, kinship linkage has taken into consideration and persons living under the same roof have considered being a household. There were more than 300 permanent Limbu households in the study area of Teesta Valley Tea garden, nearly 250 households in Dungra Khasmahal and exactly 107 Limbu households in Bungkulung.

This information was collected from the official record of the Limbu Development board office and the Limbu associations of the study areas. For the present study, 50 and 45 percent samples of the Limbu households were collected from Teesta Valley Tea garden and Dungra Khasmahal through intensive field work based on simple random sampling technique.

In Bungkulung the all Limbu households were surveyed. The sum total of 369 Limbu Households was selected for the study. Among them 150 and 112 households are from Teesta Valley Tea Garden and Dungra Khasmahal covering the 50% and 45% of the sample size. Whereas, in the Bungkulung the total 107 households were surveyed covering the 100 % of the sample size.

To obtain relevant information necessary for the research informants were selected from all the villages. The informants were chosen in such a way so they could represent every section of the village community with particular reference to their socio- economic conditions. Some non Limbu individuals were also interviewed. Two types of informants were selected on his reliability and sincerity from the study areas. The key informants and the occasional helpers or informants, help are taken to understand the rite de passage of the Limbu groups. They were also used for furnishing most of the qualitative data on the basis of some set of questions framed for the present study.

### **1.9.5 Data Processing and Analysis**

The data collected through field study were processed and analyzed after necessary checking and editing. In course of data processing the completeness and accuracy of data was looked carefully. Tabulation was done manually. Data were analyzed from both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Simple statistical methods are applied consisting mostly of percentages were calculated. The analysis of qualitative data was made through systematic and analytical descriptions of the collected facts.

### **1.10 The Fieldwork experiences and Problems**

This study has certain major limitations. Since the empirical study on Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya covering their socio – economic conditions is undertaken for the first time. The benefits of earlier research studies were not

available. Hence as an explanatory study it has its own limitations. Secondly, the study was undertaken on only three villages of the Darjeeling Himalaya mainly on the basis of convenience as the study. Hence the observations drawn from this study cannot be generalized too far covering the whole of the region.

Thirdly, the re-emergence of Gorkhaland Movement with uncertain strikes had hampered the field work. The fragile topography results in massive Landslides in monsoon season also delimit the research work through road blockages. However, irrespective of all these limitations and problems, researcher had tried to spend more and more time in field area for collecting the data. Though, the study provides broad clues about the Limbus.

### **1.11 Organization of Chapters**

The thesis is organized into eight chapters on the basis of in-depth fields' studies among the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya and these are divided into three parts. Part one is the background, which consists of three chapters showing the social history, physical and demographic attributes of the study area. The first chapter is Introduction which introduces the problem including the background, a brief description of major concept used in the study, review of literature, research gap, aims and objectives along with the research questions of the study, research methodology, research ethics, and significance of the study and limitations of the study. The second chapter provides the socio- historical background of the Limbus in Eastern Himalayas in general and Darjeeling Himalaya in particular. The third chapter depicted the physical and demographic attributes of the study areas on the basis of data collected from the field.

Part two is dealing with economy, society and culture of the Limbus. It consists of two chapters. The fourth chapter is about the economic profile of the Limbus and their sustainable rural livelihood in the study areas. The major economic activities and economic status is discussed with the help of data

collected from the fieldwork. The fifth chapter deals with the aspects of society and culture of the Limbus where the cultural attributes is depicted on the basis of tradition, spiritualism and religious attributes.

Part three is consists of three chapters analyzing the Limbu women status, identity dynamics and conclusions. The sixth chapter provides the role and status of Limbu woman. The chapter makes a humble attempt to understand the importance of womenfolk in Limbu society. It also highlights the contribution of woman in the family economic support system. The seventh chapter deals with the multidimensional process of the Limbu adaptation and integration with the greater society of Darjeeling Himalaya in relation to their cultural identity and dynamics. The eighth chapter is on the major findings, discussion and conclusion summing up the entire thesis on the basis of field data presented in the above said chapters of the thesis.

### **1.12 Research Ethics**

An ethnographic research coupled with social science and geographical aspects always allows you to understand the human variation with its environmental concerned. Like every research some unique problems may encountered in studying a community for which one has to remember and follow the code of research ethics. Researcher strictly followed the code of conducting a research. An ethical behaviour goes beyond simply not harming his study populations irrespective of caste, colour and creed. For the proper understanding the researcher spends time with them by staying in their village. The detailed data were collected prior to their intimation and consent after explaining them the research objectives. The researcher has tried his best to establish friendly relations with the villagers to erase their hesitation and gain some love from them.

### **1.13 Significance of the Study**

The present study on Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya: Aspects of their Economy, Society and Culture in relation to their Habitat is exploratory in nature and attempts to provide scientific information. The study brings out the essence of Limbu society and culture of the Darjeeling Himalaya. The data collected from the extensive field work will be the source for planner and administrators belonging to the various fields and departments to understand Limbu community in better ways. The findings of the present study will surely enhance the knowledge about the Limbu tribe who has been living obscure in the fragile terrain of Darjeeling Himalayas. Therefore, this study is a humble attempt to present and understand the ethnographic detail of the Limbus living in Darjeeling Himalaya. The findings of this research work shall be helpful for the planning and policy makers to understand this community for over all development.

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