

Chapter 3

PHYSICAL, ETHNOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF LIMBU VILLAGES UNDER STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Man interacts with nature by making the use of available resources for their survival and adjustment with the physical parameters like topography, drainage and climatic conditions in characterizing the regional set up. These combined factors have influenced the economy, society, culture and habitat of the Limbus in the study areas. The rugged and undulating terrain of Darjeeling Himalaya is a homeland for different ethnic communities living in Himalayan habitat from time immemorial.

In order to have a proper insight, the researcher has selected those areas which exhibits vibrant socio-cultural aspects moulded with physical proximity and attributes representing the perfect habitat of Limbu community with variations in terms of economy, society and lifestyle. Limbu settlements are located in the far flung rural areas of Darjeeling Himalaya among which three Limbu villages are studied namely Teesta Valley Tea Garden from Darjeeling subdivision, Bungkulung from Kurseong subdivision and Dungra Khasmahal from Kalimpong subdivision.

The selected villages are unique in their composition and offer a good prospect to understand Limbu community of Darjeeling Himalaya from different perspectives. Among the studied villages Teesta Valley is a Tea plantation area, Dungra Khasmahal is an agricultural village and Bungkulung is a mixture of both agriculture and rural tourism sector. The location factor of these villages is also very important from historical point of view. The Teesta valley was the outcome of colonial rule and lies in the rural core of Darjeeling. But whereas Limbus of Dungra and Bungkulung believe the place is their native land which lies on the periphery of main towns of Kalimpong and Mirik. The present chapter makes an attempt to understand the physical and demographic attributes of Limbu communities living in the study areas of Darjeeling Himalaya.

3.2 The Physical Setting of Limbu Villages

3.2.1 Geological Setup and Relief

Geographically, the Darjeeling Himalaya has a complex mountain system wedged between the Central (Nepal) Himalaya to the west and Bhutan Himalayas to the east (Cajee, 2018). It exhibits the diverse geographical features of landform formed during tertiary period due to plate tectonic movement. The first complete and systematic geological assessment of this region was made by F.R. Mallet in 1874. Dr. Hooker, in his famous “Himalayan Journals” (1854) reports too, studied the geological set up of the region. He traced the regional domal pictures of gneisses and observed the overlying, bedded sedimentary rocks. The geology of the Darjeeling Himalayas consists of unaltered sedimentary rocks. The Sub-Himalayas is made up of Shiwalik deposits of the Tertiary age. In the North of the Shiwalik lies the coal-bearing lower Gondwana formation. The Daling series (Pre-Cambrian) follows and is succeeded by the Darjeeling gneiss further north (ibid).



Plate 3.1 Showing the Bird Eye View glance of the Study Areas

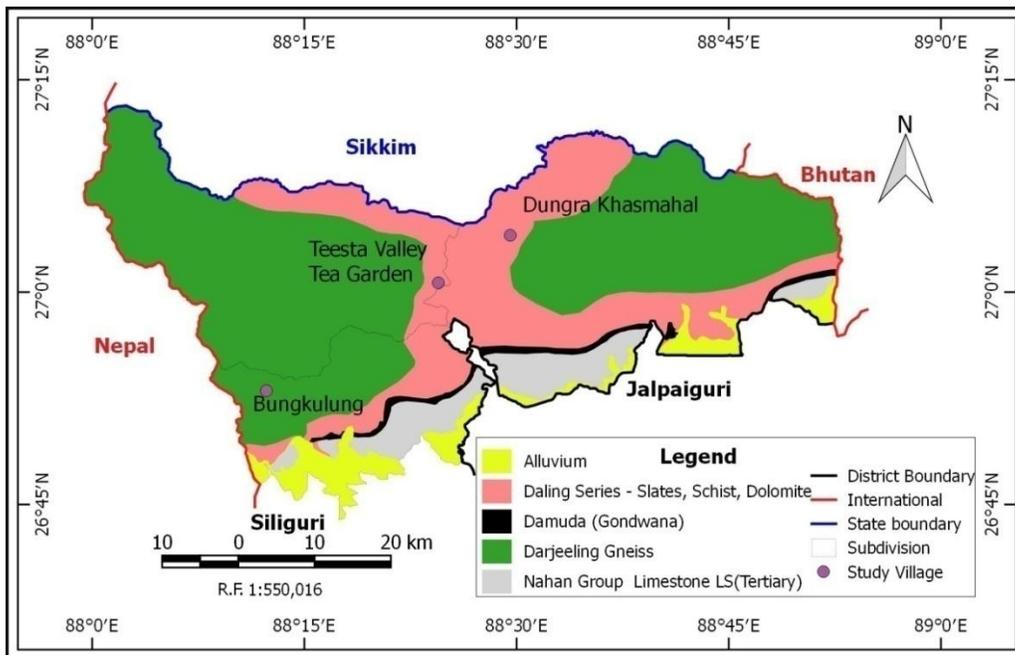


Figure 3.1 Geological Map

Darjeeling Himalaya is divided into number of micro and macro relief forms due to its topography. The hill rises abruptly from the plains that is, approximately from about 150 m and the elevation increases north-westwards up to Sandakphu (3636 m). The region is comprised of three units' namely Lower, Middle and Upper hills.

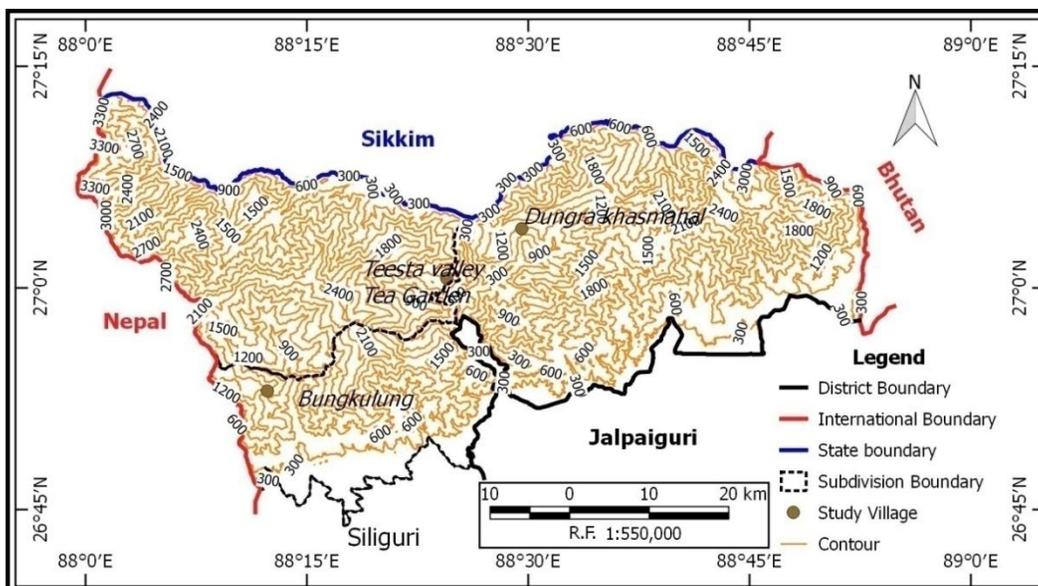


Figure 3.2 Contour Map

Lower hills: This region is delimited by contour heights of about 200 - 800 m and covers most of the study area of Bungkulung. The rivers are mostly south-flowing and cut deep gorges and V-shaped valleys. The landscape is characterized by narrow ridges, deep incisions and numerous mass-movement scars. The average slope in this zone varies between 10° - 30°, with slope length sometimes exceeding 800 m. These lower hills are the most dissected and eroded tract in the Darjeeling Himalayas.

Middle hills: This is a narrow zone, sandwiched between the upper and lower hills, bounded by 800 m and 1400 m contours. The study area of Dungra Khasmahal falls under this category.

Upper hills: The upper hills lie above the 1400 m contour line and have been identified along the Mahaldiram Bagora region and above the Ghum-Sonada ridge. It is most prominent along the extreme north-western. The Study area of Teesta Valley falls under this category. These hill slopes are mostly used for tea plantations.

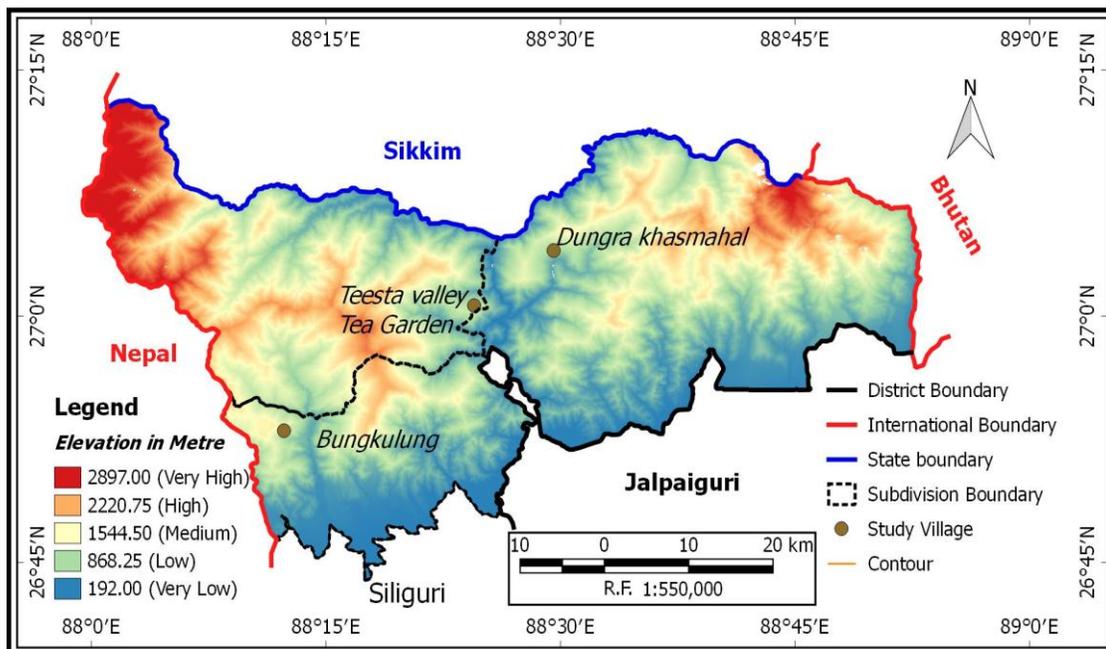


Figure 3.3 Relief Map

The study area of Teesta Valley Tea Garden comes under the Darjeeling range which forms the northern-most portion of the region with an elevation varying from 400 meters to 3000 meters. Teesta river flows southward with radial drainage pattern.

Bungkulung falls under Kurseong range where the general slope of the region is from North to South with varying altitude of 300 metres to 800 metres. The boundary of Kurseong range is well demarcated by River Mechi, in the west and Teesta in the east. Dungra Khasmahal falls under the south east of Darjeeling Himalayas in Kalimpong range. The range has abruptly rising hills with numerous streams and small torrents as marking physiographic units lying within 300 metres to 3000 metres between Darjeeling gneiss and Daling series (Tamang, 2014).

3.2.2 Climatic Conditions: Temperature, Rainfall and Humidity

The Darjeeling Himalaya experiences the monsoonal type of climate, with wet summers and dry winters. The study areas fall under Agro climatic region of Eastern Himalayan zone II of the sub region of Northern hills. The climatic condition of the study areas are characterized by a great degree of seasonality and altitudinal variations leading to varied climates ranging from the subtropical to the temperate and alpine type. The moisture laden south west monsoon plays a prominent role in the rainfall distribution. The four main dominant seasons are experienced in the study areas namely summer season (May to September), autumn season (October to November), winter season (December to February) and spring season (March to April).

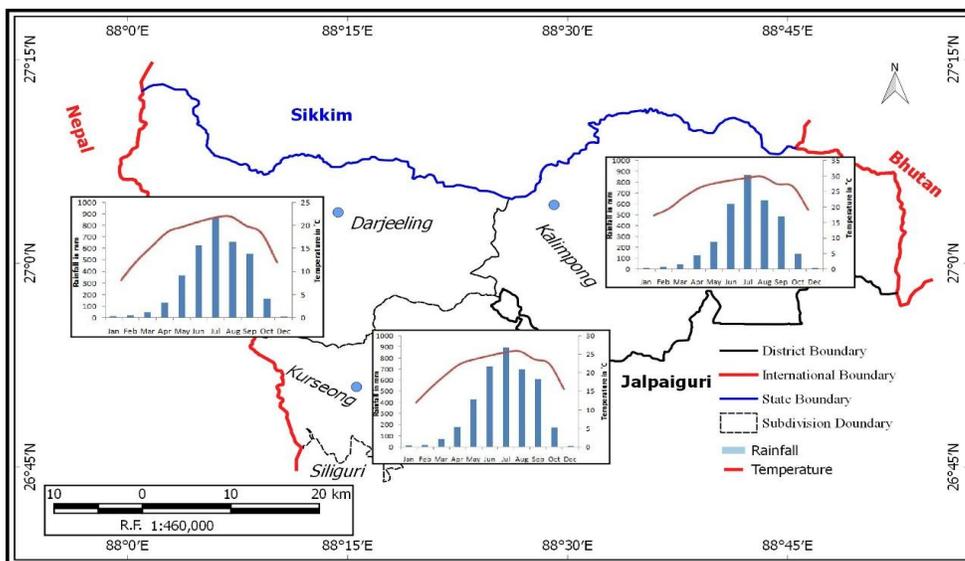


Figure 3.4 Climatic graph of the Darjeeling Himalaya

Table 3.1 Showing the Average Rainfall and Temperature Characteristics of the Darjeeling Himalaya

Months	Darjeeling		Kalimpong		Kurseong	
	Rainfall (Mm)	Temp(°C)	Rainfall (Mm)	Temp (°C)	Rainfall (Mm)	Temp (°C)
January	13.89	8.12	10.16	17.39	17.03	11.97
February	20.16	12.28	20.34	19.67	21.25	15.98
March	47.97	15.55	46.34	23.46	72.17	19.51
April	132.89	18.67	129.82	26.32	181.36	22.5
May	371.67	19.79	248.98	27.77	428.33	23.78
June	631.45	20.85	598.44	28.62	724.95	24.74
July	867.59	21.72	865.26	29.41	896.43	25.57
August	659.89	21.98	634.66	29.82	698.28	25.9
September	556.24	19.99	487.21	27.44	611.73	23.72
October	167.39	18.37	145.99	26.69	176.69	22.53
November	36.96	15.69	38.98	23.03	42.97	19.36
December	10.88	11.98	11.46	19.21	12.67	15.6

Source: Tea Planters' Association, Darjeeling

Temperature of the Darjeeling Himalayas, show a great degree of variation where elevation plays a vital role. In the upper hilly region the temperature (day and night) remains higher during the rainy season than in summer and spring season. The range of fluctuation of temperature between day and night is higher in the plains. The terai region remains hot or warm till the withdrawal of southwest monsoon (i.e. from the month of November). Thereafter, the temperature falls rapidly throughout the region. Such variation widely affects the vegetation of the region (Cajee, 2018). In Teesta Valley the maximum temperature is 28°C and the annual rainfall is 2637.55mm with the average humidity of 74%. The annual temperature in Dungra ranges from a high of 27 °C to a low of 9 °C. Summers are followed by the monsoon rains which lash the village between June and September. The winter month starts from December and last February with the maximum temperature around 15 °C. Bungkulung falls in the foot hill zone of Balasan river basin with the average temperature of 27°C to 28°C

whereas in winter the temperature drops to 17°C. The region experiences the highest rainfall between June to September brought about by the southwest monsoons and the lowest between November - February with occasional moderate showers during March - May. The entire Darjeeling Himalaya experiences a high relative humidity that remains uniformly spread. Generally the north facing slopes are cooler and remain humid throughout the whole year. Relative humidity is higher at the higher altitudes (above 2000 m) ranging from (85 - 99 %) during the monsoons, and the relative humidity generally decreases towards the lower elevations. The drier months of March and April are less humid with relative humidity ranging between 45 - 60 % (ibid).

3.2.3 Drainage and Soil Conditions

The two most significant rivers of Darjeeling Himalayas are the glacier fed river, Teesta and its tributary the Great Rangeet originating in Sikkim (from the Zemu glacier located in north and the Rothong glacier in West Sikkim). The Teesta is a mighty mountainous river traversing a large part of Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalaya. The main tributary of Teesta is the Great Rangeet. It receives the Rammam River arising from Singalila and Rangu arising from Senchal in Darjeeling on its right bank. The entire course of the river is interspersed with deep gorges. A very prominent gorge is found at the confluence of the Rammam river with its main tributary; the Lodhoma *Khola*. The Little Rangeet arises at *Chitre Pokhri* (2380 m) and flows north, almost parallel to the Lodhoma *Khola*. The Little Rangeet flows sinuously within a maze of interlocking spurs and valleys. Below the *Triveni* confluence, the Teesta flows eastward, where it receives the Little Rangeet from Darjeeling and enters the plain of North Bengal and finally joins the river Brahmaputra in Bangladesh (Cajee, 2018).



Plate 3.2 : Showing the Meandering Course of River Teesta

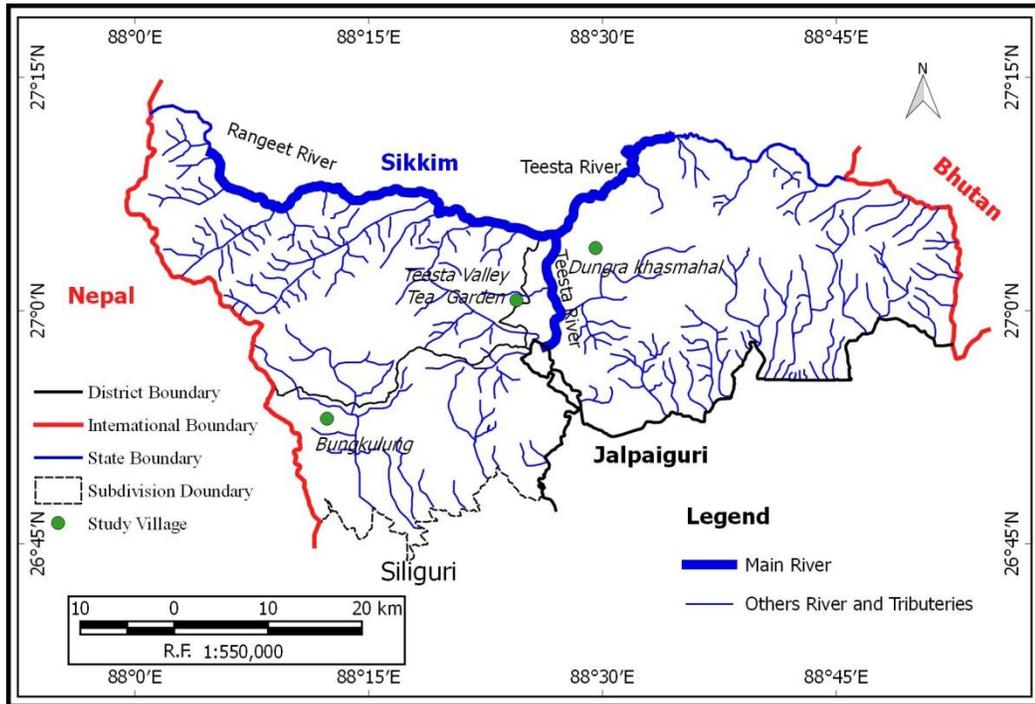


Figure 3.5 Drainage Map

The other important rivers of Darjeeling include the Balason, arising from the Lepchajagat in Ghoom saddle and running south till it reaches the plains at an altitude of 304 m and then turns south east and divides into two channels, the New Balason and the Old Balason that subsequently joins the Mahanadi further south. It receives tributaries like Pulungdung *khola*, Rangbang *khola*, the Marma *khola*, Dudhia *khola* on the right bank and Rinchingtong *khola*, Rakti *khola*, Rohini *khola*, Jor *khola* etc on

the left. The important stream found in the Teesta valley namely *Kali khola* and *Gielle khola*. The *Marma khola* and *Balasan River* forms the important drainage network in Bungkulung. The river *Relli* in the extreme southern lower periphery of *Dungra* forms the important drainage pattern but the small rivulet and seasonal springs are the main source of water supply in *Dungra Khasmahal*.

In this region, the soils found are mountain soil that is characterized by the high organic matter, high water holding capacity and volume expansion. Due to the continuous percolation towards the bottom layer, the middle portion of the soil horizon is associated with the coarse textures, that reduced the shearing strength of the soil and enhanced the materials to move downward along the roadsides slopes and valleys in the Darjeeling Himalayas (Pal, 2016).

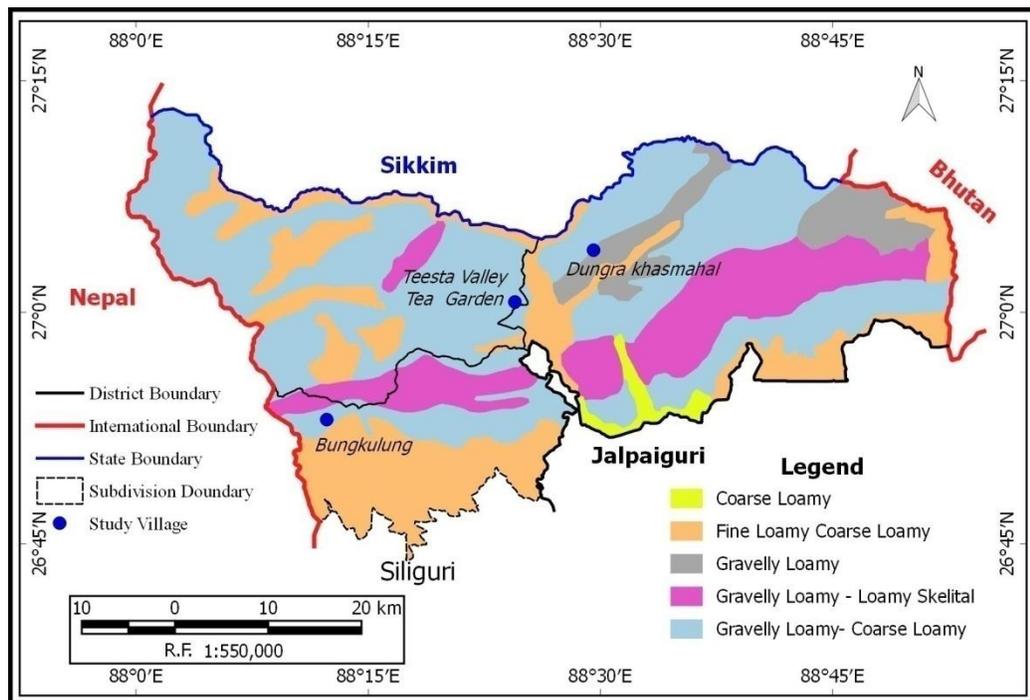


Figure 3.6 Soil Map

The soil of the upland is usually red and gritty while that of the plain is dark and more fertile. Along the banks of Teesta, silt or silty loam predominates. Red and yellow soils have developed on the gneisses and schist in the higher slopes of the Darjeeling Himalayas. The greater portion of the hilly area lies on Darjeeling Gneiss which most commonly decomposes into a stiff reddish loam. The study area of Teesta Valley Tea

garden is well drained by sandy- loamy soils with an average pH value of 5.7, with the availability of phosphorus being 96 kg/hectares and potash 350 kg/hectares. In the study area of Kalimpong and Bungkulung the soil is high to moderately fertile, and well-drained (coarse loamy soil), although there is a potential for these to become leached and exhausted in areas with relatively high population and steep slopes. Chemical fertilizers have been adopted in some cases, which are seen by many to be expensive, so fertility is maintained by the use of natural fertilizers, especially cow dung mixed with leaves.

3.2.4 Natural Vegetation

Uniform vegetation pattern does not exist in the study areas, and wide variation are found with changes in elevation. Nature wise, Champion & Seth (1968) have defined this area as East Himalayan subtropical wet hill forest.

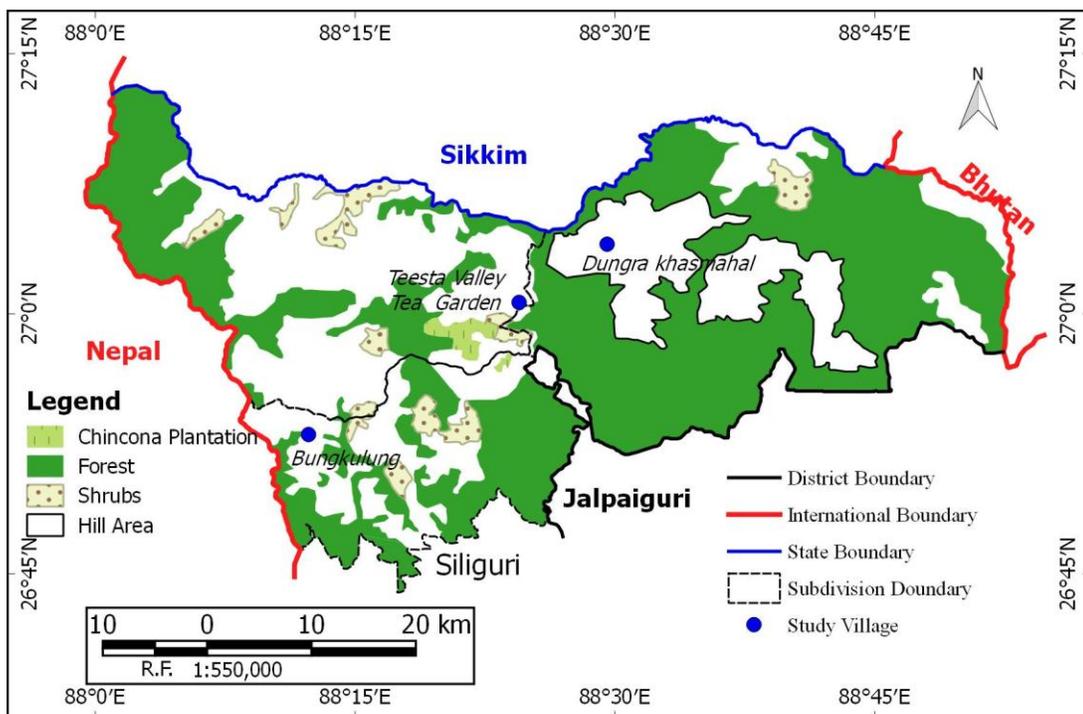


Figure 3.7 Forest Cover Map

In Teesta valley tea garden, Bungkulung and Dungra Khasmahal, subtropical mixed forests of broad-leaved trees exists at an elevation of 1000m -1600m and dry deciduous forest up to 900m. From 1400m to 2500m, the temperate forest takes over,

where evergreen trees of medium height form a closed canopy. Here, mostly rain fed large and old trunks are covered with mosses, ferns and epiphytes. The natural vegetation of these forests seems to have changed to some extent due to human intervention and the resultant biotic pressure.

3.2.5 Flora and Fauna

Darjeeling Himalayas and its adjoining regions are situated in an ecological hotspot of the lower Himalayas, one of the important eco-regions of India. The forested regions of the place exhibit a diverse range of fauna and flora. Owing to its altitudinal gradation, the region has a wide variety of plants, from tropical species to temperate, alpine tundra, and is perhaps one of the few regions to exhibit such diversity within such a small area. The pines forests are found at the higher altitudes along with evergreen alpine vegetation. Several species of flowering trees like rhododendrons are found in the region east of Kalimpong. The temperate deciduous forests include with oak, birch maple and alder are also found in the regions. The hardwood trees like Teak and *Chaap* was common in the study areas along with the dense bamboo forest. Three hundred species of orchid are found around Kalimpong. Some of the wild species of poinsettia and sunflower are found in the study area of Kalimpong. The endangered species like Red panda, clouded leopard, Himalayan black bear and barking deer are some of the fauna and various species of birds are found in the Darjeeling Himalayas.

3.3 Habitat and Limbu Villages: A profile

3.3.1 Teesta Valley Tea Garden

The Teesta valley is one of the finest tea garden in Darjeeling Himalaya. It is mostly famous for its high quality black and green teas. The Tea garden is established in 1841 A.D and covers a large area along with suitable human habitation. The geographical extension is 27° 01' 01.57" N to 88°22' 47.87" E situated at an elevation of 2772 feet from MSL. The recent census report of 2011 shows that more than 1000 households are present in this Tea garden area comprising of different hamlet types belonging to different ethnic communities of which Limbu population is spatially distributed. The study area is selected after pilot survey and by gathering

some information from the local and the regional office of Limbu association (Darjeeling) and Gram panchayat office, Takdah Cantonment for research convenience. According to the locals of Teesta valley Tea garden more than 300 Limbu households are present in the entire valley. To know the exact figure, researcher met Mr. RB Limbu an Ex Army by profession and the president of Limbu association of Teesta Valley who provided the same figure. The Limbu settlement in the entire valley is spatially distributed in small hamlets belonging to one proper clan and few other clan groups. The total sample size of the research study is (50%) i.e. 150 Limbu households are taken into consideration in order to get a proper insight of rural Limbu village lifestyle depending on different economic activities.



Figure 3.8 Study Area Map

Description of Surveyed Limbu Hamlets of Teesta Valley Tea Garden

- ❖ **D.P side** is a small village with semi compact settlement situated on the upper slopes of the Tea garden. The village composed of different ethnic groups among which the Limbus constituted half of the population proportion. The village activity is mainly

teagarden centric and their livelihood is highly influenced or depends on the existence of the Tea garden. The entire surveyed household revealed that the member of every family worked in the Tea garden as Line workers (permanent) or as *Biga* Workers (Temporary) who are employed for 6 months. The village exhibits a glimpse of rural folk communities maintaining low standard and sustaining their life with economic hardships. The climatic condition is warm humid , with temperature above 27° C favoring the luxuriant growth of tropical fruit crop Mandarin orange which is one of the important cash crop of the study area.

- ❖ **Limbu Goan** is a semi- compact rural settlement which is located in few Kilometers above Lower Khamjet. There is a big play ground in the village which also demarcated the boundary between Rai *Goan* and Limbu *Goan* belonging to same Kirati stocks. The Limbus are basically tea garden workers in this area but young adult males have migrated to major metropolitan cities for work purposes and female folks have delimited themselves into the domestic chores and tea garden activities. Orange farming is worst affected in this area hampering the economic conditions of the villagers.
- ❖ **Dharel** is another small hamlet settlement which is above Limbu *Goan* composed of Limbu, Tamang and Brahmin households. The economic condition of Dharel completely depends on the Teagarden wages.
- ❖ **Lower Khamjet** is a linear pattern rural Limbu settlement on either side of the main road which connects with NH 10 linking the place with the route going towards Kalimpong and Siliguri. Being situated in the better accessibility area it offers good site for business activities. Most of the respondents in this area are the owners of variety of shops.
- ❖ **Siru Bari** is a small hamlet settlement which is located in the southern sides of the valley. The economic activity of this village is different from the other surveyed areas. They work in Tea garden and also practice floriculture for good earning. They export their floricultural items like ornamental plants, pine varieties and orchids to neighboring states of Assam and Orissa. They had small farm in the backyard of their

houses where saplings of different pines varieties are grown. The monetary value of this product is quite high in both domestic and national markets.

3.3.2 Dungra Khasmahal

Dungra is one of the big Khasmahal areas of Kalimpong district and consists of lower and upper part. The latitudinal and longitudinal extension is 27°4' 05.57" N to 88°24' 15.77" E situated at an elevation of 3121 feet from MSL. Dungra is a Lepcha word which means fern jungle. Dungra is located on the southern side of the main town Kalimpong, Bombusty located on its western side and Sindebong on the eastern side. The village is fed by small perennial streams. Huge concentration of Limbu population is settled on the lower Dungra where agriculture is the main economic activity to sustain a livelihood. The lower Dungra region is again divided into two zones namely: Damaitar and Ramitee. According to the information collected from the *Yakthung shoong choomvo* an ethnic Limbu association of Kalimpong located within lower dungra listed 200 hundred Limbu households. The two zones were separated by a stream (*Jhoras*).

- ❖ **Damaitar:** The settlement pattern of Damaitar varies from its upper to lower limit. The main road ends in the upper end of the village where semi compact settlement is seen along with the few Lepcha households. The side of the road is marked with terraced crop field and noodle making small factories, which is the last vehicle accessible point of the village. The settlement pattern is widely dispersed in the core area due to presence of large arable land.
- ❖ **Ramitee:** The settlement pattern of Ramitee is widely dispersed with only three to four households distantly situated. The village has one primary school. The village is still inaccessible and villagers have to walk uphill and downhill. The majorities of the people are agriculturalist and leads a very simple rural life.

3.3.3 Bungkulung

Bungkulung is a small Himalayan village nestled on the laps of nature and surrounded by majestic hills along with the green carpet of forest. Bungkulung is a combination of two words derived from Lepcha and Limbu. *Bungku* in Lepcha means the place where God and Goddess reside. *Lung* is a Limbu word meaning big stones or

boulders. The village is drained by cascading and criss-crossing turbulent Marma River in the interior part and Balasan River demarcating the village boundary with Ambootia Tea Garden. Geographically the village is located within 26 ° 52' 34.27" North and 88°13'33.85" East at an altitude of 2060 ft above the MSL. The village is 15 Kilometers away from Mirik and 48 Kilometers away from Siliguri. The northern side of the village is surrounded by Marma Tea garden and Soureni in the western side. Ambootia Tea Garden lies in the eastern part of the village. Phuguri forest lies in the North western side and Manju forest in the Southern side. The village is predominantly inhabited by Limbus for more than 100 years. The lush green meadows, outstretching paddy fields, ponds and mesmerizing greenery makes the village immensely beautiful for rural tourism and home stay. The village has three hamlet types of settlement with peculiar socio-cultural settings.

- ❖ **Siren Goan:** The upper part of the village is known as siren goan with 25 to 30 households belonging to different communities.
- ❖ **Bich Goan:** The middle part of the village is known as bich goan having the largest number of Limbu households.
- ❖ **Zero Point:** The Lower part of the village is called zero point which is the main entrance point of the village from the lower periphery. The maximum amount of terraced fields is located in the lower fringe area of the village.

During the field survey in Bungkulung Mr. N.B Limbu a local and active member of the Limbu association of village gave the detailed list of households. According to village data altogether there are 147 households exactly, out of which 26 households belongs to Rai families, 3 households belong to Tamang and Chettris families respectively, 6 households belongs to Mangar families and one households belongs to Lepcha and Damai (Scheduled Caste) families each. The one common thing which was observed and noticed during the field work in these villages was, people rarely refer to each other by their given names, but usually by the sequence of their birth and thus the first born male of the family is called *jetha* and the female is called *jethi*. The second born is *maila or mailee* and so on. The members of a particular family are often referred to by the location of their house, thus someone whose house is at the

top of the village becomes *mathilo bhaje*. A particular Limbu person might be nicknamed by his mannerism and profession like Colonel Limbu Sir, or with an impressive moustache as *joongay* (Limbu, 2005). These villages located on the slopes with terraced fields has its own slow and tranquil pace, following an age old pattern, quietly and peacefully, far from the hustle and bustle of the modern world .

3.4 History of Limbu and Non-Limbu Settlements

It was difficult to obtain the exact information about the early history of the village and of the Limbus in the study areas. Therefore, in order to understand the Limbu community of the study area oral narratives, myths and genealogical charts are tracked down to know their arrivals in the village. The origin and migration of the Limbu ancestors are the major topics in the oral narratives and myths which are also supported by some historical facts to ascertain. In fact these narratives are very helpful to reconstruct about their forefathers migration and family history.

3.4.1 Narratives, Legends and Myths

The study regarding the origin of the Limbu settlement in Darjeeling Himalaya is very scanty and mostly not researched about. Historical records prove that disempowerment in the region results an increasing population pressure which leads an emigration of Limbus from Eastern Himalaya in the beginning of the 20th century (Caplan, 1970). Moreover the establishment of tea plantation in the Darjeeling and Assam valley in 1835 and construction of the Railway networks in these fragile zones shows the huge wave of the bulk migration of Kirati communities in this rugged terrain (LSSO' Malley 1907). The historical records, legends and narratives are equally important to re-construct the origin of Limbu settlements in describing their culture, customs and beliefs. Some elderly Limbus claimed that they are native inhabitants to this place, their great forefathers held a significant history. The collected oral narratives from the study areas help to understand the Limbu settlement more properly.

In order to understand the History of Limbu settlement the narratives of Padam Kumar Limbu from Teesta valley Tea garden, Kharak Bahadur Limbu from Dungra Khasmahal and Mr. N.B Limbu from Bungkulung is taken into consideration. These

men are elderly persons from villages unknown to one another but to some extent common in their experiences and knowledge. Padam Kumar Limbu, 77 years old, is a retired garden worker who is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren's. His Father's ancestral home is in *Fidim*, Eastern Nepal. His family had migrated to Darjeeling Himalaya in 1922 A.D and had settled in West Sikkim. He was born in Sikkim and when he was a year old his father got an employment in the Tea garden of Teesta Valley and settled here. But, still his family relatives are in Sikkim. The entire village had households belonging to different ethnic groups who had settled in the valley among which the majority of population were Limbus. Regarding the migration history of the Limbus one can draw the attention towards the establishment of the tea garden as one of the main reasons behind the economic needs. At first the migration was temporary as they come to *Mughlan* (Nepalese used to call the then British India as *Mughlan*) to work in Tea garden due to dearth of financial problem. There was the popular proverb among them "*Chiya ko bhot ma paisa huncha*" which means one can earn good income from working in Tea garden. Therefore, the origin of Limbu settlement in the valley dates back to 1835 A.D where they were brought by the Colonial to build up the Tea garden.

Before the Colonial rule, the vast tract of Kalimpong was occupied by Lepchas and was ruled by Lepcha king who were popularly known as *Rongs*. The onset of the Colonial rule in the region, led to hostility among Lepcha which resulted into a war. Limbus living there helped Britishers and Lepchas were defeated and left the area. It was believed that entire village was densely forested with ferns from where it gets its name *Dungra* meaning Fern which is a Lepcha word. The Britishers granted most of the land to Limbus and thereby they cleared the forest and new settlement was formed along with agricultural fields.¹ At present some of the hamlets are called by Limbu *goan* based on its clan members. Slowly the village started to grow when the family size extended from one to another household. The narratives of Kharak Bahadur

¹ During Interview with Mr. N.D Limbu resident of *Dungra* & president of *Yakthung Shoong Choomvo* on 25.05.15

Limbu (*Yongyahang*)² an 80 years old man is used to trace the origin of hamlet based on clan group. Mr. K. B Limbu is a descendant of Paache Karna Limbu, his great grandfather. Paache Karna arrived in Dungra at 18th century with his cattle's from mid eastern hills of Nepal³. He made an exhaustive and long journey challenging his both physical and mental endurances. After tumbling down through hills he reached the bank of Mighty River Teesta and he realized that it was not easy to cross the turbulent river.

He made a promise and took vow with Teesta saying if she allows him and his cattle's to cross safely. He would sacrifice a buffalo and cross the river holding the tail of a buffalo. After reaching safely to other side he swears that in *Panchami*⁴ he will come again to Teesta and sacrifice the animal. He then moves towards Kalimpong and settled in Dungra. The sacrifice of animal continued till the fourth generation. Kharak Bahadur Limbu still remembers the sacrificing of animal in his childhood days by his grandfather in the name of Paache Karna's promise to River Teesta. Slowly, Paache Karna family tree extended in the village and few of his relatives also arrived and thereby a small hamlet of Limbu clan "*Yongyahang*" was originated. Since then Clan is living in Dungra (Ramitee) and moreover K.B Limbu has donated his land for the establishment of school for the educational upliftment and keeping the name of his grandfather alive in the village history. The school named as Goandhoj primary school was set up in 1960 and was recognized by West Bengal Government in 1962.

The folklore of Bungkulung unfolds the settlement history of Limbus and non Limbus in a very interesting way. Lepcha were the very first inhabitants of this place and had cleared the dense forest region of Bungkulung for settlement. As the place was geographically isolated the entire village was densely forested. Sudden outbreak of diseases like Typhoid and Malaria worsened the health conditions of Lepcha families. Many of them died due to lack of medical treatment which ultimately led to their mass migration to Kalimpong region for better settlement. After Lepcha, Limbus made their permanent settlement in Bungkulung from more than 150 years. There are

² One of the Sub clan of Limbu

³ Oral Narratives of K.B Subba rendered to him by his grandfather gathered by researcher in Dungra on 24.05.2015

⁴ Fifth day of the Hindu month of Magh (February)

two types of Limbus, settlement history namely; the early settlers who came to this place during colonial period and later settlers who came to this place after Independence. (This information was documented for the first time from the elderly knowledgeable person of the village.) The first Limbu household of the village was of Late Mr. Baiiraj Limbu, along with the family of Late Mr. Bikram Singh Limbu. Both of them belonged to the different clan namely *Thamden* and *Phagu*.

During Colonial period Bungkulung was the part of Marma Tea Garden. After the Independence Bungkulung is no more under the authority of the Tea estate ownership. During the field visit it was found that only a single person (woman) was working in Marma Tea garden. As for now, the early Limbu settlers owned spacious land in the village. Some of them had donated the land for construction of Limbu *Mangheem* (Temple) in the village. The shifting of residence for later Limbu settlers of the village is not a new phenomenon. Influx of migrants to a new place might be of various reasons. Social factors like marriage, kin and affinal ties, Economic factor like job opportunities, Political factor like civil war, insurgency etc. The upper part of the village was mostly composed of fresh Limbu settlers who have been living in Bungkulung since the last 50 years.

3.4.2 Non-Limbu Settlements

In the study areas the settlement of non Limbus has different migration history and purpose. In the Teesta valley Tea garden arrival of non Limbus ethnic groups is mainly due to establishment of Tea gardens in and around the study area. For instance Gielle, Jinglam and Namring Tea garden which form a boundary with Teesta valley predominantly inhabited by Tamang's, Gurung and Mangar's who are hugely concentrated and formed hamlets on the basis of their clan like *Lama goan*, *Allay dhura*. The high caste Brahmin and Chettri and Lower caste Nepali households are present in the village. In Dungra Khasmahal apart from Lepcha very few households of non Limbus were present.

In the olden days the orthodox Limbus hardly allowed their family to sale their land to others. Slowly the population was increased and problem of unemployment crippled most of Limbu family which ultimately led to sell their lands to others for

financial purpose. Thereby most of the new families entered into the village among them, many army personnel have made their settlement. One of the Brahmin families said that their ancestral house is in Echhey Kalimpong, they arrived in Dungra to work as agricultural labourer. After staying for more than 20 years his landlord granted a small plot of land to them for living. It was difficult to obtain more data for the arrival and departures of Non Limbu families due to time constraints and lack of documents. But why they migrate this area was clear from the field survey with the following reasons.

- i. Availability of employments in the tea gardens.
- ii. Accessibility of resources with virgin lands.
- iii. Lepchas also sold their properties and allows a space for other Nepali community.

3.4.3 Historical Background of Land Relations

The land tenure and land ownership of Limbu in the study areas of Darjeeling Himalaya is completely different with one other. In this section an attempt is made to understand how an individual obtains rights to Land. How the land transfer system has made an impact to Limbus of study areas? Generally in the study areas land tenure is owned through traditional system of inheritance through kinship and marriage of the members. Under this framework the landholding pattern of Limbu tribe is determined.

The land is cultivated by all the members of the family and each member gets their individual share. Once all the brothers marry, the father's properties especially land is equally divided among themselves. So among Limbu the limit of landholding is neither a single person nor a nuclear family but rather a group or number of nuclear family tied patrilineally (Limbu, 2013).

3.4.4 Land Ownership and Land Transfer

The three types of Land ownership are found in the study areas. Limbus of Teesta valley who owned land had made permanent houses without having legal documents of Land ownership and thus their land is classified under lease land. In the Tea garden areas all the lease land comes under the jurisdiction of concerned company which has

given to them by owners with stipulated time of 100 years. The inhabitants of this area can't sell or buy any plot of land.

Limbus who had made their permanent settlement in the garden areas is aware of the fact but believed that they won't be deprived of their land since they had been living from generations. But in case of Dungra and Bungkulung they have rights over their land and had valid legal documents of their concerned land ownership. Some of the Limbu households in the study areas have rented land ownership.

Table 3.2 Showing the Classification of Land ownership of Limbu households

.No	Land Ownership	Study Areas					
		Teesta valley Tea Garden		Dungra Khasmahal		Bungkulung	
		Households	percent	Households	percent	Households	percent
1	Owned	-	-	100	89.3%	100	93.5%
2	Leased	150	100%	4	3.6%	2	1.9%
3	Rented	-	-	8	7.1%	5	4.6%
4	Total	150	100%	112	100%	107	100%

Source: Field Survey (2014 – 2017)

The majority of the Limbus in the study areas of Bungkulung and Dungra Khasmahal holds their land ownership right with (93.5 %) and (89.3%) respectively. The leased land (3.6 %) in Dungra Khasmahal and (1.9 %) in Bungkulung basically belongs to a family who are bonded labourers (*Pakure*) settled in the agricultural field nearby livestock sheds. They only hold the rights over yield produce from the field of which 1/3rd of the produce is given to owner either through cash or kind. The rented households especially belong to those families who have separated from the main house due to personal obligations. The newly married couple without the consent of parents are socially boycotted and thereby had to live in rented house. (7.1 %) in Dungra Khasmahal and (4.6%) of the families in Bungkulung lives in the rented households and sustaining their livelihood.

3.4.4.1 Land Transfer: Case Study of Dungra (Kalimpong)

In the Study areas land transfer is done either through inheritance, marriage, or mutual concern of the families as a gift to someone. In Dungra Khasmahal land transfer holds a significant history showing how the Limbu land was transferred to Governor of Bhutan and how the land later came into colonial to present state rule. In the olden days most of the Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal was landlords who were popularly known as Mondal. At present also Lower Dungra Khasmahal has small hamlet named as Mondal Goan from where I could trace down the history of Land transfer narrated to me by Mr. N.D Limbu. Since these accounts are not documented and is the first hand information of the researcher on the basis of field survey.

Mr. N.D Limbu, 82 years old retired army man from Mondal Goan who was the grandson of Landlord Sankhman Limbu. Similarly, like his grandfather there were few landlords in the village who had gifted their lands which in later phase converted into Government land. Sitam Limbu a landlord of Mondal Goan has friendly relation with Topke Raja of Bhutan and has gifted 13 acres 38 decimal of land in 1865 A.D in return of the gift (half tola⁵ of gold ring) by Raja to him. Thus, the land was transferred to Bhutan King and when colonial established their rule in Kalimpong the land went under their control and the villagers⁶ who used reside on that land were shifted to nearby areas. Later Colonial handed this land to Indian Government. By the end of 1975 – 76 these lands were brought under the construction of Citrus office, Livestock office, Primary Health Centre and Seed Farm Junior School as the Infrastructural facilities to village by the then State Government of West Bengal that is still present today in the study area. In some cases, Land of Limbus had been transferred to Limbus not by deed of the legal paper but by the traditional norm of the village. Jit Bahadur Limbu owns a plot of land of 10 decimal approximately but holds no legal paper of land. Many years ago his grandfather used to work as *Khetala* (agricultural worker) in one of the Limbu household apart from farm work he also helped them in domestic chores. Due to his good behavior the owner of the house had

⁵ Tola is a unit for weight measurement of gold which is 11.66 grams

⁶ When the land was under the Topke Raja he allows the villagers to reside on the basis certain tax to be paid as a royalty to Bhutan. But people hardly pay any such tax to them therefore, he hand over that land to Britishers on the basis of some political development and friendly alliance.

constructed a small hut for him at the backyard of their house to earn his livelihood. He settled with his family in that small plot of land and now the third generation is living in the same place. Presently the owner has settled to somewhere but his *Khetala* family is still there and no one can displace him due to the traditional rights over land through occupancy.

3.5 Demography and Population Dynamics

The Limbu villages of the study areas have a mixed composition of population based on caste hierarchy system. The coming of the Nepalis in the middle of 18th century has brought this system which has broadly divided the village into three board groups high, middle and low which may also be described as upper, lower and untouchables castes. From the commensal point of view, the Nepali castes can be grouped into two broad classes – *Pani Chal ne Jat* or castes from which water can be taken and *pani na chal ne jat* or castes from which water cannot be taken. The former group is a called *chhut* and latter *achhut*. The high and middle castes constitute former class and the untouchables the latter (Subba, 1989).

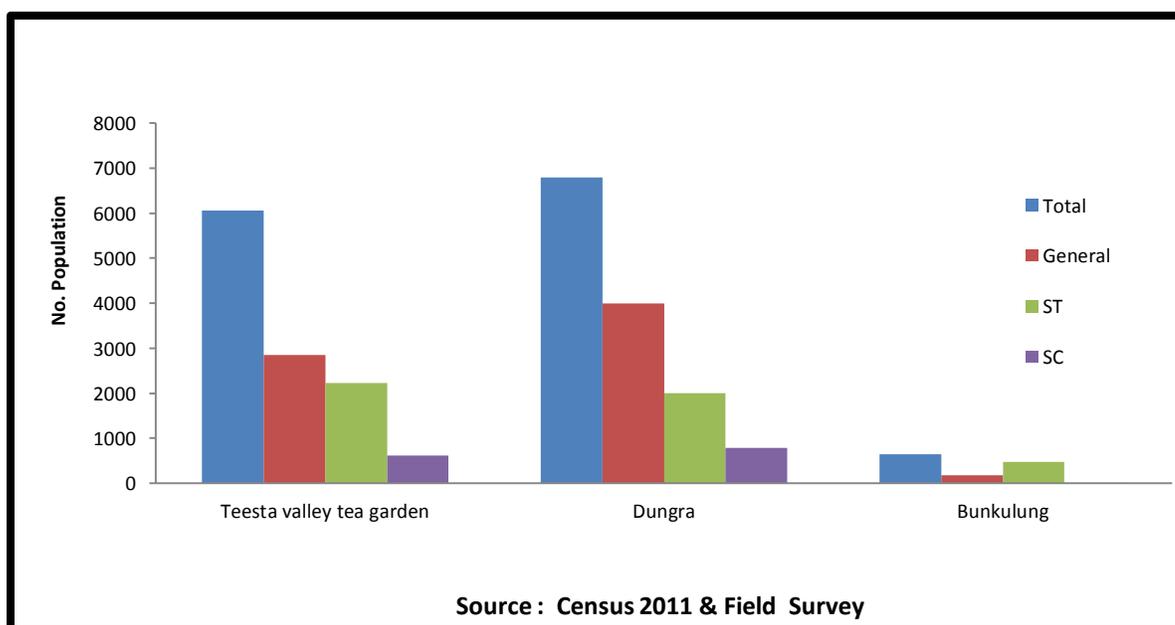


Figure 3.9: Showing the Caste Composition of the Study Areas

The establishment of the tea garden and the agricultural lands opened a new avenue for the employment opportunities to migrants belonging to lower castes. The high

caste came much later which forced them to stay in the Khasmahal areas with livestock rearing. Lastly, the low castes were accommodated in the village for repairing and manufacturing of tools required for the various purposes. In the olden days the caste hierarchy was done on the basis of their traditional occupation. Still the caste hierarchy prevails but occupation has changed.

3.5.1 Limbu Population of the Study Areas

The Limbu population according to the recent census of 2011 is 46847 in Darjeeling Himalaya. The rural and urban population composition is 36908 and 9939. The majority of Limbu population is concentrated in rural areas with 18452 males and 18456 females populations. In urban areas population is very low with 4847 males and 5092 females. The female population is slightly higher in both the areas.

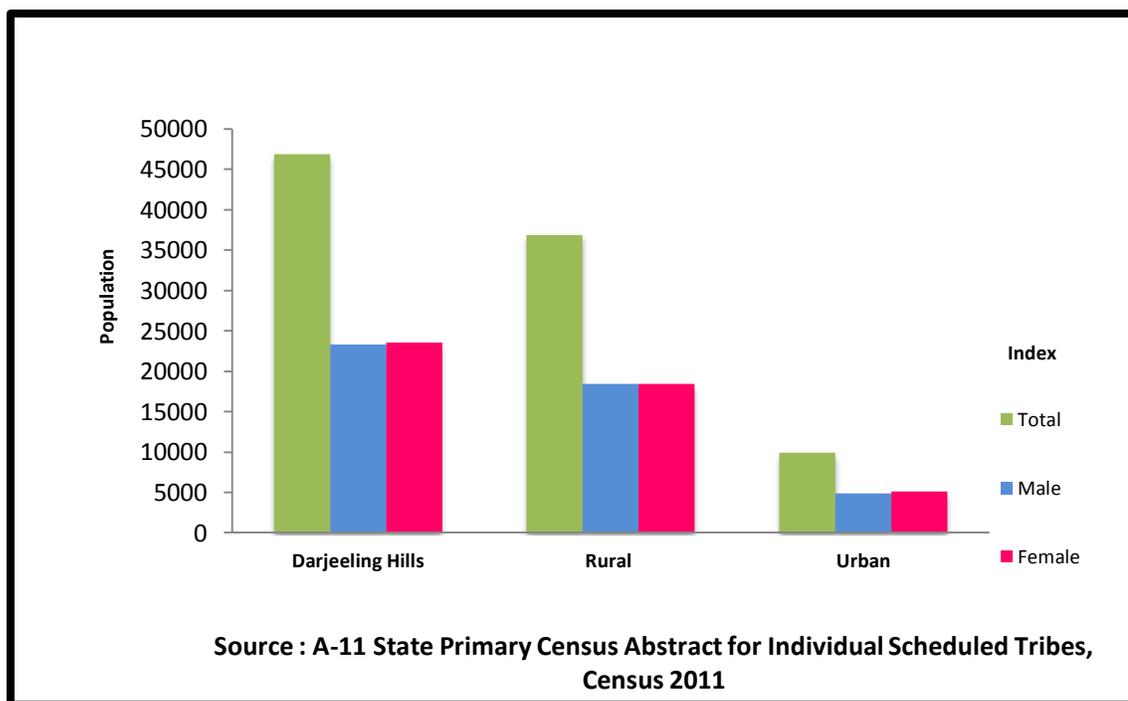


Figure 3.10: Showing the Limbu Population of Darjeeling Himalaya

The study of population composition is considered to be very important because it shows the economic, social, educational, occupational and other conditions of the

society. Different types of population composition, which are generally studied, are age composition, sex composition, sex ratio, educational composition, marital status etc. Limbu population in the study areas consist of all age groups.

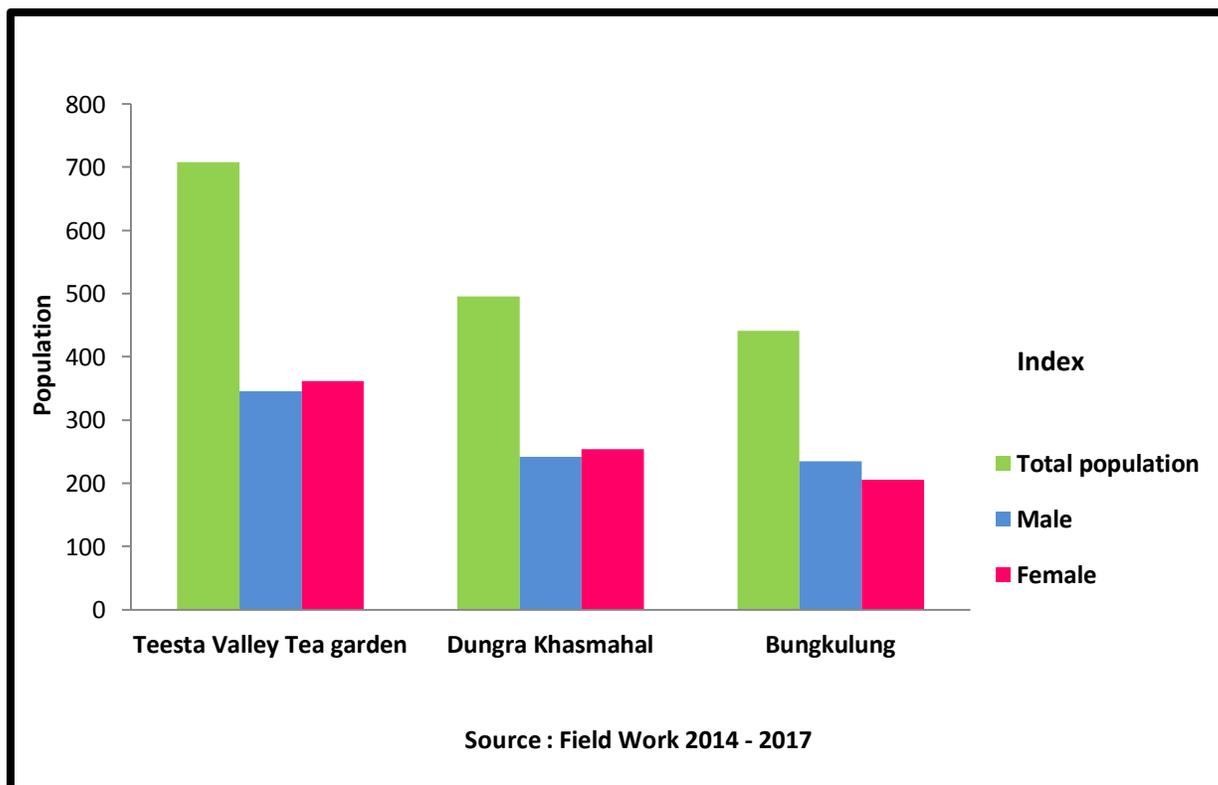


Figure 3.11: Showing the Limbu Population of the Study Areas

The bulk of Limbu population is concentrated in the plantation areas compared to Khasmahal areas, though the traditional occupation of Limbu is agriculture. The Limbu population shows the similarities with the census data and field data which indicates the female population is quite high in Limbu Community.

In Teesta valley tea garden and Dungra Khasmahal the female population is quite high as compared to male counterparts except in Bungkulung. The growth in the number of female population shows good aspect of female status in the community.

3.5.2 Age Structure

The age-sex composition of a population is the distribution of the population among different age groups, which constitutes an important subject of demographic analysis and development planning. Age structural dynamics includes fertility, mortality and as well as related changes in family planning and social arrangements. Keeping in mind the following points of age data, researcher will examine the age–sex composition of the Limbu population of the study areas and its implications on future demographic trends. Age is regarded as one of the important parameters for understanding and judging one’s personality and characteristics traits. It is one of the significant components of social background of an individual reflecting his thought, ideas, moral values and principles. It focuses on the individual mental maturity, experiences and behavior pattern.

The below mentioned Table 3.3 shows the population composition of Limbus living in the rural belt of Teesta Valley Tea Garden. Altogether 150 households were taken as samples for the research study which represents more than 50 % of sample size giving an in depth details of population characteristics. It also helps us to understand the changing pattern of population growth. The total population of Limbus in the study area was 708 out of which the total numbers of males are 345 and the total numbers of females are 363. The higher sex ratio of female shows a better social status of women in Limbu society. The maximum number of population is found in the age groups of 21-25 years (81 in number and 11.4 %) and 26-30 years (95 in number and 13.4%). The minimum number is found in the senile age group of 61-65 groups with 2.8%.

Table 3.3
Showing the Age Sex wise Population Distribution of Teesta Valley Tea Garden

Age Group	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0 - 5	21	6.1%	22	6.1%	43	6.1%
6 - 10	11	3.2%	21	5.8%	32	4.5%
11 - 15	16	4.6%	22	6.1%	38	5.4%
16 - 20	32	9.3%	22	6.1%	54	7.6%
21 - 25	25	7.2%	56	15.4%	81	11.4%
26 - 30	48	14%	47	12.9%	95	13.4%
31 - 35	31	9%	22	6.1%	53	7.5%
36 - 40	20	6%	32	8.8%	52	7.3%
41 - 45	24	7%	16	4.4%	40	5.6%
46 - 50	27	8%	40	11%	67	9.5%
51 - 55	32	9.3%	19	5.2%	51	7.2%
56 - 60	15	4.3%	11	3%	26	3.7%
61 - 65	13	4%	7	1.9%	20	2.8%
Above 66	30	8%	26	7.2%	56	8%
Total	345	100%	363	100%	708	100%

Source: Field Survey (2013 – 2015)

Table 3.4

Showing the Age Sex wise Population Distribution of Dungra Khasmahal

Age Group	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0 – 5	12	4.9%	14	5.5%	26	5.2%
6 – 10	9	3.7%	10	3.9%	19	3.8%
11 – 15	17	7%	24	9.4%	41	8.3%
16 – 20	20	8.3%	20	7.9%	40	8%
21 – 25	23	9.5%	34	13.4%	57	11.6%
26 – 30	31	12.8%	28	11%	59	12%
31 – 35	17	7%	19	7.5%	36	7.2%
36 – 40	21	8.7%	27	10.6%	48	9.7%
41 – 45	14	5.8%	15	5.9%	29	5.8%
46 – 50	18	7.4%	20	7.9%	38	7.7%
51 – 55	20	8.3%	15	5.9%	35	7%
56 – 60	14	5.8%	8	3.2%	22	4.5%
61 – 65	5	2.1%	6	2.4%	11	2.2%
Above 66	21	8.7%	14	5.5%	35	7%
Total	242	100%	254	100%	496	100%

Source: Field work (2014 – 2016)

The given table 3.4 shows the total sample population of the Dungra Khasmahal required for the study purpose. The total number of household sample is 112 which constitute 45 percent. The total population is 496 out of which male population is 242 and female population is 254. The maximum number of population is found between (21 – 25 years) with (11.6 %) and (26 – 30 years) with (12 %) respectively. The minimum number of population is found in the senior age group (61 – 65 years) with (2.2 %) of total population.

Table 3.5 Showing the Age Sex wise Population Distribution of Bungkulung

Age Group	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0 – 5	8	3.4%	8	3.9%	16	3.6%
6 – 10	24	10.2%	18	8.7%	42	9.5%
11 – 15	19	8.1%	20	9.7%	39	8.8%
16 – 20	15	6.4%	19	9.2%	34	7.7%
21 – 25	18	7.7%	20	9.7%	38	8.6%
26 – 30	37	15.7%	23	11.2%	60	13.6%
31 – 35	19	8.1%	22	10.7%	41	9.3%
36 – 40	17	7.2%	16	7.8%	33	7.5%
41 – 45	16	6.8%	16	7.8%	32	7.3%
46 – 50	22	9.4%	11	5.3%	33	7.5%
51 – 55	14	6%	14	6.8%	28	6.3%
56 – 60	11	4.7%	8	3.9%	19	4.3%
61 – 65	8	3.4%	6	2.9%	14	3.2%
Above 66	7	2.9%	5	2.4%	12	3%
Total	235	100%	206	100%	441	100%

Source: Fieldwork (2015 – 2017)

The given table 3.4 shows the total Limbu population of Bungkulung. The total households' is 107 which constitute (100 %) of the total sample. The total population is 441 with 235 male and 206 with female population. The Bungkulung is only the study area where male population is more than female counterparts. The maximum population is found between (26 – 30) years with (13.6%) and (9.3 %) in age group of (31-35) years. The area has maximum number of children population in between (6 - 10) years with (9.5 %). The minimum population is found in the senile age group above 60 years with (3 %).

3.5.3 Sex Composition

In the study areas, respondents of both the sexes were interviewed. It has been found that both of them play an important and pivotal role in family and society. So,

respondents were divided widely into two domains i.e. male and female. On the death of the husband, the deceased's wife inherits the right to enjoy husband's property and becomes the head of the household. Women today have been acquiring an equal status and position in society. In study areas the researcher observes that Limbu women were the main pillar of family support system. They play an active role in different economic activities and also dutifully perform all the domestic chores of village folk life. Though they enjoy the good social status but still they are subordinate to male members. Most of the decision making process is taken by the father. During the field work it was found most of the respondents were males and in their absence they ask their sons to respond the queries. The women were not willing for the interview because being uneducated most of them hesitate to respond saying they do not know anything related to Limbus. These types of insecurity were more common in housewives because apart from domestic chores they hardly ventured into other social activities.

Table 3.6 Showing the Distribution of Respondents according to Sex

Category	Respondents of the Study Areas		
	Teesta valley Tea Garden	Dungra Khasmahal	Bungkulung
Male	136 (90.67 %)	97 (86.61%)	80 (74.8%)
Female	14 (9.33 %)	15 (13.39 %)	27(25.2%)
Total	150 (100 %)	112 (100%)	107 (100%)

Source: Field work (2014 – 2017)

The Table 3.6 reveals the highest number of respondents in the study areas which belonged to male members with (90.67) % in Teesta valley Tea Garden, (86.61) % in Dungra and (74.8%) in Bungkulung, Male respondent was quite high compare to the female counterparts with (9.33 %) in Teesta valley, (13.39 %) in Dungra and (25.2%) in Bungkulung respectively.

3.5.3.1 Age Sex Pyramid

The age sex pyramid is one of the important geographical parameter to understand the population composition and its dynamics. The shape of the pyramid undermines the socio- economic development of a region. Another interesting feature about these types of population pyramids is to show the nature of gender imbalances in the specified age groups. In the given below figure male population is shown by the blue colour and female by pink colour. The given figure shows the higher rate of senile and female population in the study areas of Teesta Valley Tea garden and Dungra Khasmahal. The concentrations of younger populations are high in all the three villages.

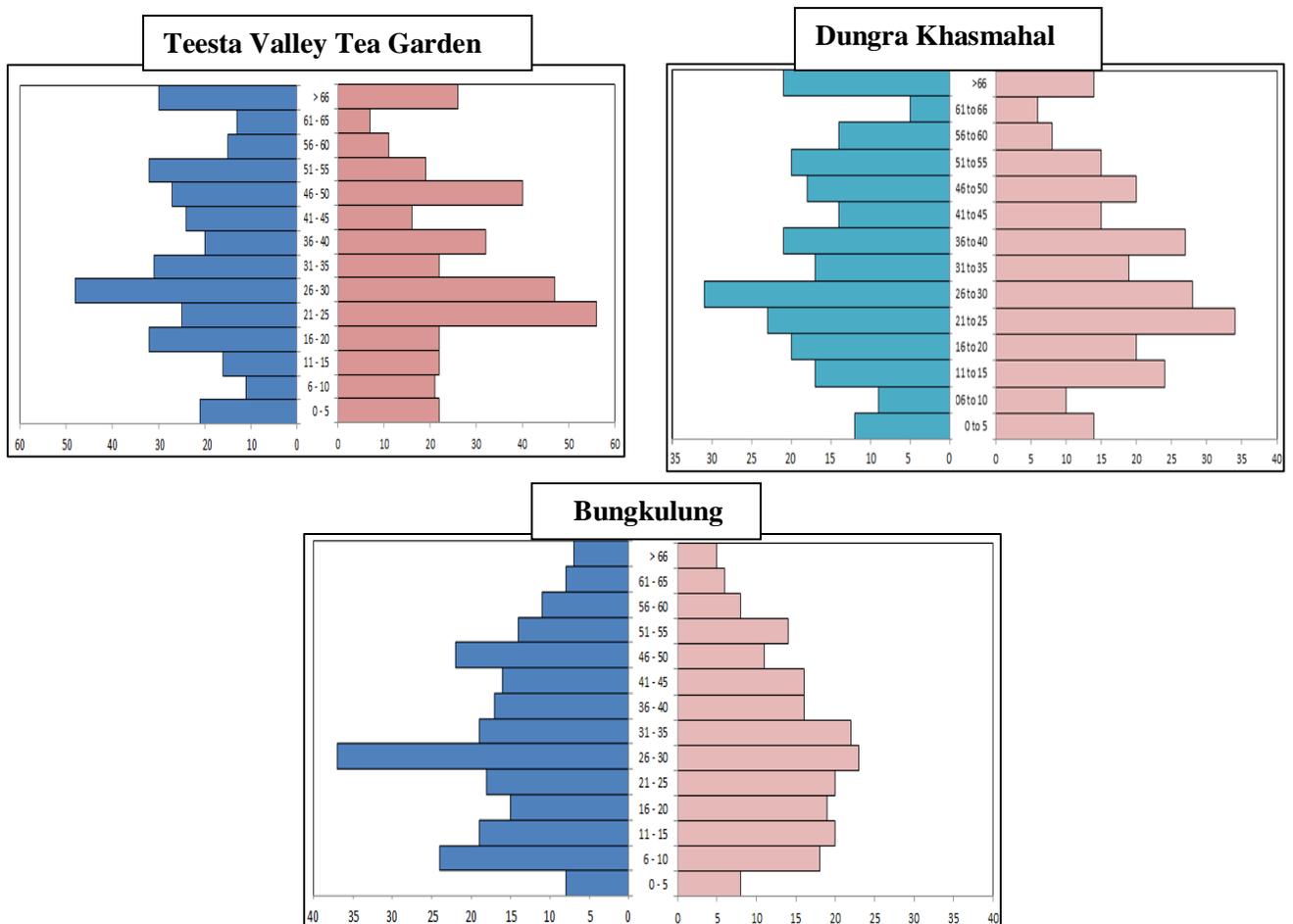


Figure 3.12: Showing the Age Sex Pyramid of the Study Areas

3.5.4 Marital Status

The study tries to show the marital status of Limbu community of the study areas of Darjeeling Himalayas. From the table below it is quite cleared to understand the marital status of the Limbus in study areas.

Table 3.7
Showing the Marital Status of the Study Areas

No	Types	Teesta Valley Tea Garden		Dungra Khasmahal		Bungkulung	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Unmarried	79 (13.3%)	72 (12.2%)	66(16.4%)	60(14.9%)	57(16.9%)	40(11.8%)
2	Married	201 (34%)	204 (34.5%)	115(28.5%)	120(29.8%)	105(31.1%)	108(32%)
3	Widow/ Widower	10 (2%)	22 (4%)	14(3.5%)	19(4.7%)	10(3%)	14(4.1%)
4	Divorced	4 (0.6%)	1 (0.2%)	4(1%)	5(1.2%)	-	1(0.3%)
5	Separated	-	1 (0.2%)	-	-	2	1(0.3%)
6	Total	592 (100%)		403 (100%)		338 (100%)	

(0 -16 years is excluded)

Source: Field Survey (2014 – 2017)

The given table 3.7 shows the marital status of Limbu population reflecting the various parameters of population dynamics. One thing which was very common in the study areas was the slightly high population of married women. The main reason of such rate was the result of polygamy, where some of the married males had two wives. In the plantation area of Teesta Valley young men and women marry at quite young age. The majority of person had marriage by elopement. The age of elopement was not fixed because some marry at very young age (17 years) and some married at (40 years). The rate of married women and men is quite high in Teesta valley with (34.5%) and (34%) respectively. Some men and women who are physically disabled were not married and categorize as unmarried but even the persons between (18 – 40 years) are labeled as unmarried. The proportion of unmarried male and females are somewhat same with (13.3 %) and (12.2%) respectively. During survey it was found that the women whose husbands had died at young age have remained as widow (4%) throughout their life. But only few men were widower (2%) especially those who lost

their wife at old age. Most of the widower falling in mid age had married twice and had started their new family. The rate of divorced or separated was low as per survey because most of the respondents did not reveal their personal life. But it was found male divorcee (0.6%) was more than female. Regarding separation by mutual consent not by legal laws was found in one household where the daughter has come back to her natal village due to hostile attitudes from husband and in-laws.

Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal also married at quite young age by elopement. The percent of married women (29.8%) is bit high than those of males (28.5%). During the fieldwork it was found the unmarried populations are young but ready to get married after some years. Only few of them had crossed their age of marriage. The percentage of unmarried males (16.4%) is higher than unmarried females (14.9%) because females were getting married as soon as they finished their school or if they were drop outs. The percentage of widow is slightly higher (4.7%) than widower (3.5%). Very rare cases of divorce or mutual separation were found. Only (1%) of males and (1.2 %) of females are divorced either through legal ways or mutual consent of separation after their husband married to another woman. The marital status of Limbus in Bungkulung shows the choice of selecting the partners depended on both the couples. The marriage through elopement is quite popular and the trend is still continuing in the study areas. The village is also comparatively smaller than the other two villages. Therefore the married population proportion is also quite low with (31.1%) of married men and (32%) women. The unmarried population of male is quite high with (16.9 %) of males and (11.8%) of unmarried females. The separated and divorced cases were very few and the respondents also did not want to disclose their broken relationships. It is through the third party such information is collected. The study area has (0.6 %) of male and female population either divorced or mutually separated from their spouses.

3.5.5 Sex Ratio

In India the sex ratio of female is comparatively lower than the males. The preferences of male child over the female have increased the infanticide at an alarming rate. The social stigma and stereotype obligations on female as debt burden

have led in the abnormal decreasing birth rate in society. Darjeeling district (*including Kalimpong*) on the other hand has different stories of positive growth of population with the highest sex ratio (970 females per 1000 males) in the state of West Bengal and the district retains same rank for rural sex ratio (973 females per 1000 males) also. In case of Scheduled Caste it rank 3rd with sex ratio of 965 females per 1000 males & Scheduled Tribe population, it rank 2nd 1015 females per 1000 males respectively (census, 2011). The positive sex ratio indicates the good social status of women in the Himalayan society.

Table 3.8
Showing the Distribution of Limbus in the Study Areas according to Reproductive Status

Age groups	Category	Teesta valley Tea Garden			Dungra Khasmahal			Bungkulung		
		Male	Female	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Sex ratio
0-15 years	Pre reproductive	48 (13.9%)	65 (17.9%)	1354. 2	38 (15.7%)	48 (18.9%)	263.1 5	51 (21.7%)	46 (22.3%)	901.9
16-50 years	Reproductive	207 (60%)	235 (64.7%)	1135. 3	144 (59.5%)	163 (64.2%)	1131. 94	144 (61.3%)	127 (61.7%)	81.9
>51 years	Post Reproductive	90 (26.1%)	63 (17.4%)	700	60 (24.8%)	43 (16.9%)	716.6 6	40 (17%)	33 (16%)	825
Total		345 (100%)	363 (100%)	1052. 17	242 (100%)	254 (100%)	1049. 58	235 (100%)	206 (100%)	876.6

Source: Field Survey 2014-2017

Table 3.8 shows the total sex ratio of the Limbus of the study areas according to their reproductive status. Age group between 0 – 15 years is considered as pre reproductive category, 16 – 50 years is considered as reproductive and 51 years and above is

considered as post reproductive category. In the study area of Teesta Valley among the males 13.9 percent and 17.9 percent females are in the category of pre-reproductive with the sex ratio of 1354.2 females per 1000 males. 60 percent of males and 64.7 percent of females are reproductive with the sex ratio of 1135.3 females per 1000 males. There are 26.1 percent males and 17.4 % females in the post reproductive category with the sex ratio of 700 females per 1000 males. In Dungra Khasmahal nearly 15.7 percent of males and 18.9 percent of females with the sex ratio of 1263.15 females per 1000 males falls under the pre-reproductive category. In the reproductive category nearly 59.5 percent of males and 64.2 percent of females with the average sex ratio of 1131.94 females per 1000 males are recorded. The post reproductive stage belongs to those populations whose fecundity rate is negligible. Almost 24.8 percent of males and 16.9 percent of females with the sex ratio of 716.66 per 1000 males are present in this category of reproductive status.

In Bungkulung the average sex ratio of Limbu population 876.6 was females per 1000 males. The sex ratio is comparatively lower than other two villages. In pre reproductive age group the percentage of female is high with (22.3%) and (21.7%) male. Whereas in the reproductive age group (16-50 years) the sex ratio is 881.9 females per 1000 males where (61.3%) is males and (61.7%) is females. The percentage is quite less in the post reproductive age group above 50 years. The Sex ratio is 825 females per 1000 males with (17 %) of males and (16%) of females.

3.6 Education and Institutional Assets of Limbu Villages

Education is the most important tool for the overall development of human being. It helps us to build our conscience to think rationally and illuminates us with the knowledge and wisdom. The educational scenario of the Limbus in the study areas is not satisfactory. Very few of them are highly educated holding a respectable position not only in professional life but also in the society. During the field survey it was found that in the early day's education among the males and females has always been a secondary option not because of choice but because of the economic hardships. The growing number of family members led to increase the size of the dependents for which working is inevitable one. Most of the respondents start to work as labourer or

any precarious jobs due to this reason. For them work was very important to sustain a livelihood which is also reflects in their *Ukhaan* (*Proverb*) saying *padi lekhi ke ko kaam halo joti maam* meaning ploughing is better than studying because it provides you food. This *Ukhaan* which was very prominent has lost its significance in recent years. Because the educationally deprived section of Limbus knows the fruits of education. They send their children to school for better education.

The stereotype thoughts has negate with positive approach where every parents support girl child education which was restricted in the olden days. Prior to this the numbers of schools are very less in the study areas. During the field work it was found that only one high school was present in the study areas. The majority of the students have to walk for kilometers everyday for schooling as good numbers of schools are located farther away from the villages. Therefore most of the parents during olden days did not allow the girl child to go to schools because of security issue leading to the educational backwardness of the female students in the study areas



The woman in a picture is Smt. Kamalphul Limbu of Teesta Valley Tea garden. She opined that during old days her parents had refrained her from going to school. Because they worried if she could learn the reading and writing in school. She would start to write a love letter to her lover and will eloped away without the consent of her parents. This would not only bring the shame to her family but will also increase the pressure of domestic household chores of her mother. Keeping these considerations in their mind, they never allow her to attend the school

Plate 3.3 Showing the Limbu Woman addressing the problem of Educational attainment in old days

Table 3.9 Showing the Educational Attainment of the Limbus in Study Areas

Study Area	Teesta Valley Tea Garden		Dungra Khasmahal		Bungkulung	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Illiterate	135	19.5 %	45	9.4%	40	9.2
Primary level	105	15.1%	49	10.2%	110	25.4
Middle (V – VIII)	106	15.3 %	65	13.5%	71	16.4
Secondary	75	10.8%	96	20%	44	10.2
Higher Secondary	80	11.5%	47	9.8%	25	5.8
Graduate / PG	46	6.6 %	71	14.8%	22	5
Studying	147	21.2 %	107	22.3%	121	28
Total	694	100 %	480	100%	433	100%

(0 - 3 years is excluded) Source: Field Survey (2014 -2017)

Table 3.8 shows the general educational scenario of the Limbus under study areas. The educational attainment among the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya is very negligible as compared to other communities. Prior to relative isolation the lack of awareness among the Limbus is also one of the prime reasons for lack of education. Limbus practice farming activities for their sustainable livelihood therefore education might remain as the secondary option. But with the changing passage of time some rays of improvement in enhancing the education for betterment of the children is seen among the Limbu families. In the Study areas nearly 19.5 % of illiterates Limbus are present in Teesta valley and 9.4 % in Dungra Khasmahal and 9.2 % in Bungkulung. The maximum female populations are illiterates in the study areas. Nearly 15.1 % have received their primary education in Teesta valley and 10.2 % in Dungra followed by 25.4 % of Limbus in Bungkulung. It was found in the survey that only

basic primary schools were present in the study areas due to which after attaining primary level education only few used to continue their education and the rest engaged in different sorts of economic activities. The Limbu populations who received education up to middle school level are 15.3 % in Teesta valley, 13.5 % in Dungra Khasmahal and 16.4 % in Bungkulung. The population who had attained the Secondary level of education which is also regarded as the first stepping foundation in building up the educational carrier was nearly 10.8 percent in Teesta valley and 20 percent in Dungra Khasmahal followed by 10.2 percent of Limbus in Bungkulung.

Most of the Limbu students discontinued their studies after higher secondary level mainly due to financial problems and engagement in the economic activities. The majority of the male population tried for defense services and female population went for other professional training courses like nursing, parlors and beautician etc. Some of them also migrate to abroad for work purpose, 11.5 % of Limbus in Teesta valley had their education up to higher secondary level and 9.8 % in Dungra Khasmahal followed by 5.8 % in Bungkulung. Very few of them had college and university degrees. 6.6 percent in Teesta Valley, 14.8 % in dungra Khasmahal and 5 % in Bungkulung are graduates and post graduates. But in the recent years few changes have come across in the life of the Limbus were they understand the importance and benefits of the modern education system.

The numbers of good schools are not present within the village. Therefore, the parents are sending their children to town areas for proper educational upliftment. Moreover the Tribal status is also giving benefits to the students who are good in studies by providing them stipend and scholarships for pursuing higher education. During the field survey it was found most of the young populations are still studying in schools and colleges among which females has outnumbered the males. In Teesta valley 21.2 percent and 22.3 percent in Dungra followed by 28 percent of Limbus in Bungkulung are still studying or continuing their education.

3.6.1 Educational Attainment of the Limbus of Teesta Valley Tea Garden

The table 3.9 given below shows the percentage of how much Limbu population is educated. In the study area of Teesta Valley Tea garden the female illiterates (23.5%) is relatively high than male (15.2 %). Some of them have left the school either after completion of primary level or Junior High School level due to economic reasons. The main reason of female illiteracy is early marriage, inclination towards the domestic chores and looking after the siblings in home. The majority of males have their education up to secondary and higher secondary school level (11.9 %) and (14.9%). In the garden area army is one of the prestigious jobs therefore; many males have left their high school as they joined army. The percentage of graduates is very low with (5.9%) of females' and (7.3 %) of males' graduates.

Table 3.10 Showing the Sex wise Educational Attainment of the Limbus of Teesta Valley Tea garden

Category	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Illiterate	51	15.2%	84	23.5%	135	19.5 %
Primary level	54	16.1%	51	14.2%	105	15.1%
Middle (V – VIII)	55	16.4%	51	14.2%	106	15.3 %
Secondary	40	11.9%	35	9.8%	75	10.8%
Higher Secondary	50	14.9%	30	8.4%	80	11.5%
Graduate / PG	20	5.9%	26	7.3%	46	6.6 %
Studying	66	19.6%	81	22.6%	147	21.2 %
Total	336	100%	358	100%	694	100 %

(0 – 3 years is excluded)

Source: Field work (2013 – 2014)

In the field work it was found that many boys and girls also left their schools in case if they failed. So the numbers of the female drop outs are more in the Teesta valley tea garden. Now- a- day's emphasis on the girl education is prime necessity in Limbu society which makes them empowered independent and determined supported by all households and is clear from the survey because of the percentage of female students (22.6%) are more than the male students (19.6%). Out of 694 the total literacy rate in the study area of Teesta Valley is (80.5 %) and illiteracy rate is (19.5%). From the above analysis it can be said that the Limbus, in the study area are less educated. Now their attitude regarding the need and the value of education is changing. During the field work, the researcher asked them about the type of education they prefer for their children. About (50 %) preferred engineering, medical science and post graduations for their children and other remaining people preferred other types of education for their children. These preferences indicated the changing attitude of the Limbu people in the study area.



Plate 3.4 : Showing Nepali Medium Primary School of Teesta Valley Tea Garden

3.6.2 Educational Attainment of the Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal

The educational attainment of the Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal is similar to Limbus living in Tea garden belt. As per the location the Dungra lies in the periphery of the main town of Kalimpong. But still Limbus of the village lack to generate an educational awareness among them. The major occupational pursuits of the Limbus are agricultural activities which do not require any educational qualification aspect like, the physical power and labour requirement for farm activities. Therefore, in the olden days hardly anyone focus in the attainment of educational qualification. Many of them left the school after completion of primary and middle school level in order to support their family income by becoming a helping hand in the farming system.

Table 3.11 Showing the Educational Attainment of the Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal

Category	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Illiterate	17	7.3%	28	11.4%	45	9.4%
Primary level	20	8.5%	29	11.8%	49	10.2%
Middle (V – VIII)	36	15.4%	29	11.8%	65	13.5%
Secondary	47	20.1%	49	20%	96	20%
Higher Secondary	26	11.1%	21	8.5%	47	9.8%
Graduate / PG	41	17.5%	30	12.2%	71	14.8%
Studying	47	20.1%	60	24.4%	107	22.3%
Total	234	100%	246	100%	480	100%

(0 – 3 years is excluded)

Source: Field work (2014 – 2016)

Majority of old aged females (11.4%) are more illiterate than males (7.3%) due to engagement in domestic chores from a very early age. But surprisingly in primary educational level female percentage (11.8 %) is more than male (8.5%). In middle school level

only (11.8%) female attained the education because of early drop outs from school as compared to male (15.4%). This may be due to the early marriage of the girl and lack of interest in education. In secondary and higher secondary level the percentage of male is comparatively higher than females. Only (8.5%) of females have attained higher secondary level compare to males with (11.1 %). Thus the male graduates (17.5 %) are also more than female graduates (12.2%). But in the recent days many changes have come across. In the hilly region female education is given more emphasis. In Dungra the current enrollment of females (24.4 %) studying in the school is more than males (20.1%).



Plate 3.5 : Showing the Primary School in Dungra Khasmahal

3.6.3 Educational Attainment of the Limbus of Bungkulung

Bungkulung is most educationally backward Limbu village compare to other study areas. During my field work it was noticed that the majority of youths were drop outs. The relative isolation of the place is also one of the factors for underdevelopment.

The place lacks in number of schools with only one private school and junior basic schools.

Table 3.12 Showing the Educational Attainment of the Limbus of Bungkulung

Category	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Illiterate	13	5.6%	27	13.4%	40	9.2%
Primary level	56	24.1%	54	26.9%	110	25.4%
Middle (V – VIII)	40	17.2%	31	15.4%	71	16.4%
Secondary	25	10.8%	19	9.5%	44	10.2%
Higher Secondary	20	8.6%	05	2.5%	25	5.8%
Graduate / PG	12	5.2%	10	5%	22	5%
Studying	66	28.5%	55	27.3%	121	28%
Total	232	100%	201	100%	433	100%

(0 – 3 years is excluded)

Source: Field work (2015 – 2017)

The give table 3.11 it is clear that female is most educationally backward and are in deplorable positions. The percentage of female illiteracy is (13.4 %) and male illiteracy is (5.6 %). It was believed that in olden days most of the female students were refrained from going to high schools located in distant far town of Kurseong and Mirik due to security reasons. Therefore, the majority of the young girls were forced to leave schooling after primary and middle school to give their hand in the domestic chores. The percentage of females having education up to primary level is (26.9 %) and (24.1%) falls under males section. About (15.4 %) of females had completed their middle school and (9.5 %) had completed their secondary education. Whereas (17

.2%) of males had attained middle school level followed by (10.8 %) completed their secondary level.

The highest qualification i.e. graduation was completed by a handful of Limbus with (5.2 %) males and (5 %) females. But now the parents have become conscious about the education of their children and encourage them. The present populations of younger generation are studying in different fields. Nearly (28.5 %) of young males and (27.3 %) of females have engaged themselves in studying schools, college and professional courses.

3.7 Limbu Language: Choice and Preferences

Nepali is the one of the most important language spoken by the people in the study areas. In term of Limbu language, very few elderly members of the households spoke in dialects with their spouses and children at home and with other Limbus during social gatherings. Many of the younger generation do not speak the Limbu language in the study areas. There is no doubt that awareness towards ones identity and culture has reached to a new heights in the past few years but proving oneself in the ever changing modernized time and at the same time holding to one’s roots is forever a challenging balancing act. During my conversation and observation the younger members of the family spoke in Nepali because they found difficult to learn and grasp the needed words/ tense from the Limbu language.

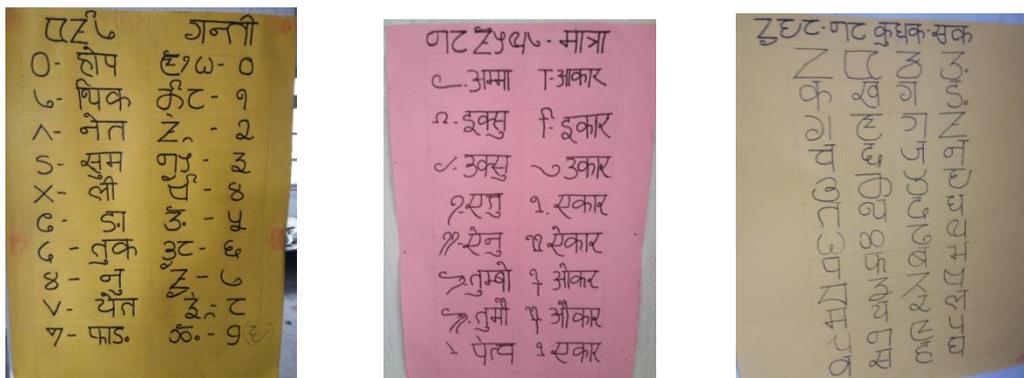


Plate 3.6 Showing the Limbu Alphabets and Numerical displayed in one of the respondent house in Dungra Khasmahal

Table 3.13**Showing the Number of Persons Who Can Speak Limbu Language**

Age Group	Teesta valley Tea Garden		Dungra Khasmahal		Bungkulung	
	Limbu	Nepali	Limbu	Nepali	Limbu	Nepali
0 - 9	-	75	-	45	-	58
10 - 19	-	92	3	78	-	73
20 - 29	2	174	2	114	-	98
30 - 39	-	105	5	79	10	74
40 - 49	1	106	16	51	9	65
50 - 59	3	74	11	46	30	47
60 +	20	56	26	20	20	26
Total	26	682	63	433	69	441

Source: Fieldwork (2014-2017)

Most of the younger members said that no one spoke in Limbu at home. There was less use of the language outside the home. Because Nepali is a common language in day to day life and in Darjeeling Himalaya it is needed for every government related works especially in government offices, ignorance of Nepali language can be troublesome. Beside Nepali language the influence of English language was more equally strong in the study areas. Many of the younger members of the households felt that they would be left out in modern competitive world if they do not know English language. From the above mentioned table it is clearly seen that majority of the Limbus cannot speak their native language and indeed it is eroding away. In Teesta valley hardly (3.7 %) and (12.7%) in Dungra Khasmahal of the persons can speak both in Limbu and Nepali and (96.3 %) in Teesta valley and (87.3%) cannot speak Limbu language. In Bungkulung 15.6 % of population can only speak and understand Limbu language and majority of population speaks Nepali. Elderly Limbus of the Study areas opined that language problem and inefficiency of speaking it ultimately hampers the culture, customs and traditions. The legacy of every community is passed down to next generation through own language which recites the

myths, narratives and legends of their ancestral achievement and lifestyles which helps in the reconstructing the forgotten history and cultural identity. Limbus of study areas is struggling to revive their forgotten language *Yakthungpan*.

In Dungra Khasmahal, it was said majority of the Limbu speak in their own language as it is one of the dominant Limbu settlement. In reality it was found hardly 10 percent of the total population can understand and speak their native language. In order to understand about the forgotten Limbu language in the fieldwork, I met senior lady who was fluent in language. Among her family members only she spoke Limbu language. She told me during her childhood days her parents did not allow her to speak in Nepali language as they refer it as other language. Meanwhile, her children do not show any interest to learn and speak in Limbu. Because they felt shy and ashamed as their friends used to give satire and jokingly comment on them saying “*Manche Khaane Jaat Boleko*” which means are you speaking in cannibalism? Therefore, they started to speak in Nepali as it was a major Linga Franca in the Darjeeling Himalayan region.

3.8 Non formal Limbu School and its Role

“The losing interest in language ultimately leads to a death of a culture” said Mr. N.D Limbu (Chairman of West Bengal Limbu Development Board).

The forgotten language and eroding cultural heritage is the main problem in Limbu society. The majority of the Limbus of Darjeeling Himalaya hardly speaks in their language. The heterogeneous society and the impact of modernization have completely alienated the cultural essence of Limbus. There is no such officially formal school in Darjeeling imparting Limbu language. During the fieldwork it was found that there used to be informal school teaching Limbu language in weekends in Dungra Khasmahal in Zambiook Junior Basic School. The primary school was built in the memory of Late Zambiook Limbu who was the first B.A .LLB from Calcutta University, an educated man from Dungra. But unfortunately he died at a very young age. The Zambiook Memorial was only one such school in Dungra where Limbu language was taught. Mr. N.D Limbu used to teach Limbu language to village children in weekends. But he left the school in 2000 A.D due to absence of students

and lack of interest to understand it. Though the teaching of language is stopped but every morning school starts with a Limbu prayer.



Plate 3.7 Showing the Zambik Basic Junior School in Dungra Khasmahal

3.9 Infrastructural Facilities and Services

The availability of the infrastructural facilities reflects the standard of development of any society. By the infrastructural facilities we mean education, medical, health and nutrition, family welfare, drinking water, agricultural pattern, employment, electricity, transportation, communication and the public distribution system (Bisht, 2001). The infrastructural facilities available in the different Limbu villages are presented in the table below.

Table 3.14 Showing Infrastructural Facilities at a Glance

No	Infrastructural Facilities	Village/ Hamlet	
1	Educational Facilities	Primary School	Limbu goan, Ramitee, Khamjet, Dp side, upper dungra, Bungkulung
		Junior School	Damaitar, Teesta valley, Bungkulung
		High School	Teesta Valley Tea Garden
2	Health and Medicare	Primary health centre	Teesta valley Tea Garden
		Dispensaries, Hospital	Nil
3	Cooperative Societies	Bank, post office	Dungra, Teesta valley Tea Garden, Bungkulung. No bank
4	Public distribution centre	Fair price shops	Dungra, Teesta valley Tea Garden, Bungkulung
5	Nutrition Programme	Midday meal, ICDS	Dungra, Teesta valley, Bungkulung
6	Development Programme	MGNEGRA	Dungra, Teesta valley, Bungkulung
7	Electricity ,Drinking water	Every village has electricity and drinking water. Except Teesta valley tea garden which has acute water problem.	
8	Panchayat Office	Rungli gram panchayat in Teesta valley, Rousay gram panchayat in Dungra, gram panchayat in Bungkulung	
9	Transportation	Bridle path, road is partially pitched and has many potholes in Dungra & Teesta valley. Road condition is worst in Bungkulung	
11	Market	Haat market held every Saturday in Teesta valley.	
10	Livestock	Veterinary	Dungra Khasmahal

Source: Field Survey 2013- 2017

Table 3.3 provides a general scenario of the availability of the infrastructural facilities in study areas of the Limbu community. These may be further delineated as follows:

Education is pre-requisite for human resource development. The Limbu communities of the core rural belt of the study areas are still deprived of primary educational facilities. In the study area of Teesta valley tea garden out of five Limbu hamlets only three hamlets have primary school, whereas in Dungra the upper Dungra has one primary school and one in the lower Dungra one school in Damaitar and one primary school in Ramitee. Most of the primary schools are of Nepali medium only the junior and high schools are English medium. It was observed from the field work the villagers send their children to urban areas for schooling. The health and medical care system is deplorable in the study areas with only one primary health centre in Teesta valley tea garden owned by the garden authority. The good numbers of hospitals are kilometers away from the villages. The developmental works like MGNERA, PMSGY, ICDS, old age pension scheme, few offices are present in the study areas. The village has electricity connection but in some of the hamlets electricity is installed only few years back. The Limbus still depend on natural resources for drinking water. Teesta valley tea garden suffers from acute water crisis as seasonal streams dry up in the summer which not only create problem but also lead to conflicts among them in fetching water. Public Health engineering department has constructed one tank but there is no water supply. In Dungra Khasmahal and Bungkulung there is no such problem. People fetch drinking water directly from natural springs. For irrigation purposes they just make small *nala* for water supply in the agricultural fields. The abundance presence of water in Bungkulung helps the people to encourage pisciculture in commercial scale. The availability of the motorable road transportation not only developed a region but also helped in the spatial mobility of people. The tea garden area has bit good transport accessibility than two Khasmahal villages. The village in Dungra is only accessible on its upper limit but in the interior core people to walk 2 to 3 Kilometers or more uphill on foot to avail this facility. The condition of road in Bungkulung is extremely bad with big pot holes. Though the village is located in exotic ambience but only few tourists visits the place due to its bad road

conditions. Apart from infrastructural facilities market is also important. There are no such markets present in the study areas except *Haat*⁷ which is weekly in nature.

3.10 Health Care System and Services

Health is a dynamic situation that needs a considerable amount of time and expertise to capture its sundry aspects (Khawas, 2006). The study does not go into the detail of health care system but only tries to understand the major health problems of the Limbus and their ways to cope it. Limbus of the study areas practices both the traditional and modern medicinal treatment for their ailment. In field study it was found that they seek remedial cure from shamans who are popularly known as *Phedangba*. They also used some medicinal herbs to cure their minor diseases.

Table 3.15

Distribution of Limbu households on the Basis of Treatment Adopted

Study Areas	Traditional	Modern	Both	Total
Teesta Valley Tea garden	30 (20%)	50 (33.3%)	70 (46.7%)	150 (100%)
Dungra Khasmahal	15 (13.4%)	37 (33%)	60 (53.6%)	112 (100%)
Bungkulung	20(18.7%)	20(18.7%)	67(62.6%)	107(100%)

Source: Field Survey (2014- 2017)

Health treatment is very important in order to keep oneself healthy and free from disease. But now-a-days the cost of treatment is worsening the problem of people. The acute and chronic health issue is incurring the huge cost expenditure because of the improved medicine and medical techniques. In the study areas there are no hospitals, proper dispensary and medical shops. Teesta valley tea garden has provided a health care system with a mere facility. Whereas in Dungra Khasmahal Kalimpong Government Hospital is the near option for the Limbus apart from costly Nursing homes. In Bungkulung the nearby health centre is in *Ghoornauny Tar* in Soureni bazaar. The health treatment also depends on the condition of the households. Limbu family having low source of income goes for traditional treatment and Government hospitals. The middle and high income group goes for modern specialty hospital. The

⁷ Rural market which is held ones in the week

Limbu army personnel go to army hospital for their treatment in Lebong and Bagdogra ECHS. From the above mentioned table it is found that 20 percent of Limbus in Teesta valley and 13.4 percent of Limbus in Dungra seek for traditional treatment cured by Phedangba, homeopathy and herbal medicines. Some of the households believe in both the traditional and modern treatment methods. If someone fell sick at first they call Phedangba to ward off evil spirit and takes blessing from *Yumasam* and goes for doctor checkup. Because they believe that unless and until if the phedangba would not see them doctor treatment will not be fruitful. 46.7 percent households in Teesta valley and 53.6% percent in dungra practiced and seek for both the treatments. 33.3 percent in Teesta valley and 33 percent in Dungra Khasmahal seeks for proper medical attention and does not believe in traditional method of shamanism.

Table 3.16 Showing Major Health Problems in the Study Areas

Teesta Valley Tea Garden	Dungra Khasmahal	Bungkulung
Liver Jaundice, Pressure	Liver Jaundice	Typhoid
Paralysis, Joint Pain	Tuberculosis	Malaria
Heart, Diahorrea and Dysentery	Nose bleeding Asthma	Asthma
Gland TB	Heart , Joint pain	Body ache, Joint pain
Asthma	Pressure, Typhoid	Blood Pressure, Arthritis

Source: Field Survey (2014 - 2016)

3.11 Findings

Darjeeling Himalaya is a rugged terrain situated on the Eastern Himalayan range. Geographically it is very fragile and has complex form of socio - cultural settings. The region is located on the laps of snow clad Himalayas, traversed by rugged valleys and turbulent streams. The study areas exhibits the diverse geographical features of landforms formed during tertiary period due to plate tectonic movement. The region is composed of granite and gneissic rocks. The Teesta Valley Tea garden is situated in Darjeeling range with an elevation varying from 400 meters to 3000 meters crisscrossed by Teesta River. Bungkulung falls under Kurseong range where the

general slope of the region is from north to south with varying altitude of 300 to 800 metres drained by the River Balasan. Dungra Khasmahal lies in the south east of Kalimpong range within 300 to 3000 metres between Darjeeling gneiss and Daling series of which the Relli *Khola* is the prominent stream.

The habitat of Limbus in this Himalayan landscape has a close relationship with nature, resource and culture maintaining through sustainable livelihood in relative isolation. The origin of Limbu settlements has close connection with the social history of Eastern Nepal from where they had migrated. The settlement of Limbus in the Teesta valley region was after the establishment of Tea plantation by a colonial enterprise. The labour paucity was compensated by their settlement in and around Tea gardens as labourers. The origin of Limbu settlements in Dungra and Bungkulung has an interesting history and stories to narrate. The Dungra is originally a Lepcha word; meaning Fern jungles and Bungkulung is derived from both the Lepcha and Limbu word meaning *Bungku* (Forest) and *Lung* (Stone). The settlement of Limbus in Dungra was after the defeat of Lepchas by the Britishers, with the help of Limbus. The Britishers provided help to the Limbus to settle permanently in these areas. This base or foundation helped the other Limbus from Eastern Nepal to migrate and mingle with the already settled Limbus here. The factors for their migration or settlement were marriage, family ties, friendship and mainly the loss of Limbuwan territory in the Eastern Nepal due to conquest policy of the then Gorkha ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah.

The Bungkulung village holds a significant history of Limbu settlements mainly; the early and latter settlers. The retreat of Lepchas from the Bungkulung, due to spread of epidemics encouraged the settlement of Limbus. These early settlers cleared the forested land and started the permanent settlement with sustained agricultural practices. The early settlers are that Limbus who had arrived in Bungkulung before the colonials' establishment. The latter settlers are those Limbu families who came to Bungkulung for economic purpose after colonial departure and India's Independence. The influx of other Nepali communities in the Limbu settlement of the study areas has huge impact on the demography and socio – cultural attributes. The coming of

Nepalis brought the caste hierarchy system. In the early days the caste hierarchy was done on the basis of their occupation (Subba, 1989). They started to employ themselves in various economic activities. The Limbu were influenced by them and witnessed the change in population composition. The process of migration, fertility and mortality has completely altered the demographic attributes of the studied areas. According to the Census of 2011 the total Limbu population of Darjeeling Himalaya is 46847. The rural and urban population composition is 36908 and 9939 respectively. The study of population composition is vital in understanding the Economy, Society and Culture in Relation to the Habitat. The surveyed population of the studied areas is thus helpful in understanding the Limbu community and their demographic profile.

The total surveyed population of the studied areas is 1645 of which The Teesta Valley Tea garden comprises of (708), Dungra Khasmahal (496) and Bungkulung (441). The male and female population composition shows the interesting characteristics. The female population is slightly higher than males in the studied areas of Teesta Valley tea garden (363) and Dungra Khasmahal (254). In Bungkulung the male population is comparatively higher than female population. The good number of female population shows better aspect of women position in Limbu society.

The sex ratio of Teesta valley is (1052.17), Dungra Khasmahal (1049.58) and Bungkulung (876.6) per thousand males. The female sex ratio is more than males but educationally males are more literates.

The educational qualification is unsatisfactory with majority of the population having middle school qualification. The females are educationally backward and most of them are school drop outs. The higher illiteracy rate among them is mainly due to the social stigma and financial crisis. The higher rate of girl's school dropout resulted in early marriage through elopement. The young men and female marry at quiet young age through elopement. The rate of separation and divorced couple is very negligible.

The local culture has immense influence among the younger generation. They do not know Limbu language. The effort was taken to impart the knowledge of language through informal school but in vain. The inter caste marriage is quite common which

is considered as one of the major reason for fading Limbu language. The infrastructural facilities especially health conditions is deplorable and pathetic with no medical facilities. They practiced both traditional and modern methods of health care system.

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