

## ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THREE LIMBU VILLAGES

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### 4.1 Introduction

Manpower is the basic resource of a region. The economy of a region depends on the major economic pursuits which are concerned over the functions of production, distribution and exchange of commodities in a society. The main objective of a human society is to strive for profit maximization through different sectors of economic activities. The economy of a tribe is a projection of tribal society, a response to the ecosystem in which it is placed. Its function of production and distribution are governed by the bonds of kinship within or between families, clans and kindred (Singh, 1982).

Economic organization helps us to understand the mode of production, relation of production and technology of production (Beteille, 1971). This chapter helps in understanding the relationship of Limbus with the member of the village for the purpose of production. In the rural belt of Darjeeling Himalaya the economy of the village is based primarily upon agriculture and tea gardens.

The relation of production consists between owners and labourers, including persons contributing in different process of mode of production. These together with their interrelation constitute the economic structure of the village. The economic structure of the studied villages has its own characteristics with slight changes in the traditional economy. The traditional occupation has been influenced by the diversified economic activities. This chapter focuses on the different economic activities of the Limbus, a fringe tribe of Darjeeling Himalaya in sustaining their livelihood.

## **4.2 Major Economic Pursuits of the Study Areas**

### **Teesta Valley Tea garden**

Economic activities are directly related with the development of infrastructural facilities offering a number of employment opportunities. Therefore, the economy of a region highly depends on it. Apart from infrastructures, working class is another important aspect for industrial and economic enhancement. The physical, manual work provided by this working classes helps in both the production process and economic growth because of the less expenditure cost. The dearth of physical energy to run tea industry is filled up by this working class. The minimum wage is not sufficient to look after their family. This compels them to step outside for other economic pursuits to fulfill their basic amenities and needs of life. The above mentioned sentences, relates the economic hardship and survival struggle of Limbus. The normal life circle is encircled with paucity and deprivation of economic assets. The majority of Limbu are living a relatively isolated life with economic hardships.

#### **4.2.1 Economic Pursuits of Limbus in Teesta Valley Tea Garden**

The core of Darjeeling economy comes from its world famous tea brand. The Limbus living in the valley is working in the tea garden from its inception. The garden has flourished in acres of land allowing number of Nepali ethnic communities to work and to be a part in the production process. Both male and female are engaged in this garden but the majority of women folks outnumber their male counterparts. Therefore, the economic pursuits of Limbu females are most vital in determining the economic setup of Limbu society in Teesta Valley Tea Garden. These working females are the bread earner in the family.

Owing to fragile environment, the area offers two major economic activities as plantation worker and farming. Climatically the area is an important growers of two major cash crops i) Mandarin orange and ii) Large cardamom. But with the increasing population most of the arable lands are transformed into residential areas thereby delimiting the farm activities. The major change in the climatic regime has worstly

affected the orchard farming and cultivation of large cardamoms'. This cash earning crops are badly affected by diseases which incur huge expenditure cost for plant treatment and thereby stagnating the flow of money in the village. Though the village is garden centric, apart from the garden work handful of Limbus in the village are engaged in floriculture and animal husbandry. Among the major economic activities defence is quite popular. During the field work it was observed most of the Limbu households have family member recruited in the army. This job symbolizes the respect, honour and dignity of the family in the village environment.

The young agile lads are more enthusiastic in joining the Indian army. The retired personnel also encourage these youths for its pride and social status. Prior to army, garden workers outnumber the employment percentage where they work as a line and *biga* workers. Line workers are mostly the permanent working group in the tea garden whereas the *biga* workers are the temporary workers who are hired on certain stipulated wages in peak plucking season to speed up the deadline assignments on said time. These Biga workers are the most affected population because rest of the year they remain as unemployed, due to lack of education and employment scarcity in the valley.

During the field work many developmental schemes and programme were on progress in the village. The most significant was MGNEGRA (constructing roads from village to market areas). They were working in the construction site as labourers. During the Interview one of the respondent mentioned working as a labour is the tiresome job. The said wages is very less as compared to their physical endurance. But they still work for the survival of their family and welfare. The given table shows the major economic activities of Limbus in the study area of Teesta valley.



**Plate 4.1: Showing the Lush Green Tea Garden of Teesta Valley**

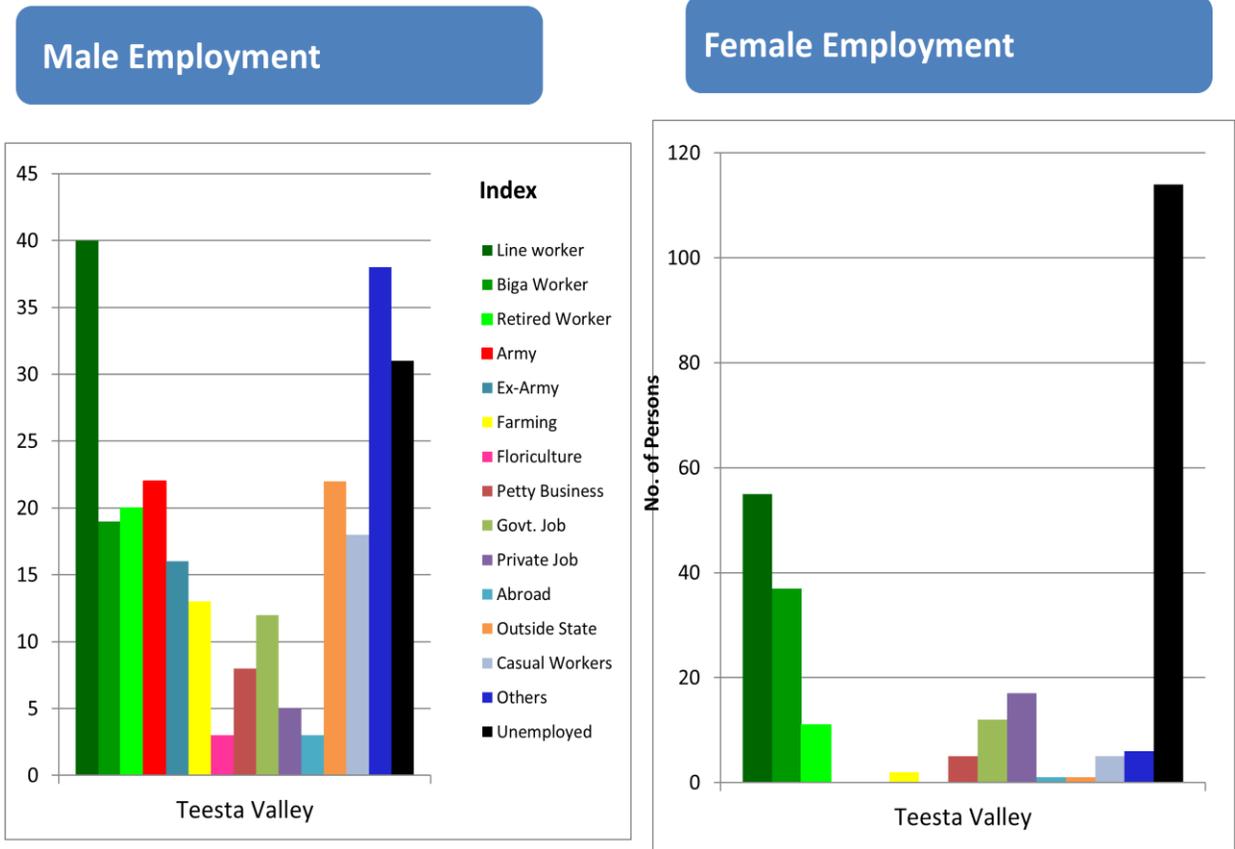
**Table 4.1 Showing the Occupational Pursuits of the Limbus in the Teesta Valley Tea Garden**

S.No	Types	Male	Perce nt	Female	Percen t	Total	Percen t
1	Tea garden line worker	40	14.8%	55	20.7%	95	17.7%
	Tea garden biga worker	19	7%	37	13.8%	56	10.4%
	Tea garden retired worker	20	7.4%	11	4%	31	5.8%
2	Army	22	8.1%	0	0	38	7.1%
	Ex serviceman	16	6%	0	0		
3	Farmers	13	4.8%	2	0.8%	18	3.4%
	Floriculture	3	1.1%	0	0		
4	Casual workers	18	6.7%	5	1.9%	23	4.3%
5	Petty Business	8	3%	5	1.9%	13	2.4%
6	Teaching (Government)	12	4.4%	12	4.5%	46	8.7%
	Teaching (Private )	5	1.9%	17	6.4%		
7	Private Jobs (Abroad)	3	1.1%	1	0.4%	27	5%
	Within India	22	8.1%	1	0.4%		
8	Others	38	14.1%	6	2.2%	44	8.2%
9	Unemployed	31	11.5%	114	43%	145	27%
	Total	270	100 %	266	100%	536	100%
Source: Fieldwork (2013-2015)							

The occupational structure of the Limbus in Teesta Valley Tea garden shows, diverse range of works and employment choice. The most prominent and significant is Tea garden work and Army recruitment. At present days the employment opportunities in Tea garden has reached to its saturation point and now it fails to require more labourers due its own financial condition and factory sickness. In some parts of the Darjeeling Himalaya most of the tea garden has closed down. It is not sufficient for people to provide the basic requirements of the family. Therefore, most of them are also doing secondary jobs apart from being a tea garden employee. The most common work was a

casual worker in the development programme and scheme initiated by the Government as MGNEGRA. The casual workers were not only the male members but females too participated in the work to speed up the income flow in the family saving.

Moreover it is clearly seen from the Figure 4.1, below that the larger section of Limbu womenfolk is associated in Tea garden work (20.7 %) of them are employed as Line or Permanent workers, (13.8 %) of them are engaged as Biga workers who are hired during the peak plucking season and (4 %) of them are retired employee. The men are usually engaged in the production processing and weeding of the tea bushes, so basically doing all the muscle works. About (14.8 %) of men are Line workers and (7 %) of men are Biga workers. Most of the Limbu males in the study area are in defence services (8.1 %) are in service whereas (6 %) are ex- serviceman (pensioners).



**Figure 4.1: Showing the Male and Female Employment of Teesta Valley**

The Lower flank of the valley has agricultural land where subsistence farming is the most suitable method for sustaining livelihood. They cultivate both the food and cash crops along with floriculture. Nearly (4.8 %) are male and (0.8 %) is female farmers. Climatically the region is most favourable for the growth of different plant species. (1.1 %) of the Limbus practice floriculture in a small scale but the income generation is highest in this occupation as compared to other. Both the male (3 %) and female (1.9%) are doing petty business.

Though literacy rate among the Limbus is low compare to other ethnic groups but still few of them are working in teaching sectors. About (10.9 %) of female and (6.3 %) of males are working in private and Government schools. Most of the ambitious youths migrate to major metropolitan cities within India or sometimes abroad for better future and good earning. Among migrated members, males are seen to migrate in larger number compared to females. In study area (8 %) of Limbu females are working abroad and within metro cities of India. But nearly (9.2 %) of males are working in major Indian cities and abroad particularly in Dubai and Kuwait. Most of the females (43 %) are unemployed who are basically housewives. Some males who are physically challenged and illiterate (11.5 %) are unemployed. (14.1 %) of the males and (2.2 %) of the females are working in different fields.

#### **4.2.1.1 Case Study of Teesta Valley Tea Garden**

##### **1. Panche Limbu (Shopkeeper)**

Panche Limbu was interviewed to know the socio-economic conditions of the Limbus. He is survived by his wife and children. He sees no option of employment in the village except garden worker and petty business. His father was a farmer. In those days orchard farming was the most important cash crop in the village. The entire village bloomed with oranges during winter season allowing flow of cash in the village. Panche Limbu is living through petty business as a local shopkeeper selling grocery. He also sells local country liquor and other alcoholic beverages. During the interview especially, middle aged males frequently come to his shop asking for liquor. He earns about Rs 500 to Rs 700 daily by selling liquor and earns double of it during functions, ceremonies and

festivals. His sons are working outside the village in different states; their remittance is meager to support family, children education and medical issue. Panche Limbu had his primary level education but was keenly interested in state and regional politics. He firmly believes if the infrastructural level could enhance in the village, the economic opportunities will itself start to flourish. The economic deprivation and stagnation of Tea garden is the main problem of Darjeeling Himalaya. The marginal people are encircled with economic burden affecting their life.

## **2. Labong Baje ( Traditional Healer & Shaman )**

Labong Baje is illiterate and living a life encircled with economic hardships. He was bare feet, dressed in a torn half pants and woolen cap on his forehead. His story reflects the condition of Limbu living in the tea garden belt of Darjeeling Himalaya. Therefore, it is necessary to sketch down his economic life as to provide a light on down trodden Limbus, living in economic debt and emptiness. He is a traditional healer and practice shamanism in the valley. His house is located in the lower flank of Khamjet, Teesta valley Tea Garden. He is called by clan name Labong, than his real name. He is survived by his wife and two sons. His sons are separated from the joint family. His wife Bhutrani Subba is a 70 year old retired woman of Tea garden. They are living in a Kutcha house made up of mud and bamboo with tin roof having two rooms and one separate kitchen. Every year the monthly expenditure cost double the rate of income with a very little saving. Labong Baje goes for performing ritual, puja and ceremonies in nearby villages for his daily bread. The institution of Shamanism is in very deplorable state because of modern and sophisticated methods of medical science. The earning of the day highly depends on the family standard where he is performing pujas. Some household offer good amount of money for cure and divination. He also works as a labourer in MGNEGRA to substitute his income for daily household chores.

## **3. Narendra Limbu( School Teacher )**

Narendra Limbu is a teacher by profession and a literate Limbu in the village. Aged in between 50 years, Sir Limbu is noble and humble man who promptly understood my

research work and willingly agreed to support me. He works in the primary school which is just a distance away from his residence.

Narendra Sir has respect and dignity in the village owing to his educational qualification. He keenly participates in the village social affairs and also gives suggestions and ways for the overall village development. It's been more than 20 years he is giving service to his village by sowing the seeds of knowledge among the children. The school is Government aided. During field visit to school it was found the numbers of staffs were less. Deprived children of poor families study in the school. He does all administrative and academic related works of school whole heartedly.

Survived by wife and three children he has good source of income. His children are studying in good school and colleges. Among the deprived and illiterate sections of Limbus of the village he is living sophisticated lifestyle with all necessary amenities in the relative isolated village environment of the Teesta Valley.



PLATE 4.2: SHOWING THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR FAMILY OF TEESTA VALLEY TEA GARDEN

#### 4.2.2 Major Economic Pursuits of Limbus in Dungra Khasmahal

Limbus of Kalimpong is enjoying all sorts of economic activities. Kalimpong is an agricultural region favouring the growth of both food crops and cash crops. In the study area of Dungra Khasmahal the main source of income depends on farm based activities.

The village is located in the southern side of the main town with heterogeneous composition of different ethnic Nepali group. The upper part of the village has well established houses belonging to armed Limbu personnel's. Their living standard is good and dignified among the villagers. The economic condition of the Limbus is in good condition compared to the Tea garden areas. Like, most of the villagers, Limbus of Dungra also leads a very simple and normal life filled with joy and sorrow. The climatic condition of Dungra Khasmahal offers the luxuriant growth of crops and vegetables. The field data reveals that most of the family income comes from the agricultural production.

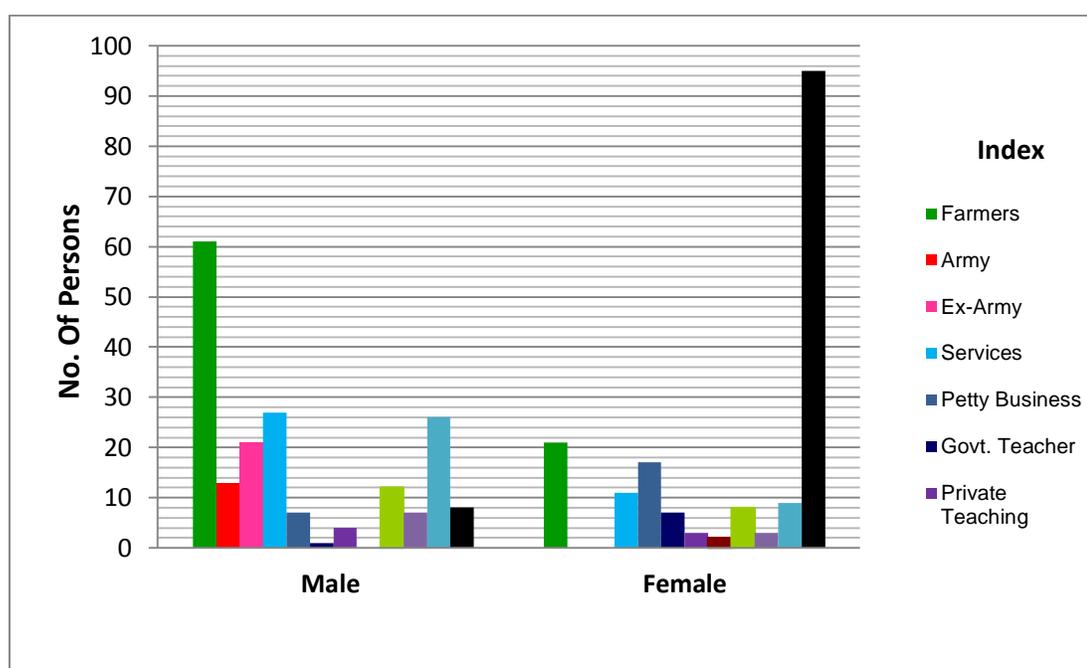
**Table 4.2 Showing the Occupational Pursuits of the Limbus in Dungra Khasmahal**

S.No	Types	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
1	Army	13	6.9%	0	0	34	9.4%
2	Ex serviceman	21	11.2%	0	0		
3	Farmers	61	32.6%	21	11.9%	82	22.6%
4	Agricultural Labourers	7	3.7%	3	1.7%	10	2.8%
5	Petty Business	7	3.7%	17	9.7%	24	6.6%
6	Government Service	27	14.5%	11	6.3%	38	10.5%
7	Teaching (Government)	1	0.5%	7	4%	15	4.1%
	Teaching (Private )	4	2.2%	3	1.7%		
8	Private Jobs ( Within India)	12	6.5%	8	4.5%	22	6%
	Abroad	0	0	2	1.1%		
9	Others	26	13.9%	9	5.1%	35	9.6%
10	Unemployed	8	4.3%	95	54%	103	28.4%
	Total	187	100%	176	100%	363	100%
Source: Fieldwork (2014-2016)							

The above mentioned table shows the occupational pattern of Dungra Khasmahal. The main economic activity of the area is farming. The open undulating terraced field occupies the major part of the village where intensive subsistence farming is practiced.

Every Limbu households has significant amount of agricultural land, where both gender plays an active role related with farm based activities.

Being an agrarian village the hardcore farm activities relating with tillage, ploughing and muscle related works are performed by male farmers. The female farmers basically do the sowing of seeds, planting and harvest related activities. The percentage of male engaged in farming is (32.6 %) with meager percentage of female participation about 11.9 %.The proportions of agricultural labourers constitute (3.7 %) males and (1.7 %) females’ participation. The figure 4.2 below shows the rate of male and female participation in the economic activities.



**Figure 4.2: Showing the Male and Female Employment of Dungra Khasmahal**

Apart from farming some of the Limbus has engaged themselves in both secondary and tertiary economic activities. This type of occupation earns respect and honour to their family in village social environment. Nearly (14.5 %) male and (6.3 %) females are employed in Government services of the State in various departments. The recruitment in Army is quite popular in the village but the percentage is less when compared to Teesta valley Tea Garden. About (6.9 %) are presently working and (11.2 %) have

retired. The field observation reveals that most of young graduate felt reluctant to work in fields therefore they have engaged themselves in teaching profession where female outnumbered the males. The females working both in private and Government Institutions is (4 %) and (1.7 %) whereas (2.2 %) of males are working in private and (0.5 %) in Government Institutions.

The unemployed female percentage is highest with overall (54 %) including housewives and (4.3 %) of males among which some of them are physically disabled. (6.5%) of males and (4.5 %) of females are working in major cities of India under private firm. (1.1 %) of females are working in South Asian Countries mainly Singapore and Hongkong as domestic helpers and as child care taker. (9.7 %) of females are doing petty business, with (3.7 %) of males which basically includes selling grocery and country liquor. Rest of the (13.9 %) males and (5.9 %) females are working in different miscellaneous works which are categorized as others like casual labourers, drivers, carpenters etc.

#### **4.2.2.1 Case Study of Dungra Khasmahal**

##### **1. Itimaya Limbu ( Farmer & Businesswoman)**

In every society woman performs most of the major work and are the backbone to their family. In this context the economic pursuit of Limbu woman of Dungra and her survival strategies for sustainable livelihood was studied. Itimaya Limbu is a 58 years old widow, survived by two children and had a nuclear family. She is competent and outspoken lady wearing a trouser, T-shirt and a head scarf. She has been looking after the family for the last 10 years after her husband death. She owned 15 decimal of land which includes household and cultivable area. She was a farmer by profession and sells her agricultural produce to nearby areas. Her monthly income comes from farming and remittance send by her daughter who is working in New Delhi.

Regarding farming she told the input cost is more. Therefore apart from the farming she rears livestock and also work as labourer in the Government development programme of the village. She sells her farm produce to nearby Haat bazaar of Kalimpong. But as for now she delivers all agricultural produce to Sikkim, due to its profitable business. She

said the vendor collects all the items once it is dispatched from Kalimpong. Firstly she has to take whole loads to Kalimpong bus stand by a vehicle at Rs 150 for four quintals. Then she loads it to Sikkim bus which cost another 120 per quintal. By the time when it reaches Sikkim it fetches Rs 480 – Rs 500 for four quintals as a carrying tariff. Then the agent deals with rest of the work and decides the price value depending on the demand and freshness. Suppose the vegetables are good price value increases and vice-versa. So in a week or twice in a month she delivers her vegetables to Sikkim which bears her the amount ranging from Rs 2000- Rs 4000. The economic pursuit of Itimaya portrays role of an efficient woman farmer challenging the obstacles of life and thereby becoming a self dependent, empowering herself to achieve fruitful goals of life.

## **2. Karna Bahadur Limbu ( Ex- British Army)**

Mr. K.B Limbu is one of the living war veterans of Second World War awarded by British bravery medals he holds an immensely important position in the Limbu society. He is 89 years old, almost fit and fine. He possesses immense knowledge of Limbu rituals and customs. Therefore, he is also known as *Tumba* (Elderly senior) for giving advice and directing Limbus for the betterment of intangible cultural heritage. He is the source of legends, myths and folklore which is yet to be documented. Recently well known author Samsheer Ali of Kalimpong has written a biography on him. He lived in joint family with total ten family members.

The source of income is farming and other related work. The arable land is used for cultivation of both cash and food crops. But due to lack of labour and decrease in the yield production he has replaced the rice farming by orchard farming in the order to double his income and cash flow. In 2013-2014 he ordered the orange saplings nearly 150 pieces each for the plantation. K. B Limbu new experiment is a challenge and opportunity to increase income level and economic conditions if things go properly. Thus the economic life is good and sounds well.

## **3. Manhang Limbu ( Agricultural Labour )**

Being an agricultural labour is the tough and hard to survive as what Manhang Limbu said. Survived by wife and his children family Manhang still works in the field at an age of 70 years also as to provide basic amenities to his family. Born in a poor family he

could not secure good education and life. From a very young age he started to work the daily earning is very low which can be used only for daily breads. There is no saving from his earning. He still lives in the rented house of the landlord where he do not need to pay his rent but has to work for in their field. His economic condition is not good because of deprivation and lack of education.



**PLATE 4.3 Showing the Respondents Of Dungra Khasmahal**

#### **4.2.3 Major Economic Pursuits of Limbus in Bungkulung**

The rural livelihood of Limbus in Bungkulung revolves around farming and rural tourism. The undulating terraced land is well irrigated for yielding both food and cash crop. Very few Limbus are engaged in the off farm activities. The majority of youths are engaged in private jobs in metropolitan cities. The male members are working in

security agency and females are working in the saloons of Bangalore and Chennai. The outmigration of skilled youths from the village in search of employment is the main economic problem. The secondary activity which is very common in Bungkulung is home stay tourism. The female folks are also interested because they can earn good income by selling their local goods to tourists using available resources. The table 4.3 shows the occupational pattern of Limbus in the study area.

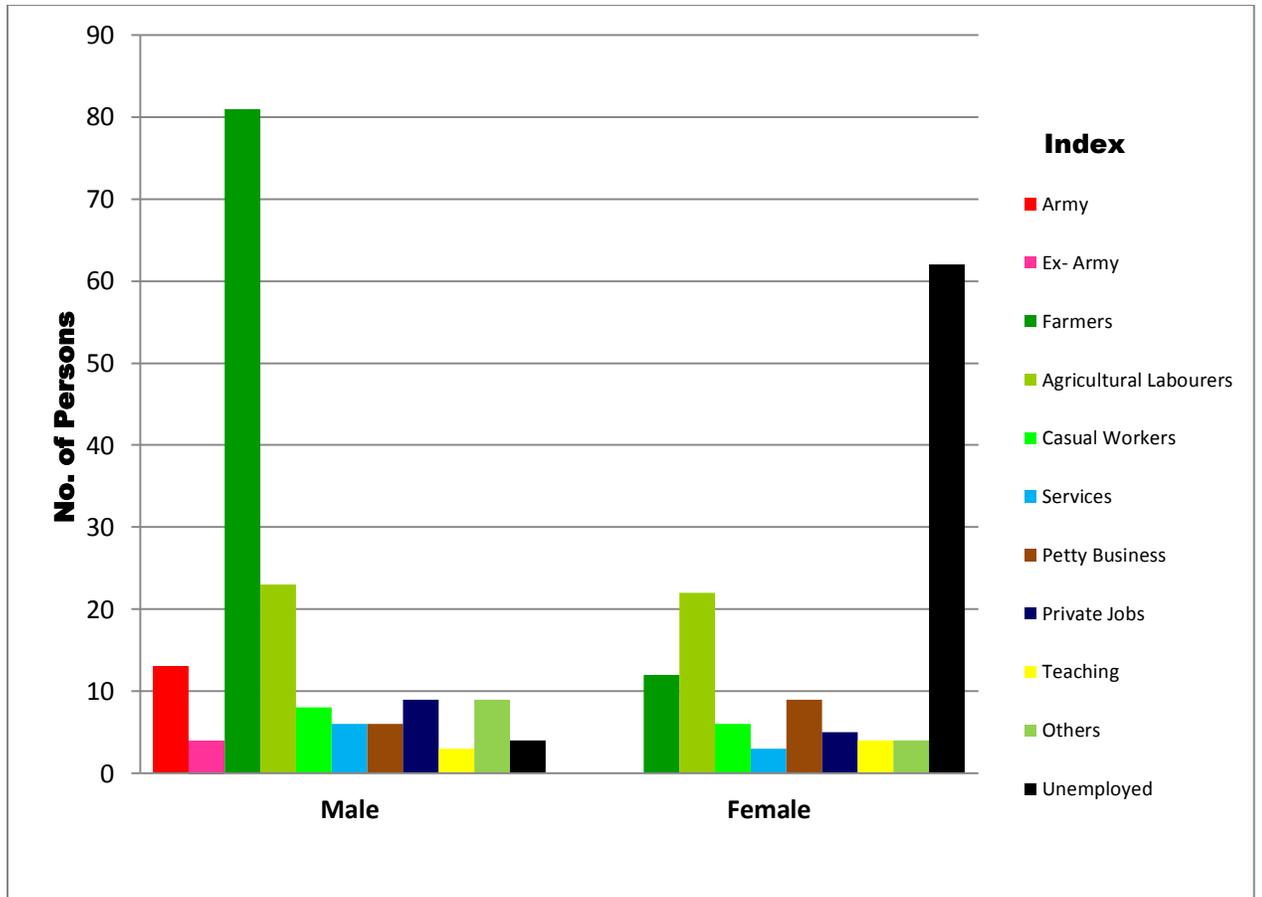
**Table 4.3: Showing the Occupational Pursuits of Limbus in Bungkulung**

S.No	Types	Male	Perce nt	Female	Perce nt	Total	Perce nt
1	Army	13	7.8%	-	-	13	4.4%
2	Ex serviceman	4	2.4%	-	-	4	1.4%
3	Farmers	81	48.7%	12	9.4%	93	31.7%
4	Agricultural Labourers	23	13.9%	22	17.3%	45	15.4%
5	Casual workers	8	4.8%	6	4.7%	14	4.8%
6	Government Service	6	3.6%	3	2.4%	9	3.1%
7	Petty Business	6	3.6%	9	7.1%	15	5.1%
8	Private Jobs ( Outside)	9	5.4%	5	3.9%	14	4.8%
9	Teaching	3	1.9%	4	3.1%	7	2.4%
10	Others	9	5.4%	4	3.1%	13	4.4%
11	Unemployed	4	2.4%	62	48.9%	66	22.5%
	Total	166	100%	127	100%	293	100%

Source: Field work (2015 – 2017)

The above mentioned table shows the details of occupational characteristics of the villages. The relative isolation of the study area and suitable climatic condition has encouraged most of the Limbu households for farm based activities. The wet paddy

cultivation in the undulating terrace is the main economic activity. It is done mostly for self-consumption. During the field visit it was observed, many female farmers growing organic vegetables in their homestead.



**Figure 4.3: Showing the Male and Female Employment of Bungkulung**

On the basis of field survey there are (48.7%) male and (9.4%) female farmers. The female are also working as agricultural labourers during sowing and harvesting periods of rice cultivation. Female agricultural workers constitute the total percent of (17.3%) and their male counterparts represent (13.9 %). The casual workers are those who work in the Government village development programme as helpers in MGNERGA of which male (4.8 %) and female (4.7 %).

The recruitment in the defence services is the most respectable job in all the three studied areas. Limbu man is known for their bravery and agility. Therefore, the young

lads are interested in joining Indian army. In study area (7.8 %) of the Limbus is serving Indian army and (2.4 %) are retired armed personnel's. Being educationally backward very few of them are Government employees mostly working in group D category. There is only one person who has passed the West Bengal Civil Service in the village till date of at survey time in the Bungkulung. The male and female holding the government service comprises of (3.4 %) and (2.4 %) respectively. The outmigration from the village is common in search of better livelihood and employment opportunities. The migrant Limbu are working in the private sector with (5.4 %) male and (3.9%) female in the study area. These youths seek to travel major metropolitan cities of India to work in different security agencies, domestic helpers and parlours. Most of them are working in family saloon because of good salary and perks. The rest population is engaged in petty business and different sorts of economic activities. Very few of male are unemployed especially the disabled one with (2.4 %) and the majority of Limbu women comprising of (48.9 %) who are mostly the housewives, engaged in domestic routine of life.

#### **4.2.3.1 Case Study of Bungkulung**

##### **1. Santabir Limbu ( Honey collector and petty Business)**

Mr. Santabir Limbu is 71 years old man living in Bungkulung with his fifth generation. He is one of the oldest inhabitants of the village. He is survived by his wife and children who are all married now. In order to have a sustainable rural livelihood he used to do apiculture and farming. He told me 50 years ago the village was sparsely populated and surrounded by dense jungle. The jungle was the source of collecting wild edible honey which used to fetch a good price in the market. He used to collect honey from the forest and sell them in the nearby markets. Being uneducated this job was lucrative from him for which he started apiculture and still practice. From 1970 onwards he started to collect honey from nearby villages. At that time he had 13 boxes of beehive from which four bottles of honey could produced from one box. He had a business partner from Siliguri plain, an Adivasi man Walsalam who used to pay Rs 30 per bottle. In a year he managed to sell nearly 100 kg honey to Walsalam. He told me, Walsalam used to export honey to Pune in Maharashtra as he was working there. As for now his business is

looked after by his younger son who is a temporary staff in the Yanki Tea factory. Now he is selling *Putka* (Stingless Bee) honey which has high demand in the regional and global market. He brings them from Bhutan at the cost of Rs 6000 per bottle and keeping some profit he sells it to his customers. The deforestation and forest entry restriction has reduced the source of honey production in the village.

## **2. N.B Limbu ( Social Worker and Farmer )**

Mr. N.B Limbu is a farmer by profession and a social worker by his choice. I met Mr. NB Limbu during my fieldwork, and had helped me immensely during my stay and fieldwork in Bungkulung. He is a middle aged man survived by wife and two children. His philosophy of life revolves around the social work and the upliftment of Limbus in the village. He is a portfolio member of regional party and has been associated with number of village organization and committee. Influenced by the ideals of late Gorkha leader Shri Subhas Ghising, NB Limbu is the active member of GNLF and is the party president of the GNLF from Bungkulung area. Mr. Limbu had studied till grade nine because of his family economic conditions. Moreover the bloodshed agitation of 1986 had driven him away from the village because of political unrest and chaos. For many years he was away from his village. In 1990's he came back and started doing farming and pisciculture. He is very fond of pisciculture for which he had initiated the programme for it. He constructed a pond in his house for better fish production. Soon, thereafter many Government projects were implemented in the Bungkulung. He had attended many seminars and workshop for pisciculture and the outcome of the workshop has been implemented in the village. Apart from this he is a social worker and restlessly works for the interest of every villager. When I asked, how he sustain his family because you may hardly benefit from the social service. He said he sells and grow agricultural products and his income comes from livestock rearing too. Recently he got a sanctioned of Rs 2 lakhs for constructing a house from West Bengal development board which is still under construction.

## **3. Sujita Limbu ( employee in a parlour)**

Sujita Limbu is young vibrant woman who is working at the parlour in Chennai. Being dropout from school, due to financial problem at home made her to realize the problem

and she started to support the family. She then decided to go outside so that she could be more financially secured. She went to Bangalore to work as some of her close friends were working there. It's been almost two years for her, working in Chennai and she is content with her work. She sends remittance every month back in her village. She said at first her parents strictly opposed her to send to work outside because of lack of security. Later on she made her best to convince her parents. Now everyone is happy in her decision. Every year especially in Durga puja she comes to village for *Dashain*.

#### 4. Pawan Limbu ( Farmer and Entrepreneur )

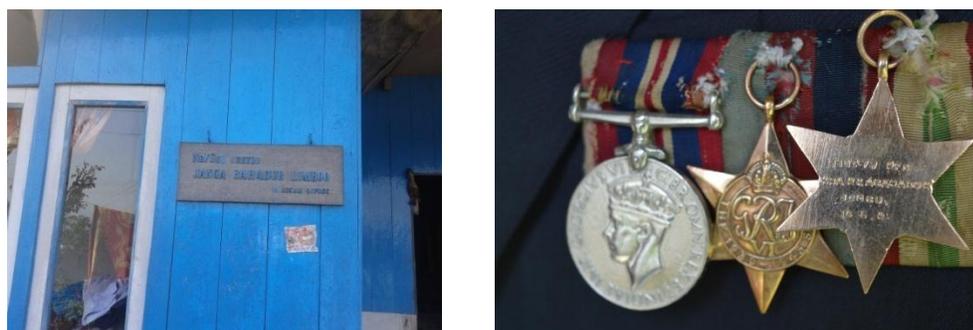
Pawan Limbu is a farmer cultivating Lemon grass from 2011 with the aim of exporting the product in the international market. He had also set up a small factory for extracting oil from lemongrass. His motive behind the establishing this factory was to provide job opportunities in a most sustainable method. He first brought the lemon grass saplings from Manipur and Uttar Pradesh. He invested six lakhs rupees on installation of a machine and started growing lemongrass in 20 acres of land. The price of the oil is Rs 600 / liter in the market. This initiative of Pawan Limbu is highly praised by the villagers because it is providing employment to the locals.



**Plate 4.4 showing the respondents of Bungkulung**

#### 4.2.4. Earning Status

The family standard is completely depends on the earning status of the members. The study areas of Darjeeling Himalaya offer a small opportunity for income generations. Therefore, most of the family is still not economically sound because of their meager income and earning status. In order to understand the earning status researcher had clubbed the sample population under three following heads. They are earner, earner dependent and dependent. The majority of the respondents fall under the category of low to medium earning groups. The living conditions of Limbus in the Tea garden of Teesta valley and Bungkulung is slightly poor compare Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal. In general they all are encircled by vicious economic hardships.



**Plate 4.5: Showing the Name Plates and Medals of the Army households depicting the Social and Earning Status**

**Table 4.4 Showing the Earning Status of the Limbus**

Study Areas	Earner		Earner Dependent		Dependent		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Teesta Valley	193	90	68	55	84 (11.8)	218	708
Tea Garden	(27.3%)	(12.7%)	(9.6%)	(7.8%)		(30.8%)	(100%)
Dungra	142	30	32	55	68	169	496
Khasmahal	(28.6%)	(6%)	(6.4%)	(11.1%)	(13.8%)	(34.1%)	(100%)
Bungkulung	120	15	31	13	85	177	441
	(27.2%)	(3.4%)	(7%)	(3%)	(19.3%)	(40.1%)	(100%)

Source: Field Survey (2014 – 2017)

The above mentioned table clearly shows the earning status of the Limbus. The dependent ratio is more in the study areas. The female population is in very vulnerable state with only the women of Teesta valley who is earning in the family. These women are the tea garden workers. Earner dependent are those working population whose earning is menial to only look after them. Therefore they too highly relied on the family.

### **4.3 Income Analysis, Sources and Levels of Income**

Income is defined as earning in cash or flow of resource in a household in the past twelve months. The source of income differs from one household to another. In the study areas of Limbu village the main income source are farming, remittance, animal husbandry, business, tea garden and pension. In order to have a detailed and in depth study researcher has tried to analyze the various aspects of economic characteristics of a Limbu village on the basis of total sampled households taken from the field study.

#### **4.3.1 Limbu Households of Teesta Valley Tea Garden as per their Monthly Income and Source**

The dearth and paucity of money is quite common among the Limbus of Teesta valley tea garden. Very few households are self-sufficient as they had good source of income. Central livelihood activities in the Teesta valley are garden centric.

The given below table 4.4 shows the amount of households income of the study area. The Limbus of the Teesta valley tea garden procures their income from different sources depending on the nature of their work. In every household one of the family members was associated with garden work and few of them were in Indian army. Some of the household income depend on the daily earning thus they have a fluctuating rate of monthly income. During my survey, it was really hard for me to take out their monthly income and expenditures details. Therefore, a general sketch of monthly income analysis is made by a researcher on the basis of the primary data gathered from the field visits.

**Table 4.5 Showing the Distribution of Limbu Households According to Monthly Income**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Income (Rs)</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	< 5000	25	16.7 %
2	5000 – 10000	66	44%
3	10000 – 15000	24	16%
4	15000 – 20000	14	9.3%
5	20000 – 25000	12	8%
6	25000 – 30000	5	3.3%
7	>30000	4	2.7%
Total		150	100%

Source: Field Survey 2013 – 2015

The above mentioned table shows the monthly income of the Limbus of Teesta valley Tea Garden. The flow of monthly income among the household is INR 5000 to INR 30000 which also clearly reflects their living standard and nature of their work. (27%) of the households have good source of income because they are employed in Government services like teaching, army etc. (3.3 %) of the households income mainly comes from remittance, pension and defense services.

Whereas (9.3 %) of the household income is from business, pension and floriculture, (16 %) and (44%) of the households' income comes from garden wages and other related works. (16.7 % ) of the Limbu households' are in vulnerable conditions because they are temporary and casual works who are active in half of the year and lie vacant and jobless in the remaining year with some minor works in the plantation and orchard farming.

**Table 4.6 Showing the Distribution of Limbu Households According to Source of Income**

S.No	Source	No. of Households	Percentage
1	Tea garden wages	58	38.7%
2	Defense service	23	15.3%
3	Government / Private jobs	11	7.3%
4	Farming / Livestock / Floriculture	17	11.4%
5	Remittances	23	15.3%
6	Petty Business	6	4%
7	Others	12	8%
Total		150	100 %

Source: Field Survey 2013 – 2015

The source of income is very important to ensure the sustainability of the economic needs. The geographical conditions of the Himalayan regime always undermine the economic pursuits of the region either through demographic attributes or by harsh physical terrain delimiting the economic opportunities. Colonial enterprises like establishment of the Tea gardens provide a steady flow of income in the rural belt of Teesta Valley. The majority of the Limbus in the study area of Teesta valley is depended on the Tea garden. (38.7%) of the Limbu households depends on Tea garden, (15.3 %) households derive their income from defense pension and remittance. (11.4 %) households depend on animal husbandry, farming and horticultural activities. (7.3 %) household income comes from Government salaries and 4 % of household depend on petty business. The rest (8 %) of households income comes from different sorts of economic activities.

#### **4.3.2 Limbu Households of Dungra Khasmahal as per their Monthly Income and Source**

Limbus of Dungra Khasmahal sustains their livelihood by farming. The farming activities include the growing of both cash and food crops. The majority of farmers'

incur stipulated income because the output expenditure cost is quite high. The Limbu households apart from farming have also indulged in others economic activities in daily affairs of life for procuring bread and butter. The given below Table 4.6 shows the monthly income of the Limbu households.

**Table 4.7 Showing the Distribution of Limbu Households according to Monthly Income**

S.No	Income (Rs)	No. of Households	Percentage
1	< 5000	14	12.5%
2	5000 – 10000	23	20.5%
3	10000 – 15000	15	13.4%
4	15000 – 20000	15	13.4%
5	20000 – 25000	15	13.4%
6	25000 – 30000	23	20.5%
7	>30000	7	6.3%
Total		112	100%

Source: Field Survey 2014 – 2016

The above mentioned income table shows the economic conditions of the Limbus in the study area is quite stable. The flow of the money within the households is throughout the year in terms of wage, salary and remittance. Though, the primary occupation of the majority of villagers is farming but they also surplus their income by participating in others economic activities as their secondary occupation.

The nature of work also depends on the income generation of the individuals. Some Limbus are unskilled and unprofessional so they landed up in doing meager jobs such as agricultural labourers, casual works etc whose income depends on the daily work. The household standard and family condition is very vulnerable with monthly income less than Rs 5000. Nearly (12.5 %) households fall under this type of income category. The average income (Rs 5000 – Rs 10000) of standard households with either one or two working family members is (20.5 %).

The half proportion of the surveyed household in the study area shows a good aspect of the income generation with (Rs 10000 – 15000), (Rs 15000 – 20000), (Rs 20000 – 25000) with (13.4%) respectively. The affluent Limbu households (20.5 %) are belonging to army officers, landlords with large fields and Government service holders who has diversified their income in various ways in order to surplus their income generation and maintain standard of living with monthly income of Rs 25000 –30000. Nearly (6.3 %) of the Limbu households’ income (above Rs 30000) is very good with better style of living.

**Table 4.8 Showing the Distribution of Limbu Households according to Source of Income**

S.No	Source	No. of Households	Percentage
1	Farming	36	32.1%
2	Defense service	8	7.1%
3	Government jobs	7	6.3%
4	Private jobs / wages	18	16.1%
5	Remittances	8	7.1%
6	Petty Business	10	9%
7	Others	25	22.3%
Total		112	100 %

Source: Field Survey 2014 – 2016

The main source of the income in the study area is farming, 32% of the Limbu households’ income comes from the agricultural pursuits. In recent time, the yield and the field has decreased with the conversion of arable land into human habitation. With the diversification of different economic activities younger generations tends to join new avenues. Outmigration for work purpose is quite high due to unemployment apart from that they also had to look after the family.

Nearly (7.1 %) of the households’ income comes from remittances. But sometimes in course of time it might happens the flow of remittance is stop or not sufficient for

procuring the daily requirements. Therefore, the member of the households to do some petty business by selling essential commodities in the village through shop in the small scale by selling locally made liquor and agricultural produce (9 %) of the households' income comes from this sort of petty business which is mostly carried by womenfolk. Recruiting in defense and getting jobs in Government sector is very influential and dignified in terms of family security, (7.1 % ) households' income depends on defense service and (6.3 % )depends on the income coming from Governments sectors (16.1% ) of the households' income is derived from private jobs and wages. The maximum number of households' (22.3 %) income comes from miscellaneous jobs categorized as other in the above mentioned table including agricultural labourers, casual workers, drivers, pensioner, contractual workers and etc.

#### **4.3.3 Limbu Households of Bungkulung as per their Monthly Income and Source**

Sustaining rural livelihood in the relatively isolated locale offers more number of obstructions and mere opportunities to assess the optimum allocation of resources. Bungkulung a small isolated village in the fringe of forest offers a hospitable environment for conducting small scale farming in both commercial and subsistence way.

The geographical set up of the village allows the people to grow both food and cash crops. The main income of the village comes from farming. Though the farming is one the most profitable and laborious job but very few of the Limbu households possessing large acre of land are making profit. The rest others are taking very handful income from it. The monthly income of the every Limbu households depends in agricultural yield. The good productivity of the agriculture is dependent on suitable climatic conditions.

The Limbu farmers of the study area are still environment deterministic because as such no alternatives are implemented in the farming system. Therefore the monthly incomes of the Limbu households are very meager to support family needs, when there is hike in the price of daily essential commodities of life they suffered a lot. Due to such adversity

every households apart from farming has also engaged in other activities. So they could double their income to meet the daily requirements.

**Table 4.9 Showing the Distribution of Limbu households according to Monthly Income**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Income (Rs)</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	< 5000	78	72.9
2	5000 - 10000	14	13.1
3	10000 - 15000	4	3.7
4	15000 - 20000	5	4.7
5	20000 - 25000	5	4.7
6	25000 - 30000	1	0.9
7	>30000	-	-
Total		107	100

Source: Field Survey 2016 – 2017

The above mentioned table is showing the total income flow in the village. The majority of households have daily income less than INR 5000. The households who are earning less income (72.9%) respondents are mainly the marginal workers who are basically agricultural and casual labourers. (13.1 %) of the household respondents has basic income to materialize their cost and way of living. The main workers employed in the different Government jobs of Centre and State is very few. Therefore only few households (4.7%) whose source of income comes from the Government jobs and Defence services were good. In very few households the economic stability was very sound and good (0.9%) of the respondents are living in better conditions with all necessary amenities of life.

**Table 4.10 Showing the Distribution of Limbu households according to Source of Income**

S.No	Source	No. of Households	Percentage
1	Farming	55	51.4
2	Defence service	10	9.3
3	Government jobs	4	3.7
4	Private jobs / wages	11	10.4
5	Remittances	9	8.4
6	Petty Business	10	9.3
7	Others	8	7.5
Total		107	100

Source: Field Survey 2016 – 2017

Farming is the most important source of income in the study area. The agricultural produce is used for both the self consumption and selling in local markets. The majority of Limbu households (51.4%) depend on farming as their source of livelihood. Apart from farming activities many households source of income from defence service (9.3%), Services (3.7%), Private Jobs (10.4%), and Remittances (8.4%), Petty Business (9.3%) and 7.5 % of the households derive their source of income from various miscellaneous economic activities.

#### **4.4 Migration and Remittances**

Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihood is a key feature of human history. Migration has become a universal phenomenon in modern times. Due to the expansion of transport and communication, it has become a part of worldwide process of urbanization and industrialization. Migration and Globalization are gradually breaking down the age-old boundaries between the countries. It has been rapidly changing from the traditional spheres of human activity. The concept of ‘Global Village’ has become a reality. Formerly isolated villages in the country side of Darjeeling Himalaya have become closer to major Indian metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai,

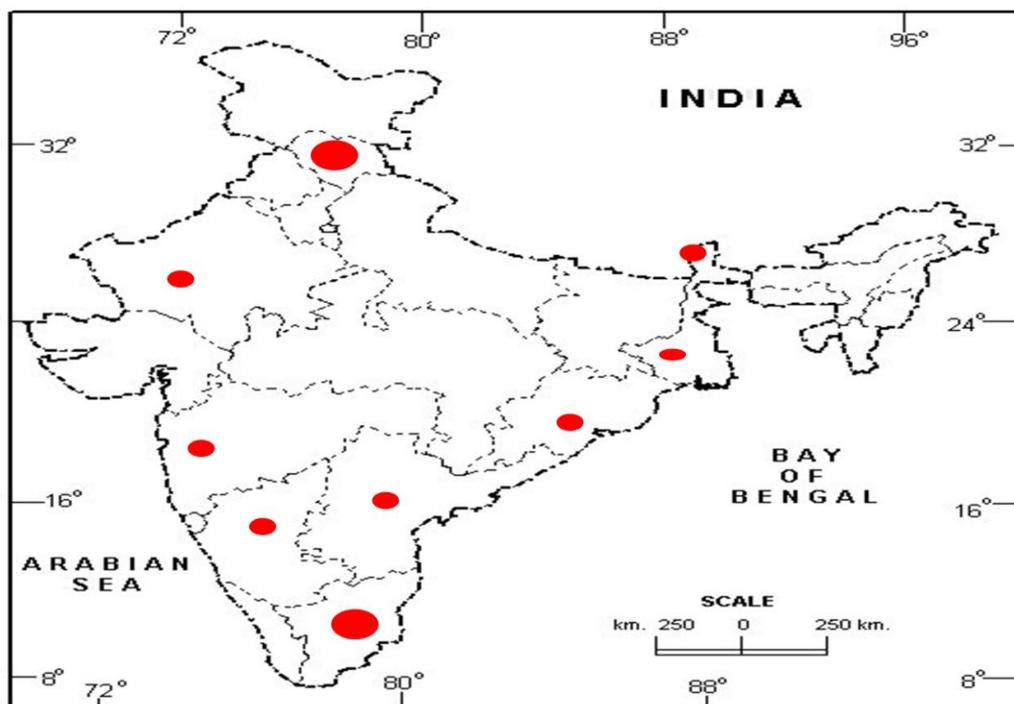
Chennai or Bangalore and other Countries owing to high monetary value and better living conditions. The rural belt of Darjeeling Himalaya are the most backward and isolated region in terms of development. Unemployment and Poverty are the main cause of migration among the villagers including Limbus. Migration for work purpose in the study areas is analyzed from two perspectives; Pull and Push factors. Push factors are scarce employment opportunities, family pressure where as pull factors are easily availability of jobs and betterment of economic conditions.

**Table 4.11 Showing the Area of Destination for the Work Purpose among the Limbus of Study Areas**

S.No	Area of Destination within India & Abroad	Study Areas		
		Teesta Valley Tea Garden	Dungra Khasmahal	Bungkulung
1	Sikkim	7	3	
2	Siliguri	2	-	
3	Orissa	1	-	
4	Delhi	3	11	
5	Chhattisgarh	1	-	
6	Chennai	3	3	5
7	Bangalore	1	1	9
8	Mumbai	1	-	
9	Kolkata	-	-	
10	Jharkhand	-	1	
11	Dehradun	1	-	
12	Rajasthan	3	-	
13	Hyderabad	2	-	
14	Middle East Countries	2	-	
15	South East Asia ( Mainly Nepal and Singapore )	2	2	
Total		29	21	14

Field Survey 2013 - 2016

From the field analysis it is clear that male members of the Limbu are more mobile for work purposes. Most of the young lads marry at quite early age and sole responsibilities of family rely upon them. Family pressure ultimately leads to migration for work purpose. The financially weak Limbus may not choose migration because of travelling expenditure. When there are opportunities of working around or near the village, they tend to migrate to diversify the income. They tend to go to near destination like Sikkim and Siliguri mostly on a seasonal basis that involve relatively low cost and risk. They choose short distance migration as they are not able to invest in far distance migration. They have good networks of interpersonal relation with former migrants at working destination, through ties of kinship and friendship by minimizing the costs and risks at destination. The above mentioned table clearly shows the outmigration of young male Limbus with few numbers of females for work purpose. The female mostly migrate to South East Asian countries namely Singapore and Nepal. They work as domestic helper or child care taker. Those who are educated they are working as school teachers in Nepal.



**Figure 4.4: Showing the Migration Destination of the Limbus**

Limbu males are now going to Middle East countries because of high monetary value. From the table it is seen the migration for work purpose is quite high in Teesta Valley Tea garden because of insecurity and uncertainty of Tea factory. Recently one of the very near by tea garden of the same place under Duncan company was shut down thereby creating all sorts of employment fluctuations.

The Limbus of Study areas Teesta valley tea garden, Dungra Khasmahal and Bungkulung has migrated to all cardinal direction of India major cities in search for employment. Whereas in Dungra Khasmahal migration to Delhi is common, very few educated Limbu youth in Delhi are working under BPO Company. The rest of the others are employed in the domestic work, security service and parlors.

### **Remittance**

Remittance is defined as a transfer income received by a household within last 12 months (Nembang, 2007). It is supposed to be one of the major sources of income in the study areas. In the surveyed Limbu households most of their family members are working in foreign countries. In Teesta valley Remittance has seen as the second largest share on the total household income of Limbu community.

**Table 4.12 Showing the Remittance received by Households (HHs) in the study areas**

Study Areas	No. of HHs receiving remittance	Percent of HHs receiving remittance
Teesta Valley Tea Garden	23 HHs out of 150	15.3%
Dungra Khasmahal	8 HHs out of 112	7.1%
Bungkulung	9 HHs out of 107	8.4 %

Field Survey 2013 - 2016

The Limbu had been supporting their families back home through remittances. They save remit money for their native place. The money remitted by the migrants is mainly used by their families for daily consumption needs, social purposes and a very small portion of it is saved and invested. The sending of money to the households gives them a mental satisfaction.

As they feel instrumental in supporting their family socio - economic conditions. This provides them a prestigious position in their household as well as in the community. In Teesta valley (15.3 %) and in Dungra (7.1 %) of the households daily requirement and family upbringing depends on the remittance. Whereas (8.4%) of the Limbu households in Bungkulung depends on the monthly remittance to look after the family affairs.

#### **4.5 Monthly Expenditure**

The source and monthly income of the different Limbu households' of the study areas differs widely with one another. Therefore the rate of expenditure patterns and expense depends on the economic stability of the village and nature of economic activities performed by the Limbu villagers. Expenditure details of the households include the money spend by the family for the cost of living and sustaining a life with better amenities.

The expenditure includes ration cost, education cost, bills, social functions, clothing, health and others. It was really a great difficulty for a researcher to obtain the minutely pattern of every expenditure cost as the respondents were quite hesitant and feeling reluctant to give the details. Therefore, the researcher has made an honest attempt to show the appropriate sum of the total monthly expenditure cost and pattern of the Limbu households'. The given below table shows the expenditure cost of each household excluding the monthly saving

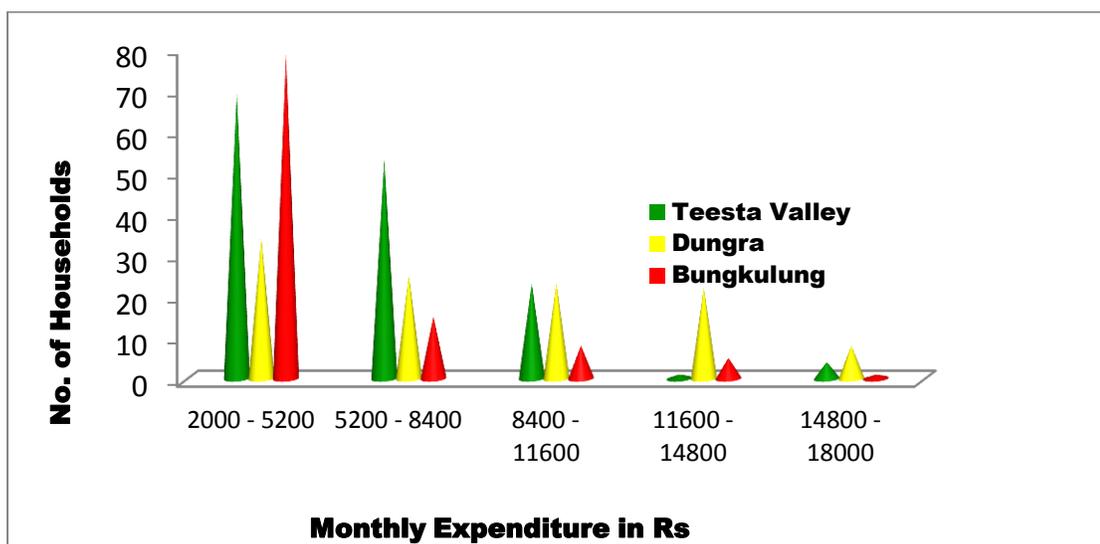
**Table 4.13 Showing the Monthly distribution of Expenditure of Limbu households’ of the Study Areas**

S. No	Monthly Expenditure cost in Rs	Study Areas					
		Teesta Valley Tea Garden		Dungra Khasmahal		Bungkulung	
		HHs	percent	HHs	percent	HHs	percent
1	2000 – 5200	69	46%	34	30.4%	78	72.9%
2	5200 – 8400	53	35.3%	25	22.3%	15	14%
3	8400 – 11600	23	15.3%	23	20.5%	8	7.5%
4	11600 – 14800	1	0.7%	22	19.6%	5	4.7%
5	14800 – 18000	4	2.7%	8	7.2%	1	0.9%
6	Total	150	100%	112	100%	107	100%

Source: Field Survey 2013 – 2016

In order to bring out monthly expenditure cost the researcher has calculated the total amounts spend on different things starting with least amount to the highest. On an average, it was found that the daily basic requirements tend to increase every month thereby, increasing the cost of living.

**Figure 4.5: Showing the Monthly Expenditure of the Study Areas**



In the given Figure 4.5 the tea garden area of Teesta valley, majority of the Limbu households (46%) expenditure cost is in between Rs 2000 – Rs 5200, followed by Dungra (30.4%) and (72.9%) in Bungkulung. This type of the household belongs to those persons who are garden labourers, agricultural labourers and casual workers etc. whose income depends on the availability of work purpose. The total monthly income is meager which hardly fulfills the basic requirements without any saving for the future prospects. Then, the households whose expenditure cost bears within the monthly range of Rs 5200 to Rs 8400 could hardly save the very little amount of money. In Teesta valley Tea Garden (35.3%) Dungra Khasmahal (22.3%) of the households and (14%) in Bungkulung bears this range of expenditure cost. The expenditure cost within the range of Rs 8400 – Rs 11600 mostly belongs to persons who are regular workers and also indulge themselves in other economic pursuits (15.3%) in Teesta Valley, (20.5%) in Dungra and (7.5%) in Bungkulung falls under this category. The households having steady flow of income bears the expenditure cost of Rs 11600 – Rs 14800 in which expense on education is more in Teesta valley (0.7%), (19.6%) in Dungra and (4.7%) in Bungkulung. The expenditure cost ranging between Rs 14800 – Rs 18000 belongs to those households whose income comes from diverse source. These households belong to influential Limbus whose earning is quite high compare to others in Teesta valley (2.7%) households, (7.2%) in Dungra and (0.9%) in Bungkulung belonging to Government Teachers, Army officers and well equipped farmers.

#### **4.5.1 Expenditure Pattern**

The expenditure pattern of the study areas highly depend on the source of the households' income. Every households income differ from one another so does their level of consumption. The monthly expenditure cost of the Limbu households' are divided into various pattern on the basis of its utility. The expenditure cost of living is always increasing and thereby making the huge financial problems in the study areas.

**Table 4.14 Showing the Expenditure Pattern of the Households' in Study Areas**

S. No	Expenditure Pattern	Teesta valley		Dungra Khasmahal		Bungkulung	
		Spend	Don't Spend	Spend	Don't Spend	Spend	Don't Spend
1	Food items	150 (100%)	Nil	112 (100 %)	Nil	107 (100%)	Nil
2	Education	70 (46.67%)	80 (53.33%)	73 (65.18%)	39 ( 34.82 % )	70(65.4% )	37 (34.6%)
3	Clothes	148 (98.67%)	2 (1.33%)	110 (98.21%)	2 ( 1.79 % )	107 (100%)	Nil
4	Medical treatment	138 (92%)	12 (8%)	105 (93.75%)	7 (6.25 %)	107(100 %)	Nil
5	Social functions	150 (100%)	Nil	112 (100%)	Nil	107(100 %)	Nil
6	Festival/Ritual	150 (100%)	Nil	106 (94.64 %)	6 ( 5.36 % )	107(100 %)	Nil
7	Others	10 (6.67%)	140 (93.33%)	100 ( 89.29 % )	12 ( 10.71% )	7 (6.5%)	100(93.5 %)

**Source: Field work (2013 – 2017)**

In the above mentioned table the expenditure pattern of Limbu households is shown to analyze the relationship between the income and expenditure. In order to simplify the work and findings the researcher had taken the total number of surveyed households who are spending in the necessary commodities of daily life clubbed into two categories showing those who spend and those who do not spend. In order to examine the trend of expenditure pattern, following essential commodities are taken into consideration which is dire necessity of every individual. From the given table it is seen almost all the households are spending money on food items, functions, health treatment and children education depending upon their social status and income level. Apart from this some of the Limbu households spend some of their saving for family recreation like travelling and other stuffs. In the fieldwork it was found hardly 5 percent of the households spend in family recreation. In Teesta valley (6.67%), Dungra (10.71%) and Bungkulung (6.5%) of the Limbu households spend on these recreations. The respondents lament that

every year their expenditure budget is increasing due to the hike in the price of essential commodities and cost of children education.

**4.5.2 Assets Ownership** The quality of living depends on the possession of assets which allows an individual to attain the level satisfaction in sustaining the rural livelihood. The ownership of assets not only makes the life easy going but also gives the worthy position in social status and cultural life of village society. The possession of land property and materialistic assets helps to minimize the financial crisis in hour of needs. Therefore, in the study areas assets ownership comprises an essential element to understand the complex fabric of economic standard of the households and their problems associated with it. Assets ownership is not just an entity but dignity and pride in the study areas.

**Table 4.15 Showing the Distribution of Respondents by Asset Ownership in Study Areas**

S.No	Assets	Teesta Valley		Dungra		Bungkulung	
		Who Possess	Who don't Possess	Who Possess	Who don't Possess	Who Possess	Who don't Possess
1	House ownership	Nil	150 (100%)	100 (89.3%)	12(10.7%)	100(93.5%)	7(6.5%)
2	Separate Kitchen	150 (100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
3	Electricity	145(96.7%)	5(3.3%)	110(98.2%)	2(1.8%)	105(98.1%)	2(1.9%)
4	Water Supply	40(26.7%)	110(73.3%)	40(35.7%)	72(64.3%)	107(100%)	Nil
5	Sanitary Toilet	150(100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
6	LPG Gas	140(93.3%)	10(6.7%)	112(100%)	Nil	105(98.1%)	2(1.9%)
7	Radio	150(100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
8	Tape recorder / DVD	150(100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
9	Television	150(100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
10	Mobile	150(100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
11	Cable Connection	150(100%)	Nil	112(100%)	Nil	107(100%)	Nil
12	Motorcycle	30(20%)	120(80%)	60(53.6%)	52(46.4%)	27(25.2%)	80(74.8%)
14	Car/ Van/ Jeep	10(6.7%)	140(93.3%)	20(17.9%)	92(82.1%)	5(4.7%)	102(95.3%)

Source: Field work 2013 – 2017

Land ownership is the most important component of economic sustainability. Land as a resource offers many attributes. In the study area of Teesta Valley, land belonging to the Limbu households (100%) does not have any legal documents to claim. The tea garden is the private enterprise where the entire Land constituting Teesta valley falls under their jurisdiction of lease land. They have been living on those houses from British time and got the authority of living which made them to construct permanent residency and establishment of Limbu settlement.

In Dungra Khasmahal (89.3%) and Bungkulung (93.5%) have their permanent landholding and house ownership. These land were inherited and been equally divided among the children. Very few respondents have no house ownership because they are mainly the migrant family, residing in the village for better livelihood recently. In Dungra (12.7%) and Bungkulung (6.5%) of the households belong to such family who are living in rented house. The households have their separate kitchen in the study areas with LPG connection. Located in the rural ambience many households used both the gas and fossil fuels for cooking purposes. In Dungra Khasmahal all Limbu households' are well equipped with gas connection. But very few of the Limbu households' whose economic conditions is deplorable is using fossil fuels in Teesta Valley (6.7%) and Bungkulung (1.9%) of the Limbu households' extensively using fossil fuels for their cooking.

Rural electrification and water supply is the most essential amenities in the village core of life. In Teesta valley (96.7%), Dungra (98.2%) and Bungkulung (98.1%) have electricity. Whereas very few households (3.3%) in Teesta valley, (1.8%) in Dungra and (1.9%) in Bungkulung are debarred from connection because of unclear dues and hostile terrain of the study areas is also responsible for delay in rural electrification. The water supplies, throughout Darjeeling Himalaya are very scanty and thus face an acute water crisis in peak season.

In Bungkulung there is no water problem because the area is blessed with number of water resources. But in the Teesta valley tea garden there is an acute crisis of drinking water. Every household has to fetch drinking water from nearby stream source. Only few

households has water supply in their village premises. The entire village has to depend on the seasonal springs and perennial stream for source of water.

In Dungra Khasmahal upper part of the village has water problem but lower part of the village has water accessibility. The use of modern electrical appliances and gadgets are very common in the study areas; almost all Limbu households have these appliances like TV, Cable and Mobiles and only very few households had computer with internet connection. Similarly only high income group of Limbu households had personal transportation system in the form of Car, Jeep and Sumo. In Teesta valley teagarden (6.7%), Dungra (20%) and Bungkulung (4.7%) of the household's uses their personal transport system and rest others uses public transportation.

#### **4.5.3 Credit Facilities'**

The studied village has no banking facilities and other sources of credit facilities. They mostly depend on their friends, relatives for credit in time of emergency. They had hardly taken loan from the bank and also not much aware of the loan facilities given by the Government. Very few about 2 % of the respondents had taken loan from the bank. In time of financial problem they keep their jewellerys as mortgage and take credit from the gold merchants.

#### **4.6 Agricultural Pattern and Production**

##### **Farming System and Production Pattern of the Study Areas**

Darjeeling Himalaya offers necessary environmental factors for growing both food crop and cash crops along with a number of sub-tropical and temperate fruits (Limbu, 2012). Subsistence farming and production of the cash crops forms a core village economy (Fitzpatrick, C.I. 2011) for which mountain farming is the most suitable method for growing crops and fruits in the rugged terrain of the study areas. Limbu are agriculturalist community of the Eastern Himalayan region who practice farming for their sustainable livelihood. During the course of evolution and adaptation processes the nature of farming was changed from sedentary farming to settle farming.

The migration of Limbus in Darjeeling brought a settled farming system where food crops were grown along with the rearing of animals. In the historical records the development of agriculture in Darjeeling Himalaya dates back to 1866 A.D where large portion of forest were cleared and replacement of Jhum cultivation by settled agriculture through efficient methods of terracing, ploughing and irrigating lands. New crops were introduced, the most noteworthy being Tea, Cinchona, Potatoes and Mandarin oranges.

In fact the development and growth of agriculture started from colonial era (Samad, 1985). Cultivation of subsistence cereal crops is the main occupation of the people of Himalayan regions, which is based upon the centuries old traditional practices and carried out on the narrow patches of the terraced fields (Sati, 2010). Farming system which includes the cultivation of agricultural crops, horticultural crops, floriculture and rearing of livestock is traditional. Under the traditional farming system the main crops grown in the study areas are rice, maize, millet, local variety of pulses and vegetables. Livestock plays an integral role in the traditional farming system.

#### **4.6.1 Traditional Farming Knowledge and Practices in the Study Areas**

Traditional knowledge combined with technologies play a very significant role in agricultural practices. Unlike other agricultural communities, Limbus use different types of tools and cultural technologies in their agricultural practice starting from preparation of the field to harvesting and preservation of seed. Since the possibility of using modern innovation is negligible due to small holdings and undulating terrain, they use the resources that are locally available and implement their traditional knowledge regarding the farming system. The most visible traditional agricultural tools of Limbus are plough drawn by oxen, *Hasia* (sickle), *cow dung*, *khurpi*, *halo-kata*, *dhoko* (basketries) and so on. They use axe and spade in preparing agricultural fields. The stock of seeds is stored in the container made up of bamboo. The cow dung is most commonly used as manure. The traditional manure is made by mixing the cow dung with other organic substances through decomposition. The harvested crops are stored in granary called *dhukuti* and the farm implements are kept in a house called *katero*. For the seed preservation, first they

are separated and cleaned which are then exposed to sunlight in order to dry the water content in it and then are directly preserved by packing the seeds for next use (Limbu, 2013).

#### **4.6.2 Farming Conditions in the Study Areas**

Limbus of the study areas has little idea about the improved agricultural practices. They use traditional method of agriculture. They commonly use the tilling of land by means of plough employing bullocks. Immediately after the harvesting of crops, animals are placed on their land in order to graze and to fertilize the fields. The Farming conditions are different in the plantation and Khasmahal Limbu village with diverse agricultural pursuits. The Limbu village of Teesta valley is a plantation area and other two study areas are Khasmahal where farming is the main economic activity. Farming in the study areas is practiced under rain fed regime purely in organic manner. The maximum temperature recorded in the study areas is 28°C to 29°C which is ideal for the growth of number of food crops, vegetables and horticultural crops. The soil of the study areas slightly varies from one another in Teesta Valley Tea garden soil is sandy loam with the average pH value of 5.7 in which availability of phosphorus is 96 kg / hectare and potash 350 kg /hectare<sup>1</sup>. During dry season irrigation is required and all farm related activities are performed manually. The effective use of manure is being done within small, medium and large scale farms. Observation during the field survey revealed that all the farm families have livestock which helped them in producing manure for crops. Pruning and weeding are performed 2 to 3 times a year.

Climatically wise the study areas of both Dungra and Bungkulung also experiences the same farming system with slightly differences in the production scale. Dungra is an agricultural village where farming is the primary occupation for sustainable livelihood. The majority of the Limbu farmers practiced traditional method purely organic in nature. Though the farming system of Bungkulung is traditional but with the new ideas accompanied by technologies has carved out new system of agriculture which is

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<sup>1</sup> Data collected from Agricultural Office of Takdah Rangli-Rangliot Block

innovative and commercially profitable for the village economy. The farming activities in the study areas are of four main types which are as follows:

- i. Homestead Farming
- ii. Orchard Farming
- iii. Floriculture
- iv. Cash crop

**i) Homestead Farming:** This type of farming is basically done on the backyard of their house mainly for subsistence please by growing vegetables, fruits and local variety of pulses. The womenfolk are mostly engaged in this type of farming. Among the study areas majority Limbus of Teesta valley Tea garden practices homestead farming.

**ii) Orchard Farming:** Orchard farming is very common in the Limbu villages of Teesta valley Tea garden and Bungkulung. The main fruit Mandarin orange is important cash earning crop for Limbus. But recently the production of oranges is worst affected due to outbreak of disease in Teesta valley tea garden. Even the production has gone down in recent years hampering the farmers economically. In Bungkulung too condition is quite similar Madan Limbu, an orange grower from Bungkulung in Mirik block, said in 2010 the production of oranges got good price compare to recent years.

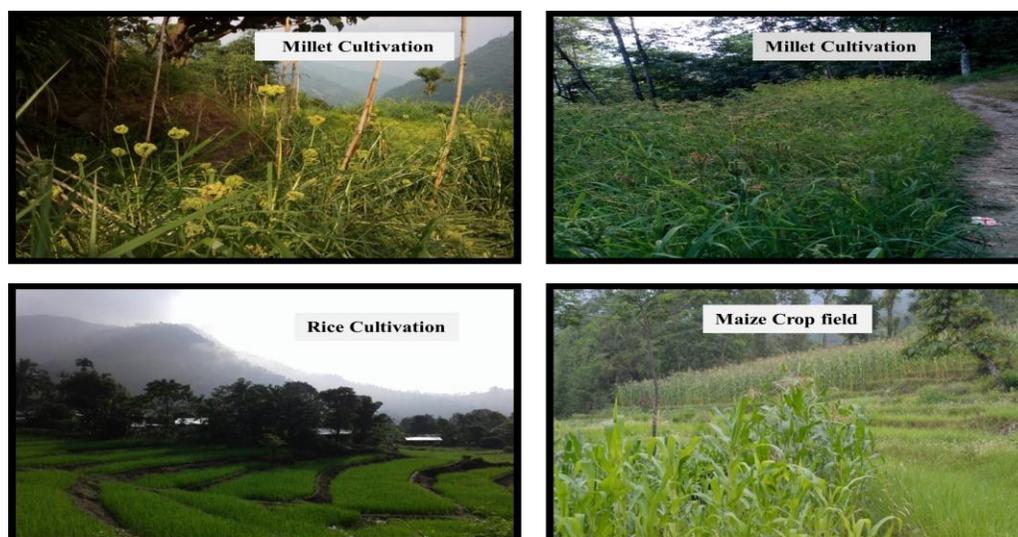


Plate 4.6 Showing the Major Food crops grown in the Study Areas

**iii) Floriculture:** Floriculture is one most profitable economic activity in the study areas. The Limbu hamlets of Teesta valley Tea garden and Dunga are doing floriculture on the commercial scale. Many varieties of ornamental plants, orchids, gladiolus and pines are grown in the nursery for export purposes to neighboring states. During the field work in Teesta valley Rocky Limbu 25 year's old married man was doing floriculture for the last 9 years. He sees better prospects in it than working in Tea garden. The floriculture incurs benefit with supply of fodder; manure freely available in the village. The suitable climatic condition offers the growth of flowers and plants.

**iv) Cash Crop farming:** The major cash earning crops in the study areas are Mandarin orange, Ginger, Cardamom, *Amlisiyo* and Lemon grass. Lemon grass is new venture of its first kind throughout North Bengal and its small factory is located in Bungkulung.



**Plate 4.7 Showing the Major Cash earning farming of Teesta Valley Tea Garden**

### 4.6.3 Cropping Pattern

The Limbus in the study areas still practices traditional farming system. Their staple food crop is paddy, millet and maize. The crops are grown on the subsistence basis. Only the surplus crops are sold in the market. In Dungra and Bungkulung, rice is grown in the lowland *Khet* owing to the fact it is a wet season crop and is grown during the monsoon season. They have managed the irrigation facilities by drawing water from nearby streams if the rainfall is not sufficient. The different crops have been planted according to the ecological patterns of the village (Limbu, 2011). The dry crops and vegetables such as maize, millet have been planted in the upland near to their home while the wet crops like rice in the low lands. It was found that millet was grown in some of the households of study areas because of religious and cultural values. They make *Jaad* (Local beer) and *rakshi* (Wine) out of millet which is used in many ceremonies. They mostly practice mixed farming, where maize and millet are grown along with soya beans. The nitrogen content of soya bean is high which helps to increase the production of the crops. The intercropping mainly helps to maintain the soil fertility and has also led to the best utilization of the land. Orange trees and the fodder trees were found to be planted near the belt of the terraces for controlling the soil erosion. *Amlisiyo* (bouquet grass) was specially planted in the slopes of the land whereby it has helped in the conservation of soil and prevention from landslides. The fruits are the next important crop for the people as they provide them with the income for the household. One of the important fruit, Mandarin orange is planted during *Jestha* (May/June) and harvested during *Kartik* (Oct/Nov). The other important cash crop are ginger, cardamom and local variety of chilly (*dalle*). Recently cardamom agro forestry is done by the Limbu farmers' of the study areas.

**4.6.4 Agricultural Cycle:** The agricultural cycle is made up of two main seasons. The spring, summer and autumn months are important for harvesting cash crops. It involves the higher participation of work force and the period is quite busy for the farmers. The farmers work become slack and low during winter months from December to February. The harvesting of oranges starts from October to November and continues till January

depending on the production. This season is the most crucial period of the year for earning good income. Similarly for floriculturist the months of September to October is important. The buyers from different states visit the village for flowers and ornamental plants.

**Table 4.16 Showing the Seasonal Calendar of the Limbu Farmers of the Study Areas**

S.no	Types	Farming Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	<b>Cash Crops</b>	Orange Planting						■						
2		Orange Harvesting										■	■	
3		Ginger Planting			■									
4		Ginger Harvesting											■	
5		Cardamom Planting								■	■			
6		Cardamom Harvesting											■	■
7		Amlisiyo Plucking												■
8	<b>Food crops</b>	Rice Planting						■						
9		Rice harvesting										■	■	
10		Millet Planting					■							
11		Millet Harvesting											■	■
12		Maize Planting		■										
13		Maize Harvesting								■	■			
14	<b>Pulses</b>	Kaalo Dal harvest												■
15		Masayam Dal harvest												■
16	<b>Spices</b>	Turmeric harvesting										■		
17		DalleChilli harvest												
18	<b>Vegetables</b>	Soyabean harvesting										■	■	
19		Potatoes harvesting		■	■									
20		Carrot, radish, beetroot							■	■				
21		Beans,pumpkin,peas							■	■				
22		Ladyfinger,cabbage							■	■				

Source: Field Survey (2013-2015)

The agricultural month of September and October is quite hectic and majority of the households are involved in farm activities. These months often coincide with festivals and religious rituals and ceremonies of Limbus along with the cash flow in the village through cash crop farming.

In the winter months villagers are engaged in off farm activities. They work in the developmental schemes of Government as casual workers to sustain their livelihood. By the month of March the same seasonal calendar of Limbu farmers' starts thereby, engaging themselves in growing food crops, cash crops and vegetables for the subsistence need and commercial purposes.

#### **4.6.5 Processes of Production**

The interaction of different categories of people in process of production develops a relationship between persons in a socially organized way bound with specific duties and obligation to one another. This relation of production creates a cleavages and bond with different classes of people. The basic cleavage within the class structure is between owners and non owners of the means of production (Beteille, 1971).

#### **4.6.6 Division of Labour**

The Division of labour in farming is of two types of categories namely, Tenants and Agricultural labourers. In the study areas tenants are the person living on lease land looking after the land and agricultural works. A tenant normally gives the minimum stipulated produce of the field to the owners and takes maximum share of the total production. He has to bear his family requirements and expenditure cost. The agricultural expenses like manpower, ploughing, harvesting, weeding, planting and sowing is given by the landowner only to some family but rest of all has to be done by them.

Traditionally there are two types of land lease system in the study areas of Limbu villages. In *Adhiya* system the tenant has only the cultivation right. He owns a living on the lease plot of land of which 25 % of the produce is given to the owner. The landowner

has its right over the land and could replace him by another if the work and relation does not go well. During the field work in Dungra, Kalimpong it was found Mr S. B Limbu (Khewa)<sup>2</sup> is a tenant. He was earning from the field belonging to Lepcha family. Mr. S.B Limbu also possesses a land in the village but the intention was to double his income. He has taken more arable land in *Adhiya*. The total input and output of expenditure related to farming has to bear by him. In *Bargadhari* or *Pakure* System the land owner gives a small plot of land in the field to tenant to look after *Chilikcham*<sup>3</sup> was a tenant and was looking after a field. It has been more than 15 years' he is living in the kutchra house at the field. The law abides the owner to remove *Chilikcham* from that law. If disputes may arise then the case is taken before a panchayat where a desirable amount is paid to the tenant for leaving the land. Moreover some of the tenant has acquired 4(four) decimal of land in the village from the landowner to earn and sustain their rural livelihood.



Plate 4.8 : Showing the Agricultural Labourer (Pakure) of Dungra Village, Kalimpong

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<sup>2</sup> Name of the Clan

<sup>3</sup> Name of the Clan

#### 4.6.6.1 Labour Requirement and their Costs

Village labour is part of both the monetary and non- monetary economy. There are three types of labour in the study areas namely *Khetala* who is paid in either kind or cash. Second one is reciprocated labour or the mutual exchange of labour like some Limbus of Dungra. They help each other in farm related works to certain extent saving the labour costs. The last one is *thekka* which is a paid contract work for terracing, ploughing etc (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Therefore, the Farming in the study areas includes numerous work forces depending on the farm size. These agricultural labourers (*Khetala*) are paid at a rate of Rs 200 – 300 per day depending on the nature of their work. In the orange orchards of Teesta valley tea garden and Bungkulung, most of the farm activities in small orchard are done by family members. However in medium and large size orchard labourers are used. They do all farm related work and are paid on weekly basis at the rate of Rs100-120. Usually labourers are also required during weeding season and after post-harvest period. During the time of orange harvesting season number of labours is required for plucking the oranges. The wage is paid them in weekly basis of Rs 12 for plucking 100 oranges and in a day labour can pluck 1000 -3000 of oranges.



**Plate 4.9: Showing the labour ploughing in the terraced field in Dungra Khasmahal**

#### **4.6.7 Gender Role in Farming**

Limbu men and women do almost all works related with farming which includes land preparation to seed storage. However, their role depends more on the family situation than on gender. In a family with more male members, male works in the fields, whereas in families with fewer men, women work equally with men (Denzogpa, 2009). But still there is little strictness in some farming activities. In relation to planting and transplanting of food crops women performs the duty. While heavy task like ploughing, hoeing and terracing are done by male members. However children are kept refrained from farm activities. Apart from heavy tasks the purchasing and selling of agricultural produce solely depends on male decision. During the field visit in Dungra it was found that most of the male members working in the field conversed and shared jokes among their peer groups. In peak harvest season when there are shortage of labours most of the womenfolk helps in the harvesting processes.

#### **4.6.8 Livestock Rearing and their Importance in Farming**

Animal resource implies wider and foremost role in livelihood as it is the second most important occupation after farming of subsistence crops. On the other hand it helps agriculture systems as ploughing the field and providing manure (Dekens, 2005). For centuries organic fertilizer as manure is used for production of crops that avail only from animals. The production of milk plays substantial role in sustaining livelihood. Milk is sold in the nearby local market. Livestock rearing constitutes major segment in the income and economy of the farming community in Limbu villages. It received more significance when high attention was paid to organic farming in recent years. From economic point of view, livestock rearing is good because it is not a seasonal activity. It can earn income throughout the year. Limbus rears all kind of domestic animals in good number like cows, poultry, pigs, goats in addition to this, oxen are kept for ploughing. The output of animal production is consumed for both family and selling in the local market. They usually keep large number of poultry birds and pigs because of its demand.

#### **4.6.9 Major Changing Scenario in Farming: Case Study of Fulbari Limbu Hamlet of Teesta Valley Tea Garden**

The farming conditions in the study areas has affected due to deforestation, settlement and climate change. This ecological change has forced the farmers to cultivate in new cropping pattern. The farmers of *Fulbari* hamlet of Teesta valley tea garden had witnessed the major agricultural change. In 1975 they used to grow paddy in the valley for subsistence needs<sup>4</sup>. But with the introduction of cash crop like oranges, paddy fields were converted into orchards farming because of its high price value in the market. The production of oranges faced a major setback from 2011 when trees were infected with pests and diseases. Limbu farmers of this hamlet are economically deprived and are unaware of modern technological knowledge. So majority of their orchards were affected with only few trees left to bear fruits which could only fill up subsistence needs for their family. The affected orchards are now plant with Bouquet grass (*Amlisiyo*) which is not only used as the fodder for livestock but also earns a good amount of money by selling it. Many others fruit trees are planted among them Pomegranate is significant. Floriculture basically of pine varieties are grown in small scale.

#### **4.7 Findings**

Darjeeling Himalaya is one of the important centres for tea and tourism. The region offers a good scope for these two industries to constitute an important economy for revenue generations. The lush green tea garden has its own unique history of colonial enterprise and socio- cultural settings. The central livelihood practices found in the study areas revolve around the primary and secondary economic activities. The main primary economic activities include working in tea gardens and farming. The Tea garden is one of the major backbones in sustaining the livelihood of the rural villagers in study area. The garden has fill up the vacuum of unemployment to certain extent but with the increasing population size and dearth of employment. The lives of the villagers are tremendously affected. The economic life of Limbu is completely different from the

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<sup>4</sup>Data recorded during Interview with the Limbu farmer of Teesta valley

taste and flavor of Tea to tasteless and hard life of a plantation worker. Who works throughout his/her life but still inefficient to look after his family.

The Limbu people are also agriculturist. They are generally mixed farmers, growing agricultural and horticultural crops with livestock rearing. Farming may be regarded as their principle source of income for supporting livelihood. Limbu males keep themselves busy at work outside their household in their fields and other physical works. It seems that they have quite balanced work division in their community. The majority of Limbus, who are engaged in farming, has their own arable land. They work on land owned by them, some Limbus work on land owned by others constituting the basis of economic and social ties between the villagers. In the study area Limbu women were engaged in and outside their houses. Limbu men do not indulge themselves in the household activities like cooking, washing clothes, and looking after the children etc, all of them are done by females. The economic role of Limbu woman is very noteworthy, in the gender biased patriarchal society of rural Darjeeling. The Limbu woman is the bread earner and does all the domestic chores of family. The rate of female employment is negligible because of their subordinate position.

The male members of the family are the economic pillar. They provide security and fulfill the needs of family. The rate of male employment is higher in the studied areas. They are employed in different occupational pursuits on the basis of their education and ability. The recruitment in Indian army is very popular in the study areas. The field data shows that Teesta Valley (8.1%), Dungle Khasmahal (6.9%) and in Bungkulung (7.8%) of males are employed in Indian Army. This job owes respect and pride among the family in the village environment.

The educational attainment among the Limbus of the studied villages is low. Very handfuls of them are employed in the Government services. In the study area of Bungkulung there was only one person who was having the officer post till date. Majority of the population are doing menial jobs with a meager income in sustaining rural life. They substitute their income by doing petty business. This business includes selling of local products and grocery. The limited job opportunities and the unstable

socio-political scenario of Darjeeling Himalaya have worsened the situation of the Limbus. The migration in search of better living and economic conditions has led many aspiring youths to out-migrate from the village in search of work. Limbu males are mobile than female. They are migrating to major Indian cities and sending remittance to the family. The migration destination is based on the personal ties and friendship. In Teesta valley they are mostly working in Delhi because the former migrants of the village helped them. In Bungkulung, Chennai is the prominent destination.

Lastly, the Limbus of the study areas is living a very simple lifestyle. They are adjusting the adversity of both social and physical environment. The occupational pursuits of the Limbus in the study areas depend upon the nature of village society and economy. The employment opportunities are also limited with farm based work. The Limbus of Teesta Valley is working in the Tea garden factories and youths are more fascinated towards army recruitment. Dungra Khasmahal lies in the lower periphery of the main town of Kalimpong. The economic condition is also slightly better than other two study areas. The majority of Limbu population in Bungkulung also sustained their livelihood by farming. The influence of globalization is clearly visible in the economic activities of Limbus.

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