

Chapter-III

Demographic changes and structure of the society

This chapter describes the changing demographic pattern and the structure of the society in the hills of Darjeeling. The various historical events and processes to the formation of Darjeeling are already discussed in second chapter. It is also noted that the military, strategic and commercial background of the gradual British annexations into the area that finally formed the district of Darjeeling. The British acquisition of Darjeeling in 1835 from the Raja of Sikkim is also mentioned in this. The demographic composition of the people of entire Darjeeling hill area changed drastically after its annexation to British India. The hill areas of Darjeeling primarily explored for settlement by the British for establishment of sanatorium for the British troops. The Nepali immigration into Darjeeling was the result of a British policy initiated by Campbell in order to populate and settle the entire region. Some measures also taken to provide much of the labour necessarily sustain the European habitation of the town itself.¹

The history of the hill sub-divisions of present Darjeeling district was deeply connected with the history of Nepal and Sikkim as well. Darjeeling runs up between Nepal and Bhutan and stretches from the plains of Bengal in the South to the state of Sikkim in the North.² It is known that the present district of Darjeeling was a part of Sikkim earlier and Nepal had invaded Sikkim in 1750 and ruled most of the district's Terai area and land of east Teesta River for about 30 years. As mentioned in chapter II that, under the Treaty of Titaliya in 1817, the British restored the land captured by Nepal to Sikkim and in 1835, the Raja of Sikkim gifted Darjeeling to the British i.e. all the land south of the Great Rangit River, East of Balasan, Kahali and Little Rangit Rivers and west of Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers.³ The growth and development of Darjeeling as a sanatorium and health resort started rapidly by Arthur Campbell, a surgeon with the Company, and Lieutenant Robert Napier, who were responsible for creation a hill station in these regions.

With the establishment of the Company's rule, the life and society of Darjeeling hill areas was remarkably changed. The most impressive on is the growth of population. The East India Company considered the climatic conditions of the area which fit for their settlement away from the dust and heat of the plains. British encouraged the immigrant labours for the development of Darjeeling for the cultivation, tea plantations, construction of roads and buildings. The British rulers also encouraged the Nepali migrants for recruitment in the

police service as well as in various construction works which were connected with the growth process of Darjeeling as a sanatorium and a tourist centre.

The roots of the growth and development of Darjeeling under the British was the result of these diplomatic relations with Nepal and Sikkim which undergone by several years. Nepal as we know it today, in fact in the past days, was geographically separated into Western Nepal, Kathmandu Valley and Eastern Nepal. Later in the 18th Century, the Valley was separated into Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan. The Eastern Hills were inhabited by the Kiratas, which comprised of the three chief communities, Limbus, Rais and Yakkas. In the Western Hills, where the Nepali- Pahari culture was dominant, Gorkha was one of the important states. It was after the decline of the Mallas in the 14th Century, that this kingdom became prominent. Prithivi Narayan Shah, born in 1723 was the son of Raja Narbhopal Singh. He became the King of Gorkha in 1742 and he soon became determined to re-organize the whole of Nepal under one banner. He is remembered for his efforts to unite the people with a new Nepali consciousness and is also known as the founding father of the Nepali kingdom. "It was mainly because of his efforts that hindered British trade with Tibet, as his conquests cut off the main route to Lhasa from India through the Kathmandu Valley."⁴

In the year 1789, the present three subdivisions were conquered and annexed by Nepal. But the was ceded to East India Company through a Treaty of Segauli in 1815 after Nepal was defeated in the first Anglo-Nepal War (1814).⁵ The population pressure and the scarcity of land in East Nepal was important reason for causing immigration from Nepal.⁶From 1803 to 1809, the that whole western Sikkim in the east, long strip of the Terai, Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh in the south, Garhwal and other hill principalities further to the west were conquered.

The Gorkha invasion upon the low-lying lands within the British dominion in India brought a conflict between Nepal and the East India Company. It was mainly to expand their territories that the Nepal rulers encouraged migration to these areas. This migration led to the changes in the demographic structure in the district. It was during these times that the British had set foot in the Himalayas. Conflicts were already there between Nepal and Sikkim and it was mainly because of some disagreement with the Gorkhas, that the British had declared war with them. The Anglo-Gorkha Wars were fought between 1814-16. The Gorkhas proved their prowess and fighting capacities in the 1st Anglo-Gorkha War but unfortunately, they were defeated in the 2nd War under General Ochterlony. Soon the Treaty of Segauli was signed and it was decided that the area conquered from Sikkim by Nepal was to be given to the East India

Company. Immediately after this, in 1817, the Treaty of Titalya was signed, under which the whole area between Mechi and Teesta was given to the Raja of Sikkim and his sovereignty granted by the Company.⁷ When the East India Company in 1835 first acquired the nucleus of the Darjeeling district from the Raja of Sikkim, it was almost entirely under forest and practically uninhabited. Although it was stated to have been uninhabited probably a more accurate estimate was that this hill tract of 138 square miles contained a population of 100.

The heavy forest and poor communications must have kept down numbers to those who could make a precarious living from rough cultivation of forest lands and the collection of forest fruits.⁸ After ten years again, there was a dispute between Nepal and Sikkim. Captain Lloyd and J.W. Grant were asked to settle the dispute. Penetrating the hills, they came across the old Gorkha station called Darjeeling. It was Captain Lloyd who initiated the idea that Darjeeling could be developed as a sanatorium for the weary and sick British soldiers. Apart from this, it would be the centre, which would engross all the trade of the country and as a position of great strategic importance commanding the entrance into Nepal and Bhutan.⁹

The Raja of Sikkim was persuaded to give away Darjeeling to the British. On 1st February, 1835, the deed of grant was signed, which read as follows, " The Governor General, having expressed his desire for the possession of the hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of this Government suffering from sickness to avail themselves of the advantages, I , the Sikkim Puttee Rajah, out of friendship for the Governor General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is , all the land south of the Balasun, Kahail and little Rangit rivers and west of Runpo and Mahanadi rivers.¹⁰ The deed was signed by Raja Gtsuphud Namgyal and the Governor General, who was Lord William Bentick then. British Government granted the Rajah an allowance of Rs.3000 which was later increased to Rs. 6000. It can be said that the growth of Darjeeling soon started after the handover. Darjeeling soon became an important centre for trade and it was the "gateway through which commerce and culture of the west could reach Central Asia".¹¹ Numerous political intellects lay down that the reason for the conquest of Prithivi Narayan Shah and his "secession was personal ambition and dynastic supremacy".¹² But it is usually accepted that it was him who infused a feeling of nationalism into the minds and hearts of the Nepalese.¹³

Demographic Profile and Structural Changes of Different Ethnic Communities

Darjeeling district comprises of three hill sub-divisions, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong. When a greater part of Darjeeling Sadar was ceded to the British by the Raja of

Sikkim in 1835, it was just comprised 357.4sq.km. and "It was wholly covered by forests and it has been said that there were not even twenty resident families or households in the area."¹⁴ Darjeeling offers a perfect example of the growth of population because of immigration from outside. Each community today wants to prove that they are the real indigenous people of the area. This is so because it is the 'sons of the soil' who are going to get access to the best jobs. Not only this, ethnicity also involves competition for the resources of a certain territory. To the claims of ethnicity is "closely linked the question of equal rights and opportunities in politics, economy and society".¹⁵

The ethnic group wise composition of the Darjeeling Hills consists of the indigenous Lepchas, Bhutias, the Nepalis, Tibetan refugees, the Madhesias or the plainsmen including the Biharis, Marwaris and Bengalis and various other groups. The Nepalis form the majority community in the Darjeeling hills. Persons like R.K.Sharma (who was one of the renowned leaders of one of the important political parties in the Darjeeling hills and also a judge of the Calcutta High Court) and leaders like Subhas Ghisingh want the Indian Nepalis to be called 'Gorkha' instead of 'Nepali'. Various other terms have also been suggested for them like *Bharatiya* Nepali or *Bharpali*, *Bharatiya* Nepali or *Bhargoli*. The political ambitions of the Nepalis in India are woven around the struggle for equal economic and political rights as others Indian citizens. Today, our endeavour is to see whether the Nepalis have really succeeded in bringing ethnic solidarity amongst themselves or whether it too offers a picture of rising ethnic revivalism as is apparent elsewhere. The aspiration of each group sees itself different from 'the other. The Lepchas were the original inhabitants of this place, the Darjeeling Hills and Sikkim, which they fondly called the 'Mayel Lyang' or the Abode of the Gods. Regarding the term 'Lepcha', there are different versions. One version says that it was the later immigrants, the Nepalis who called them 'Lapches' meaning vile speakers. Another version says that 'Lapche' was a type of fish found in Nepal having the characteristics of being submissive like the Lepchas. But the Lepchas themselves prefer to be called 'Rongs' or 'Mutanchi Rongkup' meaning 'Beloved Sons of the Mother of Creation'¹⁶The Lepchas believe that they are the descendants of Fudong Thing and Nuzong Nyu and they strongly believe that their community originated here itself. They also believe that "they are the indigenous people of Darjeeling and Sikkim; the very primeval people of the world and whose origin is as old as the Himalayas."¹⁷

The Lepchas practiced shifting cultivation, hunting and fishing. They had their own culture, language, tradition and religion. Regarding the religion of the Lepchas, they are either

animists, Buddhists or Christians. Today there are few animists amongst them. They believe that God is good and benevolent. The main trouble is with the evil spirits. When any bad omen, sickness or accident takes place, they blame it but the evil spirits and they try to find out which is that evil spirit and try to appease it. This is done by the performance of magical-religious rites by the male priest known as 'Bongthing' or female priestess known as 'Mun'. They appease their spirits by uttering incantations and sacrificing cows, fowls and by offering special fermented millet drink called 'chi'. They also worship nature like trees, rivers; the sun, the moon, the rain, the mountains and Mt. Kanchenjunga are regarded by them as their revered deity. In fact, the various clans amongst them are thought to be the descendants of the mountains. Some clans amongst them are Molommu, Sandangmu, Sadamu, Targainmu, Tamlongmu, Rongongmu, Kabumu, Foningmu and others. Many of them are Buddhists too. The 1951 Census numbered the Buddhist Lepchas at 10,099 in Darjeeling District and they belong to the red hat sect. They worship the Lord Buddha. The lamas perform all socio-religious ceremonies of birth, marriage and death. Even though they profess Buddhism, they still follow traditional animist beliefs and practices. They have their own Lepcha 'gompas' or monasteries too.¹⁸

The religious texts of Lepchas were destroyed by the later immigrants and a few remaining were translated into the Tibetan language. However, with the coming of the Nepalis, the Lepchas and Bhutias, in spite of having many primordial differences united to fight against the Nepalis.¹⁹ Christianity is also practiced by some Lepchas. The 1951 Census showed their number as 1,950. They can either be Protestants or Roman Catholics. The Christian Lepchas are better educated and live especially in towns, holding important posts and portfolios. Buddhist Lepchas have kept their traditions and culture intact and consider themselves as the preservers of the Lepcha culture and traditions. They sometimes sneer at the western influences on their Christian counter parts and say they have forgotten their culture and identity.

Formerly, ethnicity was restricted only to their tribal identity. As they had not yet come in contact with other dominant groups, ethnicity was not so important for them at that time. In the British colonial perception, the Lepchas and the Bhutias were unlikely to shift their loyalty from Tibet as they were strongly integrated by a common heritage, religion, language and culture. The customary orientation to rural society was subordinated by the more repressive control of the Gorkha *naiker* system by which “the rights of an individual to utilization and transfer of the land are recognized by the state so long as taxes are paid”. The

poorer peasants who found it difficult to pay such regular assessments migrated towards the virgin lands of the east and their tea gardens. As Gorkha rural and religious feudalism established its hold over the lands of the Gurung, Rai, Magar and Kiranti agriculturalists and warriors and as Pradhans or Newars, of the older ruling race of Nepal also sought trade opportunities outside the limited resources of Nepal itself, the excess came into the Darjeeling hills.²⁰ Agriculturists and tea garden labour in particular, were as much settlers as the earlier Bhutias and the Newar *Hindusanis* and Marwaries. While the nineteenth and early twentieth century Nepali influx of population is a factor vitally present in the historical consciousness of the new lower middleclass intelligentsia of the towns. All of them belonged to the Tibeto-Burman Language group and adhered to the religion of Lamaist Buddhism.

Beginning of commercial tea plantation in the Darjeeling hills (1839) practically triggered a human avalanche from the hills of Nepal to the slopes of Darjeeling.²¹ On the other hand, the Nepalis had not only proved their loyalty to the British during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857 but also were mostly Hindus. Dr. Campbell pointed out this Hindu religious anchorage of the Nepalis and wrote in his diary in the middle of 19th century: "The British were keen that the Nepalis should settle in newly acquired land in Darjeeling because they were considered to be traditional enemy of the Buddhist Tibetans and the Buddhist Bhutias."²²

The growth and development of Darjeeling took a massive turn with the appointment of Dr. A Campbell as Superintendent of the area in 1839. The credit of starting the tea industry in Darjeeling goes to Campbell among others. The establishment of the first tea plantations on a commercial basis was in 1856 in *Aloobari* and *Lebong*. From the 1860's there was the growth of tea industry in Darjeeling which further accelerated its evolution. It was to be developed as the main centre of Indo- Tibetan trade by the Bengal Government. Meanwhile, some of the areas of the river Tista, including *Kalimpong* area had been conquered from Sikkim by Bhutan. The Bhutan War of 1864 eventually saw the victory of the British. By 1866, there were about 39 gardens in the region. The clearing of the forests, opening out of land to people, the introduction and establishment of machinery, the establishment of the tea industry, agriculture all required more labour.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was also opened in Darjeeling in 1881. All these stimulated the growth of Darjeeling population. If we see the population of Darjeeling today, it has increased steadily. The following table shows the population of Darjeeling District: The Darjeeling Hills consist of a wide variety of people belonging to different ethnic groups,

languages, religions and customs. Here we have the Lepchas, Bhutias, Nepalis, plainsmen, consisting of Bengalis, Biharis and Marwaris. It has been rightly described as the "Babel of tribes and nations".²³

Migration: The beginning of Nepali population in the district

Darjeeling district offers the most remarkable example of growth of population stemming mainly from immigration from outside India. There was a tendency of migration between this region and less virgin lands to its westward, which began with the centralization of Rana rule in Nepal at the beginning of the century. The reason for the boom in population in this district evidently was due to the large labour migration from Nepal when the British opened the tea gardens.

Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by an economical factor, but also caused by many other aspects like social, political, cultural, environmental, and educational and so on. Population growth effected by the migration along with both birth and death rate and changes the demographical composition in respective areas. Darjeeling hill sub-divisions consisted of diverse ethnic and cultural elements and region is the abode of a great variety of inhabitants. The present district offers the most remarkable growth of population and there was a tendency of migration between this region as well as less virgin lands to its westwards. It began with the centralisation Rana rule in Nepal at the beginning of the century. The region referred to is Libuan, west of Sikkim, across the Mechi river and south of *Kunchenjunga* massifs. The Limbu once a Sikkimese tribe became alienated from the Sikkim ruler Gyurme Namgyal (c. 1717-1734) and slowly come under the Hindu influence of Nepal.²⁴ Sikkim then began to be encroached on in the Kalimpong Daling- kote region by Bhutanese and in its West by the Nepalese ruler, Sinhapratap Shah and his generals, Jor Singh and Damodar Pande. The political centralisation of Nepal by Prithwinarain Shah, the founder of the house of Gorkha led to conflicts between Nepal on the one hand, and Tibet and its subordinate ally, Sikkim on one side, and the British Empire in India particularly in the Western Ceded Provinces, later Uttar Pradesh, on the other. The Nepalese immigration took place mainly because the British enticed them to come here and work in the tea gardens.²⁵

The emergence of Darjeeling throughout the second half of the 19th century was increasingly accompanied by the settlement of a few numbers of Bengali middle-class peoples from the plains in governmental services, academic and clerical services in the tea gardens. The Bengali legal practitioners also dominated the social scene of the hill areas of Darjeeling in

the beginning of the twentieth century. Another group of merchant community consisted of the Marwaris, Tibetans, Biharis and a number of Nepalese traders.²⁶ Several factors were responsible for this change and the most important one was the English education. The Christian Missionaries were pioneer in expanding the English education in the hill areas of Darjeeling.²⁷ The Biharis and the Marwaris also began to settle there as the suppliers in wholesale and retail trade of the district. By 1941, the population figures of the Bengalis, the Biharis, the Marwaris and the other coming from the plains did not constitute more than 5.1 per cent of the total population in the three hill sub-divisions of the Darjeeling. Even though 86.8 per cent of the populations were Nepali-speaking, while the other hillmen and the scheduled castes formed only 8.1 per cent.²⁸

In Nepal, however, 'Khaskura' language mostly continued in practice to the upper castes of Brahmin-Chetris even after the Gorkha ascendancy under Prithvinaryan Shah and it could not easily form a link for linguistic or cultural affinity with the various low-caste ethnic groups of Nepal. Another community in Nepal spoke Tibeto-Burman languages. But in the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, the situation was altogether different. The low-caste Nepali migrants like the Rais, the Limbus, the Pradhans, the Gurungs, the Tamangs and the Kirats spoke in Tibeto-Burman language and picked up a second language 'Khaskura' Nepali of the upper-caste Brahmin and the Chetris. The Lepchas and Bhutias in spite of their religious and linguistic differences with the Nepalis ultimately accepted Nepali as the lingua franca in Darjeeling. The overwhelming demographic majority of the Nepalis, which became a reality towards the end of the 19th century, contributed to this acceptability of Nepali as the lingua franca. Another major factor was the steady process of Sankritisation among the low-caste Nepali migrants.

With the gradual increase in the number of the upper-caste Chettri and Brahmin migrants from Nepal, the Hindu places of worship started coming up in Darjeeling. The influence of Buddhism on the low-caste Nepali like the Tamangs, the Rais, and the Limbus began to diminish and most of them slowly involved in Hinduism. A section of the Lepchas also could not avoid this process of Sankritisation. Ethnic identity and unity was further reinforced in Darjeeling by the settlement of a large number of retired Nepali officers of British Indian Army and Nepali police personnel. This was a part of the conscious British policy of creating as segment of "loyal" immigrants in the hill sub-divisions of the Darjeeling district.²⁹

Push-pull factors

It is also at such times that identity comes to play an important role. Identity can be defined as consciousness of any group of people that in reality is the outcome of the idea of common origin in order to achieve the privileges and opportunities for realizing the country's resources. Moreover, the 'we' feeling of a particular group or groups may remain dormant until they come in contact with another group. Ethnicity thus involves resource competition so as to promote 'us' and deny 'them'. "Migration creates an awareness or consciousness of ethnic identities."³⁰ The increase of population in Darjeeling was partly due to the regular summer shift of the entire administration of the government of Bengal from Calcutta to Darjeeling.³¹ One attempts to cover such movements under a general heading of the 'push-pull hypothesis'. It suggests, "migration" is due to socio-economic imbalances between regions, certain factors 'pushing' persons away from the area of origin, and other 'pulling' them to the area of destination". J. A. Jackson in his edited book "Migration, Sociological Studies, Oxford University Press, Volume 2, March 4, 2010" used this concept for 'international migration' where he considered "geographical movements of the population in two ways: a) moves caused by necessity or obligation; b) moves caused by needs (mostly economic) of receiving countries. An interplay of certain exogenous and endogenous factors led to such a large influx of population in Darjeeling hills. These can be broadly termed as the 'push' and 'pull' factors. The migration of Rai-Limbu and others groups of Tibeto-Burman origin can be attributed to the following "push" factors: social and religious oppression, eviction from the land, prevalence of slavery with cruel punishment. The social and economic environment, recruitment in the army and Police, liberal agricultural facilities than Nepal were the 'pull' factors of migration. A recruitment center was even established in Darjeeling as early as in 1857.

Therefore, we are elucidating the Nepali caste system to understand the social composition of the labour force and most important, the intercommunity relations were a strict taboo. Such caste rigidity along with the disintegration of land imposed on certain ethnic groups led to a large-scale exodus towards the neighbouring lands. Both the conquest of Kathmandu valley and the later expansion and unification of Nepal (1769) by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, as important changes causing emigration from Nepal and two agreements firstly, Anglo-Nepalese Friendship Treaty of 1850 and Tripartite Delhi Arrangement of 1951 and the revised Indo-Nepal Agreement of 1956 were responsible for the emigration of this region.³²

Marginalization of the few communities: Limbus and Lepchas

The Limbus is another community who residing in West Sikkim since time immemorial. It is believed that they were here from ancient times together with the Lepchas. They call themselves 'Yakthumba' or yak herders. The Lepchas and Bhutias call them 'Tsang' meaning merchant. There are three sects amongst them namely Kasi Gotra (those who have come from Benaras), Lhasa Gotra (those who have come from Lhasa) and Bhuiputha. Those who belong to Lhasa Gotra are Lamaist Buddhists. The other two sects are animists and to some extent Hinduised.³³ The Bhutias are either the immigrants from Tibet or descendants of immigrants from various parts of Tibet. They came in the hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling as traders, peasants and chieftains, from south across the Himadri into Himachal areas of Tibet. Literally 'Bhutia' terms indicated those who live in Shot.³⁴ The term 'Shot' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Bhotah', which derives from Bod, the Tibetan name for Tibet. A 'Bhotey' is therefore, relatively highlights just a Tibetan origin as well as people who came from Tibet from that category. ³⁵

Today, Bhutias became predominant in Kalimpong to the east after 1709 who also form the predominant and Buddhist elements among the traders and merchants of the district. But Bhutia is not just a single tribe but an assortment of various tribes. In Darjeeling, there are the descendants of Tibetans settled in Darjeeling for many generations. They are the Ladaki Bhutias, Arunachali Bhutias, Bhutanese Bhutias (Dukpa or Drukpas), the Sikkimese Bhutias (Denzongpa or Lachungpa) and the Tibetan Refugees (who have come in large numbers especially after 1959). The Bhutias started infiltrating in the Darjeeling and Sikkim areas from the 13th Century onwards. It was mainly because of the threat from Bhutias that 'united the Lepchas. Though the Lepchas are described as a quiet and submissive lot, there are stories to prove that the Lepchas had fought the Bhutias in places like Meinsithang in North Sikkim and Damsangarh in Kalimpong. The Bhutias have been described as loud and aggressive who were mainly herders and traders. "The Lepchas had been pushed into the forests and lower valleys below 4000 feet by Bhutias who settled at higher elevation."³⁶ Moreover, with the immigration of the Bhutias, land was under their own control, and since their land was in abundance, everyone had a carefree existence. Though, the tilling of land on a permanent basis was still not introduced at that time.

As mentioned earlier, within Bhote or Bhutia, there are many sub-castes. They are the Sikkimese in general, and particularly, Bhote, Dukpa Bhote, Sherpa Bhote, Holunga Bhote,

Yolmo Bhote and Tibetan Bhote. The Denjonpas, the Singsaba, Halunga, Keronga Bhutias accommodate themselves within the term 'Bhutia'. This later gave rise to a misunderstanding as to the question about originality of Bhutias. The Bhotias call their birth place '*Do-Chuk*', 'Do' meaning stone and '*Chuk*' meaning crest or hill top. It refers to the original shrine that was seated on the hill top now known as Mahakal Dara or Observatory Hill. The original monastery was shifted to the present Bhotia Busty Monastery.³⁷ This place holds great importance and the history of Darjeeling deeply evolved from this.

A large number of Sikkimese Bhutias are seen inhabiting this region even today. It revealed the fact that, there is a comparatively large Scheduled Tribe population here, comprising of 462 persons and making 45.20% of the total voters, mostly comprising of the Sikkimese Bhutias.³⁸ The actual population in the tea garden according to 1941 census was 146,508. The Bhutias living in the Darjeeling District are only a part of their total population living in parts of Arunachal in the North East to Balthistan in Jammu Kashmir covering Sikkim, Lahul, Spiti, Ladakh and Kulu in Himachal Pradesh. In fact Limyas, Yolshodunpas, Loba, Dolpowa, Tsum, Nubriwa, Nyinba, Tsanpa, Karmapa, Shinsapa, Holungpa, Thappa, Sherpa, Thakali, Yolmos were there in Nepal before the conquests by Prithivi Narayan Shah. But these groups chose to preserve their religion, culture, traditions, clothes and fiercely resisted being Hinduised or Sanskritised and therefore they were dubbed as 'Bhoteys', 'Bhotias' or 'Bhutias'. On the other hand, those tribes and groups like Limbus, Rais, Newars, Tamangs and others who shed a large part of their indigenous identity, their culture and traditions were included as Nepali. They inculcated the traditions and culture of the Bahuns and Chettris including their language and religion. Thus, Bhutias mean a conglomeration of various ethnic and tribal groups, having their own dialects but clubbed together as Bhutias.

Sikkimese Bhutias were originally agriculturists but today many are engaged in business and service too. Singsapa Bhutias were dwellers of South Tibet, which were very near the Nepal borders. During one of the Nepal-Tibet wars, to end the war, the Treaty of Thapathali was signed in 1856, resulting in the annexation of some land in South Tibet by Nepal. This resulted in Singsapa inhabitants becoming Nepali citizens. But it was mainly because of suppression by the Rana rulers and poverty which forced them to leave Nepal. Better facilities of earning in Darjeeling attracted many of them. Holunga Bhutias are mainly found in Ghoom- Jorebungalow in Darjeeling.³⁹

The Tibetan speakers identify themselves as the '*Nangpa*' or the insider and the non-Tibetans are called the '*Chyipa*' or the outsider. Even though the Tibetans of Tibet and the Bhutias living in India especially in Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas belong to the same ethnic stock and have cultural and traditional affinity, the Tibetan speakers on the Indian side of the border prefer to be called the Bhutias rather than Tibetans. Tibetans and Bhutias are thus different only politically. The exact period of the coming of the Bhutias to Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas are not known but it is said that they migrated here about the early 19th Century. They were mostly pastoral nomads and it was mainly in their search for better pastures for their animals, they crossed over to the Indian border. During this time, there were no border restrictions. When they found the physical and environmental conditions in these areas suitable for them, they began to settle there. Many of their friends and relatives also followed them. In fact, Kalimpong became a flourishing trade centre. Many Bhutias got into business, loading hundreds of mules with merchandise, selling and buying Indian and Tibetan goods. Many of them became guides and interpreters. Some Bhutias turned their homes into hostels and inns and entertained Tibetan merchants. A number of Bhutia women also got involved in business, carrying woolens and shawls from early autumn to spring to sell in the Himalayan town bazaars.

Kalimpong also became a model of Tibetan culture, religion and education. Various scholars of Tibetan had pursued their academic interests here. Some of them were Gendun Choimpel, Naimang Gogen, Da- Lama Geshe Wangyal, Khuru Tharchen and others. The Russian scholar, Dr. Roerich produced his huge work, 'The Blue Annals', which was published by the Asiatic Society. The Hungarian scholar of Tibetan, Alexander Csoma de Karas too did his studies in Tibetan in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. He died on his way to Tibet in Darjeeling itself. Today the Bhutias live and mix freely with other communities but they maintain their religion and culture intact. The one factor that unites the Bhutias is their age old religion, i.e. Tibetan form of Buddhism. The very idea of being a Tibetan speaker is fused with the Buddhist identity.

The rapid expansion is due entirely to the migration of agriculturalists. If we see the subdivisions of Darjeeling District, Kalimpong has the highest percentage of the total population involved in agriculture. When the British officials were trying to increase their influence on the North Eastern parts of the country, in the middle of the 19th Century, they found out that the Nepalis were a very hardworking and laborious working force. This was an advantage to the British as the Lepchas were thought to be lazy and Bhutias were only interested in trade.

Darjeeling had been made into a sanatorium for the weary British soldiers. But one of the most important factors for the large inflow of the Nepalis was the establishment of the tea industry which required a large labour force. Construction of roads and railways all demanded workers. The first tea plantation was established in 1856 and by 1866 there were 39 tea gardens.⁴⁰ According to the Census of 1901, tea garden labourers and their dependents constituted 2/3rd of the total population in the District. In 1931, they formed 42.25%. In the three sub-divisions, they formed 31.52% of the total population. Agriculture also encouraged immigration. If we see the sub-divisions of Darjeeling District, Kalimpong has the highest percentage of the total population involved in agriculture. On an average, for every 100 cultivators, there are 26 agricultural labourers.⁴¹ The labour force was about 10,000 in 1870 that increased to 44,279 in 1921 and to 61,450 in 1941. Once the tea industry developed in the second half of the nineteenth century, this led the growth of ancillary economic activities in Darjeeling and created a demand for more immigrants, many of whom now took to agriculture.

Unlike Darjeeling, the society and economy of Kalimpong was far more sound which had an urban background. Presently the census data indicate that one third of the total working population of Darjeeling district are engaged in activities connected with plantation, orchards, forestry and livestock, that one-third are occupied in agricultural activities. The rest of the working population are engaged in manufacturing, construction, mining, trading and various service activities. Both agriculture and tea plantations greatly increased the population of the area, also improving the prospects of trade and commerce. Besides these, there were other factors also which led to the flow of the Nepalis. Nepalis in Nepal had heard stories from their brothers in Munglan (India), that money grew in tea bushes. Therefore, many thronged in millions. Moreover, the social, economic and political conditions in British India were much better when compared to Nepal. Here, evils like slavery, caste rigours and customs like Sati were being abolished or reformed. But in Nepal, such evil systems were still prevailing. Moreover, the caste system had become very rigid in Nepal. Even tribes like Kiratas were assigned to the status of Sudras and were subject to the Brahmin- Chetri tyranny. Strict rules of caste had to be followed otherwise they would be socially ostracized. Increase in population in Nepal Hills brought about pressure on land, which further led to their movement to Darjeeling and Sikkim, where land was plenty at that time. Another factor was the recruitment of the Nepalis into the British Indian Army, which had already started after the Anglo- Gorkha War of 1814-16. Greatly impressed by the fighting skills of the Gorkhas,

(Nepalis were called Gorkhas irrespective of the fact whether they came from Gorkha or not), the 1st Gorkha Rifles was soon formed after the Anglo - Gorkha War. The 2nd Nusuree and Sirmoor Battalion were also formed subsequently. There were also the mercenary soldiers who settled in these areas after retirement. "Only about one third of the 11,000 Gorkhas discharged from the British and Indian armies after the 151 World War opted to return to Nepal."⁴²

Table 3.1

The following table would indicate the pattern of the increase of the Nepali population in Darjeeling during the period from 1881 to 1951

Year	Total population in the whole district of Darjeeling.	Total population in the three hill sub-divisions of the district.	Total number of Nepali-speaking population in the district.
1881	1,55,179	92,141	88,000
1891	2,23,314	1,50,311	1,34,000
1901	2,49,117	1,73,342	1,52,167
1911	2,65,550	1,89,763	1,66,974
1921	2,82,748	2,06,961	1,61,308
1931	3,19,635	2,39,377	1,75,285
1941	3,76,369	2,86,355	2,23,888
1951	4,45,260	3,28,785	-----

Source: Census of India Reports (1881-1951)

The above indicate the pattern of the increase of the Nepali population in Darjeeling from 1881 to 1951 where three portion of the table separately shows the total number of population in the district, people lived in the three hill sub-divisions of the district and the number of Nepali speaking population in the district. It is clear from the table that the Nepali speaking population in the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling district are surprisingly increased in every decade. The highest number of growth found before independence in the year 1941. The next census which was occurred immediate after independence in 1951 shows no such available figure about the same.

Table 3.2

Immigration and Emigration in Darjeeling District (1891-1961)

Year	Actual Population	Immigration	Emigration	Natural Population
1891	2233314	119670	962	104606
1901	249117	113588	802	136331
1911	265550	111269	6000	160281
1921	282748	101807	6000	186941
1931	319635	100700	3455	222390
1941	376369	95750	4120	284739
1951	445260	100311	6900	351849
1961	624640	169250	N.A	455390

Source: Barun De and others, West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling, p. 108

The table 3.2 shows the figures of both immigration and immigration in Darjeeling district from 1891 to 1961. The migration from Nepal continued as earlier and, in 1931, out of a total population of 3,19,635 in the entire district, 59016 had travelled from Nepal. From 1951 onwards, following the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1950), there was visible disinclination among the Nepalis to reveal the place of birth. But the sudden increase of the population figure in Darjeeling district, from 3,28,785 in 1951 to 4,64,762 in 1961 emphasized the quantum of migration from Nepal to Darjeeling.⁴³

Table 3.3

Places of origin of Immigration into Darjeeling District in 1901 and 1961

Year	From Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet	From Bengal District	From other Indian States	From other Countries outside India
1901	80303	8725 (Undivided Bengal)	34549	814
1961	47270	13720 (West Bengal)	61226	47034 (Including refugees from

				Pakistan and Tibet)
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Source: Barun De and others, West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling, p. 108

The following table gives this valuable information about the places from which immigration took place into the district in 1901 and in 1961. This is revealed from the fact that, when a census was taken in 1901 and in 1961, it was found that out of the total population majority were born as well as came from Nepal. Even this figure failed to highlight clearly the bulk of the population of Nepalese origin in the district as it excluded those whose parents or grandparents were born in Nepal. It would, therefore suggest that the rest of the population comparing Nepalese were from Sikkimese, Bhutanese and Tibetan origin. It can be seen from the above table, that if we refer to the whole sub-communities of Nepalis as only 'Nepali' they formed the dominant group then. The Lepchas and Bhutias had already become the minority groups by then. If we see the Bhutias; the Sikkimese Bhutias were in majority, numbering 1,550 (found mostly in Darjeeling), Sherpas were about 3,450, (found mostly in the west of the District) and the Dukpa Bhutias numbered 2,350, found mostly in the Kalimpong sub-division. In 1931, 52% of the population was of Nepali origin, 21% were the Scheduled Castes and Tribes from the Indian plains, Lepchas and Sikkimese Tibetans formed 4%, Bhutanese - 1%, Tibetans- 1%, Rest were the upper caste Hindus, Muslims and non-tribal Christians. The year 1941 further showed the increase in the Nepali population (including Brahmins, Chettris, Khasas, Tamangs, Kiratas, Limbus, Kamis, Damais and others). The Lepchas in West Bengal in 1941 numbered only 12,468, 1951 they numbered 13430, 1961-14,910, 1971- 14,568, 1981-23,493.⁴⁴

The ethnic composition of the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, which had, thus, undergone a sea-change since the middle of the nineteenth century till the present times, was evidently caused by the waves of massive migration from Nepal which, in turn, emanated from three major factors. In the first stage, the ascendancy of Prithvinarayan Shah, the founder of Gorkha dynasty, in Kathmandu in the second half of the eighteenth century unleashed an aggressive drive of the high caste Hindu monarchy of Nepal for centralisation and expansion. This drive caused considerable socio-economic tensions inside Nepal and imposed a series of repressive measures in order to ensure domination of the high caste Hindu Nepalis over the Buddhist and other non-Hindu Nepali tribes and communities. In the Kirat region of Nepal, in particular, the tribal land tenure was marked by the system of 'Kipat' landholding which was a kind of community land ownership system. Such

‘Kipat’lands, which were vested in a particular ethnic group, could not be permanently alienated. But the Gorkha rulers, after they had established their supremacy over the Kirat region in eastern Nepal, changed the collective ownership of the ‘Kipat’ lands into the royal possession, making the Nepali tribes of the region landless.

The Nepali communities in the Kirat region, such as the Rais, the Limbus, the Gurungs and the Tamangs, were downgraded to the status of ‘Sudra’ in the Nepali Hindu society, making them vulnerable to the oppressions of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya castes. Non-conformity to Hindu scriptures invited serious punishment known as ‘panchakhat’, which included confiscation of property, banishment, mutilation, enslavement and even death. Faced with these repressive measures, a large number of Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Tamang and other low-caste Nepalis started migration from the eastern region of Nepal. After Darjeeling passed into the British hands in the first half of the nineteenth century, the above Nepali communities found the hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling a convenient and accessible place for settlement. A second factor originated from the inclination of the British rulers, in general, and the willingness of the English tea planters, in particular, to encourage settlers of the Nepali migrants as the plantation workers in the tea gardens of the hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling. The Nepali migrants were hard working and could adapt themselves to the working conditions of the tea gardens which were situated at the high altitude in the hills of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong.

For the tea gardens in the plains, the English planters would prefer the tribals and the Chhotanagpur region of Bihar such as the Santals and the Oraons who began to be employed as indentured labourers. However, because of their poverty-stricken background, both the Nepali migrants and the tribal from Bihar could be recruited by the British planters with low remuneration throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the present century. As indicated earlier, the tea industry flourished in Darjeeling rapidly in the initial phase. This resulted in a considerable number of recruitment at the level of plantation workers and the majority of them came from Nepal as the migrants. Though the growth of tea industry tended to slow down from the early decades of the present century, the total number of workers employed in the tea gardens of the hill sub-divisions (excluding the Terai plains) amounted to 60,979 as late as in 1961. The third factor which encouraged migration from Nepal to Darjeeling was the British policy to enlist the Nepalis for the Gorkha Battalions in the Indian army through the recruiting centre in Darjeeling during the post-Sepoy Revolt period. The basic reason, as indicated earlier, was the British recognition of the

Gorkha loyalty which was amply proved during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857. In 1863 the Sappers and Miners stationed at Darjeeling were composed almost entirely of the migrant Nepalis. As there was initial reluctance on the part of the Nepali rulers at Kathmandu to allow enlistment for the British Indian Army within Nepal, the migration of the Nepalis tended to increase for the attraction of military recruitment through the army centres in Darjeeling. The British rulers also encouraged the Nepali migrants for recruitment in the police service as well as in various construction works which were connected with the growth process of Darjeeling as a sanatorium and a tourist centre.⁴⁵

The term Nepali has been used but Nepali is a heterogeneous community having within it various sub-communities, having their own traditions, origins, customs and languages. The term 'Nepali' represents a cultural linguistic denomination. The political history of Darjeeling, Sikkim and Nepal are interlinked with each other. We cannot study Darjeeling's history without Nepal's history. Prithivi Narayan Shah had ascended the Gorkha throne in 1743 and from the beginning he wanted to bring about the unification of Nepal, which was divided into various states having different tribes and groups. He had his eyes on the Kathmandu Valley which was rich in architecture, crafts and also had good trade links with Tibet. It was only after twenty-five years of his reign, that he was finally successful in reaching the Valley. The Kathmandu Valley was inhabited by the Newars. Among them are 26 Castes, each having a hereditary occupation from Brahmins to untouchables. Thus, Jyapu Newar (farmers) could claim to be Shrestas (Brahmin Caste). But with the Gorkha conquests, the Newars just became a 'jat' or caste within the emerging Nepali society.

There was the infiltration of the Brahmin and Chettri everywhere in Nepal except in the high hills. Wherever they settled, even in the areas of other castes, Nepali became the lingua franca. Within two or three generations, Newar language lost its importance and it was never adopted as the second language of any other ethnic group. Racially, the Bahuns, Thakuris and Chettris are Caucasoid and have only Nepali as their main language, which is an Indo-Aryan language. The Newars, Tamangs, Sherpas and others are Mongoloid and have their own Tibeto-Burman languages. In their caste system, there was the absence of Vaishyas and Sudras. There were the occupational castes like the Kamis (iron smiths), Damais (tailors) and Sarkis (cobblers or leather workers) who were regarded as outcastes. They too are Indo-Aryan racially and have Nepali as their mother tongue. The Mangars and Gurungs were initially treated as the *Kshatriyas* and had some common titles. (e.g. Thapa can either be a Chettri or Mangar). But later they were relegated to the status of Sudras. In fact the entire

Nepali society was divided into two broad categories namely the Tagadharis, (the sacred thread wearing communities which include the Bahuns, Chettris and Thakuris) and the others can be categorized as the Matwalis (to whom drinking is not taboo).The Eastern parts of Nepal were inhabited mostly by the Kiratas (the Rais, Limbus and Yakkas are given this appellation) and were known as the "wild non -Aryan tribes living in the mountains , particularly the Himalayas and in the North-Eastern areas of India, who were Mongoloid in origin".⁴⁶But their conquests by the Gorkhas resulted in them losing their traditional 'kipat' landholdings and traditional identity. In the process many of them flocked to nearby Darjeeling in thousands. The Rais are divided into ten clans or thars namely Athapre, Bantawa, Chamling, Kulung, Lohorung, Nemahung, Nehali, Sangpang, Thulung and Chayrasia. They have a colossal linguistic diversity and their dialects are unintelligible to each other.

It was the Gorkha conquests in Nepal that resulted in the status usurpation of the high castes. In order to bring uniformity in the newly established Nepal Kingdom, a uniform Hindu law was also introduced. "In Nepal, the process of Sanskritisation was nothing but the subjugation of tribes to the dominant ruling class of the high castes in Nepal."⁴⁷Everyone had to follow and obey the Hindu laws otherwise were subject to five types of punishment or 'Panchakhet', which included confiscation of property, degradation to a low caste, banishment, mutilation and death. But punishment was different for different castes e.g. Brahmins were not subject to Capital punishment but the same crime resulted in severe punishment and even death penalty to others, excluding Chettris and Thakuris too. Even slavery was widely prevalent in Nepal. It was the Brahmins, Chettris and Thakuris who occupied important positions in state and administration, bureaucracy and the army. Their dominance in every sphere also further facilitated the growth of their language too i.e. Nepali. It was mainly because of these reasons that the Nepalis belonging to the Mongoloid stock migrated to the neighbouring regions of Darjeeling and Sikkim. The largest being the Kiratas followed by the Murmis or Tamangs. "In Nepal, hinduisation of the Kiratas was definitely more powerful and pervading. The State and its official discourse sought to strengthen the process as it was necessary for nation building in Nepal. The Kirata voice was never strong to challenge such domination."⁴⁸In order to escape punishment and humiliation, many migrated but the Tagadhari culture followed them wherever they went. Some Brahmins and Chettris also migrated to these areas and they were mostly engaged in agriculture and dairy farming. "The Brahmins including not

only Nepali Brahmans formed about 2% of the total Nepali population in 1901 while the Chettris constituted a little more than 1 per cent of the total Nepali population in 1941 ".⁴⁹

Table 3.4

Migrants classified by place of birth and duration of residence in Darjeeling District in 1961

The percentage of immigrants classified by duration of residence in the district in years

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Where born	No. of migrants	Less than				Period 16 and not stated	
		1	1-5	6-10	11-15	over	
Born outside the district but within the State of Enumeration	13521	16.95	33.42	17.18	13.39	16.71	2.34
Bihar	40287	9.71	26.72	23.33	14.80	24.05	1.39
Sikkim	5961	4.50	16.78	20.95	20.33	35.90	1.54
Nepal	41109	6.84	20.32	17.56	16.13	36.85	2.31
Pakistan	38162	25.37	24.13	17.44	21.05	11.44	.57
Tibet	4717	***	***	***	***	***	***

Source: Barun De and others, West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling, p. 11

The table 3.4 highlighted the data of migrants classified by place of birth and duration of residence in Darjeeling district in 1961. The post colonial classified migrated figure of population from outside the country and inner-migration are mentioned in this table. Most of

the figure clearly shows the immigrants into the district from all above mentioned regions except he classified increasing figure of Tibet. The total number of figure is available only. There was compulsion for the British to encourage peoples from outside as immigrants who serving their politico-economic interests. Immigration has been the largest single factor among others that helped in the growth of population of the district of Darjeeling. But emigration from the tract has always been relatively negligible. Moreover, the emigrant, more often than not, have left the district only temporarily. The above-mentioned table gives this valuable information about the places from which immigration took place into the district in 1901 and in 1961.

This might be because the Brahmins and Chettris occupied the dominant positions in the social, economic and political spheres when compared to the Mongoloid or Tibeto - Burman groups. However, when they came to Darjeeling, caste distinctions did not matter. The absence of domination by any one group gave them a strong community character as Nepalis. Irrespective of their ethnic diversity, the Nepali settlers in Darjeeling developed a common feeling of identity around their lingua franca Nepali. In Nepal, Nepali had become the Rashtriya Bhasa whereas in Darjeeling it became the Jatiya Bhasa. Their living with the Lepchas and Bhutias and the absence of the caste system in their society, dissolved their feeling of superiority and inferiority. Rather they developed a very strong 'we' feeling of Nepali 'jati', which was directed against 'them', i.e. the British and the plainsmen like Bengalis (who were mostly administrative clerks and teachers), Biharis (traders) and Marwaris (business).

The latter had come in plenty with the growth of Darjeeling in trade and commerce. The growth of Kalimpong flourished mainly because it was the main trade centre of Indian and Tibetan and Chinese goods. The Kalimpong- Jelep La Lhasa route was the main trade route between Kalimpong and Lhasa. This encouraged the coming in of the many Tibetans and Marwaris in this area. (The fieldwork further showed that till this day, these areas in Kalimpong i.e. 101th Mile and R.C. Mintri Road areas are mostly dominated by the Tibetans and the Marwaris). They are mainly into selling Tibetan goods like wool, scarves (khadas), incense and other items. Marwaris refer to the people of Mewar spread through Rajasthan and Haryana. They are born businessmen and began to enter Darjeeling and Sikkim along with the East India Company's thrust into the Himalayas. Most of them had come empty handed but they have become prosperous. Their traditional business is selling rice, dal, sugar, clothes but today they have a strong control over cardamom and textile business. Locally they are

referred to as Kaiyas or Madhiseys and they themselves are becoming conscious of their identity as plainsmen. In the Census of 1891, 88,000 persons were enumerated having been born in Nepal. In 1901, it was laid down that 61% of the population was of Nepali origin (including Brahmin, Chettri, Rais or Jimdar, Newar and others), 27% belonged to the Indian plains, (including Rajbhansis, Oraons, Mundas, Santhals, Meches and others), Lepchas, Bhutias (including Sikkimese, Tibetan, Sherpas, Bhutanese Bhutias or Dukpas, Kagatey or Yolmo Bhutias)- 3%, Tibetans- 1%, Remaining 4% belonged to the upper Hindu Castes, Muslims and non-tribal Christians from plains and Europe. In 1901, "the dominant race in Darjeeling was the Nepalese with strength of 134,000 accounts for more than half the population".⁵⁰

Table 3.5

Population Growth in the Hills of Darjeeling District (1872-2001)

Year	Darjeeling Sadar Sub-division	Kurseong Sub-division	Kalimpong Sub-division
1872	26591	13690	6446
1881	52318	26937	12683
1891	79041	44645	26631
1901	91953	45187	41511
1911	102577	41207	49520
1921	106511	40357	60093
1931	119178	51996	68203
1941	147327	59986	79042
1951	169631	65713	93441
1961	203523	80743	120526
1971	245207	100233	134538
1981	281346	111302	158726
1991	347912	146640	190266
2001	388107	177264	225220

Source: This census data is compiled from De, Barun and others, West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling, Mitra, A: Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1954, Development Plan for West Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, Development and Planning (T &

CP), Government of West Bengal, District Statistical Handbook 2005: Darjeeling, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal.

The following table shows the growth of population in the three hill sub-divisions of in the district from 1872 to 2001. Before 1881, the population had increased 63.8 percent and the next ten years it increased only 43.9 percent. The period from 1881 to 1911, the rate of population growth remained roughly same. From 1911 to 1921, the bulk of the population growth experienced in Kalimpong sub-division mentioned as 19.3 percent. Migration, density of population and the patterns of the population distribution varied till 1931 and recoded only 13 percent growth in 1921-31 whereas, 17.7 percent in 1931-41. The population became double in between 1931 to 1971 when migration was in its highest stage. During 1971 to 2001 the population had increased gradually and this growth mainly experienced in sadar and Kalimpong sub-divisions whereas Kurseong sub-division offered double population growth. As indicated earlier that the reasons for the influx of population growth is migration from Nepal for British imperialistic purposes. This purpose was mainly politico-economic as well as military services.

Darjeeling sadar hill sub-division has the highest rate of population growth while Kurseong remained lowest and Kalimpong offers average rate of population growth. Darjeeling Sadar sub-division is the most populous of the three hill sub-divisions of the district. The most reliable and reasonable cause is its good communication network, accessibility from the plains and also availability of cultivating lands. Kalimpong is the largest sub-division where population growth rate was very high after Darjeeling Sadar. The major portion of agriculturists settled after migration in this division. The reason for this low density is inadequate forest clearance frequent heavy floods with its climatic atmosphere. The lowest sub-division is Kurseong where population rapidly increases after planting of tea gardens.

Table 3.6

Population Variation of Darjeeling District (1872-2001)

Year	Darjeeling District	Sadar Sub-division	Kurseong Sub-division	Kalimpong Sub-division
1872-1881	+60467	+25727	+13247	+6237
1881-1891	+68135	+26723	+17708	+13948
1891-1901	+25803	+12912	+542	+14880

1901-1911	+16433	+10624	-3980	+8009
1911-1921	+17198	+3934	-850	+10573
1921-1931	+36887	+12667	+11369	+8110
1931-1941	+56734	+28149	+7990	+10839
1941-1951	+68891	+22304	+5727	+14399
1951-1961	+75023	+33892	+15030	+27085
1961-1971	+157137	+41684	+19490	+14012
1971-1981	+242492	+36139	+11069	+24188
1981-1991	+275650	+66566	+35338	+31540
1991-2001	+309253	+40195	+30624	+34954

Source: Accumulated from Mitra, A: Census 1951, West Bengal, District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, Bengal Government Press, 1954 and Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach) Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, Development and Planning (T & CP) Department, Government of West Bengal

The following table indicate the population variation of the three hill sub-divisions in Darjeeling district from 1872 to 2001. Between 1872 and 1921, hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling district experienced phenomenal growth. From 1911 to 1921, the influenza epidemic shows great mortality in the hills whereas, from 1921 to 1931, there was less immigration. The period from 1931 to 1941, there was some earthquake in January 1934 which resulted collapsed of some old buildings in the district. There was heavy flood in Mechi in 1935. The remaining 60 years, period (1941-2001) the population of the three hill sub-divisions were increased rapidly and the highest rate of the growth of population experienced in sadar sub-division of the district. The variation reflected in the table shows that differences were decreases since colonial period while it increases during colonial period. It increases in 1841 soon after tea garden plantation and decreases after Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty in 1950. The variation is less in Kalimpong than others two sub-divisions of the district from 1901 to 1921. Moreover, the rate of population growth simultaneously covered all the three sub-divisions in the district.

As a result, the Census data indicated that, in 1881, out of 1,55,179 which was the total population of Darjeeling district, 88,000 people of the district were recorded to have been born in Nepal, while the total population in the three hill sub-divisions amounted to 92,141. It should be further noted that, according to the Census data, the total number of Nepal-born population in India in 1881 was 2,23,314. As regards Darjeeling as well as with regard to

Sikkim and Bhutan, the encouragement, which the British rulers had so explicitly extended to the Nepali migrants throughout the second half of the 19th century and in the subsequent period, originated from the colonial design to outbalance the original ethnic domination of the Lepchas and the Bhutias in the region. By 1961-71, the Nepali speakers were in majority compared to other groups. In 1981, 1991, 2001, population has further increased to 1, 1,024,269, 1,299,919 and 1,605,900 respectively.⁵¹ Even though the above table has classified the Nepalese and other Nepali sub-groups differently, all of them can be subsumed under the term 'Nepali'. It further shows that the Nepalis were in majority when compared to the other groups, especially the other hillsmen, namely the Bhutias and Lepchas who were the indigenous group of the region. Amongst the Nepalis, the most predominant were the Rais or Jimdars followed by the Tamangs or the Murmis. In the field work done, it was seen that the Rais, Magars and Limbus are mostly found working as tea garden workers.⁵²

Today both the Lepchas and Bhutias are the minority groups and have got Constitutional status. They are bonded together mainly because of the tribal factor. But another group that deserves mention in the Darjeeling areas is the Tibetan Refugees who came in large numbers especially after 1959, after the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Many settlements have been established for the Tibetans in this area. They are, (i) Tibetan Self-Help Centre which was established in October, 1959. It is involved in carpet weaving, wood carving, metal and leather works, Tibetan garments, Tibetan design sweaters and thanka paintings. This settlement is 3.8060 acres and is the gift of the American Emergency Committee to the Tibetan refugees in 1964. (There are around 800 people living here and the average age of the people is 35-40. There is a home for the aged which number 85 and home for the orphans too). (ii) Darjeeling Tibetan Refugee Co-operative Collective Farming Society, Sonada established in January, 1965. It is involved in dairy farming, handicrafts and petty business farming.⁵³

With the commencement of the constitution of India from 26th January 1950, there had been a necessity to bring some legal restrictions on continued migration across the Indo-Nepal border. Apparently the 6th & 7th articles of the Indo-Nepal Treaty look like one open permit for some kind of "Go as you like" migration between the two countries of India and Nepal. These articles of the treaty express India's concern regarding protection of the people of the sub-himalayan tiny neighbouring states from hunger and unemployment. As a matter of fact, this has to be mentioned in this context that even China preferred to close its open border with Nepal after Sino-Nepal Border Treaty of 1860.⁵⁴ Tibetan Refugee Settlement, Lamahatta

Takdah established in May, 1965. Chyosum United Tibetan Self Help Centre, Kalimpong. It is engaged in carpet and woolen cloth weaving, tailoring, leather craft, apron weaving and paintings. Apart from these, there are others who have privately settled, without any aid from *Dharamsala*. They are mostly found scattered in the various town regions in the hills. The Tibetans, right until 1959, had little sense of being one group. But it was after this that the Tibetans in exile achieved some measure of uniform identity. Their unity has been fostered in exile, through the manipulation of symbols and the definite invention of tradition. Even in exile they have tenaciously held on to their faith, religion and culture. It was mainly to protect their religion and culture that they had fled Tibet after the Chinese invasion. Tens of thousands of Tibetans had followed the 14th Dalai Lama into India. Out of the refugee camps, a new Tibet had emerged in exile. The Tibetan refugee community is now better off than the Nepalis today. Their strength lies in their unshakeable faith in their religion. This together with living in a rugged terrain has made them hardy and strong people. They are enterprising traders and often leave for cities and towns to sell woollens and sweaters in autumn and winter. They are expert in craft work and also produce dairy products. Other occupations involve wood carving, statue making, weaving of carpets and thanka paintings. It is mainly because of their hardworking nature and their ability to do any work that has resulted in them being better off than the Nepali community here. Many have acquired Indian citizenship, learnt the Nepali language and also the ways of living of the Nepalis. Even though the Bhutias who came before 1959 and those Tibetans who came after 1959 to these areas have many cultural and traditional similarities, they do not want to be categorized together. Each group today wants to be recognized as a group with a distinct and separate cultural identity and wants to be distinguished from the other.

Notes & References

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³⁷The Monastery was built in 1765 and was called 'Dorjeling', meaning land of the Thunderbolt. But in 1780, the Nepalese army attacked and razed the monastery. Later the monks moved to the present Bhutia Bastee and constructed the Bhutia Bustee Monastery around 1808-1809, where it still stands till today.

³⁸Ward 21, Polling Station 23/119, District Information Centre.

³⁹Various wards in Ghoom namely 2, 3, 4 show the dominance of the Bhutias. According to the information got from the Election Department, Office of the District Magistrate, Darjeeling, in the year 1991 the S.T. population in Wards 2, 3 and 4 were 696, 660 and 519 respectively and their percentages were 26.65%, 21.16% and 14.75% respectively.

⁴⁰At present, there are 87 registered tea gardens in Darjeeling. Total area under tea is 18109 hectares and the number of people employed on permanent basis is 55000 and 25000 in the plucking season.

⁴¹Mashqura Faredi and Pasang Dorjee Lepcha, Area and Issue Profile of Darjeeling, A Document, 2003, pp.15.

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⁵²I have visited to tea gardens like Chongtong, Marybong, Rishihat during June 2016 and gathered this information from there. According to them, the Lepchas and Bhutias are conspicuous by their absence in these areas and if found are negligible.

⁵³The Tibetan Bhutia population at Sonada approximately stands at about 2000.

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