

## Chapter II

### Population of Sikkim: An Overview

Before entering into a discussion on demographic pattern of Sikkim, particularly of the Bhutias, we may begin with the purpose of conducting demographic research.

The word ‘demography’ is derived from the Greek words ‘*Demos*’ and ‘*Graphy*’. *Demo* means people and *Graphy* is a suffix word which means represented. Thus, the term ‘demography’ refers to the study of people in particular. Demography is the collection of data regarding a specific population, inclusive of various age groups, races and sex. It is the analytical inquiry of population, especially the study of different dimensions of human beings like size, composition and distribution (Kenton, 2019, p.1). It also includes the spatial changes in birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, fertility rate and life expectancy. Overall it is specified to study the information of the people.

For demographic studies, details are secured mostly from the statistical census reports, which include records of data on births, deaths, gender, migrations and employment. Study of these relevant factors gives the overall picture of the population of a particular society and the changes that have occurred in different periods. This further leads us into a conceptual understanding of the population change. Population change may be understood as an analysis of population statistics measuring the change in growth and decrease in the numbers of people from one another. Since in every society, the population continues to rise or decrease, population change is an essential component of demographic study. Demographic study is conducted by considering population of a particular census and comparing it with the earlier censuses. The present study depends on a similar method of demographic study in Sikkim.

Various governments, corporations and organisations use demographics for different kinds of societal studies. It is used for different purposes and objectives by different research groups and organisations. For example, demography is used by governments for political purposes and observations, while scientists utilise it for research purposes and business groups use it for marketing and advertising. Demographic research or studies are usually conducted to determine the current status and position (economic, cultural, social and political) of the existing groups or communities in society. This information helps us to make a comparative study across different types of communities and groups living together.

For this study, demographic data is collected through census reports and documented records of the groups and communities existing in the state. The variables included in this demographic study are race, sex, age, income, employment, households and level of education. Inclusion of all these variables allows us to derive certain generalisations about the Bhutia group.

The chapter strives to provide the necessary analytical demographic study of Sikkim, with particular focus on the Bhutias, since the first population census conducted in 1861. Data is obtained from the Population Census, socio-economic surveys, and also from various available administrative records on the population of communities in Sikkim. The demographic study of the Bhutia community in particular as described above, can be of great importance to the study on socio-economic status of communities in the state. Demographic analysis of Bhutias is extended to a variety of areas or parameters where study on Bhutia populations has changed across time and through level of migration. The chapter has two sections: section I deals with the ‘Demographic Profile of Sikkim’ and Section II discusses the ‘The Bhutia Population of Sikkim’.

## **Section I**

### **Demographic Profile of Sikkim**

The Sikkimese societal structure is quite different as compared to other multi-caste based hierarchical society found in most parts of India. It may be said that Sikkimese society is a multi-ethnic society, which is attributed to tribal social formation.

Sikkim’s demographic statistics hold limited information on the ethnic demography of the communities in the state before 1891. This is partly because the government of the Sikkimese kingdom did not begin collecting such data until 1891 and partly because the Bhutia monarchy’s rule did not document the statistical data on the population, as Sikkim was very sparsely populated till the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The lack of early records of Sikkim’s population limits the study on the evolution of the state’s demographic profile. It was only after 1861, following British entry into Sikkim, that a record of the Sikkim population was undertaken. The first population census of Sikkim was conducted in 1891 by the British Political Officer in Sikkim. As per the census, Sikkim had a total number of

30458 people, out of which 11589 were males, 10563 were females and 8306 were children (Risley, 1894, p.27 ). A detailed study of the population distribution is given in table 2.1.1.

For the study on the demographic history of Sikkim before 1975, the population figures of the ethnic communities in Sikkim have also been drawn from Limboo chronicles and Lepcha folklores and legends. For the collection of information and statistical data on the population of Sikkim, sources like the Tibetans texts have been referred to.

The first population census of Sikkim in 1891, recorded the existence of fourteen communities in Sikkim. About 30,458 population were estimated in the census record. Regarding the details of population ratio, the Lepchas were the greatest in number, followed by Bhutias, Limboos, Gurung, Tamangs and others. The information on community-wise population census of Sikkim in 1891 is presented in the following table.

**Table 2.1.1 Population Census of Sikkim, 1891**

Sl. No	Race of caste	Males	Females	Children	Total
1	Lepcha	2362	2399	1001	5762
2	<b>Bhutia</b>	<b>1966</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>4804</b>
3	Limbu	1255	1159	943	3356
4	Gurung	1108	1047	766	2921
5	Murmi (Tamang)	801	778	1288	2867
6	Rai, Jimdar	742	691	587	2026
7	Khambu	726	648	589	1963
8	Kami	626	464	580	1670
9	Brahman	521	372	521	1414
10	Mangar	363	346	192	901
11	Chhetri	303	253	273	829
12	Newar	240	183	304	727
13	Slaves <sup>5</sup>	124	99	103	326
14	Derzi	102	92	93	287
15	Miscellaneous including troops	350	72	99	521
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11589</b>	<b>10563</b>	<b>8306</b>	<b>30458</b>

**Source:** Risley, 1894.

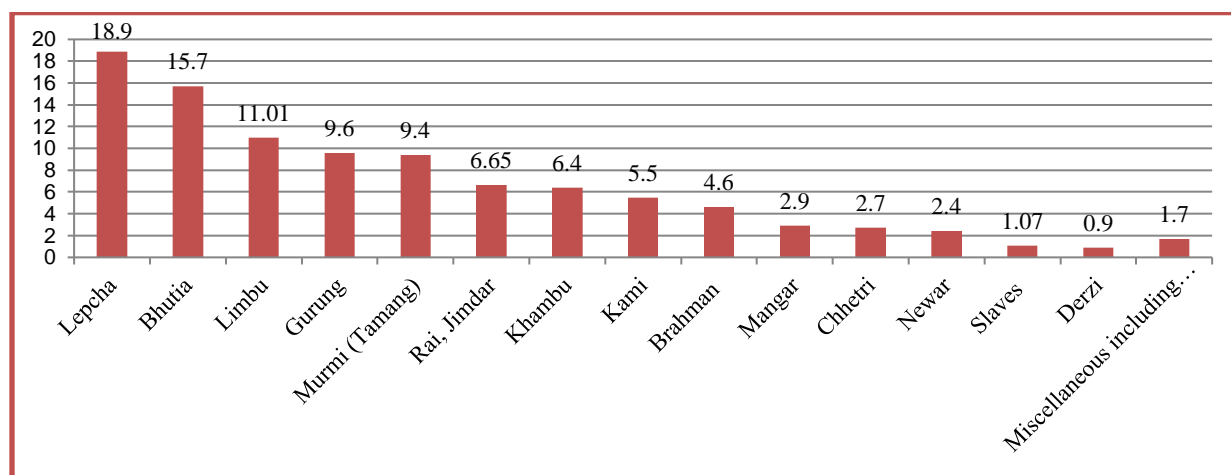
<sup>5</sup> Slaves include the *chakhureys* and *pakhureys* who cultivated the land for the landlords.

In 1891, a total of 30,458 people were recorded, with 11,589 males, 10,563 females and 8,306 children. The Lepchas were the biggest ethnic group with 5,762 people. The male population included 2,362 people, the females included 2,399 people and 1,001 were children. The Bhutias were the second largest group with a total of 4,804 people, out of which 1,966 were male and 1,960 female and 968 were children. The next highest population after the Bhutias were that of the Limboos, constituting a total of 3,356 people, with 1,255 males, 1,159 females and 943 children.

The available data reveals that in Sikkim, there existed a multi-cultural society. According to the census report, communities like Limboo, Tamang, Rai, Gurung, Khambu, Brahman (Sharma), Chettri, Kami, Mangar and Newar existed along with the Lepcha and Bhutia groups. The table also enumerates that in the earlier history of Sikkim, i.e before 1975, there existed a section of people who were categorised as slaves. As per the census of 1891, all together there were 326 slaves, wherein males constituted 124 persons, females were 99 and remaining 103 were children. A section of the population categorised in the Miscellaneous Group included the troops. The total population of this group was 521, with 350 males, 72 females and 99 children. However, if all the Nepali communities are taken together (excluding Bhutia, Lepcha and Limbo) they make the biggest population group, with a total of 16,452 people in Sikkim. As a result, we can see that Nepalese settlement in Sikkim outnumbered the previous settlers such as Lepchas, Bhutias and Limboos.

The 1891 Census Operations in Sikkim were carried out with British assistance (Risley, 1894). The first census of Sikkim, conducted for the first time under Government of India, was in 1971. Since then, the census report published revealed a steady growth in its population.

**Fig 2.1.1. Population of Sikkim, Census 1891**



Source: Risley, 1894.

The graph on census 1891 elicits the percentage of population (ethnic community-wise) in Sikkim. The data depicted in the figure explains that the highest percentage of the population as shown is the Lepchas, followed by Bhutias and Limboos. The Nepalese population shows a very meagre percentage of representation.

A comprehensive study of the decadal demographic profile from 1891-2011 is presented below.

**Table 2.1.2. Population and Sex Ratio of Sikkim (1891-2011)**

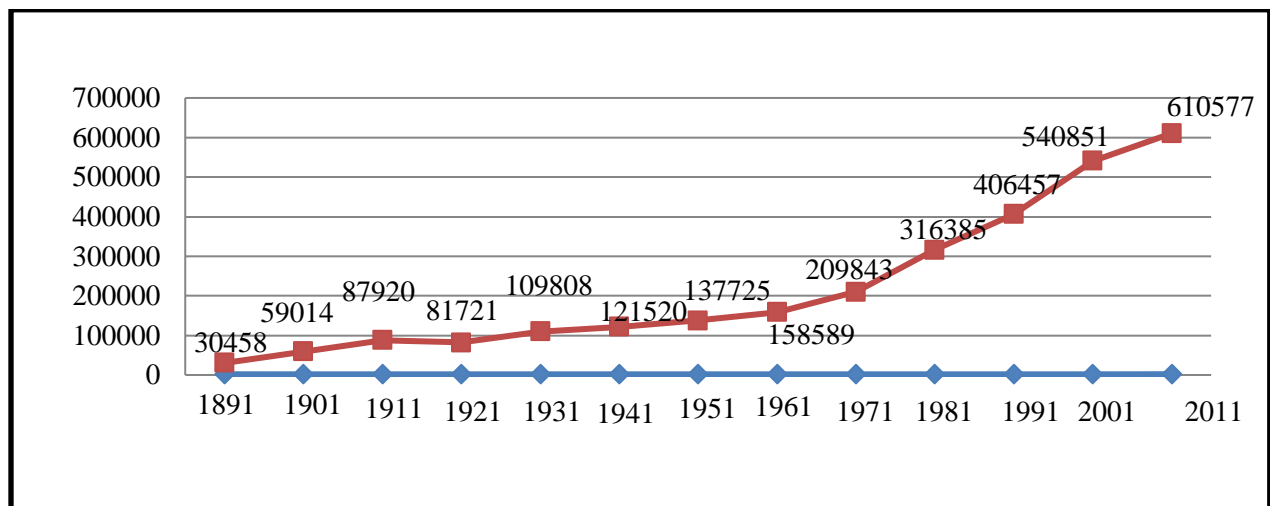
Year	Population					Sex ratio
	Total	Male	%	Female	%	
1891	30458	15742	51.7	14716	48.3	935
1901	59014	30795	52.2	28219	47.8	916
1911	87920	45059	51.3	42861	48.7	951
1921	81721	41492	50.8	40229	49.2	970
1931	109808	55825	50.8	53983	49.2	967
1941	121520	63289	52.1	58231	47.9	920
1951	137725	72210	52.4	65515	47.6	907
1961	158589	81593	51.4	76996	48.6	904
1971	209843	112662	53.7	97181	46.3	863
1981	316385	172440	54.5	143945	45.5	835
1991	406457	216427	53.2	190030	46.8	878
2001	540851	288484	53.3	252367	46.7	875
2011	610577	323070	52.9	287507	47.1	890

Source: State Socio Economic Census, DESME, Govt. of Sikkim, 2013

According to the 2011 State Socio Economic Census (SSEC), the state's population is 610577, with 323,070 males and 287,507 females, compared to a total population of 540851 in 2001. The state has registered 7.52% growth from 2001 to 2006 (SSEC, 2013). The male population has increased by 4.94% and the female population by 10.38% from 2001 to 2006. The sex ratio in the 2011 census stands at 890 per 1000 males.

As per the census of 2011, the distribution of rural and urban settlements reveals that 91.55% of the population is based in rural areas. All four districts in the state have a higher percentage of the population in rural areas.

**Fig. 2.1.2. Demography of Sikkim (1891-2011)**



**Source:** State Socio Economic Census, DESME, Govt. of Sikkim, 2013

As mentioned earlier, the demographic pattern in Sikkim has taken a new turn with the migration of the Nepalese. The graph on decadal growth of demography of Sikkim illustrates that the population rise was speedy during the decade of 1961-1971. Thereafter, consistency in the growth is seen. An increase of 51,254 people was noticed in this decade, i.e 1961-1971. The decade from 1971-1981 records an increase of about 106,542 people, which is remarkably high in comparison to previous decades. The decade from 1981-1991 shows a 90,072 increase in the population. The highest ever increase was recorded in 1991-2001 with 134, 394 people. The lowest increase was seen in 2001- 2011 i.e., 69726 people (SSEC, 2013).

The settlement of the Nepalese into Sikkim not only brought difference in the demographic profile but also influenced the socio-cultural and religious life as the majority of the migrated Nepalese professed Hinduism.

Within a short span of time, the Nepalese as a whole became the community with largest number of population in Sikkim, outnumbering both the Bhutias and the Lepchas. However, in the

political and administrative management of the country, the migrated group of people remained minor players.

Various factors stand responsible for the increase of Nepalese in Sikkim. The Nepalese were considered to be industrious because they were engaged in extending the settlements by clearing the forests and increasing agricultural cultivation during the Chogyal rule in Sikkim. They introduced new methods of agriculture, including terraced farming. Cultivation of cardamom was started by the Nepalese which is an important cash crop in Sikkim.

The Nepalese, especially the Newars, were able to occupy important positions in business and administration in Sikkim. The migration of the Nepalese helped Sikkim in the attainment of development and prosperity in the agricultural and economic fields. The migrated Nepali community who settled in Sikkim included sub-cultural groups like the Kiratis, the Newars and the Gurkhas (Bahun and Chhetri). The Kiratis include Limbus, Rais, Mangars, Gurungs and Tamangs. The Newars (also called Pradhans) came from Nepal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and emerged as the Nepali counterpart of the *Kazis* in Sikkim. The Gurkhas, namely, Basnett and Chhetri, moved from Nepal towards Sikkim along with the expansion of Gurkha invasions into Sikkim in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Mukherjee, 2011, p. 11).

By far, the most serious threat the Bhutias faced was that from the immigration of Nepalese. According to the Census reports, the population has increased around four times in the last four decades since 1975. Along with the Bhutias, Lepchas and Nepalese, a small and distinct group known as the Tsongs- settlers from the Tsang-po valley in Tibet, now the Limbuwana district of Nepal, were among the early settlers of Sikkim. A group of Indians known as plainsmen lived in Sikkim. These people were traders and businessmen. They exercised economic influence to a large extent. The Indians basically came from Rajasthan, Punjab, UP, Bihar and Bengal and are still an important community in Sikkim (Raizada, 2012, p. 9).

**Table 2.1.3. Population Decadal Growth Rate (%) in Sikkim (1901-2011)**

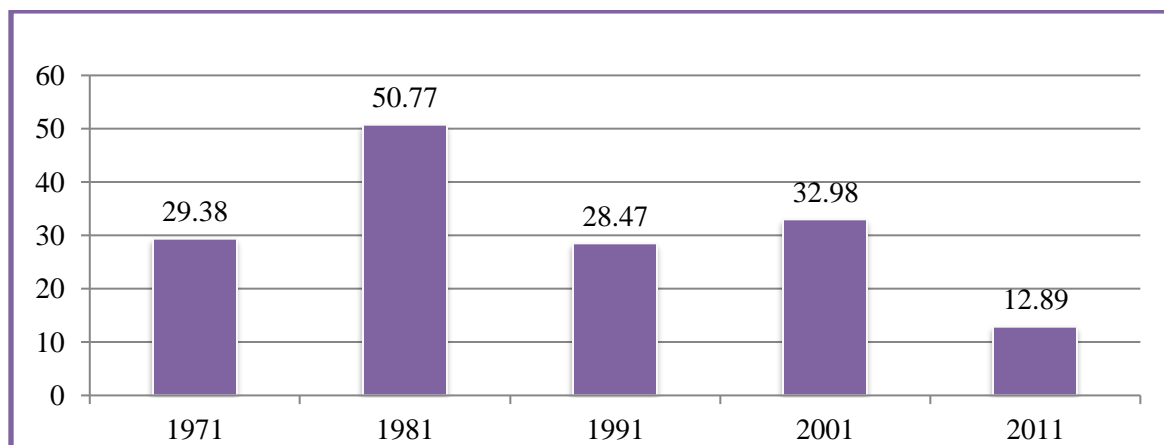
Year	Population growth rate in %
1901-1911	51.61
1911-1921	7.05
1921-1931	13.34
1931-1941	10.67
1941-1951	13.34
1951-1961	17.7 6

1961-1971	29.38
1971-1981	50.77
1981-1991	28.47
1991-2001	32.98
2001-2011	12.89

**Source:** Population Census, 1901-2011

The population census of 1901 enumerates the highest growth of 51.61%, which is about 59,014 people. The major contributing factor for this growth is the migration of the population into Sikkim, especially the Nepalese. Secondly, the Chogyal of Sikkim also encouraged Nepali settlement in Sikkim for the purpose of expanding agricultural land in Sikkim. Referring to the traditional occupation of Bhutias and Lepchas in this context, the Bhutias were basically traders and some were into pastoralism. Very few were engaged in agricultural activities. The Lepchas, as described by historians, lived a nomadic life. Hence, the Chogyal, being interested in developing agriculture in Sikkim and the Nepalese being better agriculturists, were allowed to settle in Sikkim. These events led to increase in the population of almost 50% during this period. However, there seemed to be a decrease in population growth from 1911 to 1921, which was 7.05%. Two factors may be considered responsible. One being the imposition of ban in 1917 against the transfer of land of the Bhutia and the Lepchas to other communities in Sikkim and the other, the spread of epidemic in 1919 that led to negative growth of population during this period (Raizada, 2012, p.17). The consequence of the epidemic not only hampered the population in Sikkim but also India as a whole was affected.

**Fig. 2.1.3. Population Decadal Growth Rate (%) in Sikkim (1901-2011)**



**Source:** Compiled from Census, 1971-2011, GOI.



So far, the highest growth was in 1981-91, i.e., 50.77%, and the second highest growth was recorded in 1991-2001, i.e., 32.98%. The reason may be the merger with India. Sikkim as a new state required administrators and educationists for the newly established state structure. Hence, migration was allowed to meet the changing needs of the state. The rapid growth of the population not only changed the demographic pattern but also impacted the socio-economic structure in the state.

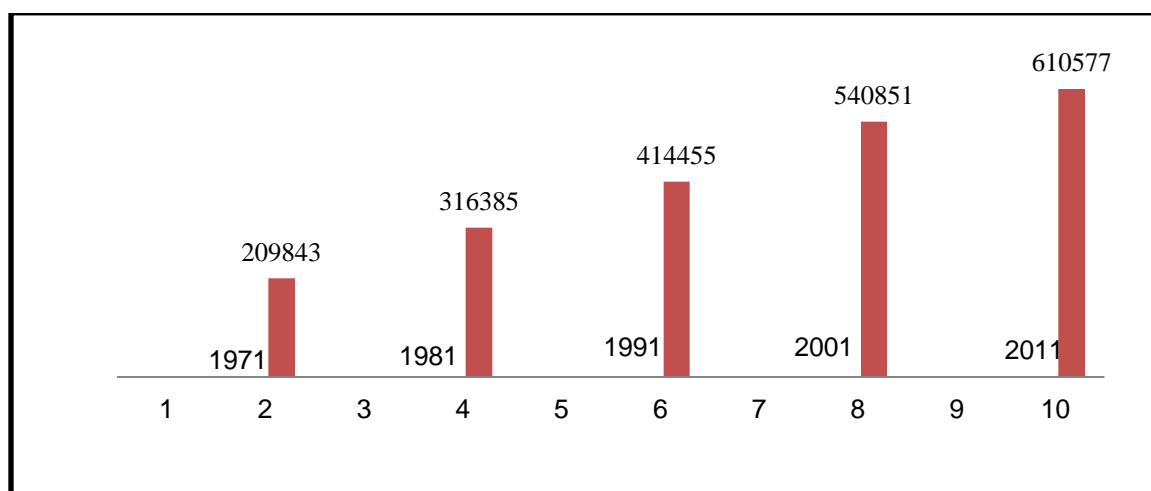
**Table 2.1.4. District-wise Distribution of Population of Sikkim, 1961 to 2011**

SL. No	Year	Sikkim	North	West	South	East
1	1961	162189	-	-	-	-
2	1971	209843	13014	58023	53185	85621
3	1981	316385	26455	75192	75976	138762
4	1991	406457	31240	98161	98604	178452
5	2001	540851	41030	123256	131525	245040
6	2011	610577	43709	136435	146850	283583

**Source:** Census of India, GOI, 2011

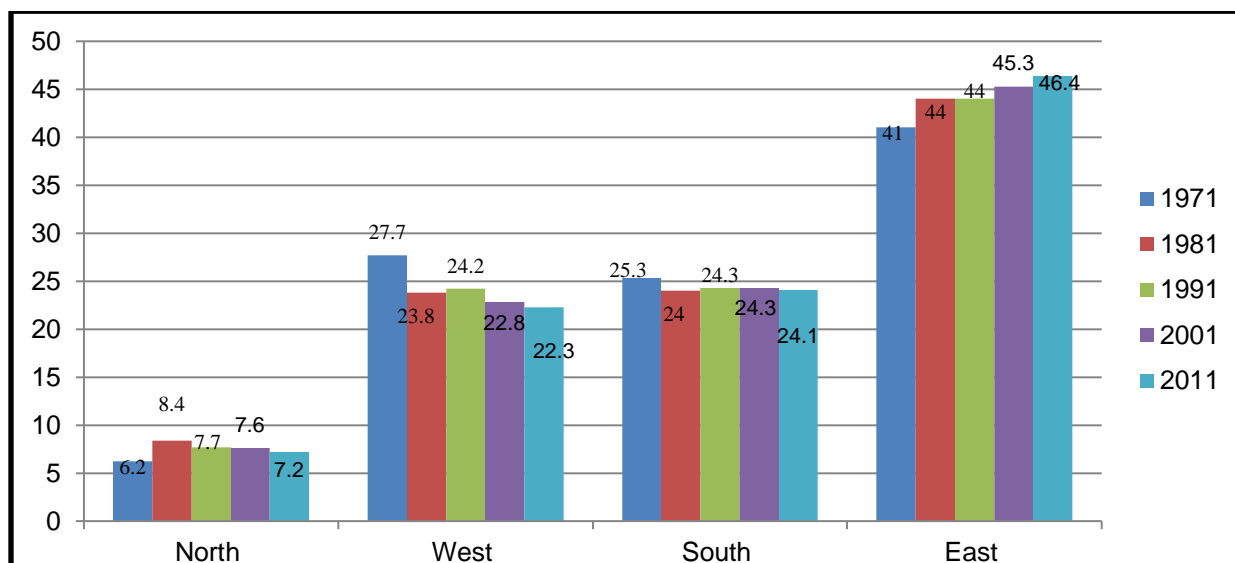
As per the figures presented in table 2.1.4, the total population in 1961 was 162189. The record on the district-wise distribution of population is not available for this census. As per the subsequent census reports (1971 to 2011), the East district has the highest population in the state, followed by South and West districts, while the North district is the most sparsely populated district.

**Fig 2.1.4. Population of Sikkim (1971 - 2011)**



**Source:** Population Census, India 2011.

**Fig.2.1.5. District-wise Population (in %) of Sikkim, 1971 to 2011**



Source: Census of India, GOI, 2011

The statistics from the population censuses enumerate that there has been increase in growth rate in Sikkim in every census, except for censuses 1911 and 1921.

The graphical presentation of district wise distribution of the population presented in Figure 2.1.5 shows the consistency in the increase in population census from 1971-2011. The East district is presented with the highest percent of population in all census reports. Near about 50 percent of the population are based in East district. West district accounts for the second highest percentage of the population, followed by the South and North districts respectively.

**Table 2.1.5. Rural and Urban Population of Sikkim-2001 and 2011**

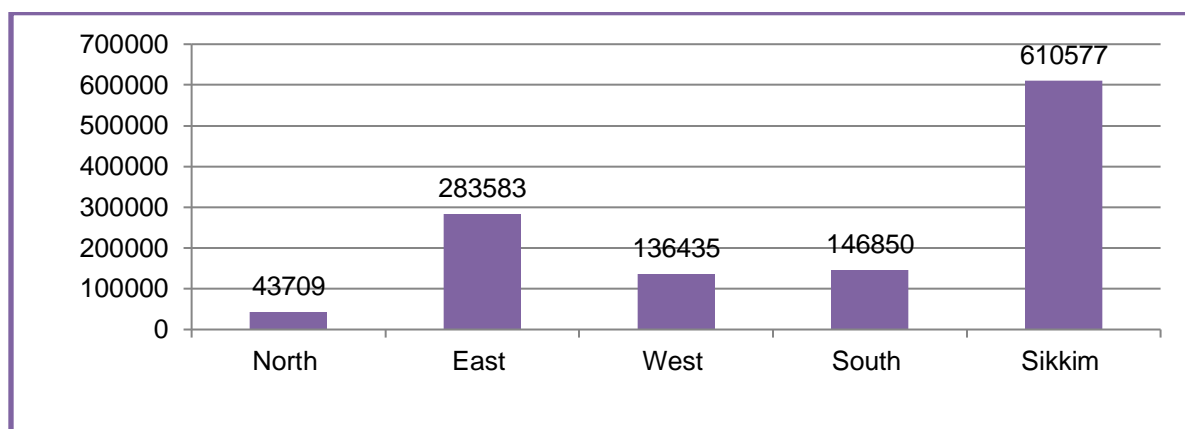
Sl. No.	State/ District	Sector	2001			2011		
			Total Population			Total Population		
			Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1	North	<b>Total</b>	<b>41,030</b>	<b>23,414</b>	<b>17,616</b>	<b>43709</b>	<b>24730</b>	<b>18979</b>
		Rural	39782	22643	17139	39065	22274	16791
		Urban	1248	771	477	4644	2456	2188
2	East	<b>Total</b>	<b>245040</b>	<b>132917</b>	<b>112123</b>	<b>283583</b>	<b>151432</b>	<b>132151</b>
		Rural	192188	104150	88038	161096	87147	73949
		Urban	52852	28767	24085	122487	64285	58202
3	West	<b>Total</b>	<b>123,256</b>	<b>63,912</b>	<b>59,344</b>	<b>136435</b>	<b>70238</b>	<b>66197</b>
		Rural	121432	62885	58547	131187	67528	63659
		Urban	1824	1027	797	5248	2710	2538

4	South	<b>Total</b>	<b>131525</b>	<b>68241</b>	<b>63284</b>	<b>146850</b>	<b>76670</b>	<b>70180</b>
		Rural	127579	66096	61483	125651	65848	59803
		Urban	3946	2145	1801	21199	10822	10377
5	Sikkim	<b>Total</b>	<b>540,851</b>	<b>288,484</b>	<b>252,367</b>	<b>610577</b>	<b>323070</b>	<b>287507</b>
		Rural	480,981	255774	225,207	456999	242797	214202
		Urban	59,870	32,710	27,160	153578	80273	73305

**Source:** Population Census 2001 and 2011

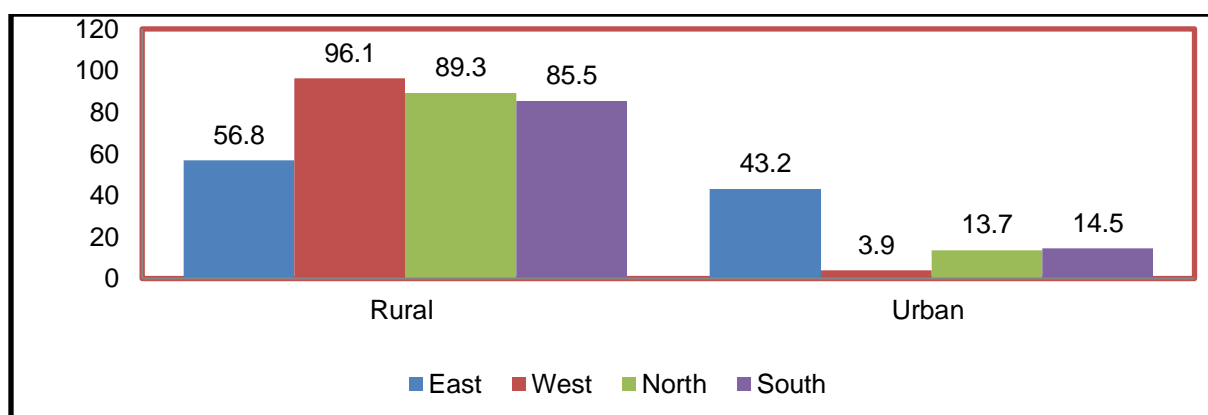
Demographic statistics for both the decades i.e. 2001 and 2011, indicate that the East district made up the larger portion of the population with 45.31% in 2001 and 46.44% in 2011. South district reports 24.31% in 2001 and 24% in 2011, West district accounts for 22.79% in 2001 and 22.3% in 2011 and North district recorded 7.59% in 2001 and 7.1 % in 2001. Area-wise North district is the largest, but it is the least populated.

**Fig 2.1.6. District-wise Population of Sikkim, 2011 (In Lakhs).**



**Source:** Census of Sikkim, 2011.

**Fig. 2.1.7. District-wise Rural and Urban Distribution of Population, 2011**



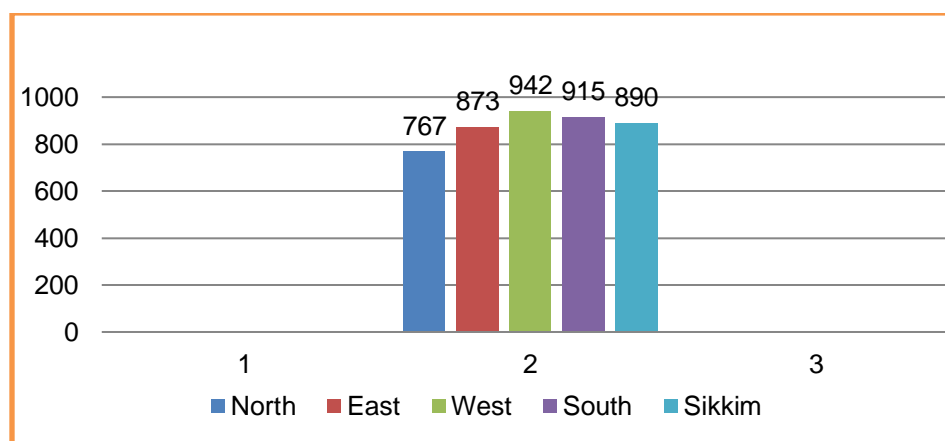
**Source:** Census of Sikkim, 2011.

While speaking elaborately about the districts' urban-rural population, in North district, 89.38% of the people live in the rural areas while only 13.7 % are in urban areas , i.e at Mangan, the only town in North district. In West district, rural areas account for 96.15 % of the population while urban areas such as Gyalshing and Nayabazaar account for only 3.85%. It is perhaps the town with the least population.

In the South district, 85.56 % live in rural areas while the remaining 14.5 % live in the urban areas: Namchi and Jorethang, the main towns in South district. East district has the highest population living in the urban areas, as there are more towns in East district; Gangtok, Singtam, Rangpo and Rhenock. We find 56.81% population living in rural areas and 43.2 % living in urban areas.

Apparently, all the four towns sharing 122,487 (79.76 per cent) are located in the East district. South district has an urban population of about 21,199 which constitutes 13.80 % of the total urban population. Similarly, West district has 5,248 (3.42 per cent) and the North district has 4,644 (3.02%) of the total urban population (Census of India, 2011).

**Fig.2.1.8. District-wise Sex Ratio (2011)**



**Source:** Census of Sikkim, 2011.

The sex ratio by district reveals that the West and South districts have higher sex ratios, with 925 and 915 females per 1000 males, respectively. North district has the lowest sex ratio with 767 females per 1000 males and East district has 873 females per 1000 males.

Apart from the population statistics, studies on the linguistic population also throw light on the demography of the state. The statistics of the linguistic population of Sikkim as published in the Census of 2001 (population by linguistic group is not reported in previous census reports) show that Nepali language is spoken by the largest number of people in the state.

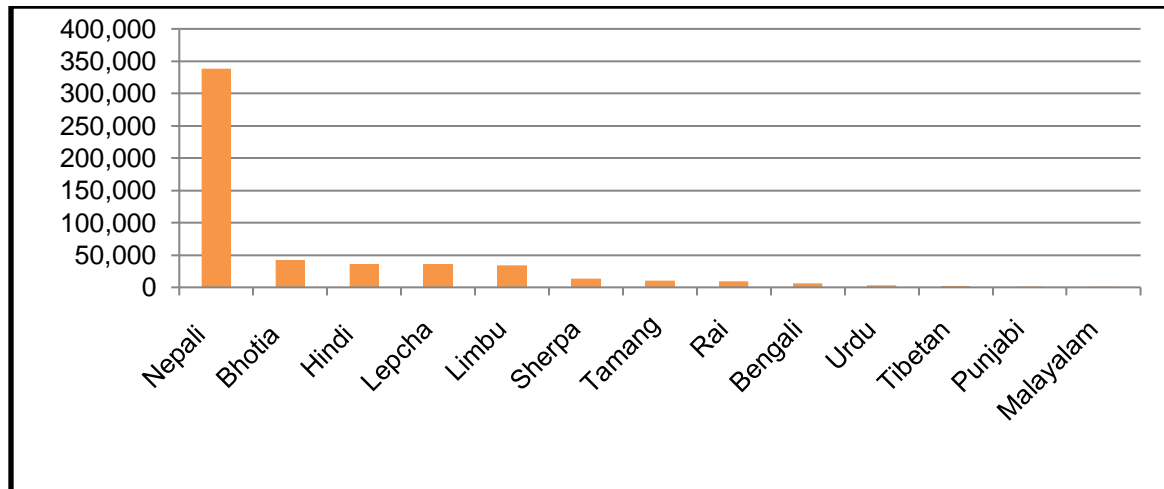
**Table 2.1.6. Linguistic Groups of Sikkim in 2001**

Sl. No.	Language	Total number of speakers
1	Nepali	338,606
2	<b>Bhutia</b>	<b>41,825</b>
3	Hindi	36,072
4	Lepcha	35,728
5	Limbu	34,292
6	Sherpa	13,922
7	Tamang	10,089
8	Rai	8,856
9	Bengali	6,320
10	Urdu	2,930
11	Tibetan	1,977
12	Punjabi	1,364
13	Malayalam	1,021

**Source:** Census of Sikkim, 2001.

Though Sikkim is country's one of the smallest state, it is marked by existence of numerous linguistic groups with co-existence of number of languages like Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo, Tamang, Rai, Mangar, Sherpa, Newari, Tibetan and other languages (Census, 2001). The table reflects that the most spoken language is the Nepali language. Hence, today Nepali has become the lingua-franca of Sikkim.

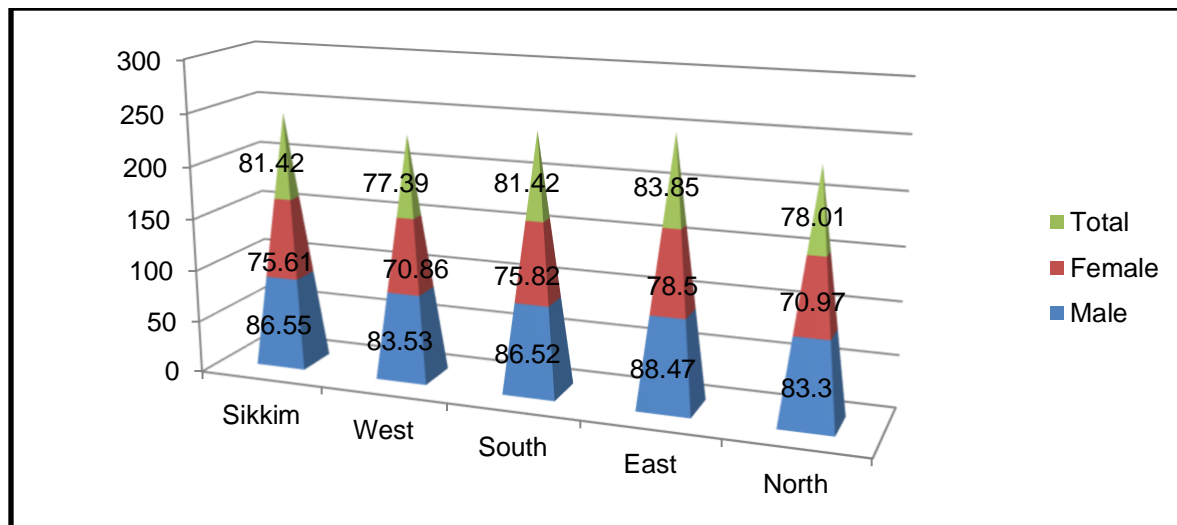
**Fig.2.1.9. Linguistic Groups of Sikkim- 2001 Census**



**Source:** Census of Sikkim, 2001.

Educational development in Sikkim started quite late, more after the merger in 1975. In 1971, the literacy rate in Sikkim was only 17.74% when Sikkim had just started as a newly created state. Within four decades there on, the literacy rate increased to 82.20% in 2011. Male literacy stands at 87.29%, while female literacy rate is 76.43%. The literacy rate in 2011 has increased by 20%. In 2001, it was recorded at 68.81%, of which male literacy rate was 77.38% and female rate was 59.63%

**Fig. 2.1.10. District-wise and Gender-wise Literacy Rate -2011.**



**Source:** Population Census, India 2011.

## Section II

### The Bhutia Population of Sikkim

It is understood from history that the actual settlement of Bhutias in Sikkim began from 15<sup>th</sup> century. According to Maharaja Thutop Namgyal and Maharani Yeshey Dolma Namgyal (1908), the migration of Bhutias took place in various forms and ways. Since the establishment of Bhutia rule in 1642, the Bhutia population has gradually expanded in Sikkim. The migration was also seen during the Chinese influence of Tibet and the escape of the Tibetan religious head, His Holiness Dalai Lama, into India.

**Table 2.2.1 Bhutia Population in Sikkim from 1891-2011**

Year	Total Population Sikkim	Total Bhutia Population
1891	30,458	4,894
<b>1901</b>	59,014	-
<b>1911</b>	87,920	-
<b>1921</b>	81,721	-
<b>1931</b>	109,808	11,955
<b>1941</b>	121,520	-
<b>1951</b>	137,725	15,626
<b>1961</b>	162,189	49,874 (including Lepchas and Bhutias)
<b>1971</b>	209,843	23,572
<b>1981</b>	316,385	36,308
<b>1991</b>	406,457	50,410
<b>2001</b>	540,851	63,723
<b>2011</b>	610,577	69,598

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Directorate of Census Operations, Sikkim, 2011 & A.C Sinha, 2008, p 37.

The first ever population census of Sikkim was conducted in 1891. The 1891 census recorded 4894 Bhutia population which increased to 69,598 in 2011. The table shows that there has been substantial growth in the Bhutia population. However, the 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1941 censuses include records of only the general population.

The researcher was unable to explain the reason leading to this non-record of the Bhutia population in the above mentioned census due to the unavailability of recorded facts. It is also worth mentioning here that the growth in the population is not only for Bhutias, but there has been a growth among the other communities as well. The census reports present that overall

population figure underwent a major change eventually. The increase in the state population over the years shows a large margin of difference in the population of Nepalese and the other two communities (Bhutia and Lepcha).

**Table 2.2.2. Population of Scheduled Tribes -2001**

Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Total population	Proportion to the total ST population %
Bhutia	70,308	63.1
Lepcha	40,568	36.4
All Scheduled Tribes	111,405	100

**Source:** Census of India, 2001

According to the Census of India, 2001, the total population was 540,851, of which 111,405 (20.6 %) of the population were Scheduled Tribes (STs). Among the ST group, the Bhutia and Lepcha are the two prominent STs in the state.

In 2001, the Bhutia share was 63.1% of the total ST population of the state and the highest numbers of Bhutias are from the East district. The Lepchas, mostly confined to the North district, represent 33.4% of ST population. As per the record, 10.9% of the Bhutias and 4.5% of the Lepchas are in urban areas. Hence, it can be said that a large chunk of Bhutia and Lepcha people are concentrated in the rural areas.

**Table 2.2.3. Distribution of Population by Social Group - 2006**

Social Group	Person	Percentage to the total population
<b>ST</b>	111618	37.39
<b>SC</b>	19683	6.66
<b>MBC</b>	69867	23.46
<b>OBC</b>	69013	23.20
<b>OTHERS</b>	32671	9.29
<b>STATE</b>	302852	100

**Source:** State Socio Economic Census, DESME, 2006.

A community-wise population study has only been found for the year 2006. The survey conducted by the Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Sikkim (DESME). There is no such data available before and after 2006. According to the survey, the most populous social group in the state are Scheduled Tribes, with 37.39% of the total population and the lowest is the Scheduled Caste. The Bhutias are included in this group (ST group) along with the Lepchas.

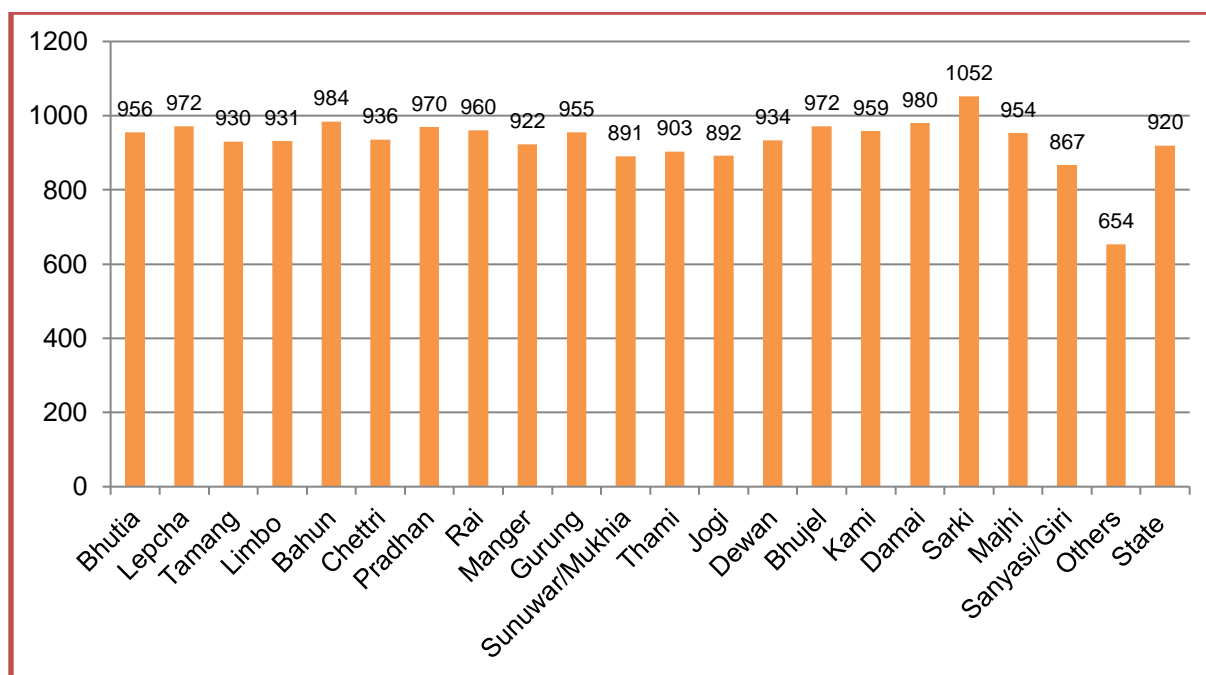


### 2.2.1. Community-wise Sex Ratio

The distribution of the population by sex ratio is considered as one of the prime factors in demographic groupings. The study on sex ratio finds an important place in demographic study. In the light of this, the present study also takes into account the statistics on sex ratio of the Scheduled Tribe in Sikkim.

The 2001 Census shows that the sex ratio of the ST population was 957. The sex ratio of STs in Sikkim is comparatively lower than the national average for STs, which is 978. In 2001, the sex ratio of the Bhutia population was 966 females per thousand males. The sex ratio of the Lepcha group was 945. The child sex ratio among Bhutia and Lepcha reveals that the Bhutia is slightly lower with 954 than that of Lepcha, which has 979.

**Fig.2.2.1. Community-wise Sex Ratio (2006)**



**Source:** State Socio Economic Census, DESME, Govt. of Sikkim, 2006

Population records show that the Bhutia population has increased consistently since their settlement in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and has become the most dominant group in Sikkim. The Nepalese settlement, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century has increased and the Bhutias have been outnumbered by them. The Bhutias have been pushed towards the minority group.

In 2006, the State Socio Economic Census under the Directorate of Economic, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation (DESME), Government of Sikkim came up with the community wise distribution of the population by house hold size and sex ratio. As per the available data, the entire population is distributed amongst twenty communities.

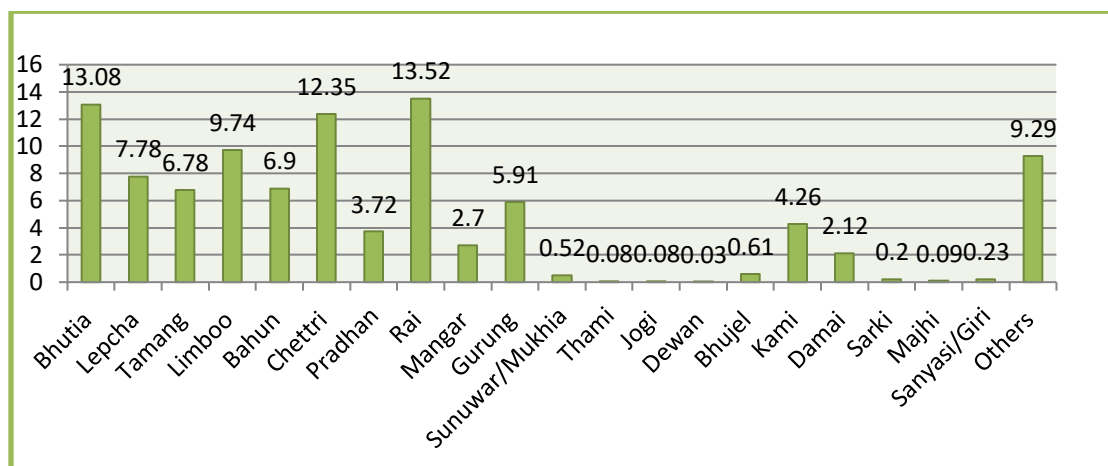
**Table 2.2.4.****Community-wise Distribution of Population, Household Size and Sex Ratio, 2006**

Community	Households	Population			HH Size	Sex ratio
		Total	Male	Female		
<b>Bhutia</b>	<b>14769</b>	<b>76070</b>	<b>38891</b>	<b>37179</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>956</b>
Lepcha	8041	45239	22945	22294	5.63	972
Tamang	7718	39457	20439	19018	5.11	930
Limbo	10672	56650	29343	27307	5.31	931
Bahun	7680	40110	20213	19897	5.22	984
Chettri	13509	71836	37103	34733	5.32	936
Pradhan	4441	21636	10981	10655	4.87	970
Rai	15430	78651	40122	38529	5.1	960
Manger	3015	15702	8171	7531	5.21	922
Gurung	6489	34344	17570	16774	5.29	955
Sunuwar/Mukhia	595	3042	1609	1433	5.11	891
Thami	92	453	238	215	4.92	903
Jogi	94	490	259	231	5.21	892
Dewan	44	176	91	85	4	934
Bhujel	701	3563	1807	1756	5.08	972
Kami	4715	24767	12640	12127	5.25	959
Damai	2345	12322	6223	6099	5.25	980
Sarki	216	1151	561	590	5.33	1052
Majhi	100	506	259	247	5.06	954
Sanyasi/Giri	263	1337	716	621	5.08	867
Others	10901	54044	32671	21373	4.96	654
State	111830	581546	302852	278694	5.2	920

**Source:** State Socio Economic Census, DESME, Govt. of Sikkim, 2006

Of the total of 111,830 households in 2006, the Rai community has the highest number of households (15430). The total households of Bhutia group is 14769. The third group is Chhetri with 13509. Bhutias alone make 13.21 % of households in the state. The State Socio Economic Census, 2006 records for 13.08% of the Bhutia population, with male accounting for 12.84% and females accounting for 13.34% of the total population.

**Fig.2.2.2. Community-wise Percentage of Distribution of Population in Sikkim, 2006**



**Source:** State Socio Economic Census, DESME, Govt. of Sikkim, 2006

The graph outlines the percentage of population of each community in Sikkim. Rai from the Nepalese group has the highest share with 13.52%, Bhutias are after Rai with 13.08% population. Lepchas who are the original inhabitants comprise of only 7.78% of the total population. This community has always been in minority since the arrival of Bhutias in Sikkim. Limboo and Tamang are the two other ethnic communities which has much higher number than other Nepali communities of Sikkim. The Limboos and Tamangs comprises of 9.74% and 6.78% of total population respectively. Excluding Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo and Tamang groups, the Nepalese make 62.12% of population in the state.

The Socio- economic survey, DESME, 2006<sup>6</sup> projects district wise distribution of Bhutia community in the state. It is noted that the East district comprises of the highest number, followed by South district, North district and then West district.

**Table.2.2.5. District-wise Distribution of Bhutia Community, 2006**

District	Bhutia population	Male	Female	Percentage %	Sex ratio
North	9221	4717	4504	13.42	955
East	37818	19404	18414	55.03	949
South	14177	7255	6922	20.61	954
West	7500	3787	3713	10.9	980
Total	68716	35163	33553	100	

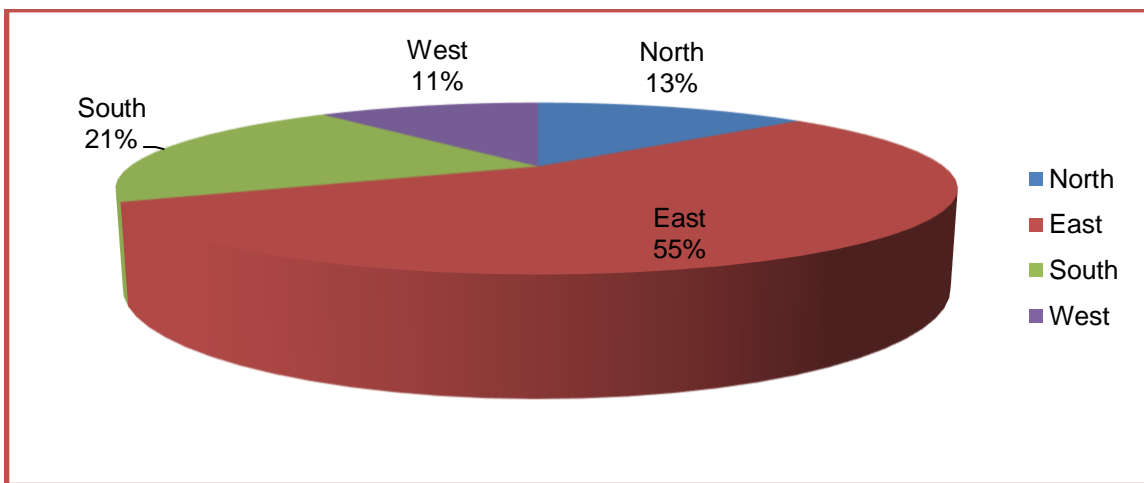
**Source:** DESME: State Socio Economic Census, Govt. of Sikkim, 2006

<sup>6</sup> State Socio Economic Census of 2006 under Directorate of Economic, Statistics Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Sikkim (DESME) is the only document available with community-wise recorded data of Sikkim.

The total Bhutia population in Sikkim as of 2006 is 68716, where the total male population consists of 35163 (51%) and 33553 (49%) of the female population. In all the districts, male population is higher than the females. The same picture exists in the state as a whole, where the male population surpasses the female population in terms of demographic profile.

The majority of the Bhutia population (55.3%) is settled in the East district. Since Gangtok, is the state capital, in the East district, more people are concentrated in this part of Sikkim. The Bhutias of the East, South and West districts have settlements along with the other communities, but North district has the habitations of mostly Bhutias and Lepchas.

**Fig.2.2.3. District-wise Distribution of Bhutia Community, 2006**



**Source:** DESME: State Socio Economic Census, Govt. of Sikkim, 2006

### 2.2.2. Age-wise Distribution of Bhutia Population in Sikkim

The demographic shift can be best revealed by the study of the age group of the population. The age distribution of the Bhutia population shows that most of the Bhutia population is over the age of 60 which is not good for the community. It shows that the overall birth rate among the community is pretty low. The percentage of the Bhutia population within the age of one to twenty, as per the 2006 socio-economic census, shows that it is the lowest with less than 15 percent. The illustration given in table 2.2.6 depicts the community with the least number.

**Table 2.2.6. Percentage Distribution of Bhutia Population by Age Group in Sikkim, 2006**

Total Population	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75 Above	Not reported
13.08	10.92	11.59	12.63	12.94	12.88	13.60	14.04	14.27	13.51	13.72	13.94	13.81	15.14	15.45	15.77	16.96	15.15

**Source:** DESME, State socio-economic status census, 2006

It is evident that the population is higher in the age group of 60 and above. The highest percentage of the population is seen within the age group of 75 and above. The census of 2011 also gives the impression that the Bhutia population has decreased over the decade. It enumerates that total Bhutia population is 69598, as against 70308 in 2001.

According to the Census 2011, the highest number of Bhutias are concentrated in the East district, with 34043 people, followed by South district with 15482 people, West with 13779 people and North district is the least Bhutia populated district with only 9184 people. Detailed data regarding the community as per the Census of 2011 is given below in Table 2.2.7.

**Table.2.2.7 District-wise Distribution of Bhutia Population in Sikkim, 2011**

District	Sikkim					Bhutia				
	Rural		Urban		Total	Rural		Urban		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	242797 (39.76)	214202 (35.08)	80273 (13.14)	73305 (12.01)	610577 (100)	<b>26127</b> <b>(4.28)</b>	<b>24729</b> <b>(4.05)</b>	<b>9097</b> <b>(1.49)</b>	<b>9645</b> <b>(1.58)</b>	<b>69598</b> <b>(11.38)</b>
North	22274 (50.96)	16791 (39.41)	2456 (5.62)	2188 (5.01)	43709 (100)	<b>4082</b> <b>(9.33)</b>	<b>3889</b> <b>(8.89)</b>	<b>815</b> <b>(1.86)</b>	<b>398</b> <b>(0.9)</b>	<b>9184</b> <b>(21.01)</b>
South	65848 (44.84)	59803 (40.72)	10822 (7.36)	10377 (7.06)	146850 (100)	<b>7330</b> <b>(4.99)</b>	<b>6475</b> <b>(4.4)</b>	<b>813</b> <b>(0.5)</b>	<b>864</b> <b>(0.58)</b>	<b>15482</b> <b>(10.54)</b>
West	67528 (49.49)	63659 (46.66)	2710 (1.98)	2538 (1.86)	136435 (100)	<b>6433</b> <b>(4.71)</b>	<b>6526</b> <b>(4.78)</b>	<b>407</b> <b>(0.29)</b>	<b>413</b> <b>(0.3)</b>	<b>13779</b> <b>(10.1)</b>
East	87147 (30.73)	73949 (26.08)	64285 (22.67)	58202 (20.52)	283583 (100)	<b>9493</b> <b>(3.34)</b>	<b>9120</b> <b>(3.22)</b>	<b>7479</b> <b>(2.63)</b>	<b>7951</b> <b>(2.8)</b>	<b>34043</b> <b>(12.0)</b>

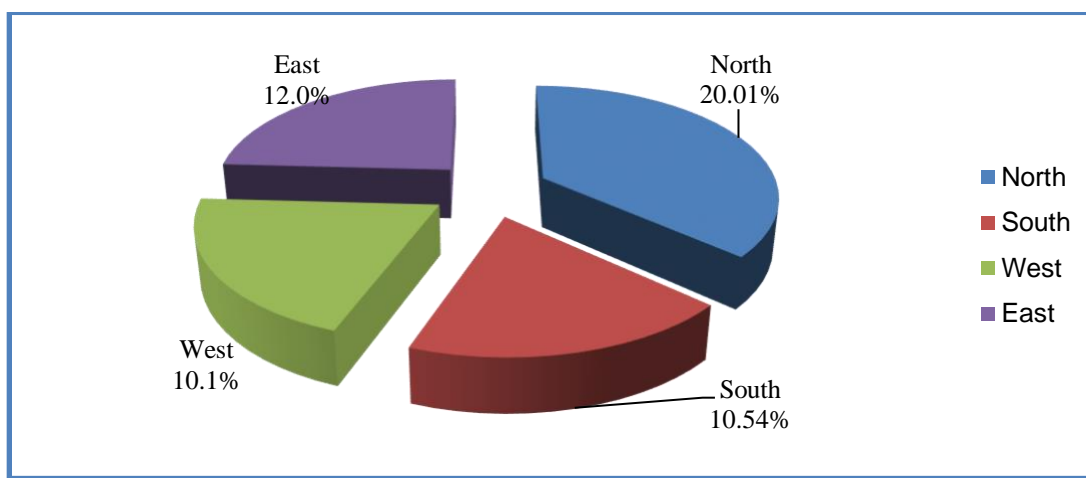
**Source:** Census of India, 2011 \*Figure in the bracket is in percentage.

Table 2.2.7 supports the contention that all the districts have a higher number of population living in rural areas. In rural areas, the number of males is higher than the number of females. The urban statistics show that among the four districts, the female population has outnumbered

the male population in three districts, and only in North district, the male population was found to be higher than the females. The female Bhutia population living in the urban areas is 9645 and that of male is 9097.

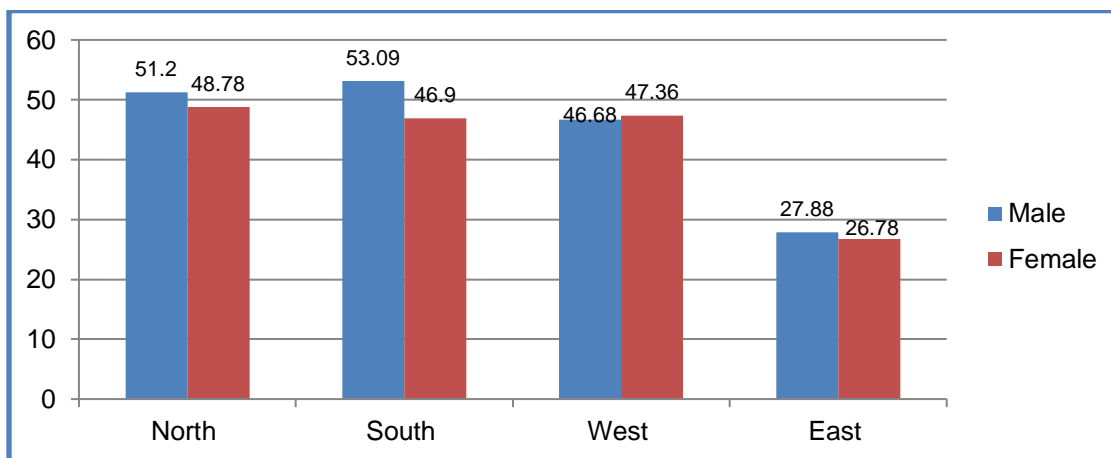
According to 2011 Census, Bhutias represent 11.38% in Sikkim, which is a decrease from 13.08% in 2001. The North district holds the highest population of 21.01%, followed by East, West and South districts with 12.0%, 10.1% and 10.54%, respectively.

**Fig. 2.2.4. District-wise Bhutia Population, 2011**



Source: Census of India, 2011

**Fig. 2.2.5. Rural Population (Bhutia), 2011**



Source: Census of India, 2011

The concluding thought on the demographic status of Sikkim may be outlined by the fact that Sikkim is a small state with minimal number of populace in India. Sikkim witnesses an increase of 1.23% in its population on yearly basis. Population of Sikkim has grown by 12.31% in the last 10 years. In the last 60 years, there has been steady growth in the population of Sikkim. Among the population, the Bhutias were the dominant group in Sikkim. A cursory look at the Bhutia

population gives us the picture that Bhutia settlement in Sikkim flourished and maintained their dominance amongst the other communities till 1975.

The Bhutias were approximately 4894 in 1891, which has increased to 69598 in 2011. It is obvious that the numbers of Bhutias have increased in every census. This chapter therefore, gives an idea about their numerical position vis-à-vis the other communities of Sikkim.

The share of the Bhutia community has come down to 11.38% of the total population of Sikkim. They occupy the second position among all the communities of Sikkim taken separately. The North district is basically inhabited by them and the Lepchas, while they are found in all the three districts of Sikkim living along with the people of other communities. The majority of the Bhutias live in rural areas, but a considerable number of them live in Gangtok also.