

**HISTORY OF THE DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY  
AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON DARJEELING  
(1880-1999)**

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I declare that the thesis entitled ‘History of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway And Its Socio-Economic Impact on Darjeeling (1880-1999)’ has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Anita Bagchi, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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## CONTENTS

	Page Numbers
List of Tables	ix-x
List of Figures	xi-xii
List of Diagrams	xii
List of Maps	xii
List of Appendices	xiii
GLOSSARY	xiv-xv
ABBREVIATION	xvi-xvii
<b>CHAPTERS:</b>	
1. INTRODUCTION	1-15
2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION BEFORE THE RAILWAY	16-54
3. PRE-RAILWAY TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION	55-71
4. GENESIS OF THE DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY	72-130
5. SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE DHR	131-156
6. CONTRIBUTION OF DHR ON THE ECONOMY OF DARJEELING	157-192
7. DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY – CRISIS AND SURVIVAL	193-217
8. DHR AND THE WORLD HERITAGE STATUS	218-242
9. CONCLUSION	243-246
BIBLIOGRAPHY	247-261
APPENDICES	262-272
ILLUSTRATION	273-282

## ABSTRACT

The history of Indian Railways has always been a favourite topic among the scholars. Many related research works have been done on topic right from the inception of railways in India to the current problems face by the Indian Railways. The present study deals with one of its steam railway that has earned so much prestige in India and abroad, not just because of its recognition by the UNESCO as being the second world railway to get the World Heritage Status but because of its own peculiarity of features and its relations with the geography of the place through which it passes. The study focuses on the society, economy and transportation system of the Darjeeling hill station before the construction of the mountain railway and the gradual need for proper transportation system such as the railways. The proposal of Franklin Prestage of laying a mountain tramway in 1878 became a reality within eighteen months and the name of Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway was changed to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in 1881. The main objective of the railway was to provide transport facility of traffic and freight in the hilly terrain, which at that time was a favourite destination of the Europeans, Eurasians and the rich Indians along with the convalescent soldiers and sick foreigners in the sanatorium.

The cost of living in the hills during the summer season was very dear to the people of Bengal due to the conventional modes of transportation like the Palkee, Dandies, Tongas, pony-ride and Bullock-carts. The transportation involved number of porters starting from fifty to fifteen hundred to reach the hill station and the same or greater number to come down the hills. Beside the greater possibilities of porters leaving on the middle of journey with rare help expected in the midst of roads surrounded by jungles were not uncommon in those days. Specially for the children, old and disabled the journey was not at all smooth. In 1860s the Cart Road was constructed and considered as one of the best mountain road but the conveyance was not so fast and comfortable to most of the

European visitors. Hence when the proposal of laying a tramway was presented to the government of Bengal there was no question of not granting the permission. The government had to bear one lakh to one and a half lakh of rupees annually to maintain the cart road due to the damages done by the onset of monsoon, the Tramway agreed to maintain the cost of the road on the terms that a two feet gauge was given for the usage of the Tramway from the Cart Road. The two feet Narrow Gauge (NG) steam engine started from its station Siliguri Terminus at an altitude of 395 ft above sea level to Sukna Station from where the climb gradually starts upto 7408ft at Ghum station, the highest altitude on the line and descends down to the Darjeeling station. In course of its 52 miles of journey, thirteen stations are crossed by this diminutive train and in certain places the alignment of the cart road was so steep like 1 in 16 or 1 in 19 that it was unworkable with the engine. Therefore, some ingenious methods of engineering was applied in the form of ‘Z’ reverses or zigzag, loops or curves, etc. that made the mountain journey unique.

The tea plantation industries and cinchona industry was well developed before the railway in the hills. The movements of goods, traffic, machines, building materials, etc. were greatly facilitated by the inauguration of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The number of days of travelling from Calcutta to Darjeeling was cut short from six to eight days to some hours or a day. At the same time the cost, difficulty of the journey was all smoothened. The troops and mails were also carried by the DHR. Labourers were transported to the foothills by the DHR and thence from there to distant places for the usages in construction of roads’ purposes. The largest help was for the plantation industries. But as the DHR was the only mountain railway in Darjeeling it had no competitor to check and balance, as a result the monopoly of railway in its fare charges was quiet high compared to other mountain railway of that time.

The success of the DHR could be understood from the fact that this 52 miles of railway had its two Extension Branches as well and a Workshop and a Hospital of its own. Next to the tea plantation the railway became the second largest industry in Darjeeling to give employment to the people. During 1947 it employed 2000 employees and provided quarters for their families too. In fact the development of the town of Kurseong and Tindharia can be accredited to the DHR Company. Nearly after fifty years of its total monopoly, the real challenge came with the invention of motor traffic like cars, buses and trucks. The number of road vehicles grew from the twenties and in the thirties of the twentieth century slowly the ratio between the rail and road increased. But the war time situations benefitted the railway and the load of traffic was so great that the authorities had to divide it into four and five times. The prospect of trade with Central Asia through Tibet although could not succeed so greatly due to political reasons. The means of conveyance through which the European had thought to fulfill so many dreams, without any such prospect had become a part of the lives of the society of Darjeeling. The political heat of the national movement of the country finally made the Europeans leave the place and their private company, which was one of the first private railway companies whose subscription was mostly done in India, and sold it to the Indian government on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1948. The Indian Railway Board first placed it under the Assam Rail Link Project, then to the North East Railway and finally to the Northeast Frontier Railway in 1958. The latter half of the twentieth century saw the negative developments in the DHR sometimes questioning to its existence. Time and again the question of its winding up came but the impact of the railway could be seen in the society that people from all strata came forward to participate against such proposals. The changing face of politics from nationalism to regionalism shrouded the country. In the eighties Darjeeling was experiencing such political heat and the old tiny engines was not out of its boundary. Then in 1985 the Indian Railway Board decided to withdraw all its steam locomotives by the year 2000 later

changed to 1995. The last decade of the twentieth century was a social fight (along with the economy of Darjeeling) for the retention of DHR and its steam engines intact. Public awareness campaigns, Conferences in India and abroad, participants of not only India but UK, Australia, Germany came forward along with the cooperation of the government of West Bengal, Government of Tourism, West Bengal and India, top ranking Railway Officers and Members jointly worked towards one end. After thorough examination by the ICOMOS the World Heritage Status was granted by the UNESCO on its 23<sup>rd</sup> Conference 1999, and thus saved the living heritage for posterity – slowly chugging the mountain terrain in its own rhythm and reminding the lost memory to many of the bygone era.

## PREFACE

Ever since my childhood days I was fascinated by the ‘*Sano rail*’ of Darjeeling. Coming from a railway family I have spent my days in the railway colonies of Kurseong and have many memories of it. The study of railway in India among the scholars is not a new concept, a good lot of research works like that of Ian J. Kerr, S.K. Saxena, G. S. Khosla, J. Jackson, etc. to mention few, have thrown lights on the different aspect of the railways. Besides, many other collections of articles on Indian railways covering a wide range have been published. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is not just only a mode of conveyance but an integral part of Darjeeling. Darjeeling is famous for its three ‘T’s – Tea, Toy Train and Tourism. In early days when the tea of Darjeeling was reaching distant places it was the DHR that served as a medium to transport the tea chests from the hills to the foothills. Darjeeling was developed as a Hill Station or Sanitarium in the early half of the nineteenth century but lack of communication hindered the progress until the advent of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in the 1880s. The influx of tourists in the hills is a result of this mountain railway. The railway thoroughly changed the socio-economic condition of the place. The process of urbanization was made rapid and complete by the rail itself. The pattern of demography was affected; there was an increase of population other than the inhabitants of Darjeeling. The life-style was affected, the imitation of the west among the Bengali *babus* who had come in the hills to serve the railways, the educated Hill men; the frequent usage of English words in their dialogues and growth of new education centres, hospitals, etc. were all related to the railway. Tourist and some eminent personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, C.R. Das, Subash Chandra Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, Mother Teresa, M.A. Jinnah, etc. could come to the place comfortably because the link of a rail line was there. Mostly Europeans and Eurasians settled in Darjeeling for health reason and for economic venture. Trade, both inland and foreign, with Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal and Sikkim was served by the

DHR. Along with the local population, these foreigners served in the plantation industry, brewery, cutlery, chemist, confectionaries and hoteliers. The society witnessed a drastic change in their lifestyle, the things hitherto not known became part of their life be it in introduction of cuisine, drinks, games, dress code, education, etc.

The soldiers in the cantonments were also served by the troops train and specially in the emergency periods such as War times, natural calamities, political upheaval railway proved its worth. In the popular songs, poems, stories, novels, cinemas, ‘rail’ was a centre of attraction. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is the first among the Indian Railway to get the World Heritage recognition in 1999. So small and so great role it had played in the society and economy of Darjeeling that mere mention of it or an article would not be worth for its contribution since 1880. The 120 years of history of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway from 1880 till 1999 focuses not just on the railway but the socio-economic background that necessitated the introduction of railway and its impact afterwards. The railway was created by the English for the utility of the Europeans living in the sub-continent but indirectly it touched the lives of the native people as well. In due course of time the railway became an identity of the place and severance from it was not acceptable even after the British had left India. The present thesis studies the history of such unique amalgamation of railway and society, as in no other parts of the country. Infact, the identity of Darjeeling is associated with the affectionately named Toy Train or ‘*Sano rail*’. Therefore, I made a humble attempt to study ‘History of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and its Socio-Economic Impact on Darjeeling (1880-1999)’ as my Ph.D thesis. The ‘Living Heritage’ of India is a local or micro research topic having a macro impact.

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Date:

Bhawna Rai

## LIST OF TABLES

1.	Table No.2:1, Census of 1872	22-24
2.	Table No.2:2, Import from Tibet to Darjeeling, 1876	39
3.	Table No.2:3, Export from Darjeeling to Tibet, 1876	39
4.	Table No.2:4, Import from Nepal, 1876	40
5.	Table No.2:5, Tea operation in Darjeeling District, 1866-70; 1872-74	42-43
6.	Table No.2:6, Postal Statistics from 1861-71	45-46
7.	Table No.3:1, Journey from Calcutta in 1838	56
8.	Table No.4:1, Progress of Railway Construction in Bengal	74-75
9.	Table No.4:2, DHR Opening of Main Line	85
10.	Table No.4:3, ‘Z’ Reversing Station	103
11.	Table No.4:4, Stations of DHR	107-108
12.	Table No.4:5, Illustration of DHR Locomotives	115-117
13.	Table No.4:6, Technical Details of A & B Class Locomotive	118
14.	Table No.4:7, Coaches as on 1/4/1999	120
15.	Table No.5:1, Various Census Report	132
16.	Table No.5:2, School Booking	139-140
17.	Table No.6:1, Recruitment of Gurkha soldiers	160
18.	Table No.6:2, Trade with Tibet	162
19.	Table No.6:3, Local Manufacture	164
20.	Table No.6:4, Dividend Return	165
21.	Table No.6:5, Number of Passengers & Freight	166
22.	Table No.6:6, Traffic in 1942-43	169

23. Table No.6:7, Workshop Staff in 1947	172-173
24. Table No.6:8, Steam Locomotives Before 1950 and After 1999	173
25. Table No.6:9, Rate of Transport for Tea	174
26. Table No.6:10, Travelling Post Office	178-79
27. Table No.6:11, Traffic Booked in 194	180
28. Table No.6:12, Internal Traffic	181
29. Table No.7:1, Dividend Returns	193
30. Table No.7:2, Passenger Fare on DHR & Extension Lines	195
31. Table No.7:3, Statistic of Traffic	197
32. Table No.7:4, Number of Private Bus by 1967	199
33. Table No.7:5, Number of Passengers in 1942-43	200
34. Table No.7:6, Maintenance of Hill Cart Road	201
35. Table No.7:7, Loss of Revenue from 1959	204
36. Table No.7:8, Disturbance of Service due to Landslides	212

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Fig. No. 3:1, Bullock Cart	64
2. Fig. No. 3:2, Hand-pulled Rickshaw	65
3. Fig. No. 3:3, Dandies	66
4. Fig. No.4:1, Clarendon Hotel	84
5. Fig. No.4:2 [A], Mahanadi Bridge Pre-1890	87
6. Fig. No.4:2 [B], Mahanadi Bridge after 1890	87
7. Fig. No.4:3, Loop No.1	95
8. Fig. No.4:4, Choonbhati loop	98
9. Fig. No.4:5, Agony Point	99
10. Fig. No.4:6, Batasia Loop	100
11. Fig. No.4:7, Reverse station	102
12. Fig. No.4:8, Kurseong station	105
13. Fig. No.4:9, Tung station	105
14. Fig. No.4:10, Ghum station	106
15. Fig. No.4:11, Darjeeling station	106
16. Fig. No.4:12,Baby Sevok	109
17. Fig. No.4:13, B787	111
18. Fig. No.4:14, Garratt engine	114
19. Fig. No.5:1, Handbrake Trolley	135
20. Fig. No.5:2, Gold watch gifted to Laden La	143
21. Fig. No.5:3, Porters' Badge	144
22. Fig. No.5:4, Bengali Hindu Hall	145

23. Fig. No.5:5, Kurseong Medical, Layak Bhawan	153
24. Fig. No.6:1, Porters Licenses	158
25. Fig. No.6:2, Troops Train during World War I	159
26. Fig. No.6:3, Tindharia Logo	172
27. Fig. No.6:4, Down Goods Train	183
28. Fig. No.7:1, Track flying in air due to Landslide	211

## **LIST OF DIAGRAMS**

1. Diagram No.4:1, Loop No.1 at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ Mile	94
2. Diagram No.4:2, Loop No.2	96
3. Diagram No.4:3 Loop No.	97
4. Diagram No.4:4, Z Reverse No.1	101
5. Diagram No.4:5, Z Reverse No.4	102
6. Diagram No.4:6, B Class engine	112
7. Diagram No.4:7, Coaches	121

## **LIST OF MAPS**

1. Map No.1:1, Darjeeling Town Map	2
2. Map No.2:1, Darjeeling in 1835	17
3. Map No.6:1, DHR and Extensions	168

23. Fig. No.5:5, Kurseong Medical, Layak Bhawan	153
24. Fig. No.6:1, Porters Licenses	158
25. Fig. No.6:2, Troops Train during World War I	159
26. Fig. No.6:3, Tindharia Logo	172
27. Fig. No.6:4, Down Goods Train	183
28. Fig. No.7:1, Track flying in air due to Landslide	211

## **LIST OF DIAGRAMS**

1. Diagram No.4:1, Loop No.1 at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ Mile	94
2. Diagram No.4:2, Loop No.2	96
3. Diagram No.4:3 Loop No.	97
4. Diagram No.4:4, Z Reverse No.1	101
5. Diagram No.4:5, Z Reverse No.4	102
6. Diagram No.4:6, B Class engine	112
7. Diagram No.4:7, Coaches	121

## **LIST OF MAPS**

1. Map No.1:1, Darjeeling Town Map	2
2. Map No.2:1, Darjeeling in 1835	17
3. Map No.6:1, DHR and Extensions	168

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

1. Appendix A: Letter to the Secretary, PWD, for the acquisition of land at Kurseong, dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 1882. Pg. No. 263
2. Appendix B: Letter to the Manager of Ghayabarie, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1882. Pg. No. 264
3. Appendix C: Indian Telegraph to Calcutta from Darjeeling, dated 16/10/1882 Pg. No. 265
4. Appendix D: Letter to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye, dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 1883 Pg. No.266
5. Appendix E: Reverse at 18 Mile Pg.No.267
6. Appendix F: Explanations DHR office papers of 1948, Pg. No.268
7. Appendix F: 1948 Explanations of Tindharia Workshops Pg. No.269
8. Appendix G: 1948 Explanation of Store department, Hospital & Medical Staff Pg. No.270
9. Appendix H: Letter to General Secretary of N.E.Rly.Employees Union from Mayadevi Chetry MP of Rajya Sabha, dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1957. Pg. No.271
10. Appendix I: Telegram to Jagjiwan Ram, Railway Minister, New Delhi. Pg. No.272

## **GLOSSARY:**

Anna – Pre-1957 sub-division of the rupee, 16 annas= 1rupee.

Beldar – A wandering caste of West Bengal who earns their livelihood by earth working.

Bustee – village or rural area.

Butcha –Child.

Cantonment – Administrative and military area of a town during the British period.

Chogyal – ‘King of religion’ as the Sikkimese king was referred.

Chowrasta – Meeting of four roads.

Dak – The Mail or Post.

Dak-bungalow – Rest houses for the travellers.

Dakgari – the Mail Coach.

Dorje - Thunderbolt

Durgeeling / Dorjeling -Abode of ‘Dorje’, a lama or priest , (Darjeeling).

Ghum – Mat of leaves and split bamboo, triangle in shape, used for protection from rainwater.

Jhora – stream

Jhum –shifting cultivation or cultivation by burning forest and sowing crops in the burnt area.

Jotedar – Owner of jote right who may be a middleman or an actual cultivator.

Khas Mahal – Private Estate.

Kukuri – traditional weapons of the Gurkhas.

Khalasi - conductor

Khola – stream

Maund – Unit of weight

Pagla – mad

Paise – Sub-division of a rupee, 100 paise= 1rupee.

Palki – Palanquin

Pice – Pre- 1957 sub-division of currency, 4pice=1anna.

Sadar – Headquarter

Saheb – Respectful title used by the natives usually to the Europeans or the creamy layer of the society.

Sano – small or tiny

Sirdar – Head or the Leader

SUFFIX LETTERS denotes the manner in which the water and fuel are carried. The absence of a suffix denotes a separate tender. Where the water and fuel are carried on the engine, in tanks and bunkers,

Examples: 0-4-0 ST: an engine with no leading or trailing (carrying) wheels and four driving wheels (on two coupled axles) and water carried in a saddle tank.

Thana – Police station.

## **ABBREVIATIONS:**

AIOW – Assistant Inspector of Works

BBCIR – Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway

B.G. – Broad Gauge

BNR – Bengal Nagpur Railway

BLW – Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia.

BP – Beyer, Peacock & Co. Ltd., Manchester.

CPI – Communist Party of India.

CPI (M) – Communist Party of India (Marxist Group)

DGHC – Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council

DHR – Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

DHRE – Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Extension

DHRS – Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society.

DHRSA – Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Supporters' Association.

DHR(T) – Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Tindharia Works.

EBR – Eastern Bengal Railway

GBSR – Gaekwar's Baroda State Railway

GNLF – Gorkha National Liberation Front.

ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments & Sites.

IR – Indian Railway

M.G. – Meter Gauge

Mph – Miles per hour

MW - Manning Wardle Co. Ltd., Hunslet, Leeds.

NB - North British Locomotive Co. Ltd., Glasgow.

NBR – Northern Bengal State Railway

NJP –New Jalpaiguri

NRM – National Rail Museum, India.

O&K – Orenstein & Koppel AG, Berlin – Drewitz.

P.S.I. – Pressure per square inch

PWI – Permanent Way Inspector

RE – Royal Engineers

SS – Sharp Stewart & Co. Ltd., Manchester & Glasgow.

ST – Saddle Tank over the top of the boiler.

T – Side tank on each side of the boiler.

TPO – Travelling Post Office

UNESCO –United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation.

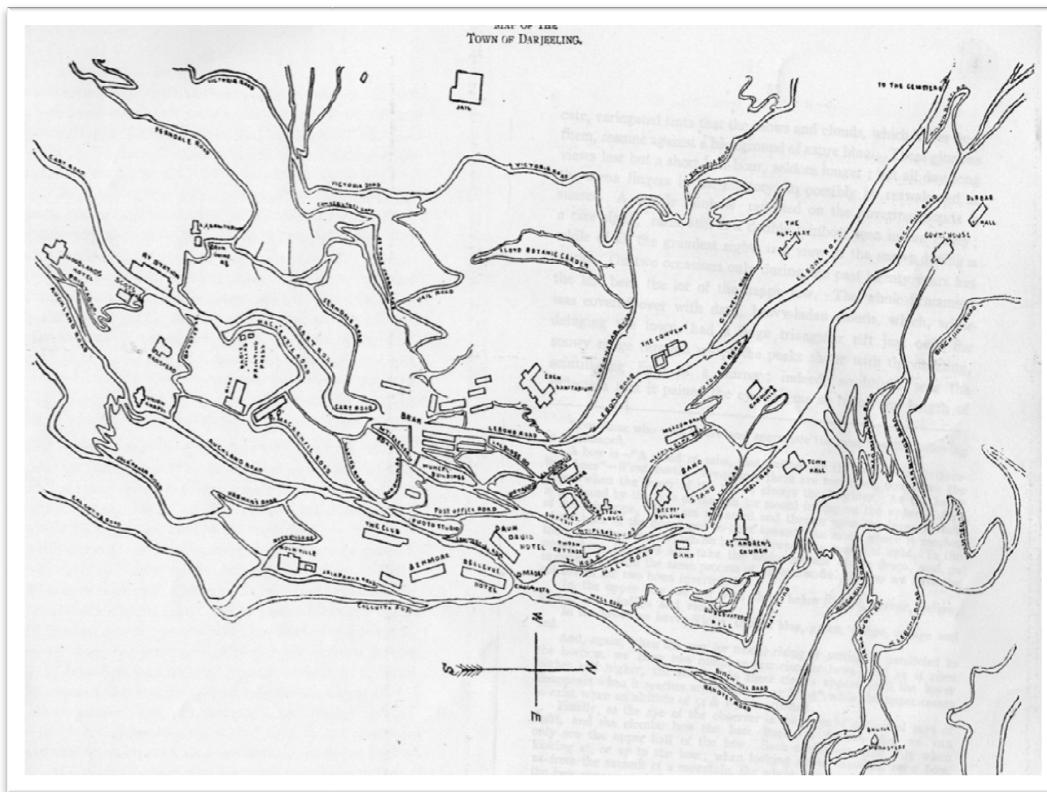
WT – Well Tank

## Chapter - I

# INTRODUCTION

### **GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION**

The district of Darjeeling lies between  $26^{\circ} 31'$  and  $27^{\circ} 13'$  north latitude and between  $87^{\circ} 59'$  and  $88^{\circ} 53'$  east longitude.<sup>1</sup> Darjeeling is located at an average elevation of 2,134 m or 6,982 ft in the Darjeeling Himalayan hill region on the Darjeeling- Jalapahar range that originates in the south from Ghum. The range is ‘Y-shaped’ with the base resting at Katapahar and Jalapahar and two arms diverging north of Observatory Hill. The north-eastern arm dips suddenly and ends in the Lebong spur, while the north-western arm passes through North Point and ends in the valley near Tukver Tea Estate [See Map No.1:1].<sup>2</sup> The hill portion of district is a labyrinth of ridges and narrow valleys. The northern boundary commences on the west at the peak of Phalut (a corruption of the Lepcha word Fak-lut, meaning peeled summit); nearly 12,000 feet high, follows the southward ridge until it joins the Mechi River down into the plains and up to the south-west corner of the district. On the west the district is bounded by Nepal, Sikkim a state of India to the north and Bhutan and Bangladesh to the east. It is hemmed in by international frontiers. The district attained its present dimensions in 1866. On the south, the district is bounded by the Khumani Forest on the east to the village of Phansidewa on the Mahanadi River and westward of Phansidewa by the Purnea district of Bihar. Darjeeling is reached on the right bank of Mahananda, which is the southernmost limit of Darjeeling. It consists of a portion of the outlying hills of the lower Himalayas and a stretch of territory lying along the base of the hills known as the Terai which is 300 feet above sea level. In shape the district is an irregular triangle. The partition of India in 1947 made no physical effect on the district.<sup>3</sup>



[Map No.1:1] Source: Dozey, 'A Concise History of Darjeeling since 1835', 1922.

Darjeeling is the main town of Sadar subdivision and also the headquarters of the district. Most of the district, including the town of Darjeeling lies in the Siwalik Hills. The soil is chiefly composed of sandstone and conglomerate formations but the soil is often poorly consolidated (the permeable sediments of the region do not retain water between rains) and is not considered suitable for agriculture. The area has steep slopes and loose topsoil, leading to frequent landslides during the monsoons. The hills are nestled within higher peaks and the snow-clad Himalayan ranges tower over the town in the distance. Mount Kanchenjunga (8,591 m or 28,185 ft) – the world's third- highest peak- is the most prominent peak visible. In days clear of clouds, Nepal's Mount Everest (8,850 m or 29,028 ft) can be seen.<sup>4</sup>

Darjeeling's temperate climate has five distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter and the monsoons. Summers (lasting from May to June) are mild, with maximum temperatures

rarely crossing 25°C (77°F). The monsoon season from June to September is characterised by intense torrential rains often causing landslides of the country. In winter temperature averages 5-7°C (41-44°F). Occasionally the temperatures drop below freezing, snowfalls is rare. During the monsoon and winter seasons, Darjeeling is often shrouded in mist and fog. The annual mean temperature is 12°C (53° F); monthly mean temperatures range from 5-17 °C (41-62°F). The highest temperature ever recorded in the district was 26.7°C (80.1°F) on 11 February 1905. The average annual precipitation is 281.8 cm (110.9 in) with the highest incidence occurring in July (75.3cm or 29.6 in).<sup>5</sup>

## HISTORY OF DARJEELING

The district derives its name from its headquarter Darjeeling. The origin of its name has many related sayings; one theory suggests that it is named after *Dorje*-ling, the Buddhist monastery that once stood on the Observatory Hill overlooking Mall, the nerve centre of the town. The name Darjeeling thus appears to be a corruption of Dorjeling, -‘ling’ meaning place, and ‘dorje’ standing for the ecclesiastical scepter or the double-headed thunderbolt (in Tibet the word *vajrah* became *dorje* the common of all emblems associated with priestly power), which the Lama holds in his hand during service, rested.<sup>6</sup> Another story goes that the monastery at the observatory hill was constructed from 1757 and completed in 1763, the chief monk of this monastery was Rinzin Dorji Legden La; hence the name ‘Dorji-Ling’ or the ‘the place where Dorji lives’ came into prominence.<sup>7</sup>

Darjeeling was a part of the dominion of the Rajah of Sikkim. ‘During the reign of Chador Namgyal (1700-1716), areas in the southeast were lost to Bhutan. Chador Namgyal was able to clear much of the country under Bhutanese occupation. In 1706 what is now Kalimpong and Rhenock was lost.’<sup>8</sup> Neither the chronicle of Sikkim nor the history of Nepal furnishes any account of its early history. Even the ‘Manuscript History of Sikkim’ compiled by Maharaja Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshay Dolma of Sikkim in 1908 is silent

regarding the particulars of its development as a hill station.<sup>9</sup> The old Raja of eighty years had long been engaged in an unsuccessful struggle against the growing power of the warlike Gurkhas. ‘After overrunning the hills and valleys of Nepal, they marched east into Sikkim in 1780; and during the next 30 years the country suffered repeatedly from their inroads.’<sup>10</sup> The Gorkhas were able to renew their onslaught only in 1788, defeating the Chogyal in a bitterly fought battle near his capital Pemionchi, which compelled him to flee to the ravines of the Teesta River and from thence to Tibet, where he was provided with men and materials to continue the struggle to repel the gorkhas.<sup>11</sup> ‘In 1802 the Rajah of Sikkim appealed to Captain Knox, then deputed to the Kathmandu Court, for British aid to expel the Gurkhas’. But was of no avail since next year Knox had to leave the Nepalese Durbar.<sup>12</sup> When relations between the East India Company and Nepal turned sour Sikkim sought to align with the British. On 1<sup>st</sup> November 1814 the British declared war on Nepal.<sup>13</sup> The war came to an end by the signing of the Treaty of Sagauli on 4<sup>th</sup> march 1816. The tract which the Nepalese had wrested from the Raja of Sikkim was ceded to the East India Company; the Raja, who had been driven out of his dominions, was reinstated; and in 1817 a treaty was concluded at Titalya, under which the whole of the country between the Mechi and the Tista, a tract extending over 4,000 square miles, was restored to him, his sovereignty being guaranteed by the Company.<sup>14</sup> According to the treaty of Titalya signed on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1817, Article 3 states: “That he (Sikkimputtee Rajah) will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between his subjects and those of Nepaul, or any other neighboring State, and to abide by the decision of the British Government.”<sup>15</sup> Under this treaty the company assumed the paramount power in Sikkim, the Raja being bound to refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes between his subjects and those of Nepal or any other neighbouring State.’ Ten years after a disputes arose on the Sikkim and Nepal frontier regarding ‘Antu’ and as per the terms of the treaty, two British , Officers - Captain Lloyd and J. W. Grant, the

Commercial Resident at Malda were sent to settle the dispute. It was during this journey that the two officers happened to passed through Darjeeling and were captivated by its geographical beauty and position.<sup>16</sup> From a report ‘Dorjeling’ by H. V. Bayley, 1838, dated the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1829, in which Lloyd claims to have been the only European who ever visited the place, for six days February 1829 and “was immediately struck with its being well adapted for the purpose of a sanitarium”. He seems to have been a little apprehensive of the rigours of winter, but, he added, “should the climate prove too cold, Ging, which is below it, and to which there is very easy access, would remedy the evil.” On all grounds, he strongly urged the importance of securing possession of the place, and, in particular, pointed out its advantages as a centre which would engross all the trade of the country, and as a position of great strategical importance, commanding the entrance into Nepal and Bhutan. At the same time, Grant also insisted the numerous advantages promised by the establishment of a sanitarium at Darjeeling. He also impressed Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, by advocating its occupation for military y purpose that is as the key pass into Nepal territory.<sup>17</sup>

The British Government received the grant of Darjeeling from the Sikkimputtee Raja ‘out of friendship’ in 1835. Col. Lloyd and Dr. Chapman were ordered to spend nine months at Darjeeling to keep detailed records of the weather and anything else of interest. Finally, an official report *Dorje-Ling* was published in March 1838 to stimulate and gauge public interest and support the Government’s efforts. It led to the formation of the ‘*Dorjeling Association*’ of Calcutta citizens wishing to settle or intending to ‘rusticate’ in the hills. The chairman of the Association was J.W. Grant.<sup>18</sup> The pages of history refer to the ‘Lepchas’ as original inhabitants of this part of the Sikkimputtee Rajah but after the takeover by the English East India Company there was a large influx of people from the neighbouring areas. In 1835 the original village of Darjeeling had scarcely one hundred inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> The place had many viabilities beside being a hill station – socially, the place could be developed as a replica of

European hometown for the foreigners; economically, beside trade the natural resources of the country could be exploited for their benefit and strategically Darjeeling commanded a suitable place to station troops and keep a watch on the neighbouring kingdoms. All attention was given to develop Darjeeling as a flourishing health resort for the European soldiers and for the families who could enjoy the vacation during the hot summer months of Calcutta (India).<sup>20</sup>

When Darjeeling was in the ‘process of making’ as one of the English territory of India, on the other parts of the country, the pioneers of Indian railways were working hard to settle lines of railway network. The first proposals for the construction of railways in India were submitted in 1844 to the East India Company in England by Mr. R.M. Stephenson.<sup>21</sup> The impact of Industrial Revolution was felt in India particularly during the period of Lord Dalhousie, in whose tenure the railways and post offices were introduced. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 1853, the opening of the 34 kilometers of track between Bombay and Thane was opened. It was traversed in 45 minutes and inaugurated a new history of technology in India. The railway also represented a triumph of engineering over difficult geographical and had, in Ian Kerr’s words, in that first journey become the ‘organizational and technological centre of many of the inter-related economic, political, social and ecological transformations that produced modern India’<sup>22</sup>. From 15 August 1854, in the eastern sector, the Howrah-Hooghly section could be travelled by train, while in the South, on 1 July 1856, the first railway line was opened between Veyasarapaudy and Walajah Road (Arcot) a distance of 101 kilometers. In the North, the 192 kilometers of railway line between Allahabad and Kanpur was opened to traffic on 3 March 1859. By 1881, the network had entered the Northwest with the opening of the Amritsar-Attari, Hathras Road-Mathura Cantonment and Kanpur-Farukhabad sections. In the North East Frontier region, the route from Dibrugarh town to Dinjan section was opened on 15 August 1882.<sup>23</sup> Indians took enthusiastically to the railways, engaging themselves both in the construction and operation of the lines as well as travelling on the trains. This figure grew exponentially over time so that by

year 1950, the Indian Railways employed over 9.13million people and 1284 million people travelled on the system annually.<sup>24</sup> ‘By 1867, nineteen of India’s twenty largest cities were on railway lines, with the density of rail lined going up from 35 routes kilometers per 10,000 square kilometers in 1800 to 159 in 1946-47’.<sup>25</sup> In 1878 the Northern Bengal Railway was completed till Siliguri i.e. the foothills of Darjeeling. The Commissioner of Rajshahi and Cooch Behar Division stated that the completion of the line ‘will give greater facility to the trade of Darjeeling which has received a great impetus by the opening of the Northern Bengal State Railway...’,<sup>26</sup>

Within five decades after the acquisition of Darjeeling the railway track was laid on the hills. The proposal of laying a tramway was submitted in 1878 by Franklin Prestage to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden. The agreement was signed on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1879 and the Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Company was formed. The railway that passes up and down through the heart of the town without any external output became part and parcel of the society. In its heydays the railway played a vital role on the economy of the place, having a total monopoly on the transportation and traffic as well. The latter half of its history is that of struggle for its continuation.

The chapter entitled ‘**Socio- Economic Condition Before the Railway**’ will trace the factors that led to the growth of heterogeneous population in Darjeeling. The acquisition of Darjeeling for the purpose of ‘health’ by the English East India Company was soon turned into a replica of their home town in Europe with similar building structures, road ways, fruits and vegetation, clubs, church, etc. Investors also tried their fortune by making ‘Hotels’ for the visitors during the summer months of the year.<sup>27</sup> But the problem of expensive and painstaking transportation was something one does not wanted to recall. The growth in the number of population of native men was necessary to support the business of hotels for the supplies of daily necessities and also labour. Therefore one major task was to attract immigration from the neighbouring

areas. It was Campbell who took the charge of the hill station at the end of 1839 and promised free land to the new settlers. As a result, the number of people rose rapidly and a sound human background necessary for the development of the new hill area was built up. Again initial experiments in tea and coffee plantation were successful in Darjeeling soil. Many entrepreneurs turned their attention to the tea plantation industry and within a few years tea was firmly established as a successful industry in the region. Moreover, Darjeeling was popular for military convalescent depot at Jalapahar established 1848 and cantonments at Jalapahar and Katapahar were established in 1867.<sup>28</sup> In 1862 cinchona plantation was also started in the area and was successful in the subsequent years. Beside trade in food grains, cardamom, tea, salt, cotton piece goods, kerosene oil, yarn, livestock, etc. was carried with Nepal, Tibet, Sikkim and Calcutta.<sup>29</sup>

In the third chapter, previous Transportation and Communication system of Darjeeling had been discussed. In the early days, Darjeeling had rough road ways that led through forest areas. There were no proper concrete roads or bridges, but narrow bridges made of bamboos. Roads are the means on which prosperity of the place depends. The inhabitants at that time were simple; they depended largely on nature and used to practice jhum cultivation.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, there was no necessity for good system of transportation as it was sufficient for those inhabitants whose demand was meager. When the East India Company took over the possession of Darjeeling they found the roads in a very crude form ‘that could be travelled by no human being but by animals or mountaineer’.<sup>31</sup> Since proper communication needs proper transportation system the English sahib focused their attention to this sector and started the construction of roads from 1839. The first road was constructed at the time of Lloyd under the supervision of engineer Gilmore, but he left the work half-finished. Therefore, Lieutenant Napier from Royal Engineer took charge of the construction and gave the place its first road known as the ‘Old Military Road’. As Darjeeling had started to flourish as a hill station, the

growing size of the population, economic necessities of trade and business and above all the military urgency could not be met by the existing road. In 1860 bigger and less steep ‘Cart Road’ was constructed to meet the need of the then time. It was one of the finest mountain cart road ever built in India. Now Tonga, bullock cart could travel easily beside dandies or horse ride. The success of tea plantation industry in the area, development of boarding English schools and the growing popularity of Darjeeling as a favourite destination for summer broadened the scope of Darjeeling which in its turn put pressure on transportation system. A faster means of transport and communication was strongly felt by the inhabitants and the entrepreneur class.

Earlier when the Eastern Bengal Railway was started in Bengal it had plans of an extension line in the hill area of Darjeeling via Jalpaiguri to Panighatta and then to Hope Town (Sonada) towards Darjeeling.<sup>32</sup> However, it was dropped later. Railway track was stretched up to Siliguri by 1878 with the opening of North Bengal State Railway. In the earlier chapters it was already discussed the necessity of a better and faster transport and communication system in Darjeeling, even the government had felt this need but had no such plan that could fulfill the need of the hour. In 1878 Franklin Prestage while on his tour to Darjeeling got an idea of opening a mountain tramway. His proposal was gladly accepted by the then Lieutenant Governor Ashley Eden. On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1878 a contract was signed between the Secretariat for State of India and Prestage as the Managing Director. The construction of the line was given to Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot and Company, an established firm of Calcutta.<sup>33</sup> The work started with great rapidity and when the laying of track upto Kurseong was finished Prestage proposed to start the traffic up to the Kurseong for the travellers while the work of laying the tracks will continue. On 4<sup>th</sup> March 1880 the line was inaugurated by the then Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton up to Tindharia. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1880 it was opened for public upto Kurseong. The line was only 2 feet Narrow Gauge and was the first mountain tramway in India. Although

the alignment of cart road was used for most of its journey but in some places the gradient was so steep (1 in 19) that it was impossible for the engine to pull the load, hence engineering techniques were adopted to meet the desired gradient. Thus the line adapted to loops or spiral curves and zigzag or reverses which made the line unique in itself. The whole length of line from Siliguri to Darjeeling was opened on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1881. The name of Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Co. was changed to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1881 and was the first private company to start in Darjeeling.<sup>34</sup>

The fifth chapter deals with the Impact of Railway on the Society and Culture of the place. After the introduction of the modern means of transportation in Darjeeling there was no looking back. There was influx of human beings from the adjacent areas. Previously there was heterogeneous population particularly that of the Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet but people from the plains started coming in large number seeking fortune in the lap of the Himalaya. Besides, there were numbers of foreign races also residing in the place. In deed Darjeeling presented a mini-form concept of ‘cultural assimilation’. Throughout its history there has been no such occurrence of violence on communal frenzy. The census taken during the period reveals this fact. The influence of the English in the life style of the local people, growth in the numbers of local educated people and usage of English word even by the ordinary people bit with the essence of colloquial tone were some of the noticeable changes in the society. The Indian employees, other than the local Gurkhas, came to the place with their own culture and languages. The result was the mixture of such varied cultures in the society. Apart from them there were superstitious beliefs in the minds of men regarding railway and lots of stories connected with it. But in due course of time railway became a part and parcel of the society. The whistling of the engine going up and down worked as a mobile clock to the residence of the area. It was favourite amusement to watch the passing train by the common people. Infact it regulated the lives of the people so much that time and again whenever the

news of its abandonment arose the general public along with the railway staff voiced their strong opinion against the decision. Not only the grown up public even the small children enjoys the movement of the railway. Songs of rail are sung by them while playing and even taught in the school.<sup>35</sup>

The profound impact on the economy of Darjeeling is discussed in the sixth chapter. Other than the tea industry, where large numbers of local people are employed, the railway has been the second major industry in the district to give employment to the educated and the illiterate. It opened new employment opportunities in different sections of the railway. The success of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway for almost half a century was undefeated by any other system. The return dividends to the investors were also profitable. To meet the growing demand of the passengers, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Extensions Company (DHRE) was formed on 25<sup>th</sup> 1914 for two new lines – (i) the Teesta Valley Branch and (ii) the Kishanganj Branch.<sup>36</sup> Trades with adjacent countries were benefitted due to the opening of this line. Freight trains were successful on both the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and DHRE lines. It boasted the plantation industries in the region. The resources of forest was transported by the DHR, Military troops and recruitments of soldiers and porters were carried by the trains; ‘School Special’ train had been introduced for the benefit of number of students and trainees in the Tung ITI center, who otherwise had to go walking by since the concept of school bus or van had not developed during the sixties or even late as nineties. So great was its effect that for quick supply the DHR established Workshops on a greater skill for dealing with rolling stock, etc. and more number of the natives were appointed. During the emergency of wars, extra hundreds of workers received employment opportunities. It was such a profitable venture that till 1948 the shareholders received their dividends.

The next chapter throws light on the negative development in the history of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The circumstances in the changing political atmosphere of the country,

India affected the withdrawal of the foreigners from the soil and with it the DHR came under the management of the Indian Railways in 1948. DHR came under the Assam Rail Link. At first the Siliguri-Kishanganj Extension line of the DHR was converted into a meter gauge on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1949.<sup>37</sup> In 1950 due to landslide the Teesta Valley Line was severely damaged and was abandoned forever. The Board of Indian Railways introduced the six- zonal system and later eight – zonal system; as a result DHR moved like a pendulum from one to the other zone and finally from 1958 it is a branch of Northeast Frontier Railway.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime regional politics shrouded the whole country, people demanding separate state on the linguistic basis in short recognition of ‘Independence’ of India was not sufficient for the population. The identity issue raised in parts of India also had its impact in the Darjeeling hills. The freight services were stopped. In all this turmoil, the DHR became a neglected piece and hardly came in the notice of the people.

When the glory of the DHR was rapidly fading away, the government incurring heavy loss on this section decided to put an auction of its locomotives in the early nineties and to wind up the railway. It was at this juncture that few responsible people came forward and revived its forgotten tale to the masses. The emergency was felt and people from all section came forward to support the cause. The action of the common people and that of the Indian Railways together with the active support and encouragement from volunteer organisation like Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society of UK, DHR Supporters Association, Australia, Friends of the DHR; appealed to save the DHR for the posterity. The last decade of the twentieth century saw awareness programmes and conferences throughout the country and outside. The appeal of the Indian Railways for Heritage Sanction to the DHR, after thorough examination by the UNESCO was at last granted in December 1999 and the crisis was solved. With a revived glory the DHR stepped in the new millennium.

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## **Chapter - II**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION BEFORE THE RAILWAY**

The society and economy of Darjeeling before the coming of Railway was a long story of acquisition, inhabitation, development and its popularity as one of the best hill station of India. Darjeeling was the result of what the English had made out of it from thick forest covered area with scant human beings to a flourishing hill town with variety of races and communities living in perfect harmony with nature. The British secured Darjeeling as a gift ‘out of friendship’ from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835 [Map No.2:1]. The main purpose of obtaining the place was first for the health reason; secondly from military point of view and thirdly, to carry trade with Tibet. But when the place came under the British administration there was not much population to support the administration. Not long before ten years the place used to be the residence of one of the principal Kazis with a large village. ‘In 1827’, according to Captain Herbert, ‘1,200 able-bodied Lepchas forming two-third of the population of Sikkim had been forced by the oppression of the Raja to flee from Darjeeling and its neighbourhood’.<sup>1</sup> In 1829 Major Lloyd described ‘that place... formerly occupied by a large village or town and some shops were set up in it; one of principal Lepcha Kajees resided here, and the remains of his house, and also of a Gompah or temple... both substantially built of stone, are still extant; also several stone tombs or chtyas of different forms, Kajees and Lamas. A stream of water issues from the hill; a short distance below, from the place having been so long neglected, the space which was formerly inhabited is now covered by a grass jungle...’<sup>2</sup>

On December 1836, Major Lloyd and Dr. Chapman came there to stay for twelve months for proper investigation. Dr. Chapman found ‘two or three huts at Darjeeling erected by order of the Rajah, in one of which we passed a wretched night; none of the coolies having arrived, we had neither food nor bedding, and the cold was very severe... part of the coolies

have returned to Tikri Bong for our supplies, the remainder employed cutting jungle etc.<sup>3</sup> As per the details of the two officers, the resolution to take up Darjeeling as a sanatorium was finalised. Major Lloyd was appointed as the Local Agent with power to deal with the application for land. Previously few Lepchas and Limbus with their little clearings in the forests resided in Darjeeling. Sometimes an occasional raid from Nepal or a visitor from Tibet landed on the Darjeeling Hills.

### Darjeeling Track of 1835



Map No.2:1] Source: Sikkim: Darjeeling, Compendium of Documents, 2004.

'It was estimated that the tract comprising 138 square miles, contained only 100 souls.'<sup>4</sup> The health-giving breezes, the lofty hills with their great forests and wonderful mountain scenery appealed to the British pioneers and the rich residents of Calcutta appealed for allotment of lands through 'Darjeeling Association'.<sup>5</sup> By 1840 the 'Old Military road' had been made from Pankhabari. For the travellers a staying bungalow was constructed at Pankhabari and another at Mahaldiram. Hotel for the visitors had been started at Kurseong and Darjeeling. In Darjeeling itself 30 private houses had been built beside some more locations at Lebong were taken for the same purpose.<sup>6</sup> But the majority of the place was still full of jungles. Therefore the early administrator tried their best to attract the native settlers and others from the neighbourhood so that the hill station could have sufficient local inhabitants to produce and supply the necessities of daily life to the visitors and other residents. The Lepchas practiced jhum cultivation and the Sikkim Raja had prohibited his subjects from going to Darjeeling and helping in establishing the new settlement.<sup>7</sup> The administrator thought to invite the Lepcha refugees to return back to Darjeeling, to import labourers from the indigo concerns in Rangpur and Ramgarh (i.e. Gaya and Hazaribagh), or to procure settlers from Nepal and Bhutan in order to repopulate the place.<sup>8</sup>

## [A] CAMPBELL AS THE SUPERINTENDANT

In 1839 Dr. Alexander Campbell M.D, a member of the Indian Medical Service, was made the new Superintendant of Darjeeling. Before coming to Darjeeling he was a British Resident in Nepal. In the Civil List of 1841 his name appears as Alexander Campbell M.D. Superintendent and in political charge (salary Rs.1200) among the names of 'Political Residents, Commissioners, Agents to Governor-General etc.' in an entry 'Darjeeling and Sikkim'.<sup>9</sup> His duties were many, but the first thing was to supply inhabitants. As already stated that barring few inhabitants there were none to do the works of cultivation, trade and commerce. Therefore, to attract the people from

neighbouring kingdoms Campbell promised to give the new settlers the grants of forest land. In this way Campbell was able to establish a sound human backbone for the development of the hill sanitarium. ‘Arthur Campbell encouraged Nepali settlers to take up waste lands since the station’s growing demand for foodstuffs was not being met by the Lepchas with their predilection for jhum.’<sup>10</sup> The Calcutta Review (1857) wrote, ‘He watched over the territory with parental anxiety ....His object was to inspire the aborigines with confidence in the British rule, to induce the neighbouring tribes to settle in the territory, and to render Darjeeling a commercial centre for traders from the countries round about, extending even to Tibet’.<sup>11</sup>

Campbell looked after the civil, criminal and fiscal administration of the district and was in charge of the political relations with Sikkim as well. At the same time he performed the duties of a Postmaster, Marriage Registrar and Administrator of the Station Funds (the income from the lands in and about the Station which had been leased for building purposes).<sup>12</sup> Not less than 70 European houses were built along with a bazaar, jail and housing of the sick in the depot. Revenue of Rs. 50,000 was collected. Campbell introduced a simple system of administration of justice and the system of forced labour was abolished. Besides, communication was made better by construction of new roads. Experimental cultivation of tea and coffee was done by him, different European fruits and grapes were also introduced to the hill station. The credit for such an evangelical work of Campbell, in the words of Mr. Jackson while reporting on Darjeeling, was to quote, ‘I may, in short, say of him that to him is the Government indebted for the formation of the district of Darjeeling’.<sup>13</sup> W.B. Jackson, an Inspecting Officer, wrote in 1852: ‘Sir Walter Buchanan calls him Archibald Campbell and furnishes the information that Campbell spent the last twenty-two years of his service as Superintendent of Darjeeling, retiring from that post and also from government service in 1862. He dies on 5 November 1874.’<sup>14</sup>

## **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: SIKKIM**

In the meantime, political situation that developed in the hill area and its relations with the adjacent territories, proved beneficial for Darjeeling as they increased the size of the station to its present dimension. ‘The increasing importance of Darjeeling under free institution was a source of early and constant jealousy and annoyance to the Diwan (Prime Minister), who was himself the monopolist of all trade in Sikkim; and it was shared in by the Lamas and other notabilities, who lost their rights over slaves settling as British subjects in our territory.’<sup>15</sup> The climax was reached in November 1849, when Joseph Hooker and Dr. Campbell were made prisoners while travelling in Sikkim with the permission both of the Raja and of the British Government and was kept captive for more than six weeks.<sup>16</sup> An expedition by the British in February 1850 remained on the north bank of the Great Rangit River for a few weeks and annexed the Terai (foothills of the Himalayas) and the portion of the Sikkim Hills bounded by the Rammam and the Great Rangit rivers on the north, by the Tista on the east and by the Nepal frontier on the west. This area of 640 sq. miles was then attached to Darjeeling. The Terai and the hill territory annexed from Sikkim were managed by the Superintendent, who from 8<sup>th</sup> May 1850 was called the Deputy Commissioner. The change was welcomed by the inhabitants who had to pay only small fixed sums into the treasury in Darjeeling, instead of having to meet uncertain and fluctuating demands in kind and calls for personal service made by the Raja and Dewan.<sup>17</sup> After the annexation, the British territory in Darjeeling was continuous with the British districts of Purnea and Rangpur in the plains, and the Sikkim Raja was cut off from access to the plains except through British territory. Subsequently, there were frequent raids, plunder, and abduction by the Sikkim government (at the hint of Prime Minister Namguay, popularly known as the ‘Pagla Diwan’) on British territory and as a result of which Dr. Campbell with a small force crossed the Rammam in November 1860 and advanced as far as Rinchinpong. Later, Colonel Gawler with a force of 2,600men and Sir Ashley Eden as Envoy and Special Commissioner advanced from Darjeeling on

1<sup>st</sup> February 1861 and entered Tumlong, the capital of Sikkim in March 1861. The Maharaja of Sikkim expressed his sincere regret for the misconduct of his servants and subjects and desired for an alliance with the British Government. On 28<sup>th</sup> March 1861 the treaty of Tumlong was signed by his Highness Sekeong Kuzoo, Maharaja of Sikkim and by Honorable Ashley Eden on the part of the British Government. Accordingly, the old Raja abdicated his throne in favour of his son, the Diwan fled for his life; full compensation to be paid to the kidnapped subjects and to the English government; fixed the transit duties on goods between British India and Tibet.<sup>18</sup>

## **BHUTAN**

On the other hand, skirmish between the British government and the Deb Rajah of Bhutan arose regarding outrages committed by the Bhutanese to the subjects of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, who were under the British protection. As a result, the notice dated 9<sup>th</sup> June 1864 by Sd. John Lawrence announced the annexation of the district of Ambaree Fallacottah to the British dominions and the cancellation of all revenues from the Assam Doars to the Bhutan government.<sup>19</sup> But the government of Bhutan replied in an evasive manner. Finally after the Anglo-Bhutanese war and the defeat of the latter the Treaty of Sinchula was signed on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1865. By this treaty Kalimpong was ceded to the British and in 1866, it was transferred to Darjeeling.<sup>20</sup> After the inclusion of Kalimpong the district was divided into two sub-division: the Headquarters Subdivision with an area of 960 sq. miles including all the hills on both sides of the Tista and the Terai subdivision with an area of 274 sq. miles which included the whole of the country at the foot of the hills. The headquarters of the Terai subdivision was at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa from 1864-1880. Thereafter it was transferred to Siliguri.<sup>21</sup>

## **[B] SOCIETY OF DARJEELING HILLS**

### **I. DEMOGRAPHY**

The two most important factors in the development of the district have been the choice of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills. Sir Joseph Hooker, indeed, compared the progress of Darjeeling to that of an Australian colony, both as regards the rapid extension of buildings and the accession of naïve families from the surrounding countries. When in 1869 a rough census was taken of the inhabitants in this tract, it was found that they aggregate over 22,000 persons. The first regular census of the district was carried in the cold weather of 1871-72, to quote the Bengal Census Report that describes the difficulty of the job-'in Darjiling, with the exception of the Head quarters Station and Karsiang, and the coolie lines on the various tea plantations, there are no villages in the proper sense of the term. The people live in their separate enclosures near their patches of cleared cultivation, but often at a considerable distance from each other and as, owing to the difficult nature of the country, much time and labour is expended in passing from one enclosure to another...'.<sup>22</sup> The total cost of taking the e Census of Darjiling amounted to £55.10s. The report gave a total population of 94,712. Numbers of males were 53,057 and that of females 41,655, dwelling in 18,864 houses; average density of the population, 77 per square mile. [see Table No.1].<sup>23</sup> It was the founding of the tea industry in the mid of 1850s, that brought the inflow of Nepalis to full flood. By 1874, in 113 tea gardens the number of Nepali labors was 19,424.<sup>24</sup>

#### Details of Population of 1872 from Mr. C.F. Magrath's District Census Compilation.

Name of Nationality Tribes or Caste	No.	Name of Nationality Tribes or Caste	No.
I.-Non-Asiatics.		3. Hindus	
European –		(i) Superior Castes	
English	207	Brahman	1002
Irish	97	Rajput	8972
Scotch	42	Total	9974
Italian			
French	19	(ii) Intermediate Castes	
German	43	Babhan	6
Prussian	5	Baidya	4
Total	419	Kayasth	44
American	1		Total
Total of Non-Asiatics.	420	(iii) Trading Castes	54
II. – Mixed Races		Arawala	18

Eurasia	32	Bania	230
III.- Asiatics		Gandha-baniya	17
A.- Other than Natives of India and Burmah.		Khatri	145
Nepali, viz. -		Marwari	10
Ale	9	Oswal	34
Basnet	2	Paliwal	7
Chibirig	115	Robi	7
Damai	252	Subarna-baniya	49
Diwan	7		
Dilpali	4		
Durlami	26	(iv) Pastoral Caste	
Gain	28		
Ghalia	537	Goala	
Garti	1419	(v) Castes engaged in preparing cooked food	
Ghatwal	47	Halwai	90
Gurung	3150	Kandu	90
Gurkha	51		
Hatwali	7	Total	180
Iyakha	235		
Jamadar	331	(vi) Agricultural Castes	
JImi	99	Aguri	15
Jirel	2	Barui	342
Kami	1886	Tambuli	181
Khamba	3913	Kaibartta	125
Khawa	310	Koeti	61
Limbu	4663	Kurmi	260
Magar	3011	Mali	143
Manjhi	275	Ruila	17
Moktan	3		
Newar	1087	Total	1,144
Pahariya	92		
Parbatiya	21	(vii) Castes engaged Chiefly in personal service.	
Parel	3	Behara	26
Pradhan	30	Dhanuk	19
Rai	1814	Dhobi	85
Risingia	6	Hajjam	435
Sengten	3	Kahar	49
sarki	328		
Suchikar	5	Total	614
Sunawar	1192	(viii) Artisan Castes.	
Tamang	4	Darzi (tailor)	541
Thakus	56	Kamar (blacksmith)	456
Thami	13	Kumbhar (potter)	342
Thapa	447	sonar (goldsmith)	371
Unspecified	398	Sunri (distiller)	486
		sutradhar (carpenter)	159
		Teli (oilman)	412
Total	25,781		
B.-Natives of India & Burmah		Total	2767
1. Aboriginal Tribes.			
Aka	165	(ix) Weaver Castes.	
Dhimal	873	Chapwal	61
Lepcha	3952	Dhuniya	6
Mech	893	Ganesh	890
Murmi	6557	Jugi	100
Uraon	1648	Tanti	644
Total	14,088	Total	1701
2 – Semi-Hinduized Aborigines		(x) Labouring Castes	
Bari	14	Chunari	53
Bauri	100	Nuniya	33
Bhuiya	6		
		Total	86
		(xi) Castes occupied in selling fish & veg.	None
		(xii) Boating & fishing Castes.	44
		Jaliya	10

Chamar	285	Keut	26
Chandal	292	Mala	1
Dom	88	Tior	<u>81</u>
Dosadh	68		
Hari	761	Total (xiii) Dancer, Musician, Beggar & Vagabond Castes.	
Kaora	1		14
Mal	2		
Mihtar	226	(xiv) Persons enumerated by nationality only.	
Musahar	62		12
Rajbansi Koch	23,124	Hindustani	12
Total	<u>25,029</u>	Madrasi	401
		Sherpa Bhutia	18
		Telenga	<u>443</u>
		Total	
(xv) Persons of unknown or unspecified caste	1057	5. Mhammadans.	82
	<u>19,052</u>	Mughul	6
		Pathan	5
		Sayyid	79
		Shaikh	<u>6076</u>
		Unspecified	<u>68,479</u>
		Total on native of India	<u>94,260</u>
		Total of Asiatics	<u>94,712</u>
		Grand Total	
4. Persons of Hindu origin not recognising caste	222		
Vaishnav	3433		
Buddhists	303		
Sanyasi	104		
Native Christians	<u>4062</u>		
Total			

[Table No.2:1] Source: Hunter, 'Statistic of Bengal: Darjiling'.

The hill people often fled when census takers, vaccination teams and other representatives of imperial authority arrived on the scene due to the rumor that the British abducted Indians to extract oil from their brains or bodies for use as medicine.<sup>25</sup>

Kalimpong was composed mostly of forest and hilltop inhabited by the aborigines later due to the immigration of agriculturists there was rapid growth in the population. Barring reserved forest and some tea plantation, the rest of the forest was cleared and the land was brought under cultivation by new settlers. This tract extends over 401 square miles was annexed from Bhutan in 1865, and was then estimated to have a population of 3,536. In 1881 the number increased to 12,683.<sup>26</sup> Owing to the pressure of population on the land in the eastern portion of Nepal many immigrant Nepalese came to Muglan in search of undeveloped land in Darjeeling. Besides number of Nepalese from tea gardens either cleared assets from jungle or with their large savings bought up good lands of Lepchas, who leave the more thick populated parts of the district. The poorer and

secluded lands were largely taken up by those who could not get good land elsewhere. The remainder of the head quarters subdivision also showed a fair growth, the tea gardens alone adding 5,000 populations.

The number of Europeans in the district also increased because of the development of tea industry where the supervising staff belongs to this group. In the Census Report of 1872 reported 419 Europeans and 32 Eurasians; whereas the number of the former has rose to 1,309 and of the latter to 329.<sup>27</sup> It was hoped that a large European colony would be established in the district. Brian Houghton Hodgson's assumption of not only to the rearing of subtropical products under European supervision, but also to agricultural settlements by the British race; and he hopefully pointed out that with "the backing of fifty to one hundred thousand loyal hearts and stalwarts bodies of Saxon mould, our empire in India might safely defy the world in arms against it' was all foiled. The early attempts of the Moravian missionaries to maintain them by industrial labour, too suffered and in the end a few of them turned tea-planters.<sup>28</sup> the introduction of tea in 1850s provided an enormous boost to the development of the hill. 'Planters' became important parts of the European communities in hill station.<sup>29</sup>

A report published in 1870 described Darjeeling as 'a sealed book' for Calcutta residents with small to moderate means, which were defined as Rs.500-600 or less a month.<sup>30</sup>

The remainder of the population was scattered along the hill raids and plains of the Terai. The Census of 1872 showed the total population of the Terai to be 47,985 and consists of native cultivators tilling their own small fields or labourers employed in the tea gardens. Villages, in the proper sense of the term, were almost unknown. In 1874 there were 544 Jotes which brought in revenue of Rs.19,000. In the hills with the exception of the coolie lines on the various tea plantations, occasionally five or six houses were grouped together and villages did not exist. Even in the Tarai the social unit was the farm, not, the village. The pressure of the population on the

soil was greatest in the Tarai, where there were 279 persons to the square mile.<sup>31</sup>

The population of Darjeeling was heterogeneous. The majority of the people in the hills were Nepalese divided into various castes, a large number of Lepchas, Bhotias and Tibetans, the others included people from the plains like the Marwari merchants, the Jews of Himalayas, Bengali clerks, Hindustani mechanics, Punjabi traders and even Chinese carpenters.<sup>32</sup> In the Tarai the mixture of races was equally great. Here the aboriginal Koches, or Rajbansis as they preferred to call themselves numbered to 29,460 and the Mundas and Oraons from Chota Nagpur and the Santals from the uplands of the Santal Parganas had strength of nearly 14,000. Hodgson in his Miscellaneous Essays, vol.1 p.108, has described Darjeeling as ‘Babel of tribes and nations’.<sup>33</sup> The variety of population differed from tribes to agriculturists to business castes to that of the civilized Europeans.

The Nepalese numbered to 1, 34,000, more than half the population. They were born cultivators, resourceful and hard-working, and had taught the Lepcha aborigines the way of agriculture. Their general character has been happily described by Colonel Waddell, who writes: ‘Though small in stature, these Nepalese have big hearts; and in many ways resemble the bright, joyous temperament of the Japanese, though lacking altogether the refinement of the latter. Naturally vigorous, excitable and aggressive, they are very law-abiding, driven as they have been to obedience by the draconic punishments of their Gurkha rulers. In appearance, the various tribes vary considerably, in proportion to the extent of their admixture with Aryan blood... The features of the great majority are markedly Mongolian, with oblique eyes, and little or no moustache. They are generally whip-chord, and so full of energy that it is quite common to see old people scampering nimbly up and down hill in preference to walking.’<sup>34</sup>

Among the Nepalese’ castes the most numerous were the Khambus, who claim to be Jimdars, one of the fighting tribes of Nepal and bear the Kiranti title of Rai. Their religion was

partly Lamaist Buddhism and partly Hinduism. The Murmis were a Mongolian or semi-Mongolian caste also known as Tamang, Bhotias and bear the title of Lama. The bulks of them were cultivators and regard agriculture as their original and fitting occupation. However, many of them served in the police and army and a very large proportion in this district were employed as labourers on the tea gardens. Next to them was the Limbu (14,300), having the title of ‘Subba’, were chiefly carriers and porters and engaged in agriculture, grazing and trade. The Chetttri were the Brahmin caste among the Nepalese, numbering almost 5,000 were successful cultivators in this district. The chief occupations of the Mangars were agriculture, trade and soldering. The Gurungs were shepherds, the Newars (5,880) originally semi-aborigines who were the ruling race of Nepal until ousted by the Gurkhas. The caste bear the title of ‘Pradhan’ and were traders and artisans, agriculturists and domestic servants, and some still adhere to their old religion Buddhism. The Yakhas (1,143), an agricultural caste calling themselves Dewan, who come from the same tract of country as the Khambus and Limbus, a cultivating tribe who were originally hunters. the Kamis (9,800) who are blacksmiths and goldsmiths, the Damai (4,600) or tailor caste, the Sarki (1,800), who work in leather, and the Gharti (3,450) who are the descendants of manumitted slaves.<sup>35</sup> Suniti Kumar Chatterji writes that the ‘Himalayan Group of Dialects spoken on the Indian side of the Himalayas, in Nepal and Sikkim – e.g. Newari, Magar, Gurung, Murmi, Sunwari, Kiranti, Lepcha or Rong, and Toto – which are pure Tibeto-Barman’.<sup>36</sup>

The Lepchas called themselves Rong, i.e. the squatters, and their country the land of caves. The word Lepcha means the people of vile speech and was a contemptuous appellation given to them by the Nepalese. For generations past a conquered race, they are a timid people, peaceful and no brawlers, disliking fixed employment and never as happy as when they are in their native woods. They are born naturalists, and have separate names for nearly every bird, plant, orchid and butterfly. With the introduction of settled cultivation and the reservation of forests, they have had to give up their old nomadic cultivation and have lost much of their jungle craft; but they have

learnt in its place how to make terraces for rice fields and the methods of agriculture practiced by Nepalese. In 1840 Campbell calculated that Lepcha population in Sikkim was about three thousands. According to the census of 1872, there were only 4,952 Lepchas in the district just over four per cent of its total population of 94,712. They carry on their families by practice of adoption. They left overgrowing area of Darjeeling for forest clad area of Kalimpong. Few of them had even settled in Bhutan. They followed their ancient system of jhuming or shifting cultivation, which consists of burning down a fresh patch of jungle each successive year, and raising crops in the ashes.<sup>37</sup>

The Bhotias of Darjeeling number 9,300. Dr. Hooker has mentioned in a footnote that 'Bhot is the general name for Thibet, not for Bhutan'. The word Bhutia means an inhabitant of Bhot or Tibet.

<sup>38</sup> They consist of four classes - the Sikkimese Bhotias, a mixed race of Tibetans and Lepchas; Sherpa Bhotias, who come from the east of Nepal; the Drukpa or Dharma Bhotias, from Bhutan; and the Tibetan Bhotias from Tibet. The Drukpa Bhotias were practically confined to Kalimpong who were settled on the land at the time of the annexation in 1865. 'In Darjeeling visitors were encouraged to venture about a mile from their hotels to a quaint and picturesque village inhabited by Bhutias and Lepchas. Even more popular with tourist was Darjeeling's Sunday bazaar, where plenty of Lepchas and other colourful ethnic types could be observed and where local curios such as prayer wheels, amulets, and skull drums could be purchased.'

<sup>39</sup>

The Mechis, Rajbansi or Koches lived in the foot of the Terai. In the words of Dr. Hooker these people were 'mild, inoffensive people, industrious for Orientals, living by annually burning the Tarai jungle and cultivating the cleared spots'. The Meches constituted a considerable proportion of the population of the Tarai portion of Darjeeling, their number being 893. But according to the reports of the Deputy-Commissioner they were leaving the place and settling in Jalpaiguri.<sup>40</sup>

## II. CANTONMENTS

The first cantonment in Darjeeling was situated at an altitude of 8163 ft. at Senchel. In 1844 detachments of invalid soldiers were quartered in daub and wattle structures.<sup>41</sup> In the article ‘An Empire De-Masculinized! The British Colonial State and the Problem of Syphilis in Nineteenth-Century India’ by Sabya Sachi R. Mishra, in the book ‘Disease & Medicine in India’ edited by Deepak Kumar, throws ample light on the case of Venereal Disease (VD) among the European soldiers in India also known as ‘firungi rog’. The disease among the European soldiers ‘was as old as the colonial rule itself’. During the mutiny of 1857 the problem became more acute about one-third of the soldiers being affected with the VD problem. As a result in 1864 the Act XXII and the Indian Contagious Diseased Act was passed for its prevention. ‘Control of the disease through a check on the soldiers’ relation with the sick women was perhaps only available option.’<sup>42</sup> In 1857 the construction of barrack was started and completed in December 1860. There were 14 Officers’ bungalows and 20 barracks. It was to accommodate a whole regiment of European troops. It could accommodate 500 men along with two hospitals one for 64 men and the other for 16 women. In 1863 construction work was stopped and due to many cases of suicide of soldiers the place was transferred to Jalapahar in 1867.<sup>43</sup> Each month there was a medical supervision of the prostitutes at Jalapahar, Senchel and Katapahar cantonments. Owing to the difficulty of travelling to the sanitarium, according to the Judicial Proceeding Records of 1868, Dr. Simpson and Ambrose claimed for an amount of Rs. 50 a month each for medical supervision.<sup>44</sup> There was government notification to the cantonments of extension of rules for the prevention of venereal diseased among European troops from the limits outside, to all places within a line drawn five miles distant from the boundary polllars of Jalapahar.<sup>45</sup> So that they were locked only to the confined area.

The Jalapahar convalescent depot was established in 1848 and included the permanent staff of one commandant, one station staff officer, one assistant surgeon, one sergeant major, one quartermaster sergeant, seven duty officers and 150 men. There were mountain battery guns, howitzers and mortars with 25 artillerymen under the command of a subaltern of artillery. The

cantonments at Jalapahar and Katapahar came into being in 1867. Jalapahar is 3 miles from the Chowrasta on the west of Auckland Road. It is situated at an altitude of 7,701 feet. When the Senchel cantonment was abandoned in 1867 the barracks at Jalapahar cantonment were enlarged to accommodate 550 soldiers each a convalescent from one of the regiments in the plains.<sup>46</sup> In 1863 it contained the hospital, powder magazine, quarter-guard, the church (Roman Catholic) and quarters for the Commandant, station Staff Officer, the Asst. Surgeon, Sergeant Major, Quarter-Master Sergeant and about 150 men only. Jalapahar is a convalescent Depot and contains accommodation for 400 men. (The Lebong cantonment below Darjeeling is occupied by one battalion of a British Infantry Regiment.) The head-quarters of the Northern Bengal Mounted Rifles are at Darjeeling; the force consists of six companies with head-quarters at Kurseong, Jalpaiguri, Dam-Dim, Nagrakot, Alipur-Duars and Purnea, 3 companies of cadets and one reserve company. The cantonment situated on the ridges of Katapahar at a height of 7,886 ft. was an Artillery barracks, which accommodate 150-200 men of Field Artillery. Garrison Artillery was distributed over its 20 buildings, 4 of which are reserved for married men and their families during the summer.<sup>47</sup>

### **III. DEVELOPMENT OF HILL STATION**

‘The Revolt of 1857 raised questions on the security of the Europeans on the plains of India and heightened their appreciation of the safety of the hills. As a result, civil and military authorities began to shift their headquarters to hill stations wherever feasible and for however long possible.’<sup>48</sup>

The hill station’s central avenue invariably emanated from the Anglican Church, Government buildings such as the postal and telegraph office, the collector’s office, and the civil court tended to be located along this thoroughfare, as were banks and other prominent business. Particularly in the Himalayan hill stations, where the terrain restrained vehicular traffic, this main street was

known as the '*Mall*', a distinctive term that both suggested its pedestrian nature and evoked associations with elegant precincts at home.<sup>49</sup>

*St. Andrew's Church* built in 1843 (rebuilt in 1882 and added to in 1897) was attended by the Europeans and the erection of the edifice was the care of Capt. Bishop, who commanded the troops of the station .it could accommodate a congregation of 150 persons, and cost Rs.9000/-.

The first divine service was held in October, 1844, the arrangement at that period for the conduct of worship being – the Chaplain of Berhampore officiated for six weeks during each of the two half seasons. It had no clock tower like the present building and the congregation was seriously informed by the benign government that as it could not afford a clock, the attendants would have to content themselves with a sun-dial, gifted by Mr. John White of H.M.'s 6th Foot who had spent fifty-two Christmas in Darjeeling.<sup>50</sup> The lightning of September 1867 that had struck the spire rendered the building unsafe. Therefore in May 1879 again new corner stone was laid for the new building on the same site. It was only on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1877 that the organ were heard on the Easter day<sup>51</sup> The Buddhist Monastery's ruin on *Observatory Hill* was built in 1765 as a branch of the Pemayangtse Monastery in Western Sikkim. It was shattered by the Nepalese troops of the Shah dynasty of Kathmandu in about 1788 and Darjeeling was under their occupation till 1817, when it was return to the Sikkim Raja by the treaty of Titalya.<sup>52</sup> Only a small shrine of '*Mahakal*' was left and the remaining of ruined monastery was transferred in 1860-61 to the flat to the north-east of St. Andrew's Church, and in 1878-79 was finally removed to Bhutia Busty, where it still exists.

The Observatory Hill came to b known as Mahakal Dara. The *Ging Monastery* three miles to the north of the town was demolished under certain political differences after 1860-61. When these were settled in 1879, after the Sikkim trouble, by the late Ashley Eden, a thatched structure was erected on the present site.

The *Hindu Mandir* was constructed in 1851 but existed before the year 1830 when the first Marwari firm, named Samboo Ram & Chunilall was established in the market-place.the present

buildings without its enclosing walls in the year 1851 is shown in Col. Sherwill's map. It was erected by Rangit Singh, an ex-army Subadar employed in the local Police Force, and endowed with a sum of Rs. 3,400 in the 6 percents.<sup>53</sup> The *Jumma Masjid* was constructed by Naser Ali Khan, Daroga Salamat Ali, Munshee Tarikulla and other Muslims most of whom were government servants. It came into being between the years 1851 and 1862.<sup>54</sup> In 1865 the Old Cemetery and jail was built. In 1868 the Darjeeling Planters' Club was founded in 'Thorn Cottage' then 'Alice Villa' and finally in the present building. A Union Chapel followed the next year. The *Buddhist Monastery at Ghum* was constructed in 1876. *Lloyd Botanic Garden* opened in 1878 was named after W. Lloyd, the proprietor of the bank who had gifted the major portion of the site. Alas! the irony is that 'Lloyd' who had worked so hard for the grant of Darjeeling has no connection to the Garden.<sup>55</sup> The Birch Hill Park (zoo) was acquired by the government in 1877 at a cost of Rs. 30,000. Ashley Eden further brought its improvement. The first charitable hospital and dispensary in the building lately utilized as the Police Lines was started in 1864.

Most of the provincial government had obtained sanction to establish seasonal headquarters in hill stations. The political importance of the official stations was underscored by the inauguration of large and costly public building projects. A profusion of clock towers, bandstands, fountains, and statues evidenced a heightened civic pride and prosperity. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal shifted his office to Darjeeling. In 1879, one of the mansions of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar was purchased by the British. It was remodeled for the purpose of an official residence and named as the 'Governor House'. The official season lasted from April to October and sometimes even November.<sup>56</sup>

#### IV. EDUCATION IN THE HILLS

Reverend William Start, a private missionary in 1841 started work among the Lepchas and established a school for the children at Takvar in October. Later Treutler, Wernike, Staelke,

Schultz and Neibel compiled a Lepcha elementary textbook and a dictionary for them. Rev. Macfarlane made October ‘as the lingua franca and in it prepared text-books’. The economic hardship of the people was well known to him therefore, he asked for government aid in the form of scholarships. It was a humble beginning for the Training Schools and by 1873 ‘there were no less than 25 Primary schools in the district in which 615 boys and girls received instruction’. In 1860 the Middle October School was started and the Bhutia Boarding School attended by all Indians along with Bhutia children came into existence in 1874, which later was merged into the High School in 1891.<sup>57</sup> Mother Teresa M. Mons devoted their lives for the education of masses. In 1846, the Loreto convent was established with a vernacular department attached to it.

The English saw hill stations, from their inception as attractive sites for the education of children who were not sent to British boarding schools. A description of Darjeeling in its infancy praised it for possessing ‘one advantage... inestimable beyond all others’ – an environment suitable for the schooling of younger children, whose parents could ‘so escape the pain and anxiety of a separation little less than those of death’.<sup>58</sup> For the education of the European and Eurasian children mainly, ‘St. Paul’s School’ an establishment of Church of England was established in 1864. In 1870-71 it contained a total of 38 pupils. In the same year 16 aided vernacular schools were attended by 428 pupils. In 1872-73 there were 29 schools in the district attended by 723 pupils on 31<sup>st</sup> March but by the end of the year 1873 the monthly average of the students being 788.<sup>59</sup>

## V. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE HILL STATION

The majority of the population of the district was Hindus. The other consisted of Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, tribal practice of belief. According to the Census Report of 1872 the Hindus accounted for 69,831, the numbers of the Muslims was 6,248, the Buddhists numbered 1,368, the followers of Christianity were 556 out of which the Europeans Christians were 532 and

only 104 natives followed Christianity.<sup>60</sup>

The example of Reverend William Start to work among the Lepchas was followed by many others. In 1842 Messrs. Treutler, Staelke, Wernicke, Brundine and Rev. C.G. Neible joined in. in 1870 Rev. Macfarlane of the Scottish Mission started work in October. He died in Kalimpong in 1887. The Roman Catholics followed the Moravian missionaries; Mother M. Teresa Mons assisted by Sister Gabriel started the Loreto Convent on October 10<sup>th</sup> 1846. Father Accursius also served this missionary and breathed his last in 1885. The result was more converts among the hill people.<sup>61</sup>

## **VI. DISEASES AND HOSPITALS**

Beside hospitals for the soldiers at cantonments in Darjeeling for the civilians there were two charitable dispensaries in the district, one at Darjeeling established in 1864 and the other at Kurseong in 1872 on a temporary basis. The higher altitude of the Darjeeling hills was suitable for sick people even then at that time people suffered from diseases like goiter although it was not so common. However in the Tarai region of the district malaria occurred amongst the Nepali coolies in the tea garden and was quite hazardous. Epidemics of small-pox were common but the government introduced the measure of vaccination to the inhabitants. In 1864 about 150 people died of cholera in the district. It appeared in 1870 and reappeared in 1872. The Darjeeling dispensary was under the charge of a sub-assistant Native Surgeon. In 1871, total 88 patients were treated out of whom 66 were cured , 6 not improved or ceased to attend and 14 died and 2 remained in hospital at the end of the year. The out-door patients numbered 2433. The common prevailing diseases being ague, bowel and chest pain, goiter, rheumatic affectations and skin diseases. The dispensary in 1872 treated 106 in-door patients, 79 no improved, 4 died, 23 remained in hospital at the end of the year and the out-door patients treated numbered 2868. The government gave the salary to the Native Doctor and the supply of European medicines and

surgical implements.<sup>62</sup>

## [B] ECONOMY

### a. RECRUITMENT OF SOLDIERS

By 1857 Darjeeling had become a well known centre for Gurkha soldiers' recruitment. Nepalis also came to enlist at its army recruiting station. In a letter dated 10 September 1857, E. Drummend, officiating Magistrate, Dinajpur suggested to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that the Sebundy Corps at Darjeeling should be raised to the strength of ten full companies with British officers in every respect similar to the Kumaon and Nepalese battalion. He further pointed out that this body could be raised without difficulty from the hill men and might be called Darjeeling battalion. 'they would in every way be more efficient, courageous, and trustworthy body of men than any to be had in the plains'<sup>63</sup> On 24 October 1857 Campbell was informed that he had been authorized in his capacity of Justice of Peace to enlist soldiers in Darjeeling into the service of the East India Company.<sup>64</sup>

### b. LABOURS, PORTERS AND OTHER OCCUPATIONS

The observation of Kennedy regarding the Indian Hill Stations is that, 'nearly every European who went to a hill station in the early years relied on local people for porterage services. It was not uncommon for a visitor to employ fifty or more men to carry the clothing, crockery and other effects needed for a season's stay in the hills'.<sup>65</sup> Lord Auckland needed more than fifteen hundred to take him up to the hill station in 1839 and double that number to return him to the plains at the end of the season. The seasonal influx of visitors created a heavy demand for domestic servants, including Khitmutgars (Butlers or head waiters), Khansamahs (cooks), Malis (gardener), Dhobis (washer man), Bheestis (water carriers), Jhampanis (coolies who carried sedan chairs and later pulled rickshaws) and Mehtars (sweepers).

In Darjeeling the rickshaw and dandy coolies were said to be mostly Bhutia and Lepcha men and their women were prized ayahs.<sup>66</sup> R. D. O'Brien in his book 'Darjeeling, the Sanitarium of Bengal and its Surroundings', emphasizes that the Bhutias and Lepchas 'when caught young make excellent cooks and khitmutgars, and they have the advantage of having no caste prejudices, and of being able to turn their hands to any kind of work'.<sup>67</sup> Many of the Indian Khitmutgars, khansamahs, ayahs, syces and other servants from the plains of India, accompanied their masters on their seasonal trip to the hill stations. Stonemasons, carpenters, artisans, merchants and shopkeepers made the most of the economic opportunities that arose where the British congregated by importing goods and opening shops.<sup>68</sup> Tibetans dominated the trans-Himalayan trade. Most of the merchants, professionals, and other middle-class Indians were Marwaris, Biharis and Bengalis. The occupations of bheesti, dhobi and tailor were also dominated by people from the plains, and the butchers were generally Muslim immigrants. Still some two-thirds of the station's populations were Nepalis, who found employment as servants, bearers, syces, carpenter, blacksmiths and small traders.<sup>69</sup>

### c. TRADE WITH SIKKIM, NEPAL, BHUTAN AND TIBET

In 1857 The Calcutta Review furnishes a descriptive account of 'Darjeeling'. The market was on the whole well arranged and well supplied; the traders were all from the plains. The shops were erected by and remained the property of the government. The authorities did not try to regulate the prices of the things sold in the market. Trade was quite free... the value of import from Lhasa to Darjeeling by Sikkim route was estimated at Rs. 50,000 annually.<sup>70</sup> The imports consisted of salt, gold, silver, precious stones and coarse woolen stuffs. 'The flocks of Tibet are very numerous, and the wool is of finest quality. It is as fine as Merino with much longer staple.' The Calcutta Review expressed hope that Darjeeling was the gateway through which commerce and culture of the west could reach Central Asia.<sup>71</sup> Ashley Eden wrote to Bengal in 1861, 'A very

considerable trade will spring up between Lhasa and Darjeeling. The Tibetans will only be glad to exchange gold dust, musk, borax, wool and wait for English cloth, tobacco etc., and the people of Sikkim will gain as carriers of this trade and their government will raise a considerable revenue from the transit duties.<sup>72</sup> From 1861 onwards Darjeeling as a commercial centre attracted attention of mercantile community. In a letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 1864 the government of Bengal was keen to know about the Indo-Tibetan trade and provision of accommodation to the traders in Darjeeling. The govt. wanted to have full information regarding articles, including specie, taken in return.<sup>73</sup> According to the report of the Superintendent of Darjeeling on the basis of information given by Cheeboo Lama, Political Representative of Sikkim in Darjeeling,- ‘the merchandise imported from Sikkim consisted of horses, cattle including sheep and goats, blankets, salt, musk, wax, ghee, oranges, millet, rice, lime and copper. The imports in 1863 were nearly double of those in 1860. The money earned during the four years under notice amounted to Rs. 89,535, out of which the sum of Rs. 19,450 was returned to Sikkim in the shape of goods, the articles of export to Sikkim included English cloth, metal utensils, tobacco and coral.

The trade with Tibet consisted of the importation of horses, blankets, tea, turquoise, wool, musk, ox-tails, musical instruments and shoes. The horses found a market in the plains; the blankets were distributed among the numerous coolies in Darjeeling. The imports increased greatly during 1860-63. The total price of goods sold amounted to Rs. 64,005. Out of this amount Rs. 43,700 was spent in Darjeeling for the purchase of goods for exports. The balance of Rs. 20,305 was taken away in cash. The articles exported to Tibet were chiefly tobacco, indigo, kutch (catechu).<sup>74</sup> Bengal also strongly recommended that the Eastern Bengal Railway Company should be allowed to extend their line from Koostea to the Valley Tista ‘at which merchants of Eastern Tibet are willing to bring their goods for exchange with the products of the plains of Bengal and the manufactures of Europe.<sup>75</sup> In October 1869 Colonel Haughton, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar strongly recommended cultivation of friendship with the Lamas of Tibet and submitted a report

on the commercial relations with Tibet and China in July 1870. He suggested that Peking should be asked to remove all restrictions on the free passage of merchants and travelers. The British Minister at Peking informed in January 1871 that there was no possibility of eliciting from the Chinese Emperor necessary encouragement for trade with Tibet. In a separate report, Haughton enumerated the routes through which markets of Central Asia could be reached: 1)via Ladakh, 2) via Nepal, 3) via Darjeeling , 4) via Buxa and Western Dooars, 5) via Assam and Towang, and 6) via Bhamo and Burma. The route most frequently used was that through Assam and Towang. He induced some of the Patna merchants, who had used the Nepal route, to establish an agency at Darjeeling. Inspite of this effort, little trade appeared to pass through Darjeeling. The eastern route by Brahmaputra Valley being most frequently used.<sup>76</sup> In a subsequent despatch Bengal requested the Government of India to induce Peking to abandon her exclusive policy. The importance of the Sikkim route was also reiterated. ‘...since even if the trade were not thrown open to us directly any radical improvement of the road must lead to a considerable increase of indirect traffic, and perhaps by bringing the Tibetans down to the plains pave the way for a more liberal policy in the future.’<sup>77</sup>

In April 1873 a deputation from the Society of Arts, London, led by A. Campbell, lt. Col. Gawler, J.D. Hooker and B.H. Hodgson submitted a memorandum to the Duke of Argyle, Secretary of State for India. They advocated a more dynamic commercial policy in Central Asia on strategic and commercial grounds. They laid stress on the improvement of existing communications in Sikkim by extending roads to the Tibetan frontier and also by completing railway connection between Darjeeling and Calcutta.In the same year the Raja of Sikkim had an interview with Sir John Campbell. One of the results of the interview was the visit on deputation of J.W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to Sikkim and Tibet frontier ‘to enquire into the conditions and prospects of trade with Tibet and advisability of making a road through Sikkim to the Tibet

frontier.<sup>78</sup> In 1876 the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling supplied the following details of import and exports with Tibet through Sikkim –

**Import from Tibet to Darjeeling**

Sl. No.	Items of Import	Amount in Rupees
1	Ponies	51,440
2	Cows	6,320
3	Sheep	7,536
4	Blanket	18,750
5	Salt	11,960
	Yak-tails	6,640
7	Miscellaneous	7980
Total		1,10,626

[Table No. 2:2]Source: Proceedings of Bengal Govt., General Miscellaneous, August 1876.

**Export from Darjeeling to Tibet**

Sl. No.	Items of Export	Amount in Rupees
1	Clothes (Broad cloth, cotton goods, mixed silk and cotton and country cloths.)	1,25,000
2	Indigo	43,000
3	Tobacco	7,140
4	Miscellaneous (paint, furs, spices, umbrellas, window panes, looking glasses, lanterns.)	10,400
Total		1,85,540

[Table No.2:3] source: Proceedings of Bengal Govt., General Miscellaneous, August 1876.

In case of Bhutan the trade was meager, the item of import was muscle required for coolies employed in tea plantation. The import amounted to Rs.1700 and that export of cloth and cotton goods amounted to Rs.4, 200 only.<sup>79</sup>

Export items to Nepal included piece goods (European and Indian), cotton twist and yarn, salt, Kerosene oil, tobacco, food grains, brass-pots, copper. The trade with Nepal showed only imports of livestock and blanket into Darjeeling. In 1860 the sale was only 23,040 and in 1863 it amounted to Rs.25, 140. In 1876 the sale to Nepal was only Rs.37, 000 whereas the imports from Nepal as per record have been cited in the following tables:

Imports from Nepal in 1876

Livestock & Ghee Imported	Amount in Rupees	other Items Imported	Amount in Rupees
Goats	9,264	Iron	20,600
Pigs	14,500	Blankets and cotton Goods	13,000
Fowls	4,900	Rice, pulses, grain and other foodgrain	5,780
Cows	1,200	Shingles for roofing houses	2,600
Sheep	2,100	Miscellaneous	10,000
Buffaloes	1,080	Total	Rs.51,980
Pigeons	1,200		
Ghee	8,280		
Total	Rs. 42,524		

[Table No.2:4] Source: Proceedings of Bengal Govt., General Miscellaneous, August 1876.

In Darjeeling the local demand was insignificant. The capitalist did not feel encouraged to purchase articles brought by the foreign merchants. The difficulties of the routes were severe. The cost of transport was heavy. In 1865 the Deputy Commissioner reported that if greater facilities

were afforded for the transport of merchandise between Darjeeling and the main line of traffic in Bengal, the station would become the centre of a large and increasing traffic with the neighbouring states. Articles such as fine wool from Tibet; rice, fruit and copper from Sikkim and cattle from Nepal would be imported to Darjeeling in exchange for English cloths and printed calicoes, metal wares, indigo and tobacco.<sup>80</sup>

#### **d. HATS OR MARKET PLACE**

The Darjeeling Municipality came into being in 1850, while that of Kurseong was established in 1879. The trade activities in the district took place at weekly markets or hats and religious fairs. According to W.W. Hunter in 1876 the weekly markets were held in Darjeeling, Namsu, Rohini, and Kurseong in the hills and in the Tarai in Phansidewa, Baghdogra, Siliguri, Naxalbari, Udaykari and Kharibari. The religious fairs took place on the banks of Rangit river at Namsu, on the banks of Balasan River at Naxalbari and also at Hanskhawa.<sup>81</sup>

#### **e. HOTELS**

The business of hotels in Darjeeling dates back to 1839 when ‘The Darjeeling Family Hotel’ was started with only 12 rooms. The future prospect of Darjeeling was wider in nature. Many business families tried their luck in this newly acquired hill territory of Darjeeling. The ‘Wilson Hotel’ with 18 rooms was started in two- storied house after the first one. Another hotel with the same name, later changed to Castleton, was built on the Hooker Road. It was followed by the Woodlands Hotel, Drum Druid, Rockville, Bellevue, and the Central Hotel. The last one could accommodate 40 boarders, (which was later changed to Hotel Mount Everest in 1915). In Kurseong, the Clarendon Hotel, Sorabjee’s Hotel situated at Cart Road,

and Wood Hill at Club Road were popular among the visitors to Darjeeling.<sup>82</sup> Except few all the hotels were owned by the foreigners.

#### **f. TEA INDUSTRY**

The growing demand for tea of ‘Chinese manufacture’ in England on the one hand and the end of English East India Company’s monopoly by the ‘Charter Act of 1813’ on the other hand necessitated an alternative way to fulfill the crisis of tea. Numbers of experiments were carried by the English in different parts of India. In Darjeeling it was Dr. Campbell, who in 1841 first did an experiment with a few seeds of tea, grown in Kumaon of Chinese stock. The experiment was successful; he found the soil and climate of Darjeeling suitable for tea cultivation. His example was followed by others, too, in the district. The Makaibarie and Aloobarie gardens were planted out in 1857; two years later the Takvar Tea Company, Mundakoti, and the Darjeeling Tea Company was established. In 1860 the Cedars, and the Rangmuk Tea Estate in Sonada; in 1862 the Dooteria, Nahore and Margaret’s Hope; in 1863 the Lebong Tea Company, and the Himalayan Tea Company; in 1866 there were 39 gardens each having an average acreage of  $256\frac{1}{2}$  acres and an aggregate yield of 133,000 lbs. of tea leafs.<sup>83</sup> The largest tea concern in Darjeeling District was that of the Darjiling Company Limited, with four gardens. These gardens included Ambutia, Ging, Takda and Phubserang. The headquarters of the Company was in London and the local management was done by a superintendent with 5 European assistants. There were 56 gardens in 1870 and 113 gardens by 1874 [see Table No.2:5]<sup>84</sup>

#### **Tea Operation in Darjeeling District Before DHR.**

YEAR	No. of Gardens	Extent of land under cultivation in acres	Out-turn of tea in lbs.	No. of Labourers Employed
1866	39	10,392	433,715	Not known
1867	40	9,214	582,640	-do-

1868	44	10,067	851,549	6,859
1869	55	10,769	12,788,697,445	
1870	56	11,046	16,891,868,347	
1872	74	14,503	29,388,626,12,361	
1873	87	15,695	295,671,014,019	
1874	113	18,888	392,791,119,424	

[Table No.2:5] Source: Hunter, W.W. –‘A Statistical Account of Bengal Darjiling’.

The tea industry was now firmly established as a commercial enterprise large plantations were established and companies were formed. This rapid extension of tea cultivation had, however, resulted in reckless deforestation, and it was recognized that it was necessary to provide for the careful conservation of the forests, for their protection from wanton or unscientific destruction, and for the proper development of this part of the resources of the country. The Superintendent of the Calcutta Botanic Gardens was appointed Conservator of Forests for Bengal; and special measures were taken for the protection of the forests about Darjeeling, where the wholesale felling of timber, which had followed the introduction of tea planting, had resulted in wide-spread denudation. Accordingly, all unassessed lands in the old hill territory above 6,000 feet in height, and all such lands between the Terai and an elevation of 3,000 feet, were made over to the newly-established Forest Department and were reserved for forest purposes. This was the beginning of forest conservancy in Bengal.<sup>85</sup> In 1870 the number of gardens rose to 56 covering an area of 11,000 acres on which 8,000 operatives were employed in the yield of 1,700,000 lbs. of tea.<sup>86</sup> In 1870 the number of tea gardens in Darjeeling was 56 which by 1874 increased to 113. The cultivated area also increased from 11,046 acres to 18,888 acres and the outturn was from 1,689; 186 lbs to 3,927,911 lbs. the workers in the tea gardens in 1870 were 8,347 and that in 1874 were 19,424. <sup>87</sup>Tea industry is not only the mainstay of the hill people of Darjeeling but also the backbone of the hill economy.<sup>88</sup>

Development of tea industry in Darjeeling in the second half of the nineteenth century was also responsible for the rise of population in the district. During this time immigrants flooded in to work in construction sites, tea gardens, and other agricultural related projects. The arrival of Scottish missionaries saw the construction of schools and welfare centers for the British.<sup>89</sup> A good number of the tea estates are situated in the two subdivisions, i.e., Darjeeling and Kurseong.

By 1874, there were 113 tea gardens in Darjeeling district only. Tea cultivation is the great industrial feature of Darjeeling district – conducted almost entirely by means of English capital and under European supervision. The first Indian owned tea established in 1876. Indian Tea Association was formed in 1881. Among the various factors of production, worker is very important in the agro-based industry. And the most potent factor contributing to the growth of population had been the tea industry in the district of Darjeeling. The great part played by the tea industry in this behalf is apparent from the fact that according to the census of 1901 tea gardens labourers and their dependants accounted for more than two-thirds of the total population of the district, in spite of the fact that tea industry was passing through a inconsequential depression at that time<sup>90</sup>. According to the census of 1901 tea industry employed 64,000 workers.<sup>91</sup>

#### **g. CINCHONA PLANTATION**

Like tea industry, cinchona manufacture had been a necessity to the English government for health reason. Its success in the Nilgiri aroused anticipation to the government of Bengal for its success. Its initial trial in 1861-62 at Senchel and Lebong in 1863 proved abortive. But the large cinchona plantation at Rangbi in the Rangoon valley in 1864 bore fruit and the harvest during 1869-70 to 1878-79 was 113,000 lbs. This plantation became centre of the cheap quinine and cinchona febrifuge manufacture.<sup>92</sup>

#### **h. POST OFFICE**

In the earlier days the discomfort and roughness of the mountain road and weather of the place

was never a hurdle for the dawk runners. Even in the worst of the season, to quote Fred Pinn, ‘Darjeeling kept contact with the plains and Calcutta thanks to the exertions of the Indian Dak-wallahs, dak runners or simply postmen’.<sup>93</sup> Their praises were sung in Rudyard Kipling’s verses: ‘With a jingle of bells as the dusk gathers in,

He turns to the footpath that heads up the hill-

The bags on his back and a cloth round his chin,

And, tucked in his waistbelt, the Post Office bill;—

“Despatched on this date, as received by the rail,

Per runner, two bags of the Overland Mail.”<sup>94</sup>

The Postal department was the only means of communication in the district in the bygone era. The letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1839 from W.H. Lloyd, Darjeeling to the Editor of ‘The Englishman’ reveal that Lloyd used to manage the dak from Gobindnagar, a distance of 90 miles and were not paid more than 4 rupees a month. Whereas Campbell managed them from Junnyapakutta, between 45 and 50 miles and according to Lloyd’s version Campbell paid ‘some of the runners as much as seven rupees a month’. The dak may reach Calcutta in seven days but from Calcutta to Darjeeling it took nine or ten days.<sup>95</sup> The earliest record available was of the year 1861-62. The items of postage included letters, newspapers, parcels and books. In 1870-71 the number of articles increased from 100,833 to 147,498. The postal receipts excluding the sale of stamps in 1861-62 was £500.8s.2d by the year 1870-71 it increased to £1543.18s.3d. The postal expenditure amounted to £596.17s.in 1861-62 and to £948.1s 6d in 1870-71 [see Table No.2:6].<sup>96</sup>

Postal Statistics For the Years 1861-62, 1865-66 And 1870-71

Year	1861-62		1865-66		1870-71	
Articles	Received	Despatched	Received	Despatched	Received	Despatched
Letters	65,488	63,115	95,447	89,711	117,236	

Newspapers	31,125	2,374	22,955	2,698	24,852	
Parcels	2,610	345	3,348	1,189	830	
Books	1,610	236	2,728	713	4,580	
Total	100,833	66,070	124,478	94,311	147,498	
Receipts, exclusive of sale of postage						
stamps - £500,8s,2d			£731,6s		£1543,18s,3d	
Expenditure - £596,17s			£787,11s,6d		£948,1s,6d	

[Table No. 2:6] Source: Hunter, 'A Statistical Account of Bengal Darjiling', p179.

## CONCLUSION:

The present chapter discusses about the emergence of Darjeeling as a popular hill destination to the Europeans. At the same time its transfer of power from the hands of the Sikkim Raja to that of the Company, introduction of new system of administration and justice to the inhabitants, growth of heterogeneous population and cultures, sanitarium, education, subsequent plantation of tea and cinchona, all in all has been dealt in the chapter. The contribution of Grant, Lloyd, Napier and Campbell in the making of Darjeeling Hill station is unforgettable. The society and economy of Darjeeling is indebted to the above English officers' whose will and dedication for their duties ushered a new epoch in the history of Darjeeling or else that of India. It was not less than a herculean task to bring a country under woods with inhabitants knowing no 'agriculture' to repopulate it with human beings; teach them the art of farming tea and other varieties of European fruits and vegetables; to make roads and buildings; abide new laws, follow new religion, education and different professions apart from labourers. Castes system was not as rigorous among the Nepalese in Darjeeling as it was in Nepal. Slave system was banned so the people enjoyed a fair system of justice than under the Sikkim government. The inhabitants could breathe in the free atmosphere. In short a new type of society with a mixture of different languages,

cultures, religions, etc. was set up in Darjeeling. The gulf of language between the rulers and the ruled never came on the way of progress of Darjeeling. The natives too quickly adopted themselves to this new environment and many of them converted into new faith. Economically, Darjeeling provided job avenues to all classes of population. For the illiterate the job of labour required in different industries was available, even the women worked as ayah or nanny, helper, in the house of the sahib and memsahib. The system of education as introduced by the initiatives of private individuals and government gradually created a group of educated youths who could serve as clerks, peons, teacher or pastor who could serve in the changing economy of the place. With the establishment of many English schools mostly for the children of Europeans, large tea estates, cinchona plantations, setting up of military cantonments and depot, hospitals and dispensaries, internal and external trade by the second half of the nineteenth century Darjeeling had progressed rapidly in the direction of urbanization. Yet the place was not easily reachable due to lack of modern transportation system, which had already begun in the plains of Bengal. All these socio- economic developments in Darjeeling thereby necessitated proper transport and communication facilities.

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## Chapter - III

### PRE-RAILWAY TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

One of the contributing factors for the development of a place, socially and economically, is transport and communication. Darjeeling being a hilly region was mostly covered by forest. The 'Lepchas', the inhabitants of the area used to practice shifting cultivation for which few areas were cleared here and there. There were no proper roads but only 'rough narrow roadways leading through dense forests, and the only bridges were the cane bridges spanning the torrents'<sup>1</sup>. Grant's memorandum of 1830 mentioned only two routes then existing north-ward from the plains into Sikkim. One was by the 'Nagaree' pass and the other by the 'Sabbook Golah'. A third route by the Mahananda was mentioned as having been deserted and overgrown with jungle.<sup>2</sup> The importance of roadways were well known to the Britishers and infact before the acquisition of Darjeeling Lloyd had thought about it. A glance into his letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1835 reflect the idea – "Supposing Durgeeling be ceded to us, the first object would be the formation of a road within the hills; this could scarcely be commended before the middle of November next, and would require the superintendence of an Engineer Officer, assisted by some of the Sappers and Miners, as there will no doubt be many rocks to remove by blasting, and various obstacles which without their assistance would be difficult to overcome; the more of this description of workmen are employed the sooner the place will be accessible. At present the way to it is calculated for no animal but a Mountaineer...."<sup>3</sup>

When the English East India Company of Bengal received the 'Deed of grant' of Darjeeling, the very first thing was to provide plan and proposal for transport and communication. The pioneers, who came to open up Darjeeling after 1835, had to undergo a difficult journey from Calcutta before they reached the 'hills'. In a letter Lloyd further

stressed this point, to quote him “As far back as June 1837 in the joint report of Dr. Chapman and myself it was stated that the first step requisite to the formation of a sanatorium here was the construction of a good road as a means of obtaining the requisite supplies for a Bazaar. I had previous to this on more occasions than one pointed out the necessity for the aid of sappers and miners to superintend workmen and assist in the construction of the road, and have never to my knowledge reported anything that could have induced a supposition that the supplied of a Bazaar here could be maintained unless a road passable for loaded cattle was first constructed.”<sup>4</sup> A Guide to Darjiling published in 1838 mentioned 98 hours as the time the journey took from Calcutta by dawk<sup>5</sup>:

From	To	Hours
Calcutta	Kriahnagar	18
Krishnagar	Behrampore	15
Behrampore	Malda	21
Malda	Dinajpore	16
Dinajpore	Titalia	20
Titlaia	Foothills	8
Total		98 hours

[Table No.3:1] Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, 2000.

‘The opening of the stations to regular traffic depended on the construction of roads through rugged mountain terrain, and most of the muscle for this enormously labour-intensive enterprise came from neighbouring villages.’<sup>6</sup> The first step to introduce modern communication in the district was taken in January 1838 when ‘the trace of the Calcutta Road to the east of the hill on which Jalapahar Cantonment stands now was completed in January, 1838, by Lt.- General Lloyd.’<sup>7</sup> On 2 July 1838, Lieutenant John

Gilmore was appointed as the Executive Engineer and superintendent of roads, ‘to raise and organize a Sebundy Corps of Sappers and Miners at Darjeeling for construction of roads in that district.’ in 1839 the local militia was raised with the following strength - two Subedars, two Jamadars, two Havildars, ten Naiks, two Burgher, one hundreds and eighty private Sepoys, one native Doctor, one Drummer, two Khalasis, two Bhistics. Other than these there were European Commandant (one), Sergeants (two) and Corporal (one).<sup>8</sup> Lloyd complained that the Lepchas of Darjeeling knew nothing of money and were ‘unaccustomed to the idea of working for hire’. <sup>9</sup>In Darjeeling, some twelve hundred local men were set to work on the roads by G.S. Lloyd in 1839.<sup>10</sup>

According to Napier, ‘Gilmore commenced the work...but the first season found the little colony quite unprepared for the early commencement of the rains. All the coolies, who did not die, fled, and some of the Sappers deserted. Gilmore got sick’.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, there was huge excitement on the part of the new property holders of Darjeeling known as ‘Darjeeling Association Committee’ in Calcutta. As no direct news from any proper source was available to them, they welcomed the proposal of sending Major E. Garstin, the Chief Executive Engineer for the Lower Provinces; who was a not only a member of the Association but also had two ‘locations’ of his own at Darjeeling. His job was to look into the matter and find out the truth ‘and it was his survey which became that letter bomb’.<sup>12</sup> The letter which was addressed to H.M. Low, Esq., Secretary to the Dorjeling Committee, pointed out the improper survey of the two roads from Titalya to Punkahbaree. He found the road via Ranidungha full of thick grass jungle with no provision made for the bridges or drains; particularly in the Balasun River which was difficult to cross during the rains. He found the road commencing from Pankhabari being very steep as such no other means of transport than men could be employed. The coolies of the plains hardly wanted to undergo the great difficulties and

fatigue and as such it was an unpopular job. For the next 20 miles, there was no attempt to remove any of the trees or stone and, was not passable for loaded cattle. The last eight miles, however, were better and could be passed by loaded cattle. To quote Garstin, ‘I am sorry to say that the part finished has been made without attention to the principles laid down by scientific men for making roads in mountainous countries. This neglect will, I am of opinion, affect the durability of this road; for no attention whatever has been paid to its drainage, nor have bridges or drains been made across it, to protect it from the torrents which rush down with violence in the rains through every ravine, and will, unless this is remedied, render it impassable in the rains.’<sup>13</sup>

In connection to the incompleteness of the road, Lloyd gave an explanation that he was not idle even during the rainy season and ten miles was completed in November for traffic by cattle. To quote Lloyd ‘Shortly after, Major Garstin paid a visit, and it being his opinion that the road ought to be entirely finished as it progressed, Lieut. Gilmore unfortunately followed his suggestions. Thereby a month of the precious time was lost, and the road did not progress a foot nearer the plains.... the people were brought down to the plains and the work commenced from below. Had the above mentioned loss of time not occurred, the road might reasonably have been expected to have reached 18 or 20 miles from Darjeeling in the end of December. The remaining distance might have been done by the middle of February, had not Lt. Gilmore gone to Monghyr to engage Mecharrees...’<sup>14</sup> But the damage had been done and the ‘road’ which was being constructed by Gilmore and Lloyd did not lead to completion rather it lead to their farewell from the place.

In the annals of the Council not much has been written about the half-hearted work of the engineer Gilmore. Due allowances were made to him along with the suggestion that it would really be a good idea if he applied for ‘leave of absence for six months to proceed

to ‘Singapore on account of his health.’<sup>15</sup> Following the suggestion, on 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1839, Lieutenant John Gilmore left for the Presidency for one month and thereafter never came back to take the charge of the unfinished road.<sup>16</sup>

The difficulties and hardship for travelers in those days can be understood from the account of one David Wilson, the proprietor of Wilson Hotel of Darjeeling. ‘The Englishman’ on 6 June 1839 reported news of an accident of David Wilson, due to falling of a tree which had broken his leg, on his way to Darjeeling for completion of the Hotel. On the following day the ‘Hurkaru’ a supplementary news with a personal letter from Wilson which had been written before the accident was published.<sup>17</sup> In the letter, Wilson wrote how he secured 100 coolies from Mr. Halkett, the Magistrate of Dinaisore, 80 Dangurs and 50 bullocks for his journey from Calcutta to Darjeeling. He wrote that for 15 days the journey was smooth as far as the manpower was concerned but the problem started after crossing Pankhabari. The next day the Sirdar escaped with 14 men along with suit of warm clothes and blankets that were given to them at Titalya. Soon others followed; those coolies from Calcutta had taken 7 rupees each in advance, besides food. Wilson reached Kurseong after ten days with the help of the Dinaisore coolies, but they too ran away. There was no shelter at the three different stages above Pankhabari to protect his hotel provisions from complete destruction. Coolies usually take four days in going up and two days for coming from Pankhabari. The cold weather of the place affects their service and also health for which ‘the greater parts of them are knocked up in one trip. If these difficulties are not speedily removed, the name of Dorjeling will strike such a terror to the natives that not a man for any sum will go near the places... Money did not matter much to natives at least not to go up the hill. Nor will it be until great changes take place here, and a better road be made in lieu of the present apology for one, which has broken away in several places.’

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1839 Lieutenant Robert Napier of Royal Engineers took charge of the two companies of secondary sappers from Lieutenant J. Gilmore.<sup>18</sup>

And Dr. Campbell, a member of the Indian Medical Service, who was the British Resident in Nepal, took charge from Col. Lloyd on 20 June 1839 of all the civil duties of Darjeeling and office of Sikkim. <sup>19</sup>

The road was the first and foremost property for Darjeeling to develop as a fully fledged hill station. Napier assumed the office the road was laid out in the midst of thick forest and along the steep ridges for a length of 40 miles. It was completed in 1842 at an expenditure of Rs.8, 00,000. The road came to be called as the Old Military Road, as military soldiers used to travel through this road. The road passes its way from Pankhabari to Kurseong and had no less than 300 bridges and culverts. From Kurseong it ascended to Dow Hill to the east of that station, and continues on its course along the spurs until it reached Senchel and descends to Jorebungalow near Ghum, from where it gradually inclined higher to the east of the hill until the Chowrasta was reached.<sup>20</sup>

From the account of Joseph Hooker, a botanist who travelled to the Himalayas in 1848 it becomes clear that even then the journey was not so convenient to the traveller. An excerpt of his journey from Karagola Ghat on the Ganges to the foothills thus follows: "I awoke at 4 AM., and found my Palkee on the ground, and the bearers coolly smoking their hookahs under a tree (it was raining hard) they has carried me the length of their stage, twelve miles, and there were no others to take me on. I had paid twenty-four pounds for my dawk, from Carragola to the hills, to which I had been obliged to add a handsome douceur; so I lost all patience. After waiting and entreating during several hours, I found the head-man of a neighbouring village, and by a further disbursement, induced six out of twelve bearers to carry the empty Palkee, whilst I should walk to the next stage, or till we should meet some others. They agreed, and cutting the thick and spongy sheaths of the

banana, used them for shoulder-pads: they also wrapped them round the palkee-poles, to ease their aching clavicles."<sup>21</sup>

Hooker's first journey from Pankhabari to Darjiling thus follows: "On the following morning my baggage arrived, and, leaving my palkee, I mounted a pony kindly sent for me by Mr. Hodgsom, and commenced a very steep, richly-wooded valley. The road zigzags extraordinarily in and out of the jungle.....Not only are the roadsides rich in plants, but native paths, cutting off all the zigzags, run in straight lines up the steepest hill-faces...."<sup>22</sup>(Hooker, pp.73-74) it costs Hooker Rs.240 for the whole journey to Darjeeling. The whole journey lasted for five to six days.

### **HILL CART ROAD**

By 1860, Darjeeling had developed as an established hill sanatorium and the 'tea industry' was then firmly established in and around the place. The emerging economy needed better mode of transportation and the Old Military road was impracticable for wheeled traffic. The Sikkim Expedition of 1860 also emphasized the requirement of a cart road. The cost of transporting military stores to the front was Rs.2 each maund from Pankhabari to Darjeeling. Government accordingly sanctioned the construction of a cart road, which was to be 24 feet in breadth, while the steepest gradient was not to be more than 1 in 18 or 20, the general gradient being 3 in 100.<sup>23</sup> By Tumlong treaty of 1861, trade monopolies, restrictions on the movement of travellers, and duties on goods passing between Sikkim and British territory were abolished. Moreover, the British Government was authorised to construct a road through Sikkim. Government agreed to protect the working parties, to maintain the road, and to erect and maintain suitable rest houses.<sup>24</sup>

The work for the 'Darjiling Cart Road' begun in 1860, when the jungle between Darjeeling and Kurseong was cleared and the construction of the road was commenced in 1861, averaging 25 feet in width and a ruling gradient of 1 in 31. The road was 49 miles

long and it cost about £6,000 per mile. It was one of the best mountain roads in India. After four years, the section from Kurseong to Darjeeling, a length of  $19\frac{1}{2}$  miles containing 300 bridges, had been completed, at a cost of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, and was opened to traffic. But, the outbreak of Bhutan War, sickness among the coolies, presence of dangerous insects and the difficulty in getting any labourer to work, all hampered the progress of the work. The ground was rocky and precipitous, the amount of blasting was far greater than had ever been anticipated, and at times the supply of gunpowder ran out. The vernacular writings in Nepali reflect on the problem and number of stories reflects on the sad plight of many coolies who died while working on the road, slipped while climbing the slopes to feed the thirsty engineers, sometimes smashed by a rolling mountain boulder or ballasting. Even many paintings and pictures by Europeans reveal the difficulty of road construction and equally the fate of poor labourers and animals.

The distance of about 3 miles below Kurseong a cutting had to be made in the face of a stupendous crag, a solid mass of rock about 500 feet in height and of the same breadth; that from Pankhabari to Kurseong over 300 bridges were required, and that a section of only 6 miles from the latter place cost  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of rupees. The whole road was completed by 1869 and communication with the plains had been established. Later in the eighties' that the 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway 'was laid out along this highway.'<sup>25</sup>

During the period, transportation from Karagola Ghat on the Ganges opposite Sahibganj to Siliguri was also improved by the construction of a road, 126 miles long at a cost of Rs.14, 68,000. <sup>26</sup> Even after the opening of rail line of East Bengal State Railway, in 1873 an artist; Edward Lear's trip to Darjeeling was an eight-day ordeal and whose cart broke down and whose coolies fled. <sup>27</sup>

## **OTHER ROADS CONNECTING DARJEELING**

The Tista Valley road, a distance of 34 miles from Sivok to Rungpo was the highway for travellers and merchants' going to Sikkim and Tibet was completed after 1850. The Public Works Department maintained the road from Sivok to Tista Bridge a distance of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  miles and from the Tista Bridge to Rungpo it was kept up by the Sikkim State.<sup>28</sup> There was an extension of 12 miles leading from Sivok to Siliguri. The 'Tista Bridge' was an important junction of roads of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The original suspension bridge was constructed across the Tista shortly after 1865 (later in 1933-34; it was replaced by the Anderson Bridge at a cost of Rs.3, 69,000 and 18 feet wide). The road to Kalimpong rising over 3,000 feet in 8 miles had the ruling gradient of 1in 15, it was so severe that carts could not pull more than 8 maund. There was also a track 4 miles shorter and less steeper, was used by pedestrian and it continued to Pedong and then passes into Sikkim and over the Jelep-la pass into Tibet.

Another road from Darjeeling to the Tista Bridge was from Ghum (Takdah ridge). Of the 17 miles, for the first three miles the road passed the great Rangarun forest and rapidly went down till the 6<sup>th</sup> mile. After which the road was accessed only for the cattle, ponies and foot-passengers. By crossing the sharp zigzags through some magnificent forest scenery to Pashok (3,300 feet), a beautiful view of the meeting of the Tista and Rangit and some tea-cultivation, it again passed into semi-tropical forests, which continued till the Tista was reached. The other road from Darjeeling descends rapidly past Lebong to the dak bungalow at Badamtam, 4,000 feet below and 8 miles distant from Darjeeling. The road moved rapidly down until the Rangit was reached, after which it branched off to the right to the junction with the Tista and followed till the Tista till the Bridge was reached.<sup>29</sup>

The Nepal Frontier Road or Ghum Simana road of 10 miles long on the north-west on was a good cart road. It passed through Sukiapokhari (7 miles from Ghum) and 3 miles further

on terminates at Simana-basti on the Nepal frontier after which it could be passed only by ponies and pedestrians.<sup>30</sup> Besides there were roads from Kurseong to Matighara via Pankhabari ( $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles), from Tirihana to Baghdogra (6 miles), and from Naksalbari to Garidhura (11 miles); and in the east of the district from Rikyisum via Mimglas and Gorubathan to Jangi Guard (26 miles).<sup>31</sup>

## MODES OF CONVEYANCES

Strong bullock carts [see Fig.No.3:1] were the common modes of conveyance for the less gradient roads. As those roads were few in number it was difficult for the wheeled carts to travel across the narrow and steep paths. Works in Nepali literature set in those social conditions are full of such tales of cart-drivers and bullock cart owners who played active part in the social life of the people. Besides carrying people, trade was also facilitated by bullock carts.

### Bullock Carts



[Figure No.3:1] Source: Darjeeling And its Mountain Railway.

Hardy porters and strong footed mules were traditional modes of conveyance in the Hills. Powerfully built and of great natural strength, they were capable of carrying the heaviest burdens. According to the information supplied by the Gait's History of Assam, page 44-45, there was a story current in those days that before the coming of the railway a single Bhotia carried a grand piano up the hills to Darjeeling, 50 miles distant and 7000 feet in elevation. It was not uncommon for a tea-garden coolie to carry a tea chest weighing 110 to 130 lbs. for a distance of 5 or 6 miles up an ascent of 2,500 to 3,500 feet; and others again, who bring in merchandise from the frontier States, perform long journeys of many days duration, carrying heavy loads, 150 to 200 lbs. in weight, along high ridges, up and down steep mountains, and through valleys varying many thousand feet in elevation. The hand-pulled rickshaws were available for the comfort of the British tourists [Fig. No. 3:2].<sup>32</sup>

Hand-pulled Rickshaws at Chowrasta.



[Fig.No.3:2] Source: 'Souvenir', Darjeeling Municipality

In Darjeeling itself the commonest conveyances for those who do not ride were the luxurious rickshaw and the hill dandy. The latter was a long coffin-like reclining chair with one end resting on the shoulder of a bearer, and the other slung across a pole (Dandi, Fig. No.3:3) which rests on the shoulders of two men behind. For long journeys four men were necessary, and then the dandy was supported on poles both before and behind.<sup>33</sup>

Dandies



[Fig. No. 3:3] Source: Kurseong Railway Museum

#### ADMINISTRATION OF THE ROADS

According to the ‘Statistical Account of Darjiling’ by W.W. Hunter, in 1871 Imperial roads were under the management of the Public Works Department (PWD). Out of the 48 miles Hill Cart road the first 8 miles was metalled and the rest unmetalled. New cart road from the daddle to Jalapahar  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles unmetalled; from Pankhabari to Siliguri, 16 miles unmetalled; Cinchona plantation road from the saddle to Rangbi, 7 miles unmetalled. The total length of the PWD roads was 93 miles.<sup>34</sup> Beside there were 234

miles of roads maintained by the Local Fund roads under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. And roads under the Municipality were about 100 miles. The total length of all the above was 427 miles. The cost of maintaining the District Roads, other than those within the Station was rupees 25 to 30 a mile per annum. The Station roads of 20 miles cost Rs.150 a mile per annum. The difference in cost was basically that the Station roads were broader and metalled in few cases. At the same time the cost of labour was high along with the supervision. On the other hand in the other subdivisions the repairs of the roads were contracted by the planters with their own labourers.<sup>35</sup> The District Road Committee looked after other 49 district roads with a total length of 297 miles, and 5 village roads with a length of 10 miles. The annual expense for the upkeep of the road was Rs.48.8 per mile. The maintenance cost was collected from the road tax by the District Road Fund that had two branches – one at Kurseong and the other at Tarai. Each of them was administered by Committees which received allotments of money for the roads maintained by them. Kurseong was responsible for the roads in the lower hills, and the Tarai Road Fund Committee for those in the Siliguri Thana. The District Road Cess Committee was in charge of the roads in the hills to the east of the Tista but it had no engineering staff. Both in the hills and the Tarai the more important bridges under the Committee were repaired by the Public Works Department at the cost of the Road Fund. In the reserved forests, which occupy over one-third of the total area of the district, were maintained by the Forest Department.

To the east of the Tista in the Kalimpong Government estate, all the roads outside the forests and tea gardens are kept up by the free labour of the ryots. By customary obligation each adult member of a cultivator's house-hold was to supply two day's labour, without payment on the roads in or near the block in which he has his cultivation; and the Mandal or headman of the block was responsible for keeping them in proper order. Altogether 158

miles of roads are kept up by the free labour of the villagers, and the system works well.<sup>36</sup> Majority of roads had a gradient which was passable only by ponies and pedestrians. In some the gradient was so steep that the roads had to be paved with rough stone slabs. It was difficult to walk upon such roads but was the only means to keep the road passable during the heavy rain.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Darjeeling had been favourable to the foreigners especially to the British soldiers and officials, who converted the place into a hill station within few years from the receipt of its grant. They made improved thoroughfares and led new roads as well for better transport and communication, which were much better than what was there in the beginning. In short more visitors flocked in Darjeeling thereby increasing the population. Since most of the staple food was imported from the plains to the place it became a cause of great concern to meet the demands of the growing population due to slow modes of conveyances and their limitation of burden (load). The problem was felt more particularly during the rainy season. At the same time many foreigners invested their capital in the plantation industry that required carrying heavy machines and goods as well as finished products in huge quantities. The improvement of roads and usages of bullock carts opened the way for easy transportation but proved to be incompetent with the necessity of the time. In those days according to Dr. Kumar Pradhan, a regional historian, even to go up to Kurseong from a village of about 20 km, people used to take leave from all their villagers, as if they were going to some distant place. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Darjeeling was a thriving destination for many tourists and the sick alike but the pain and time taken for the journey was disapproved by all. There was an urgent need for better transport and communication to ease the entire problem faced by the travellers and the inhabitant.

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## **Chapter – IV**

### **GENESIS OF THE DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY**

In 1842, Rowland Macdonald Stephenson, a civil engineer who was keen towards laying the foundation for railways in India directed his ideas through local and English journals. He convinced the government with logical facts collections on the resources and trade prospective of the important centres in India. In his words, the first consideration is a military measure for the better security with less outlay of the entire territory. The second, commercial point of view on which the chief object is to provide the means of conveyance from the interior to the nearest shipping ports, of the rich and varied productions of the country and to transmit back the manufactured goods of Great Britain, salt, etc. in exchange. The opening of a line from Bombay to Thane soon heralded a beginning of great industrial revolution in India. The network of railways connecting parts of India, was a major event to which Karl Marx observed that ‘the railway system will, therefore, become in India, truly the forerunner of modern industry’. The hill stations became more accessible with railway- construction that started in the fifties of the nineteenth century in Bengal.

#### **[A] BACKGROUND OF RAILWAYS IN BENGAL**

The first passenger train flagged off from Howrah station for Hooghly, a distance of 24 miles, on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1854 and the first section of the East Indian Railway (EIR) was opened to public traffic on the Eastern side of the sub-continent.<sup>1</sup> From February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1855 the railway had progressed westwards covering a distance of 120 miles from Calcutta and reached up to Raniganj. In October, 1859 the EIR had advanced to Rajmahal in Bihar and as early as in 1860 a distance of 219 miles from Howrah was covered and Sahibgunge, the terminus of the visitor to Darjeeling, was reached.<sup>2</sup>

The Eastern Bengal Railway (EBR), a private company got concession for construction

and management of railway lines commencing from the left bank of Hooghly towards the Eastern and Northern part of Bengal, including a line to Darjeeling. Construction of EBR lines commenced in April, 1859. The first train steamed out of the Sealdah platform for its then terminus - Ranaghat (45) miles on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1862. By 15<sup>th</sup> November of the same year, the line passed through Poradah Junction on its way to Kushtea. Its extension to Jagati (62 miles) was opened in November, 1862. The line was further extended to Goalundo (45 miles) in January, 1871. In the original contract of Eastern Bengal Railway with the Secretary of State for India, this guaranteed Railway Company was to open up a rail-line to Darjeeling. In early 1870's such good dividends were being obtained from these lines of EBR that the directors were not willing to invest money in extension including the one to Darjeeling as that might not be profitable.<sup>3</sup>

In early 1870's the Government of India took a decision to stop expansion of rail-lines under the auspices of guaranteed companies in new areas and instead decided to construct and manage rail-lines as State enterprises. For construction of rail-lines in North Bengal, a state railway in the title of Northern Bengal Railway (NBR) was formed. Survey was commenced for Northern Bengal State Railway (NBR) that continued in 1870-71. NBR took off from the northern bank of Ganges River at Sara and built a meter gauge (MG) line up to Siliguri. NBR had no plans to take the rail-line to Darjeeling as the mountain railway was considered a formidable sphere.<sup>4</sup> On 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1877, the Northern Bengal State Railway was opened for traffic between Atrai (a few miles to the north-east of Sara Ghat) and Jalpaiguri. Prospect of scarcity in Bengal, owing to the failure of rains, caused urgency and construction of a line from Ganges to Jalpaiguri was pushed forward vigorously by NBR [Table: 4.1]. On 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1878 Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, opened the traffic thus establishing communication between Sealdah and Jalpaiguri and on 10<sup>th</sup> June of the same year the line was extended up to Siliguri.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the Northern Bengal State Railway attracted to itself the

merchandise trade of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Rajshahi and Pabna, almost monopolizing the cotton piece goods traffic and participating in a large way in the transport of tea and food grains.<sup>6</sup>

For the travellers the route from Calcutta to Darjeeling was first by rail from Howrah to Sahibganj, a distance of 219 miles. Then it was followed by steam ferry across Ganges to Karagola and by bullock cart to the river opposite Dingra Ghat. After crossing which again the traveller had to take a bullock cart or palkee gharry and crossed Purnea, Kishanganj, Titalya, Siliguri and the slope commenced via Punkhabari Road, which connected the cart road at Kurseong that led the traveller to its final destination, Darjeeling.<sup>7</sup>

### **PROGRESS OF RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION**

<b>Eastern Bengal Railway (B.G.)</b>		
<i>Main Line (Eastern Section)</i>	Date of opening	Miles
Calcutta to Ranaghat	29-09-1862	45 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
Ranaghat to Jagati Jn.	15-11-1862	62
Jagati Jn. To Goalundo	01-01-1871	45
<b>Northern Bengal State Railway</b>		
<b>Poradaha Branch (B.G.)</b>		
Poradaha (1023/4 miles from Calcutta ) to Damukdiya Opposite Sara, on the right bank of Ganges	19-01-1878	12
<b>Main Line (M.G.)</b>		
Sara to Atrai	19-01-1878	38 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Atrai to Jalpaiguri	28-08-1877	134 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>

Jalpaiguri to Siliguri (for day traffic for goods)	10-06-1878	23
For general traffic	01-11-1878	

[TABLE: 4.1] Source: Bhandari, R.R., 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, 2000.

'The opening of the rail line from Calcutta to Raniganj in 1855 reduced the laborious cart journey to Darjeeling by 120 miles, and the East Bengal State Railway pushed steadily northward in the following decades.<sup>8</sup> Until the advent of the railways in the hills, 'Tongas' continued to be the only faster means of travelling from the foothills to Darjeeling.<sup>9</sup> 'The two most important factors in the development of the district have been the choice of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills.'<sup>10</sup> It has been already pointed out in the previous chapter that the growth in the numbers of tea plantations required more numbers of labour. Those people from the neighbouring countries of Nepal had heard that 'in Dorje-ling money is grown in the tea- bushes'<sup>10</sup> As such more immigrants came to the district in search of such lucrative jobs. In return the immigrants' requirements of food, clothes and shelter were to be meted out and that necessitated trade. Further tea and Cinchona plantations needed heavy machineries. 'The hill men had to be taught the mysteries of the steam engine and the marvels of European engineering; blacksmiths, carpenters and other workmen had to learn the higher branches of the callings followed by their ancestors, and from these simple hill people had to be made the engine -drivers necessary to keep the machinery going.'<sup>11</sup> To carry the supplies of the plantation industry in the hills and to bring back the produce for sale in India and abroad the tonga, the old bullock-cart, the pack-pony, and the coolies were found insufficient. As a result the planters strongly felt for the introduction of railways in the hills.

### **FRANKLIN PRESTAGE:**

#### **THE MAN BEHIND THE IDEA OF A MOUNTAIN RAILWAY**

It was by chance or destiny that in 1878, Franklin Prestage, the man who made the hill railway

possible, came to Darjeeling along with his brother-in-law Sulyard Bernard Cary. The same year the Northern Bengal Railway was inaugurated in the foothills. On that occasion the Lieutenant Governor Sir Ashley Eden had made the some remarkable speech, to quote ‘...the wearied and exhausted citizen of Calcutta within a short journey of what I have no hesitation in saying is the finest scenery and almost the purest air in the world. It brings the rapidly developing tea interests of Darjeeling and the Doars into direct communication with the ports of export...the cotton goods, metals and salt of Europe and the indigo, tobacco and the tea of India to be exchanged with the gold dust and wool of Thibet, and the silks of China. I even hope that his dreams of social intercourse with Lhasa may be so fully realized that we may have, some day, the honor of carrying the Grand Lama to exchange religious views with the bishop of Calcutta.’<sup>12</sup>

The difficulty of journey and the time taken by the Tonga i.e. two laborious days taking them to the sanatorium perhaps might have struck Prestage with an idea of a mountain tramway which could bring him fame and fortune. Prestage was working as an Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway. As EBR had thought about such venture in the hills of Darjeeling, Prestage being associated with the East Bengal Railway the possibility of such an idea cannot be ruled out. For which he took the help of Cary, a civil engineer in the Eastern Bengal Railway; to make plans for a groundwork scheme. While the price of rice was Rs. 98 a ton at Siliguri and Rs. 238 that in Darjeeling, he believed that a line could substantially reduce the cost of transport between the plains and Darjeeling. A railway could cut down the cartage rate by as much as half and still earn a good profit.<sup>13</sup> Finally he submitted his proposal to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden. According to Newnan’s Guide to Darjeeling and its surroundings Sir Eden ‘with his practical commonsense, recognized the fact that a light railway, if it coukd only be constructed to Darjeeling, would infinitely develop that town, as well as the country through which it passed, and also put Calcutta and the whole of Lower Bengal in rapid, cheap, and easy communication with its only existing sanatorium.’<sup>14</sup>

## **SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT**

Sir Ashley Eden appointed a Committee to examine the scheme. Colonel Staunton R.E., the Director General of Railway, ‘after a careful survey, came to the conclusion that it was quite possible to run a railway two feet in width along the Hill Cart road from Siliguri to Darjeeling, and in this opinion most engineers concurred...’<sup>15</sup> The Committee reported that the construction of a steam tramway was reasonable and would be of great advantage to the Government. Each year about one and a half lakhs of rupees (say £15,000) was spent in the maintenance of the cart road and it was hoped that the tramway would be able to help to defray this cost.<sup>16</sup> Prestage’s scheme of laying a tramway along the Cart Road was sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor. But the Public Works Department of the Indian Government felt that Bengal had exceeded its powers in terms of the concessions granted, and insisted on cancellation of the contract. Prestage had already cited the following benefits of the tramway: to maintain the Cart Road; Bring cheaper and regular communication between the North Bengal State Railway and Darjeeling; Serve the tea gardens; Improve the alignment of the Cart Road including doubtful bridges; Improve all the property in the district and offer lower rates of food , reducing the cost of living in the hills; Render health-restoring sanatoria to the capital of India and allow a much larger number of European troops who could be returned more promptly in case of emergency; Be a boon to poorer classes of Europeans in Calcutta to visit the hills; Stimulate goods, parcels and passenger traffic; Reduce the cost of fuels; Nine miles of Terai between Siliguri and Sukna could be traversed with the minimum of discomfort in little more than half an hour and, Bring self-supporting communication of the most useful kind almost up to our frontier. Prestage also stated that he had already ordered the rails and other materials required to advance the work without delay.<sup>17</sup>

Finally on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1879 the contract was signed between Franklin Prestage and the Secretary of State as to the construction, maintenance, management and working of the railway.

### **Main Provisions of Contracts and Agreements:-**

- (i) **Land:** – Government land and the right to use the existing cart road, to be granted to the Company free of cost. Other land necessary, if any, to be acquired by the Government and transferred to the Company at cost price.
- (ii) **Government Aid** :- The government undertook to pay to the Company any sum required to make up its gross receipts to two lakhs of rupees annually, which would include charges for carriages of mails, troops or stores.
- (iii) **Distribution of profits:** - After the first five years half the net profits of any year in excess of 5 percent on the paid up capital to be applied in repayment to the Government of the amount expended on the maintenance of the cart road during the same year, or in making good a deficiency in gross receipts.
- (iv) **Rates and Fares:** - In addition to fixing certain maxima and minima for goods and coaching traffic the Central government reserves to themselves full control over charges of all kinds.
- (v) **Special obligations as to the conveyance of :-**
  - a. Mails, troops, police, high government officials and government stores – Mails and Post Office servants to be carried by the Company in consideration of a payment by the government of Rs. 10,260 yearly.  
[No special provision exists as to troops, police, high government officials and government stores.]
  - b. Government bullion and coin, and the persons in charge there of –  
None specified.

It was settled that the tramway would be laid to Darjeeling within eighteen months. If at any

period the railway should not be worked for six consecutive months, the Company was to surrender the road and land acquired from the government, receiving any sum due to it for permanent improvements to the road or works connected with it.<sup>18</sup>

‘The public took up shares in it eagerly, and work commenced in April 1879.’<sup>19</sup> The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway may be said to have been the first attempt at ‘private enterprise’ in railways since the capital required to form a company that is Rs.14,00,000 was subscribed almost entirely in India.<sup>20</sup> The tramway to Darjeeling was only the second narrow-gauge line to be built in India .The first narrow gauge (2 ft. 6 in.) was run by the Gaekwar of Baroda in 1862 from Dabhoi to Miyagram and locomotives were built by Neilson & Co. When the three 0-4-0 saddle tanks arrived in 1863 for the Gaekwar’s Baroda State Railway (GBSR) line, they wobbled so badly over the track that the bullocks continued to haul the trains and the regular use of engines had to be postponed until the rails were upgraded to 30lbs/yd in 1873. The Gaekwar ruler even installed a throne in a special carriage. The GBSR built a network of railways connecting most of the towns in the native State with the main line stations of Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway (BBCIR). A workshop was built at Pratapnagar near Baroda to furnish repairs of locomotives. The locomotives of the GBSR were supplied by W. G. Bagnall Ltd., Stafford, whereas the carriages and wagons were built locally.<sup>21</sup>

‘The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is one of the only three remaining 2 feet narrow gauge passenger lines on Indian Railways. The others are at Matheran, another hill railway, and the lengthy Gwalior system, in the plains.’<sup>22</sup> The contract allowed the tramway to use the Siliguri terminus and all the Northern Bengal State Railway free of charge until it could pay a clear dividend of 7½% of paid-up capital and thereafter agree or arbitrate to a rent. All the construction and maintenance materials were also to be carried by NBR at rates not exceeding 60% of the lowest rates charged for similar goods. The agreement also obliged the Government to pay the value of the line as a dividend earner, plus an additional bonus of 20% over and above

that value should it decide to take over. The government passed the Bill for the tramway on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1879 and it was formally agreed by the Lt. Governor on 16<sup>th</sup> April same year.<sup>23</sup>

### **TOTAL COST OF THE LINE**

The original estimate of the line amounted to Rs.14,00,000 inclusive of permanent way, rolling stock, stations, and staff quarters.<sup>24</sup> But the actual sum spent on DHR including rolling stock was Rs. 17, 00,000. By 1887, the cost of DHR shot up to Rs. 28,00,000 which included diversions taken in hand from 1883 and acquisition of new rolling stock including sixteen locomotives. By 1891, total investment was Rs.30, 00,000, equal to Rs.60, 000 per mile. This was made up of Rs. 16,900 per mile for earthwork, cuttings and bridges; Rs. 13,800 for ballast and permanent way; Rs. 8,000 for stations; Rs. 10,000 for locomotives and rolling stock; and Rs. 11, 300 for other items.<sup>25</sup> The capital account, exclusive of debentures, by 1896 was Rs.17,50,000 , and the dividend paid to shareholders , for several years past has been 10 per cent. Including debentures, the expenditure stands at about Rs. 31, 96,000. The line had thus cost Rs. 60,400 per mile. Further improvements made during subsequent years have brought the cost up to Rs.43, 00,000 in 1920.<sup>26</sup>

### **LAYING OF THE TRACKS (CONSTRUCTION WORKS)**

Prestage as the Managing Director of the Company appointed I.J. Whitty as the Chief Engineer and H. Edwards as his assistant.<sup>27</sup> The construction of the track as cited in the book published by the DHR Company in 1896,'looks as if it had been laid for a toy railway – the gauge being 2 feet'.<sup>28</sup> The line consisted of steel rails weighing  $41\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. to the yard, and lay on sleepers of timber.<sup>29</sup> The ruling gradient of the cart road to Darjeeling was 1 in 30 and a maximum of 1 in 25. Prestage had thought of using the alignment of the cart road but was not workable. The Chief Engineer I.J. Whitty found that some of the grades on the road were 1 in 20, much steeper than the locomotives could manage without great waste of power.<sup>30</sup>

Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot and Company, Calcutta was appointed Agents of the

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company.<sup>31</sup> The contract was given to Herbert Rumsay and Thomas Mitchell & Co. of Calcutta to organize and manage the workers for the responsibility for profiling the soil, construction of bridges, ballasting and laying the track, and the construction of the stations.<sup>32</sup> They had to depend on local headsmen who recruited the labour from nearby villages for work. According to K.B. Char of Tindharia, his father Rabilal Char (the name is in the Railway papers given in Appendix) worked for 50 years under the DHR. According to whose version ‘Subedhar Jangbir Chhetri and his brother Dharmalal were the labour suppliers during the construction works of the railway.<sup>33</sup> The labour had to dig the earth and rock. The women and children were also employed to throw the soil, carrying the materials as well as lifting the bamboo and timbers for building the stations and bridges. The ‘*beldar*’ too, were recruited for earth works. The instances of labour that lost their lives while laying the path for the tramway are many and its references are found in the stories of Nepali vernacular literature. When the work was in progress near Pagla Jhora, the river had brought a boulder down the mountain and crushed three coolies to death on the cart road.<sup>34</sup>

The work of laying sleepers of timbers which were procured locally and rails at the side of the road from Siliguri to Sukna started in June 1879. After the first  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles of laying of sleepers and rails the contractors were in short of sleepers. It was not until August that the matter with the Forest Department was solved and good-quality oak and chestnut sleepers were available.<sup>35</sup> A Technical Report of 1892 writes that the track were as flat-footed Indian State Railway standard of steel and sleepers mostly of Sal wood of 4 ft 6 in x 8 in x 4 in, being used. Regarding the progress of the work by February 1880, the correspondent for the Darjeeling News reflected: ‘Now all the strength is put on near Kurseong and in a day or two, the same is transferred to Choonbutty, and so on.’ The work at Siliguri was smooth while Kurseong was a through station adjacent to the Clarendon Hotel (beside the present St. Alphonsus School) [Fig.No.4:1]. The challenge for the contractors came as the Cart Road steepened in the forests of

the Terai beyond Sukna that was notorious as a malarial jungle and a favourite haunt of wild animals. The construction of the tramway was now being carried out at a number of unconnected sites, one of the first being the spur at Chunabhati, some 16 miles from Siliguri.<sup>36</sup> Prestage had stated that he saw no reason why the line should not be partially opened for public service by the end of the year and through to Darjeeling by the beginning of the next hot season. ‘Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy of India, took great interest in the line.’<sup>37</sup>

The Englishman on 16<sup>th</sup> February reported that two of the new engines specially designed for the tramway were due to arrive at Calcutta within a few days. ‘The locomotives were by Messrs. Sharp, Stewart, & Co., of Glasgow, and were of two types. One type weighs about 12 tons, and was capable of hauling a train weighing 39 tons, including engine, up inclines of 1 foot in 25 and round the numerous and sharp curves which the exigencies of the climb of a mountain railway make necessary’.<sup>38</sup> On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February, Colonel Stanton RE, the Director of the North Eastern State Railway, Franklin Prestage, the Resident Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent, made an inspection of the line. There was much concern as the new locomotives from Sharp, Stewart & Co. had not yet arrived and the tram for the Viceroy would be dependent on ‘Tiny’, the diminutive 0-4-0 saddle tank being used by the contractors. The inspection party found that the friction lubricating the flanges of the leading wheels of the engine and trolleys with copious supplies of water, which left them satisfied that the Viceroy and his staff could be carried to the 20<sup>th</sup> milepost.<sup>39</sup>

By March 1880 the twenty mile stretch from Siliguri to Tindharia was complete. The viceroy of India inaugurated the line on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1880 and he travelled up to Tindharia on the train. It was steamed over the severest gradients to 15<sup>th</sup> milepost and managed to haul three of the four wheeled trolleys, which could at a pinch carry a total of 18 passengers. Lord Lytton and his family had many luggages with them as a result the Tiny could not pull through the steep slope so that immediately a batch of coolies were sent to carry the bags and even used “to assist

the engine in pulling through certain places. They are said to have pulled the engine and the two carriages for a distance of 18 miles; whereupon the Viceroy being impressed by the ‘hardy Gurkhas’ offered the same a reward of a rupee each.”<sup>40</sup> About the journey in the Darjeeling tramway, Lady Lytton wrote in her diary:

‘We left Calcutta at 5pm, for Darjeeling, with Sir Ashley Eden, Mr. Bewick his A.D.C., Mr. & Mrs. Hope, Col. St. John, Col. Dalrymple and Mr. Kitson, A.D.C... The next day we were up at 7, and breakfasted at Siliguri, and started by 8 in the little new tramway with two or three light cars, but only a small engine. The air was delicious as we passed through very pretty jungle ground, then the engine puffed as gaily, up, up, up, to fresher air. At 11 we changed into Tongas, which were very rough and dusty – but there was plenty of beauty all round to distract one, and as we neared Darjeeling lovely tree-ferns appeared in the forest. About 2 p.m. we were allowed a rest. The reception at Darjeeling was a very cordial one, and at the entrance the Sirdars and big people of the place were all dressed in Chinese dresses of varied shape and colours, looking so picturesque. One in an orange dressing gown riding on a mule was particularly effective.’<sup>41</sup>

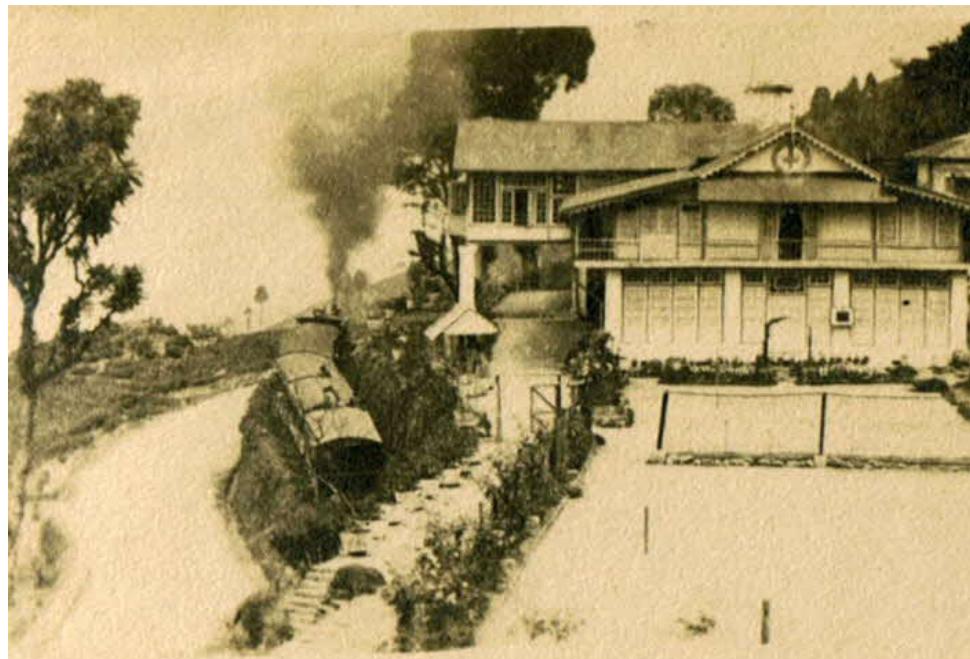
Siliguri to Kurseong (31 ¾ miles) was opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1880 and according to the notice of Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co, Calcutta, August 26, 1880: ‘This Tramway is now open for traffic between Silligoree and Kurseong, and Passengers, Parcels, and Goods can be booked through from Sealdah to Darjeeling and intermediate stations or vice-versa; arrangements having been made to convey by Tonga, or otherwise, all Passenger and Goods to and from the temporary terminus of the tramway.’<sup>42</sup> The same notice further informs about the timings, that Up-Passenger train leaves Siliguri at 8.15 a.m. and reach kurseong about 1.30 p.m. and Darjeeling by Tonga about 5.30 p.m. Whereas the Down journey was to be done by the tonga upto Kurseong from Darjeeling starting at 9 a.m. and on train at 1.30 p.m. from Kurseong to reach Siliguri at 6 p.m. the fares as mentioned by the Secretaries were for 1<sup>st</sup> Class by railway

and tonga was Rs.48.8 annas; for 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Rs.35 and for 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Rs.12. 8 annas. The through Goods rates per maund for 1<sup>st</sup> Class was Rs.2. 2 annas and 6 paise; for 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Rs.2.14 annas and 6 paise and for 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Rs.3.10 annas.<sup>43</sup>

In the early months of 1881 the tramline reached Tung.<sup>44</sup> In February 1881 Sonada was linked and as per the report of 26<sup>th</sup> March 1881 by the Secretaries ‘subject of the usual official inspection, and additional length of Line between Sonada and Jore Bungalow (40-45 miles) will be opened for Traffic on and from Monday, the 4<sup>th</sup> April’.<sup>45</sup> Ghum in April and finally on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1881 the tramway reached Darjeeling. On September 15, 1881, the title of the company was changed to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) Co. The line was extended by (1/4 miles) to Darjeeling bazaar in 1886 [Table: 4.2].

Upon completion, the journey now involved an overnight trip of 16 hours to travel the 320 miles from Calcutta to Siliguri and another 7 hours to travel the 51 miles from Siliguri to Darjeeling, all for just 19 rupees in comparison to the previous train fare of 27 rupees.<sup>46</sup>

#### **Clarendon Hotel, Kurseong.**



[Figure No.4: 1] Source: www.dhrs. Photo archive.

### **DHR Narrow Gauge (0.610 metre) Opening of Main Lines**

Sections of Railway	Date of opening	km
Siliguri to Kurseong	23-08-1880	51.09
Kurseong to Sonada	01-02-1881	15.29
Sonada to Ghum	04-04-1881	9.45
Ghum to Darjeeling	04-07-1881	5.84
Darjeeling to Darjeeling Bazaar	16-06-1886	0.40
Between Ghum and Darjeeling	10-03-1919	0.12
Total		82.19 km

[TABLE: 4. 2] Source: D.H.R. Agreements Documents.

### **[B] EXECUTION OF THE MOUNTAIN RAILWAY**

Soon after its genesis the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway became the uncompetitive mode of transport and communication in the hills of Darjeeling. It was no longer ‘a long tedious journey’ to the travellers and the sick people who used to visit the hills for respite and good health. ‘The whole journey took from five to six days, and was about as exhausting and uncomfortable a journey as can well be imagined. Those who can recall what the journey was in those days while doing it in comfort now in less than 24 hours, may well look back to it as a horrid nightmare.’<sup>47</sup>

The Himalayan Railway increased the accessibility for the tourists and thus ushered the progress of urbanization in Darjeeling. For the convenience of the travellers, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Co. published guide books one in the year 1896 titled ‘Illustrated Guide for Tourist to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Darjeeling’ when the General Manager and Chief Engineer was S. B. Cary. Another one titled ‘Darjeeling and its Mountain Railway – A

Guide and Souvenir' published by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Co. Ltd., in 1921 was prepared under the leadership of Mr. Robert Bawn Addi, the then General Manager, DHR (1919-1923) assisted by Mr. F. L. Bussell.

The extracts of the journey officially given in the guide book in 1896 along with the changes found in the 1921 official guide book within the brackets thus follows:

"Starting from Siliguri, the train has a comparatively level run for the first seven miles, and travels at the rate of 12 miles an hour. After passing the usual collection of thatched huts which constitute the town of Siliguri, the first object of interest is the iron bridge, 700 feet in length (seven spans of 100), which crosses the Mahanadi River...[the bridge originally constructed of timber was replaced by concrete in 1894 (Fig.No.4:2 A &B)] The next objects which draw attention on the east side of the 'Panchanai' Tea Garden. ...and though tea grows well in this Terai tract, it is most unhealthy for Europeans for some time after the first clearing of the jungle has been made, and many a tomb in this part of the country testifies to the deadly fever that reigns in this tract all along the Himalayas. A few more streams and 'gardens' are passed, and the first stoppage takes place at Sukna, which is 7 $\frac{1}{8}$  miles distant from Siliguri, and 533 feet above sea level.( At Sukna there is a short halt for the engine to take water.)...The jungle, after passing Sukna, grows denser and denser, and the ear-piercing chirrup of the cicada is at times heard on all sides. The Forest Department Depot is passed, and some elephants may probably be seen standing about after their labours in the forest...After passing the ninth mile – which used to be known as 'Panchkeela', or 'Five Posts' (one mile post of the Carragola Road and four guard posts), and which was a most deadly place, by read on of its malaria, for the workmen engaged in making the road, we pass the first sharp curves in the line, where the traveller first realized the nature of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway line.

### **Pre-1894 Wooden Mahanadi Bridge**



[Fig.No.4:2 A] Source: Ghum Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

### **Concrete and Steel Mahanadi Bridge**



[Fig.No.4:2 B] Source: Ghum Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

Shortly after, a fine view opens out to the south, and displays a vast horizon, and the traveller is surprised to see how rapidly he is rising above the plains. Passing on amid semi-

tropical scenery of great beauty, among which the giant bamboo is prominent, as also the screw pine we reach the  $11\frac{1}{2}$  mile, the first spiral, or ‘loop’, in the line. This runs through a deep cutting (which was closed during the rains of 1883 due to large slip of earths and rock), and forms part of the works undertaken for the purpose of easing the gradients and so increasing the hauling power of the engines. Thence working its way upwards, the train progresses along the new track some distance below the original road, which, between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> miles, was exceedingly steep. On this run a stoppage takes place at Rungtong Station, and again for water at the  $12\frac{3}{4}$  mile, and the traveller will then have time to look about for a few minutes. ..The line now turns nearly south on to a long spur, where another and somewhat complicated spiral or loop occurs, which is interesting as an engineering work. In passing through the cutting, some 30 feet deep, a short tunnel-like opening will be noticed, and over this the train shortly passes. The line, now returning northwards and eastwards, for a short distance runs along the old road, but gradually passes below it, till a third spiral or loop is reached at the 16<sup>th</sup> mile post, hard by the old Choonbattie Dak Bungalow, which was used in the days of Tongas, as the halting place for lunch. ... the next point of note will be the ‘zigzag’, or reverse, at the  $17\frac{1}{2}$  mile. This is the first of a series of reverses, and is another of the works carried out with the view of obtaining an easier ascent. The second station on the hill portion of the line is reached at the 20<sup>th</sup> mile; this is named Tindharia. The train only makes a halt here of ten minutes for tea, coffee, etc. the company has its workshops here for repairs and for erecting new stock, and it also forms the principal locomotive station. The elevation of the station is about 2,822 feet, and is considered to be above the Terai ‘fever level’.

Leaving Tindharia, we shortly pass another of the ‘zigzags’ in the line, and round the fourth and final spiral or loop. This one gives a better idea than the others of the way these loops are constructed. A large amount of work was done at this point to form the sharp curve of the loop: this curve is only 60 feet in radius. A few large trees still show what the original forest

was, and only a few years ago this point was the haunt of the little barking deer, which are common in these hills. ..at the 23<sup>rd</sup> mile we pass another ‘zigzag’ near Gayabari Station. On the ridge above may be seen several Lepcha monuments. These are erected in many places as memorials of native chiefs and persons of note. Gayabari Station is at an elevation of 3516 feet; from here a short cut road diverges towards Kurseong. This road was the only means of communication with the upper road in 1890, when the line was carried away at the 26<sup>th</sup> mile.

At 24<sup>th</sup> mile we pass the fourth and last ‘zigzag’ or reverse, and then proceed along the original road for several miles. At the 25<sup>1/4</sup> mile a halt is made at one of the numerous watering stations. Here, it will be noticed, the nature of the soil has completely changed, and we see the rock formation known as ‘Sikkim gneiss’. The water-course at this stoppage is very pretty, and is remarkable after heavy rain. A few yards up the road is the largest water-course on this side of the range, known as the ‘Pagla Jhora’ or the ‘Mad Torrent’. It has cost considerable sums to control, and has given great trouble to the road. In July 1890, during ‘the rains’ nearly 800 feet of road and line were carried away at this point and for 500 feet on the upper road. The rainfall on this occasion was over 14 inches in six hours. It is the chief outlet of the rainfall due to the striking of the clouds against the Mahalderam range, and, after heavy rain, is a roaring torrent in which large boulders are tossed about... at the ‘Pagla Jhora’ we also reach the half-way distance to Darjeeling, and in the 27<sup>th</sup> mile we pass along a very precipitous rock face of the hill side. Here the road was blasted out, in some places, for a depth of 50 feet. The ‘Goomtee’ bend, at the bazaar so named, is about an elevation of 4040 feet above mean sea level. There is a crossing station here named Mahanadi- elevation, 4120 feet; and to the north-west may be seen, in the rains, a fine waterfall some 150 feet sheet drop; this is the actual source of the Mahanadi River, and the tea garden of this name is located to the south of the waterfall...Kurseong is a place of some importance, and has a considerable trade. The old Punkabaree Road joins the cart road at the bazaar. This used to be the route from the plains and from Siliguri previous to the making of

the cart road via Sukna. From Kurseong the old road (along which troops formerly went to Darjeeling) works up to the Mahalderam ridge, and follows it to Senchel, near Darjeeling. The barracks used to be at Senchel, but were abandoned. The trains halt for half an hour at the hotel, and lunch is served in the refreshment room of the hotel...at the 38<sup>th</sup> mile, we pass the old rest barracks which were used by the troops when they had to march up to Darjeeling. Troops now proceed by rail, and these barracks have been transformed into a brewery. Some sharp curves in the 40<sup>th</sup> mile are interesting. At the 41<sup>1/4</sup> mile we reach the bazaar and station of Sonada (6552 feet elevation) ...proceeding from Sonada, the train passes through almost primeval forests, which here clothe the hill sides. Ascending gradually, we reach Jore Bungalow Bazaar. At this point the road from Senchel joins the main road, as also Rangaroon and the Jalapahar Troop Depot, of which a glimpse is obtained, as also a remarkably fine view of the mountain ranges to the north-east...The train presently pulls up at Ghoom Station, which is situated at the highest point reached by the railway (7,407 feet above mean sea level). Thence we descend towards Darjeeling for a distance of some four miles, the line falling about 600 feet in this direction. Immediately after leaving the Ghoom Station the line passes through deep cutting, and near this point during the winter of 1882-83 snow proved a slight obstruction, and, probably for the first time on record, a 'snow plough' was used on a locomotive engine in India. Snow is never very severe at Darjeeling, but in this instance it had drifted. It will be noticed that the train proceeds downhill here most cautiously – the line being steep in places (1 in 23 for a short distance). About a mile out of Ghoom the line passes out on a projecting sweep, and on a clear day the snows suddenly appear to view from this point, and shortly after the hill side to the north-east is seen covered with houses. This is the town of Darjeeling. A few minutes brings us to our destination, and the train stops at the Darjeeling terminus. The traveller can now walk to his hotel or other resting place that he may have selected, his luggage having been consigned to some of the numerous licensed coolies found waiting the arrival of the train. Some of the hotels

send servants to the station for the convenience of their patrons. ‘Dandies’, a sort of lounge chair, carried by three or four sturdy hillmen, can always be hired at the station, or ponies may be hired by previous arrangement, as also rickshaws.”<sup>48</sup>

## **FEATURES OF THE DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY**

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway has some peculiar features that are found in other mountain railways of the world. Being a mountain railway there are steep gradients and sharp curves that make the engine difficult to ascent the higher altitude. Many of such rails have adopted some typical features for the line like zigzag, swinging in a great horseshoe shape or spiral curves to gain height or even make tunnel to lower the elevation.<sup>49</sup> Unlike other hill railways the DHR has no tunnels bored in the line.

### **1. CURVES**

The engine to avoid a steep gradient without putting much pressure on the track uses curves. The curves are necessarily very sharp on account of the contour of the mountain. The simple bogie or radical truck allows curves to be tackled at speed as the locomotive is, by its use, gently eased round the curve and can adapt itself to inequalities of the track. Rough track, sharp curves and steep gradients are the bane of fast running. No tunnels being bored, a fact for which the traveler in the interests of his comfort and of the scenic pleasures of the journey may be grateful. The sharpest curve on the line is at Loop No.4 at mile 21 and has a radius of 59 feet.<sup>50</sup> The total number of curves is 872. The maximum degree of curvature is 120 degrees. The total length of the line on curves of more than 60 degrees is 23.5 Km or 27%.<sup>51</sup>

### **2. RAILS**

The steel rails used in the track weigh  $41\frac{1}{4}$  lbs.per yards, and portions of the line have later been relayed with 50lb. rails.<sup>52</sup> The contract stated the rails were ‘to weigh not less than 30lb to the yard on the level portion and 40lb on the hill road’ and that ‘when the rail

weigh 40lb per yard or more, not less than seven sleepers per rail of 24 feet are to be used on the straight and nine on curves. Where rails weigh less than 40lb, nine sleepers per rail are to be used,<sup>53</sup>

### **3. GRADIENT**

The steepest gradient on the hill section is now 1 in 20; the average gradient is 1 in 29. The line from Sukna to Ghum rises in one continuous grade, there being no reverse or counter grades in a distance of 40 miles.<sup>54</sup> When gradients are associated with sharp curves they greatly affect the performance of locomotives. Where gradients vary greatly along a route and include sections which tax the power of the locomotives the alternatives are to reduce the load throughout the journey which the locomotive could bear on the steepest section as in the case between Ghum and Darjeeling before the formation of Batasia loop in 1919. Or by adding banking engines for the difficult sections or to split the train for these banks, used most widely used in England ‘the Lickey Incline’ and Canada ‘the Kicking Horse Pass’ where powerful 2-10-4 banking locomotives were used until dieselization.<sup>55</sup>

Descent of steep gradients taxes the braking power of the train and can lead to overheating of the wheels. Devices to aid braking include steam brakes and counter-pressure brakes. On the Kalka-Simla line, jets of water are sprayed on the tyres during descents to prevent them overheating with the friction from the brake-blocks.<sup>56</sup>

### **4. CROSSINGS AND BRIDGES**

One peculiar feature of the DHR is that the tracks cross the Cart road as many as 177 times that explains the intimacy between the two.<sup>57</sup> DHR has no feature of tunnels as in the case of other mountain railways but it winds around the ridges and valleys of the hilly terrain crossing five major and 498 minor bridges.

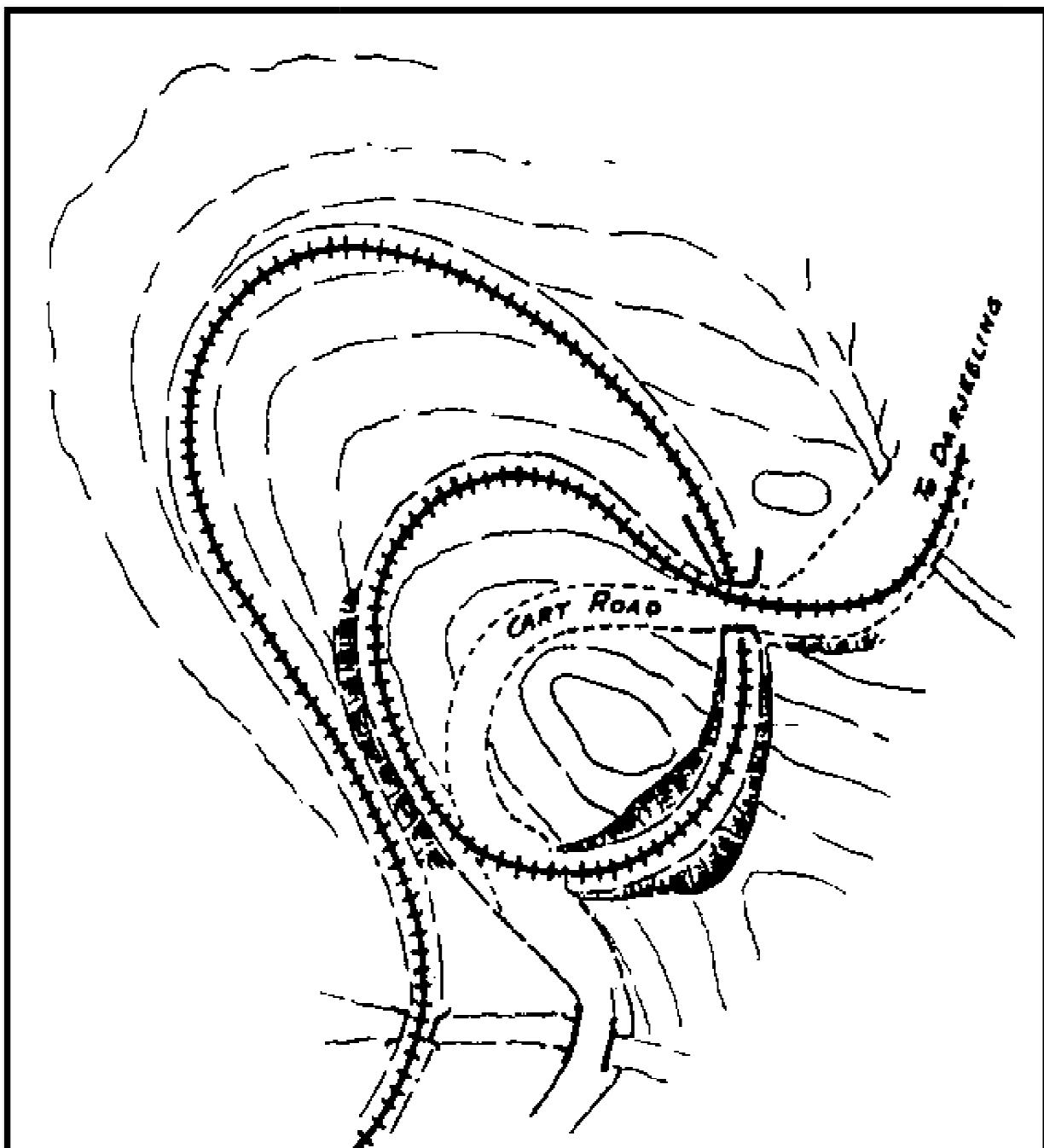
## 5. LOOPS

Loops help in gaining height for the rail skirting along the mountain with a radius of curve as minimum as possible. The technique of skirting along the hillock reduced the cost of

construction to bare minimum. David Barrie and David Charlesworth in their article “Going Loopy” published in ‘The Darjeeling Mail’ of November 1998 made an excellent analysis of all loops existing on DHR at any point of time. The mileage is from Siliguri Junction.

- i. **Loop No.1:** the engineers had to conquer an altitude of 871 ft. in the four-and-three-quarter miles from Sukna to Rangtong station (1,404), which is at the 11<sup>1/2</sup>th mile [Diagram No.4:1]. Four and a half miles from Sukna the sudden ascent made a spiral unavoidable. The track described a sharp spiral through a deep cutting to gain the higher level. The inset plan indicates clearly how the track doubles round and passes over itself by the bridge as shown in diagram 1. Four years or so after this had been constructed the rains of 1883 caused a landslide which fell into the cutting, completely filling it. This misfortune was turned to good account. The engineers had discussed re-aligning the section to reduce the gradient, and which the landslip compelled them to repair the line, they eased the gradient, making a new track some distance below the original road.<sup>58</sup> Loop No.1 at km 15/11 was sunk to a depth of 12 meters in September 1991 and a separate alignment with regarding was chosen eliminating it completely (Fig.No.4:3).<sup>59</sup>

Loop No.1 at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ Mile.



[Diagram No.4:1] Source: Darjeeling and its Mountain Railway, 1921.

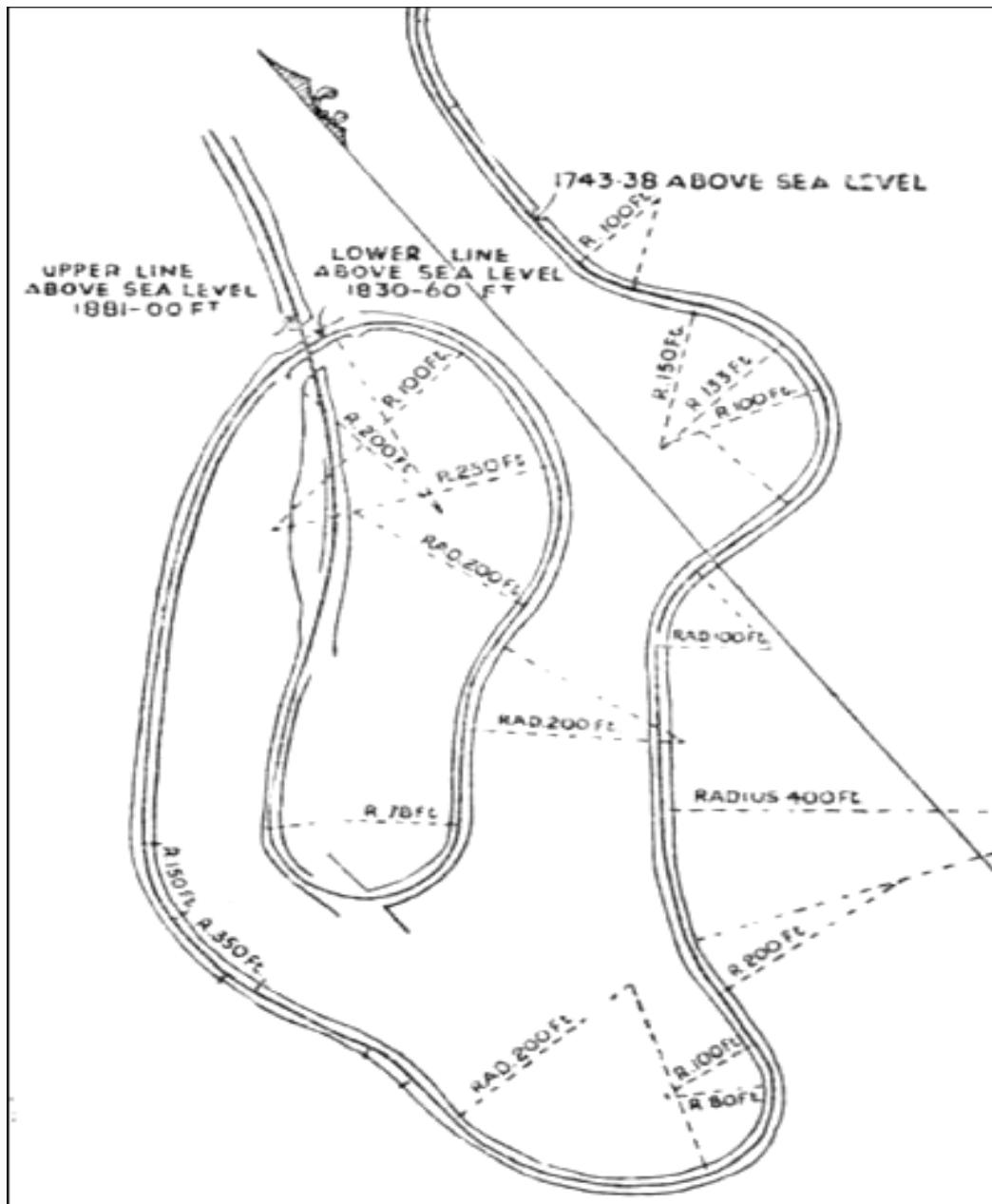
### **Loop No. 1**



[Fig.No.4:3] Source: Darjeeling and its Mountain Railway, 1921

ii. **Loop No.2:** Soon after Rungtong station the line turns nearly south on to a long spur where another spiral is encountered. In passing through the cutting, some 30 feet deep, a short tunnel-like opening will be noticed, and over this the train shortly passes [Fig. No.4:4]. This spiral begins just before the 14<sup>th</sup> mile post, and is one of the most complicated and interesting pieces of engineering on the railway as shown by the inset plan in the Diagram No.4:2. From Rungtong the line has to ascend to Tindharia station (2,822 ft.) in less than eight miles, the average gradient for this section rise of 137 ft., there is practically a double loop, the outstanding feature of which is a sharp curvature introduced to fit the alignment to the situation. the train passes under a bridge, circles round the end of the spur and then crosses the bridge. Loop No. 2 is more complicated than the first one on account of the contour of the mountain. Loop No.2 at Selim Hill was converted into a 'Z' reversing station during World War II.<sup>60</sup>

## **Loop No.2 at 14<sup>th</sup> Mile.**



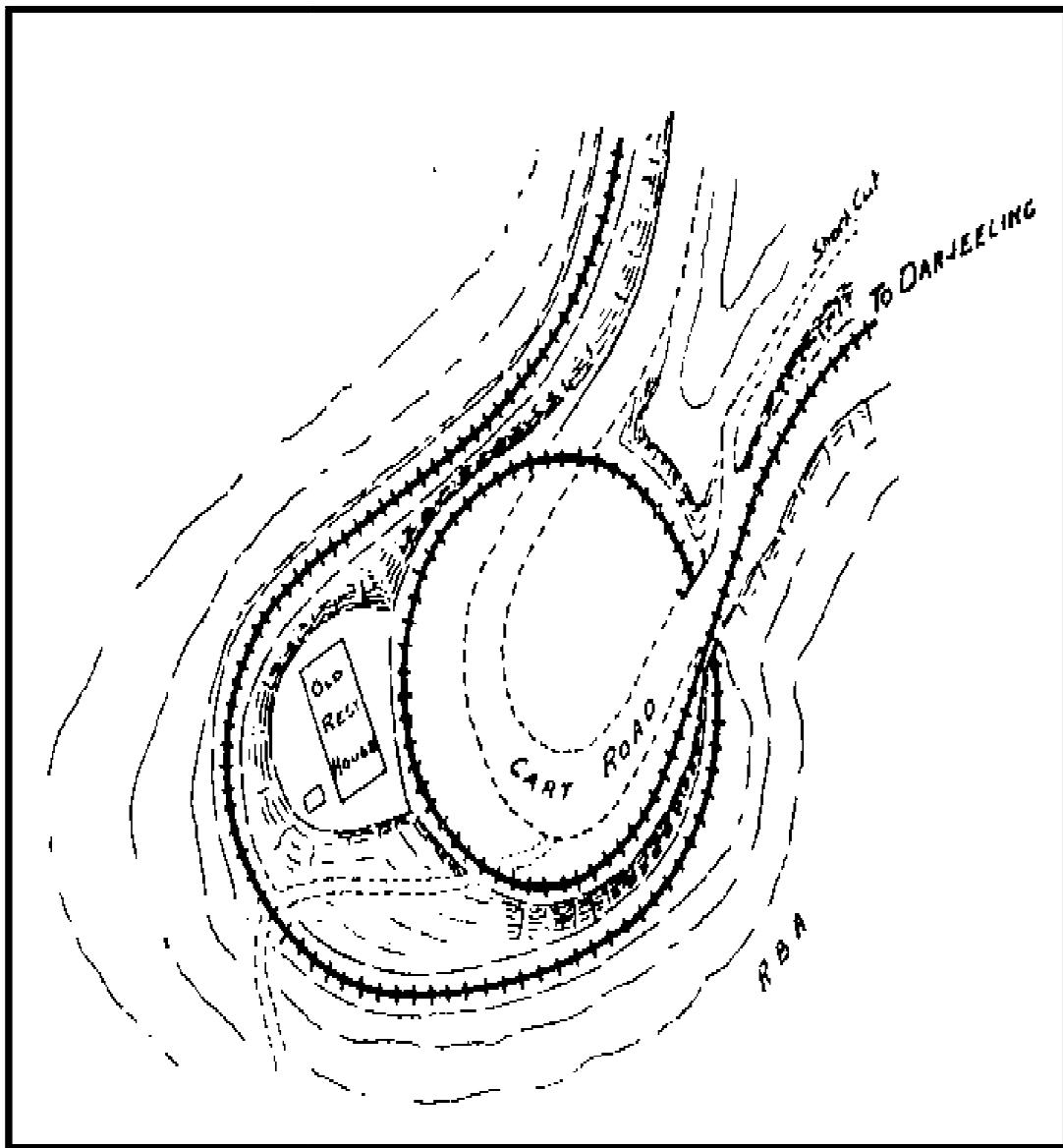
**[Diagram No. 4: 2]**

**Scale 150 ft. to the inch; Gradient 1 in 28.**

**Source: Illustrated Guide for the Tourists to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, 1896.**

- iii. **Loop No.3:** The track now returning northwards and eastwards for a short distance, runs along the old road, but gradually passes below it, until the third loop is reached at the 16<sup>th</sup> mile post. The loop at Chunabhati km 23/14 between Rangtong and

Chunabhati station is popularly known as Loop No.2, and technically it is the first loop now. This loop is double circle as shown by the inset plan Diagram No.4:3 [Fig. No.4: 5].<sup>61</sup>



**Loop No. 3 at 16 Mile.**

**[Diagram No.4: 3] Source: Darjeeling And Its Mountain Railway, 1921.**

- iv. **Loop No.4:** Leaving Tindharia one gets a better idea the way these loops are constructed. A large amount of work was done at this point to form the sharp curve of the loop; this curve is only 60 feet in radius. Originally there was so little room that on

### Choonbattie Loop



[Fig.No. 4:4] Source: Darjeeling And Its Mountain Railway, 1921.

the upper part of the loop a curve of 59 ft. radius had to be described overhauling the hillside at this point but improvements were carried out later and the curve was somewhat eased.<sup>62</sup> This is generally regarded as the most sensational spot on the line, and is called ‘Agony Point’. After the abandonment of the first loop it is popularly known as Loop No.3, though presently, it is the second loop in the line [Fig.No.4:5]. Till 1919 it remained as the fourth and the last loop of the DHR.

- v. **Loop No.5:** In 1919, the section between Ghum and Darjeeling having a gradient of 1 in 20 was eased by constructing a double spiral known as the Batasia loop. The

section which actually steepened to 1 in 16 at one point on a curve and presented the locomotive crews with long standing problem specially with adhesion but with the engine running in reverse and having the difficulty of maintaining the water level over the crown of the firebox. It was not unusual to find the train stalled on this section and a load being divided before the summit was reached. At last the Company adopted the proposal made by Cresswell ten years earlier to outline the line into a double loop round the natural projection at Batasia that eased the descent to 1 in  $22\frac{1}{2}$  and the ruling gradient to 1 in 30 as shown in Diagram No.4:4 [Fig. No.4:6].<sup>63</sup> This added a further 0.7miles to the line which was opened for service on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1919 and the work cost Rs.1,25,000.<sup>64</sup>

### Agony Point



[Fig. No.4:5] Source: [www.dhrs.in](http://www.dhrs.in). Photo archive

**Batasia Loop**



[Fig. No.4:6] Source: www.dhrs. Photo archive

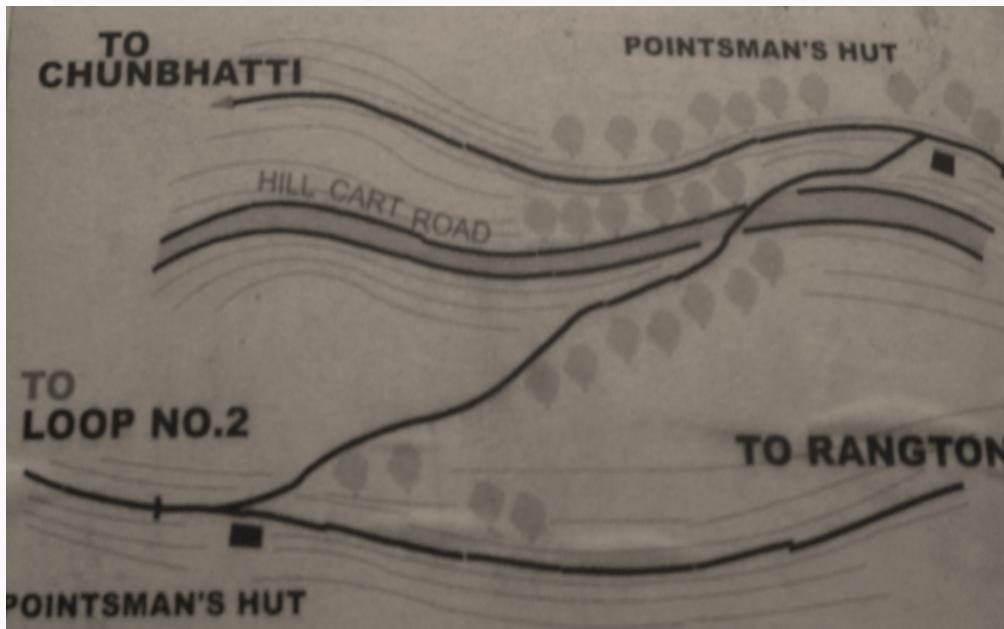
## 6. REVERSING STATIONS OR ZIGZAG (Z)

The Reversing Stations are another peculiar feature of DHR. High land offers a challenge to the surveyors and engineer and a route with low summits and a line of approach with workable gradients is sought.<sup>65</sup> When the work was in progress, deep erosion in the hillside of Tindharia made it impossible to employ a gradient within the limits of rail-transport. ‘The interesting American zigzag device to ascend steep slopes was adopted in the 1840s to carry coal wagons down into the Nesquehoning Valley of Pennsylvania. Train direction is reversed at each angle of the zigzag and so movement is slow. The technique was adopted for the line using the Rimac Valley of Peru when an ascent of 15,693 ft, had to be made between Callao and Galera Tunnel: to keep the gradient no steeper than 1 in 25, in a distance of 70 miles, there had to be 13 of these reversing points as well as horseshoe curves’.<sup>66</sup> In case of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway the story of ‘ballroom dance technique’ is emotionally involved behind such reverses. It is said that

after all efforts when no solution was apparent to Herbert Rumsay, his wife Lily suggested 'Darling, if you can't go forward, why don't you come back' just like that in a ball dance, when at the corner they step back for no interval. So the idea of 'Z' Reversing stations were used to run forward almost to the edge of the cliff, then backwards at an oblique angle up the hillside, then forward again this time high enough above the original track to avoid the problem of land erosion which they faced.<sup>67</sup>

(i) The 'zigzag', or reverse at the  $17\frac{1}{2}$  mile is the first of a series of reverses, and is another of the works carried out with the view of obtaining an easier ascent. The inset plan of the first 'Z' Reverse shows the rise in altitude from 2438.4 ft. above sea level at a gradient of 1 in 28 with a curve of 800 ft. radius, followed by one of 400 ft. radius, and reaches at 2,473 ft. It again climbs at a gradient of 1 in 33 with round curves of 400 ft. and 200 ft. radius to gain a height of 2,501 ft. Another climb at 1 in 28 around a curve of 400 ft. radius brings the train to 2,536 ft., so that by means of the reverse or zigzag a total vertical lift of 98 ft. is accomplished [see Dia.No.4:4].<sup>68</sup>

Z Reverse No.1



[DiagramNo.4:4] Source: Ghum Railway Museum, darjeelling.

- (ii) Another ‘zigzag’ in the line is near the fourth loop just after leaving Tindharia.
- (iii) The third Reverse is located at 23<sup>rd</sup> mile, immediately after which Gayabari Station at an elevation of 3,400 ft. comes on the way of the railway .

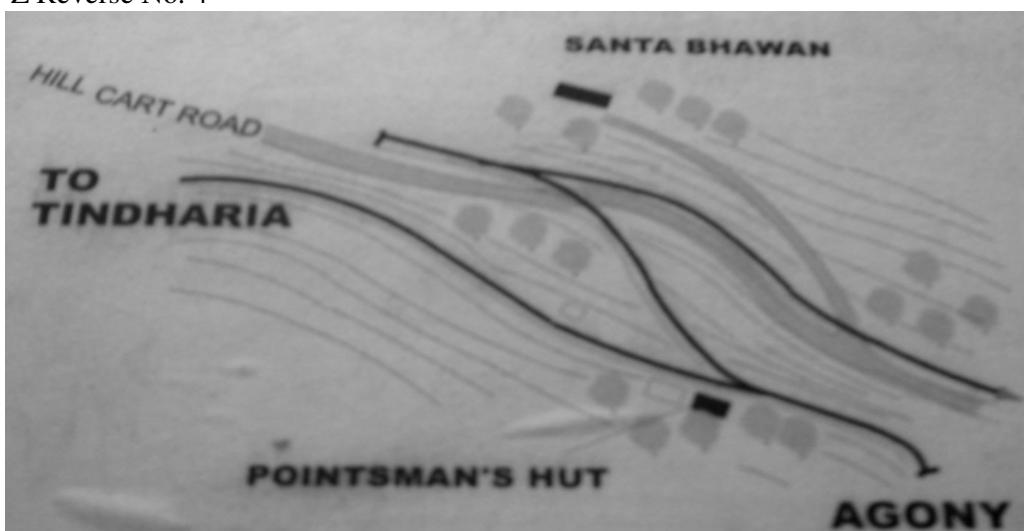
**Reverse Below Gayabari**



[Fig. No.4:7] source: Darjeeling And Its Mountain Railway, 1921.

- (iv) At 24<sup>th</sup> mile the fourth and the last Reverse station of the DHR comes across [see Diag.No.4:5].

**Z Reverse No. 4**



[Diag.No.4:5] Source: Ghum Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

For almost 40 years from the beginning, there were four complete loops and four Z reversing stations. During World War II, when traffic was intense, the very small radius double loop

No.2, between Rangtong and Chunabhati was replaced by a newly-built Z reversing station to gain 140 ft. altitude more easily for uphill trains. Thus the line now has four loops and five Z reversing stations [Table No.4:3].<sup>69</sup>

#### **DHR 'Z' REVERSING STATION**

Sl.No.	Reverse No.	Location (Km from Siliguri Junction)	Between Stations	A	B	C	D
1.	1	19/6-13	Rangtong-Chunabhati	61.87	58.22	500	27.78
2.	1A (new reverse)	24/6-13	Chunabhati-Tindharia	54.00	52.00	500	27.50
3.	2	25/13-26/3	"	67.67	63.40	285.70	11.50
4.	3	31/1-5	Tindharia-Gayabari	75.59	74.68	286.00	15.70
5.	4	34/14-35/3	"	76.20	76.20	285.00	14.50
6.	5	36/5-36/10	Gayabari-Mahanadi	74.07	73.78	74.07	17.50

[Table No. 4:3] Source: Bhandari, R.R., 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway', 2000.

## **7. STATIONS OF DHR**

There were eleven stations originally in the main line of the DHR. later two more stations viz. Siliguri junction and New Jalpaiguri (NJP) was added that made thirteen stations altogether[Table No.4:4]. Earlier for the construction of stations of Siliguri, Kurseong and Darjeeling, an amount of Rs.7,500 for the two and Rs 25,000 for Darjeeling station was estimated.<sup>71</sup> The stations up to Kurseong were completed by 1880 and the ones from there up to Darjeeling were completed in 1881. Most of the stations are still in their original form with a few exceptions. The central portion of the Darjeeling Station which was damaged during the 1934 earthquake and by 1944 was at the point of collapse. The first station of this line started

from Siliguri Town Station, 398 ft. this terminus was the starting point of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway from 1880 till 1964. Siliguri Junction was constructed in 1949 when the meter gauge Assam rail Link was completed. The previous DHR Kishanganj line branched off from Panchanai River. The main DHR line was extended on from Siliguri Town to New Jalpaiguri where a new station was built in 1964 with a new 2 ft. gauge line of 3-mile. The next station was Sukna Station situated at an altitude of 533 ft. The Rangtong Station is reached at a height of 1,404 ft.

From Rangtong the line has to ascend to Tindharia station (2,822 ft.) in less than eight miles, the average gradient for this section being a little over 1 in 28. It represents the ascent of another of the conical spurs which are common in the locality. Originally there was so little room that on the upper part of the loop a curve of 59 ft. radius had to be described, the train practically overhanging the hillside at this point, but improvements were carried out later and the curve was somewhat eased. The train passes Agony Point and proceeds, encountering another zigzag just before Gayabari station, which stands at an altitude of 3,516 feet. The Mahanadi Station is located at 4,120 ft. above sea-level and 27 miles from Siliguri. The gradient eases to about 1 in 32, and the train proceeds westwards towards Kurseong station.<sup>72</sup>

For the purpose of a station at Kurseong (4,864 ft.) the present location was sanctioned by the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Province in a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 1883 [Fig. No. 4:8]. It is noted that the compensation amounts to Rupees five thousand eight hundred and sixty-five and has been paid by the Company.<sup>73</sup> Before that Kurseong was a through station adjacent to the Clarendon Hotel where only the affluent passengers were accommodated for refreshment. There is also good shed and a few sidings adjacent to the main line, but the station proper is a dead end. Up trains must reverse out of the station (across a busy road junction) before they can continue on their climb. It is said that the station was built this way so that the train could enter a secure yard and stay there while the passengers left the train for refreshments.

Above Kurseong station, the railway runs through the bazaar. Trains skirt the front of shops and market stalls on this busy stretch of road.

Kurseong Station



[Fig.No.4:8] Source: [www.dhr.photo.archive](http://www.dhr.photo.archive).

The gradient stiffens slightly to 1 in 31 to Tung station (5,656 ft.) which is about five miles from Kurseong. The station building still retains the old structure [Fig.No.4:9]. After which the gradient increases to a little over 1 in 29 for the five miles to Sonada, 6,552 ft above the sea and forty-one miles from Siliguri. Jorebunglow was store point for tea to Calcutta. It is an important place to connect Darjeeling to rest of the country.

Tung Station



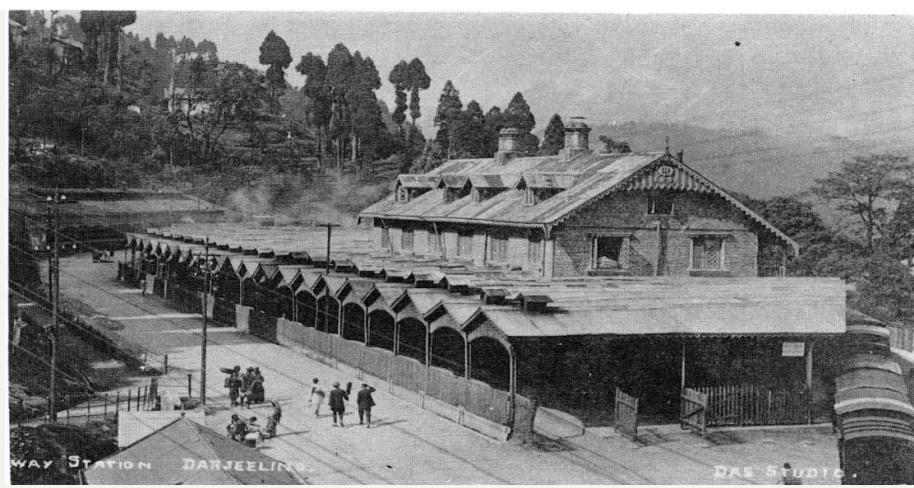
[Fig. No.4:9] Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tung>

For about six miles long to Ghum station, which is 7,408 ft. above sea-level, the gradient eases to about 1 in 37, and the line passes through magnificent forests. The station is the highest narrow gauge traffic railway in India [Fig No.4:10]. It is now only about four miles to Darjeeling, the altitude of which is 6812 ft; but on this section the steepest short gradient is found, the descent being made at an average of 1 in 31, but with a short bank of about three-quarters of a mile at approximately 1 in 23[Fig.No.4:11]. The farthest reach of the line was to Darjeeling Bazaar, a goods- line and not in use after the closure of freight train.



[Fig. No.4:10] Source: Ghum Railway Museum

Darjeeling Station



[Fig.No.4:11] Source:Das Studio, Darjeeling.

From 1949 Siliguri Junction station, north of Siliguri Town, became the main station in the area, with three metre-gauge lines (south-west to Kishanganj and Barsoi; north-east to Assam; south to Siliguri Town and Haldibari) and two narrow-gauge lines (north to Darjeeling; south to Siliguri Town). The narrow-gauge steam shed was moved from Siliguri Town to Siliguri Junction and the narrow-gauge Siliguri Junction - Siliguri Town section became freight-only. In the early 1960s the Indian Railways created a new broad-gauge rail link from Calcutta, and on the south of Siliguri Town built an entirely new through broad-gauge station, New Jalpaiguri. In 1964 New Jalpaiguri (NJP) became the main station in the area, with two broad-gauge lines (west to Calcutta; east towards Assam with branch to Haldibari), a metre-gauge line (north to Siliguri Town and Siliguri Junction, diverging thence south-west to Kishanganj and Barsoi, and north-east to Assam) and a narrow-gauge line (north to Siliguri Town, Siliguri Junction and Darjeeling). The narrow-gauge steam shed was again moved, from Siliguri Junction to New Jalpaiguri. With interchange between main-line and Darjeeling trains at New Jalpaiguri, the narrow-gauge New Jalpaiguri - Siliguri Town - Siliguri Junction section became a passenger line.<sup>74</sup>

#### **DETAIL OF STATIONS OF DHR**

NO.	STATIONS	YEAR OF OPENING	DISTANCE	HEIGHT
1	Darjeeling	1881	88km	2075.6 m/ 6812 ft.
2	Ghum	1881	82km	2257.6 m /7408 ft.
3	Sonada	1881	73	1997.2 m/ 6552 ft.
4	Tung	1881	65	1723.9 m/ 5656 ft.
5	Kurseong	1880	58	1482.5 m/ 4864 ft.

6	Mahanadi		50	1255.7 m/ 4120ft.
7	Gayabari		44	1071.6 m/ 3516ft
8	Tindharia	1880	38	860.1 m/ 2822 ft.
9	Rangtong		26	427.9 m/ 1404 ft.
10	Sukna		18	162.4 m/ 533 ft.
11	Siliguri Junction	1949	8	124.3 m/
12	Siliguri Town	1880	6	121.6 m/ 398 ft.
13	New Jalpaiguri	1964	0	113.8 m/

[Table No.4:4]DHR Paper, Kurseong.

## [C] ENGINES OR LOCOMOTIVES

At first the Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Company was to be equipped with a minimum of eight locomotives capable of hauling 9 tons at 7 mph.(miles per hour) and sufficient stock to carry the traffic to meet the estimated gross receipts of two lakhs. Brian Reed in ‘Darjeeling Tanks’ gives a complete account of the 55 steam locomotives owned by DHR. His analysis covers almost all aspects of the locomotives ever used on this mountain line. ‘Tiny’ a Manning Wardle make, four coupled wheels tank locomotive of 0-4-0ST arrangement, was the first locomotive on DHR used during the construction of the upper end of the Darjeeling line and for various purposes. The engine was built at ‘the Eastern Indian Railway Workshop situated at Jamalpur Workshop and due to its size it was christened as Tiny’. <sup>75</sup> But no DHR number is attached to it. In 1886 it was sold to Jorhat State Railway. <sup>76</sup>

In 1911 a small 0-4-0 ST ‘Baby Sivok’, smaller than the old ‘A’ class engines is said to have been obtained secondhand for the construction of the Raipur Forest Tramway and later transferred to DHR. Baby Sivok (now displayed at Ghum) was employed for construction of

the Kalimpong line [Fig.No.4:12]. It was rebuilt at Tindharia to follow the lines of the ‘A’ class and ‘B’ class tanks, and bears a plate ‘Rebuilt Tindharia Works, 1945’. It perhaps is Orenstein & Koppel built. It participated in the Centenary Exhibition at Delhi in 1953.<sup>77</sup>

The DHR’s first eight engines came from Sharp Stewart & Co. Manchester (SS) and were numbered 1 to 8. It had 0-4-0 T wheel arrangements with engines having 8”x14” cylinders and 26” wheels. For fuel both wood and coal were used. The trailing load uphill was 18 tons. However, the engines were not so powerful enough for the uphill journey. In 1881 another order was placed on Sharp Stewart for a larger type 0-4-0 T wheel arrangement ‘A’ class engines with low hung “well-tanks”. Eight ‘A’ class engines were delivered, however more power and better balance was required.

#### BABY SEVOK



[Fig.No.4:12] Ghum Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

This order was for two locomotives of well tank 0-4-0 WT design, with an outside Walschaerts motion actuating slide valves above 10”x14”outside cylinders, which were inclined at 1 in 8. This lay-out gave a low centre of gravity desirable for sharp curves of DHR.<sup>78</sup>

In 1881-82 four more orders of two locomotives each were placed with SS & Co. for this type. The engines bore DHR running Nos. 9 to 16 and were known as class 2. Sharp Stewart subcontracted the order for four locomotives (DHR Nos.11 to 14) to Hunslet Engine Company these engines were coal burners only and could haul a trailing load uphill of 27 tons, an increase of 50% over the earlier locomotives. As time went on, the locos numbered 8 to 16 were significantly altered.<sup>79</sup>

As early as in 1886, though the well tanks and under cylinder wings were retained, a narrow saddle tank was inserted between the dome and the chimney, partly to get increased water capacity and partly to get better balance between the axle loads with the pull on the draw bar. DHR workshop at Tindharia made a number of alterations in these and other locos and claimed credit by fitting an oval plate reading Rebuilt Tindharia works. These engines began to be withdrawn from service around the turn of the century, though the first one No.9 continued in service till 1954.<sup>80</sup> Prestage felt the need for new and more powerful engines and wrote in 1887, “I would suggest the Sharp Stewart type of locomotive with longer boilers and bigger cylinders and better balance”.<sup>81</sup> A new type 0-4-0 ST ‘B’ class locomotives were placed in order to the SS & Co. They were numbered 1-B to 4-B. These ‘B’ class locos fitted well with the required need that further order of which was placed in 1927 [Fig.No.4:13]. All the 34 locomotives are ‘B’ class built by SS & Co., North British Loco Co., Baldwin Loco Works and Tindharia Workshops (DHR) [Diagram No.4:6].<sup>82</sup> The introduction of B class changed the earlier No. 9 to 16 locomotives to Class A. The engines Nos. 1 to 8 became as class C. With the introduction of these classes A, B and C, the earlier classification of class 1 and class 2 went into disuse.<sup>83</sup> Class B was design was ordered in 13 different batches over a period of 39 years, and in 1999, fourteen ‘B’ class locomotives were working on the mountain railway. From 1903 orders went to North British Locomotives Co. Ltd., (NB), into which Sharp Stewart had amalgamated and the engines continued to be built at the Atlas Works until the 1914 delivery.

No782 'B' class 0-4-0ST, Sharp Stewart, in use



[Fig.No.4:13] Source: [www.dhr.photo](http://www.dhr.photo)

In 1910, a Garratt Articulated engine (0-4-0 +0-4-0) was ordered for the hill section and was delivered by Beyer Peacock Co. of Manchester in 1911 [Fig.No.4:14]. The design was approximately equal to two 'B' class tank engines, though the wheelbase of 4 ft. 3 in. of each group was closer to that of 'A' class. This eight wheeled engine No.31 was the only member of class 'D' with a working pressure, 160 p.s.i. There were constant breakages of steam and water pipes and leakage at the joints. The Garratt design later earned international fame (the first 'Garratt' was built for Tasmanian Railway in 1909).<sup>84</sup> The Garratt did not fit in with the pattern of intensive working on the hill section as traffic needed all motive powers of about the same capacity. "A 'B' class could haul six loaded trucks up a 1 in 23 gradient on a 59 ft. curve whereas the Garratt could only manage ten and that with difficulty. However, the major complaint seemed to be that the boiler would not maintain pressure. It was

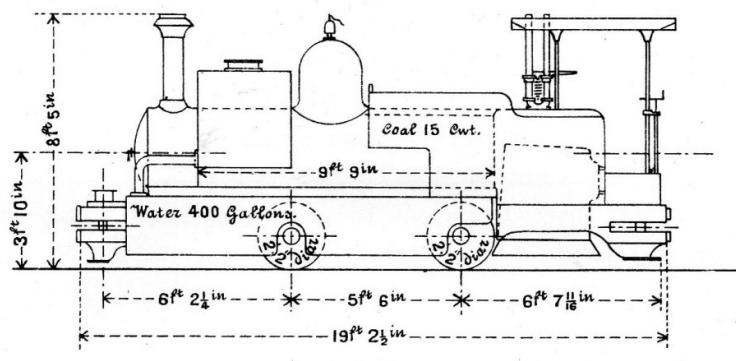
# DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY.

2 FT GAUGE.

4 WHEEL COUPLED ENGINE CLASS B.

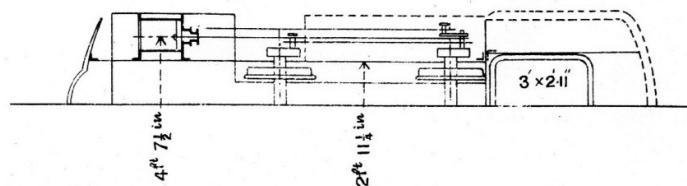
Scale -  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch = 1 foot.

SIDE ELEVATION



Axle Load.  
 Tons Cwt.      Tons Cwt.  
 6 - 10.      7 - 10.  
 Total weight in working order — Engine 14 tons.

HALF PLAN



Cylinder Diameter.....	11 inches
" Stroke.....	14 "
Heating Surface Tubes.....	276 Sq ft
" " Fire Box.....	40.5 "
Total.....	316.5 "
Fire Grate Area.....	8.75 "

[Diagram No.4:6] Source: Railway Board Technical PaperNo.58 1898,

suggested that this was because it was shorter and of larger diameter than a 'B' class. The front bogie was prone to slipping, probably because it was the water tank positioned at that end that

emptied first, thus making the front light. Serious pressure loss between boiler and cylinders persisted along with coal consumption, the Garratt using 196 lb per mile compared with 40 lb for a ‘B’ class tank. On 11<sup>th</sup> January 1914, while climbing round a curve hauling one bogie and five four wheel trucks and slipping badly, one truck derailed pulling the locomotive over too. This misadventure damaged the boiler and resulted in leaky tubes. Indeed one account maintains that the boiler was cracked. A report into the accident opined “it is doubtful whether the Garratt engine as a type is as efficient as two ordinary engines on steep grades and sharp curves, because it probably requires a higher factor of adhesion on account of the excessive vibration which is set up by the double blast. The coupled wheelbase is only 4 ft. 3in., as against 5 ft. 6 in. for an ordinary engine; it may be advisable to increase this to 5 ft. 6 in.” At around this time the DHR opened its two extensions with far less severe gradients and curves, and it was envisaged that the Garratt would be more gainfully employed here. With the re-gauging of the Kishanganj branch to metre gauge in 1949 followed by the monsoon damage caused to Teesta Valley branch the following year, the Garratt became something of an anachronism. It awaited the cutter’s torch which duly came after withdrawal on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1954.<sup>85</sup> Two new ‘C’ class engines were built by North British Loco Co., Glasgow in 1914/15, which were used for the newly constructed Kishanganj line.<sup>86</sup>

Two Pacific tender engines (4-6-2) were ordered for the long Kishanganj Branch in 1913 and were delivered in 1914. They formed class ‘C’ (old ‘C’ class having gone long before), and bore numbers 37 and 38. They too had a working pressure of 160 p.s.i. and weighed 28 tons each. One of these two locomotives has since been preserved at the Nehru Science Centre, Bombay, while the other is preserved at Malegaon, the headquarters of N.F. Railway.<sup>87</sup>



[Fig. No.4:14] Source: Wikipedia file DHR.

An order of the three 'B' class locomotives was placed with the Baldwin Locomotive Works of U.S.A. in 1916 as North British Loco Company was unable to meet the delivery schedule. These were delivered the next year and were the only American engines with DHR. To ease the motive power situation, in 1919, Tindharia Workshop erected a locomotive using spare parts. This practice was followed again in 1923 and 1925. These locomotives were named as TINDHARIA, KURSEONG AND DARJEELING respectively [Table No.4:5]. 14 of these engines are still running various modifications have been tried out over the years; however the original design still prevails. In 1925, a return was made to North British for the last engines to acquire; but that time Atlas Works was in process of being shut down. The standard engines have four coupled wheels and weigh 14 tons; the cylinders being 11 inches bore and 14 inches stroke. A Pacific type engine with bogie tender is in use in the plains section. This engine weighs with tender 49 tons [Table No.4:6].<sup>88</sup>

[Suffix letters like T – denotes side tanks on each side of the boiler. ST – a saddle tank over the top of the boiler. WT- well tank.]

## ILLUSTRATION OF DHR LOCOMOTIVES

DHR	ORDER	DELIVERY	CATEGORY	MANUFACTURE	ISR	STATUS/LOCATION
		1875	0-4-0ST(TINY)	M.W.	Leeds	Sold 1894
1	1879	1880	CLASS 1 ('C' CLASS) 0-4-0 T	S.S.&CO.	Manchester	Sold 1894
2	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1884
3	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1884
4	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1884
5	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1884
6	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1894
7	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1894
8	1879	1880	"	"	"	Sold 1894
9	1881	1882	CLASS 2('A' CLASS) 0-4-0WT	"	"	Withdrawn 1952
10	1881	1882	"	"	"	Withdrawn 1914
11	1882	1882	"	(sc HL)	Leeds	
12	1882	1882	"	(sc HL)	"	Withdrawn 1914
13	1882	1883	"	(sc HL)	"	Withdrawn 1914
14	1882	1883	"	(sc HL)	"	Withdrawn 1914
15	1882	1882	"	S.S. & C.	Manchester	Withdrawn 1914
16	1882	1882	"	"	"	Withdrawn 1914
17	1888	1889	('B' CLASS) 0-4-0 ST+WT	"	"	Withdrawn 1952
18	1888	1889	"	"	"	777 N.R.Museum Delhi
19	1888	1889	"	"	"	778 Museum USA
20	1888	1889	"	"	"	Withdrawn 1952 -scrapped
21	1892	1893	Himalayan Bird	"	Glasgow	779
22	1892	1893	Green Hills	"	"	780 Tindharia

23	1896	1897	”	”	”		Withdrawn 1952 -scraped
24	1899	1900	”	”	”	781	Assam
25	1899	1900	Mountaineer	”	”	782	Tindharia
26	1899	1900	”	”	”	783	Tindharia
27	1902	1903	”	”	”	784	Assam
28	1902	1903	”	”	”	785	Dehradun
29	1903	1904	B' CLASS 0-4-0 ST + WT	N.B.L.C.	”		Withdrawn 1952 -scraped
30	1903	1904	”	”	”	786	Tindharia
31	1910	1911	D' CLASS 0-4-0 +0-4-0	B.P, & C.	Manchester		Withdrawn 1952 – scraped
		1911	0-4-0 ST Baby Sivok	O.& K.	Berlin		Ghoom
32	1912	1913	B' CLASS 0-4-0 ST + WT	N.B.L.C.	Glasgow	787	Tindharia
33	1912	1913	”	”	”	788	Tindharia
34	1913	1914	”	”	”	789	Assam
35	1913	1914	”	”	”	790	Tindharia
36	1913	1914	”	”	”	791	Tindharia
37	1913	1914	C' CLASS 4-6-2 (PACIFICS)	”	”	807	Nehru Science Center
38	1913	1914	”	”	”	808	NFR HQ Gauhati
39	1916	1917	B' CLASS 0-4-0 ST + WT	B.L.W.	Philadelphia	792	Tindharia
40	1916	1917	”	”	”	793	Tindharia
41	1916	1917	”	”	”	794	Tindharia
42		1919	Tindharia	T.W.	Tindharia	795	Tindharia
43		1923	Kurseong	”	”	796	Assam

44		1925	Darjeeling	"	"	797	Lucknow
45	1925	1925	B' CLASS 0-4-0 ST + WT	N.B.L.C.	Glasgow	798	Tindharia
46	1925	1925	"	"	"	799	Railway Board New Delhi
47	1925	1925	"	"	"	800	Lucknow (or R.D.&S. Org.)
48	1927	1927	"	"	"	801	New Bongaigaon
49	1925	1927	B' CLASS 0-4-0 ST +WT	N.B.L.C.	Glasgow	802	Tindharia
50	1925	1943	"	"	"	803	Moradabad (or Tindharia)
51	1925	1943	Queen of the Hills	"	"	804	Tindharia
52	1925	1943	"	"	"	805	Tindharia
53	1925	1943	"	"	"	806	Tindharia

[Table No.4:5] Source: Bhandari, R.R. 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway', NRM, 2000.

DHR followed British practice in adopting the Whyte notation which defines the wheel arrangement and number of wheels in each group, from front to back.<sup>89</sup> 'DHR running number 18, ISR No.777' has been preserved at the National Rail Museum. It was one of the first prototypes built in 1889 and served up to 1952. Sharp Stewart & Co, Atlas Works, Glasgow manufactured it in 1889. Cylinders: Two 11"x 14"; Wheel Arrangement: 0-4-0 ST (Saddle and also Underslung); Weight: 16 tons; Frame: Inside plate: outside; Valve Gear: Walschaerts; Feed: Two fixed nozzle injectors; Numbers: Makers No. 3517.<sup>90</sup> No.3-B (DHR running number 19, ISR No.778) is privately preserved in the U.S.A. TECHNICAL DETAILS OF 'A' & 'B' CLASS LOCOMOTIVES

	A Class	B Class
Cylinder diameter	10 in.	11 in.
Cylinder stroke	14 in.	14 in.
Wheel base	4 ft. 3 in.	5 ft. 6 in.
Weight in working order	12 tons	14 tons
Train load in level	600 tons	840 tons
Train load in gradient 1 in 100	150 tons	210 tons
Train load in gradient 1 in 26 And curve of 60 feet radius	39 tons	50 tons
Coal consumption per mile (average of up and down hill)	38 lbs.	39 lbs.
Water consumption per mile (average)	40 gallons	45 gallons
Cost	Rs.12350	Rs. 19000

[Table No.:4. 6] Source: From Technical paper No.58 of 1898.

### COACHES AND WAGONS

The ordinary passenger bogies in use have a body 24 feet 3 inches long and are 26 feet 6 inches over all. Bogie vans and trucks are also in use, the longest bogie truck being 32feet. Earliest passenger vehicles on DHR were little more than four-wheeled trollies with canvas roofs and wooden benches; they were 9 ft.  $7 \frac{1}{8}$  in long on a 3 ft. 4 in. wheelbase. The administrative Report of 1880-81 mentions: ‘There have been no serious accidents during the year, but cases of rolling-stock running off the line are not exceptional’ and ‘The traffic arrangements, so far, have not been altogether satisfactory; and this combined with the deficiency in rolling stock, has caused on several occasions a complete block at Siliguri. The 6 wheeled Cleminson carriages which were introduced in 1881 were found inappropriate for the line and were soon withdrawn. During 1880’s

'Cleminson flexible wheel base' patent carriages and wagons were supplied to a number of railways in India. DHR also procured few wagons of this design in which the centre axle had lateral motion and the end axle could move in a circular arc, being connected by radial arms. They were 16 ft. long on a 13 ft. wheelbase. These were replaced by 4 wheeled passenger carriages that adopted the dimensions of the covered goods wagons which were in use at the time. In addition, there were some four wheeled vehicles, 10 ft. in length, with one loose wheel on each axle to reduce wear on the sharp curves.<sup>91</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> class carriages - These have no compartments and carry 6 passengers in each, giving 5.54 sq. ft. to each passenger. There are also open 1<sup>st</sup> class trolleys fitted with 6 chairs and side end curtains.

2<sup>nd</sup> class carriages- These have glazed sliding doors and carry 8 passengers in each of compartments, giving 3.25 sq. ft. to each passenger which is not found inconvenient in that climate.

3<sup>rd</sup> class trolleys- These are all open trolleys with side and end curtains, the floor area being the same as for 2<sup>nd</sup> class, and carry 16 passengers in each. Numerous designs followed accommodating for the need for comfort as well as preferences for a good view of the scenery [Diagram No.4:7].<sup>92</sup>

A report of 1896 describes the coaching stock thus: DHR has added new coaching stock built in Northern Railway Workshop, Jodhpur. They are all with bogies and wide windows to give a traveller good views as well as comfortable ride. Recently DHR tastefully furnished two of these coaches and named them 'Kanchenjunha' and 'Dhoalagiri' for the tourist special. To improve the comfort of the passengers, in 1909 bogie carriages were introduced (2 four-wheeled boogies) allowing for greater length of carriages and now predominate on DHR. There are also bogie wagons, some being 32 ft. in length, but most of the goods vehicles were only four wheelers. In 1914 DHR workshop at Tindharia was opened and it built quite a large number of coaches and wagons (only the wheels need to be imported). Even though the carriages became more elaborate over time, it was clear that for a mountain railway, they needed to remain light. In 1948 the DHR was handed over to the Indian Railways and came under the Northeastern Railway. In the late

1960s the bogies were supplied from Gorakhpur (headquarters of Northeastern Railway) and at the end between 1989 and 1991 further carriages were supplied from Jodhpur (Indian Railways carriage workshop). The freight traffic has been closed now. Some freight wagons can be seen in sidings of DHR at many places.<sup>93</sup>

The Tindharia workshop continued to adapt the carriages, which was especially so with the freight wagons. The coaches stock as on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999:

Coaches - (all bogie stock)	
First	5
Second	22
Inspection carriage	1
Luggage, etc.	10
Total	38

[Table No. 4:7] Source: Bhandari, R.R. 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway', NRM, 2000.

[Diagram No.4:7]

# DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY.

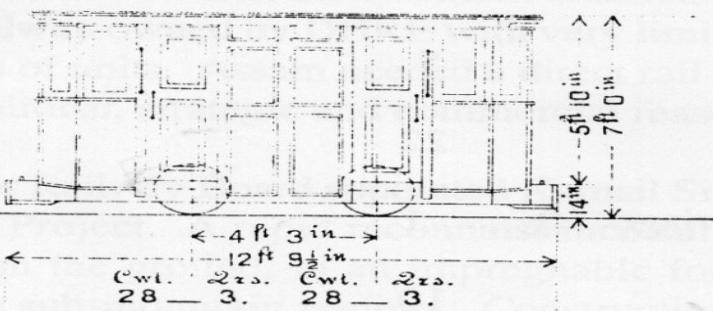
2 FT GAUGE.

Scale -  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch = 1 foot.

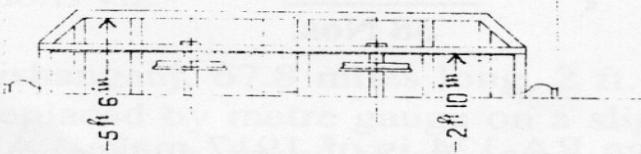
## 1ST CLASS CARRIAGE.

To carry 6 passengers.

SIDE ELEVATION.



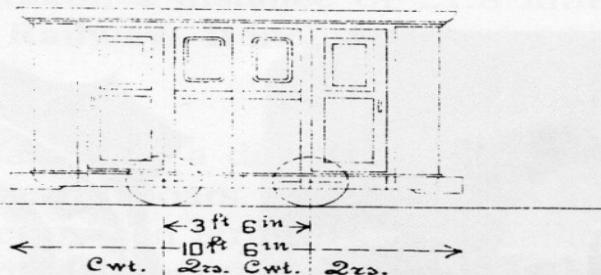
HALF PLAN



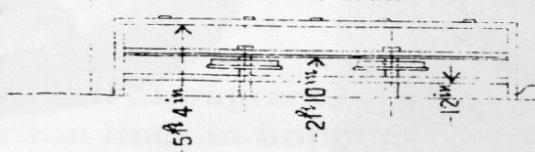
## 2ND CLASS CARRIAGE.

To carry 16 passengers.

SIDE ELEVATION.



HALF PLAN.



Source: Railway Board's Technical Paper No.58 published in 1898.

## CONCLUSION

The chapter gives a brief idea about the early phase of railway in Bengal and the situation leading to the track-way of DHR up to Darjeeling. The discomfort of journey to the visitors to the

hills of Darjeeling was well known. The time and heavy expense incurred in it was another factor of disappointment. The cart road was completed in 1860s, the decade that similarly witnessed growth of tea industry in the district of Darjeeling. The traders doing business with Tibet and China strongly felt the need for the introduction of rail service between Calcutta and Darjeeling to shorten the distance. They petitioned to the Bengal government also. The North Bengal State Railway upto Siliguri was inaugurated in the early months of 1878 that cut short the distance for the traders and travellers respectively. Darjeeling was the first choice for the ailing soldiers and European patients who could not afford to go outside the country, therefore for those the journey to Darjeeling from the foothills was still tedious with the old modes of conveyances. Even the plantation industries had to suffer similar fate on account of slow and unsafe means of transportation. The huge loads of tea chests were carried limitedly by bullock carts and the damages done by the moisture present in the air proved a great loss to the entrepreneurs. The project of Eastern Bengal Railway for an extension line to Darjeeling via Panighatta to the Hope Town (present Sonada) and to Darjeeling was left untouched. When the hope of a railway in the hills was a forgotten story, there came a man, Franklin Prestage who made that ‘dream come true’. In 1879 the Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Company was formed as a private enterprise. Worked progressed rapidly for the two feet (610 mm) Narrow Gauge line and completed within eighteen months. Traffic was opened up to Kurseong by March 1880 from where the passenger had to take a Tonga or ride horse. After the completion of the line on September 1881 the name was changed to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company. Initially, eleven stations buildings were built; Siliguri Junction and North Jalpaiguri (NJP) were later addition that makes thirteen stations on the DHR line. For most of its length the rail followed the Cart road but due to the presence of steep gradients like 1 in 19 in some places the engineers had to apply ingenious methods of spirals or loop, curves, zigzag or reverses for easy gradients. On the other hand, the Nilgiri Line employs the Abt rack system rather than pure adhesion to aid the steep climb between Kallar and Coonor and has no loops or reverses. The Nilgiri Line was built as

a meter-gauge railway. The line rises 4,356 feet in the 20 km (12 miles) of this section with a ruling gradient of 1 in 12°. Whereas the DHR line in its journey of 82.19 kms or 52 miles, rises from 398 ft. from Siliguri to 533 ft. at Sukna and goes on increasing in altitude till Ghum having 7407 ft. above sea level, making the second highest traffic rail station in the world which adds credit to the railway. The genesis of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was a boon to the place and its people. To quote the official book of 1896, the DHR ‘places it within the means of hundreds of the poorer classed to avail themselves of the benefits of a hill climate, often a matter of life or death to the European who has to work during the hot season in the plains of Bengal.’ the advantages of DHR has been further emphasized, ‘it gives a very necessary expeditious means of transit for taking the produce of the numerous tea gardens of the district and other local products down to the plains, as also for taking up to the rapidly increasing station of Darjeeling the necessary supplies of tea gardens machinery and stores of all descriptions, and troops, etc. and it tends materially to augment the growing trade with Tibet and Central Asia.’ It was in itself an innovation as being the first of its kind in India at that time. It revolutionized the way of transport and communication and thereby directly affecting the plantation industries and tourism. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway completed the process of urbanization of Darjeeling hill station.

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## **Chapter – V**

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE DHR**

The opening of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was a ‘giant example’ of one of the impact of Industrial Revolution in the district. Though its size was in the form of a ‘miniature railway’ yet it had a long term impact in the district of Darjeeling and beyond. The first impact on the society was the increase of population from the plains of Bengal and therefore, as can be understood, the interactions and amalgamation of different languages, religion, education and cultures. In 1872, before the construction of the railway the population numbered only 3,157; but during the next nine years it increased by more than 100 per cent. In 1881 the construction of the DHR brought the station within a day’s journey of Calcutta, and the population again doubled itself between the years 1881 and 1891 [See Table No.5:1]. Inspite of the epidemics of cholera in the preceding year and in 1872 and the number of death tolls in the district, there was an increase in the population percentage. No doubt, the development of tea and the yearn for cultivation of waste land had tremendously added to the number of persons in the district, but beside these the opening up of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway facilitated improved form of transportation which added to the volume of tourist traffic. It ‘encouraged the Provincial –Government to stay longer and more often in the town and made Darjeeling a centre of educational activity.’<sup>1</sup> The improvement in transportation increased the numbers of visitors and residents. ‘Hill stations consisted of relatively small, intimate communities through the first half of the nineteenth century. In the early 1840s, Darjeeling had just thirty European dwellings but the number of European houses more than doubled within three years of the opening of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway’.<sup>2</sup> Again ‘the narrow gauge rail line reached Darjeeling itself making it the first hill station to become directly linked by rail to the plains. As a result, Calcutta resident could arrive in Darjeeling in as little as twenty-one hours by the end of the century and in less than fourteen

hours by 1940s.<sup>3</sup> The census taken in the district often happens to be in the cold months of winter therefore the numbers of school children, visitors in hotels or boarding houses, even soldiers and officers in the military cantonments that usually remain scant in the cold season, remained unrecorded. Along with the appointment of number of employees and the arrangement made for their housing in the form of Railway Quarters the district witnessed an organised colonies for the first time in large scale (barring the tea estates in the garden area) throughout the rail line. For the accommodation of railway employees necessary piece of Revenue free land was acquired through the Government by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Co. The Board of Revenue Department, Railway Branch (1878-1912) records the details for the purpose of Station Buildings, goods –shed, bungalow for Europeans, etc of the DHR Company.

The growth in Population as per Census' Report of

Year	Number of Persons	Increase	Percent
1881	1,55,179	60,467	64
1891	2,23,314	68,135	44
1901	2,49,117	25,803	12
1911	2,65,660	16,433	7
1921	2,82,748	17,198	6
1931	3,19,635	36,887	13
1941	3,76,369	56,734	18

[Table No. 5:1] Dash, 'Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjiling', 1947.

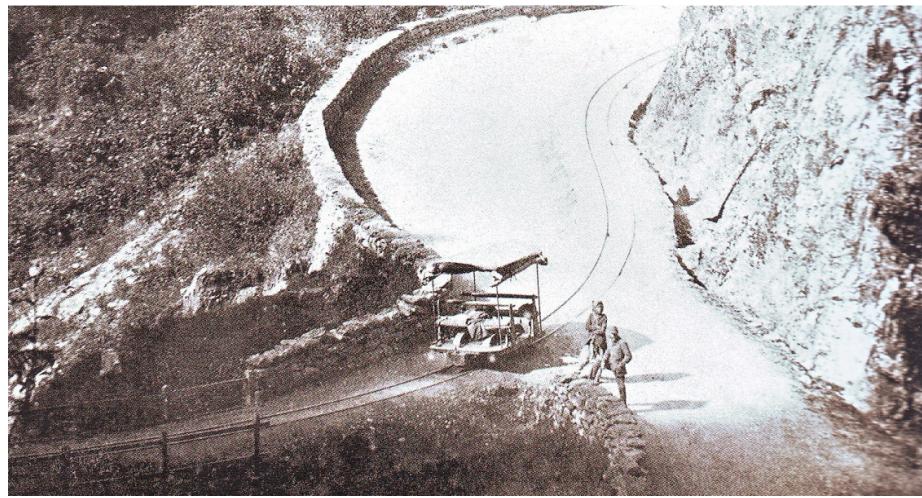
The smaller towns in the district, like Kurseong and Tindharia also became prominent due to the railway. George Belben Cresswell, the General Manager of the DHR thought to shift the headquarter from Darjeeling to Kurseong and in 1914 the name of Kurseong appeared as the headquarter of the DHR in Thackers' Business Directory for Bengal.<sup>4</sup> The Kurseong Amusement Club was opened in 1909, also known as Mahatab Club after the name of the Mahatab of Burdawan. The railway employees and natives Europeans passed their time at the club playing billiards, tennis and attached to it was a library and a bar. Later in 1961 the club became the All India Radio Station of Kurseong.<sup>5</sup>

The Railway Institute hall with a small reading room and provision for playing indoor games became the amusement club for the Indian railway employees. At Kurseong most of the population belongs to the railway family and the number of staff-quarters for various department starting from menial workers to the highest officer are located at Kurseong. Tindharia too, basically is a railway employees' locality one from every family have a connection with the railway department. Tindharia is mainly important for its workshop. Earlier it employed 700 workers, which in due course increased to 2000.<sup>6</sup> Unlike Kurseong Tindharia station has an attached club inside. The Railway hospital of Tindharia has been beneficial not only to the railway workers and their families but to the general public also, otherwise the population has to go either to Kurseong or Siliguri for treatment.

In the beginning the railway was not only a medium of transport and communication but was a source of amusement to the people in those days. It is said that when the DHR was under construction there was great rumors among the common public. When two of the Limbus from the hill had come to the plains of Siliguri they saw the newly introduced railway of the Northern Bengal State Railway (1878) and to their innocence were shocked to see the fire-eating monster that shrieks and the stomach of those nearby burst open. They somehow managed to escape from its wrath but when they heard that it is coming to the town of Darjeeling, they thought that the monster was after their blood. It was only on the day when the tiny engine arrived in the town that they were finally relieved, as they said “oh! It is only the butcha” meaning the ‘infant’ of the giant monster that actually followed them.<sup>7</sup> Again the story goes that as all the people had heard the tale of the giant fire eating monster of the plains everyone was anxious to see it. It was a special day of 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1881 as W.E. Gladstone, relative of British Prime Minister, and dignitaries were to arrive by the train. All the tea estates remained closed on that day. People were asked to come in their best outfit and bands were kept to play the welcome music by the Lieutenant-Governor Ashley Eden. The engine decorated with garlands climbed the hills and the crowd was dazed to see the train. They thought the British sahib no less than god who can made ‘the house run on an iron tongue’.<sup>8</sup>

In the beginning the train was used to clear the sewerage of the town and dump it at Batasia. Such train was known as ‘Stink Express’ to the locals, probably for the foul smell that came from the running train. This practice continued till 1909 when the Darjeeling Municipality opted for an alternative way of ropeway to do the job.<sup>9</sup>

It was no less than a magic for the common people to see the tiny locomotive chugging up the mountain terrain. Moving slowly at its own pace which was 10 mph (miles per hour) for the safety purpose and carrying all the necessities of the town along with the passengers, it revolutionized the mode of transportation against the pre-existing bullock-carts, ponies and dandies which took lots of time and money. In this context it would be worth mentioning the experience of the English novelist Mark Twain, author of ‘The Adventures of Tom Sawyer’, ‘The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn’ etc. who in 1895 travelled to Darjeeling in the toy train from Siliguri. Initially, while travelling in the DHR “canvas-sheltered cars that skimmed along a foot of the ground and seemed to be going fifty miles an hour when they were really making about twenty”. He described the six-seated coaches a “luxuriously comfortable” and the ride as “not a pleasure excursion in name only, but in fact”. For his return journey from Darjeeling he took the train to Ghum (7403 ft.) from where he with his companions rode down on an engineless four-wheeled canopied carriage, a simple floorboard with four wheels wedged between the train lines, which hurtled down the steep incline on gravity’s drag. The only safety was a hand-brake that was used to slow down or stop the contraption [Fig.No.5:1]. It was like ‘an arrow from a bow’ and rest of the ride as an unforgettable roller-coaster experience. He wrote that they ‘went flying down the mountain...flying and stopping, flying and stopping...that was the most enjoyable day I have spent in the earth. For rousing, tingling, rapturous pleasure there is no holiday trip that approaches the bird flight down the Himalayas in a ‘hand-car’. It has no fault, no blemish, no lack, except that there are only thirty-five miles of it instead of five hundred...mixed ecstasy of deadly fright and unimaginable joy.’<sup>10</sup>



[Fig.No.5:1] Source: Kurseong Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

### **RAILWAY AND EDUCATION IN THE HILLS**

The English boarding schools opened preceding the railway were small in number and were meant for the lads of the Europeans who could not send their children to their distant home town and also to those children whose parents in the plains of Bengal feared for their health. The growth of European population in the district arose due to plantations industries where managers or working staff in the governmental jobs belonged to this class, who too, could not send their children to England for education. Thus, established many educational institutions meant for European or Anglo-Indian children with the aim of providing ‘that type of education and upbringing to which the parents had been accustomed in their native country’<sup>11</sup> Later these institutions also accepted the Indian children in their roll. In 1879, the Victoria School at Kurseong was established by the government particularly for the children of railway employees. Afterwards its scope was extended to other government servants of all classes and to the children of officers paid out of local funds. For other non-officials, the rate of fees was high.<sup>12</sup> One positive benefit to those boarding schools was an increase in their numbers of rolls of student due to the easy transport facility provided by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Mark Tully in ‘A View of the History of Indian Railways’, remembers his visit to his first boarding school in

Darjeeling, but was proud to travel on the DHR as being the son of the railway's Director.<sup>13</sup> Railway did not keep all its profits itself or dividends to its shareholders only but provided useful service to the society as well. In 1912, the General Manager of the DHR contributed Rs.150 for the purpose of a school building at Tindharia.<sup>14</sup> In the school students were taught the song about the train which the hill children enjoyed even while playing at homes. The song goes like this<sup>15</sup>:

Darjeelingko sanu rail  
Hidnalai aba tyari chha,  
Sana sana dabbama yatriharu bhari chhan,  
Guard lay suna bhai, seety bajayo  
Kookh koookh gardai engine karayo  
Jhandi hariyo heyra dekhayo  
Hidna lagyo sano rail,  
Hamro pyaro sano rail – chhak- chhak-chhak.

Batase ma aaipugyon, jaminbhitra rail lukyo,  
Kati ramro dekheko, golo bhui ghumeko,  
Guard lay suna bhai, seety bajayo,  
Kookh koookh gardai engine karayo  
Jhandi hariyo heyra dekhayo  
Hidna lagyo sano rail,  
Hamro pyaro sano rail – chhak- chhak-chhak.

Ghum paharma rail aayo,  
panchai minute thamiyo,  
yatriharuko man-man ma,  
Darjeeling ko samjhana  
Guard lay suna bhai, seety bajayo  
Kookh koookh gardai engine karayo  
Jhandi hariyo heyra dekhayo  
Hidna lagyo sano rail,  
Hamro pyaro sano rail – chhak- chhak-chhak.

A free translation of the song that narrates the journey of the DHR runs as follows,

The tiny train of Darjeeling is all set to depart  
Packed with passengers in its little carts  
Oh! Brother, Listen to the whistle of the guard  
Kookh- kookh the engine shrieks,  
Green flag has been revealed  
The tiny train is moving,  
Our beloved tiny train –chhak-chhak-chhak

Batasia has been reached,  
The rail is hiding under the ground,  
How good to look at,  
The ground making a circle (loop),  
Listen to the whistling of the guard  
Kookh-kookh the engine shrieks,  
Green flag has been shown,  
The small train is about to move,  
Our beloved small rail –chhak-chhak-chhak.

Rail has reached Ghum top,  
Five minutes it is to stop,  
In the minds' of the passenger,  
Reminiscences of Darjeeling,  
Listen to the whistling of the guard  
Kookh-kookh the engine shrieks,  
Green flag has been shown,  
The small train is about to move,  
Our beloved small rail –chhak-chhak-chhak.

The children in the hills play a game of a train. They make a long row with one hand on the shoulder of a friend and the other moving like the wheel of the train. While playing they have to sing the song that goes like this:

‘Inchu Minchu London Ma,  
Hamro Babu Paltan Ma,  
Kanchi Swashni Bhagayo,  
Mo Pyaro Rome-a- Rome.

Inchu Minchu Driver Singh,  
Mo Pani Janchhu Paltan Ma,  
Steson ko Dakbabu,  
Ghanti Bajai Dewana. Tingling- Tingling- Jhyappa.’

‘A free translation of it means that the father of the child is in London serving in the army and has married a second wife there, so the child ask the driver of the train to start the train so that he will also go there.’

And two of them have to hold and raise their hands like a tunnel in the loop and others passes through it. When the last line i.e. the jingle of the bell is sung one of them is caught in the trap and the two ask him/her a question or to choose one finger that decides to which one of them she/he will be a party to. At the end of the game the two group thus formed will play the tug of war to decide the winner.

The hill of Darjeeling is also popular for Boarding Schools. The railway companies began to establish schools for the children of their British and Anglo-Indian employees.<sup>16</sup> The Victoria School, Kurseong established in the year 1879 for the children of Bengal railway workers in 1879, was started as a co-educational institution. Later a separate school for girls was established as Dow Hill School in 1897. Its scope was afterwards extended to Government servants of all classes

and to the children of officers paid out of local funds. The children of non-officials were also admitted but they pay a higher rate of fees. At the end of the year 1905-06, it had 190 pupils on the roll, all of whom were boarders.<sup>17</sup> Other institutions for poor European and Anglo-Indian children included St. Andrew's Colonial Homes of Kalimpong in 1900, Goethal's Memorial School, Kurseong established in 1907, etc.

Special school trains were introduced by the DHR. Booking of trains for the students from Mount Hermon, St. Paul's, Loreto Convent, St. Joseph's College from Darjeeling and Victoria, St. Helen's Convent, Dow Hill School, Goethal's Memorial School from Kurseong ,etc. leaving for their homes in the winter vacation was done beforehand <sup>18</sup>( Table No.5: 2).

Date	School/College	Pupils	Station	Train	Time
16.11.48	St. Augustin's European School	19	Gielle Khola	42 Down Mixed	14.30
17.11.48	Mount Herman	100	Darjeeling	Special	12.00
20.11.48	St. Paul's School	80	Darjeeling	Special	12.00
21.11.48	St. Paul's School	60	Darjeeling	Special	12.00
23.11.48	St. Joseph's Convent	80	Gielle Khola	Special	11.45
24.11.48	Loreto Convent	100	Darjeeling	Special	12.00
24.11.48	Loreto Convent	30	Darjeeling	6 Down	8.25
25.11.48	St. Joseph's College	95	Darjeeling	Special	12.00
26.11.48	St. Joseph's College	95	Darjeeling	Special	12.00
28.11.48	Victoria School	60	Kurseong	Special	13.45
29.11.48	Victoria School	60	Kurseong	Special	13.45
30.11.48	St. Helen's Convent	100	Kurseong	Special	13.45
3.12.48	Dow Hill School	65	Kurseong	Special	13.45
4.12.48	Dow Hill School	80	Kurseong	Special	13.45
5.12.48	Goethal's Memorial School	65	Kurseong	Special	13.45
6.12.48	Goethal's Memorial School	78	Kurseong	Special	13.45
7.12.48	St. Helen's Convent	08	Kurseong	2 Down Mail	15.35
8.12.48	Goethal's Memorial School	22	Kurseong	2 Down Mail	15.35
10.12.48	Goethal's Memorial School	11	Kurseong	2 Down Mail	15.35
10.12.48	St. Helen's Convent	06	Kurseong	2 Down Mail	15.35
10.12.48	St. Andrew's Colonial Homes	50	Gielle Khola	Special	11.45

11.12.48	St. Andrew's Colonial Homes	80	Gielle Khola	Special	11.45
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[TableNo.5:2] source: Martin, Terry, Iron Sherpa, 2006.

These children used to sing their favourite song ‘Going Home Day’,<sup>19</sup>

Going home day has come at last, do-da, do-da

Going home day has come, at last, do-da-do-da-day

We travel all the night, we travel all the day

We spend our money on the DHR, do-da-do-da-day

Down from old Mount Hermon on the small toy train

After nine months mugging, back to home again

Teachers are so rosy, children are the same

Everyone is happy waiting for the train

Ghum, Sonada, Kurseong, all are left behind,

Though the journeys very long, I'm sure we do not mind

When we reach sealdah, bailit with a shout

Pan, berry, cigarette, hop the beggars out!

See the winding roadway on to Kurseong,

Purple is the sunset as we roll along,

See the plaind before us, dark and far away

Calling us to hasten, going home today!

Now we're riding homeward, through terai at night

On a silver highway, singing our delight,

Now the plains before us, now we swing and sway

Into Siliguri, going home today!”

The ‘School Special’ train from Tindharia to Kurseong, Kurseong to Tung, and Darjeeling to Kurseong was run by the DHR. These ‘Shuttle train’ was introduced for the students with monthly passes of one-fourth of total amount up and down ‘from Tindharia station to I.T.I. at Tung’.<sup>20</sup> It was a great boon to students from far off places to reach their school in time with ease

and comfort, since motor vehicles for short distance or school service concept had not developed. Many students and trainees of ITI travelled without tickets. Most of the boys used to hang on the running train by the window side with one foot resting on the train and the other on air, a peculiar feature seen only in the DHR. Some of the TT were very strict, fined them or chased them in case if they ran away or dropped the students without tickets or passes on the midway. One such TT was Mr. Pema, popularly known among the students as Pema, TT; if he was in duty the students either bought ticket or strolled to their destiny. Ironically, such fun filled incidents turned regular among the local passengers many of them hardly bought tickets, which in the long way counted for the losses suffered by the DHR in traffic.

## **HOSPITALS IN THE TOWN**

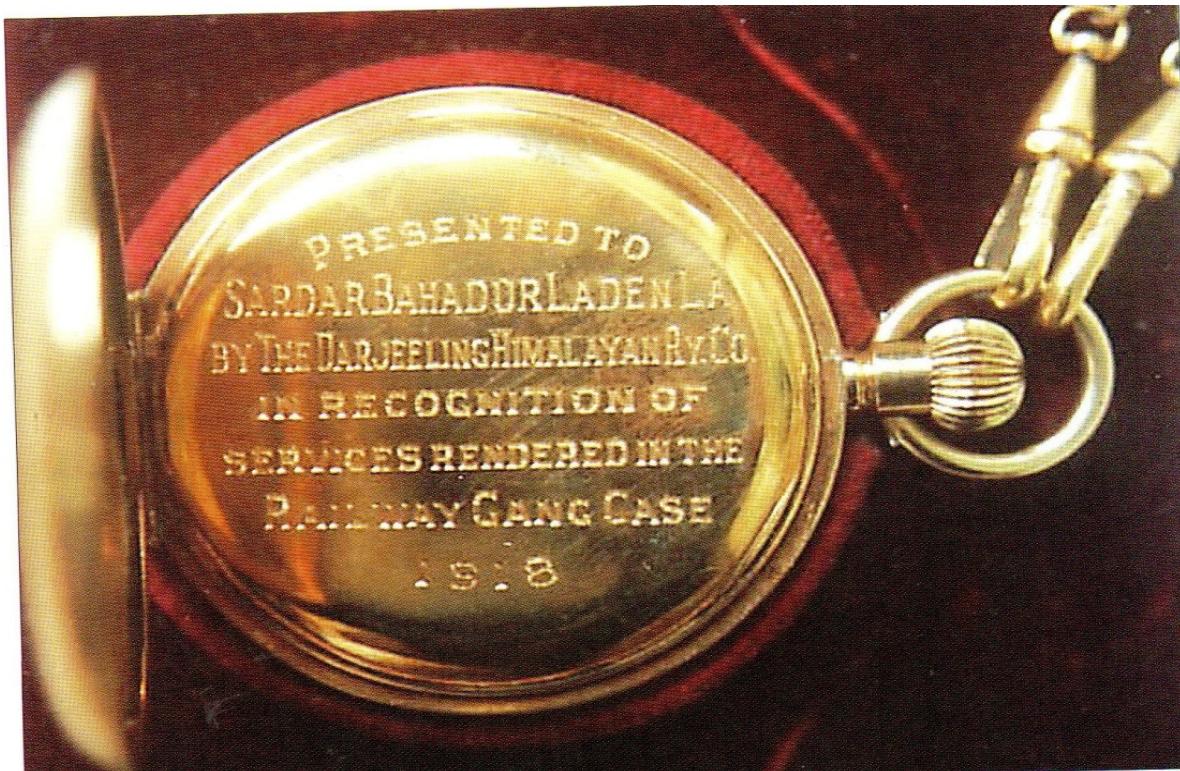
There were soon a number of hospitals and dispensaries opened after the year 1881. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway itself maintained (still in function) a hospital at Tindharia with 14 beds as well as dispensaries for outdoor treatment at Kurseong, Darjeeling and Siliguri. The medical staff for the whole railway was one Chief Medical Officer and 7 Assistant Medical Officers.<sup>21</sup> Beside there were other hospitals opened in the district such as the Eden Sanitarium. E.C. Dozey writes that the first to recognise the want of an institution similar to the Eden Sanitarium for the exclusive use of Indians goes to Franklin Prestage. But his efforts were unsuccessful because ‘prior to the opening of the railway to Darjeeling the journey was not only expensive but it also took a big slice of the amount of leave obtainable by the middle, or working classes.’ Later in 1886 Edmund Elliott Lowis, the then Commissioner of Jalpaiguri with the help of the Maharaja of Tajhat, Goinda Lal Roy who donated a sum of Rs. 90,000 and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar who donated a plot of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres, established the Lowis Jubilee Sanitarium in 1887. It had rooms to accommodate well over one hundred patients and admission figures for 1910 indicated that about half of them hailed from Calcutta.<sup>22</sup> In 1912 the annex building was constructed and with it the sanitarium could accommodate 118 patients. Now it became possible

for more numbers of sick people to afford for a good treatment in the hill sanitarium taking the privilege of a railway journey and infact the summer population of Darjeeling was so great that hotels and boarding houses could not serve all the passengers. ‘The influx of native visitors to the station of Darjeeling in recent years had been considerable’, reported the chief Secretary for the Bengal government in 1903. ‘They generally go the boarding houses, or the Lowis Sanitarium..., or they rent existing houses.’<sup>23</sup> Durga Puja, the chief Hindu festival in Bengal, became an especially popular occasion for a visit to Darjeeling, which was ‘at its gayest’ during those ten days in September and October.<sup>24</sup>

### **LADEN LA’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE RAILWAY GANG CASE**

During the early period when almost cent percent of transportation was done through the DHR it was difficult for the Company to take note of each and every article in the goods train at Siliguri. There were many instances of loss of goods and complaints by the owner for which the DHR Company was to make for the compensations. The authority was quite concerned for such large claims by the party; hence the matter was handed over to the police. Laden La was the Head of Police in the Jalpaiguri district. For his involvement in fund-raising and recruiting for the war, he was awarded the title of Sardar Bahadur in 1917.<sup>25</sup> The investigation team found that some forty men of the railway were involved in the scam. They tampered the card labels of the wagons, tally registers altered and invoices removed and were sold to traders. The police listed some 199 trial witnesses and the trial continued for a month. The Englishman for 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1918, reported: ‘Today before Mr. A.T. Banerjee, Special Magistrate, began the trial of the sensational case in which Rajendra Lal Biswas, Khagendra Nath Bose, Nepal Chandra Aich, Niroda Baran Ray, H.N. Gupta, Ghansyam Kya, Abdul Khan, Sarup Kya and eight others, some employees of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, and other merchants, stood charged with having, it is alleged, formed a gang to habitually steal goods conveyed by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway...Mr Sen opened the case explaining how in different ways the abstracting of goods consigned to stations

on the D.H. Railway from Siliguri upwards was going on with the help of the accused for which the Railway Company had to pay heavy damages to parties every year'. The DHR Company presented a gold watch to Laden La for his vital service in solving the case [Fig.No.5:2].<sup>26</sup>



[Fig.No.5:2] Source: 'A Man of Frontier: S.W. Laden La', 2006.

The Special Magistrate, Mr. A.T. Banerjee, and lawyers inspected the goods yards at Siliguri, Riyang and other areas in connection of the case. The number of culprits were reduced to 18 from 40, out of which 2 absconded, 2 were later discharged and the rest were committed to the Sessions as the Magistrate felt he could not pass adequate sentences on them.<sup>27</sup>

#### **DHR RICKSHAWS AND COOLIES**

In 1883, the Darjeeling Municipal Porter's Act was enacted in response to what local authorities

described as ‘insolent, clamorous and turbulent’ behavior and ‘extortionate’ fee demands by the stations’ porters. The act regulated porters’ rates, required them to obtain licenses and wear brass identity badges, and imposed penalties on those who deserted or otherwise failed to fulfill their terms of service.<sup>28</sup> For the convenience of railway passengers the Directors of the DHR decided to make its own rickshaws at Tindharia at a cost of Rs.250 to 300 per piece. The plan was to let it to coolies at Darjeeling station for Rs.250 annually, which they were supposed to make up by a monthly payment. In return the coolies had to wear a uniform and number badges as provided by the DHR authorities [Fig.No.5:3]<sup>29</sup>



[Fig.No.5:3] Licensed Badges for the Porters. Source: Kurseong Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

## ON RELIGION SPHERE

The Hindu Bengali community introduced the worship of idols of goddesses in Darjeeling. Earlier, most of the native Hindus used to worship stones as a form of God. As quoted in ‘Darjeeling Truth and Beyond’, according to Tarini Kamal Pandit a renowned advocate, who

served in Darjeeling for more than 50 years mentioned that, before DHR was introduced, the local people worshipped the huge stones as their Deities, it was only after the DHR that people in the hills started worshipping the idols, which were brought from the plains in goods train during Durga Puja. The puja was first celebrated at Nripendra Narayan Hindu Hall in 1917 where the idol of goddess Durga was first brought in train [Fig. No.5:4]. Durga puja was celebrated by the Railway staff at Tindharia in their railway quarter; people from Kurseong came down to Tindharia to receive the blessings and it was only after 1930s that Durga puja was celebrated in Raj Rajeshwari Hall in Kurseong.<sup>30</sup>



[Fig.No.5:4] Bengali Hindu Hall, Darjeeling.

## **DUTY BOUND NEPALI DRIVER**

In the past the duty of train was the first priority. Once while driving an up mail train, the first Nepali engine driver Tekbahadur Chettri faced an uncomfortable situation in the 1920s due to a sudden strike by the workers at Siliguri, he somehow changed the minds of his co-workers and made his way half till the Tindharia station. There other workers at strike asked to join them and Tekbahadur was left alone, but he was a sincere, dedicated man and believed in his responsibility. Fortunately his quarter was at the same Tindharia colony. He hurriedly went to his home and brought everyone from there including his wife, daughters and all the helpers. He instructed each one of them ‘who never in their life had done such things’ to put sand occasionally on the track, to smash the coal on top of the engine, put the coal inside the burner, etc. Tekbahadur was able to reach the passengers safely to the Darjeeling station in time.<sup>31</sup>

## **WILD LIFE EPISODES IN DHR**

Mr. Sushil K. Dixit remember his father Mr. B. K. Dixit who was the first Nepali PWI in the line, telling about the track covered by black caterpillar as seen all through the forest area which often made the engine slide hence a man was required in front of the engine to shove them out of the track.<sup>32</sup> Sukna station of DHR has many episodes of encounter with wild animals. It is located at  $7\frac{1}{8}$  mile from Siliguri and is surrounded by forest. In the winter of 1900 the staff was held up one bright morning by a tiger facing the booking office. Needless to say that its days were numbered, for a Nimrod happened to be at the forest bungalow, and at the earnest solicitations of the staff came across and dispatched it. In February 1915, the sound of an engine awoke a sleeping tiger under the first railway culvert of the Sukna station and while escaping it collided with an Indian passerby, who in a shocked state somehow reached the station trembling to tell his horror tale to the passengers of the train. On another occasion a herd of wild elephants caused a little flutter among the station staff, and also compelled the driver of a train to back right into Sukna, as they were meandering at will. Another interesting incident happened with the driver Oakley, of the

down evening passenger train in 1916. At the 10<sup>th</sup> mile the driver saw a tusker and two females across the track; he blew the whistle to drive them away. Instead the tusker feeling challenged tore-up the mile –post and charged towards the train. The sight of impending danger stroked the driver with an idea to blow off as much steam as possible out of the engine. As a result the huge beasts took to their heels at such a pace which is beyond one's imagination.<sup>33</sup>

Mark Twain made a short stop at Sukna Station and entered in his diary the details of a telegram that had once been sent to the railway manager in Calcutta from the then forlorn place. The station-master was being mauled by a tiger and a junior functionary of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway had telegrammed his seniors at Calcutta, "Tiger eating station-master on front porch; telegraph instructions". Twain well known for his humour, could possibly be just jesting but the writer of some of the greatest fictions in English language was at his imaginative best. When he also jotted, "It was here that I had my first tiger hunt. I killed thirteen." From Sukna onwards the ride was described as wild, interesting, exciting, and enchanting to such an extent that he wished the ride had taken a week to complete. He compared the hills wholly spread with trees and bushes to a museum of vegetation and travelling through roads that were "infinitely and charmingly crooked" that threaded the hills "smothered in vines and foliage" he arrived at Darjeeling.<sup>34</sup> According to the DHR Company' Guidebooks, 'the place in the Loop No.2 was well known for the haunt of leopard and during the two decades more than hundred of them had been killed.'<sup>35</sup>

## **WHISTLE KHOLA**

The DHR is so integral to the life of hill people that even local places have been named after its creator Franklin Prestage and the creation itself. For instance the road above Darjeeling railway station was known as Prestage road, in between Kurseong station and St. Mary's village the train passes through a bend near a stream or 'khola' in local term, where the train blows its whistle and so the place was christened as 'whistle khola'.<sup>36</sup> The author of the book, 'Teetta Meetha An, G.B. Bal, remembers the year 1943-44 when, from Ghum depot the Gurkha soldiers went on in the

train singing the song ‘ Lahureko Relimai Fahionai Ramro, Rato Rumal Relimai Khukuri Bhireko’ i.e ‘the fashion of the Gurkha soldiers are beautiful with red scarf, carrying the khukuri’ ,and waving their hands to the onlookers.<sup>37</sup>

### **A CALL WITHIN A CALL**

An Albanian, Agnes G. Bojaxhiu had spent her days in the Loreto Convent from 1929 as a novice and took her vows of a nun in 1937 after which she came to be called as Mother Teresa. She suffered from tuberculosis while serving the poor at Calcutta and had to return back to Darjeeling for recovery. It was on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1946 on the way to Darjeeling by the train she received what she termed as the ‘call within a call’ and she decided to work for the poor and the destitute in the slums, through her ‘Missionaries of Charity’ set up in 1950. The rest of the story is known to the world.<sup>38</sup>

### **COLONIAL INFLUENCE**

The Europeans borrowed their home style and the atmosphere and tried to create the replica of the same in the newly acquired area. In due course the local inhabitants also imbibed some of their culture in the form of usage of English words in their communication which differs slightly in pronunciation, as well as clothing and other things. The colonies itself was an evolution to bustee system of the hills, where houses in the villages are distanced from one another. But in the staff quarters in the railway colonies the environment is different from the others. People of different communities and cultures lived together in the same area. In the railway quarters during the latter half of the twentieth century, railway staff used to pass their time in the ‘Railway institute hall’ where they used to play cards, badminton, tennis, caramboard. There was a reading room along with books in the library, and the residents in the railway quarters utilized such things as their source of entertainment for passing time. Exchange of special cuisine in the quarters among the neighbours was common. The mixed languages of English, Nepali, Bengali, Hindi, Bihari,

words are common among the families living in the railway colonies. The employees used to relate each other not by their names but surnames like Mr. Thapa, Mr. Rai, Mr. Gurung, and so on. However, ‘babu’ was used in case of others like ‘Dutt babu’, ‘Bhattacharjee babu’, ‘Shukla babu’, etc. At the same time a fusion of various cultures evolved in the society, for instance idol worship was seldom practiced by the inhabitants but in due course it became a normal part of their religion. In deed railway has played a major role in the process of urbanization of the town. Those who came from far off villages and worked in the railways permanently settled in the town area. Thus, the DHR cannot be looked only as a means of transport and communication but socially, culturally and economically it bears a share in the shaping and sharing of the lives of the people.

### **GHOSTLY EPISODES**

The superstitious beliefs of the people also worked behind the railway According to Mr. S.K. Dixit, it was said that beside the khola or jhora the supernatural spirits reside and follow the passersby. One night Purna Kumar Chettri, a clerk in the AIOW (DHR) in 1950s was returning home after his night shift. On his way to Girdapahar at Rakti khola he was chased by a dwarf man who walked very fast. Then he realized the presence of some bad omen and walked as fast as he could but to no use, then he suddenly remembered that the iron metal works as a shield against such spirit, he hurriedly started walking in the rail tracks, after Chowkidara the evil spirit vanished. The band of bagpipers used to tune the song ‘Aaja Malai, Jhandai Khayo, Station ko Bhut Lae, Kasto Thiyo Kasto Thiyo Tate Pangre Thiyo’ the meaning of which is -‘Today I was almost eaten by the ghost of the station. How did it look, it was black and white’.

### **CINEMA AND THE TOY TRAIN**

The remarkable progress made by the cinema in the nineteenth and twentieth century in India also took into account the scenic beauty of Darjeeling as well as its life line, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Several Hindi, regional as well as international movies and documents have been filmed

on the railway. The first Hollywood movie was filmed in the year 1955 titled ‘Seven Wonders of the World ... as seen through the eyes of the modern wonder’, a Lowell Thomas production.<sup>39</sup> Among the Bollywood films of the latter half of the twentieth century, the scenic beauty of Darjeeling was captured in the roles of some of the hit films. It was impossible not to include the ‘Toy train’. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway have been featured in the songs, too. Especially popular was the song ‘*Mere sapno ke rani kab aawoh ge tum*’ featuring Rajesh Khanna and Sharmila Tagore in a train and jeep motion.<sup>40</sup> Another hit movie featuring Darjeeling’ best scenic beauty was ‘Humraaz’. The film was shot in the famous hotel of Mount Everest. The main story begins after the departure of the hero in the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in the station to join the emergency duty. The heroine is shown waiting for his arrival from war everyday in the platform, but never turns on and so the story goes on. The arrival and departure of the train with passengers and soldiers symbolizes similar fates of many wives and lovers whose beloved travelled to distant place in the train. Sagina Mahato featuring Dilip Kumar in the role of a railway union leader in Kurseong was dedicated mainly to the lives and hardship of the rail workers. Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman (1993) features Shahruk Khan who plays the role of a simple man from the hills and who goes to the big city in search of fortune. His departure in the toy train reflects the unemployment crisis among the educated youths in the place that go to faraway places. apart from these many documentaries on this narrow gauge steam engine have been filmed by the BBC, Doordarshan the National Channel of India, and private parties.

The author, G. B. Bal mentions that in those days many trains used to run and they were called as three up, five up, ten down, nine up, fourth down. All of the passengers train had three classes first, second and third .for the rail officers had special wagon interclass sometimes trolley was attached. In those days passenger wagon’s two sides were open and had only seats, for which it was called ‘coolligari’. Infact only coolies used to travel in that class. Those trains used to take the coolies from old Siliguri station crossing Panchanadi bridge and in the left hand side of today’s

Pintail village passing Hattighisa, Bagdogra, Naksalbari and on the other towards Kishanganj till Haldibari. There were two loco sheds at Kurseong one was in present location and the other in front of Bagmukhe Marwari's furniture shop, which was destroyed and converted into workers quarters.<sup>41</sup>

In 1944-45 a single engine could pull five to six ambulance wagons, fully coloured in white with Red Cross signs. All filled up with sick soldiers. It had two tier arrangements, doctors and nurses wore uniforms. Once in a week or ten days this type of locomotive used to pass up and down. He further mentions the name of some sincere devoted TTs (after independence) like H.B. Thapa, Pema Lama, and Thatal guard of Kurseong, Bazaar's Suke guard, Ghose guard, etc. again. He laments for public irresponsibilities in paying the dues of the passes which brought the closure of the service. There were different open wagons with net and for the animals like cow or bull, huge bridge girder, long electric poles, machineries for tea gardens.<sup>42</sup>

## EFFECTS IN THE VERNACULAR LITERARY WRITINGS

One of the effects of railway was that transportation of papers, books, journals, etc, became frequent in the hills. There was a continuous flow of literature through journals. Earlier for publication or printing of articles or stories, etc. one had to go to *Kasi* or Benaras that took quite a lot time. But after the introduction of the DHR that time was cut short. Later in 1901 printing houses in vernacular literature started in Darjeeling. In the literature railways occupied a prominent place to be noticed. In the story of 'Gariman' (1941) the young bullock-cart driver when he first comes to 'Muglan' that is land of the Mughals as referred to India was frightened by the shrieking train, an unknown world of engineering to him. In course of time he gets habituated like other natives of the place and even enjoys the ride. Again we find the mention of departing soldiers in the small rail where sisters are putting the red '*tika*' on their forehead for

victory and praying for their safety as described in the novel ‘Naya Tshitij ko khoj’ or ‘In Search of New Horizon’ written by Ashit Rai. *Muluk Bahira* of Lain Singh Bangdel also portrays the train in the departure of the husband and his arrival after a long time in the Ghum platform, the place from where he went away in distrust of his wife’s loyalty and the very place where he happens to meet his daughter but could not let her know about his identity for his baseless guilt of suspicion to the faithfulness of his wife is a heart touching novel in Nepali literature. *Dakman, Rani Khola, Sapanako Samjhanama* (1936), *Juneli Rekha* (1979), and other Nepali vernacular literature have been influenced by the railway and the writers do freely incorporate the DHR in their story. The departure of the train loaded with soldiers waving red handkerchief, the station platform and the tea-stall, arrival of the up-train, have symbolically played a part in the stories. Beside, poems on railway are also in plenty.<sup>43</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway served not only as the means of conveyance in the hills but was intrinsically linked with the lives of the people. Perhaps it is the only railway which runs shoulder to shoulder with the daily life of the people of Darjeeling, crossing the Hill Cart road every now and then, chugging and whistling below the hospitals, near the schools, beside the tea bushes and even in front of the houses amid beautiful natural scenery. To the poor people the train is the source of hot waters and

coals. The children collect the used coal and hot water when the train halts to fill the water tank in the steam engine. The children enjoys it in their games and whistling makes them excited. The DHR have been the knitting factor among various Indian communities living in the same railway colonies. After the opening of the Siliguri Staion in 1949 the train used to passs through the Hill Cart road, infront of the ‘Kurseong Medical’ shop and they still have preserved the memories in

the photo frame inside the shop as well as in their cash memo. This obviously shows that the people do not easily want to forget the memories but store it in everyform of their daily life.

Layak Bhawan, Siliguri.



[Fig.No.5:5] Source: Ghum Railway Museum

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## **Chapter-VI**

### **CONTRIBUTION OF DHR ON THE ECONOMY OF DARJEELING**

For the progress of any society, a good transport system is a requisite condition. Darjeeling was a place of priority to the sick, nature lover and investors but the journey it involved was not so smooth. Along with visitors comes their requirement of various types. Those involved in the ‘Hotel’ business needed a good transportation system that could bring their necessities in time without much damage. It was not possible for a cart to load as much weight as possible, nor could it guarantee the safety of the goods from weather. All this became possible only when Darjeeling Himalayan Railway set its wheel on the track. The plight of ‘David Williams’ (details given in Ch: 3) and the likes became a story of ‘once upon a time’. With the coming of the DHR, there was a rapid growth in the number of tourist visitors, which furthered the development of Hotel business, and new Hotel buildings came into being. Some of the famous hotels of that time were - Bellevue, Garrets, Central Hotel, Drum Druid, L.J. Vado, Ltd., Hotel Mount Everest , Park Hotel, Rockville (The Grand), Woodlands, Ada Villa, Alice Villa, Annandale, Beechwood House, Caroline Villa, El Esparanza, fern Cottage, Havelock House, La Roche, May Cottage, Moss Bank, The Labyrinth, Balaclava Hotel, Clarendon Hotel, Serabjee’s Hotel, Wood Hill. The DHR carried the passengers from Siliguri up to Darjeeling. According to Dozey, ‘on arrival at Darjeeling the mount ponies, and the women and children get into dandies and rickshaw (provided by the Railway Company at a small charge) which carried them away to several hotels and boarding establishments’.<sup>1</sup>Sometimes the manager of the concerned hotel used to send the carriers. The railway had its own licensed porters and dandies, at different stations in the hills [Fig.No.6: 1]

In fact, the Company not only succeeded in keeping communication open with only rare and short interruptions for a space of forty years with increasing efficiency, but has relieved Government of all cost in the maintenance of the road, thus saving the tax-payers many

thousands of pounds.<sup>2</sup>

#### DHR License for porters



[Fig. No.6;1] DHR Museum at Kurseong.

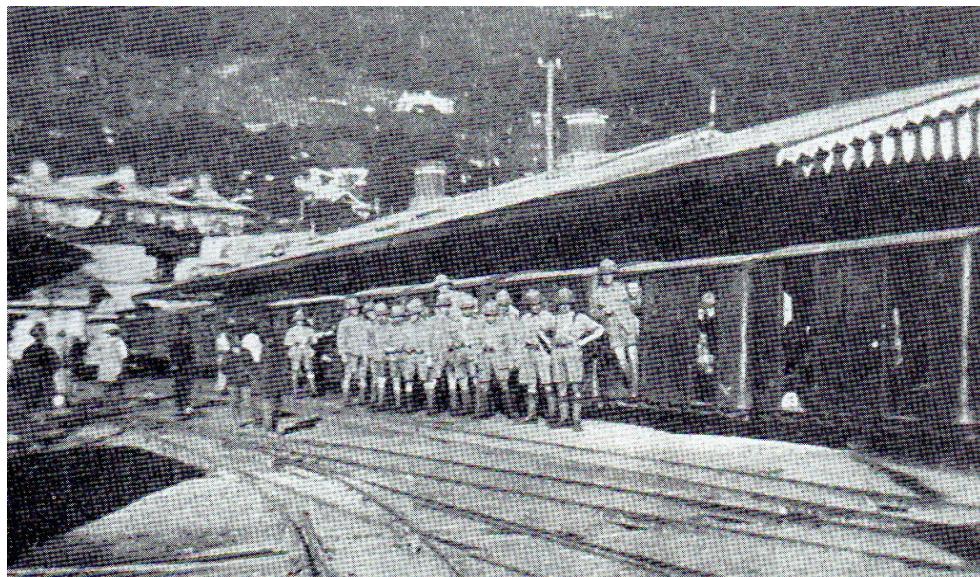
The effects of railways varied in its degree. The short-term impact being the inflow of many tourists and heterogeneous population from the plains of India that came along with the railway as clerks, labourers, businesspersons and the long-term impact was its opening of extension branches from Siliguri to Teesta Valley and Kishanganj, the latter still serves as a metre gauge. Before railways, virtually no modern industry barring the plantation sectors, existed in Darjeeling. By exporting raw materials at lower cost and carrying finished goods to internal markets, railways played a major role in the growth of India's modern industry and in case of Darjeeling, the improvement in transportation facilitated the momentum in the all round growth of the hill station within a short span of time. The inter-relationship between the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and the various economic factor of the hill station has been discussed in the following heads:

#### CANTONMENTS AND RECRUITMENT DEPOT

In 1882, Lebong cantonment established as a part of Jalapahar cantonment was located at an altitude of 6,000 ft. In 1895, it became a separate cantonment. Militarily DHR took many new recruiters from

the place, troops train carried the soldiers [Fig.No.6:2] Specially during the war times the railway carried injured and sick soldiers. The Company had made a special engine called ‘Ambulance Train’ available for the same purpose.

During the World War I, the Troops train in Kurseong Station.



[Fig.No.6:2] Source: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Brian Bramall collection, Darjeeling Mail,2002.

The first Gurkha recruiting office opened at Darjeeling bazaar in 1890. In 1902, the office shifted near Ghum. The depot deals with all kinds of work like record keeping, looks after the welfare of the families of soldiers and pensioners. From 1886 to 1904, the Darjeeling Recruiting Centre recruited as many as 27,428 Gurkha soldiers. Probably in 1890, the Recruiting Officer for the Gurkhas established an office in Darjeeling.<sup>3</sup> Some of the annual reports of the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling, contain interesting information as to the purpose of the recruiting work. During 1891-92, 1000 hill people from Darjeeling recruited for military transport were sent in to Burma and 350 for Chittagong. In the Annual General Administration Report of Darjeeling for the year 1892-93, the Deputy Commissioner reported of 500 Nepalese recruited for the Commissariat Department in Burma and 700 for Chittagong. A certain number of Nepalese recruit for building work in Assam for the Gurkha Regiment and for Lakhimpur Battalion, Dibrugarh, and Mougong Levy Battalion,

Burma.<sup>4</sup> In 1942, the Indian Tea Association's Eastern Frontier Projects Organisation asked 1,200 volunteer porters to work on Aijal Road under the guidance of two Darjeeling Planters. In October 1942, porters have been sent to the Manipur Road and in 1943 to Ledo Road. The porters usually returned home after five months and another group sent, the Darjeeling Planters made all the arrangement. During the Second World War, 7,615 Gurkhas from Darjeeling and Sikkim enlisted at Ghum, which was 38 percent of wartime enlistments. Apart from this Darjeeling district had supplied technical and ancillary war services through other agencies.<sup>5</sup> The Annual General Administration Report of the Rajshahi Division for 1897-98, stated that 672 men were recruited in Darjeeling for military service of whom 439 went as muleteers on the Tirah expedition and 233 to the Burma rifles and frontier hills. Moreover, 200 coolies been supplied to the Lushai Survey party in Silchar for transport work.<sup>6</sup> During 1898-99, according to the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling 292 coolies were recruited for military service[Table No6:1].

Recruitment of Gurkha soldiers, 1898-99

10 <sup>th</sup> Burma Rifles	46
Myitkyina Battailon	109
Ruby Mines Battalion	38
Lakhimpur Battalion	29
Naga Hills Battalion	20
North Lusha Hills Battalion	50
Total	292

[Table No.6:1] Source: Sen, Jahan 'Darjeeling: A Favoured Retreat', 1989.

The relatives and well-wishers lamented the departure of hundreds of recruits at the station. According to Dr. Kumar Pradhan in 'Chugging with Granny', the first documentary filmed by BBC on railways, in 1990; one of the folk songs current in those days brings out the unbearable poignancy

of the beloved at the scene of departure of a lover joining the recruits also mentioned in G.B. Bal's book is: 'Hai Re Mero Pardesi Pritm, Chhorera Jana Bho! Sawari Mero Ralaima, Jhan Paara Janchhu, Jhan maya lagchha, Jhan Para Jaanchha Jhan Maya Lagchha, Kusumerumal Hal-laudai, Sawari Mero Railaima'. (Oh! my stranger beloved ready to part; riding the train, farther I go the more I love, further you go the more I love, riding the train waving the crimson kerchief).<sup>7</sup>

## BREWERY

In 1888, the Victoria Brewery at Sonada was established. The place used to be a halting barrack for the soldiers before the DHR later changed to brewery. For which the place is now known as 'Gorabarie' a corrupted form of 'Gora barrack' i.e. the barrack for the Europeans. It was managed by a European firm and had branches in Simla, Kasauli, Muree and other hill stations. It produced annually 75,000 to 100,000 gallons of liquor. According to Malley, the beer manufactured was of excellent quality and supplied to the troops at the three cantonments of Jalapahar, Katapahar and Lebong.<sup>8</sup> In Kurseong, another small brewery at St. Mary's Seminary was located and the inmates consumed the beer manufactured.<sup>9</sup>

## EXTERNAL TRADE

Even after the opening of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and completion of a good road to Jelep pass, there was low rate of transaction with Sikkim. The Report on the External Trade of Bengal, 1881-82, reasoned the cause for the small size of the State of Sikkim. However, from the year 1892-93 'satisfactory increase' in trade with Sikkim became possible [Table No.6:2]. The increase of imports from Sikkim to Darjeeling included items like spices, fruits, vegetables, raw cotton, sheep, goats, pulses and yak-tails. The items of export from Darjeeling to Sikkim were tobacco, silver, brass and copper, Indian cotton piece goods, European twist and yarn, vegetables, mineral oils, horses, ponies and mules.

Trade with Tibet from 1885-1895.

Year	Value of Imports in Rupees	Value of Exports in Rupees
1885-86	3,72,735	2,45,714
1886-87	2,18,143	3,40,462
1887-88	1,90,427	1,74,799
1888-89	3,168	4,181
1889-90	1,49,275	1,34,085
1890-91	1,80,893	1,99,788
1891-92	6,18,146	2,03,131
1892-93	3,51,519	2,29,117
1893-94	3,58,799	3,31,613
1894-95	7,01,348	4,47,802

[Table No.6.2] Source: Sen, Jahar – ‘Darjeeling: A Favoured Retreat’, 1989.

Trade with Nepal included cotton piece goods, livestock, ghee, wool, hides, mustard and blankets as items of import and export included European and Indian cotton twist, yarn, salt, Kerosene oil, tobacco, food grains, brass-pots, copper. However, the imports of blankets cut down. In 1883 the importation of livestock at Naxalbari, poultry, sheep and ghee and butter at Kainjalia and Ghumpahar increased greatly.<sup>10</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> June 1885 Rhenol and Kalimpong were sanctioned for the registration of frontier traffic. Siliguri replaced Naxalbari for the Nepal frontier trade. In 1907 eight registration stations were formed namely- Malighat, Rangit, New Rangit and Singala for Sikkim; Sukhiapokhri for Nepal; Kainjalia for Sikkim and Nepal; Labah for Bhutan; Pedong for Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan were to look after the frontier trade.<sup>11</sup> In 1885 the Matigara bazaar became a centre of trade and distribution next to Darjeeling ‘not only for the terai but also for the hills, Nepal, Sikkim and even Tibet.’<sup>12</sup> In 1891 a big fair had started in Kalimpong and later another such big hat started at Baghdogra.<sup>13</sup>

An estimate of the quantity of wool imported into Darjeeling from Sikkim and Tibet showed that the trade was insignificant and irregular. The bait of Tibetan wool, inter alia, led to the proposal of a big leap to reach the heart of Central Asia through the extension of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.<sup>14</sup>

The opening of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway had an impact on the trade of Darjeeling and the frontier countries. In the words of Jahar Sen ‘Darjeeling was thus brought within an easy reach of the Tibetan frontier.’ Sarat Chandra Das heard from the Nepalese merchants in Tibet that their trade had suffered due to the influx of Calcutta goods in the Tibetan market. He further points out that ‘By the opening of the Darjeeling railway, Calcutta, where most of the Chinese articles valued in Tibet may be easily and chiefly procured, will be brought three weeks’ journey of Lhasa…’. <sup>15</sup> In 1880s, European piece goods from India arrested the cotton trade of Eastern China. The demand for indigo in Tibet was great and the volume of export increased year after year. The export of indigo in 1884-85 increased by 65 percent than previous year, the supply of brass and copper too increased from 203 maunds in 1882-83 to 620 maunds in 1884-85. Beside copper from Calcutta and tobacco were largely exported to Tibet; the items of import included horses, blankets, musk and yak tails. With little fluctuation in 1889-90, the trade with Tibet overall was static. On the other hand the ban on sale of tea and salt from Tibet proved beneficial to the government of Bengal. Darjeeling tea was sold at eight annas a seer in Gangtok against the Chinese tea at one rupee per seer along with Indian salt at cheaper rate than that of Tibet. One of the commodities which had a steady demand in the trans-frontier trade was salt.<sup>16</sup> The Reports on the External Trade of Bengal mentioned each year that the only districts to which untaxed foreign salt was imported into India through any of the other frontier districts. The consumers of this salt were mainly Nepalese, Bhutias and Lepchas. The facilities of transport allowed by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and the reduction in duty on the duty-paid salt from the plains appeared to account for the decrease.<sup>17</sup>

Beside the goods from Calcutta, the export also included local manufactures of Darjeeling like tea, gunny bags and cinchona, beer, and porter used for local needs, supplied to Military Department and exported. The report of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division clarifies the items of local manufactures [Table No.6:3].

Report of the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling on Local Manufactures

Local Manufactures	1887-88	1888-89	1889-90
Tea	£9,944,356	£10,274,131	£10,838,220
Cinchona	£349,584	£453,675	£429,110
Gunny Bags	34,075 Mds.	34,583 Mds.	24,071 Mds.
Molasses	200 Mds.	250 Mds.	300 Mds.
Cloth	9,000	9,500	9,000
Pottery	105,700 Nos.	125,320 Nos.	11,320 Nos.
Beer & Porter	42,450 Gallons	53,622 Gallons	35,640 Gallons

[Table No.6:3 ] Source: DDR, Collection XXXII F. No.54, 26 May 1890.

## TIMBER SAWING

In 1927, the timber sawing industry at Siliguri with three sawmills (one government and two private) started and the forest department of government owned the important sawmill. In 1940, it was remodeled and employed 250 labourers. The daily output in 1939 was 180 cubic feet and in 1944, it increased to 1,000 cubic feet. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway brought logs from the forest sidings to the mill. From 1940 the government sawmill took the whole output of the Kurseong Forest Division.<sup>18</sup>

## INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE (ITI)

In 1962, the Industrial Training Institute was set up for giving training in both engineering and non-engineering trades. By 1967, there were 455 trainees appeared in the All-India Final Trade Test and 95 percent was successful, out of which 75 percent of candidate were absorbed in North-East Frontier Railway, the Jaldhaka Project, etc. <sup>17</sup> The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway had introduced special train service upto Tung from Kurseong. Many students of Goethals and later ITI students used to travel by that Up train in the morning. Many of them had issued monthly passes. Mr.Sushil Kumar Dixit recalls paying only Rs.5 for the whole month from Kurseong up to Goethals siding. He further says that there was no provision for school vans hence out of four bogies of the ‘Mistin’ (as

the common people pronounced for Mixed Train) two of it was packed by the local students of the Goethals' Memorial Academy. After school, they used to return home by walking.<sup>19</sup>

### **THE DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY EXTENSION COMPANY LIMITED**

The profits and dividend returns to the investors in the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company worked in a positive way for many years [Table No.6:4]. Equally great was its traffic and freight demand [Table No.6:5]. Therefore to meet the growing demand and at the same time to enlarge its periphery the DHR Co. thought for extension lines in 1909.

Dividend Return to the shareholders

YEAR	PERCENTAGE
1886	8
1895	10-12
1909-10	8
1914-15	15-16
1919-20	8

[Table No.6:4] Karatoya, NBU, 2011.

Proposals were made for three extension lines – Kishanganj, Teesta Valley and to the barracks at Lebong. In the year 1911 the Railway Board sanctioned the proposal for the first two lines. On 20<sup>th</sup> January 1913 the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Extension Company (DHRE Co.) was formed.

As early as 1886, the success of DHR in the hill station and the profitable return on the dividend of 8% to the investors gave Prestage the idea of an extension line to Nepal. Sarat Chandra Das mention in his 'Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet' 1902, that the bait of Tibetan wool, inter alia, led to the proposal of a big leap to reach the heart of Central Asia through the extension of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway'. The trade between China and Tibet was carried on through the Arun valley. The distance of Tingri Maidan, the pasture and wool producing center of Tibet, was only 262

miles away from the terminus of DHR via Tamakote, the proposed terminus for Nepal extension. It was only 180 miles from Tamakote with a continuous descent of Arun valley from 12,500 ft. to 2,900 ft. whereas, the existing distance via Lhasa was 770 miles. Prestage's plan was the inclusion of a bridle track across the frontier into Nepal, by Ilam or by the best route into the Tambur Valley to Dhankota, an important market at the confluence of the Kosi, Arun and the Tambur rivers as well as Arun Valley and Kathmandu roads. In a letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 1889 Prestage got the green signal from the Secretary to the Government of India on the condition that he should consult the Resident of Kathmandu Durbar. However, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1889, the Resident of Nepal Durbar reported the refusal of the proposal and the letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 1892 officially confirmed about the Durbar's inability to comply with the proposal. Nepal in the present context enjoys very little scope of railway network. Perhaps the acceptance might have given Nepal the needed economic benefits in terms of tourist and natural resources, but she must have her own reason for the refusal.<sup>20</sup>

Number of passengers & Freight carried by the DHR

Year	Number of Passengers	Goods (in tons)
1881	8,000	380
1884	36,500	16,730
1896-97	30,000 (approximately)	15,510
1905	29,000	31,570
1909-10	1,74,000	47,000

[Table No.6:5] Source: Karatoya, 2011.

In the prospectus of the new Extension Company following purpose was given: 'This Company is formed to provide funds for the construction, under a contract with the Secretary of State for India, of the following railways on the 2 ft. gauge:- (1) from a point on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, near Siliguri to Kissengunge, a distance of about 66 miles. (2) from Siliguri Station, on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, to the Tista Bridge Bazaar in the Tista Valley, near Darjeeling, a distance of

about 29 miles. The annexed plan shows the intended alignment of the proposed Railways, which it is intended should serve as feeder lines to the eastern Bengal State Railway, and generally to develop the trade of the country which they traverse.<sup>21</sup> The Board of Directors consisted of E.H. Bray of the Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co., the Hon. Mr. Norman McLEOD of McLEOD & Co., R.G.D. Thomas if J. Thomas & Co. and W. K. Dowding of Turner, Morrison & Co. and a Government Inspector of Railways appointed by the Government of India. Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co., Calcutta was the Managing Agent with a capital requirement of Rs. 50,00,000. Of which 43,750 shares of Rs. 100 each were available for subscription.<sup>22</sup> The principal contract between the secretary of state and the extensions company dated 25 April 1914, and set out the terms for the DHR working and maintaining the lines and the rolling stock.

### **KISHANGUNJ LINE**

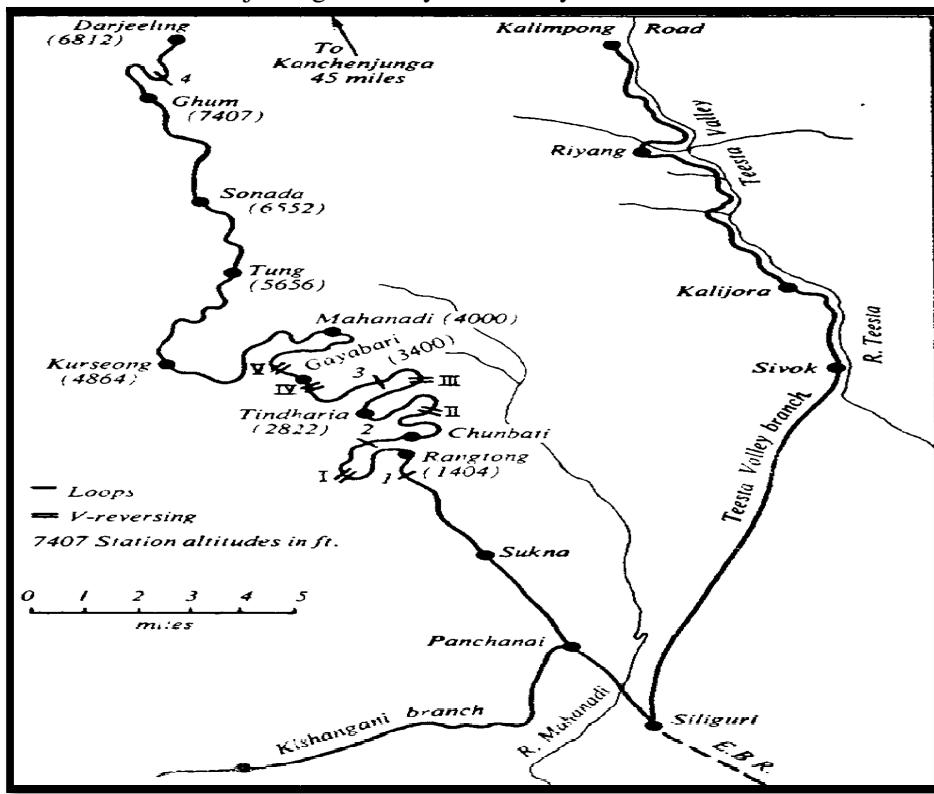
The DHRE Co. was authorized to construct to cibstruct a line from Panchanai to Kishengunj in the plains and another from Sevok to Kalimpong respectively [Map No.6:1]. The line of 66 miles connects Siliguri via Naxalbari and Kissengunge was completed in 1915. The tract of 22 miles from Siliguri to Islampore gave exceptional returns. The rolling stock includes bogie-wagons and a type of engine built by Messrs. Sharp, Stewart & Co., of Glasgow for these feeder-lines. The line crosses the Balasan and the Mahanadi rivers. Balasan Bridge had 14 spans each 40 feet long.

### **TISTA VALLEY LINE**

In the words of E.C.Dozey, ‘two factors played an important part in delaying the completion of the Tista Valley Line –the heavy blasting operations which were found necessary during its construction, and which have ever since caused innumerable slips, as also the war which had materially interfered with the delivery of bridge material’. Mr. G.B. Cresswell was the General Manager of the DHR. On

15 May, 1915, only 22 miles of the line was opened for traffic upto Riyang from Siliguri. For the next 16 miles, the line worms its way along the hillside when it reaches its present terminus, Kalimpong Road Station 2 miles from the Tista Bridge. The line was to tap the resources of Sikkim and incidentally received no less than  $4\frac{1}{4}$  lakhs of maunds of merchandise. The Tista Valley line intended for goods traffic but was suppose to serve the tourist as wel.<sup>23</sup>

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Extensions



[Map No.6:1] Source: Bhandari, R.R., 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway', 2000.

### THE TRAFFIC CARRIED BY THE TRAIN

In 1916, the Siliguri-Kissengunge Extension line carried 3,76,478 passengers (nearly all were Third Class passengers) and 27,920 tons of goods. The Siliguri-Kishanganj line handles timber, rice and jute, while the Tista Valley branch carries imports of food-grains, salt, piece-goods, provisions and building materials and exports oranges, cardamoms, potatoes, timber and wool. For the same year, the Teesta Valley carried 48,071 Passengers and 15589 tons of Goods. The gross earnings of the former line were

Rs.2, 11,449 and that of the Tista Valley line was Rs.1, 21,480 only.<sup>24</sup> In 1916-17 the line carried 2,39,696 passengers, (First Class-7,226, Second Class-29,103 and Third Class 203,367) and 59,740 tons of goods. The principal commodities included edible grains, flour, rice, etc., 17,804 tons, tea 5,354 tons, Potatoes 3,824 tons, Salt 1,634 tons, Sugar- 894 tons, Metals (owing to war, as low as ) 915 tons. Now the DHR does not carry goods. Since 1993, freight services been stopped running on the line. During the year ending 31 March 1920, the main line carried 263,082 passengers and 61,704 tons of goods. The total number of passengers travelling during 1942-43 in the Main Line of the DHR was 3, 08,872 and that of Teesta Valley Extension was 35,988. The number of passengers to and from the following principal stations during the 1942-43 is given in Table No.6:6

#### TRAFFIC DURING 1942-43.

STATIONS	TO	FROM	TOTAL
Darjeeling	63147	101984	165131
Ghum	41436	50061	91497
Sonada	11062	16703	27765
Kurseong	44910	54069	98979
Riyang	2321	3539	5860
Siliguri road and Siliguri	101207	95693	196900

[Table No. 6.6] Source: Bengal Gazetteers Darjeeling, 1947.

Down the Teesta Valley line are carried wool from Tibet, and large quantities of oranges from Sikkim during the winter season, as much as 20 tons of the latter being carried in the day. Cardamoms, potatoes and timber also carried while the imports included food grains, salt, piece goods, provisions and building materials. The Kishanganj branch carries principally jute and paddy.<sup>25</sup>

## DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY WORKSHOP AT TINDHARIA

‘Railways directly help industrialization of the country by themselves setting up huge factories and workshops for the manufacture of locomotives, locomotive parts, coaches, and other rolling stock and railway stores.’<sup>26</sup> ‘The railway workshops are the hub of railway life. Apart from the constant need of rolling stock to be kept in tip-top order the necessity of acquisition of new stocks to fill up gaps in expansion...’ The day-to-day maintenance, routine checking and servicing of the rolling stock consisting mainly of locomotives, coaches and wagons, is attended to in locomotive running sheds, at carriage and wagon depots and in sick lines. ‘In addition to repairs to rolling stock, the mechanical workshops undertake repairs to pumps, cranes, machinery and plant. On the production side, these workshops manufacture the spare parts required for repair undertaken in shops, running sheds, and carriage and wagon depots...the existing workshops were planned many years back and since then additional rolling stock has been added’.<sup>27</sup>

Tindharia meaning three ridges is situated at 2,822 ft. above sea level. It has a railway workshop, a railway hospital and a club. At the start the workshop was located higher up the hill, behind Tindharia Locomotive sheds. Commanding a fine view of the lower foothills and the plains, it is the place where Rabindranath Tagore while travelling on train, spent some time and composed his poem ‘Paglajhora’.<sup>28</sup> Initially, the Resident Engineer was in charge of the locomotives but in 1888 GE Trueman was appointed Chief Locomotive Inspector. It was only with the coming of the First World War that the new workshops, on a spur, were built in 1915. The population consists almost entirely of railway employees and their families. It was certainly a commanding position, and the new works was to have all the facilities to allow the railway to become completely self-supporting.

The DHR Workshop from the beginning produced creative pieces. Back in 1897 the Workshop started to manufacture its own rickshaws for Rs.250-300 per piece at the workshop. These would

be given to coolies at Darjeeling station for Rs.250 a year, which was to be paid monthly and on condition that they all wore uniforms. The workshop also built furniture like the dining tables, cabinets inlaid tea trolleys and standard lamps for the senior staff. During the tenure of James Shaw, the workshop produced over a hundred wooden models of ‘B’ class, toys for the children of the staff and the tea planters. Iron girdle for chapatti were a common kitchen item sold by the Workshop. However, the manufacture of coffins was the best project by James Shaw.<sup>29</sup>

‘The works were extremely well fitted out, comprising: erecting, fitting and machine shops, foundry, sawmill, all the facilities that were needed to maintain the locomotive fleet to the highest standard’ writes David Barrie.<sup>30</sup> Tindharia Workshop produced rolling stocks like the modern lightweight coaches with air-breaking for new diesel engines. ‘The stock included four 1<sup>st</sup> class buffet saloons with a bar at one end and a large, square observation window set in the bulkhead at the other. Comfortably furnished with ten upholstered armchairs, they became extremely popular with the troops on leave, particularly after James Shaw secured a supply of the virtually unattainable teacher’s whisky. A fifth saloon was built for the General Manager to complement the buffet coaches, its most distinguishing feature being a prominent rounded end in which a large panoramic window were named after Himalayan peaks, the GM’s vehicle bearing the ‘Everest’ in honour of its status’.<sup>31</sup>

The Tindharia workshop manufactured three ‘B’ class engines 795,796, 797 in the years 1919, 1923, 1925 [Fig.No.6:3]. Brian Reed, in his book ‘Locomotive Profiles’ No.23 refers them to be built in Tindharia but, Harold Bowtell,(well respected in railway circles, visited the line in 1944) spoke to James Shaw, then Locomotive Superintendent ,who told him that they were not new, but built from existing parts. Furthermore Harold records that No.44 (797) was superheated. This is also referred in Brian Reed’s book.<sup>32</sup>



[Fig.No.6:3] Source: Kurseong Railway Museum, Darjeeling.

By 1945, Tindharia Workshop had 39 locomotives, rolling stock repaired and maintained, and carriages and wagons designed and built. The machines at Tindharia was equipped with 17 lathes and all the equipment for drilling, planning, milling, shaping, slotting, grinding, shearing and punching machines. There is a carpenters' shop with the usual power driven equipment. The workshop included an employment of 381 men to keep the Railway running. Out of which, the number of Hillman employed were 317 (Table No.6:7). During the war 100 additional hands were engaged to cope 'with extra work'. Only running shed work is done at Siliguri and Darjeeling.<sup>33</sup> Before 1948 the DHR ran for 233kms i.e. Siliguri (Panchanadi Station) to Kishanganj -107kms, Siliguri to Gielle Khola (Teesta Valley) – 46 kms and Siliguri to Darjeeling -80 kms. The number of staff then was 2000. Tindharia Workshops was established in 1914 with about 700 staff, now reduced to 115.

Skill	No.	Hill men
Fitters	115	78
Turners & Drillers	26	22

Blacksmiths & Strikers	37	33
Boilermakers & Riveters	91	88
Moulders	14	14
Carpenters	29	20
Tailors	6	6
Khalasis (cleaners)	42	37
Painters	21	19
Total	381	317

[Table No.6:7] source: Bengal District Gazetteer, 1947.

The DHR before 1950 had 37 steam locomotives, 148 carriages and 730 goods wagons but after 1999 only 6 steam engine and 2 diesel locomotives are working. The number of carriages reduced to below 30 and the freight out of use [Table No.6:8].

	Steam locomotives	Carriages	Goods Wagons
Before 1950	37	148	730
After 1999	6 No. Steam and 2 No. Diesel	25-30	Nil

[Table No.6:8] Source: SAHAYTA, Stakeholder Workshop, 2002.

The introduction of DHR promised jobs for the inhabitants as elsewhere by other railways, thus bringing about a modern way of services in large scale to the people of the area. Majority of the population depended on the plantation economy like tea and others were engaged in their terrace farming or household activities. But to those youths who were getting some sort of education from the ‘school meant for the downtrodden’, it was a great opportunity to bag whatever service they could get in the DHR. Basic training given to the hard, laborious hill people was fruitful and soon many of them served as engine drivers, mechanics, fitters, etc. The author recalls late Sri Bal Prakash Rai (grandfather in relation), who served in the railway at Kurseong from 1944 till 1986, once telling that it was quite easy for a high school passed youth to get job in the DHR. One

afternoon he met one of his village men, S.C. Gurung who had recently finished his high school. On the way, Mr. B.P. Rai asked his companion, ‘what are you doing?’ to which he replied ‘nothing’. He then took Mr. Gurung along with him and introduced him to the officer. The officer immediately asked Gurung to join the office.<sup>34</sup> It was only after the absorption of the DHR in the Indian Railway that employment in rail service was recruited through examination.

In the words of Sarkar & Lama, Darjeeling Himalayan Railway played a significant role in the transportation of the tea from the district of Darjeeling to the plains from where it took down to Calcutta [Table No.6:9]. By 1905, the tea industry about one-third of the entire population depended on the tea estates. ‘In addition, a large number of people find employment in a range of supplementary industries associated with tea plantations – for example, ply-wood, tea chests, aluminum foil metal fittings, fertilizers, insecticides, transport warehousing and business and trade related with the industry. It may also be noted that the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway service between Siliguri and Darjeeling connection the plains and the hills were originally started for sending essential supplied like coal, fertilizers, machinery, building materials from Calcutta to Darjeeling via Siliguri and for sending regular supply of tea from the Darjeeling gardens to the Calcutta market.’<sup>35</sup>

#### The Rate of transport DHR for tea to Calcutta per quintal

Station	Railway	Road
From Darjeeling	Rs.19.66	Rs.9-12
From Ghum	Rs.19.66	Rs 9.50-12.50
From Kurseong	Rs.16.95	Rs 11-12.50
Transit time	4-6 days	3-4 days

[Table No.6:9] Source: Dash, ‘Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling’, 1947.

## SIDINGS

There were many sidings provided in the Main DHR line mainly for loading of goods specially the tea chests. The names of Sidings are Panchkilla Siding, Loop No.2 Siding, Prestage Siding, Carriage Siding at Tindharia, Carey Siding, Paglajhora Siding, Giddapahar Siding, Goethals Siding, Salesian College Siding, Rangbul siding , Jorkhola Siding and Batasia West Point siding.<sup>36</sup>

## TOURISM

‘The two most significant contributors to the development of Darjeeling’s economy were tourism and the tea industry. And that was mainly possible due to the introduction of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in the hills. Innovative engineering is only one facet of the inimitable Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Perhaps, no other railway system in the world is intimately related with the lives of the people as the DHR. The railway has instrumental in attracting people from neighbouring Sikkim, Nepal, different districts of West Bengal and even as far away as Tibet.’<sup>37</sup> Tourism industry was encouraged by the presence of mountain railway in this region. Cinemas in different languages are filmed in the area. Earl of Ronaldshay has described his journey in the early 1920s. "Siliguri is palpably a place of meeting ... The discovery that here the metre gauge system ends and the two foot gauge of the Darjeeling-Himalayan railway begins,... One step into a railway carriage which might easily be mistaken for a toy, and the whimsical idea seizes hold of one that one has accidentally stumbled into Lilliput.... No special mechanical device such as a rack is employed — unless, indeed, one can so describe the squat and stolid hill-man who sits perched over the forward buffers of the engine and scatters sand on the rails when the wheels of the engine lose their grip of the metals and race, with the noise of a giant spring running down when the control has been removed. Sometimes we cross our own track after completing the circuit of a cone, at others we zigzag backwards and forwards; but always we

climb at a steady gradient — so steady that if one embarks in a trolley at Ghum, the highest point on the line, the initial push supplies all the energy necessary to carry one to the bottom."<sup>38</sup>

If the medium of railway would not have established then tourism industry in Darjeeling hills would not have been so successful. During the early decades of the twentieth century Darjeeling was a favoured destination and many wanted to come to the place to see the mini railway only as they had heard or read so much in magazines or dailies. Like Brian Bramall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, who had read about the DHR in a railway magazine but have never hoped that he could have made it possible. But the World War I gave him that opportunity, his force was sent to Calcutta instead of continent and he elaborately mention his experience of his journey in the train in 'The Railway Magazine, February 1916'.<sup>39</sup>

Due to this popular link many eminent personalities could easily travel to Darjeeling to name some were – Mother Teresa, sister Nivedita, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Subash Chandra Bose, Deshbandhu Chitranjan Das, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, A.K. Fazul Haque, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Kawaka Nizammuddin, Sarat Chandra Nandi, Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, etc.<sup>40</sup>

## **ROLE OF RAILWAYS IN POSTAL DEVELOPMENT**

According to Johnson, before 1854, the post office was a medley of separate services in different provinces, each having separate services in different provinces, each having separate rules and different rates of postage. The cost of conveyance of a letter from Calcutta to Bombay was one rupee a tola and from Calcutta to Agra 12 annas a tola. A letter ordinarily took 8 to 10 days from Calcutta to reach Bombay. Mail was carried by runners or couriers. There was no regular system of carrying parcels.<sup>41</sup> In 1870, a travelling post office was introduced on the East Indian Railway, but it was not until 1907 that the Railway Mail Service was established. The authorities of the Darjeeling Postal Department decided the triangular plot of land in the Beachwood Estate for the

office building in 1920and was opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1921 by Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal.<sup>42</sup> Railway first class mails conveyed from Siliguri to Darjeeling carried heavy parcels, packets and other mails. The Agreements of 1879 reveals that from Mails and Post office servants the railway was to receive a yearly amount of Rs.10,260 from the government. In 1943-44, there was one Head Office in the town and five sub-offices at Ghum, Jalapahar, Lebong, North Point and Darjeeling Bazaar.

Nicholas Rhodes has given good information on the Travelling Post Office in The Darjeeling Mail, Nov.1999. the following extracts throws ample light on how this TPO used to carry its work in the train: -

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway carried the mail to and from Darjeeling and there used to be a separate carriage that acted as a Travelling Post Office (TPO). Apart from carrying the mail, the postal van contained a full complement of staff who sorted the mail posted en route and applied cancellations or transit markings. The postal markings that applied on the DHR giving information on these TPO markings were very limited. The DHR appears to have belonged to the C-Division of the Indian Post Office until sometime between 1903 and 1908. The relevant section was C-11, and some mail to and from Darjeeling received this mark in the years around 1900. Sometime after 1903, the DHR was transferred to a new E-Division, with headquarters at Calcutta, and it became Section E-11. The postal staff on this section consisted, at least after 1924, of five sorters and 15 van peons, which means that one sorter, with perhaps three peons, would have been on any particular train. Each sorter had his own set of cancellation stamps, separately numbered as “Set No.1” to “Set No. 5”, so that it was possible to determine which postal team sorted any particular items. Prior to 1924, it was likely that only four sorters worked on the DHR. Not every item on mail transported to Darjeeling received a DHR mark since often mail would be bundled up in Calcutta and only one item in each bundle received a transit mark – most probably the top or bottom item. When the mail was travelling up to Darjeeling, it received a

cancellation market “OUT”, since it was being transported away from Headquarters, and mail posted in Darjeeling received a cancellation marked “IN”, as it was travelling inwards, towards Headquarters.<sup>43</sup>

The TPO cancellations relating to the DHR

C-11 OUT	SET No. 1	4 July (1899)	
Cancellation Type 2			
	SET No. 2	3 July (1899)	
	SET No. 3	2 April (1898)	
	SET No. 4	8 Aug. (1899)	8 June (1903)
C-11 IN	SET No.?	? April (1904)	Sets 1 to 4 should exist
E -11 OUT	SET No. 1	8 Aug (1912)	24 Feb (1925)
Cancellation Type 2			
	SET No. 2	25 Dec (1912)	14 Dec (1921)
	SET No. 3	24 Jan (1908)	11 June (1916)
	SET No. 4	25 June (1908)	27 June (1913)
E-11 In	SET No. 1	20 Dec (1923)	
	SET No. 2	21 Jan (1910)	
	SET No. 3		Not seen, should exist
	SET No. 4		Not seen, should exist
E-11 OUT	SET No. 1	28 Sep 1927	25 Dec 1934
Cancellation Type 3			
	SET No. 2	20 Dec 1923	9 Feb 1928
	SET No. 3	20 May 1929	16 Mar 1930
	SET No. 4	16 July 1927	2 Mar 1930

	SET No. 5	27 Jan 1929
E-11 IN	SET No. 1	14 Nov 1935
	SET No. 2	X Sep 1933
Sets 3 to 5 should exist.		

[Table No. 6.10] Source: The Darjeeling Mail, Nov.1999, p.26.

The DHR also had E-21 Section from Siliguri to Kishanganj, which had three sorters, and the E-29 Section, from Siliguri to Kalimpong Road, with only one sorter. All three sections were in use between 1924 and 1943, and E -11 was still in existence in 1946 albeit only for the Siliguri to Darjeeling section of the DHR. In 1970 a postcard was dropped by the author in the postal carriage on the train and was even delivered in England but had no markings, that means the train only acted as a sorting office.<sup>44</sup>

## **INTERNAL TRADE**

Prices of commodities cheapened due to the coming of the train. Import and export of trade was enlarged in the district other than tea. The Hill Cart Road of Darjeeling and the main line of Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway carried the greater part of the manufacture of the Sadar and Kurseong Subdivisions. The freight mail carried the supplies needed for the towns of Darjeeling and Kurseong for the tea gardens and industries of these Subdivisions. The Kishanganj branch of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway also serves the Terai tea gardens via Siliguri as well as a certain amount of traffic with Nepal through Naxalbari Station. The traffic booked to the DHR from the Bengal and Assam Railway via Siliguri in the year ending March 1942 was as follows:

Station	Tons To	Tons From
Darjeeling	9,311	2,247
Ghum	2,953	3,625
Sonada	1,347	1,098
Kurseong	3,829	592
Tindharia	282	225
Other Main Line	500	700
Riyang	1,204	1,489
Gielle Khola	5,077	1,835
Other Tista Valley	69	882
Matigara	251	81
Baghdogra	465	894
Naxalbari	240	4,533
Other Kishanganj Extension	1,416	4,529
Kalimpong Ropeway	7,522	3,637
Darjeeling Ropeway	101	252
Total	34,567	5,419

[Table No. 6.11] source: Gazetteer of Bengal Darjeeling, 1947.

The internal district traffic booked on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway to and from Siliguri in the year ending March 1942 was as follows:-

Tons	To and	Tons	From Station
4,236		71	Darjeeling
983		48	Ghum
1,522		19	Sonada
1,744		175	Kurseong
600		78	Other Main Line
1,744		372	Riyang
4,083		142	Gielle Khola
02		103	Other Tista Valley
58		38	Matigara
36		193	Baghdogra
37		178	Naxalbari
967		1,422	Other Kishanganj Extension
3,597		175	Kalimpong Ropeway
46		01	Darjeeling Ropeway
19,703		3,015	

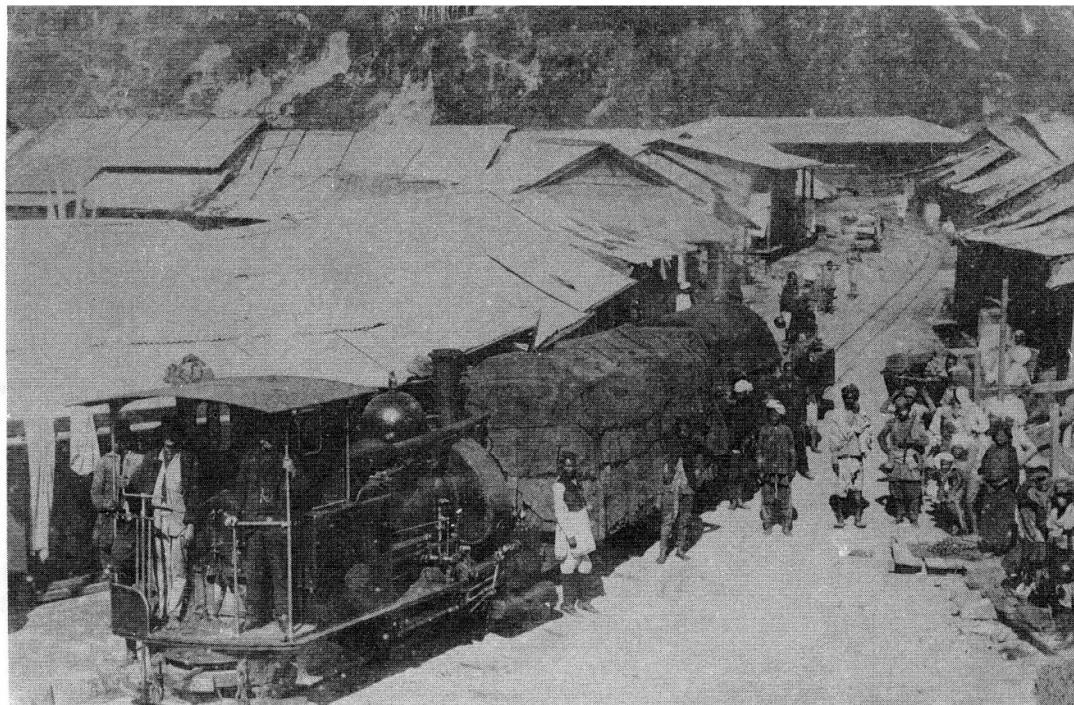
[Table No. 6:12] Source: Gazetteer of Bengal Darjeeling, 1947.

### THE DHR MAIN LINE TRANSPORTATION

The downward traffic of the hill section of DHR was principally tea, seed, potatoes, cardamoms, oranges, timber and fresh vegetables. The upward traffic of this section was principally rice, flour,

tea garden stores, oil, coal, cement, iron, and salt, building materials, miscellaneous goods and general stores. In 1915 the earnings for the week ending the 21<sup>st</sup> August were Rs. 26,722 as against Rs. 17,291 for the corresponding periods of the year prior; while the gross earnings for the financial year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1917 amounted to Rs13,01,592. In the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1920, the main line carried 263,082 passengers and 61,704 tons of goods.<sup>45</sup> In 1942-43 for instance there was an import of 7,104 tons of rice to Darjeeling, 1,007 tons of salt, 540 tons of sugar, 417 tons of grains and pulses other than rice, 773 tons of provisions and 2,769 tons of coal. Downwards from Darjeeling in the above year were moved 1,080 tons of potatoes and 1,298 tons of tea. Imports from below Ghum included 3,505 tons of rice, 513 tons of salt, 434 tons of provisions and 1,167 tons of coal. Downward export from Ghum included 1,629 tons of potatoes, 2,190 tons of tea and 515 tons of timber [Fig.No.6:4]. The main line had carrying 3, 08, 872 passengers and the loads in a year made the DHR split the sections into four or five. For the other two extensions in 1942-43 Kishanganj carried 4,59,872 passengers and the Teesta Valley line carried 35,988.<sup>46</sup> In 1999-2000, earnings were Rs.9,38,000 and expenditure was Rs.6,58,26,000. Expenditure per Rupee earned in 1999-2000 was Rs.70.2. in 1916-17 it carried 2,39,696 passengers, (of these were 1<sup>st</sup> Class-7,226, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class-29,103 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Class 203,367) and 59,740 tons of goods (principal commodities included edible grains, flour, rice, &c,- 17,804 tons, tea-5,354 tons, Potatoes-3,824 tons, Salt-1,634 tons, Sugar- 894 tons, Metals (owing to war, as low as )- 915 tons). Now the DHR does not carry goods. Since 1993 freight services have been withdrawn from the line. During the year ending 31 March, 1920, the main line carried 263,082 passengers and 61,704 tons of goods. The total number of passengers travelling during 1942-43 in the Main Line of the DHR was 3, 08,872 and that of Teesta Valley Extension was 35,988. The number of passengers to and from the following principal line, which crosses the Balasun and Mahanadi rivers, the former being spanned by a bridge having 14 spans each 40 feet long, while the latter is bridged by one having 7 spans each 80 feet in length.<sup>47</sup>

Down Goods Train



[Fig.No6:4]Source: Ghum Railway Museum.

## THE ORANGE

The Central and South Eastern Railways is a typical example of the role of railways in the marketing of fruits in the movement of oranges from Nagpur the famous orange market.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, over six millions of these fruits exported annually to Calcutta from the orchards of Sikkim, Kalimpong and Darjeeling. The price ranges from Rs.1-8-0 to as much as Rs7-0-0 per hundreds during Xmas, which leaves an exceedingly large margin of profit per acre.<sup>49</sup>

For transport by rail, the freights on the Bengal and Assam Railway system varied from Re. 0.38 pies to Re.1.87 pies per maund mile according to the class of goods. In wartime on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway from Siliguri to Darjeeling charges were from Re.0.15 pies 8 annas to Re 1 pies 10 and 6annas per maund. The distance is 51 miles and rates are thus from 3.7 to 6 pies per maund mile. Peacetime rates, about 20 percent less, would therefore be from 3 pies to 5 pies per

maund mile according to the class of goods. Downhill from Darjeeling to Siliguri, rates were from Rs. 0.9.6 per maund according to the class of goods or Rs.2.25 pies per maund mile. The peace-time rate would be Re.1.8 pies.<sup>50</sup>

## **WORLD WARS**

The outbreak of World War I gave a temporary boost to the hill station's fortunes. A great many women, schoolchildren, and others who would otherwise have gone back to Britain for various reasons were to remain in India during the duration of the war and a substantial portion of these involuntary exiles congregated in the hill station. The outbreak of the War in 1939 again overcrowded the hill stations. When Japan began its military advance across Southeast Asia, Darjeeling became the headquarters for the exiled Malayan government.<sup>51</sup> During the wartime the train had to put an extra hand of 100 employees to meet the transportation of injured soldiers and other passengers. At the same time, the supplies for the extra population also depended on the freight train. The troops train remained the same so that for the military supplies the transportation was carried through motor vehicle.

## **RAILWAY UNION**

K.K Saxena writes that 'the abnormal conditions created by World War I and its aftermath, threw a considerable strain on the economic structure of industrial India and during the period 1918-21 a great many so-called Trade Unions sprang into existence on different railways. The objects of the Unions in the beginning were to represent and seek redress for grievances common to employees whom they represented and in some cases to promote smooth and harmonious relations between the administration and staff.'<sup>52</sup> The sad plight of many poor workers and labourers necessitated the formation of Hill unions under the leadership of Ratanlal Brahmin, popularly known as the 'Maila Bajey'. The CPI leader Sushil Chatterji had influenced Ratanlal to join the party for his daring activates in favour of the common people in the hills. The party established in 1943 got

good response from the masses and there were the formation of Driver Union, Gariman Union, Rickshaw puller Union, Mazdoor Union, etc.<sup>53</sup>

The Central Mazdoor Union and the North Eastern Railway Employees' Union were active in the DHR section of railways. The writing of Gaur Kishore Ghosh on Sagina Mahato throws light on the unsafety condition of women of employees in the railway, where the sahibs exploited their honour in absence of their husband. According to the story when the author had gone to Kurseong in December 1944, Sagina had strongly organized the workers of DHR under Mazdoor Union and dared to speak for their rights to the Saheb. In 1944 for the first time the DHR employees observed a successful *hartal* too. Later he was made the Labour Welfare Officer and therefore had to go for all India tour. By the time he returned to Kurseong he found that his influence had weaned away. There are many writings about him and a movie was also filmed on him, the character of whom was played by Dilip Kumar.<sup>54</sup>

	District Imports		District Exports		D.H.R. Bookings	
	To	from	to	from		
	Siliguri Tons	D.H.R. Tons	Siliguri Tons	D.H.R Tons	Siliguri Tons	Siliguri. Tons
Paddy	6,068	24	0	38	313	8
Rice	5,404	5,676	1,158	1,830	346	7,375
Gram and Pulses	2,586	394	0	2	8	517
Wheat flour	2,947	1,358	0	1	0	412
Wheat	142	0	0	0	0	0
Oil seeds	408	2	0	39	0	0
Other grains	0	642	0	54	2	190
Salt	2,844	3,209	0	0	0	439
Gur, Molasses	444	50	0	0	0	53
Sugar	2,843	216	0	8	0	766

Wood, unwrought	0	93	5,326	5,737	882	74
Cotton, raw	0	40	0	0	0	1
Cotton, processed	271	1,356	0	57	1	15
Fodder	160	457	0	41	123	109
Fruit, vegetables	1,471	12	885	0	13	29
Oranges	0	0	0	739	152	56
Jute, raw	0	0	4,452	1,641	588	0
Jute, processed	126	131	126	16	40	27
Iron and Steel	496	1,360	0	192	50	73
Manures	837	0	0	0	0	0
Oil cake	385	0	0	0	0	0
Kerosene	1,989	164	0	0	6	728
Petrol	951	0	96	0	0	0
Oil fuel	1,135	0	0	0	0	0
Vegetable oils	1,722	84	0	4	0	378
Tobacco	0	686	0	51	1	20
Provisions	0	1,181	0	19	32	821
Potatoes	756	32	905	3,824	48	115
Coal	40,437	2,900	0	0	3	5,812
Tea	46	1,247	7,030	6,450	15	27
Cardamoms	0	1	0	1,027	5	2
Wool	0	0	0	3,058	2	0
Revenue Stores	687	0	13,109	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	6,350	7,732	4,859	1,591	230	1,107
Cement	0	5,516	0	0	23	549
Marble, Stone	0	4	0	0	132	0
Total	81,505	34,567	37,946	26,419	3,015	19,703

[Table No. 6:12] Year ending March 1942

## **COAL**

The figures given above show that total imports into the District through the Bengal and Assam Railway system at Siliguri were  $34,567+81,505=1,16,072$  tons. From this total can be deducted 12,638 tons of coal imported by the Bengal and Assam Railway for its own use. Total import thus comes to 103,434 tons including 16,439 tons of coal for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Exports from the District through the Bengal and Assam Railway system at Siliguri are  $37,946+26,419$  tons= 64,365 tons.

Earlier the DHR had put Darjeeling on the world tea map. It was practically aimed at carrying the tea to the plains. The chief centers are Darjeeling, Kurseong, Siliguri and Kalimpong. The three places first mentioned are on the railway, which carries most of the trade in the Western portion of the district, while transport in the east is carried on by means of pack-ponies and bullock carts plying along the Tista Valley.

## **CONCLUSION**

The DHR had definitely been a medium in bringing about economic changes in the region. Apart from faster and safer transportation, it speeded the communication in the area, since letters, parcels and newspapers were carried by the DHR. Next to the Tea Plantation it became the largest employment house for the people. The Railway also took care for the welfare measures like housing, hospital, medical facilities, education, etc. till 1948 it was a private firm and was a successful business. The takeover by the Indian government and the competition that it had to face with the road transport gradually brought its deterioration. The freight was stopped in 1993 and the government had to bear great losses. But in the war times the railway had given great service to the mankind not only by transporting passengers but also provisions for the extra population in the hills. Even in the latter half of the twentieth century the railway did give useful service to the schoolchildren, trainees of ITI and workers of different fields who used to travel daily by rail. The railway brought urbanization of Darjeeling into completion. In present day

scenario, however, the railway is at the lowest rung of the economic ladder of the society for lack of refurbishment and care. The changes in the political weather of the country also affected the railways. Workers became conscious of their rights and honour.

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## Chapter –VII

## **DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY – CRISIS AND SURVIVAL**

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway established in 1881, is the first to set an example as an Indian mountain railway which was soon followed by other mountain railways of India like the Kalka-Simla (1891), Nilgiri (1908), Matheran Light Railways (1907). The Matheran Railway had purchased one of the Darjeeling class ‘A’, 0-4-0 ST engine in 1906.<sup>1</sup> From its inception the DHR was a successful business enterprise. ‘It is interesting to note that DHR never needed Government’s financial support, and was a profiteering venture till its acquisition by the State in 1948.’<sup>2</sup> It was DHR that brought revolution in the hill transportation system of Darjeeling in the late nineteenth century. The long hours of journey by walking, riding a pony, bullock carts or in a dandy, the discomfort and tiring condition was all smoothed and shortened by the introduction of the railway. But, as it usually happens that - ‘what goes up, comes down’ happened with the DHR too. Almost for fifty years the DHR had a total monopoly in the hill transport and proved quite fruitful in terms of return of dividends. The following Table No.1 explains the benefit to the investors:

Dividend Returns

Year	Percentage
1886	8
1895	10-12
1909-10	8
1914-15	15-16
1919-20	8

[Table No7:1] Source: Rai, Bhawna, Karatoya vol.4, p.91.

## **DHR MONOPOLY OVER FARES AND GOODS RATE**

'Major Luard, the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India for Guaranteed Railways, felt that the Government should have some power to revise the rates and fares of the Darjeeling Tramway as there would be no competition to reduce them.' The contract had determined there would be two classes of travel for passengers, Upper and Lower, for which the Company was empowered to charge fares at 6 annas and 15 pies per mile [see Table No.7:6]. Freight was classified as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2nd or 3<sup>rd</sup> Class and the rates for its transport were 3, 4 and 5 pies per maund per mile respectively, while parcels and excess luggage was charged at 1 aana per maund per mile. An allowance was made to increase the rate for goods by 50% during the monsoon period.<sup>3</sup>(Martin, pp36-37) It was also stipulated that all the mail, parcels and articles in charge of the Post Office authorities, along with their staff in charge of them, would be carried by the tramway in return for an annual payment of Rs.10, 260.<sup>4</sup> For movement on level ground the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway charged as follows: On the Kishanganj extension for a distance of 70 miles, according to the class of goods, 9 aanas 8 pies to 1rupee 1 aana 9 pies per maund in war time. This gives peace-time rates of 1rupee 5 aanas to 2 rupee 6 aanas per maund mile; and on the Tista valley section Siliguri to Gielle khola (30 miles) 4 aanas 3 pies to 8 aanas per maund, that is, peace-time rates of 1.5 to 2.6 per maund mile.<sup>5</sup> The exorbitant rates charged by the D.H. Railway occupied the attention of Mr. Christison. He patiently collected data from the managers of mountain railways in Europe, Asia and the United States and placed it before the authorities of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. After which the DHR made a reductions in the goods' rate of no less than 33 percent on coal, 25 on rice, and 10 on tea.<sup>6</sup>

Passenger fares of DHR and its Extensions.

Destination station from Siliguri to	1 <sup>st</sup> Class (In Rupees)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Class (In Rs.)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class (In Rs.)
Darjeeling (51 miles)	10	7	2-4 (4 for mail train)
Gielle Khola (29.5 miles)	5-10	2-13	1.6-6
Kishanganj (69.5 miles)	13-2	6-9	2-3

[Table No.7:2] Source: Dash, 'Bengal District Gazetteer: Darjeeling'.

Rates were enhanced by 25 percent or more during the 1939-45 war. Freight rates vary according to the class of goods carried. On the Tista Valley and Kishanganj branches war-time rates vary from 1 to 3.2 pies per maund mile according to the class of goods carried. From Siliguri to Darjeeling rates vary from 3.7 to 6.2 pies per maund mile and downhill from Darjeeling to Siliguri upwards of 2.25 pies per maund mile according to the class of goods. The fact however remains that for many years the railway had practically a monopoly of the handling of the import and export trade of Darjeeling town and the hill areas of the district and the only competition they had to face was bullock cart traffic which was only appreciable in the Tista Valley and in the Terai.<sup>7</sup>

The thirties of the twentieth century augmented an era of motor traffic. 'Road systems are intrinsically more useful than a railway tracks. Every trader has a road to his premised and more homes are better approached by road than from a railway station. An excellent example of how the road defeated the rail, despite excellent services on the latter, is the struggle for traffic in the district round Aberdeen. In the 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles north to Dyce and in the 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> miles west to Culter were 8 and 9 intermediate stations respectively and there were 21 trains daily in each direction which performed the journeys expeditiously. With the opening of tram routes parallel to the railway for part of the distance and the provision of bus services for the whole distance these suburban rail services had to be withdrawn just before World War II because of lack of patronage although the railways stations were within a stone's throw of the main roads along which there was ribbon development.'<sup>8</sup>

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was not an exception to this problem; it faced a tough road competition. The first car imported in India was in 1902 and the earliest to make an appearance in the Darjeeling district was said to have been owned by a ‘coolie catcher’ named Saboullle. He plied his dishonourable trade by retrieving missing workers from the tea plantations in return for bounties, and it was no doubt a shamelessly lucrative business. The petrol for his machine was sent from Calcutta at a cost of Rs.10 a gallon, whilst at their most profitable time of the year, a laboring family of three would receive Rs.14 a month.<sup>9</sup> The advent of motor vehicles from about 1930 directly put a competition with the Railway. The subsequent development in road transport seriously undermined the DHR revenues. In 1929-30, the motor vehicles carried 48,000 passengers and in 1931-32, the goods carried by them were 880 tons [see Table No.7:2]. ‘Highways take traffic away from the railways. Whether the Indian railways were being managed by companies or, as after 1924, by the government, the railway heads looked with disfavor upon competition from passenger buses and freight trucks, and acted to oppose their development. In a sense, therefore, the state-owned railways are open to the charge of having helped stunt the growth of a road network in India.’<sup>10</sup>

In May 1926, there were 97 journeys made by car and 378 passengers travelled by bus. In May 1927, the number of journeys made by car was 83 and that by bus increased to 536. The figure jumped to 2,411 journeys by car and 1,309 passengers travelling by bus the following year, alarming the Director of the DHR. In the end of 1928, there was further increase in the figures, and the passengers preferring the bus service was recorded to be 2,953.<sup>11</sup> In 1932-33, the Government of India nominated a committee comprising of K.G. Mitchell, the Road Engineer with the government and L.H. Kirkness, Officer on Special Duty with the Railway Board to examine the state of road and railway competition and the possibilities of their future coordination. Mr. Gladstone representing Gillanders Arbuthnot and Co. deposed that DHR is the first Railway to experience the most serious competition. The earnings from passenger traffic have declined from Rs.4.75 lakhs in 1926-27 to Rs.2.37 lakhs in 1931-32 and that the goods traffic may also meet similar fate. Mr. Kerr, Chief

Engineer, Roads and Buildings, Government of Bengal deposed that the prosperity of DHR paid a substantial portion of its net earnings for the improvement of the road. Mr. Kerr maintained that if the motor traffic becomes so acute as to force the Railway into liquidation, Government would be faced with the whole cost of maintenance of the road and lose about a lakh of rupees a year which at present is paid by the Railway towards the cost of the upkeep of the road would be greatly increased since the road would then have to carry all the goods and passengers now carried by the Railway.<sup>12</sup>

#### STATISCTIC OF TRAFFIC ON ROAD AND RAIL.

Traffic by Rail			Traffic by Road	
YEAR	NUMBER OF PASSENGERS	TONNAGE OF GOODS	NUMBER OF PASSENGERS	TONNAGE OF GOODS
1909-10	1,74,000	47,000		
1919-20	2,63,000	62,000		
1929-30	2,58,000	80,000	48,000	880*
1934-35	2,40,000	76,000	56,000	7,600
1939-40	2,13,000	65,000	73,000	15,500
1940-41	2,06,000	57,000	81,000	16,500
1941-42	2,40,000	63,000	63,000	16,800
1942-43	3,09,000	63,000	27,000	5,900
1943-44	3,11,000	76,000	34,000	9,600

\*This figures relate to the year 1931-32

[Table No.7:3] Source: Dash, 'Bengal District Gazetteer, Darjeeling, p194.

The Report of 1935 showed a net profit of Rs.3,20,165 and to the shareholders a dividend of 2.5 percent and 2 percent to ordinary shares were given. The period of Second World War helped in the rise of traffic in DHR line as can be seen from the given Table No.7:2. In 1942-43, the total

number of passengers travelling on the Darjeeling Himalayan railway Main Line was 3,08,872, that on Siliguri Kishanganj Extension, 4,59,204 and on Tista Valley Extension 35,988.<sup>13</sup>

The Simla Conference of April, 1933, set up the Board of Communications in the Provinces and a Transport Advisory Council at the Centre. Subsequently, the Motor Vehicles Act of 1914 was amended in 1939 with a view to secure proper co-ordination. In 1943 the Government of India in the Department of War Transport, set up a Technical Sub-Committee on Transport to consider the future of road transport and road-rail relations in the country. With the passage of time the competition became more acute. Earlier the mail train carried the goods and was unloaded on the ‘goods shed’ near the stations, wherefrom the coolies carried them to the shops or godowns. But with the motor traffic their load of goods could be easily unloaded in front of their shops with no additional charges of the coolies, any shortage or damage due to the rough handling of the porters and saved time. Not only that but the business group of the society found it more profitable to own their private trucks, thus there was a rapid increase in the number of vehicles in the district. During the war years, DHR had 39 locomotives but even after high handedness by the DHR authorities to control the road traffic, the latter gradually took over the former. In 1944, the licensed public service on the Hill Cart road included 60 taxis, 25 trucks and 15 buses (for other routes 142 taxis; 76 trucks and 27 buses) were there. Beside 287 privately owned cars and 34 motor cycles were there.<sup>14</sup> The charges of trucks on the road were possibly 25 percent less than the railway, all limited to a 3 ton capacity, strictly monitored by a weigh bridge at Sukna. “The writing was also on the wall for the privileged position held by the railway, and it had to formally absolve itself from any insurance liability (from motor vehicles). A system of permits for road traffic had to be introduced in order to warn drivers of the presence of trains. Motorists were required to register their journey with each station master of each section of the line before being allowed to proceed.’ The number of road traffic increased continuously throughout the district [Table No.7:3]. By 1970, the number of private buses was 85 and that of registered taxis was 420

[Table No.7:4]. . ‘The famous ‘B’- class locomotives were in need of major refurbishment, and took longer to climb to Darjeeling than they did earlier. The overwhelming increase in faster road traffic added to the decline in rail passengers. And freight traffic had ceased completely in the early 1980s.’<sup>15</sup>

Private Bus services in the district in 1967.

Name of Route	Length in km.	Length in miles	No. of Buses plying daily
Darjeeling to Siliguri	84	53	14
Siliguri (local)	32	20	33
Darjiling (local)	16	10	14
Darjiling to Kurseong	32	20	3
Takdah to Darjiling	27	17	1
Darjiling to Manibhanjan	24	15	2
Kalimpong to Siliguri	68	42	10
Siliguri to Jhallung via Chalsa and Kumai			1
Darjiling to Pokhribong	26	16	1
Siliguri to Rangbo	74	46	1
Siliguri to Gangtok	116	72	1
Siliguri to Bagrakot and Naksalbari	39	24	1
Siliguri to Phansidewa	23	14	1
Kalimpong to Rangpo and Gorubathan	39	24	3
Kalimpong to Pedong	18	11	3

[Table No.7:4] Source: Dash, A.J. ‘Bengal District Gazetteer Darjiling’.

On the other hand the DHR could not handle the temporary increased traffic due to war-time population in the town .Hence, it had to be ‘supplemented by extra mechanical road transport (some of it military) which did not operate on a strictly commercial and competitive basis’.<sup>16</sup>

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway: total number of passengers in 1942-43.

Stations	To	From	Total
Darjeeling	63,147	1,01,984	1,65,131
Ghum	41,436	50,061	91,497
Sonada	1,062	16,703	27,765
Kurseong	44,910	54,069	98,979
Gielle Khola	12,635	14,860	27,495
Riyang	2,321	3,539	58,600
Matigara	28,351	36,295	64,646
Baghdoogra	24,003	27,613	51,616
Naxalbari	53,656	55,725	1,09,381
Siliguri Road and Siliguri	1,01,207	95,693	1,96,900

[Table No.7:5] Source: Dash, A.J. 'Bengal District Gazetteer Darjiling'.

The construction of two minor public ropeways meant to lower the costs was unable to reduce the transportation costs from Siliguri to the hills. The Kalimpong Ropeway may be considered a branch line of the Railway system mentioned above as it was managed also by Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co. and its operation works closely with that of the Tista Valley branch of the system owned by the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway Company.<sup>17</sup> The maintenance and repair of the Hill Cart Road was met by the railway, the arrangement with Government provides that Government pays the entire cost of the upkeep and maintenance of the Cart Road, the execution of which was performed by the Railway as contractors and on rates mutually agreed upon. Repair costs vary from year to year and were probably heavier in the earlier period. But costs are still high and for the Siliguri-Darjeeling Cart Road have recently been –

Year	Amount in Rupees
1939-40	1,57,788
1940-41	1,38,250
1941-42	1,35,222
1942-43	50,965
1943-44	1,14,366

[Table No.7:6] Source: Bengal District Gazetteer Darjiling,1947.

## FORMATION OF INDIAN RAILWAY ZONES

After independence of the country, Assam needed a direct rail and road connection with the rest of India. The Assam Rail Link project was undertaken by Karnail Singh as the Engineer-in-chief. He was also given the charge of the newly purchased DHR and DHRE Company by the Indian government. The first thing to do in the sphere of railways was to organise them in groupings. There were 42 different railway system with three classes –Class I Railways with gross earnings of Rs.50 lakhs; Class II with an annual gross earnings of less than Rs. 50 lakhs but more than Rs. 10 lakhs annually; and Class III Railways with yearly gross earnings of Rs. 10 lakhs or below. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company Limited and DHR Extensions Co. Ltd. were purchased by the Indian government on 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1948 at Rupees fifteen lakhs only. The DHR was at the Class II category.<sup>18</sup> The administration of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was undertaken by the old Assam Railway on 24 December 1949. The Siliguri-Kishanganj line was converted into metre gauge lines from Siliguri Junction and Siliguri Town Junction (about 2.5 km) on 9 December 1949 for laying a direct rail link to Assam.<sup>19</sup>(Government of India, Ministry of Railways (railway Board)- History of Indian Railways; Simla, 1952;p14) On the linking of Assam with the rest of India by rail and road communications, the metre gauge portions Siliguri-Jalpaiguri and Jalpaiguri-Haldibari were opened to passenger traffic on 23 and 26 January 1950. In 1950 the Railway Board prepared a plan

for regrouping of the Indian Railways into six zonal systems. They were – the Northern Zone; the Northeastern; the Southern; the Central; the Eastern and the Western.<sup>20</sup> In pursuance of the Union Government's policy to re-group the Indian Railways into six zonal systems for imparting greater efficiency and economy in their operations, the Oudh and Trihut and Assam Railways were merged the North Eastern Railway (NER) on 14 April 1952.<sup>21</sup> The North Eastern zone working was shrouded with number of difficulties. It extended from Mathura in West Uttar Pradesh, right across Bihar and the northern part of West Bengal, to the extreme east of Assam. Several factors finally led to the division of the North Eastern Railway on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1958 into two new zones viz. the Northeast Frontier Railway and the North Eastern Railway.<sup>22</sup> Darjeeling Himalayan Railway came under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR).

With the extension of the broad gauge line up to New Jalpaiguri (8 km. from Siliguri Junction and 5 km. from Siliguri Town), the narrow gauge line was extended in April 1964 from its old terminus at Siliguri Town to New Jalpaiguri which thereafter became the terminus and transshipment point from broad to metre gauges and vice-versa.<sup>23</sup>

## **THE BEGINNING OF CRISIS**

The change of authority from private to Indian government could not bring progress in the line. Already the line was having a tough competition with the road traffic; at least the DHR authority had some hold on the control of traffic as has been discussed earlier but with the new changes in 1948 that control was also lost. In 1956 number of registered goods vehicles was 752 and that of registered passenger vehicles was 1,811. The number of goods vehicles and passenger vehicles in 1964 were 1,230 and 2,527 respectively. It was during the fifties of the twentieth century that workers of the Himalayan Railway heard the news of the ‘proposed winding up of the DHR’. There was widespread agitation among the public. ‘A delegation headed by Shrimati Maya Devi Chetry, MP and Mr., R.S.

Prasad, M.L.C. consisting of Sarvasree Theodor Manen MP, D.B. Chettri, Chairman Kurseong Municipality, J.N. Chaki, organizing Secretary, N.E. Railway Employees' Union and representatives of Indian and European business communities of Darjeeling District met D.C., Darjeeling on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1957 and explained to him in detail the amount of miseries and hardships inter-linked with the proposed move for liquidation of this Railway Section. They further urged upon the D.C. to convey this feeling of the representatives to the proper Ministerial level.<sup>24</sup>( Press Hand-Out)

Later a meeting of the Railway employees of this section was held in the Kurseong Railway Institute under the banner of N.E. Railway Employees' Union with Shrimati Maya Devi Chetry as President. Looking at the profit earned by the ex. DHR Company until its handover to the Indian government, a unanimous resolution was adopted to urge upon the Railway Ministry to find out ways and means for minimizing the loss in running this section through a Committee consisting of high Railway Officials, Public, Commercial and Railway labour representatives. An ad-hoc branch committee of the said Union was also formed in the meeting with Shri Bal Prakash Rai as the Branch Secretary.<sup>25</sup>

The peaceful agitation was then followed by a process of writing petition to all the important persons of the government. The extract of a letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1957 by Maya Devi Chetry, MP, to Mr. Prasad, the Vice-Chairman, Darjeeling District Board and Darjeeling Municipality, is as follows:

'People of different walks of life and representatives of different organisations are regularly visiting my place to enquire how far we have been able to convince the authorities the dangerous reaction and economical loss and popularity of this District, if the D.H.Section of the N.E. Railway is abolished. To me it looks like disaster and I am convinced that there will be no scope for any Industry , in future, if the Railway is withdrawn. I do not know how the State Government will be able to employ hundreds of families who are now serving the Railway Department in various capacities right from the Khalasis, Choukidars, Station Staff, clerk and others...After all the District

Board is the guardian of this district and I do hope that the Honble members of the Board will try to take the subject carefully and very seriously and try to do something...' <sup>26</sup>

Again on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1957, a letter was corresponded to Shri K.P. Das, the General Secretary, N.E. Railway Employees Union, Lumding. The letter was mainly the proceeding of the general meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> May '57, at Railway Institute, Kurseong. The president Smt. Maya Devi Chetry wrote, 'I strongly feel that this Committee will render valuable service to the Railway Employees of this section under your able guidance. Railway employees showed keen interest to open a Branch Office of your Union here at Kurseong so that their individual and general grievances are properly represented and solved, as the other Unioin has miserably failed to represent their causes...I earnestly hope that you will strengthen my hands to counteract this move by adopting resolutions in your Federation level and urging on the Railway Minister to abandon this move.' <sup>27</sup>

#### Loss of revenue in the Railway from 1959

Year	Earnings in Rupee	Expenditure in Rupees
1959-1960	13,33,000	53,01,000
1960-1961	14,23,000	41,86,000
1961-1962	16,33,000	41,99,000
1962-1963	15,87,000	58,53,000
1963-1964	19,55,000	60,32,000
1964-1965	15,25,000	84,72,000
1965-1966	16,47,000	71,94,000
1966-1967	14,72,000	57,18,000

[Table No.7:7] Source: Deputy General Manager, N.F.Rly, Katihar.

The Siliguri-Darjeeling section of N.F.Railway carried 1,05,310 and 1,20,470 passengers in 1965-66 and 1966-67 respectively and its earnings on this account were Rs.3,41,380 and

Rs.3,04,,222 respectively during the same years. It also earned a total of Rs.90,320 in 1965-66 and Rs.1,45,374 in 1966-67 on account of other coaching traffic and miscellaneous items. Its earnings on goods traffic were Rs.12,16,000 and Rs.10,24,000 as against 58,546 and 51,145 tons of goods carried respectively during the same years.<sup>28</sup> ‘In 1996-97 the number of local passengers booked was 1 per day in first class and 182 per day in second class. As against that, 120 passengers a day are booked for foreign destinations.’<sup>29</sup> In 1995-96, the working expenses on DHR were Rs.5.3 crores and in 1996 it was only 2.5 crores. According to a summary of the report of the Asian Institute for Transport Development, submitted to Indian Railways in December 1998, ‘about 5,300 passengers travel each way daily on the Siliguri-Darjeeling Highway (NH55), Siliguri accounting for about 50% of originating traffic, followed by Kurseong. About 60% of passengers’ traffic by road is carried by buses and 25% by jeeps. Foreign tourists account for only 7% of total passenger traffic.’<sup>30</sup> In 1999-2000, earnings were Rs.9,38,000 and expenditure was Rs.6,58,26,000. Expenditure per Rupee earned in 1999-2000 was Rs.70.2.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1963, a meeting of the Commissioners of Darjeeling Municipality was held to discuss on the proposal of the Government to abolish Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The main criteria for the sustainability of the NFR branch of Darjeeling Railway as discussed in the meeting was: ‘The railway line is the main artery which conveys the bulk of essential food supplied and other commodities to Darjeeling; heavy machineries, required to be brought up to the Hills for development of various industries particularly in respect of the Tea Estates in the Hills, are transported mainly by the Railway and they cannot be moved through Road because of their peculiar features; the railway track which is known throughout the world as the “Darjeeling Himalayan Railway” is a unique Engineering feat and is one of the marvels of the country and the main Tourist attractions in Darjeeling.; and during emergency, such as war, this railway track plays an important role for transport on men & materials for defence needs.’ On these basis’ the Darjeeling Municipality unanimously lodges a strong protest against the proposal, and resolves that the Government be

moved to dissuade themselves from implementing such an ill-advised proposal and that the proposal be dropped for all times to come.' Copy of the resolution was forwarded to the Prime Minister of India; the Union Transport Minister of India; the Chief Minister, West Bengal and the Governor, West Bengal.<sup>31</sup>

The crisis of the closure of Darjeeling section was solved due to the timely intervention of the workers, public and Union along with the active support of Maya Devi, MP who raised the question on 'the winding up of DHR' in the Parliament. In her argument she emphasised that 'the question of loss in public transportation like DHR should not arise as, it is meant for public'.<sup>32</sup>

### **THE PROBLEM OF LANDSLIDE**

Another hardship other than the road competition the DHR faced throughout its journey from start till date was the natural calamity like landslides in the hills [Fig.No.7:1]. This is no new feature on the Himalayas, for more than half a century ago Sir Joseph Hooker mentioned several cases of enormous landslips during his travels. "the most prominent effect of the steepness of the valleys is the prevalence of landslips, which sometimes descend for 3000 feet, carrying devastation along their course :they are much increased in violence and effect by the heavy timber trees, which, swaying forwards, loosen the earth at their roots and give impetus to the mass. This phenomenon is as frequent and destructive as in Switzerland, where, however, more lives are lost, from the country being more populous, and from the people recklessly building in places particularly exposed to such accidents. The fragments of rock precipitated are sometimes of enormous size, but being a soft mica-schist, are soon removed by weathering. It is in the rainy season that landslips are most frequent, and shortly after rain they are pretty sure to be heard far or near."<sup>33</sup> The region has an annual rainfall of 160" to 190" (400-475 cms). The intensity of the rainfall is very severe. Rainfall in Darjeeling is around 126" or 320 cm. 4/5<sup>th</sup> of the total rainfall being between mid-Junes to end- September.<sup>34</sup>

A few yards up the road is the largest water course on this side of the range, known as the ‘pagla jhora’ or ‘mad torrent’. It has cost considerable sums to control, and has given great trouble to the road. When the rail track was under construction in July 1880 a landslide washed away nearly 200 feet of the road and line. Indeed so great was the destruction that it was seriously contemplated to deflect the line and to lay it around the hill at this spot.<sup>35</sup> In July, 1890, during ‘the rains’ nearly 800 feet of road and line were carried away at this point and for 500 feet on the upper road. The rainfall on this occasion was over 14 inches in six hours. It is the chief outlet of the rainfall due to the striking of the clouds against the Mahalderam range, and, after heavy rain, is a roaring torrent in which large boulders are tossed about.<sup>36</sup> No great calamity is, however, known to have been caused in this way, so far as the district of Darjeeling is concerned, prior to the year 1899, when the unprecedented rainfall which occurred during the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September, following an already excessive seasonal rainfall, resulted in disastrous landslips, which caused the loss of many lives and the widespread destruction of houses, roads and property. The immediate cause of the disaster was a cyclone which burst upon the district on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September. After entering the district, the storm took a north-westerly direction and was most severe from a point 6 miles south of the station of Darjeeling, extending to the north-east as far as the Ramman and Rangit rivers and to the north-west as far as the boundaries of the district. In its severest form, it did not extend eastwards of the Tista river, and it is noticeable that a rainfall of only 13.96 inches was recorded at Kalimpong, and of 7.58 inches at Pedong. On the other hand, Kurseong recorded 19.85 and Mangpu 16.85 inches; while there was a fall of 29.42 inches on the Tiger Hill tea estate to the south-west of Ghum, and no less than 27.20 inches fell on the Happy Valley tea estate, close to Darjeeling. The result was a succession of very heavy landslips in the hills, one at Rangbi extending from an altitude of 7000feet to the bottom of the valley, where it had a width of 250 yards.

Deaths occurred more or less all over this area - 9 lives were lost in the Kurseong sub-division, 67 at Pul-Bazar, and in Darjeeling 62 natives and 10 Europeans. The railway also was terribly damaged,

the rails in several instances hanging in mid-air over gaping chasms; and great distress was caused by the stoppage of transport and the high price of food which resulted. In Darjeeling after a fine weather, a thunder storm burst at 1.30 P.M. on Saturday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, and there was a heavy downfall of rain till 4.30pm. A lull ensued till about 8P.M., and then the cyclone burst in all its fury. The storm raged the whole of that night, and all the next day and night (Sunday) till about 3.30 a.m. though small slips were noticed during Sunday, it was not till a the evening of that day that the heavy rain began to have serious effect, and most of the worst catastrophes took place at midnight or in the early hours of the morning, when the tempest was at its highest.<sup>37</sup>

John Stagg was one of the passengers on the up train to Darjeeling in 1899. According to his letter to his friend the train made its way up to Tung even when the rain was heavy and continuous, but the train was stuck in between Tong and Sonada by an immense slip of rocks and earth that covered the line. ‘The down Darjeeling train arrived and the passengers changed places in the pouring rain.’ Shortly after passing Sonada station they saw a large slip, ‘which had submerged the line just after the down mail had passed. Had the down mail been struck by the slip, nothing could have prevented the train being hurled down the steep khud or the passengers, every one of them, from being killed. Mr. Barnard and the coolies were soon at work on the slip, but, as it was a formidable one, assistance was sent for to Ghoom and Sonada. It took three and a half hours to clear a passage for the train...’ ‘We reached Ghoom at 7.35pm, six and a half hours late. It was evident that the people on the Ghoom platform never expected to see the train come in. they had heard that we had gone on the khud, and they had no reason whatever to disbelieve it, considering the terrific storm that was raging and which had already worked great havoc in and about Ghoom.’<sup>38</sup> Gillanders Arbuthnot received a telegram from the General Manager dated 4<sup>th</sup> October to advise it was indeed the intention to run trains through to Tung, and from there the public were to make their own arrangements to continue to Darjeeling by pony truck. The Press reported that the railway deserved the highest praise, for within ten days of the disaster it had cleared the obstructions and re-erected two bridges on the

section to Tung, allowing forty passengers to travel on the first down train to Siliguri. The remaining section to Sonada and the wholesale destruction between Ghum and Darjeeling was going to take a lot longer to clear. It was reported that thousands of coolies were said to be repairing the Cart Road for the railway, and that large numbers had been brought in direct from Nepal by the railway authorities.<sup>39</sup>

‘The Englishman’ dated Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> October reported that within 17 days the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was able to clear landslips and put on traffic from Siliguri to Chuttackpur 39<sup>th</sup> mile from Wednesday. After this disaster, the government of Bengal appointed a Committee to enquire into the causes of landslips and suggest preventive measures. The Committee was of the view that instability of the hillsides gradually increased this instability. Defective drainage was also considered an important factor in the absorption of moisture. A detailed geological survey of the Happy Valley and neighbouring hillsides was also undertaken between 1912 and 1914 which confirmed the findings of the Committee and showed with the aid of maps the physical condition of the rocks, the dip of the bedding and foliation, the folds and faults together with minor cracks, fissures etc.<sup>40</sup>

July 1937 heavy sinkage at Paglajhora (at KM 38/9-14 & 43/10-14), lower and upper occurred due to heavy down pour of rains and several torrents of water running land slips, bringing big boulders and earths. Tracks and bridges were washed away. The hill slope was very steep and looked dangerous. For only 4 days the traffic was suspended and was made fit on formation of unserviceable sleepers. June 1942 (at km 19/6-13) again heavy rainfall and cyclone of 109 cm in two days, damaged the rail track at Rangtong, routes were blocked and bridges tracks washed away. Traffic was suspended for 30 days. As a result loop no 2 and short tunnel was replaced by new Z reverses. This is the longest line at present.<sup>41</sup>

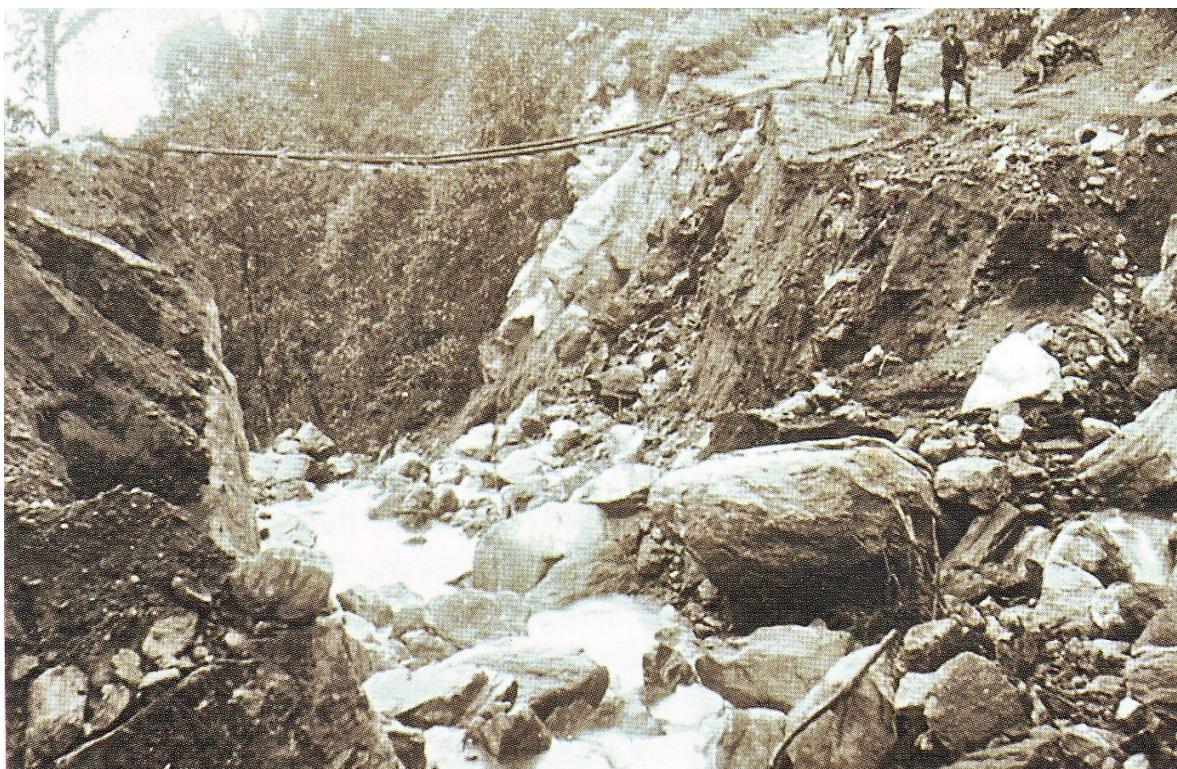
There was another major landslip in June 1950. Between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June of that year, there was a heavy spell of rain after weeks of dry weather and the rain gauge recorded 32.21” of rain.<sup>42</sup> At km

79/4 & 56/4, the most severe result of the rain was seen by the DHR and the area between Darjeeling and Kurseong as well as in the Teesta Valley Extension line was washed away. It was a direct result of such damage that caused closure of the Teesta Valley line. The line was severed at Sonada by an earth slip, leaving half a mile the track hanging in the air. It also caused damage to the wooden carriage shed (now used for engine stabling) at Darjeeling. The shed was rebuilt to the original design.<sup>43</sup> Along with property human lives were also lost; as many as 127 (of which 100 belonged to the Sadar division alone) people were killed. Landslides occurred below Darjeeling station building, Tung railway station, Gorabari at km 63/4-10 where a length of 300 meter and fall of 100 meter of landslip had been reported (which is more severe than present land slip at Tindharia). The loss was added by 180 days of suspension of traffic.<sup>44</sup> J.B. Auden, one of the investigating geologists, stated that “although capped by soil, the hill-slopes around Darjeeling are too steep to be safe against stormy weather similar to those of 1899 and 1950. But according to him the fresh solid in situ rock of the Jalapahar ridge is fairly safe for future construction.”<sup>45</sup>

In 1964 at Gorabari 63/3-10, line suspended for 90 days. Again in October 1968 incessant rainfall occurred for three days 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> recording 809mm of rain. On 4<sup>th</sup> October alone the rain measured 499 mm. The line suffered many slips from 16/0 to 77/8. More than 944 spots between Darjeeling and Sonada suffered landslides, one loco, four coaches and one luggage van of down passenger train was washed away at Chunabhati station and two of the engine crew members lost their lives. 300 passengers of two trains were held up at Gorabari. They were rescued and kept in Salesian college. Sivok Railway Bridge was severely damaged. An aerial survey undertaken by the General Manager North East Frontier Railway revealed widespread breaches on the broad gauge, meter gauge and narrow gauge sections. About 1000 Calcutta bound passengers were stranded at Siliguri and New Jalpaiguri, 135 at Kurseong, 600 at Sonada and about 2,500 at Darjeeling. It took the army engineers 5 days to repair the Kurseong- Siliguri road and to evacuate 400 stranded people from Kurseong and Kalimpong. Parts of NH No.31 were erased from the landscape altogether. Landslides caused huge

cracks across roads, uprooted railway tracts. The landslide on Girda Pahar near Kurseong damaged over 500 feet of road and rail track and demolished many buste hutments.<sup>46</sup> In 1984 Heavy landslide and sinkage of track in the area between Rangtong and Tindharia occurred due to the monsoon rainfall. For 101 days the traffic was suspended.

Again in 1985 the rail line between Ghum and Darjeeling was disrupted. Entire road of more than 150m length and 80 m deep was washed away leaving the rail track hanging in air. Total 111 days was affected due to the slip. The 1989 landslip at 17 mile i.e. Tindharia area affected the track and bridges that suspended the traffic for 231 days. Similarly in 1990 the Paglajhora area sunk leaving the track hanging in the air affecting 159 days of traffic. Situation remained the same in the following years that affected the movement of the railway for more than 100 days and the entire loop No.1 sunk down by 12 mts. which was replaced by a new 'Z' reversing. The landslide of 1995 in different areas between Sukna and Kurseong affected 192 days of rail movement.<sup>47</sup>



[Fig.No.7:1] Source: Martin, Terry 'Iron Sherpa'.

### **Disturbance of Service due to Landslides**

year	Site of landslide	suspension of traffic in days
1899	Paglajhora, Tindharia, Rangtong, Sepoydhura, Batasia and Darjeeling.	30 days
1937	Paglajhora	4
1942	Loop No. 2	30
1950	Darjeeling, Tung, Kalimpong Gaile khola extension, Gorabari	180
1951	Below Rangtong	4
1964	Gorabari	90
1968	944 spots between Darjeeling and Sonada	150
1970	Paglajhora area	30
1981	Between Tindharia and Chunabhati	60
1982	Lower Paglajhora, Lalmathi	150
1984	Between Rangtong and Tindharia	101
1985	Between Darjeeling and Kurseong	111
1989	Tindharia area	231
1990	Paglajhora, Tindharia area	158
1991	Loop No.1 , lower Paglajhora, Boxi khola near Darjeeling	113
1992	Below Rangtong, lower Paglajhora	102
1993	more than seven sites affected in between the entire track of DHR	6
1994	Dali, 5 sites between Sukna and Darjeeling	35
1995	4 sites in between Sukna and Kurseong	192
1996	Between Sukna and Tindharia	77
1997	Paglajhora	36
1998	Below Rangtong, 5 sites in between Tindharia and Tung	90
1999	8 sites in between Rangtong and Darjeeling	95

[Table No.7:8] Source: DHR office paper issued by Mr. M.D. Bhutia, DHR Director dated 22/5/13.

The disturbance on account of landslips interferes the running of the railway especially during the monsoon season almost every year. The staff of the engine crew tries their best to prevent the occurrence of serious accidents. By constructing revetment or toe walls above or below the road safety measures have been ensured but even when these prove insufficient, it necessitates to

construct a new road on a fresh alignment. The past history of the monsoon damage proves that it was an annual challenge to the railway and the staff of the DHR and like in the past the future challenges would be met with efficiency.

Apart from the landslides, train services were cancelled due to operational reasons, for instance for political bandhs or strikes as in 1986-87 when the district was raising voice for separate state of ‘Gorkhaland’. The Gorkha National Liberation Front under the leadership of Subhas Ghising started movement for ‘separate statehood’ in the eighties which soon flared like the jungle fire in the district. The political consciousness among the hill people for the ‘identity crisis’ was pacified by the 1989 accord that created the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. But during the civil unrest, the already staggering railway suffered a loss of eighteen months of traffic service. Later in 1995 the trains were cancelled for 30 days, in 1996 for 13 days and in 1997 for 22 days [Table No.7:8].<sup>48</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and the DHR Extension Co. Ltd. ruled the transportation system of the area for more than fifty years. Even in the wake of competition from the motor cars, buses and trucks it did fetch good earnings and not a single loss. In the development of Darjeeling as a tourist destination, apart from ailing soldiers and lower income Europeans who could not either go to South Africa or returned to England, the railway had a great share to its credit. Initially more numbers of European passengers and few rich Indians travelled by the railway, the majority of the common public preferred conventional mode or walking. Socially, culturally and economically the DHR slowly and gradually brought changes in the lives of the people. As the saying goes ‘Necessity is the mother of invention’ and DHR is one living example of such maxim. However, the necessity of faster means in the rapidly changing society and economy, ironically sided the DHR in preference to time and money saving road vehicles. The Indian Rail ministry gave little importance to this section when it was on its low. The railway that had earned so much profit in the past and that even led to the establishment of Extension companies and a proper workshop was a proof on its own. But after

its transfer to the government of India, the DHR carried its usual routine with no new changes. Old engines, locomotives, same method of technologies could not improve the plight of degrading DHR. Save for some introduction of new carriages in 1967 built at Gorakhpur there was no adoption of new technologies such as in Japan, where narrow gauge railways were all electrified to meet the busy schedules of the people. The demand of freight service was becoming less and by 1981 it was only an occasional service. By the last decade of the century the freight services was withdrawn from the DHR. The combined force of nature, politics, changing economy of the dynamic society all went against the DHR. At time, it seemed that the age old railway would not be able to chug the slopes of the mountain in the new millennium and dark clouds of doubt shrouded its sustainability.

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## **Chapter –VIII**

### **DHR AND THE WORLD HERITAGE STATUS**

The DHR after serving for so many years was struggling with its century old engines to keep the railway running. It was in 1900 that the ‘Doordarshan Broadcasting Team’ filmed a documentary video of the Indian Steam locomotives. Dr. Kumar Pradhan, Professor of History and a local historian of great repute was urged to host the documentary film entitled ‘Chugging with the Granny’. On 1<sup>st</sup> January it was telecast by all the SAARC countries in their national channel. The revived memory of the ‘Toy Train’ made a lasting effect in the society.<sup>1</sup> The last decade thus opened with the memories of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, there was no looking back. The nineties witnessed a series of organisation aiming at the preservation movement of the DHR. The part played by the common people with no lineage to the DHR directly and the support and encouragement from foreign nationals around the world became the theme of the last decade of the twentieth century.

#### **ROLE PLAYED BY SHERAB TENDUF**

In November 1992, Sherab Tenduf, the founding trustee of the DHR Heritage Foundation, heard the news of the coming of some foreigners to buy parts of the DHR. He quickly enquired about this to the Station Master who knew nothing about it but asked him to enquire to the higher authority at Kathiar. In 1985 the Indian Railways had made a decision to phase out all steam locomotives, ‘in the interest of speed, efficiency and economy on Indian Railways’, by the year 2000, which again in 1991-92 was preponed to March 1997. Three locomotives – a Sharp Stewart of 1899; a Baldwin of 1916 and a DHR loco built in Tindharia in 1925 were put for auction on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1992.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tenduf without wasting further time rushed to Delhi to plead for the cancellation of the global auction. He met Dr. Y. P. Anand, the Chairman of the Railway Board, Rail Bhavan, and after long persuasion Tenduf was able to postpone the auction

by four months of time. But he had no organised plans to proceed further with his mission. Thus the idea of a charitable trust ‘The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Heritage Foundation’(DHRHF) was born in his mind which aimed at ‘to acquire, restore, and preserve the rolling-stock, artefacts, structures, emblems and equipment of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which have been declared expendable, or have been condemned, by the Railway Ministry’.<sup>3</sup>

To get real knowledge about railway expertise, he met Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt, senior railway curator in the Berlin Museum of Science & Technology. He agreed for Tenduf’s help and also suggested to look up for British assistance as the DHR was their creation. After coming from Germany, time was slipping out of his hand and Tenduf regretted for not being able to show any progressive report on the conservation of DHR to the Railway Board. A follow up letter reminding him of ‘probationary’ period reached him in Canada. The official wrote, on 13 April 1993 – ‘On your request, the sale of condemned Narrow Gauge Darjeeling hills locomotives against the global tender has been pended for the time being. You are, therefore, advised to communicate your decision for purchase of these locomotives by 30.6.1993. If nothing is heard up to the date stipulated above, these locomotives will be sold to the other interested parties.’ Tenduf’s problem was that in order to collect fund he needed to register the organisation and which could not be possible without any Board of Trustees. He went back to Delhi and met Mr. Ashok Baijal, who had send him the letter and asked for some more grace period. He came back with an extended grace period upto six months.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile Tenduf along with Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt and H.H.E. ‘Teddy’ Young, the senior Darjeeling tea planter and President-elect of the Darjeeling Tea Planters’ Association, sent a signed requisition for the registration of the DHRHF but was sanctioned after much delay in December 1994. Since no help was coming from anywhere, Tenduf turned to the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, Shri Jyoti Basu, who corresponded a letter dated 12/11/1993 to Shri Jaffer Sharief, Minister of Railways, regarding establishment of a non-profit railway museum in

Darjeeling and postponement of auction of condemned Narrow Gauge Darjeeling Himalayan Locomotives. In response, the Railway Ministry agreed to the request and set aside Darjeeling Himalayan railway condemned rolling stock for sale to the proposed trust (DHRHF).<sup>5</sup>

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1993 Tenduf received a letter from Shri Somnath Chatterjee (MP), asking him to inform about his decision to Mr. Ashok Baijal, the Executive Director of Railway Board, as well as a copy of it to Shri Chatterjee for follow-up action.<sup>6</sup> After the above responses on the part of state High level Ministers, Mr. Tenduf met with a Member of the Railway Board. In September 1994 Mr. Tenduf heard that a foreigner was seen in the Railway station distributing bars of Cadbury's chocolate to all. It was none other than Mr. Benedict Cadbury, a committed railway preservationist. This happened at a time when Mr. Tenduf was looking for some help out in Britain and asked for his support to build a network for Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Through a correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 1995, Mr. Benedict informed Tenduf that he had sent a letter each to Leo de Rothschild – a Trustee of the York Railway Museum; James Sherwood - Chairman of Vienna Simplon Orient Express (Sea containers); Michael Schumann – Senior Director of the Ffestiniog Railway; and Giles Stibbe – keen railway enthusiast, with whom Benedict had undertaken rail tours, along with some others to form DHR Friends' network in UK. In the meantime in July 1997 Tenduf received a fax message in Darjeeling from David Barrie, United Kingdom who wished to form a Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society (DHRS) and requested for his support. A number of reputable people were prepared to join him in forming a society.<sup>6</sup>

1. **THE AIMS OF THE DHRHF** (Formally established in December, 1994)<sup>7</sup>
  - i. Restoration and preservation of the line,
  - ii. Creation of a mountain railway museum, and
  - iii. Provision of improved services both to the local population and visiting tourists. Its first task was to assemble local support. In this, it was most successful.

## OBJECTIVES:

- i. To encourage the restoration, renewal and preservation of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and its railway stations as a living museum;
- ii. To acquire, restore and preserve the rolling stock, artifacts, structures, emblems and equipment of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which has been declared expendable, or have been condemned by the Railway Ministry;
- iii. To create, establish and administer a Mountain Railway Museum in the Darjeeling District and to exhibit in it, with an historical perspective, the restored objects with an historical perspective, the restored objects with a view to inform and educate visitors on the special character of the Railway and its role in the economic and social development of Darjeeling;
- iv. To acquire, restore, preserve and put on exhibit in the Museum, mountain railway locomotives and coaches from around the world, and to inform and educate visitors on the special characteristics of the mountain railway systems of which they are a part;
- v. To encourage the formation of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway support groups within India and around the world.

## 2. DHR INDIA SUPPORT GROUP

- i. To encourage the restoration, renewal and preservation of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and its railway stations as a living museum;
- ii. To acquire, restore and preserve the rolling-stock, artifacts, structures, emblems and equipment of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which have been declared expendable, or have been condemned by the railway Ministry;
- iii. To create, establish and administer a Mountain Railway Museum in the Darjeeling District and to exhibit in it, with an historical perspective, the restored objects with a view to inform and educate visitors on the special character of the Railway and its role in the economic and social development of Darjeeling;

- iv. To acquire, restore, preserve and put on exhibit in the Museum, Mountain Railway engines and coaches from around the world; and to inform and educate visitors on the special characteristics of the mountain railway systems of which they are a part;
- v. To encourage the formation of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway support groups within India and around the world.<sup>8</sup>

### **3. THE DHR SOCIETY, UK**

The DHRS was founded in 1998 by a small band of concerned enthusiasts. Its first office bearers were David Barrie, Chairman; Marulyn Metz, Secretary; Peter Jordan, Treasurer; David Charlesworth, Editor; Tony Doody, Archivist; Edwin Lambert, Bibliographer, Graham Bell, Press & PR. Soon after, Peter Tiller joined the committee as Liaison Officer, to establish a link between the UK Friends and the DHRS. The DHRS have a quarterly magazine ‘The Darjeeling Mail’ with a wide variety of articles and photos, was designed and edited by David Charlesworth. Its importance in arousing interest in DHR conservation and in sustaining DHR preservation sentiment cannot be overestimated. One of the best books on Indian railway travel – that takes the reader on a tour of India and her railways- was written by three DHRS stalwarts, Peter Jordan, Richard Paget and David Charlesworth. India ‘No problem Sahib!’ written with a light touch, will continue to entertain and inform readers for years to come.

The DHRS has about one thousand members in twenty countries and that keeps on growing. The society requested for an affiliation of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society (DHRS) with the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Heritage Foundation (DHRHF) to Mr. Tenduf in a letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1998 who accepted the affiliation of the two societies. It has played a key role in the decision not only to retain steam on the DHR but to inject fresh energy into the line as well.<sup>9</sup>

### **4. DHR SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION, AUSTRALIA**

Given the enormous distances between the main population centres in Australia, and the difficulty this posed in bringing people together, the formation of the Darjeeling Himalayan

Railway Society (Australia) in September 1998 was a splendid achievement. Malcolm Dow was elected President of the Society; Dr. K.J. Walker became the Editor of the Society's Newsletter as well as its Overseas Liaison Officer, and John Stephen was appointed Secretary/ Treasurer. It works to enhance public awareness of the DHR and to raise funds for preservation. It has participated in formal conferences on the future of DHR and in the debate on the line's future status and management. Many of its proposals have been adopted and considered in depth. It has the resources to offer assistance in the rehabilitation and refurbishment of the line. The members receives a quarterly Newsletter, '2D Passenger', a Society Sales facility offering books, drawings, mementoes, etc, and discounts on Rail Stuff videos, including the best-selling 'Darjeeling Delights'. The DHRSA aims to bring together all those who would like to help in the DHR's survival, or want to know more about this fascinating railway, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>10</sup>

- I. To support the work of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Heritage Foundation, a non-profit body which has the following **aims**:
  - (a) to encourage the restoration, renewal and preservation of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and its railway stations as a living museum;
  - (b) to acquire, restore and preserve the rolling-stock, artifacts, structures, emblems and equipment of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which have been declared expendable, or have been condemned by the Railway Ministry;
  - (c) to create, establish and administer a Mountain Railway Museum in the Darjeeling District and to exhibit in it, with an historical perspective, the restored objects with a view to inform and educate visitors on the special character of the Railway and its role in the economic and social development of Darjeeling;
  - (d) to acquire, restore, preserve and put on exhibit in the Museum, mountain railway engines and coaches from around the world; and to inform and educate

visitors on the special characteristics of the mountain railway systems of which they are a part;

(e) to encourage the formation of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway support groups within India and around the world.

- II. To promote public awareness of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and its history, by means of public addresses, meetings, presentations, and publications;
- III. To encourage the study of the history, technology, infrastructure or other elements of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, by means of donations, advice, consultancy, or volunteer assistance programmes;
- IV. To support projects for the restoration of artefacts, infrastructure or other elements of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, by means of donations, advice, consultancy, or volunteer assistance programmes;
- V. To raise money to support the above objectives by the sale of photographs, postcards, publications, audio-visual materials, or other objects or memorabilia connected with the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway;
- VI. To advise and inform members of news, research findings, and other material of interest concerning the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.<sup>11</sup>

## **5. INDIAN STEAM RAILWAY SOCIETY**

Indian Steam Railway Society (ISRS) was formed on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1999 registered with the Registrar of Societies, Delhi. The objective of the Society is to form a common platform for the Indian Steam Railway Enthusiasts to exchange views and further their knowledge on the subject of Indian Steam Railway. ISRS publishes a quarterly newsletter which is sent by post by post to all registered members.

Aims & objectives

- I. Promote interest in and share the knowledge of the Indian Railways steam heritage and current developments amongst Steam Railway Enthusiasts by bringing them on a common platform.
- II. Stimulate public affection by intelligent exposure of the Steam Railway's contribution to the development of the Nation.
- III. Create awareness of the excellence of the Indian Steam Railways Works and highlight the need for their preservation in the interest of science and technology facilitating transport and tourism.
- IV. Publish a quarterly Newsletter for the members and patrons of the Society.
- V. Organise regular meetings, debates, seminars, competitions and quizzes for the members and the public to exchange and further disseminate information on Steam Railways.
- VI. Assist in preservation and revival of the remaining heritage of railway run on steam in India and to promote Steam Heritage Tourism.
- VII. Advise and if needed, assist the Government of India in the formation and implementation of policies relating to running Steam on Indian Railways.
- VIII. Participate in fund raising activities consistent with the aims.
- IX. Preserve a working steam heritage for the future generation to enjoy.<sup>12</sup>

## **THE DHR CONFERENCES**

Four conferences were organised by the DHR Heritage Foundation, from 1995 till 1999 to propagate and enlarge awareness of DHR heritage, in increasing support for the Railway in India and abroad and in quickening the movement. The conferences brought together senior railway officials, including Chairmen and key members of the Railway Board and senior tourism officials including secretaries of the Ministry of Tourism, with top railway preservationists from Britain, Australia and Germany. Secretaries of Tourism Mr. J.M. Lyngdoh and Mr. M. Bezbaruah, made the Himalayan Railway part of the official tourism agenda.<sup>13</sup>

## THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF 1995

The first conference at Darjeeling was held on 27 April, presided over by Mr. A.S. Bam, Chairman of the DHR Heritage Foundation and an ex-member of the Indian Civil Service. Other dignitaries included Mr. M. Lyngdoh, Secretary of Tourism, Government of India, Mr. A. K. Deb, Secretary of Tourism, Government of West Bengal and Mr. P. S. Rao, Additional General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway. Mr. Michael Schumann, a senior director of the Ffestiniog Railway, UK Friends' Society and Peter 'Fuzz' Jordan, chairman of the Ffestiniog Railway Society, from Germany Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt, the learned senior curator of the Berlin Museum of Science and Technology; Mr. H.H. E. 'Teddy' Young, Vice Chairman of the DHR Heritage Foundation, and President-elect of the Darjeeling Tea Planters' Association; Mr. Gani, Regional Director of Tourism, West Bengal, Mr. Ugen Lama, Deputy Director of Tourism, West Bengal and Mr. P. Bhaviskar, District Magistrate; Mr. Sen of the NFR and Mr. Ranen Dutta, Secretary of the Darjeeling Planters' Association were all present.

Mr. P. S. Rao was of the opinion that a stock of coaches, engines and some very interesting relics could be presented to the Heritage Foundation. He went on to say that limited funding was available from the Government for the running of the railway and it was yet to be decided whether to run it as a commercial company or as a tourist venture. He added 'the locos etc. can be taken on loan, and the loan (would be) renewable on a 25 to 30 year basis. Mr. J. M. Lyngdoh, offered the Railway Board the cooperation of the Department of Tourism 'for the improvement of the DHR line'. In response to Mr. Rao's comment that 'the Railways do not wish to carry on with this line beyond the year 2000 but are uncertain at this point about privatizing it', Mr. Lyngdoh said: 'since the Railway Ministry does not wish to pull any more loads after the year 2000, the Tourism Department could potentially take over'. Mike Schumann said that the travellers, who look at India as a holiday destination, invariably think of Darjeeling not so much for its celebrated tea, as few drink pure Darjeeling tea, but for its famous Toy Train. Peter shared Mr. Rao's enthusiasm for introducing DHR package tours.

Later in the decade, Peter became the first private individual to charter DHR carriages from Indian Railways and to lead his own successful package tours. Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt recommended that the DHR museum objects should tell their story visually, and not rely on commentary to convey their meaning. Dr. Gottwaldt observed that the story of Darjeeling transportation is also the history of Darjeeling.<sup>14</sup>

## **THE SECOND DHR CONFERENCE OF 1996**

The Second DHR Conference was held in Delhi in 1996. The main agenda of the second conference was “To restore, renew and preserve the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) and its railway stations as a living museum for the enjoyment of the people of India and the world”. The delegates were from the Railway Board, Mr. C. L. Kaw, Chairman; Mr. L. K. Sinha, Member (Mechanical); Mr. M. Ravindra, Member (Engineering); several Additional Members and Executive Directors. The Ministry of Tourism was represented by Mrs. C. Tshering-Mishra, Joint Secretary, from overseas: Mr. Benedict Cadbury, the founder-Secretary of the UK Friends of the DHR; Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt from Germany; Mrs. Katharine Cadbury, Solicitor; Mr. J.B. Snell, Managing Director of The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Light Railway Company; Mr. Douglas Ferreira, Managing Director of The Ravenglass & Eskdale Light Railway and Mr. Paul Atkins, Director of The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway.

The hands-on operational expertise of UK delegates made a favourable impression on senior railway board officials: the Chairman of the Railway Board asked John Snell to supply details of low cost signaling at level crossings, and Douglas Ferreira to supply details of radio control of trains.

Benedict Cadbury, John Snell, Douglas Ferreira, Paul Atkins and Katharine Cadbury held a summary meeting at the end of the conference. Among their conclusions were:

Designs were needed for the DHR tourist coaches – these to be supplied to Indian Railways via the UK Friends. Private contractors (including hotel groups like the Taj and Oberoi) and tour operators, (including Abercrombie & Kent, Thomas Cook, Amex, Cox & Kings), would be needed to market the tourist train service. A high point of the conference was the meeting that the foreign delegates had with the Minister of Railways at his Parliamentary Offices.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF 1997**

The third DHR conference was held at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham in England in June 1997. The outcome of the Second Conference in Delhi was that the DHR had great tourism potential as one of the top ten scenic railways of the world. Therefore, the Birmingham conference discussed about the heritage railway like the DHR could be marketed and made self-sustaining. Benedict Cadbury's conference team in London included his efficient Conference Administrator, Elizabeth Clarke, who went from Canada to assist him; Katharine Cadbury, and officers of the railways that provided field trips for the delegates. There were delegates from India, Canada, Germany and America. Representative of India's Railway Board were Mr. S. Malik, Executive Director (Marketing & Tourism); Mr. A. Lohani, Director of the National Rail Museum and Mr. Prem Sharma, Chief Passenger Transportation Manager, Northern Railway. Representative of India's Ministry of Tourism was Mr. M. K. Khanna, Additional Director-General. Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt of Germany, C. Danford Cieloha of America, Paul Atkins, Douglas Ferreira, Ron Fitzgerald, David Grant, Peter Jordan, Cedric Lodge, Mike Schumann, John B. Snell, Chris Seagrave, Giles Stibbe, Peter Tiller, Marilyn Metz, Richard Wallace, Professor Prahlad Basu, Prof. Aparna Basu, Robert Bettley-Smith, David Charlesworth, Phil Evans, Dr. S. Dandapani and Mrs. Dandapani were UK Friends of the DHR who participated in the conference.

The guests and speakers were Sir Adrian Cadbury, Alan Heywood, Quentin Huggett, Julia Watson and David Madden. Richard Wallace of the Rail Regulator's Office and Elizabeth Clark from

Canada, received the delegates in London and escorted them to Birmingham. Richard Wallace later wrote the book: ‘A Guide to The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway: India’s World Heritage Line’

As part of the three day programme, there were field trips for participants to three railways: The Seven Valley Railway; the Ffestiniog Railway and the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway. These preserved railways have different characteristics, but all are extremely well managed and operated. They provided a wonderful learning experience, for overseas delegates in particular, and an opportunity to see what the DHR could become. The conference discussed about the tourist market of India. Almost 2.3 million foreign tourists had visited India the previous year. Among the conclusions were: ‘The DHR should be run as a separate operating subsidiary of Indian Railways to allow the DHR freedom to develop tourist traffic alongside its existing transport operation. This does not mean privatization. It should have a suitable corporate, rather than departmental, structure for which the Konkan Railway provides a good example. Also, Tourism development requires suitable travel packages. A trip in the DHR could form the centerpiece of a package for West Bengal/ Assam/ NE India.’<sup>16</sup>

In November 1997 in the Birmingham DHR conference, Mr. Tenduf met Subhas Ghising, Chairman of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), and his Principal Secretary, Mr. Siddharth of the Indian Administrative Service at a lunch in London. Tenduf introduced Mr. Ghising to some of the UK Friends’ like Benedict Cadbury, Mike Schumann, Richard Wallace and Peter Tiller. Since the DHR Heritage Foundation looked to Mr. Ghising for patronage, it was important that the UK Friends share with him their enthusiasm for the DHR and, concomitantly, demonstrate the tourist appeal of heritage railways. After a briefing on British preserved railways Mike Schumann invited Mr. Ghising and Mr. Siddharth to visit the Ffestiniog Railway and was impressed by the operation and maintenance of this narrow gauge preserved railway. Interestingly it was on the special field trip on the Ffestiniog Railway that Tenduf learnt about Cedric Lodge, the quintessential railway enthusiast

and preservationist, the person who had gone to Darjeeling for the global auction in 1992, for whom all these long episodes started in the life of Sherab Tenduf.<sup>17</sup>

## **THE FINAL CONFERENCE**

The final DHR conference was held in Delhi in April 1999. The Conference agenda included the future management, promotion, technical assistance from foreign specialists, and role of the DHR supporters in ensuring the future of the railway. The Conference was attended by Mr. V.K. Agarwal, Chairman of the Railway Board, Mr. Ashok Kumar, Member (Mechanical) and Mr. Shanti Narain, Member (Traffic), Mr. D.P. Tripathi, Secretary of the Railway Board. A number of senior officers of Indian Railways also came forward including Mr. B.M.S. Bisht, the constant keeper of the Railways' heritage conscience, later appointed General Manager of NFR; Mr. S.K. Malik, the Executive Director responsible for railway tourism; and Mr. Rajesh Agarwal, Director of the National Railway Museum, later to be seconded to UNESCO as an expert of Tourism; Mrs. C. Tshering Mishra, Joint Secretary; Mr. A. Lohani, Director (Tourism), and formerly Director of the National Rail Museum. Mr. Siddharth, Principal Secretary of the Darjeeling Gorkha Council came to make the presence of the Council felt at the discussion table.

The British participants were Benedict Cadbury, Mike Schumann, Katharine Cadbury, Paul Atkins, Peter Tiller and Richard Wallace – all UK Friends, Marilyn Metz, another valued UK Friend, came to ensure the smooth running of the conference as Conference Administrator. Ian Birks of the British High Commission in India also attended the conference. Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt, Mrs. Kanta Stanchina, wife of a senior German diplomat in Delhi, with fond memories of childhood in the Darjeeling hills, was there too, showing her support for DHR preservation. The Australian participants were Dr. Robert Lee, noted historian and UNESCO consultant; Malcolm Dow, President of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society (Australia); Dr. Ken Walker, Overseas Liaison Officer of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society (Australia) and Editor of the Society's Newsletter; and Mary Heath,

Consultant. Dr. Robert Crawford, a Professor of Economics and Finance, came from America to give a paper. Virgil Miedema, a keen supporter of heritage projects, was another American participant.<sup>18</sup>

The summary of the findings of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Heritage Foundation Conference were:

**Motive Power:** Three issues were presented like the ‘To improve DHR service reliability; To refurbish the railway’s locomotive holding; To provide the railway and Darjeeling with a long-term operational and tourist potential of the railway and region.’ The principal decision would be whether to achieve reliability and efficiency through modernization (diesel trains) or to modify/ renew the existing steam trains. The paper discussed on the steam versus diesel operation and the decision of which lies on the Indian Railways, the Ministry of Tourism and local government. Among the conclusion drawn was an urgent action to prevent the suspension of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and that dieselization may destroy a significant source of foreign income and also heritage benefit is lost.<sup>19</sup>

**Train Service Planning** discussed about the unreliability of service which means that the travellers cannot be sure of the running of the train on any particular day. The solution drawn in the conclusion to such problem was to reduce the journey time; run two train sets all year round covering one return journey between NJP –Darjeeling and one return journey between Kurseong-Darjeeling , during the tourist season two extra train could be run; provide steam shuttle between Darjeeling-Ghum once daily in tourist season; introduction of freight for a daily parcels, small consignments and adopt old carriage bodies for the purpose, etc.<sup>20</sup>

**Management and Operating Structures** focused on a new management structure to allow the flexibility necessary to implement the radical ideas needed to increase revenue and reduce costs on the line, which require the appointment of Senior Officers dedicated to the DHR: a General Manager,

and others covering the disciplines of finance, commerce, operations, civil and mechanical engineering and heritage. Among the many suggestions were – ‘an additional Zone of Indian Railways; A joint venture between IR, the DGHC (representing the State of West Bengal and the Ministry of Tourism); A non-profit-making Trust of local government and tourist bodies; A joint venture between IR and private capital; A management contract to operate the DHR by a private organisation; Full privatization’.<sup>21</sup>

**Tourism and Publicity** centered on the need to address the railway’s reliability and to prevent adverse and inaccurate publicity appearing in future tourist guides. ‘Quality of service is an important factor in enabling Indian Railways and the region to access high value foreign revenue with a degree of certainty.’ This means service reliability and accommodation on the train. The train and the surroundings of the area need to be published by the Indian Railways and the Indian Tourist Board on an international basis<sup>22</sup>

### **Conservation and Maintenance**

An impressive report by David Wardale on ‘The DHR B Class Locomotives: a Rebuilding Proposal’ was circulated to all participants. It pointed the way to the preservation of historic DHR locos. The topics were taken by groups of participants, according to interest and expertise. The conclusion of which was to have ‘an officer with engineering, architectural and conservation experience to provide immediate advice on interim repairs to buildings and bridges etc., and to prepare a Conservation Plan for the whole of the railway.’ Spokespersons presented their groups’ conclusions and recommendations at a plenary session, to the Chairman and Members of the Railway Board and the Secretary of Tourism.<sup>23</sup>

### **IMPORTANCE OF DHR CONFERENCES**

The DHR conferences played a significant role in building the mass awareness programme worldwide and made the foundation for the preservation movement of the DHR strong. ‘Among the

many examples of collaborative effort arising out of discussions at DHR conferences, are these: Peter Tiller, an expert on railway architecture, has been advising the N.E. Frontier Railway on heritage station design; Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt provided a concept for a DHR static museum; Anthony Dugdale, a British expert on the design of railway carriages, designed classic period interiors for DHR heritage coaches; Michael Schumann of the Ffestiniog Railway in Wales had made recommendations for the extension of the useful lives of the DHR locomotives, many of which are over a century old; Peter Jordan, a British expert on railway travel in India, in cooperation with Indian Railways, is developing railway tours of the region, with charter tours on the DHR as the chief attraction'.<sup>24</sup>

Peter's work was continued, at the request of the NFR, by a gifted young architect of Darjeeling, Shasheesh Pradhan, whom Peter had brought in earlier as a collaborator. The request of Mr. D.P. Tripathi, the Secretary of the Railway Board, that the Foundation should sponsor the Railways' application for World Heritage status for the DHR, appeal was made to UNESCO's 'Committee on Monuments & Sites' in Paris on behalf of the DHR Heritage Foundation, by Benedict Cadbury and Douglas Ferreira o the UK Friends Society, and Dr. Ken Walker of the Australian DHR Society. Paul Atkins brought to the DHR preservation agenda the insights and perspectives that he had gained as a transportation consultant to several European cities. He wrote influential project papers such as 'The DHR – A Way Forward' produced for the DHR Heritage Foundation in 1998; and 'A Strategic Plan for the DHR' produced for the DHR Foundation and the IRTCT (Indian Railway Tourism & Catering Corporation), in 1999/2000.<sup>25</sup>

## **THE IDEA OF HERITAGE STATUS**

It was Ron Fitzgerald, Director of the Leeds Science Museum who first suggested that UNESCO should be asked to recognize the DHR as a World Heritage Site. In March 1996 Benedict Cadbury, Ron and Tenduf met in London to discuss about the idea. It was known that railway did not

fit in the criteria of UNESCO. There was no chance for a transport system like the DHR to fit in an application to UNESCO. In December 1997 three-day workshop was held in Darjeeling on ‘Darjeeling – Past, Present and Future’. It was organised by the National Museum of Mankind and PAHAR, and inspired by the vivacious and enterprising Rajkumari ‘Pussy’ Mahtab, a person with an admirable social conscience. Mrs. Mahtab introduced Tenduf and Mr. Siddharth to Mr. R.P. Perera of UNESCO.<sup>26</sup> Seeking an opportunity Tenduf asked Perera ‘why a unique and renowned railway like the DHR did not fit UNESCO’s criteria for designation as a world heritage site’. He mentioned that railways were not ruled out from consideration as world heritage sites. The chance of possibility for the incorporation of DHR in the UNESCO’s Heritage list was forwarded by Tenduf to the Railway Board.

The DHR preservation movement has always been dependent on the active involvement of the Indian Railways. First, it was Dr. Anand who hinted for a DHR preservation movement. Later other Chairmen of the Indian Railways such as Mr. A Bhatnagar, Mr. M. Ravindra, Mr. C. L Kaw and Mr. V.K. Agarwal, also contributed hugely to the DHR preservation movement. They encouraged their colleagues to participate in the conferences of the DHR Heritage Foundation, and to enter into constructive dialogue with the Foundation’s representatives.<sup>27</sup>

National Rail Museum (India), submitted a proposal to UNESCO on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1998 for inscribing the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) as a World Heritage Site. ‘DHR is a work of genius & technological achievement of 1881. It has social & cultural importance. It is beautiful and has outstanding universal appeal. As one of the outcomes of the industrial revolution and based on its unique features, it is considered to be of lasting significance to mankind. It must be saved for posterity.’ Accordingly, the various significant aspects and initiatives being taken for this great system by the Indian Railways were brought to the notice of UNESCO by National Rail Museum. Interaction, site study and UNESCO’s evaluations continued through 1999. The World Heritage Convention had been established in 1972 with the objective of protecting and preserving historical

and valued buildings, along with geographical sites of exceptional beauty and fragility. In 1999 there were 582 World Heritage Sites, 21 of them being in India, including the Taj Mahal, the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. It had been agreed that applications for inscription would come from national governments, and where it related to a cultural site, the assessment would be made by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). The criteria would focus on evaluating the fixed assets of a site, and would therefore protect the structure in the location in which it was built.<sup>28</sup>

The Report dated 3 July 1998 by the State Party of Republic of India highlights the following points about the DHR: ‘The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is a unique example of construction genius employed by railway engineers in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The manner in which height is gained in this railway by utilizing various loops and zigzag reversing stations is remarkable. This line also has the distinction of passing through the second highest railway station in the world.’<sup>29</sup>

The nominated property consists of the permanent way itself, which varies in width between 3m and 50m, and all the associated buildings – stations, goods sheds (“godowns”), workshops, locomotive and rolling stock sheds, and railway residences. It repeatedly crosses the Hill Cart Road, necessitating the provision of 170 level crossings. During the monsoon months (July and August) landslides make it necessary for many of these to be reconstructed. Investment plans have been prepared for the rehabilitation of the station buildings at Darjeeling, Ghum, Kurseong and Tindharia.

Development of tourism in Darjeeling is heavily dependent upon the efficient working of the Himalayan Railway. Plans are therefore being developed to improve its services. These include track improvement and the purchase of new locomotives and rolling stock. Concurrently the Ministry of Railways has sponsored a comprehensive study of the line by professional transportation consultants. There is regular interaction with the UK-based Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Heritage Foundation. Studies are in progress on comparable railway systems elsewhere in the world, such as the Ffestiniog

Railway in Wales (UK), the design of which inspired the Darjeeling Railway. The DHR represents as exceptional feat of civil engineering that has survived virtually intact up to the present day. It is notable also for the quality of many of its associated buildings, especially the intermediate stations, the railway residences and rest-houses, and the Tindharia workshop.

The 1998 comparative study of Railways as World Heritage Sites defines specific criteria for evaluating historic railways. To be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List they should conform to one or more of the following:

- be a creative work indicative of genius;
- demonstrate the influence of, and on, innovative technology;
- be an outstanding or typical example;
- be illustrative of economic or social developments.

Criteria I. This railway also exhibits an important interchange of human values, as it brought about a change in the life-style of the people living in the area. The concept of time changed, as the earlier journey time of five to six days between Calcutta and Darjeeling was compressed into less than 24 hours following the introduction of this railway.

Criteria II. The railway bears a unique testimony to the cultural tradition of tea plantation, which is still the main source of livelihood of the inhabitants of this region, whether landowners, labourers, or traders.

Criteria III. Various facets of the line, such as the innovative measures used to gain height and to overcome obstacles, the workshop at Tindharia, which is still using many original machines, the use of the original steam locomotives and original form, all bear witness to the technological skills of the bygone era and are an outstanding demonstration of their function, illustrating a significant stage in human history.

Criteria IV. The development of railways in the 19th century has a profound influence on social and economic developments in many parts of the world. This process is illustrated in an exceptional and seminal fashion by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

The DHR was selected as a case-study. It was adjudged to be “an outstanding line on several counts, but particularly significant with regard to [its] social, economic, and political effects and the route’s relationship with the landscape.” The report stresses the fact that the DHR does not possess any grand structures; its design was based on minimal capital expenditure. However, the engineering solutions adopted to cope with the steep gradients and relatively short distances were exceptional. It also emphasizes the social and economic importance of the line. The narrow gauge adopted, which was admirably suited to the terrain, permitted the transportation of passengers and goods in a way that had a profound impact on the social and economic development of the Darjeeling area.

Finally, the report describes the intimate relationship of the Railway with the varied terrain through which it passes as outstanding. In the light of these comments, there can be little doubt that the DHR is of outstanding quality. The combination of narrow gauge and zigzag reverses was the first in the world, and as such it is of exceptional technological interest. It was the first hill railway anywhere in the world and as such served as the prototype for numerous subsequent railways of this type, adopted in India, in Vietnam, in Burma, in Sumatra, in Java, and elsewhere. One other point not to be overlooked is the DHR links not only the plains with the high Himalayas, but also two distinct cultural traditions – the Hindu culture of Bengal and the Buddhist culture of the mountain region. As a result Darjeeling, which lies at an important nodal point, reflects a cultural fusion between these two cultures (not forgetting, also, the British influence). The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is intimately linked with the development of Darjeeling as the queen of hill stations and one of the main tea-growing areas in India, in the early 19th century.<sup>30</sup>

The brief history by Dr Robert Lee was significant. ‘It was the first hill railway of its type, and so was the precedent for the later Nilgiri, Simla, and Matheran lines in India, as well as for railways such as the Dalat line in Vietnam and the Maymyo line in Burma. It demonstrated, even more startlingly than the conversion of the Festiniog to steam operation had done, what could be done with a very narrow-gauge railway in terms of the traffic that could be conveyed, the economy of construction, and the terrain that could be overcome. From its inception, the DHR was widely recognized as a remarkable railway. In heritage terms, the railway is well preserved, and the changes have not damaged its value. The station at Darjeeling is a mid 20th century Art Déco folly, but most of the larger intermediate stations remain much as they were at the line’s opening. The locomotives working the line to this day are all to a design thought out by Prestage... Despite its small scale, the engineering, social, political, and economic impacts of the DHR are significant enough to justify its place on any list of important railways. However, what really makes the DHR outstanding is its relationship to the landscape through which it passes...’<sup>31</sup>

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the property in January 1999. ICOMOS also benefitted from the comparative study of historic railways coordinated by the National Railway Museum in York (UK) in 1998. ICOMOS was impressed by the quality of the DHR, and also by the commitment of those responsible for its management and maintenance to its conservation as part of the railway heritage, both of India and more widely. As there was no specific heritage expertise within the Northeast Frontier Railway staff, ICOMOS proposed that ‘Indian Railways should give special consideration to the possibility of transferring responsibility for conservation of DHR to a special unit with expertise in heritage matters as well as formal railway management skills. Such a unit would have conservation of heritage values as a high priority in its management and operation. This would appear to be consonant with the development of the line as part of the overall tourism plan for the Darjeeling

region'.<sup>32</sup> There was no buffer zone along the length of the DHR. Given the complexities of planning in India, ICOMOS urges the State Party to prepare an environmental management plan in association with all the relevant authorities responsible for the protection of the landscape along its route. ICOMOS was conscious that both proposals would require a lengthy period before they can be developed and implemented. At the same it knew well of the current level of conservation of DHR and of the existing commitment of all concerned to its continued existence. It suggested that the Committee consider asking the State Party to provide regular progress reports, with the objective of having appropriate structures in force within the next five years. The significance of this property lies in its continuing use as a working railway. Its abandonment would necessarily call its continuing World Heritage value into question.<sup>33</sup>

#### **DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE:**

MOROCCO, 29 November - 4 December 1999.

Excerpt from the Report of the 23rd Session of the World Heritage Committee.

The Committee inscribed the site on the World Heritage List under:

**Criterion (ii):** The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is an outstanding example of the influence of an innovative transportation system on the social and economic development of a multi-cultural region, which was to serve as a model for similar developments in many parts of the world.

**Criterion (iv):** The development of railways in the 19th century has a profound influence on social and economic developments in many parts of the world. This process is illustrated in an exceptional and seminal fashion by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

The Committee drew the attention of the State Party to the recommendations of ICOMOS concerning a) the creation of a heritage conservation unit; b) the establishment of a buffer zone along the length of the railway line and the station and c) the establishment of an

adapted management plan. All these issues could be examined by the Bureau at its twenty-fifth session in 2001.

The Observer of Germany underlined the importance of retaining the steam trains within the site. The Committee was assured by both ICOMOS and the Observer of India that, despite the movable character of the steam trains, they would most certainly remain in use due to their importance as a tourism attraction. The Observer of India, in thanking the Committee for its decision, drew the attention of the Committee to the importance of preserving this unique site, which was the first industrial heritage site in Asia to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.<sup>34</sup>

UNESCO's inscription described the DHR as follows:-

'The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is the first, and still the most outstanding, example of a hill passenger railway. Opened in 1881, it applied bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problem of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great beauty. It is still fully operational and retains most of its original features intact.'

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## CONCLUSION

The views of John Hurd in his article ‘Railways’, are that ‘Prior to the introduction of railways, transportation was costly, unreliable and difficult. In many regions commodities in bulk could be moved only by pack-bullocks. Railways offered the possibility of greatly reduced transport costs as well as reliability and speed’. Once in operation, the railways offered substantial advantages over more traditional modes of transport such as bullock carts, ponies, Tonga, human carriers or dandies. ‘Railways it was believed, would assist the economic development of India and provide both a market for British goods and a source of raw materials. They would also aid in the rule and protection of India by facilitating the defense of the frontier and by transporting troops within the subcontinent.’ The last point as mentioned is very much true in case of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. As an impact of DHR, that much recruitment of Gurkha soldiers as well as porters in the district in large numbers became possible due to transportation facility provided by the DH Railway especially during the World Wars. As far as economic development is concerned the findings of the past record reveals that the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in itself was economic revolution in the then society by opening job avenues to the educated Indians and unskilled labourer from the natives. But the greatest advantage promised by the railway at that time was fare prices of necessity commodities such as rice, salt, etc. to the people of the hills as they were very dear, due to the transportation difficulties. Moreover the time of travelling to Darjeeling was shortened by the inaugural of the DHR. It saved money and time to the visitors which otherwise could have taken long tedious journey of five to six days from Calcutta and two days from the foothills. The greatest boon in the economic field was for the tea planters of Darjeeling district. The long, damaged transportation of tea chests by bullock carts became possible for short, safe and easy due to DHR. Due to the climatic condition of the place tea packets used to get damaged due to moisture before it reached the harbor for its final journey outside India. The 51.07 miles of rail track made such good returns of dividends and that after opening its line to the public it became necessary to construct two new

extension lines. Both the Teesta Valley and Siliguri-Kishanganj lines proved beneficial, especially in the freight traffic. The Kalimpong Ropeway worked solely as a feeder line to the Teesta Valley Extension. The Tindharia Workshop created many of its genuine models of coaches, wagons, furniture, rickshaws, toys, etc. In the society and culture also it had mark its impression. Education, religious festival, medical facilities to the workers and Tindharia Railway hospital for the benefit of the railway families in the area is a ‘boon in disguise’.

Three cheers to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway for making all this possible. Having said so, one should not think that anything in this world is static or without change, so was the case with the DHR. It's hay days were numbered, after which DHR's monopoly was challenged by other faster means of transportation like the motor cars, trucks, buses. Being the only railway company the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Co. went smoothly in the district without any competition from any other firms. But from thirties of the twentieth century there was a continuous growth of the motor vehicles in the district. For some time the Railway exercised its upper hand in the management of road traffic as lowest as possible, since the expenses of the maintenance of the cart road was the responsibility of the DHR Co. as per the agreement of April, 1879. When all this rail- road competition was going on the one side, on the other hand nationalist fervor was at its height. Freedom movement in India gained momentum and finally forced the British government to leave India. The British officers hurried to pack their bags as soon as possible before the movement takes an ugly turn, as they had heard or witnessed the horrible atrocities of communal frenzy in many other places in India, they did not wanted to take risk with their families. Therefore, many Europeans left Darjeeling prior to the Indian independence only few remained to see the newly born independent India and passing the control of industries in to the Indian government . After the takeover by the Indian government in October 1948, the DHR became the most suffered railway like ‘an orphan’.

However, it is to be noted that although the DHR and Darjeeling made fortune during the days of the British Raj, the fruit of surplus was enjoyed only by the few hands. The majority of the native

population was in fact utilized in the form of human resources. The progress of education in the hills was largely due to the evangelical works of the Christian missionaries, although they too were not devoid of self interest. But the point is that it was not done by the planters either, or by the private industrialist. There was social disparity between the Europeans and the Indians though in small degree. For example there were some exclusive roads meant for the English only, the Mall or the Chowrasta was for the English population other than the rickshaw puller or their servants. The locals if they wished to go to the Mahakal dara or the observatory Hill for prayer then it has to be done early in the morning. Their observation for the natives was unhygienic, clumsy, etc. but when in service they praised them for their loyalty, bravery, cheerfulness. In short they knew how to tame and utilize the manpower for their personal benefit. Therefore, when the power passed from private to government hand actually it opened a new vista for exploration but the inexperience hands and the developing economy of newly independent India could not give ample time for a narrow line of Darjeeling which resulted in negative progress.

From a private firm where the railway was considered as their pride, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in the governmental hands passed from one zone to the other like a tennis ball sometime in one court and in the next to the other. In 1958 when finally it came under the newly formed North East Frontier Railway, the damaged had been done, one branch of Teesta Valley Extension line was washed away in 1950s and was closed forever, and the other Kishanganj line was converted into a meter gauge and had no more connection with the DHR. On the other side the Indian government was suffering heavily because of the losses incurred by DHR was concerning the government very much when Indian bureaucrats were trying to stand up economically through its 'Five Year Plan'. At last proposal was made to wind up the railway in the sixties of the twentieth century. When the news of such upcoming calamity reached the ears of the railway workers, they lost their sleep and tried every means to delay or change the decision. The situation was somehow saved by the joint efforts of the employees and the local political representatives. Destiny had planned something else for the

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Time and again the government kept pondering on the decision of withdrawing the DHR services in the hills, but somewhat it could not succeed. With the active support of rail enthusiast and DHR lovers, the public, politicians, and some dedicated railway officers and workers awareness campaign, workshops, conferences were continuously made throughout the last decade of the twentieth century and the result bore fruit. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway being sanctioned by the UNESCO with the World Heritage Status on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1999 opened a new era of history for the Indian Railways, followed by the Nilgiri and Matheran Light Railways in later years.

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[http://www.dhrs.org/heritage\\_status.htm](http://www.dhrs.org/heritage_status.htm)

<http://www.darjeelingtea.com/dpa.htm>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10689/1128/>

[www.rinbad.demon.co.uk/in\\_silg](http://www.rinbad.demon.co.uk/in_silg)

#### PHOTOS AND DOCUMENTARY:

Das Studio, Darjeeling .

DHR Railway Museum and Archive, Kurseong.

DHR Railway Museum and Archive, Ghum.

DHR websites.

Photo Studio, Darjeeling.

Private collections.

Souvenir, Darjeeling Municipal Records, 1850-2000.

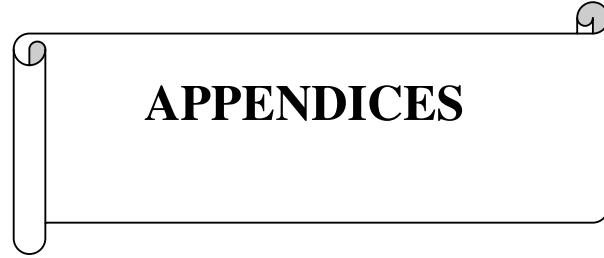
DHR Museums and Archives.

Private collections.

DHR websites.

Indain railway websites.

Chugging with the Granny, documentary in steam railways, Doordarshan, 1990.



## APPENDIX: A

Records of the Govt. of Eastern Bengal and Assam, The Board of Revenue Dept., The Railway Branch (1878-19912).

Memo No.2520

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company Limited

Manager & Resident Engineer's Office

Darjeeling 7<sup>th</sup> July 1882

To,

The Secretary Lothe (sic)

Govt. of Bengal

Public Work Department

Sir,

I have the honor to forward with this plans in tripartite together with schedule of land which I am desire to solicit may be taken up at Kurseong under act X of 1870 for the purpose of this Railway.

It is understood the value of the land fixed by the owner the Maharaja of Burdwan is exorbitant and I am desired to suggest that the amount to be paid for same, may be arrived at by taking the rent paid three years ago as a fair value of land at 20 years, purchase.

I am also desired to state that the Company has already paid 3713/14/- for work done in blasting rocks and to clear part of the site to be acquired and solicit that this expenditure may be considered at the time the value of the land is fixed.

I have the honor to be

Sdj: W. Stevenson

Secretary D.H. Rly.

## APPENDIX: B

Memo No: E/45

D.H. Railway  
Manager & Resident Engineer office  
Kurseong 22 August 1882

To,

The Manager

Ghyaberry Tea State

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> instant and it shall have due consideration. As I informed you at Tindoria Station when the Hon. F. Prestage was present Mr. Bell had promised to let him have any land required at the Loop at Rs 22/ per acre which he was selling land to you at.

And if you wish if we will pay you double that rate per acre as a private settlement or purchase.(sic)

I recollect the amen of the Deputy Collector of Darjeeling marking out the plot after he had measured the other plot at the Lower Riversings Station and he told me at that time that his valuation per acre included ample compensation for all trees, but jungle wood and saplings.

I shall be glad to see you or hear from you further on the subject.

Yours truly

Sr. S.B. Cary

Manager & Resident Engineer

D.H. Railway

## APPENDIX: C

Memo No.9806

### INDIAN TELEGRAPH

16/10/82

To Calcutta

From Darjeeling

(Station)

(Station)

words 24	Day 13	Hour 14	Minute 52	
Revenue Board, Lower Province				From Bengal Works
Darjeeling  complaining  is  in  Land  please	railway  that  great  making  to  expedite			

## APPENDIX: D

To,

The Commissioner of the Rajshahque

And Cooch Behar Division

Dated Calcutta, 26th November 1883

Sir,

In reply to your letter No. 732 Redated 16<sup>th</sup> November/83 and its enclosures, I am desired to state that the Board approve of the proceedings taken for the acquisition of the land required for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company for Station purpose at Kurseong in Darjeeling.

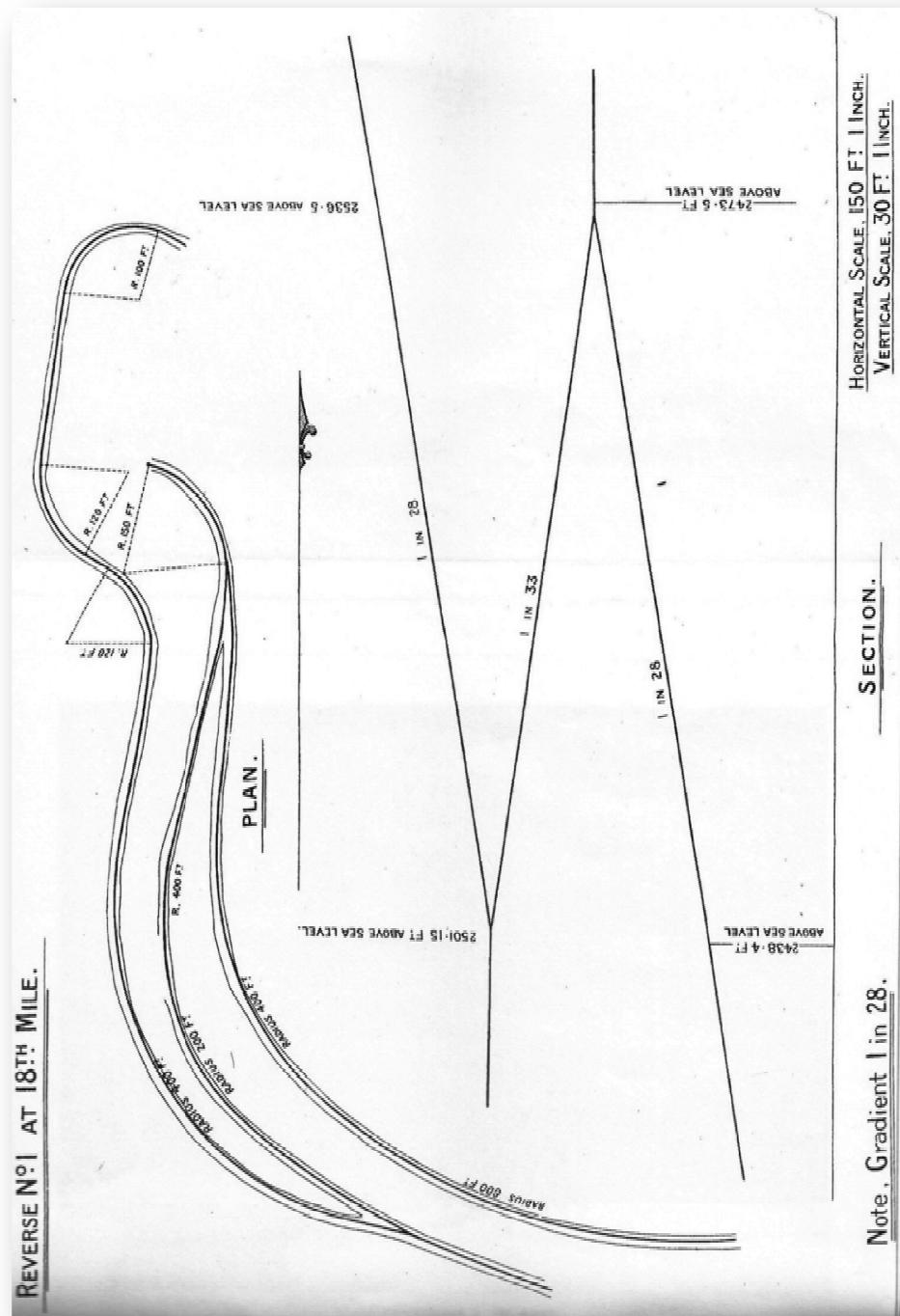
2<sup>nd</sup>. It is noted that the compensation amounts to Rupees (5865-0-0) five thousand eight hundred and sixty five, and has been paid by the Company. The Bill is returned herewith, only countersigned.

3<sup>rd</sup>. the final report and Appendix F are also returned herewith.

I have, & C.,

Secretary.

## APPENDIX:E



## APPENDIX: F

( 8 )

### Explanations.

#### *General Administration.—*

1111	Mr. J. F. W. Martin, Locomotive officer	...	800		
	Dearness allowance	...	160		
				$960 \times 12 = 11,520$	
	Half debitable to Abstract C.				
1121	Mr. J. Ager, Workshop Foreman & Chargeman	510			
	Dearness allowance	...	100		
				$610 \times 12 = 7,320$	
	Less—Half pay of Mr. J. Ager, chargeable to workshop Suspense	...		3,660	
					3,660
	Mr. B. Sen, Coal Inspector	...	140		
	Dearness allowance	...	30		
				$170 \times 12 = 2,040$	
					5,700
1131	Mr. D. N. Ghose, Chief clerk and Accountant	170	$\times 12 =$	2,040	
	8 Clerks	...	...	6,504	
	1 Steno Typist	...	...	936	
	1 Tracer	...	...	480	
	3 Menials	...	...	740	
	Acting and Dearness Allowances, etc.	...	...	4,520	
					15,220
	Recoverable from L. O.	...	...	600	
					14,620
1200	Travelling allowance (including house rent)	...		2,000	
1400	Contingent Office Expences.—				
	Stationery	...	...	1,400	
	Postage	...	...	300	
	Office furniture	...	...	50	
	Menials Uniform	...	...	150	
	Petty Stores	...	...	100	
					2,000

$\frac{1}{4}$  transferred to Abstract C.

$\frac{1}{4}$  Management charges to Extensions up to 20th October, 1948.

#### *II. Repairs and Maintenance.—*

2110	<i>Running Repairs—</i>				
	Labour	...	...	35,300	
	Stores	...	...	14,250	
	Shed staff	...	...	16,950	
					66,500
2120	<i>Workshop Repairs—</i>				
	Labour	...	...	50,550	
	Stores	...	...	44,790	
					95,340
2200	<i>Equipment—</i>				
	Labour	...	...	4,850	
	Stores	...	...	3,530	
					8,380

$\frac{1}{4}$  Chargeable to Extensions up to 20th October, 1948.

#### *III. Operating Expenses—Main Line and Extensions.*

3101	30 Drivers	...	...	...	17,960
	31 Firemen	...	...	...	10,620
	45 Engine Jacks and cleaners, etc.,	...	...	...	12,200
	2 Running Staff Clerks	...	...	...	810
	2 Callmen	...	...	...	350
	1 Shed Clerk	...	...	...	360
	Attendance Bonus	...	...	...	1,200
					43,500
	Extensions.				
	11 Drivers	...	...	...	3,290
	12 Firemen	...	...	...	2,420
	16 Engine Jacks and Cleaners, etc.	...	...	...	2,480
	Attendance Bonus	...	...	...	140
					8,330

## APPENDIX: G

( 12 )

### Explanations

#### Details of Workshops Charges—Labour & Stores.—

The following staff are provided for.—

88 Fitters	...	...	up to 2/12/- per day.	
27 Turners and Drillers	...	...	2/-	
12 Boilermakers	...	...	2/6/-	"
50 Riveters	...	...	1/4/-	"
16 Blacksmiths	...	...	2/14/-	"
14 Strikers	...	...	-1/4/-	"
23 Carpenters	...	...	2/12/-	"
4 Copper smiths	...	...	1/8/-	"
4 Tailors	...	...	1/4/-	"
16 Painters	...	...	1/12/-	"
11 Moulders	...	...	1/12/-	"
28 Khalasis	...	...	-1/4/-	"
1 Tindal	...	...	1/8/-	"
1 Sweeper	...	...	-1/4/-	"
				78,110
Overtime Dearness allowance and House Rent	...	...		87,900
Add—Half pay for Mr. J. Ager, Workshop Foreman chargeable to Workshop suspense	...	...		3,660
Mr. Rabilall Asst. Chargeman	...	...	203	
2 Shop Clerks	...	...	150	
2 Peons...	...	...	40	
2 Time keepers	...	...	107	
5 Watchmen	...	...	100	
			600 × 12 =	7,200
Overtime Dearness allowance and House Rent	...	...	...	920
		...	...	3,220
				11,340

#### Distribution of Labour and Stores for Workshop Charges as under.—

B. II.	Labour.	Stores.	C. II.	Labour.	Stores.
2110 ...	35,300	14,250	2110 ...	4,250	4,000
2120 ...	50,550	44,790	2120 ...	41,750	29,150
2200 ...	4,850	3,530	2310 ...	4,660	2,250
			2320 ...	31,400	30,100
			2510 ...	3,800	2,000
			2520 ...	4,450	9,850
	90,700	62,570		90,310	77,350

## APPENDIX: H

( 25 )

### Explanations.

1500	<i>Stores Department,—</i>				
1512	Mr. H. K. Mukerjee, Depot Store-Keeper	...	310 × 12 =	3720	
	Dearness allowances...	...		750	
			160 × 12 =	1,920	4,470
1513	Mr. P. K. Mukerjee, Head Clerk	...		4,560	
	7 Clerks including one at Siliguri	...		2,550	
	9 Menials	...		336	
	Provisions for increments...	...		4,224	
	Dearness allowances...	...			13,590
1520	Travelling and other allowance including House Rent	...		480	
1540	Stationery ...	...		180	
	Postage Stamps ...	...		120	
	Petty Stores, etc.	...		100	
	Menials Uniforms ...	...		150	550
	$\frac{1}{4}$ Proportionate charge debitable to Extensions.				
1610	<i>Cash and Pay Department —</i>				
	Mr. S. Mukerjee, Cashier ...	...	210 × 12 =	2,520	
	3 Pay Clerks ...	...		3,228	
	1 Poddar ...	...		468	
	5 Peons ...	...		1,416	
	Dearness allowances ...	...		2,678	
					10,310
1620	House Rent ...	...		300	
	Travelling allowances ...	...		1,200	
					1,500
1640	Stationery ...	...		200	
	Postage Stamps ...	...		500	
	Stores ...	...		100	
	Insurance charges ...	...		2,500	
	$\frac{1}{4}$ Proportionate charge debitable to Extensions.				
1700	<i>Medical Department—Main Line.—</i>				
1711	Dr. J. Sen Gupta Medical Officer, Kurseong	...	500 × 12 =	6,000	
	Dearness allowance ...	...	100 × 12 =	1,200	
					7,200
	<i>Less</i> — $\frac{1}{4}$ debit able to Extensions up to 20th October, 1948.				
					1,000
					6,200
	Dr. P. C. Sen, Asstt. Medical Officer, Darjeeling ...	...	130 × 12 =	1,560	
	" R. N. Halder, A. M. O. and Clinical Pathologist Kurseong ...	...	116 × 12 =	1,392	
	" J. C. Bhattacharjee A. M. O. Tindharia ...	...	130 × 12 =	1,560	
	Asstt. Medical Officer, No II Tindharia ...	...	70 × 12 =	840	
	Compounder, Kurseong ...	...		816	
	" Tindharia ...	...		480	
	1 Nurse at Tindharia Hospital ...	...		840	
	Dresser ...	...		600	
	7 Menials incl. special allowance ...	...		1,884	
	Acting allowance etc. ...	...		200	
	Dearness allowances ...	...		3,783	
	Provision for increment ...	...		455	
					14,410
					20,610
1712	Clerks ...	...		736	
	2 Menials ...	...		864	
	Dearness allowances ...	...		1,200	
	Provision for increments ...	...		50	
					2,850
	<i>Less</i> — Recoverable from M. O. ...				
					600
					2,250
	<i>Less</i> — $\frac{1}{4}$ Proportionate charge debitable to Extensions ...				
					400
					1,850
1720	Hospital allowance etc. ...	...		260	
	House Rent ...	...		800	
	Travelling allowance ...	...		400	
	Night duty allowances ...	...		120	
					1,580
	<i>Less</i> — $\frac{1}{4}$ debit able to Extension ...				
					220
					1,360

## APPENDIX: I

From,  
Mayadevi Chettri,

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
(RAJYA SABHA)



Kurseong,  
Dated the 4th May'57.

To,  
Shri K.P.Das,  
General Secretary,  
N.E.Railway Employees Union,  
Lumding.

Dear Sir,

I am forwarding herewith the proceedings of the General meeting, held on 1-5-57 under my Presidentship for your information and necessary action.

I will be thankful if you give your blessings to this Ad-hoc branch committee by way of early recognition and publication of the list of the Committee by GM/GKP.

I strongly feel that this Committee will render valuable service to the Railway Employees of this section under your able guidance. Railway employees showed keen interest to open a Branch Office of your Union here at Kurseong so that their individual and general grievances are properly represented and solved, as the other Union which has its Wing in this area for last so many years has miserably failed to represent their causes.

You will find in one of the resolutions that is a proposed move of the Railway Ministry to close down the D.H.Section which will invariably bring great hardships to the employees of this section who are mostly inhabitants of Darjeeling Hill District. I earnestly hope that you will strengthen my hands to counteract this move by adopting resolutions in your Federation level and urging on the Railway Minister to abandon this move.

I already waited on Chief Minister, West Bengal at Darjeeling a few days <sup>back</sup> and led a deputation to DC, Darjeeling and explained all aspects in detail. I will also raise this subject in the next Parliament Session.

With best wishes,

*Mayadevi Chettri*  
Yours sincerely,

OC

## APPENDIX: J

CLASS AMOUNT NO. DATE				 <b>INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS</b> RECEIPT FOR INLAND TELEGRAMS		
<b>OFFICE OF ORIGIN</b>				<b>INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS</b>		
CLASS	AMOUNT	NO.	DATE	INLAND TELEGRAM		A
<b>OFFICE OF ORIGIN</b>				SENT AT		
CODE	SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS			TO		
				BY	WORDS	
(SENDER TO WRITE BELOW THIS LINE ONLY)						
(DELETE CATEGORY NOT REQUIRED) ORDINARY/EXPRESS/NON-STATE/STATE/						
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS BY SENDER E.G. "REPLY PAID", ETC.						
NAME <u>JAGJIWAN RAM</u>						
TO:	ADDRESS <u>RAILWAY MINISTER</u>					
	TELEGRAPH OFFICE <u>NEW DELHI</u>					
LOCAL	PUBLIC	INTENSELY				
AGITATED	AT	MOVE				
FOR	WINDING	up				
DARJEELING	RAILWAY	REQUEST				
SPACE FOR POSTAGE STAMPS BELOW ABOVE LINE AND AT THE BACK						
1. NAME OF THE SENDER SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN A SEPARATE LINE JUST BELOW THE MESSAGE IF REQUIRED TO BE TELE- GRAPHED.						
2. ADDRESS FULLY AND CORRECTLY FOR SWIFT DELIVERY						
3. USE HIGH DENOMINATION STAMPS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.						



## ILLUSTRATION

Various Tickets Issued by the DHR Co





The Iron Tracks Used on the DHR Lines During the Years.



MAHANADISTATION 1945.



Kurseong Beside the Loco shed 1945.



KURSEONG LOCO SHED



TAKING WATER AT SUKNA 1979.



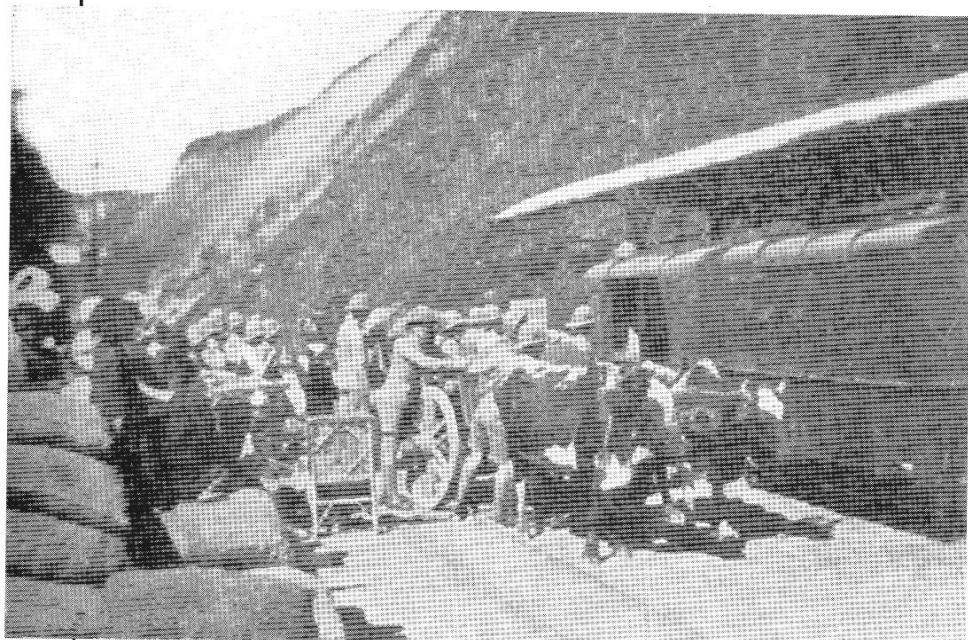
Entering Tindharia



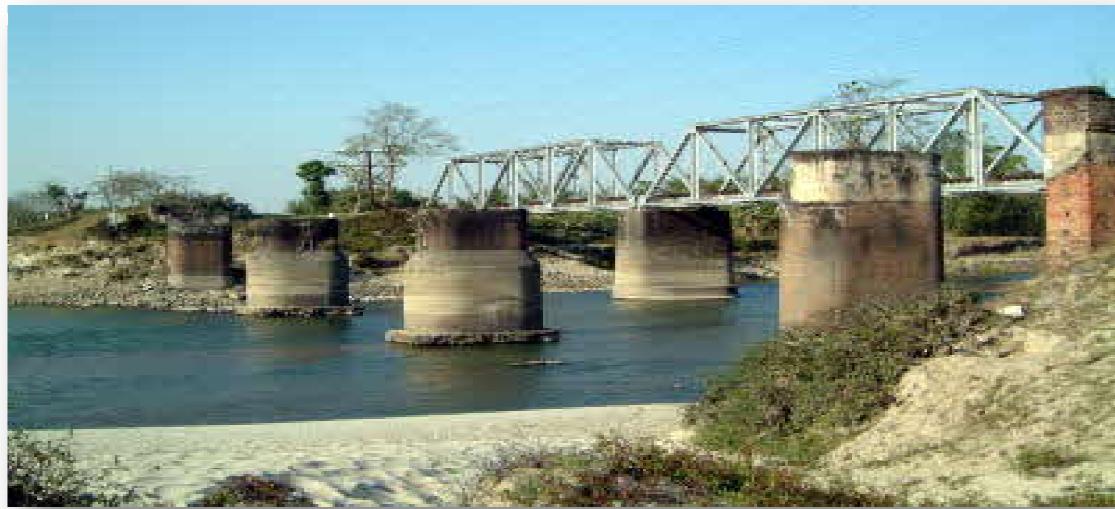




land slide and the broken link of rail lines



Transferring kit from Bullock Carts to the railway wagons at Ghoom Station



Kishangunj narrow gauge line bridge





Goods train Sukna, 1979