

INTRODUCTION

The Nepalese society constitutes one of most populous societies in the north-east Himalayas. One of their major concentrations has taken place in Darjeeling and Sikkim. Some of the Nepalese castes like the Limbus and the Magars are considered to be autochthonous of the region but the bulk of their population in this region draws its origin from Nepal. However, it has to be remembered here that the castes like the Brahmins and the Chhetris had emigrated from India to Nepal during the Muslim invasion (14th century).

The Nepalese society, as any Hindu society, is caste based. Like elsewhere the caste system goes unabated through centuries in this society also and almost every aspect of it is pervaded by the same. The Nepalese caste structure which had originated in India and developed in Nepal has undergone many changes in the course of migration and interaction with the non-caste peoples like the Lepchas and the Bhutias in the region initially and with many other non-Nepalese communities still later. Their caste system presumably adapted itself to different situations in different ways as the people who sustain it had to follow different occupations for their livelihood. Moreover, it lost the grip on its main pillar - the agrarian class structure - in the course of immigration into this region.

Such a socio-economic background of their society automatically calls for several propositions to be explored and analysed. Some of the questions which the present thesis seeks to encounter with

are :

1. What is the nature of caste-class relationship in the region and how does it stand with or differ from the same in other parts of India ?
2. Whether such a relationship is coming closer or dissociating and the forces involved in either of the process.
3. Which caste(s) or caste-group(s) has adapted better in this region and why ?
4. What about the occupational mobility ? Is it undergoing an evolutionary change, i.e., from primary to secondary or tertiary or a revitalization of the primary occupation - agriculture ?
5. Does the caste-class relationship as it exists now facilitate or inhibit the development process ?
6. What is the role of education, tenancy, income etc. in the caste-class relationships ?
7. To what extent and manner does the agrarian class structure affect the caste relations and vice versa ?
8. What is the role of history and ecology in affecting the caste-class relationships ?
9. What is the scope for changes in the caste-class relationship as a consequence of urbanization or modernization ?
10. What is the impact of the political/constitutional factors on the caste and agrarian relationship ?

This study not only deals with some of the important issues of Indian sociology but also has some relevance to

the society as such. It is hoped that the present study may help those engaged in socio-economic planning of a backward region. Moreover, this study can be taken as a sample to evaluate the relevance of the current planning on the basis of 'caste' and to do some rethinking on the statutory measures taken so far to bring about an egalitarian society. The planning on the basis of caste, though earlier, has not met with success as was expected; on the contrary it has given rise to rampant 'castelism' and discontentment among the deprived castes.

The earlier scholars writing on Darjeeling and Sikkim have, however, not touched this perspective. This statement finds ample support in the following brief but rather comprehensive survey of literature on the region.

The earliest reference on Sikkim is traced back to the 19th century writer, S.J. Ippolito Bendixi who wrote Bres-nd-ione naming Sikkim as a province of Tibet. It was, however, only after 'Particulars of a Visit to the Sikkim Hills' (1830) by J.B. Herbert appeared that Sikkim began to be known to the world outside. After some years a series of articles by Capt. A. Campbell appeared: 'Note on the Languages of Sikkim with a Vocabulary of their Languages' (1840), 'A Journal of a Trip to Sikkim, 1849' (1849) and 'Diary of a Journey through Sikkim to the Frontiers of Tibet' (1853). In the same year appeared The Aborigines of the Sub-Himalayas by D.H. Hodgson and Himalaya, Occidental and Tibet by E.D. Thompson.

During the same period one of the most authentic writings -

Himalayan Journals Vols I & II (1854) by Sir J. Hooker - appeared. Still later L.A. Waddell published 'Place and River Names in the Darjeeling District and Sikkim' (1892). Then appeared H.H. Risley's 'Tribes and Castes of Bengal' (1902). His edited work, 'Gazetteer of Sikkim' (1904) is another important book on Sikkim. Other books written during the fag-end of the 19th century are : 'The Sacred Book of the Lepchas' (1896) by K.K. Sen, 'The Lirbus' (1896) and 'Tibetan Funeral Ceremonies' (1897) by K.K. Das, 'The Lepchas of Sikkim and Their Songs' (1899) and 'Among the Himalayas' (1900) by L.A. Waddell.

The 20th century writings marked some amount of diversification in approach and contents. For example : 'The History of Sikkim' (1909) by Tashi Namgyal and Maharaja Drolma (typescript), 'Sikkim and Bhutan : 21 Years in the North-East Frontiers, 1837-1908' (1909) by J.C. White, 'A Concise History of Darjeeling District since 1835 with a Complete Itinerary of Tours in Sikkim and Tibet' (1922) by E.C. Dozey and 'Darjeeling at a Glance : A Handbook both Descriptive and Historical of Darjeeling and Sikkim' (1947) by K.C. Bhanja.

Other important publications on the region are : 'Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of the Hill areas of the North East India, Part I' (1961) by B.K. Roy Barman, 'The Himalayan Kingdoms : Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal' (1963) by P.P. Karan and W.M. Jenkins, 'A Plural Society in Sikkim : A Study of the Interrelations of Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis' (1966)

by C. Wilkins, The Ahirvanshi Theory of Lancholdia and the Darjeeling Group (1906) by H.N. Majumdar, The Lepchas : Culture and Religion of a Himalayan People, Part I (1967) by H. Stigor, Sikkim : A Short Political History (1970) by L.B. Basnet, Politics of Sikkim (1975) by A.C. Saha, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Sikkim, Rpt. (1979) by L.S.S.O* Malley and The Himalaya : Aspects of Change (1981) by J.S. Bell.

It is difficult to critically evaluate the vast material listed above as they, barring a few, are mostly of elementary nature without any theoretical base.

The references listed above may be briefly summarized to support this. The articles by Herbert and Campbell are basically travel notes. Hodgson's writings have enough of ethnography while Hooper's are primarily botanical details. Haddell gives interesting clues to the settlement history through river and place names. Halsey gives a detailed list of the tribes and castes including their places of origin. The works of Sen and Das are also ethno-cultural in nature.

The historical accounts of Sikkim given by Tashi Namgyal and Maharani Dralme, though biased to some extent, is still perhaps the oldest and the most comprehensive. It depicts both the political and the agrarian history of Sikkim. The books by White, Doney and Bhattacharya deal mostly with the political history of Darjeeling and Sikkim.

Roy Durman gives an analytical account of the economic and demographic aspects of Darjeeling on the basis of census data. Karan and Jenkins include some rare informations on Sikkim in their book. Nihone presents a break by analysing the inter-ethnic relationships among the Lepchas, Bhutias and the Nepalis based on land. Namgyal's book is once again basically a political history of how Sikkim gradually lost its territory on all sides. Slinger, a linguist, has made a thorough survey of the historical literature on Sikkim and presented his views on the aboriginality of different tribes like the Lepchas and the Limboos. Part II of his book is also on Sikkim but a purely linguistic piece of work. Basnet's political history of Sikkim includes some valuable accounts of the peasant struggles and revolution in Sikkim. Sicha offers a sociological analysis of the elite structure in Sikkim. O'Malley's book is one of the most authentic historical work. Lall, once a political officer to Sikkim, has tried to touch upon the economic aspects of change along with the political changes in Sikkim.

Thus the rationale of the present study can be drawn from the fact that the region needs a systematic study based on a proper theoretical framework. Such studies are still wanting at least on the region taken up here for the study.

The list of books given above also shows that Darjeeling and Sikkim have a long drawn common history and therefore the necessity to study the both together. It should also be mentioned that there is a great deal of social, cultural,

political and geographical proximity between these two regions from a very early period of history.

Operationalization of Concepts

Caste and class are perhaps two of the most controversial concepts in the sociological literature*. Such a controversy is mainly due to : first, the ideological orientations of the sociologists themselves; second, the difference of opinion on the aspects of caste and class to be emphasized; and, finally, there are some sociologists like Seidman (1959), Kroeber (1976) and Sharma (1980) who treat these two concepts more or less synonymously while others like Deteille (1969b), D'Souza (1969) and Leach (1971) draw a distinction between the two. However, Deteille says that these two can be studied within a single framework.

The controversy apart, these two are the most important dimensions of social stratification in India; the other dimensions being status and power. Status and caste distinctions are taken as more or less synonymous by Deteille (1977:59) but I have used the caste here in the ritual sense and not in the Victorian sense he had taken.

The word 'caste' is supposed to be drawn from the word 'casta' meaning something unmixed in Portuguese and Spanish and

* For a detailed discussion on caste-class see Sharma (1982)

'castus' meaning pure in Latin. Hutton (1861:47) says that the first use of this word in the restricted sense of today was as early as 1568 while Dumont (1972:57) marks its first application in India in the 17th century only. The controversy of caste system's origin has been discussed in detail by Barnabas and Mehta (1965).

Kotler (1909:15) defines caste mainly as a hereditary, endogenous group. Ghurye (1933) mentions six characteristics of a caste system in the traditional sense and emphasises on the last characteristic as the essence of it. These are : segmental division of society, hierarchy, restrictions on feeding and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities and privileges, lack of choice of occupation, and restrictions on marriage. Karve's definition (1931:9) includes most of these characteristics but also adds a sociologically important factor - definite mode of behaviour towards other castes. More recently she (1965) regards it as an extended kin group. Srinivas's definition (1962:3) does not differ much from those of Ghurye and Karve except in the choice of terminology. However, his definition of caste as a hereditary, endogenous, localized, having a traditional occupation and a position in the caste hierarchy seems more simple than those of Ghurye and Karve. Berman's definition (1967:43) unfolds a new dimension in an understanding of caste - cultural distinctiveness leading to differential evaluation, rewards and association.

If the earlier definitions are more attributional the

more recent ones are more empirically oriented. Bataille, for example, defines it as a system of enduring groups whose relationships are governed by certain broad principles and the essential features of a caste are endogamy, heredity, occupation and styles of life (1969a:40). Still later he regards it simply as a status group (1977:50) like Weber (1974) regarded it. But Weber's concept of caste is based on scriptures and is a very static division of society into watertight compartments but Bataille's idea is based on fieldwork and more dynamic in the sense that he recognizes its interrelationships with class and power also.

Cough (1971:11) defines caste in the ritual terms of purity and pollution. To Eough (1971:9) also repulsion, hierarchy and hereditary specialization constitute the spirit of caste system. Following her, Dumont (1972:57) regards separation, division of labour and hierarchy as the central features of caste system. He has translated these three features into his model of binary opposition - purity and pollution. Atal (1963:240-49) makes an interesting classification of the caste attributes into three groups - basic, sufficiently relevant and peripheral. To him, endogamy is the basic attribute, hierarchy the sufficiently relevant and division of labour as a peripheral one.

A controversy is also found on whether caste is a pan-Indian phenomenon or a universal one. Berneman (1972:197) in line with Dubois (1953) opines that it is a universal

cross-cultural phenomenon but Dumont (1967), Senart (1970) and Risley (1931) regard it as a post-Indian phenomenon. V.O. Souza (1967) and Bhatt (1975) apply the class approach to caste and regard it as 'universal' but Dumont (1972), Leach (1971), Srinivas (1952), Marriott (1965), Potelle (1969)^b and Bailey (1972) regard it as an Indian phenomenon. It may be commented at this juncture that caste viewed as a replica of the varna system is certainly an exclusive property of the Hindus, if not of India alone, but caste as a form of social inequality is a universal phenomenon.

In the present study the caste has been understood as a hereditary, endogenous, localised groups whose relationships are based on their respective position in their ritual hierarchy. Despite vehement criticisms on Dumont's emphasis on ritual aspect of caste it may still be regarded as the most important feature among the Hindus. However, the ritual orthodoxy today is not as strict as Senart (1970:35) understood it: as a 'self-contained and completely segregated units' with ritually determined mutual relations. The caste hierarchy may not coincide with the economic hierarchy but when the villagers themselves are asked to rank the different castes of a village the ritual parameters are found to have dominated their answers. Mabe (1965) and Srinivas (1952) also have used the ritual criteria for caste ranking. Unless suggested the social or economic criteria did not reveal themselves.

This is not to indicate that the economic or political factors are less significant. In fact, the basic hypothesis of the present study itself is that the caste system can be best understood not in its ritual parameters but in the economic or the agrarian class background of the castes. It can be theoretically assumed that without a firm class basis the different castes are bound to deviate from their traditional caste roles which may ultimately disbalance the ritual hierarchy itself. Noted scholars like Gough (1971), Bose (1957), Mukherjee (1957), Bose (1943), and still recently Harris (1982) and Orvedt (1982) have emphasized this class basis of caste system in their writings.

Therefore, it is necessary here to briefly dwell upon the concept of class also. Class is basically an economic concept but a confusion has arisen due to the uses of prefixes like social, economic, political and intellectual. MacIver and Page (1967, 343) for example, like to use the word 'social class' instead of 'class' alone - indicating the non-acceptance to use 'class' in the purely economic sense. Again, Marshall (1963), Parsons (1954), Davis & Moore (1945), Bottomore (1964), Ganters (1961) etc. understood it in terms of 'status', 'attitudes' or 'consciousness'. This practice is perhaps undesirable, unnecessary but unfortunate because it deviates our attention from the core of the matter to its periphery. The confusion deepens further when some scholars like Leach (1967:6) and Bottomore (1975) regard it as a 'concept' and others like Marx (1978) and Bose (1973) consider it as a 'reality'.

Ideas on class have been expressed by many since as early as the end of the 13th century (Smith 1776, Doob 1957, Ossowski 1963 and Veblen 1953) but the most valued ideas on class are those of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Marx's concept of class (1973:835) is primarily based on the relations of production. He makes a three-fold classification of a modern capitalist society into wage labourers, capitalists and landowners, who own labour-power, capital and land respectively. Thus we find the maximum emphasis on 'ownership of the means of production' rather than on 'property' in his concept of class as such.

On the basis of this simple classification he builds up his theory of dialectical materialism, that the class owning the means of production - the bourgeoisie - and the class not owning the same - the proletariat - would come into a conflict as the society gradually bipolarises under the capitalist mode of production. The middle class in the process would gradually become one with the proletariat class. The class conflict would ultimately result into a revolution which would finally establish the proletariat dictatorship (1975). However, his single variable (property) theory of class has been criticised by many (see Crompton and Gabbay 1971: 16, Aron 1979: 111-122).

Weber's concept of class (1974: 46-47) has been regarded as an improvement upon Marx's rather than a contradiction as such. If Marx emphasized the single variable of production relations Weber paid due attention to other variables like status and power also. To him, class is a group of people having the same 'class

situation' which includes : common life chances, common economic interest for the possession of goods and opportunities for income and common commodity or labour market conditions. Thus the 'class situation' ultimately depends on the 'property' or a 'lack of property'.

Weber goes further to differentiate a class situation according to 'the kind of property that is usable for returns' and 'the kind of services that can be offered in the market'. This is how he proceeds to regard the 'class situation' as a 'market situation'. However, his concept of class has been criticised by Crompton and Gabbay (1971: 19) for shifting our attention from the tension in the relations of production to the market. Even without the inherent limitations in the concepts of either Marx or Weber it is not perhaps wise to use them in an Indian situation without some modifications for these concepts are developed in the industrial societies of the west but India is still predominantly an agrarian country.

This is not to suggest that the agrarian societies have a lesser degree of inequality compared to the industrial ones. In fact, the agrarian inequality is perhaps one of the chronic forms of inequality because upward mobility is the least there. Detelle (1977: 5) was, thus, perhaps not very much wrong to say that inequality was not to be found in the industrial societies of the west but in the agrarian societies of the third world.

For the purpose of the present study class has been

understood to mean the 'agrarian class' and the 'agrarian relations' here refer to the complex relationship between or among the various agrarian classes/categories principally based on land though many other socio-economic criteria have also been taken into consideration to test the validity of the agrarian classification based on land. Thus the landowners here constitute one class and the landless, another. The landowners and the landless may not necessarily reflect a class consciousness nor a differential market situation because the amount of land held or the quality of land is not equal, nor is there - except land - a common chord to bind the members of a particular class together. The fact that some of them own land and others do not is but not a sufficient base to facilitate a face to face contact or conflict among the members in all places or times. Similarly, the agrarian classifications by Lenin (1907, 284) into proletariat, peasant and capitalist and by Mencher (1974a, 1495-1503) into (i) landless, (ii) poor peasants (iii) middle peasants, (iv) rich peasants (v) rich farmers, capitalist farmers and traditional landlords, and (vi) indeterminate class of large landholders on the basis of the 'amount of land' does not fit in always and everywhere.

Caste and class : a literature survey.

A number of studies can be found conducted earlier on the economic aspect of caste though geographically in different places. Some of these studies have been based on the occupational aspect of the caste system (see, for example,

Red 1955, Mayer 1960). Deitelman (1959) considered this relationship on the basis of the jajmani system while others (Kumar 1968, Desreumaux 1973) did it on the basis of landholding. Only a few scholars like Deteille (1969a), Mukherjee (1957), Thorner (1976) and Hancher (1978) have studied the caste from an agrarian class point of view.

The recent studies have marked a deviation from the simple correlational studies between caste and class (Sinha 1967, Thorner 1976, Srinivas 1978) to a focus on the processual aspect of it (Deteille 1969a, Caplan 1970, Bailey 1972, Sharma 1980). This latter group may again be divided into two groups: one contending that caste and class are gradually dissociating (Deteille 1969a, Bailey 1972) and the other supporting the view that the caste system has adapted itself and taken the form of a class system (Opstein 1962, Senyal 1976, Sharma 1980). Hancher (1978: 185) also finds that the caste-class correlation has continued. Caste has assumed new functions but these new practices are very much like the old and are often difficult to make a distinction.

A few studies on the caste and agrarian class relationship may be discussed below in greater detail.

Radhishna Mukherjee (1957) had selected six villages in the district of Bogra - five from Katschar and one from the south-western side of Bogra town. It should be noted here that his selection of sites was based on his plan of getting maximum cooperation and reliable data and in this plan he took the

suggestion and help from Mr. J.M. Roy who was a well-known Congress leader of North Bengal. Therefore, the chances for the intrusion of bias are very high not only in the field of selection of site but also in the study as a whole. His objective of study was to find the relation between different institutions and groupings in the society from the economic point of view. Thus, though he deals with the caste and agrarian class relationships also his initial or rather the main objective was not to study this.

Thorner (1976) had a different approach of studying the agrarian structure. He studied villages between seventyfive to one hundred but his style was what he called himself 'hit and run' approach. Thus, even with a very refined insight for agrarian studies, the chances of missing many a fact concerning the agrarian societies can be easily contemplated and not without reason. He also deals at length with the caste and agrarian class relationship but once again his main objective was not this ; it was to describe and analyse the network of relationships among the various groups and persons who drew their livelihood from the land. Thus, while his main focus was the agrarian structure caste comes only casually though inevitably.

Bottle (1960a) had conducted his fieldwork in only one village called by himself as asipura for about ten months during 1961-62. He also records that he made frequent visits to many surrounding villages but such occasional visits are

usually not very helpful to find out the differences in the nature of caste, class and power relationships across the region. As true of Bankalshina Mukherjee and Shomeer, Beteille also did not go to the field with the aim of studying the caste, class and power relationships which form the content of his final findings and analysis. He went to the village just to understand the village and its social life.

Bailey's study (1973) at Binipara, Orissa was also basically an attempt to trace the changes which might have come about in the internal organisation of the village as a result of the changing economic activities. But in the process he found the caste aspect of the village as a very important dimension to be understood and explained. Analytically speaking, Bailey's understanding of caste is basically 'organic'. Thus his notion of caste is based on a kind of 'false consciousness' about change (Shomeer, 1980: 7-10) and 'static' and 'abstract' (Singh, 1968: 170).

Moncher's study (1973) is to examine the relationship between society and agriculture at Chingoleput district, Tamilnadu. Though the focus is on agriculture and social structure, the social and political relations have been taken care of. The orientation, as she herself admits, is Marxist and believes that no meaningful development can take place without changing the structure of society. The study was conducted during 1963, 1966-67 and 1970-71 combining the case study method with the use of historical materials. The total

number of villages taken for study was ten but the total number of villages she herself had studied was only three ; the rest was studied with the help of field assistants. Her were all the villages of equal size and studied more than once. In fact, only four villages had been studied more than once. These ten villages out of 98 villages were chosen randomly. Her study finally concludes that the development policies have been prejudiced and benefitted the larger landholders. Thus, she finds 'land reform' a very important step towards agricultural development.

In a fascinating article (1974a) written four years before she published her book, she deals with a vital question of rural sociology that why some areas are more prone to revolution while other areas are not. She finds the former type of areas to be having a sharper polarization of classes and a wider politicization by the communist parties but the class revolution has been thwarted by the caste system, greater class mobility, especially among the lower classes, and the political propaganda of the state. In an another article (1974b) published in the same year, she pinpoints the exploitation of the low castes and delaying the class formation as two important features of the caste system.

Thus, none of these studies had the central aim of exploring the caste and the agrarian class relationship. Most of them wanted to understand the agrarian structure of a village

or a number of villeges but in the process found the caste structure as a very important dimension of the village life to be explained. In a way, therefore, the present study sounds rather experimental in the sense that it straightway seeks to study the caste and the agrarian class relationship. The presentation of data which are mostly quantitative also gives a similar impression. But it is primarily an exploratory study.

The present study is a humble attempt to explore the nature of caste and agrarian class relationship in a geographically and sociologically unexplored region. It is basically empirical in nature and analysis has been based chiefly on the data collected from a number of villeges. However, such an analysis has also been exposed to the various theoretical frameworks of analysis available on the concerned area. The history, ecology and social composition have been given due consideration as background variables though the intervening variables like education, occupational changes, institutional measures etc. have also been taken due care of.

Plan of the study

The present work has been divided into six chapters including this introductory chapter. Chapter II has been devoted to the description of the region along with a brief outline of the Nepalese settlement history on the region. Chapter III deals with the caste structure in five villeges - Banch, Purbang, Rangbali, Tamthang and Chuchen. Of these five,

Tanch and Purbong are located in the Kalimpang subdivision of Darjeeling District; Ranghull in the Salar subdivision and Falmathang and Chuchen are located in the West District of Sikkim. The chapter begins with a brief sketch of the Nepalese caste history and discusses the caste relations on the basis of the consensual and marital relations from both attributional and interactional points of view.

Chapter IV discusses the agrarian structure in the different villages. This chapter also begins with a broad outline of the agrarian history of the region vis-a-vis that of Bengal and even some other parts of India. The study of the agrarian relations has been done on the basis of mainly three criteria : education, occupation and income. Besides a statistical survey of the agrarian relations on the basis of the above criteria, an analysis has been made on the basis of production, distribution and consumption - three main economic activities of a social life. This chapter also includes discussion on the varying land tenure systems over the region.

Chapter V concerns itself with the correlations between caste and agrarian class structure on the basis of various criteria like education, occupation, landholding, income, styles of life, indebtedness and spatial mobility. Attempts have also been made to assess the role of migration, tenancy and education in affecting the caste-class relationship in different villages. Chapter VI, the last, is on the summary and comparison of the caste-class relationship at the inter-village, inter-regional and also inter-national levels to some extent.

Method

The selection of the villages has been done on the basis of purposive sampling, one of the purposes being to find villages at different stages of agricultural development. The main criterion to decide the level of agricultural development was the extent of cash-crop cultivation though the patterns of cultivation and levels of mechanization were also taken into consideration. Tang Rangtull was one of the most developed villages, Tanek and Purbong relatively less developed and Takithang and Chuchen as the most backward villages. Rangtull is also the most urbanised, Tanek and Purbong semi-urbanised and Takithang and Chuchen with the least of urban features. Here Chuchen was taken as a control village to see if really remoteness, agricultural backwardness, illiteracy, etc. were linked with greater adherence to the caste norms. Due to time and fund constraints, however, such 'control' villages could not be taken for each and every village with different level of development in the above respects.

Another purpose of the selection was to find villages at different altitudes because altitude is a very important factor in affecting the agrarian structure in the hill areas. This also has a special theoretical undertone - to see if the forces of production really determine the relations of production. Rangtull is located at an altitude from about 6400' to 7100' above sea level (a.s.l.), Tanek between 2900' to 2700' a.s.l.

The superscript (?) means feet.

Purbong between 2700' to 3000' a.s.l. and Takuthang and Chuchen between 2300' to 2600' a.s.l. The reason for selecting 2 villages in west Sikkim was the necessity to find two very backward villages. The south and east districts are urbanised like the villages of Darjeeling and the north has a very negligible Nepalese settlement.

The selection of the villages was done, besides purposive and random samplings, after an extensive survey and also a good deal of consultations with people at various places. Randomization of the villages had to be done at a limited scale with only 7 or 8 villages in each category because a complete list of the villages falling in each category based on altitude, urbanisation and agricultural development was difficult to obtain. The fieldwork in almost all the villages was extended for a period of about 3 months. In the first round of villages detailed socio-economic data were collected on the basis of census forms designed to the problem under study and in the second or third rounds interviews were taken on the basis of schedules taking at least 33.3% households from each category of caste and class. The selection of households for interviews was based on stratified sampling which was facilitated by the census forms filled earlier. These households were resampled on the basis of their spatial distribution. The interviews were of quasi-directed type and the number of questions which were mostly open-ended was minimised not to bore or detain the informants for long. Case study method was also adopted simultaneously.

Observation as a tool of study was made use of throughout my stay in different villages. The collection of official data was also done as far as possible. A track of the local newspapers like the Himalayan Observer and Sikkim Express was also kept to get the macro-level data on the region.

Limitations

My limitations were definitely negligible. I had a life-long acquaintance with the local language, culture and economy of the region. However, there were certain difficulties which I could not overcome. One of them was that the number of villages sampled was perhaps quite inadequate from the point of view of representativeness. But when there are about 62 villages within the Kalimpong subdivision itself studying a statistically representative number of villages was quite impossible and even if it were made feasible the results would be rather superficial. Moreover, representativeness does not necessarily depend on the sample size or accuracy alone; it also depends on the ingenuity of the researcher and his familiarity with the universe of study. Again, when the sigma or variation is not so much within a given altitude and range, taking a big sample is really not necessary.

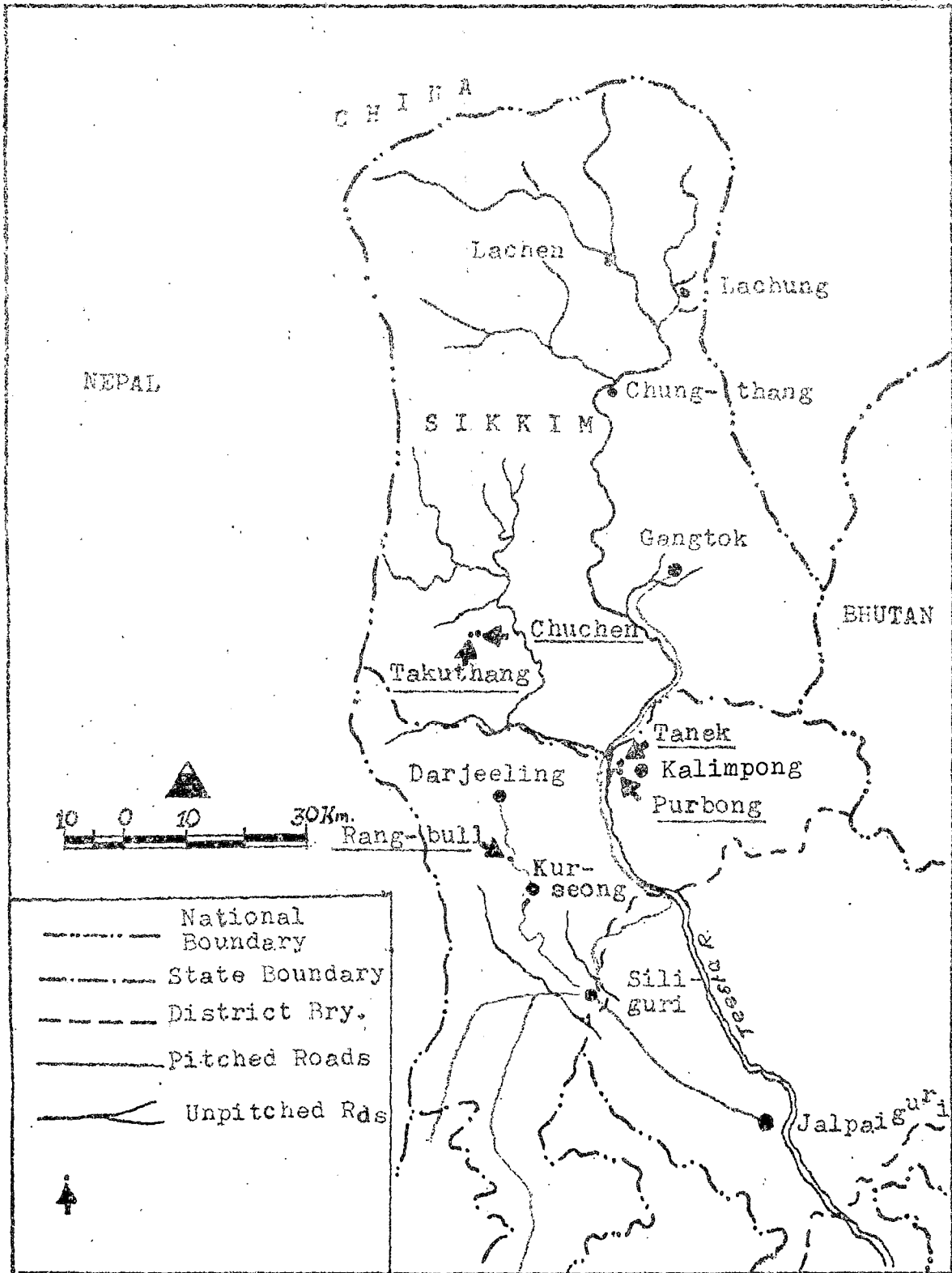
The second difficulty, though an unmountable one, was that there were some people in each village who could not be interviewed even in the three months of my stay. These people were mostly the male heads of the households working elsewhere

On government service or otherwise. Under the circumstances, the housewives had to be interviewed who being mostly less educated and less exposed to the outer world were less informative compared to their male counterparts.

Finally, it may be noted that after independence the census of India has stopped bringing out figures on the basis of each caste though we find figures on scheduled castes and tribes. Thus, the data collected on the basis of the different villages could not be compared with the district or State level figures. But whatever data have been available at these levels have been incorporated here.

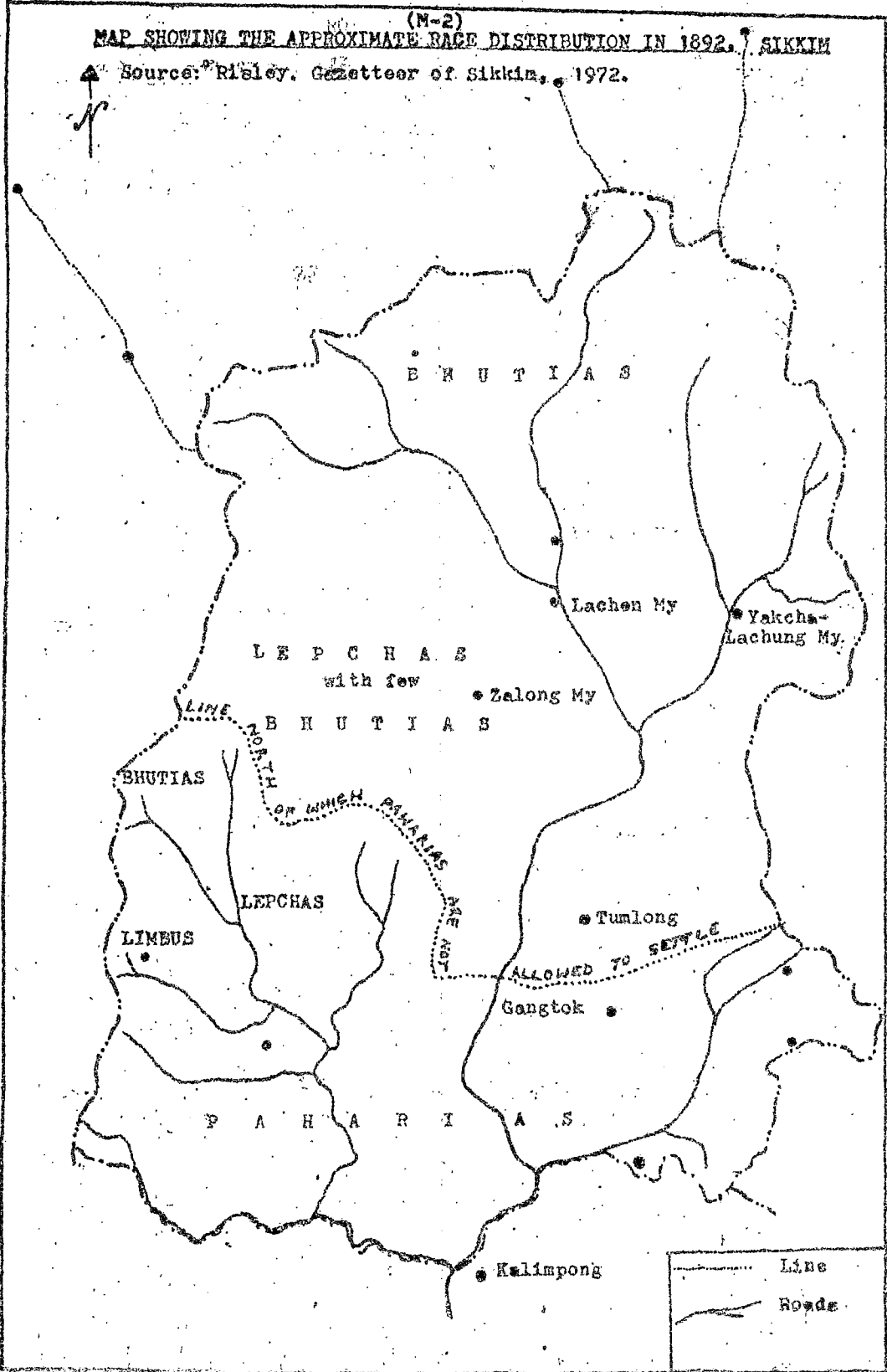
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MAP OF DARJEELING AND SIKKIM WITH LOCATION OF VILLAGES STUDIED



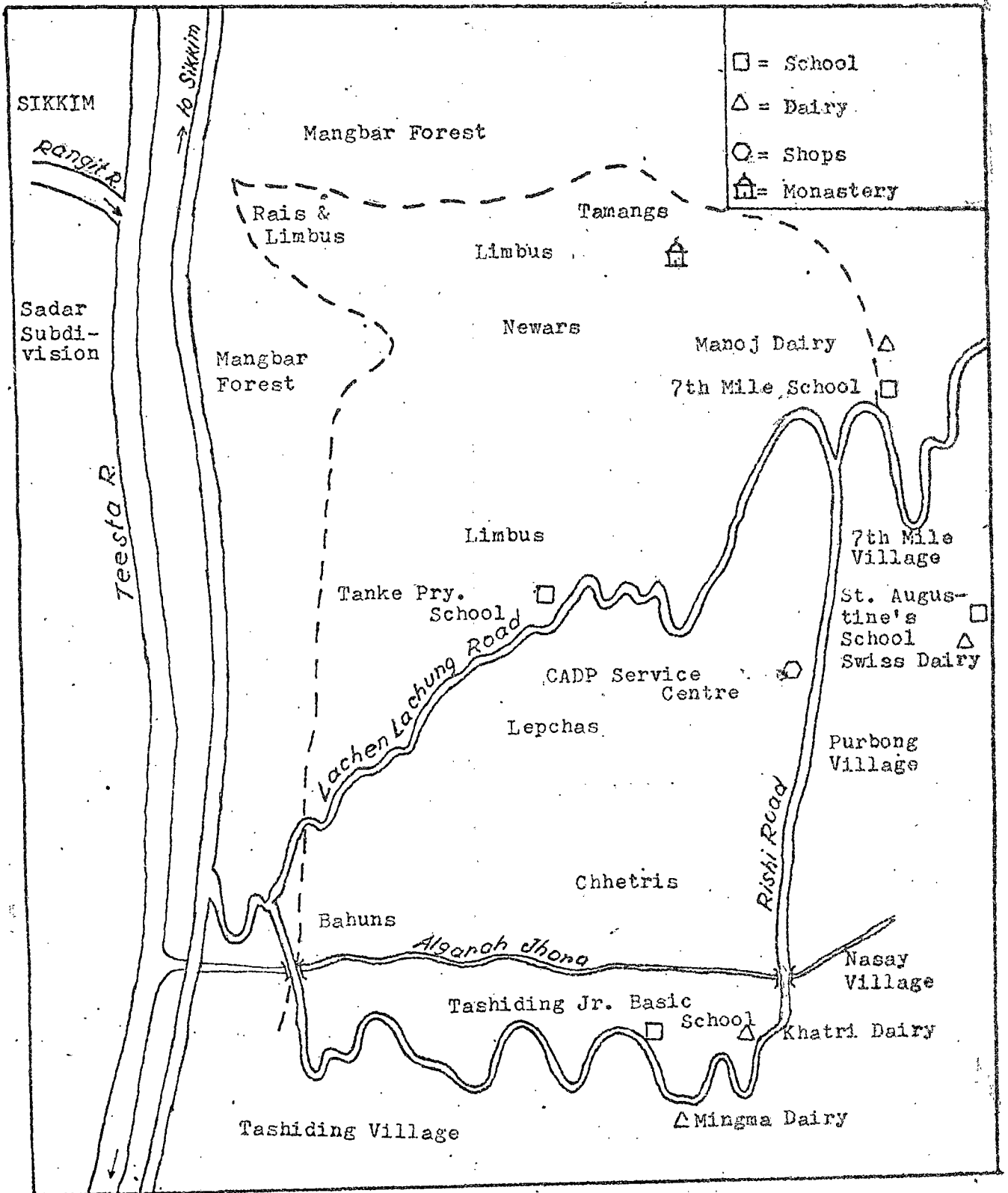
(M-2)
MAP SHOWING THE APPROXIMATE RACE DISTRIBUTION IN 1892. SIKKIM

Source: Risley, Gazetteer of Sikkim, 1972.

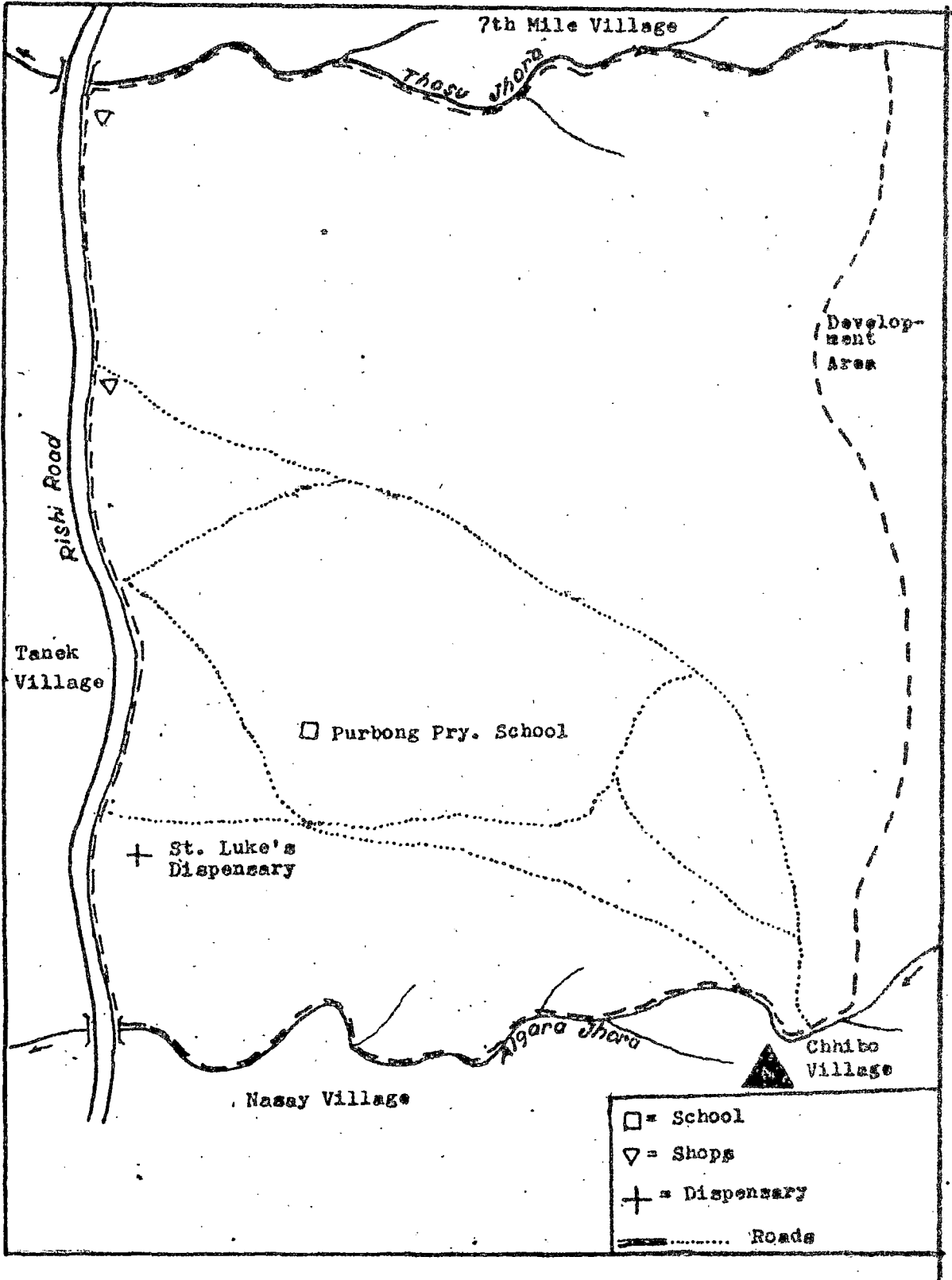


(M-3)

SKETCH MAP OF TANEK VILLAGE: KALIMPONG SUBDIVISION

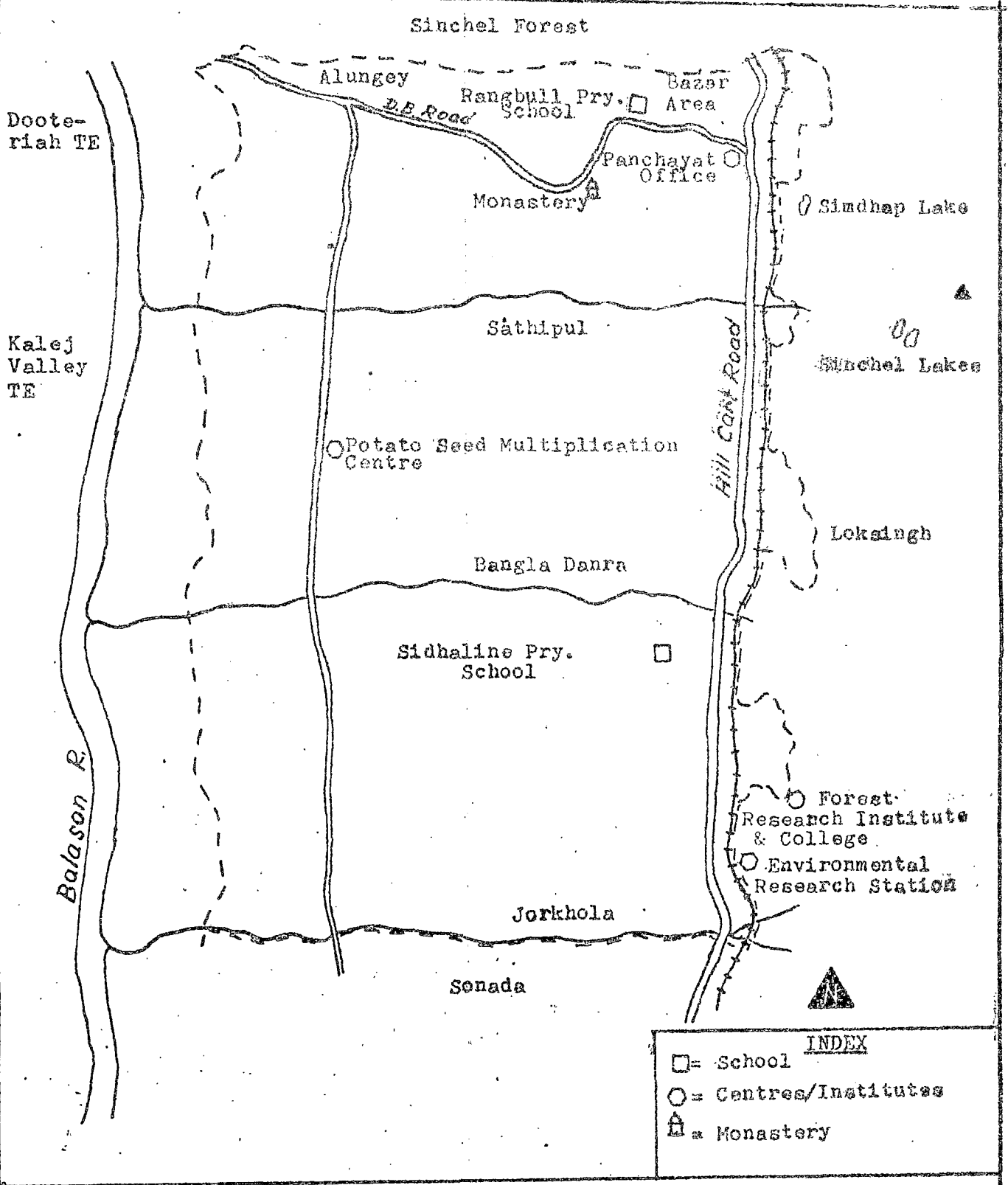


(M-4)
SKETCH MAP OF PURBONG VILLAGE: KALIMPONG



(M-5)

SKETCH MAP OF RANGEHULL VILLAGE: SADAR SUBDIVISION



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SKETCH MAP OF TAKUTHANG & AGHUCHEN VILLAGES, WEST SIKKIM

