

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled, “Politics and Development of Ethno-Consciousness and Identity: A Study of the Lepchas of Darjeeling and Sikkim” has been prepared by me under the guidance of *Sir* Dyutis Chakraborti, Department of Political Science, 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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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**Politics and Development of Ethno-Consciousness and Identity: A Study of the Lepchas of Darjeeling and Sikkim**" by **Pemu Tshering Lepcha** under my supervision is an original piece of research work which is being submitted to the University of North Bengal for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy. To the best of my knowledge the thesis has not been submitted by the candidate anywhere else for the award of any other degree. The thesis may kindly be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Dedicated to  
Appa, Aama,  
and my dearest  
Burb, and Pukçhu*

## **Acknowledgements**

This work is a humble attempt in the study and writing about the history, memory, social and cultural life- world of the Lepchas. It is a culmination of my inclination and yearning desire to contribute for the cause of my community. As a young university student back twenty years, I had set my heart to the study of Lepcha language at my hometown Kalimpong. But the task that I had set upon myself could not materialise, as I had to take upon an important call of my life i.e., taking up a job of a college lecturer in Coochbehar. Once settled into my new vocation, with a completely different environment, learning Lepcha in Kalimpong became a distant dream. With the passage of time, I became more convinced about the need to contribute in a little way towards the cause of the Lepchas. All these developments culminated towards the writing of this research work. At this moment the person who is really missed and who truly inspired and motivated me to take up the study of the Lepchas for my research work is my beloved Appa, who left for his heavenly abode before I could complete my task.

This work is just a speck of dust in the vast universe of academic exercises. In an attempt to understand the process behind the study of Lepcha identity, the work has tried to make use of the vast, unknown, rich ethno- history, beliefs and practice of the Lepchas that has largely remained an unexplored area. Lepchas belief in the worship and sanctity of nature and all natural objects around us have become more evident in view of the natural disturbances and calamities that have reeked havoc in the hills during the recent times, on account of the defiling and destruction of sacred places and sites. Thus, in this work an attempt has also been made to highlight the significance of the vast repertoire of Lepcha beliefs, legends, practices and values to understand the present man-made crisis that has beset the entire Himalayan zone. The present work would have not been completed without the constant, thoroughgoing and illuminating engagement of my guide and guru Dyutis Chakraborty. Despite the many ups and downs in his health condition, he has always patiently given me appropriate suggestions and guidance during hours of crisis. What is indeed so striking about Sir, is his sheer brilliance, raw intellect, humility and simplicity. These are the enduring values that I seek to inculcate in my life.

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The research has also entailed a number of interviews and field visits to the ruins of Lepcha forts at Dalim in Gorubathan and Damsang in Kalimpong. Visits have also been made in certain pockets of remote Lepcha villages in Kalimpong. Being a laywoman in spoken Lepcha, my friend since my college days, Kingchum Pundi Lepcha and a chaste Lepcha language speaker, was my guide, translator, interpreter and driver during my field visits. She has always remained as an inspiring and motivating figure throughout. My special thanks and gratitude to her. My students in Gorubathan Government College from the Lepcha community have also given me many information and tit bits about daily lives in Lepcha villages and to whom I am always indebted.

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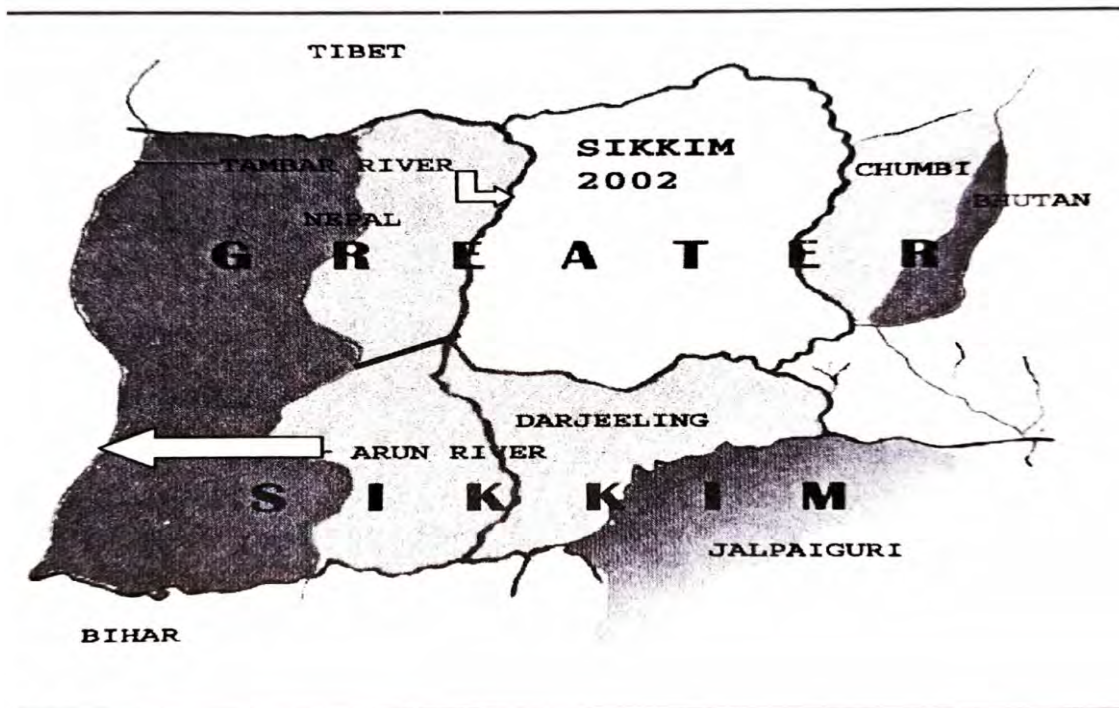
**Pemu Tshering Lepcha**

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# GREATER SIKKIM

(a sketch map)



White Area : Sikkim Today  
Shaded Areas : Parts of Greater Sikkim



## List of Abbreviations

ACT	Affected Citizens of Teesta
AIGL	All-India Gorkha League
BL	Bhutia-Lepcha
GTA	Gorkha Territorial Administration
HPSC	Hill People's Social Union
HPSU	Hill People's Social Union
ILTA	Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association
LRM	Lepcha Rights Movement
MAMT	Mayel Aahit Mutanchi Tarzum
MLAS	<i>Mutanchi Lom Aal Shezum</i>
MLLDB	Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board
PTG	Primitive Tribal Group
RMRK	Renjyong Mutanchi Ringmom Kurmom
SC	Sikkim Congress
SLA	Sikkim Lepcha Associations
SLYA	Sikkim Lepcha Youth Associations
SNP	Sikkim National Party