

Ethnic Minorities and Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan

Dissertation submitted to the Department of International Relations
Sikkim University in fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

**Submitted by
BINDHIYA RAI**



**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY
GANGTOK-737 102
2015**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A note of gratitude to a number of people, whose genuine support and encouragements made this dissertation a successful work. The dissertation began and ended with the dedicated guidance and enormous help of my supervisor Dr. Sebastian N. Sir, without whom it would be almost impossible for the completion of the same. I would like to express my heartiest thankfulness and acknowledge him for the guidance and enduring support he bestowed upon me throughout. I also express my sincere thanks to the faculty members of my Department (International Relations/Politics), Dr. Manish, Dr. Teiborlang and Ph Newton Singh for their valuable suggestions.

One of the major resources throughout the dissertation writing has been the library of Sikkim University, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology and Central Library of Sikkim. Therefore, I am thankful to all the concerned authorities of these libraries who provided me access to the library and procured relevant materials during the course of my research.

I am very thankful to my seniors Bijay da, Romana di and Rajiv da for suggesting the references and also for giving their worthy inputs. In the end, I extend my thanks to the entire family members especially papa, friends and relatives who believed on me. It was indeed their constant support, encouragement and patience which contributed at large in the process of this research.

Bindhiya Rai



सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय
(भारतके संसदके अधिनियमद्वारा स्थापित केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय)

SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

(A Central University established by an Act of Parliament of India)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Ethnic Minorities and Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan**” submitted to **Sikkim University** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Philosophy** in International Relations, embodies the result of *bona fide* research work carried out by Bindhiya Rai under my guidance and supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree, diploma, associate-ship and fellowship. All the assistance and help receiver during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by him.

Dr. Sebastian N.

Supervisor

Department of International Relations

School of Social Sciences

Sikkim University

Place: Gangtok

Date 2.03.2015.



सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय
(भारतके संसदके अधिनियमद्वारा स्थापित केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय)

SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

(A Central University established by an Act of Parliament of India)

Date: 02.03.2015

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Ethnic Minorities and Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan**” submitted to **Sikkim University** for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my original work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

BINDHIYA RAI

Roll No.: 13MPIRO1

Registration No.: 08AH1016

The Department recommends that this dissertation be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

Dr. Manish
Head of the Department

Dr. Sebastian N.
Supervisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page Numbers

Declaration

Certificate

Acknowledgements

CHAPTER-I

1-16

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Cultural Homogenization

1.3 Cultural Formation in Bhutan

1.4 Survey of Literature

1.5 Rational and Scope of the Study

1.6 Organization of the Study

1.7 Research Questions

1.8 Methodology

1.9 Chapterisation

CHAPTER-II

17-34

Ethnicity, Society and Culture in Bhutan: An Overview

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Ethnicity: The Concept

2.3 Historical Background

2.4 Ethnic Groups in Bhutan

2.5 The Social Structure

2.6 Religious Practices

2.7 Cultural Practices

2.8 Conclusion

CHAPTER-III **35-48**

State and Ethnic Minorities: The Case of Bhutan

- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Ethnic Minorities and State in the Post-Cold War World**
- 3.3 Ethnic Minorities**
- 3.4 Ethnic Minorities in Bhutan**
- 3.5 Ethnic Minorities and State in Bhutan: The Turbulent Engagement**
- 3.6 Conclusion**

CHAPTER-IV **49-72**

Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan and the Question of *Lhotshampa*

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 History of *Lhotshampas* Settlement in Bhutan**
- 4.3 Homogenization in Bhutan: The Beginning**
- 4.4 *Driglam Namza*: Intensification of Cultural Homogenization**
- 4.5 Marriage Act**
- 4.6 The Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985**
- 4.7 The Impacts of Homogenization Policy**
- 4.8 Conclusion**

CHAPTER-V **73-78**

Conclusion

References **79-82**

Appendices **I-XV**

- I. Citizenship Law of 1958**
- II. The Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1977**
- III. The Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985**
- IV. Bhutan Marriage Act, 1980**
- V. Treaty of Sinchula, 1865**

CHAPTER I

Introduction

CHAPTER II

Ethnicity, Society and Culture in Bhutan: An Overview

CHAPTER III

State and Ethnic Minorities: The Case of Bhutan

CHAPTER IV

Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan and the Question of Lhotshampas

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

References

Appendices

Dedicated to my Papa

Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is the issues of ethnic minorities in Bhutan. The study discusses different dimensions of the process cultural homogenization and its impact on the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious state of Bhutan. For this purpose, the study examines in detail, the policies of homogenization like *Bhutanization*, adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan during late 20th century. It also examines the role of political elites in assimilating or marginalizing different minority cultures under the domination of one major *Drukpa* culture. Such policies have effectively disenfranchised people who were born in Bhutan and have lived there for generations as citizens, for no other reason than their distinct ethnicity. The study mainly focuses on *the Lhotshampa* community who represent the ethnic minority of Bhutan and the changing nature of their relationship with states from the beginning. What happened in Bhutan is that the ruling *Drukpa* elites perceived the *Lhotsampa* as a threat to their dominance and initiated homogenization policies by using state machinery to oppress or force out the *Lhotsampa* in the name of state identity. Overall, this study is an attempt to unveil the reasons for the act of Royal Government and also tries to shed light on the tragedy of those Bhutanese people of Nepalese origin, popularly known as *Lhotshampa*, who today live in exile.

Bhutan, a small landlocked enclave sandwiched between two looming giants– China and India – is centrally located in the eastern Himalaya zone and in the catchment areas of river *Raidak*, *Sankosh*, *Torsa* and *Manas*, which drain them in the river Brahmaputra. It lays between latitudes 26⁰45' and 28⁰30' north and longitudes 88⁰45 and 92⁰10' east. It is about 200 air miles in length and about 100 miles in breadth and occupies approximately an area of 18,000 square miles (Sinha, 2004). Bhutan is the sub-continent's most thinly populated state with an official total population of only 6,80,000 (Hutt, 2005). At least 60% of its surface area is covered by forest, and the capital, *Thimphu*, has a population of less than 50,000 (ibid). Despite its small size, the population is ethnically diverse. There are three important ethnic categories in Bhutan named, *Ngalong* (estimated between 10-28% of the population), *Sharchops* (30. 44%) and Nepalese or *Lhotshampa* (25-53%) (Hart, 1996).

Bhutan, a country on the frontier of Tibetan and Indian cultures, has been the land of the royal refugees, exiles and adventurers. When certain communities lost their political seat in the power struggles in the neighboring regions, they simply moved to Bhutan. The Trans Himalayan trade routes connecting the Tibet mart from the north to that of the Indian plains in the south passed through Bhutan. There has been a long tradition in which both laymen and monks had been undertaking long journeys to Tibetan monasteries with a view to attain merits and knowledge.

The history of Bhutan is wrapped with the mystery of the past. It was predominantly a pastoral-nomadic community, who practice transhumances. Such communities tend to be very rich in oral tradition in the absence of the facilities for keeping written records. In such a situation, it is very likely that facts and fictions get inseparably mixed up, and causing damage to historical authenticity (Sinha, 2009). Secondly, the very character of *lamaist* society itself provides a number of ambiguities. Lamaism is a mixture of Buddhism, animism, mysticism, tantric cult, and a battery of practices known as the 'Bon' (ibid). In such situations, historical accounts are frequently and intricately linked with the supernatural being merging themselves into the realm of mystique, sacred, and other worldliness. Thirdly, with the establishment of theocracy, the clan organizations lost their relevance. Nomadism and migration further accelerated this. All these resulted into loss of significance to family genealogy. The clan and family genealogy was replaced by an intricate series of reincarnations, in which claims and counter claims are difficult to sort out. Lastly, whatever the record were available, the *dzong* emerged as their repositories. These huge structured wooden edifices with their stores of butter, wool, hide, cereals, and other consumer articles had been prone to destruction by fire and earthquake along with whatever archival materials they have (ibid). In sum, regaining authentic social political and cultural history of Bhutan remained a major challenge.

Today, Bhutan, a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious society is under the process of homogenization. But it is very far to do with the process cultural globalization, because the process *Bhutanization* is distinct from westernization. In fact, it is just opposite the process globalization by restricting the flow of human/labour, imposing one particular ethnic culture and so on and so forth. Historically, the cultural formation of Bhutan is influenced by the people migrated from its neighboring countries. Therefore, in order to

maintain its unique identity, it is imposing the *Drugpa* tradition to the other ethnic community. The domination of *Drugpa* tradition is also known as *Drugpanization*, and *Bhutанизation*, similar to cultural imperialism. Homogenization means over the years, peoples of two or more cultures have interacted and intermingles in such a manner as to lose their individual cultural identities and merged into a one uniform culture than does not show any trace of diversity of different cultures among the people. The same situation we can see in contemporary Bhutan, where the ethnic Nepali community does not have the right to practice their culture and tradition.

1.2 Cultural Homogenization

Cultural homogenization can be defined as a state led policy aim at cultural standardization and the overlap between the state and culture. As a goal, it frequently imposes the culture of dominant elites on the rest of the population; it is a kind of top-down process where state seeks to nationalize the masses. Scholte (1993) describes that the spread of mass cultures “westernization or modernization... a dynamic whereby the social structures of modernity (capitalism, rationalism, industrialism, bureaucratism, individualism, and so on) are spread the world over, frequently destroying pre-existing cultures and local self-determination in the process” (Ferguson and Mansbach, 2012; 23). This line of argument is essentially state-centric and viewing globalization as a part of a “hegemonic discourse” around American hegemony and imperialism. As Callinicos (1989) conceives that the globalization “not as a secular tendency, as a highly specific political and economic project represented notably by the neo-liberal policies of the Washington Consensus... and informed by the drive to maintain and even extend the position of the US as the dominant global power (Daniel, 2010).

The process globalization has swept like a flood tide through the world’s diverse cultures, destroying stable localities, displacing peoples, bringing a market-driven ‘branded’ homogenization of cultural experience, thus obliterating the differences between locally-defined cultures which had constituted our identities (Yale and Richard, 2010). Cultural homogenization can define as the aspect of cultural globalization, which can lead to a single global culture and elimination of all other, distinct local cultures. One can associate this with the reduction of cultural diversity, through the popularization and diffusion of a wide array of

cultural symbols, not only the physical object but also the customs, ideas, and values. The term cultural homogenization is usually used in the context of western culture. The spread of global culture is equated with the spread of US culture, the process of cultural homogenization in context of the domination of western (American), capitalist culture¹. It has been argued that the homogenization can be seen in the form of dress, diet and education system to advertising and spreading belief in democracy and human rights (Daniel, 2010).

Assimilation with the west has given the way to multiculturalism in which members of various ethnic group's foster links with one another transnationally, while de-emphasizing the ties that bind them to fellow citizen in the countries in which they reside. By using the modern communication and transportation technologies, overseas communities can remain in touch with their homeland instantly and on a regular basis. Globalization might seem that it imply the nationalism waning².

Cultural homogenization through aggressive nationalism based on culture and identities can lead to serious conflict between different countries and within countries especially in the developing world. The essence of nationalism “is a psychological bond that joins people and differentiate them in the subconscious convictions of its members, from all nonmembers in a most vital way” (Rogers, 2009; 6). In this context Rosenau (2006) observes that, nationalism has become “a form of exclusionary localism” because “it emphasizes boundaries and the distinction between us and them”. The world has witness revival of nationalism that involves, in Scholt's (Scholte, 2002) words, “defensive reaction against intrusions of the other who threaten to erase the self”³.

1.3 Cultural Formation in Bhutan

Bhutan is the land, where the Indian Buddhist saint *Guru Padmasambhava* and the Tibetan prine-abbot, *Zhabsdrung*⁴ *Ngawang Namgyal*, laid the unique foundation of the Bhutanese state religion—“ Brugpa or Drugpa”⁵. This is the dragon kingdom (*druk-yul*) of

¹ also known as *Mc-Donalidation*, coca colonization, *Amricanization* or westernization

² but in reality nationalism remains as a powerful ideology even in the midst of globalization. Chinese in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Vietnamese “ghost worker” in Russia seek to keep alive national custom and tradition, which is some case brings them into conflict with host countries

³ The nationalist sentiments have been encouraged and manipulated by political entrepreneurs, like in India the BharatiyaJanata Party had long enjoyed a popular base owing to Hindu nationalism

⁴ Dharma Raja

⁵ Brugpa is a one sect of Nyngmapa(red hat) school of Buddhism, brug or drug means the thunder dragon.

the *Wangchuk* rulers⁶. Though there are less fashionable Persian/Arabic and Sanskrit appellations of the land, the word settled for 'Bhutan' after a series of innovation of spelling in nomenclature. The present Bhutan is located in the sandwich between the two big countries of Asian region i.e. India in west, south, and east and Tibet region of China from north and north-west. As recognized by the history that the northern boundary of Bhutan with Tibet is based on the traditional usage (Sinha, 2009). The ethnology of Bhutanese society may be identified at various levels: the pre-*Brugpa Mons*, predominantly found in the eastern Bhutan, Ngalong⁷ of western Bhutan and *Koch*, *Mech* and decedents of the other communities from *Dours* in the high hills. Another and perhaps the most easily identified ethnic group are the *Lhotshampas*⁸.

Brugpa or *Drugpa* is one of the sects among the unreformed *Nyingmapa* identified with the red gear (red hat). *Tsampa Jarey Yeshey Dorjii* (1161-1211), founded a monastery at *Ralung* in 1189. While the monastery being consecrated, "thunder dragon (*brug* or *drug*) said to have resounded through the sky on the occasion" (Sinha, 2004). The monastery, the sect, its followers, and in course of time the land, where its mainstay could be established, came to be known as the *Brug-Drug*; they followed the ancient teaching of the *Guru Padmasambhava* besides ascetic traditions from a variety of sources. The famous *Ralung* monastery passed on to the control of the Prince-abbots, who turned the sect into an important and powerful institution of Lamaism in Tibet, which spread unto western Bhutan. *Shapdrung Ngawang Namgyal* (1594-1651) was consecrated as the 18th prince-abbot of the *Brugpas* in the year 1606 (ibid). He had driven away from his ancestral monastic seat at *Ralung* because of political strife. He consolidated his *Brugpas* monastic estate in the new land into a unified, organized and dynamic order to counteract all types of Tibetan incursion.

With the establishment of a series of defensive fort at strategic locations and raising an effective fighting force, the *Dharmaraja* unified *Ho-Mon* (Bhutan) into the *Brugpa* people and nation. His country, religion and followers - all came to be known as the *Brugpa*. *Sarchhap* - the Indo-Mongoloid people of south-eastern Bhutan – speak *Sangla*, the language of the area south of *Tashigang*, and several other dialects. For their livelihood, they practice

⁶ who would like to call it IHo-mon-Khabzi (present Bhutan) in the medieval Tibetan tradition

⁷ The earliest risen and converted to Bhuddhism and thus civilized

⁸ Bhutanese Nepali, also called southerners

the slash-and –burn-type of rotational cultivation locally known as *tseri*⁹ cultivation. Their houses are built on stilts or piles on the slopes. Similar to the practice of its eastern neighbors, they pipe water in bamboo conduit from a nearby spring or stream for miles. *Mithun* is the most prized animals with pigs, which is measuring rod of their prosperity and is frequently sacrificed during festivals¹⁰. The western Bhutanese frequently refers to their eastern counterparts as very much choosy in their matrimonial alliances. It simply means that the clan organization, endogamy, and communal identity are more prized among the easterners. They have developed a regional identity based on language and they claim to be *sarchhap*.

The Nepalese in Bhutan belong to predominantly to the *Kirati* stock consisting of *Rai*, *Gurung* and *Limboo* tribes¹¹. There are two separate region of Nepalese concentration in Bhutan; south-western and south-eastern, such as *Samchi* and *Chirang* districts. Their areas are predominantly agricultural, raising rice, maize, wheat, pulses, oranges, pineapples, ginger etc. and domesticating cattle. This is the area, which contributes substantial amount of revenue to the central exchequer. With polygamous families, the prosperity of a Nepali family in Bhutan is synonymous with its numerical strength. There are families with the head of household along with four to seven wives with four to five children each. Though the Nepalese immigration to Bhutan has been banned since 1958, the Government made policies to integrate them to the mainstream of the Bhutanese society up to 1990 (ibid).

Among the pre-Buddhist settlers of Bhutan *Mons*, *Khen*, *koch'Brokpas*, *Doyas*, *Birmis*, etc. are enumerated. Beside them, Wang aristocracy of west Bhutan well got it assimilated among the *Brupas*. The western Bhutan besides its northern alpine extensive tracts and southern foothills (*Dours*) is identified with *Ha*, *Paro*, *Thimpu*, *Punakha*, *Wongdi Phodrang*, and *Shar* valleys. The inhabitants of these valleys have been able to evolve *Dzongkha* as the standard tongue, which has been accepted as the national language of the country now. The *Dzongkha* speakers from above the six valleys are known as the *Ngalong* – the earliest risen. This identification has a historical background stretched to pre-*Brugpa* phase of the Bhutanese history. Since then the region had played significant role in the

⁹ They clear the bush by burning the vegetation: grow dry rice, maize, millets, and vegetables on it for three or four years, and then move to another patch of forest for the same.

¹⁰ Today, in spite of their conversion to Brugpa Lamaism, they are able to retain a number of pre-Brugpa animist religious practices.

¹¹ The Nepalese cultural commonwealth comprises three important social groups- the *Thakuris* of predominant in western Nepal, the *Newaris*, and the *Kirates* of eastern Nepal and Sikkim. The Nepalese are broadly divide into two categories: the *Tagadharis* (Brahamins), and the *Matwali*, those who not permitted to use the sacred thread and thus normally not prohibited intoxicant drink

Church-State of Bhutan. With the establishment of *Dharmaraja* (ibid) theocracy initially in the western Bhutan and subsequently to the eastern and southern regions, his followers came to be known as *Brugpa* or *Drugpa*.

Situated in the Himalayas between Tibet and India, Bhutan used to be a multicultural and relatively harmonious society – a meeting point of Hindus and Buddhists and peoples of different languages and cultures. Bhutan's problems are all the more acute considering the fact that it is a land-locked country with cultural and ethnic similarities with both India and China. Bhutan is bordered on the North by Tibet on the West, South and East by Indian states of Sikkim, West Bengal and Assam respectively. The two big neighbors, China and India, which are situated to the North and South of Bhutan respectively, are very vital in geopolitical term to Bhutan.

Bhutan has a cultural and ethnic mix up. While the people of South Bhutan have some similarities with the people and tribes of India's North-eastern region, those who live in the Western parts of Bhutan are of a different stock. They are mostly from Tibet who has migrated to Bhutan several centuries ago. On the other hand those who migrated from Nepal in the last couple of centuries are residing in Eastern parts. But the immigrants from Nepal got mixed up in the Eastern region with the tribes of North-East India. Thus, there is a large immigration into Bhutan from India's North Eastern region, Nepal and Tibet. These immigrants also brought their own religion, language and culture to Bhutan. In spite of its close ethnic and cultural identity with India and Tibet, Bhutan maintained a distinct character of its own over the years. Maintenance of separate identity for herself was considered very important to preserve Bhutan as a nation. Certainly, Bhutan as an independent nation cannot survive if its cultural identity gets submerged in the dominant cultures of its neighbors.

Bhutan is a multi-ethnic state, where ethnicity and religion have major role in socio-political life. Ethnic groups having different religious faiths and different religious sects co-existed under the monarchy in relative peace, with occasional tensions, for the most part of the century. Thus, as a multi-ethnic state, Bhutan is multi-lingual¹² and multi-religious. *Mahayana (Kargupa)* Buddhism is pursued mostly by the *Ngalung* whereas the *Sharchop* follow another sect of Buddhism called *Nyingmapa*, which is quite distinct from *Kargupa*,

¹² 20 languages spoken in Bhutan

and the *Lhotsampa* practice a form of *Sanatan* Hinduism akin to the form dominant in India and Nepal. The *Drukpa* - who form the dominant political elite over the period are a sub-sect of the Buddhist *Kargupa*. The potential of such linguistic, religious and other cultural diversity to divide - or be manipulated to divide – was very high. Bhutanese society has made ethnicity constantly a major concern in building and maintaining nationhood in Bhutan (ibid). Until the early 1980s, the government's response to this concern was to try to achieve peaceful accommodation of the ethnic mix with some reconciliation towards protest by activists who felt that national policy disadvantaged their ethnicity. But when the *Drukpa* elite gained powerful influence over national policy through the monarch, it pursued a different, sectarian approach in maintaining nationhood. However, during 1980s, the picture of a harmonious *Shangri-la* began to fall apart. The most divisive issue in Bhutan from the late 1970s with the assertion of the *Drukpa* elite has been accommodation of the *Lhotshampa*. *Drukpa* fear them on the basis of their cultural difference from other ethnic groups in Bhutan, their religious difference from the nation's Buddhist ethnic groups, and what at that time appeared to be the rising proportion of *Lhotshampa* within the Bhutanese population.

The roots of the ethnic conflict in Bhutan had been evident from 1950. The ethnic *Lhotshampa* have long sought what they believe is an equitable share of Bhutan's economy and polity. They set up the Bhutan State Congress, Bhutan's first political party, in the year 1952. The Bhutan State Congress pushed ahead with demands for democratization, seeking citizenship rights and political representation for *Lhotshampa* settlers. The *Ngalung* minority perceived this development as a threat to its control over Bhutan, and still refers to this development as 'the first anti-national revolt'. In a policy of accommodation, the Bhutan National Assembly enacted the Nationality Law in 1958 and granted Bhutanese citizenship to Nepalese immigrants (Pattnaik, 2008).

The *Ngalung* or *Drugpa*, in late 1980's, through a series of laws or act, are trying to justify their leadership and maintain their cultural hegemony toward the others. Among the minorities, their main target is *Lhotshampa* (Nepalese/southerners) and every law is directed against them. The 1980 Bhutan Marriage Act, detailing laws for marriage with a non-national, effectively restricted matrimony from outside. Under this Act, a Bhutanese citizen who marries a foreigner is denied state support in the form of land, seeds, loans, livestock and health benefits. Other assistance from the Government, including free school education, is also unavailable. The 1980 Act applies only to the *Lhotshampa*, not to other ethnic groups.

However, the 1985 Citizenship Act went even further in its demands. Documentary evidence was required to prove that one had paid land tax, and been registered in 1958, the year of the first Nationality Law (Rizal, 2010). In addition, one must not have spoken or acted against the King, the country and the people.

In order to implement the law, the Bhutanese government organized another census in the year 1988 which became very controversial. It clearly aimed at identifying non-Bhutanese citizens, rather than at producing statistical data about the population; interestingly, the survey only is being carried out in the southern districts, where most of the *Lhotshampas* lived. When it became clear how stringent and unreasonable the requirements were with regard to documentation, people started worrying¹³.

In the year 1987, in its sixth Five Year Plan, Bhutan adopted the concept of *driglam namza* or “one nation one culture”. One of the main aims of the plan was the preservation and promotion of national identity. It stated that maintaining and strengthening a distinct national identity was a vital factor for Bhutan’s well-being and security, and was later epitomized in the slogan “One Nation, One People”. As a part of this policy, in 1989 the King issued a royal decree to promote so-called Bhutanese etiquette, the national costume and the Dzongkha language. *Driglam namza* (one nation, one culture) imposed over the citizen, to wear traditional *Ngalung* dress on duty, schools, and Government offices even in the *pathshala*¹⁴. It is mandatory for everyone, including children, and if anyone denies they face for cash penalty or imprisonment. In case of *Lhotshampa*, it became unfavorable for them to wear the *dzongkha* dress because of the climatic conditions¹⁵.

Most importantly, during 1970s, the *Drukpa* elites who were in power, adopted the policies of homogenization in the name of *driglam namza* which directly targeted the ethnic Nepalese. This is the context in which present study discuss the concept cultural homogenization and Minorities in Bhutan.

¹³ Providing thirty-year-old agricultural tax receipts would be difficult enough in the West, and was even more challenging in the largely paperless and illiterate society of Bhutan.

¹⁴ Pathshala is an exclusive Nepali institution which provides traditional informal education in Sanskrit for Hindus.

¹⁵ *Dzongkha* dress made up with thick clothes suitable for people of northern Bhutan but *Lhotshampa*, live in a terrain region of South and the dress was not suitable for the climatic conditions there.

1.4 Survey of Literature

The major sources of the study are basically secondary sources - books and articles - on ethnic minorities, cultural homogenization, ethnicity, history of Bhutan, socio-cultural structure and politics of Bhutan. The study is divided into two parts, the first part would describe the term cultural homogenization and its impact on minorities, and the second part is on the crisis in Bhutan from the beginning and its implications.

One of the useful book in this study is *Globalization: The Return Of Orders To A Borderless World*, written by Ferguson and Mansbach (2012). The study explains the concept globalization and its origin, in the light of key recent political and global trends and events. The text identifies different political, economic, technological, and cultural meanings of globalization. It describes multiple attributes and consequences of globalization including its impacts on nation state, especially the state sovereignty. It assesses the normative implications of globalization and o analyzes the challenges to globalization posed by contemporary events such as the global finance crisis, nation building, nationalism and ethnicity. This book is useful for the study as it is helpful to conceptualise cultural globalization and to contextualize it.

The edited volume of Peterson and Tyler, *Majority Cultures and The Everyday Politics of Ethnic Differences*, (2008) has stated the complicated depiction of the 'other' by scrutinizing the multiple ways in which 'majority' Western cultures govern, manage, control and represent established ethnic minorities and recent immigrants. It draws the international case studies grounded within up-to-date reviews of theories of identity, globalization and migration, power, culture and difference, place, space and locality, nationalism, post-colonialism, xenophobia and racism. In short, our focus on the formation of majority cultures sets out to highlight the ambiguities and inequalities inherent within majority discourses, practices and policies of sameness, difference and otherness. The use of the book in the study is to discuss the ethnic minorities in general and the processes of the creation of minorities.

Fredrik Barth's, *The Social Organizations of Cultural Differences* (1996), collections of the essay of this book gives the fact that the ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actor themselves, and have the characteristic of organizing interaction of

the people. It explores the different processes that seem to be involved in generating and maintaining ethnic groups. In order to observe these processes, it mainly focuses on the constitution and the history of the separate ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance.

The volume *Documents on Sikkim and Bhutan* (1998) compiled by Sharma and Sharma contains the important documents - text of different treaties, deeds, agreements and other papers - pertaining to Sikkim and Bhutan. The book has deeply focused on the multi-facet aspects like political treaties, covenants/agreements signed between Sikkim and Bhutan and also Bhutan and the British India, their history, geography and travels and social and cultural heritage. This book provides the important documents which will help the study to analyze and elaborate the policies, acts and agreement.

The work of Rogers Brubaker on *Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism* (2009), where he traces the contours of a comparative, global, crossdisciplinary, and multi paradigmatic field that construes ethnicity, race, and nationhood as a single integrated family of forms of cultural understanding, social organization, and political contestation. It then reviews a set of diverse yet related efforts to study the way ethnicity, race, and nation work in social, cultural, and political life without treating ethnic groups, races, or nations as substantial entities, or even taking such groups as units of analysis at all.

Another important work for the study is Daniel Converse, *Cultural Homogenization, Ethnic Cleansing, and Genocide* (2010), he has describes the concept cultural homogenization as a state lead policy. Author traced, that the historical background of the term cultural homogenization and examine the crucial period where it is practiced. Describe the involuntary migration, mass population transfers and refugees as a result of state led homogenization policy.

The second group of literatures deals with cultural homogenization process and its consequences in Bhutan. The book of A.C Sinha, *Himalayan kingdom Bhutan: Tradition, Transition and Transformation* (2002), is useful for the study because it is based on an analytical study of Bhutanese theocratic community turning into a nation-state. The book has been organized, that the tradition examines the environment and ethnic groups, religion and history, and the traditional pattern of administration. Transition refers to incorporation of

dynastic rule, frontier management, and immigration of Nepalese and introduction of modern education in the traditional *Drugpa* structure. And transformation reports on the emergent political culture, ethnic conflict and the efforts to remove the ethnic statements. Moreover, the book has also provided the information about the origin of ethnic crisis in Bhutan. This book is a very useful source material as it provides useful information on the history of different ethnic groups in Bhutan and the origin of the crisis that discussed in this study.

The book *Bhutan: Society and Polity*, edited by Ramakant and R.C. Mishra (1998), describes the situation of problems facing by the last *Shangrila* (Bhutan) in modern time. The process of social change, development, modernization, national identity and integration are posing serious challenge to the ruling elites in Bhutan. The volume is all about the dynamics of encountering and the strategies that the elite had adopted to deal with them. Three articles in the volume has specific use. The article of B.C Upreti “The Nepali Immigrant in Bhutan: Growing Conflicts between National and Ethnic Identity” deals with the contradiction between national and ethnic identities in the context of ethnic conflict in Bhutan. The article points out that, despite several steps taken by the Bhutanese Government, conflicts has assumed critical proportions owing to the emerging contradiction between the interests of northern and southern settlers in Bhutan. The article “Bhutan’s Problem of Ethnicity: Causes, Consequences and Prospects” by Parmanand. He examined ethnicity and ethnic conflict in Bhutan. Describing ethnic conflicts as nation-destroying activity, he makes some critical comments on Nepali ethnic problem in Bhutan. Last is the “Political Economy of Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan” by Mathew Joseph. Joseph deals with the political economy of development and modernization in Bhutan, including its impact on ethnic conflict between *Drugpas* and ethnic Nepalese settled in Bhutan. He gives details about various Five Year Plans and the extent of progress affecting different sections of society. He also highlights the role of India in Bhutan’s progress towards modernity including raising its international status.

The work of A.C Sinha on, *Bhutan Ethnic Identity and National Dilemma*, (1998), portrays the transition process of the Bhutanese community from the theocratic to a feudal one. It examines the ecological ethnic and historical processes through which the Brugpa theocracy was established in the 17th century A.D. After explicating the aspects of conflict between the monks and the regional feudal lords, establishment of the *Wangchuck* rule under the British patronage, status of Bhutan within the Empire and the impact of the Indian

freedom movement on Bhutan, it uncovers the Bhutanese ethnic identity, nation building efforts and national dilemma of the emergent nation state. The book traces the roots of the recent democratic movement in Bhutan.

The book of Dhakal and Strawn, *Bhutan: A Movement in Exile* (1994), examines the situation of refugees and political crisis of Bhutan, complete history of Bhutan, the present situation of minorities in Bhutan and in the refugee camps, and the facts related to the politics of crisis.

The book *Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan* (1999) written by Mathew Joseph elaborates the politico-economic roots of ethnic conflict and their relation to the process of modernization and development. He describes the ethnic community in Bhutan in a detailed manner. In the book, he argues that the modernization and development is suitable for explaining the ethnic conflict in Bhutan. He discussed about the process of political development in Sikkim during early 1970's, ended the rule of *Chogyal* and merger of Sikkim with Indian territory in 1975 and resurgent of *Gurkha* militancy in the Darjeeling hills under (GNLF), 1980, indirectly politicized the Nepali in Bhutan. The situation lead Bhutan to become conscious about their security and the process of *Bhutanization* is the expression of insecurity.

In same way, the work of B.R Giri, *Bhutan: Ethnic Policies in the Dragon Kingdom* (2007), also discuss about the same issues. He has discussed the major causes for the ongoing ethnic conflict in Bhutan. He examines the ethnic fears of the *Ngalung* establishment drove them to policies which initially attempted cultural assimilation, then racial discrimination and expulsion policies, which have finally resulted in the creation of a culturally divided Bhutanese society.

Dhurba Rizal's *The Unknown Refugee Crisis: Expulsion of the Ethnic Lhotshampa from Bhutan* (2010) discusses how the ruling *Drukpa* elites perceived the *Lhotshampa* as a threat to their dominance and initiated policies to oppressor force out the *Lhotshampa* and others through ethnic cleansing. He argued that the Bhutan's ethnic conflict and the refugee crisis it has produced are the outcome of *ethno-nationalism* clothed in the slogan of 'One Nation, One People', and the contrived *mechanisation* of the ruling elites.

A.G Naidu's book *Bhutan Looks Outwards: Its Search for Identity* (1984) identifies the problem of Bhutan by considering the fact of its geographical location with cultural and ethnic similarities with India and China. The two big neighbors, China and India, are very vital in geopolitical term to Bhutan. The book also analyzes the dilemma of Bhutan and its search for an identity.

Daniel Schappi's article "Cultural Plurality, National Identity and Consensus in Bhutan" (2005) is a comparative study of Bhutan and Switzerland. In this article, author refers the Lijphart's condition for establishing and maintaining a successful census model in Bhutan. Here, he also brings the problem of ethnic minorities as hurdles for maintaining consensus model in Bhutan.

1.5 Rational and Scope of the study

Recently, nationalism, ethnicity, migration, refugees, vanishing identity etc. are gaining momentum in many academic disciplines. This is because, of late, efforts to cultural homogenization in association with nationalism have been creating serious problems in many countries. The victims of ethnic oppression can be any ethnic community subordinated to the power of another. The latter fears the people of the former group on the basis of their ethnicity and capacity to challenge, or unseat, the latter's oppressive domination. This study, at base, tries to reflect on the ongoing process of cultural homogenization in Bhutan.

Bhutan is the land of migration. If we look at its history, many people were used to take refuge in Bhutan. Bhutan's geopolitical importance as a nation is important as it is located between superpowers - China and India – with the status of a buffer state and both has heavy influence on its cultural formation. Like almost all modern nations, Bhutan's 6,50,000 people consist of several ethnic groups - the *Ngalongs* of the western mountains, the *Sharchhops* ('easterners') and the *Lhotshampas* ('southerners' or 'Nepali-speaking Bhutanese'). However, almost all of the refugees in Bhutan come from this last group, which, before the crisis began, was reckoned to constitute one third to one half of the total population.

With intensification of cultural homogenization, the dominant group or the group who are in power use every possible means to seize control of the state and implement policies that deliver ethnic repression, discrimination and systematic human rights violations upon their opposite groups for maintaining their hegemony or to bolster the group's own hold on power. This process has been under way in Bhutan particularly from the late 1980s. The *Lhotsampa*, one of the three major ethnic groups, have sought a status of equality under which they would be allocated what they need as an equitable share of Bhutan's polity and economy. The ruling *Drukpa* elites perceived the *Lhotsampa* as a threat to their dominance and initiated policies to oppress or force out the *Lhotsampa* and made them illegal immigrants or anti-nationals through the official homogenization policies/process.

The scope of the study lies on understanding the ongoing process of cultural homogenization in Bhutan after the enactment of Citizenship Act in 1985 and the adaptation of the policy of *Driglam namza* (one nation, one culture). The ethnic minority *Lhotshamapas* in southern Bhutan, due to the implementation of such policies, has been facing various forms of discrimination. They raise their voice against the Government for adopting such policies, which lead to serious ethnic crises in the country. Therefore, the study attempts to examine the impact of *Lhotshamapas* in Bhutan's society, role of ruling elite or Government in adopting such policies and tries to fill the knowledge gap in this regard.

1.6 Organization of the study

The major objectives of the study are as follow:

- a) To discuss nationalism, identity, and cultural homogenization in the context of Bhutan
- b) To examine the nature of ethnic minorities of Bhutan and their relationship with state
- c) To discuss the major aspects of cultural homogenization in Bhutan
- d) To analyze the role of political elite in the process of *Bhutanization* or homogenization

1.7 Research Questions

The study tries to answer the following research questions:

- a) Why the Royal Government of Bhutan targeted only *Lhotshampa* community through the homogenization process?
- b) What is the impact of *Lhotshampas* in Bhutanese culture?
- c) Are the political elites and the higher officers in Bhutan manipulating the policies of government, in order to maintain their hegemony?

1.8 Methodology

The study follows historical analytical method. It will describe the process of cultural homogenization in association with globalization. The study is mainly descriptive one, and it used both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The qualitative data is based on in-depth interviews with research scholars, Bhutanese students, and immigrants (those who fled and settled in nearby area instead of refugee camps). The quantitative data can be collected from various official reports/documents.

Both primary and secondary sources will be used for the study. Primary sources include the Government documents, press releases from Institutions and Organizations, reports of Royal Government of Bhutan, acts, appeal, treaties, agreements etc. Secondary sources include the available books, articles, journals, research papers, academic papers, online sources and newspaper reports.

1.9 Chapterization

Chapter I: **Introduction**

Chapter II: **Ethnicity, Society and Culture in Bhutan: An Overview**

Chapter III: **State and Ethnic Minorities: The Case of Bhutan**

Chapter IV: **Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan and the Question of *Lhotshampas***

Chapter V: **Conclusion**

Chapter II

Ethnicity, Society and Culture in Bhutan: An Overview

2.1 Introduction

Bhutan is an ethnic mosaic nation. There are three major ethnic groups - *Sharchop*, *Ngalong*, and *Lhotshampa* resides in the country having their own distinct traditions and cultural practices, language, religion and belief system. In this context, this chapter discusses the concept ethnicity and brings it into the context of Bhutan. Besides, this chapter also has an overview of the social, political and cultural history of Bhutan.

Bhutan is a sovereign state with absolute monarchy as political system. It is a landlocked country, sandwich between the Peoples Republic of China on the northern side and India on the south - east and western side. As the country had been followed the isolation policy for long time, Bhutan had very limited interaction with other countries. Bhutan has different patterns of civilizations, socio-economic life, religion, administration and political institutions. It is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religion nation. In the past, the nation was a comfortable home for immigrants¹. People from different region with different culture and traditions came and settled in Bhutan. They have great impact on Bhutanese society, culture and tradition.

2.2 Ethnicity: The Concept

The word ethnicity derived from Greek word *ethnos*, which in turn derived from the word *ethnikos*, originally means heathen and pagan (Eriksan, 2002). In the general usage, the word ethnicity is rounded by the concept of “minority issues” and “race relations” (Rogers, 2009). In social anthropology, it refers to a group who consider themselves and regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive. The discourse of which concerning with ethnicity tends to concern itself with sub-national units or minorities, but majorities and dominant groups are also no less ethnic than minority.

¹ For example like *Zhabsdrung Ngawang Namgyal*, The first Dharmaraja, who unified the entire Bhutan into the single Drugpa as a national religion, he had fled from Tibet due to political strife and take exile in Bhutan

When explain the word ethnicity, one indicates that groups and identity have developed through interaction rather than isolation. Certain question like, what kind of relationship called the ethnic relationship; whether it could be the religious contact, cultural or lingual contact; How do we describe an ethnic group; What is the basic feature of ethnicity are important to be discussed.

The distinctive culture, religion, language and technology does not entail the features of ethnicity; it does not pose that there is an ethnic relationship among them. For ethnicity, it is necessary that the group have some contact and they must entertain the ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. There are some groups, who may seem culturally similar, but there can be inter-ethnic relationship between them². The cultural variation may consider as important, only if there are the ethnic element in social relationship. The social relationship between the members who consider themselves culturally different from the member of other group with whom they have regular interaction is considered as the ethnic aspect (Eriksen, 2002). The ethnic element in social relationship needs that the cultural difference should regularly make the differences in their interaction with the members of other groups.

The term ethnicity has come across or interrelated with the term race and nationalism; the concept race concern with a group of people whose believe have shared distinct physical characteristics like hair texture, skin color, shape and size of body. Generally, these physical variations of people are the result of them living in different geographical regions. For example, human being living in hotter climates having darker skin from the natural skin pigment called melanin; its main work is to protect skin from the sun's rays. The region with moderate and cool climates, people does not need the protection from the sun and thus develops lighter skin. Though it has biological reality, race is based on the assumption that personality is somehow linked with the hereditary characteristics which led to the distinction among races (Rogers, 2009).

On the other hand there is a cultural definition of race has the basis of scientific categorization of people based on biological differences between individuals. But racial

² It would be the case of *Bhutia* and *Lepcha* tribe of Sikkim, they have similar culture, and their religious festival are in some kind same.

categories are more based on sociological definition rather than biological differences³. Ethnicity is an umbrella term under which the race comes. Ethnicity can take many forms and the boundaries between races. It is not necessary to always link race with ethnicity; ethnicity can exist without accompanying notions of race. Banton argue that there is need of distinction between race and ethnicity (cited in Eriksen, 2002)⁴. He claims, race refers to the categorization of people, and ethnicity has to do with group identification. Discrimination based on presumed inborn and immutable characteristics tends to be stronger and more inflexible than ethnic discrimination which is not based on racial differences. Hence, ethnicity can assume in many forms, and since ethnic identity tends to stress common descent among their member, the distinction between race and ethnicity is a problematic one.

The phenomenon ethnicity and nationalism have become so visible in many societies and it became impossible to ignore them. In the early 20th century, ethnicity and nationalism have grown in political importance in the world, especially since the Second World War. In many parts of the world, nation-building - the creation of political cohesion and national identity in former colonies - is high on the political agenda. Ethnic and national identities also become strongly pertinent following the continuous influx of labour migrants and refugees to Europe and North America, which has led to the establishment of new, permanent ethnic minorities in these areas⁵.

The relationship between ethnicity and nationalism is also complex as in case of ethnicity and race. Like ethnicity, nationalism also stresses on the cultural similarity with its adherent, and by implication it draws boundaries with others, who thereby become outsiders. The nationalist holds on the political boundaries should be co-terminous with the cultural boundaries, whereas, many ethnic groups does not demand command over the state. When the political leaders of an

³ One of the important fact is that there are different societies, construct different system of racial classification, and these system are not constant it can change over a time. According to Leggon, “the major significance of race is not biological but social and political, insofar as race is used as the primary line of demarcation separating “we” from “they” and, consequently, becomes a basis for distinctive treatment of a group by another” (Eriksen, 2002)

⁴ According to Banton race is a negative categorization of people, which is more concern with the tagging of them, and ethnicity as a positive identification of group, more concerned with identification of us.

⁵ At one extreme of the continent, the erstwhile Soviet Union has split into over a dozen ethnically based states. With the disappearance of the strong Socialist state in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, issues of nationhood and minority problems are emerging with unprecedented force (Daniel, 2010).

ethnic movement place demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore on definition became nationalist movement.

2.3 Historical Background

Bhutan has its own distinct history; even though the earlier history of Bhutan is unknown. Its history is deeply wrapped in the mystery. *Guru Padma Sambhava*, an Indian saint made his legendary trip from Tibet to Bhutan at the end of eighth century⁶. His visit is the important landmark in the history of the country. Some scholars believe that during the early historical period the inhabitants were fierce mountain aborigines, the *Monpa*, overran northern Bhutan. The people of *Monyul* of Bhutan like the *Lepcha* people of Sikkim practiced the shamanistic bon religion, which emphasized the worship of nature and existence of good and evil spirits.

Bhutan is a Buddhist state and its religious practices largely follow those of Tibetan Buddhism - with Commemorative dot, the landscape while faded prayer flags are stretched around homes and monasteries. Different names were given to the country in different times. It is generally believed that the word is derived from the Sanskrit name '*Bhotant*' which means the 'end of Tibet'. It is also known as 'Land of the Thunder Dragon' or *Druk Yul*- and its people call themselves *Drugpas*. It was also known by other names, such as a *Lho Tsendenjong* the Southern Land of the Sandalwood, *Lhomen Khazhi* the Southern Land of Four Approaches, *Lho Mon* The Southern Land of Darkness, *Lho Men Jong* the Southern Land of Medicinal Herbs. After various rounds of Anglicization, the name was fixed towards the end of the last century as Bhutan and it is now accepted by the Bhutanese as the official name for their country. The modern name of 'Bhutan' has been derived from '*Bhutana*', which is old Indian term for the whole Tibet.

It is a Buddhist state where power is shared by the king and the government. In Bhutan thunder to be believe as the voice of dragons roaring. And the country's name in the local dialect means land of the *Dragon*. It is believed that about 1200 years ago a monastery called *Druk* (Thunder Dragon) was set up by a sect who is called themselves as *Drugpas*. The name and the emblem of the dragon have been associated with Bhutan ever since. The dragon on the flag is white symbolize purity (ibid;1).

⁶A Buddhist guru traveled from Afghanistan to bring Vajrayana Buddhism to Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim in 8th century.

There is no authentic chronological history of Bhutan and the available early history is vague. Bhutan seems to have existed as a political entity for many centuries. The legendry of king *Zhabs-Drung Ngawang Namgyal* (1616) marks the important part into the history of Bhutan. Any attempt to understand the creation and continuation of the *Brugpa*⁷ polity has to begin with the appreciation of *Zhabs-drung's* role in turning the community of Bhutan into a vigorous and an organized nation. He was installed as the 18th prince-abbot⁸. He picked up theological and succession disputes in Tibet and was forced to exile himself into Bhutan at the age of twenty three in 1616. It is claimed that he undertook extensive travels in Bhutan and intensive meditation to control the malignant spirits. In between, with the help of his allies he was able to capture, convert, coerce and co-opt other monastic estates of other *Lamaist* sects within the *Brugpa* fold. He secured a number of monasteries and he himself credited to have raised other such edifices. As a monk-ruler he built a number of *Dzongs*⁹ as strategic forts as well as monastic conclaves (Rizal, 2001).

Before *Zhab-drung Nawang Namgyal's* arrival, numerous clans ruled in different valleys of Bhutan. It is claimed that *Khirji-Khar-Thod (Khampajong)* in upper *Bumthang* and *Naguchi*, the second son of king *Singhala of Serkhya (Kamakya)*, were the chief ruler. *Naguchi*, whose palace is referred to be located near *Punakha*, extended his kingdom to *Dorji Tag, Hor* in Tibet and eastern Bhutan. *Naguchi* lost his son in course of a war with *Raja Nabudara*, who ruled in the Indian Plains. That made the king grief-stricken and he began to suffer from an acute sense of depression. *Padmasambhava*¹⁰, with the aid of the king's daughter, *Menmo Jashi Kyeden*, appeared on the scene and provided solace to the king, saved his life and converted him to Buddhist faith of *Nyingmapa*. Since then, many people converted into Buddhism and it spread mostly in eastern part of the country. The seed of Buddhism showed by *Padmasambhava* in Bhutan at that time is able to become a huge tree. Today, the country is known by the Buddhist

⁷ *Brugpa* or *Drugpals* one of the sects among the unreformed Nyingmapa indentified with the red gear (red hat). Tsampa Jarey Yeshey Dorjii (1161-1211), monk, founded a monastery at Ralung in 1189. While the monastery is consecrated, "thunder dragon (brug or drug) said to have resounded through the sky on the occasion". The monastery, the sect, its followers, and in course of time the land, where its mainstay could be established, came to be known as the Brug-Drug, they followed the ancient teaching of the Guru Padmasambhava besides ascetic traditions from a variety of sources.

⁸ The famous Ralung monastery passed on to the control of the Prince-abbots, who turned the sect into an important and powerful of Lamaism in Tibet, which spread upto western Bhutan.

⁹ Dzong means fort and presently the centre of civil administration

¹⁰ Guru Rimpoche, precious teacher

nation (unique identity of Bhutan). One of the dominant ethnic groups called *Sharchokpa* belongs to this sect of Buddhism.

Before the advent of Buddhism, tribes in Bhutan followed a different religion to which the king *Naguchi* belongs. Those people are identified as *Mon/Bon*, though they present the less population but their presence is still traced in Bhutan. There are two significant part of the story of them may be identified: *Bumthang* area known as *Klong*-people identified as the “hidden land” and *Khyi-Kha-Ra-Thod* as a possible pre-Lamaist Mon ruler. He was associated with the cult of the ‘hidden land’ is said to be the son of *bMar-rgyan*, one of the queen of *Khro-Srongdep* Son of Tibet. He was illegitimate son and never attained the national significance in Bhutan. However, he is accepted as ancestral hero in *Bhumthang* area, eastern Bhutan and even further east among the *Monpa* and the *Sherdukpen* of *Kameng* district in Arunachal Pradesh. Presently, his descendants are living the village of *rGyal-mKhar*, a mile or so south of *Bya-dKar Dzong* in *Bumthang*. Other group of *Bumthang* claimed that their descent are not from the king but from his retinue i.e. *Khyi-Kha-Ra-Thod* is accompanied on his journey to south to *Bumthang* by Fifteen ‘religious minister’ and twenty ‘demon-minister, and many wives. Later, most of the Bon people are converted into Buddhism and the remaining few Bon people are practicing the *Semanistic* tradition.

Prince of *gTang-ma*, the eldest son of the king *Khri Ide-srong* (800-815) was originally a royal refugee in Bhutan. His exile is referred to as a grand *Bon-po* conspiracy against Buddhism. This resulted into *gTsamg-ma* banishment at *Bumthang* in *Iho brag*, where he is credited to have procreated the number of descendents. Normally six ruling clans of *Jo-bo*, *rJe*, *Byer*, *Tas-sde*, *sTung-sde*, and *Wang-ma* are supposed to have descendent from the son, grandson, and great-grand- sons of *gTang-ma*. The kings of these clans are led over eastern *Mon* situated east of proto Bhutan.

The arrival of *Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal* is considered as the most important event in the history of Bhutan. He conquered and unified the country which otherwise was fragmented into petty principalities, ruled over by the tribal feudal chiefs. During his reign, he built *dzongs*, monasteries, and religious institutions all over the country. He established the *Drugkpa Kargyupa* school of Tantric Mahayana Buddhism in Bhutan. His reign marked by the

introduction of the unique dual system of governance called the *Chhoesid*. This new system was characterized by the sharing of power and authority between the *Deb* Raja and the *Desi* who was the head of secular affairs and the *Dharma* Raja or the spiritual head, called as *Je Khempo* (Sinha, 2001). He also codified the law of the country. The successive “Dharma Rajas” were the incarnations of the *Shabdrung* whereas the post of the *Deb* Raja was like that of the Prime Minister. In course of time the Dharma Rajas preferring religious matter withdrew themselves into seclusion while the *Deb* Rajas consolidated their authority exercising sole responsibility over the secular affairs. The 7th and 8th *Zhabdrung* reincarnations died in 1931 and 1953 (Sinha, 2001). The dual form of governance continued until the birth of the *Wangchuk* dynasty and establishment of hereditary Monarchy in 1907. *Ugyen Wongchuk* was elected as the first hereditary monarch of Bhutan on December 17, 1907. The present King *Jigme Singye Wangchuk* is the fourth hereditary king (Kautharia, 2007).

The background of Nepalese settlers in Bhutan can be traced to the period of *Shabdrung* rule. There are frequent references in historical literature on them. Integration of Nepali artisans to Bhutan during the reign of *Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal* in the seventeenth century is traceable. Today, it appears that, no *Lhotshampa* family can trace its roots such a far back time. However, in the 18th century, the Bhutanese invaded and occupied the kingdom of Cooch Behar to the south. In 1772, Cooch Behar appealed to the British East India Company who assisted them in ousting the Bhutanese, and later attacking Bhutan itself in 1774. A peace treaty was signed in which Bhutan agreed to retreat its pre-1730’s borders. The skirmishes eventually led to the *Duars* War (1864-65), a confrontation over who would control over the Bengal *Duars*. With the signing of *Sinchula* Treaty in 1865, the war between India and Bhutan came to an end. This caused large-scale immigration of the Nepalese all over the region - first to Darjeeling, Sikkim, and then to the *Duars*. Eventually, in the late-nineteenth century, the *Gurung* and the *Dorjee* families were granted permission by the government to settle Nepali migrants in southern Bhutan. In 1887, the then ruler of western Bhutan in *Paro* jointly granted *Garjaman Gurung* and his father *Dalchan Gurung* settlement rights in perpetuity to what is present-day *Samchi*. This was the time, when *Kazi Ugyen Dorji* emerged as a significant person in the Bhutanese power structure, Indo-Bhutanese relationship and also in the authority system of western and southern-western Bhutan.

In 1909, John Claude White, the British India's Political Officer for Sikkim and Bhutan, noted that, 'The remaining inhabitants are *Paharias*, the same as those in Sikkim, who are creeping along the foothills and now form a considerable community extending the whole length of Bhutan where the outer hills join the plains of India. With the exception of the Hindu *Paharias*, Buddhism is the religion professed throughout Bhutan.'(Sinha, 2001) In 1932, a British officer reported the presence of 60,000 Nepali-speaking inhabitants in the southwest of Bhutan (ibid). *Lhotsampa* who migrated from Nepal to Bhutan cleared forest in *Samchi* and *Chirang* and developed the *Gaylegphug* and *Samdrup jonkhar* areas for farmland. These areas were densely forested and had been considered unsuitable for clearing by the *Drukpa* because of what they saw as the lands' malarial condition. The hard working *Lhotshampa* were able to survive on such condition, and within a short span of time, they converted the inhospitable malarial area into a most productive and fertile farmland of Bhutan¹¹.

Since their settling in southern Bhutan, the *Lhotsampa* have largely retained their language, religion and other aspects of traditional culture. The lifestyles of *Lhotsampa* thus differ starkly from those of the other main ethnic groups. Hence, they followed the Hindu tradition which is akin to the people of India and Nepal and they remained isolated from other groups of Bhutan. At first, they were strictly restricted to go up (north or east) and there were the absence of inter-ethnic marriages among them. There were less possibilities of interaction between the people of eastern, western, central, northern and southern Bhutan at that point of time. Therefore, *Lotshamapas* were able to establish the southern region as Nepali-dominated areas and have close contact and matrimonial relationship with the Nepali people from the border region of India and Nepal.

2.4 Ethnic Groups in Bhutan

Bhutan is the least populated country of South Asia. The official figure on total population of Bhutan is highly controversial one¹². Various writers and Government publications

¹¹ Southern Bhutan have almost all the factories and necessary market, but the *Ngalong* dominated north have only two resources i.e. timber and tourism.

¹² There are varieties of data provided by the different reports, commissions, organizations, plans and all. It has been claimed that the ruling elite have manipulated the figure in order to serve their political purpose. The census of

has given multitude of figures. In the view of census of 1970, the population of Bhutan is 1.31 million inhabitants in an area of 47,000 sq.km or 18,000 sq. miles, giving thereby a density of 73 persons to a square mile (*Bhutan Country Report 2012*; 4). However, when Bhutan joined the U.N in 1971, it provided a population figure of 1.2 million (Rizal, 2001)

In 1981, its population was stated to be 11, 65,000. Statistical year book of Bhutan, 1989 had estimated its population at 13,75,400. In 1990, its population was estimated 6,00,000. On the other hand, Seventh Five Year Plan of Bhutan had mentioned that it would be known by 1992-93 estimated. It has been further estimated that by 1997, its population will be between 7,13, 211 to 7,68,050 (Seventh Five Year Plan 1992-97). According to the Yearbook released by the Central Statistical Organization of Royal Government of Bhutan (2002), the population of Bhutan was 6, 77,934 in the year 2000¹³. Inconsistency in these figures are conscious and having lot of political significance in an ethnically divided state Bhutan.

There are three main ethnic groups in Bhutan, the people in western Bhutan called *Ngalongs*. The eastern Bhutanese are referred to as the *Sharchops*, and in southern Bhutan there are *Lhotshampas* who are of ethnic Nepali origin. There are also other numerous ethnic groups in Bhutan who literally lived in isolation in their own communities for many years keeping their traditional practices alive. This includes the *Doyas* in south, the *Layaps* in the north-west, the *Monpas* of central Bhutan and the nomads of *Merakand Sakten* in eastern Bhutan (Bisht, 2008).

According to the available data, all the three main ethnic groups are migrated to Bhutan at different points of time and each group has their own distinct characteristics in terms of language, culture and religious practices (Rizal, 2001)

1978 stated that Bhutan had one million inhabitants, and it was estimated at 1,451,000 a decade later. The 1988 Census focused mainly on southern Bhutan, and it was stipulated that a person should have arrived in Bhutan at the latest by 10 June 1955 to qualify for citizenship under the 1985 Citizenship Act. In 1988 the Government officially declared that there were around 100,000 illegal immigrants in the work-force, whereas the World Bank's 1982 estimate reported that some 35,000 non-Bhutanese citizens were working in various parts of Bhutan. In July 1992 Bhutan announced that the total population stood at 1,660,167. A year later, however, a 'revised figure' reduced the total population to 657,548 (Hutt 1996s).

¹³ None of these figures carry the number of Lhotshampas refugees who are forcefully thrown out from the country. The exact population will be known only when refugees are repatriated from exile and subsequent census conducted by a democratically elected government.

Ngalungs¹⁴: The group known as *Drugpa*¹⁵, live in the central and north-western regions. They speak *Dzongkha* language and wear robe like dresses. Their ancestors migrated from Tibet. The *Ngalong* comprise the largest ethnic group in Bhutan, and they control the government/political power and the culture/social power of the country. They were often called as *Bhote*¹⁶, meaning as they come from Tibet or *Bhot*. They practice Tibetan Buddhism, and grow mountain potatoes, rice, barley, and other temperate climate crops, and build large fortress monasteries (*dzongs*). The king and most of the government officials belong to this ethnic group. However, the policy of *Driglam Namzha* (one nation one culture) adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan, which claim that it is mandatory for all the Bhutanese citizen to follow the national dress (*gho* and *khira*) code and speak national language (*Dzongkha*), is specifically *Ngalop* in origin (Bisht, 2008).

Sharchops: *Sharchops* are inhabit in eastern and central region and practice *Nyingmapa* sect of Mahayana Buddhism and belongs to *Tibeto-Burman* ancestry. They speak *Sharchopkha* also known as *Tsangla*¹⁷, *Kurteop*, *Kheng* and *Brogpa* dialects¹⁸. Their ancestry can be traced to the tribes of northern Burma and north-east India. Although as being the biggest and earliest ethnic group of Bhutan the *Sharchops* have been largely assimilated into the Tibetan *Ngalop* culture. They have largely adopted the cultural practices of Tibetan derived culture of central and western Bhutan and also shares linguistic heritage with Tibetan and *Dzongkha*. They practice slash-and-burn and *tsheri* agriculture, planting dry rice for three to four years until the fertility of soil will be exhausted and then moving on to another area (ibid).

Lhotshampa¹⁹: *Lhotshampa* means southerners in *Dzongkha* language (national language of Bhutan), they live in six southern foothills districts, speak Nepali language, practice mostly Hinduism and migrated from Nepal, Darjeeling and Sikkim in India. The Nepalese commonwealth comprises of three important social groups, like the *Thakuris*²⁰ of predominantly

¹⁴ They are also known as *Ngalongs* or *Ngalops*

¹⁵ They are called *Drugpa* as they follow the *Drugpa Kargyupa* school of Tibetan Buddhism

¹⁶ This term is basically used to the Tibetan people, but now it is rarely used.

¹⁷ *Tsangla* is also spoken by the *Menba* national minority across the border in China

¹⁸ some of them speak Assamese and Hindi because of their proximity to India

¹⁹ Southern Bhutanese

²⁰ They strictly divide themselves on the Hindu Verna system with the concept of purity and pollution

in western Nepal, the *Newaris*²¹, and the *Kiratis*²² of eastern Nepal and Sikkim. The Nepalese in Bhutan belong predominantly to the *Kirati* stock consisting of *Rai*, *Gurung*, and *Limbu* tribes. *Lhotshampas* practice Hinduism as their religion. However, many among them, including the *Tamang* and the *Gurung* are largely Buddhist; *Kirati* group including *Rai*, and *Limbu* are largely animism followers of *Mundum*²³. Their main and common festival *Desain* and *Tihar*, is similar with the festival of Indian called *Dashera* and *Diwali*.

There is another group of Nepali origin, who are presently living as refugees in *Jhapa* (Nepal). They are those *Lhotshampas* who are living still in refugee camps seeking a solution for their problem. They are known by the name of *Bhupalis*²⁴ and they claim themselves as Bhutanese citizen. The term is basically used by the Indian officials in and around the Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Nepal regions. Due to the agitation for democracy in Bhutan which was begun in 1990s, people who once lived in southern Bhutan are now in a major chunk of them living in refugee camp of *Jhapa* (Nepal). Most of the leaders of that democratic movement belongs to this segment of Bhutanese population. The movement which they started for democracy was ended up in refugee camps in Nepal. They are considered as the illegal immigrants by the Royal Government of Bhutan. The *Bhupalis* also lives in the refugee camps in *Bagrakot*, *Kalchini*, *Looksan* and *Bipara* tea gardens in *Jalpaiguri* district of West Bengal in India.

The above three ethnic groups are the major ethnic groups of Bhutan. Apart from them, there are other small ethnic groups live in Bhutan in small number, they are the *Monpa*²⁵, and they share the very close affinity with the *Sharchops*. Their language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family and they follow the Tibetan Buddhism of *Gelugpa* sect, although the several members of the *Monpa* are followers of *Bon* and animism. They led a hunter-gather lifestyle and known for wood carving, *Thangkha* paintings²⁶, carpet making and weaving. The traditional dress of the *Monpa* is based on the Tibetan *Chugba*²⁷. Men wear a skull cap of felt with fringes or

²¹ They divided among themselves into a number of occupational castes and follow the Hinduism and Buddhism and both

²² Kiratis is a generic term for a number of animist, lamaist and Hindu tribes

²³ These group are mainly found in eastern Bhutan.

²⁴ The term is used by the Indian officials in and around the Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Nepal region.

²⁵ A small group of monpas are found in the Himalayan hills (*Tawang*) of Bhutan.

²⁶ Religious painting, a specific paintings of god an goddess and other religious symbols

²⁷ A woollen coat and trouser

tassels and women wear a warm jacket and sleeveless chemise that reaches down to the knees, tying them around the waist with a long and narrow piece of cloth. The *Monpa* practices shifting and permanent types of cultivation. Cattle include yaks, cows, pigs, sheep and fowl are kept as domestic animals, and meat is hunted using primitive method. Cash crops includes rice, maize, wheat, barley, chilly, pumpkin, beans, tobacco, indigo and cotton are planted (Rizal, 2001).

Another small ethnic group of Bhutan is *Kheng*²⁸ or *Khen*. They are mostly found in the *Zhemgang* and *Mongar* districts of south central Bhutan. They speak *kheng kha*, a member of the extended Tibetan language family and like most of the other ethnic groups they are devoted followers of Tibetan Buddhism.

There is another ethnic group called the *Layap*, and they inhabit in the high mountains of northwest Bhutan in the village of *Laya*, in *Gasa* district (just below the *Tsendagang* peak) (Bisht, 2008). They are formally called as *Bjop* by Bhutanese. They are ethnically related with the Tibetan, and speak a Tibeto-Burman language. Their costume is much similar to the Tibetan dress.

2.5 The Social structure

By tradition, social structure within the Tibetan cultural sphere such as Bhutan was a three-tier system consisting of clergy, aristocracy, and peasantry in the descending order of importance. Firstly, every family was duty bound as far as possible to send intelligent and physically fit child to the lamasery to be trained as a *gelong*²⁹. Lama could perform several roles from household priests to the head of the state on the basis of their ability. They could rise in the hierarchy to the highest position in the church-state system without social disability.

Secondly, there were secular regional chiefs, who could establish their sway through their martial and strategic skills; carve out their principalities; build *dzongs* and *lakhangs* and patronize monasteries. Descendant of such regional chiefs had an aura of significance in the name of their families. Many of them drew their descent from significant monks, even from monk's unusual liaison (Sinha, 2001). However, in the case of descendants of unusual

²⁸ *Kheng* refers to the ancient small kingdom of the area of south central Bhutan, which were autonomous fiefdoms prior to the unification of Bhutan in the 17th century.

²⁹ *Gelong* means monk or lama

excellence, their family background added to their advantage. For example, the *Wangchuk* of Bhutan rulers drew their genealogy from the legendry of Lama *Phazo* (1161-1211 AD) and the ancient 'text discover' *Padma Glingpa* (1450-1521 AD) adding an aura of reverence and historical significance (Sinha, 2001).

However, the mainstay of the Bhutanese society continues to be peasantry from which clergy and aristocracy emerged. In the pastoral economy of almost self-sufficient rural units, animal husbandry were inseparable occupation of the peasants cultivations continuous to be strenuous exercise, carried on by ploughing and raking, terracing intricately and arranging for irrigation channels on undulating terrain. The peasant's life is marked by joint and extended family and village corporate life. In Bhutan the social status is based on family's economic station. Except among the Hindu Nepalese in southern Bhutan, there was no caste system. Primogeniture dictated the right of the inheritance traditionally, although in some central areas the eldest daughter was the lawful successor (Bisht, 2008). In contemporary Bhutan, however, inheritance is equally distributed among all children of a family.

Except for the royal family and a few other noble families, Bhutanese do not have surnames. Individual normally have two names, but neither is considered as family name or a surname. Some people adopt their village name, occasionally in abbreviated form, as part of their name, using it before their name. Wives keep their own names, and children frequently have names unconnected to either parent. Some individual educated abroad have taken their last name as a surname. A system of titles, depending on age, degree of familiarity, and social and official status, denotes ranks and relationship among the members of society (Sinha, 2001).

All the above discussed ethnic groups except *Lhotshampa* and *Bhupalis*, though have distinct tradition and practice different culture, but speaks the language which are belongs to the different Tibetan family, and most of them are Buddhist by religion.

2.6 Religious Practices

Religion always remains in the important place of Bhutan's spiritual and material life. Bhutan is well-known as the outpost of the *Tantric* Buddhism of the kind Tibet practice (Aris, 1986). Bhutan is the land of demons, serpent divinities, flesh eating *raksha*, evil spirit and so

forth until the taming of the land by the great figures of Buddhism, such as *Shandrung Ngawang Namgyal*, *Drukpa Kunley*, and above them *Guru Rimpoche*, *Padmasambhava*, the lotus born guru, he is the main Buddhist tamers. His main shrines at *Tasang* in the *Paro* valley and *Kurje Lhakhang* in the central valley of *Bhumthang* virtually define the scope of Bhutan as a land of Buddhist religion. The fact for the act of Guru's taming of Bhutan as a land of Buddhist religion is the conversion of the king of *Bhumthang*, *Sindhu* raja was enacted at *Kurjei*. *Padmasambhava's* figure is frequently the central one in temples and shrines. When the people of the large village of *Ura* in central Bhutan recently reconstructed their temple, it was a huge statue of the guru that formed its Centre-piece. The major festival of the monastery fort- *dzongs* - is called *tsechu*³⁰. The name of the *Kurje* temple in *Bumthang*, central Bhutan which is central to the cult of guru, means "body traces", for it believed that *Padmasambhava* left marks of his body to the rock itself.

Mahayana or *Vajrayana* Buddhism is the state religion of Bhutan. It is based on the doctrine of *Bodhisattava*. It is also known as *Tantric* Buddhism, Esoteric Buddhism, and the Diamond way or the Thunderbolt Way. It has brought in Bhutan by the first religious king *Shabdung Ngawang Namgyal* around 16th century from Tibet. In Tibet the *Vajrayana* Buddhism was established when the *Tantric Mahasiddha Padmasambhava* visited Tibet from Afghanistan on the request of Tibetan *Dharma* king *Trisong Detsen* somewhere around 767 AD (Tsongkhapa, 2005). It had led two important transmissions, first transmission anchor the lineage of *Nyingmapa* School. Second transmission occurred in 11th and 12 century, which lead the lineage of another school of Tibetan Buddhism, they are *Sakya*, *Kadam*, *Kagyü*, *Jonang*, and *Gelug*³¹.

The *Sanskrit* term '*Vajra*' means the 'thunderbolt', the legendary weapon and divine attribute which were made from indestructible substances and which could therefore pierce and penetrate any obstacles. It is the weapon choice of the *Indra* the king of *Devas* in Hinduism. As in its secondary meaning the '*Vajra*' refers to those indestructible substances is compared to the 'adamantine' or 'diamond'. So, *Vajra* is rendered in English literature as the 'The Adamantine

³⁰ literally "the tenth day of the month", which is the day on which the guru was born and on which he subsequently carried out his most famous deeds in his eight manifestation

³¹ The school in which his holiness Dalai Lama belongs (Bibbhuti, 2008)

Vehicle' or 'The Diamond Vehicle'. Hence, in standard Tibetan language it called '*dorjee*'³². The goal of *Vajrayana* tradition is to become *Bodhisattava*³³. The *Ngalong* people, those who are the descendent of Tibetan immigrants, comprise the majority population of the central and the western Bhutan mostly follows the *Drukpa* or *Kagyugpa* lineage of *Vajrayana* Buddhism. The *Sharchops* decedents of the country, those who consider as the original inhabitants of Bhutan, mostly concentrated in the eastern part of the country. They follow the *Nyingmapa* sect of *Vajrayana* Buddhism (Aris, 1986).

Apart from Buddhism, there is evidence for the presence of other religion in the country. In southern Bhutan, the ethnic Nepalese - *Lhotshampa* who migrated in Bhutan in some hundred years ago, mostly follows Hinduism. Most of the Bhutanese people used to practice *Bon* before the advent of Buddhism. It is an animist and *Samanistic* belief system, revolve around the worship of nature is still exist in Bhutan. The Royal Government of Bhutan supports both *Nyingma* and *Kagyuu* Buddhist monasteries and practice the combination of *Nyingma* and *Kagyuu*, and most of the people believe in the concept of "*Kanyin-Zungdrel*," meaning "*Kagyupa* and *Ningmapa*" as one.

2.7 Cultural Practices

Culture implies the linkages between the past and present in various forms of human life like dance, painting, printing, arts, crafts and architecture. Bhutan is very rich in the sphere of art, architecture, paintings etc. Among the chief religious works of Bhutanese literature, the *kangyur*³⁴ and the *tengyur*³⁵ are included. These are the two great *lamaic* encyclopedias. Moreover, a vast mass of historical and biographical literature grew up in Bhutan during 17th and 18th century A.D. these includes *Lhoyichhoejung*, *Namthar Sindhu Gyab*, *Namthar of Phajo Drugom Shigpo*, book of *Dung Chhoeje*, *Gyalrab Selvimelong*.

In Bhutan everybody still wears the traditional costume, *go* for men and *kira* for the women. The eastern and the central regions of Bhutan have a strong tradition of weaving which

³² A sceptre like ritual objects which has a sphere at its centre and a variable number of spokes like 3, 5, and 9 at each end and enfolding either end of the rod.

³³ Attainment of a state in which one will subsequently became *Buddha* after some further reincarnation

³⁴ The translated commandments

³⁵ The translated doctrinal commentaries

have no equal in the Himalayan world. Cotton and silk used in the east while in central Bhutan wool was prevalent. Bhutanese fabrics are known for the intricate pattern woven into the cloth with either supplementary-wrap or supplementary-weft techniques and sometime both. In Bhutan even before the king's edict, all *Drukpas* wore traditional dress and majority of the population weave them in home.

Both India and Tibet have influenced Bhutan's art and craft. Almost all the Bhutanese art is symbolic, non-secular, and rare blending of Tibetan, Indian, and Chinese traditional styles in characteristics in Bhutanese setting. It mostly derives lore and tantric mythology. It is highly decorative and ornamental and it's particularly located in its monastic centers: *Dzongs*, *Lhakhang*, Monasteries, Temples, and *Chortens*. Religious theme dominates all Bhutanese forms of art (Rizal, 2001).

Bhutan is very rich in the sphere of architecture. *Chortens*, *mani* walls, temples, monasteries, fortresses, palaces and village house constitute a landscape, much unique to Bhutan. Bhutanese classical dance is reflected by their religious mask-pageants and ritual dances³⁶. Traditionally, most of these were initiated first by the *Terton Padmalingpa* in the 15th century and thereafter by *Shabdrung Rimpoche* in the mid-17th century as accompaniment to prayers of the protector's god *Mahakala* in the *Punakha dzong*, which is famous as *Puna-Domchhoe* and later *Kunga Gyaltshen*, reincarnation of *Jampel Dorji* started a pattern for prayers to the protectors Goddess *Shri Devi* in the *Thimpu dzong* (Rizal, 2001; 22).

The most popular ritual and festival dance are: *Chhoe-Je*³⁷, the *Dam-Ngen Chham*³⁸, the *Ragsha Chham*³⁹, *Damitse Nga Chham*⁴⁰, the *Sau Shachi*⁴¹, *Pa cham*⁴², *Achara Chham*⁴³ (ibid). Almost all the Bhutanese dances are symbolic and represent religious and folk traditions of the country's past. The distinguishing food habit comprise rice, dried beef or pork and chillies in

³⁶Amongst the celebrated religious dances are the *ShangChham*, *DegyedChham*, the *SinjeChham*, the *Le-Geon Chham*, the *LhamoTsokhorChham*, the *SherdengBer-Kor*, the *GeonpoMang-Cham*, the *Dur-dagChham*, *TumNgamChham*, *GuruTshengyed*.

³⁷ Semi religious ritual dance

³⁸ Guitar dance

³⁹ Yamraj dance

⁴⁰ Drum dance

⁴¹ Dance if deer and hunting dogs

⁴² Hero dance

⁴³ Yogi dance

west and east and typical Indian (north-east) and Nepali dishes in southern Bhutan. The official dress is *Gho* and *Kira* worn by male and female respectively. Women are fond of various kinds of necklaces. People from west, east and central Bhutan mostly wear this type dress pattern. In southern Bhutan, which is predominated by *Lhotshampas*, they wear typical Nepalese costumes or shirt and trousers and sari and blouses and *salwars* and *kameezes* akin to Indian dress.

Bhutan's culture does not isolate or disenfranchise women. Dowry is not practiced, and land is divided equally between sons and daughters. Girls receive nearly equal educational opportunities, and, while accorded a lower status than boys, they are cherished because they are the ones who care for parents in old age. Men and women usually work side by side in the field. Women fill most of the nursing and teaching positions.

Marriages may be arranged by the parents or by the individuals themselves. To get married, a certificate is required from the Court of Law, but most marriages are performed by a religious leader. The Bhutanese are essentially monogamous. Polyandry (multiple husbands) has recently been abolished; the practice of polygamy is legal provided the first wife grants her consent.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have identified the Shangri-la image of Bhutan, an image of being other-worldly Lamaist monarchy on the snowy Himalayan ranges and forested ravines free from maddening crowd of other South Asian countries. Further we have delineated the ethnic complexity of Bhutan in which the *Drukpa*, the *Sharchokpa*, and the *Lhotshampa* have their distinct locales of north-western, eastern and southern part of the country respectively. However, we can say that the dominant image of Bhutan is the only Lamaist country in the world, an issue wrapped with myth, legends, and hoary past.

As we see in the chapter, the earliest phase of Bhutan's history is the most obscure one. There are variations in the myth, legends, and tales spread all over Bhutan and its adjoining areas. Over the period, Bhutanese society emerged as a conglomerate of various ethnic groups. The population in the west and in some extent in central Bhutan is Tibetan origin. The earlier immigrants (*Ngalop*) evolved to a distinct religion with a cultural pattern of their own, the

Vajrayana Buddhism of Tibetan variety, which is still significant in their social set-up. They called themselves *Drukpa* and speak *Dzongkha* which is considered as the national language of Bhutan.

The Bhutanese those who live in the east of the black mountains called themselves as *Sharchop* are believed to be the earliest inhabitants of Bhutan. In certain degree they are distinct from the people of eastern and western regions like in dress, food, festivals, language and so forth. But they are appearing to be assimilated into the broad overarching *Drukpa* Buddhist cultural pattern of western Bhutan.

Apart from these, there is the *Lhotshampa* or Nepalese who was brought in the early nineteenth century to work in the foothills of southern Bhutan. Unlike the people of eastern and western Bhutan, they believe in Hinduism, follow the Hindu caste system, speak Nepali and have familial connections as well as extended associations in Nepal and Indian areas.

Chapter III

Ethnic Minorities and State: The Case of Bhutan

3.1 Introduction

Today the ethnic identity has become the significant source of conflict in modern state. Ethnic identity create internal socio-political disturbance in modern state due to the evolving identity of a community as a nation, which has produced certain disturbing trends that resulted in instability. The process of nation-building has paved the way for the elites group of modern states. To create a balance between ethnic identity and national identity with the right mixture of diversity of ethnic diacritics within a state has become one of the challenging tasks of the government. The identity of the state with any particular group or groups residing inside a single dominion makes the deprived groups perceive that they are being dominated by others which make assimilation difficult. In this complexity of nation building, minority groups often feel marginalized, which further strengthens the feeling of alienation (Pattanaik, 1998). This chapter is about the issues of ethnic minorities in Bhutan; the chapter explains who are they and what kind of problem they face as minorities. It also discusses the nature of their relationship with the state.

The concept ethnicity and its influence into the discipline of international relations had been going unnoticed until the outburst of decolonization movement in Third World. The movement demonstrated that the nation-state was not 'inscribed into the nature of things' and ethnicity matters for international politics (ibid). However, the study of ethnicity and ethnic politics has remained epiphenomenal in international relations. The end of Cold War and the emergence of ethnic conflict in post-Soviet eras had forced the international relations discipline to turn their attention towards ethnicity.

The relationship between state and minorities in the legal sense, it is the responsibility of States to protect and promote the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, whether they are citizens or non-citizens, under their jurisdiction and act as responsible members of the international community with respect to minorities under the jurisdiction of another State. Secondly, other States may have an interest in the well-being of minority

groups abroad, especially those with whom they are linked by ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage. Finally, States can pursue this interest through extending benefits to minorities abroad only in consultation with the State of residence and with due respect for the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty and friendly, including good neighbourly, relations (OSCE, 2008). States should ensure that their policies with respect to national minorities abroad do not undermine the integration of minorities in the States where they reside or fuel separatist tendencies (OSCE, 2008).

The scope of the studies of ethnicity or ethnic politics in the discipline of international relations dates back to the immediate aftermath of decolonization movement in post-Second World War period, especially during 1960's. Decolonization left the new states on their own in consolidating their nation-state. Ethnic conflict that broke during this era demonstrated that ethnic group, whose important had been sacrificed on the alter nation-state, had played a significant role in world politics.

The early studies on ethnic politics mostly remained content with offering shallow and temporary surveys of the cases. A dynamic existence of the studies of ethnic conflict into the discipline of international relations was date back to the 1970's and 1980's. Dominance of the Cold War in the IR discipline, as well as in the political life, arguably had the main reason behind the negligence of the study of ethnic politics during its initial period of emergence on the subject. During these period, the most prominent nationalist scholar such as Antony Smith (1990), Benedict Anderson (1991), Ernest Gellner (1985), and Walker Connor (1994) published their *magna opera* on the concept of nationalism *per se*; and when the first academic journals specifically devoted to the studies of ethnic politics, such as *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, and *Nationalities Papers* started to be published.

During 1970's and 1980's, particular scholars were considered as the significant contributors on the initiation of ethnic politics studies within the IR context. In 1963, Glazer and Moynihan' had co-authored the book *Beyond The Melting Pot*, which focused on the ethnic groups of New York. In 1975, they published a milestone book name, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experiences*. In 1985, Donald L. Horowitz, a professor of Law and Political Science,

published his later-to-be premier book, *Ethnic Group in Conflict*: These academics works have significantly influenced the study of ethnicity/ethnic politics

In the contemporary political arenas the demand to old affiliations and distinctions enables a mobilization of people on a scale which is never possible before. The importance of ethnic conflict, as a force shaping human affairs, as a phenomenon to be understood, as a threat to be controlled, cannot longer be denied. [...] Ethnicity is at the centre of politics in country after country, a potent source of challenges to the cohesion of states and of international tension (Horowitz 1985: xi). The most important fact about the ethnic conflict and their political form, would point out that certain basic shifts in power and values are occurring in which ethnic identification has an effective value, and has become prominent in the concerns of states in international system.

3.2 Ethnic Minorities and State in the post- Cold War world

Studies of ethnic politics gain its significance with the end of Cold war, specifically with the disintegration of Soviet Union and collapse of communist regime in Eastern Europe, and end of bi-polar system from international politics. The insurgence of ethnic group within the dissolve of multinational regimes became the significant matter in the international sphere. On the one hand, industrialism, capitalism and mass communications have created a world of interdependent states, of mass tourism, regional networks of media, an international division of labour, world-wide commodity markets and the like. On the other hand, these ethnic conflicts, protest movements, social antagonisms have led to the undermining of several states and the creation of new states (Eriksen, 1993).

The Eastern Europe and Soviet Union and its geographical areas were at the heart of the international politics and the academic endeavor of IR. Therefore, the focus of academic lenses turned from the Third world to Eastern Europe. During 1980's and 1990's, scholars purely from IR background specialized on the studies of ethnic politics. Broad studies and project were initiated¹. However, in spite of its significance and relevance of ethnic politics in IR, the studies of ethnic politics are unable to manage a significant place within the discipline. The role of ethnic politics and its importance in national and international security has been

¹ For example, Edward Azar's *Conflict and Peace Databanks* (1980) and Ted Gurr's *Minorities At Risk* (1993)

neglected by dominant IR theories for long time. The reason behind this is that both are part of two separate fields i.e. the ethnic politics studies and the broader discipline of IR (Turkmen, 2012).

Ethnic politics, especially after the end of Cold War, was boomed in the form of ethnic conflict. A large number of literature, vary from different disciplinary background and approaches, were added to the literature of ethnic politics. Many prominent works in ethnic politics were started to accept the need for a major theoretical background to study ethnic politics. Due to the absence of general theory in ethnic politics which can acknowledge and embraced in the field, the field seems suffer from disorder and badly need of an organizing theory (Hale, 2008).

As a result of the absence of a common agenda for a central question, studies of ethnic politics remain mosaic picture. A huge literature falls under the same rubric but remain disorderly because of the lack of interconnectedness, although works under each sub-rubric are sophisticated in themselves (Turkmen, 2012).

3.3 Ethnic Minorities

The ethnic minority can be define as a group of people those who are differ in race, national, religious and cultural from the dominant group or majority population of the country in which they live. The identity of an ethnic minority can be shown in various ways like distinctive custom, lifestyles, languages, dresses and food preferences to particular attitudes, moral values, and economic or political beliefs espoused by members of the group. The minority can be recognized, but not necessarily they are accepted by the larger society in which they live. The nature of their relationship with the larger society can be determined that whether they will move in the direction of assimilation or self-segregation. In some cases, the ethnic minority can simply excluded by the majority. Many Americans use the term minority to refer both to certain cultural groups in the population and to disadvantages in terms of socio-economic status². However, the problem with the use of the term minority is that it does

² African Americans and Hispanics are often referred to as minority groups because they number approximately 34.6 and 35.3 million, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000), and their socioeconomic status, at the group level, is lower than that of the “majority” group.

not take into consideration the impact that the population size of a “minority” group can have on other groups (Wilkinson, 1986)³.

Ethnic minorities pose problem to the national state, to that extent that they communicate their distinctiveness in context where this distinctiveness is incompatible with requirement to the nation state, notably those referring to formal equality and uniform practice (Eriksen, 1991). Sometimes minorities may face the threat of more or less forced assimilation. In the process of assimilation, minorities are formally be ignore and left alone. In the modern world they are define as outside as citizen of nation state. They are unable to practice equal rights which are provided by the administrative apparatus because of their cultural distinctiveness (Banton, 2003).

3.4 Ethnic Minorities in Bhutan

Bhutan is the least populated country of South Asia, the population of Bhutan, once estimated at several million, has now of been officially downgraded by the Bhutanese government to 750,000 after a census of early nineties. The total population figure of Bhutan is highly confusing and controversial one. It has been believed that in 1970s the population of Bhutan was artificially inflated⁴.

Bhutan Himalaya is comprised of a mosaic of different ethnic peoples live in the valleys and isolated from one another. Bhutan is a multi-ethnic society, where three major ethnic groups such as *Sharchop*, *Ngalung*, and *Lhotshampa*—have a distinct identity, shaped by geographic origin and based on culture and religion. Bhutan as a multi-ethnic nation, it is a multi-lingual state too, there are more than 20 languages are spoken by the different group of people in Bhutan. All of them are belongs to Tibeto-Burman family, except Nepali. Apart from the rest, there are four major languages, such as *Dzongkha*, *Tsangla*, *Kheng/Khen*, and

³ For example, many African Americans and Hispanics reside in Florida. Currently, a major problem confronting African Americans in Florida is that in several areas of the state they constitute a minority of the population, whereas Hispanics constitute a “majority” group. Both Hispanics and African Americans are examples of minority groups in relation to the total number of people in the United States, but in certain parts of Florida, Hispanics take on majority status.

⁴ This is because of the earlier perception that the nation with less than one million populations would not be admitted to the United Nations. But United Nations population figure for Bhutan is much higher than the figures provided by the government.

Nepali. *Dzongkha* is the national language of Bhutan. It is a sophisticated form of the Tibetan dialect spoken by the *Ngalung* villagers in western Bhutan.

The other languages include *Tsangla* a Mon language spoken by *Sharchop* in eastern district. *Kheng/Khen* language is spoken by *Bhumthang* in central Bhutan, and Nepali is predominantly is spoken by *Lhotshampa* in southern Bhutan. It has been roughly estimated that there are total 1,60,000 people spoke *Dzongkha* language, 1,56,000 are Nepali speaking people, 1,38,000 are *Tsangla*, and 80,000 are *Kheng/Khen* speaking people. Bhutan's national language is written in Tibetan text. Though the *Sharchokpa* are accepted as the original people of Bhutan, due to lack of written text of their *Tsangla* language, they were also accepted the *Dzongkha* as their national language. The *Dzongkha* language constitutes about 10-25% and imposed on other ethnic groups comprising of 85% of total population. Remaining 15% population are Nepali speaking (Rizal, 2001; 21).

It is possible to divide Bhutan's population into three broad ethnic groups, though the distinction blur in places. The *Ngalung* are people of Tibetan origin who migrated to Bhutan ever since the ninth century. They are often referred to in foreign literature as *Bhote* (people of *Bhot* or Tibet) and are concentrated in western and northern districts. The *Ngalung* introduced Tibetan culture and Buddhism to Bhutan and comprise the dominant political and cultural element in modern Bhutan. They speak *Dzongkha language*, which is now the official national language of Bhutan.

The *Sharchop*, who are recognized as Bhutan's earliest inhabitants, can be traced to the tribes of northern Burma and northeast India and comprise most of the population of eastern Bhutan. Because of their religious similarity, the *Sharchop* have been assimilated to a certain extent into the Tibetan–*Ngalung* culture. They speak their own language, called *Tsangla* (ibid).

The *Lhotshampa*, who live mostly in southern Bhutan and speak Nepali, are the Nepalese ethnic group whose forebears came to Bhutan from Nepal through ‘step migration’⁵ from Darjeeling, Sikkim and adjoining areas of northeast India. The government of Bhutan attempted to limit immigration and restrict residence and employment of Nepalese to the southern region (ibid).

In spite of their presence in Bhutan for more than a century, the Nepalese have maintained their unique tradition and culture. This is because the identity of the Nepalese as a distinct ethnic group stems from the fact that they belong to different religious, lingual and socio-cultural group. Moreover, the Nepalese "as a distinct cultural group, are very proud of their tradition and, in fact, they look to Nepal and India as the centers of their civilization, historical achievements and religious pilgrimages. However, there is definitely a cultural gulf between the two communities. As in the Nepalese elite castes, abhor beef, polyandry and widow remarriage is prevalent among the *Brugpa Lamaists* also. They themselves practice ritual purity and personal and food pollutions.

In 1969, when the first Bhutan’s national census was conducted, the population figure was officially stood at 930,614 persons. Before 1969, population estimates had ranged from 300,000 to 800,000 people (Bisht, 2008; 95). In the 1970 census, the population of Bhutan is 13.1 million inhabitants in an area of 47,000 sq. km. or 18,000 sq. miles, giving thereby density of 73 persons to a square mile. In the census of 1980-81, its population was stated that it increased to approximately 11,65,000 persons. *The Statistical Book of Bhutan* (1988-89), had estimated its population at 13,75,400. In 1990, its population was estimated at 6,00,000. In the Seventh Five Year Plan of Bhutan, which would be known by 1992-93 had mentioned that its population at 1.3 million. It has further estimated that by 1997, its population will be between 7,13,211 and 7,68,050 (Rizal,2001; 21). But the UN estimated at 1,145,000 people in the census of 1988. Other foreign projections put the population at 1,598,216 persons in 1991 (Bisht, 2008, 96). The extensive census of 2005 results put the population of Bhutan at 635,000 considerably lower than the one million figure used previously (Evans, 2010; 28)

⁵ Step migration is a migration pattern that consists of a series of small, less extreme locational changes. For example, if a person moves from a farm to a small town, then to a larger town and finally a city, it is an example of step migration.

Bhutan's society is made up of four broad but not necessarily exclusive groups, such as the *Ngalung*, the *Sharchop*, several aboriginal peoples, and the *Lhotshampas*. Among these Bhutanese people, the *Ngalung* are considered as the dominant group, they follow the Buddhist tradition based on *DrugpaKagyü* form. Most similar to the *Ngalung*, there is another group in Bhutan called the *Sharchopa*, who are associated with the eastern part of the country, has been traditionally follow the *Nyingmapa* sect of Buddhism instead of *Drugpa Kagyupa* sect. Today, due to the similarity in their religion and some cultural practices the *Sharchopa* peoples are merged with the *Drugpa* tradition under the dominance of *Ngalung* and formed the majority population of the country. The third exclusive group is *Lhotshampa*, they are completely different from the above two groups. They traditionally follow Hinduism which is akin to the India and Nepal. Because of their cultural and religious distinctions with the majority population, they are considered as the minority group of Bhutan.

Bhutan's demographic statistics are also controversial one, presently all provided figures should be treated with caution. It is estimated in this way that the *Ngalong* vary from 10% to 25 %, *Schorchop* and *Kheng/Khen* together formed 30% to 40%, and for *Lhotshampa* or Nepalese as 25% to 53% (Hutt, 1994; 8).

3.5 Ethnic Minorities and State in Bhutan

A state is a civil community having its own government and law. In its legal definition, it attributed to have a definite territory, a population of citizens, a functioning government, and its sovereignty of governance (Kukreja and Singh, 2008). But the similar condition cannot meet in the case of every state. Sometimes, the legal claim of a state territory is disputed by their neighbors, there could be the non-citizens, and in the matter of sovereignty, some states seems very helpless to cope up with the terrorist attack. Bhutan is also having most of these features and going through similar situation. It is a fact that the tiny Himalayan country has been fighting with the problem of the influx of huge number of illegal immigrants from the southern border.

The state is the agency which provide and denies citizenship. In a state, citizen can only be free in an environment in which their culture and values are respected. As the state and the majority group become tangled, the majority community expresses its understanding of the way society should be organized through the state. Therefore, as the majority community expresses its culturally based understandings of liberal values through the state, minority communities take this as majority autonomy. And the majority autonomy is especially dangerous for political state - wide consistency if the minority group begins to feel that, their way of seeing things is different from the majority, that this is generally not understood or recognized by the majority, and the majority is not willing to regulate forms of debate to accommodate this difference and the minority is being systematically unheard, its voice unable to penetrate public debate (Alan, 2010). It reinforces the state; minority autonomy challenges it. Considering nationalism as a minority phenomenon makes its relationship with the state mainly opposed, it ignores the dialectical relationship between the majority and minority nation as they react to each other (Craigie, 2010).

In Bhutan's case precisely illustrate the role the state in considering the *Lhotshamapa* a minority by observing their unique identity and culture and depriving their identity and security by claiming them illegal immigrants. Based on the perceived threats as consequences of political turmoil in the neighbouring states⁶, one can see a gradual improvement of *Lhotshampa* both in political and economic spheres.

The relationship between the state and *Lhotshampas* is a kind of 'us vs them' from the very beginning. As compared to other ethnic groups, *Lhotshampa* are always discriminated by the state in many ways⁷. In the early 1980s, the *Ngalung/Drukpa* rulers began to impose

⁶In 1975, political unrest involving ethnic Nepalese in Sikkim caused the former state, where Buddhist monarchs had also ruled, to lose autonomy and be subsumed by India. In Sikkim, the demographic changes caused by large-scale immigration of ethnic Nepalese were perceived to have resulted in the monarchs' loss of power, which fuelled fears in Bhutan. The Bhutanese Government feared that if their new citizenship laws were 'circumvented', the 'indigenous' Bhutanese would be 'reduced to a minority in their own country, as has happened to the indigenous people of Sikkim and the neighbouring hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong'. These concerns were exacerbated by a violent *Gorkhaland* independence movement – the *Gorkha* National Liberation Front – led by ethnic Nepalis in Darjeeling between 1986 and 1988, which 'must have played a major part in convincing the Bhutanese government that political activity among the *Lhotshampas* should be prevented at any cost'.

⁷ The initial policy towards the south was isolation, enacted through restricting the Nepali Bhutanese to this region. *Lhotshampas* were not allowed to own land in the north, and many did not learn to speak the *Dzonghka*

involuntary assimilation policies through the enactment of a series of laws⁸. The *Lhotshampas* are not ready to get assimilated with the majority culture and traditions enforced over them by state. Just few years back, there were the tensions in relationship between *Lhotshampas* and the state government, but the issue has been settling down⁹.

The history of the spread of Nepali community in Eastern Himalayas has a distinct history. It is John Claude White, the British Political Officer at Gangtok (Sikkim), was instrumental for this migration. He had been very much impressed with the industrious nature of Nepalese. White was the one who used Nepalese to develop southern Sikkim and Darjeeling, from where a bulk of Nepalese was moved to Bhutan when *Ugyen Wangchuk*¹⁰ was appointed as the chief of *Haa* region. The southern part of Bhutan was full of forest and wild animals, and unfavorable climatic zone for human settlement. It was assigned to the *Dorji* (Wangchuk) family for its development. The administration of Bhutan is based on old Tibetan form, under which a Bhutan agent/chief was responsible for paying a fixed amount for central exchequer without any consideration. For that purpose agents collect tax from the villagers. Tax could be on various forms, such as all the households in a village were subjected to an obligatory labor tax to the state.

There could be three type of household in a *Drugpa* village, *trepla*¹¹, *zurpa*¹², and *suma*¹³ (Kukreja and Singh 2008). There are two types of grain taxes: *wangyon*¹⁴ and

language. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the Nepali populations were required to pay taxes in cash and labour, whereas the *Drukpas* in the north provided their taxes in kind and labour until 1960. The Nepali settlers were taxed more heavily and, prior to the 1950s, were not admitted to the police force and army on the same terms as other ethnic groups (Evans, 2010).

⁸ For example the Bhutan Marriage Act 1980, *driglam namza* (one nation, one culture) in 1987, and the 1988 census focused mainly on southern Bhutan (Giri, 2007).

⁹ At first the *Lhotshamapa* protested against the tax in 1927, in 1947 their first political move “Jai Gorkha” and approached the (AIGL) to help them politically against the oppressive feudal system, in 1952 *Bhutan State Congress* based on the pattern of the Indian National Congress and demands the abolition of feudal system, democratization of administration, civil and political rights for the Bhutanese and closer ties with India. But the movement had been alleged by the high handedness and more than dozen of agitators were killed, 17 wounded and many of them arrested and imprisoned.

¹⁰ *Ugyen Wangchuk* was the First king under the tutelage of the British and also was a chief of *Haa* region in 1889. White struck a good relationship with *Wangchuk*

¹¹ Liable to pay taxes

¹² splinter household not liable to pay taxes

¹³ The households paying taxes to the nobility, for example the royal family

¹⁴ Levy for blessing

*thojab*¹⁵ (ibid). There were various other taxes to be paid such as textile tax, butter tax etc. The *Lhotshampas* were subjected to a classical tenancy pattern. They were not supposed to pay tax on such manner, but they were also not free from labour tax. The *Dorjis* collected taxes from the head of the families through their contractual officials in the form of cash, on the basis of cultivated land, number of cattle, fruit etc. Even, the *Dorjis* did not transmit the collected taxes to the king. They were supposed to provide for the cash requirements of the ruler and his establishment as and when required. It was the case of classical exploitation upon the *Lhotshampas*. They had no tenancy rights. Their settlements were haphazard and huddled bamboo huts after clearing the dense tropical forest.

There were no means of communication and transportation in the region where *Lhotshampas* resided. They had neither education nor any facilities for health. They had no civil rights and they were exposed to the exploitation and brutalities of the *durbar*¹⁶ functionaries. They were not in a situation to deny any demands made on them because the dissent was suppressed by the powerful persons. In short, they had very limited options that was either to comply with all sorts of demands made on them or leave Bhutan.

Basically there is the primal fear among the ruling elite that Bhutan is losing its territorial integrity and independence in decision-making as a sovereign state which is surrounded by the two largest Asian powers. Therefore, to be able to resist undue influence from outside, strict internal cohesion is considered as most crucial for the country's existence. Having this in mind, one perceived threat has gained particular momentum: that the "*Drukpa* Bhutanese" gets outnumbered by Nepalese immigrants (Giri, 2007). The political development in Sikkim and Nepal in 1970s had also impact on Bhutan. The development of Sikkim State Congress and Nepali Congress in Sikkim and Nepal and their supporters were predominantly the Nepalese. In this context, one of the most significant experiences for Bhutan's elite was India's annexation of Sikkim in 1975, leading to an end of the absolute rule of the *Chogyal* Monarchy¹⁷. As a result, there was an increasing surge of nationalist sentiment

¹⁵ Grain tax on land output

¹⁶ A court

¹⁷ It is claimed that this was made possible only because of the huge numbers of immigrated Nepali, which lorded over the indigenous communities of the *Lepchas* and *Bhotias* by voting in a disputed referendum for

among the many Bhutanese who voiced concerns about getting marginalized in their own country and the emergence of a pan-Nepali identity and nationalism based on the imagined concept of a 'Greater Nepal'. These fears became further increased by the *Gorkhaland* movement led by the *Gorkha* National Liberation Front (GNFL) for a Nepali speaking state (homeland) in the 1980s. While there is little concrete evidence either in Nepal, India or Bhutan of such an idea taking actual shape, the term is used to stoke an imagined threat to the country's identity, cultural heritage and political structure (Wolf, 2013).

During the first year of third *Druk Gyalpo* regime (1952-72), Bhutan had witnessed ripples of *Lhotshampas* agitation under the banner of Bhutan State Congress. But the movement was suppressed and all kinds of political agitations banned in Bhutan. The leaders of the Bhutan State Congress kept away from Bhutan and lived in exile till royal pardon was granted to them in 1960s.

The situation of *Lhotshampas* was not remaining the same throughout. At one point the ruler was forced to grant some incentives to *Lhotshampa* and review the Bhutanese approach to them from a cold tolerance to reluctant acceptance in the *Drugpa* state. Their first step was the enactment of Bhutan Citizenship Act of 1958, which provided a status to *Lhotshampas*. Their language was recognized and it began to be taught in the primary schools. They were permitted to build their shrines and teach Sanskrit, the language of their scriptures. The state also adopted the conscious ethnic policy of assimilating the *Lhotshampa* into the *Drugpa* fold they were encouraging inter-ethnic marriages by granting some amount first it was Rs.5,000 then increasing it to Rs. 10,000 as incentives. Further, the *Lhotshampas* were encouraged to participate in the proceedings of the *Tsongdu*¹⁸, they were sent abroad on scholarship for higher studies, were appointed as bureaucrats, were accorded membership to the Royal Advisory Council, the council of ministers; all these were happened during 1970s.

integration into the Union of its southern neighbor. It was in 1975, in Sikkim where the Buddhist monarch was used to rule and had been merged into the Indian union. In Sikkim, the demographic changes caused by large-scale immigration of ethnic Nepalese were perceived to have resulted in the monarchs' loss of power, which fuelled fears in Bhutan.

¹⁸ National legislative body

The *Lhotshampas* provided the much-needed labor force when Bhutan decided to undertake planned development through the Five-Year Plan in 1962. *J.B.Pradhan*, the commissioner of southern Bhutan, was entrusted by the *durbar* to provide manual laborers and ration required for their consumption on construction sites. Erstwhile insignificant sleepy border settlements such as *Samchi*, *Penden*, *Phuntshilling*, *Geylegphu*, *Samdrung Jongkhar* were turned into townships with thriving commercial activities (Kukreja and Singh, 2008). These settlements also housed the infant industrial establishments such as fruit preservation, liquor, cement, woodcraft, and the like. And it was the *Lhotshampas*, who were the only local labour available to handle those demanding accomplishments. During those days, the Bhutan *durbar* began its way to make the *Lhotshampas* life as comfortable as possible. The two decades from 1962 to 1982 can be considered as the heyday of *Lhotshampas* in Bhutan. Slowly and steadily, they developed a sense of assertion and by the late 1970s they began to voice their opinion and called a demand for democracy in Bhutan. At the same time, the 334 years old *Namgyal* Dynasty came to fell down, and there were the democratic fever caught up in Sikkim. This was the movement entirely organized by Nepalese with the Indian democratic force, the event surprise the Bhutanese ruler. In this context, the relationship between the *Lhotshampas* (ethnic minority) and state of Bhutan became much worse than before.

3.6 Conclusion

In the name to construct a framework for one King, one country and one people, Bhutanese nationalism, with its unique ingredients of *Ngalungs* culture and way of life, was introduced. Justifications for the policy were wrapped with apprehensions of a small country facing demographic threat from people of migrant origin. As a result of the introduction of various partisan policies to preserve its sovereignty and culture as described by the King, the people who till the late Eighties had perceived themselves as part of the Bhutanese socio-political system, suddenly felt that they were being alienated in different sectors of the government and that their loyalty was suspected in spite of their presence in Bhutan for more than a century. A major shift in the policy towards the *Lhotshampas* took place in the late Eighties. Various policies are adopted by the Government first to assimilate and later to marginalize the minority *Lhotshampas*.

As we discussed in this chapter, the relationship of ethnic minority with their state Bhutan has three distinct phases. First, after the signing of *Sinchula* treaty in 1860, *Lhotshampa* were not allowed to go up, and had to pay extra tax in cash. Second, phase that they are consider as the Bhutanese citizen in 1958. Third phase is marked from 1970s; the Royal Government of Bhutan has adopted the homogenization policy as completely against the minority *Lhotshampa*.

After examining the relationship between the minority *Lhotshampa* and the state of Bhutan, this chapter concludes that the relationship between State and the ethnic minority Lhotshampas in Bhutan is predominantly conflictual/contradictory. We can find overwhelming mistrust, protest, disobey, bias, unhappiness and dissatisfaction in their relation. This even led to an ousting of huge numbers of Lhotshampas from Bhutan by accusing them anti-nationals.

CHAPTER IV

Cultural Homogenization in Bhutan and the Question of Lhotshampas

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the process cultural homogenization in the context Bhutan and analyzes the acts and policies adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan in this regard. The Chapter also analyses the reasons for the adaptation of such policies and the way it was implemented/it worked. Homogenization is associated with the process assimilation on the one hand and marginalization on the other. It targets those groups of people who have distinct culture and traditions but numerically less - generally the minorities. The chapter also discusses the impacts/implications of such policies on the major minorities - *Lhotshampas* - of Bhutan.

The preceding chapter is an attempt to discuss the homogenization process into the kingdom of Bhutan and its exclusionist and assimilationist policies toward the minorities *Lhotshampa*. The idea of cultural homogenization is associated with the concept of globalization. In simple words, homogenization is a condition where the people of two or more groups with their distinct cultural and traditional practices were used to live together, have suddenly interacted and intermingles in such a manner as to lose their individual cultural identities and merged into a one uniform culture than does not show any trace of diversity of different cultures among the people (Kingzhouyang, 2012). The process homogenization is basically seen as a state led policy with an aim to impose the culture of the dominant elite group over other groups. It is a kind of top to down process to secure their position and power. The policies are generally imposed by force over the masses (Daniel, 2010). The elite groups can adopt homogenization process in their respective state in the name of national identity, ethnic identity, or nationalism. Sometime, the process turned to be incidents like ethnic cleansing, genocide, rape, murder, torture etc. upon the ethnic minorities¹. After the era of bi-polar system, the global culture can be seen on the basis of Westernization or Americanization (Hopper, 2007).

¹ For example, Bosnia and Serbia and many African Countries like Rwanda and Burundi

According to *Phadnis and Ganguly* (2001) there are two kinds of nationalism i.e. civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism². They discuss in civic nationalism, the nation came to be understood in a political or civic sense, that is, ‘as a community of politically aware citizens equal before law irrespective of their social and economic status, ethnic origin, and religious belief’ (ibid; 29).

In the late 19th and first half of the 20th century, European continent (especially France and England) has witnessed the development of the ethnic or cultural nation, which envisioned the creation of the nation not based on any common political values, law and citizenship, but either the spirit of the cultural community based on common descent, language, religion, customs and history. According to Anthony Smith,

Ethnic nationalism...unlike the territorial and civic versions of nationalism..conceives of the nation as a genealogical and vernacular cultural community. Whereas civic and territorial conceptions of the nation regard it as a community of shared culture, common laws and territorial citizenship, ethnic concepts of the nation focus on the genealogy of its members, however fictive; on popular mobilization of ‘the folk’; on native history and customs; and on the vernacular culture, as a vernacular community of genealogical descent, the ethnic nation seeks to create itself in the image of an ancestral ethnic. In so doing, it often helps to recreate that ethnic (Smith, 1991 cited in Phadnis and Ganguly 2001; 31).

It can be understood that in a state based on the idea of particular ethnic nation, citizen belong to the other or different ethnic group cannot consider the part of national grouping. Ethnic nationalism in association with self-determination can expose the problem of minority ethnic nationalities. No matter how consciously or carefully the political maps were drawn, dissatisfied minority ethnic nationalities would emerge in most of the state. This leads to some serious problems. First, though ethnic nationalism scattered among many of the existing states, it needs a strict implementation of the right of national self-determination which require either the great proliferation of new states or massive population migration causing severe hardship to many. Secondly, once a new state formed, it can make the situation of trapped minorities even worse.

² The famous French historian Ernest Renan (1863) called the civic nation a ‘daily plebiscite’, meaning that a political or civic nation ‘comes into existence when the population of a given territory perceives itself to be nation and equates citizenship with nationality’.

States would naturally be suspicious and therefore insist on absolute loyalty from their ethnic minorities for the reasons of state integrity and security. Moreover, states would deny their ethnic minorities, the right of self-determination and increased assimilations pressure on them. Such assimilation pressure would easily take into the form of outright discrimination. And finally, the existence of such trapped ethnic minorities would generate a plethora of powerful and destructive secessionist and irredentist conflicts (ibid; 35).

South Asia is the home of one fifth of humanity who are living in seven developing countries in the region with diverse identities, be it ethnicity, religion, caste, class, or language. The region has been the battlefield due to the huge influx of migration, imbalances in relationship between state institution and civic forces and ethnic nationalism or homogenization policy (Krishna, 1999). The post-colonial nation-building in South Asia is basically focused on creating a unified 'national identity' based on either common political values and citizenship or a putative majoritarian ethnic identity. But the states having more than one ethnic group, this type of outlook regarding the nation-building may not remain stable and harmonious. For Sankaran Krishna, 'whenever state elites in the region have attempted to ride roughshod over the rights and aspirations of so-called peripheral minorities (religious, linguistic, regional, or other), the result has been either a violent partition/secession or the emergence of ethno nationalist movements that have attempted to achieve those ends' (ibid; 444).

The plural states of South Asia have been faced enormous challenges to national integration from ethno-nationalist turbulence to violent ethnic conflicts³. The Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan which is under discussion here has also faced similar ethnic turmoil. An influx of ethnic Nepalese – the economic migrants drawn to the prosperity of southern Bhutan - and the homogenization policies/formation of ethnic nationalism by the state elite (*Drukpa*) transformed the erstwhile sleepy mountain Kingdom into a cauldron of violent ethnic clashes between the majority *Drukpas* and minority *Lhotshampas* (Nepalese), during the 1980s and 1990s (ibid; 186).

³ For example, India had with stand serious secessionist challenges in Punjab, Kashmir, and the Indian north-east. The myriad of ethnic problems faced by the country since independence have undermined national unity and morale, retarded development and destroyed countless life. In Pakistan too, has been facing the same problem, from the initial year of its independence. Not only India and Pakistan, some smaller state of South Asia have also facing the ethnic problem. The most vicious secessionist ethnic war between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil would be found in Sri Lanka.

There is clash between the traditional elites and modern elites; traditional elites consist nobility, clergy, and aristocracy support the ethnic-religious-pastoralist-past-oriented *Drukpa* identity as uniquely Bhutanese, whereas the modern elites consisting the commoners-populist-*Lhotshampa* as desired more democratization, human rights, written constitution and transparency in the state affairs (Sinha, 2001). When we come across the term elite, literally it means a small group of people those who are educated, experienced and skillful. Neither groups, the *Drukpa* or the *Lhotshampa*, consists such qualified and experience personalities. The traditional elite, who hold the dominant position in the state, instead of reconciliation with care and understanding, adopted the rash, callous and dismissive of the natural and genuine concerns of their opponent. This eventually led to massive clashes between the two parties and considerable size of population of Bhutan was dismantled; public and private assets were vandalized; all types of assaults on human dignity were perpetrated; an articulative, educated and experienced set of the *Lhotshampa* were forced to move to the refugee camps outside Bhutan.

As discussed above the state having more than one ethnic groups, may not stay stable or harmoniously, if it tries to create a unified national identity based on the majoritarian ethnic identity. Bhutan, as a multi-ethnic, multi-religion, and multi-linguistic nation has been faced the challenges of violent ethnic conflict, emergence of ethno nationalist or anti-nationalist movement and the growth of rebellious groups inside its territory due to the adaptation of homogenization policies through the acts and policies adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan in order to maintain its unique identity based on the ethnic identity of dominant group (*Ngalong/Drukpa*). Here there is an analysis of those policies into the context of *Lhotshampa*, and try to visualize the picture of trauma, pain and tragedy of minorities through some effective story told by the victims.

4.2 History of Lhotshampa Settlement in Bhutan

The term *Lhotshampa* or *Lhotsampa*, means southerners, has been used to signify the Nepalese community of Bhutan⁴ and to differentiate to the Nepalese of Bhutan from the

⁴ Prithwi Narayan Shah, who founded the modern Nepal has indentified the Nepalese as a cultural commonwealth of four Vernas and 36 Jatis through his DivyaUpadesh, recognizing the diversity among his subjects (Sinha; 2001). The Nepalese commonwealth comprises the three important social groups, the Thakuris those who strictly divided among themselves based on the Hindu verna system with the concept of purity and pollution, predominantly found

Nepalese of other parts. The social scenario of Lhotshampas in Bhutan presents a picture in which there is a preponderance of the matwali as against the tagadhari⁵. Though, a few priestly Brahmins are found in almost all the Lhotshampa settlement in Bhutan, as a whole there is complete absence of the Thakuris and the Newaris castes. Among the Brahmins also, apart from the priests, the herd men (Upadhyay) and Joshis were the first migrants, who moved to Bhutan Duars in search of pastureland. As the business has been occupied by the Drugpa monks and the noble businessmen, Newar trader could never find a welcome market for themselves. The Gurung, Tamang and the Kiratis, such as Rai, Limbu and Sunwar were used to clear the forest in eastern Nepal found a welcome niche on the Bhutan hills (Sinha, 2001).

Lhotshampas existence in Bhutan is controversial one. Only since early 19th century the existence of Nepalese in Bhutan is recorded. But the Nepalese those who are the dissident of Nepal camps trace their presence in Bhutan as far back as 7th century AD (Evans, 2010). On the other hand the Royal Government of Bhutan claims that the Nepalese are only a hundred years old immigrants in Bhutan. Whatever the claims from both the parties, available records reveal that *Lhotshampas* began living in Bhutan after the signing of *Sinchula* Treaty of 1865⁶. A further consequence of the *Sinchula* Treaty was the British encouragement of large numbers of Nepali immigrants arriving in Darjeeling and Sikkim, some of whom eventually settled in Bhutan⁷. Out of twenty districts of Bhutan, the Bhutanese of Nepalese origin predominantly settled in five of them, namely *Samchi*, *Chukha*, *Sarbhong* and *Samdruk Jongkhar*.

Captain C.J Morris (Army recruitment officer), in his “Report on the Immigration of *Gurkhas* into Bhutan”⁸, argues that Nepalese settlement in Bhutan is prior to the date of 1865. It

in western Nepal; the Newaris those who divided among themselves into a number of occupational castes and following Hinduism and Buddhism and combination of both; and the Kirates in general term it will comprised the number of animist, Lamaist and Hindu tribes. The Nepalese are also broadly divided into two groups, the tagadharis, such as Brahmins (those who wear the sacred thread)- the higher castes according to Hindu rituals and social hierarchy; and the *matwalis*, those who are by tradition are not allowed to wear or use the sacred thread and thus normally not prohibited intoxicant drinks.

⁵ Tagadharis, those who were sacred thread (Brahmins) the higher caste in rituals and social hierarchy, matwalis, those who are by tradition not permitted to touch the sacred thread and normally not prohibited intoxicant drink (Sinha 2001;30)

⁶ See Appendix V

⁷ there is no clear evidence on the part of Nepalese and their presence in Bhutan prior to 1865. And the reason behind their absence in prior to the above date was the absence of laws, unsettled state affairs and chronic feud among the *Drukpa* functionaries.

⁸ It is based on the survey made by the Morris for *Gurkha* recruitment, where he recorded the presence of Nepalese population.

is written that, in *Chirang* District, prior to 1910, many Nepalese used to visit the area for a few months in the hot weather to tap rubber trees since 60 years ago, but it has been said that they were always used to return their homes which was situated in Eastern Nepal for the rest of the year. They were free to come and settle in the *Chirang* district at that time, however, Bhutan government banned their further movement⁹. People were completely free to follow their own religion and customs. They lived exactly as in Nepal and there is no supervision by the Bhutanese of any sort whatsoever (Sinha, 2004). Within this context, we can see the lifestyle of Nepalese in Bhutan, during 1930s. Nepalese are even permitted to dispose their land and houses to other Nepalese and/or Bhutanese. However, they were banned to purchase land from Bhutanese. Morris had been observed that the Nepalis - *Rai* and *Limboo* - were majority in this district, who were originally come from eastern Nepal.

In *Samchi* (*Chamerchi*) district where *Morris* and his team reached in 1933 recorded that it was the Nepalese who were the first occupied this area in some sixty or seventy years ago. Amongst the first arrivals, *Dalchand Gurung*, in course of time, had been able to obtain a concession from the Bhutan Government for an area which seems to have been practically coincident with that now occupied by the Nepalese (ibid). The present boundaries of the concession are as follows; on the east the *Pa Chuu* River, on the west the *Dinah* River, and on the south the British frontier. The northern border was not fixed. By the time *Morris* visited, there were no Nepali settlements on North as it is hilly and many places covered by thick jungle (ibid; 97). Therefore, it was a sort of 'no man's land', which separates the Nepalese and Bhutanese.

Dewan Hemraj Gurung (grandson of *Dalchand*) was the owner of the concession during their visit, he has been given the title of *Samchi Zompe* and his position is analogous to that of a petty raja tributary to the Maharaja of Bhutan, with complete judicial power. *Morris* observed that the *Dorkha* is populated mostly by the *Rais*, *Denchuka*, on the other side of the *Amo Chu* by *Limboos*. They used to grow rice and corn in much more quantities, which are sent to the entire Bhutan (ibid; 99).

⁹ people themselves knew nothing about that and as there were no Bhutanese officials standing in that district. The Nepalese were enabled to live much freer life like their own country

On west of the *Samchi* district and adjoining it is another concession known as *Sipchu*, the inhabitants of which are also for the most part are Nepalese. The concession stretches upto the western boundary of Bhutan. In *Sipchu*, the arrangement were apparently in progress to transfer it into the form of integral part of *Samchi*¹⁰.

Jigmi Y. Thinley, the spokesman of the Royal Government of Bhutan, reported that the *Tongsa Penlop* authorized *Kazi Ugen Dorjee* in the year 1900 AD to recruit *Lhotshampas* as contractual labourers and lumberman for clearance of forest and timber extraction (ibid). Charles A. Bell was deputed for a survey to the western fringe of Bhutan on *Torsa* River for construction of a road from the Bengal *Duars* to Tibet. He found *Sipchu* and *Tsangbe kazis*, *Nandlal Chettri*, *Garjaman Gurung* and *lalsingh* as *thickadars* (contractual landlords) controlling 2,730 houses and about 15,000 persons out of which 14,000 were reported to be the Nepalese (Charles, 1904). John Claude White, who visited Bhutan in 1905, found “that for the last fifteen years (since 1890) the grazing grounds of herdsman *Bhotias* near *Sipchoo* and the lower hills have been seriously curtailed by the increasing interruption of Nepalese settlers and then the chief source of their wealth - cattle rearing and dairy produce - has begun to fail, while constant quarrels arising between them and *paharias* (Nepalese) entail much worry and expense (ibid; 8).

The thing has been wondering that if the Nepalese were already there in Bhutan, then how come there was no mention of them on the eve of the coronation of the first king *Ugyen Wangchuk* on 17th December 1907. *Dhakal* published a Bhutanese edict (*kasho*)¹¹ which was issued by *Bhar Raja* and *Rimphu Raja (Paro)* to *Dalchan* and *Garjaman Gurungs* in August and September 1887 granting them an estate in perpetuity (Sharma and Sharma, 1998). It is an interesting documents which defines the area, purpose for which the edict was granted, the person to whom it was bestowed and its comprehensive scope. It is important to quote in full, because it claims the legal authority toward the *Lhotshampa* settlement:

“This official document is hereby issued in favor of *Sadar Dalchan*, Nepali resident of *Hamrajmin of Chamurchi* area. The area extending to the west from *Balachuwar Torpa* river, and to east from *Uchumpato* river, is given to *Sardar Dalchan Gurung and Garjman Gurung*, the father and son, respectively. It is hereby declared that nobody else is allowed to do anything on

¹⁰ But *Morris* report does not found the detailed information about the area concerning.

¹¹ Its original text is in Nepali and translated by B.B Shrestha

the land whether he or she is a noble family or a low class family; and this document legalizes the contractual authority of the (aforesaid) father and son. No complaint in this regard is intertwined no matter who they are, high class people or low class people...(Sinha, 2001; 166)

“The river in the east of Balachhuwar, eastward from Ujumsa, and further Chunpaha River in the west southward from the source from Chunmati (limestone) on the hill, and north ward from the Barus the borderline with the English (British Indian Territory). The area within this cardinal demarcation is officially given on contract with due seal and signature. In accordance with it, the fish, clay, stone, wood, bamboo, binding weed, leaf and all products of the land should be delivered to our government store from now onwards (throughout your posterity use and enjoy (them)); Follow the law; Avoid giving trouble and taking undue advantage; Make the land fertile and do not leave it barren; Encourage habitation and enhance the environment. Sardar Dalchan Gurung and his son are endowed with the land under these conditions. No high class or low class person is allowed to lodge any complaint in this respect. This contractual document is sealed and handed over to both the father and the son everybody, including high and low class people, should bear it understanding. It is hereby permitted to use and enjoy the land,...” (Sinha, 2001, 165).

At first, *Garjaman Gurung* came to Bhutan to mine lime quarries. Later he made ‘*Samchi* estate’ for the purpose of tax collection. He eventually settled a number of Nepalese families in his estate (ibid, 165). The *Gurung* has also reported to have got constructed ‘*Saureni palace*’ at *Samchi* for his residence. In his visit to *Samchi* in 1932, Capt., C.J Morries found that 25 years old *Hemraj*, son of *Garjaman*, handling the businesses of his father with the help of his two brothers *Jasraj* and *Motiraj*. They were to living in their large Bungalow at *Samchi* in semi-European style (ibid, 166). The *Gurungs* life style attracted the *Drugpa* elites. It has been alleged that the *Hemraj* did not return from his annual trip to *Parodezong* in 1947, where he had gone to deposit the annual revenue collected from the tenants from his estate. It has been suspected that he was poisoned to death in the *Dzong* (ibid, 167). After the death of *Hemraj* the *Gurungs* were continued to manage their estate and status until 1960.

Apart from *Gurung*, another loyalist notable *Lhotshampa* family of *Dasho Jhulendra Bahadur Pradhan*, popularly known as *Neoly Babu/Sipchu Kazi* also traces their presence in Bhutan since 1880s. His family had settled down at *Chengmari* in *Samchi* district sometime in second half of the 19th century. He was recruited as an assistant to the Bhutanese delegation of *Sir Wangchuk* to the famous *Delhi Durbar* in 1911 at the young age of 16 years (ibid).

Dorji family (*Ygen, Sonam Tobgyel and Jigme Palden*) was entrusted with the settlement and administration of southern Bhutan by the *Wangchuk* rulers. The most of the *Lhotshampa*

immigrants were farmers, herdsmen and lumbermen inhabited in the region. The *Dorjis* were resided in Kalimpong and involved in the matters of the Durbar, the British and their own business, handed over day-today administration of their charge to *Garjaman Gurung and J.B Pradhan* to the western and the eastern district respectively. After the death of *Garjaman Gurung*, the western parts of southern Bhutan were also assigned to *J.B. Pradhan*. He used to oversee levy and collection of land and house taxes, ensure law and order, investigate and solve the civic and criminal cases, maintain census and land records and liaison with the British and Indian officials on behalf of Bhutan administration (ibid).

The administration of southern Bhutan was patterned in a formal structure during the reign of third *Wangchuk* king. At that time *J.B. Pradhan* was made the Commissioner of southern Bhutan and was placed under the Bhutan House (*Kalimpong*), with *Samchi* (western) and *Chirang* districts under his control. The other two districts were placed under the charge of Deputy Commissioner *Jasraj Gurung* and *Aas Bahadur Subba* in west and east respectively; these are also further divide into sub-division and were assigned to the respective Sub-Divisional Officers. This pattern of administration was continued until the assassination of Prime Minister *Jigmie Palden Dorji* in 1964, and then the administration of southern Bhutan come directly under the King. *J.B. Pradhan* was instrumental in encouraging the *Lhotshmapas* settlements in Bhutan especially for two reasons. First, to create revenue base for the state and, second, to secure Bhutan borders with India and prevent possible encroachment on the Bhutanese territory (ibid). The important thing to be noted here is that the entire administrative documentation and correspondence was carried through the medium of Nepali language.

It was the Commissioner *J.B Pradhan*, who was responsible for providing labour and ration for thousands of construction workers engaged on National Highway being constructed by the Indian Border Road Organization (BRO) in 1960s. Even after the communication from *Thimpu* to south was restored and administration was recognized under the *Druk-gyalpo*, the role of *J.B. Pradhan* remained the same, and he continued to hold the position with privileges and decoration until he died in 1975¹² (ibid).

¹² He is one of the *Lhotshampa* among the few state functionaries who are identified closely with the *Drukpa* regime

Till 1950s, Bhutan did not have rules for naturalization of their aliens, it was only in 1958, the Nepalese immigrants were granted citizenship (Citizenship Act of 1958¹³). Bhutan took the giant step in its ethnic policy, where the immigrant Nepalese were granted a regional identity i.e. *Lhotshampa* which means ‘the people of south or the Nepalese settlers of the southern Bhutan foothills’. Citizenship rights to the *Lhotshampas* not only gave them legitimacy but conferred on them political and economic rights at par with other communities of Bhutan. The National Assembly (*Tshogdu*) which was established in 1953 gave representation to the Nepalese for the first time in 1958, thus including them in the decision-making process (Pattanaik, 2008). The southern Bhutanese were represented in the Bhutanese civil services at par with the ethnic Bhutanese. In the National Assembly, other than the national language Dzongkha, the debates were translated into English, and Nepali. Till 1988, Nepalese were free to study in their mother tongue and teaching was imparted in Nepali. They were also taken in the Army and police and were included in the Cabinet and judiciary. There was no restriction on Nepalese to open *pathsalas* to learn Sanskrit or to celebrate Hindu religious holidays and maintain their culture, tradition and wear their unique dress.

Until the reign of third *Druk-Gyalpo*, there was no tension between the two parties. Rather there was a visible improvement in the relationship between the state and the minorities. The state had adopted a conscious ethnic policy to assimilate *Lhotshampas* into the *Drukpa* fold by encouraging inter-ethnic marriage by granting some cash incentives. But the situation had undergone through rapid changes immediately after the death of third *Druk-Gyalpo*. Bhutan no more remained untouched with the political developments in its neighbouring states such as the fall of *Namgyal* Dynasty in Sikkim and its subsequent merger with India, the demands for *Gorkhaland* and the politics of Greater Nepal – both led by the Nepalese population.

4.3 Homogenization in Bhutan: The Beginning

Basically, the primal threat among the traditional elites was that Bhutan was losing its territorial integrity and independence of decision-making as a sovereign state as it is surrounded by two Asian powers (India and China). Therefore, to be able to resist undue influence from the outside, strict internal cohesion is considered as crucial for the country’s existence (Dhurba,

¹³ See Appendix I

2010). By keeping this in mind, one perceived threat has gained its particular momentum; that the “*Drukpa* Bhutanese” has been outnumbered by Nepalese immigrants¹⁴. In this context, one of the significant experiences of Bhutan’s elite was India’s annexation of Sikkim in 1975, leading towards the end of absolute Royal rule of *Namgyal* Dynasty. It has been claimed that this was possible only because of huge number of immigrants Nepalese, who outnumbered the indigenous communities *Lepcha* and *Bhutia* by voting in a disputed referendum for integration into the union of its southern neighbor Sikkim. As a result, there was an increasing surge of nationalist sentiment among the many Bhutanese who voiced concerns about getting marginalized in their own country and the emergence of a pan-Nepali identity and nationalism based on the imagined concept of a ‘Greater Nepal’. These fears became further increased by the *Gorkhaland* movement¹⁵. While there is no concrete evidence in Nepal, India or Bhutan of such an idea taking actual shape, the term is used to stoke an imagined threat to the country’s identity, cultural heritage and political structure. Drawing on this, the Bhutanese government passed restrictive citizenship acts in the following years and adopted a new cultural policy and resettlement process – *Driglam Namzha* – which entitled as *Bhutanization/Drukpanization* of the country.

However, apart from these political developments in the neighbouring countries, the *Ngalung* elite claimed that demographic threat is also a factor behind the adaptation of such a policy. They claimed that there are many illegal Nepalese in Bhutan, and the ethnic Nepali have a grand plan to render *the Ngalung* a minority in their ‘own country’¹⁶; a claim that relies heavily on asserting that the fertility rate of *Lhotshampa* is significantly higher than that of the *Ngalung*. However, the *Ngalung* authorities claim Bhutan has one of the highest population growth rates in South Asia because the *Lhotshampa* is a polygamous race and a *Lhotshampa* household with three or four wives and a dozen or 15 children is quite common.

¹⁴ It has been estimate that the Naglung represent 10-25%, *Sharchop* and *Kheng* 30-40%, and *Lhotshampa* is about 25-53% of population.

¹⁵ led by the *Gorkha* National Liberation Front (GNFL) for a Nepali speaking state (homeland) in the 1980s (Phadnis and Ganguly, 2001)

¹⁶ They make a contradictory statement in 1993, that there was no Nepali presence in Bhutan prior to the 20th century. Whereas, in 1991, a Bhutanese Foreign Minister was reported as saying that “Nepali have been settling down in our southern plains from the 17th century and we welcomed them (i.e. allowed immigration) because they were hard working people, but they cannot swamp un” (Giri, 2004).

Despite the fact of the demographic threat feel by the *Ngalung* by the *Lhotshampa*, the other factor which also seems relevant observed by the third party, which may led elite group to adopt the policy. It is a fact that the Government of Bhutan became particularly uneasy about the successful *Lhotshampa* community in the south. Being hard-working farmers close to Indian markets, the *Lhotshampa* had transformed the once disease-prone south of Bhutan into the granary of the entire country (Giri, 2007). While southern Bhutan had almost all factories and necessary markets, the *Ngalung*-dominated north had only two resources: conifer timber and tourism – the latter held in check by a cautious clergy. The realization that the south had become a potential economic base explains, in part, why the *Ngalung* elite turned against the *Lhotshampa* community. The Government of Bhutan has employed various methods to evict a large number of *Lhotshampa* people to achieve cultural, economic and political hegemony in favor of the *Ngalung* (ibid).

Basically in the early 1980s the *Ngalung* rulers began to impose involuntary assimilation policies through the enactment of a series of laws. The 1980 Bhutan Marriage Act, detailing laws form marriage with a non-national, effectively restricted matrimony from outside (Giri, 2007). Under this Act, a Bhutanese citizen who marries a foreigner is denied state support in the form of land, seeds, loans, livestock and health benefits. Other assistance from the Government such as free school education was also stopped. The 1980 Act applies only to the *Lhotshampa*, not to other ethnic groups. In 1987, Bhutan started its sixth Five Year Plan, proclaiming the concept of *driglam namzha* or ‘one nation, one people’ (Dhurba, 2010).

4.4 *Driglam Namzha*: The Intensification of Cultural Homogenization

The sense of insecurity largely has emerge from the growing *Lhotshampas* population made Royal Government of Bhutan to think about its identity as a distinct nation, its culture and Mahayana form of Buddhism which the Bhutanese consider as unique and exclusive. Apprehensions surfaced over whether illegal migration of Nepalese to Bhutan can alter the ethnic composition of the Bhutanese society and reduce the *Drukpas* and other ethnic groups to the status of minority in their own country. The government realised the dangerous implication it can have for the identity of Bhutan with its unique Mahayana Buddhism and culture. To deal

with this, the Bhutanese programme of *Driglam Namzha* was introduced in the form of a Royal *Khaso* (decree) on January 16, 1989, as a part of the Sixth Plan document (ibid).

The vast social and political changes¹⁷ in its neighbor state created serious concerns about how to bridge the tensions between tradition and modernity. Having this in mind, one of the most significant and troubling question for Bhutan's elite was how to preserve country's culture and identity. The notion that, the king is not any more the focus and sole guarantor and symbol for a united Bhutan is for large segments of the ruling elite as well as the common people, was disturbing. Therefore, political reforms are seen as critical by the "traditionalists".

The royal decree of *Driglam Namzha*, understood abstractly as 'the principles of Bhutanese traditions, customs, etiquette, and values' and, more concretely, as 'national dress and language', was issued by King *Jigme Singye* in 1989, and enforced by the Bhutanese government in the same year. *Driglam Namzha*, alongside other measures, was intended to forge a distinctive Bhutanese national identity on the basis of the culture of the ruling *Ngalung*, deemed by the King to be the country's main resource. It includes the mandatory wearing of the national costume (*gho* for men and *kira* for women) on formal occasions. Reports suggest, however, that the dress code is often applied beyond the stipulations of the King's decree, extending even to everyday life. Failure to abide by the dress code of *Driglam Namzha* may result in short-term imprisonment or the imposition of a fine. The *Dzongkha* language, mother tongue of the *Ngalung* people of the west highland districts, was already declared the national language of Bhutan by the King in 1961 (Wolf, 2012). In 1989 the Nepali language was taken off from the curriculum of educational institutions and all teaching-learning materials in Nepali were removed from schools.

The government was accused of using the *Driglam Namzha* regulations not only to preserve the cultural identity of Bhutan but also as an instrument to harass and suppress the people of Nepali origin. In this context, Bhutan's cultural policy is identified as a deliberate strategy of persecution to drive the Nepali out of the country. This policy targeted *Lhotsampa* for

¹⁷ One was the *Gorkha Land* Movement which pushed for a separate land for Nepali speakers in India in the 1980s. The second was the so-called 'Greater Nepal' concept, a bogey to incorporate all Nepali-speaking areas into one fold of Greater Nepal. Third, Bhutan's royal elites, who are closely related to the *Chogyal* royal family of Sikkim which is now an Indian state, also cite the example of how Nepali speakers helped the Indian government to merge Sikkim with India.

‘overnight’ assimilation into the *Drukpa* fold, compelling them to adopt Bhutanese culture, tradition and social etiquette, with a heavy monetary penalty for non-compliance. This policy has sought to absorb culturally the *Lhotsampa* within Bhutanese society and erode their identity as a distinct ethnic group. The new language policy is also aimed to this end which expanded the use of the Dzongkha national language and banned Nepali from the school syllabus and other sites of crucial human engagement such as offices and any site of government business including the parliament. The argument made by some human rights activists that the knowledge of Bhutanese language (*Drukpa*), history and culture is mandatory for citizenship, is identified by minorities as the social construction of an exclusive, culturally-based nationalism of the majority group leading to forced assimilation of minorities.

Whatever be the case, in the name of national integration and promoting Bhutanese identity, the government has used the rhetoric of ‘One Nation One People’ to justify its policies of ethnic cleansing. These policies seek to erode the culture, religion and language of the *Lhotsampa*, the *Sharchop* and other minority ethnic, religious and linguistic groups to bolster the dominance of the *Ngalung* people and the *Drukpa* sect of which the elites are part. The ‘One Nation One People’ platform focuses on what the government claims is the need for a distinct ‘national identity’ - an ethnically exclusive *Kargupa* Buddhist identity. This policy seeks explicitly to purge Bhutanese society of its diversity by forcefully imposing *Drukpa* values, customs, lore, symbols and traditions on a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. This policy attempts to make a nation not just of ‘One People’ but more diacritically of ‘One *Drukpa* People’ (ibid).

4.5 Marriage Act

In conjunction with citizenship requirements, the government introduced strict marriage laws in 1980 to have retrospective application from 1977¹⁸. These laws involved punitive measures against any Bhutanese married to a non-Bhutanese national, or such a Bhutanese person who chooses to take this step. In these circumstances, the Bhutanese citizen is, from the day of marriage, denied promotion in government services, not promoted beyond the rank of

¹⁸ Keeping in mind the relations resulting from marriages between the Nepalese on either side of the international boundary which encourages further immigration, the government introduced the Marriage Act, 1980, restricting marriage with non-Bhutanese by laying down certain penalties in terms of promotion and other benefits.

sub-divisional officer, ineligible for employment in national defense or the Foreign Ministry, and ineligible to seek candidacy to contest election for the National Assembly or any local government bodies (Pattnaik, 2008). They are deprived off privileges provided by the state such as distribution of land, loans, medical treatment abroad and grant for the investment of capital. They also forfeit their right to government assistance for education and training. These punitive marriage laws provide a type of long-term reinforcement to the citizenship laws, particularly since marriage is the site of reproduction of future Bhutanese citizens (ibid).

Hence, because of their close contact and similarity in their culture and tradition, most of the *Lhotshampas* were used to make a matrimonial relation with the non-Bhutanese Nepalese of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Sikkim and Nepal (outside the Bhutan). All those who have non-Bhutanese wives have been denied from all the facilities provided by Government (ibid). But it has been seen that this marriage law is implemented discriminately - applied to the *Lhotshampas* only; not to the other ethnic groups like many elite *Ngalung* have Chinese or Western wives but they do not need to comply with the Marriage Act¹⁹ (ibid).

4.6 The Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985

The ruling elite, from the 1980s, has used citizenship as a powerful mechanism to exclude or expel *Lhotshampa* and others of Nepalese origin. After years of peaceful struggle, the *Lhotsampa* were granted citizenship and some rights as citizens in 1958 through the Royal Edict on *Lhotsampa* Citizenship Act. But the 1958 act has been revised or replaced a number of times. The 1985 Citizenship Act currently in place states that Bhutanese citizenship can be acquired only by birth, registration or naturalization. For citizenship by birth, both parents must be Bhutanese, instead of at least the father as required in the 1977 Act²⁰ and either of the parents as required in the 1958 act. The act is written in this way:

This act may be called the Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985. It shall come into force from Twenty-third day, forth month of Wood Bull year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to 10th June, 1985. In case of the conflict between the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

¹⁹ See Appendix IV

²⁰ See Appendix II

1. ***Citizenship by Registration***

A person permanently domiciled in Bhutan on or before 31st December, 1958, and, whose name is registered in the census register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by registration.

2. ***Residence Permit***

His majesty the King was pleased to state that the Citizenship Act had been formulated and passed by the National assembly, taking into account the present and future security and stability needs of a small country like Bhutan. Therefore, all the assembly Members must recall this decision and ensure that there are no continuous changes in the important laws and regulations of the country.

His Majesty the King was pleased to note that in accordance with the Citizenship Acts promulgated in 1958, 1977 and 1985, the children of Bhutanese men married to non-nationals prior to 1985, the children of Bhutanese men married to non-nationals prior to 1985 would automatically eligible for citizenship. In the case of the Bhutanese women married to non-nationals, her husband and children would according to the law not be considered as citizens. His Majesty assured the National Assembly that it was not the intention of the Royal Government to separate parents and children, husbands and wives from living together. In consideration of their welfare, His Majesty suggested that non-nationals married to Bhutanese and are not eligible to citizenship according to the provisions of the existing laws, could be granted special residence permit. They would also be entitled to health education and other social benefits extended to citizens of the country.

According to Government's statics, marriages between Bhutanese and non-nationals have taken place during the last 20 years. As the number is not small, but runs into tens of thousands, it is necessary that the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Census, and the respective Dzongkhags, Gups and Chimis carry out investigations to ensure that the marriages are genuine and in conformity with the law. Marriage which have taken place according to necessary procedures could be given special residence permit.

If the royal Government does not proceed strictly in accordance to the provisions of its laws, it is likely that non-nationals may come to the conclusion that irrespective of the clear laws of the country the Government would grant citizenship once inter-marriages have taken place. Under such circumstances, landless and unemployed non-nationals may resort to arrangement of marriage with Bhutanese nationals as a means of settling down in the country. If such cases take place in large number, as it has happened in many others countries, the peace and stability of the country will be affected. Therefore, even the granting of the special residence permits should be limited to those married prior to coming in force of the 1985 Act and should not be applicable to any individuals married thereafter.

His Majesty the King was pleased to state that marriages between Bhutanese and non-nationals are not prohibited, so long as they are carried out fully in accordance with the Citizenship and Marriage laws of the country.

3. ***Foreign Nationals Who Have Land and Property in Bhutan***

The Deputy Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs, reported to the Assembly that foreign nationals who have acquired land and property in accordance with the 1985 Citizenship Act. Those who have acquired immovable properties illegally shall not be admissible for citizenship.

4. *Bhutanese Nationals not included in the Census*

The Deputy Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs, reported that genuine Bhutanese Nationals not appearing in the census register shall be confirmed citizenship and included in the census after thorough investigations are carried out by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Department of Census, respective *Dzongkhags* and *Chimis*. This must be undertaken within 1989.

His Majesty the King was pleased to state that in reviewing their records of *Dzongkhags*, it was found that 12,103 Bhutanese nationals have not been registered in the census. Thorough investigations would be carried out on each case. Those who have not been registered due to lack of knowledge or for justifiable reasons shall be permitted to be included in the census in 1989 and shall be subject to any sanctions. Those deliberately avoiding to appear in the census for reason of evasion of *Woola* and taxes, shall be subject to penalties depending on the seriousness of their actions. Further, appropriate punishment shall also be imposed on Government officials, Gups, and other defaulters responsible for deliberate exclusion of people from the census (Sharma and Sharma, 1998).

The Citizenship Act of 1985 put up more hurdles regarding both attainment and termination of citizenship. It is more rigid and stringent compared to the 1958 Citizenship Act as far as naturalization is concerned. The Act stated that only in cases where both the parents are from Bhutan, a child born to such parents will be a Bhutanese citizen by birth. Other significant provisions of the 1985 Citizenship Act are in case a non-national marries a Bhutanese national, the offspring of such marriage and the spouse can apply for Bhutanese citizenship. For the non-Bhutanese spouse, it includes 15 years residency, ability to speak, read and write Dzongkha proficiently, possessing a good moral character and having no record of acting or speaking against the King, country and people. Besides, the government has the power to reject any application without citing any reason.

The 1985 Citizenship Act lays down two circumstances. Apart from making annual registration in the Census Department compulsory, the clause relating to the termination of citizenship reads that "any citizen of Bhutan who has acquired citizenship by naturalization may be deprived of citizenship at any time if that person has shown by act or speech to be disloyal in any manner whatsoever to the king, country, people." This clause affected the *Lhotshampas* because many of them are naturalized citizens. It is interesting to note that through this clause, the government curtailed any dissent whatsoever to the policies undertaken in the name of national integration.

The 1985 Act, in particular, caused great consternation amongst the *Lhotshampa* population for the following main reasons: The act was seen as targeting the Nepali-speakers alone, because it effectively revoked the assurances of citizenship granted under the 1958 Law and 1977 Act to all those who had been resident in Bhutan for period of years regardless of the date of first arrival (Hart, 2010). It has demanded a level of fluency in *Dzongkha* that was beyond the capability of many people in the south amongst whom this language was not necessary for the conduct of daily life. Until the 1970s, the Nepali speaking population of the south had not been allowed to travel to the Dzongkha-speaking north. In any event, many members of the older generations were illiterate.

The Citizenship Act called into question the nationality of people who had been included as citizens in national censuses conducted in 1969 & 1979. The Bhutanese Government justified their new citizenship policies on the basis of the ‘Greater Nepal’ conspiracy, arguing that the ‘minority ethnic community’ was attempting ‘to turn themselves into a majority through illegal immigration in order to take over political power’.

According to the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGB), the 1988 census revealed that ‘large numbers of illegal immigrants flooding the country’ who had been attracted by free healthcare, education and other development projects in southern Bhutan since 1961 (Evans, 2010). This demographic pressure rendered Bhutan’s *Drukpa* Buddhist culture at risk of ‘extinction’, which necessitated laws and policies designed to address illegal immigration and to retain Bhutan’s distinct national cultural identity.

While the Bhutan government claims that the exercise was devised to address a growing problem of illegal immigration in southern Bhutan, many *Lhotshampas* saw it as an initiative designed to reduce the size of the ethnic Nepali population of Bhutan. The 1988 census focused mainly on southern Bhutan, and it was stipulated that a person should have arrived in Bhutan latest by 10 June 1955 to qualify for citizenship under the 1985 Citizenship Act. In practice, this was targeted against the *Lhotshampa* community, in order to drastically reduce their representation in the national population (Rizal, 2010).

It is important to note that the census of 1988 was conducted only in the *Lhotsampa* - dominated southern districts of Bhutan, sought to identify Bhutanese nationals strictly in accordance with the provisions of the 1985 Citizenship Act (Rizal, 2010). During the census, each adult member of a household was required to be present himself or herself before a census team from the central government when it visited his/her locality. In order to be recorded in the census register, the *Lhotshampas* had to produce a tax receipt dated 1958, the year of the enactment of Bhutan's first Nationality Law, and prove their membership of the relevant household if the name on the receipt was not their own.

The citizenship cards that had been issued to all Bhutanese in the years leading up to 1988 were no longer accepted as proof of Bhutanese citizenship, and in some cases these were confiscated during the census. A Certificate of Origin (C.O.) had to be produced by individuals who had moved to their place of residence after 1958. Typically, married women were required to return in person to their places of birth and acquire a C.O. from the authorities there. Each individual's name was added to one of the seven lists with five intermediate categories in between²¹. An individual who could produce a 1958 receipt for tax paid on the land registered in their or an ancestor's name, and could convince officials that both of their parents were Bhutanese nationals, was listed under F1 (ibid). Women who had come in from outside Bhutan to marry could not produce C.O.s and were therefore liable to be registered as non-nationals.

The Home Ministry, which conducted the census demanded even 30-year-old receipts from the *Lhotsampa* farmers, was itself established only in 1968. Some observers claim that the requirements of the 1985 Citizenship Act would not have posed a major problem if implemented fairly during the census, since most *Lhotsampa* have retained their tax receipts. Yet after the census, even the *Lhotsampa* who had their 1958 receipts have been evicted from Bhutan and with nowhere to go, most have been relocated in refugee camps in Nepal (ibid).

²¹ The census identified the population under seven categories: F1 Genuine Bhutanese citizens; F2 Returned emigrants; F3 Dropout cases (i.e. people who were not around at the time of the census); F4 Children of a Bhutanese father and non-Bhutanese national mother; F5 Non-Bhutanese national father married to Bhutanese national mother and their children; F6 Adopted children; and F7 Non-nationals (Rizal 2010).

The intention of the census was clearly to weed out those who the authorities saw as their unwanted demographic opponents. As testament to the ethnic cleansing purpose of the census, one can find in these refugee camps in Nepal some *Lhotsampa* who still have their land tax receipts dated even before the establishment of the *Wangchuk* Dynasty as Bhutan's hereditary monarchy in 1907 (ibid).

4.7 The Impacts of Homogenization Policy

In April 1989, *Tek Nath Rizal*, a *Lhotshampa* member of the Royal Advisory Council, attempted to alert the king (wrote a confidential appeal to the King) of growing public unease about the 1988 census and 1985 Citizenship Act in the south. But he was immediately arrested and detained briefly for his temerity. Subsequently, a small group of *Lhotshampa* took to the streets and held a peaceful demonstration in September 1990 demanding basic human rights and democracy in Bhutan. The authorities dismissed these demands and the police resorted force and extreme methods to deal with the conflict.

After the demonstrations, the Bhutanese army and police began the task of identifying participants and supporters, who were later arrested. Many were held for months without any trial. After the demonstrations, many new rules and procedures were introduced in the south. *Lhotshampas* found these measures as attempts to attack the economic and social bases of their communities. Restrictions were placed on the transportation of essential commodities such as salt. Applicants for scholarships and civil service appointments had to produce a 'No Objection Certificate' (N.O.C.) that they had acquired from the Royal Bhutan Police (Evans, 2010). This certified that the holder had a clean record, i.e., that they had not taken part in oppositional activity, and were not related to anyone who had. The N.O.C. was also required of children seeking admission to school, with the result that children whose parents had taken part, or were suspected of taking part, in 'anti-national activities' had difficulties gaining access to formal education (ibid). Many individuals were prevented from selling their cash crops in the open market and made to hand them over to the local administration, which issued receipts but no payments.

Following the introduction of new government policies in the late 1980s, political tensions mounted in southern Bhutan. By 1992, over 80,000 *Lhotshampas* had departed for refugee camps in eastern Nepal. There are various reasons behind their flight to refugee camp. On the one hand, RGB and its supporters allege that southern Bhutanese dissidents engaged in violent and subversive activities against the state, which posed ‘a threat to Bhutan’s survival as a distinct political and cultural entity’ (Evans, 2010). Therefore, the RGB arrested a small number of criminals and ‘terrorists’ (ibid, 31). When large numbers of southern Bhutanese began leaving, the RGB expressed surprise at this ‘disturbing trend’, claiming that ‘no force whatsoever has been used against them’ and that the King had made ‘appeals to the *Lhotshampas* not to leave the country’. On the other hand, according to the refugees and their supporters, the southern Bhutanese peacefully objected to the government policies that they felt directly attacked their distinct culture and language, and requested political reforms. In response, the government branded ‘all the activists and the supporters of the movement as anti-nationals’ and ‘sent the Royal Bhutan Army to crush the movement’. This resulted in ‘mass arrests, flogging, torture, rape, arson, looting and plunder’, which ‘compelled the innocent *Lhotshampa* villagers to flee Bhutan’ (ibid, 35).

In response to the government’s new policies, some southern Bhutanese established organizations to demand respect for their cultural rights. Students and lecturers at the National Institute of Education were involved in the People’s Forum for Human Rights (PFHR)²². In turn, the Bhutanese Government acted swiftly to quell their resistance. Between October and December 1989, 45 people including *Tek Nath Rizal* who were active in organizations protesting the government policies were arrested. Following these arrests, in late autumn 1989, several hundred mostly male activists had fled Bhutan and ‘taken refuge in a tea plantation in *Garganda*, West Bengal. It was here that the Bhutan People’s Party (BPP) was formed in June 1990 and ‘plans were made for a programme of political action across southern Bhutan’ (Raven 2010) to demand civil rights and democratic reforms, which further worsened the condition of *Lhotshampas*. During the early stages of this ‘movement’, some *Lhotshampa* activists adopted

²² This organisation was established in June 1989 and was headed by Tek Nath Rizal, who fled to Nepal.

violent tactics similar to those adopted by GNLF (Gorkha National Liberation Front) extremists in India',²³.

On 2 June 1990, the severed heads of two southern Bhutanese government officials found in a bag in the *Gomtu* River in *Samchi* district. The RGB associated these murders with the BPP's inception and reports that an attached warning letter stated: 'All those who supported the Royal Government would meet the same fate' (Hutt 2003). According to refugees this incident gave credence to the BPP's threats that non supporters would 'lose six inches' – that is, their head (*chha inchi ghataune*) – or that they would find their 'head in a bag, body in the river' (*'tauko jholama jieu kholama'*) (Evans, 2010).

The government claimed that, from mid-1990 onwards, the 'anti-nationals' (including members of the BPP) increased their violent activities like kidnapping and murdering civilians. However, there was no authentic proof for that. Some refugees described a campaign of violence conducted by the BPP to ensure support for their movement amongst the southern Bhutanese population. Their methods included forced 'donations' in cash and kind, the demand that at least one member of every household join the party, kidnaps of and attacks on those perceived to be non-supporters, and theft of animals. They also engaged in militant activities, such as bombing government. Refugees described a situation where they were caught between the government and the BPP.

According to A Refugee Women, if people did not give donations or take part in the movement, the BPP said that they would shoot them with a gun. But if people did give donations or took part in the movement, then they were targeted by the government (Raven, 2010). These difficulties caused some southern Bhutanese ultimately to leave Bhutan²⁴. After the 1990 demonstrations, the Bhutanese Government began identifying and subsequently arresting participants and supporters, most of whom left Bhutan following their release from detention (Hutt, 2003). Those arrested reported torture and ill-treatment in jail, including being forced to

²³ Such tactics included pressuring ethnic Nepalese to support the movement financially, and threatening them with violence if they did not attend protests.

²⁴ To quote a refugee women, "in the area where we lived, the villagers were stuck between the anti-nationals and the Bhutanese government. My father said we could not continue to live like this, so we left" (Evans, 2010).

perform incongruent acts, which violate a person's cultural or religious beliefs (Hutt, 2003). As one refugee woman explained: 'The army took one of our relatives to jail. He was vegetarian but they made him carry meat outside in the sun every day (Sharma and Sharma, 1998: 267).

Many human rights and political activists and influential people in the villages were alleged by the government authorities of being involved in the movement'. They began leaving the country in 1990fearing persecution or continuous harassment' (ibid).Rumors circulated that members of the Bhutanese army were raping girls and women in the south, which contributed to the sense of insecurity amongst the *Lhotshampas*, and was a factor in their decision to leave the country. But after the interview taken by the Refugee women (Mrs. Dhan Maya)²⁵, it claimed that it was not only rumors, but rather she had gone through the panic and trauma of that kind of harassment (ibid). From 1991, it appears that, 'a systematic eviction of southern Bhutanese' began through the government's use of 'voluntary migration forms', which many southern Bhutanese were pressured to sign, sometimes following physical violence and coercion. Southern Bhutanese advised by village leaders or ordered by government officials to leave the country²⁶.

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter discussed the process cultural homogenization in the context of Bhutan. As we have seen, the Dominant *Drukpa* adopted various policies to bring cultural homogenization in the country. Due to the threat of huge influx of migration from the southern zone, the Royal Government of Bhutan has adopted such policies in the name to protect the national culture and identity which has its roots in the dominant *Drukpa* culture. Though they give the reason to maintain the unique identity of Bhutan, it has been seen that the *Drukpa* elite feel threat from the political development in its neighboring region (merger of Sikkim and *Gorkhaland* movement).

²⁵ Taken at Refugee Camp of Nepal, by a worker of BRAVVF

²⁶ The following account is typical of refugees' narratives of leaving Bhutan. Based on the statement of a refugee women, 'the *Mandal* told my father that he had to fill in a form to leave the country or he would be arrested. Many people were leaving the country and it was risky for my older sisters because of the army's activities. After my father filled in the form in *Dzongkha*, we were taken for photos. They told us to stand in a line and show our teeth [smile].Later we realized the statement said he was happy to leave the country and were going willingly (Refugee Woman, 17 December 2007, Sharma and Sharma, 1998, 264).

With the line of one nation, one culture, they targeted the *Lhotshampa* or Nepalese people. When the Nepalese opposed those policies, a serious ethnic crisis is emerged in Bhutan.

Ethnic conflict is deepening in Bhutan. Deep and active discrimination against the *Lhotsampa* has served to strengthen ethnic identification among the people of *Lhotsampa* origin. An ever deeper ethnic divide is now pitting the major ethnic communities, particularly around the *Ngalung*, against the *Lhotsampa* and *Sharchop*. We have witnessed in Bhutan the rise and consolidation of an ethno-crazy which dominates the institutions of government, economy and society and fuels ethnic tension by promoting its own ethnic group at the expense of others. Though the short-term benefits that the *Drukpa* elites' ethnically divisive policies may bring, it cannot compensate for the long-term social, economic and political costs for the nation at large. These are not just the costs of discrimination and denial of opportunity for the *Lhotsampa* and others, it is also the immeasurable cost that comes from a society now driven along ethnic and other lines by the fear, mistrust, resentment, frustration and anger that the regime has deliberately fuelled.

Chapter V

Conclusion

This study has basically discussed ethnicity, society and culture of Bhutan and examined the dimension of the relationship between the ethnic minorities and state of Bhutan. By doing this, an effort is made to analyze the process of homogenization which is going on in Bhutan, and for this the study examine the homogenization policies in detail which were adopted the ruling elite. The study had also discussed implication of those and its impact on other ethnic groups most importantly the minority *Lhotshampas*.

By focusing more in the case of ethnic minorities, the study finds out that Bhutan as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual nation used to be the home of immigrants. At different phase of time, different groups of people came with their respective culture and tradition and settled in Bhutan. The culture of these groups has great impact on the contemporary Bhutanese society. In the case of *Lhotshampa*, there is no significant impact of them in Bhutanese culture as they were systematically marginalized from the mainstream of Bhutan. Since their existence in Bhutan they remained isolated from the other groups and were not allowed to go to other's premises in Bhutan. The socio-political essence of *Lhotshampa* was hardly or never acknowledged by the larger community which pushed them to the peripheral region. This marked the marginalization of the *Lhotshampa* from the social and political mainstream of Bhutan, hence leading to their identity as ethnic minority in the broader context of Bhutan.

The examination of the nature of relationship between the ethnic minorities and state of Bhutan reveals that there are three different phases in their relation. In first phase, which is began in around 1890s, where the *Dorjis* family were assigned to develop the southern foothills through the immigrant Nepali labour. At that time there was no system of cash payment of taxes in Bhutan, citizen were pay taxes in the form of certain amount of goods, commodities and cash crops. But *Lhotshampa* were bound to pay tax in cash, on the basis of cultivated land, number of cattle, fruit, and other consideration. State never treated the *Lhotshampa* equal other citizen of Bhutan. In the second phase, we can see some improvement in their relationship, basically

during the reign of third *Wangchuk* ruler *Jigme Dorjee Wangchuk*. As discussed in the chapters he had enacted the Bhutan Citizenship Act in the year 1958, which provided equal status to *Lhotshampa*. Their language was recognized and has begun to teach in schools. They were allowed to build temple and shrine. Moreover, the state had adopted an important ethnic policy to assimilate them into *drukpa* fold through encouraging inter-ethnic marriage by rewarding some amount of cash incentives. Their children were started to send abroad for higher studies, appointed as bureaucrats, accorded membership to the Royal Advisory Council and so forth. In return of that *Lhotshampa* were help to provided much needed labour when Bhutan decided to undertake planned development under the Five Year Plan. In the final phase, since 1970s, the relationship between them has become very critical, here this time state seems to be completely against the *Lhotshampa*. The Royal Government of Bhutan has revised the Citizenship Act in 1985 and claim for the real citizenship on the basis of the census which was conducted in 1988.

Citizenship in Bhutan is based on ethnic lines. Unlike the earlier period, the pace of cultural homogenization was much faster in Bhutan. Since 1970s we see the intensive phase of cultural homogenization in Bhutan, adopted mainly by the *Drukpa* elite. The ruling elite from the 1980s has used citizenship as a powerful mechanism to exclude or expel *Lhotsampa* and others of Nepalese origin. During the early 1980s, all adult members of the Bhutanese population from age 18 years were issued with a printed citizenship card. It is after years of peaceful struggle, the *Lhotsampa* were granted citizenship and some rights as citizens in 1958 through the Royal Edict on *Lhotsampa* Citizenship Act. But the 1958 act has been revised or replaced eventually a number of times. The 1985 Citizenship Act which is currently in place states that Bhutanese citizenship can be acquired only by birth, registration or naturalisation. For citizenship by birth, both parents must be Bhutanese, instead of at least the father as required in the 1977 act and either of the parents as required in the 1958 act. As per the new Act, Citizenship by registration requires evidence of permanent domicile in Bhutan on or before 31 December 1958.

By adopting such policies the ruling elite targeted the *Lhotshampa*. The census of 1988, on the basis of which the 1985 Citizenship Act was implemented, conducted only in southern Bhutan. The people of the region - *Lhotshampa* - were accused for providing a safe haven for illegal *Nepalis* from Nepal or India. It also alleges that they have the highest birth rate. The Bhutanese authorities view that the *Lhotshampa* as a single racial group seems to pose a threat to

the *Ngalung*. They again accused that the ethnic Nepali have a grand plan to render the *Ngalung* a minority in their 'own country' – a claim that relies heavily on asserting that the fertility rate of *Lhotshampa* is significantly higher than that of the *Ngalung*. They also argue that many of the *Lhotshampa* are illegal Nepali immigrants from Nepal or India. After examining the whole context, apart from the reason given by the ruling elite, there exist another reason for which they feel serious threat. First, the downfall of 337 years old *Namgyal* dynasty in Sikkim, and subsequent merger of Sikkim in the Indian Union in 1975 had taken place due to the active support from Nepalese. Another reason was the *Gorkhland* movement for the demand of separate state in Nepali dominated area in West Bengal in 1985.

In Bhutan the other part of the story is that, it is the political elite (*Ngalung*) who manipulated the policies in order to serve their own interest. Most of the *Ngalung*, are members of Royal Advisory Council and after permitting the *Lhotshampa* to participate in the membership of RAC, they feel insecure. *Lhotshampa* people are highly educated and hard working they demanded democracy and fair and equal representation in the political system. This posed a serious threat to the dominance of *Ngalung* and they feel like the *Lhotshampa* made them minorities in their own land and dominated over them. By keeping all these in mind, it has been seen that the political elite manipulated the state policies to maintain their hegemony and enacted the policies which are directly targeted the *Lhotshampa*.

As far as the concern of cultural homogenization, it always signifies the emergence of single culture or the domination of single identity and destroys the other culture\identity. It is a very challenging task to adopt such policy in a multi-ethnic society and to create a balance between the identity of country's people and the national identity. The process always serves the interest of the dominant elite and marginalized those minorities. But to destroy the identity of one group may lead to a tragic situation. Ethnic diversity within a nation can lead to struggle for fair representation and resources if some groups are excluded structurally from opportunity for full participation in the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the nation. Tensions cultivated particularly through fear of ethnic difference deepen cleavages within the society along ethnic lines. With intensifying ethnic conflict, one group will use whatever means it can to seize control of the state and implement policies that deliver ethnic repression, discrimination

and systematic human rights violations upon their perceived opponents, to bolster the group's own hold on power. This is what happened in Bhutan.

The first *Dharmaraja Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal*, of Bhutan was from Tibet and all most all the ethnic groups – except Lhotshampas - follow the Tibetan tradition and speak Tibetan language. The *Lhotshampa* of southern Bhutan, speak a distinct language; they have their own written text and script and they mostly belong Hinduism. Though there are differences in religion, language and culture, there was the unity in diversity till 1980s. The *Lhotshampa* used to enjoy equal rights and opportunity which is provided by the government. They were first conferred legal citizenship of Bhutan in the year 1958. Citizenship rights to the *Lhotshampas* not only gave them legitimacy but conferred on them political and economic rights at par with other communities of Bhutan. Till 1988, the Nepalese were free to study in their mother tongue and teaching was imparted in Nepali. As discussed in the chapter the Nepalese were taken in the Army and police and were included in the Cabinet and judiciary. There was no restriction on the Nepalese to open *pathsalas* to learn Sanskrit or to celebrate Hindu religious holidays and maintain their culture, tradition and wear their unique dress. In short, till 1980, the government never interfered with the socio-cultural life of the *Lhotshampas*.

The phases of the *Lhotshampa's* experiences and exodus from Bhutan since the late 1980s to present, is almost a paradigmatic model which generally describes the pattern of ethnic conflict. The present crisis which has emerged as a challenge to the security of Bhutan is the dichotomy between ethnic identity and national identity. As the act of homogenization, the Bhutanese identity emphasizes the Dzongkha language, the dress code of the major communities i.e. *gho* and *kira*, typical Bhutanese dress impose over other groups, and other etiquette that are included in the cultural edict known as *Driglam Namzha* which was introduced as the theme of the Sixth Five-Year Plan.

The renewal of Marriage Act, Citizenship Act, and the result 1988 census are directly targeting the *Lhotshampa*. The identity of the Nepalese stems from their distinct socio-cultural and religious beliefs, their distinct language, food habit and dress. To construct a framework for, one country and one people, after including all the ethnic groups 'under the *Ngalung* tradition,

Bhutanese nationalism with its unique ingredients of *Ngalung* culture and way of life was introduced. Justifications for the policy were wrapped with apprehensions of a small country facing demographic threat from people of migrant origin. As a result of the introduction of various partisan policies to preserve its sovereignty and culture as described by the Royal Government of Bhutan, led the people who till the late Eighties had perceived themselves as a part of the Bhutanese socio-political system, suddenly felt that they were being alienated in different sectors of the government and that their loyalty was suspected in spite of their presence in Bhutan for more than a century. A major shift in the policy towards the *Lhotshampas* took place in the late Eighties.

The census exercise of 1988 based on the 1985 Citizenship Act changed the fate of many Bhutanese from citizens of Bhutan to non-national or illegal immigrants. A number of demonstrations were organized against the Citizenship Act of 1985 and the census exercise of 1988 which put many people in the bracket of illegal immigrants. The government came down heavily on the demonstration which was organized in the tiny town of *Chirang* in southern Bhutan to express genuine dissatisfaction. This led to loss of life and property. Many *Lhotshampa* people left Bhutan and took refuge in India and were later shifted to the refugee camps in Nepal maintained by the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR).

Many people who were just present during the demonstration out of curiosity were evicted since they were considered as conspirators in these anti-national activities and were made to sign voluntary immigration forms. Moreover, as has been pointed out earlier, the Bhutanese Citizenship Act has laid out in clear terms that any person who by act, speech or deed is considered to be disloyal to the King, country and people, will forfeit citizenship. This is also evident from a circular of the Home Ministry that reads, "Any Bhutanese national leaving the country to assist and help the anti- nationals shall no longer be considered as a Bhutanese citizen. It must also be made clear that such people's family members living under the same household will also be held fully responsible and forfeit their citizenship." There are ample of statement given by the victims that in what condition they were force to live their home, what kind of tragedy and problem they were facing.

In Bhutan, the rise and consolidation of an ethnocracy dominates the institutions of government, economy and society and fuels ethnic tension by promoting its own ethnic group at the expense of others is visible in the late decades of 20th century. The majority *Drukpa* with a minority complex and a short political vision Bhutan destroyed the unity of the state. The short-term benefits that the *Drukpa* elite's ethnically divisive policies may achieve for them, that cannot compensate for the long-term social, economic and political costs for the nation at large. These are not just the costs of discrimination and denial of opportunity for the *Lhotsampa* and others, who could have contributed much to the nation building. It is also the immeasurable cost that comes from a society now driven along ethnic and other lines by the fear, mistrust, resentment, frustration and anger that the regime has deliberately fuelled.

Bhutan has always been multi-ethnic; what is today the nation of Bhutan is a construct several centuries ago of various ethnic groupings with a rich diversity of racial, religious, cultural and linguistic attributes. The only workable option for Bhutan is that of a pluralistic society that harnesses its diversity as a source of opportunity, richness and strength. This pre figures a nation that achieves unity in diversity rather than, as at present, being pulled apart by those who seek to subvert the potential virtue of this diversity to serve their own narrow interests. The pre-1985 policies, as pursued by Bhutan, had given the southern Bhutanese space to keep their ethnic identity intact. The language and dress of the Nepalese was never a threat to Bhutan's unique identity--why did it become so significant suddenly? It is the democratic aspiration which scared the elite, not the demonstration by the southern Bhutanese. Still the situation were not became such worse. If RGB tried to negotiate and take the consensus of *Lhotshampa*, instead of using force or violence method, the situation in Bhutan would have been different. Referring to the refugees in the Eastern Nepal camps as illegal immigrants is not going to solve the problem. It amounts to non-recognition of the problem. Any tough stand on its part will provide only temporary relief. The hundreds and thousands of refugees in the neighbouring country, who have many grievances against the government, might be led to align with terrorist groups operating in this part which will compound a major security threat to the country and the ruling elites. Therefore, Bhutan has to look into the problem realistically and has to be more accommodative and sympathetic in its approach towards this problem.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources: Treaties, Deeds, Documents, Acts and Agreements

An Appeal to His Majesty's Government of Bhutan "Taxation and Political Reforms", (Original text in Nepali) 5th December 1955.

BTI (2012), "*Bhutan Country Report*", Berlesmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (Guterstah), URL: www.bhutan.gov.bti.

Oath of Allegiance Signed at Punakha at the Installation of Sir Ugyen Wangchuk as King of Bhutan, 17th December 1907.

Royal Government of Bhutan, Planning Commission, "*Seventh Five Year Plan (1992-97)*", Vol.1, Main Plan Document, (Thimpu; Planning Commission, December, 1991).

The Bhutanese Citizenship Act, 1958 www.ahurabht.tripod.com/draft4_1.html

The Bhutanese Citizenship Act, 1977
www.satp.org/.../bhutan/.../actandordinances/bhutan_citizenship_act_197..

The Bhutanese Citizenship Act, 1985
www.satp.org/.../bhutan/.../actandordinances/bhutan_citizenship_act_1985...

The Bolzano/Bozen Recommendation on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe,(2008).
www.osce.org/hcnm/33633?download=true

The Code of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, Summary of the Laws Laid for the Government of Bhutan in 1650 A.D.

The Treaty Concluded At Sinchula on the 11th Day of November, 1865
<https://bangaloregorkha.wordpress.com/documents/treaty-sinchula>

Secondary Sources

Books

Aris, Micheal (1982), *Bhutan: the Early History of Himalayan Kingdom*, Vol.41, Association for Asian Studies, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2055279>.

Aris, Micheal and Micheal Hutt (edt.) (1994), *Bhutan: Aspect of Culture and Development*, London: Strachen and Kiscadale.

Barnah, Bibbhuti (2008), *Buddhist Sect and Sectarianism*, New Delhi; Sarup and Son.

Barth, Fredrik (edt) (1996), *The Social Organizations of Cultural Differences*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Bisht, Ramesh Chandra (2008), *International Encyclopedia of Himalayas*, Vol.2, New Delhi: Mittal Publication.

- Dhakal, D.N.S and Christopher Strawn (1994), *Bhutan: A Movement in Exile*, New Delhi: Nirala Publication.
- Eriksen, Hylland Thomas (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2nd Edition Anthropological Perspectives, London: Pluto Press.
- Ferguson, H. Yale and W. Richard Mansbach (2012), *Globalization: the Return of Borders to a Borderless World*, London: Routledge.
- Gurr, Ted Robert (1993), *Minorities At Risk*, Washongton, DC; USIP Press.
- Hale, E. Henry (2008), *The Foundation of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of State and Nations in Eurasia and the World*, Cambridge.
- Hasan, Selcuk Turkmen (2010), *Ethnic Politics in International Relations: The Case Study Volga Tatarsa*, Ankara: Ghsan Dogramaci Bilkent University Ankara.
- Hopper, Paul (2007), *Understanding Cultural Globalization*, United Kingdom: Polity Publication.
- Hutt, Micheal (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood, and The Flight of Refugees from Bhutan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press,.
- Joseph, Mathew (1999), *Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan*, New Delhi: Nirala.
- Kathuria, Anil (2007), *Encyclopedia of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet*, Vol.2, New Delhi: Anmol Publication.
- Phadnis, Urmila and Rajat Ganguly (eds.) (2001), *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia*, New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Ramakant and R.C Mishra (edt.) (1996), *Bhutan: Society and Polity*, New Delhi; Indus Publishing House.
- Rizal, P. Dhurba (2001), *Bhutan Decentralization and Good Governance*, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- Rosenau, James (1990), *Turbulance in World Politics*, Princeton; Princeton University Press.
- Sharma, Rashmi (2007), *Bhutan and SAARC*, New Delhi: Regal Publication.
- Sharma, S.K and Sharma Usha (1998), *Documents on Sikkim and Bhutan*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication.
- Singh, Mahendra Prasad (edt.) (2008), *Democracy, Development, and Discontent In South Asia*, New Delhi; Sage Publication India Pvt.Ltd.
- Sinha, A.C (1998), *Bhutan: Ethnic Identity and National Dilemma*, New Delhi: Relaince Publication House.
- Sinha, A.C (2002), *Himalayan Kingdom Bhutan: Tradition, Transition, and Transformation*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
- Tsongkhapa (2005), *Trantric Ethics: An Explanation of the Precepts for Buddhist Vajrayana*, Wishdom Publication.

Articles

Anderson, Benedict (1991), "Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism", *Revised Edition London and York*, Retrieved 14/10/2014, URL: <http://www.academia.edu/439371>.

Azar, E. Edward (1980), "The Conflict and Peace data", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, URL: [Jcr.sage.pub.com/content/24/1/143.refs](http://jcr.sage.pub.com/content/24/1/143.refs).

Brubaker, Rogers (2009), "Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism", *Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90095*; brubaker@soc.ucla.edu.

Callinicos, Alex (1989), "Against Post-modernism: A Marxist Critique", *St. Marti's Press (New York)*, URL: <http://trove.ala.gov.au/work/16520309>.

Connor, Walker (1995), "Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding", *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Retrieved on 20/10/2015, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2501491>.

Converse, Daniel (2010), "Cultural Homogenization, Ethnic Cleansing, and Genocide", URL: <http://eu.wiley.com/>.

Craigie, Allan (2010), "Unanims and Pan-Nationalism: Theoretical Musing on the Dialectical Relationship between Minority and Majority Sub-State Nationalism", *University of Edinburg, published by Routledge*, Retrieved on 20/1/2015, URL: http://www.academia.edu/Allan_Craigie.

Gans, J. Herbert (2010), "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Retrieved on 24/8/2014, URL: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rers20>.

Gellner, Ernest (1985), "Nation and Nationalism", University of Chicago press, Retrieved on 15/10/2015, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2780219>.

Giri, B.R (2007), "Bhutan: Ethnic Policies in the Dragon Kingdom", *Asian Affairs*, Retrieved on 26/11/2014, URL:<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/roof20>.

Hart, Jason (1996), "Bhutan: Conflict, Displacement and Children", *Refugees Studies Centre, Oxford University*.

Kingzhouyang (2012), "Global Cultural Homogenization and Cultural Heterogenization", *The Greatest Wordpress.com*, URL:<http://kingzhouyang.wordpress.com>.

Krishna, Sankaran (2001), "Post-Colonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka and the Question of Nationhood", *Canadian Journal Political Science Association*, Vol.34, No.2, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/323272>.

Naidu, A.G (1986), "Bhutan looks Outwards: Its Search for Identity", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No, 4, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41855269>.

Pattanaik, Smuiti (2008), "Ethnic Identity, Conflict and Nation-Building in Bhutan", *Strategic Analyses*, Vol.22, URL: www.idsa-india.org/an-jul8-10.html.

Rizal, Dhurba (2010), "The Unknown Refugee Crisis: Expulsion of the Ethnic Lhotshampa from Bhutan". *United Nation University, Tokyo*, Retrieved on 26/11/2014, URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1463136042000221861>.

Schappi, Daniel (2005), "Cultural Plurality, National Identity and Consensus in Bhutan", *Centre for Comparative and International Studies (ETH Zurich and University of Zurich)*, Retrieved on 12/08/2014, URL: www.cis.ethz.ch/publication/./2005_wpo6_Scppi.pdf.

Scholte, Jan Art (2002), "What Is Globalization? The Definitional Issue-Again", *CSG Working*, URL: <http://www.csgr.org>.

Smith, A. Anthony (1990), "Nation and National Identity: A Critical Assessment", *Journal of American History Volume 9, Published by University of Illinois press*, Retrieved on 15/10/2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/275000762>.

Wolf, O. Siegfried (2012), "Bhutan Political Transition- Between Ethnic Conflict and Democracy", *Spotlight South Asia*, Retrieved on 10/1/2015, URL: www.apsa.info.

APPENDIX I

Citizenship Law of 1958

The National Law of Bhutan.

Having found necessary to amend the law relating to the acquisition and deprivation of Citizenship which has been in force till date, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo, in accordance with the suggestion put up by the Royal Advisor, people and the monastic body, is pleased to incorporate the following change:

1. This law may be called the National Law of Bhutan 1958 and shall be effective throughout the kingdom of Bhutan.
2. This law shall be in force throughout the kingdom of Bhutan from the day of its enactment.
3. Any person can become a Bhutanese National
 - a. If his/her father is a Bhutanese National and is a resident of the Kingdom of Bhutan; or
 - b. If any person is born within or outside Bhutan after the commencement of this law provided the previous father is a Bhutanese National at the time of his/her birth.
- 4 (a).If any foreigner who has reached the age of majority and otherwise eligible, presents a petition to an official appointed by His Majesty and taken an oath of loyalty according to the rules laid down by the Government to the satisfaction of the concerned official, he may be re-enrolled as a Bhutanese National, provided that:
 - i. the person is a resident of the Kingdom of Bhutan for more than ten years; and
 - ii. owns agricultural land within the Kingdom.
- (b) If a woman, married to a Bhutanese National, submits petition and takes the oath of loyalty as stated above to the satisfaction of the concerned official and that she has reached the age of majority and is otherwise eligible, her name may be enrolled as a Bhutanese National.

(c) If any person has been deprived on his Bhutanese Nationality or has renounced his Bhutanese Nationality, forfeited his Bhutanese nationality, the person cannot become a Bhutanese national again unless His Majesty grants approval to do so.

5 (a). If any foreigner submits petition to His Majesty according to rules described in the above sections, and provided the person has reached the age of majority and is otherwise eligible, and has served satisfactorily in Government service for at least five years and has been residing in the Kingdom of Bhutan for at least 10 years, he may receive a Bhutanese Nationality Certificate. Once the certificate is received, such a person has to take the oath of loyalty according to the rules laid down by the Government and from that day onwards, his name will be enrolled as a Bhutanese National.

(b). Any foreigner who has reached the age of majority and is other wise eligible, can receive a Nationality Certificate provided that in the opinion of His Majesty his conduct and his service as a Government servant is satisfactory.

6. Any person who:

- a) Becomes a National of a foreign country and resides in that country; or
- b) Has renounced Bhutanese nationality and settled in a foreign country; or
- c) Claims to be a citizen of a foreign country or pledge and oath of loyalty to that country;
or
- d) Is registered as a Bhutanese National but has left his agricultural land or has stopped residing in the kingdom; or
- e) Being a bonafide national has stopped residing in the country or fails to observe the law of the kingdom;

Shall forfeit his Bhutanese nationality.

7. (a). If a Nationality Certificate has been obtained on presentation of false information or wrong facts or omission of facts, the Government may order the Certificate to be cancelled.

(b). If any citizen or national, engage in activities against His Majesty, , or any national of Bhutan; or

- ii. When Bhutan and India are engaged in a war with some other country if any citizen or national of Bhutan is found indulging in business, correspondence or helping enemies; or
 - iii. If any person, within the period of five years from the day when he was enlisted as a Bhutanese National, if imprisoned in any country for more than one year, the person is liable to be deprived of his nationality without prior notice.
8. To implement this law, if necessary, His Majesty may incorporate any additional rules.
9. This law supersedes all laws, rules and regulations, ordinances relating to the acquisition and forfeiture of nationality from the day of its commencement.

APPENDIX II

The Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1977

Conditions Required for the Grant of Citizenship:

- KA
1. In the case of government servants an applicant should have completed 15 years of service without any adverse record.
 2. In the case of those not employed in the Royal Government, an applicant should have resided in Bhutan for a minimum period of 20 years.
 3. In addition, an applicant should have some knowledge of the Bhutanese language both spoken and written and the history of Bhutan. Only those applicants who fulfill the above requirements may apply for grant of citizenship to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which will ascertain the relevant factors and submit the application to the Royal Government for further action.

Eligibility and Power to Grant Citizenship:

- KHA
1. The power to grant or reject an application for citizenship rests solely with the Royal Government. Hence, all applicants who fulfill the above conditions are not necessarily eligible for grant of citizenship.
 2. Any applicant holding the citizenship of another country or with criminal records in other countries or those who are related to any person involved in activities against the people, the country and the King shall not be granted citizenship even if all the other conditions are fulfilled.
 3. A person granted citizenship by the Royal Government is required to register his/her name in the record of the Royal Government from the date of the grant of the citizenship.
 4. All those granted citizenship are required to take the following oath to be administered by the Home Minister.
 - o Henceforth, I owe allegiance only to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo of Bhutan.
 - o I shall abide by observe and the laws and regulations of the Royal Government with unswerving reverence.
 - o I shall observe all the customs and traditions of the people of Bhutan.

- I shall not commit any act against the TSA-WAS-SUM of Bhutan (the country, the people and the King).
- As a citizen of Bhutan, I hereby take this oath in the name of Yeshey Goempo and undertake to serve the country to the best of my ability.

Special Grant of Citizenship

- GA 1. A foreigner in possession of special or extraordinary qualifications will be granted citizenship without consideration of the required conditions except for the administration of the oath of allegiance.

Renouncement & Re-application of Citizenship:

- NGA 1. In the case of a Bhutanese citizen, who having left the country returns and applies for citizenship, the Royal Government shall keep the applicant on probation for a period of at least two years. On successful completion of the probation period, the applicant will be granted citizenship provided the person in question is not responsible for any activities against the Royal Government.
2. A foreigner who has been granted Bhutanese citizenship may apply to the Royal Government for permission to emigrate with his/her family. Permission will be granted after an investigation of the circumstances relating to such a request. After grant of permission to emigrate, the same person may not re-apply for Bhutanese citizenship. In the event of adult family members of any person permitted to leave the country, who do not wish to leave and makes an application to that effect, the Home Minister will investigate the matter and will permit such persons to remain in the country after ascertaining that the country's interest is not harmed.
3. If anyone, whether a real Bhutanese or a foreigner granted citizenship, applies for permission to emigrate during times of crises such as war, the application shall be kept pending until normalcy returns.

Procedure for Acquisition of Citizenship:

- CHA
1. When a Bhutanese woman is married to a foreigner, only she is a citizen, her husband and their children will not be considered as Bhutanese citizens. If they desire Bhutanese citizenship, such cases will be considered in conformity with the procedure laid down in this Act applicable to foreigners applying for citizenship.
 2. When a Bhutanese man is married to foreign woman their children will be considered Bhutanese. The wife will have to fulfil the requirements of this Citizenship Act as applicable to foreigners applying for citizenship.
 3. In the case of Bhutanese citizens residing in other countries, the Citizenship Law subhead KA-12 No. 2 which is reproduced below, shall be applicable.

Reproduction of Thrimyic KA 12-2:

- KA-12(2)
1. With the exception of a genuine Bhutanese whose family is domiciled in Bhutan but he himself has to stay away in another country in connection with the works of the Royal Government, private business or religious practices, all others who live in foreign countries and serve the government and people of such countries or have settled in a foreign country or are holding official posts in a foreign government are considered non-nationals.

Registration Procedure:

- CHHA
1. All children born of a father who is a Bhutanese citizen should be registered in the official record within one year of their birth whether the children are born inside or outside the country
 2. All children born within the country are required to be listed with the Dzongkhag or the Dungkhag of their birth. Children of Bhutanese parentage born in other countries should be recorded with the Royal Bhutanese Embassies. Where they are no Embassies nearby the information should be conveyed to the Home Ministry through correspondence.
 3. If a child is more than one year old and still not registered in the official

record, registration is not permitted but may be applied for to the Home Ministry by the concerned local authority. The Home Ministry will then investigate the matter before granting permission for the registration.

Validity of Census Record:

- JA 1. All census records must bear the seal of Royal Government and the signature of an officer not lower in rank than a Dzongdag. Other records will not be acceptable.

Enquiry of Kashos:

- NYA 1. All Kashos with the people which were not granted by His Majesty the King will be investigated by the Home Minister and reported to the Royal Government.

Penalty of Violation of Rules:

- TA 1. Any one having acquired Bhutanese citizenship if involved in acts against the King or speaks against the Royal Government or associates with people involved in activities against the Royal Government shall be deprived of his/her Bhutanese citizenship.
2. In the case of any person knowingly presenting false information at the time of applying for citizenship, the Kasho granting him/her citizenship will be withdrawn after due verification of the false information presented.

Status of the Provision:

- THA 1. In case of conflict between the provisions of this Act and the Provisions of any previous laws, rules and regulations, the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

APPENDIX III

The Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985

1. This Act may be called the Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985. It shall come into force from the twenty third day of the fourth month of Wood Bull year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to 10th June, 1985. In case of conflict between the previous laws, rules and regulations relating to citizenship, the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

2. **Citizenship by Birth:**

A person whose parents are both citizens of Bhutan shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by birth.

3. **Citizenship by Registration:**

A person permanently domiciled in Bhutan on or before 31st December 1958, and, whose name is registered in the census register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by registration.

4. **Citizenship by Naturalization:**

A person desiring to apply for Bhutanese citizenship to the Ministry of Home Affairs in Forms KA-1 and KA-2 must fulfill all the following conditions to be eligible for naturalization:

- a. The person must have attained the age of 21 years, and 15 years in the case of a person either of whose parents is a citizen of Bhutan;
- b. The person must be mentally sound;
- c. The person must have resided in Bhutan for 15 years in the case of Government employees and also in the case of applicants, either of whose parents is a citizen of Bhutan, and 20 years in all other cases, and this period of residence must be registered in the records of the Department of Immigration and Census;
- d. The person must be able to speak, read and write Dzongkha proficiently;

- e. The person must have good knowledge of the culture, customs, traditions and history of Bhutan;
- f. The person must have good moral character and should not have any record of imprisonment for criminal offences in Bhutan or elsewhere;
- g. The person must have no record of having spoken or acted against the King, Country and People of Bhutan in any manner whatsoever, and
- h. The person must be prepared to take a solemn Oath of Allegiance to the King, Country and People of Bhutan according to the prescribed Form KHA.

On receipt of the application Form KA-1 for naturalization, the Ministry of Home Affairs will take necessary steps to check all the particulars contained in the application. The Ministry of Home Affairs will also conduct written and oral tests to assess proficiency in Dzongkha and knowledge of the culture, customs, traditions and history of Bhutan. The decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs on the question of eligibility for naturalization shall be final and binding. The Royal Government of Bhutan also reserves the right to reject any application for naturalization without assigning any reason.

6. Grant of Citizenship:

- a. A person, whose application for naturalization has been favourable considered by the Ministry of Home Affairs, shall take the Oath of Allegiance according to Form KHA of this Act.
- b. A person shall then be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan upon receiving a Kasho from His Majesty the King of Bhutan according to Form GA of this Act.

7. Termination of Citizenship:

- a. Any citizen of Bhutan who acquired the citizenship of another country shall cease to be a citizen of Bhutan. The wife/husband and children shall have the right to remain as citizens of Bhutan provided they are permanently domiciled in Bhutan and are registered annually in the Citizenship Register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- b. Any citizen of Bhutan who has acquired citizenship by naturalization may be deprived of citizenship at any time if it found that naturalization had been obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact.
- c. Any citizen of Bhutan who has acquired citizenship by naturalization may be deprived of citizenship at any time if that person has shown by act or speech to be disloyal in any manner whatsoever to the King, Country and People of Bhutan.
- d. If both the parents are Bhutanese and in case of the children leaving the country of their own accord, without the knowledge of the Royal Government of Bhutan and their names are also not recorded in the Citizenship Register maintained in the Ministry of Home Affairs, then they will not be considered as citizens of Bhutan. (Resolution No. 16(2) adopted by the National Assembly of Bhutan in its 62nd Session).
- e. Any citizen of Bhutan who has been deprived of Bhutanese citizenship must dispose of all immovable property in Bhutan within one year, failing which, the immovable property shall be confiscated by the Ministry of Home Affairs on payment of fair and reasonable compensation.

APPENDIX IV

Bhutan Marriage Act, 1980

Marriage with a Non-Bhutanese

KHA 2-1: If a Bhutanese citizen wants to obtain a marriage certificate from a court of law to enter into matrimony with a non-Bhutanese spouse whether residing in the kingdom or outside, he/she will be required to produce two persons as guarantors before the court. One of them must be a reliable Bhutanese citizen in the knowledge of the court and both of them must possess thorough knowledge about the bride and the groom. Thereafter, the matter shall be processed in accordance with the article KHA 1-5 as mentioned above (Ref-Thrimshung 1957, article KHA 2-2).

A non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen must abide by the traditional customs and the citizenship act.

KHA 2-2: The question whether a non-Bhutanese spouse shall acquire Bhutanese citizenship or not whether he/she shall be allowed to live in the kingdom or not shall depend on the citizenship act, traditional and cultural requirements and the government directives issued from time to time.

Rules and regulations to be followed by a non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen.

KHA 2-3: A non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese spouse must abide by the following rules and regulations irrespective of whether he/she acquires citizenship.

Promotions shall not be granted to a Bhutanese citizen married to a non-Bhutanese.

KHA 2-4: Any Bhutanese citizen working under the Government of Bhutan shall not be granted promotion with effect from June 11, 1977, if married to a non-Bhutanese or such a person will never get promotion beyond the post he/she held at the time of marriage with the non-Bhutanese. Such a person shall not be promoted beyond the post of a sub-divisional officer.

Promotions shall not be granted to a Bhutanese citizen married to a non-Bhutanese.

KHA 2-5: Whichever post a Bhutanese citizen held prior to marriage with a non-Bhutanese or prior to June 11, 1977, such a person shall not be granted promotion beyond the post he held from the date of marriage with the non-Bhutanese or after June 11, 1977.

A Bhutanese citizen married to a non-Bhutanese shall not be employed in the national defence department or in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

KHA 2-6: Any Bhutanese citizen employed in the national defence department or in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall be removed from such services if he/she is married to a non-Bhutanese. No Bhutanese shall be employed in these two departments if married to a non-Bhutanese.

A Bhutanese citizen married to a non-Bhutanese shall not get facilities enjoyed by other citizens.

KHA 2-7: A Bhutanese citizen whatever status he/she may enjoy shall be entitled to other facilities and welfare of the government including the following assistance upon marriage with a non-Bhutanese.

- a. Distribution of land
- b. Cash loans
- c. Seeds for cultivation and oxen for ploughing fields
- d. Livestock and income generating livestock schemes of the department of Animal Husbandry
- e. Treatment abroad and
- f. Grant of capital for factory, industry or trade.

A Bhutanese married to a non-Bhutanese shall not be entitled to education and training abroad.

KHA 2-8: A Bhutanese citizen receiving education and training under the government funding shall not be entitled to the following facilities and welfare upon marriage with a non-Bhutanese:

- a. No assistance shall be provided by the government to undertake education or training either inside Bhutan or outside.

- b. Government assistance being rendered for education or training shall be discontinued from the day of marriage.
- c. The expenses incurred by the government on education or training until the day of marriage will be required to be refunded to the government.
- d. A Bhutanese citizen undergoing education or training abroad under a foreign scholarship shall lose it immediately upon marriage with a non-Bhutanese. In such a case the government of Bhutan shall request the concerned foreign government to stop the funding.

Religion of non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen.

KHA 2-9: If a non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen is allowed to live in the kingdom, then, he/she shall not be permitted to preach other religion or start a new religion except the religion of the kingdom of Bhutan.

A non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen shall be required to follow the culture of the kingdom and the government orders.

KHA 2-10: A non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen, if allowed to live in the kingdom irrespective of whether he/she acquires the Bhutanese citizenship shall be required to follow the traditional customs, government orders and laws in force in the kingdom.

A non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen shall be required to comply with the Marriage Act.

KHA 2-11: A non-Bhutanese married to a Bhutanese citizen irrespective of whether he/she acquires Bhutanese citizenship or not shall be required to abide by the rules included in the provisions of this Marriage Act on all matters of Marriage.

APPENDIX V

Treaty of Sinchula – 1865

On the 11th day of November, 1865

Treaty between His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir John Lawrence, G.C.B., K.S.I., Viceroy and Governor-General of Her Britannic Majesty's possessions in the East Indies, and the one part by Lieutenant Colonel Herbart Bruce, CB, by virtue of full powers to that effect vested in him by the Viceroy and Governor – General, and on the other part by Samdojey Deb Jimpey and Themseyrensey Donai according to full powers conferred on them by the Dhum and Deb Rajahs, 1865.

ARTICLE I There shall henceforth be perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government and the Government of Bhootan.

ARTICLE II Whereas in consequence of repeated aggressions of the Bhootan Government and of the refusal of that Government to afford satisfaction for those aggressions, and for their insulting treatment of the officers sent by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council for the purpose of procuring an amicable adjustment of differences existing between the two states, the British Government has been compelled to seize by an armed force the whole of the Doars and certain Hill Posts protecting the passes into Bhootan, and whereas the Bhootan Government has now expressed its regret for past misconduct and a desire for the establishment of friendly relations with the British Government, it is hereby agreed that the whole of the tract known as the Eighteen Doars, bordering on the districts of Rungpoor, Cooch Behar, and Assam, together with the Taloo of Ambaree Fallcottah and the Hill territory on the left bank of the Teesta up to such points as may be laid down by the British Commissioner appointed for the purpose is ceded by the Bhootan Government to the British Government forever.

ARTICLE III The Bhootan Government hereby agree to surrender all British subjects, as well as subjects of the Chief of Sikkim and Cooch Behar who are now detained in Bhootan against their will, and to place no impediment in the way of the return of all or any of such persons into British territory.

ARTICLE IV In consideration of the cession by the Bhootan Government of the territories specified in Article II of this Treaty, and of the said Government having expressed its regret for past misconduct, and having hereby engaged for the future to restrain all evil disposed persons from committing crimes with in British territory or the territories of the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar and to give prompt and full redress for all such crimes which may be committed in defiance of their commands, the British Government agree to make an annual allowance to the Government of Bhootan of a sum not exceeding fifty thousand rupees (Rupees 50,000) to be paid to officers not below the rank of Jungpen, who shall be deputed by the Government of Bhootan to receive the same. And it is further hereby agreed that the payments shall be made as specified below:

On the fulfillment by the Bhootan Government of the conditions of this Treaty Twenty Five Thousand Rupees (Rupees 25,000).

On the 10th January following the 1st payment, thirty five thousand rupees (Rupees 35,000)

On the 10th January following, forty-five thousand rupees (Rupees 45,000)

On every succeeding 10th January, fifty thousand rupees (Rupees 50,000)