SOCIAL STRUCTURE, CULTURAL VALUE AND

TRANSFORMATION

A STUDY OF RAI COMMUNITY IN SIKKIM

Dissertation submitted to the Sikkim University in partial fulfillment of the requirements

Of the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "Social Structure Cultural Value and Transformation: A Study of Rai Community in Sikkim" submitted to Sikkim University for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy,** is my original work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Social Structure Cultural Value and Transformation: A Study of Rai Community in Sikkim" submitted to the **SIKKIM UNIVERSITY** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences** embodies the results of *bona fide* research work carried out by **Ms Yozana Rai** under my guidance and supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma, associate-ship, fellowship.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

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INTRODUCTION

Sikkim is a small hilly state situated in the western part of the Eastern Himalayas with the total area of 7096 sq km. It is the 22nd state of India. It is a landlocked state bounded by Tibet in the north, Bhutan in the east, Nepal in the west and west Bengal in the south. The total population of Sikkim is 607,688 and has sex ratio of 889 females per 1000 males. (according to 2011 census). It is the least populous state in India and the 2nd smallest state after Goa. Gangtok is the largest town and capital of Sikkim. It has four districts, East, West, North and South.

The state consists of three different ethnic communities namely, Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalese. Nepali is the lingua franca of Sikkim.

Lepcha are the original inhabitants of Sikkim, they existed here much before the Bhutias and Nepalese migrated to the state. Dzongu is the main place of origin of Lepcha community. They believed that they are the children of mount Kanchenjunga so they worship this mountain and consider it as their mother .They are very submissive and friendly by nature. They easily intermingle with each other. Because of their adjustable nature they converted into Buddhism when Bhutias came and settled in Sikkim, and with the arrival of foreign missionaries most of them converted to Christianity. The Lepchas have their own rong or Lepcha language (Rongke or rongring) and the script is different from that of Tibetan, though it is a branch of the Tibetan language (Bareh 2001). But now they communicate in Nepali, Hindi or English language without any difficulty as they are now studying in schools, colleges, universities and exposure to the outside world. The dress pattern is very simple, male member used to wear *gada* as upper garment and female wear *dumdyan* and the *boku (itisko)* with striped scarf as their head gear. They also wear colorful bead, necklaces, earrings and bangles etc. They are non vegetarian, beef and pork is common among them, they are also fond of fermented liquor. Rice is their staple food along with maize and millet. They eat shoots, wild plants and tubers. The form of marriage is monogamy. They consider marriage not only a bond between two people but a bond between two families. So if the husband or wife is dead, another boy or girl from the same family is chosen as the next groom for the widow and next bride for the widower.

The Lepcha priests are known as Bomthing. Namsoong is the major festival which marks the beginning of the New Year. Their source of economy includes agriculture, cardamom and oranges. But because of the good education qualification, gradually they had taken up other occupation like business and government services etc. We can see some changes among this community which may be because of certain factor like urbanization, modernization etc (Sengupta 2001).

Bhutias first came into Sikkim from Tibet. It has evidently been accepted that people from "*Kham*" province of eastern Tibet first started to come down and to settle in Sikkim from about 10-11 centuries, due to various socio-political, economic and religious reasons (Bhattacharya 1994). Shortly, Sikkim became the colony of the Tibetan Settlers. By the middle of the 17th century, three venerable Lamas of Tibet came to Sikkim and established the Namgyal Dynasty in 1642 just as the prototype of the Lamaist Tibet.

The Bhutias of Sikkim as history says are of Tibetan origin, having same cultural pattern, language and scripts as the Tibetans. In Tibetan dialect, Tibet is called Bod which means land of snow and the people are called *Bod-pa.* The ethnic origin of Sikkim Bhutias is very complex and includes Drukpas, people from Drukul/Bhutan (Thunder, Dragon).The Chumbipas, people from Chumbi Valley (Southern Tibet) the Dhopthapas, inhabitants of Dhoptha, a place in South Tibet, the Tromopas or *Do-mu-pas,* inhabitants of *Du-mu,* the Lachenpa, the people of Lachen Valley in Sikkim, and the Lachungpas, the people of the Lachung Valley in North Sikkim (Singh 1993). They speak their own language within their own community and they can speak Nepali and the educated one speaks English too. The Bhutias are non vegetarians like Lepchas. Their staple food is rice with meat and sometimes they also take fruits and vegetables. They drink tea which contain small amount of butter. They themselves prepare local alcoholic drink from millet, rice etc, but now they also take varieties of Indian dishes. They had their own traditional dress known as *bakhu* with *honju.* A married woman wears a small striped colorful apron known as *pangden.* The Bhutia's are divided in all the four districts of Sikkim but mostly they were found in North Sikkim. Earlier marriage was endogamous, sororate and levirate was also in practice. Modes of acquiring mate are by negotiation and service property is inherited only by sons. Extended family is declining giving rise to nuclear families (Bareh 2001).

The Nepalese are largest ethnic group in Sikkim. They constitute 70% of the total population of Sikkim. They started to migrate in Sikkim due to the socio economic and

political reason from Nepal. There was a rapid growth in Sikkim's population with the coming of Nepalese. At that time British also had their own interest for trade with Tibet, so Sikkim was the possible gateway to Tibet. They also needed more and more labour force to develop network for access to Tibet. As a result it led to the increase in Nepalese population in Sikkim (Das 1983)

Nepali communities consist of different castes like Bahuns, Chettris, Limbus, Rais, Mangers, Pradhans etc. Their main source of livelihood is agriculture. When we compare the style of living with Bhutias and Lepchas they had a very economical way of living, their dress pattern and food habit are simple.

The different communities living in Sikkim follows Hinduism and Buddhism which are the major religion in Sikkim. The numbers of people who follow Hinduism are 67.25 percent and the numbers who follow Buddhism were 25.71 percent. Buddhism was the only religion followed by the people of Sikkim before the introduction of Hinduism and Christianity. Christianity was introduced in the state during the period of British rule, but could not flourish during that period due to the distance of cultures. Hinduism came with the Nepalese migrated from the country Nepal. The majority of the population of the state is Nepalese so Hinduism is widely spread. But now other different religion has came up with the intermingling of different peoples from outside the state (Choudhary 2006).

The main occupation of Sikkim is agriculture, 65 percent of peoples were engaged in agriculture for their livelihood. Earlier, apart from this fishing, hunting, weaving, gathering of wild fruits from jungle, collecting firewood etc, were other source of livelihood. But due to the development of scientific technology, urbanization, modern education, they are now engaged in government services, business, private sectors etc (Das 1983). Peoples celebrate their own festivals differently throughout the year, by doing this they enjoy as well as try to preserve their culture and tradition for younger generation.

Origin of the Rai community

The Rai, community call themselves as Kirat. The word **KIRAT** has been possibly derived from Cirata or Cireta or Cirayita, also known as Kirata-tikta or Anarya-tikta- a bitter plant of the non-Arayans, grown in the lower regions of the Himalayas, which forms the country of the modern Kirantis or Kiratas. This is the name of a drug which was obtained from the Kiratas by the Aryans and used for medical purposes. It is also possible that the Kiratas

themselves might have given the name to the drug, which was as bitter in taste as they were (Singh 1990).

The king Prithivi Narayan Shah (gorkha ruler) conquered the Kathmandu valley in 1768 he further proceeded to expand his kingdom to the east ward. As a result he wanted the Kiratas who were present before them to transfer their allegiance to him, and promise for the security of their lives and property. So the King appointed the local headman, who was given royal commissions and the title "Rai" or "Chief" (Rai 2005).
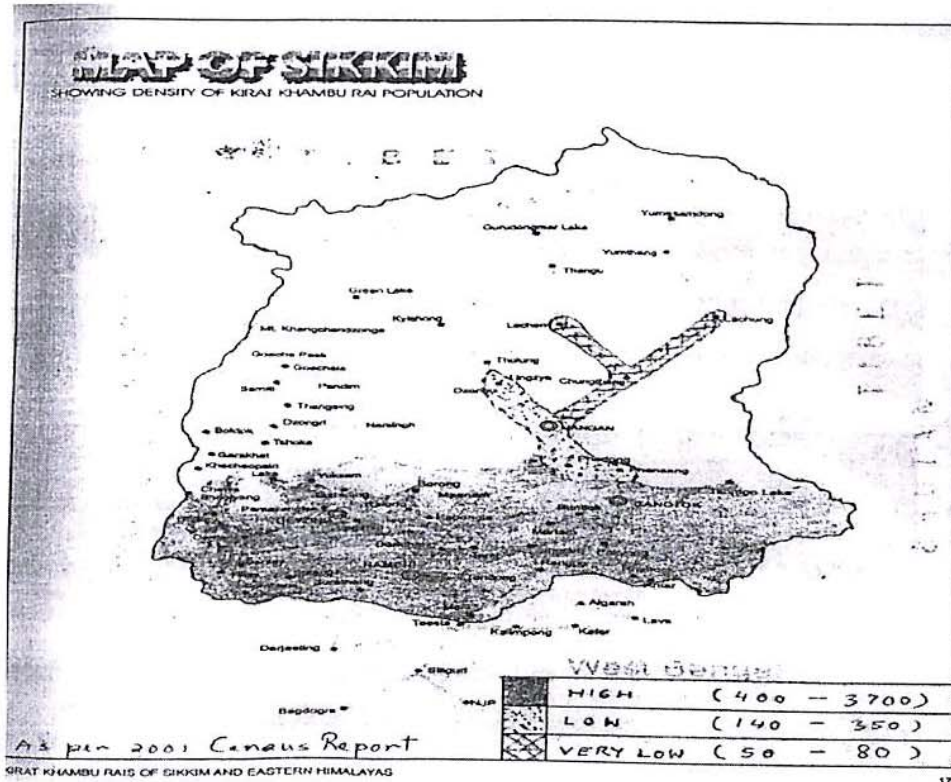
Source: S.K Rai *(2005) Kirat Khambus Rai's of Sikkim and Eastern Himalayas.*

Kirat Khambus Rai predominates in the state of Sikkim, Darjeeling, kalimpong, kurseong, mirik and dooars of West Bengal. A large number of Kirat Khambus Rai is also living in other north eastern states and eastern Nepal. The total population of Rais in Sikkim is 607, 688(as per 2011 Sikkim population census report). In Sikkim, West Bengal and north state it is about 8 lakhs. When for the first time in Sikkim a census was conducted in 1891, the population of Rai community was 2, 020. (Rai 2005). Rai comes under the category of Nepalis ethnic community. They are one of the Nepal's most ancient groups. They started to migrate due to socio economic and political reasons (Balaram 2008).

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Review of literature

Social structure, Cultural value, and Social change:

Social structure used within the broad frame work of structural and functional approach was the main focus of the works of the British social anthropologist, these anthropologist studied small scale preliterate societies where they did a lot of work, because they wanted to classify and eventually arrive at the universal features of the society. Radcliffe Brown used the term Social structure to describe the regularities in kinship behaviour, economic and religious organization. According to him the human beings are connected in a complex net work of relationships and social structure denotes the actual nature of actual existing relations. However, he distinguishes between the concrete social structure and the form of the structure. Since established and socially recognized systems of norms or patterns of conduct backed by sanction are termed social institution, a definition of social structure which takes into account all this is 'a continuing arrangement of persons in relationships defined or controlled by on institutions, that is , socially established norms or patterns of behavior (Radcliffe – Brown 1973:144).

This definition however, was not adopted by other Anthropologist, because this definition was not able to cover small societies. After his work on the Nuer society, Evans Pritchard, concluded that social structure is the relationship between groups, Therefore, the focus shifted from persons to groups. According to him in The Nuer (1940) Social relations are the relations between groups which form a system. (Evans-Pritchard 1940:262-3)

Raymond Frith excluded those elements which were not of enduring nature from Radcliffe-Brown's definition and introduced the concept of social organization, to take into account all the activities that are taking place in the society. He defined 'social organization as the systematic ordering of social relationships by act of choice and decision' (Frith1951:31).

In his book, *The Theory of Social Structure* (1957) Nadel argues that 'we arrive at the structure of the society by abstracting from the concrete population and its behavior the pattern or network of relationships obtaining between actors in their capacity of playing roles relative to one another (Nadel 1957:12).

In the French traditions social structure was not the abstract form of observed social relations but resided in principles of operations underlying observed data and governing relationships and procedures that could be observed. In this regard, Emile Durkheim's work

has a deep influence upon British structuralism, because his works ranged from pre-industrial to industrial societies and compared the two. Durkheim wanted to ensure, that the phenomenon under investigation and the data used correspond to his definition of social facts and the subject matter of Sociology is the delineation of social facts. Like Durkheim, Marcel Mauss also tried to concentrate on the study of social relationship. In *The Gift* (1925) Marcel examines the different kinds of gift exchange, and how by the passing of these gifts individuals express their relationships. He also reveals the fact that gifts have significance on many levels, symbolic, individual and social and in many spheres of life religious, economic and legal and moral (Jain 2001).

Levi-Strauss through his kinship studies drew attention to the existence of social life. According to him structure encompasses all kinship relations because it includes three types of family relations consanguinity, affinity and descent.

Culture

Culture is a way of life, it includes everything acquired (learned) by human being, that is not physically inherited. It is both a social product and a social property, passed on through teaching from generation to generation. It includes how they dress, their marriage customs and family life, their patterns of work, religious ceremony and leisure pursuits. (Bhattarcharya1969) To quote Anthony Giddens "culture consists of the values the member of a given group hold, the norms they follow and the material goods they create."

Values and norms are the elements of culture. And norms are social rules which define correct and acceptable behavior in a society or group to which people are expected to conform. In short norms are a bundle of dos and don'ts (Bhattacharya 1969).

Its use in scholarly writings and in sociology and anthropology has been classified into four main categories by John Thompson in his book, Ideology and Modern Culture (1990). These are classical conception, the descriptive conception, the symbolic conception and the structural conception. According to the classical conception, the concept of culture has been broadly defined as follows: culture in the process of developing and ennobling the human faculties, a process facilitated by the assimilation of works of scholarship and the art and the linked to the progressive character of the modern era (Jain 2001:20).

Descriptive concept of culture was developed in the nineteenth century and a land work was published by E.B.Taylor. According to Taylor, a culture is a complex whole which is

characteristic of a particular society. This approach is very broad and includes everything that varies human life, apart from the physical and physiological characteristics of human beings.

The symbolic conception of culture is based on the use of symbols in human life. Historically, a clear identification of the culture with the symbolic emerged in the context of the development of what is termed 'the pattern theory of culture', in the works of cultural anthropologist or ethnologist Jain. (2001:22). According to this theory, the culture from any society can be placed in any categories representing different spheres of social life to allow comparison between societies. Geertz (1973) placed the concept of culture at the center, according to him by analyzing culture we are drawing attention to meanings that are hidden.

John Thompson in his book, *Ideology and Modern Culture* (1990) attempts to integrate Geert'z symbolic conception with the structural matters. In this conception, cultural phenomena are to be seen as the symbolic forms in structured contexts, and 'cultural analysis' is the study of various kind-in relation to the historically specific and socially structured contexts and processes within which , and by means of which, these symbolic forms are produced, transmitted and received (Thompson1990:136).

Social structure and culture are both aspects of social reality and they are linked to each other, such that the relationship between culture and social structure is conceptualized as being dialectical.

Human societies are changing its nature from one stage to another stage. The foreign rule in India starting from Mughal and then British had brought so many changes in India society, culture and economic life. The Indian social change is unlike western society, is a complex in nature. It is not a smooth evolutionary process of social change rather a conflict, contradiction and cooperation between the ideas of westernization, modernization and Indian tradition of castes ethics, joint family, patriarchy and the rural collectivism (Srinivas 1966).

Sikkim and Rai Community

From Sikkim, most of the works on its society and physical features are in the form of Government reports or travelogues written by British officials. Published in 1894, by H.H Risley edited the first and only Gazetter of Sikkim that gives detailed historical, geographical, botanical and zoological accounts of Sikkim (Sachdeva 2011).

John Claude White (1909), British political officer visited the area of Sikkim and gave account of the origin of its people in his book 'Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty one years on North- East Frontier 1887-1908'. 'Experts from History of Sikkim' by Joseph F.Rock (1953) has also published experts from the main body of the book, 'The History of Sikkim'. He also gives an ethnographic profile of the Bhutias, Lepchas. Limbus and Mangars. C.De Beauvoir Stocks (1925) wrote a book 'The Folklore and Religious Belief of the people of Sikkim' it is an anthropological study which deals with religious rites and customs of the inhabitants of Sikkim. 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal,' by Dalton (1872) deals with the ethnology of different types of tribes of Bengal. For the purpose of this study, he divided the tribes according to their geographical positioning. While describing the tribes occupying the Northern barrier of Assam, on crossing the border of Bhutan he came across , the Bhutias, the Lepchas, the Limbus and the Kirants. He touches upon their history, physical traits, religion and marriage customs (Sachdeva 2011) .

Social structure of Rai community: Review of literature

The available literatures on the social structure highlight some details of the Rai community. They were initially known as Khambus which means an aborigine people who used to reside in the Himalayan ranges. They had their own distinctive culture, tradition and religious practices. Balaram Rai in his book writes the Rai people do not follow any religion, they are animist and nature worshippers, and they worship ancestor and nature. The concept of heaven or hell is absent.Mangpa (Rai priest) perform all the religious ritual, (Samkhalung) sacred fire place is very important for them as all the religious ritual are performed here. There is a belief that the soul of the death person reside here .And only the clan members are allowed to go near it, even the married daughter from the same family cannot go near it. But daughter in laws have the right to go near it. It shows that the position of women is equal to men among Rai community.

The Rai people had their own Veda called 'Thuturi Bead' (spoken Veda) this oral tradition was one of the most important means of cultural continuity in a non-literate society. Muddum which is also in oral form is inherited knowledge from the ancestor.

In his book People of Nepal Dor Bahadur Bista highlight some food habits like the Rai people love to eat fermented food items being kinema made from soyabean, gundruk (dried green vegetable leaf) and sinki (dried carrot) with rice. But with the mixing of different peoples these food items is common to everyone (Rai 2005, Rai 2008, Northey 1928) .

Rationale of Study:

The focus of the current study is to investigate the social changes that are taking place in the Rai community. There is a dearth of information which brings out this information. From the literature reviewed it was found that quite a number of studies have been conducted which highlight only about the history, culture, tradition, language, script and customs of Rai's. But modernization, urbanization, and westernization, have affected the social structure, value system of societies and Rai community has not been an exception. These forces of social change have also affected the Rai community whose traditional values are witnessing a gradual decline. In this context, this study aims to explore the change and continuity in Rai community with the process of social change taking place in the society. The above rationale resulted in investigation of the areas where a paucity of information was existing.

Specific research queries which necessitated the need for conducting the present research are:
1. What is the major occupation of Rai community?
2. What kind of rites and rituals they follows?
3. What are the natures of religious beliefs system?
4. What is the nature of interaction between the individual and the community members?
5. What is the nature of social change?
6. Why Rai community is more prone to conversion to other religion?
7. How does the new generation perceive to the Rai community culture, beliefs and customs?

Objectives

To study the above mentioned questions, the objectives of the present study were framed as follows:

1. To study the changes that occur due to the westernization, modernization among Rai community during birth, death and marriage ceremonies.
2. To understand how the new generation perceives their own Rai culture.
3. To analyze what are the factors that led to the transformation of Rai people into Christianity
4. To study the role played by the state in both changing of culture and making of identity among Rai community.

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Methodology

This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. An Exploratory research design is followed when the phenomenon under investigation is has not been researched earlier. The data has been collected through structured and unstructured interview schedule. Both qualitative and quantitative data has been collected. Focus group discussion and in depth interviews have also carried out. Stratified sampling is used based on gender, age, income and education. Only the individuals belonging to the Rai community have been incorporated as respondent for the study. Secondary data and available literature has also used for this study. The study is based on field investigation. The field areas of study include Yanyang, Rolep and Ranka.

Selection of study area and Field setting:

The study was undertaken in Rolep, Yangyang and Ranka as these villages had the maximum Rai population and this was considered an ideal choice for providing an ideal choice in a homogenous cultural setting. A sample is of one hundred and sixty (160) is collected for the research. There are 110 male respondents comprising 80% of the total respondents and 50 female respondents comprising only 20%.

ROLEP: This is small village of East Sikkim which has a distance of 17 km away from Rongli bazaar. It is an area where there is a large settlement of the Rai community as my sample includes only the people from same community. This village is mostly dominated by the Rai community, the old tradition, rituals customs are still found as compared to other district. They interact in their own Rai language within the community member.

YANGANG: This village is situated in South district of Sikkim. This village had a large settlement of Rai community as well as the chief minister of Sikkim belong to this area so to know the political influence, economic background within the Rai community. Or what role has played by the state in this area towards the culture and tradition.

RANKA: This village is 15 km away from Gangtok, East Sikkim This is the area which is near to the capital Gangtok which is the most populous and urbanized, so it is suitable place to study the effects of urbanization and modernization on the social structure of the Rai community.

Significance of the study:

Since Sikkim is largely unexplored by the social science researcher, this study will be helpful for the contemporary academicians, the policy makers, the researchers and students to understand the nature of social change in Sikkim within a broader perspective of social change in India. The study also has a significant contribution to the field of academics to understand and theorize the Rai community, their culture, identity and the process of changes.

Organization of the study

This study is divided into four chapters on the basis of the objectives and the problem.

Chapter I- Starts with the brief introduction of the state Sikkim followed by the three ethnic community. A detail of the subject "Rai" community and social structure has highlighted. Rationale of the study result in the investigation of the three villages located in the state of Sikkim, this chapter also deals with the research queries, aims and objectives and methodology for this study along with the details of the study area and significance of the study.

Chapter II- Social change has been at the centre for the study to various sociologist. This chapter provides the theoretical explanation in social change on broader view (Classical sociology), and social change from Indian sociological perspectives.

Chapter III- This chapter deals with the field analysis on social structure in the process of transition and change. The details of the respondents have given. It also provides the findings of the study.

Chapter IV- This chapter is the concluding part where the summary of the findings is given and provide some insights for the future research in this field as well as contribution of the study.

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Chapter II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL CHANGE

The changes within Rai community has been studied by using the various theory and concept given by scholar like M.N Srinivas (sanskritisation), Yogendra Singh(modernization of Indian tradition) and Dipankar Gupta(Mistaken Modernity).The research work has also followed the major theoretical ideas given by Marx, Durkheim and Weber on social change.

Social change may be defined as changes in the social organization that is the structure and functions of society. It refers to all historical variations in human societies. It means changes in political institution class structure, economic system, mores and modes of living .In short in all the fundamental relations of man to man. (Bhattacharya1969). Social change may be caused by a variety of factors like demographic, technological and cultural. By demographic factor is meant the size, composition, distribution and changes in population. Demographic factor create social change by effecting the basic social institution like family (ibid). Technology as another factor for social change which turned rural nations into urban ones and created new social relationships, new classes and changed the family organizations. Culture can be another important factor for social change. It refers to acquired behavior which are shared and transmitted among the member of the society.

Social change in Classical Sociology:

Social change is the change in the society. Since society is a web of social relationship hence social change is the change in social relationship. Social change can be observed in every society and the fact that social change is taking place can be analyzed by glancing at the history of any society. Since society is dynamic in nature it undergoes constant changes. Classical thinkers like Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber emphasize on the historical development of society, how society changes from one stage to another stage. It also focuses on human society as a hole, because society means group mind and not individual mind and group mind can be predicted as a whole. It tries to establish the nature of society i.e. law of progress.

Karl Marx on Social Change

Karl Marx was influenced by his teacher Georg Hegel idea of dialectical materialism. According to the Hegel each statement of truth a thesis has an opposite statement or anti-thesis which is also truth. The thesis and the anti-thesis may be reconcile on a higher level of synthesis but this is not the end for the dialectical process then continuous as the synthesis will become a new thesis and its antithesis so on (Morrison 2006).

Marxian theory begins with the simple observation that in order to survive, man must produce food and material objects by doing so he enters into social relationship with other men. (Haralambos 1980) Marx consider the human society as an arena in which there is a constant struggle and strife going on between groups of people competing for the forces for survival and hence there is a social change. According to Marx society had two groups have and have not. So he argues that instead of peaceful harmony there is always a competition and conflict between these groups which was an important factor for social change or advancement.

To Marx the mechanism of social change is based on the contradiction which arises between the forces of production and the relationship of production. Thus according to Marx social change is rooted in the change in the mode of production. Marx identify four stages of human history on the basis of mode of production i.e. 1/ primitive communism 2/ ancient slave production 3/ feudal society and capitalist society. Primitive communism what Marx says is classless society or pre history people produce by hunting and gathering which only fulfill the basic survival needs like forest was the common to everybody, everybody was the ownership of everything so there was no class struggle and no exploitation. Private property was absent. Ancient mode of production is the first stage where some group of people wants to produce the food requirements for the whole society. Land and forest was owned by someone by his physical power so the others has no land but they also had to survive, as a result they had to work in other land this relation is called ancient mode of production.

Feudal society: In this stage there was struggle between majority verses minority. Agriculture was the main source of economic production. But the land owner transforms into landlords

by changing the way of job. Those who were workers before became tenants. They change the society from ancient to feudal.

Capitalist: It is the stage where industrial society developed. Two groups of people i.e. bourgeoisie (have group) and proletariat (have not group) are dependent upon each other. Proletariat sells their labour for his livelihood and bourgeoisie were dependent on the labour power without which there will be no production. There is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. (ibid) .

The changing of society was the main focus of Marx intellectual work. He argue that man must be free from the shackles' which they unwilling produce for themselves and to bring changes in the society they should realize that they can bring positive change (man make his own history) he believes that man struggles for survival in competition would came to an end when the working people would be sufficiently strong and politically conscious (Haralambos1980).

Emile Durkheim view on social change:

Durkheim used the concept of division of labour in social theory to refer to the process of dividing up labour among individuals in a group so that the main economic and domestic task are performed by different people for the purposes of the collective maintenance of society. The process of the Division of labour begins as soon as individuals form themselves into groups where, instead of living isolated or alone they collectively divide their labour and by coordinating their economic and domestic activities for purposes of survival (Morrison 2006). He further examined how social order was maintained in different types of society. He focused on how it differed in traditional societies and modern societies.

According to him division of labour is social institutions and not an economic institution. It is not regarded as something desirable but it is a condition for the existence of society which maintains the group solidarity. Before him authors like Herbert Spencer argued that societies evolved like living organism, moving from a simple state to a more complex one resembling the working of complex machines. Durkheim reversed this formula, adding his theory of social progress, social evolutationism and social Darwinism. He used two broad system of social solidarity. Durkheim's argues that in those societies whose solidarity is mechanical, people are homogenous, mentally and morally they feel the same emotions, people engaged in the same occupation like farming, hunting etc. There is a collective conscience, which

means the idea of a common set of values, norms and morality which guides and control individual behavior. The law is generally repressive in societies with mechanical solidarity which is basically based on punishment. The growing development of the division of labour brings changes in the societies from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity which developed out of differences rather than likeness. Mental and moral similarity will disappear. Increase in population, urbanization and industrialization ultimately results in dissimilarities of individual in society or society becomes more and more individualistic. The law is generally restitutive in societies with organic solidarity. The Division of labour in modern societies contributes to social solidarity as labour is divided and every individual depends on each other (Morrison 2006).

Max Weber on social change

Marx Weber tried to analyze everything according to human behavior. He argues that the modern societies are dominated by government oriented rationality which replace the earlier preference of the traditional value oriented behaviour. There is a shift from the value towards the goal. According to Weber society transforms through the Cultural Revolution. Capitalism ideas are also developed through cultural value. According to him culture has some principles to develop the economic foundation values like concept of god is labour (Morrison 2006).

Religious beliefs systems are also considered a major influence on the economic behavior in a particular society. Weber analyzed human action to which an actor attached to a subjective meaning, every action is not social. According to Marx Weber action is social when the subjective meaning attached by the acting individual takes into account the behavior of others. He categorizes social action into four basic types. Traditional action, where both the means and the ends are determine by customs and beliefs. Affective or emotional action, where emotional when it satisfies or need for savage, devotion sensual gratification. Actor directly acts on the basis of an emotional response to a situation. It lacks a specific orientation to a goal. Value traditional action where the means are chosen but the ends are determined by value. Instrumental rational action is oriented towards a goal, here the actors determines the goal and chooses his means purely on their efficiency to attain a goal. Apart from the classical sociologist social change can be understood in the Indian context by various sociologists (ibid).

Understanding social change in Indian sociology

Modernization of Indian tradition

The process of social change in Indian society has analyzed from a sociological perspectives by Yogendra Singh. Modernization in India started mainly with the western contact, especially through establishment of the British rule. This contact had a special historicity which brought about many far reaching changes in culture and social structure of the Indian society. Not all of them, however, could be called modernizing. The basic direction of this contact was towards modernization, but in the process a variety of traditional institutions also got reinforcement (Singh1986). This demonstrates the weakness of assuming a neat contrariety between tradition and modernity. This polarity may be more heuristic than real. However, only after the establishment of British rule in India, modern cultural institutions and forms of social structure were introduced (Singh 1986). Modernization is a process which is based on the ideas principles, dealing with logic, calculation technological inventions where societies changes or progress. Before the introduction of modernization in the traditional Indian society there was a low level of technological development, agriculture was the only main occupation as a source of livelihood.

The two concepts i.e. social structure on the macro level include changing nature of the political, industrial and urban structures which has categories in industrial workers, migration urbanization and tradition. On the micro level it includes structures like caste, family, kinship, village communities. The rise of the Mauryan empire, Gupta dynasty, Mughal empire and finally the British empire leads to the growth of political and economic macro structure in the past (Singh 1986). But gradually, new macro structures also came into being like elite who represent the basic values which find a concrete expression in the power structure and the decision making process of the society. The structure of elites in a society also undergoes with the changes in the social system as a whole. For example the king and the priest were the important elite in traditional societies their social structure was based on the principles of hierarchy, holism etc. But traditional society changes into modern, new science and technologies came up and create new opportunity for other groups (ibid).

The migration of rural population as a worker in factories leads to the rise in the urban population which is also the main factor which contribute to social change and modernization in India. Growth of cities brought modern facilities. In the process of micro structural change the, caste system, family structure and village community has been analyzed. The caste

system which is rooted in the four Varna i.e. Brahmin, kshtriya, vaishya and the last shudra. Occupation is divided according to Varna, but the caste activity is changing into political associations, economic interest groups. The function of Indian family structure has undergone certain changes with the changes in technology and economic structure of the society. The transformation of extended family into nuclear family results in the new direction of socialization process of a new born child. The structure and functions of family has somewhere, somehow changed in terms of mate selection, freedom of choice etc. Another important micro structure in India's social life is the village community. Indian village community was self sufficient; they have everything what they want within themselves and not dependent on the outside world. But as societies is dynamic in nature, with the introduction of new land reforms, community development programmes. Political elections have brought certain changes in the inter-group relationship. Scheme like community development programs which is for whole the village is mostly goes to the upper caste or upper classes, which brought changes in inter group relation in the villages. With the coming up of modernization market economy has developed and the villagers are dependent on market to sell their agriculture products (Singh 1986).

Social change in modern India.

Social change in modern India has been conceptualized by several from different perspective. According to M.N. Srinivas the societies of Indian not only experiment change only through the external factors like Muslim and British culture, but also India had the process of social change in earlier period. He developed the concepts of sanskritization where the lower castes try to raise their position in the caste hierarchy adopting some customs of twice born caste. In different parts of Indian Sanskritization was widespread cultural and social process among the Hinds. It is also happened among some of the tribal groups. It is major processes of social change in the country like India were different people are divided into different castes and regional diversity.

He further defined westernization as the important factor brought about in Indian society and its culture and traditions, as a result of 150 years of British rule, at different levels like technology, institutions ideology and values. They develop communications, railways, post and telegraph, roads and canals etc. They also brought press, media, a new modern education facility which earlier was traditional knowledge only for some section of higher caste people. Since independence modern education introduction of adult franchise, panchayati raj and

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other opportunities has resulted in the upliftment of the lower caste giving them reservation. Westernization gave rise to industrialization and urbanization. People living in town are greater in chance for the exposure to influences. Industrialization leads to the increase of highly urbanized areas. It has also brought a fundamental change in the old institutions like education which result in a secularization of style of life. In the political and cultural field, it has given birth to the nationalism, revivalism, communalism, while using the western ideas. This foreign rule had brought the concept of secularization of Indian social life and culture. The civil disobedience movements by Mahatma Gandhi also mobilized the Indian masses which later on contribute in the increase of secularization. The India's independence results in the declaration of India as a secular state. When we compare secularization with sanskritization, sanskritization is a general process which affects all the citizens of India but sanskritization only affects the lower Hindu caste and tribal groups. The process of ritual has also affected by the secularization. The ceremonies such as name giving, ritual of changing sacred thread, the rituals for girls attaining of puberty where elaborate rituals was observed, shaving of a Brahmins widows head has disappeared in most of the Indian societies. And widow's remarriage has approved among the educated family. The introduction of universal adult franchise, the abolition of untouchability, community development programme, village self governance, increased popularity of education all these has changed the Indian village community.

Mistaken modernity.

Indian Society is living between tradition and modernity what Dipankar Gupta says mistaken modernity. After independence new constitutions was framed which gives way to the modernity. People had their own government, freedom for every individual, equality before law, reservation for the weaker section of the society etc. Industrialization and urbanization increased rapidly. Though many changes had taken place in Indian society, the people perception still lies in tradition or it can be said that India is still unmodern. With the introduction of market, they are using the modern concept with traditional value system for example dowry, which is the system of giving valuable things as a gift during marriage ceremonies has changed, they now exchange television, fridge, car which is a modern products, but dowry is a traditional value. In many traditional societies marriages are based on inequality like bride taker is considered superior than bride giver, according to tradition the bride's side is supposed to give but not to take anything in return from the bride taker family (Nagla2008).

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Although major changes had also taken place in the agrarian sector modern equipments like using fertilizer, tractors, HYV etc but at the same time the agricultural land is worshipped before cultivation which shows that Indian societies is still superstitious and traditional. India is a caste based society, which make it different from the rest of the countries. There is competition against each other. Caste is also playing a significant role in politics. The function of caste is no longer the same as in traditional India, it is slowing dying but caste identities are still strong. Democracy and urbanization have broken the Hindu caste system giving rise to the political mobilization and competition based on caste identities. So modernity came into being when intersubjectivity came amongst the one another lives (ibid).

Social background of Indian Nationalism.

A.R Desai gave importance to the economy for the understanding of the Indian social reality. He applied dialectical approach to study the emergence of Indian nationalism, and discuss about the transformation of Indian societies due to the British rule. He says the Indian village were self sufficient in pre-British, they consumed what they produce they produced. The technology was primitive and whatever they produce it did not go out of village and economy was limited. Most of the village population was composed of peasants. Their family enjoyed traditional hereditary right to posses and cultivate the land which passes from one generation to another. So the village was based on agriculture. The village council was indirectly the owner of the village land. Everything was decided and controlled by the village council. The British conquest transformed India from feudal economy to capitalist economy. They adopted the new path of development in terms of political and economic policies at three levels i.e. trade, industry and finance, which is forces of modernization. As a result old land relations were disappeared. New classes like the capitalist, industrial working class, merchants emerged. It also gave rise to new class structure in agrarian societies like zamindars, absentee landlords, tenants, moneylender, agricultural labourers. The new land revenue system, commercialization of agriculture, fragmentation of land etc results in the transformation of Indian village (Nagla 2008).

National consciousness emerged due to the development of communication, British government introduced railways, postal services, English education, modern industry which brought change in Indian society. Although they exploit the people of India but unknowingly and unintentionally it led to the unification of Indian masses. Communication facilities

brought consciousness, national sentiments, among the disintegrated people. And finally gave rise to awakening of Indian nationalism. By introducing industrialization and modernization British developed new economic relations and when these relations are linked with traditions there was a change in the Indian society. A.R Desai view traditions with reference to religion, rituals, and festivals. The origin and development of tradition lies in economy, for example economy of institution like family. Modern education also played a progressive role in Indian nationalism (ibid).

Tradition from Marxian perspectives

D.P.Mukherjee analyzed Indian society from Marxian perspective of dialectical materialism. He emphasize on economic factors in the process of cultural change. He gave importance to the role of tradition in order to analyse social change. He says Tradition is the most important aspect to understand the Indian reality, "Tradition comes from the root 'tradere', which means "to transmit". He further argued that there is dialectical relation between India's tradition and modernity. When modernity came in India, there is a cultural contradiction, adaption, as well as conflict between modernity and tradition .As a result it ends up with two consequences i.e. conflict and synthesis. Indian society is the product of historical process. Indian traditions not only belong to Hindu but other several ideologies such as Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Tribal Life and Western Modernity. He further classified Indian traditions into three headings i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary (Nagla 2008).

The primary tradition is the earliest and authentic. The secondary tradition was traditions when British came in India there was no total harmony among Muslim and Hindu in terms of social existence (natural resources), there was also conflict in the case of religion. In the tertiary tradition differences survived prominently.

As a result of the modern education introduced by the British which led to the development of new middle class, of the urban centres. They command the knowledge of the modern social forces, i.e. science and technology democracy etc. They began to look after western lifestyle. They were uprooted from Indian tradition and more inclined towards the western traditions (ibid) .

India's Changing Villages

In his book India's Changing Villages S.C.Dube deals with the changes brought about in Indian villages by the initiation of community development programme by the Indian government and human factors responsible in bringing changes through this programme. Which aims was to bring positive change among the rural people. His aim was to give clear picture of social, economic and religious aspect of Indian rural life .According to him development not only means economic growth but development should be both in cultural level i.e. there should be equality, freedom of expression among the people, and as well as in individual level i.e. development of individual through giving education, health facilities etc. He further argued that Indian societies has been developed from inequality to democratic country, the individual mind has not developed as with the society (ibid). There is no visible change of development in the majority of population as there are unemployment, poverty, health problem etc. This community development programme only benefited the small section of the society (Nagla 2008).

Social change in Sikkim

The history of Sikkim begins with the consecration of Phuntsog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim in 1642. Before this, the Lepchas, Limbu and manager Chief ruled here Phuntsog Namgyal was great grandson of guru Tashi who belongs to minyak dynasty of Tibet. He had a vision to see and visit Denzong "the valley of rice" (presently Sikkim), with his family including five sons. So on the way he found sakya king engaged in the construction of big monastery but to erect the main pillar thousand of men employed were failed so the elder son of guru Tashi came forward and raised the pillar single handedly, thus he was given the name Khye Bumsa meaning the superior of the ten thousands heroes and he was also offered the daughter of Sakya king in marriage. Then after on the dead of guru Tashi they moved further and settled down in the chubby valley then he came in contact with Lepcha chief Thekong Tek of Gangtok. And they sign the treaty of brotherhood which brought the feeling of brotherhood between two communities. Phuntsog Namgyal the great grandson of guru Tashi was consecrated as the first chogyal of Sikkim. So the Namgyal dynasty started in 1642 A.D, who ruled over Sikkim for about 333years. During this time Lepcha tribes came under the Buddhist fold (Sinha 2008).

During the reign of Namgyal dynasty there were many social economic administrative reforms in Sikkim like establishment of high court at Gangtok, prohibition of public

gambling and forced labour in 1921, the system of jharlangi were abolished, peasant were asked to pay their land taxes directly to the sate in place of landlords. The power of landlords decrease Sikkim nationalized transport was started which brought transport facilities. The first public school was set up at Gangtok. Sikkim's people began to get modern education gradually the political turmoil's with the new king who failed completely to save the institution of monarchy. The Namgyal dynasty that lasted for 333years came to an end with the establishment of the democratic elected government. (ibid) The political system of the country changed with the tripartite agreement signed at Gangtok between government of India, the chogyal and the leaders of political parties. The main provision of the agreement was rule of law, guarantee of fundamental rights, independent judiciary. Then election was held in which Sikkim congress headed by Kazi Lhendup Dorji. Thus for the first time democratically elected government was formed with L.D Kazi as the chief minister. Finally the institution monarchy was abolished and Sikkim was merged with Indian by the thirty sixth constitutional (amendment) act and became the 22nd state of Indian union on 16th may 1975. The merged of Sikkim with Indian union brought a new political system for the people of Sikkim. The state was divided into 32 constituencies 15 seats for Bhutias and Lepcha, 15 for Nepalis, 1 for schedule caste/schedule tribe (Sinha 2008) .

Socio- Cultural change in Rai community

Different authors (Rai 2005.Rai 2008. Northey 1928.Singh 1990.) Had written about *Kirat* Khambus Rais and their different aspects of life. Some of them argue that the society of today is different from earlier one. Some of the factors of changes are physical environment, demography, economic factor. Globalization and modernization which gave rise to huge migration, inter-cultural interaction plays a vital role for changes. As it result in bringing consciousness among the ethnic and minorities groups etc.

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Chapter III

SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION AND CHANGE

This chapter aims at eliciting socio, economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study sample. The variables that are selected are age, gender, occupation, education, living conditions and marital status. Since this chapter also focuses on the social structure and the changes taking place in the Rai community religion, family structure, attitude towards religion, language are also taken into consideration.

By reviewing the existing literature on the social structure of the Rai community in the previous chapter, it was observed that the social change within Rai community has been ignored .Thus this study focuses on the changing nature of the social structure within the Rai community.

Profile of the respondents:

The total numbers of the respondents which have been interviewed from the study areas are one hundred and sixty from the study area.

Table I: Area Wise Distribution of the respondents.

Field areas	Total no. of respondents
Yangang (South Sikkim)	50
Rolep (East Sikkim)	80
Ranka (East Sikkim)	30

Source: Field Data Jan-Feb 2012.

The age wise distribution of the respondents (Fig.2) ranges from 20 years to 70 years. The reason for taking this is that the behavior of an individual changes from generation after generation, even though the socio-cultural attributes may be the same. Knowledge and attitude of an individual grow with every successive generation and modern times; its diffusion is faster due to well developed means of communication and network (Sachdeva 2011). In the elder age group people are less influenced by changes that are taking place, however the younger age groups change very fast because they have better exposure and education level is also good. Respondents who belonged to the age group of 20-30 comprised 20%, of the study sample and the other age groups were more or less ranged between 20% to 25%. Maximum number of respondents was in the age group of 70years and above. (Fig 2)

Fig2: *Age wise distribution of respondents*
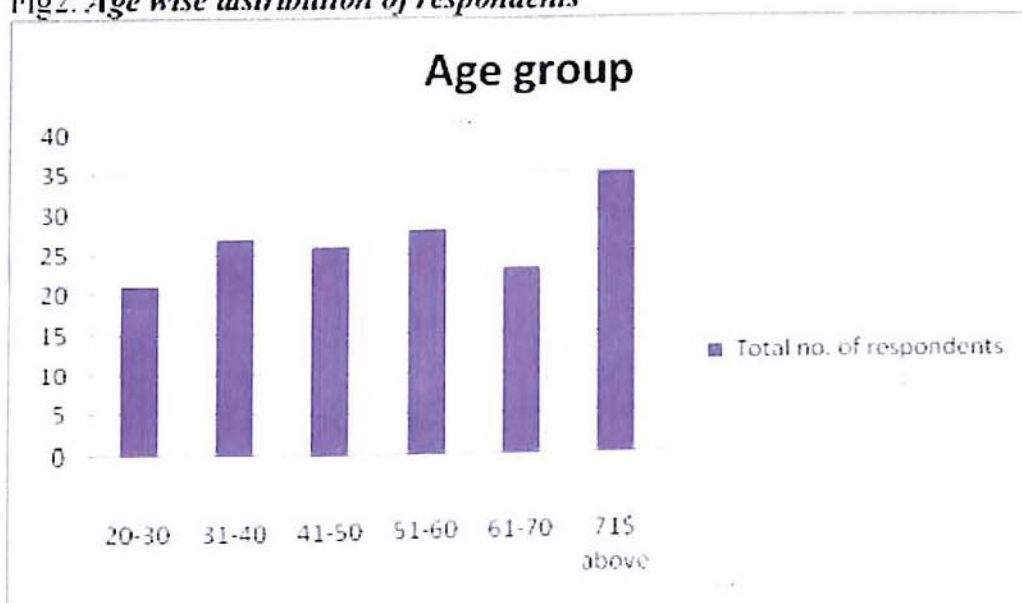
Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. As per selection criteria there are 130 male respondents which comprise of 80% of the total respondents and 50 female respondents comprising 20% (Fig 3) Some researchers have explored the function of various cultural rituals and representations in creating the symbolic justification for gender differences and inequality based on this sex based division of labour For example, Gilbert Herdt describes a

variety of 'coming out' processes in a variety of culture, thus demonstrating (1) the connection between sexual identity and gender identity, and (2) the dramatic variation among these identities (Mead 2001). This study focuses on male member of the Rai community because the Rai's are a patriarchal society and most of the ceremonies, rituals are performed by the males but it does not imply that no importance is given to the female members. (Fig 3)

Fig 3: *Gender profile of the respondents*
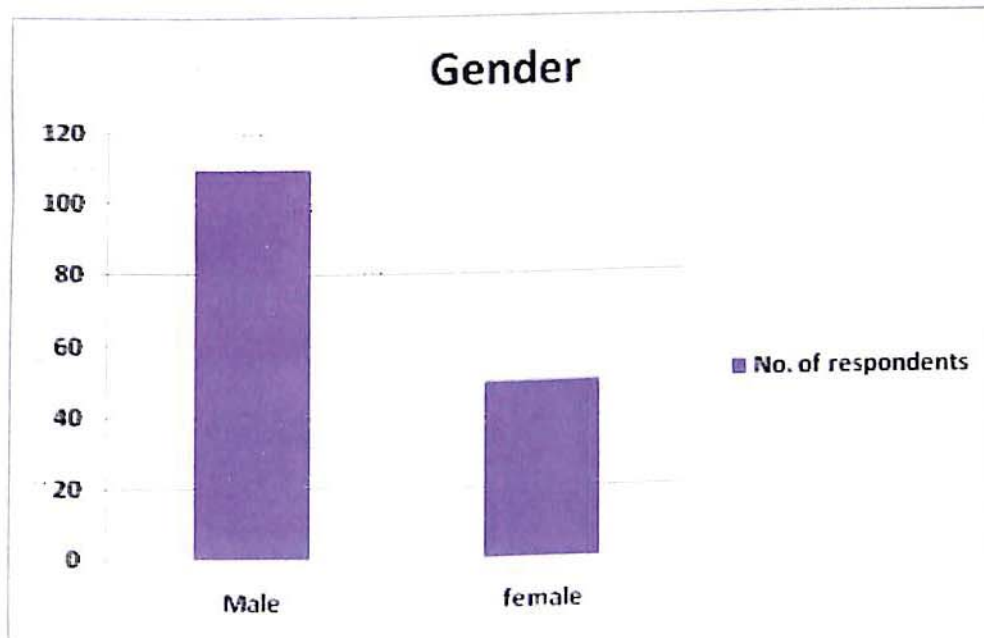
The Rai caste is divided into numbers of pachha (clan) which helps to identify the place from where that particular Rai belongs. This clan is further divided into sub-clan (samait) which indicates the family root of that particular person. So pachha and samait plays a significant role during marriage as it is essential to pronounce the samait of the groom and the bride at the time of marriage (Rai 2005). Marriage system among the Rai's is usually monogamous. Three types of marriage are there i.e. arranged marriage, marriage by fine payment and marriage by force. But now a day's love marriage or marriage by elopement is taking place. Inter caste marriage are also taking place happening. There is permission to marry the wife's younger sister but marriage with younger brother's wife is restricted (ibid).

In the sample size majority of the respondents were married as indicated (Fig4). According to the age group most of the respondents were between 30-40 and 50-60years. This also

indicates the fact that in the Rai community individuals do not marry late and the age of marriage is relatively early. (Fig 4)

Fig 4: *Marital status of the respondents*

Family occupies an important place in the social structure of any society, it is a universal institution. The structure of the family varies from society to society. Gradually a change in the family system has been taken place due to industrialization, urbanization, spread of education, migration towards towns and cities for work etc. The changing nature of the family system leads to the breakdown of the jointness among the members. The Rai follow the patriarchal family system where the father is the decision maker and his words are final.

The role and the position of the women are also changing in the family system. Earlier they were only confined to the household activities, and were unknown about the outside world. Rai women are now found in service and helping their families economically. All the social ritual and religious activities require the participation of women, who are also indirectly and sometimes even directly controlling their society and enjoy an equal status with men in all sphere of life. They now not only contribute to the family income but also control the family expenditure. They are not only doing the household work but are also taking decision and participating in economic activity, politics, and business and participating in the field of education etc. (Bareh 2001). For instance in the village of Ranka some married women first collect some amount of money like Rs 100 per head and then they buy some useful things such as utensils, LPG etc which is given in rent for two to three days during marriages,

religious ceremonies ,funerals etc .This helps them to contribute to the family income. As a result they don't have to depend on their husband totally they themselves can handle some economic problems.

On the basis of the composition, families are divided into two type i.e. joint family and nuclear family. Industrializations further create a new occupation which leads to many rural people to shift from their locality with their family for work. The family structure among Rai community was both joint as well as nuclear. In Sikkim numbers of factories like Cipla, Sun Pharma ,juice factory, pickle factory have been established, due to this Rai people from different place came to work here as a wage labour as a result there is a rise in the number of nuclear families. Education is one of the other factor for the breakdown of the joint family system like with the increase in educational institutions in Sikkim students after completion of their senior secondary level they started to migrate towards other colleges or universities for further studies as a result if two to three members of a particular family migrate this led to the small and nuclear family. (Fig5)

Fig 5: *Family structure*
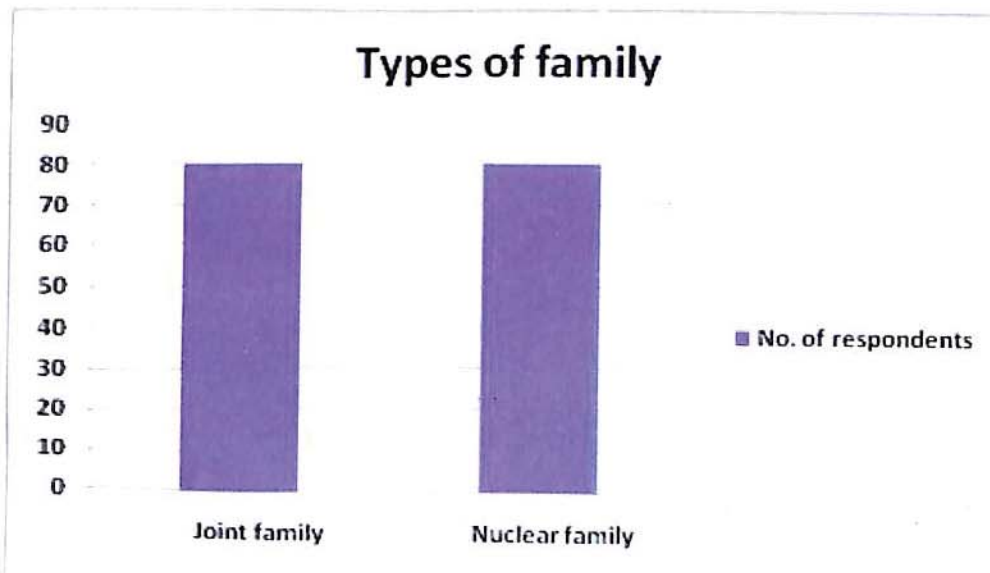
Although educational development has received priority in recent years in Sikkim but in the sample the percentage of the illiterates was the same as that of those who had received the secondary level of education because most of the respondents were from the age of 50 -60 and above the age of 70 According to them in our time the value of the education was less, only the upper class people used to send their children to school like children's of

big landlords politicians etc. but in their case parents used to say *padi lekhe ke kamm, holo jote kha mamm* which means education does not give anything but ploughing the field gives rice to eat. As a result the number of illiterate people in these age groups was higher. Although there are number of degree colleges as well as university even then the level of higher studies among the Rai community is quite low, but it may be because of the small size of sample belonging to the age group of 20 to 30. The respondent whose level of education is up to primary level had to leave their studies because of the family problem such as financial problem, health problem etc. The death of their parents was also one of the reasons for leaving schools. (Fig6).

Fig 6: *Level of education of respondents*
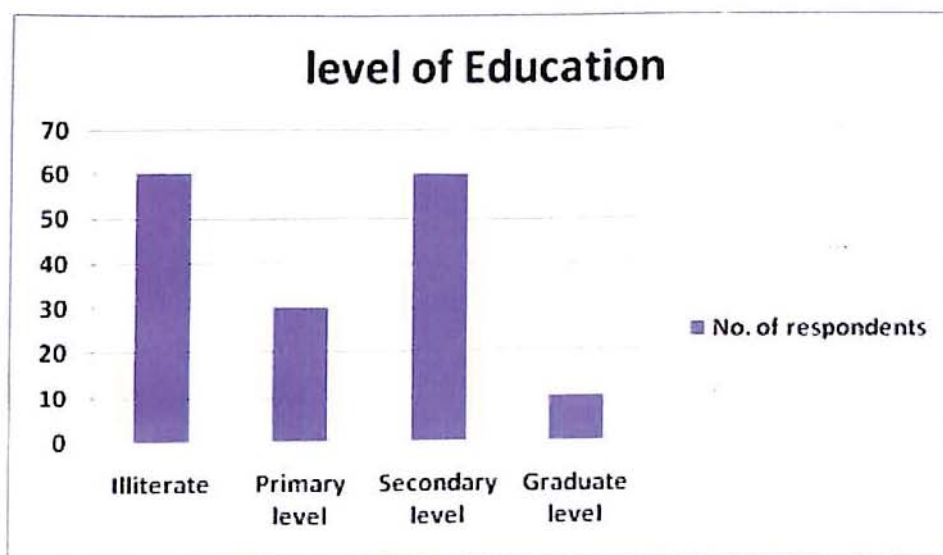
The level of education is also indicative of the kind of occupation the respondents have in the sample of study. Sikkim is an agricultural society but there is a significant shift towards other occupation as well. The number of respondents who are farmers and are engaged in agriculture, dairy farm etc comprise 70% in the study sample, 30% of them are employed in government sector, 10% of the respondents were employed in the private sector, 10 % of the total respondents had their own business like hotel, shops and 10 % of respondents are engaged in other work like carpenter, labour, taxi drivers etc. (fig 7).

Fig 7: *Occupational status of respondents*
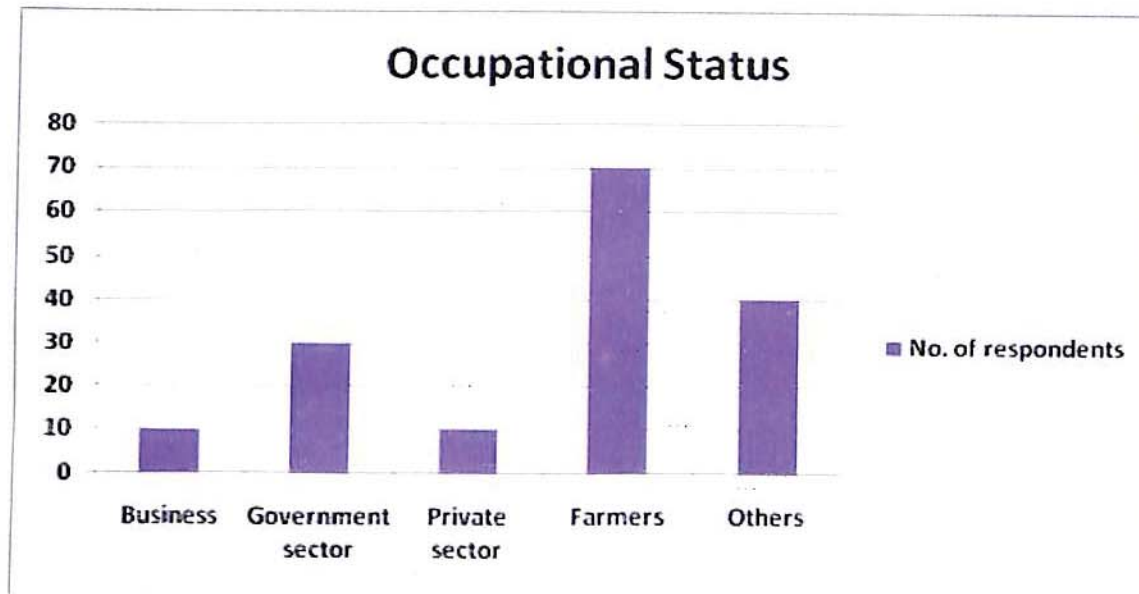
Religion is an almost universal and pervasive institution in human society. According to Durkheim (1954), 'A religion is a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things that are things set apart and forbidden.' Durkheim explains religion according to its social function, which according to him has five aspects: these are experiential, ritualistic, intellectual and finally consequential. Religion plays an important role in Rai community and in the study it was found that majority of the respondents are Hindu which means that they attached a lot of importance to rituals.

The Rai people who are Christian comprise 15% of the sample, they were converting into this religion because they found the Hindu festivals very elaborate which they could not afford because of low income, and in Christianity there where are no such expenses. Another reason cited were illness, health problems which were cured by religious transformation.

Religion such as 'heavenly path' which is a new religion among the Rai community is also becoming popular .The followers of this religion say that it is the best religion which avoids the unnecessary rituals like animal sacrificing to the god. They feel that unnatural death, missing of family members, birth of deformed child etc are all due to animal sacrifice. So they offer fruits and flowers .They say that the religion which takes away the life of others living being is not good ,so by converting into this religion they feels happiness and peace

will come to them and their families. They became vegetarian and also gave up drinking of alcohol. Everything is same in this religion like rituals, celebrating festivals etc, but there is no consumption of non vegetarian food and alcohol. This religion has brought about changes in the food habits among the Rai community.

'Manav dharma' is also followed by Rai community where they found the real meaning of life, the concept of soul etc. They say that there is also life after death and if an individual leads a sincere and simple life in this world. (Fig8).

Fig 8: *Forms of religion practiced*
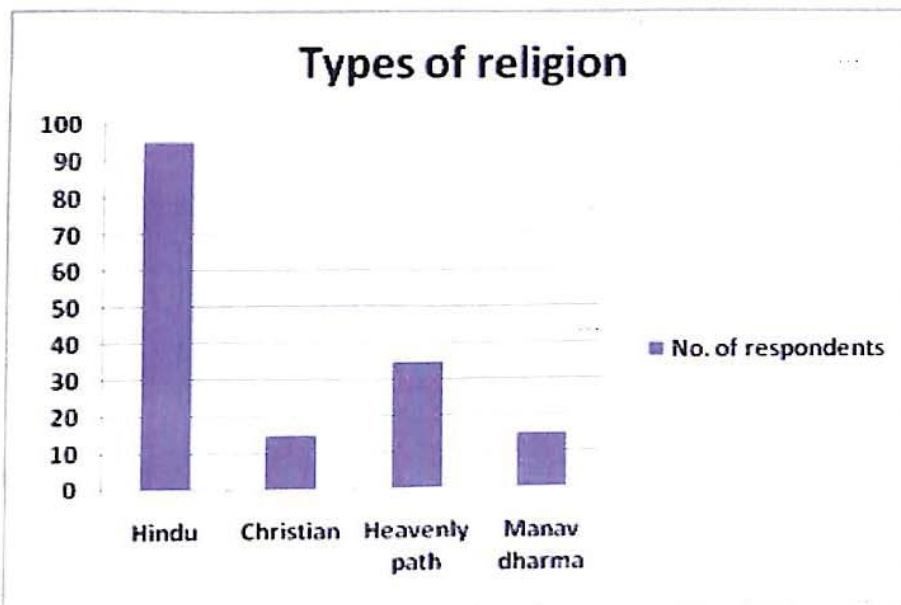
Among Rai community most of them believe in religious practices because it provides them support and unites them into a socio-religious community. Performing religious practices together creates a community feeling among them. Rituals and customs play an important role in the well being of the every community. It provides support and containment for strong emotion. Rai is a community which beliefs in its rituals and customs and every function is full of ritualistic practices. The rituals performed by them in every occasion are different and unique in nature. They are basically agriculturist and rituals is present in each and every step, while cultivating, harvesting etc. since they are agriculturist their food habits includes fried popcorn and fermented millet beer in the morning. At the day time they take cooked corn or millet with a kind of fermented vegetables soup or pulses along with some homemade wine, at dinner they take pork with rice, stinging nettle soup, bamboo shoots, wild flowers, tubers

which are their important dishes. Homemade wine is necessary for them. One of the important traditional foods of the Rai community is Wachippa which is generally prepared during ancestor worshipping ceremony (pitri puja), marriages, festivals and some other important occasions. Ingredients like pieces of chicken meat, rice, ash of the burnt feathers of the chicken, ginger, onion, turmeric, chilly, salt, mustard oil are used in preparing Wachipa. It also had a religious significance that no parts of the chicken which is sacrificed should be thrown outside the house but it should be cooked and consumed by the family members. There is a belief that it is very good for health and works as a medicine during body ache. There is another type of wachipa which is for the vegetarians, wild flower (Damlapa) which is bitter in taste is used instead of chicken meat and burnt feathers. It also works as a medicine. The individuals who do not beliefs in such religious practices were mostly from new generation who were affected by the modern culture. (Fig 9).

Fig 9: *Impact of religion on the respondents*
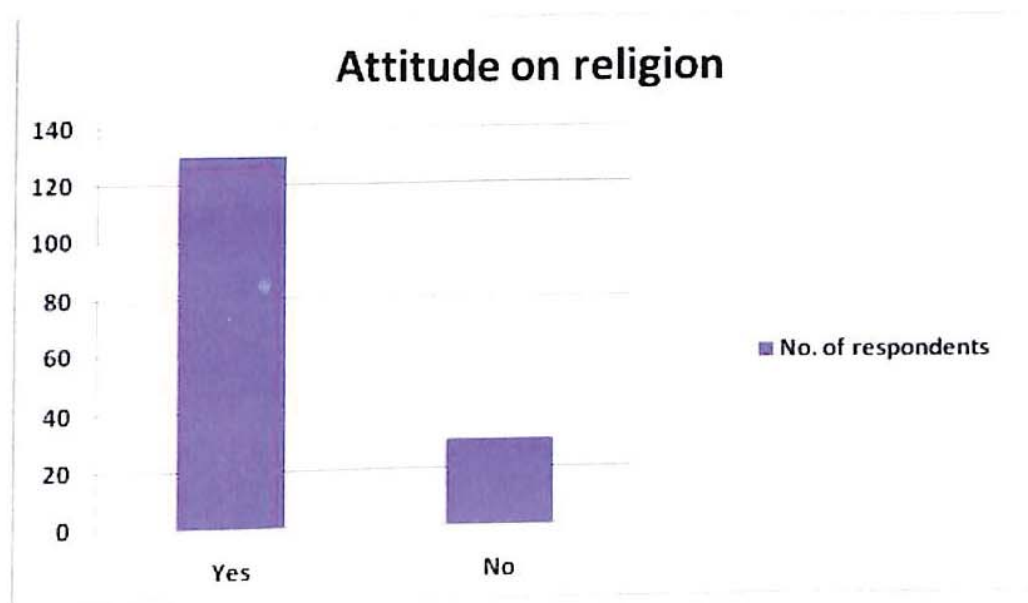
Language gives meaning to the physical entity which is socially constructed. Without language there will be no interaction between individuals in a particular society. The Rais are divided into many different clan groups, including Bantawa, Chamling, Kulung, and Khaling etc. Every clan has its own language; it varies from clan to clan and also one area to another area. So there is a saying in Nepali *"jati Rai Ute Kura"* or as many clans are there, their language are also many (Rai 2008).

Maximum number of respondents communicates in their own language, the reason behind this is that firstly most of them belong to the age group of 40 and above and they were of the opinion that this helps to preserve their culture. New generation people are also fluent in other languages such as English and even Hindi because of outside exposure to modern education. The old generations communicate in their own language with the people of their age, they want to keep their language alive, but Nepali language is common to everyone. (Fig 10)

Fig 10: *Communication through own language*
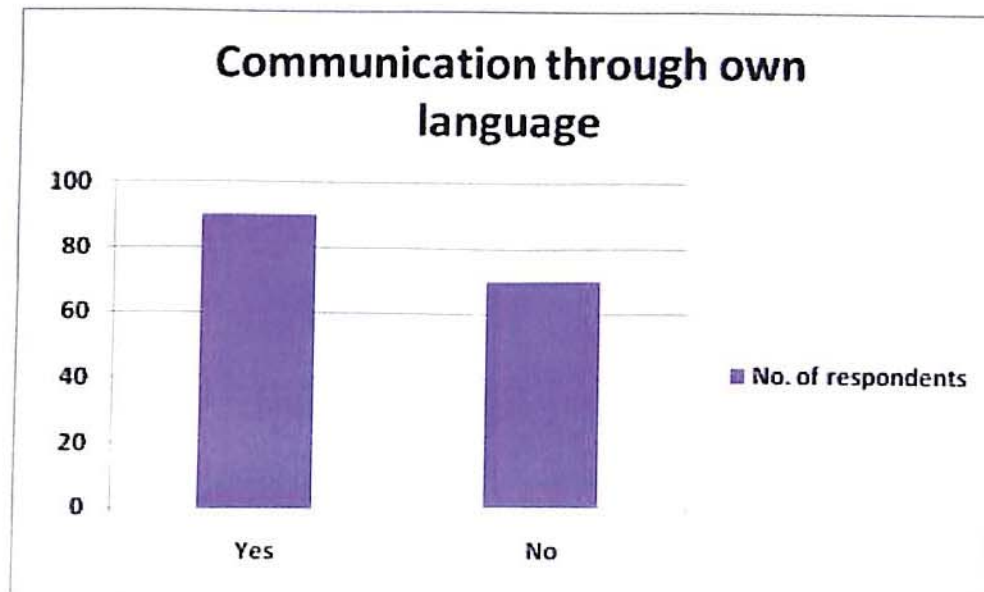
Equal numbers of respondents i.e. new generation as well as older generation were of the view that modern amenities such as televisions, mobile phones-pods and modern education have an impact on eroding the cultural values and traditions of the community. (Fig 11)

Fig 11: *Views on modern means of technology and culture*

Views on modern culture(TV, modern education)

Fig 12: *Role of state in preserving culture*
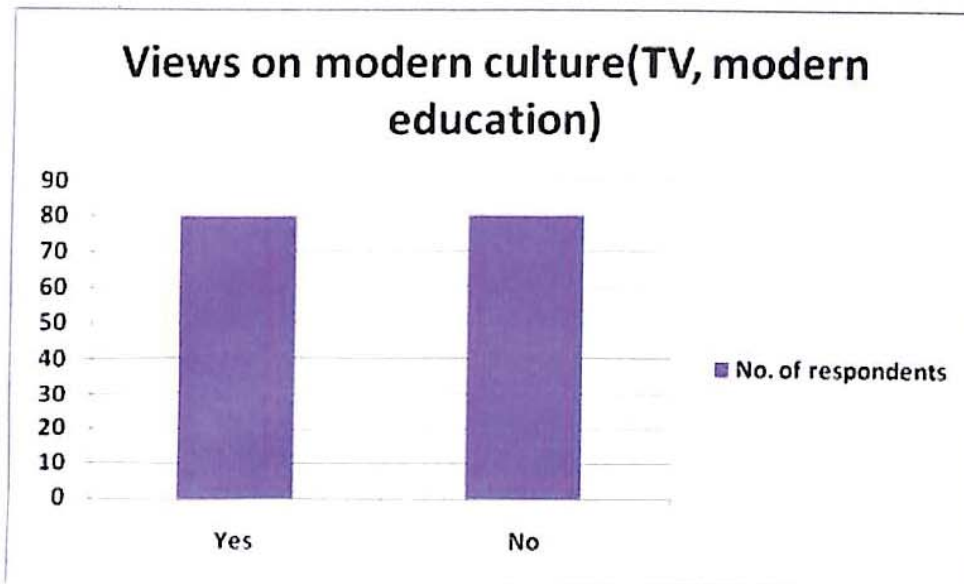
Role of State in preserving culture
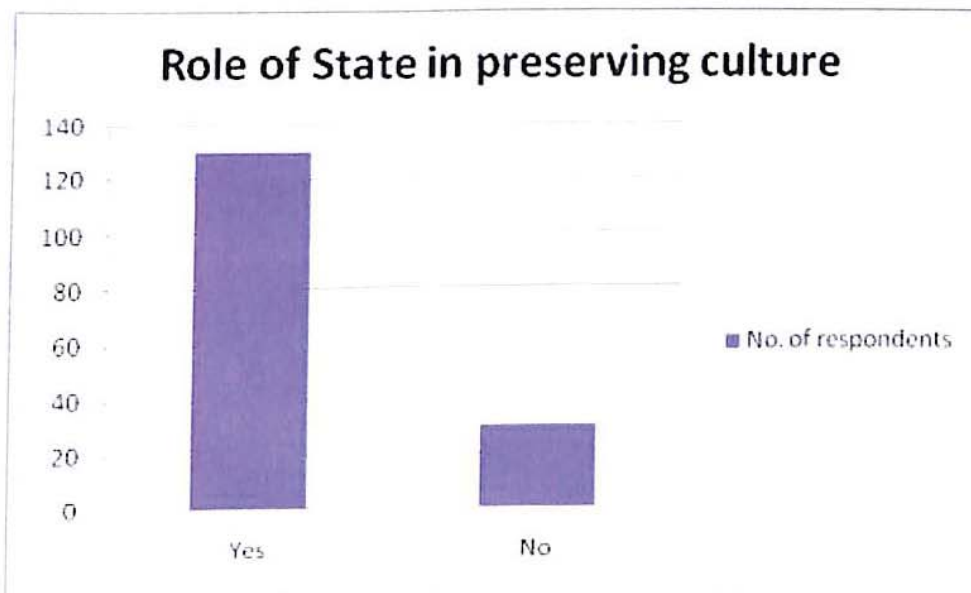
Most of the respondents are on the opinion that, state has played a significant role in preserving the culture and tradition of the Rai community, such as declaration of holiday to celebrate the main festivals known as Sakewa, construction of Rai mandir (temple), for example in the Ranka village construction is going on to build Mangkhim (Mang means religious rituals and khim refers to the house) a place where religious ceremony is conducted.

Mankhim at Maity gaon Dalapchand, East Sikkim. Introduction of Rai language in schools . up to class six levels etc. And during the field visit in the Yangang village (Rangrang) few respondents says that those Rai family who converted into Christianity were again converted into Hindu religion by arranging meeting within Rai community and as well as by helping them financially. The elderly people also advice them about the significance of the religion of Rai people for them.

Some of the respondents says that the Rai association from Gangtok i.e. *Akhil Kirat Rai Sangh* (AKRS) came to their village to know about whether the three hearth stones or Chula (fireplace) is present in each and every household or not .In the house of Rai people there is a presence of fire place where there is three stone placed in round shape and this is the place where dead ancestor are believed to be resided here and they were worshiped every year (Northey1928). Rai do not allow other caste people to touch or enter this place because something wrong will happen in the family members like illness, bad luck, unnecessary expenses etc.

But those who convert into Christianity or other religion in this case the thing is different. Enforcing the importance of the hearth clearly indicates the fact that the state is indirectly playing some important role in preserving the old religious every field which makes them aware of preserving their cultural values and traditions. (Fig 12)

Photo 14: Three hearth stone (fire place) of Rai community.

Photo 15: Celebrating Sakewa Sili (Dance) in Ranka Rai gaon, East Sikkim.

Photo 16: The three hearth stone (fire place) in the Rai house who convert into new religion i.e. Heavenly path.

hoto 17: Respondents in Rolep village .East Sikkim.

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Chapter IV

<p align="center">**CONCLUSION**</p>

Summary of findings

The aims and objectives of the study were to understand the process of social change on the social structure and cultural value of the Rai community. As most of the existing literature on Rai community deals with the history, culture, family structure, economic behavior, religious practices, customs, traditional occupation, festivals, marriage system etc, but there is no any literature available on the changes brought by the westernization, urbanization and modernization upon the social structure of this community. Because of this reason this study tries to explore the nature of changes which takes place among the Rai community. So to fulfill the above mentioned aims and objectives the field work was conducted in three villages of Sikkim. There were one hundred and sixty respondents which include the new generation as well as the old generation. The changes in the social structure within Rai community was different in three villages.

In a village called Rolep which is situated in the district of East Sikkim where communications were done through their own language. They prefer their own language to communicate with their own community but they used Nepali language with other community. In the case of the Yangang village their traditional language were only used by the older generation but new generation were mostly communicating through Nepali and other languages.

Most of the respondents said that the present government has introduced Rai language in most of the schools as a result the coming generations was found learning their own language. Gradually interest is coming between them. Apart from the schools Rai language is taught in every three district of Sikkim except north district. The Rai language belongs to the Tibeto Burman sub family of the Sino Tibetan family. The Rais are multi lingual because the sub group of the Rai has a separate language. Of all the Rai language, Bantawa is spoken and understood by a majority of Rai community. So the government of Sikkim has recognized Bantawa language as the state Rai language in 1995.Text books have been published in this language. This has brought a positive change among the new generation.

Transformation was found on the religious beliefs system because of which there are certain changes in the food habits among the Rai people in Rolep. There were hardly such changes on religion which occurred in other two places as compared to Rolep village. The effects of the urbanization or modern culture on the community can be seen in the village (Ranka) where they are transforming themselves from traditional to modernity in a rapid way. Occupation in this area has also undergone changed where in earlier time most of them were engaged in agricultural sector but now they are found in business, private sector, government sector etc.

By analyzing the data collected from the field of the study shows that the older generations are less influenced by the process of modernization as they want to continue their old tradition and customs for their coming generation. They feels that their old traditions should remain forever. But in the case of the younger generation they are more influenced by the modernization because the level of exposure to the outside world are much more than the old people, on the one hand they want to learn their traditional language, participate in the festivals but on the other hand gradually they were accepting the modern culture because of the technological developments. This shows that the modernization and tradition is living between them.

Other factor such as urbanization and industrialization has given a new structure in the case of family system. It has become a major issue in sociological studies about the relationship between the structure of the families and process of industrialization. As industrialization proceeds, extended family tend to break up and nuclear family emerged. Among the Rai community the family structure is both nuclear as well as joint. Earlier the family structure used to be only joint system but now the findings shows that nuclear system is equally common among Rai community.

The term urbanization and industrialization results in the huge migration and individualism among the people. The changing role and the position of women was one of the reasons for the rise in the nuclear family. As compared to earlier time the position of women had changed in the present society, it is due to the fact that they are now educated and found in business sector, private sector as well as in government sector.

Earlier their roles were only confined inside the house but now they are participating in the outside world. The change in the position further changes the role which somehow changes the family structure.

The educational attainment in advanced industrial societies is increasingly linked to occupational status. It plays an important part in the process where there is a move from ascribed status to achieved status. The educational level among the Rai community in the sample, most of them were uneducated or the level of education were up to secondary level, because all of them were from the older generation, the value of education was less at that time, people were engaged more on agriculture as their source of livelihood. Market was very rare, varieties of packed food was not available earlier as compared to this present time, They were mainly depend upon the agricultural products .But gradually with the coming up of modernization and urbanization, the modern education which gives way to better occupation, high income and better living condition.

Times are changing due to the westernization and modernization, traditional norms and values are also changing and challenged and gradually, it is undergoing some kind of modifications. Female respondents in Ranka village said that among Rai community there is hardly any occasion which does not have an elaborate ceremony.

Earlier when a child was born in a Rai family, so many rituals were performed like purification ceremony, name giving ceremony, rice eating ceremony etc, the birth of a child takes place in the husband's house. Only the female members from Rai community were engaged. The experienced old woman (midwives) ties the umbilical cord and cut with a piece of thread, kept it in a tree near the house, bury it in nearby field or kept it in a bamboo basket. The child and mother were washed with hot water. A cock in the case of boy and a hen in the case of girl and some local wine were first prepared, this items were first offered to the family deity,(pitri, ancestor) for the protection of the newly born child and mother, and to deity in general and evil spirits. The elderly women who cuts the umbilical cord and looks after the newly born baby and mother were offered some amount of money and wine which is called 'saya chongma '(rites of lifting the head) or in Nepali 'shir ubhaunu'. Then after four days of delivery, purification ceremony was performed. Both the family members of both parents were present. But there were certain changes in the case of above mentioned ceremonies, as now days we can see most of the child delivery is done in the hospital where delivery of child

is done by scientific technology which may take some more time. Everything is done by doctors whether they were male or female. So the birth rites were not possible to perform. But the preparation of food for the mother is same as earlier. Similarly rice eating ceremony where a small amount of rice is given to the child after completing five months in the case of boy and four months in the case of girl for the first time is also witnessing a decline. Hair cutting ceremony is only performed for the male child, as he turns three years old; the maternal uncle cut his hair for the first time. But now a day this kind of ceremony is only found in rural areas, people from urban areas hardly perform this ceremony as they gave more importance to celebrate their children's birthday.

Marriage is the important transition in human life. It is an important social institution, through which the relation between man and women is socially recognized. It performs several important social functions. Marriage system among the Rai's is usually monogamous. It is the most prevalent form of marriage in all the societies. Kongpi (middleman) two from the both sides manage everything between the two families during marriages. Marriage of a Rai girl remains incomplete if the father fails to perform the practice called Vak Datta where there is a declaration that he has given his daughter to the bridegroom in front of the fireplace and in the presence of witnesses. Without this practice the women remains maiden for the father as well as clan members, even she lives as wife, have children etc. This shows that this practice is very important during the marriages among the Rai community. Marriages are of different types among the Rai community and there is different customs and culture like during arranged marriage, everything is arranged by the parents. During the marriage by fine payment, (elopement with another's wife) the boy has to pay for the girl to her former husband whatever amount he decide etc (Rai 2005).

But there were certain changes in marriage system among Rai community but the ritualistic practices were same as earlier. In the place of arranged marriages, love marriage is taking place which gave rise in the inter caste marriage. One of the respondents said that inter caste marriage may be the important factor for changingness of the rituals and traditions. Because of the modern culture they are choosing their life partner by themselves. As a result the girl from different caste were grown up in a different caste culture, so it will be difficult for her to adjust into a new culture, which will bring some changes on the culture and traditions. During fieldwork in Ranka some of the respondents says that if we want to preserves our culture and

tradition, inter caste marriage should be avoid. Marriages should takes place between the same community.

The funeral rites of the Rai community also had an elaborate ritual, it is due to the different clans among them, and there were slightly differences in performing rituals. Mangpa (Rai priest) plays a very important role during the funeral rites. They perform various rites and rituals for the welfare of the society; the customs and tradition of the Rai community is incomplete without these mangpa. They were very much respected, as to become a mangpa it is practically and even by training, impossible. They have to be selected by the deity and must have spiritual power. (Rai 2005).

Generally the dead body is buried in a field near the house. The family and clan members of the deceased person avoid the use of oil, salt up to the purification day. The purification is done in five days where a Rai priest (mangpa) conducts an elaborate rite called 'chinta' which continuous throughout the night. But now a day it is difficult to find the accomplished mangpa and ordinary mangpa cannot do it. During this rite the soul of the dead person is called by the mangpa, and then asks it about its unfulfilled desires. The mangpa speaks in the language and same voice of the dead person. And finally the soul of the dead person goes to reside in the fire place (hearth stone).

When there is an unnatural death the soul of that person does not reside in the fire place. It is placed in the small garden near the house or field. Because of this reason there is a saying that (Rai ko dewa) which means anything from the field or garden of a Rai house should not touch by other people. If someone does the same they will suffer from many health problems like the hands and feet will stop working, mouth bleeding etc. In this case the person who suffers has to request the owner of that field to forgive him for the mistakes. It shows that the soul will protect the garden or field in the Rai community.

The culture of a particular community differs from one another. It is passed on through teaching from one generation to another. The younger generation perceives their own culture as a guideline for them. From the childhood they learn the norms and values which guide their behavior. But the concepts like modernization and urbanization results in secularization of the style of life. A new attitude towards food begins to emerge among the new generation.

It is looked at more from the point of view of whether it promotes health and efficiency and less from whether it is traditionally permitted or prohibited.

Most of the respondents use their traditional dress only on certain important occasions like festivals, marriage etc. It shows that they are now feeling the significance of their traditional dress. On the other side it is found that old Rai women still use their own dress everyday, they said that the traditional dress gives them identity as a Rai and they want to preserve it.

In Rolep village of "East Sikkim" maximum number of the respondents were followers of the new religion i.e. Heavenly Path , by this conversion there is a change in the food habits for example non vegetarian, alcoholism was totally given up. It shows that religion as a strong factor which guides individual action. The use of the chicken, pork was important and necessary in every ceremonies except the death one. But in this new religion every ceremonies is performed by using only flowers and fruits.

In Yangang village few section of respondents were followers of the religion called Manav Dharma where there is a belief that after the death of a person their soul will be free from the obstacles. This is a religion characterize by humanitarianism where the welfare of all human is concern. By following the Manav Dharma they feel peace and happiness, Changes has occurred in food habits like the use of alcohol were totally gave up.

The last objective of the study was to know the role played by the state in both changing of culture and making of identity among Rai community. Maximum number of respondents gave their positive view on the role of the state. They said that the state is more concern about the language as it creates identity among the particular community. Rai have their own beautiful language, it is now introduced in government schools. The state had also recognized the importance of the Sakewa festivals for the Rai community and declared it a state holiday. They further said that this festival makes them feel as a part of community than an individual. People from 'Rai' community, irrespective of their beliefs and faiths came together in their traditional dress for celebration. Sakewa Sili (Dance) is usually performed which symbolizes the close relationship between Rai community and nature.

Earlier in Sikkim even the people from Rai community were unknown about the Sakewa festivals. They used to celebrate Dussera and Dipawali with great enthusiasm. But along with

these festivals Sakewa has become very much popular among them. Akhil Kirat Rai Sangh (AKRS) plays a very important role during the Sakewa celebrations. This is the name of the association of the Kirat Khambus Rais of Sikkim whose aims were socio-economic upliftment of the poor and educationally backward Rais of Sikkim.

While dealing with the major research questions of the study, the major traditional occupation of the Rai community was agriculture, hunting, fishing, gathering of wild fruits etc, in the earlier times. But now killing is banned by the forest department. So agriculture remains the major traditional occupation. They also have a kind of tradition called (Parma) a reciprocal labour system as agriculture still remain the basic source of livelihood. Due to the urbanization and modernization, the educational attainment in the present times increased linked to occupational status. They are now engaged in government sector, private sector, business etc.

In Rolep village, people mostly used to interact in their own Rai language within this community whereas in Ranka and Yangang village it is used rarely among old generation. Few of the respondents said that their children are now learning our own traditional language in schools which help them in preserving their tradition and create an individual identity. As language has a meaning which gives identity in a particular community. There is equal number of respondents who said that there are some effects of modern culture on Rai community. They said that one is judged by what one has and not by what one is. Especially the new generations were more influenced by the modern amenities such as television, mobile phones etc which has became necessary for them in everyday life.

On the basis of data collection, the major findings were religious transformation among the Rai community which further leads to change in food habits, for example the preparation of traditional food 'wachipa' (it is prepared with the charcoal of the burnt feathers and pieces of chicken during the important occasions like festivals marriages etc.) is declining as they were now became purely vegetarian. People are accepting the modern culture but on the other hand their perception still lies in tradition, what Dipankar Gupta says Indian society is living between tradition and modernity.

Contribution of the study

As the major aims of study was to explore the nature of social change and continuity among the Rai community in Sikkim. While the available literature only focused on the socio-cultural aspects of Rai community. This study can be helpful for academicians, scholars, students, government. The study had focused on the changes brought by the concept like westernization, modernization and urbanization on the social structure of Rai community.

This study tries to provide some information about the perception of the both generation towards their unique culture and traditions. It also tries to provide the perception of the Rai people from the above mentioned areas, about the role of the state in creating identity and unity among them.

Further research

While this study had focused on the social structure, cultural value system among the Rai community in Sikkim, further research in this field can be done in certain areas such as:

1. Research can be done on Global impact on socio-cultural transformation among Rai community.

2. Research can be done on Democratic value system on political participation and identity formation in Rai community.

3. Research can be done on the contemporary socio-cultural crisis and intergenerational conflict in Rai community.

4. Research can be done on Cultural assimilation and exchange of socio-cultural value system among the Rai community with the interaction with other ethnic community in Sikkim.

Research questions

General questions:

1. Name
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Religion:
5. Marital status:
6. Occupation:

Questions related to the topic:

7. What is the major occupation of Rai community?

8. What kinds of rites and rituals they follows?

9. What are the natures of religious beliefs system?

10. What is the nature of interaction between the individual and the community members?

11. What is the nature of social change?

12. Why Rai community is more prone to conversion to other religion?

13. How does the new generation perceive to the Rai community culture, beliefs and customs?

14. What is the role of modern education in changing nature of the community?

15. Do you speak your own language? Or which languages do you use when you interact with your own community?

16. How do you socialize your children about rituals, customs and culture?

17. What are the specific food habits of the community?

18. What are the religious practices and how this is different from earlier/other community member also participate or not?

19. Who performed all the religious function?

20. Traditional dress and ornaments are used every day or only on important occasion?

21. How birth and death rites are performed?

22. What are the effects of urban culture, TV, and education on your traditional Rai culture?

23. What role has played by the state to preserve the culture and tradition for Rai community?

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