

MIGRANT NAMLAYS IN GANGTOK:

A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

Dissertation submitted to the Sikkim University

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled '**Migrant Namlaysin Gangtok: A Sociological Exploration**' that I have submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is bona fide my own work, and has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree in this university, or in any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledge by him.

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Acknowledgements..... | i |
| Abbreviations..... | ii |
| List of Tables..... | iii |
| Chapter I | |
| 1. Intorduction..... | 1 |
| i. Situations of Nepalese Labors..... | 3 |
| ii. Who are <i>Namlays</i> in Gangtok?..... | 4 |
| iii. Understanding Migration: Theoretical Framework..... | 4-7 |
| iv. Conceptualizing the theoretical understanding of <i>Namlays</i> ' migration..... | 8-12 |
| 2. Review of Literatures..... | 12 |
| i. Historical events of Nepalese migration to Sikkim..... | 12-14 |
| ii. Triggering factors of Out-migration from Nepal..... | 14-16 |
| 3. Rationale of Study..... | 16-17 |
| 4. Objective and Research Questions of the Study..... | 17-18 |
| 5. Methodology..... | 18 |
| i. Field Areas and Sample..... | 19 |
| 6. Significance and Limitations of the Study..... | 19-20 |
| 7. Organizations of the Chapter..... | 20 |

Chapter II

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Nepalese Migration and Settlement in Sikkim: A brief historical backdrop..... | 21 |
| i. State of Sikkim: Brief general profile..... | 21 |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 2. Historical Backdrop of Nepalese migration..... | 21-22 |
| i. The Gorkha invasion and settlements of ethnic Nepalese..... | 22-24 |
| ii. British penetration and immigration of Nepalese..... | 24-26 |
| 3. Patterns of Migration and Politics of Migration..... | 26-27 |
| 4. Protections to Lepcha-Bhutia and earliest Nepali settlers..... | 27-28 |
| 5. Demarcation of Sikkimese Nepali against Nepalese of Nepal (Pre-merger era 1947-1975)..... | 28 |
| i. Enactment of Sikkim Subject Regulations..... | 29-30 |
| 6. Post-merger era and Formations of Sikkimese Identity..... | 30-31 |
| 7. Genesis of <i>Namlays</i> in Sikkim | 32-33 |
| 8. Overview of the Chapter | 33-34 |

Chapter III

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Locating Lives and Contributions of <i>Namlays</i> in Gangtok | 35 |
| i. Gangtok: A Brief Profile | 35-36 |
| 2. <i>Namlay</i> community in Gangtok: Field Experiences | 37 |
| i. Describing <i>Namlays</i> | 37-38 |
| ii. Becoming <i>Namlays</i> is a strategy | 39-40 |
| 3. Socio-Economics of <i>Namlays</i>: Field Experiences | 40-53 |
| 4. Locations and Residential patterns of <i>Namlays</i>..... | 53-56 |
| 5. General Descriptions of <i>Namlays</i>..... | 56-58 |
| 6. <i>Namlays</i> and local community in Gangtok: Social engagement or interaction with local community..... | 58 |
| 7. Assessing Impacts of <i>Namlays</i> in Gangtok..... | 59 |
| 8. Overview of Chapters..... | 60 |

Chapter IV

| | |
|---|-------|
| 9. Understanding Societal Perceptions and Social world of <i>Namlays</i> | 61-64 |
| 10. Stereotyping and Formation of Division of Labor | 64-65 |
| 11. Expression of Symbolic Violence to <i>Namlays</i>: An analysis | 65-68 |
| 12. Societal Perceptions are Vice-versa | 68 |
| 13. Capturing <i>Namlay</i>'s Life worlds: Narrations in Biographies | 69-76 |
| 14. Overview of the Chapter | 77 |

Chapter V

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 15. Conclusion | 78-83 |
| 16. Bibliography | 84-90 |
| 17. Annexures | 91-97 |

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Kishore Rai

ABBREVIATIONS

AD: Anno-Domini

ADB: Asian Development Bank

COI: Certificate Of Identification

DESME: Department of Economics, Monitoring and Evaluations

LPG: Liquefied Petroleum Gas

NH: National Highway

PHE: Public Health Engineering

SSC: Sikkim Subject Certificate

SSEC: State Socio-Economic Census

SSR: Sikkim Subject Regulations

STNM: Sir Thuthop Namgyal Memorial Hospital

UD & HD: Urban Development & Housing Development

UN: United Nations

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 3.1: Distributions of Respondents by Study Area..... | 39 |
| Table 3.2: Place of Origins of Respondents..... | 40 |
| Table 3.3: Age and Sex wise Distribution of Respondents..... | 41 |
| Table 3.4: Ethnic and Religious Backdrops of Respondents..... | 42 |
| Table 3.5: Educational Attainment of Respondents..... | 43 |
| Table 3.6: Marital Status and Length of Staying of Respondents..... | 44 |
| Table 3.7: Monthly Income of <i>Namlays</i> in Gangtok..... | 45 |
| Table 3.8: Determinants of Out-migration or Push-factors..... | 46 |
| Table 3.9: Attractions or Pull-factors..... | 49 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since ages there is a constant movement of people within South Asian region because of porous borders and numerous commonalities, for instance, common cultural affinity, ethnicity and linguistic similarities (Naik, 2011). Besides, one could also observe these substantial intra-regional movements due to economic deprivation, social and political instabilities. Migration is defined as a move from one migration defining area to another, usually crossing administrative boundaries made during a given migration interval and involving a change of residence (UN, 1993). The change in residence can take place either permanent or semi-permanent or temporary basis (Premi, 1990).

The issue of migration with respect to Sikkim is largely confined to the issue of in-migration, as the region has always been historically a migrant receiving area, right from the early migration of Bhutia community from Tibet in 17th century followed by 19th century mass migration of Nepalese to 20th century migration of Indian plainsmen and the influx continues. As far as Nepalese migration is concerned, the Gorkha conquest of 18th century and the pro-immigration policy of British colonial government in early 19th century encouraged large number of Nepalese settlements in Sikkim and Darjeeling who came as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled laborers. They were generally known for rough work, industrious, better cultivator and enduring labor, (Sinha, 1994). The initiative of Britishers has brought drastic demographic and economic transformations. The first ever population census of Sikkim was recorded in 1891, numerically Bhutia were 4894, Lepchas accounted to 5762, Limboo and Nepalese were 3356 and 15,458 respectively (SSEC, 2006). Srikant Dutt (1981) estimates, by the mid-20th century 60 percent of the population in Sikkim was immigrant Nepali speaking community strong enough to form a government. A.C Sinha commented, "With his frugal habits, perseverance and industriousness he makes a difficult living for himself to begin with. His role in the local economy within no time turns out to be significant, because his availability for any type of agriculture chores and manual labor. The lonely porters of yesterday begin to be locally identified" (Sinha, 1994:148-149).

Initially these earliest Nepalese immigrants were settled on a temporary basis and were subjected to various discriminatory practices and alienated from various privileges. But they have been settled permanently and such kind of discriminatory practices stop after conferring the earliest Nepalese settlers as Sikkimese Citizens by the 'Sikkim Subject Act of 1961' equating them at par with the other two communities i.e. *Bhutia and Lepcha* (Thapa, 2012). A clear demarcation was drawn between Sikkimese Nepalis and the immigrant Nepalese which has brought a twist in the pattern of migration and changes in labor relations, i.e. from permanent migration to seasonal temporary migration dialectically formed the two different groups. The Sikkim subject status of 1961 later became the basis for conferment of Indian citizenship after the merger in 1975. Hence, a clear demarcation has been made between the migrant laborers and the local Nepalis who have the control over the local resources. Despite of commonalities like shared culture, customs, languages etc, the relation between Sikkimese Nepali and immigrant Nepalese is more economic and share temporarily employer-employee labor relationships.

However, there has been a constant movement of Nepalese laborers in the form of manual laborers into the state of Sikkim during the phase of¹merger and later phase of post-merger era given impetus by Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950 which facilitates free movement of citizens of both the countries across the border (Gurung, 2008: 1). Porous borders between India and Nepal is one of the prime reasons of constant seasonal influx of in-migrants from Nepal to Sikkim which is contributing a significant proportion in the formation of the comprehensive migrant population. Statistically, the 1971 census recorded 35% of migrant population in Sikkim, which has gone up to 61% in 1981. On the other hand, the figure shows a declining trend to 57% in 1991 and 34.6% in 2001 (Census, 2001). According to State Socio Economic Census (SSEC, 2006), non-Sikkimese (migrants) people constitute 1,46,564 persons accounting to 25.20% of the total population in Sikkim. In order to check the continuous and overwhelming influx in view of the state's scarce resource, the Government of Sikkim has adopted various protectionist policies for the locals. For instance, The notification No. 105 of Land Revenue Department, dated 25th

¹Before its merger to Indian union, Sikkim was an independent monarch nation ruled by *Namgyal* dynasty by its institutional head called Chogyal (King) from 1642 AD to 1975 and his rule was absolute. From 1861 onwards Sikkim was brought under the aegis of British India as a protectorate state and maintained the same status in Independent India till 1974. On 16th May 1975 by the 36th Amendment of Indian constitution Sikkim has become the 22nd state of India in response to the popular people's uprising or revolution in 1973 against the feudal monarch and was the subsequent end of the 333 years of *Namgyal* dynasty (Rao, 1978).

February 1961, stated that the 'Non-Sikkimese are not entitled to acquire any immovable properties in Sikkim' and the Nepalis or other non-Sikkimese cannot alienate property from the Lepcha-Bhutia community even by marrying their women.

i. Situations of Nepalese labors in Gangtok

The adoption of various policies by the Government of Sikkim for the protection of locals does not allow permanent settlement of recent migrants. So they are unable to settle here permanently and have to return to their homeland eventually. It has been found that majority of Nepalese laborers in contemporary Gangtok are foreigners without Sikkimese identity, Indian citizenship and without political right. They are absorbed in informal sector in the jobs of transporting goods and services and are considered as seasonal laborers of the town, who are expected to return their homeland one day. Wage work, such as *coolies* or *portering* is one of the easily available works in Gangtok and adaptive strategies by Nepalese immigrants adopted for their livelihood. Majority of Nepalese immigrants in Gangtok are unskilled, illiterate, irregularly employed and are mostly poor people who migrated due to porous borders tempted by high surplus of Indian currency against Nepalese currency and the linguistic similarities are among the primate attractions of Gangtok. The demand for labors and the potential employment prospects in the economy is determined by the forces of economic growth, looking at the Sikkim Human Development Report 2001 and 2014, it indicated that the state has experienced phenomenal increase in growth rate of 8.3%.

Burden bearing is commonly regarded as physically demanding work (Heller, 1996). Nepalese *coolies* or *porters* who has earned great reputation as high-altitude labors, reliability, punctuality, carefulness with tools, honesty, alertness and compatibility in group effort, or physical variables like health strength and stamina (Malville. J, 2005). Such workers are referred by the term '*Namlays*' in local parlance of capital town Gangtok and elsewhere in Sikkim.

ii. Who are *Namlays* in Gangtok?

The word *Namlay* is synonymous to Hindi word *coolie* and English word *porter* or *Bhariya* in *Nepali*. Unlike *coolies* and *porters* who performs different types of physical labor, *Namlays* are dynamic and perform both the types of labor and expressed combined meaning of *Porters* and *Coolies* simultaneously. Thus, the term *Namlay* is a Nepali term (*particularly used in Sikkim*) refers to dynamic manual laborers who are seasonally migrated from various parts of Nepal to work as daily wage labor in informal sector of Sikkim. They sell their labor in transporting various commercial as well as providing required services to the locals and tourist, for their livelihood. The term *Namlays* is a Nepali term which is derived from the word *Namlo* which is synonyms to ‘Load strap’ used for carrying the load by fixing it on forehead coincides with ‘Bearer’, in local parlance of Sikkim they are locally called as *Namlays*.

Meanwhile, migration for employment is age old phenomenon in Nepal, out migration of labor is fundamental for many Nepali households, as agricultural yields often are not sufficient to nourish all household members (Bhole and Adhikari, 1998: 321). Macfarlane and Gurung (1992:122), “a large proportion of the male population is mobile, spending varying periods abroad for employment”. Until recently, international migration from Nepal was mostly to India, a migration which has several special characteristics (Kasper 2005: 28-29). The most popular strategies of out migration for Nepalese labor is the seasonal migration to Sikkim (India).

iii. Understanding Migration: Theoretical Framework through economic and sociological perspectives

There exist multiple types of migratory stream and pattern. We thus find internal vs. international, temporary vs. permanent, and regular vs. irregular migration. Given the multiplicity of types of migration, researcher will examine very briefly some of prominent theories of migration within the scope of proposed study from sociological and economic viewpoint.

a. Neoclassical economics and Push-Pull Theory: Neoclassical economics and push-pull theory is based on ²Revenstein's (1885) laws of migration and Lee's (1969) Push-Pull theory respectively. This model conceives of migration as driven by a set of push factors operating from the region or country of origin (poverty, unemployment, landlessness, rapid population growth, political repression, low social status etc), and pull factors operating from the place or country of destination (better income and job prospects, better education and welfare systems, land to settle and farm, good environmental and living conditions, political freedom etc.).

However, the neo-classical approach has been severely criticized for its determinism, functionalism and historicism (Arango, 1993). As a result the 'new economics' of migration emerged as alternatives in the 1970s and 1980s.

b. The 'New Economics of Labor Migration': Its leading exponent has been Oded Stark (1985). There are two important aspects of the New Economics of Labor Migration. The first is the recognition that migration decisions (who goes, where to go, for how long, to do what etc) are not individual decisions but joint decisions taken within the ambit of the household and for different members of the household. The second is that rational-choice decision-making is not only about wage and income maximization but is also about income diversifications and risk aversion.

c. Dual Labor Market Theory: M.J. Piore (1979) argued that international labor migration is primarily driven by pull, not push factors. Developed economies are duality in nature. Primary labor market of secure, well paid jobs for native workers and a secondary labor market of low skill, low wage, insecure and generally unpleasant jobs in factories and the service sector, filled

²**Revenstein's Law of Migration-**1. Every migration flow generates a return or counter-migration. 2. The majority of migrants move a short distance. 3. Migrants who move longer distances tend to choose big-city destinations. 4. Urban residents are often less migratory than inhabitants of rural areas. 5. Families are less likely to make international moves than young adults. 6. Most migrants are adults. 7. Large towns grow by migration rather than natural population growth (Bardalai, 2014).

mainly by migrant workers because such jobs are shunned by local workers, due to pride and status attach to it, which leads to labor crisis, make it much easier for immigrants to find and take up these jobs.

By their very nature, dual labor market model of migration have a fundamental flaw, they regarded migrants as 'little more than passive pawns in the play of developed economies and natives presided over by the logic of employment. We will also be interpreting in later part about the class and caste factor of both the *Namlays* and natives in abandoning and embracing informal sector.

These prominent economic theories of migration overlap with each other and yet circled around the factors of economic superstructure. However, the concepts of migration is also the domain of concern of sociologists, who view that the economic factor of migration that look apparently economic are actually the responses of social structure of the society in which economic opportunities grow and migration takes place. Sociologists stand, the phenomena of migration has social foundations for its occurrence from the place of origin to the place of destination and is a socially motivated and normatively determined behavior. Hence, sociologists developed their own theories to study and deal with the phenomenon of migration.

d. Systems and Social Networks: Its multiple analytical focuses on structure, transformation, linkage and process allowed comprehensive framework for studying migration. Massey, Arango and Taylor (1998) define migrant networks as sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, non-migrants and former migrants in webs of kinship, friendship, ethnic connections and shared origin that transformed conventional orientations of immigration. They can be considered as a form of social capital stretched across migrant space and therefore facilitate the likelihood of international movement because they provide access to information that lowers the costs and risks of migration led to connect individual and socio-structural reasons for migrating.

As we will see in the case of Gangtok, personal contacts and social networks of migrants *Namlays* are crucial for employment and in transforming migratory streams and pattern. Migration and social networking went hand in hand and could play a significant role in shaping ethnic division of labor.

e. Sociological Dimension on Migration: Parsonian paradigm of pattern variables

This structural-functional approach of Talcott Parson provides significant guidelines for an analysis of mobility and immobility of population i.e. the phenomena of migration. In parsons' scheme of variables, the effectivity and effective-neutrality value components, shows a paradigm shift from tradition to modernity, has a bearing on migration. It explains the social conditions under which the movement of population is active or inactive. The effectivity component refers to the personal or emotional attachment of an individual to his or her family, family's' assets and traditions, family's' social networks and the place of residence and the neighborhood. This attachment works through the institutional mechanism and interpersonal contacts. Social attachment restricts the mobility of population. As soon as the effectivity is changed into effective-neutrality and impersonal attachment, the spatial mobility of the population gets accelerated. Thus, the Parsonian formulation provides a theoretical basis to examine the process of migration from a sociological viewpoint.

The theoretical discussion has attempted a brief summarization of the main approaches to theorizing migration. It has been demonstrated that there is no single theory that captures the full complexity of migration. It is thus important to recognize that the phenomenon of migration is not just about the domain of economic but it is confirmed that its occurrence is actually the responses of cultural, social and institutional factors of society. The factors that shape the motive of migration are interrelated. The economic factor is considered to be the root cause of the act of migration but the objective conditions that promote economic motives, the value attached to migration, the traits of population that emerge to affect migration and the decision regarding the act of migration all depend on the kind of socio-economic, structural and cultural conditions that exist at the place of origin and at the place of destination. Many people move because they are compelled to and aspire for better livelihood, employment opportunities, diversification of income and to improved social status yet many choose to stay because of emotional attachment towards family, culture and traditions. Thus, Sociological and Economic perspectives enrich our understanding of the issues related with the process of migration.

iv. Conceptualizing the theoretical understanding of *Namlays*' migration

The *Namlays* are presently a visible labor force of Gangtok and other notified town areas like, Deorali, Tadong, Chandmari, and Ranipool. According to Todaro (1968), decisions to migrate to the urban areas are determined by income differentials between city and rural areas and the probability of obtaining a job through the informal channels of information of one's social networks. Most of the *Namlays* in Gangtok town are hailed from Nepal, they are unskilled or semi-skilled labors engaged mostly in informal sector in transporting goods and services to earn their livelihood as well as to aspire for better life. Rough estimates suggest that around 500-600 *Namlays* (2015) have been engaged in this service around the city, this trend got discernibly strengthened in the subsequent decade, though there is a complete absence of secondary statistics available to substantiate this. Acknowledging this argument, according to field work, there has been a swelling presence of young youth between 14 to 40 ages are on move from central and eastern region of Nepal to the prominent urban centers of the Sikkim, capital town Gangtok are mostly favored by migrant *Namlays*. By now it is widely acknowledged that the unprecedented city bound exodus of youth from Nepal in the most recent years is determined by multiple factors including high surplus of Indian currency against Nepal, charm of city life, porous borders, cultural similarity etc. An equally pressing reason is unemployment, illiteracy and the socio-political unrest prevailed in recent past of Nepal. The reasons or determinants of migration could also be grouped as Revenstein's (1885) laws of migration and Evert Lee's (1969) theory of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Such segregation allows situating the situation-specific reasons of migration within the broad categories of 'constraints' and 'attractions'.

In Gangtok, informal works like *portering*, *coolies* and *day laborers* are completely dominated by Nepalese *Namlays* and so as locals always preferred and willing to hire them. As Arjaan de Haan (1999) commented, due to the strong segmentation of labor market often accompanied by ideas or myths about what groups of people are good at. Similarly, stereotypes exist that Nepalese labors are efficient and effectively very good at *portering and coolies* especially in the

rugged hilly sub-Himalayan region which was ³scientifically proved by many researchers in recent past. Historically engagement of Nepalese labors in the process of building modern Sikkim is remarkable, being a *Namlays* is one of their career option and common work as they embrace it with honesty and loyalty. “As time passed on, their role and engagement has also been changed, once they were hired from Nepal by British officials, ⁴Chogyal’s authority, ⁵Kazis and ⁶Mandols of Sikkim for construction of roads, transporting consignment, clearing up the forest for agricultural chores and all-in return of wages or in kind (Sinha, 2008).

Now in contemporary Gangtok, they themselves voluntarily migrate for a season, destination has always been chose after ascertained the information and available social capitals. Jobs in Gangtok are limited to immigrants *Namlays* who are illiterate, unskilled and further, the state government has adopted preferential policies for locals in formal sector and some field of informal sector as well, consequently entrance is only open to them in general field of informal sector where they work as service provider to locals and tourists by transporting their luggage, burdens etc. apart from that loading and unloading of construction materials and transportation of business stuff, groceries-vegetables of wholesalers-retailers-vendors to hotels and restaurants, petty shopkeepers to showrooms of Gangtok. They also do other degrading unhygienic job like, collecting garbage and carrying it to dumping point of local area. A prominent pattern of getting access to irregular but frequent urban work was through referrals, even though it is a work of *burden bearing or coolies* “bring your own buddy is the policy of the local people” said a *Namlay*. Many of them often found the urban life is tougher than they expected.

³The methods of Nepalese porters in burden bearing is unique, they can hold as much as 93% and 66% of their body by every ordinary male and female porters respectively and sometimes they can bear double of their body on their back. They commonly use oversized *doko* (Bamboo basket) on their back as backpackers with the hanging support of *Namlo* (load strap) or used *Namlo* only. The important aspect which differ them from other porter is the support of head to the burden of back which makes both hands and shoulders free and they can save 65% of energy of the body in comparison of other methods of human burden bearing (Ebert, 2010).

⁴*Chogyal* is a Tibetan word, meaning one who rules the nation as per the religious guidelines.

⁵*Kazis* has parallel meaning and power to present day Magistrate, it was typically denotes to the Sikkimese aristocrats or feudal lords of Sikkim.

⁶*Mandols* are the Indian Nepali term which was commonly used to address the Village headman in feudal Sikkim.

Their staying and choosing of destination is determined by their native agricultural calendar which would fit with the strategies of when to migrate? for how long? to do what? where to migrate? Which are not an individual decisions but joint decisions taken within the ambit of the household and for different members of the household. This rational-choice decision-making is not only about wage and income maximization but is also about income diversifications and risk aversion. Furthermore, *Namlays* cannot live easily without their agricultural work nor they can afford the cost of living in at the destination due to lack of surplus income. However, they do migrate and willing to travel short as well as long distance migration mainly influenced by employment prospects with high currency value of Indian rupee, porous border and linguistic similarities but only for shorter period of time or seasonally. Rationalization of seasonal migration and choosing of destination can be clubbed into the Oded Stark' (1985) theory of The New Economics of Labor Migration and Parsonian paradigm of pattern variables effective and effective-neutrality on migration such clubbing would allow to depicting the pattern of migration and understanding of other unique socio-economic aspects of migration.

Dual labor market theory of migration by M.J Piore (1979) suggests that, the locals are generally reluctant to be engaged in degrading, labor intensive precariously informal works and jobs in view of dignity and pride, in the name of social status, low wages, insecurity and sometimes beyond the capacity of one's physical strength resulting they shun away from it. It opens the door to unskilled or semi-skilled labors like *Namlays* who was born ready for every possible work for earnings would replenish the imperatives demand of labor and earned money for themselves. Moving towards the state capital Gangtok is one of the most preferred choices of Nepalese labors, along with city bound migration, some proportion of *Namlay* also move to Gangtok surrounding semi-urban and rural areas to work as agricultural wage labor or contractual work for constructing buildings and consignment. For instance, based on field work it was noticed that, in many occasions residence of *Rumtek*, *Ranka* and *Bojoghari* village often hired them as a wage labor for plucking cardamom and to harvesting their crops, the reason they expressed "*there is dearth of laborers for such work*" consequently they have to hire *Namlays* who are cheap and effective laborers, in the end employer are happy employee would be satisfy, they said.

As per the report of Urban Development & Housing Development, Government of Sikkim (2011), Gangtok Notified Town Area including Gangtok has 55.5% of the Total Urban Population of Sikkim. The Gangtok town has a total population of 100,286 persons (Census, 2011). The main working population is near 93% of total working population. Only 1% of the Population is engaged in secondary sectors (DESME, 2013).

Therefore, in that way, *Namlays* have become necessary ⁷human capital for the society of Gangtok, rendering service of *Namlays* have become necessity as their presence allow to replenish the huge gaps of labor demand in unorganized sector and for comfort in other socio-economic life of people. Furthermore, it is functionally important in every nook and corner in the hilly set up of Gangtok, where other means of transportation are of no use. Men with small height seems to be Nepali speaking, dressed up for labor intensive works, carrying heavy weight on their back on weekly ⁸*haat* day or any other day, heavy luggage of tourists and locals with such an ease is common sight on the streets of Gangtok.

It is common that people do not have the ideas about the lives of the *Namlays* because very less is written or even said about them. *Namlays*, who are the most indispensable part of hill people's daily life, has been neglected and invisible in Sikkimese society, as their works and contribution are concerned. They are considered as the most deprived immigrant community of the Gangtok. Though, they work for themselves but directly/indirectly they are also working for the society and smooth functioning of its economy as well as to bring comfort to both local and tourist through their cheap and affordable services. Contradictory to this it was reported that, sometimes they are confronted with vulnerable issues like verbal abuse, discrimination and exploitation by their customers or sometimes by some miscreants during their staying in Gangtok, it is evidently quite visible that their work and contribution has been constantly abandoned and devalued over the time, very few people recognized their importance to the city and its people.

⁷Theodore W. Schultz, an American economist, coined the term 'human capital' in the 1960s. The theory of human capital was developed by his student, Gary S. Becker, who viewed human capital as the outcome of an investment in workers. Human capital is sometimes used synonymously with human resources, although human capital typically refers to a more narrow view i.e. the knowledge the individuals embody and can contribute to an organization. Likewise, other terms sometimes used include manpower, talent, labour, or simply people(Online Web, accessed on 25 March 2015, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4603579>).

¹⁰*Haat* is local term used for weekly market that occurred every Saturday and Sunday in Gangtok' Lall Market. It also occurred in other days like Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday in other parts of Sikkim.

At this juncture, the *Namlays* in Sikkim have become a topic of both academic and sociological discussion. Nepalese labor migration to Sikkim has been a practice steeped through historical processes and the legacy continues differently. This study would identify the significant socio-economic factors of migration and its role for choosing similar main destinations by the Nepal's mobile populations to Sikkim. It'll exclusively deals with the *Namlays* who bear the burden on their back and willing to do every possible works for their livelihood in Gangtok, it ascertain on the terms *Namlay*, what it is and whom it addresses for in Sikkim and questions the existing views of what it means for the local people, who many times crosses the international borders come to Gangtok and always willing to provide comfort level to locals and non-locals by embracing not only locally abandoned work but also the all locally stigmatized work by selling their labor in returned of standard wages.

2. Review of Literature

The concept of migration has been broadly studied by economist and sociologists in many of their studies. For the proposed research various types of literature has been reviewed. It helps us to understand the background as well as the theoretical understanding of the research problem. Various writers have expounded various reasons of Nepalese immigration to Sikkim and other parts of India. Such as, historical events, porous borders, unemployment, poverty, employment opportunities etc. Therefore, review of literature is classified into two categories of: (i) Historical events of Nepalese immigration to Sikkim, (ii) Triggering factors of Out-migration from Nepal.

i. Historical Events of Nepalese Migration to Sikkim

Bohle & Adhikari (1998) edited, Mishra (1980), Kanasakar (1982), have in their respective work discuss that; migration for employment is an old phenomenon in Nepal. In the early 19th century, Nepali people travelled to Lahore to join the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh and also for the recruitment of Gorkha regiment to colonial government. Out migration of labor is fundamental for many Nepali households, as agricultural yields often are not sufficient to nourish all

household members. The growth of cash economy is the major reason for migration of Nepalis to India. The British started capitalism and the trend continued even after India became independent. The free recruitment of Gorkha soldiers to British Indian Army after the treaty of Saugauli (1816) opened the border between the two countries. The process of migration and settlement of the Nepalese into Sikkim and Northeastern states started as movement of labor to be employed in commercial purpose, trades, and agricultural activities as the British found them loyal, hardworking, best fitted for hilly terrains and comparatively cheaper than the Indians, the extent of such international migration has increased, that is what the colonial administration did almost 160 years ago.

Heidi Kaspar (2005) in his work **Gender Aspects of Out-Migration for Labor in Nepal** commented that, the most popular strategy of out-migration for labor to India is the recruitment of soldiers to the Indian and British army. Recruitment to the army is popular because 15 years of service qualifies one for a lifelong pension and free medical treatment for all family members. They get reemployed as low and semi-skilled workers or in the industrial sector in India. About 0.2 million Nepalis work in Delhi alone and most of the migrants are originally from the rural of Nepal.

L.W.Shakespear (1929-reprinted 1983) in his work of **History of Assam Rifles** mentioned that the real migration of Nepalis into Northeast India began in early nineteenth century. Their first direct contact with the region occurred in 1817 with the deployment of 1000 Gorkha soldiers in the Sylhet operation, as part of the Cuttack legion which came to be known as the 'Assam Light Infantry', after its permanent location in Assam. These Nepali sepoys in Assam continued to constitute a floating population following their respective customs, usages and traditions. The process of migration and settlement of Nepalis into Northeast India, Darjeeling and Southern Sikkim began about two centuries ago with the British imperial penetration and the recruitment of Gorkha soldiers to the British Indian Army after the treaty of Saugali (1816). The recruitment of Nepalis opened the border between the two countries. The treaty also facilitates free recruitment of Gorkha in a big way as the British found them loyal, hardworking, best fitted for hilly terrains and comparatively cheaper than the other Indian soldiers.

T.B.Subba (2003) in his work **The Nepalis in Northeast India: Political Aspiration and Ethnicity** in **A.C. Sinha and T.B. Subba ed., *The Nepalis in Northeast India: A community in Search of Indian Identity***. Discussed about the migration and the presence of Nepalis into northeast India is historical and their role in unifications and economic development of the region is very crucial. Sinha mentioned that, In the Mahabharata, there is suggestion that the Sino-Tibetans or Kiratas belong to the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The *Kiratas* of Assam, who were known to the Hindu, would as a group of people, were originated in the Himalayan slope and in the mountains of the east. Nepalis in the north-east are divided into three major ethnic groups. The first known as the Kiratas, claimed to be the earliest inhabitants of the land and were traditionally hill men, ethnologically closer to the North-eastern tribes of India. According to Subba “the ancient Kamarupa kingdom is, for instance, known to have its boundaries extended right up to the eastern Nepal as late as 1520s, the two Kamarupa kings Nidhwaj and Narayan had married the princesses of Nepal” (Subba 2003: 59-61).

ii. Triggering factor of Out-Migration from Nepal

Aryal (2008), Acharya (2001), Khatiwara (1998) and Gurung (2003) talked about the various factors of out migration from Nepal. They suggest that the problem of unemployment or disguised unemployment created by the closure and failure of domestic industries and conflict has contributed to migration of Nepalese for foreign employment. The major motivating factors are attractive salary and thereby, upliftment of the status of family, other fringe benefits and increase in the standard of living. Gurung (2003) pointed out that, Out of the total migration, 80% migrants prefer to migrate to India and most of them are seasonal migrants. Nepalese migrate to India during off season in search of some work where they can sustain and save the good grains in their back home. Khatiwara (1998) commented, the main reason for migration of Nepalese into the India before the inception of Maoist was economic. When the conflict started the migration occurred due to political reasons but turned into economic again. The existence of open border between India and Nepal makes the movement easier. Unemployment and poverty are the main causes of migration from Nepal to other countries. The cultural linguistics affinities combined with economic opportunities attracted the people. As Gurung (2003) says, factors like, historical links, linguistic affinity, higher education and economic opportunities served as pull

factors to India. The Nepal government now has foreign employment act 2007 that tries to protect the rights of the Nepalese Migrants worker. However, the act doesn't include the Nepal-India migration issue.

Ghosh (2001), in his work 'Migrant and Refugees in South Asia: Political and Security Dimension' provides an account of dynamic relations between movements of people and politics mainly in the context of south Asian region. He focuses on the regional security and consequences to movement of people. In his opinion, there is intra state and cross boundaries movement of people takes place due to commonalities in physical features and culture in South Asian region. Importantly, the migrants do not spread the own culture and religion in the host country which differentiates from other parts of world.

R.Nanda Shrestha, in his work 'The political economy of land, laborers and migration in Nepal' has highlighted the deteriorating environmental conditions due to high population increase, land degradation; poverty and unemployment in Nepal are other major triggering factors of migration. He argued Poverty is the root cause of environmental degradation in Nepal as people highly dependent on land and other forests resources and over exploitation of resources caused major environmental degradation in Nepal. The population growth in Nepal has been continuously showing upward trend and is likely to continue in near future also. Rapid population growth has become the main constraint to sustainable economic development. Thus, migration from Nepal to India has been a continuing phenomenon.

Asian Development Bank (2004) reported, Nepal due to its backward economy is reeling under the problem of unemployment and poverty. As the government fails to provide enough jobs and opportunities, a large number of youth remain outside the mainstream of national development exercise. According to figures, there are 1.5 million youths who are totally unemployed. As per the Census of 2001, out of the total population, the economically active population was 45% estimated at 10.482 million.

Meanwhile, it is evident from the above discussion that migration of Nepali speaking people into Sikkim and other parts of India occurred due to various above factors. Though most of the time migration occurred due to economic reasons, other factors such as environmental political are also contributing factor for migration. Some casual factors do have striking similarities and

others do differ in both spirit and reality. Since the ancient times they have been migrating to these areas, earliest immigrants were settled permanently later kept migrating temporarily. Nepalis were mainly encouraged to get recruited in the Gorkha Army. The hard working Nepalis were also encouraged to do cultivation in grazing lands and other activities. Nepalis were in fact provided lands in the foothills areas of Sikkim to settle, especially to the earliest settlers.

3. Rationale of the study

The rapid economic growth, urbanization and growth of tourism industry, development project has created lot of jobs avenues in Sikkim both skilled and unskilled, in recent times. There are many job avenues which are filled up by the migrant laborers both from other states of the country and from Nepal. The census of Sikkim in 1981 following the merger of Sikkim with India has witnessed an increased in migration of population from 35% in 1971 census to 61% in 1981. The figure recorded in 1991 Census was 57% which has come down to 34.6% on 2001 (SSEC: 2006). The decline in the in-migration may be justified on the ground of Protectionist Policy of the State for the Locals.

One such area, where one can find plenty of Nepalese migrant laborers is the job of *Namlays* in capital town of Gangtok. The obvious reason for the dominance of *Namlays* from Nepal is mainly unavailability of the locals for such jobs, which they shun away due to the low status and dignity attached to the job.

The requirement or the work of *Namlays* has been historically stereotyped internalized and segmented to Nepalese labor and continues to do so even today. *Namlays* are economically viable and effective means of transportation in every nook and corner of hilly locations of Gangtok, where other means of transportation are of no use and they provide the only reliable means of transport in every commercial centers as well as for domestic necessity in the town.

Despite the contribution of *Namlays* to society, they are treated historically among the most socially, economically degraded occupational groups. It is forgotten that *Namlays* are not only earning livelihood for themselves but they are a vital link between consumers-producers, distributors-consumers, stakeholders-laborers as well as to domestic spheres of people and

society of Gangtok. Thus become a significant labor force, making a valuable contribution to the economy of the state as well as provide comfort to locals and non-local by embracing all locally stigmatized work including burden bearing. Though *Namlays* are rendering significant role cementing the socio-economic lives in society of Gangtok, such contribution of the community is not well documented and constantly devalued over the time. The circumstances that give rise to existence of *Namlays* are poorly understood also there is no published literature in this area. The relation between porters and society at large interweave the benefit to each other.

Thus the study would like to explore interplay of various forces in the process of migration of *Namlays*, their contribution to Sikkimese society and their socio-cultural life and their interaction in the Sikkimese society, locate their identity and their status in the society of Gangtok as well as the perception of local community about them.

Therefore, the proposed study will try to understand the problem through the intensive study.

4. Objective of the Study

- To explore the push and pull factors of *Namlays* migration in Sikkim.
- To locate the *Namlay's* working and living condition as well as the roles and contribution in the socio-economic life of the people of Gangtok.
- To assess the *Namlays* socio-economic status and nature of interaction with the local community.
- To understand the social world of *Namlays* and societal perceptions towards them.

Research questions

1. What are the push and pull factors that determine *Namlays* migration to Sikkim?

2. How historical events have shaped the contemporary pattern of *Namlays* migration?
3. What is the societal perception of local community towards *Namlays*?
4. What is *Namlay*'s socio- economic status and nature of their interaction with the Sikkimese?
5. In what ways *Namlays* are vital in establishing links between people and society of Gangtok?
6. What are the State Government Policies towards *Namlays*?

5. Research Methodology

The present study basically follows the historical, analytical and empirical approach. The analysis is based on both primary as well as secondary sources of data & information. The Nepalese labor migration to Sikkim and its historical backdrop, can be understood by going into the past political, social and economic history of Sikkim, which was studied from the published literature, official documents both government and non-government records, journals magazines and newspapers. Empirical descriptions of social milieu at a certain point of time are not sufficient to fully understand the prevailing situation of the society and pattern of migration. Therefore, it needs to add a study of development of these phenomena in time, what is history to connect links between the past and the present. Hence the historical method of data collection has been used for the proposed research.

For the proposed study, both quantitative and qualitative methodology has been used. Qualitative method permits a subjective assessment of the data. Collection of Case study and narratives has been a part of the data collection. In the Quantitative method, survey method was used in order to understand detail socio- economic profile of the *Namlays*, administered by semi-structured interview schedule containing both close ended and open ended question which was subjected to statistical analysis during the report writing.

i. Field Area and Sample: The study was conducted in the Sikkim's capital town of Gangtok and its notified town areas located in east district of Sikkim. The east district have benefit of being located along with the National Highway 31A, which is the lifeline and the only connection to the outside world and other parts of the country. Gangtok being capital town of the state located enroute to Nathula and presently being the administrative and business capital of the state haseventually led to Gangtok becoming the primate town of Sikkim, also the main base for tourism.Hence Gangtok became hub of large variety of social and economic activities, consequently attracts large number of people from within as well as from outside Sikkim.

The *Namlays* working in various commercial as well as in public markets of Gangtok and its notified town areas like, Deorali, Tadong, Ranipool, and Chandmari has been chosen as a field area for study, using the purposive and snow ball sampling technique with total sample size of 100 respondents.

6. Significance and Limitations of the Study

The proposed study is considered as an important area of research because there has been no exclusive and empirical study done so far to document the *Namlays* community of Gangtok, its pattern of migration and genesis of commercialization of *Namlays* in the state of Sikkim. The study however, cannot be representative of the entire state since the research would be dealing with urban area that too in the capital city of Sikkim. There are innumerable important issues related to the community such as, identity crisis, social exclusion, illegal migration, etc. but these range of factors are beyond the scope of this study.

7. Organizations of Chapter

Chapter I- Introduction-The first chapter provides the Statement of the problem, context and setting of the study, review of literature, rationale, objectives, research questions and methodology. It also contains Field Area, Sample, and Limitations of study as well as organisation of the chapters.

Chapter II- Understanding Brief Historical Backdrop of Nepalese Migration to Sikkim: This chapter deals with the Historical backdrop of Nepalese migration to Sikkim and discussed its settlement patterns throughout *The Gorkha Conquest* in connection with the *Migration policy of British East India Company*. It has followed by the other development in pre-merger and post-merger Sikkim, especially the policy to protect the locals which literarily changed the Nepalese migration pattern from permanent to temporarily seasonal one, ultimately leading to concentration of *Namlays* in informal sector of modern Sikkim.

Chapter III- Locating *Namlay's* lives and their Contributions: -Chapter III is the depiction of socio- economic status of *Namlays*, changes before and after migration to Gangtok. Further, there is an in-depth exploration of their contribution in economy and society of Gangtok.

Chapter IV- Understanding the Societal Perception - The chapter have ascertained the reasons of ethnic division of labor and discussion on how *Namlays* has been stereotyped, their nature of interaction with the local community and perception of locals regarding them, the degree of their integration in Sikkimese society. The chapter attempts to make a critical analysis of the situation.

Chapter V- Chapter V is the concluding part of the study comprising findings and observation of the study.

Bibliography- In this section attachment of bibliography and appendix has been done.

CHAPTER II

1. NEPALESE MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN SIKKIM: A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKDROP

i. State of Sikkim: Brief general profile

Sikkim is the 22nd state of Indian` union. The state lies between 27.5 degree and 28.10 North latitudes and between 88.4 and 88.58 East longitudes. Comprising an area of 7096 square kilometers. Sikkim is locked between Nepal on the West and Bhutan in the East. On the South lies the Darjeeling district of West Bengal and China on its North.

The census of 2011 says population of Sikkim is the least in all of India. This thinly populated state has a population of little more 6 lakhs, and has grown by approximately one lakh since the last census. As per the details from Census 2011, Sikkim has population of 607,688, an increase from figure of 5.41 lakhs in 2001 census, of which male and female population comprises 321,661 and 286,027 respectively.

Sikkim is a multiethnic and multicultural state and comprises with three major ethno-linguistic communities i.e. Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali co-exist harmoniously along with Indian plainsmen. The state has virtually no large industrial base, due to rugged mountainous hilly terrain and is basically agrarian, among others government service emerged as prime job sector. Sikkim is blessed with natural scenic beauty as a result, there is tourism boom which became the backbone of state economy along with agrarian activities.

2. HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF NEPALESE MIGRATION TO SIKKIM

The immigration of Nepalese and the presence of Nepali speaking people in Sikkim have different histories and stories. Nepal is a landlocked country, from ancient times, its citizenused to migrate to North-eastern region of India for various purposes, such as for the sustenance of

livelihood, grazing cattle, trade, pilgrimage, cultural visits including marital exchanges. As T.B. Subba mentioned “the ancient Kamarupa kingdom is, for instance, known to have its boundaries extended right up to the eastern Nepal as late as 1520s, the two Kamarupa kings Nidhwaj and Narayan had married the princes of Nepal, shared marital to martial exchange” (Subba, 2003: 59-61). It was the period of late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Nepalese had made the movement mainly pressing towards eastwards and resulted in permanent settlement outside the kingdom’s modern borders (Hutt, 1997: 109). Active encroaching began under the aegis of newly emerged Gorkha king Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors in the late 1700s with the consequent unification and expansion of the Kingdom of Nepal. This boundary extension meant that Nepalese settled in places where they had never been before (Baral, 1993). Gorkha armed forces had reached and consolidated the eastern Himalayan region of Khambuan (Land of the Khambus or Rais) and Limbuan (land of Limboos) bordering Sikkim. In 1774 the first Gorkha raid began in a small band of adventurous Gorkha scouts and patrolling inside the territory of Sikkim whom was successfully chased away straight seventeenth times, by the valiant Lepcha military general *Chyok Thup Barphonga* popularly known as *Satrajeet* (victor of seventeenth battle) or called as *Athing* by Lepcha, he pushed them away as far to *Chainpur* inside Gorkha territory where they witnessed the might of Gorkha in 1776, *Satrajeet* calls a hasty retreat compelled to took hide in *Kalimpong* which was then under the control of Bhutan and from there he vanished into the history of Sikkim, The Gorkha threat has become imminent and invasion is inevitable (Sinha, 2008; Subba, 2007; Basnet, 1974).

i. The Gorkha invasion and settlements of ethnic Nepalese

Sikkim then was an independent monarch nation ruled by the theocratic *Namgyal* dynasty of Bhutia community whom migrated from Tibet and settled down in early 16th century. By virtue of tripartite treaty of *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum* signed between early inhabitants *Lepcha*, *Tsong* (Subba) and *Bhutia*, ruler had been chosen from Bhutia community and legitimized as hereditary whose authority is absolute from 1642 A.D onwards. Much before Bhutia migration

historical traced in old accounts of Sikkim confirmed that Nepali ethnic community like⁹*Limboo* and *Magars* were the earliest settlers along with the Lepcha community. *Limboo* was relinquished and excluded from its due shares in monarchy despite of signing the treaty and rebellion *Magars* were driven away from Greater Sikkim by the conferred monarch and its aristocrats over the time as a result their existence and narrations has lost into the corner of histories (Subba, 1999; Sinha, 2004; Chemjong, 1967).

Lepcha and Bhutia people were devoted their maximum times to pastoral and religious shrines, which kept them away from the military matters, an ethos of non-violence. Consequently Sikkim lacks in potent strong standing army taking advantages of this, Gorkha general *Johar Singh Thapa* exploits the loose prepared Namgyal monarch, cross *chewbhanjyang pass* and invade Sikkim in 1788, in a while they captured capital *Rabdentse*, later reinforced by redoubtable commander of Gorkha, general *Kazi Damodar Pande* in 1789 and subsequently brought under control the entire south-west of river Teesta. Bhutan intervention help to lift the siege from Gorkha, but soon vacate the region as they found situations are beyond of their interest, in 29th march 1789 on their return the greater part of land and people of Sikkim remained under Gorkha control, thus Gorkha remains masters of Sikkim beyond Teesta. The Chogyal along with Royal family and his followers compelled to flee and sought asylum to Tibet in 1790 seeking Dalai Lama's intervention to this matter (Nakane, 1820; Hamilton, 1819; Sinha, 2003; Subba, 2005).

Tibet intervention in subsequent years resulted in Nepal-Tibet war of 1791 with the involvement of China favoring Tibet, The Gorkha army was defeated and the arbitration treaty has been signed between Nepal-Tibet-China in 1792 under which Tsugphud Namgyal failed to secure Sikkim's interest as a result, the boundary of Nepal in the east remained extended up to western Sikkim including Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri up to 1814 and Chumbi valley took away by Tibet (Pradhan, 1991; Chemjong, 1967). It is said that after the historic victory of Gorkha general Johar Singh Thapa, the present day southern town of Sikkim called *Jorethang* was named after his name. It was during this phase large number of Nepali speaking people of various hill tribes like *Khambu Rais, Limboos, Thakuri, Basnet (Khas), Chettris, Thapa* and

⁹ The *Limboos or Limbus or Yakthungbas* or *Tsong* are the descendent of ancient Kiratas from the pre-historically occupied areas of "Limbuwan" (the land of Limboos) was considered as former part of Greater Sikkim prior to Prithvi Narayan Shah's Gorkha invasion of 1774 (Stiller, 1968:109-110).

Gurung made their way to newly conquered land of Sikkim and settled there during this long period of about 25 years i.e. from 1789-1814 (Sinha, 2008; Subba, 2007; Pradhan, 1991).

Gorkha suzerainty over Sikkim came to an end with the breaking of Anglo-Nepalese war in 1814 when British forced them to leave Sikkim east of river Mechi as per the treaty of Segauli 1815. Accordingly, the cluster of Gorkha withdrawn from the conquered lands of Sikkim but for time being, they returned back within few years as per the British migration policy to settle Nepalese on Eastern Himalayas. Thus, with the changing fortunes of their fate, Nepali people migrated, settled and then uprooted. Yet, the Gorkha conquest or invasion remains an important event in enabling Nepalese migration and settlement in Sikkim (ibid, 2008; ibid, 1991).

ii. British penetration and immigration of Nepalese

In an unprecedented historical events, late 18th century witnessed the active Nepalese movements towards Sikkim, through the means of invasion and conquest of Sikkimese territory in search of prosperous and better life but with the beginning of 19th century, they were forcibly send back to Nepal where they came from by British after being defeated in Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814. Immediately after the war British identified Gorkha as a martial race and can make excellent peasants in the hills as well, they befriended with them by signing the treaty of Segauli 1815 and Titalia 1817 respectively, which primarily facilitated the free recruitment of Gorkha into the British Indian Army and restoration of annexed territory of Sikkim which was the crux of the treaty. In a strange ways of fate, repatriated Nepalese was brought back or encouraged by the same power who forced them to vacate the land of Sikkim earlier (Kottarum 1983)

British had economic interest on lucrative Tibetan trade via Sikkim from long time as Gorkha had in Sikkim from long time was the primate reason of Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814 (Basnet, 1974; Subba, 2007, Pradhan, 1991: 116). With the defeat of Nepal and cunning diplomacy with Sikkim, British had gained influenced over Sikkim consequently in February 1835; British took away Darjeeling of Sikkim due to its strategic importance as well as climatic conditions fit for sanatorium. Acquisition of Darjeeling was the accomplishment of long cherished desire to get a foothold in Sikkim to build the bridge to Lhasa and open Sikkim to link with British India and rest of the world. Thus, historical trace confirmed that, Darjeeling were conquered and occupied by Nepal from 1788-1816, and restored to Sikkim by the British in 1817, was taken by the

British as a gift in 1835 later it was developed as largest concentration of Nepali speaking population outside Nepal. Throughout the history British-Sikkim relations remains shaky and cloudy, many unpleasant things occurred between them which ultimately resulted in Sikkim becoming the British India protectorate, as per the Treaty of Tumlong 1861. Since then British assumed their control to Sikkim.

By virtue of above treaty British held sway away to construct roads in Sikkim, the British merchants and traders were permitted to trade and could recruited coolies from foreign land into the state without any hurdles and they controlled all its administrations to external relations. It was more likely that traders and merchants hiring the Nepalese labors than to carry the load by themselves. 1861 was the initial year when British just began their trade to Tibet via Sikkim with full autonomy and was the just the beginning year of planned Nepalese migration to unoccupied land of Sikkim. Colonial power took every advantage and made the arrangement of settlement of Nepalese in that kingdom from where they have been uprooted previously (Basnet, 1974: 35-36; Risley, 1894: 19-21; Sinha, 2008: 60-70). With an aims to accelerate the trade and commerce and to develop Sikkim communication for network access to Tibet, as well as, in order to bring more land under cultivation and to expand revenue through more agricultural productions, Nepalese migration was welcomed by giving land on favorable terms, British molded Nepalese settlement to untouched areas where plenty of forest land and resources for new settlers are available, unrestricted and every encouragement given to hardworking Nepalese that were industrious, loyal and fit to work in the rugged hills (Karan, Jenkins: 1963; Joshi, 2004).

Sikkim has been favored destination for Nepalese ever since the British penetrated Sikkim in late 19th century. The British who wanted hard working laborers for lumbering and clearing of jungles for agriculture and plantations they needed more labor power for construction roads and bridge and for commercial purposes. All of these required physically strong laborers, The Gorkha were just fit admirably to fill this need, so they were attracted in large numbers to the forests, roads, construction sites, fields, plantations and so on. They moved out from Nepal in search of new and better opportunities alone or in small groups of semi-skilled and unskilled laborers. Expansion of economic activities, particularly with the introduction of land lease system in Sikkim, rapid construction work for trade and establishment of agrarian economy, Nepalese migration accelerated into Sikkim under colonial patronage. These migrants were

subsequently engaged in low profile jobs like care takers, *chowkidars* (guards), coolies and porters (Subba, 1999).

3. PATTERNS OF MIGRATION AND POLITICS OF MIGRATION

It was the sheer determination of J.C White, the first political officer of British to Sikkim in 1891 who took the Nepalese under his side at the cost of detaining even the King and Queen of Sikkim (Sinha, 1994:140) and feudal lords of Sikkim *Khangsha Dewan and Phodong Lama* who shared the same views and were considered as the chief architect of Nepalese immigration and made possible their settlement to vacant land of Sikkim in last quarter of 19th century. So it is also important to know that the Nepalese were not just encouraged by British, the local feudal elites from these areas too played important role who did not resist in the settlement in south-western valleys of Sikkim.

Nepalese immigration and its settlement had been encouraged to maximize the revenue through agricultural production of the state by churning the labor from Nepalese peasants, to fulfill the huge requirements of coolies for the constructions of roads, bridges to cut down mountains and forests and to meet the need of enduring porter for transporting trade consignment to Tibet. By doing this, it would ensure economic prosperity of British and Sikkim as well as balance the ethnic correlation. The significant step begins with the introducing of landlordism it was a system of periodic land leases divided land into *ellakas* and has to renew it annually, this give birth to new group of people called *thikadars* (contractors), first deed given to skilled business community of Gorkha race, *The Newar*. The earliest of the Lease holder or contract given to popular Newari figure Laximidas Pradhan in 1867, who was renowned for his artistic mastery on minting metal became first Nepali origin to have foothold in Sikkim and were granted the right to settle in Sikkim by then *Chogyal Sidkeong Namgyal* to mint *Chapte paisa* (flat coins) for the states of Sikkim as Sikkim had no currency system till then and the traders followed barter systems. Furthermore, the other side of the contract grants to Pradhan also facilitates the ownership of the land in vacant area of southern Sikkim and even giving him the right to settle

others; later along with Pradhan other Nepali landlords were granted responsibility for the recruiting and settlement of Nepalese into untouched areas of south-western Sikkim (Sinha, 2008; Basnet, 1974).

In the process, there was large influx of the Nepalese to work in their possession, him along with other lease holders brought the large number of service casts such as Brahmins, barbers as well as artisan castes such as *kami* (blacksmith), *darjee* (tailor), *sarkee* (shoemakers) and *Sunuwar* for minting metal and settled them on their estates permanently to *Namthang, Rincehnpong, Rangpo, Tuluk, Legsep, Mazitar, Pacheykhani, Tuk Khani etc.* of southern and eastern region of Sikkim (ibid: 2008; Rao, 1972). It is important to note here that, it is their caste based profession assigned to them by virtue of Hindu Varna system centuries ago, many of them now transformed into urban service community from decades old, some mobilized into other modern profession possibly to all the white color jobs of all the major towns of Sikkim.

White spent one year in Nepal before being appointed as political officer in Sikkim, where he studied and identified the Gorkhali races like Rais, Limboos, Gurung, Thakuris, Thapa, Magars, Gurungs and Chettris would make a good peasant and labor in peace time as well made soldier in war time. The combination of these two excellent qualities and similarities between the topography of the Gorkha home in Nepal and Sikkim made them the ideal immigrant to meet the need of large labor demand as well as to fill the empty space of Sikkim (Basnet, 1974: 42).

British provided wastelands of southern-eastern and western valley of Sikkim on favorable terms, accordingly, number of lessee landlords was created and settlement of Nepalese and their families in small pockets in different hamlet empty areas of same region of Sikkim was made. As a result, majority of them would eventually turns up as dominant peasants and herdsmen without whom, life would become a hardship. Within decades the demographic picture of Sikkim was changed by turning the west and south districts into predominantly Nepalese habitations (Sinha: 2008).

Within few years not only the earliest Nepalese settlers multiplied in number but outnumber the local inhabitants Lepcha and Bhutia, as in 1891, 51 percent of population of Sikkim was Nepali origin, by their cosmopolitan nature, industrious character and hardworking aptitude they soon began to displace the local inhabitants and sound economically well. The resentment between local inhabitants versus migrants was mounting steadily (Das, 1987: 6; Grover, 1974:23).

4. PROTECTION TO LEPCHA-BHUTIA AND EARLIEST NEPALI SETTLERS.

Under British patronage the Nepalese migrants accumulated land assets on which they established terrace farming, planted cardamom resulted in sound economic production. In fact, the British created a landlord class from among the Nepalese, ¹⁰*The Newar* wielded parallel socio-economic power with the Lepcha- Bhutia Kazis (estate lords). This advancement has been perceived as threats to socio- economic interests of the Lepcha-Bhutia community. Disturbed by economic aggression of Nepalese and threats perception posed by random influx of immigrants, severe protest had been put in front of British political officer to stop the uncared inflows of Nepalese to the land of Sikkim (Sinha, 1994; Rao, 1974)

Responding to the protest a legal notification, had been issued by White on May 17, 1917 ‘the Revenue Order No. 1’ followed by vide Notification No 2371- 2470/G dated 1.8.1941 issued by C.A.Bell. It mentions ‘a settlement of people of other communities in lands which was abandoned by the Bhutia-Lepcha communities or belongs to them was strictly prohibited without the express permission of the government’ (Moktan, 2001: 158; Karan & Jenkins, 1963: 62-63). The other communities refer to the Nepalese who had interests in the land. By the above provisions the Lepchas and the Bhutias were settled in central and northern Sikkim. These settlements were declared as reserve areas which still follows to this days.

In course of time, Sikkim’s ethnic scenario has changed, migrant Nepalese far outnumbered the local inhabitants Lepcha and earliest immigrants Bhutia and has become the influential majority ethnic community in Sikkim. Meanwhile migration continued with increasing pace during the century, this increase was mainly linked with the development of infrastructure, rapid transformation of Sikkimese society, open borders and better prospects and opportunities available in Sikkim. In addition the vast number of offspring from the first generation Nepalese settlers, who settle there from centuries, was the main contributor (Moktan, 2004: 212). With the changing course of time, the presence and dynamic growth of Nepalese could not be ignored

¹⁰*Newars* are the original inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley in Nepal. The word *Newar* is derived from the name of the country Nepal itself. The Nepal name has derived from the famous ascetic and patron saint of Nepal “*Ne Muni*” who installed the son of a pious cowherd as king and thus started the cowherd (Gopala) dynasty (Subba, 2008:409).

anymore in Sikkim, especially in the context of formulating and implementing policies for social and economic development of Sikkim.

5. DEMARCATION OF SIKKIMESE NEPALI AND NEPALESE OF NEPAL (PRE-MERGER ERA 1947-1975)

When India gained independence in 1947 from British, British left Sikkim as well and Sikkim faced a phase of dilemma. The questions of identity accelerated, ethnic politics was widening. On other hand, apprehension has reached its peak to both Sikkimese locals to being displaced from their own land and to Nepali community living there from centuries, the fear of being suppressed. In other words an era of struggle for rights, privileges and protection has come with the arrival of mid-20th century in Sikkim.

It is undeniable fact that Nepali of Sikkim was subjected to various discriminatory practices and ill treatment till 1962. Graced with special rights and privileges from the king of Sikkim, the Sikkimese Kazis and Thikadars (contractors) exploited and suppressed the common people which only came down after the eradication of Zamindari system and forced labor, sought it out by peasant agitation of 1949 (Chakravarti & Nepal, 2012: 149).

i. Enactment of Sikkim Subject Regulations

There was growing apprehensions and anticipation among local community about the safeguard of their interests due to continuous influx and permanent settlement of Nepalese immigrants. It had brought Bhutia and Lepcha together and the notion of 'Sikkimese' and 'Non-Sikkimese' arose. Hence, for safeguarding the interest of Lepcha-Bhutia and to provide proper documentation and domicile to its citizen, 'Sikkim Subject Regulation Act, 1961' was promulgated by the 11th Chogyal, Sir Tashi Namgyal on 3rd July, 1961 (Rao, 1978:20-21). Initially, when the Act was drafted, there was a public outcry against the Act, as it did not include the majority section i.e. Nepali community of Sikkim. But, the controversy was soon over as the Act was later amended on 1962 which provided with Sikkim Citizenship to every rightful citizens of Sikkim under following criteria; (i) who was born in the territory of Sikkim and is resident there in; (ii) has been ordinarily resident in the territory of Sikkim for the period of not less than fifteen years immediately preceding such commencement; (iii) is the wife or minor child of a person mentioned (Gurung, 2011: 45). The legal recognition of the Sikkimese

identity has been aimed to protect the interest of the earliest Nepalese settlers as well as Bhutia and Lepchas, which also prevented the influx of fresh migrants (Thapa, 2012: 11).

This act granted the Sikkimese nationality for the first time to all Nepalese who had settled in the Sikkim before 1961. Conferring earliest Nepalese settlers as natives was the essentially significant steps for Nepali of Sikkim which not only enabled them to enjoy equal privileges at par with original inhabitants of Sikkim but also literally distinguished them from ¹¹Nepal born Nepalese to Sikkim Born Nepali.

Nevertheless, despite of strict enforcement of Sikkim Subject Act (SSC) 1961, ethnic politics and conflict over resource-entitlements remains the crux of polarization between pro-Nepali and anti-Nepali group impetus by fault parity system of election and Chogyal's policy of preferential treatment for Lepchas and Bhutias. This led to competitions over resources and power entitlement so intense, it was aggravating ethnic tension in Sikkim. Discriminatory treatment towards the Nepali community sparks the acute discontent and contributed to political instability in Sikkim during 1970s. Under the influence of India's independent movement, Democratic movement were launched in 1973 against feudalism. Many participated in this revolution the political activists for democracy put pressure on monarch and Government of India, consequently movement catch momentum along with political development in Sikkim. Eventually resulted in creation of 22nd state of India in 16th May of 1975 by the an act of 36th amendments of Indian constitution guided by the article 371F, subsequently end the 333 years of Chogyal institution of Sikkim.

6. POST-MERGER ERA: FORMATION OF SIKKIMESE IDENTITY

Popular uprising led merger to India resulted in profound social transformation and unprecedented economic as well as population growth in Sikkim. As per 1971 census 35% of migration population was recorded, which has gone up to 61% in 1981. On the other hand, the

¹¹ There is an utter misunderstanding about the term 'Nepalese'. Naturally, it denotes people of Nepal. But problem is that the term is used in very flexible way, referring to anybody, who speaks Nepali language or whose ancestors had ever been from Nepal. However, since mid 20th century awareness has emerged among the Indian of Nepalese Origin that they must display their distinct identity from the 'Nepalese' i.e. citizens of Nepal, an effort has been made by scholars, writers like A.C. Sinha and Jyoti Thapa Mani to describing the Indian born Nepali by coining the terminology like Nepali, Gorkha/Gurkha, *Nepamul (Nepali Mul Ko Bhartiya)* and it has become an absolute necessity while we talking about Indian citizenships (Sinha, 2008:41-42; Gurung, 2011: 47).

figure shows declining trends 57% in 1991 and 34.6% on 2001 (SSEC, 2006). The post-merger phase of Sikkim to India had witnessed increased level of migrant population. However, in recent years reduction in immigrant's population could be attributed to the 'protectionist policies' to locals adopted by the state Government.

Similarly, Sikkim Subject Regulation Act, 1961 has been repealed after the merger with the Indian Union in 1975 as the Indian Constitution does not provide dual citizenship, instead Sikkimese are provided with Certificate of Identification as descendent of SSC have been enacted with special provision under Article 371F of the Indian Constitution as an Indian of Sikkimese origin. The Sikkim Subject became the basis for getting the Indian citizenship. Therefore, Nepalese immigrant who migrated and settled permanently in Sikkim before 1961 became legal citizens of Sikkim and after merger to India an authentic Indian of Nepali Origin.

The approach of the state government underwent a radical change with the enactment of the several defensive measures in post-merger period. In order to restrict fresh entries of migrants to Sikkim, the state government introduced several defensive measures. For instance, Notification of Home Department vides 66/Home 195 dated 29.11.1995, facilitates the stop gap and preferential policy for the locals in employment and distribution of the state resources which restricted the participation of migrants or non COI holder to hold any land and job in government sector as well as in some private sectors of Sikkim which ultimately compelled the Nepalese to migrate for temporary time only (Thapa, 2012; Gurung, 2011).

It is important to mention here that even by marrying Sikkimese female, resources and immovable property cannot be transfer to her husband who doesn't possess SSC or COI. If they remained unmarried till her 40s, she will receive unmarried pension on the basis of COI (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2004). This was perceived by as Sikkimese female as a move to prevent them from getting married outside. It was designed strictly to control the permanent settlements of migrants as well as preventing alienation of local community from opportunity.

Despite of strict protectionist policies in Sikkim, influx of Nepalese labor continues in informal sector, particularly, after merger to India, nationwide program of development and modernization came up in Sikkim which has brought the massive development of infrastructure, education, social services and the tourism boom. Such rapid economic growth has created lot of

jobs avenues in Sikkim in both formal and informal sector, in recent times. There are many job avenues which are effectively filled up by the migrant labors from Nepal, one such area, where one can find plenty of Nepalese laborers is the job of *Namlays* in capital town of Gangtok.

7. GENESIS OF NAMLAYS IN SIKKIM

In Sikkim, transportation of loads, burden of consignments through human labor by Nepalese labors was found in most historical writings of Sikkim. Commercialization of Nepalese labors as *Namlays* in the Sikkim has its roots in many centuries of trade between British India and the Tibet dated back to second half of 19th century. From centuries' half of rural population of Nepal lives far from any road network (UNICEF, 1992) carrying loads on their backs is an unavoidable necessity for residents of the Himalayan kingdom. All rural hill people in Nepal, except for few are accustomed to transporting their own loads, and children begin to learn at an early age the art of using a *namlo* (load strap) to balance loads on their backs, they were poor but cheerful and resilience. With this excellent nature, they easily combine multiple role and jobs in him as coolies, porters, dairyman and even errand boy (Sinha, 2007: 46-47; Malville, 2005: 4). Immigrants Nepalese inhabiting in Sikkim found *Namlays* as employment, ever since the Gangtok was linked with India by wheeled traffic in 1906, for the first time, (Karan & Jenkins, 1963: 69). Completion of the construction of mule road from Gangtok to Chumbi valley via Nathula in October 1904 from December 1903, which would accommodate loaded pack animals allowing mule to transport goods during much of the year was the first remarkable achievement made possible by the thriving Nepalese coolies and porters (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013: 533). The lucrative trade and business began to flourish in Sikkim, despite of mule road connection narrow bamboo or wooden bridges spanning turbulent mountain streams made many trails in north-eastern region of Sikkim inaccessible to loaded pack animals because loaded mules cannot cross the narrow bamboo bridges over smaller streams nor ford the streams without the help of the humans. Thus, human labor (*Namlays*) provides the only reliable means of transport in such rugged area. The British traders and merchants hired the *Namlays* for transportation of food stuff, construction materials, goods of all kinds and miscellaneous necessities. The hill trails of north-eastern region of Sikkim were remained crowded throughout the year with Nepalese *Namlays*, British Indian merchants and traders (Basnet, 1974).

Its goes without saying that the *Namlays* are hardy and have earned great respect as high-altitude porters and was labeled as thriving labor or coolies, they were part of numerous Himalayan expedition of British including famous young husband expedition to Tibet in the year 1880. Hence, we can assume that the existence of modern days *Namlays* of Gangtok has its roots to longstanding tradition of commercialization of Nepalese labors as *Namlays* dated back to British penetration of Sikkim in late 19th century.

8. OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

The presence of Nepali speaking people in Sikkim has different histories and stories, which are often been exaggerated seeking domination of one kingdom to others through wars and frequent occurrences of chaos among different ethnic communities are the cause of a lots of those exaggerations. But it wouldn't be wrong to say that contact had been made between the two Himalayan kingdom centuries ago, some rulers did it with peaceful means to maintain harmony, some did it by hostile approach to accomplish its domination and some intentionally did it for commercial purposes. From ancient days Sikkim has always been a chosen region for new settlers from its immediate neighbors like Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal. However, it was British policy which facilitated the mass Nepalese immigration which has brought an unprecedented demographic, socio-economic and political changes into the history of Sikkim and paved the way to in formation of multi-ethnic democratic society from late 20th century to present day. Thus, migration and settlement of Nepalese ethnic groups into Sikkim had influenced a lot in shaping of past and present of Sikkim which occurred against the backdrop of several developments of historical events from ancient to late 20th century.

The two mythical Nepali communities of Sikkim Limboo and Magars lived along with Lepcha community since the time of immemorial, Bhutia migrated from Tibet in 16th century established the Namgyal dynasty. The Gorkha conquest of Sikkim in 1788-89 brought the martial races like Rais, Thakuri, Basnet, Gurung and Thapa and settled down in conquered territory of Sikkim. British and Nepal had interest in Tibetan trade resulted Anglo-Nepalese war in 1814, with the defeat of Nepal, annexed land of Sikkim has been restored in 1817 and making Sikkim as British protectorate in 1861, British has all control over Sikkim. Since the late nineteenth century they

encouraged Nepalese to migrate into Sikkim in large number and were allowed to settle in the southern valley on the ground of economic benefits.

The movement of Nepali peasants and service caste grew more when land was provided to Nepali immigrants under the periodic land lease system introduced by British. The entire cultivable lands were divided into *Ellakas*, and then there was emergence of *Thikedars*, *mondols* who allotted land on contract (Thika) way back in 1877, as a result large number of skilled and unskilled Nepali migrated along with service caste like kami (blacksmith) damai (musician) sarki (shoemaker) and Sunuwar (goldsmith) and finally settled down. Later, on the basis of these land holdings, Sikkim Subject status was conferred to earliest Nepali settlers through the Sikkim Subject Act of 1961, which has given them the same status as Lepcha/Bhutia community. Later, those, persons whose names were registered in Sikkim Subject Regulation of 1961 became citizens of India automatically.

Ever since Sikkim was open to Nepalese migrant by the British, population increased rapidly, urban centers grew gradually and steadily in its volume and numbers. Further, getting employed as *Namlays* (porters or coolies) were stigmatized and was not desirable to *Bhutia-Lepcha* community of Sikkim by virtue of their socio-religious ethos (Sinha, 2008). So far, the Nepalese migrants have been able to fill the role of unskilled and semi-skilled labor in Sikkim. The types of work in which the Nepalese migrant laborers are engaged are socially not desirable to locals. Thus, there is little competition from the local indigenous communities and soon they began to lead and formed an underprivileged yet imperative *Namlay* community in urban centers of Sikkim, more visibly in capital town Gangtok. Even after merger, Nepalese continue to migrate in Sikkim trying to find a full-time or permanent job. When this fails, they naturally transit into burden bearer or *Namlay*; some survive at street corners for years and continue to do so in contemporary Gangtok.

CHAPTER III

1. LOCATING LIVES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF NAMLAYS IN GANGTOK

In globalized world, one cannot be confined only to one administrative boundary when the question of basic livelihood arises. Migration has been an intrinsic component of human behavior and a natural process; people generally migrate in search of better livelihood and opportunities, when their needs are not adequately fulfilled in their place of origin. (Castles, 2000). Migration has become an essential and inevitable phenomenon of the socio-economic life of modern world.

Historical events unfurl considerable evidences that movement of Nepali speaking people to Sikkim is not a new phenomenon and the migration of Nepalese citizen in search of better opportunities is not recent. Many people from different parts of Nepal came to Sikkim to work as *Namlay* (Porter or coolies)) since the time of British colonization of Sikkim. The historical backdrop of *Namlays* has been discussed in detail in 2nd Chapter. However, with the merger of Sikkim with India, due to various socio- economic and political reasons and adoption of protectionist policy by the state, the Nepali migration has been restricted to seasonal and temporary basis. Therefore, the chapter focuses on migrant Namlays in Gangtok which is based on study of 100 respondents.

i. Gangtok: A Brief Profile

Gangtok which means '*The Hill Top*' is present capital of Sikkim and has features of multiethnic and multicultural society. It comprises three major ethno-linguistic communities i.e. Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali co-exist harmoniously along with Indian plainsmen. In 1894, the then Chogyal, Thutob Namgyal, the Sikkimese monarch under British rule, shifted the Sikkim's capital from *Tumlong* to Gangtok. Following India's independence in 1947 and Indo-Sikkimese treaty of 1950, Sikkim became a protectorate state with Gangtok as its capital. In 1975, after years of political uncertainty and struggle, the monarchy was abrogated and Sikkim became India's twenty-second state, with Gangtok as its capital.

Gangtok is also the headquarter of the '283,583 population of east district (Census, 2011) and is located in the eastern Himalayan range, at an elevation of 1,650 m (5,410 ft). The town's population of 100,286 belong to different ethnic group such as, Nepali, Lepchas, Bhutia and plainsmen communities.

a. Literacy rate

The capital town has an average literacy rate of 81.4%, with male and female literacy rate of 85.33%, and 78.68 % respectively. Of the total urban population of Sikkim, Gangtok has a share of 55.5% (DESME, 2013). It is due to being capital town of the state; it is center of administration, hub of various socio-economic activities. Nestled within higher peaks of the Himalaya and enjoying a year-round mild temperate climate, Gangtok is at the center of Sikkim's tourism industry.

b. Economic profile

The eco-tourism industry is the largest industry in Gangtok as the city is the main base for Sikkim tourism. Many of Gangtok's residents are employed directly and indirectly in the tourism industry. An estimated suggests that 351,000 tourists visited Sikkim in 2007, generating revenue of about Rs 50 crores (Rs 500 millions). The opening of historic Nathula trade between India and China, located about 50 km (31 miles) from Gangtok, spurred economic growth for Gangtok as well to the state as a whole (DESME, 2013).

Sikkim's mountainous terrain limits the area's potential for rapid industrial development. The government is the largest employer in the city, both directly and indirectly. More than 60 percent of people directly depend upon the agrarian economy of the state, hence traditionally emerged as the largest employment sector to absorb local as well as migrant workers. Thus eco-tourism and agrarian are the two strong backbone of Sikkim's economy. Further, Gangtok economy is basically circled around both formal and informal economy. Since the entrance to white collar or formal sector is only open to local on the ground of holding of Sikkim Subject or COI (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013) hence, all migrants especially those who are unskilled, uneducated or incompetent has to embrace the informal sector of Gangtok. Meanwhile, Nepalese migrants are widely seen in this sector more particularly in the work of *portering and coolies* locally known as *Namlay*.

2. NAMLAY COMMUNITY IN GANGTOK: FIELD EXPERIENCE

In Gangtok, most of the *Namlays* are hailed from places like, *Okhol Dhunga, Chowri goath, Ramay chaap* district which is located in central and eastern region of Nepal. They are basically seasonal immigrants but some of them are settling permanently as they had brought their entire family and residing here for last 16-17 years. Annually, they came to Gangtok for work for five to six months and remaining six months, they stay at home to finish off harvesting and other domestic works. Those who have brought their family are staying in rented room in Gangtok for more than 15 years, some from 1-2 years. In overall 98 percent of them are seasonally migrated and are willing to return back to their place of origin eventually, to look after their family and ancestral land. They are poor, illiterate and unskilled. Furthermore, since there are exclusive government's protections to local community of Sikkim, thus, options are very limited to that kind of Nepalese migrants but to enter into the work of burden bearing which is preferably shunned away by the locals.

i. Describing *Namlays*

In Gangtok, the work of *portering and coolies* is exclusively performed by male *Namlays* and they are the seasonal labors of the town, whose visit are more frequent and shorter in a cyclical

temporary manner. Among 100 respondents, 98 percent of them are from Nepal, only 2 percent of them are from West Bengal states of India. Rough estimate suggest that currently in Gangtok, there are around 1000 *Namlays* working differently in different hamlet of Gangtok. Their life and livings can be described as simple but difficult. The touch of modern way of living style is away from them except few, as they have their own typical conventional oriental Nepalese way of living, distant from almost all sorts of so called ‘modern capitalist form of life’ or materialistic world. Their physical appearance with dripping sweat in the face, smelling out body odor with poor condition of their cloths reflects the hardship they bear. A stained casual t-shirt and faded waist coat with dusty half pant, quarter pant or full pant, old shoes or slipper and a simple half torn old ¹²*paharey topi or daka topi* is what they wouldn’t bother to wear it, as their regular get ups. They have very messy outlooks, some of with shaved or unshaved bearded face, often loitering around with ¹³*bidi* on their mouth half wrinkled smiley face trying to ease out from the hardship of difficult life. *Namlay* as they have been called in Gangtok and elsewhere in Sikkim.

Affections, care, fun and respect is essentially vital motivational aspect of human’s life in the quest of pursuit of happiness, no matter how contradictory and sophisticated the situations are. Staying in close group is found to be appropriate by most of the respondents and they cited several reasons for that. In a foreign land, with many odds, these *Namlays* have nobody but their fellow colleagues and friends to share their feelings, to steal out some moment of fun and happiness by cracking some jokes and humor on friends. They always extended their possible help and care to somebody, who fall sick and get injured among their community. It is fascinating to note that they develop so much of attachment and fondness within friend circle that some of the *Namlays* even almost forgot their real names, as they were not referred by their real name since they have arrived. They are fondly called by different nick name by their friends like, *sailo, mailo, bhimey, bhena, mama, fista, dalley, harkey, purkey, thuley, gorey, kalay, hariyo* and so on. Such attachment often assumes as a ‘close group’ where ethnicity, regional connection, kins and kith relations are the crux over other considerations. This kind of proximity enabled a sense of togetherness and feelings of regional belongings to develop bonding which molded into collective consciousness, which is often lacking in their native place. This

¹²*Paharey topi or Daka topi*= Nepalese torque.

¹³The meaning of *bidi* in oxford advanced learner’s dictionary is: In South Asian, a type of locally made of unfiltered tobacco in leaves.

consciousness motivates them to work closely with community based collectives in foreign land. Based on field study of *Namlays* in Gangtok, it was found that the most popular strategies of out migration from far and mid-western region of Nepal is seasonal migration to Sikkim (India) to work as *Namlays*.

ii. Becoming *Namlays* is a strategy

The available work of burden bearing or work of *Namlay* can be under taken for a shorter period of time and are easier to handle for Nepalese immigrants who are unskilled, illiterate and have very limited employment opportunities. It is a sound source of earning for those who failed to pay debt in their village. Their staying in Gangtok are shorter and can be fitted to accommodate their work routine in Gangtok with their agricultural calendar, so that they can go back to the native place and work in agriculture. They work in Gangtok in the off-season i.e. during winter months of November to March, during that time, back at home, their domestic works are looked after by women and children. Inextended families, family members may be dispersed, one brother goes to Sikkim and comes back to the village to plough fields, another works in other parts of India to secure a regular income, and a third stays in Nepal to run the ancestral property. In other words, it is the strategy of risk minimizing and labor sharing by diversifying the income source.

It would be the time of winter in Gangtok (which is off-season for them in Nepal) where number of *Namlays* and their dramatically increased in the town. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that, there is constantly increasing number of inflow of temporary young *Namlays* between the age group of 15-19 years in Gangtok. They claimed themselves as students, when they have school vacation in Nepal. It is their established custom in village that, male members has to spend holidays in foreign land with their own, purposefully searching opportunities for employment to take responsibility of the house later on, like their older generation did and are doing. After couple of months of uncertain work in Gangtok, they return back to native land to resume their study but if they fail to pursue their study and to get job, their holidays experience

of working in Gangtok as Namlays, and casual acquaintances would become worthwhile and likewise the destination for migration will be chosen.

It has been found that among all the selected 100 respondents of Gangtok town, 98 percent belongs to far central and eastern rural region of Nepal. These regions of Nepal are lacks economic development and has problem of chronic unemployment and poverty, this is doubled with the population growth, growing shortage of food and other resources, seasonal agriculture failure, increasing debt (Shrestha, 2007) and recently, the situation has been made worst by devastating 7.9 earthquakes of 2015, which directly affected their livelihood. Such kind of structural constraint influenced directly on lives of the people, resulted in temporarily out migration of young adults into foreign land seeking jobs and other opportunities. These customs have become tradition and one has to cope with this in his lifetime, an obligatory role which has been strategically chosen for sustenance.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF NAMLAYS

The following analysis is based on the detail study area of work of hundred respondents selected from Gangtok city. In the absence of any authentic and comprehensive data on the available numbers of *Namlays* in Gangtok, the field survey followed a snow ball technique and purposive sample selection. After detailed discussion with few old generation *Namlays*, four areas were identified as hubs, where more migrant *Namlays* from Nepal resides i.e. *Lower Arithang, Deorali, Tadong and Ranipool*. Considering the sparse number of them, to get a good account of the information, it was decided to interview of 100 *Namlays*, 25 each from the four selected notified towns of Gangtok.

In the proposed study attention was given in selecting representatives sample giving due attention on various attributes such as gender, age, place of origin, caste categories and so on. Most of the respondents hails from mid and far western region of Nepal, except few who are migrated from Darjeeling district of West of Bengal, working temporarily or actively seeking any available physical works.

Table 3.1.

Distribution of Respondents by study area

| Study Area | No. of Respondents |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Lower Arithang | 25 |
| Deorali | 25 |
| Tadong | 25 |
| Ranipool | 25 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

Apart from selected field area, a visit has also been done to other resident areas where few *Namlays* resides at *Pani House, lall market, Chandmari and Development areas*. This enabled more insights on study of social adaptation, inter-relationships and nature of working patterns between them and locals developed over the time. It is interesting to note that *Namlays* of above respective areas never went to work in other area where other *Namlays* from other regions *are* working on. For instance, In *Tadong* there is complete domination of *Namlays* who are hailed from *Okhol Dunga* district of far western Nepal and vice-versa.

Table 3.2

Place of origin of Respondents

| Places | No. of Respondents | % |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------|
| Ramaychaap | 17 | 17% |
| Chaowri goath | 25 | 25% |
| Okhol Dunga 3 No. | 45 | 45% |
| Birtamur | 11 | 11% |
| Mangalpuri (Darjeeling) | 02 | 02% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Field survey, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

All the above mentioned places of Table no.3.2 are located in central and eastern region of Nepal which takes 5-6 days to reach Gangtok, depending upon traveling schedule of the immigrants. Places like Okhol Dunga 3 No. and Chowri goath are often considered as one of the most far flung district of Nepal, lacking in many basic amenities, majority of migrant *Namlays* hails from these areas accounting to 45% and 25% respectively. It is followed by 17% from Ramaychaap,

13% from Birtamur district of eastern Nepal and 2% from Darjeeling district of West Bengal, who are currently working in Gangtok and are included among 100 respondents.

Table 3.3
Age and Sex wise Distribution of Respondents

| Age Groups | No. of Respondents | Sex | | % |
|------------|--------------------|-----|-----|------|
| | | M | F | |
| Upto 20 | 17 | 17 | nil | 17% |
| 20-25 | 25 | 25 | “ | 25% |
| 25-30 | 45 | 45 | “ | 45% |
| Above 30 | 13 | 13 | “ | 13% |
| Total | 100 | 100 | “ | 100% |

Source: Field survey, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

Table 3.3 presents age and sex distributions of respondents which are crucial factors in determining people’s need and choices of migration in societies. In *Namlays* cases too, age factors is of foremost relevance to make the decision to migrate. Out of 100 respondents all of them were males. It means the work of *Namlays* in Gangtok is gender specific. Above table shows that, around 45 percent of the *Namlays* were from 25-30 age groups. 25 percent from 20-25 of age and 17 percent of them are still younger up to 17 years. It was only 13 percent of respondents who are of above 30 years. It clearly indicates that there is higher proportion of youth inflows from Nepal to Gangtok, where they work at different town as *Namlays*. 13 percent of respondents above 30 years either work temporarily as *Namlays* or hire different work in contractual terms from locals and employ young and recent immigrants from Nepal to carry out the task. Many of them have experience of more than 15 years of working in Gangtok and developed good amount of networks with the locals.

Majority of the respondents are within the first five years of their migration, their skills and education are not so impressive. Further, the work of *Namlays* is highly physical demanding work which requires enduring stamina and willingness. Income and opportunity are determined by the one's fitness and physical strength. In other words it is the job of young and fit ones, which is why we found large engagement of youth from Nepal working as *Namlays* in Gangtok.

Table no. 3.4

Ethnic and Religious Breakups of Respondents

| Ethnic Group | Religions | No. of respondents | % |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Chettri/Bahun | Hindu | 11 | 11% |
| Sherpa | Hindu-Buddhist | 18 | 18% |
| Kami/Damai | Hindu | 25 | 25% |
| Sarki/ | Hindu | 12 | 12% |
| Tamang | Hindu-Buddhist | 20 | 20% |
| Thami | Hindu-Buddhist | 14 | 14% |
| Total | - | 100 | 100% |

Source: Field work, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

Nepal is a Hindu country featuring many ethnic tribes of Nepal and follows strict caste system which facilitates division of labor. Traditionally labor works like *coolies and portering (Namlays)* has been performed by lower caste. On the contrary, Table 3.4 shows that upper caste like Chettri/Bahun defies the ethos of caste based professions as 11 percent of *Namlays* are found to belong to upper caste. This strongly indicates that economic preference temporarily overshadowed the social ethos of caste system, when it comes to the matters of livelihood. Due to lack of livelihood strategy in native place, they migrated to foreign country. Similarly, by considering the variables like caste and ethnicity, Hindu-Buddhist ethnic communities like *Tamang, Sherpa and Thami* represent 20%, 18% and 14% respectively. Followed by 12% of *Sarki* whom are regarded as lower caste in hierarchical order of the caste system. It is interesting to note, that there is an absence on participations of Nepali ethnic group like Rai, Limboo,

Thapa, Magar and Gurung. However, it was well informed by respondents that they are working as *Namlays* in Gangtok not by the compulsion of caste bound profession in their native village but for the sustenance and for better future of their children and family.

Table 3.5

Educational attainment of Respondents

| Classes | No. of Respondents | % |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Up to primary | 5 | 5% |
| Jr. High Secondary | 2 | 2% |
| Illiterate | 93 | 93% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Field work, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

Analysis based on table no 3.5 shows that the educational background of *Namlays* was not so impressive rather it was that 93 percent of them are illiterate who only knows how to count the money. Though 2 percent of them said they have studied till 8th standard, but has no use in both native place and in Gangtok, similarly 5 percent reported that they had received education up to primary level 8-10 years ago and forgot everything except writing their names. Thus, educational level of *Namlays* in Gangtok reflects the harsh reality of lacking cultural capital which is one of the prime reasons of remaining unskilled and incompetent to suit in modern labor market in the era of globalization. The process thus facilitates continuation of vicious cycle of poverty. Therefore, they decided to migrate in Gangtok and compel to embrace the low profile physically demanding work of *Namlays*, which is abandoned by natives in view of low status and class, in order to evade from poverty, which is a harsh reality for them way back their home.

Table 3.6**Marital status and Length of staying of respondents**

| Marital Status No. of Respondents | | Length of Staying of Respondents and its number based on marital status | | | | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| | | Upto-6 months | 6 months-1 years | 1-2 years | 2-4years | 4 years & above | |
| Married | 44 | 30 | 10 | 02 | | 02 | 44 |
| Unmarried | 49 | | 19 | 21 | 09 | | 49 |
| Divorce | 02 | - | - | - | - | 02 | 02 |
| Engaged | 5 | 2 | 3 | | | | 5 |
| Total | 100 | 32 | 32 | 21 | 09 | 06 | 100 |

Source: Field work, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

Historically, Migration from Nepal to Sikkim occurred in a permanent manner, with the merger to Indian union pattern of migration has changed to temporarily cyclical migration which are the recent trends of migration of *Namlays* from Nepal to Gangtok. One of the basic factor which influence this patterns of migration is the marital status of respondents. As above table no. 3. 4 highlights that 44% of respondents are married, as majority of them left behind their family in Nepal and are more likely to return. Married *Namlays* staying in Gangtok is for shorter term than unmarried *Namlays* (i.e. from 6 months to 1 year) it is due to affective ties attach to family and ancestral property in native place; they did this frequently but for shorter period of time. On the

other hand, unmarried *Namlays* comprises 49% and their length of staying is 1-4 years. However, there are variations in their length of staying. Some of them are willing to stay for more than 4 years and some are staying permanently with family from last 10-15 years. In both cases, their willingness and reluctances are determined by the nature of adaptation, assimilation and interaction with the local community. Similarly, 2 percent of respondents reported that they are divorcee and wanted to spend rest of life in Gangtok but due to linkages to kins and kiths in native place, they occasionally visits once in a four years or more. 5% of *Namlays* are young and energetic, sometimes their length of staying is even shorter than married ones, as some of them are engaged in relationships or about to get married.

Thus, compared to unmarried respondents, married one's migration to Gangtok is shorter, frequent and more likely to be temporarily. However, those who are engaged or going to get married are specially the young ones, their migration period is even shorter than married *Namlays*. Thus, marital status heavily influence the duration of migration.

Table 3.7

Monthly income of *Namlays* in Gangtok

| Monthly income in Rs | No. of Respondents | % |
|----------------------|--------------------|------|
| Up to 2000 | 17 | 17% |
| 2000-4000 | 53 | 53% |
| 4000-6000 | 18 | 18% |
| 6000-7000 | 08 | 08% |
| 7000 & above | 04 | 04% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

Source: Field work, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

On an average, a *Namlay* earns Rs 5000-7000 per month that too depend upon the physical fitness and willingness to precarious works. The income which they generate is very small and varies according to the nature of the work. With this money, they have to send remittances to their family. They have little saving, that too in a family where only one head is earning make it very difficult to save. At the end of the month they have to go out of the money sometimes. This is the routine they have been facing since long time.

Table no. 3.8

Determinants of Out migration or Push factors

| Push Factors |
|--------------|
|--------------|

| Sl. No. | Factors | No. of Respondents | % |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Unemployment | 65 | 65% |
| 2 | Poverty | 25 | 25% |
| 3 | Socio-Cultural factors | 3 | 3% |
| 4 | Political Instability | 2 | 2% |
| 5 | Bankruptcy | 5 | 5% |
| Total | | 100 | 100% |

Source: Field work, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

Almost from ¹⁴200 years ago labor migration has been a feature of Nepalese livelihood strategies (Gill, 2003). According to Respondents from mid-western and far-western hill villages of Nepal, labor migration represents a vital part of their rural systems without which sustenance of life would not be possible. Since the rural economy relies on traditional agricultural system only as main source of income, which would not be enough for livelihoods. *Namlays* in Gangtok expressed various reasons for migrating, and the underlying cause is the general lack of economic opportunities, chronic repetitive poverty, social constraints, miserable educational level and civil war which causes Nepalese youth to migrate to foreign land which they called ¹⁵“*bideshinu*”. Table No.3 highlights that among 100 *Namlays* 65 percent of them responded that unemployment is the prime factor of out migration seconded by repetitive poverty of which 25 percent of respondent reported, followed by 3 percent of socio-cultural constraints, 2 percent of political instability and 5 person says due to bankruptcy, they are compelled to migrate. The detail discussion has been made in following sub headings.

(i). Unemployment, Poverty and Backwardness

All the above three phenomena are related and interlinked to economic structure of the society. The economic systems of their regions are beyond contentment or backward economy relies completely on Stone Age agrarian system (Gill, 2003). Complete dependence on backward

¹⁴During 18th century, young hill men of Nepal used to go to Lahore city of Northern Punjab (*present day it's a part of Pakistan*) to recruit as mercenaries or armies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. These recruited soldiers were popularly called as ‘*Lahure*’ in Nepal. They were highly famed with the labeled of martial race and loyalty which hitherto continue to this days.

¹⁵*Bideshinu* : Going to foreign land, it's an established customs in Nepal which is romantically explained different songs, poems and in story. For instances, popular noble like ‘*Muna-Madan*’, songs like ‘*Munglann hera jadai chu etc*’ both of these literature and lyrics of the song expressed the hardship they bear in foreign land and poured how does it feel to leave behind someone whom do you love adorably, for the sake of survival and livelihood.

traditional agriculture system made them so hard to earn their bread and butter that led the entire region into acute unemployment problems, which could later convert into chronic poverty and repetitive backwardness, in such situation out migration has become a necessity and is among the prime push factors of migration. This could not be undone, because of the need of liquid cash money in the era of market economy.

(ii). Socio-cultural factors

The notion of¹⁶*Munglaan mania* that young adult has to obliged in some stage of his life is deeply rooted into their society and embedded firmly in cultural values as well. It would be ashamed to young adult to stay at home dependent on parents and others. So, rather to be parasite or get stuck with age old insufficient agricultural legacy, they decide to migrate. The interviews conducted in Gangtok among the age group between 14-55 years states that they had known since their childhood, that they have been taught to spend some time in Sikkim (India), working as burden bearers. They explained, when a male reached adulthood, it is his obligatory role that must be fulfilled in order to ensure source of livelihood and so on to taking care of family. When young men get married and families rely on them, migration becomes compulsory. In other words, these customs is a form of division of labor on which different gender role is constructed in their respective society. Other traditional practice like parilineal inheritance of property is associated to male member of the house, who is expected to oblige the socio-economic burden of the family. It is thus *Namlays* view it as an obligation among many that has to oblige or embrace anyway.

In additions, casteism in Nepal is deeply rooted in their society and so as discrimination of high and low castes. Respondent *Namlays* like *Deo kumar Naubag* who belong to Dholaka district of central Nepal, stated that it is commonly seen in their village that the high caste people ill-treats people of the low castes like slaves as curse of human. As a result, low castes people have to

¹⁶*Munglaan* is a popular term denotes to the 'Mughal India' or to 'land of Mughal' used to refer India by Nepalese during the reign of Mughal Empire whose border extended to southern part of Nepal. In fact, many of fanatic Nepalese still called India as '*Munglaan*'.

suffer and have to bear the curse of being born as low caste, consequently they remain underprivileged, marginalized or socially excluded group. Hence, deserting such a place is only options left because surviving with dignity is what every human seek and so did they. Similarly, in *Ramay Chaap* central region of Nepal, temporary migration, is described as ‘aoudai jada’ (come and go) is an inherent part of life of young men and established customs in their village.

(iii) Political commotion

The political commotions are also standing as push factors. During the Maoist stir (1996-2005), youth who were not agreeing to join the same, were bound to escape to protect the life, since western region was one of the most affected districts of Nepal during the Maoist violent agitation (Chettri, 2015: 157). Due to burst of the Maoist rebel and their rampant activities, there was constant occurrence of political unrest, frequent strikes and agitations which led near to total collapse of the administrative system and complete breakdown of law and order in Nepal. Emergence of new and more political parties tries to wipe out the former ones and enforcement of policies are executed by force, to add the worst, the fear of the ethnic cleansing approaches and apprehension about their future made common people extremely vulnerable. Terrified by such rumors and activities Nepal’s situation has become more worsen than ever, to escape from such a misfortune to meet, a forced migration occurred. Most return after normalized the situation but many remains permanently as underprivileged group as working *Namlays* especially in Darjeeling and few in Sikkim.

(iv) Other factors

(a). One unique aspects of ‘Out migration’ encountered during field survey was that, for some of Nepalese youth, there is no need to work for living by undertaking this low status precarious job of *Namlays* because they belong to well to do family. They viewed out migration or going to foreign land as an adventure, it is all matter of their curiosity to explore the world beyond The Himalayan Mountains, rivers, forests and their people, they said. Further, they were surprised to see people like them in Sikkim due to absence of knowledge, in fact they found it so fascinating that they enjoy to work as *Namlays* in Gangtok for shorter period. One curious mind may asked, why would they do that? When there is no necessity? Answer is mesmerizing; in their region, those who go ‘*bidesh*’ (foreign land) and come back with many resources have better chances to

get true love and better bride, because they believe distance for shorter period enhance love and maturity. Money and the knowledge they brought back would be an assets for future prospect in village. Now the question is why the job of *Namlays*? Why not anything else? Answer was simple and straight, the work of *Namlays* is the only work they know, no one would give them other jobs that too for the shorter period of time and this is the only jobs in Gangtok where they found Nepalese of western region, where they meet their old separated friends and kins.

(b) Dearth of proper educational facilities

In the contemporary modern world, there is overwhelming evidence that better education make one more efficient and economically better off people and have greater propensity to migrate as well. However, education is perceived in mixed feelings by the respondents and even cause for concern but most of the *Namlays* of Gangtok would agree that education is the most important requirement to survive and for a dignified living in modern world and it is absolutely essential to attain a certain level of education. It is lively visible among the interviewed respondents that only 5 percent of *Namlays* has attained formal education. One of the respondents from *Chari Gooth says*, this extremely low level of education is a fact not only to them but to their villages as well. This reflects the extremely poor condition of educational infrastructure, since sending children into elsewhere to receive higher education far from home is the only option available. Unfortunately very few would able to do so, on the ground of expensive educational cost in Nepal.

In a different ways but collectively they said “due to absence of such proper education system and institutions like in Gangtok and elsewhere in Sikkim, we remain illiterate, backward and are compelled to choose this unskilled physically demanded profession for daily earnings to assist the family. It is the dearth of good educational facilities and reluctance showed by some educated selfish person and politicians of Nepal resulting in continues reproduction of regular illiteracy, unemployment than backwardness and poverty at last. That is the reason why we are in Gangtok otherwise no one would want it to leave their motherland”. Despite of these backdrops, the

Namlays shared common view on education, no matter what? It is the education which can change one's wretched life to dignified one and so on to family, society and nation as whole.

Table 3.9

Attractions or Pull Factors

| Pull Factors | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Sl. No. | Factors | No. of Respondents | % |
| 1 | Job opportunities | 10 | 10% |
| 2 | Socio-cultural similarities | 35 | 35% |
| 3 | High value of Indian currency | 41 | 41% |
| 4 | Porous borders/Geographical proximity | 11 | 11% |
| 5 | Network/Inheritance | 03 | 3% |
| Total | | 100 | 100% |

Source: Field work, 14th-28th May, 17th June-4th July 2015

As far as choosing destination is concern, several strategy and factors are taken into account by migrant *Namlays*. They mainly considered socio-economic aspects of the host society for migration which is usually associated with a specific kind of pre-determined job. In the case of *Namlays* the choice of work and destination is determined and influenced by the availability of human capital as well as structural elements, like, cultural similarity, possession of socio-cultural capital and economic growth of the receiving society.

(i) High value of Indian currency and job opportunities

The above table no. 3.9 shows that high currency value of Indian rupee against Nepal's rupee followed by cultural similarities are the prime attractions or pull factors of Gangtok. As 41 percent respondents said cause of high value of Indian rupee. It would be worthwhile to embrace the work of *Namlays* which is creditable work against other precarious low profile jobs. Supplemented by 10 percent of respondents who thought that due to absence of locals in this kind of work, that creates job opportunity to unskilled migrant like them hence they determined to be *Namlay* in Gangtok before migration.

(ii) Socio-Cultural similarity

According to (Tuan, 1990) 'human being's affective ties with material environments is natural and are vary from one person to another to place to place. Similarly, 35 percent of respondents said due to socio-cultural similarities they preferably choose to migrate in Sikkim and Darjeeling where majority of population are Nepali Hindu and Nepali is *lingua-franca* commonly spoken and generally understood by the common people. Therefore, linguistic similarities is one motivational factor which would be rationale to uneducated, unskilled youth (*Namlays*) who found problems in communication to people with other languages, migration to Sikkim and Darjeeling would become comfort zone. They find that the degree of treating them as foreignness in Gangtok is quite less than it is in the Indian plains and the visible presence of *Namlays* in Gangtok gives comfort zone.

(iii) Inheritances and Social Networks

The above table 3.9 shows that 3 percent of *Namlays* chosen Gangtok as destination because their fathers/grand fathers were also headed for this town. Some of them are direct descendants of their ancestor who were porter during colonial era or pre-merger Sikkim; they have received the work of burden bearing in legacy from their forefathers, in an anonymity they accept it as a fate and could be passing on to coming generation also. Therefore, 3 percent of respondents is directly inherited the work of *Namlay* from their father who was once *Namlays* in Gangtok. An

emotional attachment to the same place where their forefathers worked pulls some *Namlays* to migrate in Gangtok.

Meanwhile, others choose after ascertained the information provided by returned fellow members of the village. Returning *Namlays* shared the some knowledge to others in native place, which is close to them and wanted to go for foreign employment in Sikkim (India). Thus, sharing and receiving information through the channels of network helps *Namlays* to find the jobs in Gangtok informal labor market. Assuming the fact that, in a foreign land there would be greater chances of risk to newly arrive unskilled migrants to remains unemployed or expose to the unknown, unwanted and uninvited troubles, thus, availability and the use of social capital helps to limit risk factors, and to minimize the psychological and economic lost to find any work in an alien place. However, despite of familiarity or holding of social capital, working as *Namlay* in Gangtok have become highly competitive, as there is constantly increasing number of porters in the town made the opportunity very limited. In this situation thus, access to social network have become imperative.

(iv) Porous borders and Geographical proximity

According to table 3.9, 11% of *Namlays* reported that for the people of Nepal, entering in India is easy because of the porous borders, which is existed by virtue of Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 that allows the free movement of citizens of both the country. However, coming to state of Sikkim is not the same, as Sikkim follows the defensive measures against migrants and only after strict checking they are allowed to enter. Another natural factor is geographical proximity, Since Nepal is landlocked country and surrounded by India from east, west and southern part which made India an immediate neighbor country the first choice to migrate propelled by close and rich historical links between the two south-Asian countries including Sikkim.

Meanwhile, migration for employment is an age old phenomenon in Nepal, out migration of labor is fundamental for many Nepali households, as agricultural yields often are not sufficient to nourish all household members (Bhole and Adhikari, 1998: 321). Macfarlane and Gurung (1992:122) mentioned “a large proportion of the male population is mobile, spending varying periods abroad for employment”. Until recently, international migration from Nepal was mostly to India, a migration which has several special characteristics (Kasper 2005: 28-29).

4. LOCATIONS AND RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS OF NAMLAYS

Gangtok is the preferred destination to migrant *Namlays* who are currently working in and around the town. Naturally they prefer to stay in rental house near to the working place, as a result their concentration are mainly located in Lall market, the heart of the Gangtok town, Tadong the hot spot of commercial activities and Ranipool the starting town of Gangtok notified town areas. The places where they reside are on rented buildings or rented room. With the increasing rate of inflation in Gangtok, rate of the single rented room varies between Rs. 2000 to 3000 rupees per month, which varies according to its room condition and location. Considering the fact that, room rent is not economically viable by considering the monthly income of single *Namlays*. So they prefer to stay together in order to share the expensive burden of room rent and rations.

Adequate and proper shelter is necessary for any human being in order to live in a dignified manner and to reduce the exposure to communicable diseases, which is one of the significant aspects of collaborated pattern of residence. Critically evaluating, it was found that, respondents sleep on the ground or make shift of beds with or without pillow or bed cover. Many of them stays in single room of 24 x 24 feet (length/breadth) at a time of 4-5 persons together which lacks the privacy especially for sick and injured person. Contrary to this, these patterns of residence is economically viable as they have to bear only 20-25% of total room and rations rents, which made savings possible and the presence of somebody will be always there to look after, who are sick or injured. They divide the household work, for preparing food, collecting water and sometimes, they even take food from outside.

The place where they live is no different from the local communities, mostly on the fringe of the town and some lives within the town. Maintenance of the rented rooms and hired flats is one of the important aspects; they frequently carry on routine manners which would help them to leave impressions in the eyes of landlords. It is important because, when they vacate the rooms and buildings, it will be used by another fresh *Namlays* and by himself in his return from home without wasting time and energy, they get their familiar shelter. Thus, impression management and social networking is important and would help to reduce risk and wastage of time and energy.

i. Water

It is essential for any humans to receive adequate quantity and good quality of water as it has numerous impacts on nutrition, health and sanitation. An adequate quantity of water is an important public health issue because lack of water is correlated with the presence of diseases such as diarrhea and cholera and other water born disease. It is also important for the water to be readily accessible, and the taps should be accessed to every residing room and buildings. Adequate and continues supply of water often remains a constant challenge in Gangtok areas. But among the respondent *Namlays* case it is well maintained. PHE running water has been the prime source of water to the population of Gangtok from the past decades. It is centrally controlled and distributed through complex channels of pipes. The water comes on for a few hours twice a day in the morning and evening, which they preserve in a basket for later use. Water distribution in the *Namlay's* buildings and room is equally available at par with the locals; hence, incidence of water related problems was found minimum.

ii. Sanitations

Maintenance of adequate sanitation is crucial to prevent communicable diseases and epidemics while ensuring good health and dignity. According to Health Department of Gangtok as well as informed by *Namlays*, Government of Sikkim provide free medical facilities o Sikkimese in all the government owned hospital, one of the prime hospital is Sir Thutop Namgyal Memorial. Significantly in STNM hospital migrant *Namlays* also enjoys the privileges of free treatment for the average sickness by paying the fee of Rs 10 as a registration card, however unlike locals they will have to buy all the prescribed medicine. In Gangtok and Sikkim as whole, sanitation facilities are designed to avoid all kind of vulnerabilities. All household have a designated latrine and this has provided adequate sanitation coverage. On critically reviewing the sanitation situation in the *Namlay's* rooms and flat. The buildings are properly planned with adequate requirements. Solid waste management and vector control were carried out through the construction and repair of latrines. Building sanitary conditions remained good. Latrine were well maintained, disposal of garbage was done in disciplined manner with the monthly payment

of Rs 50 to Urban Development and Housing Development of Gangtok for the collection of waste disposal.

iii. Numerical strength of *Namlays*

As per 2001 census, the migrant's population of Sikkim is accounts to 34.6 % of its total population and is expected to be continuously expanding. The east district accommodated largest proportion of migrants with 65.02% of total migrant population (SSEC, 2006). Gangtok, being the capital town of Sikkim is the largest concentration of migrants. The process of urbanization, the pace of development, availability of basic infrastructure and employment prospects has been the major pull factor for rapid in migration to the town.

However, there is an absolute absence of the official records of *migrant Namlays* in Gangtok or Sikkimas a whole. Neither State Socio-Economic Census, 2006 nor Census of India, 2011 incorporated the official number of *Namlays* into their respective census figure; *Namlays* are completely excluded by both the census respectively. It is argued that *Namlays* are migrants and foreigners too, the two sufficient reasons for exclusion in census. Till now, in Sikkim there are no any private or publicly owned scientifically systematized mechanisms which specially deal with the matters of *Namlays* as well as there are no any official data available (labor department of Gangtok). However, on the basis of interview hypothetically researcher estimated that, an average presence of *Namlays* remains around 300-600 in and around the town.

5. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF *NAMLAYS*

There are various categorization of work under informal sector '*Namlay*' is one of them, which is pre-dominantly monopolized by the Nepalese immigrant in Gangtok. Their main reason to come in Gangtok is to work, the range of available work is limited to immigrant labors that are unqualified, casual, and unskilled. Once they arrives in town, he can start working as a *portering or coolies*, with just a jute sack on his back to protect it from dust and dirt and a strap to carry loads, which resulted in cash earnings in the alien town. Their works is completely precarious and totally flexible. One advantage is that in the event of an emergency, it is possible to go home without having to report to one's employer as their nature of work is pretty flexible which

facilitates independence. Furthermore, it increased the possibility of arranging flexible hours of works, seasonal options are always there with the possibility of self-directed individual work arrangement. There is no need such as, lobbying for local contract of hiring and arrangement of manual labor, no any background history checks or references required neither education credentials nor any work experience needed. In other words, entrance and exit to the work of *Namlay* is an ease.

Further, they don't need any particular reason to be introduced to local employers or to any other. He can enter into portering instantly. Initially he will work with other *Namlays* who have already been settled in the town in order to get familiarity with the place and to understand its socio-economic milieu, sometimes they work together to accomplish group works and sometimes alone, roaming the market, waiting for locals, wholesalers or tourists to call him for temporary work.

i. Working patterns

The *Namlays* don't have any time table to follow. People's need and their willingness decided their time table. It's a regular and common sight in Gangtok that, in the early morning from 4 am to 8am when the commercial goods and consignment reached the market from Siliguri, shopkeeper search for *Namlays* to load and unload the goods from Truck to store or go-down. They not only perform loading and unloading jobs but also carry the construction material like Sand, Cement, iron Rod, Stone etc to respective construction places. Several of these *Namlays* have served the market merchant and businessmen from more than 15 years or few from generations.

Most of the commercial goods and consignment comes mainly from Siliguri or through Siliguri, considering the hilly topography of Gangtok and availability of only national highway. There is a provisional law of Government of Sikkim that markets in Sikkim opens at 9 am and officially closed at 9 pm. In fact they work for at least 12 hours sometimes. The time extends well beyond 12 hours. The unloading charge of cement sack from truck to go-down is Rs. 5 per sack each weighing 75 kg and loading charge from go-down to truck is 6 Rs per bags. Similarly carriages of unloading construction materials like cement, rods, stone etc. to construction sites requires 6-10 person charging Rs.7000 and more which would vary according to the distance to be covered.

In addition, in day time i.e. from 9 am to 6 pm, it is common sights that *Namlays* standing in long queue of LPG distribution centre along the road side edge of NH 10 highway and around the town to receive the cooking cylinder for the locals in return of already fixed money for that service. The practice is quite handy and time saving for rented students, working men and women and family as well. They are also anxiously waiting for travelers, tourists and far travelling students in taxi stands to carry their luggage to its destination, their presence are clearly visible in shopping complex, busy street corner of market, construction sites even in social functions waiting for employer to get hired for temporary daily works like, (Coolies, Portering, domestic chores, seasonal agricultural workers, day laborers etc.).

For instance, functionally, their labor is an absolute necessity to the residents of buffer areas of Gangtok town like *lower Arithang, lower Tadong, lower Tathangchen, lower Pani House* where disposal of garbage and transporting home appliances is always been a matter of human labor due to steep slopes and crowded buildings, restriction on expansion of roads which makes roads inaccessible. Hence, local community commonly hire a *Namlay*, pay monthly for the disposal of garbage of respective areas as well as hire other *Namlays* to carry all the domestic requirements including the grocery shopping. Furthermore, based on field work it was found that, in many occasions residence of *Rumtek, Ranka* and *Bojoghari* village often hire them as a wage labor for plucking cardamom and during harvesting their crops, the reason they expressed is “there is lack of local laborers for such work” consequently they have to hire *Namlays* who are cheap and effective labors. At the end, both the employer and employee would be satisfied. From morning to night *bhariya/ Namlays* are selling their labor for the sake of society and their need. Their typical *paharey topi* with labor intensive appearance and the *Namlo* (load strap) with either old cement or jute sack that they carry all the time supplemented by their typical way of talking have become their credentials for the locals to identify them. They are commonly addressed by different pseudo names like *Daies, Daju, and Kancha* etc. Thus, primary relationship between *migrant Namlays and local community* is truly economic which in some cases has molded into social.

6. NAMLAYS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY IN GANGTOK: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OR INTERACTION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

The spatial proximity between *Namlays* and Local community in the Gangtok result in many forms of social interactions. During the daily routine, they also work for their neighbor or landlords like delivering messages and things side by side. In social functions like marriages, puja, funerals etc. *Namlay* who carries heavy items from the market will normally offered refreshment by local households. In case of illness they will seek help from local neighbors for hiring cars and vehicle to take them to hospitals or spiritual healers if so required. These mutual interaction occurred frequently and has been an integral part of the society. They are not topic of discussion or even seen as problematic. Sharing of social space of many social events between them and local community is not so problematic such as offering prayers in monastery and temples. Important social functions like marriages and funerals of local have been attended by them. However, there is a case of one *Namlay* family in Gangtok who resides in Lall Market, where their landlords helped them to get admission in local school to their children and pay cost for the children's upbringing including the school fees also. Despite of hospitable social interaction, relationships would be determined by the economic interaction, nature of work which literally influences the approach towards them.

i. Economic condition of *Namlays*

The *Namlays* have a very common life style. Every day they sell their labor to ensure the sustenance and livelihood. As far as the economic conditions are concerned, it is insufficient to them. Most of them have hand to mouth earning. Their earning depends on the physical strength of the body. Many of them go in debt during the time of illness.

7. ASSESSING IMPACT OF NAMLAIS IN GANGTOK

The existence of *Namlays* in Gangtok has been existed from the time of colonial era. However there are remarkably little violence or confrontation and between them and host community. Though exchange of communication between migrants and locals are determined by economic needs however the situations remain relatively stable. There are also cases of adverse feelings towards migrant group by surrounding communities due to pressure on local resources and employment. They are indistinguishable on physical appearance. For instance, migrants and local population compete for some daily wage labor, such as labor for agricultural activities migrant can performed the same work in a much lower price. This create some resentment among local

labors towards *Namlays* and often blamed them for faltering local wage rate resulted in mild hostilities between them which is not intense so far.

Security has been a particularly sensitive issue between locals and immigrants. In recent years chief minister of Sikkim announced that suicide and crime are high due to the influx of migrants. Inevitably immigrants look for work in nearby towns and street corners contractor. As a result laboring wages have dropped which affect local laborers. Inflation keeps on growing day by day and commodity became expansive.

The impact of *Namlays* on local's community can be seen in following ways:

Water: migrants have huge impact on host country due to their huge demands on water resources and environment, give rise to friction with the local communities.

Security: migrants *Namlays* are often seen as a security threat to the host community as they indulge in illegal activities such as drugs, robbery bashing and gambling.

Health and sanitation: Generally, the influx of a great number of immigrants causes an increase in communicable diseases in the surrounding areas. At the same time, this increase is often accompanied by the improvement of health and sanitation services in the area. In Sikkim migrants are allowed to enjoy the basic health services in government hospital.

7. OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

Every year hundreds of Nepalese migrants travelled hundreds of mile from different parts of Nepal to Sikkim, in search of employment and aspire for better livelihood. Their economic engagement is basically found in the work of *Namlays* (porters) because they are unskilled, illiterate and foreigner. Despite of important drawbacks they have become an integral part of the service system in Gangtok. In the hill town as most of the commercial as well as domestic establishment is inaccessible by roads due to the hilly nature of Gangtok's topography but by different footpath and typical mountainous ways via various small streets corners and curly path. The people of Gangtok depend on and required the *Namlays* in every part of their life regardless

of caste and class. They are regarded as inevitable aspects of means of transportation and the backbone of service system in Gangtok, who serves the inhabitants in variety of ways.

Despite of this fact they are treated low and many times subjected to discriminatory practices and addressed with derogatory terms. Their presence, roles and contributions can make much socio-economic implication to the society of Gangtok.

Hence, most probably it seems that, all the Nepalese migrants who had failed to get land on lease and are unskilled or incompetent would eventually compelled to embraced the publicly emerging urban labor called as *Namlays* (porters or coolie. In fact, During field study it has been found that, few of the *Namlays* in the city is the direct descendent of those *Namlays* who has migrated after merger of Sikkim or left out from the Sikkim Subject Act of second half of 20th century. In other words hitherto or legacy of burden bearing as profession has been passing on to generation to generations.

CHAPTER IV

1. UNDERSTANDING: THE SOCIETAL PERCEPTION & SOCIAL WORLD OF NAMLAYS

The previous chapter highlighted, how the service of *Namlays* has become an integral part in the hilly town of Gangtok basically to meet the required service in the commercial as well as domestic establishment regardless of caste and class. They are regarded as inevitable aspects of means of transportation in Gangtok, who serves the inhabitants in variety of ways. Therefore, the

present chapter basically attempts to comprehend perception of local community on them and their social world.

As classical sociologist Max Weber viewed human society is divided into different strata and groups with distinctive life-styles of human civilization distinguished by status. Status is social in nature, an expression of socially valued and evaluated relationships a collective societal perception. It is the position or the situation that a person occupies in society. As a result of that status and position person is expected to deliver certain functions. These functions are known as roles. Each status has its own set of role requirements (Haralambos, 2013). Thus, in contemporary society status is often equated with economic activities and appropriate role performance. Likewise, *Namlays* are among those whose economic activities and roles determine their status into the society of Gangtok. These perceived status are internalized through socialization over the time hence, stereotype exist about *Namlays* works and their habits as mentioned above which is sometimes not considered as viable to locals consequently many viewed them as low status people with minimum respects.

The interaction with some local community members brought out both positive and negative perception about *Namlays*.

In a discussions with a group of vendor from ¹⁷*lall market*, they collectively said “it’s true their labor makes things easy but it’s because of us they have earn, they are illiterate and poorer than us that’s why they are doing this kind of back breaking work” they said. Further, A local man said “*enaru maya lagdo huncha tara besi jasto praya rakshi khayera kaam garcha afno izzat afai fakecha*” (they are innocents but most of them mix alcohol with work, they have thrown their own dignity). Similarly a local non-Nepali person said “I don’t know how they have entered Sikkim and what they are doing here? They shouldn’t be here, government should do something about it” and lastly a young local youth passing a negative remark said “They behave according to their position and looks, they asked much higher money than actually it should be, bargaining with them is worthless”.

¹⁷*Lall market* is the heart of the Gangtok city and its peripheral area as it is the hotspot shopping complex for commercial to domestic requirements for people. The market’s name has been named after the first Governor of Sikkim late Shri B.B Lall in his tribute. Interestingly, after that all the major towns of Sikkim have *lall markets*.

Hence the above perception reveals that building social images or reputations not only rests in how locals would perceive them but also their own habits, nature and work ethics of *Namlays*. If they deviate in roles which is not expected them to perform in host society, then the whole hard work and honesty of migrants would be jeopardized. A collective negative perception will be established or sometimes in extreme forms.

However, on the other hand, a restaurant owner of Deorali says “if *daies* (addressing term to *Namlays* (meaning elder brother) are not here than it will be mess for me, who would carry the *namlo* (load strap) and *bhari* (loads) these days that too from market to home or to hotel, not even from taxi stand. Even my employee always hesitate and about my kids there is no questions at all. Because of them (*Namlays*) it is an ease to me”. Similarly, a female college going student express “thanks to them, I don’t have to worry about cooking cylinder gas from filling to carrying it to the room, my home is in west Sikkim, I always have to travel with lots of luggage, I can’t carry those heavy loads from taxi stands. A *Namlay daju* will make the things work by paying him Rs. 20-40”. Further, a detail discussion has been done with Padam Rai who owned a hardware shops at *Chandmari* .According to him, “I always owe them, whenever my consignment reach here. At present I have three trustworthy contacts with *daju* who later bring require labors. As in Gangtok, movement of heavy loaded vehicle are allowed at night after 9pm to early morning 8am, people are resting or sleeping that time, nobody is willing to work during that hours except *daju haru* (these brothers). It would be worthwhile to pay them for their hard labor. Normally unloading iron rod, cements, tiles etc. are the works but they also load it to customers. Apart from that, I also give them *thika* (a contract) of transporting construction materials to the sites. If require, we also hire them for constructing temporary tents during festivals or marriages and invite them to attend the social functions. I don’t know what will happen, if there is absolute absence of them in the town but so far they are amazing, they always joke and smile and always won my heart”.

From the above discussions, it’s very clear that with different types of people having different nature of work, the work of *Namlays* is indispensable to every sections of people of Gangtok. Considering above activities, it would not be wrong to say that without doubt, their absence would have direct impact more on economic life of local people, in the form of labor crisis, and hinder functioning of day to day life undeniably, their roles, contributions and significance are

clearly visible and recognized on the ground of economic requirements mostly. However people would not talk or recognize them much on social grounds, and have maintained social distance in daily life. There here are some cases of social penetrations but that too completely relies on local's gesture and willingness. As a result their presence remains underestimated, invisible and have restricted social interaction with the local population

It is important to note here that, the courteous and hospitable responses have come up from the people who are engaged in commercial activities or students or working men and women. On the other hand, a section of common people viewed them as non-essential labor power and does not encourage their participations in social space. Many commented on their inappropriate work ethics and unhygienic nature etc. and branded them as immigrants.

Thus, there are differences on perceptions regarding *Namlays* from different sections of people. From, common perception, we can conclude that there is social recognitions of their labors as highly required and useful. Many valued them on the economic grounds but do not consider it as the work of prestige and honor.

The study found out that the works of *Namlays* are locally abandoned low profile and low status work, one cannot find locals adopting this work yet the work is imperative for inhabitants for various purposes. Their work plays an important role in socio-economic life of Gangtok without which life would become hard and uncomfortable. Nevertheless many acknowledge their pivotal role but by considering their nature of work and activity, collective perception of locals demonstrate that, *Namlays'* social status and position in Gangtok is considered as low. It was also found that some of the *Namlays* have directly inherited this work and status from their forefathers, thus demonstrating that there is a continuous process in formation of same societal perceptions due to the very nature of their work.

2. STEREOTYPING AND FORMATION OF DIVISION OF LABOR

Certain attributes and meanings attached to certain community or group is based on economic activity, the way of talking, dressing up and having different taste of food can formed collective perception that influenced their role and behavior (Sewpaul, 2006; Bourdieu, 2002). Such

societal perception and evaluation has potential to create identities and stereotypes about who belongs to what group which expected to performed specific occupation. Hence community based segmentation of works in labor market, relationships between certain group and specific occupation of that society (Arjaan De Haan, 1999). Stereotypes exist about migrant *Namlays* who are mostly Nepalese origin and were historically known for '*bravery, loyalty and strong labor for mountains and scientifically proven as world's most efficient and enduring labor*'. These social and scientific labeling (*see; Chapter I*) has become part of the very identity of the *Namlays* and hence stereotypes have still been retained.

The analysis in chapter III highlighted that social network was crucial in access to works and to ensure constant earnings in Gangtok for the *Namlays*. They share the information which helps them to access to work and choosing destination through friends, kins and kiths. Distribution of such information through social networks enabled parallel influx of migrants belonging from same regions of sharing similar linguistic and cultural background, resulting in influx of migrants *Namlays* in host society (Gangtok). In that way they are able to depict themselves as distinct labor group, created distinctive identities and ideas about their race, nationalism and occupation declaring as if 'we are from Nepal and we are Migrant *Namlays*'.

There are many obvious advantages for *Namlays* in such kind of settlement pattern, it is quite often noticed that subsequent access to work and getting acquaintances to town for a newly arrived *Namlays* is network-based that too from within the own migrants group belongs to own ethnic and regions. Generally, a process of molding co-nationals into ¹⁸ethnic enclave works to ensure its employment and domination over labor market; such is the case of *Namlays*. Due to undesirability of locals in this kind of work it enables working conditions more lucrative for unskilled and semi-skilled immigrantsto fill the much required labor demand. Therefore, their established customs of *munghaan mania* native place, social and scientific labeling, information through social network, regional and ethnic base settlement in Gangtok has paved the way to formation of ethnic based division of labor i.e. splitting the informal labor market of Gangtok

¹⁸An ethnic enclave as a concept was developed by Alejandro Portes in 1980 to define "migrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organize a variety of enterprises serving their own ethnic general population." For an ethnic enclave to exist, two notable requirements must be met. First, ethnic entrepreneurs must employ their co-ethnics; second, an ethnic enclave must be spatially bounded from the main economy so that it can function internally as a labor market.

into subsections based on race and nationality. Further, *Namlays* stereotypes help them to create the distinctive identities as distinct labor group in the town, these identities become their credential for customers.

Thus, when a group of people are unskilled and semi-skilled belong to same place of origin have parallel influx into a new place of destination through shared network and one way concentration who are engaged into a similar works and later passed that legacy into next generation or to others, these exchange of information ensures the circulation of legacy thus, it is highly possible there would be an establishment of an ethnic division of labor, which is true in case of *Namlay*, where the job of portering is dominated exclusively by the community from Nepal.

3. EXPRESSION OF ¹⁹SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE TO NAMLAYS: AN ANALYSIS

The identity of *Namlays* is shaped through a process of nature of work they have performed. The locals of Gangtok are befitted by the kind of job which they do in everyday activities for sustenance, are locally not desirable and is regarded as disrespectful, menial and precarious. Some section forms their opinion about them by their way or usage of language and the way *Namlays* dressed, because visible and repeated information in everyday activities shapes people's perspective, thus, perception towards. *Namlays* is constructed through nature of work, way of talking and way they have dressed. Discriminatory treatment reported by the respondent ranges from basic rights of living to larger issues of nationality. Common issues cited by majority are related to discriminatory practice and symbolic violence. Many looked upon them with disgraceful eyes and harassed them in various ways. Some addressed them with derogatory terms like *gattey* (clumsy), *kode* (dumb), *jungle* (wildly), etc. some exploit them by paying less than actual rate of labor. If they are trying to retaliate or argue for this very injustice, they have been threatened to be ousted not only from Gangtok but from the Sikkim.

Issues related to rented accommodation are also reported by most *Namlays*, Getting a room/flat on rent is very difficult task for them. A good chunk of local landlords are not even considering *Namlays* as potential tenants to rent out their rooms/flat, as they look down to them citing instances like "*They are unhygienic, loose manners, poor labor and sometimes problems to*

¹⁹Bourdieu (1998) defined symbolic violence is an extension of the term violence to include other forms of violence. According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is an imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning upon groups or classes, accepted as legitimate.

society as they are foreigner and prone to committing crime” etc. are the justification given by many of local landlords (Based on interview with some local respondents).

Thus, in everyday life activities of *Namlays* in social context, their nationality and locally occupation have become basis for their social evaluation and social labeling as well as sources of symbolic violence. These social evaluation and labeling on the basis of nature of work (which is important for that society), the way of talking and dressing up and creating dichotomy of good or bad is a symbolic violence because symbolically it creates stigma for labor groups like *Namlays* in society. For instances, Nepali is a communication language between them and locals but the way of talking and pronunciations of words by *Namlays with a typical accent of Nepal* are something which sometimes are perceived as symbols of uncultured and backwardness. Further, their typical ethnic dress up confirmed local’s presumptions visibly distinguish them from natives, and are subjected to stereotyping resulted in derogatory responses sometimes.

i. Verbal abuse & Harassment

Use of abusive and discriminatory language by some local and non-local people is one of the most prominent forms of insult faced by *Namlays* in Gangtok. Most of respondents have something to tell about derogatory terms they have faced in Gangtok. Discrimination here often takes the forms of nationality as well the perceived notions of submissiveness and helplessness attached to *Nepalese Namlays*, often prompt the authorities not to consider them seriously. Several of respondents expressed their displeasure regarding the monopoly and unwanted harassment given by the some police personnel “*they asked us how did they enter Sikkim, asked for our identity and make fun of us by citing the way we speak Nepali*” (reported by some respondents). Apart from verbal abuse and harassment, few of the respondents also reported instances of physical attack by some drunken social element especially at night in the city.

Many of *Namlays* always anticipated some kind of abusive remarks and atrocities from locals especially from non-Nepali community of Sikkim. Many respondents have been always skeptics about them. Though many of them were not direct victims, many had episodes to add such instances. These kinds of harassment and atrocities on *Namlays* made them helplessness and add their anxieties in Gangtok. It was commonly complained that many times police personnel asked

them to do their private work in half of actual wage and sometimes forced them to do precarious and menial works, even sometimes they have been barred to enter Sikkim which is the violation of Indo-Nepal treaty of 1950. However on the ground of Sikkim as a special state of India, it could be justifiable but “*being a foreigner working as Namlays we need to work and obey their command*” (Few respondents reported).

One of the major reasons for labeling, insulting, prejudices and discrimination to *Namlays* is being as foreigner and their involvement into locally shunned away and physically demanding low status work in Gangtok.

ii. Deprivation of State Privileges

In Sikkim, there is provision of exclusive privilege to locals on social, economic and political spheres which is exclusively enjoyed on the basis of ²⁰SSC/COI provided by the state government. Therefore, being belonging to immigrants groups from Nepal, *Namlays* are not allowed to enjoy certain privileges.

Firstly, they are not allowed to form any organization or association to put forward their interest in any case in the state. They have been barred to enjoy the same privileges as locals and Indian migrant labors do, however they can enjoy basic health treatment by paying Rs.10 in government hospital. However, they have to buy all medical requirement. Since they are foreigner and not static migrants thus they are not included in State socio-economic census nor in Indian census (reported by labor department of Gangtok). Therefore, migrant *Namlays* have nothing to claim, nor have any space for political mobilization in Sikkim, made them dependent upon locals for shelters and employment. Dependency on society under some other person cannot always be seen as positive, it is another form of submission to the provider or owner which allows them to take manipulative action over dependents. Their work again is regulated by the policies and local conditions in the host society. The restrictions against *Namlays* is thus, shaped through a legally accepted habituation process over time.

²⁰SSC or Sikkim Subject Certificate is promulgated in 1961 and repealed as COI or Certificate of Identification in the year 1975. It is an exclusive documentation to the native ethnic population of Sikkim domiciled provided by government of Sikkim through the article 371F of Indian constitutions, to protect the locals from alienation from land as well as from privileges and opportunity in Sikkim.

4. SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS ARE VICE-VERSA

In Sikkim, recent trends suggesting that educated and skilled people are leaving the hills on the ground of better job prospects and aspiration available in other states of India and abroad. On the other hand, illiterate and unskilled or semi-skilled who could possibly do the work of *coolies* and *porters* look far towards long distance destination with view to improve their economic and social status. This equation is vice-versa to *Namlays* as well even in their respective native place work like *coolies* and *porter* are viewed as low status work, if they want to pursue such kind of work at their place, there is a risk that they will be looked down by villages for holding such a shameful works. In order to avoid such misfortune to meet, they strategically avoid proximate destination to meet relatives or near and dear. Therefore, their preferred choice of destination to work is far from native place and border town obviously to Sikkim and Darjeeling hills on the ground of cultural similarities and high currency value of Indian rupee.

5. CAPTURING NAMLAIS' LIFE WORLD: NARRATIONS IN BIOGRAPHIES COLLECTED FROM THE FIELD

From Doleful Dusk to Hopeful Dawn

“In our village physical labor is must for survival; flow of money is extremely limited I was done with those kind of life, every night I was frustrated by the same hard routine which I have been following for last 22 years, where there is no sign of progress, eventually I decided to leave the village searching for better opportunity hoping to earn money, so that I can give much deserve happiness to my family” --- Bhimey Karki (pseudo name of respondent from Okhol Dunga 3 No.)

Bhimey Karki, 28 years old lad has been staying at Gangtok lower Tadong with his colleague from last 6 years. He came to Sikkim with many new hopes and dreams for the betterment of him and his family. Working as *Namlays* is only option remain to him as he is illiterate and semi-skilled person which limited access to other status and well earning work. He is young energetic willing to do every possible work and wanted to use maximum hours of a day, that is why he doesn't have regular routine for sleep and to wake up. Depending upon traditional farming and income from it neither make comfort for him and his family to sustain their life, since there was no wage oriented jobs in his village nor well-earned jobs at their region, so he decided to migrate to Sikkim and took over the work of *Namlays*. He has been let to be known by one of his cousin in village and shared information regarding Gangtok and nature of work he could possibly perform.

He was born and brought up in small village of Nepal, *Okhol Dhunga 3 no.* central region of Nepal. Old traditional agricultural system was only source of income for his big family of seven members. He is youngest among the three brothers and elder to two young sisters. Despite of being youngest among brother he has to share the responsibility of household chores, he had to go jungle for collecting fodder/woods, has to participate in every agricultural activity. As his village and region lack higher education facilities, moreover that too he was laden with so much household load at a very young age, he could not get guidance for proper education. He only knew to write his name and can do simple sum of counting money, He recollects how because of irregularity in school, his teachers even used to mock him "*arey heyra tourist po ghoomnu ayecha hamro pathsala*" (wow, look here tourist has come to visit our school). Later, due to many reasons including his aspiration to become rich man he left the school without completing his IInd grade. During those days, education was not given much preference by the elders as they believe in hardworking in agriculture would be the ultimate destiny. In Nepali there is very popular saying '*pari lakhi ke kaam halo joti khowng maam*' (Reading and writing has no use, you can manage food by ploughing the field). "The hardship of my young age and sorrow to leave the family and village is something I can't express" *he said.*

Eventually at the age of 22, he decided to move out to Sikkim. He felt very bad as that was his first time to move away from his family and village, leaving all and everything behind. He came to Sikkim with one of his cousin who had experience in working in Gangtok. In the beginning he was nervous, was little afraid and can't able to figure out what to do. It took time for him to

adjust in an alien place, however he was not alone he was escorted by his cousin and other persons of same region. The locations where they are staying are mostly rented by *Namlays* from different part of Nepal. After a month of acquaintances in Gangtok, he began to work as *Namlays* and continuously to do so. He admits that it is a back breaking work but earnings are there and are much more flexible than the one which he left behind. Today on an average he is able to earn Rs 7-8000 per month half of it sent to his home as remittances. He visits his village annually because it takes 5-6 days to reach out there. Within few years he is planning to get married and wants to settle here. However by knowing the fact about the stop gap policy of Sikkim government, he decided to remain in their village continue agriculture and migrate in Gangtok for as a seasonal worker.

When he first came to Sikkim, he had a great hope. Coming to a new place and working as *Namlays* is not a simple task especially in Sikkim where there is strict protection to locals, high literacy rate. He struggled hard to get work, later he became familiar with the city and its people he knew this is the way to work here accordingly he diversified his work ethics molding himself into local' environment, locals' need and locals' way of working consequently today he has well established web of networks and hardly in short of work.

When he arrived here he thought people would be same in Sikkim as in Nepal but after he came here he realized that though, races, languages and traditions are somehow similar but way of thinking and living style are far different here and as he says "*bhera ko hull ma bhakra*" (One goat in the herds of sheep). In the beginning he regretted with his decision to leave his village but after years of working here, he is now confident, it was his best decision ever made because he was able to send money back to home helping family to enhance status in village and able to save more money so far than expected *he said*. However, working in Gangtok wasn't an easy task for him nor it is now, many times he was harassed, threatens and exploited by the locals. On the one hand, he feels that people like them have to compromise or agreed to the terms and condition of state government, police personnel, and landlords sometimes to customers on the ground of being foreigner. On the other hand he also believed that this could be same for foreigner in every nation.

The story of *Bhimey Karki* reflects that depending upon hard physical labor for old agriculture practice suffocates young minds if there is no sign of progress in life, lacking in education make it complicated further. A person belonging to low income group from big family with aspiration

would more likely to take decision to move out from the village and ready to face all upcoming challenges during and after migration. It also suggest that they are willing to do hard work even in destination society if there is good earnings and flexible opportunity. For instances, unemployment and insufficiency agricultural production are among the prominent factors that kept pushing Nepalese youth from native place. On the other hand, high value of foreign currency and linguistic similarities of Sikkim always attract them regardless of hurdles.

Responsibility Demands Sacrifice

“I have very big family my parents are totally dependent on me as they are in advance age where we have no chances of being alive (He laughs...hahaha)...I have three children two son and a daughter, my wife is my backbone she is everything. I have to look after all of them and to ensure their better life is my job, my responsibility that’s why I am here working as Namlay” --- Mama Sherpa (nick name of respondent given by his friends).

Mama Sherpa, 37 years old man is staying in *chandmari* near Gangtok in a rented room. He has been staying there from last 6 years. He is a married man with three children one son and two daughter, all of them are school going kids. He got married at the age of 25 and working as *Namlays* for more than 4 years. For two years he worked as a cook helper in a restaurant of Gangtok, later he left it as income is not sufficient to meet the need of his family. His wife is an excellent housewife (*according to him*) which is why he has not worried so much for the home. He was born in *Ramay chaap* district of central district of Nepal, where his family resides on his ancestral property. His staying at native place is for six months as he has family and ancestral property there to look after on one hand, on the other hand he stays in Gangtok working as *Namlays* because he required money for children’s education as well as for other domestic requirement. Thus his staying and movement in Gangtok and native place is almost equal and frequent.

Mama Sherpa used to have one elder brother but unfortunately he passed away when he was 23. After that all household responsibility comes on his shoulders which were doubled after getting married and has three children. The economic burden was immense, despite of having no any

interest he was compelled to leave his family and village to ensure regular flows of money for the sake of children's future and to look after aged parents. He decided to migrate in Gangtok as he was well informed by one of his friend, that in Sikkim people speak Nepali language and most of them are Nepalis. Further lured by double value of Indian currency against Nepalese rupee, people like him who are uneducated and unskilled would do the work of burden bearing as locals are not interested to do so. He was well aware about the problems/complications in foreign land and kind of treatment he will going to receive from locals, against those odds he firmly decided to migrate here and already decide to work as *Namlays* in Gangtok. Sacrificing all his dreams and desire he happily embraced this low status work so that he can earn some money for his children's and family.

He happily expressed it is quite satisfying to work in Gangtok as *Namlays* where he can communicate in his mother language, have considerable earnings, people are similar as in Nepal and most importantly law and order is extremely good which made him feel safe to work here and wanted to come again and again till his children have grown to strong enough and establish themselves (*He said*).

Resilience is Imperative

“Sikkim is a land of opportunity even to people like us but one has to be versatile, need to be calm-honest and willingness to do every possible work here; there is money, more money is status” --- Maaney Rawat (nick name of respondent called by friends).

Fourteen years ago Maaney Rawat (45 years) made a six day long and tiring journey from *Chowri goath* district of central-eastern region of Nepal to Sikkim accompanied by his friend from same village. In the beginning they had made their mind to work for six months in a year in Sikkim and return back to village for another six months. He had an arranged marriage at the age of 25 years. He is a father of three children to feed and educate them, so he decided to migrate to Sikkim and was already determined to take over the work of *Namlays*. He had confronted many problems while traveling to Sikkim especially during entry from border town of Rangpo, initially he was sent back by the police personnel of Rangpo check post on the ground of being a foreign citizen but later he produced his '*Nagriкта*' (*Identity card of Nepalese nationals*) and only after strict scrutiny and after depositing his '*Nagriкта*' as a security he was allowed to enter Sikkim and was told that later he can take his identity card on the way back while leaving Sikkim. After his arrival in Gangtok, he realized that earnings would be only possible if he had thrown all his ego, arrogance and pride, in other words he has to take over the back breaking to menial work. In initial year he faced hardship to find proper earning work. Thus he decided to diversify his work, fortunately he was hired by group of residents of *Pani House* as a garbage collector in return of monthly wage of Rs 5000, he has to collect the garbage in every alternate days. Later as time passed on, he was able to win the trust of local residents "*Uh daju ta purano maanchey ho, sarai ramroo cha ani biswasi pani cha*" (That brother is nice and trustworthy person, he have been here from old days) said a local lady, consequently he was awarded with another work of collecting and delivering LPG cylinder for households which according to him is very lucrative (he denied to reveal the reason). Further he also used to work as newspaper distributor to door to door but later he left it due to restrain of time. Gradually he became familiar face to many people and the local people began to ask him for bringing more man power for construction sites, loading and unloading of consignment and for day labor as well through that way he has develop excellent web of social network and contacts. Thus, he decided to do the 'arrangement work' of labor to needed one, since *Namlays* are always looking for work and locals are in need of cheap labor for comfort and savings, it's a win win situation for *Maaney Rawat*. "If there is labor requirement or shortage of cylinder and any other work we call *Maaney daju*"— said a local respondent. Due to his excellent past record many times people would give him some exclusive contract also on the other hand he is like a god father to migrant *Namlays* who mostly stay in and around Deorali. Today he is able to earn sometimes more than Rs.15000 per month and in

regular interval he sent money to home which would make his children's education possible. At present *Maaney Rawat* is staying at *Deorali bazaar* with his old friend in a rented room and every six month he visits his native village but for one to two months only.

Maaney Rawat expressed that in his initial years he was exploited, harassed and abused by many people even to worst. He was unskilled and poor but did not give hope instead he decided to face the tough situation. He was calm, honest, hardworking and easy going person, who let every bad vibes to pass on. From his story in order succeed and survive, I can only say that, hardworking with honesty is necessary.

Education is my Ultimate Aim

"This is my third season holding Namlo (load strap) in Gangtok. I come here in every winter season for 2 months when my school vacation is on, all my earnings I will spend on my education later, I don't want to be parasite to my family and all this I am doing is for my education only so that one day I'll be able to be employed in government service". --- Gyalu Thami (nick name of respondent from Birtamur).

Gyalu Thami, an unmarried 19 years old lad is hails from *Birtamur* district of eastern Nepal is very much optimistic about his future and working hard for it. He is a student studying in class XI in a semi-government school of nearby his village and the youngest one among two brothers. Since he is not working for livelihood but for his education, which is exceptional than other respondents, it is his ambitions which drove him to Sikkim to work as *Namlay*, an ambition to become rich and get governmental job through education later. It was three years before he made his first journey to Gangtok with his uncle in order get exposed to outer world. Escorted by his uncle, he is now experienced and confident to travel as well as can work in Gangtok alone. In his family no one is in wage earnings work, they are busy in agricultural activities throughout the years, thus flow of cash money is extremely limited creating hurdles in the form of money for acquiring higher education. His elder brother is a married man, although encouragement is always there from him he can't afford all educational expenditure as he also has to look after his growing two children.

Gyalu was determined with his ambitions and knew very well what he is doing and what he has to do. *“I have heard so much of Sikkim and its people, especially about Gangtok as lifestyle and literacy rates are very high here, I found when I came here that it’s true. If we have this kind of educational facilities like in Sikkim for poor kids, I would not have to migrate here for educational expenses by working as Namlays but this is only for few years”* he said. According to him people out here are very lucky as government provide almost everything to its people and maintain strict law and order. *“For students it’s like a heaven here as they can get dress, shoes, notebooks, pencils, scholarships and even rice and pulses (mid-day meal) free, what is this? Wow!”* he said.

He noticed that people in Gangtok have become lazy and mostly try to escape from even small work and walk. I asked about the reasons he said *“paisa pura cha ya ko maanchey harukoma”* (people out here have lot of money). Further he added witty comments by saying “if Nepalese, what is commonly called as *Namlays* does not come here for work, than people of Gangtok will suffer extreme hardship”. With disappointment he expressed that people in his region are mostly illiterate, as there is no proper education system due to selfish politicians of his country. In 21st century without education it is impossible to imagine better and prosperous life, so “I will study no matter whatever the hurdles comes, if God grace my hard work, than I will help others like me.” “I have a vision to open a good school at my village so that nobody has to migrate for education.” he concluded.

A young boy who migrated from Nepal to Sikkim and embraces the physically demanding work of *Namlay* for education and determined to become successful person later and also have a vision to help others by establishing school in his village is something which deserves respect and applause. For a youth with so much of aspiration and responsibility too, who has lamented with poor educational infrastructure of his region and resentful to his country’s selfish politicians, becoming *Namlays* here in Gangtok is with a purpose of fulfilling his dream.

There are many others who has something to tell about, therefore I try to highlights in a brief possible ways. In a chat with *Gora* his friends fondly called, he says “before I came to Gangtok, I had spent 1 years in Uttarakhand, out there I couldn’t find myself fitting with that society and its people. The degree of treating foreignness and ill-treatments towards labor from Nepal was something unbearable, therefore I left that place. I decided to come in Sikkim now I know it was

my best decision ever, I feel like home though my village is in chowri goath with no roads and hydro-electricity but people and languages are same, I can work, talk and walk freely as Gangtok is my second home”.

Another 27 years old lad from *Ramaychaap* called *fista* shared his good days in Sikkim “I made my first work centre in Geyzing of west Sikkim 2 years ago. I was one of reserve porter of travel agent in Pelling which is why I mostly never run out of work, out there I never felt like I am a foreigner, local people treated me fairly well. It was privileges to see Mt. Khanchandzonga very closely many times from Dzongri during my days as porters in Geyzing. After 2 years of hardworking in high altitudes I found my health is slowly detreating so I and my colleague decided to quite the job and shift to Gangtok. Here opportunity is plenty but needs contacts, thanks to my Goombey daju (another *Namlay*) who took me with him. It’s been 5 years in Sikkim 3 years in Gangtok till now I haven’t face any serious problems yet I am hoping to be the same in coming days also”.

Similarly, *Hari* seems to be very mesmerized with the Gangtok city as he says “people of Sikkim are very lucky because Sikkim government provides everything to them rations, shelter and many other facilities. When I first arrived here I felt like I am in different world especially at m.g marg, the city is clean and developed, the air is fresh like of my village in *okhol dunga* people speaks Nepali and most of them are generous. In Gangtok my kind of works opportunity is plenty, hospitals are near, and here is everything that one would desire to have in its surrounding. Further, if we ask some favor from local acquaintance they would do. Especially our landlords Bhakti Sharma of Tadong did many deeds to me and my friends, which I owe him always”.

Generally, embracing the work of *Namlays* in Gangtok by Nepalese youths has lot to do with their native social world, equally influence by the favorable socio-economic milieu of Sikkim. Their nature of works creates social perceptions many acknowledge them many may not but what remains unchanged is their important labor and low social status.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

The nature of economic activities is one of the components to determine the status of an individual. So in the case of Namlays. The local inhabitants consider their labor as important on economic grounds and for their comfort but many collectively do not perceive it as a status holding work. Although many regard their job as inevitable for running the business and catering the demand of various work for domestic purposes, there are sections of people, who are averse to their presence in Gangtok. Since, their migration is facilitated by the social networks that enables parallel migration from same region of origin, race and ethnicity it results in ethnic division of labor, as in Gangtok, where the work of portering is exclusively dominated by Namlays from Nepal. Although many regard their presence as inevitable in carrying out many day to day activities, deviations on work ethics by some Namlays, unaccepted social behavior sometimes or being a foreigner migrant laborer made them vulnerable to extreme forms of prejudices and the symbolic violence.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

I

Migration is a universal phenomenon practiced across the nations in its own distinctive patterns. The movements takes many forms, people migrate as manual workers, highly qualified specialists, entrepreneurs, refugees or as family member of previous migrants. There is no single theory that captures the full complexity of migration, thus migration can be defined as a collective action, arising out of social change and affecting the society in both sending and receiving areas.

II

Various literature related to Sikkim from old to new accounts asserts, Sikkim has always been favored destination for migrants and attracted peoples from its immediate neighboring countries especially from Tibet and Nepal. Historically *TheGorkha Conquest and British migration policy* supported by the interest of some *local feudal elites* was the prominent historical events of Sikkim leading to overwhelming settlements of Nepali speaking community in Sikkim. Historical accounts confirmed there was substantially permanent migration made by earliest Nepalese to Sikkim centuries ago, which remains same till 1961 when Sikkim Subject Regulation was amended and earliest Nepali settlers were given the Sikkim Subject status making them at par with other indigenous communities in Sikkim. Consequently, today we see the perpetuation of multi-cultural society in Sikkim. Lepcha, Bhutias and various sections of Nepali communities exists in Sikkim with their distinctive culture and languages.

While migration cannot be stopped or halted, however in order to control the ever increasing volume of movement of people as well as to stop the alienation of local resources and opportunities from locals, two of the significant pro-people features adopted by the government of Sikkim was promulgation of Revenue order no. 1 and Sikkim Subject Regulation (*See; Chapter II*), both measures to safeguard the interest of ethnic local population whose relevance is

felt more today than ever before. After Sikkim's merger with India in 1975, the Sikkim Subject certificate became the instrument for getting the Indian Citizenship.

In the post-merger period, although the state has adopted the stop gap policy to check the influx in the state, it is important to highlight that by virtue of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950, temporarily seasonal labor migration is possible from Nepal to Sikkim as well as the treaty is responsible for continuation of migration as borders remains porous and open mostly. This factor is largely accountable for the existence of Namlays, from Nepal who are found to be working in informal sector of Gangtok mainly in the job of *coolies*, *portering* and transporting goods mainly because such service becomes inevitable due to the hilly topography

The word *Namlay* is synonymous to Hindi word *coolie* and English word *porter* or *Bhariya in Nepali*. Unlike *coolies* and *porters* who performs different types of physical labor, *Namlays* are dynamic and perform both the types of labor and expressed combined meaning of *Porters* and *Coolies* simultaneously. Thus, the term *Namlay* is a Nepali term (*particularly used in Sikkim*) refers to dynamic manual laborers who are seasonally migrated from various parts of Nepal to work as daily wage labor in informal sector of Sikkim. They sell their labor in transporting various commercial as well as providing required services to the locals and tourist, for their livelihood. The term *Namlays* is a Nepali term which is derived from the word *Namlo* which is synonyms to 'Load strap' used for carrying the load by fixing it on forehead coincides with 'Bearer', in local parlance of Sikkim they are locally called as *Namlays*.

Against the backdrop, the present study entitled “**Migrant *Namlays* in Gangtok: A Sociological Exploration**” was undertaken mainly with the objectives of getting comprehensive insight about **the push and pull factor of *Namlays* migration to Sikkim**, supplemented by **locating their working and living conditions as well as exploring their role and contribution in the socio-economic spheres of people of Gangtok and to assess the social world and nature of societal perceptions about *Namlays***. The study was conducted on 100 respondents taking male migrant *Namlays* from Nepal in Gangtok. The findings is based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis of 100 respondents.

III

Findings of the study

- Historically Sikkim remained as migrant receiving area from its immediate neighbors as the Gorkha conquest and British immigration policy was the main historical events responsible for permanent settlements of ethnic Nepali in Sikkim. The remarkable historical economic performance of Nepalese labors during colonial British trade and commerce with Tibet remains the genesis to existence of present days *Namlays* in Gangtok.

The rugged Himalayan hilly topography of Gangtok that confines the modern transportation to its limits and the ever growing ultra-modern life style of comfort coupled with locally perceived notions of low status attached to physical labor like *coolies and porters*, are the prominent reasons that made *Namlays* a relevant labor even today. The study highlighted that among the pull factors basically includes; high value of Indian currency followed by cultural-linguistic similarities, porous borders and sometimes emotional attachments related to forefathers which has been rationally chosen by them were the prime reasons, while the push factors includes the high rate of illiteracy, fear of an unknown future, poverty and chronic unemployment in the place of origin are important amongst the prominent push a factors responsible for their seasonal migration to Gangtok.

- By virtue of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950, temporarily seasonal labor migration is possible from Nepal to Sikkim as well as the treaty is responsible for continuation of migration as borders remains porous and open mostly. This factor is largely accountable for the existence of *Namlays* in Gangtok.

- Regarding the factors facilitating their migration, includes the social networking and the support obtained from early migrants or fellow countrymen from whom they get acquainted and access to their employment as *Namlays*. This enables one way parallel influx or predominance of Nepalese ethnic immigrants into the informal labor market of Gangtok resulted in ethnic division of labor which is flourishing and are more likely to be continue in coming years as Gangtok provides blooming platform for jobs both in formal and informal sector, where they can be instantly absorbed .

- Once they arrive in town, he can start working as a *portering or coolies*, with just a jute sack on his back to protect it from dust and dirt and a strap to carry loads, which results in cash earnings

in the alien town. Their work is completely precarious and totally flexible. One advantage is that in the event of an emergency, it is possible to go home without having to report to one's employer as their nature of work is pretty flexible which facilitates independence. Furthermore, it increased the possibility of arranging flexible hours of work, seasonal options are always there with the possibility of self-directed individual work arrangement. There is no need such as, lobbying for appointment and arrangement of manual labor, no any background history, checks or references required neither education credentials nor any work experience needed. In other words entrance to the work of *Namlays* is an ease.

-Regarding their accommodation they usually share a hired flat or a rented room forming a sort of "ethnic enclave" from same regions. This is an added advantage as they develop a sense of collectivity based on their ethnicity, and place of origin, that acts as a binding force and helpful in getting job, preventing isolation, especially more useful for ensuring help and support in sickness in the alien land, when the interaction with the local community is very restricted.

-Growing inflation of Gangtok, community based feelings, and need for savings for family and home are the binding factors that makes them to stay in collaborated rented rooms near markets which is a rationale choice, as it is economic to sustain.

-Regarding the people's perception, their all-time readiness, loyalty and availability of cheap labor bring down the cost of transportation and enable people to save money and time. This is perceived by many. They ease out people's physical and mental pressure by carrying burdens possibly of all types (*See; Chapter IV*). Thus, it is safe to say without *Namlays* living and carrying day to day life would become profoundly uncomfortable and expensive especially for the commercial establishments, domestic necessities, tourist, business communities and for working people and that way their service becomes immensely important, where local population are not available for carrying out such activities.

-However, there are differences in social perceptions about *Namlays*, if there are section of people, who value them on the economic grounds but they do not consider them holding a position of honor and the prestige. There are ample cases where respondents expressed their experience of humiliation.

-There life is not without hardship and struggle of what *Namlays* thought was going to be a new life with new opportunities in Gangtok. The study shows considerable mismatches between the expectation of migrants *Namlays* and the hard realities they have to face in day to day life and at

workplaces. The *Namlays* often have to face various forms of harassments-ranging from verbal abuse to nation related discriminations.

- It has been collectively reported that they are more uncomfortable and skeptic to non-Nepali community in Gangtok. Sikkim being the peaceful state and crime rate being very low, the cases of physical violence are reported to be very low and almost non – existed. However, the analysis suggests that the *Namlays* often becomes the victim of symbolic violence in every day's life world, ranging from poor stereotyping coupled by perceived notions of Nepal as poor and backward country. Further, the locally embedded views of 'insider-outsider' followed by docility of *Namlays* lead to exploitation and harassment at the workplace and in the public domain. Absence of state government' attention is yet another problem that adds to the vulnerabilities to *Namlays* in the city.

- Benefits of adopting accommodative policies and approaches both by the state government as well as by the locals will benefit more to locals than *Namlays* as in their absence, many locals expressed their inconvenience in the work like loading and unloading construction materials, LPG Cylinder especially for the working population and students, Restaurants etc. One instance reported by the respondent is that in the post-earthquake phase in Nepal in April, 2015, many *Namlays* left for Nepal to look after their family and such inconvenience was experienced and reported by the local people.

- Therefore, requirements of state's government's attentions towards *Namlays* migration has been felt during study. Effective checks and monitoring is essential to maintain tolerance and to prevent from shortages of labor crisis in Gangtok. It will be possible through issuing work permits on viable conditions like annual renewing system and implementing suitable official wage rates etc.

From the analysis, it is quite evident that the relationships between *Namlays* and the host society is mutually exclusive and interrelated. Hence there is need to change hard feelings and perceptions towards *Namlays* whose labor are more essential to society of Gangtok, even though, apparently, the give and take relationship is restricted to economic grounds only, indirectly, their functions are equally important in carrying out the social functions like marriage, death and religious activities when their service is required, On the other hand, the availability of work in Gangtok helps them for sustaining livelihood as they found the plentiful opportunity

in Gangtok. Some positive changes of migrant *Namlays* in Gangtok have also been noticed in the form of acquaintance with technology and city life made them more conscious than ever before. Significantly, their absorption in Gangtok irrespective of their caste status helps in breaking social stigma like caste-bound profession when the questions of livelihood arise (*see, Chapter III*) and the opportunity has been provided in Gangtok. And as reported when they go back with good amount of cash, it has reflection on their social status in the native place.

To conclude the rationale behind examining this topic is to understand the issues that has lost its narration and genesis which has been neglected throughout the writings and available literature in Sikkim. The work is a humble attempt to make an intensive study about the migrant community and highlight the issues related to them, to understand their social world and nature of interaction with the host society, which will be an addition to available literature of Sikkim.

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ANNEXURE I

Migrant *Namlays* in Sikkim:

A Sociological exploration

Interview schedule for *Namlays*

Name of the Respondent.....

Caste/community.....Marital/Status.....

Family/siblings.....Wife.....Son.....Daughter.....Siblings.....

Religion.....Age.....Educational qualification.....

1. Reasons for migration-

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| i) Push- | (a) Political instability | ii) Pull- | (a) job opportunities |
| | (b) Unemployment | | (b) linguistic similarities |
| | (c) Poverty | | (c) kinship network |
| | (d) Landlessness | | (d) good living condition |
| | (e) Any other | | (e) Any other |

2. Reasons to become *Namlay*-

- (a) More wages than other manual work

- (b) No alternative
- (c) unskilled
- (d) any other

Any other skills you have-

3. Your monthly income in Rs:

- (a) Below 2000
- (b) 2000-4000
- (c) 4000-6000
- (d) 6000 and above

4. How long is the duration of migration)-

- (a) Up to- 1 year
- (b) 1- 3 years
- (c) 3-5 years
- (d) 5 years and more

5. How do you stay:

- (a) Hired room individually
- (b) Group/ friends
- (c) With kins and kith
- (d) Any other

Kindly mention the advantages and disadvantages of selected option.

6. Distribution pattern of monthly income-

- (a) Remittances
- (b) Self-maintenance
- (c) Rent/food
- (d) Any other

7. Details of staying residence's facilities-
 - (a) Proper sanitation
 - (b) Drinking water/ hygienic food
 - (c) Electricity/ good living condition
 - (d) Any other

8. Why did you decide to move specifically to Gangtok?
9. Procedure of fixing price rate for the performing tasks?
 - (a) Bargaining
 - (b) Government rate
 - (c) Depends upon weight and distance
 - (d) Any other

10. Your nature of interaction with locals-
 - (i) Economic-
 - (a) Wage laborers for construction and agricultural chores
 - (b) Contractual for transportation of goods and services
 - (c) Any other

 - (ii) Social-
 - (a) Marriages- work conditions=
 - (b) Funeral- work conditions=
 - (c) Festivals- work conditions=

Any other type of interaction? If yes kindly mention-

11. Do you need permit to enter into Sikkim?
 - (a) Yes (b) No
12. Your stand on state government's policies for the local.
13. Troubles and problems you had/have faced.
14. Share your experience with local community.
15. Where do you locate the employment centers?

- (a) At commercial centers
- (b) At taxi stands
- (c) whole sellers or retailer's shop
- (d) Any others

16. Kindly mention your working time table-

17. Is the earning through this work sufficient for your family and your maintenance?

- (a) Yes (b) No

If no, what are the other options available?

18. Did you migrate with your family? Yes/No.

- (a) If yes, where do you send the children for schooling?
- (b) Do you and your children get the facilities from govt. of Sikkim? Yes/ No.
- (c) Your stand on the recent policy to stop facilities for non-locals.

19. Do you feel the need to send your children for higher education? If yes, are you able to afford?

20. Your grievances with the local community?

21. What is your experience before migration and after migration?

22. How frequently you use to visit your home?

Interview schedule for Locals of Gangtok

1. When and what occasion you take the service of *Namlays*?
2. How would you recognize hem and find them?
3. How would you have managed? If there is an absolute absence of *Namlays* in Gangtok?
4. How do you see the importance of their service?
5. Kindly share your perception regarding the work of *Namlays*?
6. Why do you think most of them are from Nepal?
7. Your grievances on Nepalese immigrants?

Interviewed schedule for Government officials of Labor Department of Gangtok

1. Is there any systematic procedure or official formalities for *Namlays* to enter into Sikkim?

(a) Yes (b)No

If yes, what are the policies?

2. Are there any mechanism to draw a difference between Nepalese immigrants and other immigrant groups?

3. Does *Namlays* are included in State Socio-Economic Survey of Sikkim?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes, specifically or generally and why? If no, why?

4. How would labor department see the advantages and disadvantages of *Namlays* in socio- economic spheres of Gangtok?

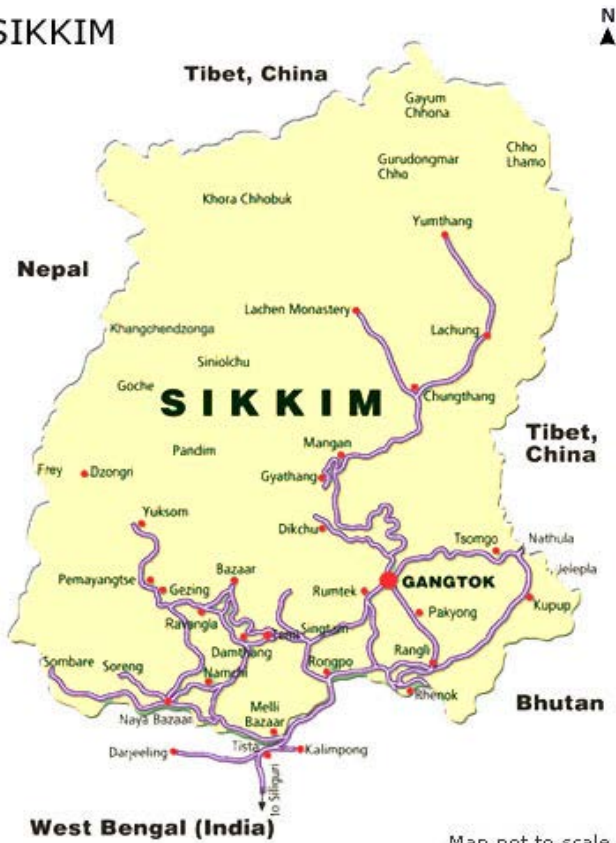
ANNEXURE II

Maps of India, Sikkim and Nepal



Source:https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=2ka0VpvOEuvI8AfW9pawDQ&gws_rd=ssl#q=maps+of+India+and+Sikkim.

SIKKIM



Map not to scale Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/india/sikkim/>.

Kingdom of Nepal



Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/nepal/nepal-district-map.html>