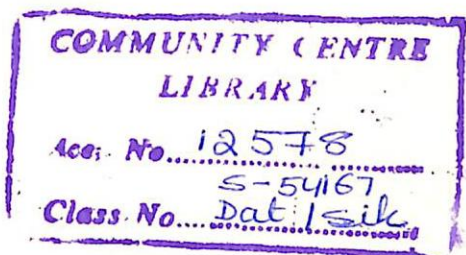


**SIKKIM SINCE  
INDEPENDENCE**

# SIKKIM SINCE INDEPENDENCE

*(A Study of Impact of Education & Emerging  
Class Structure)*



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## PREFACE

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production i.e. the land.<sup>1</sup> Because of the feudal political structure, kinship and traditional class affiliations were the major imperatives to decide the nature and extent of opportunities and chances in the operative field of occupational and educational opportunity. In accordance with the Marxian theory of the then society in pre-merger Sikkim was characterised by two broad economic classes upper class i.e. those who did have the control over the primary means of production and/or capital; and lower class i.e. those who did not have such control were actually working proletariat. According to Veblen's<sup>2</sup> idea the then upper class was nothing but a leisure class who were exempted from

The education in pre-merger Sikkim was rather conservative, helping the upper class in perpetuating its feudal privileges and domination in the society. The scope of education was not equally for all. Educational opportunity was not universalised while it was apparently restricted to the feudal upper class people. Besides, the educational facilities available for commoners was less than that of the actual requirements in the society. Low level education did not create skilled and trained personnel locally who could have taken leading part in the developmental process of the state.<sup>3</sup> The monarchical education (training) which was so far available in Sikkim being esoteric in nature did not benefit the common people. As a result there was a few educated who were mainly from the upper class to man the available positions in the Sikkimese bureaucracy. The educational qualifications necessary for particular occupational positions were either curtailed or modified to suit the interest of the feudal elements i.e. the feudal elites.<sup>4</sup> The better educational opportunity was available mostly for educated feudal elites i.e. the upper class of the society. Not only the

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1. A. C. Sinha, *Studies in the Himalayan Communities*, p. 41.
  2. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.
  3. Amal, Datta, *Educational Development in Sikkim*.
  4. A. C. Sinha, *Politics of Sikkim*, pp. 56-57.

large portion of various positions in the Sikkimese administration and technical services were held by Indians mostly on deputation basis. The scope of government activities in terms of administration, welfare, development and other essential activities were minimal, in turn could not create enough job opportunities for educated in the society. Even many of the educated Sikkimese elites had taken up jobs in India, Nepal and Bhutan.<sup>5</sup> Hence, there was no proper connection between education and occupation in the Sikkimese bureaucracy during pre-merger period.

While, after its merger the State Government gradually in assistance with the Central Government of India has been taking necessary measures to make Sikkim one of the modern and developed state of India. Obviously, education has been assigned in the plans of the state which is now playing a decisive role to bring about development of the state. The scope of the government activities has increased tremendously due to growth of state bureaucracy in all areas of life within the society.

With the large scale expansion and increase in the state activities the Government of post-merger Sikkim has needed a large educated work force to maintain its various functions like in administration, welfare, development for eradicating its backwardness, in turn have generated greater job opportunities for educated people in the society. In reality the state government of Sikkim has now been a major and crucial source of diversified employment opportunities in the society. Therefore, it is not unnatural that the state government has now placed premium on educational development. Obviously, the educational facilities have increased remarkably in the society. As a result, the people of Sikkim have now significant trend to go through formal education mainly to acquire better occupational positions as in the government services. This has been mainly because of the present faith in 'equal educational opportunity' as the

mately has brought about relatively a new class situation in the society.

In the sphere of twentieth century of post-merger Sikkim it is so apparent that the society has shifted from a old class situation to a new class situation in which education and occupation have become diversified, standardized and fitted into the new hierarchical organizations of educated skills and services. Therefore, a hierarchy based on education, occupational position, and their correspondence influence on prestige, income, power and style of life are more suitable in understanding the new class situation in the society. This has been why the present study takes Weberian model in seeking the reality—'the emergence of new class' on the way of finding out 'who benefits through formal education in post-merger Sikkim?'

The following discussions will reflect an effort to give as complete and as brief a picture as possible of contemporary society like Sikkim. Some special or technical aspects may be lost, but the larger picture, may be trusted, will certainly be much simpler and complete that a new class has emerged in contemporary Sikkim. Later, a more detailed further examination may some day supplement and perhaps even change some of the conclusions cited in this study, because the society is not a static one but always changing on its own way. But, when this study emphatically speak of a new class it is no doubt confined to contemporary post-merger Sikkim and at the same time it also do so to put Sikkim as an example in its outside world perspective too, to make its reality clearer.

In the context of Sikkim, no earlier scholar on Sikkim has however touched this aspects. Almost all of the studies are mostly of an elementary nature without any theoretical base. Those studies are mainly on ethnography, political history, common history and historical literature of Sikkim. Moreover, some of the writings on Sikkim are basically travel notes. Thus, the systematic studies based on a proper theoretical frame-



bureaucratic organization.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, modern education encourages rational and independent thinking and consequently affects the individual. As thought and behaviour are inter-related, education can be regarded as influencing both the thought and behaviour patterns of the individual and when there are changes in the behaviour patterns of individual members of various social groups, the social structural elements of a community are bound to have a significant impact.<sup>10</sup>

Sociologically, the process of education is thought of as the formal transmission of culture with its elements of preservation, dissemination and innovation. In simple societies this process is not formalized except in *rites de passage* but in industrial, developed and modern societies education as it takes on disseminating and innovating functions is elaborately organized so as to meet the requirements of society for basic moral education, specialized training related to the demands of the economy, for skilled workers, scientists, bureaucrats, professional people and for additions to knowledge through research. Learning in schools and colleges is itself a social process, and what is learnt in schools and colleges is not merely a body of knowledge which is necessary to the performance of subsequent official and social roles. A formal educational system is a means for determining which individual will occupy various positions in the society. Mass secondary and higher education become both possible and necessary in order to prepare individuals for an everwidening variety of specialized occupations in a growingly wealthy economy and which are conducive to modernization.

A. H. Halsey points out that “education has become the part of the economic foundations of modern society—a major avenue of social mobility, a central agency of

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9. H. H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, p. 426.

10. G.S. Bhatnagar, *Education and Social Change*, p. 4.

ment, composition of the labour force, division and mobility of labour etc., and indirectly through savings, limitation of the size of the family and by inculcating the right kinds of attitudes and skills by removing some of the obstacles to social change and progress.

Besides, education may also be considered as investment and consumption of goods if it is understood that the underlying motive of an individual or family in seeking education is to improve economic prospects through better job opportunities and higher wages. The modern concept of education being geared to the training of scientists, engineers, doctors, administrators, technicians and others possessing marketable professional competence. The student looks upon education as an investment of his well-being and economic betterment rather than as a means of cultural satisfaction.<sup>13</sup> Schultz proposes to treat education as an investment and its consequences as a form of capital.<sup>14</sup>

R. Boudon's<sup>15</sup> analysis of the relationship between social structure and education emphasizes the existence of several crucial 'branching points' within schooling, each leading to different classes of occupations. Occupation is important because in modern society each particular occupation is used in common social interaction as a major means of locating the individual within the social system.<sup>16</sup> In the absence of hereditary feudalism, class differences come to rest primarily on occupation.<sup>17</sup> Thus, educational system may act so as to assign the people to a particular class position which is defined by their position in a bureaucracy and where such position is conditional upon possession of particular educational qualifications and certificates. Hence, schooling has

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13. S.C. Goel, *Education and Economic Growth*, pp. 2-3.

14. T.W. Schultz, *Investment in Human Capital*, p. 78.

15. R. Boudon, *Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality*.

16. R. H. Hall, *Occupation and the Social Structure*, p. 240.

17. P. M. Blau and O. T. Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure*, p. VII.

Hence, it can be concluded that education plays one of the major and important roles to contribute to the emergence of classes in the society, and in the present study these emerging classes are defined as new classes, who are to carry out services to general population in various ways according to their positions in various occupations within the state and where such positions are conditional upon possession of particular formal educational qualifications.

### III

However, the major emphasis is to be laid on one particular aspect—the role of education in the emergence of a new class, and hence, bringing about a new dimension in stratification and social change in Sikkim. indeed, the role of education to the formation of new class can be regarded as most crucial in recent times. The present study intends to find out the extent of the emergence of new class in Sikkim, and the nature of the role of education in this context. In addition, it also aims to find out how the emergence of a new class has affected the traditional social structure and has brought about social change in the contemporary society in the direction of modernization. In short, the attempt will be to emphasize the relationship between education on the one hand and the formation of new class and social change on the other.

Therefore, the main emphasis, as a specific objective under the study, is to assess the role of education as one of the major factors in the formation of a new class and its consequent contribution to the formation of a new class structure within the society. Since the new class members are all educated and education is an important means of bringing about social change, emphasis has also been given to assess the role of the educated new class to bring about social change. Though education is not the only factor contributing to the emergence of a new class in the society, it can be said that it is one of the important and major factors in this direction. The major objectives of the study are therefore:

overnment employees is quite high (59.82 per cent) in comparison with Bhutias (19.25 per cent) and Lepchas (16.65 per cent). The percentage of the state government employees belonging to other (plains) communities is more than that of Lepchas, and among the gazetted employees it is more than that of Lepchas and Bhutias taken individually. Actually, considering their small population size, the percentage of Others is more than enough.

In the first phase, the selection of sample areas has been done on the basis of purposive sampling. The main purpose being to have sufficient number of the state government employees for quantification because in the villages the number of the state government employees is very small. Further, on the basis of purposive sampling, three district headquarters viz. Namchi of South District, Yangshing of West District, and Mangan of North District were selected. For the first phase the universe of the study is the total state government employees in these three sample areas. The sample unit is the each adult individual state government employee selected on the basis of certain sampling traits. The sampling traits were: male, literate having educational qualification of at least upto school final level and a state government employee. Hereafter, stratified sampling has been adopted to select the state government employees both gazetted and non-gazetted belonging to Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepalese communities. Finally, the judgement sampling<sup>20</sup> has been adopted to select samples from each of the strata.

After selecting the sample, each subject has been interviewed by two separate interview schedules. In this

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20. The judgement sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure. A researcher generally use this procedure only when the composition of the universe is known to the sampler, and when a small sample of only one or a few items is required, the sampler may elect to rely on his mature, sound judgement in choosing the sample. Judgement sampling will therefore be most effective in the hands of an expert who knows his population, and who can readily spot the typical case. Quoted in Mueller, John, H. and Karl F. Schuessler, *Statistical Reasoning in Sociology*, p. 345.

classified as urban area. Namchi has one district level secretariat where a number of various departmental head offices are located. Namchi is a slightly advanced area in comparison with Gyalshing and Mangan. In Namchi, the number of population has grown up to 1,444 in 1981 as against 460 in 1971.

*Gyalshing:* It is the headquarters of the west district. The other characteristics are the same as Namchi. In Gyalshing, the number of population has increased to 745 in 1981 as against 445 in 1971.

*Mangan:* It is the headquarters of the north district. It is comparatively backward. The other characteristics are the same as Namchi. The construction of a district level secretariat is going on here. The number of population in Mangan has grown up to 780 in 1981 as against 331 in 1971.

The second phase was devoted for conducting the study mainly concerned with finding out major educational constraints with a view to establish the fact that the educational constraints act as a barrier as well as a process in the exclusion of individuals from getting entry into the new class positions in the society. In the second phase of field study the sample villages in the three districts were selected. The selection of villages was done on the basis of purposive sampling. The major purposes were: that the sample villages should have educational facility, should be located near the bazaar area, or have a small bazaar within the villages. Other criteria were that the villages should be located near the main road and thus have better communicational facilities. The rate of literacy of the sample villages was also taken into consideration. In the villages for the purpose of selecting respondents for interview, it was necessary to have a complete list of all the persons with their educational and occupational background. To have such a list a house to house survey with a socio-economic schedule was conducted to cover the social, economic, demographic and

Lepchas and Bhutias in which the Nepalese constitute the majority.

*Phamtam*: It is one of the villages of the North district situated about 20 kms. from Gangtok. There is one junior high school in the village. Moreover, it is located in between Phensong and Phodong where high school facilities are available. The number of households is 63 and the total population is 319. As it is situated near a main road it has also better communicational facilities.

Table 2: Sample size

Phases of Field Study	Name of Sample Area	Sample of State Government Employees	Sample of Heads of Families
Ist Phase	Namchi	69	—
	Gyalshing	34	—
	Mangan	25	—
	Temí	16	70
IInd Phase	Rhenock Basti	5	94
	Phamtam	3	62
Total		152	226

The population of Phamtam is mainly the Lepchas. Table 2 shows the sample size from the three district head-quarters and three villages. In all, after going through these two phases of field study a total sample of 152 literate state government employees and 226 heads of the families both educated and uneducated was collected. The sample of 152 respondents was interviewed by two separate interview schedules for literate state government employees with a view to assess the role of education in the formation of the new class and importance of the educated new class in bringing about social change. The sample of 226 respondents was interviewed by a short interview schedule (along with the socio-economic schedule) with a view to find out major educational constraints in the villages.

Indeed, the major tool of collection of primary data thus has been interview schedules. Besides the interview

