

Politics of Ethnicity and Identity in Sikkim

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Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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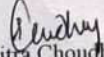
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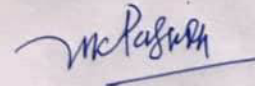
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List of Abbreviations

ACA	Additional Central Assistance
AOSS	Association of Old Settlers of Sikkim
BL	Bhutia-Lepcha
COI	Certificate of Identification
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Schemes
EIECOS	Eleven Indigenous Ethnic Communities of Sikkim
EPIC	Electoral Photo Identity Card
GAC	Gorkha Apex Committee
ICAR	Indian Council of Agricultural Research
ICHR	Indian Council of Historical Research
ICSSR	Indian Council of Social Science Research
IPR	Information and Public Relation
IT	Income Tax
JAC	Joint Action Council
MBC	Most Backward Class
NCA	Normal Central Assistance
OBC	Other Backward Class
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ORGI	Office of the Registrar General of India
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCA	Special Central Assistance
SDF	Sikkim Democratic Front

SIBLAC	Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee
SJC	Sikkim Janta Congress
SJP	Sikkim Janta Party
SKM	Sikkim Krantikari Morcha
SNP	Sikkim National Party
SNC	Sikkim National Congress
SSC	Sikkim State Congress
SSC	Sikkim Subject Certificate
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UGC	University Grant Commission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Area of Study



Chapter I

Introduction

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. Background

Sikkim, an Indian State on the Eastern Himalayan ranges, is a tiny State with just 7,096 sq. kms of area. With 6, 10,577 inhabitants as per the 2011 Census, Sikkim is the least populous State of the Indian Union. Sikkim was an independent state ruled by the Namgyal monarchy until May 1975. Sikkim was regarded as an independent kingdom before it became an integral part of an India Union in 1975. Prior to its official merger with India it was an Indian Protectorate. Even though Sikkim was considered as an independent kingdom prior to its merger, yet all important affairs of Sikkim was being taken care by India well before it became a part of India. Under the Indo-Sikkim treaty of 1950, India had exclusive control over Sikkim's defence, external affairs, and communication. In the year 1975, a referendum was held which brought about an end to the absolute monarchy and Sikkim ushered into democracy within the Constitution of India.

First information about Sikkim's population composition is available in the census of 1891, which mentions the total population of Sikkim as 30,458 out of which 5,762 were Lepchas, 4,894 Bhutias, 3,356 Limbus and 15,458 Nepalis. The Lepchas are believed to be among the original inhabitants of Sikkim but going by the oldest census report Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali can be considered indigenous to this land. On the basis of many historical and archeological evidences, it is believed that Limbus and Mangars who make a greater Nepali community have inhabited Sikkim for a long time.

The existing Sikkimese identity came into being particularly after the *Durbar*¹ recognized the earlier settlers as legal settlers who had been given the status of Subjects of Sikkim which is referred to as “Sikkimese” by Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961². The Sikkim Ruling *Durbar* maintained a register of all such legal settlers who were recognized as Sikkim Subjects. When Sikkim became the 22nd State of India, the Indian Constitution was extended to Sikkim and the Sikkim Citizenship Order 1975 was issued by the Indian Government. According to this order, every person who immediately before the 26th day of April, 1975 was a Sikkim Subject under the Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961 shall be deemed to have become a Citizen of India on that day.

Prior to shifting our focus on the Sikkimese ethnicity let us understand ethnicity in general terms. There are two distinct ways in which the term ‘ethnic’ is interpreted. In the narrower construal of the term, ‘ethnic’ groups mean ‘racial’ or ‘linguistic’ groups. This is the sense in which the term is widely understood in popular discourse. There is, however, a second, broader definition. As Horowitz argues, all conflicts based on ascriptive group identities- race, language, religion, tribe or caste- can be called ethnic. In this umbrella usage, ethnic conflicts range from (1) the Protestant-Catholic conflict in Northern Ireland and the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India to (2) Black-White conflict in the United States and South Africa, (3) the Tamil-Sinhala conflict in Sri Lanka, and (4) Shia-Sunni troubles in Pakistan (Varshney, 2001).

¹Durbar basically refers to the court of native ruler. In context of Sikkim it means the regime/court of *Chogyal or the King*

²See Appendix-IV

Ethnicity focuses on group identity. It implies the organization of plural persons into distinctive groups and implies the loyalty of individual members to those groups (Choudhury, 2016).

Sikkim's ethnic issue is related to its distinct identity issue which in turn is dependent on documents of identity i.e. Sikkim Subject Certificate (SSC) which in recent times have been replaced by the Certificate of Identification (COI) with both the documents serving the same purpose and holding the same value. SSC/COI can be considered as the most important document when it comes to proving one's Sikkimese identity. In the past conflict situation has emerged among ethnic groups living in Sikkim but it was not always on the matter of ethnicity. At the same time we can observe that the concern for Sikkimese identity is growing among the Sikkimese as it is directly associated with safeguarding their unique rights and privileges.

As per the Census 2011, Sikkim had a population of 6, 10,577. Although, this number gives us a fair idea about number of people living in Sikkim but it does not correspond to the number of people who can be considered Sikkimese in legal sense of the word. It is noteworthy to mention that only about 1/3 of the total population of Sikkim has documents such as the SSC or COI which validates their true Sikkimese descent. Thus, it is clear that a large number of people living in Sikkim are migrants from other parts of the country. Over the years, Sikkim has witnessed a sound number of migrations particularly from neighbouring Indian state of West Bengal, Bihar and Rajasthan. As a result of such uncontrolled migration into Sikkim owing to various reasons there is definitely an element of fear among the legal Sikkimese that such population may one day make them a minority in their own land.

Documents such as the SSC or COI are important in the context of ethnicity as it solidifies the uniqueness of Sikkimese people but at the same time importance of documents such as the Electoral Voter Card (Electoral Photo Identity Card or EPIC) cannot be undermined in times of electoral politics. As India chose democracy after independence, Sikkim too by virtue of its merger had to adopt and enact the Constitution of India while upholding its democratic values. This was not at all a depressing choice as the people of Sikkim had an option like never before where they were no longer ruled by the King and had the alternative to choose their own leader. Voting rights without a doubt plays a key role in the formation of a democratic Government. A Government in a State like Sikkim cannot work separately for SSC/COI holders and for those not possessing such documents, who might otherwise be in custody of Sikkim's voter card. Thus, when Government starts making policies while taking into account the migrant population as well, the rights and laws exclusively meant for SSC/COI holders are going to be compromised and in a worst case scenario it might even cease to exist. In such scenario where the Sikkimese people are denied of their constitutional rights and liberties, there is always a possibility of occurrence of ethnic rift. In one sense it is important on the part of Sikkimese people to stay cohesive to protect their special rights but it is not always the case. It is even more disturbing to note that Sikkimese people are disintegrating in the name of community affiliations which can make safe guarding their exclusivity a difficult case. In last few decades, Sikkimese community as a whole and its sub communities have become more aware of their exclusive culture, tradition, custom, language and literature. It is seen among the Sikkimese people that different ethnic communities in Sikkim have formed their respective organizations and associations to work exclusively for their community or a sub-community. This may be a welcome

step as far as the upliftment of a community or a sub-community is concerned but Sikkimese community as a whole seems to be forgetting the importance of pursuing collective good and a larger goal.

Sikkimese people while trying to embrace their ethnicity have started to segregate themselves into different communities and sub communities, which is bringing a shadowy rift among the Sikkimese population. There are associations, organizations and committees working exclusively for a particular community or sub-community with even outsiders in state taking a cue.

This research tries to analyze the probable concern and conflict that may arise in future based on cultural rupture which is happening amongst the Sikkimese people. For example Sikkim in 2013 has already witnessed some differences when the Old settlers (who are in Sikkim since longtime but do not possess SSC or COI documents) of Sikkim demanded the same law of Income Tax exemption as enjoyed by the SSC or COI holders to be implemented on them as well. It is not just a matter of concern for Old Settlers instead it is a matter of apprehension for the entire Sikkimese population. So it is necessary to recognize and not ignore every probable matter of concern of any possible conflict in future.

1.2. Review of Literature

Theoretical overview of Identity Politics

Plural society faces the problem of ethnicity and identity politics because every ethnic group claims or tries to prove themselves superior to others. This type of issue is more prominent in developing countries rather than the developed ones.

The article (Hashmi et. al, 2015) *Politics of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Perspective* says that ethnicity and ethnic politics is an important phenomenon of plural societies. In

developing world, ethnic politics is one of the main reasons of internal instability. The developed states have strong state institutions and democratic norms, which facilitates in resolving the problem of pluralism in an uncomplicated manner. Many post colonial states lack these values. Power gain and despotic rule is their basic aim that is why these states are unable to solve the ethnic problems peacefully.

Likewise, the three ethnic groups within Sikkim were engaged in ethnic conflict in the recent past for their own political-economic space. Ethnic conflict is a result of clash of interest between different groups. Thus, such may have been the basis for conflict between Bhutias, Lepchas and Nepalis in the past. We come across accounts from past which points to the fact that all three ethnic groups have migrated to Sikkim. Migration is a natural flow that is difficult to stop and Sikkim being no exception, it continues to witness the same.

The article (Lee, 1966) *A Theory of Migration* says that in every area there are countless factors which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it which means that there are countless pull factors (example: job opportunities, better living conditions, education etc) that attract one to another area, and there are others as push factors (example: not enough jobs, few opportunities, inadequate conditions etc.) that tend to repel them.

Similarly, migration in Sikkim being no exception it constantly molded the Sikkimese history but migration in Sikkim particularly saw accelerated increase after its merger with the Indian Union. Migration although was not encouraged here but it was neither controlled nor stopped for various reasons. One of the rationale being as Sikkim was a new state, it was in need of a human capital. On one hand you had Sikkim in need of a human resource and on the other you had India where many people were skilled and

educated yet jobless. Thus, both push and pull factors played a favorable role in promoting migration into this Himalayan state.

As the time passes by, one cannot help but notice the process of transition wherein migrated population or the non Sikkim Subjects will probably outnumber the genuine Sikkim Subjects. We cannot deny the fact that in a democracy majority always wins but at the same time upholding the rights and privileges of the minority is of highest precedence in a democratic country like India. Let us think about a case where the migrated population outnumbers the genuine Sikkim Subjects, here it is most likely that they will ask for the same rights and privileges as enjoyed by the Sikkim subjects. This situation may demand a political solution which means the policy makers are most likely to support the majority population or the fraction with higher number of votes. So in the beginning it may seem like only the migrated population is fighting for their rights but later on it is possible that it will turn into a two way demand which in due course may result in unwanted ethnic/identity conflict.

The article (Tajfel and John C. Turner, 1986) *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour* explore the view that the intergroup discrimination existed in conditions of minimal in-group affiliation, anonymity of group membership, absence of conflicts of interests and absence of previous hostility between the groups. The economic or social realities of a society may be such that the impossibility of getting out on one's own as an individual becomes an everyday reality that determines many forms of intergroup social behavior. In-group aim of differentiation is to maintain or achieve superiority over an out group on some dimensions. In these conditions, inter group competition, which may be unrelated to the objective goal relations between the groups, can be predicted to occur. It becomes insecure when the existing state of affairs begins to be questioned. The dominant/in group too can experience insecure

social identity and will react to it by searching for enhanced group distinctiveness. When a group's action for positive distinctiveness is frustrated, impeded, or in any way actively prevented by an out-group, this will promote overt conflict and hostility between the groups. For reasons as mentioned by the above theory, in Sikkim's case also somewhere down the line interest of genuine Sikkim Subjects and the migrated group are bound to overlap. There will be circumstances where these two groups are expected to struggle for the same economic or social benefits. These fractions will try to prove their superiority over the other in their own possible rights. All these factors which may look modest in the beginning should be foreseen as a road to overt conflict and hostility. Although the masses may never want this situation to ever occur in Sikkim but considering these hypothetical yet possible situations it is not unlikely that Sikkim in future may have an unstable state of affairs and society.

On Ethnicity and Identity

The article (Adam, 1995) *The Politics of Ethnic Identity: Comparing South Africa*, states that ethnicity is described as designating a historical community of cultural similarities with a shared sense of solidarity and belonging, memories and symbols or myths of descent. When such distinct people aim at either greater political autonomy or their own state, they form a nation. Nationalism can be described as politicized ethnicity.

The article (Regmi, 2003) *Ethnicity and Identity*, informs that the phenomenon of ethnicity is the expressive aspect of ethnic identities. Ethnicity may be attributed to several causes. It may be a response to the cultural arrogance of the dominated groups may resent being dominated and exploited by the group in power. When the economy is retarded and development unequal, some groups may organize on ethnic platform to fight their battles for equity and distributive justice. In recent decades, the Third

World has witnessed four shifts in emphasis, from political freedom to economic development to social equality to cultural self-determination. Most ethnic movements now seem cultural autonomy as a prerequisite to the attainment of real political freedom and distributive justice, to the growth of the economy and to the creation of a fraternal social order.

The article (Jenkins, 2000) *The Limits of Identity; Ethnicity, Conflict, and Politics*, explore the view that Identity is perhaps one of the most widely used words in today's world. Identity and ethnicity do not in themselves make people do things. They must always be understood in their complex, local and other, political and economic contexts. Identity and self-determination have become unassailably defensible as political goods. While it is not respectable to pursue self-interest too nakedly, self determination expressed in terms of identity is a wholly different matter.

The article (Chandra, 2006) *What is ethnic identity and Does it Matter?* states that ethnic identities are a subset of identity categories in which eligibility for membership is determined by attributes associated with, or believed to be associated with, descent. Ethnic identity categories are a subset of this larger set defined by the following restrictions: they are impersonal; they constitute a section of a country's population rather than the whole; if one sibling is eligible for membership in a category at any given place, then all other siblings would also be eligible in that place; the qualifying attributes for membership are restricted only to one's own genetically transmitted features or to the language, religion, place of origin, tribe, region, caste, clan, nationality, or race of one's parents and ancestors.

The article (Caselli et. al, 2006) *On the Theory of Ethnic Conflict*, explore that in many countries and many periods a person's ethnic identity has profound

consequences for his or her physical safety, political status, and economic prospects. Violent confrontation along ethnic lines is the most apparent form of ethnic conflict. Less news-making, but even more widespread, is nonviolent ethnic conflict, whereby ethnic cleavages form the basis for political competition or economic exploitation. Each society is endowed with a set of wealth creating assets. There is therefore an incentive for agents to form coalitions to wrest control of these assets from the rest of the population. Agents not belonging to the winning coalition will attempt to infiltrate it. This infiltration defeats the winning coalition's purpose, as it dilutes the 'dividend' each original member receives. If the population is ethnically heterogeneous, coalitions can be formed along ethnic lines, and ethnic identity can therefore be used as a marker to recognize potential infiltrators.

The article (Sebastian, 2012) *Ethnic identity, political identity and ethnic conflict: simulating the effect of congruence between the two identities on ethnic violence and conflict* informs that an ethnic conflict can emerge in the absence of initial hatreds and during times when interethnic relationships appear strong. Rather ethnic identity can become politicized, causing political issues to become ethnic issues. In multi-ethnic states, the different aspirations of each group and the degree to which each group will benefit or lose from political decisions leads to an 'ethno-political congruence' in which certain political positions are ascribed to an ethnic identity. Far from being purely materialist these political gains and losses can be symbolic and intangible, arising from the shared myths, symbols and history that bond ethnic groups. Thus the political antagonism stemming from the polemic can be directed at individuals based on their ethnic identity.

The article (Phukan, 2013) *Ethnicity, Conflict and Population Displacement in Northeast India* informs that Northeast India is the homeland of large number of

ethnic groups who came to the region from different directions at different historical times. These groups belong to the different racial stocks, speak different languages, and have varied socio cultural tradition. As a result the region has become the epicenter of numerous ethnic nationalities. Especially the societies in the hills of Northeast region reflect high degree of diversity as each community living therein has its distinct characteristics. Ethnic tension in Northeastern region in most cases is a byproduct of land alienation owing to demographic change as the people are fighting for natural resources in the same geographical space.

The book (Choudhury, 2016) *Women and Conflict in India* analyses the conflict prevailing in the North-eastern states of India and its impact in the life of North-Eastern women. The author has highlighted various conflict dynamics such as ethnicity and identity issues, inclusion, immigration, lack of development and economy of the region etc in the book. According to the author the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of North-east India is unparalleled. This Heterogeneity is not visible in any other region. Though such diversity may not be the cause of the conflict, the inadvertent ignoring of ethnic and cultural factors in delineating the state borders of North-East India played a key role in igniting unrest in the region. As per the information provided in the book, the politics of North-East India has generally followed the ethnic path, but during the pre-colonial era most of the communities of North-east India were not very aware of their ethnic identities.

In the article (Choudhury, 2009) *Ethnic Conflict, Migration and Consequences: A Study of Nalbari District of Assam, India*, the author says that migration plays a significant role in livelihood strategies and generally occurs in response to actual or perceived circumstances people face both in their home communities and in areas away from home. Migration is by no means a predictable or homogenous action and

thus occurs in response to a wide range of factors, which affect people differently and to which they do not necessarily respond in identical ways. Generally, ‘two types’ perspectives on migration exist. Firstly, the ‘push-pull’ factor, in which it is argued a due situation in the place of origin pushes people to leave, while the glittering attractions in the destination pull the migrants. Secondly, a maximization model, in which it is assumed that the migrant aims for maximum economic gain through his/her migration.

A Brief Overview of Sikkim

Rai, Prava (2014), Sikkim: The Reinvention of Identities and Cultures, an introductory part/ article written in *MARG: A Magazine of The Arts*, throws some light on the history of Sikkim, its culture, its tradition and how people used to live together peacefully exchanging each other’s tradition. In the said article, the writer has focused on the history of transition of Sikkim from being mere scattered autonomous regions ruled by different rulers to establishment of Namgyal monarchy and from the establishment of the Namgyal monarchy to merger with the Indian Union and the changes thereof. She also highlights her views on how two strands of reinvention of identities can be recognized: one that grows out of the communities’ need to find ways to coexist peacefully, while the second is the state-sponsored programme with an eye on the political and social ramifications. While the first stems from the people themselves, the second is imposed as a part of a government’s vision. Both approaches significantly impact cultural practices of celebrations and worship.

The article (Sinha, 2005) *Sikkim*, states that Sikkim has occupied the centre stage in the Himalayan trade and politics during the period that began in 1988. Sikkim, an Indian state on the Eastern Himalayan ranges, because of its past feudal history; it was

one of the three 'States' along with Nepal and Bhutan which were known as 'the Himalayan Kingdoms' till 1975, the year of its merger with the Indian Union.

The book (Subba, 2008) *History, Culture and Customs of Sikkim* informs us that Sikkim was not politically consolidated and it was not a single political unit till 1642, when Phuntshok Namgyal was consecrated as the Chogyal of Sikkim. There were a number of autonomous chieftains belonging to the Lepchas, Tsongs (Limboos) and Mangar community and they ruled this territory of "The Greater Sikkim" when many of these Lepchas and Tsongs chieftains accepted the supremacy of Namgyal Dynasty in 1642 and signed the Tripartite Treaty of Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum.

The author in the book (Mullard, 2011) *Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History* tells that today, Sikkim is an extremely diverse state in the Indian Union, home to numerous different Himalayan people, with different cultures and religions. In part this situation is a testament Sikkim's geo political location as a meeting place for the different people of the Tibetan and Himalayan regions, yet it is also indicative of the colonial history of Sikkim and the socio-political engineering policies of the British Raj. In more recent years migration from Nepal has continued with people fleeing their homeland in search of more profitable lives or an escape from the recent civil war in Nepal. Whilst the current ethnic demographics of Sikkim remain complex, it is safe to say that Sikkim has always been a multi ethnic region.

The book (Kazi, 2009) *Sikkim for Sikkimese-Distinct Identity within the Union*, informs that under the Proclamation of the Chogyal of Sikkim, the Sikkim Government initiated the move for registering the names of Sikkimese nationals under a regulation known as the Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1961. When Sikkim became

the 22nd state of India the Indian constitution was extended to Sikkim. The Sikkim Citizenship Order 1975 was issued by the Indian Government, according to which, every person who immediately before the 26th day of April, 1975 was a Sikkim subject under the Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961 shall be deemed to have become a citizen of India on that day. The gradual and systematic dilution of the special status enjoyed by Sikkim and the Sikkimese people under Article 371F was inserted in the Constitution when Sikkim became part of India. Article 371F is not just a piece of legislation or an article in the Constitution but it is an article of faith between the people of India and Sikkim. It is an article which gives special rights and privileges to the Sikkimese people.

The article (Chhetry and S. Choudhury, 2020) *Politics of Tribalization and Contested Space in Sikkim*, in Handbook of Tribal Politics in India, states that Politics over the issue of seat reservation for Gorkha/Nepali sub-ethnic groups Limboo and Tamang has been occupying a major space in the larger politics in Sikkim. In the name of accomplishing the political rights of these communities, time and again, many political parties and other associated organizations have been brewing their hot cups of tea in the political atmosphere of Sikkim. The major part of the politics in the Himalayan State of Sikkim spins on the axis of ethnic and tribal issues. Sikkim is more or less still a state based on socio-cultural interaction in the guise of traditional society and is also reflected in the large politics of state. Unlike the larger ideological affiliation, the very local issues of the tribes and their socio-political and economic share over resources occupy a major space at politics and political manipulation.

The article (Bhasin, 2002) *Ethnic Relations among the People of Sikkim*, in *Journal of Social Science*, vol-51, tells that the population of Sikkim state is composed of three ethnic groups the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalis who settled in the state at

different times. Sikkim saw a lot of change after its merger. As expected some changes brought betterment and development to the Sikkimese while some changes had the potential to give rise to ethnic conflicts in Sikkim. The tension generated over the issue of identity of Sikkimese and non-Sikkimese because of changes that have taken place in political, economic and social structure of the society can only be minimized by process of redefining the Sikkimese identity.

The article (Subba, 2009) Indigenous knowledge on bio-resource management for livelihood of the people of Sikkim, *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge* Vol.8(1), pp. 56-64 states that the plainsmen comprises of Marwaris, Biharis, Bengalis, Punjabis, Kerelites, etc. More and more plainsmen were added up after Sikkim was integrated into the Indian Union in 1975 due to increase of developmental activities.

The article (Rai, 2013) Monarchy and Democracy in Sikkim and the Contribution of Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsherpa, in *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, vol-3, said that the political upheavals of 1940s precipitated into protest movement of 1973 that finally led to the merger of Sikkim into India in 1975. First Chief Minister of Sikkim Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khangsherpa played a pivotal role and contributed immensely in forming Democratic political system in Sikkim. His contribution is honored as “Father of Democracy in Sikkim”.

The article (Hiltz, 2013) Constructing Sikkimese National Identity in the 1960s and 1970s in *Bulletin of Tibetology* discloses the fact that the introduction of the electoral system in 1953 obligated the Chogyal and his advices to begin the process of defining Sikkimese citizenship for the first time. Once a person’s name made the register of Sikkim Subjects, the person was regarded as Sikkimese and guaranteed legal rights,

such as voting. Sikkim's population started increasing at an accelerated rate due to migration from other Indian states. As if to parallel the demographic shift in Sikkim at the turn of the 20th century, the majority Nepali Sikkimese face the possibility of becoming a minority in their own state in the 21st century. It remains to be seen if the preservation and reinvention of Sikkimese identity is even a priority in the state. Examples around the world where minority groups with distinct identities thrive can perhaps offer guidance for the Sikkimese people as they traverse into the 21st century.

The article (Subba, 1988) *Migration and Ethnic Relations in Darjeeling and Sikkim*, in S. B. Chakrabarti (ed), *Social Science and Social Concerns* tells us that the plainsmen later remained as clerks, officers, administrators and teachers. The hill communities started finding themselves outmaneuvered by the plainsmen. Most of the white-collar jobs were held by the Bengalis. The trade and business was dominated by the Biharis and Marwaris.

The article (Sarma, 1994) *Plainsmen in Sikkim and their Occupational Structure*, in M. P. Lama (ed), *SIKKIM: Society, Polity, Economy, Environment* says that the post 1975 migrants from the plains of India being highly educated or professionally trained occupied some of the key positions in the service sector.

The article (Sinha, 2009) *The Politics of Identity Formation in Sikkim* says that the bulk of the Sikkimese were struggling under oppressive feudal system known for a variety of beggars (forced unpaid labour). And whatever education was available, it was meant for the wards of the lessees, the local land lease holders, who were invariably either Bhutias Kazis or Newar Thikadars. But after the democracy was established, various segments of the Nepalis began to assert their democratic rights granted under the Indian Constitution. The struggle has passed through various

phases: from recognition of Nepamul as an autonomous social entity to recognition of their language as an Indian language etc. In Sikkim, only Bhutia and Lepcha used to be considered as the Scheduled Tribes and they have 12 seats reserved in the state assembly under the classification of BL (Bhutia-Lepcha) seats. But even though state assembly do not have reserved seats for ST as elsewhere but other Nepali sub communities are trying their best to include themselves under ST category with a belief that they may also get reservation in assembly.

The article (Chettri, 2016) Engaging State: Ethnic Patronage and Culture Politics in the Eastern Himalayan Borderland, in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol-38 says that in Sikkim, the existing socio-political order is a response to important ethnic grievances that frame the policies and politics of the state, whereby the state provides different incentives and motivations to different groups, so encouraging ethnic politics and changing the nature of the society overall. Ethnicity, an important political resource is utilized both by the state to create vote-banks, and by its citizens to achieve greater access to public goods through a reservation system based on ethnic identity. Ethnic politics in Sikkim is dependent on the overt display of ethnic culture. Establishing cultural exclusivity has become a prerequisite to accessing maximum benefits from the state. As a consequences, construction of temples, shrines and statues has become the most permanent and potent way of authenticating the tribal identity of certain groups. Ethnic associations act as political brokers in the existing patronage system and facilitate greater state-society interaction. The conflation of socio-economic categories and ethnicity has also led to the exploration, discovery and essentialization of identity. Sikkim has seen unprecedented growth in the number of its ethnic associations since 1994.

The article (Arora, 2007), *Assertive Identities, Indigeneity, and the Politics of Recognition As A Tribe: The Bhutia, The Lepchas and The Limboos of Sikkim* says that the current battle to gain recognition as an indigenous group and more specifically the entitlements associated with ST status in Sikkim, indicate that tribal identity does not necessarily signify marginality, subalterneity and oppression, it reflects political empowerment of groups in Sikkim. The tribal tag is now a desirable identity and a sign of privilege associated with socio-economic entitlements and rights. Tribes are not disappearing but gaining ground with the emergence of political consciousness in the community. Due to the discriminatory nature of the administrative policies favouring certain category of people, now every community in Sikkim is signalling the presence of its distinct language, script, culture, dance and music, and circulating a trope of economic backwardness to claim rights and entitlements.

The article (Sinha, 2009), *The Politics of Identity Formation in Sikkim* unveil that ethnicity is nothing, but a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it the traits believed to be innate. in 1990's, various communities otherwise ranked at the bottom of the social ladder in Sikkim were demanding the rights with a view to securing social justice granted by the Indian Constitution. The struggle has passed through various phases: from recognition of Nepamul as an autonomous social entity to recognition of their language as an Indian language; agitation of the *Matwali* communities from among the Nepamul to demand for Other Backward Class (OBC) status; demand for the recognition of OBC as Scheduled Tribes. The last phase of the on-going agitation has taken the shape of demand for carving out a Kirat identity for nearly about a dozen communities within the Nepalese socio-cultural commonwealth, distinct from that of the Nepalese caste structure and according them autonomous

‘tribal’ status. In the present context Sikkimese society presents a somewhat fragmented entity which seems to be divided on communal and ethnic lines.

An article (Singh, M. Amarjeet and Komol Singha, 2016) *Democracy and Ethnic Politics in Sikkim* highlights the fact that if the constituencies in Sikkim are allocated in proportion to the size of population, the Nepalis will secure at least two thirds of the seats in the legislative assembly. But the fact is out of thirty two seats in the legislative assembly, twelve seats is reserved for Bhutia-Lepcha, two for Scheduled Castes, one for Sangha and remaining seventeen are kept unreserved. But inspite of existing Bhutia-Lepcha reservation in the assembly seats, the pressure groups such as the Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee alleged that the Lepcha and Bhutia are underrepresented in the council of Ministers and other important bodies. The assembly seat arrangement clearly reflects inclusive approach that 41% (including Sangha) of the total assembly seat is reserved for 16-20% of Bhutia-Lepcha population.

The written article (Syanbo, Genevive and Karma Samten Bhutia, 2016), *Political Parties and Regional Discourse in Sikkim* show that historical reports presents that the Lepcha’s and the Tsong’s (Limboos) often resented Bhutia domination in Sikkim which lasted for 333 years (1642-1974). The formation of a political party– Sikkim Independent Front Party by Ruth Karthak in 1966 which concentrated in the articulation of social, economic and political grievances of the Lepchas in Sikkim also provides evidences to this. Thus, the ethnic divisions and the feeling of community identity is not a new phenomenon in Sikkim. More significantly it got accentuated after the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union and after the growth of regional political parties in the state.

1.3. Rationale and Scope

In current scenario almost every nation are facing the challenges mounted by ethnic or religious self determination movements which come along with the major regional and global threats which are capable of creating humanitarian disasters of varying scales. Sikkim has witnessed ethnic rift and conflict in the past amongst the various indigenous communities of Sikkim. Considering the current scenario of Sikkim, ethnicity is being politicized to a certain level which has made it mandatory to take a step forward and to know its pros and cons.

This study will be an interesting one as it will study the probability of a future ethnic conflict understanding the past history as well as ongoing developments taking place in the state. The study will also focus on conflict settlement which can alleviate the existing strategic dilemmas and address the causes of a given conflict. Moreover, as no substantial work has been done so far in this area, hence this work will unquestionably contribute positively in the area of reducing ethnic conflict and creating a peaceful environment which would be acceptable to entire populace of Sikkim

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- To understand the dynamics of ethnicity and identity from theoretical discourse.
- To understand the historical traces of identity politics in Sikkim.
- To examine the factors that shaped Sikkimese identity.
- To analyze State's responses and people's perception on identity dynamics in contemporary Sikkimese society.

1.5. Research Questions

The study began with certain research questions which are placed below:

- What are the causes of politics of ethnicity and identity?
- What were the historical factors that shaped ethnicity and identity discourse in Sikkim?
- How Sikkimese identity factored in the post merger politics in Sikkim?
- What are the State's responses and people's perception on ethnic identity in the contemporary Sikkimese society?

1.6. Hypothesis

- The existing schism between the communities will rupture the unified Sikkimese identity and may push Sikkim towards a probable ethnic conflict.

1.7. Research Methodology

- The study is descriptive and explanatory in nature where both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied.
- The research was conducted through simple random sampling followed by the snowball sampling to reach out to the people and organizations etc.
- The more focused population of the study was basically the literate as well as the educated ones who had a sound knowledge about the subject that this study demanded. The so called people mainly consisted of the educated youths working in different fields, advocates, beaurocrats, teachers etc.
- The sample size included 200 respondents, 50 from each districts i.e. East-Gangtok, West-Geyzing, North-Mangan and South-Namchi.
- The study included both primary as well as secondary sources. Primary data basically are based on the field visit where the information are collected with the help of questionnaires/schedules and interviews with the respondents. Both

open-ended and close-ended questionnaires have been employed to generate data where in the former, the pre conceptualized answers were not given whereas in the later, the options were given. Extensive field study with in-depth interviews with relevant officials, Sikkim Subject Certificate holder, non-Sikkimese, social activists, journalists etc were conducted.

- Secondary data such as journals, magazines, official publications of governmental and non-governmental organizations, books, newspaper reports, information provided online including research works (both published and unpublished) have been used as a source of information. It helped in understanding the dynamics of the subject matter that have been taken under study and foresee the scope as well.
- The data so collected through field visit have been showed with pie charts, bar diagrams graphs etc prepared with the help of Microsoft Excel.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

Like every research, this study also has few limitations which are given below:

Sample Size: Even though the sample size of 200 (50 from each districts) looks small but when it comes to the field it was difficult to reach out to 50 people in North district particularly.

Respondents: As the study is mainly focused on the literate populations, thus it was difficult to convince them why this research is conducted. It was difficult to generate data due to its futuristic sensitive nature.

1.9. Organisation of the Study

Chapter I-Introduction

The introductory chapter will give an overview of the entire dynamics and historiography of Sikkim. This chapter will give a brief introduction about Sikkim as a whole, right from the pre merger era to present one, throwing some light on the ethnic conflict that had occurred in the past along with the latent ethnic conflict that is going on in the state now.

Chapter II-Ethnicity and Identity: A Theoretical Perspective

The study focuses the trajectory of ethnicity and identity in the State of Sikkim after the merger with the Indian Union and the ethnic conflict thereof, using theoretical framework focusing on the historical facts. An ethnicity or identity issue begins when there is more than one ethnic group in the state or a region and one group somehow initiate domination on the other. So this chapter is examining how ethnicity paved its way to conflict in the past along with throwing light on the present scenario.

Chapter III-Dynamics of Ethnicity and Identity: A Historical Overview of Sikkim

This chapter examines and analyzes the historical background of indigenous communities of Sikkim followed by the politics that was played by different ethnic communities to achieve their respective goals. This chapter highlights the identity issues attached to the concerned indigenous communities.

Chapter IV- Post-Merger Discourse on Sikkimese Identity

This chapter highlights the distinct Sikkimese identity and the privileges that Sikkimese people are enjoying. This chapter focuses on the conflict that had occurred in the past amongst the indigenous communities in Sikkim.

Chapter V- State's Response and Perception of the people on Ethnic Identity in Sikkim

This chapter is based on the views and perceptions of different people in Sikkim regarding the ongoing politics of ethnicity and identity in the state. It further analyzes the impact of ethnicity that may lead to future ethnic conflict that may occur in Sikkim in near future while proposing a few workable models to settle ethnic conflict. These workable models may also be helpful and applicable for other Indian states reeling under conflict.

Chapter VI- Conclusion

This chapter summarizes my research findings and concludes with some suggestive measures. This research is trying to open a new path for the researchers working in this untouched area.

Chapter II

Ethnicity and Identity: A Theoretical Perspective

Chapter II

Ethnicity and Identity: A Theoretical Perspective

2.1 Introduction

Ethnicity and identity are two correlated but yet two different terms. Whenever the term ethnicity is discussed, the identity tends to relate itself to make the term understandable in a more precise sense. The oxford dictionary meaning of the term ethnicity is, the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

The term “ethnic” is derived from Greek word “ethnos” meaning heathen, i.e., who is neither Jews, Christians, Muslims, nor Buddhists, or Hindus, or for that matter, of any other religion, but falls under the category of the “Others”, i.e., to say, animists or tribes. An ethnic group or ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities such as common ancestral, language, social, cultural or national experiences. Membership of an ethnic group tends to be defined by a shared cultural heritage, ancestry, origin myth, history, homeland, language or dialect, symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, art and physical appearance. Ethnicity is an important feature of human identity that manifests differently in different societies. Ethnic group manages to maintain some distinctive identity that differentiates members of that group from others. Earlier ethnic group refers to the tribal group but now it is used to identify non tribal group as well. Ethnicity is basically an issue of “ours” and “others”. Ethnicity is deep-rooted historical continuity (Hashmi, 2015).

The terms ethnicity and ethnic group are often used interchangeably. In actuality, although the two terms are closely related, there is a fine distinction

dividing them. While ethnic group is a group based on ancestry, culture, or national origin, ethnicity refers to affiliation or identification with an ethnic group. Ethnicity has remained a vital and important part of contemporary life.

On the other hand, the term identity refers to the fact of being who or what a person or thing is (Oxford dictionary). Identity is presently used in two linked senses, which may be termed “social” and “personal”. In the former sense, an “identity” refers simply to the social category, a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes. In the second sense of personal identity, an identity is some distinguishing characteristic (or characteristics) that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable (Fearon, 1999). There are different definitions of ethnicity and identity given by different scholars, but there are no universally accepted definitions, of neither ethnicity nor identity. Each scholar defines the two term in what situation they are in or they have been. Here are few examples:

1. Identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Hogg and Abrams 1988, 2).
2. “Identity is used to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture” (Deng 1995, 1).
3. Identity “refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities” (Jenkins 1996, 4).

4. “National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalized the symbols of the nation ...” (Bloom 1990, 52).
5. Identities are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self” (Wendt 1992, 397).
6. “My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose” (Taylor 1989, 27).

The most relevant entry for “identity” in the OED (2nd edition, 1989): “The sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality.” While there is considerable overlap among social scientist’s definitions, there is almost none with the dictionary meaning. Our present concept of “identity” is recent, or at least recent enough that dictionaries have not caught up with current usage. The OED definition is reporting an older meaning of the word that is still used quite frequently in everyday speech but is nonetheless narrower than our present concept of identity (Fearon, 1999).

2.2 Distinct Identity of Sikkim and its People

Sikkim as stated in the preceding introductory chapter is a very small hilly northeastern state of India. It is the 22nd state of India which came into existence with effect from 26th April, 1975. Prior to that, Sikkim was considered as an independent Kingdom ruled by the Namgyal monarchy. But even though it was an independent region, before Sikkim became a unit of India in 1975, it was an Indian Protectorate.

As per the treaty of 1950 which is known as the Indo-Sikkim treaty, India had special control over Sikkim's, external affairs, communication and defence. The internal running of the country was left to the people themselves (Kazi, 2009). In the year 1975, a referendum was held in Sikkim which brought about an end to the absolute monarchy and the new state of India ushered in a democratic government within the Constitution of India.

The most authentic information about Sikkim's population composition can be found in the first ever census conducted in Sikkim in the year of 1891. This census explains that the total population of Sikkim then was 30,458 out of which 5,762 were Lepchas, 4,894 Bhutias, 3,356 Limbus and 15,458 Nepalis. The Lepchas are believed to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. Today indigenous people of Sikkim consist of the Lepcha, Bhutia (People who migrated from Kham province of Tibet), and Nepali. But it is believed that Limbus who essentially are part of a Nepali community have inhabited west Sikkim since the time immemorial. The Limbus inhabited the western part of Sikkim which was contiguous to an ancient Limbu Kingdom, Limbuan, in East Nepal (Subba, 1988).

The contemporary Sikkimese identity came into being predominantly when the *Durbar*³ of Sikkim recognized the earlier settlers of Sikkim as the legal settlers who were then given the status of Subjects of Sikkim by then Chogyal and were referred as "Sikkimese" under the Sikkim Subjects Regulations, 1961. As per the aforementioned regulation the Sikkim Ruling *Durbar* maintained a register of all the legal settlers who were recognized as Subjects of Sikkim. Once Sikkim became the 22nd state of India, the Indian Constitution was extended to this new state and the Sikkim (Citizenship) Order 1975 was issued by the Union Government. As per the

³During the regime of *Chogyal or the King*

said order every person who immediately before the 26th day of April, 1975 was a Sikkim subject under the Sikkim Subjects Regulations, 1961 shall be deemed to have become a citizen of India on that day.

So in Sikkim's context Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961 holds an important value to define the Sikkimese identity, which in simple terms relates to possession of Sikkim Subject Certificate or Certificate of Identification. These documents have prominence in dictating the Sikkimese identity over community/ethnic belongingness. So people tend to decide on whether a person is a Sikkimese or not on the basis of such documentation rather than on the fact that a person is a Lepcha, Bhutia or a Nepali for that matter. To a great extent for Sikkimese people, possession of such documents is a way to secure the future of their children/upcoming generations. Identity of an individual living in Sikkim is still judged by these factors. Even in this contemporary era people of Sikkim are stuck with this all important document as it continues to play a major role in the life of the Sikkimese people.

2.3 Different Ethnic Groups of Sikkim: Integration and Disintegration

Western scholars and their Indian counterparts maintain the view that Sikkim was not politically consolidated and it was not a single political unit till 1642, when Phuntsok Namgyal was consecrated as the Chogyal of Sikkim. There were a number of autonomous Chieftains belonging to the Lepcha, Tsongs (Limboos) and Mangar community and they ruled this territory of "The Greater Sikkim" when many of these Lepcha and Tsongs (Limboos) Chieftains (other than Mangar Chieftains) accepted the supremacy of Namgyal Dynasty in 1642, signed the Tripartite Treaty of "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum", integrated their land resources with the migrant Bhutias and emerged as a country known as now Sikkim (Subba, 2007). Sikkim's population comprises of

three ethnic communities: the Bhutias, the Lepchas and the Nepalis who settled in the state at different times. Nepali is the lingua franca of Sikkim. It is believed that Sikkim was inhabited by three tribes namely Naong, Chang and the Mon in pre-historic times. But Lepchas claim that Sikkim is the origin and home of their ancestors. All the three ethnic groups have its share of migration history.

2.3.1 Lepchas: The Lepchas are of mongoloid origin living in the Himalayas on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kanchenjunga. Lepchas, who call themselves '*Rong*'⁴ are said to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. The origin of Lepchas is shrouded in mystery but some scholars claim that their immigration was from the eastern direction as they present similar linguistic and cultural traits to the clans of Nagas of the Mikir, Garo and Khasia hills. The Lepchas speak Tibeto-Burman language, based on which some anthropologists suggest they emigrated directly from Tibet to the north, or from Eastern Mongolia. They were even said to be from Japan or Korea, while others suggest a more complex migration history that started in southeast Tibet finally entering ancient India. But the Lepchas firmly believe that they did not migrate to the current location from anywhere and are indigenous to the region. The word Lepcha is derived from the Nepalese word '*lepche*'⁵. They practiced shifting cultivation and led a tribal life at the beck and call of their tribal leader. A person called *Tur Ve Pa No* kept them organized into some sort of a society. He was an elected king or chief, in the hoary past. After he was killed in the battle, he was succeeded by three kings. The monarchy came to an end after three generations and the tribe switched off to a system of chieftainship. The advice as well as counsel of the Chieftain was sought after on crucial matters and was accordingly followed. It is said that *Thokeng tek*, the Lepcha chief, was instrumental in installing the Bhutia rule

⁴The people living in ravines

⁵Vile speakers or inarticulate speech

in Sikkim by associating himself with the Tibetan migrants. Accordingly, a dozen of Lepcha chiefs were accorded with the status of *Dzongpens*, or regional rulers or the governors, by the first Bhutia theocrat, *Phuntso Namgyal* (1642-1670). These *Dzongpens* along with another dozen of Bhutia Councillors came to be known as the qazis or kazis, the Sikkimese aristocrats, in course of time. These two dozen qazis came to be known as the ‘created or the fashioned’ ones (*A-den*) against the Bhutia (*Bar fung-mo*) ‘the flowing from on high’; the lower and the higher order respectively of the qazis. It is said that there is no word for violence and conflict in their language. By tradition, they are inhabitants of Inner Himalayan highland and they lived in a region known as Dzongu Lepcha Reserve, a preserve of the former royal family (Sinha, 2008).

No matter from where they have original roots, the fact that is clearly established is that they are of Mongoloid descent. Once the sole inhabitants of Sikkim hills, they managed their environment for making a living effortless. The lands were abundant and forests were rich. They were nomadic and subsisted mainly on the collection of roots, tubers, leaves, fruits, grasses, fishing, hunting and practiced a primitive shifting cultivation with poor and simple technology. They were animists and believed in many gods and spirits of land, water and trees, the natural outcome of their surroundings. Environment played a great role in shaping their culture and society.

The well known deities of the Lepchas are *Itbumoo*, *Rom*, *Itbu Debu Rom*, *Kongchen Konglo* and *Tamsang Thing*, who are also said to have invented the Lepcha script. The central religious roles in the Lepcha community are traditionally occupied by the *bongthing* and *mun*, who both function as shamans. The *bongthing* is traditionally a male shaman who presides at recurring religious ceremonies and

seasonal festivals and may heal acute illness. The *mun*, often but not necessarily a female shaman, is a healer who exorcises demons, helps to heal illness and guides souls to the afterlife. In the 18th century, the Lepcha people were converted to Buddhism, although indigenous Lepcha shamans managed to coexist with Buddhist customs and beliefs. Both Buddhist Lamas and Lepcha shamans preside at many important ceremonies in Lepcha life, each to perform their own rituals. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, a significant number of Lepcha people have converted to Christianity. Many Christian Lepchas have lost their language and have distanced themselves from the old shamanistic rituals and beliefs (Subba, 2007).

The Lepcha folklore is very rich. One of the very popular stories has a parallel with the legend of the Tower of Babel. It describes that the *Rongs* or Lepchas once attempted to ascend to Rum or Heaven by building a tower of earthen pots.

Now the population of Lepchas in Sikkim is around 13 per cent of the total population and is one of the Scheduled Tribes from the state. Moreover, the Government of Sikkim has also granted them the status of Primitive Tribe of Sikkim. In the Dzongu reserve area of North Sikkim their chief occupation is cardamom cultivation with very limited activities for horticulture and agriculture pertaining to other crops. It may be mentioned here that this area has remained inaccessible for a very long time and no one other than a person originally from this area was permitted to trade or reside there. Lepcha 'reserve' in Dzongu was created to preserve their social homogeneity. From the primitive stage of cultivation, they have developed agriculture, replacing shifting cultivation by more efficient methods of terracing, ploughing and irrigating lands.

2.3.2 Bhutias: The Bhutia are a community of people of Tibetan ancestry. The majority of the Bhutia inhabitants are descendants of immigrants from Tibet and Bhutan in the 17th century who played an important role in establishing the kingdom of Sikkim. The name Bhutia sometimes spelt and pronounced as Bhotia is derived from their original habitat '*Bhot*' (Tibet). The Bhutias although originally migrated from Tibet had been known in Sikkim since 13th century onwards as a '*Lhopo*' or '*Lhopas*' which means 'The Greater Sikkim'. Even today many Bhutias speak among themselves in their own language. It was a widely spoken language during the monarchical times although it lacked the written form among the masses. They are followers of Buddhism and the monasteries occupy predominant place and play an important role in the socio-cultural life of the Bhutias. The Bhutias are known by their place of habitations such as the *Drukpas* are people from Bhutan; *Chumbipas*, people from the *Chumbi* valley (now eastern Tibet); the *Dhophthapas*, inhabitants of *Dhophtha*, a place in south Tibet; the *Trompas* or *Do-mu-pas*, inhabitants of *Do-mu*; the *Lachungpas*, inhabitants of *Lachung* valley migrated from *Hah* valley; *Lachenpas*, inhabitants of *Lachen* valley migrated from *Hah* valley and Tibet under the leadership of *Lempen*; are all Bhutias. Many of the above mentioned areas such as *Chumbi* valley, *Har chu* valley, *Amo Chu* valley of Tibet and Bhutan were the part and parcel of 'The Greater Sikkim' (Subba, 2007).

The Bhutias are said to have descended from the eight clans known as *Beb-Tsan-Gyat* of the great ancestor of Khye Bumsa, while other say that it was from Khye Bumsa's three sons that they have descended and multiplied. It is said that the Bhutia herdsmen moved in search of pasture grounds as per seasonal requirements without any consideration to the geographical divides. They used to camp in high Himalayas during the summer and Chumbi valley in the harsh winter. It appears that

the Bhutia herdsmen were already there in Sikkim during the period of Guru Padma Sambhava (eighth century AD), who is credited to have preached an early form of Buddhism. It is said that some Bhutia patriarchs of Namgyal dynasty came to Sikkim in 13th century with their cattle wealth (Sinha, 2008).

The majority of the Bhutia inhabitants are descendants of immigrants from Tibet and Bhutan in the 17th century who played an important role in establishing the kingdom of Sikkim. The majority included traders, peasant and Buddhist monks as well as aristocrats who helped in the formation of kingdom and Tibetization of the Lepchas. The Lepchas were shy and peace loving people who avoided aggression in any form. Tibetan Bhutias were attracted to Sikkim's vast empty land, green valleys, rich forests, ample water supply and good climate in comparison to cold climate, their bare and inhospitable mountain plateau. Valleys of South Sikkim were found favorable for the cultivation of rice. Tibetans who migrated into Sikkim in the thirteenth century started amalgamating with the indigenous population of Lepchas and practically assimilated in the course of time. The Lepchas who were animists were attracted by the rich Buddhist religion and cultural tradition of Bhutias. As the area was resource rich and Lepchas were less apprehensive of being dispossessed. Intermarriages of Lepcha-Bhutia resulted in the formation of Sikkimese Bhutia (Bhasin, 2002).

The Tibetan migration in early 17th century led the Rongs to shift their habitats so as to avoid conflict. Meanwhile the struggle and conflicts among the followers of the "Yellow hats" and the "Red hats" in Tibet forced the latter to seek refuge in Sikkim, where they attained the status of aristocracy. Being aggressive they occupied lands, which were not registered by the docile Lepchas. These Tibetan migrants (the

Bhutias as they came to be known) who were followers of the sect of 'Red Hats' now tried to convert these Sikkimese "Worshippers of nature" to Buddhism. They succeeded to some extent, even though the Lepchas tried to keep themselves detached as far as possible. A bureaucratic kingdom was established by the immigrant Bhutias with the help of local chiefs and steadily in the year 1642, Namgyal Dynasty came into being with the consecration of Phuntsok Namgyal as the King. The Namgyal dynasty ruled over Sikkim as hereditary kings for about 332 years. Mahayana Buddhism was declared as the state religion by Chogyal Phuntsok Namgyal. It continued to be the state religion until Sikkim became a part of the Indian Union.

After Sikkim came under a Raja and Ministers, they had a settled form of Government. Other Bhutia tribes and settlers from Paro and Hah in Bhutan came from time to time and settled in various parts of Sikkim, who on becoming naturalized came to be ranked amongst the Bhutia tribes of Sikkim, though considered to be inferior to the former ones.

2.3.3 Nepalis: The Nepalis comprise over 70 percent of Sikkim's population. They began to settle down in Sikkim since the last two decades of 19th century. The Nepalis migrated from Nepal in large numbers from the middle of the nineteenth century and soon became the dominant community considerably outnumbering the Lepchas and Bhutias. Their settlement in Sikkim was encouraged by the British.

The victory of British India in the Anglo Nepal war in early 19th century resulted in the cessation of hostilities between Nepal and India. Peace prevailed thereafter and the Britishers impressed by the warlike qualities of the Nepalis inducted them in large number into the British army. Nepalis were permitted to settle in large numbers in British India specially the hilly tracts. Darjeeling was annexed from

Sikkim to British India in 1835 and subsequently European required manpower to grow tea. The growing British influence had its implications in the context of migration of Nepalis to Sikkim. But it was somewhere in the 1860s that the then ruler of Sikkim granted a lease in Sikkim to some Nepali traders. These traders immediately got to the task of exploiting the agricultural wealth of Sikkim with the help of Nepalis belonging to the agrarian class who settled here freely. The Nepali settlers introduced the terraced system of cultivation and this brought large tracts of hilly terrain to yield crops productively. The Nepali community of Sikkim is a blend of various castes and a highly stratified society, speaking their own vernacular and having a culture of their own. They are divided into the Bahuns, Chettris, Newars, Mangars, Murmis, Rais, Limbus, Sunwars, Tamangs, Gurungs, Sherpas and scheduled caste namely Kamis, Damais and Sarkis etc. Nepali language-the lingua-franca of the State is spoken by all communities in Sikkim. This language is widely taught in schools and colleges in the State.

Major sub-cultural stocks of the Nepalis are the Kiratis who along with the Lepchas are said to be the aboriginals of Sikkim. The Kiratis include Limbus, Rais, Mangars, Gurungs and Sunwars. Limbus are one of the indigenous communities of Sikkim, residing there even before the Namgyal dynasty was established in 1642. The Limbus or Tsong are the descendents of ancient Kiratas from the pre-historically occupied areas of 'Limbuwan'. The Limbus were living in Sikkim before there was Sikkim for them to live in and even before they were known as Limbus, because the original name or the name that they prefer to use for themselves is 'Yakthungbas' which means heroes of the hills in Limbu language.

2.3.4 Integration and Disintegration

The early phase of Sikkim's history is linked to the blood treaty signed between the Bhutias and Lepchas which promoted the growth of a multi ethnic society with the invaders providing the ruling dynasty. The Lepchas were converted to the lamaist Buddhism of the Tibetans. The new religion and ruler made a deep impression on the social and economic life of the community. The dominance of the Bhutias of Sikkim was fairly overwhelming as the Lepchas remained among the poorest and the neglected among Sikkimese. The exceptions being those Lepchas who followed Mahayana Bhudhism and had the opportunity to intermarry with the Bhutia elite thereby letting them reach the level of equality. Mostly confined to the Northern belt of Sikkim in an area called Dzongu, they lived their life of indolence and negligence contributing little against the aggressive exploitation by the Bhutias of the riches in land and forest. Conflicts between the Tibetan Bhutias and the Lepchas have led to considerable disturbances in Sikkim in the past. The Lepchas have been pushed into the forests and low valleys below 4,000 feet by Bhutias who have settled at higher elevations. The threat of the Bhutia domination over them perhaps united them and made it possible for them to fight against the Bhutias. As per the oral history narrated by some Lepchas they had fought with the Bhutias. If the Mangars and the Limbus had supported the Lepchas in their fight against the Bhutias, the entry of the Bhutias into Sikkim would have perhaps been difficult and could perhaps never capture Sikkim politically though in terms of religion, that is, the spread of Buddhism, there could perhaps be no apparent conflict or resistance from the same people. But the Mangars numbered only a few hundred and felt insecure before the Bhutias. The Limbus were much larger in number and posed a threat to the smooth takeover of Sikkim by the Tibetan Bhutias but the royal matrimony established by the Tibetan

Bhutias with them neutralized the Limbu potentiality to counteract the Bhutia domination. And the Lepchas themselves were by nature never a fighting people.

The Bhutias and the British expeditioners had a cordial relation in between because of which the Raja of Sikkim was somehow persuaded to grant them Darjeeling and the areas surrounding it. But later when their diplomatic relations with Sikkim deteriorated, the necessity to counteract the Bhutia animosity was felt. This led them (Britishers) to encourage the Nepalis to settle there. These people were expected to support the British if need arose and serve them as labourers in their tea-gardens, forests and construction works or as porters in the much coveted Indo-Tibetan trade. The Nepalis started occupying lands. This became a matter of grave concern especially to the Bhutia who, until then, were enjoying the supremacy over others. Thus they tried their best to stop the Nepali immigration. Some of them who had already settled were harassed. A deputation was also made to the British administrator, to stop the Nepali immigration. Consequently, the British administrator, Sir Ashley Eden, gave them all assurance and issued a decree maintaining that the Nepalis could settle only in vacant or waste lands (Subba, 1988).

Even though the lack of a common racial background is responsible for the disunity of the Sikkimese people and racial distinctions thus represent a 'centrifugal force' working to divide the Sikkimese people. Still, despite these dissimilar racial groups, the religious factors and a common feeling of national consciousness have resulted in a certain degree of historic and cultural unity. Tibetan Buddhism, the state religion, is followed by about 28% of the population while 60% follow Hinduism. They all exist in a synthesized form there is hardly any conflict between these two religions in this Himalayan kingdom. The official language is English, though

comparatively few speak it, Sikkimese and Nepali/Gurkhali are the languages of the people. Existing language divisions do not affect the overall political stability of Sikkim; they are counteracted by the ‘feeling of kinship or belonging together’ which centuries of living together has generated among the Sikkimese people (Joshi, 2004).

2.4 Ethnicity and Identity Politics: On Different Approaches

There are different approaches on ethnicity and identity politics. Following are few such approaches which make the study more justifiable and uncomplicated.

2.4.1 Instrumentalist Approach

Instrumentalism is one of an addition of modern schools of thought formed by scientists and philosophers throughout the 20th century. It is named for its principle that theories are tools or instruments able to identify reliable means-end relations. Its premises and practices were most clearly stated by two philosophers, John Dewey and Karl Popper with their published works “The Development of American Pragmatism” and “Three Views Concerning Human Knowledge” respectively in the year 1925 and 1956. Dewey’s particular version of pragmatism, which he called “instrumentalism,” is the view that knowledge results from the discernment of correlations between events, or processes of change. Inquiry requires an active participation in such processes: the inquirer introduces specific variations in them to determine what differences thereby occur in related processes and measures how a given event changes in relation to variations in associated events. True to the name he gave it, and in keeping with earlier pragmatists, Dewey held that ideas are instruments, or tools, that humans use to make greater sense of the world. Specifically, ideas are plans of action and predictors of future events. A person possesses an idea when he is prepared to use a given object in a manner that will produce a predictable result. Thus, a person

has an idea of a hammer when he is prepared to use such an object to drive nails into wood. An idea in the science of medicine may predict that the introduction of a certain vaccine will prevent the onset of future maladies of a definite sort. Ideas predict that the undertaking of a definite line of conduct in specified conditions will produce a determinate result. Of course, ideas might be mistaken. They must be tested experimentally to see whether their predictions are borne out. Experimentation itself is fallible, but the chance for error is mitigated by further, more rigorous inquiry. Instrumentalism's operating premise is that ideas empower people to direct natural events, including social processes and institutions, toward human benefit. Dewey was a practitioner of instrumentalism. He held that means-end relations can be discovered by reasoning inductively and deductively about experience. Popper was a critic of the school. He insisted that induction is not scientifically valid, and that realities can be known without experience. But contrary to that confusion and ambiguity, they both agreed or had common views on these two points below:

- i) Theories are tools-of-the-trade of thinking, seeking to map means-ends relationships found in experience. Where Dewey said that "Instrumentalism is an attempt to establish a precise logical theory of concepts, of judgments and inferences in their various forms, by considering primarily how thought functions in the experimental determinations of future consequences", Popper said Instrumentalism endorses "the interpretation of scientific theories as practical instruments or tools for such purposes as the prediction of impending events."
- ii) Theories predict consequences of using means to achieve ends.

Here Dewey said that "the verification of a theory ... is carried on by the observation of particular facts", Popper on the other hand said that "... we submit

[theories] to severe tests by trying to deduce from them some of the regularities of the known world of common experience."

These were accepted by both philosophers and the general public.

Now relating instrumentalism to the study of politics of ethnicity, this theoretical framework reveals, people become ethnic and remain ethnic when their ethnicity yields significant returns to them. Ethnicity exists and persists because it is useful. The functional advantages of ethnicity range from the moral and material support provided by ethnic networks to political gains made through ethnic bloc voting. Instrumentalist theory views ethnicity as an instrument or strategic tool for gaining resources. According to this theoretical framework, people become ethnic and remain ethnic when their ethnicity yields significant returns to them. To Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1975), ethnicity is not simply a mix of affective sentiments, but like class and nationality it is also a means of political mobilization for advancing group interests. Ethnic groups are also interest groups. The instrumentalism attributes the acquirement and preservation of ethnic membership or identity solely to the enthusiasm of wanting to obtain comparative advantage. Like for Orlando Patterson (1975, 348), the strength, scope, viability, and bases of ethnic identity are determined by, and are used to serve, the economic and general class interests of individuals. Thus it shows that interests are the sole determinant of ethnic identity, and ethnic association tends to be fleeting and situational as the benefits of ethnic shift.

2.4.2 Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour

Social Identity Theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979. The theory was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup

discrimination. Tajfel and Turner attempted to identify the least conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favor of the ingroup to which they belonged and against another outgroup. Social identity theory is an interactionist social psychological theory of the role of self-conception and associated cognitive processes and social beliefs in group processes and intergroup relations. Originally introduced in the 1970s primarily as an account of intergroup relations, it was significantly developed at the start of the 1980s as a general account of group processes and the nature of the social group. Since then, social identity theory has been significantly extended through a range of sub-theories that focus on social influence and group norms, leadership within and between groups, self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction motivations, deindividuation and collective behavior, social mobilization and protest, and marginalization and deviance within groups. The theory has also been applied and developed to explain organizational phenomena and the dynamics of language and speech style as identity symbols. Social identity theory was conceived and born as a theory of intergroup relations and conflict and cooperation between groups. As it developed, it became a much broader social psychological theory of the role of self and identity in group and intergroup phenomena in general. However, intergroup relations has always remained a core feature of the theory; for the simple reason that what happens within groups is inextricable from and fundamentally affected by what happens between groups, and vice versa (Hogg, 2016).

Social identity theory initially focused primarily on intergroup relations—exploring the issue of conflict and cooperation between large-scale social categories. This early emphasis within the wider theory is often referred to as the social identity theory of intergroup relations. Social Identity Theory begins with

the premise that individuals define their own identities with regard to social groups and that such identification works to protect and bolster self-identity. The creation of group identities involves both the categorization of one's "in-group" with regard to an "out-group" and the tendency to view one's own group with a positive bias vis-à-vis the out-group. The result is an identification with a collective, depersonalized identity based on group membership and imbued with positive aspects.

Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory explains that part of a person's concept of self comes from the groups to which that person belongs. An individual does not just have a personal selfhood, but multiple selves and identities associated with their affiliated groups. A person might act differently in varying social contexts according to the groups they belong to, which might include a sports team they follow, their family, their country of nationality, and the neighborhood they live in, among many other possibilities.

When a person perceives themselves as part of a group, that is an ingroup for them. Other comparable groups that person does not identify with are called outgroups. We have an "us" vs. "them" mentality when it comes to our ingroups and their respective outgroups.

There are three processes that create this ingroup/outgroup mentality:

- **Social Categorization:** First, we categorize people in order to understand and identify them. Some examples of social categories include black, white, teacher, student, doctor, engineer etc. By knowing what categories one belongs to, one can understand things about themselves, and can define appropriate behavior according to the groups that one belongs to. An individual can belong to several groups at the same time.

- **Social Identification:** We adopt the identity of the group that we belong to, and we act in ways that we perceive members of that group act. For example, if you identify as a teacher, you will most likely behave within the norms of that group. As a consequence of your identification with that group, you will develop emotional significance to that identification, and your self-esteem will be dependent on it.
- **Social Comparison:** After we categorize ourselves within a group and identify ourselves as being members of that group, we tend to compare our group (the ingroup) against another group (an outgroup). To maintain your self-esteem, you and your group members will compare your group favorably against other ones. This helps explain prejudice and discrimination, since a group will tend to view members of competing groups negatively to increase self-esteem.

2.4.2.1 Intergroup Comparisons

There are a couple equations that tend to happen in the process of comparing an ingroup to an outgroup, as mentioned above. Members of an ingroup will tend to:

1. favor the ingroup over the outgroup
2. maximize the differences between the ingroup and the outgroup (it is necessary to maintain that the groups are distinct if a person is favoring their group over the other)
3. minimize the perception of differences between ingroup members (this increases ingroup cohesion)
4. remember more positive information about the ingroup and more negative information about the outgroup

2.4.2.2 The Interpersonal-Intergroup Continuum

Another main aspect of social identity theory is its explanation that social behavior falls on a continuum that ranges from interpersonal behavior to intergroup behavior. Most social situations will call for a compromise between these two ends of the spectrum. As an example, Henri Tajfel suggests that soldiers fighting an opposing army represent behavior at the extreme intergroup end of the interpersonal-intergroup spectrum.

2.5 Sikkim on Ethnicity and Identity: Then and Now

It can be found that the term ethnicity is gaining more importance within the contemporary Sikkimese Society. Every ethnic group or cultural-based community is trying their possible ways to organize their respective group and make them stronger. But what made them realize the importance of ethnic group and its mobilization. Increase in population and fear of losing their identity are among the primary motives for ethnic allegiance. The decennial growth before integration of the state into Indian Union, that is during 1931 to 1941 was 10.67, during 1941 to 1951 was 13.34, during 1951 to 1961 was 17.76, during 1961 to 1971 was 17.76, which has increased to unprecedented growth rate of 50.77% during 1971 to 1981 after the merger of Sikkim into the Indian Union due to in-migration to cope with the development activities. The present decennial growth during 1991 to 2001 for India was 24.66% while it was on the higher side for Sikkim with its decennial growth at 33.06%. As a result, the population density per sq. km increased. District wise comparison of the population profile showed that the East where the state capital lies is the most populated which accounts for almost 50% of the state population. In-migration to Sikkim became more conspicuous after 1975, when Sikkim became the constituent state of India and large quantum of resources was allocated for developmental purposes. According to the

census data on migration, which primarily covers migration by place of birth and last residence, between 1971 and 1981, Sikkim recorded a very high level of in-migration (35%). By 1991, the percentage of migrants to the state decreased in both categories, 19 to 13% by place of birth, and from 16 to 9% by place of last residence. The proportion of male migrants has always been higher than that of women. An analysis of the origin of migrants in the by birth category reveals that while there was a steady decline in the proportion of in-migrants from neighboring countries, there was an increase in the proportion of in-migration from within the country. Thus, by 1991, the percentage of in-migration within India was higher than that of in-migrants from neighboring countries (Subba, 2007).

In the census of 1891, the total population was 30,458 of which 5,762 were Lepchas, 4,894 Bhutias, 3,356 Limbus and 15,458 Nepalis. But the 2011 census shows there are 607,688 inhabitants which further prove that there is an unprecedented increase in population. It was during the 1890's that some people from the places like Bengal, Bihar, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and other places of India, who are generally referred to as 'plainsmen' began to migrate to Sikkim. They were essentially traders participating in the then famous trans-himalayan trade.

There were few well educated people from Bengal who served as tutors to members of the royal family. Their flow to Sikkim became more noticeable after Sikkim became a protectorate of India in 1950. The second large influx of plainsmen was noticed after 1975 when it became a part of the Indian Union. Lepchas, Limbus and Mangars who were there from the early times, were basically agriculturalist. But for Bhutias, beside agriculture, they also depended on pastoralism and trade. The Tibetans occupied a dominant economic position until the end of the nineteenth

century mainly because of their expertise in trading activities. But when, J. C. White was appointed as the first British Political Officer for channelizing trade across the border and for helping Chogyal in the administration of the state. A large number of plainsmen notably the Marwaris were then engaged in the trade with the Tibetans side by side with the British. Others from Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Kerala, and Punjab etc. had also gone there either to engage themselves in subsidiary commercial trade or for service.

The plainsmen in Sikkim are usually referred as '*Madishey*'⁶ by the local people. The word *Madishey* has its origins from the word '*Madesh*'. The word '*Madesh*' in Sikkim's lingua franca means plains. Thus the term '*Madishey*' literally means people who have their origins in the plains of India. These people largely consist of those who have migrated to Sikkim from the plains of Bengal, Bihar, UP, Rajasthan etc. These people initially entered to Sikkim to pursue their respective livelihood as traders, teachers, office clerks, businessman, skilled labourers etc. So, *Madishey* is a typical term used commonly by the local people for mainland Indians (Mukhia and Choudhury, 2019).

In the year 1975, the Institution of the Chogyal, which had survived in this Himalayan territory for over 300 years, came to an end. In this year, the political and religious control of a particular ethnic group called the Bhutias was simultaneously abolished and the winds of democracy and development began to blow in the hills and valleys of this region. After 1975, each new or expanded segments of occupation in Sikkim has created enough room for the entry of outsiders.

⁶Madishey is a term basically used to refer to plainsmen. But as far as Sikkimese people are concerned, the term madishey is used by them basically to denote people from mainland India who have Aryan looks, having dark skin color and taller heights than the normal North-Eastern people, whose looks are Mongolian.

Today, Sikkim is an extremely diverse state in the Indian Union, home to numerous different Himalayan people with different cultures and religions. In part this situation is a testament to Sikkim's geo-political location as a meeting place for the different people of the Tibetan and Himalayan regions, yet it is also indicative of the colonial history of Sikkim and the socio-political engineering policies of the British Raj. In more recent years migration from Nepal has continued with people fleeing the homeland in search of more profitable lives or an escape from the civil war in Nepal. Whilst the current ethnic demographics of Sikkim remain complete it is safe to say that Sikkim has always been a multi-ethnic region (Mullard, 2011).

Talking about migration in general, migrants have created pressure on others who are in the same job market. While freedom to migrate within the country is an enshrined right but, the uneven development, levels of desperation and other factors have created friction points. States at the receiving end of migration were left to bear the heavy burden. For, migration significantly affected and at times re-cast their domestic order, challenged their traditional institutional structures, modified existing social arrangements, transformed the forces of integration and fragmentation, and accelerated the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

In a more concise sense migration has become a serious challenge to the long-standing paradigms of certainty and order. An increased volume of uncontrolled migration may lead to competition between the citizens and newly migrated populations over already scarce resources such as jobs, housing, public services, and social security. It may at least heighten the existing pressure over state institutions that are trusted to provide such services and thus cause them to fail. Such a development would not only upset the existing system, it would also play into the hands of those

who would be ready to blame everything on the arriving migrants. Dissatisfied groups of people thus provide a suitable ground for playing over ethnic, sectarian, religious and cultural differences, a plausible set of circumstances which make it difficult to maintain internal security and order. Not only that but ethnic tension and conflicts have been a part of the Northeast reality already along with the tension and conflicts based on tribal principles of heroism, justice, honour, pride, recognition, customary obligation or feeling of revenge.

At a time when Sikkim became a part of the Indian Union, the circumstances were such that outsiders residing in Sikkim were engaged in range of jobs and professions. These included petty jobs as a cobbler, barber etc. to occupying many of the senior official positions in various government departments in the state, primarily owing to the fact that these set of people were more skilled, educated and were eligible to meet the demands of those times. It was completely acceptable then to the people of Sikkim if those fine positions were occupied by outsiders rightly as the sons of the soil lacked the necessary skills and education to match the available positions.

Comparably today with the increasing number of local educated people in the state, the outsiders are instead seen as a barrier. It may be apt to say that the people of Sikkim lacked qualities required for private entrepreneurship owing to various socio-economic factors in the past and they hardly got themselves into such professions but lately the scenario seems to be changing. The educated youths of Sikkim are exploring the unchartered territories which were earlier exclusively catered by the outsiders living in Sikkim.

In the past it was local people's incapability that had kept them away from many of the opportunities in Sikkim and this is when the outsiders with their

knowhow grasped the available opportunities. Today, the Sikkimese people are ready to take those opportunities but many such avenues have been and still occupied by outsiders. It would not be completely wrong to state that it is due to such issues the competent locals are still unemployed in their state. Many eligible Sikkimese who would have liked to take many of the jobs and professions which were historically dominated by the outside population settled in Sikkim but it is a huge uphill task for them as the outsiders have been doing it for generations and majority of them are very well established here in Sikkim. These types of issues building up in the society although minor in some sense may culminate into a threat to the peace and harmony of Sikkim.

When we consider unemployment, it is definitely not a local issue rather in today's time it has become a national issue and even more so a global issue. Sikkim's case is such that, there is huge number of Sikkimese people who are highly educated and yet unemployed in Sikkim. One may argue that it's the lack of skills and capabilities of the Sikkimese people that has presented such situation. Even though SSC or COI may be the important piece of document for the people of Sikkim but the outsiders settled in Sikkim even without possessing such document have been able to dominate the private sector. On the other hand, if we look at the Sikkimese people who are SSC or COI holders, the growing competition is worth noticing. There already prevails a sense of insecurity among the Sikkimese people due to the ongoing increase in population because they play a vital role in forming the government (with their voting rights) and any government in Sikkim is bound to acknowledge the demands laid down by this section of the society. A relatively small percentage of migrants from a homogenous background may be tolerable while a larger number may be perceived as a threat to the identity and societal security of a receiving

country/state. Sikkim is unquestionably on a path to becoming one of such states in India where the outsiders are dominant on the indigenous population.

2.6 Polarised Ethnicity in Sikkim

Ethnicity is considered as a process, whereby the leaders of an ethnic group try to mobilize its group members by utilizing the ethnic sentiment for some economic and political goals. It reflects diversity in the Society whose internal harmony and stability depends on how ethnic diversity is accommodated in a pluralistic framework of the state and society. Pluralistic framework includes those constitutional designs which guarantee the protection of an ethnic identity. The state's failure in creating such institutions, leads towards a conflictual situations in which one ethnic group feels insecure against the dominance of other. The feelings of antagonism ultimately force ethnic groups to pursue their demands (Hashmi, 2015).

Political dimension of ethnicity makes it powerful and potentially so destructive that ethnic passion has become the main reason of countless wars, revolts, and conflicts. Ethnic conflict has been a major concern for governments and ethnicity does matter for politics. Ethnicity and Ethnic Politics is an important phenomenon of Plural Societies. In developing world, ethnic politics is one of the main reasons of internal instability. Ethnic conflict leads towards ethnic politics which is often conceived as a conflict among ethnic groups. Ethnic conflict with state should be handled on priority basis. If state fails to resolve conflict, the reformation of nationality of a particular ethnic group creates serious unrest and threat to the process of nation building (Hashmi, 2015).

There are a number of ethnic groups in Sikkim which are as old as the Namgyal dynasty of Sikkim but only with the emergence of the Sikkim National

Party in 1948 mobilization of those ethnic groups for political purposes began. Sikkim consists of multiple cultural racial groups like Nepalis, Lepchas and Bhutia of which Nepalis constitute the majority. Cultural-territorial mobilizations or ethnic mobilizations were not altogether unknown under the monarchical form of government in Sikkim. Incidents of protests by Lepchas or Nepalis, including the Tsongs (Limboos), against the Bhutia domination did occur but was different from the modern sense of cultural and ethnic mobilizations. It became evident only during the second half of the 20th century where political parties like Sikkim National Party articulated interests of a particular community. Such community interests were aggregated and presented as the general interests of Sikkim. Even when the general subjects of whom Nepalis constituted the majority, protested against the discriminatory and oppressive rule of the Bhutia king and elites, the protest movement was not known as the movement by the Nepalis rather it surfaced as a grievances in the form of movement for introduction of democracy in Sikkim.

Historical examples have illustrated that the more a migrant community seeks to integrate itself into the society of the host country and the more it attempts to adapt to the way of life of that society, the less threatening this migrant community is perceived to be. The less a migrant community seeks to integrate itself into the host society and the less respect it displays for the values and norms of that society, the more threatening this migrant community is perceived to be. Cultural differences and ethnic conflicts have gained significance and new meanings in national as well as in an international environment characterized by dissolution of traditional political and societal structures. The perceived efforts of migrants to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities are often blamed as a cause of conflict within states. What some see as a development that enriches a society's cultural character, others view it as a threat

to their own culture and conception of themselves. It is widely established in people's minds that the existence of migrants has a substantial impact on social stability and economic prosperity, which are inter-related. By becoming citizens of the receiving state, migrants create a cultural, linguistic, religious and possibly a racially distinct minority within the host country thereby altering the character of its society. Thus, migration may be seen as threatening communal identity and culture by directly altering the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic components of the population of the receiving state.

History does not appear to be a strong basis for emergence of ethnic or cultural politics in Sikkim. Yet cultural-ethnic politics has not only emerged, it has sustained and proliferated further in Sikkim in recent past. There is no doubt to the fact that sub-communities existed as a part of a larger community in Sikkim but these sub-communities did not feel necessary to divide themselves in order to fight for their respective interests and benefits particularly rather they chose to stay under one umbrella. But if we focus on the recent past, the growth in caste/community consciousness among different groups, sub-groups and individuals has been growing which has led to mushrooming of several caste/community organizations duly raising their respective claims and demands. The Lepcha organizations such as Rangyang Mutanchi Rongong Shejum (Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association) has been demanding for a 50% reservation in the Sikkim State Assembly as well as in education and public employment, legal protection of Lepcha land, separate delimitation etc. while on the same line Bhutia dominated organizations like Survival Sikkimese and Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) emphasize on restoration of rights and privileges as enjoyed by the communities they represent prior to Sikkim's merger with the Indian Union. On the other hand, organizations such as the Gorkha Apex Committee

(GAC) has demanded for equal treatment at par with the Lepchas and Bhutias, and extension of 'creamy layer' concept to exclude members of royal family and Kazis from the tribal list. Thus, when political mobilization takes place, appeals to these caste/community organizations naturally take place and the community centered demands and grievances are also represented in the political arena. On top of that, now certain communities which were considered as sub-groups of a larger community have also started to assert their distinctiveness on the basis of their language, culture and identity. So, these developments are indicative of a sharp increase in community consciousness and community identity.

Ethnic cultural politics in Sikkim with community oriented demands and attempts at community oriented political mobilization are common but these parties have not been electorally successful. By articulating as well as by aggregating demands and aspirations of a group of people, political parties and organizations in Sikkim mobilize people in support of their issue and generate consciousness regarding the demands. Thus, by working with a political party and organizations, the aspirations and demands of a particular cultural-linguistic group is expressed and legitimized. Political parties often rely on social bonds, community sentiments, and symbols in order to garner popular support. This way the relationship is established for mutual benefit. Certain times, due to the political pressure and complex social elements, the state is unlikely to be a harbinger of distributive justice. Its policies may benefit a particular group or a community but it may as well be a prospective threat to others. It further strengthens community consciousness and ultimately manifests in the form of an organization articulating community interests.

The major part of the politics in the Himalayan State of Sikkim spins on the axis of ethnic and tribal issues. Sikkim is more or less still a state based on sociocultural interaction in the guise of traditional society and is also reflected in the large politics of state. Unlike the large ideological affiliation, the very local issues of the tribes and their sociopolitical and economic share over resources occupy a major space of politics and political manipulation. Despite the fact that the merger agreement brought the Himalayan kingdom to Indian sovereignty in 1975, the policy of ethnic representation was introduced into its practice long before the merger. However, the pre-merger representative mechanisms were always in question as a bone of contention among ethnic communities represented in decision-making bodies (Chhetry and Choudhury, 2020).

2.7 Conclusion

Ethnicity and Identity are two different terms yet they are interrelated. Ethnicity needs to be understood to clearly understand the identity and vice versa. Both the term complement each other. Some scholars claimed in the past, that the importance of the term ethnicity and identity will decrease with the passing years but it proved to be wrong. As we can see in the contemporary world, with the increase in population everywhere around the world, the importance and value of these terms are on the rise. People try to mobilize their ethnicity to create their own respective identity, a distinct one, different from any other group or individual. As there is enormous number of people residing in every part of the world, it became mandatory to seek for a way which can help an individual or a group to stand out in a crowd. People now have started giving more importance to ethnicity for their identity formation, as in a way ethnicity is one such thing which people could use at any point in time to showcase their uniqueness. The theories propounded by different scholars at different point in

time help us to justify and un-complicate issues related to ethnicity and identity. As stated above ethnicity and identity does play an important role in a life of an individual. The meaning of the term ethnicity and identity may vary to some extent from society to society or nation to nation. But we have seen in the preceding paragraphs, how instrumentalist theory helped us to understand, how an individual or rather a group uses their ethnic identity with diverse motives. Instrumentalist theory was propounded first by John Dewey and Karl Popper, both of them are considered founder and practitioners of this theory. Instrumentalist theory considers ethnicity, an instrument or tool for gaining or fulfilling the goals. Those goals may vary from moral or material goals to political goals. Consequently, people become more ethnic or in other words they become more conscious about their ethnicity only when its returns are significant and worthy.

Thus we can relate it directly to the study of Sikkim, as a state where the importance of ethnicity and identity is growing day by day. As we have already seen in the preceding paragraphs that the said three ethnic groups namely Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali of Sikkim too have migrated to this part at different points in time. Though, the Lepchas are assumed to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim, but when we look at the history that is available we get to know that they too have migrated from somewhere into this part of Sikkim. There are no written history/records available which may prove that the Lepchas are the original inhabitants or have migrated from one particular place. It is due to this lack of written records it is impossible to be absolutely sure about the ancient history. From the above gist of historical background, we can be sure that the Lepchas, no doubt, are there in this region since time immemorial. They are peace loving people which can be seen by their welcoming nature, as they have lovingly welcomed the immigration of the

Bhutias in the past. Bhutias became capable enough to organize them together as there was no single ruler in the past which kept them together under one umbrella, there used to be respective leader or king for different indigenous group. After the arrival of the Bhutias in Sikkim, the Namgyal dynasty came into being after the consecration of its first ruler, Phuntsok Namgyal. Similarly with regards to the Nepalis migration to Sikkim, the history shows that Limbus and Mangars who are a part of a larger Nepali community were residing in Sikkim alongside the Lepchas. It will not be completely true to say that these three ethnic groups came and settled peacefully together as there have been frictions amongst them. It was not easy for every one of them to adjust within and accept the facts. Level of adjustments has gone higher in the contemporary societies of Sikkim as compared to the past. With more number of population as compared to anytime in history, it has presented more number of problems, competition, difficulties to stand out. So, it is obvious for people to look for some alternative ways to make them easy to stand out and achieve their respective motives.

People in Sikkim have now become more conscious regarding their ethnicity or their ethnic identity. Each and every ethnic group in Sikkim has their own social, economic and political motives behind. Therefore, they are organizing themselves and have formed associations/organizations to promote their ethnicity or ethnic identity. They are up to using their ethnicity as a tool to achieve their respective goals. To a certain extent, it is good way to preserve their respective culture and tradition in this westernizing society while at the same time when it turns out to be a means to get something out of the society or Government, it shows how politics is veiled.

Similarly, Social Identity Theory of Tajfel and Turner, basically an account of intergroup relations and conflict and cooperation between groups, was developed

further to a general account of group processes and the nature of the social group and so on. This theory holds the view that when a person perceives themselves as a part of a group, that becomes an in-group for them and rest other groups are considered out-groups. Mentality of 'us' vs 'them' comes in through the process of social categorization where the people categorize in order to identify and understand them like categories of black, white, student, professor etc. It makes them understand themselves and act accordingly. Second is social identification, when people adopt the identity of the group that they belong to and act accordingly. Here people belonging to a particular group develop emotional significance and their self-esteem depends on it. Thirdly there is social comparison, where groups tend to compare with other such groups which bring the differences between them. Similar is the case in the state of Sikkim. Sikkimese society is disintegrating itself into number of ethnic associations in the name of preserving their cultural identity. Even though it may serve the purpose to some extent but Sikkim being a small state with least population compared to any state in the Indian Union, the populace here will benefit more with unification than disintegration. It may not be denied that ethnic associations, organizations or affiliations are somehow dividing the society. Their motive may not be to make the state as a whole weaker but eventually it will. The organization of people on the basis of ethnicity and identity for their own social, economic or political benefit is a way to make them superior to other groups. As described in the theory above that in-group tries to prove themselves superior of out-group. As every group is an in-group for themselves and considers everyone else as an out-group and treat as though they are entirely different. These are the things that counts in a society and which happens to be a hurdle in the way of development of the state by making it weaker from within. Differences in terms of ethnicity and identity when given excess consideration bring

differences amongst the people living within the same geographical boundary and it ultimately leads to conflict within the society.

Chapter III

Dynamics of Ethnicity and Identity: A Historical Overview of Sikkim

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Dynamics of Ethnicity and Identity: A Historical Overview of Sikkim

3.1 Introduction

Sikkim, an Indian state on the Eastern Himalayan range, is a small state with a total area of 2,818 sq. m (7,096 sq. km) lying between 27 deg. 4" North to 28 deg. 7" North latitude between 80 deg. East 4" and 88 deg. 58" East longitude. This 113 kilometer long and 64 kilometer wide undulating topography is located 300 to 700 meter above sea level. It is a landlocked Indian state located in the Himalayan Mountains. The state borders Nepal to the west, Tibet to the north and east, and Bhutan to the east. The Indian state of West Bengal lies to the south. With 607,688 inhabitants as per the 2011 census, Sikkim is infact the least populous state of India and the second-smallest state after Goa in total area. Sikkim is the only state in India with an ethnic Nepali majority. The most widely accepted origin theory for the name Sikkim is that, it is a combination of two Limbu words, *su*, which means 'new', and *khyim*, which means 'palace' or 'house'. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is *Denjong/Denzong*, which means 'valley of rice' while the Bhutias of Sikkim refer to it as *Beyul Demazong*, which means 'the hidden valley of rice'. The Lepcha people call it *Nye-mae-el* which means 'paradise'.

3.2 Sikkim in Prehistoric Period

As of now we have not encountered any written record dating to the ancient historical period of Sikkim. But, from whatever researches have been done so far about the history of Sikkim by the western as well as Indian scholars, it is found that Sikkim was not a single political unit. It is said that the present day Sikkim was formed and named only after the Namgyal Dynasty was set up. The researches suggests that there

were many independent chieftains prior to the formation of the Namgyal dynasty with chieftains belonging to the Lepcha, Limboo and Mangar community who have ruled their respective territory which would consist of certain region of present day Sikkim. Later around 1642 when many of the Lepchas and Limboos accepted the supremacy of the Bhutias, they came together with a signing of a Tripartite Treaty known as the “Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum” and integrated their land resources with the Bhutias who had primarily migrated from Tibet. Thus a kingdom called Sikkim (which was greater in area than present day Sikkim) emerged.

Talking about the prehistoric times and people of Greater Sikkim, we can be certain that people did not live in a particular place permanently. It was mainly due to scarcity of food and other resources which were vital to their survival. People back then had to hunt, gather, explore and move constantly to meet their daily needs. It was only during the Neolithic age, people developed the art of land cultivation which ultimately resulted in permanent settlement in a particular area. It suggests that the earliest humans who lived in Sikkim were free to discover the land in their own way to meet their requirements. They were not constrained by any geographical boundary as such and did not have the same sense of geography as we have today.

It is believed that the Lepchas and Limboos lived in different parts of present day Sikkim, hunting, gathering, exploring and in later days cultivating plots of land which they felt contented but in the absence of written records we can never be sure as to which time in history exactly did all these events take place. Following are the brief overview of ethnic communities who are said to be there in the prehistoric times in Sikkim:

3.2.1 The Lepchas: As written in the preceding chapter as well, the Lepchas are generally considered as the aboriginal inhabitant of erstwhile “Greater Sikkim”. There is no written record to prove since when they have been living here and from where they have come to this part as such. But the tribe called ‘Nahangs’, who are known to have existed first in Sikkim, died soon and there are none of them right now. Today we find 12 sub castes within the Lepcha community, out of which many are named after the places they reside in. As per Sikkim’s first census of 1891, the total Lepcha population in Sikkim was 5,762, which was 18.92% of the total population but their percentage decreased with the passage of time despite the fact that their number increased to 48,811 as per the 2004 census, they accounted for only 8.46% of the total population.

Lepchas are originally nature worshippers. The important religious roles in their community are traditionally occupied by ‘Bongthing’ and ‘Mun’, who function as shaman. Later in the 18th century, due to the influence of overwhelming Bhutia population, many Lepchas were converted to Buddhism while in 19th century a good number of Lepchas converted to Christianity much to the credit to missionaries under then British India. Now many Lepchas who have accepted Buddhism or Christianity as their core faith have altogether left aside their original faith.

3.2.2 The Bhutias: The term Bhutia is derived from the word Bhot which means Tibet. The word Bhutia is also pronounced as Bhotia while its written form is always maintained as Bhutia. The people belonging to this community are also at times referred as Bhotay but its usage is limited to local population only. They originally migrated from Tibet and their presence has been known in Sikkim since 13th century as Lhopo or Lhopas, meaning the dwellers of the Southwards. From where and when exactly the Bhutias have descended is a mystery though. According to the Maharaja’s

history some claim that they have descended from 8 clans known as Beb-Tsan-Gyal of the Great ancestor of Khe-Bumsa who was a prince or chief from Dome in the Kham province of Tibet, while others claim that it was from Khe-Bumsa's three sons that they have multiplied. And later when Sikkim became a monarchy, other tribes and settlers from Paro and Hah in Bhutan came from time to time and settled in various parts of Sikkim. Primarily the Bhutia community may be divided into two parts i.e. (1) Tibetans who have migrated to Sikkim in its recent history and who have permanently settled in Sikkim while enjoying all available benefits under the Bhutia category and (2) Those people who refer to themselves as Sikkimese Bhutia and who have been permanently settled in Sikkim since centuries. While majority of the customs, festivals, rituals, literature etc. match between them and both use the Tibetan dialect, the Sikkimese Bhutia speak Lhopo or Sikkimese which is slightly different from Tibetan language. The Sikkimese Bhutia people have been interacting among themselves in their own language since ages but they did not put much effort to put it in written form. It was only in recent times that they felt the need to render it into a written form and started preparing literature, text books etc. in Sikkimese Bhutia Language. The publishing of Sikkimese Bhutia language related materials has picked up since 1977 onwards.

3.2.3 The Limboos: The Limboos or the Yakhumbas as they call themselves are said to be the aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim. Yet their origin and migration issue is still a matter of debate due to lack of documentary evidences. The Limboos may not believe in migration as such but their oral tradition which they call 'Mundhum' mentions of their migration history. Their history lies on the narrated stories by different people in different periods of time. Different authors predicts differently on their history of origin. While some claim that they are migrants from Sichuan Yunan

province in China, who left their native place out of tribal antagonism and settled in a place in North Burma, further multiplying and spreading to east, west and south. Some authors claim that the Limboos are of Tibetan origin, which is widely accepted in Sikkim. These authors believe that the Limboos are the immigrants from the Tsong province of Tibet. Another recent claim about the origin of the Limboos is that they have migrated from the region of modern Nepal to modern Sikkim. From all the available Limboo migration theory the very first and widely accepted concept of their origin suggests that the Limboos descended from a family of Kirat-asura, who once fought against the Aryans. They are the descendants of ancient Kiratas from the historically occupied areas of Limbuwan (the land of Limboos). It is said that the Limboos were living in Sikkim even prior to the formation of Namgyal monarchy in Sikkim. They have predominantly inhabited certain areas within Sikkim since time immemorial. The Limboos played an important role in formation of the monarchical rule in the Greater Sikkim through the Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum tripartite agreement which appropriately establishes and proves their presence in the land of Sikkim.

3.2.4 The Mangars: In the history of Sikkim we find that Mangars also referred as Magars have lived and ruled some parts of Sikkim. The Mangar kings used to construct *Jongs*⁷ and establish their rules by forming small independent principalities in different parts of Sikkim. Such *Jongs* can still be witnessed at different places in Sikkim. Moreover the remains of such *Jongs* have also been found in neighboring regions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Nepal which goes to prove their existence in those regions as well. The Mangars in Sikkim are mostly settled in hilly terrain and in close proximity to forest. Although in recent times young Mangar population have started to permanently move to urban areas but they are still thickly populated in rural

⁷Jong refers to fort or castle in manger language.

areas of East and West Sikkim. While writing about their origin, it is suggested that the original homeland of Mangar community was in western Nepal from where they migrated to eastern Nepal and finally to Sikkim but few account of their migration suggests that they came from Bokim, a land behind Nepal somewhere in Tibet.

3.3 Dynamic History of Formation of the Greater Sikkim

It is believed that Sikkim's population in the prehistoric time comprised of the ethnic communities: the Bhutias, the Lepchas, the Limboos and the Mangars, brief overview of which has already been mentioned in preceding paragraphs. Sikkim claims that it had extensive territories in the past. The Shah rulers of Nepal invaded Sikkim from 1770 to 1810 and conquered regions upto the river Tista. Subsequently, Sikkim lost regions referred as Limbuan in Nepal. Up until the last decade of 19th century, Chumbi valley which is now under the Chinese control was a part of Sikkim. Between the year 1817 to 1916, Sikkim lost its foothills and Darjeeling hills in the South to British India. Succession disputes in the ruling family in Sikkim gave Bhutan the chance to interfere with its internal affairs and it lost land on its Eastern frontiers to Bhutan (Sinha, 2008).

There is dearth of written records when it comes to the ancient history of Sikkim and it prevents clarity on both the origin and the way of life of the Sikkimese. The modern history of Sikkim has direct connection with the history of the Blood Brotherhood between Thekong Tek and Khya Bhumsa and a sub-ethnic group of Gorkha/Nepali community. According to the popular folklore prevailed in the Sikkimese society, the Blood Brotherhood Treaty was an oath taking ceremony with the sacrifice of several animals summoning the local deities to witness the occasion. It is believed that this Blood Brotherhood Treaty, solemn oath taking ceremony was

for the peaceful co-existence of three different entities growing as Blood Brothers as one and inseparable single entity (Chhetry and Choudhury, 2017).

The earliest recorded fact related to Sikkim is the passage of the Buddhist Rinponche through the land in the 8th century, who is reported to have blessed the land and introduced Buddhism to Sikkim. Furthermore, he foretold the era of monarchy in the state some day. Somewhere around 13th century a prince named Guru Tashi of Minyang Dynasty in Tibet had a divine vision that he should go to South to seek his fortune in 'Denzong-the valley of rice'. So as directed he along with his family headed towards South. While traveling they came across the Sakya Kingdom where a monastery was being built at that time. The workers there had not been able to erect pillars for the monastery. The elder son of Guru Tashi raised the pillar single handedly and thereby came to be known as 'Khye Bumsa' meaning the superior of ten thousand heroes.

The Sakya king offered his daughter to Khye Bumsa for marriage. Guru Tashi afterwards died while Khye Bumsa settled in Chumbi valley and it was here that he was able to establish contacts with then Lepcha Chieftain Thekong Tek in Gangtok. As Thekong Tek was also a religious leader, Khye Bumsa was not only blessed with three sons but he was prophesied that his successors would be the rulers of Sikkim. In due course of times the relationship between two culminated in a treaty of brotherhood. This treaty brought about ties of brotherhood between the Lepchas and the Bhutias. The relationship further developed between the communities and as a result, a treaty called "the Blood Brotherhood Treaty" was signed between them at Kabi Longtsok. The famous Blood Brotherhood Treaty signed at Kabi Lungtsok in 1275 AD had brought a feeling of great friendship among the Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali/Gorkha communities (Chhetry and Choudhury, 2017). Mipon Rab, the third

son of Khye Bumsa succeeded his father and subsequently Guru Tashi, the fourth son succeeded Mipon Rab and shifted to Gangtok. After the death of Thekong Tok, on the other hand, the Lepchas broke into minor clans. They also steadily bowed to Guru Tashi for protection and leadership. Thus, this way he paved a way for a regular monarchy and became the first ruler of Sikkim not administratively though. Later in 1642, the fifth generation descendant of Khye Bumsa, Phuntsok Namgyal, was consecrated as the first Chogyal of Sikkim by the three venerated Lamas who came from the North, West and South to Yuksom, marking the beginning of the monarchy.

While going through the history of Sikkim it can be found that the installation of Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim was not so easy. Way before the signing of tripartite agreement amongst the Lepchas, the Limboos and the Bhutias, there were resentment against the supremacy of the Namgyal Dynasty which led to conflict situation back then. Not only the Mangars, but also the Lepchas and the Limboos were also against the installation of the Namgyal Dynasty and its supremacy over them. In the year 1642, when Phuntshok Namgyal and his adherents were heading towards Yoksom for coronation, the Lepchas and the Limboos offended the installation. They literally fought with the Bhutia force that was well equipped with guns, swords, arrows and spears at Geyzing, West Sikkim. However, they were defeated with many killed while few who survived fled away but many Bhutias were also killed during this incident.

The then Mangar's king Santusati Sen of Mangarjong of Mangsari, West Sikkim was also against the installation of the Namgyal Dyanasty and its supremacy over them in Sikkim. He fought with the Bhutia force but was defeated and fled away to Lungchok, West Sikkim. He then sought help of Limboo king of Lungchok, Nahan Mabohang and they fought jointly with the Bhutia force. It is also found in the history that when the Limboos and the Mangar chiefs made war against Phuntsho Namgyal,

he had to bring Tibetan soldiers and with their help he won the war against them. In the war Santusati Sen was killed, which compelled the Limboo king to accept the supremacy of the Namgyal Dyanasty. It is said that the wife of Santusati Sen also invited the victorious Bhutia force to participate in the funeral of her husband where the wife of Santusati Sen tricked them with poisoned alcoholic drink, killing many of them. The Limboo chiefs were given full sovereignty for their districts by the Phuntsho Namgyal and agreed on maintaining himself as their nominal King. In 1642, the fifth generation descendant of Khye Bumsa, Phuntsok Namgyal, was consecrated as the first Chogyal of Sikkim by the three venerated Lamas who came from the North, West and South to Yuksom, marking the beginning of the monarchy. But then the task ahead was to consolidate the land resources of all the communities together which were accomplished by Phuntshok Namgyal with the advice of three venerated lamas. The King or the Chogyal invited all the chiefs of the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Limboos and signed the Tripartite Treaty of *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum*⁸.

The Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum treaty was signed by 24 persons out of which, 8 were Bhutia Ministers, 12 were Tsong leaders and 4 were the Lepcha leaders. It was mentioned in the treaty that the people *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum* will hereafter integrate our wishes and will not have our separate self Government but will have only one destiny and one Government. It was mentioned that if any among *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum* would not abide by the pledge will be made punished according to the degree of crime he has committed from slight physical punishment to the extreme of death penalty. No hesitation will be made in execution of this punishment so that all may keep this in their mind. The Greater Sikkim is the result of the Tripartite Treaty of *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum*.

⁸Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum means the Bhutia, the Lepcha and the Limboo together.

3.4 Other Inhabitants

At present there is little evidence to indicate the precise origins of the Tibeto-Sikkimese population who 'ruled' Sikkim. However, what we can say with some degree of certainty is that there were probably different migrations to Sikkim which occurred at different times, and that these waves of migration into Greater-Sikkim came from many different locations both within Tibet and along the Himalayan ranges, and continued well into the twentieth century (Mullard, 2011).

Apart from only the Lepchas, the Bhutias, the Limboos and the Mangars there are other Nepali communities that live in Sikkim, they are Rais, Dewans, Sunwars, Gurungs, Tamangs, Bhujels, Thamis, Bahuns, Chettris, Kamis and Damais. The Shah rulers' invasion and ruling of Sikkim from 1770 to 1810 followed by British encouragement for settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim during the 19th century can be seen as two important events in Sikkim's history that led to Nepalese migration and their rightful settlement in Sikkim. Given below are brief overviews of origin of these Nepali communities who are also considered inhabitants of Sikkim.

3.4.1 The Rais: Khambus or Rais are said to be the descendents of ancient Kiratas from the pre-historically occupied areas of Khambuwan. The Kiratas are amongst the oldest inhabitants of Nepal and are also referred as Kirati. Nepal was not a single political unit, it was divided into many princely states ruled by respective Chiefs. The Gorkha King Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1744 AD started its unification. The Rai is a title given to the King of those princely states until unification of Nepal in 1769. They have close affinity with the Limboos of Sikkim. They were in reality the victims of Nepal unification that led them to lose almost all Khambu ethnographic characters. Back then the Gorkha kingdom under the able leadership of Prithvi Narayan Shah, extended from East of Kashmir to River Teesta, side by side keeping and taking along

the dynamic hindu tradition. Thus the common boundary and flexible movement led the Rai's migration to then Greater Sikkim.

3.4.2 The Dewans: They are also the descendents of ancient Kiratas. They usually use the term Dewan, which is a title given to the Yakhas by the Gorkha Kings of Nepal as their surname. They are negligible in number and often counted as Rais or Limboos. They do have few common cultural traits with Rais and Limboos yet they are different. Being a small tribal group, the history of Yakha/Dewan has tended to be subsumed under the history of other ethnic groups. The Yakha population is not recorded separately in the censuses in both Nepal and Sikkim not because of their small number but because they are counted among the Rais. But they are an independent community. They have migrated to Sikkim or they are in Sikkim because of flexible boundaries or border of two nations way back in time.

3.4.3 The Sunwars: The origin history of Sunwar community is a mystery, but it is believed that they came to Nepal from the very distant land of Churdji Langchi. They are the aboriginal tribes inhabiting on both banks of the Sun Kosi river, the West and the North of Nepal. The term Sunwar is derived from the Sun Kosi river where they inhabit. But they use the title Mukhia more often, which is a term or title given by the Gorkha conquerors. They also call themselves 'Koinch', because of their belief that they have originated in a cliff called Kuin. They are less in number consisting only 2091 in the whole of Sikkim according to the voter's list of 1999.

3.4.4 The Gurungs: The Gurungs are autonomous tribes belonging to the Himalayas of Western Nepal. Their historical account suggests that they have come from Po huing, a land that lies beyond Nepal somewhere in Tibet. A word Tamu is also widely used instead of Gurung but more so during verbal references which basically means

people who are brave and fearless. Their existence in Sikkim in the prehistoric period is difficult to prove. They generally started to settle in huge numbers in parts of Greater Sikkim right after they began to be recruited by the Britishers following the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814-15, as Mangars and Gurungs were their first preferences. A good number of Gurungs were also copper miners and coin minters. At the same time we should accept the fact that in the absence of proper boundaries duly limiting their movement across the Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim and Bhutan settling anywhere may ever have been an issue for them. Further, the boundaries between these two Himalayan Kingdoms have changed several times owing to invasion and conquest which resulted in changing of geographical boundaries while the population living there did not reallocate accordingly.

3.4.5 The Tamangs: Diverse historians as well as historical writers in the past have proposed a number of origin assumptions concerning Tamang people. Some historians suggest that they are original inhabitants of Nepal while others are of the view that they came from a place, which was about fifteen days journey inside Tibet. They were originally called 'Bhote' meaning someone belonging to Bhot which is another name for Tibet but later on they started calling themselves as Tamang as they were horse traders and in Tibetan language 'Ta' means 'horse' while 'mang' means 'traders'. The reason behind calling themselves as Tamang is because the term 'Bhote' was felt to be highly offensive and disagreeable to most of Nepalis. Tamang having acquired much of the culture of Hinduized Nepali, considered themselves more as Nepali avoiding the term 'Bhote'. It is believed that their places of inhabitants in Nepal were conquered by some other races who subjected them to many indignities and hardships, made them slaves and forced them to do all the tough

work. So to escape from those hardships, they might have settled in parts of Greater Sikkim and present day Sikkim.

3.4.6 The Sherpas: The Sherpas are of Tibetan origin. The name Sherpa means ‘Eastern People’ in the Tibetan language. It is said that Sherpas’ original homeland was in Kham region of Eastern Tibet (China). However, Sherpas of Nepal refer to Solukhumbu as their homeland while those settled in parts of Indian state such as West Bengal and Sikkim have a similar view and call these parts of India as their home since they have been living here since ages. Sherpas’ *Mola*⁹, says their original homeland was in Kham and also reveals how they migrated or fled away from their original homeland Kham when their country was attacked by invaders.

Similarly there are many other communities residing in Sikkim such as the Khasa who were originally from north-west part of India. There are varied accounts of their origin but universally the Khasas define themselves as Hindus with distinct caste system as Bahuns, then Chettris at higher Khasas and Kamis, Damais and Sarkis at lower Khasas (Subba, 2011). As there is no particular text or literature that proves their claim over this part of the area but with whatever information is available as historical facts their existence in both Greater Sikkim and Greater Nepal is appropriately established. It goes to prove that in the absence of stiff boundaries between Sikkim and its bordering areas, the movement of people as well as permanent migration may on no account have been an issue. Further, there was hardly any political resistance during such resettlements as the lands were plenty while there was hardly enough inhabitants living in such places. The boundaries of both the nations have changed several times during the course of history. There have been times when

⁹Mola is a speech making tradition which is orally narrated sometimes like a story on the occasion of wedding.

parts of Nepal were under Sikkim's jurisdiction and similarly parts of Sikkim were under Nepal's control. For instance present day Darjeeling district and Kalimpong District of West Bengal was initially part of Sikkim which later went on to be controlled by Nepal and finally it was ceded to British India in 1835. Thus, it was quite obvious that the different communities living in Sikkim, Nepal as well as those living in present day Darjeeling and Kalimpong District for that matter moved freely and comfortably settled at different places within these hilly terrains. Therefore, it is evident that those left out hill tribes that are living now in Sikkim, have migrated and settled at different times during the development of these geographical areas. In the same way it may be assumed that some of the earlier mentioned tribes were already living in these landscapes alongside the Limboos and the Mangars but were probably fewer in number as compared to their counterparts and was in reality over shadowed by the majority of Limboos or Mangars.

3.5 Lists of Chogyals who ruled Sikkim from 1642-1975

1. Phuntsok Namgyal : 1642 – 1670
2. Tensung Namgyal : 1670 – 1700
3. Chagdor Namgyal : 1700-1717
Yugthing Tishey acted as regent during the infancy of the Chogyal when he attended secular education at Lhasa
4. Gyurmed Namgyal : 1717-1738
Dzogchen Kyabgeon Jigme Pao acted as regent during the infancy of Chogyal Gyurmed who ascended the throne at the age of ten
5. Namgyal Pintso : 1738-1780
(i) Tshe-chu-dar Changzod Tamding/Tamding Gyalpo acted as regent for about 3 years (1738-1741)
(ii) Rabden Sarpa acted as regent for 6 years (1747 - 1753)
6. Tenzing Namgyal : 1780-1793
Namgyal Tshering Densapa acted as the regent 1790 – 1793
7. Tshugphue Namgyal : 1793 – 1863

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| 8. Sidkeong Namgyal | : | 1863 – 1874 |
| 9. Sir Thutob Namgyal | : | 1874 – 1914 |
| 10. Sidkeong Tulku | : | 1914 (for a short period of about 5 months only) |
| 11. Sir Tashi Namgyal | : | 1914 – 1963 |
| 12. Palden Thondup Namgyal | : | 1963 - 1975 |

3.6 History of Disintegration of Greater Sikkim

During the reign of first Chogyal Phuntsok Namgyal, the territory of Sikkim extended to Chumbi valley in the North, Tagongla (Bhutan) in the East, Titalia (Bihar) in the South and Devagaon (Bangladesh) and Singalila range in the West. He played an important role in improving ethnic relations with other communities in this region. Mangars were allowed to keep their freedom at a payment of annual taxes while Limboos or Tsongs could use their title of 'Subba'. For the efficiency of administration he divided the territory into twelve districts or Dzongs and governors or Dzonpens were appointed these Dzongs.

During the reign of third Chogyal Chagdor Namgyal, Bhutanese King invaded Eastern region of Sikkim in early 1700AD. The Chogyal being a juvenile back then fled away to Lhasa, handing over the Durbar to his Chief Minister Yukthing Arup. Except Chumbi, Ilam and Limbuwan area, Bhutanese occupied the entire area of Sikkim. The Bhutanese even captured the Palace of Sikkim and ruled Sikkim for eight years. But, once the Sikkimese King became youthful and wise enough, he requested the then Dalai Lama for his assistance in the matter. Accordingly, Dalai Lama wrote a letter to the Bhutanese King requesting him to withdraw his forces from Sikkim. Thus, after the withdrawal of Bhutanese forces from Sikkim Chogyal Chagdor Namgyal to Sikkim resumed his charge of the kingdom. However, it was found that the Bhutanese still maintained their positions at Fort Dumsang (now in Kalimpong

District, West Bengal) and retained areas up to Tegongla. Again the lands were annexed by Bhutan during their second invasion in 1718 AD (Subba, 1999).

The historical accounts suggest that during the reign of fourth Chogyal Gyurmed Namgyal, the Limboos were subjected to lot of unnecessary harassments. They were asked over to fight unnecessarily and built forts and walls. Even though Limboos played a critical role in forming the Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim by signing the all acclaimed Tripartite Treaty, they were deprived of their due share in administration and they were also denied of benefits available to communities dearer to the monarchy. Out of disappointment, the Limboos finally threw off their adherence and formed their self governed country which they called as Limbuwan. During the reign of fourth Chogyal is when a boundary issue arose between Bhutan and Sikkim whereby Sikkim forever lost to Bhutan huge areas east of river Teesta including present day Kalimpong and Terai region.

During the Gorkha invasion of 1774 AD, Sikkim lost its Eastern hills, including all the territory west of the Singalila watershed. The Gorkhas controlled the entire territory as far East as the Teesta River in the Terai. The Gorkhas occupied Western Sikkim from 1780 AD to 1814 AD. The area of Sikkim that were occupied by the Gorkha ruler was acquired by British India through the Treaty of Sugauli in 1814 AD and was later reinstated to Sikkim through the Treaty of Titalia in 1817 AD by British India, under which the whole countryside between Mechi and Teesta was restored to Sikkim and sovereignty being guaranteed by the British India. It was during a journey of Mr. J. W. Grant, he was attracted by the location and beauty of picturesque Darjeeling. After few years of which they negotiated a deed of grant to Raja, but later annexed it forever. The main event that led to the complete annexation of Darjeeling by Britishers was when in the year 1849 two Britishers Sir Joshep

Dalton Hooker and Dr. Archibald Campbell was detained and made prisoners by a Diwan of Sikkim, annoyed British Government sent up a force and annexed all the Terai areas of Sikkim.

In the year 1886, the Tibetans built a fort at Lingtu in Sikkim which they refused to vacate but later they were compelled to do so when in March 1888 Sikkim sent its forces to Lingtu. Various negotiations were opened afterwards to settle the disputes between Sikkim and Tibet. At last Sikkim had to lose Chumbi valley to Tibet by a convention signed between Great Britain and China (Risley, 1844).

3.7 Who were considered “Sikkimese”?

Sikkim’s monarchical history dates back to the ascension of the first Chogyal of Sikkim, Phuntsok Namgyal in the year 1642. Prior to this period, the ancestors of the Namgyal House of Sikkim were living in Chumbi, which then belonged to Sikkim. One of the ancestors of Phuntsok Namgyal named Khye Bumsa swore a blood relation with Thekong Tek a Lepcha chief at Kabi-Longtsok. Gradually, the Lephas and the Bhutias settled in Sikkim and were able to live in harmony without much tension and conflict. The invasion of the Bhutanese from Bhutan and later of the Nepalis from Nepal accounts for much of the loss of Sikkimese territory to these two neighboring kingdoms. It was during these periods that Sikkim showed a steady increase of Nepalis in the region. It was British, who in later part of the 19th century encouraged the increase of Nepali population in Sikkim. Later in the 20th century, when the question of identifying and pronouncing Sikkimese nationals arose, the Proclamation of the Chogyal of Sikkim, the Sikkim Government initiated the move for registering the names of Sikkimese nationals under a regulation known as the Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1961. The Regulation clearly defines the status of Sikkim Subjects and other provisions for acquisition and loss of the said status. The

Sikkim Subjects Register of 1961 shows a total of about 1.50 lakh names. The Sikkim Subjects Register contains the list of names of the holders of Sikkim Subjects Certificate, along with the name of the person's father, date of birth, and place of residence. Thus, it is a good reference to those who wish to obtain Sikkim Subjects Certificate following the due process of law or for checking the validity of their certificates.

Those who did not qualify for subjecthood under the rules of the Regulation were not included in the list. There were a number of cases whereby applications were cancelled due to disqualification of the applicant. Most of these were either Nepali immigrant from Nepal or Tibetan refugees. Many of the unqualified Nepalis moved to Assam but some of them returned to Sikkim later on. The concerned authorities of the Sikkim Subjects Committee of 1961 mentioned that the registration of these names was a very thorough and exhaustive process.

Under the provisions of the Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1961, the criteria for a person to acquire Sikkim subjects are as follows;

1. Every person who has his domicile in the territory of Sikkim immediately before the commencement of this Regulation shall be a Sikkim subject if he
 - a) was born in the territory of Sikkim and is a resident therein, or
 - b) has been ordinarily resident in the territory of Sikkim for a period of not less than fifteen years immediately preceding such commencement:
Provided that in counting the period of fifteen years any absence from the said territory on account of service under the Government of India shall be disregarded; or
 - c) is the wife or minor child of a person mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b):

Provided that a person shall not be a Sikkim subject under this section unless he makes a declaration to the effect that he is not a citizen of any other country at the time of inclusion of his name in the register of Sikkim subjects to be maintained under the Regulation:

Provided further that, in the case of a minor or person of unsound mind, such declaration be made by his guardian.

2. Certain person, though not domiciled in Sikkim, can become Sikkim subjects if he is a person whose ancestors were deemed to be Sikkim subjects prior to the year 1850.
3. A person can also acquire Sikkim Subjects through descent. Every person born after the commencement of this Regulation shall be a Sikkim subject if at the time of his birth his father is a Sikkim subject under the Regulation, whether or not the birth takes place in the territory of Sikkim.
4. Sikkim subject can also be acquired through marriage by a woman of foreign nationality who renounces her former nationality on being married to a Sikkim subject.
5. A person can also become a Sikkim subject through naturalization by making an application to the Government of Sikkim in the manner prescribed by the rules under the Regulation (Kazi, 2009).

3.8 Subjugation during the Chogyal Regime

There are numerous historical accounts wherein the common people of Sikkim were subjected to exploitation and harassment during Chogyal's regime especially by Kazis, Thekedars, Landlords, Mandals etc. The general population of Sikkim was being oppressed by the Chogyal's representatives even during the time when Sikkim had already become a protectorate of British India. First Chogyal of Sikkim, Phuntsok

Namgyal divided the territory of Sikkim into twelve districts or dzongs for smooth functioning of the administration where he appointed twelve dzongpens or governors from the Lepcha community of Sikkim. He also appointed twelve Bhutia chiefs representing twelve clans in a council to assist and help the King in administration while the local administration was under the landlords who were then known as Kazi or Thikadars. They were responsible for maintaining law and order, and to collect revenues from the tenants and further deposit the required amount of collections to the country's treasury. Despite of the Tripartite agreement of 'Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum' the Limboos were not given any administrative responsibility. They were treated as second class citizens and were exploited for many years. It is said that the King was not a superior person but was one among the Lamas, his appointee and the Bhutia chieftains on whom the King depended so much. A strong landlordism grew in Sikkim and they grew to such strength that many a times they disobeyed the orders given by the King himself. There were times when Kazis were independently ruling areas under their control. The King and his family had the largest and the most beautiful and fertile lands as their estates in the country. After the establishment of Namgyal Dynasty in 1642, they cleverly aligned with the superior families of the Lepchas while the common Lepchas and Limboos were exploited and dominated. The fertile lands belonging to such ordinary populace were seized. Even the religion of the common people became a problem in the eyes of the Chogyal and his group of representatives. The common people were not allowed to practice their own religion. There was a mass conversion of the Lepchas, who were basically nature worshippers to Buddhism. However, despite having converted Lepchas to Buddhism, the Lepchas were never accorded high positions in the lamaistic order. Their status was reduced to serfs at the mercy of influential Bhutias. The Lepchas and the Limboos were exploited

by the administration through diarchy taxation policy which was introduced by J. C. White. The Taxation Policy of the Namgyal Dynasty was unequal to Bhutia-Lepcha group and Nepali community including the Limboos which brought a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontentment amongst the two groups. The first taxation policy in Sikkim was introduced by Rabden Sherpa Gyalpo. He was a regent deputed by the Tibet Government in Sikkim, where he introduced annual taxation policy. He used to provide a present/gift in the form of a plateful of salt to those who came to pay him respect. Thereafter, he used to keep a note of the names of those recipients of salt and same note was used next year for the assessment of taxes.

During a time when Sikkim was a British protectorate, J. C. White, the then Political Officer encouraged Nepali immigration from Nepal. A series of revenue generating measures were introduced like Kazism, Landlordism, Zamindarism etc. and used all unfair and unjust means for raising or generating revenue particularly from the Nepali ethnic group including the Limboos. They worked together with the Kazis who all were directly connected with the Royal family, the King and its administration. So, they legitimized themselves to exploit, to tax the common people. There were various forms through which the masses were exploited. For example in the electoral practices being adopted under the Namgyal Dyanasty which in principle was meant for the empowerment of people, the people of the kingdom as a whole, the system was biased in nature. In the said electoral setup the Nepali ethnic groups were given less importance and were marginalized in some or the other way which ultimately brought major discontentment and dissatisfaction amongst the Nepali community.

Prior to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union, the Political and administrative powers in Sikkim was in the hands of the minority Bhutia elites. They

attempted to establish their legitimacy for ruling the land with the help of a blood-brotherhood treaty with the Lepchas, who were in truth inhabiting Sikkim before the arrival of the Bhutias to this land. The Lepchas were accommodated as minor partners in the ruling coalition. The Bhutia ruling group had accommodated some Nepali eminent personalities in the ruling alliance but later occupied a subordinate position like the Lepchas. A huge majority of Nepali population was excluded from the governing process and they were treated merely as revenue generators with no political or socio-economic rights. The policies of the Bhutia rulers were such that it offered very little opportunity to majority Nepali population for participation in the government. The Nepalis were often subjected to discriminatory rules such as the Revenue Order No. 1¹⁰.

3.9 Sikkim Merger: A Brief Overview

The system of Government during the Namgyal Dynasty was fundamentally based on absolute monarchy. The King was helped by an assembly consisting of Lamas and the Bhutia chiefs. They were known as the 'Lhade-Mede'. They had no fixed numbers and were nominated by the Kazis and later by the private Secretary of Chogyal. Their jurisdiction was extended right from the marriage of the royal family member to

¹⁰With reference to the order dated the 2nd January, 1897 it is hereby again notified to all Kazis, Thikadars and Mandals in Sikkim, that no Bhutias and Lepchas are to be allowed to sell, mortgage or sublet any of their lands to any person other than Bhutia or Lepcha without the express sanction of the Durbar, or officers empowered in this behalf, whose order will be obtained by the landlord concerned. If any one disobeys this order will be severely punished. In this order the term 'mortgage' means the mortgaging the whole or part of a holding on the Biyaz or Masikata system and the term sublet means the subletting the whole or part of holding on the Pakuria system, where Biyaz means mortgaging land to another person who enjoys the produce of the land as interest, so long as the principle loan remains unpaid, Masikata means, mortgaging of fields to a creditor who enjoys the produce of the field as annual installment towards the loan, Pakuria means sub letting, where a rayot allows another new rayot to settle upon a portion of his own holding, generally receiving from him some rent in cash and some assistance in cultivating his own fields.

Gangtok-C.A.Bell,
17th May, 1917,
Superintending, Sikkim Estate

issues of national importance. They used to provide exclusive advice to Chogyal. Once Sikkim became a British protectorate the administrative control was transformed. The first Political Officer of Sikkim J. C White brought the entire administration under his control. He introduced Advisory Council which composed of only those Kazis and landlords who were faithful towards the British government. But this setup lasted for only for a short period as later on when Charles Bell took over the charge as a Political Officer of Sikkim, the full power of administration was once again transferred to Chogyal Tashi Namgyal.

In the year 1947 British finally departed from India but India continued British colonial policy in Sikkim. With the signing of India Sikkim Peace Treaty India and Sikkim agreed to continue all agreements that existed between British Crown and Sikkim. With the increasing affiliation with India, demands for a democratic government along with basic economic reforms gained momentum. The Chogyal made certain reforms to hold the interests of agitating people. The Chogyal even appointed an Indian Officer as Dewan of Sikkim. The seats were distributed between the Bhutia-Lepcha and the Nepalis for the formation of State Council but there arose a feeling of dissatisfaction (Gurung, 2011).

During the months of January and February 1973, elections were held for the fifth time in Sikkim. New political party named a Sikkim Janta Congress (SJC) emerged in Sikkim which was a product of the merger of the Sikkim State Congress (SSC) and Sikkim Janta Party (SJP). The SJC captured only two seats in the elections while Sikkim National Party (SNP) emerged as the strongest party as it captured eleven (11) out of the eighteen (18) elective seats. The remaining five (5) seats were won by Sikkim National Congress (SNC). During the counting of votes from January 29th onwards, Kazi Lhendup Dorji of SNC and K.C Pradhan of SJC charged the

Presiding Officer on the ground that the Joint Action Council (JAC) of the SNC and SJC has claimed that vote rigging had taken place in one of the constituency. Thousands of angry agitators led by the two parties, marched up to Gangtok on April 4, 1973 and demanded immediate political and administrative reforms. The introduction of universal adult franchise and principle of one man, one vote were some of the demands. The administration in South and West districts of Sikkim was completely paralyzed. They even threatened to increase the intensity of the agitation if their demands were not met.

Lives of many of the Bhutia-Lepchas were under severe threat. Houses were burnt, properties were damaged and looted. Sikkim was now divided into two camps- the Nepalis versus the Bhutia-Lepchas. The plague of communalism had descended all over Sikkim.

On April 8, 1973, the Government of India took over the administration of Sikkim as requested by the Chogyal. An important agreement was signed on May 8, 1973 between the Chogyal, the leaders of the political parties and the Government of India. The agreement envisaged the establishment of a fully responsible Government with a more democratic constitution, guarantee of fundamental rights, rule of law, an independent judiciary, legislative and executive powers to the elected representatives of the people and adult franchise based on one man, one vote.

Preparations for another election to the Legislative Assembly were being made according to the agreement. Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janta Congress merged to form a new party known as Sikkim Congress. Then the elections were held in April 1974. Out of 32 seats the Sikkim Congress captured 31 seats as it had the support of the majority Nepalis.

On May 2, 1974, the new Assembly, under the leadership of Kazi Lhendup Dorji, passed a unanimous resolution to make the Chogyal a constitutional ruler as enshrined in the Tripartite Agreement of May 8, 1974. On June 20, 1974, the Assembly approved the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974, which contemplated more powers to the legislature and the Council of Ministers and intended to make the Chogyal a titular head. The Bill was passed on June 28, 1974.

There were much opposition to the bill particularly from Bhutia-Lepcha community but all such opposition proved futile. The Chogyal had his own reservations for giving his ascent to the bill and there were many things which needed thorough discussions before coming to any definite conclusion but due to enormous political pressure put on him from various sections, the Chogyal finally signed the Bill on 4th July 1974. This Bill made therefore made Sikkim an Associate state of India.

In the month of February 1975, the Chogyal was invited to the coronation ceremony of the King of Nepal. On this occasion, the Chogyal met many foreign dignitaries with whom he exchanged views on the recent political upheaval in Sikkim. However, the Sikkim Assembly members were not pleased with the Chogyal's reference to Sikkim during his visit. On his arrival at Gangtok thousands of Sikkim Congress supporters demanded his abdication.

On April 10th, 1975, an emergency session of the State Assembly was called. The Assembly passed a resolution abolishing the institution of the Chogyal. It also declared Sikkim to be a Constituent unit of India. As a result, the Indian Parliament passed the 36th Constitutional Amendment Bill on April 26, 1975, making Sikkim the 22nd State of the Indian Union while inserting Article 371-F in the Constitution of

India. Sikkim formally became a full-fledged State of India on May 16, 1975 (Kazi, 2007).

3.10 Conclusion

Though there are no written records available of prehistoric periods which are a period before the establishment of Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim, but by the assumptions drawn by various scholars and authors we do have a fair idea that there was no singular nation or a country called Sikkim as such prior to the establishment of the Namgyal monarchy in 1642. There were number of autonomous chieftains belonging to the Limboos, the Lepchas and the Mangars ruled by their respective leaders. Though later on when they all agreed and accepted the supremacy of the Bhutia ruler whether through peaceful treaty or through force, they signed the Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum treaty and accordingly integrated all their land resources to the Namgyal Dynasty.

As we look at the history of Sikkim in depth, right from the raw scattered ‘No Sikkim’¹¹ to ‘Greater Sikkim’¹² to just ‘Sikkim’ of today, this tiny Himalayan state has gone through a massive transformation. It must not have been an easy journey for people from the Tibentan plateau to travel to this region, to convince the population living here, to win over them and rule it as centuries. The Namgyal Dynasty successfully established itself, integrated the small autonomous regions and ruled this land for over 300 years. As we have understood that the Limboos, the Mangars and the Lepchas did not welcomingly accept the supremacy of the Bhutia ruler but history has it that they ultimately agreed and signed the treaty which automatically brought them under the control of the Namgyal Dyanasty. Mangars were taken out of the

¹¹There did not exist the name Sikkim as such

¹²The political border of Sikkim was much bigger than that of today

picture after their disagreement and war against the Bhutia ruler as they fled away from their land in the Greater Sikkim.

Even though the Namgyal Dynasty was established, all the Kings who reigned the throne was not competitive and superior in nature which led to the disintegration of Greater Sikkim. The incompetency of few rulers of Namgyal Dynasty turned Greater Sikkim into geographical Sikkim of today. Few rulers ruled as a puppet in the hands of their Bhutia Chiefs and Lamas. As mentioned in the information provided above the Lepchas and the Nepalis were subjected to lot of exploitation under the dynastic rule. More who suffered were the people belonging to the Nepali community including the Limboos and the Mangars. The ruling Namgyals used them for their benefit but when the time came to pay them back for the deeds, all they received was discontentment and dissatisfaction in return. The discontentment and dissatisfaction amongst the masses is what led to the end of the rule of Namgyal Dynasty and in due course made the erstwhile Sikkim an integral part of the Indian Union.

Chapter IV

Post-Merger Discourse and Sikkimese Identity

Chapter IV

Post-Merger Discourse and Sikkimese Identity

4.1 Introduction

The kingdom of Sikkim became the 22nd State of the Indian Union on 16th May, 1975 as a result of the decision taken unanimously by the State Legislative Assembly on 10th April, 1975. Since then Sikkim is no more a kingdom but a State and an integral part of a country, India.

The popular support back then was for the permanent abolition of the institution of Chogyals which was fulfilled with the merger of Kingdom of Sikkim with the Indian Union. As mentioned in the preceding chapters that the reason behind people seeking abolition of the monarchical rule was due to the ongoing oppressive ruling character of the dynasty as well as due to biased political motives of the Durbar. People of Sikkim were being stressed and oppressed in one way or the other. Such discriminating rules of the ruler/durbar made mostly the Nepali elites to fight against the feudal system and in later period perceive democracy while taking steps to merge with India. They found merger with the Indian Union to be the only solution for getting justice and for transforming such uneven distribution of power. Thus, the then educated as well as politically sound Sikkimese people made use of the opportunity and they left no stone unturned to make Sikkim a democratic state, a part of Indian Union regardless of the fact that the Bhutia elites were absolutely against it. The Bhutia elites perceived democracy as a threat to their political domination and to the identity of a Buddhist state. The Bhutia elites also felt the fear of abolition of their political identity manifested in the institution of the 'Chogyal' and they would be expelled from the power and privileges that they had been exercising until now. Thus,

they condemned democracy and accentuated the need to protect and preserve the ethnic identity of Bhutia-Lepcha community in Sikkim. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of Chogyal came to an end and Sikkim became a part of India in 1975.

After the merger with the Indian Union, Mr. B. B. Lal was appointed as the first Governor of Sikkim on May 16th, 1975. Article 371F¹³ was incorporated in the Constitution of India which provided a special constitutional status to the state of Sikkim. One of the basic and the important rule or the tenet of the provision of the Article 371F is:

The article grant for continuation of old laws of Sikkim even after the merger, which is stated as “All laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim or any part there of shall continue to be in the force therein until amended/repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority”.

Apart from Article 371F, Sikkim has also been listed in special category states of India. The concept of a special category state was first introduced in 1969 when the 5th Finance Commission sought to provide certain disadvantaged states preferential treatment in the form of central assistance and tax breaks. There are eleven states altogether that have been granted special status, Sikkim being one of them now. The rational for special status is that certain states, because of inherent features, have a low resource base and cannot mobilize resources for development. Some of the features required for special status are:

1. Hilly and difficult terrain;
2. Low population density or sizeable share of tribal population;

¹³See Appendix for details

3. Strategic location along with borders with neighbouring countries;
4. Economic and infrastructural backwardness; and
5. Non-viable nature of state finances.

The Planning Commission allocates funds to states through central assistance for state plans. Central assistance can be broadly split into three components: Normal Central Assistance (NCA), Additional Central Assistance (ACA) and Special Central Assistance (SCA). Special category states also receive specific assistance addressing features like hill areas, tribal sub-plans and border areas. Beyond additional plan resources, special category states can enjoy concessions in excise and customs duties, income tax rates and corporate tax rates as determined by the Government. The Planning Commission also allocates funds for ACA (assistance for externally aided projects and other specific project) and funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). The Finance Commission recommends the principles governing non-plan grants and loans to states. Examples of grants would include funds for disaster relief, maintenance of roads and other state-specified requests (Padmanabham, 2013).

The aftermath of merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union was not a smooth one. The monarchy gave way to democracy and many of the issues continued in democratic Sikkim. Socio-economic issues continued to exist in the Sikkimese society. Sikkimese people fought their way to end monarchy and merged with the Indian union out of dissatisfaction and humility faced during the Chogyal's reign but merger did not end the overall dissatisfaction of the people. Although the discontentment of the people of Sikkim was not entirely on the same ground as during the monarchy but it made sure that all was not well immediately after the merger.

4.2 Obstructions Immediately after the Merger

There were many obstructions that came in way of democratic Sikkim. Sikkim being a newly formed state of India the Sikkimese society was yet to get over the monarchical hangover. Turning a once separate kingdom into a part of an Indian Union brought many challenges along. Following are the brief overview of few of the major challenges that Sikkim as a state, the State Government and its citizens had to face:

4.2.1 Citizenship Issue

As Sikkim became the 22nd State of the Indian Union in 1975, the people of Sikkim basically who had been able to register themselves as Sikkimese nationals under the Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1961 automatically became Indian Citizens. This was in accordance with the existing law of India found in Section 7 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, which states that “If any territory becomes a part of India, the Central Government may, by order notified in the official Gazette, specify the persons who shall be citizens of India by reason of their connection with that territory; and those persons shall be citizens of India as from the date to be specified in the order”. On May 16, 1975, the Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi passed a notification which stated that “In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 7 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, the Central Government hereby makes the order called the Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975. As per Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975, “Every person who immediately before the 26th day of April, 1975 was a Sikkim Subject under the Sikkim Subject Regulation, 1961, shall be deemed to have become a citizen of India on that day”.

The problem arose when many of the people living in Sikkim did not find their names in the voting list of democratic Sikkim. This section of the society, majority of whom had supported the pro-democratic movement found themselves extremely

displeased by the situation they were in. The problem plant that had grown after the merger had its roots in the 1961, Sikkim Subjects Regulation under proclamation of the Chogyal of Sikkim. Under the said proclamation,, the Sikkim Government had initiated the move for registering the names of Sikkimese nationals under a regulation known as the Sikkim Subjects Regulation 1961, which clearly laid down the provisions for acquisition and loss of the Sikkim Subject status. The Sikkim Subjects Register of 1961 shows a total of around 1.50 lakh names. As these names were registered in 1961, it was alleged that a substantial number of people (nearly 30,000 as mentioned in few sources) were considered unqualified to be the subjects of Sikkim. Hence, making those people Stateless despite them being early settlers in the land of Sikkim.

Actually, the emergence of Sikkimese identity came into existence in broader context, particularly after the Durbar (during the regime of Chogyal) recognized the earliest settlers as legal settlers who had been given the status of Subject of Sikkim. They are referred to as Sikkimese by Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961 (Rao, 1978). The main intention of this recognition was to enhance the level of the economic and political interests of the ruling elites by monopolizing their dominance over the limited resources. Initially, such recognition mainly referred to Sikkimese mainly Bhutias, Lepchas and Tsongs as among categories of persons entitled to citizenship. It excluded Nepalese who formed about 70 percent of the population of Sikkim. But later, to allay the fears of the Nepalese all references to the communities were deleted from the regulations with effect from 16th January, 1962 (Ibid). Indeed, the Bhutia, Lepcha and the Limbus were automatically recognized as the Sikkimese by the regulations. But it was not easily attainable even for the earliest Nepalese settlers in general, who were later recognized and granted Sikkimese status after initial

resistance from a section of (anti-Nepalese) ruling elites, though the plainsmen had always been excluded (Sinha, 1981).

Indeed, the Sikkim ruling Durbar had maintained a register of all such legal settlers who were the Sikkim subjects (Kotturan, 1983) i.e. Sikkimese. In this context, having individual tilling rights on certain plot of arable land naturally played positive role particularly for Nepalese to become eligible for Sikkimese status. Because, among the Nepalese only the earliest settlers were given such tilling rights on certain plots of land they cultivated since many decades, and their names were maintained in a register after 1951 land reform programme. Interestingly, it may be mentioned here that the voters for electing the members of the village Panchayats (as they came to be established in 1966 according to the Panchayat Act of 1965) were mainly property-holders who pay land revenue and local tax (Sinha, 1975). It signifies that the proprietary rights of the people on a certain plot of land had been most crucial in determining the Sikkim Subjects recognition i.e. Sikkimese and the voting rights of the people in pre-merger period of Sikkim as well.

Therefore, post merger when it was expected that the Sikkim Citizenship Order 1975 would finally settle the citizenship issue, it instead raised dissatisfaction among those whose names were not found in the voter list as a result of their names not being in the Sikkim Subject Register. Majority of them wanted revision to the Sikkim Citizenship Order 1975. The State Government (Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government) had openly supported those masses and in 1982, the State Government recommended to the centre to make 1970 as the base year for granting citizenship. Even his successor Bhim Bahadur Gurung had supported citizenship rights to the stateless people. But this move of the State Government had a mixed response and made few sections of the society feel little insecure as they feared losing their distinct

identity if the Centre accepts the State Government's recommendation. Many then believed that Chief Minister Mr. N. B. Bhandari can no longer be considered as the people's leader but as history has it, he managed to win the election of 1984. Clearly the citizenship issue did not end there and these issues continue to crop up in the form of Pink Cards, Residence Certificate and fake Sikkim Subject Certificate/Certificate of Identification cases.

4.2.2 Concern Over State Assembly Seat Reservation

Politics over the issue of seat reservation for Gorkha/Nepali sub-ethnic groups Limboo and Tamang has been occupying a major space in the larger politics in Sikkim. In the name of accomplishing the political rights of these communities, time and again, many political parties and other associated organizations have been brewing their hot cups of tea in the political atmosphere in Sikkim (Chhetry and Choudhury, 2020). While going through the history of Sikkim in the last century, it is found that the Sikkim State Council initially consisted of 17 members. The Chogyal issued two Royal proclamations in January 1952 and March 1953 with the provisions for the distribution of seats based on the parity formula along with the complicated mode of election to the State Council. A council consisted of Dewan as its President along with 12 elected members and 5 nominated members. The 12 elective seats in the state council were further equally divided among the Bhutia-Lepcha and the Nepali communities. The Chogyal was to appoint five nominees. The parity formula adopted had equated the seat share of Bhutia-Lepcha constituting 25% of the population with the majority of Nepali comprising of 75% of the population. As per the proclamation 'whereas the Bhutia-Lepcha candidates were to be elected first by the Bhutia-Lepcha voters and then by the whole electorate of the Constituencies, the Nepali candidates were to be returned by the whole electorate of the Constituency'.

The 1953 constitutional proclamation set out the powers of the Executive Council and composition etc. and established a Diarchy, in which certain reserved subjects were kept under the exclusive control of the Chogyal, while the transferred subjects were to be administered by the people's representatives. The first general election in Sikkim was held in 1953, on the parity formula. The Royal Proclamation of 1958 slightly modified the 'Parity System'. The number of the Councilors was raised from 17 to 20 with 6 representatives of Nepali while the representation of Bhutia-Lepcha remained unaltered. Two new elective seats, one general and other reserved for the Sangha (Monastery), were included and the nominated members were raised from five to six. The Royal Proclamation of 1966 added four more seats to the State Council, one each for the Scheduled Caste, the Tsongs, the Nepali and the Lepcha-Bhutia, thus raising the number of seats to 24, of which 18 were elective. Till 1972 the Sikkim Council consisted of 24 members excluding the President. Chogyal later on desired that the government should be carried on equally by two major groups of Bhutias-Lepchas and Nepalis and the communities should live in harmony and it should be maintained for the goal of all. Thus he divided the seats equally. Till 1972, the Sikkim Council consisted of 24 members excluding the President.

In the year 1979, four years after the merger with the Indian Union, the Chief Minister of Sikkim Mr. Nar Bahadur Bhandari voiced his demand for restoration of seat reserved for Sikkimese Nepalese in the State Assembly that was taken away during the 'Janata Government' in 1979. He said that there will not be any elections if there is no reservation. Even the opposition party at that time the Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) led by R. C. Poudyal had filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging the Constitutional validity of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1980, which was responsible for abolishing the reserved seats for

Sikkimese Nepalese in the Assembly. Both the parties took stand on the seat reservation. This demand was basically because there was a fear that if this demand is not accepted, even the majority community of today might get reduced to a minority. That may ultimately lead to the gradual extinction of the distinct cultural historical identity of the people of Sikkim.

4.3 Internal Migration

Article 19 of the Constitution of India guarantees all its citizens, the right to reside and settle anywhere in India. This freedom of movement is considered ideal for the development of any free and liberal economy. A change in the place of residence at least once is quite common in a wide range of countries. Internal migrants, those who move within national boundaries are several times more significant in terms of the numbers involved compared to those who move across countries, but fail to receive the attention international migration receives from researchers, international organizations and funding agencies.

Internal Migration in Indian Context

India's total population, as recorded in the recently concluded Census 2011, stands at 1.21 billion. Internal migrants in India constitute a large population. 309 million internal migrants or 30 percent of the population (Census of India, 2001), and by more recent estimates 326 million or 28.5 percent of the population (NSSO 2007-08). Despite the fact that approximately three out of every ten Indians are internal migrants, internal migration has been accorded very low priority by the government, and existing policies of the Indian state have failed in providing legal or social protection to this vulnerable group. This can be attributed in part to a serious data gap on the extent, nature and magnitude of internal migration. Migration in India is primarily of two types: (a) Long-term migration, resulting in the relocation of an

individual or household and (b) Short-term or seasonal/circular migration, involving back and forth movement between a source and destination. Migrants do not constitute a homogenous category, and migrants are differentiated according to gender, class, ethnicity, language and religion. Women constitute an overwhelming majority of migrants, 70.7 percent of internal migrants as per census 2001, and 80 percent of total internal migrants as per NSSO (2007-08). Marriage is given by women respondents as the most prominent reason for migrating. About 30 percent of internal migrants in India belong to the youth category in the 15-29 age groups. The intensity of migration is expected to increase in the future as a response to economic crises, political instability and global environment change.

Myths and Facts about Internal Migration:

MYTH

“Internal migrants are a drain on society and a burden for the economies of the destination”

FACT

Internal migrants contribute cheap labour for manufacturing and services and in doing so contribute to national GDP, but this is not recognized. Far from being a drain and burden, migrants are in fact providing a subsidy

FACT

Poor migrants typically do the 3-D jobs (Dirty, Dangerous and Degrading) which locals do not want to do; this is different to ‘stealing jobs’

MYTH

“Internal migrants steal jobs from the local population”

MYTH

“Internal migration can be stopped”

FACT

Migration and urbanization are an integral part of economic development and societal transformation, and historical experience has shown that it cannot be stopped

FACT

By not accepting migrants or providing facilities for them, governments are merely increasing the risks and costs of migration and reducing its development potential

MYTH

“Inhospitable and harsh cities are best deterrent to migration flow”

MYTH

“Internal migration is a non-issue in India since all citizens have the right (...) to move freely throughout the territory of India; to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India”

FACT

In practice, internal migrants do not have the freedom and dignity that the Constitution promises. Policy makers and urban planners mostly view migration as a negative process and have therefore created an inconducive and unsupportive environment through neglect and inaction.

FACT

The design of the Census and NSSO data surveys enable respondents to give only a single reason for migration. Though marriage is reported by women as the most prominent reason for migration, women’s labour migration and economic contribution remain inadequately captured owing to this mono causal approach. This has contributed towards undercounting of women’s migration for employment.

MYTH

Women’s migration is mostly for marriage and associational reasons (as members of a migrating family).

Source: UNESCO handbook

Internal migration is an integral part of development and cities are important destinations for migrants. The rising contribution of cities to India's GDP would not be possible without migration and migrant workers. Many positive impacts of migration remain unrecognized. Migrants are indispensable and yet invisible key actors in socially dynamic, culturally innovative and economically prosperous societies (UNESCO).

Even though there are positive consequences of internal migration but there are negative consequences as well. In terms of internal migration into the state of Sikkim as well there are probable consequences that need to be addressed at the earliest to stay away with further untoward consequences in future. There should be strict mechanism to check and protect Sikkimese identity at the same time.

Demographic changes over the years

After the merger with the Indian union, Sikkim has witnessed a huge number of migrations from other parts of the country. It can be assumed from the written history that while people in other parts of the country were already facing the problem of unemployment, Sikkim, a newly formed state had huge number of opportunities lying. Thus, considering the facts, following are the demographic changes that have taken place in Sikkim over the years.

4.3.1 Increased Migration into the State

Migration plays a significant role in livelihood strategies and generally occurs in response to actual or perceived circumstances people face, both in their communities and in areas away from home. Migration is by no means a predictable or homogenous action and thus occurs in response to a wide range of factors, which affect people differently and to which they do not necessarily respond in identical ways

(Choudhury, 2009). When Sikkim became a part of the Indian Union, its population mainly comprised of the three major communities the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalis but after its merger many people from other parts of the country have migrated to this tiny state. While, most of the people who came to Sikkim after its merger with India may have come with their temporary objectives but many among them have decided to permanently settle in this part of the country. Ever since Sikkim's merger the amount of influx of outsiders in the state has only grown over the years. The preceding chapters have specified the details of every community residing here in Sikkim today as ethnic group. Irrespective of the differences, the three ethnic groups have been successfully transitioned from the past to the present state of affairs. These three ethnic groups are said to have migrated to Sikkim at different times in history from three different regions a very long time ago. Regardless to mention that then durbar recognized them as the legal settlers and gave the status of subjects of Sikkim or the Sikkimese under the Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961. The three communities, the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalis have been living here permanently since centuries. Despite the fact that these three communities may too have migrated to this land owing to whatever circumstances but it cannot be denied that these communities have left their earlier place to this region their eternal home.

There was nothing unusual when small number of people from neighboring country India used to come to Sikkim with their sincere motives when Sikkim was under the Chogyal regime. But at the turn of the 19th century when British correlation with Sikkim amplified, the number of migration from the Indian states too increased. The decennial growth before integration of the state into Indian Union, that is during 1931 to 1941 was 10.67, during 1941 to 1951 was 13.34, during 1951 to 1961 was 17.76, during 1961 to 1971 was 17.76, which increased to unprecedented growth rate

of 50.77% during 1971 to 1981 after the merger of the state into the Indian Union, largely due to in-migration to cope with the development activities. The present decennial growth (i.e. between 1991 to 2001) is still on the higher side of 33.06% against the country's 24.66%. As a result, the population density per sq. km has been on the rise. District wise comparison of the population profile showed that the East where the state capital lies is the most populated which accounts for almost 50% of the state population. In-migration to Sikkim became more conspicuous after 1975 with Sikkim becoming the constituent state of India and large quantum of resources was allocated for its development. According to the census data on migration, which primarily covers migration by place of birth and last residence, between 1971 and 1981, Sikkim recorded a very high level of in-migration, 35% to be precise. By 1991, the percentage of migrants to the state decreased in both categories, 19 to 13% by place of birth, and from 16 to 9% by place of last residence. The proportion of male migrants has always been higher than that of women. An analysis of the origin of migrants in the by birth category reveals that while there was a steady decline in the proportion of in-migrants from neighboring countries, there was an increase in the proportion of in-migration from within the country. Thus, by 1991, the percentage of in-migration within India was higher than that of in-migrants from neighboring countries (Subba, 2007).

Earlier it was normal for migrants from plains of India to come and reside in Sikkim on a temporary basis with no intention of permanent settlement in Sikkim. Many of these migrations were to facilitate British government's interests in Sikkim. British from the very start viewed Sikkim as a passageway for establishing trade links with Tibet. The British government was interested in commercial transaction of

English manufactured goods to Tibet via Sikkim. Sikkim had occupied the centre stage in the Himalayan trade and politics during the period that began in 1888.

It was during the 1890's people from places like Bengal, Bihar, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and other places of India, who are generally referred to as 'plainsmen' began to migrate to Sikkim. They were essentially traders participating in the then famous trans-himalayan trade. There were a few from Bengal serving as tutors to the royal family members. Their flow to Sikkim became more noticeable after Sikkim became a protectorate of India in 1950. The second large influx of plainsmen was noticed after 1975 when it became a part of the Indian Union. Lepchas, Limbus and Mangars who were there from the early times, were basically agriculturalist. But for Bhutias, besides agriculture, they also depended on pastoralism and trade. The Tibetans occupied a dominant economic position until the end of the nineteenth century mainly because of their expertise in trading activities. But when, J. C. White was appointed as the first British Political Officer for channelizing trade across the border and for helping Chogyal in the administration of the state. A large number of plainsmen notably the Marwaris, were then engaged in the trade with the Tibetans side by side with the British. Others from Bihar, Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Kerala, and Punjab etc. had also moved there either to engage themselves in subsidiary commercial trade or for service. In the year 1975, the institution of the Chogyal, which had survived in this Himalayan territory for over 300 years, came to an end. In this year, the political and religious control of a particular ethnic group called the Bhutias was simultaneously abolished and the winds of democracy and development began to blow in the hills and valleys of this region. After 1975, each new or expanded segments of occupation in Sikkim has created enough room for the entry of outsiders.

After 1975, the agriculture sector received a major thrust of the state government. There was a new hierarchy of officials engaged in the agricultural development of Sikkim such as at the levels of Directors and in the ICAR (Indian Council of Agriculture and Research), most of which are filled by people from Bengal and UP. Thus, many of the plainsmen entered into the agriculture sector as technical personnel. Besides such technical personnel from the plains of India, there were number of clerks, accountants to sweepers who served at the headquarters of the Agriculture Department at Tadong. Hence, agriculture sector in Sikkim provided ample opportunities to the plainsmen of India.

Similarly after the merger with India, trade and business in Sikkim grew mainly due to the expansion of the infrastructural facilities and graduating of many towns into districts or sub-divisional headquarters. Post merger the trade activities have considerably expanded and diversified in this tiny state. Many of the traders and business owners from outside Sikkim had a natural advantage as they could well communicate with suppliers spread across India and acquire the necessary goods for supply to consumers of Sikkim. Many of these plainsmen who were engaged in contractual activities in Sikkim due to their wide network and reach over resources had an advantage over the hill contractors. So, most of the traders and businessmen from outside faced no resistance from local business owners while they discharged their purpose.

Similarly, post 1975 Sikkim saw rapid expansion in service sector. Educated unemployed from India began to migrate to Sikkim in search of better opportunities. Such migration was not only from then neighboring Darjeeling hills and Dooars but also from as far as Kerela in the South, Gujarat in the West and Jammu and Kashmir in the North-West. There have been accounts where it has been mentioned that until

1977-78 these qualified migrants of India did not even have to wait for a month to get a job in Sikkim's fast expanding service sector.

Post 1975, highly educated and professionally trained migrant population from the plains of India were able to occupy many of the key positions in the service sector available within Sikkim. For instance the Education Department of the Government of Sikkim was virtually controlled by the plainsmen for a very long time (Sarma, 1994). However in recent times, one can witness migration from the neighbouring places such as Darjeeling and Kalimpong of West Bengal to Sikkim for livelihoods such as by opening Restaurants and Bars, Beauty Parlour etc. in large numbers.

4.3.2 Reasons that led outsiders' Migration into the State

In today's scenario of the state, the number of outsiders in the state has increased enormously along with the plainsmen.

The term "Outsider" denotes two sets of people basically:

1. Those who have been living permanently in Sikkim without the possession of "Sikkim Subject Certificate/Certificate of Identification" since so many years,
2. Those people who have come here to earn their livelihood, including of those who are here because of their jobs (Government employees).

In Sikkim or for the Sikkimese people outsider generally refer to a person/people who doesn't possess SSC/COI irrespective of their tenure of living in Sikkim. To prove oneself a Sikkimese one should possess a SSC/COI of Sikkim as paper speaks more than anything else here in the state.

Traditional education of Sikkim was simple life-oriented, practical and experience based. The famous Nepali saying '*pari guni ke ham, haolo joti mang*', meaning 'What

is the use of reading and writing as ultimately you have to plough the field' reflected the thinking of the people of that time. Growing children, till attainment of adolescence, obtained hands-on knowledge of things, ceremonies, and functions. The family was the focal point of nearly all educational endeavors with a key role being played by women. Apart from the reading of Buddhist religious literature at home, education in Sikkim for most of the nineteenth century was of the monastic type. The monastic schools imparted religious education for the preparation of monks to priesthood. Schools in *Tashiding*, *Tulung*, *Pemayongtse* and *Sangacholing* monasteries were famous as centres of monastic education in those days.

The genesis of these schools could be traced back to the arrival of Buddhism in Sikkim. Famous scholars like Shanta Rakshita and Guru Padma-Sambhava brought Buddhism to Tibet, which was later brought back to Sikkim by the Tibetan lamas, who consecrated the first ruler of Sikkim at Yuksom and consequently got the support of temporal power as well. Even today the Ecclesiastical Department in Government of Sikkim has recorded 163 monasteries and temples all over Sikkim excluding the small shrines. Monasteries and temples have made a significant contribution to education in Sikkim. Buddhist literature, especially the Mahayana and Tantric texts, were available in Tibetan, which has been the medium of instruction. The fundamental Buddhist teaching and chanting of some important prayers included in religious books formed the curriculum of monastic education. The curriculum also included the study of diversified subjects such as painting, sculpture, astrology, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, literature, tantra and so on. The Shedas (Monastic Colleges for Higher Studies in Buddhist Literature) at Deorali and Rumtek are primarily aimed at reviving the formal educational role of the monasteries. Christian Missionary Education in Sikkim began in the late nineteenth century with some

support from the landlords/Kazis, some of whose schools had been handed over to Scottish Missionaries. On the whole Christian missionary activities were not favored by the Maharaja. The missionaries were not allowed in Gangtok.

In 1924, Mary Scott was allowed to open a school for girls in Gangtok. The first matriculation class passed the examination (four candidates) in 1945 and the school continued to grow, becoming a recognized higher secondary school in 1961. A striking feature of the Christian Missionary schools for girls was 'industrial' teaching mainly sewing and knitting. 'Vocational training' was also a part of the curriculum. In fact, for many years until the beginning of the twentieth century, primary schools set up by the church offered the only means of basic education. The Bhutia Boarding School (1906) was the first government school in Sikkim. The second government school, Nepali Boarding School was started in 1907 in today's Lal Bazaar area of Gangtok. In 1924, the government amalgamated the Bhutia and Nepali Boarding Schools into what has grown today to become the Sir Tashi Namgyal Academy. By the year 1930, Sikkim had 21 schools (6 government schools, 13 mission schools and 2 schools under landlords). This number continued to increase over the years. In 1961, at the end of the First Plan period, the number of schools in Sikkim was in fact 182, registering an increase of 107 per cent as against in 1954, when there were only 88 schools. Since 1975, following the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union, there has been a steady increase in the number of schools and in the number of teachers. In 1998-99 out of the total number of 1,474 schools in the State, 50 per cent were pre-primary schools, followed by primary schools (34 per cent), middle school (9 per cent), secondary schools (5 per cent) and higher secondary schools (2 per cent). Schools however, are unevenly distributed across districts. Due to its low population density, the North district has the lowest concentration of schools. In 1998-99, hardly

10 per cent of pre-primary schools were located in the North district, against 31 per cent in the East district and 29 per cent in the South district. Its percentage share was nearly 11 per cent of primary schools, while it was as low as 7 per cent for middle and higher secondary schools. It is interesting to observe that 50 per cent of the schools employed hardly 10 per cent of the total number of teachers. This can be attributed to the fact that there are a number of schools where the school teacher ratio is hardly 1:1.02. Primary schools with 35 per cent share in the total number of schools account for a major share of the total number of teachers of 7,771 in the State. Middle schools account for 22 per cent of the total number of teachers followed by; secondary schools (19 per cent), and higher secondary schools (14 per cent). As the importance of education has been understood, the Government has given high priority to this sector. Literacy rates among the population aged 7 years and above have also gone up steadily; moving from 17 percent in 1971 to nearly 57 per cent in 1991. During the same period the rise in female literacy rate has been very impressive, moving from 8.9 per cent to over 46 per cent. Although, the growth in education sector had been steady, but the local population still lacked among outsiders when it came to grabbing and dominating many of the available opportunities. Few of the reasons for such education status may be attributed to the fact that English education started off pretty late in Sikkim as compared to the rest of India, moreover the state of Sikkim did not have its own education boards to cater to the higher educational needs and it was fully dependent on central education boards of India. There is no immediate sign of introducing post-graduate courses in the existing institutions. University Grants Commission (UGC) and national social science institutes like the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)

have not shown interest either in starting postgraduate courses or supporting research relating to the State of Sikkim (Lama, 2001).

Education is the most important step towards development. Education is responsible for the development of an individual, a society and a region as whole. During the days of monarchy Sikkim did not have educated people who could lead the kingdom towards development. Thus, at that point in time when there was a need of educated people in the state, the people from the plains of Indian states migrated to Sikkim. They served Sikkim as Accountants, Teachers, Clerks and at various administrative levels. With the gradual rise in engagement of British Government with Sikkim, it required even more educated professionals to facilitate its development projects. All these factors played a key role in creating influx of outsiders into the state, which became more visible as Sikkim officially became an Indian state in 1975. People, mainly competent youths were already facing unemployment crisis in their respective states of India. So, it served as a great opportunity for them to move to Sikkim and grasp the available opportunities. While, at that point in time most of the Sikkimese people were still illiterate and uneducated which kept them unvoiced. Majority of the Sikkimese populace lacked professional skills in administrative sectors while the migrated population from outside were more skilled as well as professionally trained which gave them ample welcoming opportunities to seize in the newly formed state.

4.3.3 Impact on the Sikkimese People

While ordinarily migrants earn lower incomes than do the native inhabitants of the area to which they move, there are some situations in which the income of migrants is higher. First, the new jobs created in a region may be attractive to both local people and to migrants, but the migrants may have superior skills or patterns of work

behavior that make them more desirable to employers. Regional development in an area with low-skilled manpower will therefore attract skilled individuals from outside. Second, outside entrepreneurs may see opportunities for investment that local people do not perceive or do not have the skills or capital to exploit. Indeed, the local community may not have entrepreneurs capable of responding to new economic opportunities. Third, new employment opportunities may not be initially as attractive to local people as to migrants (Weiner, 1978).

In today's scenario of the state Sikkim, the number of outsiders in the state has increased enormously with majority of them being from the plains of India. By the term "Outsider" in Sikkim we understand those people living/working in Sikkim without being in possession of important documents such as the "Sikkim Subject Certificate/Certificate of Identification". We can see a wide range impact on the indigenous people of Sikkim directly as a result of migration of the outsider (Mukhia and Choudhury, 2017). When the indigenous population faces competition from migrants in their own homeland it is bound create some amount of confusion and pressure on the indigenous populace. This pressure can be easily measured in areas where the interests of indigenous group overlap with the outsiders. Such as, in the case of job markets that is available where outsiders capture the opportunities which originally should have gone to the natives. While in the largest democracy of the world like freedom to migrate anywhere within the country is an enshrined right however the uneven development, levels of desperation and other factors have created friction points among its huge population. Many a time states that were at the receiving end of migration were left to bear the heavy burden that was caused directly or indirectly by the unnatural growth in their state's population. For, migration significantly affected and at times re-casted their domestic order, challenged their

traditional institutional structures, modified existing social arrangements, transformed the forces of integration and fragmentation, and accelerated the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. In a more concise sense migration has become a serious challenge to the long-standing paradigms of certainty and order.

When we look at the history of Sikkim during its early days of Sikkimese kingdom, Bhutias were among the most skilled trading community inhabiting Sikkim. However, the same community faced a stiff contest with the advent of the Marwaris and other Indian trading communities in the state, thereby adversely affecting their trade practice. The arrival of Indian trading communities meant that although they were new to this region but they were old as well as capable when it came to trade and business. Slowly yet steadily these Indian trading communities started dominating most of the trade and business sector in Sikkim, credit to their knowledge, skill and sharp mindset.

Sikkim being a landlocked region, the Indian trading communities carrying out their businesses in Sikkim had a huge advantage. The majority of the commodities that were being supplied to the state of Sikkim and further to Tibet were mainly procured from India which became a positive factor for the Indian trading communities operating in Sikkim. As these communities had undue benefit of language and reach to facilitate their commercial activities. While talking about the local market, they were quick in getting the sense of available business prospects. They swiftly addressed the needs and demands of the people in Sikkim, whether it be about clothing, utensils or anything else. These traders from the plains had an upper hand as they could easily travel outside Sikkim and bring the required consumer goods to be sold in Sikkim. Even though many a times the Bhutias and the trading

communities from the plains of India were involved in similar trading practices, the later comfortably gained more profit.

In conjunction with trade and business, the outsiders took a major share in every accessible sector, be it the education sector or the administrative sector of the state government. People of Sikkim saw a gradual rise in employment of outsiders in the state. Such was the case that many a time number of outsiders employed outnumbered the local people. As mentioned earlier there was no difficulty for outsiders to get a government job here in Sikkim during the initial years of Sikkim's merger with India. In fact proficient outsiders used to acquire a government employment under regular establishment within a month of their application which seems like a distant dream even for the local indigenous youths of Sikkim. Although it is certain that the state government was required to employ learned people from outside as there was shortage of educated locals to fulfill the immediate demands of the newly formed state.

4.3.4 Impact on the Contemporary Period

As decades passed with Sikkim becoming an integral part of the Indian Union, more number of educational institutions came into existence. With growing number of schools in the state it aptly met the demands of the growing population of Sikkim. As local people increasingly became more aware of the importance of education, higher studies and what role education can play in their personal as well as family lives, more people strived towards it. In doing so, there was/is an increasing number of well educated and professionally skilled indigenous populace. However, by the time many of the local people reached the level of education which was suffice to cater to the employment opportunities, many of such avenues were already occupied by the outsiders. Although local people may be willing or able to compete for jobs that at an

earlier time they did not seek, these jobs are no longer easily accessible to them, for migrant employers and job holders are likely to help provide employment to their own friends and relatives (Weiner, 1978). Nevertheless, this seems to be progressively moving in favor of the local indigenous population especially in terms of government employment as more and more locals are getting into various levels of governance. As Sikkim endeavors to become one of the highest literate states of the country, one thing is for certain that the number of educated unemployed is also on the rise.

As Sikkimese people are becoming increasingly aware and educated about their special rights and privileges, the worth of documents such as the Sikkim Subject Certificate and Certificate of Identification has been equally understood by the local Sikkimese people. As per the prevailing norms of the Government of Sikkim anyone who wishes to apply for State Government jobs in Sikkim should possess a Sikkim Subject Certificate/COI. The immediate period after the merger of Sikkim saw huge recruitments of outsiders in state government jobs despite the fact that the prevailing norms of the Government of Sikkim gave first preference to the local Sikkimese candidate. It was mainly due to the fact that the local populace then lacked the required qualifications which would have made them eligible for the available jobs. This is how the outsiders were able to capitalize on the available government jobs in Sikkim as for them documents such as the Sikkim Subject Certificate or Certificate of Identification was not made mandatory. In the present scenario it has become extremely tough to get employed into government sector in Sikkim as the number of educated people is mounting every year while the government can by no means match the job supply with the demand. The circumstances has taken a U-turn as the Sikkim which used to provide respectable government jobs to outsiders is now unable to provide such jobs to even the local qualified candidates.

The state of Sikkim has been provided with a special provision by the Indian Constitution in the form of Article 371F. In a way article 371F of the Indian Constitution is a guardian of Sikkimese people's rights. In accordance with the provisions laid down under Article 371F which speaks about the continuance of all laws in force immediately before the merger of Sikkim, the Sikkimese people till the year 2008 were being governed by Sikkim Income Tax Manual 1948 to the degree that income tax of Sikkimese individuals were concerned. Thus in the year 2008, the old law was repealed and Income Tax Act 1961 was enforced in Sikkim but while doing so, in order to protect the special status of Sikkimese people a Section 10 (26AAA) was incorporated into the act in which the income of a Sikkimese individual from any income arising out of the state of Sikkim has been exempted from income tax. Furthermore, Sikkimese people's dividend income from anywhere is also exempted. It may not be completely out of point to state that the Income Tax exemption that was granted to the indigenous Sikkimese population had some historical foundations. The fact that the Sikkimese people were able to enjoy the fruits of democracy by paying a hefty price in the form of their homeland is one corresponding factor which led to such provisions being granted to the Sikkimese people. In addition, the socio-economic condition of the people of Sikkim during the time of merger was relatively poor as compared to mainstream India. As the indigenous people of Sikkim then had very low or almost no income available to meet their daily needs, the question of paying income tax never cropped up. This may also have been the reason why the Government of India did not extend the Indian Income Tax Act in Sikkim during the time of merger because if they would have intended, it was a straightforward decision for them.

A new clause (26AAA)¹⁴, which was inserted in section 10 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 ('Act') with retrospective effect from assessment year 1990-91 specifically states that "The following income accruing or arising to a Sikkimese individual is exempt from tax—

(a) Income from any source in the State of Sikkim; or

(b) Income by way of dividend or interest on securities."

Therefore, since 2008 Sikkimese people have complete exemption on Income Tax. While this was granted to the indigenous Sikkimese populace it did not cover a certain section of Sikkim's total population. This certain percentage of Sikkim's population primarily comprised of people belonging to Indian trade and business communities who have been settled in Sikkim for decades but did not come under the purview of the provisions of the aforementioned section. Many of these people have been living in Sikkim prior to April 26th, 1975 but they do not possess special documents such as the Sikkim Subject or the Certificate of Identification to make them available for the income tax exemption. They have represented themselves to various executive, legislative and judicial functionaries as well as institutions as "Old Settlers of Sikkim". They characterize themselves as Old Settlers of Sikkim also for the reason that many of them were born in Sikkim, educated in Sikkim while many of them being a second and third generation of the Indian trade and business community living in Sikkim.

In the recent past, the Old Settlers of Sikkim have raised a demand which has unquestionably been an attention grabber in the state of Sikkim. Their demand is plain and simple, they too want equal provisions under the Income Tax Act, so far being

¹⁴See Appendix-II

provided only to the Sikkim Subject holders or COI holders of Sikkim. This is not a huge matter for a country with the second largest population in the world but it has certainly been a matter of concern for the Sikkimese people who have become eligible for such provisions by virtue of them holding a document authenticating their Sikkimese identity. The indigenous people consider this to be a demand for equal right and privileges as being enjoyed only by them till date. They regard this step will not only be confined to income tax rather it may proceed as a first step towards a overall demand for equal rights and privileges by the Old Settlers of Sikkim.

We have to reflect on the time when the present day Old Settlers of Sikkim was offered Sikkimese citizenship by then Chogyal of Sikkim but it was refused by them citing various reasons. They had refused to identify themselves as Sikkimese and often stated that they have their own 'Desh'¹⁵. It was mainly due to the fact that during a time when Sikkim Subject Regulation, 1961 came into effect, India and Sikkim were two separate nations and the business communities operating in Sikkim did not want to lose their Indian identity. They were in Sikkim for a sole economic purpose and had no plans whatsoever about permanently settling in this part of the world. The Durbar when recognized the earlier settlers as legal settlers, the outsiders or migrated plains populace mainly comprising of Indian trade and business community members were not interested in altering their Indian nationality to a Sikkimese one which in a way was an obvious decision for them. The fact that they did not give up their Indian citizenship which was a condition precedent for an entry in the relevant Sikkim Subject Register clears any doubt as to why they were not granted Sikkim Subject Certificates. However, with the changing economic scenario where there is rapid rise in population with an ever growing competition, it was

¹⁵Country from where they belong to.

natural for the Old Settlers of Sikkim to come up with certain demands. The growing rate of Income Tax and the numerous official procedures related to it in particular have left the Old Settlers of Sikkim with no other option then to demand the state as well as the federal government to recognize them as legal settlers or the Sikkimese citizens duly making them eligible to enjoy the same benefits as enjoyed by the indigenous population of Sikkim.

It is evident that an increased volume of uncontrolled migration from the rest of India to the least populous state of the Indian Union has serious repercussion. This can effortlessly lead to detrimental competition between the indigenous Sikkimese and recently migrated population over already scarce resources including jobs, housing, public services and social security. This means that the second smallest state of India with its limited resource and infrastructure will be over burdened. The state institutions will be overburdened with abnormal demands, which when not met will lead to eventual trust deficit between the people and the government eventually leading to total breakdown. Such a development would not only upset the existing system, it would also play into the hands of those who would be ready to blame everything on the arriving migrants. Dissatisfied groups of people thus provide a suitable ground for playing over ethnic, sectarian, religious and cultural differences, a plausible set of circumstances which make it difficult to maintain internal security and order. Not to mention the fact that ethnic tensions and conflicts have been a part of the Indian reality and more importantly of the North-East India along with the tension and conflicts based on tribal principles of heroism, justice, honour, pride, recognition, customary obligation or feeling of revenge.

Historical examples have illustrated that the more a migrant community seeks to integrate itself into the society of the host expense and the more it attempts to adapt

to the way of life of that society, the less threatening this migrant community is perceived to be. The less a migrant community seeks to integrate itself into the host society and the less respect it displays for the values and norms of that society, the more threatening this migrant community is perceived to be. Cultural differences and ethnic conflicts have gained significance and new meanings in national as well as in an international environment characterized by dissolution of traditional political and societal structures. The perceived efforts of migrants to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities are often blamed as a cause of conflict within states. What some see as a development that enriches a society's cultural character, others view it as a threat to their own culture and conception of themselves. It is widely established in people's minds that the existence of migrants has a substantial impact on social stability and economic prosperity, which are inter-related. By becoming citizens of the receiving state, migrants create a cultural, linguistic, religious and possibly a racially distinct minority within the host region thereby altering the character of its society. Thus migration may be seen as threatening communal identity and culture by directly altering the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic components of the population of the receiving state.

The majority of Sikkimese population lacked entrepreneurship qualities in the past while the outsider population operating in Sikkim was already thriving due to their entrepreneurship abilities. Many of those outsiders were not only successful with their entrepreneurship ventures but were also able to occupy position in several government departments. Times are changing with more number of indigenous populace taking on entrepreneurship ventures which so far had remained alien to them. Today, the competition to the local people is not only from the Old Settlers of Sikkim but also from people who are arriving in flocks to earn their livelihood. It has

been the case in Sikkim where the majority indigenous population instead of catering to their own needs is entirely depended on outsiders for countless commercial services.

The Old Settlers of Sikkim insist that discrimination has been made while implementing the Income Tax Act in Sikkim and they too should be granted recognition as legal settlers duly exempting them from Income Tax. Many representations have been made in this regard by the Old settler of Sikkim at the union level. Owing to such issues being raised and representations being made by the Old Settlers of Sikkim, the Sikkimese people have been compelled to think over and take the matter seriously. The Sikkimese people although not completely vocal and against the demands of the Old Settlers of Sikkim are not in favor of diluting their own rights and privileges in spite of everything. Moreover, the three ethnic communities of Sikkim have always lived in harmony with the Indian business community members including those identified as old settlers of Sikkim but at the same time it cannot be denied that the recent developments pertaining to the issues raised by the old settlers has made the indigenous population little apprehensive about the future of Sikkim.

An Association of Old Settlers of Sikkim (AOSS) shocked the locals when they approached the Honorable Supreme Court of Indian in 2013 seeking that the old settlers are also given income tax exemption as given to Sikkimese by the Union government. The association submitted that they represent old settlers of Sikkim living in the State for generations and the old settlers are also entitled to income tax exemption. Moreover, counsels representing AOSS submitted to the Honorable Supreme Court that from the total population who has been exempted from paying income tax “includes about 70 percent people of Nepalese origin and the entire

exemption has come about to appease the electorate”. They argued that if they have to pay income tax in Sikkim, the Nepali population should also pay their taxes as they are originally from Nepal. The Sikkimese community for the major part of history has been a peace loving community and they welcomed everyone with an open heart. The petition filed did not go down well with the Sikkimese community and was in fact taken as a breach of trust by the Sikkimese. Bhaiyaa, Bhaijee, Malik who were part of the Sikkimese society suddenly seemed like strangers who were trying to snatch the rights of the Sikkimese indigenous people by putting up highly contentious base for their case. Overnight it became a hot topic of discussion in Sikkim. The apparent question in the masses was, how could they do this? The main motive behind inserting Article 371F, is one of the prime example of the noble principle of distributive justice throughout the bulkiest constitution. It was agreed by both the sides, in fact, all signatories of two nations to the agreement that Sikkim is not in a position to compete with the mainstream Indians through a general arrangement. Therefore a special arrangement for this territory was conceived. It is almost like reasonable restrictions of the Fundamental rights granted by the Indian Constitution. It can also be seen as an agreement which made Sikkim an Indian State (Dhakal, 2013). The AOSS has raised some peculiar and a controversial issue. ‘Controversial’, because it questions the nationality of the people of Sikkim (Rai, 2013).

Till this time even with world running in chaos for diverse rationales, Sikkim is known for its natural beauty and harmony but this peace and tranquility can unquestionably run into an expiry date. For instance, if the number of outsiders keeps increasing the way it is now in the least populated state of India than it’s just a matter of time when the indigenous population becomes a minority in their own state resulting in several grave consequences. It is likely that the local indigenous

population will begin to develop a feeling of insecurity in their own homeland. The ongoing increase in the population from outside may lead to environmental impacts, socio-economic issues, ethnic conflicts, riots etc. Sikkimese people may undergo similar problems as being faced by the indigenous population of Tripura since decades.

But on the other hand, as migrants are looked upon as ‘outsiders’ by the local host administration, and as a burden on systems and resources at the destination. In India, migrants’ right to the cities denied on the political defence of the ‘son of the soil’ theory, which aims to create vote banks along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. Exclusion and discrimination against migrants take place through political and administrative processes, market mechanisms and socio-economic processes, causing a gulf between migrants and locals (Bhagat, 2011 cited in UNESCO, 2013).

4.4 Disintegration of Different Communities in Sikkim

One cannot be sure about the ancient history of Sikkim because there is no written record available. The three indigenous ethnic groups of Sikkim namely Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese share a history of migration from one part or the other at a time when the very place Sikkim did not even exist or did not mean the same geographical boundary as it is understood today. But, whatever may have been the ancient history of Sikkim, the three ethnic groups have been living together in this land for centuries.

As we can witness today in Sikkim that there are huge number of migrants living in Sikkim pursuing their respective purpose in this tiny Himalayan state but they all cannot be considered Sikkimese by virtue of they being physically present in this territory. As mentioned earlier possessing a Certificate of Identification or a

Sikkim Subject Certificate is a must to be acknowledged as an authentic inhabitant of Sikkim.

In recent times the true worth of COI/SSC has grown tremendously but at the same time it seems that the Sikkimese people are failing to work towards its preservation. A compelling issue such as the fact that only 1/3rd of population of Sikkim possess COI/SSC which promptly suggests that rest of the population are non Sikkimese but still they being a citizen of world largest democracy get to exercise their voting rights in Sikkim and are now considered an factor in forming a government in Sikkim.

In a way, the prevailing situation in Sikkim indeed demands that the Sikkimese people stay unified in protecting their special rights and privileges as enshrined in Article 371F of the constitution of India. But, what we can witness in recent times is that in Sikkim there has been some major disintegration amongst the Sikkimese communities in order to gain and earn greater privileges in the name of community or sub-community. This condition may off course benefit them at the community or sub-community level but at a larger perspective shows that it is bound to do greater bad than good to the delicate fabric safeguarding the indigenous Sikkimese. Formation of associations in the name of a particular community such as the Bhutia associations, Lepcha associations, Nepali associations and likewise there are whole bunch of associations representing a sub community within a larger community has been in development in recent years. Generally, the motive behind such associations is to work for the upliftment of their respective community and sub-community which indeed is a good move for the preservation of their unique culture, tradition and custom but it cannot be completely denied that many a times these associations fail to work towards the preservation of distinct Sikkimese identity as a

whole. These associations have been noticed promoting their vested interests over and above the greater interest of Sikkim and Sikkimese Society. In the long run the community and sub-community thinking is bound to bring greater divide in the Sikkimese society and the prospects are that there will be unnecessary disintegration in the Sikkimese society. These factors have a potential that may cause or rather become a source of intergroup conflict. We cannot absolutely deny the possibility of having inter or intra community conflicts in future as we have seen already in many places around the world, ethnicity issues can certainly lead to minor to major conflict situations.

4.5 Conclusion

Therefore, after going through the above document one may be clear that Sikkim although a second smallest state of India and also relatively new to India has its own unique yet huge issues to deal with. The post merger time of Sikkim has not been a cake walk for the indigenous Sikkimese. Beside, the issues that grew amongst the Sikkimese people have also added to its trouble. The migration of people from other parts of the country has challenged the existence of the indigenous people of Sikkim.

It is certain now that the outsiders in Sikkim are here to stay as they are rightly entitled to in a democratic India but the issues that will to bring together to tiny state has to be dealt with judiciously with the indigenous Sikkimese in mind. The outsiders owe their prosperous today to the local indigenous people who never opposed their arrival and operations in Sikkim. Majority of Sikkimese at the time of merger was backward, illiterate and lacked those efficient qualities which the outsiders possessed. The outsiders being eligible, educated and skilled got good opportunities in Sikkim. Many who migrated belonged to the Indian business communities and have now become successful business families in Sikkim. But, as we know today with the

passage of time the number of outsiders migrating to Sikkim is on the rise. Many of them have already established themselves in sound positions. Today the Sikkimese local people are ready to take on new opportunities but many such avenues have been already occupied by the outsiders. It is also because of such issues, the indigenous Sikkimese populace is facing unemployment in the state. These minor issues building up in the society can be considered as a threat to the peace and harmony of Sikkim. This threat can very well be categorized as non-traditional security threat.

A lot of times it's due to factors such as lack of skills among the Sikkimese people, inability or hesitancy to take risks as well as lack of hereditary business knowledge that makes them more dependent on the outsiders. As the outsiders have already set a strong base for themselves, many of whom are second or third generation workers in their respective occupation, the locals are falling behind and at times find it difficult to compete with the outsiders. This ultimately means that many Sikkimese locals are unable to compete with outsiders in the field of commercial activities including various trade and business. Consequently, the indigenous population has become more dependent towards the Sikkim state government jobs. However, it is impossible for any government to accommodate everyone in government jobs. Adding fuel to the fire now the outsiders are being represented by groups such as the Association of Old Settlers of Sikkim, who have gradually started to demand equal rights and privileges enjoyed so far only by the locals. Some sections of the local society feel that such rights should be exclusively for them while the old settlers consider that they deserve to be treated equally. So, whether knowingly or unknowingly the state seems to be welcoming some unwanted problems. As far as sharing of rights and privileges is concerned, it can be mentioned here that to a certain extent the outsiders themselves are responsible for not getting the same even though

they are residing here since long time back. It is understood due to the fact that they were offered an opportunity to be subjects of Sikkim by then King of Sikkim but they refused. With time the outsiders seems to have realized that they are never going back to their ancestral land which lies in the plains of India. They have become conscious that it is more beneficial to be in Sikkim and make a living here than to go back to their family roots. The outsiders know it very well that if they are counted at par with citizens of Sikkim they will receive more benefits in terms of rights and privileges enjoyed solely by the indigenous people of Sikkim. These are among the facts that have made outsiders or in particular old settlers of Sikkim demand rights and privileges that were initially designed keeping in mind the indigenous people of Sikkim. But seeing the ongoing disintegrating nature of the Sikkimese people and its communities, such demands can also be raised by other people who are residing here in Sikkim since a long time without having the Sikkim Subject Certificate or the Certificate of Identification. As people on all sides become more aware, it is likely that they will come forward with their respective issues and demands which is expected to cause some stir in Sikkim. All said and done while rest of India saw the democratic light in 1947, it took another 28 year for Sikkim to follow the same path. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for all the stake holders of Sikkim to take utmost care whenever and wherever any decision is taken in regard of Sikkim. It is much younger state as compared to other states in the Indian Union and demands extra care. Not to mention that Sikkim needs special attention when it comes to its social, economical, geographical and political developments. What's more important to remember in the larger context of national interest is the truth that Sikkim holds utmost strategic importance for India as it holds three international borders i.e. with

China, Nepal and Bhutan. All such minor yet significant considerations would ensure that the sanctity of Sikkim is maintained at all times.

Chapter V

State's Response and Perception of the people on Ethnic Identity in Sikkim

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5.1 Introduction

For any developing region, backwardness of its people, ethnic tensions and conflicts are seen as a threat to its progress. The people of North-eastern India especially often construct migration stories in an attempt to explain their history and present distribution. These stories assume that language and ethnic boundaries coincide and that they endure through long periods. Ethnic boundaries, however, are even language boundaries are interpreted in varied ways so as to support particular ethnic and political goals. Ethnicity is still used today, both to assert local differences and in an attempt to forge unity. Ethnic sentiments have contributed to simmering violence that has punctuated the history of North-eastern India since the end of the colonial period (Burling, 2007).

Sikkim has always had an image of being one of the most peaceful States in India and till date this image has been maintained by its people. The State has been lucky as it has not witnessed any major conflicts in its recent past. It was obvious in the ancient times that a tiny landlocked kingdom of Sikkim which shared four international borders with Nepal to its west, Tibet to its North, Bhutan to its east and India to its south was a means of access to regions across and for many people it became a destination they arrived at by hiking and trekking for days, weeks and months across the mountains, snowy passes, hills, dense forests and rivers. So, over the centuries many travelers, saints, pilgrims, administrators, traders and herdsmen arrived in the land of Sikkim and made it their home.

Even though a major part of the written history of Sikkim begins from the year 1642 when three revered lamas of the Nyingmapa School of Buddhism-Lhatsun Chenpo, Kahthog Rigzin Chenpo and Ngadog Sempa Chenpo- consecrated Phuntsog Namgyal of Tibet's Minyak clan as the first Chogyal of Sikkim at Yuksom in West Sikkim. But, many such evidences have been found which proves human presence in Sikkim way before 1642. As illustrated by Mr. Shital Pradhan, a devout Sikkimese artifact collector from Sikkim itself in one of his articles that archaeological evidence demonstrates that there was life in this region even during the Neolithic¹⁶ Age. Considering the Neolithic evidences one can be certain that a human life was present in this land since thousands of years. May be the early human habitants never identified themselves as Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali or a Sikkimese for that matter but there should not be any doubt as regards to their affinity to this place as they belonged to this land and this land belonged to them. While some may argue that the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese who all form a majority of today's Sikkimese population have also migrated to this land. In spite of this it can certainly be said that when they migrated to this piece of geography to make these rugged terrains, mountains, hills, lakes, streams, rivers and forest their venerated deity and their eternal home, the Sikkim in today's context could have never existed in their minds.

If we consider Sikkim dating around 1642 when Namgyal monarchy was first established, its territory extended over a much larger area, spilling into present day Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and even some parts of West Bengal which all goes to suggest that there have been free movement of people living in the kingdom. So it becomes

¹⁶The Neolithic Age, also known as New Stone Age. It was characterized by stone tools shaped by polishing or grinding, dependence on domesticated plants or animals, settlement in permanent villages, and the appearance of such crafts as pottery and weaving.

easier to accept and understand as to why today in Sikkim we have inhabitants similar to ones living in Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and northern part of Bengal.

Sikkimese people now consist of three major ethnic indigenous groups which together make the Sikkimese identity unique and distinct. What separates these three ethnic groups is their distinct language, costume, custom, culture, tradition and their distinct roles in the history of Sikkim, not to mention they all have their own migration history as well. Together, whether knowingly or unknowingly all of them have been responsible for creating Sikkim of today. For a major part of the Sikkimese history they all have lived in peace and harmony. These three ethnic communities have always been a party to Sikkim's history whether it is by signing the Tripartite Treaty of "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sun" giving way to a monarchy in the year 1642 or by signing documents consenting to the merger with an Indian Union and reflecting it on the referendum in the year 1975.

With the passage of time particularly after the merger, Sikkim has witnessed steep rise in its population and hence in competition for the opportunities and resources which may be considered all but natural. These factors have in a way resulted in its troubles and confusions. It took much perseverance and hard work from the people of Sikkim to bring Sikkim to its current brand standing. The various ethnic groups residing in this tiny state managed to live together overcoming all the obstacles and hurdles that came along Sikkim's journey. Preceding chapters of this text has already highlighted few of the major issues witnessed by Sikkim in the past. Sikkim and its people have gone through different phases of history, right from the time when Sikkim was not a single political entity or a kingdom to becoming a 22nd State of the Indian Union. Recent history of Sikkimese people suggests that they have keen interest in its development with democracy by their side while keeping their

unique ethnic identity alive. All of the ethnic indigenous populace of Sikkim have worked hard for its holistic betterment. As we have read in the preceding chapters that it was a struggle and consensus amongst the people which ultimately formed the Kingdom of Sikkim in the year 1642. There was always a difference of opinion when it came to merger with the Indian Union while certain section or so to say the majority of Sikkimese wanted complete abolition of monarchy and its merger with India, while some were looking for democracy with Chogyal as a titular head at the same time maintaining it as a separate kingdom and there was a section who supported complete monarchical authority under the Chogyal. Despite such differences it never turned too ugly, which has been a routine in the rest of the world. We must accept the fact that such differences will continue to exist until we human beings exist in this world but luckily for Sikkim it is peace which has prevailed.

There is little denying that democratic movement in Sikkim had its own parallels with the freedom movement in India but it became stronger after the independence of India in the year 1947. From Sikkim being a Protectorate of Britain, to Protectorate of India, to becoming an Associate nation and finally the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975 brought with it many changes and challenges. Sikkim was no longer a Kingdom headed by a Chogyal but a 22nd State of the Indian Union with Kazi Lendup Dorjee Khangsarpa as it's first Chief Minister. The Sikkimese people had out of the blue started living in a democratic State of the Indian Union. They had more democratic rights and privileges at their disposal. They were no longer the victims of monarchical as well as feudal setup and were no longer governed by whims and fancies of elite Kazis and Thekedars of Sikkim. The immoral practices such as Kalobhari, Jharlangi, Thiki-Bethi, Kuruwa and many such heinous feudal practices which had become a norm under the monarchy had finally met its

rightful end. Sikkimese for at least had become free from the authoritarian rule. Sikkimese finally had democracy in their hand and unbounded possibilities waiting at their doorstep. Nepalis of Sikkimese origin that made the majority population of Sikkim, who had faced discrimination at many levels in the kingdom of Sikkim were now at a level playing field. It should be made clear here that the democracy in Sikkim was a joint effort with political leaders and support base belonging to all three ethnic indigenous communities. Leaders of the democratic movement in Sikkim such as Tashi Tshering, Sonam Tshering Lepcha, Dimik Singh Lepcha, Dorjee Dadul Bhutia, Gyaltzen Tshering Ethenpa, Kazi Lendup Dorjee Khansarpa, Raghbir Basnet, Rashi Prasad Allay, Chandra Das Rai, Dorjee Dadul Bhutia, Kasi Raj Pradhan, Bhim Bahadur Gurung, Atang Lepcha and many more are testimonial to the fact that three ethnic communities of Sikkim were equally responsible for paving a way for democracy in Sikkim.

The first election under the new democratic setup was held in April 1974. As per the new setup 15 seats were to be represented by Bhutia-Lepcha community, 15 by Nepali community, one seat by Sangha and one seat was to be represented by Scheduled Caste candidates. The reservations of seats were arranged in such a manner that no community had an upper hand against the other community. As it was clear that Sangha seat was meant for Bhutia-Lepcha while Scheduled Caste seat was meant for representation from Nepali community. This was the first time in the history of Sikkim that a principle of “one man one vote” was applied, contrary to earlier practices where communal voting practice was adopted clearly giving an undue advantage to the Bhutia-Lepcha community. The election was won by the Sikkim Congress Party which was lead by the Party President Kazi Lendup Dorji Khansarpa.

A referendum was organized to seek public opinion which ultimately allowed Sikkim to become a state under the Indian Union.

Post merger, Sikkim got its own Sikkim Legislative Assembly with a unicameral state legislature consisting of 32 assembly seats. Kazi Lhendup Dorjee Khansarpa was the first Chief Minister of democratic Sikkim State of the Indian Union till the year 1979. Back in the day he was considered as the national leader and was also given the title of “The Father of Democracy in Sikkim”. Elections thereafter became a regular custom under the democratic setup for a thirty two seat legislative assembly. In the year 1979 under the Constitution of India, the Representation of the People Act, 1950 was amended by inserting Section 7(1-A) and Section 7-A in order to reserve twelve seats in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly for people of Bhutia and Lepcha community, two for Scheduled castes and one for Sangha. This amendment lead to a reduction of 15 seats of Bhutia-Lepcha community to 12 seats in the Sikkim Assembly while no such reservations were granted to the Nepali community who were earlier granted 15 seats in the Sikkim Assembly. The same reservation format in the Sikkim Assembly continues till date. It was unanticipated and surprising on the part of majority Sikkimese Nepali community who all in fact had played a vital role in the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union but now had no reservations in the State Assembly. Reservation of seats in the Sikkim Assembly has always been a matter of discussion for more reasons than one.

As a result of Sikkim becoming a part of an Indian Union many of the constitutional provisions were extended to Sikkim corresponding to the fact that Sikkim was a Special Category State under article 371F of the Indian Constitution. Like the categorization of certain ethnic communities of Sikkim as tribes in accordance with the Constitutional Scheduled Tribe Order, 1978. This Scheduled

Tribe Order of 1978 granted Bhutias which in Sikkim's context included Chumbipa, Dothapa, Dukpa, Kagatey, Sherpa, Tibetan, Tromopa and Yolmo along with Lepchas of Sikkim a scheduled tribe status. Some section of Bhutia community opposed the Order, as for them they did not want Sherpa, Kagatey and Yolmos to be termed as Sikkimese Bhutia but this issue seems to have taken a back door. This recognition of only Bhutia and Lepcha communities as tribals can be easily contested for the fact that even the Tsongs also referred as Limboos/Subbas who are part of the larger Sikkimese Nepali community and in fact one of the party in the revered Tripartite Treaty of "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sun" which laid the foundation of monarchy in Sikkim were deprived of such recognition. Furthermore, even the Mangars who are also part of the larger Sikkimese Nepali community and among the early inhabitants of Sikkim were not recognized as tribals under the Scheduled Tribe Order of 1978.

The tribal recognition of only selected communities did play a crucial role in the ethnic divide of Sikkim as people living in the same land for centuries with analogous lifestyle were unpredictably labeled as tribals and non tribals thereby denying certain benefits to non tribal populace of the state. The non tribal Sikkimese population which primarily comprised of majority Nepali people was progressively categorized under the Indian Constitution as Other Backward Castes (Limbus, Tamangs, Gurungs, Rais, Magars, Majhis and Sarkis), Scheduled Castes (Kamis, Damais, Lohars, Majhis and Sarkis) and General category castes (Bahuns, Chettries and Newars). This division particularly among the Sikkimese Nepali community has challenged the very idea of Nepali as a singular united ethnic indigenous community which was prevalent during the pre merger era of Sikkim.

Although being labeled as tribe or tribal may not have had any significance for the Sikkimese populace in the monarchial times but with the passage of time more

number of Sikkimese left out communities are demanding such recognition. Their demands may be attributed to the fact that being included in the Scheduled Tribe list of the Indian Constitution confers them numerous socio-economic benefits both at the state and national level as it has been the case for Bhutias and Lepchas of Sikkim. Over the years being recognized as a Scheduled Tribe has been on the priority for many left out communities of Sikkim and successive governments have capitalized on this issue for their own benefit irrespective of the fact that majority of the left of communities are yet to be listed as Scheduled Tribe. Some amount of relief came in the year 2003 when the Limboos and Tamangs forming a part of the larger Sikkimese Nepali community were included in the Union list of Scheduled Tribes under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 2002 (No.10 of 2003) published on 8th of January'2003 but this amendment has brought the already unresolved matter of seat reservation in Sikkim Assembly to the fore front once again. As this amendment requires a corresponding amendment in Section 7(1-A) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 which would allow the Limboos and Tamang communities to have seat reservation in the state Assembly in line with the Bhutia and Lepchas of Sikkim. Even though going by Article 332 of the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes are entitled to contest State Assembly elections from seats reserved only for them; this is yet to being a reality in Sikkim. Not to forget while all this is going on, all the left out communities are pushing for their demand of being included in the Union Scheduled Tribe list. If truth be told recognition of Limboos and Tamangs as Scheduled Tribes has only added fuel to the fire and hard-pressed the left out communities to more actively pursue their demand for similar recognition.

Post merger categorization of Sikkimese populace into Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Castes, General etc. seemed to have torn the

social fabric of Sikkim and in a way caused further disintegration of Sikkimese community. With each community trying to prove their distinctness and uniqueness among other communities with a genuine motive to include their community in the Union Scheduled Tribe list much like their other counterpart who have already been listed, the division only seems to be growing further. Section of people who were once clubbed under the common nomenclature are today busy redefining themselves and seeking distinct identities, weaving a rich tapestry of different cultural strands into the fabric of Sikkim.

Considering all the above stated facts which show how Sikkimese Society seemed to be disintegrating themselves while pursuing their respective objectives, it has to be summarily accepted that there is growing difference of opinion and interest in the Sikkimese society. These differences if not properly guided can certainly lead to some unwanted situation which can be detrimental to Sikkim's future. Some may even argue that clashes of interest are inevitable in Sikkimese society. Therefore, this chapter will try to highlight the people's perception on various issues (though not open and visible) that are relevantly seeking expression in Sikkim which if not directed properly may lead to major issues in future. Further, this chapter mainly focuses on the causes of growing ethnic consciousness, its merits and demerits. This chapter is also going to highlight peoples' perceptions on the issues that are of concern in the state and off course the state's responses to such issues.

5.2 Causes of Growing Identity Consciousness

5.2.1 Discrimination: Tracing the roots of the ethnic categories in the past, one finds that during the first Census of Sikkim in the year 1891, its population was ethnically differentiated into 15 groups as follows:

Race or caste	Males	Females	Children	Total
Lepcha	2,362	2,399	1,001	5,762
Bhutea	1,966	1,960	968	4,894
Limbu	1,255	1,159	942	3,356
Gurung	1,108	1,047	766	2,921
Murmi	801	778	1,288	2,867
Rai, Jimdar, & c.	742	691	587	2,020
Khambu	726	648	589	1,963
Kami	626	464	580	1,670
Brahman	521	372	521	1,414
Mangar	363	346	192	901
Chetri	303	253	273	829
Newar	240	183	304	727
Slaves	124	99	103	326
Dirzi	102	92	93	287
Miscellaneous, including troops	350	72	99	521
	11,589	10,563	8,306	30,458

Figure: 5.1- Population division based on ethnicity in the year 1891

Source: Gazetteer of Sikkim by H.H. Risley

However after 1891, the imperial administration delineated Sikkimese population into four groups, namely, the Lepchas-Bhutias, the Limbus, the Nepalis and the others. In 1915, when the land revenue rates were finalized, the imperial regime differentiated between only the Lepchas-Bhutias and the Nepalis. From 1931 onwards, they progressively categorized all groups, excluding the Lepchas-Bhutias, as Nepali. Some section of Limboo community in Sikkim claim that they are an indigenous ethnic group and don't consider themselves a part of Nepalese ethnic group. The Nepali category was constructed by the colonial administrative discourse (Arora, 2007). During the monarchial era, the Nepalis (including the Limboos) were alienated in more than one aspect. The Lepcha-Bhutia lands were protected by the Revenue Order No.1¹⁷ but the Nepalis in general, neither got recognized nor were they protected by any laws of the land. As per the May Agreement 1951 the Limboos were given special status by incorporating provisions for the protection of their identity and two seats were reserved for them in the state council. But after the merger

¹⁷See appendix

with India, the Limboos were not given the preferential entitlements and ST status. Instead they were merged into the Nepali category in 1975. Only Lepchas and Bhutias were recognized in the year 1978 as STs and twelve seats were reserved for them in the State Assembly as they were considered a minority. Partialities existed between Lepcha-Bhutia and Nepalis (as a whole) for centuries in Sikkim. When the lessee landlord system was introduced in 1888, the lease of land given to a Nepali landlord was 10 years while that of Bhutia-Lepcha it was 15 years. Similar to this is a case when SSC was being granted to the people, the Bhutia-Lepcha were automatically granted citizenship irrespective of their status (owners/landlords) while a large portion of Nepali were denied subject hood considering they were labourers and owing to authoritarian conditions applied to Nepali to obtain the same. Nepali of Sikkim, also had to pay a much higher rate of land rent in cash as compared to the older subjects of the principality, who had the option of paying in kind as well. They were subjected to a series of exploitative labour obligations in form of kurwa¹⁸, bethi¹⁹, jharlangi²⁰, kalobhari²¹ (Sinha, 2009). Such discriminations might have kept people motivated to keep their respective cultures and traditions alive as well as pursue the democratic goal. Keeping one's culture and tradition alive ensures that people take notice of you even if they want to ignore you as a part of the same society.

¹⁸Kuruwa literally means a long wait. Sometimes due to some reason, when people sent to transport Kalobhari get stranded for several days waiting and survive on their own supplies. This process of waiting was called Kuruwa.

¹⁹Mandals and Karbari was to collect the rents for the Zamindars and Thekadars. But they too, as middlemen, exploited the masses. On festive occasion they were supposed to be welcomed by gifts. Along with that peasants also offered their wageless labour. This labour was called Bethi.

²⁰The contractors used their peasants to work for them without paying their wages even though Britisher used to pay the contractors. The system of labour without wage was called Jharlangi system.

²¹The British sold arms and ammunitions to Tibet which were wrapped in cardboards and put inside gunny bags bedaubed with tar. The black colour gave the load its name Kalobhari or black load.

5.2.2 Positive Rewards

Another major cause of growing identity consciousness may be due to the benefit that a particular community seems to get by virtue of being categorized under the Union law. For example, if we consider the Nepali community under study it can be seen that the contemporary articulation of ethnic subjectivity has undermined the linguistic solidarity of the Nepali in Sikkim, as ethnic groups instrumentally emphasize the uniqueness of their language, revive it in their everyday life, reinstate forgotten scripts, recover their literature and record their oral history to claim historicity. These identity claims are intimately connected with their survival and struggles over land, forests, education, employment, justice and dignity in post-independent India (Arora, 2007). Nepamul²² Bharatiyas are engaged in a different kind of struggle. And this struggle is addressed to finding an honourable place in Indian political system. They fought for recognition of their language, Nepali as an Indian language, getting citizenship rights to the left-over Nepamul Sikkimese and separate seats, reserved for them in the State Legislative Assembly. They succeeded in first two and are trying to maneuver the third one. If you cannot beat the system, you join it; and that's what they have decided to do now by taking advantage of the constitutional provisions of providing special treatment to the "educationally, economically and socially backward communities" (Sinha, 2009). Likewise, the political administrative arrangements, which reduced the Bhutia-Lepcha seats in the Assembly in 1978 even though the definition 'Bhutia' was extended to include eight other Bhutias, the inclusion of the Limboo and Tamang communities in the Scheduled Tribes list in 2003, further kindled a sense of insecurity among them. In view of the introduction of a new formula of seat reservation, the Bhutia-Lepcha were anxious of being dominated by

²²Term coined by A. C. Sinha to Nepalis of Indian origin.

the Nepali while the Nepalis were apprehensive of losing control over state power. The Nepalis and Bhutias were educationally better off than the Lepchas and thus dominated economic and political power, including the bureaucracy. While the Lepchas, by virtue of socio-economic and educational backwardness, were short of the fruits of economic and political opportunities and even felt discriminated. The feeling of deprivation among the Lepchas led to strengthening of ethnic consciousness and articulation of community oriented demands by forming organization (Bhutia, 2015). Consequently, these factors have also contributed to growing identity consciousness in the State of Sikkim.

5.2.3 Fear of Losing Identity: As mentioned in the previous section “Revenue Order no.1” one of the steps taken by the Chogyal to keep the identities of the Bhutias and the Lepchas alive. We have encountered the fact earlier in this chapter about how the Nepali population due to their sheer numbers overshadowed the Bhutia and Lepchas. Due to the fear of losing their identities the Revenue Order no.1 was passed. Similarly the recognition of earlier settlers as legal settlers was also another step to not allow the non Sikkimese/migrated people to surpass the existing original subjects of Sikkim in any possible way. When the migrated people start to outnumber the original citizens of the host State, the feeling of fear of losing your identity is obvious. Sikkim is a state which is composed of many communities comprising of respective sub-communities when considered at a national level is a negligible percentage. The Sikkimese people belonging to various communities are trying to keep their traditions and cultures alive to maintain their distinct identity. In the contemporary situation where there are diverse communities and cultures on the one hand and modernization on the other, keeping one’s identity intact is both important as well as tough. Hence, the fear of negligence of their community has also been one of the reasons why

people always supported some or the other regional political parties in the state (Syanbo, 2016).

5.3 Phases of Identity Formation in Sikkim

There are different phases of identity formation in Sikkim. Right from time when Sikkim was the land of different autonomous regions ruled by their respective chieftains to the Sikkim of today. Sikkim has witnessed various forms of identity formation and invention as well as reinvention. There was a time when there was not a single modern educated person in Sikkim and its population itself was only a fraction of today's population. It is a universal fact that when population increases within a certain geographical boundary, some amount of friction among its populace does arise. More people may mean more interests, ideas and purpose which directly or indirectly lead to clash of interests, ideas and purpose. Consequently, this has been the case in Sikkim, when there were less number of people there were less or no friction but as the number increased, so its problems. The critical issue that has to be dealt with here is the question of identity in Sikkim and Sikkimese.

1st Phase: During the period beginning from the formation of kingdom in Sikkim till the beginning of the beginning of the 20th century, we see that the average Sikkimese population was never too engrossed in their individual community politics which focused only in achieving their respective community goals. Despite the fact that then existing laws were bias but that was still a phase where all ethnic communities of Sikkim established and maintained good ties with each other in all due respect. While going through various historical facts of Sikkim we find that their ties were so deep rooted that many a times a Bhutia used to act as a Limbu Yeba and Limbu as a Lepcha Bongthing and sometimes a Lepcha used to act as a Bhutia Pawo and even Bhutias used to perform as a Nepali Jhakri (Shaman). Similarly there was a time when

Limbus inter-married freely with the Lepchas and the Rai's in Sikkim until an imperial law was enforced in 1913 which checked ethnic miscegenation by regulating marriage among Lepchas and Bhutias. This law contoured a preference that the Lepchas and Bhutias should marry within their own communities while prohibiting the marriage of Lepchas and Bhutias with the Tsongs and Nepalis in Sikkim. This law was enforced until the 1940s.

2nd Phase: This phase is when the question of 'Identity' first aroused. This phase was a time when the Chogyal ruled the Kingdom of Sikkim but observed that Nepalese population has started to outnumber the Lepchas and Bhutias. The Chogyal witnessed the possible risk to its subjects due to the ongoing migration. Due to this reason, the Chogyal decided to issue a certificate (Sikkim Subject Certificate) to all the original inhabitants of his kingdom. Then the Durbar outlined certain criteria that had to be mandatorily fulfilled to obtain a Sikkim Subject Certificate. Accordingly, the Durbar maintained a register and recognized all the SSC holders as a Sikkim subject and approved them as legal settlers. The Chogyal had come up with such provisions to protect the indigenous population and also to prohibit the migrated population from taking the privileges meant for the Sikkim Subject only.

3rd Phase: Third phase is the reinvention of identity in Sikkim. This phase begins with the formation of Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) government in Sikkim. People in Sikkim consisted of three ethnic groups basically Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese. The umbrella of Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepali community consists of many sub-communities. The SDF government encouraged every community and sub community residing in Sikkim to promote their respective culture and tradition. The government gradually permitted government holidays to such communities and sub communities allowing them to celebrate their respective festivals. This phase was instrumental in

reviving the forgotten traditions and cultural practices which ultimately took the Sikkimese society to its 3rd phase where identity mattered. This phase is still active in Sikkim even after formation of new Government i.e. SKM (Sikkim Krantikari Morcha) in 2019.

5.4 Peoples' Perceptions on Various Subjects

5.4.1 Perceptions on the definition of a “Sikkimese”?

According to an article written by Ms. Prava Rai, there are two strands of reinvention of identities that can be distinguished. One that grows out of communities' need to find ways to coexist peacefully, while the second is the state sponsored programme with an eye on the political and social implication. While the first stems from the people themselves, the second is imposed by the government's vision. Both approaches significantly impact cultural practices of celebrations and worship (Prava Rai, 2014). There are different section of people in Sikkim with their own perception and views which culminates to designating somebody as Sikkimese. While many consider possessing SSC/COI is good enough documentary evidence to term somebody as real Sikkimese, while some consider a person with a Electoral Voter ID card of Sikkim a Sikkimese and some consider a person who has been born and brought up in Sikkim a Sikkimese. Based on the study and a firsthand survey, the views of the people have been depicted in a chart below:

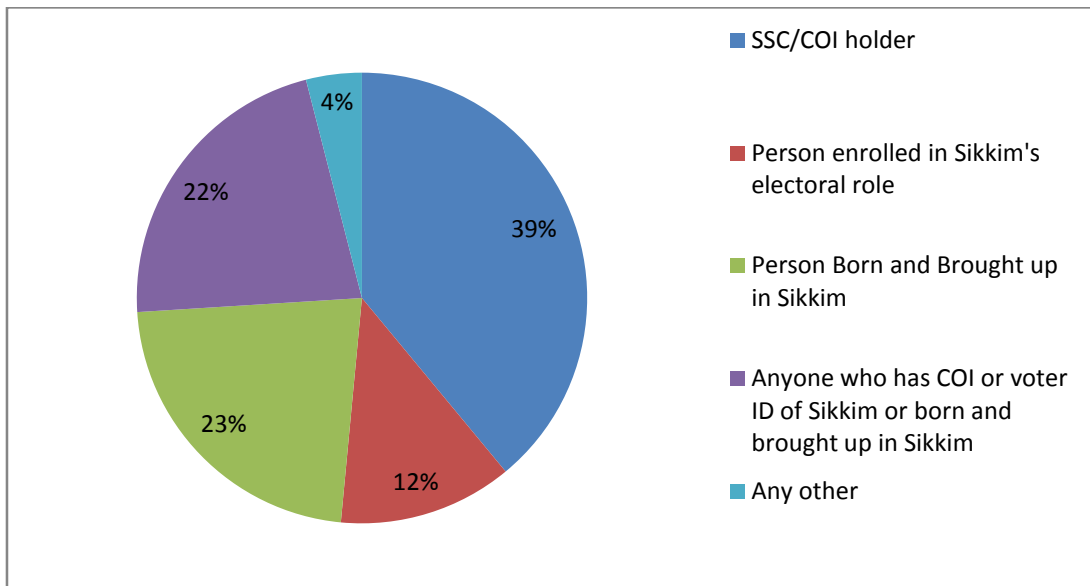


Figure 5.2- Percentage of people showing their views on 'who is a Sikkimese?'

Source: - Diagram based on the research carried on by researcher

Therefore, from the above pie-chart, it can be clearly seen that out of two hundred sample size, 39% still feel that possession of SSC/COI is important to prove oneself as Sikkimese. However, there are good number of people who feel that person enrolled in Sikkim's electoral role should also be considered as Sikkimese because of the role they play in the formation of the Government which is directly involved in the overall development of the state. This section of population feels that they are also playing a role in making Sikkim a better state. While 23% people said that a person who is born and brought up in the state is also a Sikkimese because once a person is born and brought up in a particular place he/she automatically adapts to its culture, language, livelihood etc. And 22% of the respondents think that, yes COI is an important piece of document in Sikkim but one can be accepted as Sikkimese if one is casting his/her valuable vote in Sikkim and at the same time if the person was born and brought up in Sikkim. While 4% of people feel that whoever is working for the betterment of the state in one or more ways should be considered Sikkimese.

5.4.2 SSC/COI: Their Importance

According to an article (Eden, 2015), Sikkim Subject Certificate/Certificate of Identification is not just a document attesting a person as a bona fide citizen of Sikkim but it is about a person's identity in relation to the state and his own understanding of belonging.

The Sikkim Subject Regulation was repealed on 13th September 1975 according to "Adaptation of Sikkim Laws (No.1) Order" power conferred by clause (I) of Article 371-F of the Constitution which took effect from 26th April 1975. Today, the descendants of then Sikkimese are provided with Certificate of Identification (COI) instead of a Sikkim Subject Certificate (SSC) as issued during the erstwhile kingdom. As mentioned earlier Article 371-F (k) protects the Old laws of Sikkim. Under the provisions of the Government Service Rule 4(4) of 1974 which falls under the category of Old Laws of Sikkim, only Sikkimese (SSC/COI holders) are recruited at Government jobs which fall under the state list of the seventh schedule of the Constitution. Non COI holder is not allowed to hold property at rural areas. Nevertheless, every Indian citizen can get into Central Government jobs in Sikkim, carry out trade, business etc. (Kiran, 2009).



Photo: Original SSC That Was Issued In the Year 1974, Source: Sikkim NOW

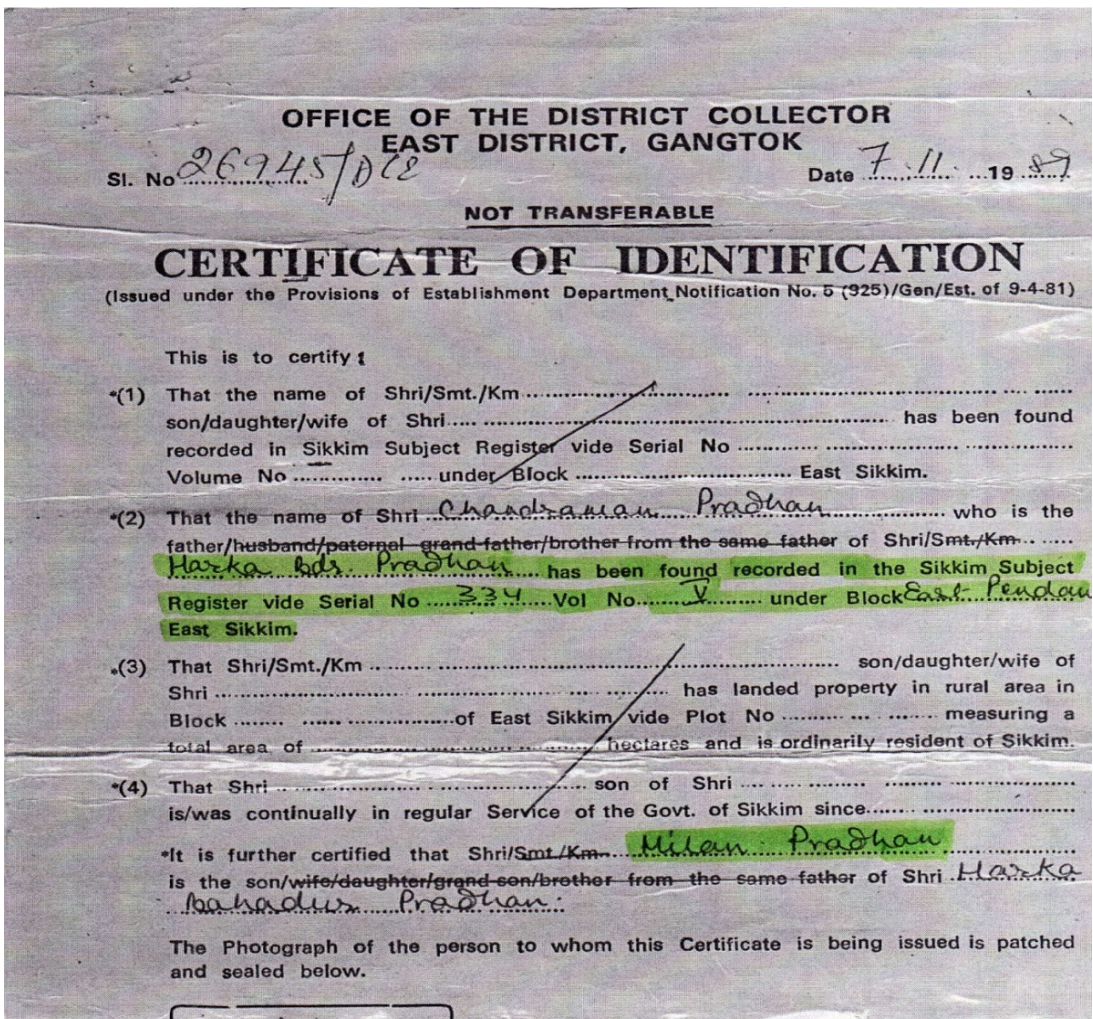


Photo: Certificate of Identification, Source: Sikkim RTI Forum

SSC/COI has become an indispensable document for proving oneself as Sikkimese. Many a times an Identity of a person is evaluated by possession of such document. Right from applying for a state government job to owning a property in Sikkim, the first and most basic document one needs to produce to the government authority is the SSC/COI. In recent time, it has been observed that among the Sikkimese people there is a growing consciousness about SSC/COI. This fact established by the field survey which was conducted where more than 90% of the respondents agreed that SSC/COI is an important documentary evidence to support the claim of being a Sikkimese.

5.4.3 Perception on Identity Politics

Identity politics has been observed in various societies around the world at different times in history and Sikkim is no exception. If we look at the history of Sikkim, identity politics started to take root particularly with the establishment of the Namgyal monarchy. The famous tripartite treaty Lho-Mon-Tsong Tsum which laid the foundation of monarchy in Sikkim can itself be attributed as the very beginning of identity politics in Sikkim. As this particular treaty not only brought the three communities who till then had identified themselves separately but also brought a political consensus giving way to a establishment of a Kingdom of Sikkim to be ruled by a Chogyal, a religious king from the Bhutia community. Even the treaty of blood brotherhood signed at Kabi Lungchok between Thekong Tek (a Mon/Lepcha Chieftan) and Khye Bhumsa (a Lho/Bhutia) to reinforce the bonding between each other can be considered equivalent to some sort of exclusive political alliance which was instrumental in shaping the identity and politics of Sikkim and it continues to do so even till date.

From the early days of monarchy, identity politics had an ethnic background in Sikkim. Over the years subsequent rulers of Sikkim made specific laws and policies which favoured certain Sikkimese community/communities instead of laws and policies which should have catered equality amongst all its citizens. These specific laws and policies from the Chogyals of Sikkim provided special rights and authorities to certain section of the Sikkimese Society which included the Kazis and Thekedars who then exploited the masses. These discriminations resulted in mistrust and separateness in the minds of people. This perceptibly led to a political system in Sikkim which was founded upon ethnic considerations. Identity politics with its own merits and demerits have played a major role in shaping the history of Sikkim and this does not seem to give away with time. Let us have look at some of the merits and demerits of Identity Politics:

Merits:

- a) Identity politics has the tendency and an ability to bring people belonging to a same ethnic community together and make their bond stronger ultimately raising the feeling of oneness in them.
- b) Acceptance in every way no matter how and from what socio-economic background they come from.
- c) It safeguards as well as promotes the culture and tradition of a particular community irrespective of the overwhelmingly modernization that is impacting today's generation.
- d) Identity politics plays a major role in getting access to certain privileges which is normally denied to non members while it also gives some sort of an upper hand in conducting and concluding certain tasks of interest.

Demerits:

- a) Identity politics is one of the most important factors resulting in disintegration in society.
- b) Identity politics may lead to unnecessary ethnic groupism which alienates the other groups which later on creates discontentment amongst each other.
- c) Disagreement of interest and purpose begins to crop up which if not corrected leads to disharmony in the society.
- d) It makes the society as a whole much weaker by creating unwanted divisions within a society and thereby slowing down the developmental process of the state.

On the basis of data samples collected through rigorous ground survey it is understandable that day in and day out identity politics has played a key role in shaping the fate of Sikkim.

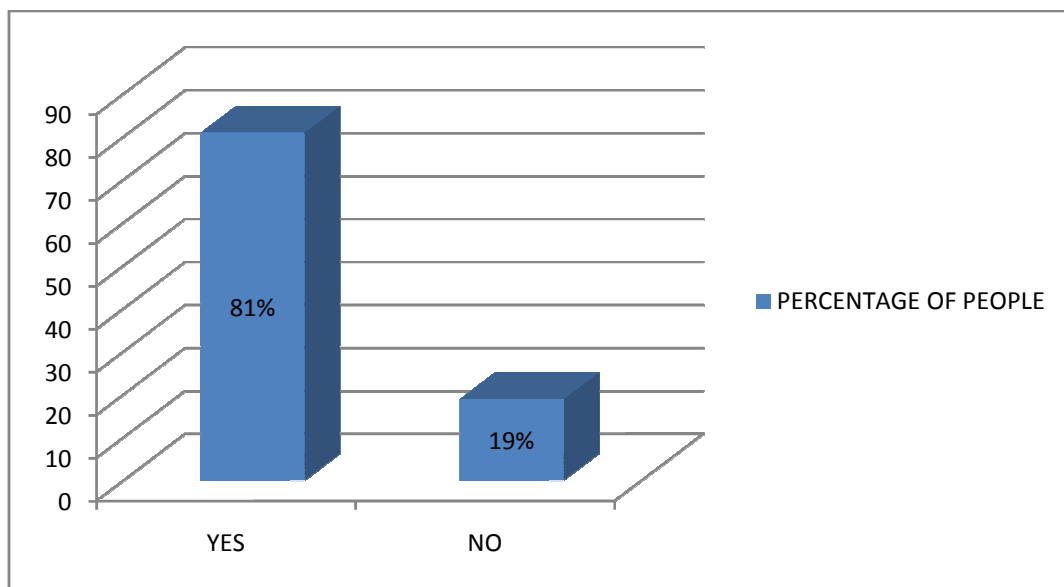


Figure 5.3- Percentage of people who agreed/disagreed on whether or not identity politics has played a major role in shaping the history of Sikkim.

Source: Research based drawing

Referring to the above figure it is clear that identity politics does play a major role in shaping the history of a state. While conducting ground survey and listening to different points of view from persons belonging to different sections of the Sikkimese society, they strongly affirm that many of the old laws and policies whether good or bad have brought Sikkim to its present state and they feel that present political situations has to be dealt with utmost care thereby giving way to better future policies and programs for Sikkim and Sikkimese. As it normally happens many of the past events, laws and policies formulated by the ruling authority/authorities of Sikkim in the past is still deciding many of the government policies of Sikkim. Therefore, they want the Government to formulate and enact such policies for the Sikkimese society that ensures long term peace, stability and development in the state.

To cite an example where policy makers' disappointment at the State and at the Union level in the past has led to its repercussion today would be the case of Sikkim Legislative Assembly seat reservation. While Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepali had enjoyed equal number of seats in the assembly till 1978, it was later changed to 13 seats for Bhutia-Lepcha and no seat reservation for the Nepali community. If the seat reservation status had remained the same till date there would have been no issues coming up from the left out communities for reservation of seats in the state assembly but this issue seems to be only growing with the latest demand for Limboo and Tamang seat reservation in the State Assembly, more such demands is bound to follow from the left out communities in subsequent years. Why the majority Sikkimese Nepalese community who were instrumental in bringing democratic umbrella of the Indian constitution to Sikkim after just three years of its merger denied any special treatment in the democratic setup is a huge matter of debate, dialogue and discussion.

5.4.4 Article 371F

India and China has always been discontent towards each other. Considering China's invasion of Tibet and time and again encroachment by China in India laid the importance of keeping well equipped army in the border areas. Sikkim as history proven to be the only Himalayan region along the Indo-China border where India had a tactical advantage over the Chinese forces due to its strategic location (Lepcha, 2018). Also, considering that Sikkim shares its border with Nepal and Bhutan and more importantly it is vital in securing what is known as Siliguri Corridor (Informally Chicken's neck) which connects the North-East States to the rest of India may perhaps have made it obvious for then political leaders of India to make Sikkim a part of India while providing the state with special rights and privileges under the provisions of Article 371F.

For the people of Sikkim Article 371F is not just a piece of legislation or any ordinary article in the Constitution of India, it is an article of faith between the people of India and Sikkim. Article 371F was inserted to provide special status to the state of Sikkim, which further ensured protection to the ethnic communities living in the state. The Article 371F reflects the spirit of merger which while incorporating Sikkim as a part of the Indian Union also wanted to protect the distinct identity of Sikkim and its people. Per se it is one of the most unique and powerful Constitutional Protection given to any state beside Jammu and Kashmir (ibid.).

One of the most unique features of the article 371F is clause (k) which safeguards all the laws of the kingdom of Sikkim prior to the merger. This clause provided for the continuation of all existing laws particularly the one pertaining to validity of Sikkim Subject Regulations which enables the citizens of Sikkim to have a distinct citizenship status empowering the state to safeguard the political, economic

and social rights of the people of Sikkim and similarly other ancillary important rights and privileges, which have been conferred to Sikkimese people by the old laws which have been safe guarded by Article 371F (ibid.).

Even today, Sikkimese people absolutely rely on Article 371F for the protection of their rights and privileges. The importance of Article 371F only seems to be rising with the passage of time. People belonging to different sections of the Sikkimese society have their respective views and perceptions as regards to the special provisions provided to the state of Sikkim under Article 371F of the Indian constitution. Let us have a look at some of them:

“371F is the only Article which can save Sikkim as a whole from merging with any other state or region of the country”- Dedup T. Lepcha, Ass. Prof, Gyalsing Govt. College

“It safeguards the originality of the state”- Dawa Doma Sherpa, Ass. Prof, Gyalsing Govt. College

“It’s a mini constitution and many feel it is viewed in favour of the Bhutias and Lepchas but don’t realize that due to this fact alone the other communities are being protected and that dilution of 371F is a recipe of disaster for all Sikkimese”- Name: withheld

“It is a boon for the Sikkimese” - Name: withheld

“I think Article 371F was just a supporter to Sikkim when it was first merged with India, so to make Sikkim equal par with other state of India, it was given to Sikkim as a special provision. And also to preserve old laws with retrospective application”- Sarala Gurung, Lawyer

*“Article 371F provide safety for the Sikkimese people and protects our rights” -
Leongmit Lepcha, Student*

*“Article 371F should be long term. It should be protected at any cost because
Sikkimese are able to call themselves Sikkimese and have been residing in this
peaceful environment just because of Article 371F ” - Neeraj Adhikari, Research
Scholar*

*“Article 371F is a protection shield for the state which protects Sikkimese people and
provide the rights Sikkimese are suppose to get” - Dupzang Bhutia*

*“Article 371F is meant for the original Sikkimese people, it should be kept
unchanged. There should be separate provision for the Old Settlers as they are also
part of Sikkimese society.” - Nima Tamang, All Sikkim Tamang Association*

*“Article 371F is particularly meant for the Sikkimese people so it should not be
applied to the Old Settlers. Old Settlers, themselves had denied to be recognized as
Sikkimese in the past, so, only subjects of Sikkim should get its benefit.”- Bishnu
Rana, General Secretary, All India Manger Association*

Therefore, from the above statements it is clear that we cannot undermine the importance of Article 371F and it still holds major significance in the lives of Sikkimese people.

5.4.5 Population Influx

Migration can be considered as a natural world phenomenon which has been influencing the human survival for ages. Migration has always been a part of the human history. Even the scientific evidences suggest that the early humans whom we refer to as Homo erectus migrated out of Africa to Eurasia about 1.75 million years

ago. Similarly over the centuries there have been numerous accounts of human migration across countries and continents. Migration can be voluntary or involuntary. Involuntary migration includes forced displacement (in various forms such as deportation, slave trade, trafficking in human beings) and flight (war refugees, ethnic cleansing). In India too migration has been a part of its history such as the Vatsayan Priests who migrated from the eastern Himalayan hills to Kashmir during the Shan invasion in the 13th century.

In modern times industrialization played a crucial role in promoting human migration. Many mass migrations in the 20th century were involuntary owing to war between nations. Like in the same way Partition of India which saw displacement of around 17 million people is one of the largest recorded migrations in modern times.

In recent times consequent upon the placement of stricter laws by nations across the world, immigration has become more controlled. There are countries in which even movement within its own territory is restricted by the established laws. In India too there are states and regions where even an Indian needs a special permit to visit such locations. These permits are issued with various categorizations such as Inner Line Permit, Protected Area Permit, Restricted Area Permit etc. depending on the place one is visiting.

Since last few decades due to explosion in population, migration has grown to a great extent all over the world. Although temporary migration may not be much of an issue but permanent migration has brought many problems for the indigenous people of the land. Migration of people from one country to another is sometimes denoted by either of the two words i.e. emigrate (meaning you are leaving your current homeland to settle in a new one) and immigrate (meaning you are coming to a

new country to live permanently) both of these situations is looked upon by the countries with caution now a days.

As the population increases, so is the level of competition for resources among its populace, thus migration within a country i.e. migration of people between the States of a Country, in other words inter-state migration is also becoming an additional area of importance for the development of a State and a Country as a whole. Migrants tend to create pressure on the indigenous population who are also sustaining in the same job market. While freedom to migrate within one's own country like in India is an enshrined right but, the uneven development, levels of desperation and other factors have created friction points. States at the receiving end of migration were and are being left to bear the heavy burden. For, migration significantly affected and at times re-casted their domestic order, challenged their traditional institutional structures, modified existing social arrangements, transformed the forces of integration and fragmentation, and accelerated the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. In a more concise sense migration has become a serious challenge to the long-standing paradigms of certainty and order. An increased volume of uncontrolled migration may lead to competition between the actual citizens and newly migrated population over already scarce resources such as jobs, housing, public services, and social security. It may even worst heighten the existing pressure over state institutions that are trusted to provide such services and thus cause them to completely fail. Such a situational development would not only upset the existing system, it would also play into the hands of those who would be ready to blame everything on the arriving migrants while at the same time there may be equally opposing section putting it on the government and stake holders of the region. This may result to an unnecessary hostility among the two sections of the society, thereby

creating a hindrance to the smooth development of the region. Dissatisfied groups of people thus provide a suitable ground for playing over ethnic, sectarian, religious and cultural differences, a plausible set of circumstances which make it difficult to maintain internal security and order. Not to forget that ethnic tensions and conflicts have been a part of the Northeast India's reality. These tensions and conflicts may take a superior form if combined with tribal principles of heroism, justice, honour, pride, recognition, customary obligation or feeling of revenge.

In the same way while conducting surveys, it was learned firsthand that majority of bona fide Sikkimese people do have a feeling of some sort of insecurity and discontent due to an ever increasing number of non Sikkimese in the State of Sikkim which can be highlighted by the following statements given by the people of Sikkim:

"It should be strictly checked"

"Population influx may vanish the identity of the Sikkimese people in future"

"Non Sikkimese masquerading as Sikkimese/locals has cornered jobs thereby depriving locals."

Thus it can be said that they have the potential to escalate"

"It should be checked if not stopped"

"Ongoing migration has created upheaval because youth of Sikkim has been left without any job"

“The state has already started facing problems due to the population influx because problems which are unknown to the Sikkimese society has now become a part of the society such as the traffic jams, sexual assault, rape, drug abuse etc.”

“Coming of outsiders in the state is a dangerous trend; such influx may become a great problem to a small state like Sikkim in future. Looking at the rate of present migration to the state, he said the cost of all essential goods and commodities will rise, which may lead to crime and other social evils. Migration is a potential threat to the local people.”

“The coming of outsiders in the state is growing day by day, so it would be a problem in future for the locals. Owing to increasing number of migration into the state the opportunities which are supposed to be for the locals have been grasped and enjoyed by the outsiders. Migration is a potential threat to the local people as the migrated people may snatch the rights and privileges of the locals.”

From the above statements as given by different individuals an inference can be drawn as migration or influx of outsiders into the state of Sikkim is seen as a potential threat to the local people. Outsiders here refers to all those who are not from Sikkim and have migrated to the state in search of better job opportunities (private sectors) and better living. These outsiders blatantly refer to the ones from neighboring hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong as well as from neighboring country Nepal, who looks similar to the Sikkimese people. One may find many such temporary migrants in Sikkim who are into private sector jobs. Sikkim is one of the most peaceful States of India, although Sikkimese culture and tradition does play its role in maintaining such level of peace in the State but it has also to do with the population of the State. Sikkim is the least populated State in India with a population of only around six lakhs

which may go down further if we consider just the population of SSC/COI holders, who are in fact considered as proper Sikkimese. Maintaining law and order at a low populated area is relatively easier than at a higher populated region. So, it is obvious that migration leading to drastic increase in population of Sikkim may further lead to increase in crime and social evils. Increasing migration trend in Sikkim is a potential threat to the local people also for the reason that the economic opportunities particularly are being grasped by the outsiders which actually should have been for the local people. Gradually once the outsiders realize they can effortlessly overpower the locals, they may demand and seize the privileges of Sikkimese people. Outsiders' influx in a state as small as Sikkim should be checked at the earliest to avoid any untoward situation in future.

On the contrary, there are section of people who do not consider that population influx is a problem instead they regard it as a good aspect for the Sikkimese society. This section thinks that migration and influx would rather introduce the people of this tiny state to new ideas, in so doing advancing the way of development. Few of the comments made by the people to support this claim are cited below:

“Population influx or migration is not affecting the Sikkimese people anyway because many people with COI are still jobless when they have the opportunity to get a State Government job”

“Migration is not a problem”

“People are migrating bringing new ideas and skills which can help Sikkim flourish”.

5.4.6 Drift of Disintegration

There is no denying that Sikkim is indeed witnessing a drift of disintegration among its masses particularly since past decade or two. There was a time when taking into consideration the People of Sikkim, one would think of the three ethnic communities living in Sikkim i.e. Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis who were more or less responsible for keeping the Sikkimese society integrated. There was always a difference between these communities in terms of its customs, costumes, tradition etc. but lately it seems the differences have grown further. When we have to consider the disintegration status of Sikkim, we have to concurrently take some reference for integration. In what can be considered as the most integrated phase or time of modern Sikkim which led to Sikkim turning into a democratic State of the Indian Union, what comes to one's mind is the phase of merger with India which is certainly the most integrated stage of contemporary Sikkimese Society. It is principally because all three communities were party to this occasion and it was a unanimous decision on the part of all three communities which transformed a once separate Kingdom to an integral part of India. It would be wrong to say that the decision witnessed cent percent involvement of the people as there were segments in the Sikkimese society which included people from all three communities who had their own reservations as regards to such developments but as history has it, majority democratic forces prevailed in Sikkim.

The communities as a whole may or may not have intended to disintegrate themselves from the greater idea of Sikkimese but there are certainly few indicators which suggest that some amount of split has come about between these communities. It is for the most part visible especially when Organizations or Associations formed with specific community affiliations comes forth representing only their community's claims and demands while keeping integration of Sikkimese Society as no area under

discussion. Even if one claims to be speaking for the entire Sikkimese, their hidden agenda constantly is to promote their own community's views, motives and to gain advantage from the rest. This has been an ongoing trend as far as organizations representing their respective community are concerned. Apart from this ongoing reality, Sikkim is also witnessing a new shift where communities have started to disintegrate themselves as sub-communities and are in fact portraying their distinctness ever so actively. Not to forget, the perceptible demographic changes brought by the population influx in Sikkim which too has challenged the idea of People of Sikkim. This distinctiveness may not be all negative as it promotes diversity which is the hallmark of a country like India. This adoration towards distinctiveness even promotes one's unique culture, custom and tradition which in a way make the Society even more vibrant. It may even have a tremendous positive impact on the tourism sector of Sikkim but all this should not apparently come at the cost of dissolution of overall idea of Sikkim and being Sikkimese.

In recent times political parties of Sikkim and government in power have been instrumental in bringing this consciousness to the sub-community level. They alone are obviously not entirely responsible for it, as it is the people who have endeavored for such consciousness. There are various socio-economic, political and even individual reasons that have played its role in promoting sub-community individuality movement in the state of Sikkim, some of which has already been highlighted in the preceding chapters.

Most of the sub-communities which together make the larger communities of Sikkim now emphasize on celebrating their own sub-community based festivals. Although, such change in celebration of a particular festival may also pertain to an individual's conversion of faith but it is not the only reason. For instance, Nepalis in

particular used to celebrate Dusshera/Durga puja wearing new clothes and putting tika²³ on the forehead but these days only few Nepali sub-communities whole heartedly celebrate this festival. Many have made a switch to sub-community based festivals such as Tamu Lochar by Gurungs, Indra Jatra or Yenya by Newars, Sonam Lochhar by Tamangs, Teyongsi Srijunga Sawan Tongnam by Limboos, Barahimizong by Mangars, Sakewa by Kirat Khambu Rais etc. It is understandable that the distinctness of various communities and sub-communities under different ethnic groups were always present but what prompted them or rather compelled them to come up explicitly in the present day is a big question. What is being celebrated now by different communities and sub-communities were always in existence but why it has become necessary to give it a grand touch is a subject of curiosity. Will all these tiny factors not escort the Sikkimese society from the days of unity and harmony towards a day of greater divide? It at the least demands some amount of attention. Not for the fact that it has to happen but for the fact that it never happens as anything of greater magnitude is bound to be disastrous for the entire Sikkimese society. There are various aspects and sides to analyzing the drift of disintegration that seems to be in progress in Sikkim. People have been gracious enough to share some of their views on this critical subject, some of which have been mentioned as follows:

Mr. Nima Tamang is a founding member of “All Sikkim Tamang Association”. When he was inquired about the main motive behind forming the association, he informed that they formed it to work for preservation and promotion of language, culture, tradition as well as to safeguard the political rights of their community in the state. Further, on the issue of influx he mentioned that it is certainly possible that in a near future a conflict may arise between the indigenous people of Sikkim and the mainland

²³Made up of uncooked rice mixed with curd and red colour which are put on the forehead of every one in family by the head of the family with a blessing.

Indian due to the fact that local people are being deprived of some opportunities as a result of migration. As per his opinion, to address this possible rift between insider and outsider, the state administration should play a crucial role in demarcating the status of locals and non locals and in no circumstance the local sentiments ought to be compromised.

Mr. Bishnu Rana is a founding member of Mangar Association of Sikkim and is a General Secretary of “All India Mangar Association”. While informing about the core motive behind forming the association, he said it has been formed for the preservation and protection of language, culture and tradition of Mangar community and to uplift Mangars educationally and to make them aware politically. Further, on the question of influx, he has a feeling that a conflict scenario may arise between the local indigenous people of Sikkim and the mainland Indians settlers in near future as he feels that the outsiders are decreasing the economic opportunities for the locals. As per his opinion, to address this possible rift between insider and outsider Government should check the influx. Additionally, Government should know the proper way of managing both the groups without hampering the relationship made so far as now outsiders are also playing a great role in forming the Government.

Mr. Dhanraj Rai, Assitant Professor, Gyalsing Government College, is of the opinion that the disintegration of the society adversely affects the unity of the people as a ‘Sikkimese’. There are two dimensions of ongoing disintegration:

- i) On the one hand it helps to protect the rights and liberty of people belonging to various sub/communities as they are representing themselves.
- ii) On the other hand it leads to the division among the people and may hamper the state’s unity as a whole.

Ms. Leongmit Lepcha is of the view that the disintegration in social fabric that is taking place in Sikkim is not profitable at larger end. People needs to stay united and integrated as earlier because the present scenario demands unity of Sikkimese people when the outsider/non-Sikkimese people is outnumbering the Sikkimese etc.

Consequently, it can be sensed from the views of the above mentioned respondents that they are of the opinion that the Sikkimese society should remain integrated. As per the respondents, the associations are there to preserve and promote their community's culture, custom, language, tradition and political rights. They also talked about the fact that migration may perhaps be a possible recipe for conflict in the near future. They were of the view that the government and authorities concerned should take necessary steps to avoid such scenario while duly maintaining a cordial relationship with the outsiders or the migrated influx group. Respondents does seem to acknowledge the importance of staying Sikkimese while keeping one's unique culture and tradition alive in this 21st century.

5.5 Present Scenario of Sikkim and State's Responses

Lately, Sikkim has been witnessing many variants in social fabric as well as in politics. Being a tiny state it can be seen that it is easier for any people or organization to reach out to people. Even a small statement by a certain group of people or Government makes a huge impact on the people. People in Sikkim have been living in harmony for the greater part of the time. As people of Sikkim become more educated and aware of their rights, the people seemed to look for initiatives and programmes from the Government which is crucial for development of the state. Such steps will ensure a healthy society while ensuring bright future for the Sikkimese. If any of the crucial areas of interest of the people of Sikkim is not addressed to their liking by the government, there seemed to heightened dissatisfaction and people these days are

quick to respond at various levels. There are a variety of subjects in Sikkim that have taken great hype in recent times. Following are few of the subjects which are certainly of major concern:

5.5.1 State Government on Ethnic Identity

Almost all issues in Sikkim originate from and end in its ethnic diversity. Lepchas, the original inhabitants are today facing extinction; the Bhutias who ruled after them are also in a minority. Nepalis, who immigrated in large numbers in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, are now in an overwhelming majority and are clamoring for their right to rule. Adding to the confusion is a large number of plainsmen, identified as "of Indian origin". The tension and bitterness created by the ethnic struggle have cut across party lines (Yogi, 2014). It is observable that political parties in the past were more or less based on ethno cultural divisions. But they often used a more general name to conceal its ethnic bias, where they try to project the particular ethnic interest in such a way as it becomes the general interest. For example, the Sikkim National Party in Sikkim was basically a party for Bhutia and Lepcha but had used the taxonomy 'National' party. Likewise, the Sikkim State Congress though clearly representing Nepali community and the interests of Nepali community, masked itself with a universal demand for 'democracy'.

In recent times what can be noticed is even those political parties who do not necessarily have an ethnic base are compelled to fall in ethnic line by supporting ethnic demands. This is basically to ensure their electoral survival even though their primary motive is to serve the common issues and interests of the people. The recent government in Sikkim was seen giving more importance to ethnicity while making people aware of the importance of practicing their culture and tradition. As per the government's version it was to keep their uniqueness alive and to pass the same to the

next generation. For making it happen past government declared holidays on festivals of several ethnic groups like Sakewa for Rai, Tamu Lochar for Gurung, Sonam Lochar for Tamang etc. and recently 18th May 2019, has also been declared as a holiday for Shyadar Pidar, a festival of Sunuwar community.

Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) Party under the leadership of its President and former Chief Minister of Sikkim Mr. Pawan Kumar Chamling used to lay stress on celebrating community and sub-community festivals to keep the traditions of the ethnic group alive which is part of their unique identity. The SDF government was actively involved in the recognition of Newar, Gurung, Tamang, Rai, Mangar, Sherpa and Sunuwar languages as State languages. The Mandal Commission recommendations were implemented under the SDF government and Gurung, Limboo, Rai, Mangar, Thami, Bhujel, Jogi, Sunuwar, Tamang and Dewan were included in the OBC list. On 7th of January, 2003 the Limboos and Tamangs of Sikkim were accorded the status of Scheduled Tribes. Consequently, the eleven left out communities which includes Bhujel, Gurung, Mangar, Newar, Jogi, Khas, Rai, Sunuwar, Thami Dewan and Giri have been working hard for their inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list. The SDF government also seemed equally concerned about the social and religious aspirations of the people of Sikkim. Cultural cum research centers for the Limboos and Lepchas were established in Hee Bormoik and Dzongu respectively. A statue of a Limboo spiritual leader 'Siri Junga' and a 'Manghim' (place of worship) at Hee Bormoik and a 108 feet statue of Guru Rimpochey (Padma Sambhava) at Samdruptse (South Sikkim) and many more similar structures were also established to cater to the peoples demands. These decisions made by the SDF government did play its part in winning the hearts of the people which in turn made Mr. P. K. Chamling the longest serving chief minister of India.

During the twenty five years long tenure of the SDF Government many reforms and changes were brought to the ethnic structure of Sikkim. Some of which have been discussed below:

i) Tribal Status to Limboos and Tamangs

The Limboo and Tamang was granted Tribal status in the year 2003 by the parliament during the term of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Initially, the tribal movement of Tamang community was started by “Tamang Buddhist Association”, Darjeeling in 1950s and it was further strengthened in the year 1981 with the formation of “All India Tamang Buddhist Association”. Likewise, the Tribal Movement for Limboo community was first started by “Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limbu Chumlung” lead by Shri Ashok Kumar Limboo in the year 1973 later followed by others.

ii) Proposed Bill to increase Assembly Seat

Limboo and Tamang have been demanding the reservation of seats in the assembly since its inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes list. A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking reservation for two Scheduled Tribes, 'Limboo' and 'Tamang', in Sikkim Legislative Assembly. The petition, filed by members of organization viz. 'Sikkim Limboo Tamang Tribal Joint Committee', has sought a direction to the Centre to take appropriate steps to amend the provisions of the Representation of the People Act and to provide reservation to Scheduled Tribes 'Limboo' and 'Tamang' in Sikkim Legislative Assembly. The government is yet to effectively conclude this matter. The previous SDF government was unable to make changes to the existing seat distribution and instead tried to increase the number of seats in the assembly

but was unable to do so. This matter now lies in the hand of the present Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) government for necessary resolution.

iii) Lepchas declared as Primitive Tribe

The Sikkim Legislative Assembly in its session held from 21st to 28th February, 2005 passed a resolution for declaring the Lepcha Tribal Community of Sikkim, as the Primitive Tribe Group. The Lepcha community was declared as a Primitive tribe by the government on 18th November 2006 to protect and safeguard their indigenous knowledge and tradition. They were provided Primitive Tribe certificates to uplift their socio-economic, educational, political status and to give them distinct identity and special status.²⁴

iv) Scheduled Tribe Status for Eleven Indigenous Left Out Communities of Sikkim

The state government has been working time and again for the inclusion of certain communities or sub communities under the Scheduled Tribe category. Beginning with the year 1996, government of Sikkim sent numerous proposals to the Union government for inclusion of Gurung, Mangar, Rai, Sunuwar (Mukhia) and Thami in the Scheduled Tribe list of Sikkim. But in the year 1999 Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI) wrote back saying that they do not have relevant material on the proposed communities. Again in 2005 a committee was constituted by Government of Sikkim under the chairmanship of Prof. A. C. Sinha for preparation of ethnographic report of six communities viz; Rai, Dewan, Sunuwar, Gurung, Mangar and Bhujel submitted its report known as the Sinha Committee Report (SCR) 2005 to

²⁴384/Gazette/150 Nos./Dt:- 18.11.2006

Government of Sikkim. In the same year, the state government in order to review the constitutional status of castes and communities in Sikkim in historical, cultural-ecological and political-economic contexts constituted a Commission entrusting the Chairmanship of the Commission to the renowned Anthropologist, Prof. B. K. Roy Burman. But, in the year 2006 ORGI, after thorough examination of the SCR, 2005 wrote back saying “In absence of any significant primitive cultural traits existing among them the proposal could not be supported”. Again in the year 2012, the state government constituted a Committee headed by Shri Sindhu Saha, Anthropologist and the Report on Proposal for inclusion of 11 communities in the ST list of Sikkim was sent to ORGI but once again it was rejected. The same process continued in the year 2016, 2017 with the latest being in the year 2018.

In the latest endeavor for recognition of the left out communities as Scheduled Tribes, a Summit by the name “Sikkim Summit for Tribal Status-2018” was organized at Gangtok, Sikkim as a unique initiative taken up by the Eleven Indigenous Ethnic Communities of Sikkim (EIECOS) in collaboration with the Social Justice Empowerment and Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim and Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes, Government of Sikkim which brought together leading Scholars and Policy makers from across the country to present their views on why such a demand by the Sikkimese Nepali ethnicity is justified and deserves to be accepted. In the said Summit a resolution was passed viz. Gangtok Resolution on the final day of the Summit in which all the Scholars and Speakers endorsed the fact that the eleven left out communities deserved the Scheduled Tribe status in the interest of removing any disparities of status within the Sikkimese Community. Here is Gangtok Resolution thus passed on 4th May, 2018 in detail:

GANGTOK RESOLUTION:

Gangtok Resolution on Grant of Scheduled Tribe Status to Eleven Indigenous Ethnic Communities of Sikkim

We understand:

- 1. That, all the indigenous communities of Sikkim, the Bhutia, the Lepcha and the Nepali live in peace and harmony. All the tribes of the Sikkim Himalayas live in similar social and economic conditions and endure similar hardship and challenges posed by the geopolitical situation and mountainous topography of Sikkim.*
- 2. That, British India had recognized all these communities as the tribes of the Himalaya. The King of Sikkim, the Chogyal, had placed all of them in the same pedestal and had given them protection by providing them reservation in the State Council and employment.*
- 3. That, after the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975, a section of the Sikkimese people were recognized as Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes of Sikkim as per the prevailing Constitution of India and the rest (especially the Sikkimese Nepali Community) were left-out from this affirmative action.*
- 4. That, the rights of the remaining communities of Sikkim to be recognized as Scheduled Tribes based on this Historical Right and situation, need for Justice and need to Right this wrong.*

On this day of 4th May, 2018, and in view of the deliberations of the Sikkim Summit for Tribal Status 2018, we recommend to the Government of Sikkim and Government of India that the Scheduled Tribe Status be considered in alignment with the

provisions of Article 371F of the Constitution of India for all the communities of Sikkim.

This will ensure lasting peace and prosperity for which 98 percent of Sikkimese voted in a historic referendum on 14th April, 1975 to join the Indian Union as the 22nd State.

(Accepted and signed on 4th May, 2018 by all the Dignitaries, Resource Persons and Participants of the Sikkim Summit on Tribal Status held on 3rd and 4th of May, 2018 at Gangtok, Sikkim.)

Therefore the above resolution maintains the long and ongoing support of the Government of Sikkim to bring the eleven indigenous ethnic communities of Sikkim for the grant of Scheduled Tribe Status.

v) News Broadcast in Various State Recognized Local Languages

The Department of IPR (Information and Public Relation), Government of Sikkim has recently started news broadcast in different local languages like Mangar, Rai, Sunuwar, Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo, Tamang etc. It shows the Government's initiative on making people aware and keeping them conscious of their respective culture and languages.

5.5.2 Assembly Seats

“Sikkim became the 22nd State of India vide Constitution (36th Amendment) Act 1975. The Act provides that the Legislature Assembly of Sikkim shall consist of not less than thirty two members and that the Assembly of Sikkim formed as a result of the elections held in Sikkim in April, 1974 with 32 members elected in the said

elections (hereinafter referred to as the sitting members) shall be deemed to be the legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly constituted under the Constitution.”²⁵

The issue of Assembly seat is not a new one but it has become an issue of concern over a period of time. Sikkim Legislative Assembly seats used to be based on the parity formula where the 32 seats were divided into 15 for B-L, 15 for Nepalis, 1 for Sangha and 1 for Scheduled Caste where Sangha belong to a B-L community and Scheduled Caste belong to Nepalis community. But four years after the merger with the Indian Union, on the basis of the Article 371F (f) which states:

“Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim make provision for the number of seats in the legislative Assembly of the state of Sikkim which may be filled by candidates belonging to such sections and for the delimitation of the assembly constituencies from which candidates belonging to such sections also may stand for elections to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim.”

The Government of India contemplated to do away with parity formula of seat reservation. The parliament introduced Bill No.79 in the Lok Sabha on 18th May 1979, seeking to make amendment to the Representation of the People Act 1950/51 to provide readjustment of the assembly seats in Sikkim. The bill proposed to reserve 12 seats for the B-Ls, one for Sangha and two for the Scheduled Castes with no reservation to Nepali community. The remaining 17 seats would be kept general. The objects or the reasons for the introduction of the bill given by the Government of India stated:

²⁵<http://www.sikkimassembly.org.in/>

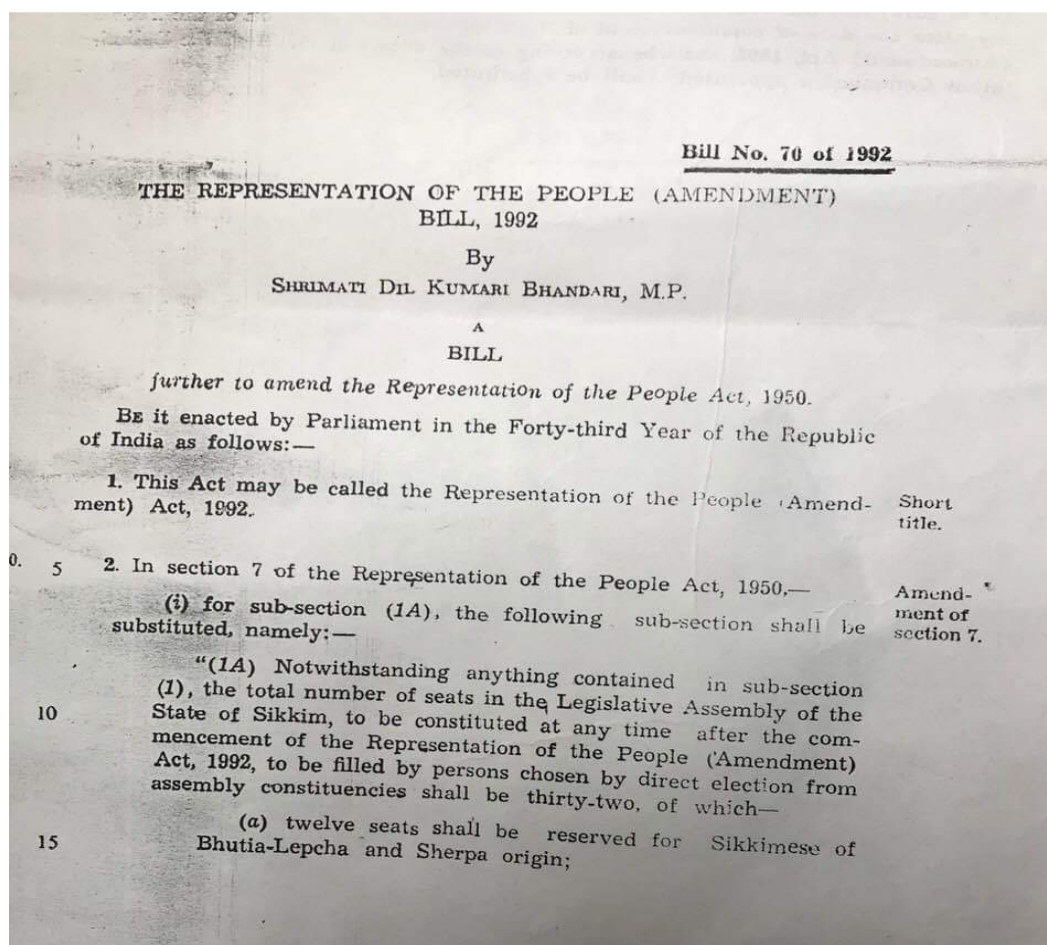
“Under the existing arrangements, the seats in the assembly are reserved for the Nepalis, the Bhutias and Lepchas, the Scheduled Castes and the Sanghas belonging to the monasteries. As a result, other residents of Sikkim are not eligible to contest elections to the Assembly. In these circumstances, it has become necessary to modify the existing set-up of the Legislative Assembly so as to ensure fair representation to all sections of the population of the state in the Assembly. At the same time, it is considered that if the Bhutias and Lepchas, who are the original inhabitants of Sikkim, are given representation solely according to their population ratio their interest may not be safeguarded. Accordingly, it has been decided that 12 seats in the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim which may be constituted hereafter may be reserved for the Bhutias and Lepchas” (Kazi, 2009).

Hence, under the new arrangements, no seats were reserved for the Nepalis but 12 seats were seen reserved for B-Ls. Although the amendment also reduced the seats reserved for the B-Ls from 15 to 12 but included other groups of Tibetan descent but Nepalis were found the worst affected. The safeguard of interest so far enjoyed by them had been taken away. The new arrangement evoked criticism from different quarters. The majority of the Nepali leaders both ruling and opposition parties became agitated and apprehensive of the future of the Nepali people in Sikkim. The Nepalis lost the benefit of reservation, while the people from the plains included as Sikkimese citizen and were granted right to contest the general seats. The resentment reached such a height that certain leaders started demanding reservation of seats for the Nepalis also and demanding for disfranchising the plains people got thrust. For the first time the issue of plainmen vs hill people seemed to surface in the Sikkimese politics. A section of the Sikkim Janata Party leaders, under the leadership of R. C. Poudyal became vocal against the Bill and called it a Black Bill. Even Sikkim Janata

Parishad party of Nar Bahadur Bhandari when formed the Government, declared that there would be no elections if seats were not reserved for the majority Nepalis. ‘No Seat, No Vote’ became the slogan. (Gurung, 2018) The Bill was then placed in the Parliament time and again but ended up at last with no change but justification:

*“The Legislation is to safeguard the validity of the elections already held. Therefore, this valuable suggestion would certainly be taken cognizance of for future elections and if necessary, we would certainly come over with the amendment.”*²⁶

Photo: one of the copy of many Bills that were introduced, “The Representation of The People (Amendment) Bill, 1992” for reservation of seats for Tsongs and Nepalis which had been introduced by then MP Dil Kumari Bhandari in the Lok Sabha.



²⁶Proceedings of the Parliament of India, February, 1980

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The State of Sikkim joined the mainstream of national life recently and it has been just a few years that the people of the State have been exposed to the democratic set up. During the last Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, the demand for reservation of seats for the Sikkimese of Nepalese origin and Tsongs was the main plank of all political parties. Upto the year 1979 seats were reserved for the Sikkimese of Nepalese origin. However, in the year 1979 the reservation of seats for this category of persons was done away with. The issue of reservation of seats for Sikkimese of Nepalese origin and Tsongs should be viewed not only in the context of educational, economic, social and political backwardness of these communities but also in the context of historical, traditional and constitutional factors which have guided their destinies for generations.

Sikkim is the smallest State in the country and there is, therefore, a legitimate apprehension in the minds of these communities that with the influx of the people from other parts of the country they will be completely out-numbered and, in the course of few years, will become a minority, thus losing their identity. This highlights the intensity of the feelings of the people of the State on the issue. The people of Sikkim consider the abolition of reservation of seats for Sikkimese of Nepalese origin and Tsongs as most unjust and it cuts at the very root of amity, peace and harmony between various communities in the State.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to restore the reservation of seats for the Sikkimese of Nepalese origin and Tsongs in the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim.

The Bill seeks to achieve the above objective.

NEW DELHI;
March 3, 1992.

DIL KUMARI BHANDARI

Source: Dil Kumari Bhandari official page

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the present status of Sikkim and its people. The chapter also looked upon many reasons that have led to growing ethnic identity consciousness among Sikkimese people. The growing consciousness is a direct result of the policies, provisions and amendments made at the State and the Union level which has led to feeling of accomplishment and achievement among some communities and sub-communities while disparity and discrimination among some of the Sikkimese society.

The reason for the promotion of one's ethnic identity may have been honest and non-prejudiced where communities and sub-communities are trying to preserve their culture, custom, language and more importantly their individual ethnic identity. But, all of these have obviously guided the Sikkimese society to a path of separation where one section has already achieved certain special privileges by virtue of some amendments while the left outs are hectically pursuing the same goal. We cannot entirely deny the importance of preserving unique identity in the age of modernization and globalization which is automatically amalgamating cultures across the world.

Through this chapter as a minimum we can try to understand the people's perspective on various burning issues and concerns that are looming in the Sikkimese Society. Even though the people can be seen less vocal about the ongoing issues, however, the survey so conducted revealed many facts which obviously concerns the people of Sikkim. Even though the people of Sikkim seems quite flexible while speaking on casual topics but when it comes to the topic such as the Sikkim Subject Certificate, Certificate of Identification, Article 371F and Sikkimese/non-Sikkimese issues, they present a strong opinion. Lately due to the advent of social media, the people of Sikkim seem better informed and well aware of the developments that are taking place in their state.

Overall the state of Sikkim has been witnessing changes which have both positive and negative sides to it. With the recent downfall of the ruling SDF Party who had been the power centre of Sikkim for five consecutive terms and with the formation of the new government by the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) Party which won the 2019 General Elections with the sole slogan of "Parivartan" which mean Change in English language, we are yet to see both the positive and negative changes that are in reserve under the new ruling government.

As highlighted in this chapter, it is a welcoming step when it comes to making people aware of their culture, tradition and the need to preserve their distinct identity. But, at the same time it is ever more important to stay cohesive as Sikkimese, considering the ongoing population influx and outnumbering of Sikkimese population by non-Sikkimese in the State of Sikkim. The non-Sikkimese who may be referred as outsiders has been grasping the available opportunities in every sector of Sikkim. It is one such reason which demands unification of Sikkimese people instead of disintegration on the ethnic lines as this will ensure that the collective rights which is provided by the Indian Constitution in the form of Article 371F remains intact in future to serve the greater interest of the Sikkimese people. People may only anticipate but cannot be certain about what is in store for Sikkim and Sikkimese in days to come. Therefore, it is in best interest for everyone to consider all aspects looming in the Sikkimese society today and make better decisions to secure the future of entire Sikkimese.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

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Ethnicity and identity are separate terms with their individual meanings but when these two terms are understood in a combined sense, its meaning, purpose and importance can change significantly. The primary motive of focusing on these two realities is to prove a distinctness of an individual or a group of people living in a society, however there can be many supplementary reasons for pursuing these two subjects in particular. It may make perfect sense to pursue such distinctiveness as this is what makes an individual or a group of people unique in terms of culture, tradition, customs, costumes, food habits etc. and more importantly gives a sense of security thereby enabling them to follow their respective larger goals. In today's time these two matters have indeed become key tools to seek one's moral, material and political ambitions as any fulfillment in these areas can bring huge dividends to an individual or to the entire community. These fulfillments may not be limited to one age group rather it can impact the subsequent generations as well.

Ethnicity and Identity although regarded as different terms yet they can be greatly interrelated. Ethnicity needs to be understood in order to clearly understand the identity and vice versa. Some scholars in the past have claimed that with the advent of globalization the importance of ethnicity and identity among people will gradually decrease but considering the current scenario across regions it does not seem to be happening anytime soon. As we can see in our contemporary world, with the enormous expansion in population world over, the importance and utility of these terms may have changed but it is still relevant. People try to mobilize their ethnicity to create their own respective identity, a distinct one, different from any other group or

an individual in order to meet a certain purpose. Put it simply, with people moving across regions, countries and continents in a globalized world, people feel it is necessary to seek a way which can help an individual or a group to stand out in a crowd. People tend to give added importance to ethnicity for their identity formation. In this sense ethnicity is one such parameter which people use at any point in time to showcase their lineage and uniqueness. The theories propounded by different scholars at different points in time have helped us to justify and simplify issues related to ethnicity and identity. There are scholars who have claimed that ethnicity and identity per se does play a significant role in a life of an individual and a community as a whole while there has been an identical claim to the contrary. Some societies and nations may try to define these terms as per their convenience and motives but nonetheless the core meaning of these terms remains the same.

When we pick these terms and try to understand it in the context of Sikkim, we definitely need to look back at Sikkim's past. The period prior to the formation of Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim can be considered as a pre-historic period of Sikkim as this era lacks written records and documents which can concretize the true history of Sikkim. We find that even the early monarchical history of Sikkim is vaguely documented. This shortage of Sikkim's early history can be attributed to the socio-economic condition of the populace of Sikkim during those times which largely spent their lives meeting their survival needs rather than recording their life challenges. In the absence of written records dating to pre-historic period, we may perhaps have to accept the assumptions drawn by various scholars and authors who strongly suggest that prior to the establishment of Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim there was no idea of a singular nation or a country called Sikkim. Many scholars and authors propose that even though there was no singular monarchy ruling Sikkim prior to the formation of

Namgyal dynasty, there were inhabitants sparsely spread across this hilly region with numerous autonomous Chieftains belonging to tribes such as the Limboos, the Lepchas and the Mangars who had control over specific parts of Sikkim's geography and had total control over the population of that land. All these tribes later on agreed and accepted the supremacy of a ruler whose ancestry belonged to Tibet. They later signed the Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum treaty and integrated all their land resources to the Namgyal Dynasty.

As we look deeper into the timeline of formation of Sikkim from the raw scattered 'No Sikkim' to 'Greater Sikkim' to 'Sikkim of today', it has indeed been a complex process with lots of ups and downs of its own. It must not have been easy for people to travel across mountains through high passes from a faraway land of Tibet to a new land, convince the population living here, win them over and be regarded as their overall ruler. Namgyal Dynasty with all the challenges did establish themselves as the sole ruler of this land and effectively ruled this land for over three centuries.

There have been instances in the Sikkim's history which suggests that the Limboos, the Mangars and the Lepchas were not easily convinced to be ruled by a new ruler and were not ready to accept Namgyals' supremacy in the beginning but as a result of different approaches adopted by the new ruler, all of the Chieftains along with their respective populace ultimately accepted the supremacy of the Namgyals. With the signing of the treaty all the territory of Sikkim and its people came under the direct control of the Namgyal Dynasty. With reference to Mangars, there are historical accounts which suggest that there were disagreements between the Mangars and the Namgyals on the formation of a new Kingdom which later lead to armed confrontations between the two. At the end of this all, Namgyals emerged victorious while the Mangars moved away from their original land to other parts of then Greater

Sikkim. Upon the establishment of Namgyal monarchy it can be observed that not all the Kings who reigned the throne were competent and strong in nature which led to the gradual disintegration of Greater Sikkim. The incompetency of Namgyal rulers to protect and defend the territory of Greater Sikkim reduced the areas of then Sikkim into more or less Sikkim of today which is much lesser in total geographical area. There are historical records which go to show that few of the Namgyal rulers were puppet rulers who were highly influenced by prominent Lamas, Bhutia Chiefs and even foreign powers. All of these factors lead to loss of Sikkim's territory initially in parts and later in full with the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union.

The Namgyals ruled over all the communities living in Sikkim but their rule over their people cannot be considered as just and righteous as they had preferential attitude towards certain community or communities. Their decisions highly depended upon their needs and the directions received from prominent Lamas, Bhutia Chiefs and foreign powers. There have been important instances in history of Sikkim which has been decided by Tibet, British India and later by independent India. The preferential attitude of the Namgyals have been supported by the historical records which shows how at times Bhutia community was preferred over Lepchas and Nepalis of Sikkim while there are also decisions taken by then monarchs which gave higher grounds to Bhutias and Lepchas over their Nepali counterparts. There were times under the monarchy when Lepcha community and Nepali community of Sikkim have felt oppressed by the ruling community. The Sikkimese history has been particularly unkind towards the Nepali community which includes the Limboos of Sikkim without whom Sikkim as a separate kingdom would have never seen the light of day. In fact the origin of the word Sikkim itself is from two Limboo words, Su which means "new" and khyim which means "palace" or "house". The queen Thungwamukma who

was married to the second Chogyal of Sikkim, Tensung Namgyal is attributed to have coined the word “Su-khyim”. Despite all these facts we see Nepali community regarded Chogyals as their king and trusted his decisions but when Nepali community demanded equivalent deeds from their ruler, only discontent and dissatisfaction was served in return. The discontentment and dissatisfaction amongst the Nepali community which was also the majority population living in Sikkim sparked an upheaval against the ruling Chogyals which eventually ended the rule of Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim. Nonetheless, we observe that with the independence of India from British rule on 15th of August’ 1947, demands for democracy in Sikkim also started taking place in different forms and it was not limited to a single community as there were strugglers for democratic movement from all communities living in Sikkim. It has to be understood that while some were looking to merge Sikkim with India, some were only looking for a democratic setup under the Chogyal’s monarchial rule itself.

On 16th May’ 1975 Sikkim became the 22nd State of India after a special referendum was held where more than 97 percent of the electorate voted for Sikkim’s merger with the Indian Union. With this the entire 333 years long Namgyal kingship came to an end and gave way to democracy in Sikkim. Merger was not an end but a new beginning for Sikkim with little comprehension about what future may hold for this newly formed state of India. With the information available we can be certain that not everything was well and good in Sikkim post its merger. What followed was confusion among Sikkimese who were still trying to grasp the reality while there were different political parties being formed, deformed and reformed in order to manifest their own political cause. Communalism was still being harvested among the Sikkimese while influx was on the rise for all the incentives that were available for grabs in Sikkim.

The aftermath of merger can be considered a chaos of one or the other kind for Sikkim. The communal lines were still visible in Sikkim with no community being absolutely pleased by political developments that were taking shape in the state. Even as Nepali community felt betrayed when Nepali seat reservation in the state assembly was done away with in the year 1979, the Bhutia-Lepcha community too was not in high spirits when their assembly seats were being reduced from 15 to 12. In all the political developments that took place during the initial years of merger, Nepali community was most to suffer as their entire struggle against the monarchical rule had been on the premise of equality but what followed was completely unprecedented. The Nepali community never achieved equal rights at par with the Bhutias and Lepchas of Sikkim instead they lost their seat reservation in the year 1979 and in years that followed they were labeled as immigrants in the only land they called home. Besides, all such issues that erupted amongst the Sikkimese people, the huge migration of people from other parts of India was a major cause of concern. In a new democratic setup the very existence of the indigenous people of Sikkim was being challenged by Indian settlers or outsiders.

It can be seen that the Indian settlers or outsiders are here in Sikkim since a long time. Many of them have made it their eternal home owing to various factors which favours their continued existence and growth in this region. Their prosperous today is for the reason that the majority of local indigenous people of Sikkim was backward, illiterate and lacked certain qualities which the outsiders possessed during Sikkim's merger with India. The outsiders being eligible, educated and skilled got good employment opportunities in the new state. People belonging to Indian plains were the most to migrate to Sikkim as traders. With the passage of time more number of outsiders started migrating in search of various jobs. Many of them were able to

secure good career in Sikkim. In a span of few years people from India started to hold top positions in Sikkimese administration. Although there was discomfort among the Sikkimese people with few individuals and political parties even being vocal about it but largely the Sikkimese populace remained silent on the matter. All of these lead to outsiders being able to continue with their pursuit of livelihood in Sikkim.

Many times it's the factors such as lack of skills among the Sikkimese, their inability or hesitancy to take risks as well as lack of hereditary knowledge is what makes them more dependent on the outsiders. With the continuous influx, the employment opportunities for the Sikkimese are only getting grimmer. Many of the outsiders have already set a strong base for themselves, many of whom are second or third generation workers in their respective occupation. In certain sectors the Sikkimese people seem to be falling behind and at times they find it difficult to compete with the outsiders. The difference is prominent in the field of commerce, trade and businesses in Sikkim. Consequently, the local population has become more dependent towards the Sikkim state government jobs but again it is impossible for the government to accommodate everyone in government sector. Adding fuel to the fire now the outsiders, particularly the old Indian settlers have gradually started to demand rights and privileges enjoyed so far only by the locals. Some sections of the local society feel that such rights should be exclusively for them while the old settlers consider that they too deserve to be treated equal.

As per the 2011 census, Sikkim has already reached a literacy rate of 81.42% which indicates that the majority population is well educated to take on the opportunities available in Sikkim but many of such positions are being occupied by outsiders. From a Sikkimese point of view this is one of the major reasons for unemployment in Sikkim inspite of local population being competent enough.

Unemployment cannot be regarded as a local issue but nonetheless this matter has the potential to disrupt the peace and harmony of Sikkim. This type of issues can be classified as a non-traditional security threat to Sikkim. Non-traditional security threat not only to the state of Sikkim but considering the geo-political importance of Sikkim with its three international boundaries with China, Nepal and Bhutan it may have national level implications.

With kind of developments that are taking place in Sikkim where there is continuous influx and demands being raised for equal rights by the old settlers, there is every chance that these factors will lead up to something untoward in future. So, whether governments at the state or at the central level acknowledge such friction points or not, these issues are prevalent and are increasingly being acknowledged by masses in Sikkim.

If we look at the historical facts of early Indian settlers in Sikkim or the “Old Settlers of Sikkim” as they themselves like to address them as “Old Settlers of Sikkim”, we find that they too are responsible for their present situation. They are devoid of certain rights and privileges which are only available to SSC/COI holders despite them being in Sikkim for decades. It is understood that the early Indian settlers were offered an opportunity to be subjects of Sikkim by then Chogyal but they refused such offer and decided to remain as Indian nationals. There can be various reasons for such a decision which at that time they felt was a wise one. With time the outsiders seems to have realized the mistake they have made by forgoing the Sikkimese citizenship and are now seeking course correction. The old settlers have concluded that they are never going back to their ancestral land which lies in the plains of India. They have become conscious to the reality that it is more beneficial to be in Sikkim and make a living here than to go back to their ancestral roots. The

outsiders are aware that if they are counted at par with citizens of Sikkim they will have numerous benefits in terms of rights and privileges enjoyed solely by the people of Sikkim. These are among the facts that have made outsiders or in particular Old settlers of Sikkim demand rights and privileges that were initially designed keeping in mind the indigenous people of Sikkim.

Considering the current disintegrating nature of the Sikkimese society which are results of multiple political as well as non political influences, one cannot be sure for how long the communal bonding remains in this tiny state. Add to that demands being raised by non Sikkimese people residing in Sikkim inspite they not being in possession of documents such as the SSC/COI. The ripening of these issues however inconsequential may have grievous consequences to the entire Sikkimese community.

As discussed in the preceding chapters the growing identity consciousness in Sikkim is a result of budding awareness among the people of Sikkim about the historical rights and wrongs which has discriminated a certain community against the other. In particular a Nepali community in Sikkim has been made to feel like a second class citizen in their own homeland notwithstanding the fact that they possess all documents necessary to prove their Sikkimese identity. One of the reasons for discrimination among communities is also due to the benefit a community sees in differentiating their culture, language and identity. Promotion of one's identity against the tides of modernization and globalization can be a genuine reason to preserve a unique identity of a community and yet it may catalyze discrimination among different communities.

In one of the chapters we were able to perceive people's perspective on various burning issues and concerns that are looming in Sikkimese society. Even

though Sikkimese society is known to be unvocal and breezy, the people hitherto participated in the survey and revealed many specifics. Sikkimese people when questioned were quite open and flexible speaking on general issues but when it came to topics of importance such as the issue of Article 371F, SSC/COI as official documents, Sikkimese/non-Sikkimese people, they presented stronger opinions and were sensitive about protecting their exclusive rights and privileges.

The most successful political party of Sikkim, the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) lead by Mr. Pawan Kumar Chaming vis. which was in power for the past twenty five years was defeated in General Elections of 2019 by a party lead by Mr. Prem Singh Tamang who is the leader of a Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) party. This was a mega change in the political scenario of Sikkim as this ended the twenty five long years of a single party, single leader rule in Sikkim. The people of Sikkim may have lot of expectations and apprehensions as far as the new government is concerned but we will have to wait and watch to judge if the change has positive or negative implications to Sikkim and Sikkimese.

Averting the non-traditional security threats in Sikkim would be one of the biggest tests for the newly formed government. Whether it is about controlling the ever increasing influx or maintaining peace and harmony amongst communities living in Sikkim, the government in power has a huge responsibility ahead of it. All political parties would want to translate their political agendas into reality once they assume power and this government is no different. They too have lot of promises to keep whether it is in regards to employment, health, education, agriculture, rural development or many of such issues which touch the lives of the masses directly or indirectly but again creating a favorable environment for any of such endeavor to succeed would be a priority for this government.

Every government in Sikkim till date has their own share of contributions and failures for the Sikkimese people. During the tenure of SDF government which was in power for consecutive five terms, upliftment in the overall socio-economic condition was evident but at the same time the very factor was responsible for attracting substantial influx thereby increasing the non-traditional security threats in Sikkim. The SDF government's involvement in preservation and promotion of Sikkimese people's unique cultural identity is well known. This may seem as a positive move by the government but it also brought in more divide among the communities and sub-communities living in Sikkim. It is so as each community or sub-community was more interested in securing exclusive benefits for their respective group only rather than thinking about overall good of the Sikkimese community. These minor cracks have the potential to induce major divide among the Sikkimese people subsequently sowing the seeds for nontraditional security threats in Sikkim.

As Sikkim continues to witness a rise in influx with continued demographic change it is important for the Sikkimese people irrespective of the community they belong to that they realize the importance of staying unified in order to safeguard their special rights and privileges. It is noticeable how the outsiders in Sikkim have been grasping the opportunities which in their absence would have benefitted the Sikkimese instead. In the dearth of stringent policies that supports local interests over the interests of outsiders, Sikkim would go on promoting the growth of influx in Sikkim which might one day outnumber the Sikkimese. It is terribly possible for the Sikkimese to become a minority in their homeland as in the case of Tripura due to mass Bangladeshi immigration. While the governments at the centre and the state should formalize policies to protect the special rights of the Sikkimese, the Sikkimese

people too should not disintegrate amongst themselves in the name of ethnicity and identity.

One may argue here that Sikkim is also an integral part of India and there should be no restrictions leading to conflict when people from any part of India moves to Sikkim for any purpose. People from the mainland India may even dispute that even people from Sikkim migrate to different parts of India for education, employment, health care etc. For them let me remind them Sikkim became a part of the Indian Union only in the year 1975 which is a whole 28 years after India's independence. Sikkim did not have the privilege of same developmental advancements which the rest of India was lucky to have for the lost 28 years. In addition Sikkimese people have trusted their homeland to India for the sake of democratic values that it holds and not to be ruled by people from mainland India. Moreover when Sikkimese people migrate to other parts of India for varied purposes, they do not make the population of that region a minority but even if a population equivalent to a district of majority Indian states moves to Sikkim, there is a threat of Sikkimese becoming a minority in their own state. Hence, protecting the Sikkimese in Sikkim should be a priority for the governments both at the centre and state level.

We often talk about ethnicity and identity issues, about its causes and consequences. We often fail to relate the issue of migration and the issue of ethnicity and identity. Migration has always been one of the important causes of later. Migration sounds simple yet it's extensive in reality. Migration is organic which ensures survivability, prosperity and sustainability of a human race. It is something which started as a basic survival need for the human beings with the development of its senses and agility. Although our focus remains on the humanity but migration is not only limited to the human civilization and is far beyond us. Each person in this

world is a migrant. Whether the person accepts it or not depends on his depth of history.

Throughout the history of this world, migration is what has resulted in shaping the crude as well as human made boundaries across the planet. Migration has always changed the ethnic, tribal, cultural and national conditions all over the globe. Migration is a process which had started since time immemorial and will continue till lives exist in this world. Migrations possess real dilemmas for the regions across the world. Most states have, nevertheless, failed to manage or control irregular migration effectively and efficiently. A person or a group of people migrates from one place to another due to diverse reasons. During ancient times migration may not have been a huge issue as it is today. It is so as during those times many of the lands were unclaimed and even for the claimed lands the population surviving out of those lands were negligible which left plenty of resources for all. Differing to it as we see it today migration has become a cause of concern and threat to many. Migration has become a major problem mainly due to population explosion around the world as a result of better food availability and health care but on the contrary many of the natural resources on which we depend are getting depleted. This may serve as a perfect recipe for conflict as there will be plenty of overlaps of interest amongst people leading them to fight for the same resource. As the human population continues to increase, so will the migration and so will the conflicts erupting out of it. As many countries in the world are trying to address the issue of international migration vehemently, a country too can formulate policies that secure the people and their interests in their home land by addressing internal migration effectively.

As the population of the world continues to increase people are obligated to migrate in search of better opportunities. Everyone has a right to pursue happiness,

even if it means crossing the local regional borders or going past international boundaries. People are always ready to make their way of life better even if it means leaving their homeland. Throughout the history of mankind, people have migrated across regions, countries and even continents to fulfill their respective aspirations. Recent history shows that people have migrated from many non-developing to developing and developed countries. In a similar way many people have migrated from developing to developed nations in order to pursue their life goals. While some migrations are temporary there are those of permanent nature as well. There are many countries owing to various reasons accept and even promote permanent migration. There are also countries which are acceptable about temporary migration but do not validate permanent migration or needs substantial reasons for its approval and validation.

Immigration from a country or countries will be an inseparable part of developmental programmes for many host nations. Immigration will still be a part of a human rights programme for major world organizations such as the UN (United Nations) whether it is about giving refuge to people from war torn countries or to those in a conflict region. Voluntary and forced migration will continue to grip the world. Migration presents multiple challenges to both the migrator and the host nation, however the migration phenomenon will continue for many more years to follow. For the people of any country, insider-outsider issue will be of major concern so as to balance the resources and the civil liberties among all the populace. Migration leads to amalgamation of cultures and many things alien while one may still continue to hold on to the past. So one can only hope that migration is not seen as a stumbling block to development but as a step towards progress in all spheres of life.

In the past migration may not have been much of an issue but that is not the current case. In the present world as we talk about this natural phenomenon we have to consider the man made laws of the land. Internationally, many countries are facing problem of illegal migration. Illegal migration most of the time is a result of war torn countries and conflict zones which compel people of that region to move out for better life. It is what we call as forced migration. Thus, they end up moving into another country from their original land. Some of the immigrants are granted citizenship by the host nation while some live in their new country as refugees. These migrants or immigrants may have been assured a better life in their new country but it is definitely not a comfortable situation for the host country and its people while in some cases the host country may become a victim of illegal migration.

In the preceding chapters we have discussed about EU countries about how the people of host countries are in fear of losing their jobs and how there has been an increase in criminality. We have also discussed how illegal migration is getting increasingly out of control in Slovenia and how the country is trying to cope up with it. Likewise, we have seen in India, the North-eastern region has been the most affected of all. The North-eastern regions like Tripura and Assam have an issue of illegal migration from the neighboring country 'Bangladesh'. For the reason that more number of illegal immigrants are settling in the state, the indigenous people have now become a minority in their own land. The fate of the land owners are now being decided by the guests in a state like Tripura. It is also due to this fact that many of the aids and facilities meant for the indigenous people of the region never reach them and instead benefits the majority migrants. As observed in various places the concern for non-traditional security threat is increasing because of such migration behavior.

As we look at the Indian state of Sikkim which has the least population compared to any other Indian State we find that there has been a good amount of development in all the sectors that affect public life. Be it the roads, bridges, education, health care, rural development etc. Sikkim has seen a fine amount of progress as measured to its monarchical days. Sikkim is also striving forward in tourism sector by becoming one of the most visited states of India with both domestic and foreign tourist bee lining it. People love to visit Sikkim time and again owing to its god gifted natural beauty, peace and cleanliness. At the same time people from other states of India have found Sikkim favorable to pursue their own interests. There are all kinds of manual works, construction works, taxi driving, cultivation works, mechanical jobs, all forms of businesses etc. being done by the outsiders in Sikkim. The welcoming nature of Sikkimese people coupled with zero resistance in government policies for such activities by outsiders have made Sikkim the go to place for the opportunity seekers. Add to that the possibility of getting voting rights ethically for an Indian citizen in a matter of few years makes Sikkim a just place for the outsiders. In this way although an outsider in theory, they still have an opportunity to play a huge role in the political scene of this small state and decide the faith of any government. This is how outsiders tend to dominate the private sector and have a valuable influence over the politics of Sikkim. Almost all the prominent business hubs in Sikkim have been dominated by outsiders. For example if we have a look at prime locations in Sikkim such as the Gangtok, Singtam, Rangpo, Jorethang, Namchi, Gyalshing and Mangan, one would find almost all businesses being run by the outsiders rather than the indigenous people of Sikkim. In the preceding chapters we have already discussed on how the outsiders flourish in Sikkim and in a span of few years time start to have a healthy market presence. The outsiders seem to be available

in every non government jobs available in Sikkim. This domination of the market by outsiders can easily turn into domination of people of Sikkim by outsiders. Taking over of the markets by the outsiders gives them an opportunity to get a grip of Sikkim's local economy thereby enabling them to mint valuable wealth in Sikkim. As money can be a greatest tool to gain any kind of undue advantage, the outsiders in Sikkim have the potential to disrupt the thinly balanced issues of Sikkim.

As we know, back in the initial days of Sikkim's merger with India, the outsiders entered into the newly formed state and occupied key positions not to mention almost every department was headed by outsiders. Immediately after the merger, there was a huge need of educated and skilled people in Sikkim. Majority of Sikkimese being uneducated and unskilled in the required professions meant the outsiders had a free hand and grabbed every opportunity available at their disposal. As the uneducated and unskilled people of Sikkim gradually started to acquire the required traits which were necessary for employment, it became a huge struggle to fit themselves in a congested job environment. The locals suffered and are still suffering as a result of unemployment created by the outsiders.

Many hold a perspective that even the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalis have migrated to this land but they fail to understand that these communities have a long history going back to several centuries in Sikkim and even the earliest documented history of Sikkim supports their presence. Further, the Sikkim Subject Regulation Act of 1961 has also officially recognized these communities as the subjects of Sikkim.

We have seen in the preceding chapter, how instrumentalist theory helped us to understand, how an individual or rather a group uses their ethnic identity with

diverse motives. Instrumentalist theory propounded first by John Dewey and Karl Popper, were the founder and practitioners of this theory. Instrumentalist theory considers ethnicity, an instrument or tool for gaining or fulfilling the goals. Those goals may vary from moral or material goals to political goals. Consequently, people become more ethnic or in other words they become more conscious about their ethnicity only when its returns are significant and worthy.

We can relate the instrumentalist theory directly to the study of Sikkim where the importance of ethnicity and identity is ever growing. We have already understood from the preceding chapters that the three ethnic groups the Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali of Sikkim have their own history in Sikkim. Although in a popular assumption the Lepchas are believed to be the aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim but there are historians who maintain that they too have migrated to Sikkim. There are no ancient written history/records available which may prove that the Lepchas are the aboriginal inhabitants or have migrated from one particular place. It is due to such lack of written records it is difficult to be absolutely certain about the ancient history of Lepchas but from the gist of information on historical accounts there is no doubt that Lepchas are in Sikkim since centuries.

It may not have been easy for everyone to adjust within and accept the new setup. Level of adjustments has gone higher in the contemporary societies of Sikkim as compared to the past but everyone has accepted the reality and thus formed a new Sikkimese identity. With more number of people residing in Sikkim as compared to anytime in history, it has presented more of problems and difficulties for the Sikkimese. So, it is obvious for people to look for ways to highlight their ethnic background and achieve their respective motives. People in Sikkim have become ever more conscious with regard to their ethnicity and identity as it gives them a

bargaining chip for many of the prominent issues of Sikkim. Each and every ethnic group in Sikkim has started to organize themselves in order to achieve their respective goals. Essentially these organizations in the form of officially recognized associations, committees and even political parties have been formed to promote as well as preserve respective heritage but alongside these primary objectives they also enterprise for any possible gains in any socio, economic and political sphere of Sikkim. At a basic level, it is a good intent to preserve one's culture and tradition in this ever westernizing society but at the same time if it turns out to be a means to extract unwarranted advantage by one community over the other or a way to play veiled politics than it would only put in jeopardy the entire future of Sikkim and the Sikkimese. The communities belonging to any ethnicity, identifying themselves with any group if desires to remain as Sikkimese and wants a prosperous Sikkim cannot expect only New Delhi or any particular authority to safeguard Sikkimese interest while they themselves portray a distorted Sikkimese image. The safety and security of all the communities who have a long history in Sikkim would ensure the longevity of Sikkim and Sikkimese.

Social Identity Theory of Tajfel and Turner, basically an account of intergroup relations, conflict and cooperation between groups was developed further to a general account of group processes and the nature of the social group etc. This theory holds the view that when a person perceives themselves as a part of a group, that becomes an in-group for them and rest other groups are considered out-groups. Mentality of 'us' vs 'them' comes in through the process of social categorization where the people categorize in order to identify and understand them like categories of Black, White, Asian, Indian, etc. This in group makes them look at themselves in a way which demands protecting their group interests while also trying to upsurge personal gain. It

makes them understand the interests involved and allows them to act accordingly. This theory also talks about social identification, when people adopt the identity of the group that they belong to and act accordingly. Here people belonging to a particular group develop emotional attachment towards their “in group” and their self-esteem depends on the group’s success. This theory also discusses about the social comparison, where groups tend to constantly compare their “in group” with other groups which amplify the differences between them. Similar is the case of Sikkim, Sikkimese society is disintegrating itself into number of ethnic associations and organizations in the name of preserving their ethnic and cultural identity. Even though the intention of these groups sounds positive and the members of such groups may be working in perfect sync with the principles and values of the group they are affiliated to but in a long run whether intentionally or unintentionally they too are bound to get into an in-group vs out-group situation whereby they would further aid animosity amongst the different groups. In Sikkim different communities tend to use the associations and organizations for social identifications whereby people limit their emotional attachment to the needs of such groups only. If Sikkim needs stability and progress, Sikkimese people need to form consensus on every matter of importance. Instead of limiting one’s social identity merely till community, association or organizational level, people of Sikkim will have to start identifying themselves as Sikkimese over any other identity. This would ensure the continued existence of Sikkim and the Sikkimese with their special status under the Constitution of India. The associations and organizations will have to give away their special purpose(s) which limits their specialty exclusively for their group members if they ever wish to continue with the special provisions laid down for Sikkimese under the Constitution. Sikkim is bound to suffer if Sikkimese carries on with these shallow social

identifications. It would be quite unfortunate if Sikkimese population of just around six lakhs is unable to think collectively and bring unanimity to decide on their own future. Any social comparisons among different groups which shreds the Sikkimese fabric should not hold any place in Sikkim.

We can draw the inference that ethnic associations and organizations have done more harm than good for Sikkim. With the guiding light being shown by the Sikkimese themselves, the outsiders too have been active in forming their own organizations in Sikkim thereby allowing them to build a stronger base to gain advantage on all issues that concerns them. All Sikkimese needs to see beyond their self centric group interests and take into account the future consequences for their current actions. As discussed every in-group tries to have an edge over an out-group. At the same time as every community based group is an in-group in themselves and considers everyone else as an out-group, it is simply creating more of differences amongst the Sikkimese thereon obstructing the smooth development of the region. The Sikkimese people should be united for development of Sikkim while differences which promote conflict in the Sikkimese society should be addressed accordingly by the policy makers, implementers and the people of Sikkim.

The matter of ethnicity and identity has become a subject of intense dialogue all round the world and it is no different in the context of Sikkim. The matter such as these is bound to play a greater role in days to come. It is worthless to argue on the issue as to which group or the section of this society will gain an upper hand in this tug of war as either way the peace and harmony of Sikkim is likely to be disrupted.

The data collected reveals that identity politics did play a major role in shaping the history and policies in Sikkim. While listening to several points of view

from people of all sections, it is comprehended that these groups are obvious about the roles played by ethnic and identity groups in Sikkim. They do understand the larger impact of their actions in the future policies and programs of the governments. To take an example, the ethnic politics is the sole reason behind the Bhutia-Lepcha assembly seat reservation which is still in existence while Nepali seat reservations have been done away with later even being labeled as immigrants. It is interesting to note that the referendum which leads to Sikkim's merger with India had the highest percentage vote from the Nepali community of Sikkim. This goes to show how Sikkim's history and policy was changed for forever thanks to identity politics. The demand for Limboo-Tamang seat reservation in the Sikkim state assembly, demand for tribal status for the left out communities of Sikkim and even demand for Nepali seat reservation by some political parties are all part of identity politics in Sikkim. These demands and issues if not given due resolutions by the competent authorities has the latency to disrupt the peace and harmony of Sikkim. The governments at all levels should formalize timely arrangements to contain such disturbing issues as any delay can have grievous cost not only for Sikkim but considering its geographical importance it can have consequences for the entire country. There is a deeper need for the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalis of Sikkim to reflect on their past to make a sensible decision that protects their special privileges while maintaining a unity among themselves.

There are few concluding aspects on the present situation which I wanted to highlight as they have the potential to disrupt the peace and harmony of this otherwise harmonious state:

- There has been a continued rise in the number of outsiders living in the state of Sikkim. This section of people in Sikkim does not possess documents such

as the SSC/COI but many of them have acquired the voter card of Sikkim. While it is debatable whether the process followed to acquire such an important document is ethical or not with some even claiming that such documents are made with the consent and support of political parties which in return is trying to gain their valuable vote. Irrespective of how it is obtained, one thing is clear that it is not a good news for the Sikkimese. In a democracy where vote bank politics is a platform to decide the formation and working of the government, the rise in voting rights for the outsiders can only mean the future of Sikkim is slowly sliding in the hands of outsiders living in Sikkim. This evolving scenario has every potential to spark a conflict between the Sikkimese and the outsiders living in Sikkim.

- As a result of better education and overall enhancement in socio-economic condition of the Sikkimese people, now they have increased self awareness thereby promoting community and even sub-community level consciousness which in turn is creating differences among the Sikkimese. The promotion and preservation of one's culture, tradition and customs should be welcomed as long as it goes hand in hand with the peace, harmony and development of the state but if it hinders the progress of Sikkim in any sense than it has to be contained accordingly by the people of Sikkim.
- The Old Settlers of Sikkim have been demanding exemption of income tax at par with the SSC/COI holders of Sikkim, it may be a well justified demand from their end but it has not been taken well by the Sikkimese as they feel that demands such as these will rise in future thereby hampering the exclusivity of privileges originally meant only for the Sikkimese. If such calls for change

threatens the status quo of Sikkimese society than there is possibility of resistance and disturbances in the state.

- On one side, migrants from other parts of India have a feeling that Sikkim being a part of India, they should be allowed to have equal rights at par with the Sikkimese. The Sikkimese on the other hand feels that their exclusive rights and privileges should be protected as assured under the Indian Constitution. These provisions may be clear in the eyes of the learned and well read people but at the same time understanding of these crucial constitutional provisions may not be comprehensible to the masses, thereby creating unnecessary conflict.
- Migrants should never try to encroach the special rights of the Sikkimese. Managing the ongoing influx in Sikkim should be a priority for the state government while New Delhi too has to support the decisions taken by the Sikkimese which directly impact their lives in Sikkim so as to avoid any rationale for conflict.
- It is extremely important on the part of State Government to bring in necessary legislation and for the Government at the Centre to make necessary amendments to the provisions related to Sikkim that would safeguard the sanctity of Sikkim. Many North-East states of India have implemented the Inner Line Permit System (ILPS) which in current scenario safeguards the interests of the indigenous people while allowing inward travel of an Indian citizen for a limited period. If the people of Sikkim are serious about protecting their culture, tradition, their way of life and their land they need to build a favorable pressure on the government while the government too needs

to come up with acts and laws that favours the Sikkimese interests in Sikkim. Governments can even work on something better than ILPS by working on its shortcomings and by implementing it in Sikkim, accordingly.

- Sikkimese people working along with the governments should come up with necessary laws and acts which will ensure that while the outsiders can easily enter Sikkim as tourists or to earn their respective livelihoods but they do not get a privilege of getting privileges which are only meant for the Sikkimese such as the rights to buy land, buy property, voting rights, etc. in Sikkim. Such change shall ensure Sikkim remains for the Sikkimese and they have complete control to decide their own fate. In an electoral politics one cannot undermine the importance of voting rights as this has the potential to make any other important documents of Sikkim irrelevant.
- It is important to address that a high degree of consciousness towards one's community heritage should never out shine the Sikkimese identity as a whole. Although a community or a sub-community has every right to preserve and promote their distinctness but it should never be a means to render other communities inferior to theirs. The duty to maintain this reverence towards each other not only remains with the government but also with the people of Sikkim as a whole.
- In a democracy change in government is expected but it should not mean that with the change in government either at the centre or the state, they completely change their outlook towards Sikkim and Sikkimese. Irrespective of change in government every five years or so, the policies and laws which protect the Sikkimese autonomy needs to remain constant thereby building trust towards

government here and New Delhi. This trust in a long run will uplift the Sikkimese population for a greater role towards their state and their country.

- The discourse on migration generally ignores the achievements and contribution of the migrant population towards the development of the state/region. The Sikkimese too needs to acknowledge that while they may have suffered due to migration but the migrant population too had a role in building Sikkim as it is today. So, migrant population may not always be projected as a threat as they still continue to contribute in areas where Sikkimese lack. However, it is a reality that unabated migration has enormous demographic and social implications capable of creating tensions and conflicts between migrants and natives. Since migration cannot be simply stopped, it is necessary to devise alternative policies to help and protect the interests of the natives as well as of the migrants to avoid any future conflicts. It is also important to accept the existence of different kinds of push and pull factors forcing people to migrate.

As we understand the aspects discussed above it becomes easier to formalize policies, decisions and plans that would avoid consequences which can have a dreadful impact on its people and society. It would be better for the governments both at the centre and the state to take necessary and impactful steps on a priority basis. It is a truth that one cannot completely stop migration in an instance but policy makers ought to find creative solutions which would control the ongoing trend of migration into the state. The scenario being created is also a result of politics of ethnicity and identity where the Sikkimese people and political parties are busy with their community level developments while an issue of influx has taken a back seat. Issue of

community level thinking should be addressed by the government in a manner that does not hurt the sentiments of any particular community of Sikkim.

The Sikkimese people should be absolutely aware of their special privileges as provided to them under Article 371F of the Indian constitution. This would help them better understand their Sikkimese identity in an Indian context and help protect themselves against the injustices that they might face. As the policy makers and the policies changes, as the influx grows, as this tiny state moves along with rest of the country to reach that next level of development, it is upon the Sikkimese to be united to defend and protect their rights. While we would advocate that the special provisions remains forever for a state like Sikkim but one cannot be completely sure. With a population of just around six lakhs in a country of over a billion, the governments at all level may ensure the safety and security of Sikkimese while also making sure that Sikkimese never become a minority in their own homeland. Sikkimese people in years to follow should endeavor to be more educated, smart, strong, able, capable, competent, skillful and ready to take on the world. Sikkimese people may always keep a positive attitude towards the policy makers but they should be equally prepared for the worst case scenario which might hit them. Sikkimese should remember that Article 371F of the Indian Constitution falls under the same Part XXI-Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions of the Constitution of India in which Article 370 falls and gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir prior to its abolishment in the year 2019. I may not want to draw a parallel here while making Sikkimese people confused and threatened but it is what it is.

Despite these facts all stake holders of Sikkim should put their sweat and blood to protect their special rights in order to protect Sikkim for the Sikkimese. While the rest of the country should consider that the Sikkimese people have trusted

their land and their future to India. They have given everything they had to this country with a hope for a better tomorrow. The Sikkimese people still have a strong faith in the democratic values and principles of this country. This faith should be reciprocated by the rest of India for this country can be great only when people trust in each other and believe in this nation.

Let me close with a quote by the Iron man of India, Sardar Vallabhai Patel:

“By common endeavor we can raise the country to a new greatness, while a lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities.”

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APPENDIX-I

371-F. Special provisions with respect to the State of Sikkim- Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,-

- (a) the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall consist of not less than thirty members;
- (b) as from the date of commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975 (hereafter in this Article referred to as the appointed day)-
 - (i) the Assembly for Sikkim formed as a result of the elections held in April, 1974 with thirty-two members elected in the said elections (hereinafter referred to as the sitting members) shall be deemed to be the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly constituted under the Constitution;
 - (ii) the sitting members shall be deemed to be the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly elected under this Constitution; and
 - (iii) the said Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall exercise the powers and perform the functions
- (c) in the case of the assembly deemed to be the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim under clause (b), the references to the period of five years in (1) of Article 172 shall be construed as references to a period of four years and the said period of four years shall be deemed to commence from the appointed day;

- (d) until other provisions are made by Parliament by law, there shall be allotted to the State of Sikkim one seat in the House of the People and the State of Sikkim shall form one parliamentary constituency to be called the parliamentary constituency for Sikkim;
- (e) the representative of the State of Sikkim in the House of the People in existence on the appointed day shall be elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
- (f) Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim make provision for the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim which may be filled by candidates belonging to such sections and for the delimitation of the assembly constituencies from which candidates belonging to such sections alone may stand for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
- (g) the Governor of Sikkim shall have special responsibility for peace and for an equitable arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of different sections of the population of Sikkim and in the discharge of his special responsibility under this clause, the Governor of Sikkim shall, subject to such directions as the President may, from time to time, deem fit to issue, act in his discretion;
- (h) all property and assets (whether within or outside the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim) which immediately before the appointed day were vested in the Government of Sikkim or in any other authority or in any person for the purposes of the Government of Sikkim shall, as from the appointed day, vest in the Government of the State of Sikkim;

- (i) the High Court functioning as such immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim shall, on and from the appointed day, be deemed to be the High Court for the State of Sikkim;
- (j) all courts of civil, criminal and revenue jurisdiction, all authorities and all officers, judicial, executive and ministerial, throughout the territory of the State of Sikkim shall continue on and from the appointed day to exercise their respective functions subject to the provisions of this Constitution;
- (k) all laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim or any part thereof shall continue to be in force therein until amended or repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority;
- (l) for the purpose of facilitating the application of any such law as is referred to in clause (k) in relation to the administration of the State of Sikkim and for the purpose of bringing the provisions of any such law into accord with the provisions of this Constitution, the President may, within two years from the appointed day, by order, make such adaptations and modifications of the law, whether by way of repeal or amendment, as may be necessary or expedient, and thereupon, every such law shall have effect subject to the adaptations and modifications so made, and any such adaptation or modification shall not be questioned in any court of law;
- (m) neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall have jurisdiction in respect of any dispute or other matter arising out of any treaty, agreement, engagement or other similar instrument relating to Sikkim which was entered into or executed before the appointed day and to which the Government of

India or any of its predecessor Governments was a party, but nothing in this clause shall be construed to derogate from the provisions of article 143;

(n) the President may, by public notification, extend with such restrictions or modifications as he thinks fit to the State of Sikkim any enactment which is in force in a State in India at the date of the notification;

(o) if any difficulty arises in giving effect to any of the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by order 374, do anything (including any adaptation or modification of any other article) which appears to him to be necessary for the purpose of removing that difficulty:

Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of two years from the appointed day;

(p) all things done and all actions taken in or in relation to the State of Sikkim or the territories comprised therein during the period commencing on the appointed day and ending immediately before the date on which the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, receives the assent of the President shall, in so far as they are in conformity with the provisions of this Constitution as amended by the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, be deemed for all purposes to have been validly done or taken under this Constitution as so amended.

APPENDIX-II

SECTION 10(26AAA)

SIKKIM, INCOME FROM

[SEC. 10(26AAA)]

Exemption to Sikkimese individuals - Vide Finance Act, 2008, a new clause (26AAA) has been inserted in section 10 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 ('Act') with retrospective effect from assessment year 1990-91. Under the said clause, the following income accruing or arising to a Sikkimese individual is exempt from tax—

- (a) income from any source in the State of Sikkim; or
- (b) income by way of dividend or interest on securities.

Income accruing or arising to a non-Sikkimese individual residing in the State of Sikkim continues to be liable to tax under the Act. In the case of such individuals, it has been decided that—

- (a) For assessment year 2007-08 or any preceding assessment year, no assessment or reassessment shall be made with regard to the following income—
 - (i) income from any source in the State of Sikkim; or
 - (ii) income by way of dividend or interest on securities.
- (b) In case any proceedings have been initiated for assessment year 2007-08 or any preceding assessment year for not filing the return of income, such proceedings shall be dropped.
- (c) In case any assessment or reassessment proceeding has been initiated for assessment year 2007-08 or any preceding assessment year and assessment orders have not been passed, the aforesaid income shall be accepted as per the return.
- (d) For the assessment year 2008-09 and subsequent assessment years, assessment or re-assessment, if required, shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

These instructions shall apply only to non-Sikkimese individuals residing in the State of Sikkim - *Instruction: No. 8/2008, dated 29-7-2008.*

APPENDIX-III

Revenue Order No. 1

With reference to the Oder dated 2nd January 1897, it is hereby again notified to all Kazis, Thikadars and Mandals in Sikkim that no Bhutias and Lepchas are to be allowed to sell, mortgage or sub-let any of their land to any person other than a Bhutia or a Lepcha without the express sanction of the Darbar or Officers empowered by the Darbar on their behalf, whose order will be obtained by the landlord concerned. If anyone disobeys he will be severely punished. In this order the term 'mortgage' means mortgaging the whole or part of holding on the Biyaz or Masikata system and the term sub-let means sub-letting the whole or part of holding on the Pakhura system.

Definition:

1. 'Biyaz' means mortgaging land to another person who enjoys the produce of the land as interest so long as the principal loan remains unpaid.
2. 'Masikata' means mortgaging the fields to a creditor who enjoys the produce of the field as an annual instalment towards the loan.
3. 'pakhuria' means sub-letting, where a rayot allows another new rayot to settle upon a portion of his own holding, generally receiving from him some rent in cash and some assistance in cultivating his own fields.

Gangtok

C.A Bell

17th May 1917

Superintendent, Sikkim State

APPENDIX-IV

Sikkim Subjects Regulation 1961.

(As amended vide Notification No. S/277/61 dated the 16d1 January, 1962, Notification No. S/252/65

dated the 26d1 July 1965 and Notification No. 790/H dated the 3rdDecember 1970).

HOME DEP DEPARMENT

Notification No.156/S-61

Dated Gangtok, the 3m July 1961

(Published in the Sikkim Darbar Gazette, Extraordinary, dated the 3m July 1961).

The following Proclamation of the Chogyal of Sikkim is hereby notified:

WHEREAS it is expedient to define clearly the status of Sikkim subjects and to make provision for acquisition and loss of such aforesaid status:

NOW, THEREFORE, The Chogyal of Sikkim has been pleased to make and promulgate the following Regulation.

1. Short title and extent-

(i) This Regulation may be called the SIKKIM SUBJECTS REGULATION, 1961.

(ii) It shall extend throughout the territory of Sikkim.

2. Commencement-

This Regulation shall come into force on such date as may be appointed for the purpose by the Chogyal of Sikkim.

3. Certain persons domiciled in Sikkim Territory at the commencement of the Regulation to be

Sikkim subjects-

1. Every person who has his domicile in the territory of Sikkim immediately before the commencement of this Regulation shall be a Sikkim subject if he:

- (a) Was born in the territory of Sikkim and is resident therein, or
- (b) Has been ordinarily resident in the territory of Sikkim period not less than fifteen years immediately preceding such commencement; provided that in the said period of fifteen years any absence from the said territory on account of service under the Government of India shall be disregarded; or
- (c) Is the wife or minor child of a person mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b):

Provided that a person shall not be a Sikkim subject under this section unless he makes a declaration to the effect that he is not a citizen of any other country at the time of inclusion of his name in the register of Sikkim subjects to be maintained under this Regulation: Provided further that in the case of a minor or a person of unsound mind, such declaration may be made by his guardian.

Explanation: no person shall be deemed to have his domicile in the territory of Sikkim unless:

- (i) He is a person who has made Sikkim his permanent home and has severed his connections with the country of his origin such as by parting with his property in that country or acquiring immovable property in Sikkim. Provided that a person shall not be deemed to have a permanent home in Sikkim if he indicates an intention of returning to his country of origin, by keeping a live interest therein even though he might have parted with his property in his country of origin and the mere parting of such property will not be regarded as proof of a person's having acquired a permanent home in Sikkim.
- (ii) The wife and minor children of a person having his domicile in Sikkim shall also be deemed to have domicile in Sikkim for the purpose of this section.
- (iii) In any case of doubt as to whether a person has his domicile within the territory of Sikkim under this section, the matter shall be decided by the Chogyal with the

assistance of a Board consisting of persons to be appointed in accordance with the rules made under this Regulation.

4. Certain persons, though not domiciled in Sikkim, to be Sikkim Subject. Any person, who has not voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any other country, though not domiciled in Sikkim, may, on an application made to the authority prescribed by the rules made under this Regulation by registered as a Sikkim subject if he is a person whose ancestors were deemed to be Sikkim subject prior to the year 1850.

5. Sikkim Subject by Descent:

Every person born after the commencement of this Regulation shall be a Sikkim Subject if at the time of his birth his father is a Sikkim subject under this Regulation, whether or not the birth takes place in the territory of Sikkim.

6. Status of women married to Sikkim subjects:

A woman of foreign nationality who is married to a Sikkim subject after the commencement of this

Regulation shall ordinarily be eligible to be registered as a Sikkim subject, on making application therefore to the Government of the Chogyal in the manner provided by rules under this Regulation, and after announcing her former nationality and on taking oath of allegiance. Provided that the Government of the Chogyal after giving a reasonable opportunity to the person of making a representation may refuse such application.

7. Certain persons not to be Sikkim subjects:

(a) Any person who renounces his status as a Sikkim subject, or voluntarily acquires the citizenship of any other country, or takes an oath of allegiance to a foreign country or Ruler thereof without the consent of the Chogyal's Government; or

(b) Any Sikkimese woman who marries a person who is not a Sikkim subject; or

(c) Any person, other than a person referred to in section 4, who severs his connection with Sikkim such as by parting with his property in Sikkim and migrates to a

place outside Sikkim and India after the commencement of this Regulation, or has not been ordinarily resident in Sikkim for a continuous period of seven years, shall thereupon cease to be a Sikkim subject.

8. Naturalised subjects:

- (i) The Government of the Chogyal may, if application is made to them in the manner provided by rules under this Regulation by any person of full age and capacity who at the date of the commencement of this Regulation is a national of another state but otherwise fulfills the requirements of section 3 of this Regulation to be a Sikkim subject, grant to him a certificate of naturalization if he renounces his former nationality,; and the person to whom such certificate is granted shall on taking oath of allegiance, and on his name being entered in the Register to be maintained under this regulation, be a Sikkim subject by naturalization from the date on which the certificate is granted
- (ii) If a certificate is granted to any person under the first foregoing sub-section his wife after renouncing her former nationality and taking oath of allegiance be granted certificate of naturalization.
- (iii) The Government of the Chogyal shall also have the power to naturalise a person upon application made therefore in the manner prescribed by the rules, provided that the Government of the Chogyal are satisfied that;
 - (a) He has been in the service of the Government of Sikkim for a period of not less than ten years immediately preceding the date of his application, or
 - (b) He has rendered meritorious service to the state; and the person to whom such a certificate is granted shall, on taking oath of allegiance, and upon his name being entered in the Register of Subjects, be a naturalized Sikkim subject from the date on which the certificate was granted;
- (iv) The Government of the Chogyal may at the same time naturalise the wife and minor children of a person who is granted a certificate of naturalization if application thereof is made.

9. Loss and deprivation of Nationality- Loss of status of Naturalised Subjects:

A naturalized subject shall lose his status as a Sikkim subject if he ceases to reside ordinarily in the territory of Sikkim or fails to comply with any of the conditions subject to which the certificate of naturalization may have been granted to him and thereupon his name shall be removed from the Register of Sikkim Subjects.

10. Deprivation of status of Subjects:

Subject to the provisions of this section, the Government of the Chogyal may by order deprive any Sikkim subject who is such by registration under section 4 or by naturalization under section 8 of this Regulation of his status if the Government are satisfied that such, a subject:

- (i) During any war in which the Chogyal or the government of India are engaged, unlawfully traded or communicated with an enemy or communicated with an enemy or has been engaged in or associated with business-that was to his knowledge carried on in such a manner as to assist an enemy in that war; or
- (ii) Shown himself by act or speech to be guilty of disaffection or disloyalty towards the Chogyal or
- (iii) Obtained the certificate of naturalization by fraud, raise representation or concealment of material facts;
- (iv) Within five years of naturalization has been convicted of any offence in any country and has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than twelve months; and such a person shall cease to be a Sikkim subject with effect from the date on which such order of deprivation is passed; Provided that a person shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity of making a representation before an order of deprivation is made.

MISCELLANEOUS

11. Offence and Punishment: Any person who for the purpose of procuring anything to be done or not to be done under this Regulation makes any statement which he knows to be false in material particulars or recklessly makes any statement which

is false in material particulars, shall be liable in summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

12. Evidence of Status as Sikkim Subject: The Government of the Chogyal shall prepare and maintain a Register of Sikkim Subjects in accordance with rules to be framed under this Act and the entry of a person's name in such a register shall be prima facie evidence of the person's status as a Sikkim Subject. Provide that a person's name may be removed from the aforesaid Register of Sikkim Subjects and any certificate of status as a Sikkim Subject granted to him may be cancelled with effect from the date of the original grant when the Bard constituted under section 3(3) of Sikkim Subject Regulation is satisfied that the said person's name had been wrongly entered in the Register at any time and submits a finding to that effect to the Government of Sikkim. Provided further that an appeal shall lie to the Chogyal against any such finding by the aforesaid Board.
13. Power to make Rules: The Government of the Chogyal may make and promulgate such rules as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Regulations.
14. Repeal: All rules, regulations, orders and instructions hitherto in force in Sikkim territory in relation to the definition, acquisition and loss or deprivation of the status of Sikkim subjects are hereby repealed.

TASHI NAMGYAL,

MAHARAJA OF SIKKIM

By Order

Sd .D. DAHDUL Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim

APPENDIX-V

The Constitution (Thirty-Sixth Amendment) Act, 1975

AN ACT (16.5.75) further to amend the Constitution of India. Be it enacted *by* Parliament in the Twenty-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows.

1. (1) This Act may be called the Constitution Amendment (Thirty Sixth) Act 1975
- (2) It shall be deemed to have come into force on the date on which the Bill for this Act (introduced in the House of the People as the: Constitution Amendment Bill, (Thirty eighth 1975), as passed by the House of the People, is passed by the Council of States.
2. In the First Schedule to the Constitution, under the heading "I. The STATES", after entry 2. I. The following entry shall be inserted namely: "22 Sikkim the territories which immediately before the commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, were comprised in Sikkim".
3. After article 371 F of the Constitution, the following article shall be inserted, namely: 371 F notwithstanding anything in the Constitution.
 - (a) The Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall consist of not less than thirty members.
 - (b) As from the date of commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975 (hereafter in this article referred to as the appointed day)
 - (i) The Assembly for Sikkim formed as a result of the elections held in Sikkim in April, 1974 with thirty-two members elected in the said election (hereinafter referred to as the sitting members) shall be deemed ,to be the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly constituted under this Constitution.
 - (ii) The sitting members shall be deemed to be the member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly elected under this Constitution and;
 - (iii) The said Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall exercise the power and perform the functions of the Legislative Assembly of a State under this Constitution.
 - (c) In the case of the Assembly deemed to be Legislative Assembly of 'the State of Sikkim under clause (b) the reference to the period of five years. In: clause (1) of article 172 shall be constituted as reference to period of four years and the said, period' of four years. Shall be deemed to commence from the appointed day;
 - (d) Until other provisions are made by Parliament 'by law, there shall be allotted to the State of Sikkim one seat in the House of the People and the State of Sikkim

shall form one parliamentary constituency to be called the parliamentary constituency for Sikkim

- (e) The representative of the State of Sikkim in the House of the People in existence on the appointed day. Shall be elected by the members *of* the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
- (f) Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim. Make provision for the number of seats in the Legislative, Assembly, of the State of Sikkim which may be filled. by ,candidates belonging to such sections and for the delimitation of the assembly constituencies from which candidates ‘belonging to such section alone may stand for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim’
- (g) The Governor of Sikkim shall have- special responsibility for peace and for an elaborate arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of all sections of the population of Sikkim and in the discharge of his special responsibility, under this clause, the Governor of Sikkim shall, subject to such directions as the President may, from time to time, deem fit to issue, act in his discretion.
- (h) All property and assets (whether within or outside the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim) which immediately before' the appointed day were vested in the Government of Sikkim or in any person for the purposes of the Government of Sikkim shall as from the appointed day, vest in the Government of the State of Sikkim;
- (i) The High Court functioning as such immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim shall on. And from the appointed day, be deemed to be the High Court for the State of Sikkim,
- (j) All courts of civil, criminal and revenue jurisdiction all authorities and all officers, judicial, executive and ministerial, throughout the territory of the State of Sikkim shall continue on and from the appointed day to exercise their respective functions subject to the provisions of this Constitution;
- (k) All laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim or any part thereof shall continue to be in force therein until amended or repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority.
- (l) For the purpose of 'facilitating the application of, such law as referred to in clause.
- (k) In relation to the administration of the State of Sikkim and for the purpose of bringing the provisions of any such law into accord with the provisions of this Constitution on, the President may, within two years from the appointed day, by order, make ‘such adaptations and modifications of the law, whether by way of

repeal or amendment, as may be necessary or expedient, and thereupon, every such law shall have effect subject to the additions and modifications as' may be necessary and any such adaptation or modification shall not be questioned in any Court of law;

- (m) Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall have jurisdiction in respect of any dispute or other matter arising out of any treaty, agreement; engagement or other similar instrument relating to Sikkim which was entered into or executed before the appointed day and to which the Government of India or any of its predecessor Governments was a party, but nothing in this clause shall be construed to derogate from the provisions of article 143.
- (n) The President may, by public notification, extend with such restrictions or modifications as he thinks fit to the State of Sikkim any enactment which is in force in a state in India at the date of the notification
- (o) If any difficulty 'arises in giving effect to any of the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by order; do anything (including any adaptation: or modification of any other article) which appears to him to be necessary for the purpose of removing that difficulty: Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of two years from the appointed day;
- (p) All things done and all actions taken in or in relation to the State of Sikkim or the territories comprised therein during the period commencing on the appointed day and ending immediately before the date on which the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, receives the assent of the President shall, in so far as they are in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution as amended. by the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, be deemed for all purposes to have been validly done or taken under this Constitution as so:

4. In the Fourth Schedule to the Constitution, in the Table,

- (a) After entry 2 I, the following entry shall be inserted, namely 22. Sikkim
- (b) Existing entries 22 to 25 shall be renumbered as entries 23 to 26 respectively;
- (c) For the figures. '2 3 1 the 'figures" 2 3 2 "shall be substituted
- (d) In article 81', in cause (1) the words and figures and paragraph.4 of the Tenth Schedule shall be' omitted.
- (e) The Tenth Schedule shall be omitted.

APPENDIX-VI

SIKKIM
GOVERNMENT
GAZETTE
EXTRAORDINARY
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

Gangtok Friday, 8th December, 1995

No. 198

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
HOME DEPARTMENT

No. 66/Home/95.

Dated: 22nd November, 1995.

NOTIFICATION

In supersession of the Memorandum No. 5 (92) 229/GEN/EST, dated 25th September, 1976; Notification No. 285/GEN/EST, dated 28th January, 1980, Memorandum No. 5 (92) 5/GEN/EST, dated 9th April, 1981 and Circular No. 339/HS/87, dated 17th March, 1987, the State Government is hereby pleased to authorise the District Collectors, Sub-Divisional Officers and Revenue Officers within their respective jurisdiction to issue Certificate of Identification to the persons falling in the different categories as indicated below on the recommendations of the Gram Panchayat and being duly satisfied with such recommendation:-

1. A person whose name is found recorded in the Old Sikkim Subject Register or
2. A person whose name is not found registered in the Old Sikkim Subject Register but he/she has established beyond doubt that the name of his/her father/husband/paternal grandfather/brother from the same father has been recorded in the Old Sikkim Subject Register or
3. A person who has or had agricultural land in rural areas and has been ordinarily residing in the State of Sikkim or
4. A person who is holder of Indian Citizenship Certificate issued by the District Collector, Government of Sikkim under the Sikkim (Citizenship) Order, 1975 as amended vide the Sikkim (Citizenship) Amendment order, 1989 or
5. A person whose father/husband has/had been in Sikkim Government Service on or before 31.12.1969. Certificate of Identification obtained by such persons shall be for the purpose of employment only.

The Form prescribed for submission by Gram Panchayats to District Collectors/Sub-Divisional Officers/Revenue Officers for issue of Certificate of Identification is at Annexure I. Certificate of Identification henceforth shall be issued on the basis of verification report and recommendations of Gram Panchayats. Gram Panchayats have to be very careful in respect of verification and recommending such cases. In case Certificate of Identification is issued to wrong person on the recommendations of Gram Panchayat, such Gram Panchayat shall be liable for punishment under appropriate Acts or Rules.

For issue of Certificate of Identification to the applicants of notified bazar areas necessary verification shall be done by the concerned Police Station and Sub-Divisional Officers on the basis of guidelines indicated above.


Certificate of Identification shall be issued to the applicant by the issuing authorities.

By order and in the name of the Governor,

K.A. VARADAN
CHIEF SECRETARY
(F. No. 103/90-91/L.R.)

APPENDIX-VII

SIKKIM



GOVERNMENT **GAZETTE**

EXTRAORDINARY
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

Gangtok Monday 1st November, 2010 No. 591

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
HOME DEPARTMENT
GANGTOK

No.120 /Home/2010

Dated: 26/10/2010

NOTIFICATION

The State Government is hereby pleased to authorize the District Collectors and the Additional District Collectors within their respective jurisdiction to issue **Residential Certificates** to persons falling in the different categories as indicated below on the recommendations of the Gram Panchayat or the Nagar Panchayat/Municipality and being duly satisfied with such recommendation after proper police verification:

1. A person who has established beyond all reasonable doubt that he/she was a resident of the State of Sikkim as on 26th April, 1975 and has been residing therein since then, or
2. A person who has established beyond all reasonable doubt that he/she is the natural legal descendant of the person referred to in category 1 above and has been a resident of the State since birth, or
3. A person who has established beyond all reasonable doubt that he/she is the natural legal descendant of a Sikkimese woman holding/eligible for a Certificate of Identification in terms of the State Government Notification on the subject and is a resident of the State since birth, or
4. A person who has established beyond all reasonable doubt that he/she is/was a regular employee under the Government of Sikkim and is settled therein, or
5. A person who has established beyond all reasonable doubt that he/she is the natural legal descendant of the person referred to in category 4 above and is a resident of the State since birth.
6. A person whose spouse is eligible for grant of a Residential Certificate under any of the above mentioned categories and is a citizen of India and a resident of the State.

Application for a Residential Certificate shall be submitted in the form prescribed to the respective District Collectors along with relevant documents. The District Collector may issue the Residential Certificate after due verification from the Gram panchayat/Nagar Panchayat/Municipality and the police.

The issuing authority is also authorised to cancel the Residential Certificate of a person if it is reasonably established that the Certificate has been obtained by him/her or on his/her behalf by misrepresentation or suppression of any material fact.

Any person aggrieved by the refusal to grant or cancellation of his/her Residential Certificate by the Issuing Authority may apply within one month of such refusal or cancellation to the Secretary, Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department for redress.

BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR.

TT Dorji, IAS
Chief Secretary
File No. Home/Confdl./158/1994/2/Part

S.G.P.G. - 591/Gazette /100 Nos./Dt:- 1.11.2010.

APPENDIX-VIII

As a part of the surveys as well as analysis undertaken during the preparation of this thesis, several questions were asked to different sections of the society. The questionnaires/schedules were categorized as follows:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

ORGANISATION: _____

GENDER: MALE _____, FEMALE: _____, OTHER: _____

AGE GROUP: 15-20: _____, 20-30: _____, 30-40: _____, 40-50: _____,

50 above: _____

Q1. In your opinion what are the attributes that makes a person Sikkimese?

- i. A person possessing a Sikkim Subject Certificate/Certificate of Identification.
- ii. A person enrolled in Sikkim's electoral role.
- iii. A person born and brought up in Sikkim.
- iv. A person belonging to Lepcha, Bhutia or Nepalis community but not in possession of SSC?COI.
- v. A member of a business community in possession of SSC/COI.
- vi. A person possessing a Residential Certificate of Sikkim.
- vii. Any other.

Q2. Which ethnic groups mentioned below are original inhabitants of Sikkim as per your opinion? Here are few check boxes; you may tick more than one:

- i. Lepchas
- ii. Nepalis
- iii. Bhutias
- iv. Members of the Tibetan community permanently settled in Sikkim
- v. Members from business community permanently settled in Sikkim
- vi. Any other

Q3. Do you think Sikkim Subject Certificate/COI is an important document to prove oneself a Sikkimese?

YES

NO

Q4. Do you think Sikkimese people are giving more and more importance to Sikkim Subject Certificate/COI with the passage of time?

YES

NO

Q5. Do you think that the ethnicity and identity of Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis of Sikkim differ from people belonging to the same community but living in regions outside Sikkim's current geographical boundary?

YES

NO

If YES what makes them different?

i. Possession of Sikkim Subject Certificate/COI that proves they are original Sikkimese.

ii. They have been living in Sikkim since ages.

iii. They follow different culture and tradition.

iv. They have different ancestors.

v. Any other.

Q6. Do you agree to a point that the ethnicity and identity of Sikkim has its deeper roots to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and neighboring regions of Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

YES

NO

Q7. Do you feel that identity politics has played a major role in shaping the history of Sikkim?

YES

NO

Q8. Will you support a policy wherein a Government decides to define or rather redefine the true Sikkimese identity?

YES

NO

Q9. Do you identify yourself as Sikkimese?

YES

NO

Q10. Do you think Sikkim Subject Certificate/COI is necessary for preserving the Sikkimese identity?

YES

NO

Q11. Are you in support or of the special provisions provided to the state of Sikkim under Article 371f of the Indian constitution?

YES

NO

Q12. What type of Political party will be favourable to serve the greater interest of Sikkimese people?

REGIONAL

NATIONAL

Q13. Do you feel that the population influx into the state of Sikkim may become a major issue of concern in future?

YES

NO

Q14. Do you think that the serving political party has done enough to tackle the issue of population influx?

YES
NO

Q15. Do you feel that there have been disintegration in social fabric of Sikkim in the name of various communities and sub communities in Sikkim?

YES
NO

Q16. Do you feel that communities disintegrate mainly due to the fact that some communities enjoy special rights and privileges while some does not?

YES
NO

Q17. Do you think that the ongoing disintegration which is happening in Sikkim is not helpful in maintaining the peaceful fabric in the state?

YES
NO

Q18. Looking at the tiny population strength of Sikkim, do you feel that Sikkimese population should remain integrated as earlier instead of paying attention to divide politics?

YES
NO

Q19. Are you in favour of Residential Certificates being issued to the Old Settlers of Sikkim by the Government?

YES
NO

Q20. Do you feel that the following benefits should be extended to the Residential Certificate (RC) holders?

i. Ration Card? YES NO

ii. Trade License in municipality and nagar panchayat?

YES NO

iii. Purchase/lease of immovable property in municipality and nagar panchayat jurisdiction with prior approval of the state government?

YES NO

iv. Taxi permits for BPL RC holders?

YES NO

v. Driving Licence (NT/T)?

YES NO

NAME :

ADDRESS :

OCCUPATION :

ORGANISATION :

QUESTIONNAIRE/SCHEDULE

Q.1. In your opinion what are the attributes that makes a person Sikkimese?

Here are few check boxes which you may want to tick; you may tick more than one check box:

- I. A person possessing a SSC/COI.
- II. A person enrolled in Sikkim's electoral role.
- III. A person born and brought up in Sikkim.
- IV. A person belonging to Lepcha, Nepalese or Bhutia community but not in possession of SSC/COI.
- V. A member of a business community in possession of SSC/COI.
- VI. Any other.

Please feel free to add your inputs and to place comments in support of your answer:

Q.2. Which ethnic groups mentioned below are original inhabitants of Sikkim as per your opinion?

Here are few check boxes which you may want to tick; you may tick more than one:

- I. Lepchas
- II. Nepalese
- III. Bhutias
- IV. Members of the Tibetan community permanently settled in Sikkim
- V. Members from business community permanently settled in Sikkim
- VI. Any other.

Please feel free to add your inputs and to place comments in support of your answer.

Q.3. How does the ethnicity and identity of Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese differ from people belonging to the same community but living in regions outside Sikkim's current geographical boundary?

Q.4. Do you agree to a point that the ethnicity and identity of Sikkim has its deeper roots to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and neighbouring regions of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. Please place your comments in support of your answer.

- Q.5. Do you feel that identity politics plays a major role in shaping the history of Sikkim. Please place your comments in support of your answer. If you differ, please illustrate.
- Q.6. What are the factors that has contributed over the years while forming today's Sikkimese identity?
- Q.7. Will you support a policy wherein a Government decides to define or rather redefine the true Sikkimese identity? Please place your comments in support of your answer.
- Q.8. Do you identify yourself as Sikkimese? Please place your comments in support of your answer.
- Q.9. Given an opportunity to formulate policy/policies for preserving the Sikkimese identity. What you'll be your step as an administrator?
- Q.10. What are your views on the special provisions provided to the state of Sikkim under article 371F of the Indian constitution?
- Q.11. What type of Political Party (Regional/National) will be favourable to serve the greater interest of Sikkimese people? Please place your comments in support of your answer. If you have different opinion, please illustrate.
- Q.12. What is your view on the population influx that is being witnessed by Sikkim? Whether the ongoing migration has created an upheaval in the present scenario?
- Q.13. How has the demography of Sikkim changed after the merger with the Union of India?
- Q.14. What is your view on the disintegration/rupture in social fabric that is taking place in Sikkim in the name of various communities and sub-communities?
- Q.15. Do you think that the ongoing disintegration which is happening in Sikkim is not helpful in maintaining the peaceful fabric in the state? Please add your inputs either in support or opposing the viewpoint.
- Q.16. Looking at the tiny population strength of Sikkim, do you feel that Sikkimese population should remain integrated as earlier instead of paying attention to divided politics? Please add your inputs and comments in support of your answer.

Please read the following paragraph and answer the questions mentioned thereafter. Please feel free to add your inputs and to place comments in support of your answer.

It is likely that in the probable future of Sikkim, the number of voters not possessing SSC/COI will outnumber the voters possessing SSC/COI. As you are aware of the fact that formation of government is decided by votes irrespective of whether the voter holds SSC/COI. What this means is that any political party aspiring to come to power will take this major voting but non SSC/COI population into consideration. Once a political party is elected by the votes from non SSC/COI holders they will unquestionably have policies in favour of this fraction of population. Accordingly, in this scenario the SSC/COI holders will have to compromise on various avenues as they will no longer be a majority voice in their own land.

- I. Do you think that the state governments over the years have addressed this apparent issue?
- II. Has the central government shown interest in safeguarding the special status being enjoyed by the people of Sikkim?
- III. What are the basic steps the people of Sikkim should take up to avoid such scenario in near future rather than depending completely on the successive governments?

Questions asked to the Vice-President of AOSS:

1. Since when most of the Old Settlers are living in this state (Sikkim)?
2. What according to you made them to choose Sikkim? (for their occupation)
3. What was the nature of migration basically (temporary/permanent)? Whether they came alone or your family accompanied you?
4. What is your opinion regarding Sikkimese citizenship and the Income Tax?
5. Are you happy with the present system? Yes/No. Why?
6. Who are the local people as per your opinion?
7. What kinds of differences you find when compare Sikkim with the other states right now?
8. Do you want some changes in the system?
9. Do you think society in Sikkim is peaceful and harmonious?
10. Do you think some problems have cropped up recently with insider vs outsider?
11. Do you think the so called locals are facing some kind of threat (economic opportunity, cultural threat etc) because of coming of the mainland Indians? Yes/No? Why?

Questions asked to different community based associations:

1. What is the main motive behind forming the association?
2. What are your views about the coming of outsiders in the states?
3. What type of impact do you see on the Sikkimese society looking at the rate of present migration to the state?
4. Do you find migration as a potential threat to the local people?
5. Do you think that the Article 371F should be applied to the Old Settlers also?
Or 371F should be rephrased
6. Do you think that there may arise conflict between local indigenous people of Sikkim and the mainland Indian settlers in near future?
7. Do you think that local people are being deprived of some sort of opportunities after the migration?
8. According to you what measures can be done to address this rift between insider and outsider?

Questions asked to the outsiders living in Sikkim:

1. Since when you are living in this state?
2. What made you to choose Sikkim? (for your occupation)
3. What was the nature of your migration (temporary/permanent)?
4. Whether you came alone or your family accompanied you?
5. What is your opinion regarding Sikkimese citizenship and the Income Tax?
6. Are you happy with the present system? Yes/No. Why?
7. Who are the local people as per your opinion?
8. What kind of differences they find when they compare Sikkim with the other states?
9. Do you want some changes in the system?
10. Do you think society in Sikkim is peaceful and harmonious?
11. Do you think some problems have cropped up recently with insider vs outsider?
12. Do you think the so called locals are facing some kind of threat (economic opportunity, cultural threat etc) because of coming of the mainland Indians?

Questions asked to the Local indigenous people of Sikkim:

1. Who are actual Sikkimese (citizen of Sikkim) as per your opinion? Please support your answer with an explanation?
2. What positive changes have you seen in Sikkim after the merger of Sikkim?
3. What negative changes have you seen in Sikkim after the merger of Sikkim?
4. Do you think that the central and the state governments have done enough to protect the rights and privileges of the citizen/subject of Sikkim?
5. What changes can the central and the state governments bring to safeguard as well as to enhance rights of the subjects of Sikkim?

6. Do you think Sikkimese citizen should continue to get an Income Tax exemption? Yes/No. Why?
7. As you know a person may obtain an electoral voter card of Sikkim without being a “Sikkim Subject/ COI” holder. This set of population is now playing a vital role in the formation of government in Sikkim. Do you think that this will gradually decrease the importance of Sikkim Subject Certificate/COI? Do you wish to see any changes in this matter? Please elaborate.
8. Do you think some problems have cropped up recently with insider vs outsider?
9. Do you think the Sikkimese citizens are facing some kind of threat (economic opportunities, cultural threat etc) because of coming of the outsiders?