

**CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITY:
THE LIMBU TRIBE OF DARJEELING HILLS SINCE
INDEPENDENCE**

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**SUBMITTED BY
JAMUNA SUBBA**

**UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
DR. DEBAJIT DUTTA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN HISTORY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY**

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Certified that the Thesis entitled

“CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITY: THE LIMBU TRIBE OF DARJEELING HILLS SINCE INDEPENDENCE” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my own work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Debajit Dutta, Assistant Professor in History, Department of History, Jadavpur University and that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

Countersigned by the

Supervisor: *Debajit Dutta*

Dated: 29.12.2021

Candidate: *Jamuna Subba*

Dated: 07/01/2022

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA - 700 032

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABGL</i>	Akhil Bhartiya Gorkha League
<i>ANM</i>	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
<i>ASHA</i>	Accredited Social Health Activists
<i>ASKLC</i>	Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limboo Chumlung
<i>BDO</i>	Block Development Officer
<i>BJP</i>	Bhartiya Janta Party
<i>BGPM</i>	Bhartiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha
<i>CPIM</i>	Communist Party of India
<i>DGHC</i>	Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council
<i>GJM</i>	Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha
<i>GNLF</i>	Gorkha National Liberation Front
<i>GTA</i>	Gorkhaland Territorial Administration
<i>HDI</i>	Human Development Index
<i>ICMR</i>	Indian Council of Medical Research
<i>JAP</i>	Jan Aandolan Party
<i>LR</i>	Literary Rate
<i>MBBS</i>	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
<i>NDA</i>	National Democratic Alliance
<i>RCH</i>	Reproductive and Child Health
<i>SES</i>	Socio-Economic Status
<i>WASH</i>	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
<i>WBCS</i>	West Bengal Civil Service
<i>WHO</i>	World Health Organization
<i>YMMCC</i>	The Yuma Maang Meditation Committee Center

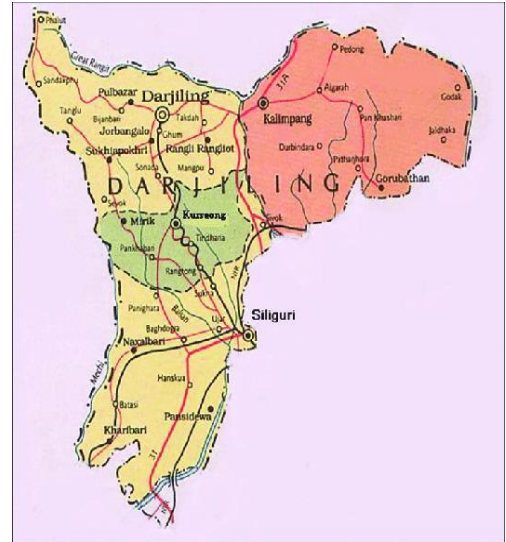
GLOSSARY

Bahun Baje:	Religious Priest
Bigga:	Part-time Worker of Tea Garden
Bokshi:	Witch
Busty:	Village
China-Kagaz:	Astrological Predictions Paper in One's Horoscope
Chyabrung:	Traditional Musical Instrument of Limbu People
Daura Suruwal:	Nepali Traditional Dress for Male
Dhaan Naach:	Limbu Traditional Dance
Fariya:	Nepali Traditional Dress for Woman
Gorkhali:	Nepali Community of India
Gorkhasthan:	Place of Gorkhali
Heem:	Limbu House
Jari:	Fine for Getting Second Marriage
Katus:	A Tree of Chestnut
Kanchi Budi:	Second Wife
Khukuri:	Nepali Traditional Weapon
Marad Kaam:	Male Worker of Tea Garden
Mata:	Female Priest
Mith:	Friendship
Mundhum:	Ancient Religious Scripture and Folk Literature of the Limbu
Nanglo:	It is a Flat, Round, Woven Tray, Made up of Bamboo.
Paharay Dabai:	Traditional Medicine
Paharay topi:	Nepali Traditional Cap
Rakshi:	Alcohol
Sikuwa:	Veranda of House
Silam Sakma:	Identical Symbol of Limbus
Tarsaunay:	Fear of Ghost
Thar:	Clan
Thi:	Alcohol

MAP OF THE STUDY AREA



West Bengal State, India



Darjeeling District (Old)



Darjeeling Hills (Main Study Area)



Darjeeling District, (New)

INTRODUCTION

This research work is a humble attempt to explore the Limbu tribe as the ethnic original inhabitants of Darjeeling hills and also to assess the present socio-economic and cultural conditions of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling is the Northmost district of the state of West Bengal in eastern India in the foothills of the Himalayas. Geographically the district can be divided into the hills and the plains. The hill regions cover the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Mirik and Siliguri is the subdivision of the Darjeeling district in plain area. The plains area of Darjeeling also known as the *Tarai* which is bounded on the north by the mountains, on the south by Kishanganj district of Bihar state, on the east by Jalpaiguri district, and on the west by Nepal. It has a length from north to south 18 miles (29 km) and a breadth from east to west of 16 miles (26 km). As of 2011, it is the second least populous district of West Bengal (out of 19), after Dakshin Dinajpur.¹

Historically, if we see the historical developments of Darjeeling, we found that Darjeeling and its surrounding terai area was the part of Sikkim which formed a part of the then Kirata kingdom *Limbuwan*. Later in 1775 Prithivinarayan Shah defeated and killed the last king of Kirata and subsequently attached and defeated all the chiefs and thereby makes an end to Kirata's rule in Nepal and captured the western part of Sikkim including Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Siliguri which remained under the Gorkha king till 1814.² The Anglo-Nepalese War started between the Kingdom of Nepal and the East India Company in 1814 because both of them had ambitious expansion plans for the mountainous north of the Indian subcontinent. The war was ended with the *Treaty of Sagauli* signed on the 4th of March, 1816 between the East India Company and Gorkha king. By this Treaty Nepalese kingdom ceded the 4,000 square miles of territory to the East India Company including Sikkim. Later Darjeeling Hills was returned to the king of Sikkim Chogyal Namgyal by the British East India Company after the signing of the *Treaty of Titalia* on February 10th 1817.³ In 1835 Sikkim puttee, the aged Rajah, handed over a strip of hill territory, 24 miles long and about 5 to 6 miles wide, stretching from the northern frontier of the district of Pankhabarie in the plains, which in its trend included the villages of Darjeeling and Kurseong, "as a mark of friendship to the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck for the establishment of a Sanatorium for the invalid servants of the East India Company". In return, the Raja received an allowance of Rs,3,000/-, which was subsequently raised to Rs.6,000/- per annum.⁴ After the

independence of India in 1947, the British occupied area of Sikkim that is Hill and Tarai area of Darjeeling and Kalimpong, was merged into the West Bengal state of India.

Who is the Limbu?

The Limbus are considered as one of the indigenous inhabitants of the region of Darjeeling and Sikkim. The Lepchas and the Bhutias always considered the Limbus or Tsongs to be a part of them. This can be evident in the treaty signed among them called, '*Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum*' between the *Lhopas* (Bhutias), *Monpas* (Lepchas), and *Tsongs* (Limbus). The Limbus Tribes has its' own history, belief system or religion, Limbu language, Script, distinct Limbu culture, and archaic traditions. They have spread throughout the world but are mostly concentrated in the Eastern Himalayan region of Eastern Nepal, Lower valleys of Bhutan, India (West Bengal, Sikkim, and other North-Eastern states), United Kingdom (Kent area), Hongkong, Singapore, etc. They are also constituted to be the largest Scheduled tribe community of Darjeeling.

The word "Limbu" is derived from "Li" and "Abu". "Li" means "bow", and "Abu", meaning "shooter". Hence, "Limbu" means "*bow shooter*" or "*archer*". Thus, in the Limbu language, it means the person who carries a bow and arrow. The Limbu tribes are also known as '*Yakthumba*'. "Yok" means a place, "Thung" means "hard-working", so "*Yakthung*" means hard-working people of a particular house. The Lepchas and Bhutias of Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal called them '*Tsongs*' or '*Changs*'. In Darjeeling and Sikkim Limbu is popularly known by the name of '*Subba*'. The word '*Subba*' means '*Chief*', it is a title conferred by king Prithivi Narayan Shah upon influential Limbus as a conciliatory measure after subjugating them politically. They belong to the *Kirata* confederacy along with Rai and Yakkhas. According to oral narratives, the original homeland of Limbu is *Limbuwan*, which consists of Modern Eastern Nepal and Modern Western Sikkim including Darjeeling.

Thus, Limbus are the original inhabitant of Darjeeling hills. They are living in Darjeeling hills for centuries, during the colonial period, the Limbu and Lepcha people were known as tribal but after the colonial period, unfortunately, Limbu tribal people were not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. Many other tribal communities were inserted in "The Scheduled Tribal Act of 1950" but the genuine and warrior tribal people such as Limbu were blindly left out. As a result, only Lepcha was recognized as the original inhabitant of Darjeeling, and Limbus was considered the non-tribal people of Darjeeling. It was the backwardness and unawareness of the Limbu people of Darjeeling; no voice was raised in the parliament to include them in the Scheduled Tribes list even though they were fundamentally and truly tribal people. Gradually, the Limbu tribe

of Darjeeling began to lose their distinct identity through the process of acculturation with the other tribal and non-tribal communities. It was only after 2003 they were recognized as the ethnic tribal community of Darjeeling hills and Sikkim.

Statement of the Problem:

The Limbu tribe in Darjeeling hills are living for centuries, during the colonial period, they were known as tribal people but since the independence of the country, Limbus were treated as the people of general category till 2003, and the Limbus were not recognized as scheduled tribe. Many other tribal communities were inserted in the scheduled tribal Act of 1950 but the genuine and warrior tribal communities such as Limbu were blindly left out. Here, it is important to note that despite being aboriginal indigenous people of Darjeeling, the Limbus have been merged with the non-tribal communities of Darjeeling hills, and Lepchas became the only aboriginal indigenous people of Darjeeling. Thus, with time they began to lose their distinct identity through the process of acculturation which was further intensified by their political lumping with the non-tribal communities of Darjeeling.

Therefore, the question that looms large is what about the identity of the Limbus? Has it been totally lost under the impact of the forces of modernization and commercialization that they have been confronting in post-independence India? Is it a fact that the progress achieved in the fields of education, economy, and politics made them deprived to be inserted in the scheduled tribe list?

Thus, for the 53 years, they were considered as general categories people and after their long struggle, Limbus of Darjeeling were inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian Constitution in 2003. So, there are social, economic, cultural, and political reasons behind selecting the research topic. During the 53 years, how did they become successful to preserve their tribal culture and religions? How did they fight for tribal status? After getting tribal status what types of changes have come in their life? Being unreserved and being reserved what types of differences have come in their social, economic, and political life? How much have they become conscious regarding their culture? What types of indigenous health care systems do they follow?

Thus, this research work is intended to know more about the changing identity of the Limbus tribe from tribal status to general and again general to tribal category and its impact on their social, political, economic, and cultural life. These are the main cause behind selecting the research topic.

Area of Study:

We have located our research at hill areas of Darjeeling district. The total area of Darjeeling is 3,149 Square Km. It has a length from north to south 18 miles (29 km) and a breadth from east to west of 16 miles (26 km). It is surrounded by four neighboring countries of Nepal, Bhutan, China, and Bangladesh. According to the census 2011 total population of Darjeeling was 1,595,181 (excluding Kalimpong).

Though the Limbu population is found scattered in both hill and plain areas of Darjeeling district my research work is completely focused on the Limbus of the hill areas of Darjeeling district. Our research area includes those places in Darjeeling hills in which Limbus are found in the majority in rural areas such as Bijanbari, Bunkulung, Pachang Bazar, and Hope Town (Phoolbari) and the Limbus who are scattered in the urban areas of Darjeeling municipality (Ghoom-Jorebanglow) Kurseong municipality. We visited both places where Limbus are found in the majority as well as in minority in order to see the variation in their tradition and cultural change.

This study has made an attempt to explore the ethnic identity of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills with the help of the historical sources and oral sources which says that not only Lepchas but Limbus were also the aboriginal tribe of Darjeeling hills. Secondly, till today, no study has been made on the Limbus' struggle for ST status and the political participation of the Limbus in the ethnic movement of Gorkhaland. Though some studies are done before, on their socio-economic condition, and their cultural life, of the Limbus of Kalimpong district.

Limitation of the Study:

The study has certain limitations like it is confined only to the hill area of Darjeeling district. A total of 500 households were taken as samples by using the purposive random sampling method.

The period has been chosen since independence to till September 2021 to understand the Limbu community and their social, cultural, economic, and political development. The period of 2003 is very significant among the Limbu community because, since 2003 the, Limbu tribe were inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. From independence to 2003 Limbu community had lost their ethnic identity, as the original tribal inhabitant of Darjeeling and they remained as a non-tribal community till 2003.

So, the study has mostly focused on the post-2003 period, immediately after the inclusion of the Limbus in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution for a better understanding of the social and economic status of the Limbus, their cultural status, and changes. Their struggle for ST status,

their political participation, and the health care system with the help of field study and secondary sources. Simultaneously, historical backgrounds are also discussed for a proper understanding of the current statement of the problem.

Simple statistical tools are used to analyze data.

Literature Review:

The Limbus Tribes has its' own history, belief system or religion, Limbu language, Script, distinct Limbu culture, and archaic traditions. Many Limbu personalities have contributed their life for the preservation of their history, culture, language, and religion. We can get many books written on Limbu Tribes but a maximum of them has been based on Kranti history, their culture, tradition, and religion. So, we can get many books about Limbu religion, philosophy, culture, ritual, History, and Development of Limbu Language, etc.

Chemjong Iman Singh, "*Kirat Itihas*" (1948), book is mainly based on the origin and migration of the Kirat people. The author has discussed that how the eight provincial kings, descendants of King Yakthunghang Lillimhang migrated to Assam from Khamati, Myanmar but they found that the area was already occupied by the earlier waves of descending Mongoloids so they preceded further West and reached Kanshi/Kosi which was also already occupied by the Aryans and spreading Hindu religion. So, they came back to the Limbuwan area and settled with eight provincial kings. In due course of time, they revolted against these eight provincial kings and after defeating these kings in the battle they divided Limbuwan into ten provinces and began to rule these provinces. The author further writes that the name of Limbuwan was given because the revolution was made successful with the help of Bow (*Li*) and Arrow (*Toong Abu*).

Chemjong Iman Singh, "*The History and Culture of Kirat People*"(1967) written in English was published in 1967 A.D. The book has two parts. The first part of the book contains two chapters. The first chapter mainly dealt with the historical period of Kirat, their culture, religious marriage, and death rites, and the second chapter mainly discussed the coming of the Limbus, the birth of their name, social custom of the Limbus, and their different forms of dances. The second part provides valuable information on various Kirat kings and their achievements and the Gurkha invasion. Chemjong has divided the Revolution of Kirat people into four parts and has claimed that Phunshuk Namgyal to be the king of all Sikkim including the Northern part of Limbuwan. The author writes that during the time of integration Gorkha king Prithivi Narayan Shah brought all the Kirat Kingdoms into one unity with the common name of Gorkhas.

Subba. J.R. “*The Philosophy and Concept of Yuma Samyo Tradition*” (2005) we can get detailed information about the Limbu religion. The book has contained seven chapters and Five Appendix. In chapter one, the author has given an introduction of Yuma Samyo Tradition (Yumaism) and in chapter two he has clearly mentioned the concept of God according to Yuma Samyo Tradition. In chapters three and four we can get information about the creation of the universe and the concept of life and destiny in Yuma Samyo tradition and in chapters five, six, and seven we can get the concept of soul, afterlife, and purpose and meaning of life in Yuma Samyo Tradition. One of the interesting things we found in this book is that from chapters three to seven we can not only get religious information about the Limbu Tribe but the author has made every possible effort to write about the concept of the other religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrian, and Judaism. Overall, we can say that this book is very helpful to get information about the Limbu tribal religion as well as other religions. In this book, the author has made beautifully comparative studies of all religions so that we can understand the true meaning of religion. Most of his books are based on the Limbu religion (Yumaism) and its Mundhum. He has published three and four analysis books on Yumaism Mundhum namely “*Cognitive and social Function*” (2009. New Delhi) secondly “*Yumaism, the Limbu Way of life- A Philosophical Analysis*” (2012, Sikkim) In this book the writer has attempted a structured approach to explore the conceptual beliefs –ethic ideas, elementary ideas or folk ideas, including supernatural powers such as the Great Goddess Tagera Ningwaphuma, other supernatural powers, and spirituality, the Eight Souls tradition (Yetchham Thim), the eighteen stages of life and other spiritual practices of Yumaism. It also explores the origin of matriarchy in Yumaism, indigenous knowledge of food and other livelihood bio-resources management culture, and origin, pre-history, and history of the Limbu (Subba) tribe.

Subba, J.R. “*Ethno-Religious Views of the Limbu Mundhum (Myths)-An Analysis of Traditional Theories*” (2012). This book is Yumaism’s Mundhum-wise analysis based on Eliade’s Traditional Theories and Significance of Ethno-Religious views of the Limbu Tribes. The work defines what is shamanism and shamanic practices. The author has beautifully made the difference between the Mundhum or myths and legends, folktales, etc. The book explores Eliade’s Traditional Religious Theories and their significance in a traditional archaic society inclusive of Limbu tribes. All these analysis books which are based on Yumaism (religion of Limbu Tribes) help those people who want to get the full knowledge about the Limbu religion and Mundhum.

Subba, J.R. “*Origin and Development of Religion 100 Questionaries*” (2013) The writer has published this book in the question-answer form to create some interest or to extend the knowledge about Yumaism to the readers in general. The Question Answers have been divided under eight

important topics: namely Introductory Questions on Religion, Analysis on Evolutionary Approaches, Analysis on Functional Approaches, Analysing the Role and Functions of Religion, Analysis on Functions of Myth, Analysis on Structuralism Approaches, Analysis on Religious Beliefs and Rituals, and Analysis on Religious Symbolism. The Introductory Question on Religion has fifteen question-answers (1-15) about the elementary issues of religion. The Evolutionary Approaches has 18 question-answers (16-33). The evolutionaries postulated their answer through their numerous evolutionary theories. The functional Approaches category has 14 question-answers (34-47) and postulated their answer through social function, Totemism, etc. The fourth group is on the Role and Function of Religion in a Society. It has four question-answers (48-51), and functionalists postulated their answer through the Functional role of Religion, Identity, continuity, and solidarity of society. The fifth group, Analysis on the function of Myth, has 4 question-answers (52-55) and formulated their answer through Cognitive and Social Function of Myth with the elucidation of Mundhum of Yumaism as an ideal example. The sixth group, Analysis on structuralism Approaches has 21 questions –answer (56-76), and Structuralists seek their answers through mythic or symbolic structure and social structure of a society. The seventh group, Analyses on Religious Beliefs and Rituals has 11 question-answers (77-87), and talks about various aspects of religious beliefs and rituals of society. The last group, Analysis on Religious Symbolism has 13 question-answers (88-100) and discusses the religious symbolism with a particular reference to Yumaism.

Subba T.B. and his book, *“Politics of culture-A study of Three Kirata Communities in the Eastern Himalaya”* (1999), has given detailed information about the culture and politics of three Kirat communities of Eastern Himalayas. The book has nine contents and each content author has beautifully described the Kirat communities and their culture. In the first chapter of the Introduction, the author has written about the problem, politics of culture, and his fieldwork, and the field where he visited to collect information about the Kirat communities. In chapter two, the author has written about the original word of the Kirat, from where this word had come and what does it mean? He has also mentioned the geographical spread of Kirata and their relationship with the Aryans and also written about the dynasty of the Kirat people. In chapter three, the author has written about the Kirat people their history, and their present status of the Kirata. In chapters four and five we found in detail about the political organization, economic organization, and social organization of Kirata. In chapter six, the author has beautifully attempted to show the relationship between Kiratas and Tagadhari, Kiratas and other Mongoloids, and Kiratas and Untouchables. Here, he has shown the relationship between their socio-economic relationship and cultural relationship. In chapters seven and eight he discusses their culture, language and religion, and their politics. This book is very much helpful to know about the Kirat people and their cultures.

Laksam Makar Singh, “*Khauma*” (2006) attempts to analyze stages of death rituals of the Limbu tribe. The author has given in detail about the death rituals from the preparation of the dead body to the burial of the dead body. The author writes that Limbu people perform Khauma/Yuma (breaking of eating restrictions) ceremony on the fourth day of death of a male and the third day for the female deceased. Further, he discussed that the last rite is performed by Phedangba reciting Mundhum with the help of Tumihangs (learned persons) five in number, representing as Pancha. The author has described the rituals in a very simple way that how they keep various eatables including ara (liquor) thee (alcoholic brew made of millet) and a (meat) on a nanglo (small winnowing tray made of bamboos) as a last offering to the deceased. Then a Tumihangs, carrying a brittle stick, intimates the people the day of the last rites. After the performance of all the rites, the Tumihangs announce the ending of the restrictions and inform the family members of the deceased that from that day they allow them to do all the family chores without any restrictions. After the announcement, they break the stick, which was carried at the time of informing the people about this rite, into pieces and throw. Kusiringba is the ceremony when members of the family offer the last prayer to the deceased at his grave lighting candles or diyos. This ceremony is performed on the ninth day if the deceased is a male and on the eighth day if the deceased is a female. They perform last rites simultaneously with the above ceremonies or can be deferred for uneven months like three, five, or nine, etc., performing of the last rites depends on the financial capability and availability of all the members of the family of the deceased. Samba is their community priest who performs *Tongsing* (seance/trance) on the night of the last rites of guide deceased to heaven. The author has written all the rituals in detail and one of the plus points is that it has been written in Nepali.

Another book of Maker Singh Laksam, is “*Aa-Nama- Nahen*” (2001). The author has explored the name of the Divinities, Deities of Yumaism (Limbu tribal religion), how to do worship them and what to offer them to make them pleased. Besides this, the author has also written about the “*Chyabrun*” (a musical instrument of the Limbu tribes).

Limbu J.R., Panduk “*Limbu Janajatika Jiwawn Pachiko Jiwan Dhara Thatha Antosti annusdhandari*” (2012), is a translated book of J.R. Subba from his English book named “*Concept of life after and funeral practices in Yuma Samo traditions*”. The book is translated by three authors. T.B. Chandra Subha, Harish Moktan, and Ama tungalong, in the first chapter author, has written about the Limbu culture and origin of Yumaism and second chapter Yumaism and funeral practices of Yuma Samo traditions

Kainla Birahi - "*Limbu Bhasa a Sahityako Samchipta Parichay*" (2049 B.S.) published by royal Nepal academy) this book is written in Nepali. The author has tried to highlight the history of the Limbu tribes and the origin of the Limbu script. He further writes that the Limbu language has its own script, which is invented by king Srijunga and later this script was reinvented by one Limbu saint called Teongsi Srijunga in 1761-1748 Bikram Era and original Limbu scripts is collected by B.H. Hudson and took it from the India office to Library in London. The book has contained the origin of the Limbu language and script and development of language, Literature, Poet (Poem) Novel each and everything. This book is very much helpful to learn the Limbu language and scripts.

Subba J.R. "*The Limbu of the Eastern Himalayan with special reference to Sikkim* ", (1999) (*Sikkim Yakthung Mundhum Saptopa*) this book is mainly based on the Limbu life, cultures, Customs, belief system, Yumaism religion and its philosophy and teaching of West Sikkim. This book has been divided into thirty-one chapters in which the author has nicely described the original homeland of Limbu and Limbuwan, the history of Kirat, and Limbu as an original inhabitant of Sikkim, and the unified treaty of Lho-Men-Tsong sum. This work then goes on to discuss the economic, social, cultural, folklore, literature, languages, and religion. This book is very much helpful for Limbu people who want to know about their culture and for any scholar who wants to know in detail about the Limbu tribe and their cultures. It is an information-packed book of the Limbu tribe.

Limbu K. P Palungwa and Limbu Kamal Tigela edited book "*Sirijunga*" (Dharan 2059). This book provides us detail information about Teongsi Srijunga Sinthebay Limbu, who was considered the real hero of the Limbu Tribes. It was he who reinvented the Limbu script and taught the script among the Limbu communities. The book also further discussed that how he sacrifices his life for the sake of the Limbu language and culture.

Brook Northey and Morris C.J. in their combined book "*The Gurkhas, Their Manners, Customs and Country*" (1927), give a full account of the Gurkha dynasty and Nepal. The authors have discussed in detail the government, administration, tribes inhabiting it, and also discussed on a lucid account of the rise of the Gurkha dynasty. In chapter fifteen authors have discussed in detail the Limbu Tribe, their origin, their country "Limbuwan" their war against the Gurkhas, and their customs. Authors write about Limbu and their country that Limbuwan, or the country of Limbus, lies between the River Arun on the West, and the Singalela ridge on the East. About the Limbu people the authors write "Limbus were first known by the name of Yakthumba, and they are descended from ten brothers. With these ten brothers came three spiritual advisers. These thirteen

men were all residents of Benares, and they agreed to make themselves homes in the mountain of Nepal. The first five brothers and their descendants are called Kashigotra, and the second five brothers and their descendants are called Lhasagotra because they respectively journeyed from Banaras to Tibet and from Lhasadinga to Nepal. Now, these ten brothers settled in a place called Ambepojoma Kamketlangma Sumhalangma. The ten brothers had many children, and their descendants multiplied very quickly, till they became a nation and were called Limbus. Besides their original authors have also vividly described the customs of the Limbu tribe.

Risely, H.H. in his "*The Tribe and Caste of Bengal*" (1891), is full of discussion regarding the tribal and caste of Bengal. About the Limbu tribe of West Bengal author has written that the Limbu (meaning archer) belongs to the Kiranti Group or Kirat confederation. The Yakshas, the Limbus, the Rai, and the Sunwar are together known as Kirat. The Limbu, probably of Mongolian descent ranking next to the Khumbu (Rai) and above the Yakkha among the three upper divisions of the Kiranti Group the name Limbu or Das Limbu from the ten Sub-tribes (really - thirteen) into which they are supposed to be divided, is used only by outsiders. The Lepchas and Bhotias of Tibetans settled in Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal speak of the Limbus as 'Tsong', because the five thums or sub-tribes included in the class known as 'Lhasha-Gotra', emigrated to Eastern Nepal from the district of Tsong in Tibet. Lepchas call them Chang, which may be a corruption of Tsong. By other Members of the Kiranti Group, they are addressed by the honorific title of Subba or Suffah, a chief. Further, he writes that they have their own Tibetan - Burman dialect called Yakthungpan, and also have their own script and their indignity is based on Gotra. Among the ten Sub-tribes (really thirteen) five came from 'Lhasha' called 'Lhasha Gotra' and five from Banaras called 'Khashi Gotra'.

Dozey E.C. in his book entitled "*Concise History of The Darjeeling District since 1835*" (1917) not only gives a full account of what an intensely interesting district is like but also gives details of its subdivisions like Kurseong, Kalimpong, and Siliguri. This book is something like a history book, something like a guidebook, and something like an Encyclopedia. The author has discussed in detail about the early history of Darjeeling its physical aspects, boundaries, Lakes, the towns, people, caste system, marriage, rites, school and college, climate and health, hospitals, natural history, calamities, improvement of towns, etc. It also contains a chapter on the industries, flora, and fauna of Darjeeling. About the book statesman of 16-6-17 writes- "This work has the great merit of being written by an old resident who know every stick and stone in the neighborhoods, and who has also the art of writing in an entertaining manner. There is no subject in which Mr. Dozey does not take a lively interest. He tells you all about Old Darjeeling; describes the various hill people, and gives an account of trips out of Darjeeling. In fact, Mr. Dozey has compiled a

chatty guide which may well be found to be a more interesting companion on the journey to Darjeeling than much recent fiction.”

Malley L S S O’ s “*Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling* (1907). This book has been divided into sixteen chapters. This Gazetteer book provides a wealth of material on all aspects of the regions covered by their districts or provinces. The sixteen chapters of the book give detailed information about the physical aspects, history, people, public health, flora and fauna, tea industry, different types of administrations, and education. About the Limbu tribe author has written on page number 29 that, “Formerly, beyond a few Lepchas and Limbus with their little clearings in the forests, and occasional raid from Nepal or stray visitor from the table-lands of Tibet, the Darjeeling Hills were practically uninhabited”. So, this historical writing of Malley helps the Limbus of Darjeeling to identify themselves as the aboriginal indigenous people of Darjeeling.

Vidyarthi L.P. and Rai Binay Kumar in “*The Tribal Culture of India*’ (1985) tried to focus on various aspects of Indian tribes. Starting from the anthropological study to the economic system, social organizations, political, cultural, and religious life., they also highlighted the folklore, arts, and crafts of the tribe they mentioned the structure of the tribal village, their matriliney and polyandry system. The authors have further discussed the approaches, planning, and programme and ultimately the cultural changes which are taking place in India. How tribal society is changing and how Hindunization had influenced the simple tribal culture and religion and how the Christianity inroaded during the British period in the life of the tribal, especially from North-East tribes like Mizo, Garo, and Nagas who were totally Christianised, not only North-East but in middle Indian states like Madhya Pradesh and Bihar tribal-like kharias(two thirds) Mundas, Oroans were also converted into Christianity and half of the tribal from south India were also converted but the western Indian tribes were the least affected, etc. have been the main areas of discussion.

Chattopadhyay Dr. Pradip “*Redefining Tribal Identity*” (2014) is an excellent book to compare the changing tribal society of the Santhal with the others. How the Santhals society, their social, economic and cultural are changing and what are the factors of the changes have been elaborately discussed. How the modern way of life, urbanization, and industrialization are affecting tribal life, Modern means of media, communication, and transportation are forcing the tribal people to accept the modern way of life in West Bengal.

Karmakar Madhusudan, “*A Geographical Outline of North Bengal*” (2011), The book explores a systematic detailed analysis of the physical and climatic conditions of north Bengal as well as demography, agricultural and industry of the area. This book would be of immense help to know

about all readers and researchers who want to know about the geographical knowledge of north Bengal.

Ray Ranjana (ed.) *“Tribal Health Care System. A Tribute to P.O. Boddington”* (2019) the book is an outcome of an International Seminar which was dedicated as a tribute to P.O. Boddington, who was a linguist, ethnographer, and a folklorist who has done a deep study on the health care system of Santal tribal group. The book explores a wide range of work on indigenous health care, disease, cure, and remedies on numerous tribes of India. This book will help all those researchers and readers who want to know about the traditional medicines system and health care of tribal people.

Middleton Townsend and Shneiderman Sara *“Darjeeling Reconsidered Histories Politics, Environment”* (2018). This is the new book written on Darjeeling with a new perspective. The book rethinks Darjeeling’s status in the postcolonial imagination. The book has been divided into three sections. The first section Histories of Exception comprises three chapters related to the history of Darjeeling, About the people author has written that Limbu and Lepchas were the original inhabitants of Darjeeling. The second section, Politics and Social Movement contains five chapters which are mainly based on the political movement of Gorkhaland. The third section of the book comprises three chapters related to the environment and Labour. The author has mentioned that the book has two goals, first, it explores how perspectives from contemporary social science and humanities may open up a new understanding of Darjeeling ‘s past, present, and future. Second, to ask what Darjeeling might teach us about South Asia, the Himalayan region, and the postcolonial world more generally.

Yogi K.B *“Demand for Separate State of Gorkhaland Hamro Kura Panni Sunnany Gara Na”* (2009). Written in Nepali language author has expressed his discontent against the Bengal government and has mentioned that why the people of Darjeeling demand a separate state of Gorkhaland. The book is based on the sentimental aspiration of the Gorkhas people of Darjeeling.

Sharma A.N. *“Tribal Welfare and Development Emerging Role of Anthropological Exploration”* (2002), The book deeply explores the whole package of knowledge for the steady growth of tribal welfare and development. The book contains twenty-five chapters from various disciplines. This book gives immense help to all those readers who want to know in detail about the multidisciplinary nature of tribal life.

Subba Purna Hang, *“Sekmuridekhi Mekcherisamma”* (2010) has written comprehensively on account of the Limbus. Most of the writing is devoted to the Limbu culture and religion and its underlying philosophy and teaching. The book has been written in the Nepali language. The author

has started his chapter from the origin of the universe according to Limbu religion “*Yumaism*” then he has discussed in detail about the Limbu Divinities and Deities, he has divided these deities into two groups: good souls and bad souls.

Kar, Chiranjib, *Sub-Regional Movement in India, (2000)*, is a book which enquires about the political development of the Darjeeling hills and Jharkhand. The brief history of Darjeeling and the movement of Gorkhas regarding the attainment of the separate state of Gorkhaland is the main theme. The author has devoted his full concentration to the Gorkhaland movement launched by Subash Ghising in the 1980s. The other chapter deals with the Jharkhand movement in Bihar. To know about the political and social history of Darjeeling is one of the best books.

Dr. Debnath, Sailendra (Ed.) “*Social and Political tension in North Bengal since (1947)*” Book contained different varieties of articles. This book deals with the topic of political, social, economic, and tribal studies. The Lepcha tribe’s description of its culture and Gorkhaland movement and Kamtapur movement are the main articles of this book.

Liwang, Min book’s “*Gorkha a Glance at their Culture and Traditions*” (January 2008) is based on the customs traditions and cultures of the Gorkha (Nepali) community. The author has divided the Gorkha community into two different races. The Aryans and the Non-Aryans. Under the Aryans falls Chettri, Bahun, Thakuri and under Non-Aryans falls, Gurung, Magar, Pradhan, Tamang, Bhutia, Limbu Rai etc. The author has discussed customs, traditions, and culture of every Aryan and non-Aryan race of Gorkha community like their language, scripts religions, birth marriages, death, festivals, dress food, ornaments, weapon tools, Jewellery, house, utensils, etc. I would like to say that this book is a treasure of information about the Gorkha community.

Bomjan, D.S, “*Darjeeling Dooars People and Places under Bengal’s Neo-Colonial Rule*”, (2008) book is mainly based on the political history of Darjeeling Author has explored the Geo-Political formation of Darjeeling its immigration level, Development of Darjeeling from a different perspective like Tea Garden, Cinchona Plantation Darjeeling Himalayan railways and the plight of four Ts. The authors have described the political conditions of Darjeeling from the formation of different political parties in Darjeeling to the emergence of Bimal Gurung. He has given each and every detail of the politics of Darjeeling, it seems that the author wants to explore the crisis of identity of Indian Nepalis who called themselves as Gorkha community.

Lama, Basant B. “*Through Mist of Time the Story of Darjeeling the Land of Indian Gorkha*”(2008). This book is also based on the political history of Darjeeling. The authors have divided this book into three parts; As yesterday, today and tomorrow. Yesterday means Darjeeling

between the years of 1757 to 1907. From 1757 to 1907 the development of Darjeeling hills has been discussed and the second part deals as today mean Darjeeling between the years of 1907 to 2007. In this second part, the author has focused on all about the history of demands for a separate state. In this part of the book, the author has a discussion about the relation of the Gorkhas and Subash Chandra Bose and he has also written about the political awakening of the Indian Gorkhas and their demand for Gorkhaland, demand for the sixth schedule, and end of Subash Ghising's party GNLF. The third part covers the Indian idol affairs and role of Prasant Tamang to the emergence of Bimal Gurung and his political party Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha and their fighting for the demand of "GORKHALAND".

Mukhia Terence and Subba Susna edited book "*Darjeeling Saga; a Sequel*" (April 2013) is also helpful to the readers to know more about the Darjeeling hills. This book cover area of Development, Economy Education, Culture, Religions, health, and tribal study. Susna Subba has pen down about the Limbu tribal belief system, dance, and Music of the Limbu tribe.

Biswas Sanjay and Roka Sameer's "*Darjeeling: Truth and Beyond*" (2007) have thrown some light in the history of Darjeeling regarding its socio-economic and political background in their combined book.

Subba, T.B in his book "*Ethnicity State and Development: A Case Study of Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling*" (1992). Has discussed the Gorkhaland movement of Darjeeling hills. The history of the Gorkhaland movement starting from the evolution of the Gorkha identity, ethnic movement in Darjeeling hills, towards conciliation, the politics of expediency, impact of the movement, and lastly the media and the movement, the Gorkhaland movement, and its related political aspects are deeply expressed, the importance of the statehood, the identity of the Gorkhas and movement of the Gorkhaland from the Theoretical perspective have been described, the role of the different Political parties such as GNLF for launching the movement and CPIM for the suppressing the movement and how the expression of the media was being utilized in opposing and spreading the movement.

Mishra Dr. K. and Dr. Dutta's Ambika Edited book "*Exploring the Conditions of Tribal People and Culture in West Bengal*, (2012). Consists of eighteen papers. Ranging from the different areas of tribal people and others. The most important paper by Dr. Pradip Chattopadhyay who explores the changing cultural life of the Santhals in the post-Independence period (1950 – 2000) explained the Santhals tribal society and its rapidly transforming socio-economic conditions. Way of life, how industrialization and Urbanisation and technological advancement are affecting the culture of the tribe and the tribal are forced to adopt the modern way of life.

Prof Upadhyay, V.S. and Dr. Pandey Gaya in their book “*Tribal Development in India a Critical Appraisal*” (2003). Have discussed the concept of tribal development, changing approaches for tribal development, and constitutional provisions. They also have an elaborate discussion regarding the tribal problems, their lifestyle and inseparable conditions with forest, their movement, how different development programs were made. This book also consists of a draft executive report of the tribal studies committee.

Verma, R.C “*Indian Tribes through the Ages,*” (2002), in this book the authors, has attempted to present the glimpse of tribal from the historical perspective, their tribal society, their culture attached with the land and forest, educational system within tribal community and their exploitation by money lenders. Book also consists of detailed discussion regarding the constitutional safeguards, reservation, and administration of scheduled areas under V and VI scheduled. This book is rich with information regarding the scheduled tribes and their social economic and cultural aspects. A list of the tribal at last is very helpful to find out the state-wise tribe in India.

Nadeem, Husain’s “*Tribal India*” (2001) is a book especially dedicated to tribal development, its various areas, its problems, etc. this book includes a detailed explanation about the tribal development from the British era to 2000. The tribal racial classification, social-economic, and political organization of the tribal, ethnographic profiles of some tribes, the role of the NGO, and Other voluntary organizations have been discussed. The history of the tribal development and development policies, acts. and the impact of urbanization on the tribal are the core areas of the book.

Chakraborty M. and Mukherjee D. on “*Indian Tribes*”, (1971). have brilliantly chosen ten-tribe to gather all sorts of information regarding the tribal of India and selection of the ten-tribe were done on the basis of geographical location, linguistic affiliation ethnic affinity, and economic organization. Tribal like Veddass, Andamanese, Kadar, the Tada, Gond, Bhil, Santhal, Oraon, Naga, Khasi were chosen from all over Indian by them for their unique cultural and linguistic identity, where they have written about each tribal community’s special features. Each tribe’s socio-economic and cultural aspects have been described, such as their physical features, habitat, food culture, social organization, arts and crafts, dress, family system, religion, marriage system have been discussed nicely.

Thapar, Romesh Edited book on “*Tribe Caste and Religion in India*” (1977) It is a very old book but this book provided a lot of information from every aspect. Nineteen contributors were there and all their paper is relevant from a different perspective because each and every paper has given

good information about the tribes of India. The paper-like tribal problem in India, tribes in transition, the western impact of Indian tribes, Modernization and religious values, changing role of religious minorities are very good. The book further discussed various aspects of the tribal people of India like their caste system and politics, Inter-caste tension, Tribal of Southern India, Central and Eastern India. This edited book is a compact study on tribal but time has passed a lot since then, life of the tribal is now rapidly changing especially in the globalization. A lot has been transformed but basic ideas which book gives is really a treasure.

Bose, Nirmal Kumar on "*Tribal Life in India*" (1971) has nicely presented a total tribal scenario of India, the author has discussed tribal as hunters, fishers, and food gatherers, shifting cultivators, and further discussed their social organization, religion, and economic system. He further discussed that how they have been attached to the forest, land, nature, and their tribal languages. How clan system plays an important role in marriage system and pattern of family. The tribal religious life is significantly based on their "animistic" beliefs, how they worship nature, what is their beliefs system and values towards forests, rivers. The tribal people of Andaman and Nicobar, North-eastern states, Bihar, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh have been discussed

Vidyarthi, L.P. In his book "*Art and Culture of North East India*" (1986) has discussed the demographic profiles of the people of the North-East, their history and ethnicity, the arts and crafts of the people of North East and new economic system, and more importantly the changing cultural scene of tribes of North East. The author has continued, that how religion has changed the cultural values of the tribal people of North-East and how changing and developing economic life of tribal people forcing them to change their culture and he also mentioned that different types of government plans and policies for development are also responsible for the change in the cultural life of the tribe.

Bandyopadhyay, P.K. "*The Northeast Saga*" (2005) is full of discussion regarding the North East states of India. This book deals with the complete discussion regarding the geographical feature to the political development and cultural uniqueness of the northeast people. The Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, and the Manipur and its culture and people are given a prominent place here. The formation of the North East council and its powers have been briefly discussed. How the cultural aspects of the people are changing has been given in this book.

Sahu, C. "*Encyclopedia of Indian Tribes*" (2000) is an Encyclopedia book that contains full of details and descriptions about Indian tribes. It is compiled with different types of articles on the Indian tribes. It discusses the social-economic profile and various tribal development issues and policies. The traditions, customs, and rituals of the tribe related to marriage, death, their social

position, economic conditions, their lifestyles, sculptures, changes taking place in the tribal society are the main discussion in this book. How absorption was taken place in the ancient Indian Hindu pantheon has also been discussed. A special focus has been given to the pre-and post-independence era from where the definition of the tribe to approaches and various tribal development sub-plans have been discussed.

Singh, K.S., “*People of India, West Bengal*” (1992) is the ethnological study of the people of West Bengal. This book is composed on varieties of articles on the different people of West Bengal by different researchers and scholars. It is started with the geographical discussion of West Bengal and continued with a different aspect of the people of West Bengal like their social, economic life, villages system, relation with the forest and land, their culture, rituals related with the marriages and funerals, and festivals.

Singh, K.S., *The Scheduled Tribes (People of India. National Series Volume iii)*” (1997). has generated a wealth of information on the hundreds of tribes that exist in this country. The name of the all-tribal communities is presented in alphabetical order and the author has discussed all aspects of culture and society, location, language, script, biological variation, educational level, and impact of the development of all the tribal people of India. But unfortunately, we, could not find the name of the Limbu as a tribe of India, it might be that Limbus were not inserted in the scheduled tribes’ list of the Indian constitution when the author was doing an Anthropological Survey of India.

Fitzpatrick, Ian Carlos, “*Cardamom and Class, A Limbu Village and its Extensions in East Nepal*”, (2011) has discussed in detail the relationship between the Limbu people of Mamangkhe village and Cardamom production. Further, he writes on the emergence of a dispersed village, economic differentiation, and international migration. The book also explores a contemporary ethnographic portrayal of Limbu, economic, social, and cultural life in a village in the Eastern Nepal.

Bagchi, Romit, “*Gorkhaland Crisis of Statehood*” (2012). The book has been divided into four parts. In part I: which contains the topic ‘The Moving Trajectory’, here the author has started from historical and assimilations of Darjeeling and discussed up to Madam Tamang’s assassination and its possible impact on the hill politics and in part II ‘Shifting Scores’, the author has covered the whole activities of GJMM and in part in part III ‘Reflections’ where the author has mentioned about the Black Darjeeling, Legends and Darjeeling and Darjeeling Beckons and lastly in part IV contain the topic ‘Views’ here the author has written views of different political leaders of Darjeeling hills and North Bengal. This book is an attempt by an author to present the Gorkhaland Movement of the Nepali-speaking community of the Darjeeling hills from different new perspectives.

Sharma, Khemraj “*Gorkhas in the Wilderness, A study in North East India* (2013) has discussed the Gorkhas of Changlang and Lohit frontier region of Arunachal Pradesh and, Sadiya frontier of Assam. The author writes that the Gorkhas of the North-East are treated as good as immigrants, outsiders, foreigners, non-tribal. In spite of that, the Gorkhas of the North-East are contributing lots to the agrarian and industrial economy of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam frontier wilderness.

Subba, T.B, Sinha A. C., Nepal G.S., Nepal D.R. (eds.) “*Indian Nepali Issues and Prospective* (2009). The book contains the research papers presented at a national seminar. It has been divided into five sections. The first section of the book is comprised of six chapters which related to conceptual and the theoretical issues of ethnic identity of Indian Nepali, Second section of the book is comprised of five chapters which are related to the search for Indian national identity of Indian Nepali and third section of the book comprises of six chapters which are related to regional identities of Indian Nepali and four sections of the book comprises four chapters which are related to the Nepali sub-cultural: Youth women food and Medicine and fifth section comprises five chapters related to Indian linkage” historical literature and people.

Sahu, Chaturbhuj (ed), “*Tribal Culture and Identity*” (1998). The present volume is devoted to the studies of tribal culture and identity of different states of India. The volume has provided the basic features of the tribe and also gives some guidelines in the perspectives plans for the development of the scheduled tribe plans for the tribes. The volume also deals with the food habit and health conditions of the tribe, tribal language, demographic profile of the tribe, socio-economic condition of the tribe, and their environmental perspective. Regarding the Lepchas of Darjeeling and their language problem the editor has written that Dalton and P.C., Biswas have contributed a number of papers on Lepchas and Limbus.

Das, Mithun & Biswas Subir (Eds.) “*Anthropology in Public Health*” (2019), The book has been divided into four parts, the first part of the book comprises three chapters related to healthcare practices and Awareness. The second part of the book is comprised of four chapters specially devoted to the Epidemiology of Non- communicable diseases and the third part of the book is comprised of four chapters devoted to Nutritional Status. The book is very helpful for readers to know about the health and nutrition of the tribal people of India.

Limbu, Dil Kumar & Basanta Kumar Rai, “*Ethno-Medicinal Practices among the Limbu Community in Limbuwan, Eastern Nepal*”, (2013) in their research paper they have written exclusively on the ethnomedicinal practices among the Limbu community. They further write that they have documented 225 species of medicinal plants from their study areas which are used for the treatment of 48 disorders in the Limbu community. They have nicely described the treatment

of different diseases by different medicinal plants among the Limbu people. They have mentioned that the Limbu religious priest and Shaman used all these plants for the treatment of diseases and sometimes they also recite some magical words called mantra during the treatment.

Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar, “*Kirata-Jana-Kriti, The Indo Mongoloids*” (1951) is said to be an authentic account of the history of Kirata. It provides valuable information on the Mongoloid in Ancient India as Kirata and also the meaning of the word Kirata. Chatterjee has mentioned that the first-word ‘Kirata ’has been used in Vedic literature Yajurveda. He further writes that kirata indicated the wild non-Aryan tribes living in the mountains particularly the Himalayas and in the North-Eastern areas of India who were Mongoloid in origin.

Dr. Pandey, B.B., (Chief Editor) “*Status of Women in Tribal Society, Arunachal Pradesh (1997)*, is the compilation of the research studies on the status of women of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The book provides information on the status of tribal women of Arunachal Pradesh in the terms of Occupation, Recreation, Property, Consequences, Education, Households duties/family affairs, Sex, and marital affairs, right to political activities, Rights to religious activities, and changes and development in the status of women. Twenty-two tribal women status has been written in this book and the status of all the women are better. It seems that all the Arunachalis women through tradition-bound yet they enjoy a better status in all spheres of their life.

Mullard, Saul, ‘*Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese*’ (2011) has discussed in detail about the construction of Sikkimese history on the basis of religious and political concern. The book also deals on how and why traditional historiography was developed and continued with the Tibetan understanding of state, kingship, and the role of Buddhism in justifying political administration as well as social stratification and also has discussed the economy of pre-modern Sikkim. Mullard has also made critical analysis on the importance of ‘Lho-Mon-Gtsong Gsum’, an Agreement between the Phunshuk Namgyal and two other indigenous Lepcha and Limbu people.

Sanyal, Charu Chandra, ‘*The Limbus-A South Eastern Himalayan Kirata People*’ (1979), has exclusively studied the Limbus as one of the kirata communities. The book also describes the origin of Limbus and their settlement in the South-Eastern Himalayan region of India. Besides, Sanyal has also discussed the social, cultural, and religious life of Limbus.

Subba, Gracy Maria, “*Fluid Boundaries and Fluid Identities-The Study of Limboo Tribe of Sikkim*”, (2013) In this article author has discussed in detail about the origin of Limbus from different perspectives. The author has written that there are four theories of the origin of the

Limbus peoples. The first theory is Kirata Origin second theory is the origin of China, the third theory is Tibetan Origin and the Last is the theory of post-boundary migration. The author has written that “*The policies of war and conquest has, in fact, redefined the boundaries and made the Limboos straddle between the two nations of modern Nepal and India.*”

Khamdhuk, Buddhi L, “*The Tsongs (Limbus) Down the Ages in Sikkim*”, (2019) in this article, Khamdhuk has tried to explore the ethnic identity of Limbus of Sikkim and their deprivation from indigenous rights and justice. Further, he writes that Limbus are neither Nepalis by ethnicity nor Hindus by religion. Historically, linguistically and culturally they have a distinct identity but still, they are fighting for *Tsong’s seat*. The author wants to highlight here that Sikkimese Limbus are neither the immigrants of Nepal nor of any other place outside Sikkim but they inhabited in Sikkim from immemorial and they are as old as Sikkim itself. He has also discussed the struggle of Sikkimese Limbu for Tribal status.

Roy, Barun, ‘*Gorkhas and Gorkhaland*’ (2016) has been divided into three parts. In book one which contains the topic of *Gorkhas* has been written comprehensively on account of the custom, culture, and traditions of the Gorkha community. In book two the topic is *Gorkhaland*. It has discussed in details about the geographical features and demographics of the Darjeeling and in book three topic is *The Rise of the Demand for Gorkhaland* and it has in details about the Gorkhaland movement. Most part of the writing is devoted to the Gorkhaland movement from the history of Gurkhas to the formation of the GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Administration).

Vulli, Dhanaraju (ed.), ‘*Debating Tribal Identity, Past & Present*’ (2017). This edited volume comprises five parts with nineteen papers. Different historical perspective of tribal identity has been discussed in part one and the rest four parts of the book have discussed multiple perspectives/discourses in developing a new paradigm to understand tribal identity in different regions of India. Gracy Maria’s paper on ‘*Shamans and their Ethno-Medicinal Practices Among the Limboo Tribe of Sikkim*’ is a very informative paper on the Limbu community.

Research gaps in the literature:

Though all these books give lots of information about Limbus culture, tradition and religion, and tribal people of India until date no research work is done on the Limbus of Darjeeling as an indigenous inhabitant of Darjeeling, their political processes, the ethnomedicinal beliefs, and practices of the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills. There are many historical writings on Darjeeling in which it has been written that Limbus were the original inhabitant of Darjeeling like Lepcha and oral tradition also supports it. Unfortunately, after the independence, Limbus were not

inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution and were considered as migrant Nepalese. Thus, Limbus of Darjeeling along with the Limbus of the Sikkim began to demand tribal status and after their long struggle of fifty-three years, they have been recognized as the tribe and inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution.

There has not been any significant research work on the Limbus' social, economic, cultural, and religious lives after getting tribal status in Darjeeling. What types of changes have come in their socio-economic conditions and how they have been able to preserve their culture and language when they were considered as migrant Nepalese? The Limbus are not active in the political arena of the hills. The Limbus are marginalized because of the presence of other oldest, superior, and advanced tribal communities in the hills of Darjeeling.

So, we find that there are research gaps in matters of their ethnic identity, their struggles for inclusion in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution, and changes in their socio-economic, cultural condition before and after getting the tribal status of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills, their political participation in the ethnic movement and their ethnomedicinal beliefs and practices. Till today no specific research work and data about these matters can be found. So, the present study has been a humble attempt to fill up these research gaps to some extent.

Objectives:

The main objectives of this research are to know more about the history of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. The study has focused on the transforming socio-economic condition of the Limbu tribe in different ways before and after independence. The study also focused on the Political role of Limbus in the ethnic movement and their indigenous treatment. Thus, the major focus of study can be enumerated as follows:

- 1) To examine the Limbu as the original inhabitant of Darjeeling.
- 2) To examine the basic demographic attributes and socio-economic and cultural status of the Limbu tribe in the hills of Darjeeling on the basis of field study
- 3) To analyze the social and economic development of the Limbus before and after inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list.
- 4) To find out the political participation of Limbus in Darjeeling hills

- 5) To document the ethnomedicinal treatment and medicine system of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling Hill
- 6) To develop a well-written document of the Limbu community for future references to the forthcoming researchers, educationists, government, and non-government officials.

Research Questions:

To fulfill the objectives of the present study, we formulated the following research questions.

1. Were the Limbu people indigenous tribe of Darjeeling like Lepchas?
2. Does the Limbu community migrate to various parts of India from their ancestral land with special reference to Darjeeling hills?
3. What were the livelihood practices of the Limbu tribe?
4. Do Limbus of Darjeeling politically marginalize?
5. What are the indigenous treatments of the Limbu tribe?
6. How far have the Limbus community benefited by their Scheduled Tribe status?

Hypothesis:

We can assume the following hypothesis of the present research paper:

1. Limbus are the indigenous tribe of Darjeeling along with Lepchas.
2. Socio-Economic standards of Limbu people of Darjeeling hills have been changed after getting tribal status.
3. Limbus are very conscious regarding their language and script and always preserved their culture and religion and their unique culture help them to get tribal status
4. Limbus tribe of Darjeeling are very conscious regarding their health and hygiene.
5. Limbus of Darjeeling are politically marginalized.

6. Limbu tribal peoples' conservative nature is responsible for their indigenous treatment practices in their society.

Methodology:

The present research has been agglomerated various data from primary as well as secondary sources of information.

Primary Sources:

The primary data for the study was collected through a sample survey and fieldwork. Interviews have been conducted mostly structured interviews and, in some cases, unstructured interviews. The basic primary data is based on a house-to-house census survey which helped to know demographic as well as the socio-economic condition of Limbus of Darjeeling.

Secondary Sources:

Secondary data were collected from published documents of Government Departments such as the Census Report, District Statistical Hand Book, District Census Handbook, District Gazetteers, and information collected from offices like Panchayat offices and Municipality, etc. Published books, book chapters, articles journals, unpublished Ph.D. thesis were chiefly consulted for the study. To obtain inclusive data various libraries like the National Library of Kolkata, Central Library of Jadavpur University, Departmental library of Jadavpur University, District library of Darjeeling, Rural Library of Sonada in Darjeeling district were also visited. Some secondary and primary sources have been accessed through the internet as in the case of the online resources of JSTOR, DOAJ, JURN, and Shodhganga, etc.

Sampling Procedure:

A sample size of 500 households has been selected where Limbus are found in the majority. The Limbu community mainly resides in the rural areas, so in panchayat areas of Bijanbari, Lamagaon, Sumbuk, Ringtong T.E (Sonada, Pachang Bazar, Phoolbari), Mirik (Bunkulung Busty) where Limbu are in respectable majority have been interviewed as the primary source of information. The Limbus who are scattered in the urban areas of Darjeeling Municipality (Ghoom-Jorebanglow) Kurseong Municipality have been interviewed. Religious priests, Tumiyanghaang (Limbu elderly men) were interviewed. Ceremonial functions of Limbus have been attended. Presidents and Secretary of Limbu Associations of Darjeeling, Ghoom-Jorebanglow, Kurseong, and President of All India Bhartiya Limbu Association were interviewed and their interviews were

supplemented by the documentary sources. Oral history and case studies also helped in revealing the socio-economic and cultural condition of the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills.

Method of Data Analysis:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected from sample households through schedule interviews, Census Report, District Statistical Hand Book, District Gazetteers and Published books, book chapters, articles journals, etc. The collected data were thoroughly checked, compiled, and tabulated to make the data set suitable for analysis. The data has been analyzed through descriptively and simple statistics methods (i.e., Bar Graph, Pie Chart, Clustered Bar and Mean). Data processing was performed with the help of a simple calculator, computer, and other electronic and manual devices. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis technique has been undertaken.

Chapterisation:

Introduction

Chapter I: Ethnographic Study of the Limbu Tribe: A Brief Outline

Chapter II: Socio-Economic Status of Limbu Community of Darjeeling Hills

Chapter III: The Cultural Changes of the Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills

Chapter IV: Health Hygiene, Indigenous and ethnomedicinal Treatment of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills

Chapter V: Role of Limbu Tribe in Ethnic Movement of Darjeeling Hills

Summary of finding, Recommendation

In research work organization of the study has played a very vital and important role. This research work has been divided into five chapters, excluding introduction and conclusion, on the basis of extensive field studies among the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills and secondary sources.

Introduction:

Introduction' starts with the introduction of the Limbu tribe and main areas of research and its basic problems. It has also included the review of literature, research gap, the objectives of the

present research, the research questions, hypothesis and methodology, and the brief discussion of the different chapters and research findings and recommendations.

Chapter I: Ethnography Study of the Limbu Tribe: A Brief Outline

The first chapter has dealt with the ethnographic study of Limbus of Darjeeling. The study has focused on the Etymology of Limbu, the origin of Limbu, their country Limbuwan, Limbu as Kiranti, their cultural life including Limbu dance and songs, dress, ornaments, food habits, festivals, marriages, religion, religious priest, Maangheem, the birth of a child, language and funeral. The study also focused on the ethnic identity of Limbus of Darjeeling, Limbu as the original inhabitant of Darjeeling along with Lepchas, their affinity with Lepchas, their struggle for including them in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. Regarding their original homeland, various writers and historians have written many books and their writing has now become a dominant story. Such writing helps to re-defined and re-interpreted the identity issue and original inhabitant of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills.

Chapter II: Socio-Economic Status of the Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills

The second chapter deals with the demographic and socio-economic profile of Limbus. This chapter depicted the demography of Limbu such as age and sex ratio, the family size, head of the family, their marital status of the Limbu of Darjeeling hills. The social and economic status of Limbu has been presented through different occupations and their income and expenditure, their livestock, house pattern, landholding, sanitation facilities, the lifestyle of villagers, various amenities, and health and entertainment enjoyed by the Limbu. The educational status of the Limbu has been studied through their rate of literacy and illiteracy ratio, level of educational achievement, reservation and educational opportunities and we have also discussed the status of Limbu women, their equal rights and freedom with men, their inheritance of property, divorce system and status of the widow of Limbu in Darjeeling hills.

Chapter III: The Cultural Changes of the Limbu Tribal Community of Darjeeling Hills since Independence

This chapter deals with the different aspects of the culture and traditions of the Limbu tribes of Darjeeling hills. The cultural attributes are depicted on the basis of the linguistics status of Limbu at present in Darjeeling hills through statistical data. Reading and writing ability of the Srijunga script by the Limbu tribe, their communication skill and methods in different other languages have been covered. To know about the religion of the Limbu, the Limbu religion of Yumaism has been

discussed, the study also focused on their religious priests, and their religious temple called 'Maangheem', Their belief system in nature worship and animal worship, and their changing religious interest have also been discussed, this chapter also focused on the festivals, Limbu songs, dances and dresses, their attire and ornaments. Here we have also discussed the Limbu Development Board and its merits and demerits.

Chapter IV. Health Hygiene, Indigenous and ethnomedicinal Treatment of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills

The fourth chapter has been divided into three sections. First section deals with the consciousness of Limbu about their health and sanitation system with statistical data. We have tried to present a true picture of sanitations among the Limbus, their health and hygienic through the study of their daily life routine, whether they have sanitation facilities at home or not, sources of safe drinking water, habits of daily toothbrush and bath, etc. In the second section, we have focused on their indigenous treatment for different-different diseases. How and which medicinal plant they use for the treatment of diseases have also been discussed. First of all, they follow their religious priest and after that, they used medicinal plants, and lastly, they go to the allopathic treatment. The Phedangbas play a very important role in their indigenous treatment. Here, we have explored more than 30 diseases and their treatment by the ethnomedicinal plant. In the third section, we have discussed women's health care system through the study of their daily behavioral study. Sanitation habits during their mensuration and at the time of delivery of the child have been discussed, preferences of women for delivery at home and hospital have been covered.

Chapter V: Role of the Limbu Tribe in the Ethnic Movement:

Here in the chapter, we have explored the historical background of the ethnic movement of Darjeeling hills and the political participation of the Limbu tribe in the ethnic movement. Their understanding of the Gorkhaland movement and their participation in the movement as political activists, apolitical, and a spectator has been shown. Their participation in the democratic processes such as elections and voting behaviours have also been discussed. Those Limbus who lost their life (martyrs in view of the Limbus) during the movement has also been discussed. We have also inquired how the Limbus are taking interest in the local government institutions such as GTA, DGHC, Panchayat Raj, and Municipality. How Limbus of Darjeeling is politically marginalized has also been discussed.

Summary of Finding and Recommendation:

The conclusion has been reached on the basis of the field survey and the secondary sources which verified the research questions and hypothesis and the different chapters of the study have been discussed briefly and suggestions are placed in the concluding chapter.

Research Finding:

The present study on “*Constructing Social Identity: The Limbu Tribe in Darjeeling Hills since Independence*”, is a humble attempt to explore the Limbus as the ethnic original inhabitants of Darjeeling hills and being tribal and non-tribal what types of changes have come in their political, social, economic, cultural life with the help of field survey, interview, literary sources, and oral narratives.

We found that Limbus of Darjeeling always claimed that they are also an original inhabitant of Darjeeling hills along with the Lepcha and there are many historical writings and oral narratives which also support their claims. Many historical writings and oral traditions are there which helped them to prove that they are the original inhabitants of Darjeeling. Books like ‘Report on Darjeeling’ by H.V. Belley (1829), ‘Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling’ by L.S.S.O. Malley (1907), ‘Concise History of Darjeeling’ by E.C. Dozey (1922) ‘The Limbus’ by Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal (1979) Tipan-Taapan by Dr. Parasmani Pradhan (1969) ‘Darjeeling Reconsidered’, by Middleton & Shneiderman (2018), ‘Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal’ by Colonel Dalton (1872) ‘A short note on the Limbus of Darjeeling’ by P.C. Biswas (1934-35) have proved that Limbus and Lepchas were the aboriginal tribes of Darjeeling. So, most of the writers have tagged them as the original inhabitant of Darjeeling along with the Lepchas. In this regard, LSSO’Malley’s book “Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling”, has also sufficient descriptions to prove the aboriginality of the Limbus.

In the matters of the tribal status for Limbu in 1950, we found that the secretary and president of Limbu associations and elderly Limbus clearly stated there was a misconception among Limbus that they thought that scheduled tribe means very lowest caste in the society, and if they accept it, they would be lower caste in the society so they declined to accept it. All these narrations are based on oral narratives and there are no written documents.

It was the year 1993, for the first time Limbu Association of Kurseong raised their voice for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of the Indian constitution. In our research work, we found that previously all these Limbus were divided into many associations like Limbu Association of Kurseong, Limbu Association of Darjeeling, Limbu Association of Kalimpong, Limbu

Association of Siliguri, and Limbu Association of Jalpaiguri but later they decided to merge into one association and on 15/01/1995 at Darjeeling Dukh Niwarak Sammelan they organized the conference of all the Limbu association and founded the one association of '*All India Limbu Tribal Association*' and under this banner, they began to fight for tribal status and finally they were successful to insert the Limbu community in the scheduled tribe list of Indian Constitution.

We have done the field survey to know about the demography and socio-economic profile of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills. To get a clear idea of the socio-economic conditions of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills a survey including 500 households from Darjeeling District's selected villages were carried out and found that the majority of Limbu populations are concentrated in rural areas. The total population of the Limbu tribe in our sample households are 2237. Here we found that the 49.4% male and 50.5% female populations. We found that the female ratio is slightly more than male and young population are larger than old population.

The Family pattern of Limbu showed that 95.2% belong to nuclear family and only a few families were found living together. In Limbu society, the father is considered as the head of the family but if the father is dead, then the widowed mother became the head of the family. Although decision-making power is in the hand of the husband the final decision is taken after the consultation with the wife.

We found that they follow the monogamy system of marriage system and their form of marriage is mostly based on elopement and 79.79% of Limbus have got married through elopement. It is because elopement is part of the Limbu marriage culture.

The literacy rate among the Limbus has been increased, previously the literacy rate was very low among Limbu, 18% in Darjeeling Sadar and 14% in Kurseong subdivision whereas we found that 48.9% male and 51.27% female are literate in our research study which indicate the improvement in their education system.

Economically the Limbu are dependent on Tea Garden and agriculture, daily wages, carpenter, driver, etc, and the young generation always preferred to join the Indian Army. We found that 34% of households' monthly income was less than 5000, 31.4% of households' income is between 5001 to 10000. Only 0.4% of Limbus are there who are earning between 70001 to 80000 and they are doing government service, teaching in schools, colleges, and university. Thus, we found many changes have come in their social and economic status after getting tribal status.

Among the 500 households of Limbus of Darjeeling 84.6% of Limbus strictly followed their culture and tradition at home. Limbus tribe have their own language and we found that only 38.8%

of Limbus of Darjeeling can speak their language and 53.6% Limbus of Darjeeling cannot speak their language. We found there are many causes for the decline of Limbu language from the Darjeeling hills such as education system and medium of instruction, dominant language and communication among themselves and with other people i.e., Nepali language and parents were not using their language at home are the main cause for the decline of Limbu language. Here lack of job opportunities in Limbu language, the influence of modern information and technology, internet, smartphone, media like the press, film, and cinema, television, radio, society at large, importance to the English language were other factors of the decline of Limbu language in Darjeeling hills. Besides language, the conditions of Limbu scripts are most endangered in Darjeeling hills. But after getting tribal status they are trying to revive it. Total 95.2% Limbu among the 500 households who followed their own religion 'Yumaism and others follow "Satyahangma" and other religions.

The study also brings out the true picture of indigenous treatment which is prevailed among the Limbu tribal community of Darjeeling hills. Limbus of Darjeeling are very conscious about their health and hygiene. 94% of the Limbu who always maintain good health and hygiene, their houses and surrounding are also neat and clean. we found that they have their own cultural and social practices to treat various illnesses. They follow the two types of indigenous treatment. First, they prefer the treatment of Phedhangba (Shamans), and second, treatment is by Paharay Dabai (herbal medicinal plants). We found that 97.6% of respondents preferred their first-hand treatment should be done by their religious priests like Phedhangba, Dhami or local priest, Mata and Bhaun Baje (Hindu priest), etc. After that, if patients did not recover from illness, then they would take them for modern treatment. We also found that there are 0.6% of Limbu people who do not believe in religious priests like Phedhangba, Dhami or local priests, Mata and Bhaun Baje, etc. They preferred medical science treatment instead of indigenous treatment.

The Limbus are participating in the ethnic movements due to political compulsions; however, they are more or less passive as far as participation in the local government and other local institutions are concerned. In the ethnic movement, the Limbus of Darjeeling are politically marginalized, 83.8% of Limbus are conscious about the ethnic movement of Darjeeling hills. But they are not so active in politics and support the ethnic of Darjeeling passively. In our survey, we found that there are only 7% of Limbus are active members in the Gorkhaland movement but 73.4% of Limbus are passive party members. It shows that maximum the Limbu community are not interested in politics they do not take part in politics they follow the leaders who asked them to follow. They are not active in politics. Though among them 7% show active members we did not find any Limbu person in any political portfolio. There are 29.2% of Limbu people who act as a spectator they observed

everything and know everything but they do not take part in politics. They think that it is better to stay away from politics. But there are 3.4% of Limbu people also who are totally apolitical.

The finding of the research work shall be helpful for the planning and policymakers to understand this community for their development and this work also will be helpful for upcoming scholars who want to know more about the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills.

Recommendations/Suggestions:

(a) Government and local bodies should conduct the awareness programme among the tribal communities of Darjeeling hills. The contents of the programme should include gender equality, political participation, health education, economic self-sustainability, women's empowerment, human rights, and so on.

(b) Government should provide modern health facilities. All the health care centres should be well equipped with basic health care infrastructure with lifesaving medicines.

©There should be an awareness programme on children and women's health, hygiene, and malnutrition.

(d) Government should take initiative for the preservation of ethnomedicinal plants used by tribal people. Traditional knowledge systems should be carefully documented for the next generation.

(e) An immediate step should be taken by the All-India Limbu Association with the help of the West Bengal Government for the preservation, promotion, and development of the Limbu language, literature, culture, and tradition.

(f) As most of the Limbu children do not understand the Limbu language, so, the curriculum and textbooks for the basic level education should be developed by West Bengal Government in such a way that it should make compulsory to learn the traditional language. In this context, West Bengal Government can take ideas from Sikkim Government who has already started to teach the Limbu language in Sikkim from primary level to PG level.

(g) A documentation project should be launched to preserve the Limbu language, rituals, Limbu dance, songs, dress, and cultural Programme, which will be the biggest treasures for coming generations.

(h) 31.60% Limbus of the study areas are dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood. They are following the traditional method for cultivation and depend on rain-fed. Thus, the

government should take steps to minimize their problem by providing alternative irrigation and a new method of cultivation. They should be provided agricultural implements, better quality seeds, and pesticides. Nowadays, there is a great demand for organic vegetables in the market. Limbu as being the traditional agriculturist they should be encouraged for the development of organic agriculture.

(i) 21.80% Limbus of the study areas are dependent upon tea plantations for their livelihood. Unfortunately, tea garden planters are given meager wages which is not sufficient for their daily life so the owner of the tea Estates should increase the wages of the workers as per the minimum wage scheme.

(g) Limbu Association must form a trust for the economic development. They should ask some affluent tribals of their society to contribute financially. The total collected cash can be deposited in the bank account or that can also be given to needy as a loan which will fetch huge interest in their account, in this way the trust can perform many social, educational, cultural and religious Programme without collecting donation every time.

(h) Tourism is one of the major economic sources of Darjeeling hills, nowadays, *Homestay* instead of the hotel has become very popular among the tourist. During my survey in Bijanbari, we also stayed in *Homestay* and the owner of the *Homestay* belonged to the Limbu community. Like them, many Limbu of Darjeeling hills can open *Homestay* as a source of income.

To sum up, Limbu culture, language, tradition, and society are a cluster of multi-ethnic. multi-religion, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural heritage of Darjeeling hills. So, Limbus of Darjeeling always should be aware and active for social, economic, cultural, political, and linguistic upliftment and preservation. On the other side, the Government sector should also act an active role to preserve and develop the Limbu status providing beneficial opportunities.

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CHAPTER-1

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE LIMBU TRIBE: A BRIEF OUTLINE

1.1 The Limbus of Darjeeling: In search of Ethnic Identity

Tribal identity is mainly focused on ethnic identity. This means that ethnic homogeneity, along with other factors, characterizes a tribe. Tribe represents historical continuity and exclusiveness. Groups who had been living together without losing or diluting their specific characteristics were formed into the tribe. The formation of the tribal identity as indeed that of tribes was a product of territorial, economic, ecological, and technological isolation.¹

The ethnic Limbu community is an aboriginal race residing as an indigenous inhabitant in the hill districts of West Bengal and Sikkim and other different states of India. Unfortunately, the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling lost their ethnic identity after the independence of India. Limbu and Lepcha were the original inhabitants of Darjeeling but after the independence Limbus were not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution and the Lepchas tribe became the only original indigenous people of Darjeeling. Despite being the original indigenous tribe of Darjeeling Limbus were blindly left out to insert in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. Since independence to 2003, The Limbus of Darjeeling had lost their ethnic identity and after their long struggle the Limbus of Darjeeling were successful to regain their ethnic identity and they were inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution in 2003. Many historical writings and oral traditions are there which helped them to prove that they are the original inhabitants of Darjeeling. Books like Sir Joseph Hookers “*Himalayan Journal-1854*” ‘*Report on Darjeeling*’ by H.V. Belley (1829), ‘*Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling*’ by L.S.S.O. Malley (1907), ‘*Concise History of Darjeeling*’ by E.C. Dozey (1922) ‘*The Limbus*’ by Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal (1979) *Tipan-Taapan* by Dr. Parasmani Pradhan (1969) ‘*Darjeeling Reconsidered*’, by Middleton & Shneiderman (2018), ‘*Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*’ by Colonel Dalton (1872) ‘*A short note on the Limbus of Darjeeling*’ by P.C.Biswas (1934-35) have written that Limbus and Lepchas were the aboriginal tribes of Darjeeling. So, most of the writers have tagged them as the original inhabitant of Darjeeling along the Lepchas. In this regard, LSS O Malley writes in his book “*Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling*”, on page number 29 that, “*Formerly, beyond a few Lepchas and Limbus with their little clearings in the forests, and occasional raid from Nepal or stray visitor from the table-lands of Tibet, the Darjeeling Hills were practically uninhabited*”.² So, this historical writing of Malley helps the Limbus of Darjeeling to identify themselves as the

aboriginal indigenous people of Darjeeling. Again Townsend Middleton & Sara Shneiderman writes in “*Darjeeling Reconsidered*”, that, “*These transformations required labour-far more than the local inhabitants (largely Lepcha and Limbu) could provide.*”³ Here they have mentioned that Limbus were the local inhabitants of Darjeeling. This book ‘Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling’, was published in 1907, and ‘Darjeeling Reconsidered’, was published in 2018 but in both of the two books the writers have written that Limbus were the original inhabitants of Darjeeling. Colonel Dalton the authentic ethnographer in his book “*Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*” has also mentioned the Limbu settlement in Darjeeling along the Lepchas. Besides these authors, many other writers have mentioned that Limbu and Lepcha were the aboriginal people of Darjeeling but unfortunately, in the present scenario, the name of Limbus are left and only Lepchas are considered as the original inhabitants of Darjeeling. The historical tripartite agreement “*Lo-Men-Tsong-Sum*”, among the Lepcha, Bhutia, and Limbu also proved that Limbus of Darjeeling were the original inhabitant of Darjeeling because at that time Darjeeling was the part of Sikkim. Here, *Lo* indicates *Lhopas* (Bhutia), *Men* indicate *Mempa* (Lepcha), and *Tsong* indicate Limbus, and all of them are considered from one family. Phuntshog Namgyal who belongs to Bhutia said that Bhutia must be considered as the father of the family and Lepcha must be regarded as the mother of the family and Limbus must be the children of the family and they should remain united and rule the country by making a council in which all the three communities should be represented. The Buddhist monks prophesied a rumour of spreading plague in Sikkim which could be controlled only by a monk whose name starts from Ph letter and he will be the king of Sikkim. The simple-minded Limbu and Lepcha accepted the rumour and in 1642 Phuntshog Namgyal was consecrated as the first king of Sikkim.⁴

Thus, besides literary sources, there are a number of traditional oral sources which also mentioned that Limbus were the original inhabitant of Darjeeling hills from the immemorial time. The Limbus of Darjeeling always claimed that the name of Darjeeling was given by them. According to Limbu people of Darjeeling the Observatory Hills now popularly known as Mahakaal Dham at that time there was only a big slab of stone and cave and surrounded by dense forest and they called this place in their language, “*TAJENGLUNG*” (*TALKING STONE*) (*Tajeng=talk, Lung=stone*) they called it *Tazenglung* because in this place they always heard the conversation of people on the slab of stone with unknown language every time they searched everywhere but no one was there they only heard the conversation. So, Limbus of particular period gave this name *Tajenglung* (*talking stone*) and they considered this place *Tajenglung* as one of the holy religious places and started to worship here. Gradually the popularity of this place began to spread and the king of Sikkim Phunshuk Namgyal also heard the story of *Tazenglung* so he sent the Buddhist monks from Sikkim to check the matter (at that time Darjeeling was the part of

Sikkim). One of the monks whose name was Dorjee who struck the one stone here as an offer to a thunderbolt (Lord Indra). Later the king of Sikkim began to popularise this place of Tazenglung as the Buddhist religious place and everyone accepted his claim because at that time Darjeeling was the part of Sikkim and everyone believed his claim that the name of Darjeeling was given by the Buddhist lama Dorje who struck the stone as an offer to a thunderbolt (Indra) and its name became the Darjeeling. As a result, LSSO' Malley writes in his book "Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling that *"The name of Darjeeling is a corruption of Dorje, the precious stone or ecclesiastical sceptre, which is emblematic of the thunderbolt of Sakhra (Indra) and of ling, a place. It means therefore the place of the Dorje, the mystic thunderbolt of the Lamaist religion, this being the name by which the Buddhist monastery which once stood on Observatory Hill was formerly known."*⁵ Here, Limbus of Darjeeling claims that it seems O'Malley was also influenced by the claim of king Namgyal. On the other side Limbus of Darjeeling always claimed that the original name of Darjeeling, was given by them but unfortunately due to lack of written documents the voice of Limbus of Darjeeling was left unheard and the name of Darjeeling was popularised under the banner of Buddhist religious place. In this regard, when we met the President of All India Limbu Federation Sri, S.R. Kajum sir he also strongly claimed that the name of Darjeeling is the corruption of *Tajenglung*, he said that from *Tajenglung* it corrupted into *Dajenglung* and from *Dajenglung* it became *Dajilung* and finally when Britishers came to here they began to call it *Darjeeling* instead of *Dajilung*. Sankar Hang Subba also gives the same explanation in his article, *"Sabdatitma Tazenglung"*, he further said that if you see the all-surrounding places of Darjeeling, you found almost name of places is in Limbu and Lepcha languages. He has mentioned the name of different places of Darjeeling which are in the Limbu language like *Lebong, Pandam, Sidrabung, Tungsung, Sandhakpu, Mirik*, etc. which also help us to prove that the name of Darjeeling was transformed from the name of 'Tajenglung'. Local narratives also support this claim.⁶ Thus, all the literary sources and oral sources proved that the Limbus are the original and indigenous tribe of Darjeeling hills. Unfortunately, despite the fact, they were not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution.

On the other side if we see the history of Sikkimese Limbus we found the same story. Previously Darjeeling was part of Sikkim so naturally, Limbus of both states were considered the original inhabitant of the same areas. Unfortunately, after the independence Limbus of both states were not recognized as ethnic tribal people. According to 'Lo-Men-Tsong-Sum' Limbus, Lepcha and Bhutia were the original ethnic tribe of Sikkim, but Limbus were always deprived and denied political rights and economic benefits. Their 'Tsong seat' granted by Chogyal of Sikkim was abolished on 8th May 1973 when a tripartite agreement was signed between the Chogyal of Sikkim, the leaders of the major political parties of Sikkim, and the Government of India. Thereafter, the Limbus of

Sikkim were merged with Nepalis. While abolishing the '*Tsong Seat*' none of the Limbu was consulted and no consent of the Limbu was taken. This undemocratic act of abolishing '*Tsong Seat*' paved the way for the gradual erosion and dilution of Limbus' distinct identity.⁷ (Khamdhuk) When Limbus were merged in Nepali communities it was a great humiliation for the Limbus of Sikkim so, as a reaction to this, on 23rd May 1973, *Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limbu Chumlung* (ASKLC) was established at Tharup, West Sikkim. Since then, *Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limbu Chumlung* time and again kept on highlighting the concept of historical testimony, '*Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum*', and vocalizing their aspirations and demands. (ibid) Finally, after the long demand of the tribal status with authentic evidence, Limbus were recognized as a tribal people of India in 2003 but still, they are fighting for their '*Tsong seat*'.

In Darjeeling, on 26th November 1993, for the first time, Limbu Association of Kurseong submitted the Memorandum to Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao then prime minister of India, New Delhi, claiming; '*We the aboriginal Limbu Tribe settling from the time immemorial along the Western Sikkim and the District of Darjeeling would like to highlight the discriminatory treatment meted to this tribal community in every aspect of their social, economical, educational, and other lives. It was further stated, 'This tribal community is the most backward among Indian Nepali/Gorkhas and in the most minority group. This Limbu tribe thus requires protection from Govt. of India as in like manner given to other tribal groups.'* (Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by All India Limbu (Subba) Tribal Association, Kurseong dated, 26 November 1993).⁸

At that time Limbus of Darjeeling had founded individual Limbu associations like *All India Limbus (Subba) Tribal Association of Kurseong* (1993), *Akhil Bhartiya Limbu Sangathan, Darjeeling* (1994) *Akhil Bhartiya Limbu Bikash Parishad, Jalpaiguri* (1994) *Siliguri Limbu Welfare Association* (1995). Finally, all these individual Limbu associations decided to merge into one association and on 15/01/1995 at Darjeeling Dukh Niwarak Sammelan they organized the conference of all the Limbu associations and founded the one association of '*All India Limbu Tribal Association*'. On 11th December 1995 first delegation led by *Late, N.S. Limbu, Sri, G.D. Limbu, Sri, D.M. Chemjong* and *Sri B. Limbu* from Darjeeling, and *Late B.K. Subba, Sri N.D. Limbu* from Kalimpong and *Sri D.B. Limbu, Sri Durga Samba* from Siliguri and *Late I.B. Limbu* from Kurseong and *Late B.K. Subba* and *Sri Jetha Subba*, from Jalpaiguri, went to Delhi to submit their memorandum to the central ministers. First of all, they met the MP of Assam *Late M.K. Subba* who helped them abundantly to meet other central ministers. He had an important role in the inclusion of the Limbu tribe in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. On 21st December they met former central minister *Sri Bhuta Singh*, secretary of All India Congress Committee *Sri*

Sushil Kumar Shindia, and *Sri Sitaram Kesari* former welfare minister, and presented the memorandum demanding the inclusion of Limbu (Subba) in the list of Scheduled Tribes.⁹

Meanwhile, on 15th May 1995, it was announced that fifteen communities of Darjeeling would be given the OBC status and during that time *All India Limbu Tribal Association* made an announcement among the Limbu communities of Darjeeling hills that they would not accept the OBC status because they are already demanding tribal status, despite that few Limbu of Darjeeling ready to accept OBC status by showing their different clan. It was a great challenge for the *All-India Limbu Tribal Association* to convince them not to take OBC status. They met individually all those Limbus who had applied for OBC status and convinced them about the tribal status. Finally, they were agreed to withdraw their demand of OBC for the time being.

In 1998 the Cultural and Research Institute of West Bengal asked the *All-India Limbu Tribal Association* to prepare a documentary film on Limbu culture and tradition. After the visiting of different places finally, the All-India Limbu Tribal Association chose the Sumbuk village for the shooting of the Documentary film. *Sri Challuram Limbu* wrote the script of the documentary and *Sri Loka Limbu* and *Smt. Ganga Limbu* played the role of hero and heroine. They gave the name of the film as '*Sons of Himalayan*'. Dr.S.M. Choudhury (Anthropologist) was surprised by seeing such a culture and religion of Limbus of Darjeeling. He suggested to the team members of the *All-India Limbu Tribal Association* to preserve such a rare culture and religion from extinction. Thus, the Cultural and Research Department of West Bengal wrote the letter, (letter-number 129-TW/EC 98/90 ON 12-02-96) to the Central Government considering the Limbu as the Tribal community on the basis of their culture and religion. This recommendation letter of the West Bengal has an immense role in the inclusion of Limbus in the scheduled tribe list. Simultaneously, they continuously submitted their memorandum to the prime minister, chief minister, and ministers of the different departments for their inclusion in the list of scheduled tribe list. They had submitted a memorandum to the Prime minister *Shri Indra Kumar Gujral* (14th June 1997), *Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee* (9th March & 5th November 1999), President of India *Shri K.R. Narayana* (12th September 1997), *Shri Jyoti Basu*, Chief Minister of West Bengal,(1994), *Miss Mamta Banerjee*, Railway Minister,(2000) *Shri Juel Oram* (2001, Ministry of Tribal Affairs) *Mrs, Maneka Gandhi* (2001, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment), *Sonia Gandhi*(President AICC) *Shri Abdul Kalam*, President of India, etc.¹⁰

On 15th November, 2002 a delegation led by *Sri B. Limbu* and *Sri Bhun Kumar Subba* from Darjeeling, *Late B.K. Subba* from Kalimpong, *Shri Jetha Subba* and *Late, B.K. Subba* from Jalpaiguri and *Shri Jagdish Subba* from Kurseong went to Delhi and they submitted their

memorandum to *Shri Juel Oram*, Minister of Tribal Affairs. Finally, their demand for the inclusion of the Limbu Tribe in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution was fulfilled. It was only after their continuous struggle the Limbu communities were recognized as the Scheduled tribe with the SC/ST Orders (Second Amendment) Bill, 2002 (Bill No.62 of 2002). The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 2nd August 2002, it was passed by Rajya Shaba on 18th December 2002 and Lok Shaba on 19th December 2002. Finally, the bill received presidential assent on 8th January, 2003 and Limbu tribal people were included in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution.¹¹

1.2 The Limbu: Etymology

The term 'Limbu' has been explained by various writers with different meanings. Some explains that the word "Limbu" is derived from "Li" and "Abu". "Li" means "bow", and "Abu", meaning "shooter". Hence, "Limbu" means "bow shooter" or "archer". Thus, in the Limbu language, it means the person who carries a bow and arrow. Another view is that the ten Limbus defeated the eight ruler Kings of Eastern Nepal with the help of "bow" and "arrow" and hence after their victory, they named kirat land as "Limbuwan" and called themselves "Limbu". J.R. Subba writes that the word "Limboo" is derived from three Limboo words "*Li*=" Bow", "*Toong*" = " Arrow"; and "*Abu*" =Shooter"; or *Li+Toong+Abu*= "Bow and arrow shooter" or *Li+abu=Liabu+Bow* shooter (arrow kept silent) or Archer. The word "*Li-toong-Abu*" or "*Liabu*" later on was corrupted with only two words *Li+abu=Liabu*.¹²

There is a very close connection between the Limbu tribe and Bow and Arrows. They need it in their every ritual. Limbu tribal rituals like "*Tendham Mekhim*" (marriage), *Nahangma* ritual, *Thoba Sammang* ritual, and many religious rituals of Limbu tribe cannot be performed without it. Every Household of Limbu people must have a Bow and Arrow either for their protection or for their religious rituals. Even their King Sirijunga Hang is seen to be carrying a bow and arrow as his weapon in the pictures and images that are found in Limbu houses. Thus "Limbu" surname is the most appropriate surname for the Limbu people. Generally, if we see in Darjeeling Dist. then we found that the people of Darjeeling do not keep the Bow and Arrow at their home, they would make these at the time of performing rituals.

The Limbu tribe is also known as 'Yakthumba'. The word Yakthumba is most likely a combination of three Limbu syllables-yak meaning the animals yak but another meaning is also there which means hill, thum meaning herder, and other meaning places/district, and ba (pa) have the same meaning inhabitant. Together we may call it as 'hill people'.¹³ Another meaning of "Yakthumba"

is that “Yok”, means ‘fort’ and ‘Thumba’ means ‘defender’, hence “Yakthumba” meaning “defender of the fort”. Other meaning of Yakthumba is “Yok” means a place, “Thung” means “hard-working”, so “Yakthung” means “hard-working people of a particular house. The word ‘Yakthumba’ is of recent origin and it is used by the Limboo people after the division of Limbuwan into ten provinces or ‘Thums’. The word Yakthumba has not been mentioned in Limbu Mundhum as such. It is of recent origin and composed of three Limboo words “Yiok” =fort of a particular province and “Thum” means Province or Country, and “Ba” means from; that means “Yiok+Thum” = “fort of the province”, and “Yiok+Thum+ba” =” From the Fort of the Province”; or “Yiokthumba” means a group of a race or a group of the community of the ten Limboo leaders who divided Limbuwan into ten provinces. So Yakthumba means “the community or race or group of the ten Limboo leaders of Limbuwan.¹⁴ So when they talked among their communities, they called themselves as ‘Yakthung’ and for the male they called ‘Yakthungba ’and for female, they called themselves ‘Yakthungma’ but other communities called them as Limbu or Subba. In Darjeeling, they are popularly known as ‘Subba’ or ‘Limbu’, instead of ‘Yakthung’

‘*Tsongs*’ or ‘*Changs*’ are another name of Limbu tribes which has been given by the Lepchas and Bhutias of Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal. They called them by this name, because the five thums or sub-tribes included in the class known as ‘Lhasha-Gotra’, immigrated to Eastern Nepal from the district of Tsong in Tibet. Lepchas call them ‘*Chang*’, which may be a corruption of Tsong.¹⁵ But here in Darjeeling, this word is rarely used by the Limbus. In Darjeeling and Sikkim, Limbus are popularly known by the title or name of ‘Subba’. The word “Subba”, was derived from “Subha” meaning head of the village of Limboo community and was in use before the Sen period of Vijaypur. The word ‘Subba’ means ‘Chief’ is also a title conferred by king Prithivi Narayan Shah upon influential Limbus as a conciliatory measure after subjugating them politically. Thus, the Limbus tribes are known as *Tsongs* or *Changs* in Sikkim and *Yakthungba* when they refer to themselves in the Limbu language. Subba is a popular title among them in Darjeeling and Sikkim and in Nepal, they are known as their clan names of Limbu.

1.3 Origin of Kiratas:

The Kirata is a generic term in Sanskrit literature for people who had territory in the mountains, particularly in the Himalayas and Northeast India, and who are believed to have been Sino-Tibetan in origin. It means in Distant Past. As per Sanskrit –English Dictionary as a degraded mountainous tribe, a savage and barbarian while other scholars attribute more respectable meanings to this term and say that it denotes people with the lion’s character, or mountain dwellers. (Sanskrit-English dictionary) The word “*Kirat*” is the corrupt form of “*Kiriat*”, “*Kiriat*” or “*Kirjoth*” which means

fort or town in Moavite language of Middle-East area. When their population increased, “*Kiriyat-Yarim*”, “*Kiriyat-Sunna*” and “*Kiriyat-Saphen*” which means the forts or towns of the jungle, or Baal or Book or Pam tree. The inhabitants of these forts or towns were known as “*Kereti*” which was later on corrupted to “*Keretite*” or “*Kerayit*”¹⁶ The word Kiranta is derived from the two words: ‘Kira’ meaning lion and ‘ti’ meaning ‘People’ thus it means Peoples with lion’s nature.¹⁷

About the origin of the Kiranta Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee in his book ‘*Kiranta-Jana Kriti*’ writes that, “*The traditional explanations of the word Kiranta do not help us in finding its origin. These explanations are those who move atanti along the side of the mountain or in bad, dirty places, Kira those who move about talking gibberish Kira or Kila; It is quite likely that the name is but a Sanskritization of some Sino-Tibetan tribal name and some scholars have identified the name with that of the name with Kiranties, a Tibetao Burman people living in its Nepal which is quite possible. They had entered into India in the remote past before the influx of Aryan-speaking Nordics and these Indo-Mongoloid Kiratas were in constant touch with Dravidians and Austrics since remote antiquity and later on they mixed up with Aryans.*”¹⁸ (Here, we found that he was strongly favoured of the Mongolian origin of the Kiratas. But we also found that, on the other hand, G.P. Singh in his book, “*Kiratas in Ancient India*” gives contradictory views that they were not of Mongolian origin but they are of mixed origin. The racial and cultural identities of the Kirantas appear to have changed from age to age and from region to region. Their indigenous origin in general as well as in particular can be proved mainly by the evidence furnished in ancient Sanskrit literature, which can be further supplemented and confirmed by other authentic sources.¹⁹ J.R. Subba has opined that the Kiratas belonged to the Indus Valley Civilization because he found the similarities between the religion of the Limbu tribe and the form of the religion of the Indus valley Civilization.²⁰

1.4 Limbus as Kirat:

As we have already mentioned that Limbu, Rai, and Yakkhas are known as Kirat but there are so many views about the Kirat people. We found in the early literary account that only Khambu appears to be considered as Kiranti. European scholars Colonel Kirkpatrick writes that the Limbus, who are taken here as one of the principals Kiranta groups, were not taken here as Kirant till the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hamilton, another European scholar suggests the same. While Brian H. Hodgson writes that, the inclusion of the Limbus and the Yakkhas into the Kiranta identity is justified because, the manners and customs of the three tribals do not greatly differ, yet each has retained its own language. So here we found that every writer has a different opinion about the Kiranta on the one side Suniti Kr. Chatterjee writes that the Limbus, Khambus, and the Yakkhas

live on the Indian side of Himalayan, in Nepal and Sikkim as Kiranta, but on the other hand I.S.Chemjong includes almost all Mongoloid groups of Nepal like the Lepcha, Mangars, Gurung, Tamang, Sunuwar, and Thapa under the umbrella of the word “Kiranta”. Singh, G.P. pointed out that Raji Kirata of Kumaon, Garhwal and Kalibasin; Tharu, Danuwar, Mangar, Gurung, Newar, Tamang (Murmi), Sunwar, Jirel. Thami, Khumbu, Limbu, Yakkha, Dhimal, Lepcha, Koche, Meche, Rajbansi, Bodo, Ahon, Akas, Mismis, Tipperahs, Naga groups, Khasi-Janita people, and many other tribes in the Himalayan region are descendants of ancient Kiratas distinguished from others by their physiognomy, language, culture, and religion. Bangdel has more specifically remarked that Khomboos, Limboos, Jyapus, and Tharus belong to ancient Kiratas. On the other side D.R. Regmi has argued that among the whole people of Eastern Himalayans only two of them, the Khambus and Limbus are taken as Kirant. ²¹ It is very difficult to ascertain that when and how the Kirata people, particularly Khomboos and Limboos, came to occupy their present habitation. Some sources reveal that these Kirata people, must have come to their present abode sometimes between 600-100 B.C. and their power was great and their dominion extensive, reaching possibly at one time to the delta of the Ganges.²²

Thus, none of these scholars put forward the view that the Khambus alone should be treated as the Kirant. So, at present, the Yakkhas, Limbus and the Rai (Khumbu), and the Sunuwars are together known as Kirant. Today Limboos, Khamboos, and Yakkhas have separate entities; however, they share a common tradition, customs, and way of life. The rites and rituals of Khamboos and their culture in totality bear the resemblance of Limbu culture in many respects and whatever the variation seems to have emerged through geographical distances and neighborhood interactions. There should not be any confusion between the branches of Kiratas-Limboos, Khamboos, and Yakkhas and the title given to these Kiratas by Gorkha rulers as “Subba”, “Rai”, and “Diwan” to these people.

1.5 Original Homeland of Limbu Tribes:

According to the oral narratives term and literary sources, the historical land and original homeland of Limbu is ‘*Limbuwan*’, which consists of Modern Eastern Nepal and Modern Western Sikkim including Darjeeling. The Limbu tribes along with three religious priests came to the hilly parts of the Eastern Nepal which were under eight Kirat chiefs and they approached them for permission to settle there under their sovereignty as a kiranti. They were allowed to settle in the kirat land by eight kirat chiefs. But when their families multiplied then there started dispute between eight chiefs and Limbu tribes. A great war broke out and the Limbu tribes were succeeded to gain victory over their chiefs and drove them away from their native place. After their victory, they fixed the

boundaries of the conquered lands. They fixed the northern boundary in Tibet, the southern boundary in the Indian plain at Jalal Garh near Purnea, the eastern boundary at river Teesta and the western boundary at river Dudkoshi. They further held the meeting at the holy place of Ambe pojoma, discussed, consulted, and decided to name the Kirat land by the name of “*Limbuwan*.” They also decided to divide the conquered land into ten districts with each Chief as the ruler of his district.²³ The Limbus inhabited between the Koshi and the Mechi and Singibla ridge as the boundary on the east. The Limbu themselves claimed that one of their sub-tribes bear the name Tambhakhola, which indicates that they have held from time immemorial the Tamba Khola valley on the upper waters of the Tamba Koshi river. In their tradition among the ten (really thirteen) sub-tribes five from Lhasha and five from Banaras formed different Gotras. All that can safely be said that the Limbus are the oldest recorded population of the country between the Tamra Koshi and Mechi. ²⁴About the habitat of the Limbus, H.H. Risely writes that Dr. Campbell has mentioned that “the Limbu tribe form a large portion of the inhabitants in the mountainous country lying between the Dudkoshi and the Kanki rivers in Nepal and are found in smaller numbers eastwards to the Mechi River which forms the boundary of Nepal and Sikkim. In still fewer numbers they exist within the Sikkim territory, as far east as the Tista River, beyond which they rarely settle. On Bhutan, they are unknown except as strangers.” ²⁵ Northey, W.B. and Morris, C.J. also considered that the original home of the Limbus is east of the valley of Nepal, and beyond the Dudh Kosi River. ²⁶About the origin and identity of Limbus Gracy Maria has given four theories in her article, ‘*Fluid Boundaries and Fluid Identities- The Study of Limboo Tribe of Sikkim*’ First theory is the theory of Kiranta origin where she writes that according to the Kiranta theory, the Limboos (Limbu) are descended from a family of Kiranta-asura, who once fought against the Aryans. Here, she has given different arguments of different scholars to support this theory. The second theory of the origin of Limboo is the theory of Chinese origin where she mentioned the migration of the Limboos from China and in her third theory which is the theory of Tibet origin; she writes that they are the immigrants from the Tsang province of Tibet. The last theory of the origin of Limboo is the theory of Post-Boundary Migration where she writes that this is the recent origin theory of the Limbu community here, she narrated that the due to the policies of war and conquest redefined the boundaries and made the Limbus straddle between the two nations India and Nepal.²⁷

Thus, all the opinion of the different scholars proves that the original homeland of Limbus was the *Limbuwan*. However, it appears that some part of this Limbuwan like, between Mechi River and the Tista River comprising of the present Darjeeling District of West Bengal, the west and south district, and a part of North district of Sikkim and Ilam district of Nepal were under the control of Namgyal Dynasty (Sikkim) till 1774 A.D, but later these areas were also surrendered to the

administration of the greater Nepal. Thus, it seems that this Limbuwan area was the part of Sikkim Dynasty but later it was annexed by king Prithivinarayan Saha of Nepal. In the year 1814-16 A.D. Anglo- the Nepalese War was fought and the treaty of Sagauli was signed between East India Company and Nepal king and according to this treaty, Nepal occupied the area of Sikkim was ceded to the East India Company. In 1817 treaty of Titalia was signed between the East India Company and Sikkim king and according to this treaty, all land of Sikkim was transferred to the Sikkim king by the East India Company. Later in 1835, the Sikkim king gifted the present area of Darjeeling District to the East India Company. After the independence of India, Sikkim did not claim its leased land of British occupied areas of Sikkim like Kalimpong, the Terai, and Darjeeling hills and finally it was merged into the West Bengal state of India. When, on 16th May 1975, Sikkim was merged into the Indian Union that time they did not ask the Indian Government to return the British occupied area of Sikkim, i.e., Kalimpong, the Terai, and Darjeeling hills which were already merged into the West Bengal state of India.

Thus, due to the policies of war and conquest redefined the boundaries of Darjeeling and from the 1835, the Limbu people of Darjeeling lost their aboriginality as the East India Company did not give them any special privilege and after independence Government of India also overlooked their aboriginality and gave no special privilege to them and thus derecognizing their aboriginality and after the independence original indigenous tribe of Darjeeling lost their identity and remained as the general category people of Darjeeling till 2003. It was only 2003 when they were succussed to regain their lost identity of tribal status. At the present scenario the land of the Limbus of the Limbuwan has been divided into the following parts:

- i). The presently six districts of Eastern Nepal, namely –Dhankuta, Teherathum, Sankhuwassobha, Tapleyjung, Panthar, and Ilam having a total area of 4,347 sq. miles bordering Arun River in the West and Mechi River in the East.
- ii). The entire Darjeeling district along with the Kalimpong district of West Bengal state of India contains a total area of 1,164 sq. miles.
- iii). The two important districts of Sikkim-the West and South Districts, and a part of North District of Sikkim.²⁸

So, unfortunately, the Limbu tribes of Darjeeling lost their original homeland Limbuwan which at present has been divided into three pieces, two states of India and six districts of Mechi and Kosi Anchals of Nepal not only this they also lost their indigenous identity as a native tribe of Darjeeling

and till 2003 they were known as the non-tribal community of Darjeeling and at present scenario their identification has become as the new tribe of Darjeeling hills.

1.6 Affinity with Lepchas:

The Limbu are closely related to the Lepcha. If we see the history of Sikkim and Darjeeling then we found that the Limbu and Lepcha were native tribes of Sikkim and Darjeeling. Many historical writings are there where it has been written about the affinity of Limbus and Lepchas. The historical tripartite agreement “*Lo-Men-Tsong-Sum*”, among the Lepcha, Bhutia, and Limbu also proved that Limbus and Lepcha had a close affinity from immemorial time. The entire habitat of the Lepcha and Limbus falls in the eastern Himalayan region, east of the Arun River in Nepal. Both of them believe in spiritual deities that are attached to nature and dwell around nature’s significant aspects, which they considered sacred places. They identify several sacred places of nature wherever they go, which they worship, conserve and protect to this date.²⁹ Both Limbu and Lepcha practice shamanism and have priests and priestesses. Lepcha priestesses and priests are called *Bonthing* and *Mun* and Limbus have their own religion called *Yumaism* and they have a mother goddess called *Tagera Ningwaphuma* and their religious priests are called *Phedangba*, *Yeba*, and *Yema*. O’Malley writes that Limbus have largely intermarried with Lepcha. The Limbus and Lepchas were virtual cousin clans and freely intermarried though they appear to have mixed little with Hindus but much with the Lepchas. Dr. Campbell compares the two tribes in the following words - “The Limbu are very little taller in stature than the Lepchas, somewhat less fleshy and more hair in the limbs, as fair in complexion and as completely beardless. He is scarcely ever as ruddy as the Lepchas, sometimes are, his eyes are, if anything, smaller and placed more to the front than the Lepcha’s, and his nose although somewhat smaller is rather higher in the bridge than that of the Lepchas. He wears his hair long, but does not plait it into a tail, has no fancy for bead necklaces; wears a Khukuri instead of the ban, and wide trousers and a jacket or Chapkan in preference to the robe and long jacket of the Lepchas. The habits of the Limbu people are so similar to those of the Lepchas, that they constantly intermarry. They employed the Bijuas of Lepchas to perform the dead rituals, although Limbus also have their own religious priests who belong to a higher order than the Bijuas.” The Lepcha called them ‘Chang’ which is the corruption of that of their original place of residence, possibly the Tsang province of Tibet.³⁰ Thus, both the communities have many similarities in observing customs. Lepchas are known as *Rongs* and Limbus are known as *Tsongs*, while Lepchas have already been categorised as Tribe since independence but unfortunately, Limbus were left to categorised as tribe till 2003.

1.7. Physical Features of Limbu Tribes:

The Limbus people are descendants of Mongolian so their physical features are very similar to the Mongolian race. Most of the Limbu people have very small eyes with flat noses, thin lips, and beardlessness. Their complexion is fair to wheatish and their height is short to medium but some Limbus of Darjeeling have tall height also. In Darjeeling, anyone can guess either Limbu or Rai by seeing their physical features.

1.8 Traditional Attire of Limbu Women:

The Limbu tribe has its own traditional dress. Traditional dress and ornaments played a very important role to identify any caste or community. Their dress is very simple. The traditional dress of the Limbus is called Mekhli and Tagaba. Mekhli is like simply wearing fariya and along with they wear Chunglokek/sunghamba (blouse). Phaoee (patuka) is one of the important traditional attires of Limbu women. The Limbu female traditional dress would be incomplete without its Phaoee (patuka). This is like the waist belt but does not look like the belt but it is a very long cloth which is mostly in white colour and they wrap their waist with this for three and four-folds. Nowadays with some changes and modifications, the Limbu dresses of females have become famous. Now Limbu women do not wear Phaoee, fariya, and blouse. Now Mekhli (female attire) with modification looks like a long dress worn with a horizontal strip of cloth with collars crossing over or in a V-neck style. Most of the young generation prefer to wear new modification Limbu attire instead of old-fashioned Limbu attire. Their garments have special features of horizontal stripe which makes the distinct features of their attires for both female and male.

1.9 Traditional Ornaments of Limbu Women:

Limbu women are very much fond of ornaments. Mostly they used gold (Samyang) ornaments but they also used Yuppa (silver), Luung (glass stone) Ponche(coral/amber), and mudhin (turquoise). We found that most of the Limbu ornaments are based on nature. The names of the traditional ornaments are as follow

1.9.1 Samyanfung: This is the most important ornament of the Limbu tribes. Samyanfung looks like a gold flower or huge circular disc in gold. The common design features of this ornament are a coral on the Center. They wear it on their forehead. This Samyanfung represents the sun

1.9.2 Nessey or Cheptesun: another important traditional ornament of the Limbu tribe is Nessey also known as Cheptesun. This is a large circular flattened gold earring. This gold earring is not

worn for daily life; they wear it on special occasions. The Common designs of this ornament are water springs with coral or glass stones

1.9.3 Laksari- This is another gold earring that is worn continuously on the ear lobes by Limbu women. This earring is found in the shape of leaves, and whatever design they like, etc.

1.9.4 Namloyee or yogakpa- This is also called Chandrahaar. This Chandrahaar is made of silver. This is a large silver necklace in the shape of a square or circle which is embedded with coral stones. Most of the Limbu women prefer to have this Chandrahaar.

1.9.5 Yangyichi or Reji –This is also one of the ethnic ornaments of Limbu tribes. This is a unique ornament that is made of coins. It is also a long necklace with coins.

1.9.6 Sesephung (Bright Flower) – This gold ornament is the most beautiful ornament among the traditional ornaments of the Limbu tribes. This ornament looks like the Sirbandhi of the Hindu people. A Limbu woman looks very beautiful after wearing this. This ornament is worn on the forehead of a woman and it is decorated with a coral moon.

1.9.7 Pongwari or kantha- This is a very common ornament not only in the Limbu community but among all the Nepali communities. This is also one kind of necklace with golden beads and red colour felt but sometimes they prefer green or black felt. (Colour of felt depends on their choice)

1.9.8 Bulaki and Mundri-These ornaments are mainly for the nose. These ornaments are very much common in Limbu as well as the Nepali community. Every woman used to put this ornament on their nose but at present days especially old-aged women put these ornaments. Limbu women wear these ornaments only on special occasions.

1.9.9 Yarling- This is also a kind of earring which have shaped like the lotus bud.

1.9.10 Hukpangi- This silver ornament is very common among the Limbu women because of this different design.

1.9.11 Swagep- This is a finger-ring. Limbu women wear both gold and silver rings.

1.9.12 Ponche-This ornaments are made from red coral beads, etc. ³¹

All these traditional ornaments of Limbu women made of gold and silver and only those Limbu women whose economic status are sound would have all the sets of ornaments but those Limbu women who could not afford to buy all these ornaments at least would have rings and earrings. Nowadays these Limbu ornaments have become so popular that not only Limbu women but other communities also wear these traditional Limbu ornaments. The main reason behind this is that different jewellery shops sold these ornaments often referring to it as the Gorkhali ornament and another reason is that now in the market all duplicate ornaments are easily available with the same designs which look like original gold. Hence, like many other global indigenous people, they are also shamanistic and worship nature, and all the ornaments of Limbu tribes are based on nature so naturally, they also love to wear these traditional ornaments of Limbu tribes.

1.10 Traditional Attire and Ornaments of Limbu Men:

In the Limbu community, Limbu men also have traditional dresses like *Paga*, *Ningkheng*, *Phaoee*, *sandokpa* on special occasions, like marriage and in their religious performance. Paga is the white colour long stripe for headwear. This headwear is pointy and tied at the back with long white strips. It is not so easy to wear paga while wearing paga, one should have to follow the measurement which has five parts. They are called kapmar, kaapmar, Tokmaar, Changmar and Ekmaar.³²

In general Limbu men do not wear any ornaments. They wear it only at the time of their marriage. Mostly they wear two ornaments like *Kantha* and *Chandra haar* if they have otherwise, they do not wear all those ornaments. Only *Paga* is most important for them

1.11 Language & Scripts of Limbu Tribe:

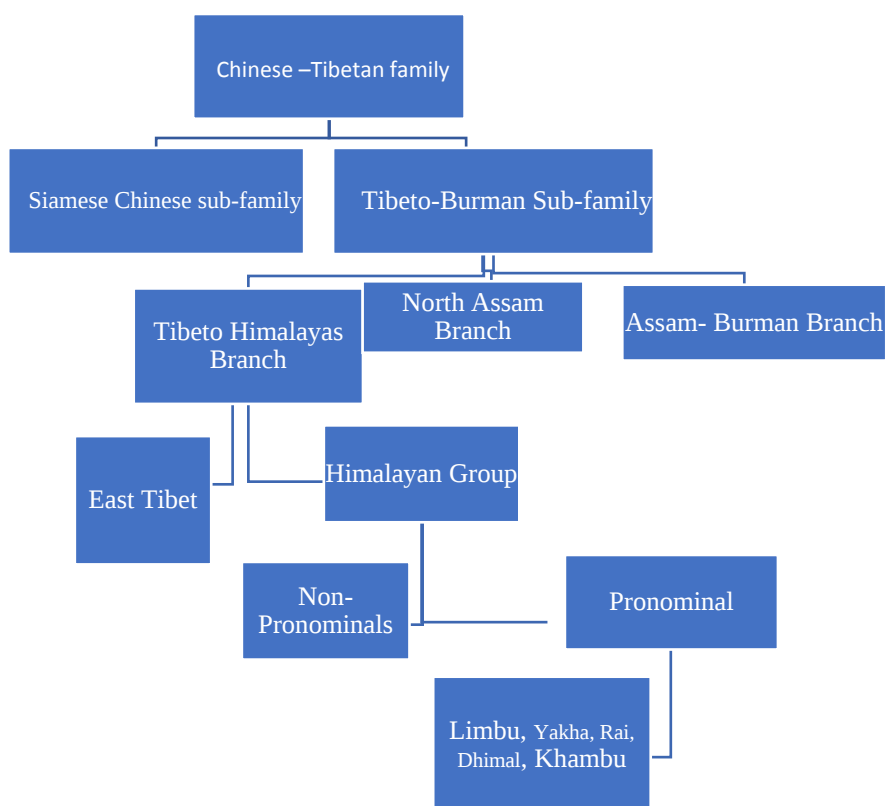
Limbu tribe has its own language and script belonging to the Tibeto Burman Group. According to their own Limbu language, they refer to themselves as ‘Yakthumba’ and their language as ‘Yakthungpan’. It is one of the ancient languages of Darjeeling hills spoken by the Limbu tribe. It has its own unique evolution of Tibetan and Devanagari writing system

According to the classification of Tibeto-Burman languages, Ballav Mani Dahal has concluded that the Limbu language has been influenced by all the three ancient languages of Austric, Aryan, and Dravidians in its remote antiquity in India, and hence the Limbus are one of the ancient races of Indian sub-continent. They were in close contact with Mundas, Santhals, Kuls, Bhils and other Austric people. They came in contact with Aryans and Dravidians and are in association from ancient times.³³ According to Pokharel (1994), the Limbu language bears close resemblance with

Khamboo, Sampang, Nechhering, Chamling, Yakkha, Kulung, Pangduwali, and Sakkha out of 58 (fifty-eight) currently spoken Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal.³⁴

George Grierson and Cono have classified the Tibeto-Burman languages of the Sino-Tibetan family on the basis of phonetics, words, and grammar but a number of changes have been made later on by the other linguist. However, their study and classification are considered important

Schematic representation of George Grierson and Cono Classification on Tibeto-Burman speech.



Source ³⁵: J.R. Subba,1999, p.229

Limbu language has four main dialects – i) Panchthar, ii) Phedape iii) Chatthare iv) Tamar Khole. Among these four dialects, Panthare dialect is considered the ‘standard dialect’ of the Limbu language. But among these four dialects, the Phedape dialect is widely spoken and well understood by most Yakthungpan speakers.

1.11.1 Some Specimen of Limbu Language:

LIMBUS	NEPALI	ENGLISH
Kayming Theabay?	Timro naam k ho?	What is your name?
Kaymmare kuming theabay?	Timro Aama ko naam k ho?	What is your mother's name?
Kaymbare kuming theabay?	Timro babako naam k ho?	What is your father's name?
Heynay ati keyung ba ke?	Timi kaha baschau?	Where do you live?

1.12 Limbu Script or Sirijunga Script:

In Limbu history, *Te-ongsi Sirijunga* is known as the reviver of the old Kirat sirijunga script. *Te-ongsi Sirijunga* is also known as the incarnate of *Sirijunga* king who discovered and evolved the Sirijunga script. Sirijunga's contribution in spreading Kirat-Sirijonga script, Limbu language, Mundhum, and literature is immense. It was he who sacrificed his life for the dissemination of the Limbu language, Kirat-sirijonga script, Mundum, and literature during 1730-1741. Thus, Limbu tribes have their own script known as '*Sirijunga script*'.

It is believed that this script was derived and evolved from Brahmi Script after the Sixth Century A.D. and introduced among Limbus by the king Sirijonga during the end of the Ninth Century and early years of Tenth Century.³⁶ It is believed that this script had been disappeared for 800 years, but later on Tae-ongsi Sirijonga Sing Thebe (reincarnation of the king Sirijonga), revived it again among the Limbu community in the first half of 18th century. The script popularized by him is known as the "Kirat Sirijonga" script. His writings and teachings through the Kiranti alphabets and literary texts he collected attracted significant numbers of Limbus and Lepchas and led to the start of an ethnic awakening. This act of Sirijonga Te-ongsi annoyed the Thasang Lamas of Pemiyongchi Gumpa (monastery) and Sikkimese authorities. Consequently, the Thasang Lama killed Sirijunga Te-Ongsi in Martam, Hee-Bermiok in West Sikkim in 1741 after being tied to a tree and shot with poisonous arrows. Hence, Sirijonga Te-ongsi sacrificed his life for the dissemination of the Limbu language, Kirat-sirijonga script, Mundhum, and literature during 1730-1741. To give honour to Sirijunga Teyongshi the Postal Services Department, Nepal Philatelic

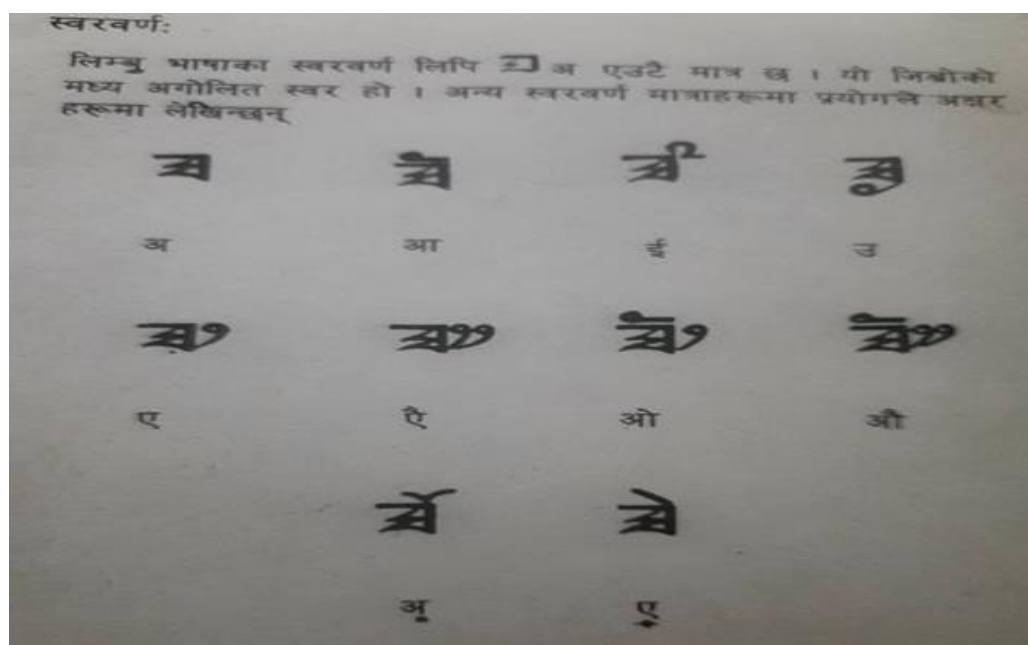
Bureau, Kathmandu has issued a postal ticket in his name in the Personalities Series, and Sikkim Government has declared holiday on his birthday which falls on 14th December.

Iman Singh Chemjong was the first Limbu scholar to publish various books on Limbu history, culture, and language. He even wrote books in the Limbu language using Kirat Sirijonga script. He had worked hard to revitalize, preserve and promote the Limbu language and Kirat Sirijonga script. These days, only a handful of Limbus follows this writing tradition in the Limbu language and script, because there is no place for them to enhance their capacity to read and write in their mother tongue in higher education. Still, some Limbus are working hard to revitalize their language and script in many ways: through publishing books, newspapers, magazines, awareness-raising campaigns, literacy classes, and the introduction of the Limbu language in formal education.

1.12.1 Sirijunga Script:

The present form of Sirijonga Script has nine vowels, twenty-five consonants, eight conjoins, and three suffix letters making. There are three more symbols called ‘Phonic symbols’ which help for perfect pronunciation of some Limbu words.³⁷

KUBUNG SAK (SWAR VARNA)



KUDUK SAK (BYANJAN VARNA)

व्यञ्जनवर्णः
लिम्बू भाषाका व्यञ्जनवर्ण निम्न लिखित छन् :-

ॐ	ॐ	ॐ	ॐ
क	ख	ग	ङ
च	छ	ज	न
त	थ	द	ध
प	फ	ब	भ
म	य	र	ल
व	स	श	ह
		घ	

Sources:38 Bali Chatthare, "Sirijunga saksak", Yakthung Language Literature and Mundhum Study Centre, Itahari, Nepal,2074

1.13 Development of Limbu languages and Literature:

There are many native, national, and international writers and scholars who have really contributed to compiling, documenting, and writing books and articles about the Limbu language, literature, culture, tradition. The Limbus Tribes has its' own history, belief system or religion, Limbu language, Script, distinct Limbu culture, and archaic traditions. Many Limbu personalities have contributed their life for the preservation of their history, culture, language, and religion. We can get many books written on Limbu Tribes but a maximum of them have been based on kiranti history, their culture, tradition, and religion. Kirant King Sirijunga had invented a different script known as *Sirijanga* script in the late 9th century. Unfortunately, it was disappeared for many years due to lack of preservation and invasion and encroachments over Kirantis. It was *Teongsi Sirijunga* who resurrected this almost disappearing script in the 17th century. In Limbu history, *Te-ongsi Sirijunga* is known as the reviver of the old Kirat sirijanga script. *Sirijanga Teo-ongsi* is also known as the incarnate of *king Sirijanga* who discovered and evolved the Sirijanga script. Sirijanga's contribution in spreading Kirat-Sirijonga script, Limbu language, Mundhum, and literature is immense. It was he who sacrificed his life for the dissemination of the Limbu language, Kirat-sirijonga script, Mundum, and literature during 1730-1741. Although we do not get any historical work of *Te-ongsi Sirijunga*.Mundum Sapla is one of his important contributions to

Limbu literature. Although we don't have any manuscript written by King *Sirijunga* himself with us today, a copy of the scripts revived and popularized by his incarnate *Sirijunga Teongsi* are available with the India Office Library, London. A photocopied set has been obtained from London and preserved in Archives of Sikkim ³⁹ Similarly, *Mahaguru Phalgunanda* (1885-1949), a rationally enlightened persona, brought a great revolution in the field of language, literature, and culture to make corrections in tradition and culture prevailed during his time in the Kirat communities. *Iman Singh Chemjong*, another man of letter and Kirat history, culture, and literature expert, has immensely contributed to the society by authoring a good number of documents and critical books mainly on history and culture, and language and literature of the Kirat people. Likewise, many scholars have contributed to the development of Limbu languages. *Lalsor Sendang* (1840-1926) taught the Limbu language not only in Nepal but in Sikkim, Kalimpong, and Assam. *Prem Bahadur Maboahang*, *Kajiman Kandangwa Khadga Bahadur Nembang*, *B.B. Chemjong*, *Chandra Prasad Nembang*, *Randhoj Nembang*, *Krishna Bahadur Laoti*, *Virahi Kaila*, *Bom Prasad Laoti*, *B.N. Laoti*, *Keshar Kumar Limbu*, *Ashman SubbaMani Shankar Shereng*, *Keshar Kumar Limbu*, and many others have made great contributions to the development of Limbu language and literature .⁴⁰

There are several western scholars also who have played a very important role in the preservation and development of the Limbu language and literature. They are *Kirkpatrick* (1811), *Sir Francis Hamilton Bukanon* (1819), *G.B. Mainwaring*, *Dr.A.C. Campbell* (1842,1855). *Sir B.H. Hodgson* (1819 to 1843) *Risely* (1891) *Vansittart* (1894) *Hamilton* (1971) *H.W.R. Senior* (1908) *G.A. Grierson* (1909), *R.K. Sprigg*, *A. Weidert* (1982,1983,1985), *George van Driem and Saul Mullard* (2011,2012), and many others who have done significant work on the development of Limbu languages and literature. *Sir B.H. Hodgson* is especially remembered for his tremendous contribution to collecting a number of handwritten papers on Limbu languages, religions, arts, cultures, literature and preserving it in the India Office Library, London. ⁴¹

Many writers from Sikkim and Darjeeling are also contributing for the development of the Limbu language and literature. *Sanchaman Limbu*, *Adam Singh Subba*, *B.B. Subba Muringla*, *J.R. Subba Mohan Subba Phurumbo*, *Aitaman Tamling*, *N.B. Tamling*, *P.M. Subba Nembang*, *Maita Singh Subba*, *Harka Bahadur Khamdhak*, *S.R. Kajum*, and *B.L. Khamdhak*, and many more from Sikkim has published many books and articles for the development of the Limbu language and literature. It is found that more extensive research has been carried out on the Limbus of Sikkim and Eastern Nepal by many Limbu scholars as well as non-Limbu scholars. From Darjeeling *Jashang Maden*, *Laxman Laoti*, *Hillihang Kambang*, *Purna Subba 'Sambahaang'*, *Dhana Haang Subba*, *Sankar Hang Subba*, and many more are there who are doing diligent work for the preservation and

development of Limbu language and literature. Purna Haang Subba has published a Limbu-English dictionary which is very helpful for those Limbus who want to learn the Limbu language.⁴²

1.14 Occupation of Limbu Tribe:

The principal occupation of Limbus of Darjeeling is Tea Plantation and agriculture. Apart from Tea Plantation the most important part of Limbus' occupation is the Pastoral economy. The Limbus of Darjeeling were found keeping livestock and they earn high income from it. The pig is the most important animal for husbandry. Almost every Limbu house keeps pigs as animal husbandry and by selling its meat they earn a good amount of money. The cow is another animal for husbandry from which they get milk and cow dung for agriculture. Another important occupation of the Limbu tribes is selling wood and *Rakshi* or *Thi* (liquor made from wheat and rice at home). The young generation of the Limbu community prefer to join the Indian Army and many of them have been recruited in the Indian Army.

Education has brought great changes in their occupation. We found that there are a number of educated Limbus who are very well established in different government jobs like, doctors, civil service officers, college and school teachers, and other government services. (Regarding their occupation we have discussed in detail in our next chapter on the Socio-Economic condition of Limbus of Darjeeling)

1.15 Food and Drinks of Limbu Tribe:

Food is often used as a means of retaining their cultural identity. People also connect to their cultural or ethnic group through food patterns. People from different cultural backgrounds eat different foods. Limbus have a very rich culture in the matter of food. Normally they eat rice pork and the flesh of all clear feeding animals and vegetables. They do not eat beef meat because those Limbus who belong to Kashi Gotra are not allowed to eat beef meat even, they are not allowed to enter the meat inside the house but other Limbu who does not belong to Kashi and who have Lhasa Gotra are allowed to eat beef meat. Besides these, they eat different types of food which represent their cultural identity. They are as follows:

1.15.1 Sagi Sumbaak (Sisnu ko saag)- Sisnu (Nettle) is the very important food of the Limbu tribes. It is found in the forest. It is a very easy way to cook *Sisnu*. First of all, they bring the *Sisnu* from the forest and they sprinkle flour on it left for hours. They do this because whatever insects are there, will fall down, and after washing that they put *Sisnu* in hot boiled water and cook it.

They add salt, a few amounts of flour, garlic, and when it is cooked it turned into thick soup which is considered one of the healthiest foods.

1.15.2 Chembikik or Kinema-This is another favourite food item of the Limbu community. It is fermented soybeans that have a sticky texture and a slight ammoniacal odor if prepared properly. The soya beans are traditionally left to ferment for two to three days above an earthen-oven kitchen. They consumed it in a form of curry and pickle.

1.15.3 Kandruk (Gundruk)-Gundruk is a fermented leafy vegetable which is usually sun-dried. It is a very common food not only in the Limbu community but in whole Nepali communities. Generally, it is prepared from the leaves of radish and mustard green. They prefer to have the soup of Gundruk and also like the pickle. Apart from these, they have *Saargyang*, *sosokya*, *khareng*, *chafrekma*, *phakshako kharua*, etc. In the matter of drink, their intoxicating drink is “*THI*” (Jaar in local language), and *Rakshi* (wine) is also prepared from “*THI*” by distillation.⁴³

1.16 Thar (Clan) of the Limbu Tribe:

The Limbu Tribe are divided into several clans (Thars). These clans are further divided into sub-clans. The names of each clan are extremely curious, two or three at the most are totemistic, a few are local or territorial and only one is eponymous. J.R. Subba writes that there are more than 270 clans (including sub-clans) have been found among Limbus. But there is no distinction or hierarchy in the clan status or division.

The names of the Limbu clans are as follows:

Angbohang	Angbo	Angbung	Angdembe	Angdemba- Papo
Angdemba Phendua	Angdemba Nembang	- Angla - Tokleng	Aanglabang	Aangdroom
Bokhim Yyorong	Bokhim Kangva	Bokhim Maa	Bokhim Lokshom	Bokhim khangba
Banta	Baphu	Baragah Sangwa	Baragah Khajum	Begha – Tungalun
Begha - Panthar	Bengtak	Bhotang	Burra	Burumb
Beaem	Bhavuhang	Chemjong	Chitlk	Charkhe
Chebegu	Chongbang Phago	Chengsu	Chenwa	Cherma

Chethare	Chekpho	Chongbang Shreying	Chongbang Saamba	Chongbang Hoakpa
Chickchohangh	Chickphoong	Idingo – Tunglung	Ildingo - Tinkole	Ildingo – Athraya
Ijam	Imusong	Inemba	Inglamphen	Ingnamphe
Ingwa Chethar	- Ingwa - Tambarkhole	Ingwaba Nembang	- Ingwaba - Papo	Ingwarem
Iringba	Isubo	Iwaram	Iwahang	Jabegu
Je yoh	Khamdak	Kadi	Kambang – Mabohaang	Kambang- Sambahang
Kanbonan	Kandangwa	Kanthak	Karamba	Kawepung
Kebok - Tilling	Kebok –Khewa	Yongyahang Kebok -	Kedem	Keiba - Kebang
Keiba Lingden	- Kekluke Kerabar e	Kerung – Panchthar	Kerumba	Kerung
Kerungma	Keyo - Ejam	Keyung	Khajum- Parghari	Khajum – Phungyange
Khajum Kurumbang	- Khangwa	Khapung	Kodang	Koggeknamba
Kogling	Kohyang	Koklung	Kondongwa	Kongliba - Ejam
Kongwa – Singjang	Koyahang	Koyohang	Kudanamba- Kungari	Kurumbang– Khajum
Kurumbang	Kurungbhong – Chethar	Labang	Labong	Labyung
Lad-ho Chemjong	- Labasamba	Lahoron	Laksemba - Ijam	Laksomba – Yongyahang
Lambeba	Lawati	Lechharbo	Lejenji	Lekhongwalong
Lekhwa Kajum	– Lekwa – Kamthak	Lekwa - Samba	Lengwa	Lewahang – Kajum
Lewahang Sambahang	– Lianmphe	Libang	Limkhim	Lingthep

Lohringen	Lakshamba	Laksom	Lokpeba	Loksong
Loktam	Loktong	Loli	Longwa	Longwago
Lua	Lugumba	Luhimba	Lumdhoyutamba rkhol	Lingkhim
Lungfungwa	Lung Maden	Lung Kimba	Lunkimba	Luwa
Maang Thung	Maangyak (Khewa)	Maasuwa	Maaksingbung	Maashreng
Maakhim	Maayuthak (Izam)	Maareysong	Mudengyak	Naamgenpongyook
Nombaang	Ney-yongbo (Phogo)	Naamluk (Nembang)	Naaitomba	Naalbo
Noogo	Nembuckoo	Pabemba	Padupling	Pahim
Pehim	Pahtangna	Painger	Pak - Sangwa	Pak – Serma
Pak – Pheyak	Pakpasomba	Paksangwa	Pakseng	Pakserma
Palahajum	Palange	Palghe	Palungwa	Pambokpa
Paneyanggu	Pangba	Phago	Pangboma	Pangenhag
Pangma (Pangmali)	Pankemyang	Panphoma	pungdha	Papalang
Papo – Kurungbang	Papo – Panthare	Papsong	Parghari Khajum	- Parangden
Parangen	Pahango	Pataha	Patare	Pegwa
Pekim	Pembasong	Penchangwa	Penjelam	Penjetamlingba
Pettehba	Phaklecha	Phakole	Phalechuwa	Phamphe
Phedaph	Pheguba	Phegwaden	Phejonba	Phejong
Phempfu	Phemsong	Phewaden	Phiyak	Phombo
Phonjela	Phonpho	Phonthak	Phonyang	Photre
Patangwa	Phudunhang	Phuglala	Phungenahang	Pichchowa
Pobemba	Podalung - Tilling	Podalung Tinkhole	- Poinyanggu	Pomu
Pongjange	Pehim	Potangna Tumbangphe	- Potangwa Sambahang	- Pothangehere

Sabenhimba	Sademba	Sakwademba	Sakwaden - Ponglai	Sakwaden - Tegim
Sakwaden - Tumbangphe	Selling	Samba - Nalbo Sambiu (Sembo or Simbu)	Samda	Ngwa
Sameakamba	Samra	Samsomba	Samsong	Samsohang
Sangba	Sangi	Sangita	Sangpanggye	Sangreba
Sangsangbo	Sangsanguang	Sangwa	Sapla	Sardaphe
Sering	Sawaden	Sademba	MaSedemba	Sengsaugbo
Sengwangyang	Silingbo	Sine hang	Sing - Thebe	Sing Maden - Khewa
Sing Maden - Tilling	Singak	Thamsuhang	Thargder	Tumba
Tumsok	Tungyangpa	Tumbahangphe	Tungdhong	Yongyang

Source⁴⁴: Subba Dhanhaang, 2017

The rule of exogamy goes by the male side and is supplemented by forbidding intermarriage between the persons descended in direct lines from the same parents as long as any relationship can be traced. Intermarriage between the cousins is barred for three generations or as some say for seven but in practice, it is forbidden forever. The rule forbidding marriage within the *Thar* is most strictly observed. Any breach of the rule is punished by exclusion from the Limbu tribal society. They are also not allowed to get married to lower caste people if they get married to caste people, they are not allowed to enter the house even today in this modern and educated age still they strictly follow this rule.

1.17 Heem (The House of Limbu)

Limbu tribal people have their own design of houses which is known as “Khim or Heem” in the Limbu language. It has generally a rectangular ground plan with a rectangular roof with winged flaps at the two narrow sides, made of the bamboo mat or “chim”. The floor of the house is generally made of mud or wooden planks and the walls with stone and mud or bamboo matting plastered with a thin layer of clay. The stone walls are well plastered with mud and decorated or washed with white and red coloured soils known as “*Khamphulla*” and “*Khamhetlla*”. The roof of the house is made of a number of good-sized undressed timber which is inserted in the ground

known as “Sitlang”. Generally, their house consists of two rooms and one kitchen and in front of the house is small verandas or “Sikuwas”

The house of Limbu is a symbolic representation of a feminine character and Yuma — a goddess of the Limbu community. The details of the windows and doors are embroidered with wood carvings depicting different flowers which are used by the Limbus during rituals. Some decorative embroideries done in the wood carvings of the door and windows of the house are the direct representation of gold jewellery worn by Limbu women. In a traditional house of the Limbus, the skirting of the wall is generally painted manually with red mud paint. This is also a symbolic representation of the *patuka* or the belt worn by the Limbu women. There are numerous symbolisms including number symbolism usually 3 and 9 in the house which is inspired by the beliefs of the tribal people.⁴⁵

In the Limbu house, the major distinct element is the *Hangsitlang* or *Muring-sitlang* or the main pillar/column of the house which is in the center of the house on the ground floor. It is believed that this pillar is the shrine where the Yuma goddess resides in the house. Thus, to pay their gratitude they perform ritualistic prayers and offerings around the pillar, twice a year. In the present scenario, these houses are now endangered and are hardly built due to the adaptation of modern architecture and another reason is that the poor house owner is unable to bear expenses for wood carvings for the embroideries, thus resulting in the extinction of local craftsmen and hence the traditional design itself.

1.18 Child Birth in Limbu Tribe:

In the Limbu society, the birth of a child is not considered inauspicious. If there is the birth of a girl child, the celebrations and others samskaras are conducted with enthusiasm. The daughters are given equal love and affection by their parents. There is not any discrimination between sons and daughters. Though they gave importance to sons but once a daughter is born, she is raised with tender care, affection, and love. If in the family, there are only daughters then she is assigned the legal position of a son and she could perform the funeral rites of her father.

1.18.1 Sapok Chomen (Worshipping womb)

When a woman becomes pregnant the God of the Limbus is worshipped for the welfare of the child in the womb. This customary rite is known as ‘*Sapok-Chomen*’, which starts from the sixth month of the pregnancy of the mother. After completing six months their religious priest Phedangba would perform this customary rite. Especially the deities of ‘*Wagnangma*’ and

'*Pakchana*' would be worshipped. After completing the worship, he would ask the pregnant woman to follow some laws like, not to weigh heavy things, not to cross the river, Khola, Nala, etc. and in return for his services receive money and a small amount of rice.⁴⁶ Thus for the protection of pregnant women against the evils and deities; causing harm to her and for the easy delivery of the child '*Sapok Chomen*' is performed in the Limbu community.

It is customary amongst Limbus who can afford the expense to have the child's date of birth committed to writing. This paper is known as "*China Kagaz*" and is retained by the parents, who consult it on all important occasions such as marriage throughout the child's life.

1.18.2 Yangdangfoma (Naming Ceremony)

The fourth and the third day after birth, for a boy and a girl respectively, is the day for "*Yangdangfoma*" (naming) ceremony. The ceremony is as follows: Early in the morning before the sun rises all the house and veranda will clean with and mother and child after having a bath will give new clothes to wear. Then, a cup is taken and filled with '*nubunba*' (water from seven places), and rainwater into it is placed any gold object such as a ring or ornament. To this are added a small quantity of sugar, cow's urine and milk, and Dubo (Bahama grass). Finally, into this mixture, a small branch of Titepati (Indian wormwood) is dipped and the assembled company besprinkled by the Phedangba with chanting mantra (spell). The house and particularly the actual spot where the child was born is similarly treated.⁴⁷ (Ibid, p.27)

1.18.3 Takshi (Weaning Ceremony)

When the boy becomes six months and the girl five Months old, they are fed with solid food in a ceremony called *taksi* (vaat khuwai). It is *nalingken thangben* for boys and *Sisaken Menchhin* for girls through which their adulthood is declared.⁴⁸

1.19. Marriage Rites of Limbu Tribes:

Marriage is defined as a legitimate union between a man and a woman so that they may produce legitimate children. In Limbu society, marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and not a contract. Child marriage is not known in their society. A girl is married at 16 or more years of age when her physical development was complete. Now so many changes have come in tribal society, now they became very much conscious regarding the marriage of their daughter while selecting the bridegroom, the economic status of the boy in terms of his own earnings is kept utmost in mind. They believed that an educated girl should be married to an equally educated man.

In Limbu tribes both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage. A Limbu tribe may marry any girl or boy, he or she likes, provided she or he does not actually belong to his or her own clan (Thar). In Nepal especially in weddings, market days, and other holidays a group of young people organise the *Dhan Nach* which enables Limbu men to meet marriageable girls from a wide area. When a young man and his family have accumulated enough goods to make initial marriage payments with which the marriage process begins then he would choose any girl for marriage who is performing dhan nach.⁴⁹

Although a woman's choice in an arranged marriage is limited to the right of refusal, she would give a number of options which serve to give her considerable decision-making powers over where she will live and who she will marry. (1). She may remain unmarried and inherit property along with her brothers; (2). if there is an arranged marriage, she may choose to live in her natal home for periods ranging up to ten or fifteen years. (3). she may elope with a man of her choice, thereby circumventing the wishes of her parents, (4) finally, if dissatisfied with her marriage altogether, she may choose to leave her husband and run off with another man.⁵⁰

The marriage rules in the Limbu society are strictly Endogamy and Thar exogamy. Besides their own Thar exogamy, they have paternal and maternal exogamy. They are also not allowed to marry with their teacher, student, son's and daughter's friend, their adopted children, and the scheduled castes of any other community.

The Limbu tribes have four types of legal marriages: 1. Adultery, 2. Arrangement 3. Elopement 4. Abduction.

But J.R. Subba in his book, "The Limboos of the Eastern Himalayas", writes that "In the early Limboo social laws, we come across fifteen types of marriages.

1. Na-aksingma Metkhim (Arranged marriage),
2. Na-nupna Khepma Metkhim (Elopement Due to Liking),
3. Marriage after having children,
4. Jari marriage.
5. Namna Metkhim,
6. Marriage with In-Laws,
7. Khupna Metkhim (Elopement Marriage),
8. Marriage with the agreement,
9. Polygamy Marriage,
10. Marriage with Papchokma (Divorce Marriage)

11. Widow Marriage,
12. Widow Widower Marriage
13. Dependent Relative's Marriage.
14. Orphans' Marriage,
15. Yok-Yokwa Metkhim (Servants' Marriage)

In the case of adultery, marriage compensation must be paid to the previous husband. Basically, the Limbus follows the system of elopement because according to their custom there should be elopement of bridegroom and bride. For Limbus elopement is actually pre-arranged by both the parents, where the bride's parents send their daughter to a pre-determined place or spot like a fair or marketplace where the prospective bridegroom comes to take her home. However, the girl is taken into confidence before the finalization of such an arrangement.

The Limbu tribal marital ritual is said to be originated with the rituals in "*Satra Thum*" of Nepal where the ten Limbus used to rule. The whole process of marital rituals is completed after the completion of "*Char Kalam*". This system or rituals of the marital process by seventeen groups (Ten Limbus each group) is called "*Char Kalam*".⁵¹

1.19.1 First Kalam: A young girl is selected or chosen and makes her convinced for marriage. Then from the young man's side "*Peliphak Hukwa*" and "*Peliphuk*" i.e., one bottle of wine, some flowers, and some cash are presented to the family of the girl. If the man gets a positive signal from the girl, then the man ties a knot with "*Yupparung*" or silver coin in her shawl as advance booking if the girl does not like the man, she does not allow to tie the knot. If she accepts the proposal then the date of *Char Kalam* is fixed.⁵²

1.19.2 Second Kalam: This is the marriage ceremony in the house of the bride. Whereas fixed earlier the groom and the Kaliya "*Pantumyang*" (one day if the distance is far/same day if the distance is short) to bring the bride. After reaching the house of the bride, another Kaliya '*Ingmiba*' (arranger of Marriage) asks about the thing to be presented in form of *Char Kalam Dus Rit*. Before going to meet with the bride the groom must give "*Singgok Kakma*" (some gift) with due respect to the sister of the bride if she is unmarried. The extra tent or room "*Tapsangga*" would be prepared for the groom and his relatives. Then following the rituals of "*Yungsang*" they are advised to seat on the left side of the *Tansangga*. In the evening of the day, the *Ingmiba* of the groom will give all the items such as cloth, ornaments, etc to the *Pantumyang* of the bride. Then if there is anyone unmarried brother. He is also be given the "*Singgok Kakma (some gift)*".⁵³

After completion of this, the father of the bride gives her “*Manghenayang*” a silver coin. The mother may also give her “*Pachelam*” then both the bride and groom are asked to go to the room specified for a traditional ceremony. Meanwhile, the beating of a musical instrument called “*Chyabrung*” starts outside the house. The white cloth which is called the “*watepatewa*” is placed in the main door of the room. In the name of the moon and sun, the “*Lasari* and *Namsari*” two flower vessels are kept. After entering into the room then all family members and relatives etc bless them then the bride and groom are asked to have food or dishes. The chyabbrung dances are held on the veranda. All women and men take participate in the dance and enjoy the marriage.⁵⁴

1.19.3 Third Kalam: The Limbu tribe do not recognize the bride and groom as husband and wife who have not gone through the “*Metkam thim*” traditional rituals. During the evening of the marriage day, the main Metkam thim is held. The big plate (Nanglo) with banana leaves and on that a bronze plate with rice with a flower of Mikcheri, Red flower, Ginger, pure water of seven streams and other with two sets of *chyabrung* are kept. During the Metkam thim, the bride on the left and the groom on the right side facing the northeast must be seated. A cup of wine is served first to the Nalisang (groom) and to the Sisamet (bride). With One side of “*Muisum*” the shawl must cover the head of the bride and another side will cover the shoulder of the groom. The “*tumyang*” invitees are seated on the right side of the bride and groom as “*Nakuksam*” as evidence of the marriage. Then the Metkam thim starts but there should not be the presence of any niece, nephew, small grandchildren, and those whose relatives are recently died (impure people). The Phedangba, the priest will perform the rituals and the “*manggenna*” is also done with a pair of fowl. Then the groom will garland to the bride. The thumb keeping upside down will dedicate the “*Sindur*” to the bride and for the flower, in the name of long life without separation, to the bride and then the bride gets the blessing from the Nalisang.

The stone which they call ‘*Michak*’ is robbed with each other for firing a light by the priest called “*Phedangba*”. After firing the light. The stone is given to the bride by the groom then the Phedangba declares that both bride and groom as the husband and wife. The invited guests (Tumyang) also accept them as husband and wife. Then the groom provides a piece of cloth (Yembari) to the bride. The bride will have to wear that cloth till the death of her husband. During the whole process of the tradition and rituals, the main door of the room is kept closed and ultimately the door open. The invitees also ask the Phedangba about the coming future of the couple. Then, the musical instrument “*Chyabbrung*” is being started beating with their song and verses. The bride and groom also have to dance and rotate around the main pillar which is called “*Murumsitalang*”. After that the bride and groom have to take blessing from the parents, relatives,

and neighbours also known as “*Sewamamma*” then they will serve the dishes prepared for the Phedangba and invitees. With this thing the char Kalam in the house of the groom is finished.⁵⁵

1.19.4 Fourth Kalam: After finishing all the rituals from the groom’s side now they come to the house of the bride to submit all those cash and thing of char Kalam and das Rit along with two friends of bride and groom(lokhondre) all other dagmiba/ Naratary total ten to twelve persons.

The house of the bride already would have prepared those entire things for their welcome. They would have also prepared a small extra tent for the staying of the guests (Janti) but the guests are not directly allowed to enter into the tent before that they have to submit all those things and cash to the family member of the bride following all process of the Char Kalam.⁵⁶

Finally, after the completion of the rituals of *Chaar kalam*, they would become husband and wife. In Limbu society, women are free to choose their husbands and the most important thing is that marriage is not compulsory for a woman. If they do not want to get married no one can force them to get marriage

The Dowry system does not prevail in the Limbu society. Although it appears that the bride has been given by her parents’ gold and valuable articles etc. which she carried to her new house but that is not considered dowry.

There is not any polygamy system in the Limbu tribe but in some cases, we found that those who have no male children can always take a second wife. Otherwise, we can say that in Limbu society the marriage is an established institution where husband and wife stand on equal footing and pray for long-lasting love and friendship.

1.19.5 Sai Mundri

There is a peculiar custom in the Limbu Community which is called “Sai Mundri”. According to Limbu custom, the married-off daughters are not considered totally out of their family fold until the “*Sehmui*” or “*Saimundry*” ceremony is performed. The death rituals of the married-off daughter whose *Sehmui* ceremony is not performed according to her husband’s customs but according to the customs of her father and it is the members of the father’s family who are authorized to observe the restrictions. In fact, *Sehmui* or *Saimundry* is nothing but a barrier to checking whether one’s daughter will remain happy, content, and secure in her husband’s house or not. If the Girl’s parents are satisfied with the security of their daughter, they agree to perform the *Saimundry* ceremony. In this ceremony, the son-in-law needs to pay a negligible amount along with other necessary items and in return, the father-in-law gives the total necessary items and

daughter to his son-in-law. There is no time specified for this ceremony to be performed. The Girl's father may agree to perform this ceremony at the far end of the life of his daughter.⁵⁷

In this custom, the bride after having children and many years of her marriage seeks the separation of her relation from the family of the parents. After Sai Mundri, the bride becomes a fully bonafide member of her husband's family. During the Sai Mundri ceremony, there is the social custom of giving gifts to her parents and relatives according to their capacity but one thing is there that this ceremony is only performed when the daughter is married within the Limbu clan and Rai.⁵⁸

1.20 Papchok (Divorce) in Limbu Marriage:

In Limbu tribes both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage and divorce. A divorce from the husband's side is called "*khemjong*" and a divorce from the wife's side is called, "*Najong*". Limbu tribes have certain rules for divorce. If a husband divorces his wife and if he has not paid the price of his wife in full then children will remain with their mother and their maternal uncle will be their guardian and they will be under his disposal which is called the rule of, "*Kwajani*". But if a husband has paid the full amount of his wife's price, then he can take away his children with him. In the event, both husband and wife want a divorce from each other but both of them want the children under their custody then they can seek by legalizing the children under the rule of Samyok Lung Thim of the Ten Limbus. If a wife divorces her husband, she should refund her price to her husband in front of the court, then divorced wife will be treated as an unmarried girl and she can do remarriage.

1.21 Status of Widows:

In Limbu society, widows are given due respect. After the death of the husband, sometimes, the widow gets remarried to the brother of the husband. This type of marriage takes place when the children are infants and if she is not in a position to look after those children. However, in such circumstances, the brother-in-law cannot force the widow for marriage, in Limbu traditions, widow marriage, marriage with her brother-in-law, and others all depend on the will of the widow. Nobody can force her. So, she is independent to take her all decisions in this matter.

1.22 Inheritance:

In Limbu society, private property is inherited equally by all sons and unmarried daughters of a man. In the case of an adopted son or a natural son by a wife informally married (Kanchi Budi) takes only one-half of a legitimate son's share. The division of the property is usually made by the

tribal council (thum - thum) who set apart an extra share for the eldest son but nowadays they go through legally

The youngest son is allowed to choose his share first, and the other shares are then allotted by the *Thum-Thum*. Failing sons, the son-in-law actually living in or willing to live in the family homestead are entitled to divide the property. Brothers are the next heirs and married sisters if they attend the funeral, usually get a small share in the inheritance, although it is said that they have no positive right to claim this concession.

1.23 Death and Funeral Rites of Limbu Tribes:

The common causes of death are diseases and accidents. The Limbu tribe believes that death is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body. When someone dies, the fact is first reported to a priest (Phedangma) who is called to the house for this purpose. The priest (Phedangma) examines the corpse to see that death has really taken place. He then inquires how long the deceased had been ill and also the cause of death. Having satisfied himself that death has taken place, he orders the *China Kagaz* of the deceased to be thrown away. The dead body is shifted from the bed to the floor in front of the main door facing westward. The corpse is left in the house for one whole night and if death is occurred on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and is buried on the following day. Sometimes their close relatives are awaited overnight. A box of wood is prepared and a dead body is put in the box and carried dead body to the graveyard.⁵⁹ At the time of the funeral procession Phedangma declares that the dead soul should find a new home and follow the path of his or her own destined by the Mundhum *Susuwa Lilim Yakthunghang*. This ritual is known as Sam Lammepma. While taking the dead body from the house to the graveyard all the daughters, sons, and relatives of the dead person weep, cries and scream.⁶⁰

The Limbus observe two funeral ceremonies. i) *Cremation* and (ii) *Burial*: The latter being the more common and probably the older practice. The corpse is placed lying on its back with the head to the east. The grave is lined with stones and consists of four tiers for a man and three for a woman erected on the top. The Phedangma attends the funeral and delivers a brief address to the departed spirit on a general lot of mankind and the doom of birth and death, concluding with the command to go whither his fathers have gone and not to come back to trouble the living with dreams. Neither food nor clothes are placed in the grave but sometimes a brass plate with a rupee in it are laid under the head of the corpse and again put the corpse in the box and buried it and in some cases, the dead body is put on fire. After the funeral, all the persons return to their homes.

After the funeral, the family and relatives of the deceased should be observed Pollution (Tshak Barnu) four days for males and three days for females. During the observing pollution, the family and relatives of the deceased do not have to take common salt, oil, fish, meat, egg, chilly, ginger, garlic, onion, spices, alcohol, sweets, etc, they can only have chapati(roti) without the soda, plain rice, and boiled potato. While observing pollution they do not cut hairs, beards, moustaches, and nails. They do not wear new clothes and also, they do not attend any happy or merry-making occasions, festivals.

1.23.1 Khauma: (Breaking of Eating Restriction)

They perform *Khauma/Yumsa* (breaking of eating restrictions) ceremony on the fourth day of death of a male and on the third day for the female deceased. The last rite is performed by Phedangba reciting *Mundhum* with the help of *Tumihangs* (learned persons) five in number, representing as Pancha. They keep various eatables including Ara (liquor) Thee (alcoholic brew made of millet) and Sa (meat) on a Nanglo (small winnowing tray made of bamboos) as a last offering to the deceased. A Tumihangs, carrying a brittle stick, intimates the people the day of the last rites. After the performance of all the rites, the Tumihangs announce the ending of the restrictions and inform the family members of the deceased that from that day they allow them to do all the family chores without any restrictions. After the announcement, they break the stick, which was carried at the time of informing the people about this rite, into pieces and throw. *Kusiringba* is the ceremony when members of the family offer the last prayer to the deceased at his grave lighting candles or diyos. After that, all the eatables' items are distributed among the deceased family members who are observing the pollution, and after eating that they break their eating restrictions. But they cannot take milk for one year if the dead is their mother and they cannot eat fish or curd if the dead is their father.⁶¹

1.23.2 Tong Sing:

Tong Sing is the last ritual performed by the Phedangbas on the last night of the death ceremony. They perform this last rite simultaneously with the above ceremonies or can be deferred for uneven months like three, five, or nine, etc., performing of the last rites depends on the financial capability and availability of all the members of the family of the deceased. It usually starts at night time and continued till tomorrow afternoon. First of all, they prepared the altar then they began the ritual by chanting *Mundhum*. After that, the Phedangma started dancing round and round outside the altar beating bronze plates and he is followed by his disciple. After the dancing, Phedangma and his disciple take a rest for five and ten minutes, and again Phedangma starts to chant *Mundhum* and

dance. While performing the ritual at late night Phedangma and his disciple enter the house and start with the process of *himwa rumma* (purification of the house) he sprinkles the water among the family members for purification. After this Phedangba enters the room where the deceased corpse had been kept here, he begins to say Jokhana (it seems that the deceased soul is entering the body of Phedangba) he acts like deceased soul and tells everything in the voice of the deceased that like how did he die? Where is he or she now, not to cry, not to fight among themselves, etc. After saying that Jokhana Phedangma comes in his real form. This ritual procedure continued till tomorrow. In the end, there is the final purifying ritual which is known as “*mikwanang wasangma*” (washing of tears) here Phedangma dips the leaves of *katus* (*chestnut tree*) in the water and sprinkles on the deceased family to purify them.

1.24 Religion of Limbu Tribe:

Limbu Tribe people have their own distinct religion known as “*Yuma Samyo*” or “*Yumaism*”. They consider “*Yumaism*” (divine soul / principal deity) as their creator and always worship them first before worshipping any other form of God Yumaism is a Henotheist or kathentheist religion and believes in a single almighty goddess - “*Tagera Ningwaphuma*” which is also popularly known as “*Yuma*”. They believe that *Tagera Ningwaphuma* (Yuma) has created the universe including every living and non-living thing in it with the help of her messengers collectively known as the “*Mangs*” (Deities). She is there in everything of her creation. Yuma is the creator, the preserver, the sustainer and should be prayed every morning and evening to establish a close relationship with her by the Yumaism adherents.⁶²

1.24.1 Main Feature of Yumaism:

- I. Yumaism beliefs are usually related to the existence of nature pray and worship of a Tagera Ningwaphuma popularly known as “Yuma”.
- II. Yumaism comprises of three important components of religion namely ‘Ancestor’s worship, Shamanism, and Totemism.
- III. Yumaism does not believe in idol worship.
- IV. Yumaism adherents believe in the afterlife
- V. Yumaism believes in an infinity of life.
- VI. Yumaism is a ritualistic religion and philosophy whose central theme is a transformation of the soul

VII. Yumaism believes in Animatism or morality of life in all animates they also believe in the dualism of life on human individuals.

VIII. Yumaism believes in three worlds visa vis animal world, inanimate world, and spiritual world.

1.24.2 Maangheem (Temple):

Limbus has their own temple, called '*Mangheem*' where they worshipped their religious god '*Tagera Nuwangfuma*' (*Yuma*). Inside the Mangheem there are eight steps on the Centre which represents the eight atmospheric layers of the earth. The construction of a collective worship place known as Maanghim for the almighty goddess *Tagera Ningwaphuma* in its places mang/ deity form at Maanghim has also been started in many places from the last quarter of the 20th century before the 20th century they usually do not have any Maangheem but after 20th Limbus have started to construct their religious temple Maangheem.

According to the Mundhum of Yumaism that there are *eighteen dens* (world/realm of earth/s atmosphere and nine dens inside the earth's surface. The ground floor is considered as the living world.....den) thus these eighteen dens/layers worlds realm of the earth's atmosphere and earth inside has specific functions to discharge and the Dens are governed by different *mangs* (Deities) *sammangs* (Divinities) *sammang chyangs* (retinues of divinities) and enlightened spirituals.⁶³ *Phedangma* or *Samba* were the only types of the ritual specialist to carry out ceremonies in the *Maangheem*. If there is no *Phedangba* or *samba* then inhabitants of the particular village are allowed to carry out ceremonies who also act as the caretaker of the Maangheem. Alcohol and blood sacrifices are strictly forbidden inside the *Mangheem*.

1.24.3 Limbu Religious Priest:

The Yuma Samyo religions practitioners are collectively known as 'Phedangma'. The *Phedangba*, *Samba*, *Yema*, *Yeba* are the priests of the Limbus. Historically the Limbus recognizes nine types of Phedangma. They are: - i) *Muhikkum Ongsi*, 2) *Phejiri Phedangma*, 3) *Samboko Samba* 4) *Yeboko Yeba* 5) *Yeboka Yema* 6) *Yuma sans*, 7) *Sammundhum* 8) *Yepmundhum* and 9) *Sidapaungdang*.⁶⁴

They differ in their gear or costumes known as "*Sama*", their role in the religious functions in the community worship methodology as cures, healers, and offerings to a supernatural being. The Limbus believe that the Phedangmas are the reincarnate individuals having an additional soul of

the departed dignitaries as “*Samsire*” recognized and sent by the Almighty Goddess “*Tagera Ningwaphuma*” (*Yuma*)⁶⁵

They officiate and perform all the life rituals and worships such as pre-natal womb worship, birth rituals new born child naming, purity the new born pollution rituals, solemnize marriage weddings, death rituals offerings of household divinities, harvest ceremonies, etc. besides curing and healing of the sick. They are soul specialists and collect and retrieve the souls of the dead and travel/ accompany the souls to the land of ancestors and finally hand them over to the ancestors of the clan.⁶⁶

While Phedangma and Samba use a bronze thal (plate) as a drum at the time of performing rites, it is dhyangro (traditional drum used by Shamans) that is used by Yeba and Yema. However, in most cases all the shamans can be seen using Thal as a drum Yeba and Yema usually wear white frocks, headgear with feathers stuck to it, rudraksha (a holy bead cowrie (conch/shell), ghanti (bells), etc. while other Shamans hardly wear any specific dress unless it is necessary except a turban-like Pheta or traditional Dhaka topi (traditional cap) which is necessary for all to wear while performing rites and ceremonies.⁶⁷

1.24.4 Satya Haangma and The Yuma Mang Meditation Committee Center:

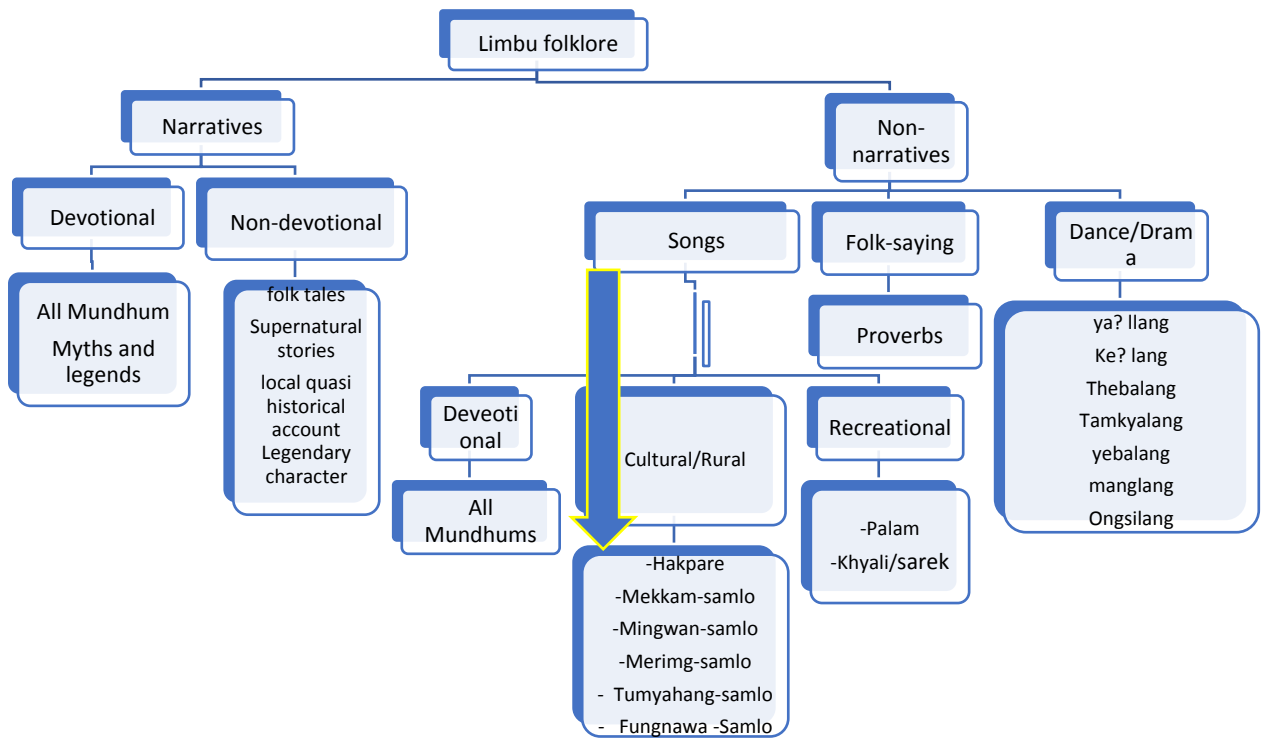
Besides, Yumaism the *Satya Haangma (truthful prince)*, and *The Yuma Mang Meditation Committee Centre (YMMCC)* also claim to be Limbu religion and have followers in Sikkim In Darjeeling we found only followers of Satya-Haangma but we did not meet any followers of Yuma Mang Meditation Committee Center in Darjeeling. The followers of Satya Haangma followed nonviolence meaning (opposing ritual sacrifice,) vegetarianism, and no consumption of alcohol. It seems that they are greatly influenced by Hinduism.

1.25 The Limbu Folklore:

Limbus have their own rich folklore which made them distinct from other communities. Limbu folklore is understood as all kinds of oral artistic expression including common transmitted tradition, myths, festivals, customs, songs, dances, and stories, etc.

Limbu folklore which consists of all oral traditions, myths, songs, dances, legends, stories, tales, riddles, charades, drama, arts, and above all the Mundhum performances can normally be shown in the following ways.

Limbu Folklore:



Source⁶⁸ Limbu Ramesh Kumar, 2010, Performance in Limbu Mundhum: A study of Cultural Representation, M. Phil Dissertation, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, page-12

1.25.1 Cultural Festival of Limbus:

Limbus have their own cultural festivals. Besides that, they also celebrate all those festivals which are based on and related to Hinduism according to their traditional way. Their famous festivals are as follows:

i)Chasok-Tangnaam (harvest festivals)-It is a harvest festival. Supreme Goddess Yuma is worshipped offering newly ripened food grains and fruits. Besides Yuma, they also worship other various divinities such as *Mundenhang*, *Thungdanmang*, *Theba*, or *Kappoba Sammang* by offering food crops, fermented grains, and sacrificial animals. During this festival, people enjoy abundant rice food, meat, vegetables, and wine.

ii)Yokwa Tangnaam (celebrated with the worship of agricultural divinities before cultivating the field)-This is also a festive ceremony of ancestors as well as nature divinities before getting involved in agricultural activities. Yuma is the principal deity of prayer for this occasion. They performed this *Yokwa* or *Yumang*, ceremony praying for rain, favourable weather, and abundance of crops and also for avoidance of any accidents and natural calamities.

iii) Sisekpa Tangnaam (Saune Sankranti)-This festival is celebrated on the month of Sawan. This festival is very auspicious for the Limbu tribe. At night before the festival day, they burn the leaves of kurilo (herb) and Titepati (herb) with fruits and throw luto (a disease) with burning agultho (fire) by hitting Nanglo with the slogan, ' *Anikaal gayo hai sahkaal aayo hai*'. (*Bad fortune gone, good fortune come*). They believe that their religious goddess Yuma would come to their house to give them a blessing.

Besides these, they also celebrate ka: ka Fekwa Tangnaam, Balihaang Tangnaam, and the birthday of incarnate Sirijunga Teongsi who preached and propagated Kiranti culture and language as the festival in the month of December *Senchhrenal Labhoon (Mangsirey Purnima)* according to the Hindu Calendar. They gather in a common place where they worship incarnate Sirijunga after which they drink *thee, ara (alcohols)*, and *Massu (meat)* and dance beating *chyabrun* (*traditional Limbu drum*)⁶⁹

1.25.2 Folk Dances of Limbu Tribes:

Dancing is one of the important aspects of the life of Limbus. They enjoy various kinds of traditional dances and express their joy, emotions through these dances. Usually, they performed their dances when there are religious occasions and after harvesting of the crops and in socio-religious festivities such as *Tongsing, Phuntsok, Nahangma* rituals, marriage, *Maghey Mela, Tribenimela*, etc.⁷⁰ They never performed any dances on funeral occasions and they do not take part in any dances for one year, in the case of their relative's death and on the house where death has occurred.

Based on performance, Limbu dances can be categorized into five groups.

a) Chyabrun Langma or Ke Langma:

Ke Langma is the most popular dance among the Limbu tribes. This is the dance performed after the origin of life. In Mundhum it has been described that Lodenhang and Phungdenhang were the primitive Limboo persons to perform Ke Lang dance when the primitive man was learning to construct his house. Thus, it is performed in the religious rituals of new house opening, Metkamma (marriage), or any happy occasion of Limbu tribes. But it is not performed in any sad or death ceremonies only religious priests Shamanistic can perform *Yagrangsing Ke Lang* for religious ritual. The *Chyabrun dance* is especially performed by the male by suspending the *Chyabrun* (drum) in front of the body with the help of a leather cord following the percussion of the *Chyabrun*. It is usually danced without song. On some occasion female

also participated with males but they do not carry the drums but stood in between the dancers and follow the beating sounds by clapping their hands and performing dance through proper stepping and bodily movements.

The Mundhum experts narrate the whole story that why this dance is performed and how to perform it. The dance is mainly performed to protect the newly built house from termite and wood-cutter insects. First of all, *Chyabrung* dancers have to dance around the main pillar of the house and invoke the god Akwanama, who protects the house. After that, they came out of the house and make several rounds of the house, and finally dance in the front courtyard. While performing *Chyabprung* dance, dancers have to wear their traditional costumes.

The Chyabprung dance imitates the various actions of animals, insects, and any form of living beings. The name of dances based on different living creatures are as follow, *Puttukey Lang* (Dove dance), *Perewa Lang* (Pigeon dance), *Melluk Lang* (Sheep dance), *Sanwa dance* (Buffalo dance), *Menda Lang* (Goat dance), *Tokmi Lang* (Elephant dance), *Waruk Lang* (Frog dance), *Chirphemba Lang* (Butterfly dance), etc.⁷¹

b. Agricultural Dance - There are two types of agricultural dances. (i) *Yialang* or *Dhaan Naach* (ii) *Damke Ookma*

(i) Yialang or Dhaan Naach: This dance is performed after night falls after the crops are reaped. *Yialang* or *dhaanaach* (paddy dance) is the most popular dance of the Limbu Tribe. This is a form of dance performed by Limbus after harvest. Usually, young boys and girls and even late adults of male and female perform this dance by holding each other, swaying to and for, and swinging their feet in the beat of Chyabprung and rhythm of Limbu songs known as Palam. The dance is usually organized at night or even in the daytime in any festive occasion such as marriage, Mageay mela, etc.

There are two types of *Yalang* dance:

Kemba Yialang: This dance is a slow-motion dance and the Palam(song) of this dance is also slow in tempo but the melodic movement makes it alluring. It is danced in a straight row clasping the hands of each other arranged in an order of male and female and thus demonstrating unities.

Kushrakpa Yialang: This dance is based on the Palam(song) of fast rhythm and tune. The style of dancing differs from place to place with *Kemba Yialang*.

Although, Yialang dance does not look attractive or entertaining to the spectators but is really entertaining to those who participate in the dance. This dance may continue the whole night or day or several nights and days once they start.⁷²

(ii) Damke Ookma - This form of dance is performed while sowing Maize crops in the field. While Yialang dance is performed after the harvest of Paddy (Dhan) but Damke Ookma is performed while showing Maize crop in the field. The only difference is that it is done in the daytime while doing the first earthing up of maize crop. Like Yialang the Palam is the same as in the Damkey Ookmu. Both boys and girls take part in the dance with love songs

c. War Dance – This form of dance is known as “Nahangma” and is performed during ‘Nahangma’ their religious function. In this dance, only adult Males and “Shamanistic” Priests can take part. During the dance, they carry a sword in their right hand and a shackle in their left hand or an arrow in their right hand, and a bow in their left hand. A similar type of war dance is performed by the shamanistic priests of Limboos in several religious ceremonies such as Nahen Khomma, Singyuk Muden Khoma, Tongsing Teayma, Yagrangsing Phongma, etc. The main purpose of this dance is to protect the altar of religious ritual, the life of himself and his fellow friends from Nahen (envy and jealousy), evil spirits, etc.⁷³

d. Historical Dance -

In this dance form only, adult males depicted the historical war of the Limbus who fought in *Ambepojoma Kamketlungma Sumhatlungma* against the rulers and defeated them and established “Limbuwan”. Although this dance is not so popular as *Chabrun* dance or *Yialang* dance, it is organised occasionally.⁷⁴

e. Mysticism and Mythological Dance of Limbu Shamanistic Priests:

This type of dance is known as *Yagrangsing Lang*, *Phuntsok Lang*, *Tongsing Lang*. The dance is performed only by the Shamanistic priests viz. *Phedangma*, *Samba*, *Yeba* and *Yema*. The helpers of *Phedangma* and *Samba* are called *Sanglangoba* and the helpers of *Yema* and *Yeba* called *Yagapchiba* also participate in these dances on special occasions. While performing this type of dance they used brass plates (gongs) with a short baton. They perform such dances ringing the brass plates with a baton and moving around the *Pengiri Pengkesing* or any other altar. They wear their respective costumes or gears while performing the dances.⁷⁵

1.25.3 Limbu Folk Songs:

Besides dances, the Limbus has a rich tradition of singing folk songs. Their folk songs can be divided into the following groups.

a. Khyali –It is a conversational song but young girls and boys sing it with poetic expression and in a very sweet tone. Through this song, the young boys and girls negotiate the *Yialakma* dance.

b. Love Songs –The love songs are known as Palam Samlo. All Palam Samlo are love songs but it differs in the tune of singing depending on the stepping of dances, slowness, or fastness of the dance and works dance situation as follows:

(i) Sakpa Palam Samlo - This song is sung during the Kusakpa Yeaalang dance in fast beat.

(ii) Kemba Palam Samlo - This song is sung during the Kemba Yeaalang dance in slow beat.

(iii) Domke Akma Palam Samlo - It is sung when doing the normal chases and also during the Domke Akma dance.

c. Hakpara Samlo – This song is sung by middle-aged men and women who are interested in Mundhum and who are well known in it. Ac solo voice is usually accompanied by a chorus at the beginning. Hakpara is sung on all occasions.

d. Nisammang Sewa Samlo - This song is sung during religious functions. It is a devotional song.

Thus, we found that such folk dances and folksongs performed in the community have great value and significance for they help redemonstrate socio-cultural and historical heritages as well as depict the tradition, cultural behavior, and lifestyle of the Limbu community. Nowadays these dances and songs of Limbu are found gradually getting lost due to lack of proper conservation as well as national and global cultural intrusions. In Darjeeling it is very rare to see such a performance of Limbus, they performed it only in a cultural programme.

1.25.4 Musical Instruments of Limbu Tribe:

Apart from the Limbu dance and Limbu songs, Limbus are also very fond of music. There are many musical instruments they play but Chyabrung or Niyara Hongsing Ke and Nagara are the most important and popular instruments of Limbus.

a. Chyabrung- It is a long cylindrical hollow-log wooden drum about two meters in diameter and two feet in length. The drum is strung around the neck with a cord at stomach height and played during every cultural ceremony of Limbus.

The Chyabrung has two openings on either end, each end being tightly stretched by cow and bull/buffalo skin on the right and left ends respectively. The face covered by cow skin produces a sharp, treble tone whilst and the face covered by bull/buffalo skin produces a flat bass sound. The cow skin face is called *huksagay* and played with the palm of the hand and the bull/buffalo side is called *singsagay* and played with a stick called *kay chhari*.⁷⁶ Niyara Hongsing Ke is the most essential instrument of the religious priests of Limbus and without which religious rituals of Phungsok Thim, Yagrangsing Thim, Tongsing Thim, Death rituals of the shamanistic priests of Limbus is not possible.

b. Nagara Kettle Drum- It is a large kettle drum made of copper, brass, or sheet -iron riveted together. The heads are made of skin and are stretched upon hoops of metal. The head may be anything from two to three feet in diameter. It consists of pairs -one small size is the male and the bigger size is the female Nagara. These drums are beaten with two curved or straight round sticks. It is used in almost all occasions of Limbus. It is used in funerals, death rites marriage ceremonies, etc. The tune of the music from the drum signifies the kind of events taking place, starting or ending of occasions, etc.⁷⁷

1.25.5 Mundhum:

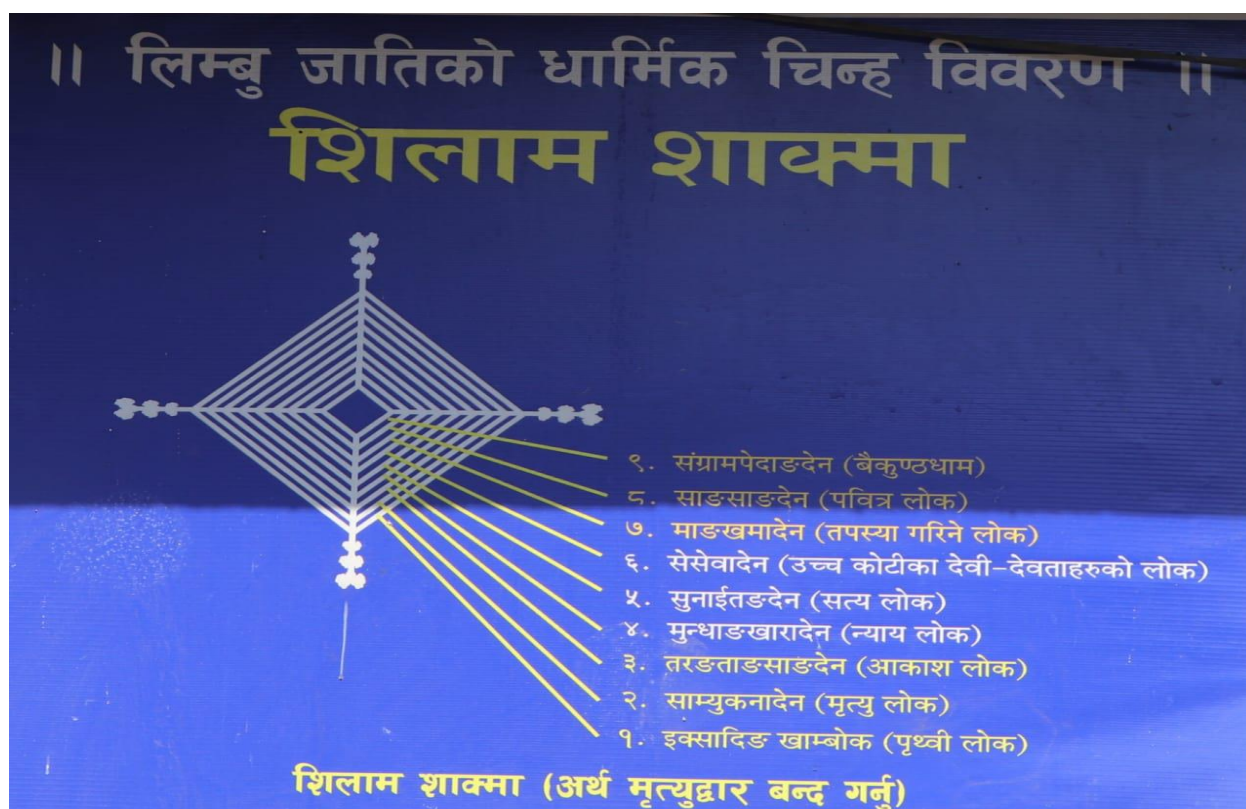
The word Mundhum means the power of great strength and the Kirat people of east Nepal take it to be a true, holy, and powerful scripture⁷⁸. Mundhum is the source of inspiration, information, and enlightenment for Limbus and guidance of the way of life, customs, and rites-de-passage⁷⁹ (Mundum occupies great social and cultural importance in the Limbu tribe. It gives a superb expression to the development of religious, moral, and social beliefs and assumptions in many mythological legends and folk tales.⁸⁰

Thus, Mundhum is the spiritual instructions for Limbus from their ancestor passed down from generation to generation orally through their phedangma system and yehang system in society. Mundhum has a great role in *Yumaism* without this no one is able to understand the belief system, essence, and philosophical analysis of the Yuma Samyo (religion). In other words, we can say that the Yuma Samyo (Yumaism) is essentially based on an ancient oral tradition known as Mundhum (Myths). We can say that Limbus have an animistic religion, they still have an unwritten religious

book which is a folk epic type. It can be termed as “Mundhum Epic” because of its unique literary characters. It has no single author and is a product of oral tradition.⁸¹

1.25.6 Silam Sakma: (Blocking the Path of Death)

Silam Sakma is a symbol that identifies Limbus. It is a symbol with religious and cultural significance to the Limbu people. This symbol is seemingly diamond in shape and has 9 concentric diamond shapes supported by two axes at the centre, one vertically and one horizontally. 9 concentric diamonds indicate the nine planets. There is very much similarity between the house of the Limbu community and other communities due to acculturation between different communities living in the vicinity. Therefore, nowadays a Limbu house is difficult to identify through an exterior perspective. This has been intervened by the introduction of the display of the symbol called *Silam-Sakma* in the house elevation which is apparently a ritualistic element used by the *phedangma* or tribal priests and has been a symbol/logo for identifying the Limbu community. *Silam Sakma* is a symbol that identifies Limbus. A version of this symbol is placed outside the house to announce the house belongs to Limbu residents. Limbus belief is this symbol blocks the path of death and protects family members. It is also worn by the community people on their left chest during an event. There is no uniformity for the woolen used in *Silam Sakma*. The colour of *Silam Sakma* should be green colour.⁸²



Source:⁸³ [http://commons.wikimedia.org,file ‘Silam Sakma’ a symbol identifying Limbu tribe.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org,file%20%27Silam%20Sakma%27a%20symbol%20identifying%20Limbu%20tribe.jpg)

1.25.7 Yakthung Subang Nisa (Flag of Limbu Tribe):

Previously when Limbus were the ruler of Limbuwan at that time they had their own flag. Their flag was consisting of three colours viz. white, blue, and red. The blue represents the bodies of water and the sky, the white represents air and peace, and the red represents the earth and pure blood of the Limbu people. The sun in the centre represents various Limbu spiritual practices and everyday living. The use and recognition of the flag ended in the eighteenth century during the Gorkha invasion.

With the passage of time, Limbu tribal community felt the necessity of a flag for their symbol of identification and after a long discussion, the *All-India Limbu Association* prepared the flag which is called “Yakthung Subang Nisa” or “Limbu Jaatiya Jhanda”. This new flag also consists of three colours sky blue white and green. In the center of the flag, they display the symbol *Silam-sakma* in which is a symbol/logo for identifying the Limbu community.

Sky Blue colour: This colour represents infinity, which has no ending like that Limbu community also wishes to remain in this universe as an infinity under the roof of the sky.

White colour: This colour represents peace, honesty, and purity. Limbu people also considered themselves as honest, peace-loving people.

Green colour: This colour represents nature. As Limbus worships various powers and manifestations of nature. They believed that every object of nature inclusive of human beings has a soul.

Silam Sakma: In the middle of the flag is Silam Sakma which represents the symbol of identification of the Limbu community.⁸⁴

IMAGE OF FLAG



Summing up:

The Limbus of Darjeeling is also an original inhabitant of Darjeeling hills along with the Lepcha and there are many historical writings and oral narratives which also support their claims. During the British period, they were known as tribal people but after the independence of India, this genuine tribe was not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. It was only after three decades of their continuous struggle the Limbu community were recognized as Scheduled tribes with the SC/ST Orders (Second Amendment) Bill, 2002 (Bill No. 62 of 2002). The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 2nd August 2002, it was passed by Rajya Shaba on 18th December 2002 and Lok Shaba on 19th December 2002. Finally, the bill received president assent on 7th January 2003 and Limbu tribe was included scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution.

The word Limbu means bow and arrow. Li means bow and Abu means shooter, thus Limbu means archer. There is a close connection between the Limbu people and bow and arrow. Besides Limbu, they are also known by other names like Yakthungba, Tsong, or Chang and Subba. Limbus are also belonged to the kirata confederation along with Rai Sunuwar, and their original homeland was Limbuwan. They have a close affinity with the Lepchas. They have more than 200 clans. They have their own traditional dresses and ornaments for both males and females. Their language is called

Yakthungpan and their own script is called Sirijunga saksak. They have a rich culture of marriage system and death rites. Their religion is known as Yumaism and they have their own temple called Mangheem and their religious priest are known as Phedangba. They have rich folklore which consists of festivals, Limbu dance, and song, musical instruments, Mundhum, Silam Sakma, and flag.

We found that Limbus is really one of the oldest tribal people of India as well as Darjeeling. Their culture, tradition, language, script all prove that they genuinely belong to the tribal community. Though Limbus have their own language and script, in Darjeeling they rarely use this language and script. The Limbus of Darjeeling have been taught in the Nepali language only whereas in the state of Sikkim Limbu language is recognized as an official language and also taught in school. Besides following their own religion “*YUMAISM*” they are also following Hinduism. We also found that some Limbus of Bijanbari is following another sect of Limbu religion known as “*Satya Haangma*” it is greatly influenced by Hinduism. They do not sacrifice animals for worship rather they used fruits and flowers to worship their deities. They do not eat meat and alcohol. Even we found some of them have converted to Christianity and some of them are following some religious gurus like *Saibaba, Manav Dharma, Parnami, and Radha Swami*, etc. But in the matter of the marriage system, they strictly follow the rule for forbidding marriage within the Thar [clan]. If there is any breach of the rule is punished by exclusion from caste, home, and society. So, no one can dare to get married within thars, they follow all those rites and rituals which have been discussed above. They celebrate all those festivals celebrated by the Hindus. Although they have their own Limbu dances and songs, they perform it only on a special occasion. Otherwise, it is very rare to see Limbu dances and to listen to songs in Darjeeling. They have their own association known as “All India Limbu Tribal Association” which played a very important role in their identity fighting, and they were succeeded to get tribal status in 2003.

One thing I just want to mention here is that besides Limbus there are so many tribal or non-tribal people in Darjeeling with their own individual culture and tradition. But one thing is there that all these people with different languages, dialects, modes of worship, their distinctive customs, and cultural traditions live together in a perfect specimen of communal harmony and unique secularism. The religious conflicts and communal infighting are never known in this region of Darjeeling. Hence, Limbu tribal community have a very rich culture, tradition, religion, language, and script but they are in an endangered position and we should not forget that ethnic tribal language and culture have been the main prey of the global culture and global language otherwise a beautiful language and culture of the Limbu tribe in India would not have been endangered.

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CHAPTER-2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF LIMBU TRIBE OF DARJEELING HILLS:

2.1 Background of Social-Economic Condition in Darjeeling Hills:

It is very necessary to understand the socio-economic scenario of Darjeeling hills, we have to understand the background history of social development in Darjeeling. While Darjeeling had been 'granted' to the British in 1835 to build a sanitarium for the Britishers by the Raja of Sikkim in return for some concessions and a yearly grant of Rs.3000, whereas Kalimpong was only an integral part of Sikkim, Kalimpong subdivision had first been lost by the Raja of Sikkim to the Bhutanese after the war in 1706. This area was later annexed, along with the Dooars by the British in 1865, and included in the present Darjeeling district in 1866. Till 1874 Darjeeling was a non-regulated Area, from 1874-1919 it was a Scheduled Area and from 1919-1935 it was a Backward Tract. Thereafter and until Indian Independence it was a "Partially Excluded Area". Hence, till 1947, Darjeeling was administratively not fully integrated with West Bengal although it had been nominally a part of the state since 1866 itself¹. The Britishers had already started to construct the road, railways, and some hotels and residential bungalows especially the world-famous Tea. therefore, the first generation of migrant laborers who had come as members of the labour force and regiment and the police provided the impetus for the others to follow. By the early 19th century service in the military was not the only attraction as migrants came as grazers and herders, to work in the tea and quinine plantations and the construction of road and railway lines.² Tea is the main crop in the region and is grown over a vast area of hilly land, covering 17 542 hectares divided into 87 tea estates. After the first 3 commercial tea estates were established at Tukvar in 1852, the area under tea expanded gradually to 39 estates in 1866, 56 in 1870, and 113 in 1874. But slowly declined after the Independence of the country and today there are 87 tea plantations. The tea industry has played a pivotal role in the socio-economic lives of people of the region by providing direct employment to thousands of households and related jobs to many more thousands in the tea estates, plywood, tea packaging, and other tea-related trades. In the last three-four decades, however, the livelihood of the large, dependent population has been threatened. The gradual decline of the Darjeeling tea industry from strong international competition, increasing production and labor costs, and declining productivity, and other factors, have affected the sustainable livelihoods of plantation workers.³ Darjeeling Himalaya, producing superfine Darjeeling tea.

Darjeeling tea makes up 3 percent of India's total production. The Darjeeling tea industry at present employs over 52 thousand people permanently, while a further 15,000 persons are engaged during the plucking season which lasts from March to November. More than 60 percent are women and the employment are on a family basis.

Another very important source of income is tourism. Darjeeling is the hot spot of tourism in West Bengal state. Darjeeling hills are generating incomes and employment for the local population. Around 3.5 lakhs domestic tourists and 50,000 foreign tourists visit Darjeeling yearly which generates approximately 30% of the total tourism business of the region worth around Rs 350 crore per annum. Everybody right from a shopkeeper up to the hotel owner and the government benefits from the tourism. Apart from an increase in income and the demand for local products, tourism also results in a multiplier effect. This refers to how tourist expenditures filter through the economy and generate other economic activities.⁴ The tourism in Darjeeling hills has been shifted from urban to local areas due to eco-tourism and rapidly spreading village tourism in Darjeeling hills. Sittong, Chatakpur in Sonada, Tinchuley in Takdah, Rimbick, Lamagoan in Bijanbari, Bunkulung, Mirik, are the spots right now in Darjeeling hills. The people of rural areas of Darjeeling hills heavily depend on animal husbandry livestock especially on cow, piggery farms, fish, goats, and chicken. It plays an important role to uplift the rural economy in our country and more so in the hills. In India, its contribution to the Gross National Income is about 25%. Several important technological developments in branches of Animal science has established that Animal Resources Development is one of the most important sectors for economic growth of rural poor, marginal destitute farmers, and unemployed youth of the country with special reference to Darjeeling hills, where landholdings among these groups are significantly are following the animal husbandry.⁵ India is the agricultural country and Darjeeling's agriculture is grossly rain-dependent and distributed between pre-Kharif and Kharif seasons. Almost all upper ridges of the region are forest areas; tea plantations and native agriculture occupy the mid-hill section. Cultivation is mainly done in some Khasmahal areas, of good paddies extending the mid-hill section up to the bottom valley in some cases. The soil, in general, is shallow, medium to light textured, surface drainage is rapid, highly susceptible to erosion by water, internally well-drained, reasonably high in organic matter, poor in bases and phosphate, and distinctly acidic in reaction. Cultivation in drier months is limited to small patches where residual moisture/ limited irrigation from nearby rivulets is available.⁶ Horticulture is now a daily growing market in Darjeeling. Most of the farmers in these regions are still practicing the traditional method of cultivating traditional crops like ginger millet, local varieties of paddy, maize, and vegetables. It has been observed that the traditional method of crop cultivation with local traditional crop varieties is not economically viable these days due to low productivity and the high cost of cultivation. It is, therefore imperative that the emphasis and

development initiatives vis-à-vis agriculture be shifted to floriculture-horticulture crops in the hill areas of Darjeeling District. The main fruit crops of the area are temperate fruits like orange, plum, pears, and peach. Besides these, there are substantial areas growing bananas, pineapples, and guava. The government is now encouraging the cultivation of kiwi fruit in some areas of Darjeeling hills. There is also scope for the cultivation of passion fruit and its juice has great demand at present especially for export purposes.

We will try to present the actual social-economic, education, and status of women of the Limbu tribal community of Darjeeling hills through analysis of the data collected from the sample survey of 500 households. The data will also be supported through different tables and diagrams as required and many social, economic and educational issues will be discussed with different angles of interpretation and analysis. But before going to directly discuss the socio-economic status of Limbu in Darjeeling hills, it is pertinent to know why the Limbu tribe did not get a chance to get inserted in the scheduled tribal list and we must have a clear idea about the tribal scenario in India and West Bengal particularly in Darjeeling. Let us start with the tribal scenario of India.

2.2 Tribal Population in India:

India got independence in 1947, during the British period in India, many communities were treated as “tribe” but after independence during the first census of India in 1951, many tribal communities were not inserted in the Scheduled Tribe list of India, among them the “Limbu” Tribal of West Bengal, Sikkim, and the North East States were one of them. The Scheduled Tribal List was finalized through the population of scheduled tribes (Notified under the president’s order 1950).⁷

Table 2.1: Tribal Population and Percentage from 1951

S. No	Census Year	Total Population of ST (lakhs)	Percentage of ST to Total Population
1	1951	225	6.23
2	1961	302	6.87
3	1971	380	6.94
4	1981*	538	7.58
5	1991**	678	8.08
6	2001#	843	8.20
7	2011	1040	8.6

Source:⁸ Data compiled from Annual Report- 2007-08. and **Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India 2013**

The demographic of the tribal population had suffered seriously due to the adoption of arbitrary decisions to select the scheduled tribal list. The tribal population, as determined by the Constitutional (Determination of Population) Order 1950 was reduced from 24.7 million in 1941 to about 17.9 million.⁹ many original and primitive tribal groups were kept outside from the schedule tribal List. The Limbu and Tamang tribals were also kept outside. Although, the Britishers had identified them as a tribe of Darjeeling hills. Later on, the government of India in pursuance of the 'Modification Order' of 1956, another 34,00,000 persons, belonging to tribal groups and left out earlier, were added and the number rose to 2,25,19,054. This accounted for 6.23 percent of the total population of the country at that time but the Limbu tribal community did not get a chance to get inserted into the scheduled tribal list. As per the 1961 census, there were 3,01,73,998 persons belonging to Scheduled Tribes, 6.87 percent of the total population of the country. The situation further changed during 1961-71. Several communities of Uttar Pradesh, viz. Jaunsari, Tharus, Buxas, Bhutias, and Rajis were included in the 'Schedule' in terms of the Presidential Order of June 1967. The Bhutia who had already got listed for West Bengal got another chance from Uttar Pradesh.

Thus, at the time of the 1971 census, the number of Scheduled Tribes had risen to 3,80,15,162 accounting for 6.94 percent of India's total population. In 1981, the total tribal population (excluding Assam where the 1981 census was not held) was 5.38 crore which worked out to 7.58 percent of the total population. As per the 1991 census, the Scheduled Tribes' population was 6,77,58,380 (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) and its share in the total population worked out to be 8.08 percent. The decennial growth during 1981-91 was 25.91 percent. The rate of growth of the tribal population during 1991-2001 has been recorded at 24.34 percent, which is higher than the general population growth rate of 21.54 percent.¹⁰ At the district level, the 2011 Census reveals that there are 90 districts where the ST population is 50 percent or more. As per Census 2001, this number was 75 districts. Out of these 90 districts, 48 districts are in 8 North Eastern States. All the districts in Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland have more than 60% of the ST Population. Excluded Assam in 1981, Excluded Jammu & Kashmir in 1991. The figures excluded Mao-Maram, Paomata, and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur, census 2001.¹¹

The tribal administrative system has been divided into two different systems under the fifth and sixth scheduled under the constitution of India. Article 244 and 244(A) under X of the constitution provide for the administration of scheduled areas and tribal areas. Under the constitution, the term the Scheduled areas and scheduled tribal areas have definite connotations. These may be called the fifth and sixth scheduled. The state of West Bengal is under the fifth schedule.¹²

Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to Scheduled Tribes as those communities, who are scheduled by Article 342 of the Constitution. This article says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be Scheduled Tribes.

Tribal people constitute about 8.6% of India's population-104 million and cover about 15% of the country's area. There are about 635 tribal groups and sub-groups including 75 primitive tribes. Maximum tribal population concentrated in North-East India followed by Central India and lowest proportion in South India. The tribal population of India speaks 105 different languages and 225 subsidiary languages indicating a great deal of variety. The population of STs in India as per the 2011 census was 104,281,034 constituting 8.61% of the total population.

2.3 Tribal Population in West Bengal:

In pursuance of Government policy during the first census of India after Independence, there was limited enumeration and tabulation of Castes in the 1951 Census. Even in the case of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes, the figures of each Caste were not separately extracted; only the group totals were ascertained.¹³

Table 2.2: ST Groups and its Population till 1951 in West Bengal

The Population of Scheduled Tribes (Notified under the President's Order 1950) in the Census 1911-1931 to 1951. West Bengal					
		Population and Year of the Census			
Sl. No	Name of ST	1911	1921	1931	1951
1	Bhutia	16917	15707	14749	4810
2	Lepcha	9842	9669	12719	13430
3	Mech	19893	10777	9981	10787
4	Mru	*	*	46	4696
5	Munda	41023	76160	82669	82923
6	Oraon	139593	175809	197466	203296
7	Santal	636900	762615	753663	845395

Sources: ¹⁴ Estimated Population by Castes. West Bengal, Office of the Registrar

General of India Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1954, Page-6

According to the 2011 census, the scheduled tribe population of West Bengal is 5.29 million, which constitutes 5.80% per cent of the total population and is unevenly distributed in the districts. Paschim Midnapur has the highest 16.61% tribal concentration in the State. Jalpaiguri district has

13.81%, Purulia 10.21%, Burdwan 9.24%, and Darjeeling district have 7.50%, standing they are second, third, fourth and fifth respectively. More than 57 per cent of the Scheduled Tribes are concentrated in these districts. The lowest proportion of the tribal population is in the Kolkata district (0.20 %). Other districts viz. Howrah (0.28%), Cooch Behar (0.34%), and Purba Midnapur (0.53%) could not reach even 1% of the total Scheduled Tribes population in the state. The population of Scheduled Tribes has marginally increased in 2011 compared to 2001 census whereas the literacy rate has beefed up by 11.86% and 14.5% in India and West Bengal respectively.¹⁵ In West Bengal, the Tribal population is 52,96,963 as per Census 2011, which is about 5.8% of the total population of the State. The tribal population of West Bengal constitutes about 5.08% of the total Tribal population of the Country. Tribal communities are present in all the Districts of the State. A higher concentration of tribal population is seen in the Districts like Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura, and Purulia.¹⁶ The state of West Bengal come under the fifth schedule of the Indian constitution in term of tribal governance. The West Bengal state has 40 tribal communities who are mainly found in the Northern and Western parts of the Bengal. The West Bengal government has its own ministry of tribal affairs. It governs everything regarding tribal development, it frames policies and programs for the cultural and linguistic preservation, research, and analysis, it gives stipend, scholarship, loan, etc. for the tribal development

Following is the list of the scheduled tribe of West Bengal at present. The Tamang and Limbu tribal have been inserted in the list in 2003 only.

Table 2.3: List of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal at Present

1 Asur	2 Baiga	3 Bedia, Bediya	4 Bhumij	5 Bhutia, Sherpa, Toto, Dukpa, Kagatay, Tibetan Yolmo	6 Birhor	7 Birjia	8 Chakma	9 Chero	10 Chik Baraik
11 Garo	12 Gond	13 Gorait	14 Hajang	15 Ho	16 Karmali	17 Kharwar	18 Khond	19 Kisan	20 Kora
21 Korwa	22 Lepcha	23 Lodha, Kheria,	24 Lohara, Lohra, Lohar	25 Magh	26 Mahali	27 Mahli	28 Mal Pahariya	29 Mech	30 Mru
31 Munda	32 Nagesia	33 Oraon	34 Parhaiya	35 Rabha	36 Santal	37 Sauria Paharia	38 Savar	39 Limbu (Subba)	40 Tamang

Sources: ¹⁷ Compiled (WBDHB)2011

Though the presidential order of 1950 for census of 1951 only seven tribal communities from West Bengal had been selected, Mech, Murmur, Oraon, Santal Bhutia, and Lepcha. Among seven tribal communities only “Bhutia” (Bhutia, Toto, Sherpa, Yolmo, Kagatay, and Tibetan) and “Lepcha” were included in the scheduled tribe list of West Bengal. Limbu and Tamang could not get the place on this list. Therefore, till, 2003, Limbu and Tamang tribal groups lived like generals and fought for the scheduled tribal list.

2.4 Tribal Population in Darjeeling District:

It is for a clear understanding that the Darjeeling district has been divided into Darjeeling and Kalimpong since 2015-16. The following table is the population figure of both the districts.

Table 2.4: The Population of Darjeeling before Independence

Sl. No	Census year	Population
1	1871-72	94,712
2	1881	1,55,179
3	1901	2,49,117
4	1911	265,550
5	1921	282,748
6	1931	319,635
7	1941	3,90,899

Source: ¹⁸ Census 1951

The first regular Census under the British regime was conducted in Darjeeling in the year 1871-72 showing a population figure of 94,712 which increased manifold to 1,55,179 by the next Census in 1881 and within Census 1901 the population of Darjeeling grew to as much as 2,49,117. The population of the district continued to increase at a steady pace during the next decades and by 1941 it almost touched the four lakhs mark at 3,90,899.

Table 2.5: The Population of Darjeeling District since Independence

1	1951	459,617
2	1961	624,640
3	1971	781,777
4	1981	1,024,269
5	1991	1,299,919
6	2001	1,609,172
7	2011	18,46,823

Source: ¹⁹ Census 2001 and census 2011

As per the first Census after the independence of 1951, the population of Darjeeling district was 4,59,617, an increase of almost 73 percent during 50 years from 1901. After independence, the growth rate of population gradually decreased (with an exception in the decade 1971-81 adding lesser people to the bounty. As per Census 2011, the population of Darjeeling stands at 18,46,823 with 9,37,259 males and 9,09,564 females.²

Table 2.6: Population Dynamics of the Darjeeling District (Block wise) in 2011 Census

	Local Bodies: Blocks	No of Village Panchayat	No of Households	Population
1	Darjeeling-Pulbazar	23	26612	126747
2	Jorebunglow Sukhiapokri	15	25251	113501
3	Takdah-Ranglirangliot	11	15323	70188
4	Mirik	06	12013	55359
5	Kurseong	12	21036	94337
6	Matigara	05	41190	227400
7	Naxalbari	06	35752	165523
8	Khari Bari	04	24810	109251
9	Phansidewa	07	340	100796

Source: ²¹ Compiled data from District Environment Plan 2021

Table 2.7: Scheduled Tribes' Population in Darjeeling District (1961-2011)

Census year	Total Tribal population	Urban	Rural
1961	96444	11212	85232
1971	108586	11417	97169
1981	151073	15130	135943
1991	179153	20425	158718
2001	204167	25289	178878
2011	397389	78320	319069

Sources: ²² Compiled from the District Census Handbook Darjeeling, pg-53

The above table shows the distribution of Scheduled Tribes population since 1961. It is observed from the table that the decadal growth rate of Scheduled Tribes population up to 2001 Census has followed a decreasing trend except 1981 but in 2011 Census it was the highest with 94.6 percent. It is to state here that in 2003, by the parliamentary Act of scheduled tribe, 2003, the two hill tribal

communities “Tamang” and “Limbu (Subba)” were inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution, that is a reason we can find that decadal growth of population in Darjeeling district has jumped from 204167 to 397389. It is also to state that since the 2011 census, we find that the tribal population of Darjeeling has also increased in urban areas whereas in the 2001 census we could observe only 25289 urban tribal populations which increased up to 78320.²³

Table 2.8: Scheduled Tribal Community of Darjeeling Hills

1	2	3	4
Lepcha,	Bhutia, Sherpa, Toto, Dukpa, Kagatay, Tibetan, Yolmo	Tamang,	Limbu

Sources:²⁴ Compiled data from WBDHB

Table to refers that the Darjeeling hills are one of the most northern parts of West Bengal. In Darjeeling hills, we can find many tribal communities such as Lepcha, Bhutia, Sherpa, Dukpa, Kagatay, Tibetan, Yolmo, Tamang, and Limbu (Subba). Tamang and Limbu (Subba) are the new scheduled tribes in Darjeeling hills. We can find the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling who is also commonly known as Subba, Yakthumba, and Tsongs in Sikkim are living in Darjeeling from immemorial time. After the independence of India, Limbus of Darjeeling lost their distinct tribal identity because they were not inserted in the “Scheduled Tribe List of Indian Constitution” and after their long struggle, they were inserted in the Scheduled Tribe list of the Indian Constitution in 2003, so from 2003 onwards, Limbus of Darjeeling got their distinct tribal identity as the tribal people of India as well as Darjeeling.

2.5 Limbu Population Census in Darjeeling District before and after Independence:

The first Census of Darjeeling was carried on by the Britishers in 1872. According to the Census report of 1881, the population of Limbu was 2429 in the district of Darjeeling.²⁵ But the census of 1901 was considered as the first census of Darjeeling. At that time, the people of Darjeeling used to speak in their own tribal and traditional languages instead of the Nepali language. So, Limbu community being the original inhabitant of Darjeeling found to speak in their own language. With time, gradually the Nepali language began to receive its popularity and all the peoples of Darjeeling including Limbu began to speak in the Nepali language instead of their native language. As a result, when there was a linguistic survey held in 1961 in Darjeeling in other languages Limbu and

Lepcha languages were also surveyed and it was found that the Limbu language was endangered. The Limbu population of the Darjeeling district had the population as followed

Table 2.9: Limbu Population till 1951

Sl.no	Year	Limbu Population
1	1901	14,305
2	1911	13,804
3	1921	14,191
4	1931	16,288
5	1941	17,803
6	1951	19,835

Source:²⁶ Census 1951

Table 2.10: Growth Rates in Darjeeling District between 1901 and 1961 and Limbu Population

Serial No.	Year	The total population in Darjeeling District	Limbu speaking population
1	1901	249,117	14,305
2	1911	265,550	13,804
3	1921	282,748	14,191
4	1931	319,635	16,288
5	1941	376,369	17,803
6	1951	445,260	20,092
7	1961	624,640	260

Source:²⁷ Census 1951 West Bengal, District Handbooks Darjeeling

Table 2.10 shows the population growth of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. In the 1901 census report, Limbus was 14,305 among the total population of Darjeeling but in the 1911 and 1921 census shows that Limbus were slightly less in comparison with the previous census but in 1931, 1941 and 1951 census shows the increasing numbers of Limbus of Darjeeling. But 1961 census report shows a very shocking report about the population of Limbus of Darjeeling, it shows only 260 Limbus in Darjeeling. According to this census, Limbu speaking people were only 260 which is wrong because in ten years before in 1951 census Limbu speaking people were 20,090 and after ten years it shows only 260 Limbu speaking people. Here, we can assume that Limbus were not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution, and with the time they began

to mix with the Nepali community and during the linguistic survey, they were counted as Nepali speaking people of Darjeeling. T.B. Subba has also mentioned the same reason for the differences that many of them must have later declared their mother tongue to be Nepali for the census figures based on mother tongue counts.²⁸

According to the census of 2011, the Limbu population is 46847 in Darjeeling hills. The majority of the Limbu population is concentrated in rural areas with 18542 male and 18376 female populations and urban areas 5092 female and 4847 males. The Darjeeling hills are the land of multi-ethnicities, different caste and tribal people live to-gather for a century, and they have experienced and exchanged many social occasions together. A tribal community cannot be imaged aloof; they are dependent on each other for their survival now a day. Socially, we found that the Limbu community comes under the Kirata confederations which included the Limbus, the Rai, the Yakshas, and the Sunuwar.²⁹ Although there are many clans in the Limbu community there is equality in the social hierarchy in the castes system within the Limbu Community. There are many similarities between Limbu and Lepcha in respect of language, tradition, and culture. In Limbu society, the father is considered the head of the family, and the decision-making power is in the hand of the husband but the final decision is taken after the consultation with the wife.

The Limbu tribal of Darjeeling are dependent economically on agriculture, tea garden, business, shop keepers, daily wages, carpentry, and government jobs under the central, state and working in Gorkhaland territorial administration and young generation always preferred to join the Indian army and other forces such as West Bengal police, Border Security Forces, Central Reserved Police Forces, etc. The Limbu are becoming conscious about the educational development of the children, most of the parents are sending their children to English medium schools and this trend can be found not only in urban areas but in the remote corner of the Darjeeling hills. The school of Darjeeling hills are mostly an English medium school for a very long time. The ratio of the Limbu in higher education is very poor but the interests are raising high due to their tribal status in 2003. The prominent feature of the Limbu tribal community is the women and their social position. Women are highly respected in Limbu society and they play a very important role in social formation and family development.

The socio-economic conditions of the Limbu tribal in Darjeeling will be best understood from its various yardsticks of population, educational level, occupational status, etc. Therefore, to make the pictures of the Limbu tribal social and economic life structure, the present tribal community of West Bengal and Darjeeling will be given.

In this regard, we have surveyed to know about the demography and socio-economic profile of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills. To get a clear idea of the socio-economic conditions of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills a survey including 500 households from Darjeeling District's selected villages was carried out. The present chapter deals with the socio-economic and demographic conditions of the Limbu tribes in the study area. An attempt is made in this chapter to analyze the socio-economic and demographic life of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills.

Table 2.11: Age and Sex Composition of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills

Serial No	Frequency Distribution	Total No of Frequency of Limbu Male Tribe	Total No of Frequency of Limbu Female tribe	Total No of Frequency Limbu Tribe
1	0-4	18(0.80 %)	21(0.93%)	39(1.74%)
2	5-8	34(1.52 %)	28 (1.25%)	62(2.7%)
3	9-12	54 (2.42 %)	65(2.90%)	119(5.31%)
4	13-16	89(3.99%)	85(3.79%)	174(7.77%)
5	17-20	95(4.26%)	87(3.88%)	182(8.4%)
6	21-24	99(4.44%)	109 (4.87%)	208(9.29%)
7	25-28	101 (4.53%)	102(4.55%)	203(9.07%)
8	29-32	89(3.99%)	96(4.29%)	185(8.27%)
9	33-36	81(3.63%)	86(3.84%)	167(7.46%)
10	37-40	79(3.54%)	85(3.79%)	164(7.33%)
11	41-44	62(2.78%)	67(2.99%)	129(5.76%)
12	45-48	55(2.46%)	59(2.63%)	114(5.09%)
13	49-52	58(2.60%)	54(2.41%)	112(5.00%)
14	53-56	47(2.11%)	51(2.27%)	98(4.38%)
15	57-60	43(1.93%)	46(2.05%)	89(3.97%)
16	61-64	34(1.52%)	30(1.34%)	64(2.86%)
17	65-68	31(1.16%)	27(0.98%)	58(4.47%)
18	69-72	14(0.62%)	13(0.58%)	27 (1.20%)
19	73-76	11(0.49%)	10(0.44%)	21(0.93%)
20	77-80	07(0.31%)	05(0.22%)	12(0.53%)
21	81-84	04(0.17%)	02(0.08%)	6(0.26%)
22	85-88	01(0.04%)	02(0.08%)	03(0.13%)
23	89-92	0	01(0.04%)	01(0.04%)
24	93-96	0	0	0%
25	97-100	0	0	0%
	Total	1107(49.4%)	1130(50.5%)	2237 (100%)

Source:³⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.11 refers to the age and sex composition of the Limbu tribes of Darjeeling hills. It is observed that the sample composition is slightly predominant with the female respondents (50.5%)

and followed by the male respondents (49.4%). Here, we found that the maximum Limbus between the age of 17-52 is above the 5% including male and female, and from the age between 0-16 and 53-92 are below the 5%. Maximum respondents are between the age of 21-24 and 25-28 of age. In our survey above the age of 90, we could find only one male who is 92 years old. Thus, the majority of Limbu respondents are found to be relatively young.

2.6 Types of Family

Generally, every family has been divided into nuclear and joint families. A nuclear family consists of parents and their children and a joint family means all the family members like grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, children, and cousins live together and share the bonding of love, happiness, sorrow everything. During our survey, we found that Limbus families are broadly divided into nuclear families, Joint families, and Single-families.

Table 2.12: Types of Family among the Limbu Tribe

Sl. No	Family	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nuclear Family	476	95.20%
2	Joint Family	19	3.80%
3	Single	5	1%
4	Total	500	100%

Source: ³¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 2.1: Types of Family among the Limbu Tribe

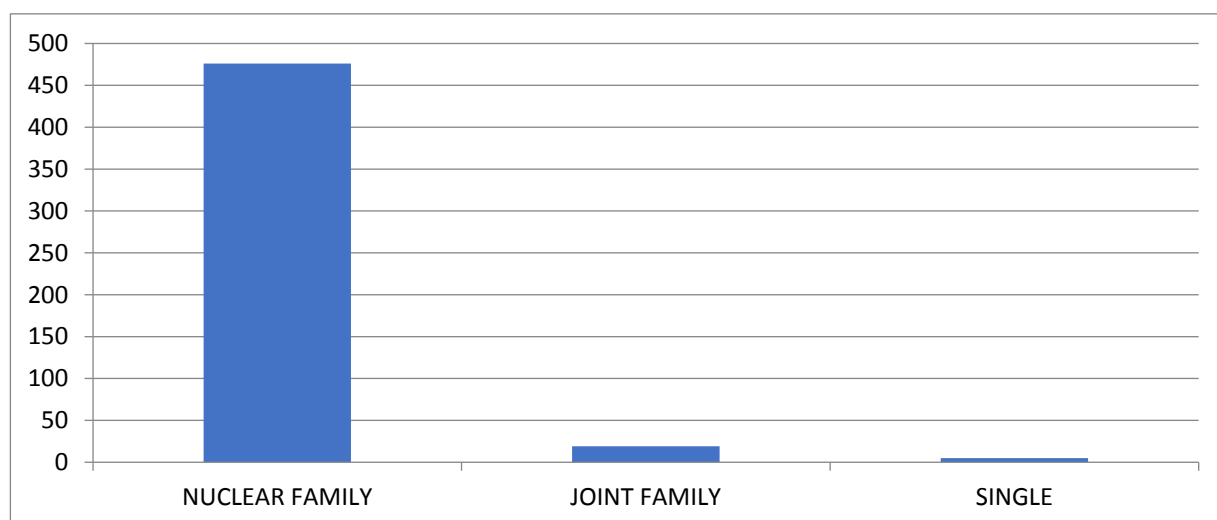


Table 2.12 and figure 2.6 refer to the types of families among the Limbu tribes of Darjeeling hills. In our survey, we found 95.2% of respondents were from nuclear family only 3.8% were respondents from joint families. Even we found that 1% of respondents were single-family members who live alone. In the study areas it was found that the maximum number of single persons to be unmarried and due to family dispute, he/she decided to live alone as a single-family.

2.7 Size of the family:

The size of the family plays an important role in determining the well-being of every individual. It has a direct impact on the socio-economic life of families. The Large and Small family has both merits and demerits. We found the size of Limbus families varies from single-family to family members of more than ten family members.

Table 2.13: Size of the Family of Limbus

Size of family	Frequency	Percentage
0-1	5	1%
02-05	321	64.20%
06-07	127	25.40%
08-10	41	8.20%
Above 10	6	1.20%
Total	500	100%

Source: ³² Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Above table 2.13 shows the size of families. We found 1% family size single who lives alone because of the death of parents and in some cases death of a spouse. Some of them to be unmarried and their age of marriage is crossed and due to family dispute, he/she decided to live alone as a single-family and 64.2% of respondents belongs to the 2-5 family members which consist the nuclear families of husband, wife, and children whose numbers are highest and 25.4% respondents are from 6-7 family members which we can consider as nuclear and as a joint family here we found grandparents are living with son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren and in some family, unmarried sisters and brothers are living with their brother and sister-in-law. 8.2% of respondents belong to the 8-10 family members which we considered joint families including grandparents and unmarried brothers and sisters. 1.2% of respondents belong to more than 10 family members this is also a joint family including grandparents, uncle aunt, and cousins.

2.8 Head of the Household:

In Limbu society, the father is considered as the head of the family but if the father is death then the widowed mother became the head of the family. If the eldest son is there then he would help his mother to run the family. There is a cordial relationship among the family members of the Limbus. The youngest members of the family always give respect and privilege to the seniors of the families. Seniors of the family also take all the responsibilities of the family and teach discipline and moral values to the family members. In Limbu families' women are highly respected and given equal status with the men. Although decision-making power is in the hand of the husband the final decision is taken after the consultation with the wife.

2.9 Status of Houses of Limbus of Darjeeling Hills:

The dwelling house of a Limbu is known as “Khim or “Heem” in Limbu language, which has generally a rectangular ground plan with a rectangular roof with winged flaps at the two narrow sides, made of the bamboo mat or “chim. The floor of the house is generally made of mud or wooden planks and the walls with stone and mud or bamboo matting plastered with a thin layer of clay. The stone walls are well plastered with mud and decorated or washed with white and red coloured soils known as “Khamphulla” and “Khamhetlla”. The roof of the house is made of several good-sized undressed timbers which are inserted in the ground known as “Sitlang”. Generally, their house consists of two rooms and one kitchen and in front of the houses are small verandas or “sikuwas”. At present these types of houses, rarely seen in Darjeeling hills. We have observed a lot of changes in their housing pattern. These houses can be found only in Eastern Nepal and the western part of Sikkim, India.

2.10 Description of Limbu Houses in Darjeeling:

As already mentioned, that Limbus have their own pattern of houses but in Darjeeling, we did not find these types of Limbu houses. So, we have divided houses of Limbus into three categories viz, Pacca house, Semi Pucca house, and Kachha house.

Table 2.14: Description of Limbu Houses in Darjeeling

Sl.No.	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Pucca house	97	19.40%
2	Semi Pucca house	287	57.40%
3	Kachha house	116	23.20%
4	Total	500	100%

Source: ³³ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

The above table 2.14 shows the housing conditions of Limbus in the Darjeeling hills. In our survey, we found mainly three types of houses based on their structure. The majority of the Limbus have Semi pucca houses which are built with cement and wood. 57.4% of respondents have semi-pucca houses. Those Limbus of Darjeeling whose economic conditions are better than other Limbus have pucca houses. Pucca houses are fully cemented houses and integrated with all sorts of facilities required to have for good means of living. So, 19.4% of Limbus have pucca houses. Those Limbus whose income has meager have kaccha houses, 23.2% of Limbus have kaccha houses in Darjeeling hills. The Development Board of Limbu have built many houses for Limbus so in our survey, we considered these houses to semi pucca houses.

2.11 Description of Areas of Limbus Houses of Darjeeling Hills

To get a clear picture of the habitation of the Limbu tribal society, we have classified the 500 households of Limbus of Darjeeling, according to the habitation namely municipality and Panchayat.

Table 2.15: Description of Areas of Limbus Houses of Darjeeling Hill

Sl.No.	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Municipality area	71	14.20%
2	Panchayat area	429	85.80%
3	Total	500	100%

Source: ³⁴ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.15 refers to the distribution of the tribal respondents by the habitation areas of Limbus of Darjeeling. It is found that the majority of them have lived in Panchayat areas i.e., 85.8%, and the remaining 14.2% of the Limbus are lived in Municipality areas.

2.12 Description of Landholding of Limbus of Darjeeling:

The land is the mainstay of the tribals and more than 90 percent of them are dependent on agriculture and allied activities. Their economy is primarily agro based. The land is the only tangible asset of a tribal family. Tribals have an emotional attachment to the land.³⁵

The land is the most important productive asset and is also a symbol of power and privilege in society. Its possession enhances one's economic and social status. In rural Darjeeling, People have three types of ownership patterns of land, (1). Own Permanent Land (Khasmahal area), (2). Tea Garden land, (3). Permanent Forest Land. In this context, we attempt to look into the ownership

pattern of the land of Limbus of Darjeeling. The Khasmahal land belonging to Limbu households have their documents and ownership. These lands were hereditary land and every child has equal rights on them.

The Tea Garden land belonging to the Limbu households does not have any legal documents to claim. The tea garden is the private enterprise where the entire Tea Garden Land falls under their jurisdiction of lease land. At the time of the British period, they have been given authority to choose any area of Tea Garden land and to settle themselves. Gradually they also divided the forest resources of tea garden areas among themselves and have become the permanent owner of those land and forest. We also came to know that at that time British Tea Garden owners used to construct permanent houses for each of the tea garden workers and used to provide all other amenities to the workers including medical facilities. Permanent Forest Land belonging to Limbus is the same kind of land as Tea Garden land. Here, land comes under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department.

Table 2.16: Description of Land

Sl.No.	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Own land (Khasmahal)	355	71%
2	Tea garden land	138	27.60%
3	Permanent forest	7	1.40%
4	Total	500	100%

Source: ³⁶ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 2.2: Description of Land Limbus of Darjeeling hills

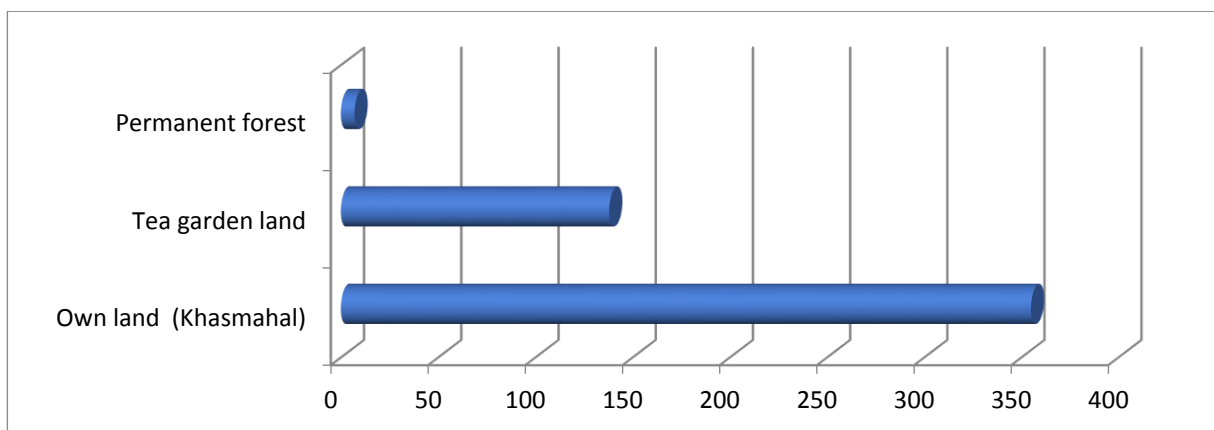


Table 2.16 refers to the description of lands by Limbus tribal respondents. It is observed that 71% of respondents live in their own land (Khasmahal), 27.6% of respondents live in Tea Garden land and 1.4% of respondents live in permanent forest land. According to the available records, the first commercial tea gardens were planted in 1852. Darjeeling was then a very sparsely populated

region and was only used as a hill resort. Tea being a labour- intensive industry needed a sufficient number of workers to plant, tend, pluck and finally manufacture the produce. Hence, people from the neighboring regions, mainly Nepal, were encouraged to immigrate and engage as labourers in the tea gardens. It appears that by the year 1866, Darjeeling had 39 tea gardens producing a total crop of 21,000 kg of tea. In 1870, the number of gardens increased to 56 to produce about 71,000 kg of tea harvested from 4,400 hectares. By 1874, tea cultivation in Darjeeling was found to be a profitable venture and there were 113 gardens with approximately 6000 hectares. Today there are 87 registered gardens sprawled across the geographical area of 20,200 hectares.³⁷

2.13 Electric Connection in the Houses of Limbus

Darjeeling was the first town to get electricity. November 10, 1897, was an epoch-making day in the power sector in India. On this day, the first hydel power station in India, and reportedly in Asia too, was commissioned at Sidrapong near Darjeeling town, the first power utility runs on a commercial basis for use of the general public, heralding the electrical energy era in the Indian sub-continent, and ushering in a revolutionary change in the socio-cultural and economic life of Indian society. Darjeeling got the hydroelectricity from this Sidrapong Hydel Power Station, such being the first town in India supplied with hydropower. Quite appropriately, the Govt. Of India declared Sidrapong Hydel Power Station as a ‘Heritage Power Station’ of India on the eve of its centenary.³⁸ When we surveyed the 500 houses of limbus regarding electricity and we found the following percentage.

Table 2.17: Electric Connection in the Houses of Limbus

Sl.No.	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Electrified	500	100%
2	Not Electrified	Nil	Nil
3	Total	500	100%

Source: ³⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.17 shows the electric connection in the houses of Limbus of Darjeeling and 100% of the Limbus houses has connected with electricity.

2.14 Sanitation Facility among the Limbus:

Limbus of Darjeeling are very much conscious of hygiene and health. Generally, the scheduled tribes are not much concerned about their health and hygiene but this does not apply to the Limbu tribes. During the survey, it was observed that maximum Limbus’ houses are neat and clean and they have good sanitation facilities.

Table 2.18: Sanitation Facility among the Limbus

Sl.No.	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Toilet attached with house	40	8%
2	Public toilet	5	1%
3	Toilet outside the house with septic tank	338	67.60%
4	Toilet Linked with stream	117	23.40%
5	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁴⁰Compiled Data from the Field Survey

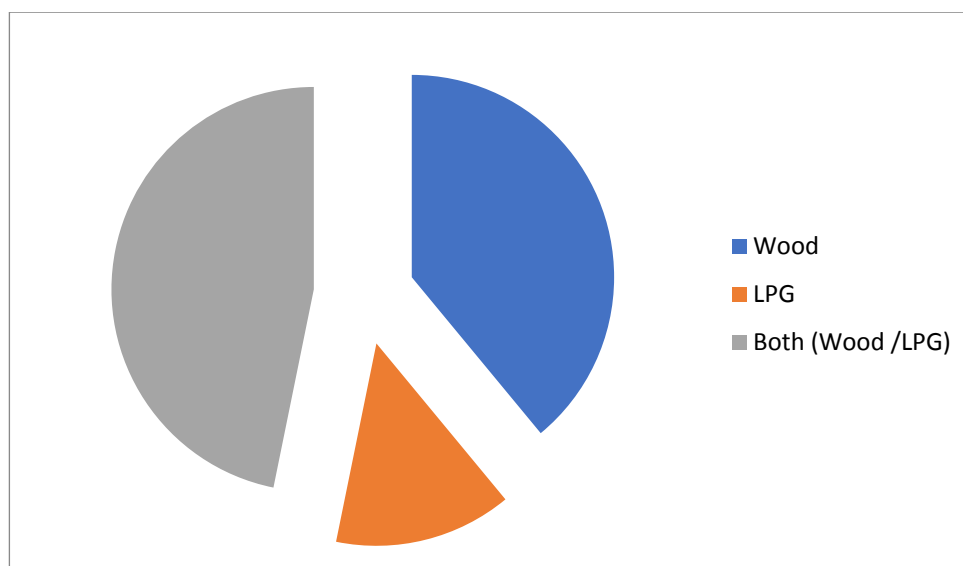
Table 2.18 discusses the sanitation facility of Limbus in the study area. It is found that the majority of the respondents have owned toilet facilities outside the house with the septic tank (67.6 %) and 23.4% of respondents have owned toilet facilities outside the house linked with the stream. Only 8% limbus have toilet facility attached with the house and only 1% respondents use public

Table 2.19: Fuel Used by Limbus

Sl.No.	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Wood	195	39%
2.	LPG	71	14.2%
3.	Both (Wood /LPG)	234	46.8%
4.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁴¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 2.3: Fuel Used by Limbus of Darjeeling



The above table discusses the source of Fuel of the respondents. When we surveyed the 500 households and we found maximum Limbus resided in the Panchayat areas. So, when we asked them about the source of Fuel then we found that maximum respondents (46.8%) use both wood and LPG. 39% of respondents use wood, and 71% of respondents use LPG only because they are from municipality areas.

2.16 Source of Water of the Limbus of Darjeeling:

Traditionally the people depended on their traditional water resources such as rivers, ponds, and springs. Besides, that Government agencies provide water facilities like a tap, bore, and well. In Darjeeling maximum Limbus depended on traditional water source of spring and those who reside in municipality areas use tap water.

Table 2.20: Source of Water of the Limbus of Darjeeling

Sl. No	Types of sources	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Spring	429	98.4%
2.	Tap	71	14.2%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source:⁴² Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Above Table 2.20 shows the source of water among the Limbus of Darjeeling. As already mentioned, that maximum Limbus depended on spring water sources so found 98.4% uses spring water source and 14.2% uses tap water source.

2.17 Education in Darjeeling Hills:

Changes in education scenario: the education of tribal people and universal education is a huge task for all the policymakers and a solution does not lie in the management of any single factor. The government must see the entire problem of tribal education and development holistically taking into consideration the specific context of tribal sections of the society.⁴³ Education is universally recognised as the most powerful instrument for the socio-economic development of individuals. Improvements in literacy level have positive spin-off effects, Such as better health indicators and an increase in productivity. Which can increase the income levels of poor people significantly.⁴⁴

Table 2.21: Literacy Differences between General and ST

Comparative Literacy Rates of STs and Total Population (in percent)						
Category / Census Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population	28.3	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.84	72.99
Scheduled Tribes	8.53	11.30	16.35	29.60	47.10	58.96
Literacy Gap between ST and General	19.77	18.15	19.88	22.61	18.28	14.03

Source:⁴⁵ *Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India 2013*

Education forms an important component in the overall development of individuals, enabling them to greater awareness, better comprehension of their social, political, and cultural environment, and also facilitating the improvement of their socio-economic conditions. These hold true in the case of the Scheduled Tribes in India. Among states, Mizoram and Lakshadweep have the highest LR for STs, while the lowest LR was observed in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The gap in LR was highest in Tamil Nadu in 1991 and 2001 and decreased only marginally (6.1 points) in 2011.⁴⁶

Darjeeling owes its original development to its suitability as a health resort for Government servants. It is not therefore surprising that schools were needed there for the children of those European Government servants who used it as a sanitarium and who could not afford to send their children to the educated in their native land. Schools were attracted to the district or were opened in it to meet these needs. At first, the schools which were started were on a small scale and had a precarious existence. They gradually gained stability. They aimed to provide for European and Anglo-Indian children that type of education and upbringing to which the parents had been accustomed in their native country. Though the schools were designed and maintained for European and Anglo-Indian children, the type of education they provided has proved attractive to several Indian parents who could afford the fees, and practically all the so-called European schools now accept children of Indian parents up to 15 to 25 percent of the total number of their pupils.⁴⁷

The pioneers in the spread of education in the district were Christian missionaries and particularly those of the Church of Scotland Mission. When the British took over the district, popular education was practically unknown. A few of the better classes had private tutors for their boys; a few who

could read tried to hand on this accomplishment to their families; and in Buddhist monasteries novitiate monks were taught to chant Tibetan texts.⁴⁸ The first attempt to reach the hill people by education was made about 1850, by the Rev. W. Start, a private missionary, who added to his record of good work in Darjeeling by opening a school for Lepchas. After he came to a band of German missionaries, one for whom, a Mr. Niebel, devoted himself to school work, prepared some Lepcha primers, and gathered boys together into schools. It was not however until the advent of William Macfarlane in 1869 that any board scheme of vernacular education was introduced into the district. He realized that it would be essential to train teachers and with this object he collected a band of hill boys, to teach whom he devoted the first years of his missionary life in the Hills. This group of boys was the nucleus of a training school at Kalimpong. Mr. Macfarlane found he could use Hindi textbooks as a means of instruction and induced the Government to give scholarships for a student attending his courses of instruction. He himself taught in the face of many discouragements and the frequent disappearance of his most promising pupils. But he persevered and, overcoming all obstacles, was able, with the help of the Government to start primary schools in many parts of the district. Primary Education In 1813 there were 25 primary schools with 650 boys and girls receiving instruction. Under his successors in the Church of Scotland Mission, progress was steady.⁴⁹

Education is one of the most powerful means of bringing about socio-economic development among scheduled tribes and the one major factor that can bring transformation in the overall condition of this tribal population is education. Moreover, proper education will not just benefit the tribal population but benefit the entire economy of India. Furthermore, implementing effective education resources for the tribal community will either bring immediate changes in their state of living or improve their future living conditions.

Darjeeling is renowned for its centres of educational excellence. Education in the Darjeeling district ranks quite high. Therefore, it is not surprising that people across India and South East Asia flock here to get the best of primary and secondary/higher secondary education. These schools have a long history and old legacy with the oldest school among them coming up as early as 1844 in the form of Loreto Convent School, Darjeeling. However, the modern schools for the commoners came only half a century later in the form of Darjeeling Govt High School. The seeds for educational revolution for commoners were started by one of the teachers of Darjeeling Govt. High School – Dr Parasmani Pradhan.⁵⁰

So, the people of Darjeeling are also very much conscious about education. Limbus of Darjeeling are also not behind this. In our survey, we found the following status of education among the Limbus of Darjeeling.

Table 2.22: Educational Status of the Limbu Tribe

Educational Standard	Limbu Tribal Male	Percentage	Limbu Tribal Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Illiterate	141	6.41%	159	7.23%	300	13.64%
Class I To IV	257	11.69%	280	12.73%	537	24.43%
Class V To IX	268	12.19%	279	12.69%	547	24.88%
M.P/ICSE/CBSE	132	6.00%	136	6.18%	268	12.19%
H.S./ISC/CBSE	137	6.23%	139	6.32%	276	12.55%
B. A	92	4.18%	75	3.41%	167	7.59%
B.Sc.	05	0.22%	07	0.31%	12	0.54%
B. Com	07	0.31%	08	0.36%	15	0.68%
B. Ed/B.T.	05	0.22%	07	0.31%	12	0.54%
M.A.	13	0.59%	21	0.95%	34	1.54%
M.Sc.	03	0.13%	05	0.22%	08	0.36%
M.Com.	05	0.22%	04	0.18%	09	0.40%
M.Phil	00	00%	02	0.09%	02	0.09%
Ph.D.	03	0.13%	02	0.09%	05	0.22%
LLB	03	0.13%	03	0.13%	06	0.27%
Total	1071	48.72%	1127	51.27%	2198	100%

Source: ⁵¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Here table 2.22 depicts the distribution of the male and female tribal respondents by their education. It is observed that 6.41% male and 7.23% female are illiterate among the 500 households of Limbus of Darjeeling. We have divided the classes to know in details of education among the Limbus. We found that from class I to IV both male and female percentages are 24.43% and from class V to IX both male and female respondents are 24.88% and 12.19% respondents have passed Class X and 12.55% have passed class twelve. Regarding B.A. only 7.59% of respondents have cleared it and B.SC respondents are very few only 0.54% and B.COM respondents are only 0.68%. When we asked them about their higher qualification then found 1.54% M.A., 0.36% M.SC., and 0.40% M.COM. In our survey we also could found that 0.22% of Limbus have done M. PHIL and 0.27% have done Ph.D. And 0.27% Limbus are also doing LLB. So, here we found the total literacy rate among the male Limbus 48.9% and female Limbus 51% after deducting the illiterate numbers of Limbus.

The main factors responsible for the low level of literacy and educational backward among tribal responsible communities are acute indigence of the tribal people, want of positive motivation for

education, lack of adequate educational infrastructure in their neighborhood, and deficiency in a communication system, besides these factors, a large proportion of the poorer tribal children or account of the rising cost of the schooling and economic burden cannot afford to benefit from them. Most tribals tend to use their children for ancillary services that would bring in some added income for their starving families.⁵²

2.18 Social Concept of Marriage of Limbu Community in Darjeeling Hills:

Marriage is a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by-laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status of their offspring (if any). In Limbu society, the marriage system is really good. Marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and not a contract. Child marriage is not known in their society. A girl is married at 16 or more years of age when her physical development was complete. Now so many changes have come in tribal society, now they became very much conscious regarding the marriage of their daughter while selecting the bridegroom, the economic status of the boy in terms of his earnings is kept utmost in mind. They believed that an educated girl should be married to an equally educated man.

In Limbu tribes both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage. A Limbu tribe may marry any girl or boy, he or she likes, provided she or he does not belong to his or her clan (Thar). The marriage rules in the Limbu society are strictly Endogamy and Thar exogamy. Besides their own Thar exogamy, they have paternal and maternal exogamy. They are also not allowed to marry with their teacher, student, son's and daughter's friend, their adopted children, and the scheduled castes of any other community. The Limbu tribes have four types of legal marriages: 1. Adultery, 2. Arrangement 3. Elopement 4. Abduction.

The Limbus follow the system of elopement because according to their custom there should be elopement of bridegroom and bride. For Limbus elopement is pre-arranged by both the parents, where the bride's parents send their daughter to a pre-determined place or spot like some relative's house, a marketplace where the prospective bridegroom comes to take her home. However, such an arrangement was taken under the permission of the bride.

A total of 4,67,00,848 out of 10,45,45,716 Scheduled Tribes population are married, according to the Census data on the marital status of ST population. The married constitutes 44.7 per cent of the total STs population. According to the 2011 Census data on the marital status of the ST population released today, the percentage of widowed is 4.6 percent and separated is 0.4 percent. The percentage of divorced constitutes 0.2 percent. In comparison to the 2001 Census, the

percentage of widowed, divorced, separated has increased in most of the age groups. (Census, 2011)

Table 2.23: Marital Status of the Limbus of Darjeeling Hills

Sl.No.	Forms of Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Monogamy	1565	99.42%
2.	Polygamy	9	0.57%
3.	Total	1574	100%

Source: ⁵³ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table:2.23 refers to the marital status of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills. In our study areas we have found 1574 married couples and among this 99.30 % of marriages are based on Monogamy. In The Limbu, community monogamy is very popular rather than polygamy. It is found that Limbu men and women can remarry in the presence and the death of their first wife or husband. As we came to know that polygamy and polyandry also prevail in Limbu society but we hardly found it only 0.57% of polygamy found in our study areas and polyandry is not found in the study areas.

2.19 Different Way of Getting Marriage in Limbu Community of Darjeeling Hills:

In Limbu society, we found different types of marriage, which we have already discussed in our previous chapter (Ethnography). In our survey, we found a maximum of Limbus have got married through elopement (runaway). Elopement is such a type of marriage where the boy takes away the girl without her parents knowing about it and only after three days of elopement, the boy's family send the message to the family of the girl that her daughter has been married by their son. The message is sent along with social obligated rituals, if the girl's parents accept the gifts, then it means they have given their consent if not then the girl is not allowed to come into her natal family house throughout her life. Her family breaks all relations with her.

Arranged marriage is not so common in Limbu society. If boys and girls are from the same community then they follow the arranged marriage. One thing we found in our survey is that elopement is part of Limbu's marriage system if you do engagement with a Limbu boy, but at the time of marriage you have to elope with your fiancée but this time both parents know about their elopement.

Adultery marriage (Jari vivah) means stealing away from someone else wife. This Jari vivah is a very rare case in Limbu society. In the case of adultery, compensation must be paid to the previous husband.

Table 2.24: Different Ways of Getting Marriage in the Limbu Community of Darjeeling Hills

Sl.No.	Forms of Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Arranged (Magni)	315	20.01%
2	Elopement (Vagera)	1256	79.79%
3	Adultery (Jari)	3	0.19%
4	Total	1574	100%

Source: ⁵⁴Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 2.4: Different Ways of Getting Marriage in the Limbu Community of Darjeeling Hills

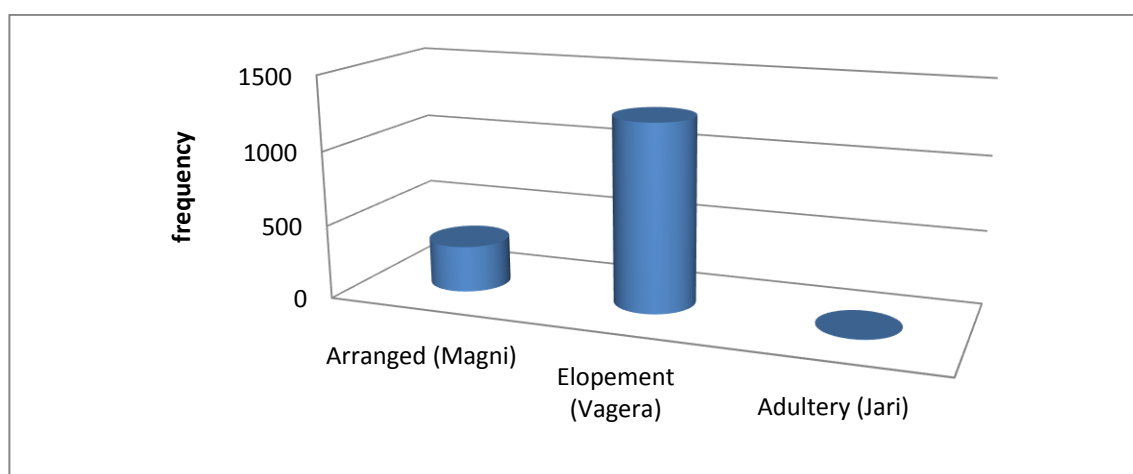


Table 2.24 refers to the different ways of getting marriages of Limbus of Darjeeling. As already mentioned, the maximum number of respondents are in favor of Elopement. We found 79.79% of Limbus have got married through elopement. It is because elopement is part of the Limbu marriage culture. They also follow the arranged marriage if both are from the Limbu community in some cases, they do arrange marriage with other communities but not with all rituals but within Limbus they follow this with whole rituals. Thus, in our study areas, we found 20.01% of respondents who have got their marriage through the arrangement. Adultery marriage (Jari vivah) is very rare in the Limbu community so we found only 0.19% of Limbus who have got adultery (Jari) marriage in Darjeeling hills. As already mentioned in adultery marriage (Jari vivah) compensation must be paid to the previous husband.

2.20 Marital Status of Limbus of Darjeeling Hills:

In Darjeeling among the Limbu community, we have found that Monogamy is very popular than polygamy. Almost 99.42% of marriage was monogamous. Here, we surveyed to know the different status of marriage among the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills.

Table 2.25: Different Status of Marriage among the Limbus of Darjeeling Hills

Sl. No	Marital Status	Total	Percentage
1	Married	1574	70.36%
2	Widow	25	1.11%
3	Widower	11	0.49%
4	Unmarried	81	3.62%
5	Below the age of 21unmarried male	307	13.72%
6	Below the age of 18 unmarried female	239	10.68%
	Total	2237	100%

Source: ⁵⁵Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 2.5: Different Status of Marriage among the Limbus of Darjeeling Hills

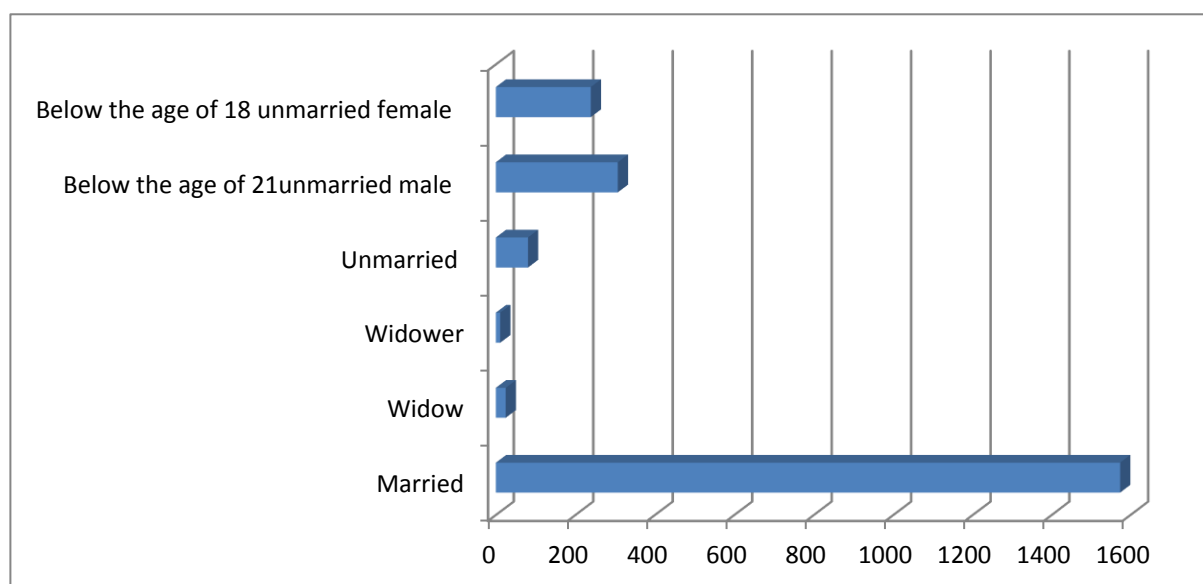


Table 2.25 shows the different status of marriage among the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. Among the 500 households, we found 70.36% married Limbus and 3.62% unmarried Limbus here, unmarried we consider those who crossed the marriage age and have not got the marriage.

After marital status, we checked the status of Widow and Widower. In Limbu society, widows are given due respect. After the death of the husband, sometimes, the widow gets remarried to the brother of the husband. This type of marriage takes place when the children are infants and if she

is not in a position to look after those children. However, in such circumstances, the brother-in-law cannot force the widow for marriage, in Limbu traditions, widow marriage, marriage with her brother-in-law, and others all depend on the will of the widow. Nobody can force her. So, she is independent to take her all decisions in this matter. During our survey, we found widow respondents are higher than widower respondents. The total percentage of widows is 1.11% and widowers are 0.49% which is slightly lower than widows.

Besides this, we also surveyed the below of 21 of age unmarried male Limbus and below 18 of age unmarried female and found 13.72% unmarried male- and 10.68% unmarried female

2.21 Economic Conditions of Limbus of Darjeeling:

Socio-economic status (SES) is a combined measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position about others, based on income, education, and occupation. For analyzing the SES of a family, the household income, education, and occupation were examined, as well as combined income of the family members with other attributes were assessed. Socioeconomic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. SES, here, is the total of the scores of families monthly income, landholding, dwelling housing, properties including furniture, luxurious items, and other impediments.⁴⁸

Darjeeling's economy is mainly based on tea gardens and tourism. Besides these other economic sources of Darjeeling are Timber, Trade, indigenous types of agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, recruitment in Army, Paramilitary, Government and Semi-Government officer.

The main economic activities of Limbus of Darjeeling are working in Tea Garden and agriculture. In the tea garden, both males and females are engaged but female tea workers are higher than male tea workers. It is found that tea workers have been divided into permanent workers and temporary workers. In, our survey one of the female tea workers tells us that in the tea garden, permanent tea workers have been divided into four parts (1). Footwala, (2). Bichkhalay, (3). Chatakhalay, (4). Nani ko aama, when we asked why this division then she mentioned that this is like rank Footwala means highest rank and Bichkhalay means second-highest rank Chatakhalay means third highest rank and Nani ko aama means the lowest rank. so, here according to rank their work has been divided. For male workers in their local language called them *Marad Kaam* and their main work is to spray chemicals on the tea plant to defend them from the leafhopper and moth besides this they also plucked the tea leaf at the time of seasonal influx. Temporary tea workers are also known as *Biga* workers and they are hired at the time of seasonal influx on certain stipulated wages. The young male generation always gives their preference in joining the Indian Army. Those who are educated are employees in Government jobs and under GTA casual works. Those who are

uneducated are running their family doing labour work, carpenter, driver. It is also found that those who are unemployed prefer to go to foreign countries mainly Middle East Asian countries to earn the money. The below-given table shows the occupational status of Limbus of Darjeeling.

Table 2.26: Occupational Status of the Limbu Tribe

Occupation	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Farmer	119	23.80%	39	7.80%	158	31.60%
Labour	12	2.40%	-		12	2.4%
Carpenter	15	3%	-		15	3%
Teachers	14	2.80%	7	1.40%	21	4.20%
Private Job	27	5.40%	17	3.40%	44	8.80%
Business	15	3%	9	1.80%	24	4.80%
GTA employee	7	1.40%	5	1%	12	2.40%
Govt. Service	19	3.80%	11	2.20%	30	6%
Para-Military forces (army)	18	3.60%	4	0.80%	22	4.40%
Drivers	9	1.80%	0		9	1.80%
An employee in a foreign country	13	2.60%	7	1.40%	20	4%
Tea workers	22	4.40%	87	17.40%	109	21.80%
Retired Govt.-servant (Pensioner)	19	3.80%	5	1%	24	4.80%
Total	309	63.80%	191	36.20%	500	100%

Source:⁵⁶ Compiled Data from the field survey

Table 2.26 shows the occupational status of Limbus. It is found that maximum Limbus (31.6%) both male and female are farmers who engage themselves in cultivation and they have their own land where they do cultivation. Especially, they cultivated vegetables like Iskush (Chayote), cauliflowers, cabbage, potatoes, peas, beans, Rayo saag (green leaves), radish, carrot, beetroot. They do not grow paddy and wheat because the climate of Darjeeling is not suitable for the cultivation of these crops. The second highest respondents are tea workers (21.8%), that Limbus who are residing in tea garden areas are mainly associated with these occupations but some of them do not associate with this occupation. At present, the tea garden condition is not good in Darjeeling. Most of the tea garden has been closed due to the financial crisis. Therefore, most of them working as secondary workers, in our survey in Ringtong Tea Estate, found that when the tea garden was closed at that time all those tea workers survived by cutting and selling the wood of their own forest. Another source of income besides tea gardens is employed in the government and private sectors. 8.8% Limbus are engaged in private job and 6% Limbus of Darjeeling are engaged in a government job. As already mentioned, that young Limbu boys are very fond to join

the Indian army so 4.4% of Limbus are recruited in the Indian Army. There are many retired armies and civil also who are pension holder whose percentage are 4.8%. During the Gorkhaland agitation who took an active part in the movement and whose family members became ma martyrs at the time of agitation were given the jobs after the formation of DGHC later DGHC turns into GTA so here we found 2.4% of respondents are working under GTA. When unemployment increases in Darjeeling due to various causes so many youths of Darjeeling turned their attention to seek jobs in foreign countries particularly Dubai, Kuwait, and Israel, where they could get a handsome salary from which they could fulfill their daily requirement and dreams. Therefore, it has become one of the trends in the youths of Darjeeling to go to foreign countries instead of getting government jobs because for getting government jobs they have to study hard and work hard which they do not want to do so, most of the youths have an option that to go foreign countries and earn money. Limbus of Darjeeling are not exceptional from this trend so 4% Limbus are there who works in foreign countries. We found that 3% and 2.4% of respondents are doing the job as daily wages carpenters and laborers respectively. 1.8% of respondents are drivers some of them have their own vehicles but others are driving the vehicle of their malik (owner). Limbus are also found in doing business, like small grocery shops and ration shops. In our survey, 2.4% of Limbus are found doing business. Literacy is another indicator of the standard levels of living. The Limbus literacy rate is also growing after getting tribal status they have become very conscious about the education and they are also working as a teacher in Government schools and also teaching in colleges and universities so, 4.2% of Limbus of Darjeeling working as teachers and assistant professor in a different part of Darjeeling and West Bengal. It is also found that many governmental schemes and developmental works like MGNREGA (The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) are also providing daily wage work to them.

2.22 Case Study of Lama Gaon: (Teacher cum Homestay Owner)

When we surveyed Lama Gaon Bijanbari to know about the socio-economic condition of the Limbus community we stayed at one homestay and met the owner of the homestay Mr. Bishes Subba and Mrs. Ruth Subba who were also from the Limbu community. So, we also interviewed them about their socio-economic condition and found that their economic condition is very sound. They have their own school which is run by foreign-sponsored and the husband also works as a school teacher in a government school and the wife runs the homestay business. They have converted to the Christian religion. They are educated, well equipped with all modern amenities, and with their three children, they are leading a happy life. By observing their lives, we can say that many Limbu of Darjeeling has been leading economically improved life.

2.23 Case Study of Sumbuk :(as a Daily Wages Labour)

At Lama Gaown we found that Limbus are doing development but at Sumbuk still, they are backward condition. In Sumbuk we met Mr. Harka bahadur Subba (Nugo). He has a wife and son. He works as daily wages labour to serve his family. He is an illiterate person and even he has no idea about the scheduled tribe status of Limbu, even he is not aware of the benefit of being tribal and he has no idea about the Limbu Development Board. He is such an innocent person, during our survey he was telling us that please tell the government to give me a job and all facilities. The life of Mr. Harka bahadur Nugo tells us that still there are Limbus who are living their primitive life with their old tradition speaking their own Limbu language. Limbus of Darjeeling should be grateful to this type of Limbus because they preserve cultures, they were successful to get their tribal status.

2.24 Monthly Income and Source of the Family:

The source of income plays a very important role to know the sustainability of the economic growth of any community. So, after the occupational status of Limbus, our questions were based on their monthly income. It has been observed that those Limbus who are residing in tea garden areas sustain their livelihood as tea workers, and those Limbus who are inhabitants in Khasmahal areas are mainly dependent on farming, and in Municipality areas, most of them depend on Government and private jobs. Although it seems that their source of income is depending on their inhabitant areas which is true but it is also found that not all of them depend only on Tea Garden and Farming. Many of the Limbus of tea garden as well as Khasmahal areas has been working as a government employee, in the private sector, recruited in the Indian army and in different fields to earn the money for their livelihood. The given below table shows the month.

Table 2.27: Monthly Income of the Family of Limbus of Darjeeling

S. No	Monthly Income	No of Households	Percentage
1	Less Than 5000	170	34%
2	5001 To 10000	157	31.4%
3	10001 To 20000	82	16.4%
4	20001 To 30000	57	11.4%
5	30001 To 40000	12	2.4%
6	40001 To 50000	9	1.8%
7	50001 To 60000	7	1.4%
8	60001 To 70000	4	0.8%
9	70001 To 80000	2	0.4%
10	80001 To 90000.	Nil	00%
11	Above- 100001	Nil	00%
12	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁵⁷Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 2.6: Monthly Income of the Family of Limbus of Darjeeling

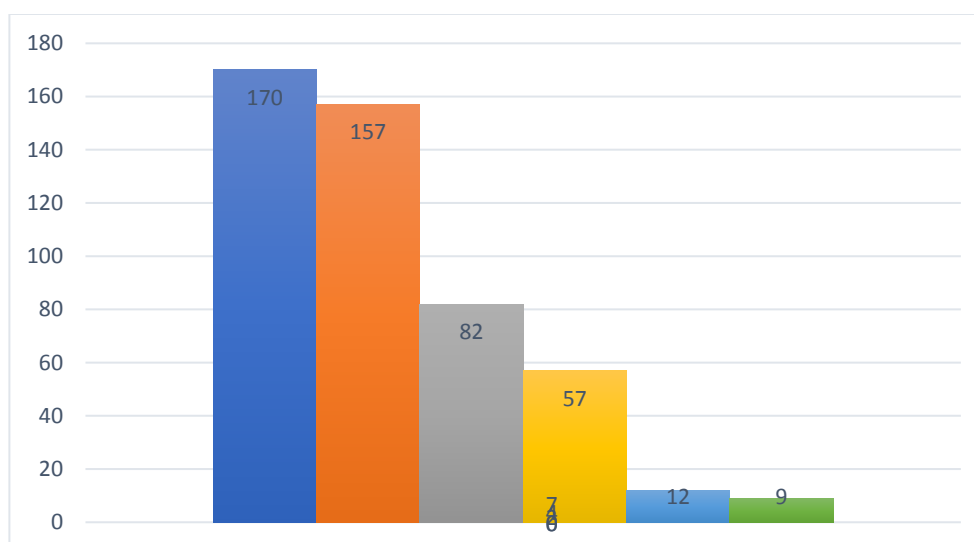


Table 2.27 shows the monthly income of the Limbus of Darjeeling. Here, we found that 34% of respondents' monthly income was less than 5000, from here we could understand their nature of work. They are mostly from daily wages labours and farmers. 31.4% of respondents are from tea workers, business, carpentry, and driver whose monthly income is between 5001 to 10000. 16.4% Limbus are earning between 10001 to 20000 in a month and they are mostly employees in GTA, Private job and pension holders. 11.4% of respondents who are working as an Indian Army, Government job (particularly group C and D) and in foreign countries are earning between 20001 to 30000. Those Limbus who are working as teachers and government employees (A and B group) and in private sectors (call center) whose percentage is 2.4% earning between 30001 to 40000. 1.8% respondents are those who are working in the teaching field, administrative field whose monthly income is between 40001 to 50000. Those respondents whose monthly income are between 50001 to 60000 and between 60001 to 70000 their percentage are 1.4% and 0.8% respectively. Only 0.4% of Limbus are there who are earning between 70001 to 80000 and they are teaching in university and colleges.

Table 2.28: The Proportion of Income Spent on Daily Necessities by the Limbus

Sl.No.	Name of the items	Frequency	percentage
1.	Food	500	100%
2.	Clothes	500	100%
3.	Education	445	89%
5.	Social Function	500	100%
6.	Festivals/Culture	500	100%

Source: ⁵⁸Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.28 shows the income spent on daily necessities of Limbus of Darjeeling. Here, we have divided daily necessities into five groups. It is observed that all the respondents spent their 100% households spend from their income on food, clothes, social function, and a festival or cultural Programme. But 89% households spend their income on education and 11% households do not spend their income on education

Table 2.29: Average Expenditure on Health of the Limbus of Darjeeling

Average Expenditure on Health	Frequency	Percentage
100 to 500	264	52.80%
501 to 1000	163	32.60%
Above 1000	73	14.60%
Total	500	100%

Source:⁵⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.29 tells us the monthly expenditure of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills on health. It is observed that 52.8% of respondents spent Rs.100 to Rs.500 on health and 32.6% of respondents spent Rs.501 to Rs.1000 and 14.6% of respondents have chronic diseases like diabetes, pressure, heart, etc. And takes medicine daily spent above Rs.1000 Rupees on health. During our survey, one of the respondents told us that he spent Rs.16000 in a month to buy his medicines.

Table 2.30: Average Expenditure on Entertainment (Recreation) of the Limbus of Darjeeling

Expenditure on Entertainment	Frequency	Percentage
Nil	422	84.40%
5%	56	11.40%
Above 5%	18	3.60%
Total	500	100%

Source:⁶⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.30 shows us the average expenditure of Limbus on their entertainment and comfort. It is found that 84.4% of respondents have spent nil percent on their comfort and entertainment. 11.4% of respondents spent 5% on their family recreation and 3.6% of respondents have spent above 5% on their family entertainment and enjoyment.

Table 2.31: Livestock Rearing among the Limbu Tribe

Sl.no.	Name	Nil	1 To 5	6 To 10	More than 10	Total
1	Cow	353(70.6%)	147(29.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
2	Ox	422(84.4%)	78(15.6%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
3	Goat	346(69.2%)	154(30.8%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
4	Pig	146(29.2%)	352(70.4%)	02(0.4%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
5	Hen/Cock	276(55.2%)	212(42.4%)	07(1.4%)	05(1.0%)	500(100%)
6	Duck	489(97.8%)	11(2.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
7	Cat	367(73.4%)	133(26.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
8	Dog	194(38.8%)	306(61.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)
9	Rabbit	498(99.6%)	2(0.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	500(100%)

Source: ⁶¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.31 shows the livestock rearing among the Limbus of Darjeeling. Here, a large proportion of Limbus of Darjeeling tells us that there is a close relation between Limbus and Pig, one of the respondents tell us that in *Mundhum* it has been written that Limbus and Pig have close relationships and in every ritual of Limbus they need the meat of pig so, 70.8% Limbus rear pig in their house. Besides, pig other livestock like cow, dog, hen, and cat was recorded high as compared to other livestock resources.

Table 2.32: Technological Devices at Home

Sl.no	Name of assets	Who have	Who don't have
1	Car/Vehicle	10 (2%)	490 (98%)
2	Television	495 (99%)	05(1%)
3	Bike/Scooter	66 (13.2%)	444 (88.8%)
4	Computer/Laptop	12 (2.4%)	488 (97.6%)
5	Mobile	500 (100%)	Nil
6	Refrigerator	37 (7.4%)	463 (92.6%)
7	Invertor	4 (0.8%)	496 (99.2%)
8	Music system	134(26.8%)	366(73.2%)
9	Gas oven	306(61.2%)	194(38.8%)
10	Heater	17(3.4%)	483(96.6%)
11	Iron	267(53.4%)	233(46.6%)
12	Mixer	42((8.4%)	458(91.6%)
13	Rice cooker	207(41.4%)	293(58.6%)
14	Cable Connection	357(71.4%)	143(28.6%)
15	Radio	16(3.2%)	484(96.8%)

Source: ⁶² Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 2.32 shows the availability of different technological devices in the houses of Limbus. It is found that the use of modern electrical appliances and gadgets are very common among the Limbus; almost all Limbu households have these appliances like TV, Cable, and Mobiles and only very few households 2.4% respondents have computers with internet connections. 61.2% of respondents have a Gas oven. Only 2% of Limbus who have high-income sources have personal vehicles like car, jeep and spacio, sumo and 13.2% respondents have bike and scooter. Very few Limbu had Inverter, Heater, Mixer, and Radio. Nowadays Rice cooker (41.4%) is highly used by the Limbus and 53.4% of respondents had Iron at their home.

2.27.1 Status of Limbu Women:

In Limbu tribal society women held a very high and honourable position, they have very honourable and respectable status in the society. They are eligible for higher education there is an equal status between man and woman, they can occupy administrative and other important jobs mostly performed by men. The Limbu society is free from many of the social evils like child marriage, dowry system, purdah system. Widows are free to remarry.

2.27.2 Girl Child:

The customary rites are known as '*Sapok Chomen*', which starts from the sixth month of the pregnancy of the mother. When it is known that a child is about to be born, a Brahman or Limbu priest is summoned. He notes the exact time of the child's birth and in return for his services receives money and a small amount of rice. It is customary amongst Limbus who can afford the expense to have the child's date of birth committed to writing. This paper is known as "*China Kagaz*" and is retained by the parents, who consult it on all important occasions such as marriage throughout the child's life. The fourth and the third day after birth, for a boy and a girl respectively, is the day for the "*Yangdangfoma*" (naming) ceremony. The ceremony is as follows: A cup is taken and filled with water and into it is placed any gold object such as a ring or ornament. To this are added a small quantity of sugar, cow's urine, and milk. Into this mixture, a small branch is dipped and the assembled company besprinkled. The house and particularly the actual spot where the child was born is similarly treated. When the boy becomes six months and the girl five Months old, they are fed with solid food is a ceremony called taksi (vaat khuwai). It is nalingken thangben for boys and Sisaken Menchhin for girls through which their adulthood is declared.

So we found that in the Limbu society the birth of a girl is not considered inauspicious. If there is the birth of a girl child, the celebrations and others samskaras are conducted with enthusiasm. The daughters are given equal love and affection by their parents. There is not any discrimination

between sons and daughters. Though they gave importance to sons once a daughter is born, she is raised with tender care, affection, and love. If in the family, there are only daughters then she is assigned the legal position of a son and she could perform the funeral rites of her father.

2.27.3 Equal Right to Both the Sex:

In the Limbu society, women are generally not discriminated against merely on the grounds of gender. Men and women had equal status in matters of education, marriage, remarriage, managing the household, participation in public debate, etc. At mental, physical, and emotional levels Limbu women never suffered from inferiority. So, in the Limbu society, women have equal rights with men in every field.

2.22.4 Girls Education:

As we know education has an important role in our life, like that in Limbu society, education is considered essential for girls and now it's become customary for girls to receive an education. The girls with education held a very high and prestigious place in society. They believed that if daughters are given proper education, then their future would be secured. But education in the modern world is not only a process of learning and acquiring wisdom but also a tool at one's command to survive in this age of competition. In this competition, Limbu as a being as a tribal community as a whole is lagging behind.

2.27.5 Marriage (Metkhim) System:

In Limbu society, the marriage system is really good. Marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and not a contract. Child marriage is not known in their society. A girl is married at 16 or more years of age when her physical development was complete. Now so many changes have come in tribal society, now they became very much conscious regarding the marriage of their daughter while selecting the bridegroom, the economic status of the boy in terms of his own earnings is kept utmost in mind. They believed that an educated girl should be married to an equally educated man.

In Limbu tribes both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage. A Limbu tribe may marry any girl or boy, he or she likes, provided she or he does not actually belong to his or her own clan (Thar). In Nepal especially on weddings, market days, and other holidays a group of young people organize the *Dhan Nach* which enables Limbu men to meet marriageable girls from a wide area. When a young man and his family have accumulated enough goods to make

initial marriage payments with which the marriage process begins then he would choose any girl for marriage who is performing dhan nach.

Although a woman's choice in an arranged marriage is limited to the right of refusal, she would give a number of options which serve to give her considerable decision-making powers over where she will live and who she will marry. (1). She may remain unmarried and inherit property along with her brothers; (2). if there is an arranged marriage, she may choose to live in her natal home for periods ranging up to ten or fifteen years. (3). she may elope with a man of her choice, thereby circumventing the wishes of her parents, (4) finally, if dissatisfied with her marriage altogether, she may choose to leave her husband and run off with another man.

2.27.6 Married Life:

The status of married women in Limbu society is very honourable. Limbu wives enjoyed full freedom as they do not live in purdah or seclusion even when father-in-law, husband's elder or younger brother, or any other male member including a stranger is present. In fact, she could talk to men –folk freely without any hesitation, and her talking and joking with anyone was not taken otherwise. Their husband has full faith in them. As a wife, she has considerable freedom to take important decisions about any family matters in the absence of male family members, who used to be away from either in the army or in foreign countries to earn the money for their livelihood.

2.27.7 Divorce (Papchok) In Limbu Marriage:

In Limbu tribes both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage and divorce. A divorce from the husband's side is called "khemjong" and a divorce from the wife's side is called, "Najong". Limbu tribes have certain rules for divorce. If a husband divorces his wife and if he has not paid the price of his wife in full then children will remain with their mother and their maternal uncle will be their guardian and they will be under his disposal which is called the rule of, "Kwajani". But if a husband has paid the full amount of his wife's price, then he can take away his children with him. In the event, both husband and wife want a divorce from each other but both of them want the children under their custody then they can seek by legalizing the children under the rule of Samyok Lung Thim of the Ten Limbus. If a wife divorces her husband, she should refund her price to her husband in front of the court, then divorced wife will be treated as an unmarried girl and she can do remarriage.

2.27.8 Status of Widows:

In Limbu society, the condition of widows is given due respect. After the death of the husband, sometimes, women get remarry with the brother of the husband. This type of marriage takes place when the children of the deceased's husband are infants and if she is not in a position to look after those children. However, in such circumstances, the brother-in-law cannot force the widow for marriage, in Limbu traditions, widow marriage, marriage with her brother-in-law, and others all depend on the will of the widow. Nobody can force her. So, she is independent to take her all decisions in this matter.

2.27.9 Inheritance:

Private property is inherited equally by all sons of a man but an adopted son or a natural son by a wife informally married (Kanchi Budi / takes only one-half of a legitimate son's share. The division of the property is usually made by the tribal council (thum - thum) who set apart an extra share for the eldest son. The youngest son is allowed to choose his share first, and the other shares are then allotted by the thum-thum, failing sons, the son-in-law actually living in or willing to live in the family homestead are entitled to divide the property. For a Limbu woman, if she remains unmarried, she may receive an inheritance from the lands of her patrilineages and if she marries, she herself inherits no land from her natal group but upon residence in her husband's home, she becomes the member of his productive unit. On her husband's death, she receives a portion of his land for the maintenance of herself and her younger children.

2.28 Comparative Study of Limbus of Darjeeling being Tribe and Non-Tribe:

The present study seeks to comparatively analyze Limbu as being the tribal and non-tribal community of Darjeeling hills from the socio-economic perspective. This is done to show the differences within the Limbu community being tribal and non-tribal people. If we see the history of Darjeeling, we found that Limbus were the original inhabitants of Darjeeling but unfortunately, after independence, they were not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution, and Limbus of Darjeeling remained as the non-tribal community of Darjeeling hills till 2003 and after their long struggle, they were inserted in the scheduled tribe list of Indian constitution in the year 2003. So, during 53 years, the socio-economic conditions of Limbus were not good. It was very difficult task to compete with the people of the plains and other advance people of the hills, first of all, Socially and economically the limbus people were very backwards, always resided in the remote areas of Darjeeling hills, no facilities of quick transportation and communication, never

got any opportunities for higher educations in nearby areas, never thought for professional and vocational courses due to lack of awareness. The recruitment in the Gorkha rifle was only the hope for them but later on that also became very difficult task due to changes in the recruitment centres. When All-India Limbu Association Darjeeling was demanding to include Limbu in the list of the Scheduled Tribes list of Indian constitution at that time in their 'Memento' they have written that the economic condition of Limbus is utterly miserable. Many Limbus families have been moved to the Tea Gardens and have been working as daily wage earners. Due to economic difficulties and lack of facilities, most of the Limbu families were unable to send their children even to primary school. Educationally, they are very backward and there were one or two of Post Graduates and a few dozen graduates among the Limbus. Further, they have mentioned that there was only one Limbu doctor (M.B.B.S.) and only two W.B.C.S. officers and they did not get any Limbus who had passed Engineering and no Limbus who was working as a lecturer in the college. Thus, when Limbus were in the non-tribal category at that time they were socially, economically, politically, and educationally very backward people but the limbu were living as the tribal whereas government treated them as non-tribe in the Darjeeling hills and in the West Bengal.

In the year 2003 Limbus were inserted in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution and from that onwards gradually they are getting different facilities for their education. A ray of hope has arisen in their mind that if they educate their children, they would get government jobs and many of them have been sending their children in a good school. Many of them now pursuing higher education and a few of them have been enrolled as M. Phil /Ph.D. Scholars. Previously the number of Limbus were nil as college teacher but now many Limbu of Darjeeling have been working in university and colleges as an assistant professor and many of them have passed W.B.C.S. Exam and has been appointed as a B.D.O. The Government of West Bengal has formed the West Bengal Limbu Development Board for the all-around development of Limbu community, through the development Board, many facilities such as housing schemes, community hall, safe drinking facilities are also being given. The reservation in colleges and universities, Marks relaxations for admission, Reservation in jobs, Stipend, Scholarships, loan, etc are boosting their higher and changing scenario of villages through different facilities such as internet, jeepable roads, village tourism, the life standard of the limbus are also changing slowly and gradually now a days.

Socially they are now recognised as a tribal people of India as well as of Darjeeling and their economic conditions are also improving in comparison with their previous as non -tribal community. They are getting many govt facilities which were not given to them before, 2003.

The following table will be helpful indicator to understand the limbu as tribe and non-tribe.

Sl.no	Limbu Tribal now getting facilities	Limbu as the People of General Category (Non-tribal)
1	Reservation in educational institution	Not applicable
2	Reservation in govt. jobs	No reservation
3	Upper Age limit relaxation	No age relaxation
4	Stipend	No stipend
5	Scholarship	Scholarship
6	Relaxation in fees	Full payment
7	Direct govt schemes	No direct schemes
8	Loan with subsidy	No Loan facilities
9	Separate school facilities	Common school
10	Hostel facilities	Common facilities
11	West Bengal Limbu Development board	Never imagined
12	Housing Schemes/Cultural Protection/Language Preservation	Never got any facilities

2.29 Summing Up:

We have done a survey to know the actual socio-economic conditions of the Limbus of Darjeeling. Here, we have selected 500 households of Limbus from selected villages and the municipality of Darjeeling District. First of all, we enquired about the Age and Sex composition of Limbus and found the total population of 49.4% male and 50.5% female respectively, here, females are slightly predominant than males. About their family and size of family, we came to know that 95.2% of families were from nuclear families and 64.2% were between 2-5 family members. Father is always considered as the head of the family but he never takes any decision without consulting with their wives. About their marriage life, we came to know that monogamy is very popular among them, polygamy is very rare among them.

In Limbu language house is called “Heem”, In our survey, we found that maximum house of Limbus’ is semi pucca house and their main residing areas are from Panchayat areas. They are living in three types of land, 1.) Khasmahal Land (Own land), 2). Tea Garden Land, 3). Permanent Forest Land. They are very conscious of sanitation and hygiene. They used both LPG and wood for cooking purposes and for drinking water they are mainly dependent on spring water. In the

field of education, their literacy rate is 48.9% male and 51% female. They have become very conscious and maximum their children are studying in English schools.

Economically Limbus are mainly dependent on Agriculture and Tea Garden, besides that many Limbu have been recruited in the Indian Army, Government jobs, and private jobs. The monthly income of Limbu respondents is not so good, 34% of Limbus earned less than 5000, and 31.4% earned between 5001 to 10000. The highest earner percentage is very low. They spent most of their income on their daily necessities, health. About their livestock rearing, we found that they mostly reared pigs (70.8%) which help them for their financial support. We also asked them about their technological device at home and we came to know that every household of Limbus have T.V., Cable, and Mobile.

Lastly, when we asked them about what types of changes have come in their life after getting tribal status. Many Limbu respondents said that they are getting many benefits from the government after getting tribal status few respondents said that they did not find any differences before and after getting Tribal status.

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CHAPTER-3

THE CULTURAL CHANGES OF THE LIMBU TRIBAL COMMUNITY OF DARJEELING HILLS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

3.1. The Meaning of Culture:

The term “culture” has different connotations in different behavioral subjects like Anthropology, Sociology, and Biology, etc. anthropological meaning of the culture has been defined by the penguin dictionary as “the way of life of a group of people. Consisting of learned patterns of behavior and thought passed on from one generation to the next. The notion includes the group’s beliefs, values, language, political organization, and economic activity, as well as its equipment, techniques and art forms”¹ The first classic and most popular definition of culture, was given by the 19th-century English anthropologist Edward Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* “Culture or civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”² William A. Haviland, another cultural anthropologist has defined culture as follows “Culture consists of abstract values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world that lie behind people's behavior and that are reflected by their behavior reflects. These are shared by the members of society, and when they are acted upon, these elements produce behavior that is intelligible to other members of that society”.³ Clifford Geertz tries to explain the concept of culture in his own words as thus “The concept of culture is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs, and the analysis of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning”.⁴ He again described culture as follows “culture denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embedded in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about the attitude towards life”⁵ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron have defined culture “culture is a way of life-based on a signifying order developed originally in a tribal context that is passed along through the signifying order from one generation to the next.”⁶ Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) described culture as follows: culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyle, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs. ⁷ from the above-mentioned definition we

can say that the culture cannot be defined in a single sentence, we can say that every aspect of social life, spiritual, material, educational, emotional, behavioral, and historically transmitted from one generation to another generation, as a way of life.

3.2 Factors of Cultural Change:

Cultural change is a word that denotes some changes in the internal and external pattern of society. It can be material as well as non-material in nature. All cultures change over time. The regular addition and subtraction of cultural traits result in culture change. However, the rate of change and aspects of culture that change varies from society to society. Different factors are responsible for resulting change in culture. The factors and process of culture change too are different from culture to culture, hence it is a hard task to generalize the factors of culture change but most of the cultural change comes through contact with other cultures, inventions, and internal adjustment of culture. The general factors of culture change as described by the anthropologists include some processes like innovation, diffusion, acculturation, cultural loss, transculturation, and revolution, etc. These factors can be divided into two broad categories- internal stimuli or internal factors and external stimuli or external factors. Internal stimuli originate inside a society such as innovation and cultural loss. The external stimuli originate outside a society such as diffusion, assimilation, and transculturation, etc. There are three general sources of influence or pressures that are responsible for both change and resistance to change. Those are - (i) Forces at work within a society, (ii) Contact between societies, (iii) Changes in the natural environment.⁸ The processes leading to change that occurs as a result of contact between societies are diffusion, acculturation, transculturation, and assimilation, etc. Diffusion is the movement of things and ideas from one culture to another. In this process, cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture of the recipient group. When diffusion occurs, the form of a trait may move from one society to another but not its original cultural meaning. Diffusion may be direct or indirect. When a group or society is in contact with a dominant society, the weaker group is often obliged to acquire cultural elements from the dominant group, that process is called acculturation. It happens to an entire culture when alien traits diffuse in on a large scale and substantially replace traditional cultural patterns.⁹

David Dressier and Donald Carns have made the following observation with regard to the causes of cultural changes.

1. Sometimes members of a society are often confronted by customs that differ from those which they have learned to accept. In such a situation they adopt some of the new customs,

reject others and follow a modified version of still others. This might be called cultural eclecticism.

2. New customs and practices are likely to be more readily adopted under two conditions (i) If they represent what is viewed as socially desirable and useful and (ii) If they do not clash with re-existed and still valued customs and practices.
3. Changes in culture are always superimposed on existing culture especially during cultural contact.
4. All the cultural changes are not equally important. Some changes are introduced to culture because necessary for human survival. Some other changes are accepted in order to satisfy socially acquired needs not essential for survival
5. It is a fact of common observation that crisis tends to produce or accelerate cultural changes. If the changes are accepted once due to the crisis they tend to persist, for example, women were included in the military during the Second World War, and even now they continue to be there.
6. Cultural change is cumulative in its total effect. Much is added and little is lost. Its growth is like the growth of a tree that ever expands but only loses leaves. Some times its limbs from time to time, as long as it survives

Cultural changes lead to a chain reaction, whenever a change is incorporated into the culture and becomes defined as a social necessity. New needs emerge, generating the desire for still further changes to complement or supplement the original change.¹⁰ The cultural changes, cultural transformation, cultural absorption, cultural assimilation which indicate some changes in the life structure of tribal society need some special focus to get more ideas about the changes of the tribal culture and traditions. The process of transformation has varied meanings for different strata of society according to their phase of development. Its course becomes even more interesting when studied in relation to the tribal groups as firstly, they are isolated and little is known about them; secondly, these societies are highly marginalized and exploited by the subjects of mainstream society; thirdly, they are most neglected mainly because of their distinct and little known cultures and lastly, any little change in their social or economic sphere can never be studied in isolation but has to be studied in a holistic fashion”¹¹The process of social transformation may restructure the technological, economic, political and cultural pattern in society. The social value-normative system may change, often in a way that allows the emergence and stabilization of pluralistic institutions.¹² whereas the process of absorption and slow and gradual transformation of society has varied meanings for different strata of society according to their phase of development and conditions of society. Its course becomes even more interesting when studied in relation to the tribal groups as firstly, they are isolated and little is known about them; secondly, these societies

are highly marginalized and exploited by the subjects of mainstream society; thirdly, they are most neglected mainly because of their distinct and little known cultures and lastly, any little change in their social or economic sphere can never be studied in isolation but has to be studied in a holistic fashion”.¹³ The tribal society, their culture, religion, and linguistic identities are also being absorbed in various scales and slowly merging with their larger society. The small tribal groups have been losing their 102 actual colour and the process of absorption is placed silently. Andrew Betailla has stated that “ The process of absorption has been going on for centuries in fact since the beginning of history in Indian scenario, hardly any of the tribe exist as a separate society because they have been absorbed in varying degrees into the wider society in India”¹⁴ Social interaction and relations as core aspects of social life are institutionally and environmentally structured and are mediated through individual perception, self-categorization, interest is a strategic calculation, on the other hand, change in identity categories is self-provoked by and response to changes in institutional structure and social practice.¹⁵ Todd in her seminal paper explained that it is only when institutional changes are accompanied by changing self-perception that new institutions begin to create new dynamics in interaction.¹⁶

3.3 Government Approach for Cultural Change:

After the independence of our country, The Government of India’s policy towards the tribes underwent significant changes. The old approach of isolation and benign neglect was replaced by assimilation and integration of tribes into the mainstream of national life and entering the modern age to avail the benefits of science and technology Each tribe has a way of life of its own. Each tribe has its own way of behaving, thinking, feeling, and acting. Each has its own custom, traditions, moral values, its own peculiar institution, in brief, its own culture. The very peculiarities of a tribe reveal that it has a distinctive culture of its own. Pundit Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, strongly believed in the co-existence of numerous diverse cultures and felt, that the tribal groups can become a part of an integrated Indian nation like the non-tribal groups. Advocating the integration of tribal people into the national mainstream, he understood our approach to tribal development in terms of a 100 “*Panchsheel*” in his forward to Verrier Elwin (2nd Ed.) A Philosophy for NEFA, as early as 1959. Delivering the inaugural address at the Conference of Tribes and Scheduled Areas held at New Delhi, in 1952, The first prime minister of India Pandit Nehru stated that, "I am not at all sure which way of living is better, ours or theirs. But in some ways, I am quite certain theirs is better. A lot of things could be learned from their culture especially in the frontier areas. They are people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life; not people who sit in stock exchanges and shout at each other and call that civilization."¹⁷ Further, addressing an all-India Conference of the Tribals held at Jagdalpur (Bastar District, Madhya

Pradesh), in March 1955, he advised the tribals of India in the following words: "Wherever you live, you should live in your own way. This is what I want you to decide yourselves. How would you like to live? Your old customs and habits are good. We want that they should survive but at the same time, we want that you should be educated and should do your part in the welfare of the country".¹⁸ While the above statements of Pundit Nehru symbolize the concern and care for the development and welfare of tribals, the main objective of the tribal policy in post-independent India has been the social, economic, and educational advancement of the tribal with an emphasis on their integration with the rest of the society. In brief, India's policy on tribal development can be best summed up in "Panchsheel", i.e., the five fundamental principles, which formed the basis of the national policy towards tribal development. They are 1. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture 2. Tribals' rights to land and forests should be respected 3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no 101 doubts, be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribals' territory. 4. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions and, 5. We should judge results, not by statistics or by the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved. We are very much aware that times have changed a lot. When we see and compare our lives with those of our parents and grandparents. We find a lot of changes in our surroundings and especially in our society. Every kind of change can be easily observed in the social, cultural life of our society. The cultural and social changes in the particular group of the community have clearly visible in different spheres of life. The new technological inventions and development such as the internet, TV, Computer, social media are playing their role in changing the lifestyle of every individual. They have molded our life as a new condition develops, the conditions of our grandparents and parents were totally different and many of customs, rituals have been changed.

Considering all the factors of cultural changes, now we can examine and assess the actual scenario of the cultural changes that have taken place among the Limbu tribal community of Darjeeling hills. What are the impacts of the westernization, industrialization, modernization, upon the Limbus' cultural aspects, What the impact of the government schemes on Limbu tribal cultural life and side by side we will try to understand the impact of the regional culture, regional language, rural and urban life differences?

As we know that tribal cultures are rapidly changing all over the world and Indian tribal communities are also facing the same situation, the hill tribal communities of Indian sub-Himalayan regions are prone to change due to many internal and external factors. The Darjeeling hills have different tribal communities and Limbu is one of them. The dominant community of Darjeeling hills is always indirectly impacting and forcing all tribal communities to change the cultural aspects, language, and religions, traditions, and customs, the modern inventions regarding information and technology on the other hand compelling all communities to be universal. In these circumstances, we will try to understand the actual changes in cultural aspects of the Limbu tribe and present status in Darjeeling hill through data collected through the field survey. The Limbu tribal communities have their own culture and tradition. We have described their culture and tradition in the previous chapter of ‘Ethnography study of Limbus also. So, in this regard when we did a survey to know whether they follow their tradition and culture in their home, here, we have asked them about their languages and scripts, religion from different aspects, about their music, songs and dances, their traditional dresses and different aspects of their cultures. We found different responses from them. A detailed aspect of the Limbu culture will be assessed and discussed in length to show the actual cultural scenario of the Limbu tribal community with the help of the data collected through the field survey in the hills of Darjeeling. All the tables and diagrams will be presented to make the study very clear and scientific as much as possible.

3:4 Culture and Tradition of Limbus at Home:

The Limbu tribes have different ancient cultures and they are following different cultures on different occasions. An established Limbu tribal culture followed since a long by generation to generation in Darjeeling hills have been closely observed and a general view of culture, in the form of day-to-day activities, which ultimately set the benchmark of any culture after passing few generations. Language and dress, customs, traditions, rituals, etc. change with time. The modern and western culture has become dominant in all aspects of our life. Therefore, the Limbu tribal of Darjeeling hills as a distinct social-cultural entity has been studied in the following paragraphs in details

Table 3:1: Culture and Tradition Followed at Home

Culture/Traditions Followed at Home	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	423	84.6%
No	10	2%
Sometime	67	13.4%
Total	500	100%

Source:¹⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3:1: Culture Followed at Home

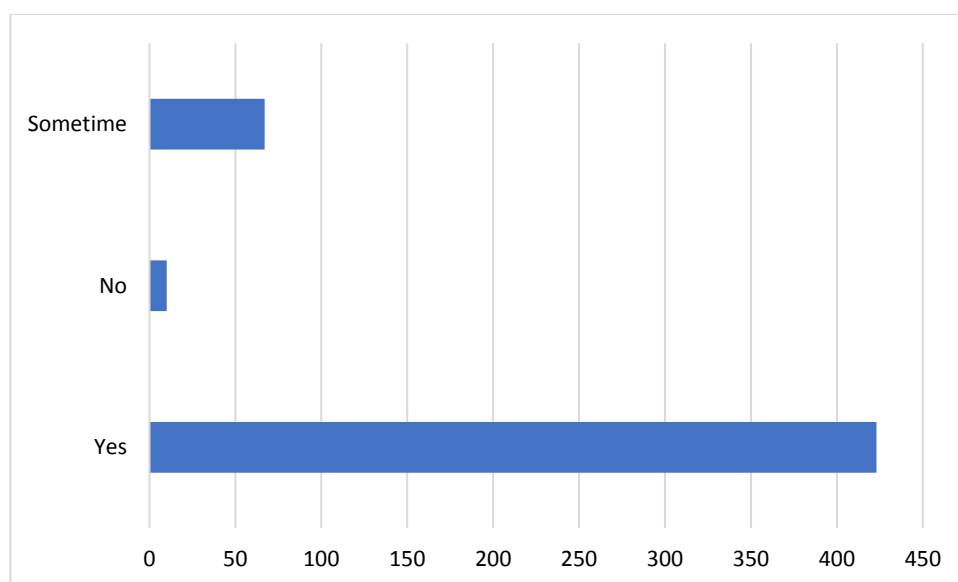


Table 3.1 refers to the distribution of the respondents about their culture and tradition followed at home. It is observed 84.6% of respondents followed their culture and tradition at home. 2% of respondents are those who do not follow the culture and tradition and they are especially that Limbus who has converted to Christianity. There are some respondents who do not follow their tradition regularly but only at the time of occasion, so here, 13.4% are those respondents who follow their culture and tradition at the time of occasion. Therefore, it can be said that the culture and traditions are not followed by all the Limbu regularly at their residences. Social change is an integral part of our lives and our existence has been through stages of growth and development from childhood, adulthood, and old age. Cultural aspects of society are followed by generation to generation and changes may occur due to various factors. Here in respective of the Limbu tribal community, adoption of Christianity is the main cause of changes in the cultural pattern among the Limbu tribal community. So, it can rightly be said that the different religions other than their own and their values may cause cultural changes.

3.6 Present Situation of Tribal Language Shift:

The “tribal” or the “Adivasis” have lived on this soil for thousands of years. Though they have been interacting with the non-tribal on the periphery of their homelands, the process of interaction has acquired a new dimension in India after independence with the introduction of adult franchise and several community developments programs. Industrialization and modernization are other reasons for tribal language shift. Around 50% of the Indian tribal population has already lost their linguistic identity adopting the regional language.²⁰ Most languages in India belong to one of the

four language families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burmese, and Austro-Asiatic. The Eight Schedule of the Indian constitution deals with the languages of the country. The tribal languages are at the greatest risk for language shift. Though the language shift is a universal phenomenon, we have to take several factors into account as we deal the minority languages. Rubenstein believes that language shift is normally gradual and not abrupt. A high degree of shift may occur in the areas of high mobility and social instability. Sometimes there can be cultural continuity despite language shifts.²¹ the language shift can result out of coercion or choice; here the socio-economic and political factors play a major role. Shift never occurs because of an increase in choices but in a decrease of available choices. Language shift is faster in urban areas than in rural as insularity and rigidity of rural life reduce the acceptability of change.²² He has considered social bilingualism as a prerequisite for language shift. It is the outcome of the dynamics of language contact. The contact-induced changes can lead to linguistic homogeneity on one hand and language attribution on the other.²³

Though the Constitution of India guarantees the use of mother tongue in education, the majority of the minor languages are not used in primary and middle schools anymore. There seems to be no space for the lesser-used languages in the framework of TLF.²⁴ It is common knowledge that since independence some radical changes have been experienced in different walks of life in India. Human society is of composite character. A change in any aspect of society will have its direct or indirect bearing on other spheres as well. A simple change a material set up of society may, through a chain reaction, bring about highly significant transformation in non-material aspects of human society.²⁵

The tribal languages are under threat of extinction because of rapid social transformation. Most of the minor languages are spoken by the aboriginal/indigenous population termed as “Adivasis” or “tribals”.²⁶ A tribe commonly called the Scheduled Tribe in the Indian context, is an administrative and legal term to label some ethnic groups based on their socio-economic status, and religious and cultural customs in order to give special attention to them as mandated by the Constitution.²⁷ The Scheduled Tribes constitute about 8 percent of the total population of 68 million people.²⁸ Most languages in India belong to one of the four language families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burmese, and Austro-Asiatic. The Eight Schedule of the Indian constitution deals with the languages of the country.

Language is a strong symbol of a community’s identity. Language allows the members of the community to experience their intellectual, spiritual, and cultural life. Language embodies their terms to express their emotions, behaviors, and habits, their way of speaking, their humor, style of

conversation, their common greetings, their vocabulary, traditions, myths, and literature. The tribal languages occupy the lowest position among the linguistic hierarchy. The tribal languages are not recognized as languages but rather dialects by the non-tribals. Often tribals are ridiculed for using their mother tongue in public places.²⁹ There is a sense of inferiority, awareness of the low status of their own mother tongues among the tribal and this often discourages them to declare their mother tongue.³⁰

3.7 Language of Limbu Tribe:

Limbu, one of the major languages of Sikkim and Nepal is widely used both as a spoken and written language among the Limboo community. It is also spoken in some parts of West Bengal in the Darjeeling district and North-Eastern states of India. It belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language sub-family of Sino-Tibet language stock. The Limbu call it *Yakthung Sappan* and the script the *Srijunga Script*. The Limbu tribes are also known as 'Yakthumba' in their own Limbu language so they called their language 'Yakthungpan'. It has four main dialects; Panchthare, Phedape, Chhathare, and Tamborkhole among which Panchthare is most commonly spoken and used as lingua-franca among the Limboos for both communication and writing.³¹

As per the census of 2001, The Limbu tribal In Nepal, of 356000 total Limbu population of Limbu, 333633 speak Limbu language. In India, there are 37265 Limbu speakers of which 34292 are in Sikkim, 2377 West Bengal, 288 Assam, 141 Rajasthan, 92 Arunachal Pradesh, 17 Maharastra, 13 Nagaland, 10 Karnataka, 5 Dadra and Nagar Haveli, 4 Manipur, 3 Andhra Pradesh, 3 Tamil Nadu, 2 Delhi and 1 from Mizoram.³² The Indian tribal languages are a good indicator of the lifestyle and history of many of the famous tribes of India.

Limbu is one of the major spoken and written languages in Sikkim whereas the status of the Limbu language is very unfortunate.

According to Ballav Mani Dahal (2037 B.S.) that the Limbu language has been influenced by all the three ancient languages of Austric, Aryan, and Dravidians in its remote antiquity in India, and hence the Limbus are one of the ancient races of the Indian sub-continent. According to Pokharel (1994), the Limbu language bears close resemblance with Khamboo, Sampang, Nechhering, Chamling, Yakkha, Kulung, Pangduwali, and Sakkha out of 58 (fifty-eight) currently spoken Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal.³⁴ The Limbu language has been listed as the definitely endangered language category by the linguistic survey of India. India has the highest number of endangered languages in the world. It has 197 languages on the list.³⁵

3.8 Speaking Ability of Limbu of Darjeeling Hills:

Modern Information and technology run only after the majority of languages, like English and Hindi, and Nepali in Darjeeling hills. It gives all information through Audio-visual, print, Electronic in the majority of languages. The urban population is a more active recipient of all the impacts whereas the people of rural areas are not interested in many aspects of change. The people of old age have less interest and the young generation are more attracted towards new fashion live style etc. The people of the rural areas have maintained a strong base of speaking habits whereas the people of urban areas have bilingual or tri-lingual speaking habits. Old age people speakers mainly speak either in Nepali or Limbu whereas the young generation can speak in many languages like English, Hindi, Nepali, etc. So, many factors such as social setting, clusters villages, environment, etc. are responsible for speaking ability and habits among the Limbu tribal of Darjeeling hills. The following table will indicate the picture of the Speaking ability of the Limbu tribe in Limbu languages.

Table 3.2: Speaking Ability of the Limbu Tribe in Limbu Language

Sl.No.	Speaking Ability	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes, I can speak and understand	194	38.8%
2	No, I Can't speak and understand	268	53.6%
3	I can understand but can't Speak	38	7.6%
4.	Total	500	100%

Sources: ³⁶ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3.2: Speaking Ability in Limbu Language

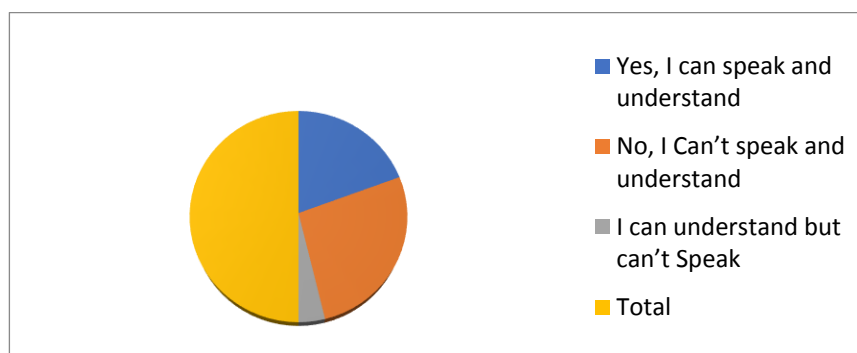


Table: 3.2 one of the most commonly spoken languages in Darjeeling hills is the Nepali language. There are many spoken languages in the hills of Darjeeling such as Nepali, English, Hindi, Bengali, Tibetan, and other respective tribal languages, etc. But the Limbu tribal community of Darjeeling

hills does not know all languages. The above table reveals the speaking ability of the Limbu tribe in their own Limbu languages. As above stated, the urban Limbu tribal people were not expressive about their language whereas the rural Limbu tribal people were very much aware of their language and found speaking Limbu language among themselves, even the youth could speak their language. The Limbu tribal people of Darjeeling urban areas have been found using Nepali predominantly and young generations were not very keen about their tribal language and rather found speaking Nepali, English, Hindi, frequently, so as per data above, among the 500 households of the Limbus, we found that 38.8% respondents can speak Limbu language and 53.6% Limbus said that they neither understand nor speak Limbu language. 7.6% of respondents are there who can understand Limbu language but cannot speak. Though the Limbu tribe have their own language they never talk in their language, maximum Limbu of Darjeeling District speaks in the Nepali language, and in school, they are taught in English. The tribal cultural lives have been the main prey of modern and western culture. The English language has been an indivisible part of our life. Everybody now wants to learn an English language and because of this, the local and tribal languages have been greatly influenced and slowly and gradually declining.

The tribal language like Tibetan is only taught in some schools in Darjeeling officially, whereas the languages like Lepcha, Sherpa, Bhutia, Tamang, and Limbu have their own languages but have not been taught even at the primary level. Nowadays, few awakened and educationally conscious people are taking initiative to teach in night school.

3.9 Limbu Tribals' Spoken Habit within the Family:

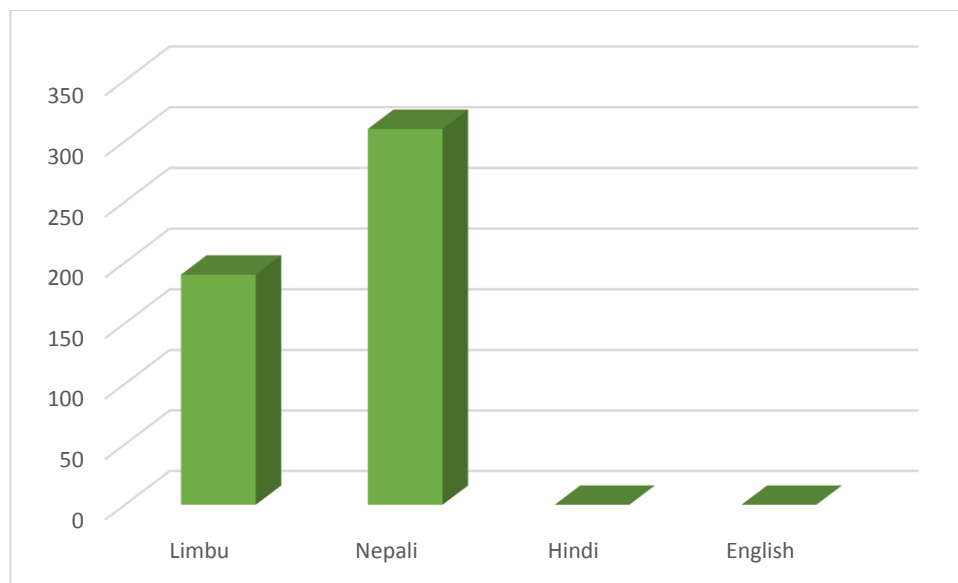
Parents are the key person within the family to speak in their own languages but most of the Limbu people do not speak in the Limbu language in Darjeeling hills. As already stated, that very few rural Limbu tribal people speak in the Limbu language within the family. The parents and all the family members must start speaking among themselves if they want to save their beautiful language from extinction.

Table 3:3: Limbu Language Spoken Habit within the Family

Sl.No.	Language spoken	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Limbu	190	38%
2.	Nepali	310	62%
3.	Hindi	0	0%
4.	English	0	0%
5.	Total	500	100%

Sources:³⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 3.3: Limbu Language Spoken Habit within the Family



The head of the family especially parents; guardians are responsible to transmit their culture among their children, if the parents speak in their own language, other family members easily learn from their parents. The children learn those languages which they frequently listen to from the family.

Table 3.3 shows the distribution of the Limbu tribal respondents by the language spoken by their family members. It is observed that 38% of Limbus of Darjeeling speaks the Limbu language within the family, besides they also speak the Nepali language. But 62% of Limbus of Darjeeling hills speak only Nepali language within their family members because they cannot speak Limbu language. Very good numbers of the rural Limbu people of the Sumbuk, Lamagoan, Bijanbari areas speak in Limbu languages at home whereas in Darjeeling town, Ghoom Jorebunglow, Sonada Pacheng, Phoolbari, Kurseong, speak mostly in Nepali languages. We found that Youth also speaks in Limbu language in Sumbuk. It is also to state that non-Limbu people also speak in Limbu languages in Sumbuk. This is a clear picture of the society that the majority language dominates the minority. We did not meet any Limbu family who speaks in Hindi and English within their family members.

3.10 Language of Communication of Limbu with a Neighbour:

Social communication is very important for social existence and language is the bridge to communicate among them. The majority and dominant language are frequently used to communicate with a neighbour. Very few neighbours are there to communicate in the mother tongue or tribal language.

Table 3.4: Language of Communication of Limbu with Neighbour

Sl. No	Languages Spoken with Others	Frequency	Percentage
1	Limbu	45	9%
2	Nepali	455	91%
3	English	0	0%
4	Hindi	0	0%
5	Bengali	0	0%
	Total	500	100%

Source: ³⁸ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

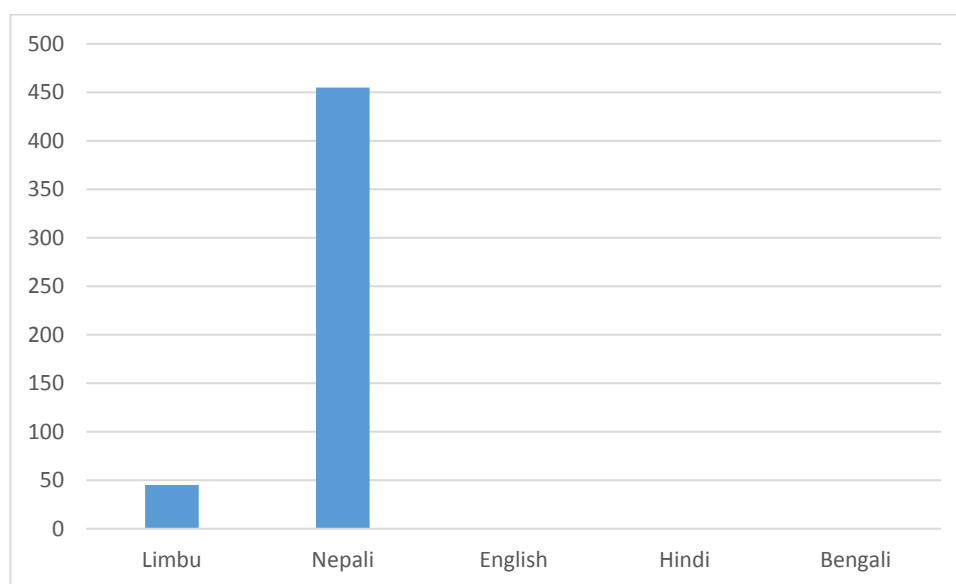
Figure 3.4: Language of Communication of Limbu with Neighbour

Table 3.4 shows the language of communication of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills with their neighbour. We found in our survey that 91% of Limbus communicated with other communities in the Nepali language and 9% of Limbus communicated in the Limbu language. We observed that in Sumbuk village which is Limbu-dominated village maximum villagers speak in the Limbu language even other communities also speak in the Limbu language with them. It is also found that in Darjeeling other communities who are non-Nepalis also speak in the Nepali language with the people of Darjeeling instead of their language so within Darjeeling Limbus of Darjeeling always speaks in Nepali with other communities. They also told us that if they go outside of Darjeeling like Siliguri, Kolkata, and other parts of the states at that time they can communicate in the Hindi language, and those Limbus who are educated can also communicate in the English language. As we have observed above, we find as an overall picture that speakers of Nepali have increased manifold among the Limbu tribe. Therefore, there has been a shift in the mother tongue

scenario of the Limbu tribe towards Nepali as more people have responded to Nepali as their spoken language.

3.11 Present Endangered Status of Limbu Language in Darjeeling Hills:

Professor Ganesh N. Devy, who documented 780 Indian languages while conducting the people's linguistics survey of India in 2010, also. Shockingly, found that 600 of these languages were dying. He added close to 250 languages in India had already died over the past 60 years. According to UNESCO, any language that is spoken by less than 10,000 people is potentially endangered.³⁹ As per the number of speakers, Limbu Language with 37265 speakers had been categorized as critically endangered status.⁴⁰ Limbu are found mostly in the Indian state of Sikkim and Darjeeling hill of West Bengal state.

There are several factors for the decline of the indigenous languages of tribal people and the Limbu language is one of the languages which has become endangered in Darjeeling hills. The tribal people now become conscious of their language, script, culture but side by side they are also attracted towards the modern way of life. The competitive environment for everything makes their lives tougher. In this situation, if we search the basic reasons for the endangered situation of the tribal languages, we found the following causes. The first cause is the diminishing number of native speakers, only old aged tribal people speak their native language and the young generation does not follow their own native tribal language and after the death of the old generation, their ethnic language is also dying with them. Those who know the tribal languages must transmit to their new generation but such transmission of languages is not taking place. Thus, as the older generations failed to transmit their languages to their children, leading to many languages became endangered. The second cause is the presence of other languages if their neighbour speaks in other languages then they have to speak them in other languages. The third cause is the use of the language by children, when parents do not teach their native language to their children then naturally children do not learn their native language this is one of the main causes for the decline of the native language. Besides, government policies, job opportunities, urban drift, and media are additional factors that also affect the survival and preservation of an ethnic language.

In Darjeeling, we found the endangered condition of the Limbu language and when we asked them behind this, we got a different opinion from the respondents which indicates us from the following tables.

3.12 Reasons for Endangered Conditions of Limbu Language:

There are many factors responsible for the endangered status of the Limbu language. The government, General public, Limbu tribal people themselves, Local bodies, Regional Government, Social Organization, political party, policies of the government are responsible. Certain important and practical factors have been discussed in the following table.

Table 3.5: Reasons for Endangered Conditions of Limbu Language

Sl. No	Reasons for Declining Conditions of Limbu Language	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Education and medium of instructions	141	28.2%
2.	Parents never talked in the Limbu language	121	24.2%
3.	Language of Neighbours and society	190	38%
4.	Media and modern technology of the society	45	9%
5.	Total	500	100%

Source:⁴¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 3.5: Causes of the Endangered Condition of Limbu Language

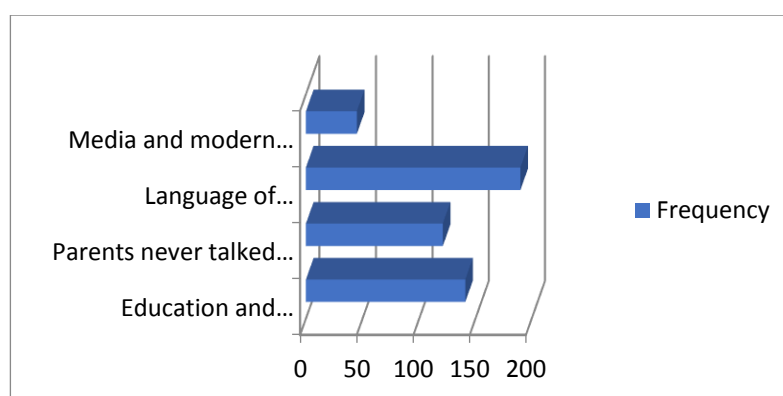


Table 3.5 shows the responses of Limbus for the declining conditions of the Limbu language in Darjeeling hills. 28.2% of respondents believe that education and medium of instruction is the main cause for the decline of Limbu language among the new generation of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills because in school they are taught in English medium and Limbu language is not introduced in school so it is not possible for them to learn Limbu language in their life. So, they considered that this is the main reason for the decline of the Limbu language in Darjeeling hills. 24.2% of respondents believe that the main cause of the decline of the Limbu language is that parents never talked in Limbu language at home. This is very true because some parents believe that more opportunities would be available to their children if they become fluent in the English language rather than ethnic language so they give importance to the English language instead of

their own language. 38% of respondents believe that it is declining because of the language spoken by the neighbours and society because in Darjeeling most of the people speak in Nepali language and they have to also speak with them in the Nepali language. 9% of respondents tell us that media and modern technology have the main role for the decline of Limbu language. Language is used as a medium of exchange, knowledge on various purposes like Radio, FM, T.V. Channels, advertisements, Posters, journals, local dailies, industrial and business sectors in different educational institutions and it's responsible for the powerful influential factors in the consolidation of the speakers towards English and Hindi language used in the said field.⁴² Media like the press, film, and cinema, more recently, the Internet, have increasingly influenced the development of a local language and community. The modern media of social communication to which the Limbus tribal people of Darjeeling are exposed to that significant are mobile, internet, Facebook, YouTube, films, radio, and newspaper. The language used in Facebook, YouTube, Television, Movie are either Hindi or English. So, most of the young generation of Limbu tribes watch these media and they are learning these languages which are good but they could not learn their ethnic language.

3.13 Limbu Language in School Curriculum:

With the growth of the Nepali-speaking population, the linguistics situation in the district rapidly took a new turn. From the beginning of British rule, the media of instruction in the district were English and Hindi, Hindi vernacular as a medium of instruction was introduced in 1873. Since 1927 Nepali was introduced as the medium of instruction. The Bhutia and Lepcha had opposed the move of the government.⁴³ There were hot debates and discussions among the Bhutia, Lepcha, and Nepali communities. Later on, Bhutia language was also introduced as in Darjeeling hills from primary level to college level whereas the Lepcha language never gets that opportunity in West Bengal. Other minority languages of other tribal such as Limbu, Sherpa, Tamang, Toto were overshadowed and never became the matter of linguistic policy of India. There were many other issues regarding the tribal language and its protection and preservation in Darjeeling hills but slowly and gradually the tribal language of the Limbu and others started declining, supposed the government had started the tribal language at least at the primary level, the situation would have been much better now. When we found that one of the main causes of the declining condition of the Limbu language in Darjeeling was due to not being included in the school curriculum in Limbu language in schools. So, we surveyed to know the interest among the Limbus whether the Limbus of Darjeeling are in favour of teaching and learning in school or not. We found the result which shows in the following table.

Table 3.6: Limbu Language in School Curriculum

Sl. No	Limbu Language Should Be Taught	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	500	100%
2.	No	0	0%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁴⁴ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 3.6 shows the responses of Limbus of Darjeeling to be taught the Limbu language in school. It is observed that 100% of Limbus of Darjeeling wants to the introduction of Limbu language in schools. In our survey, many Limbu people told us that after their long struggle with the government for the introduction of Limbu languages in primary schools the West Bengal Government also had issued an order to teach Limbu language in schools but unfortunately due to some political issue it could not be implemented. When we asked them about written evidence, they had produced, one government notification issued from District Inspector of Schools, Hill Areas, Darjeeling, for the introduction of Limboo language in primary school in the hill areas of Darjeeling.

3.14 Sirijunga Script of Limbu Tribe:

Limbu tribes have their own script known as ‘Sirijunga script’. It is believed that this script was derived and evolved from Brahmi Script after the Sixth Century A.D. and introduced among Limbus by the king Sirijonga during the end of the Ninth Century and early years of the Tenth Century.¹⁹ It is believed that this script had been disappeared for 800 years, but later on, Tae-onsgi Sirijunga Sing Thebe (reincarnation of the king Sirijonga), revived it again among the Limbu community in the first half of the 18th century. The script popularized by him is known as the “Kirat Sirijunga” script and this script began an awakening among the Limbus of Sikkim. This act of Sirijunga Te-onsgi annoyed the Thasang Lamas of Pemiyongchi Gumpa and Sikkimese authorities. Consequently, the Thasang Lama killed Sirijunga Te-Onsgi in Martam, Hee-Bermiok in West Sikkim in 1741 after being tied to a tree and shot at with poisonous arrows. Thus, Sirijunga Te-onsgi sacrificed his life for the dissemination of the Limbu language, Kirat-sirijonga script, Mundhum, and literature during 1730-1741. But it could not be flourished due to state oppression there as we as in Nepal and it began to be read and taught only after 1925 when Iman Singh Chemjong and a few others gave it a new lease of life in the open atmosphere of Darjeeling.⁴⁵ at present this script and language are taught in Sikkim and the language has been recognized as one of the four-state language in Sikkim.⁴⁶ Whereas, West Bengal government has not given any importance to this language.

3.15 Reading Ability of the Limbu Tribe in Sirijunga Scripts:

Maximum Limbus of Darjeeling cannot speak Limbu language even maximum of them cannot understand also which we found in our survey. We also came to know that they have their own Sirijunga Script so in this regard when we asked the question among the Limbus of Darjeeling whether they can read Limbu script or not we got the following responses from the following below table.

Table 3.7: Reading Ability of Sirijunga Scripts

Sl. No	Reading ability Sirijunga script	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes, I can read the Limbu language	46	9.2%
2.	No, I can't	454	90.8%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁴⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 3.6: Reading Ability in Sirijunga Scripts

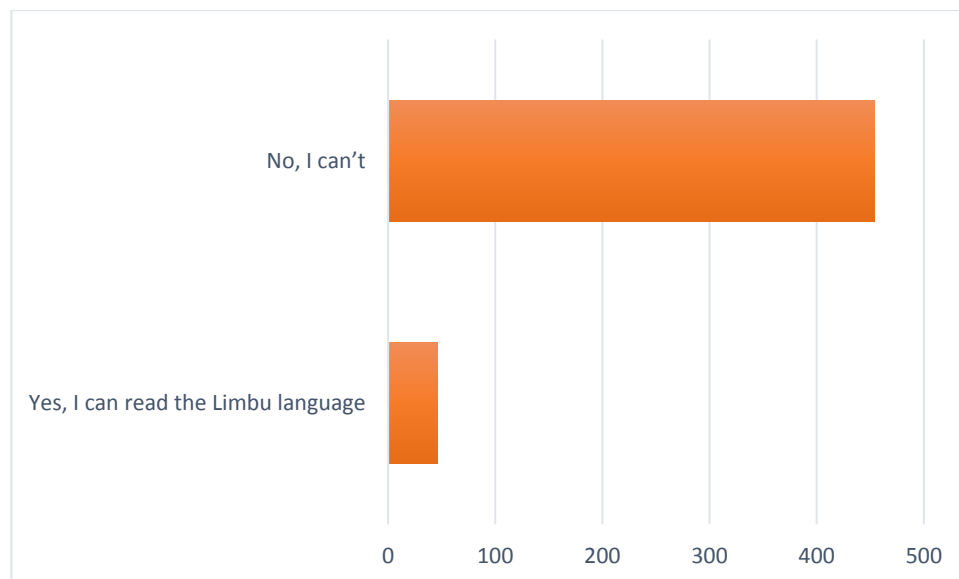


Table 3.7 shows the reading ability of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. We found that 90.8% of Limbus are there who cannot read Limbu script. There are only 9.2% Limbus who can read Limbus and maximum of them were aged. Though after getting tribal status, they are becoming very conscious regarding their cultures so, it is also found during the survey that many youths are learning Limbu script and language so that they could be successful to preserve their language and script.

3.16 Writing Ability of the Limbu Tribe in Sirijunga Script:

The writing of the Limbu language and script was unknown in Sikkim. Iman Singh Chemjong was the first to revive the Limbu script in the 1940s and literature could set a new milestone in Sikkim. In 1951, two books '*Tum Yakthung Ningwaphuma Sapla*' and '*Nisigeg Yakthung Sapla*' were published by Iman Singh Chemjong, M B Khamdhak, and PS Muringla. The premiers were the first Limboo books ever written in Sirijunga script of Limbu language and literature in Sikkim. It was on the basis of these primers that teaching of Limbu language and writing of literature set its threshold in Sikkim. The Limbu language witnessed its rapid growth and development and gained its momentum after the dawn of democracy in Sikkim, 1975. On 24th April 1976, the Government of Sikkim appointed Shri B B Muringla as an Assistant Text Book Writer (ATBW) for the preparation of Limboo textbooks. After Muringla's appointment to the ATBW, formal Limboo textbooks were prepared at par with the other subjects and according to the curriculum framed by the Education Department, Government of Sikkim.⁴⁸ Whereas the Limbu of the Darjeeling hills could not do specific progress as the West Bengal government did not take any interest in the preservation and development of tribal languages. It is clear from the neighbouring state of Sikkim that Limbu Language and literature is the main discipline and taught up to M.A. level and Ph.D. degree are given for the research activity but the same language's teaching facilities have not been started even in primary level in Darjeeling hill under the West Bengal government.

Table 3.8: Writing Ability in Sirijunga Script

Sl.no.	Writing ability Sirijunga script	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes, I can write the Limbu language	46	9.2%
2.	No, I can't	454	90.8%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source:⁴⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 3.7: Writing Ability in Sirijunga Script

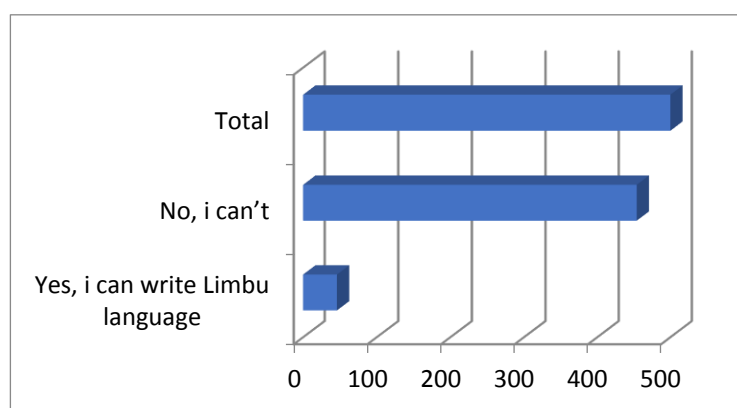


Table 3.8 reveals the fact of the writing ability of the Sirijunga script by the Limbus of Darjeeling.

We found the writing and reading percentage are equal among them. Those who can read Limbu script they can only write so 90.8% of respondents cannot write Limbu script and only 9.2% can write.

3.17 Limbu Religion: Yumaism:

Limbu Tribe have their own distinct religion known as "*Yuma Samyo*" or "*Yumaism*". They consider "*Yumaism*" (divine soul / principal deity) as their creator and always worship them first before worshipping any other form of God. *Yumaism* is a Henotheist or kathentheist religion and believes in a single almighty goddess - "*Tagera Ningwaphuma*" which is also popularly known as "*Yuma*". They believe that *Tagera Ningwaphuma* (Yuma) has created the universe including every living and non-living thing in it with the help of her messengers collectively known as the "*Mangs*" (Deities). She is there in everything of her creation. Yuma is the creator, the preserver, the sustainer and should be prayed every morning and evening to establish a close relationship with her by the Yumaism adherents.⁵⁰

Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills has its own cultural system of religion, which is original and distinct in characters. They have an elaborate philosophy of religion. Their religion appears to be an organized cultural system spread over the thoughts and behavior of man. So, we did a survey to know about religious consciousness among the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills.

Table 3.9: Limbu Tribal Religion "Yumaism" Followed by Limbu Tribe

SL.NO.	Followed own religion	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	476	95.2%
2.	No	24	4.8%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁵¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3.8: Limbu Tribal Religion “Yumaism” Followed by Limbu Tribe

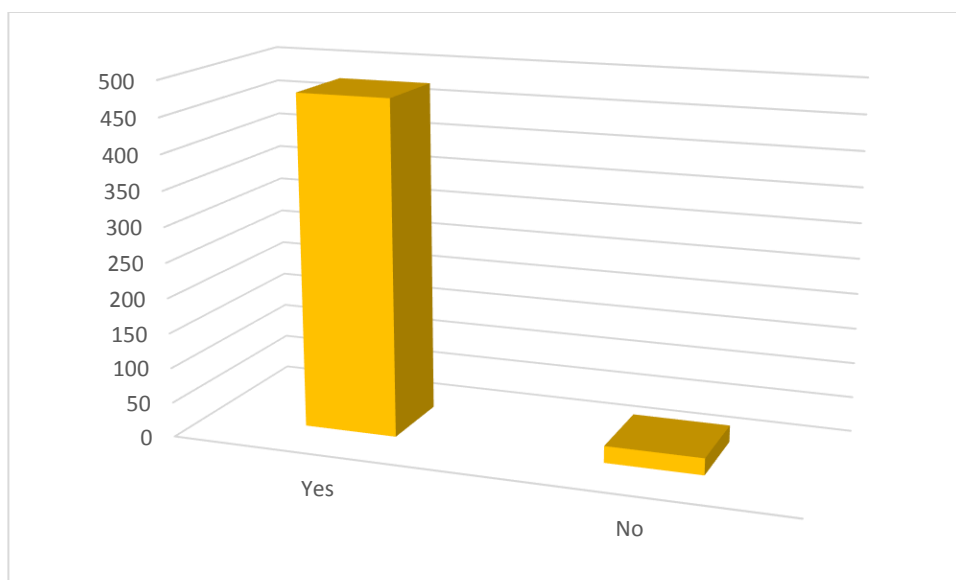


Table 3.9 shows the percentage of Limbus of Darjeeling who followed the ‘Yumaism’. It is observed that 95.2% of respondents followed their own religion and 4.8% of respondents did not follow Yumaism. Those Limbus who does not follow their Limbu religion either have converted into other religion or those Limbus who does not believe in religion and consider all these is superstition.

3.18 Knowledge of God and Goddess of Yumaism:

Limbu tribal people have their own religion ‘Yumaism’ and they have their own Almighty Goddess ‘*Tagera Nuwangphuma*’ who created the Universe, planets, man, and every living and non-living object of the Universe. She also created many Gods and goddesses for helping her in her creation. In this context, we did survey whether Limbus of Darjeeling have knowledge about their Gods and Goddesses. The following table shows their responses.

Table 3.10: Knowledge of God and Goddess of Yumaism

Sl.No.	Limbu God/Goddess	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	482	96.4%
2.	No	18	3.6%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁵² Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3.9: Knowledge of God and Goddess of Yumaism



Table 3.10 refers to the knowledge of God and Goddess of Yumaism among the Limbus of Darjeeling. Limbu tribal people have their own religion and their own god and goddess. It is found that 96.4% of respondents have knowledge about their Limbu deities and they also utter the name of deities like *Tagera Nuwangphuma*, ‘Yumasaam’ and ‘Thebasaam’, Yuma means female god and Theba means male god. Besides these two main deities, there are other deities also. But 3.6% of respondents are there who do not have any knowledge about their religions and deities.

3.19 Phedangba, the Limbu Religious Priest:

Limbu tribal people have their own religious priest. The religious priest of the Limbu tribal people is collectively known as ‘Phedangba’. There are four types of Phedangba. They are

- 1. Mangba-Mangba is an exorcist, who drives evil spirits away by ritual prayers and incantations.*
- 2. Samba-Samba is adept, skilled in the ancient Limbu scriptures.*
- 3. Yema, -Yema is a female Phedangba*
- 4. Yeba-Yeba is male Phedangba*

Both Yeba (male) and Yema (female) protect the community from the rage and vengeance of Nahen, who is short-tempered god and is appeased through animal blood sacrifice once every three years. They also protect people from wizards and witches, who attempt to suck people’s blood. (People of Nepal, Limbu)

The Limbus community believes that the Phedangbas are the reincarnate individuals having an additional soul of the departed dignitaries as “*Samsire*”² recognized and sent by the Almighty Goddess “*Tagera Ningwaphuma*”⁵³

3.20 Knowledge of Religious Priest *Phedangba*

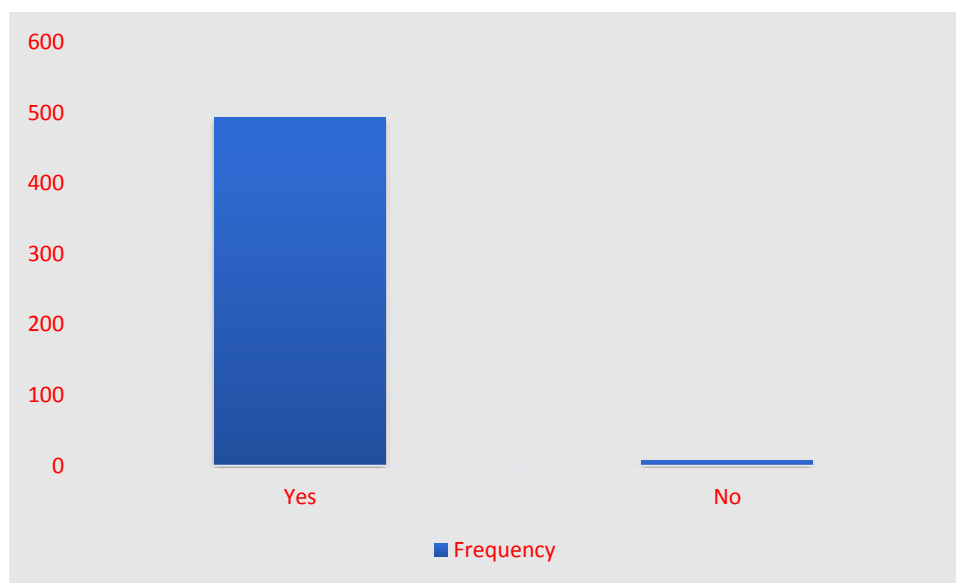
As already mentioned, the Limbus tribe have their own religious priest. In every ritual they needed *Phedangba*. All the religious rites are performed by the Phedangba. So, in our survey, we did different questions regarding their knowledge about the role of the Phedangba in their cultural life or not. We found the following response from them.

Table 3.11: Knowledge of Religious Priest Phedangba

Sl.No.	Limbu Priest	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	493	98.6%
2.	No	07	1.4%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source:⁵⁴ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Figure 3.10: Knowledge of Religious Priest “Phedangba”



Above table 3.11 shows the knowledge of religious priests among the Limbus of Darjeeling hills. It is observed that 98.6% of respondents have knowledge of having their own religious priest of their own religion they knew this because in every ritual of Limbus they needed Phedangba. Only 1.4% of respondents have no idea about their religious priest.

3.21 Maangheem (Limbu Temple):

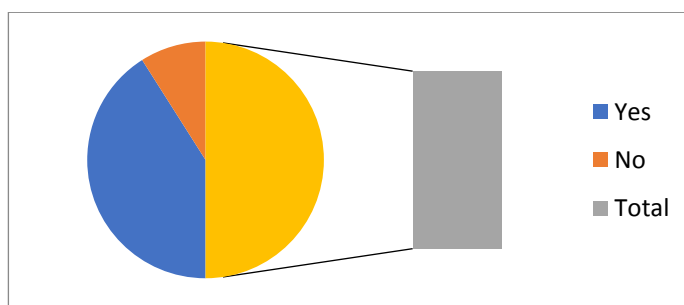
Limbus has their own temple, called ‘Mangheem’ where they worshipped their religious god ‘Tagera Nuwangfuma’ (Yuma). Inside the Mangheem there are eight steps on the Centre which represents the eight atmospheric layers of the earth. Each layer represents a different meaning. Previously construction of Maangheem did not prevail among the Limbu community it was started from the twentieth century onwards. In our study areas, we found four Maangheem of Limbus where they worship every day morning and evening.

Table 3.12: Worship at Limbu Religious Temple (MAANGHEEM)

Sl.No.	Limbu Temple (Maangheem)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	410	82%
2.	No	90	18%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source:⁵⁵ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3.11: Worship at Limbu Religious Temple (MAANGHEEM)



Above table 3.12 shows the percentage of Limbus who worshipped at Maangheem (Limbu religious temple) and 82% of respondents are there who go to worship at Maangheem. It is found that in Darjeeling Mahakaal Dham (one of the famous temples of Darjeeling District) Limbu temple has also been built there and every Limbus who visited the Mahakaal temple also visit *Mangheem* (Limbu Temple) to worship their religious head “*Tagera Nuwangphuma*”. In our survey, we found that not only in *Mahakaaldham* but in *Bijanbari*, *Bunkulung*, and *Nalichour* (*Pacheng*) where maximum Limbus have resided have also built their Maangheem (temple). But, 18% of Limbus are also there who have not visited their Maangheem (Limbu temple). Some of them have been converted into other religions and some of them said that they did not get time to visit Maangheem (Limbu temple)

3.22 Limbu as Nature Worshipers:

The tribal people and forest are indivisible, nature and its worship are other forms of belief system among tribals. The Sun, Moon, Earth is considered the creator or supreme power. The Limbu tribal of Darjeeling hills also worship nature in different forms.

Table 3:13: Nature's Worship and Belief System among Limbu Tribe

Nature Worship by Limbu	Yes	No
Sun and moon	429 (85.8%)	71 (14.2%)
Forest and rivers	455 (91%)	45 (9%)
Mountains and hills	287 (57.4%)	213 (42.6%)

Source:⁵⁶ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3.12: Nature's Worship and Belief System

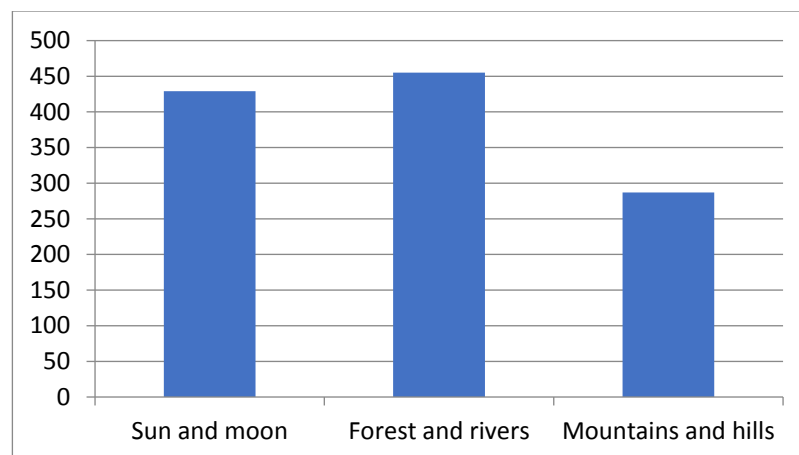


Table 3.13 shows the responses of the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills about their nature's worship and belief system. Here, when we asked them whether they worshipped Sun and Moon 85.8% responded yes and only 14.2% denied worshipping of Sun and Moon. We have also asked them about the worship of Forest and rivers and 91% of responders are in favour of worshipping Forests and Rivers. About the mountains and hills worshipped we got fifty-fifty answers from them. 57.4% are in favour of worshipping and 42.6 respondents are against worshipped of Mountains and Hills. In this regard when we asked them about the worshipped one of the Learned Limbu who is also the president of All India Limbu Association told us that it should be worshipped because in our *Mundhum* (Mundhum are the spiritual instructions for Limbus from their ancestor passed down to generations to generations orally through their phedangma system and yehang system in society) it has been mentioned that we have to worship the mountains and hills. There are 9% Limbus who never worshipped any of them because they do not believe in all this.

3.23 Worship of Mt. Kanchenjunga:

Mt. Kanchenjunga is considered sacred by the Bhutias, Lepchas, Limbus of Sikkim. They believe that all the deities reside in this mountain. They worship Kanchenjunga as their resident god and protector. It is found that Limbus of Sikkim also worships the *Mt. Kanchenjunga*, so in this context when we did a survey among the Limbu tribes of Darjeeling hills, we got different responses from them. The following table shows the response of the Limbus of Darjeeling.

Table 3.14: Worship of Mt. Kanchenjunga by Limbu Tribe

SL.NO.	Worship of Mt. Kanchenjunga	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	0	0%
2.	No	500	100%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁵⁶ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 3.13: Worship of Mt. Kanchenjunga by Limbu Tribe

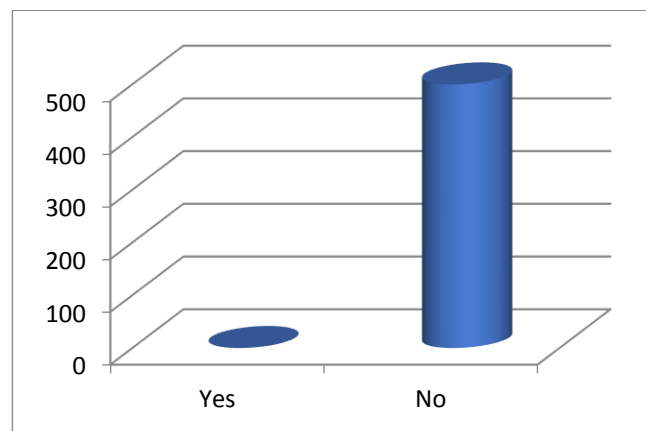


Table 3.14 shows the percentage of Limbus of Darjeeling Hills who worship the *Mt. Kanchenjunga*. Actually, we have asked them this question because in Sikkim state the Limbus of there worshipped the *Mt. Kanchenjunga* so we wanted to know whether Limbus of Darjeeling also worshipped the *Mt. Kanchenjunga* or not and we observed that they do not particularly worship *Mt. Kanchenjunga* although they worship mountains and hills as a whole so 100% Limbus of Darjeeling do not worship the *Mt. Kanchenjunga*.

3.24 Animal Worship by Limbu Community:

Worshipping Animals is a religious ritual where animals are considered deities. It is believed that these animals symbolize deities and have divine characteristics. In different parts of the world, animals are worshipped for different reasons. Limbu tribal people also worship the animals. They mainly worshipped the Gaai (cow) and few Limbu of Darjeeling also worshipped the Naag (snake). Even we asked them whether they worship crow or not, we got the following responses.

Table 3:15: Animal Worship by Limbu Community

Animal Worship by Limbu Tribe	Yes	No
Cow	329 (65.8%)	171(34.2%)
Snake	167 (33.4%)	333 (66.6%)
Crow	00	500 (100%)

Source: ⁵⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 3.15 refers to the distributions of the respondents by their animal worship. We have asked them individually animal's name to whom they worship and we observed that 65.8% of respondents worshipped the cow as a Goumata but 34.2% do not worship the cow here, we found that those Limbus who keep cow as husbandry at home they worshipped cow and those Limbus who do not keep cow as husbandry at home they do not worship cow. 33.4% respondents are there who worshipped snake and 66.6% respondents are there who do not worship snake. About the worship of crow, we found 100% of respondents do not worship the crow. There are 34.6% respondents who do not worship any animals and 65.4% respondents are there who worshipped the animals.

3.25 Traditional Weapons Kept at Home:

Limbu itself means bow and arrow. The Limbu tribal people of Darjeeling hills have a system of keeping the traditional weapon within the house. Most of the tribal people are now not following this system. The culture of keeping the traditional weapon at home is changing to occasional keeping. When an occasion comes the Limbu tribe prepare the weapon and keep for some time later on, they do immersion.

Table 3:16: Traditional Weapon Kept at Home

SL.NO.	Bow and Arrow at home	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	146	29.2%
2.	No	354	70.8%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁵⁸ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

The above table shows the responses of respondents who keep their traditional weapons Bow and Arrow and Arrow. 29.2% of respondents keep bow and arrow at home because maximum Limbus do not keep this weapon at their home, they prepared it when it is required at the time of rituals. So, 70.8% of respondents are there who do not keep their traditional weapons at home, some of them even do not have any idea of their traditional weapons.

3.26 Hindu Festival Celebrated by Limbu Community:

The social life of the tribals involves methods of grouping to carry many social activities. In social life, a group or community cannot be isolated, one group will impact another group in every aspect of life such as cultural, social, and religious life in Darjeeling hills, the tribal of Limbu live mixing with other tribal and non-tribal communities, Hindus are the majority group. The impacts of the Hindus can be easily observed in the cultural aspects of Limbu. All the people of Darjeeling hills celebrate some Hindu festival in their homes.

Table 3:17: Hindu Festival Celebrated by Limbu Community

Religious Festivals	Yes	No	Total4
Dashain	462 (92.4%)	38 (7.6%)	500 (100%)
Tihar	482 (96.4%)	18 .6%)	500 (100%)
Raksha Bandhan	145 (29%)	355 (71%)	500(100%)
Mage Sankranti	387 (77.4%)	113(22.6%)	500 (100%)
None	6 (1.2%)	494 (98.8%)	500 (100%)

Source: ⁵⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey

Table 3.17 shows the responses of Limbus who celebrate the religious festivals of Hindus. Although till 2002 they were treated as a general category but it was 2002 when Limbus were also included in the scheduled tribe list of the Indian constitution. Thus, it is very natural when Limbus celebrated the Hindu festivals. 92.4% of Limbus of Darjeeling celebrated Dashain and 7.6% of Limbus are there who do not celebrate the Dashain when we asked them the reason behind this, they believe that Hindu people, particularly Chhetri and Bahun, celebrated this festival after killing the king of Limbus so they do not celebrate the Dashain.

3.27 Participation in Hindu Pujas by Limbu Community:

As already mentioned, the Limbus were tribal but they were not given their tribal status till 2002, so maximum Limbus were influenced by Hinduism although it is true that they always follow their Limbu culture and tradition. But being influenced by Hinduism they also celebrated Hindu pujas

also. Saraswati puja and Deepawali are celebrated by the Limbus of Darjeeling with great belief. As we know that Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge, so every Limbus who are the students always worshipped goddess Saraswati no matter whether they are tribal or not in our study areas we found almost all the Limbus of Darjeeling celebrate the Hindu pujas.

Table 3:18: Participation in Hindu Pujas by Limbu Community

Hindu Puja Celebration	Yes	No	Total
Saraswati puja	478 (95.6%)	22 (4.4%)	500 (100%)
Laxmi Puja	462 (92.4%)	38 (7.6%)	500 (100%)
Vishwakarma Puja	86 (17.2%)	414 (82.8%)	500(100%)

Source:⁶⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 3.18 refers to the distributions of the respondents by their participation in Hindu Pujas, so we observed that 95.6% of Limbus are there who celebrated Saraswati puja. There are 4.4% Limbus are there who do not celebrate and worship Saraswati puja. Maximum Limbus of Darjeeling worshipped Laxmi Mata as a goddess of wealth so 92.4% of Limbus are there who worshipped the Laxmi Mata for the wealth but 7.6% respondents are there who do not worship Laxmi Mata, they prefer to worship their own religious god '*Tagera-nuwangfuma*'. 17.2% respondents are there who follow the Vishwakarma puja and 82.8% respondents do not celebrate the Vishwakarma puja because maximum people who have vehicles at home would do Vishwakarma puja.

3.28 Adaptation of Religious Gurus by Limbu Tribe:

A guru is defined as a “teacher or spiritual guide who guided their disciple to unite with god”. India has given birth to many ancient religions and practices that focus on the development of spirituality in a person. Today, in India there are many spiritual gurus who are famous all over the world for promoting their practices and ethics. Many people irrespective of religion have become ardent followers of these gurus in search of the true meaning of life. Limbus of Darjeeling are also following those gurus apart from following their own religion *Yumaism*. The following table shows the percentage of the Limbus of Darjeeling who have adopted religious gurus. Here, we found that they are simultaneously worshipped by both *Yumaism* and religious gurus.

Table 3.19: Adaptation of Religious Gurus by Limbu Tribe

Religious Teaching and Preaching Programme	Frequency
Sai Baba	6 (1.2%)
Manav Dharma	14 (2.8%)
Bhramakumari (Om Shanti)	4(0.8%)
Any others	0
Total	24

Source:⁶¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 3.19 shows the distribution of Limbus who has started the worshipping of other religious gurus like Sai Baba, Satpalji Maharaj religious head of Manav Dharma and Bhramakumari here, we have asked particularly about three religious organizations because in Darjeeling these three religious organizations are very active and people of Darjeeling follow them. In our survey we found that 1.2% Limbus is there who follow the Sai Baba and 2.8% Limbus are there who follow the Manav Dharma and 0.8% Limbus is there who follow the Brahma kumari. We observed that although they follow the religious gurus but simultaneously, they also follow their own tribal religion also.

3.29 Religion Changed by Limbu Community:

As already we have discussed that Limbus have their own religion and a few of them also followed the religious gurus but have not changed or converted into other religions. When we did a survey then we found that there are some Limbus people who have totally left their traditional religion and have converted into other religions.

Table 3.20: Religion Changed by Limbu Community

Religion change	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	6.8%
No	466	93.2%

Source: ⁶² Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 3.20 refers to the religion changed by the Limbu community and 6.8% of Limbus have changed their religion and converted them into other religion and 93.2% of Limbus are there who have not converted into other religion although they follow the other religious gurus, they have not abandoned their traditional religion.

3.30 Adoption of Religions:

Religious conversion is the adoption of a set of beliefs identified with one particular religious denomination to the exclusion of others. Thus, the religious conversion would describe the abandoning of adherence to one denomination and affiliate with another.⁶³(Religious Conversion, Wikipedia) India, being a secular country, everyone has the right to adopt any religion of their choice. So, some Limbus of Darjeeling has also adopted new religion by abandoning their old traditional religion *Yumaism*. There are various causes for the adoption of another religion. When we asked them for their conversion, they told us the economic cause is the main reason for the conversion.

Table 3:21: Adoption of Religions

Adopted Religions	Frequency
Christian	34 (6.8%)
Hindu	0
Buddhism	0
Jainism	0
Any Others	0

Source:⁶⁴ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 3.21 refers to the distributions of Limbus who have adopted the new religion and left their ancestral religion forever. In our above table 3.19, we have a discussion about the adoption of religious gurus but we found that though they follow the new religious gurus they did not leave their ancestral tribal religion but here, they adopted the new religion and left their ancestral religion. So, 6.8% of Limbus are there who adopted new religion here, we found that particularly they have adopted Christianity.

3.31 Limbu Dance and Songs:

Limbu tribal people have their own rich tradition of Limbu dance and songs. Every cultural Programme they performed their dances. They sing folk songs in different forms like *Khyali*, *Palam Samlo*, *Hakpare Samlo*, *Nissammang Sewa Samlo* and *Ke Samlo*. All the songs have different tunes and different stepping of dances. Limbu people enjoy various kinds of traditional dances and they also express their happiness and various types of emotions through the dances. Chabrung dance also known as *Ke Langma* is very popular among the Limbus besides *Ke Langma* they also performed the *Damkey Ookma* and *Yialakma* which is also known as *Dhaan Naach*. So,

when we asked them about their knowledge about dances and songs, we got the following responses from Limbus of Darjeeling.

Table 3:22: Knowledge of Limbu Dance and Songs

Tribal Dance or Songs Known	Frequency	Percentage
Dance and songs	45	9%
Dance only	52	10.4%
Songs only	48	9.6%
None	355	71.00%

Source:⁶⁵ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Here table 3.22 shows the different forms of dance and folk songs of Limbus. In our survey, we observed that 9% of Limbus are there who performed both dances and songs and 10% are there who performed dances only and 9.6% Limbus are there who only can sing Limbu song and rest 71% Limbus are there who neither sings and nor dances.

3.32 Attire and Ornaments of Limbu Tribes:

The traditional dress may be defined as the ensemble of garments, jewelry, and accessories rooted in the past that is worn by an identifiable group of people. Though slight changes over time in color, form, and material are acknowledged, the assemblage seems to be handed down unchanged from the past. ⁶⁶ (Encyclopedia dictionary). The Limbu tribes have their own traditional dress. Traditional dress and ornaments played a very important role to identify any caste or community. Their dress is very simple. The traditional dress of the Limbus is called *Mekhli* and *Tagera*. *Mekhli* is a Limbu female dress that looks like a long dress worn with a horizontal strip of cloth with collars crossing over or in a V-neck style.

Like a traditional female dress and ornaments, they have also traditional male dress and ornaments. *Paga or Pheta*- They usually used the white color long stripe for headwear. This headwear is pointy and tied at the back with long white strips. They wear it on their special occasion like marriage and in their religious performance, *Ningkheng*- Muffler, *Phaoee I*- Waist belt, *Sandokpa*- Upper body dress, *Sungrehba*- coat like upper body dress, *Lapetta and pagappa*- Upper body dress, *Paohao*- Main body dress. In our study areas when we asked them that when and at what occasion they wear their traditional dress and found the following responses.

Table 3.23: Traditional Dress

Sl. No	Do you wear traditional dress	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Everyday	00	0%
2.	Occasionally	24	4.8%
3.	Cultural Programme	78	15.6%
4.	Festivals	35	7%
5.	Total	137/500	27.4%/100%

Source:⁶⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table: 3.23. The traditional tribal dresses are a symbol of their separate identity. Now a day the traditional dress and costume are slowly changing because of western cultural dominance. The young generation of the tribal community mainly becomes prey to modern western culture and fashion. So, during our survey, we found that 0% of Limbus do not wear every day their traditional dresses and 4.8% of Limbus are there who wear their traditional dresses at the time of occasion and 15.6% of Limbus are there who wear their traditional dresses at the time of cultural Programme and 7% of respondents are there who wear their traditional dresses at the time of festivals.

3.33 Changes Observed on Marriages, Funeral and Festival of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills:

Limbu tribe has a different social culture. They have their own languages, script, dress, ornaments, religion, songs, and dances which make them different from other communities. But their culture is slowly eroding and its reasons are many. One of the main reasons is contact with other cultures. The Limbu tribal people especially the new generation after getting higher education, jobs, better facilities, etc. led to bilingualism which led to indifference towards their tribal language. Another reason is the imitation of western culture in different aspects of their social life and leaving behind their own culture. These imitations in marriage, funerals, and religion, etc. have led to the degeneration of their tribal culture.

Here, we asked them what changes have come in their culture, particularly in their Marriage system, Funeral, and festivals, and found the following responses.

Table 3.24: Observation of Changes on Marriages, Funeral, and Festival

Sl. No	Observation on Cultural Change	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Marriages	133	26.6%
2.	Funeral	91	18.2%
3.	Festivals	155	31%
5.	None	121	24.2%
6.	Total	500	100%

Source:⁶⁸ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 3.24 refers to the respondents who believe that cultural changes have come in the Limbu community. 26.6% of respondents believe that changes have come in the marriage system of Limbus, they believe that previously the Limbus strictly used to follow rituals of the marriage system but nowadays they have become very flexible regarding rituals of marriage system. 18.2% respondents believe that changes have come in funeral system, in the early days there was no system of construction of cemetery or *Kapur* but during these days the construction of cemetery has become a necessity. Nowadays various types of cemented cemeteries are constructed on burial sites. We have found that many of them have used tiles and marbels for the construction to show their affection for the deceased soul. 31% of respondents believe that changes have come in their festivals previously when Limbus of Darjeeling were non-tribal at that time, they used to follow all the festivals of Hindus but after getting tribal status most of them left the Hindu culture and used to follow their own culture and traditions. 24.2% of respondents are there who believe that nothing has been changed in their cultures. They do not get any changes in their cultural life; they were following their own culture and still following the same without any changes.

3.34 The West Bengal Limbu Development Board:

The West Bengal Limbu Development Board was established on 10th February 2016 under the administrative control of the Tribal Development Department, Government of West Bengal. This 'The West Bengal Limbu Development Board' has been registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961 (West Ben. Act XXVI of 1961)

3.34.1 Aims and Objectives of Limbu Development Board:

a) To undertake all necessary activities for the protection, promotion, and safeguarding of the Limbu language, tradition, and culture;

- (b) To undertake activities to protect historical and culturally significant landmarks of the community;
- (c) To provide support to museum, community radio, publishing unit, and mass media units;
- (d) To undertake activities to popularize, promote and enhance products of artisans, farmers, and other tradition-based items and help the artists and artisans engaged in traditional activities;
- (e) To protect and promote customary rights of the community;
- (f) To establish a center for the protection of the Limbu heritage;
- (g) To take up social welfare activities catering to the requirements of the community;
- (h) To promote education among the Limbu community;
- (i) To publish or cause to be published useful literature, papers, books, research works, magazines of the Limbu community, etc.;
- (j) To work in association with all Government agencies for awareness generation regarding various programmes of development and social welfare, education, literacy, etc.
- (k) To undertake necessary activities for natural resource management, alternative energy, ecology, and environment;
- (l) To construct, maintain, improve, develop, any building, houses or other infrastructure and purchase land and other movable and immovable assets for the benefit of the community;
- (m) To promote Limbu medicinal practices;
- (n) To take up livelihood development of the community;
- (o) To undertake and provide legal assistance to protect assets of the community members;
- (p) To raise loan and credit to fulfill the objectives from a national and international financial institution, subject to observation of statutory rules and executive instructions;
- (q) To obtain funds from different Government departments for the fulfillment of the aforesaid objectives;

(r) To undertake activities for the overall development of the Limbu community throughout West Bengal;

(s) To do all such acts, deeds, matters, and things connected thereto.⁶⁹

3.34.2 Members of the Limbu Development Board:

At present, the West Bengal Limbu Development Board is looking after the overall development of the Limbus of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik, Siliguri, Bagdogra, Doars, Jalpaiguri, Alipore, and Jaigaon. The Chairman of the Limbu Development Board is *Shri Nar Dhoj Limbu* and Vice-Chairman is *Shri Jetha Limbu* and Members are *Shri Yogesh Hang Sereng (Limbu)*, *Shri Chandra Bdr. Subba*, *Shri Sekhar Subba*, *Shri Jasman Subba*, *Shri Suman Subba*, *Shri Kul Bdr. Subba*, *Shri Jit Lal Limbu*, *Smt. Sanjogita Subba*, *Shri Kaji Subba*, *Shri. P.T. Lokshom*, *Shri Binod Subba*, *Shri Pradip Subba*, *Shri Jit Bdr. Subba*, *Shri Ashik Subba*, *Shri Ash Bdr. Subba*, *Shri S.R. Subba*, *Shri Bhristpati Subba* and *Shri Sanjay Subba*.

The general body shall ordinarily meet at least twice a year on a date and place to be fixed by the secretary in consultation with the Chairperson and they shall:

- i) Adopt the annual report of the preceding year
- ii) Pass the audited accounts and budgets and estimates and;
- iii) Transact any business as well be placed in agenda suggested by the executive body.⁷⁰

3.35 Benefits from Limbu Development Board:

Limbu Development Board is working for the development of Limbus of West Bengal. They have constructed many houses for the Limbus of West Bengal. According to the beneficiary list of the year 2017-18, they have constructed 368 houses and in the year 2018-19, they have constructed 246 houses for the Limbus of West Bengal.⁷¹

In my survey areas many Limbu have complained that they have not got the board house, they were saying that it was given randomly without doing any survey. First of all, they should have surveyed the areas and those who are needed they should have given first preference but they gave it without doing any survey and as a result, those Limbus who have already pukka house have got the benefit and needed Limbus were left. In my study areas following Limbus have got the beneficiary from Board.

Table 3.25: Benefits from Limbu Development Board

SL.NO.	Got benefits from Board	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	155	31%
2.	No	345	69%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source: ⁷² Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 3.25 refers to the responses of Limbus who have been benefited by the Limbu development board 31% of respondents are there who have got the houses from Limbu development board and 69% Limbus are there who have not got any houses and benefit from Limbu board. To construct the houses of any Limbus, the development board provided them material and money but they were saying that amount of money and materials are not sufficient to build a house.

3.36 Summing up:

Limbu tribes of Darjeeling have a very rich culture and tradition. This culture of Limbus makes them different from other communities and it also helped them to get tribal status. Here, we found out that what types of changes have come in the cultural life of the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills. First of all, we just asked them whether they follow their culture and tradition at home or not and 84.6% respondents are there who follow their culture and tradition and only 2% respondents are there who do not follow and the reason was that they have converted into other religion.

Language is one of the main parts of the culture and the Limbus community has its own language and script. In Darjeeling only 38.8% of Limbus are there who can speak and understand their language; it is found that most of them speak in the Nepali language within their family and with their neighbours. About their script which is in very poor condition, there are only 9.2% Limbus who can read and write and most of them were above sixty years. When we asked them, what are the causes for the decline of script and language most of them answered lack of Limbu school and parents do not speak at home. It is also found that DI of schools of hill areas has issued the corresponding letter to teach Limbu language in primary school but due to some political reason it could not implement in the primary schools of Darjeeling hills, but during our survey, we found that they are running night school to teach their language and script.

About their religion, we came to know that they have their own religion called “Yumaism”, and their own goddess named “*Tagera Ningwafuma*’.95.2% of Limbus of Darjeeling follow their own

religion. They have their own religious priest called “Phedangba performed all their rituals at the time of occasions. They have their own religious temple called “Maangheem”, in Darjeeling, we found four Maangheem first one is in Darjeeling Mahakaal Dham, the second one is in Bijanbari, the third one is in Bunkulung and the last one is in Pacheng Bazar. One of the learned men among the Limbus who knows the rituals of the Limbu community goes and worship there in every morning and evening. Besides these, they also worship nature and animals. They also celebrated Hindu pujas and festivals. It is found that only 1.8% of Limbus are there who have changed their religions.

Limbus has its own culture of songs and dances. They have different types of songs and dances which they performed at the time of cultural Programme and occasion but in Darjeeling, only 9% Limbus are there who can dance and sings a Limbu song. Although they have different types of dances, in Darjeeling, they performed only “Chabrung dance”.

Limbus has its own traditional attire for women and men. Limbu women have different types of traditional ornaments which they wear at the time of the cultural programme. 15.6% Limbus are there who wear their traditional dress at the time of cultural Programme and special occasion.

Limbu Development Board was founded in the year 2016 by West Bengal Government and according to the beneficiary list of the year 2017-18 they have constructed 368 houses and in the year 2018-19, they have constructed 246 houses for the Limbus of West Bengal. In our study areas, we found that only 31% of Limbus have been there who have got houses from the Limbu Development Board.

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CHAPTER-4

HEALTH, HYGIENE, INDIGENOUS AND ETHNOMEDICINAL TREATMENT OF LIMBU TRIBE OF DARJEELING HILLS:

SECTION-I

4.1 Definition of Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation:

The meaning of health has evolved over time. In keeping with the biomedical perspective, early definitions of health focused on the theme of the body's ability to function; health was seen as a state of normal function that could be disrupted from time to time by disease.¹ In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".² This definition has been subject to controversy because of the word "complete", which makes it practically impossible to achieve. So, in 1986 the WHO further clarified that health is: "A resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities." ³Thus in the concept of health, there are so many ever-changing components that are responsible for the well-being of an individual that it is quite difficult to get a complete aspect of the health of a particular individual. In fact, the concept of health is quite multifaceted and dynamic in nature. The concept of health plays a very important role in community development. "It is a basic requirement, not only for the fulfillment of human aspiration but also for the enjoyment of all mankind of a better quality of life. It is also indispensable for a balanced development of the individual within the family and as a part of the community and the nation."⁴ The most vital problem in the philosophy of medicine regarding defining the concept of Health is to get the substantive analysis of health and disease.⁵

An important way to maintain your personal health is to have a healthy diet. A healthy diet includes a variety of plant-based and animal-based foods that provide nutrients to your body. Such nutrients give you energy and keep your body running. Nutrients help build and strengthen bones, muscles, and tendons and also regulate body processes. The food guide pyramid is a pyramid-shaped guide of healthy foods divided into sections. Each section shows the recommended intake for each food group. Making healthy food choices is important because it can lower heart disease, developing some types of cancer, and it will contribute to maintaining a healthy weight.⁶ Health can be promoted by encouraging healthful activities, such as regular exercise and adequate sleep, and by reducing or avoiding unhealthful activities such as smoking and excessive stress. ⁷

4.2 Hygiene:

Hygiene is the degree to which people keep themselves or their environment clean, especially to prevent disease⁸ It is a series of practices related to lifestyle, cleanliness, health, and medicine. The World Health Organization defines the term “hygiene” as follows, “Hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases”.⁹ Hygiene is the key factor to ensure good health. There are five hygiene activities grouped:

- a) Home and everyday hygiene- Home and everyday hygiene mean those hygiene practices that prevent or minimize the spread of disease at home and other everyday settings such as social settings, public transport, the workplace, public places, etc.
- b) Personal hygiene- Personal hygiene involves those practices performed by an individual to care for one’s bodily health and wellbeing through cleanliness.
- c) Medical hygiene- Medical hygiene pertains to the hygiene practices related to the administration of medicine and medical care that prevents or minimize the spread of disease.
- d) Sleep Hygiene- Sleep hygiene is the recommended behavioral and environmental practice that is intended to promote better quality sleep. These recommendations include establishing a regular sleep schedule, using naps with care, not exercising physically or mentally too close to bedtime, limiting worry, avoiding alcohol as well as nicotine, caffeine, and other stimulants in the hours before bedtime.
- e) Food Hygiene- Food hygiene (culinary hygiene) pertains to the practices related to food management and cooking to prevent food contamination, prevent food poisoning and minimize the transmission of disease to other foods, humans, or animals.¹⁰

4.3 Sanitation:

Sanitation refers to public health conditions related to clean drinking water and treatment and disposal of human excreta and sewage. Preventing human contact with feces is part of sanitation, as is Hand Washing with soap. The main aim of the sanitary system is to protect human health by providing a clean environment that will stop the transmission of diseases like diarrhea the main cause of malnutrition and stunted growth in children can be reduced through adequate sanitation. There are many other diseases that are easily transmitted in communities that have low levels of sanitation such as ascariasis, cholera, hepatitis, polio, schistosomiasis, etc.

There are some variations on the use of the term “sanitation” between countries and organizations. Sanitation is not an easy concept to understand.¹¹ The World Health Organization defines the term “sanitation” as follows:

“Sanitation generally refers to the provision of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and feces. The word ‘sanitation’ also refers to the maintenance of hygienic conditions, through services such as garbage collection and wastewater disposal.”¹² Thus, Sanitation is the means of promoting hygiene through the prevention of human contact with hazards of wastes especially faces by proper treatment and disposal of the waste, often mixed into wastewater. These hazards may be physical, microbiological, biological, or chemical agents of disease.

The main objective of a sanitation system is to protect and promote human health by providing a clean environment and breaking the cycle of disease.¹³ Sanitation can include personal sanitation and public hygiene. Personal sanitation work can include handling menstrual waste, cleaning the household toilet, and managing household garbage. Public sanitation work can involve garbage collection, transfer, and treatment, cleaning drains, streets, schools, trains, public spaces, community toilets, sewers, operating sewage treatment plants, etc. Workers who provide these services for other people are called sanitation workers.¹⁴

4.3.1 Dry Sanitation: The term “dry sanitation” is somewhat misleading as sanitation includes hand-washing and can never be “dry”. It usually refers to a system that uses a type of dry toilet and no sewers to transport excreta.

4.3.2 Ecological Sanitation: This sanitation is commonly abbreviated to ecosan, is an approach rather than a technology or a device that is characterized by a desire to “close the loop” between sanitation and agriculture in a safe manner.

4.3.3 Emergency Sanitation: This sanitation is the management and technical processes required to provide sanitation in emergency situations. Emergency sanitation is required in situations including natural disasters, internally displaced persons, and relief for refugees. There are three phases of emergency response: Immediate, short-term, and long-term. In the immediate phase, the focus is on managing open defecation, and toilet technologies might include very basic latrines, pit latrines, bucket toilets, container-based toilets, chemical toilets. The short-term phase might also involve technologies such as urine-diverting dry toilets, septic tanks, and decentralized wastewater systems. Providing handwashing facilities and management of focal sludge are also part of emergency sanitation.

4.3.4. Environmental Sanitation: Environmental sanitation encompasses the control of environmental factors that are connected to disease transmission. Subsets of this category are solid waste management, water, and wastewater treatment, industrial waste treatment, and noise and pollution control.

4.3.5 Improved Sanitation and Unimproved Sanitation: Improved sanitation and unimproved sanitation refer to the management of human feces at the household level. This terminology is the indicator used to describe the target of the Millennium Development Goal on Sanitation by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water supply and Sanitation.

4.3.6. Sustainable Sanitation: sustainable sanitation considers the entire “sanitation value chain” from the experience of the user, excreta and wastewater collection methods, transportation or conveyance of waste treatment, and reuse or disposal (1) the term is widely used since about 2009. In 2007 the sustainable sanitation Alliance had defined five sustainability criteria to compare the sustainability of the sanitation system. In order to be sustainable, a sanitation system has to be not only (i) economically viable (ii) socially acceptable and (iii) technically, and (iv) Institutional appropriate. It should also (v) protect the environment and the natural resources

4.3.7. Lack of Sanitation: Lack of sanitation refers to the absence of sanitation. In practical terms, it usually means a lack of toilet or lack of hygienic toilets that anybody would want to use voluntarily. The result of lack of sanitation is usually open defecation (and open urination but this is of less concern) with associated serious public health issues. It is estimated that 2.4 billion people still lacked improved sanitation facilities including 660 million people who lack access to safe drinking water as of 2015.¹⁵

4.3.8. List of Diseases caused by Lack of Sanitation: Relevant diseases and conditions caused by lack of sanitation and hygiene include: (i) Waterborne diseases, which can contaminate drinking water (ii) diseases transmitted by the fecal-oral route (iii) Infections with intestinal helminths (worms)- approximately two billion people are infected with soil-transmitted helminths worldwide; they are transmitted by eggs present in human feces which in turn contaminate soil in areas where sanitation is poor (iv) Malnutrition, particularly in children

The list of diseases that could be reduced with proper access to sanitation and hygiene practices is very long. For example, in India 13 diseases have been listed which could be stamped out by improving sanitation 1. Anemia, Malnutrition 2. Ascariasis (a type of intestinal worm infection 3. Campylobacteriosis, 4. Cholera 5. Cyanobacteria toxins 6. Dengue, 7. Hepatitis 8. Japanese

encephalitis (JE) 9. Leptospirosis 10 Malaria 11. Ringworm or Tinea (a type of Intestinal worm infection)12. Scabies and 13. Schistosomiasis.¹⁶

4.4 The Problem of Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation among the Tribals:

The tribal people have to face a number of problems related to health and sanitation. They have to face such problems because of their distinctive culture, residence style of life, economic condition, and lack of communication facilities. Tribal lives in a village surrounded by hills, forest, sea, islands, rives, etc. In these areas, they lack communication facilities. Due to lack of communication facilities, they are not able to attain the benefits of the program related to general health, reproductive health, children, expectant mother, lactating mother, family welfare, communicable disease, sex-linked diseases, AIDS, etc.,¹⁷

Although the government has opened many health centers and sub-centers for the tribal peoples and also appointed the numbers of doctors, nurses, and health servants but the tribal areas are being too remote places and the communication problems they do not want to go there and live-in tribal areas. They go there just for their salaries not to serve the people. In some cases, expired medicines supplied them and good quality of medicines was used by the staff for their own purpose and for earning extra money. As a result, tribals do not get proper treatment and medicines at the centers and they have to face a lot of health problems.¹⁸

If we talk about their sanitation then we found they live a very unhygienic life which affects their health. Living in a very poor life their houses do not have windows, rooms, kitchen, drains, latrines, etc. Thus, lack of windows and holes they do not get sufficient air and light which affects their skin and health. Tribal people do not have toilets, they use streets, roads, and fields for the purpose of easing. As a result, flies transmit a number of diseases in them. The tribal have to cook food with cow dung, leaves dry woods which create much smoke and affects the lungs of an entire family member. The tribals generally do not have pumps for drinking water they have to use the water of the pond for cooking, eating, and drinking purposes which affect the health of tribal people by causing diseases like Jaundice, diarrhea, pox, typhoid, T.B., gastritis, etc. They do not take baths regularly and as a result, they have to suffer from skin diseases like wounds, scabies, etc. Being very poor they do not have money to feed their body. That is why they do not pay proper attention to pregnant women, expectant mothers, and lactating mothers. In the majority of cases, deliveries take place in houses under the supervision of senior woman (sungeni). Hence in several cases, the mother and child both have lost their lives.¹⁹

Young tribal girls enter the reproductive age as victims of undernourishment and anemia and face greater health risks as a result of early marriage, frequent pregnancies, unsafe deliveries, and sexually transmitted diseases. Besides this, they have to suffer from malnutrition, imbalanced diet, and lack of inappropriate behavior towards their physical, social and economic matters.²⁰

4.5 Causes of Ill Health among the Tribal:

(I) Lack of awareness of health issues: This is the foremost cause for the ill health of tribal people. Most tribal populations tend to fall ill more frequently because they are not aware of the diseases and most of the time they depended on local practitioners.

(II). Lack of health facilities in remote rural areas: Past efforts to bring health care to the poor through outreach camps and mobile health units have not had the desired impact. Coverage of remote tribal areas was found to be poor, a large number of positions lay vacant, the availability of drugs was inadequate, and vehicles frequently broke down because of poor maintenance. Even where brick-and-mortar health facilities were set up, they were often insufficiently equipped with drugs and medical supplies and faced a shortage of trained doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff.

²¹(Ibid)

(III.) Lack of emergency transportation: The tribal people live in remote areas surrounded by hills, forests, sea, islands, and rivers, and in these areas are lacking communication facilities. So, pregnant women and sick persons are unable to make it to health facilities and institutional deliveries.

(IV). Lack of pure drinking water: The tribal people do not have pumps for drinking water. They use the water of the pond for cooking, eating, and drinking purposes. They wash their clothes on the bank of the same pond and also washed animals in the same ponds which makes the water of the pond contaminated. So, when the water is used for cooking, eating, and drinking purposes, it affects the health of the tribals adversely by causing diseases like Jaundice, Diarrhea, pox, typhoid, gastritis, etc.

(V). Discriminatory behaviour by the staff of health centers: There are deep-rooted cultural differences between tribal groups and the largely non-tribal health care staff. It is found that they follow insensitive, dismissive, and discriminatory behaviour towards the tribal people. In addition, they also face language problems because they have their own dialects which are not easily understood and they are frequently exploited for informal payment and often referred to private

chemists or medical practitioners with mal-intent. This is one of the main reasons they prefer to visit traditional healers rather than public or private health facilities. ²²(ibid)

(VI). Poverty: The tribal people live below the poverty line. They do not have money to maintain living standards when one of their members falls ill. They have to borrow money, mortgage land or animals, or pawn jewelry to meet medical expenses, or else let the sick person die. They also cannot sustain the proper attention on the pregnant women, expectant mother and lactating mothers.

4.6 Way to Improve the Health Problem of Tribal People:

The health problem of tribals can be solved in the following ways:

I. Raising awareness of health issues is the first step towards improving the health problems of tribal populations. Health education should be imparted among the tribals.

II. To bring health services to remote populations: Medical camps should be conducted in every remote tribal area. Medicine should be free of cost. Doctors of pediatric, gynecological, general medical services should be brought from reputed hospitals. There should be a range of free medical services including free immunization, basic lab tests, free medicines for a full course of treatment, and referral of the more complex cases to advanced facilities.

III. Transportation facilities should be improved. Providing emergency transportation for expectant mothers.

IV. Hand pump should be installed for drinking water. Ponds and well should be clean and spray for disinfectant.

V. Health workers should be employees from tribal communities and the number of tribal girls should be increased in the post of ANM.

4.7 Health, Water Quality, Sanitation, and Hygiene among the Limbu Tribal Community of Darjeeling Hills:

The Limbu tribals of Darjeeling are aware of health and sanitation. If we see the health and sanitation of the Limbu ethnic people of Darjeeling hills, then we found a different picture in comparison with the other tribal (tribal of plains). Most of them are very conscious about their health and hygiene but there are many Limbu people who are not aware of health and hygiene. Those Limbu people who are conscious about health although, live in villages and busy and there is a lack of communication, but they visit to meet the doctor and health center if required. Most of

them can visit the health centers and hospitals and even can talk to the doctor in the Hindi language (almost all the doctors who are appointed in their localities are non-Nepalis and they cannot speak Nepali so, they communicate with them in Hindi). In some cases, those who are old and illiterate are accompanied by their relatives. If there is any serious illness then they would take them to district hospital and if the patient is so serious then they would take them to Siliguri, Mumbai, Chennai, Vellore, and Kolkata, etc. But one thing we should mention here is that all the Limbu peoples' economic conditions is not so good who could not take their relatives for treatment even in Siliguri for better treatment. So, in these cases, they have only one option that is to depend on indigenous treatment and medicines. Those Limbus who are not aware of health and hygiene hardly visit health centers they only depend on the quack doctor and ethnomedicinal treatment.

Safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) have remained a major global concern over recent years. WASH is a composite measurement, mostly determined by the availability of safe drinking water, safely managed sanitation facilities and provision for basic handwashing facilities. Lacking such facilities can directly contribute to diarrheal illnesses, helminthic infections, eye infections, skin infections, pneumonia, and childhood malnutrition.²³

Now, if we talk about the sanitation of the Limbu ethnic community then we found that they are very hygienic and love to live in a neat and clean environment. Their houses have separate kitchens, toilets, and well drainage system. Maximum Limbu people use LPG for cooking and others who cannot afford LPG, cook with dry wood which does not create smoke. They do not drink pond water and tube well water because these are not available in Darjeeling Dist. Their main sources of water are rain, spring (Dhara), Stream (Khosla). They preserved the water in the tank. They always drink the water after boiling it.

So, here we did a survey to know in detail about their hygiene and how they keep themselves neat and clean in their everyday life activities. We have asked them each and every question regarding their daily routine like whether they brush their teeth or not? about their bath etc. The following tables show the responses from them.

Table 4.1: Local Environment (Neatness and Cleanliness)

Sl.No.	Local Environment Neat and Clean	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Good	133	26.6%
2.	Satisfactory	367	73.4%
3.	Bad	00	0%
4.	Worst	00	0%
5.	Total	500	100%

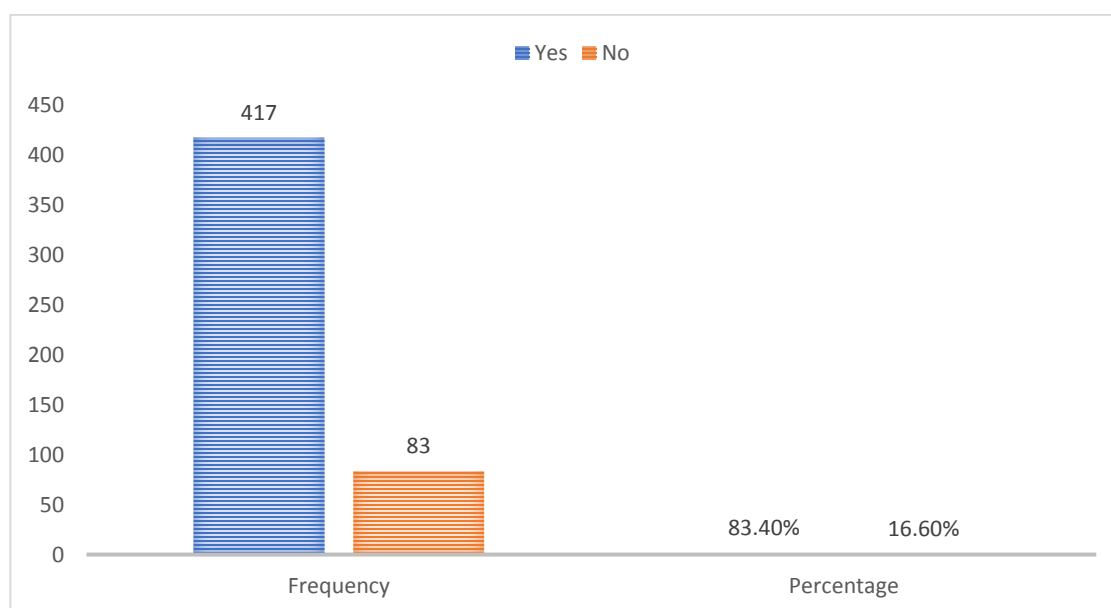
Source:²⁴ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 4.1 refers to the opinion of the Limbus of Darjeeling hills respondents about the neatness and cleanliness of their surrounding environment. As already mentioned, that they prefer to live in a neat and clean environment so in our survey we found that 26.6% of respondents live in a good hygienic and neat and clean environment. They keep their surrounding very neat and clean. 73.4% of respondents live in a satisfactory clean environment. In our survey, we did not find any response from Limbus about worst and bad environment conditions, even those Limbus whose financial condition are not good have kept their surrounding neat and clean.

Table 4.2: The Consciousness of Health and Hygiene

Sl.No.	The consciousness of health, hygiene, and Sanitation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	417	83.4%
2.	No	83	16.6%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source²⁵: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.1: The consciousness of Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation

Above table 4.2 and figure 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by their consciousness of Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation. Although they are tribal people, they are very conscious about health and hygiene so we found that 83.4% of respondents are conscious of health and hygiene and there are 16.6% of respondents who are not aware of health.

4.8 Habit of Bath Taking of Limbus of Darjeeling:

During the field survey to know about their hygienic condition, we asked them about their bath taking habit and maximum of them said once in a week so we got surprised and asked them if you have to be hygienic and neat and clean you should have to take bath daily but their answer was different, they said in Darjeeling if you take bath once in a week then that is sufficient because Darjeeling is a very cold place and there is no pollution, no dust so if you take bath once in a week then you are maintaining neat and hygiene. It does not mean that all of them take bath once a week but there are many Limbu who take bath twice and thrice a week but take bath regularly is not possible. The following table shows the percentage of the habit of bath taking.

Table 4.3: The Habit of Bath Taking of Limbus of Darjeeling

Sl.no.	Taking bath	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Twice a week	122	24.4%
2.	Once a week	283	56.6%
3.	Once in a month	95	19%
4.	Once in a year	00	00%
5.	Total	500	100%

Source ²⁶: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.2: The Habit of Bath Taking of Limbus of Darjeeling

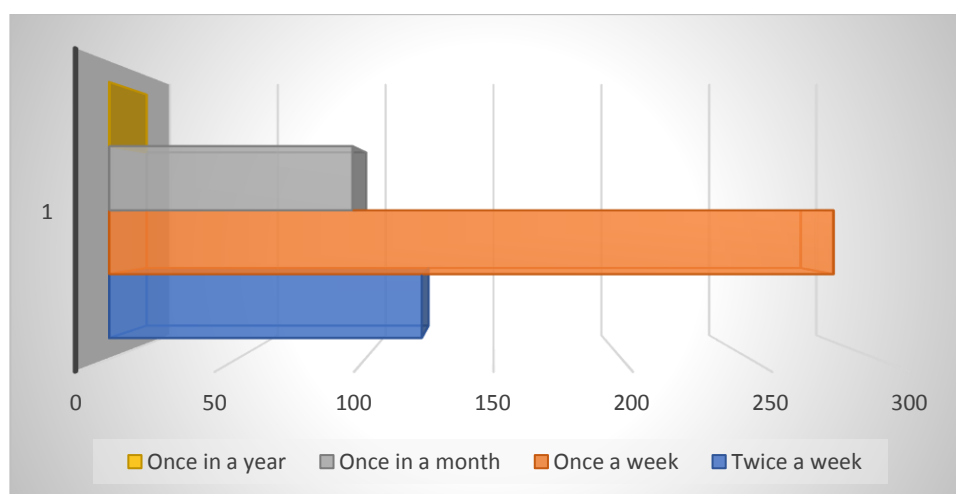


Table 4.3 shows the percentage of Limbus of Darjeeling of their bath taking the habit and we observed that 24.4% respondents are there who take bath twice in a week and 56.6% respondents are there who take bath once in a week and there are 19% old age people who take bath once in a month.

4.9 Toothbrush Habit among the Limbus Tribe:

Traditionally, twigs of neem, meswak, and datiwani have been used for cleaning teeth. The Limbus of Darjeeling does not use neem and meswak because it is not locally available in Darjeeling so they used the twig of datiwani. But from the past few decades, the Limbu tribe community have got access to new oral hygiene aids such as toothbrush and toothpaste. So, most of the Limbus of Darjeeling who used twigs and other materials for cleaning their teeth have been switched over to toothbrushes and toothpaste. In this regard, we did a survey to know about the habit of toothbrushes among the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling.

Table 4.4: The Habit of Tooth Brush

Sl.No.	Brush of the Teeth	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Twice a day	97	19.4%
2.	Once a day	386	77.2%
3.	Weekly	17	3.4%
4.	Never	0	0%
5.	Total	500	100%

Source:²⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 4.4 refers to the distributions of respondents about their daily habit of toothbrush and 19.4% of respondents are there who brush their teeth twice a day and 77.2% of respondents are there who brush their teeth once a day. We also observed that there are 3.4% of respondents brush their teeth only once a week and they are mostly old age people. All of them used toothbrushes and paste to brush their teeth instead of a twig.

4.10 Sanitation and Water Quality among the Limbu Tribal Community:

Safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) have remained a major global concern over recent years. WASH is a composite measurement, mostly determined by the availability of safe drinking water, safely managed sanitation facilities, and provision for basic hand-washing facilities.²⁸ Limbus of Darjeeling are very conscious regarding sanitation and drinking water quality.

Maximum Limbus of Darjeeling have their own toilet facilities at their houses and drinking water in their houses. We have already discussed the types of sanitation and sources of water among the Limbus of Darjeeling in our previous chapter of Socio-Economic. In this regard, we did door to door survey to know about the sanitation and drinking water facilities among the Limbu community. The following table and figure show the percentage of sanitation facilities and drinking water quality.

Table 4.5: Sanitation Facilities

Sl.No.	Do you have a toilet?	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	495	95%
2.	No	05	1%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ²⁹: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.3: Sanitation facilities

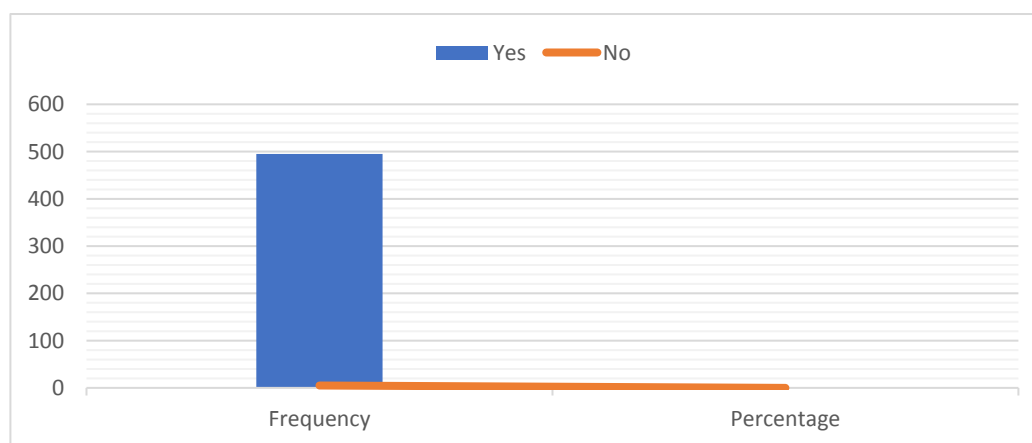


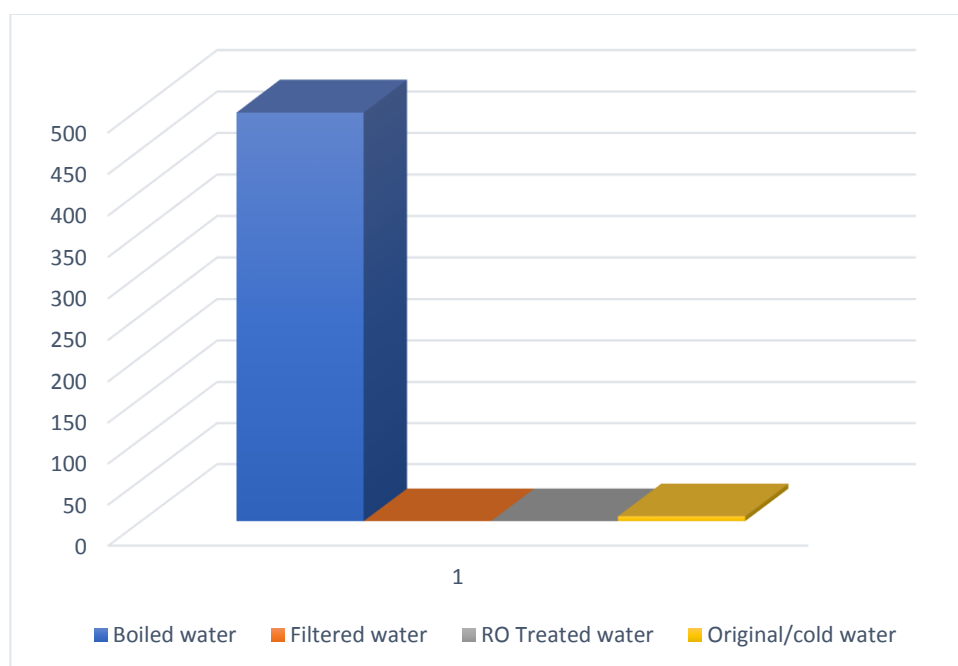
Table 4.5 and figure-3 discuss the sanitation facility of Limbus in the study areas. As already mentioned, that Limbus of Darjeeling are very conscious about health and hygiene so it is observed that 95% of respondents have owned toilet facilities at their houses and only 1% of respondents did not have owned toilet facilities.

Table 4.6: Safe Drinking Water Facilities

Sl.No.	Form of water	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Boiled water	494	98.8%
2.	Filtered water	0	0%
3.	RO Treated water	0	0%
4.	Original/cold water	06	1.2%
5.	Total	500	100%

Source ³⁰: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.4: Safe Drinking Water Facility



Above table 4.6 and figure-4 refer to the distribution of respondents by their safe drinking water facilities. As already mentioned, that Darjeeling is a cold place so the people of Darjeeling always drink boiled water so, 98.8% of Limbu respondents are there who drink the boiled water only. 1.2% of respondents are there who drink cold water prefer to drink the water directly from tap and spring and RO treated water and filtered water they do not drink because, in Darjeeling, water does not need to do filtered and RO.

4.11 Malnutrition:

When there is a lack of or excess intake of one or more nutrients and fatal utilization of nutrients in our body, it leads to a state of imbalance in the body. This condition is known as malnutrition. According to the World Health Organization, malnutrition is the most common nutritional disorder in the world.³¹ The majority of tribals are illiterate and poor and they are totally dependent on wage-earning as a different kind of labour. For the wages, they are not able even to meet their both ends. So, it is not possible for them to buy vegetables, pulse, and meat. Thus, they do not take protein in their food and other nutrients, which results in malnutrition among them. Malnutrition in tribal people is not only a health issue, it is a manifestation of the gamut of social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental adverse factors.³²

4.11.1 Causes of Malnutrition: The main causes of malnutrition among the tribals are as follows:

I. Poverty: Generally tribal have to face the problem of malnutrition due to poverty. Problems of poverty are compounded by a lack of sanitation, access to healthcare, and frequent ailments leading to rampant under-nutrition.³³

II. Cultural Factors: Cultural factors are also responsible for malnutrition in women of the tribal societies. During pregnancy and lactations, they have to observe a number of taboos on food due to which they also become mal-nutrient. According to cultural tradition, women are expected to eat food last after serving to all family members and on many occasions, they have to face the situation of food shortage. In this situation, they remain hungry or half-fed. This also brings malnutrition among the women of tribal society.³⁴

III. Drinking Habit: Drinking habits among the tribe is another cause of malnutrition. They drink *Jaar* or *Nigar* made from rice and wheat which work as food besides intoxicating effect. Excess taking of liquor results in loss of appetite which results in malnutrition.

Malnutrition among the tribals can be removed with the improvement of economic status, to create general awareness on health and nutrition, and to access medical care, especially during pregnancy.

4.12 Awareness of Malnutrition among the Limbu Tribes of Darjeeling:

During our survey we only asked them whether they are aware or not about malnutrition and or they have knowledge about malnutrition or not and we found the following result.

Table 4.7: Malnutrition

Sl.No.	Knowledge of Malnutrition	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	187	37.4%
2.	No	313	62.6%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source³⁵: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 4.7 refers to the distribution of respondents by their awareness of malnutrition. Here, we only wanted to know from them about their knowledge on malnutrition and we did not do any survey on nutritional status among children, adolescents, and adults in males and females of Limbus of Darjeeling. The above table shows the frequency of knowledge of malnutrition among the Limbus of Darjeeling and 37.4% of respondents have knowledge about malnutrition and they are also aware of the result of malnutrition. But 62.6% of respondents are there who does not have any knowledge about malnutrition and its effects on their life. The study shows that their awareness

about malnutrition is greatly influenced by certain socio-economic factors like family income, education, and occupation.

SECTION-II

4.13 Traditional Treatment and Ethnomedicinal Practices among the Tribes:

Traditional medicines are meant for protecting and restoring health. The tribal people have been in close contact with nature. Whenever they faced health problems, They, took the help of natural herbs, shrubs, flowers, fruits, seeds, barks, roots, etc. to solve them. The knowledge of folk medicine diffused from individual to individual, group to group, generation to generation, and area to area. In tribal society, a medicine man came into existence whose main function was to cure the illness of the people by providing folk medicine. The medicines men possessed the knowledge of diseases and provided medicines prepared from the forest plants, trees, herbs, shrubs. They also prepared the medicines from the skin, teeth, bone, horn, nail, eyes, feathers, etc. of animals and birds available in the forest. The medicines man transmitted the knowledge of disease and medicine to his sons. In the absence of a son, the knowledge of medicine is transmitted to the daughter's husband or brother's son. Thus, the post of medicine men became hereditary in tribal societies. The medicine man enjoyed considerable respect in society.³⁶

This traditional knowledge of medicine existed in the tribal societies before the arrival of modern medicine. It is generally transmitted from generation to generation orally through a community, family, and individuals. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as “the sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not used in the maintenance of health as well in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness. “To date, in some parts of the world, the majority of the population continue to rely on their own traditional medicine to meet the primary health care needs. Tribal communities possess a unique health problem in regard to the acceptance and rejection of modern medicine. It is very difficult to understand the tribal health problem only by providing health institutions, modern doctors, equipment, and medicine to tribal communities for the betterment of their health. Inadequate service quality and the western model of modern health services fail to meet their expectations. The tribal concept of health, disease, treatment, life, and death is as varied as their culture. In tribal societies illness is believed to be caused by the active, purposeful intervention of a sensate agent

who may be a supernatural being (deity or a god); a human being (such as ghost, ancestor, or evil spirit); or a human being (witch or sorcerer) ³⁷

Thus, from a cross-cultural perspective, tribal health belief systems fall into two categories:

- i. Personalistic belief system: It is believed that causes of illness are due to supernatural forces like a sorcerer or by an angry spirit
- ii. Naturalistic belief system: It explains sickness in terms of natural forces, such as the germ theory of contagion in Western biomedicine. ³⁸

Thus, tribal people when they become ill, they took help from ethnomedicinal plants to cure themselves and if they believed that the causes of illness are due to supernatural powers then they would visit the traditional healer man for their treatment.

4.14 Indigenous Treatment and Ethnomedicinal Practices of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills:

In Darjeeling hills all tribal communities have their own cultural and social practices to treat various illnesses, in their language, it is called '*Paharay Dabai*', indigenous treatment or local treatment. In the context of indigenous treatment, the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills have their own cultural and social practices to treat various illnesses. Generally, they have two types of indigenous medical treatment based on the naturalistic belief system and personalistic belief system. After doing all these treatments if the patient is not recovered from the illness, then they would go to the modern (allopathic) treatment.

4.15 Types of Indigenous Treatment in the Limbus Community:

1. Treatment by Religious priest. (Phedhangma, Dhami, Mata, Bhaun baje,)
2. Treatment by Paharay Dabai (Indigenous Herbal Treatment)

4.16 First Types of Treatment by Religious Priests (Phedhangma, Dhami, Mata, and Bhaun Baje,):

Here, we found that in the Limbu community, the first indigenous medical treatment is the ritual medical system which is based on enchanting of mantras by Limbu religious priests (Phedangma, Shamba, and Yeba –Yema, Jhankri, and Mata). They use the spiritual forces through incantations, provocation, invocation of deities, performing rituals and sacrifices of animals to please the deities and divinities. In their society, it is strongly believed that if there is any patient in their family, first

of all, they would take them to the religious priest-like and he or she would diagnose the ailment and would suggest them to take the treatment of the rituals or herbal medicine or modern doctor treatment. There are two categories of Limbus first category believes in the existence of evil spirits, witchcraft, sorcery, and voot-pret (ghost), etc. and the second category does not believe in the existence of all those supernatural powers. Those Limbus who believed in supernatural power strongly believes that if they first go to the modern (allopathic) treatment without consultation of their religious priest then the patient's conditions would be worst and he or she would die. So before going to the hospital, they would take the patient to their local traditional healer and in some cases, if the patient is too serious then the religious priest would come to the patient's house, and those Limbus who does not believe the existence of supernatural power they would take directly to the hospital or doctor. It is believed that the religious priest can see the cause and then know the cure of the disease by reading into the seeds of the rice. If he or she found that person is possessed by an evil spirit, then he or she would do the treatment by chanting the '*mantras*' and '*rituals*' only and if he or she found the cause of illness due to other reason, they would suggest following allopathic or herbal medicines.

Limbu people have one of the unique types of treatment which are done by performing Shamanistic dance. The dance of the Shaman depends on the prediction and cause of the disease. They performed the dance as per the type of sickness. A Shaman started their dancing around the altar, which they prepared themselves with the help of bamboo and leaves. They started their dance with a mild beating of brass plate and Yegek (dangro/drum) and slowly they raise its beating of brass plate and Yegek and while dancing, chanting mantras, and arguing with the spirits, often created the sense of terror among the family members of the patient. After doing that they slowly possessed the spirit of diseased or deceased and they shake their body fanatically, sweating and uttering the voice of a supernatural accompanied by the divine hallucination. Surprisingly, after doing this patient would recover from the illness if he or she is really possessed by an evil spirit. In other cases, if the shaman found that the patient is not suffering from spirit then he or she would suggest the family members go for modern treatment.³⁹

As Gracy Maria Subba writes in her research paper "Shamans and their Ethno-Medicinal practice" that the Limbu tribe has recognized four categories of Shamans or religious heads namely, Phedangma, Samba, Yeba, or Yema. All these four shamans have distinguished features in their own particular field like Phedangma performing household rituals and preventing misfortune, the Sambas specialized in Mundhum and Yeba or Yema cures those diseases caused by the spirit of Nahen, the spirit of envy and jealousy. She further writes that a Shaman performed the mere ritual with the prayerful offering of Thi (local millet beer), flowers, fruits, tubers, bamboo, and leaves

are believed to nullify the sin and pave the way for recovery from the suffering and sometimes adding life to an individual.⁴⁰

4.17 First Preference of Treatment:

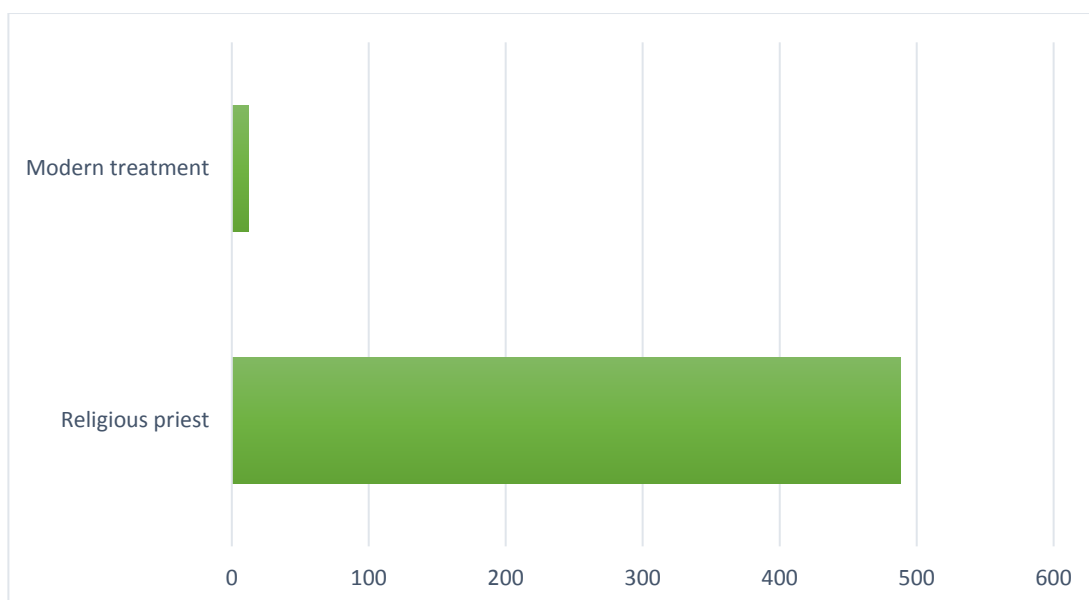
In Darjeeling, among the Limbu community, we have done a field survey to know about their first types of treatment. All the respondents were asked first where they get their patients treated when they get sick, and we found the following responses from them.

Table 4.8: Preference of Treatment to Cure

Sl.No.	First Preference of treatment	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Religious priest	488	97.6%
2.	Modern treatment	12	2.4%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁴¹: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.5: Preference of Treatment to Cure



In table 4.8 and figure 5 refers to the preference of treatment. We found that 97.6% of respondents preferred their firsthand treatment should be done by their religious priest like Phedhangba, Dhambi or local priest, Mata and Bhaun Baje, etc. After that, if patients did not recover from illness, then they would take them for modern treatment. We also found that there are 2.4% of Limbu people

do not believe in religious priests like Phedhangba, Dhami or local priests, Mata and Bhaun Baje, etc. They preferred medical science treatment instead of indigenous treatment.

The above table gives us clear information that still Limbu community believed in their religious priest because 97.6% of respondents showed their first preference to indigenous healers. It seems that the role of their religious priest is very significant and decisive among the Limbu community. Although there are 2.4% of respondents do not believe them, but their number is very low.

Table 4.9: Inheritance of Religious Priest

Sl.No.	Religious priests are inheritance from family	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	00	0%
2.	No	500	100%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁴²: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 4.9 reveals the fact that religious priests are not an inheritance from family 100% of respondents answered that it is not heredity it is up to their goddess Yuma who chose the religious priest. It does not mean that if the father is a religious priest, then after his dead son would be a religious priest. It is not hereditary.

4.18 Existence and Belief of Bokshi (Witchcraft):

The concept of a witch and related practices of witchcraft is present among the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills. The term ‘witch’ (Bokshi) is popularly used for women. She is believed to be the one who acquires supernatural power and is capable of performing black magic and sorcery and brings misfortune on an individual or group. The concept of a witch and related practices of witchcraft is present among the Limbu community. They strongly believe that the best way to keep away these witches is to keep a safe distance. There are certain signs or symptoms which are associated with witches, like if a woman becomes a witch, she may have developed certain physical changes like she may blink her eyes repeatedly.⁴³ They are identified as witches by their local religious priest and Mata. When we asked them that how do they identify them as a witch they answered that there are certain signs and symptoms which are associated with a witch which only they could see and help them to identify the witch. So, when someone is affected by witchcraft these religious priests and Mata who has tremendous power against the witches can save them from the hand of the witches.

When in our survey we asked them whether they believe in Bokshi (Witch or Dayan) we found the following responses.

Table 4.10: Existence of Witchcraft (Bokshi)

Sl.No.	Believe in Witch (Bokshi)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	443	88.6%
2.	No	57	11.4%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁴⁴: Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

We have asked them about their belief in the existence of Bokshi¹ or Dayan (witch) because it is very common among the tribal people for their belief in the existence of witch and we observed that 88.6% of respondents believe in the existence of Bokshi (witch) besides this they also believed that some people are living in this world with malignant sight, which may harm others. This is also known as ‘Evil Eye’. Generally, a symptom of the evil eye could be understood, when suddenly a person would become ill or their cattle would die one after the other. In that case, they appointed religious priest and Mata to get rid of this evil eye. 11.4% of respondents are there who do not believe in the existence of witch (Bokshi) they said now we are educated people we know all these things are just superstition but on the other side there are many educated Limbus who even believe in the existence of Dayan (Bokshi).

4.19 Existence and Belief in Ghost and Soul (Voot-Pret):

Apart from Bokshi (Witchcraft) the Limbus also hold the concept of ghost and soul. It is believed that everyone could not see the ghost or soul those Limbus who have special power would see and feel the ghost attack in their community it is called ‘*Tarsako*’. The case is conspicuously reported from every village where we did our survey. In one case study, one Limbu boy whose name is Permit who is 35 years old, narrated his experience with a ghost (voot), he said that it was night almost 10 p.m. when he was returning home suddenly he saw one person is standing on the middle of the road so he thought that he met one friend to accompany and he walked fast to reach to him but when he reached near to him he saw that person’s height is growing on and he saw that he has no face after seeing all this he became unconscious when he came into conscious he found he was lying on the road and it was already morning after that he went to the home and became ill for one month and fortunately his wife also Mata (traditional lady priest) who treated him and cured him of the attack of Ghost.

Table 4.11: The Belief System in Ghost (Voot-Pret)

SL.NO.	Existence of Ghost/Vampire	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	443	88.6%
2.	No	57	11.4%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁴⁵ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

It is observed from Table 4.11 that 88.6% of respondents believed in the existence of ghost (voot-pret) and when they became ill and their religious priest suspected it is due to Voot -Pret (ghost) and he would spell the hymns (mantra) to relief from ghost and bad soul. There are 11.4% of respondents who do not believe in the existence of ghosts (voot-pret).

4.20 Second Types of Treatment by Phahare Dabai: (Indigenous Herbal Treatment)

In the Limbu ethnic community, the second category of indigenous treatment is traditional herbal medicine. There are a number of herbalists known as the medicine man who does not enchant *mantras*, they believe in the magical action of the herbals, they use. In some cases, the Limbu religious priest also used to practice herbal medicine in Limbu society, but it is not necessary that every medicine man should be a shaman (Limbu religious priest). These medicine men are trained by their father and they also transmitted the knowledge of disease and medicine to his sons. Thus, in the Limbu tribe, this system has become hereditary. If there is no son then this system is transmitted to the daughter.

About the Ethno-medicine of the Limbu tribe, Dil Kumar Limbu and Basanta Kumar Rai write, in their journal “*Ethno-Medicinal Practices among the Limbu Community in Limbuwan, Eastern Nepal*” that Numerous Limbu plant families contain a large number of species with reputed medicinal properties. Most Limbu medicinal species are herbs (100 species), trees (48 species), and shrubs (46 species). The most frequently used plant parts in the preparation of herbal remedies were roots (67 species), bark (40 species), and leaf (30 species) ⁴⁶

4.21 The Limbu Medicine Men Prepare their Herbal Medicine into Four Forms.

1). First and the most frequently elicited modes of preparation are extracted, here first they collected different plants, and they smashed, crushed, or chopped the parts of plants and juice extracted and prepared herbal medicine

- 2). The second mode of preparation is pasted here they do not extract juice but here they smashed, crushed the plant parts, and made paste.
- 3). The third mode of preparation is soup here they do not crush and smashed the plant parts but they boiled it.
- 4). The fourth one is raw here they directly used plant parts without processing.

4.22 Traditional Herbal Medicine Practice among the Limbus:

In the past decade, there has been renewed attention and interest in the use of traditional medicine globally.⁴⁷ Today, according to the WHO, as many as 80% of the world's people depend on traditional medicine, and in India 65% of the population in the rural areas the Ayurveda and medicinal plants to help meet their primary care needs.⁴⁸ Traditional Herbal medicines are comparatively safer than synthetic drugs. Traditional medicine is normally opposed to allopathic medicine. The Limbu community of Darjeeling hills also used the medicinal plants at their home. So, in our survey, we found the following responses from the Limbus of Darjeeling.

Table 4.12: Traditional Herbal Medicine Practice

Sl.No.	Practices of Traditional Herbal Medicine at Home	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	438	87.6%
2.	No	62	12.4%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁴⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.6: Traditional Herbal Medicine Practice

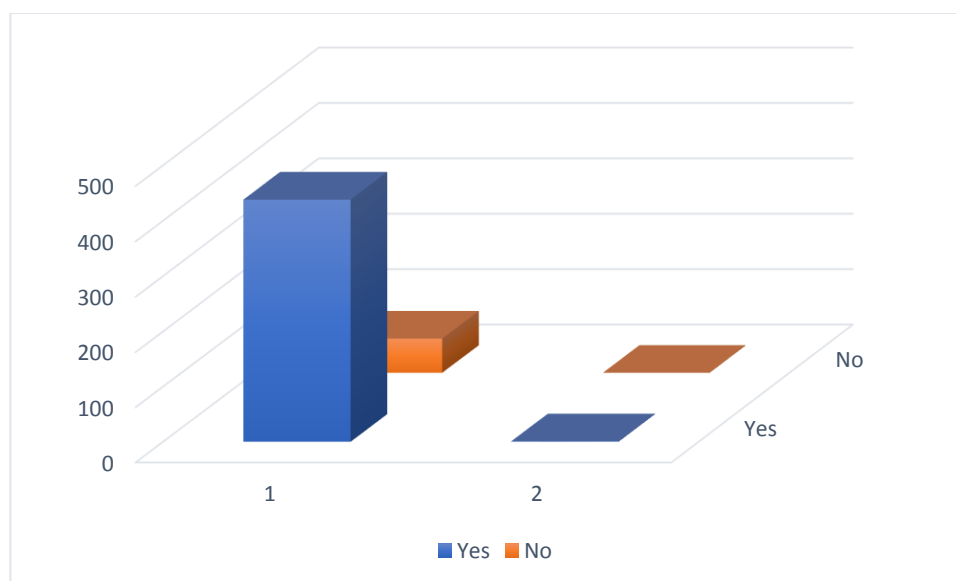


Table:4.12 refers to the distribution of respondents by traditional herbal medicine practice at home. We observed that 87.6% of respondents used traditional (herbal) medicine at home. As already mentioned, the Limbus of Darjeeling first preferred to go religious priest but side by side, they also used herbal medicine.12.4% of respondents are also there who does not use herbal medicine at home.

4.23 Religious Priests and Medicine Men are Different:

In Limbu communities, we have found that they have their own religious priest who does treatment to the patient and we have found that they also have medicine men who also do the indigenous treatment. So, in this regard, we asked them whether religious priests and herbal medicine men are the same or not? And we found the following responses from them.

Table 4.13: Are Religious Priests and Medicine (Herbal) Men the Same?

Sl.No.	Are religious priests and herbal men the same?	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	11	2.2%
2.	No	491	98.2%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁵⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 4.13 shows the distribution of respondents on the questions of religious men and medicine men are the same or not? 2.2% of respondents believe that they are the same, but 98.2% of respondents said that they are different. In some cases, the religious priest also used herbal medicine but most of the time they are a different person because religious priests are those persons who have been selected by their goddess Tagera Nuwangfuma and he possessed all power and knowledge from the goddess but medicine men are those persons who learn to make medicine from their ancestors.

4.24 Ethnomedicinal Treatment (Pahare Dabai) of the Limbus:

Ethno-medicine is a set of empirical healthcare practices that have been transmitted orally from generation to generation through traditional healers and shamans with an aim to cure different ailments and is strongly associated with the religious beliefs and practices of the indigenous people.⁵¹ The present study explored a widely accepted traditional system of medicine for primary healthcare, practiced by the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. Though these days, everywhere dominance of allopathic is prevailing the Limbu community still uses, both ethnomedicinal plants

along with present-day pharmaceuticals. Although the Limbu tribe has maintained their ethnomedicinal knowledge to date their practice of folk medicine is considerably reduced and plunging towards abandonment and is limited to minor ailments like skin diseases, stomach problems, fever, headache, cold, cough, etc. This is due to the wide-scale prevalence of pharmaceutical technology in addition to the death of a person or practitioner having traditional knowledge.⁵²

Here, we are going to discuss the plant species used for curing different ailments by the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. Although there are many species for curing the different ailments here, we are going to discuss only those species which they use persistently in their daily life for their minor ailments and which are easily available in their surrounding area.

4.25 Name of Ailments and the Medicinal Plant used by Limbus of Darjeeling Hills:

Yeghek Tukma (Headache)-The Limbus of Darjeeling used *Bojho* (*Acorus calamus*) to cure headaches. They chewed small dried rhizomes to treat headaches. Sandalwood is also applied to cure headaches. They also drink lots of water, they believe that after drinking lots of water, the urine goes frequently and it will cure the headache.

Sapokin Tukma (Stomach-ache) –Stomach-ache is caused by various causes. First of all, they would go to the local religious priest and he or she would give the patient a few amounts of water mixed with rashes and salt after chanting the mantra, and sometimes surprisingly patient pain would vanish. They also used *Manjhito* (*Rubia-cordigolia*) for stomachache. In case of stomachache, they boiled the roots or stem of the plant and consumed it for relief. Besides this, they used the fruit part of chimping (*Heracleum wallichii*), pudina (*Mentha Viridis*) Tulsi plant, honey, Ajwain, and lemon juice to cure stomach ache.

Tung Tasu (Fever) – During fever, most of them use the chirowto (*Swertia paniculate*). They boiled the chirowto and drinks its water. This treatment is effective against headaches also. This finding suggests that there exists a void in the transmission/dissemination of traditional knowledge. People seemed to relate the persistent bitterness of plants to cure fever. This plant contains several bitter compounds like ophelic acid, chiratin (glucoside), amarogentin (glucoside), and swerchirin as the active component. Beside Chiraoto they also used Bikhuma (*Aconitum Ferox*) for fever and pain. The dried root is powdered and taken orally to relieve fever and pain.

Sung (Cough and Cold)- This is a very common disease for Limbu communities. Nowadays there are so many medicines available in the market so without doing any hard work because to make indigenous medicine you have to crush, mix, boil everything which takes time so they prefer to buy allopathic medicine for cold and cough. But there is also an indigenous medicine for cold and cough they used the fruit of Harre (*Terminalia chebula*) plant is roasted in fire and served to the patient suffering from cough and cold. They also mix dry powder of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) with hot milk and honey and drink it to cure cough.

Sahikpa Tukma (Jaundice)– Jaundice results from various conditions, but all of them stem from the health of the liver. The patients are encouraged to drink black sugarcane juice and eat a lot of papayas. The disease is identified by symptoms. They also go to the medicine man who cures jaundice with the help of a mantra (spell). The medicine man asked them to bring one katora (small vessel) of mustard oil and ten small bunches of Dubo Grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) for treatment. The patient sits before the medicine man and then the medicine man holds the Katora in front of the patient's face and while shaking the grass from head to toe he will recite the mantras and after three- and five-days patient's jaundice will be cured. They asked the patients to come regularly for three days or five days. If they follow the allopathy medicine but side by side, they go to the medicine man for treatment.

Sakma, Chekma (Fracture) – Most of the Limbus of Darjeeling go to the medicine men in case of bones fractures. It can be treated well by some medicine man. The medicine man collects leaves and barks of particular medicinal plants from the jungle which are not known by common people and after that reducing the mixed ingredients to paste and they apply the paste mixed up with yolk in the broken part of the limbs. The process of plastering by the modern way of orthopedic treatment is followed by them. The broken part is tightly fastened by the cloth and to keep the affected part straight and erect (in case of leg and hand) they bind the pasted part with bamboo sticks around. It is as good as hard –plaster by the modern treatment. Now a day these medicine men of Darjeeling have gained much popularity so they have opened their dispensary in their locality and peoples from different parts comes there for treatment. In case of emergency, the powdered bark of Paiyum (*Prunus cerasoides*) is made into a paste and applied to the sprains and fractured bones.

Habo Tukma (Toothache) – At the time of toothache, they washed their teeth with salt and mustard oil. They also used turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) with mustard oil. They also gargle with the water of chutro (*Berberis Asiatica*) to relieve pain. Some of them go to the local religious priest (one who castes spell) for treatment also. Traditionally, it is believed that toothache is due to worms

and the latter can be removed by a combination of the Dhumi-Jhankri method and herbal medication.

Nebonu Makhi Lamma(nosebleed) - There are several reasons for nosebleeds. Minor irritation and rupture of small veins of the septum of the nose is the main reasons. In summer it is caused by heat. Titepati (*Artemisia dubia* wall) is the common medicine for nose bleed. People drop extracts from Dubo (*Cynodon dactylon*) or Titepati (*Artemisia indica*) into the nostrils for stopping the nosebleed. It is common to plug the nostrils with rolled leaves of Titepati to clot the blood. Some of them rub soot from the mud (or stone) tripod of traditional firewood stove on the forehead and nostrils to stop the nosebleed.

Soma (Scabies or Itching) - Scabies is a contagious skin disease caused by itch mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei*). The disease is characterized by intense itching. The oil of neem and karanj is very beneficial for curing scabies. To counteract this itching, Limbu people also resort to different herbal medicines. They use the juice squeezed from Titepati (*Artemisia indica*), Saypatri (*Tagetes erecta*) Bojho (*Acorus calamus*), or angeri (*Lyonia ovalifolia*) shoots. Angeri is a very potent medicine but it gives an intense burning sensation. For the sensitive ones, treatment with angeri can be very agonizing, and therefore care must be taken during its administration. According to some people, angeri is simply an absolute medicine for scabies. Modern treatments of scabies involve the topical application of lotions containing permethrin and lindane.

Midhikma (Burns) – The burning place should not be touched and the application of water to it is restricted. The Limbus of Darjeeling always uses ghiu kumari (*Aloe barbadensis*), over the burnt parts. They applied pulp from leaves on the burnt skin for shooting effect and removal of scars. Some of them also use Babari (*Ocimum basilicum*) juice; harro (*Terminalia chebula*) oil, ghoda khori (*Lyonia ovalifolia*) oil, and saruwa Kadam (*Jatropha curcas*) sap.

Kheray Lungsi (Dysentery) - The natives use pakhanbet (*Bergenia ciliata*), lalchan or belchanda (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*), guava barks/leaves, and rhizomes of kaalo unyu / kaalo nigure (*Tectaria macrodonta*) to cure the dysentery. The oral administration of the above-mentioned herbs may have actions similar to antibiotics that are used to combat dysentery. Lalchan can be eaten as such but the rhizomes of kaalo nigure are first rubbed on a stone with some water and the slurry that results is taken orally. Among other things, belchanda contains gossypetin, hibiscin, anthocyanins, pectic substances, vitamin C and many other organic acids. Recent researches show that guava contains more than 20 identified components. Its leaves contain -selinene, guajavarin, quercetin (and a number of flavonoids), to name but a few. Reports validate that guava leaf and bark extracts can be effective against hypertension and diarrhea.⁵³

Haksimvat Tung (Sinusitis) - Sinusitis is a skull disease that occurs due to inflammation (caused by bacterial infection) of the membrane lining a sinus of the skull. A plant called *haachhyun jhaar* (*Dichrocephala integrifolia*) is very popular but this is not a permanent remedy. The plant induces sneezing, which temporarily relieves the condition. Some people also said that they administer the juice of *ban ghiraula* (*Trichosanthes cucumerina*) through the nostrils. Hot salt water was reported to stabilize the complication.

Ho-Suba-Ho (Boils/Abscess) – To cure the boils first of all they deliberately made boils more septic by topically applying *murcha* (Yeast cake), etc. Sometimes, a kind of paste prepared from *amliso* (*Thysanolina maxima*) roots is also used. Bringing about septic condition fills the boils with pus and can be easily squeezed out and it will be cured.

Sera Tukma (Piles) –For treatment of piles medicine man or woman prepared the juice from the different herbal plants and give it to the patient but they never reveal the name of the plants because they believe that if they mentioned the name of the plant then medicines would not work. Maybe there is another reason is that if they mentioned the name then people would prepare themselves and their value would decrease. For bleeding piles, they used *Dubo* (*Cynodon dactylon*), an infusion of the grass with milk is given to the patient.⁵⁴ A few people also mentioned the use of *Harro* (*Terminalia chebula*) for the treatment of piles.

Asaek palay Agu (Snakebite) – The treatment of snakebite is also done by medicine man through charms and incantations. The medicines man transmitted this knowledge to his son and daughter. Generally, the upper portion of the affected place is tied with a rope very tightly to stop blood circulation of that place. If there is no medicine man then they use black Bikhuma (*Aconitum spicatum* syn *bisma*) as the primary aid. Biting garlic (*Allium wallichii*) and sucking poison out of blood from the wound is a very effective first aid. Garlic and Bikhuma may be effective as an antitoxin. In Darjeeling, most of the snake bite case is cured by herbal medicine man but they never reveal the name of the plant they used to cure the snake bite.

Chedi Thama (Worms) - Aqueous extracts of firewood ash is usually used to kill worms. Many people also use lemon juice. Some people use root extracts of siru (*Imperata cylindrica*), *amliso* (*Thysanolina maxima*), *sallibisalli* (*Equisetum* sp.), *bhirgaule* (*Coix lachrymajobi*), and *ulte kuro* (*Achyranthes aspera*). The roots are rubbed on a stone and the aqueous dispersion is orally administered. Some people mentioned using the fruit decoction of *lapsi* (*Choerospondias axillaris*). It is known that rhizomes of siru contain, inter alia, appreciable amounts of dimethyl sulfoniopropionate and potassium

Yangdhek (Fresh Wounds/Cuts) – In case of the incidence of cutting in any part of the body, they apply the juice extracted from the leaves of *kaalo Banmara* (*Eupatorium odoratum*), immediate relief for the pain. It also checks to bleed. In serious or deep cuts, the crushed leaves are also put upon the wound and bandaged. They also used Titepati (*Artemisia indica*) and other plants. Some people also topically apply trichome of dhusure (*Colebrookea oppositifolia*). The above plants extract obviously works as a disinfectant. Some may also work as a pain reliever. Some of them also use tender shoots of thaade unyu (*Thelypteris appendiculoides*) and rhizomes or leaves of chiple (*Pouzolzia hirta*). A small piece of rhizome may be chewed and swallowed or paste topically applied for the treatment of the same. The plant is believed to ward off evil spirits and repel snakes.

Yam Tukma (Body pain) – Body pain is treated by Bikhuma (*Aconitum ferox*). The root of Bikhuma is dried, and dried root is crushed into powder and taken orally to relieve pain. (Medicinal plants of Darjeeling, Inner Wheel Clu Darjeeling.) Body pain is also treated by applying paste of chitu (*Plumbago zeylanica*) roots. Some people also use aankh (*Calotropis gigantea*) leaves. The leaves are baked on fire or under hot cinders and pressed over the sprain while still hot (the heat may sometimes become unbearable). The process is repeated for a number of times. People also said that they use ghoda khori (*Viburnum cylindricum*) oil and ‘rifle oil’ (whenever available) to, which they rub over the sprain. This massaging relieves one of pain and speeds up healing.

Khyaballe Haru (Dog Bite) – When a dog bites any Limbu person, first of all, they washed the wound with soap and water they go to the doctor to take the injection. After that, the bark of the kaphal (*Myrica esculenta*) tree or the stinging nettle or ‘Sisnu’ (*Urtica dioica*) root is ground into a paste and applied over the affected area. A small amount of the paste is also administered orally. Some people mentioned the use of Bikhuma (*Aconitum spicatum*) and root extracts of kaali jhaar (*Eupatorium odoratum*).

Chabot Tukma (Sore Throat) – If there is sore throat and pain then they chew the Golpata popularly known as aathanay jhaar (dallay jhaar) in Darjeeling, this is a very common use medicine among them, and it’s very effective one. People also eat corn seeds, pumpkin seeds, and laligurans (*Rhododendrom arboreum*) flowers to relieve sore throat. They also gargle with salted water and sometimes with black tea which gives a very good result.

Namvara (Rash)– The Limbu people believe in a very peculiar treatment method. ‘Puwalo mala’ (a type of beaded necklace) is rubbed against the rashes, which is later pressed with ‘janto’ (a hand-operated attrition mill made from a pair of circular stones; used to pulverize grain seeds). Another

very effective treatment is to rub phachyang (*Zingiber cassumunar*) over the affected area. This plant also supposedly wards off evil spirits.

Lamvo (Common Cold)– Limbu People drink in modest amounts the un-boiled aqueous extract of Titepati (*Artemisia vulgaris*). This medication is also helpful in pneumonia. Some people drink a lot of heavily-seasoned, hot chicken soup to drive away from the cold. It is a general belief that fried (sizzled in a small amount of oil) *Rakshi* can also relieve cold. It is also common to chew ginger rhizomes (hot, baked under cinders) to counteract the irritation in the throat and relieve the coughing. Lasun (*Allium wallichii*) and gurans (*Rhododendron lepidotum*) are also eaten in modest amounts to get relief from the common cold.

Hivipma (Diarrhea) - In the case of diarrhea, immature banana and guava are considered beneficial to the treatment of diarrhea. Bark extracts of jamun (*Syzygium cumini*), gayo (*Bridelia retusa*), and ambak (*Psidium guajava*); fruit extracts of totala (*Oroxylum indicum*) and tender bud extracts of ainselu (*Rubus ellipticus*) were also mentioned as having antidiarrheal properties. Although they are familiar as home-based electrolytic treatments such as ‘noon-chini-pani’ (salt-sugar-water) and ‘jivan jal’ against dehydration, as anyone knows, these are not their discoveries. People were found to believe that an immature banana owes its medicinal property to an alkaline taste. Guava is supposed to cure diarrhea because of its profuse seeds (which help harden the stool!).

Nekhoba Tukma (Ear Ache)- Onion (*Allium cepa*) juice is dropped in the ear to cure earache. Although it’s very painful in the beginning after dropping in the ear slowly and slowly it reduces the pain. Besides, they also cooked garlic (*Allium sativum*) in mahua (*Madhuca longifolia*) oil or mustard (*Brassica nigra*) oil and after cooling they dropped it in the ear.

Sematin Oru (Urine Infection)- In the Limbu community if there is the problem of urine infection then they drink the juice of Beth Lauri (*Costus speciosus*) and they also take the juice of black sugarcane.

Khedo Tukma (Kidney Disease)- In the initial stage they drink a lot of water, and they also boil the bark of the black chinday and drink the water which is a very effective medicine for kidney infection. Medicine man/woman also prepared the herbal medicine from the different herbs of the forest which is also helpful to cure the infection. If there is a stone in the kidney but the size is not big at that time, they drink lots of water and also take herbal medicine so that it may come out in urine and no need to do the operation. Sometimes they also drink beer which reduces the size of

the stone and it may come out in the urine. All these are only for the initial stages if the condition worst, then they would go to the modern treatment.

Sohik Tukma (Diabetes)-To control sugar they used *Thullo Nakima* (Complylandro-claroki). They take it as a curry. The juice can be used after boiling. The disease of sugar is controlled by using the leaf powder of *Gurmar*, juice of *chirito*, chewing the leaves of *neem*, *sisam*, *bel*, etc. The powder of the seed of Jamun or bark of Jamun is also very useful in curing the disease.

Hakyam Tung (Asthma): In the case of asthma, Limbus of Darjeeling always used allopathic medicine but, in some cases, they follow the TM. In the case of asthma, they used the *Datura* (*Datura metel*). The dried leaves and twigs of the plant are smoked and the smoke is inhaled for a cure in asthma.

Blood Pressure: If there is high blood pressure then Limbus of Darjeeling used the *Sisnu* (*Urtica parviflora*) to reduce the pressure. This is a very common method among them. Generally, they boiled it with water and one cup of flour and for the taste, they also add the garlic paste. If there is low blood pressure then they drink black coffee and salt tea.

In the above description, 29 kinds of diseases known to the Limbus of Darjeeling with their English name and Limbu name have been identified. They used all those medicinal plants for their common problems such as fever, cough, headache, acidity, and diarrhea to deadly diseases such as diabetes, kidney problem, and jaundice, blood pressure, etc. Although they used all these medicinal plants to cure all these diseases but simultaneously, they also follow allopathic medicine.

SECTION-III

4.25. Health Status of Limbu Women:

Health is a basic requirement not only for the fulfillment of human aspiration but also for the enjoyment of all mankind of better quality of life. It is also indispensable for the balanced development of the individual within the family and as a part of the community and the nation. The health of women is a prerequisite for development and is one of the important indicators of their status.⁵⁵ A tribal woman occupies an important place in the socio-economic structure of her society. The Dhebar Commission Report (1961) mentions that the tribal woman is not a drudge or a beast of burden, she is found to be exercising a relatively free and firm hand in all aspects related to her social life unlike in non-tribal societies.⁵⁶

In this context, we found that Limbu tribal women also enjoy a high place in their societies in our previous chapter two we have already discussed their status in detail. Here, in this chapter, we are going to explore the health issues of Limbu women of Darjeeling hills. We found that maximum Limbu populations are living in rural areas so, first of all, we wanted to know from them whether they have primary health centers in their villages or not?

Table 4.14: Primary Health Center at Limbu Villages

Sl.No.	Local Primary Health Center	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	437	87.4%
2.	No	63	12.6%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source⁵⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 4.14 refers to the availability of health centers in the villages of the Limbu community. Though already mentioned that most of the Limbus were living in rural areas so they have primary health centers in their areas. 87.4% respondents are there who said that they have primary health center at their locality and 12.6% of respondents are there who said that their primary health center is not in their locality they have to go to direct hospital and private doctors.

4.26 Knowledge and Practices Related to Menstruation among Limbu Adolescent Girls:

Menstruation is the monthly shedding of the lining of a woman's uterus. It is also known by the terms Menes, menstrual period, cycle, or period. The menstrual blood-which is partly blood and partly tissue from the inside of the uterus-flows from the uterus through the cervix and out of the body through the vagina. This menstrual cycle is concurrent and coordinated, normally lasting between 21 and 35 days in adult women, with a median length of 28 days, and continues for about 30-45 years.

In Indian society, menstruation is generally considered unclean. Many restrictions are imposed on menstruating girls. Actually, adolescence in girls has been recognized as a special period which signifies the transition from girlhood to womanhood. This transitional period is marked with the onset of Menarche, an important milestone. In the existing Indian cultural milieu, society is interwoven into a set of traditions, myths, and misconceptions especially about menstruation and related issues. There were many social and religious restrictions on girls during menstruation. Girls

were given instructions for dos and don'ts from the elders of the family. They were prohibited to visit religious places, offering prayers, not entering the kitchen during the period, not cooking, and touching any items of the kitchen, they were kept in separate rooms for seven days, and foods are also served in the room for seven days. All the girls have to follow these cultural prescriptions and prohibitions without questioning.⁵⁸

In this context, Limbu girls are very lucky because they don't have to follow all these types of restrictions in their tribal society. Though they do not visit the religious place and offering prayer all other restrictions are not applicable to them. The term '*Menstruation*' in the local language among adolescents is known as '*Mahinavari*' or '*Sarir maila vaako Cha*'. We found very poor hygienic conditions were maintained during menstruation among adolescent girls of the Limbu tribe. Although they take bath, brush their teeth, comb their hair but in regard to using the material for absorption of menstrual blood, they revealed that an old used cloth was recycled for this purpose. Very few of them use a sanitary napkin during menstruation. In our questionnaire, we asked them whether they keep away their daughter during menstruation and we found the following response from Limbus of Darjeeling.

Table 4.15: Keep Daughters away from Home during Menstruation

Sl.No.	Keep Daughters away from Home during Menstruation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	00	0%
2.	No	500	100%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source⁵⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 4.15 shows the percentage of Limbu respondents about to keep away daughters from home during menstruation. As already mentioned, the Limbu tribal community do not follow any restriction in the matter of menstruation, so 100% of respondents say that neither they send their daughters away from home nor in a separate room. They live as usual life during menstruation.

4.27 Delivery of Children:

One of the major thrust areas of the RCH (Reproductive and Child Health) Programme in India is to encourage and promote deliveries under proper hygienic conditions under the supervision of trained health professionals. The health facilities, serving the field area included a Sub-Centre, a primary health Centre, a community health Centre, and the district hospital. Unfortunately, as

already mentioned that the Sub-Centre serving community is usually shut as the ANM, who should have been residing at the Centre is rarely available because of her outreach services. The primary health Centre, which should ideally have been conducting normal deliveries as well as providing basic emergency obstetric care, is ill-equipped and poorly staffed, and no delivery services are being conducted.⁶⁰ Thus, most of the time they have to go to either a district hospital or nursing home.

In a tribal community, pregnancy and childbirth are perceived as natural processes, not requiring much external intervention. Traditional practices are both primarily geared towards protecting the mother and child through conducting prayer ceremonies to ward off evil spirits, and restricting diet. Fever and swelling of feet are considered a common part of pregnancy. Until the time of delivery, a woman can do her daily activities. The delivery is conducted at the home under the guidance of experienced women and family members especially women of the family. After the delivery of the child, the placenta is buried, it is believed that if the placenta is left out in the open place which would be eaten by animals and this could bring harm to the baby.⁶¹ (ibid) Sometimes delivery at home would be complicated and at that time they would take the patient to the hospital and in some cases, patient and child would die on the way, so delivery at home is also very risky.

4.28 Delivery of Children among Limbu Women of Darjeeling Hills:

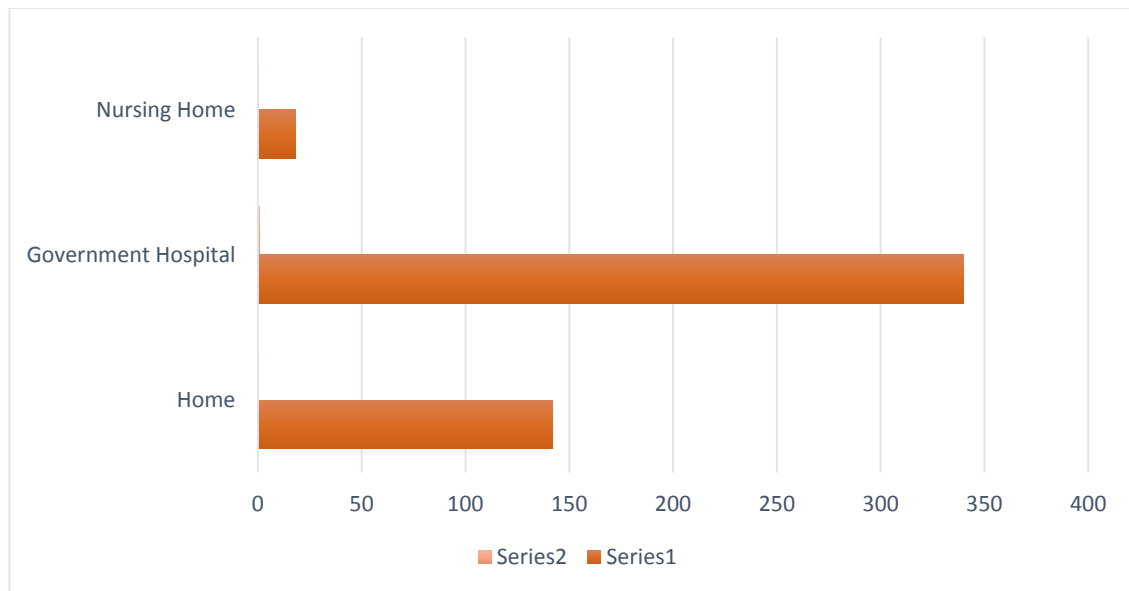
In Limbu society pregnancy and childbirth is considered as a gift of God. When a Limbu woman conceived, first of all, they conduct all rituals and prayers ceremonies for the protection of mother and child from evil eyes. Then they go to the doctor for a checkup and they continue it till the birth of a baby. They prefer the delivery of a child in the hospital because they do not want to take any risk. Very few Limbu are there who delivered the child at home otherwise most of the Limbus are admitted to the government hospital for the delivery of the child. Those Limbus who are economically sound admit their wife in the private nursing home to deliver the child. The following table shows the percentage of childbirth in a government hospital, nursing home, and home.

Table 4.16: Birth Place of Children

Sl.No.	Birth Place	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Home	142	28.4%
2.	Government Hospital	340	68%
3.	Nursing Home	18	3.6%
4.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁶² Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 4.7: Birth Place of Children



Above table 4.16 and figure 7 shows the percentage of respondents who gave birth to a child in the government hospital, nursing home, and home. We found that Limbus of Darjeeling do not want to take any risk so they prefer to deliver in hospital under the supervision of doctor and nurses so they admit to a government hospital for the delivery and in our survey areas, we found 68% of Limbus have given birth in a government hospital. Some Limbu women prefer to give birth at home and we found that some women are there who go through childbirth without disturbance to their regular life. Total 28.4% of Limbus are there who have given birth at home without any complication and those Limbus are economically sound they prefer to deliver in a nursing home and in our study areas we found 3.6% Limbus have given birth in the nursing home.

4.29 Types of Deliveries:

The deliveries are categorized as cesarean section and vaginal deliveries. Cesarean birth is quite different from vaginal delivery. Caesarian section is a surgical procedure in which the doctor will make an incision through your body abdomen and uterus to remove your baby and once the baby is out, the doctor will cut the umbilical cord, remove the placenta and close the incision. Since this is an operation, you'll be given an epidural block that numbs the lower part of your body, allows you to remain awake during the procedure. After a cesarean delivery medical team will check the baby and clear their airway and give it to you to hold your baby.⁶³

Natural birth is considered a vaginal delivery which could be with or without pain medication or other medical intervention. While others may require some form of intervention. These may include:

- Pitocin to induce labour

- An episiotomy (a surgical incision) to allow the baby's head to pass through without tearing the skin
- An amniotomy or artificial rupture of the amniotic membranes (breaking your water)
- A forceps delivery or vacuum extraction
- Typically, vaginal births result in shorter hospital stays, lower injection rates, and quicker recovery times. In general, a C-sections is a surgical procedure that takes about 45 minutes, whereas a vaginal birth can take hours.⁶⁴

4.30 Deliveries Type among Limbu Women:

Generally, in Limbu society, it is found that those who are admitted to hospital either in government or a private maximum of them opted for cesarean very few of them give birth as natural and of course, those who give birth at home that is normal. So, in our study areas, we found the following percentage about the deliveries of children among the Limbu women.

Table 4.17: Types of Deliveries

Sl.No.	Types of Deliveries	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Caesarean	287	57.4%
2.	Vaginal (natural)	213	42.6%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁶⁵ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 4.17 refers to the types of deliveries among the Limbu women. As already discussed, maximum Limbu women prefer to give birth at the hospital instead of home so the cesarean birth rate is highest than vaginal. Here, we found the cesarean birth rate is 57.4% and the vaginal birth rate is 42.6%. We came to know that they preferred cesarean because they do not want to take any risk and as well as pain and doctor also suggest them to go for cesarean.

4.31 Health Care System Under Accredited Social Health Activist (Asha):

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is a trained female community health activist. It is instituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) as a part of India's National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). The mission began in 2005; The objective behind the ASHA is to connect the marginalized communities to the health care system. Their main tasks are motivating women to give birth in hospitals, bringing children to immunization clinics, encouraging family planning, treating basic illness and injury with first aid, keeping demographic records, and improving village sanitation.⁶⁶

4.32 Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and Limbu Women of Darjeeling Hills:

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is very active in Darjeeling hills. In every village of Darjeeling this Community Health Volunteer i.e., (ASHA) is providing health care services, building awareness about the health care system. In our study areas, we have asked them about ASHA and their service and we found very satisfactory answers. The following table shows the percentage of ASHA work service among the Limbu women as well as in Darjeeling hills.

Table:4.18: ASHA Work Service among the Limbu Women as well as in Darjeeling Hills

Sl.No.	Health Care Service from Asha	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	500	100%
2.	No	0	0%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source⁶⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 4.18 shows the health care service of ASHA karmachari among the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills. In our study areas in every village, the service of ASHA is really praiseworthy. We found 100% of respondents yes in regard to the health care service of ASHA.

4.33 Documentation: Challenges

It is very necessary to keep a record of documentation of traditional knowledge in health and medicines. During our survey, it is found that the traditional treatment was based on oral tradition and most of the medicine men do not want to reveal the name of plants which they use for preparing medicine and when they die, he would take the knowledge of medicine. Until and unless this knowledge system is not documented, it is an oral system and in the absence of proper patronage and non-availability of such medicinal plants or animals, they are likely to be forgotten So, knowledge and documentation of traditional knowledge of medicine are very necessary before they are forgotten. However, The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is taking the initiative to undertake documentation of tribal medicinal practices in keeping with an idea mooted by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi asked them to follow the Patanjali Yogapeeth to document the traditional use of herbs and medicinal plants. As the ministry senior official said that, “Documentation of tribal medicine and medicinal practices in our country is lacking, which may have been documented in Ayurveda, but there could be many medicines and practices which have not been documented at all. Some work has been done by some Tribal Research Institute (TRIs,) the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Botanical Survey of India, and Ayurvedic institutions.

However, we need to document these practices not only as very useful medical practices but also for the sake of our rich heritage”.⁶⁸

Documentation should be made and at the same time, one has to be aware of the risks involved in the use, and the commercial interest can put to it. Hence, it should be done with certain reservations. There are many cases when after the publication of research reports on traditional medicinal plants used by tribals, many such plants were collected in bulk by outsiders and by big industries for commercial use for profit. As a result, they are no more available to the traditional medicine men which are so essential for treatment. Multinational drug companies, the medical lobby, and the western media have played a major role in disrupting and negating the indigenous knowledge system while on the other hand exploited this traditional knowledge and resource base to develop a new drug.⁶⁹

4.34 Documentation of Tribal Medicinal Treatment among Limbu Community:

Limbu tribe have their own traditional medicinal treatment. They have two types of treatment first treatment by the medicinal plant (Paharay Dabai) and second treatment by various religious priests known as shamans. Those Limbu people who treated a patient with the help of medicinal plants are also known in their local language as “*Dabaiwala*”. Shamans are perceived as a divine being having been sent by supreme God *Tagera Ningwaphuma* for saving human beings from the evil spirit. Shamans treated the patient by performing a dance as per the type of sickness. This type of treatment should be documented with video recording. Regarding ethnomedicinal plant, the medicine man/women never revealed the name of the medicine plant which they used for treatment. In some cases, they transmitted the knowledge to their son and daughter, but if they do not transmit the knowledge then the knowledge of medicinal plants would be forgotten. Thus, documentation is very urgently required before they are forgotten. In this context, Limbus of Darjeeling are also in support of documentation.

Table 4.19: Documentation of Tribal Medicinal Treatment

Sl.No.	Should be Documented	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	500	100%
2.	No	0	0%
3.	Total	500	100%

Source ⁷⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 4.19 shows the responses of Limbus regarding the documentation of tribal medicinal treatment. We found that 100% of respondents were in favour of documentation.

4.35 Summing Up:

Thus, the study was conducted among the Limbus of Darjeeling hills to evaluate and record health care practices and ethnomedicinal practices observed by them from generation to generation. The study has been divided into three sections. In the first section, we have a discussion about their health, sanitation, and hygiene. Their consciousness in the matter of health, their hygienic system, sanitation facilities, drinking water has been discussed with the help of the data collected through field survey.

In the second section, we have explored the traditional health care system of Limbus. Here, we have found that they have two types of treatment i. Treatment by religious priest. (Phedangma, Dhami, Mata, Bhaun baje,) ii. Treatment by Paharay Dabai (indigenous herbal treatment)

If the patient is suffering from supernatural power and another one is treated by the ethnomedicinal plant if the patient is not suffering from any supernatural power. We have found that they have their own shamans who have been divided into four categories, Phedangba, Samba, Yeba, and Yema. They treated the patients by performing dances and their dances are based on per type of sickness. If sickness is simple, they treated the patient without doing dance but only with chanting the Mundhum. About the ethnomedicinal plant, we have discussed the thirty (30) diseases and their treatments by the medicinal plant. If there is the serious matter like fracture, snake bite, dog bite, piles, jaundice then they would go to the traditional healers who treated them by medicinal plant but in normal sickness like, fever, throat pain, stomach-ache, head-ache they used the medicinal plant by themselves because these plants are so common that everyone knows the uses of them. Lastly when the patient is not recovered from all those indigenous treatments then they would switch on to the allopathic treatment.

In the third section which is in the context of the health status of Limbu women, we found that the Limbu community is very liberal to the women. They do not follow any rules and regulations during the menstruation of Limbu girls, there is no restriction on them during the menstruation period. They also prefer to give birth to their child at the hospital but some of them also prefer to give birth at home. We found that the cesarean birth rate is slightly highest than the vaginal birth rate.

Health is a prerequisite for human development and is essentially concerned with the well-being of the common man. The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) comprises three components i.e., health, education, and income-generating capacity. Health is a function, not only of medical care but also of the overall integrated development of society - cultural, economic, educational,

social, and political. The health status of a society is intimately related to its value system, philosophical and cultural traditions, and social, economic, and political organization. Each of these aspects has a deep influence on health, which in turn influences all these aspects. Hence, it is not possible to raise the health status and quality of life of people unless such efforts are integrated with the wider effort to bring about the overall transformation of society. Health development can be integrated with the larger Programme of overall development in such a manner that the two become mutually self-supporting. Good health and a good society go together. This is possible only when supportive services such as nutrition and improvements in the environment and in education reach a higher level.⁷¹

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CHAPTER-5

ROLE OF LIMBU TRIBE IN ETHNIC MOVEMENT OF DARJEELING HILLS:

5.1 Definition of Ethnic:

The term *Ethnic* is derived from the Greek word *ethnos* which means nation. The adjective term 'ethnic' preceded the noun 'ethnicity'. The term Ethnicity was first used by the French nationalist and scientist, Georges Vacher de la Pougéin in 1896 to describe the “natural and counterfeit” cultural, psychological, and social characteristics of a population and in order to distinguish the latter from the concept of race which he defined as a series of physical characteristics. Ethnicity emerged after the Second World War though the term ethnicity existed prior to the Second world war and the study on ethnicity is gaining momentum since 1960. Dennis L. Thompson says: "the term ethnicity has replaced the terms like Nationality, National grouping, and Minority".¹ For a proper understanding of ethnic movements, it is necessary to understand what we mean by ethnicity as such movements are associated with it. Ethnicity is denoting towards identification of a group of people on the basis of certain criteria or markers which they are supposed to share with each other. These markers include culture, race, language, religion, customs, history, economic experiences, etc. *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* defines an ethnic group as a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such groups are, or feel themselves or are thought to be bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture'.² T.K. Oommen opines that the ethnic group is a group of people who share a common history, tradition, language, and lifestyle, but are uprooted from and or unattached to a homeland. Ethnicity is a process that creates a sense of ethnic consciousness among the members of an ethnic group and mobilizes the members of the same caste, language, and religion to articulate their economic and political interests. Scholars in India generally consider that mobilization as ethnic which is based on multiple attributes — language, religion, culture, history, economy, etc. For example, language-based mobilization is considered as linguistic mobilization, and the groups as such are considered as a linguistic group. A tribe commonly called the Scheduled Tribe in the Indian context is an administrative and legal term to label some ethnic groups based on their socio-economic status and religious and cultural customs in order to give special attention to them as mandated by the Constitution.³ The tribal languages occupy the lowest position among the linguistic hierarchy. The tribal languages are not recognized

as languages but rather dialects by the non-tribals. Often tribals are ridiculed for using their mother tongue in public places.⁴ There is a sense of inferiority, awareness of the low status of their own mother tongues among the tribals and this often discourages them to declare their mother tongue.⁵ Thus, Ethnic or ethnicity can be described as a group of people having different socio-economic conditions, language, and religion, history. The Limbu tribal community is an ethnic community of the hills involved in the movement of Darjeeling hills. Thus, in this chapter, the different aspects of Limbu ethnicity, such as their interest in the ethnic movement of the hills, development of Darjeeling, voting behaviour and Political parties, the role of the Limbu in the Gorkhaland Movement will be discussed.

5.2 Historical Background of Darjeeling:

Darjeeling which is popularly known as “Queen of Hills” is a famous tourist paradise. All over the world, the region is also known for its tea production which fetches sizable foreign exchange for the country. Those demanding separate statehood claim that politically West Bengal is trying to forcefully keep Darjeeling within the political map of the state without amalgamating people of the Gorkha community within the mainstream of state. Darjeeling “Queen of hills” having a population of 1842034 (2011 census) is a place composed of 61% of rural areas and 39% of urban areas. The town of Darjeeling is located in the lesser Himalayan at an average elevation of 6710 ft.⁶ Topographically, the district can be divided into two distinct tracts. The Northern hills tracts of Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Mirik subdivisions and the plains areas of the Siliguri subdivision. Kalimpong district was the subdivision of the Darjeeling district till recent time. The ethnic and social plurality of Darjeeling hills is perhaps the most beautiful and powerful demonstration of the Darjeeling Himalayan region. The social groups of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds create a cultural mosaic with ethnic distinctiveness. Various racial groups mostly of Mongoloids race constitute the social contour of the region. The majority of them are Nepali-speaking people, caste and tribe groups, and other groups like Lepcha, Bhutia, and Tibetans. Apart from this, many communities from plains like the Bengali, Bihari, and some Marwari families are also accommodated within the social contour of the hills.⁷

Historically, if we see the historical developments of Darjeeling, we found that Darjeeling and its surrounding terai areas were the part of Sikkim which formed a part of the then Kirata kingdom Limbuwan with its capital ‘*Bijaypur*’. Later in 1775 Prithivinarayan Shah defeated and killed the last king of Kirata Buddhi Karna Rai and subsequently attached and defeated all the chiefs and thereby makes an end of Kirata rule in Nepal and in Sikkim captured the Western Sikkim including Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri which remained under the Gorkha king till 1814. ⁸The Anglo-

Nepalese War started between the Kingdom of Nepal and the East India Company in 1814 because both of them had ambitious expansion plans for the mountainous north of the Indian subcontinent. The war was ended with the *Treaty of Sagauli* signed on the 4th of March, 1816 between the East India Company and the representative of king Girmaun Jode Bikram Shadav.⁹ By this Treaty Nepalese kingdom ceded the 4,000 square miles of territory to East India Company. Later Darjeeling Hills was returned to the king of Sikkim Chogyal Namgyal by the British East India Company after the signing of the *Treaty of Titalia* on February 10th 1817.

In 1828 Lt.-General (then captain) G.A. Lloyd and Mr J.W. Grant, I.C.S., the Commercial Resident at Malda, after settling the internal factions between Nepal and the Sikkim States found their way into Chungtong to the west of Darjeeling and were much impressed with the beauty of the land and its cool climatic conditions. They were also impressed by the natural resources of Darjeeling especially timber. Thus, a team under the head of Captain J.D. Herbert who was the Deputy Surveyor-General of Bengal and J.W. Grant was dispatched to Darjeeling to survey on the possibility of establishing a sanatorium. Capt. J.D. Herbert visited Darjeeling and also recommended it for the sanatorium. Thus, the Court of Directors of East India Company asked Lt.-General Lloyd to start negotiations with the Sikkim Raja for the cession of the hill either for an equivalent in money or land. Through the personal influence and efforts of Lt.-General Lloyd with Sikkim puttee, the aged Rajah, ultimately handed over a strip of hill territory, 24 miles long and about 5 to 6 miles wide, stretching from the northern frontier of the district of Pankhabarie in the plains, which in its trend included the villages of Darjeeling and Kurseong, “as a mark of friendship to the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck for the establishment of a Sanatorium for the invalid servants of the East India Company”. In return, the Raja received an allowance of Rs.3,000/-, which was subsequently raised to Rs.6,000/- per annum.¹⁰ On the other side the war was fought between the East India Company and Bhutan king and this Anglo-Bhutanese war came to an end by the treaty of Sinchula which was signed on 11th November 1865 and Bhutan ceded territories in the Assam Duars and Bengal Duars as well as around 80,000 kilometers of Dewangiri to British in return for an annual subsidy of 50,000. So, the original map of Darjeeling came into existence only after the induction of the Kalimpong and Duars area. Thus, in this way, Darjeeling came into existence. Darjeeling, as we know of today, was organized in 1866. After the independence of India in 1947, the British occupied area of Sikkim that is Kalimpong, Darjeeling was merged into the West Bengal state of India.

5.3 Emergence of Ethnic Movement in Darjeeling since British Period:

In India, Gorkha is basically a term to denote Nepali speakers people living in Darjeeling and different parts of India. The term Gorkha is used by the people of Darjeeling to separate themselves from the Nepalese (citizens of Nepal). There is a misconception between the '*Indian Gorkhas*' and Nepalese '*Gorkhali*'. Actually, in Nepal, the term '*Gorkhali*' refers to the people from '*Gorkha District*' and in India, the '*Gorkha*' refers to the Indian citizens of Nepali ethnicity who live in Darjeeling and other parts of India from immemorial time and they are demanding separate state Gorkhaland from the state of West Bengal.¹¹

The first-ever demand for a separate administrative setup for the District of Darjeeling was placed in 1907 before the British government by the leaders of the hill people. Their main reason for the demanding separate administrative setup is due to the differences in ethnicity, culture and language from the people of Bengal.

On November 8, 1917, the Hillmen's Association of Darjeeling submitted a memorandum to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, demanding the administrative separation of Darjeeling. The copies of this were also submitted to E.S. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford, the then viceroy of India. They again submitted a memorandum in 1930 and 1934 but the British Government instead of conceding the demand of Hill Mens' Association made Darjeeling a "partially excluded area" and an "Independent Administrative Unit" under section 92 of the Government of India Act, 1935. Thus, the period from 1907 to 1935 is seen as a first phase of ushering with a political demand by the elite gentry of Darjeeling without forming a formal political organisation.¹²

The census report of 1941 shows the population of Gorkha as 246548 but to diminish the voice of the new state in future, the Bengal with its political conspiracy highlighted the population of Gorkha as 88,000 which was not perceived by the local Gorkha leaders even Delhi at that time. After the independence of India, in 1954 the same report had been produced before the first state reorganisation commission which was set up to create new states on the basis of language.¹³ Prior to India's independence, a written memorandum had been submitted by Ganeshlal Subba, Ratanlal Brahmin, and 4 other members of Gorkha league to Mahatma Gandhi and Jinnah in 1945 in which it was requested to have a secure place for Indian Gorkhas in Independent India along with the right of self-determination.¹⁴ All India Gorkha League came into existence under the presidentship of Damber Singh Gurung in May 1943 with its headquarters at Kalimpong. On 22nd December 1945, they passed the resolution that inclusion of Darjeeling in Assam. The concept of forming a separate zone by merging Darjeeling with Assam was on the basis of physical similarity and mental

traits of the people of the two regions. But it remained a mere wishful thought of a microscopic minority of India in Darjeeling.¹⁵ Thus the wishes of the Gorkha had been crushed at the very beginning merging all Darjeeling hills in West Bengal instead of Assam as desired by the Gorkha.

5.4 Akhil Bhartiya Gorkha League (ABGL) and Ethnic Movement:

In Darjeeling on 15 May 1943, the All-India Gorkha League came into existence under the presidentship of Damber Singh Gurung. On 19 December 1946, the Gorkha League's president and Legislator D.S. Gurung put demand in the Constitution Hall before the Constituent Assembly for recognition of Gorkhas as a minority community. Unfortunately, sudden demise of D.S. Gurung on 7th April 1948 another leader Randhir Subba from ABGL and Rupnarayan Sinha from Hill Men's Association raised the demand for a separate state within the framework of the Indian Constitution called '*Uttarakhand Pradesh*.' *Uttarakhand Pradesh* comprising Darjeeling District Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Dooars, and Cooch Behar. Their demand was not fulfilled because Sardar Ballabh Patel then deputy prime minister was totally against the formation of Uttarakhand Pradesh.

5.5 Communist Party of India (CPI) and Demand of Gorkhasthan:

On April 6, 1947, two Gorkhas, Ganesh Lal Subba the then Secretary of CPI Darjeeling District and Ratanlal Brahmin the CPI MLA from Darjeeling members of the undivided CPI (Communist Party of India) submitted a memorandum to Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Vice President of the Interim Government and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan the finance minister of the interim Government for the creation of *Gorkhasthan* – an independent country comprising of present-day Nepal, Darjeeling District, and Southern Sikkim. The demand for the separate 'Union of Gorkhasthan' created a great deal of controversy. Gorkha League which had earlier supported Ratanlal Brahmin and Ganesh Lal Subba withdrew its support. Thus, the demand of Gorkhasthan eventually fell due to the lack of support from other political parties and the contradictory demand of the Communist Party. After the debacle of the memorandum petitioning for the formation of 'Gorkhasthan', Ratanlal Brahmin and Ganesh Lal Subba began to organize unions for the Tea Garden labourers, Cinchona plantation workers, workers of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, etc. On the 25th of June 1955, in the Tera Garden agitational programmes, the State Armed Police opened fire on protestors at Margaret Hope Tea Garden killing seven people. Among these seven two were women and one of them was pregnant, the killing of the innocent tea garden labourers sparked a great deal of resentment among the populace in Darjeeling Hills and consolidated the Communist Party's stand in the Hills.¹⁶

5.6 Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and Gorkhaland Movement:

On the 30th July 1980, Subash Ghising founded Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and he raised the demand for the creation of the state of Gorkhaland comprising of the hills of Darjeeling and areas of Dooars and Siliguri Terai. On the 27th of November 1980, the GNLF published a “Bulletin” laying down the scope of the state of Gorkhaland as demanded by the party. The Bulletin read:

- i.) The name of the state would be Gorkhaland
- ii) The state of Gorkhaland would have 8 districts
- iii) The state of Gorkhaland would have 21 sub-divisions
- iv) The state of Gorkhaland would have 39 constituencies
- v) The capital of state would be Darjeeling
- vi) Each District would have a District Court
- vii) The High Court would be at the state capital.¹⁷

The Gorkhaland movement took a violent turn and violent clashes started between the cadres of the GNLF and CPI(M) and also between the Police and the cadres of the GNLF, which led to the death of over 1200 people. After 28 months of movement for Gorkhaland from 1986 to 1988 by GNLF of Shri Subash Ghising, he had finally settled for Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council through a tripartite agreement.¹⁸ (Yogi K.B, 2009) This was the unique experiment of hill council not tried anywhere in India. The West Bengal Assembly formally and unanimously passed the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Bill, 1988, on 5th September 1988. On 13th December 1988, the election to the DGHC was held and GNLF won all the seats and Subash Ghising became the chairman of the DGHC and its Chief Executive Councillor. DGHC consists of the general council and Executive council. The general council consists of 42 councillors- out of this 28 are elected and 14 are nominated councillors. Executive Council consists of 15 councillors with 13 elected and 2 nominated councillors. The chairman of the general council is also the chief executive councillor of the executive council.¹⁹

Although the GNLF party had accepted DGHC the most important issue demand of statehood was not fulfilled. So, after 2005 Subash Ghising and his party GNLF again raised the demand for statehood in the form of Sixth Scheduled Status. Subash Ghising had already known that people's sentiments were not fulfilled by DGHC rather created more complicated social, economic, cultural,

and employment problems. So, at the time of the introduction of a bill of the sixth schedule in parliament for Darjeeling hills, it was stated that DGHC could not fulfill the aspiration of the people of the region. It is a tacit admission by the center and state governments and GNLF. the failure of this unique experiment of the system not tried anywhere in the country. But unfortunately, this time people of Darjeeling did not support the Subash Ghising. The opposition parties vehemently opposed the demand for Sixth Scheduled Status. The opposition parties particularly the Gorkha League under the leadership of Madan Tamang vehemently opposed it. They believed that the conversion of Darjeeling Hills into a ‘tribal area ‘would divide the people and the Gorkhas at large.²⁰ On the other side the demand of Six Scheduled was vehemently opposed by one of his own right hands Bimal Gurung and the result was that Bimal Gurung was expelled from GNLF on 3rd October 2007 and this expulsion led to the formation of Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) on 7th October 2007. One factor of Subash Ghising fall was the unpopularity of the GNLF’s sixth schedule proposal and another triggering issue was his silence in favour of social media sensation Shri Prashant Tamang, a singer in Sony TV channel who was supported by the fan clubs under the organization ship of Bimal Gurung and his closer circles that actually prepared the whole background for Bimal Gurung to start his own party Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) on 7th October 2007. Prashant Tamang was the beacon, the spark that ignited the people of Darjeeling into action. Voting for Prashant Tamang unified the people of Darjeeling as also the Gorkhas all over India in a way that had not happened for years. It gave a sense of pride and hope for a better life and a better future and a long-lost voice in the affairs of their community.²¹ Edwards, a social worker has said recently that “It was a question of identity – we are not seen as Indians, not mainstream. You know, *chinki*, *chowmein*, *momo* ... whatever ... people face when they go down there (to the plains). So, Prashant Tamang was about our identity ‘Indian Idol Prashant Tamang’ like a Nep’ (Nepali) or a Gorkha guy winning it. It was just a game show; it was nothing for others, maybe. But for us, it was like, ‘Oh, we gotta make him win,’” Other factors such as the unsystematic functioning of the DGHC, unplanned distribution of development projects, rising unemployment, the party presidents’ eccentricity, the contradiction between councillors vs contractors and anti-press stand, employing all on contractual basis even though DGHC had the power to recruit on permanent basis.²²

5.7 Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) and Gorkhaland Movement:

On 7th October 2007, Bimal Gurung announced the formation of Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) in a meeting attended by a large number of people at Chowk Bazar, Motor Stand, Darjeeling. The aim and objectives of the new party were to “fight for the democratic right of the Indians Gorkhas living in India and to work unitedly for the creation of a separate state for the

people residing in the three Hill Sub-Division of Darjeeling, Siliguri Terai, and Dooars areas. The supporters of GJM showed their aggression towards Sixth Scheduled and burnt the copies of the '1988 Memorandum of Settlement' in which GNLF had agreed to give up its demand of Gorkhaland. The demand for a separate state within the Indian Union has been started more intensely by the Gorkha leader Mr. Bimal Gurung, and his newly formed party called Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJM). Bimal Gurung has vowed to create a separate state by 2010 otherwise he would kill himself in front of people. He has called for a more non-violent form of protest by refusing to pay state taxes to the government including electricity and phone bills. coming to the statehood movement in Darjeeling hills. GJMM seems to have distinguished itself from others in its avowed adherence to the Gandhian creed of non-violence, according to this leader, the moral force put on the nation's conscience would prove more effective than an indulgence in the romance of the Kukris.²³ Bimal Gurung himself is no Gandhi. He keeps hinting that he would not hesitate to change tact of the extent of repression crosses a certain point.²² (Ibid, page 139) Gurung promised the GJM would prevent Darjeeling from becoming a sixth schedule area and establish statehood instead. To put pressure on Ghising and his state and national allies, the GJM used general strikes, gheraos (sieges of government building) tax boycott, and road blockades. GJM activists clashed with non-Gorkhas in the plains of Darjeeling and with GNLF members in the Darjeeling hills.²⁴

People have resorted to changing vehicle numbers from WB (West Bengal) to GL (signifying Gorkhaland). Gorkhaland supporters also demand the inclusion of 398 contiguous and non-contiguous mouzas of adjoining Terai and Dooars areas of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri in the proposed state. These regions have Gorkhas as their dominant community. As per census report 1901, the Nepali community constituted 61 percent of the total population of Darjeeling.²⁵ The administrative machinery in the hills of Darjeeling seems to have broken down, with most of the Government offices non-functional, and even the police unable to maintain law and order in the district. The central and the West Bengal governments have called for a tripartite meeting with the GJMM leaders to resolve the issue, but it seems very hard line because the former has refused to consider anything less than Gorkhaland while the latter has been adamant in claiming that they would not allow further division of Bengal.

GJMM knew that without having the support of the union government it was not possible to fulfill the demand of the Gorkhaland and when the BJP announced their policy of having smaller states and to create 2 more states Telangana and Gorkhaland if they win the general election. So, with this hope, GJMM conferred its support to BJP in the 2009 general elections and later in 2014. GJMM also entered into an electoral alliance with Trinamool Congress so when Trinamool

Congress came into power in 2011 both came out with a solution namely, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), a semi-autonomous administrative body for Hills. The memorandum of agreement was signed on 18th July 2011 at Pintali Village near Siliguri and the concerned bill was passed in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on 2nd September 2011. The president of India Pratibha Patil gave assent to the GTA bill on 7th March 2012 and a gazette notification regarding this was issued by the West Bengal government on 24th March 2012. Considering the agreement, Gurung made it very clear that GTA does not mean the end of the demand for Gorkhaland. The text stated, “.... GJM while not dropping their demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland has agreed to the setting up of an autonomous Body”.²⁶ It was a very misfortune for the people of Darjeeling that though they conferred their support to BJP and BJP also won the election and formed the government in India. On 30 July 2013, the Congress Working Committee unanimously passed a resolution to recommend the formation of a separate Telangana state from Andhra Pradesh to the INC-led central government. This resulted in flaring up of demands throughout India; prominent among them were the demands for statehood for Gorkhaland in West Bengal and Bodoland in Assam. Bimal Gurung welcomed the move of the center for creating Telangana but at the same time urged the center to consider the demand for the creation of Gorkhaland state too. Gurung commented on the social networking site Facebook, “I congratulate the union government for taking a step towards the creation of Telangana. In this context, I would want the government to take a positive step for the creation of Gorkhaland. If Telangana is created then Gorkhaland has to be created”²⁷

Following a 3-day strike, GJM announced an indefinite bandh from 3 August. Largely peaceful, political development took place in the background. With the West Bengal government armed with Calcutta high court order declaring the bandh as illegal, the government toughened its stand by sending a total of 10 companies of paramilitary force to quell any violent protest and arresting prominent GJM leaders and workers. In response, GJM announced a unique form of protest 'Janta Bandh', in which with no picketing or the use of force, the people in the hills were asked to voluntarily stay inside on 13 and 14 August. This proved to be a major success and an embarrassment for the government.²⁸

In 2017 the Gorkhaland Movement again revived with strong commitment. Gurung declared that fight for Gorkhaland would continue till death. The main cause for the agitation was that when the education minister of the West Bengal government Partha Chatterjee announced that the Bengali language should be mandatory across all schools from Class I to X in the state. The protest broke out all over Darjeeling because Nepali is the official language in the hills of Bengal, recognised as an official language of Bengal in 1961. In 1992 Nepali was recognized as one of the official

languages of India. The state government ignored the initial reactions of the GJMM and chief minister Mamata Banerjee said the leaders were making “an issue out of a non-issue.” Protest marches took out in different parts of Darjeeling with banners that said “we won’t tolerate infringement on our Nepali language”. Different arms of GJMM like Youth Wing, Student Wing, and Women’s wing took out a rally in various places of Darjeeling; even marches had also been conducted by teachers and students from different schools and colleges. Under pressure chief minister Mamata Banerjee clarified that Bengali will be an option in Darjeeling Hills. But it was too late, everywhere the protest was in an uncontrolled situation so the state government sought army help. The battle of attrition reached on flashpoint when the police raided the office of the GJM at Darjeeling and seized weapons, cash, and radio sets from there. The GJM called an indefinite shutdown in the hills complaining of police atrocities on their workers. As the shutdown started pro-Gorkhaland rallies, picketing, vandalism in government offices, and clashes between the agitators and security forces became regular happenings. The situation deteriorated when three local activities were killed during the clashes with police. The incensed locals believed that the state government held the responsibility for all these deaths and resorted to widespread violence and arson which compelled the government to deploy the army. Constant aristocracy on GJM leaders also infuriated the other hill parties like GNLF and JAP so setting aside their differences they also supported the GJM for the cause of Gorkhaland. During the indefinite shutdown every day, thousands of Gorkhaland supporters took out rallies. The Gorkhas of all India and the world came forward to support the GJM and the cause of Gorkhaland. Several Gorkha intellectuals including singers, filmmakers, and poets registered their protest by returning awards received from the state government. Unfortunately, two separate bomb blasts in 24 hours in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. One civic body was killed and two security personnel were injured in the Kalimpong explosion. The police raids were intensified and an arrest warrant was issued against Bimal Gurung and his associates under the Unlawful Activities Act, which forced Bimal Gurung and Roshan Giri to abscond.²⁹

However, as the shutdown continued without any positive outcome for the Gorkhaland demand though the West Bengal government attempted to settle the problems with the agitators by conveying the meetings it was futile because all parties of the hills boycotted the meetings. After the absconding of Gurung, there started cracks among the hill parties even within the GJMM leadership. The JAP openly questioned the relevance of the shutdown while GNLF said that it was ready to talk with the state government on the issue of Gorkhaland. As the infighting was continued within the GJMM and the result came out when its main part personnel Vinay Tamang and Anit Thapa were ousted from the GJMM. On the other side taking the opportunity Mamata Banerjee appointed Tamang as the chairman of the GTA for carrying out development activities in the hills

while Gurung was still hiding. So, after making the chairman of the GTA there was a positive talk between the two parties and an appeal from Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh the indefinite shutdown was called off after 104 days. Gorkhaland supporters say that Darjeeling was historically never a part of West Bengal. GJM president Bimal Gurung in a Facebook post wrote: “Creation of Gorkhaland is not the partition of Bengal. Darjeeling was not part of Bengal and was leased by the British from the kingdom of Sikkim in 1835. Kalimpong and Dooars were also annexed in 1865 from Bhutan.” He further says, “Allegations of being foreigners used by those opposed to Gorkhaland only strengthens our statehood movement.”³⁰

5.8. Present Scenario of Gorkhaland Movement:

As already mentioned, that Bimal Gurung and Roshan Giri had absconded in September after the bomb explosion in Kalimpong and Darjeeling and in violence that led to the killing of a police officer. After three years of exile, Gurung surfaced in Kolkata on October 21st, 2020, and swore loyalty to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Gurung said that we supported the NDA government with the hope that they would fulfill our dreams of Gorkhaland but neither PM Narendra Modi nor home minister Amit Shah kept their commitment. They have not even granted tribal status to the 11 communities in the hills. NDA government betrayed us so now we will work hard to help Mamata Banerjee win the 2021 state assembly polls. That will be a befitting reply to BJP.³¹

The return of Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJM) founder Bimal Gurung from exile and his political U-turn created political tension in the hills. Now, GJM Party has been divided into two factions GJM-1(Bimal Khema) and GJM-2 (Binay Khema). The Binay Tamang faction of the GJM holds sway over the hills by the control over the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and Anit Thapa who was the chairman of the GTA and close aide of Mr. Tamang said that the people of the Darjeeling want peace and they don't want Mr. Gurung to return as it would mean the beginning of strike and violence so he is not welcome in Darjeeling. They took out rallies in Darjeeling claiming that Gurung's return meant reverting to violence.

On the other side supporters of Bimal Gurung began to prepare for his welcome and said that Bimal Gurung is the face of the Gorkhaland Movement and the people of Darjeeling eagerly waiting for his return. The GJM-1 Gurung faction took out rallies in Darjeeling in the support of Gurung and demanded that he be allowed to return immediately in Darjeeling. In spite of many protests, Gurung was successful to return to Darjeeling. Meanwhile, there was split arose within the GJM-2 between Binay Tamang and Anit Thapa and Binay Tamang resigned from party presidency, and Anit Thapa had also quit a faction of GJM-2 in July 2021 and decided to float

a new political party. Thus, on 9th September 2021 former chairman of GTA and president of GJM-2 Anit Thapa launched a new party 'Bhartiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha' (BGPM). Speaking at the launch of the new party, Thapa said that our main motive will be to protect the interest of the hill people and also said that the party would not keep a confrontational approach and will work in coordination with the state and central government to solve the problem of the people of the hills. On the other side, it seems that pretty soon Binay Tamang will also launch a new party. So, till 2021 political scenario of Darjeeling is like this, GJM Bimal faction is trying to revive their hold in Darjeeling, on the other side GNLF party is supporting BJP and working for the sixth scheduled and Anit Tapa has launched a new party BGPM and Binay Tamang is also supposed to launch new party pretty soon and Ajay Edward who left GNLF party will also going to a launched new party. It seems that the leaders of Darjeeling are only behind the formation of parties instead of their main demand of Gorkhaland. On 12th October 2021 NDA government called a tripartite talk among the BJP leaders and GNLF and state government to solve the problem of hills. So, the people of Darjeeling hope that in the future their long-standing demand of Gorkhaland will be fulfilled.

5.9. Limbu Tribe and Gorkhaland Movement:

The Limbu people of Darjeeling are not active in politics. During the 1940 to 1960 period, we found that Limbus were active in politics. In ABGL Party we found the name Randhir Subba, who was the president of the party and demanded the separation from West Bengal. We also found the name of George Mahabart Subba who was the first MLA of the Siliguri constituency and Ganeshlal Subba who was an active member of the Communist party of Darjeeling. When Subash Ghising started the Gorkhaland movement at that time also Limbus were also active, we found the name of Chattrey Subba one of the active members of The GNLF party and Hangu Subba councillor of Kalimpong. But in the time of Bimal Gurung and his party GJM the Limbus people were not as active as leaders. The Limbus tribals of Darjeeling are participating in the ethnic movement of Gorkhaland due to political compulsions; however, they are more or less passive as far as participation in the local government and other local institutions are concerned. In the Gorkhaland movement, the Limbus of Darjeeling are politically marginalized, though they are conscious about the Gorkhaland movement of Darjeeling hills they are not so active in politics and support the ethnic movement of Darjeeling passively. In our survey, we found that there are a smaller number of Limbus who are active members in the Gorkhaland movement but maximum Limbus tribals are passive party members. It shows that maximum the Limbu community are not interested in politics they do not take part in politics they follow the leaders who asked them to follow. They are not active in politics. Though among them very few Limbu are active members in politics in our survey

we met one Limbu person named Sandeep Limbu of Bijanbari Block who is active in politics but does not belong to GJM Party. He belongs to GNLF Party and his political portfolio is the GNLF branch Secretary of the Darjeeling subdivision. There are many Limbu people who act as a spectator, they observe everything and know everything but they do not take part in politics. They think that it is better to stay away from politics. There are many Limbu people also who are totally apolitical.

5.10 General Awareness of the Gorkhaland Movement among the Limbu Tribe:

The General people of Darjeeling are politically much aware nowadays. The print and electronic media are feeding news to the far-flung areas of hills, due to internet connectivity through smart mobile everything is available nowadays. Many local media reporters are working in the hills for various news agencies. Social media played a very crucial role in spreading awareness among all people the agitation of the 2017 Gorkhaland movement Protest spreads outside Gorkhaland While Darjeeling was enveloped in virtual darkness, and curfew being clamped across the Hills, Gorkha people and activists across the world stood up to highlight the issue and kept the issue alive and burning by organizing protests and rallies across Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and other cities of the world. Social media became the most effective tool, allowing people to uphold the freedom of expression and protest in a democratic form. For the first time in the history of the Gorkhaland movement, the internet offered a revolutionary potential for social activists to reach out directly to the citizens of the world, outwitting the official press releases and messages of political parties and traditional media. Mobile phones coupled with social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp gave undue advantages to citizens offering them the tool to forward their views. Online platforms as Alternate Media social media gained prominence simply because people had lost confidence in mainstream media that was heavily controlled by the state.³² In this regard we did a survey to find out the reasons for the awareness of Limbus regarding the Gorkhaland movement of Darjeeling.

Table 5.1: Awareness of Gorkhaland Movement among the Limbu Tribe

SL.NO.	Choice For Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes, I am Aware	419	83.8%
2.	No, I am Not Aware	27	5.4%
3.	Not Fully Aware	54	10.8%
4.	Total	500	100%

Sources:³³ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 5.1 shows the awareness of Limbu tribes of Darjeeling hills about the Gorkhaland movement. The Gorkhaland movement is the burning issue of Darjeeling people and they are demanding their separation from the Bengal government before the independence but unfortunately, they are still fighting for their separate statehood and regarding this, we have made a survey among the people of Limbu tribes as their awareness about the ethnic movement of Darjeeling. Here, we did a survey within 500 houses of the Limbu community of Darjeeling district. We found that among the 500 households 83.8% of Limbu people are very much aware of the Movement when we asked why they want a separate state from Bengal at that time most of the answers were the same. Their opinion was that if we get Gorkhaland then it would help us for our identification, people would not ask us as “Are you from Nepal? or Northeast? We would have our own government; we will get jobs but most of them said that it would solve our Identity Crisis.

But on the other hand, there are 5.4% of Limbu people who are totally ignorant about the movement. When we asked them “Do you have any idea about Gorkhaland Movement”? Their reply was very casual, yes, we have heard they are demanding Gorkhaland but we don’t think that it would solve our problem because to survive ourselves we have to work ourselves. We will not get any type of help. It seems that they are only aware of their economic life not concerned about the political and cultural life.

During our survey, we found 10.8% of Limbus are not fully aware not a fully ignorant about the movement. When they have been asked about awareness of movement, they said yes, we know and said that we have heard if we get Gorkhaland then we will get every benefit. Thus, we came to know that they are not fully aware of the movement they know only that much whatever they have been taught. Many Indians are not aware of the fact that there are two sets of Nepali speakers in India. The first set of Nepali speakers belongs to the permanent inhabitant and bonafide citizens of the country and on the other hand, the second category of Nepalese speakers comprises those who are citizens of Nepal but are residing in India on a temporary basis.³⁴ The people of Darjeeling who are the original inhabitants of India always face an identity crisis and that can only be fulfilled by a separate state but the mainline Indian people do not understand the problem.

5.11. Limbu Tribe as the Supporters of Gorkhaland Movement:

Almost all the hill people are in favour of a separate state of Gorkhaland but all are not politically active all the time. There are people who are silent majority who never disclosed their mind but acted and showed results during the time of the vote. There are many tribal and non-tribal communities who have formed different organisations and affiliations to particular political parties. Some people are active and some are passive. The following table will disclose the political

attitude of Limbu. Political parties usually include a party leader, who has primary responsibility for the activities of the party; party executives, who may select the leader and who perform administrative and organizational tasks; and party members, who may volunteer to help the party, donate money to it, and vote for its candidates. There are many political parties in Darjeeling hills. The agitation for the Gorkhaland movement mostly lunched by the GNLF for 1980 decades, then after GJMM in 2007 onwards and at present issues of the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland had come to PPS (Permanent Political solution) as coined by the BJP before 2019 election. Under the leadership of Subash Ghising and Bimal Gurung all almost all the people were in support of the demand but no one fulfil the demand.

Table 5.2: Limbu Tribe as the Supporters of Gorkhaland Movement

Sl. No.	Choice for respondent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Active Party Member	35	7%
2.	Passive Party Member	367	73.4%
3.	Spectators	146	29.2%
4.	Apolitical	17	3.4%
5	Total	500	100%

Sources: ³⁵ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 5.1: Limbu Tribe as the Supporters of Gorkhaland Movement

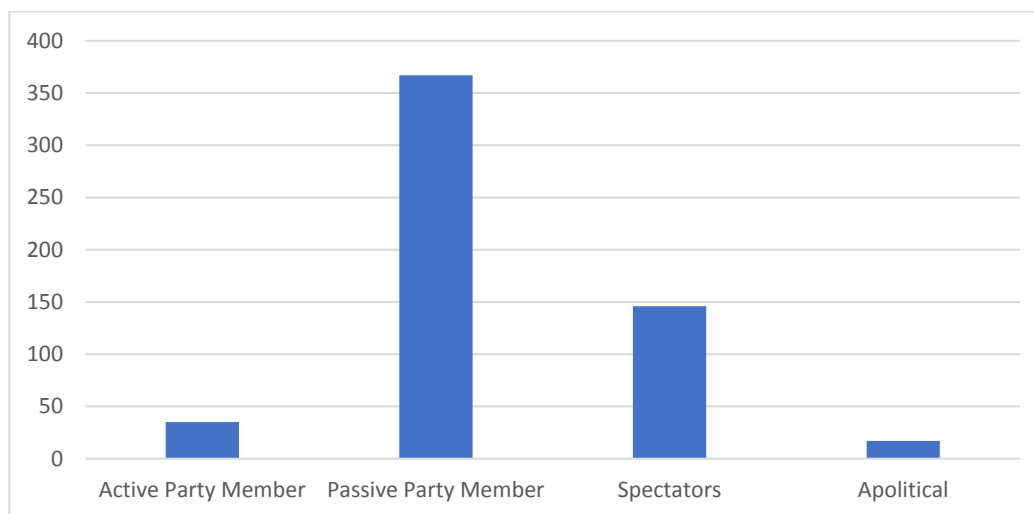


Table 5.2 refers to the Limbus of Darjeeling and their support for the Gorkhaland movement. In our first question, we came to know that maximum Limbu people of Darjeeling are aware of the Gorkhaland movement so we asked them the next question which was based on how much they are involved in the movement but here we found a different picture although Limbu people are aware of the movement their participation was less. In our survey, we found that there are only 7%

of Limbus are active members in the Gorkhaland movement but 73.4% of Limbus are passive party members. It shows that maximum the Limbu community are not interested in politics they do not take part in politics they follow the leaders who asked them to follow. They are not active in politics. Though among them 7% show active members but we did not find any Limbu person in any political portfolio.

There are 29.2% of Limbu people who act as a spectator they observed everything and know everything but they do not take part in politics. They think that it is better to stay away from politics. But there are 3.4% of Limbu people also who are totally apolitical. They are involved in their own world; they are neither concerned about the Gorkhaland movement nor leaders.

5.12. Preferences of Ethnic Movement:

The people of Darjeeling are very peaceful, calm, sincere, and honest. Thus, they have been betrayed by the people of plains on every front. The movement for Gorkhaland has seen a violent fight in the 1980 decade and 2017 also. The people want peace and tranquility, side by side development, and want to get their separate identity as Gorkhaland.

Table 5.3: Preferences of Ethnic Movement

Sl.No.	Choice For Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Non-Violence and Democratic	453	90.6%
2.	Violent and Arm Struggle	47	9.4%
3	Total	500	100%

Sources:³⁶ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 5.3 refers to the preferences of Limbus in the ethnic movement. We have discussed the different phases of the ethnic movement of Darjeeling, in first 1907 to 1985 up to it was based on only constitutional demand but 1986 movement was arm struggle and the third phase of the movement was followed by non-violence and the democratic way so on the basis of this we have asked the question them whether they prefer violence and non-violence movement and we found that that 90.6% Limbu tribe of Darjeeling preferred non-violence and democratic way of movement and 9.4% Limbu tribe of Darjeeling thinks that violent and arms struggle was the best way to achieve Gorkhaland. When it was first started under the leadership of Subash Ghising at that time the movement was based on violence but a later movement which was started in 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung was based on non-violence and the democratic way so people of Darjeeling found that non-

violence and democratic way of movement was a simple way to achieve Gorkhaland. The demand of Gorkhaland is still going on and they are following the democratic way of movement to fulfill their demand.

5.13. Political Participation and Caste of Vote:

India is the largest democratic country in the World; Voting is one of the most important aspects of government forming and commonly used terms in the contemporary age of democratic politics. Each adult citizen uses ‘voting’ as a means for expressing his approval or disapproval of governmental decisions, policies, and programmes of various political parties and the qualities of the candidates who are engaged in the struggle to get the status of being the representatives of the people. There are votes for the member for parliament (MP), West Bengal Legislative Assembly Vote (MLA) Election for DGHC and GTA (Councillor) Municipal Vote and Panchayat Vote in Darjeeling hills. MP and MLA vote are regular every five years whereas in GTA there has been only one vote in 2012. Panchayat elections have not been held since 99-20. Municipal elections are held in four municipal areas of Darjeeling hills like Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, and Mirik. MP election was held in 2019 and the MLA election was held in 2021.

Table 5.4: Caste of Vote

Sl.No.	Vote Cast by the Head of Family	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Once	56	11.2%
2.	Twice	154	30.8%
3.	Thrice	215	43%
4.	More than thrice	75	15%
5.	Total	500	100%

Sources:³⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 5.4 shows the vote cast by the Limbus of Darjeeling. As we have already discussed the awareness of the Limbus in politics and when we asked them about the casting of the vote that how many times, they have cast the vote and above figure shows it clearly that 11.2% Limbus have caste once time, 30.8% of Limbus have caste twice in their life, 43% of Limbus have caste thrice in their life and 15% of Limbus have caste more than thrice in their life. Though Limbus of Darjeeling are not so active in politics they are a good citizen of India because they know that to cast vote is our duty and maximum of them have cast vote in Every Election.

5.14 Reasons to Support Ethnic Movement and Political Party:

The ethnic movement of Darjeeling hills is going on for more than one hundred years. The people of Darjeeling hills are culturally, physically, religiously, geographically, economically, and socially. The people of Darjeeling hills want their own separate identity as Indian Gorkha. The people of Darjeeling have been exploited by the Britishers and now by the majority community of plains. To get a separate identity, they are fought with the government for long years. Different political parties contest elections on different issues and the people of Darjeeling cast their valuable votes to political parties as per their choices. Most of the political parties fight the election on the issue of Gorkhaland which has been a sentimental issue for the people of the hills.

Table 5.5: Reasons to Support the Ethnic Movement and Political Party

SL.NO.	Choice for Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Issues of Election	378	75.6%
2.	Personality & Leadership	45	9%
3.	Party Ideology	59	11.8%
4.	Caste & Religion of a Candidate	18	3.6%
5.	Total	500	100%

Sources:³⁸ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 5.2: Reasons to Support Ethnic Movement

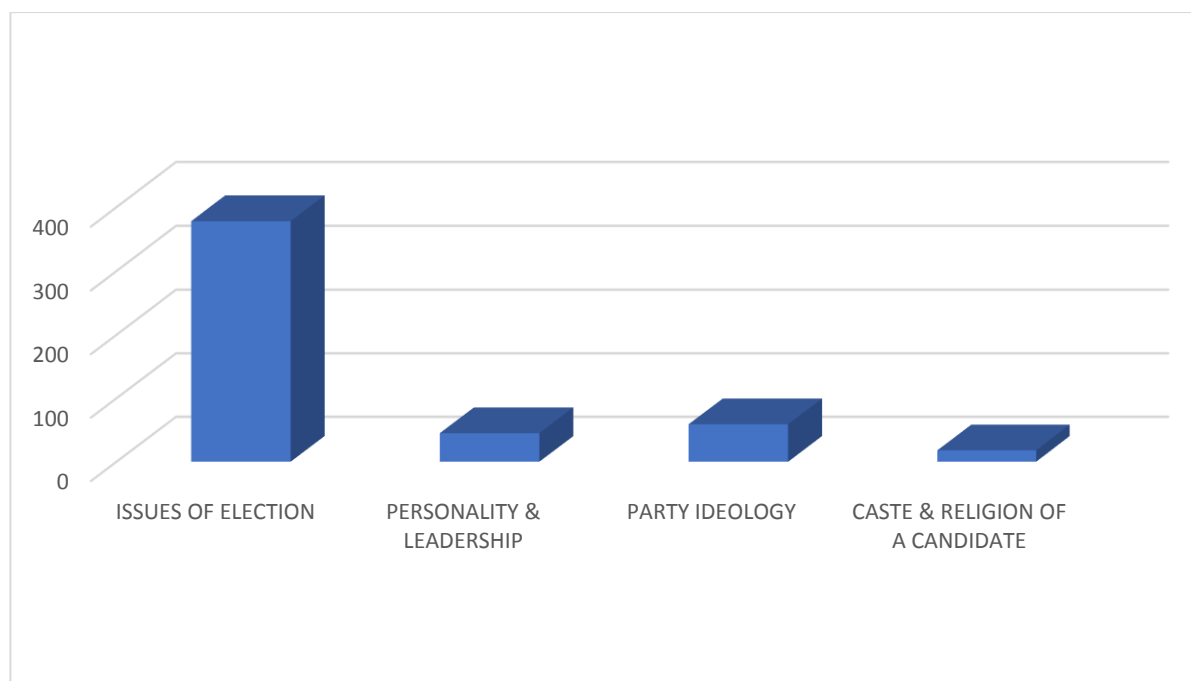


Table 5.5 refers to the reason to support for the leaders in their Ethnic Movement. The ethnic movement of Darjeeling is started in the British period but there was not a particular leader who could guide the people of Darjeeling on the right way and made them conscious about the movement and make them aware of the Gorkhaland movement. It was Subash Ghising who first guided the people of Darjeeling about the ethnic movement and he was followed by Bimal Gurung, Binoy Tamang, and Anit Thapa. In this regard, we have asked the question to the Limbus of Darjeeling on which ground they would support the ethnic movement. So, the above table shows that 75.6% of Limbus would support on issues of the election but there are 9% Limbus who look at the personality of the leaders and soft corner for their leader they would support the ethnic movement. There are 11.8% Limbus who supported ethnic movement on the basis of party ideology and 3.6% Limbus of Darjeeling are there who are biased and don't look at issues of the election, party ideology, and leadership rather they would support on the basis of caste and religion of a candidate.

5.15. Influences for Voting:

The behaviour of voters is influenced by several factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, the purpose of the polls, the extent of franchise, political wave, the popularity of leaders, family history, ³⁹ therefore, Limbu community have faced also various influences from many quarters that have been presented in the following table.

Table 5.6: Influences during Voting

Sl.No.	Who influenced you most while voting	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Parents	18	3.6%
2.	Husband/Wife	44	8.8%
3.	Leader	60	12%
4.	Self-conscious	378	75%
5.	Total	500	100%

Sources:⁴⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 5.6 shows who influence the Limbus of Darjeeling while casting vote and it shows clearly that 75% follows their own subconscious and 12% voted on the influence of leaders or candidates and 8.8% Limbus voted on the influence of husband and wife and 3.6% voted on the influence of parents.

5.16. Attended any Political Gathering:

The political parties try to attract as many as people. They organize the big rally, procession, and Jan-Sabha and Mahajan Sabha to show its party strength to the opposition and the people at large. GNLF, GJMM, BGPM, CPM, TMC, BJP, CPRM, etc. have organized many meetings and gathering especially during the elections. There are many hardcore leaders, members of the party are but there are so many people who just visit the gathering without knowing the objectives of the meeting. The simple people of hills are simply lured and taken to the different meetings and procession in the presence of the new visiting places. Many take a keen interest in politics whereas there are people who are acting silently. The following table will focus on the behavioural pattern of the Limbu tribal in Darjeeling hills.

Table 5.7: Attendance at Political Gathering

Sl. No	Choice respondent for	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	195	39%
2.	No	185	37%
3.	Sometime	68	13.6%
4.	Regular	52	10.4%
5.	Total	500	100%

Sources:⁴¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 5.7 shows the clear pictures of attendance of Limbus in any political gathering and programme. As already mentioned, the maximum Limbus of Darjeeling are passive supporters and we found only 39% Limbus attended any political meeting and programme and 37% Limbus do not attend any political meeting and programme. There are some Limbus also who attended political gatherings when it is by order so here, we have put them in the category of sometime and we found 13.6% Limbus comes under this category. When we asked those Limbus who attended political gatherings about their regular attendance at that time, we found that among those attenders only 10.4% of Limbus are regular attenders in any political gathering.

5.17. Participation in Protest against Government:

The political party tries to show their anger through the protest march, rally and showing different kinds of posters, banners, placards, Flex, etc. some protests are violent in terms of Darjeeling hills. Police have lathi-charged the people, some got injured and some got dead especially during the

agitation of 2014, 2017, 1988 in Darjeeling hills. The government took strict actions during the agitation for Gorkhaland.

Table 5.8: Participation of Limbu in Protest against the Government

Sl.No.	Choice for Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
1.	YES	119	23.8%
2.	NO	381	76.2%
3.	TOTAL	500	100%

Sources:⁴² Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Above table 5.8. The participation of Limbus in protest against the government has shown in table 5.8. A higher proportion of respondents were No (76.2%) and a lower proportion of respondents were Yes (23.8%).

5.18. Representation by Limbu Tribe in Different Government Bodies:

The politics of Darjeeling hills never care for a separate tribal community rather it is the politics for all. There are no direct associations, trade unions, clubs of the tribal associated with the tribal community. All India Limbu Tribal Association is the apex association but it has not been affiliated with any political party.⁴³ All India Limboo (Subba) Vikash Parishad, Jalpaiguri, Yakthoong shong choompho, Kalimpong, and All India Limbu (Subba) Tribal Association, Kurseong, were other associations.⁴⁴ There are other tribal such as Tamang, Sherpa, Bhutia, Lepcha Yolmo, Toto and there are numerous association for social and cultural and linguistic development of the respective tribal but not affiliation to any political party. Thus, Limbu tribal community does not have a separate political party but always individually can join and leave any political party. The party may choose any person from any tribal and non-tribal community and he or she will represent all groups. *Sukharaj Limbu* and *Makerdhoj Subba* from Darjeeling, *Harka Singh Subba* from Kurseong, *Captain: Kainabir Limbu* from Kalimpong, and *George Mahabert Subba* from Siliguri were the members in All India Gorkha league founded in 1943.⁴⁵ Following table will show that how many Limbu tribal got chance to represent the people of all section of Darjeeling district in the democratic system from Panchayat to Parliament.

Table 5.9: Representation by Limbu Tribe in Different Government Bodies

Sl.No.	Representative of Constituency	Frequency
1.	MP	Nil
2.	MLA	1
3.	Municipality	1
4.	Panchayat	1
5.	DGHC	2
6.	GTA	0
7.	Total	Nil

Sources: ⁴⁶ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

In table 9 shows the Limbu people as a member of MP, MLA, MUNICIPALITY, PANCHAYAT, DGHC, and GTA. Here we found that to date there is none of the Limbus who is elected as MP from Darjeeling District and we found one Limbu as an MLA from Darjeeling District, his name was *George Mahabert Subba* who had contested election in 1951 from Kurseong Siliguri constituency as an independent candidate and became the MLA of West Bengal Legislative Assembly. Although in 1951 *Ganeshlal Subba* had also contested election for the seat of MLA as a candidate of CPI from Jorebunglow constituency he was the runner up only. Unfortunately, from 1957 to date there is no Limbus from Darjeeling District who has become MLA. In the municipality, we found *Sri Krishna Limbu* as the chairman of Kurseong municipality. When the Panchayat system through the elected body was functional, we found only one panchayat Pradhan who was Limbu. During the time of DGHC, there was only two Limbus who were elected as councillors. If we see in GTA then we found that there were forty-five GTA Sabhasad but no Limbus is there only nominated Sabhasad is found from Kalimpong District.

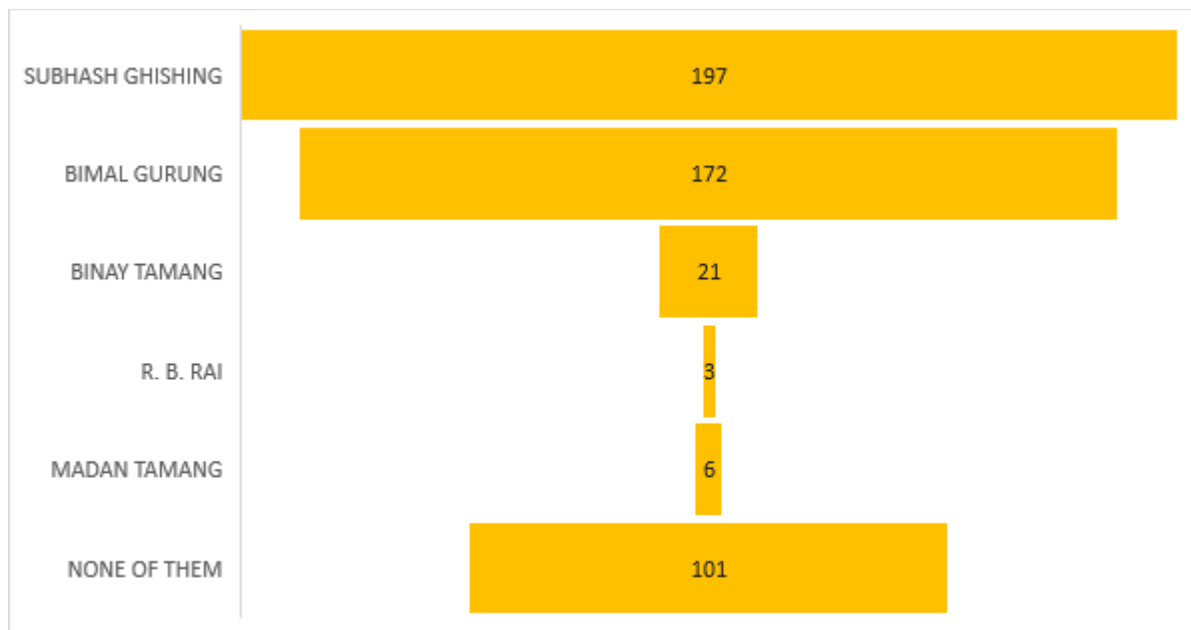
5.19. Favourite Leader for Gorkhaland Movement:

The people of Darjeeling have been participating in political processes and there are different political parties. At present, the president of the BGPM Anit Thapa is much closer and popular in the hills but when the field survey was conducted, he was not so popular rather had a negative perception of him. The political scenario has changed a lot within a span of a few months. Bimal Gurung was an absconder and was in Delhi but had many followers in Darjeeling hills. But when we are analysing this report here, he has come to Darjeeling hills but has lost all his earlier charms.

Table 5.10: Favourite Leader as liked by Limbu Community

Sl.No.	Name of Leaders	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Subhash Ghising	197	39.4%
2.	Bimal Gurung	172	34.4%
3.	Binay Tamang	21	4.2%
4.	R. B. Rai	3	0.6%
5.	Madan Tamang	6	1.2%
6.	None of Them	101	20.2%
7	Total	500	100%

Sources: ⁴⁷ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 5.3: Favourite Leader for Gorkhaland Movement

In table 5.10. shows the Favourite leaders of Limbus during the Gorkhaland agitation. As we know all the first Gorkhaland agitation was started by Subhash Ghising. It was he who raised the demand for the creation of the state of Gorkhaland to be carved out of the hills of Darjeeling and areas of Dooars and Siliguri Terai contiguous to Darjeeling, with a large population of ethnic Gorkhas. The Gorkhaland movement took a violent turn in the 1980s when Subash Ghising lead Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) issued a violent demand for statehood, which lead to the death of over 1200 people. This movement culminated with the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988, but it was failed and the people of Darjeeling again began to demand Gorkhaland under the leadership of Bimal Gurung Mr. Bimal Gurung, under the newly formed party called

Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM). Bimal Gurung has vowed to create a separate state by 2010. He has called for a more non-violent form of protest by refusing to pay state taxes to the government including electricity and phone bills. People have resorted to changing vehicle numbers from WB (West Bengal) to GL (signifying Gorkhaland) and this time also they failed to achieve Gorkhaland and they got GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Area). Besides this, there are other leaders also from a different party like Madan Tamang from ABGL and R.B. Rai from CPRM, unfortunately, Madan Tamang was executed when he was supposed to address a public meeting in Darjeeling. In 2017 again, people of Darjeeling began to start their demand of Gorkhaland and this time Bimal Gurung was exiled from Darjeeling so in this situation Binay Tamang came forward and began to lead the people of Darjeeling. So here, we found 39.4% of Limbus favoured the Subash Ghising because according to them it was Ghising who first showed the path of Gorkhaland. 34.4% Limbus supported Bimal Gurung they believe that one day Bimal Gurung would bring Gorkhaland for them but when Bimal Gurung leave the Darjeeling and again came back Darjeeling after three years still they believe that due to the political compulsion he was forced to leave Darjeeling and still they love them and believe that he would be a great leader for the people of Darjeeling. When we asked them about Binay Tamang leader of GTA2 and found 4.2% Limbus favoured the Binay Tamang as a leader because they believe that it was Binay Tamang who came forward and save them from Bengal Government after the negotiation with Bengal Government. There are 0.6% Limbus who supported R.B. Rai and 1.2% Limbus who supported Madan Tamang. 20.2% of Limbus are there who does not support any one of them because they believe that all of them are the same and they did nothing for Gorkhaland. While when we were doing our survey at that time Anit Thapa was not there as a party leader, he was the co-supporter of Binay Tamang but in 2021 there was a split between Binay Tamang and Anit Thapa and recently Anit Thapa has launched a new party under his leadership, so we could not include his name as a favourite leader.

5.20. Name of the Limbu Martyrs during Gorkhaland Agitation:

Limbus became the martyr at the time of the Gorkhaland movement. During the Gorkhaland Agitation from May 1986 to August 1988, the hills of Darjeeling and Dooars shook with the tremor of violence, destruction, and killing. There were clashes between the GNLF Cadres and the combined group of CPM Cadres, CRPF, and State Armed Police. There are almost 1200 Gorkhas who had given their life to Gorkhaland (official record). Among these 1200 hundred martyrs, we found the name of Ten Limbus who sacrificed their life for Gorkhaland from my research are

Table 5.11: Name of Limbu Martyrs

Sl. No	Name of Limbu Martyrs	Name and Year of Agitation
1.	Ganeshlal Subba	1986
2.	Timan Subba	1986
3.	Man Singh Subba (Khewa)	1986
4.	Param Subba (Nugo)	1986
5.	Dhan Raj Subba	1986
6.	Prem Subba	1986
7.	Raj Kumar Limbu	1986
8.	Arthalal Limbu	1986
9.	Balbhadrur Limbu	1986
10.	Chabiman Khewa	1986

Sources: ⁴⁸ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Table 5.11. Though we have found that maximum Limbus are passive supporter of Gorkhaland movement but if situation demand for the identification of Gorkhas then they do not hesitate to give their life for the ethnic movement of Darjeeling. Among these ten martyrs two martyrs were from Hope Town, (Phoolbari) village. One of the martyrs whose name was Timan Subba was captured and another one (Ganeshlal Subba) was trying to run away but they shot him from the backside and he died in hospital but the one whom they had captured did not come back, later came to know they killed him. They were killed by CPIM Party members who were also from the Gorkha community. Others eight martyrs were from the Bijanbari block and their names were revealed by the family members and villagers and all of them were killed by either CRPF or CPIM cadres during the clashes between GNLf and CPIM cadres.

After the agitation when DGHC was formed their family member was given the job by the Subash Ghising through DGHC.

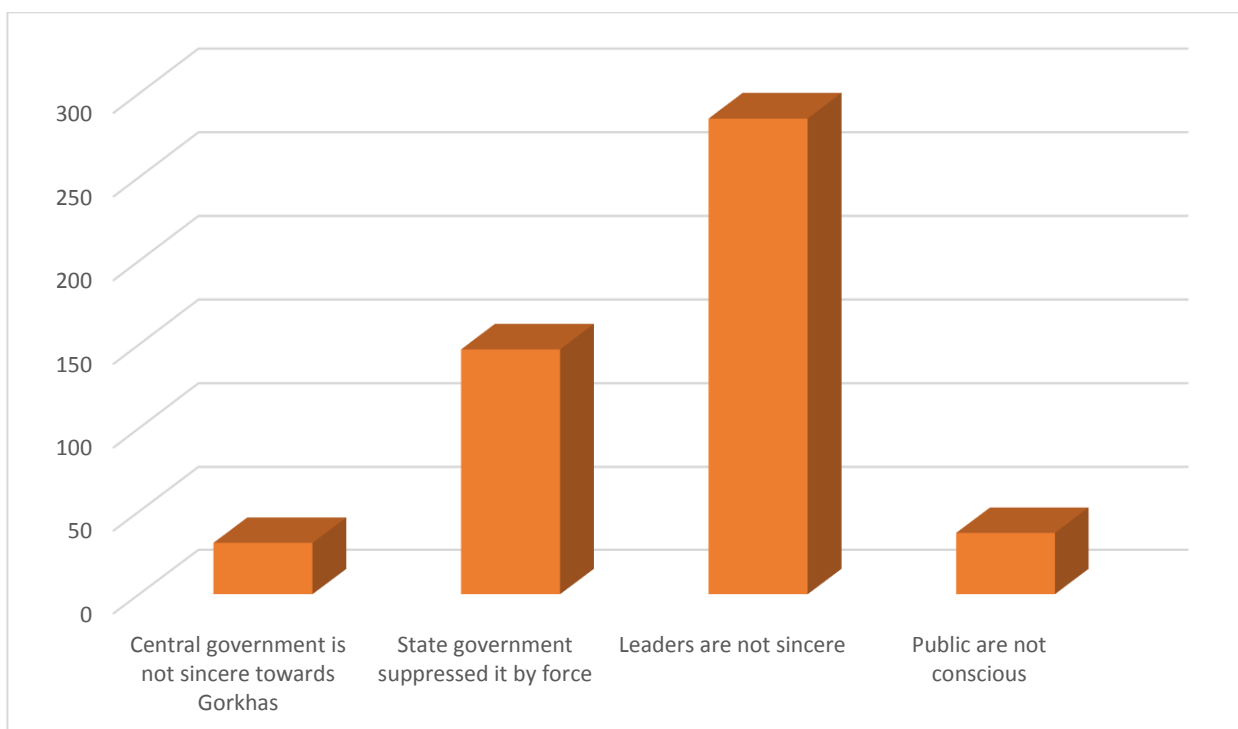
5.21. Failure of Gorkhaland Movement:

Hundred years of struggle of the Gorkhas have not paid to date. Whenever there were agitations the state and central government tried different methods to crush the movement. The agitation of 1986-88, 2007-12, 2014, and 2017 all have been suppressed.

Table 5.12: Failure of Gorkhaland Movement

Sl.No.	Causes	Frequency	Percentage
1.	The central government is not sincere towards Gorkhas	31	6.2%
2.	The state government suppressed it by force	147	29.4%
3.	Leaders are not sincere	285	57%
4.	The public are not conscious	37	7.4%
5.	Total	500	100%

Sources: ⁴⁹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 5.4: Failure of Gorkhaland Movement

Why Gorkhaland Movement has failed and its causes of failure are shown in table 5.12. Maximum respondents (57%) believed that it was failed because our leaders are not sincere. 29.4% of respondents believed that the state government suppressed it by force and it is failed, 7.4% of respondents said that we the people of Darjeeling are not conscious about the Gorkhaland Movement and highly educated people do not participate in the movement this is the main causes for the failure of the movement. 6.2% respondents think that it was failed because the central government is not supporting Gorkhas. They said that during election time they used to promise that we will give a political solution but after winning the election they do not fulfill it. Thus, maximum Limbus believe that at the last moment our leaders gave up their demand of Gorkhaland

and makes the compromise with the West Bengal Government and they will accept whatever is given to them instead of Gorkhaland.

5.22. The Expectation of Gorkhaland State:

Two interim autonomous bodies like DGHC and GTA could not fulfill the aspiration of the Gorkha, so they hope one in the future their dream of Gorkhaland state will be fulfilled. In this regard, the views of the Limbu people have been collected and shown in the following table.

Table 5.13: Formation of Gorkhaland State in Future

Sl.No.	Believe in Formation of Gorkhaland State in Future	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	86	17.2%
2.	No	43	8.6%
3.	No Idea	371	74.2%
4.	Total	500	100%

Sources: ⁵⁰ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 5.5: Believe in Formation of Gorkhaland State

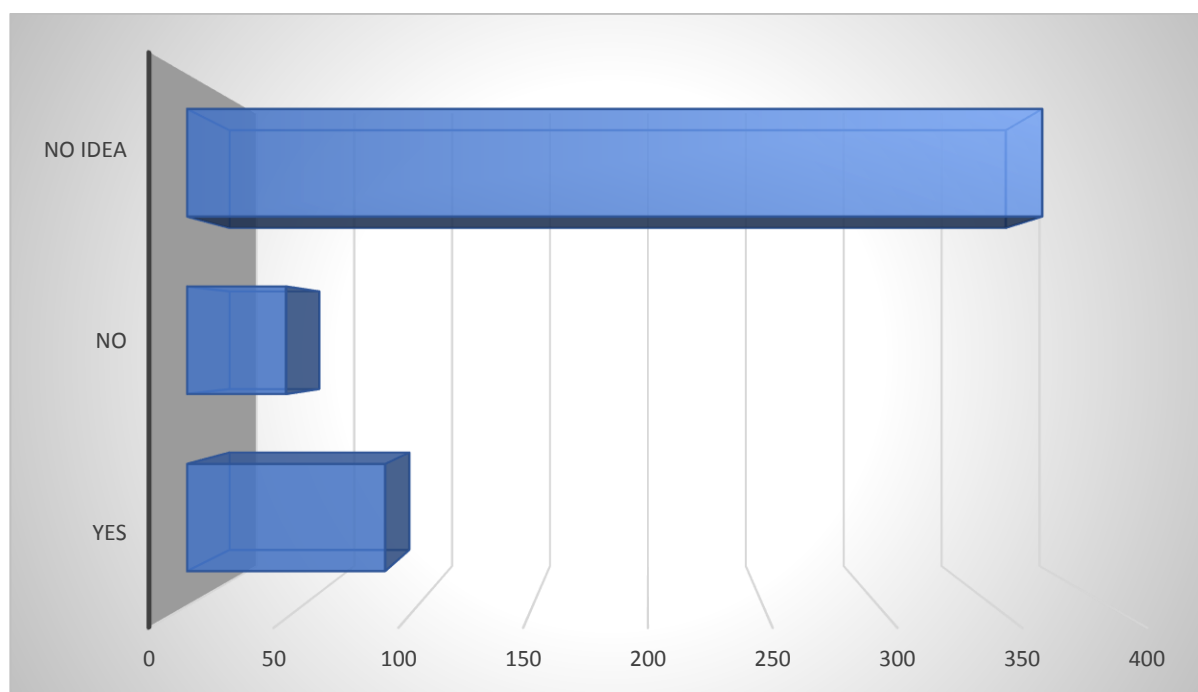


Table 5.13 shows the percentage of respondents about the future of Gorkhaland whether it will form or not. 17.2% of respondents believe that in future Gorkhaland state would form and we would have our own state Gorkhaland but 8.6% of respondents totally disagree with the formation of Gorkhaland state in future. Here, we found that there are 74.2% of respondents who have no idea about the future of Gorkhaland

5.23. Marginalisation of Limbu Community in Politics:

Limbu Tribal people of Darjeeling hills are very sincere, honest, and never harm anyone without particular reasons. Whereas there are some advanced tribal and non-tribal groups who are very clever, cunning and opportunist, the tribal people of Darjeeling hills are not very aware, they are outspoken, expressive, they don't have the power to debate and fight literally and, mainly, very few people are well educated. The tribal people seldom get a chance to represent their community. There are many factors of political marginalisation, thus whether the Limbu tribal feel that they have been marginalised in politics by the majority community in Darjeeling hills.

Table 5.14: Limbu Perception of Marginalisation

Sl. No	Politically Marginalised	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	482	96.4%
2.	No	18	3.6%
3.	Total	500	100%

Sources:⁵¹ Compiled Data from the Field Survey.

Figure 5.6: Marginalisation of Limbu Community in Politics

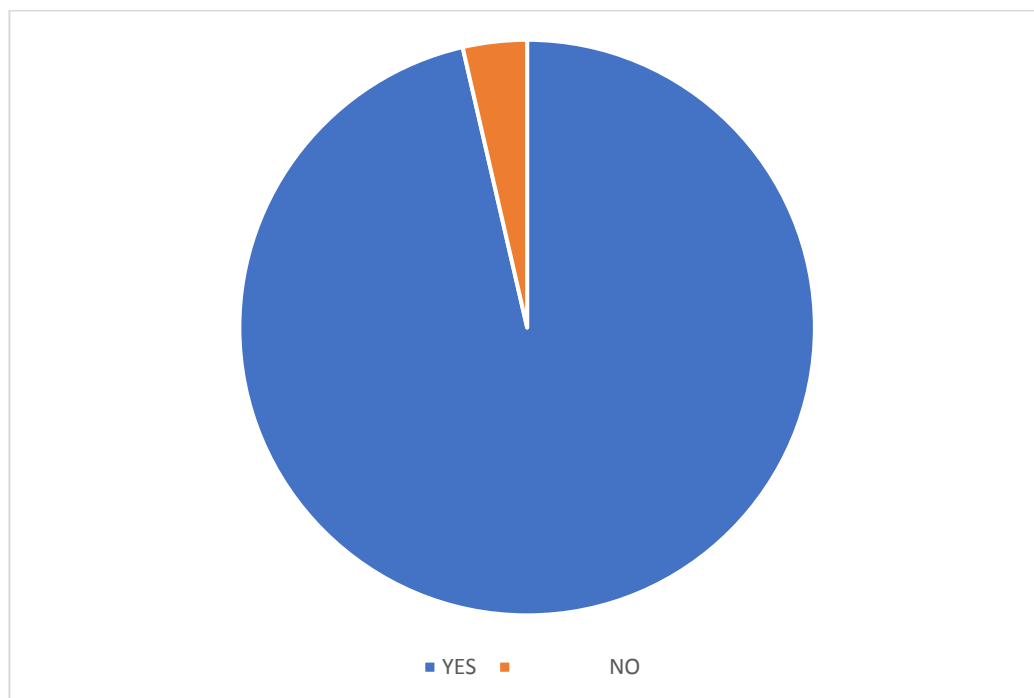


Table 5.14 shows the marginalised of Limbus in politics. A higher proportion (96.4%) of respondents reported that Limbus of Darjeeling has been marginalised in politics because we have seen that there is only one and two Limbus who had been involved in politics. During the period of DGHC, there are only one and two Limbus who had given political portfolio but at the time of GTA there are forty-five GTA Sabhasad but we did not find any Limbus as a Sabhasad.

5.23. Summing up:

Thus, we can sum up that the demand for a separate administrative province and for separate ethnic identity, Gorkhaland Movement had been started in Darjeeling since 1907. Hillmen's Association first put the demand of separation of hill people from West Bengal government and we can consider that period from 1907 to 1935 is seen as a first phase of ushering with a political demand by the elite gentry of Darjeeling without forming a formal political organisation. Unfortunately, their demand for separation from the West Bengal government had not been fulfilled. Then comes ABGL who also demanded the separation of Darjeeling from West Bengal even they had put their suggestion to create Uttarakhand Pradesh comprising Darjeeling District, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Dooars, and Cooch Behar but their demand also went all in vain. Another political organisation, Communist Party of India (CPI) and their leaders, Ganesh Lal Subba, the then Secretary of CPI Darjeeling District, and Ratanlal Brahmin the CPI MLA from Darjeeling had submitted a memorandum to Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Vice President of the Interim Government and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan the finance minister of the interim Government for the creation of *Gorkhasthan* – an independent country comprising of present-day Nepal, Darjeeling District and Southern Sikkim. The demand for the separate 'Union of Gorkhasthan' created great deal of controversy and their demand also failed without any result. On the 30th July 1980, Subash Ghising founded Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and he raised the demand for the creation of the state of Gorkhaland comprising of the hills of Darjeeling and areas of Dooars and Siliguri Terai. This time Gorkhaland Movement took a violent turn and violent clashes started between the cadres of the GNLF and CPI(M) and also between the Police and the cadres of the GNLF, which lead to the death of over 1200 people. Finally, in 1988 this movement ended with the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) instead of Gorkhaland. The West Bengal Assembly formally and unanimously passed the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Bill, 1988, on 5th September 1988. After twenty years of ruling over DGHC, began to demand Six Scheduled status instead of Gorkhaland so people of Darjeeling began to protest against Six Scheduled and Subash Ghising and on 7th October 2007 Bimal Gurung announced the formation of Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) with the firm objectives for the creation of a separate state for the people residing in the three Hill Sub-Division of Darjeeling, Siliguri Terai, and Dooars areas. Unfortunately, he also failed to

bring Gorkhaland and compromised with Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), a semi-autonomous administrative body for Hills in 12th March 2012. So, to date people of Darjeeling have been demanding their long-standing demand for a separate state Gorkhaland. Now Darjeeling has become the hub of a number of political parties and each of them claiming that they would bring Gorkhaland but they are not sure when they would get the Gorkhaland. It can be concluded that the development issues never became the issues of the Gorkhaland movements whereas the entire period of agitation was in the name of the separate identity but now a new discourse has come up in the hills through young politician the politics of reality and development issues have slowly taken place of identity politics in Darjeeling hills.

So, in this political scenario of Darjeeling, we found that Limbus of Darjeeling are not so active in politics. They supported Gorkhaland Movement as a passive supporter. We saw that to date there is no active political representative from the Limbu community of Darjeeling. Besides, we have asked them about the political development of India and about the CAA and NRC, only 50% of Limbus could answer about the CAA and NRC. The Limbus are participating in the ethnic movements due to political compulsions; however, they are more or less passive as far as participation in the local government and other local institutions are concerned. In the ethnic movement, the Limbu of Darjeeling are politically marginalised, 83.8% of Limbu are conscious about the ethnic movement of Darjeeling hills. But they are not so active in politics and support the ethnic of Darjeeling passively. In our survey, we found that there are only 7% of Limbus are active members in the Gorkhaland movement but 73.4% of Limbus are passive party members. It shows that maximum the Limbu community are not interested in politics, they do not take part in politics they follow the leaders who asked them to follow. They are not active in politics. Though among them 7% show active members we did not find any Limbu person in any political portfolio. There are 29.2% of Limbu people who act as a spectator they observed everything and know everything but they do not take part in politics. They think that it is better to stay away from politics. But there are 3.4% of Limbu people also who are totally apolitical. When we asked them about the failure Gorkhaland Movement we found that the maximum number of respondents (57%) believed that it was failed because our leaders are not sincere. In the end, when we asked them about the marginalised of Limbus in politics, a higher proportion (96.4%) of respondents reported that Limbus of Darjeeling has been marginalised in politics.

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SUMMARY OF FINDING, AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of the Finding:

The present study on ‘*CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITY: THE LIMBU TRIBE IN DARJEELING HILLS SINCE INDEPENDENCE*’ is a humble attempt to explore the Limbus as the ethnic original inhabitants of Darjeeling hills and being tribal and non-tribal what types of changes has come in their political, social, economic, cultural life with the help of field survey, interview, literary sources, and oral narratives. It also includes conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations of the study team to improve the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the Limbu community of Darjeeling hills. The major findings of the survey are presented on the basis of Chapterisation:

- **Ethnographic Study of the Limbu Tribe: A Brief Outline**

(a) The Limbus are living in Darjeeling for centuries. They are always claiming that they are also original inhabitant of Darjeeling hills along with the Lepcha and there are many historical writings and oral narratives which also support their claims. During the British period, they were known as tribal people but after the independence of India this genuine tribe was not inserted in the scheduled tribe list of Indian constitution and they remained as general category people of Darjeeling hills. When, we have asked the Limbus of Darjeeling why they were not included in scheduled tribe list the secretary and president of Limbu associations and elderly Limbus responded with the unanimous answer that our ancestors were offered the tribal status but they declined to accept it because, they thought that scheduled tribe means very lowest caste in the society, and if they accept it, they would be lower caste in the society so they declined to accept it. Unfortunately, all these narrations are based on oral narratives and there are no written documents. It was only after three decades of their continuous struggle the Limbu communities were recognised as Scheduled tribes with the SC/ST Orders (Second Amendment) Bill, 2002 (Bill No.62 of 2002). The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 2nd August 2002, it was passed by Rajya Shaba on 18th December 2002 and Lok Shaba on 19th December 2002. Finally the bill received president assent on 7th January 2003 and Limbu tribe was included scheduled tribe list of Indian constitution. The Limbu people of Darjeeling and Sikkim had played a significant role in achieving the scheduled tribe status for all Limbu of India.

(b) They were very conscious regarding their language and script and for the development of their language they had founded '*Yakthunghaang Chumlung*' in 26th July 1925 and this is considered as the first milestone of all the Limbu community of the world.

(c) There is very close connection between the Limbu tribe and Bow and Arrow. In every ritual they used Bow & Arrow. Limbu itself means '*archer*'. They are also known by different name like, Yakthumba, Tsong/Chang, Subba and Limbu. They also belong to *Kirata* confederacy. There is various opinion regarding the original homeland of Limbus. Their original homeland Limbuwan at present has been divided into three pieces, two states of India and six districts of Mechi Anchal Kochi Anchal of Nepal.

(d) They have close affinity with Lepchas. Many historical writings and oral traditions are there which mentioned that Lepchas and Limbus are the original inhabitants of Darjeeling. Books like '*Report on Darjeeling*' by H.V. Belley (1829), '*Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling*' by L.S.S.O. Malley (1907), '*Concise History of Darjeeling*' by E.C. Dozey (1922) '*The Limbus*' by Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal (1979) *Tipan-Taapan* by Dr. Parasmani Pradhan (1969) '*Darjeeling Reconsidered*', by Middleton & Shneiderman (2018), '*Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*' by Colonel Dalton (1872) '*A short note on the Limbus of Darjeeling*' by P.C.Biswas (1934-35) have written that Limbus and Lepchas were the aboriginal tribe of Darjeeling. So, most of the writers have tagged them as the original inhabitant of Darjeeling along the Lepchas. They also believed that the name of Darjeeling was given by Limbus.

(e) They have their own traditional dress and ornaments for both male and female. Their language is known as *Yakthungpan* and script are called *Sirijunga script*.

(f) The Limbu Tribe are divided into several clans (Thars). These clans are further divided into sub clans. Marriage within thar is strictly prohibited. They have four types of legal marriage. Their marital rituals are completed after completion of "*Char Kalam*". In Limbu tribes both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage and divorce. In Limbu society, widows are given due respect.

(g) The Limbus observes two funeral ceremonies. i) *Cremation* and (ii) *Burial*: They have their own religion 'Yumaism and own religious priest called Phedangba, and they have also their own religious temple Maangheem.

(h) They have very rich cultural folklore, like festivals, dances, songs and musical instruments.

(i) Limbus have a distinct identification symbol which is called *Silam Sakma* and they have their own flag which is called “Yakthung Subang Nisa” or “Limbu Jaatiya Jhanda”. This new flag consists of three colours sky blue white and green. In the center of the flag, they display the symbol *Silam-sakma* in which is a symbol/logo for identifying the Limbu community.

- **Socio-Economic Status of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills:**

(a) Limbu populations are concentrated in rural areas. It is observed that male respondents (49.4%) is slightly predominant by the female respondent (50.5%) Regarding their family types 95.2% belongs to the nuclear family.

(b) The total literacy rate among the male Limbus is 48.9% and female Limbus are 51.27% among the 500 households of Limbus of Darjeeling.

(c) The main occupation of Limbus is agriculture, tea plantation and animal husbandry. The young generation always gives their preference in joining the Indian Army. They are also involved in other professions such as teachings, administrative service, government jobs, business, abroad employment, etc. Many changes have come in their social and economic status after getting tribal status.

(d) The dwelling house of a Limbu is known as “Khim or “Heem” in the Limbu language. We found that they live in three types of houses. Actually, Limbus have their traditional design of houses but this type of house is could not find in Darjeeling. In our study areas, we found that 57.4% of the Limbus have Semi pucca houses and 19.4% Limbus of Darjeeling whose economic conditions are better than other Limbus have pucca houses and,23.2% of Limbus have Kachha houses in Darjeeling hills. The Development Board of Limbu have built many houses for Limbus so in our survey, we considered these houses in semi pucca houses. In rural Darjeeling, Limbu People have three types of ownership patterns of land, (1). Own Permanent Land (Khasmahal area), (2). Tea Garden land, (3). Permanent Forest Land. We found from our study areas that 71% of respondents live in their own land (Khasmahal),27.6% of respondents live in Tea Garden land and 1.4% of respondents live in permanent forest land.100% of the Limbus houses has connected with electricity. In the context of sanitation, it is found that the majority of the respondents have owned toilet facilities outside the house with sceptic tank (67.6 %) and 23.4% of respondents have owned toilet facilities outside the house linked with the stream. Only 8% of limbus has a toilet facility attached to the house and only 1% of respondents use a public toilet. Maximum Limbus of Darjeeling, depended on spring water sources so found 98.4% uses spring water source and 14.2% uses tap water source.

(e) The total literacy rate among the male Limbus 48.9% and female Limbus 51% Women are doing improvement in education.

(f) They followed the monogamy system of marriage system and their form of marriage is mostly based on elopement and in our study areas 79.79% of Limbus have got married through elopement.

(g)The main occupation of Limbus is Agriculture and Tea Garden, and animal husbandry besides that many Limbu have been recruited in Indian Army, Government jobs and private jobs. Monthly income of Limbu respondent is not so good. 34% Limbus earned less than 5000 and 31.4% earned between 5001 to 10000. The highest earner percentage is very low. They spent most of their income for their daily necessities, and health. 70.8% Limbus reared pigs which help them for their financial support. We also asked them about their technological device at home and we came to know that every household of Limbus have T.V., Cable, and Mobile.

(h) Limbu women have a very honourable and respectable status in society. There is no discrimination between boys and girls. In every field, they are treated equally. The Limbu society is free from many of the social evils like child marriage, dowry system, purdah system. Widows are free to remarry.

(i) Their socio-economic life has changed after getting tribal status. We found that many Limbu is pursuing higher education and participating in competitive examination. Many of them also have been appointed as Assistant professors in colleges, WBCS officers, school teachers, bank service, and many miscellaneous services.

- **The Cultural Changes of the Limbu Tribal Community of Darjeeling Hills since Independence:**

(a) Limbu tribe have their own culture and tradition and among the 500 households of Limbus of Darjeeling 84.6% Limbus strictly followed their culture and tradition and 2% Limbus are there who do not follow the culture and tradition and, 13.4% Limbus are there who follow their culture and tradition at the time of occasions.

(b) The Limbu tribes have their own Limbu language called ‘Yakthungpan’. we found that only 38.8% of Limbus of Darjeeling can speak their language and 53.6% of Limbus of Darjeeling cannot speak their language nor speak Limbu language. 7.6% of Limbus are there who can understand Limbu language but cannot speak. All the Limbus of Darjeeling speak in the Nepali

language at home and very few of them speak in the Limbu language at home. 91% of Limbus of Darjeeling communicated with other communities in the Nepali language.

(c) We found there are many causes for the decline of the Limbu language from the Darjeeling hills. 28.2% of Limbus believe that education and medium of instruction is the main cause for the decline of Limbu language. 24.2% of Limbus believe that the main cause of the decline of Limbu language is that parents never talked in Limbu language at home. 38% of Limbus believes that it is declining because of the language spoken by the neighbors and society and 9% believed that media and modern technology have the main role for the decline of Limbu language.

(d) 100% Limbus of Darjeeling wants the introduction of the Limbu language in schools. The West Bengal Government also had issued an order to teach the Limbu language in schools but unfortunately, due to some political issue, it could not be implemented. When we asked them about written evidence, they had produced, one government notification issued from District Inspector of Schools, Hill Areas, Darjeeling, for the introduction of Limboo language in primary school in the hill areas of Darjeeling.

(e) Limbus of Darjeeling have their own Limbu script. Unfortunately, 90.8% of Limbus are there who cannot read and write Limbu script. There is only 9.2% Limbus who can read Limbus and maximum of them were aged. To save the Limbu script from extinction many youths are learning Limbu script and language.

(f) In Darjeeling, we found the endangered condition of the Limbu language. Although Limbu Association, as well as intellectual Limbu people, is working hard to save it from extinction by running night school to teach Limbu language and publishing Limbu dictionary and books on Srijunga Alphabet and culture and tradition of the Limbu tribe.

(g) Limbus of Darjeeling have their own religion called 'Yumaism'. 95.2% of Limbus followed their own religion and 4.8% of Limbus did not follow Yumaism.

(h) Besides, Yumaism the *Satya Haangma (truthful prince)* and *The Yuma Mang Meditation Committee Centre (YMMCC)* also claim to be Limbu religion and have followers in Sikkim. In Darjeeling we found only followers of Satya-Haangma but we did not meet any follower of Yuma Mang Meditation Committee Center in Darjeeling.

(i) They have their own religious priest, 'Phedangba', and their own religious temple, 'Maangheem'. Phedangba has four categories and in our study areas, we found four Maangheem

of Limbus. Besides their own religion, they also worshipped nature and animals. 6.8% Limbus are there who abandoned their traditional religion and have adopted new religion (Christian)

(j) Limbus have their own traditional attires and ornaments but they wear it at the time of occasion. Regarding their songs and dance, 9% of Limbus are there who performed both dances and songs and 10% are there who performed dances only and 9.6% Limbus are there who only can sing Limbu song and rest 71% Limbus are there who neither sings and nor dances.

(k) Many Changes have been observed in the Marriages, Funeral, and Festival of Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills. 26.6% of Limbus believe that changes have come in the marriage system of Limbus, 18.2% of Limbus believe that changes have come in the funeral system and 31% Limbus believe that changes have come in their festivals. 24.2% of respondents are there who believe that nothing has been changed in their cultures.

(l) Limbu Development Board is working for the development of Limbus of West Bengal. They have constructed many houses for the Limbus of West Bengal. According to the beneficiary list of the year 2017-18, they have constructed 368 houses and in the year 2018-19, they have constructed 246 houses for the Limbus of West Bengal.

• Health, Hygiene and Indigenous and Ethnomedicinal Treatment of Limbu Tribe of Darjeeling Hills:

(a). Limbus of Darjeeling are very conscious about their health and hygiene. We found that 83.4% of Limbus are conscious of health and hygiene and there are 16.6% of Limbus who are not aware of health and hygiene. In our survey, we did not find any house of Limbus in bad and worst conditions even those Limbus whose financial condition are not good their houses and surrounding are also neat and clean. 98.8% of Limbus of Darjeeling who drinks the boiled water only. 1.2% of Limbus of Darjeeling who drinks water without boiling.

(b) 37.4% of Limbus of Darjeeling have knowledge about malnutrition and they are also aware of the result of malnutrition. But 62.6% of Limbus are there who does not have any knowledge about malnutrition and its effects on their life.

© They have their own cultural and social practices to treat various illnesses. They follow the two types of indigenous treatment. First, they prefer the treatment of Phedangba (religious priest), and secondly the treatment of herbal medicinal plants. 97.6% of respondents preferred their first-hand treatment should be done by their religious priests like *Phedhangba*, *Dhami* or *local priest*, *Mata* and *Bhaun Baje*, etc. After that, if the patient did not recover from illness, then they would take

them for modern treatment. We also found that there are 2.4% of Limbu people do not believe in religious priests like *Phedhangba*, *Dhami* or *local priests*, *Mata* and *Bhaun Baje*, etc. They preferred medical science treatment instead of indigenous treatment.

(d) 88.6% of Limbus of Darjeeling believe in the existence of *Bokshi* (witch) and *Voot-Pret* (Ghost) besides this they also believed that some people are living in this world with malignant sight, which may harm others. This is also known as '*Evil Eye*'. 11.4% of Limbus of Darjeeling are there who do not believe in the existence of Witch (*Bokshi*) they said that being educated we should not believe in all these superstitions.

(e) They used all the medicinal plants to cure all 29 kinds of diseases. In the case of an emergency, they visit allopathic treatment.

(f) Limbu girls are very lucky because they don't have to follow all types of restrictions during their menstruation period. The term '*Menstruation*' in the local language among adolescents is known as '*. Mahinavari*' or '*Sarir maila vaako Cha*'. Generally, they do not visit the religious place and offering prayer but all other restrictions are not applicable to them. But very poor hygienic conditions are maintained during menstruation among adolescent girls of the Limbu tribe. Although they take bath, brush their teeth, comb their hair but in regard to using the material for absorption of menstrual blood, they revealed that an old used cloth was recycled for this purpose. Very few of them use a sanitary napkin during menstruation. 100% Limbus says that they do not have to follow any rituals during the period of menstruation. They live as usual life during menstruation.

(g) Most of the Limbu women prefer to give birth to their child at the hospital instead of home. Thus, the cesarean birth rate (57.4%) is higher than the vaginal birth rate (42.6%).

(h) It is very necessary for the documentation of traditional knowledge in health and medicines. The traditional treatment was based on oral tradition and most of the medicine men do not want to reveal the name of plants that they use for preparing medicine and when they die, he would take the knowledge of medicine. Until and unless this knowledge system is not documented, it is an oral system and in the absence of proper patronage and nonavailability of such medicinal plants or animals, they are likely to be forgotten. 100% Limbus believe that there should be documentation of traditional treatment and medicines and treatment of Limbu

- **Role of Limbu Tribe in Ethnic Movement of Darjeeling Hills:**

(a) Ethnic movement was started in Darjeeling from the British period. In 1907 first time people of Darjeeling had put their demand for separation from West Bengal.

(b) First Hillmen Association had raised the voice of separation, secondly, on 15th February 1924, the Akhil Bhartiya Gorkha League (All India Gorkha League) put demand in the Constitution Hall before the Constituent Assembly for recognition of Gorkhas as a minority community. Randhir Subba from ABGL and Rupnarayan Sinha from Hill Men's Association raised the demand for a separate state within the framework of the Indian Constitution called Uttarakhand Pradesh. Uttarakhand Pradesh comprising Darjeeling District Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Dooars, and Cooch Behar. Thirdly, On April 6, 1947, two Gorkhas, Ganesh Lal Subba the then Secretary of CPI Darjeeling District, and Ratanlal Brahmin the CPI MLA from Darjeeling members of the undivided CPI (Communist Party of India) submitted a memorandum to Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Vice President of the Interim Government and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan the Finance Minister of the interim Government for the creation of *Gorkhasthan* – an independent country comprising of present-day Nepal, Darjeeling District, and Southern Sikkim. Fourthly Subash Ghising and his party Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) raised the demand for the creation of the state of Gorkhaland comprising of the hills of Darjeeling and areas of Dooars and Siliguri Terai. Fifthly, the demand for a separate state within the Indian Union has been started more intensely by the Gorkha leader Mr. Bimal Gurung, and his newly formed party called Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJM). Thus, till date, five parties of Darjeeling hills have put the demand of separation from Bengal yet their demand is not fulfilled.

(c) The Limbus are participating in the ethnic movements due to political compulsions; it seems that the Limbu people are aware of the movement but their participation was less. 7% of Limbus are active members in the Gorkhaland movement and 73.4% of Limbus are passive party members.

(d) All the Limbus believed that there are many causes for the failure of the Gorkhaland movement and 57% of Limbus believed that it was failed because our leaders are not sincere. 29.4% Limbus believed that state government suppressed it by force and it is failed, 7.4% Limbus believed that we the people of Darjeeling are not conscious about the Gorkhaland Movement and highly educated people do not participate in the movement this is the main cause for the failure of the movement. 6.2% respondents think that it was failed because the central government is not supporting Gorkhas.

(e) Regarding the formation of Gorkhaland 17.2% of Limbus believe that in future Gorkhaland state would form and we would have our own state Gorkhaland but 8.6% of Limbus totally disagree with the formation of Gorkhaland state in future and 74.2% of Limbus are there who have no idea about the formation of Gorkhaland.

(f) Limbus of Darjeeling are politically marginalized in the ethnic movement of Darjeeling. A higher proportion 96.4% Limbus believed that Limbus of Darjeeling has been marginalized in politics. According to them during the period of DGHC, there are only one and two Limbus who had given political portfolio but at the time of GTA there are forty-five GTA Sabhasad but we did not find any Limbus as a Sabhasad.

The finding of the research work shall be helpful for the planning and policymakers to understand this community for their development and this work also will be helpful for upcoming scholars who want to know more about the Limbu tribe of Darjeeling hills.

- **Recommendations/Suggestions:**

The phenomenon of changes is an inevitable factor in every human society for existence. Every aspect of society undergoes various changes depending upon time and situation. The Limbu tribal people and their socio-economic conditions, language, and culture are slowly changing in Darjeeling hills. On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are suggested for the betterment and development of the social, economic, cultural, and political status of Limbus of the Darjeeling hills. The suggestions are given below in three different aspects:

- **In the Context of Social Aspect:**

(a) Government and local bodies should conduct the awareness programme among the tribal communities of Darjeeling hills. The contents of the programme should include gender equality, political participation, health education, economic self-sustainability, women's empowerment, human rights, and so on.

(b) Government should provide modern health facilities. All the health care centres should be well equipped with basic health care infrastructure with life-saving medicines.

(c) There should be an awareness programme on children and women's health, hygiene, and malnutrition.

- (d) Majority of the Limbus of Darjeeling lives in the rural areas so the connection of roads and streets should be improved.
- (e) Educated Limbus and NGO should work together for the eradication of the ill belief in witchcraft, ghost, and sorcery from the Limbu society.
- (f) Government should take initiative for the preservation of ethnomedicinal plants used by tribal people. Traditional knowledge systems should be carefully documented for the next generation.
- (g) Local government and NGOs should organize gender orientation training in order to eliminate gender-based discrimination.

- **In the Context of Cultural Aspects:**

- (a) An immediate step should be taken by the All-India Limbu Association with the help of the West Bengal Government for the preservation, promotion, and development of the Limbu language, literature, culture, and tradition.
- (b) As already mentioned, the West Bengal Government had issued a letter to the introduction of Limbu Language at the primary level but due to some political issue it could not be implemented but now again they should continue their demand for implementation.
- © As most of the Limbu children do not understand the Limbu language, so, the curriculum and textbooks for the basic level education should be developed by West Bengal Government in such a way that it should make compulsory to learn the traditional language. In this context, West Bengal Government can take ideas from Sikkim Government who has already started to teach the Limbu language in Sikkim from primary level to PG level.
- (d) A documentation project should be launched to preserve the Limbu language, rituals, Limbu dance, songs, dress, and cultural programme, which will be the biggest treasures for coming generations.
- (e) Local government of Darjeeling hills with the help of State government should organise cultural programme and exhibition of all the communities of Darjeeling hills so that people will get information about the Limbu culture and tradition as well as they also get information of other communities.

- **In Context of Economical Aspects:**

(a) Poverty is one of the dangerous diseases that affect badly the overall development of any country and its people. Thus, it is necessary to conduct an effective programme for the reduction of poverty in rural areas. For this, there is a dire need for great employment opportunities and economic generating programmes.

(b) 31.60% Limbus of the study areas are dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood. They are following the traditional method for cultivation and depend on rain-fed. Thus, the government should take steps to minimize their problem by providing alternative irrigation and a new method of cultivation. They should be provided agricultural implements, better quality seeds, and pesticides. Nowadays, there is a great demand for organic vegetables in the market. Limbu as being the traditional agriculturist they should be encouraged for the development of organic agriculture.

(c) Animal husbandry is another occupation of the Limbus. It is found in our study areas that 70.8% of Limbus rear pigs in their house. In every ritual of Limbus, they need the meat of the pig. Besides the pig, they also rear cows, hens, goats, etc. which would help them for financial support. Thus, they should be provided financial support like a loan with less interest so that they could buy the animals for rearing. Besides that, the government should provide them with some basic training in dairy development work and animal husbandry.

(d) 21.80% Limbus of the study areas are dependent upon tea plantations for their livelihood. Unfortunately, tea garden planters are giving meagre wages which are not sufficient for their daily life so the owner of the tea Estates should increase the wages of the workers as per the minimum wage scheme.

(e) The government should open vocational course institutions for the ward of the tea garden workers to upgrade the skill of the workers.

(f) There should be extensive research work and discussion in order to understand the root cause of problems faced by the workers' community of tea gardens.

(g) Limbu Association must form a trust for the economic development. They should ask some affluent tribals of their society to contribute financially. The total collected cash can be deposited in the bank account or that can also be given to needy as a loan which will fetch huge interest in their account, in this way the trust can perform many social, educational, cultural and religious Programme without collecting donation every time.

(h) Limbu association with the help of the NGOs and Government should organize the Programme which enhances their skill income generation activities, rural skill-based cottage industry development, through local participation.

(i) Tourism is one of the major economic sources of Darjeeling hills, nowadays, *Homestay* instead of the hotel has become very popular among the tourist. During my survey in Bijanbari, we also stayed in *Homestay* and the owner of the *Homestay* belonged to the Limbu community. Like them, many Limbu of Darjeeling hills can open *Homestay* as a source of income.

- **Suggestion for All India Limbu Tribal Association:**

(a) In Tribal Gazettes Notification, the spelling of Limbus has written 'Limbu' in West Bengal and 'Limboo' in Sikkim, which creates misunderstanding to the other communities. This mistake should be rectified.

(b) Silam Sakma is the identification symbol of the Limbu community. Nowadays it has become very popular among the Limbu community. They display it in front of their house which identifies the house of the Limbus. It is also worn by the community people on their left chest during an event.

· But there is no uniformity for the woollen used in Silam Sakma, different-different colours of woollen has been used for the preparation of Silam Sakma. The colour of *Silam Sakma* should be green colour. So, the All-India Limbu Association should strictly take decisions for the uniformity of the colour.

(c) Limbu Association has two types of flags. One flag contains five colours and another one which have three colours. So, Limbu Association must choose only one type of flag.

(d) Limbu tribe have their own traditional dresses for both male and female. Due to the influence of other cultures and modernization, drastic changes have come in their traditional dresses. They should pay attention to the matter of dresses.

(e) Limbu tribe have their own Maangheem. In our survey, we found four Maangheem in our study areas. We found that different -different symbol has been displayed on the top of the Maangheem. It is suggested to them that the same symbol should be used.

(f) Lastly, I would suggest that Limbu intellectuals and educated groups should be always collective, organized, and unitary circles to raise and promote their social, educational, cultural, and economic status.

To sum up, Limbu culture, language, tradition, and society are a cluster of multiethnic. multi-religion, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural heritage of Darjeeling hills. So, Limbus of Darjeeling always should be aware and active for social, economic, cultural, political, and linguistic upliftment and preservation. On the other side, the Government sector should also act an active role to preserve and develop the Limbu status providing beneficial opportunities.

APPENDIX-A:

Questionnaire

Name of interviewee.....

Household No.....

CHAPTER 2: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF LIMBU COMMUNITY OF DARJEELING HILLS

S.No	Name of the family members	Age	Sex	Educational Status			Occupational status			Marital status		Property			
				Class	Board	Medium	Profession	Govt/ PVT.	Monthly income	Mode of marriage	Religion	Loan	H.Spon.by LDC/other	Asset	Roadside/off
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8	Houses and amenities	Pacca	Electrified		Own Land	Sanitation facility	Yes without tank	Yes with septic tank	Fuel used	Wood	LPG	Drinking water	Tap	Location	Municipality
		Kaccha	Not Electrified		Tea Garden		Attached with House.	Public		Kerosene oil	Cow dung/ coal		Spring/Stream		Panchayat

Religion: H= Hindu, B= Buddhist, C=Christen O=others

Family Pattern: Joint family/ Nuclear Family

Note: Mode of Marriage: A: Arranged (Inter -Limbu) E: Elopement (L with General/Limbu with Caste /Limbu with Other Tribe) R: Re-marriage,

Asset: TV: Television, C: Car B: Bike S: Scooter Com: Computer, mobile phone (number of family members holding mobile)-Signature of interviewee.....

CHAPTER-3

THE CULTURAL CHANGES OF THE LIMBU TRIBAL COMMUNITY OF DARJEELING HILLS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

1. Can you speak the Limbu language?
(a) Yes, I can (b) No I can't (c) I can understand but can't reply
2. Can you read (Limbu language) in Sirijunga scripts?
(a) Yes (b) No
3. Can you write (Limbu language) in Sirijunga scripts?
(a) Yes (b) No
4. In which language do you talk within family?
(a) Limbu (b) Nepali (C)English (d) Hindi
5. In which language do you talk with others (Neighbour)?
(a) Nepali (b) Limbu (c) English (d) Hindi
6. What are the reasons of declining conditions of the Limbu language in the Darjeeling hills?
(a) Education and Medium of Instructions
(b) Parents never talked in Limbu language
(c) Language of the Neighbours and society
(d) Media and Culture of the society
7. In which language do you watch T.V?
(a) Hindi (b) Nepali (C) English (d) Bengali
8. Do you want the Limbu Language to be taught in school?
(a) Yes (b) No
9. Have you noticed any changes in the following cultural aspects of your community?
(a)Marriage (b) funeral (c) festival (d) others please clarify
10. Do you follow your old traditions at home?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) sometime
11. Do you know about your own tribal religion?
(a) Yes (b) No
12. Do you have your own tribal religious god/goddess?
(a) Yes (b) No
13. Do you have your own tribal religious priest?

(a) Yes (b) No

14. Do you have your own tribal temple?

(a) Yes (b) No

15. Do you worship Nature? Such as

(a) Sun and Moon (b) Forest and Rivers (C) Mountains and Hills (d) Never

16. Do you worship Mt. Kanchanjunza?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes then why and how do you worship?

17. Do you worship animal?

(a) Cow (b) Snake (c) Crow (d) any other

18. Do you keep bow and arrow at your home?

(a) Yes (b) No

19. Do you celebrate other's religious festival?

(a) Dashain (b) Tihar (c) Raksha Bandhan (d) Mage Sankranti (e) any other

20. Do you and your family members celebrate Hindu's Puja?

(a) Saraswat puja (b) Laxmi puja (c) Vishwakarma puja

21. Have you attended any religious teaching and preaching programme?

(a) Sai Baba (b) Satpalji Maharaj (C) Christian (d) others

22. Have you changed your religion?

(a) Yes (b) No

23. Which religion have you adopted?

(a) Christian (b) Hindu (c) Sikhism (d) Jainism (e) Other

24. Do you and your family members know the cultural dance and song of your community?

(a) Dance and Songs (b) Songs only (c) dance only (d) None

25. Do you wear your traditional cultural dress?

(a) Everyday (b) occasionally (c) cultural programme (d) Festivals

26. Do you have any organisation to preserve and promote your culture? If yes name them

(a) Yes (b) No

27. Do you know about Development Board?

(a) Yes (b) No

28. Did you get other benefits from Limbu Development Board?

(a) Yes (b) No

29. How do you socialize with other communities (Non-Tribal)?

(a) Attending ceremonies/marriages (b) At work place (c) Through Language (d) All

30. Would you like your children and descendants to preserve and follow the religion- culture and traditions of your tribe?

(a) Yes (b) No (be modern in every aspect) (c) Be modern as well as preserve the culture

31. Do you find any positive and negative impact of modern technology on the youth of Limbu culture? If you get any impact then mention?

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32. Do you think that the Limbu culture is also rapidly changing? If yes then give the reasons and point out that which culture is changing.

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33. Do you find any impact of Government policies on Limbu culture? Explain.

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CHAPTER 4

HEALTH, HYGIENE, INDIGENIOUS AND ETHNOMEDICINAL TREATMENT OF LIMBU TRIBE OF DARJEELING HILLS:

1. Do you find your local environment neat and clean?

(a) Good (b) Satisfactory (c) Bad (d) Worst

2. Do you have any sense of health and hygiene?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes then how do you maintain?

3. Do you take bath?

(a) Daily (b) Once in a week (c) Once in a month (d) Once in a year

4. Do you have sanitation facilities?

(a) Yes (b) No

5. If yes then

(a) Open Space (b) Public toilet (c) Private toilet (d) Others

6. What form of drinking water are you using?

(a) Boiled water (b) Filtered water (c) RO treated water (d) Stream

7. Do you eat nutrients diet?

(a) Yes (b) No

8. Do you wash your hands before having food?

(a) Always (b) Frequently (c) Sometimes (d) Never

9. Do you have any idea about Ayurvedic Treatment?

(a) Yes (b) No

10. Do you brush your teeth?

(a) Twice in a day (b) Once in a day (c) Weekly (d) Never

11. Do you know about malnutrition?

(a) Yes (b) No

12. Do you use herbal medicine at home?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes then can you tell me the name of herbal plant which you use for different diseases?

13. When you became ill what was the first thing you did to cure yourself?

(a) Meet the religious priest (b) have allopathic medicine

14. What type of the treatment did you prefer?

(a) Treatment by religious priest (like, Phedangma, Dhami, Mata, Bahun Baje etc.)

(b) Treatment by pahare dabai (Indigenous Herbal Treatment)

(c) Treatment by medical science/doctor

15. Do you have cultural and religious practices to treat various illnesses?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes then how many types of treatment are there?

(A) One (b) two (c) three (d) more than three

16. In your community medicine man and religious priest are same?

(A) Yes (b) No

If no then what is the difference in their treatment?

17. Are religious priests inherit from family?

(A) Yes (b) No

18. Do you think that religious priests are gift from God?

(A) Yes (b) No

19. Do you think that traditional treatment, people take training from specialist and others?

(A) Yes (b) No

20. Do you believe in witch (Bokshi)?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes then how do you recognize them?

21. Do you believe in Ghost/vampire?

(a) Yes (b) No

22. Do you have primary health sub-Centre at your locality?

(a) Yes (b) No

If yes then how far is it from your house?

23. How many members of the family have received the traditional medicine system?

24. Do your family use separate cooking utensils and sleeping material during the menstruation of the daughter and wife? Do your family keep them in a separate room?

(a) Yes (b) No

25. Do you take your female members to hospital for delivery?

(a) Yes (b) No

26. Is there any arrangement of vehicle for admission of pregnant mothers at hospital or health sub-Centre?

(a) Yes (b) No

27. Where did your son/daughter get birth?

(a) Home (b) Govt. Hospital (c) Nursing home

28. Was your son or daughter birth normal or Caesarean?

(a) Normal (b) Caesarean

29. Who helped during the delivery at home?

(a) Mother (b) Grandmother (c) Local dhai /Aaya (d) Other

30. Have you heard about the awareness of maternal health policies funded by the state and central governments like ASHA and ANM?

(a)Yes (b) No

If yes then how does it work?

31. Have you heard about Unani treatment?

(a)Yes (b) No

32. Have you ever documented your tribal medicinal practices?

(a)Yes (b) No

If yes then how did you document it?

CHAPTER-5

ROLE OF LIMBU TRIBE IN ETHNIC MOVEMENT OF DARJEELING HILLS

1. Are you aware of the ethnic movement for Gorkhaland State?
(a) Yes, I am aware (b) No am not aware (c) Not fully aware
2. How do you support the Gorkhaland Movement?
(a) Active Party Member (b) Passive Party Member (c) Spectators (d) Apolitical
3. What type of movement do you believe to achieve Gorkhaland?
(a) Non-Violence Based (b) Violent (Arm Struggle) (c) Democratic (d) All
4. Have you casted your vote?
(a) Once (b) Twice (c) Thrice (d) More than thrice
5. What do you see to cast your vote?
(a) Issues of Election (b) Personality & Leadership (c) Caste of a Candidate (d) Religion of a Candidate (e) Party Ideology
6. While voting whose opinion you keep in mind?
(a) Parents (b) Husband/Wife (c) Leader (d) Self -Conscience
7. Do you belong to any political party?
(a) Yes (b) No
If yes then mention the name-----
8. If your leader changes the political party and joins the other, will you also do the same?
(a) Yes (b) No
9. Have you ever attended any political meeting?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometime (d) Regular
10. Have you been polling agent or both level workers for any candidate?
(a) Yes (b) No
11. Have you ever participated in any protest march?
(a) Yes (b) No
12. Is there any Limbu tribe in your locality who is representing in Panchayat, Municipality, GTA, MLA, MP

(a) Yes (b) No
If yes then mention the name and post-----

13. Do you see any Limbu women leaders in your community?

(a)Yes (b) No

If yes then mention the name and post-----

14. Do you know any Limbu tribal martyrs during Gorkhaland Movement?

(a)Yes (b) No

If yes then mention-----

15. Do you have any member in your family who became martyr during the agitation?

(a)Yes (b) No

If yes then mention-----

16. Have you ever faced any police case during the Gorkhaland Movement?

(a)Yes (b) No

17. Who is your favourite Gorkhaland Movement leader at present?

(a) Bimal Gurung (b) Man Ghising (c) Binay Tamang (d) R B Rai (E) None of them

18. What are the causes of failure of Gorkhaland Movement?

(a) Central Govt is not sincere towards Gorkhas

(b) State Government suppressed it by police force

(c) Leaders are not sincere

(d) Public is not conscious

19. Do you enjoy your rights to freedom of expression to demand the separate state?

(a) Yes (b) No

20. Have your family faced any police atrocities?

(a) Yes (b) No

21. Do you believe that Gorkhaland state will be formed by the central govt in future?

(a) Yes (b) No

22. Do you think that Limbu community is politically marginalised?

(a) Yes (b) No

23. Are you aware about NRC/CAA/NPR/ Inner Line Permit?

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23. What is your opinion regarding Gorkhaland Movement?

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Appendix-B: Photo Gallery



Samyanfung (Circular disc of gold)

Sesephung (Forehead piece with the coral moon)

Nessey (Gold earring)

Pongwari or Kantha (Golden beads and red felt)

Hukpangi (It is a silver bangle)

Namloyee or Yogakpa (Silver Necklace)

Limbu Woman with Traditional Ornaments



Limbu Woman in Cultural Dress called "Mekhli



Limbu Male Wearing Traditional Dress



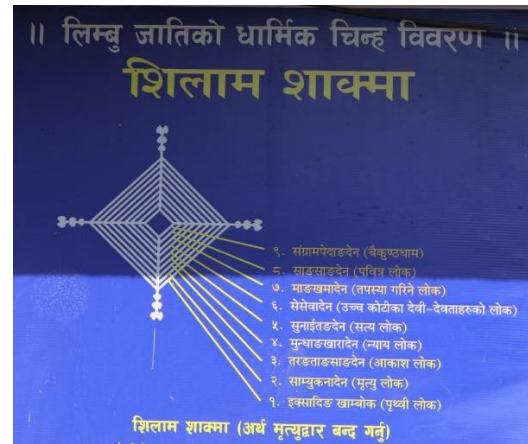
Research Scholar with Phedangba



Tong Sing



Mangheem



Silam Sakma



Chyabrunge Dance



Phedangba Performing Tong Sing



Interview in Sumbuk



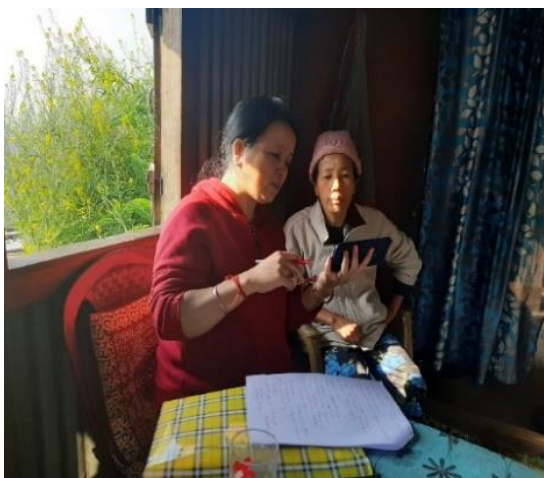
Interview in Bijanbari



Interview in Sumbuk



Interview with The President,
Bharatiya Limbu Mahasangh (Sonada, Bacchabri)



Interview in Lamagaon



Interview in Bunkulung

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