

DEVELOPMENT IN PERIPHERAL REGION: THE CASE OF DARJEELING IN WEST BENGAL

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled submitted by me in partial fulfillment for the requirement for the award of degree of Masters in Philosophy from Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree in this university or any other

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

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Abbreviation

DGHC – Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council

GJMM – Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha

GNLF – Gorkha National Liberation Front

GTA – Gorkha Territorial Administration

HADP – Hill Area Development Programme

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Development in the peripheral areas of the country has been much neglected for various reasons besides remote geography. It has been a victim of state and administrative neglect as this study is likely to establish. The periphery is discussed in relation to the mainland areas usually represented by headquarters of central and state government. There are wide differences in the services offered from infrastructure, health, sanitation to education facilities. The lack of production bases or mechanism to sustain it further adds to sustenance of the peripheral development. The core may be dependent upon the periphery for its resources on the other hand the peripheral regions would also be depended on the mainland for aids or grants inspite of its rich resources. In India it the tribal areas that constitute the peripheral regions of the country. There are one or more backward districts in all states except for Delhi and Goa that was reported to have no backward district Rashtriya Sham Vikas Yojana.¹

The study selects Darjeeling. as the region to understand administrative and developmental challenges of being located in a periphery. The district constitutes of four subdivisions Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri and shares borders with Nepal in West, Bhutan in the East and Bangladesh in the South. Darjeeling though to a certain extent has been able to take advantage of Siliguri as a commercial centre it has still lagged behind in terms of infrastructure and planning. Siliguri marks the hub of commercial activity in th region and also is a major transit point for all goods to be supplied as well as brought down from the hill subdistricts. Rich in Cinchona, tea, forest products and scenic beauty that creates immense potential for tourism in the hill subdistricts. Despite this development still seems to have eluded the hill region of Darjeeling. Political stability often is considered as a marker of a state supportive development. But this has proved to be false in state of West Bengal when Darjeeling is considered as a case.

¹ Rashtriya Sham Vikas Yojana was drawn up during the tenth five year plan that identified 100 backward districts in the country with a special component for Bihar and Kalahandi- Bolangir- Koraput region of Orissa.

There has been a looming political and deepening economic crisis in the district for quite some time now. A notable example in this direction is the demand for statehood² of the 1980's led by Gorkha National Liberation Front (under Subhash Ghising) that culminated into the establishment of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. The failure of this approach aroused another wave of statehood demand in 2006 this time led by Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (under Bimal Gurung) resulted in Gorkha Territorial Council. How far the Council will be successful, only time can tell. The dissertation commences with an introductory note on the issue at hand at the macro level finally narrowing on to the issue at micro level. The following chapters deal with theoretical perspective on underdevelopment, an evaluation of how underdevelopment of the Darjeeling region was sustained noting example of DGHC. The fourth chapter deals with a statistical evidence of the underdevelopment of the region, finally concluding with a prescriptive note.

1.1 Disparity in India

In the immediate period following post independence saw adoption of a socialist policy and complete state control of the economy. Although it did create a strong industrial but was not able to sustain the success for long. The liberalization, privatization and globalization policy of the government brought no respite with income and inequality gaps further widening. The tribal regions being the most neglected in this predatory path of development adopted by the government. Even after sixty years of Independence infant mortality rate is alarmingly at 47.57 per thousand live births (CIA World Fact Book, 2011). Around 35% of the population lives in slum areas (Urban Population Development and the Environment 2007, UN). 20% of the total population is undernourished while 46% of under five children are under weight (World Population Bureau Data Sheet, 2007). The countries peripheries which mostly constitute the tribal regions of the countries are worst off in terms of development. More than 70% of the population is concentrated in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Northeastern states of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs).

² There have been separatist demands by the residents of hill districts of Darjeeling to carve out a separate state out of West Bengal comprising of the three hill districts as well as Siliguri. The demand has not been fulfilled. A separate arrangement in the form of Gorkha Territorial Autonomous Council in taking shape after the failure of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council.

1.2 Disparity in West Bengal

West Bengal which was hailed as the state with success in land reforms policies has been suffering from this peripheral development of areas such as Purulia, Murshidabad, Birbhum and North Bengal Region consisting of Darjeeling, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakhsin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Koch Bihar. All districts are designated low ranks in the Human Development index. However Darjeeling district has been designated fourth on the HDI among all states.

West Bengal 2004 Human Development Report clearly states that human development is highest in greater Kolkatta and diminishes towards the peripheral regions. Backward Region Grants Fund report³ states that these regions are predominantly occupied by socially and economically weaker sections of society particularly the SC, ST and minorities. Darjeeling is treated as neither deficit in natural nor human resource. Despite a fourth rank on the HDI it still lags behind in terms service delivery and good governance. According to the census of India 2001, Darjeeling has a growth rate of 2.4% which is third of the highest after districts Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda which have 2.9 % and 2.5% respectively. Growing population need implies greater demand for services but unfortunately this has not kept in pace. In terms of life expectancy West Bengal fairs quite well above the national average with Darjeeling fairs even better than the state⁴. In terms of sex ratio Darjeeling (with sex ratio 971 (2011 census report)). Even in terms of Gender Development Index Darjeeling ranks second among all districts of West Bengal according to the West Bengal Human Development Report.

1.3 Darjeeling's economic potential

In addition to this Darjeeling has immense trade potential and also has a strategic importance as it shares borders with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and China. Cross border trade among could at

³ Report on *Development Initiative in the backward identified villages of West Bengal*.

⁴ Life expectancy for West Bengal is 69 for female and 65 for males. Life expectancy for Darjeeling district is 71 for females and 67 for males.

Phulbari, Phuntsoling, Jelep-la and Pani Tanki could bring in lot of revenue. Tea, Cinchona plantations and floriculture could further have immense potential of being traded particularly to the east and south east Asian countries. Although it is a tourist destination, its potential has not been harnessed enough. The Sindrabong power house the first hydel dam (1897) lies in ruins, if maintained has potential of becoming a world heritage site along with Darjeeling's toy train. Furthermore, the region has immense hydropower generation potential due to several rivers passing through it.

1.3.1 Untapped potential and underdevelopment

The West Bengal HDI report also clearly spells out Darjeeling having the second highest district per capita income. Despite this why has service delivery, infrastructure, higher education, employment issue a cause of concern? Why have there been two major political upheavals, one in 1988 and other in 2006 for a separate statehood?

Such inadequacy has been felt by people of Darjeeling which has manifested in the past in the form of violent separatist movements for statehood. Gorkhaland movement of the 80's culminated into providing autonomy in the form of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill council in 1988. It was to be regarded as a step towards realization of development in the hills only to realize later that even after twenty years of its existence the DGHC was unable to bring about desired results.

In many instances autonomy has become a policy measure to deal with situations of secession and separatism where lack of development is spelt out as the primary reason behind the cause. It is seen as a mechanism, a form of decentralization that will initiate the development process. However it needs to be noted that if state legitimacy and trust is discounted with no sufficient way for people to express their demands, the relationship between the state and its regions deteriorates. Rather than mitigating problems arising due to lack of development it further perpetuates the status quo. The relationship between the state of West Bengal and Darjeeling has been neglected. The short term view of development as seen in the case of handling of the Gorkhaland issue in the 80's to constituting of the DGHC that lies defunct now speaks volumes on this issue. The DGHC accord itself was fraught with discrepancies with no mention

whatsoever of the key revenue sectors of the hills that included timber, forest and tea⁵. It must also be noted that DGHC did not have a constitutional status and was not recognized neither under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution.

DK Sarker and D. Bhaumik (2000) with the aid of statistical data point out to this case. Since its existence in 1988, no audits were conducted which led to blatant embezzlement of funds meant for development purpose. Moreover the flow of funds for itself unstable. An example of this is the central assistance for tourism which was nil between 1988-1991, funds were only available from 1991(ibid). From funds to provisions relating to structure, powers and functions of DGHC seemed to be under the control of the state government. The DGHC bears similarity to the model of local autonomy explained by Dillon (1989)⁶ whereby the local government has powers granted by the state government. Their powers are limited in two ways first they act according to the powers given by state government of which the rules and regulation is set by the state legislature and secondly the penalty for non obedience. (Clark.G, 1984:10).

1.3.2 Economic and infrastructural areas of concern

The infrastructure facility is another major cause of concern in the hills sub districts of Darjeeling. In 2001 the official number of villages that were receiving electricity stood at three hundred eighty one and for agricultural use sixty out of a total of seven hundred and eight villages of which six hundred and eight are inhabited. The areas under the DGHC had immense potential of creating hydroelectricity (set up in 1897) the first of its kind in Asia but today it remains neglected under the West Bengal State Electricity Board⁷. The recent National Hydel Power Project came under immense criticism owing to the danger it poses to ecological surrounding as well as displacement of inhabitants. Above all there is no mention of power sharing once the NHPC project on lower Teesta is completed⁸. In 2010 shortage of electricity

⁵ (Part IV of DGHC accord 1988 dealing with the executive powers of the Council).

⁶ John Dillon, Chief Justice of Iowa Supreme Court articulated what has come to be known as Dillon rule. According to him local government are creatures of the state government and can be created and destroyed at will.

⁷ The sindrabong Hydel Power plant was overtaken by West Bengal state Electricity Board in 1979.

⁸ Teesta lower Dam project covers areas of 27th mile, Kalijhora and Mungpho in the hill areas with potential generating capacity of 130 MW, 110 MW and 340 MW. Chettri. V, *Tatkal Water for Darjeeling Residents*, Telegraph, 2rd January 2009.

was seen in the form nonpayment of bills as ordered by Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. As a response the power ministry threatened to cutoff power supply to the hills. It seemed that in the tussle between the state government and GJMM it was the general public who suffered the most.

Sanitation is a state subject but the centre also aids through the National sanitation programme. In Darjeeling which is known for its scenic beauty severe congestion, water woes and pitiable waste disposal dispel this mirage. In Darjeeling the sanitation facility is very old (constructed in 1935). Maintenance of drainage pipes and public toilets, overburdened waste disposable sites and lack of sweepers has made the situation worse.

The infrastructure and key sectors lay in slumber. Major plantation industry of Darjeeling includes tea and plantation. The tea industry flourished post its introduction by doctor Campbell in 1850's (the then superintendent under the British ruled India). The setting up of tea board (by the tea act of 1953) did not mark any change in the plight of the workers. According to the agreement between the private planters, government of West Bengal and few representatives of the workers in 2005, Rs. 48.40 was decided upon for eight hours of labor. Tea gardens labourers receive a sum of Rs. 66.70, Rs. 74.62 and Rs. 85 in Kerala, Tamil and Sikkim. Added to this woe is the nonpayment of hill compensatory allowances that is available to the private, government and semi government employees. (Bomjan 2008:13). Poor maintenance tea gardens, Lack of transparency and accountability anti worker legislations all point towards neglect of workers and tea gardens.

Cinchona plantations are no better. It is spread over an area of 26000 acre in demand for its medicinal properties. Little has been done to sustain this vital source of revenue which is running into huge losses almost Rs.24crores annually. Instead of revitalizing the ailing industry that could prove to be a major source of revenue and employment to the local people, in 2001 proposals were made to divert the area under cinchona leaving it for area under bamboo, rubber and orange plantation. It was only in 2001 that the seasonal workers of the Cinchona plantation regularized by the West Bengal government.⁹

⁹ Seasonal Labourers working for 15 days a month have been regularized. Only 200 regularized out of 600 (from the speech of Gyan Chandra

Scenic beauty of Darjeeling has great potential to create a boom in the tourism sector. Although it has been regarded as a major hill station destination for tourists. It still has immense untapped potential that has not been explored. The financial aid as mentioned above has been intermittent and not uniform. The toy train in Darjeeling that comes under World heritage site lies uncared for. Tanka Bahadur Subba (2009) laments on the isolation of hill people from the revenue earned from the tourism sector. Most of them are engaged in menial jobs while the lion share of profit goes to the private companies or to the West Bengal Tourism Corporation which makes an annual profit of thirty six crores from Darjeeling.

One of the most important types of infrastructure is roads and communication that enables connectivity and smooth flow of goods and services essential for a healthy economy. In this sector again Darjeeling area is thoroughly neglected by West Bengal Government and Darjeeling Gorkha Hill council. In Darjeeling except the hill cart road and Lebong cart, all roads belong to the Municipality. Road density in Darjeeling is approximately 9/km². Even in Kalimpong and Kurseong the state of roads is miserable with numerous potholes and lack of proper roads particularly in rural areas making accessibility difficult. Traffic jams in Darjeeling town area and Kalimpong bazaar is a daily sight. Problem of infringement of PWD roads is ubiquitous, Kalimpong motor stand area, Reshe road in Kalimpong, Darjeeling motor stand are a few examples. In 2008 Kalimpong Municipality proposed to set up dividers on the main road from Thandara to Dumber Chowk as well as to renovate Kalimpong motor stand; however this plan has still not materialized. (Road to Darjeeling in poor condition, Statesman 19th August, 2011). During monsoons the problem becomes worse with landslides. The roads connecting Darjeeling and Kurseong are particularly highly prone to landslides. From among 640 inhabited villages only 385 can be accessed by paved roads and 552 by metal roads.

Municipal Roads in Darjeeling

	Type of Roads	No.	Length (KM)
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1	Motorable Bituminous Road	40	50
2	Non-motorable Bituminous Road	61	14.5
3	Water Bound Macadam Roads	21	9.50
4	Concrete Stepped Roads	25	2.50
5	Kutchia Roads	10	13.50

Source: Municipality Office, Darjeeling, 2002, (Khawas.V, Urban Management in Darjeeling Himalya, Mountain Forum Online Document, 2003)

These indicators from socioeconomic to infrastructural provisions give an overarching view of the status of affairs during the DGHC tenure. It highlights the loopholes in the DGHC accord as well as the neglect of West Bengal government towards the apathy of the hills. The utter neglect of the sources of income such as tea, cinchona plantation, tourism. The plight of tea laborers and deteriorating quality of higher education are quite striking. Both DGHC and West Bengal government seem to have turned a blind eye on the plight of the hill residents which has resulted in the influx of hill people towards the plains as well as the metropolitan city in search of employment and better education.

1.4 Social sector

Higher education is another sector that needs to be probed. Darjeeling hill districts attract students from all parts of the country. However higher education facilities in Darjeeling are bare minimum even the schools maintained by DGHC today lay in ruins. Most schools and colleges were built during the British times and no significant contribution has been made by the west Bengal government. Apart from this the management in colleges and schools is understaffed in proportion to the students. Rama Shiksha Parishad in Darjeeling were highly overcrowded with more than fifty students in a class, Mirik secondary school did not have science and Commerce stream, Kalimpong government schools had only seven teachers as against the requisite number

of twenty seven ¹⁰. It is important to note that although the literacy rate of Darjeeling district is higher than that of the state average (71.1% according to 2001 census). There is a gap in terms of literacy rate among the Schedule caste (SC) and Schedule tribe (ST) population that constitute 12.69 % and 16.09% of the population of Darjeeling. The enrollment rate in primary schools is high however at the same time the dropouts ratio was also high around 27.34% (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan data 2006). Also the number of primary schools and middle schools in Darjeeling district is the lowest compared to all other districts of West Bengal (Directorate of Census Operation West Bengal). Among all universities North Bengal University receives the least share of non plan expenditures (Annual report of the University Grants commission 2001-02).

In terms of health Darjeeling stands 4th on the HDI index according to the West Bengal Human Development report 2004. There are 395 villages having medical facilities, twenty seven health centres which is highly inadequate considering the growth rate of population as well as accessibility problem which is a major deterrent. Despite a higher sex ratio (943), the female infant mortality rate is higher than that of male infant mortality rate which is forty three and thirty nine respectively and is higher than the state female infant mortality rate of thirty four (Census 2001).

In the case of income and employment Darjeeling is placed second rank in terms of per capita income Rs. 185298.18 but at the same time rural poverty ratio being 19.66% and urban poverty ratio being 15.21% . It also becomes interesting to note that percentage of workers engaged in non agricultural activities is high. However the urban work participation rate for male workers has increased by only 0.3% since 1991. Whereas marginal work participation rate has increased by 2.2 % . The disparity in work participation between males and females¹¹ is also very high.

Understanding of this political economy of underdevelopment is not complete without discussing the nature of relationship between the state and Darjeeling district. As mentioned above there has been a complete lack of effort from the state government towards the underdevelopment of the region. Instead of resolving issues, their neglect and the maintenance of status quo has further perpetuated the problem. There is a complete lack of legitimacy which is evident from the

¹⁰ Excerpts from meeting held in 2009 of Gorkha Janmukti Vidhyarthi Morcha, Janmukti Secondary Teachers Association and Gorkha Primary Teachers Association.

¹¹ According to Census 2001 Work participation rate of females is only 10.3%

struggles arising for separate state. The recent demand for statehood resulted in the dissolution of DGHC and rise of GTA (Gorkha Territorial Autonomous Council). The local politics itself is such that instead of placing development agenda on the table has merely been puppet in the hands of West Bengal government. The lack of progress during the DGHC tenure, unaccountability of funds, lack of audit during its existence all point towards mere eyewash in the name of progress. Even during the recent struggle that had stirred up the demand for statehood, consensus seemed to be a far cry. Internal bickering among members of the GNLF (Gorkha National Liberation Front) had led to birth of separate faction of GJMM (Gorkha Janmukti Morcha) headed by Bimal Gurung who initially belonged to GNLF under Subhash Ghising. There hasn't been a collective mobilization with opposition to inclusion of Dooars and several Bengali groups in the Siliguri sub district of Darjeeling. The recent broad day light murder of ABGL (Akhil Bharti Gorkha League) president, Madan Tamang who was considered as an opposition party in the hills further reiterates this proposition.

The institutions of governance are themselves weak. The policies of development were not able to create an environment of participation. The DGHC is a notable example in this direction where key sectors like forest and tea were lacking from the jurisdiction of the DGHC. DGHC came into being with the signing of DGHC accord between GNLF, State government of West Bengal and Central government. It marked an approach towards development in the hill region. However this autonomous body was failed to meet the purpose for which it was instituted. The intermittent funds, lack of accountability and failure to conduct audit.

1.5 Planning for the Region

There is no mechanism of participation of people in the planning process. There is a complete top down approach. The Uttarbanga Unnayan Parishad was established in 2001. All MPs, MLAs, sabhadhipatis and DMs of the six districts¹² are members of the council. It is interesting to note that no elections to panchayats were held there was no grass root level representation from Darjeeling at it was represented by District Magistrate. At the same time Siliguri being a sub district of Darjeeling has a separate Zilla parishad or Siliguri Makhuma Parishad which is represented here. Among all districts the funds released to Darjeeling is the least 2680.01 lakhs

¹² The six district covered are Darjeeling, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, UttarDinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda.

although 82.39% of the funds were utilized which is one the highest (West Bengal Plan Documents 2008-09). Most of the development work being carried out in Siliguri under the Rural Infrastructural Development Fund scheme 2009.¹³

This practice of ‘internal colonialism’ (Hetcher 1975) has therefore been seen in the form of the lack development policies to unleash productive capabilities of the hill region of Darjeeling. This has been sustained by lack of participative planning, the inability of local politics that has created trust deficit between state and people. The setting up of participatory institutions may not be sufficient but its responsiveness and whether they are able to create spaces for political representation among the marginalized where they can make claims, compete and arouse political learning among them.

In such a scenario it becomes essential to probe the nature latent processes that cause a state of neglect and what they may manifest into. There are several explanations to prove the neglect however the most prominent ones calls for probing into the politics of development that entails the relation of between state and the region in handling issues of development and the capacity of local politics not excluding the outcome of this process. However, it must be noted that participatory planning through institutional means is a necessary but not a sufficient condition in itself to ensure development. Development depends not only on the nature of the institutional working, responsive and the behavior of the actors involved but also whether they create spaces for political representation among the marginalized where they can make claims and competition and ‘political learning’ among them.

Conclusion

The research would look into Darjeeling interms of stable political unrepresentation’ in the State of West Bengal. It would intend to explore the reasons behind the peripheral nature of Darjeeling district in comparision to Siliguri subdistrict and its manifestation in the form of lack of participatory planning and an unaccountable institution of governance. In addition, role of Central and the state to prevent such neglect would also be explored. These objectives of study would be achieved by segregating the study into certain interrogative stratgedgies.

¹³ For further details- <http://wbplan.gov.in/docs/AnnualReport200809/State%20Scheme.pdf>

The nature of development during DGHC tenure till the time it became defunct and the extent to which the institutional structuring of DGHC played a role in perpetuation of underdevelopment in the region. The mechanism that sustain the core and periphery relation that perpetuates underdevelopment in Darjeeling. The political economy of underdevelopment where the Union government, State government and local politics play a central role.

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Methodology

Statement of Problem

Darjeeling though has been able to take advantage of Siliguri as commercial centre has still lagged behind in terms of infrastructure and planning.

The process of interaction between the state and the hill region has been of neglect. This is because of the state's response in handling issues of development has been quick fix in nature without a long term plan. From the handling of the 1980s crisis to the sector wise development, there has been a huge gap in the promises and the implementation on field.

The local politics itself has been incapable of articulating the development agenda and fraught with internal bickering that in turn has weakened governance in the region.

The institutions of governance are themselves weak. In a way it has developed into a periphery where the core lies in Siliguri. This practice of internal colonialism has therefore been sustained through lack of participative planning that has been seen in the case of DGHC experiment, that has in turn created obstacle in the path of people centered development which would have enabled the region to create a self sustainable economy.

- To study the neglect of Darjeeling in terms of 'stable political unrepresentation' in the state of West Bengal
- To explore the ways in which neglect of Darjeeling's hill sub districts has taken place.

Research Design:

The research would be empirical and explanatory in nature with aim of exploring uneven development and non participative planning practices

Rationale

Development has been uneven in the larger part of the world as much as it has been in India. The Centre has been planning for the whole of India with some basic stereotyping of ideas about the periphery as an inert, non-participative and secessionist rim of the country which can be kept disciplined through some strong measures in law and larger autonomy to law implementing agencies. This has developed a vicious cycle of underdevelopment through a chain of measures such as increased central controls, displaced development programmes, non-participative communities and weak markets. The entrepreneurial skill and participatory enthusiasm has got diverted towards various political movements which oppose central control through top-down planning. Some groups have gone to the extent of secessionism which has again lent a cue to the Central government to reduce the freedom of periphery society to participate in the developmental process. *“When citizens feel alienated from the general will or from the process by the process from which the general will is created voting on issues is merely a mechanism for decision making that can turn out to be oppressive and undemocratic.”* (Robert Post 2006)¹⁴. Darjeeling presents an appropriate case for studying reasons of neglect and also an understanding about the discouraged and diverted energy of local people from becoming partners in progress to an alienated region of the state.

¹⁴ Post, Robert (2006), Democracy and Equality, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 603, Law, Society, and Democracy: Comparative Perspectives, pp. 24-36

Universe:

Case study of Darjeeling district would be undertaken that comprises of Kurseong Kalimpong, Darjeeling Sadar and Siliguri as its sub-districts.

Population under focus:

It will be mainly the Bhutias, Lepchas, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Manger, Sunwa, Gurung, Newar and other tribal and ethnic communities residing in the study area. .

Procedure of Data Collection

Secondary sources of data have been utilized including newspapers both local and national, census data and state financial reports.

Problems faced during research:

The main problem faced during research was the inability to acquire primary data due to the unsupportive nature of the bureaucrats and officials of the hills.

Chapter 2

Peripheral Development: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.

2.1 Study under focus:

Darjeeling is constituted of four sub divisions Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri and shares borders with Nepal in the West, Bhutan in the East and Bangladesh in the South. Darjeeling though has been able to take advantage of Siliguri as commercial centre has still lagged behind in terms of infrastructure and planning.

The assimilative development policy through the constitution of DGHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) has had a reverse effect. The DGHC during its twenty years of functioning was unable to provide even basic necessities like water, proper roads and electricity. The limited power that the council possessed was centralized in the hands of Subhash Ghising (then councilor of DGHC). Currently the state government initiative of North Bengal council does not have direct representation of any one from the grass root institutions as they lie defunct with no new election held till date. This reveals the neglect of the hill regions in comparison to the plain regions. In a way it has developed into a periphery where the core lies in Siliguri. This practice of internal colonialism² has therefore been sustained through lack of participative planning that has been seen in the case of DGHC experiment, that has in turn created obstacle in the path of people centered development which would have enabled the region to create a self sustainable economy.

Recently the DGHC has been replaced by Gorkhland Territorial administration which is a semi autonomous body constituted in September 2011. This setup will replace DGHC and is an attempt by the Trinamool congress to provide a form of autonomy and voice to the locals in their affairs. Any comment on the success or failure of the setup would be too early since it has recently been established. However what must be looked into is that mere setting up of institutional mechanism is not sufficient. There must be capacity building of the local population

involved. It is essential to probe the past institutional mechanism of in place that is the DGHC and how is the new semi autonomous body different from it. It is also important to note are the capacity building measures in place for the hill areas. Why despite the setting up of DGHC for the past twenty years infrastructural development of the hills is in a dismal situation? Why despite a high per capita income, a good HDI record in literacy and health, political instability in the form of statehood demands recur in the hills time and again? Why hasn't adequate attention been paid towards self sustaining economy?

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Development literature since its inception in the 1950's has always been spelt out in terms of economic terminology. It was more to do with economic growth and concerned purely with economic growth rates as the measure. There was increasing concern regarding the third world development which made the modernist theories prescribe 'the catching up' formulae. The modernist theories and the dependency school with its economist point of view dominated much of social research till the 1970's. However today the research on the development is no longer limited to theorizing of problems and its universal generalization. Instead development studies aspires to grow out the economist jargon and has already ventured out into new dimensions of development problems and investigation of a diverse aspects of human life not just economic production and growth. Although still debatable, such research has opened up new direction of research in development studies. The following chapter discusses the various kinds research that has taken place in development as a field of research. It will give a brief introduction of various development theories and the kind of problems that it has dwelt upon. The first section would discuss the development theories including theories of underdevelopment and its critique. The second section elaborate on the internal colonial theory which although a part of underdevelopment approach adds a new dimension of research by emphasizing on social cultural aspects of human life. This approach is particularly highlighted as it would provide the conceptual base for the research on peripheral development of Darjeeling district that is to be undertaken. Last section would talk about the prescriptions on underdevelopment literature that is relevant for the research to be conducted.

2.3 Modernist and underdevelopment theories: Economic view point on development

Rostow with his five stages of development¹⁵ prescribed that the lag between the developed and developing was momentary and would be reduced later. He was of the view that developing economies reflected the past of the developed economic, and that they were passing through stages economic growth that would ultimately lead them to stage of mass consumption. The diffusionist theories had a slightly different picture. For them core is the centre of ideas, capital, technology and innovation, Eventually trickle down effect takes place with increasing urbanization and expansion of market. Role of the government is also highlighted in this process of trickle down of the benefits to the peripheries. The most noted theory of the 1960's and 1970's in this regard was Perroux's growth pole theory. He explained economic growth in terms of interaction between a group of industries which were termed as the propulsive firms or leading sectors of the economy. They would be located in an economic and not geographic space. **(Forbes D.K, 1984)**. Eventually the multiplier effects would reach other areas as well. Boudville attempted a geographical application of this theory to explain regional development. Urban growth strategy was explained as investment in these dynamic sectors concentrated in a place that would account for a more generalized development over a period of time. Gunnar Myrdal elaborating the concept of geographic dualism argues against the convergence thesis between core and peripheral areas. He stresses on factors like labour migration, capital movements, trade that retards development of backward regions and also impacts the growth of the region as a whole. The multiplier accelerator mechanism producing increasing returns in a favoured region would ultimately lead to cumulative movement caused by forces of demand and supply away from spatial equilibrium. This is what he calls the 'backwash effect' that creates development gaps between regions. Hence in order to stimulate spread effects and offset the polarization effects, government policies must be designed in a way as to reduce these interregional differences **(Thirwall.A.P, 2005)**. Applying it to space and location elaborates development in terms of regional development. According to him regional development reflects the change in regional productivity as measured by population, employment, income and manufacture value added. It also includes social development referring to the quality of public health and welfare, environment

¹⁵ First stage is the stage of traditional society where subsistence, barter and agriculture persists. The second stage is marked by transitional stage. Third is the take off stage with industrialization and regional growth. Fourth stage is Drive to maturity. Last is the Stage of High Mass consumption that is characterized by durable consumer goods and expansion of the service sector.

quality and creativity. He makes distinction between the core and periphery, growth centres and hinterland as well as leading and lagging regions. Centre and periphery he states represents regions on a global scale which could be a nation or a group of nation. In the present context it the former would be the north countries and the latter south countries. Growth centre is referred in terms of urban fields while the hinterlands are located outside the urban fields. These are present both in the core and periphery region. The leading and lagging regions represent difference between the advanced and underdeveloped regions at the global as well as regional levels. Highlighting that even the periphery can have few propulsive poles and the hinterlands of the core may also have leading regions. **(ibid: 28)** He further goes on to explain development from above and development from below. Development from above prescribes the trickle down effect from the national, subnational and further down the hierarchy. Hirshman's trickle down, Rotows stages of development, Boudville explanation of regional development belong to this group. The development from below argues that the control of grass root level institutions over their own affairs. Further he prescribes trade, migration of people and investment relationship crucial for regional development.

Forbes has highlighted the non Marxist theories into marginalist approach that emphasizes allocation of resources through the market and uneven development as a transitory phenomena. The second is the institutionalist approach that recognizes spatial inequities and regional imbalance. Third is the diffusionist model that claims spread and trickle down effect emanating from the growth centres. **(ibid: 114-115)**

Neoclassical theories stressed on opening of the economy that would require structural changes in the economy enabling the third world countries to benefit from the comparative advantage of trade.

Opposing this view vehemently was the neomarxist theory of dependency. Prior to them were the classical theories of imperialism outlined by Marx and later Lenin and Luxembour. They emphasized on the transition to capitalism and proletarian revolution that would break the colonial bonds. It failed, however to explain the changes that would take place in these backward economies once this transition process is set in motion. Dependency theory It made an attempt in this regard. It makes a distinction between mere economic growth and economic development. It emphasized that growth alone is not development but it is growth coupled with equity that is

the true measure of development. The concept of underdevelopment can be traced to dependency theory of development that sought to explain underdevelopment as a result of structural inequalities of the periphery perpetuated by the core. It was a theoretical exercise to explain the unevenness and unbalanced development temporally and spatially as a product of capitalist development. This was done through capital accumulation by extracting surplus from the periphery structured in a way so as to inhibit self development efforts. It is in this context that the problem of development in the third world societies that dependency theory developed. It argued against the claim of modernization theories that predict convergence and accuse continuation of feudal institutions and isolation from the developed world as the reason for their backwardness. As opposed to this dependency theorist exclaim that it is not the infact the isolation but the highly unequal relationship with the developed countries that has perpetuated the state of underdevelopment. The birth of dependency can be traced to Raul Prebisch who conducted study of Latin American economy and observed that the disparity between the rich and poor nation which made him question the neoliberal policies. Prebisch critically diagnosed that poor countries were disadvantaged due to dominance of primary commodities in their export that were sold at a high price and finished goods sold by the developed to the developing at a higher price. Hence capital accumulation takes place in the developed world at the cost of developing world. He prescribed import substitution as the way out this vicious cycle of unequal transaction. But this model did not appear viable as primary products were not at times owned by the state.

The argument was furthered by the work of Andre Gunde Frank and Emanuel Wallersteins World system theory. According to TD Santos dependency is a historical condition that shapes the structure of the world economy in such a way that it favours some countries to the detriment of the detriment of other countries. A situation is created where the economy of a country is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which their own is subjected. Dualism is created resulting in existence of core -periphery, dominant -dependent and metropolitans- satellites. Dualism that is characteristic of developing countries in early stages of development could be due “differences in level of technology between different sectors or regions, differences in geographic development and differences in social customs and attitudes between indigenous and imported social system.” **Santos also** talks about different forms of dependency colonial dependency based on trade and exploitation of natural resources. Second a

financial industrial dependence that has shaped the economies of third world according to the needs of the developed nations. Lastly, technological- industrial dependence where “the multinationals investment is geared to the internal markets of developing economies”. (**ibid: 234,252**).

The dependency theorists emphasize on the external factors like the operation of multinational companies, uneven foreign aid, and international commodity markets as the cause of subordination of the backward economies. This relationship is historically shapes. Higher the interaction between the developed and third world economies, higher would be the exploitation and worsening of the third world economy. AG Frank explains in terms of a rigid international division of labour. The dependent states being cheap suppliers but at the same time consumers of the developed manufactured goods. He further explains that the relation between metropolis and satellite is not limited to the only the international level but also penetrate the economic, political and social life of the dependent satellites. Drawing example of colonization of Latin America by Iberian Peninsula, explains that even within Latin America metropolis developed. Wallerstein o the other further adds to the explanation of AG Frank. Relying on Marxists ideas, he explains that the world is a single entity what he terms as a ‘world system’. He rejects the idea of a third world and states a trimodal comprising of core, periphery and semi periphery unlike Frank’s bimodal of the core and periphery. According to him the core is characterized by developed and diversifies economy, is wealthy, militarily powerful and industrialized. It specializes in service, and finance industry; and is relatively independent of external control. Peripheral countries on the other hand least diversified, often target of investment of the core, high percentage of population are poor and uneducated. They are generally controlled by the core or at their own elites. Semi periphery on the other hand are peripheries to the core and core to the peripheries. They are weaker than the core but try to overcome these weaknesses to join the core. Wallerstien emphasizes on the productivity dominance of the core that produce better quality products which ultimately leads to trade dominance (Nelson, Arthur.C,1993). Further makes it clear that the capitalist development causes both development and underdevelopment simultaneously as a related process. Development of the core and underdevelopment of the periphery. He talks creation of ‘semi societies’ that were dependent upon the export of raw materials to the core. The existence of elites in periphery is also mentioned by him as a parasitic group that causes the subordination of satellite to the metropolitan.

One of the major contribution of dependent theorists is the distinction between undevelopment and underdevelopment. Underdevelopment is a situation where resources are exploited but they are used in a way that they benefit the dominant states while the latter suggests the untapped potential of resource. Hence by this they try to point out that the developed countries were never underdeveloped only undeveloped and thus their past does not mirror the present of developing countries. Making this point, Samir Amin in explaining unequal development Explaining dependency in terms of unequal trade he states nine thesis in explaining underdevelopment. He points out difference between transition to peripheral capitalism and transition to central capitalism. First, he points out the lack of industrial production in the peripheries. Secondly he explains the international division of labour that favours the core. Third is the contradictions of unproductive activities that cater to the need of the core. Fourth is the distortions created due to unequal international specialization. Fifth the capital accumulation and transfer of profits to the centre, that he terms as 'leaks'. Sixth, the integration of periphery into the world economy. Seventh, he blames the structural features as causing underdevelopment. Eighth, blocking growth in periphery and not allowing it to create indigenous ability to produce and sustain its economy and development. Lastly the form that periphery will take depends on the nature of their precapitalist formation and the form in which they would be integrated into the world system. Unbalanced development takes place when the centre develops creating more jobs than the craftsmen it ruins on the other hand the periphery develops in a way that both absolute and relative unemployment grow. Dependence of the periphery on the core is due to the fact that it is unable to sustain its development as most of the investments take place in foreign countries.

Tracing the backwardness in terms of historical processes (Ghosh.B.N, 1996) points towards a political economy approach where backwardness is inherited. This backwardness is a combination of worst forms of both feudalism and capitalism that inhibits development in the third world countries. This deprives the backward areas of opportunities to garner 'economic strength' in order to self sustain development. Instead they are imbued into the political, moral and cultural values of the feudal practice.

Underdevelopment theories have been criticized for explaining cause of underdevelopment in purely economic terms. It restricts itself as a counter view of the diffusionist model. They are unable to explain the cause of underdevelopment, and only explain how this underdevelopment

results. Brenner points out that development of underdevelopment is not merely a quantitative process of specialization, trade and expansion of this system that leads to underdevelopment but it also a qualitative process of expansion of relative surplus and innovation in the core that has allowed the core countries to abstract the surplus. It has been accused of being mechanistic and failing to identify the different level of underdevelopment that exists in the world today. It does agree to the fact that industrialization is taking place in the periphery as well however it fails to explain the form of industrialization that is taking place. Amin does make a point when he states the differences in the capitalist development in the periphery and the core but fails to explain the different forms that place fordist and the post fordist methods of production. There is an overemphasis on external factors. It must be noted that internal policies also do play a role in the perpetuation of underdevelopment of the peripheries. Moreover Wallerstien's idea of a single world system seems to negate the existence of state and the sovereignty they exercise (**Leys .Collin, 1996**). He also criticizes underdevelopment theories as being repetitive and stagnant and the cooption of underdevelopment theories by developmentalist allied to international capital.”(**ibid:45**) hence there is a need for critical inquiry into the complex development problems of the third world problems. In addition there must also be a policy implication that offers solutions (may not be immediate) to the burgeoning development gaps between developed and underdeveloped be it at an international, national or sub national level.

2.4 An attempt at new understanding of underdevelopment

There have been attempts to revive this field of research that involves clarification of terminologies as well as birth of new directions of perceiving development. HY Mint tries to distinguish between backwardness and underdevelopment. He uses former interms o people and later interms of resources. He states that both may or may not exist. When they do exist they “mutually aggravate each other in a vicious circle and is dynamic and historical process.” It also must e noted that although underdevelopment of resources may cause backwardness of people but development of resources resulting in increased production may not automatically equal to removal of backwardness of the people. This cold be because people have been unable to or left out of the process of development. He outlines that the problem of the underdeveloped countries or regions may not just be underdeveloped use of resources but also backwardness of the people. He further distinguishes between backward country as an “aggreagate territory or economic unit

while on the other hand backward people is referred to a group confined to certain sectors of the economy.” (ibid:110) backwardness further has two sided to it subjective described as economics of discontent and maladjustments. On the objective side as economics o low per capita productivity and income. However one must not fail to account he backwardness of the people involved. Therefore one must also focus on the inexperiences, oppurtunities, capital supply between the backward and the advanced groups. Also in prescribing increased investments in these sectors not just the amount matters but also the type of investment, distribution of economic activities and economic roles between backward people and others.

2.4.1 Internal colonial approach.

Literature on social structure and change have tried to highlight the cause of ethnic mobilization through the lens of internal colonial approach.th internal colony approach makes an attempt to explain the underdevelopment of the periphery not it terms of any externally induced factor but due to the internal conditions that renders it a periphery. The term first used by Lenin in his empirical investigation of national development. Michael Hetcher uses this approach to explain the ethnic mobilization of the celtic fringe due to their treatment as internal colony by the British national government between 1536 – 1936. The internal colonial model as opposed to the diffusionist model of political development states that the “periphery is dominated by the core politically and exploited materially.” There is wedge created between the advanced core and the backward periphery due to uneven modernization. Policies becomes tool of institutionalizing this system of hierarchy creating what he terms as ‘*cultural division of labour*’and ‘*politics of stable unrepresentation.*’(Hetcher,M, 1975:40). The core seek to subordinate the periphery using its policies institutionalizing he rigid system of stratification. Allocation of roles is done in a way that superior roles are reserved for the members of the core. There what Hetcher terms as cultural division of labor that gives a distinction identity to groups. Retieirating the dependency school of thought, even Hetcher mentions that there arises a differences in the industrialization product, while it leads to diversified economy in the case of core , the periphery becomes mostly an export oriented economy highly subjected to volatile international prices. Finally the internal colonial model suggests of a likely hood of ethnic assertion by the periphery that may either lead to separatism or secession from the core.

The concept of internal colonialism emerged as a type of dependency to study the dominance of natives by natives. It emerged in a culturally heterogeneous and distinct group. It has also been spelt in terms of structural arrangements and control of allocation of resources in a particular section of society (Havens.E and Flinn.W.L, 1970). Norma B and Y Chalout(1979) go a step further calling for inclusion of both economic-political and socio cultural dimension to the study of internal colony situation. “*It requires not only analytical description of a set of variables but explanatory functions explained through mechanisms.*”(ibid:87). For this purpose several economic political variables like access to technology, capital movement, electricity supply, exploitation of natural resources etc and socio cultural variables like awareness, social conflicts, health, education etc. to explain underdevelopment in using internal colony approach. One also needs to look into the historical process and the change in the variables into mechanisms of dependency (Wynn.Williams,Stephen,1977) stresses on the political economy approach to study regional inequality in the periphery. He describes internal colonialism as a stage of ‘*underdevelopment development continuum*’. Two forces that are important for understanding of the formation of internal colony is the “core periphery relation and progress of industrialisation.” The core periphery has been further defined in terms of ‘dominance and dependence’ comprising four major processes: decision making and control, capital flow, innovation, diffusion and migration. (ibid).

Efforts have been made to link political institution and development. Molotch’s (1976) growth machine theory highlights that it is not structural economic changes alone that impact development but role of local political and economic elites who stand to benefit from this coalition. Other works include that of Gunnar Myrdal who provided an institutionalist understanding to the problem of underdevelopment through the idea of circular cumulative causation (Preston.P.W ,1996:200) He states that once a process sets in motion it would be self reinforcing. The reasons for underdevelopment in the third world was attributed to the weak institutional arrangements that needed reforms. He points towards planning to break away from this vicious circle. Douglas North defined institutions in terms of ‘*rules and norms of constraints*’(J.Jutting (2003): 7). A much more broader definition included organizational entities, procedural devices and regulatory frameworks. The debate on whether institutions cause growth or whether the human and social capital that improves the quality of institutions that

in turn impacts efficiency has been a major centre point. However it must be noted that institutions are embedded in society and are not isolated. Responsive institutions should not only be viewed as the ultimate goal but should be made part of a larger process towards development.

Sen (2009) on the other hand talks in terms of capability approach. According to him value of freedom lies in its processes and opportunities that it provides. He shifts from the purely economics based focus of 'means of living' to opportunities of living'. In addition he states that capability however is just one aspect of freedom and is unable to pay adequate attention to fairness and equality. He talks about 'attainment equality' freedom to achieve equal functioning and 'shortfall equality' to achieve according to one's own capacities. *"Shortfall equality, if realized, would permit unequal freedom to achieve according to individual variations in the capacity to convert goods into functionings as long as persons had an "equal opportunity" to reach their given potential. Attainment equality, on the other hand, would ensure each person equal freedom to achieve equally valuable functionings, regardless of discrepancies in the given potential for functionings."* (Ibid). Sen thus underlies underdevelopment as denial of opportunities to lead a life of one's own choice.

2.5 Peripheral Underdevelopment of Darjeeling

The above discussion reveals that underdevelopment has been seen in context of core and periphery, explaining the causes for creation of such unbalanced development. The causes of underdevelopment may manifest into several dimensions be it economic, social or political. In addition it must be noted that reasons alone would not suffice a complete study of underdevelopment. There must be an analysis of the processes involved, the reasons as to the sustenance of subordinate status of the periphery by the core, different forms such relation might manifest into, its impact and responses. Above all solutions must seek to mitigate such relations. The research to be undertaken focuses on the stable political unrepresentation concept of Hatcher and A. Sen capability approach to explain the underdevelopment in Darjeeling district despite a high HDI rank.

In such a scenario it becomes essential to probe the nature of decentralization approach that is prescribed to rectify the underdevelopment in an internal colonialism framework. Participative democracy through institutional means is a necessary but not a sufficient condition in itself to

ensure development. Development depends not only on the nature of the institutional working, responsive and the behavior of the actors involved but also whether they create spaces for actual political representation among the marginalized where they can make claims and competition and 'political learning' among them. Informational inadequacy and increasing bureaucratization can defeat the purpose of decentralization and participative planning. Therefore it is essential that adequate decision making is devolved and not delegated to the grassroot level, sufficient autonomy for operation is essential, accountability with respect of utilization of the funds must be made available, capacity building at the grassroot level for effective participation also becomes indispensable. (**Chandrashekar,C.P, 2009**). **James Manor (2000)** talks about different forms of decentralization : deconcentration or administrative decentralization when agents of government at the higher level move to the lower level, fiscal decentralization and devolution or democratic decentralization when resources, power and tasks are shifted to lower levels of authority. He also emphasizes on the accountability mechanism in order to make decentralization a success. Benefits of this can be noted by the increased legitimacy of the government, improvement of governance and informational flows, in making government policies more responsive to local conditions and replication of best practices elsewhere.

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CHAPTER 4

Darjeeling Gorkha Council Accord: A Critical Evaluation of the Powers, Structure and Functions

3.1 DARJEELING GORKHA HILL COUNCIL

DGHC can be translated as one of the administrative answers to the circumstances prevailing during the skirmishes between the CRPF and GNLF. Since its inception, GNLF marked a new phase in the ongoing movement for a separate homeland. GNLF stood out in terms of methods adopted for protest during the movement which initially appealed to the Gorkha population as issues which were initially on pen and paper were being vociferously projected. The demands made through petitions and proposals which seemed to have suffered a silent death during the Hillmen Association, AIGL, Pranth Parishad phase was soon brought to life with the emergence of this charismatic leader and his party, GNLF. After the launch of GNLF in 1980, Subhash Ghising (President of GNLF) wrote to then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as well as Chief Minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu lamenting on the mistake of coalescing Darjeeling and its districts with West Bengal, he also announced a time bound plan of action to be taken by the state government in favour of the above said demand. On April, 1986 the agitation propelled to the next level with the commencement of 'Black flag' protest against the killing of Nepalis by the police. The anti foreigner drive in Meghalaya and Assam which resulted in forced exodus of Nepali from these areas further added fuel to the fire. The movement took an ugly turn during the forty day strike called by GNLF that virtually cut off communication and transport between the plains and hills in West Bengal. More than GNLF it was the common residents of the hills that

suffered the most facing wrath of CRPF as well as GVC. Finally after much hue and cry, the state government proposed the establishment of Darjeeling Hill Council comprising of elected representative from all three subdivisions (17th September, 1988). This was not the first time that a demand for autonomous council proposed. Anand Pathak CPI(M) member in 1983 made a plea for the same but was rejected. The following chapter deals with the working of DGHC covering its powers, functions and composition from a critical angle.

3.2 DGHC ACCORD

The DGHC accord¹⁶ (see appendix A) was signed on August 22nd1988 during a tripartite meeting between the state of West Bengal, Central government and DGHC. The DGHC came to replace Darjeeling Zilla Parishad, Hill Development Council, Darjeeling District Planning and Coordination Council. The DGHC was established based on the Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council Act, 1979. Unhappy with the jurisdiction allotted to the council, the State Committee of GNLFF sent a delegation to the centre expressing dissatisfaction over the certain provisions of the accord. GNLFF pointed out (Sarkar.D.K and Bhaumik.D, Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, 2000:37)

- The name of the council was ‘very vague’ two alternative names, Gorkha Hill Council and Gorkha Land Council were suggested
- The proposed areas to be placed under the council excluding Siliguri and Dooars were unacceptable

¹⁶ The accord was signed in Calcutta. The signatories included C.G.Somiah (Union Home Secretary), R.N.Sengupta (State chief Secretary) and Subhash Ghising (president of GNLFF).

- The offer of 46 crores by the centre for the development of hills was inadequate

After a tussle between the GNLF and State government, the GNLF compromised and demanded inclusion of 14 villages from the Dooars area and offices for DGHC in Calcutta. DGHC was awarded with the three subdivisions including 12 Mouzas of Shukna and Lohargarh in Siliguri as a part of Kurseong sub-division that consisted of 60% of Nepali population (ibid:40). The demand for constitutional recognition to Nepali language was left untouched. The inclusion of Siliguri mouzas created discontente among Bengalis living in that area as consequence to which Mahakuma Parishad was formed. Mr. Haren Ghosh as a member of the Siliguri Nagorik Samiti appealed to the chief minister who assured the formation of Mahakuma Parishad possessed with powers and functions similar to a Zilla Parishad. The finances were to be divided between DGHC and Mahakuma Parishad. DHHC led by Subhash Ghising also met with opposition from United Front supported by CPI (ML) leader Kanu Sanyal, Madan Tamang of Pranta Parishad, ABGL and Gorkha Liberation Organization led by Chatre Subba. With the signing of the accord the State Government agreed to withdraw cases against public servants engaged during the movement and GNLF on the other hand called for arms surrender and end the agitation for maintenance of peace and cooperation in the hills for the smooth functioning of the DGHC administration.

3.5 Structure and Composition

Structurally DGHC is divided into two parts the General Council and the Executive council.

The General Council comprises of forty two members of whom two-thirds are elected on the basis of adult suffrage from the constituencies under the DGHC administration and one third nominated by State government. The nominated members also would include three members of

the State Legislative Assembly, West Bengal elected from Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimong as well as the member elected to the Loksabha from Darjeeling constituency and chairman of the municipalities in the hill areas. Both the elected as well as the nominated members hold a tenure of 5 years.

The executive council consists of Chief Executive Councilor (Chairman of the General Council) and Vice Chairman and seven others of whom five are nominated by the Chief Executive Councilor from the elected members of the General Council and two by the State Government from amongst the nominated members of the General Council. There is also a Chief executive officer who is appointed by the State Government in consultation with the Chief Executive Councilor for a period of three years. The State government can also depute other officer as it may see fit to assist the General council in consultation with the Chief Executive Councilor.

Officers can also be appointed by the General Council with the prior approval of the State Government.

3.6 Powers and Functions of the DGHC

(see appendix B)

The DGHC Act, 1988 confers 19 subjects to the Council that range from allotment occupation or use of land other than reserved forest, management of forest, agriculture, education, small scale and cottage industries, water, transport, roads, tourism, public health etc. It also exercises supervision over Panchayat Samities, Gram Panchayats and Municipalities in areas under the jurisdiction of the council. The General Council can exercise powers of the Zilla Parishad given under sections 153-162 of the West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973. In terms of supervisory powers

over the local self governing bodies , the General Council only inspects and examines the workings and utilization of funds. In case of disputes, order of the State government would be final.

DGHC may also pass by laws with the approval of the State Government (section 27(1)) within the hill areas over subjects allotted to DGHC under section 24 of the DGHC Act,1988. The Council also has the Power of collecting and levying taxes (section 30) subject to limit set by the State government. It includes levying of tolls, fees on vehicles registration, animals, water rate, sanitation facilities, licenses etc. The general Council may also appoint committees from its own body for discharge of duties.

The General Council is required to formulate integrated development plans for the hills as well as implement central and state schemes and programmes for development of the hills.

3.7 Financial Powers

Section 52 of the DGHC act spells out the provisions related to the financial sources, auditing, rules and procedures of use etc. All finances received by the general council are to be credited to the general council fund. The State and the Central allocates funds to the council; the council may itself also take loans and create a sinking fund for repayment the same. The State Government is empowered to make rules for management of the Council fund with respect to withdrawal, payment and any other matter in connection with financial transaction.

Section 53 outlines the sources of funds that DGHC could raise by itself. Royalties received from forest, fees for granting of license, extraction of minerals and land revenue (in consultation with the State government). The General Council is obliged to prepare a budget of its estimated

receipts and expenditure and submit it to the State by 1st November of the current financial year. The budget is approved by the State government and it can resend it for modifications, however if the government is unable to approve the budget within the stipulate time (last date of financial year) the budget is deemed to be passed. The council can also prepare a supplementary budget for modification its budget for that particular year which again requires the approval of the government.

3.8 Critical analysis of the working of DGHC

Establishment of DGHC surely marked a sea change in the administration of the hill areas. It was hailed, atleast by the GNLFF members as a harbinger of good fate to the underrepresented hill people who were reeling under the tyranny of the West Bengal State government. Since its inception, DGHC act, 1988 has come under the scanner for being biased and farce wherein the control lies ultimately in the hands of the State government. In its infant stage, even the GNLFF criticized the provisions of the DGHC as mentioned above. Other civil society groups such as the ABGL, Pranth parishad etc opposed the formation of DGHC itself calling it an unequal bargain and selling the fate of the hills to an unresponsive State. Another development that took place during this time was the ‘save GNLFF Committee’ that consisted of estranged members of GNLFF who accused Subhash Ghising of corruption under the garb of Development funds for the hills.

A glimpse into the financial transactions and provisions of the DGHC accord have proven that most of the accusations and discrepancies pointed out seem to be the truth. The following section

points out the ailments of the DGHC and its failure which has also been one of the factors for revival of Gorkhaland cause.

From nomination of members to the expenditure of funds, important subjects that have a bearing on the crucial decisions indispensable for the functioning of DGHC lie with the State apparatus.

Earlier all fourteen members out of forty two members were nominated by the West Bengal State government. After much hue and cry by DGHC, 1994 amendment act required eleven members to be nominated by the State government and two by the chairman of the council. The State government also has the constitutional right (section 38(1), DGHC Act, 1988) to nominate two out of seven members to the executive council from among the nominated members by the State government to the General Council. Section 48(2) furthers the powers of nomination by the State government by designating it the power to nominate the Chief Executive Officer who in principal is in charge of the executive while other General council members are subordinate to him except the Chief Executive Councillor. Although he/she can be removed by the government in consultation with Chief Executive Councillor or if majority members of the general Council request the State government to do the same provided the State is satisfied with reasons of removal. The State government may also appoint a Secretary and officers for the General Council in consultation with the Chief Executive Councillor with terms and conditions laid down by the State Government.

DGHC has been given nineteen subjects under DGHC act as mentioned above paragraphs that ranges from agriculture, education, health, transport, roads etc. However a deeper probing reveals that tea and timber are absent from the clauses that mention subjects under the DGHC administration. It must also be noted that a substantial amount of revenue is generated from these

sources which is whisked away by the State government. West Bengal Government has strategically included a clause that debars the executive powers of the Council to extend over reserved forest. *“The executive powers of the Council will cover the following subjects, subject to the provisions of Central and State laws The allotment, occupation or use, or settin apart, of land other than any land which is **reserved forest** , for the purpose of agriculture or grazing , or for residential or other non agricultural purpose likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village, locality or town.”* (DGHC Accord,1988:2)

Dr Mahendra.P.Lama notes that if Gorkhaland comes into being it would be the only state with varied plantations and agricultural system with crops such as tea, cinchona, floriculture and horticulture all of which have an international demand. In addition, its geographical location would make it economically viable as it has advantage of sharing four international borders Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Nepal. (Darjeeling Times, July-August,2008:30-31).

There is a huge demand for tea particularly organic Darjeeling tea which is sold at Euro 25-35 per kg in European market at \$25-30 per kg in USA. In addition demand from countries like UAE, Russia and China.(Economic Times, 10,December, 2009, Darjeeling Organic Tea in Demand in U.S and U.K). Currently there 87 gardens in operating over 17,500 hectares of land producing 9-10 million kgs annually. The turnover of Darjeeling tea is reportedly \$7.5 million. (Darjeeling Tea Association).

Similarly revenue generated from the minor and major forest produce is also substantial. The following table reveals the revenue expenditure of the forest produce, Kalimpong forest Division.

Particulars	Unit	1984-84	2004-05
-------------	------	---------	---------

Forest Produce			
Timber	M3	26651.000	9548.138
Fuel		29217	5369
Sawn Timber		955	1159.437
Pulp wood		7175	0
Boulder		24660	9018
Charcoal		78705	30
Citronella		6350	0
Pole		1060	0
Revenue and Expenditure	Rs. (in thousand)		
Revenue		270.24	823.73
Expenditure		218.05	872.36

Source: Kalimpong Forest Division.

3.9 Sources of Finances

There are three modes of revenue made available to sub state level or regional councils assigned revenue, shared revenue and Grants in aid. Assigned implies that certain sources of tax revenue are assigned to local bodies, shared revenue means revenue of the state is shared by other sub-state level bodies and Grants in aids is usually provided by the State or Central government to the lower bodies. Finance and audits incase of DGHC are in a dismissal position, there has not been a proper auditing of finances of DGHC for the last 22 years of its existence despite the

provision of DGHC accord by which the State government is responsible for appointing of Accountant general for annual release of financial reports. Such irresponsibility on part of the government has given rise to laundering of DGHC finances, scams involving government schemes and reports of corruption charges against GNLF.

Apart from non regulation of financial disbursements, flow of finances has also been intermittent. The flow of finances to DGHC from the centre is through the State government. Since the council does fall under the purview of 6th schedule, dispersion of funds to DGHC have taken place according to its whims and fancies of the State Government. An example of this is the central assistance for tourism which was nil between 1988 – 1991, funds were available only from 1991. Even the amount varies on a yearly basis. One of the reasons pointed out has been the lack of finances with the State government itself for DGHC. According to figure available with the finance department , Bengal's public debt has touched 1.65 lakh crore which translates into about Rs. 20,000 that every person in the state is burdened with (Telegraph,2009). Recent data reveals that the States debt to GDP ratio is 43.4% compared to the state's overall debt of 28.7%. A demand 100 crore more in plan funds an permission to allow 500 crore more through bonds was put up before the planning commission in 2005 (Telegraph, 8th February 2005). A study conducted reveals that West Bengals revenue through tax collection fell between 1960-61 to 1990-91 (The Statesman, November 11, 1998).

There are several departments to which the funds are allocated: Development fund, Employment generation fund, Establishment fund. Development fund has five different categories: Special Central Assistance, Central Assistance, Centrally Sponsored Scheme, central Grant for Tourism and State Plan (Sarkar.D.K and Bhaumik.D, 2000:105).

Flow of Funds to DGHC 1988-1997

Year	Amount(in Rupees)
1988-89	-
1989-90	18408500.00
1990-91	19434255.00
1991-92	9062000.00
1992-93	31,444905.00
1993-94	26958000.00
1994-95	37521000.00
1995-96	33187950.00
1996-97	18797200.00

Source : Finance Department, DGHC Darjeeling (Sarkar.D.K and Bhaumik.D, 2000:108)

reveals that the amount allocated have been sporadic and there was no allocation in 1988-89.

JRY funds to DGHC

Year	Amount
1988-89	-
1989-90	18408500.00
1990-91	19434255.00
1991-92	9062000.00
1992-93	31444905.00
1993-94	21958000.00
1994-95	28881000.00

1995-96	940000.00
1996-97	-

Source: Finance Department, DGHC (ibid)

Non plan expenditure and receipts between 1988-89 to 1996-97 reveals that there has been an increase in receipts and expenditure and at times negative imbalance reported. Table 2.4 shows that in the year 1993-94 and 1995-96 excessive expenditure was incurred in comparison to the given receipts. The Non plan expenditure is usually incurred from the State and Central transfers. The table reveals the inability of the State government as well as DGHC to mobilize finances from own resources.

Also to be noted is the rise in the expenditure for payment of salaries compared to the revenue which on many occasions during the same time period was on the deficit side. Rising amount of salaries was attributed to the high price elasticity of non plan expenditure, establishment of secretariat of the DGHC in 1994 and to the increase in number of employees on an adhoc basis.

(ibid)

Receipts and expenditure of West Bengal Government 1988-1997

Year	Receipts	expenditure
1988-89	-	244758
1989-90	69556173	36017182.92
1990-91	92019112	83501839.84
1991-92	134094251	12108747474
1992-93	109446110	109908234

1993-94	120913298	138447226
1994-95	196144222	193416289
1995-96	381271000	407284942
1996-97	575455000	504190757

Source: ibid

Another interesting observation that reiterates the puppet like administration of the DGHC is the control over the surplus finance and taxation rates. Section 52(6) of DGHC clearly mentions that control of surplus finances of the DGHC would be invested in accordance to the rules laid down by the state Government. Although DGHC has the power to levy taxes on subjects laid out in section 30(2) of DGHC accord, the maximum rates would be prescribed by the State government (DGHC Accord,1988:16). Furthermore DGHC cannot incur any expenditure without the prior approval of the government. Therefore financial autonomy is a mere mirage for DGHC under such provisions.

3.10 Constitutional Status of the DGHC

When viewed microscopically the very foundations of DGHC seem to be on a weak footing. The DGHC neither comes under the purview of sixth schedule or the fifth schedule provisions. In reality it has just been a replacement to the Zilla Parishad. The Hill Council will be a substitute for Zilla Parishad in the hill areas, the existing Hill Area Development Council and the District Planning and Coordinating Council.”¹⁷

¹⁷ ¹² Abstract from the speech given by Jyoti Basu in West Bengal Legislative Assembly, 5th September, 1988.

Several sections inserted in DGHC act have been merely copied this includes collection of taxes, inspection work of panchayats, settlement of disputes, powers functions and duties of the Executive Councillor, appointment of secretary , dissolution of General Council, effect of Supersession and the power of the government make rule etc (Parihar.L, Himali Darpan, 2008:6).

As a result of ambiguity related to the constitutional status of DGHC does not even have the power to legislate or employ. Section 51 clearly spells out that General Council may appoint officers and other employees for discharge of functions only with prior approval of the State Government. Section 58 is indicates further loopholes in relation to legislation. *“If at any time , the government is satisfied that a regulation or by-law or resolution made by the General Councillor the Executive Council is likely to endanger the safety and security of the State, the Government may annul or Suspend such regulation or by-law or resolution...”*Section 61 indicating the supersession of the council by State government and Section 60 dealing with power of the government give directions further curtails the autonomy of the Council.

In sum DGHC more or less bears similarities to the model of local autonomy explained by Dhillon (1911) whereby the local government have powers granted by the state government. Their powers are limited in two ways first is that they act in accordance to the powers given by State government of which the rules and regulation is set by the State legislature and secondly the penalty for non obedience. (Clark.G, 1984:10).

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Chapter 4

Assessing Development in Darjeeling District

Darjeeling is considered to be a developed region in West Bengal on the basis of its tourist and tea earnings. However, a deeper analysis suggests that this income is transient as the local capacities, confidence and institutional support is slow, disheartening and under the care of disinterested bureaucracy. This chapter may highlight many developmental myths about this region.

Decentralization and development are complimentary to each other provided that the institutional mechanism for decentralization is available to people lacks the mechanisms to participate in the planning process. Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) is quite evident of this fact that for more than twenty years DGHC functioned in adhocism linked to politics driven by vested interests. The intermittent funds provided to the council were rather insufficient looking at the problems of the hill region which are not only economic but also exasperated by the topographical terrain. In the past there has been overlapping of functions of Darjeeling Municipality and DGHC. A separate Municipal corporation was set up for Siliguri along with Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority whereby most of the fund allocation is received by Siliguri Subdivision. Another institution that established in 2006 was North Bengal Development Department which included Darjeeling along with six other districts. But even this setup remained elusive to people participation with only the District Magistrate as the sole representative for Darjeeling district during the CPIM regime. It was reconstituted in 2011 due to change of government (Trinamool congress came to power). There is no representation for the hill district of Darjeeling and members include ex and present serving MLAs. Thus it is essential to analyze in this context the under development of Darjeeling hill districts where under representation can be a major cause. The

chapter mentions on Darjeeling hill district and not Darjeeling district as a whole that is underdeveloped. Darjeeling Hill district comprises of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong only while Siliguri subdistrict forms the terai region.

Even in terms of funds there is major discrepancy within the district. According to the third State finance report total amount that was allotted to the Panchayat institution and Urban Local bodies under the DGHC purview was 0.72626% and 0.24484% of the total state allocation while Siliguri Municipal corporation alone received 1.24236% of the total share.¹⁸

Profile of Darjeeling District

Darjeeling district lies in the northern most part of West Bengal State. It constitutes 2.02% of the total population of West Bengal of which Schedule tribe constitute 12 % and Schedule caste comprise 16% of the population. Population increased from 1,842,034 (2011) from 1,609,172 (2001). Male Literacy has increased from 80.05% to 85.94% while female literacy has increased from 62.94% to 73.74%. Clearly percentage of female literacy has increased more compared to male literacy. The sex ratio also has shown an improvement from 937 to 971 between 2001- 11.

Administratively Darjeeling district of West Bengal is divided into four subdivisions Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri. There are 4 municipalities one each in Darjeeling and Kalimpong and two in Kurseong. Siliguri alone has a municipal corporation.

Darjeeling Sadar division comprises of three Community Development Blocs Darjeeling Pulbazar comprising of twenty three gram Panchayat and one census town, Pattabong tea garden. Rangli Ranliot Community Development block consisting of 11 gram panchayat. Jorebunglow Sukhiapokhri community development block comprising of 16 gram panchayat. Kalimpong subdivision

¹⁸ Panchayat Raj Institutions of Darjeeling hill districts received 581.01 lakhs and the Urban local bodies of Darjeeling hill district received 195.87 lakhs. Siliguri Municipal Corporation alone received 993.89 lakhs. (Third State Finance Report, 2008)

also comprises of three community development blocks KalimpongI, KalimpongII and Gorubathan. There are 42 gram panchayats divided among them. Kurseong Subdivision comprises of two community development blocs Mirik and Kurseong and census town, Cart Road. Siliguri Subdivision has four community development blocks Matigara, Naxalbari, Phansidewa and Kaharibari with two census towns Uttar Bagdogra and Bairatisal.

Darjeeling was transformed socially, economically as well as administratively under the British regime. English settlers did not leave any stone unturned in converting Darjeeling into a haven often neglecting the plight of the Gorkha migrants and native inhabitants of the region. Awestruck by the scenic beauty of Darjeeling, Capt. Lloyd and Mr. J.W.Grant who suggested Darjeeling as a get away from the heat of the plains. Dr.Campbell initiated the process for development when he was sent to Darjeeling in 1839 as a superintendent of Darjeeling district. He slowly pushed for the development of Darjeeling and its adjacent hill areas which later propelled at a rapid pace with the development of Darjeeling Municipality in 1850 and tea industry in 1856.

4.1 Strengths and Potential of Darjeeling

4.1.1 Economy.

Forest Resource of Darjeeling District

The importance of forest cannot be undermined from recharging ground water to causing rainfall and maintain a healthy microclimate of the region. It is also beneficial in terms of acting as carbon sinks and checking soil erosion. In terms of commercial importance forest products such as timber and medicinal herbs have a viable market. Timber is utilized for making numerous types of furniture and related products. Bamboo plantation also holds the key in development of bamboo related craft industry in the region. Medicinal plants for production of emetine, reserpine, copolanine, staramonium, becognine, ephedrine and camphor oil are being explored. (industry potential of siliguri, www.sjda.org).

The hill areas of Darjeeling district are divided into three four types depending on the altitudinal location. Tropical moist deciduous (300-1000 mts), tropical evergreen lower montane forest (1000-2000 mts), tropical evergreen upper montane forest (3000-3500 mts), temperate forest and subtemperate forest (above 3500 mts). A large percentage of forest area is concentrated at an altitude of 2000 mts and above while areas between 1000-2000 have been cleared for tea cultivation.

Agricultural Sector

The agricultural sector is one of the mainstays of the Darjeeling economy. Tea, horticulture and forestry are the backbone of agricultural sector in Darjeeling. Location of Siliguri provides an ideal opportunity for setting up of number of consumer industry

Tea

Tea industry flourished post its introduction by Dr. Campbell in 1850's. The development of tea industry attracted a lot of investment as well as manual labour and thus economic progress of the region followed consequently. It is one of the oldest existing industries of Darjeeling that is famous world over for its quality. Presently there are eighty seven gardens producing 10-12 million kilograms of tea annually (Bomjan,2008:12). The Darjeeling tea industry employs around 55000 permanent workers and 16000 are employed on a temporary basis. (The Telegraph 2012)

Cinchona

Cinchona plantation was introduced by Dr. Thomas Anderson (then Superintendent of Royal Botanical Garden, Calcutta) in the year 1864 in Mungpho, that later spilled over to Munsong in 1901, Rongo in 1938, Latpanchor in 1943 and Ambotia in 1977 (Roy,2009). Cinchona plantation spread over 26,000 acre was in demand due to its medicinal properties. Its curative value earned a sizeable amount of revenue to Britishers as well as post independence West Bengal Government.¹⁹

Thus tea, floriculture, horticulture and agro processing have huge potential for the economy of Darjeeling in terms of employment opportunities as well as trade. Both domestic and international. Its proximity to international borders of

¹⁹ Between 1939 -1944 income earned amounted to Rs. 2000775 and post independence in 1948 it earned 30 lakhs from quinine alone, between 1984-85 revenue generated earned was around Rs.2.43 crores

Nepal, Bangladesh, China and Bhutan shall ensure a sustainable market for such products.

Tourism

Darjeeling is truly a tourist destination attracting tourists from across the globe. With a scenic view of Kanchenjunga, Darjeeling train(that has been inserted in the list of world heritage status), rich flora and fauna and a favourable climate. During the colonial rule it had also served as the summer sanatorium for the Europeans to escape from the heat of the plains as well as an educational centre and was designated as ‘the queen of hills’. By the end of 19th century the rapidly expanding tea cultivation in Kurseong and Sadar area attracted a large number of entrepreneurs who were also the earliest tourists at that time. Kalimpong also became a major tourist destination with beginning of indo Tibetan trade by the start of 20th century. **(sociological consequences of tourism in Darjeeling t subba, geography of the Mountains,ed RB singh, 1990heritage publishers)** Annual tea and tourism festival is also organized in the month of December to promote tourism. It provides employment to around 1 lakh persons **(The telegraph, sept 14, 2011) IT plan for job starved hills**. The tourism in the hills is managed by the WBTDC(West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation)²⁰.

²⁰ Tourism was systematically organized with the establishment of WBTDC in 1975.

4.2 Weakness

Although Darjeeling ranked four according to West Bengal Human Development report 2004, its full potential remains untapped. Lack of employment opportunities to sustain the growing work force in the hills has forced many to migrate to metropolitan cities. Thus unemployment as well as underemployment has become apparent among the youth. Almost all sectors discussed above have major obstacles that have mooted realization of their full potential. The laccadaisal attitude of the state government from providing funds to engaging people in the development process has added to this situation. The demand for statehood itself is evident of the fact that people of Darjeeling hill district discontent with the situation despite Darjeeling's potential. Each of the roadblocks to development have been discussed below.

4.2.1 Agriculture

The hill region is heavily dependent on monsoon. However the rainfall is highly uneven with heavy rainfall between June to September and acute scarcity during February to May. Soil although is rich in organic matter, erosion is cause of concern due to cultivation of steep slopes by poor farmers, which also makes the hill region prone to land slides. Under such conditions water harvesting, contour ploughing and conservation of top soil become essential. In the horticulture sector the growth of traditional crops like ginger, millet, local paddy

and maize is proving economically unviable due to traditional method of cropping. The Hill Areas Program Development report 2010 suggests floriculture horticulture combination in the region. With emphasis on temperate fruits like peach, plum, orange and pears. Development and marketing of packaged juices also have a great scope for export industry. However the amount sanctioned was a mere 26,10,000 in 2010-2011 under the Hill Area Development budget (2012-2013 duget report West Bengal). Although there has been an increase in the amount demanded in 2012-2013 budgets to 77,00,000 , the amount is still not substantial compared the potential of industry.

4.2.2 Woes of Tea industry

However plight of the workers has still not improved despite the setting up of Tea Board of India post in independence (Tea Act 1953). It is quite well known that Darjeeling tea is famous internationally but the fruits of labour has not reached the workers. Very often high cost of production and declining demand are some of the reasons given for the deleterious condition of the tea plantation and workers. It is important to note here that tea does not come under the jurisdiction of the DGHC but the State government; however nexus between the private planters and corrupt government officials is not hidden from the public eye. The following are some of the problems that ails the tea gardens which has a direct impact on the workers and their livelihood.

- Low wages – According to the agreement between the private planters, Government of West Bengal and few representatives of the workers in 2005, Rs. 48.40 was decided upon for eight hour labour. Tea garden labourers receive a sum of RS.66.70, RS.74.62 and Rs.85 in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Sikkim.

(Bomjan, 2008:13). Such a paltry sum is highly inadequate for a family of more than four which is mostly the case in the hills. Added to their woes is the non payment of Hill Compensatory Allowance that is available to government, semi government and private employees. Bonuses of works slashed and non payment to the provident funds of workers has not been looked into till date.

- Poor Maintenance

The tea bushes are almost hundred to hundred fifty years old and have not been replaced by new bushes. Profit driven private companies and entry of more such companies has left the condition of tea gardens in dismay due to excessive use of fertilizer and insecticides in order to extract maximum. Eg. Ringtong tea garden is being used on a seasonal basis with total disregard to the maintenance as well as labour welfare. Thus the seasonal workers are deprived of Provident fund, Gratuity, Ration, Medical Facilities etc given to workers of other gardens (ibid). Despite the recommendation by Enquiry Committee constituted of West Bengal government in 1960 to report on the plight of tea gardens, nothing consequential has come out.

- Lack of Transparency and Accountability

Misallocation of funds given by Tea Board to the planters is common practice. Many reports²¹ of false packaging under Darjeeling Tea brand name have been brought to light, which directly affects the brand name as well as pricing of the authentic Darjeeling tea. Despite such reports no strict measures have been undertaken in this regard.

- Anti Worker legislations

Gardens managed by West Bengal Tea Development Corporation (WBTDC) are not any better either, welfare of workers has gone for a toss in the Planters Labour Act in the interest of the Private players. There are no statutory rights for the tea workers and non compliance of the provisions for labour welfare in Plantation Labour Act is common. There is provision of Welfare officer for every tea garden, however very few are actually present. Moreover they draw their salaries from the Company itself, therefore poor condition of workers are rarely brought to light.

Recently absenteeism of workers has hit tea industry which has had a major impact on production from 13 million kg to 7.5 million kg. One of the plausible reasons is thought to be MNREGS that also covers the tea gardens. Workers prefer to work under MNREGS as it has a better pay (Rs.130/day) compared to the tea estates (RS.90/day). Workers are also piqued by the working hours that has been prescribed as 4hrs+4hrs+1hrs (breaks in between with total 9 hrs) while the tea legislation prescribes 8hrs. (The Telegraph , 2012)

²¹ Roy.B, 'Orange on Cinchona Plot', 29 January 2009, Himlyan Beacon

4.2.3 Unsustainable Cinchona plantation

Post Independence the West Bengal Government has done little to sustain this source of revenue and is running under huge losses of Rs.24 crore. The management is in shambles with shortage of permanent staff. Moreover land under Cinchona plantation was sold to National Hydel Power Corporation despite protests from civil society groups such as United front. The ailing industry experienced some respite in 2006 when United Front auctioned 170 tonnes of Cinchona bark at a higher price than it was sold to Kolkata. The Directorate of Cinchona and Medicinal Plantation have proposed diversification of plantation after consultation with Mckinsey group in 2001. According to this plan proposal, Cinchona would be reduced to 7000 acre, leaving area for cultivation of bamboo, ipecac, tissue, rubber and oranges. The turn over is expected to be 40-50 crore in the next five years. However although the diversification may be hailed the distribution of profits is highly under question. Only in 2001 did the West Bengal government regularized Cinchona seasonal plantation workers.⁵ Earlier they were given work for 15 days a month but now would receive work for 26/27 days a month and would be paid according to group D employee. (The Telegraph, 2009) permanent jobs for cinchona workers.

4.2.4 Problem of Sanitation and Sewerage

Severe congestion and water woes have made sanitation and waste disposal scenario pitiable. In Darjeeling the sanitation facility is extremely old (constructed in 1935). Poor Maintenance of drainage pipes and public toilets;

overburdened disposal waste sites and lack of sweepers has surely put a blot on hill's cleanliness. Darjeeling produces 50 metric tonnes of waste but municipality vehicles and employees are able to collect only 60% . Earlier there use to be a ropeway system for carrying solid waste in the area where Butcher Busty is located but it was stopped in 1970's.(Khawas.V, 2003). In 1984 Consulting Engineering Services appointed by West Bengal government submitted a report giving recommendations for Darjeeling district but till date no efforts have been made in that direction.

4.2.5 Underdeveloped tourism potential

However efforts to maintain the tourist spots and harness revenue have not been neglected all through. As mentioned in earlier chapter(3), funds for tourism sector have been intermittent with flow of funds commencing only from 1991 onwards. Apart from this maintenance of Darjeeling toy train which now comes under the category of world heritage lies uncared. The Toy train extended from Siliguri to Geille Khola on National Highway 31 A till 1950 but due to land slide this path has been abandoned and till date no efforts have been made for repairment. Tanka Bahadur Subba laments on the isolation of Hill People from the revenue earned from the tourism sector. Most of them are engaged in menial jobs while the lion's share of profit goes to the private capitalists or the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation which makes an annual profit of 36 crores from Darjeeling. (Subba.T.B, Ethnicity, State and Development). Infrastructure is deplorable with traffic and pedestrian congestion almost a daily

affair which peaks during tourist season (May-June). The political instability in the form of frequent bandhs, harthals, chakka jam or roadblocks for trucks carrying goods as well as tourist vehicles has also had a negative impact on tourism sector.

4.2.6 Lack of funds for Educational sector and higher educational facilities

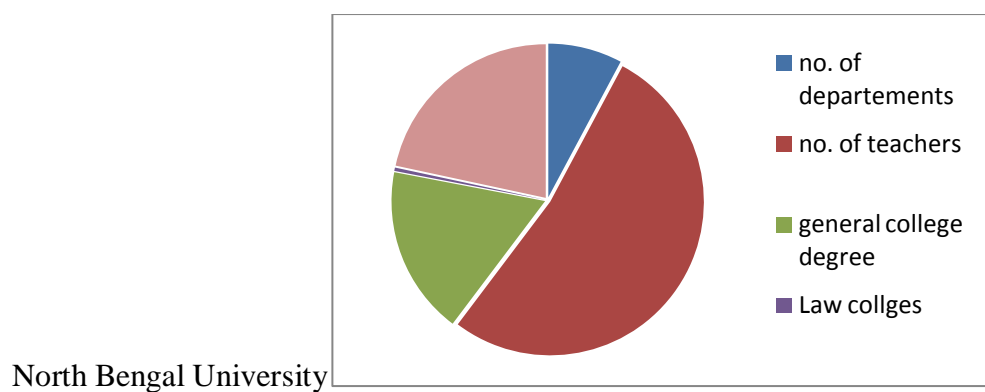
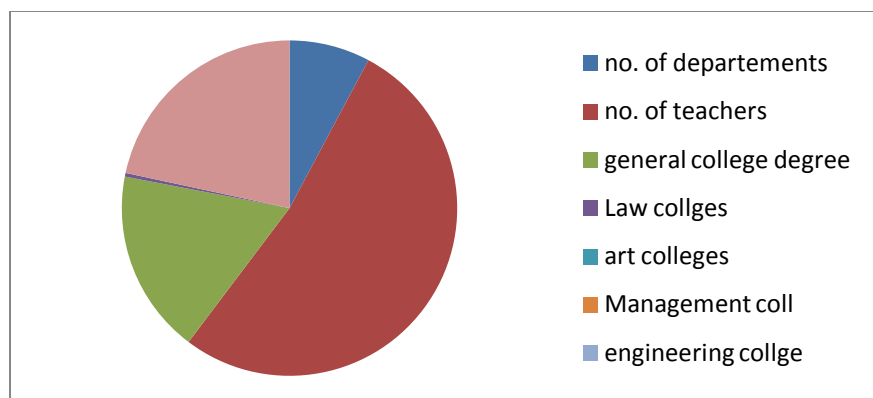
Darjeeling was developed as the educational hub by the Europeans during the colonial regime. With substantial European population there was a pressing need for development of educational institutions which was initiated in 1869 by Rev. William McFarlane. His efforts resulted in setting up of 19 schools for boys and 55 schools for girls between 1869-1874, around 70 missionary schools were developed. Another major contribution was made by Rev. Turubul who prepared the first Nepali grammar book and dictionary. However the services was restricted to the Europeans and only few privileged natives could afford to avail the educational services. A small but significant beginning was made with the formation of Nepali Sahitya Sammelan in 1924. There was an ever increasing sense of self consciousness with the spread Nepali language as the lingua franca among the hill communities including Lepcha and Bhutias. Presence of missionaries also led to conversions particularly among the Lepcha tribe. Bible was also translated by Nepali convert Padri Ganga Prasad Pradhan.

The hills even today attract a lot of students from neighbouring states as well as plains but the quality of education and administration has surely deteriorated. Schools managed by DGHC are in ruins with poor infrastructure facilities.

Higher education is not very developed within the hill region which has been the major cause of migration to capital cities like Bangalore, New Delhi, Kolkatta etc. There are only 5 colleges in Darjeeling²² two colleges in Kalimpong and one in Kurseong that are affiliated to North Bengal University. Most of the schools and colleges were developed during the British time and there has not been any significant contribution by the West Bengal government in this regard. Apart from the management colleges suffer from insufficiently stocked libraries, teacher absentee and poor infrastructural facilities. Figure 4.1 shows comparison between higher educational facilities between Calcutta University and North Bengal University

Calcutta University

²² St. Joseph college, Loreto college, Darjeeling Government College, Bijanbari College and Ramakrishna College (Colleges in Darjeeling)). Kalimpong college and Cluny college(Colleges in Kalimpong).



Data Source: Annual Report of Department of Higher Education

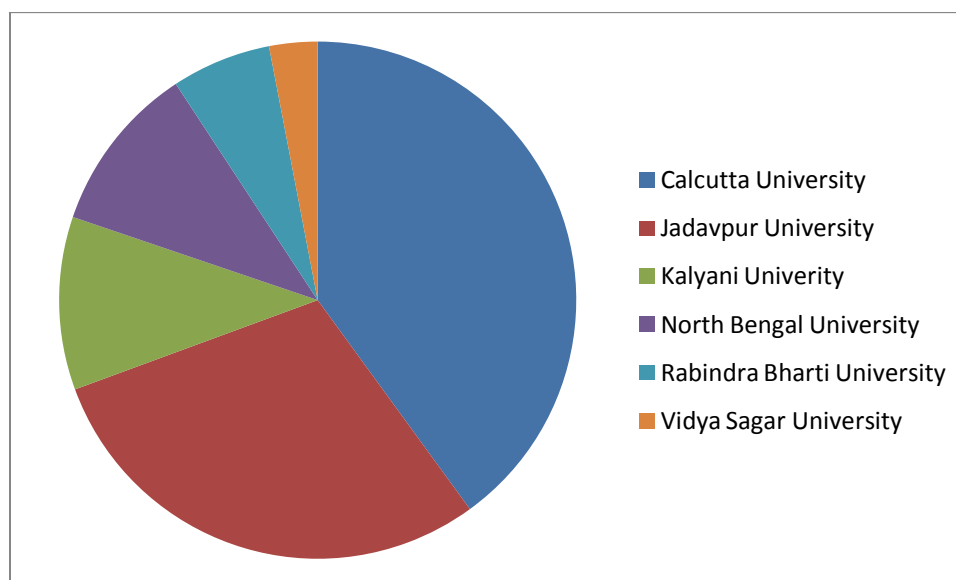
Figure 4.2

Distribution of number of colleges teaching PG courses in West Bengal

Sl. No.	University	No. of Government PG teaching colleges	No. of Government aided PG teaching colleges	Total No. of PG teaching colleges
1	Under Calcutta University	10	17	27
2	Under Burdwan University	03	14	17
3	Under North Bengal University	02	03	05
4	Under Gour Banga University	00	02	02
5	Under Vidyasagar University	01	10	11
6	Under Kalyani University	01	04	05
7	Under West Bengal State University	04	10	14
	Total	21	60	81

Source: ibid

Figure 4.3 Total Grants Released to State Universities by West Bengal government (2010-2011)



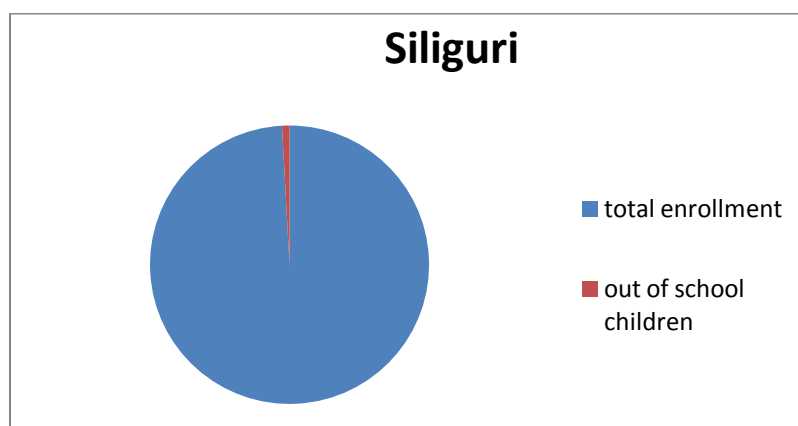
From the above figures it is visible that the North Bengal University is heavily understaffed and also receives low grants compared to other universities despite the large number of colleges that requires grants for its upkeep.

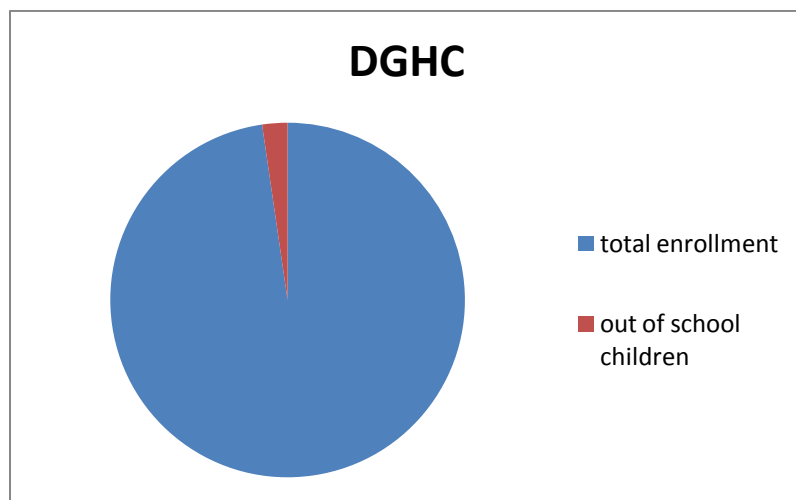
Primary Education.

Primary ,secondary and higher education in West Bengal is managed by the West Bengal School Education Department.

- Lower primary education

According to the Population projection by Sarva Shikha Abhiyaan Survey population increase in age group 5-8 years is 97468 for DGHC area and 88516 for Siliguri. Statistics (2011) based on the survey conducted by Sarva Shikha Abhiyaan gives a comparative view of primary education status in the hill subdistricts vis s vis Siliguri Figure 4.4 Enrollment in Primary schools

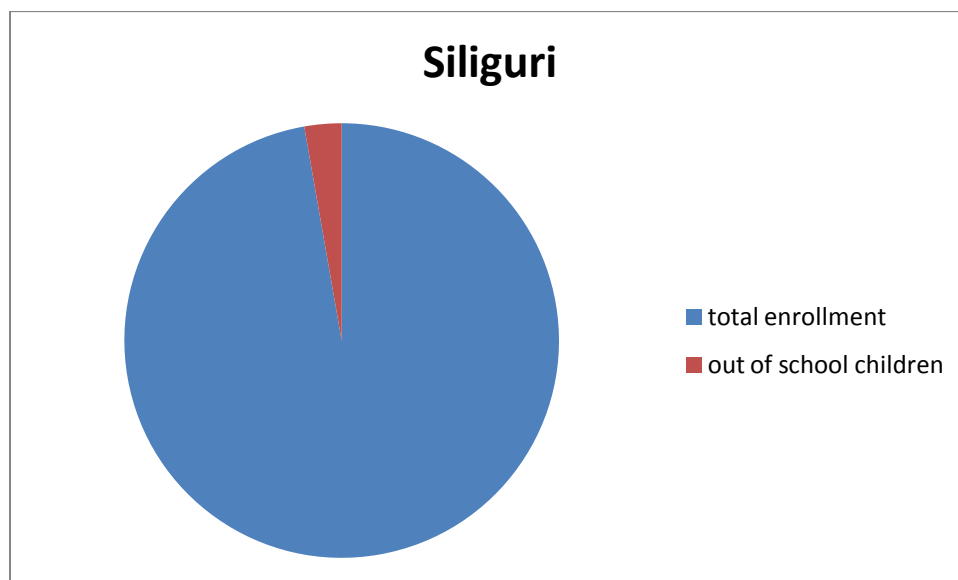
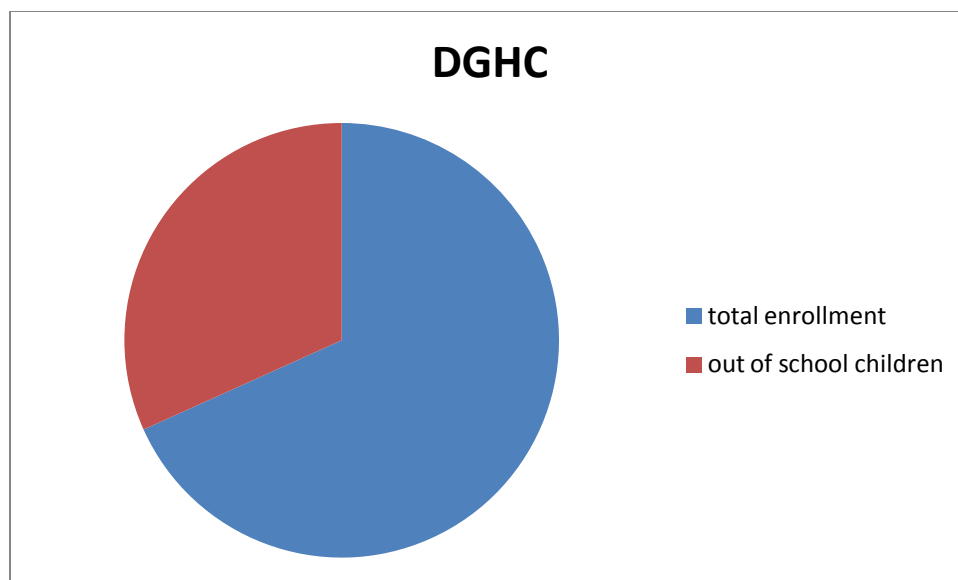




- Upper Primary education

According to the Survey Siksha Abhiyaan survey the population projection for age group 9-13 years is 1122676 for DGHC and 857959 Siliguri.

Figure 4.5 Out of School Children in DGHC and Siliguri 2011



Source: Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan survey 2011.

The above figures reveal that despite the higher population projections for DGHC region the total enrollment is less compared to Siliguri both at the primary and upper primary level. Similarly out of school children is also on a

higher side in DGHC region compared to Siliguri.²³ From this one could conclude that the higher literacy rate of Darjeeling district is due to Siliguri and if only the hill regions are taken into account the picture is different.

Frontal organizations of the current movement for statehood like Gorkha Janmukti Vidhyarthi Morcha, Janmukti Secondary Teachers Association, Gorkha Primary Teachers Association together have formed an educational monitoring cell to look into the deplorable condition of education in the hills specifically looking at educational infrastructure, number of subjects, increasing dropouts, staff absentees, lack of government schools etc. During a meeting in 2009 several issues faced were brought to light such as overcrowding of classes like in Rama Krishna Shiksha Parishad where there were 50 students in class V, Mirik Secondary School did not have Science and Commerce stream, Kalimpong Government School has only 7 teachers against the requisite number of 27 with closing down of science stream; concerns were also raised against the absence of Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (for dropouts) in the DGHC area.

4.2.7 Poor Health infrastructure

The Health and Family Welfare department of state of West Bengal has the exclusive responsibility of sanitation, hospitals and health. Under the NRHM Darjeeling district five Primary health centres in Sourani Basti, singrington, Teesta Bazaar, Bagdogra and Bidhannagar.(www.wbhealth.gov.in) . The

²³ Out of school children is 2813 for DGHC region as compared to Siliguri 1053, total enrollment was calculated to be 119452 for DGHC and 120814 for Siliguri (Sarvashiksha Abhiyaan 2011). In the upper primary level total enrollment for DGHC region was 110330 and 85697 for Siliguri , out of school children is 5128 for the former and 2430 for the latter.

reproductive and health care programme is implemented by the West Bengal voluntary Health Association in Darjeeling.

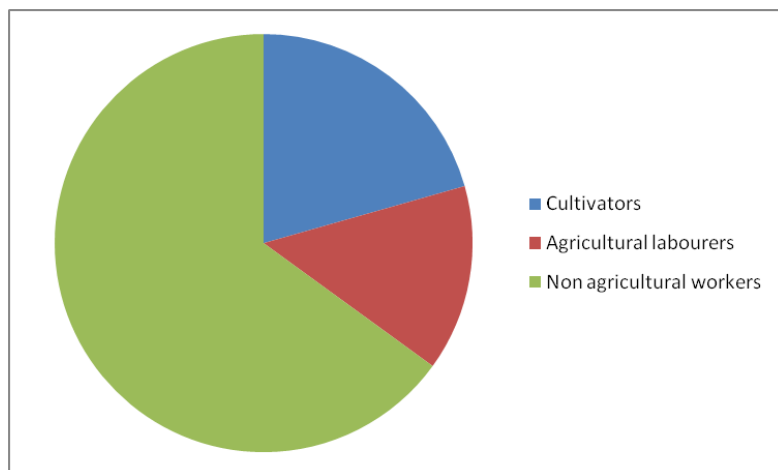
Darjeeling stands 4th among 17 districts according to west Bengal HDI report. There are 395 villages having medical facilities, 27 primary health centre and 141 primary sub health centers in Darjeeling district which is highly inadequate considering the growth rate of population as well as accessibility problem which act as a major deterrent. There are two rural hospitals for each sub district of Darjeeling district however there are three rural hospitals for Siliguri subdistrict of Darjeeling.²⁴ Despite a higher sex ratio, the female infant mortality is higher compared to the male infant mortality rate, which is 43 and 39 respectively and is higher than the state average female infant mortality rate 34 (Census of India 2001).

4.2.8 Paradox of high percapita income and lack of job oppurtunities

Darjeeling is placed second rank in terms of per capita income of Rs.185298.18 with rural monthly per capita consumption of Rs.465.42 and urban monthly per capita consumption of Rs.744.9. Rural poverty ratio being 19.66% and urban poverty ratio is 15.21%.

Figure 4.6 Distribution of Workers in different agricultural sectors , Census 2001

²⁴ Gender gap in literacy rate at state level is 17.41% in comparison to 17.11% for Darjeeling district.

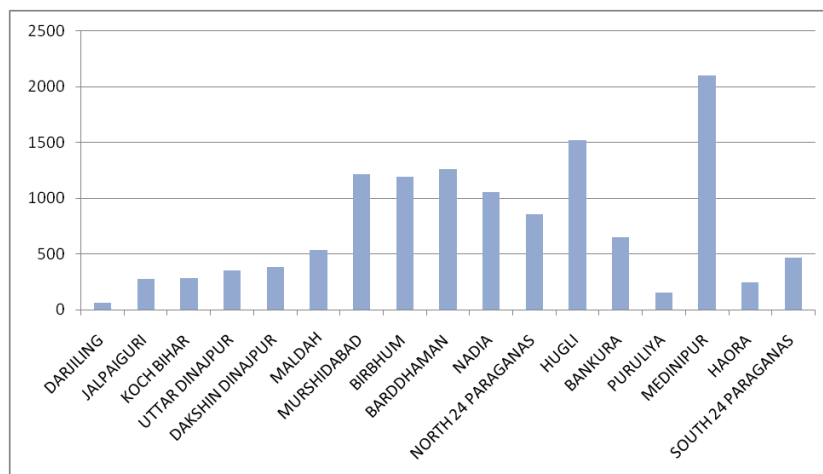


Data Source: Census of India, 2001

From the above table it is visible that percentage of workers engaged in non agricultural activities is high. At the same time it is essential note that although the urban work participation rate among for male main workers has increased by only 0.3 % since 1991 whereas marginal participation rate among males has increased by 2.2%. The disparity in work participation rate between male and female main work participation (only 10.3% for females) is extremely high (West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004).

4.2.9 Infrastructure woes in Darjeeling district

Figure 4.7 District Wise number of Villages in West Bengal having power supply for domestic use , Census 2001



In 2001 the official number of villages that have been receiving electricity for domestic use stood at 381 and for agricultural use 60 out of total number of 708 villages of which 640 are inhabited. In 1991 villages receiving electricity for irrigation purposes was nil in comparison to West Bengal which stood at 3055 villages the areas under DGHC have immense potential for generating hydroelectricity, the Sindrabong Power house (set up in 1897) the first of its kind in Asia but today it remains neglected under the West Bengal State Electricity Board(Census). The ambitious project of generating 300MW power under the Rammam Hydel project could produce only 50MW power initially. In addition a large chunk of it is being transferred to the plains jeopardizing needs of the hill economy and its people. The recent National Hydel Power Project also came under severe criticism owing to the danger it poses to ecological surrounding as well as displacement of inhabitants. To top it all there has been no mention of power sharing once the NHPC project on lower Teesta is completed. Recent agitation against the acute shortage of electricity has been seen in the form of non payment of electricity bills as ordered by Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha. As a response West Bengal Power Ministry had threatened to

cut off power supply to the hills. In the tussle between GJMM and the West Bengal State government, it was the general public who were the sufferers.

Figure 4.9 Number of villages within sub districts of Darjeeling receiving electricity for domestic use , Census,2001

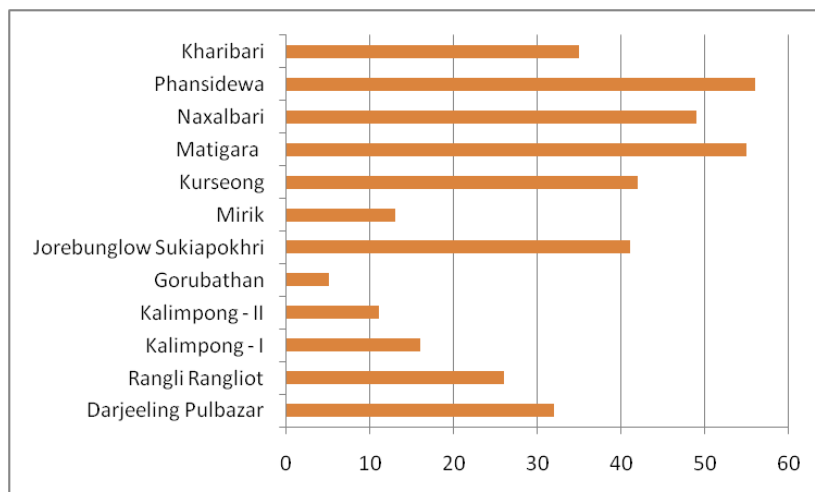
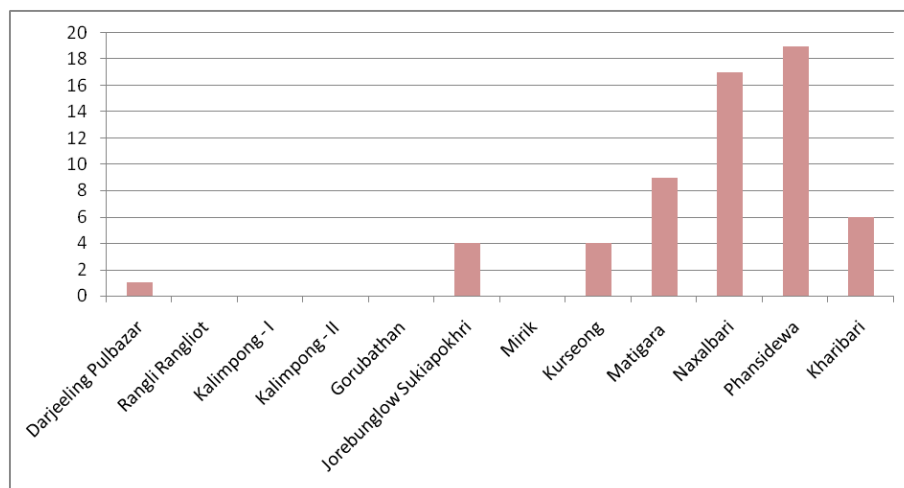


Figure 4.10 Number of villages within subdistricts of Darjeeling receiving electricity for irrigational purpose 2001



From the above data it is clearly seen that both in terms of domestic use of electricity as well as water for irrigation purposes it was the Siliguri Subdistrict that received the maximum beneficiary in comparison with the Hill subdivisions of Darjeeling.

4.2.10 Water scarcity

Darjeeling Teesta, Rangit, Mechi, Balason, Mahananda, Lish, Gish, Chel, Ramman, Murti and Jaldhaka are important rivers of Darjeeling. Despite this water scarcity is one of the major problems faced by the residents of hill areas. Water supply falls under Darjeeling Municipality which comes under the jurisdiction of the West Bengal Government. Water supply for Darjeeling town was taken from Sinchal lake divide into North and South constructed in the year 1910 and 1912 respectively to feed for a population of 10,000. There is acute shortage of water due to the rise in the population. Sindhap Lake with capacity of 15MG as an alternative source failed to store the requisite amount of water. A Committee was setup in 1995 which recommended water from Balassan lake to

be transferred to Sinchal lake. Despite the foundation stone being laid in 2006, the project has been entangled in political arguments and has not been able to serve its purpose. Demand of Darjeeling is around 50,000 gallons per day, the lack of sources for Sinchal lake both north and south poses a major impediment for regular supply of water. Even in Kalimpong Water supply is intermittent particularly in the Bazaar areas, supply of water through water tankers of Darjeeling Municipality is not a rare sight. Water supplied Neora and Dhowla²⁵ sources is highly inadequate (less than 8 gallons per day) Kalimpong subdistrict.

Recently the Darjeeling Municipality has taken the onus of starting a water programme under 'Tatkal scheme' for domestic as well as commercial purpose where the user fee has been decided to be Rs. 35,000 for domestic users and Rs. 75,000 for commercial users. This hike has come as a blow to the rural households. Although the Municipality claims of 400 public water taps public use the availability and distribution remains highly under question. (Telegraph, 2009). It is a shocking revealing that areas like Darjeeling bazaar with inhabited villages has only 6 villages with public tap facility and no other source of water, while there are extreme cases such as Mirik where there only 6 villages with tap facility and 2 villages with wells out of 21 inhabited villages. According to Census 2011, 37% of the household out of 3,82, 289, have drinking water sources within the premises, 28.8% households have near their premise and 33.4% households have sources away from the premises. It is one

²⁵ Sindhap Lake was constructed by PHE department in 1984.

of the lowest when compared with other districts that come under the North Bengal region²⁶.

4.2.11 Sanitation and Sewerage Problem

Severe congestion and water woes have made sanitation and waste disposal scenario pitiable. In Darjeeling the sanitation facility is extremely old (constructed in 1935). Poor Maintenance of drainage pipes and public toilets; overburdened disposal waste sites and lack of sweepers has surely put a blot on hill's cleanliness. Darjeeling produces 50 metric tonnes of waste but municipality vehicles and employees are able to collect only 60% . Earlier there use to be a ropeway system for carrying solid waste in the area where Butcher Busty is located but it was stopped in 1970's.(Khawas.V, 2003). In 1984 Consulting Engineering Services appointed by West Bengal government submitted a report giving recommendations for Darjeeling district but till date no efforts have been made in that direction.

²⁶ North Bengal region comprises of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Malda, North and South Dinajpur.

Figure 4.11 Households with no drainage facility, Darjeeling District. Census 2001

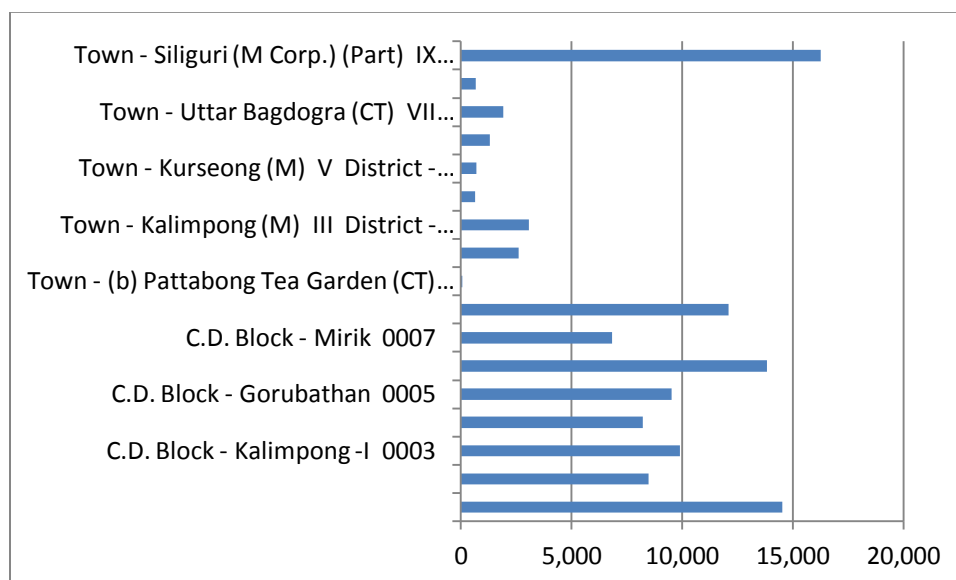
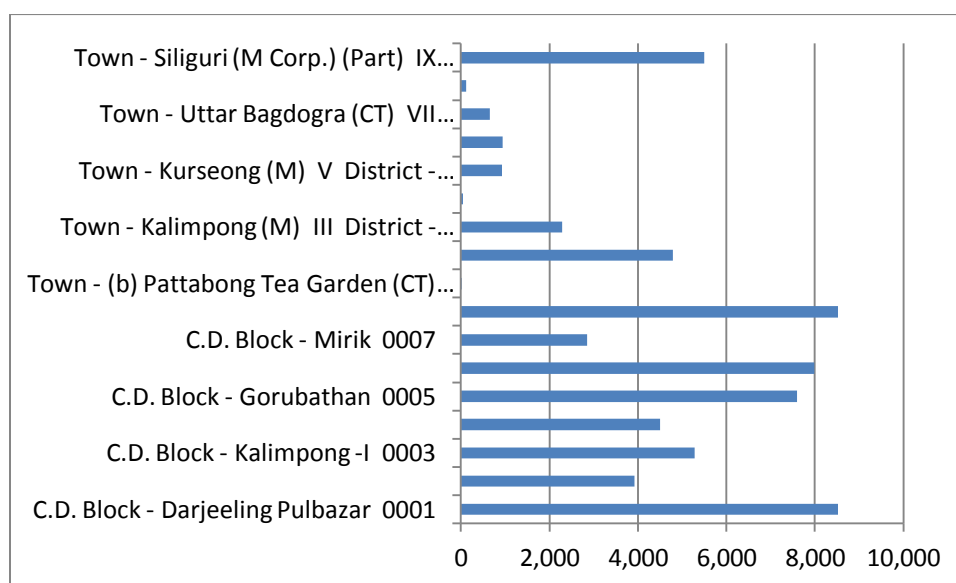


Figure 4.12 Number of Households without toilet facilities, Darjeeling district, 2001



Interms of households without toilet facilities, maximum number of rural households lack this

facility among the hill districts of Darjeeling.

4.2.12 Neglect of Road and Communication

Roads in Darjeeling district is another area thoroughly neglected by West Bengal government and DGHC. In Darjeeling except the hill cart road and Lebong Cart road, all roads belong to the Municipality. Road density in Darjeeling is approximately 9/km². Even in Kalimpong and Kurseong the state of roads is miserable with numerous potholes and lack of proper roads particularly in rural areas making accessibility difficult. Traffic jams in Darjeeling town area and kalimpong bazaar is a daily sight due to narrowness of roads. Problem of infringement of PWD roads is ubiquitous; Kalimpong motorstand area, Reshe road in Kalimpong, Darjeeling motor stand etc are a few examples. In 2008 Kalimpong Municipality proposed to set up dividers on the main road from Thanadara to Dumber Chowk as well as renovate the Kalimpong motorstand, however this plan has still not been materialized.

Figure 4.13 Number of Villages (Darjeeling district) that can be accessed by paved roads, Census 2001.

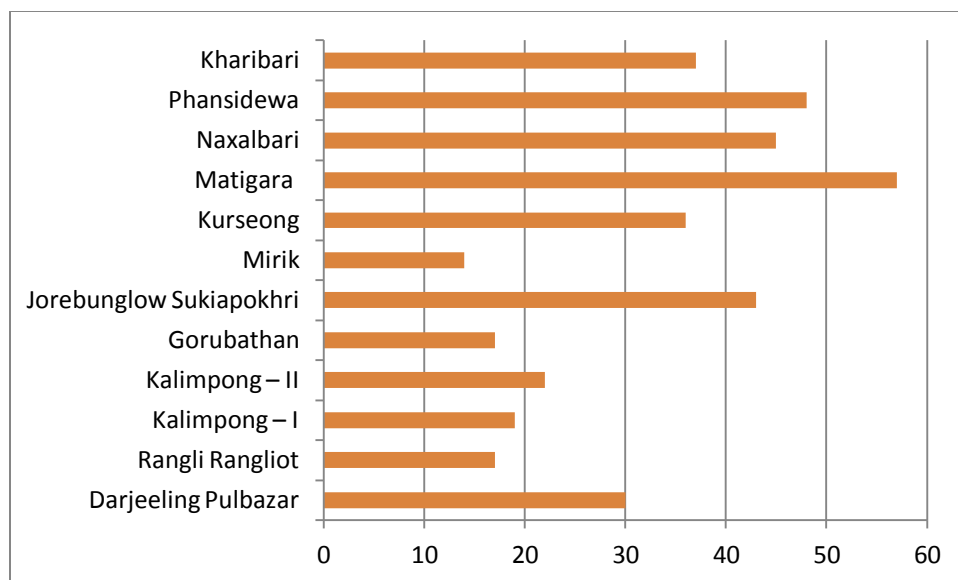
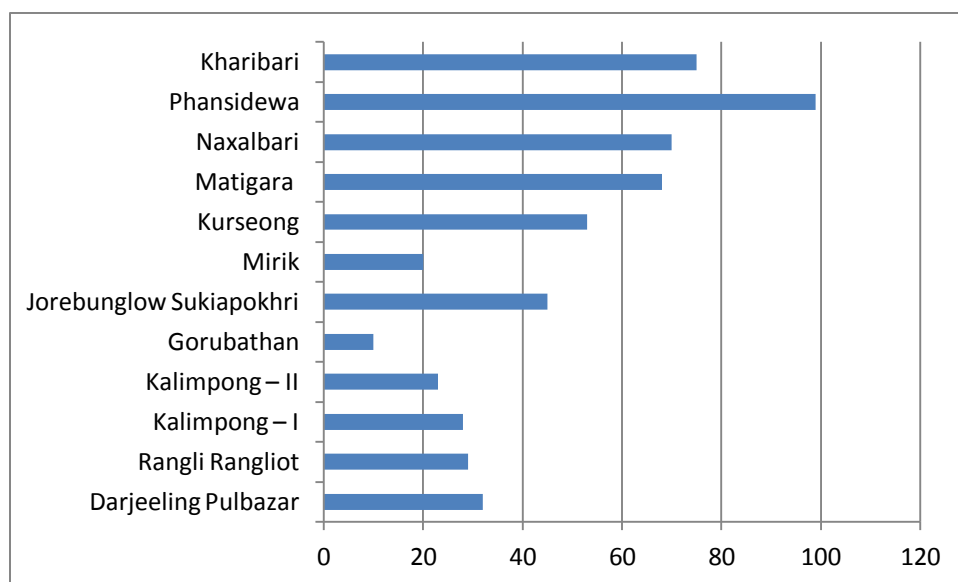


Figure 4.14 No. of Villages (Darjeeling district) that can be accessed by metalled roads, Census 2001



From the above diagram it is evident that most villages under the hill subdistricts lack access through paved roads and metalled roads.

4.3 Environmental Degradation :

The geology of Darjeeling Hills which is of recent rock structure and the heavy precipitation during monsoon months has made this region prone to landslides. The erosion of the hills becomes even pronounced with anthropogenic actions like terrace farming, excessive logging (for timber), construction of Dams (under the NHPC programme). Moreover the region is placed at IV on the seismic scale (on a scale of I – V in increasing order of proneness) and such activities without regard for the geology of the region will only make things worse. Although a District Disaster Management Authority is in place with a state disaster management policy, efforts towards prevention of landslides has been lackadaisical. No clear response was given for an RTI enquiry regarding disaster efforts made by Darjeeling based NGO ‘Save the Hills’. (Telegraph 9th January, 2009)

4.4 Lack of People participation

One of the apparent examples exhibiting lack of people participation and extreme bureaucratization is process of Hill Area Development Programme. The programme is a central scheme that has identified certain regions due to their distinct geography as well as socio-economic backwardness. The programme has been in operation since the fifth five year plan to supplement to efforts of the state government in the development process of the identified districts. Darjeeling also figures as one of beneficiaries under the HADP programme.²⁷ The Programme emphasizes on eco management and restoration with sustainable development with focused attention on the local needs of the region. The guidelines clearly mentions the importance of community participation. The hill region however portray a different picture. The HADP is implemented under the DGHC. Post the dissolution of DGHC from prioritization of schemes to the implementation is done by the executive officers and line department heads. There is no clear demarcation of funds sector wise at

²⁷ Other regions include North Kachhar and Karbi Anglong in Assam, Nilgiri district in Tamil Nadu and 175 talukas of Western Ghat region (Maharashtra(6), Karnataka (40), Kerala(36) and Tamil Nadu (33) and Goa (3).

the line department level. According to the HADP report 2011, there was only minimal participation with no role of NGO's in Darjeeling region for implementation of the scheme. The role of panchyats was completely absent as no elections were held post the dissolution of the DGHC. Emergency construct cell, communication, Education, engineering, rural electrification, Parks and Gardens were identified as the priority sector by the DGHC administrator. The list is evident of the fact many sectors related to forestry, eco tourism, agricultural activities have been neglected. HADP report clearly states that no beneficiary oriented programme was implemented under the schemes.

4.5 Threats

4.5.1 Crisis of governance

As already outlined in the earlier chapters DGHC suffered from poor administration, no accountability, lack of transparency and poor performance. For years no proper auditing of accounts took place, the West Bengal government which has the onus of conducting monitoring neglected it resulting in the current state of infrastructural facilities, water woes , tourism, tea gardens etc

Improper channelling of funds and misallocation has been pointed out but at the same time intermittent flow of funds is also responsible for the failure. Several financial reports of the state government indicates severe cash crunch faced by the West Bengal State government. In March 2009 the West Bengal Hill Affairs demanded a sum of more than two hundred crores for the socio, economic and cultural activities of the hill areas despite release of funds in 2008-09 for both

planned and non plan expenditure for sectors like tourism, education, sports, communication (focus on roads), rural electrification etc. Despite such allocation, no substantial development has taken place so far; in addition water woes remained unaddressed.²⁸

The DGHC accord as mentioned in the previous chapters is rife with loopholes. There is no actual devolution of powers such that DGHC does not even have a constitutional status, it has been recognized only by the state legislature. The accord grants DGHC with mere management and supervisory powers while depriving it of subjects like tea, timber, tourism and forest which are major sources of income. For instance even though the educational sector as a subject was handed down to DGHC, actual executive control over secondary and higher secondary education still lies with West Bengal State government. DGHC's weakness is highlighted in its inability to even grant permanent employment status. Formation of Siliguri Municipal Corporation has seen to be a major blow to DGHC's existence despite several areas under DGHC's jurisdiction. West Bengal State government has strategically pushed for its establishment as the helm of economic affairs of the hills lies in Siliguri.

It is important to note that DGHC was not offered to give people more autonomy or out of concern for the socio-economic condition of the hill people but rather a stop gate for regional demands. This brings us to the debate regarding crisis of governability which has strained relations between State and local government. Autonomy or statehood is not the end of it all. Several

²⁸ Hill Affairs Department Budget Speech 2009-10

opinions in this regard profess that there is a need for good leadership and administration that is devoted to safeguarding of human rights, accountability, transparency, efficiency and democratic practices. Mere granting of state hood is part of the solution not a complete one. Thus decentralization is an important part of the recipe for informed and affective development but not a sufficient one.

4.5.2 Lack of People Participation

Planning from above as seen in the previous chapters has been rendered failure. The establishments setup in the name of participatory development were neither affective nor efficient which has resulted in the underdevelopment of the hill economy. This underdevelopment is being perpetuated by the peripheral approach to Darjeeling hill subdistricts vis a vis Siliguri subdistrict that lies in the terai belt. Despite being under the purview of Darjeeling district administratively it has a municipal corporation as well as a development board of its own , Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Board.

These issues have often been raised by local political parties that has resulted in violence and disruption of the day to day life of the people in the hill districts. Recent killing of Madan Tamang (leader of opposition party Akhil Bhartiya Parishad) in broad day light threatens to pull back the hill subdistricts in a state of anarchy that was witnessed during the 1980's.

4.5.3 Poor Infrastructure

the lack of infrastructure poses threat to the development of the hills. The loopholes in the DGHC accord that had given a free hand to DGHC as well as the West Bengal government to run the economy of the hills according to their whims and fancies is evident in the neglect in terms of infrastructure particularly the scarcity of water and electricity. This may undermine the true potential of these sectors in adding to the source of hill economy and employment potential seen in terms of the plight of tea laborers. The deteriorating quality and lack of funds in education are quite striking which poses a threat to human resource development of the hills. Lack of employment opportunities has also caused exodus of youth to metropolitan cities in search of jobs which has often resulted in underemployment.

Conclusion

The above indicators ranging from socio economic to infrastructural facilities give an overarching view of the state of affairs in hill regions. Cinchona plantation, tea, tourism are the strengths of Darjeeling hill district. However threats in the form of poor governance that involves bureaucratization, lack of transparency and accountability have and would continue to have negative cumulative effects on the development of the hill subdistricts. Lack of participation and poor infrastructure have till date left untapped the true potential of the hill economy. These threats need to be averted to harness true potential of Darjeeling's hill economy which would be beneficial to the natives.

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Telegraph 5th December, 2009

Telegraph 14th February 2012

Conclusion

Harnessing the development potential of a region is very much dependent upon the political will which is often manifested in the efficient operation of institutions of governance. Institutions of governance here denotes the spheres of public participation that enables compromise and contestation between the government and public which results in logical solutions to local problems. In the context of Darjeeling, although institutions of autonomy in the form of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and presently North Bengal Development Board have been established, lack of participation of the people has rendered it a failure.

“Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” – Lord Acton

This statement is well reflected during the Subhash Ghising tenure when he drove the people of Darjeeling district towards a fruitless movement and left the socio-economic concerns untouched. Post the historic signing of the 1988 Darjeeling Hill Council Accord, it was not the hills that gained autonomy but Subhash Ghising who used finances according to his whims and fancies which ultimately spelt doom for DGHC administration.

. The new state government under Mamta Banerjee has sought solution in the setting up of Gorkha Territorial Administration(GTA). However the arrangement has been caught up in technical and political wrangles that does not seem to be resolved anytime soon. The Shyamal Committee report in determining the jurisdiction of the GTA had been rejected by the GJMM. The report suggested the inclusion of five *mouzas*²⁹ two in Siliguri and three of Darjeeling under the GTA as against the demand of 398 *mouzas* of Terai and Doars region. Recent developments however indicate that GTA arrangement for the hill subdistricts of Darjeeling has been accepted with elections due on July 29th 2012. It would be fairly early to predict the outcome of the

²⁹ A group of villages is a mouza. It was taken as an administrative unit while delineating the jurisdiction of GTA.

arrangement. However prescriptions regarding to achieve the sole objective that is participation and development is possible.

The threats mentioned in the fourth chapter has a large potential to undermine development. Each of the threats cannot be dealt by an umbrella approach, however the common ingredient that will resolve the issue partially.\

Governance practices

Nature of Participation

Grassroot level participation is important but it must be accompanied with empowerment of the natives. Here role of Non governmental institutions becomes vital but such organizational workers themselves must be intuned with the local issues. Creating awareness and educating the people of their rights and the entire process of any development work must be made part of participation. Only a vigilant public can actively participate in the development process

Thus participation of political parties or particular sections to be involved in this matter in neither nor healthy for development of the region, all communities must be involved equally for the cause as well as successful functioning of the governing institutions and break the link of underdevelopment of the hill sub districts so that its full economic potential is realized.

Transparency and accountability is also critical to for proper implementation of development programmes. This would further enable a critical appraisal of the institutions of governance. Apart from constructive criticism of the public , self appraisal is also very important in the form of reports and audits. Making them public the next corresponding step. Right to Information here can prove to be an important step.

Harnessing Darjeeling's Potential

Education: Proper survey and data base is the first requirement. Most government schools lack proper sanitation and drinking facilities. Infrastructure interms of furniture, blackboards, playgrounds etc are in poor condition. Steady flow of funds both for higher and primary education.

Agriculture: Floriculture needs to be emphasized. Supply chains need to be established for which good infrastructure interms of roads and transport need to be established. Weeekly markets need proper organized and support facilities interms of concrete shops need to be provided . Schemes associated with agricultural activities need proper implementation with rainwater harvesting to grapple with problem of lack of proper water supply.

Forestry: The menace of black marketing in timber and other forest needs to be stopped. Afforestation and forest management need to be promoted vigorously for a sustainable environment. Activities of NGO as well as other environmental groups in schools must be encouraged.

Tourism promotion: Although tourist attraction lay a plenty in Darjeeling maintenance and management of funds immediate attention. Here again proper roads play a major role. Inaddition a proper motor stand facility where taxis and tourist buses could be parked is required which is lacking in all three subdistricts. The funds must be used to enhance civic amenities for the tourists particularly toilet facilities which is still lacking.

Proper construction of roads is essential to increase accessibility and fulfill above mentioned targets. Construction o hospitals with adequate staff is another area which must be looked after so that emergency cases could handled easily instead of rushing to Siliguri.

Thus it is a combination of good governance and social and infrastructural services that will to an extent help commence and sustain development of Darjeeling region.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The West Bengal Act XIII of 1988

Signing of Darjeeling Hill Council Agreement

Chapter I

Preliminary

Definitions 2(i) 'hill areas' means the territory comprising the three subdivision of the district of Darjeeling, namely, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and includes the following mouzas in the subdivision of Siliguri of that district -:

1. Lohargarh Tea Garden
2. Lohargarh Forest
3. Rangmohan
4. Barachenga
5. Panighata
6. Chota Adalpur
7. Paharu
8. Sukna Forest
9. Sukna Part I
10. Pantapati I
11. Mahanadi Forest
12. Champasari Forest
13. Salbari Chhat Part II

Appendix B

Text of Memorandum of Settlement

1) *On Separate state of Gorkhaland*

Part (iv) The executive powers of the Council will cover the following subjects, subject to the provisions of the Central and State laws :

1. The allotment, occupation or use or setting apart of land other than any land which is a reserved forest, for the purpose of agriculture or grazing or for residential or other non agricultural purposes or for any other purposes likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village, locality or town;
2. The management of any forest, not being reserved forest;
3. The use of any canal or watercourse for the purpose of agriculture;
4. Agriculture;
5. Public health and sanitation, hospitals and dispensaries,
6. Tourism;
7. Vocational training;
8. Public works-development and planning;
9. Construction of all roads except national highways and state highways;
10. Transport and development of transport;
11. Management of burials and burial grounds, cremation and cremation grounds;

12. Preservation, protection and improvement of livestock and prevention of animal diseases, veterinary training and practice;
13. Pounds and prevention of cattle trespass;
14. Water that is to say water supply, irrigation and canals, drainage and embankment, water shortage;
15. Fisheries;
16. Management of markets and fairs not being already managed by Municipal authorities, Panchayat Samiti or Gram Panchayats;
17. Education- primary, secondary and higher secondary;
18. Works, lands and building vested in or in the lawful possession of the Council
19. Small scale and cottage industry

