"The one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once-by even a glimpse- would not give that glimpse for the shows of the rest of the world combined.” Mark Twain

Nestled among the rolling mountains with the glistening snowcapped with Indra’s Abode, Mt Kanchanjunga (28, 146 feet), the king of mountains, towering over the sky, Darjeeling fondly called “Queen of the Hills” has its own glory as a very beautiful hill station in India having rich biodiversity of international importance. The name Darjeeling is thought to be a derivation of “dorje” the precious stone or ecclesiastical scepter, which is emblematic of the thunderbolt of Sakhra (Indra) and of “ling”, a place. It means therefore the place of the Dorje, the majestic thunderbolt of the Lamaist religion. In Sanskrit, the name, derived from the world ‘Durjay Ling’, means ‘Siva of invincible prowess, who rules the Himalayas’. This is the land of the muscatel flavoured Darjeeling Tea revered by connoisseurs across the globe and world heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway where the century old miniature steam engine still chugs uphill. Certainly Darjeeling in this post modern era comprises of six T’s- Tea, Timber, Tourism, Toy Train, Tiger Hill, and Trekker’s Paradise.
2.1 Physical Description

2.1.1 Position and Boundaries

The district of Darjeeling lies between 26.31’ and 27.13’ North Latitude and between 87.59’ and 88.53’ east Longitude. Its total area is 11,99.7 square miles.

In shape, the district is an irregular triangle. The district is located in the northern most part of West Bengal and is bordered by Sikkim in North, Bhutan in East, Nepal in West and the districts of Jalpaiguri and Purnea (Bihar) in South.

The district consists of a portion of outlying hills of the lower Himalayas and a stretch of territory lying along the base of the hills known as Terai. The altitude ranges from 300 feet (Terai) to 12,000 feet in the hills.

Figure 2 Map of Darjeeling District
2.1.2 Geology

The geological formation of the Darjeeling District consists of unaltered sedimentary rocks, confined to the hills on the south and different grades of metamorphic rocks over the rest of the area. The outcrops of the various rocks form a series of bands more or less parallel to the general line of the Himalaya and dipping one beneath the other into the hills. The mountains are made of folded rocks piled one over another by a series of North-South horizontal compression movements and tangential thrusts which folded the strata on the sea floor and caused their upheaval by stages. (LSS O’Malley, 1907).

The foothills, north of the Terai, are made of well cemented and more compact alluvial detritus consisting of soft, grey, massive sandstones, mottled clays, mudstones, shales, conglomerates and subordinate bands of earthy limestone and lignite. (LSS O’Malley, 1907).

2.1.3 Rivers

The rivers of the district drain ultimately to the south, though the west to East Ridge across it causes a series of Tista tributaries rising on its northern face to flow northwards and others flow east or west before joining the main river. River Tista which rises in a glacier in North Sikkim (21, 000 feet) above sea-level is the major river of the district. It forms the boundary of the district with Sikkim from Rangpoo to the point where it joins with the Great Rangit flowing in from Western Sikkim. From that point it lies entirely in the Darjeeling District until it leaves it at Sevok, ultimately entering the Brahmaputra in Rangpur District. Other rivers are Rammam, Little Rangit, Relli, Rambhi, Chel, Rangnu, Mahanadi, Balasan, Mechi, Jaldhaka etc.

2.1.4 Climate and Weather

Two of the seasons - spring and autumn – are congenial seasons. Heavy rainfall and mist occur in monsoon period. Winter is very cold. The southern parts of the District (Terai areas) are at low altitude and are directly affected by conditions which regulate weather in the plains. Climate in the more northerly parts of the district depends on the extent to which the shape
and heights of the local mountain masses impede or enhance the southerly influences.

The annual average rainfall varies from 100 inches to 220 inches in different parts of the district. During the cold weather months very little rain falls in the Darjeeling hills. The hills above 6,000 feet receive snowfall in winter during the period December to March.

2.1.5 Temperature

Temperature varies with altitudes. In the Tarai and Doars region maximum temperature is more than 100 degree F and lowest minimum 36.0 degree F. In the hills it is 87.0 degree F maximum and lowest at freezing and below freezing point. (LSS O’Malley, 1907).

2.2 Historical Background

2.2.1 Darjeeling

The history of Darjeeling begins from the third decade of the nineteenth century. The District was a part of the dominations of the raja of Sikkim. In 1706 what is now Kalimpong sub-division was taken by the Bhutanese from the Raja of Sikkim. In 1780 the Gorkhas invaded Sikkim and during the next thirty years they overran Sikkim as far east as the Tista and conquered and annexed the Terai. War broke out between the Gorkhas and the East India Company which was ended by the Treaty of Titaliya in 1917. The Gorkhas had to cede to the Company the tract wrested by them from the Rajah of Sikkim. The Company restored the whole territory between Mechi and Tista to the Rajah and guaranteed his sovereignty. In return the Raja was bound to refer all disputes between his subjects and those of neighbouring states to the arbitration of the British Government.

Ten years after a dispute arose between Sikkim and Nepal with regard to their frontiers. The British Government deputed two Officers, Capt. Lloyd and Mr. Grant in 1828 to deal with the dispute. General Lloyd spent six days in February, 1829 in “the old Gurkha Station of Darjeeling” and was attracted by its advantages as a site for a Sanitarium.

Mr. Grant accordingly reported to the Governor General Lord William Bentick and also recommended its occupation for Military purposes as the
key of a pass into Nepal. General Lloyd was directed to start negotiations with Raja of Sikkim and he succeeded in obtaining the execution of a deed grant by the Raja of Sikkim on 1st February, 1835. This was an unconditional cession of what was then an uninhabited mountain.

This deed of grant, which is commendably short, runs as follows:

"The Governor-General having expressed his desire for the possession of the hills of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I the Sikkimputtee Rajah out of friendship for the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India, that is, all the land south of the Great Runjeet river, east of the Balasur, Kahail and Little Runjeet rivers, and west of the Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers."

This was an unconditional cession of what was then a worthless uninhabited mountain; but in 1841 the government granted the Raja an allowance of Rs. 3,000 as compensation, and raised the grant to Rs. 6,000 in 1846. (L S S O'Malley, 1907).
In 1836, General Lloyd and Dr. Campbell were sent to Darjeeling to explore and investigate the climate and the capabilities of the place. Plan for developing the site as a Sanitarium was finally decided and by 1940 a road was constructed from Pankhabari, a hotel was started at Kurseong and another at Darjeeling.

Dr. Campbell, British President in Nepal, was transferred to Darjeeling in 1839 as superintendent. By 1852 an excellent Sanitorium, a Hill Corps for maintenance of order and improvement of communication, no less than 70 European houses, bazaar and jail were established. Experimental cultivation of Tea and Coffee was introduced.

The Terai area was annexed to this District in 1850. Terai and the hill territory annexed from Sikkim were managed by the Superintendent who from 8th May, 1850 was called the Deputy Commissioner.

There were still frontier troubles with Bhutan. All negotiation being fruitless Govt. of India decided to annex Duars and Kalimpong. Small expeditions were sent to Bhutan in 1864 and in 1865 a Treaty was concluded by which Bhutan ceded to the British Bengal Duars and Kalimpong for return of an annual subsidy. The Kalimpong area was first notified as a Sub-Division under the Deputy Commissioner of the Western Duars District but in 1866 it was transferred to the District of Darjeeling.

When meter-gauge railway of North Bengal State Railway was extended to Siliguri, it was transferred from Jalpaiguri to the district of Darjeeling in 1880 and made a Sub-Division in 1907. Kurseong had already begun to develop and hence in 1891 it was made the headquarters of a new Sub-Division. Thus, the four Sub-Divisions; Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri were created and this district reached its present dimension.

2.2.2 Kurseong

Kurseong is a hill station (and sub-divisional town) situated in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Located at an altitude of 1458 metres (4864 ft), area covered is 5.05 sq. km; Kurseong is just 30 km from Darjeeling. Average annual rainfall is 160 inches. It has a pleasant climate throughout the year and the winters are not as severe as Darjeeling.
The local name of Kurseong is called "Kharsang" which in the Lepcha language means "Land of the White Orchids". Kurseong was ceded to the British Empire by the Chogyal (monarch) of Sikkim in 1835. Later in 1880, the small hamlet became a tourist destination for the colonial authorities and was a preferred place for sanatoriums where the sick would recuperate. Another important place within the subdivision is Mirik which is a picturesque tourist spot nestled in the serene hills of Darjeeling. The name Mirik comes from the Lepcha words Mir-Yok meaning "place burnt by fire". Mirik has become a tourist destination for its climate, natural beauty and accessibility. Mirik is located at 26.9°N 88.17°E. It has an average elevation of 1495 metres (4904 feet). The climate is pleasant all the year round with temperatures of a maximum of 30°C in summer and a minimum of 2°C in winter. Rainfall is about 279.4 cm annually.

2.2.3 Kalimpong

There are two spurs of the Himalayas in Darjeeling District, West Bengal, one in the west running from north to south. On this spur the beautiful hill resort, “the queen of hill stations” called Darjeeling is situated. The other spur is in the east across the Teesta River. On the lower spur is Kalimpong, a small but attractive hill station.

The word Kalimpong in Tibetan means “the stockade of Kings Ministers” form the two Tibetan words “Kalon” meaning Kings Ministers and “Pong” meaning stockade. Some scholars translate “Pong” as Assembly, in which case Kalimpong would mean “The Assembly of Kings Ministers”. It is also called “Kalibong” or the black spur by the hill people. “Kalibong” in local dialects stands for “Kaulim” a fibrous plant which grows in abundance in this region. The meaning that has found the most favour, however, is the Lepcha meaning of the name – “ridge where we play”. It is said that Lepcha tribesman used to organize field sports while not engaged in agricultural pursuits – hence the name.

Situated at a height of 1,182 metres / 3,456 ft. and between the latitudes 26°51’ & 27°12’N and longitudes 88°28’ & 88°53’E Kalimpong has a very mild and temperate climate. During the summers the maximum temperature is about 27°C and the minimum about 17°C while in the winters
the maximum temperature is around 17°C and the minimum about 6°C. The average rainfall is about 100 inches to 220 inches.

Figure 4 Kalimpong Town

The early recorded history of Kalimpong is small. The area which now comprises the sub-division of Kalimpong originally belonged to the Maharaja of Sikkim and the original inhabitants were the Lepchas. The Bhutanese took over Kalimpong in 1706 and it remained in their possession till 1865 when by the “Treaty of Sinchula” the Doors and Kalimpong was ceded to India. The period 1706-1865 is the record of wars, first between the Nepalese and the Sikkim Maharaja, and then between the East India Company and Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. By a process of adjustment and elimination the eastern boundary of Nepal was continued to the Mechi River, Sikkim lost the Darjeeling district and the Darjeeling Terai, and Bhutan ceded the Duars and Kalimpong to the East India Company. The hill region of this part of West Bengal with its rich cultural and religious heritage, the fascinating scenic beauty and wonderful flora and fauna has immense tourist potential.

Kalimpong was first known as the Dalingkot sub-division of Western Duars District and in 1866 it was transferred to Darjeeling District. The area of the sub-division is 1056.5 sq. km and is bounded in the north by Sikkim
and in the east by Bhutan. The development and growth of the sub-division was rapid from 1865.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in the sub-division. There are a few tea estates, and most of these are situated in the foothills about the Duars. The people who are a painstaking and successful lot in agriculture, use the plough with effect; and where the land is steep, which is prepared to cut and build terraces. The crop grown includes maize (Makia or Bhutta), Millet (Merwa or Koda), Buck-wheat (Phapar) and rice. Chinchona, Potatoes, Oranges, Cardamoms besides a large variety of vegetables are grown with success. The economy of the hill area is, however, ill-balanced and the local population economically weak. In the town areas the people are engaged in business or are engaged in government services.

2.2.4 Siliguri

Siliguri lies in the terai or the foothills of Darjeeling District. The track was seized by the British in 1850 from the Raja of Sikkim. In 1891 it had been absorbed into the Kurseong Sub-division. Later in 1907 Siliguri was made the head quarter of the terai which was previously in Hanskhawa near Phansidewa. It was separated from Kurseong Sub-division making it the fourth sub-division of Darjeeling district.

2.3 Demographic Profile

The district of Darjeeling has got a mixed population of Nepalese, Lepchas and Bhutias. The Lepchas are the aboriginal inhabitants of this hilly region. In 1835 when Darjeeling was made a British territory many Bhutias from Bhutan and Nepalese from Nepal migrated to this place. Dr. Campbell, in 1850 stated the number of population to be 10,000 which in 1869 increased to 22,000. (LSS O'Malley, 1907). For administrative purposes the Bengalese and for business purposes Marwaris and Biharis also thronged in the hills. In the plains in addition to Adibasis like Rajbansis, Mundas, Orauns and Santhalis are also found along with Bengalese.

The Nepalese are in great majority in the Hills. Nepalese form the majority consist of several tribes, viz. Brahmins, Chettris, Newars, Tamangs, Rais, Mangars, Limbus, Gurungs, Kamis, Damais, Sherpas, Sarkis,
Sunwars, etc. The provisional total population of the district according to 2011 census is 18,42,034, of which 9,34,796 are males and 9,07,238 are females. The total literacy of the district as per 2011 census is 72%.

The block-wise distribution of population in hilly areas according to 2011 census (provisional) is as follows;

**Table 1 Block-wise distribution of population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Name of the Block</th>
<th>No. of Gram Panchayats</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Darjeeling-Pulbazar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rangli-Rangliot, Takdah</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jorebunglow-Sukhiapokhari</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kurseong</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mirik</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>23,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kalimpong-I</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kalimpong-II</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gorubathan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31,029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population in Municipal towns in hilly areas according to 2011 census (provisional) is as follows;

**Table 2 Municipality-wise distribution of population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Name of the Municipality</th>
<th>No. of Wards</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Darjeeling Municipality</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kalimpong Municipality</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kurseong Municipality</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mirik Municipality</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.4 Cultural Background**

Historically, the Nepalese can broadly be divided into two different races – the Aryans and the non-Aryans or Mongoloid, locally distinguished as Tagadhari (sacred thread wearer) and Matawali (who drink wine).
Generally Brahmins and Chhetris fall in the first category and the rest in the second.

The Nepalese as a whole are animists, having a strong faith in Shamanism. At present most of the Nepalese profess Hinduism and Lepcha, Sherpa, Bhutia and Tamang follow Buddhism and Christianity. Most of the festivals are celebrated with ritualistic gaiety, either as per the Hindu tradition or in their animistic way. Even the festivals, which are based on and related to Hinduism and Buddhism, are also celebrated according to their traditional way.

Most of the Hindus and Buddhist festivals follow the lunar calendar. The ceremonies though originated from their religious beliefs, they tag it with social and cultural traits of their own. In keeping with the change in time and place some of them have met with the extinction while other on the contrary go on adding and or receiving the old ones. Though each and every month of the year witnesses some festivals or other, special mention may be made of the following;

2.4.1 Pailo Baisakh
Pailo Baisakh is the first day or the New Year’s Day. The Samvat calendar is celebrated in mid April by the Nepalese as common festival irrespective of caste, category and religion. They observe it with feasting, singing and dancing.

2.4.2 Lhosar
Losar is celebrated by the Indian Tibetans as per the Tibetan calendar the Buddhist New Year sometimes in March with the same jest. The Tamangs observe the same as Sonam Lochhar in earlier February. The Sherpas, the Dukpas also observe Lhosar in their ownways in different months. The Lepchas’ New Year is called Namboon and newars’ Maha-Puja.

2.4.3 Buddha Jayanti
The birthday of Buddha falls on the fullmoon day of Baisakh (April-May). Buddhist and Hindus also celebrated it with much enthusiasm.
Buddhists also make a rally with Holy Scriptures on their heads and later offer prayers in the Goompas.

2.4.4 Asarko Pandhra
The 15th day of Asar month is observed as festival. By this day, it is supposed to finish the planting of paddy; if no paddyfield one should be smeared with muds at least. On this day all use to take dahi-chiura i.e. curd and beaten rice to get salvation. It is generally observed by the villagers.

2.4.5 Sawanie Sankranti
Shravan Sankranti is the first day of Shravan month. It is also the feast day of common villagers. In the evening, people burnt off the burning firehood shouting ‘go away scabies’. The next day they won’t enter the field.

2.4.6 Sawane Purney
Shravan Purnima is one of the sacred ceremonies of Nepalese. The Tagadharies get the sacred thread worshipped by the Brahmins. It is also known as Janai Purney, Risi Purney or Raksha Bandan. Nepali tradition the thread is got tied by the Brahmans unlike the plains Hindus who get it tied by sisters.

2.4.7 Teej
Teej is also an important festivals of Nepalese especially that of tagadharies. It falls on the third day of bright fortnight of Bhadra (Aug-Sept). Generally the women folk keep fast on this day for the good health and longevity of their husbands.

2.4.8 Guru Purnima
Guru Purnima falls on the fullmoon day of the Bhadau (Bhadra) month is a special day for Nepali Shamanism. This day is dedicated to Gurus (Religious Teachers). The community priests like dhami, jhakri, mata, bijuwa, phedangma in their traditional attires offer prayers with drums and cymbals through out the night. In some places they lead a procession invoking the deities, playing with musical instruments.
2.4.91 Dasain or Durga Puja

It is the most important festival of the Nepalese. It falls on Ashoj (Sept-Oct). It is a fortnight long celebration. The seventh day is called Phulpati on this day a colourful cultural procession led by a band of Naumati Baja takes place, the eight day, the astami and the ninth day, the Navami are meant for sacrifices. From the tenth day called Dasami the Tika starts. The elders put acheta (the rice-grain mixed with curd), plain or coloured on the foreheads of juniors in age or relation and showers blessings. People and relatives from far and near get together on this occasion and it lasts upto full moon.

2.4.92 Tihar

Tihar or Diwali or Aunsi (Amavasya) comes right after fifteen days of past full moon. It is shorter than dasain lasts for five days only. First comes Kag (crow) tihar, then Kukur (dog) tihar and comes gai (cow) tihar, the day of worshipping cows and night of burning lamps all around the houses. The women folk sing Bhailo roaming door to door throughout the night. The next day is Guru Tihar. The bulls are worshipped in the morning. The male members start playing Deosi that goes for two days.

The fifth day is Bhai tihar or Bhatri Dutiya. Sisters with ceremonial rites put tika of colourful powders on the foreheads of their brothers and offer merrygold garlands. Selroti is the cultural bread of tihar.

2.4.93 Maghay Sakrati

Also called Makar Sankranti is the first day of Magh month. People take bath early in the morning going to river or near by springs. The day is celebrated taking boiled roots of various edible creaper plants.

2.4.94 Chaitay Dasain

It is supposed to be the original dasain and, or the celebration of Rama’s birth day as Ramnavami, the precious day, Nepalese offer prayers and worship Rama in their respective homes or in the mandirs. This day, they observe fast and the next day, the dashami or dasain is celebrated with feast.
2.4.95 Sansari Puja

It is a community festival irrespective to caste and creed. It is a residual of shamanistic belief. It is a kind of worship of nature or the earth or world (sansar) which is observed in the jungle by erecting stone as idols, planting bamboos and fastening the dhajas (dhuajas) of different colours. Fowls and animals are also sacrificed. It has no particular date. It is done sometimes in chait and baisakh generally on the fifth day of lunar month.

Besides these there are various festivals like Kuse Aunsi, Nagpanchami, Janmasthami, Shivaratri, Saraswati Puja, Saga Dawa, Christmas (Bada Din), Basanta Panchami (Holi). Some of them are observed with great delights and some for just traditional sake.

2.5 Religion

The Nepalese of Darjeeling profess Hinduism, Buddhism and Christainity. Whether Hindus or Buddhist or pre-conversion Christians they were all animistic which can still be traced in their dharti (earth) and pitri (ancestor) pujas. They offer the first plucked corn, cereals and vegetables to earth and ancestors as nuagi (new food).

As for institutionalized religion most of the Nepalese adopted Hinduism but not so much rigorous than that of Indian plains and Nepal. Next comes to the Buddhism which is professed by Tibetans, Sherpas, Bhutias, Lepchas and Tamangs. A few Newars and Gurungs have also adopted this religion. Hinduism and Buddhism were the prominent religion prevalent among the early native settlers of this region.

Christainity was an alien religion for these communities in the hills. It was only after the advent of Christain missionaries a number of Hindus and Buddhists adopted this new faith. But it is the most striking feature of the Nepali society that there is no rigid compartment as to separate these three religious communities in social festivities, cultural functions and even in matrimonial relations. In Darjeeling town there is one religious point called Mahakal (observatory hill) where Hindus and Buddhist offer worship sitting together before the common idol where the Hindu prist and Buddhist prist too sit face to face.
In the terai areas there had been a large immigration of animistic tribes from Chotanagpur whose adoption of Hindu practices is slight. Rajbanshis have become hinduised yet they follow their own customs in regard to birth and burial, food and marriage etc. A number of Bengalese come from Bangladesh profess their own Islamic faith. But with the Nepalese of the district the dilemma is between the terms Hindu and Buddhist or Christian and with Lepchas it is between animist and Buddhist or Christian.

2.6 Languages

The major language of the hills is Nepali and it is the lingua franca of the whole district even that of Doors, the Northern part of Jalpaiguri district. Only some Indianised Tibetans speak Tibetan among them. In remote area some Lepcha and Limboo family converse in their own languages within their family members.

Nepali is one of the official languages of West Bengal but it is limited in the hills only under the Bengali language. Nepali is recognized by the constitution of India as one of the major languages of India. Nepali is taught from primary level to post graduate level. Even the research work is done in this language.

In the terai area Bengali is the official language. However Nepali is the medium of learning for Nepali students. The North Bengal University for the Darjeeling District is situated in the Terai region which is the apex institution of the Nepali language and literature. A good number of Lepcha and Bhutias have enriched the Nepali literature with outstanding poems, fictions and plays.

In the hills, Hindi is understood and spoken by all the Nepali flok and the Bengali is by the elite group only.

2.7 Economy

Economy of the Darjeeling hills depends mainly on three Ts, i.e., tea, timber and tourism. Besides these a small amount of revenue can be had from agriculture, sericulture, floriculture and hydro-power. Cultivation of rice and pulses in the lower slopes, growing, cardamons, ginger, and oranges
are taken as cash crops, though in small scale. Sericulture and floriculture is carried on in Kalimpong. Orchids are grown in Kalimpong and Takdha. Tapping hill streams minor hydro-electricity plants are installed at Sidrabong, below Darjeeling town and at Phaji, near Kurseong and a bigger project has been set up at Rambhang valley.

Large industries in the hills are virtually nil. Even cottage industries like paper making, juice making, tanning and weaving have been wound up on various grounds. The hill depends mainly on tea industry. Darjeeling tea is a world famous beverage. It is renowned for its peculiarly fine flavor and taste. Tea plantations in the hill was begun in 1850 by Dr. Campbell, the then Superintendent (present District Magistrate) of Darjeeling. Later it was extended upto the plains also. The hill has China variety bushes and the plains Assamese variety. A good hybrid from these two varieties had proved most suitable all rounds. In some tea gardens Manipur varieties were also tried but the tea produced was almost coarse and rank in flavor. However these three varieties, i.e., Chinese, Assamese and Manipuri are the principal varieties of tea at present cultivated. The tea industry fetches a good foreign exchange and offers a huge employment to the local people.

Under plantation comes Cinchona plantation also. In this district it was started in 1860 by Dr Anderson. First it was started at Lebong in a small nursery. Then it was shifted to the Ranju valley at Rambi, in the south-eastern slop of Senchel and later extended upto Reshep and Mangpu in further south-east and Labdah and Sitong of Reyang valley. A factory was established at Mangpu. The success in the project prompted the planters to cultivate it in Kalimpong as well. The first attempt was made at Nimbong but later it was abandoned and commenced at Monsong. At present the cinchona plantation at Mangpu and Mansong in the hills and at Rongo in the plains of Darjeeling have been carried on with great success. The object of Government in maintaining these plantations was to supply quinine to the hospitals and the people with a cheap remedy for malerial fever.

2.7.1 Agriculture

In the hills of Darjeeling, there was an actual decrease in the area under country crops as there was an extension area under tea. In the hills,
however, there had been extension of crop cultivation especially in the Kalimpong tract, as there being no extension of tea plantation barring one or two gardens in the sub-division of Kalimpong.

Agricultural produce of the hills is very few. Besides tea and cinchona, the main items are orange, cardamom, seed potatoe, ginger and vegetables. Rest like rice, wheat, sugar pulses, oils, spices are the things to be had from plains.

The Darjeeling hill is topographically non-favourable for growing stable foods. The river valleys and some areas of Kalimpong are the places where paddy, maize, millet are cultivated in small scale.

Terracing is a distinctive and important feature of hilly cultivation. Jhumming is no more in vogue in this region.

2.7.2 Horticulture

The cultivation of fruits and flowers is prospective in the hills. Oranges of Darjeeling are famous outside the district. Pear, peach, plum, guava, pineapple and jackfruit could be grown amply in this region if cultivation could be done extensively.

2.7.3 Sericulture

The credit of first introducing sericulture in the hills goes to Mr. Sutherland, the then Principal, SUMI, Kalimpong who introduced it as a subject in the institution in the year 1879. It was only in the year 1917 the Govt. tasks a positive step opening a silk-worm breeding center in Kurseong. Mulberry nursery and seed multiplication station was also set up in Kalimpong vis-à-vis; training centers in Kalimpong, Kurseong and Darjeeling were established by the Directorate of Cottage and Small Scale Industries. Besides, a Sericulture Sub-research Station, Govt. of India located at Kalimpong is doing research in sericulture.

2.7.4 Floriculture

Darjeeling hills where the temperature is moderate floriculture flourishes. Kalimpong and Takdah are ideal and promising places for orchids and gladiolis. Other lucrative flora in the hills may be cited as rose, marigold
and chrysanthemum though they are seasonal ones. Many seasonal flowers are available here to they have a megre market. Magnolias, rhododendrum and champakas are the flowering trees that grown in high altitudes but they are wild and do not come under culturation.

### 2.8 Flora and Fauna

“Such a wonderful variety of trees crowded together within such small confines can nowhere be found in the world,” says a Govt. Gazette.

Lt. Gen. Lloyed tells us that the hill sides of this station were clothed from summit to base with virgin forest, which disappeared shortly after the British came into possession of this area. When the hill territory was first acquired; the early settlers and even the Govt. Officers wanted to be benefitted from this great extent of the forest.

Their sole aim was to convert it into settlement of cantonment cultivation of crops and the plantation of tea. They did it for a considerable time. But the advent of Forest Conservancy it was put to a stop.

The forest tract of Darjeeling district was divided into three divisions – Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong. The Darjeeling division is covered by birch chestnut, oak, magnolia, maples, laurels, rhododendrons, pines and firs at an altitude of six thousand feet and up. Down below, in the Kurseong division are maples, dogwood, alder, pipli and tuny at four thousand feet and below at three thousand feet there are forest of saal, auley, ohang, seto, chanp, mithey etc, further down saal and bamboos abound. The Kalimpong division has also harboured hill type and plain type of vegetations.

The flora comprises of around 4000 species. The following is a list of some important flora of this district – Accacia, aconite, chilaune, conifers, cryptomania, katus, lampate, panisaj, pakhasaj, simal sisau etc.

Besides, there are forty types of flowering plants, out of which twenty six kinds of rhododendrons, orchids of dozens varieties, lilies and wild roses of multiple colours and sizes. The hill is proud of its rhododendrons, magnolia, chanp, chimal and orchids. The lotus tree belonging to the magnolia genus that bears large white lotus shaped flowers is really the Queen of the forest.
The district is very rich in Medicinal Plants. Their cultivation on a commercial scale is very prospective. Aconite which is largely exported for medicinal purposes grows at an elevation of 10000 feet. Magito yields colour of commerce. The Chiraito grows wild around every homestead. It is very bitter in taste and used in fever by the natives. It makes a base of various medicines too. Myrobalan (soap-nut), locally known as ‘ritha’ has detergent property. It is not only used in cleaning cloth but for medicinal purposes it is shipped by the ton. Lemon grass is grown in marshy places. It is used in many indigenous remedial purposes. The sap extracted from it makes good perfume as well.

Rawaffia serpentine is meant for high blood-pressure, insomnia and certain mental diseases. Castus spaciosus is used by the local people for cough. Luvunga scandens is used in scorpion sting. Scindaprus Officinalis is applied for rheumatism. Argerea Speriosa root is used as tonic and its leaves for wounds and skin diseases. Croton hylium is used as a purgative. Dioscorea prazeri is meant for killing lice. Cannabis sativa is famous for its narcotic properties, grows wild as a weed in this area. The root of ipecac is a well known specific for amoebic dysentery. A Swiss pharmaceutical firm is carrying on an extensive research on the podophyllum species for treatment of serious disease like cancer.

Cinchona has been elaborately dealt with under plantation. Ipecac and Cinchona earn crores of rupees from pharmaceutical manufacturers in India and abroad.

Besides these, piper longum, luvunga scandens, argyreia speciosa, crotom hylium, solamum khsiamum, terminalia helerica, t chebula, aegle marmelos, andrographis paniculata and many other plants that grow in the hills are used for medicinal purposes by the local people and the firms as well.

Due to the dense forests over and above and due to the wild life codes the animals in the hilly forest abound terribly. The common creatures are boars, deers, jackles, hares, porcupines, jungle-cats, monkeys, bears etc., and the rares are mithun, ghorals, leopards, tigers, elephants (in Kurseong divisions), wolf, panthers etc.
It is observed that there are forty-seven varieties of snakes, the chief being the python, often measuring twenty eight feet.

The hill of Darjeeling is a bird watcher’s paradise. Over five hundred fifty species abound in the area, among them the great Indian hornbills, minivets, blue-birds, doves, cuckoos, crow, eagles, falcons, woodpeckers and many more attract all the feather lovers.

2.91 Timber

In 1835 when the Darjeeling tract was acquired by the East India Company, it was fully covered with a dense forest of virgin woods. The most remarkable feature of the forest of Darjeeling, as observed by the earliest British Botanists, is the wonderful variety of species that are hardly found in the world within so small an area. But as the settlements went on increasing, it was natural that the acreage of the forest land diminished. So the first step of the Government was to introduce ‘reservation of forest’, under which the users were allowed to fell trees on payment of a fixed price per tree. It was the initial stage of collecting revenue from the forest resources. In 1870-71, Govt. of West Bengal established Forest Department and laid down that no tree should be felled except by the direct agency of the department. During the last quarter of the 19th century, the demand for firewood from the tea gardens and of sleepers from the railways increased considerably. By the time the First World War ended, great stride had been taken in the reorganization and advancement of forestry and the role of the forests in the national income of the country came to be recognized.

In the early stages, forests were considered as timber producing agencies. Experiments were done with plantation of indigenous and exotic trees. At the highest altitude, from the elevation of 8000 ft to 12000 ft forests of silver fir are grown extensively. Lower down are thickets of bamboos. At the altitude of 5000 to 6000 ft the forest of chestnut, maple, oak, birch, alder and piplee grow luxuriantly. At the level of 4000 ft tuny and other mixed forest of little value except for fuel and charcoal are found. In the foothills more valuable timbers like sal and teak are planted along with local varieties of aule champ, lampate, panisaj, plalant, buk, katus etc.
Timber of this region fetches a good amount to revenues. The subordinate source of income in Darjeeling is timber next to tea. The yearly revenue is estimated to the tune of fifty lakhs (from the hill region only) per annum against a meagre annual expenditure of nearly seventy thousand.

The exploitation of forests in Darjeeling is mainly for industrial ends or as in following purposes;

- Constructional
- Furniture
- Ply-wood
- Match-wood
- Pulp-wood
- Box-wood
- Planks & beams
- Mats & cane works etc.

### 2.92 Tourism

It is a universal admission that Darjeeling is one of the most haunted places in the world for the scenic beauty lovers and for the inner peace seekers.

The quest of spirit for ever remains the supreme effort of mankind, the inborn aspiration to something beyond the apparent emptiness of everyday life.

Nestling in grandeur and beauty of majestic Kanchanjunga, towns and villages of Darjeeling offer an eternal concept of being over the cloud. Therefore the hill of Darjeeling is a paradise for the poets and painters, saints and hikers.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore often visited the hills, twice at Darjeeling and thrice at Kalimpong. The hill to Tagore was an open book of verse and enjoyed a lot. In a letter from Kalimpong he could not but referred the hills in following words;

“….Sharada has ascended on the top of the hills; a mass of cloud is stagnant under the feet. A golden beam is shining on the diadems. For the whole day I am sitting on the arm chair. Frequently the muses’ lyre makes the entire region of my heart humming…….”
The letter avers the maxim of Goethe who writes ‘over all the mountain top is peace’. And above all, as a traveller Mark Twain sums up the tourist’s view: “the one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of the rest of the world combined.”

It is Darjeeling that offers the viewers what they look for. Men visit this place for merry making, for spiritual serenity, for nature studies, for enjoying great Himalayas, puffing Toy Trains, verdant tea gardens and for many more.

The modern age is less meant for pilgrimage but for the way faring. Tours and Tourism has become a catch word today and people perform it with quest and zest.

Darjeeling is the choicest spot for many Indian and foreign tourists. The more visitors come, the more earns the hills. Tourism is therefore a fine source of income for the local people. A good revenue is also gained by the government.

What attracts the tourists to come over the hill is its congenial climate for the plains men especially during the summer and for the Europeans the climate suits them throughout the year. LSS O’Malley has compared the average annual temperature in degrees Fahrenheit of Darjeeling and London in the following figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Maximum temperature</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Minimum temperature</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Air temperature</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As such the tourists who come to Darjeeling enjoy the weather of London. It is the choicest place of British. The colonial residues can be tasted in Darjeeling Himalayan Toy Train, terraced tea gardens, Ropeways, highways, structures and architectures.

A number of view points all over the hills allure everyone who has been long in city pant. Train, taxis, hotels, warm clothings, Nepalese and Tibetan curious are the major things that fetch good returns. Phalut and Sandakpu, Tiger Hill and observatory hills, Batasia Loop, Delo and Mirik are
the major points of attraction and the main source of income through tourism. So along with tea and timber, tourism is also an important economic factor of Darjeeling Hills.

2.93 Education

When the British took over the Darjeeling district in 1835, popular education was practically unknown. In Buddhist Monasteries, novitiate monks were taught to chant Tibetan texts and in Sanskrit tos Hindu pupils were taught Vedic rituals and literature for the priesthood. It was only the advent of the Christian Missionaries that dawned education in the hills. Not only have the Missionaries been the pioneer of education among the native population, but for the last generation practically the only organization for meeting the primary educational wants of the people of the hills has been the Church of Scotland Mission. The earliest formal schools as Scotts Mission Schools were dotted in the hills though with poor attendance.

The opening of Mission schools in the hills replaced the earlier monastic, makta and pathsalas education. These indigenous educations were confined only in respective religious circles. The mission schools imparted semi formal education at the same time scriptural teaching in sundat schools. There were no regular routine classes nor were the examinations held in order to promote for higher classes. Their aim was to make the native people just literate to read the scriptures they provided in native tongues. They emphasized the Bhutias to read Tibetans, the Lepchas to read Rong and the Nepalese to read Hindi.

The so called institutions of the indigenous system of formal education were too negligibly few to help in the spread of common and mass education among the hill people. There were no other means and agencies to propogate the values of information and education to the people living in dark of modern age, excepting the foreign missionaries.

The Darjeeling hills had joined the mainstream of national life only in 1835 when the region came under the East India Company. The period 1835-55 may be taken as the initial period of all sorts of modern activities including education in the real sense. The efforts of the British Officials and
the Missionaries that came to the hills, initiated education rather than mere literacy deserve appreciation.

The Charter of 1813 opened India to the Missionaries of England and the Charter of 1833 to the Missionaries of other countries as well. It was the German Missionaries that preceded British in the field of preaching and teaching both. Rev. William Start was the pioneer in this field. He started opening schools. As back as 1841 the first school for Lepchas, the aborigins of this region. After him Mr. C G Niebel devoted himself to school work by preparing some Lepcha primers and began to run classes in school located at tukvar. They translated scriptures like Genesis, Exodus and the gospels of Mathew, Mark and John into Lepcha. In Nepali the Gospel of Luke and acts were translated and distributed among the Lepchas and Nepalese. A dictionary of Lepcha language as well as of Nepali had also been compiled by this missionary. The first efforts in the direction of raising the masses by means of education was made by the Non-British Christian mission and Lepcha school was the earliest school known in the Darjeeling hills.

It was only 1856 that the Govt. of Bengal took interest in evening schools for the general public in Darjeeling. The establishment of Darjeeling school was a public school for Nepalese, Bhutias and Lepchas. It was an anglo-vernacular school maintained by the government. Along with the native schools European schools were also opened. Among them Loreto Convent for Girls and St. Paul’s school for boys exist till date. Schools for the hill tribes and non-hill tribes were the Bhutia Boarding School, meant for Bhutias and Lepchas, Darjeeling Zilla School, meant for all i.e. Nepalese, Bengalis, and Mohamedans and even for Bhutias and Lepchas attended it. Later Bhutia Boarding School a primary school and Zilla School a Middle English School was amalgamated and was made Darjeeling High School in the year 1891. Besides these Victoria Boy’s School (1879) and Dowhill Girls’ School (1898) both in Kurseong are the Government school.

The Govt. in opening schools was confined in Darjeeling and Kurseong proper only where as the missionaries were doing so in the villages also. Macfarlane, Turnbull and Sutherland are regarded as the premier initiators of modern education even in the terai region of Darjeeling. St. Alphonsus’ school at Kurseong, in 1888, Scottis Universities’ Mission
Institution at Kalimpong was initially a Normal School started in 1886 as a Teacher Training Center. In 1888 St. Joseph’s College in Darjeeling was opened as a Junior Cambridge Local. Girls’ Boarding School, Darjeeling opened in 1890, Girls’ School in Kalimpong in 1891, Loreto Convent and St. Pauls’ School in 1892.

The primary schools planted in the hills in the 19th Century still exist. In the 20th century many more schools were opened and many of the schools were upgraded upto higher secondary. Some new colleges were also opened. But the hill even in 21st century is lacking a University.

On the part of social, adult, vocational and technical education also the missionaries have played a vital role in the hills. As early as in 1886 Scottish Universities’ Mission Institution, Kalimpong had started Vernacular Training, popularly known as Guru Training as a Teacher’s Training Center. Some social organizations like Gorkha Dukh Nivarak Sangh (1932), Ramkrishna Vedanta Ashram (1924), and the early schools founded by the Scotts Mission invariably included night schools. Mrs Catherine Graham 1897 founded a teaching-cum-training institute for the hill girls which later became the Kalimpong Industrial School. For the hill boys Rev. Graham founded the Kalimpong Mission Industrial School around in 1900. Fr. Wary of St. Alphonsus’ School opened an Industrial section where knitting, weaving, carpentry, printing, book binding, leather work were done. After Fr. Wary’s death the industrial section was taken over by the West Bengal Government and made it Industrial Training Institute at Tung. The first school in India for physically and mentally defective children and destitute children was opened by Ms. De Laplace at Kurseong in 1918. At Kalimpong a school for the blind was opened by Mary H. Scott in 1940.

After Independence the Government took various steps in introducing vocational training centers in the hills like sericulture, epiculture, cane and bamboo training centers in Kalimpong and wool and cotton weaving center, footwear center, and carpentry training center, cutlery servicing center, nurshing and midwifery training centers for girls, Basic training institute for teaching profession besides Physical Education and youth Welfare Activities and Social Education Programme in the hill region.
A Library Training Center of certificate course was started at Kalimpong Janta College in November 1984. Also an amount of Rs. 1.50 lakhs was sanctioned for providing training in television set repair and maintenance as a scheme for vocational training for the hill youths of Darjeeling districts. Government also took various developmental steps to improve the educational status of both the urban and rural people by establishing many schools at different places in the area. For a long time Darjeeling has had a very good reputation for being an excellent educational centre.

References:


