CHAPTER I

ETHNICITY IN ITS THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The 20th Century has made us respect the fact that the world is made up of people belonging to different colours, races, religions, speaking different languages and having different cultures and traditions. One aspect that has gained a lot of salience today is the feature of ethnicity. Today, "ethnicity is at the centre of politics, nationalism and internationalism and is a potent source of challenge to the cohesion of states and of international tensions." 1 Soon after the phase of imperialism and colonialism was marked the phase of nationalism in the former colonies of Asia and Africa. But the excitement of the new found independence could not last long. People had overlooked the ethnic diversities of religion, race, caste, creed to unify the people into various nationalist movements. The ethnic diversities have again fractured into sub-national challenges to new state boundaries. Formerly it was nationalism against colonialism, now it is sub-nationalism against new states. Of course, religion, race, caste and creed can unify and divide people but these conditions do so only superficially, as compared to ethnicity, which binds people with its characteristic entirety and wholeness.

Before going any further, let us look at the meaning of ethnicity first. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ethnicity means heathendom, ethnic means a gentile nation. So originally, we can say that the term was used to mean, belonging to a nation, especially a pagan one.

Ethnicity is used to signify self-consciousness of a group of people, willing to maximize its fitness on the basis of certain common factors such as tradition, territory, language, religion and similar other attributes, thus symbolizing a sense of oneness among the concerned people. An ethnic group becomes a self conscious community, only when its leadership selectively uses ethnic symbols such as language, religion or territory for political mobilization to attain specific goals, including political power and socio-economic advancement.

Moreover, a person's identity is always with reference to a social group, with which he identifies himself and they act upon each other through
imitation and thus, develops a common consciousness, which in turn, develops its identity. The identity of an ethnic group or its members is not only a case of self-identity, but at the same time, it is also an identity which others concede, vis-à-vis their own. People's concepts about themselves are formed to a large extent by how other people see and label them. A person's ethnic identity is anchored in a network of important social relationships. To have a certain ethnic identity means they are a part of a community. People derive most of their self-esteem from their group membership. But whenever we say that a social group develops an identity, we implicitly refer to the group's relation to the other group in the wider society. Identity has no meaning on its own. It is only with respect to some other groups that a particular group distinguishes itself and therefore asserts its own identity.

APPROACHES

Talking about the approaches to ethnicity we can say that broadly, there are two approaches. Objectivists like Frederick Barth lay down that cultural markers like race, language and descent are the main determinants of an ethnic group. This view also corresponds to the primordial nature of ethnic group membership. It explains ethnic identity from a cultural and psychological point of view. The individual shares identity symbols and are emotionally attached to these symbols.

The subjectivists maintain that cultural markers are only the manifestation of ethnic identity distinctiveness and its recognition by others. According to Max Weber, "an ethnic group is one whose members entertain an ethnic subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs of both, or because of memories of colonization and migration." This also corresponds to the circumstantial approach, which says that ethnic identity emerges and continues because of dynamic socio-cultural change, which is brought about by new cleavages and new alignments of power. Structural conditions determine which ethnic symbols are to be taken into account and are to be neglected or abandoned, so as to maximize group interest. According to this approach, ethnicity is a flexible
concept and the process leading to the formation of ethnic groups is fluid and not primordial in nature.

Certain developments such as migration, economic advances and changing political systems can result in ethnic groups dividing, amalgamating, disappearing or re-appearing in completely different forms. With various changing circumstances, ethnic differentiations may be highlighted or downplayed.

The above views also correspond to two other conceptions of ethnicity (a) as a Cultural construct and (b) as a Situational construct. As a Cultural construct, ethnicity signifies a composite of symbolic markers, real or putative, used by members of an ethnic group, who define themselves and are defined by the others as having a distinctive identity. Ethnicity brings about a sense of distinctiveness based on common geographical origins, descent and culture. As a Situational construct, ethnicity signifies the emergence of ethnic consciousness, when there is multi-ethnic competitiveness. It serves as an effective mode of mobilization. It lays down that ethnic identity is created at a certain point of time in particular situation by educated elites such as politicians, folklorists, anthropologists and historians. Glazer and Moynihan say that they have become the foci for concrete political ends. In this context, we can also talk about the primordialists and the utilitarians. Primordialists define ethnicity as a natural bond, which is believed to generate among the members of an ethnic group, a sense of belongingness and an identity.

Edwards Shils is considered as the founding father of the Primordialist theory of ethnicity. According to him, "ethnicity is a primordial sentiment, which leads one to search for a naturally genetically based origin for ethnic based sentiments".3

Clifford Geertz and Harold Isaacs also define ethnicity as a primordial sentiment. Geertz (1973) defines ethnicity as a primordial sentiment but according to him, ethnicity is a historically important cultural identity that has become important in the changing socio-political context. He further says that when the autonomy of primordial communities is threatened by the present day unstable state order, then primordial sentiments may serve to define the politically significant social movements.
Isaacs (1975) also lays down that ethnic attachments are a natural kind of group affiliation. The primordialists trace ethnicity’s roots to an intrinsic tribalism, based on fundamental differences in language, race, temperament and traditions.

On the other hand are the syncretists. They are for a ‘proper linkage between the subjective and objective viewpoints. R.A. Schermerhorn lays down that an ethnic group is a collectivity existing within a larger society, having “real or fictional common ancestry”, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements, defined as the epitome of their people hood.

THEORIES OF ETHNICITY

Today there is a great deal of debate and controversy as to whether modernization brings about the resurgence or the disappearing of ethnicity. Cyril Black defines modernization as the “dynamic form that the age old process of innovation has assumed as a result of explosive proliferation of knowledge in recent centuries. It stems initially from an attitude, a belief, that society can and should be transformed, that change is desirable.”

Moreover, if we look at modernization closely, what we can say is that it can be seen in various spheres. In the political sphere, there is a highly organized bureaucracy and close rapport between state and citizens. The economic sphere is the central and determining force, in the social sphere, there is a phenomenal migration to the cities and extension of literacy and psychological opportunity for upward mobility are available to a large proportion of the population.

The question is whether with modernization, ethnic consciousness of various groups will disappear and assimilation of various groups will take place. Karl Deutsch was very much a supporter of this theory, i.e. the modernization theory. He talks about the effect of modernization on culture, the progressive assimilation of the dominant by the population of the periphery. As there are more interactions, the individuals of the periphery experience more contacts outside their local setting.
There is assimilation when the peripheral culture is made up of many local variations within a larger cultural group and this leads to homogenization. Deutsch says that "when several population clusters are united through more communications or more economic activity, the people begin to think of themselves as a country." W. Rostow (1960) also states that the market forces will marginalize ethnic affinities. Ernest Gellner also supports the homogenization thesis and says that with the rise of nationalism and industrialism, the local cultures will be replaced by unitary high cultures. The Marxists also lay down that ethnicity is bound to wither away in the face of genuine socialist revolution. Lenin, Marx and Engels are all supporters of this view.

Thus, it can be said that the modernization theory laid down that "greater political and economic interaction among people and widespread communication networks, would break down people's parochial identities with ethnic groups and replace them with loyalties of larger communities."7.

THE ASSIMILATIONIST THEORY

The credit of first articulating the Assimilationist Theory goes to Robert Park. Assimilation is a process through which groups that live in a common territory, but are of heterogeneous backgrounds, reach a broad based cultural solidarity that ripens into national unity. It can also be said that it is a "process of inter - penetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attributes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history is incorporated with them in common cultural life."8.

Milton Yinger talks about four forms of ethnic assimilation. They are (1) Acculturization, a process through which the ethnic population accepts the dominant culture of the larger unit and loses its cultural distinction, (2) Amalgamation, a process through which the ethnic population loses its biological distinction. An example of this type of assimilation is intermarrying (3) Identification, a psychological process whereby ethnic groups come to think of themselves as belonging to the same society."9
4. Integration, which occurs where ethnic stratification is eliminated and various groups are given similar civil, political and economics rights and privileges.

Thus the Assimilationist Theory, like the Modernization Theory lays down that the salience of ethnicity decreases with the advance of modernization over a culturally heterogeneous population. Theory of assimilation expects a gradual, linear and a relatively unproblematic assimilation of ethnic minorities to the dominant, modern majority culture. But less the assimilation amongst groups, greater the solidarity amongst them. Contradicting the above, are other theories, which emphasize the resurgence of ethnicity in today's world.

THE OTHER THEORIES

When we analyze the present scenario, we can say that ethnic nationalism or primordialism is very much alive and it is not only a thing of the past. With the impact of modernization, ethnic identities have not been dissolved. Modernization with its characteristics of advanced technology, preponderance of formal organizations, a mobile and dynamic society, has brought about more ethnic consciousness and conflicts. It can be further emphasized that ethnicity being a highly charged and emotive issue, easily lends itself to mobilization by interested parties. Those who want to gain through this, revive the discarded primordial ties and recurrent beyond symbols.

It cannot be denied that technology and communication have brought about homogenization. The world has been reduced to a global village because of the communications revolution. There is homogenization in terms of consumer goods. But we can pose the question as to whether there has been homogenization in terms of culture? It treats the people as mere objects only. But however, while it is true, that the people want to assert themselves as subjects, they do not wish to lose their cultural and social identities. People reassert their cultural identities in terms of language, ethnicity and religion.

Mass- media like television and radio have proved to bring in powerful demonstration effects. Prominent among these are the rise in economic
demands for new goods and a rise in political demands for new rights, services and opportunities. Industrialization and modernization have led to massive increase in migration. This can be seen not only amongst the workers seeking land and better job opportunities but also among refugees fleeing oppression. As a result, the mixture of people and their interethnic frictions have increased. Not only this, democratic norms and nationalist ideas have heightened the sense of oppression and exploitation. In fact, "modernization seems to have been caught by the dialects of its own dynamics. If it combats ethnic loyalty, it also stimulates ethnic awareness." 10

Even countries like USA and Canada which were regarded as melting pots are no longer regarded so, instead they are referred to as "Salad Bowls" characterized by multi-culturalism, which refuses to be homogenized. Modernization brings economic and political competition. "The ethnic differentiations lead to intensifications of competition among groups, making the ascriptive basis of ethnicity a functional and effective vehicle for advancing group interests." 11 This is thus a phenomena in both the developed and developing countries. Supporting this view are various theories.

The Marxists lay down that the state is an instrument of domination by one class over the other. But the classical Marxist view of the state has been modified by two groups of theorists working in the Marxist frame of reference. One group of Neo-Marxists included writers like Althusser, Habermas, Poulantzas and O'Connor. They lay down that the non-communist state is not simply a class struggle of product and the state might act independently even against the wishes of the dominant bourgeoisie groups.

However, another group of Neo-Marxists associated with the core – periphery and internal colonial perspectives, have modified the classical Marxist position in another direction by bringing ethnic struggle to the forefront. Michael Hecter says that the modern capitalist state is an upholder of a cultural division of labour. "It distributes valued jobs and economic development unevenly in such a way that the core region of the country controls the best jobs, while the peripheral regions are dependent upon the core and ethnic groups that inhabit these regions are confined to the least skilled and prestigious jobs." 12.
Thus the internal colonial theory states that the relationships between members of the peripheral communities are characterized by exploitation. The ethnic solidarity is the reaction of the periphery against the dominance of the Centre. Commerce, trade, credit are all monopolized by members of the core. The nation state can be compared to the metropolis and the various ethnic regions under it as "internal colonies". The former uses its economic and political power to maintain its superior position and thus creates an atmosphere of frustration among the peripheral groups. The discrimination made, being on the basis of language, religion and others, the distinction becomes cultural and may form basis of demonstrations and separatist agitations. This exactly was the case of the Nepalis in Darjeeling. They were politically and socially conscious than Nepalis elsewhere. Their demands for greater participation in administration, politics and quality in developmental activities have always been there since Darjeeling became a part of British India in 1835. They remained politically and economically backward because of their docile nature. West Bengal's attitude seemed to be that of Center – Periphery and Darjeeling suffered because of internal colonialism. The Neo-Marxists thus lay down that development of capitalism, particularly uneven development, accentuates ethnic consciousness rather than diminish it.

The school of pluralist thought, associated with Furnivall and M. G. Smith, also share the Neo–Marxist view of the state as an instrument of domination by the privileged ethnic groups. According to them, in a plural society, there are various cultural groups living together, yet without mingling together in one political unit. However, it is one cultural section that monopolizes power and the state apparatus is controlled by it and it is this group that dominates over other cultural groups. They believe that modernization does not necessarily displace traditions. Rather it operates within a framework of given traditions. They say ethnicity is a situational construct which remains dormant in some situations and salient in others. Their view is accommodative of ethnic diversity and supports ethnic sensibility.

The Diffusion–Competition Theory is supported by Michael T. Hannan, Susan Olzak and others. They lay down that when social rewards are given on the basis of rational or achieved criteria, it cross–cuts into the ethnic
boundaries. But it does not mean that ethnicity becomes irrelevant. There is greater competition for the same rewards. The competition and tensions are manifested by increasing competitions among groups and there is greater solidarity among the various groups. It is said "modernization entails the extension of rational labour market in which individuals are allocated to occupations on the basis of universalistic criteria."13.

Moreover with the spread of education, there is greater competition between members of different ethnic groups. The moving away from occupations like agriculture to other jobs also brings in the competitive edge between different groups. It will be later seen in the study that in the Darjeeling Hills, which is a multicultural and multilingual area, the advancement of education and greater competition for the same jobs has made the various ethnic groups make ethnicity, the main vehicle of their ambitions. "Rapid social change causes anomie and that espousing the ethnic cause represents search for identity."14.

Walker Connor, Daniel Moynihan, Nathan Glazer and others can be put in the group of new ethnicists. They lay emphasis on the endurance of ethnic and cultural loyalties. Connor says that "since the 70's, ethnic consciousness is definitely in the ascendancy as a political force."15 The advances in communication and transportation tend to increase the cultural awareness of minorities, the distinctions between themselves and others.

Connor has shown at great length, how writers on nation building and political development have overlooked and under estimated the emotional power of ethnic identifications. The growth of modernity has not brought about the loss of traditional identities. Socio – economic changes have brought alternatives in traditional cultures, but this does not mean the loss of group identity. Connor lays down that the main aspect in ethno- nationalism is the belief of the people in the common origin and evolution. The intensity of this belief will determine how susceptible the group is to political manipulation by leaders, who evoke images of blood, forefathers and homeland.

Even before modern nations appeared, ethnicity provided an important source of personal and group identity. When we look back at the middle ages, even though ethnic groups existed, they were not conscious of the political
meaning of their ethnic identity. But it was this sentiment that helped the birth of modern nationalism in the 18th Century.

Walker Connor coined the term "ethno-nationalism." He defined nation as a self-conscious or self-aware ethnic group. "An ethnic group may be readily discerned by the outside observer, but until the members are themselves aware of the group's uniqueness, it is merely an ethnic group and not a nation."16.

Paul Brass has also made a distinction between ethnic category and ethnic community. Ethnic category is a group of people dissimilar from the other peoples in terms of objective cultural criteria and that it contains within its membership, a complete division of labour and for reproduction. On the other hand, "ethnic community is an ethnic category that has adopted one or more of its marks of cultural distinctiveness and used them as symbols, both to create internal cohesion and to differentiate itself from other ethnic groups."17 Existence of ethnic consciousness does not by itself bring about ethnic competition or ethnic strife. It is only when the leadership of an ethnic group selectively uses ethnic symbols such as language, religion or territory for political mobilization, to attain certain objectives, including political power and socio-economic advancement, vis-a-vis competing actors, that an ethnic group becomes a self-conscious community.

Glazer and Moynihan point out that ethnic group is an interest group and ethnicity can be used to defend the powers, ethnic groups are enjoying or to overcome obstruction towards development. Glazer and Moynihan are well known for their instrumentalist view of ethnicity. The Instrumentalists lay emphasis on the malleable nature of ethnic identity, which makes them useful cultural artifacts for states and manipulative political elite. Glazer and Moynihan (1975) lay down that ethnic groups are particularly effective as interest groups because they can combine an interest with an effect. T. B. Subba (1992) says that a common interest may be developed, only when it is threatened by another group. Daniel Bell (1973) also lays down that ethnicity has become more important than class because it can combine interest with an emotional tie. Milton Gordon (1964) says that the social positions in a modern industrial society are allocated on the basis of achieved criteria like education, learned skill, personal qualities and race and ethnic criteria.
become inappropriate. "But however there has been failure of assimilation to explain the persistence of apparent primordial stratifications that has come to be known as new ethnicity." 18 Ethnic groups can use ethnicity to "make demands in the political arena for alteration in their status, in their economic well being, in their civil rights, or in their educational opportunities and are engaged in a form of interest group politics." 19.

Another important theory is the Language theory. The Language theory developed by Sagarin and Moneymaker stresses the importance of language for mobilizing ethnic groups. Language is not only a means of communication and a symbol to unite groups, but "its effective use or abuse can catapult an ethnic movement." 20. The Communitarians criticize the liberals for ignoring linguistic communities. However, Jurgen Habermas thinks of a possibility of a linguistic consensus and communicative action in modern political theory. 21.

Language is the best means of expression of the emotion, life and culture of a people. Since it is a cultural institution, it gives identity and solidarity to the people who speak it and also constitutes a strong factor of ethnicity. As language development is central to educational advancement, so also educational development is central to economics, cultural and political development. Moreover with the various forces of modernization penetrating in all walks of life, the issues of identity and development of different languages have acquired political significance. "Language is an essential part of culture and at the same time, the instrument through which other aspects of culture are organized." 22.

Thus ethnic groups speaking different languages develop separate perspectives. Often, it is said that, language has been used as the main weapon in the struggle for political power. In India, during the independence movement, local language was used as a means of arousing the masses against the alien system.

There are other levels where demands were made for the recognition of regional language, as a medium of instruction in schools and as an official language, thus giving more prestige, privileges and job opportunities for speakers of that particular language. "These demands are often raised in multi-lingual societies, where the language of the state works to the
disadvantage of particular ethnic groups or where immigration reduces access to education or employment for native speakers.\textsuperscript{23}

Moreover, in India, there have been various ethno-linguistic upheavals, asking for linguistic re-organization of states. The Nepalis, an ethnic minority residing in the Darjeeling hills had for a long time been demanding the inclusion of the Nepali language in the VII\textsuperscript{th} Schedule of the Constitution since the 1950's itself. The leaders had thought that with this, there would be better job opportunities for the Nepalis. Another ethnic minority of this area, the Lepchas are trying to being about ethnic revivalism and stressing the importance of the Lepcha language and its introduction as a subject in the various schools and colleges.

Another very important theory is the Elite Theory. Elite consciousness is a pre-condition to mass consciousness. This theory lays down that cultural forms, values and practices of ethnic groups can be used by elites as political resources, in competition for political power and economic advantage. Modernization creates conditions in which the traditional elite find its authority being challenged by new socio-economic forces. "Threat principle being the guiding principle, the existing and the added ethnic grievances are articulated normally around extremist demands, new strategies are forged and invariably, separate movements are launched." \textsuperscript{24}

Moreover, the role of the ethnic leaders is to be treated as a very important factor in mobilizing ethnic political culture. The neo-elites, especially the educated in the modern fold are the most important recipients of building up this political culture. The main issues relate to more power to the people of the area (sons of the soil), provide greater facilities to them and proportionate investment in the field of infrastructure, protect their cultural heritage and tradition. The local ethnic leaders try to whip up the emotions of the people and use ethnicity for mobilizing them. "The intellectuals of the new ethnic group usually create a literature that binds them together- poetry, fiction, history and stirring polemics". \textsuperscript{25}

It is often laid down that modernization poses a challenge to the socio-cultural and political ties, orientations and institutions and hierarchical social order is often perceived by the elites of these groups as threats to identity. Moreover with rapid social change, mobilization and revolution in transport
and communications all have greatly increased the particularistic cultural awareness and identity consciousness. "The intra-ethnic as well as inter-ethnic communications play a major role in the creation of ethnic consciousness." 26.

Myron Weiner (1975) has said that middle class nativist movements tend to emerge in those communities where the local population has recently produced its own educated class and aspires to move into jobs held by others, e.g. in the civil services, as teachers in local schools, as clerks, managers and technicians. "An additional potential explosive situation exists, when the new power elite is economically and socially subordinate to the ethnic group, that dominates the urban centre, in which the capital is located, i.e. when the geographical core and the political core are held by different ethnic groups". 27.

Even for Anthony Smith (1981), self-consciousness is not something latent and inherent among members of an ethnic group who would become self-aware at some point of time. Instead we can say that it is created and imposed by the intellectuals of ethnic minorities. It was mainly to bring changes in the existing state structure, that the frustrated intellectuals of the ethnic minorities invoked common ethnicity to legitimize their claims to higher status and power. Michael Hecter (1975) also discusses the possible roles of elites within the cultural distinct periphery. Individual members of a cultural sub-group, who achieve high status occupational roles may reconsider their ethnic identity and seek incremental improvement for their group and assert the value of the culture and organizational solidarity. When modernization of the peripheral population proceeds rapidly, it produces potential entrepreneurs and they may use ethnicity as the vehicle of their ambitions. Donald Horowitz also says that among the sub-groups, economic and educational changes have repeatedly given rise to a "new leadership skilled in the ways of the system and the emergence of intellectuals who debunk the myths of the racial order, who advance new definitions and who agitate on their behalf. Consequently, sub-groups and the frustrated, aspiring elites they produce aim to destroy the ascriptive principle that impedes their mobility and limits their dignity." 28 Smith (1981), Paul Brass (1976), William A. Douglas (1988), all echo the same sentiments saying that ethnic identity was created.
and used by intellectuals as a political instrument. It is the process of politicization that transforms ethnic groups into nations.

It can be said that the state is the main resource and prize over which various groups compete and also the state is a distributor of resources, especially in societies that are being modernized and industrialized. Competition between various ethnic groups for state power and resources is the main thing in ethnic group formation. When people perceive that persons from other categories are getting disproportionate share of government jobs, it is then that ethnic categories develop self-consciousness and identity. Moreover, formation of new ethnic groups and identities will develop among previously dormant ethnic groups, if the state follows quota policies or affirmative action. Modernization also brings about an uneven spread of education, industrialization and employment opportunities among communities, castes and classes. Education, exposition to Marxist and other political ideologies give rise to new secular elites, who want to achieve political power in institutions and arenas, created by the modern state. But Brass lays down that resource competition itself does not produce ethnic group cohesion. The group “must have certain pool of symbols to draw upon and elites capable of transmitting to the ethnic group a sense of increasing attachment to those symbols as a basis for social and political mobilization.”29. However, it depends a great deal on how effectively the elites interpret and manipulate symbols of the group for purposes of political mobilization. It also depends on how much the group is available for political mobilization and also on the inter-ethnic relationships with the other groups and competition between them for scarce political and economic benefits.

If we look into the Indian example, the educational opportunities available soon produced an English speaking educated elite class. They were the ones who led or mobilized the Indian community on the basis of Indian culture and tradition. In Darjeeling too, it was mainly because of the efforts of the Britishers (who took upon themselves the white men’s burden) mainly the missionaries, which helped in the spread of education among the hills people. Soon an English speaking elite emerged, who began to mobilize the simple people of the hills on the basis of the Nepali language. This soon
metamorphosed into an ethno-linguistic movement, the Gorkhaland Movement and the people began to question themselves of their identity.

Schermerhorn, George Simson, Milton Yinger and others support the prejudice discrimination theory. It lays down that the minority is held in prejudice by the majority and hence, minority movements are a result of majority discrimination. In India, almost all the federation states are ruled by one dominant majority and a number of minorities are prejudiced against the former. In West Bengal, the minority group, the Nepalis, are prejudiced against the majority community, the Bengalis. Again in Darjeeling itself too, economic prosperity seen among the Tibetans has not gone unnoticed by the majority community the Nepalis. This results in prejudice against the minority community. Such tendencies are generally stronger in areas where resources are scarce.

Another theory deserving mentioning is the Relative Deprivation Theory. This theory explains the politisation of ethnicity or the development of ethno – nationalism and tries to show the inequality in the distribution of available resources, social benefits and opportunities between distinct ethnic groups. “Nationalism arises because of the objective exploitation of an indigenous group by an alien group or one social class by another.” 30 Social mobility can lead to a deepening sense of relative deprivation and insecurity. “Modernization lends to an awareness of separate identity on the part of different groups who become increasingly aware of themselves as groups and of their interests and claims in relation to other groups”.31.

Another aspect of the problem relates to the intra – ethnic power struggle. Deprivation of power leads to frustration and anger among the minority groups. The younger generations who are more educated and more politically conscious try to change the existing social structure. In this struggle for supremacy, the new leadership raises new demands and advocates various means even violent methods to achieve the same. The inter-group attitudes and prejudices are influenced by the psychological feeling of Relative Deprivation. There is a growing sense of political consciousness and also a rise in the aspirations of the socially and economically deprived groups. All these have resulted in an increase in their sense of relative deprivation and thus more strengthening of ethnic identities. In this context, Darjeeling can be
taken as an example again. Darjeeling is a polyglot of different cultures, traditions and languages. The majority community is the Nepalis. We have others too like the Lepchas, Bhutias, Tibetan Refugees and of course the plainsmen. There are a lot of cultural similarities between the people of this area and the Tibetan refugees. "But cultural similarity and frequent social interaction does not necessarily guarantee a situation free of ethnic tensions and conflicts."32. The Nepalis have developed a feeling of frustration or relative deprivation, in relation to other groups.

From the above, what we can say is that, contradicting the Modernization and Assimilationist Theories are other theories which emphasize the importance of ethnicity in modern times. Modernization has brought about improvement of transport and communication, spread of education, civil culture and a great deal of mobility. Truly we can say that ethnicity has come to stay as a global phenomenon. It has exacerbated ethnic ties instead of mitigating them. The often used dichotomy is "us" and "they". Ethnicity binds human beings together with various overlapping bonds, which are more natural and spontaneous. Parochial consciousness has become very important and both the national and international set up is confronted with ethnic resurgence.

ETHNICITY IN INDIA

India has an ethnically heterogeneous and fragmented population with the various ethnic groups transforming into ethnic communities over a period of time and competing for greater access to power and resources. In the pre-independence period, it was the Britishers who sowed the seeds of separatism at the caste and religious levels. There was reservation of seats for Muslims and Harijans, separate electorate for them and Anglo- Indians. The Britishers were responsible for kindling conscious awareness of ethnic differences in the minds of all. Fostering of ethnic differences formed a part of the colonial strategy of domination. Even in independent India, this colonial heritage has continued, i.e. using ethnicity for political mobilization. After India attained independence, it was mainly to accommodate the demands of her
heterogeneous population that the Indian Constitution provided for a strong Centre, combined with a secular, pluralistic framework based on federalism and containing safeguards for minorities.

Moreover after the attainment of independence, all efforts were made for economic development. This brought modernization of not only science and technology but also of the social and cultural life. Better transportation and communication facilities and spread of education, all accentuated ethnic consciousness. The anti-colonial movement had a strong linguistic and cultural element. Even in post-colonial India too, we find the continuity of the same tradition in cultural and linguistic regionalism. Various efforts were made to do away with social inequality and to bring social and distributive justice. When this could not be achieved in full practice, demands emerged for cultural self determination. This further led to the assertion of ethnic identities.

The various ethnic aspirations were accommodated through affirmative action programmes and structural devices such as reorganization of state boundaries on the basis of language as the main cultural marker. The linguistic movement of the 50's mainly emphasized on the linguistic reorganization of states and the demand of their language to be recognized as the official language and also for educational and employment purposes. Another aspect is the sons of the soil movement, which calls for preferential treatment and distributive policies to protect the nativist socio- economic and political interests vis-a-vis the more privileged outsiders. Such movements could be seen in Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal and Tripura, where there are large numbers of migrants. Religion too has been used to attain political ends. "In order to differentiate themselves further from each other and to obtain political benefits, the political elites of the opposing religious communities have struggled to make religion and language congruent, to erect further symbolic barriers to effective communication between groups."33

Uneven economic development in India has resulted in bitter economic and political crisis. This too has brought about competition for scarce economic and material resources and mobilization along caste, language, religion and territorial lines. Regional parties and regionalism have become important specially in the period of the 80's but with the Centre adopting a more centralized authority, the policy of accommodating pluralism has
weakened. This has further alienated the already marginalized ethnic communities in various states, thus further accentuating their ethnic identities, which has manifested itself in various linguistic, tribal, caste and regional movements.

India consists of a medley of religions, castes and linguistic groups. Not only religious groups but caste, tribal and linguistic groups can be defined as self defined minorities. "They have a distinctive group identity that they fear is eroding and they regard themselves as socially and economically subordinate to the others". They also believe that they suffer from discrimination either from the "others" in the society or from the state itself. These ethnic communities are apprehensive that their cultures will be crushed under the dominant communities. All these have made them highly ethno-centric and make them cling to some distinctive features of life and culture. It is here that we can pose the question as to whether ethnicity should be encouraged or discouraged in a democratic set-up. "The impact of democratic institutions in India has been the heightening of ethnic consciousness and deepening of ethnic differences. " Though the Indian Government discourages ethno-groupism, there is still always some protection at the background for socio- economic development of these groups. This can clearly be seen in the various Articles and Schedules of the Indian Constitution, mainly to promote and safeguard the interests of the weaker sections of the society.

The Indian Constitution talks about justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for all the citizens. But of course, various groups are being acutely aware of the inequality and are resentful of it. Forces of political mobilization and economic development have brought a great deal of group consciousness. Heightened group consciousness brings about a sense of pride, strict observance of cultural and religious practices and could lead to members of the group to help each other. Each ethnic group tries to protect its own interest. However, conflicts may arise, when a group asserts its identity by attacking the identity of other groups.

Moreover in traditional societies undergoing a process of modernization, two motives work side by side, namely, a search for identity and demand for progress. While analyzing inter-ethnic relations in egalitarian plural societies like India, we have to look into some important aspects.
Firstly is the degree of ethnic identity. Individuals identify themselves to a particular ethnic group and they manipulate aspects of their identity according to different situations. They participate in their ethnic organizations, further affirming their ethnic identity. Secondly, is the degree of access to societal rewards. People tend to judge others’ achievements objectively, sometimes material and sometimes status. Although objective differences in culture and language do contribute to identity formation, community consciousness does not by itself lead to community consciousness until there is an emergence of socio-economic factors. Only when there is a perception of inequality and discrimination of scarce resources, a feeling that a group is at a competitive disadvantage, then there will be growth of ethnicity.

Thirdly, the relative deprivation is expressed in grievances and actions to protect the interest of one’s ethnic group. It is here that politics and power enter into actions to protect ethnic group interest. Politics thus can intensify group consciousness.

Fourthly, is the governmental response. Acceleration of the mobilization of ethnic loyalties will be there, if there is uneven distribution of resources. Much depends on how the Central and State Governments respond and how they accommodate the demands of all, without threatening the interests and cultural identity of any group.

The formation of a centralized state together with a democratic participatory system in India has resulted in greater ethnic, economic and political expectations of the states and a greater competition for resources. Just as the states claim more resources and greater autonomy from the Centre, so also the various ethnic groups – tribal and linguistic minorities make claims upon the state. The ethnic consciousness for identity had remained dormant initially, but all these later percolated down to the ethnic communities. As mentioned earlier, all ethnic groups want to strengthen their group identity and improve their status or economic well being. Thus there is a close relationship between group identity and political power. It is this that induces politicians to appeal to their ethnic groups. Whether it is the case of India, or for that matter, America, Canada, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia, attachment to the various ethnic groups to their language, religion, tribe is greatly strengthening. The belief in the first half of the 20th Century, that attachments
to these primordial loyalties would be given up as the processes of modernization set in, has proved wrong. The reverse is happening.

This work will examine the case in the Darjeeling Hills in West Bengal. Have the different ethnic groups residing here been assimilated into one group or are the ethnic loyalties strengthening? Is there ethnic revivalism among them? An effort has been put forth in the following Chapters to find out answers to these various queries.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


35. Shiva K Gupta in A.D. Pant and Shiva K. Pant (ed.) *op.cit.* pp.17