CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Sikkim, a small hilly state of North-East India and the 22\textsuperscript{nd} state of the Indian Republic, is situated between 27°5’ and 28°10’ North Latitude, and between 88°4’ and 88°58’ East Longitude.\textsuperscript{1} It covers an area of 7096 square kilometres. Sikkim is surrounded by China on the north and east, Nepal on the west and Bhutan on the east sharing 220 km., 100 km. and 30 km. long borders with these countries respectively. The only border she shares with an Indian state is with that of West Bengal on south. However, when Sikkim was founded in the middle of the seventeenth century the boundary of the state was different. It was Dibdala on the north bordering Tibet, on the east it touched Bhutan at Tangla, on the west at Tamar Chorten bordering with Nepal and on the south the borders was at Titalia. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the British took over, after the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, the boundary of Sikkim, as described in of the Convention, was:

“The boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into other rivers of Tibet. The line commences at Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan frontier and follows the above mentioned water-parting to the point where it meets Nepal Territory.”\textsuperscript{2}

Sikkim is a land of varied elevations ranging from 800 feet above sea level at the southern foothills to over 20,000 feet along its northern and north-west boundaries. The state is girdled by high ridges on the north-east and the west and thus looks like an

\textsuperscript{1} H. H. Risley, \textit{The Gazetteer of Sikkim}, Calcutta, 1894, p. 1
\textsuperscript{2} C. U. Aitchison, Article 1 of “Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890”, \textit{A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Vol. II}, Calcutta, 1909, p. 331
amphitheatre.\textsuperscript{3} It is covered by snow-clad mountains on the north-east and the west. World’s third highest mountain peak, Mt. Kanchandzonga (28,156 ft.) lies in Sikkim. The other mountain peaks of Sikkim are Mt. Kabru (24,215 ft.), Mt. Talung (24,200 ft.), Mt. Siniolchu (22,600 ft.), Mt. Simvo (22,476 ft.) and Mt. Pandim (22,100 ft.).\textsuperscript{4}

Besides these mountains a number of easy passes run through Sikkim into the Chumbi valley of Tibet. They are Nathula, Jelepla, Batangla, Chola and Yakla. A number of mountain ranges separates Sikkim from three countries namely, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. The Singalila Range separates Sikkim from Nepal in the west, Chola Range separates Sikkim from Tibet and Bhutan in the east and the Pangolia Range separates Sikkim from Bhutan in the east.\textsuperscript{5} The Himalayas also act as a barrier from penetrating cold winds blowing from Central Asia, resulting in heavy snowfall on the mountain tops and higher elevations. This also results in dry winter season at lower elevations of Sikkim located at the leeward side.\textsuperscript{6} The Monsoon winds dominate the climate of Sikkim and there are seasonal reversals of winds almost throughout the state.

The snow-clad mountain peaks are the sources of rivers in Sikkim in the form of glaciers. Among them Rathong and Cholamu Glaciers are the sources of two important rivers of Sikkim namely, Teesta and Rangit. River Teesta originates from the Cholamu Glacier and Rangit originates from the Rathong Glacier. The other glaciers of Sikkim are Zemu Glacier, Lonak Glacier and Talung Glacier. Besides these glaciers Sikkim has a number of lakes which are regarded sacred and holy and they are places of interest and important tourist destinations. They are Tsango Lake, Cholamu, Khecheopalri, Gurudongmar and Memenchu Lake. These water bodies are natural and mostly a product of glaciations. The only exception is Khecheopalri Lake, which is located in low altitude valley in west Sikkim. Sikkim has a few hot springs where warm water

\textsuperscript{4} Sikkim – A Statistical Profile, Gangtok, DESME, Government of Sikkim, 2002, p. 27
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid. p. 28
\textsuperscript{6} J. R Subba, Agriculture in the Hills of Sikkim, 1989, p. 27
oozes out from beneath the earth with a strong sulphurous odour and is popular due to their medicinal value.

The State is endowed with rich natural resources and its flora and fauna are unique in nature. The two major rivers of Sikkim are Teesta and Rangit which flow in north-south direction. The Teesta and the Rangit Rivers meet at the borders of Sikkim and West Bengal. The Sanskrit name for the Teesta is *Trishna* which means ‘thirst’. The other Sanskrit name of Teesta is *Trisrota*, which means ‘three springs’. An account of the origin of the River Teesta has been given in the *Kalika Purana* that goddess Parvati, wife of Lord Shiva, a Hindu pantheon, was fighting with a demon, whose crime was that the demon would worship her husband and not herself. While fighting the demon felt thirsty and prayed to his patron deity Lord Shiva for water. In consequence Lord Shiva caused the Teesta River to flow from the breast of the goddess Parvati in three streams, and thus it has ever since continued to flow. About 48 species of fishes like *katla*, trout and common carps are found in these rivers.

The climate of Sikkim is varied due to its geographical location, relief and altitudinal variation. Due to great variation of sharp edged mountains there is also a large variation of rainfall and temperature. The proximity to the Bay of Bengal and direct exposure to the effects of the moisture laden south-west monsoon made the State most humid place in the whole of the Himalayan Range. The maximum temperature rises up to 28 degree centigrade during summer and during winter it goes up to minus 15 degree centigrade. Depending on the topography of the State it can be divided into five climatic ranges:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Altitude</th>
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<tr>
<td>I. Tropical</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>- Below 610 m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Sub-Tropical</td>
<td>- 610 - 1524 m.</td>
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8. *Ibid*.
9. J. R. Subba, *op. cit.* p. 27
III. Temperate - 1524-2743 m.

IV. Sub-Alpine - 2743-3962 m.

V. Alpine - 3962-5182 m.

Most of its territory is covered with forests. The forest covers 44.10% of the total area of Sikkim. The different varieties of trees found in there include oak, silver fir, magnolia, sal, pine, cane, rhododendron, bamboo, etc. and plants of great medicinal value. About 150 species of mammals, 550 species of birds, 650 species of butterflies, moths and amphibians, 4500 species of flowering plants, 36 species of rhododendrons, 8 species of conifers, 450 species of trees, 480 species of orchids, 362 species of ferns and 175 species of edible wild plants are found in the forest of Sikkim.

Sikkim is divided into four vegetation zones namely, Tropical, Sub-Tropical, Temperate and Alpine, and in these divisions large varieties of vegetation are found. The principal crops of Sikkim are rice, maize, wheat, barley, pulses, millet, buckwheat, and oilseeds such as mustard and soya bean. The climate of Sikkim is suitable for growing a large number of high value crops such as cardamom, ginger and other horticultural crops. Tea plantation has also been taken up in small scale and the product is rated highly in the international tea market. Sikkim is also suitable for the cultivation of fruits like apples, oranges, banana, papaya, peach, plum, pears and a number of wild fruits. Presently mandarin orange has become an important commercial fruit.

The total population of Sikkim as per 2011 census is 6,07,688 persons and the density of population is 86 persons per square kilometre. According to the population

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11. Ibid.
12. Sikkim Study Series, op. cit. p. 5
13. J. R. Subba, op. cit. p. 65
14. Sikkim Study Series, op. cit. p. 82
15. Census of India, Series 12, Provisional Population Totals, Sikkim, Paper 1 of 2011, Gangtok, 2011, p. 4
census of 2001, the total population of Sikkim was 5, 40, 493 and the density of population was 76 persons per square kilometre. The decadal growth rate of population of Sikkim during 2001 – 2011 is 12.36%. The decadal growth of population during 1991- 2001 was 33.07% and the 2001 – 2011 censuses have shown a decrease in the percentage of decadal variation of population in the state.\textsuperscript{16} In February 1891 a census was taken in Sikkim for the first time and the total population was 30,458 persons. The majority of the population consisted of the Nepalese and their number was 18,955, Lepcha population was 5,762 and the Bhutias were 4,894 in number. The census also gives a miscellaneous population which consisted of 521 persons.\textsuperscript{17} The miscellaneous populations were, most probably, the Marwaris and the Biharis, who came down, following the British, in the last decade of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and settled in Sikkim. They mostly engaged in trade and commerce and a section of them helped in the administration. The population of Sikkim, today, comprises mainly of the Nepalese, the Lepchas and the Bhutias, the plainsmen - the Marwaris and the Biharis. The Marwaris and the Biharis, settled mostly in the town areas, formed the business community and have dominated the trade and business activities in Sikkim. Some of these worked as teachers and government officials along with their traditional business activities. These people formed a link between the local people and the plains. They procure articles of daily use from Siliguri, a major town in plains of West Bengal and sell into the towns and \textit{bazaars} of Sikkim. The local people of Sikkim, mostly the farmers, sell their products like cash crops such as - cardamom, ginger, oranges and other fruits, to these businessmen and these businessmen in turn sell these items at Siliguri.

\textbf{The Nepalese:}

The Nepalese occupies about 70\% of the total population of the State. The Nepalese are the people of Nepal origin but settled down in Sikkim before 1946 and

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.} p. 28
\textsuperscript{17} H. H. Risley, \textit{op. cit.} p. 27
speak Nepali language. In 1961 Maharaja Tashi Namgyal passed the Sikkim Subject Regulation Act by which all the people living in Sikkim were granted the status of the subjects of the Sikkim Maharaja. According to one of the terms of the Act people living in Sikkim for more than fifteen years before the commencement of the said Regulation were regarded as the Sikkim Subjects. The Nepalese of today’s Sikkim are the descendants of those subjects who were living in Sikkim during the reign of the Namgyal rulers even before the Sikkim Subject Regulation was passed.

The Limboos and the Mangars of the Nepali communities were living in west Sikkim even before the consecration of Phuntsog Namgyal, the first ruler of Sikkim. During that period the Limboos were known as the Tsongs as they came from the province of Tsang of Tibet, and they maintained their profession as yak herders. In the early part of the Namgyal rule, too, a large number of people from Nepal on different occasions came to Sikkim and settled there. In the late 17th and the 18th centuries when the Gurkha rulers of Nepal conquered the western part of Sikkim a large numbers of the Nepali people occupied the area and settled down. In the late 19th and the early 20th centuries another wave of the Nepalese settled down in Sikkim due to the encouragement of the British administrators.

In the 17th century, the second Namgyal ruler, Tensung Namgyal, granted the title of Subba to the Limboo chiefs, as the head of a subah in Sikkim. From now onward the Limboos of Sikkim used the title of Subba after their names. The Mangars, however, later moved back to Nepal as they were defeated by Phuntsog Namgyal and again came to Sikkim to work as miners under the Newars. The Newars are the business class among the Nepalese who were granted the permission to dig mines in Sikkim by the ministers of Namgyal rulers in the first quarter of the 19th century.

19. Before 1889 most of the tracts of Sikkim were barren and covered with forests. After 1889 the British administrators encouraged a large number of people from Darjeeling, Nepal and Bhutan to settle down in Sikkim. The people who preferred to come and settle down in Sikkim were mostly the Nepalese.
The Nepalese are mostly agriculturists. In Sikkim they introduced the terraced system of cultivation and brought large tracts of hilly terrain to yield productive crops. The introduction of terraced cultivation had a great impact on the cultivation of rice, maize and other cash crop like cardamom and ginger in Sikkim. This brought a great change in life of the people of Sikkim by raising their income and brought good revenue to the state. Following them the Bhutias and the Lepchas also started to grow crops on the terraced fields.

The Bhutias:

The second largest inhabitants of Sikkim are the Bhutias. Originally the Bhutias came from the province of Kham of Tibet to Sikkim, and practice Buddhist religion. During the reign of the Namgyal rulers more people from Tibet came to live under them. Though they prefer to call themselves as Bhutias, the name ‘Bhutia’ has been given to them by the Mangars. Tibet was known as Bhot in the language of the Mangar and the people of Bhot were the Bhoteys variantly ‘Bhutia’. After the exile the Dalai Lama in the middle of the twentieth century from Tibet, a large number of Tibetan from the different parts of Tibet came down and settled in Sikkim as refugees; they also claimed as the ‘Bhutia’ as they are from Tibet. The Bhutias of Sikkim do not consider them as Bhutia and argued that there are a number of differences between them. First and foremost of all is the allegiance showed by both of them. The Tibetans owe their allegiance to the Dalai Lama as their religious and temporal head whereas the Bhutias of Sikkim do not. The other difference between a Bhutia and a Tibetan is that Bhutias of Sikkim celebrate their festival of New Year as Losoong which falls in the month of December – January, and the Tibetans celebrate their festival of New Year as Losar in the month of March. The Bhutias are evenly distributed throughout the state of Sikkim however, in northern Sikkim they are the major inhabitants. They speak Bhutia, a dialect of Tibetan language, and use Tibetan script in writing.
The Lepchas:

The Lepchas are of Mongoloid descent and are predominantly Buddhists by religion, at present, many of them have converted into Christianity. The Lepchas, call themselves as ‘Rong’, are said to the oldest inhabitants of Sikkim. According to the tradition prevail among them that the ancestors of the Lepchas worshiper of spirits, both good as well bad, of mountains, rivers, big stones, big trees and so on. The places, where the spirits of these components were worshipped were called by them as ‘Lapcho’. From Lapcho the people came to be known as Lepchas or the people who worshipped at ‘Lapcho’. Another version says that in the ancient period the people from Sikkim used to go to Tibet to bring salt. As the route to Tibet was covered with dense forests and full of wild beasts, the people used to gather in a place, and, then went to Tibet in a large group. The place where they used to gather is known as ‘Lapcho’, the act of waiting for others to gather, is known as ‘Rong-Lyang’, and the people, who wait for others, are termed as the Rongs in Lepcha language.

The Lepcha population prefers to live in the hilly terrains and concentrated in the hilly terrain of Dzongu in north Sikkim. They live on agriculture of paddy; the production of cardamom and oranges are mostly under their control and are fond of hunting and fishing. Due to development of education in the state some of the Lepchas are moving out of their traditional practice and have started taking up different professions in both private and public sectors.

Other Communities:

Among other population of Sikkim a small section consists of the plainsmen. The Marwaris, constitute 50% of the plainsmen living in Sikkim, settled down in Sikkim from the beginning of the 20th century, and the Biharis, 40% of the plainsmen, and have settled down in the second half of the last century as merchants and traders. Rest others are the people from other states of India who have settled down as
government employees, both under central and state, in the private sectors and as manual labourers. Many of the Marwaris established their business as bankers. Nowadays a number of people from the plains have migrated to Sikkim as migrant labourers due to growing hydro – power projects in Sikkim. Many of them are working as contractors in large constructions and in private firms.

The *lingua franca* of the state is Nepali. Due to the growth and development of education in Sikkim people have almost abandoned their traditional dresses except during festivals and occasions. The impact of Western culture could be seen in culture of Sikkim. The main religions are Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity and Islam is popular among the town dwellers.\(^\text{20}\) The Nepalese celebrate *Durga Puja* as *Dasai* and *Laxmi Puja* as *Tihar*, *Maghe Sakranti*, *Ram Nawami* as *Chaite Dasai* and *Tij*. The Lepchas celebrate *Namsoong* as their New Year and the Bhutias celebrate *Loosong* as the New Year. One noticeable thing is that the people of Sikkim belonging to different communities celebrate all these festivals together.

By the Thirty Eight Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution 1975 Sikkim merged in India as the 22\(^\text{nd}\) state of Indian union and received the Associate State status.\(^\text{21}\) Prior to that Sikkim was under the Namgyals till 1861 when Sikkim became a protectorate of British India; then in 1947 it became protectorate of India. Gangtok is the capital of Sikkim and the district headquarter of the East District. There are four districts in Sikkim namely, East, West, North and South, with its headquarters at Gangtok, Gyalsing, Mangan and Namchi respectively. There are nine sub-divisions in Sikkim namely, Gangtok, Pakyong and Rongli in the East district, Gyalsing and Soreong in the West, Mangan and Chungthang in the North and Namchi and Ravongla in the South. By far the East District is the largest among the four districts in terms of population containing 46.29 per cent of the total population in the state. Sikkim is connected by National Highway No. 31 A with the Darjeeling District of West Bengal.

\(^{20}\) *Census of India*, op. cit. p. 6
\(^{21}\) *The Gazette of India*, Extraordinary, Part II-Section I, dated May 16, 1975
The nearest railway station of Indian Railways is New Jalpaiguri and the nearest airport is Bagdogra both in West Bengal. The literacy rate as per 2011 census is 82.20 per cent and the sex ratio is 889 females per 1000 males.\textsuperscript{22}

There are several versions regarding the toponym of Sikkim. According to one version prevailing among the Nepalese of Sikkim that Sikkim was connected with the Mahabharata, the Hindu epic. In the tussle over the throne of Hastinapura between the Pandavas and the Kauravas the Pandavas were overpowered by the Kauravas and the Pandavas were sent to exile for long fourteen years. After the completion of exile the Kauravas did not accept the claim of the Pandavas on the throne of Hastinapura. To win over them the Pandavas performed a number of yajnas and in this course Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava, sent his brothers to all four directions, for performing Rajasuya sacrifice so that they could get back their rights over Hastinapura by defeating the Kauravas in war. Bhima, the second Pandava went to the east, third brother, Arjun went to the north, fourth Nakul to the west and the fifth bother, Sahadeva went to the south.\textsuperscript{23} Ved Vyasa, the great teacher of the Pandavas suggested Arjun, to go to the Northern Himalayas called Indrapuri to learn the art of warfare from Lord Indra. At Indrapuri, Arjun met Lord Indra in the dress of a sage who suggested him to worship Shiva, another Hindu pantheon. While worshipping Shiva a wild boar appeared before Arjun. Arjun shot an arrow at the boar and at the same time another arrow from some unknown direction was shot at the boar killing it at the spot. Arjun was surprised at the moment and a man appeared on the scene. He was wearing a dress made up of skins of wild animals and had a bow in his hand. Arjun and the unknown man had a discussion over the killing of the wild boar. Both argued that they had shot the arrow killing the wild boar. Finally, Arjun realized that he met Lord Shiva in the form of Kirateshwar or

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Homnath Subba and Kedarnath Pandit Upadhaya, \textit{Mahabharata, Sava Parvam, Sloka 5-6}, Varanasi, 1969, p. 102
\end{itemize}
the Lord of the Kiratas and was blessed by Kirateshwar. The place where the above incident had taken place is believed to be situated, at present, at West Sikkim, where the present temple of Kirateshwar Shiva is situated. Due to these reasons the Nepalese believe that Sikkim was once a garden fort of Lord Indra or Indrakila which was described as Indrapuri in Mahabharata.

Guru Padmasambhava, a Buddhist teacher and a monk, well versed in Tibetan language, described Sikkim as Bras-ma Jong. In the 8th century A.D. on his way to Tibet to preach Buddhism he reached Sikkim. He found Sikkim a beautiful and peaceful place, covered by snow clad mountains on the north and forest on all sides. He considered the place was best for meditation and thus named it Bras-ma Jong which means a paradise. The Lepchas who are the old inhabitants of Sikkim called it Nye-Mael or heaven. Sikkim is known as Denzong and variantly Demozong or Demoshong by the Bhutias which means “Valley of Rice”. The word Sikkim is said to be derived from two Limboo words – ‘Su’ which means new and ‘Heem’ which means a house. The second Namgyal ruler, Tensung Namgyal, is said to have built a new house for his Limboo queen and asked her to name it. She called it “Suheem” which in Limboo language meant “new house”. At first the Limboos called the country Suheem after their queen’s new house. Later the whole area where the queen’s new house was situated was known as Suheem. Later on, in course of time Suheem became Sukhim meaning a happy country (sukh means happy). During the reign of the Namgyal rulers the people of Sikkim used to visit Nepal. The people of Sikkim who visited said that they were from Sukhim, the happy country as the Namgyal rulers made them happy by giving good

24. *Ibid. Vana Parvam, Sloka 87-94*, p. 167. As per the Mahabharata the Kiratas were the people living in the Northern Himalayas and were mostly the tribes belonging to the Nepalese. They worshipped Lord Shiva, the Hindu Pantheon, in the form of Kirateshwar, the Lord of the Kiratas. In Sikkim the Nepalese mostly the Khambu Rais and the Limboos worship Kirateshwar and a few temples and statues at Legship and Namchi are dedicated to Kirateshwar Shiva.


government and other facilities. Till today some old people of Nepal refer Sikkim as Sukhim. British called the country Sikhim and finally it became Sikkim.

The history of Sikkim before the seventeenth century is obscure as there is no written document of their own. According to the oral history prevailing among the people of Sikkim that during the thirteenth century a Tibetan chieftain named Guru Tashi along with his five sons headed towards south direction from Tibet to try his luck in there. During their wandering they came across the Sakya province of Tibet where a monastery was being built at that time. They saw the workers trying to erect pillars for the building. When the workers collectively failed to erect the pillars of the monastery in their proper position the eldest son of Guru Tashi raised the pillar single handedly and were placed in proper positions, after that he came to be known as Khye Bumsa.27 The Sakya chief offered his daughter named Guruma in marriage to Khye Bumsa which he readily agreed. The family of Guru Tashi lived at Sakya for some time after marriage. Again, they moved further southwards. On their way they built a monastery at a place called Pashi and left one brother in charge of it and the rest went to Phari and built another monastery. Guru Tashi died at Phari and the three brothers of Khye Bumsa moved towards Bhutan while Khye Bumsa went to a place called Chumbi, a province in southern Tibet, to rule.

Khye Bumsa did not have any issue for a long time. The religious teachers and astrologers advised him to seek the blessings of the head of the Lepcha people of Sikkim. The Lepcha head, Thekong Tek, at that time, was living at a place near present Gangtok. Khye Bumsa met Thekong Tek with offerings and finally the latter blessed Khye Bumsa that he should become father of three sons. Finally, three sons were born and the eldest was named Kya bo Rab, the second Mipon Rab and the third Langmo Rab.28 Out of the gratitude Khye Bumsa visited Thekong Tek a number of times

27. H. H. Risley, op. cit. p. 8
Khye Bumsa is a Tibetan word which means as powerful as ten thousand men.
28. Ibid. p. 9
thereafter which ultimately culminated in a treaty of brotherhood between the two chieftains at a place called Kabi Lungchok. This treaty brought about new ties of brotherhood between the Lepchas and the Bhutias. After the death of Khye Bumsa his three sons went further south and settled around Gangtok. The second son Mipon Rab, married a lady from Sakya province of Tibet, had four sons, the youngest of them was named Guru Tashi after the name of his grandfather. Guru Tashi’s eldest son was Gyelpa Apha. Gyalpa Apha had a son named Guru Tenzing, who was the father of Phuntsog Namgyal, the first consecrated ruler of Sikkim.

With the consecration of Phuntsog Namgyal, Sikkim, for the first time, got a hereditary ruler. His successors continued to rule Sikkim till it became the protectorate of British in 1861 and Mr. J. C. White became the first British Political Officer in 1889 and Sikkim was brought under direct British Administration. The Namgyal rulers, tracing their origin in Tibet, has brought changes in the polity, society, economy and cultural conditions of Sikkim from 1640 till 1890. Being the ruling class, the Bhutias became superior and influential to the inhabitants of Sikkim. The Namgyal rulers introduced Buddhism as a state religion and made Sikkim a Buddhist state.

Review of Literature:

Number of books have been written on Sikkim by various writers and scholars. They have taken up the study of various aspects of modern history of Sikkim, however, they have slightly overlooked the society and economy of Sikkim under the Namgyal rulers. Among some of them mention may be made of History of Sikkim by Thutob Namgyal and Yeshey Dolma, Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty One Years on the North-East Frontier (1887-1908) by J. C. White, Politics of Sikkim by A. C. Sinha, The Himalayan Gateway: History and Culture of Sikkim by George Kotturan, Aspect of Cultural

29. Sikkim Coronation, Gangtok, Sikkim Coronation Book Committee, 1965, p. 1
   The two chiefs cut down their veins and the blood was poured into a pot thereby promising that the Bhutias and the Lepchas have become blood brothers from that day.
30. H. H. Risley, op. cit. p. 10
History of Sikkim: Studies in Coinage by Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya. In these books attempts have been made by the writers to provide comprehensive history of Sikkim. However we do not find any comprehensive study on society and economy of Sikkim during the Namgyal period though many of them have written about socio-economic trends that took place in Sikkim in the later period. We do not find any single book that has been written with special reference to the society and economy of Sikkim before the beginning of the twentieth century. This work is a modest attempt to find out the socio-economic condition of Sikkim during the Namgyal period. The study aims to reveal the society and economy of Sikkim during the Namgyal period which was not studied before.

Objectives:

The work has been done with the following objectives:

(i) To study the changes in society as a result of migration and state policy.
(ii) To examine the changes in economy from pastoralism to agriculture, trade and commerce through change in technology.

Methodology:

The work is exploratory cum descriptive and analytical in nature. It is exploratory in the sense that unexplored events of history have been put to scrutiny to develop a comprehensive study. In the absence of sufficient primary source materials historical method of investigation, predominantly on the basis of hitherto unexplored primary source materials has been followed in the form of interviews in addition to the new scientific methodology to complete the work. Due to the dearth of primary sources, the study also depends on secondary sources both published and unpublished through field studies. Thus, it is an endeavour to review the available materials, literatures of Sikkim and fill the gap of inadequacy by exploring new areas. The field work carried out has been supplemented by consulting library and archival works, census and case
study. For further information studies have been carried out at National Library Kolkata, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata, National Archives New Delhi, Sikkim State Archives, Tribhuvan University Library, North Bengal University Library, K. K. Handique Library Gauhati University, ICHR Gauhati, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology Library, Gangtok and private archives and libraries. Interviews are being taken from the old house members of Sikkim. Apart from this other supportive documents like deeds and family papers are collected from such families. These documents are reviewed and used in the conventional and time tested historical methodology. Secondary sources include both official and non-official documents, published and unpublished materials. After collecting the source materials, cross examination of these sources were initiated to get a complete picture of the various historical aspects.