CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Social structure and social change are the significant concepts, employed by social scientists, particularly in the fields of sociology and social anthropology. Both are central theoretical concepts in the social sciences and act as complementary to one another in social life. Social structure denotes permanence and continuity while change talks about dynamics and changeability. ‘Structure’, for instance, does not necessarily suggest lack of change. There are parts of structure that are initiated by dynamic processes. For example, in the family and marriage structure of a given society there are many social processes which show a cyclical pattern in the formation, dissolution, and reformation of families. The same processes that perform to retain the social structure may also lead to certain kind of social change. Such appraisals have induced different theories pertaining to the nature of social structure and social change. These have continued to exist in the present-day social thought as well. Since about 1965 there has been a shift from ‘structure’ to ‘change’ in social theory. Though the emphasis on change focuses at different levels such as social dynamics in everyday life, short-term transformations and long-term developments in society, yet both the concepts, in the end, contribute to a fuller understanding of society, its pattern, and pattern of change. In practice it has been found that the Ladakhi social structure and change is embedded in the realm of Ladakhi culture, having meaningful interaction with the various sub-structures such as family, marriage, economy, polity, religion etc. Ladakhi social structures can be viewed as constituting independent spheres of experience in sub-structures that is family, marriage, polity etc and the inter-linkages among them appear quite meaningful for analytical purposes. In such a sphere, the collective as well as individual factors provide important roles in understanding Ladakhi social structure and various changes and continuity in it. Since the term social structure is a very broad concept, therefore, the chief aim of the study was to delineate the following principal institutions of the Ladakhi social structure that is family, marriage, economic and political structure, religion and status of women. The prime objective of the study was to analyze the continuity and change in above substructures and to identity the various factors responsible for the change.
Leh block is purposively selected as it the only block with both urban and rural population in whole of Leh, Ladakh district. Out of these 21 wards and 24 villages, ward no. 1 was identified as urban and most developed and Sku Markha village as rural and less developed in the Leh block respectively. We purposively selected these areas as we applied the yard stick of religion to the respondents of our study respondents who belongs to the Buddhist identity as it becomes easier to compare people from same identity in studying culture or their social structure. The total numbers of households in the ward No 1 are 192 and the total number of households in Sku Markha is 98. Due to time constraint and being a single researcher, it was difficult to interview all of them. So 50 percent of the total households of ward No 1 were taken which comes out to be 96 and all the household of Sku-Markha were studied as they were already less in number. So the total sample size came out to be 194 along with few case studies. Along with “participant observation” sociological methods such as interviews and case study method were conducted as primary tool of data collection. A detailed interview schedule which was prepared before hand with both open ended and close ended questions proved helpful in the field.

Respondents included in the study, were mostly of middle age groups (41-60 years), males. They were fairly educated in the urban area and mostly illiterate in the rural areas. Land holding on an average was that of less than one hectare showing subsistence agriculture, mostly associated with government job in Leh or with tourist industry. Income status of them in urban areas was higher than that in the rural areas. Besides, the majority of them had marital status as that of married while in rural areas, a majority of them belong to joint family setup while in urban area there was a change in their family type as most belong to quasi-joint family setup.

As per our objectives third chapter of the present study dealt with the economic condition of Ladakh including subsistence agriculture and cash economy. Let us first give the brief outline of Ladakh economic condition in past.

Ladakh served as the nerve-centre for the Central Asia Silk trade route till early 1960s between central Asian countries and Indian plains. The traditional source of economy was largely dependent upon the trade as Ladakhis were mainly subsistence farmers. The only source of cash with them was through renting out their horses, donkeys and yaks as pack animals during the trade. Village communities were largely sustained by
raw material available in the local environment and through the intricate nexus of reciprocal exchanges of labour and goods for meeting the basic needs. Co-operative labour between people made farmers dependent upon cash economy.

After independence, economic condition of Ladakh got severely affected as Chinese sealed Sinkiang’s border with Ladakh. It was only after the Sino-Indo war of 1962 that Indian Government for the first time thought about Ladakh and sanctioned many development plans for the region. After this, even the state government drew its attention towards Ladakh and opened many offices in the region. Ladakh’s economic condition got impetus in 1974, when the region was put on world map and was opened for both domestic and international tourists.

Tourism has won a wide recognition as an important industry in the district Leh in view of its potential for creation of employment opportunities and generation of income on a large scale. Tourism industry provides employment to a large number of people, even in remote areas. They are also engaged in the related sectors like transport, hotels and catering service, cottage industry etc. This industry has a direct bearing on the socio-economic scene of the district. Furthermore, in order to cater to the demand of the tourist industry, a lot of infrastructure has come up in the form of hotels and restaurants as well as guesthouses, leading to the conversion of agricultural plots to other kind of use. These new options have helped to absorb a large part of the increasing population. This has also led to changes in the economic system. New sources of livelihood have also led to a migration of people from villages to Leh town, leading to a shortage of household labour for agricultural activities these changes in the livelihood options and in the agrarian system have affected land use pattern largely in the town of Leh. Historically, all houses and habitation in Leh were confined to the area around the Leh Palace; all the other areas were agricultural lands. Over the years, as the population has increased and land fragmentation has begun to take up, houses have spread and come up on the agricultural land in the other parts of Leh. Tourism as a source of income has been a boon to Ladakhi economy but it is not the only source of economy. There are others sources like presence introduction of Indian Armed forces and small scale industries and new market based commercialized agricultural products.

The role of Indian army in the economic development of Ladakh has been enormous. The Line of Control (LoC) casts a long shadow over Ladakh; those who dwell in this
shadow are separated from the rest of the Nation from the central regions of Ladakh by another boundary called the “inner line”. Police checkpoints, restricted travel permit, and other such rituals of surveillance monitor the movement of foreigner and Indians from outside the Jammu and Kashmir who seek to venture into these areas.

Wars like 1962 between India and China, 1971 between India and Pakistan, Kargil war of 1999 and ongoing war at world’s highest battlefield ‘Siachen glacier’, signify the ever increasing presence of Indian army. Ladakh’s significance as a border increased and subsidized food flowed in. The military and civilian authorities promoted the introduction of new crops, fertilizers in the agriculture to reduce the dependence on food imports from the Indian plains. Much of the surplus is purchased by the large number of army personnel stationed in Ladakh which equal in numbers, if not exceeding, to the local population. The presence of army has given a boost not only to vegetable production but to employment as well. Ladakhi soldiers had served in the home guard and Jammu and Kashmir militia, and now they are incorporated into a paramilitary outfit called ‘Ladakh Scouts’. Large numbers of indigenous people are also employed at Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

Agriculture has been a mainstay of Ladakhis till last decade but new sources like tourism has shifted it to secondary occupation. Subsistence agriculture comprised of the cereals crops of wheat, barley and potato. Recently with the coming of tourism and market based economy, subsistence agriculture has been most affected mainly in the urban area. Animal Husbandry is of sizeable economic value employing around 18% of population of Leh district and generates substantial income from rural population. Animals such as sheep and goats are used for sources such as rearing of wool and Pashmina for economic benefits in rural areas. But because of various difficulty of herding, such as threats from wolves and taking livestock to high pasture land in summer months, it has become a difficult task for them because of decreasing workforce due to migration to urban areas and ever decreasing pastureland because of increased camping activities, which is why herding has been replaced by the portering. Number of goats and sheep have decreased from 70-90 to 20-30 while the number of donkeys and ponies have risen. Donkeys and ponies are used as pack animals for trekking parties. So, in another way those who are not directly involved in tourism have been earning indirectly from this industry through their livestock. Finally there are few, who are employed in small scale industry which comprises of
Shawl weaving, wood carving and famous thangka painting. It is not feasible to set up large scale industrial units there because of region’s inaccessibility during winter months, lack of proper communication and infrastructure facilities.

In an overall analysis to know the change in occupation and income of the households selected for the study, it was revealed that there were sudden changes in the source of income and occupation of the families during last one decade. Data analysis clearly shows that there was a change from the subsistence agriculture to government jobs in Leh but in case of Sku-Markha, there was a change from subsistence economy to tourism. While the primary source of occupation and income in Leh are Government jobs but the secondary source of occupation and income for the majority of respondents is tourism. However, in case of Sku-Markha, the primary source of income is tourism while the secondary source is subsistence agriculture. Thus, tourism has become a dominant economic activity. It is difficult to get an accurate and quantitative account of the economic condition of the people in this part of country.

This sudden process of economic development during the past three decades and especially in the last decade has made Ladakhis economically on a firm footing.

Similarly, it is apparent from the analysis that people living in Leh (urban area), enjoyed a higher income status as compared to those living in Sku – Markha (rural area). There is a sharp contrast between the annual incomes of both the areas as a higher proportion of those living in urban area (Leh) have their annual income between Rupees 2,50001-3,50000/- while those living in rural (Sku-Markha ) area have their annual income upto Rs. 1,50000 only. This shows that the economic condition of people living in rural parts of Ladakh is not that prospering relative to that of urban part. This difference can be attributed to low level of literacy rate in Markha valley that has hampered their job prospects as there is only one household who is dependent upon government job as a source of income, while the rest of them rely upon tourism for their cash income (which is seasonal, that is starting from June to September). It is only in these four months when they earn their livelihood.

Though there has been a change in their source of income and they have accepted these new changes as an easy prospect to earn money, without even pondering about their future. Most notably, with the influx of tourism and a general push towards development these have posed the threat to the traditional Ladakhi culture. Young men are lured away from their traditional avocation of farming by attractive financial...
rewards which other avocations offer them. Tourism has impacted Ladakhis in many ways but alteration of Ladakh’s fragile environment and traditional practices of subsistence economy are important to note. Eckholm describes the Himalayas as a fragile ecosystem, where “forces of ecological degradation are building so rapidly and so visibly” (Eckholm.1975;765). Recently, we can see an ecological degradation in Ladakh. Ruins of ecology can be seen in the form of trail degradation due to trekking, problem of waste disposal and sewerage and over exploitation of scarce resources such as water and wood to meet the ever increasing demands of tourist activities and decline in quality of pasture lands as they are being used as camping sites, and finally decrease in biodiversity which is part and parcel of increasing tourist activities.

The social and cultural effects of tourism are more complicated to isolate from the consequences of development programs and broader pressure for globalized tourism. The lack of information and inadequate communication among Ladakhis, to those who are involved in tourism, is an important issue to ponder upon. Some Ladakhis especially in villages do not comprehend why tourists visit Ladakh while on the other hand some tourists tend to be uninformed about the culture of Ladakh. They tend to see themselves as observers catching up a glimpse of an exotic preindustrial culture. Just as the Ladakhis do, tourists make judgements based upon physical appearances and unexamined preconceptions. Influenced by the western stereotypes of the Third World, tourists see Ladakhis as poor, dirty and deprived peasants, in need of development. Tourism has also an influence on the local culture by introducing new elements and showing the people different modern ways of living. The other impact of tourism is that the region has also witnessed a major shift of population from the villages to the urban centre of Leh. The migration of people from the villages to Leh in search of job opportunities or work at various sectors mainly tourism industry has put tremendous pressure on the inadequate infrastructure of the Leh area, which has now become disorganised and a badly designed city. There is a boom of construction in Leh, forcing many temporary residents from rural parts of Ladakh, drained by the tourist economy, to live in a rented house without basic amenities of water and sanitation. New sources of livelihood have also forced migration, leading to a shortage of household labour for agricultural activities in rural areas. This, in turn, has led the farmers to hire their agricultural labour. Previously, with cooperative labour between people, a farmer had no need for money. But the changing economy has
made it difficult for individuals to remain a farmer. There has also been a concomitant reduction in livestock holdings, which has led to shortage of manure and increased use of fertilisers. This migration deprives the villagers of labour power, thereby adversely affecting agricultural sector. This has upset the entire social structure, especially the elders and women left behind, who experience great hardship in villages. The reciprocal relations of mutual aid are worn out by the expansion of monetary benefits.

It would be mistaken here to believe that economy of Ladakh is the only driving force behind their changing social structure but what permeates all aspects of life of Ladakhi is their religion. Fourth chapter of the present study dealt with an overview of the religion in Ladakh, and secondly, to study religion and its role in society.

Buddhist atmosphere can be experienced in Ladakh with monasteries, Stupas, Mane wall, brightly coloured flags fluttering on the roof tops and monks visible everywhere. The demeanour of the people is affected by the religion and can been seen as older people in particular recite mantras as they walk, as they work along with the younger ones who also believe in the Buddhist philosophy of impermanence. It is monasteries that play important role in the lives of Ladakhis. They not only act as seminaries for monks, but organize festivals and help economically those in need. But somehow the role of monastery has undergone changes in the last few years. There are less numbers of monks getting enrolled in the monastic life relative to yesteryears. In our analysis, only 7 households of Leh have their sons leading a monkhood whereas in Sku-Markha except one household, each has one of their sons in monastic life. In case of females, there are hardly any females living a life of a nun. This reflects that there is rural-urban and male-female contrast in admission of monks and nuns in the monasteries and nunneries respectively. Respondents believed that one of the main reasons for this rural-urban difference is economic condition of the families. People of Leh have abundant resources that enable them to make a decent living while in Sku-Markha, the sources of income are very limited and making both ends meet is quite contrary to the people of Leh. Since the monastery caters to the needs of its monks, it becomes one of the reasons for the people of rural region to send their child to lead a monastic life. Another reason for less number of monks enrolled from urban area is gauged from the view of one of the respondents:
Nowadays the pattern of family planning amongst the Buddhists has changed and it has become akin to the outside world. For example, there are small size families having one or two children. If we send them to monasteries, then who will look after us when we are old and carry our family line. So there has been a decline in number of monks enrolled in the monasteries.

As stated above shrinking of large size family structure and formation of nuclear families with one or two children in urban Ladakh has hampered the families from sending their children to monastic life, while rural Ladakh still has large number of children in the family and joint families. This is one reason why there are more children enrolled in monastic life from rural parts of Ladakh. Talking about respondents there were few of them who thought that media mainly television has played a role in the changed monkhood scenario among the youngsters in Leh while in the case of rural area, there is no provision for media to affect the lives of rural folks as it is not connected with electricity. They are still using age old mode of lighting such as kerosene lanterns and candles. Only a few prosperous households have solar light which works for few hours in a day. So television or any other mode of mass media which works on electricity is alien to them.

The male-female contrast lead us to the question why only a small number of females are opting for nunneries in comparison to large number of monks who are opting for monasteries. A common answer received for this contrast is a very small number of nunneries present in Ladakh relative to monasteries. It makes virtually impossible for the family members to send their kin to a far flung land while it is easier to send a boy to a monastery adjoining the same village. So with a less number of nunneries there is a low admission of women, leading a life of a nun.

As mentioned earlier, Buddhism not only plays an important role in Ladakhis lives but Buddhism as a religion also does play an important role in the politics of the region. The widespread sensitivity of identity in Jammu and Kashmir has assumed a great political substance since Indian independence and its role has been a subject of prolonged and sustained discussion. Muslim identity of Kashmir valley, Dogra’s of Jammu plains and Buddhists identity of Ladakh have a feeling of disempowerment in their state. Buddhists believe that it is their identity and region that intersects to marginalize and politicize the concerns within their state and nation. Buddhists demand for separation from Jammu and Kashmir and to protection their identity in Union Territory status is as old an issue as that of Kashmir. Ladakhi, being Buddhists
always felt alienated and discriminated in the Jammu and Kashmir State. Firstly, they could not connect to Muslim dominated state due to their distinct lingo-cultural factor as their religion was more akin to that of Tibet, and secondly inspite of the strategic location, Ladakhis were not given what they deserved economically. Various investigations such as Gajendra Gadkar Commission, (Government of J & K 1968, 24-25) have been set up to investigate for the slow delivery of funds which left Ladakhis disheartened and discriminated against by the State Government.

The issue of religion has emerged after 1989 agitation when the communal politics became visible in the peaceful Ladakh society. There is now a strained relationship between Buddhist and Muslim communities of Ladakh, after long tradition of coexistence. Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA,) a semi political-religious organization played an important role in attaining Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) after a series of protests demanding a Union Territory status for Ladakh. LBA activities were much influenced by religious leaders, high monks, who were able to use their authority to add to the movements’ power and influence. It got the support of a religious organization like Ladakh Gonpa Association (LGA), which had a similar agenda and to reform religious practices. The above mentioned role of LBA and Buddhist religious leaders in the political affairs of the region shows that there is a strong relationship between religion and politics in Ladakh.

The Buddhists religious leader XIV Dalai Lama in August 2003, appealed to the masses regarding the celebration of religious pluralism and promoting peaceful coexistence, but this philosophy has not been accepted by many. Though on the surface, things appear to be calm, yet the actual situation is very different. There is an ethnic conflict between these two communities which is often reflected in their preference of choosing a candidate. In an analysis of the preference given by respondents for choosing a candidate in local, regional and national Level elections, it was clear that both the urban and rural folks prefer at the time of voting to see the ‘political party of the candidate’ and “religion” to which he belongs and choose as their representative leader. If he is a Buddhists they will surely vote for him but in case he is a Muslim, then hardly anyone may approve him as their leader.

To have more detail on the role of religion, question such as how significant is the role of religion in politics was asked, the majority of respondents from both the rural
and urban areas agreed that religion does play a significant role in the political processes, only 3 respondents each from Leh and Sku-Markha believed that religion did not play any role in politics. All of those who agreed on its role in politics further revealed that they felt connected to their religion and its people, if somebody belonging to their religion contest in election. It naturally becomes their moral duty to vote for the fellow villagers of the same religion. From this we get an idea how religion has great influence in the political practices of the region. It can be said while analyzing the role of religion in politics, that there exists a very strong ‘we feeling’ or ‘ingroup consciousness’ among the Buddhists. It is the first step towards asserting their identity which may further trigger off their demands for a greater autonomy. Their statements about religion and its role in politics become more clear from their strong responses, that ‘religion is the cause of communalism’ and ‘one must believe in a particular religion’. The above statements are the evidences of the existing interplay between religion and politics in the case of Ladakh.

They still believe that they have been denied their share in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This appears to be a strong reason for which they have come together religious-politically. The views of the respondents regarding their demands concerning about regional autonomy or Union Territory Status is revealing. On an enquiry about their demand for a UT status for Ladakh, 100 percent respondents from the urban area and majority (93%) of them from rural area were in affirmative. But there were some voices within the segment of Ladakhi society who believed that attaining a UT status for Ladakh is unfathomable. The reason stated by one of the respondents is as below:

UT Status for Ladakh seems to be impossible because our representation in the Parliament is miniscule. Even if there is a consideration for our legitimate demand of granting the UT status for Ladakh, it gets overlooked because of the larger consideration for Kashmir valley of which Ladakh is a part. We need skillful leader to raise our demand. I wish the day will come when people of Ladakh will have their own regime free from Jammu and Kashmir. But the main problem here is that Kashmir wants Azadi which seems baseless to Indian Government and that goes for Ladakh’s demand for UT too.

Another respondent replied to the same question in the following ways:

The fundamental aspect that should attract Central Government attention is that we are divided socially, culturally and linguistically. It should compel the Central Government to mull
over granting the UT status to Ladakh. We need persuasive leaders who can push forward the demand that has been lying in comatose. It remains to be seen how youth of the region comes together for the cause and toil of their Land. It is now their responsibility to wake up and fight for our right.

The above two statements are the reflection of Ladakhis still struggling for the demand of UT status but they were a little reluctant about the outcome. At the same time, they have come to believe that their demand has not been met for two reasons. Firstly, for being a part of the trouble state of Jammu and Kashmir and secondly, because of their feeble representation in the Central Government.

It was observed in the case of the Ladakh, Buddhism, which is known as casteless religion and for being more egalitarian than other religions, attracts Dalits for conversion. But Buddhism in Ladakh exercises certain practices which gives an observer an ample belief that there exists a caste system, even in a casteless religion. The Buddhists of Ladakh follow a feudalistic social structure, where the Gyalpo, (gyl-rgis) are the lineal descendants of the monarchs who once ruled the land and occupied the top position in the social strata. Next in hierarchy come the aristocratic families or nobility (sku-drag) whose ancestors had options of honour under the royalty and bear the titles like kalon, kharpon, Lonpo who are now comparatively wealthy, enjoy a comfortable life and pump their savings in the flourishing tourist industry. Then come the well to do commoners (mang-rigs) who enjoy considerable material prosperity and form a sort of lower middle class. At the base of the social pyramid in general, are the artisans and the labouring class in general. The victim of social discrimination rigs-ngan goes by the name of Mons, Gara and Beda. ‘Mons’ play religious tunes in honor of the Gods. ‘Gara’ manufacture plough-scissors, arrow-heads, knives, axes, stoves and repair all kinds of pots and pans. The ‘Bedas’, positioned at the lowest in the strata, are songwriters and musicians.

Social stratification as a visible feature determines seating arrangements in Ladakh. The higher one in comparison to others is seated in the Dral. Monks take the highest seats, according to their own hierarchies of seniority, followed by the upper class and then the commoners and the outcastes at the bottom. Mons and Garas regularly bear the humiliation of being seated at the end of the Dral. Bedas, are even denied access to the Dral altogether. Stepping outside the boundaries of one’s position in the Dral or failing to respect the etiquettes of seating can lead to friction and even to ostracism.
from the society. Discrimination does not end here, but they are also deprived of becoming the head of the village (Goba) and head of the monastery irrespective of their proficiency due to their caste identity.

The XIV Dalai Lama each time in his sermons to protests against the division of castes among Buddhists. In 1985, the Dalai Lama made history by visiting the house of a smith, where he was facilitated by members of all three oppressed castes. Photographs of his holding up drumsticks and beating a Daman are hung in several homes. The Dalai Lama has openly expressed his disapproval of caste, denying that it has any basis in Buddhist doctrine. (Aggrawal.2004;168) Lower caste has been warning upper caste members that if the discrimination against them persisted, they would have no recourse but to convert to Islam. (Aggrawal.2004;173) Conversion has been a major factor governing the politics of Ladakh since 1989 agitation. The anxiety of conversion has finally motivated the LBA to mobilize a campaign against caste differences, but its execution is still very slow.

Though certain practices of Ladakhi Caste system are somewhat flexible than other parts of India, yet as such there is no restriction about entering the house of upper caste people and public places, like monastery, festivals etc by the lower caste as it is seen in many parts of India where people from lower caste are not allowed to enter the house of upper caste or any public places. Lower castes are generally invited by the upper castes and vice versa in their social ceremonies such as marriages and other festive occasions. In the selected areas for this research, there were not a single household of the Mon, Gara and Beda groups. People from urban areas would call Mons and Garas for their various works like playing music in their marriage ceremonies or their household works like carpentry or as agricultural labor etc. However, the villagers from Sku- Markha stated that all the work of playing drums to carpentry was being done by the villagers themselves, as there are no lower caste people in the area. Moreover, villagers do not feel ashamed or stigmatized in playing drums in their ceremonies.

Other than this, the reasons of purity and pollution are articulated by Ladakhis even today. It is widely believed by villagers that having sexual contact with low castes is ritually contaminating (see also Gutschow, 2004). Once in a while, caste differences would be superseded by romantic love, generally in the case of women from the oppressed castes marrying into upper caste families. Though inter-caste marriages are
still not accepted but there have been one or two cases of inter-caste love marriages in Leh in the past.

Our respondents were asked about their views regarding caste system, that is, whether they favour caste system or not. Out of the total 96 respondents of the Leh (urban), the majority, (97.92%) of them did not favour caste system in Ladakh, except one respondent while in rural Ladakh (Sku-Markha) all the respondents openly opposed inter-faith and inter caste marriages. Few years back, a girl eloped with a low caste boy and got married. The situation in her family was worse than the death of any member of the family. Relatives and friends pressurized to boycott their daughter and virtually the whole family boycotted her. The news spread like wild fire; the life of the boy was in threat. Other reasons stated were social status of family, economic and societal barriers. In the coming future, there may be changes in the inter-caste marriages among the Buddhists due to development in economic conditions and upliftment through educational achievement.

This is surprising as on one hand, the majority of people do not favour caste system but on the other hand the same majority does not favour inter-caste marriages. This paradox among the Buddhists is a complex phenomenon to understand and it need to be answered. It can be said that at personal level they want to get rid of the system but the societal pressure does not allow them to do so. The fundamental question is as to who is this society then? Who forms the society? Does it comprise of middle and lower caste or of those elites class who are ruling them. This paradox takes us back to the Marxian view. Marx's states that "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas." These ideas are considered as manifestation of class interests and are linked to the power structure, which is identified with the class structure.

Fifth chapter of the study has been devoted to study a general overview of the family and marriage system as they exist for the Buddhists in Ladakh currently. Ladakhi family and marriage system of past reflects the values of people dependent on the scarce land for subsistence farming. A feature of Ladakhi society that distinguished it from the rest of the state was the fraternal polyandry and inheritance by primogeniture. The custom of inheritance by primogeniture, whereby only the eldest son inherits the father’s property. Even the limited land availability for cultivation also ensured that the land is not carved up in ever decreasing portions, making it unprofitable to cultivate. If family’s inheritance was continually split up there soon
would be tiny properties which would be unable to support their owners. So fraternal polyandry was practised until the early 1941, when this was made illegal by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Another strange feature present in the past was that of Khanchen and Khang-bu. Khanchen is a household where married elder son with his family lives and Khang-bu is the place where an old parent retires with their unmarried children. Ladakhi describes khanchen as the place of surplus production, which is able to supply festival and sponsor monastic rituals, while Khang-bu merely has sufficient stock for its own survival. The khanchen is the place of reproduction, where every household has enough land and livestock to support a family, however, some do have a significantly greater number of fields and larger houses. It is found in all Ladakhi villages that the khanchen is socially superior to the Khang-bu (Pirie. 2007; 58). It is now the married children who shift from the main house to small dwelling, leaving parents behind in the main house. But interestingly, this practice has been replaced with the coming of nuclear family structure. To know the details about the contemporary family structure, for operational purposes, in this study, Morrison’s classification of family types has been taken into account as it has been found to be, more appropriate in analysing the family system in the selected area. According to Morrison, there are three types of families, Nuclear, Quasi-joint, and Joint, on the basis of the conjugal pair. The nuclear family consist of one congual pair; joint family consists of two or more conjugal pair with or without other relation. If joint family consists of two conjugal pairs and if husbands in the pairs are related as father and son, it is defined as Quasi-joint family (Morrison, 1959).

In the present scenario, the analysis of Leh and Sku-Markha shows that there is preponderance of quasi-joint families in Leh and joint families in Sku-Markha. There are also few nuclear families present in Leh. Our data analysis also shows that in spite of the numerous changes and adaptations to a pseudo-Western culture and a shift toward the nuclear family among the urban folks, the modified joint family which in other terms is quasi-joint, is the most preferred family type prevailing in Ladakh. As they believed that elder people are the important members of the family and old age implies years of valuable experience and wisdom. They remain a part of a family and community, so active that even in their eighties they are usually fit and participate in all spheres of life. This new type of family is also compatible in maintaining decent
relationship with members of the family and is compatible with the new cash economy. It is very interesting to note that there are large number of joint families still prevalent in Sku-Markha. Respondents also revealed that the significant inflow of tourist in the valley demanded a large number of homestays, which were opened in Sku-Markha, (rural). Joint family is of great help as more number of family members are required to maintain the homestay’s and guest houses and also to deal with the tourists. In such a situation, the system of joint family and quasi joint has been found more appropriate than those of nuclear families. Economic condition of rural respondents is not good enough to get separated and start up their new households. So the joint family system is more appropriate for the rural people. But there are large numbers of nuclear families that have come up in Leh city. The reasons articulated by respondents for nuclear families are mainly economic independence and privacy.

In case of functions of the families, there has been a changed scenario. Nuclear family structure in Ladakh is quite different from the rest parts of the country. Even the boundaries and rules governing the nuclear family are very different from the modern nuclear families. Therefore, a married man and his nuclear family are not completely independent from the parental extended family, when he establishes his own new social and economic unit of production. The independence of his nuclear family is limited only to the economic production and family privacy. The means of subsistence agriculture and livestock, is still dependent and secured through joint efforts with other extended family members. However, the materials for this production come mainly from collective property and labour. Therefore, the nuclear family, in many ways, may not survive as a completely independent social and economic unit in the present Ladakhi society. Similarly, the nuclear family is only partly independent in the spiritual world also. Many of the important spiritual, life-supporting ceremonies are only conducted jointly by all the members of the entire extended family conducted by the grandfather, father, and first-born married son. As a result, of all of these existing factors, it makes the nuclear family seem less significant in case of Ladakh. Another significant change is regarding decreasing size of family. In the present Ladakhi social structure, there is much more popularity of joint family than nuclear family, reason being the relevant and practical role of joint family system in Ladakhi social, political and religious life. Marriages in Ladakh are examples of social cooperation. Customarily it is relatives and friends who cooperatively help the
family members, as it is believed that marriage expenses are too heavy for one person to bear. They believe that just as the duty of shepherding goats and cattle, which rotates around the villagers so shall be the case with the marriage. One of the respondents stated “it is his turn today and tomorrow it will be mine”. Each of the households of a locality where marriage is going to take place contributes whatever little they can afford. Each household gets two yarkandi carpets and one table before the main feast, as they are laid for the guest, in the tent where the main celebration takes place.

If family is the basic unit of society then marriage stands at the foundation of the family life. As mentioned earlier, polyandry was the common form of marriage in past but some cases of monogamy and polygyny were also found. Till recently, polyandry was practised in remote parts of Ladakh, though it was abolished in 1941. The boys were generally married at an age of 19 - 24 years and girls by the age of 16-20 years. Marriages among the Buddhists were always a religious affair and were marked with elaborate ceremonies and wedding arrangements, full of music, dance, joy and feasting which used to last for several days.

To examine the changes taking place in marriage practices, data were collected regarding the age of males and females at which they should get married. The age at marriage is high in case of Leh (urban) as compared to Sku-Markha (rural), other important variation is that the males age of marriage is relatively higher than females in both the cases. Though the general attitude of individual’s regarding the shift in the early age at marriage has changed, yet in regard to rural areas, until recently, early marriages, particularly of the females were in higher proportion. The reasons given by respondents for a shift in age of marriage in the urban part (Leh) are spread of education, economic developments, legislative provision and impact of mass media. Different factors responsible for slow change in the rural area are due to low educational qualification and low economic development. In an overall analysis, it has been observed that in general, many factors have contributed towards increasing the age at marriage but it appears that changed economic prospects and increased opportunities for the higher education have particularly influenced this trend in Ladakh. So our proposition where we said that economic substructure might have influence or changed other substructures has proved to be true in the case of family
and marriage. The differential educational growth in urban parts of Leh has affected the age at marriage on a differential rate. We can also see a drastic change in mate selection.

In case of choosing a mate, in past it were usually the head of the family and other elder members of the family who would decide the mate for their children. Since then, the issue of mate selection has undergone many changes. The respondents of Leh revealed that it is personal choice of partners that supersedes the parental choice in choosing a mate. There were a large number of respondents (35%) who believed that it was better if both parents and children’s choice were considered while choosing a mate. But in the case of Sku-Markha, it is still parental choice that decides the mate selection process while there are equal number of respondents who believe that personal choice and choice of both parents and partners are essential for choosing a mate. These changes in Leh have been attributed to increased educational qualification of the respondents relative to respondents of Sku-Markha. Another reason articulated for those changes is the increased age at marriage, which has enabled individuals to take decision on their own. One of the important reasons why Buddhist parents allow their children a freedom of choice in having marriage partners is that this may help them to be more successful in their marriages and this may reduce divorce.

In the case of selection of mate in Ladakh, there is very strong religious and caste endogamy being practised now. Though the inter-religious marriages were practised in the past but this has come to an end after the 1989 communal agitation. Not even marriages between these two communities have been boycotted but those families who had relations with each other were also asked to boycott each other. The responses of inter-faith marriages reveal that they will not allow their children to marry outside their religion especially between Muslims and Christians. But contrary to their statements, there have been a few cases of marriages between Buddhists and Christians. It is important to note here that these Christian are not Ladakhi Christians but they are foreign nationals, who come to Ladakh as tourists and fell in love with Ladakhis. Ladakhis openly boast about the marriages taking place between Buddhist and foreign nationals. What do these distinctions suggest us? Marrying a Ladakhi Christian is considered as a sin while marrying a foreign Christian is a practice to
boast about. The belief that family economy will rise by marrying a foreigner is one of the main reasons for allowing their children to marry with a foreign Christian. Conversion and excommunication within their community may be another reason for not marrying with Ladakhi Christians and Muslims. Though there have been cases of inter-caste marriages but then these families were outcasted from the society. In case of inter-faith marriages, Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) entered into a verbal agreement with the Ladakh Muslim Association (LMA) in Leh, to ban these practices and punish those who defied their agreement by forcing them to leave Ladakh and threatening their families with excommunication. The treaty ensured that in the events of love affair between a Buddhists and Muslims, each side is responsible for taking the prospective bride and groom back to their family, who will presumably stop them going through with the marriage. They believe that marriages among Buddhists are most compatible due to their cultural similarities. This reflects that religion and caste endogamy play a significant role as criteria for selecting a mate and on the other hand, lesser importance is given to the secular elements.

In case of ways of acquiring mates in the past, there were three common ways, formal marriage, Pagma or Magpa, voluntary elopement and bride abduction. Formal path of marriage and voluntary elopement were the most common ways. Voluntary elopement was so commonly practiced that it sometimes outnumbered the formal path of acquiring mates. It was common to avoid the expenses of marriage ceremonies and expenses of dinners and parties that were to be given in the formal marriage practice. Today, the majority of respondents of Leh believe that Pagma followed by Magpa are the common ways of getting married. However, then comes the voluntary elopement, is still practiced in large numbers especially in rural Ladakh. They revealed that the practice of bride abduction has been completely vanished in Leh, whereas in Sku-Markha, voluntary elopement is the most common form of marriage followed by Pagma and Magpa ways. A large numbers of voluntary elopements in rural parts are indicative of the fact that the economic condition of people is not that good as compared to people of urban area.

Ladakhi marriages differ from marriages of Indian plains on account of dowry system. There is no dowry system in Ladakh but the bride’s family financial token has been conversely considered as gifts. The money that the bride accumulates serves as a
reserve fund for her future. The eldest daughter receives the bulk of pots, pans and vessels, as well as her mother’s *perak*. Interestingly, it is boy’s side that has to take care of all the expenses and has to pay girl side for taking away the girl from her parents. Recently, there have been cases where a girl’s parents had given car to the bride as a wedding gift. But then Ladakh Buddhist Organization (LBA) had has made it a rule that no girl would take car or any other expensive gifts with her as it might one day take a shape of dowry system. This will become a burden for those parents who cannot afford to spend much on weddings.

Divorces occur often in Ladakhi society. A man can divorce his wife if she proves to be infertile and unfaithful. Frequently, the wife divorces the husband if he treats her badly or if he quarrels with her irreconcilably. The old kings law lays down that the guilty party responsible for breaking up the marriage must pay the other some compensation. (Ribbach.1986:113). If it is the wife who seeks the divorce, she has to return to the husband the part of the dowry or a bride price contributed by him. In the event of the husband seeking the dissolution of the marriage, he has to let the wife take away all her dowry including the part contributed by him. All cases of divorce are referred to and decided by local elders, only rare cases are taken to court. There are remarriages both for the boys as well as for the girls after divorce. In case she is a widows, then also she is free to remarry, if she chooses so. Buddhist girls have the choice to marry, remain a spinster and spend her life in her father’s house or to enter a monastery as a nun.

Finally the status of women has been studied in the six chapter on four basic parameters, that is, economic, educational, extent of political participation and their role in decision making process within the household and outside household.

India as a whole is characterised by sharp gender disparities. Although status of women varies considerably from region to region, unlike other parts of India, Ladakh is marked by its speculative feature where women enjoy moderately better status. They have better mobility and greater economic independence, but they lag behind in public sphere. In public sphere, their fate meets the same result as their counterparts in other parts of the country. There is a kind of duality observed where; man dominates the public, political and religious spheres, while a woman enjoys private powers. Traditional women in the past have helped in the household chores and worked as
agricultural labourers but recently women’s role in both economic and non-economic pursuits has become equally important. This has given them better social standing and personal enrichments.

Today, a major segment of agricultural work is done by women who do weeding, planting, harvesting and thrashing except ploughing which is a man’s domain. In addition to the domestic activities they also collect goods like fuel, fodder and water while men are out on assorted duties as shepherding, tourist guides, serving in army etc. Adding together their informal work at the household and fields, they have several avenues of wealth to rely upon, like selling of vegetable and local handicrafts. Even women belonging to respectable income households are free to sell vegetables on the streets that might not be the case in the Indian plains.

These women by running a guest house, homestay, selling vegetables or any other paid job, thereby achieve direct economic benefits. This has strengthened their motivation to strive for greater self-reliance and economic independence. It is not only the educated women who are coming out of the households to try their hands in various ventures but there are cases where poorly educated and even illiterate women are holding positions in economic sphere. For instance, there is an illiterate woman in her late 70s in Markha valley, who not only handles the various demands of tourist staying at her homestay, but she also prepares food for them and converses with them in English with few lines she had learnt over the years. For example, asking them “how is the food?”, “do you need anything?”, “how are you?”, “Do come back?” etc. The above example reflects that the earning from tourism is not only in the hands of educated folks but old illiterate women are also complementing the promotion of economy.

Some of them contribute the cash income earned from these sources to a household’s budget while others use it for their personal affairs. Working outside their household and within the household in tourism industry, has given them relevant exposure, and it has increased their decision making power. Firstly, it has given them a higher professed contribution to household’s economic status. Secondly, employment has worked as a core for women’s economic independence from men. Additional benefits of a woman working outside her home are increased social contact, exposure to knowledge and new norms of behaviour, increased potential and a clearer perception.
of individuality and well-being. All these have enhanced a woman’s power relative to her husband’s. Finally, for the urgradation of status of women, there are organizations like ‘Women Alliance of Ladakh’ and various others NGO’s like LEDeG’s, Self Help Groups, Government run handicraft schemes, Snow Leopard Conservancy, etc that are working for building up more independent women to face the difficulties of the new modern world.

Education wise Ladakhi women have won wide recognition but still there are sharp disparities between urban and rural literacy rate. A large number of respondents from Leh want their girls to acquire atleast post graduation and professional degrees while the majority of rural Ladakh want to educate their girl’s only upto twelfth standard. There are only one or two respondents favouring higher education. Reason given by respondents for educating their children only upto 10th standard or 12th standard, is that it is really difficult to cover daily distance of 13km to reach the school. While parents are enthusiastic about educating their daughters in rural parts of Ladakh, they enrol their daughters in schools but there are cases where girls study up to middle level and then drop out. There are few respondents from Markha who believed that in absence of hired labour, the girls have to work both at home and in the agricultural fields This is of utmost importance and more so eventually the girls have to get married and start their families. Other than geographical location, low economic conditions and poor awareness about education among people of Sku-Markha are held as important factors for their low level of literacy.

Irrespective of sex, literacy in Sku-Markha is very low. The most striking feature of Sku-Markha is its literacy rate which is 34.19 percent according to 2001 Census. The present running school in Markha was middle school till 2008 but due to low enrolment of the students it has been converted to primary school from then onwards. It is important to note that there are in all 9 students in the school with four teachers handling them. Another reason for low enrolment rate in Markha School is that a large number of households have sent their children to Leh city for studying in private schools, which is again another reason for a low enrollment at the Government school at Markha.

Since in most of the villages, women are illiterate, adult education is of the utmost importance in order to make these women at least capable of writing their own name.
and mastering the basic reading and writing skills necessary in modern life. Women organizations have taken active part in educating the village women. The women welfare society has carried out adult education programme. Such programmes have been effective in making women more confident in their general social and economic sphere and especially in their daily business in the market. (Angmo, 385: 1999). The women of Ladakh are achieving a far wider economic and social independence during the course of time. Despite numerous women getting educated and finding employment in various sectors, their role in political sphere still remains minimal.

The Ladakhi political setup is the one area in which gender disparities are more visible. It is interesting to note that although by agreement every village in Ladakh had a tradition of Goba system, whereby all the village decisions are taken by the Goba. But women are not allowed to become Goba. This shows how women are generally bypassed and marginalized in public affairs and community decision-making. However, traditional institutions have witnessed a significant change with the coming of Panchayats system (local government) and there are women who are now taking part in this system.

A key feature in Ladakh’s politics has been the establishment of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in 1995, to address the distinctive subject of governance in the context of Ladakhi society and polity. The step implied the growth in political opportunities for the Ladakhi, and a mechanism particular to the needs of the region. However, this has no tangible thrust of the Council to women’s development or empowerment in Leh district. Presently, amongst the 30 members of General Council of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), there are two nominated women councilors Spalzes Angmo nominated for all the three terms on the principle of minority and Tashi Angmo, on the reservation of weaker section. In more than half a century political account of Ladakh after India's independence, Ladakh could bring in only one woman candidate as a Member of Parliament in the Indian parliament that too the Queen of Ladakh. The significance of belonging to the royal family could be an important factor for her representation. Lack of women participation in the local governance makes them more venerable for the violation of their rights. Women who can make a difference being part of the Hill Council; their performance and track-record remain lack-lustre. With low level of
contribution to the process of planning and setting agendas is not visible for them. For women in the Halqua Panchayat, it is the same story and at LAHDC, it is an opportunity lost. Within the Executive Council, the think-tank and the body which defines policy and sets development agenda, women’s role in Development or Empowerment are conspicuously missing from it.

G M Sheikh, who works on women’s leadership, points out, “Ladakhi society is patriarchal and it is the main barrier to the participation of women in governance and decision making in the society. The general perception still persists that these jobs (leadership) are the responsibility of men”. While Tsering Dolker, General Secretary of Women’s Alliance of Ladakh says, “this mind-set itself discourages women’s participation in governance”. The myth of the Ladakhi women being at par with the males in society stops short of their participation in governance and the political process which in some ways is considered the yardstick of women’s empowerment in any region. Unless women participate fully and are part of not only public discourse on any issue but of the process of governance, they will remain in the shadows, no doubt more as decorative subject or emblems of a rich and fascinating culture, but without a role in development. Advocate Thinley Angmo notes, “The level of education in women is increasing and will soon start a new era in women’s society. The government job opportunities which are most preferred by women, along with exploring other opportunities will take them way forward”.

While deciding the voting behaviour of women, the data reflects that there is male supremacy in deciding their voting behaviour. But what was astonishing to note here is that a large number of respondents revealed that it is religious leaders that influence their voting behaviour. This finding suggests and confirms with our earlier finding, where we stated that religion plays an important role in politics.

In decision making process it is said that Ladakhi women have far better power and independence than modern sub urban housewives. A woman always has it in her power to leave her husband if she is angry, dissatisfied or unhappy. In Ladakhi society, woman has the right to select a man, and marry him on her own choice. Not only she has a choice to choose her life partner but she also has a right to get separated if she wants to. A woman is rarely abandoned by her husband, even in case of infertility; she is not deserted though another wife is brought into the family.
Widow has an option to marry any other person. The divorcee or widow women among these communities have similar rights and duties as other married women have. The other norm accompanying matriliney is that of matrilocal post-marital residence which is rare in other group.

However, religion is the front where women face sharp gender disparities. The religious organization of Buddhist society gives an idea about gender inequality that denies the status and independence to Buddhist nuns as compared to Buddhists monks and perpetually they are subordinate as nuns. The subjugation of women in religious activities and their denial of access to position of religious leadership has been a powerful tool in most worlds religions in supporting the patriarchal order and the exclusion of women, from the public forum (Franzmen, 2000). Buddhist nuns can never hold the same status which a monk in Buddhism holds; that is one important reason why there are less number of girls enrolled as nuns.

Ladakh has undergone tremendous economic, political, socio-cultural, and psychological changes during the last two decades. The change agents are the rapid economic development due to tourism and often culturally disruptive influence of tourism, a much greater presence of the Indian government, population increase, political unrest and dramatic political changes in and around Ladakh, the widespread introduction of modern schooling, the massive presence of the Indian Army, the influence of the mass media and a rapid decrease in the practice of polyandry. The influence of these change agents has been especially massive in the Leh (urban area) but can be observed in rural areas of Ladakh as well. Traditional Ladakhis were “embedded” in collectivistic social structures and worldviews that asked the individual to give priority to family and village interests and to cooperate in collective institutions as well as village activities. In contrast, processes of modernization and conflict tend to “dissemble” the individual thereby both liberating and alienating him or her from networks of social constraint and support. This process has also supported the rise of religious “identity politics” which intensified during the late 1980s and 1990s. Culture change often increases differences in worldview between the generations, a tendency that is furthered by the introduction of modern schools that mostly teach knowledge created in the outside world rather than in the local society. In this context, some younger Ladakhis may be tempted to reject some of the beliefs...
and customs of the older generation, perhaps seeing them as outdated and even superstitious. This individualism may also support the decline of the joint family structure. The desire not to divide up a family’s land between the children may be there but the system began to decline as new economic opportunities arose especially for the younger men.

It is surprising to find out that on one hand there is a strong process of identification building up as a Ladakhi Buddhist but on other hand there is erosion of identity as a Buddhist or as a Ladakhi. Infact, in reality they are becoming more as a citizens of world as a result of growing consumerism and cultural globalization. This erosion of identity is due to the consumerist culture which has come into this mountainous region with the advent of tourism. Ladakh has become a famous tourist destination among the international tourists. The process of modernization and cultural globalization can be reflected in the Ladakhi new way of adopting different practices, and the traditional way of life and beliefs that were once supported in early Buddhism are gradually withering away. The interplay between religion and polity throws up contradictory signals. On one hand Buddhists are using their minority syndrome as a tool to gain political and economic benefits but on the other hand, there is erosion of their identity due to onslaught of consumerist culture.

The forces of modernization via new economic development initiative especially that of tourism, have induced individualistic attitudes, greater self-awareness, a greater awareness of Ladakh’s position in the political and cultural setting, a more systematic awareness about one’s religious and socio-political identity, decline in myopic thinking and imagination, lesser belief in some of the more supernatural aspects of folk religion, an increase in the difference between the generations in the belief system, greater exposure of the younger generation to India’s youth culture (which, in turn, is influenced by international trends), and rising expectations and desires among the people. These changes are transforming Ladakh’s Buddhist ethos by taking away some of the more ingrained diffuse manifestations. However, at the same time, the ethos continues to exert a powerful influence on the Ladakh’s Buddhist inhabitants. So our hypothesis that economic structure may influence the polity, religion, family or marriage institutions holds true in case of Ladakh. But at the same time along with
economy, it is religion that also plays an important role in the life of the local population.

Existing theories on social structure vis-a-vis social change provides various factors for change in structure of a society. Marxian projects economy to be the determining factor; functionalists predicts continuity of an institution because of its functions in sustaining the system; and symbolic integrationists believe in the process of social construction that reproduces existing structures and also leading to alteration of the structures at the same time. Interpretivists has the standpoint that social change is brought about by the change in the ‘meaning’ thereby suggesting that change itself is the process of interaction and negotiation. Thus, structure becomes a temporary by-product of the social process of creation and recreation of a social order for the interpretivists. Present study finds Marxian theory to be a valuable support for explaining the changes in the social structure of Ladakh as economy is found to be the most prominent factor that is producing change in the Ladakh’s social structure. However, above economic deterministic theory neglects the cultural realm and the conflict over economic factors were not the only reason for social change in Ladakh. Religion, particularly Buddhism as a functional pre-requisite of the Ladakhi was the main factor that is providing continuity in the Ladakh’s social structure. Therefore, functionalist perspective also holds true in this domain of maintaining order in the society. Beyond classical Marxist theoretical realm, conflict over the symbolic realms like religion, gender, values and ideologies of the people of Ladakh were also found as important factors for change in the social structures of Ladakhi society. So, Neo-Marxian theory of social change which takes into account the cultural realm better explains the change and continuity in Ladakh. Gidden’s idea of structuration as an ongoing process depicting the dynamic nature of structure and agency is also helpful in recognizing the role of human agency in Ladakh engaging with social structure which also contributes to social change. Factors like tourism, education, militarization, polity, etc. seems to be analyzed as individual factors of social change in Ladakh but there is need for a holistic view. Thus, available theories and perspectives on social structure vis-a-vis social change helps in explaining a certain domain of change but none of the theory can explain the social change in Ladakh in all its dimensions. Therefore, present study concludes with the idea that in order to
capture all aspects of social structure and to understand social change in Ladakhi society, we need multiple perspectives and a holistic theoretical approach.

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Ladakh, being part of Jammu and Kashmir was and still affects at every level of development due to religious and regional causes for Kashmir's insurgency which overlaps with the political instability in the Kashmir valley (Bose, 1997). Though it has escaped the scale of uncertainty and violence that the Kashmir valley deals with daily. Still, when the phrase “the voice of the Kashmiri people” is invoked for seeking resolutions for the Kashmir conflict beyond exclusive negotiations between Pakistan and Indian heads of the state, political analysts generally ignore the perspective from Ladakh's point of view. When these perspectives are considered, it is to only differentiate the Buddhist Ladakh and the Hindu Jammu from the Muslim Kashmir, using religion as a criterion to ascribe a unified voice to the areas (Aggarwal, 2004; 7).

Inspite of developmental programmes and schemes, there has been very less development in Ladakh be it urban area or rural area. Self-reliance and sustainability are the key words for development in Ladakh which is striking a balance between modernization and tradition. The importance of farmers and farming as a profession has to be recognized by society as well as by planners and development administrators. Agriculture and animal husbandry activities have to be given top priority in funding and management. Also, special plans and programmes have to be initiated for the development of traditional handicraft and small scale industries based upon local products like pashmina, Yak wool, and dry fruits like apricots etc. Non-conventional energy sources such as solar and hydro need to be developed in preference to those based on fossil fuel. Tourism, which has become a major source of income, has to be given a new direction so that its benefits are shared by a greater population particularly in rural areas. Rural areas are to be developed as quickly as possible with the provision of basic infrastructure including electricity, medical and educational facilities and the creation of employment opportunities in the villages in order to minimize population shifts to Leh (Dawa, 1999).
It is to be seen to what extent the wind of change triggered off by globalization and modernization will change the Buddhist cultural ethos and mores. This change needs to stand the test of time or the inherent resilience of the Buddhists philosophy may confront difficulties in preserving the cultural heritage of Buddhism in this part of the world with certain modification in its form and structure.