

Merger of Sikkim and Politics of Development

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Degree of Master of Philosophy

By

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Declaration

I, Bishwas Mani Rai, do hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the content of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university.

The dissertation has been checked using URKUND and found within limits as per plagiarism policy and instructions issued from time to time.

This is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Merger of Sikkim and Politics of Development**” submitted to Sikkim University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science is the result of bonafide research work carried out by Ms Bishwas Mani Rai under my guidance and supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree, diploma, associateship and fellowship.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

Date: 07.02.2017

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Abstract

Sikkim became a full fledged 22nd constituent state of Indian union in 1975. Until 1975 Sikkim was under the rule of Namgyal Dynasty which lasted for 333 years. In 1950 Sikkim became the protectorate of India. Indian Government in the name of protectorate performed several task in Sikkim. The Sikkimese people however desired for change in feudal order and implementation of democratic set up. India being the protectorate of Sikkim constantly interfered and controlled Sikkim's internal and external matter that made India's control over the region more firm. Geopolitically and strategically, Sikkim is an important state for India as it forms the north-eastern borders of India. The strategic location of Sikkim makes it draw sufficient attention from the Indian Government. The Namgyal Dynasty came to an end when Sikkim was finally merged with the Indian union in 1975. This event led to the change in the political system of Sikkim from centralized monarchial system to the liberal democratic system.

The study examines factors and events leading to merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union, identifies post merger developments in Sikkim in accordance to the changes in political, social and economical aspects of Sikkim. Further tries to understand Sikkim's people's perception on merger and the developmental process in Sikkim.

The study uses qualitative approach to examine the pre and post merger issues in Sikkim and to understand the view points of the people of Sikkim on the merger issues.

Merger brought with it so many changes and developments in Sikkim's political, economical and social fronts. The changes that merger brought with it are both positive and negative changes. India's developmental policy in Sikkim is successful in providing material or physical change in the region. By following various developmental paths India has gained victory in nationalizing the space. As merger meant unification, it established the unification of the space. The finding shows that Sikkimese people have come under the threat of losing their identities. The merger made smooth transition in the process of democratic participation in 1975, yet it has failed to establish smooth transition in terms of Sikkim's people's identity. In the process of counting developments, the loss of identity that accompanied the merger was undermined. The merger of Sikkim with the Indian union can be reckoned as a political success with a social failure.

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List of Acronyms

CATCH:	Comprehensive Annual and Total Checkup for Healthy Sikkim
CHC:	Community Health center
GPU:	Gram Panchayat Unit
JAC:	Joint Action Committee
MDONER:	Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
NBC:	Non Backward Class
NCERT:	National Council of Education Research and Training
NEC:	North Eastern Council
NIEPA:	National Council of Education Planning and Administration
OBC:	Other Backward Class
OPD:	Out Patient Department
PHC:	Primary Health Center
PHSC:	Primary Health Sub-Center
PRI:	Panchayat Raj Institution
SC:	Scheduled Caste
SDF:	Sikkim Democratic Front
SJC:	Sikkim Janata Congress
SJP:	Sikkim Janata Parishad
SJP:	Sikkim Janata Party
SNC:	Sikkim National Congress
SNP:	Sikkim National Party
SSC:	Sikkim State Congress
SSP:	Sikkim Sangram Parishad
ST:	Scheduled Tribe
UGC:	University Grant Commission
VLW:	Village Level Workers

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim had been a monarchical state before its merger with India in 1975. Geopolitically and strategically, Sikkim is an important state for India. The strategic location of Sikkim makes it draw sufficient attention from the Indian Government. Until 1975 Sikkim was under the rule of Namgyal Dynasty which lasted for 333 years. The Namgyal Dynasty came to an end when Sikkim was merged with the Indian union in 1975.

Statement of the Problem

Sikkim was accorded associate status in 1974 and full state status in 1975. Till the day it was declared 22nd state of India, Sikkim was an independent sovereign kingdom under India's Protectorate. In the name of Protectorate Indian government performed several developmental activities and controlled and influenced the region and its people, to bring Sikkim closer to India. Since the 1950's India has assumed direct responsibility on three specific matters of Sikkim: external relations, defense and communication. The Sikkimese people however desired for change in the feudal order and the implementation of democratic set up. India being the protectorate of Sikkim constantly interfered, influenced and controlled Sikkim's external and internal matters. There were other factors also. At that time it was difficult to visualize Sikkim as economically independent. The domestic political scene was also not very encouraging. People of Sikkim aspired for change and revitalization in political structure.

By the beginning of 1970 people of Sikkim started demanding for the removal of monarchy and establishment of democratic set up. This finally gave rise to the agitation against Sikkim Durbar¹ in 1973. Further events between 1947-1973 led to Sikkim's transformation from a Protectorate to an Associate State. However differences between Chogyal² and the Legislative Assembly rose to an extent that Sikkim eventually was declared 22nd state of India in 1975 that forever abolished the institution of Chogyal. Consequently, parliament of India passed 36th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which received the President of India's assent on 16th May 1975. This

¹ Durbar means a Royal court.

² Chogyal in Sikkim meant the one who rules as per religious tenets and is the ruler of Sikkim.

Amendment ensured a smooth transition of Sikkim from centralized monarchical rule to democratic rule under the Constitution of India. Things started changing in post merger period because of the developmental task performed by the Indian government in Sikkim. The changes were reflected in the political, social and economical fronts of Sikkim.

The present study examines the factors and events leading to merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union, identifies post merger developments as initiated by Indian Government in Sikkim and further describes the changes that developmental activities has brought in political, economical and social aspects of Sikkim. Additionally, an effort has been made to understand people's perception regarding the developmental process, which is actually ongoing. Further, it tries to understand what merger signifies to the people of Sikkim and whether it has been able to facilitate a national identity or a sense of belonging among the Sikkimese population.

Theoretical Perspective

David Easton defines politics as authoritative allocation of values (Easton, 1965). Likewise, Leftwich developed a thesis titled 'From Drivers of Change to the Politics of Development' whereby he defines politics as an essential and unavoidable process in all human collectivities, formal or informal, public and private, concerned with decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources. It consists of activities of cooperation, negotiation and conflict. And development, fast or slow is a transformative process. It is inescapably about change- economic growth, social transformation, and political transition. Leftwich defines development as a means in which transformation is concerned with far reaching change in the structure and use of wealth and power. That makes it quintessentially political and politically deeply conflictual (Leftwich, 2006).

According to Leftwich, if politics consists of activities of cooperation, negotiation and conflict in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources, then politics of development is about changing not only how resources are used, produced and distributed but also about how decisions are taken about such changes, and about politics which sustain, implement and extend them (Leftwich, 2006).

Adrian Leftwich summed up the political nature of development in two ways – (Leftwich, 2006)

- a) When people change the way they use, produce and distribute resources, they also change their social and political relations that is, relations of power with each other.

- b) When people change their political and social power relations with each other, they usually change the way they, use, produce and distribute resources.

It means that political change can affect the distribution of economic power and resources, on the other hand, the economic change can in turn, induce political change.

According to Olle Tornquist, political and economical spheres are tightly interwoven, but in such a way that the politics is particularly important. The quandary of politics and development, he argues, should be solved by analyzing politics as part of interdisciplinary problems of development. If we are interested in agrarian development, for instance, we must apply interdisciplinary theories of agrarian problems to identify what essential factors are involved and how they interrelate – and then study the role of politics when all the theories comes together (Tornquist, 1999).

A Historical Overview of Sikkim

Sikkim is a mountainous state situated in the north eastern part of India. It bears much of its significance in view of its physical location. Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan all touch its borders. Sikkim's location plays an important role in determining India's security in its north-eastern borders. The important strategic location of Sikkim makes its developmental imperatives gain sufficient attention from the Indian Government (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

Sikkim was an independent kingdom in the time of British East India Company's arrival. The East India Company came to Sikkim in the late eighteenth century. In the beginning of the eighteenth century Nepal encroached on the Sikkimese territory and invaded Sikkim in 1780. Sikkim's Raja at that time was helpless against the strong invasion by Nepal and the Raja of Sikkim sought the assistance of the British East India Company who by then had already established its hold in eastern India by weakening the Mughal rule. Nepal's act in Sikkim came to an end in 1812 when British East India Company intervened and defeated the Nepali forces. On February 10, 1817, Sikkim signed a treaty with the East India Company giving up all her rights to deal with foreign power and gave Britishers the right of free access to Tibet Border. By means of this treaty the British East India Company were able to exercise huge influence over Sikkim. Sikkim became the British protectorate in 1861 when this treaty was further revised (Moktan, 2004). There existed two reasons why British never relaxed their hold on Sikkim until their disengagement from India in 1947. First, due to its strategic location in between Nepal,

Bhutan, Tibet and India, Sikkim became a vital point for India's defense in the Eastern Himalayas. Its location enabled British India to watch over the developments in the neighboring countries of Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal. Another reason for British interest in Sikkim was trade. The traditional trade route through Sikkim to Tibet made British always recognize Sikkim's importance (Raizada, 2012).

The monarchial set up in Sikkim had deep impact on its politics. It was not through blood relations that the prince had established his authority over the people, but the king was appointed by the lamas (monks) and was dependent on the Tibetan (Bhutia) chieftains. The king hardly spent any time for the administration of the country (Basnet, 1974). The high lamas' exercised full control in the decision making processes of the state. The monasteries not only administered the area but also carried out the judicial functions. The king and lamas were in close collaboration with the Kazis (landlords). This relationship became the basis for the feudal network to flourish in Sikkim that gradually led to the exploitation of people through various administrative devices and patterns of land holdings. With such a system prevalent, the country remained economically the most backward region. In the 19th century when British East India Company extended its control over Sikkim, it found that the country was in a primitive stage. There were no roads, no police, no public works, no education etc. The administration seemed very loose in the country. In spite of framing of two constitutions, one in the year 1714 which was known as Mangshar Convention, where the powers and privileges as well as the duties of the king and noble lords were defined, and the other constitution in 1871, which highlighted the settlement pattern and tenancy right, there was no revenue system, no records and no civil service provided (Raizada, 2012).

The treaty of 1817 allowed the Britishers to establish their authority over Sikkim. In this regard H.H. Risley writes in the Gazetteer of Sikkim 1894 that by the Treaty of Titalia British India had assumed the position of Lord's Paramount of Sikkim and a title to exercise a predominant influence over the region (Risley, 1894). Thereafter the East India Company appointed the British political officer to administer the affairs of the kingdom in collaboration with the local officials. The ruler (Chogyal) remained only the nominal power holder. The real power had been retained by the political officer of the British India that considerably enjoyed influence over the kingdom (Subba, 2008).

After India's independence in 1947, Sikkim became a protectorate of India in 1950 and subsequently the 22nd state of India in 1975. The institution of Namgyal Dynasty was abolished in 1975 when it was merged to the Indian union that eventually made Sikkim lose its 'Himalayan Kingdom' status (Das, 1983). This event in Sikkim led to the change in the political system of the state from theocratic monarchical system to the liberal democratic system (Yasin and Chhetri 2012).

Prior to its merger, Sikkim was politically a theocratic state. Politics in Sikkim can be described as containing not only undemocratic and un-participatory process but also a centralized and authoritarian one. The electoral democracy was not regularized in the country. Economically, the country had very limited resources (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). The socio-political structure in Sikkim was traditional and feudal in nature. Its social structure was based on social status inherited through tribal affiliations. However with the increasing influence of India since the 1950's, socio-political scene of Sikkim has seen the abolition of landlordism, feudal privilege and private courts and the strengthening of its bureaucracy. Simultaneously, it has witnessed the emergence of a party system that includes political parties such as Sikkim National Party, Sikkim State Congress and Praja Sammelan. These changes reflect the developmental process in Sikkim with new forms of Sikkimese power structure (Sinha, 1975; 2008).

India after its independence in 1947 followed the same footsteps as the Britishers (East India Company) did, making Sikkim its protectorate. An Indian political officer or Dewan replaced the position of the British political officer. The Indo-Sikkimese treaty was signed in 1950 that made Sikkim the Protectorate of India, a Protectorate inherited from British that brought Sikkim closer to India. Sikkim's developmental plans were made part of India's five year plans. Sikkim, in the beginning of 1950's faced major political problems - the demand of its own people for economic progress and the demand for the representative government. The Chogyal's rule that supported the feudalistic approach somewhat dissatisfied the people. The people of Sikkim were reaching the stage of revolt against the prevailing situation and economic disparities. This period saw the realization of the responsible government in Sikkim and further provided a boost to the democratic movement in Sikkim (Sinha, 1975; Subba, 2008).

Under the treaty of 1950 Indian government had a special responsibility towards Sikkim's good administration that also involved India's own security. This treaty made India's intervention obligatory in times when Sikkim was going through a political turmoil (Raizada, 2012).

According to N. Ram the treaty of 1950 was a policy of Indian Government to control and expand power over the region and the treaty can be seen as the process to assimilate the region Sikkim to the larger nation of Indian Union (Ram, 1974). Since the development plans of Sikkim were undertaken at the behest of the Government of India, Sikkim became heavily dependent upon India for its development programs and for some regular administrative expenditure. This further led to the increase in influence and dominance of India over Sikkim (Rose, 1969).

The Government of India in the name of responsibility under the Treaty of 1950 intervened in every important matters of Sikkim. It provided major suggestions in course of its political upheavals that created a vacuum for the change in political structure of Sikkim by the collapse of Chogyal's authority. A detailed study of this issue has been discussed in chapter II.

The traditional and early feudal society of Sikkim gradually transformed into a modern and democratic society. After 1975, more priorities were laid down by the Government of India in Sikkim to make society modern and developed. When society in Sikkim started experiencing democratic and modern forms, profound changes occurred in social, political and economic sectors of Sikkim (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). This has further been discussed in detail in chapter III.

Independent India followed the gradual transformative path towards Sikkim, beginning from the period before its merger which continued even after the merger. The liberal democratic system which India had adopted won the battle against the theocratic traditionalism of earlier Sikkim.

These entire pre and post merger issues and its effects have been discussed in the chapters that follow. Additionally, a field study was conducted, which includes personal accounts and opinions of the common people of Sikkim with regards to the merger.

Review of Literature

Das (1983) in his book, 'The Sikkim Saga' who served as Chief Executive Officer in Sikkim from 1973-1974 provides a detail account of political situation of Sikkim in 1970's when chaotic political situation was at its peak. The book covers the period of turmoil in Sikkim from 1973-1975. Being an Executive officer that time he deals with the issues of merger and hence provides an analytical account on merger of Sikkim with Indian union. He tries to address the question, on what account did the merger took place and what India gained in the ultimate analysis. The role played by India in course of Sikkim's merger has also been thoroughly addressed. The book

covers the story of Sikkim till 1975. Thus, the book fails to address the post- merger scenario in Sikkim and also fails to address the opinions of the common people of Sikkim on merger issues. Basnet (1974) in his book, 'Sikkim: A Short Political History' provides a political history of Sikkim, starting from the period of India's independence 1947 till 1973. The book seeks to present political history of Sikkim from the viewpoint of the masses. It talks about the rise of political parties after India's independence the role played by the Indian Government and the political scenario of Sikkim till May 1973. He states that "the policy pursued by the Government of India was 'neo-imperialist' that had the protecting power and the ambitions of the ruling house that posed a threat to eroding monarchy. Whatever little of democracy was introduced in Sikkim had her contact with the newly independent India that provided shape to the formation of political parties and that the majority of the people in those parties showed 'special interest' of the Government of India." The book is of great importance to understand the political events of Sikkim after India's independence and India's role in transforming the political structure in Sikkim. Since the book only covers up the period of political events till 1973, it lacks to provide post-merger or a present understanding of the situation in Sikkim.

Sinha (1975) in his book, 'Politics of Sikkim: A Sociological Study' attempts to show the amendment to Indian constitution, merging Sikkim with India and giving it the status of the twenty second Indian state as the result of long drawn political unrest in Sikkim. The book describes different events in the course of political development in Sikkim. It also provides the background story, the analysis and evaluation of the actors involved in the political struggle. The main theme of the book is divided into three parts and provides an analysis of political development in Sikkim: part one gives the background history of various social forces in Sikkim it also discusses how an indigenous tribal ethos accommodated a complex Lamaist tradition of the Tibetan feudal origin giving the ruler ship of Sikkim a unique character of its own ; part two identifies the elite such as kazis, pro-palace bureaucrats, Nepali political leader and youth congress leaders, leading and controlling various social forces, giving a direction to the politics of Sikkim, this section analyses personal and social background, social and economic status, political affiliation and perceptions of various elite in Sikkim. Part three evaluates the political development after 1947 leading to the merger of Sikkim in 1975 and this segment also deals with the dilemma regarding adaptation and restructuring of the power and political structure in Sikkim in period after 1947. Sinha tries to understand all the aspects of this phenomenon as the

process of nation building. The book provides the readers with a study of political events in Sikkim leading to its present status. It covers the story only till 1975 and thus lacks the understanding of the post-merger scenario.

Sinha (2008) in the book, 'Sikkim: Feudal and Democratic' tells the story of Sikkim from the past to present and reports as to how the Tibetans, Nepalese, and the British dealt with Sikkim. The book also provides a background and social history of Sikkim that indicates the emergence of ethnic plurality and indeterminate political status. The book mainly focuses on the shift of Sikkim from a feudal to democratic set up under Nepali control. It also projects the role of Indian government in enhancing support to the political groups for the democratic set up and a shift of power in Sikkim. All the findings in book are provided through a detailed field work conducted in Sikkim based on the respondents view point. The book mainly presents a historical account of the events that somehow leaves a gap for the present study (Sinha, 2008).

Joshi (2004) in his book presents Sikkim with its changeable history. It shows both the side of Sikkim viz. its past or how was it during the monarchical regime and its present or how is it now. The book portrays a vivid account of different aspects of Sikkim-its history, politics, and economy. This work is useful to understand the socio-cultural, economical and political developments and changes in Sikkim.

Gurung (2011) in his book, 'Sikkim Ethnic and Political Dynamics' provide an understanding on political development in Sikkim with regard to ethnicity driven political mobilization in Sikkim. His study shows, Sikkimese society that marks an absence of long history of ethnic and religious conflict, after the merger with the adoption of parliamentary democracy, became subject to assertive cultural and ethnic mobilization. He further tries to bring out the circumstances where community and ethnic assertiveness is demonstrated by rediscovering the hitherto neglected ethnic names and boundaries. With the introduction of parliamentary democracy how the politicization of ethnicity and culture has taken place in Sikkim and how the political parties and organizations have actively participated in this process in the name of defending individual rights are clearly shown in this study. Thus, by articulating the demands and aspirations of the group of people how political parties organize or mobilize people in support of their demand are shown by the author representing the case of Sikkim. Thus, Gurung says, it is through political parties and organizations that demands of the people gets legitimized and in turn it establishes the process of mutual benefit by making the ethnic groups and community as vote bank. Unlike

the earlier times in Sikkim (during monarchial era), in this era of parliamentary democracy ethnic groups use political parties to legitimize their interest and influence the decision making process and in turn political parties use ethnic groups as their vote bank. But the book fails to present the view point of the people of Sikkim with regard to the above study.

Raizada (2012) in her book, 'Merger of Sikkim: A New Perspective' presents the instances of the merger of Sikkim to Indian union. The book has made an attempt to understand the facts related to the merger issues with regard to the geo-political importance of Sikkim. It covers the history of Sikkim from the advent of British interest in Sikkim from 1817 till 1947. It mainly focuses on the various issue related to merger of Sikkim- domestic as well as international. The book covers the story of Sikkim till its merger 1975. It provides a new perspective of the merger that shows the desire of the Sikkimese people to merge with Indian Union. The perspectives on merger are basically drawn from the secondary resources that fail to seek perspectives of Sikkimese people on the merger issue.

Subba (2008) gives an insight into the history of Sikkim. It provides the reader with the vivid account of Sikkim's history where he has shown how the kingdom of Sikkim came into being in the fourth decade of the seventeenth century as a result of the tripartite agreement known as "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum" signed between Bhutia, Lepcha and Limbus or Tsongs communities of Sikkim. He projects informative outlines of the history of Sikkim by his thoroughly collected data. According to Subba, Sikkim which has a small size now was a kingdom that came into existence in 1642 A.D that had a larger area than it was in 1975. He calls this larger area kingdom as 'The Greater Sikkim' that shrunk into present shape and size as a result of annexations of its territories by Nepal, Bhutan, China and British at different periods of time and by finally losing its independent kingdom status to Indian union in 1975. The book highlights the disintegration of the Kingdom in eight phases in different periods of time. Thus, the book provides an insight into the history of Sikkim's existence as the Himalayan Kingdom, its disintegration in various phases with regards to ethnicity, culture and customs of the people of Sikkim and different historical developments in Sikkim. The book is quite informative provided with detailed survey in Sikkim. Having said this, the book lacks to provide people's perceptions on Sikkim's matter with regard to its past or present situation.

Lama (2000) in his edited volume, 'Sikkim: Society, Polity, Environment' provides a study on Sikkim after its integration for twenty years with India. The book provides some introspection on

the experience of Sikkim's integration with the Indian union. According to Lama, Sikkim's integration with Indian union shows no trace of political resistance, cultural alienation and problems of assimilation and adaptability concerning the fact that Sikkim had its own social, cultural, political and economic history and its own traditional way of development. It undertakes the issues like integration process of Sikkim, social change, development intervention, strategic explosiveness and its environmental agenda. The book is divided into four section viz. Society, Polity Economy and Environment. In each section there are articles written by scholars, professionals and policy makers who has provided their original findings on Sikkim in various contents. Thus the book is of great importance to understand development trajectory in Sikkim for twenty years after its integration with the Indian union.

Yasin and Chhetri (2012) in their edited volume, 'Politics Society and Development: Insights from Sikkim' gives an account of a different socio-political and economic aspects of Sikkim. It tries to show how the end Namgyal Dynasty brought a change in political system of Sikkim and how this change had its impact on the society, economy and political front of Sikkim. The book is a compilation of fifteen chapters from different authors each focusing on the socio-economic and political aspects of Sikkim providing insights into the various developments in Sikkim.

Gupta (1975) in his article, 'Sikkim: The Merger with India' talks about the situation and events that led to the merger of Sikkim. He described the problem in Sikkim as geo- political and ethnic one during the pre-merger period. He starts with the international factor that is the Chinese factor that first prompted India to focus on Sikkim because of its strategic location. Then he describes the constitutional events that further boosted to merger situation. He covers the internal issues of the political parties, their demands and the tussle between Chogyal and its people that contributed in enhancing India's influence over the region. Overall he has somewhere questioned the Chogyal's authority in loosing Sikkim's identity as an independent kingdom. The article thus gives an understanding of various internal and external situations in Sikkim during its pre-merger period.

Ram (1974) in his article, 'From Protection to Absorption' gives an understanding of Indo-Sikkimese Treaty of 1950 which he calls as an unequal treaty that gave a protectorate status to Sikkim brought Sikkim closer to India. According to Ram this treaty was a sneaky and a cynical step taken by India that had taken away the rights of people of Sikkim, of their right to manage their own affairs. N. Ram presents a critical viewpoint on Sikkim's integration. According to

him the protective policy that India adopted with regard to Sikkim was a policy that was framed by Indian Government to absorb all the powers of Sikkim and further keep the region under its control. In the name of protection following the Treaty of 1950 Indian Government took everything away from Sikkim. Ram further describes how tactfully the Indian Government suppressed the popular movement in April 1973 that led to the tripartite agreement among government of India, the Chogyal and Kazi Lendup Dorji through which a new political and constitutional arrangement was made under the level of democratization. The article provides an illustration on the wrangle over the 35th Amendment, period of British Colonialism in Sikkim, the Indian nationalist view 1921, Nehru's policy, unequal treaty of 1950 and the will of the people. Thus it goes on saying that, India under the notion of protectorate and development took everything away from Sikkim and thus the protection ultimately led to the absorption. Thus, the article provides a critical framework of the merger.

Rose (1969) in her article, 'India and Sikkim: Redefining the Relationship' talks about the process of redefining India's relationship with Sikkim that had so far enjoyed only limited success over redefining the relationships between two states. It tries to analyze the various initiatives taken by the Indian government after its independence in the political and economical matter of Sikkim. Mainly focusing on the treaty of 1950 it tries to analyze various other economical and political scenarios in Sikkim calls that treaty as the very basis to subjugate all the important matters relating to economy and politics that led to the limited success over the relationships between India and Sikkim. According to the author the political circumstance in which the treaty of 1950 was signed between India and Sikkim has proved to be disadvantageous to Sikkim. It only provided advantage to the Indian government. This study is critical about the treaty signed between India and Sikkim in 1950 which according to Rose managed to provide gains to the Indian government and a simultaneous loss to the Sikkimese counterpart. But this study also lacks the description of post-merger scenario in Sikkim.

A thesis developed by Leftwich (2006), gives the understanding of the deeper structural and institutional factors which frame the political context within the individual and organizations act. It places a greater emphasis on analyzing the political processes which drive for change and development. It is because there is now widespread recognition that politics is fundamental, if not primary, it is shaping development choices, strategies and outcomes. For development is unavoidably transformative process affecting social, political and economical relationships and

institutions. It thus involves change that challenges the established interest and structures of power.

Tornquist (1999) in his book, 'Politics and Development' specifically addresses the issue of development and politics in Third World countries. It first defines the general questions in relation to interdisciplinary politics of development, and then focuses on the political agents, process, institutions and structure that affect and are affected by the development problems.

According to Tornquist, to study politics and development in Third World it is important to understand the problems of development and the role of politics. Thus, Tronquist provides an analysis of different perspectives on politics and development.

Scope of the study

The study looks into the factors and events that contributed to the merger of Sikkim with Indian Union. It also draws into account the activities performed by Indian Government, which controlled and influenced the region during the protectorate period and certainly brought the region closer to India that eventually led to its merger. The study further identifies various developmental tasks performed by Government of India in the post merger period and the changes that have occurred in the political, economical and social aspects of Sikkim because of these developmental performances. In addition, the study also tries to understand the perspectives of people residing in Sikkim, regarding merger, the developmental process and their national identity or sense of belonging to India.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To examine the factors and events leading to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union.
- 2) To identify various developmental activities initiated by Government of India in the post merger period, primarily with focus to changes in social, political and economical aspects.
- 3) To understand people's perception regarding merger, developmental process and their sense of belonging or national identity.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the factors and events that led to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union?
- 2) What kinds of developmental activities are performed by Government of India in post merger period?
- 3) Has there been any change in the social, political and economical aspects of Sikkim after its merger with developmental activities as initiated by government of India?
- 4) What are the opinions of people of Sikkim regarding merger, developmental process and their sense of belonging to India?
- 5) Has merger of Sikkim to Indian Union led to the sense of belonging in Sikkimese people's identity?

Methodology

The study includes both primary and secondary source of data. For primary source of data reports and documents were used. Field study was undertaken to collect first hand data concerning respondents' social background, their attitudes and perceptions on what merger signifies to them, the developmental process and their notion on national identity or sense of belonging. In collection of primary data, simple random sampling was followed. At the same time purposive sampling was followed concerning respondents who had witnessed the reign of Chogyal and merger in Sikkim. The sample size was 100 and the data was collected from places of Sikkim namely, Gangtok, Mangan, Gyalzing, Namchi, Rhenock, Ranipool, Khamdong, Kabi, Tshlamthang, Mangan, parts of Dzongu, Mangalbarey and Damthang which was intended to cover both rural and the urban population of Sikkim. The list of structured questions was put up to the respondents that were enclosed with both closed ended and open ended questions. Simultaneously, an unstructured interview was undertaken from the respondents who had witnessed the period of merger of Sikkim with India. For secondary source of data, books, journals, articles and newspapers were used. Therefore, qualitative approach was applied for the data analysis that involved analysis, interpretation and description of the data collected.

Plan of Study

Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter introduces the topic with some historical background and incorporates statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, methodology and the review of literature.

Chapter 2: Merger of Sikkim

The chapter talks about the factors and events that led to merger of Sikkim with Indian Union, the internal scenario of Sikkim before 1975 and the role played by Indian government in facilitating the pre-merger developments in the region. Additionally, the chapter also tries to provide an analytical understanding of the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union.

Chapter 3: Post-merger developments in Sikkim

The third chapter of the study provides the description of the developmental activities initiated by government of India in Sikkim. Simultaneously, it highlights the changes in social, political and economical aspects of Sikkim that is brought together by these developments.

Chapter 4: People's Perception on Merger and the Developmental Process in Sikkim

The chapter includes field work in the State of Sikkim with regard to understanding people's perception on merger, developmental process and their notion of national identity or sense of belonging to Indian union.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The chapter comprises findings and concluding remarks of the study.

CHAPTER 2

MERGER OF SIKKIM

The seeds for the merger of Sikkim had been sown long before its actual date 1975. It can be traced back to the 1940's when India was in the last stage of the freedom movement. It was not an abrupt process that can be limited to 1975; it had been ongoing long before its completion. In fact there are several factors that have been aided in the merger of Sikkim, this chapter will look into the factors and events that made Sikkim come closer to India and the developments that have given a fillip to Sikkim's merger.

Political Developments in Sikkim, since 1947

During the British regime in Sikkim 1889- 1947, there were no political parties worth the name but only political groups and no democratic institutions existed and the region was kept economically backward (Raizada, 2012). The emergence of the political parties in Sikkim can be traced back to 1940s when an organized political party called the Sikkim State Congress was formed. According to K.R. Chakravarti and Y.P. Nepal in their study "Sikkim: A Historical Perspective on the politics of Merger" the formation of Sikkim State Congress was directly the impact of the Indian National Congress. During that time the popular leaders in Sikkim such as Tashi Tshering, Kazi Lendup Dorjee Khangsarpa, C.D. Rai, D.B. Gurung, Sonam Tshering, Captain Dimik Singh Lepcha, B.B. Gurung, L.B. Basnet and many others were inspired by the democratic struggle put forward by the Indian National Congress for the independence of India (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

The exploitation and suppression from the feudal Kazis³ and Thikadars (contractors) was rampant in Sikkim. These Kazis and Thikadars enjoyed special rights and privileges from the Chogyal (King) of Sikkim (Basnet, 1974).

The kazis or landlords and Thikadars were vested with the magisterial powers in both civil and criminal matters. They were empowered to register documents for the sale or transfer of landed property. There were no effective checks on these powers of landlords and landlords were free to use commoners for their own gains. They had the right to

³ Kazis are the feudal lords who exercised special rights and privileges from the Chogyal (King) of Sikkim. They were the intermediaries between the Chogyal and the common people. They collected tax from the common people and even exercised power to exploit over them.

impose more fines and received one-half of the collection as his fees and other half goes to the state. In the slightest delay of payment of taxes the landlords or Kazis could even seize properties...and there were various forms of forced labor to which the commoners were subjected (Basnet, 1974).

Thus, the voice of the people began to rise against the exploitation and suppression. The risen voice of the people attempted to eradicate the Zamindari system⁴ that prevailed in Sikkim. However, the suppression and the exploitation by the Kazis and the feudal lords slowly came down. As a result, during 1946, three political parties came up; they were Praja Sammelan at Timi Tarku, Praja Mandal at Chakhung and Praja Sudhar Samaj at Gangtok. The Indian national movement and the democratic experiment that was taking place in India before its independence advanced the flame of democracy indirectly in Sikkim (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). It was therefore expected that, India after independence would go for bringing about democratization in Sikkim. But India did not contribute to promote any drastic change in the socio-economic and political structure of Sikkim. India decided to follow the footsteps left behind by the Britishers and gave Sikkim the Status of protectorate⁵ (Raizada, 2012). With the achievement of India's independence the office of Political Officer was handed to the Government of India. Harishwar Dayal was appointed as the Political Officer on 1 April 1948 (Subba, 2008).

According to R.S. Chauhan in his writing, 'Sikkim – Politics of Immigrants' India followed the process of gradual transformation. India, instead of integrating Sikkim fully with her, went ahead with the policy of keeping it as her protectorate. With the policy of protectorate-ship India tried to maintain stability and control over the region (cited in Raizada, 2012).

The India's independence on 15 August 1947 became an inspiration to the people of Sikkim that added to the consciousness of the people and political reform in Sikkim. The need for political party was strongly felt; the educated Sikkimese came forward to form political party in Sikkim. Thus, in the place of three parties, the members of the three parties along with the educated Sikkimese decided to form one political party. As a result, under the Presidentship of Tashi Tshering⁶, the Sikkim State Congress (SCC) came into existence on 5 December 1947. The

⁴ Zamindari system in Sikkim consisted of evil practices such as Kalobhari, Jharlangi, Kuruwa, Theki-bethi and Dhurikar.

⁵ Sikkim was protectorate under British rule till 1947. When India got its freedom from the British rule India followed the same footsteps of Britishers by making Sikkim its protectorate in 1950.

⁶ Tashi Tshering was one of the popular leaders in Sikkim who became the president of the first larger political party in Sikkim the Sikkim State Congress.

Sikkim State Congress made a resolution demanding – (1) abolition of landlordism, (2) formation of popular interim government and (3) accession of Sikkim to India. However, all these issues raised by the Sikkim State Congress were not given any attention by the Sikkim government. The party by then had already started to impart political education to the masses through campaigns and movements. The State Congress within a short period gained its recognition and became a power to be considered with. Thus, against the failure of the government to attain their demands, the SCC under the leadership of Tashi Tshering organized a course of no-tax movement, non-cooperation movement and non-violent agitations. The leaders of the movement- C.D. Rai, Namgyal Tshering, Chuk-Chuk Sangderpa, Reshmi Prasad, Changchup Bhutia, Abhichandra Kharel, J Ratna Bahadur Khatri, J Buddhiman Rai, Katuk Lama, Brihaspati Parsai and Ongdi Bhutia, were arrested for their three point demands (Basnet, 1974). According to A.C. Sinha all these movements attempted to convince New Delhi for the drastic political change in Sikkim. Given the brotherly assurances from the politicians in New Delhi, the party decided to continue its movement (Sinha, 1975). The State Congress adopted the Gandhian Principle and launched satyagraha⁷ movement from 29 April 1949 to 1 May 1949 (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). All these movements were new to Sikkim and they certainly served as inspiration and influence for its merger.

After understanding the intensity of the situation, the Chogyal (king) of Sikkim on the advice of political officer of India⁸, made an invitation to the party to form its ministry (Sinha, 1975). On 9 May 1949 the first ‘Popular Ministry’⁹ of Sikkim was established under the leadership of the State Congress President, Tashi Tshering and included Chandra Das Rai, Captain Dimik Singh Lepcha, Dorjee Dadul and Reshmi Prasad Alley (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

During the time the ministry was installed the scope of its powers and functions was not defined. Therefore, after the formation of the ‘Popular Ministry’ the tussle between the government and the ministry began over the issue of power. This power struggle between the ministry and the government gave India an advantage to intervene in its matter. The Indian Political Officer, stationed at Gangtok, Harishwar Dayal, under the threat of using the Indian Army and the

⁷ Satyagraha is the idea of non-violent resistance started by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the Sikkim State Congress also used the same concept of no-violent resistance to fulfill their demand to the Sikkim Government.

⁸⁸ Political Officer of India during 1949 Mr. Harishwar Dayal had advised Chogyal to make an invitation to the party to form its ministry.

⁹ On 9 May 1949, under the Chief Ministership of Tashi Tshering, a five member ministry consisting of Tashi Tshering, Chandra Das Rai, Captain Dimik Singh Lepcha, Dorjee Dadul, Rashmi Prasad ally was formed and this was known as the ‘popular ministry’ of Sikkim established in 1949.

Deputy Foreign Minister of India B.V. Keshkar dissolved the 29 days old ministry and the power was handed over to the Chogyal Tashi Namgyal. Thus, government of India advised Chogyal to appoint a Dewan, an Indian to head the administration. Consequently, from 11 August 1949, Dewan's rule was established in Sikkim and J.S. Lall who belonged to the Indian civil service was appointed as the first Dewan of Sikkim (Basnet, 1974). According to Sinha, the Indian administrator or Dewan became the actual ruler of Sikkim because of the failure of the ruler or Chogyal and the popular ministry. The Dewan, after coming to power, accepted various demands of reformations suggested by Sikkim State Congress and also undertook the solutions to relieve the misfortune of agrarian system of Sikkim. Thus, the tenant system was abolished and steps were taken to implement judicial, legal and revenue administration (Sinha, 1975). Subba states "the actual power of Sikkim shifted from Chogyal to the Dewan and the Dewan was actually the ruler of Sikkim" (Subba, 2008).

J.S. Lall, who belonged to Indian Civil Service, took over the administration of Sikkim on 11 August 1949, who had been appointed by the Chogyal of Sikkim on the advice of the Government of India and Lall organized the administration of Sikkim along the modern lines. With regard to the status of Sikkim vis-à-vis India, the Government of India felt that it was time to give a definite formal shape to Indo-Sikkim relations which were governed by signing the Standstill Agreement of 27 February 1948 between India and Sikkim that represent the interim arrangement which was intended to cover up the period for a fresh new agreement between the two countries (Basnet, 1974).

On 20 March 1950, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, issued a press release that stated:

The Government of India has had consultations with the Maharajkumar of Sikkim and the representatives of the political parties in Sikkim, who were invited recently to Delhi. The discussions covered the entire field of future relations between Sikkim and India and necessary administrative arrangements within the State, including the association of popular representatives in the Government of the State. Provisional arrangement has been reached as regards the future relationship of Sikkim with India and decisions have also been taken regarding the administration (Basnet, 1974).

The press release also talks about the issues with regard to the status of Sikkim vis-à-vis India, which states that, "Sikkim will continue to be a protectorate of India. The Government of India

will continue to be responsible for its external relations, defense, and communications. This is much done in the interest of the security of India as well as of Sikkim and is guided by the facts of geography. In the matter of internal government, the State or Sikkim will enjoy autonomy subject to the unlimited responsibility of the Government of India for the maintenance of good administration and Law and order” (Basnet, 1974).

The press release further notes, for the present an officer of the Government of India will continue to be Dewan of the State. But the Government of India’s policy is one of “progressive association of the people of the State with the Government”. The press release also spoke about instituting a village panchayat system on an elective basis within the State (Basnet, 1974).

Both the parties that is, the Government of India and the Chogyal (King) of Sikkim, agreed upon the above statements. Therefore, on 5 December 1950, the Indo-Sikkim Treaty enclosed with the above principles was signed by Maharaja of Sikkim, Tashi Namgyal and Indian Political Officer, Harishwar Dayal (Basnet, 1974).

According to N.Ram, given this protectorate status to Sikkim, its constitutional and political status was left indeterminate or uncertain and its sovereignty was left open to interpretation. He considers it as an unequal treaty that made India entirely responsible for the conduct of Sikkim’s affairs. All the important powers such as defense, external relations, communication were retained by India. Except for a small decorative bodyguard for the Chogyal, Sikkim’s power to keep any forces or buy weaponry was denied. India was made entirely responsible for the communication system of Sikkim and the government of India now could station troops anywhere in Sikkim. The treaty further prohibited Sikkim, from maintaining any formal or informal contact with the foreign power. The treaty took away all the major powers from Sikkim. And even the internal administration of Sikkim was made to be managed by an IAS officer nominated jointly by the Government of India and the Chogyal (Ram, 1974).

After Sikkim became the protectorate of India, the presence of the protectors was distinct in Gangtok. Their presence was marked in the form of Indian bureaucracy, Indian Army and Indian businessmen. During this period in Sikkim there was no industry, beyond small food processing units. The power resources of the Sikkim had not been developed, either by the British or by the Government of India. The medical provisions totally lacked behind. The transport system that depends on network of roads and highways was not developed and that was mainly the requirement needed for the Indian Army. India after getting Sikkim under its protectorate

managed to build bridges that replaced the swaying cradles of Bamboo. Sikkim witnessed the arrival of vehicles, cars and trucks that began playing the new highway. The strategic highways such as the Nathu La- Gangtok Highway was built by the Government of India under the Treaty of 1950, the North Sikkim Highway was built in 1962, linking Gangtok to the northern border areas and a highway from Rangpo on the Indo-Sikkim border to Gangtok through Pakyong was built. According to N. Ram “India after having Sikkim under its protectorate shield managed to built highways and road connections not as a serious developmental activity but as a ‘forward policy’ in relation to China, as it did not focused on the other aspects of development in Sikkim” (Ram, 1974). The influence and dominance of India in Sikkim were further enhanced when Sikkim heavily started becoming dependent upon India for its economic development programs and for regular administrative expenditure. Basically the development budget made by India to Sikkim was through grants-in-aid, loans or subsidies (Rose, 1969). Thus, the 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty marks a shift in the policy of Indian Government vis-à-vis Sikkim. From that day on it became the concern of the Indian Government to maintain stability and status quo in all matters related to Sikkim (Basnet, 1974).

During these events, Sikkim experienced many political activities. An understanding was provided by the Government of India to hold the panchayat elections in December, 1950. Since the interest of the “indigenous population”¹⁰ population was not safeguarded, these elections were boycotted by the National Party¹¹ of Sikkim. By indigenous population the National Party meant Bhutia and Lepcha community of Sikkim. The Nepalese it was argued by the leaders of the National party were later immigrants, while Bhutias and Lepchas by virtue of their having already settled in Sikkim, when Nepalese were unknown, were classified as indigenous population (Basnet, 1974; Sinha, 1975). At that time, during 1950’s, the Nepalese population formed more than 70% and the Bhutias and Lepchas together formed the rest 25%. The boycott of the panchayat election was straight away the expression of dissatisfaction by the indigenous community. After much discussions and negotiations between Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal, leader of National Party Sonam Tshering, the State Congress represented by Dimik

¹⁰ Indigenous population according to National Party of Sikkim meant the population from Lepcha and Bhutia Community who were regarded as the oldest inhabitant of Sikkim. Nepalese population, it was argued by the leaders of National Party, were later immigrants, while Lepchas and Bhutias, by virtue of their having already settled in Sikkim when Nepalese were unknown, were classified as indigenous population.

¹¹ The Chogyal and the group of Landlords mobilized their considerable resources and gathered number of Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali Community with a view of forming new political party, the Sikkim National Party to oppose Sikkim State Congress. SNP adopted their first resolution on 30 April, 1948. It was basically the Chogyals Party.

Singh Lepcha and Kashi Raj Pradhan and representatives of Government of India, in May 1951, a system of 'Parity Formula' was introduced and signed, by which Nepalese were equated with the Lepcha-Bhutia community in the matter of distribution of seats for the State Council and Maharaja or Chogyal was to appoint five nominees. According to L.B. Basnet parity formula was protested by the leaders of the State Congress (SSC) but was of no benefit. For the first time, election was declared in Sikkim. Therefore, on the basis of 'parity system' the first general election was held in 1953. The State Council consisted of a President who was to be nominated and appointed by Maharaja, twelve elected members, "of whom six shall either be Sikkimese Bhutias or Lepchas and remaining six shall be Sikkimese Nepalese" and Maharaja had the power to nominate five members to the council. The total strength of council was therefore 17. Along with these a system of diarchy was introduced, whereby the Maharaja or Chogyal was entitled to look into the matters of reserved subjects, such as, ecclesiastical affairs, external affairs, home and police, finance, state enterprises, land revenue, rationing and establishment. The transferred subjects were to be administered by the people's representatives that include education, public health, excise, press and publicity, transport, bazaars, forests and public works (Basnet, 1974). This shows that the major departments remained in the hands of the Government and the minor ones were in the hands of the people's representatives and that the people's representatives did not have power to exercise authority to work for the welfare of public.

In 1954, N.K. Rustomji was given a hold of the office of Dewan, soon after that, the Seven-Year Plan¹² of Sikkim, was introduced with a disbursement of Rs. 32.369 million (4.315 million dollars), which was wholly contributed by India. The idea for launching this plan was for development on roads and bridges, education, medical services, strengthening the cottage industries and the building of some micro-hydel projects (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

Like the 1953 election second general election of 1958 was also held on the basis of 'parity system'. But before the second general election, the composition of the council was changed by the Maharajas Proclamation, dated 17 March 1958. The member of the Council was raised from 17 to 20. In this election the State Congress party won the clear majority of 8 out of 14 elected seats (Basnet, 1974; Sinha, 1975).

After the first and second general elections during 1959, serious split had taken place in the membership of both the existing political parties – the Sikkim State Congress and the National

¹² In Sikkim the first plan work or planning introduced was for Seven Year term from 1954-60.

Party. Thus, under the leadership of L.D. Kazi, the former member of State Congress, these split political parties such as Swatantra Dal, the Praja Sammelan, opposing wing of the State Congress and the faction of the National Party were brought about to form a new party known as Sikkim National Congress (SNC) (Sinha, 1975). The Sikkim National Congress later developed into a full opposition party and posed a serious challenge to the Sikkim Darbar (Basnet, 1974). At the meeting, in 'Singtam' on 20 May 1960, the party asked for "the legitimate demands of the people of Sikkim, such as the establishment of a responsible government, a written constitution, Universal Adult Franchise based on joint electorate etc." According to Basnet, the party also realized the importance of unity and integrity of the people so as to fulfill these demands. They also felt the need of uniting more parties so as to give the shape of large political organization. So as to fulfill these demands the party decided to merge into one compact body known as Sikkim National Congress. Hence, Kazi Lendup Dorjee was unanimously elected as the first president of the Sikkim National Congress (Basnet, 1974).

The Sikkim National Congress was critical of the whole system of elections, distribution of powers and functions of the Executive Council and the working of the State Council (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). Thus, the leaders of the Sikkim National Congress stated its policy: "Sikkim run by Proclamation cannot be called a democratic country...Never before in the history of India and China has Sikkim come within the orbit of both India and China. In such a critical period, therefore, the aspirations of the people of Sikkim must find expression in the formation of responsible government based on written constitution..." (Sinha, 1975). Having learnt from their past experience that merely passing the resolutions and submitting them to the Sikkim Durbar – as the State Congress had been doing for a long time – the party this time threatened to launch a Satyagraha with a view of compelling Sikkim Durbar to look into its demands. The leaders were, however, advised by the Political Officer that Prime Minister Nehru was prepared to meet them and hear their grievances, and therefore, there was no point of launching a Satyagraha. As the Durbar did not pay attention to the demands of the National Congress, in August 1960, the leaders of the SNC party asked the Indian Government of their stand and submitted a Memorandum enlisting the demands of its party (Basnet, 1974).

In July, 1961, the Sikkim Darbar published the Sikkim Subjects' Regulations¹³ that made the conditions that would govern the subject hood of Sikkimese people. The regulation was highly discriminatory and unfavorable to the Nepalese in a way that it categorically recognized the Lepchas, Bhutias and Tsongs (Limboos) as the bona fide subjects of Sikkim while Nepalis were avoided with such ethnic references and it also gave subject hood to the persons who is not domiciled in Sikkim but of Lepcha, Bhutia and Tsongs origin and whose father and grandfather was born in Sikkim (Gurung, 2011). The Sikkim State Congress (SSC) and the Sikkim National Congress (SNC), who relied on the Nepalese support, on this ground became active and asked for the changes in the regulations (Basnet, 1974). The Government of India then intervened to bring about balance in the form of much more reasonable Subject's Regulations. The Sikkim Subject Regulation, 1961 was amended in 1962, that provided every person who has his domicile in the territory of Sikkim immediately before the introduction of Regulation shall be a Sikkim Subject if he – “was born in territory of Sikkim and is resident therein, have been resident in the territory of Sikkim for not less than fifteen years immediately prior to the introduction of Regulation and the wife or minor child of a person shall be given the subject hood of Sikkim” (cited in Gurung, 2011).

By 1960's the Seven – Year plan had come to an end, India gave further aid of Rs. 81.33 million (10.844 million dollars) for the second five - year plan in Sikkim. Nearly 1/3 of the amount was reserved for roads and bridges. The rest was allocated to agriculture, minor irrigation, and other projects (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013). According to Rose, the ruler or Chogyal, by 1960's, was left only with the power of running the internal administration and some bit of power to form the Sikkim Guards and expand it in times of protest of the political parties (Rose, 1969).

Following the Sino – Indian border conflict, in 1962¹⁴, the Chogyal got the opportunity to get him out from the political mess by the declaration of the emergency. At that time the political parties were preparing for contesting the third general election for the State Council the elections were postponed. Towards the end of the year 1962, the Maharaja regained much of his lost

¹³ The Sikkim Subject Regulation of 1961 was a mechanism invented by government of Sikkim to keep Bhutia Lepcha subject separated from Nepalis and other communities. The Regulation also treated Limboos (Tsongs) at par with Bhutia Lepcha Subject this time. It provides with the subjecthood to the Sikkimese people if born in Sikkim and resident here or if ordinarily resident in Sikkim for not less than fifteen years prior to promulgation of the regulation. Persons not domiciled in Sikkim but of Lepcha-Bhutia and Tsong origin whose father or grandfather was born in sikkim and person not domiciled in Sikkim but whose ancestors have been the Sikkimese Subjects before 1850, would naturally qualify to acquire Subjecthood of Sikkim. And only one who had landed property was considered eligible to be registered as Sikkim Subjects

¹⁴ In 1962 a border conflict had occurred between India and China.

powers. The protecting power India looked more to the ruler than to the people and their so-called representatives. A very important role in bringing about these changes had been played by Maharaja Kumar Palden Thondup Namgyal. He was the second son of Maharaja Tashi Namgyal. After his elder brother's death in 1941 he took over the temporal duties upon him as the heir to the throne. Being the Sikkim's heir Maharaja kumar Thontup Namgyal took part in many of the important affairs of the Kingdom (Basnet, 1974). On 16 March 1965, Thondup Namgyal changed his Indian Status of Maharaja to that of Tibetan sounding status of Chogyal. 'Chos' in Tibetan means religion and 'Galpo' means ruler or king. Maharaja Thondup Namgyal represented his father at the coronation of King Mahendra of Nepal and led Sikkim teams negotiate a treaty with India in 1950. He was connected with various cultural and academic bodies. He was the president of Mahabodhi Society of India since 1953. In 1958, he established the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology for the study of Mahayana Buddhism at Gangtok. This was the time when all these events made the Maharaja as the powerful Chogyal, of Sikkim (Raizada, 2012).

On April 4, 1965, the Maharaj Kumar was crowned as the King of Sikkim. Lakshi Menon, Minister of State for External Affairs and Indira Gandhi, Minister of Information and Broadcasting represented India. This coronation was special not only for new ruler but also for the Maharani (Gyalmo in Sikkimese) who, for the first time in more than two decades, made a public appearance by occupying her proper place in the Chapel¹⁵ (Basnet, 1974).

The Government of India announced the recognition of the title Chogyal and Gyalmo (King and Queen) adopted on the coronation day by the new ruler and his wife. Immediately after the coronation ceremony, Chogyal declared, "it will be our purpose and endeavor to strengthen yet further the eternal bonds of friendship between India and Sikkim in the fullest measure" (Asian recorder, 1965)

After the coronation, according to Basnet, the new chapter began in Sikkim; especially the Gyalmo began to exert her influence in Sikkim. As Chogyal was married to an American, Hope Cook the Gyalmo¹⁶, born and brought up in America, she found Indian role in Sikkim too dominating and too much out of tune with modern notions. She became aware of many things

¹⁵ During Tashi Namgyal's life, the Maharani, ever since she had been refused admission to the palace years ago, had been kept aloof from all the ceremonies. Now that Tashi Namgyal was no more, the new ruler, a devoted son of his mother Thondup Namgyal restored his wife Maharani to her rightful station.

¹⁶ Gyalmo in local term meant Queen of Sikkim.

that were ongoing in Sikkim during that time. As Hope Cook was aware of the fact that, all the high positions in Sikkim were drawn away by the preponderance of Indian officials, even though there were educated Sikkimese capable of taking over, she started rallying to the educated young Sikkimese. While her husband still carried with him the traumatic memories of 1947-49, aggravated by the native Nepalese, which left him apparently happy under the protective leash of India, Hope Cook Gyalmo of Sikkim was free from such inhibitions. The ever present Indian hegemony was unacceptable to her and she set herself with a will to bring her husband (the ruler) round to her way of thinking. The Gyalmo became aware of the Indo-Sikkim relations based on the 1950 treaty which she felt was built on shaky foundations. She felt that because of Sikkim Durbar's weaknesses, India had taken excessive advantage of its powers by imposing very unjust treaty on Sikkim (Basnet, 1974).

The Chogyal and Gyalmo wanted some concessions from India. Left only with the one company strength, the Sikkim Guard, had become painful and unacceptable to Chogyal. The Chogyal wanted to double its strength but the India wanted it to remain at the one company strength. Because of the developments outside in the international scenario such as, Indo-Pak short war in 1965 and Chinese determination to undermine close friendship between India and Sikkim, finally, India had to agree which demanded that there should be no defect in Indo-Sikkim relations. It is said that, about this time when Sikkim started playing its 'National Anthem' the Indian eyebrows were raised. The annual presentation Sikkim's national flag to the Sikkim Guards by the Chogyal was looked upon with suspicion and disfavored by the Political Officer when it was announced that the National Anthem of Sikkim would be played on that occasion. The Political Officers from India boycotted the function in 1965 and advised other Indian's living in Sikkim against attending the ceremony. The ceremony was enjoyed by the Sikkimese participants and went embarrassment for the Indian side (Basnet, 1974).

In the year 1966, a group called the 'Study Forum' was formed, whose members were drawn from among the senior most government officials. This group was known as the 'Young Turks' and it was apparently formed to remove ills from the administration, but according to Basnet, it was actually formed to propagate anti-Indian sentiment and propaganda. The politicians by 1953 Constitutional Proclamation was allowed only a low profile role, in both internal and external matters, the officials of the 'study forum' assumed the role of supra-political organization. The members of this group charged falsely the political parties and made blaring comments for

concessions from India. At first, they appealed for revision of Indo-Sikkim treaty and then began to demand for independence of Sikkim from India's dominance and interference. Thus, it became obvious that the group 'Young Turks' was the creation of the Chogyal and the Gyalmo. Since the group was formed by Chogyal, it lacked people's mandate. The Indian government pretended to have listened to their clamor but actually ignored their demands (Basnet, 1974).

In 1967, the third general election was conducted in Sikkim. On the one hand Sikkim National Party was in close ally with Sikkim State Congress and both had the active support of the Sikkim Durbar. Against these two parties, Sikkim National Congress stood alone. It had become clear that, who voted for National Party or State Congress would be voting for the status quo and would be voting for policies pursued by Sikkim Durbar; while those who voted for Sikkim National Congress would be voting for change and against the policies of the Sikkim Durbar (Basnet, 1974). By the third general election of 1967, the number of the seats in Council was increased to 24. The Sikkim National Congress stood victorious winning 8 seats out of 24 seats in the council (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

Table 2.1 Third Council election of Sikkim (1967)

	Parties	Seats won
1.	Sikkim National Congress	8
2.	Sikkim National Party	5
3.	Sikkim State Congress	2
4.	Tsongs	1
5.	Scheduled Castes	1
6.	Sangha	1
7.	Nominated members	6

Source: Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013.

In the same year in 1967 Chogyal showed his desire for review of the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 on the ground that Sikkim has progressed much since the treaty was signed in 1950 (Basnet, 1974).

The r of the Sikkim National Congress had posed a serious challenge to the power of the Sikkim Durbar. On 4th of June 1967 the SNC party fixed a country wide agitation, starting from Gangtok, if the Government did not reduce the price of rice before then. The SNC party after winning the election of 1967 charged the Sikkim Government for the high price of rice. The

SNC party held a meeting all over Sikkim passing resolutions in support of the party's demand and it had the support of the large number of the population. While the SNC party was making full preparations for the agitations of the price of rice, the notification by the Sikkim Government prescribing jail and fine to those indulging in false propaganda with regard to price of rice was issued. But, like the bubble, the party had come up and gone down. The Leader of the Party Kazi Lendup Dorjee feared of going to jail as he said "I am not in politics to go to jail". Therefore, in fear of going to jail the demands of the party went down. Like the bubble, the party had come up and gone down. The SNC Party limited its role only as a 'paper-opposition' party. The Sikkim Durbar again felt internally secure and ready to challenge the paramount power, India (Basnet, 1974).

On 15 June, 1967 three Executive Councillors of Sikkim signed a press release where it was claimed that the peculiar kind of 'democracy' that Sikkim enjoyed was best suited for her and the state was not ready for the widening of the 'democratic' process (Basnet, 1974). The press release further noted that;

Sikkim gained her sovereign status on the 15 August, 1947 when India achieved her independence from the British rule and this is evident from the fact that Sikkim does not figure in the list of Indian Union Territories as defined in the Constitution of India (Raizada, 2012).

Therefore, the press release went on to demand for the review and revise of Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 with the changing circumstances and the abolition of the word 'protectorate' as applied in Sikkim. According to Basnet, the Treaty of 1950 was looked upon as the fetters that bound Sikkim (Basnet, 1974).

The Executive Councillors were apprehensive that the Indian press was instigating the Indian Government for interfering in Sikkim's internal matters under the notion of "democratization of Sikkim's administration, the tense situation with China on its northern borders, and the growing influence of Americanism¹⁷." The joint statement of Executive Councillors was supported by Sikkim Herald¹⁸ when it pointed that Sikkim attained its independent status and rights on 15

¹⁷ The culture, values and process that any country or place adapts from America address to the growing influence of Americanism.

¹⁸ The publication of Sikkim Herald was started in 1956 during the reign of Maharaja Sir Tashi Namgyal to inform his subjects about the developments brought about by the Government. The initial format of Sikkim Herald was a magazine and it used to get published every months. Prior to 1962, the Sikkim Herald Magazine was brought out in

August, 1947 when India attained her independence. The bulletin also pointed out that “Sikkim had - its own geographical dimensions, history and culture. It has its own existence. Above all it aspired to breathe independently” (cited in Raizada, 2012).

While the Chogyal had disguised himself in matters in some press interviews, the Indian Government and the Indian press began to show that the Chogyal had never formally demanded the revision of the Treaty. The Chogyal, kept himself in the background, and used three Executive Councillors, as the instrument in his hands to show what he desired (Basnet, 1974). There was a rising tension between the Chogyal and the Indian Political Officer. At the same time Kazi Lendup Dorjee who had a deep rooted bitterness towards the Chogyal’s rule and wanted the democratic process to thrive in Sikkim, had begun to put forward the political movement in Sikkim. At about the same time Chogyal had begun to agitate for greater autonomy of Sikkim in international affairs and Kazi Lendup Dorjee began mobilizing political support for a party-based governmental system and a constitutional ruler (Gupta, 1975). During this time on 18 December 1969, a new political party, a Sikkim Janata Party (SJP) was born in Sikkim founded by Lal Bahadur Basnet, who was previously the General Secretary of Sikkim National Party (Sinha, 1975).

In such a political climate, the fourth general election was held in April 1970. It took fourteen days to count about 10,000 votes from all over Sikkim. The Sikkim Government figured more than 50,000 votes was misleading where each voter in Sikkim cast 6 or 7 tickets. The 50 thousand votes are more than 10000 votes. In this election the Sikkim National Congress won 5 seats, two factions of the National Party won 8 seats, the Sikkim State Congress won 4 seats and the Independent won 1 seat. This election was followed by widespread protest on charges of rigging (Basnet, 1974).

In July 1970, a six-man Executive Council was appointed by Government of Sikkim. It included six new councillors, three from National Party, and two from State Congress and one from Sikkim National Congress. This Executive Councillors was formed by Chogyal to end the ‘oppositions’ of the party. This was simply the reflection of the erosion of democratic principles that could not challenge the supremacy of Sikkim Durbar (Basnet, 1974).

English only and later sometime in 1962, editions were brought out in Bhutia and Nepali languages as well. It is the oldest newspaper in Sikkim.

Towards the middle of June 1970, the President of India was scheduled to visit Sikkim. According to Basnet there were secret meetings of the Study Forum which wanted to show-down to India by staging 'Black Flag' demonstration on the occasion of President's visit. The anti-Indian elements were ganged up in Sikkim. But this could not be successful as the visit of the President of India was postponed because of weather condition. The Sikkim National Front which was formed in September 1970, with its birth criticized India for having foisted the 1950 Treaty on Sikkim and demanded for Sikkim's total independence. The United Front put forward many anti-Indian demonstrations in Sikkim; it also held an open meeting on October 1970 at Gangtok Bazaar. The Political Officer T.N. Kaul alarmed the Foreign Secretary, Government of India who flew immediately from Delhi to Gangtok to take over things with the Chogyal (Basnet, 1975).

In May 1971, a high powered delegation of Sikkimese went to Delhi for talks over Sikkim's Fourth Five-Year Plan. The Chogyal also visited Delhi from time to time to guide the Sikkimese delegations. For the Sikkimese satisfaction the outlay of Rs. 26 crore was expressed and a revenue earning projects were demanded so that Sikkim could develop a self-generating economy. The revenue earning projects were not granted but after many bargaining and negotiation eventually the original of Rs. 26 crore was granted. In this way it satisfied the Sikkimese, for they had their way, and so were the Indians, for the number of Indian officials in Sikkim had to increase in order to successfully implement the Fourth Five-Year Plan of Sikkim (Basnet, 1974).

Though the Sikkim National Congress was represented in the Executive Council, the party was not compatible with the Government of Sikkim. The National Congress kept on criticizing the political system, the administration, and the ruler through their bulletins. In one of its issues published on 26 January 1972, the National Congress put charges of corruption and excesses of administration against the ruler. Therefore, no confidence motion was raised in the State Council and the dismissal of the President of the National Congress from the Executive Council on 28 May 1972 by the ruler of the Executive Council was proposed. Sedition charges were also framed against some of the functionaries of the party (Sinha, 1975). When talk was held between a senior Indian diplomat and Rai Bahadur T.D. Densapa, adviser of the Chogyal, eventually the compromise was worked out, the Indian diplomat prevailed upon Kazi Lendup Dorjee to submit a written apology and the Chogyal was also convinced not to give publicity to the apology. Thus,

the sedition charges against the National Party leaders were brought down. The party was thus, able to contest for the fifth general election in January 1973 (Basnet, 1974). On 23 September 1972, Government of Sikkim issued an Extra Ordinary Gazette Notification fixing the dates for the next election on 10.1.1973 and 23.1.1973 (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

During the course of fifth general election, the ethnic feelings were so increased that the Nepalese politicians choose to form yet another party. On 26 October 1972, with the merger of two party members, the Sikkim State Congress (SSC) and the Sikkim Janata Party (SJP) of L.B. Basnet, the Sikkim Janata Congress (SJC) came into being but at the cost of accommodating number of unpopular candidates for the fifth general elections (Sinha, 1975).

The birth of Sikkim Janata Congress indicated challenge not only to the Palace and the National Party but also to the Government of India. The Sikkim Janata Party, during its brief period of political campaigning, had strongly criticized the Government of India for the “dirty role” it had played by deliberately introducing communalism¹⁹ in Sikkim politics and for murdering the beginning of democracy in Sikkim. The ‘parity formula’ which was introduced with the suggestions of Government of India, was not acceptable to the Party, whereby the 25% Bhutia-Lepcha population was given equal representation with the 75% of Nepali population. The parity was extended to every possible field, like the awards of stipends and scholarships to employment. There were large areas (the areas of Bhutia-Lapcha settlement) where Nepalese could not settle. Bhutias-Lepchas could only buy lands from the Nepalese, whereas Nepalese could not buy land from the Bhutia-Lepchas. Above all, the Chogyal, himself a Bhutia, as a supreme authority in Sikkim, had given a shape to the policy that was increasingly seen as a discrimination against the Nepalese. According to Basnet, The Sikkim National Congress under the leadership of L.D. Kazi had been the Government of India’s greatest ally; he was so readily pro-Indian that in Sikkim political circles he was known as the agent of the Government of India. The only one difference between the ideals of the two parties was the issue of ‘parity’. The Sikkim Janata Congress wanted to do away with the ‘parity’ whereas the Sikkim National Congress wanted the ‘parity’ to be maintained. This division helped the Chogyal and the Sikkim National Party at the fifth general elections of January 1973. In the election of January 1973, the Sikkim National Party winning 11 seats had come out with an absolute majority leaving far

¹⁹ By communalism it means the introduction of ‘parity formula’ which was based on the communal representation of the Sikkimese communities in the State Council.

behind the Sikkim National Congress with 5 seats and Sikkim Janata Congress with 2 seats (Basnet, 1974).

The Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janata Congress condemned the election results putting an allegation of rigging and a conspiracy by the Sikkim National Party and Sikkim Administration and showed their criticism towards the Palace. All these complaints made by the two parties were ignored. This led the Congress party i.e. the Sikkim National Congress and the Sikkim Janata Congress to come close to each other. Both the parties had the same popular demands, and was equally critical of the Government, demanding an end of the 'parity formula' and replacement with full fledged democracy, a written constitution, fundamental rights and the 'one man one vote principle' based on adult franchise. These two Congress parties organized the masses in favor of the demands and as well as against the rigging of the fifth general election that was in the favor of the National Party. Even though, under such an atmosphere, the Chogyal appointed six members of the Executive Council, four from the Sikkim National Party and one each from the Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janata Congress. The two parties further boycotted the new Council that was inaugurated on 28 March 1973, by the Chogyal (Basnet, 1974; Sinha, 1975).

According to B.S. Das, Delhi over years played an ambiguous position. It pampered Chogyal over the years which were understood as support to him from the Government of India. It was impossible for people and any other party to react unless the support of the Indian Government was withdrawn from Chogyal. When this happened in 1973 and "the Chogyal made the unfortunate mistake of rigging the elections in March that year", an immediate reaction against the Chogyal was fully shown by his political opponents and Delhi's support had been fully assured to them (Das, 1983).

After the January 1973 election, the masses, and specially the Sikkimese youth went on to agitation. The youth leaders like R.C. Poudyal, N.K. Subedi, Karma Peda and K.N. Upreti went on for a hunger strike at the palace lawns. K.C. Pradhan the President of Janata Congress was arrested. It appeared that the Chogyal did not pay much attention to these developments. On 4 April 1973 was the 50th birthday of the Chogyal. The administration of Sikkim towards the mid of 1973 was so busy preparing to celebrate Golden Jubilee of Chogyal in an appropriate manner that the two Congress party, by then, had formed the Joint Action Committee (JAC) under the leadership of L.D. Kazi. The JAC was formed to put their final demands to the Chogyal and if

their demands were not fulfilled before 4 April, they would not allow the Celebration of Chogyal's birthday to be held. But the Palace did not pay any heed to these actions (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

On 4 April 1973, while the celebration of Chogyal's birthday was taking place, the anti-Chogyal slogans were chorused and voices echoed the atmosphere with anti-Chogyal slogans. Many demonstrations took place that showed the demands of the people for free and early elections and removal of parity formula. A strong contingent of police had taken their position. Thousands of protestors clashed with the police, that led to serious lathi charges and firing. Many demonstrators came to Capital Gangtok from others parts of Sikkim. Warrants of arrest were issued against the Joint Action Committee (Sinha, 1975; Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). The agitation had continued for two months April-May 1973. Many ugly incidents took place such as people were looted and killed specially the Chogyals supporters. The movement had intensified in a mass scale which the Sikkim police were unable to handle. The Sikkim Guards entrusted for the security of Chogyal also could not handle the situation. The Indian army was called to handle the situation. As soon as some normalcy was restored the maintenance of law and order was given in the hands of Indian armed police who had moved in from India (Gupta, 1975).

The Government of India sent Avatar Singh, the senior official in the External Affairs Ministry, to administer the situation in Sikkim. He tried to sort out the issues between the Palace and the JAC. Ultimately the Chogyal felt less powerful and he made a written request to the Government of India to intervene and restore law and order. Similar request was made by the chairman of JAC. During the period, the anti-ruler sentiments were very high and the people in Sikkim under the leadership of the Chairman of Joint Action Committee (JAC), Kazi Lendup Dorjee Khangsarpa were demanding for the resignation of the Chogyal. B.S. Das was sent as an administrator by New Delhi and the Indian Army took over the administration. By that time ruler's domain had virtually been restricted to the palace only (Sinha, 1975; Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

On the basis of the political developments over the period from 1957- 1973 five elections were held in Sikkim. One can make a broad generalization that ethnicity has been the point of attraction to party system of Sikkim. The Assemblies had only a decorative role to play. Before Sikkim formally adopted the federal system as suggested by India, the parties and groups in Sikkim were fighting for the liquidation of feudal royal order. The political parties in the

subsequent years were engaged in getting more powers for the people in administration of Sikkim. The early movements in Sikkim after 1947 showed the dissatisfaction of the people against the socio-economic²⁰ and political²¹ sustained by the Chogyal, the Kazi's, Government of India and the lack of any democratic forum. However, the April 1973 movement that echoed anti-Chogyal Slogans led by the Chairman of the JAC L.D. Kazi were to expel Chogyal and his rule.

As initiated by the Indian Government, the reconciliation talks were held between the leaders of Joint Action Committee, the Chogyal and his supporters from the National Party and the Indian Government, leading to the 'tripartite agreement' between these three. Thus, the political upheaval that shook the State, ultimately led to the signing of the 'Tripartite Agreement' on 8 May 1973 (Das, 1983).

The Agreement of 8 May, 1973

Elections were demanded by the political parties specially the Sikkim Congress and the Government of India were asked to make necessary arrangements. The Government of India responded quickly in the working of the elections in Sikkim and gave responsibility to the Election Commission of India to work for the matter. The old pattern of elections was substantially eliminated. It would further delimit the constituencies and make changes in the parity formula. The Chogyal wanted the adequate safeguards for the minority (Lepcha-Bhutia) community in Sikkim. According to Chogyal if the changes are made in the parity formula then the interest of the minority would be in danger (Das, 1983). On the other side the Sikkim Congress and the Janata Congress did not want elections under the parity system. Thus the Election Commission was asked to resolve the issue. Finally a plan was evolved where there was an enhancement of seats from 24 to 32 seats in Legislative Assembly which was divided as follows: 15 reserved for Bhutia Lepcha candidates, 15 for Nepali candidates, 1 for Sangha (monastic community) and 1 for Scheduled Castes. This appeared to be the only way through which the interest of the minority communities (Lepcha-Bhutia) could be safeguarded and at the

²⁰ Socio- Economic system in Sikkim during Chogyal's reign supported the feudal lordships in Sikkim and the Bhutia-Lapchas were favored over all the economic matters as compared to Nepalis, for instance- Nepali people could not buy land from Bhutia-Lepcha Community whereas Bhutia-Lepcha could buy it from Nepali.

²¹ People showed their dissatisfaction in political process in terms of the system of unequal representation and communal representation or the 'parity system' in State Council which was suggested by the Indian Government to Sikkim.

same time satisfy the interest of the majority Nepalese community and thus the 8 May agreement was provided (Gupta, 1975).

The agreement of 8 May 1973 was signed at Gangtok between the Chogyal, the leaders of the Political Parties who represented the people of Sikkim and Government of India. The Agreement provided for the Legislative Assembly in Sikkim elected on the basis of universal adult franchise, an Executive Council responsible to the Assembly and safeguards for the Sikkimese minorities (Das, 1983).

The 1973 agreement gave authority to India, to head the administration. An Indian Chief Executive was entrusted with ensuring democracy, communal harmony and social development. Further, Government of India was provided with “responsibility for the establishment of law and order and good administration in Sikkim” (Gupta, 1975). In addition, pending elections for the new Assembly was to be held within a few months. The Assembly was to be elected every four years on the basis of adult franchise. The elections for the Assembly were to be conducted by the Election Commission of India. It provided a set up for “one man, one vote” franchise, but with the provision that no single group from Bhutia, Lepcha or the Nepalese will hold a dominant position (Das, 1983).

Under the agreement, the Legislative Assembly was given the power to propose laws and adopt resolution on fourteen subjects, six more than those listed in the 1953 Act including finance, economic and social planning, education and agriculture. But the Legislative Assembly was not given the power to discuss the matters relating to ruler and the members of his family and matters relating to the responsibilities of the Government of India. And only the palace guards remained directly under Chogyal (Das, 1983).

The agreement made a strong indication by confining the role of Chogyal to constitutional head and not more than that. He was to perform his functions in “accordance with the Constitution of Sikkim.” Although the constitution was published a year later, but the 1973 Agreement clearly showed Chogyal no more than the Constitutional head. The Chief Executive henceforth was provided with all the major power to run the government. As under the agreement he was to submit all the important matters to Chogyal for his approval but he was also given the power to put forward action without Chogyal’s concern when the immediate action was required. The Chief Executive had the right to decide on how funds for social and economic developments would be used. And if the differences of opinion between him and Chogyal arises then the matter

would be referred to the Indian Political Officer in Sikkim “who shall obtain the advice of the Government of India which shall be binding” (Gupta, 1975).

The Agreement marks importance for many reasons. For the first time in Sikkim, democratic rights were introduced and people became the participants in political process. Even though the Chogyal remains the ‘Head of the State’ his powers had been drastically reduced. It further installed India’s control over Sikkim and made India’s hold over Sikkim more unshakable. The agreement also made it clear that India had already established its power and Chogyal is subordinate to the Indian Government. The internal administration of Sikkim to much extent had been taken away by Government of India. The 8 May agreement, moreover, marks drastic changes in the system of government in Sikkim and further conceived Sikkim’s relation with India stronger.

Election for the new Sikkim Legislative Assembly, 1974

Soon after the agreement was signed the election campaign got started. The Sikkimese with the Election Commission of India prepared the ground for election. R.N. Sen Gupta, I.A.S representative of the Election Commission of India was appointed as Commissioner for the New Sikkim Assembly Elections on April 1974. Compared to the earlier elections, the election campaign had been strong in 1974 with the party symbols, speeches and money – all that characterizes election in India (Gupta, 1975). By this time the Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janata Congress had been merged and formed Sikkim Congress with Kazi Lendup Dorjee as its leader. This time the Legislative Assembly was composed of thirty-two seats and Sikkim was divided in Thirty-one Territorial Constituencies and one Sangha Constituency²². Out of thirty-two seats fifteen seats were divided for the Bhutia-Lepcha and fifteen for Nepali community. One was reserved for Sangha and one for the Scheduled Castes. Parity between two major communities Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepalis were maintained, but in the reduced manner. The elections were held on the basis of Adult Suffrage. The old system of communal voting²³ was

²² The Sangha Constituency was comprised of the Sanghas (Monks) belonging to monasteries recognized by Chogyal. It was to elect one member through an electoral college of the Sanghas whose members were not eligible to vote for any other Constituencies.

²³ In the earlier elections of Sikkim before 1974 the voting pattern was based on communal line ‘parity formula’ where the candidate representing the community where he belong had to secure at least 50% vote from his community and 15% from the other community. In 1974 election candidate receiving the largest number of votes cast by the entire electorate is considered elected.

replaced by the principle of one-man-one-vote. The Sikkim Congress gained victory winning all the seats in 1974 election (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

Table 2.2 Sikkim Assembly election of 1974

	Parties	Seats won
1.	Sikkim Congress	30
2.	National Party	1
3.	Independent	1

Source: Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013.

The Resolution and the Associate Status, 1974

In the mean time after April 1974 election, a clash of will between Chogyal and Sikkim Congress had occurred. Chogyal did not want to accept the loss of his past authority and on the other Sikkim Congress wanted the democratic leadership to be maintained. The members of Legislative Assembly refused to take oath on the Chogyal's or Ruler's name. The Sikkim Congress asked New Delhi to send a Constitutional expert. For the first time, the newly constituted Assembly met on 10 May 1974 and adopted a resolution requesting Government of India "to examine the modalities for Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India." The Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 was introduced in the Legislative Assembly by which the entire Sikkim's administration was to be re-structured. It proposed for a three-tier system in which the role of the Ruler(Chogyal) was reduced to figure head; the Chief Executive was to be the head of the administration and the Chief Minister and his Cabinet was to be responsible for the non-reserved subjects (Sinha, 1975). The Sikkim Congress also demanded that there should be a Council of Ministers instead of an Executive Council; there should be a regular Speaker elected from amongst the Assembly members and the Ministry should control all the portfolios including, Home, Finance and Planning (Das, 1983).

So far as the Chogyal was concerned the resolution stated that the "role and functions of the Chogyal cannot be more than those of the Constitutional head of the Government of Sikkim." The Assembly also requested Indian Government to assign a Constitutional expert to give a legal and Constitutional framework to the objectives of its resolutions and modify the draft (Sinha, 1975).

A Constitutional expert was sent to Gangtok by the Indian Government and a series of discussions took place. The Chogyal wanted the new constitution to flow from the throne while Government of India and political parties wanted the position of the Chogyal to be defined in the Constitution. The Constitutional experts sent by Indian Government prepared a new draft. The Executive Council was replaced by the Council of Ministers, the post of Deputy Speaker was allotted and provisions were made to transfer the other subjects under the purview of the Assembly on the recommendations made by the Government of India (Das, 1983).

The Bill defined the role and functions of the Chief Executive. It declared that, Chief Executive would be nominated by Government of India and appointed to the post by Chogyal. The Chief Executive was vested with all the important powers to run the administration in Sikkim. The Bill stated for Chief Executive: (Gupta, 1975)

All the powers necessary for the discharge of his functions and responsibilities and the executive power in Sikkim shall be so exercised as to insure compliance with any decisions taken or orders or directions issued by Government of India in all matters pertaining to internal administration of Sikkim (Gupta, 1975).

The Chief Executive though was responsible for the running of the administration in Sikkim but at the same time he was responsible for executing the directions provided by Government of India pertaining to internal administration of Sikkim and every advice given by Council of Ministers to Chogyal was communicated through the Chief Executive (Gupta, 1975).

Chogyal by now was convinced that all these were a preliminary to Sikkim's ultimate merger with India. Therefore, left with no other options, he tried to fight it back through many processes. Firstly, he tried to interpret the provisions of Indo-Sikkim Treaty, the Tripartite Agreement and the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 in his own way and put forward the political controversies, this probably made him to come into sharp conflict with the Indian Government. He met with the Indian Prime Minister but his talks with the ambitious Prime Minister Indira Gandhi failed and he returned with disappointment. Secondly, he took steps to internationalize the Sikkimese issue. He went to Kathmandu (Nepal) and met international dignitaries and tried to convince them for the cause of Sikkim's sovereignty. He even tried to fight it back and regain his throne through public demonstrations (Das, 1983).

The Chogyal boycotted the opening session of the Assembly, which he was to address on 20 June 1974. However, the Assembly met and passed the Draft Constitution unanimously. The

Chogyal did not give his consent to the Bill. The Chogyal was in opposition to Section 30(c) of the Draft Constitution through which Government of Sikkim may seek participation and representation for people of Sikkim in the political institutions of India. In Chogyal's view this would damage Sikkim's separate identity and international status as the protectorate of India under Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950. The Sikkim Congress gave an answer to Chogyal by passing a resolution that stated "there is only one way out for the Chogyal, either he acts strictly subject to the provisions of the Government of Sikkim Act, 1974 and May 1973 agreement or quit the Sikkimese political scene." By then the Assembly had met thrice – on 20 June, 28 June and 3 July of 1974 and passed the Constitution Bill unanimously. The Chogyal under threat of removal, having no other choice than to give his consent, put his seal to the Government of Sikkim Bill, 1974 on 4 July 1974 and it became an 'Act' that no more pronounced the fate of Sikkim as a separate entity (Sinha, 1975).

According to B.S. Das the resolution had far reaching implications. He says, Sikkim's participation in political and economic institutions of India was not possible without having active membership in the related bodies of the Indian side and unless Sikkim was listed amongst the Indian States under the constitution, which was not so (Das, 1983).

A special provision relating to association of the Government of India was also mentioned in the new constitution. In this context, the Sikkim Government could request the Indian Planning Commission to include planned development in Sikkim. The Sikkim Government could also ask Indian Government for facilities for students from Sikkim in Indian educational institutions in addition to employment opportunities, which is equal to those available to the Citizens of India (Gupta, 1975). As provided under the new constitution a special provision under clause 30, entitled "Association with Government of India" the Chief Minister L.D. Kazi then made a formal request to Government of India to fulfill the objectives laid down under this clause of the new Constitution. Das notes, this request meant the amendment in the Indian Constitution and "the Sikkimese representation in the parliament is only possible if Sikkim's territory became a part of India" (Das, 1983).

According to B.S. Das who was then an Indian Chief Adviser to Chogyal under the new constitution, the Chogyal had constantly opposed involvement of any Indian in presenting his views to Delhi. He always said, "Sikkim's interests can only be represented through a Sikkimese." But when the new constitution was implemented, Chogyal was left with no other

option. Through B.S. Das, the Chogyal made an attempt to make his request to Delhi for the continuity of Sikkim's separate identity under the 1950 Treaty and 8 May 1973 Agreement. In return without taking much time Delhi forwarded a draft constitutional amendment Bill (Thirty-fifth amendment act of 1974) that stated: (Das, 1983)

After Article 2 of the Constitution, the following shall be inserted, namely:

2A- Sikkim, which comprises the territories specified in the Tenth Schedule, shall be associated with the Union on the terms and conditions set out in that Schedule.

Thus, the Bill was introduced in the Parliament and was passed with the overwhelming majority and Sikkim became an Associate State of India in September 1974 provided with representation in the Indian Parliament.

N. Ram states 'the 35th Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed with a road roller majority in the Indian Parliament, with the M.P's of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) alone voting against it. The prominent persons who were against the new association were harassed and some were kept virtually under house arrest. And the demonstration against this association were handled and tackled by the CRP (Central Reserve Police) of India.' According to Ram, "if the Treaty of 1950 was 'a grossly unequal one', by the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 and thirty-fifth Constitution Amendment Bill, the Government of India has now resided all its power over Sikkim" (Ram, 1974).

The 1974 constitution at first violated the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 under which Sikkim had its separate identity and protectorate status with provincial autonomy. It further limited the scope of internal autonomy of Sikkim Government that the Ruler (Chogyal) had enjoyed till 1973. Though powers of the Chogyal was made more limited and the Councils of Ministers and Chief Minister was entrusted with more power, but the presence of Chief Executive and Indian political office remained in Sikkim that gave Sikkim some kind of ambiguous international status. N.Ram says, the constitution recognized Sikkim's sovereignty under the India's suzerainty- leaving all the powers to the Indian Government to decide on all the matters of Sikkim including how exactly its autonomy was to be defined (Ram, 1974).

The Merger, 1975

Since Sikkim was now an associate state of India under the Thirty-fifth Constitutional Amendment Act, this meant that though the merger had not been accomplished formally, but for

all practical purposes, the merger had been accomplished. There was only a step left to execute merger formally. All the powers for Sikkim's decisions had already been shifted to Indian Government, thus it was only left to be given the 'Indian State' status to Sikkim.

Chogyal, now assuming India's next move and the final one i.e., the merger of Sikkim with India, decided to give a fight. He therefore tried to create an internal disagreement between the Sikkim Congress and the New Delhi. Das notes, the Government of India's attitude now had changed in dealing with Sikkim. The smooth takeover of Sikkim without any hurdle had made Indian Government more confident. Therefore, the style of dealings with the new ministers had changed. Earlier, the leaders were given a special treatment by the Foreign Office like those from foreign countries. But being a part of India now, the leaders of the political parties were given the less important treatment. The Indian official had now turned more dominating. Therefore, Chogyal tried to make full use of these instances. But this could not help Chogyal because the Sikkim Congress leaders were made to believe that, without Government of India's support, they were now helpless (Das, 1983).

The international reaction against India was being build up in Nepal and China. Chogyal seemed determined to maintain the feudal rule in Sikkim. In March 1975 Chogyal paid a visit to Nepal and even met the Chinese delegation. There he charged India for retaining most of the Sikkimese administrative powers. He also gave a press conference in Nepal criticizing Delhi and the Sikkim Congress leaders and questioned Delhi's motives. Chogyal's contact with Chinese posed a threat to Delhi (Das, 1983).

For five years now since the beginning of 1970's, Sikkim had been witnessing a popular unrest like agitations, demonstrations, rallies, public meetings and strikes that certainly damaged the Sikkimese life and brought a change in Sikkim's political scenario. With all these developments, the grand confrontation between the democrats and the royalists was waiting in its wings. The Sikkim Assembly on April 10, 1975 passed a resolution demanding the institution of Chogyal to be abolished and merger with India in the name of protecting the interest of the people of Sikkim (Sinha, 1975).

A referendum was organized on April 14, on the issue of merger to seek public opinion. In a referendum an overwhelming majority of 59,637 voters out of 61,133 votes cast approved the resolution. Thus the result went in the favor of the merger. The institution of the Chogyal was now abolished leading to Sikkim's merger with Indian Union. Exactly after a month on 16 May

1975, Sikkim was declared as the full fledged Constituent State of Indian Union by Thirty-sixth Amendment Act, 1975(Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

With the merger, the historical position of the Political Officer came to an end and B.B. Lal the Chief Executive then, took over as the first Governor of Sikkim on April 16 and the affairs of the new state of Indian Union was passed on to the Home Ministry of India (Das, 1983). The Sikkim Assembly formed through the elections of 1974 with 32 members, became the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim. Further, Sikkim was allotted one seat in Lok Sabha. Thus at the end, democracy and its movement by the political groups in Sikkim won the battle against the monarchy or the Namgyal Dynasty that ruled Sikkim for more than 333 years (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012).

Hence, Sikkim lost its identity as a separate entity or separate Himalayan kingdom. First it lost its identity as a protectorate, then by being an Associate State of India by 35th Amendment Act, 1974, and later by completely merging with and becoming a fully fledged Constituent State of Indian Union by 36th Amendment Act, 1975.

An Analytical Understanding of Merger of Sikkim with India

The question that arises immediately after the merger took place is – What was the reason for merger? How the transition of Sikkim from protectorate of India to integral part of India took place? To understand this process an analysis of the event from 1947 to 1975 is necessary.

With the decline of British paramountcy in India, in 1947, Sikkim's position was no better than that of the other princely states that subsequently joined the Indian Union. However, the difference existed in case of Sikkim, being the border state of strategic importance it was being looked after by the Indian External Affairs Department as had been in case of North West Frontier Province²⁴ (NWFP) during the British days (Raizada, 2012).

The statements of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, said in the Constituent Assembly on 9 March, 1949:

Sikkim has not acceded. The question in that shape has not arisen. All the matters are pending and are under consideration. The present position is that the old relations of

²⁴ The North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) was a Province under the British India. It was introduced in 1901 under the British administration and lasted till 1955. When Punjab came under the British East India Company in 1848-1849, this region along with the 'Frontier Tribal Areas' acted as a 'buffer zone' with Afghanistan. The province was created out of North-Westerly areas of originally Pashtun lands which were merged with old Punjab.

Sikkim and Bhutan with the Government of India continued. What exactly the future relations will be is a matter of consideration between Sikkim, Bhutan and Government of India (cited in Raizada, 2012).

A similar statement was made by the Deputy Minister of External affairs of India, Dr B.V. Keskar who said:

With regard to Sikkim, in many matters it is controlled by Government of India, but in many matters it stands independently, not exactly as a state within India but something between a state in India and an independent state (Raizada, 2012).

All these statements created a lot misunderstanding about the true position of Sikkim with regard to India. The differences of opinion within the Sikkimese population further contributed to the confusion of Sikkim's position with India. The Sikkim National Party that was backed by the Sikkim Durbar, opposed the merger of Sikkim in strong terms in 1948, while the bulk of Sikkimese people had already started asking for merger with India soon after the British East India Company had left (Raizada, 2012).

The Treaty of 1950 although preserved Sikkim's distinct identity, but it clearly made India's role on Sikkim's matter more strong. Unlike Bhutan and Nepal, where separate agreement or understanding were necessary for defense related matter, the defense frontiers of India directly covered Sikkim with the 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty. The internal administration of Sikkim was totally brought under the ambit of Delhi. Though Chogyal was given the responsibility of the internal administration but it was under the overall guidance and control of the Indian Political Officer. The Political Officer in Sikkim played the role of Delhi's watchdog to direct the Sikkim's matter and ensure and implement the 1950 Treaty provisions (Das, 1983).

In 1947, when for the first time the anti-Chogyal movement broke out with the formation of Sikkim State Congress (SSC) party , along with several demands of abolishing landlordism, formation of popular interim government and accession of Sikkim to India, when in 1949 India intervened suggesting Sikkim's Government to form 'popular ministry', and when the power struggle broke out between Chogyal and the popular ministry in 1949, Indian Government had clearly established its sphere of responsibility in Sikkim by dissolving the 29 day ministry and by appointing the Indian (Dewan) to head the Sikkimese administration, that also laid the foundation for the 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty (Das, 1983). When one looks into the constitution of Sikkim both through 1973 Agreement and 1950 Indo-Sikkimese Treaty, one can see that the

enlarged role of Indian Government was brought about under the 'ultimate responsibility' clause in 1950 Treaty and May 1973 Agreement. In the name of ensuring good administration, equal rights and social justice for all sections of the Sikkimese people India had established its sphere of responsibility and interference in every Sikkim's matter. Gupta states that, the 1974 Constitution was intended to bridge the concept of 'protectorate' with provincial autonomy. It limited the scope of the internal autonomy of Sikkimese government or Chogyal that he enjoyed until 1973 (Gupta, 1975).

Between 1950 and 1970, Delhi was aiming for a semi-independent status for Sikkim. Das writes, Delhi's dealings with Sikkim were not directed through policy but through its Political Officers and Foreign Secretaries, that had their own views and process in dealing with Chogyal (Das, 1983).

Chogyal thought more of nationalism than democracy. He wanted to preserve the institution of monarchy. The Chogyal wanted to acquire for Sikkim the status similar to Bhutan with independence and sovereignty. And over the years the Chogyal tried to push away Delhi's authority by his way of seeking a revision of the Treaty of 1950 and the protectorate concept and by increasing his contacts with the anti-Indian forces like Chinese and Pakistani diplomats outside. Meanwhile, the political parties in Sikkim were becoming increasingly impatient with Chogyal's way of rule and highly dissatisfied with the economic policies. They wanted to do away with the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of few. When Bhutan joined United Nations in September 1971, Chogyal at this time got a boost and went to open demand for revision of the Treaty along with this he increased his contacts with the anti-Indian lobbies such as Pakistan and China abroad. He continued to push Delhi hard. Thus, once the Indian Government realized that the Chogyal was becoming an unreliable ally they decided to remove him (Das, 1983). According to Ranjan Gupta, 'the argument that developed since 1950 for dealing with monarchies rather than popularly elected governments in the Himalayan region had been based on the assumption that it would be easier to deal with one person rather than a group of politicians who would be replaced periodically. However, basic assumption to this approach was that king would be a reliable and a stable ally' (Gupta, 1975). But Delhi could not achieve it in terms of Sikkimese monarch.

Delhi over the years had played an ambiguous role. It helped Chogyal by giving many suggestions to balance the demands and situations that developed in Sikkim over the years,

which according to B.S. Das was understood as support to him from the Government of India. But when in 1973 Chogyal made the fatal mistake of rigging the elections in March that year, an immediate reaction by Delhi was seen, by lending its full support to the political opponents of Chogyal. It was evident, by 1973 the Indian Government had decided to change its support and back the political parties, particularly the party led by Kazi Lendup Dorjee.

When the 8 May Agreement was evolved, political parties in Sikkim wanted the same privileges that an elected government of a state in India enjoyed. They needed constitutional and legal arrangement. The political parties in Assembly therefore, wanted the participation in the political institutions in India that would enable them to get rights and privileges under the Indian Constitution. Das notes, “Delhi could not have found better arrangement and they lent full support to this demand and this demand could not have come on its own unless the Indian side had been consulted in advance” (Das, 1983).

It can simply be seen as a power play both in terms of the internal arrangements as well as the external one. At the time before merger of Sikkim, in the internal scenario, the notion of doing away the feudalistic system and aspiration for the democratic setup was relevant in Sikkim and the political parties specially Kazi Lendup Dorjee made an endeavor to overthrow monarchy or Chogyal’s rule. In the external one, the Himalayan Kingdom’s formed the northern periphery of India’s defense and Sikkim is one of them. Even if Sino-Indian relations were normalized, Sikkim’s strategic importance would still remain the same. The Chogyal’s efforts to seek revision of the Treaty and his contacts with foreign parties was detrimental to India’s security and his claim for a status for Sikkim similar to Bhutan was totally against India’s interest. Therefore, grabbing the opportunity that came with the Resolution of the Assembly, Delhi with full backing of the popularly elected Assembly, made a decision to make Sikkim an associate state of India (Gupta, 1975).

N. Ram in his article ‘Sikkim Story: Protection to Absorption’ states, “the Government of India claims that the absorption of Sikkim ‘reflects the true aspirations of the Sikkim people’ as expressed through the Assembly...the main aspiration of the people of Sikkim was the abolition of landlordism and the abolition of the oppressive order of the society. In the name of meeting the aspirations of the people, the Government of India has devoured Sikkim’s national identity” (Ram, 1974).

Thus it seemed that so long as Chogyal remained in power even nominally, he would not fully accept the new arrangements of democratic setup or he would still remain hostile towards it. Das notes, Kazi's Government had realized the threat that had every chance of escalating. Delhi also opined that India's enemies outside would try to use every occasion to create problems in future. For India and also for the people aspiring for the fall of monarchy and establishment of democratic set up in Sikkim, it became necessary to merge Sikkim with the Indian Union. Therefore, merger became necessary on these accounts (Das, 1983). After merger, along with the change in political system there are several developments that has taken place in Sikkim under the framework of Indian Government and these developments has further induced change in social, political and economical aspects of Sikkim which shall be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

POST-MERGER DEVELOPMENTS IN SIKKIM

The process of integration of Sikkim with Indian Union has been a unique one, mainly because Sikkim had for long remained protectorate until it was merged. With the merger in 1975 the Lamaist theocratic rule of Namgyal Dynasty²⁵ came to an end. The entire power structure was re-organized where people and not the ruler, are considered supreme (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). After the merger, all the basic instruments of development were put forward into action by the Indian Union Government. According to Mahendra P Lama this was done primarily to give an Indian identity to Sikkim (Lama, 2000). This trend has led to restructuring the entire socio-political and economical process of Sikkim.

Post-Merger

Soon after the merger with the Indian Territory, political system with parliamentary democracy was introduced in Sikkim. Mr. B.B. Lal assumed the office as the Governor of Sikkim on May 16, 1975 and Kazi Lendup Dorjee Khangsarpa was made the first elected Chief Minister of Sikkim. The Sikkim Assembly, which was formed through the elections of 1974 with 32 members, became the legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim under the Constitution of India. Further, Sikkim was allotted one Member of Parliament seat in the Lok Sabha. The State of Sikkim was now run by the Governor representing the central government as the nominal head and the Chief Minister with his Council of Ministers as the real functionary. Sikkim was further accorded with special status under Article 371(F)²⁶ of the Indian Constitution which protects the identity and rights of the Sikkimese people (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013). The change of Government from monarchy to democratic set up was one of the basic factors which brought about a turning point in all the establishments in Sikkim.

The political, social and economical scenario of the state was totally changed. The laws of the Indian Constitution were extended to Sikkim. Those whose names appeared in the old Sikkim

²⁵ Till 1975 Sikkim was under the monarchical system which was run by the Namgyal Dynasty. The monarch was guided by the Buddhist monks. Phuntsog Namgyal was the first monarch of Sikkim who was helped by the Buddhist monks in establishing a 'rule of law' in Sikkim. The ruler was not only the secular head of the State but also incarnate lama or monk, who was responsible to rule the subjects according to the doctrine of 'Chhos' which means the Dharma. In all 12 rulers ruled Sikkim from 1642-1975 for a period of 333 years.

²⁶ Article 371(f) contains the special provisions with respect to the State of Sikkim. It protects the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim.

Subjects Regulations were made citizens of India. The issue of citizenship had appeared out of the Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975 which was issued by the Government of India. The order provided that “every person who immediately before the 26th day of April, 1975 was a Sikkim Subject²⁷ under the Sikkim Subject Regulations, 1961²⁸ shall be deemed to have become a citizen of India on that day.” Accordingly those whose names were already entered in the earlier Sikkim Subjects Regulations of 1961 would become the citizen of India and would also gain Sikkimese status. As a result those whose names did not appear in Sikkim Subject Register were denied Indian citizenship (Gazetter of Sikkim, 1975). The legislators of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly condemned the Regulation of 1961 as undemocratic and black act of Chogyal regime and emphasized to keep the year of merger of Sikkim with India i.e.1975 as the cut off year for the award of citizenship to the left out person of Sikkim. The Sikkim (Citizenship) Order, 1975 was amended on 1989 to include the names of the ‘left- out’ persons of Sikkimese origin. But the Sikkim Subject Regulation of 1961 continues to remain an important document that distinguishes Sikkimese from others. Sikkim Subject is the symbol of identity and an important document to public appointment and other political-economic opportunities in Sikkim. For being the old laws of Sikkim, Sikkim Subject enjoys protection under article 371f (K)²⁹ of the Indian Constitution (Gurung, 2011). The office of District Collector issues ‘Certificate of Identification’ to the descendants of Sikkim Subject Certificate holders.

With the merger all the resources in Sikkim have been brought under the fold of ‘public goods’ under the direct utilization and control of the state. This change can be seen in the steady rise in social services, state expenditure for the public welfare, utilization of public goods in state for development, and effective administration and enforcement of law and order. Allocation and distribution of the state’s resources and rewards are now carried out by the Government elected by the people (Datta, 1991). Earlier it was the monarch or Chogyal and his ministry who looked

²⁷ Sikkim Subject is the Person having domicile of Sikkim. Every person if he is born in the territory of Sikkim and is a resident and whose father and husband holds the domicile of Sikkim before Sikkim became part of India in 1975, are the Sikkim Subjects.

²⁸ Every person who has domicile in the territory of Sikkim immediately before the commencement of this Regulation shall be a Sikkim Subject if he: (a) was born in territory of Sikkim and is resident therein, (b) has been the resident of the territory of Sikkim period not less than fifteen years immediately preceding such commencement, (c) is wife or minor child of a person mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b).

²⁹ 371f(k) of the constitution states; all laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim or any part thereof shall continue to be in force therein until amended or repealed by a competent legislature or other competent authority.

after the state services, now after merger the state services is being looked after by the democratic government with the modern form of state apparatuses.

Within the span of few years, after 1975, the service and business sectors expanded rapidly thereby creating new opportunities for the people. The white-collar jobs such as medicine and engineering were to some extent a new phenomenon for Sikkim (Sinha, 2008). With this regard the state required a large workforce. However, because of the insufficient availability of the skilled and educated local people, a huge influx of skilled and better educated people from other parts of India took place. The business sectors and the market economy expanded that further attracted businessmen and money from other parts of the country (Choedon, nd).

After the merger the land reform measures were taken up as per the norms provided by Government of India through the Sikkim Cultivators Protection Act, 1975 and Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reforms Act, 1978³⁰ to remove the defects of existing agrarian structure that practiced oppressive feudalism in Sikkim. It is said that, since its merger in 1975, Sikkim has achieved commendable progress in all areas. It has witnessed visible efforts in education and health care as a means of social improvement with the establishment of good schools and hospitals all over the state. Besides agriculture, other economic opportunities were also made available to all the segments of population. Different training programmes and employment opportunities for the Sikkimese population were now made available (Kharel and Sonam, 2013).

Jeta Sankrityayana in his study 'Development without Shocks: A Himalayan Experience' notes, "The development scenario that extended in Sikkim is interesting in a way that Sikkim's economy prior to merger was drawn from its rural adaptation with its high agricultural dependence. After the merger it has sought to create new avenues outside agriculture that has ensured decentralized spread of economic progress." Further he says, in the period of planning in Sikkim, before its merger, the developments had remained confined only to the East District, particularly Gangtok. The new strategies for development after 1975 also focused the

³⁰ After Sikkim became an Indian state in 1975, the first measure taken by the Government was the abolition of the intermediaries. And it subsequently provided for the land rights to the landless tillers, enforced ceiling laws of landholding, distribution of surplus land and protection of tenancy rights through the legislations like the Sikkim Cultivators Protection Act, 1975, The Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reform Act, 1978. Land Rights of the indigenous Lepchas and Bhutias, which was protected earlier by the Revenue Order No. 1 of 1917, (it was mentioned that the land owned by the Lepcha and Bhutia community cannot be transferred to other communities), continued to be so after the merger of Sikkim with India because of the tribal status of those two groups. Imposition of land ceiling on agricultural holdings helped the state to acquire a substantial amount of agricultural land, demarcated as 'vested land'; however no ceiling was imposed on non-agricultural holdings.

developments in other districts of Sikkim, particularly the South and West Districts where it was easy to reach with less topographical constraints. The Government of India followed the ‘top-down’ approaches followed by planning and creating collateral investments focusing on the field of basic needs that included health care, education, agriculture etc (Lama, 2000).

Planning Allocations in Sikkim

The concept of planned development in Sikkim was initiated in 1954. The first plan of seven years (1954-1960) was subsequently followed by the second five year plan, from the period 1961-1966 and third five year plan covering the period from 1967-1971. These entire plans were financed by the Government of India. All these five year plans in Sikkim provided a foundation for economic reconstruction in Sikkim and by the time Sikkim got integrated into the Indian union, these plans led to the increase in overall economic activities of the State. As on the date of merger the State Planning Committee came under the purview of the National Planning Committee (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

The Fifth Five Year Plan Document (1976-1980 which was Sikkim’s first post-merger plan period) stated that:

Sikkim has entered upon an era of intensive development after the historic constitutional change of April, 1975, through which the state joined the mainstream of national life...Switch-over from a monarchical system to democratic government has naturally generated great enthusiasm and rising expectations of the people of Sikkim... (Lama, 2001).

In post-merger era, Sikkim being a mountainous state situated at the north-eastern border of India is classified under the ‘Special Category State’³¹ by the Indian Government that provides the state with the favorable treatment in terms of distribution of grants from the Planning Commission. Being a Special Category State it gets central assistance of 90 percent as grant and 10 percent as loan as against 30 percent as grant and 70 percent as loan to other non-special category states. The state is also incorporated in Minister of Development of North Eastern

³¹ Special Category States are those states that fall under hilly and difficult terrain, low population density, strategic locations along the borders, economic and infra backwardness, non-viable nature for state finances.

Region (MDONER)³² in 2001 and North Eastern Council (NEC)³³ in 2002, for other fiscal benefits (Planning Commission, 2008).

From Traditional Feudalism to Modern Society

The socio-political structure of Sikkim was traditional and feudal in nature before its integration with India. For many centuries, feudalistic regime of Chogyal had a complete power over land and society of Sikkim (Government of Sikkim, 2001). At the top, there was Chogyal or the king, and according to traditional Sikkimese economic system, all land belonged to him. The king would lease out a portion of land as gift to the kazis and thikadars, who were primarily the absentee landlords in Sikkim. The kazis and thikadars finally leased out the lands to peasants and individual families of the cultivators under different exploitative terms. They would employ mandals (headmen) and karbaris (account assistants of headmen or mandals) to collect rent from the peasants and the individual families of the cultivators (Sinha 1975; 2008).

According to Sinha, under the feudalistic regime of the Chogyal, the traditional society in Sikkim was characterized by three strata- the clergy, the nobles and aristocrats and the commoners. Among the clergy, the monks were chosen from the Bhutias and Lepchas of high position. These monks played an important role in the management of monastery estates and administered justice in collaboration with the Kazis, the clergymen also managed the affairs of the state. The Kazis constituted the nobles and aristocrats of Sikkim's feudal society (Sinha 1975; 2008). The Kazis were the regional lords and had authority to command the regional territories. Land rights were vested primarily in the hands of Kazi (feudal lords) families. They did not possess legal rights in the land but had the hereditary title to their office (Hope, 1966). The Kazi's were also empowered to register the documents for transfer or sale of the landed

³² The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDONER) is a Government of India ministry, established in September 2001, which functions as the nodal Department of the Central Government to deal with matters related to the socio-economic development of the eight States of Northeast India, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It acts as a facilitator between the Central Ministries/ Departments and the State Governments of the North Eastern Region including Sikkim in the economic development including removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, provision of basic minimum services, creating an environment for private investment and to remove impediments to lasting peace and security in the North Eastern Region including, Sikkim.

³³ In 1971, the Indian Central government set up the North Eastern Council by an Act of Parliament. The eight States of North East India viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim are members of the council, with their respective Chief Ministers and Governors representing them. Sikkim was added to the council in the year 2002. The Council is an advisory body and may discuss any matter in which the North Eastern States have a common interest and advise the Central Government as to the action to be taken on any such matter.

property (Gurung, 2011). They possessed the power to adjudicate minor disputes, and collected land revenue from people within their territory. The peasants, the wage earning people, the skilled and semi-skilled workers were considered as the commoners (Sinha 1975; 2008).

The form of oppression under forced labour (Jharlangi) was rampant in Sikkim. There were various forms of forced labour in Sikkim to which the common people were subjected. Forced labour with very less compensation and often without compensation, were usually endured by the landlords when cultivating their private fields and when harvesting their crops. There was neither wages nor compensation provided to the labours for such services. The State-requisitioned forced labour was commonly known as 'Kalo Bhari' or black loads in Sikkim. 'Kalo Bhari' was the name given to a special consignment compactly packed in black tarpaulin. Huge quantities of loads were transported to China via Tibet during the later part of World War II." In the name of the state authority the landlords falsely requisitioned the forced labour. Large number of loads belonged to the private concerns. The feudal lords charged the private concerns the highest rates and paid the labour the prescribed rates and rest of the profits were taken by the feudal lords. The forced labour often had to carry loads across the passes (over 1500 feet) into the Tibetan territory and whatever prescribed rates the forced labour used to get, was barely sufficient for his meal from the journey to and from (Gurung, 2011). In this manner the form of feudal oppression thrived in Sikkim in its traditional society.

With the change of time, according to Amal Datta, the present day society in Sikkim is characterized broadly in four distinct classes- agrarian, business, wage-earning and new. The agrarian comprises of land owners whether small or big and the landless farmers. The big and small businessman and also the owners of the small scale industries constitute the business class. The manual workers, agricultural workers, skilled or semi-skilled workers comprise the wage-earning class. The educated members employed in the government services fall under the new class category (Datta, 1991). A gradual transformation from traditional and feudal society of early Sikkim to the modern and democratic society can be seen in Sikkim. Sikkim was going through its transition phase, a transition from feudal and agrarian society to modern and democratic, therefore a special attention was given to Sikkim during the post merger period to make society modern and developed (Yasin & Chhetri, 2012).

Feudalism in Sikkim had its complete monopoly in the pre-merger period that was strictly based on communal lines. According to the 1971 census, Sikkim was pre-dominantly rural with nearly

99 percent population living in village (Government of Sikkim, 2001). Roads were few and transport scanty. Land rights were vested primarily in the hands of Kazis. The development in any sphere or fields was rarely visible in Sikkim during the pre-merger period (Lama, 2000). The common people in Sikkim aspired for the abolition of landlordism and empowerment of people. These aspirations of people and the role that India performed in the name of 'ultimate responsibility' led to the 1948-49 popular upsurge against Zamindari and in the course of time another upheaval led to the events of 1974 by which the Sikkim Congress demanded for the entire Sikkim's administration to be restructured.

After Sikkim became an Indian state in 1975, the first task taken up by the Government of India and Sikkim was the abolition of intermediaries. Subsequently, it created the provision of land rights to the landless tillers, enforced ceiling laws of landholding, distribution of surplus land and protection of tenancy rights through legislations like the Sikkim Cultivators Protection Act (1975), the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling³⁴ and Reforms Act (1978), and the Sikkim Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act 1978. Land rights of the indigenous Lepchas and Bhutias, which were protected earlier by the revenue order no 1 of 1917 (it was mentioned there that the land owned by the Lepcha and Bhutia community cannot be transferred to other communities), continued to be so after the merger of Sikkim with India because of the tribal status of these two ethnic groups (Chakrabarti, 2010; Yasin and Chhetri 2012; Gurung, 2011).

In 1996, the Government of Sikkim introduced a land re-distribution measures through land bank scheme. According to this scheme, land owners were supposed to surrender their surplus land voluntarily and landless laborers (known as Sukumbasis in Sikkim) were free to choose the plot of land they wanted for cultivation. Landless laborers were identified by the government and would be given permanent land rights and each landless family could choose a land up to 1000-2000 sq. meters at a cost not beyond Rs. 52,500 that included registration and stamp duty (Yasin, Chhetri, 2012). But this also poses a question as follows, what would make the landowners surrender their land, secondly, most of the land in Sikkim is owned by the lepcha-Bhutia community which is non-transferable according to the constitution of India and given that how much surplus land would be available for the redistribution. Therefore, land reforms in Sikkim can still be viewed as the unfinished business in the distributive sense.

³⁴ Complete abolition of feudal agrarian structure remained unfulfilled because of which the ceiling was applied only to the agricultural land and no ceiling was imposed on non-agricultural holdings. The kazis still hold considerable amount of land in Sikkim.

There has been an increasing use of land for the commercial and residential purposes. Prior to merger the agricultural production was given more importance and so the land was used more for agriculture purpose, now the land use is more focused on commercial aspects and agriculture is given less importance. But this trend is not confined to urban areas of Gangtok, it is making its grip over the other parts of East, West and South Sikkim as well. According to Government of Sikkim Report 2008, because of the policy shift in Sikkim there has been a heavy decline of agricultural sector and a change has occurred in the land control and management system. The land use pattern in Gangtok capital of Sikkim has now been categorized in six categories i.e. residential, commercial, public and semi-public, transportation, industrial and recreational (Paul, 2016). In this way in the post-merger period the traditional system of land practice has been shifting to modern system of land use in Sikkim.

Though Sikkim is no longer a monarchical state but feudal elements still have its root in the agrarian society. According to Chakrabarti and Gurung, Land Reform measures in Sikkim have been inadequate and have failed to provide distributive justice (land ceiling is applied only in agricultural land and no ceiling is imposed on non-agricultural holding) (Chakrabarti, 2010; Gurung, 2011). According to Jeta Sankrityayana, although the transition of the feudal past to the egalitarian emancipation was to be gradual rather than abrupt, but in terms of legislation, the oppressive order of the society was deprived (Lama, 2000).

Thus, when Sikkim became a part of India the traditional and feudal society of early Sikkim gradually transformed into modern and democratic society by depriving the oppressive order of the feudal society mainly in terms of legislation.

Change in Cultural pattern of Sikkim

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits music and arts (Zimmermann, 2015). The merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union has also contributed to change in culture of Sikkimese people.

Dress Culture

The dress culture of the people of Sikkim has a tremendous diversity, divided into various communities (Lepcha, Bhutia Nepali) living in Sikkim. Different Communities of Sikkim have their own traditional dresses, colour, pattern etc. The effect of globalization has caused a shift in

dress culture. With the adoption of dresses of western culture and other various cultures the dress culture in Sikkim has further been diversified, with new materials and designs the youth adapt trends by following western fashions (Subba, 2008).

The state does not have factories to produce dress materials of their own except a few traditional dress materials; the dress culture in Sikkim is largely influenced by the material available in the market. Different communities in Sikkim have their own traditional dresses. Wearing traditional dress shows their commitment towards their community, identity and culture. The retention of traditional dress is higher amongst the Lepcha and Bhutia Community of Sikkim. According to Subba between 1774-1975 Nepalese spread throughout the length and breadth of Sikkim and promoted ethnic Nepali dresses. Under the British protectorate in 1817, with the start of modern education initiated by the missionaries in Sikkim, people started adoption of western dresses and western style (Subba, 2008).

With the integration of Sikkim into Indian Union, a number of Indian ethnic groups such as Biharis, Marwaris, Punjabis, Bengalis, Keralites and other migrated to Sikkim for better opportunities. These Indian ethnic groups were made available due to various works and business by the plan and economic development in Sikkim. These communities outside Sikkim brought their dress culture along with them and also marketed in Sikkim (the market in Sikkim was mostly run by these communities). Now, most women in Sikkim prefer to wear Sari, Kurta Pajama etc brought about by these communities. The school teachers in Sikkim often wear sari and Kurta pajama while going for their daily work. Only during the occasion people in Sikkim wear their traditional dresses, therefore the traditional dress has turned out to be the occasional dresses for people of Sikkim (Subba, 2008). In this way the dress culture in Sikkim is changing faster with the increase in literacy rate in Sikkim.

Art Culture

Sikkim has very rich tradition in handloom and handicrafts, carpet weaving, Sikkimese traditional crafts, cane and bamboo crafts, wood carvings, handmade paper making, Thanka³⁵ paintings, woodcarvings, blanket weaving, and traditional jewelry etc. The centre of cottage industry at Gangtok was established in March 1957 for preservation of traditional arts and crafts

³⁵ Thankas are religious scrolls found hanging in the monasteries in the Sikkimese homes. They are considered auspicious and are supposed to drive away evil spirits. Thanka normally depicts the sketches of gods and goddesses.

of Sikkim. This institute has been imparting training to the school dropouts, young boys and girls in the traditional arts and crafts of Sikkim (Subba, 2008).

Today after the merger, there is secularization in Sikkimese Art and Culture. 1975, the period marks the introduction of various Indian art and culture through migration of a large number of people from the vast and diverse country to Sikkim. Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal started Government Cottage Industry at Gangtok for preservation of traditional art and culture of Sikkim. Nowadays cosmopolitan market of Gangtok and other markets in Sikkim are flooded with a variety of arts and crafts from parts of India and other parts of the world, which in turn has affected the art culture of Sikkim (Subba, 2008).

Food Culture

Every ethnic group (Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali) in Sikkim have their own ethnic cuisines and whatever was grown in the land like paddy, wheat, barley, seasonal vegetables, meat and their fermented foods was the source of food for the people of Sikkim till 1975. The general food items were boiled cooked in pig-fat and rarely oil cooked food. Till 1975 Sikkim did not imported much food items from India or any other parts of the world. It was a self-sufficient state. The only thing it imported was oil and salt from India. After 1975 an improved varieties of all types of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, spices, flowers etc were introduced in Sikkim. Thus with the merger the change occurred in the food choice and food habits of people in Sikkim. Now along with globalization there is a choice for everything including food. Thus, modern and diverse food culture was made available to the people of Sikkim after the merger and therefore affecting the traditional food habits in Sikkim (Subba, 2008).

Development and Change in Education and Health structure in Sikkim

In the post-merger period along with the National Government and its policies, the State Government of Sikkim has started giving emphasis on the educational and health developments in Sikkim. This section will discuss the educational and health developments and change in post-merger Sikkim.

Education

Sikkim has long history of traditional education. The religious and cultural system of education influenced the earlier society of Sikkim. That system of education provided only the traditional education. The monastic system of education played a significant role in the early days of

religious education or traditional education (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). With the need of the time Chogyal made some changes in the system of education that also facilitated some modern formal system of education. Later Christian missionaries played a great role in imparting the modern education system in Sikkim. But the act of imparting modern education system in Sikkim by the Christian missionaries was not very encouraged by the Sikkim monarch (Planning Commission, 2008). Under the British system, Durbar of Sikkim established a school in the Kingdom. In 1906 Bhutia Boarding School was established and in 1907 Nepali Boarding School was established in Sikkim (Joshi, 2010). The Christian missionaries were also interested to spread modern education in Sikkim. By the year 1920 Sikkim had 21 Schools including 6 government schools, 13 mission schools and 2 schools under landlords (Lama, 2001).

By 1950 the Government of India had already launched the five-year plans in Sikkim, thus Sikkim also became the part of the plan policy. Accordingly, the planned economic development in Sikkim was introduced in 1954. When the five-year plan was formulated for Sikkim in the guidance of the Planning Commission of Government of India, education was the integral part of development. There is a quantitative growth of education in 1954-75. The literacy rate of Sikkim in 1951 was 6.59 percent. In 1954 there were only 70 Lower Primary Schools, 14 Upper Primary Schools, two Middle Schools and two High Schools and total enrolment of 2500 students. By 1960, the enrolment rose to 9700 students in 117 Lower Primary Schools, 47 Upper Primary Schools, 13 Middle Schools and five High Schools. Out of 182 schools in 1960, 97 were Government schools and 61 under private management (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013). It shows a considerable increase in the educational development than before in 1950.

When Sikkim became the 22nd state of India in 1975, the education in State was still in an elementary stage. The literacy rate was also below 50 percent, 17.74 percent of literacy rate was figured according to 1971 census (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013). However, after merging with India Sikkim witnessed a rapid and a phenomenal expansion of education along with the constitutional responsibility, as a result of which various educational policies and practices and various standards of education gradually started coming up (Lama, 2001).

In 1975, number of Government schools rose to 211 while privately managed schools remained at 56 (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013). The post-merger period saw a steady rise in the number of educational institutions in Sikkim in the form of modern education in the State. In 1998-99 there were total numbers of 1,474 schools in the state (lama, 2001). According to human development

report 2014, Sikkim now has a strong network of 781 government schools, 421 private schools, 71 monastic schools, 25 local body schools, 11 Sanskrit schools and three Islamic schools. Sikkim became the second state in India to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Quality Council of India on 27 March 2011 for developing accreditation standards towards quality government schools (Government of Sikkim, 2015). Now it also has 18 government colleges, one central university and four private universities (Government of Sikkim, 2015). According to 2011 census report, literacy rate in Sikkim stands at 82.2 percent (Government of India, 2011).

However, after 1975 the education policy and development programs of Government of India were applied, adapted and implemented. Accordingly, the Government of India's National Policy on Education 1986³⁶ was adopted as per directions provided by Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, NCERT (National Council of Education Research and Training), NIEPA (National Council of Education Planning and Administration) and UGC (University Grant Commission) was all adopted by the state. The State has also incorporated various schemes put forward by the Government of India such as District Primary Education Programme (1994), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (1995) and Sarva Siksha Abhiya (2005) and all these programme has also helped to grow enrollment in Sikkim's education process (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013).

In this way scenario in education system of Sikkim began to change rapidly after the formation of democratic government in 1975 by replacing the century old monarchical system. The major initiatives taken by the government (central and state) in the field of education has deep impact on the improvement of Sikkimese society and education sector. However, issues like the inadequate infrastructures; quality education etc. still remains the matter of concern for education. The government needs more concerned efforts regarding this sector.

Health

Before its merger with the Indian Union in 1975, Sikkim had only one major hospital in Gangtok i.e. Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial (STNM) Hospital, which was established in 1917 with 50 beds and three doctors that expanded with some specialized departments (Lama, 2001).

³⁶ The National Policy on Education 1986 is a policy formulated by government of India to promote education amongst Indian people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India.

Since the period of merger, there has been a considerable expansion of the public health infrastructure. In 1979, Sikkim had only four districts hospitals (located at Singtam, Gyalshing, Namchi and Mangan) in addition to the Central Referral Hospital at Gangtok. The hospital at Gangtok which began as fifty bedded hospital with three doctors in 1917 had expanded to 250 beds in 1985. By Seventh Plan 1985-90 it had 300 beds. New clinics with sophisticated equipments were for better diagnosis and treatment were set up with the availability of specialized personnel in the field of medicine, surgery, anesthesia, pathology, dental, psychiatry, endoscopy etc. A new Out Patient Department (OPD) emergency complex was also added. A State Level Blood Bank and Transfusion Unit with facilities of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) screening and advanced facilities in cardiology with a coronary unit were added during the 7th plan (1985-90) period. Further in 1990's many more other specialized facilities in the other field of health concern were added (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

As against the initial phase of 1970's, when Primary Health Center (PHC) were grossly understaffed and pharmacists ran many dispensaries, in the late 1990's, there were 1-3 doctors as well as paramedical personnel for each PHC. In 2013 Sikkim, there are 1 State Referral Hospital, 4 District Hospitals, 24 Primary Health Centers, 146 Primary Health Sub-centers, 4 Community Health Centers (CHCs), 1 District Tuberculosis Center and 1 Central Referral Hospital in the state (discussed in Table: 3.1) (Government of Sikkim, Annual Report 2012-2013).

Health Infrastructure in Sikkim as on 31.7.2013

Table: 3.1 No. of Health Institutions in Sikkim

SI No	Health Institution	East	West	North	South	State
1	State Referral Hospital/STNM Hospital	1	-	-	-	1
2	District Hospital	1	1	1	1	4
3	Community Health Center	1	-	-	1	2
4	Primary Health Center	6	7	5	6	24
5	Primary Health Sub Centers	48	41	18	39	146
6	District Tuberculosis Center, Namchi (South Sikkim)	-	-	-	1	1
7	Center Referral Hospital (PVT.)	1	-	-	-	1
8	Total	58	49	24	48	179

Source: Annual Report 2012-2013, Government of Sikkim.

Over the period many health missions were also launched like National Rural Health Missions, National Leprosy Eradication Programme, Family and Mother Child Programme, National Tuberculosis Control Programme, Comprehensive Annual and Total Check up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH) etc for the betterment and growth of health sector in Sikkim (Kharel and Bhutia, 2013).

Shift in Occupational Structure

In early days of native inhabitant of Sikkim, the economic activities were based on agriculture and hunting. There was no such question of urban development or urbanization (Dewan, 2012). The early communities in Sikkim like Lepchas and Limbus did some trade with the Tibetans and Gorkhas. The Mangars were involved in mining activities. Till the end of seventeenth century there was no conception of occupational hierarchy among these communities. In the next line of immigration the Khamps who were also known as Bhutias, migrated from the Kham province of Tibet. Agriculture was their main occupation. Besides agriculture, they were also involved in trade activities. The Tibetans along with Lepchas occupied a dominant economic position until the end of the nineteenth century mainly because of their skill in trading activities (cited in Lama, 2000).

With the British connection with Sikkim in 19th century there was huge influx of people of Nepal from the western side in Sikkim (Lama, 2000). According to Subba, the Nepalese were put into the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. They were engaged in the field of agriculture as share croppers and agricultural laborers with no security of tenure (Subba, 2008). In 1889 J.C.White was appointed as the British Political Officer to channelize trade across the border and help Chogyal in administration of the state. Large number of plainsman mostly Marwaris were engaged in the trade with the Tibetans and side by side also with the British. For the insufficiency of labour on trade, British East India Company had promoted policies to increase number of Nepali settlers in Kingdom of Sikkim (Lama, 2000). People of Sikkim did not gain anything materially from this business of trade that was carried out by the British East India Company. It was only unpaid labour that they gave to the Britishers and other administrators (Karan and Jenkins, 1963). Even though Sikkim initially practiced trade, their occupational diversification was very limited. There were no signs of non-trading occupations such as medical practice, teaching and administration (Lama, 2000).

A study done by Nilotpal Sarma titled 'Plainsmen in Sikkim and Their Occupational Structure', states in the year 1975 when the institution of Chogyal came to an end, the political and religious control of an ethnic group called the Bhutias³⁷ was simultaneously abolished and democracy and development took its form in Sikkim. Several forms of development took place in Sikkim. Of all the development that took place after 1975, the development of infrastructure has received the utmost priorities. The various occupational segments in Sikkim were created that further made room for the entry of multiple ethnic groups including the non-Sikkimese into it (Lama, 2000). Sikkim's occupational structure in post 1975 can be classified in three broad sectors, they are,

- a) Agriculture sector
- b) Industry Sector and
- c) Services sector

Table: 3.2 Sectoral Growth rates of GSDP Sikkim (2005-2012) Year wise growth rate

Sector	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Primary	4.13	0.09	3.9	4.3	4.2	2.8	4.5
Secondary	11.77	7.06	9.9	34.8	172.7	7.4	7.2
Tertiary	10.71	7.36	7.6	9.6	24.5	10.5	10.5

Source: <http://planningcommission.nic.in>

The above table shows the composition of the three basic sectors and accordingly the overall development of the state. While in early days agriculture was the main sector for livelihood and even today agriculture plays a major role in economic development of the state but when technological development occurs, it will lead to the shifting in occupation of the human world. Sikkim has started with agricultural occupation and ended with the shift in occupation because of mainly two reasons: a) merger and b) along with the merger to a larger nation, technological innovations in secondary sector developed that also changed the traditional state into a modern state. The decrease in primary sector towards the State Gross Domestic Product indicates the shift in occupation of Sikkim. The table further shows the increase in secondary sector i.e. the industrial development with the increase in secondary sector that occurred in 2009-2010 with (172.75%). After 1975, developments in all sectors of Sikkim have occurred that also divides the people in the fields on the basis of skilled and un-skilled labour.

³⁷ Bhutias are one of the ethnic groups of Sikkim that enjoyed dominant position in terms of political and religious control in Sikkim till the period of merger.

With the merger, economically the occupation of people shifted from traditional agricultural activities to employment-oriented services and other services (Yasin and Chhetri, 2012). The occupational structures in Sikkim have been gradually growing complex and diversified. By the end of Chogyal's rule these structures were fairly complex but after 1975 they seem to have grown even more so (Lama, 2000).

Decentralisation and Devolution of Powers and Functions

Unlike the traditional Sikkim where the administrative power resided to the authoritarian regime and in the hands of few, post-merger Sikkim saw the decentralization of powers and functions to the local bodies as according to the policy framework of the Indian Government.

Local Self Government in Sikkim

Even after having the relationship with India Sikkim did not experience the community development phase of early 1950's. But during this phase only that the institutions of local self government known as Local Area Panchayat was introduced. Under the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 both the parties agreed on 'progressive association of the people with the governance of the state', for that matter in 1951 there was a formation of village panchayats at the local level on an elective basis (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013). The elections were held for the Local Area Panchayats in 1950 but it was soon boycotted by the National Party of Sikkim on the ground that the interest of the "indigenous population" had not been safeguarded. By indigenous community the National Party meant Bhutias and Lephas and even the Government of Sikkim did not show any interest to it, therefore, the institutions became defunct as soon as they were established (Basnet, 1974).

The concept of local self government in India is the old practice. It holds the idea of participation of people in the management process and their involvement in development process. The idea of participation was first reflected in the early 1950's when Community Development Programme was first launched in India. However it failed to achieve its objectives of involving people in the development process. In 1960's the Panchayat Raj Institution (PRIs) was established which would ensure the involvement of people in the local areas as well as in the nation building process. With this the panchayats were left to perform smaller functions like construction of village roads, bridges, minor irrigation channels etc. Financially they were controlled and supervised with the wide provisions of government. Therefore, in 1993 the 73rd Amendment

Act³⁸ was introduced to make PRIs more effective partner in development process (Bhattacharya, 2000).

Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1965

Even before merger the colour of local democracy was reflected in the Sikkim panchayat act of 1965. The Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1965, promulgated by Durbar, was the first attempt to establish PRIs in Sikkim. It came into force in December 1965. The Act provided for the single tier panchayat system (Block Panchayat) and also introduced the concept of Block Sabha, which is like the Gram Sabha, that consisted of adults of the area who were Sikkim Subjects, over 21 years of age and who paid land revenue or local tax to the Government for landed property and house owned in their names. The Panchayat Act, 1965, was enforced to facilitate rural development and enable participation by all communities at the village level. The term of such Panchayat was three years. The Block Panchayat was allotted with wide range of functions such as developmental, welfare and agency (Rai, 1975).

The 1965 Act also provided for the long list of sources of finance. However a study done by Ranju Dhamala on Panchayat Raj Institution in Sikkim, states that “despite being provided with the long list of function and finance the role of panchayats were limited to placing demands to the Government and nominating the contractor for implementing minor schemes.” Mobilization of resource stood nil and they were given 10% of land revenue collected from the area which was spent mainly for buying stationeries and providing refreshments at meetings (Lama, 2000).

No political issues were put forward in the panchayat elections or the election was not contested on the party or political platform as panchayat arena did not fall under the boundary of political parties. Universal adult franchise was not the basis of election of the panchayats. Only land revenue payee was qualified to be the voters to elect the panchayats (Government of Sikkim, 2008). As Sinha observed “adaptation of the institutions of local self – government appears to have failed to educate the masses even about political elementary, so that they could graduate to participate in governance at higher level” (Sinha, 2008).

Panchayat Act, 1982

After joining the Indian Union in 1975, Panchayat Act was enacted in 1982. This Act put forward the concept of a two tier panchayat System in the state by instituting the zilla or district

³⁸ The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1993, Part IX relating to Panchayats inserted in the constitution to provide Gram Sabha, constitution of panchayats at village and other levels, direct elections to all seats, fixing the tenures, reservation for SC/ST and 33% seats for women etc.

panchayat and gram panchayat at the block level. Under the act of 1982 the first Gram Panchayat elections took place in 1983 (Government of Sikkim, 2008). These bodies for the first time were constituted on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The gram panchayats are elected directly by the people and the election is conducted by the Election Department of the State. Panchayat elections now fall under the boundary of political parties and thus elections are contested on political platforms. Besides timely elections to the panchayats, the State Government has given increased financial and other powers to the rural leaders. These panchayats are now given the power to use financial resource to utilize for development of their respective areas (Arha and Sigh, 2008).

Now, Sikkim follows a two-tier system of panchayati raj, with the zilla panchayat at the district level and the gram panchayat at the village level, as per the rules of the 73rd Amendment Act. Thus, the state after 1993 has four zilla panchayats corresponding to four districts i.e. east, west, north and south district of Sikkim, presently consisting of 95 Territorial Constituencies and 165 Gram Panchayat Units comprising 906 wards (Rai, 1975). Reservation of seats for the weaker sections have been ensured as stated in the 73rd Amendment Act and it has further reserved 50% of seats for women in Sikkim. The two-tier panchayat raj institution is practiced in every village in Sikkim excluding the two tribal villages of Lachen and Lachung where Dzumsa ³⁹(Pipon system) the traditional system of local governance is still prevalent.

Local self Government in Urban Areas

For the purpose of better administration of the urban areas, Municipal Government has been established as a result of the 74th Amendment Constitutional Act. The Sikkim Municipalities Act, 2007, provided for urban local-self governance at various levels that aimed to improve the quality of life of the urban resident of Sikkim. A three tier local self government at urban areas were established – Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Namchi Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayats in Mangan, Rangpo, Singtam, Jorethang and Gyalshing (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013). The State Government has now given the administrative power to the president of Gram Panchayat Unit. The president has been given power to administer and monitor all government

³⁹ Dzumsa is the traditional system of local self governance prevalent in the two tribal villages of Sikkim i.e. Lachen and Lachung. The election to the Dzumsa is held every year which means the tenure of elected member of Dzumsa is only one year. The election is held on non-political basis. Government officials and politicians are not allowed to contest election.

institutions like primary schools, primary health sub centers, libraries, community information centers, rural tourism, grounds for sports etc., falling under his/her Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU). The president will be assisted by government functionaries like Headmaster/Headmistress of Primary school, Medical Officer in-charge of Primary Health Centers (PHC), Village Level Workers (VLW) etc., who act as the members of their respective GPU Committee and manage these institutions under the president. The state has also established District Planning Committees, District Technical Support Committees, and Gram Level Planning Forums for this purpose (Dafflon, 2011; Arha and Sigh, 2008). In 2012 Government of India ranked Sikkim the best state in the country in the category of smaller state for its performance in development and strengthening of the PRIs in Sikkim (Now, 2012).

Therefore, the transformation in political system from monarchical to democratic in Sikkim also changed the structure and use of wealth and power with regard to implementation of the policy and act passed by Government of India.

Identity Politics and Political Development in Sikkim (Post-merger)

Even before Sikkim's merger with Indian Union, ethnic politics had thrived in Sikkim. The struggle for power has been a part of Sikkim's politics. Nepali communities were often subjected to discriminatory rules such as Revenue Order No.1, 1917⁴⁰ and the notification (No 5063/F) in 1948⁴¹ (Chakrabarti, 2010). Since the ruler himself was affiliated to Bhutia community, the Nepali community was often excluded from centers of power and the power mostly resided to the Bhutia community in Sikkim. Prior to merger community based political mobilization was attempted by the Sikkim National Party, as a consequence of which, other political parties also directly or indirectly emphasized on their traditional network and community consciousness for mobilization (Gurung, 2011).

Sikkim's merger with India introduced parliamentary democracy in Sikkim. The introduction of parliamentary democracy with new legal constitutional structure as a consequence of merger in 1975 generated the platform for ethnic and communal politics on a larger scale than before in 1975. The constitution of India to ensure equality, freedom and rights to the unprivileged section of society provided certain legal provisions to uplift the downtrodden and unprivileged sections

⁴⁰ Revenue order No. 1, 1917, was a notification that was issued in the interest of Bhutia and Lepcha communities. It states that "no Nepali can buy a Lepcha or Bhutia land."

⁴¹ Notification (No 5063/ F) 1948, prohibited Nepalese from acquiring land, especially in North Sikkim.

of society irrespective of their caste, race, communities and religion. Such legal provisions were framed to minimize inequality prevailed in Indian society. But in spite of minimizing the inequality and providing rights to the communities of Sikkim, ethnic and communal politics in post-merger period in Sikkim became a norm pursued and practiced by almost all political groups and parties to such an extent that even smaller communities and cultural groups which until 1975 identified themselves with the larger cultural groups began to assert their separate political identity with a view of claiming larger share of resources and power. For example, the Lepcha community started demanding for protection of their land from Bhutias and maintenance of parity with the Bhutias in terms of Assembly seats, employment, educational facilities etc. Bhutia community on the other divided themselves as the 'Real Bhutias' and the 'Other Bhutias' on the basis of period of their settlement in Sikkim, Nepali community too were divided into the Other Backward Class (OBC) and Non-Backward Class (NBC) on the basis of their racial origin. Similarly, the Limboos, asserted their separate identity organizationally, considering it different from the other general Nepali identity (Gurung, 2011).

The Government of L.D Kazi started functioning from May 16, 1975. After the merger, the situation in Sikkim demanded for the visionary leadership and professional bureaucracy who could formulate new policies and plans for taking Sikkim into the new era of political stability and economic development. Sikkim immediately after its merger required local bureaucrats and other experienced administrative leaders but during the post-merger period there were insufficient local senior officials to run the administration. The Chief Minister Kazi under the advice of State's Governor, B.B. Lal was compelled to bring in other bureaucrats to post in Sikkim. With this the sense of insecurity had risen in Sikkimese people because of the influx of outsiders. Apart from this, community consideration which had also been the feature of pre-merger era continued to get favor even at the political level. Therefore, different communities in Sikkim and specially the Nepali community resented against the Kazi Government. Kazi government was criticized for doing nothing in order to protect the Nepali seats in 1979. Consequently the two regional parties emerged namely: Sikkim Prajatantra Congress of Khatiwada and Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) by R.C. Poudyal that reflected the issues of deprivation of Nepalis (Gurung, 2011). This shows the ethnicity oriented politics which had been the feature of pre-merger era, continued even in the post-merger era at the political policy making level.

The merger issue then became prominent in Sikkim at the level of politics. Democracy was interpreted as the rule by the Indians (Gurung, 2011). Mr. Nar Bahadur Bhandari, the then leader of Sikkim Janata Party (later Sikkim Janata Parishad) criticized the signatories of the merger as ‘Battishay Chor’ (Thirty-two thieves) or ‘Desh Bachuwas’ (person who sold their country) and appealed to the people to ‘not to be fooled again’. Bhandari stressed on the need for “safeguarding the lost rights of the people of Sikkim” (Sengupta, 1985).

It was in this background that the first election after the merger was held in 1979. The political parties like Sikkim Prajatantra Party, Sikkim Janata Parishad used merger issue as the political campaign. N.B. Bhandari leader of Sikkim Janata Parishad stood victorious, that showed itself as the party that did not supported merger (Gurung, 2011).

After assuming the power of Chief Minister Bhandari reorganized the administration of Sikkim. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was replaced with Sikkim Armed Police. The Central Reserve Police Force was present in Sikkim since 1973. The number of central government officials was considerably brought down. Bhandari even changed his party name from Sikkim Janata Parishad to Sikkim Parishad (Gurung, 2011). Bhandari was extremely critical of the then Governor of Sikkim Mr. J.H. Taleyarkhan. Unlike Bhandari who always projected ‘Sikkim for Sikkimese’ and ‘Son of the Soil’ policy based on Sikkim Subject Certificate, the Governor of Sikkim maintained the view that “Sikkim Subject has no validity and all Indians should get permanent jobs in Sikkim” (Sharma, 1992).

In April 1974, general election to the Sikkim Assembly was held for the first time on the basis of ‘one man one vote’. In the election, sixteen seats each were kept reserved for the Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepali community respectively, but no separate seats for Tsongs (Limbu community of Sikkim) was allocated. In Connection with seat reservation and tribal status, the Limboos of Sikkim on 15 June, 1976 submitted a memorandum to the president of India, New Delhi⁴² (Khamdhak, nd.). Gurung in his study states, the tribal Bhutia- Lepcha community played an instrumental role behind Bhandari’s political success. But the Bhutia-Lepcha leaders were slowly inclined towards the Governor. Considering this fact and also he was the representative of

⁴² Memorandum to President of India by the Limboos on 15 June, 1976, claimed “the Limboos of Sikkim are one of the aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim having their own distinct culture, tradition, religion and language”. It was further stated, ‘Limboos of Sikkim along with the Bhutia and Lepchas have accepted and installed Phuntsok Namgyal as the first king of Sikkim and very name of Sikkim originated from the two Limboo words- ‘Su’ and ‘Khim’ meaning new house’ (Memorandum submitted to the President of India by Akhil Sikkim Kirat Limboo Chumlung, dated: 15th June 1976).

the Limboo dominated Soreng constituency, Bhandari wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, for the inclusion of Limboos in Scheduled Tribes list of Sikkim in 1981 (Gurung, 2011).

In May 1984, Bhandari's government was dismissed by the Governor under Article 164 of the Indian Constitution for using anti-merger sentiments and Sikkimese identity for political bargaining. On 11 May 1984, Mr. B.B. Gurung was appointed by the Governor as the third Chief Minister of Sikkim. However, B.B. Gurung gave a pro-Indian speech on the State Day, dated 16 May 1984, that created unhappiness among the Sikkimese population and also his supporters within and outside the government. With this the Legislative Assembly was suspended on May 1984 and Sikkim was brought under the view of Article 356 (President's Rule) of the Indian constitution (Upadhyay, 2011).

Bhandari, soon after his dismissal resigned from the Indian National Congress (I) and founded a new regional party called Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) in 1984. Bhandari stood victorious even in March 1985 Assembly election. He in this election used effective ethnic issues like the restoration of parity formula and reservation of seats for Sikkimese Nepalis and preservation of local identity and recognition of the Nepali language in Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution (Gurung, 2011).

Bhandari's government in post-1985 era was considered worst. He was accused of being arrogant and corrupt. He practiced the politics of divide and rule. Unlike his 1981 stand⁴³ he later opposed inclusion of Limboos and Tamang in the Scheduled Tribe list of Sikkim. The Limboos then submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India requesting to include Limboo community to the Scheduled Tribe list of Sikkim and restoration of the Limboo seat in the Assembly. The Limboo Organization, called Akhil Kirat Limboo Chumlung (Estd. 1973), also demanded resignation of the Chief Minister, Mr. Bhandari (Khamdhak, nd.).

The major hiatus within the Nepali community was created when central government passed a legislation to implement Mandal Commission Recommendation in 1990. In Sikkim, the communities like Rai, Limboo, Mangar, Tamang, Gurung and Bhujel were included in the other Backward Classes (OBC) list and excluded other groups of Nepalis like the Bahuns (Brahmins), Chhetris (Kshatriyas) and the Newars. This led to the division within the larger Nepali

⁴³ Bhandari's letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dt.14/11/1981 states- for the inclusion of Limboo to the Scheduled Tribe List of Sikkim.

Community in terms of 'backward classes' and 'forward classes' who belonged to higher caste Nepalis. Mr. Bhandari being the upper caste Nepali himself, rejected the proposal of the Mandal Commission Recommendation. On 7 September, 1990, the Assembly passed a resolution rejecting the central directives for the implementation of Mandal Commission recommendation. The OBC community with their notion of benefits in terms of 27 percent reservation in employment and other economic benefits were hurt by the rejection of the implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendation. Bhandari not only rejected the Mandal recommendation but also began to refer higher caste Nepali as the Non-Backward Class⁴⁴ (Gurung, 2011; Khamdhak, nd.).

According to Suresh Kumar Gurung, the division in the Nepali community occurred in two ways: firstly, the decision of the State Government that did not recommended for the inclusion of the Limboos and Tamangs in the Scheduled Tribes list. The Limboo-Tamang community felt alienated by the policies of the government which was taken in favor of the Bhutia-Lepcha community. Secondly, the communities belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) too felt bitter with the policy of the government which denied the status of OBC in 1990. This generated a sense of community resentment and consciousness as against the notion of belonging to Nepalis (Gurung, 2011). Thus, the linkage between the electoral politics and government policies generated the social divisions and created community consciousness to the smaller identities which until then was regarded as the Nepali Community.

It was during 1990-91 that Mr. Pawan Kumar Chamling, a cabinet minister was having ideological differences with his political leader, Mr. Bhandari. Mr. Chamling was politically popular within the ruling SSP party and also belonged to majority Rai (OBC) community of Sikkim. He was being the choice of Congress (I) which was then engaged in 'remove Bhandari' campaign. Understanding the situation Mr. Bhandari removed Mr. Chamling first from Ministry on 16 July 1992 and then from the membership of Sikkim Sangram Parishad party (Gurung, 2011). Bhandari government did not suffer any untoward damage during this time. The constitutional recognition to the Nepali language in August 1992 further normalized the condition⁴⁵ (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013).

⁴⁴ NBC is actually Non-Backward Class but in the context of Sikkim it meant Newar, Bahun and Chettri.

⁴⁵ The President of India accepted the Bill on 31st August, 1992 and was published in Government Gazette on 1st September 1992.

After his removal from the Ministry and the SSP party, Mr. P.K. Chamling formed a new regional party known as the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) in March, 1993 (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013). SDF was initially considered as the party representing the OBC group. It was during 1993, a clash occurred between the SDF and SSP party and it was viewed as a conflict between Mongoloid and Aryan Nepalis. The party of Mr. Chamling was declared as the terrorist party. An arrest warrant was issued against the SDF party and its supporters, this further provoked the OBC group of Sikkim and indirectly strengthened the sense of unity amongst this group (Gurung, 2011). This period and politics thus marks the search for OBC or mongoloid identity in Sikkim.

During the same period (1993-94) the government of India proposed to extend the central Income Tax Act 1961⁴⁶, to Sikkim affectively from April 1995. Sikkimese including those who were making a living in Sikkim was exempted from central income tax and other direct taxes. In a letter dated 24 July 1993, Bhandari requested the central government for tax exemption for the Scheduled Tribes of Sikkim in a manner that the tribes of North-East India were exempted from central income tax. The Sikkim's People's Forum which was formed in March 18, 1994, demanded tax exemption for Nepalis along with the tribal's. According to them, everyone including all the communities Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali of Sikkim who enjoyed protection under article 371F should be given an equal treatment and protection otherwise they said it would be partial, discriminatory and unconstitutional against the community (Gurung, 2011).

The People's Forum continued their agitation for equal tax exemption for all the communities of Sikkim. Because of People's Forums agitation, the government issued the Finance Bill(No.15) of 1994, and submitted memorandum to President seeking to extend Central Income Tax Act, 1961 to Sikkim by giving due recognition to the tribal communities of Sikkim. And also the memorandum requested the president for the similar exemption to the Nepalis of Sikkimese origin. The Bill however was withdrawn by the Finance Minister after receiving Bhandari's letter. Bhandari who had already lost Nepali's support now also somehow lost Bhutia-Lepcha tribal support. With the withdrawal of Finance Bill No.15, ethnic tension grew in Sikkim. Anti-Nepali and anti-Bhutia-Lepcha slogans (Nepali thieves/leave Sikkim/Bleed Bhutia-Lepchas etc.) were raised. On 15 May 1994, Mr. Chamling called for a public meeting in Singtam and he declared, "If somebody wants to bleed any Bhutia or Lepcha, he should first chop off my head."

⁴⁶ Section (10) of the Income Tax Act 1961, states the exemption of tax to the Sikkimese.

With this Mr. Chamling's stand the normalcy was restored in Sikkim and he was successful in diffusing ethnic tension before it turned out to be an ethnic violence (Gurung, 2011).

No-confidence motion caused the Bhandari government to fall on 17 May 1994. Subsequently Sanchaman Limboo was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Sikkim on 18 May 1994 (Vandenhelsken, nd.). But soon he lost majority and himself resigned from the Assembly (Gurung, 2011)

According to Gurung, the OBCs like the Limboos, Rais, Gurungs, Mangars etc. belonged to the early inhabitants of Sikkim but their identity remained mostly unreported and marginalized mainly due to the then prevailing political atmosphere, lack of education and awareness and indolent nature (Gurung, 2011). Thus, the fall of Bhandari Government put up a new phase in Sikkim's politics. The community identity had now become the center of political alignment and mobilization. The rise of OBCs changed the nature of politics in Sikkim and it also made available the opportunity to reinvent the individual native identity for various sub-groups of Nepalis who were often referred as the migrants, influx etc. Since 1990 there has been a steady growth in number of such ethnic organizations and so the ethnic groups and organizations have become politically articulate and assertive too.

In 1994 election, the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) of Chamling stood victorious winning 19 out of 32 seats (Gazetteer of Sikkim, 2013). In the 1994 election two major changes took place: First, the differences between the Bhutia and Lepcha community were narrowed down. Since 1996, out of 12 seats reserved for Bhutia-Lepcha community, fifty percent were reserved for Lepcha community and fifty percent were reserved for the Bhutia community in Assembly seats. Another Significant feature of 1994 Assembly election was that the Sherpa tribal community was provided a separate representation. Besides there was the increasing number of OBC candidates in the Assembly after P.K. Chamling assumed power in Sikkim. According to Chamling "safeguards to ethnic communities were inevitable to have dignified living and inculcate spirit of responsibility in every Sikkimese" (Gazettee, 1994).

Chief Minister Chamling after his coming to power implemented Mandal Commission recommendation and ethno-cultural groups like Bhujel, Gurung, Limboo, Rai, Tamang, Mangar and Sunuwar were declared as Other Backward Class (OBC) in the state (Gazettee, 1994). However, Chamling's pro-OBC policies alienated upper caste Nepalis and also created apprehension among Bhutia-Lepchas. Similarly, 'Dzumsa' the traditional Bhutia institution of

Village administration was institutionalized as the lowest unit of the Pachayati Raj Institution in Bhutia dominated villages of North Sikkim particularly Lachen and Lachung and took initiatives to protect social, political and economical interest of the Bhutia-Lepchas by categorizing them as 'most primitive community'. The state also added Thami, Yogi, Dewan in the list of OBC in 2000. The Government of India also added all these communities to OBC central OBC list except Dewan. And the other OBC were declared as 'Most Backward Classes' by Sikkim State Government (Bhujel, Dewan, Gurung, Jogi, Kirat Rai, Mangar, Sunuwar and Thami). In brief all these communities were included in central OBC list except Dewan. In 2003, pursuing the project of having all the Nepali groups in OBC list, the OBC list was enlarged to the high castes Bahun and Chhetri, as well as the Newars and Sanyasi by the Sikkim government⁴⁷ (Vandenhelsken, nd.).

In 2003, Limboos and Tamangs previously OBC were accorded the status of Scheduled Tribes (Telegraph, 2003). Henceforth, Chamling has been successful to understand the ethnic and community nuances in the society of Sikkim that had been prevailing over the post-merger era. Providing all the communities of Sikkimese society with the communal representation and along with the other social-economic policies, the Sikkim Democratic Front party of Mr. Chamling is ruling the State till the date of 2017.

Sikkim is a traditional society. Like other parts of India, political parties and organizations of Sikkim do not really represent ideology and policy divisions. Political parties in Sikkim are often recognized on the basis of traditional networks and relations. The seats in the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim is so designed that traditional networks and bonds play an important role both in terms of electoral success and duration of power. The political parties in the process of constructing their support base enter into some kind of alignment with the socio-cultural and ethnic organizations and formulate policies on favor of or in denial of a particular communal or social group. With the introduction of Parliamentary system, Bhandari government showed pro-Bhutia-Lepcha and pro-upper caste policies that alienated the other Backward Class communities, in the same manner Chamling's pro-OBC attitude and formation of certain policies that included certain communities into Scheduled Tribe list status created concern and worry among the communities who were felt affected by it (Gurung, 2011).

⁴⁷ Notification No. 54/SWD/WD dated 17 Sept. 2003.

Thus, the merger brought with lot of developments in course of socio-economical and political life of Sikkim. The authoritarian component was reduced with the democratic values. As a result of socio-economic development since merger, the feudal, non-democratic and traditional society of Sikkim transformed into a modern and democratic society. In post merger Sikkim more attention has been paid to the directions necessary to make Sikkim modern and developed. However, when society in Sikkim started experiencing the democratic forms, profound changes occurred in socio-economic and political life of Sikkimese people. As a result, competitive general elections began in Sikkim, formation of democratically elected local government was introduced, occupation of the people shifted from traditional agricultural activities to employment services, modern forms of administration with new avenues of employment was created and the traditionally downtrodden section of the society gradually turned assertive in nature overcoming the age-old depression. Visible efforts in education and health care as a means of social improvement acquired rapid momentum with the establishments of more schools and hospitals. The democratic governance and universal adult franchise has been successful to undermine the influence of Kazis and aristocrats that opened up the channel for Sikkimese people for mass participation in the policy decision making process. The next chapter discusses people's perception on merger and the developments that took place in post-merger Sikkim.

CHAPTER 4

PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION ON MERGER AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS IN SIKKIM

The previous chapter analyses as to how after merging Sikkim with the Indian union, the Government of India has followed a developmentalist path so as to bring several developments in Sikkim and made an attempt to bring the region closer to India. According to Wolfgang Sachs, development is much more than just a socio-economic endeavor. It is a perception which models reality, which comforts society and which unleashes passions (Sachs, 1992). By merging Sikkim with Indian union, India has gained full control over the region. Following merger with several developmental tasks India has taken hold over Sikkim's matter and brought a change in the social, political and economical aspects of the State. By following this entire path India has brought the region under its ambit, but a question that arises here is that, has it been able to tie up with or associate with Sikkimese people's identity? Has it been able to form a sense of belonging to India in Sikkimese people's mind? To put it in other words, though by merging Sikkim with India in 1975 and by following several developmental paths, India may have nationalized Sikkim's territory or its space but by following all these process till where has India reached? Is it also successful in nationalizing Sikkimese people's identity? This chapter is dedicated to understand people's perception regarding merger of Sikkim to Indian Union, their perceptions on the developmental process that took place after merger and their sense of belonging to India.

Field Survey

A field work was conducted in Sikkim that included respondents from both the urban and rural or village population of Sikkim. The places that were visited for the field work are, Gangtok, Rhenock, Mangan, Gyalzing, Khamdong, Ranipool, Tshlamthang, Kabi, parts of Dzongu, Mangalbarey, Kamling, Namchi and Damthang. Gangtok, Namchi, Gyalzing, Ranipool, Rhenock and Mangan falls under urban areas of Sikkim and Khamdong, Tshlamthang, kabi, parts of Dzongu, Kamling, Mangalbarey and Damthang falls under the rural areas of Sikkim. The simple random sampling techniques were followed in selection of the respondents. The study included total 100 respondents from Sikkim holding Sikkim Subject. Both young generation and old generation respondents view point from Sikkim were taken up for the study.

The older respondents' opinions count because they have been a part of the transition that took place during the merger. The younger respondents were included as they are also the ones who are experiencing the post-merger Sikkim. All the responses were complete and used for analysis. To understand Sikkim's' people's perception on this matter the series of questions were framed that included both closed ended and open ended questions. Simultaneously an unstructured interview was carried out to the respondents who had witnessed the period of Chogyal in Sikkim (Sikkim before merger) and to the participants of the political movement in Sikkim during 1970's. The questions were carried out to the respondents in the month of November and December 2016. The study also provides an in-depth opinion. The data was calculated manually. The socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the respondents are highlighted below from Table: 4.1 to Table: 4.5.

Table: 4.1 The sex ratio of the respondents

Sex	Number	Ratio (%)
Male	58	58%
Female	42	42%
Total	100	100%

The above table shows out of 100 respondents, 58 were male and 42 were female.

Table: 4.2 The age group of the respondents

Age	Number	Ratio (%)
20 – 40 Years	37	37%
40 – 60 Years	40	40%
60 and above	23	23%
Total	100	100%

The above table shows the age group of the respondents. Out of 100 respondents 37 of them belonged to the age group between 20-40 years, 40 of them belonged to the age group between 40-60 years and 23 of them were aged above 60 years.

Table: 4.3 The category of the respondents

Category	Number	Ratio (%)
Scheduled Caste	9	9%
Scheduled Tribe	41	41%
Other Backward Class	32	32%
General	18	18%
Total	100	100%

The above table shows the caste category of the respondents. Out of 100 respondents 9 respondents belonged to Scheduled Caste category, 41 of them belonged to the Scheduled Tribe category, 32 respondents belonged to the Other Backward Class category and 18 of them belonged to the General category.

Table: 4.4 Educational Qualification of the respondents

Educational Qualification	Number	Ratio (%)
Non-Qualification	9	9%
Class X and below	16	16%
XII pass	21	21%
Graduate	28	28%
Post Graduate	26	26%

The above table provides the data of the educational qualification of the 100 respondents. It shows out of 100 respondents 9 respondents had no educational qualification, 16 of them had obtained qualification of class X and below, 21 respondents had qualification of class XII pass, 28 of them were graduate and 26 respondents were post graduate.

Table: 4.5 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Number	Ratio (%)
Student/Scholar	13	13%
House wives	4	4%
Teacher	14	14%
Employee of the service sector	25	25%
Retired Employees from the service sector	12	12%
Business	3	3%
Farmer	16	16%
Doctor	4	4%
Panchayat/ex-panchayat leaders	4	4%
Others including respondents belonging to political background	5	5%

The above table shows the occupation of the respondents. The respondents belonged to various occupational backgrounds. Out of 100 respondents, 13 of them were students and scholars, 4 of them were house wives, 14 of them come from teaching background, 25 of them were employees, 12 respondents were retired employee, 3 of them belonged to the business background, 16 were farmers mostly belonging to the village background, 4 of them were doctors, 4 respondents were panchayat and ex-panchayat leaders and 5 of them belonged to the other occupation that also includes respondents from political background.

The Questions were divided into three sections. First section of the question dealt with understanding people's perception on merger, the second section dealt with understanding people's perceptions on the developmental process and the third and final section dealt with understanding people's perception on their sense of belonging to India. All the questions were complete and used for analysis. The responses were as follows:

Section I - Understanding People's Perception on Merger

1. Do you know Sikkim was an independent kingdom under India's protectorate before 1975 and was merged with India in 1975?

Table: 4.6(a)

Yes	62%
No	7%
Not Sure	31%

According to Table 4.6(a) majority of the respondents i.e. 62% know that Sikkim was an independent Kingdom before 1975 and was merged with India in 1975, these respondents are from both rural and urban background and many of them have also witnessed the period of merger. 7% of them don't have idea on the matter and these are the respondents mainly from the village background. 31% of them are not sure about the year of merger though they know Sikkim was an independent Kingdom and many of them had also witnessed the reign of Chogyal.

Amongst the respondents who had witnessed the reign of Chogyal and the year between 1973-1975 few of them shared their story on what had happened during the period between 1973-1975. Some of them are:

An old lady aged 68 remembers a slogan 'Chogyal Raja Murdabad' (Down with king Chogyal) and 'Kazi Zindabad' (Long-live kazi)⁴⁸ a slogan during the time of merger, where they also participated without knowing the context of what they were saying. The lady was young that time she along with her friends were told to join the procession against Chogyal. She just remembers saying 'Murdabad' and 'Zindabad' without even knowing to whom they were referring to. She further says though the Indians were present in Sikkim and that was normal, but they didn't at all know that procession would ultimately lead to merger. Even after merger took place for months they were unaware that Sikkim was then a part of India.

Respondents who were also politically active and lived through the merger period said, they never actually demanded for a merger with the Indian Nation. They talk about how people,

⁴⁸ During the political movement of 1973 L.D.Kazi was the leader of the party against Chogyal. Kazi along with his team were fighting for the democratic movement in Sikkim. They wanted to do away with the rule of Chogyal. For this reason Kazi and his other fellows who were fighting for introduction of democratic set up in Sikkim had gathered people from all over Sikkim to fight for democracy.

wanted equal representation and removal of the feudal system but never in the form of a merger. The merger was never in their conscience.

Respondents who had participated in the processions against Chogyal say that they remember being brought to Gangtok (capital of Sikkim) in hordes to participate in rallies, knowing nothing about the issue. Some people admitted that they had absolutely no idea about the political struggle. They were promised good and adventurous time in Gangtok. So they came and participated in the issue. Only much later they realized that their youthful ignorance had much larger implications and effects. Some of them say they were swept away by the wave of adrenaline and excitement that seemed to have plagued Sikkim. For them seeing how and what India did in 1975 was a sort of takeover that India had put forward understanding the unstable political situation prevailing in Sikkim that time in 1975.

Respondents who had lived and experienced the time in Sikkim before merger said that they had love for Chogyal, they said they never participated in the political processions with the notion of throwing away the reign of Chogyal, their fight was against the feudal system and for equal representation.

2. Do you think Sikkim’s merger with India has benefited the State?

Table: 4.6(b)

Yes	57%
No	5%
Not Sure	38%

Table 4.6(b) shows that 57% of the respondents think that Sikkim’s merger with India have benefited the state. Respondents on this matter are of the perception that the state has been benefited in many ways and quoted developments such as infrastructural, health, education etc. Respondent belonging to the lower caste background were of the perception that, after the merger the old discriminatory treatment to the lower caste has certainly gone down even though it has not been totally eradicated and the access to education which they felt was lacking during the Chogyal period has improved. Only 5% said no because the respondent feels that developments that we see today in Sikkim was likely to happen even if we were under the Chogyal’s or monarchial rule and the respondents have given more reason of negative effects of

developments mainly the influx that has taken place in Sikkim, which they think could have been taken care if Sikkim was still under the old monarchial rule. 38% of respondents who were not sure mostly had positive and negative point of view on benefits in Sikkim after merger, and respondents like farmers and less educated ones were ignorant on this issue.

3. Considering the state you are living in right now, which political system do you think is most suitable for you?

Table: 4.6(c)

Monarchial	38%
Democratic	62%

Table 4.6(c) shows that 38% of the respondents prefer monarchial system, and they had their various reasons for this, many thought that the democratic state they are living in right now proves to be inefficient, for them had it been monarchy, Sikkim would have been much better. Monarchy would have served an immediate progress. Amongst these respondents many of them were the one who has lived Chogyal's reign and traces a hearty link with the system (their love for Sikkim's monarch), for this reason they still find monarchial system better. 62% are of the perception that democracy is a better political system. Of the few responses from the people who has witnessed the period of monarch in Sikkim think that democracy provides equality to all, the feudal system that Sikkim practiced during the Chogyal's period in which not the monarch but kazi's or the feudal lords ruled the state, was brutal. The old system never encouraged equal treatment to all. Many respondents thought in democratic system they are living in right now have provided them equality and participation in social and political institutions of Sikkim which would not be possible in the monarchial system.

4. Are you happy with the parliamentary system that Sikkim practices today?

Table: 4.6(d)

Yes	33%
No	24%
Not sure	43%

As is highlighted in Table no. 4.6(d), 33% of the respondents are happy with the parliamentary system that Sikkim practices today. But 24% are not happy because respondents think in parliamentary system the chances of corruption is much high than any other system. According to respondents, in parliamentary system ministers have their own politics and are busy fighting the other opponents that leads to inefficiency and does not show real progress in the state. 43% are not sure about the parliamentary system that Sikkim practices today.

5. Being a part of India how do you feel now?

Table: 4.6(e)

Very happy	11%
Happy	48%
Not happy	11%
Not sure	30%

Table 4.6(e) shows that 11% of the respondents are very happy being a part of India and these are the respondents mainly from age group 20-40 years, the one who has not witnessed the period of Chogyal and does not trace any subsequent memories of Chogyal's time. 48% of the respondents are happy to be a part of India that includes the respondents from the entire age category. A respondent aged 61 said in Nepali "Khushi nai hunu paryo abo hamro Sikkim tha pharkera aune hoina" which means now we have to be happy accepting what we have now and knowing that our old Sikkim is not going to come back. 11% of the respondents are not happy being a part of India, these are the respondents mainly from age group 40-80 years, the one who had outlived the period of Chogyal or lived Sikkim before merger and traces a memories and connections with Chogyal's rule. 30% are not sure about how they feel being a part of India as they seemed to be in the state of dilemma.

6. What are your perceptions on merger of Sikkim with India?

When this open ended question was asked many respondents belonging to the rural areas, the young, those who were illiterate, farmers and even few amongst the educated background hesitated to answer and many did not respond to the question. Many respondents had their view

that they have 'no idea' on the matter therefore left the question unanswered. A mixed response has been derived from the respondents in this regard.

Respondents feel that Sikkim has become a democratic state after being merged with India. The power is decentralized to the people and many more freedoms and rights are guaranteed to the people.

After the merger respondents feel many positive developments in Sikkim has taken place including the political, social and economic rights that Indian constitution guarantees. The merger brought along with it the eradication of the oppressive order of the society.

Respondents felt both happy and sad with the merger. They are happy because of the progress and development that has taken place in social, political and economical arena of Sikkim and sad because Sikkim lost its identity as a separate kingdom.

According to one respondent "it is true that Sikkim had very little chance of surviving on its own as a kingdom. It anyway had to join its hand with the larger nation be it India or China. But simply put, looking at the contemporary situation I'm glad it was India. Although there are many nuances within the Indian political environment, but Indian constitution still provides us with many clauses and articles to protect our culture and identity. There is still space for us to grow as a state and also as a community."

A respondent aged 58 says, "During monarchical system people suffered from exploitation and inequality. And now after merger system of democracy has been established which guarantees equal rights and equal treatment to all. But there is a massive fear of losing our identity. In other words merger has led to the 'identity crises' and you are neither fully Indian nor fully a Sikkimese, one stands in between these two"

Respondents were of the opinion that, since Sikkim was going through political, social and economical crisis, it was a better step towards democracy by merging Sikkim with India.

Many respondents were also of the opinion that, with the merger the Sikkimese people who under the Chogyal's rule for many years never raised their voice against any form of inequality and suppression that time have now come a long way with the practice of democratic rights. People can now place their voice with regards to any form of inequality or suppression. The legal order that constitution of India guarantees are now their weapon against any form of inequality or disorder in the society. And people now choose their own representatives or leaders

they want which according to the respondents are major positive change that merger brought with it.

A respondent aged 61 says,

The merger has led to the fragmentation of the Sikkimese population as a whole, earlier everyone lived as Sikkimese first but now community, race and, religion comes first. Communal harmony is slowly losing its importance and people have started to give priority to community based politics which in turn affects democracy. This issue of fragmentation is of major concern as it challenges the mood of nationality and nation building as people become biased and make decisions based on communal influence.

According to a respondent who has witnessed the pre-merger situation says,

Though Sikkim has a variety of culture or it is a mixture of many cultures including the Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha culture but it had always managed to portray itself as a single cultural entity(the Sikkimese culture) till the date of its merger. Therefore after merger in Sikkim we see the potential for manipulation of the Sikkimese culture.

According to a respondent aged 63 year upon being asked whether he was happy and satisfied with the merger, he said that,

He feels like it is a fifty-fifty gain, some aspects have been positive whereas others have been negative. He feels that, 'merger' would be a wrong choice of word, for him it was 'smash and grab' or 'annex'. He remembers as a young boy of fifteen years, the sudden warlike atmosphere that accompanied the merger. He was just a child back then and could not understand the significance of the monumental incident that was about to change their lives forever.

A respondent aged 71 says,

The merger has brought in the system of governance and institutions which were totally unaccustomed to Sikkimese traditional past.

At the end of this study, section I 'Understanding People's Perception on Merger' it appears that a majority of the respondents feel that the merger has brought about a lot of positive changes in Sikkim after merger. In the first section of the question the respondents who have lived through the merger have stated that although they were rather unaware of the merger taking place, they feel that this event had positive impact on Sikkim. Speaking in general terms respondents talk about democracy being a welcome change for them. Also education, health and economy has

witnessed massive improvements post merger according to them. For a lot of respondents who have actually witnessed both the pre merger and post merger Sikkim, the most significant positive development was the removal of the feudal system that was prevalent in Sikkim during the reign of Chogyal. One important fact that has come out of this study is that, many respondents of Sikkim who took part in the political movement and rallies against Chogyal's reign were at that time in the beginning 1970's, very young and did not actually know about the issue.

Respondents feel loss of identity as something that they face in post merger period because they feel they stand in the threshold, neither completely inside nor completely outside. Positive developments aside, socially and culturally there is a huge rift between mainland Indians and Sikkimese that remains to be filled. This is one negative aspect of the merger that cannot be overlooked. In this manner, respondents showed their perception on merger, their responses reflected the positive as well as negative side of merger.

Section II - Understanding People's Perception on Developmental Process

7. Do you have voter card or Aadhar card (document of identification)?

Table: 4.7(a)

Yes	100%
No	0%
Not sure	0%

Table 4.7(a) shows that all the respondents i.e. 100% has voter card or aadhar card, which means every Sikkimese people has document of identification that Indian Government has provided. Along with the Sikkim subject i.e. the certificate of identification that Sikkimese holds that identifies them as being the people of Sikkim origin, the respondents also have the identification provided by Government of India. According to the respondents both the certificate of identification i.e. Sikkim Subject as well as other id proof provided by Government of India is equally important to them. 'Sikkim Subject' they say is their right as being the people from Sikkim origin and other identification such as aadhar card provided by Government of India according to them is their national identification.

8. Are you happy with the devolution of power to the local bodies?

Table: 4.7(b)

Yes	65%
No	8%
Not Sure	27%

Table 4.7(b) shows maximum i.e. 65% of respondents feels happy with the devolution of power to the local bodies. Some respondents who has witnessed the time of merger feels, with these devolution of power now even the poor people can have easy access to Panchayats or nearby local bodies and the power does not only concentrate on top bodies. They are also happy saying that until and unless the decentralized power given to local bodies are not misused devolution of power is good. It has become very much convenient to the villagers to approach to the local bodies. There are only 8% of them are not happy with the devolution of power to the local bodies because some respondents feel that only the people who are close to political parties in power become the beneficiaries of the resources and those who are not are most often neglected and 27% are not sure.

9. Do you participate in the meetings of Panchayat/Municipality in village or towns?

Table: 4.7(c)

Yes	51%
No	44%
Not Sure	5%

According to Table 4.7(c) 51% of respondents participate in meetings of Panchayat/Municipality in village or towns. Most of the respondents who said yes are the villagers and people who live in village areas other than people who live in urban areas. People from village specially the farmer background frequently attend the meetings. 40% said no they don't attend the meetings of panchayats or municipalities. These are respondents mostly from the service sector background. 5% are not sure.

10. Are you beneficiary of governmental schemes such as – MGNREGA, health and agricultural schemes etc?

Table: 4.7(d)

Yes	52%
No	39%
Not sure	9%

Table 4.7(d) shows 52% of respondents avail governmental schemes provided by Government of India, 39% say they do not avail or are not beneficiary of the governmental schemes and rest 9% are not sure about it.

11. Do you think India has brought about developments in Sikkim after its merger in 1975?

Table: 4.7(e)

Yes	66%
No	12%
Not sure	22%

In Table 4.7(e) 66% respondents believe that India has brought about development in Sikkim after its merger. This is the view of respondents of all age group. Respondents have reflected the positive side of developments in many senses. 12% of them are of the view that India has nowhere brought about developments in Sikkim after its merger. They have considered the negative side of development in Sikkim. Respondents who hold this view are mainly from the old generation background i.e. from age 40-60 and 60-70 the ones who have seen Sikkim before 1975. 22% are not sure.

12. Has these developments benefited Sikkim?

Table: 4.7 (f)

Yes	58%
No	12%
Not Sure	30%

Table 4.7(f) shows 58% of the respondents think that developments after 1975 that they see in Sikkim have benefited the state. 12% are of the view that it has not benefited the state and most of their argument is based on seeing the negative consequence of developments after merger like the environmental degradation because of hydro-project. Rest 30% of the respondents are not sure whether developments after 1975 that they see in Sikkim has benefited the state.

13. Are you happy with the shift in occupation (from feudal agricultural based occupation to contemporary form of occupation) after the merger of Sikkim to Indian Union?

Table: 4.7(g)

Yes	77%
No	2%
Not sure	21%

According to Table 4.7(g) 77% of the respondent considers that they are happy with the shift in occupation that has taken place in Sikkim after the merger took place. Only 2% amongst them feel they are not happy. 21% of them feel not sure about the shift in occupation that has taken place in Sikkim after its merger. According respondents who have witnessed Sikkim before its merger to Indian Union say that they were self sufficient even before the time of merger. Only thing Sikkim used to import was oil and salt, otherwise the state was all sufficient with the agricultural products grown in Sikkim. According to those respondents the state has now become more dependent and that has subsequently harmed the self-sufficiency image that Sikkim had in early times.

14. Are you happy with the categorical privileges (SC/ST/OBC) guaranteed by the Indian Constitution?

Table: 4.7 (h)

Yes	60%
No	22%
Not sure	18%

Table 4.7(h) describes that 60% of the respondents feel happy about the categorical privileges that is guaranteed by the Indian constitution. 22% of respondents are not happy with such privileges. Rests 18% of the respondents are not sure about the categorical privileges guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. A respondent aged 60 are of the opinion that this system of categorical privilege has eroded the brotherly friendship and ties that early community had with each other in Sikkim. Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepali used to share such brotherly ties before merger; in Nepali they call it ‘mit launu’ (brotherhood), people have now become selfish because of that and it has contributed in dividing the Sikkimese society that early Sikkim had. The long tradition of social harmony existed in Sikkim. The kind of tolerance, social cohesiveness and bond of unity existed before 1975 amongst the various ethnic groups in the region – Lepcha-Bhutia on the one hand and Nepalese on the other. This had contributed to the social integrity amongst these ethnic groups in Sikkim. As a result there existed a separate identity transcending the ethnic identity – the Sikkimese identity. Some of the respondents believed that the categorical privileges guaranteed by the Constitution have now resulted in dividing the unified, cohesive and tolerant society that traditional Sikkim had before 1975.

15. Do you think your traditional culture has been influenced by the other Indian culture?

Table: 4.7(i)

Yes	74%
No	8%
Not sure	18%

In Table 4.7(i) it appears that 74% of the respondents believe that their traditional culture has been influenced by mainland Indian culture. The respondents give instances in terms of influence in dress culture, religion, language, food habits etc. 8 % feels that their culture has not been influenced by the Indian culture. And 18% are not sure whether their traditional culture has been influenced by the Indian culture.

16. How has your traditional culture been influenced by the other Indian culture?

Upon being asked, how your traditional culture has been influenced by the mainland Indian culture, the responses are as follows:

As 74% of the Sikkimese respondents felt that their traditional culture has been influenced their responses were based on the influence in food, art, music, cuisine, language, religion culture of the Sikkimese tradition before 1975. Some of the respondent's views are:

According to a respondent who saw Sikkim before merger said,

Culture in Sikkim has always been a diversified one, the mixture of Lepcha, Bhutia and a Nepali culture and we have accepted these cultures as ours. But somehow after Sikkim became part of India I feel the old traditional culture of Sikkim that these three community practices has been reduced. Other than the influence in language, food, lifestyle, clothing habit the 'Khanki system' or Dinning system has totally changed.

One of the respondent believed that, a lot of mainland Indian practices have been incorporated into Sikkimese tradition and culture and that today they celebrate festivals with a hint of mainland Indian flavor.

According to one of the respondent,

Festivals such as 'Mesopurne' used to be celebrated in Chogyal's palace in which every Sikkimese from every community used to come from every parts of Sikkim, meet each other and offer something from their production to the Raja. It was a big festival that used to be celebrated in Sikkim. In this festival Rs.5 was given to everyone present in palace who offered their bit of production to the Chogyal. There was a great feeling of oneness and happiness when this festival was celebrated. Now after Sikkim became part of India everybody has forgotten this festival of celebrating 'Mesopurne' which is very sad.

Some respondents said,

The early Sikkimese festivals such as Panglabshol, Tendong Lho Rumfaat, Bhai Tika is now slowly losing its importance and the other form of festivals such as Holi, Kaarwachaut, Raksha Bandhan are apparently becoming important. Because of introduction to new form of attractive culture our own traditional is lagging behind.

Respondents were of the opinion that a lot of mainland Indian practices have been incorporated into their tradition and culture; mainly the respondents gave the example of influence in the

religious festivals and practices. Heavy influence can be seen in terms of religious content, quoting from one respondent view point “many households have chesums (Buddhist God’s temple) and mandirs (Hindu God’s temple). People celebrate other Indian festivals regardless of their ethnicity.” Thus according to the respondents they can see a heavy influence by the Indian culture and society in traditional Sikkimese culture and society.

17. Point some positive developments in Sikkim after merger?

When respondents were asked to point some positive developments in Sikkim after merger, there were varied responses.

Many respondents have given an example of the achievement in education, health facilities, development in infrastructure, road connectivity, tourism sector, power development, building and housing, finance and tourism. Respondents also gave an example of distribution of power at the local level institutions and other various institutions and practice of democratic setup and democratic rights pointing it as the positive developments in Sikkim after the merger of Sikkim to Indian Union. Respondents who had witnessed the reign of Chogyal said that people can now express freely in a democratic system and merger has also brought eradication of the system called ‘kalo bhari’ (feudal system) that used to be practiced during Chogyal’s regime. Respondents were of the opinion that merger has provided social justice to the poor and downtrodden.

A respondent from a farmer background said, in old days during Chogyal’s time the wage of the farmers were very low, they used to get wages in form of agricultural produce, they say ‘chaar mana dhan’ which means four cup paddy per day and today they get Rs 200 per day as their wage in the form of money, which for them is a good and positive change after merger.

According to the respondent who lived the time before merger said the people had nothing against the Chogyal but they were virtually against the system specially the feudal system that existed in Sikkim. The power distribution was very unequal one and most of the power resided in the hands of the feudal lords. For the respondent everyone is equal now with equal distribution of power unlike the earlier days where the inequality is prevalent in Sikkim.

A respondent aged 33 said, “of course there have been monumental changes but we cannot blatantly declare that it is due to merger, every nation has to grow with time and the developmental process would definitely have been there without the merger. Better health care,

better education system, fund-flow from the central government, connectivity to the rest of the world are some examples of positive developments in Sikkim.”

18. Point some of the negative developments in Sikkim after merger?

When the respondents were asked, name some of the negative development in Sikkim that took place after merger, there were varied responses.

Nearly 80% of the respondents feel ‘influx’ of the outsiders as one of the negative developments that took place in Sikkim after the merger. According to the respondents belonging to pre-merger period though they have seen the Indian bureaucrats, other officials and the Indian businessmen in Sikkim even before merger but after the merger they feel influx has been very heavy and they also feel the influx could have been controlled if they were still under the monarchical system.

To many respondents loss of unique identity of being a Sikkimese is a major negative development in Sikkim after the merger. And because of this, respondents believed that the feeling of insecurity has risen after the merger of Sikkim to Indian Union.

Respondents also feel because of the incorporation of hydro-projects there is a huge displacement of local resources and degradation of natural environment in Sikkim.

Respondents think that Sikkim has now become a totally dependent state in terms of finance and other things. According to some respondents Sikkim was much self sufficient in terms of food production before the time of merger. Though it was under India’s protectorate, it never had to import any other food items other than oil and salt from any other parts of country. The self sufficiency has been disturbed as respondents feel people of Sikkim now depends on funds and schemes that flow from the Central Government and people itself have become more lazy.

Respondents also feel the categorization of cast or denouncement of categorical privileges after the merger period as one of the biggest negative developments in Sikkim. According to some respondents who lived in pre-merger period said, in pre-merger days all Bhutia Lepcha and Nepali community used to stay together, they didn’t have that segregated mindset. He says because of this divide in caste category and giving privilege to some caste has led to erosion of the feeling called ‘Bhaichara’ or brotherhood that Sikkimese people had before merger.

In section II ‘Understanding People’s Perception of Developmental Process’, it appears that at least on paper everyone is an Indian as they all possess Indian identity cards. Also, majority of respondents feel that the devolution of power that goes upward beginning from the Panchayat is

a huge step forward. They now feel like their opinions and feedbacks matter in the nation building process unlike in the pre merger era where every decision making power resided with the aristocracy. The shift in occupation from an agrarian society to contemporary forms of employments has been a rather significant positive change for Sikkim.

Section III – Understanding the Sense of belonging to India

19. Do you think you are an Indian by heart?

Table: 4.8(a)

Yes	39%
No	35%
Not sure	26%

In table 4.8(a) 39% of the respondents think they are an Indian by heart. 35% feel they are not. 26% say they are not sure whether they are Indian by heart or not. Some of the old respondents argue that, since they were born and brought up under the Chogyal's provision, they mostly have their feelings towards him and the old Sikkim and they still don't consider themselves as Indian.

20. Do you remember the name of last Chogyal?

Table: 4.8(b)

Yes	50%
No	28%
Not sure	22%

In table 4.8(b) 50% of the respondent remembers the name of last Sikkim Chogyal. 28% does not remember the name of last Chogyal and 22% are not sure.

21. Do you know the name of present Indian president?

Table: 4.8(c)

Yes	40%
No	44%
Not sure	16%

In table 4.8(d) 40% of the respondents know the name of the present Indian President. 44% does not know and 16% are not sure about the name of the Indian President.

22. Have you visited any part of India other than Sikkim?

Table: 4.8(d)

Yes	68%
No	18%
Not sure	14%

In table 4.8(d) 68% of the respondents have visited other part of India other than Sikkim. 18% have not visited other parts of India and rest 14% are not sure.

23. Whenever you visited outside Sikkim (to other parts of India) what was your experience?

Many respondents while answering to this question have shared their experiences on their visit outside Sikkim to other parts of India. Many have given the example of other people asking them where Sikkim is located. According to the respondents many of the other Indian people they met in their visit to other parts of India does not know where Sikkim is located or is part of India, for many of them it is located in China or belonged to some other parts of the world. Thus according to the respondents;

People still think that Sikkim is a part of China and whenever they see faces with our features they call us Chinese.

People ask questions such as ‘aap Sikkim se aye hain’ you come from Sikkim? Where is it located?

I have always felt like I'm an outsider. Most people I came across in my visit to Delhi and Rajasthan didn't know where Sikkim is located. Especially when I visited Rajasthan and a place called Jaisalmer where the people looked at us with surprise when I said Sikkim falls under or is a part of India.

We exist as this weird hybrid Mongolian looking Indian people who have to explain a little bit of geography and a little bit of history every time someone questions our identity. How good they treat us, we are never made to feel like a part of India no matter how well they treat us.

By giving all these examples respondents have illustrated their experience with regards to their visit to other parts of India.

24. Do you connect yourself with the National Anthem?

Table 4.8(e)

Yes	50%
No	30%
Not sure	20%

Table 4.8(e) shows 50% of the respondents connect themselves with the National Anthem, 30% do not and 20% are not sure. According to some respondents who have lived in Sikkim before the age of merger say that Sikkim had its own National Anthem during the time of Chogyal and they still remember that. Some of these respondents connoted the early Sikkim's National Anthem as 'ours' or in Nepali 'hamro' Anthem and today's National Anthem as 'India ko' or India's National Anthem. Many respondents say for the sake of giving respect they stand whenever the India's National Anthem is played they actually don't have the patriotic feelings for it. It has given a birth to confusion.

To some of the respondents falling in the age groups of 40-60 and 60-80 say, they connect themselves with the old Sikkim National Anthem and not so much with the Indian Anthem. One of the respondents said "the first cut is the deepest".

According to a respondent falling in the age group of 20-40 said,

We are a part of India now and coming from a post merger born generation, I feel good to be part of India. I have not lived the period of Chogyal or Monarch and I don't know

how it is to live in an independent kingdom but my forefather did. But whenever I hear the National Anthem, nowhere has it had a mention about Sikkim or North-East, which also means when the Indian National Anthem was composed Sikkim was never a part of it. I personally don't connect myself to the National Anthem. The feeling of patriotism still lacks in me. Having said this I'm a happy Indian citizen with Sikkimese origin.

One respondent was of the belief that,

Sikkim has its own history and its own form till 1975. We the people of Sikkim have now exquisitely adopted Indian forms and read Indian history but many of the other Indian's do not know about Sikkim's history and they still feel Sikkim is a part of China or is not a part of India, which in fact is sad thing to know. Nowhere in the text books of the schools or colleges is the history of Sikkim and its merger to Indian Union is added. We read others history, culture and forms but our own history is corroded.

25. What is your say on people from the plains working and doing business in Sikkim?

The responses included mixed opinion from the respondents. Many thought it is good that people from plains are working and doing business in Sikkim and others thought they are taking away the employment opportunities of the Sikkimese people. But people also thought that they have a good skill of doing a business and other things and so they should learn from them. Some also felt that they have absolutely no problem and do not see this trend as an encroachment to their opportunities. But many felt this trend is slowly sweeping away their opportunities. Some believed, as long as they abide by laws they have no problem because we already have established the need of interdependency.

26. How do you treat the people from plains when they come to Sikkim?

Answering this question almost every respondent said they make them feel welcomed and treat them good. Some said they try to remove their inhibitions and ignorance by having good conversations with them. Some also said others appreciate the Sikkimese people treatment to them. These are the kind of responses derived from the respondents from every background in Sikkim.

27. What would you prefer to be called: an Indian or a Sikkimese and why?

A mixed reaction has been derived from the respondents from all the age group. Some responses are:

I'm a Sikkimese. I prefer to be called a Sikkimese origin Indian and not Indian origin Sikkimese.

I prefer being called as an Indian than Sikkimese because outside Sikkim or India people do not know who Sikkimese people are and where do they belong. Since we are already a part of India I prefer to be associated with the larger identity which is also known to everyone.

An Indian I prefer to be called. Since we are already merged with India and from that moment only we lost our identity being a Sikkimese. In this world now there point showcasing yourself with the lost identity. I have reconciled to the fact that merger is an inevitable process.

Because I was born after the merger I would prefer to be called as an Indian as my political identity. But ethnicity wise I would prefer to be addressed as Sikkimese.

I would prefer to be called "Sikkimese" because it hurts my sentiments when people of our country India say that Sikkim is a part of China. I would love to be called Sikkimese and create an identity for my state.

I'm both Indian and a Sikkimese; I will have traits of both the nations.

I would prefer to be called a Sikkimese first and then an Indian. Since now we are already a part of India we cannot deny the fact of officially we are Indians. I would prefer to be called 'Sikkimese origin Indian' and not 'Indian origin Sikkimese'.

A respondent aged between 28 said, he prefers to be called a Sikkimese. He further says "we have our own unique history. It is only in year 1975 which is only a couple of decades back that Sikkim has merged with India. We may be India's on paper but I will always consider myself a Sikkimese by heart."

One respondent says, "For now people of Sikkim are existing like an extra pair of limbs that has grown overnight, it is useful but never really accepted as one of its body. In this process people, who identify as Sikkimese Indians are never fully Sikkimese (for they have assimilated a lot of Indian cultures and values), nor fully Indian (for no one can fully let go of one's roots)."

One respondent who was also the participant in the 1973 and other movements said,

‘Sikkimese’ has just become a tag that is losing its importance and relevance, we may be Sikkimese from our heart but we had to adapt to Indian rules, regulations and customs which influences our lifestyle and thoughts. I feel proud to be called a ‘Sikkimese’ but this identity is slowly starting to lose its relevance and importance, being an Indian has to come first because on paper our identity has to be ‘Indian’. The merger affected every aspect of Sikkim’s existence, political, social, and cultural.

Section III of the study dealt with the psychological impact of the merger. This section deals with the sense of belonging that Sikkimese people feel towards being an Indian. It is sad to know even after a couple of decades after the merger; some respondents from Sikkim do not completely feel assimilated into the Indian nation. The sense of nationalism is present but with a hint of apprehension. Progress has been rather slow in this matter compared to how rapidly the other sectors have developed post merger. In this respect, a lot of respondents recall incidents when they have had to explain geography and history to other Indians with regards to their nationality. A majority of respondents face this challenge as soon as they leave the boundary of their state and venture out to other parts of India. This issue is neglected as theoretically, the assimilation has been smooth, Sikkim is on the map as a part of India, it is on paper as the 22nd state of India but when it comes to practicality, there is a huge that is yet to be bridged.

Essential Findings

From the field analysis it can be said that:

- Sikkim’s merger with India brought with it a lot of political, social and economic changes and developments that were viewed both positively as well as negatively by the respondents.
- One important negative aspect that people of Sikkim (respondents) face in post merger era is the ‘loss of identity’ or identity crisis.
- An important fact that has come out from the study is that, the common people who were also the participants (respondents) in the movement of 1973 had no say on merger of Sikkim with India and were also unaware of the political transition taking place.
- On paper everyone from Sikkim appears as an Indian but people from Sikkim (respondents) still do not completely feel assimilated to the Indian nation. A sense of

nationalism is present but with a hint of apprehension. Progress has been rather slow in this matter (sense of belonging towards Indian union is lacking in Sikkimese people or respondents) as compared to how rapidly the other sectors have developed in post merger Sikkim.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study on, 'Merger of Sikkim and Politics of Development' has examined the factors and events that led to merger of Sikkim with the Indian union. Further it has made a study on post-merger developments and change in political, social and economical arenas of Sikkim. To understand the perceptions of people of Sikkim regarding merger, development and their sense of belonging to India, the field study was also undertaken in Sikkim. A detailed study on perspective of Indian Government and people from other parts of India other than Sikkim was not undertaken. It can however be incorporated in future research.

Having discussed on the merger issues it can be said that, India after its independence in 1947 has played a major role in determining the political structure of Sikkim. First, by being an inspiration through the ideals of Indian national movement and democratic experiment that was taking place in India during 1947 that also spread the flame of democracy in Sikkim. As a result, for the first time in 1947 people's voices were raised against the kind of socio-political structure prevalent in Sikkim. Secondly, by providing all the major suggestions to Sikkim, starting from the establishment of the first 'Popular Ministry' in 1949, providing an understanding to held panchayat elections in 1950, then the introduction of the 'Parity Formula' in 1951. All these major phenomena that had changed the face of the political structure in Sikkim was done under the guidance provided by Government of India to Sikkim that further gave India a power and an advantage to intervene in all its matters. By appointing an Indian Political Officer in 1948, then by establishing the Dewan's rule in 1949 and by placing planning commission in Sikkim in 1954, India had gradually taken hold of all the major decision making power and left Chogyal or the Sikkim's ruler only with some bit of power of running the internal administration. In this manner the power of Chogyal was slowly brought down in Sikkim's matter.

The Chogyal after understanding that his power is being deflated made an effort to retain his power and the independent status for Sikkim in various ways. First, by asking for the revision of 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty, second by declaring an emergency in 1962, third, by forming the 'Study Forum' called the Young Turks which according to Basnet was formed to propagate the anti-Indian sentiment and propaganda (Basnet, 1974), fourth, by increasing his contacts with the Chinese and Pakistani diplomats.

The situation changed rapidly after 1970 when new nations were being born. In 1971 Bangladesh sprang up as a new nation and the democratic tendencies generated in the whole region. Bhutan had joined the United Nations in 1971 making it forever the independent unit. The opposition party had continued their struggle for political reforms against Chogyal's administration. Sikkim being strategically the most important region situated at the Chinese border, for India, the danger would always remain as it formed the northern fence of India's border. Thus, India encouraged and supported the Sikkimese people's movement for the popular government that served its utmost interest. As an independent Kingdom, Sikkim would always pose a security threat to India's north-eastern border. As a fully fledged state of Indian union, every matter of Sikkim be it internal or any external matter could be taken care of within India's national policy and India could have full control over Sikkim's matter. As on after the merger of Sikkim with the Indian union, India would no longer remain under possible threat of losing Sikkim which is detrimental to India's security on its north-eastern border. Thus, Sikkim's merger is an amalgamation of lot of things viz. political unrest within the state, its geographical location, opportunist ideals of influential political bigwigs.

Hitherto 1975, politics in Sikkim can be described as containing not only undemocratic and un-participatory process but also a centralized and authoritarian one. The electoral democracy was not regularized in the country. Although the elections for council had been held, democratization was still very much limited to the electoral issues, where it lacked in internal democracy and institutions for popular participation. Economically, the country had very limited resources (Yasin & Chhetri, 2012). The change and development in this course of socio-economic life of Sikkim gradually reduced the authoritarian component and led to the growth of democratic values. In the authoritarian or monarchial regime there was an absence of competitive party system, less involvement of citizens in the decision making and most importantly the presence of feudal oppressive order. Thus, for the society that was seeking for change approaching development, democratic elements became essential, as such, it required changes in the governmental policies and also changes in the political leadership. The Agreement of 1973 was vital as it marked a shift in political system in the Sikkimese political arena. The power shifted from the monarch to the Legislative Assembly or the democratic body and Sikkim's relationship with India was further conceived. This was followed by the enactment of the Act of 1974 that limited the role of monarch as the head of the state or the nominal head and the Chief Minister,

the executive head, elected by the people. These changes constitute the core element of political developments in Sikkim.

From the perspective of the respondents, it may be summed up that, respondents who had lived the period before merger never really had envisioned being a part of India. They wanted democracy with equal representation and especially the franchise and eradication of the feudal system that existed in Sikkim and according to them, Indian Nation saw this as an opportunity of gaining a state that was a strategically placed territory with regards to border issues and foreign relations. During 1970's a new world order was being forged, new nations were being born and diplomatic relations were difficult to establish. Thus, maintaining Sikkim in itself was a herculean task as the monarchical system was just beginning to be challenged by a substantial portion of the Sikkimese population. This atmosphere of confusion combined with the political aspirations of the Indian Nation, were the major factors that led to the unification of Sikkim with the Indian nation. From the field work it can be analyzed that, number of respondents from the period of Chogyal's reign, had no idea about the merger; in fact to this day some people are living in ignorance about the merger. This very fact shows that the common people had no say in this decision or it had no input from the people that were actually being affected by this significant political change.

One important fact that has come out of the field study is that, respondents from Sikkim who took part in political processions and movements in 1973 and later 1973 movements against Chogyal's reign were at that time very young and had participated in political movements against Chogyal without knowing the real issue that had much larger implications and effects. The majority of the respondents had no clue about the merger taking place; they could sense something but had not fully understood the gravity of the situation. Though they wanted feudalism to be abolished, but never really had envisioned merger or did not really asked for merger. Respondents who lived in villages and other parts of Sikkim other than Gangtok (Capital of Sikkim) were unaware about the merger even after the merger had taken place. Only much later they came to know that Sikkim has merged with Indian union and now that Sikkim is 22nd state of India.

The post merger era has brought about a process of conversion in political, social and economic culture of Sikkim as the Indian State. India's developmental policy in Sikkim including the central allocation of funds in Sikkim have provided material or physical changes in the region

and this process has further made India's control over Sikkim more effective, but at significant social, environmental and political costs. Many changes have been witnessed in the last forty years in the surrounding areas of Sikkim. One major change is of ethnicity. Respondents were of opinion that, in the past Sikkim's strength was based on its multi-ethnic character; the culture which had developed over the past many years, had integrated the Sikkimese people (Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha) into a society that was wedded to common traditions. Those respondents who have stayed and witnessed Sikkim before its merger really felt the division in this unique blend of the Sikkimese people because of some governmental policies and constitutional arrangements made by the Government of India. Of the many changes, the respondents consider influx or demographic change as the threat to their existence. It means that a sense of insecurity has crept of within some of the Sikkimese people as consequences of the post merger developments.

The merger happened for a lot of different reasons; it had a lot of positive aspects, as well as some negative aspects that one simply cannot overlook. As merger meant unification, it established the unification of the space. From the perspective of the respondents, it has been found in the contemporary time Sikkim and Sikkimese people are in crossroads because along the political and economic development, Sikkimese people have come under the threat of losing their identities. The respondents believe, since Sikkimese people exist as hybrid Mongolian looking Indian people, the question on their identity is always pronounced, where the people have to explain history and geography of Sikkim to identify them as the Sikkimese Indian. This for the respondents remains one of the major post-merger issues that in theory may not seem like much, but it actually affects most of Sikkimese people in ways more than one. This gap of identity, this sense of feeling like an outsider within the confines of one's own house is something that some of the respondents has to live with soon as he/she crosses Siliguri (West Bengal, India) and ventures into the rest of India and even the other parts of the world for that matter.

From the field study it can be said, the merger that unified an independent kingdom to a nation failed to establish a smooth transition in terms of identity. Of course it would be unfair to assume that unification would automatically mean a seamless amalgamation of cultures, beliefs and ideologies. This huge rift between the Sikkimese people and the mainland Indians are the major source of identity crisis which most of the respondents have pronounced blatantly.

Thus, all the efforts including merging Sikkim into Indian union and providing developments and change in the region, may have gained victory in nationalizing the space and control over the region, but somewhere it has failed to provide a sense of belonging into some of Sikkimese people's heart. People likely to be called a 'Sikkimese' first then 'Indian' proves that there is still much to be done to provide sense of belonging in Sikkimese people's heart.

There are always two sides of a coin, the merger story goes likewise. It is accompanied with experiences and testimonials which shows how this colossal event brought with it both positive as well as negative impacts. The important positive development that the merger brought with it is the replacement of the authoritarian regime by the much welcomed democratic form of government. From some of the Sikkimese people's perspective, the merger enabled the Sikkimese people to take part in the politics that concerned their own state. Prior to the merger, these people had absolutely no say in the nation building process; they were just living under the governance of the Chogyal. As such was the situation, the merger came as a much needed change politically because a democratic form of government is people friendly and is designed keeping in mind the welfare of the public. As a society, Sikkim has come a long way in incorporating the ideals of democracy and secularism. The Sikkimese people now have major decision making powers invested in them in the form of Universal Adult Franchise.

Another positive aspect of the merger is that it ensured equal treatment to all the sections of society irrespective of their class, caste or religion. A merger with the Indian nation meant the implementation of its constitution which was based on the ideals of equality, secularism and fraternity among other things. A lot of discriminatory rules were also removed from the society and the traditionally downtrodden sections of the society were now uplifted because of the constitutional arrangements provided by the Indian constitution. Prior to the merger, all the communities in Sikkim lived in harmony, this sense of fraternity gradually depleted with emphasis being laid on a particular community and not on inter-communal harmony. This is why communal bonds have strengthened after the merger with a lot of communities bonding over their ethnicity and a common culture. But this in turn has given rise to the politics of vote bank which is in turn against the ideals of democracy.

According to a majority of the respondents, Sikkim has made huge progress in the fields of education, technology, infrastructure, health etc., they sound thankful when speaking about how these developments have been ushered in by the merger.

Sikkim, before the merger, was a kingdom that dependent on a feudal system because of which the common people were exploited. A perfect example of this is the system of 'kalo bhari' or 'black load' (discussed in detail in chapter III). After the onset of democracy such practices could no longer survive or at least were removed in terms of legislation.

The merger has in a way, boosted the morale and the confidence of the Sikkimese people. The same people who followed their King without any questions asked, have come a long way in being able to choose their own leader. This merger has instilled in them the courage to assert their basic human rights and demand for equality and justice when needed. This is one major development for a society whose people had no idea what they were asking for when they were blindly following leaders and shouting slogans that they did not understand. In these aspects, the merger has certainly been like a boon that comes at the right time.

Merger brought with it so many developments in Sikkim's social, political and economic front. The changes it brought in Sikkim were both negative as well as positive. By merging Sikkim with Indian union, India has gained victory in nationalizing the space that promised social, political and economical developments and established a smooth transition in democratic participation in 1975 however it has somewhere failed to bring change in establishing smooth transition in terms of people's identity. Thus, one finds merger of Sikkim with Indian union has been a political success but a social failure. The promised developments have been trivial in terms of degradation of Sikkimese people's identity.

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