

# **Hydro-Power Projects Induced Conflict: A Study of Lepcha Community in Sikkim**

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**Sikkim University**



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the

**Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

By

**RESHMA LEPCHA**

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management

School of Social Sciences

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Gangtok 737102



**DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT  
STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT**  
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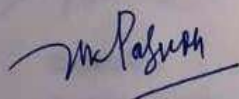
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Ms. Reshma Lepcha

Registration No:15/Ph.D/PCM/01

Roll No: 12PDPC05

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**Supervisor**  
Prof. Nawal K Paswan  
Professor  
Peace and Conflict Studies and  
Management  
Sikkim University



**Head of the Department**  
Prof. Nawal K Paswan  
Professor  
Peace and Conflict Studies and  
Management  
Sikkim University

सचिव  
Head  
Department of Peace and  
Conflict Studies and  
Management  
Sikkim University



**DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT  
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**Supervisor**  
Prof. Nawal K Paswan  
Professor  
Peace and Conflict Studies and  
Management  
Sikkim University

**Head of the Department**  
Prof. Nawal K Paswan  
Professor  
Peace and Conflict Studies and  
Management  
Sikkim University

Head  
Department of Peace and Conflict  
Studies and Management  
Sikkim University



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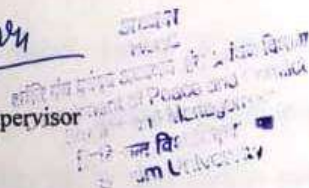
**“Hydro- Power Projects Induced Conflict: A Study of Lepcha Community in Sikkim”**

Submitted by: **Ms. Reshma Lepcha** under the Supervision of **Dr. Nawal K Paswan, Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University, Gangtok 737102, INDIA**

*Reshma Lepcha*  
Signature of the Scholar

*Dr. Nawal K Paswan*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ACT	Affected Citizen of Teesta
WCD	World Commission of Dams
ADR	Alternative Disputes Resolution
BL	Bhutia Lepcha
FRA	Forest Right Act
GPU	Gram Panchayat Unit
SLYA	Sikkim Youth Lepcha Association
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
ECOSS	Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim
ASESE & UA	All Sikkim Educated, Self Employed and Unemployed Association
SIBLAC	Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee
HEP	Hydel Electric Project
MOEF	Ministry of Environmental Forest
NBWL	National Board for Wildlife
SPCB	State Pollution Control Board
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EMP	Environment Management Plan
NEAA	National Environmental Appellate Authority
SPDC	Sikkim Power Development Corporation

CISMHE	Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Mountain & Hill Environment
CLOS	Concerned Lepchas of Sikkim
SOD	Sangha of Dzongu
HPCP	High Powered Committee on Power
CFS	Citizens Forum of Sikkim
SAE	Sikkimese Association for Environment
NHPC	National Hydropower Commission
RMRT	Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum
RMROS	Renjong Mutanchi Rong Ong Shezum
MLAS	Mutanchi Lom Aal Shemzum
LSA	Lepcha Students Association
LYO	Lepcha Youth Organisation
HPP	Hydro Power Projects
NTFP	Non- Timber Forest Product
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lepcha were an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and Dzongu is a reserved land for Lepcha community but in the post 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the indigenous community of Sikkim had to face new challenges towards their culture, religions and identity. Therefore, when mega hydro project first brought into Dzongu the Lepcha community instantly became conscious of a threat looming over in the form destroying the nature which they revered as their guardian deity and vulnerability on the status of Dzongu as reserved land. Such thought of destroying their environment and nature has instilled within the Lepcha of Dzongu a sense of protecting it which ultimately led to a protest against this developmental project.

This Hydro Power project has brought more harm than good particularly to life of Dzongu residents. Through this project, Lepcha in Dzongu reserve of Sikkim became more conscious and concern about their traditional practices. Although, Lepcha claim themselves as an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim but in contemporary era they are facing unprecedented threat in terms of vanishing tribe of Sikkim. The Hydro power projects divided Lepcha community into two groups. One group favoured the construction of projects and another one group who vehemently opposed such projects. This divided stand was made evident on the issue of with one Lepcha organization deciding not to support the organizers, affected Citizen of Teesta.

Therefore, an attempt has been made to examine the reasons behind the Lepcha protest against the hydro power projects. This study will examine the breach between Lepchas that do or don't resist the projects has extend over time. As a result relationships between friends and family members have in some villages split. In Dzongu reserve of Sikkim, most of them practices animism and wanted to live



close with the nature but due to the Hydro Power Projects they are going through with massive challenges in their socio-cultural customs. However, this would have a negative impact on the traditional believe system for upcoming generation. This study will try to examine both positive and negative impact of hydro power projects on Lepcha's socio-cultural practices or Lepchas identity of Dzongu reserve of Sikkim.

The study was conducted with following Objectives: (1) To understand the role of ACT in addressing the Hydro Power projects. (2) To study the socio-cultural milieu of the indigenous people of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim. (3)To study the nature and impact of hydro power projects of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim. (4)To explore the positive and negative impact of Hydro Power projects on Lepchas socio-cultural traditions of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim.

Following Research methodology the study has been focussing on Hydro Power Projects Induced Conflict by taking a study of Dzongu Reserve in Sikkim. The study has look on affected citizens located in Dzongu region. The study has incorporated all relevant primary data from the respondent of these affected areas. The size of this study has 130 respondents (65 male and 65 female). A focused group discussion has been conducted among the affected local people, local leaders to understand their views and arguments on concerned issues.

The study has been including primary data with the extensive field study with in-depth interview will be carried out, with the help of structure questionnaire schedule (closed ended) in the Dzongu region and nearby outside areas in Sikkim. Information from unstructured interviews with certain activists in concerned issues will be incorporated. The study has been including secondary data like books, newspaper report, information provided in websites and some published as well as

unpublished research works. Further the raw data would be analyzed using quantitative method and finally would be represented with the help of statistical tools.

This research study is organised under six chapters including introduction and conclusion. Chapter one dealt with that from the very beginning during the times of Chogyal and later under the democratic set up, Lepchas was allotted Dzongu or Mayel Lyang in North Sikkim to be their reserve. So this chapter will explore the historical overview of Lepcha community in Sikkim.

Chapter two deals with the historical overview of Lepcha community and the impact of modernization on Lepcha identity. In a contemporary Sikkim, Lepcha has been facing a huge problem on the issue of Identity. As in Sikkim, Lepcha people are basically divided into different religious' adherence that is Buddhist, Christian and animism. Hence, in this pursuit the chapter will explore the actual impact of modernization on Lepcha of Sikkim society.

Chapter three deals with the Hydel project has often been embodied as the modernization process, but this modernization process in Dzongu has brought huge challenges in the life of Lepcha people. Hence, this chapter explore the impact of mega hydel power project on nature worshiper of Sikkim society.

Chapter four deals with the historical overview of Mayel lyang- sacred land and examine the reason behind the Mayel lyang and why Lepcha called it sacred. Hence, this chapter dealt with the relation between Dzongu and Lepcha of Sikkim and will look over the HPP and its impact on Dzongu land.

The fifth Chapter deals with the impact of Dams and development in Lepcha community of Dzongu with the impact of modernization on Dzongu reserve of

Sikkim and the active role of affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) which staged numerous rallies and hunger strike. Hence, this chapter examine the impact of mega hydel project on Lepcha community of Sikkim by taking case study of Dzongu reserve.

The Sixth chapter deals with concluding part illustrating the hidden facts about the conflict between nature worshipper and global forces in a concise form along with the suggestions to cope with it.

The findings of the research are summarized via its following chapters, the Lepcha were a nature worshiper and they had a particular reserve and Holy land i.e. Dzongu in north Sikkim. But, after the initiation of Mega Hydro Project the reserve and Holy land faced huge challenges. That challenge later came to be known as a non-violent conflict between modernization and nature worshiper.

The second chapter of this study revealed the impact of modernization on Lepcha community of Sikkim. Lepcha claim that they were an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and their origin, culture, religion, scriptures, languages, political and economic sphere had an emotional attachment with natural elements. But, after 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century both Buddhist and Christianity have their influences in Sikkim particularly on the Lepcha community. Which ultimately led to a drastic an impact on Lepcha cultural, belief system and they adopted other culture value system. Therefore, in Sikkim Lepcha community divided into three religions and the major reason behind the crisis of Lepcha's identity was lack of traditional and cultural practices among the Lepcha community.

In the third chapter, the study revealed the conflict between nature worshiper and modernization. The chapter also revealed the impact of the developmental project which led to the transition of peaceful homogenous community into heterogeneity

society. Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community but nowadays, that reserve land used in developmental project. Eventually, the conflict arose between the developmental project and resident of Dzongu which spread from a local level to state level, state level to national level, and national level to international level.

The fourth chapter of this study revealed the impact of modernization on environment and the natural disaster on 18<sup>th</sup> Sep 2011 in Dzongu reserve of Sikkim. After initiation of developmental project, Lepcha of Dzongu became more concern and conscious towards their traditional culture practices. Nowadays, to preserve their reserve land and to maintain their beliefs system Lepcha of Dzongu established Homestay which motive is to protect and preserve their reserve land.

The fifth chapter of this Study revealed in-depth about before and after the construction of Hydro power projects with authentic household questionnaire in affected area of Dzongu. Those questionnaires rely in the context of cultural erosion, displacement, disaster hazards, unequal unemployment, health, and livelihood and agriculture productivity. It aims to discuss the narrative in the phases of pre HPP and in post construction with the help of legitimate pictures of respondents from affected area of Dzongu.

The six chapter exposed the overall conclusion of Thesis and to protect the reserve land on Dzongu, Lepcha people organised ACT, CLOS, SOD and MoE to preserve their traditional way of life and Lepcha of Dzongu protest the mega hydro project through non-violent. Nowadays, ACT protest known as silent protest by establishing Homestay and cultivate organic plantation on their remaining field.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Sikkim became 22<sup>nd</sup> state of Indian union on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1975 and is a second smallest state in India where many tribes resides in. It was a small kingdom of Eastern Himalaya. Lepcha claim themselves as an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and according to the Sikkim chronicles; the Lepcha were a primitive tribe of Sikkim. According to the myth of Lepcha, the mother creator has made human beings from the fresh snow ball and after their death the soul of Lepcha will remain at Mt. Kanchenjunga. Therefore, Lepcha of Dzongu dearly love that place and worshiped by heart and they are also known as animism. But Lepcha has been facing a drastic and dynamic transition on their traditional culture and practices.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan red hat followers migrated in Sikkim and slowly indigenous people converted themselves into Buddhist religion due to influence of the red hat monks (Ehrhard; 2003). In 19<sup>th</sup> century Christianity also came into Sikkim and majority of animism Lepcha converted themselves into Christianity. So, today Lepcha in Sikkim are at the verge of extinction and undergoes through a very difficult period in its long history in regard to the preservation of their rich and unique identity.

Although, during the time of Chogyal the Dzongu were declared as reserved land for Lepcha residing there and even made a law to take prior permit for other Sikkimese people belonging to outside the area of Dzongu. Dzongu covers approximately 78 km<sup>2</sup> geo-graphical areas extending between 27°28'–27°38' N lat. and 88°23'–88°38' E long along the 700 m to 6000 m amsl altitude (Bhasin; 2011). By nature, Lepcha are very docile and nature loving people, they are also called as an

indigenous people of Sikkim. However, today they are in minority population in comparison with other remaining groups like Bhutia and Nepali in Sikkim. As a result, the Lepcha community are now being dominated by other majority community like Bhutia and Nepali.

Lepcha as described above were a nature worshiper and they love to live close with nature. According to the myth of Lepcha, they share a close affinity with nature which can be substantiated through their deep attachment with environment and their entire cultural, religious practices and festivals had close link the environment. This close affinity with nature has been manifested in the form of praying the Mount Kanchenjunga which they considered as their guardian deity.

It has been observed that after the initiation of mega hydro project on the Dzongu reserved land, the homogenous society began to divert into heterogeneous society (Little; 2010). Hence, a contemporary story has emerge, that is of a pending threat to the Lepchas landscape that will be overwhelming to their identity the construction of six mega hydro electric projects in the Dzongu Lepcha reserve in North Sikkim. They are determined and committed at opposing change to their culture and identity (Little; 2008). When the influence of cultural modernization penetrated into Sikkim society, the whole way of living of an indigenous people of Sikkim began to undergo through change. An indigenous people of Sikkim started to adopt western's culture and way of living for instance began to wear a western style of clothing. The major threat to the existence of Lepcha community is closely linked with the lack of languages which poses a major impact on identity crisis of Lepcha community (Little; 2008). On June 2008, state government scrapped four hydro power projects from Dzongu North Sikkim they are Rangyong, Ringpi, Lingzya and Rukel projects on the grounds of both local protests and lack of fulfilment of

formalities on behalf of the project proponents. Two of these large hydro power projects the 300 MW Panan hydel project on the Rongyongchu and the Teesta IV while, part of it falls inside Dzongu reserve Land (Wangchuk; 2007).

Therefore, Lepcha of Dzongu protest the developmental project under the banner of affected citizens of Teesta. However, Lepcha of Dzongu has been exploited from their own rights, for instance; the hydel project company preferred to employ the outsider workers in the project than the local people. Consequently, Dzongu which has been declared as reserved land are now being flooded with outsider workers due to the initiation of hydel project. Similarly, they also face huge challenges in the cultural practices, economic and political sphere. Culturally, the resident of Dzongu face a huge challenge as the nature which they worship for instance Teesta River has been diverted through tunnels consequently leading to dismay among the resident of Dzongu. In the economic aspect, the people of Dzongu face a challenge in the form of rapid decreasing of cardamom production which they attributed to losing of their land. In the political sphere, the Lepcha people who have been fighting against the hydel project are often being ignored by the state government, since the initiation of hydel project has come under the supervision of state government.

Lepcha people protest the developmental project for the preservation of their cultural and unique identity. As mentioned above, Lepcha by birth were a natural worshiper and they worships natural phenomenon and according to their myth, they were a creature of mother Itbu-moo and she made first human beings from Mt. Kanchenjunga (Doma; 2010). Therefore, the protest by Lepcha people against the developmental project mainly came in preserving their traditional practices and their reserve land. They fight against the governmental project and proposed to put forward their own way of development in Dzongu without harming and destroying their land.

Such initiatives of local resident of Dzongu can be attributed to the construction of homestay and cultivation of organic vegetables. Through these initiatives, they indeed try to show the example in front of state government. Lepcha of Dzongu believe that by obliteration and the total utilization of environment cannot positive development and transforms old society into a proper modernized society but rather they claim that, only through the preservation and protection of natural calamities can bring positive development which can indeed play a vital role in everywhere.

Sikkimese Lepcha as described above since 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century divided into three religions but in Dzongu even today majority of Lepcha religion are Animism. But, due to the developmental project like hydel project, even Lepcha following other religion like Buddhist and Christianity also joined hand with animist Lepcha to protest the project. Therefore, by protesting the developmental project the Lepcha people across religious differences got united and create solidarity among them to preserve their identity. When Sikkimese Lepcha raised their voice against developmental project, the Lepcha from the West Bengal also earnestly supported them and took a part on their rallies and hunger strike. Lepcha organised ACT, CLOS, (Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha apex committee) SIBLAC and (Sangha of Dzongu) SOD to protest the project. These organisations also succeed in their vision and also got result in terms of scraping a four hydro projects at upper Dzongu. Therefore, Lepcha protest against the modernizing agents in Sikkim in order to preserve or protect their rich and unique Identity.

## **1.2. Review of Literature**

Various researchers have made significant contributions to study on the Lepcha Language, Script, and folklore and Literature in Sikkim in a number of articles, books, reports and research paper. Among the available literature related to hydro power



projects induced conflict in Dzongu and conflict between development and Lepcha community, some of the important books and articles have been reviewed and presented below.

#### **a. Development Conflict: A Theoretical Overview**

The development theories covered in this study derive from the peace and conflict studies. Rather than covering the entire discipline, this study focuses on a few themes that have influenced theories of development and with the help of conflict resolution theory which explains major term like formal and informal conflict resolution would be included to understand the basic nature of developmental conflict.

The meaning of Development is that, which makes a better life for everyone. In the present context of a highly uneven world, a better life for most people means, essentially, meeting basic needs sufficient food to maintain good health, a safe, healthy place in which to live, affordable services available to everyone, and being treated with dignity and respect. Therefore, development is a founding belief of modernity. And modernity is that time in Western history when rationality supposed it could change the world for the better and the Modernization theory saw ladders and stages of development leading from uniform traditionalism toward a singular common future. We can see both philosophical-theoretical devices as lending depth, solidity, and inevitability to the process of development (Peet and Elaine Hartwick; 2009).

The other costs of anti-development and underdevelopment of development subtract further from the welfare of this vast majority of 'Minorities'. Ever developing threats to peace and the environment are cases in point. Minority regional, local, peasant, native, tribal and other environmental movements are mobilizing to protect their own sources of livelihood. However, thereby they are also protecting ecological

survival for all of us through another and a sustainable eco-development (Frank; 1996).

The modern way of conflict resolution is based on formal institution of courts, law and orders, facts and evidences which are very complex and time consuming (Victor; 2007). Hence, in modern term conflict resolution refers to the termination of a conflict or dispute through the elimination of the underlying bases or cause of the conflict (Dukes; 1990).

The term identity refers to that which defines an individual or a community. Charles Taylor argues that identity allows individuals or collectivises to seek authenticity and validity in relation to others. Furthermore, identity defines the rights and expectations of an individual or a group within a certain society. Ethnic and national issues, therefore, cannot be excluded from the state's polity, and the linking of ethnic identity to national security remains a major priority in terms of ensuring the security of the state. There are Relative Deprivation theory, formulated by Merton and Runciman. The term relative deprivation refers to deprivations experienced when individuals compare themselves with others that is individuals who lack something compare themselves with those who have it, and in so doing have the feeling of deprivation. Thus, relative deprivation not involves comparison; it is also usually defined in subjective terms. Deprivation is relative (Saleh; 2012).

People experience resentment or discontent about their condition not necessarily when they are deprived in an absolute sense, but when they feel deprive relative to some standard of comparison. These are the essential concepts behind the theory of relative deprivation (Anand and Shamin; 2009). The line of thought is

simple here that deprivation leads to exploitation which again leads to awareness of a group, who in turn mobilize themselves to achieve the set goals of social change.

While conflict resolution aims at dealing with the root causes of the conflict and eliminating them even by altering and restructuring the institutions, systems and forces that breed, nurse and perpetuates such conflicts whereas prevention, management and settlement of conflicts can be seen as different stages of conflict resolution (Muni; 2003).

The Civilization's driving force, in Marxian thought, is class struggle the relentless war between the exploiters and the exploited. This class struggle would ultimately lead to overthrow of the bourgeois State by the proletariat, bringing about Socialism and ultimately Communism. Thus, Marxian human development consists in generating class consciousness of the proletariat and hastening the pace of relentless class struggle by deliberate efforts of the Communist Party (Basu; 2007).

Western conflict resolution is material; revolve around the socio-economic development. They think that, sufferings and discomforts are bad whereas comforts and pleasures are good. They focus on individual rather than society. Therefore, to resolve conflict basic human needs need to be addressed through political and economic solutions. Western and indigenous cultures are starkly different from one another. Western model of conflict resolution is criticized as culturally inappropriate for indigenous people due to differences in worldview underlying the techniques, sometime it may contradict from indigenous understanding of conflict and conflict resolution (Irani; 1999).

That development is the progressive satisfaction of the needs of human and non-human nature, starting to those most in need. Need deprivation is suffering and at

all level of deprivation there is an element of suffering. The extreme form of suffering is death, individual extinction whether from traumas inflicted on the body (direct violence) or lack of inputs (structural violence). But before extinction of individual, there enters another key concept in development theory and practice and that is exploitation (Galthung; 1996).

The Conflict resolution could be organized and instrumental in the corner, but messy and difficult in the periphery in fact. International intervention continues to fuel violence in the periphery. To regain its validity, research on the resolution of conflicts must take their transformation much more seriously, especially in the periphery. Intervention succeeds only if the domestic conflicts in the periphery are restructured in a manner that at least some of their root causes are eliminated (Vayrynen; 1999).

The negative peace simply denotes the absence of war and in which no active, organised military violence is taking place and usually result in a diplomatic emphasis on peacekeeping or peace restoring. Therefore, negative peace is thus a more conservative goal, as it seeks to keep things the way they are (Barsha and Charles P. Webel; 2009). The author deals with the Western Conflict Resolution assumes that conflict occur due to failure of the state, therefore, it focuses on state building, and democracy and economic liberalization as solution of conflict (David; 2011).

The Concept of conflict resolution is often conscientiously applied to processes outside the realm of political activity, rather it has to be creative. Creativity is defined as unconventional capability or a social and epistemological process where an actor or actors involved in the conflict learn to formulate an unconventional resolution option and procedure for resolution (Arai; 2009).

Judging from the above theories we can place the indigenous Lepcha conflict in Sikkim having the characteristic of all the above-mentioned theories.

### **b. Impact of Hydro Power Projects**

The large dams being built on the rivers of the eastern Himalayas have become highly controversial. The hydropower that north-east India is expected to produce is meant almost entirely for use elsewhere. That these dams will be exclusively hydropower and not multipurpose dams and that there will be a great unevenness in the distribution of potential gains and losses – and of vulnerability to risks – accounts for a serious legitimacy deficit in India's ambitious hydropower development plans in the region (Baruah; 2012).

The water is viewed as a commodity whose function is generating profits. Instead of that human view it as a common good of humanity. Water has an exceptional cross culture symbolic value and its uses raises enormous question of our lifestyle, our ethnics and our relationship with the nature (Bouguerria; 2006).

Therefore, development induced displacement may impact human security severely. Institutions financing the development projects that give rise to development induced displacement have a considerable hand in lessening these political human security impacts of their business. Dam construction can severely impact human security by inducing forced displacement. Financial institutions therefore need to integrate individual security considerations into their decision-making process (Caspary; 2007).

However, the land use, road network and the hydrological network have changed considerably. There is a drastic change in the cultural landscape of the study area as a result of the construction of the Victoria reservoir. Some of the land used

previously has been submerged with the construction of the dam. The dam project has brought new livelihood options to the people in the area. It is clear that these repercussions are partly due to the changes that have occurred with the development of technology and society with time. The significance of this is that drastic changes are not only on tangible physical changes but also intangible aspects such as culture and the society of this region (C.J and N.D.K Dayawansa; 2011).

Hence, the conflict over water are becoming more bitter and violent not only at the macro level of interstate rivers but also in the micro context of local streams, pounds and wells (Wood; 2007). Similarly, Dzongu Hydro power projects conflict induced conflict from Local to state, state to nation and nation to international level.

The Dam-induced floods from projects such as the 405 MW Ranganadi hydroelectric project in Arunachal and the intense people's opposition to the under-construction 2,000 MW Lower Subansiri hydroelectric project on the Assam–Arunachal Pradesh border have been major triggers for what has now emerged as a major political debate on the downstream impacts of dams in the region. Meanwhile, in the uplands of Sikkim and Arunachal, minority indigenous communities such as the Lepchas and Idu Mishmis have expressed concern about the impacts of multiple mega projects in their homelands. The large dams' juggernaut promises to be the biggest 'development' intervention in this ecologically and geologically fragile, seismically active and culturally sensitive region in the coming days (Vagholikar & Partha J. Das, 2010).

The instances of socio-economic dislocations and ecological hazards ensuing from development projects like the HEPs, specifically given the existence of state-mandated counter-mechanisms to prevent such problems, are not cases of

“implementation gaps”, but rather are manifestations of a deeper crisis in the policy framework that has prioritised the commercialisation of resources and privatisation of mega-projects to achieve energy security (Banerjee; 2014).

The traces changing ideas and practices of what constitutes appropriate development through the shifting transnational dynamics of big dams construction. The author tells the story that features novel of appropriate behaviour in areas such as human rights and environmental protection (Khagram; 2004).

The water resources are an issue of ever-increasing importance worldwide given rising populations and increasing environmental degradation. Water has also become a divisive issue, both within and between countries. This book discusses and analyzes several interlinked themes related to crucial aspects and many dimensions of water resources in India (Iyer; 2003).

That in the process of looking for diverse means of energy collection, large dams result in enunciation of the voices of people against dams as it also bring disaster of catastrophe through flood or displacement along with socio-cultural impacts. Central Electricity Authority has identified the Brahmaputra river basin as the potential future powerhouse in India. However main conflicts come up from the indigenous people and local organizations towards the reckoning that the construction of such huge power projects may result in debacle and forceful displacement of human inhabitants from their homelands. In this paper an attempt has been made to identify the political and economic contradictions arising from big dams in North Eastern Region of India (Saikia; 2012).

Therefore, with the interstate transboundary water sharing in India conflict and cooperation where author explore that the water is becoming an increasingly

important site of contestation among the states in India because of the rapid rates of population and economic growth (Powell and Sonali Mitra; 2012).

### **c. Conflict between the Hydro Power Projects and Lepcha Reserve of Sikkim**

The history and culture of the Sikkimese Lepcha are relying on tribal identity. Therefore the book point out the impact of modernization or study that Buddhism and Christianity is a root causes for the vanishing of Lepcha identity in Sikkim and provides a complete account of cultural exploitation (Forning; 1987).

The impact of National Hydropower Commission (NHPC) on local people' livelihood and provides complete account of displacement and resettlement. This paper also examines the advantage and disadvantages of NHPC and also study on environmental issues (Tara; 2007).

Offer many understanding impression on Lepcha community and explore the relation of Lepcha animism with natural phenomenon through the help of Lepcha folklore and myth tale. This book provides numerous understanding account of Lepcha culture, religion, festivals with the help of legend (Doma; 2010). Tribals of Sikkim and look for the depth connection with environmental and cultural system. It also explores the impact of modernization changes on traditional cultural structure (Bhasin; 1987).

Author Studies about the historical background of the Lepchas of Sikkim with inclusive investigation. This book looks at the relation of Lepcha community with Dzongu reserve and observes the exact reason behind the extinction of Lepcha identity (Gorer; 1996).



In Sikkim chronicle news, author explores the historical background of Sikkim documentation and study on the geographical, political transformation and the state socio-economic record (Chetteri; 2010). Provides the Marxism works on origin and development of society, concept of Religion and laws of society and of social change which has been play important role under the study (Rajimwale; 2006).

This work focused on the life of indigenous community of Lepcha and scope by exploring the mountains historical, religious, political and cultural connections of Sikkim. Study on the close connection of Lepchas with the holy land and reason behind the diminishing of the indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim (Zulca; 2007). Regarding the identity crisis this work explore the struggle of Lepcha youth with their identity and provides relevant advices to the primitive society to preserve their identity in own motherland (Lepcha; 2006).

There are many related reports, Apart from the above articles and books, on the theme i.e. magazine of North East India, (Zulca; 2009), *Indigenous Lepchas Protest to Save their Land in Sikkim, in A Developmental*, Talk Sikkim, Hidden Treasures mayallyang homestay, Sikkim express, *Some Pondering on the Hydro Projects, Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT) - Striving to Protect Sikkim* Tseten Lepcha (2013) are some of the important reports which has been used under study since they provides information on various aspects of dams and developmental conflict in Dzongu Reserve of Sikkim.

The different books review on Lepchas community which is also provides complete understanding studies on Lepcha. This book also provides a deeper thoughtful study on Lepchas and their hydel protest (Denjongpa; 2007).

Hence, this work provides very details study on historical background of Lepcha community like origin of Lepcha, advent of Tibetans & blood brotherhood treaty and Dzongu & the Lepchas etc. These books explore the religion of the Lepchas, Lepcha influences in Sikkim and it also helpful to develop the comprehensive understanding of Lepcha community and its relation with nature worshippers (Tamlong; 2008).

The deeper studies that how mega hydel project impact on homogenous society that is Lepcha of Dzongu. This paper explores the impact of hydel project on local, state, national and international level (Little; 2008). Another work by same author explore the different concept of dams and developmental conflict in the form of affected citizen of Teesta (ACT), State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), NGO and BBC world online (Little; 2010).

That this primitive religion of Lepcha is nature worshiper and with the help of the Bong thing that might be called a shaman, a medicine man they worshiper the nature. These book also explore the Lepcha believe system by taking various religious folklore and observe the solidarity of indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim (Stock; 1925). Hence, the conflict between Lepcha reserve verses panel hydel project in Dzongu is an indefinite Satyagraha. This article provides that how traditional indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim fights back with agrarian modernization (Arora; 2007).

The literatures available in the field of hydro power projects induced conflict in India indicate that that despite availability of large numbers of writings on the subject, it falls short in highlighting the hydro power projects induced conflict in Sikkim and its potential impact on the economy and local people of Sikkim. There is complete lack of study in terms of future potential impact of hydro power projects

induced conflict and formulating the suitable strategy and mechanisms for mutual benefits of local people and economic development of Sikkim. Therefore, this proposed work is an endeavour to fill these gaps and seeks to explore the positive and negative impact of hydro power projects on Lepcha's socio-cultural traditions of Dzongu reserve of Sikkim.

### **1.3. Rationale and Scope**

This study focuses on the conflict between hydro power projects and Lepcha Dzongu reserve of Sikkim. Lepcha were an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and Dzongu is a reserved land for Lepcha community but in the post 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the indigenous community of Sikkim had to face new challenges towards their culture, religions and identity. Therefore, when mega hydro project first brought into Dzongu the Lepcha community instantly became conscious of a threat looming over in the form destroying the nature which they revered as their guardian deity and vulnerability on the status of Dzongu as reserved land. Such thought of destroying their environment and nature has instilled within the Lepcha of Dzongu a sense of protecting it which ultimately led to a protest against this developmental project.

This Hydro Power project has brought more harm than good particularly to life of Dzongu residents. Through this project, Lepcha in Dzongu reserve of Sikkim became more conscious and concern about their traditional practices. Although, Lepcha claim themselves as an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim but in contemporary era they are facing unprecedented threat in terms of vanishing tribe of Sikkim. The Hydro power projects divided Lepcha community into two groups. One group favoured the construction of projects and another one group who vehemently opposed such projects. This divided stand was made evident on the issue of with one Lepcha organization deciding not to support the organizers, affected Citizen of Teesta.

Therefore, an attempt has been made to examine the reasons behind the Lepcha protest against the hydro power projects. This study will examine the breach between Lepchas that do or don't resist the projects has extend over time. As a result relationships between friends and family members have in some villages split. In Dzongu reserve of Sikkim, most of them practices animism and wanted to live close with the nature but due to the Hydro Power Projects they are going through with massive challenges in their socio-cultural customs. However, this would have a negative impact on the traditional believe system for upcoming generation. This study will try to examine both positive and negative impact of hydro power projects on Lepcha's socio-cultural practices or Lepchas identity of Dzongu reserve of Sikkim.

#### **1.4. Objectives**

These are the following major objectives of the research work:

- To understand the role of ACT in addressing the Hydro Power projects;
- To study the socio-cultural milieu of the indigenous people of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim;
- To study the nature and impact of hydro power projects of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim;
- To explore the positive and negative impact of Hydro Power projects on Lepchas socio-cultural traditions of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim;

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

- What types of role that Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) can play in addressing the Hydro power projects from Dzongu reserve in Sikkim?
- Does the ACT can succeed to preserve their socio-cultural identity?
- How will the hydro power projects effect on Lepcha identity?

- What are the positive and negative consequences of hydro power projects of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim?

### **1.6. Hypothesis**

- Hydro Power Projects induced conflicts generate insecurity among the indigenous inhabitant of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim.

### **1.7. Research Methodology**

**Study area:** The study has been focussing on Hydro Power Projects Induced Conflict by taking a study of Dzongu Reserve in Sikkim. The study has look on affected citizens located in Dzongu region. The study has incorporated all relevant primary data from the respondent of these affected areas.

**Survey:** The size of this study has 130 respondents (65 male and 65 female).

**Focus Group Discussion:** A focused group discussion has been conducted among the affected local people, local leaders to understand their views and arguments on concerned issues.

**Key Informative Interviews:** The study has been including primary data with the extensive field study with in-depth interview will be carried out, with the help of structure questionnaire schedule (closed ended) in the Dzongu region and nearby outside areas in Sikkim. Information from unstructured interviews with certain activists in concerned issues will be incorporated.

**Secondary Data Sources:** The study has been including secondary data like books, newspaper report, information provided in websites and some published as well as unpublished research works. Further the raw data would be analyzed using quantitative method and finally would be represented with the help of statistical tools.

## **1.8. Chapterization**

### **Chapter 1. Introduction**

It contains the general overview on basic nature of modernization or developmental projects as hydro power projects which has an impact on local inhabitant of Dzongu of Sikkim. A brief on the organization of the study has also been integrated in this chapter.

### **Chapter 2. Dams and Development Conflict: Theoretical Perspectives**

This chapter discusses on development perspectives and elaborated, starting with a general overview of the term development. A brief background on concept and definitions on dams and development conflict have been included provided by various organisations especially in Northeast India. The mechanism which solves the conflict is called conflict resolution. Therefore, this chapter elaborates to deals with the conflict resolution theory which will try to address the socio-cultural condition of indigenous community of Dzongu and it would be included to understand the basic nature of developmental conflict.

### **Chapter 3. Historical Overview of Lepcha Community and Hydro Power Projects in Sikkim**

This chapter discusses the major concepts—historical overview of Lepcha and their origin, religion, culture, language, scriptures, economy and political background and Dzongu the reserve of Lepcha community. This chapter discusses historical background of hydro power projects in Dzongu Sikkim. It elaborates the whole concept of modernisation and its positive and negative impact on the people of Sikkim, particularly on Dzongu reserve of Sikkim.

#### **Chapter 4. Conflict between the Hydro Power Projects and Lepcha Community of Dzongu**

This chapter discusses the major role of the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) and Homestay on Dzongu reserve to control construction of mega hydro power project in the region. The chapter would include different measures adopted by ACT to protect the sacred place of Dzongu. The chapter explore the impact of dams and development that generate insecurity to affected areas which has spread from local to State, State to National and from National to International level.

#### **Chapter 5. Impact of Hydro Power Projects in Sikkim: A Study of Lepcha Community of Dzongu**

It elaborated the present details on the impact on cultural erosion, displacement, disaster and hazards, unequal employment opportunity, impact on health, local livelihood and changes in agricultural productivity of Dzongu reserve of Sikkim before and after the construction of Dams. It elaborates by using modernisation as a concept and its implications on the affected area of Sikkim. The chapter discusses both ban and boon of mega hydro power project on socio-cultural practices of Dzongu reserve of Sikkim.

#### **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

The chapter will summarize the previous chapters and analyze the validity of the hypothesis and recommend suggestions which will help in formulating some suitable strategy and mechanisms for mutual benefits of local people and economic development of Sikkim.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Dams and Development Conflict: Theoretical Perspectives**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter will explore the development perspectives and elaborated, starting with a general overview of the term development. A brief background on concept and definitions on dams and development conflict have been included provided by various organisations especially in Northeast India. The mechanism which solves the conflict is called conflict resolution. Therefore, this chapter will deals with the conflict resolution theory which will try to address the socio-cultural condition of indigenous community of Dzongu and it would be included to understand the basic nature of developmental conflict.

This chapter will deal with that the how conflict resolution is relevant within Dzongu area? Because of hydro power project within Dzongu Lepcha community divided into two groups one is totally supported the HPP and another one is totally against the HPP. Therefore, this chapter also explore that, after having quarrel within community how the ACT, SOS and NGO is actively working to protest against the HPP and side by side how they trying to shutout the community base unbalance relationship. The all the mechanism which solves the conflict is called conflict resolution and with that statement this chapter will study HPP conflict in Dzongu with conflict resolution perspective.

Afterwards, different views on dams and development are detailed, followed by contrasting, newer and increasingly recognized perspectives to give a picture of how development has been understood in different ways. Then views on how conflict resolution theory is understood today will be sat in development perspective, and



lastly we will conclude in a small reflection of the entire dams and development chapter and discuss how the view on conflict resolution theory has changed.

## **2.2. Dams and Development Perspectives**

Development has carried different meanings and in its present sense development change society from agrarian to industrialization. In society development create positive and negative perspectives among human beings. Development was thus conceived as of organic, immanent, directional, cumulative and irreversible. Also it entailed the idea of structural differentiation and increasing complexity. With the rise of industrial system and capitalism there cropped up with western development thinking.

In the turn of the century late comers to industrialization in central and Eastern Europe faced basic development questions such as the appropriate relationship between agriculture and industry. In central planning the Soviets found a novel instrument to achieve industrialization. During the cold war years of rivalry between capitalism and communism, the two competing development strategies were western development economics and central planning. In this general context, the core meaning of development was catching up with the advanced industrialized countries.

What is generally agreed is that the term development is connected to something positive, something desirable, whether it concerns community, economy or population. Especially from the 1950's the concept of development became a synonym to all the growth the First World countries experienced after the Second World War, a growth that was understood to be applicable to the Third World. Because the term encompassed all that was constructive and progressive in North

America and Western Europe it has kept its positive-laden understanding (Gedionsen; 2012).

The specificities of development or rather development planning in post-colonial India which is particular focuses on the history of large dam-building. Development is understood as a normative frame of reference that is in many ways influential in contemporary political debates. The common *modus operandi* that goes along with the implementation of large dams, illustrates this, while the construction of large dams is typically rationalized as an imperative for developmental intervention on behalf of the most needy, the proclaimed beneficiaries are quite often the last to benefit (Werner; 2015).

India's thirst for development means the government must find a way to provide the energy to power this. Supplies of fossil fuels are diminishing and India along with China is under pressure to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the global impact of climate change. In this context alternative fuels such as hydropower are increasingly attractive. The construction of huge dams, known as 'mega dams' is a result of these pressures. The dams will produce hydropower to serve the whole of India but will be constructed primarily in the country's Northeast region (Ghosh; 2012).

In India, development is defined and conceptualized as progress in socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio political, educational, and scientific and technology brought about by planned or programmed efforts to bring about an era of orderly and peaceful transformation of a society in a constitutionally or nationally desired direction. In spite of several theories on development, most concepts of development

are primarily economic and have to be within the conceptual framework of the Modern State (Varte and Neitham; 2013).

However the situation in north east India is somewhat different. Thus the government of India is planning 168 dam/hydro electric projects in north east India. It has been estimated that the north east has the potential to generate 38 percent of India's total hydro electric power potential. In order to have mega projects on needs space, in geographical sense; the north east has that space in abundance, particularly in hills reasons (Hussian; 2008).

### **2.3. Dams and Development in Sikkim**

Sikkim is at a junction and a generation has approved since the kingdom was included into the Indian union the member of Sikkimese who remembers the state as a kingdom diminish. Its population increases at hasten rate much of the growth due to migration from other Indian status. Roads connect nearly every occupied corner of the state and most houses have electrical coverage which brings national and international radio and developmental programs are beings execute.

The maximum hydro power potential of the state of Sikkim is about 8000 MW with a firm base of at least 3000 MW. The Teesta and Rangit are the two main rivers of Sikkim where considerable hydro power potential is available. In 1974, a committee was constituted to study the hydropower potential in Sikkim. As per the preliminary reconnaissance survey, the river Teesta can be harnessed under a cascade development for hydropower generation in six stages i.e. Teesta Stage-I to Stage-VI. Besides the river Teesta the other tributaries of the river such as Rangit, Rangpo, Lachen etc. are also having high potential for the hydro power development (Subrata; 2013).

As the government of Sikkim encourages hydropower development for enhancing socio-economic development of the state it encourages both the public and the private sectors to harness the Hydro-energy thus The National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) and other private developers are entering in the hydro power sector in Sikkim. The State envisages that hydropower development will eventually lead to the overall infrastructural development here as hydropower generation involves construction of dams, tunnel, and power station which involves developing transport linkages, opens up employment opportunities and generates income enhancing the socioeconomic development of the population residing here (Subrata; 2013).

The State Government of Sikkim has commenced construction on some of 26 proposed hydel in the small, mountainous state. The most contentious hydel Teesta Stage-IV is slated to be built in the Dzongu Lepcha Reserve. It consists of six projects plus one other on the border of Dzongu at Dikchu which is near to completion. The Lepchas are protesting the dams on many grounds: that as nature-worshippers their land is sacred and should not be destroyed by development that the Dzongu is recognized as a reserve, and since only Lepchas who are from there are allowed to enter the reserve it should not be the site for the hydro projects. They also argue that the projects will bring thousands of workers from outside Sikkim into the Dzongu for several years while work is completed and they will outnumber the population of 7,000 Lepchas and since the workers have different customs and beliefs, their dominated presence will soon dilute and destroy Lepcha culture (Little; 2008). Thus, due to the mega hydel project the indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim have been face huge challenge in the matter of employment, culture and custom life and side by side on their identity issues.

#### **2.4. Impacts of Dams and Development in Indigenous Community of Sikkim**

We can learn a lot from our experience of large dams over the past. Large sections of Indian society and economy would suffer very badly if we do not learn those lessons. It would be important to recollect the very often quoted statement of the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, in praise of the Bhakra Nagal Dam as the modern day temple of India. However, later on even Nehru changed his assumption about big dams on the basis of his own critical understanding as is evident from the as the evident from these statement: I have been beginning to think that we are suffering from what we may call a disease of gigantism (Hussain; 2008).

Obviously, the mega dams are the most visible example of such gigantism in India. For the state, it symbolizes power and modernity (Hussian; 2008). Meanwhile non-modern, traditional and indigenous systems of knowledge have been devalued, and portrayed as unscientific and irrational. By their very existence, such practices have been perceived by the development planners as in the way of India's continued modernization. The impact of such development projects on the tribal communities, their lifestyle and identity, social cultural and religious, has been simply enormous (Yasin and Durga P Chhetri; 2012).

Due to the introduction of development schemes like dams, mines, industries, etc, on tribal inhabited areas, vast segment of India's tribal population have been displaced from their natural habitats apart from being subjected to numerous forms of exploitation and deprivations (Varte and Neitham; 2013).

The common pros and cons of large dam construction are well known. Whilst its advocates put forward beneficial effects, such as food security, drinking water, and power generation, the critics of dam projects hold against with concerns like forced

displacement, insufficient compensation and resettlement practice, severe environmental damage, and incorrect cost benefits statistics. Yet the construction of large dams has implications that transcend the material side of socio-economic and ecological sphere. It is basically connected with their advocate preferences for specific types of development (Werner; 2015).

The dam will also submerge various historical and legendary sites and sacred groves with vital spiritual and cultural significance to the communities and lead to destruction of rich biodiversity which is threatening the peoples' right to life and livelihood. Like other development projects in the north east, here too, the people that are most adversely affected are tribes (Bhattacharjee; 2013). In Dzongu movement is an environment basis and activist claiming that the delicate ecology of native land. Dzongu is a reserve land and moderately comes under inside Mount Kanchenjunga national park and part of the Himalaya biodiversity hotspot is like the rest of Sikkim prone to landslides and earthquakes and will not survive the development (Little; 2010).

The dispute is also on environmental basis the Lepcha activists claiming that the delicate ecology of Dzongu, because reserve land of Dzongu partially comes under inside Mount Kanchenjunga national park and part of the Himalaya biodiversity hotspot is like the rest of Sikkim prone to landslides and earthquakes and will not survive the development (Little; 2010).

The World Commission on Dams (WCD 2000) with its worldwide survey report agrees that dams have adversely affected many people and societies. Involuntary displacement dismantles the agricultural production system, causes loss

of employment, disorganizes social system and network, change the occupation pattern, degrades the environment, increases the male migration (Butt; 2013).

#### **2.4.1. Indigenous Overview**

The word indigenous is common where there are different ethnic communities or different tribes of communities. Though we may not find out the exact meaning of indigenous but here is some available definition. The issue related to indigenous people has become important in united nation too. Indigenous people also known as first people, aboriginal people or native peoples, are ethnic groups, who are the original inhabitants of the given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently. Groups are usually described as indigenous when they maintain tradition or other aspect of early culture that is associated with given region.

Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and way of relating to people and the environment. They have reserved social, cultural, economic and political description that uncommon discrete from those of the prevailing society in which they live. Notwithstanding their cultural differences, indigenous people from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as diverse peoples.

Due to the business development projects and other business pressure indigenous people faces challenges as they loss of their land territories and resources. They do not have other choice and hence they migrate to urban areas in search of better prospects of life, education and employment. They also migrate between countries to escapes conflict, persecution and climate change impacts. Additionally,

indigenous migrates face a myriad of challenges, including lack of access to public services and additional layers of discrimination<sup>1</sup>.

Perhaps more significantly the term indigenous needs special attention; scholars use term indigenous in two broad applications regarding culturally related practices. First, it is used in reference to the broad range of the culture practices and products, which are found outside the world. Stating is differently, it refers to anything created outside the scope of western influence. Second, the term indigenous refers to communities that are not independent states, and are encapsulated into modern states as marginalised and subordinated populations (Tuso; 2012).

Indigenous Communities people and nations are those which having a historical permanence with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories considers themselves diverse from other sectors of the societies of the existing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant division of society and are resolute to preserve develop and broadcast to future generation their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basic of their continued subsistence as peoples in accordance with their own cultural patterns Social organization and legal systems (Kingsbury; 2012).

Indigenous people or aboriginal people are those who were living lands before settlers came from elsewhere. They are the inhabitant of those who occupied a country or a geographical region at the time where peoples of different cultures or ethnic origin inwards the new arrivals later becoming dominant through defeat, occupation, settlement or other means. Indigenous people are also called first people's

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<sup>1</sup>Article written by Ranjan K Baruah on Sikkim express 9<sup>th</sup> August 2018 "*indigenous people's migration and movement*"



tribal people's aboriginals and autochthons. The Lepcha people are believed to be the indigenous inhabitants of Sikkim and the Lepcha call themselves Rong kup or Mutanchi rongkup.

. In 1958, the exclusive claim of Dzongu Lepchas on this land was formalised by the royal proclamation. Hence, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the king of Sikkim gave the Dzongu territory in dowry to his wife and this guarantee even more exclusivity for the region (Wangchuk; 2007). The total area of Dzongu covered is 15,845 hectares of a roughly triangular mountain tract and the total population of Dzongu as per the 1981 census was 7,745 persons. Administratively, Dzongu today is divided into 14 revenue blocks- Sakyong Pantong, Thingbong, Lingthem, Lingdem, Lizma, Salimpakel, Lingdong, Burfok, Higyathang, Gor Tarayang, Shipbeak, Sangtook Sangyong, Mun Sangdong and Lumlimtyang (Yasin and Durga P Chhetri; 2012).

#### **2.4.2. Impact on Indigenous Community**

Lepchas are the Indigenous people of Sikkim, a small Himalayan state in northeast India. They are known for their deep knowledge of botany and ecology; their close connection to their landscape has been acknowledged and admired for centuries. Their feeling for nature and reluctance to accept changes to their sacred landscape, contributed to a protest movement to stop the development of several mega hydro-electric projects inside the Lepcha Dzongu Reserve in North Sikkim.

In this context, the recent protests of the Lepchas against the Dzongu hydel projects by invoking religion and religious traditions, in the light of Lepcha consequence to Dzongu as the representative of the sacred and the hydro power project in Dzongu as the elimination of their socio religious space (Yasin and Durga P Chhetri; 2012). Hence, the Lepcha adherent battle to stop the hydro projects

started in Dzongu villages in 2003. The major impacts can be divided into three sections.

The protest narrative became broader. The UN Charter on Indigenous Rights was cited and the small space in front of BL House was extended to fit more hunger strikers, more banners, and more khadas. The slender bodies of the relay hunger strikers, who took turns sitting out front of BL House, were dwarfed by the rhetoric that surrounded them. Their core messages of religion, tradition, culture, environment, and “ownership” prevailed and while they weren’t as explicit as the Sámi with “we came first”, there were several references to Article 371F (*see Annexure -I*) a law that acknowledges the first rights of the Lepcha and Bhutia tribes endeavour to protect their rights and interests (Little; 2009).

#### **2.4.3. Impact on Sacred Land**

The dam will also submerge various historical and legendary sites and sacred groves with vital spiritual and cultural significance to the communities and lead to destruction of rich biodiversity which is threatening the peoples’ right to life and livelihood (Bhattacharje; 2013). According to Lepcha myth the first Lepcha was created from snow this is why they tend to relate themselves to these peaks (Doma; 2010).

The Lepcha are the nature worshipers and Dzongu and they believed that their land is sacred. Dzongu being an incarnation of their religion cultural heritage it should not be disturbed by developmental activities. This sacred land should not be destroyed by development. The loss of Dzongu may result in their ethnocide the vanishing of their cultural heritage that is rooted to their ancestral connections and

performance of rituals connected to the land, forest, mountain, lakes and nature (Yasin and Durga P Chhetri; 2012).

Dzongu and Tholung valley are considered sacred region in the heart of Lepchas as the place associated with the mythological genesis of the Lepcha race. It has been claimed by some that Rimbochhi i.e. Padma Sambhava, preached Buddhism to the Lepchas at Tholung valley in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and some believe that the sacred Namthar written on the stone slabs, the equivalent of the ten commandments of the Christian have been imbedded near the Tholung monastery (Tamlong; 2008).

A concern for Culture has also played an important role in determining the course of social mobilization. As rightfully noted earlier one the proposed site for the dam is located next to Tholung Gonpa (Holy place of Worship for the Buddhist). It is just 20 kilometres from the proposed sight of Lingzia village. Any mega project in the vicinity of this area is definitely a cause for concern as it would involve large influx of migrant workers from outside the State. The increased human activity in the area can be a security threat to the Monastery and its sanctity. This is a concern shared by many intellectuals and followers of Buddhism in the State (Little; 2008).

Dzongu status as a reserve and the requirement of authorize to enter the sacred land has acted as a double edged sword. It has had the consequence of preserving Lepcha language and culture within the Lepcha community that lives there on one hand but in the other it has literally shut Dzongu away from people from outside (Little; 2010). This very fact has down played the reach of the movement though it has to a large extent been able to surpass this negative factor by making every effort to spread the news far and wide and even to people from

outside the region well aware of the Lepcha plight to preserve their paradise in Sikkim.

However, the initiation of mega hydel project passed by Government had infringed its own declaration of Dzongu as reserve area. Simultaneously, the impact of modernization agents on Dzongu is bigger and also a complicated issue which led to the debate between insider and outsider in one hand and Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) verses state government in the other hand.

#### **2.4.4. Impact on Social Cultural Life**

In a contemporary Sikkim, Lepcha has been facing a huge problem on the issue of Identity. As in Sikkim, Lepcha people are basically divided into different religious' adherence that is Buddhist, Christian and animism. Lepcha claim that they were an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and their origin, culture, religion, scriptures, languages, political and economic sphere had an emotional attachment with natural elements.

The Lepchas were once alone in Mayel Lyang for so long many people say they were there from the beginning of time. Lepcha they like to call themselves indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim but during 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century indigenous people had to face abundant challenges in cultural value system. Due to the influence of Buddhism and Christianity that Animism society converted into other religion and had been cross out from vanishing tribe. But later on when Sikkim merge with Indian union again multidimensional opportunity come over and invention new transportation, industrialization, education and health sector. Foreigners were started climbing the peaks, stepping on their mountain deity, Kanchenjunga, leaving the imprint of their climbing shoes and their conquest over her surface (Little; 2008).

Therefore, after 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century both Buddhist and Christianity have their influences in Sikkim particularly on the Lepcha community. Which ultimately led to a drastic an impact on Lepcha cultural, belief system and they adopted other culture value system. Nowadays, in Sikkim Lepcha community divided into three religions and the major reason behind the crisis of Lepcha's identity was lack of traditional and cultural practices among the Lepcha community.

However, with the initiation of mega Hydel project by the government of India from its north eastern region the purity of the area stands infringed. The first thing a Lepcha of Dzongu would do is identify them with this sacred land. They consider that nature's gifts give them life in the form of food, medicine and prayer and many of their festivals and prayers pay homage to nature. Lepchas everywhere consider the Dzongu to be their holy land and that their race was created in Dzongu by Mother Nature and that Mount Kanchenjunga is their mother mountain. They observe their traditional nature worshipping festivals such as the festival of Tendong Lho-Rum-Faat, whereby Lepchas pay offering to the Tendong Hill which saved their tribe from extinction in the great flood, and Chu Rum Faat, an offering to the Himalayas (Little; 2008). Lepcha of Dzongu had an emotional attachment with their nature and worshiped them. Hence, from very 8<sup>th</sup> August the Lepchas annually worships mountain Tendong as this mountain offered sanctuary to the human, environment and other creatures during the deluge to the caused by river Teesta (Arora; 2007).

In subsequent their indigenous ritual, Lepcha worship of all the nature and their employ religion Buddhism, adds layer of specificity relating to Buddhist as a sacred places. To the Lepcha environment and religion are intertwined (Little; 2008). Animist essentially treats a natural phenomenon like tree, mountain, rock and river as

inviolability to be worshiped. Lepcha they like to called themselves indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and they are nature worshiper or animism. A land in Dzongu is treated as sanctity by Lepcha people but today the same land has been used for other purposes. Dzongu is our heartbeat. They have sliced away every their part of us but our heat remains. This small heart is what keeps us alive (Little; 2010).

The impact of such development projects on the tribal communities, their lifestyle and identity, socio-cultural and religious, has been simply massive. In this context, it is important to analyse the recent protests of the Lepcha against the Dzongu hydel project by invoking religion and religious traditional, in the light of the Lepcha reverence to Dzongu as the representation of the sacred and the hydro power project in Dzongu as erasure of their socio-religious space (Yasin and Durga P Chetteri; 2012).

#### **2.4.5. Impact on Homogeneity**

The hydel project has often been embodied as the modernization process, but this modernization process in Dzongu has brought huge challenges in the life of Lepcha people. The initiation of hydro power projects lead to the transition of peaceful homogenous community into heterogeneity society. Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community but nowadays, that reserve land used in developmental project. Eventually, the conflict arose between the developmental project and resident of Dzongu.

Indigenous and tribal peoples in many parts of the world do not enjoy their fundamental rights in the state in which they live to the same degree as the rest of the population. Presently, they are non-dominant sections of the society because of their poverty and illiteracy (vulnerable groups and human rights). During the Chogyals's

dynasty that Dzongu was declared to be reserve land for Lepcha community. No outsider was allowed to visit this Dzongu area of Sikkim except with the specific permission of the durbar, which also exists so far. There was total restriction on the transfer of land to outsiders.

The construction of large dams continues to fuel an intense debate between dam proponents and opponents, a debate which hinges on different perceptions of the economic, social and environmental benefits and impacts of large dams. Highly controversial undertaking, large dams are seen by their proponents as a relatively efficient means to store critically needed water, to produce electricity and to control the flow of rivers. Critics cite their negative environmental and social impacts, particularly the relocation of masses of people, who were largely members of indigenous and politically marginal and socioeconomic communities (Fisher; 1999).

Lepchas are animists with some sway of Lamaism and Buddhism their traditional religious practices are intricately related to the natural phenomenon found here. They perform intricate rituals in the Dzongu village. Thus the proposed hydropower projects here is having a drastic effect on the religious practices of Lepchas leaving its impact on the socio cultural setup of this small community, besides inducing environmental susceptibility in the fragile landscape of the Dzongu, the ancestral homeland of the Lepchas community (Subrata; 2013).

In the process the hydel project supporters from North Sikkim, drove into Gangtok in vehicles flaunting banners announcing their pro hydel project. They poured into Samman Bhawan on Saturday to petition the Chief Minister with a request to expedite work on the hydel projects in North Sikkim for which MOUs had been signed. However it is alleged by the ACT members that most of the so

called hydel supporters were ruling government party supporters and affected people who were selling land to the hydel project companies for money. This divided stand was made apparent on the issue of with one Lepcha association deciding not to support the organizers, Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT), and calling for dialogue with the Government, rather than the more confronting march (Little; 2008).

The presence of a large number of the workers in Dzongu with different culture, customs and beliefs may diminish and destroy Lepcha culture in course of time. Lepcha community were disagreeing that projects will bring thousands of workers from outside Sikkim into Dzongu for several years till the completion of the project. Thus, the outsiders may outnumber the Lepcha population in Dzongu and present Lepcha population is 7000 in Dzongu, leading gradually to their annihilation (Yasin and Durga P Chhetri; 2012).

Therefore, the Lepcha community in Dzongu seems to be divided within on that supports development and the one that favours status quo of Dzongu. The gap between Lepchas that do or don't oppose the projects has extended over time. As a result relationships between friends and family members have in some villages split (Little; 2010).

## **2.5. Conflict Resolution: A Historical Overview**

The word "resolution" means, The quality of being resolute, A firm decision, An expression of opinion or intensions agreed on by a legislative body, The action of solving a problem or dispute, The process of reducing or separating something into components (Wani; 2011). Conflicts resolution woks in phases, first prevention,



second reduction and the intensity of the conflict and finally to an ultimate resolution (Rashid; 2005).

Conflict resolutions means, a conflict exists when two or more parties have opposed views about how some social situation should be organised. Conflict resolution is the process of facilitating a solution where the actors no longer feel the need to indulge in conflict activity and feel that the distribution of benefits in the social system is acceptable (Vayrynen; 1991). Conflict resolution refers to methods used by trained neutrals to help people to communicate more clearly, negotiate effectively, develop and evaluate solutions, or resolve conflicts. Neutrals do not take sides or represent the parties. Conflict resolution is an interdisciplinary field that attracts neutrals from backgrounds like human resources, law and social work (Arora; 2015).

A conflict resolution involves recognition by the parties of one another's interests, needs, perspectives and continues existence. The most effective forms identify the underlying causes of the conflict and address them through solutions that are mutually satisfactory, self perpetuating and sustaining. Conflict resolution can also be practised with a variety of emphases, including but not limited to corporation, non confrontation, non competition and positive sum orientation. Therefore, a lasting resolution for any conflict requires both systemic and individual analysis and intervention (Dar; 2011).

Conflict resolution is used to focus on the need for unity and in keeping the tradition of the family and the community. Conflict resolution is not an option, it is mandatory. The goal of conflict resolution is not based on class and power; it is base on the worth of the community places on the individual irrespective of power and the

social status of the parties. The main goal of the conflict resolution is to repair damage relations and not to exact punishment, although punishment are involved where damage has been done as the result of the conflict (Tuso; 2011).

It can be said conflict resolution has played a vital role among conflicted parties and in war zones. In other words conflict resolution is the best device of balance and equilibrium among the disputed parties. Conflict resolution is an integral part of social justice and social transformation which aims to tackle the human crisis and divisions through the peaceful means and avoid conflicts among the nation states. Conflict resolution is the best weapon through which the entire humanity and posterity can be protected from the scourge of war and violence. It can be argued that conflict resolution mechanism is the protector, guardian and custodian of the peace, harmony, social justice, world brotherhood and equity across the globe (Wani; 2011).

### **2.5.1. Conflict Resolution: Formal and Informal**

In this booming economy and the competitive world, it is natural for people to have opposing interests, needs and values. Having a conflict is not a problem; rather people live with it every day. Conflicts become harmful only when they take the shape of disputes. Disputes can occur between family members, relatives, friends, acquaintances, businesses as well as between the state and individual citizens. Disputes can also be international. Governments or companies of two countries may enter into a dispute. The problem with disputes is that they cannot be ignored, causes real damage and can bring life and business to a standstill (Arora; 2015).

When studying an “organizational situation charged with conflict”, observed, one must understand both formal and informal relations. This observation eventually evolved into separate lines of inquiry. The first became the object of structural-culture

research on changes in formal conflict resolution structures across American organizations, ultimately leading to the legalization thesis. Multiple styles of critical institutional theorizing, and analyses of the spread of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) through American organizations. His insights into informal relations also inspired an early generation of researchers to study the interactional bases of conflict, which set the stage for processual-culture approaches that place a premium on the emergent meanings of conflict, including negotiated order and discourse approaches (Annu; 2012).

There always exists a problem when it comes to differentiating these conflict resolution mechanisms and tagging them under the categories of formal or informal. People have different opinions on these practices and it seems to be a very subjective phenomenon. Though the words *formal and informal* have well-defined meanings attached to them but still it has been observed that people around the globe have categorized these practices according to their own understanding.

### **2.5.2. Formal Conflict Resolution**

Formal conflict resolution include the mechanisms which are officially constituted or organized, whereas informal may include those which are not officially recognized and organized (Arora; 2015). Formal justice system or formal conflict resolution system refers to processes of addressing conflict created and run by states. These may include systems such as the police, the court, and penal code. Within the broader formal justice category, western/modern conflict resolution systems are those formal system designed by and typically associated by west. These do not include Western informal conflict resolution introduced through religions, community models and economic practices (Gang; 2010).

Mediation, adjudication and arbitration is mainly done by an outsider where as in informal system third party mediator is close to victim offender (Magfarlane; 2007). The process of arbitration replicates the litigation process by promoting an adversarial culture. Decision-making is rigid and inflexible and the process has an individualised focus. Traditional dispute resolution practices consist of a co-operative process where discussions are based on consensus rather than authoritarian procedural requirements. The procedures are flexible, non-coercive, non punitive and decisions are made for the community (Pringle; 1996).

Informal resolutions seek a change of heart, a transformation and a healing of relationship and spirit. Settlement is related with the community, not a settlement that is separated from the whole of the community, and which pertains to the individual. Sauvé asserts, ‘what needs settling or redress is not issues, but relationships’ (Sauve; 1996), because settlement means reconciliation with the inner (the source of illness), reconciliation with the other (disputants) and the community (clans from all sides). Thus, the goal of individual settlement is merely a by-product to the essential goal, which is reconciliation with the community as a whole.

### **2.5.3. Informal Conflict Resolution**

Informal conflict resolution is traditional and culturally established process to address conflict with the intention to resolve conflicts. Informal conflict resolution is based on local culture, values, customs, tradition, practices, connected with nature and supernatural power, familial relationship and knowledge which have been passed over from one generation to the other from centuries. Indigenous is informal because mostly it lacks the recognition of the states, therefore it operates informally among tribal and indigenous communities across the globe. Unlike formal process it is context specific and dispensing of justice is mostly on normative basis. It does not

need to have formal institution necessarily rather a village councils uses local actors (elders, chiefs and clergy men), community based judicial and legal decision-making mechanism to resolve conflict (Rabar and Kamini; 2004).

An informal conflict resolution is defined as resolution facilitated by organizational members through other means than the formal processes of grievances, investigations and litigation (Kolb and Bartunek; 1992). It often takes a non-rational approach and Kolb and Bartunek describe this approach as accenting “The unconscious or spontaneous aspects of disputing, ones that are driven by impulse and the feelings of participants and not simply their Cognition” (ibid; 20).

Informal resolution adopts therapeutic models of mediation and are thus driven by emphasis on emotional healing rather than settlement. The Transformative model of mediation primarily deals with the emotional and relationship or (kinship) factors of disputants. The focus of the process is shifted from solutions to a transformation of the interaction between the relationships. The mediators’ role is to assist parties to move from weakness to strength (empowerment) and from self-absorption to responsiveness (empathy) (Bush & Folger; 2005). Transformative mediation derives its roots from communication theory which holds that ‘human beings naturally have strengths and compassion, they desire to be neither victim nor victimizer, they have capacities for choice and decision making, and they constantly harbour a desire for connection with others’ (Goodhardt et al; 2005).

#### **2.5.4. Retributive Justice**

Retributive justice sees wrongdoing as crime (crime is a violation of law and the state, violation creates guilt) and offender as criminals and criminal justice ask, what laws have been broken? Who did it and what he/she deserves? (Zehr and Ali; 2003).

Restorative justice is not in good terms with retributive justice in many aspects. There is a call to have a look at retributive justice with an offer of clearer distinctions. Besides, restorative justice attracts a number of fears (Muwereza; 2013).

Retributive justice is the reestablishment of justice through unilateral imposition of punishment on the offender consistent with what is believed the offender deserves. Such a response could be sufficient for the restoration of a status/power relation that a transgression has disturbed. A unilateral punishment means that offenders have to endure suffering against their will. The imposition of punishment in the name of justice means that offenders are powerless and the suffering means that their status is lowered. The punishment can be unilateral; the offender need not be persuaded by the punishment and need not show any remorse or contrition. In fact, if offenders accepted their punishment as deserved, as something they have brought upon themselves, the punishment might effectively be considered self-imposed and its status/power reduction effect might be neutralized (Murugesan and Sears; 2006).

Restorative justice can trample the rights of offenders and victims, can dominate them, can lack procedural protections, and can give police, families, or welfare professionals too much unaccountable power (Braithwaite; 2002). This is true as far as the checks and balances are weak or absent. Moreover, this may be the case with traditional justice mechanisms, mainly due to their informal nature. Although it may be criticized along the dilemmas of determining proportionality of punishments (Sterba; 1977).

Retributive justice is a system by which offenders are punished in proportion to the moral magnitude of their intentional actions that directly or indirectly inflict harm on others. This has both moral and legal aspects of punishment. The moral

justification for punishment is a separate issue from the legal justification because, although the law may provide for the infliction of punishment, society's moral justification for punishment still has to be established (Margot and Mulwale; 2011). Retributive justice is based on 'tit for tat' principle, counter-revenge. Retributive justice views crime in terms of state law and its violation (Zehr; 1990).

It is a normative moral imperative to punish whoever breaks any norms of a community. But it is also legally provided that a crime is acceptably punished in a proportionate manner to restore a balance (Kant; 1952). Offender and offence to state's law is harmful activity or behaviour. Definitions of crime are intrinsically political-i.e. both the legislative bodies that produce statutory law and the judicial bodies that adjudicate criminal cases are political institutions. It should be recognized that some conceptions of crime are more directly political e.g. in totalitarian societies, where any actions deemed offensive to those in power are treated as crimes, regardless of legislative actions or court findings. A moralistic conception of crime is exemplified by the pro-life movement's characterization of abortion as a crime and a very serious crime independent of its status under state law. In this conception crime is an offense against the moral order of a particular group (Sullivan; 2008).

The other characteristic of retributive justice relates to its procedures or processes. These see the state and the offender as the main players. The victims and the community are peripheral. The state is historically seen as the beneficiary of the harms suffered by victims (Gavrielides; 2011). Hence, in general, the interpretation of a transgression as a threat to status and power should lead to a preference for the retributive justice notion, whereas its interpretation as a threat to shared values should lead to a preference for restorative justice. However, we grant the issue could be more complicated. First, it is possible that punishment, as part of retributive justice, could

also serve to restore values. For instance, from a punishment-as-communication perspective (Duff; 2001).

Modern and indigenous conflict resolution processes are methodologically different from each other. Traditional is normative, subjective based on norms and values, tradition, symbols, spiritual and cultural values. Whereas, western or modern conflict resolution is objective and based on scientific methods. In the modern court system resolution is also not friendly; it is always defensive, judgment is based on winner and loser. There is no chance to repair relationship and forgive. Whereas traditional is cooperative, it always tries to cooperate among the victim and accused and always gives a chance for forgiveness and forgiven. Try to resolve conflict on friendly and satisfied manner (Cordova; 2014).

Hence, they would be more likely to endorse retributive justice, revenge, and punishment (rather than restorative justice). Indeed, there is evidence that members tend to endorse stronger punishment toward out-group offenders than in-group offenders (Graham et al; 1997). Hence, if a transgression is primarily viewed as the usurpation of power by the offender and as a humiliation of victim and community, then the imposition of a punishment on the offender may be a means of demonstrating and restoring the power/status of victim and community. This argument is consistent with empirical evidence suggesting that the humiliating nature of a provocation leads to greater retaliatory aggression (Murugesan and Sears; 2006).

The state seeks justice on behalf of victims by way of punishing the offenders. Yet the victims, who are in most cases, treated as witnesses perceive it negatively. Further, this form of justice relates very well with retaliation or revenge, the proportionality principals notwithstanding. The sense of proportion, however, can



vary greatly depending on the society. In this case, retributive justice can be significantly different in different areas. This leaves gaps that restorative justice can plausibly cover. However, restorative justice is criticized for lacking the fundamental tenets of criminal law. A comparison between restorative and retributive justice is given in the next section (Mwureza; 2013).

#### **2.5.5. Restorative Justice**

Whereas restorative justice see wrongdoing as harm and offender as harmer and restorative justice ask who has been hurt. What are their needs? Whose obligations are these? Justice demands the actions from authority or state to determine the blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment) (Zehr and Ali; 2003). It is now evident that restorative justice is not a movement that needs any further popularization. Almost every commentator and writer on restorative justice in current discourses agrees that it is a popular and useful form of justice that needs to be adopted in some particular ways (Kgosimore; 2000).

However, there is a need to clarify on its processes and mechanisms so that it does not appear to be a formal and new concept at the expense of its informal and old existence. Arguing from formal frameworks, restorative justice has been portrayed as a new and emerging movement of criminal processes in Africa (Roche, 2002). Restorative Justice may sometimes lead to beneficial by products, such as reconciliation and forgiveness as well as decreased recidivism and repeat offenses, but these are not necessarily required or central to the process. The reason for RJ is that it is the best thing to do to heal and address the needs of stakeholders involved in a crime. Also, in contrast to misconceptions, RJ is not meant as a substitute for the legal system or prisons necessarily (it can often work well in parallel with these). Importantly, RJ does not imply a return to past experiences of a status quo which may

in fact be troubled, but rather a transformation to our better selves and communities which are always available to us as a potential (Zehr; 1990).

Therefore, it may be true that the formal conceptualization of restorative justice is new but not its processes and applications. It is what goes on in most traditional and cultural forms of justice in most African communities. This is because these communities practiced and still practice criminal justice with many elements of restorative justice than retributive justice. Presently however, restorative justice is seemingly presented as a solution to gaps existing in the formal processes of criminal justice (UN, 2006), which do not heal or satisfy victims (Braithwaite; 2002). Restorative justice has also a distinct value frame that, foremost, places emphasis on healing rather than punishing (ibid; 2002).

What is restorative justice then? To clearly understand the concept of restorative justice, an understanding of its basic and pivotal principles is crucial (Sharpe, 1998). Restorative justice (RJ) is defined as “An ethos with practical goals, among which to restore harm by including affected parties in a (direct or indirect) encounter and a process of understanding through voluntary and honest dialogue” (Gavrielides; 2007).

The first of these principles is the fact that any criminal act causes injuries to victims, offenders and the community. This means that an offense committed on any individual hurts not only that individual as a direct victim but also the offender and the community within which they both live. The question of how the offender is hurt is answered from a moral and psychosocial dimension in aspects such as “their need to come to grips with their own sense of victimization” (Sawin and Zehr; 2007). While in practice it can also involve punishment of the offender, restorative justice

promotes more constructive punishments as alternatives to the mere infliction of suffering on the offender such as incarceration. Restorative punishments are more constructive and meaningful in that they oblige the offender to do something for the victim (or, alternatively, to victims of similar offenses), provide some service to the community, or take part in an educational program (Bazemore; 1998).

Therefore, punishment is not necessarily (and should not be) confined to retributive justice. This is because within the conditions of restorative justice there are elements of punishment such as taking responsibility, restitution or compensation and acceptance of realities (Misener; 2001). Further, people who commit crimes psychologically disengage themselves from their moral aspects of their human nature. Identified these aspects as rationalization of consequences (the positive/right aspects of a crime outweigh the negative/wrong ones); trying to lessen or obscure personal responsibility for the criminal act; denying the seriousness of the harmful effects on others; as well as blaming or belittling the victims (Bandura; 1990).

In contrast, restorative justice is the reestablishment of justice through a renewed value consensus, through the reaffirmation of values violated by the transgression. Obviously, this justice notion speaks directly to the value implications of the offense. If a transgression is primarily seen as the violation, questioning, or undermining of values that are presumed to be shared in the relevant community, then the most effective undoing of the incident should be the offenders' re-endorsement of those values. The offender should be brought back into a consensus about community values. The renewed consensus provides social validation of those values (Turner; 1991). Restorative justice differs from mainstream mediation because of its engagement with the community of concern. The presence of the community in restorative justice processes addresses the shortcoming of mediation in matters

involving domestic violence, as the violence is open in public scrutiny. The community able to protect the victims, and can act to prevent future violence (Kelly; 2007).

Restorative justice is known by various names; ‘communitarian justice’, ‘making amends’, ‘positive justice’, ‘relational justice’, ‘reparative justice’, ‘community justice’ (Dandurand; 2006). It ‘determines blame and administers pain in a context between the offender and the state directed by systematic rules’. For restorative justice, crime is essentially ‘a violation of people and relationships. It creates obligations to make things right.’ It ‘involves the victim, the offender and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation and reassurance’ (ibid; 2006).

*Restorative Justice* is another such process. It encompasses victim/survivor centre processes that address harm from crime, bullying and violations of legal and human rights. Restorative resolutions engage those who are harmed, wrongdoers and their affected communities in search of outcomes that may help promote the repair, reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships. Restorative justice sees wrongdoing as a violation of people or relationship (Zehr and Mika; 1998).

These include the importance of participation and consensual decision-making; healing what is broken; the accountability of offenders; and the restoration of relationships through the reintegration of both offender and victim into the community (Sullivan, Dennis and Tifft, Larry; 2008).

The offender is forgiven with the help of community elders. Governments then usually respect these decisions of the victim and the community. In the western legal system, however, forgiveness processes are more sidelined to justice and offenders

are usually required to complete their punishment even if forgiven. Although there is a phrase “forgive and forget” in western culture, many teach that forgiving does not involve forgetting: “remember and forgive”, some say. In Eastern culture, forgiveness and reconciliation often do require one to forget (Zehr and Ali; 2003).

The emergence of restorative justice as an alternative model to Western, court-based criminal justice may have important implications for the psychology of justice. It is proposed that two different notions of justice affect responses to rule-breaking: restorative and retributive justice. Retributive justice essentially refers to the repair of justice through unilateral imposition of punishment, whereas restorative justice means the repair of justice through reaffirming a shared value-consensus in a bilateral process (Wenzel; 2008).

A direct, facilitated, face-to-face encounter with adequate screening, preparation and safeguard is often an ideal forum for this involvement, at least in some cultures. As we shall see shortly, this can take a variety of forms: a meeting between victim and offender, a family group conference, a circle process (Bluett-Boyd; 2005). Restorative justice is ultimately concerned about the restoration and reintegration of both victim and offender as well as the well-being of the entire community. Restorative justice is about balancing concern for all parties. Restorative justice encourages outcomes that promote responsibility, reparation and healing for all. It aims at educating the wrongdoer by speaking to their feelings, while through the victim’s forgiveness and community’s willingness to help, they were most often rehabilitated (Gavrielides; 2011).

RJ focuses on addressing the underlying problems that have produced the offence. It engenders a victim's focus by recognizing the emotional effects of crime to

the victim, offender and community and seeks healing rather than attempting to channel emotions through some abstract entity such as the State (Barton; 2000). Therefore, the form of justice, including (the kind of punishment) needs to address such aspects if meaningful restoration is to take place in the lives of offenders. Moreover, this is the core aim of restorative justice. However, for this restoration and healing processes to happen, posits that there exist important conditions that need to be fulfilled. These include accepting the reality of the consequences of the offence(s); accepting responsibility such realities and consequences; realizing and expressing change or the need to do so; reconciliation and restitution or compensation (Misener; 2001).

## **2.6. Indigenous Community and Conflict Resolution**

In Dzongu that gyapon and youmi is still exist in Lepcha's community though, they don't have power to rule over the community but their dignity is still present in Lepcha community. In every village's meeting their presence were be counted very worthy and they participate it actively too<sup>2</sup>. At Dzongu, that time they were the mediator and always active to resolve conflict from the personal to professional life.

In Lingthem the youmi are selected from those who have already held the office of gyapon; they consist of old and experienced men who assist the mandal with their advice and efforts in his various works' they also with the gyapoon try to compose querrels or minor misdemeanours without bringing them to the official notice of the mandal. Youmi are selected but the mandal in consultation with all the responsible householders; as one youmi gets too old, or wishes to give up works or dies, the mandal nomites another from the ex-gyapon to replace him.

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<sup>2</sup> On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018 information collected during field visit at upper Dzongu.

The protest has a good and a worse side, like every action has a positive and a negative end. In this sense what happened in Dzongu was that Lepcha had a divided stand over the issue of dams. One group favoured the construction of the mega dams that promised prosperity and they kept on pressing on with their support towards the project however there was another group who vehemently opposed such projects.

Hence, educated Lepcha youth have become more aware of their vanishing culture and attempt to boost Lepcha identity. The fear of vanishing their own culture has inspired and moved certain of Lepcha community into activists to protest the modernization. Usually, the term vanishing applies both to Lepcha culture as well as to the ethnic community as a whole. Therefore, many Lepcha associations were founded in Sikkim and Most Lepcha associations have their aim to protect and endorse the Lepcha cultural heritage. Many of the executive members of these associations belong to the educated layer, partly because education gives those means and human capital to reliable the needs of their community in a more public way. Those associations focused on which changes in Sikkim influence the Lepcha community and create the notion of a disappearing culture. The associations offer the channels to represent the Lepcha and their cause to the outside the world.

#### **2.6.1. Mutanchi Lom Aal Shezum- the NGO in Dzongu**

Villagers of nampatan deem the Mutanchi Lom Aal Shezum and associations only for Lepcha of Dzongu, so villagers of nampatan do not have any affiliations with Lepcha associations. In Dzongu north Sikkim, the members of the MLAS are regarded as culturally conversant people because of their performance. Their authority in cultural matters runs analogous to that of elders and ritual specialities. They are often asked for advice and have been very active in the documentation of oral

traditions and the conservation of material culture. Therefore, the MLAS has strong influence on what is perceived to be Lepcha culture- conserve and creating through their activities (Bentley; 2007).

The initiation of mega hydro project creates conflict between natural worshiper and developmental project and that conflict brought solidarity among Lepcha community. Through the mega hydro project Lepcha of Dzongu learned numerous things and established most active associations within Dzongu that is Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum (RMRT). Renjong Mutanchi Rong Ong Shezum (RMROS). Lepcha Students Associations (LSA) and Mutanchi Lom Aal Shemzum (MLAS). Those organizations were actively preserving their various socio-economic, political and traditional way of life.

A six-member team of Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum [Sikkim Lepcha Association] led by their president, Sonam Dupden Lepcha, visited the earthquake affected areas of North Sikkim on 22 September, and informs a press release. The team interacted with the members of seven households of Bey Block in Upper Dzongu at 4<sup>th</sup> mile Mantan and handed over relief items to them, the release informs. According to the release, out of the 16 households in Bey, four houses have completely collapsed while the remaining 12 houses have been severely damaged. Six Lepchas and one labourer died here in a landslide on the evening of 18 September. Seven households have been shifted to 4<sup>th</sup> mile Mantan, two households to Nampruk, one family is at the Mangan hospital while two families were shifted to Lingzya and Pakshek respectively. The first day of the visit ended with at the Lingzya relief camp.

The team then visited Toong-Rongrong village under Lingdong-Barfok GPU of Lower Dzongu yesterday where they interacted with the village headman and



handed over relief materials. Similarly, the team also visited the Toong ward under Toong-Naga GPU and handed over relief materials to the panchayat, the release adds.

### **2.6.2. Affected Citizen of Teesta, Concerned Lepcha of Sikkim and Sanga of Dzongu**

The Lepchas residing in the area are aware of the threat associated with the development of hydro-power projects and at present are concerned for their future and their rights. They have formed a committee called the Affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) to seek redressal for the problems faced by them in the Dzongu, protests are on as the Lepchas are aware of their rights as an indigenous people to be protected by the Indian Constitution, the Supreme court and above all the Human right commission which ensures that the small indigenous communities like the Lepchas have the right to control their resources for their own needs and interest (Subrata; 2013).

The government has now finalised a proposal for executing hydel power project in the catchment areas of the river Teesta, which includes considerable area under Dzongu, under the national hydel power cooperation, and this is causing great concern to the people who are faces the horns of dilemma (Tamlong; 2008). Thus, the movement first started in 2003 when Lepchas opposing the Dzongu projects started holding small meetings in the villages. Their aim at that time was to fight the large Teesta River hydro-electric projects slated for Dzongu and to bring awareness to the Lepcha community of what they considered to be the harmful effects of the projects. On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2004, Lepcha activist came together to form an ad hoc committee under the banner of affected citizen of Teesta (Wangchuk; 2007).

After formation an ad hoc committee in July 2004, started collecting documents and searching hydel prospects and threats. On June 8, 2006, ACT office

bearers spoke at the public hearing, but their protest was a minority voice with the 80 of those present speaking in the favour of the project. On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2006, ACT was seen as an elitist group of educated Lepcha youth with a romanticised idea of development and culture which was out of sync with the more immediate aspiration for the development of people (ibid; 2007).

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2006, Concerned Lepchas of Sikkim (CLOS) a new association was formed which instantly publicized its support for the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) by saying, it is beyond anybody's doubt that the Hydel Power Projects in Dzongu will bring in its wake abundant ill effects to Dzongu and other area, which will certainly have unpleasant affect on the lives of the Lepchas of these areas, it is relevant to mention that the Proclamations and Old Laws enacted during the reign of Chogyal prohibit settling and or carrying on any occupations of any form in Dzongu by the outsiders (Little; 2008). In Dzongu indigenous inhabitant originally connected with nature and they loved to live close with it. Therefore, in Dzongu indigenous people directly or indirectly worshipping the nature phenomenon. That's why they so love their environment and always ready to save from harm. But after Sikkim merge with Indian union new dimensions like transportation, industrialization, education and urbanization had been come over the indigenous community. Modernization term is known as changes, changing from traditional to agrarian society or Modernization is a process which brings new cultural system into established system.

President of Concerned Lepchas of Sikkim (CLOS) Mr. Gyatso Lepcha said that 'the issue is not just about whether we are giving our land for the project or not. It has much larger connotation. It is the question about our very survival. If we have our land we can flourish as a race, as a community. Our ancient practices, our cultural heritage can be preserved for future generations but with our land gone, we will be

finished as well this is the reason why we will die but we will not give our land' (Little; 2008). In Sikkim due to rapid growth of the modernization procedure, cultural practices and way of life of an indigenous people have been highly influenced by this modernizing agent and this impact of this modernizing agent is very visible in the life of Lepcha community. Therefore, Lepcha protest against the modernizing agents in Sikkim in order to preserve or protect their rich and unique Identity (Little; 2008).

It is also well known that even the legal court which has jurisdiction over each and every walk of life in Sikkim has not paid heed to the appeal of the ACT. This was apparent by the fact that the Hon'ble High Court of Sikkim has dismissed a Public Interest Litigation by Tashi Tshering Lepcha seeking the High Court's intervention to stop the ongoing hydel project. This decision has been interpreted as the one ensuring the implementation of the hydel projects in Dzongu.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007, a new association was formed 'Sanga of Dzongu' (SOD) and Buddhist monks representing monasteries in Dzongu congregate at passingdang village in Upper Dzongu. They announced their resolve to oppose hydel projects proposed for north Sikkim. On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Affected Citizen of Teesta was supported by CLOS and SOD and began a hunger strike at Bhutia-Lepcha (BL) house on Tibet road, a short walk above the town's main access (Wangchuk; 2007). Till the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2007, indefinite hunger strike had been carried on at BL House, Gangtok for more than two months and the health condition of strikers had become precarious and two three rounds of talks had taken place with the Government authorities, which had yielded no positive result (Tamlong; 2008).

On 250<sup>th</sup> day of the hunger strike, Affected Citizen of Teesta announced that Lepchas from Darjeeling and elsewhere would be undertaking a pilgrimage march

from Melli in West Bengal to Dzongu in north Sikkim (Wangchuk; 2007). On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007, the Lepcha sympathisers of Kalimpong enforced blocked (chakkajam) of national highways 31A at Melli for two hours. On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007, the Lepcha supporters from Darjeeling district organised a procession in Darjeeling town and later gave a deputation to DM Darjeeling (Tamlong; 2008).

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017, concern Dzongu youth and affected citizen of Teesta organised rally at lower Dzongu, north Sikkim. Say, no to big to dams in Dzongu Nye mayellyang. The land of paradise and the origin birth place of Lepchas. On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017, it's official that the last FRA Gram Sabha on stage-IV NHPC, in Gor Lum Sangtok GPU 100% public said No to stage-IV. "Affected Citizen of Teesta" would like to thank the public of the GPU, panchayat of Lum Gor Sangtok, panchayats of rest GPU and extend pour thanks to SLYA Gangtok, Government employee of Dzongu, university students of SU, NGOs and individuals who helped us in many ways to come to this point<sup>3</sup>.

The Gram sabha can make its resolution if there is presence of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the members in the house. The Gram sabha is conducted to resolve issues related to the need of the GPU<sup>4</sup>. There are many tribes in some parts of the country who still dwells in the forest and derives their livelihood from the resources of the very forest and if this is acquired for the purpose of power development than these people are directly affected and in order to protest the rights of this people and amicably rehabilitate and resettle them the forest rights Act was enacted.

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<sup>3</sup>Nowadays, among Lepcha youth generation the curiosity toward their traditional way of life has been rise up and recently they open new webpage i.e. "U Made Us Proud" where only Lepcha's oral, traditional and modern historical collection are recorded.

<sup>4</sup>BDO in his speech on forest right act( FRA) gram sabha, Lum-Gor-Sangtok GPU on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at community centre, gor, Dxongu, north Sikkim

The chairperson once again asked the house to feel and share their view but the entire house endorsed their decision of scrapping FRA. Out of 865 voters 207 voters were present today and this is in accordance with the quorum of the house. A total of 37 members had opined against FRA in the house in front of the august gathering. So the chairman declared that since it was cent percent opinion against FRA, so it is declared rejected which means the people of Lum-Gor-Santok have unanimously rejected FRA. The house thus deemed to have rejected the power project and hence the formation of FRC does not arise at all. The gram sabha declares to have scrapped the development of power project.

The chairmen said that the gram sabha of the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017 which was conducted in the absence of the president, secretary, vice president and member is declared illegal and void and also declared that for the violation of panchayat act and contempt of the office of the panchayat legal proceeding will be sought by the panchayat office. He also said that no officer can called for or gives date to conduct gram sabha and it is passed and made into rule on this 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2017<sup>5</sup>.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

Dams and development building is an old one and the construction of large dams for irrigation and the projects of hydro power projects is a phenomenon of modern times. In India about 4,500 dams are located and around 300 dams were built after 1950. In Sikkim 26 hydro power projects proposal were pass out and around 6 dams were located in Dzongu North Sikkim. Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community and majority of Lepcha are animist by religion, which is why they worship the natural phenomenon. Lepcha community consider that Dzongu is sacred and holy land for

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<sup>5</sup>SDM in his speech on forest right act (FRA) gram sabha, Lum-Gor-Sangtok GPU on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at community centre, gor, Dxongu, north Sikkim.

them and during the realm of Chogyal Dzongu declared reserve for Lepcha community.

Due to the initiation of Hydro power projects Lepcha community faces many difficulties in cultural value system, social and environmental. Hence, Lepcha community protest against the HPP under the banner of Affected Citizen of Teesta. In the days of 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is difficult to keep every section happy and it seems that Lepcha have come of age and they have become clever and aware their rights as a citizen of India. Hence, they have taken up such protest against the hydro power projects in Dzongu. It is right to every citizen to protect themselves against the violation and they have right to live in democratic country. Since 16<sup>th</sup> May 1975, the days are gone of dictator and oppressive kings and kazis from our state.

Lepchas from Dzongu has decided for themselves as to what is good for the community and without being influenced by any modernization process. Even though, the hydro power projects would be good for the Dzongu and its people, but at the same time, there must be authentic concern and high risk involved in allowing that project in Dzongu reserve land. Development is needed for the betterment of people and environment but, pros and cons of the scheme need to be considering beforehand. Lepcha protest the projects under the banner of affected citizen of Teesta and that protest for safeguarding Dzongu will go lesson learn to all the Sikkimese.

There are two mechanisms of conflict resolution which operate formally and informally. Formal is modern, based on western values and culture guided by codified law and interpreted by professional lawyers. Informal is indigenous methods of conflict resolutions embedded in rituals and cultural values and give importance to elders. However, theoretically these two methods of conflict resolution, formal

(modern) and (informal) indigenous are based on two different principle of justice, former on retributive and later on restorative.

The initiation of mega hydro project creates conflict between natural worshiper and developmental project and that conflict brought solidarity among Lepcha community. Through the mega hydro project Lepcha of Dzongu learned numerous things and established most active associations within Dzongu that is Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum (RMRT). Renjong Mutanchi Rong Ong Shezum (RMROS). Lepcha Students Associations (LSA) and Mutanchi Lom Aal Shemzum (MLAS). Those organizations were actively preserving their various socio-economic, political and traditional way of life. Today, world is more suffering from local conflict than international conflict. Therefore, indigenous conflict resolutions have more potential to maintain positive peace because it's give more important to remove root causes of conflict.

In the field of conflict resolution to take indigenous processes of conflict resolution more seriously, as suggested is this essay, we need to understand the historical and cultural background in which the western and the traditional cultures have interact during the last five years centuries. Therefore, Within Dzongu people became more conscious and concerned about their identity and they started to preserve their reserved land and their community with the help of indigenous conflict resolution.

The indigenous processes of conflict resolution should be the new frontier for the profession of conflict resolution. As the same time, there are no well trained experts in the traditional of the social sciences, who can provide leadership in such endeavours. As a matter of fact, some members of the elite sector, as discussed in the

topic and tend to become involved, when actually they know very little, and their knowledge about the processes of indigenous systems of conflict resolution is based only on conventional wisdom, or on some vague memories.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Historical Overview of Lepcha Community and Hydro Power Project in Sikkim**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the major concepts on historical overview of Lepcha and discuss their origin, religion, culture, language, scriptures, economy and political background and Dzongu the reserve of Lepcha community. Unlike other ethnic groups, Lepcha claim themselves as an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim. But in a contemporary Sikkim, Lepcha has been facing a huge problem on the issue of Identity.

The chapter discuss on the economy and unique culture of the Lepchas who are at present opposing development projects in the form of Hydro power projects in the Dzongu as they feel that such development activities will take away their land, physical resources and unique culture from them. As in Sikkim, Lepcha people are basically divided into different religious' adherence that is Buddhist, Christian and animism. Hence, in this pursuit the chapter will explore the actual impact of hydro power projects of Sikkim society.

It aims to explore the connection between these community concepts to understand the relationship of hydro power project impacts on Lepcha community in Sikkim. This chapter also discusses positive and negative concepts of hydro power project have been give particular attention to explore its impact on Lepcha community. The chapter also addresses the environmental vulnerability and loss of livelihood opportunities based on availability of local resource of small communities in the name of development by taking the case study of the Lepchas.

### **3.2. Lepcha and their Origin**

The Lepchas claim themselves not only as the indigenous race of the Sikkim and the Darjeeling District, but also the very primitive people in the world (Tamsang; 1983). The Lepcha traditional says that in the beginning. The first and foremost primogenitors of the Lepcha, foodongthing and nazaongnyo were created by God from the pure, virgin snows of Kanchenjunga mountains pinnacle and sent them down to live, prosper and spread all over the fairy land of Mayel lyang that lies on the Kanchenjunga mountains (Tamlong; 2008).

According to the story of origin the first Lepcha couple Tukbothing and nazong nyu, their Adam and Eve respectively, were created by Itbu Mu from the fresh snow of Kangchendzonga's summit (Wangchuk and Mita Zulca; 2007). The Lepchas love to call themselves Mutanchi Rong meaning the beloved children of god. Mother Itbu-moo created an unique ancestors, Foodongthing and Nazong-Nu, man and women from holy of the Himalayans, as such even today, Lepchas worship the Himalayans as their guardian deity (Lama; 1994).

Fadong thing and Nazong Nyu being brother and sister committed sin as a result of which, seven ugly looking sons born by them later killed the good looking eighth one and then realising of their sins, they prayed to god. God then forgave and bless them. The ten sons then born to them are regarded as the forefather of the Lepchas (Das; 1962).

Itbu-moo the mother creator creating everything upon earth and in the heavens set about executing and fulfilling her great plan. After what she thought was completion of her work. Even after that she was not quite satisfied till at last she thought of giving Tukbothing, her pet creation a companion, as female. So, it is said

that taking out a little bit of nung youg or the marrow from Tukbothing's own bones Nazong Nyu was created (Forning; 1987).

The aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim are the Lepchas and the language they use is Lepcha. Their origin is uncertain, as they did not enter sikhim across the Himalayans or from the Tibet, but are assume to have come from the east along the foothills from the direction of Assam and upper Burma (White; 1988). The Lepcha have no custom of exodus and the place the home of their ancestor's people of Mayel in one of the inaccessible valley of Kanchenjunga (Gorer; 1938).

Lepchas, or as they call themselves, the Rongpa or Ravine folk, a most charming people whose origin is obscure, though it is thought that they migrated to their present abode along foothills of the Himalayans from the east, not from Tibet. They are distinct race, with a language, both spoken and written, of their own, and with very marked characteristics (Dozey; 1922). The Lepchas are the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, who call themselves Rong, i.e. the squatter, and their country the land of caves (Malley; 1999).

The Lepchas who call themselves Rong Pa (ravine folk) are believed to have been the original inhabitants of Sikkim. the Bhatia's bounds to the Lepchas date back to more than 500 years when a blood brotherhood was established between their tribal chiefs at Kabi Lungtsok in north Sikkim (Joshi; 2004).

Lepchas are supposed to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim (Ghatak; 1993). When countless generations Lepchas had been to roam large parts of Sikkim, being the original inhabitants of the country (Pin; 1987). The Lepcha are the original inhabitants of Darjeeling and Sikkim, which the Lepchas fondly called the Mayel lyang or the abode of the gods. Regarding the Lepchas there are different versions.

One version says that it was the Nepalis who called them Lapches meaning vile speakers. Another version says that Lepcha was a type of fish found in Nepal, having the characteristics of being submissive like the Lepcha (Yasin and Durga P Chhetri; 2012).

### **3.2.1. Religion of the Lepchas**

The Lepcha have their own ancient religion called boonhthingism and munism. Their religion is simple. They believe in the existence of a god called rum, and to him they offer prayers and thanksgiving. The first fruits of the season are always offered to God. They also believe evils sprits which causes illness and misfortune, and to them they also offering sacrifices (Tamsang; 1983). The muns and the bongthing were the mediators between God and men and as protectors of men against the machinations of the demons (Joshi; 2004).

Pleasing and pampering mungs or devils were the way of life of the Lepchas. Many people still fear touching sacred and secret things kept in Lepcha homes or treading on the Lepcha ginger field or fruits and vegetables garden, as sometimes their hands get immobilized due to certain invisible powers which only the Lepcha head of the family can cure. It is also said that similar experience will be faced when going; in backyard garden of Rais or Limbus, which in Nepali is called “Dewa Lagyo”, meaning ‘Affected by God’ (Tamlong; 2008). According to the above statement about the fear touching secret thing has been still practised and people had believe on that and without owner permission no one touched their secret things which is kept in home or at field.

It is possible that before the conversion on Lamaism, the Lepcha felt more strongly that they possessed that only correct way of dealing with the supernatural

power, but now they have accepted that there are two alternative methods for dealing with nearly every devil they can accept without difficulty further alien methods founded on similar hypothesis (Gorer; 1938). The Bongthing and Muns are the Lepcha Shaman religious priests and the mediators between the God- “Rum” spirits souls and the sole liberators of the Lepcha souls after death. The Lepcha Shaman priests (Bongthing and Muns) have no written texts for prayer or worship of nature (Subba; 2009).

The great mother creator created bongthing and who she sends down for us. He was specially made not only to control these trouble making mungs, but was also to do everything for our welfare (Forning; 1987). Therefore, till now when Lepcha family organised any religious service than they invite Bongthing and arrange lots of offering thing. Which Bongthing have to offer as sacrifices to mungs for rescuing people from the troubles. Specially, Lepcha of Dzungu by faithfully and with honour they follow up their actual doctrine according to the myth.

The chief work of the Mun is to ward off the misfortunate and illness of the Devils (mung). The daily lives of the Lepcha, their religion and ceremonies are based on an effort to propitiate these mung with ritual, sacrifices and incarnation (Ghatak; 1993). In Lepcha community Bongthing is traditionally a male shaman who presides at frequent religious ceremonies and seasonal festivals and may heal sensitive illness. The mun is a female shaman, is a healer who exorcises demons, help to heal illness and appearance souls to the afterlife. It is possible for a Bongthing to develop into Mu, in Sikkim such healers are known as Padem (Heleen; 2005).

Before adopting Buddhism and Christianity as their religion, the earliest Lepcha settlers were believers in the bon faith and Mun faith. The faith was basically

based on spirits, good and bad. Witchcraft and exorcism were very common. They worshipped spirits of mountains, river and forests which was but natural for a tribe that co-existed so harmoniously with the rich natural surroundings. The well-known deities of the Lepchas are Itbumoo, rom, Itbu Debu Rom, Kongchen Konglo and Tamsang Thing, who is also said to have invented the Lepcha script (Verma; 2002).

Both Buddhism and Christianity have influence the Lepcha community and their belief system. Since 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Lepcha people were converted to Buddhism, though indigenous Lepcha shamanism managed to coexist with Buddhist customs and belief. Both Buddhist lama and Lepcha bongthing supervise at many important ceremonies in Lepcha life, each of them perform their own rituals (Plaiser; 2005). The Lepcha really accept Christianity because it gives lots of material advantages in regard to medicines, legal help and general moral rising advice (Awasty; 1978 ).

As we all know that after influence of Buddhism and Christianity in Sikkim, animism has diminishing from Lepchas community. But somehow people still believe on spirits, good and bad. Bongthing perform their ritual work through the help of spirits because their faith basically based on spirits of natural phenomenon.

### **3.2.2. Culture of the Lepchas**

In Sikkim Lepcha people divided into three category i.e. animism, Buddhism and Christianity. Therefore, each community have their own way of cultural value systems. Indigenous Lepcha claim themselves nature worshipper and worship natural phenomena. Lepcha were nature worshiper and behind their each and every cultural practice had some logic like on festival, ceremonies and religious way first Nambun: One major festival of the Lepchas is the Nambun which marks the beginning of the

New Year. This occasion celebrated during the month of December and January or it depends on the new moon falls. According to the Lepcha myth that god tashey thing defeat the devils laso mungs and this day organising festival to celebrate the victory over evils. The purification and ritual performance will be doing by Bongthing.

Mayel Lyang or the country the original utopian land of our tribe was fertile, fruitful and prosperous. But the time come when the children started forgetting of Itbu-moo and became negligent in offering sacrifices and prayer. So, the great mother was hurt. The big black shiny pamolbu the very embodiment of evil in the serpent form took that as his cue. This cursed creature true it its evil nature, now went and blocked the flow of the two main rivers rongmit and rong-nyu flowing through the prosperous Mayel country (Forning; 1987).

At last the whole of the prosperous land became a mass of water destroying everything. The flood started abating. Now the few who had followed the partridge also succeeded in reaching the top and they were saved. So, every year during the monsoon season the mount-tendong and the occasion have been declare as a holiday in Sikkim this festival is called Tendong Rum Fat (Forning; 1987).

From the above description we got clear about the background of the Tendong Rum Fat and the value of that culture for the Lepchas community. In Bible book of Genesis 7: 12 Lord God became angry with his own creature, because they started to worship other god and goddesses. Therefore, the floodgates of the heavens were opened and rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. From this statement the relation between Lepcha culture and Christian had an authentic resemblance.

The river Teesta is not just a source of water, but the very lifeline of Sikkim and an ancient Lepcha myth, a furious Teesta caused a flood when he lost the race to

his lover, the sacred river Rangit. In this ancient myth, the rest of Sikkim was flooded and all life perished in that great flood (Arora; 2007). According to Lepcha myth, human beings started forgetting Mother Nature and negligent in offering, sacrifices and prayers to mother Itbu-moo. Hence, the flowing waters of two rivers i.e. Teesta and Rangit started rising till a time came when all the land was submerged under the great flood.

Therefore, on August 8, the Lepchas annually worship Mount Tendong, as this mountain offered sanctuary to human, animal, and other living creatures during the flood caused by the river Teesta. During these prayers, gods and the spirits of the land are propitiated to ensure the fertility of the land, maintain the environmental balance, and ensure peace and harmony in Sikkim, the Darjeeling Hills and the entire world (Arora; 2007). Their ways of life is so much accustomed to the mountains that they observe their traditional nature worshipping festivals such as the festival of Tendong Lho-Rum-Faat whereby Lepchas pay offering to the Tendong Hill which saved their tribe from eradication in the great flood.

Lepchas traditional dress were male wear cap (lepchas wear two types of cap, called thyak tuk in Lepcha thyak from athayk i.e. head and tuk means cover) tago (male shirt is called tago and it covers the upper body from the hip upwards. From the chest upward it is open and end with stiff high neck) tamu (it is Lepcha trouser which goes up to the calf) and dum-praa (a thick shawl type cloth and is wore over tago and tamu) female wear tago (a loose shirt made of thin and light cloth material with long sleeves which are folded at the wrists when worn) dum-bun or dum dem or gado (fine and soft cloth materials used for usually made into dum dem) and tago (a head scarf called tago is also worn by the ladies usually) (Tamlong; 2008).



It is only in Dzongu and in one or two small villages outside the reserve that there is a homogeneous Lepcha society, particularly undisturbed by alien influence (Gorer; 1996). According to the Lepcha myth that Lepcha people had been practised their culture as to do nature worshipped. Their each and every culture is emotionally involved with the nature. Lepcha's festival like Tendong Rum fat, Namsong and when we analysis historical background of this festival than it was directly implicated with nature. However, in Sikkim Lepcha community divided into three parts that is Animism, Buddhist and Christianity. But the cultural practices have been pursuing by only Lepcha Animism and Buddhist. In every culture and custom Lepcha priests who known as Bongthing played his important role through the help of supernatural spirit.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> month Pang Lhabsol this is annually held of Tibetan calendar and both the Lepcha and the Bhutia community participate in this celebration with the Buddhist Lamas and the Lepchas Bongthing and Muns also taking active part. Another objective of the celebration was to encourage and perpetuate the unification of the Bhutias and Lepchas. In the year fell on 28<sup>th</sup> August and nowadays the occasion is considered as a celebration of Unity Day of Lepcha-Bhutia-Nepali (Tamlong; 2008).

According to the Sikkim chronicles that there were three tribe people who was originally inhabitant of Sikkim i.e. (Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali) and each tribe had their own custom and culture. Three tribes had been directly or indirectly attached with nature worshiper and they worshiped the natural phenomenon. First, in Sikkim traditionally Lepchas were nature worshippers. They worship all other natural elements like peaks, rivers, lakes, streams, cloud, water, soil, tree, rain and sun of the region. Through the help of Lepcha priest they offering sacrifices and offer prayer to their respective ancestors and mount Kanchenjunga. Muk-Zik-Ding-Rum-Faat is the offering to Mother Nature for timely and sufficient rain, mist and good climate for

habitation and vegetation. The Faat is observed during March-April i.e. the period of germination (Roy; 2011).

It is said that in the evening of each Faat there is at least one shower of rain. Chu-Rum-Faat is the offering to Mount Kanchenjunga and other peaks who are the divine deity of the Lepchas. Tendong-Lho-Rum-Faat is the special offering to Tendong peak of Sikkim which is believed to cause deluge in the by gone days. The government of Sikkim has declared 8<sup>th</sup> of August as state holiday to celebrate the occasion. Lyaang-Rum-Faat is the offering and prayer to Mother Earth. Mut-Rum-Faat is the offerings to jungle spirit and the Lepchas praise the spirit both before and after hunting (Roy; 2011).

Lepcha were animism and they worshiped mount Kanchenjunga but after 17<sup>th</sup> century Tibet red hat followers migrated in Sikkim and they influence Buddhism towards animism society. But according to their myth they also believe on nature elements wind, water and air. The majority of Lepchas became Buddhists after the migration and settlement of Bhutias into Sikkim. However they continued practicing shamanism, their indigenous relation along with Buddhism.

The eastern Himalaya has always been considered as a distinct phytogeographical region, it stretches over Sikkim, Darjeeling Hills, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. The climate and water system of the eastern Himalaya substantially influence the other north-eastern states, namely, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura, even though they are separated by the mighty Brahmaputra river. In view of geographical contiguity and political reorganisation of the region in India and for purposes of better understanding of the ecological phenomena and several volumes would be needed to tell the entire story of

interaction among humans and nature in the eastern Himalaya. It offers an account of wetlands, forests and belief systems, problems arising from modernisation processes and the pace of change. Such knowledge is a crucial step towards formulation of sustainable development programme (Singh; 2001).

Buddhist worships the spirits of land and water for good health, ample rains, excellent harvest and prosperity. The curving for protected against malignant gods, spirits and demons causes the people to pain their faith on charms and amulets and erect tall prayer flags, with string of flag lets, which flutter from house tops, bridge, passes and other places believed to be infested by evil spirits (Bashan; 2009).

On 19<sup>th</sup> century the colonization period or on British period in Sikkim they invented new dimensions like transportation through road and tea plantation and that time outsider migrated over Sikkim they are Nepalese (Rai, Limboos). Rai kirati people believe in their holy book Mundhum and practices their religion according to that Mundhum is an oral tradition, which is passed on from generation to generation. Mundhum teaches the Rai people many things that the earth is our mother and we have to care for her. We should only take from the earth what is needed and nothing more is truthful and honest at all times. In every type of traditional rituals the performers are mostly Rai kirati people using traditional natural things (Bhadur; 2012).

It also shows that these people are nature worshiper. For example still today in the Rai people's house everybody keeps three stone in separate places for worship. They took these stone as their god suminma and paruhang for that sila (stone) as well as their origin god, universe, ancestors and well-wisher. To respect nature the Rai

people worship their god twice a year in the name of the sakela sili festival, wishing for goods crop, good harvesting and good future for all creatures (Bhadur; 2012).

Yuma is the ultimate Goddess of Limboo, they consider her as the Goddess of progenation and believe that she blesses them for their all round development. In the field of learning she is equated with Goddess Sarswati, with Goddess Laxmi in matters of wealth and with Lord Bishnu in matters of providing them with the amenities for comfortable and congenial life, but idol worship of Goddess Yuma and animal sacrifice for her is prohibited. The rituals to worship Yuma are simple. The ceremony is conducted by recognized priests known as Phedangma, Yewa, or Yema but in case of non availability of such priests any elderly person of the tribe can perform and conduct the ceremony, but the service of a Phedangma has to be sought for in case the influence of the evil spirits have to be warded off. Limboos are nature worshippers so the eight steps of their manghim can be compared with the eight aspects of nature such as, earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, brain and pride. The other items of offerings to Yuma such as water trumbles, diyo, handful of corn, incense sticks, teetaypati and flowers are items also enough to indicate their Nature worshipping nature. However, the comparison of the eight steps of manghim with the customary Chaudhalok of Hindu religion cannot be denied altogether (Sigger; 1967).

According to the above declaration about the nature worshipper of Sikkim we came to know that, how profundity Sikkimese people honour and respect the nature and want to live close with nature. In Sikkim, not only Lepcha people worshiped the nature but Bhutia, Rai and Limbo community also had an emotional attachment with the nature and somehow, they also worship the nature elements. Like, their religious activities have been implicated with nature that is Tree, fire, air, sky, river etc. Each natural elements has an own significance on righteous work and with the help of these

nature elements animism community perform their religious activity. Therefore, they so honour and respect the natural elements and worshiped them.

### **3.2.3. The Lepcha Language**

In Sikkim, Lepcha is one of eleven official languages. Lepcha is taught in schools, there is a textbook department that develops official learning materials, there is a Lepcha edition of a government newspaper, the Sikkim Herald, and the government radio station broadcasts news bulletins and cultural programmes in the Lepcha language (Plaisier; 2005).

The Lepcha scripts is said to be related to be Tibetan alphabet. To the naked eye, there appear to be flourishes of the Urdu script as well. The Tibetan script appears nearer to the Sanskrit model (Awasty; 1978). The Lepcha language is very ancient, having no traces whatsoever of Mongolian, Semitic or Indo-Germanic origin and that it was given by giving God while creating the first primogenitors. The Language is highly developed and comprehensive that it can express anything and everything and for all purposes (Tamsang; 1983).

The Lepcha language, though cannot compare with Latin and Sanskrit is more ancient than any other Indian tribal languages (Dahal; 1984). Just like the tribe itself, the origin of our language is shrouded in mystery. None can say for certain from where it originated, and how it became the mother tongue of a tribe living right in the lap of the mighty Himalayas unknown and unseen till as late as the seventeenth century (Forning; 1987).

The Original Lepcha language was considered unfashionable and inferior and thus the Lepcha language was uprooted and crushed to the very dust, a hatred policy if the then victorious British government upon the vanquished Lepcha victims. Not only

this, but the despotic Bhutia kings of Sikkim and their dogmatic lamas forcibly compelled the simple and the innocent Lepcha to adopt Lamaism and disseminated Tibetan language, culture, customs way of life and living etc to the Lepcha (Tamsang; 1983).

After profound thought general Mainwaring came to the conclusion that not only were the Lepchas the descendents of our first parents, but that as could be simply shown by a device to the general called the power of letters, the Lepcha was the language spoken in the garden of Eden (Gorer; 1996 ). The Lepcha, Language which is far anterior to Greek, and perhaps not less old than Sanskrit. The Lepcha language is one of the most scientific languages while naming things the Lepcha categories the things under different heads and starts the names of a particular group with a particular letter (Thakur; 1988).

The Buddhist Lamas came from Tibet and started to get the Tibetan religions scriptures and books translated into the language of the aboriginal Lepchas. This was primarily and mainly undertaken for the purpose of proselytizing the shamanistic autochthons, and converting them to their faith, Buddhism. According to some scholars, whatever books there were in the land were collected and made a bonfire of (Forning; 1987).

The Lepcha language though said to be 5,000 years old and invented by the Byjo-Menchy Olong and Sayun (according to the Dhendop Lepcha), is hardly spoken today except by the older generation. Nepali has become the lingua franca for the region. But rather beautiful Lepcha scripts exist and a printing press at Kalimpong has the Lepcha types for printing purposes (Awasty; 1978).

However, according to philologist, one thing is certain that this language comes within the Tibeto-Burma group of language that is spoken by the innumerable tribes inhabiting the stretch of the sub Himalayan region curving down through Patkai-Naga hills in the sub-mountainous regions of Arakan-Pegu Yomas and Tenasserin, down south in Burma and beyond (Forning; 1987).

Father Rey holds that the Lepcha language is Monosyllabic and is a corrupted form of Tibetan. Bhutia too is a form of Tibetan but the Bhutia and Lepcha dialects are unintelligible to each other. The Lepcha script is said to have been intensively studied by General G.C. Mainwaring at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to General Mainwaring, Lepcha was the language spoken by the Adam and Eve and hence older than Sanskrit or Urdu (Awasty; 1978).

#### **3.2.4. Lepcha Scriptures**

The origin of the Lepcha script is controversial. Some claim that it was invented by Thekong Mensakong, legendary figure among the tribesmen. He lived towards the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Others say and believe that it was given along with the mountains, rivers and lakes by Itbu-Moo, the mother creator herself. The latter of course, may be viewed and dismissed as a fairy tale like the theory itself. As for the invention by thekong mensakong, we can see that it is nothing but just glorifying a legendary hero. Till now, no document or proof of any kind has been found testifying to the validity of this theory (Forning; 1987).

The wise Lama Lhatsun with the view of proselytising Buddhism in Sikkim got the legends of the guru rimbochhi and other Tibetan scriptures translated and written in Lepcha and produced which are now known as Namthar. These Namthar were widely circulated and it was some sort of a bible to be kept at Lepcha Homes

(Tamlong; 2008). Some Tibetan scholar of repute such as Tsepon Shakabpa say that in a book written by lama Khajan Ngawa, it is mentioned that it was lama Lhatsum Nangkha Jigme, reverently called Lhatsum Clhempo by the Sikkimese who gave the script of the language to the Lepcha (Forning; 1987).

In Dzongu literacy is exclusively confined to the reading of the Tibetan scriptures and has no sort of influence or use in everyday life; lamas who can read religious books and write religious formulas are quite incapable of reading or writing a letter in any language. As will be seen later this factual illiteracy puts the Lepchas at the considerable disadvantage in their commercial transactions (Gorer; 1996). Earlier, Lepcha manuscripts narrating Lepcha mythology and legends which, according to Gorer and even father Rey, were destroyed by the Tibetans Lamas in their Zeal to convert the Lepchas. This Views of the Fanaticism of Lamaism in Sikkim is held by the Christians missionaries (Awasty; 1978).

### **3.2.5. Economy and Political Background of Lepcha**

The Lepcha, who were living in settlements, consisting of a few extended families, were probably not governed by a chief or king as such. There is a concept of kingship existing among in Lepchas. But this is of mythical order. In practical, it is doubtful whether the tribal organisation headed by a worrier chief as an institution (Awasty; 1978). When Khye Bumse came to meet the heads of the Lepchas, he could meet only legendry Thekung Tek in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and considering the blood covenant was also taken not with any raja but with Thekung Tek, there is a possibility there was no institution of Lepchas king in Sikkim, at least at the part of Sikkim were the two great leaders of the two communities met in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Tamsang; 2008).



The man who organised the first tribal setup to which all the people brought to was one named Turve who was given the title of Punu. But by this time the Limbus belonging to the kirat tribes had already occupied the south western part of the country which led to frequent encounters between the two tribes. It seems that the Punu Turve was killed in one of these encounters. There appears to have been two more punus after which the title which could be equated to that of the raja became extinct. Turve Pano has been mentioned as the first king of Lepchas by numerous historians, but the period of his rule is debatable, it can be between the period 1400 to 1700 AD (Tamsang; 2008).

The agricultural land in Dzongu land is divided into two categories: the land under permanent cultivation and the land which is cleared for crops once in every eight years. The permanent cultivations are of three types, there is the field garden against the house, cardamom fields and rice terraces. The two latter types of cultivation, which are now of a very great importance in Lepcha life, are both very modern. Cardamom was introduced at the beginning of the century, rice terraces for wet paddy less than twenty years ago.

Potentially this permanent cultivation has introduced a new note into Lepcha life, though so far the effect is not noticeable. Both cardamom fields and rice terraces demand a certain amount of hard initial labour, after which they acquire as it were a capital value; this is less true of cardamom, which needs replanting every ten years, than of the rice terraces to build these a considerable amount of work is needed, but once they are made a heavy crop can be raised from them with relatively little labour (Gorer; 1996).

The present day politico-administrative structure has evolved from a very simple system existed hundreds of years ago in Sikkim. The political structure existed than was basically the reflection of a simple and carefree tribal society with tribal chief as their ruler/kings. As mentioned earlier the Lepcha king called “Panu” and the spiritual leaders’ Bongthing or Athing used to occupy important position in the political and socio-religious life of the Lepcha community.

AR Forning though does not support the theory of lepcha rules and contends that the Lepcha do not believe in the system of gradation or ranking a sixteenth century document granting permission to the Tsongs (Limboos) to settle in the mayel lyang (Sikkim) however is indicative of the presence of a determinate source of authority whose position in the Lepcha society was undoubtedly superior to others. The Lepcha however lost their authority with the solicitation of legendry brotherhood. Post with the migratory Bhutia patriarch Khye Bumsa. In 1642 Phuntshog Namgyal a Bhutia peasant was called Chogyal (Dharmaraja) of the Tibetan origin at Yoksum in west Sikkim. He was described as the descendent of the brave ancestors of the Kham province in eastern Tibet (Gurung; 2011).

Gyeba Achhyok as last of the Lepcha kings who ruled from 1730. These forts that he built and the battle battles that the fought with the Sikkimese Bhotia king and with the Bhutanese king were not a communal battle. It had been a struggle of a freedom fighter aganist the aggressors. Though King Gyebu Achyok Pano lost his life, he cherished liberty more than anything else in life 200 years ago (Forning; 1987).

### **3.2.6. Dzongu the Lepcha Reserve**

Dzongu, the personal estate of the Maharaja of Sikkim, was made the ‘Lepcha Reserve’, perhaps in the wake of unchecked entry of more and more outsider into

Sikkim in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was done to ostensive keep the Lepchas protected, but the prime objective may well be to keep the Lepchas there unaffected by the outside influences so that the palace could have steady supply of docile and loyal servants as and when needed.

The village, situated at the base of the Kanchenjunga and included in the Kanchenjunga National park, is almost triangular in shape, having approximately forty miles on each side. Dzongu must have been so named, because it was made to look like a fort or jail from the outside, since ‘Dzongu’ usually indicates fort or jail in Bhutanese territory. No outsiders were allowed to visits this Dzongu area of Sikkim except with the specific permission of the Durbar and was total restriction on the transform of land to outsides (Tamlong; 2008).

Dzongu has traditionally been a Lepcha stronghold. Its steep ravines must have made it unpleasant to the Bhutia community who were basically herders and required out pastures it isolation and has terrain made it unfavourable for agriculture which was the specialisation of the Nepalese community. The Limboos, recognised as the autochthons of Sikkim alongside the Lepchas and Bhutias, were concentrated more towards south and west Sikkim, leaving Dzongu free through history for the Lepchas. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the king of Sikkim gave the Dzongu tract in dowry to his wife and this ensured even more exclusivity for the province.

The Lepcha reserve in North Sikkim, Dzongu, which borders the Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve, is an emerging eco-tourism destination, supported by the Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) as a response to concerns for the upcoming younger generation of Dzongu who were keen to explore alternative opportunities for the educated youth who would provide avenues for self-

employment within Dzongu. Dzongu is worthy of the eco-tourism description (Little; 2009).

It is a protected area, abundant with eco-narrative tropes: verdant vegetation, a small number of inhabitants (6,000), the birdsong, the roaring rivers, the cleanliness, the godliness, and the mother-mountain, Kanchenjunga, strong, protective, benevolently looking down on her Lepcha children. It is a remote place, most parts being hard to reach and its status as a Lepcha reserve has given it precious breathing space from the flight to modernization afflicting other sacred places, long given up for the greater common good.

The majority of the Sikkim population consists of Nepalese, Hindu and Tibetan immigrants. In the places where the last-mentioned have intermarried with the local population, their offspring is called Bhutia. The Nepalese are especially numerous, and in order to prevent them from completely taking the Land from the Lepchas, the Sikkim Government have reserved a particular district by name Dzongu in the central and northern part of the country for the Lepchas. Hence, the Teesta hydel project and its performance may lead to the loss of the Dzongu the ancient Lepcha reserve which may result in ethnocide, the vanishing of the cultural heritage of the Lepchas that is rooted to their ancestral connections and performance of rituals connected to the natural phenomenon in general.

From the above statement, we came to know that Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community. According to the Lepcha folklore Itbu-mu mother creator create Lepcha ancestor from the fresh snow ball and they believed that after death their soul will stay behind on this holy snow mountain. Therefore, Lepcha of Dzongu community believed that the land of Dzongu is holy for them and they worshipped the

nature that is river Teesta, land and mountain etc. During the time of Chogyal Lepcha were allowed that the Dzongu is reserve area and whoever wanted to visit than they have to be taking out permit for it.

### **3.3. Modernization and its Impact on Lepcha Community**

The impact of modernization shows on cultural practice because they prefer the westernized in their style of living. They have change their food habits and especially about their traditional dress. Nowadays, indigenous people of Sikkim wear their traditional dress only on occasion or ritual services and due to the lack of language practices the identity were diminishing from society. As for example in Bhutan at home, school, college and every where each citizen has to wear their traditional dress and they have to speak their own language, therefore till now they were success to preserve their tradition way of life. But in Sikkim due to the modernization people influence towards the western lifestyle and forget to practice their own language and traditional dress and nowadays due to the lack of practicing the traditional way of life indigenous inhabitant has to face diminishing or vanishing identity in own land.

Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community and they were passive and shy nature but due to the modernization multidimensional opportunity urbanization has been materialize and slow moving legend of a place and its people who were gradually shifting from a traditional life as hunters and cardamom farmers to a modern life. Specially, the young generation of Lepchas the first educated generation as they refer to themselves are studying in the larger cities of New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, some of them live in Gangtok and working in Government Job. Hence, due to the modernization opportunity shift majority of youngster living outside from their native land (Little; 2010).

Surround and submerged from all sides, there has occurred gradual change in the lives of Lepchas and they have had to adjust themselves to aggressive influences of the surrounding. The Tibetans imposed Buddhism on them, the missionaries brought Christianity on them, and the Nepalese spread their culture and language among them. Unlike their neighbouring Nepalese tribes such as the Limbus, Rais and Magars etc. The Lepchas did not get assimilated into the wider society they could somehow preserve their identity. Some tenets of their old culture and traditions are still retained by the Lepcha Buddhist as well as Lepcha Christians despite their adoption of alien religions (Tamlong; 2003).

According to the Sikkim chronicles that Lepcha is an indigenous inhabitant and they were nature worshiper or animism. But after 17<sup>th</sup> century the impact of Modernization ruled over Sikkim and Lepcha animism had been influenced by Bhutia and Christian religion. So, due to that transformation of Lepcha identity it's create vanishing Tribe in own land. The animism Lepcha believe on Bounghing for their ritual services but due to the conversion of animism into Buddhism the role of Bounghing remain with animism only. Later on, Buddhist Lepcha prefer lama for their ritual ceremonies. And Christianity totally avoids every animism custom and culture and they adopt new one. So, the impact of modernization brings huge revolution on the culture of Lepcha because it divided into three religions and each has their own customs and culture. .

Modernizing agents have played a vital role in eroding the identity of the Lepcha. Which ultimately lead to a conflict between those who believe in sanctity of the place and original habitat of the Lepchas and those who believe that the only way forward is through bringing project? But, Modernization in itself is much need for development of any society including the Lepchas. However, the Lepchas been

relatively docile and God fearing people, who have not been able to sustain the impact of various form of modernization. The carrying capacity of the place and the people are not equipped to face such inroads in their way of life. Moreover there is also the issue of defining modernization in context of the remote areas.

The Modernization project has divided the minuscule Lepcha community. Largely against the agents, but again large numbers being agent of the government will support globalizing even at cost of their own identity. The effort to prevent the Lepcha culture from vanishing is a continuous process with large number of concerned people working tirelessly towards it. It is the ones who for economic reason who disturb such efforts that have caused more harm. The Lepcha of the world mainly from Darjeeling hills, Nepal, Bhutan and all over the world have supported the natural way of life for the Lepcha. Devastating level, as mentioned earlier large tracts of land have been taken away large number of people from other areas will settle down etc. The ACT has provided free information to the people about the pros and cons of mega projects, which will have a serious impact of the lives of the Lepchas in coming future. ACT has succeeded in awakening the consciousness of the people to deal with such a situation.

The Lepcha myth and Bible's creation story has a similar way of description and when Christian translated their religious book into Lepcha Language than they easily converted into Christianity. The indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim now became a dominant community by outsider namely Nepalese, Bhutia and Limboo. The modernization was emerging in Sikkim during the Buddhist kingdom and later on when Sikkim merge with Indian union numerous developmental have been come over the established society.

### **3.3.1. Lepcha Influence in Sikkim**

Phuntsog Namgyal as per the advice of Lhasun chembo initiated a Lepcha Yugthing Tishay, into the mystic rites of Rig-hzin srong-hgrub, restricted to the three Lamas who had participated in the enthronement ceremony of Raja and it has also been pointed out that the first Raja had appointed twelve Kazees from Bhutia and equal numbers of Jongpens from among the leading Lepchas. While establishing his kingdom Phuntsog Namgyal several domains under the care of Lepcha chief and even appointed one of his prime minister. Later Chogyal took Lepcha wife reinforcing the fact that the marital ties had to be maintained in respect to the equal status enjoyed by the two communities in Sikkim (Wangchuk and Mita Zulka; 2007).

Hence more or less in keeping with the spirit of blood brotherhood covenant , the Lepcha were associated by the first Chogyal in the administration of his kingdom and as a result of this farsightedness of his policy, his kingdom extended from Chumbi in Tibet upto Arun River in Nepal and similarly in the south and East (Tamlong; 2003).

### **3.4. Historical Overview of Hydro Power Project in Dzongu North Sikkim**

Foundation of Power (Energy) sector in Sikkim was laid on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1927 with the commissioning of first micro hydel project at Ranikhola near Gangtok with the installed capacity of 50 KW. During this era, activities under power sector in Sikkim were not at all significant. Till the year 1954, operation and maintenance of power supply system were managed with the help of a foreman and an electrician, under the supervision of Sikkim Public Works Department. In the year 1957, keeping in view of growing demand for electricity and as a standby measure, a Diesel power house was established and commissioned at Gangtok with a capacity of 257 KW. The then Prime Minister of India late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated it on October 1,1958.



Following this development one more 150 KW SKODA Diesel generating set was added in this Diesel Power House. The year 1974 witnessed an important historical event in Sikkim<sup>6</sup>.

India's hydropower potential is about 148,700 MW and currently about 32,442 MW is under operation. In 1974, a committee was constituted to study the hydropower potential in Sikkim. A preliminary survey revealed that power on river Teesta can be generated in a cascade arrangement in six stages. At present, Sikkim has 95.7 MW in its power system, out of which 68.4 MW (12% of energy generated by NHPC) are received as free energy from Individual Power Producers (IPPs) and 5 MW from thermal plants. The rest is contributed to the system by small hydropower plants, though some of them are not in normal operation. Sikkim welcomes private developers for developing and exploiting its hydropower potential, which has been assessed to 8000 MW peak with a firm base of 3000 MW. The Sikkim Power Development Corporation Limited has granted permission for 22 different hydro power projects, which will generate 4,924 MW.

Therefore, in 1995 the Association of Buddhist monks submitted a memorandum to the government of Sikkim to act against proposal. This was followed by a writ petition being filed at the supreme court of India by the association of Buddhist monks, Bhutia-Lepcha association and the tribal women's association. This petition was transferred to the Sikkim high court. The year 1995 also witnessed massive protest by concerned citizens of Sikkim (CCS) and organization that came together to raise their voice against the silence of the government on this matter.

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<sup>6</sup>ENVIS Centre: Sikkim Status of Environment and Related Issues Hosted By Forests, Environment & Wildlife Management Department, Government of Sikkim Sponsored by Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Govt of India.

The list of upcoming hydro power projects are shown below.

**Table 3.1 Upcoming Hydro Power Projects in Sikkim (2009-2013)**

Sl no	Project Name	Capacity (MW)	Developer Company	Probable Date of Commissioning	Present Status
1	Teesta Stage -I	280	Himalayan Green Energy (P) Ltd	2012-13	Under Investigation
2	Teesta Stage -II	330	Him Urja Infra (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
3	Teesta Stage -III	1200	Teesta Urja Ltd	2011-12	DPR ready
4	Teesta Stage-IV	495	NHPC Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
5	Teesta Stage-V	500	Lanco Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	DPR ready
6	Lachen	210	NHPC Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
7	Panan	280	Himgiri Hydro Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	DPR ready
8	Rangyong	117	BSCPL-SCL Joint Venture	2011-12	Under Investigation
9	Rongnichu	96	Madhya Bharati Power Corporation	2011-12	DRP Ready
10	Sada-Mangde	71	Gati Infrastructures Ltd	2011-12	DRP Ready
11	Chuzachen	99	Gati Infrastructures Ltd	2009-10	Under Construction
12	Bhasmey	51	Gati Infrastructures Ltd	2011-12	DRP Ready
13	Rolep	36	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2009-10	DRP Ready
14	Chakung Ch	50	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
15	Ralong	40	Amalgamated Transpower India Lt	2011-12	Under Investigation
16	Rangit-II	60	Sikkim Ventures (P) Ltd	2011-12	DRP in final stage
17	Rangit-IV	120	Jal Power Corporation Ltd	2011-12	DRP
18	Dikchu H	96	Sneha Kinetic Power Projects Ltd	2011-12	
19	Jorethang Loop	96	DANS Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
20	Thangchi	499	Lachung Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	
21	Bimkyong	99	Teesta Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
22	Bop	99	Chungthang Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under Investigation
Total 4924					

Source: [www.Sikkimpower.org](http://www.Sikkimpower.org)

The government has now finalised a proposal for executing hydel project in the catchment areas of the river Teesta, which includes considerable areas under Dzongu, under the National Hydel Power Corporation, this is causing great concern to

the people who are facing the horns of dilemma (Tamlong; 2008). Hydro power in Sikkim has become a national development priority to the extent that it may be alleviate recurring energy shortages in the country and fuel economic growth. The mission to generate 5,000 MW in Sikkim by 2015 is part of India's 50,000 MW Hydro initiative launched in 2003 (Dharmadikary; 2008).

**Table 3.2 Current Hydro Power Projects in Sikkim (2015-2016)**

	<b>Sl no</b>	<b>Name of the Project</b>	<b>Capacity (MW)</b>	<b>Owner/developer</b>
<b>Functional projects</b>	1	Teesta Stage V HEP	510	NHPC Limited.
	2	Rangit Stage-III HEP	66	NHPC Limited.
	3	Chuzachen HEP	99	Gati Infrastructure Pvt Limited
<b>Projects expected to be functional soon</b>	4	Teesta Stage – III Hep	1200	Teesta urja limited
	5	Dikchu HEP	96	Sneha Kinetic Power Projects Pvt Ltd.
	6	Rangit- IV HEP	120	Jal Power Corporation Ltd.
	7	Jorethang Loop HEP	96	DANS Energy Pvt Ltd
	8	Rongnichu HEP	96	Madhya Bharat Power Corpn.Ltd
	9	Rangit-II HEP	66	Sikkim Hydropower Ventures Pvt Ltd
	10	Tashiding HEP	97	Shiga Energy Private Limited.

Source: Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SSERC -2015).

Prior to the visit of HH dalai Lama to Sikkim on march 24 this year, SIBLAC had written to the office of HH Dalai Lama in Dharamshala apprising him of the threat to the Buddhist legacy in Sikkim imposed by the Yashiding HEP. The appeal consisted of various letters of annexures by various Buddhist personalities including then

secretary, Ecclesiastical, Kyabje Drodubchen Rinpoche, then Lachen Rinpoche and late Denjong Khyen Rinpoche Dechen Dorje among others opposing the project in 1995. The letter concluded by seeking his holiness intervention in enlightening the government of Sikkim with your holiness precious Kalop to scrap the above Tashingding HEP in veneration of our age old tradition.

This appeal by SABLAC presented here is an effort to bring to notice how a minuscule section of civil society is keeping alive the conscience of the entire state the generation population, and by extension, its government seem to be wallowing in a mire brought on by self aggrandizement. Ecology and environment culture and ethnicity, which are so wonderfully woven into the identity of Sikkim, are relegated to provide a vague backdrop to the careless and casual path at exploitation both of the resources and statutes. And it seems the government is leading the way here.

That there is a standing Supreme Court directive against any kind of construction activity within 10km of national parks and sanctuary is not a revelation. This order has been standing for years. What comes as a revelation is that the government seems to have just awoken to this order. And in a hurry has written an appeal to the ministry of environment and forest to reconsider this condition which bars hydel projects within 10km of such sanctuaries. This essential for projects to be granted forest clearance and without which any project can't go ahead.

Teesta Stage-IV project general manager, D Chattopadhyay is quoted as having said, if the Supreme Court guidelines and MoEF guidelines are enforced, then not a single projects can be constructed in a small state like Sikkim. that may be true but then the state government thought is better to flout the norms and court directives and go ahead with construction rather than preferring an appeal. It was only last year

that the government thought it fit to put in an appeal and that too when the Tashidhing petition in the high court got too hot to handle. This dogged stance of the state government has already endangered the topography of the state especially those areas in the vicinity of the projects.

When reviewing the history of Sikkim, it quickly becomes apparent that many religious, political, economic and demographic changes have taken place in the areas inhabited by the Lepcha. Since, the changes that have been occurring in Sikkim are diverse and far reaching, that factors which cause to be vanishing and complex. Lepcha they like to call themselves indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim but during 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century indigenous people had to face abundant challenges in cultural value system. Due to the influence of Buddhism and Christianity that Animism society converted into other religion and had been cross out from vanishing tribe. But later on when Sikkim merge with Indian union again multidimensional opportunity come over and invention new transportation, industrialization, education and health sector.

The government has now finalised a proposal for executing hydel power project in the catchment areas of the river Teesta, which includes considerable areas under Dzongu, under national hydel Power Corporation, and this is causing great concern to the people who are facing the horns of dilemma. Dzongu valleys are considered a sacred region in the heart of the Lepcha as the place is associated with the mythological genesis of the Lepcha race.

The National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) and other private developers are entering in the hydropower sector in Sikkim. The State envisages that hydropower development will eventually lead to the overall infrastructural development here as hydropower generation involves construction of

dams, tunnel and power station which involves developing transport linkages, opens up employment opportunities and generates income enhancing the socioeconomic development of the population residing here (Subrata; 2013).

On July 11, 2007, Lepcha youth from Darjeeling district of West Bengal, led the Rong Ong Prongzom (Lepcha Youth Organisation) descended on Sikkim's sole lifeline to the rest of the country – National Highway 31A- and staged a protest there which held up traffic for nearly two hours. The protest was staged on the West Bengal side of the National Highway just beyond the south Sikkim border. On the 250<sup>th</sup> day of the hunger strike, ACT announced the Lepchas from Darjeeling and elsewhere would be undertaking a pilgrimage march from Melli in West Bengal to Dzongu in North Sikkim. Significantly, the opposing arguments have not contested this claim on record, but have only highlighted the Dzongu has never been introduced as a Holy Land in the Past. To this, ACT has argued that the need had never arisen since Dzongu had never been under threats in the past.

The appeal by Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) presented here is an effort to notice how a miniscule section of civil society is keeping alive the conscience of the entire state. The general population, and by extension its government, seem to be wallowing in a mire brought on by self aggrandizement. Ecology and environment, culture and ethnicity, which are so wonderfully woven onto the identity of Sikkim, are relegated to provide a vague backdrop to the careless and causal push at exploitation both of resources and statues. And it seems the government is leading the way here (Singh; 2013).

Throughout four district of Sikkim, Dzongu which is cones under north district of Sikkim where there are still have a genuine Lepcha who have a more knowledge

about their own culture in terms of oral traditions and ritual practices. Dzongu takes up a special place in the discussion of Lepcha culture and preservation of Lepcha traditional life. Therefore, the initiation of development project brought huge modernization impact on Dzongu reserve land of Sikkim. Modernization impact brought dynamic hamper on local people's way of lifestyles. Because Dzongu is a reserve Land for Lepcha community and the entire resident were Lepcha people and they speak only Lepcha language but due to the development project thousands of outsiders came to that land and mostly they speak Hindi languages.

Therefore, Modernization is highly needed in society, but at the same time people have feared also, because it brings new ideas and values and forces people to leave the villages in search of higher education and employment. Modernization generally and primary hamper the Lepcha of Dzongu face on conversation with outside people and the changes of in the Lepcha community over the past centuries have left traces on Lepcha culture. Buddhism and Christian religion initiate new values and beliefs, shaking the very foundations of the Lepcha community.

### **3.5. Impact of Hydro Power Project on Lepcha Community**

Out of the total hydro-power projects eight projects are directly or indirectly associated with the Dzongu area where 38 Lepcha villages are located. This area has been assessed to have a capacity of around 2500 MW of electricity. The Teesta stage III, IV, and V projects located in Panam, Rangyong, Rukel, Ringpi, Lingzya are directly or indirectly going to affect the Dzongu (Subrata; 2013).

Out of the 38 Lepcha villages located in the Dzongu reserved area the Dzongu village is the holiest place of all which is being directly affected by the Teesta V project. The hydro power projects here will take away the holy Teesta from the

Lepchas as the projects here are “run of the river” where the river water is diverted through long tunnels before the water is dropped back into the river at downstream location. This leads to most of the river flowing through tunnels and the river disappears from its original course, thus restricting rituals associated with the river (Subrata; 2013).

According to the Sikkim’s history, Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community which in turn contain a people belonging outside of Dzongu even Sikkimese people not from Dzongu are required to obtain a authorize to visit the reserve land. But, over the year a status of being reserved land for Lepcha have often been ignored or overlooked. For example, the initiation of mega hydro project has brought thousands of outsiders at reserve land and still they were working out there. Lepcha so love and respect the nature but after the initiation of power project the sanctity of that land have been infringed or destroyed by the modernization project. Lepcha worshiped the natural phenomenon and after having developmental project at Dzongu reserve the authentic reality and purity of environment turned into development process. The Lepcha of Dzongu faced huge challenges and problem after the commencement of hydro project.

### **3.6. Hydro Power Project and its Positive and Negative Impact**

In Dzongu, about 7000 population living and the forceful local resentment against hydro power projects located in the Dzongu as the Lepchas fear influx and settlement of the outsiders that will ultimately lead to the loss of their unique culture as they are small in number. Furthermore, the Panan hydro Project under Teesta VI is taking away the sacred sites Kagey Lha-Tso lake, the Drag Shingys caves and the Jhe-tsatsu and Kong Tsa-tsu hot springs too. The hot spring are said to be gifted with healing properties and are of medical importance to the Lepchas.



In the year of 2004, the Lepcha community's offence first came up with the slogan of affected citizens of Teesta (ACT) and took its protest to the streets of the state capital, Gangtok, lashes between Lepchas and the authorities back at the dam site in Dzongu also anxious the state government. Which got succeed by scrapped by the two projects i.e. 96 MW Lethang and the 99 MW Ting Ting projects on the Rathong Chu.

Through their protests, the Lepchas have succeeded in bringing their religious beliefs and the rights of their community into the conservation discourse. Theses demonstrations also serve as a unique counterpoint to the form that identity-based conflicts usually tend to take in other parts of India. In West Bengal, for instance in the late 2000s, the Lepchas responded to the perceived and legitimate threats from the rise of the ethnic Gorkha movement a demand for a separate for the Indian Gorkha ethnic community, with an agitation to safeguard their linguistic rights. Lepchas were an animist people and according to their myth that mother creator create human being from fresh snow ball and after their death their soul will be remain on same place i.e. at mount Kanchenjunga. But that land has to face huge challenges due to the establishment of mega hydro project. First major impact would be the loosing of their land, which is their main source of livelihood and once they lose their land they migrate to other areas and adopt relatively new way of life. Once life style is changed the very essence of one's culture, convention, religion also changes. Particularly, Lepchas in Dzongu are still known as the nature worshiper but due to developmental project like the mega hydro project their trees, land, river and sacred places has been completely obliterated. Religious value system of homogenous society also had to undergo through drastic changes due to these new dimensions which surround them.

Presently there are at least 4 hydro electric projects in Sikkim being constructed in violation of the apex court's order; these are being constructed within 10 km of eco sensitive zones around the Khangchendzonga National Park and the Fambonglho wildlife sanctuary without the mandatory approval of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). These are the namely the Teesta stage III by Teesta urja, the Dickhu HEP by sneha kinetic and Tashidhing by shiga energy. The cavalier of both state and the private developers is further elaborated by the fact that none of them have approached NBWL for the necessary clearance. This has been corroborated by NBWL itself of team of which was in Sikkim recently (Singh; 2013).

In addition, the construction process has had extensive negative environmental impacts adding to the already fragile mountain ecosystem. The traditional livelihood of the mountain people are shattered already, their houses are cracking down due to the force of dynamite blasting, which have further weakened road network and its surrounding mountain belts causing massive landslides and soil erosion. Sikkim is an example of how indifferent and ignorant Government policies could ultimately destroy livelihood of the people (Dhakal; 2007).

### **3.7. Conclusion**

In Sikkim indigenous inhabitant originally known by Lepcha community and later on, they were divided into three religion value system that is animism, Buddhist and Christian. Animism Lepcha have strong connection with nature and they loved to live close with it. As we all know, Indigenous people basically connected with nature and they worshipping the nature phenomenon. Hence, they so attune with the nature and they consider that the nature is their identity without nature they don't have any identity. Sikkim is 22<sup>nd</sup> state of Indian union and relatively backward state of India and needs to enhance its socio-economic development. But the state is not known to

have many raw materials nor is it suitable for agricultural development. The only recourse the state can have of our forests and water resources. The forest resources of Sikkim are to be preserved and protected at any cost for the sake of ecology and environment.

After Sikkim merge with Indian union new dimensions like transportation, industrialization, education and urbanization had been come over the indigenous community. Modernization term is known as changes, changing from traditional to agrarian society or Modernization is a process which brings new cultural system into established system. Due to the modernization process numerous development projects started in Sikkim and one of the development projects was hydro power projects.

As much of the water resources in Sikkim lie down in North district of Sikkim where the Dzongu is also located. After initiation of the development of the mega projects in Dzongu, surely here is the loss of land, livelihood and the unique culture of the small community of the Lepchas. To supply of energy and prosperity to the towns and cities located far away from the Dzongu where a large mass of the Indian population resides, but this is possible only at the cost of the Lepcha identity, culture and livelihood.

In Dzongu there are 6 hydro power projects was sanction and due to the projects work many outsider migrate into reserve land. Though, Lepcha is nature-worshippers and they consider their land is sacred and should not be destroyed by development that Dzongu is recognised as a reserve. Within that reserve land government sanction numerous hydro power projects and that projects will bring several thousand workers from outside Sikkim into Dzongu. The migrant workers have different customs and beliefs system and that make a threat in culture value

system in existing community. Before initiation of HPP Lepcha in Dzongu known as Homogenous community but after HPP that homogenous transform into heterogeneous community one group was fully support that projects and another group was against the projects.

Though, in Sikkim there are other many options for development that is tourism and agriculture but administrators have focused their attention on generation of hydro electricity and accordingly hydro power projects are coming up in the state in the last few decades. The state plans to produce a whopping 5000 MW of power annually whereas the domestic requirement of the state is only about 100 MW of electricity. Hence the rest of the power will help in generating revenue for the state as the state will be in a position to sell energy to the neighbouring states of country.

The prosperity and suitable life to the population residing in far away cities and towns may lead to erosion of traditional culture value system of this indigenous community of Dzongu. The Lepcha identity and culture rely on natural phenomena and for the sake of development the destruction of environment it may be wipe down the Lepcha identity from the universe. Therefore in 2004, some of the activist organised a meeting and they formed affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) to fight back with that projects. They started hunger strike under the banner of (ACT) in front of BL House at Gangtok. ACT general secretary Dawa Lepcha and CLOS member Tenzing Lepcha had took a 93 days hunger strike to protect their holy land.

Hence the Lepchas under the banner of ACT and with the help of other organization are engaged in Gandhian protests (non-violence) against such projects. Lepcha community felt that the development of the projects here will not only take away their sacred land but also lead to demographic changes besides destroying their

fragile natural environment. Therefore, the protest against the HPP is to protect their unique culture and religious practices of the Lepchas, the environmental vulnerability and livelihood losses associated with such projects.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Conflict between the Hydro Power Projects and Lepcha Community of Dzongu**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter will elaborate the historical overview of Mayel Iyang-sacred land and will explore the reason behind the Mayel Iyang and why Lepcha called it sacred. This chapter will expose the relation between Dzongu and Lepcha of Sikkim and will look over the HPP and its impact on Dzongu land. After the construction of HPP in sacred land local people go through many difficulties and still they are struggling with these. Hence, ACT plays their vital role to address the issue and control the construction. The impact of dams and development that generate insecurity to affected areas which has spread from local to State, State to National and from National to International level. This chapter discusses the major role of the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) and Homestay on Dzongu reserve to control construction of mega hydro power project in the region. The chapter would include different measures adopted by ACT to protect the sacred place of Dzongu.

This chapter deal with the hydel project has often been embodied as the modernization process, but this modernization process in Dzongu has brought huge challenges in the life of Lepcha people. Hence, this chapter explore the impact of mega hydel power project on nature worshiper of Sikkim society. This chapter deal with the impact of modernization on Dzongu reserve of Sikkim and the active role of affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) which staged numerous rallies and hunger strike.

This chapter discusses the role of the affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) on Dzongu reserve which tries to bring down the ways of impact of modernization by

controlling the both pull and push factors that promote the impact of modernization in the region. Through its preventive process Lepchas youth Association, CLOS, SOD and ACT organization further actively involves in the efforts to limit the threat towards the impact of modernization. It is evident in the discussion of this chapter that ACT, has work eradicate the environmental disaster on reserve land and has proved that the banner of affected citizen of Teesta can play a critical role to addressing the issues on impact of modernization project.

#### **4.2. Mayel Lyang- Sacred Land**

Prior to the advent of the Tibetans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century of before, Lepchas were the masters of their own destiny in their own country, Mayel Lyang, which means the land of hidden paradise or delightful region. According to Tamsang, Mayel Lyang or Lepcha country extended from the Himalayas to Titalaya, now in Bangladesh, in the south, upto Gipmochi mountain (trijunction of Sikkim, Bhutia and Tibet) in the east and upto aroon river in Nepal in the west (Tamlang; 2008).

The present Sikkim and the territories it lost to neighbouring countries were called by Lepchas, Ne mayel Renjyong lyang, or in short it was called Renjong which the Tibetans erroneously claimed to have originated from the words De-Ma-Jung which means the land of rice. The Lepcha original homeland stretched from the western part of the Bhutan upto the eastern part of the Nepal, which of course included the present day Sikkim and Darjeeling district and some parts of Bhutan and also of Nepal. It may be iterated here that Renjyong in Lepcha means respectable people. The name Sikkim was given the Limbu princess who was married as the third wife by the Raja Tensung Nmgyal (1644-1700) as a Su Heem in Limbu means new house.

As known from the history particularly, after the installation of Pencho Namgyal as the first king, Sikkim was several times the size of the present state. To the north, beyond the snows, it contained the region along the Chumbi valley, called Tromo by the Tibetans. Now to the west, it was bounded by the rivers Arun and Tambar, which now run to the eastern parts of the kingdom of Nepal. To the east, the boundary was extended right up to Tegong La enclosing the present with the plains-strip of the Durs, extending a few miles to the south. The southern boundary extended up to Titaliya, sixteen miles south of the present thriving and upcoming city of Silliguri in the foothills. This was the history acknowledged extent to the country (Forning; 1987).

The boundaries of Sikkim under Phuntsog Namgyal (1604-1670) were Dibdala in the north, Shingsa Dag-pay, Walung, Yangmag Khangchen Yarlung and Tamar Chorten in the west, down along the Arun Dudh Koshi rivers, down to the Maha Nodi Naxalbari, Tuitalia in the south. The Lepcha original inhabitant extended from over 120 miles along the southern face of the Himalayas from the river Kossee in Nepal on the west to about miles due east of the river Tista (Dozey; 1922). The Honorable Ashley Eden in 1864 noticed that Sikkim, though a very petty state, was formerly a fair sized country, reaching from the Arun on the west to the Taigon Pass on the east from Tibet on the north to Kissengunge in Purnea on the South.

Till about the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were three main regions, (i) Renzong (Denzong) Lyang, comprising of the present Sikkim area including the present subdivisions of Darjeelin, Kurseong and Silliguri. (ii) Damsang Lyang comprising of present Kalimpong subdivisions, and some doors area and (iii) Iam Lyang, which is now in Nepal. Lepcha peoples in these territories were broadly known as Renzongmoos, Damsangmoos and Iammoos respectively. The Lepcha residing in the



western part of the Bhutan area called Promo i.e. of Bhutan, since the western portion of Bhutan were also part of Lepcha Mayel Land (Tamlong; 2008).

### **4.3. Hydro Power Projects and its Impact in Dzongu**

According to the Sikkim's history, Dzongu is a reserve land for Lepcha community which in turn restrain a people belonging outside of Dzongu even Sikkimese people not from Dzongu are required to obtain a permit to visit the reserve land. But, over the year a status of being reserved land for Lepcha have often been ignored or overlooked. For instance, the initiation of mega hydro project has brought thousands of outsiders at reserve land and still they were working out there. Lepcha so love and respect the nature but after the initiation of power project the sanctity of that land have been infringed or destroyed by the modernization project.

Lepcha worshiped the natural phenomenon and after having developmental project at Dzongu reserve the genuine reality and purity of environment turned into development process. The Lepcha of Dzongu faced huge challenges and problem after the initiation of hydro project. Fear against the projects, being expressed from all residence including local citizens, civil society and the scientific community, are also based on the fact that they would change the ecology of the region irreparably as the river Teesta would be reduced to a drop in some parts, forest and agricultural areas will be flooded and the blasting conducted during dam construction would lead to numerous landslides.

Even, the two large hydro power projects the Panang and Panan hydel project on the Rongyong Chu and the Teesta IV on the Teesta are proposed to be located within the Lepcha Reserve of Dzongu. A large component of Teesta Stage-III also falls

within the Dzongu Reserve. Therefore, the Lepchas community first faced the environmental impact and second was on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011 disaster of earthquake.

**4.3. a. Earthquake:** As per the carrying capacity report of the Teesta Basin conducted by the CISMHE in December, 2007 which clearly states that some of the projects located in the Dzongu (under Teesta Stage-III project) are environmentally not advisable. The recent earthquake in 2011 further suggests that the Dzongu is not suitable for big hydro power projects which envisage heavy construction for damming and tunnelling the rivers through the fragile mountainous terrain of Sikkim extremely prone to earthquakes.

The collision of tunnelling on areas located above and below these tunnels, including drying up of water sources, impacts of blasting on agricultural fields and on residential areas are also sidelined. As per the seismic zone map of India, Sikkim, beside with other north-eastern states located in seismic zone IV, one of the most seismically vulnerable regions. During 2011 earthquake, Chungthang village, the dam site of Teesta III, suffered a lot during. Constructions of dams using heavy blasting for excavate in road building, building and tunnels put heavy stress on this fragile environment.

The protest is also on environmental grounds, the Lepcha activists claiming that the delicate ecology of Dzongu, which is partially inside Mount Kanchenjunga national park and part of the Himalaya biodiversity hotspot is like the rest of Sikkim prone to landslides and earthquakes, and will not survive the development. This claim is supported by MK Pandit, director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Mountain and Hill Environment (CISMHE) who warned that many of the hydropower

projects on the Teesta River are located in the high-risk zone IVG of the seismic zoning map (Little; 2010).

Following the September 18, 2011 earthquake in Sikkim, a badly damaged old Buddhist monastery in Hee Gyathang, a village in the Lepcha reserve of Dzongu in north Sikkim was being considered for demolition. The 6.9 Richter scale earthquakes damaged the monastery in such a way that some villagers thought it best to destroy the structure and rebuild a new one. But there were others who did not support the idea as this was a very old monastery and the cost borne entirely by the villagers themselves and they preferred to keep it as it was, so to perhaps promote it as a heritage site in the near future.

There was an attempt to save the site because of the community's involvement despite being a Buddhist place of worship. The third voice came from those who did not want to promote the age-old monastery because it was a Buddhist place of worship and traditionally Lepchas were not Buddhists. The third voice is a recent but an important voice that is being heard among Lepchas today. In the end, the monastery was to be renovated and it is being promoted as a 'community building'.

As per the government of Sikkim data the magnitude of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011 earthquake was 6.8 in Richter scale and with focal depth of 19.7 kms, the epicentre being at 27.72 N, 88.06 E, in Sikkim-Nepal border region and the timing was 18.10 hrs. The most devastating earthquake struck our state and since the situation at Chungthang the grand zero, and other several affected several affected area like Bey, Sakong-Pentong in Dzongu, Lachen & Lachung is of complete neglect and utter mismanagement, it became necessary for the affected families to dwell upon the reasons due to which the Saga of suffering has continue. Therefore, the argument that

there is no linked between the earthquake and Hydro project is completely wrong. It is proven any doubt that the severity of destruction in Chungthang and surrounding areas was compounded by the destructive Mega hydroelectric power project<sup>7</sup>.

Incidentally, it is this factor which imparts to the Himalayas a great deal of 'instability'. The frequent earthquakes in the north-eastern and northern parts of the country are the result of the unknown convolutions of nature, deep in the bowels of the earth, a major factor being the constant, unrelenting pressure of the erstwhile Indian plate against the erstwhile Asian plate. This point has very great significance for our approach to many aspects of Indian life and development programmes.

People are not against the hydel power projects as such. They are against the way these projects are done, the casualness with which the environmental impact assessment is conducted and clearances are given and the way project developers are selected. The location, size and scale of this project, the knowledge and experience of these project developers, the capabilities of project regulating agencies and the way projects have been designed and the technology used have been question all across the fragile Himalayan ecology. Unfortunately, in many cases these issues come up for public discussions only in the aftermath of disasters<sup>8</sup>. So, from the above statement we can see the somehow connection of earthquake with Mega Hydro Project.

**4.3. b. Cultivation:** In Dzongu north Sikkim the Major cultivation is Cardamom which has drastically decreased over the past few years seriously affecting the economic well being of majority of the Lepchas within Dzongu. Other cultivation in

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<sup>7</sup>Tseten Lepcha working president, affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) [www.actsikkim.com](http://www.actsikkim.com) chungthang, north Sikkim.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Mahendra P. Lama on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2011 in the Hindu, New Delhi.

Dzongu is Rice, Wheat, Pulses, Ginger, Potato, Oranges, Maize, Millet, Phaper and amply of vegetables.

Even though, certain literatures distinguish hydropower as sustainable form of development. Some studies show that a hydropower development adjusts variability in springs and disrupts downstream flows, impacting agriculture and fisheries on which livelihoods depend. Among the stakeholders, hydropower development causes an uneven distribution of costs, benefits and risks.

Field investigation to this area suggests that the Lepchas are reeling under the losses incurred in Cardamom cultivation whose productivity has fallen. This is the main cash crop of the Lepchas and the Lepchas are looking for other alternatives in order to curb the disorder created in their socio-economic life by the hydro power projects in their area. Some of the settlements located in the vicinity of the existing power plants of Teesta stage-V are experiencing reduction in crop production especially oranges. New landslide scars are appearing in the fragile hill slopes and some of houses in the small Lepcha villages are reporting development of cracks due to vibration caused by high power blasting associated with the projects, drying up of perennial streams, landslides etc have been reported from this area.

The Lepchas feel that the gas used in blasting has adversely affected the productivity of the Cardamom by about 50%. Dust pollution is rampant affecting the flowering and productivity of fruits.

**4.3. c. Disturbance in their Ritual Practices:** In Dzongu North Sikkim, Panan is the one of the most uncertain project proposed for Dzongu an area not only sacred but also falling dangerously closed to the Khangchendzonga National Park, an area rich in flora and fauna. Give the physical topographical nature and so many Sikkim's holiest

place and the concurrent recognition of Lepcha and Bhutia with that site, the potential impact with current development proposal of Dzongu religious identity and sanctity is what causes such great unease among many.

However, recent development initiatives in Tashiding have brought increased tourism, construction projects, and destruction of natural resources to the area. These changes have been incorporated into Lhopo understandings of Tashiding's 'sacred land', a perspective based on a reciprocal relationship with the land that was originally outlined in the nelson. Lamas have prophesied that when a black snake curls its way up towards Tashiding, the place will be 'finished'; today, a newly built black asphalt road winds to the top of the hill, which some residents experience as the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Yet residents are of two minds about the road: on one hand they view it as a beneficial modern advance, something that aids convenience, connects them to the hospital, and encourages tourism. The construction of the road is simultaneously blamed for a variety of local illnesses and deaths. The road, therefore, serves a practical purpose and also offers protection, but does so at the expense of disturbing the land, damaging its Ters, and freeing destructive entities that the land had subdued.

**4.4. Role of ACT to Control Construction:** With the announcement of the projects on the Teesta River, the story shifted from New Delhi and Gangtok to the villages in Dzongu in North Sikkim where, in 2004, a group of Lepcha youth opposed to the dams formed a 17 member group called Affected Citizens of Teesta, known as ACT (Little; 2010).

The Lepchas residing in the area are aware of the threat associated with the development of hydro-power projects and at present are concerned for their future and

their rights. They have formed a committee called the Affected citizen of Teesta (ACT) to seek redressal for the problems faced by them in the Dzongu, protests are on as the Lepchas are aware of their rights as an indigenous people to be protected by the Indian Constitution, the Supreme court and above all the Human right commission which ensures that the small indigenous communities like the Lepchas have the right to control their resources for their own needs and interest.

Since 2003, Lepchas opposing the Dzongu projects started holding small meetings in the villages with the activist. In July 2007, they formalised these meetings when they formed, Affected Citizens of Teesta, (ACT). Their aim at that time was to fight the large Teesta River hydro-electric projects slated for Dzongu and to bring awareness to the Lepcha community of what they measured to be the harmful effects of the projects.

The protest has a good and a worse side, like every action has a positive and a negative end. In this sense what happened in Dzongu was that Lepcha had a divided stand over the issue of dams. One group favoured the construction of the mega dams that promised prosperity and they kept on pressing on with their support towards the project however there was another group who vehemently opposed such projects. In the process the Hydel project supporters from North Sikkim, drove into Gangtok in vehicles flaunting banners announcing their pro hydel project. They poured into Samman Bhawan on Saturday to petition the Chief Minister with a request to expedite work on the hydel projects in North Sikkim for which MOUs had been signed. However it is alleged by the ACT members that most of the so called hydel supporters were ruling government party supporters and affected

people who were selling land to the hydel project companies for money<sup>9</sup>. That clash of traditional society with development project creates conflict between Lepcha community of Dzongu and Hydro power projects. The major effect of the Hydel power projects can be divided into four sub sections namely, local, state, national, and the impact at the international level.

#### **4.5. Impact of Hydro Power Projects on Local Level**

Due to the mega hydel project the indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim have been face huge challenge in the matter of employment, culture and custom life and side by side on their identity issues. Because, nowadays indigenous people became minority in number and they were protest the developmental project. The workers have belonged from different background and had their own lifestyles which were different from the Lepcha community. In Dzongu Lepcha people communicate with each other through Lepcha language but after initiation of mega hydro project maximum workers tough in Hindi language. So, the hampers of communication face by local people of Dzongu reserve of Sikkim.

Though, Development projects have huge prosperity for society but it has also made minority in own native land. Hydro Project report says, that the area has 22,000 populations and after initiation of stage-III and Six such project on the Teesta River, along with that projects if there is outsider of about 25,000 to 30,000 people from outside. What will happen to our native population (Arora; 2007).

Under Article 371 (F) of Indian Constitution for preserving the Lepcha culture, Dzongu region is provided with special status that Proletariat colony as well as staff colony should not be set up within the Dzongu reserve land. Hence, after the

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<sup>9</sup>Posted by Weeping Sikkim “*Indefinite Hunger Strike Crosses One Month*”, Thursday 10 April 2008



beginning of Hydro power projects in Dzongu Lepcha community had to face many threat in culture, social and employment life<sup>10</sup>.

Regarding the land issues that the presence of the Garrison Road Engineering Force (GREF) and the army has taken about 40 per cent of our fertile land, and some of the tribal are on the edge of landless and if tribal people loss their land they will also diluted from their unique identity (Arora; 2007). Hence, in Sikkim mega projects became threat from original Sikkimese residents.

Lepcha communities of Dzongu have their unique way of life in the mountain which is very beloved and holy for them. Lepcha community itself opposed the projects which will bring ample of workers along with their culture and customs. The Lepchas thus, who have long been abridged to a minority in their land fear that the outsider project workers will drive them further and make them marginalized in their homeland (Little; 2008).

Among youth an Employment opportunity is a major factor leading to disturbance of peace in any state. In Dzongu, if we go by this reason employment opportunity for the local was one of the various issues that substance the Lepcha movement. For some young Lepcha the battle for Dzongu has acted as a magic potion, which has changed their conceptualization of their native land and has clarity and confidence that they can improve the lives of Dzongu Lepchas. Due to the projects those who left the village many years earlier is lighted by the threat of losing it. For Lepcha youth they make plans that will bring job opportunities for them in ecotourism and organic farming (Little; 2010).

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<sup>10</sup> “*Lepcha Protest against Panan HEP in Sikkim: Dams, Rivers and People*” SANDRP, July-August 2007

Within Dzongu Lepcha community seems to be divided into two opinion one group on that supports development and the one that favours to preserve and protect the Dzongu. That do or don't oppose the projects has widened over time, as a result relationships between friends and family members have in some villages miserable and sensitive (Little; 2012). Therefore, impacts of hydro power projects in Dzongu move ahead from local to state level. On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Lepcha activist have been on an indefinite non-violent protest at Gangtok demanding the closure of the Panam hydel project in Dzongu, the Lepcha reserve (Arora; 2007).

#### **4.6. Impact of Hydro Power Project on State Level**

The protest by Lepcha people against the developmental project mainly came in preserving their traditional practices and their reserve land. They fight against the governmental project and proposed to put forward their own way of development in Dzongu without harming and destroying their land. Such initiatives of local resident of Dzongu can be attributed to the construction of homestay and cultivation of organic vegetables. Through these initiatives, they indeed try to show the example in front of state government. Lepcha of Dzongu believe that by obliteration and the total utilization of environment cannot positive development and transforms old society into a proper modernized society but rather they claim that, only through the preservation and protection of natural calamities can bring positive development which can indeed play a vital role in everywhere. On 20 June 2007, Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) supported by concerned Lepcha of Sikkim (CLOS) and Sangha of Dzongu (SOD), began a hunger strike at Bhutia Lepcha House on Tibet Road (Wangchuk; 2007).

Now the construction process has disrupted the lives of many people without just and adequate compensation. The extensive use of dynamite detonation has

destroyed people's houses, their land and livelihood. National Hydropower Commission (NHPC) project have been a disaster to the rural highlands communities whose crop productivity has decreased, agriculture fields damaged and losing water sources due to the project. This has pushed them to the edge in their struggle for survival (Dhakal; 2007). On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2006, at a public hearing conducted by Sikkim's State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) a woman identifies her as the Chairperson appointed by the government to the (SBCB) gave statement that, those who oppose the project in not Sikkimese you are an anti- national (Little; 2010).

During the hunger strike at Bhutia Lepcha BL house activist carry poster or banner announce save the primitive people, save Teesta save Tholung'<sup>11</sup>. While other banner announce that, don't destroy the mountains, the river, the forest, wildlife, above all the who are on the edge of extinction (Arora; 2007).

The hydel projects have had a two simultaneous impact first social that is, the traditional livelihood of the mountain people as such are vanishing already, due to cracking down of houses resulting from excessive force of dynamite blasting, and second environmental which have resulted in weakened road network in its surrounding mountain belts causing massive landslides and soil erosion (Dhakal; 2007). Those who support the projects they belong from richer landlords or moneyed people and they brought the land from poor proprietor and these are the people who actually taking advantage by selling the non inheritable land at a much higher price to the project developers (Little; 2010).

During the Gandhi's birth anniversary there have been threats and arrest particularly the arrest of several Lepcha who refused to stop a march. In national

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<sup>11</sup>Tholung is a historic 18<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist temple located in Dzongu.

television for the first time these events goes successfully moved news of their protest beyond their region. Lepcha from West Bengal also joined the fight to save the Lepchas native land and around 700 Lepchas from West Bengal cut off Sikkim's lifeline to the rest of India by staging a blockade on the national highway (Little; 2010). The entire ambitious project, Teesta V has been the worst of all. It has led to large scale displacement of individuals inhabiting the proposed area of the hydro project. Dawa Lepcha the General Secretary of Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT) reveals that the initial figure of 52 ousted families and 72 partially affected, the figure of affected citizens had gone up to 714 because of the ever increasing tunneling and the use of explosives which has resulted in cracking of the houses, tilting and some collapsing totally endangering the lives of the resident (Lepcha; 2009).

Open repressive measures were used by the State government which happens rarely in Sikkim as individuals opposing NHPC were branded as opposing the government. Thus, when people whose rights were violated tried to voice their concerns with both the project and related government officials they were arrested and beaten up by police and hooligans sent by the government (Dhakal; 2007). The movement humble started from native land and had spread across the state boundaries. Mr, Dorjee Lepcha from Kalimpong narrates the path of his clan's 'Tamsangmoo' soul after death to explain the importance and sacredness of Dzongu to Lepchas everywhere. In his narrates, the soul will go to the convergence of Teesta and Rangyong rivers, the river below Passingdang where they would be in peace forever. Lepcha Priestess will take the soul through Teesta River and when it arrives at the confluence of Teesta and Rangyong it will follow Rangyong, whichh is a holiest river of the Lepchas flows in the middle of Dzongu (Little; 2008).

On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007, activists also wish to pressurize the state government into reviewing many of the 24 hydel projects planned on the river Teesta in Sikkim as well as in North Bengal. Sitting under a white-silken 'khada' covered picture of Mahatma Gandhi and listening to sacred Buddhist chants, surrounded by their supporters, the activities continue undaunted in their struggle (Arora; 2007). Hence, the movement goes from state level to across the national boundaries.

#### **4.7. Impact of Hydro Power Projects on National Level**

Affected Citizen of Teesta has received from non government organization (NGO) Kalpavriksh, an Environmental Action and Research Group in India, and from International Rivers, a global Organization whose mission is to protect rivers and defend the rights of communities that depend on them and from other NGOs which have given their support on the ground in Dzongu (Little; 2010).

West Bengal Lepchas had connection with the government circle regarding their long drive for Lepcha language to be officially recognized by the West Bengal state government. Hence, an association of the West Bengal Lepchas prominent the pressure on the government and gave Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) much needed resources. During the first hunger strike they held a protest in New Delhi and soon after an 18 member delegation of anti dam representatives from Sikkim and West Bengal made the first of what have become many meetings, with media, ministers and NGOs in New Delhi. What this added support has done besides raising the spirit of the youth is that, it has caught the attention of the public not only in the state level but also at the National level, thus, providing the much needed dynamism for the movement (Little; 2010). Therefore, by protesting the developmental project the Lepcha people across religious differences got united and create solidarity among them to preserve their identity. When Sikkimese Lepcha raised their voice against developmental

project, the Lepcha from the West Bengal also earnestly supported them and took a part on their rallies and hunger strike.

One of the prominent social activist M/s Medha Patkar who protest against the dams in India's that is Narmada valley has also extended her support towards the Affected Citizen of Teesta and their incomplete struggle for freeing their native land from projects. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> hunger strike, in April 2008, She came to Gangtok and stayed 12 hours including overnight and her presence was a watershed for ACT and the movement for her fame gave the protest legitimacy beyond Sikkim's borders (Little; 2010). Even Sunderlal Bahuguna who played a leading role in the Chipko Movement is also in favour of the Act activist and had also alleged that construction of several hydel projects in Sikkim amounted to a "destructive act" against the ecology of the "greenest" state of the country<sup>12</sup>. Impact of hydro projects come across at all the three levels and its continuous never tiring effort it has been able to win supporters at the international level too.

#### **4.8. Impact of Hydro Power Projects on International Level**

Taking prompt of the Sikkimese living outside India posted their support on the blog which is manifest from the fact that supporters in Sydney were photographed holding banner which announce 'Save the Teesta'. Not only in Sydney this photo inspired a similar confidence boosting support in Melbourne, with Sikkimese and Australian Indigenous elders presentation their support for ACT (Little; 2010).

Dawa Lepcha general secretary of affected citizen of Teesta decision to act against the dams has had an unplanned significance of bringing young Dzongu Lepchas back to their traditions. Their love for their holy Dzongu was now openly

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<sup>12</sup>See <http://voiceofsikkim.com> "Ani Sikkim Runcha" on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

expressed in stories, in songs and in the protest banners (Little; 2008). Supporters of the protest against the Hydro Power Projects (HPP) posted videos of Dawa and Tenzing in hospital on YouTube, a story that was picked up by the influential UK Independent newspaper even BBC World online also ran the story. The use of technology to capture an audience beyond the villages and the city of Gangtok, even though not in ACT's initial plans, has served the movement well (Little; 2010). Mega Hydel Project would amount to the desecration and destruction of the land which is held sacred by the local people, as it is Dzongu where the Lepchas originated, with their customs, traditions, and religion (Lepcha; 2009).

These are some of the most important social impact of the Lepcha movement which has turned the world of the Lepchas into something which they couldn't have imagined 10 to 20 years ago. The calm villages of Dzongu, 'Ney Mayel Lyang' are now rich with modern stories of courage and cowardice, politics and intrigue, naiveté and stubbornness, of families split apart because of differing views on the future of their Dzongu. People of Dzongu now will need to find a widespread space they can inhabit without alternative (Little; 2010).

The impact of social movement has been very deep and positive which led to the scrapped of four of the six projects from Dzongu through that is, Rukel, Ringpi, Linzya and Rangyong, letter of intent between the government and developers withdrawn. These are some of the many changes that Affected Citizen of Teesta or one can say Lepcha mobilization has brought in Sikkim (Lepcha; 2009). This was accomplished during Dawa and Tenzing's the first indefinite hunger strike, however, for ACT the fight is still on, as they are determined to stop the other two Dzongu projects too. There are also petitions brought by Affected Citizen of Teesta, which due to be heard in the Supreme Court in New Delhi (Little; 2010).

#### **4.9. Conclusion**

Lepcha consider Dzongu is a sacred land for them and they believe that their deities live in every natural phenomenon. Even, Lepcha people believed that after their death the soul will remain on that mountain. Due to the believe system Lepcha community have strong connection with the nature. Since 1975, Chogyal allowed Dzongu is reserve land for Lepcha community and outsider need permit to entry the land. Therefore, Dzongu refers the identity of Lepcha community in Sikkim. Majority of Lepcha in Dzongu were animism by religion and they had a homogenous society and around 7000 Lepcha population reside on reserve area of Dzongu which is located in north-east district of Sikkim. Lepcha clam themselves an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and during the time of Chogyal that Dzongu were declared a reserve land for Lepcha community.

Therefore, Lepcha of Dzongu try to preserve, promote and modify their traditional way of life. But in Sikkim, a new class of people has emerged who cut across the boundaries of caste, ethnicity, languages and religion. The emergences of this class are facilitated by equality of educational and occupational opportunity. The Lepcha of Sikkim are the inhabitant of the society and had solidarity behind all its socio-economic, educational and political activities. The Lepcha of Sikkim realised the long term harmful effects of the new class of people and have become conscious of the need to preserve their traditional and their cultural practices.

Hydro power projects destroying nature fragile from the existing land in Dzongu and create enormous impact in Lepcha community concerning their identity. Hence, on 2004 some of the activist had meeting under the banner of ACT and started their movement with the slogan of non violence that is hunger strike infront of BL house at Gangtok. ACT, CLOS, SAGA and several other NGO come together from



Dzongu region and participated on hunger strike movement. Lepcha from outside the Dzongu also actively participated on that movement and stand firm till the end of the strike. In 2008, the perseverance towards their movement gave them good news that is, four hydro power projects were scrapped from Dzongu are Rangyong, Lingza Ringpi, and Rukal.

Dzongu is a reserve and holy land for Lepcha community but after the initiation of mega hydro project the purity of that land turned into impurity. Therefore, those issues create impact in Lepcha community into four level that is local, state, nation and international level. In local level Lepcha community faced problem in migration influx from outside and their influences culture, customs and livelihood in existing community. In state level, due to the hydro power projects Lepcha had to come forward and have hunger strike movement in front of BL house at Gangtok. In nation level, after the hunger strike at Gangtok numerous Lepcha come across from West Bengal and had a rally on NH10 at to protest against the HPP in Dzongu. In international level, Lepcha who are outside the country they come forward through social media for e.g. BBC news and highlight the issues which were going on the Dzongu and they fully support the movement.

Due to the developmental project, the Lepcha of Dzongu faced environment impact and natural disaster on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The environmental impact create displacement term among the homogenous society and Lepcha of Dzongu leave their place by willingly and by forcefully. Therefore, Lepcha of Dzongu protest the developmental project under the banner of affected citizen of Teesta.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Impact of Hydro Power Projects in Sikkim: A Study of Lepcha Community of Dzongu**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter has explored the impact of Dams and development in Lepcha community of Dzongu. This chapter has studies in-depth about before and after the construction of Hydro power projects with authentic household questionnaire in affected area of Dzongu. Those questionnaires rely in the context of cultural erosion, displacement, disaster hazards, unequal unemployment, health, and livelihood and agriculture productivity. It aims to discuss in depth phases of pre and post construction of Hydro Power Projects with some authentic narrative, legitimate pictures of respondents during field survey from affected area of Dzongu. This study has further elaborated by using Modernisation as a Concept and its Implications on the Affected Area of Sikkim. This Chapter has Examine Both Ban and Boon of Mega Hydro Power Project on Socio-Cultural Practices of Dzongu Reserve of Sikkim.

#### **5.2. Hydro Power Project in Dzongu Sikkim**

The Government has now finalised a proposal for executing hydel project in the Catchment areas of the river Teesta, which includes considerable areas under Dzongu, under the national hydel power corporation, and this is causing great concern to the people who are facing the horns of dilemma (Tamlong; 2008:188). In May 2003, the 26 dams (*see annex-Table 5.1*) proposed for Sikkim are part of the central Indian government's program of dam construction to create another 200 billion cubic metres of storage through the 50,000 MW Hydroelectric proposal, launched (Little; 2008: 232). As many as six power projects have been envisioned in the River Teesta

supported by multiple high level dams built within 175km distance with an estimated generation capacity of 3635 MW (Lepcha; 2013). Due to the initiation of hydro power projects existing people of Dzongu had to go through from enormous calamities on their lifestyle, from cultural, social, political and to economic level. Therefore, on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2004 concerned citizen of areas to be affected by hydel projects proposed on the Teesta river came together to form an ad hoc committee under the banner of affected citizens of Teesta (Wangchuk ; 2007: 34).

Lepcha generation really very serious about their native land and with their identity, that's the main slogan that they got supporter from their own land to fight back with the development procedure. With the guidance of some hero Lepcha people took 265 days hunger strike and not only the local people took initiative on it but, ritual people like Buddhist monk also formed a group sagha of Dzongu (SOD) to protest against the hydro power project. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2006, a new organization was formed Concerned Lepcha of Sikkim CLOS, to play a major role in the hydel protests in the ensuing months (Wangchuk ; 2007: 39).

On 2008, state government has scrapped hydel power projects are Rangyoung (141 MW), Lingza (120 MW), Ringpi (90 MW) and Rukel (33 MW) all located in Dzongu in North Sikkim. The scrapping of four projects is a step towards protection of Sikkim, its nature and environment said the ACT Chief Coordinator, Mr Tseten Lepcha<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, after ACT had fight back with the help of non violent protest and ACT Was Successful to scrap four hydro power projects from Dzongu reserve land that is Rangyong, Ringpi, Lingzya and Rukel hydro power projects.

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<sup>13</sup>See <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2008/06/17/stories/2008061751272100.htm>

In Dzongu, remaining two hydro power projects that are Panan hydro project and Teesta IV still active so far. ACT, CLOS SOD and now, Save Teesta association want to scrap this two hydro power projects from their native land and want to preserve their nature and their identity. The study has been focus on Hydro Power Projects Induced Conflict by taking a study of Dzongu Reserve in Sikkim.

The study has look on affected citizens located in Dzongu region. The study has incorporated all relevant primary data from the respondent of these affected areas (*see Annexure-II*). The size of this study has 130 respondents (65 male and 65 female). Therefore, to examine the current situation about indigenous people at Dzongu an attempt has been taken with the help of household questionnaire survey in 18 villages namely (1) Lingtem, (2) Lingdem, (3) Zim Goar, (4) Sakyong, (5) Hee Gathang, (6) Leek,(7) Passingdong, (8) Tingvong, (9) Gnon Sangdong,(10) Ruklu, (11) Ship Gyer, (12) Lingza, (13) Taryong, (14) Kaylem (15) Pentong, (16) Laven, (17) Salim Pakel, and (18) Kusing.

**Table 5.1. Details of the Respondents (%)**

SL	Village	Gender (%)			Religion (%)			
		Male	Female	Total	Christianity	Buddhist	Animism	Total
1	Lingtem	72.73	27.27	100.00	9.09	63.64	27.27	100.00
2	Lingdem	60.00	40.00	100.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	100.00
3	Zim Goar10	80.00	20.00	100.00	10.00	40.00	50.00	100.00
4	Sakyong	40.00	60.00	100.00	10.00	60.00	30.00	100.00
5	Hee Gathang	30.00	70.00	100.00	0.00	80.00	20.00	100.00
6	Leek	25.00	75.00	100.00	0.00	37.50	62.50	100.00
7	Passingdong	66.67	33.33	100.00	22.22	33.33	44.44	100.00
8	Tingvong	37.50	62.50	100.00	0.00	75.00	25.00	100.00
9	Gaon Sakgdong	33.33	66.67	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
10	Ruklu	50.00	50.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
11	Ship Gyer	50.00	50.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
12	Lingza	37.50	62.50	100.00	12.50	87.50	0.00	100.00
13	Taryong	25.00	75.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
14	Kayhem	40.00	60.00	100.00	20.00	80.00	0.00	100.00
15	Pentong	33.33	66.67	100.00	16.67	83.33	0.00	100.00
16	Laven	60.00	40.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
17	Salim Pakel	50.00	50.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
18	Kusing	66.67	33.33	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49.23</b>	<b>50.77</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6.15</b>	<b>71.54</b>	<b>22.31</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: During field survey (8<sup>th</sup> May 2018- 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019 at Dzongu North Sikkim)

Table 5.1 show details about the respondent's gender and religion from Dzongu North Sikkim. Total no of respondents was 130 male 65 and female 65. In Dzongu Lepcha community are divided into three religions they are animism, Buddhist and Christianity. Majority of the respondent was Buddhist with 71.54 percent and least comes under Christianity with 6.15 percent.

**Table 5.2. Occupation of the Respondents (%)**

Sl	Village	Agriculture	Non-Agriculture	Self Employed	Government Job	Private Job	Business	Total
1	Lingtem	27.27	9.09	27.27	18.18	9.09	9.09	100.00
2	Lingdem	40.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	30.00	10.00	100.00
3	Zim Goar10	30.00	20.00	30.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	100.00
4	Sakyong	30.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	40.00	10.00	100.00
5	Hee Gathang	30.00	10.00	30.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	100.00
6	Leek	37.50	12.50	25.00	0.00	12.50	12.50	100.00
7	Passingdong	33.33	22.22	11.11	11.11	11.11	11.11	100.00
8	Tingvong	37.50	12.50	12.50	0.00	37.50	0.00	100.00
9	Gaon Sakgdong	16.67	16.67	16.67	16.67	33.33	0.00	100.00
10	Ruklu	50.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
11	Ship Gyer	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	100.00
12	Lingza	25.00	12.50	25.00	12.50	12.50	12.50	100.00
13	Taryong	0.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	100.00
14	Kayhem	40.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
15	Pentong	16.67	16.67	16.67	0.00	33.33	16.67	100.00
16	Laven	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
17	Salim Pakel	0.00	16.67	33.33	16.67	33.33	0.00	100.00
18	Kusing	0.00	16.67	33.33	0.00	33.33	16.67	100.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>27.69</b>	<b>13.85</b>	<b>20.77</b>	<b>6.92</b>	<b>23.08</b>	<b>7.69</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: During field survey (8<sup>th</sup> May 2018- 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019 at Dzongu North Sikkim)

Table 5.2 reveals the occupation of 130 respondents from 18 villages of Dzongu North Sikkim. An occupation estimate in the above table depicts that the majority of respondents are agriculture with 27.69 percent and least comes under government Job with 6.92 percent.

**Table 5.3. Education details of the Respondents (%)**

Sl No	Village	Illiterate	Primary	Senior Secondary	High Secondary	Graduation	Total
		18.18	18.18	18.18	27.27	18.18	100.00
2	Lingdem	10.00	30.00	30.00	20.00	10.00	100.00
3	Zim Goar10	10.00	40.00	40.00	10.00	0.00	100.00
4	Sakyong	0.00	20.00	10.00	50.00	20.00	100.00
5	Hee Gathang	0.00	30.00	20.00	30.00	20.00	100.00
6	Leek	12.50	12.50	37.50	37.50	0.00	100.00
7	Passingdong	0.00	11.11	33.33	33.33	22.22	100.00
8	Tingvong	0.00	50.00	37.50	0.00	12.50	100.00
9	Gaon Sakgdong	0.00	33.33	50.00	0.00	16.67	100.00
10	Ruklu	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00	0.00	100.00
11	Ship Gyer	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
12	Lingza	0.00	37.50	37.50	12.50	12.50	100.00
13	Taryong	0.00	25.00	50.00	0.00	25.00	100.00
14	Kayhem	0.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	100.00
15	Pentong	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
16	Laven	0.00	20.00	60.00	20.00	0.00	100.00
17	Salim Pakel	0.00	33.33	33.33	16.67	16.67	100.00
18	Kusing	0.00	16.67	33.33	33.33	16.67	100.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>29.23</b>	<b>33.85</b>	<b>20.77</b>	<b>12.31</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: During field survey (8<sup>th</sup> May 2018- 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019 at Dzongu North Sikkim)

From Table 5.3 it can be observed that Education status of 130 respondents in details from 18 villages of Dzongu North Sikkim. Majority of respondents relies on senior secondary education with 29.23 percent and least comes under illiterate with 3.85 percent. In Sikkim Lepcha community comes under primitive tribe, but in Dzongu majority of Lepcha youth are educated and well recognized. Which is why, they are protesting HPP under the banner of Affected Citizen of Teesta.

Indigenous people had been come through with enormous transformation between the before and after the construction of hydro power project, which has explored below in details.

**Table 5.4. Household perception on Pre and Post Hydel Power Projects Phases in Dzongu**

Household perception	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you agree that Dzongu is a sacred land for Lepchas?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Are the Lepchas of 21 <sup>st</sup> century still feeling themselves attached with the sacred land of Dzongu?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Are you happy with the modernization process that is going on in Dzongu with the establishment of hydro power projects?	92.31	7.69	92.31	7.69
Are you the happy with the changes that took place in Dzongu due to the hydro power project?	92.31	7.69	92.31	7.69
Did the Hydro power project affecting the Dzongu reserve land?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Did the Lepchas of Dzongu support the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) Movement?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Are the people of Dzongu happy with the initiative that the people took opposing in the form of ACT Movement?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Do you think the ACT banner is helpful so far in raising their voice and achieving their ends so far?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Do you think ACT Banner will going to help the people of Dzongu to get what they want in future as well?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Do you think there should be taken more initiatives in coming days to preserve Lepcha identity?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Are there members from your family involved in the ACT movement?	65.38	34.62	100.00	0.00
Did you agree that due to the construction of dam's homogenous community converted into heterogeneous community?	84.62	15.38	100.00	0.00
Does ACT working on addressing the roots causes of division?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00

Note: Table 5.4 is in annexure 5.5

Source: During field survey (8<sup>th</sup> May 2018- 24<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Dzongu)

Table 5.1 reveals that during the field visit there are ten villages covered with the 130 respondents and the questions were set into five different issues regarding the before and after construction of HPP in Dzongu has explain below too. The respondent's feedback was very supportive for further study on related issues and majority of respondent expressed that environmental damage going ahead after the Construction of Hydro power projects (HPP) in Dzongu. Local resident have observed that because of HPP various changes emerged in their daily livelihood. Dzongu is reserve land for

Lepcha community and 100% Lepcha people claim that due to the HPP affecting the Dzongu reserve land. From agrarian to industrialization development process, Dzongu community converted from homogenous society to heterogeneous society. Therefore, maximum of Lepcha youth is playing actively participate in Affected Citizen of Teesta to address root causes of division.

Hence, with the analysis of field information local people agree that Dzongu is a sacred land for Lepchas community Lepchas and so far, of 21<sup>st</sup> century still feeling themselves attached with the sacred land of Dzongu. Majority of respondents are not happy with the modernization process that is going on in Dzongu with the establishment of hydro power projects. They are not happy with the changes that took place in Dzongu due to the hydro power project. Hydro power project affecting the Dzongu reserve land and its violating the peace of the nature. Therefore, the Lepchas of Dzongu support the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) Movement and the people of Dzongu happy with the initiative that the people took opposing in the form of ACT Movement.

The ACT banner is helpful so far in raising their voice and achieving their ends so far and they believed that ACT Banner will going to help the people of Dzongu to get what they want in future as well. To control such development in Dzongu there should be taken more initiatives in coming days to preserve Lepcha identity. Nowadays, there are viral slogan working among the Lepcha community to protest the HPP from reserve land such as 'save Teesta' and 'free flow Teesta' are the active groups and majority are the Lepcha youngster not only from reserve land but entire Sikkim and West Bengal are the members in this movement. Due to the construction of dam's homogenous community converted into heterogeneous community and its effect on people's perception and decision making ability.



Hence, ACT working on addressing the roots causes of division from their homogenous community. Local community have many grievances towards the construction of HPP in sacred land and that community wants to make their sacred land free from such kind of Development which is created disaster for the sake of betterment for local community. Due to the HPP in reserve land of Dzongu, Local people got many circumstances in their daily life and since 2004, they fight back with the movement of ACT and the silent fight is still going on with the tag of save Teesta. Many dignitaries are involved in this fight with dedicated mind and soul to scrap all the remaining HPP from Dzongu.

Today, ACT isn't just an organisation fighting to save our rivers and fragile ecosystem from disastrous development but has become an institution and people from outside are willing to hear and learn from the struggles of ACT. Dzongu relied in Sikkim Northeast India and that sacred land of the Lepcha (indigenous peoples) beautiful and rich in biodiversity. All are under threat with the construction of the Teesta IV hydro power dam. The Lepcha are leading the fight to stop the project under Affected Citizens of Teesta and Save Dzongu. If successful, this would be the 5<sup>th</sup> dam the communities have stopped since 2010 (Lepcha; 2021). Therefore, Lepcha community of Dzongu still fighting to save their identity and the Lepcha oneness and struggle towards movements are inspiring for other people who are in same struggle. Nowadays, many enthusiasm educated youth from every corner of state are involving in this movement and playing very vital role to protect the identity of Lepcha community.

**Table 5.5. Cultural Erosion before and after the Construction of HPP**

Culture Erosion	Before the construction of Dam		After the construction of Dam	
	Yes.	No	Yes	No
Did modernization cause any form of Lepcha community Disruption?	100.00	0.00	84.62	15.38
Did you participate or practice any traditional festival?	50.00	50.00	92.31	7.69
Have you notice any changes on food processing?	42.31	57.69	73.08	26.92
Have you notice any difference on Wearing traditional dresses?	73.08	26.92	76.92	23.08
Did you notice any changes on traditional Marriage ceremony?	23.08	76.92	65.38	34.62
Are participating on Ancestor worship?	46.15	53.85	50.00	50.00
Did you prefer to Giving traditional name for children?	50.00	50.00	84.62	15.38
Did you Weaving traditional clothes?	53.85	46.15	26.92	73.08
Did you prefer your Language for conversation?	61.54	38.46	92.31	7.69
Did your community interested on Hunting?	100.00	0.00	53.85	46.15
Did Lepcha children practice traditional culture?	53.85	46.15	73.08	26.92
Do you feel that your characteristics are similar to others community people?	34.62	65.38	30.77	69.23
Is the Lepcha of Dzongu is struggling to preserve their identity	28.46	71.54	92.31	7.69
Is your custom change due to living in mixed culture community people?	33.85	66.15	84.62	15.38
Is your resettlement site close to urban areas?	52.31	47.69	69.23	30.77
Did construction of HPP cause any form of physical disruption?	76.15	23.85	92.31	7.69
Has HPP affected any of your cultural or religious activities?	53.85	46.15	92.31	7.69
Has construction of HPP affected your area's physical security?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Note: table 5.5 is in annexure 5.6				

Source: During field survey (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018, Dzongu)

Table 5.5 reveals the changes that have been occurring in Sikkim from 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the new infrastructure and development programs are being implemented. In north Sikkim Lepcha community of Dzongu have been deeply transformed, that changes cause in the identity and cultural practices. After the Modernization process massive changes happen on the pattern of Participate or practice any traditional

festival. Local people notice that the changes on food processing is daily life and notice many difference on Wearing traditional dresses. Highly noticeable changes are on traditional Marriage ceremony and this is because of inter-caste marriage. Lepcha community are divided into three religion practices which is why; only animism and Buddhist follower are participating on Ancestor worship. Even though, Lepcha name for children is giving out in Lepcha community and so far it is highly trends going on in three of the religion follower.

Regarding their traditional way of life like, elderly women have skill of weaving Lepcha traditional dresses and elderly men are engaged on hunting passion, with the help of self help Group (SHG) they used to they sold at cultural shows and other events. Language is one of the key to protect the identity, within Dzongu majority is preferred own Language for conversation. Nowadays, due to the HPP Issues youngster are more enthusiastic towards their language for conversation because, language plays a vital role to protect the indigenous Identity. Youngsters are more involved in practicing the traditional culture for example on Tendog Lho Rum-fat, Nambun and numerous traditional festivals. Lepcha is rare community among the other; Lepcha are docile in nature and love to live In Peaceful Nature. Since 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Lepcha of Dzongu is struggling to preserve their identity and now, HPP creating insecurity among the Lepcha identity. Therefore, due to the HPP the existing nature is vanishing from Dzongu sacred land which is affecting in cultural practices and religious activities and the construction of HPP affected area's physical security too.

### **5.3. Pre HPP Phases of Cultural Erosion on Dzongu**

Dzongu rely on north Sikkim where we found Lepcha population in majority and during the Chogyal dynasty Dzongu declared a reserve land for Lepcha community. Lepcha people is an animism by religion so for that, they worshiped natural phenomena and have faith that they created by snow by mother it-bu-mu. Lepcha have a strong connection with the nature and they performed ritual offering to the nature. Regarding the pre HPP phases of cultural erosion in Dzongu relies on religion, migrant labourers and education. Since 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Lepcha community facing transformation from their ethnic identity, when Buddhist and Christianity religion influenced over existing animism life, the converting religion among them were visible. Therefore, the cultural erosion occurred in Lepcha community in religious perspective and the notion of the vanishing of Lepcha culture or even of the entire Lepcha tribe is expressed by every member of Lepcha society.

Due to the migrant labour many outsider reside in native places and along with them they introduced new cultural value system. One of the cultural erosion was mixed culture which turn into inter caste marriage and which is why, it started to demolished the Lepcha languages and its identity too. Lepcha was animism by faith but, after influenced by many other religious value system its effect culture and slowly it cause on vanishing existing cultural practices.

Education is one of the most requirements to survive in the modern society and needed in youngster life. Therefore, from Dzongu many youth had to leave their native places to achieved good education and migrate over the urban places. In their youngster they merge with the other influential culture and started to rely on western culture instead of own. Which is why, that create impact of changing on values and interest in own culture. Education is perceived which mixed feelings and is even a

cause for concern. Because changes introduced by education are feared and criticised by many villages.

A. R Forning in his book “My Vanishing Tribe” on page-shared one incident about the reaction on western dress by indigenous people.

When they saw me, a stranger, in a bush shirt, pants tucked up inside top boots, with my gurkha hat cocked up one side, at first there was a little bit of commotion among them. None of them had shoes on or any western dress as I had on. However, one or two of them who knew a little bit of the ‘Denjong ke’ or the Sikkimese language, plucking up courage, approached me and started making inquires as to my identity and other things (Forning; 1987: 261).

From above statement we came to know that how the indigenous community had taste on outer appearance. They found western dress like unfamiliar for them but, modernization slowly vanishing Lepcha from culture as well as to the ethnic community as a whole. The beginning of vanishing of indigenous culture or the entire Lepcha tribe is uttered by every member of the indigenous community in urban and rural area, male or female members, young or old ages and educated or uneducated Lepchas felt that they are losing their culture and become an necessary part of describing Lepcha culture.

Since, from 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Buddhism and Christianity religion influence towards indigenous community. Lepcha community has been vanishing from culture as well as ethnic identity. Modernization is needed for the betterment of society but, at

the same time the new values and beliefs create threat among indigenous people too. This is why, that causing a loss of access to indigenous culture and ethnic identity.

#### **5.4. Post HPP Phases of Cultural Erosion in Dzongu**

Lepchas of Dzongu have faith that their culture is origin and there are no mixed up of cultural valued system. But, after the construction of dam people felt that somehow outsider culture dominating their existing cultural practices. First of all, its destroy the nature beauty belonging that means they are indirectly effecting human beings too, in Dzongu people so much attune with nature, their each and every life style connected with nature and if nature will not work out than how could their culture will survive so long. If it so than, it also affective for the lepcha culture book that are written just like the story of Teesta, are totally going to change in different level.

The Local people of Dzongu directly and indirectly affected by the hydropower projects to lack of appropriate consultation, participatory approaches, and benefit sharing mechanism developed by the construction companies of hydropower schemes, the consequences of the impact have resulted in physical loss of homes and lands, disruption of community networks and loss of cultural heritage. The majority of respondents (95%) expressed that environment damage, dam construction and flooding and disappearance of water resources particularly, rural springs and streams, heavy tunnelling work, landslides and soil erosion, flash floods during monsoon are the major prevailing issues that are associated to hydropower projects. Which is why, the existing cultural phenomenon is disappearing from the native land. Dzongu is sacred place for Lepcha people and they believed that their creator lived in the nature but, due to the hydro power projects enormous causes is emerging in nature which is diluting their existing believed system too. The hydropower projects are at different

stages of their development, and have acquired a large forested and agricultural area, and several sacred, spiritual and culturally important spaces along the river belts.



**Figure 5.1. Hot Spring at Upper Dzongu**

Lepcha community of Dzongu strongly allied on the natural phenomenon and they worship nature with profundity devotion. Lepcha had a strong connection with nature and according to their myth they were created by snow and after death they will remain on where they belong. Above fig.1 hot spring located at upper Dzongu at Lingtem where local people consider that place is holy and sacred place for them. They worship that area and whenever outsider visited that place they used to introduce that area as a sacred place for them.

Therefore, Lepcha's cultural value system also connected with the nature. As for example, during the time of interview with SHG (self help Group) member at upper Dzongu they shared how they were made Lepcha dress from stinging nettle's

roots<sup>14</sup>. (Since many decades back yarn spun they used to collected from jungle out of stinging nettle (especially from sisnu's roots was used for weaving<sup>15</sup>). They used to make traditional handlooms bags, jackets and even belts from nettle yarn spun were used for weaving.

After the construction of dams they were unable to collect the raw materials from jungle, as we know that Dzongu geographical area were fully covered by jungle and Lepcha people love to lived closed with the nature. Because of that, might be they know how to make their traditional dress through that plant. But, due to the modern infrastructure used on that jungle area the numbers of species were decreased nowadays and that was the main reason behind an unable to collect sufficient raw materials from very jungle. In market, they will get sufficient traditional dress which is made by different material, but the connection with nature will decrease slowly. Dzongu includes a unique diversity of plains, lakes, glaciers and spectacular snow capped mountains covered with ancient forests, including the world's third highest peak, mount Khangchendzonga.

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<sup>14</sup> In our native language stinging nettle also known as SISNU.

<sup>15</sup>On 05-05-2018 information given by local resident on field visit at Leek upper Dzongu.





**Figure 5.2. Respondent from Upper Dzongu Leek**

They worship every flora and fauna, streams, river and natural phenomenon. According to the respondent, the nature of Dzongu totally guided by nature god and they will protect it in any cost. Their deity has that power to rule over the natural phenomenon and have power to shaken all over the hill and mountain. They said that with the power of deity the unnatural things will be flow over from the sacred land of Dzongu. From the above statement it reflect that how much they have faith towards their goddess and that also reflect that they were attuned with their cultural faith. Lepcha of Dzongu totally based on cultural value system so far and practises their ritual so devotedly. Therefore, about out of the total respondents from the Lepcha communities of Dzongu reiterated that living standard of the local people have increased since the implementation of the hydel projects, while some of them said,

that the living standard have been worsened. The remaining others observed no changes in the living standard of the people in the project areas.

**Table 5.6. Disaster, Displacement and Hazard on Local People before and after the Construction of HPP**

Disaster, Displacement and Hazard	Before the construction of Dam		After the construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
As there any disruption in learning due to natural disaster and hazards in Dzongu?	50.00	50.00	84.62	15.38
Did the Lepcha communities experience livestock loss due to Natural disaster and hazards?	57.69	42.31	73.08	26.92
Did your house affected due to natural disaster?	53.85	46.15	92.31	7.69
Did the household experience crop damage during the natural disaster?	50.00	50.00	69.23	30.77
Was the main fasten crop the one which was damaged	73.08	26.92	92.31	7.69
Did the household experience any loss of food stocks during the natural disaster	65.38	34.62	76.92	23.08
Did the 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2011 earthquake affect your family?	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Did landslide occur in the village?	26.92	73.08	92.31	7.69
Do you agree that due to the initiation of hydro power projects, Dzongu faces natural disasters?	50.00	50.00	100.0	0.0
Is there any unnatural lake in Dzongu?	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Are you happy with the unnatural lake in Dzongu?	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Does that lake create any impact on Dzongu?	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Are you struggling for the transportation, due to the landslide in Dzongu?	50.00	50.00	92.31	7.69
Do you think this unnatural lake is reliable in Dzongu?	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Note: table 5.6 is in annexure 5.7				

Source: During field Survey (9<sup>th</sup> August 2018-16<sup>th</sup> September 2018, Dzongu)

Table 5.5 reveals that in Dzongu, frequently during monsoon season the disruption in learning due to the heavy rainfall. Local people have been experiences that, some of the livestock loss and their house affected due to the landslide. After the initiation of HPP in Dzongu land, massive incident have been occurring due to the natural disaster

and hazards. A major problem created by the landslide, road connectivity was cut off and huge problem are facing by local people.

Due to the landslide the local household experience on their crop damage, that was the main fastening crop the one which was damaged. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011 earthquake create huge trauma in Local people life and affected many families too. Landslide occurs in the upper Dzongu passingdong village on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016 and formed an unnatural or artificial lake in Dzongu. Because of that artificial lake transportation issues become major problems for that GPU and local people still struggling for the transportation. On 2<sup>nd</sup> landslide went there and the remaining hope also goes down, all the route connectivity again faced problems and they think this unnatural lake is not reliable in Dzongu. In future, local people will be facing its circumstances.

### **5.5. Pre HPP Phases of Disaster, Displacement and Hazard on Dzongu**

According to the Lepcha narrative, their ancestor faced one of the unforgettable disasters:

Rongflok, the children of fudong-thing and Nazon-nyu, according to the plan of mother Itbu-moo, prospered and multiplied. Mayel Lyang, or the country, the original utopia land and of our tribe, was fertile, fruitful and prosperous. But a time came when they started forgetting Itbu-moo, the mother creator and became negligent in offering sacrifices and prayers. So the great mother was hurt. The big black shiny pamolbu, the very embodiment of evil in a serpent form, took that as a cue. This cursed creature, true to its evil nature, now went and blocked the flow of the two

main rivers, Rongit and Rong-nyu, flowing through the prosperous Mayel country. The flowing waters of these two rivers, thus being dammed. Started rising till, atlast a time came when all the land was submerged under the great flood (Forning; 1987: 91).

Since, that incident Lepcha people wan not chaos with the nature and according to the Lepcha myth Tendong hill was the refugee for some of the creatures. Which is why, on 8<sup>th</sup> August, they worshiped the hill which is known by Tendong lho Rum-Fat. Another narratives regarding with flood is based on the love story between Rongnit (male) and Rongnue (female):

The Lovers decided to meet at a rendezvous place known as Teesta, but Rongnit led by bird roamed many places before arriving at the destination and finds the lover Rongnue led by the snake arrived already Raongnit, his pride hurt, feels rejected and after exclaiming “theestha” meaning already arrived starts going back to the himalayas, causing the great Deluge and flood (Lama; 2007:153).

According to the Yishey Doma narrative in *‘The stairway to heaven’* explain us that how God displace Lepcha community to several places:

Let us make a ladder to heaven and meet our God’s, said one of them and the idea please everyone. Another said, let’s make big earthen pots and put them one on the other to make a column. When the pillar of pots is high enough, we will climb it to reach the heavens and meet our Gods (Doma; 2010: 47-48).

Above narrative also relevant with Holy Bible in book of Genesis 11: 1-9, “The Tower of Babel”. The whole world had one language and a common speech and they said to each other come, let’s us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the

heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves, otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth. But LORD goes down and confuses their language so they will not understand each other. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

In the narrative of stairway to Heaven, the serious breakdown of communication between artisans working at the top and the ones at the bottom of the earthen pot tower. Instead of passing the hooked stick to reach the heaven, they smashed it down. Therefore, the men's aspiration to meet their Gods remained a dream. Which is why, through that incident Lepcha community had to face the scattered over worldwide and was not accomplished their mission. They named this place Thallom purtam, came to know as Ka Daan Raom Dyen (nowadays it's known as Daramdin), which means 'we smash it down'.

#### **5.6. Post HPP Phases of Disaster, Displacement and Hazard on Dzongu**

The hazards (landslides, soil erosion and flash floods) after the construction activities (road construction and dam construction) have resulted into economic loss, damage to the houses and agricultural land, etc. of the communities in the project areas. This situation is also reported from the Dzongu area in North Sikkim where a few hydropower projects are under construction (Lepcha; 2013). Nowadays, Landslide became major problem. Dam destroying the sacred placed of Dzongu and not only sacred land but destroying natural flora and fauna and whole biodiversity of mayellyang Dzongu of Sikkim. There increased very much unbalanced of environmental weather. Massive affect happen to sacred land and their clean and green environment in Dzongu. One of the major problems faced because of blasting and using chemical stuff the native land became so flexible and sinking problem is appearing. Chemical product destroying natural resources of Teesta like aquaria

species and it's also affected life too. Dzongu covered by full of greenery, stream and the people lived here were so kind and devoted towards their nature. After construction of Dams people of Dzongu and the whole existing nature had to face huge challenges. Within Dzongu after constructions of dam people had to come across with three major natural calamities which are as follow;

First, we observed that there is a great fear of unavoidable natural calamities such as landslides and earthquakes. Sikkim has been classified as geologically fragile and is part of seismic Zone V prone to high magnitude earthquakes. This was proved by the 18 September 2011 earthquake (6.9 Richter scale) that caused great damage to the fragile landscapes killing more than hundred lives. The earthquake induced destructive landslides that swept away villages in Dzongu and other areas, was recorded in the hydropower project sites than in other areas.

Second, the Kanaka River, a tributary of Teesta River, had been blocked by the debris of the hill side on Saturday (13 August 2016) partially submerging Mantam village at 4<sup>th</sup> mile on the way to upper Dzongu. The 22 odd families of the village were shifted to relief camp at tringvong and lingdem while the major worry was that the around 150m wide natural dam could burst posing a huge risk to the settlements along the Teesta river upto Rangpo and beyond. Mantam village is around 25km away from Mangan and falls under upper Dzongu. The Kanaka River flows past this village and joins Teesta River at Nampringdong, about 10km down.

It was informed that the Kanaka River found a breach in the natural dam and started draining from the morning hours providing some degree of relief to the people

settle close to the river. Eleven houses and the suspension bridge linking upper Dzongu at Mantam have been submerged under water<sup>16</sup>.

During the rainy season lake gesture swollen Mantam Bridge and it's been many times that Mantam Bridge was collapsed, there is lack of permanent solution regarding the bridge. Public of two GPU has been facing multiple problems due to the obvious, temporary bridge collapse at Mantam lake, which is a big challenge for local people to survive and they have been facing problem on road connectivity. Therefore, they want justice to the local people of this two GPU regarding smooth road connectivity and permanent solution to this Mantam Bridge tragedy.



**Figure 5.3. Mantam Lake during Mansoon**

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<sup>16</sup> Sikkim express 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016 “Experts to study Dzongu hill slide, relief appeal for affected people”.



**Figure 5.4. Mantam Bridge Collapsed during Rainy Season**

On field visit, got some dependable information about that incident which was happened at upper Dzongu that, on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 nearly 30 houses were collapsed and nowadays only four houses are nearby that lake but rest of them were settled in Lingthem village with their respective things. The trauma still exists with them and they were unable to take proper nap during the raining season. 55 year old lady shared her experienced that throughout her life that awful landslide was very worse experienced so far. They were unable to take out their things except the document and some cash only. That year they planted around 250 plants for their better future earnings. But on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 around 1 pm that disaster landslide also wipe out their every future plans for better livelihood<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 information given by affected resident during field visit at Mantam Lake.





**Figure 5. 5 Upper Dzongu Mantam Landslide maintenance work**

The 22 old families of the village were shifted to relief camps at Tingvong and Lingdem while the major worry was that around 150m wide natural dam could burst posing a huge risk to the settlements along the Teesta River up to Rangpo and beyond. Mantam village is around 25 kilometers away from Mangan and falls under upper Dzongu. The Kanaka River flows past this village and joins Teesta River at Nampringdong, about 10km down. It was informed that the Kanaka River found a breach in the natural dam and started draining from the morning hours providing some degree of relief to the people settled closed to the River. Eleven houses and the

suspension bridge linking upper Dzongu at Mantam have been submerged under water<sup>18</sup>.

Respective an inhabitant said that they lost their land with so many cash crops and still they were suffering from that kind of trauma. Some of them said that it was happened due to the blasting for construction of hydro power project the existing Mantam hill was fall down and some other said that because of blasting and earthquake that Mantam lake already cracked and later it was fall down. But when they talk through religious perspective that what they thought was Dzongu is a sacred land for them and their creator lord lived on every natural phenomenon. That's why they are animist who worship nature and love to live close with the nature. And what they thought that it was a signal of their creator furious towards their descendent. Instead of protect the nature they used to make it develop through destroying the existing nature.

Third, case of negligence by Hydro Dam Company was 365 kilogram of dynamites exploded at Lingzya the proposed dam site of Panam power project and more than 30 houses are damaged. The intensity was felt by far flung villages and the villagers are still shocked and trying to overcome from the trauma i.e. people thought that china attacked them. The elderly people are feeling choked and breathless, the locals don't even know what action has been taken to the himagiri HEP is there attempt to cover up the corporate negligence? Many answer to seek affected citizen of Teesta and save Dzongu team visited the sites today long with panchayat of the surrounding areas. Something is terribly wrong with our system and still Dzongu seek Justice, and focused on no more Dam and river for life.

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<sup>18</sup>Sikkim express 15 August 2016 "Kanaka river finds way past natural dam" experts to study Dzongu hill slide, relief appeal from affected people.

According to the current news that the Rongyong River the biggest tributary of Teesta and the only river which is not been dam till now, but this one has been proposed for 280 MW Panam HEP. But still the people of Dzongu said no more hazards and disaster in their existing nature and they were stock on no more dam in Dzongu and river for life. One of respondent said about his experienced that when the proposed of hydro power project bill was passed and when the committee received the notice, that night the river was automatically change his wave in a drastic way and its seem like everyone will suffer now. That's why they thought that their creator remain on the hill, mountain and every natural phenomenon<sup>19</sup>.

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020, another disaster happens in Dzongu, A flash flood at Passingdang upper Dzongu due to the heavy rain. Huge damages to houses and public properties. It will take a couple of days to clear this stretch if the weather clears; there are many other areas where minor landslides have blocked the road. The Tingvong GPU public have decided to clear these slides on their own and not wait for the authorities since connectivity to upper Dzongu is snapped at other places said Nim Tshering Lepcha former national footballer and a Tingvong GPU resident. Upper Dzongu is cut-off from rest of the state due to landslides at multiple locations. The major landslide is al Passingdang where the entire village had to be evacuated. Tingvong and Sakyong Pentong GPUs lie above passingdong and do not have permanent road connectivity since the Mantam Slide of 2016. The villagers of these two GPUs take vehicles upto Mantam, cross the bamboo cane bridge and then board vehicles on the other side of the lake. Due to the landslides on 27<sup>th</sup> June vehicular movement within these two GPUs are affected due to landslides<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup>On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018 information collected during field Interview at upper Dzongu

<sup>20</sup>Sikkim express report on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Therefore, out of the total respondents surveyed, most of them revealed that the incidence of the number of landslides and soil erosion has increased dramatically. While, some of the respondents were of the opinion that the frequency of flash floods have increased owing to frequent release of water from Mantam lake during monsoon.

**Table 5.7. Unequal Employment Opportunity before and after the construction of HPP**

	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Unequal Employment Opportunity</b>				
Do your children go to primarily school?	73.08	26.92	61.54	38.46
Do your children go to secondary school?	65.38	34.62	53.85	46.15
Are you satisfied with the education services?	57.69	42.31	50.00	50.00
Did lepcha youth face unemployment crisis?	46.15	53.85	92.31	7.69
Are there any unemployment issues in Dzongu?	84.62	15.38	26.92	69.23
Conflict Between Local Communities to Hydro Power Project is Because of Unequal Employment?	38.46	61.54	46.15	53.85
Have you been involved in any unskilled labour?	57.69	42.31	50.00	50.00
Have you been involved in any skilled labour?	53.85	46.15	100.00	0.00
Does modernization process migrate most of the youth outside the Dzongu?	84.62	15.38	50.00	50.00
Has the process of modernization led to a loss of agriculture income sources?	26.92	73.08	38.46	61.54
Do you think there has been increase of tourism?	65.38	34.62	53.85	46.15
Did Lepcha of Dzongu establish Homestay to preserve and protect Lepcha culture, custom and tradition?	50.00	50.00	34.62	65.38
Are they satisfied with their dedication?	46.15	53.85	50.00	50.00
Note: table 5.7 is in annexure 5.8				

Source: During field survey (10<sup>th</sup> June 2019- 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Dzongu)

Table 5.7 reveals that regarding the education, schooling upto class 12 is available in Hee gyathang lower Dzongu and in Mangan capital of north district. For post graduate study students have to go to Mangan, Gangtok, and out of the state. From 2016 only there is Government College at Mangan and with that many of the family member and student are satisfied with the education services. Even though, after getting a good

qualification unemployment is one of the issues where many youth lose their self confident. Regarding the employment in Dzongu some of the youth have a job card and working in MGNERAGA, some of them are engaged on skill labour work for example; carpenter, painter and caring charges. After the initiation of HPP in north Sikkim youth have a huge expectation for getting job or first priority should be given to them, but most of the outsiders were hiring for job and one of the reason was Conflict between Local Communities to Hydro Power Project is because of Unequal Employment.

Therefore, due to the modernization procedure like, blasting and chemicals led to a loss of agriculture income sources especially on cash crops. So, to maintain their sources of income some of the youth has been increase of tourism by establish homestay. Behind the intention of making homestay in Dzongu was to preserve and protect Lepcha culture, custom and tradition and they are satisfied with their dedication.

### **5.7. Pre HPP Phases of Unequal Employment in Dzongu**

Since, Khangsarpa brothers, who were the Lepcha, virtually ruled Sikkim during white's tenure and also when DC Darjeeling looked after Sikkim prior to white. At this moment, there are only insignificant numbers of Lepcha in higher bureaucracy in the state, and with more and more communities being notified as scheduled tribes, it will be difficult for the Lepchas, the most indigenous tribe of Sikkim, to secure good jobs in their own native land, once known as Mayel Lyang (Tamlong; 2008). Therefore, indigenous people had been facing status issues in their own native land and want to address it from the root of the causes.

Hence, to achieve well status in society first, education is mandatory for everyone and in Dzongu there is limited of well education centre. Therefore, to have well education many of the children were leaved their place in very young age. Which is why; many of the children who expend most of their life in hostel and away from their families and communities do not nurture in Lepcha environment. That many of the children who were educated elsewhere are settling their only and they are unaware of the situation facing in native place.

### **5.8. Post HPP Phases of Unequal Employment in Dzongu**

According to employment census in Dzongu some youngster got job in HPP Company not permanent but ad-hoc basis. People said, that ad-hoc job is only for misguiding them so that they couldn't goes against their systems. In Previous scenario, people sold their land for the sake of money and for some third level job basis only. But as compare to outsider people most of the native people working under third level work. Though they are well educated and according to their qualification they deserve higher status. But, still employment became problematic situation in Dzongu. In the case of majority of employment, maximum numbers of employed are outsider instead of native youth and this is also one of the impact of unequal employment opportunity.

In this case, the local people had been suffering and had so many questions with the state government too. That first they passed these projects on the one condition that is development on Dzongu only and most of people thought that development means enthusiastic future for upcoming generation in every aspect. Like, road, hospital, education and especially for job opportunity, but after the construction of Hydro power project local people stock on one question that is where development is? They didn't saw any developing work for the local inhabitant. Instead of developed village they had to suffer for their right and had to fight back for their

sacred land and later they took hunger strike for couple of months. And instead of, first priorities to local inhabitant, most of the outsider get good position. Which is seriously causes local conflict with the state government and which is still going on through the help of social media. Most of the young generation fight back with this problem with the help of college student and university student they fight back with this injustice system with the slogan of save Teesta and free flow Teesta.

One of respondents share about the unemployment issues in Dzongu that is, youth of Dzongu had been facing deprived level in status. Though, all the Sikkimese youth were appointed for job in different company within Sikkim but, actual the reality was they had to do difficult work as like carpeting, packaging, levelling and had to do all the stuff work which comes under third class category. That's the reason behind the unemployment issues in Dzongu and in Sikkim. Instead, of doing that work they felt that, is better to leave the job. Therefore, not only Dzongu youth had been struggle with these issues but most of the Sikkimese youth facing the same problem. They shared that if developed work will launch in their village or in state than first priority have to be given to the local people. For that they have to provide them training and instruct them instead of hire people from outsider. It will be only scheme of decreasing an unemployment issues among the youth from our place<sup>21</sup>.

Therefore, most of the respondent said that no employment opportunities have been provided to the local people in the power projects. Some of the respondents have said that opportunities mostly in the form of paid labourers, small contracts and contractual jobs have increased. In addition, they also revealed that job opportunities on regular basis are negligible. Only the affected households of the NHPC that had given away their land have been given regular employment, especially on clerical

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<sup>21</sup> On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018 Interview done at passingdang with local resident

positions; other private power developers have not given employment to the affected households in their companies. Almost all the respondents repeatedly stressed that there is lack of employment opportunities for the local people in the hydropower project institutions, especially the private sector companies. Even if the locals are employed, they are employed on contractual basis in clerical posts and as casual labour. Furthermore, the local institutions indicated that construction works of the power developers are mostly allocated to the non-local contractors.

**Table 5.8. Human Health before and after the construction of HPP**

<b>Human Health</b>	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has there been any big infrastructure development likes roads, public health post, post office was established?	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Are you satisfied with the Condition of Road linking village with hospitals, market, education institutions?	26.92	73.08	92.31	7.69
Does your household have access to clean drinking water?	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Are you satisfied with the drinking water facilities?	84.62	15.38	73.08	26.92
Does your household have access to sanitation facilities?	65.38	34.62	69.23	30.77
Are you satisfied with the available sanitation facilities?	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Do you have access to medical services?	73.08	26.92	73.08	26.92
Did you have Health facility available in Village?	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Are you satisfied with the available medical services?	57.69	42.31	50.00	50.00
Has any member of your family experience any repeated health complication?	46.15	53.85	84.62	15.38
If yes, do you think that the construction of Teesta IV Dam is to blame?	50.00	50.00	100.00	0.00
Has the implementers carried out any health related initiatives?	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Note: table 5.8 is in annexure 5.9				

Source: During field survey (10<sup>th</sup> June 2019- 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Dzongu)



Table 5.8 reveals that nowadays, there has been a big infrastructure development like's road, public health, post office was established in Dzongu North Sikkim. Local people are satisfied with the condition of road linking village with hospitals, market, education institutions. Regarding the drinking water so far, in locality is satisfied but due to the landslide facilities have been facing problems. Because, in Dzongu mostly the water supply is linked with the peak and during rainy season the flood landslide use to creates some problem in drinking water.

Regarding the medical facilities within Dzongu that is, in Passingdong there are one PHE centre for public, but in referral case they have to move towards Mangan or Gangtok. Therefore local people quit worried for their health like, if they got stock any serious issues than its very risk to move forward in end moment. After the initiation of HPP in Dzongu some of the elder have been experience repeated health complication. Therefore they think all health issues arise because of the construction of Teesta IV and Panam Dam in Sacred land.

### **5.9. Pre HPP Phases of Human Health in Dzongu**

Some of the important festivals also played very vital role in healing from sickness. Peek-sat and Apchyong discarding–the head of the family, then keeping the entire tray in front of him calls all members of the house, seniority wise, one by one, and after giving background of the tradition brushes each member from head to toe with a leafy twig and hereby symbolically purifying each member and the twig, one after the other, is thrown into the tray. It is assumed that sickness and other undesirable in the person of each member is thus transferred to the tray and the member is cleansed (Tamlong; 2008).

As priest and in any ceremonial work Lepcha priest were involve doing important role to accomplish it. From birth to till death ceremony, priest has to fulfil all responsibility which is requiring on it. This is why, in Lepcha community when any devil harm in human health than bongthing performs a healing offering prayer for that particular person, as in result they got heal from sickness. So, since ancestor they have believed system that their priest is a mediator to offer prayer for them in any circumstances, especially in healing process.

Therefore, there are many families in the near extinct stages due to sterility, poverty, diseases and death, since it is not in the nature of the Lepchas to beg for anything even in the extreme circumstances. This nature of the Lepchas to tolerate everything and everybody including sickness, diseases and their reluctance to approach anybody for medicine has brought disease and death among them. There are many Lepchas who die at home untreated, unattended and uncared. Some of them need to be pushed to or carried to the hospital as, on their own, they would not go (Tamlong; 2008).

Many folklore are prevalent among the Sikkimese people about the miraculous cure by herbalists, medicine-men, Lepcha and Lamas living in remote monasteries in the high mountains of Sikkim. For example, the flower of *pandanus nepalensis* (Borkung in Lepcha and Trika in Nepali) found in Sikkim upto 1752 elevation are worn in the hair by the girl to win their lovers. It is said to prevent abortion; flower are considered to remove headache and weakness and seeds to cure wound in heart (Lama; 1994: 287).

From above statement we came to know that Lepcha intimates had much knowledge about the herbs medicine and they rely on it too. Nowadays, grandparents for some reason sometime just hunched influential the stories about the medicine and young generation also not interested anymore and there is no one to tell the stories. Therefore, young generation will slowly be battered from traditional knowledge and having deal with the challenge between traditional belief and modern medicine.

#### **5.10. Post HPP Phases of Human Health in Dzongu**

After construction of dam noise pollution became major problematic for local people and they felt that it is harmful for their health issues, because some of them became heart patient, pressure patient. People condemn hydro power project in Dzongu because it's created huge problem not only for human being but for all the natural phenomenon and wild animals too. New infrastructure, new development and new construction of HPP in an existing area mean destroying the existing phenomenon from existing area. Whenever disasters happen in existing place with chemical product then definitely health issues occurred.

After construction of dam regarding the water quality and health condition of the local communities, that human health is deteriorating due to the increase in pollution and contamination of the water sources. Almost all the Lepcha communities have been experienced that there is serious decline both in the number and volume of water resources such as springs, rivulets and streams after construction of various project related activities in Dzongu.



**Figure 5.6. Respondent from Upper Dzongu Passangdang**

In the case of Dzongu Mayellyang, people have an attachment with nature and they used to have NTFP (Non-Timber forest product) and some of them used for medicinal cure too. But now what happening are the herb plants are slowly diminishing from their land and that are the major issues after the construction of dam in Dzongu. Since, from their fore father they had been practicing same herbal cure but, because of the construction of dam People reliable things are diminishing from their native place.

Therefore, most of the respondents have revealed that cases of new diseases are appearing due to heavy immigration of population from the plains over the recent years into Sikkim for employment in hydropower projects. Respondent revealed that all private industries in Sikkim settled down near river and they took huge places too. So, directly and indirectly it will cause our free flow river and side by side it causes human health too.

Gyatso Lepcha said that Impact of the NHPC power project on dwelling houses and why they are doing this? Doing illegal drilling work in underground water

about one day it will come that in our water we will found so many problems. They are doing their toxin drilling under water and one day Sikkimese people will definitely getting poison water within Sikkim. One of the major cause people of Sikkim will suffer in future because of High voltages from HPP which create so many affect to the natural calamity as for example birds, butterfly, flower and vegetable <sup>22</sup>.

**Table 5.9. Important Local Livelihood Adaptation Strategies before and after the Construction of HPP.**

Important local livelihood adaptation strategies	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has any activity contributed to your income in any way?	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Has any modernization affected your Culture value?	69.23	30.77	84.62	15.38
Has modernization affected your Income?	73.08	26.92	84.62	15.38
Has modernization affected your access to food security?	65.38	34.62	92.31	7.69
Has modernization affected your Access to school?	50.00	50.00	57.69	42.31
Has modernization affected your Access to health care?	73.08	26.92	84.62	15.38
Has modernization Access to your electricity and water?	65.38	34.62	76.92	23.08
Did modernization effect of your livestock (domestic animals)?	46.15	53.85	84.62	15.38
Has modernization created any Pollution situations (water, air, noise...)?	50.00	50.00	100.00	0.00
Does the Transportation condition in Dzongu have improved?	73.08	26.92	76.92	23.08
Are you satisfied with the Living conditions as compared to neighbouring villages or community?	50.00	50.00	73.08	26.92
Note: table 5.9 is in annexure 5.10				

Source: During field survey (20<sup>th</sup> July 2019- 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019, Dzongu)

<sup>22</sup>ACT General Secretary Mr; Gyatso Lepcha gave a lecture regarding “free flowing river from regional and activist prospective “at one day workshop organised by Department of Lepcha school of Language and literature Sikkim University.

Table 5.9 reveals that after the construction of hydro power projects in Dzongu the agriculture cultivation lose their quality and quantity too, which was affected on their income. Due to the blockage of road and landslide has affected on student to Access the school. HPP construction work Access to electricity and water too and due to the landslide many household faced the effect on livestock (domestic animals).

Noise pollution is one of the serious issues during the construction of HPP and due to the blasting and dust created pollution situations. Afterwards, due to the landslide the road was block in middle at Mantam lake and the transportation condition in upper Dzongu has not yet improved and local inhabitant are not satisfied with the living condition as compared to neighbouring villages or community.

#### **5.11. Pre HPP Phases of Local Livelihood in Dzongu**

Indigenous community of Dzongu have been witness to collapse of their sacred relationship with the land, forest and among themselves. Lepcha community area derives a massiveness of its livelihood from the natural resources, violation of nature area by development projects would at a risk their livelihood opportunities.

Ordinarily the members of a Lepcha household do not separate, but if the family gets too numerous, or if brothers either real or classificatory do not agree, the household will split and the land be divided and the younger brother will build a house of his own (Gorer; 1938). Because Lepcha community is known as homogenous society and they love to live close with the nature.

Homogenous society refers to the unity in the religious value system, culture and traditional life. In the context of religious festival everyone is available to celebrate in massive unity. Dzongu is a surrounded by many flora and fauna where many natural herbs also perceptible for local community which is why, some of the

eldest person known about the herbal medicine and implemented it too. But, homogenous community encroachment into heterogeneous community in decision making regarding the projects.

Lepcha race has been hunting for long time and they rely on wild hunt for their livelihood. The hunting has stopped, after the modernization process like road was constructed and after Sikkim merged with the Indian union, being a 22<sup>nd</sup> state Sikkim comes under wildlife protection Act. Hence, it is now illegal and the hunting livelihood move towards rice and paddy cultivation, sowing cardamom crops and became agriculturalists.

In ancient times, the Mutanchi Rongkup beloved children of Mother Nature had no proper homes or clans. Whenever wild fruits grew in abundance they gather together and lived in one group, eating the fruits. At that time, they wandered about in place called, Na-ho Na-hu, in their sacred motherland, neymayel lyang. There lived an old Rong. An expert in hunting in the innermost conners of the dense jungle, who used to roam around with his wife and children and lived by hunting and catching the fish in the rivers and eating them. He was the man who only spoke the Rong Ring (Lepcha language a Rong hunter whose home was inside the dense jungle, small but sufficient for shelter. Living there he used to go out for hunting and in a very short while would return with a kill with which he provided for his wife and children to consume (Denjongpa; 2007: 81).

From above narrative we came to know that Lepcha intimates were good in Hunting. Some of the Lepchas infrequently still hunt. They go deep into the dense forest where they follow their traditions not because they need to provide food for their family for modernity long ago removed that need. The few that hunt do so because they were born to. And that nature was passed by their grandparents. But later on the hunting has stopped and it is now prohibited.

Lepcha move away from hunting and became agricultures, they building paddy terraces and sowing cash crop (cardamom) and plantation orange trees. Some of the educated Lepcha possibly started to working in a government job and hold good status and earning enough for their livelihood, some of them working in agriculture sector and became self employed by growing cardamom or tending to their orchard.

#### **5.12. Post HPP Phases of Local Livelihood in Dzongu**

Mayellyang is one of the separate and organic places where Lepcha people dependent on natural NTFP (Non-timber forest products) too. They have connection with natural phenomenon, that's why they worship each and every phenomenon. After the construction of dam many of the NTFP were diminished from the native places, some herbal plant also. One of the major impacts was some of the origin people sold their land to HPP and became landless; they sold their land to HPP side by side they are losing their identity. Because, Lepcha's identity refers to their land and in Dzongu after the constriction of dam some of the people really suffer a lot and their regular livelihood changed.

Before construction of dam, they used to live in their native land very comfortable and with peaceful nature and after the construction of dam, their life style



and livelihood or the source of living process gonna changed. Previous time they have amply of NTFP in their native place, now they have to buy from market. Local people had been suffering because of pathetic road condition for transportation. Because of the incident occurred on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at Passangdang there are enormous disturbance people had been facing on transportation.



**Figure 5.7. Upper Dzongu Bamboo Bridge at Mantam Lake**

Respondent shared about their livelihood through tree plantation, more than 300 they do plantation in a year for future reliability. Nowadays, the situation of Dzongu is not in control and the stable hill and mountain are shaken because of massive blasting and landslide is frequently occurred in that area. Hence, they did

plantation for their future reliability nearly 400 trees near Rangyong River this year only.

On, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 massive landslide occurred in that particular area and all their treasures sweep away along that landslide. Not only plantation but some of the paddy land also demolished with that landslide and creating extreme problems in local livelihood issues. They were losing their precious land and without land how they will survive. Due to the Mantam landslide road was broke in middle and since 2013 vehicle was not available for local people to caring their ration and all utensils thing from market to village. Therefore, local people themselves caring their monthly ration by foot and some paid workers also available out their but in high wages.

**Table 5.10. Agricultural Productivity before and After the Construction of HPP**

Agricultural Productivity	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are you involved in any agricultural activity?	73.08	26.92	46.15	53.85
Has the agricultural production improved?	76.92	23.08	23.08	76.92
Do you sell your crops?	65.38	34.62	26.92	73.08
Do you use it for your own consumption?	84.62	15.38	73.08	26.92
Are you satisfied with the condition of your land?	92.31	7.69	7.69	92.31
Did you lose any agricultural land?	50.00	50.00	73.08	26.92
Is your land registered?	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Do you feel that modernization has made you lose any farm jobs?	50.00	50.00	84.62	15.38
Do you feel that modernization has made you lose any non- farm jobs?	65.38	34.62	92.31	7.69
Note: table 5.10 is in annexure 5.11				

Source: During field survey 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019- 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Dzongu.

Table 5:10 reveals that majority of the inhabitants involved in any agricultural activity. The people of Dzongu depended on nature and natural products supplemented by whatever agriculture produce they could manage from the cultivated lands. Nowadays, it is observe that many cardamom fields now have become barren due to the plant disease. Because of that the agricultural production is worse in quality and quantity, which is why some of the inhabitants facing trouble to sell their crops and for their own consumption. Due to the modernization process many blasting procedure was done for making tunnels under the mountain and in rainy season massive landslide occurred in Dzongu.

Therefore, due to the landslide some of the local inhabitants lose their agriculture land and they are not satisfied with the condition of their land. Some inhabitants have been rely on farm business like (poultry, dairy and piggery) and due to the massive landslide occurred on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 they lost it and non-farm business like (tree plantation) too.

### **5.13. Pre HPP Phases of Agriculture in Dzongu**

The chief crops raised by the Lepchas on the Talung side of Dzongu are wet rice, dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamom and different varieties of millet or eleusine. On the warmer Teesta side a certain amount of sugar cane and manioc is also raised (Gorer; 1938). One of the main cash crops is cardamom and most of the family rely on that yearly cultivated product for their livelihood.

In year of 1930, the market value of cardamom was comparatively small and flowed only slowly into the Lepcha community, after 10 years it became much larger. With this growing wealth came the opportunity for Lepcha farmers to employ labourers from Nepal to work on the land, especially on the cardamom fields, as well

as to provide their own children with an education by sending them to school. From this statement what we come to know is, the cash crops production was healthy and pleased for local community.

As we all know that Dzongu land is a reserve for Lepcha community and the area were covered by dense forest and known as sacred land. While, during field visit one of the respondent shared about the agriculture productivity before the initiation of Hydro Power Projects in Dzongu, which was, on that particular sacred land the cardamom plantation was very healthy like, without any manure the cardamom plants quality and quantity of product was healthy. They believed that their deities lived within nature and which is why; through their abundant blessing they had such prosperity in agriculture field.

A long time ago, people from mayel used to come and mix with the Lepchas living in the foothills of Kongchen Kongcho. These mystical beings ate and talked like ordinary people. But they stopped visiting when they felt the humans were no longer pious. However, to make up for their absence, they used to send messages in the forms of birds. The kaku announced to the people it was time to sow dry land paddy and other birds announced it was time to harvest the crop (Doma; 2010: 41)

From above narrative written by Yishey Doma on '*How Lepcha Got Grain*' shared the Lepcha talk of a secret place in Dzongu called Mayel Kyong where seven families live a traditional life and there is no diseases, no famine. One of the shaman

or hunter Thekung mensalung enters the Mayel and spends quality time with the deities. Each morning deities become children, by noon, they become adult and as the sun sets, they are old. During the day of their departure that deities families gave him different types of grains. Hence, they sow these seasonal seeds in their land. Still in Lepcha community the seasonal birds plays very vital role in sowing the seeds and for harvesting too. Lepcha believed their neighbour and their people will never die of hunger. They will harvest plenty to eat all through the year.

Therefore, in Dzongu Lepcha community have faith that their deities are protector and live in their nature. During field survey respondent shared their experience regarding the cultivation of agriculture that without any manure their crops gave good quality and quantity too. According to the local estimates, most of the households in Nampatan used to harvest between two to six maunds (one maunds is approximately equivalent to 40kg), a fair number of households even obtained ten maunds. Which is why, animism Lepcha take offerings the deity from their livestock and agriculture productivity.

#### **5.14. Post HPP Phases of Agriculture in Dzongu**

Being a native place residence what they experienced so far that before HPP their agriculture productivity was good in quality and heavy in numbers. But after the HPP, first they examined their agriculture quality goes down and especially fertilizer of land not works properly. Therefore they are facing low productivity on their cash crops that is cardamom and rest of the agriculture productivity too.



**Figure 5.8. Respondent from Hee Gathang**

Changes in agriculture productivity the local farmers expressed that agricultural yield has declined due to development induced issues. Respondents strongly argued that the productivity of their agriculture cereals and pulses declined over the last 10 years. This drastic decline of the productivity was attributed to the declining trend of the disappearance of local springs, streams and small rivulets that are the immediate sources of irrigation. All the respondents strongly argued that the tunnelling and explosion during tunnel construction has created cracks, and earth movement in the agriculture field and in the forest areas. The impacts of tunnels continue till date especially in the cultivated ecosystems, agro forestry systems and in the surrounding forest ecosystems. Some of the respondents notice on their agriculture productivity that the size of the fruits such as that of mandarin orange and guava have reduced considerably, losing vigour, colour and taste and as a result lost market competition.

Lepcha community have a strong believed that their deities lived within the nature but, after the initiation of Hydro power projects in Dzongu their deity presence abolish from sacred land which is why, the abundant blessing on their agriculture productivity are decreased as compared to previous. Before construction of dam people had amazing experienced about their cash crops in quantity and quality too. After construction of dams the real quality was fall down and cardamom plantation decreased day by day which effect from local people to in market rate too. So far, the condition of cash crop is not steady in Dzongu instead good result in plantations it's creating more problems for local people. Which is why, the market prize is goes down and its impact on local livelihood.

Therefore, respondent gave strong statement that because of the modernization process in sacred land and because of the stubborn attitude towards their creator. Like, instead of protect the sacred land they sold out their sacred land with the projects and the massive severe effect shown in their agriculture productivity. Nowadays, the local community realized that they are losing their abundant blessing in agriculture productivity from their deities. So, honestly the reason behind the decreasing of agriculture product from Dzongu is negligence toward their duty, that to protect the sacred land because, Dzongu is a sacred land where their deities lived and now, the ACT have a vision to protect their land it in any cost<sup>23</sup>.

#### **5.15. Modernisation as a Concept and its Implications on the Affected Area of Sikkim.**

Though hydro power project create huge disturbance in local inhabitant people, they also got so conscious and aware about their traditional culture. Now in north Sikkim we found so many homestay for tourism and they put their traditional name on it.

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<sup>23</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 information collected during field interview at Passangdang upper Dzongu

Which will reflect the background of that cultural value system and people used to know that whose tribe belongs to that homestay? As like that in Dzongu too people used to open traditional homestay and in Dzongu the main motive behind the homestay is to protect their cultural identity. Because through that homestay service what they want to spread a message among other is that without destroying existing natural phenomenon people can make better future.

After the construction of Hydro Power project in Dzongu, people became more aware about their cultural value system. Instead of accepting development in their land first they want to preserve their identity and with the help of social media people of Dzongu spreading awareness about their culture, traditional and customs among the community. Affected citizen of Teesta slogan working so hard so far, they organised so many local meeting and discuss the major issues which they were facing. Through facebook too, there are U MADE us Proud and Affected Citizen of Teesta pages working so hard. Through that pages people getting news update and what will the future plans and what kind of work the committee is working every minute had been updating here.

An awareness programme on the free flowing of river was organised by ACT (Sikkimese River) and supported by the Affected citizen of Teesta, Sikkim ornithological society and save Sikkim under one banner of the green defender of Sikkim, at Darap, west Sikkim on Monday. The event was attended by South East Asia international river organisation Samir Metha, Jiten Yumnan from Manipur research centre DIO West Sikkim Aron Lepcha Geyzing government college principal Kessang W. Bhutia Zilla panchayat Rinzing Lhamu Lepcha, Sikkim university research scholars, student and youths from Rimbi, Darap and adjoining villages, a press release informs.



The aim of the workshop was to apprise on keeping the present free flowing river safe and flowing where the construction haven't taken place. The participants deliberate on peaceful and hopeful requests to the government as well as the political parties of the Sikkim to put the issues letting remaining rivers flow free in their election manifestos. We aim to spread awareness in the far corners of our state regarding the important of free flowing of rivers which is so important for keeping the natural process functioning. We have started this programme from Darap. We aim to keep all such rivers flow free in the state for healthy environment not just today but for our future generation, they said. The members further decided to move further North Lachen and Lachung where there are free flowing rivers which might be chocked<sup>24</sup>.

#### **5.16. Both Ban and Boon of Mega Hydro Power Projects in Socio-Cultural Practices of Dzongu Reserve of Sikkim**

ACT celebrated 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of historic hunger strike movement on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in Dzongu. Still an Indigenous Lepcha people protest at entry of Dzongu region against NHPC stage IV and they cry for the sacred land. Public of Dzongu protest against the stage IV NHPC at the lower Dzongu phidang bridge entry point of lower Dzongu. More than 1000 people participate the protest rally, which includes self help group women's, farmers, NGO, Government, employs, panchayat, college and Sikkim university student etc from the region. Records of how corporate undermine the government and crush the people's aspirations. NHPC stage V Dickhu land owners and affected people desperately waiting for government to interfere. NHPC general manager despite summon from the collector north didn't turn up for the

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<sup>24</sup> 14 August 2018 Sikkim express "*workshop on free flowing rivers held at Darap*"

meeting. Upcoming stage-IV people should look at this as the classic example of how NHPC can turn around in future courses.

Stage-IV right bank elected panchayat members delegation to district collector north asking the administration to stop social impact assessment study for stage-IV on the ground that right bank majority gram sabha has already rejected the power project the government of Sikkim had come out with the land acquisition notification dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and also notified social impact assessment study dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The majority of gram sabha from Dzongu rejected the project on forest right Act; it is irrelevant to acquire land under acquisition Act, when the same project has been rejected under FRA as a part of forest clearance process. It will be a dangerous move to create a fait accompli illegally by acquiring<sup>25</sup>.

Where our generating energy is going? If we come to know that, we should come to know the value of our natural rivers. Gyatso Lepcha, the general secretary of Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT), a group that has opposed the dams on behalf of the Lepcha for many years and has gotten extensive coverage in the news, argued that the UNESCO designation provides added importance to their stance. He said that his group is anticipating a decision by the government to scrap the Teesta Stage IV project. If it does not, ACT will submit a written petition to UNESCO pointing out how designated sites are being treated within India. Gyatso said that two of the completed projects, Teesta III and V, produce over 1,700 megawatts of power, only 112 of which are used within Sikkim. The remainder power is sold to the rest of

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<sup>25</sup> [www.web](http://www.web) page of affected citizen of Teesta (ACT)

India<sup>26</sup>. So, he concluded by saying that being a responsible citizen of Sikkim we have to know about everything related with our state development.

The Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) has censured NHPC over its clam on having received support of the state government towards 520 MW Teesta-IV and 500 Teesta-V hydel power projects. Last week, the NHPC had issued a press statement mentioning that chief minister P.S Golay had extended full support of the Sikkim government towards the two mega power projects, one of which falls in the Lepcha reserve of Dzongu. The report assurance was given during the call-on of NHPC chairman on Golay at New Delhi. This was swiftly encountered by the chief minister, who in his social media account on March 9. Maintained that no such assurance was given for the Teesta-IV project for which public hearing is yet to be concluded involving different panchayat as per the forest Right Act 2006, he posted. No decisions will be made on hastily on such projects without a broad consensus of the different sections of our society, he said. Taking up the matter, the ACT said it was concerned with the misinformation campaign by NHPC. The ACT express communities of Sikkim on multifaceted impacts of hydropower projects in fragile Himalayans landscapes of Sikkim said the organization in a press statement today issued by general secretary Gyatso Lepcha. The ACT also expresses concern with misusing and misrepresentation of the office of the chief minister on hydropower development in Sikkim by NHPC and undermining the voices and rights of the indigenous people, ACT also would like highlight on the easy and reckless attitude of

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<sup>26</sup>ACT General Secretary Mr; Gyatso Lepcha gave a lecture regarding “free flowing river from regional and activist prospective “at one day workshop organised by Department of Lepcha school of Language and literature Sikkim University.

NHPC towards Government of Sikkim wherein the chief minister's office had to clarify and refute the false claims made by the NHPC, said the ACT<sup>27</sup>.

Member of ACT and save Sikkim jointly organised and awareness rally carrying placards at the banks of river Kalej to mark international day of action for river today. The rally organised by save Sikkim, the west Sikkim based organisation in collaboration with Dzongu north Sikkim based ACT with the theme with 'No More Dams in Sikkim' Culminated at Shrithang under Geyzing Omchung GPU. The day is celebrated across the world as the day dedicated for action for rivers. The ACT has been spearheading movement against the construction of big dams in the state from the past 16 years and save Sikkim has been raising the concern on mega hydro power projects along the sacred river rathong chu in west Sikkim. Various discussions pertaining to the ecological imbalances caused by developing hydro power projects and dams were held. River kajel originates from above uttarey near the indo-Nepal border via Dentam and merges with Rangit River at Legship. Speaking at the event, Prabhu Ram Kharka a member of save Sikkim said, as we all know, the previous government constructed hydro power projects in most of the rivers in the state. Our motive is to keep rest of the rivers safe and natural. We hope that the present state government is positive on this and would support us to save the environment. Save Sikkim President Yapchung Bhutia thanked the ACT members for visiting west Sikkim. Our aim is to make people aware of negative impact of ecological imbalances through constructing dams. ACT general secretary Gyatsho Lepcha said there are more than the required numbers of dams in the state. Our rivers are not for sale, he said appealing that the building of dams be stopped on the rivers now. The programme also passed a resolution requesting the state government not to build

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<sup>27</sup>Sikkim express report on 11 March 2020 "Stop Building Dams in Sikkim: Act tells NHPC"

further dams in Sikkim and also reiterated the demand of scrapping the Teesta stage-IV project and Tashinding HEP. Kajeel River is the only river in the state which is virgin and no hydro power projects and dams have come up till date and we should let the river flow freely. He appealed to the state government to keep the remaining rivers to flow freely and without dams and damages as it are natural<sup>28</sup>.

### **5.17. Conclusion**

Government said that development is for people's security but in Dzongu that same development creating insecurity among the indigenous community. Within Himalayan community we stated regional issues that is Hydro power project movement and it is not only for Lepcha's people but it is our or for everyone who is live in this Himalayan region. In Sikkim we can find out so many species as like butterfly, flower (orchid) just behind Arunachal Pradesh, animal and river too. In Sikkim we have more than 300 major rivers and among them two river are so renowned we have that is Teesta and Rangit. When we are talking about rivers first and foremost we have to know about source of river. But why we are delaying to know much more about the river which is our treasures. Because we don't know about the rivers very much, we have just seen it but never examined it seriously. Lake, glacier are creation of rivers and river has sound and flow of life too. First we have to know much more about the river. How many of us know about the source of river? Because, being a citizen of Sikkim Himalayan region first and foremost we have to know about our natural treasures and what its historical overview of our natural phenomena. Rivers have sound and we can feel it well.

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<sup>28</sup>Sikkim express reported by Pritam Lama on 14 March 2020 "ACT, Save Sikkim reiterate anti dam stance"

Our forefather gave name to the River which is so far exist and river giving us what we human being want or need it, we saw Scar (wound) in valley after the construction of dam in north Sikkim. Through this movement what they want to say is that, we have to protect our nature or must say our aboriginal nature where the entire natural calamity is situated. Because of earthquake all the natural calamity was goes into vain and during earthquake all of the impact had somehow connection with hydro power project. Almost 3 hours people of north Sikkim felt shaking of earthquake. Because of HPP turner for the existing land had poor condition to hold back. Therefore, they had been suffering from since that day. Because of vibration the existing land goes into dangerous way, after the construction of dam Dzongu people used to faced with the landslide as compared with the before construction dam. After the earthquake which occurred on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011 so many natural disasters has happen, after the construction of Dam in north Sikkim.

Madha bharat hydro power project create some problem like suddenly 40ft hole appeared which give huge sound too. Downstream it's best for the hydro power project therefore, the dam established on it. People used to partiality on the basis of community, races and religion but the rivers couldn't its flow everywhere wherever people need. But after the construction of dam the boundary had been creating on it too which is flowing everywhere. Why this is happening? This is only for human greed and benefit they create barrier to natural phenomena too. Dam create huge disturbance to the natural fragile. Through software that government of app, it will help us to know how much we are consuming the energy, we can check it out. Almost all the local and indigenious communities strongly argued that they are not directly involved to ensure their participation in the planning process for hydropower development. As a result several conflicting issues such as impacts cultural erosion,

displacement, disaster hazards, unequal unemployment, health, livelihoods and appropriate mechanisms for impact mitigation and improvement of agriculture productivity are yet to be addressed.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Sikkim is an amusing place for anyone who has an obsession to the Himalayas and loves raw nature. Sikkim is one of the seven sisters of the North-East states of India and Sikkim is the least populous. The state of Sikkim as we know of today was incorporated in the Indian Union as late as 1975 when the monarchy was dismissed and became 22<sup>nd</sup> smallest state of our great country. Interestingly Sikkim has the highest literacy rate and per capita income among all other Himalayan states. It is divided into four districts, the East, West, North and South Sikkim, this tiny state is almost entirely covered by mountainous.

Lepchas are the original inhabitants of Sikkim although after 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Bhutia from Tibet and Nepalese who came in from Nepal constituted the major population of the state. After the decay of years, there has been a fusion of culture & traditions amongst the three communities that are (Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepalese) and the original Lepcha culture in Sikkim had been taking a back seat. Therefore, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, king gave the Dzongu which is rely on North Sikkim in dowry to his wife and in 1958, the exclusive claim of Dzongu Lepcha on this land is formalised by royal proclamation. Therefore, Dzongu is richly surrounded by Lepcha community's original culture and practices

However having said that, in Sikkim there has still been some influences from Bhutia and Nepalese culture and practices. For example, in around 17<sup>th</sup> century time the Bhutia came to Sikkim and introduced Buddhism in Sikkim, the Lepchas used to worship the mountain Kanchenjunga, and rivers such as Teesta and Rangeet. Today while they mostly practice Buddhism, many also combine the earlier practices of



worshipping mountains and rivers. Hence, Lepcha loved to call themselves “children of Rong tribe,” Because they were peace loving, deeply religious and are children of nature and nature worshiper.

In fact, the originality of Lepcha community no one can say from where it originated and how it became the indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim. Some said that the Lepcha language comes from the Tibeto-Burma language and the original of the Lepcha tribe belonged to the clan of the Nagas, Garo, and Khasia. Therefore, narratives only proclaim that the indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim is Lepcha people and they claim themselves mutungchi rongkup which means Children of Himalayas.

Since, 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Lepcha community faces extinction in culture and practices lies when these Tibetan people migrate from Tibet because of the conflict among the followers of the yellow hats and the red hats. In Sikkim migrate Tibetan (red hats) followers converted the Sikkimese indigenous inhabitants who are called by animism to Buddhism and they were succeeded in doing this. The Christian missionaries translated their religious book into Lepcha language with the purpose of converting Lepcha to Christianity and Nepalese people migrated in early 19<sup>th</sup> century and influence their culture and practice among indigenous people. That is why, indigenous people has been facing identity crisis issues in Sikkim.

This became one of the first reasons for the extinction of Lepcha as their real identity. The Sikkimese Lepcha who are the worshippers of nature converted their religion into Buddhism and Christianity followed their new religious value system and is slowly left their original religious practices. After the modern period, Sikkim developed in education, hospital, industries and dispensaries are made to improve the condition of indigenous community.

From the very beginning that is 16<sup>th</sup> May 1975 Sikkim had been facing numerous challenges and new dimensions like culture, education, westernization and industrialization. Therefore, modernization slowly influences towards indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim society or from traditional to agrarian society. Thus modernization process was one of the reasons behind the vanishing of Lepcha as a tribe is due to converting their religion into others and not practising their original religion, culture and customs. Even though, Dzongu is a reserve land and holy land for Lepcha community and which was away from the modernization and development procedure.

In Sikkim indigenous inhabitant originally connected with nature and they loved to live close with it and they worship the natural phenomenon. That's why they so love their environment and always ready to save from harm. But after Sikkim merge with Indian union new dimensions like transportation, industrialization, education and urbanization had been come over the indigenous community. Modernization term is known as changes, changing from traditional to agrarian society or Modernization is a process which brings new cultural system into existing system.

In Sikkim 7000 Lepcha population reside in Dzongu which is located in north district of Sikkim. Within Dzongu religion value system is divided into three categories that are Animism, Buddhist and Christian. Lepcha clam themselves an indigenous inhabitant of Sikkim and during the time of Chogyal that Dzongu were declared a reserve land for Lepcha community. Therefore, Lepcha of Dzongu try to preserve, promote and modify their traditional way of life. But in Sikkim, a new class of people has emerged who cut across the boundaries of caste, ethnicity, languages

and religion. The emergences of this class are facilitated by equality of educational and occupational opportunity.

The Lepcha of Sikkim are the inhabitant of the society and had solidarity behind all its socio-economic, educational and political activities. The Lepcha of Sikkim realised the long term harmful effects of the new class of people and have become conscious of the need to preserve their traditional and their cultural practices.

The government has finalised a proposal for executing hydel projects in the catchment areas of the river Teesta which includes considerable areas under Dzongu. Since, 1994 in Sikkim people were against the dam and they protest it. The government of Sikkim proposed the construction of three dams in the then capital, Yuksom. According to the proposal, the three dams were to be constructed across the Rakthong Chu with 99 MW project in Ting Ting with 96 MW project in Lethang and 97 MW project in Tashiding. This proposal witnessed strong opposition from the Buddhist lamas from west Sikkim, as Rakthong Chu was considered a holy river and the act of tampering with this natural treasure interfered with their religious sentiments.

Hence, association of Buddhist monks, Bhutia-Lepcha association and tribal women's association submitted memorandum to the government of Sikkim to act against the proposal. After their grievance Sikkim government come on this conclusion for the suspense of two of the projects in Ting Ting and Lethang. The second major movement Sikkim witnessed was the movement led by Affected Citizen of Teesta, this movement encompassed of a larger ideology that was based on the protection of the culture and ecology of a region.

Sikkim is a state that is located in the eastern Himalayas. The eastern Himalayas are young and fragile which makes the region landslide prone. Along with this, Sikkim also lies in seismic zone making it vulnerable to frequent earthquake. We had all witnessed the tragedy Uttarakhand faced in 2013. There was a sudden cloudburst that led to the flooding of the valley in 2013, taking toll on lives property and nature. This incident left many in shock as they witnessed the wild, rushing water washing away structures of concrete as it angrily made its path. A similar incident took place in August 2016 when a sudden cloudburst caused a heavy landslide in Mantem village, Passingdong Dzongu. Though there were no losses of lives the water washed away many homes. But for some fortune reason, this was not followed by a flood. Instead the water collected and formed itself as a lake. Surprising the government instead of addressing the calamity and reconsidering their decisions about its interference with nature turned the newly formed lake into a tourist destination.

In a land where man has co-existed with nature for decades, the definition of development is slightly different. It is on the lines of this different ideology of sustainable development and an anti-dam outlook that the affected citizen was established in Dzongu. ACT introduces themselves as an organisation of indigenous Sikkimese citizens to protect the land and people from the threat to the biodiversity hotspot (Khangchendzonga biosphere reserve) endangering the demographic profile to the indigenous primitive Lepcha tribes and the right to live in one's own homeland with dignity and security due to implementation of numerous mega hydro electric power projects in one go.

The movement marked its beginning in the year 2007 against national hydro power corporations Teesta stage-IV project. Many people from Dzongu participated

in an indefinite hunger strike that lasted till September 2009. In 2009 the government of Sikkim assured to suspend four of the seven projects on the Rangyong 141 MW project, Lingza 120 MW project, Ringpi 90 MW project and Rukel 33 MW project. The hunger strike began on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2007 with the then leaders of the movement of the movement, Dawa and Tenzing Lepcha in the forefront. Since then, ACT has been involved in a continuous struggle against the state led dam missionary. They have resorted to peaceful protest and have resorted to peaceful protest and have been creating awareness among the people on the issues. They have also been taking the legal path in representing their voice at a various tribunals and courts. For instance, in March 2015 ACT filed a petition at the national green tribunal.

Therefore, after the initiation of mega hydro project the purity of that land turned into impurity. Due to the developmental project, the Lepcha of Dzongu faced environment impact and natural disaster on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The environmental impact create displacement term among the homogenous society and Lepcha of Dzongu leave their place by willingly and by forcefully. Lepcha of Dzongu protest the developmental project under the banner of affected citizen of Teesta. The initiation of mega hydro project creates conflict between natural worshiper and developmental project and that conflict brought solidarity among Lepcha community. Through the mega hydro project Lepcha of Dzongu learned numerous things and established most active associations within Dzongu that is Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarjum (RMRT). Renjong Mutanchi Rong Ong Shezum (RMROS). Lepcha Students Associations (LSA) and Mutanchi Lom Aal Shemzum (MLAS). Those organizations were actively preserving their various socio-economic, political and traditional way of life.

Within Dzongu people became more conscious and concerned about their identity and they started to preserved their reserved land through homestay and

cultivate organic plantation. They always felt that development can be achieved without destroying our fragile ecology, culture and tradition. They established homestay to prove that without any biggest invention people can earn and protect their environment. Hence, in Dzongu motive behind the homestay is to promote their ethnic identity and by telling their movement regarding the identity issues.

Lepchas had been traditionally a peaceful community and engaged in farming, crop cultivation and herding cattle for livelihood. Lepchas in Dzongu grow different types of vegetables including potatoes, squash, avocados, cabbage, ginger etc. Cardamom and rice are two of the main sources of livelihood here, and you can see vast stretches of paddy and cardamom plantations on the slopes of the hills. Earlier, their entire livelihood was full dependent on agriculture and they never had to purchase anything from the market. Rather they would earn money through selling our product. In the early years the Lepchas used to move for cultivation form one land area to the other depending on season and land fertility. After Sikkim merged with Indian union the land areas where demarcated and mobility was restricted. That is why, majority of Lepcha community reside in reserve land that is Dzongu.

The hydropower projects in Dzongu raised several serious issues regarding the disturbance in traditional ecological and communities incorporate the provision of community infrastructure such as water and electricity systems, health and employment in the project areas. Almost all the stakeholders and most particularly the local and indigenous communities strongly argued that they are not directly involved to ensure their participation in the planning process for hydropower development.

Judging from the above achievements, Lepcha movement has met a partial if not full success in the fight for its motherland. It has however, brought a positive

development in the local, national and international level. In the local level it is in turn helping the youth to learn their indigenous culture, language, tradition and in a way it is preserving culture for the future which is a very positive development with regards to people in Sikkim forgetting their own culture and adopting the dominant culture of the land.

Therefore, since from 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in Sikkim because of modernization term Lepchas who had been facing vanishing tribe or they were known as identity crises community. Because of these modernization procedure Animism Lepcha converted into Buddhism and Christianity. Dzongu is a reserve area for Lepchas and they said that is a Holy land for them. But, from 2004 Mega hydel project bring huge transformation on homogenous community of Dzongu. Due to the clash between homogenous societies verses modernization project conflict has been arise into four level that is local level, state level, national level and international level. At local level, Due to the mega hydel project homogenous society has faced huge challenges towards their identity.

Like, Dzongu is a reserve land of Lepchas but that project bring outsider on that holy land and created challenges in front of local youth. At state level, homogenous society started hunger strike under the banner of (ACT) in front of BL House at Gangtok. ACT general secretary Dawa Lepcha and CLOS member Tenzing Lepcha had took a 93 days hunger strike to protect their holy land. In the national level it has brought solidarity amongst Lepcha not only from the land but also Lepchas who are distributed in other pockets for example Lepchas living in Darjeeling, Kalimpong (West Bengal). Similarly in the international level it has been able to win many supporters from many of the first world American and

European countries. It has in a way won a huge support base which is vital for the survival and sustenance of such movements.

But again the movement has also given rise to a large array of negative phenomenon. We should not forget the growth of hard feelings among friends and families who have differing views on the future of Dzongu with regards to the development of major Hydel Power Project. Like Kerry Little in her article "*From the Villages to the Cities: The Battleground for the Lepcha Protest*" there is persuading to be done there in reconciling the differences, educating the masses and the future generation which can lead to rebuilding of relationships and a prosperous Dzongu but not at the cost of the sacred land.

The battle for Dzongu continues despite the recent improvement of the relationship between ACT and the Sikkim government. But looking at ACT now it is well organized, well equipped with modern technologies which is a very important to meet future crisis. They have strong contacts in New Delhi; they have gained a sophisticated understanding of the processes of state government and learned how to exploit the gaps in these processes.

They have always thought of Dzongu as their holy place but now they are excavating their narratives to learn why it is sacred. They have always described themselves as nature worshippers but they are now learning the traditions behind living as nature worshippers.

Increased rate of pollution due to ever-increasing vehicular movement after project intervention which causes on local communities cultural, disaster and hazards, unemployment, health, agriculture and livelihoods were some of the impacts the local communities revealed. It is widely accepted that the energy of a hydropower project is



water and is a renewable resource; majority of such projects are utterly controversial since the construction and operation which directly influences the river systems and geology whereby the adverse socio-ecological environmental impacts become direct and visible. In the context of increasing and rapid capitalization of river waters for hydropower generation and increasing demand of water both for drinking and irrigation in the mountains, the complex geo-hydrological systems and the increasing impacts of climate change, collaborative and strategic approaches are urgently necessary in the Sikkim Himalayan region.

Lepcha people protest the developmental project for the preservation of their cultural and unique identity. As mentioned above, Lepcha by birth were a natural worshiper and they worship natural phenomenon and according to their myth, they were a creature of mother Itbu-moo and she made first human beings from Mt. Kanchenjunga. Therefore, the protest by Lepcha people against the developmental project mainly came in preserving their traditional practices and their reserve land. They fight against the governmental project and proposed to put forward their own way of development in Dzongu without harming and destroying their land.

In the recent past, Sikkim has emerged as a preferred destination for tourists and travelers both domestic and International. The influx of tourists has seen a sustained rise over the last decade and even more. Such initiatives of local resident of Dzongu can be attributed to the construction of homestay and cultivation of organic vegetables. Through these initiatives, they indeed try to show the example in front of state government. Lepcha of Dzongu believe that by obliteration and the total utilization of environment cannot positive development and transforms old society into a proper modernized society but rather they claim that, only through the

preservation and protection of natural calamities can bring positive development which can indeed play a vital role in everywhere.

If a hydro projects are put in place, a share of the income that is generated should be given to the communities who are being affected because of the projects. In the beginning local people thought that these projects would greatly benefits the area and that it would develop a lot. But when the work started it did not develop the way it should have. There is no water in the full area. Ours road, the environment our home and our land everything destroyed. We are left with nothing the government has given us no alternatives. The government, NHPC and other authorities all of them claimed that we would prosper because of the HPP. But till date, none of that has happened.

People grievances from affected areas are earlier, our entire livelihood was full dependent agriculture and we never had to purchase anything from the market. Rather we would earn money through selling our product. Now that our land is not ours anymore, we are dependent on the market at access basic amenities like food and water. This has been a huge change. While they took our land, they did not purchase the land from us. We were only provided a meagre compensatory amount.

The mega projects have a negative impact on the environment around them, when impoundment is done; land is submerged under water which then means that sources of livelihood, like agriculture, are completely destroyed. There is large scale of deforestation, construction, more influx of population that further leads to environmental imbalance because mountains have a fixed carrying capacity. All the biggest fact is that the ecological impacts of these big dams are already being felt all across the state of North Sikkim Dzongu where many areas would have cardamom

and orange plant, today there is decreasing of plantation and cultivation. Shifting of species has occurred. The cardamom and orange tree is vanished from existing field, because the climate has become significantly warmer, Seismological noted that North Sikkim lies in zone in the year 2011, which is a highly prone area. Which is why, the artificial water lake occurred in upper Dzongu, which are part of hydro power projects contribute to the intensity of earthquake. Thus is quite dangerous and land have catastrophic consequences in the future

In conclusion, it has been observed through my research based on field work and other relevant materials which unveiled that as a result several conflicting issues such as impacts in the context of cultural erosion, displacement, disaster hazards, unequal unemployment, health, and livelihood and agriculture productivity springs and water resources, adequate and lack of accepted rehabilitation and resettlement of project affected populations and proper mechanisms for impact mitigation and improvement of livelihoods are not yet to be addressed. Therefore, it has also been noticed that Hydro Power Projects induced conflicts generate insecurity among the indigenous inhabitant of Dzongu reserve in Sikkim.

**Recommendations collected from case study:**

- A number of Lepcha youth shared that Dzongu place is sacred site and they have believed system that their deities lived in nature. Therefore, Lepcha worship the nature and consider their native land is sacred land. So, in context of religious value system so far they are clearly protection their nature which includes values that are metaphysical and intangible. But, nowadays, that very sacred land is using for tourism and tourist (outside from the state) taking sacred land into consideration for nature beauty only and they used to visit over their without any spiritual thought and sometime they used to throw may

unwanted stuff, which is totally against their believed system and found those value outweighed by others. That was one of the major causes of disaster in Dzongu. Therefore, in future prohibiting must be adopted to protect the sacred land and to visit any religious site in Dzongu.

- Majority of respondent shared their view regarding the development of Hydro power projects in Dzongu. The ACT stress that dams have wrought enormous and irreparable impacts in Sikkim and any further dams will be disastrous for Sikkim. Sikkim people further will be annihilated with the inundation of land, forest, sacred sites and rich biodiversity of Sikkim. Sikkim is not for the sale and treating Sikkim only as source of profit and corporate expansionism and economic growth at the cost of Sikkim's people, land and future is height of irresponsibility and unaccountability for NHPC. NHPC should stop building Teesta -IV, Teesta- VI and 300 MW Panam projects in Sikkim.

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**Article 371F of the Indian constitution:**

**Special provisions with respect to the State of Sikkim**

Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution-

- (a) The Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall consist of not less than thirty members;
- (b) As from the date of commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975 (hereafter in this article referred to as the appointed day)
- (c) The Assembly for Sikkim formed as a result of the elections held in Sikkim in April, 1974 with thirty-two members elected in the said elections (hereinafter referred to as the sitting members) shall be deemed to be the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly constituted under this Constitution;
- (d) The sitting members shall be deemed to be the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly elected under this Constitution; and
- (e) The said Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Legislative Assembly of a State under this Constitution;
- (f) In the case of the Assembly deemed to be the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim under clause (b) , the references to the period of 372 [five years], in clause (1) of article 172 shall be construed as references to a period of 373 [four years] and the said period of 373 [four years] shall be deemed to commence from the appointed day;
- (g) Until other provisions are made by Parliament by law, there shall be allotted to the State of Sikkim one seat in the House of the People and the State of

Sikkim shall form one parliamentary constituency to be called the parliamentary constituency for Sikkim;

- (h) The representative of the State of Sikkim in the House of the People in existence on the appointed day shall be elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
- (i) Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim make provision for the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim which may be filled by candidates belonging to such sections and for the delimitation of the assembly constituencies from which candidates belonging to such sections alone may stand for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
- (j) The Governor of Sikkim shall have special responsibility for peace and for an equitable arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of different sections of the population of Sikkim and in the discharge of his special responsibility under this clause, the Governor of Sikkim shall, subject to such directions as the President may, from time to time, deem fit to issue, act in his discretion;
- (k) All property and assets (whether within or outside the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim) which immediately before the appointed day were vested in the Government of Sikkim or in any other authority or in any person for the purposes of the Government of Sikkim shall, as from the appointed day, vest in the Government of the State of Sikkim;

- (l) The High Court functioning as such immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim shall, on and from the appointed day, be deemed to be the High Court for the State of Sikkim;
- (m) All courts of civil, criminal and revenue jurisdiction, all authorities and all officers, judicial, executive and ministerial, throughout the territory of the State of Sikkim shall continue on and from the appointed day to exercise their respective functions subject to the provisions of this Constitution;
- (n) 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;
- (o) For the purpose of facilitating the application of any such law as is referred to in clause (k) in relation to the administration of the State of Sikkim and for the purpose of bringing the provisions of any such law into accord with the provisions of this Constitution, the President may, within two years from the appointed day, by order, make such adaptations and modifications of the law, whether by way of repeal or amendment, as may be necessary or expedient, and thereupon, every such law shall have effect subject to the adaptations and modifications so made, and any such adaptation or modification shall not be questioned in any court of law;
- (p) Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall have jurisdiction in respect of any dispute or other matter arising out of any treaty, agreement, engagement or other similar instrument relating to Sikkim which was entered into or executed before the appointed day and to which the Government of



India or any of its predecessor Governments was a party, but nothing in this clause shall be construed to derogate from the provisions of article 143;

- (q) The President may, by public notification, extend with such restrictions or modifications as he thinks fit to the State of Sikkim any enactment which is in force in a State in India at the date of the notification;
- (r) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to any of the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by order 374, do anything (including any adaptation or modification of any other article) which appears to him to be necessary for the purpose of removing that difficulty;
- (s) Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of two years from the appointed day;
- (t) All things done and all actions taken in or in relation to the State of Sikkim or the territories comprised therein during the period commencing on the appointed day and ending immediately before the date on which the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, receives the assent of the President shall, in so far as they are in conformity with the provisions of this Constitution as amended by the Constitution (Thirty-sixth Amendment) Act, 1975, be deemed for all purposes to have been validly done or taken under this Constitution as so amended.

**Annexure table 5.1**

**Upcoming Hydropower Projects in Sikkim**

Sl. no	Project Name	Capacity (MW)	Developer Company	Probable Date of Commissioning	Present Status
1	Teesta Stage -I	280	Himalayan Green Energy (P) Ltd	2012-13	Under investigation
2	Teesta Stage -II	330	Him Urja Infra (P) Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
3	Teesta Stage -III	1200	Teesta Urja Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
4	Teesta Stage-IV	495	NHPC Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
5	Teesta stage-V	510	NHPC	2008-9	Commissioned
6	Teesta Stage-VI	500	Lanco Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
7	Lachen	210	NHPC Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
8	Panam	280	Himgiri Hydro Energy (P) Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
9	Rangyong	Approx 300	NHPC	2011-12	Stopped
10	Rukel			2005	Stopped
11	Ringpi			2005	Stopped
12	Lingzya			2005	Stopped
13	Rongnichu	96	Madhya Bharati Power Corporation	2011-12	DPR Ready
14	Sada-Mangder	71	Gati Infrastructures Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
15	Chuzachen	99	Gati Infrastructures Ltd	2019-10	Under construction
16	Bhasmey	51	Gati Infrastructures Ltd	2011-12	DPR Ready
17	Rolep	36	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2019-10	DPR Ready
18	Chakung Ch	50	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
19	Ralong	40	Amalgamated Transpower India Ltd	2011-12	Under investigation
20	Rangit-II	60	Sikkim Ventures (P) Ltd	2011-12	DPR in Final stage
21	Rangit-IV	120	Jal Power Corporation Ltd	2011-12	DPR
22	Dikchu H	96	Sneha Kinetic Power Projects Ltd 18	2011-12	under investigation
23	Jorethang Loop	96	DANS Energy (P) Ltd 19	2011-12	under investigation
24	Thangchi	99	Lachung Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	under investigation
25	Bimkyong	99	Teesta Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	under investigation
26	Bop	99	Chungthang Power (P) Ltd	2011-12	under investigation
	Total (est.)	5494			

**Annex Table. 5.2**  
**Details of the Respondents**

VILLAGE	No of Respondents	GENDER		RELIGION		
		Male	Female	Christianity	Buddhist	Animism
Lingtem	11	8	3	1	7	3
Lingdem	10	6	4	0	5	5
Zim Goar10	10	8	2	1	4	5
Sakyong	10	4	6	1	6	3
Hee Gathang	10	4	6	0	8	2
Leek	8	2	6	0	3	5
Passingdong	9	6	3	2	3	4
Tingvong	8	3	5	0	6	2
Gaon Sakgdong	6	2	4	0	6	0
Ruklu	4	2	2	0	4	0
Ship Gyer	4	2	2	0	4	0
Lingza	8	3	5	1	7	0
Taryong	4	1	3	0	4	0
Kayhem	5	2	3	1	4	0
Pentong	6	2	4	1	5	0
Laven	5	3	2	0	5	0
Salim Pakel	6	3	3	0	6	0
Kusing	6	4	2	0	6	0

**Annex Table 5.3**  
**Occupation of the Respondents**

VILLAGE	OCCUPATION					
	Agriculture	Non Agriculture	Self Employed	Business	Private Job	Government Job
Lingtem	3	1	3	2	1	1
Lingdem	4	1	0	1	3	1
Zim Goar10	3	2	3	0	1	1
Sakyong	3	1	1	0	4	1
Hee Gathang	3	1	3	1	1	1
Leek	3	1	2	0	1	1
Passingdong	3	2	1	1	1	1
Tingvong	3	1	1	0	3	0
Gaon Sakgdong	1	1	1	1	2	0
Ruklu	2	1	1	0	0	0
Ship Gyer	1	1	0	1	1	0
Lingza	2	1	2	1	1	1
Taryong	0	0	1	0	3	0
Kayhem	2	1	1	0	1	0
PENTONG	1	1	1	0	2	1
LAVEN	2	0	2	0	1	0
SALIM PAKEL	0	1	2	1	2	0
KUSING	0	1	2	0	2	1

**Annex 5.4**  
**Education of the Respondents**

Village	EDUCATION				
	Illiterate	Primary	Senior Secondary	High Secondary	Graduation
Lingtem	2	2	2	3	2
Lingdem	1	3	3	2	1
Zim Goar10	1	4	4	1	0
Sakyong	0	2	1	5	2
Hee Gathang	0	3	2	3	2
Leek	1	1	3	3	0
Passingdong	0	1	3	3	2
Tingvong	0	4	3	0	1
Gaon Sakgdong	0	2	3	0	1
Ruklu	0	1	2	1	0
Ship Gyer	0	2	2	0	0
Lingza	0	3	3	1	1
Taryong	0	1	2	0	1
Kayhem	0	2	1	1	1
Pentong	0	3	3	0	0
Laven	0	1	3	1	0
Salim Pakel	0	2	2	1	1
Kusing	0	1	2	2	1

**Annex Table 5.5**  
**Household Perception on Pre and Post Hydel Power Projects phases in Dzongu**

Household perception	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you agree that Dzongu is a sacred land for Lepchas?	130	0	130	0
Are the Lepchas of 21 <sup>st</sup> century still feeling themselves attached with the sacred land of Dzongu?	130	0	130	0
Are you happy with the modernization process that is going on in Dzongu with the establishment of hydro power projects?	120	10	120	10
Are you the happy with the changes that took place in Dzongu due to the hydro power project?	120	10	120	10
Did the Hydro power project affecting the Dzongu reserve land?	130	0	130	0
Did the Lepchas of Dzongu support the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) Movement?	130	0	130	0
Are the people of Dzongu happy with the initiative that the people took opposing in the form of ACT Movement?	130	0	130	0
Do you think the ACT banner is helpful so far in raising their voice and achieving their ends so far?	130	0	130	0
Do you think ACT Banner will going to help the people of Dzongu to get what they want in future as well?	130	0	130	0
Do you think there should be taken more initiatives in coming days to preserve Lepcha identity?	130	0	130	0
Are there members from your family involved in the ACT movement?	85	45	130	0
Did you agree that due to the construction of dam's homogenous community converted into heterogeneous community?	110	20	130	0
Does ACT working on addressing the roots causes of division?	130	0	130	0

**Annex Table. 5.6**  
**Cultural Erosion before and After the Construction of HPP**

Culture Erosion	Before the construction of Dam		After the construction of Dam	
	Yes.	No	Yes	No
Did modernization cause any form of Lepcha community Disruption?	130	0	110	20
Did you participate or practice any traditional festival?	65	65	120	10
Have you notice any changes on food processing?	55	75	95	35
Have you notice any difference on Wearing traditional dresses?	95	35	100	30
Did you notice any changes on traditional Marriage ceremony?	30	100	85	45
Are you participating on Ancestor worship?	60	70	65	65
Did you prefer to Giving traditional name for children?	65	65	110	20
Did you Weaving traditional clothes?	70	60	35	95
Did you prefer your Language for conversation?	80	50	120	10
Did your community interested on Hunting?	130	0	70	60
Did Lepcha children practice traditional culture?	70	60	95	35
Do you feel that your characteristics are similar to others community people?	45	85	40	90
Is the Lepcha of Dzongu is struggling to preserve their identity	37	93	120	10
Is your custom change due to living in mixed culture community people?	44	86	110	20
Is your resettlement site close to urban areas?	68	62	90	40
Did construction of HPP cause any form of physical disruption?	99	31	120	10
Has HPP affected any of your cultural or religious activities?	70	60	120	10
Has construction of HPP affected your area's physical security?	130	0	130	0

**Annex Table. 5.7**  
**Disaster, Displacement and Hazard on Local People before and after the Construction of HPP**

<b>Disaster, Displacement and Hazard</b>	Before the construction of Dam		After the construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
As there any disruption in learning due to natural disaster and hazards in Dzongu?	65	65	110	20
Did the Lepcha communities experience livestock loss due to Natural disaster and hazards?	75	55	95	35
Did your house affected due to natural disaster?	70	60	120	10
Did the household experience crop damage during the natural disaster?	65	65	90	40
Was the main fasten crop the one which was damaged	95	35	120	10
Did the household experience any loss of food stocks during the natural disaster	85	45	100	30
Did the 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2011 earthquake affect your family?	0	0	130	0
Did landslide occur in the village?	35	95	120	10
Do you agree that due to the initiation of hydro power projects, Dzongu faces natural disasters?	65	65	130	0
Is there any unnatural lake in Dzongu?	0	0	130	0
Are you happy with the unnatural lake in Dzongu?	0	130	0	130
Does that lake create any impact on Dzongu?	0	0	130	0
Are you struggling for the transportation, due to the landslide in Dzongu?	65	65	120	10
Do you think this unnatural lake is reliable in Dzongu?	0	130	0	130

**Annex Table. 5.8**  
**Unequal Employment Opportunity before and after the Construction of HPP**

<b>Unequal Employment Opportunity</b>	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do your children go to primarily school?	95	35	80	50
Do your children go to secondary school?	85	45	70	60
Are you satisfied with the education services?	75	55	65	65
Did lepcha youth face unemployment crisis?	60	70	120	10
Are there any unemployment issues in Dzongu?	110	20	35	90
Conflict Between Local Communities to Hydro Power Project is Because of Unequal Employment?	50	80	60	70
Have you been involved in any unskilled labour?	75	55	65	65
Have you been involved in any skilled labour?	70	60	130	0
Does modernization process migrate most of the youth outside the Dzongu?	110	20	65	65
Has the process of modernization led to a loss of agriculture income sources?	35	95	50	80
Do you think there has been increase of tourism?	85	45	70	60
Did Lepcha of Dzongu establish Homestay to preserve and protect Lepcha culture, custom and tradition?	65	65	45	85
Are they satisfied with their dedication?	60	70	65	65

**Annex Table. 5.9**  
**Human Health before and after the Construction of HPP**

<b>Human Health</b>	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has there been any big infrastructure development likes roads, public health post, post office was established?	65	65	65	65
Are you satisfied with the Condition of Road linking village with hospitals, market, education institutions?	35	95	120	10
Does your household have access to clean drinking water?	65	65	65	65
Are you satisfied with the drinking water facilities?	110	20	95	35
Does your household have access to sanitation facilities?	85	45	90	40
Are you satisfied with the available sanitation facilities?	65	65	65	65
Do you have access to medical services?	95	35	95	35
Did you have Health facility available in Village?	65	65	65	65
Are you satisfied with the available medical services?	75	55	65	65
Has any member of your family experience any repeated health complication?	60	70	110	20
If yes, do you think that the construction of Teesta IV Dam is to blame?	65	65	130	0
Has the implementers carried out any health related initiatives?	65	65	65	65

**Annex Table. 5.10**  
**Important Local Livelihood Adaptation Strategies before and after the Construction of HPP**

<b>Important local livelihood adaptation strategies</b>	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has any activity contributed to your income in any way?	65	65	65	65
Has any modernization affected your Culture value?	90	40	110	20
Has modernization affected your Income?	95	35	110	20
Has modernization affected your access to food security?	85	45	120	10
Has modernization affected your Access to school?	65	65	75	55
Has modernization affected your Access to health care?	95	35	110	20
Has modernization Access to your electricity and water?	85	45	100	30
Did modernization effect of your livestock (domestic animals)?	60	70	110	20
Has modernization created any Pollution situations (water, air, noise...)?	65	65	130	0
Does the Transportation condition in Dzongu have improved?	95	35	100	30
Are you satisfied with the Living conditions as compared to neighbouring villages or community?	65	65	95	53

**Annex Table. 5.11**  
**Agricultural Productivity before and after the Construction of HPP**

Agricultural Productivity	Before construction of Dam		After construction of Dam	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are you involved in any agricultural activity?	95	35	60	70
Has the agricultural production improved?	100	30	30	100
Do you sell your crops?	85	45	35	95
Do you use it for your own consumption?	110	20	95	35
Are you satisfied with the condition of your land?	120	10	10	120
Did you lose any agricultural land?	65	65	95	35
Is your land registered?	130	0	130	0
Do you feel that modernization has made you lose any farm jobs?	65	65	110	20
Do you feel that modernization has made you lose any non- farm jobs?	85	45	120	10



**Annexure II**  
**Field Study data from North Sikkim Dzongu (130 respondent details)**

Sl.No.	Address	Gender	Age	Category	Religion	Education	Occupation
1	Lingtem	Male	30-40	ST	Christianity	Senior Secondary	Government Job
2	Liingtem	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Government Job
3	Lingtem	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Self Employed
4	Liingtem	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
5	Lingtem	Male	15-20	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Agriculture
6	Liingtem	Male	60-70	ST	Animist	Illiterate	Agriculture
7	Lingtem	Male	40-50	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Self Employed
8	Lingtem	Male	30-40	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
9	Lingtem	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Business
10	Lingtem	Female	50-60	ST	Buddhist	Illiterate	Agriculture
11	Lingtem	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
12	Lingdem	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Private Job
13	Lingdem	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
14	Lingdem	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
15	Lingdem	Male	50-60	ST	Buddhist	Illiterate	Agriculture
16	Lingdem	Male	30-40	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Private Job
17	Lingdem	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Business
18	Lingdem	Female	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
19	Lingdem	Female	40-50	ST	Animist	Primary	Agriculture
20	Lingdem	Female	30-40	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
21	Lingdem	Female	20-30	ST	Animist	Graduation	Government Job
22	Zim Gor	Male	20-30	ST	Christianity	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
23	Zim Gor	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
24	Zim Gor	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
25	Zim Gor	Male	40-50	ST	Animist	Primary	Agriculture
26	Zim Gor	Male	30-40	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Business
27	Zim Gor	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Non Agriculture
28	Zim Gor	Male	30-40	ST	Animist	Primary	Agriculture
29	Zim Gor	Male	50-60	ST	Animist	Illiterate	Agriculture
30	Zim Gor	Female	50-60	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
31	Zim Gor	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
32	Sakyong	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job

33	Sakyong	Male	15-20	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Agriculture
34	Sakyong	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Graduation	Private Job
35	Sakyong	Male	30-40	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Agriculture
36	Sakyong	Female	30-40	ST	Christianity	High Secondary	Private Job
37	Sakyong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Business
38	Sakyong	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
39	Sakyong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Self Employed
40	Sakyong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Private Job
41	Sakyong	Female	30-40	ST	Animist	Primary	Agriculture
42	Hee Gathang	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Agriculture
43	Hee Gathang	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
44	Hee Gathang	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Graduation	Business
45	Hee Gathang	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Agriculture
46	Hee Gathang	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
47	Hee Gathang	Female	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
48	Hee Gathang	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
49	Hee Gathang	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Government Job
50	Hee Gathang	Female	50-60	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
51	Hee Gathang	Female	40-30	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Self Employed
52	Leek	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Business
53	Leek	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
54	Leek	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Agriculture
55	Leek	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
56	Leek	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Private Job
57	Leek	Female	60-70	ST	Animist	Illiterate	Agriculture
58	Leek	Female	40-50	ST	Animist	Primary	Non Agriculture
59	Leek	Female	30-40	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Self Employed
60	Passingdong	Male	20-30	ST	Christianity	High Secondary	Agriculture
61	Passingdong	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Business
62	Passingdong	Male	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
63	Passingdong	Male	40-50	ST	Animist	Primary	Agriculture
64	Passingdong	Male	30-40	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Non Agriculture
65	Passingdong	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Graduation	Government Job
66	Passingdong	Female	20-30	ST	Christianity	Senior Secondary	Non Agriculture
67	Passingdong	Female	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
68	Passingdong	Female	20-30	ST	Animist	High Secondary	Self Employed
69	Tingvong	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
70	Tingvong	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Private Job

71	Tingvong	Male	20-30	ST	Animist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
72	Tingvong	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
73	Tingvong	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
74	Tingvong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Private Job
75	Tingvong	Female	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
76	Tingvong	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
77	Gnon Sangdong	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Government Job
78	Gnon Sangdong	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
79	Gnon Sangdong	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
80	Gnon Sangdong	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
81	Gnon Sangdong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Private Job
82	Gnon Sangdong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
83	Ruklu	Male	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
84	Ruklu	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
85	Ruklu	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Non Agriculture
86	Ruklu	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
87	Ship Gyer	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
88	Ship Gyer	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
89	Ship Gyer	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
90	Ship Gyer	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Government Job
91	Lingza	Male	20-30	ST	Christianity	Senior Secondary	Private Job
92	Lingza	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
93	Lingza	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
94	Lingza	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Self Employed
95	Lingza	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Business
96	Lingza	Female	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Government Job
97	Lingza	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
98	Lingza	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
99	Taryong	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
100	Taryong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Private Job
101	Taryong	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
102	Taryong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
103	Kayhem	Male	20-30	ST	Christianity	High Secondary	Agriculture
104	Kayhem	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture

105	Kayhem	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
106	Kayhem	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Self Employed
107	Kayhem	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Private Job
108	Pentong	Male	30-40	ST	Christianity	Senior Secondary	Private Job
109	Pentong	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
110	Pentong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Business
111	Pentong	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
112	Pentong	Female	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Agriculture
113	Pentong	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
114	Laven	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Self Employed
115	Laven	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
116	Laven	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
117	Laven	Female	15-20	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
118	Laven	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Agriculture
119	Salim Pakel	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
120	Salim Pakel	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Government Job
121	Salim Pakel	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Non Agriculture
122	Salim Pakel	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
123	Salim Pakel	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
124	Salim Pakel	Female	20-30	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Self Employed
125	Kusing	Male	40-50	ST	Buddhist	Primary	Self Employed
126	Kusing	Male	30-40	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Self Employed
127	Kusing	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job
128	Kusing	Male	20-30	ST	Buddhist	Graduation	Business
129	Kusing	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	High Secondary	Non Agriculture
130	Kusing	Female	30-40	ST	Buddhist	Senior Secondary	Private Job

**Annexure III**  
**Household Questionnaire/ Interview Schedule**

No-1/Yes-2

**1. Name of the Village:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Total no. of member in the household** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Religion: Animist** \_\_\_\_\_ **Buddhism** \_\_\_\_\_ **Christianity** \_\_\_\_\_ **others** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Respondent Name:**

Gender	Age		Education Qualification		Occupation	
<b>Male</b>	15-20		Illiterate		Agriculture	
	20-30		Primarily		Non-Agriculture	
	30-40		High-Secondary		Self-Employed	
	40-50		Senior-Secondary		Govt- Job	
	50-60		Graduation		Private-Job	
	60-70		Post-Graduation		Business	
<b>Female</b>	15-20		Illiterate		Agriculture	
	20-30		Primarily		Non-Agriculture	
	30-40		High-Secondary		Self-Employed	
	40-50		Senior-Secondary		Govt- Job	
	50-60		Graduation		Private-Job	
	60-70		Post-Graduation		Business	

Q.6. Do you agree that Dzongu is a sacred land for Lepchas?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.7. Are the Lepchas of 21<sup>st</sup> Century still feel themselves attached with the sacred land of Dzongu?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.8. Are you happy with the modernization process that is going on in Dzongu with the establishment of hydro power projects?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.9. Are you the happy with the changes that took place in Dzongu due to the hydro power project?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.10. Did the Hydro power project affecting the Dzongu reserve land?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.11. Did the Lepchas of Dzongu support the Affected Citizen of Teesta (ACT) Movement?

No-1/Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.12. Are the people of Dzongu happy with the initiative that the people took oppose in the form of ACT Movement?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.13. Do you think the ACT banner is helpful so far in raising their voice and achieving their ends so far?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q. 14. Do you think ACT Banner will going to help the people of Dzongu to get what they want in future as well?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.15. Do you think there should be taken more initiatives in coming days to preserve Lepcha identity?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.16. Are there members from your family involved in the ACT movement?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.17. Did you agree that due to the construction of dam's homogenous community converted into heterogeneous community?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Q.18. Does ACT working on addressing the roots causes of division?

No-1/ Yes-2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Section I: Impact on Cultural Erosion before and After the Construction of Dam**

Sl no	Questions	Before construction of dam	After construction of dam
Q.19	Did modernization cause any form of Lepcha community disruption?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.20	Did you participate or practice any traditional festival?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.21	Have you notice any changes on Food processing?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.22	Have you notice any difference on Wearing traditional dresses?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.23	Did you notice any changes on traditional Marriage ceremony?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.24	Are you participating on Ancestor worship?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.25	Did you prefer to Giving traditional name for children?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.26	Did you Weaving traditional clothes?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.27	Did you prefer your Language for conversation?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.28	Did your community interested on Hunting?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.29	Did Lepcha children practice traditional culture?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.30	Did Lepcha community facing a huge challenge on the issues of their identity	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.31	Do you feel that your characteristics are similar to others community people?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.32	Is the Lepcha of Dzongu is struggling to preserve their identity	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.33	Is your custom change due to living in mixed culture community people?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.34	Is your resettlement site close to urban areas?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.35	Did urban areas influence your culture?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____

Q.36. Did construction of HPP cause any form of physical disruption?

No-1/ Yes-2\_\_\_\_\_

Q.37. If yes, explain\_\_\_\_\_

Q. 38.Has HPP affected any of your cultural or religious activities?

No-1/ Yes-2\_\_\_\_\_

Q. 39. Has construction of HPP affected your area's physical security?

No-1/ Yes-2\_\_\_\_\_

Q. 40. Did you experience any Cultural Erosion after Construction of HPP which was absent or less intensive before construction of HPP? If so, please place your comments in support of your answer

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section II: Impact of Disaster and Hazards on Local People

Sl. no	Question	Before construction of dam	After construction of dam
Q.41	As there any disruption in learning due to natural disaster and hazards in Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.42	Did the Lepcha communities experience livestock loss due to Natural disaster and hazards? No	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.43	What was the impact of the natural disaster on people's houses	No-1/ Yes 2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.44	Did your house affected due to natural disaster?	No-1/ Yes2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.50	Did the household experience crop damage during the natural disaster?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.51	Was the main fasten crop the one which was damaged	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.52	Did the household experience any loss of food stocks during the natural disaster	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.53	Did the 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2011earthquake affect your family?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.54	Did landslide occur in the village?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.55	Do you agree that due to the initiation of hydro power projects, Dzongu faces natural disasters?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.56	Is there any unnatural lake in Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.57	Are you happy with the unnatural lake in Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.58	Does that lake create any impact on Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.59	Are you struggling for the transportation, due to the landslide in Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____
Q.60	Do you think this unnatural lake is reliable in Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2____	No-1/ Yes-2____



Q.61. Did you experience any Disaster and Hazards after Construction of HPP which was absent or less intensive before construction of HPP? If so, please place your comments in support of your answer

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### Section III: Impact on Unequal Employment Opportunity

Sl. no	questions	Before construction of dam	After construction of dam
Q.62	Do your children go to primarily school?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.63	Do your children go to secondary school?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.64	Are you satisfied with the education services?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.65	Did lepcha youth face unemployment crisis?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.66	Are there any unemployment issues in Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.67	Conflict Between Local Communities to Hydro Power Project is Because of Unequal Employment?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.68	Have you been involved in any unskilled labour?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.69	Have you been involved in any skilled labour?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.70	Does modernization process migrate most of the youth outside the Dzongu?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.71	Has the process of modernization led to a loss of agriculture income sources?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.72	Do you think there has been increase of tourism?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.73	Did Lepcha of Dzongu establish Homestay to preserve and protect Lepcha culture, custom and tradition?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____
Q.74	Are they satisfied with their dedication?	No-1/ Yes-2_____	No-1/ Yes-2_____

Q.75 Did you experience any unequal employment opportunity after Construction of HPP which was absent or less intensive before construction of HPP? If so, please place your comments in support of your answer

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**Section IV: Impact on health before and after construction of dam**

Sl.no	Question	Before construction of dam	After construction of dam
Q.76	Has there been any big infrastructure development likes roads, public health post, post office was established?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.77	Are you satisfied with the Condition of Road linking village with hospitals, market, education institutions?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.78	Does your household have access to clean drinking water?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.79	Are you satisfied with the drinking water facilities?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.80	Does your household have access to sanitation facilities?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.81	Are you satisfied with the available sanitation facilities?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.82	Do you have access to medical services?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.83	Did you have Health facility available in Village?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.84	Are you satisfied with the available medical services?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.85	Has any member of your family experience any repeated health complication?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.86	If yes, do you think that the construction of Teesta IV Dam is to blame?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.87	Has the implementers carried out any health related initiatives?	No-1/ Yes-2 _____	No-1/ Yes-2 _____
Q.88	If yes, how would you rate the initiatives?	Very well _____ Well _____ Neutral _____ Unwell _____ Not well at all _____	Very well _____ Well _____ Neutral _____ Unwell _____ Not well at all _____

Q.89. Did your household experience any diseases after Construction of HPP which was absent or less intensive before construction of HPP? If so, please place your comments in support of your answer

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**Section V: Important local livelihood adaptation strategies before and after construction of Dam.**

Sl. No	Question	Before construction of Dam	After construction of Dam
Q.90	What is your income generating activity?	Employed____ Self Employed____ None of the above____ Other____	Employed____ Self Employed____ None of the above____ Other____
Q.91	Has any activity contributed to your income in any way?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.92	Has any modernization affected your Culture value?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.93	Has modernization affected your Income?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.94	Has modernization affected your access to food security?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.95	Has modernization affected your Access to school?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.96	Has modernization affected your Access to health care?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.97	Has modernization Access to your electricity and water?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.98	Did modernization effect of your livestock (domestic animals)?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.99	Has modernization created any Pollution situations (water, air, noise...)?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.100	Does the Transportation condition in Dzongu have improved?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____
Q.101	Are you satisfied with the Living conditions as compared to neighbouring villages or community?	No-1/Yes-2____	No-1/Yes-2____

Q. 102. Did your household experience any Impact on your local livelihood after Construction of HPP which was absent or less intensive before construction of HPP? If so, please place your comments in support of your answer

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**Section VI: Impact on Agricultural Prod activity before and after Construction of Dam**

Sl.no	Questions	Before the construction of Dam	After the construction of Dam
Q.103	How much land do you have?	_____ ha	_____ ha
Q.104	Are you involved in any agricultural activity?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.105	If yes which activity	Rice _____ Maize _____ Beans _____ Cardamom _____ Tea _____ Livestock farming _____ Fishfarming _____ Other _____	Rice _____ Maize _____ Beans _____ Cardamom _____ Tea _____ Livestock farming _____ Fishfarming _____ Other _____
Q.106	What kind of product you plant on your agriculture land?	Cardamom Paddy Ginger Others	Cardamom Paddy Ginger Others
Q.107	Has the agricultural production improved?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.108	What kind of crops you plant in your garden?	Fruits Grass Herbs others	Fruits Grass Herbs Others
Q.109	Do you sell your crops?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.110	Do you use it for your own consumption?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.111	Are you satisfied with the condition of your land?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.112	Did you lose any agricultural land?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.113	Is your land registered?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.114	Do you feel that modernization has made you lose any farm jobs?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____
Q.115	Do you feel that modernization has made you lose any non-farm jobs?	No-1/Yes-2 _____	No-1/Yes-2 _____

Q. 116. Did your household experience any Impact on your Agriculture Productivity after Construction of HPP which was absent or less intensive before construction of HPP? If so, please place your comments in support of your answer

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