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**SOCIAL FRAMEWORK OF DARJEELING**

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The chapter includes nature and history of peopling in the area. Growth and structure of population, distribution and density of population, S T and SC population, literacy and distribution of settlements. These components of social dimension are largely controlled by the physical and natural environment that prevail in the Darjeeling.

**(A) Historical Background:**

The early peopling of hilly region of Darjeeling peeps into untraced historical background. The area under study has faced some invasions by Gorkhas (Nepalese) when it used to be the dominion of Raja of Sikkim, who used to rule the region. The Gorkhas, overrunning the hills and valleys of Nepal, ultimately marched into Sikkim in 1780 and further up to Tistariver. These Napalese had to face the East India Company which intruded and conquered the areas captured by the Gorkhas in 1814. The territory was given to the Raja of Sikkim under some treaty with the East India Company in 1817. The intervention of the British was a successful step in preventing Gorkhas and merging it into the province of Nepal. Therby, Sikkim, including the present district of Darjeeling, was retained as buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan<sup>1</sup>.

In 1829 Mr. Lloyd visited the narea and stayed for six days. He recommended the place “Darjeeling “ for the purpose of a sanitarium. Later Captain Herbert, the then Deputy Surveyor General was deputed to survey the area ( Dorjeeling ) for habitation and economic purposes. In 1835 the Darjeeling area was transferred to the East India Company for habitation by the Raja of Sikkim. Thus, the hill territory of Darjeeling was ceded and general Lloyd and Chapman were sent in 1836 to explore the area to ascertain the nature of the climate and for adopting Darjeeling as sanitarium. In 1840, a road was constructed to connect Darjeeling as the area was practically uninhabited, except a few huts here anjd there. In 1839 Dr. Campbell was sent Darjeeling from Nepal to administer and promote the area for habitation, Particularly for the health purposes. Thereby, in 1849 the area of Darjeeling was inhabited by about 10,000 persons, mostly slaves from Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. During the end of 1849 the relation between Raja of Sikkim and British Govt. got a strained position, but during later period the relation became smooth.

The inception of roads in the area connecting various parts of forests promoted plantation of medicinal plants and commercial trees. The construction of the Darjeeling cart road in 1861 proved to be a boon for the development of the area. It was considered a wonderful work in engineering which subsequently was used to align railway.

The communication led to grow tea plants, a commercially important activity, promoted population growth and development of Darjeeling and Taraiarea . In 1841 Dr. Campbell had started the experimental growth in Kumaun from China stock. The plant grew to

the commercial benefit due to favorable soil and climate of Darjeeling and gave way to its large scale commercial cultivation.

There have been two most important factors in the development of the district-Darjeeling as a health resort and plantation of tea in the hills. General Lloyd and Mr. Grant are credited to reinvigorate the possibilities of Development of Darjeeling as tea planting region and for health resort purposes. After the cession of Darjeeling roads for the development of the area were started to be constructed under the supervision of Lord Napier to Further grow Darjeeling as import centre. The labourers were brought from surrounding territories and tea plantation was developed. Besides these two Factors, the preservation and protection of forests were also taken into priority as incessant cutting of timbers were to be restricted for the protection of ecology of the Darjeeling area. Thereby, Darjeeling got official resorts, ea planters, labourers missionaries to develop it multidimensionally.

**(B)Growth and structure of Population**

Growth in indicates increase in population number over a period for an area. At the time of cession of Darjeeling Hill territory in 1835 by the British, the area contained about 100 persons spread in 138 sq. miles (357 sq. km ) as it was entirely under forest. Dr. Campbell, the first Superintendent, adopted policy to inspire the aboriginal for confidence in the British rule to induce the neighboring tribes to settle in the territory, and to promote Darjeeling as a commercial centre for tea and timber. The policy was successful and by 1850 the population rose to 10,000 and by 1869 it became 22,000 persons in the Darjeeling Hill territory. Further, when the district got constituted in 1871-72 the regular census in the year recorded 94,712 persons and the 1881 census recorded 1,55179 persons in the district. Subsequently the census years 1891 and 1901 enumerated 2,23314 and 2,49117 persons respectively.

**TABLE – 3.1**

**Showing Growth of population in Darjeeling district**

Sl.No	Census year	Population
01	1869	22,000
02	1871	94,712
03	1881	1,55,176
04	1891	2,23,314
05	1911	3,73,255
06	1921	4,03,505
07	1931	5,27,783
08	1941	6,32,361
09	1951	7,23,413
10	1961	8,10,516
11	1971	8,92,104
12	1981	10,45,830
13	1991	12,99,919
14	2001	16,091,77

Source: District Gazetteers and census 2001

As indicated by table-3.1 it is mentionable that there has been a sharp increase in population from the initial enumeration year of 1869 onwards. Since the population from 1911 to 1981 could not be obtained from the records, the noted population over the period are estimated. However, the populations of 1991 and 2001 show a growth of 3,09,258 persons in decade. One of the reasons of such growth may be due to prevailing normalcy after the cessation of Gorkhaland movement.

As mentioned earlier, the growth of population is attributed mainly to two factors of health resort and tea plantation at initial stage in the district. Both the factors contributed much to the growth during early period, but in later periods, other factors like growth of administrative, educational, commercial and tourism added to the population of the district much.

The structure or composition of population indicates a mosaic of several races. It includes various Nepalese castes, Lepchas, Bhutias and Tibetans, all belonging to Mongolian origin. Others consists of Marwaris, Jews, Bengali, Bihari, Punjabi and also Chinese who contribute to influx the population. Besides, Rajbansis (the aboriginal Koches), Mundas, Oraons, Santhals also contribute to add to the poplution of the Darjeeling district.

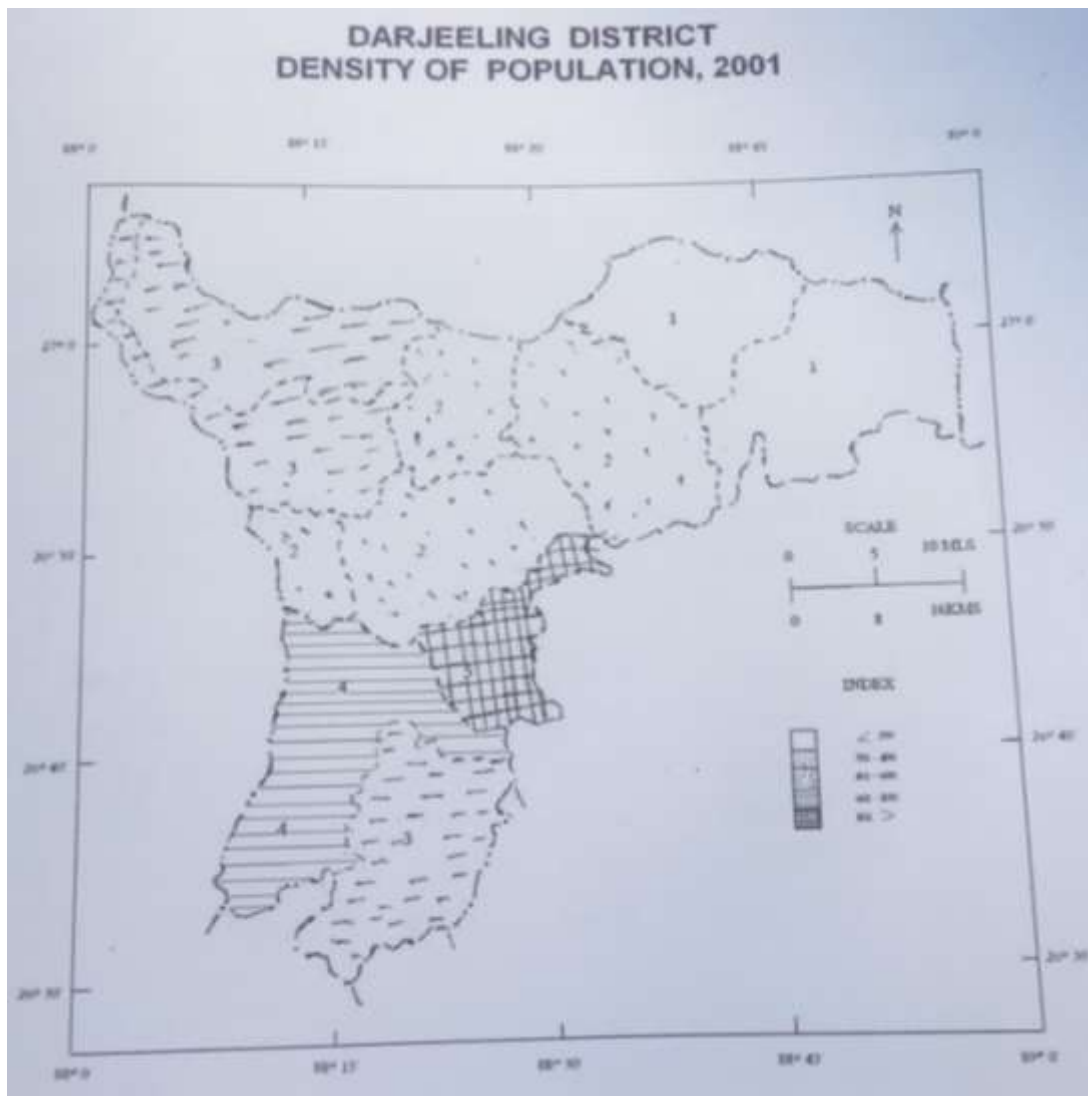
The Napalese are the most dominant, accounting about fifty percent of the poplution of the district. They have occupied the land from the aborigines by virtue of their effort, hard working nature and resourcefulness. The Nepalese hold the mixture of various castes, such as Khambus, murmis, limbus, khas or chettri, mangars and gurgungs, with mixture of Aryan blood. The lepchas are the aboriginal inhabitants who largely continue as cultivators. They faced invasion by Tibetans about 250 years back and were drove to lower valleys and gorges, but later they regained due to the british policy to protect aboriginals. With the march of time, mass of lepchas have adopted terraced cultivation in place of jhuming or shifting cultivation. The contribution of lepachas is less to the total poplution is very slow. The Bhotias belong to four sub castes- the Sikkimese, the Sherpa the Durkpa or Dharms and the Tibetan bhutias. They are mostly spread up around Darjeeling and in kalimpong areas. Bhotias are generally rude and quarrelsome as against the nature of lepchas. The bhotias are hardworking and carry heavy load as a labourer.

The rajbansis or Koches are mostly spread up in Tarai region who also belong to aboriginal base as having their kingdom during early days. Later they adopted Hinduism and extended their areas mostly in the marginals Bengal. The Rajbansis speaks Bengali language and are Historically recognized as belonging to molngoloid race.

The migrants constitute about half of the poplution that immigrated in early period. The tarai region, in particular belongs districts to numerous early settlers from the adjoining districts of Bihar and West Bengal who mostly engaged themselves in cultivation. The early immigrants were the Nepalese who settled to work as labourers in tea gardens. Now, the flow of immigrants is very low as early immigrants are replaced by their children born in Darjeeling. As a consequence of people from various parts and ground, the district of Darjeeling observes poplution of cvaried regions. Most of the poplution belongstio Hinduism and Buddhism. Other religion poplution, Such as Muslims, Christiains, Jews are in low proportion. Christians are a very few wher as jews and Muslims are copmparatively more in relation to Christians.

#### (C) Distribution and Density of population:

Distribution mentions the placement of object points over a space. As the district of Darjeeling holds an areas of varied relief, the distribution of poplution is highly uniform, depending upon topographic nature climatic suitability, agricultural practices and industrial set up belonging to tea and timber. The enumeration of poplution under census operations goes on basing the village and is compiled to the level of community Development Blocks, District and State the distribution of poplution on the basis of blocks servers the Geographical purposes in general. (fig 3.1)



The districts of of Darjeeling consist of 12C.D.Blocks. Due to uneven topography the blocks display a variation of poplutionfrom minimum of 42,237 in mirik to maximum of 12,1508(2001) in phansidewa block. In between the two extremes of poplution distribution are other blocks of the district.

Showing Population Distribution in Darjeeling District, 2001

Sl. No.	Block name	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
01	Darjeeling Pulbazar	58407	57430	115837	983
02	Rangli Rangliot	32304	32045	64349	992
03	Kalimpong-I	34382	33298	67680	968
04	Kalimpong-II	31309	28954	60263	925
05	Gorubathan	27572	26707	54279	969
06	Jore Bunglow Sukia Pokhari	49816	50908	100725	1022
07	Mirik	21112	21125	42237	1001
08	Kurseong	43330	42537	85867	982
09	Matigara	68004	61322	129326	902
10	Naxalbari	75831	69004	144915	911
11	Phansidewa	87945	83563	1711508	950
12	Khoribari	45449	42781	88230	941
	District	830644	778528	1609172	937

(Source: Census of India, Final Population Totals, West Bengal)

It is mentrionable that besides topography, the area extent also plays an important role to assess population distribution. The block of phasidewa falls in the plains area resting in the south part of Darjeeling Districts, while mirik, being the smallest block in areal extent falls in hilly zone of Darjeeling district.

The male-female ratio differs from one block to the other. It indicates higher ratio(lower number of females per 1000 males) in blocks that accommodate plain areas in comparison to blocks resting in hilly areas. In this regard the block jore bungalowsukiapokhri shows the superseding ratio of females with 1022 over 1000 males,whereasmatigara block display 902 females per 100 males. The average male – famele ratio of the district comes to 935 females per 1000 males. Thus , there are only 03 blocks whwewr male-femaloe ratio goes below the average ratio and 09 blocks have above the average ratio.

As regards density of poplution , it indicates distributional arrangement in terms of persq. Unit in an area. As the topography of the Darjeeling district varies greatly the density of population also shows variation from hilly areas to the plain areas. The distributional arrangement of poplution is highly coordinated with physical environment and the plain areas acquire higher density than the others .Accordingly the density of poplution per sq km. among the blocks of the density show a variation ranging from 123 in Gorubathan to 904 in matigara blocks . All other blocks of the district are accommodated in between these two extremes ofdensity.Altogether the district has 511 person per sq.km. There are 8 blocks which come

under below the average density and 4 blocks come under above the average density of population of the district

Showing population, and Density, 2001

Sl.No.	Name of block	Population	Area in s q .k.m	Density
01	Darjeeling Pulbazen	115837	416.00	278
02	Rangli Rangliot	64349	272.99	236
03	Kalimpong-I	67680	360.46	188
04	Kalimpong-II	60263	241.26	250
05	Gorubathan	54279	442.72	123
06	Jore Bunglow sukia pokari	100724	222.12	453
07	Mirik	42237	119.18	354
08	Kurseong	22204	354.31	231
09	Matigara	129326	143.00	904
10	Naxalbari	144914	181.88	797
11	Phansidewa	171508	312.15	549
12	Khoribari	88230	144.88	607
	District	1609172	3149.00	511

(Source; Census of India, Final Population Totals, West Bengal, 2001)

The district accommodates a palatable percentage of SC and ST population. The blockwise distribution of SC and ST population ranges between 5.57 to 48.38 percent and 9.33 to 55.58 percent as minimum and maximum respectively in each category. The most distinguished blocks stand Khoribari for SC and Kalimpong-II for ST population. The average percentage of SC population. The average percentage of SC population comes to 14.67, while for ST it is 13.50 percent

**Table – 3.4**

**Showing SC and ST Population, 2001**

Sl. no	Block name	Total population	SC	percen tage	ST	Percent age
01	Darjeeling pulbazar	118837	6289	5.86	11924	10.29
02	Rangli Ranglot	64349	3702	5.75	7140	11.09
03	Kalimpong-I	67680	4911	7.25	13771	20.34
04	Kalimpong-II	60263	9494	15.07	37497	55.58
05	Gorubathan	54279	3576	6.59	6067	11.17
06	Jore Bunglow Sukia Pokhri	100724	7864	7.81	12745	12.65
07	Mirik	42237	4395	10.40	4506	10.60
08	Kurseong	72204	5197	7.19	6740	9.33
09	Matigara	129326	50529	39.07	18386	14.21
10	Navalbari	144915	28451	19.63	24663	17.01
11	Phansidewa	171508	43372	25.28	50654	29.53
12	Khorthari	88230	42863	48.58	17055	19.33
	Total	1609172	236143	14.67	210148	13.05

(Source: Calculated by the Scholar)

Before the arrival of the British in the Darjeeling Hill area, the educational Scenario remains obscured. It is traced that a few of better class people used to have private tutors for their children. The first attempt to reach the hill people by education was by W. Start who used to run private missionary in Darjeeling where he started a school for Lepcha tribes. Mr. Niebel, operator of a German missionary also contributed to educate Lepchas at early stage. However the initiative of W. MacFarlane in 1869 streamlined education at early stage in the Darjeeling hill region. He induced Govt. to offer scholarship for tribal students. Subsequently a number of primary schools rose to 142 in the Darjeeling district. Now, the educational scenario observes sophistication even at higher education.

(D) Distribution of settlements:

The hilly area of Darjeeling was discovered with the advent of the British who entered into the area to support the Raja of Sikkim in 1814 against the invasion of Gorkhas (Nepalese). Thereafter the East India Company got legal right to establish in 1917 under some treaty. Before the arrival of the British, the area was unknown to the world. It is important that almost all the areas were forested and were inhabited by the tribals who mostly used to reside in a flock without having permanent settlements. Even the population of the area was unknown.

The proper census of 1901 indicates only enumeration of population but not of settlement. The British settled in the Darjeeling area because of its climate suitable and established sanitarium which later attracted population. However, the Govt. of West Bengal enlisted the village along with population enumeration. Now the district of Darjeeling observes a detailed census in 2001 which mentions village wise population (Table 3.5)

**Table--3.5**

**Showing Number of Bloeks, Panchayats and villages, 2001**

Sl. No.	Block Name	No. of panchayats	No. of imhabited village	No. of uninhabited villages
01	Darjeeling pulbazar	23	52	----
02	Rangli Rangliol	11	35	----
03	Kalimpong-1	17	44	07
04	Kalimpong-2	41	128	----
05	Gorubathan	11	30	07
06	Jore Bunglow sukia pokhari	18	53	----
07	Mirik	06	29	----
08	Kurseong	14	67	06
09	Matigara	06	70	10
10	Naxalbari	06	82	16
11	Phansidewa	07	103	11
12	Khoribari	04	74	01
	District	164	667	58

(Source: Census of India, 2001)

As indicated by table -3.5 there are altogether 725 villages in the district in which are included 58 uninhabited villages. It also indicates a large variation in the number of villages, ranging from 30 as minimum and 128 as maximum among the blocks of the district. Besides the district includes urban center of varied nature according to 2001 census, such as tea garden centers, tourist centers, sanitarium centre etc. these urban centred are Darjeeling (107197), pattabong Tea Garden (1633), attached with Darjeeling, kalimpong (42998), miri k (9141), kurseong (40010), cartroad (13636), Uttar Bagdogra (1577), Bairastisal (5405), and siliguri (284602). Among all these, Suliguri is the largest urban center which rests in plain and is called 'Door of Darjelling'.

Reference:

1. o'Malley, LSS (2001), Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling, p.24