

# Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background

The term tourism is derived from the Latin word "tornore" and the Greek "tornos" meaning a tool for describing a circle "turners' wheel." It indicates a round tour "the journey at which one returns to the starting point visiting various places." Basically, it comprises two basic activities, viz. the journey to the destinations and the activities at the destinations for the use of leisure for the purpose of pleasure.

Conceptually tourism denotes the temporary short-term movement of the individuals to various destinations outside the place of their interests. Likewise in technical term, it deals about various forms of short-term journeys which are variously defined for particular purpose of travel or visit, duration and other criterion (Burkart and Medlik 1988: 41-43). In general, the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as " the theory and practice of touring, travelling for pleasure, or it is the business of attracting tourists and operating tours." Similarly, Modi states, tourism constitutes one end of a broad leisure spectrum. In geographical sense, a basic distinction between tourism and other forms of leisure (practiced at home or within the urban area) is the travel component. Tourism is generally taken to include at the very minimum a one-night stay away from the place of normal residence or origin (Modi 2001: 279).

In Sanskrit literature, there are different terms for tourism. It is derived from the root *atan*, which refers to the act of leaving home for sometime to other places. After this root various words have been use to mean different types of tourism such as *Paryatan* which refers to going out for pleasure and knowledge; *deshatan* refers going out to other countries; *tirthatan* refers for visiting to the places of religious importance. Similarly *akhet* refers for hunting and *vihara* for excursions (Kunwar 2006: 02).

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industry in the world in last fifty years and it is considered as a largest industry in present world scenario (Chauhan 2004: 03). It emerged as a big industry with immense revenue and development potentiality due to the rapid developments in transport and communication facilities especially after the post war period (Robinson 1976: 24).

Tourism as a smokeless industry opens the doors of various opportunities, but simultaneously it may create problems for a multitude of societies. Its impact may be economic, social, cultural, political and environmental. The study of UN on impact of tourism especially in developing countries has stressed that tourism confers many economic advantages to that country, it also frequently causes social and environmental disruption (Chauhan 2004: 04). Although, tourism is an important sector which provides a source of income and employment opportunities as well as it brings infrastructural improvements and it may help for the regional development (Robinson 1976: 125).

Tourism has five vital components viz. attraction, transportation, accommodation, food catering, infrastructure and souvenir shops. Transportation enables to visit the destinations, accommodation caters for the visitor's well being there, attraction induce him to entertain there, food catering helps the visitors to survive there and proper infrastructure enables successful functioning of all these components (Kunwar 2006: 22). Robinson writes, tourism encompasses to a very large extent, geographical in character. Location and accessibility, impressive scenery or varied landscapes, favourable climatic conditions, animal life, settlement and cultural features are the geographical components of tourism (Robinson 1976: 41-42). Similarly, Sharma writes, there are broadly two factors that generally affect tourism. External factors include the levels of disposable income, general economic conditions in the tourist generating countries, travel potential to various segments of the market, climatic factors and wet weather facilities, etc. which affects the tourism development. Internal factors include the quality of attractions and available facilities limits, the use of attractions and facilities by the local population, cultural and recreational facilities based on tourist's demands and the availability of both land and investment are also concern destination areas (Sharma 2000: 27).

Tourism is a phenomenon, the variety of touristic motivation corresponds to the diversity of the types of tourism during these days (Chauhan 2004). On the basis of its nature and features, tourism is divided into different types. Recreational tourism is one of them which is mainly concerned with leisure and rest, and to recover physical and psychological stamina of the individual. Especially the visitor prefers to visit the rest centers to secure relaxation. Another type of tourism is pleasure tourism

which mainly concerned with the people who enjoy going on holiday observes something new, to delight in good scenery, indulge in any recreational activities, etc. This tourism usually depends upon the taste and temperament of individuals. Cultural tourism is another type of tourism and is usually concerned with learning the habits, language, custom and traditions, visiting historical places, religious centers, art galleries, and participate in art music, theatre, dance and folklore festivals, etc. Sporting tourism is next one which is usually enjoyed by the individuals through visiting the different sports events organize in different places. The tours which are undertaken by businessmen or industrialists or professionals to the different places of their interest is generally regarded as business or technical tourism. Visiting fairs and exhibitions and the places of technical achievements comes under this category. Conference tourism is another type of tourism mainly concerned with the international, national or regional conferences held which generally includes scientific, professional, literary and even political gatherings.

Tourism is also classified according to its geographical locality such as national or domestic tourism, regional tourism and international tourism.

During these days, various forms of tourism have been emerged such as medical tourism has emerged from the rapid growth of what has become an industry, where people travel substantial distances to overseas countries to obtain medical, dental and surgical care, while simultaneously being holiday-makers in a more conventional sense (Connell 2006: 99). Spiritual tourism also gaining its popularity during these days. Not only in the eastern countries, it has gained quite a recognition in Western World too (Pradhan 2007: 58-59). Cyber tourism as a new form of tourism has been electronically simulated travel experience that is a substitute for a physical tourism experience. It allow the participants to explore the destinations via new technologies free from the usual restrictions of time, distance, cost and human frailty (Prideause and Singer 2005: 27). The current evolving trend of volunteer tourism is yet another aspect, which has been attracting thousands of tourists accenting their passion for voluntarism and social works. Such visitors (volunteers) mostly come in association through web or individual referral who work in cooperation with different International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) or local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for assisting the native to provide a helping hand in building

and renovating school projects drinking water projects and orphanages, etc. (Rayamajhi 2008: 20-21).

During these days, tourism development also has committee to develop tourism in South Asia, especially in SAARC region. At the international level, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was established in 1944 to assist and promote travel and tourism in the world. World Tourism Organization (WTO) based in Madrid, Spain is the official tourism voice of United Nations. It was established in 1975 with an objective of promoting and development of tourism globally. Consequently, tourism emerged as a premier service industry and one of the fast growing industries in the world.

According to Lascrain, the relation between tourism and natural environment is very close in which environment is affected by tourism and in the long term, tourism depends on the quality of environment. Indeed, the quality of environment is generally the primary attraction for tourists. During these days, tourists of all kinds are becoming much sensitive to polluted or environmentally degraded conditions at their different travel destinations (cited in Bhatt 2006: 25-49). Therefore, in present day context, the main concern is with recreation tourism and with its range of consequences for an environment and the people living in that environment. Hence, a considerable amount of interest has been directed towards a relatively new form of tourism that apparently has emerged in response to the growing dissatisfaction with mass tourism and its associate negative impacts. This new form, which has been broadly termed as "alternative tourism" has evolved as a popular counter-response to the emphasis on consumerism especially in developing nations. Coupled with the resurgence of the environmental ethic, these concerns about mass tourism have been linked to the denigration of important natural environment and as a consequence have given rise to one form of alternative-green tourism or eco-tourism (Fennell and Smale 1999: 415).

The word ecotourism comprises of two different words, i.e., 'ecology' and 'tourism'. Ecology is defined as the science of the different relationships between living organisms and existing natural environment. It generally studies the overall assemblages of living organisms and their physical milieus. These all comes under a particular natural system which is known as ecosystem. The ecosystem conceptually

units the biology, behaviour, organization and functioning of man with an environment. Hence, ecology refers to the scientific study of living things in relation to each other and to their environment existing.

So, 'ecology' and 'tourism' connected together became eco-tourism which is regarded as a great achievement in tourism industry. It has a great value for society. The interactions and interrelationships between tourism and conservation of environment comes under this category. Therefore, eco-tourism is an environment friendly tourism in general. The role of national parks and conservation area has remained vital towards the promotion of eco-tourism. Concerning to this, UN General Assembly has declared to observed 2002 as International Eco-tourism Year. For the sake of environment conservation and sustainable future of the natural area, the then president of US, Alsas Grant established Eco Stone National Park in 1872. It is considered as an oldest national park in the world. After that, trend of such parks establishment spread all over the world. Royal National Park of Australia established in 1879, El Chiko National Park (Estd. 1898) of Mexico, Nahuel National Park (Estd. 1903) of Argentina, Mt. Egmount National Park of New Zealand etc. are considered as the initial steps towards ecotourism in the history of world tourism (Poudel 2003: 42).

However, the term eco-tourism was firstly coined by Hester Ceballos Lascurain in 1983. It was initially used to described nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education. The concept has developed to a scientifically based approach to the planning, management and development of sustainable tourism products and activities (<http://www.gdrc.org/uec/eco-tour/etour-define.html>.)

The International Eco-tourism Society defines "eco-tourism as responsible travels to the natural areas which conserves the environment and improves welfare of the local people" (Western 1993: 08). Eco-tourism offers national, regional as well as local benefits similar to those of other type of tourism offers.

Eco-tourism is a logical component of eco-development a way to paying for nature conservation and increasing the value of land left natural i.e. how tourist dollars can flow back into conservation and make pay for those people living in the

areas. Sound politics and fair economics argue for making local people partners and beneficiaries in conservation, as opposed to implacable enemies of it. It is a complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon and has a tremendous role to play in the interpretation of nature and natural resources as well as understanding of human history and its interaction with environment, environmental knowledge and awareness. It plays a vital role for environmental education especially raising ecological awareness both in tourists and local people, and government officials too. Eco-tourism respects the environment and encourages and promotes the well being of the local people (Chauhan 2004: 165). Thus, it is a symbiotic relationship between tourism and environment (Chaturvedi 2002: 41).

In the words of the World Conservation Union, eco-tourism is an environmentally responsible travel and visits to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation. It has low visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

Eco-tourism is also seen as interfacing of conservation concerns and tourism interests, setting free the synergy required to jointly preserve the quality of the environment while protecting nature and promoting tourism. It is a timely strategy that is vital to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems along with economic benefits to any host-area communities. Therefore, eco-tourism has been viewed as a new tourism strategy that balances development and economic gains by benefiting both nature and destination areas (Farell and Runyan 1991: 26-40).

Eco-tourism especially plays a vital role in the case of minimizing the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment of any regions. But its basic attractions generally include flora, fauna, wilderness adventures, cultural heritage, etc. It also plays the vital role for enhancing the cultural integrity among the local people. It not only plays the role for conserving natural environment, culture and traditions, but also creates the opportunities for local mass to earn something for smooth sustaining their day to day life status.

Compared with "mass" or "old" tourism, eco-tourism has been played a vital role in providing better sectoral linkages, reducing leakage of benefits out of the

country, creating local employment and fostering sustainable development. Thus, it has been widely promoted as a means of reconciling wildlife conservation with economic development particularly in developing countries (Campbell 1999: 534-553). Eco-tourism is thus one of the most feasible sources of alternative income generation from natural resources (Uprety 1998: 61).

During these days, ecotourism is considered as a fastest growing market in the tourism industry with an annual growth rate of 5 percent worldwide and representing 6 percent of the world gross domestic product, 11.4 percent of all consumer spending ([www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/etour-define.html](http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/etour-define.html)). Although, the sustainability of tourism generally depends upon the environment of the area. Therefore, the value of eco-tourism increasing vigorously during these days.

Agro-tourism, pro-poor tourism, nature safari are the term that are getting popularity in world tourism market and reflexive to the concern of eco-tourism

Although, each type of eco-tourism do have the same basic principles and goals, viz. to minimize impact, to build environmental and cultural awareness and respect, to provide positive experiences for both visitors and empowerment for local people, to raise sensitivity to host countries' political and environmental and social climate as well as to support international human rights and labour agreements (<http://www.ecotourism-sites.blogspot.com>). In this context, Honey stated that eco-tourism is a philosophy, a set of principles and practices that, if properly understood and implemented, will transform the way we travel. He further argued that, eco-tourism is a multifaceted concept that involves travel to fragile, pristine and usually protected areas (Honey 2002: 01-02).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Uttarey-Singalila region is rich in diverse flora and fauna having rugged topography of numerous beautiful hills and valleys, which are covered by evergreen forests in the lower hills and flows a number of glittering streams through the valleys. The region portrays a rich feature of ecological and cultural diversities. Therefore, the region is endowed with the diversified natural and socio-cultural resources. Owing to these factors, the area has been identified as an uprising eco-tourism destination in Sikkim.

Even though having huge potentialities, the given area is unable to attract handsome number of tourist in the region. Therefore, development of eco-tourism in the region is remaining not so satisfactory. So, it is necessary for understanding the prospects and problems of ecotourism in the Uttarey-Singalila region. In this context the present study is an attempt to analyze the prospects and problems of eco-tourism in Uttarey-Singalila Region and help people to make their economy sustainable.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to explore the prospects of eco-tourism development and trace the problems associated with it in the study area. The specific objectives are:

- i) To appraise eco-tourism resources of the study area.
- ii) To study the historical perspective of eco-tourism development in the area.
- iii) To trace the perception of the local people about the eco-tourism in the region.
- iv) To analyze socio-cultural and environmental impact of tourism.
- v) To analyze the major problems for the eco-tourism development.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Tourism has become an important source of income in Sikkim. In this context ecotourism is playing a vital role for promoting tourism activities and environment conservation in Sikkim. Among many tourism destination of the state, Uttarey-Singalila region is one of an impressive and fresh emerging destination for tourists.

The present study is basically focused to examine the scope of ecotourism in study area. The study highlights about the importance and scenic beauty as well as the place of interests for eco-tourism. It will be helpful for the general information and guidelines to the local people, planners, tourists and other concerned authorities about the sustainable development of ecotourism in the fragile landscape of Uttarey-Singalila area. Similarly, this study may be helpful for the future researchers to pursue their study in tourism development in general and eco-tourism development particular.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**



The present study has been conducted within a limited period of time for academic research. Owing to the financial and time constraints, the assessment of ecotourism activities of whole Sikkim became impossible. Therefore, present study mainly focused on Uttarey-Singalila region and its periphery within Maneybong-Sopakha GPU under Dentam Constituency of West Sikkim for analyzing the prospects and problems of ecotourism development. The study does not draw any hypothesis testing such as F-test, T-test, Z-test, etc. So the study is based on the information collected only during the months of October -November 2007.

## **1.6 Literature Review**

Literature and research papers are not abundantly available particularly about the tourism in Uttarey-Singalila trek route region. Nevertheless, various journals, magazines, articles, books, etc. have provided some general information about the region. In this context, some of the relevant available literature have been reviewed in the study.

Verma (2007) mentioned in his book "Sikkim" that there is considerable increase in the number of tourists visiting in the state since last few years. It is so because of the unrest situation in other tourist spots in the country like Kashmir. He further urges that, Sikkim has the most unparalleled beauty on earth-exotic lakes, verdant landscapes and breathtaking views. Unfortunately, most of these places are in restricted areas and the visit them entail getting permission from various source and this can take months together. At last he mentioned that a boom in tourism in the state will result in concomitant rise in the demand for local handicrafts too which may enhance the economic status of the local people. These book is very helpful to those who are interested on the study and research on tourism in Sikkim. For the present study, Verma's work has provided theoretical knowledge for analyzing and generating ideas about the tourism and natural environment of Sikkim.

Dhungana (2006) has conducted a study on "Tourism in Nepal: A Study on Eco-Tourism in Tansen". The general objective of her study was to explore the prospects of eco-tourism in Tansen area. Both primary and secondary data were analyzed for the study. The conclusion of her study reflects that, Tansen as a hill station, situated in Western Nepal has the high prospects to develop a circuit of

tourism as Pokhara-Tansen-Lumbini in the region. She writes, there is no significant impact of tourism on nature and socio-cultural environment in Tansen area. This is so due to the number of visitors in the region is considerably low. She further mentions that the region also lacks the places to spend money by tourists. Her finding reflects that, there is no significant tourism activities are carried out in the region even having the high potentiality of tourism development in which the region is unable to attract/impress the tourists in the remarkable number. Therefore, she strongly urges that there should be practice various recreational activities to attract the large number tourists in Tansen area. She further urges to restoration of cultural heritage, garbage and waste management, well managed drainage system, enhancement in drinking water supply, etc. should be taken into action for the development of eco-tourism in Tansen area. She developed the ideas and trend to analyze the eco-tourism development in such a uprising tourism spots which is very useful for the present study to analyze the tourism activities.

Poudel (2005) made a study on "Tourism Development and people of Marginal Livelihood in Khaptad National Park Area of Far Western Nepal." This study attempts to appraise natural and religio-cultural tourist-magnetic resources, marginal condition of population and various challenges, associated with tourism development in Khaptad National Park (KNP) area based on both primary and secondary data. Poudel writes in his paper that, environmental changes in the mountain area of the developing countries have been a subject of intense debate and controversy, and Nepalese mountains where mountain tourism has been developed in no exception. The study concluded that, most of the benefits go primarily to lodge restaurant-owners and wealthy households. But large proportion of subsistence farmers (people in marginal livelihood) did not benefit from tourism employment, income and other linkage by tourism. Therefore, the researcher recommends here that, in such area for the development of sustainable tourism, more emphasis should be given or conservation of both natural and cultural heritage with due consideration on hosts' and visitors' satisfaction that address to basic need, poverty mitigation, social improvement and economic justice. He further recommends that the involvement of local community and supplying locally produced and souvenir items may help better to control income leakage and establish linkage between mountain tourism and local community development and help tourism development last for long future. Hence

this study is much helpful to know about the impact of tourism on livelihood of marginal population in the study area. It is also helpful to know about the key factors needed for developing sustainable tourism in the region.

Gayawali (2005) carried out a research on the topic "An Assessment of Tourism Status and Ecotourism Potential of Nagarkot." The objectives of his study was to assess the natural and cultural resources of the study area and its potentiality for ecotourism as well as to observe the impact of tourism activity to the local environment. His study also emphasized on the status of tourism and assessed the development of ecotourism in an environmentally sustainable manner in Nagarkot. The study was based on both primary as well as secondary data collected from the various sources.

This study clearly reflects that the rapid increase in the infrastructure development like construction of building and cottages for hotels lodges and commercial shops, construction of link roads, etc. are some of the responsible factors to create impact on the local environment such as change in the scenic beauty of the green forested hills, enhancement of soil erosion, solid waste and sewage disposal problems, forest felling rate, change in landuse pattern, change in water run-off, etc. Regarding other environmental problems, no significant noise as well as water pollution was observed during his study.

He further states that, due to the factor of such tourism activities in Nagarkot, it was observed drastic increase in landuse value, number of small scale industries especially hotels, fruit farming, poultry farming, livestock farming, etc. which mainly opened the doors of primary and secondary job opportunities to the local individuals as well as for outsiders too. The findings of his study further deals that the main tourism induced social changes in the study area includes mainly the young generation's attitude in imitating tourists' behavior and disruption of community bonds through the economic differentiation in some extent.

Although, the overall study reflects the very favorable prospects of ecotourism in Nagarkot. The presence of various religious sites further enhance the tourism potentiality of the area. Therefore, the study is helpful for analyzing the

environmental and social impact of tourism in a particular area gathered from different sources.

Wagle (2005) made a study on "Tourism in Nepal; A Case Study of Phewa Lakeside, Pokhara." His study mainly aimed to analyze tourism activities as well as its impacts on socio-economic scenario in Phewa Lakeside of Pokhara. The study was conducted on the basis of analyzing both primary and secondary data.

He states in his thesis that, Nepal is famous for its rich natural beauties, like Mt. Everest, the highest peak of the world and the numerous snow-capped mountains peaks, a number of lakes, waterfalls and rivers. Cultural heritage like temple of Lord Pashupatinath, Limbini (the birthplace of Lord Buddha), the homeland of brave Gurkhas and the brave Sherpas, the ethnic and lingual diversity, etc. all exist in Nepal. Therefore, Nepal became an attractive destination for tourists from all over the world, he stated.

The conclusion of his study reflects that the tourism has become a good source of income for the local people to enhance their livelihood. As the local people improving their living standard in comparison to the past decades due to the factor of tourism activities. He again states that, due to the lack of proper and sufficient dumping sites, the waste materials left by the tourists as well as common people is causing environmental pollution in the area in some extent. But side by side, modernization has fosters in most of the cases. At last, he mentions that, tourism in Pokhara will be sustainable with the environmental protection and cultural conservation. This study shows the role of tourism in the regional economy as well as role of regional environment and existing culture and traditions to foster tourism activities and its impacts in the local scenario, which is helpful for analyze the present study.

Sapkota (2004) studied the role of ecotourism for alleviating poverty in Nepal. His study was mainly focused on the role of ecotourism in poverty alleviation which was carried out under the descriptive as well as analytical research design. The study was based on secondary data source. He states that Nepal hosts a large number of locations with significant ecotourism potential. Some of the sites are more accessible

than others. Despite the obvious potential, limited efforts are made to link them with mainstream tourism development in the country.

He further mentions in his thesis that, cultural and national heritage in Nepal have seen important tourism destination like other countries. He recommends that, continuous efforts are necessary for conservation of these sites and the resources. Lastly, he writes eco-tourism has become a major source of revenue for National parks and protected areas. That has been an incentive for developing the eco-tourism as a distinct and important program in buffer zone management plans. National parks and protected areas are also gradually including ecotourism into their management plans. He recommends that, the huge potential of biodiversity- ecotourism synergy for rural poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation remains to be harnessed. The study is mainly helpful to know about the role of ecotourism for alleviating poverty in a particular region which is quite relevant to the present study.

Dhakal (2003) has made a study on "Economic Impacts of Tourism in Nepal." His study was totally based on secondary data analyzed by using qualitative as well as quantitative methods. His study states that, Nepal having a number of historical cities/places and wide range of geographical diversities within a limited area, the most popular activities has been pleasure and trekking. His finding reflects that the number of male tourists exceeds the number of female tourists. His study also revealed that the importance of Indian tourists visiting Nepal. He further writes concerning the employment generation, the domination of partial and indirect employment along with the lack of professionalism was noticed during the study. He urged that sufficient investment, proper planning and clear vision are the main measures for the proper utilization of the resources potentials. His study also reflects that the tourist prefers shorter distance of visits considering both security and economic point of view.

His study also states that, being a multi-sectional industry, involvement of various acts and policies are creating a lot of confusions and contradictions in the tourism industry. His study helps to know the trend, intention of the tourists and some of the existing problems in the tourism sector which is very helpful for the present study.

Rai (2003) has carried out a study on the topic "Tourism Industry in Khumbu Reigion in Nepal." The main objective of his study was to examine the impact of tourism on the economy and culture and traditions of Khumbu people (especially Sherpa community). The study was based on both primary and secondary data to fulfill the objectives of the micro-level study of tourism industry in Khumbu region. The findings of his study deals that, beside the critical political situation of the country, tourism in Khumbu had a high growth rate over the past decades. It was so, due to the presence of Mt. Everest (highest park of the world) and the beauty of the high attitude Khumbu region as well as the amicable Sherpa with the rich culture and traditions. It was found that the tourism has provided various opportunities for income, employment and better lifestyle in the Sherpa villages of the study area. He again stated that tourism has impacted negatively upon certain elements of the region's environment, economy and also upon socio-cultural heritage.

Sherpa (2001) has made a study on "Tourism in Sikkim, problems and prospects; A Case Study of Trend of International Tourism." The main objective of his study was to identity the scope of tourism in Sikkim with reference to growth and trend of international (foreign) tourist in Sikkim. Both primary and secondary data were gathered for analyzing about the problem and prospects of tourism in Sikkim especially focused on international tourism. His study deals about the historical background of tourism development to explain the problems and prospects in the field of tourism industry in Sikkim.

He found that Sikkim has high potentiality to attract tourists but she has still to develop its vast potentiality to secure a remarkable position in international tourism scenario. He again stated that the tourism in Sikkim is totally seasonal. Therefore the number of unemployed drastically rise high especially during the off seasons. His study deals about the historical background of tourism in Sikkim, types of visitors and their purposes which is very supportive to further carryout the present study.

Chhetri (2000) carried out a study on "Trends of Tourism Development in Sikkim." The main objectives of his study were to account and analyze the trend of foreign exchange earning and domestic earning from tourism as well as to assess the role of tourism within the state and also to identify the main issues and problems associated with tourism in Sikkim.

Findings of his study show that, the economic status of the people is found improving by the tourism within the state. Besides having many hindrances, he urges that tourism in Sikkim hold a better position both in terms of arrivals and receipts. The study deals about the economic impact of tourism industry in Sikkim as well as some of the prevailing hindrances which is helpful for tracing the major problems of tourism for the present study.

Curz (1999) made a comparative research on "The Impact of Ecotourism in the Annapurna Region." The research was focused on three geographic areas, each with their own interest ecological problem. They were the Sikles trek, the Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) trek and the lower Mustang from Jomsom to Muktinath. The research was based on primary data source in which the researcher walked the trails of the Annapurna, a Standardized Environment Impact Assessment Sheet was filled out during his field study.

He states in his report that, the flora of the Annapurna sanctuary have been impacted adversely to a medium extent. It was found surprising given the number of trekkers that go through the area even year. But the damage was mitigated by the number of key factors as close management by ACAP, the prohibition of firewood collection and the use of kerosene and there is only one trail, which specially limits the damage. He further writes that, it has brought employment and hard currency to a people of surrounding areas. The greatest cultural change seems to be that people are living and working in the sanctuary for as much as 10 month in a year. Tourism improved the administration of the sanctuary. According to his study, tourism has not improved educational status in the region.

Trekking played a vital role for leading local culture strong in the Sikles sector. He found the forests were very healthy and trekking had a minimal negative impact on them. Tourism has had a very positive effect on the people and economy of the Baragaon. The only serious negative effect was found as deforestation in the side valleys near the trail to Muktinath.

His research concludes as overall in the three areas studied, ACAP role is remarkable for adhering to its mandate to integrate tourism management, nature conservation, cultural resource conservation and community development for the benefit of local people. Hence, this study provides some information about the impact

of ecotourism as well as management techniques for smooth tourism development in a region.

Poudel (1998) has conducted another study on "Mountain Tourism and Its Socio-cultural Impact in Ghandruk VDC Annapurna Region, Nepal." Mainly, the study was focused on tracing the genesis of mountain tourism development and its socio-cultural impact in the study area. The study was based on primary data gathered during different seasons in which PRA and key informant survey also utilized for generating the reliable information in the study.

Besides having various positive impacts of tourism in the study area, it has also brought a number of undesirable impacts on the socio-cultural environment of Ghandruk VDC. The conclusion of the study deals that the attractive elements of traditional Gurung culture has been found deteriorated due to the materialistic outlook of the local people. The researcher further stated that, such materialistic and monetary gain at the cost of socio-cultural heritage does not anger well for the sustainable mountain tourism in the area. Therefore, the researcher suggests that, there is highly in need of consciousness regarding to sustain the socio-cultural heritage invaluable resources for the sustainable development of mountain tourism in Ghandruk VDC. So, this study significantly provides the ideas to analyze the socio-cultural and economic impact of tourism in the study area.

Agarwal (1998) in his book entitled "Holiday and Trekking in Sikkim and Bhutan" highlights the various tourism destinations of Sikkim and Bhutan which are suitable especially for mountaineering and trekking. The book also deals about the various culture, traditions and history of Sikkim. The writer further stated that, there is high potentiality to develop trekking and mountaineering in Sikkim due to the rugged and uneven topography having steep slopes and numerous foothills. Hence the book is very much useful to understand about the historical development of tourism in Sikkim.

He further writes that, there has been adverse impact on the Sherpas' lifestyle deviation from the local control towards westernization. There have been changes in the land use and agriculture patterns and environment. Himalayan deforestation and other vegetation changes in the high valleys were found more complex, he mentions. This study is helpful for the present study to analyze the positive and negative impacts



of tourism as well as to know about the role of existing components of the region to impress and attracts the tourists.

Dhakal (1998) made a study on the topic entitled "Ecotourism in Nepal; A Case study of Pokhara Valley, Kaski, Nepal." He mentions that, healthy and varied natural and socio-cultural environment are the basic resources of tourism. The areas of outstanding natural beauty and living socio-cultural heritage are the most preferred and successful environment for modern tourism. Therefore, he strongly supports tourism and environment exists in harmony.

Findings of his study reflects that the increasing pressure of tourist arrivals creating some physical and socio-economic impacts in Pokhara. Vegetation degradation, landscape change, increase in surface run off, soil erosion, pollution in Phewa Lake, change in socio-cultural values, etc. are some of the main impacts which are shown in finding of his study. Therefore, his study is a best document to know about the impact of ecotourism in the topography of a particular region.

## 1.7 Methodology

The present study has been basically based on both primary and secondary sources of information gathered during the study period.

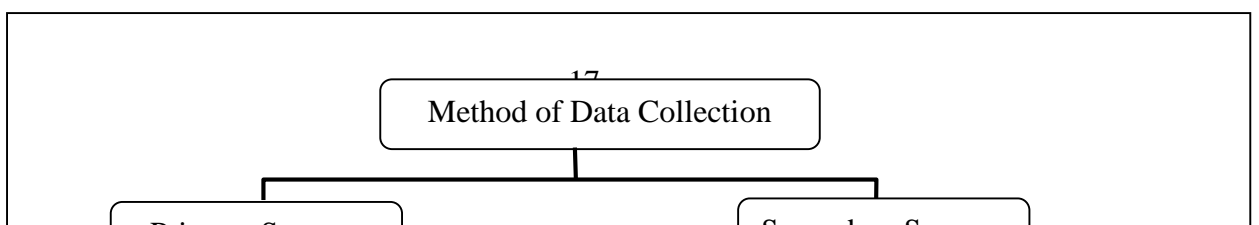
### 1.7.1 Selection of the Study Area

Uttarey-Singalila area within Maneybong-Sopakha GPU under Dentam constituency of West Sikkim has been selected for the study. The given study area is situated at the westernmost corner of West Sikkim covering the small part of Singalila Range touching Indo-Nepal border in the west.

Geographically, the study area has uneven, rugged topography having diverse biodiversity of flora and fauna. Therefore, area regarded as an uprising tourism spot in West Sikkim. Being an uprising tourism destination of West Sikkim, the area has been selected for the study to analyzing its tourism potentiality .

### 1.7.2 Nature and Sources of Data

Methodological framework of data collection of the study is presented in Figure 1.



## **Figure 1. Methodological Framework of Data Collection**

### **1.7.2.1 Primary Sources of Data**

According to the nature of the study, the primary data has been gathered by using the research tools as questionnaire, interview, observation as well as key informants survey made during the field visit. In order to gather the required and relevant information from the household and visitors, three different sets of questionnaires were prepared. First set of questionnaire was prepared to collect the information from the local households (see Appendix 1). Due to the limitation of time, energy and cost, simple random sampling has been adopted with taking the sample size of 10 percent of the total houses from each ward for conducting household survey. Sample household has been extracted on the basis of house numbers. Consequently, a sample of 63(10%) household from total (635) households has been selected for the study. Second set was prepared in order to collect the information from the hotel owners (see Appendix 2) and third set for the visitors who were encountered during the period of field visit in October- November 2007 (see Appendix 3).

### **1.7.2.2 Secondary Sources of Data**

Secondary data for the present study are especially gathered from the various concerned centers as Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) Gangtok, Sikkim Tourism Board Gangtok, RIT library Gangtok, IPR Gyalshing and Uttarey Tours and Travels Uttarey. Besides this, relevant information were collected from various published and unpublished books, booklets, journals, newspapers,

reports, etc. from CDG Library, T.U., Kirtipur, ICIMOD Kathmandu, Central Library T.U. Kirtipur, and CDG Library TU Kirtipur. Various concerned websites also visited for the sake of capturing required information for the study.

### **1.7.3 Data Analysis**

The information collected from both primary and secondary sources has been tabulated manually for the preparation of master table. Different thematic tables and figures has been created from the master table for fulfilling the purpose of the study. Qualitative, quantitative and cartographic technique has been used side by side for analyzing the data.

## **Chapter II**

### **GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SETTINGS OF THE STUDY AREA**

#### **2.1 Geographical Settings**

Sikkim, a small and hilly state of Indian nation is divided into 32 constituencies comprising 159 Gram Panchayat Units (GPU) within four districts for the sake of smooth administration. Each GPU comprises of few revenue blocks under it. Likewise, the study area Maneybong-Sopakha GPU which is selected for the present study is one of the GPU in the state.

##### **2.1.1 Location**

Maneybong-Sopakha GPU as Uttarey-Singalila region falls under Dentam Constituency which is situated at the western corner of the hilly state Sikkim. It has occupied a small area of West-Sikkim extended under the lap of Singalila range touching the Indo-Nepal border. Generally, it is a rural area comprising fifteen small villages viz. Simphok, Uttarey, Gumpadanda, Bandukey, Barbotey, Makurung, Simboley, Tarang, Dathong, Intake, Lingay-Sopakha, Middle Sopakha, Kumuk, Sepi and Dhandegown which are scattered over foothills. However, the region comprises of seven Panchayat Wards viz. Lower Mukurung-Simboley, Bandukey-Barbotey, Simphok-Gumpadada, Upper Mukurung, Kumuk-Sepi, Lingay-Sopakha and Middle Sopakha.

Uttarey village as a take off point for the trek route is situated at an elevation of 2000m. Likewise the elevation of the area ranges up to 4,530m as it rises towards its western border (<http://scstsenvis.nic.in/sikkim.html>).

The study area is 20<sup>th</sup> GPU of Dentam constituency situated at a distance of 151kms westward from the capital region Gangtok and 34kms west from its district headquarter Gyalshing.

### **2.1.2 Topography**

Topographically the study area represents rugged and uneven surface comprising numerous gorges and canyons forming a complex valley in the region. The area is gently sloping hilly region to the east. But it is quite steeper as it moves towards west up to the razor-edged Singalila ridge. Singalila Ridge form the international border between Sikkim (India) and Nepal in the west.

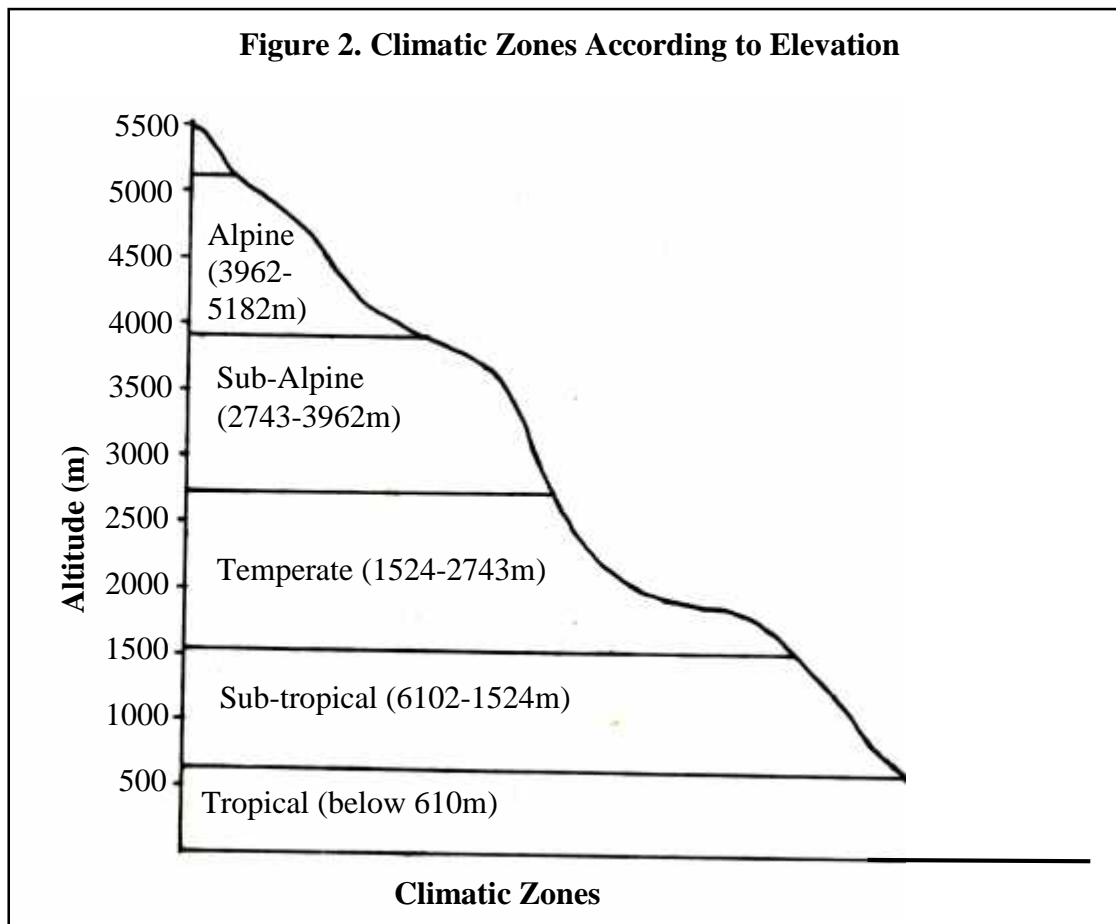
### **2.1.3 Drainage**

There are three main perennial rivers in the area viz. Kalej Khola, Kumuk Khola and Singshore Khola. Kalej Khola divides the study area into two Gram Panchayat Blocks in which southern part as Maneybong Block and Sopakha Block as the northern part. Accordingly, Maneybong Block comprises of four Panchayat Wards viz. Uttarey-Gampadada, Bandukey-Borbotey, Upper Mukurung and Lower Mukurung. Similarly, Sopakha Block comprises three wards as Sopakha, Lingay-Sopakha and Kumuk-Sepi wards.

Kumuk Khola flow along the northern border of the study area acting as a natural boundary between another GPU with it. Likewise, Singshore Khola acts as the south-eastern boundary of the area. Both of these river finally join and form Kalej Khola. Many small streams flowing through the area are the tributaries of the major rivers of the area.

### **2.1.4 Climate**

The study area experience extreme cold in winter and moderately warm during summer. Generally Sikkim is divided into five different ranges climatically viz. Tropical (below 610m), Sub-Tropical (610 to 1524m.) Temperate (1524 to 2743m) Sub-Alpine (2743 to 3962m) and Alpine (3962 to 5182m) (Figure 2). Hence, the study area enjoys Temperate to Sub-Alpine type climate (SSP 2006). December, January and February are the coldest months. The area receives excessive rainfall especially during summer. The area generally comes within snowline during the winter (Verma 2007).



### 2.1.5 Natural Vegetation

Sikkim is basically divided into three major zones in describing the aspects of natural vegetation viz. Tropical zone, Temperate zone and Alpine zone (SSP 2006).

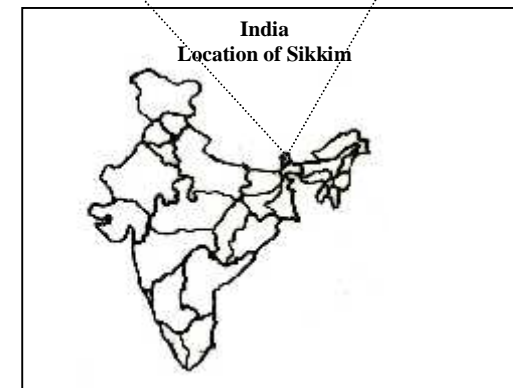
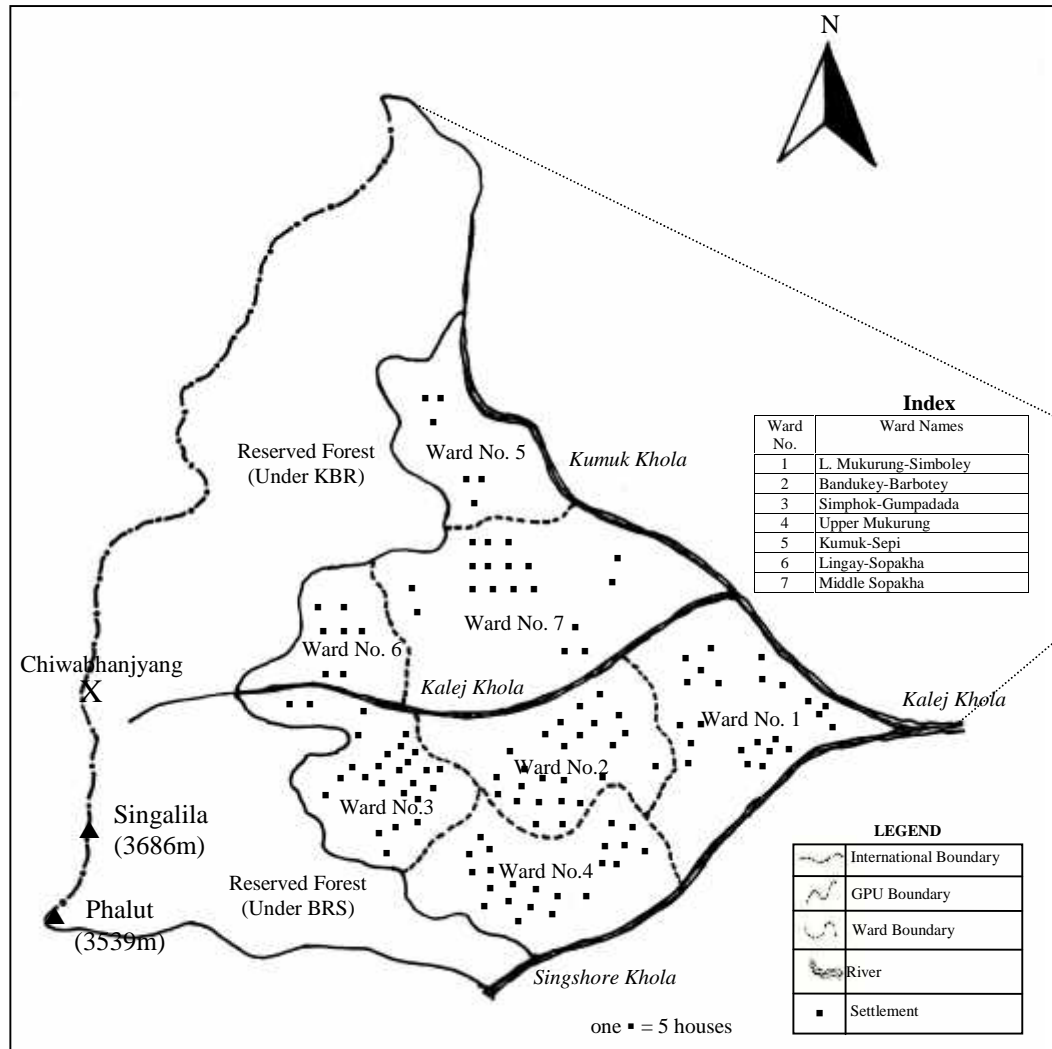
The altitudinal range of the study area supports a wide variety of biodiversity ranging from Temperate Evergreen Forest, Mixed Broadleaf Forest, Coniferous Forests and finally Alpine Meadows. The super abundance of different species of rhododendrons is the glory of the Singalila Range. (<http://www.geocities.com/iluvbarsey>).

The study area is thickly covered by the evergreen forests, in its north-western and south-western part which falls under Kanchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (KBR) and Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary (BRS) respectively. BRS is one of the newly established sanctuary in the region for the sake of biodiversity conservation in Sikkim. It was established in 1996.

Sir J.D. Hooker, the renowned botanist noted in his diary, "The Singalila Range, forming the political boundary between Sikkim and Nepal, springs from Kanchendzonga and extends southwards to the plains to Bengal. The super abundance of *Rhododendron* is the glory of the Singalila Range. The banks of rivers are generally covered with rhododendrons sometimes to the total exclusion of other wooded vegetation, especially near the snowy mountain, a cool temperate and great humidity being the most favourable conditions for the luxurious growth of this genus. Such conditions prevail throughout the area due to its proximity with the Kanchendzonga Range. Silver fir, *Abies dense*, Junipers, *Juniperus Pseudo-Sabina* etc. are found in the area. For many miles the path runs through woods of *Rhododendron* viz. *R. barbatum*, *R. Campanulatum*, *R. Cinnabarinum*, *R. Falconeri*, *R. Arboreum* and *R. Hodgsoni*, *Acer Candatum*, *Betule Utilis*, *Pieris Ovalifolia*, *Prunus Rufa*, *Pyrasfolioloce*, *Pyrus Macrophylla*, etc. He further writes, there are seen the last examples of the dwarf bamboo tribe, *Arundinaria Spathiflora* and *Arundinarie Racemosa*." Towards the termination of the range, rhododendrons and other shrubs grow sparsely, thus favouring the existence of a greater variety of herbaceous plants, primroses. The present species being the water loving primula *Sikkimensis* and *Primula reticulata* are more abundant.

He further mentions, hundreds of bird species are found in this area including three species of spectacular pheasants viz. Satyr Tragopan, Impeyan Monal and Kaleej Pheasant. Notable large mammals include Leopard, Leopard-Cat, Yellow-Throated Marten, Palm Civet, Wild Dog, Goral, Barking Deer, Himalayan Black Bear, Wild Boar, Red Panda, Flying Squirrel, Crestless Porcupine, Himalayan Mouse-Hare, etc. ([http://www.sikkim.info.net/barsey\\_rhododendron\\_sanctuary.htm](http://www.sikkim.info.net/barsey_rhododendron_sanctuary.htm)).

**Map 1. Location of the Study Area  
Maneybong-Sophaka GPU of Uttarey-Singalila Region**



Source: Rural Administrative Centre, Maneybong-Sophaka GPU, 2007.

Map Not to Scale



## 2.2 Socio-cultural Settings

### 2.2.1 Population

The villages of the study area are scattered over the hillsides. The total population of the study area is 3656 of which 52 percent are males and 48 percent females. The area consists of 635 households (Table 1). Generally scattered type of settlements are found in the study area.

**Table 1. Household and Population by Blocks and Gender**

Block	Ward No.	Ward names	No. of HH	Population		Total Population
				Male	Female	
Maneybong	1	L. Mukurung-Simboley	115 (18.1)	352 (18.4)	310 (17.7)	662 (18.1)
	2	Bandukey-Barbotey	120 (19.0)	329 (17.2)	313 (17.8)	642 (17.5)
	3	Simpbok-Gumpadada	131 (20.6)	401 (21.0)	378 (21.5)	779 (21.3)
	4	Upper Mukurung	112 (17.6)	330 (17.3)	297 (17.0)	627 (17.1)
Sopakha	5	Kumuk-Sepi	32 (5.0)	99 (5.2)	92 (5.2)	191 (5.2)
	6	Lingay Sopakha	33 (5.1)	107 (5.6)	81 (4.6)	188 (5.1)
	7	Middle Sopakha	92 (14.4)	286 (15.0)	281 (16.0)	567 (15.5)
Total			635 (100.0)	1904 (100.0)	1752 (100.0)	3656 (100.00)

*Source: Panchayat Office Maneybong Sopakha GPU, 2007.*

*Figures within parenthesis indicate percentage*

In terms of population, Simphok-Gumpadada is populous ward which accounts about 21 percent of the total population from 131 households in the study

area. It comprises about 51 percent males and 49 percent female population. Lingay-Sopakha is least populous ward in the area. It shares 5.1 percent population to the total population of the entire study area. This ward comprises of 57 percent males and 43 percent females from 33 households.

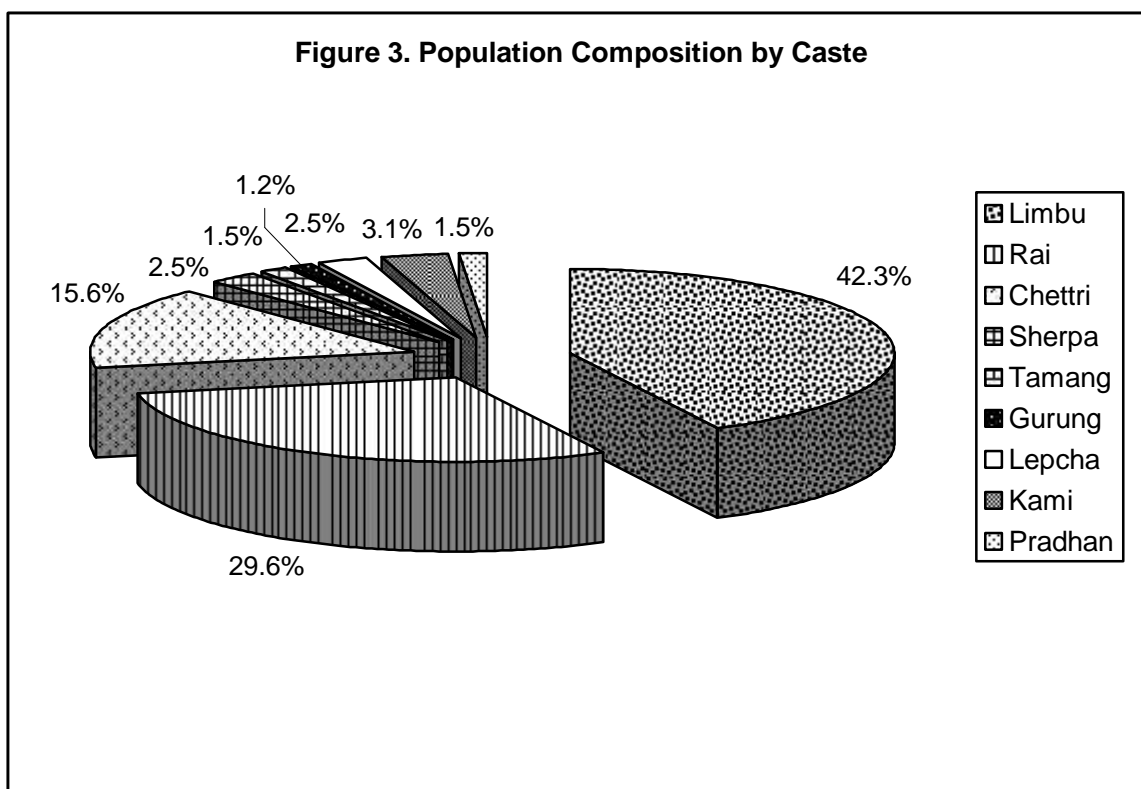
Ethnic diversity is a distinct feature of this area. Rai, Limbu, Chettri, Sherpa, Bhutia, Tamang, Gurung, Lepcha, Kami, Damai and Pradhan are the major ethnic and caste groups within the area. These different families or group make up the village having its own physical, socio-economic and cultural identity.

**Table 2. Population Composition by Castes**

S.N.	Caste	Sampled HHs	Sex		Total population	Percentage
			Male	Female		
1	Limbu	28	75	61	136	42.3
2	Rai	18	54	41	95	29.6
3	Chettri	8	23	27	50	15.6
4	Sherpa	2	4	4	8	2.5
5	Tamang	1	3	2	5	1.5
6	Gurung	1	2	2	4	1.2
7	Lepcha	2	5	3	8	2.5
8	Kami	2	6	4	10	3.1
9	Pradhan	1	2	3	5	1.5
Total		63	174	147	321	100.00

*Source: Field Survey 2007.*

Table 2 represents that Limbu and Rai has the highest percentage of population with 42.3 percent and 29.6 percent respectively. It is followed by Chettri (15.6%), Kami (3.1%), Sherpa (2.5%), Lepcha (2.5%), Tamang (1.5%), Pradhan (1.5%) and Gurung (1.2%).

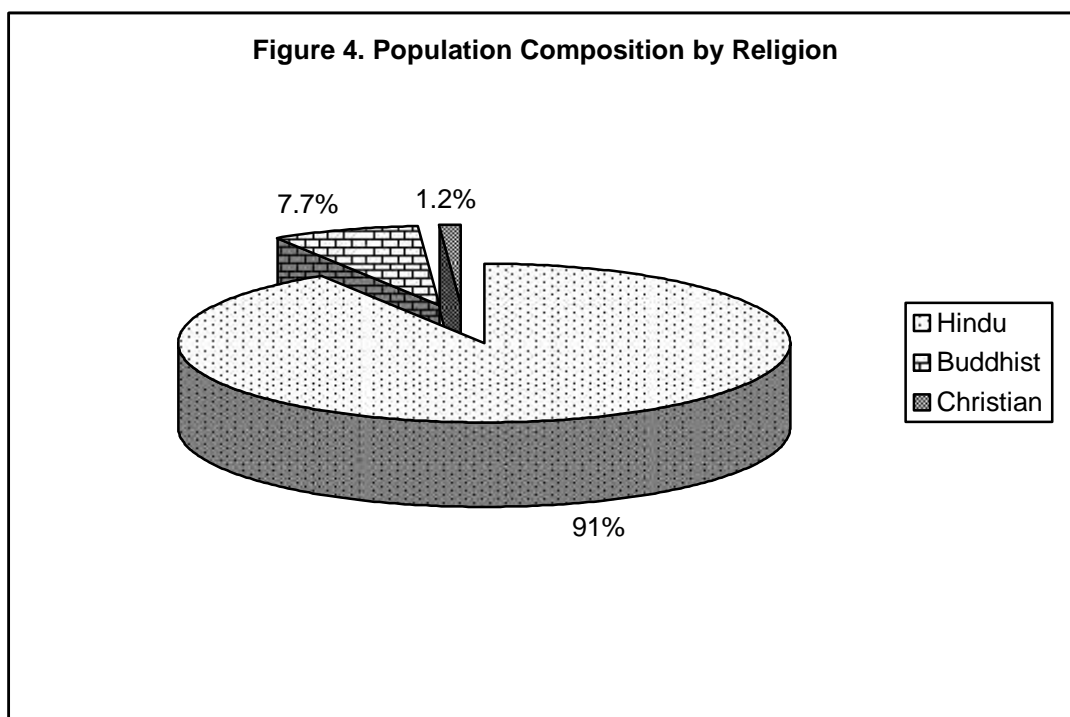


Hinduism is the predominant religion in the area which accounts 91 percent. Buddhism and Christianity are the next two religions in the area which holds the figures of 7.7% and 1.2% respectively (Table 3).

**Table 3. Population Composition by Religion**

Religion	Total Sampled HH	Sex		Total Population	
		Male	Female	Number	(%)
Hindu	56	164	128	292	91.0
Buddhist	6	14	11	25	7.7
Christian	1	3	1	4	1.2
Total	63	181	140	321	100.0

Source : Field Survey 2007.



### 2.2.2 Age and Sex Composition

Age plays a vital role for the development of a region, state or a nation. It is known that if a region has high percentage of dependent population than independent group, there is less possibility for the development.

As the study area has notably high proportion of independent group (Table 4), one can hope for the overall development in the area.

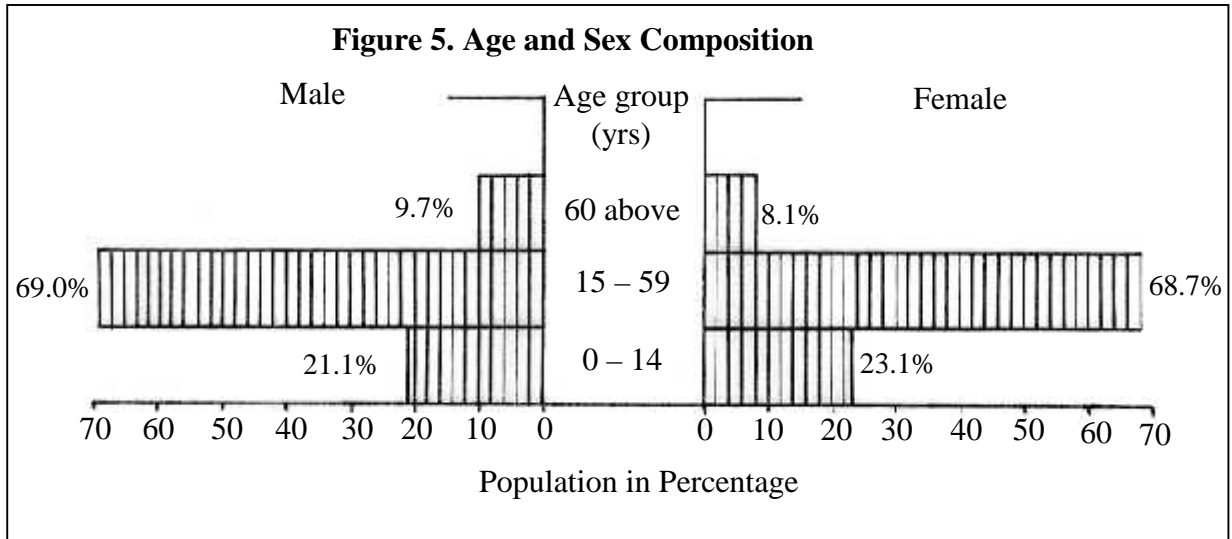
**Table 4. Age and Sex Composition of the Sampled Population**

Age group	Total population		Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 - 14	71	22.1	37	21.2	34	23.1
15 - 59	221	69.0	120	69.0	101	68.7
Above 60	29	9.0	17	9.7	12	8.1
Total	321	100.0	174	100.0	147	100.0

*Source: Field Survey 2007.*

Table 4 reveals that the population of age group (0 - 14) consists 22.1% of the total population comprising of 21.2% male and 23.1% female. Economically active population group (15 - 59) holds the highest percent of the total population 69.0 percent. Out of the total proportion of economically active population, male shares

around 37 percent whereas female shares 31 percent. The table clearly denotes that the economically active population in the context of both male and female has highest percentage out of the total sample population. The third age group i.e. above 60 has the lowest percentage. This age group shares 9% in the total population comprising nearly 10% male and 8% female population.



### 2.2.3 Educational Status

Talking about the paradigm of educational status in the study area, it is found that the percentage of illiterate is quite low. The percentage of the population having primary education is comparatively higher than the population without any educational background. However, moving to the higher levels, the percentage also decreases comparatively than that of the lower ones. Although the total population of the sample households is 321, but 7 infants are excluded in this part.

Out of the total sampled population in the study area 20 percent of population are found illiterate. The percentage of female illiteracy is comparatively higher (20%) as compared with the male illiteracy (10%).

**Table 5. Educational Status of the Sample Population**

Education Level	Population					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No.	%
Illiterate	16	10	44	28.7	60.	19.1
Primary	53	33	35	23	88	28
L. Secondary	49	30.4	49	32	98	31.2
Secondary	16	10	13	8.5	29	9.2
Higher Secondary	21	13	10	6.5	31	10
Graduate	05	03	02	1.3	07	2.2
Post Graduate	01	0.3	00	00	01	03
Total	161	100	153	100	314	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2007.*

Table 5 reflects that the highest number of population from the sampled households has attended lower secondary level of education. About 31% has educated up to this level but some of them were found dropouts. It is so due to the fact that they do not get proper guidance and good partnership. Therefore, their interest towards study slowly get decreases. In this level too, the percentage of female population is comparatively higher than that of males. It is than followed by primary level with 28 percent. 9 percent population have attended secondary level education. Likewise, 2 percent are graduates and only a single member from the sampled population has completed post graduation.

There are twelve schools in the study area. Out of the total number of schools, 9 are Government Schools and 4 are Private. Altogether, there are 8 Primary Schools, 3 Junior Secondary Schools and only one Secondary School. There is 1 Primary School in each wards. The populous ward of the area i.e. ward no. 3 posses 3 Primary Schools including 2 Private Schools. The least populous ward i.e. ward no. 6 has only one Primary School. There is no Senior Secondary School and College in the study area. The state government has implemented the provision of compulsory education upto the age of 14 years within the state. Although, few teenagers are found dropouts even being proximity to the schools in the area.

#### **2.2.4 Occupational Status**

Residents from the different ethnic groups in the study area are engaged in different occupations for sustaining their livelihood. Table 6 represents the occupational status of the population of the study area by ethnicity.

**Table 6. Occupational Status of Sampled Population by Caste**

Occupation	Caste Groups									Total
	Rai	Limbu	Chettri	Sherpa	Lepcha	Gurung	Tamang	Kami	Pradhan	
Farmer	27 (29.0)	41 (30.1)	14 (29.1)	3 (42.8)	2 (28.5)	-	-	-	-	87 (27.7)
Gov. Job	17 (18.3)	28 (20.6)	7 (14.6)	-	-	-	-	1 (11.1)	-	54 (17.2)
Business	2 (2.1)	3 (2.2)	3 (6.2)	-	-	-	2 (40.0)	-	2 (40.0)	12 (3.9)
Tourism	-	2 (1.4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (20.0)	3 (1.0)
Student	29 (31.1)	40 (29.4)	19 (39.6)	2 (28.6)	3 (42.8)	2 (50.0)	1 (20.0)	3 (33.3)	2 (40.0)	101 (32.1)
Carpentry	-	2 (1.4)	-	-	1 (14.3)	-	-	-	-	2 (0.6)
Tailoring	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (11.1)	-	1 (0.3)
Contractor	1 (1.0)	3 (2.2)	-	-	-	1 (25.0)	-	-	-	5 (1.5)
Blacksmith	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 (33.3)	-	3 (1.0)
Unemployed	17 (18.3)	17 (12.5)	5 (10.4)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	1 (25.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (11.1)	-	45 (14.3)
Total	93 (100.0)	136 (100.0)	48 (100.0)	7 (100.0)	7 (100.0)	4 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	314 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey 2007.

Figures within parenthesis denote percentage.

Note: Out of 321 total population, 7 infants are excluded here.

Out of the total population 32 percent are student which is comparatively high than the other attributes. 27 percent of the people are farmers which is followed by Government job holders (17.2%). The involvement of people in tailoring is quite negligible (0.3%). Unemployed population in the study area accounts 14 percent.

In terms of caste wise occupation, Limbu and Rai holds much diversification in their occupational status. Both communities holds around 30 percent farmers from their respective population. 18.1 percent of Rais and 20.6 percent of Limbus are government job holders. Engagement in business from of the community reveals around 2 percent respectively. The percentage of Limbu students are comparatively higher than Rai. 18.3 percent of Rai's and 12.5 percent of Limbu, are unemployed. On the other hand, 40 percent of Pradhans are engaged in business and 20 percent in tourism. Remaining 20 percent of them are student. In overall, 3 percent of the total sampled population are engaged in tourism sector in the study area.



## Chapter III

### ASPECTS OF ECO-TOURISM IN SIKKIM

#### 3.1 Geographical Aspects

The smallest state of India in terms of population and second smallest in terms of size, Sikkim is now a fast evolving into a favorite destination for the visitors. The pristine and unspoilt natural beauty including thick luxuriant tropical forests and alpine landscapes, rivers, glaciers and streams, crystalline waterfalls as well as peaceful lakes makes the state a true *Shangrila* (Verma, 2007). The state is bestowed with abundant natural as well as cultural diversity attractive for tourism. Owing to the fragile environment and increasing arrivals tourists in the state, eco-tourism is more suitable and appropriate, which may further increase potentiality and make tourism development sustainable.

##### 3.1.1 Physical Setting

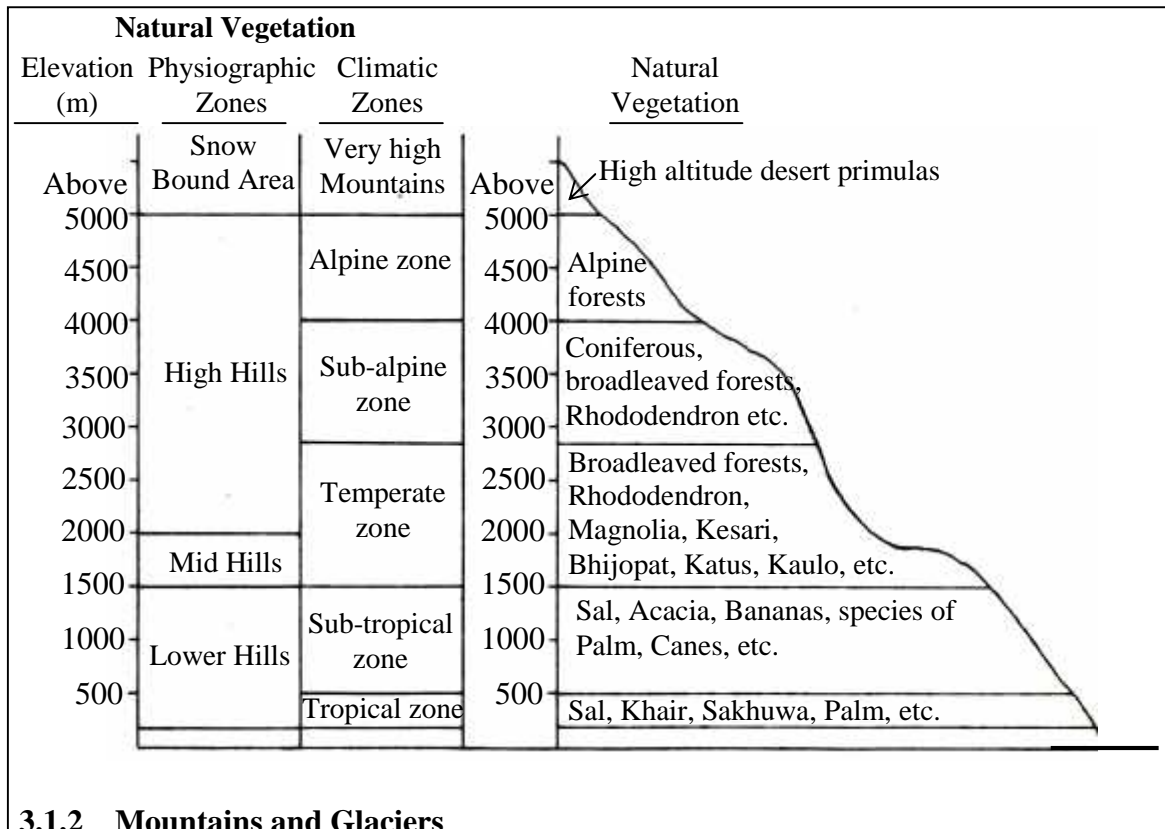
Sikkim as a very small state in the mighty Eastern Himalayas with formidable physical features, nestled under the protective shadow of Mount Kanchendzonga (8598m), the third highest mountain of the world. So, the state is situated in an ecological hotspot of the Lower Himalayas, one of only three among the Eco-regions of India. It is bounded by vast stretches of Tibetan Plateau in the North, the Chumbi Valley of Tibet and the kingdom of Bhutan in the east, Nepal in the west and Dajeeling District of West Bengal in the south.

The total area of the state is 7,096km<sup>2</sup> and measures approximately about 112kms from north to south and about 64kms from east to west. Its longitudinal and latitudinal extension is in between 88°00'58" to 88°55'25"E and 27°00'46" to 28°07'48"N respectively. Despite its tiny size, Sikkim is geographically diverse, owing to its location on the Himalaya. The region is dominantly characterized by mountainous terrain. Its elevation ranges from 224m to over 8598m above sea level. Within the distance of 112kms presents incomparably high variation in landscape patterns geology and flora and fauna life. The majestic mountain peaks, deep river valleys and the dense foothill forests, the frothing rivers, waterfalls and the beautiful agricultural fields with variety of crops make the region rich in biodiversity. The northern portion of the state is deeply cut into

steep escarpments while the altitude decreases as it moves towards southern part which is more open and fairly well cultivated too.

Sikkim has been broadly classified into four physiographic regions (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Relationship between elevation, Physiographic Zones, Climatic Zones and**

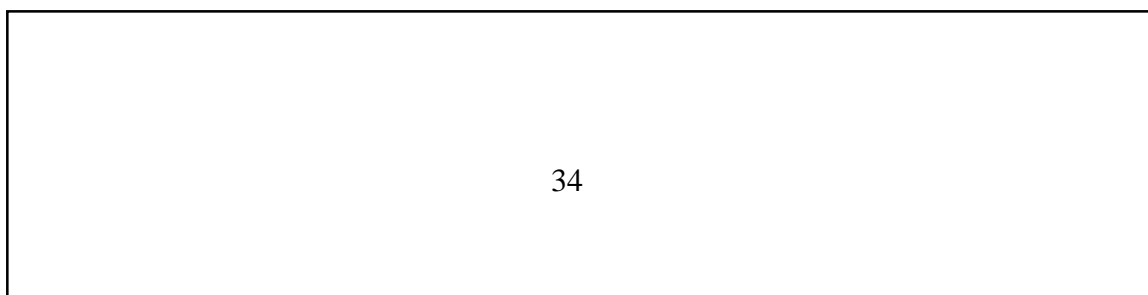


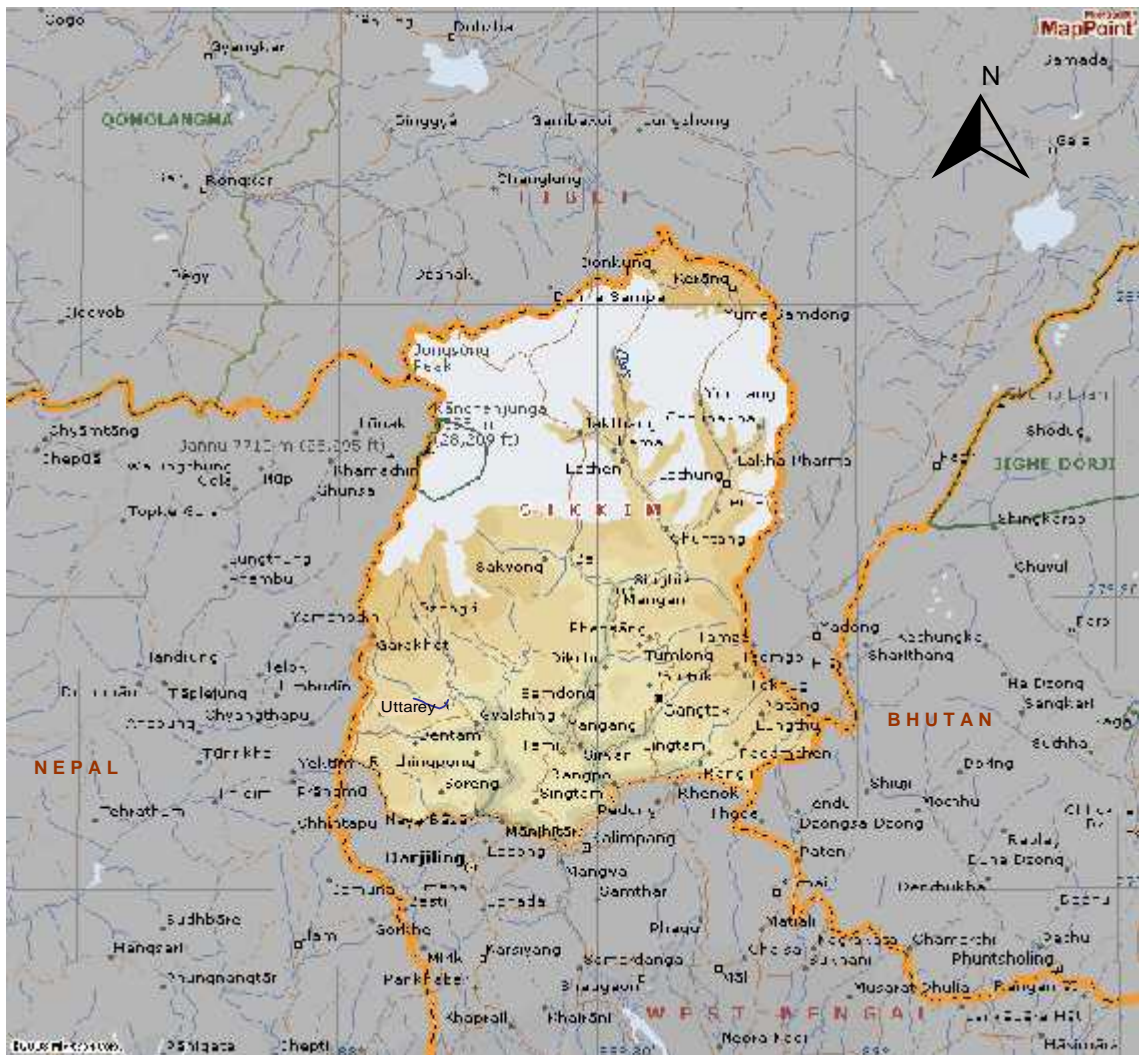
### 3.1.2 Mountains and Glaciers

Physiographically, Sikkim can be said to have its feet in the ocean and its head in the sky due to its huge range elevation. The entire state is built of a young mountain system which is highly folded and faulted rock strata at many places. It encompasses the Lesser Himalaya, Central Himalaya and the Tethyas Himalaya. The presence of plain land is generally negligible. The towering mountains and hills makes the state of complex physical diversity. The three principal mountain ranges are: a) the razor edged Singalila Range on the western border that defines the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal and, b) the undulating Chola Range on the east forms a part of the border between Sikkim and Tibet, and c) the low altitude Pangelia Range in the south-eastern part of the state demarcates the border of Bhutan with it (Map 2).

### Map 2. Sikkim

#### Geographical Location





Source: [http://www.encarta.msn.com/map\\_701516543/sikkim.html](http://www.encarta.msn.com/map_701516543/sikkim.html).

Most of the peaks above 6100m. lie towards the western border of Sikkim which includes the third highest peak of the world, Mt. Kanchendzonga (8598m). Other peaks that stand at an attitude of above 6100m are Mt. Kabru (7340m), Mt. Talung (7351m), Mt Siniolchu (6889m), Mt. Simvo (6855m), Mt. Pandim (6693m), Mt. Rathong (6680m), Mt. Paunhri (6700m) Mt. Kokhtang (6148m). The other imposing mountains that are slightly less than 6100m. in terms of altitude are viz. Mt. Masthonangye, Mt. Yabukjakchen, Mt. Narsing and Mt. Lamaongden. Most of the peaks have been remained unscaled because of Sikkimese consider them as a sacred place and feel they will lose their sancity if climbed. Climbers on Mt. Kanchandzonga are believed to have returned back a few feet from the summit in respect to these religious feelings. Therefore, mountains of Sikkim are of great attraction for the trekkers and mountaineers.

The glaciers are also in abundance in the state. The most important ones are the Zemu and the Lonak Glaciers of North Sikkim and the Rathong Glacier of west Sikkim. Although there are other glaciers also in existence viz. Hidden Glacier, Talung Glacier, North-Lonak Glacier, South-Lonak Glacier and Tista-Khangse Glacier in North Sikkim. These mountains, glaciers snow field and glaciated valley in combination presents Sikkim a novel scenic site for tourist resources.

### **3.1.3 Rivers, Lakes and Hot-springs**

The Tista and the Rangit are the two main rivers of the state which originates from the Cholu Lake and the Rathong Glacier respectively. River Tista flows right across the length of the state from the North-south direction, while the Rangit, tend to flow in the South-East direction and finally join with the Tista at *Triveni*, the border between Sikkim and Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The main tributaries of river Tista are Dikchu, Rangyong, Bakcha Chu, Rongpochu, Zemu Chu and Lachung Chu. However, it has several smaller tributaries viz. Lonak Chu, Rani Khola and Talung Chu. Similarly, Ranghang, Reshi, Rathong and Kalej Khola are the main tributaries of the Rangit.

Most of the rivers are fed by snow melting on the mountains and also by rains during monsoon. Therefore, the rivers of Sikkim are perennial. Owing to the steep gradient the rivers flow with a greater velocity. Thus, the rivers have a huge potential of generating electricity and high prospect for water tourism.

Although having a rugged terrain, there are many spring fed as well as river-fed lakes are found in Sikkim. The lakes also form the source of various rivers. Gurudongmar is one of the largest and highest lake in Sikkim. Khecheopalri and Changu (Tsomgo) are the well known lakes of the state. The highest concentration of lakes is on the western border of the state towards north from the Chiabhanjyang along the Singalila Range. Laxmipokhari, Lampokhari, Majurpokhari, Ram-Laxmanpokhari, Dud Pokhari, Nirpokhari, Hans pokhari and Samiti Lake, etc. are a few of the lakes in this range. Besides this, Bidang Cho, Menmecho, Ghati Tso, etc. are the other lakes in the state. Most of the lakes have been considered to be the sacred destination in Sikkim. Native people use to visit these *Pokhari* (Lakes) for respecting its religious values.

The state also possesses sites of hot springs which are popularly known for their medicinal and therapeutic value. The well known are the ones located at Phurchachu (Reshi) in west district, Yumthang in the North, Borong and Ralang as well as Yumey Samdong in the south and east district respectively. Visitors from different parts of India as well as from abroad visit these springs for getting medicinal value, particularly during winter seasons.

#### **3.1.4 Climate**

Sikkim possesses the monsoon type climate ranging from tropical to the alpine. However, the state enjoys five seasons viz. winter, summer, spring, autumn and monsoon (June to September). The state has been basically divided into five climatic zones viz. Tropical, sub-tropical, Temperate, Sub-alpine and Alpine. As the mountains fall directly in the path of the monsoons, it generally experiences torrential rains during rainy seasons. The pre-monsoon rain occurs in April-May and the monsoon occurs normally from the month of May and continues up to early October. The climate remains comparatively cold and dry during winter. For most of the year, the climate remains cold and humid as it rains throughout the year. Temperature varies from as high as 35°C in the summer at places in south to below the freezing point in the north in winter. The southern slopes are full of rich tropical forests whereas most part of the northern eastern and western frontier hills are blanketed with snow almost throughout the year due to its high elevation.

Owing to the proximity of the state to the Bay of Bengal and the fact that mountains of the state come directly in the path of the monsoon clouds, most part of the state receives heavy rainfall during rainy seasons (June to August). Therefore, it is regarded as one of the rainiest regions of India. Due to the uneven hill features, rainfall varies considerably from place to place within the state. The northern border of the state experiences comparatively low rainfall than other parts because of the monsoon clouds drying out by the time as they hit the northern barrier. Generally the weather remains more or less clear and fine especially from the month of October to March.

#### **3.1.5 Soil**

The hills of Sikkim mainly consist of gneissose and half-schistose rocks, making the soil brown clay and generally poor and shallow. According to the National

Bureau of Soil Survey and Landuse Planning Regional Centre (NBSS & LPRC), Kolkata, the soil types of Sikkim varied with elevation, temperature and rainfall. The upper steep slope consists of brown loamy skeletal soil with rock particles of micaceous gneiss rocks and talus deposits. Brown to dark coloured soils have been formed in genesis rocks in steep slopes and escarpment which are found susceptible to landslides and erosion.

The soil of Sikkim is coarse with large amount of iron oxide concentrations ranging from neutral to acidic and has poor organic and mineral nutrients. Thus, it is quite favourable for evergreen deciduous forests in the hill slopes (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sikkim>).

The National Bureau of Soil Survey and Landuse Planning Regional Centre (NBSS & LRPC), Kolkata classified the soil of the state into three taxonomic order viz. inceptisols, entisols and molliols.

### **3.1.6 Floral and Faunal Diversification**

Natural vegetation of Sikkim exhibits a diversified composition of flora and fauna within its small geographical area ranging from tropical screw Pine to alpine Primula. The state is renowned for its rhododendron and orchid. It as also high altitude primula, meconopsis and blue poppy. Hence, Sikkim boasts around 5,000 species of flowering plants, 515 rare orchids, 60 primula species, 36 rhododendron species, 11 oak varieties, 23 bamboo varieties, 16 conifer species, 362 types of ferns allies, 8 tree ferns and over 424 types of medicinal plants (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sikkim>).

Sikkim has been classified into the following major zones in describing the aspects of vegetation, altitude and composition;

- i) Tropical Semi-deciduous and Wet Tropical Forests (altitude up to 900m); Most of the lower southern valley fall in this range. This zone mainly constitutes deciduous plants viz. *Sal*, *Khair*, Sakhwa and other species like banana, pan danus and various species of palm and cane.
- ii) Tropical Moist Forests or Broad-leaved Forests (altitude between 900-1800m); This zone includes mainly broad-leaved species of plants and some species of bamboo and climbers.

- iii) Temperate Broad-leaved Forests (altitude between 1800-2800m); This zone is mainly predominated by the different species of Rhododendron, Cherry, *Chanp*, *Katus*, *Jhingune*, *Kaulo*, *Kharane* and other temperate types shrubs.
- iv) Temperate coniferous and Broadleaved forests (altitude between 2800-3800m); The vegetation in this zone consists of mostly rhododendron, *Korlinga*, *Chimal*, *Kapashi*, *Bajarent*, *Bante* and some coniferous species plants.
- v) Sub-Alpine Region (between 3800-4500m); The vegetation in this zone consists of mostly coniferous trees and shrubs. Plants like juniper, dwarf rhododendron and spring flowers like Primulas, Rhubarb and Aster are common.
- vi) High-altitude Desert (between 4500-5500m); This region is almost treeless zone has typical high altitude desert plants, which generally blossom during spring and summer just a few inches above the ground. It also consists of several mosses, lichens and some medicinal plants.

Besides, the fauna includes the snow Leopard, Musk Deer, Bhoral, Himalayan Thar, Red Pands, Himalayan Marmot, Serow, Ghoral, Barking Deer, Common Langur, Himalayan Black Bear, Clouded Leopard, Marbled Cat, Leopard Cat, Wild Dog, Tibetan Wolf, Hog Badger, Binturong, Jungle Cat, Civet Cat, etc. Among the animals more commonly found in the alpine zone are Yaks and *Dzo*, which are mainly reared for milk products and meat *Dzos* are used for carrying goods. The avifauna of Sikkim mainly comprises the Impeyan Pheasant, Crimson horned pheasant, snow partridge, snow cock, Lammergeyer, Griffon Vultures, Golden Eagles, Quail, Plovers, Woodcock, Sandpipers, Pigeon, old World Flycatchers, Babblers and robin, etc. A total of 550 species of birds have been recorded in the state, some of which have been declared endangered. Similarly, Sikkim also has a rich diversity of arthropods, much of which remains unexplored even today. The state posses about 695 species of butterflies which includes some of the endangered species as Kaiser-i-hind, yellow Gorgen and Bhatan Glory. Hence, the state exhibit a diverse range of flora and fauna within a small area (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sikkim>).

### **3.2 Socio-Cultural Aspects**

The state comprises of different communities, cultures, religions, customs and traditions. Although, all these intermingle each other to constitute a homogenous blend. Temples, Monasteries, Churches, Mangheem and Mosques coexist together in the region. All communities live in perfect harmony sharing each others culture, ethos and traditions. Majority of the people speak Nepali language, which is also recognized as the official language of the state. Owing to the harmony of the place it provides justification to the name of the state derived from the Limboo word *Suheem/Sukheem* to "Sikkim" meaning "a new happy home, a place of peace."

### **3.2.1 People**

The predominant communities in the state are the Nepalis, Bhutia's and Lepchas. The earliest inhabitants of the state are the Lepchas. According to the census 2001, the state has the sum of population 5,40,493 with 2,88,217 (53.3%) males and 2,52,276 (46.71) females. Out of which the Lepachas constitute 13 percent and the Bhutia's of Tibetan origin constitute 14 percent of the state population. The Nepali's are the majority community (73%) in the state. However, Nepali community comprises of some sub-community groups. Kirantis are one of them which further comprises of various sub-cultural group viz. Rais, Limbus, Magars, Gurung, Tamangs and Sherpa. Another group comprises of Pradhan, Basnets, Thakuries, Chettris, Kamis, Damais, Karkis, etc. Mostly in the urban areas, the plainsmen as Marwaris, Biharis, South Indians as well as Punjabis have been settled for the sake of business and government services. Due to the development and construction activities, certain percent of population consists of migrant labours from different states of the nation as well as from the abroad.

According to the census of 2001, the population density of the state is 76 per sq. km. with the sex ratio of 875 females per 1000 males. The population of the state is predominated by Hindu (60.9%) in terms of religious beliefs. Buddhists constitutes 28.1 percent while Christians and Islam constitutes 6.7 percent and 1.4 percent respectively.

The main language or lingua franca of the state is Nepali. However, Hindi and English are also spoken and understood by most the people in the state. Other regional language spoken in the state includes Lephca, Bhutia, Limbu, Rai, Sherpa, Tamang, Dzongkha, Gurung, Magar, Majhi, Sunuwar, etc.



### 3.2.2 Festivals

The state performs an incessant row of different festivals throughout the year. Hinduism and Buddhism are the main religions that exhibit most of the celebrations. *Dashain, Tihar, Lossar, Lossong, Sakewa, Sirijunga Sawan Tongnam, Maghe Sakranti, Ramnawami, Good Friday, Shivaratri, Janmastami, Vishwa Karma Puja, Kal Chakra Puja, Saga Dawa, Drukpa Teshi, Lhabab Duechen, Pang Lhabsol, Guru Rinpoche's Trungkar Tsechu, Basanta Panchami, Tendong Lho Rum Faat, Kagyed Dance, Nyenpa Guzum, Tanu Lochar, Sonam Lochar, Christmas, Id-Ul-Fitr*, etc. are the main festivals celebrated by the different religious communities. The traditions of the principal communities display rich heritage in the state.

Apart from the traditional festivals, the state also enjoys the celebrations of 'food festival', 'music festival', 'mahotsavs' and 'fairs' throughout the year.

### 3.2.3 Pilgrimage Sites

Sikkim is enriched by various pilgrimage sites of both Buddhists and Hindus. Generally, the state is famous for the Buddhist Pilgrimage sites. *Rumtek Gumpa* of east district is one of the biggest monasteries in the state. It comprises the world Dharma Chakra centre, which is said to be the seat of His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, who is the head of the Kagyu (Kargud) order of Tibetan Buddhism. *Pemayangtse Gumpa* in the west district is one of the oldest monasteries in the state. Situated on a wooded hilltop, this monastery whose name means 'perfect sublime lotus', indeed offers a sublime view of Mt. Kanchendzonga and its foothills. *Samdruptse* in the south district is famous for the world's highest statue of Guru Padmasambhava. Some of the important monasteries in the state are viz. *Enchey, Tashiding, Kathog, Zurmag, Tolung, Sangachoeling, Tsuklakhang, Nadak, Ahlay, Rabtenling, Mangbru* and *Bon*, etc.

Besides this, there are many pilgrim places for Hindus. Some of the famous sites are *Ganesh Tok, Hanuman Tok* and *Baba Mandir* of east district, *Kiratshwor Mandir, Sirijunga Mangheem* and *Sai Sarbadharma Mandir* of west & *Rolu Mandir* of south district. Similarly, various lakes and hills within the state are considered as the holy shrines for both Hindus and Buddhists in Sikkim.

**Chapter IV**  
**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**  
**IN SIKKIM**

**4.1 Tourism in India: A Brief Historical Overview**

Tourism is not a new phenomena in India. She portrays a rich cultural heritage as a legacy of her ancient civilizations. Modi writes that, contemporary Hebrew and Greek scholars have noted the wonder of India and her fabled wealth. Trade over land and through inland waterways was well developed during that period. Brahmin villages evolved as a centers of learning attracting both travellers and scholars (Modi 2001: 70-71).

Travelling for pleasure on the rivers and to the hills was a tradition started by the royal Courts in Indian Society as they had great love for nature and traveled extensively. They contributed towards what we today call resort development. Even today, it can be identify that the travel culture in India's past by the *Kos Minars* (Milestones), *Bacolis*, *Saris* and a network of roads and paths that make all centers of this vast country accessible.

The concept of mass tourism emerged along with the introduction of holiday with pay. It was in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that increasing attention was paid to the desirability of holidays with pay and at least of cheap holidays for working class people in some countries of the West. In India, Colonialism reproduced the British form of tourism. The hill station became the destinations for the administrative and commercial sites as summer retreats. Beaches catered to the desire for sea-side holidays. The railways made most of the destination accessible to British tourists and the Indian elite. Railways, hotels and guest houses run by the Anglo-Indian community provided impetus to the growth of records. The visitors had began to build second homes in the areas which had a regular clientele. The second home phenomenon was responsible for the growth of hill stations like Manali, Oety and Darjeeling as well as the beach shrubs of Puri, Waltair and Juhu. Although, during the period of imperialism many tradition beliefs were undermined, but the pilgrimage provided a resource to those who wanted to preserve their cultural identity.

The first formal and organized effort to promote tourism in India was made in the year 1948, when a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Sir John Sargent. In the early 1960s, it was decided to establish the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) especially for attracting western tourists in India. In the 1970s, the Department of Tourism was separated from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, indicating the growing importance attached to tourism in India. State Tourism Development Corporations (STDC) were setup to provide proper accommodation and transport facilities at tourist destinations around the country.

But it was only after the 1980s tourism activity gained momentum in the country. The central government took several significant steps towards tourism. National policy on tourism was announced in 1982. In 1988, the national committee of Tourism formulated a comprehensive plan for achieving sustainable growth in tourism. The target of one million tourists in 1990 remained as a great milestone in the development of tourism in India. In 1992, the National Action Plan for tourism was prepared and in 1996, the National Strategy for Promotion of Tourism was drafted. The year 1992 was celebrated as "Tourism Year." In 1997, a draft of a new tourism policy in tune with the economic policies of the government and the trends in tourism development was published for public debate. The proposed policy recognizes the roles of central and state governments, public sector undertakings and the private sectors in the development of tourism. The need for involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions, local bodies, non-governmental organizations and the local youth in the creation of tourism facilities has also been recognized.

New markets and diverse products like adventure sports, fairs, festivals and golf, along with the traditional cultural attractions are now being developed into different circuits which cover the main tourist destinations of the entire nation. India now welcomes around two million foreign tourists annually (Modi 2001: 77-79). With realizing the importance of tourism for the growth of the country's economy and making the requisite policy changes, the government's focus now seems to be on fine-tuning the 'Indian tourism product' to attract a greater number of tourists to the country. It seems that India is entering in a bold new era with confidence of making herself good in the world economy.

The launching of several innovative schemes like "Atithi Devo Bhava", "Priyadarshani" and "Rural Tourism", etc. enabled India to emerge as one of the

hottest destinations in the world. India has been ranked fifth among the world's tourist hot spots and also the fastest growing tourism (8.8% annually) by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

## **4.2 Historical Perspective of Tourism in Sikkim**

As tourism is multi-industry and multi-product in nature, the history of tourism in Sikkim is not so long. The history of Sikkimese tourism can be classified into two main phases as follows:

- i) First Phase: before 1975
- ii) Second Phase: after 1975

### **4.2.1 First Phase: Before 1975**

Sikkim was a small monarchical kingdom ruled by Namgyal dynasty before 1970s. It was merged with India during 1975.

When the colonial powers of Portugal, France and Britain were making roads and settlements in different parts of India, history of another kind was also being made in Sikkim. The attention of the East India company was concentrated towards Sikkim due to its strategic importance in the year 1814 when it was involved in a war with Nepal (Slegrover, 1974).

The prime aim of the East India Company to establish relation with Himalayan kingdom Sikkim was due to the following three main reasons;

- i. it was easily accessible
- ii. it would facilitate communication with China via Tibet, in which the princes of Sikkim had matrimonial relation as well as religious affinities with Tibet, and
- iii. to present possible Nepalese-Bhutanese intrigues against the company.

With concerning to these advantages, the East India Company instructed Captain Bare (Captain of the Bengal Army) to establish cordial relation with Tsugphud Namgyal, the ruler of Sikkim. After establishing relation with the Sikkimese authorities, the Company promised to support Sikkim to recover its lost territories to Nepal during the invasion of Nepal on Sikkim in 1780 (Slegrover 1974).

Sikkim agreed to support the Company and undertook to play the role of a faithful ally. War between Nepal and British India broke out in 1814 and came to an end in 1816 with the defeat of the Nepalis and the subsequent signing of the Sugauli Treaty. The British India proposed the Nepalese Government to agree the condition as not to molest or disturb the Chogyals of Sikkim. Company's arbitration was vital in case of any problems arise between those two kingdoms. British India signed another treaty with Sikkim in 1817 known as the treaty of Titalia in which former territories which the Nepalis captured were restored to Sikkim. Thus, the British India has assumed the position of lords paramount of Sikkim and a title to exercise a predominant influence in the state (Verma, 2007).

The cession of Darjeeling was a remarkable event in the history of the East India Company's relation with Sikkim. Tsugphud Namgyal (the then ruler of Sikkim) presented Darjeeling as a gift to the British Government in 1835. There has been several constraints and compulsions regarding the cession of Darjeeling. Later on, Darjeeling became an important observation post of the British in the Himalayas which enhanced the possibilities of trade and travels in the hilly kingdom Sikkim. After 1835, Darjeeling was introduced as a Hill Station for British people which further supported to flourish the concept of tourism development in Sikkim too.

It has been considered that Tashi Namgyal was the main promoter of tourism in Sikkim. He established an important research centre, the Namgyal Research Institute of Tibetology (NRIT) at Gantok in 1958. The only one of its kind in India, it is one of just three of its kind in the whole world. The other two are the Institute of people of Asia in Moscow, Russia and the Toyo Bunko in Tokyo, Japan. Being a world-renowned Centre for Buddhist philosophy and religion, the Institute contains an invaluable array and books on science, religion, medicine, astrology and so forth. It also boasts a reasonably good collection of Lepcha and even Sanskrit manuscripts. Similarly, it covers a large variety of secular subjects like history, geography, botany, chemistry, medicine, survey, art and architecture. Therefore, it has become one of the prime attraction for Buddhist devotees and researchers from all over the world during these days (Bora 2006: 26.27). During his reign, mainly Tibetan Lamas and Indian tourists visited Sikkim for religious and missionary purposes.

The last ruler of Sikkim, Palden Thendup Namgyal married an American lady named Hope Cooke in 1963. Therefore, the matrimonial relation between Sikkimese

and American made a significant publicity about Sikkim in most of the western countries, because of the marriage became an hot-cake issue for the most of the western newspapers during that period (Chettri 1999). Therefore, the matrimonial relation between the king and Hope Cooke played a remarkable role for the development of tourism in Sikkim before its merger with India.

In 1973 a revolution broke out against monarchical system in Sikkim under the leadership of Kazi Lendup Dorjee. As a result, Sikkim became a democratic country and a new democratic government was formed in 1974. Various departments were formed under the ministry of the new democratic government, in which Tourism and Foreign Affairs' was one of them. Therefore, 1974 the birth year of tourism department has been considered as a remarkable step taken by Sikkim government formally for the development of tourism in Sikkim.

#### **4.2.2 Second Phase: After 1975**

The Assembly of Sikkim passed a resolution on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1975 demanding the total removal of Chogyal reign and merge with India to protect the interests the Sikkimese people. Therefore, a referendum was held on April 14, 1975 to decide the issue of merging Sikkim with India. The result was overwhelmingly in favour of the merge in which 97.5 percent of people voted in favour of merging. Hence, on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1975, Sikkim became a full-fledged state of the Indian federation.

The Central Government of India appointed B.B. Lal as the first governor to Sikkim in the same year. All the ministry affairs were handled by the Central Government of India. Hence, Sikkim was considered as international boundary zone between China, Nepal and Bhutan. Foreign tourists were strictly prohibited by the government to visit most parts of the state and need to take permit from Union Home Ministry of India (UHMZ), Delhi to visit some of the sensitive areas of Sikkim. Inner Line Permit (ILP) was issued to the foreigners to visit very few places in the state. All these restrictions brought the drastic fall in the arrivals of foreign tourists in Sikkim, till 1990. Owing to such Restricted Area Permit (RAP), the development of International Tourism in the state was in very slow prior to 1990.

The year 1990 is considered as one of the remarkable period in the history of tourism development in Sikkim. In this year, the department of Home and Tourism started to issue the (RAP) Restricted Area Permits for the foreign tourists, which

brought a drastic increase in the trend of international tourism in Sikkim. Similarly from this year, many areas of the state were opened for the tourists to visit. Tourists were allowed to visit in the high Himalayan region like Dzungri (4030m) and it has been a popular trekking circuit route in the state. Mountain expeditions were also introduced after 1990. Peaks like Pandim (6693m), Tenchikching (5800m), Japonu (5900m), etc. were opened for mountaineering expedition. Various monasteries located in the restricted areas were also opened for the foreigners. Sacred place like Changu Lake (3693m) was also opened for the foreigners. It has become one of the most popular sightseeing picturesque place in Sikkim. Open door policy adopted by the government further enhanced the development of tourism in the state. Presently, the government has given top priority to develop tourism infrastructure in the state. Consequently, there has been tremendous domestic and international tourist inflow in the state at the moment (Table 7).

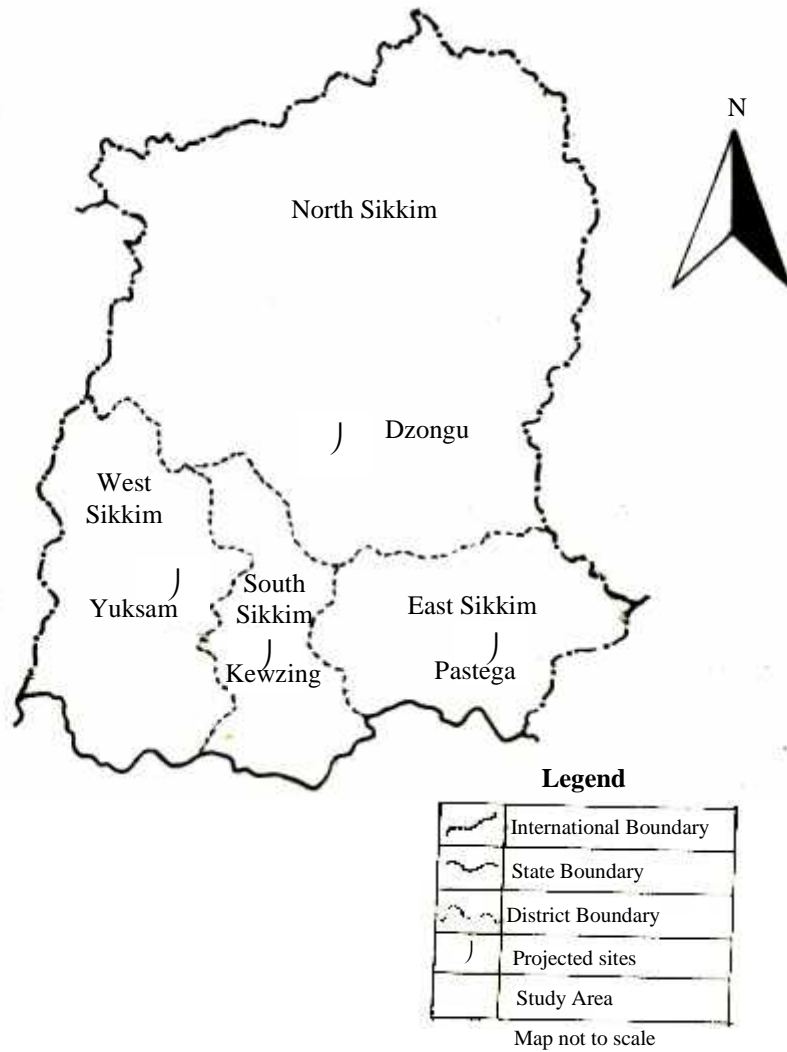
### **4.3 Eco-Tourism Development in the State**

The assemblage of bright lofty peaks, holy lakes, ancient monasteries, orchid nurseries, heli-tours, stunning trekking routes and evergreen forest coverage make the state a place of eco-tourism destination in the nation. There are various sites focused on the principle of eco-tourism in the state. Among the various sites, Uttarey-Singalila region is one of the emerging eco-tourism destination.

Both government and non governmental organizations have been playing a vital role for the promotion of eco-tourism in the state.

Eco-tourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS) is one of such non-governmental organization in the state. It works together with the local communities under the collaboration UNESCO to help the communities. Recently ECOSS has implemented its projects in four districts of Sikkim viz. Dzungu in north Sikkim, Yuksam in west, Kewzing in south and Pastega in east. Although, these are the pilot sites in the state which are chosen to implement the Sikkim Himalayan Home stay project. The local communities of these projected sites have been engaged in dialogues and interactions for the sake of promoting community based tourism.

**Map 3. Sikkim  
Projected Sites of ECOSS**



*Source: Eco-tourism Conversation Society of Sikkim, Gangtok, 2007.*

#### 4.4 Present Scenario

After merging with India, the Central Government of India started giving incentives for the development of Sikkim. The state government also became much interested in developing tourism and remained supportive to developed the accommodation facilities, improve transportation and communication networks and other modern facilities for the visitors. Initiatives have been taken by the state government towards the art, culture and traditions of different communities as well as to the places of interests for the development of tourism in the state.

Consequently, tourism became one of the leading source of foreign exchange in Sikkim. But unfortunately, most of the places in the state are under the restricted



areas and to visit them entails getting permission from various sources till the date. Even most of the locals do not have easy access to the restricted areas (Verma, 2007).

Since few years, the number of tourist arrivals to Sikkim from the different part of the world has been increasing (Table 6). Their main attraction are trekking, mountaineering and sight seeing. Simultaneously, the number of domestic (Indian) tourists arrival also increasing notably in the state.

The flow of domestic tourist in the state is comparatively higher than that of the international tourist. Major source of domestic tourist in the state are, West Bengal (61.08%), Maharastra (10.57%) followed by Delhi (10.37%), Tamil Nadu (0.77%) and Karnataka (1.29%). Major sources of international tourist for Sikkim are France, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, USA, etc.

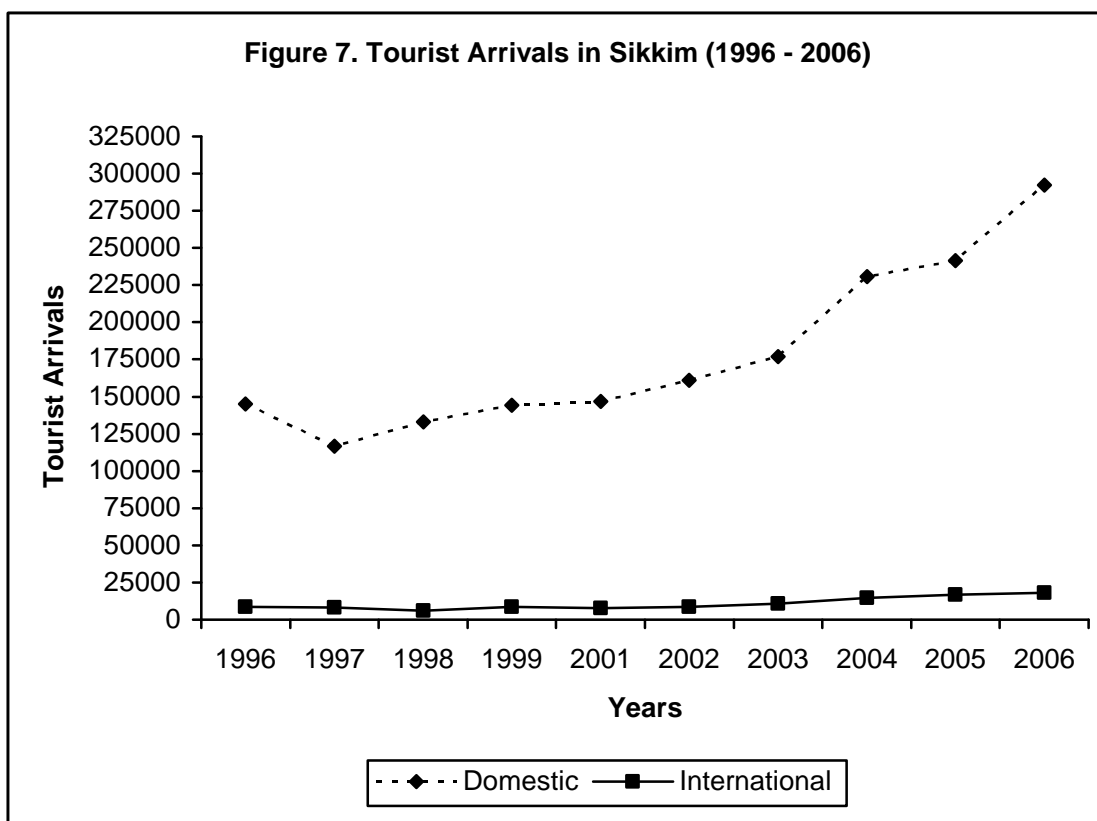
At present, there are more than 135 travel agencies in the state which are engaged to promote tourism in Sikkim. Besides these travel agencies, the state government has introduced tourism as a vocational subject in schools for the sake of educating the young generation about tourism and its importance.

**Table 7. Domestic and International Tourist Arrival in Sikkim (1996-2006)**

Year	Domestic		International		Total	Trend of growth (%)
	No of tourists	Trend of growth (%)	No of tourists	Trend of growth (%)		
1996	145256		8642		153898	
1997	116500	-24.6	8068	-7.1	124568	-23.5
1998	133158	12.5	6111	-32.2	139269	10.5
1999	144203	3.5	8794	2.6	152997	3.4
2001	146923	2.0	7757	-13.3	154680	1.0
2002	160789	8.6	8539	9.1	169328	8.6
2003	176759	9.0	10926	21.8	187685	8.0
2004	230719	2.3	14646	25.4	245365	23.5
2005	241697	4.5	16827	13.0	258524	5.0
2006	292486	17.3	18026	6.6	310512	16.7

*Source: Sikkim Tourism, Govt. of Sikkim, 2007.*

From the above table it is clear that the arrival of domestic tourist is notably higher than the international tourists in Sikkim. In terms of domestic tourist arrival, there is drastic decrease in the number of tourists in the year 1997 than that of previous. Beside these, the rest of the years shows the positive figures in the case of domestic tourist arrival in the state. While in the case international tourist arrival, the trend of arrival decreased drastically in the years 1997, 1998 and 2001. Especially in the year 1998, the trend of international tourist arrival has been decreased by -32.2%. It was so, due to the cause of Kargil conflict broke out between India and Pakistan during the year in which it influenced especially the transport networks in terms of security especially in Northern India. The trend of domestic and international tourist arrival in the last ten years (1996-2006) has been increased at the averages of 4% and 5.4% respectively. Overall, the trend of tourist arrival in the state has been increased at an average of 6 percent annually (Figure 7).



#### 4.5 Perspective of Tourism Development in Uttarey-Singalila Region

During 1996-97, the state government has taken an initiative to implement of tourism development programme in Uttarey village. Before this, only the local people from the adjoining villages used to visit this area for picnic, holiday recreation, enjoy the natural beauty of the area, etc. The arrival of domestic and international tourists were negligible during those days. Presently it is considered as one of the uprising tourist destination in the state.

Realizing the interest of visiting to Uttarey village by domestic and international tourists, a team consisting of officers from tourism department and the wildlife division of the forest department of Sikkim conducted a Route survey of the Singalila trail from Uttarey village along the western border between Sikkim and Nepal in 1996. Their main objectives were to investigate the feasibility of promoting the trek route as high altitude adventure trekking trail to link up with the Dzungri trail. Consequently, the government realized the importance of the area and started to take initiative to develop tourism in this area in an eco-friendly manner.

Geographically, Uttarey area is a hill station having an attitude of 2000m. The area is rich in natural and cultural diversities. Within Uttarey village there are interesting spots to visit-like Buddhist monastery, Hindu temples Mangheem, several natural lakes, serpentine streams and waterfalls as well as dense rhododendron forests around the villages and Singshore Bridge (the second highest bridge in Asia). Besides these, Uttarey village is take up point for trekking to Singalila Range which is one of the notable trekking sites in West Sikkim. Recently, the Singshore bridge has been selected as the site for Bungee jump. It is going to be started quite sooner (<http://gopelling.com/changay%20falls.htm>).

The different culture and traditions of different communities as Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Bhutia, Lepcha, etc. also presents the fragrance of tourism in this area. Historically, it had also enjoyed a strategic location for Sikkim-Nepal war during 1788-89. During the war, Nepalese army under the leadership of the Gorkha General Jaharsingh penetrated from Chiwabhangyang (the only pass in the study area) and attacked on Sikkim and captured the areas upto river Tista (Dhamala, 1983).

As mentioned earlier, the treaty of Titalia was signed under the arbitration of British East India company in 1817 in which the former territories which the Nepalis captured were restored in Sikkim. After that, the British government constructed a stone-paved trail from Namchi south Sikkim upto Darjeeling via Uttarey village and Chiwabhanjyang following the razor edged hill of Singalila Range along the Indo-Nepal border in west Sikkim.

The governmental departments as well as several non-government agencies have been working for the sake of promoting Uttarey area as an eco-tourism destination. It has been developed as a base camp for Singalila trek route too.

#### **4.5.1 Arrivals of Tourist in Uttarey Village**

Both domestic and foreign tourist visit Uttarey for different purposes. The number of domestic tourist arrival has been comparatively high than that of foreign tourists. The table 8 shows that March-May and September-November is the most favourable months for the tourist visit (Table 7). During these months the weather remains pleasant which presents favourable condition for the visitors.

**Table 8. Tourist Arrival at Uttarey Village (2002 - 2005)**

Months	Years														
	2002			2003			2004			2005			2006		
	D	I	Total	D	I	Total	D	I	Total	D	I	Total	D	I	Total
Jan	24	13	47	13	05	18	17	10	27	20	11	31	13	06	19
Feb	20	09	29	18	02	20	31	08	39	27	09	36	37	10	47
Mar	34	16	50	66	21	87	103	42	145	33	16	49	41	05	46
Apr	49	27	76	65	30	95	129	65	194	37	21	58	55	09	64
May	44	21	65	60	49	109	101	39	140	24	07	31	58	13	71
June	11	10	21	22	13	35	36	11	47	24	02	26	29	06	35
July	-	-	-	11	07	18	27	07	34	-	-	-	06	-	06
Aug	-	-	-	08	05	13	06	02	08	08	-	08	-	-	-
Sept	19	06	25	24	19	43	23	12	35	19	-	19	25	03	28
Oct	28	19	57	42	29	71	53	34	87	24	13	37	37	14	51
Oct	16	16	32	79	31	110	32	27	59	30	08	38	33	14	57
Dec	21	05	26	70	23	93	49	13	62	11	-	11	23	05	28
Total	266	142	408	478	234	712	607	270	877	257	87	344	357	85	442
	(65.2)	(34.8)	(100)	(67.1)	(32.8)	(100)	(69.2)	(30.8)	(100)	(74.7)	(25.3)	(100)	(80.7)	(19.2)	(100)

Source: UETDA, Uttarey 2007.

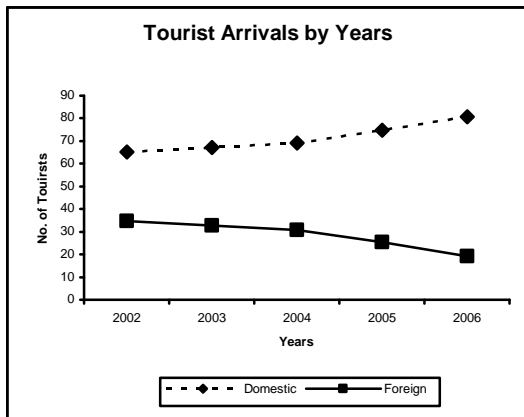
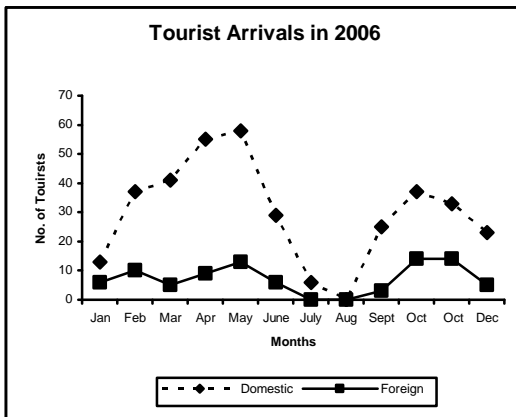
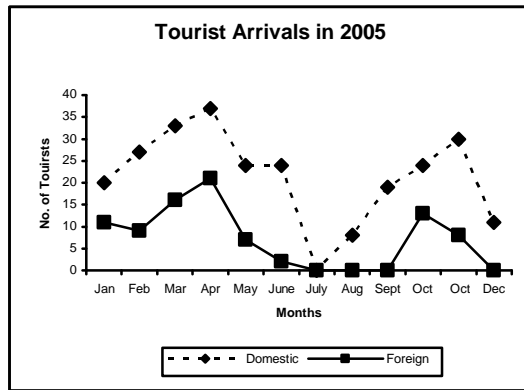
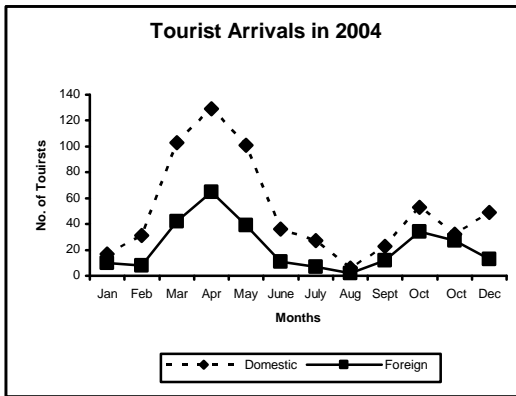
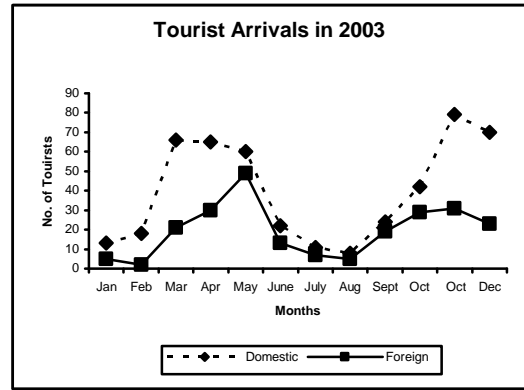
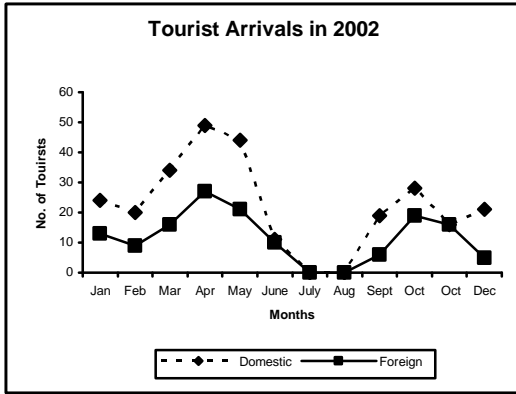
Figures within the parenthesis denote percentage.

D = Domestic Tourists

I = International Tourists

The month from March to May and September to November has been considered as tourist season in Sikkim. However, the above table reflects the dramatic fluctuation of tourist arrival especially in the year 2005 and 2006. Comparatively the arrival of foreign tourists has been decreased notably than that of domestic tourist since 2005. It has been so due to the closure of Uttarey-Singalila trail by Union Home Ministry of India (UHMI) because of the unstable political condition and Maoist insurgency in neighbouring country Nepal.

**Figure 8. Tourist Arrivals at Uttarey Village (2002-2006)**



## **Chapter V**

### **TOURIST RESOURCES, DEVELOPMENT AND FACILITIES IN UTTAREY-SINGALILA REGION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The diversity in natural resources is very attractive for eco-tourism development in Uttarey-Singalila region. The region portrays a rich feature of ecological and cultural diversities. The spectacular beauty, varied landscape features like deep gorges, waterfalls, perennial streams and rivers, wilderness, varieties flora and fauna, alpine meadows, culture-tradition and historical monuments are most appraised factors for tourism in the study area. The area is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity. Every ethnic group have their own culture, tradition, and heritages which dignify their own identity. Hence, Uttarey-Singalila Region is endowed with the diversified natural and socio-cultural resources favourable for the development of tourism in general and eco-tourism in particular.

Uttarey-Singalila region is the most fragile region where the natural heritage can be enjoyed in undisturbed situation. The region is enriched by lots of remarkable tourist spots in which most of them are still remained unexplored and are valuable for developing eco-tourism destination in Singalila trek of West Sikkim. Peters has drawn up an inventory of the various attraction which are of significance in tourism and his five categories are viz. cultural attraction, traditions, scenic features, entertainments and other attraction including climate, health resorts, etc. (cited in Robison 1976; 41).

##### **5.1.1 Cultural Attractions**

This category mainly comprises about the historical building and monuments, archaeological sites, places of historical significance, museums, modern culture, political and educational institutes and religion of the particular areas.

**Plate 1. Glimpses of Some Cultural Attraction**



I. Kagyup Monastery



II. Durga Mandir



III. Buddhist Stupa



IV. Yumasaam Mangheem



V. Uttarey Village



VI. Singshore Bridge

*Source: Field Survey 2007.*



Concerning to this, the study area possess some cultural attraction for the tourists (Plate 1). Kagyup Monastery is one of them. It is a Buddhist monastery of Kagyupa order, built in 1711 A.D. and rebuilt in 1992. This monastery is considered as one of the holiest in the state. It is located on a hill top within Uttarey Village, which commands a magnificent panoramic view of Singalila range in the west and surrounding hills and adjoining villages. Especially the Buddhist followers used to perform meditations and worship during the Buddhist festivals. Durga Temple is another important structured pilgrimage place established in 1986. A small but perennial stream originate from the bottom of the temple and flow towards north (*Uttar*) direction in its initial stage. That's how the village derives its name after this stream. Yumasaam temple is another place of attraction, located beside the Kagyup monastery. Generally the Limbu community from the adjoining areas use to perform *Pujas* to their deity *Yumasaam*. The temple has been considered as the model of Limbu architecture. There is a Trout Hatchery Centre beside the bank of Kalej river on the way to Chiwabhanjang, 30 minutes walk from Uttarey village, where one can enjoy the view of Trout (fish of the Salmon family) rearing centre.

The Government of Sikkim has taken a policy to develop model villages in each constituency of the state. The idea of such villages creation of model village is to develop remote villages with the involvement of government agencies and making the village self-reliant and having all facilities at its disposal ([http://www.sikkiminfo.net/govt/rural\\_development.htm](http://www.sikkiminfo.net/govt/rural_development.htm)). The government has been developing Sopakha Block of the study area as one of the typical model village. The program also aims to preserve the culture and traditions of the local communities as well as protect local art and architecture.

### **5.1.2 Traditional Attractions**

The study area is quite rich in its cultural and linguistic heritage. People from different caste and community mainly indigenous people like Limbu, Rai, Lepcha, Sherpa, Bhutia, possess their own cultural practices and speak their own language. But, they possess harmonize society even having diverse cultural and linguistic background. *Dhaan Naach* of Limbu

**Plate 2. Glimpses of Some Traditional Attraction**



I. Nepali girls in their traditional costume



II. Limboo youths performing *Ke Laang* (Chyabrunge Dance)



III. Lepcha Couple in their traditional costume



IV. Bhutia Girls in their traditional costume



V. Rai women performing Sakela dance



IV. A Local witch-doctor (*Bijuwa*) performing his spiritual mantras

Source: Field Survey 2007.

community, *Udhauli-Ubhauli*, *Sakela* of Kiranti Rai community are source of cultural attraction in the region. Furthermore, *Maruni*, *Ke-Laang (Chyabrung Naach)*, *Damphu Naach*, *Chandi Naach*, *Sangini Naach*, Lepcha Dances, Bhutia Dances, etc. are some more cultural practices that can be observed in various occasion (Plate 2).

The people from different communities celebrate different festivals throughout the year. *Dussehra*, *Deepawali*, *Maghe Sakranti*, *Ramnawami*, *Vishwa Karma Puja*, *Janmastami* are generally observed by the Hindus while the Buddhists celebrate *Lossar*, *Losoong* and *Pang Lhabsol*. Christmas is celebrated with fun and fervor by the Christians. Beside this, *Sakewa* and *Sishekpä Tummyen* has been observed by the Kirant Rai and Limbu communities respectively. Everyone celebrates and enjoys all the festival with great pomp and show which has been remained as a unique feature of the area.

### **5.1.3 Scenic Places**

Scenic beauty is regarded as the primary plus point for a place to become a tourist destination. The physical characteristics of natural features determine scenic quality of the landscape. Identification of the existing attraction is the first priority of tourism development in a region.

The area posses several scenic places of interests but most of them are needed to enhance further for increasing its attraction. *Phoktey Danda*, a tower shaped hill situated between the Chiwabhanjyang and Singalila hill along the Singalila trek is one of the notable site in the region. The views from the top of the hill is something to be cherished and enjoyed at it spans across the majesty heights of the numerous hills of the Himalayan Range including Kanchendzonga. It is a newly identified destination for viewing rising sun. The glowing view of sunrise that can be viewed early in the morning from this hill which provides an immense pleasure to the visitors. *Mainbas waterfall* situated between Uttarey village and Chiwabhanjyang presents a magnificent scenario especially during monsoon. But to facilitate the tourists to savour the pristine beauty and to be with nature, the concern authority's role has been remained negligible towards its enhancement.

**Plate 3: Glimpses of Some Scenic Attraction**



I. Panoramic view of Rising Sun from Phoktey Danda



II. Panoramic view of Kanchandzonga from Singalila



III. Lampokhari



IV. Dud Pokhari



V. Gumpadada Lake



VI. Maienbas Waterfall

*Source: Field Survey 2007.*

Furthermore, the area possess various natural lakes and perennial streams with it. *Gumpadanda Lake*, situated at the foothill within Uttarey village is one of the main attraction in the area. The premises of the lake has become a famous picnic spot for the local visitors. The visitors can enjoy boating and natural beauty of surrounding areas.

Besides, there are number of natural lakes concentrated in the region especially towards north from Chwabhanjyang (the only pass to Nepal from west Sikkim) along the Singalila trek route. The lakes as *Laxmipokhari*, *Lampokhari*, *Majurpokhari*, *Ram-Laxuman Pokhari*, *Dud Pokhari*, *Nir Pokhari*, *Has Pokhari* and *Timbong Pokhari* (in Nepal side), etc. are some of the notable lakes which are renowned attraction for sightseeing in the region. The lakes are considered to be the sacred place for both the Hindus and Buddhists.

Likewise, *Phalut* (Trijunction hill between Sikkim, West Bengal and Nepal), *Singalila hill*, *Chiwabhanjyang pass*, *Tirpain Taar*, *Tikshu Dhaap*, *Nedham Cave*, etc. are other attractive places in the study area.

Similarly, Singshore Bridge is one of the highly attractive place in the study area. It is considered as second highest bridge in Asia. It was built in 1994. This suspension bridge has been built over a deep gorge connecting the study area (Maneybong-Sopakha GPU) with the rest parts of the state. It is more than a thousand feet deep and located at a distance of 4km from Uttarey village. The bridge has been selected for Bungee Jump spot by the tourism department recently. This activity may notably enhance the attraction of the area.

#### **5.1.4 Trekking and Other Adventure Tourism**

The Uttarey-Singalila trek on the razor sharp Singalila Range traverses through Oak forests, Rhododendron forests, Silver Fir forests and Alpine meadows of the Kanchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (KBR) in West Sikkim. It has been remained as a place of prime attraction to foreign and domestic tourists as a trekking destination. The highest point on this route is a known as Singalila hill (3686m) and after which the whole western range of Sikkim is named. From Singalila, one can see Mt. Kanchandzonga towering above and in the distant east the Chola Range. On the west are the rolling hills of Nepal and far below, the Nepalese villages of

Chayangthapu, Panchthar, Sinam, Sadewa, etc. can be distinctly seen. One can view yaks grazing on the green meadows when peeped curiously. Yaks are reared for milk, meat, skin and hair. *Dzo* (Hybrid Yak family) are used for carrying goods.

Generally, March to May and September to November are the best months for the visitors during which the climate normally remains favourable for visitors. During the spring season, one can enjoy the colours of rhododendron and magnolia blossoms over the hilly slopes along the trails which makes the whole environment colourful and lovely.

## **5.2 Accessibility, Accommodation and Amenities**

Being a part of westernmost corner of the state, the study area is accessible by a metalled road upto Uttarey village (see Appendix 4). Generally foot trails and CC footpaths are assessed to most of the places of interest in the area. There are six hotels in the area which provides fooding and lodging facilities for tourists. These hotels provides mainly local and Indian dishes as well as single and double bed room for accommodations. All the hotels are concentrated in Uttarey village because, the village is assessed by a motorable road from where transportation facilities can be grabbed easily.

The six hotels of the study area comprises 44 rooms with the accommodation capacity of 96 persons at a time per night. Out of 44 rooms, 66 percent are double bedrooms and remaining 34 percent are single bedrooms. Out of the total room, only 4.5 percent have Air Condition facility and 63.6 percent rooms have the facility of attached bath. There is no dormitories in the area (Table 9). However, certain facilities of camping also available in the area..

**Table 9. Accommodation Capacity in the Hotels**

Rooms type	AC Room	Non AC Room	Attach Bath	Total
Single Room	2 (4.5)	13 (29.5)	10 (27.2)	15 (34.0)
Double Room	-	29 (66.0)	16 (36.3)	29 (66.0)
Dormitories	-	-	-	-
Total	2 (4.5)	42 (95.4)	28 (63.6)	44 (100)

Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.

Figure within parenthesis denote percentage.

Out of the total hotel surveyed, the proportion of female ownership has been found comparatively low (16.6%) than male ownership (83.3%). All the hotel owners are from the Hindu religion in the area (Table 10).

**Table 10. Ownership of the Hotels by Sex and Religion**

No. Hotels	Sex		Religion		Total
	Male	Female	Hindu	Buddhist	
6	5 (83.3)	1 (16.6)	6 (100)	-	6 (100)
Total	5 (83.3)	1 (16.6)	6 (100)	-	6 (100)

Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.

Figure within parenthesis indicate percentage

On the basis of ethnicity, most (50%) of the hotel owners are from Limbu community. It is followed by Rai (33.3%) and Pradhan (16.6%). The involvement of rest eight local communities has been remained nil in the case of hotel ownership (Table 11).

**Table 11. Ownership of Hotels by Ethnicity**

S.N.	Ethnicity	No. of Hotels	Percentage
1	Limbu	3	50.0
2	Rai	2	33.3
3	Pradhan	1	16.6
Total		6	100.0

Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.

Table 12 reflects about the dishes available in the hotels of Uttarey village. Normally the hotels of the study area serve mainly local and Indian dishes. Sixty percent of the total hotels provides local dishes and the rest 40 percent serves Indian dishes too. During the field survey, it was found that much preference given to the local dishes due to the visitor's interests with enjoying the local flavor rather than other dishes.

**Table 12. Dishes Available in the Hotels**

S.N.	Types of Dishes	No. of Hotels	Percentage
1	Local	3	60
2	Indian	2	40
Total		5	100

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

There are mainly five kind of shops in the study area viz. Grocery, Clothes, FL (liquors) shops, Souvenir and Miscellaneous goods. Of the total shops, maximum number (54%) are of grocery followed by FL shops and Miscellaneous 14.3 percent respectively (Table 13). The maximum concentration of shops are normally in Uttarey village because most of the hotels are concentrated in this area and it is the arrival point of the visitors.

**Table 13. Types of Shops**

S.N.	Shops	No. of Shops	Percentage
1	Grocery	15	53.5
2	FL (liquors) shops	4	14.3
3	Clothes	3	10.7
4	Souvenir	2	7.1
5	Miscellaneous	4	14.3
Total		28	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

As compared to the other shops, souvenir shops have been found comparatively less than others. There are only 7 percent such shops in the study area. It provides mostly the machine made items in which the availability hand made items were quite negligible.



## Chapter VI

### TOURIST ARRIVALS AND THEIR RESPONSES

#### 6.1 Typology of Tourists

Uttarey-Singalila region is famous for its tranquility and natural beauty and is yet relatively less traveled by tourists (<http://www.east-himalaya.com/sikkim/westsouth.htm>).

The area is a newly identified eco-tourism destination and is considered normally remote area of the state in terms of transport and communication facilities. The frequent blockage of the only road to Uttarey especially during the summer generally influence the existing transport network of the area throughout the year. Because of newly developed tourist area secondary data related to tourist arrival is not available sufficiently.

##### 6.1.1 Arrival of Tourists by Types

Being newly introduced eco-tourism destination, only 20 visitors were encountered during the survey period in the study area. Most of the visitors (90%) were Indians (Domestic tourists) by their nationality (Table 14).

**Table 14. Arrival of Tourists by Types**

Types of Tourists		Sex		Total	
		Male	Female	Number	%
Domestic		13	5	18	90.0
International		1	1	2	10.0
Total	No.	14	6	20	100.0
	%	70.0	30.	100.0	

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

The above table show that the arrival of domestic tourist is comparatively higher (90%) than international tourists. Out of the total tourist arrival, the majority (70%) were males (Table 14).

### 6.1.2 Tourist by Age, Sex and Religion

According to the religion, most of the visitors were the Hindus (90%) followed by the Christians (10%). With referring to the age group, maximum number (45%) of visitors were from 30-45 yrs. followed by 15-30 yrs. (40%) and remaining 15% were from 45-60 years of age group. Similarly, 70 percent of them were male visitor followed by 30 percent females (Table 15). Due to the proximity of West Bengal, the area generally receives Bengali tourists at the maximum.

**Table 15. Tourists by Age, Sex and Religion**

Age Group (in yrs.)	Sex		Religion				Total Tourists		
	Male	Female	Hindu	Muslim	Buddhist	Christian	No.	%	
15- 30	7	1	8	-	-	-	8	40.0	
30- 45	4	5	7	-	-	2	9	45.0	
45- 60	2	-	3	-	-	-	3	15.0	
Total	No.	14	6	18	-	-	2	20	100.0
	%	70.0	30.0	90.0	-	-	10.0	100.0	

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

### 6.1.3 Duration of Tourist Stay

The duration of stay plays vital role for the development of tourism in a particular area. The amount to be spend by the visitors remains more according to their duration of stay. The table below represents the duration of visitor's stay village in the study area.

**Table 16. Duration of Tourist Stay**

Night spend	No. of Visitors	Percentage
1 night	16	80.0
2 nights	4	20.0
More than 2 nights	-	-
Total	20	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

Table 16 clearly reflects that majority (80%) of the visitors had spend one night in the study area. It is followed by 20 percent for a couple of night. No visitors

were encountered during field survey who spend more than 2 nights in the area during their visit.

#### 6.1.4 Tourist Arrival by Purpose

Generally the visits of any individual have their own purposes as it may be personal or social. According to the nature of purpose, majority (55%) of the visitors arrived the area for the sake of sight seeing. Thirty percent of the visitors were for leisure and recreation and only 15% were visited the area to see culture and tradition of the local communities (Table 17).

**Table 17. Purposewise Tourist Arrival**

Purpose of Visit	Tourist	
	Number	Percentage
Enjoy scenic beauty	11	55.0
Culture and tradition	3	15.0
Trekking	-	-
Leisure and recreation	6	30.0
Total	20	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

Most of the visitors responded that they were mainly been the area to see Singshore Bridge (one of the prime Centre of attraction and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest bridge in Asia) as well as to enjoy the scenic natural beauty of the area.

The study area is one of the renowned destinations for Trekking in Sikkim to Singalila trek. But, no one of the visitor encountered for the purpose of trekking during field survey. It may be so due to the trek route was closed after the Central Union Home Ministry objected to the trial passing through Nepal in several places in January 2005. Closed for over two and half years, it has reopened recently with necessary modifications (see Appendix 5).

### 6.1.5 Tourists by Frequency of Visits

The majority (95%) of the visitors were first time visitor in the area. Only 5 percent visitors have visited the area twice. The figure of more than second time visitors have been remained nil (Table 18).

**Table 18: Visitors by Frequency of Visits**

Frequency of Visit	Tourists	
	Number	Percentage
First	19	95.0
Second	01	5.0
Third	-	-
Total	20	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

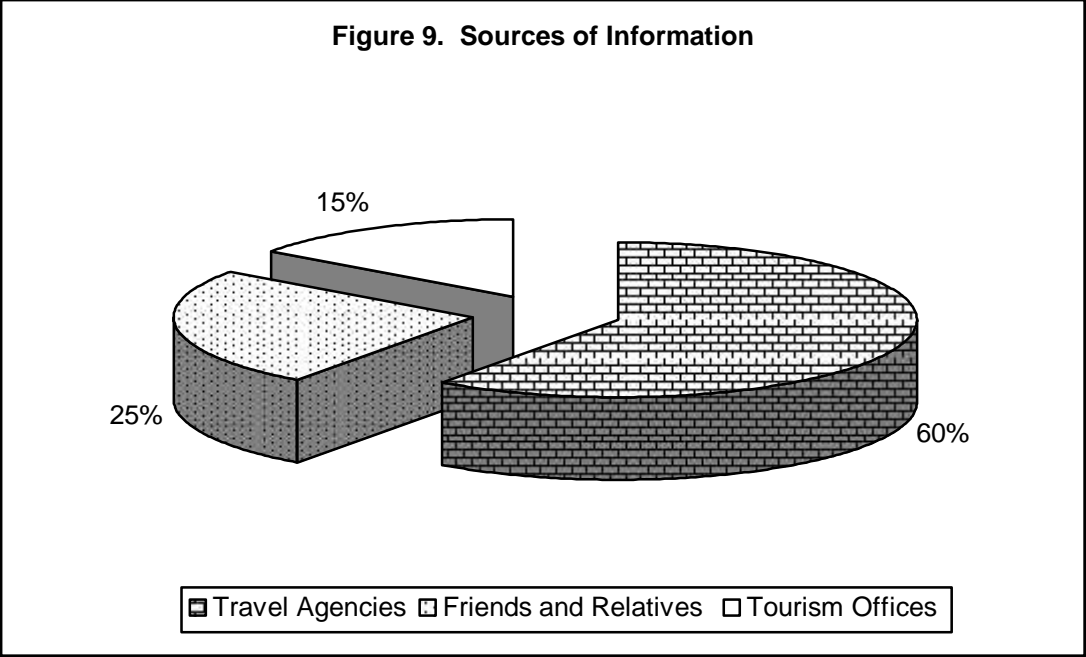
### 6.1.6 Sources of Information to the Tourists

Obviously, the source of information about the particular destinations plays vital role for enhancing the volume of tourist arrival. In this context, it has been found 60 percent of the total visitors got information about Uttarey-Singalila Region from different travel agencies. Likewise, 25 percent of the visitors came to know about the area from their friends and relatives. While 15 percent visitors got information for the same through tourism offices (Table 19). Therefore, it is found that these are the three main sources of information about the area to the visitor's till date.

**Table 19. Sources of Information about Uttarey-Singalila Region**

Sources of Information	Respondents	
	Numbers	Percentage
Travel Agencies	12	60.0
Friends and Relatives	05	25.0
Tourism Offices	03	15.0
Total	20	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007*



**6.1.7 Nature of Expenditure by the Visitors**

It was quite difficult to collect authentic information regarding the expenditure made by the visitors during the study. Tourists are hesitant to disclose nature of their expenditure. Although, attempt has been made to collect the information for the same in terms of percentage. According to this, 65 percent of the total visitors spend their 20-30 percent budget in food and drink items and 35 percent spend 30-40 percent budget in the same item. Cent percent visitors have been found to spend their 20-30 percent budget in accommodation and transportation each. The expenditure made by the visitors in souvenir items has remained comparatively less in which 25 percent of them spend their 5-10 percent budget for the same. All of the visitor's expenditure remained 5-10 percent in other purpose (Table 20).

**Table 20. Expenditure of the Visitors (in percentage)**

Items	Expenditure in Percent					Total
	5-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	>40	
Food & Drink	-	-	13 (65)	07 (35)	-	20 (100)
Accommodation	-	-	20 (100)	-	-	20 (100)
Transport	-	-	20 (100)	-	-	20 (100)
Souvenir	5 (25)	-	-	-	-	5 (25)
Other	20 (100)	-	-	-	-	20 (100)

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

*Figures within parenthesis indicate percentage of the total visitors.*

## **6.2 Perception of the Tourists**

The present study has also attempted to gather the information about the visitor's perception about the area during their visit. For this purpose, some questions were asked to the visitors concerning to their level of satisfaction as well as the necessary improvements to be done in the study area as they felt.

During the course of interview, most of the visitors responded that the area possess high potentiality of eco-tourism development. Out of the total visitors, 20 percent answered about moderate and rest 20 percent were not interested to say anything regarding the same. Most of the visitors were normally satisfied with the facilities available in the area. However, for the further promotion of tourism in the area, 70 percent of them suggested for the enhancement of accommodation by introducing modern facilities in the hotels. This indicates that, the planned development with modern facilities are still lacking in the area.

**Table 21. Tourist's Suggestion for the Improvement of Tourism**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Respondent in %</b>
Communication	17	85.0
Accommodation	14	70.0
Transportation	10	50.0
Trained manpower	07	35.0
Advertisement	05	25.0
Govt.'s policies	03	15.0
Total		100.0

*Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.*

As the table 21 reveals that, 85 percent of the visitors suggested for the improvement of communication facilities in the area. Because of the poor mobile network coverage, they faced the problems for communicating with their relatives in homeland during their stay at Uttarey village. They felt about the lack of internet and fax facilities in the area too. The visitors also felt the lack of sufficient transport facilities. In this matter, 50 percent visitors suggested for the improvement of transport facilities in the area. Similarly, about 35 percent visitors has felt the need of trained manpower in some extent during their course of visit. They also felt the need of proper advertisement about the area. They recommended that the promotional information should be displayed in the key areas for its promotion. Out of the total visitors, 25 percent suggested in favour of the same. Among them, 15 percent suggested that the government's role always remains vital for the development of tourism in such areas so that, active participation of governmental departments also needed for the infrastructural development within the area. They also express their opinions that, the cultural, traditional, scenic and other attraction should be preserve and infrastructures should be enhanced for the promotion of tourism in the area. Furthermore, they suggested that, the local agencies, NGOs and governmental departments should go together for the promotion of tourism in the area.

## **Chapter VII**

### **PHYSICAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM**

#### **7.1 Concept**

Tourism became one of the most desirable and essential activity of the people in modern world, and the cause of tourism varies from person to person and place to place. It has been considered as one of the invisible items of international trade. Generally, it can have social, cultural, ecological, economic and demographic impact on the environment of a particular region (Bisht 1994: 175).

Tourism has both negative and positive impact on nature, society, culture and economy. It may not produce similar type of impact on similar economics, society and ethnic groups, because it basically depends upon the various factors such as time, duration of exposure, nature and number of tourists, historical, socio-cultural, economic and political background of the people. Hence, the nature of impact both negative and positive depends upon the interaction, understanding, relationship, the duration and intensity of contact between the hosts and the guests. So, it is quite complex matter to assess the impact of tourism on the socio-cultural aspects (Poudel 1998: 41).

The present study aims to trace out some physical, socio-cultural and economic impacts brought by the tourism in the study area.

##### **7.1.1 Physical Impact**

It has been found the cases that tourism development in mountain and remote areas also generated some ecological problems like garbage trails, deforestation, disturbances to flora and fauna, over-crowding, congestion, landslides, etc. in several areas around the world. Therefore, tourism demands nature conservation and promotion. Bio-physical assets of the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the people are considered to be the main attractions for tourism. But, there is no such notable negative impact of tourism observed in the study area.



The area is relatively less visited by the tourists. Therefore, the area faced minimal impact on environmental degradation. Negligible garbage trails in certain areas and incomplete alternative road to Uttarey is causing certain soil erosion in the area. The forests of the hill-slopes are protected for the conservation of flora and fauna. Hunting and poaching practices are strictly prohibited since 1998-99 by the state government for sustaining proper fauna life systems in the region. As the state government has implemented the policy of 'Green Mission' all over the state, the activities of afforestation has been practiced periodically in the area for the enhancement and conservation of natural environment.

It is known that without nature, there will be no tourism. Therefore, the above activities can be considered as positive impacts which also assist for fostering tourism in the study area. Besides, no water, air and noise pollution have been observed during the course of survey. The concept of hygiene and sanitation has been develop among the people. So, the study area can be considered as a fresh spot in terms of natural and socio-cultural resources of tourism in the state.

### **7.1.2 Socio-cultural Impact**

The first appearance of tourism in the world had a socio-cultural motivation and it stood as a unique vehicle for cultural exchange, which is necessary for the deeper understanding among the people of the world (Bhist, 1994: 186). Therefore, it must not only be regarded as a business promotion in the world, but also a medium by which people can know, understand and cooperate each other which plays a vital role for maintaining peace.

As the tourists visits the area, cultural and social exchanges as well as technological interactions take place among the individual. It has been mentioned earlier that, apart from the positive impacts of tourism, it may brought certain undesirable influences on the socio-cultural environment of the host communities.

During the course of field survey, most of the respondents answered that there is positive impact of tourism in the study area. It has been found that most of the old houses especially in Uttarey village converted to RCC structure aiming at to attract more tourists to them for stay. In this case, some of the traditional houses are also replaced by modern houses in the area. With due course of time, most of the houses of

the settlements reflect a drastic change in the traditional architectural design and building materials. The state government has taken an initiative to develop Sopakha Block as a model village recently. It comprises four villages viz. Sopakha, Lingay, Kumuk and Sepi. The traditional houses of the area has been preserved and the new houses of Nepali model has been built in concrete structure.

It has been observed that cultural exchange of habits, behaviour and ways of life among host and guest take place in some extent. It also brought consciousness about the value of education and social relations with each other in day to day life among the locals.

The area is mostly visited by the domestic tourists. Therefore, most of the younger generations are found of enjoying Bollywood songs. The growth of tourism has led to the improvement in living styles and standard of the local people in some extent. With the assistance of local agencies, NGOs and governmental authorities, the local communities have started to preserve their art, culture and traditions for maintaining their own socio-cultural identity.

### **7.1.3 Economic Impact**

It has been said that tourism is the greatest employment generator. It provides an opportunities to the local people to use the amenities specially made for tourists which includes hotels, travel agencies, guiding activities, pottering, etc.

Hotels are some existing service sector in the study area. Especially during the peak tourist season, the demand of agricultural products such as vegetables, milk, egg, meat, ghee, cheese, etc. increases notably which is supplied from local production for which, the local people enjoys the profits. But the number of hotels seems relatively less in the area as compared to the other places. There is more than a hundred porters in the area but the number of trained tourist guides and cooks are comparatively very low.

Tourism has become a seasonal activity in the area. Most of the unemployed individuals directly or indirectly involves in tourism during peak seasons. But, they must remain unemployed especially during the off season. The villagers felt the shortage of labour especially during the peak agricultural seasons in some extent. Due

to the strict rule and regulation implemented for the sake of environment conservation, it has been found that most of the local herdsmen have compelled to give up their traditional occupation of cattle rearing so far. The reserved forests are considered as the restricted area for practicing such activities within the state since 1998-99.

Tourism also brought certain changes in land use pattern and land value in the area. Few families have converted their food crop land to cash crop land. Some families have increased vegetable farming in their kitchen gardens and greenhouse sheds. After designation as eco-tourism site, land value has increased drastically in the area.

Overall, tourism has brought positive economic impact in the study area either being a seasonal activity in nature.

Nevertheless, to compare the positive and negative impacts of tourism in the study area, the positive impacts of tourism are notably higher than the negative ones (Table 22). Following framework has been taken into consideration in evaluating the impact of tourism in the study area.

**Table 22. Impact of Tourism Assessment**

Attributes	Nature of Impact	
	Positive	Negative
Physical Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eco-tourism brought environmental consciousness among the people.</li> <li>▪ Importance of scenic landscape, flora and fauna being realized.</li> <li>▪ Awareness about pollution being improved.</li> <li>▪ Concept of hygiene and sanitation among the people improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Negligible garbage trails in some areas.</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural exchange between local people and tourists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural imitation of tourists by local youths in some</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness on education</li> <li>▪ Preservation of local cultural, tradition and architectures.</li> <li>▪ Cordial relation among the people.</li> <li>▪ Exposure of the local people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ extent.</li> <li>▪ Substitution old traditional houses by RCC houses.</li> <li>▪ Concentration of tourists in particular sports resulting in scarcity of facilities in some extent.</li> </ul>
Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seasonal income source to locals.</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure improvement.</li> <li>▪ Improvement in landuse pattern.</li> <li>▪ Demand in agricultural products.</li> <li>▪ Utilization of barren lands and open meadows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem of unemployment during off season.</li> <li>▪ Increase in land value.</li> <li>▪ Lack of labour during peak agricultural season.</li> </ul>

## 7.2 Perception of the Local People

A sample survey of 63 local people was conducted during the study to trace out perception of the local people on tourism. According to their responses, tourism in the area is still crawling at its initial phase as compared to the other sites of the state. As compared to the other places, tourist flow in the area has remained comparatively low. The local entrepreneurs stated that, due to the operation of package tours from Pelling (a renowned tourists destination of West Sikkim), most of the tourists visits the areas as one day visitor. It has become one of the influencing factor for flourishing tourism in some extent.

During the course of interview, more than 60 percent of the local respondents mentioned very 'good' about future tourism in the area and about 36 percent responded in favor of 'normal' future. Only 3 percent stated miserable future tourism in the area. It clearly shows that, the majority of the local people hope for the highly sound tourism in the area in future. It has been observed that, the state government has taken some initiatives to develop the area as a touristic destination, but delayness in action caused certain dissatisfaction among the people. In this context; out of the total respondents, 59 percent mentioned that the government role, towards tourism development in the area remained normal followed by 24 percent in favor of very good and remaining 17 percent for miserable. As eco-tourism is one of the best

available option for environmental conservation and local development, local agencies and NGO's role has remained quite vital in the area. Forty-three percent of respondent marked that their role is very good for the promotion of tourism in the area followed by 46 percent normal and around 11 percent stated miserable. Without the support and cooperation of the local people the government and NGOs alone might be unable to promote tourism at any region. Therefore, the study also attempts for tracing the level of perception about people's participation in tourism activities. Among them, 62 percent stated that the people's participation in tourism has remained normal. Around 14 percent mentioned for good participation and remaining 17.4 percent stated that the people's participation in tourism is quite miserable in the area. So, it can be assess that the people's participation towards tourism in the study area is normal. Tourists are the integral part of tourism. The development of tourism generally depends upon the volume of tourist arrival in a particular area. In this matter, about 68 percent of the total respondent has considered the arrival of tourist is normal, 14 percent considered it very good while more than 17 percent of them considered that the number of tourists arrival in the area is miserable (Table 23).

Therefore, most of the respondent suggested that, the local communities, local agencies, NGO, INGOs and Government should go together for the drastic promotion of tourism in the study area.

**Table 23. Local People Responses to Tourism Activities**

S.N.	Attribute	Level of Perception		
		Very Good	Normal	Miserable
1	Future tourism in the study area	38 (60.3)	23 (36.5)	2 (3.2)
2	Government's role	15 (24.0)	37 (59.0)	11 (17.4)
3	Local agencies and NGO's role	27 (43.0)	29 (46.0)	7 (11.1)
4	People's participation	15 (24.0)	39 (62.0)	9 (14.2)
5	Tourist arrival	7 (11.1)	43 (68.2)	13 (20.6)

Source: Field Survey, Oct. 2007.

Figures within parenthesis denote the percentage.

### 7.3 Tourism and its Associated Problems

In order to ensure the community benefits from the tourism sector, the local people are organized themselves forming the group as Uttarey Eco-Tourism Development Association (UETDA) and Sopakha Samaj Kalyan Samiti (SSKS). These local agencies basically play the role for operating as well as conducting tourism activities in the area. Orientation and awareness programmes conducted frequently by these local agencies in the local level with the assistance of various concerned NGOs and Governmental Departments.

There is an open wetland (*Bhojoghari* in local term) right in front of Uttarey village at which the state Government has projected to develop an artificial lake since a decade before. But, negligible course of action have been taken for the same.

Despite a lot of potentialities, development of tourism in the area is not so satisfactory to the date. The state government has identified Uttarey-Singalila region as one of the tourism destination in West Sikkim for trekking, adventure and village tourism.

The existing NGOs, GOs and local communities have not been launching their activities effectively and successfully in tourism sector in the region. There has been found several factors responsible to hinder the smooth development of tourism in the area. Lack, tourist information centre in the area, inadequate travel agencies, Singshore landside which frequently blocked the only existing road to Uttarey especially during rainy days, lack of trekkers huts and resting sheds along the Uttarey-Singalila trek, unfavorable climatic condition during summer and winter seasons throughout the year, slow implementation of departmental plans and policies, etc. are the hindering factors in the region towards the smooth development of tourism in the region. The newly constructed alternative road to Uttarey from Dentam Bazar is in a very critical state. It has brought the problem of soil erosion in some extent. Need of sufficient accommodation, transport and communication facilities are highly felt in the area. Internet and fax services are nowhere in the scenario of the region. The travel agents, accommodation personnel and other who come in contact with the tourists are not properly trained to explain about the region's attractions, routes, country culture, history, geography, etc. Tourists requires some of the facilities like clothing, food, area maps, cooks, helpers, campsite facilities, recreation parks, etc. But these are utterly lacking. Such under developed structure of tourism is common in entire study area.

## Chapter VIII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Summary

Tourism as a smokeless industry is regarded as one of the fastest growing industry in the world. It opens the doors of various opportunities, but simultaneously it may also bring some problems for environment, societies and the economy. Coupled with the resurgence of the environment ethic, the concerns about mass tourism has been linked to the denigration of important natural environment and consequently the new form of tourism as 'alternate-green tourism' or 'eco-tourism' came into being. The term "alternate tourism" has evolved as a popular counter response to the emphases on consumerism especially in developing countries. During these days, the value of eco-tourism has been increasing vigorously since it provides justice for the environmental aspects, social concerns and issues of sustainability.

In this context, the present study aimed explore the prospects and trace out the problems of eco-tourism development in Maneybong-Sopakha Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU), Uttarey Singalia Region of West Sikkim. It also aimed to asses some physical, socio-cultural and economic impact of tourism in the study area. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary information has been collected, by using the research tools like questionnaire, interview, observation and key informants survey. Whereas, the secondary information were collected from the various research papers or reports, books, articles, published on different journals and newspapers, texts from library and records of various concerned offices.

The study area is situated at the western corner of the hilly state Sikkim. Its elevation ranges from 2000m upto 4530m and occupies a small area of Singalila Range touching the Indo-Nepal border in West Sikkim. The area is topographically rugged and uneven surface comprising numerous gorges and canyons forming complex valleys and quite rural environment in nature. The area enjoys Temperate to Sub-Alpine type climate.

The history of Sikkimese tourism can be classified into the two phases. During its first phase, the colonialization in India by the different European countries viz. Portugal, France and England played certain role to flourish the concept of tourism



development in Sikkim. Tibetan Lamas as well as Indian saints also used to visit Sikkim during those days. The matrimonial relation of Sikkimese King with American lady further catalyzed to flourish the tourism in the state. The second phase of Sikkimese tourism started after its merging with Indian federation in 1975. Tourism in Sikkim had been promoted formally only after forming the democratic government in the state. The year 1990 has been considered as a milestone in the history of tourism development in the state in which the government actively played a vital role towards tourism development and its conservation in the state. Consequently, tourism became one of the leading source of foreign exchange in the state.

Among different tourism destination in the state, Uttarey Singalila Region was formally considered as one of an uprising destination of the state since 1996. The region mainly known for trekking.

The arrival of tourists in the study area notably decreased during the years of 2005-2006 than its previous years. It was so due to the closure of Uttarey-Singalila trek route by Union Home Ministry of India keeping in view about the unstable political condition as well as Maoist insurgency in neighbouring country Nepal.

Natural resources is very diversified, suitable and attractive for eco-tourism development in Uttarey-Singalila region. The region portrays a rich feature of ecological and cultural diversities but they are quite fragile which can be enjoyed only in undisturbed situation. The area is also rich in cultural and ethnic diversity. Therefore, the diversified natural and socio-cultural resources seems much favourable for the development of eco-tourism in the area.

The study area is accessed by a metalled road upto Uttarey village. Trails and footpaths interconnect different places of the area. There are six hotels in the study area which comprises of 44 rooms with the capacity of 96 persons per night. Certain camping sites are also available for the tourists. All the hotels are concentrated in Uttarey village because the village is accessible by a motorable road from which transportation facilities can be grabbed easily.

The area is a newly identified for eco-tourism destination and is yet relatively less visited by tourists. It is found that the majority (55%) of visitors arrive the area

for the sake of sight scene and 15 percent of them for observing culture and trekking. Likewise, the arrival of domestic tourists is comparatively higher (90%) than international tourists (10%). Out of the total visitors, 70 percent of them were males and 30 percent females in which majority (90%) of them were from Hindu and remaining 10 percent Christians. Only 5 percent of them reported to have visit twice to the area.

Tourists were hesitant to disclose their expenditure during the visit. They spend limited amount of money in the area. Sixty five percent of them spend 20-30 percent budget in food and drink items. Only few of visitors spent (5-10%) in souvenir and other purpose. Majority (60%) of them got information about the area through travel agencies and few (3%) through tourism offices.

Most of the visitors were normally satisfied with the facilities available in the area. Although, majority (85%) of the visitors suggested for the improvement of communication facilities in the area. Likewise, 70 percent suggested for the enhancement of accommodation by introducing modern facilities in the hotels. Few (15%) of them suggested for the active participation of the governmental authorities needed for the infrastructural development in the area.

The area is relatively less visited by the tourists and has faced minimal impact on environmental degradation. The social behaviour and activities of the local people has been changing slowly after the designation the area as eco-tourism site. It has become a good source of income for the locals. Most of the local respondents suggested that, the local communities, local agencies, NGOs, INGOs and Government should work side by side for the drastic promotion of tourism.

The state government has identified Uttarey-Singalila region as one of the tourism destination in West Sikkim especially for trekking, adventure and village tourism. Despite a lot of potentialities, development of tourism in the area is not so satisfactory to the date. Although, majority (60%) of the local people hope for highly sound tourism in future.

## **8.2 Conclusions**

Tourism is the main source of income for the economic development of the developing countries. Thus special emphasis should be given to such fastest growing industry. In this context, the prospects for tourism in Sikkim still remain bright when sustainable tourism is promoted in the blend of eco-tourism. The development of eco-tourism in the state is strategically much more important owing to its physical setting and socio-cultural assemblages.

Uttarey-Singalila region is a rural area generally having high potential for tourism, but its development is not so satisfactory. Generally, tourism activities are operated only at Uttarey village rather than other adjoining villages. Lack of proper publicity, motivation and interests among the locals can be regarded as a catalyst towards the promotion of tourism in the area.

Due to the difficult topography, deficient mineral resources and fragile ecosystem are not so suitable for heavy industries and even agriculture. A graphite mine has been identified at *Chittrey Taar* on the way to Chiwabhanjyang many years before. But such mining is neither economically sound nor ecologically viable. Nevertheless, numerous rolling hills, mountain chains, open valleys, frothy-foamy streams, waterfalls, natural lakes, varied flora-fauna and wide meadows are the great attraction of the area. Through these natural resources, it can be acquired large social, economic and geographic benefits. Apart from the identified attractions, there are many things yet to be identified and publicized. Rich potentials for paragliding, wildlife watching, rock climbing, etc. are existing. With proper research, planning and resource management these potentials can be converted into finest tourism attraction in the region.

Infrastructure of the region is improving, though, it could not reach up to the required standard. Extension of roads are under process. Accommodation facilities are concentrated only at Uttarey village, but the house keeping is not up to the standard. Campsites are yet to be developed at several places. Facilities can be added in the name of recreation and entertainment. To boost the tourist industry and regional economy local handcraft, small and cottage industries have to be developed. Scarcity of drinking water supply along the trekking trail, trekkers huts, banking facilities (ATMs, etc.), medical facilities, transportation, internet facilities, etc. have been felt.

So, proper thinking, planning and action would provide sustainable development of eco-tourism in the region.

Although, tourism is totally seasonal activity in the area, its activities are increasing. Local people are getting jobs. Due to the closure of Uttarey-Singalila trek in 2005, there was gradual decrease in tourist arrival mostly foreigners. But it has opened recently after 2½ years of its closure (see Appendix 5). So, it can be hope for the drastic increase in the volume of both domestic and international tourists in the study area. To compare the positive and negative impacts of tourism, the positive impacts of tourism are notably higher then negative ones. Development of model village may further widens the door of village tourism in the study area. Likewise, consciousness about sustaining the socio-cultural heritage as resources not only for the present generation but for the future generation need to be inculcated. So, strong and effective steps towards conservation should be taken by the people and for the people which may lead the region towards sustainable development.

### **8.3 Recommendations**

The present study generally aimed to appraise the eco-tourism development in Maneybong-Sopakha Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU), Uttarey-Singalila region of West Sikkim. On the basis of this empirical study, following recommendations are proposed for the development of tourism in general and eco-tourism in particular.

- Proper motivation, education, training and encouragement towards the promotion of tourism should be given to the local people. Tourism education is most necessary for the tourist and local resident alike.
- In order to promote the study area wide publicity and information about the tourism activities, various constructive works should be done. More attractive and clear promotional materials like books, booklets, magazines, brochures, pamphlets, and audio-visual materials should be produced and distributed properly to the major tourist generating regions. Publicity should be made at international level through different popular international travel trade magazines, journals and internet.
- Both private and public sector should spend the desired amount of budgets for its marketing in order to enhancing its promotion. Participation of private

entrepreneurs and other funding agencies should be approached and encouraged.

- Co-operation and coordination among the various agencies such as Forest and Wildlife Department, PWD, RDD, tourism, power department and regional administrative authorities, etc. is essential for speedy, smooth and healthy development of tourism.
- Control of negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects of tourism should be given special attention and priority. Flora, fauna and open meadows should be protected and properly used for tourism. Effective measures should be taken to prevent in the case of soil erosion and landslides.
- There should be the provision of legal strict punishment in case of any individual finding the involvement in drug abuse, crime and prostitution, etc.
- The government should pay more functional attention and initiate strong action and polices to address and flourish the significant sector tourism in Uttarey-Singalila Region for its overall development.
- Local/national fairs and festivals, religious celebrations, yoga, meditation and other spiritual activities should be promoted for the sake of interaction between host and guest. It may be a good opportunity for the locals to expose between guests.
- Ticketing facilities (Air, Rail, etc.) and systematic regular transportation should be introduced for encouraging guest's desires. Good communication facilities (mobile, internet, fax, etc.) are the basic necessities for every individuals in this modern world. So, proper attention should be given towards the same.
- Participation of the local people leads to the effective and authentic conclusions of the discussions during the period of decision making. Therefore, the concerned authorities should not be neglected the locals participation in decision making and implementation hours.



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<http://www.sikkimpr.org/GENEARL/PEOPLE/PEOPLE.HTM> (05 March 2008, 11:30am)

[http://www.sikimpr.org/GENERAL/about\\_sikkim/SIKKIM.HTM](http://www.sikimpr.org/GENERAL/about_sikkim/SIKKIM.HTM) (05 March 2008, 12:05pm)

<http://www.asianepal.com/sikkim.html> (20 April 2008, 05:30pm)

**Appendix 1**

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU  
(Academic Research)**

**Socio-economic Survey**

**Eco-Tourism in Maneybong-Sopakha Gram Panchayat Unit, Uttarey-  
Singalila Region, West Sikkim**

**A Household Survey**

**A. Background Information**

1. Respondent's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Village/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Ward No.

\_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion :

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Details of the household members :-

S.N.	Name	Age	Sex	Relation with Hh head	Educational Status	Marital Status	Occupation
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							

3. How do you feel about the tourism activities in this region ?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How many members from your family are involved in tourism activity ?

- 
5. Please specify the member of your family who are involved in tourism activity:

	No. of involvement		Age
	Male	Female	
Tourist guides			
Porters			
Operating lodge			
Operating hotel			
Others			

6. Can you tell me about the initiation/initiator of tourism activities in this region?

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7. Have you noted any socio-economic and cultural impact of tourism ?

Positive impacts	Negative impacts

8. Do you noticed any change in the trend of tourist's arrivals in this region within the last 5 years?

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**B. Energy Sources and Consumption:–**

- Firewood : a) Fetch from nearby forest [ ]  
b) Fetch from own land [ ]  
c) Purchase from local people [ ]
- Monthly consumption of firewood: \_\_\_\_\_ per months

3. Monthly consumption of kerosene for domestic purposes: \_\_\_\_\_  
ltrs/m
4. Monthly consumption of LP gas : \_\_\_\_\_  
cylinder/months
5. Monthly consumption of electricity: \_\_\_\_\_  
units/months
6. Is there any change regarding the consumption fuel  
(firewood/kerosene/ LP gas) in your village during last ten years:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you noticed any adverse impact of eco-tourism in the local  
environment ? If yes, please specify :  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What measures should be taken of for the conservation of  
environment in this region ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Perception of Local People**

1. Would you like the arrival of large number of tourists in this region ? Why ?

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2. How do you perceive the existence of Uttarey-Singalila trek route in this reason ? Why ?

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3. Are you in support of the programmes for promoting eco-tourism in this region ?

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4. Are you facing any problems after the development of eco-tourism in this area ? If yes, please specify ?

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5. What is your opinion about the future tourism in this region ?

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6. What are the major obstacles that generally disturb the tourism activity in this region ?

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7. Is the government's programme and policies are sufficient to develop eco-tourism in this region ?

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- 
8. Do you have any suggestions regarding the development of ecotourism in this region ?

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***Thank You Very Much***

**Appendix 2**  
**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**  
**CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**  
**KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU**  
**(Academic Research)**

**Eco-Tourism in Maneybong-Sopakha Gram Panchayat Unit, Uttarey-Singalila Region, West Sikkim**

**Questionnaire for the Tourists**

Place:

.....

Date:

.....

1. General Information :

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: -

\_\_\_\_\_

Age : \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation :

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How did you come to know about the Uttarey-Singalila trek route of West-Sikkim ?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Visit :

a) First [ ] b) Second [ ]

c) Third [ ] d) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the main purpose of your present visit ?

a) Sight Seeing [ ] b) Trekking [ ]

c) Research study [ ] d) Cultural tour [ ]

e) If others, please specify; .....

5. How long do you remain in this area ?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your opinion regarding the hospitality in the hotels of this area ?

a) good [ ] b) moderate [ ] c) poor [ ]

Any

suggestions:

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7. What makes you more satisfied in your visit in this area ?
- a) Scenic beauty [ ]      b) Culture and tradition [ ]
- c) Trekking [ ]      d) Leisure, recreation and holidays [ ]
- e) Others : \_\_\_\_\_
8. Place of stay;
- i) Hotel and similar establishment [ ]
- ii) Private tourism recommendation [ ]
- iii) Any others; .....
9. How much do you expend for visiting this area ? (Expenditure in % of the total budget)
- a) Accommodation [ ]      b) Food and drink [ ]
- c) Transport [ ]      d) Souvenir [ ]
- e) Other expenditure [ ]
10. Would you like to visit again ?
- a) Yes [ ]      b) No [ ]
- Reason: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Are you satisfied with the dealings of the guides, hotel/lodge owners as well as local people ?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you faced any garbage problems during your visit ? If yes, please mention your suggestions for the same ?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
13. Is there any other problems existing along the trek route ? Please mention and suggests ?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



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14. In your opinion what are the major improvement needed in each of the following for further improvement of eco-tourism in this area ?

- a) Accommodation/Hotels [ ]                      b) Transportation [ ]  
] ]
- c) Trained manpower [ ]                      d) Communization services [ ]  
] ]
- e) Government policies [ ]                      f) Advertisement [ ]  
] ]
- g) Any suggestions:

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15. What do you think about the future tourism in this region ?

- a) Highly sound [ ]                      b) Moderate [ ]  
c) Not so good [ ]                      d) Any suggestions :

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16. Do you have any suggestions for the further promotion of the eco-tourism in this region ?

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*Thank You Very Much*

### Appendix 3

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**  
**CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**  
**KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU**  
**(Academic Research)**

**Socio-economic Survey**

**Eco-Tourism in Maneybong-Sopakha Gram Panchayat Unit, Uttarey-  
Singalila Region, West Sikkim**

**Questionnaire for Hotel Owners**

1. Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Sex : Male :

Age :

Female :

Edn. Qualification :

Other Occupation :

2. Details about rooms and beds of the hotel.

Room type	No. of rooms	AC room	NAC room	Attached Bath
Single room				
Double room				
Dormitories				
Total				

AC = Air condition

NAC = Not air condition

3. Facilities in the hotel:

a) Room service

b) Television

c) Telephone

d) Internet

e) Running hot & cold water

f) Refrigerator

g) Other facilities: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Details about the tourists stayed last year:

Month	No. of tourists		Total No. of Tourists
	Domestic	International	
Jan			
Feb			
Mar			
Apr			
May			
June			
July			
Aug			
Sep			
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			

5. Suggestion and comments for the development of eco-tourism in this area.

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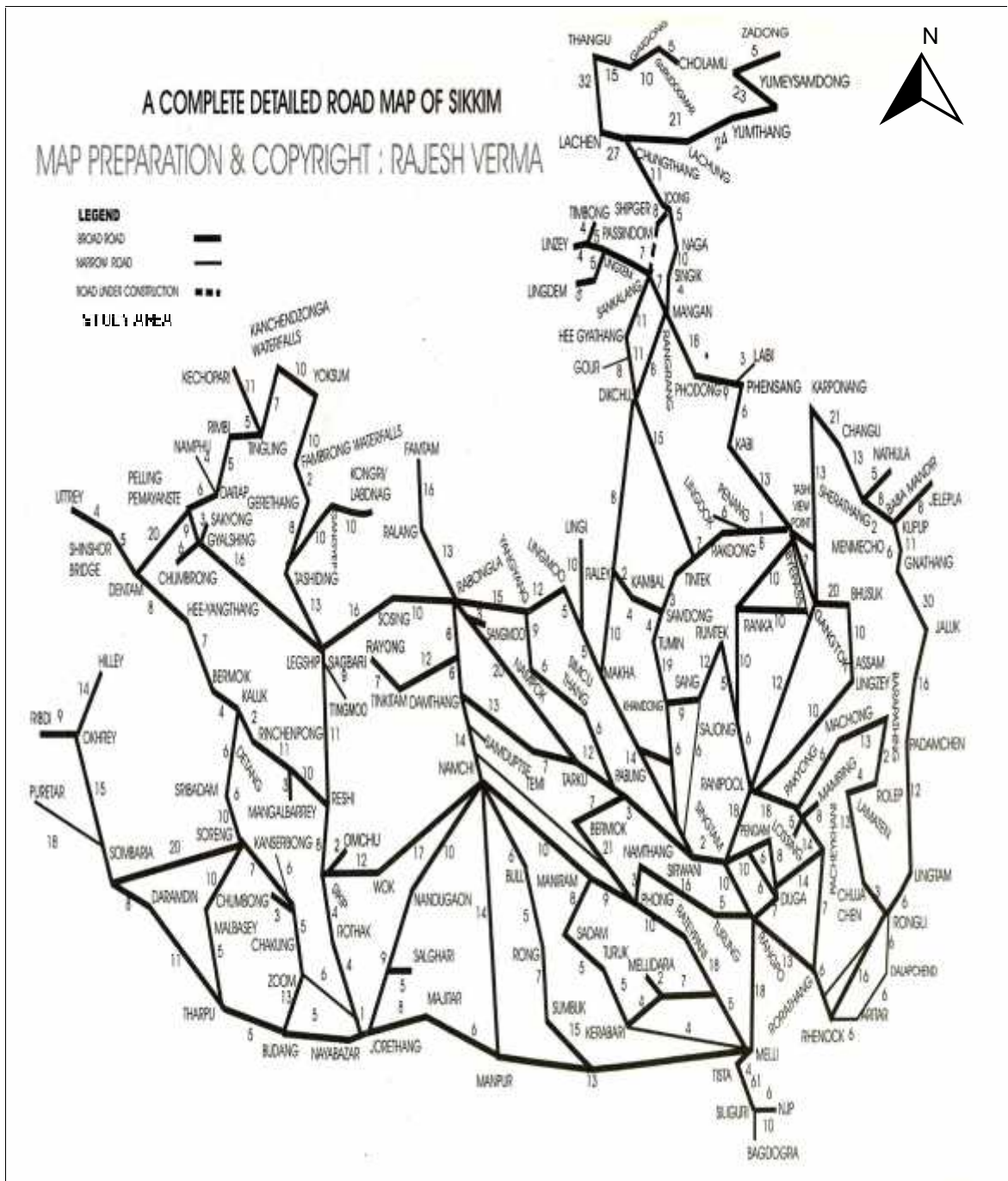
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*Thank You*

# Appendix 4



Source: Verma 2007:90.

## Appendix 5

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Singalila trek in Sikkim reopened with changes



Gangtok, Nov. 13: Closed for over two-and-a-half years, Sikkim's most famous trekking trail is back in business but with changes in the route.

A 14-member Italian team was the first to follow the Singalila trail in West Sikkim on November 5 after a government notification announced its reopening in October.

The route was closed in January 2005 after the Union home ministry objected to the trail passing through Nepal in several places, including a camp at Nepal Megu. The Centre had then told the Sikkim government to make alterations in the trail so that it did not enter the neighboring country. The state tourism department closed the route for two years to make necessary modifications.

Considered one of the most breathtaking treks in the world, the Singalila trail is at an elevation of more than 3,000m with a view of the Himalayan range, including Mt. Everest and Kanchenjunga.

In June this year, in a bid to find a new and alternative route, a recce was organised. It was led by joint secretary (adventure) B.R. Subba and officials from the state tourism and forest departments, members of the Travel Agents' Association of Sikkim (TAAS) and representatives of Sikkim Association of Adventure Tour Operators.

They identified a new route, which in fact was a very old trail used during the time of the Chogyals, without touching Nepalese territory and recommended it to the government. The amended trek trail also starts at Uttarey with three exit points in Yuksom, Hillay and Nambu-Darap. But the new route takes only 12 days against the earlier 16 days.

"We are very happy that the route has reopened. The people of Uttarey and surrounding areas will benefit since it is always a sold-out trail," said Lukendra Rasaily, TAAS treasurer and managing director of Sikkim Tours and Travels.

The best time for a Singalila trek is from September to November and between April and June.

at 7:32 PM Posted by The Sikkim Times

Labels: sikkim,news,gangtok sikkim, trekking 

*Source: <http://sikkimnews.blogspot.com/2007/11/singalila-trek-in-sikkim-reopened-with.html> (Accessed on 01 March 2008)*