

December 2014

# Precarity and Possibility: On being Young and Indigenous in Sikkim, India

Mabel D. Gergan

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, mgergan@email.unc.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya>

## Recommended Citation

Gergan, Mabel D. (2014) "Precarity and Possibility: On being Young and Indigenous in Sikkim, India," *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*: Vol. 34: No. 2, Article 10.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol34/iss2/10>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/).

This Research Article is brought to you for free and open access by the DigitalCommons@Macalester College at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies by an authorized

---

# Precarity and Possibility: On being Young and Indigenous in Sikkim, India

## **Acknowledgements**

The author is grateful to the National Science Foundation for funding her fieldwork research (2013-14) which contributed to the more recent interviews and material for this article. The author would like to thank the following people for their comments and suggestions on this material: Sara Smith, Pavithra Vasudevan, Mike Dimpfl, Autumn Thoyre, the Geography writing group at UNC-CH, Jenny Bentley and two anonymous reviewers. She is especially grateful to Gina Drew, Mark Turin and Sienna Craig for their helpful advice and endless patience. And most importantly I would like to thank all the young men and women of Dzongu who agreed to be interviewed and those who welcomed her into their homes and their lives.

# Precarity and Possibility: On being Young and Indigenous in Sikkim, India

Mabel D. Gergan

In the last decade the Indian Power Ministry began an aggressive campaign for hydropower development in its ten Himalayan states. Twenty-nine of these dams were commissioned for construction in the small Eastern Himalayan state of Sikkim. In June 2007, Dzongu a protected reserve of the indigenous Lepchas in North Sikkim, became the center of controversy when reserve youth went on a hunger strike against seven dams planned within the reserve. Their protests garnered enough national and international attention to cancel four of the seven dams. However, within the reserve there was very little support for the activists who were seen as educated, upper class youth, most of whom had studied and lived outside the reserve. In this article I narrow the focus on the Dzongu youth and demonstrate how contestations between State and indigenous groups often pry open profound contestations within these groups. In tracing the trajectory

of the Dzongu activists after the protests, I examine how they are redefining indigeneity, beyond and sometimes in conflict with former connotations. I argue that the anti-dam protests became a way for Dzongu youth to question state-led development agendas as well as elders and urban elite who spoke on behalf of the community. Building on literature in indigeneity and geographies of young people, this research draws on my M.A. research (2007-10), two pre-dissertation surveys (2011, 2012) and ten months of fieldwork (2013-2014). The Indian Himalayan region is home to several indigenous groups and is the site of intense geo-political anxiety given its proximity to China and Pakistan. I argue that an attention to young people's political articulations can provide a valuable lens in analyzing the politics of nation building, the politics of difference and the shifting political subjectivities of marginalized groups.

**Keywords:** Hydropower, Lepchas, Sikkim, youth, indigeneity.

## Introduction

The Dzongu reserve, located in the district of North Sikkim, is home to around 5,000 members of the indigenous Lepchas also known as the 'Vanishing Tribe.'<sup>1</sup> For years the reserve had witnessed an out-migration of young people leading to concerns over the cultural and moral dissolution this mobility would cause. Young people's ambivalence about returning to the reserve had strained inter-generational relations within the reserve. But events that unfolded in 2007 saw these young people emerge as "alchemists of the revolution" (Jeffrey 2011: 3), questioning, challenging and reimagining the future of Dzongu as well as their own.

Before 2007, 29 hydropower projects had been planned in Sikkim as part of the Indian Power Ministry's effort to develop the hydroelectric potential of the Himalayan states (Government of India 2008; Dharmadhikary 2008). Seven of these dams were planned to cut across Dzongu. Predictably, this resulted in tensions within the reserve splitting opinions and loyalties but very few could have anticipated what followed next. Dawa and Tenzing, two young men from the reserve both of whom had been educated in Gangtok, the state capital went on a hunger strike which turned into a 915 days long (2007-2010) relay hunger strike. Their protests garnered enough national and international attention to pressure the State Government of Sikkim to cancel four of the seven dams.<sup>2</sup> Amidst celebrations, young activists voiced concerns about their future in a state with limited employment opportunities. Their involvement in these protests had jeopardized any possibility of employment in the highly competitive and coveted government sector (Government of Sikkim 2009). Larger concerns over the fate of the reserve were intimately tied to young people's concerns over their future in a precarious political landscape.

The Lepcha protest raises several pertinent questions around democratic politics, development and the agency of marginalized indigenous groups. Some of these questions have been explored by scholars who have argued for the increased involvement of civil society groups in official politics, highlighting the limits of representative democracy for marginalized communities (Little 2010; Arora 2013). Others have pointed to the elitist and ethnocentric tendencies of such movements since these were educated, upper class indigenous youth, and the resultant polarization this causes between ethnic groups (McDuie-Ra 2011). Acknowledging the contribution of these scholars, I draw in the young people<sup>3</sup> who were part of the movement and place them at the center of this conversation. I argue that the Dzongu Lepchas experience merits a closer examination of the relationship between youth and indigeneity.

There is rich literature within human geography and allied disciplines exploring questions of youth agency (Aitken 2001; Katz 2004; Durham 2008; Jeffrey 2013). Within the Indian context, young people's agency has been approached from the lens of caste, gender, masculinity and temporality (Jeffrey 2001, 2008; Jeffrey et al 2004; Dyson 2008; Jeffrey and Dyson 2008; Smith 2012). However, thus far there has been very little discussion around indigenous youth in the context of environmental movements despite the prominent role played by them in such movements. While several authors have explored indigenous youth activism (Bora 1992; Dutta 1998; Baruah 2002) and environmental movements in the North-Eastern context (Arora 2007; 2008; Karlsson 2009; McDuie-Ra 2011), my work seeks to draw a more explicit connection between the two.

This article builds on two important observations of the anti-dam protests in Sikkim: the protests were led mostly by educated youth from Dzongu and much of the support for the movement came from outside Dzongu and the Lepcha community in Sikkim (McDuie-Ra 2011). Rather than viewing this as the movement's hamartia and one which led to its perceived failure, I draw our attention to the articulations of the Dzongu youth to demonstrate how contestations between State and indigenous groups often pry open profound contestations within these groups. The Lepcha anti-dam protests became a way to question state-led development agendas as well as elders and urban elite who speak on behalf of the community. In these contestations the meaning of indigeneity was and is being redefined by Dzongu youth, beyond and sometimes in conflict with former connotations. Building on literature in indigeneity and geographies of youth, I draw the reader's attention to three ways in which indigeneity and young people's experiences are intimately linked in the Sikkimese context. Firstly, the articulation of indigeneity was tied to young people's contradictory experience of everyday hardships in a sublime<sup>4</sup> landscape. After the protests Dzongu youth promoted the idea of 'return to Dzongu' by presenting it as an exceptional landscape of both spiritual significance and economic potential. Secondly, the discourse of indigeneity that emerged from the Dzongu protests marked a shift from the more institutional discourse that is prevalent in the region that appeals to the state for recognition and benefits. This shift was linked to young people's experience of their community's dependence on the government and their lack of competitiveness with other ethnic groups both of which were understood as effects of racialized and exclusionary state practices. Lastly, the protests and what followed after were an attempt at constructing respectability for young Lepchas, especially men struggling against tropes of the 'lazy native' and 'apathetic youth.'

My research for this article draws on several years of association with the region and these young activists. My mother belongs to the Lepcha tribe and I conducted my M.A. research (2006-2008) and two pre-dissertation surveys (2011, 2012) in Dzongu, wherein I conducted group interviews, an oral history study on inter-generational relations, personal interviews, and household surveys. Most of my interactions have been with young activists from two organizations, Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT) and Concerned Lepchas of Sikkim (CLOS). In most cases I have used pseudonyms except for the more prominent members of the movement. Interviews were conducted in Nepali and English.

### Being Indigenous in India

The term 'indigeneity,' while being rooted in "historically sedimented practices, landscapes and repertoires of meaning" (Li 2000: 151) is itself a fairly recent product of post-war international bodies like the UN and ILO (Karlsson 2003; Castree 2007). It interpolates different indigenous groups situated in distinct histories and territories and is a way of pursuing local, place-based agendas through global means (Radcliffe 1999; Turner 2001; Routledge 2003; Castree 2004; Routledge and Cumbers 2009). Indigenous movements are rooted in struggles over material, symbolic and intellectual resources generally in opposition to the state but they are also seen as a way of securing certain benefits from the state (Karlsson 2003; Shneiderman and Turin 2006; Middleton 2013). While acknowledging historical conditions that necessitate indigenous struggles and demands, scholars argue that indigeneity is "the cultural and political work of articulation" (Li 2000: 151) and is 'customized' by the interlocutors (Greene 2009). The interlocutor's position, mediated by class, gender and age, to a large extent determines the nature of indigeneity articulated. Indigeneity therefore is not 'customized' equally or similarly by everyone within the tribe (Canessa 2007). This is not to imply that these articulations are false rather it makes us sensitive to the stories of the interlocutors, the multiplicity of voices and the knowledge that in these articulations certain "sites and situations....are privileged while others are overlooked" (Li 2000: 151).

If indigeneity is indeed the work of articulation, then it is important to recognize the role played by colonial administrative discourse in the Indian context. The British demarcated tribal areas as excluded or partially excluded areas (Pathy 2000). Post-independence partially excluded areas came under the Fifth schedule of the constitution which granted tribal groups several rights over forest and land resources. Areas which were wholly excluded came

under the Sixth schedule and had more rights to retain customary titles and positions. Sixth schedule areas are in the Himalayan<sup>5</sup> region whereas Fifth scheduled areas are spread across India with a large concentration in Central India. Since the Fifth schedule didn't have as strong regulations as the Sixth schedule, tribes here were subjected to more state-led development incursions. In opposing these incursions, tribal groups in Fifth Schedule areas developed stronger ties with environmentalists and other marginalized groups and effectively cultivated an 'adivasi' identity (Karlsson 2003). Large-scale development projects in Sixth schedule areas have a more recent history. The language and terms used by groups in this region are shaped much more by their transnational engagements rather than alliances with other Indian tribal groups (Ibid 2003). Differences in regulations and policies have resulted in a significantly different politics of resistance and recognition arising from Fifth and Sixth schedule areas. The term for indigenous in India is adivasi, however very few groups in the Himalayan region identify themselves as such and prefer the term 'indigenous' or 'tribal' since adivasi is seen as a sanskritized term that doesn't apply to them.

Therefore in the context of the 'indigenous debate' it is important to recognize a plurality of indigenous movements as well as a plurality of discourses within indigenous movements (Rappaport 2005). In India, indigeneity is a controversial category which is closely related to the confusion around the question 'who count as indigenous?' Indian anthropologists such as Roy Burman and Bettiele (in Karlsson 2003) feel it is difficult to determine who is indigenous in India since the entire country was colonized and the history of tribes has been that of movement and migration. Others (Xaxa 1999; Karlsson 2003) feel we must accept these groups on their own terms. Claims to indigeneity are understandably controversial since they provide important social and political leverage. Karlsson (2013: 33) points out that in the North Eastern context, "The indigenous tribe category [is] a strategic conflation of two different regimes of rights or political assertions." The first relates to the recognized Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for affirmative action and the second being the emerging global framework for indigenous peoples rights. In Sikkim and neighboring regions of Darjeeling and Kalimpong, Lepchas have been recognized as Scheduled Tribes and self-identify as indigenous since as early as 1925. In Sikkim the interlocutors belonged to institutional bodies with close ties to a State whose 'pro-tribal' policies have made it the envy of its neighbors (Shneiderman and Turin 2006: 56). The Dzongu protests marked a shift away from the institutional framework and this reformulation of indigeneity drew them closer to global indigenous discourses wherein the

State is an antagonistic force. While being shaped by global indigenous politics the articulation of Lepcha indigeneity was also a response to localized issues specifically those facing young people from Dzongu.

### **The Lazy Native meets the Apathetic Youth**

Young people stand on the edge of a community's boundaries constantly traversing between lines of 'tradition,' 'modernity,' 'morality,' and 'immorality' (Cole and Durham 2008). Geographers examining young lives offer a spatial and temporal analysis of how young people's lives are marked simultaneously by apprehension and anxiety as well as hope and potential (Aitken 2001; Cole and Durham 2008; Jeffrey and Dyson 2008). Despite their involvement in social movements and civil society groups, young people's lack of interest in formal politics has long been seen as a sign of their apathy leading to concerns around the 'crisis of democracy' (Furlong and Cartmel 2012). Young people occupy a liminal legal and political space viewed as 'adult-in-waiting' or 'political apprentices' rather than political agents (Skelton 2010). In the domestic space young people and children occupy a special place of exclusion because of their perceived inability to enter into intelligent dialogue with adults (Matthews, Limb, and Taylor 1999). The agency of young people therefore needs to be understood as operating at these multiple scales (Dyson 2008; Skelton and Gough 2013).

When discussing indigenous youth it is important to have an understanding of the powerful racial tropes related to indigenous groups that further contribute to their exclusion from political spaces. Racialized tropes brought into effect by colonial discourses cut across time and space and have a continued dominance in how indigenous groups are racialized in present-day post-colonial nations. Stoller (1995, 2002) examines how the racial discourse of colonialism employed patriarchal, protective and familial metaphors where racialized others were frequently equated with children. Both children and 'the natives' were othered in ways that compared them to lower-order, animal-like beings, lacking civility, discipline, and sexual restraint (Ibid 1995: 151). These arguments are echoed in Nandy's comparison of childhood and the state of being colonized and in Alatas' influential piece on the 'Myth of the Lazy Native' (Alatas 1977; Nandy 1983). Early anthropological accounts of the Lepcha tribe describing them as "timid, peaceful, and no brawler[s]" (Hooker in Kennedy 1991: 64) with a "want of aggression [and] sex-obsession" (Gorer 1938: 39) resonate with these racialized tropes. Even today both state and non-state actors perpetuate these

tropes to explain away the lack of development within the reserve as an effect of the laziness or the lack of ambition of reserve members.

This analysis when layered onto our understanding of indigenous youth provides a striking parallel in how similar tropes are variously applied to young people. Young people especially in non-western contexts are seen as somehow less than adult and inadequate citizens, simply 'passing time' and a site of 'moral panic' (Neyzi 2001; Jeffrey 2008; Smith 2012). These concerns are echoed by the state, older adults in the family, and get exemplified in rural indigenous communities where we see strained inter-generational relations because of out-migration. The challenges faced by groups like the Lepchas are distilled in the struggles of their youth —unemployment, out-migration, increased drug usage, and suicide rates to name a few (Eicher et al. 2000; Ningshen 2013). Concerns over the future of these young lives figure prominently in claims over land, resources, and material benefits. In many recent social movements in the region, indigenous youth are positioned as vanguards who must fashion new political selves which work to both challenge and affirm the anxieties of community members and state authorities. Young people's bodies and futures then form the template on which these desires are inscribed and where territorial, ecological and moral anxieties play out (Smith 2012). The story of the young Lepcha activists brings these important concerns into sharp relief.

### **A Political Landscape of Precarity and Possibility**

A narrow twenty-three kilometer wide corridor known as the 'chicken neck' connects the eight North Eastern states of India to the rest of the country. While Sikkim has only recently (2001) been included in the North Eastern states, like the other states it has a contentious though far less violent history of assimilation with India. Bordering Nepal, China, and Bhutan, Sikkim has been described as the "single most strategically important piece of real estate in the entire Himalayan region" (Graver in Hiltz 2003: 68). Beginning in the 1860s the British began settling Nepalis in the southern and western tracts of Sikkim to balance out the pro-Tibetan Bhutia community with the pro-British-India Nepalis (Ibid 2003). Sikkim was annexed to India in 1975 prior to which it had been an independent Buddhist theocracy. A restless Nepali political majority pushed for a referendum in which 97.5 percent voted in favor of abolishing the monarchy and becoming a part of the Indian union. Indian authorities had set the stage for annexation in 1953 with the establishment of the Sikkim Council, which divid-

ed the electorate into Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepali Sikkimese constituencies (Ibid 2003). This electoral system paved the way for the annexation and widened divisions between these communities.

These lingering tensions still define present day political life in Sikkim. The Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) has been in power for the last four terms with the same Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling, with practically no opposition party. However, in a dramatic turn of events in early February of 2013, 'rebel' leader P.S Tamang floated a new party, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) under the Obama-esque rallying cry of Parivartan (change). SDF's pro-incumbency factor will be put to the test and the fate of this fledging political party will unfold as Sikkim goes for elections in April 2014.<sup>6</sup> One of the central concerns around which opposition has coalesced is the steady increase in educated unemployed youth in the state. The following quote from a disgruntled youth on SKM's website summarizes these concerns.

Unemployment has reached new level [sic] with over 5000 candidates filling up the exam forms for a vacancy of 20 or 30. Well-educated youth whose only mistake was coming back to their hometown to work are being employed on ad-hoc and contract basis putting their career and future in jeopardy. I personally have a lot of respect for our Chief Minister but if he has become too powerful to ignore what's going on beneath his nose then I am sorry sir, next year I am voting for change.

After the hunger strike, several young Lepchas returned to Dzongu and set up different self-employment ventures,

like coaching classes, organic farms and eco-tourism homestays. These projects were aimed at weaning young people from their dependency on the government. While activists received little support from within the reserve the hunger strike marked a shift in political activism within the state. The indigenous Lepchas claim to be one of the most marginalized groups within the state, forming just 8 percent of the state's population. The North district, with a majority Lepcha population, fares poorly on socio-economic and health indicators, while the Dzongu reserve is considered 'underdeveloped' in official state reports. Several Dzongu youth joined SKM, including Dawa Lepcha, who initiated the hunger strike and commands the respect and loyalty of many in Sikkim. While support for SKM may not be uniform, the decision to join it is the first official political move made by the Dzongu activists. Given this backdrop, young lives are where both state and community elders' desire and aspirations for the future intersect.

### An Exceptional Landscape

The Dzongu reserve has only three bridges to enter and exit it and is revered by Lepchas as an ancient paradise which holds the myths and folklores of the tribe. Early British anthropological accounts of the reserve detail a plethora of unique species of flora and fauna. Reserve members appear in these early accounts as bearers of indigenous knowledge 'born naturalists' knowing the name for every flower and animal in the reserve (Gorer 1938; Hooker in Kennedy 1991). These accounts also fed into a geographical image of the reserve as an untouched paradise. Winding down perilously narrow, pot-holed



Figure 1. Landslides, heavy rainfall and poor road infrastructure make this an all too familiar sight in Dzongu.

(Mabel Gergan, 2013)





Figure 2. A view of the landscape on the way to Lingdem, Upper Dzongu.

(Mabel Gergan, 2013)

roads through forested slopes and terraced fields, even today one traveling to Dzongu can make a similar observation as Gorer did that “the overwhelming beauty of the landscape [is] spoilt only by the very considerable difficulty of traveling about, so rocky and precipitous is the land” (1938: 81). Most roads within the reserve are unpaved and every monsoon several interior villages get completely cut off from the rest of the reserve. Questions of remoteness, isolation, and poor infrastructure profoundly shape young people’s everyday experience within the reserve. There is only one higher secondary school here and in interviews with reserve youth difficulty of access to education was often cited as a reason for Dzongu’s ‘backwardness.’ Nima who was now in his 30’s recalled how many students would have to walk several kilometers every day to get to school.

School started at 9am and I would have to leave latest by 7am. I would walk every day to school. Seven kilometers both ways, that’s fourteen kilometers daily. By the time I reached school, I would be so tired but we did not have any relatives in Mangan [district capital] nor could we afford to take up a place on rent.

Owing to its geographic isolation the reserve has less political clout and therefore poor basic infrastructure. In her account of indigenous politics and eco-tourism in the Amazonia drawing on Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, Wheatley (2009: 215) interrogates how specific geographical locations like the ‘Amazonia’ become the exception and

indigenous subjects examples of “bare life”—“life that is simultaneously banished beyond the normal political order of the state and also subsumed by the legalities of the state through its very exclusion.” Dzongu Lepchas experience a similar ‘banishment’ from the political realm wherein they are enrolled in various government schemes because of their marginalized position but are unable to effect any change in the political order because of this very position. Employing Wheatley’s analysis, I argue that young activists responded to this ‘banishment’ by presenting Dzongu as an exceptional landscape. In interviews, hardships of the reserve were frequently invoked both in terms of a need for improvement but also as a spiritual experience that kept the young activists ‘grounded’ and ‘in-touch’ with nature. Young Lepchas articulated a contradictory discourse, which worked by essentializing the indigenous subject as guardian of the reserve while simultaneously critiquing state-neglect. After the protests, youth who had studied and lived outside began actively creating a vision of Dzongu as untouched and idyllic through posts on Facebook groups such as “We the Indigenous Lepchas,” “Lepcha Youth Association,” and “Dzongu History and Cultural Conservation Society.” An eco-tourism website run by one of the activists after the protests tempts the reader to visit Dzongu, “Where there are hidden treasures behind every tree.” Before the protests began, I interviewed Dzongu youth who felt that while the lack of infrastructure was a drawback, growing up in Dzongu made them more sensitive to Lepcha culture unlike their urban counterparts.



Karma, who had returned to the reserve after the protests was interested in setting up an eco-tourism resort and felt he now had a fresh perspective.

When you come back to Dzongu, you have that sense of belonging. Like when you are all the time in Dzongu you don't feel that "own-ness" like when you go outside, and you see the real world outside then you come to know what Dzongu really means and what are the potentials in it. You [author] have seen Dzongu. We don't have potential only in tourism. It's still untouched, unexplored.

Aitken (2001) points to how attention to the contradictions embedded in young people's everyday experiences has not just descriptive but also prescriptive value, as young people may find playful and creative ways to subvert these oppressive structures. During the protests, Dzongu youth discussed the need for documenting oral histories and exploring sites of spiritual importance within Dzongu on Facebook groups. In the initial days of the protests with very little support for the movement, Dawa and Tenzing, the two young men who went on the hunger strike, gathered a team of young men and women who went from village to village within the reserve raising awareness about the movement. Dawa recalls how through these tours young people who had grown up outside the reserve were able to gain a spatial and spiritual awareness of Dzongu.

There's Dzongu they know it is Dzongu but they don't know where, which point is Dzongu? The shape of Dzongu and of course how many rivers? What are the stories related to those rivers? Or the lakes and the mountains...but with this movement you know a lot of the guys know the rivers. A lot of guys have learned about the lakes and the stories about these lakes. For example when you [author] were in Gyathang you maybe have gone to this small lake? Many youth didn't know about that lake but with this movement a lot of people know about this lake and they even make it a point sometimes to visit the lake.

While walking from one village to another, experienced members would point to important landscapes and their stories as well as the sites where powerhouses were being planned thereby superimposing important spiritual landscapes onto the project sites. The articulation of indigeneity here is a material, place-based process closely tied to young people's experience of the reserve. Dzongu is presented as the sublime whereas Gangtok, the capital city, is portrayed by several activists as fraught with risks of

drugs, sexual promiscuity, and increasing unemployment. While very few young people have made the actual transition, most actively subscribe to the discourse of returning to Dzongu, which feeds into the vision of the reserve as an exceptional space worthy of being visited, lived in, cared for, and protected.

### Shifting Terrain of Indigeneity

In Sikkim until recently, only Bhutia and Lepcha groups were recognized as Scheduled Tribes (ST). Both groups are recognized as early settlers of Sikkim and present a united front with organizations like the Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) and have joint Bhutia-Lepcha (BL) seat reservation in the state assembly (Shneiderman and Turin 2006). Though many scholars suggest the Lepchas migrated from Assam, official discourse recognizes them as 'original inhabitants' bestowing on them the 'first insider' status (Little 2007). In 2002, the Limbu<sup>7</sup> and Tamang groups, formerly under the Nepali<sup>8</sup> category, were also accorded ST status. In an indirect response to this in 2003, the Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association (SLYA) pushed for Lepchas to be recognized as the Most Primitive Tribe (MPT) "to protect and preserve this endangered human species...as these people cannot adapt in such [sic] competitive world" (Arora 2006). While claims to indigeneity and autochthony may not be prerequisites for the Scheduled Tribe status in India, histories of migration (real or imagined) and the insider/outsider debate still figure chiefly in official and unofficial discourse within Sikkim. The push for MPT, while criticized by many for labeling Lepchas as 'primitive,' points to the attempts at positioning Lepcha claims as somehow more valid and urgent than those of other groups.

In Sikkim, Lepcha groups like the SLYA, Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Tarzum (RMRT), Mutanchi Lom Aal Shezum (MLAS) have actively deployed the term 'indigenous' in their programs and activities. However, other than MLAS, which is based in Dzongu, the other groups are in Gangtok and aren't particularly active in the reserve (Bentley 2007). These groups, headed by urban elite Lepchas, focused primarily on building and maintaining institutional frameworks, especially around language (Shneiderman and Turin 2006; Turin 2014) and political reservation which required close dealings with the state, making it difficult for them to openly support the anti-dam movement. Protests were given momentum by groups like Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT) and Concerned Lepchas of Sikkim (CLOS), which, while established and advised by older Lepchas, was comprised mostly of Dzongu youth. It also became a 'youth movement' since several older Lepchas sympathetic to the

cause were held back because of their position as government employees and the fear of victimization.

During the protests, Dzongu Lepchas interacted with national and international researchers, activists, and media persons connecting them to global indigenous discourses. With severe opposition from several reserve members and state authorities, reserve youth depended mostly on national and international solidarity networks (Arora 2007; Little 2010). But after the protests when young people struggled to find employment, many returned to the reserve and began reflecting on their experiences. In Sikkim the government is the single largest employer and every year government jobs get harder to come by. Many of the young activists had at some point unsuccessfully tried securing government jobs, leading to a sense of failure coupled with indignation. Reflecting on the lack of support from official Lepcha organizations and elders within the reserve, young activists inferred that being a government employee made state critique impossible. In many interviews, a recurring theme was the refusal to be dependent on the State, and the focus instead was on developing sustainable self-employment alternatives. Tashi one of the activists had this to say,

They [panchayat members] make our people day by day more dependent on government, no? They don't talk about self-employment kind of thing. It's only theoretical to them but not practical. They talk about income-generation and all those kinds of things. How can you generate income in your area when you are not self-employed?

Another youth, Paljor reflecting on the futility of looking for government or private jobs in Gangtok felt that young activists returning to the village could set an example for others,

It's not like you won't get a job in Gangtok if you look hard enough. But it'll be something like a salesperson or in a shop. You stay out for a year and realize that in Gangtok you end up spending more than you're earning. Also what happens is that young people right after they finish their studies they only want government jobs. Now it's not as easy as it was before. What I'm telling the younger generation is that we're trying to set an example for them that 'See it is possible to come back to the village and still make a living.' Maybe they will see this and return.

Many of the young activists had been critiqued as educated, upper class youth who had left the reserve and

were disconnected from the realities of the reserve. While acknowledging these critiques, they felt their decision to return to Dzongu was a deliberate attempt at changing people's perspective of both Dzongu and its youth. During my fieldwork before the protests, I encountered two prominent discourses being mobilized by non-reserve residents. Building on colonial romanticized notions, outsiders saw reserve members living simple uncomplicated lives in close proximity to the spirits of their ancestors. But a reverse logic was simultaneously at work where reserve members were caricatured as black-magic-wielding simpletons. Many young people who studied outside recalled how they suffered the taunts of those viewed Dzongu as 'backward' and perceived them as unhygienic and superstitious. Sonam, one of the activists who had returned to the village, made this pointed observation:

From the start Dzongu has...it's been called the 'victimized' place. Govt. officials like teachers get sent here as a punishment. If there is a program organized in Gangtok and they announce that our next program will be in Dzongu, everyone says, "Ambo [Oh gosh] Dzongu! Why there?" but if you see it only takes two and a half hours from Gangtok but that's the image they have. I feel like the earlier leaders made that image. And that's what we're trying to change now.

Young people I spoke with demonstrated an awareness of the ways in which racialized tropes of the reserve and its members were sedimented in both official and unofficial discourse. While being aware of these negative stereotypes, they invoked another oft repeated stereotype of 'not being assertive' and juxtaposed it with Bhutia and upper-caste Nepali groups who were portrayed as 'shrewd' and 'business-minded.' These tropes have their roots in what Bernard Cohn termed as the colonial sociology of knowledge whereby British authorities constructed a knowledge of their subjects according to their own needs and purposes (Kennedy 1991). The British<sup>9</sup> had a huge role to play in drawing a contrast between the Lepchas and their mountain neighbors, the Nepalese and the Bhutanese. While the latter two peoples were seen as aggressive, industrious, and warlike, the Lepchas were seen as "timid, peaceful, and no brawler[s]" (Kennedy 1991: 57). While these tropes regarding different communities had been in circulation prior to the hunger strike, these were deployed by young Lepchas to create a subjectivity that would stand apart from the 'dominant' communities. In my interviews I asked young Lepchas to state what they felt was a unique aspect of Lepcha culture. Ugen, a first year college student had this to say,

For me the best feature of Lepcha culture is our straightforwardness, there is no sense of any deception in us everything that is in our hearts is there on our lips...giving rise to blind trust and hospitality. We must remember that we are those same people who gave their own lands to their so called Bhutia brothers to stay otherwise who gives his or her land to anyone.

Emily Yeh's (2007) work on tropes of Tibetan indolence and 'being spoilt' by the Chinese government and how Tibetans themselves participate actively in the circulation and reproduction of these tropes provides an important theoretical entry point. While these might appear to be straightforward reflections of state discourse, she argues that they point to important experiences of development and exclusion. In the Lepcha context we find an extension of this coded critique of the state being articulated by Dzongu youth in promoting tropes of the 'shy and unambitious' Lepchas. While the government sees it as the reason for their economic backwardness, young Lepchas deployed this trope to talk about how they have been taken advantage of by other groups demonstrating how "ethnic values and sentiments can be generated from socio-economic insecurities and mobilized politically" (Chettri 2013: 11). The moral and ecological high ground of the Lepchas is demonstrated through the performance of an environmental consciousness and ancient claims to the land predating those of both Bhutia and Nepali communities. These critiques mixed in with the general belief among Dzongu youth that benefits for the Lepchas were cornered by their urban counterparts suggest a break from official Lepcha institutions based in Gangtok thereby shifting the articulation of Lepcha indigeneity within Sikkim. Dzongu activists through these material and discursive practices then are fashioning not only an ideal vision of the reserve, but also an ideal vision of the indigenous subject.

### Constructing Respectability

Before the protests, young Lepchas leaving the reserve in search of better opportunities were written off by community elders as apathetic to their cultural roots. The hunger strikes sparked discussions among young Lepchas around a moral responsibility to return to Dzongu. However, many of them were studying or working outside the reserve and were critiqued for being disconnected with ground realities. Cardamom, the main cash crop in North Sikkim and an important source of income within the reserve, had seen a steady decline in productivity in the past decade while reserve land could not be sold to non-reserve members. With these limited economic opportunities, hydro-

power development appeared as the perfect opportunity to liquefy a resource that was either unproductive or no longer an essential material capital (McDuie-Ra 2011). In interviews with community elders regarding the younger generation, they expressed feelings of disapproval and possibility. In interviews with village elders in the reserve many felt that young children were "lazy, rude, disrespectful and indifferent to Lepcha culture" but also "bold, adventurous and willing to take risks." Conversely, young Lepchas like Norden, who was actively involved in village affairs, felt youth were taken for granted by community elders.

I guess in entire Sikkim there is this thing, this communication break down between the generations. Like the seniors don't believe in the youths... for them youths are only like... there's a meeting to be organized you have to get some bamboos, cut some bamboos make something [such as makeshift tents]. For manpower, for labor, but after that you are not thanked also like 'you guys did this it's a very nice thing.' You're just like a fool out there working so hard.

Several young men like Norden who had been part of the hunger strike returned to the reserve after being unable to find jobs in Gangtok. While both young men and women supported the protests, a disproportionate amount of young men held positions of responsibility within the movement. Two young men launched the hunger strike and prominent positions within the movement are still held by men. My own interactions with the movement have mainly been with its male members, a choice made for matters of convenience as well as one that reflects the reality of the movement. Jeffrey's (2004, 2008, 2010) work on educated unemployed men is an important reference point here. He argues that for young men being unemployed and excluded from 'productive' forms of labor can come with associated feeling of failure, guilt, and loss of respectability. In line with broader patriarchal notions, young women do not face similar pressures to enter paid salaried employment (Jeffrey 2004). For Dzongu Lepchas, perhaps this reflects the ways in which young men in particular have been affected by lack of employment opportunities given the increasing competition with other groups in the Sikkim. Whether their unemployment was a cause or a consequence of activism, in what followed during and after the protests, Dzongu youth fashioned themselves into important political actors worthy of their community's respect. For some this respect was gained through setting up successful eco-tourism homestays. One such homestay boasts of hosting the Royal Prince of Norway, has won

tourism awards, and has been featured in magazines such as National Geographic traveler. For others like Kalzang this respect was gained through standing up for panchayat (village-level) elections as an independent candidate

Things are really changing...now youths are really being recognized. Even the seniors, they act differently towards the youth...like they act a little maturely towards us not like before making excuses refusing to meet with us. Now they have to be more serious towards us. But in order to do that even we have to do something that's worthwhile. That's why we are getting more recognized and the public trusts the youth more than the seniors, the politicians. So that's a huge difference we made.

From being perceived as a remote, backward area, of interest only for researchers, Dzongu is slowly emerging as an important political constituency. After the last elections, the Dzongu constituency was altered to include Mangshila, the hillside across Dzongu that has a majority pro-SDF population. This past year, many young men and women from Dzongu, including Kalzang, joined the opposition party with Dawa Lepcha leading the charge. After the protests, Dzongu youth have been actively challenging not just racialized and exclusionary state practices but also community members' perceptions about them. As Norden pointed out, from being seen as useful only for cutting bamboos, young people are slowly being taken seriously as political actors who are consciously and actively shaping Dzongu's future.

## Conclusion

Difference has always been acknowledged as part of the national project in India, as evidenced in our motto, 'Unity in Diversity.' Within the framework promoted by ideals of liberalism, projects of recognition require the subject of recognition to posture in certain ways that fit within the given framework of difference (Povinelli 2002; Shneiderman and Turin 2006; Middleton 2013; ). The indigenous subject in India has to twist and position oneself within a neo-colonial, neo-liberal, and religious framing of difference (Appadurai 1996b; Hansen 1999; Pandey 2006). Indigenous youth find themselves responding to all this and more with community and state aspirations and apprehensions weighing heavily on their lives. Unlike their neighbors in neighboring districts of West Bengal who are struggling to secure the coveted Scheduled Tribe status (Middleton 2013; Chettri 2013), the Dzongu Lepchas are struggling against state apathy despite having this status. In the Dzongu Lepchas' case, indigenous claims to exceptionalism are deployed to bolster their project of

recognition where Dzongu is presented as an exceptional landscape that embodies and induces the contradictory experience of adversity and opportunity.

While transnational groups support this indigenous exceptionalism, it leaves out non-indigenous groups within the state who cannot make similar claims to land and natural resources but might experience a similar 'banishment' from the state. Karlsson (2013), writing in the Meghalaya context, points out that there the indigeneity discourse is not so much to address social inequality but to strengthen claims of certain already powerful tribes over land and resources. Discussions on Facebook groups by Lepcha youth reflect a growing anxiety around the dissolution of the tribe's boundaries alongside a growing desire to keep the tribe 'pure.' How might we then make sense of this politics of difference, which, in challenging important exclusionary and racialized practices, is assigning those same categories to other communities within the state? For any engaged academic, this presents many such worrisome yet important questions. An awareness of these different positionalities has to be carefully tempered with the ability to critique and enter into dialogue. My role as an engaged academic who positions herself alongside the Lepchas is not to simply critique these tendencies in an academic journal while keeping them hidden from the activists themselves. Instead I see myself as an outsider who expresses solidarity while questioning and challenging these disturbing patterns and contradictions.

In the Dzongu Lepcha case we see that there are contestations within the tribe over who defines indigeneity and its associated meanings. Even as there is public debate promoting Lepcha exceptionalism, there are also internal tensions over purity and difference. McDuie Ra (2011: 96) draws our attention to the "intra-ethnic contest for legitimacy" wherein pro-dam groups within the reserve have been critical of Lepchas from neighboring regions like Kalimpong and Darjeeling for lending support to the anti-dam protests while Dzongu activists have been critiqued for being upper class youth disconnected from the reserves material realities. While acknowledging these intra-ethnic dynamics, my argument has been built around an attention to young people's particular experience of state neglect and community anxieties which have put them at odds with the older and urban members of the tribe. Dzongu youth are redefining indigeneity to address concerns specific to their experiences both within and outside the reserve. Even as young people subvert racialized tropes surrounding the reserve and its inhabitants, they reify others that help them access both internal and external recognition. Tropes regarding Lepchas' indolence

and lack of industry have a long history in Sikkim and are at present firmly sedimented in official and unofficial discourse. As Yeh (2007) points out in the Tibetan context, while these tropes shape development policies directed at these groups and are utilized for political control, they also shape possibilities of maneuvering within the larger trajectory of reform and development. Dzongu youth's political performance of authenticity and posturing of difference is closely tied to young people's desire to be included in the plans and policies of the State and acknowledged as important political actors with a voice. Even though they are excluded by the state they cannot help but reluctantly appeal to it, pushed by their desire and longing for justice (Secor 2007).

Dzongu youth respond to and challenge the concerns of their elders and state leaders transforming these expectations and apprehensions into new practices and goals. Their desire to be seen and valued by the state and their community members as responsible citizens instead of apathetic youth have found fertile ground in the hunger strike and their subsequent projects. Through this article I have sought to illustrate the interplay between indigeneity and youth and the myriad ways in which indigenous youth encounter and engage with development and democratic politics. The entry of hydropower and other development projects in the Himalayan region merits a closer examination of how marginalized groups are navigating the treacherous terrain of industrialization and urbanization. In the Sikkimese context, indigeneity is being defined by young people through the lens of their particular material and embodied experiences and is informed by a complex relationship between personal agency and structural constraints. While the political practices of Dzongu youth can be read as simultaneously progressive and reactionary, they demonstrate that they are not unwitting subjects of state exclusion and are playing an important role in shaping the imaginaries and futures of their community.

**Mabel D. Gergan** is a graduate student in the Geography Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests are at the intersection of Science and Technology Studies, Youth Geographies and Political Ecology. Her dissertation research explores the formation of political subjectivities among indigenous youth in the context of resistance to state-led hydropower development. Her mother belongs to the Lepcha tribe and, having been born in Sikkim, she has strong family ties in the region. Gergan is deeply committed to bringing the Himalayan region to the forefront of academic scholarship both in India and elsewhere.

The author is grateful to the National Science Foundation for funding her fieldwork research (2013-14) which contributed to the more recent interviews and material for this article. The author would like to thank the following people for their comments and suggestions on this material: Sara Smith, Pavithra Vasudevan, Mike Dimpfl, Autumn Thoyre, the Geography writing group at UNC-CH, Jenny Bentley and two anonymous reviewers. She is especially grateful to Gina Drew, Mark Turin, and Sienna Craig for their helpful advice and endless patience. And most importantly the author would like to thank all the young men and women of Dzongu who agreed to be interviewed and those who welcomed her into their homes and their lives.

## Endnotes

1. A.R. Foning (1987) a Lepcha author wrote the book, *Lepcha, my Vanishing Tribe* and ever since the epithet has been used in common parlance to refer to low numbers of the tribe and other 'threatened' aspects of the culture.
2. The works of Kerry Little (2010), Vibha Arora (2007; 2008) and Duncan McDuie Ra (2011) provide a rich ethnographic look into what sparked the movement and its political ramifications.
3. In this paper I employ the term 'youth' and 'young people' to refer to 16-30 year olds, fully aware that these are intellectually and politically problematic terms and that there can be no straightforward definition or experience of 'youth' (Jeffrey 2013).
4. The usage of the term sublime is derived from Bill Cronon's (1996) influential piece, "The Trouble with Wilderness or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." Cronon examines 'the sublime' and 'the frontier' as cultural constructs which influence contemporary environmentalism. Pristine wilderness is seen as the "ultimate landscape of authenticity. Combining the sacred grandeur of the sublime with the primitive simplicity of the frontier." Cronon critiques this tendency to place the human and the natural at opposite poles thereby obscuring

the complex ways in which the two are entangled. During the hunger-strike many of the activists presented Dzongu as the sublime- sacred and pristine in opposition to the more 'artificial' urban landscape of Gangtok, the capital town. Cronon would perhaps have been critical of such a move and further along in the paper I discuss how and why these activists presented Dzongu as a sublime, exceptional landscape.

5. The Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) consists of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, hill districts of West Bengal and Assam and the other North Eastern States (Nandy, S.N et al 2006; Ministry of Power 2008). The official geographic definition of the IHR includes the North Eastern states however the author is aware of discrepancies on the ground wherein NE states and subjects may not necessarily identify themselves as Himalayan. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out and pushing me to elaborate on this definition of the Himalayan region.

6. The state elections results were declared in May 2014 after this article was written. SDF won 23 seats of the total 33 seats in the State Legislative Assembly making Pawan Chamling Chief Minister for the fifth term. SKM won 10 seats making it the official opposition party.

7. The Limbu's are acknowledged as one of the earliest settlers of Sikkim however colonial administrative discourse progressively classified them as Nepalis. Due to limitations of space I couldn't possibly do justice to Limbu claims to indigeneity which have been discussed in great depth by scholars like Arora (2006), Subba (2010).

8. Scholars view the Nepali category as a colonial construct that enveloped distinct groups with cultural, religious and linguistic heterogeneity who migrated from Nepal into Sikkim (Arora 2006).

9. While Dane Kennedy writes primarily in the West Bengal context of Darjeeling and Kalimpong, his analysis can be extended to Sikkim since early anthropological studies of the Lepchas of Sikkim were undoubtedly influenced by these tropes.

---

## References

Aitken, Stuart. 2001. *Geographies of Young People: The Morally Contested Spaces of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Alatas, Hussein. 1977. *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and Its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism*. London: Cass.

Anderson, Jon and Katie Jones. 2009. The Difference That Place Makes to Methodology: Uncovering the 'Lived Space' of Young People's Spatial Practices. *Children's Geographies* 7 (3): 291-303.

Appadurai, Arun. 1996a. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 1996b. Number in the Colonial Imagination. In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 114-139. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Arora, Vibha and Jayaram, N., eds. 2013. *Routeing Democracy in the Himalayas: Experiments and Experiences*. New Delhi, India: Routledge.

Arora, Vibha. 2007. Unheard Voices of Protest in Sikkim. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42: 3451-3454.

———. 2008. Gandhigiri in Sikkim. *Economic & Political Weekly* 27.

———. 2006. Roots and Route of Secularism in Sikkim. *Economic and Political Weekly* 41: 4063-4071.

Baruah, Apurba. K. 2002. *Student Power in North-East India: Understanding Student Movements*. New Delhi: Regency Publications.

Baviskar, Amita. 1997. Tribal Politics and Discourses of Environmentalism. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 31 (2): 195-223.

———. 2005. Adivasi Encounters with Hindu Nationalism in MP. *Economic and Political Weekly*: 5105-5113.

Bentley, Jenny 2007. Change and Cultural Revival in a Mountain Community of Sikkim. *Bulletin of Tibetology*. 43 (1-2): 59-79.

Bora, Shiela. 1992. *Student Revolution in Assam, 1917-1947: A Historical Survey*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.

Castree, Noel. 2004. Differential Geographies: Place, Indigenous Rights and 'Local' Resources. *Political Geography* 23 (2): 133-167.

Canessa, Andrew 2007. Who Is Indigenous? Self-identification, Indigeneity, and Claims to Justice in Contemporary Bolivia. *Urban Anthropology* 36 (3): 195.

Chettri, Mona. 2013. "Choosing the Gorkha: at the Crossroads of Class and Ethnicity in the Darjeeling Hills." *Asian Ethnicity* 14(3): 293-308.

Cole, Jennifer, and Deborah Durham. 2008. Introduction: Globalization and the Temporality of Children and Youth.



- In Figuring the Future: Globalization and the Temporalities of Children and Youth*, 3-24. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Cronon, William. 1996. The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. *Environmental History* 1 (1): 7-28.
- Dharmadhikary, Shripad. 2008. *Mountains of Concrete: Dam Building in the Himalayas*. Berkeley, CA: International Rivers.
- Drew, Georgina. 2011. *Ganga is 'Disappearing': Women, Development, and Contentious Practice on the Ganges River*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Durham, Deborah. 2004. Disappearing Youth: Youth as a Social Shifter in Botswana. *American Ethnologist* 31: 589-604.
- Dutta, Sristidhar. 1998. *Student Movements in Arunachal Pradesh*. Delhi: Himalayan Publishers.
- Dyson, Jane. 2008. Harvesting Identities: Youth, Work, and Gender in the Indian Himalayas. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98 (1): 160-179.
- Eicher, A. D., N. Crofts, S. Benjamin, P. Deutschmann, and A. J. Rodger. 2000. A Certain Fate: Spread of HIV Among Young Injecting Drug Users in Manipur, North-East India. *AIDS Care* 12 (4): 497-504.
- Furlong, Andy, and Fred Cartmel. 2012. Social Change and Political Engagement Among Young People: Generation and the 2009/2010 British Election Survey. *Parliamentary Affairs* 65 (1): 13-28.
- Gorer, Geoffrey. 1938. *Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas of Sikkim*. London: M. Joseph Ltd.
- Greene, Shane. 2009. *Customizing Indigeneity: Paths to a Visionary Politics in Peru*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1999. *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hiltz, Jackie. 2003. Constructing Sikkimese National Identity in the 1960s and 1970s. *Bulletin of Tibetology* 32 (2): 69-86.
- Jeffrey, Craig, Patricia Jeffery, and Roger Jeffery. 2008. *Degrees Without Freedom?: Education Masculinities, and Unemployment in North India*. Stanford University Press.
- Jeffrey, Craig. 2001. 'A Fist is Stronger Than Five Fingers': Caste and Dominance in Rural North India. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 (2): 217-236.
- . 2008. 'Generation Nowhere:' Rethinking Youth through the Lens of Unemployed Young Men. *Progress in Human Geography* 32: 6.
- . 2010. *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 2011. Geographies of Children and Youth III Alchemists of the Revolution? *Progress in Human Geography* 37 (1): 145-152.
- Jeffrey, Craig, and Jane Dyson, ed. 2008. *Telling Young Lives: Portraits of Global Youth*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Karlsson, Bengt G. 2003. Anthropology and the 'Indigenous Slot' Claims to and Debates About Indigenous Peoples' Status in India. *Critique of Anthropology* 23 (4): 403-423.
- . 2009. Nuclear Lives: Uranium Mining, Indigenous Peoples, and Development in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* 44 (34): 43-49.
- . 2013 The Social Life of Categories: Affirmative Action and Trajectories of the Indigenous. *Focaal— Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 65: 33-41.
- Katz, Cindi. 2004. *Growing up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kennedy, Dane. 1991. Guardians of Edenic Sanctuaries: Paharis, Lepchas, and Todas in the British Mind. *South Asia: South Asian Journal of Asian Studies* 14 (2): 57-77.
- Lama, Mahendra P. 2001. *Sikkim Human Development Report 2001*. New Delhi: Social Science Press.
- Li, Tania M. 2000. Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and Indigenous Slot. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (1): 149-179.
- Little, Kerry 2010. From the Villages to the Cities: The Battlegrounds for Lepcha Protests. *Transforming Cultures eJournal* 5 (1).
- Marchang Reimeingam Ningshen. 2013. *Escalating Problems of Youth Unemployment in Sikkim*. 14 July 2011 <[http://reimeingam.blogspot.in/2011/07/escalating-problems-of-youth\\_14.html](http://reimeingam.blogspot.in/2011/07/escalating-problems-of-youth_14.html)> (accessed on 17 September 2013).
- Matthews, Hugh, Melanie Limb, and Mark Taylor. 1999. Young People's Participation and Representation in Society. *Geoforum* 30 (2): 135-144.

- McDuie-Ra, Duncan. 2011. The Dilemmas of Pro-development Actors: Viewing State-Ethnic Minority Relations and Intra-ethnic Dynamics through Contentious Development Projects. *Asian Ethnicity* 12 (1): 77-100.
- . 2012. Leaving the Militarized Frontier Migration and Tribal Masculinity in Delhi. *Men and Masculinities* 15 (2): 112-131.
- . 2013. Beyond the 'Exclusionary City': North-east Migrants in Neo-liberal Delhi. *Urban Studies* 50 (8): 1625-1640.
- Middleton, Townsend. 2013. States of Difference: Refiguring Ethnicity and its 'Crisis' at India's Borders. *Political Geography*.
- Ministry of Power. 2008. *New Hydropower Policy*. Government of India.
- Nandy, Ashis. 1983. *The Intimate Enemy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Nandy, S. N., Dhyani, P. P. and Samal, Prasana K. 2006. *Resource Information Database of the Indian Himalaya*. ENVIS monograph No. 3. Kosi-Katarmal, Almora: GPIHED Publications.
- Neyzi, Leyla. 2001. Object or Subject? The Paradox of 'Youth' in Turkey. *Presses de Sciences Po*. No. 2: 101-117.
- Pandey, Gyanendra. 2006. *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Pathy, Jaganath. 2000. Tribe, Region, and Nation in the Context of the Indian State. In *Nation and National Identity in South Asia*, edited by S.L. Sharma and T.K. Oommen. New Delhi, Orient Longman, pp. 97-111.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2002. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Rappaport, Joanne. 2005. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation, and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Routledge, Paul. 2003. Voices of the Dammed: Discursive Resistance Amidst Erasure in the Narmada Valley, India. *Political Geography* 22 (3): 243-270.
- Routledge, Paul, Andrew Cumbers, and Corinne Nativel. 2007. Grassrooting Network Imaginaries: Relationality, Power, and Mutual Solidarity in Global Justice Networks. *Environment and Planning A* 39 (11): 2575.
- Roy, Arundhati. 1999. *The Greater Common Good*. India Book Distributor (Bombay) Limited.
- Secor, A. J., 2007. Between Longing and Despair: State, Space and Subjectivity in Turkey. *Environment and Planning D* 25:33-5.
- Shneiderman, Sara and Mark Turin. 2006. Seeking the Tribe: Ethno-politics in Darjeeling and Sikkim. *Himal Southasian* 19 (2): 54-58.
- Skelton, Tracey. 2010. Taking Young People as Political Actors Seriously: Opening the Borders of Political Geography. *Area* 42 (2): 145-151.
- Skelton, Tracey and Katherine V. Gough. 2013. Introduction: Young People's Im/Mobile Urban Geographies. *Urban Studies* 50 (3): 455-466.
- Smith, Sara H. 2012. 'In the Heart, There's Nothing:' Unruly Youth, Generational Vertigo and Territory. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 38 (4): 572-585.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 1995. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke.
- . 2002. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Subba, T. B. 2010. Indigenizing the Limbus: Trajectory of a Nation Divided into Two Nation States. In *Indigeneity in India*, edited by Bengt G. Karlsson and Tanka B. Subba, 143-158. London: Kegan Paul.
- Turin, Mark. 2014. Mother Tongues and Language Competence: The Shifting Politics of Linguistic Belonging in the Himalayas. In *Facing Globalization in the Himalayas: Belonging and the Politics of the Self: Governance, Conflict and Civic Action: Volume 5*, edited by Gérard Toffin, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, 372-396. Delhi: Sage Publications India.
- Valentine, Gill, Tracey Skelton, and Deborah Chambers. 1998. *Cool Places*. London: Routledge.
- Wheatley, Elizabeth Shannon. 2009. 9 Ec (h) O-tourism and the Whisper of the State. *International Relations and States of Exception: Margins, Peripheries, and Excluded Bodies*: 210-229.
- Xaxa, Virginius. 1999. "Tribes as Indigenous People of India." *Economic and Political Weekly*: 3589-3595.
- . 2008. *State, Society, and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India*. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley.
- Yeh, Emily T. 2007. Tropes of Indolence and the Cultural Politics of Development in Lhasa, Tibet. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97 (3): 593-612.