

Reconstructing historical Trends: - Limbo Tribe of Himalayn region

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Abstract:-

The paper is on the limbo community a tribe of Himalayan region. The limbos are the kirati people of Himalayan region. I have focused work on the limbos of and try to understand how the social status influences political rights. Though there are different communities in Darjeeling like Lepchas, Tamangs etc. but the paper focuses on Limbo community and their history and the process of migration. Limbo is a small but historically important ethnic race of the Nepalese and Indian Himalayas region. The paper focuses on the limbo tribe an ethnic tribe of Himalayan region. It will help out to find out impetus to give glimpse of Limbo traditions and their demographical impact.

Keywords- Limbo, Himalayan, Kirati, Tribal, Lepchas, Tamangs

The limbo people also known as *Yakthung* are Kirati Indigenous and native to their homeland, Himalayas regions. In ancient text *Yakthung* or *Yakthum* is a derivative of *Yaksha* and some interpret its meaning as the *Yaksha* winner. In Limbo language it means “heroes of the hills”. The etymological origin of the word *Limbo* is traced in various literature and popular traditions of the Tibeto Indian Himalayas Literature including the great epics. Since the tribe is also known as *Kirati*, the word first occurred in the *Krsnayayur* Veda and also find mention in the *Taiteriyā Brahmana*, the *Atharvaveda*, the *Puranas* the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It is further quoted in the *Vishnu Purana* that India is flanked by the *Kiratas* in the East.

According to a book *Bhongsoli*, there are hundreds of Limbo clans and Tribes or sub national entity or according to their Place of origin. The Limbo was also one of the earliest inhabitants of Sikkim. A larger number are scattered throughout the cities of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal, Assam, Nagaland. Limbos of Darjeeling stated that there are around 1.5 lakh Limbos in West Bengal. Accordingly the mother tongue of the Limbo Tribe of West Bengal especially of Darjeeling is Nepali. The limbo tribe is also known as *Matwali*” as their hindu caste system ranked them as one of the unenslavable alcohol consuming groups. It is one of the Sino Tibetan languages of Himalayan Region. Due to the late Invaders the limbos have divided into two nationalities Nepalese Limbo or Subba and Indian Limbo or Subba.

The Limbos have inhabited west Sikkim since time unrecorded, but unlike them some sections of the Limbos believed to have originated from Kashi or Benaras in India. Others believed themselves to have come from Tsang Province of Tibet. Limbo group are immigrant population from the country Nepal. The British lured the Limbos and Other tribal people to Darjeeling with hopes of prosperity. The first and the widely accepted theory, is the theory of the Kirata origin which in my view is quite a wider concept as Kirata denotes wide range of ethnic community. According to the Kirata theory, the Limbos are descended from family of Kirat-asura, who once fought against the Aryans. According to Subba an eminent writer relates Limboo with the people of Indus Valley Civilization, claiming them to be the off shoot of ancient Indian race, who at the arrival of Aryans migrated to eastern Tibet and back to Limbuwan via Walangchuk and again on the other, he gives a contradictory opinion designating them as the nomads to have wandered in the various places of inner south-Asia.

According to Gracy Maria Subba a Research Scholar of Ambedkar University in her Research work She vividly present the second theory that deals with that of Chinese origin, the migration of the Limbos from China. Chemjong categorizing the Limbos as the Kiratas who probably migrated from the Sichuan Yunan province of China, who left the place and migrated due to conflicts among the tribes and settled in a place called Nam Maw in north Burma under the leadership of Pongbo Hang. Further multiplying this group spread to east, west and south. A branch which spread to south-west settled in a place called Mokwan and began to address them as Shan Mokwan and migrated towards the hilly terrain of present East Nepal.

One of the most important theory regarding the limbos is in Sikkimese context is the theory of Tibetan origin that highlights Limboos are the immigrants from the Tsang province of Tibet. The theory is beautifully mentioned in Sikkimese histories the Limbos are known as Gtsong in the local Bhutia dialect, for having been migrated from the Tsang province of Tibet.

The fourth theory indeed is of the recent origin and speaks of the migration of the Limbos from the region of modern Nepal to modern Sikkim. According to her, the Gtsongs of the western Sikkim, belonging mostly to Lasha gotra and Buddhist by faith are the early settlers of Sikkim and has close affinity with the Bhutias and the Lepchas. The later migration took place during the reign of Sir Tashi Namgyal, when in 1938 a dozen of Limboos from Dhankuta in east Nepal who did the construction of Tsuk-La-khang(the royal Chapel) were later granted permission to settle and open fields within the Phodong Estate of Mangshila.

Whatever may be the origin of the Limbos but now they are the inhabitants of the Himalayan region and follow a very indigenous and rich culture.

While analyzing the cultural aspects of Limbo tribe they practice many of their own life cycle ritual,they belief. The Limbos follows the social rules and regulation of Mundhum oral 'scripture' and a religious book. Their God Tagera Ningwaphuma is described as a forceful power the creator of life on earth. The deity Yuma known as "Yuma Samyo" or "Niwaphuma" is the most important and popular among some Limbus and is worshiped in all occasions. Yuma is the mother of all the Limbus, therefore one regards his or her mother as a goddess. They also worship Phedangma (priest), Yeba ,Shamba are some. Their religion is enshrined in the evergreen Cynodondactylon (Dubo) grass.

But with the passing of time the Limbos too started following the rituals of Hinduism and Buddhism. Limbo indigenous knowledge system regarding biodiversity and Limbo cultural identity are interdependent and have changes and crisis in are inevitably affecting the other losses on cultural identity and vice versa. It is the duty of the researchers to preserve the rich culture of the tribes of Himalayan region through their writings.

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