

## **The Dhimals – A Little Known Tribal Group of Sub-Himalayan West Bengal: Historical Perspectives**

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**ABSTRACT** The Dhimal of North Bengal had categorized as non-Aryan tribe by eminent scholars of pre-Independent India like Hodgson, Dalton, Hunter, Risley and O'Malley. However, several years after Independence, they have been going through a non-recognition period simply by wiped out from Govt. census. Recently they have been classified as Other Backward Classes (OBC) of West Bengal. Even in terms of education, occupation or Social-Cultural context they are very similar to tribal communities of West Bengal even primitive one. Therefore, they (Dhimals) demand for Scheduled tribe status instead of OBCs. The present paper is an attempt to identify almost all the documents on Dhimals, which has a historical importance in the field of Anthropological research, and also to conclude the status of Dhimals as per previous writings. The study is a type of documentary research; data have been collected from almost all secondary sources after scanning of existing literatures scattered in different forms as well as through retrospective search of non-printed sources. The sources have identified the Dhimals as a non-Aryan Tribe, with distinguishable characteristics; though with some recent changes in cultural aspects, which is not so deviated that can exclude Dhimals from previous status.