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Identity Formation among the Lepchas of West Bengal and Sikkim

Rip Roshina Gowloog

*Anthropological Survey of India, Mawblei, Madanring, Shillong 793 022, Meghalaya, India
Mobile: 9436301958, Email: groshina@yahoo.com*

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ABSTRACT This article deals with the challenges a small but autochthonous Himalayan community living in the hills of Darjeeling and Sikkim is facing on account of their gradual domination first by the Buddhist Bhutias and subsequently by the Hindu Nepalis, converting them into an insignificant minority in their own traditional habitat. It also demonstrates how allegiance to different religions, especially Buddhism and Christianity, has created a cleavage within them, which they are slowly trying to address and overcome.