

Interrogating the Social construction of Space and Place of Gorkhaland

A Dissertation Submitted

To

Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy

By

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Declaration

I, Abhishek Sundas do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “**Interrogating the Social Construction of Space and Place of Gorkhaland**” is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and this dissertation has not been submitted by me to any other University or Institution.

This is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the **Degree of Masters of Philosophy**, to the Department of Geography, School of Human Sciences, Sikkim University.

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All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by him.

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*Dedicated to
MY Beloved
Aama and Baba
And My
Late Grandmother*

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Acronyms

AIGL: All India Gorkha League

ABNBS: Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity

DGHC: Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council

GJMM: Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha

GTA: Gorkhaland Territorial Administration

CHAPTER 1

“If one lacks the sponsorship of a nation state, one can readily come to be regarded merely as a “human being” in general-without a profession, without a citizenship, without an option, without a deed by which to identify and specify(one) self.”

...Hannah Arendt’s

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The Darjeeling hills has been undergoing the anxious form of “*Politics of Homeland*” voicing sub-national movements since 20th century amongst all, the most distinguished feature of the existing political scene in Darjeeling is the development of group ‘Political-territorial Identities’¹, determined for separate territory within the Indian Union.

The people in Darjeeling continue to pin their anticipations for a better life exclusively on the image of ‘Gorkhaland’ and not on any substitute imaginations or non-ethno regional discourses to negotiate their claim on the state. The imagination of Darjeeling succeeds and peoples’ relation to the state continue to be negotiated in terms of Gorkha identity which subsumes or side lines other form of identities. This raises the question of where the idea of Gorkhaland for more than over 30 years after its beginning in 1980s still draws its strength from.

The previous days of Darjeeling and the Gorkhaland Movement is fused and to comprehend this process one needs to look back in time, when neither the borders were formed nor the nation- state. A definite amnesia prevails in the hills in relation to Gorkhaland; similarly the association with ‘*Maato*’ (Land) with time has grown stronger .Therefore, ‘*Kipat*’ (Possession of land by a community) and ‘*Maato*’ (Land) till this day has remained central to this vigorous

¹ The term coined by David B Knight refers to the political identities seeking territorial recognition at various geographical scales see David B Knight, “*Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism,*” *Annals of Association of American Geographers* 72 (1982).

campaign. Over the years Gorkhaland has been enclosed as an Imagined Geography², and has resulted in voicing subjectivities, resounding expectations, ambitions and connotations as a popular geography. Hence, Gorkhaland not only expresses but also outlines peoples' subjectivities surfacing around aspirations for recognition and justice alive in the idea of separate state.

Keeping the above background in mind the study induces one to map the intangible and theoretical works on regional identity construction which interweaves diverse aspects of geography, with focus on Human geography as well as other disciplines of human sciences. Therefore, this study intends to be within the conjuncture of Human Geography, Cultural Anthropology and History, conforming the critical concepts and discourse.

1.2 Literature Review

The concept of Space and Place has been considered as one of the most essential and concrete elements in the construction of Homeland and Identity. The notion of Space and Place was given less emphasis in relation to the construction of Homeland and Identity, prior to the development of contestations in geography. Though the idea have changed throughout the development of geography, other disciplines has moreover focused on discussing the single dimension of Space and Place. The following section views different arguments laid upon the concept of Space and Place.

Debates about the concept of Place have often held central position amongst Human Geographers, with this the question of whether a Place matters or not became loud and clear

² The idea of imagined, as also referred to as 'Imaginative' geographies, emerged from the works of Edward Said. In this context 'Imagined' does not mean to be 'false' or 'made-up', rather it is used as an synonym to the 'Perceived', used in accordance to the perception of a Space, as a product of certain imagery, texts, narrations and discourses. See: Edward Said, (1979) Imaginative Geography and its Representations.

during 1980s. The arguments based on '*Uniqueness*', '*Contextuality*' and '*Place Perspectives*' over the years have increased the opacity within geographical imagination (Agnew, 1989)

Therefore, the notion that Place differs and the differences which are mapped out has over the years blurred and intensified the contestations regarding a Place.

Similarly, various scholars have tried to engage in empirical research on Place, highlighting the philosophical and methodological approaches which has moreover turned out to be less effective in drawing the basic ontological understanding of about a Place. This is primarily because of the lack of neglect of the basic grounds and rules on which many scholars build their arguments on Place, which moreover has left the question of Place within a restrictive philosophical sphere (Merrifield, 1993).

Therefore, Lefebvre (1991, a, b) in his formulations about everyday life and Space plays a pivotal role in understanding the question of a Place and bridging the gap between the dialectical notion of a Place. As Lefebvre's work highlights how experience is lived and acted out in a Place, and its relation to the embedded activities be it economic or political, which operates on a large spatial scale.

Lefebvre's framework goes beyond the dualist thinking associated with Place which moreover held central position in various geographical contestations on Place. Therefore, Lefebvre's work becomes important to restore the dilemma between Space and Place.

The proof of Geography's failure to leave the mathematical baggage is highlighted by Entrikin (1991) as he talks about the nature of place in '*Betweenness of Place*'. Though he argues that Place matters, his understanding about the dimensions of the concept of Place leans towards the Cartesian understanding of a Place.

Entrikin (1991) states that Geographers have always studied Place as a subjective interpretation, which has resulted in developing an intellectual gap between sense of being and

of being in a place, and thus his notion of 'Placelessness' is an attempt to characterise and build theory about the role of human actions and events for better understanding the concept of Place (Entrikin, 1991)

Likewise, as Entrikin argues, throughout 20th century geographers focused on narrowing the gap between dualism, between descriptions and explanations. Therefore, he states that both subjective and objective reality needs to be incorporated for deeper understanding of place. His argument centres on human experience and the meanings attached to a place by conscious actors, which was contested by other scholars being based on Cartesian foundations.

As perceived by Entrikin in his work, the intellectual gap that surfaces in understanding a Place is located between being an actor and the attempts to theorise about the place, which is often represented by contesting human consciousness. Therefore, while narrating a story about a place geographers are quite often juxtaposed between objective and subjective poles.

Lefebvre (1991, b) *'Production of Space'* strongly advocates the idea of Karl Marx, as Marx postulated on commenting for 'fetishism', Material world is both simultaneously thing and a process (Marx, 1967). Therefore, Lefebvre points out that conceptualisation of Space as material landscape produced as the result of necessity as a character in a place with time acquires meanings in everyday social activities. Hence, the emergence of socio-physical landscape is the result of the processes which operates simultaneously across spatial and temporal scales, in this context Lefebvre highlights that the interactions between the space and place becomes important and argues that the relationship between space and place does not arise out of abstract determination.

Lefebvre in his pioneering work argues that space is not absolutely abstract, separated from a place which is often taken as synonym. Therefore, Lefebvre places his argument by stating that space and place both have ontological positions as both are included in material construction,

which includes human interference. Likewise, the idea of space and place must be constructed on the basis of how they infuse onto each other, rather than disagreeing, as Lefebvre argues.

Lefebvre's framework is important and flexible in understanding and interpreting the contestations laid between space and place, which helps to build the notion of place and its role in shaping the social whole.

Lefebvre (1991) challenged the dualist nature and went on to introduce the third contestation, as Lefebvre have been responsible for the spatial turn in social sciences, he argues that before a space is inhabited it must be in order as to be lived, as he is of the opinion that each living body is space and has its space, thus living bodies produces space and vice-versa.

Lefebvre (1991, b) with his lifelong intellectual project '*The Production of Space*' Lefebvre challenged the traditional notion of space as abstract arena and passive container by proposing a theory which unified Physical, Social and Mental conceptions of space. Through this he sought to understand the role of space, which focused on production and reproduction of space.

Lefebvre highlights three important processes to understand space as 'Conceptual Triad' (Lefebvre, 1991, a.p.33). Namely, Representations of Space, Representational Space, and Spatial Practice.

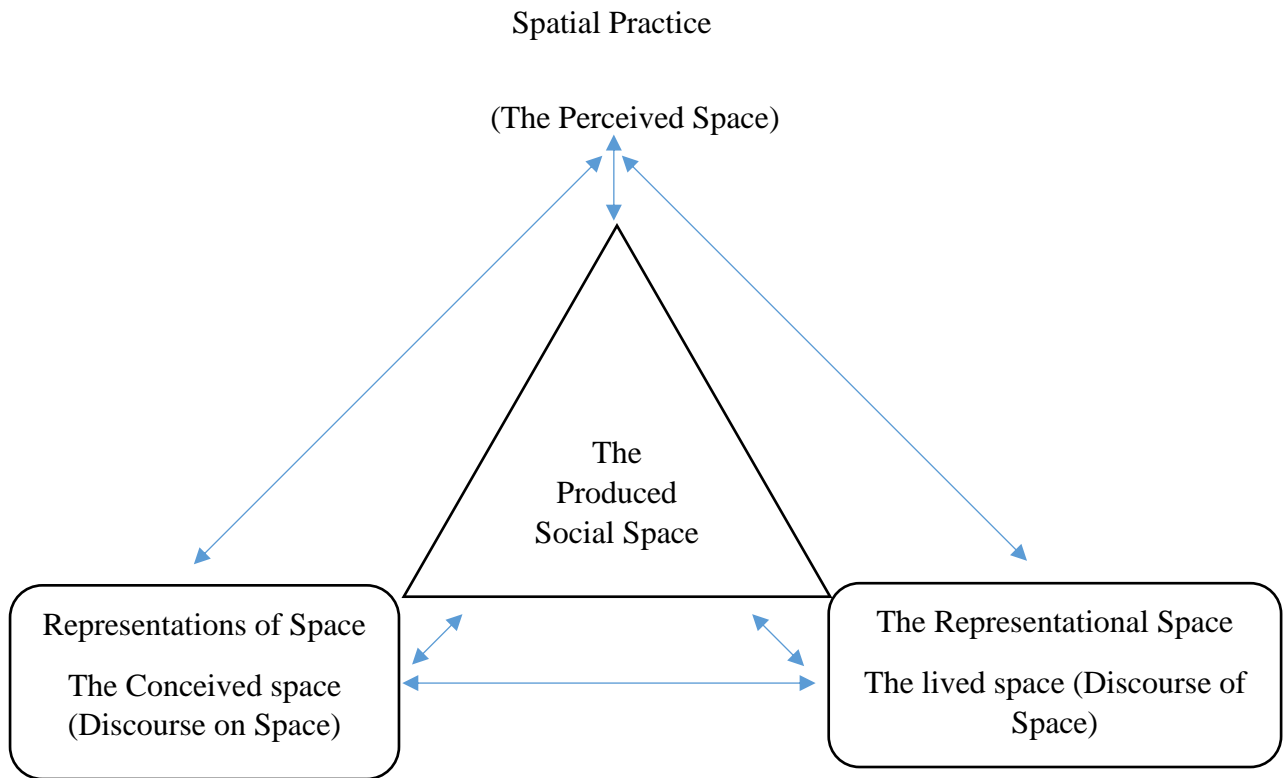


Fig 1. Illustration of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad

Source: Simon Briercliffe: Using –Lefebvre's- Triad.

The first element that contributes to the production of space as pointed out by Lefebvre is Spatial Practices or the Perceived space, which is the outcome of choices and practices.

Secondly, the more theoretical element is Representational space. The space experienced passively, through imaginations. Therefore, Lefebvre refers this as the lived space, because of the meaning it holds. This is where history is narrated and made, where movement begins.

Lastly, The Representation of Space also known as the Conceived Space, which is created and produced by the meanings attached to it.

Therefore, Lefebvre's conceptual triad becomes important as a tool for assessing historical spaces, as space can no longer be viewed as static, but as a platform of struggles that shapes ideas, beliefs, and principles. Space is interconnected with lived experiences, highlighting

every arena of social and cultural life. Therefore, this draws the understanding of discourse of Gorkhaland from the lens of Place and Space.

Similarly after Lefebvre, Soja (1996) argued that place can be understood as physical and social landscape, interwoven with meanings with everyday social practices, the product of processes which operate through different scales of time. Eventually Soja has categorized space into three dimensions, namely Perceived Space inclusive of emotional and behavioural characteristics which shapes and organises actions of bodies. Secondly, as Soja highlights Conceived Space is all about the knowledge of Spaces, which is the result of the power discourse and constructed ideologies. Likewise the third space which Soja illustrates is the space where the subjective and objective dimensions of space meet.

However, Soja's argument may be different from that of Entrikins, but the idea of third space amongst both the scholars can be taken to be the same.

Jessop et.al (2008) stressing on interdisciplinary research, though their main focus lays on socio-spatial relations, in their work has stressed on using different approaches as to investigate a Place. As they argues place should be looked into as specific location extending over wide scales.

Jauhiainen (2005) while dividing space into four categories talks about space being produced due to economic activity, which constitutes of borders and giving emphasis to socio-spatial relations, likewise Jauhiainen argues that the existence of space is only possible after some meaning is added through human involvement.

While talking about place, varied definitions by distinct authors are applied as to define Place (Massey, 1994; Agnew, 1987; Martin, 2003). Place is viewed as a social construct incorporating various characters and representations. As the discussions about the idea of Place

and space is concerned it involves a varied organisation of literature which often discusses the emotional, symbolic and meta-physical description about places.

Tuan (1974) is credited for turning the interest in space and introducing the concept in a holistic way through his thoughtful and insightful definition of space, as he considers how people feel and think about space and how attachments are formed. '*Topophilia*' the term coined by Tuan generalises the idea of space. At this juncture the clarification about the concept of the place was most important, likewise, exploring the notion of place and space various other eminent scholars have contributed to the development of the concept yet Tuan's work occupies the central position till date. As to quote Tuan "*What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with meaning.*"(Tuan, 1973, p.16).

Similarly, as the concept of space and place is important in humanistic geography. The concept of Space and Place has certain differences and often contrasted. To say Space is abstract and lacks meaning, while Place is embedded with attachment and meaning. Rather a Place is observed as a Space embedded with meaning. Therefore, Space and Place is often described and interpreted in accordance to the meanings rendered upon by human beings (Tuan, 1977, p.6)

Augé (1995) argued the definition of place cannot be laid on the basis of what it comprises of, rather it can also be defined by what it ignores.

While discussing the importance of Place and Space in relation to Identity formation Sarbin (1983) highlights the interrelationship between Place, Identity and self, putting his argument on the note of place being socially created, he further argues about the changing notion of place in relation to various theoretical approaches and fields of study.

Relph (1976) while introducing the concept of mass-identity, which he states as meanings created by opinion makers and often supplemented by media, argues that mass-identity are often located on stereotypes and associated with symbols and significance.

Similarly, Alexander (2002) while citing the example of Holocaust and its relation to a particular space and memories attached to the particular event has stated that historical events can be used in building wider context and understanding of space, as historical events often creates and adds Meaning to a particular place.

Friedman (2007) Discusses the role played by state and its involvement in place making, as he illustrates that the creation, of particular image of a place by the state by contrasting everyday life and deciding on activities also adds meaning to a particular place. The influence of state is thus deeper in creating a place through various institutions and planning. Likewise, through the involvement of state in place making quite often conflict between the individual and state can emerge too.

Martin (2003) highlights the importance of narratives in forming a place. The way a place is formed and perceived the processes involved in it are not static rather it is more dynamic, which he states is the result of common ground for collective action which shapes people's ideas about places. Common experiences, new meanings, values and interests in relation to a particular place in turn distinguishes people from others.

Therefore, valued arguments and debate are placed as to inquire why the meanings attached to a place in individual level contributes to their collective Identity. Hence, adding meaning to a particular space and place results in discovering and creating Identities, likewise Gorkhaland has been rendered with meanings over the period of time with connections and attachment of individual in relation to space and place.

Similarly, the idea of Gorkhaland can be contested in this format as space, place and place making is connected to nostalgia for awakening feelings, security, belongingness and freedom. Thus place plays an important role in creating place connections and place identities.

Therefore the contestations and theoretical approaches led to the understanding of place as a social construct.

While locating the studies conducted on the sense of Place and Identity formation it becomes important to analyse and understand the contributions made by distinguished scholars as the importance of Space and Place in framing Identity has been investigated by many scholars from distinct backgrounds.

Foucault (1967) in his work has located the transformation of space and its importance in understanding social realities. Arguing about the fact that during 19th century the whole idea was related to history, but during the present times space has emerged to be above all its assumptions. He discards the obsession of time in relation to space, as Foucault states it is time that has highlighted space to be as fixed. While contributing extensively towards the theory building process he stated that it is power that regulates Space, likewise in his discussions about power and space, he talks about power being influential and central in developing the idea about the sense of place.

Harvey (1992) while commenting on Place and Identity has said that Space and Place are like overlying Images that builds strong question upon us. As he argues by stating that the function of space, can be identified and analysed when the space is looked from the perspective of how a space is utilised and produced which also designs identities. The nature of place is his main argument in relation to global capitalism and the changing world. Harvey however has talked about how social movements can picturise place and shape social identities.

Following the arguments put forward by Harvey, Massey (1995) while reflecting on Harvey's Ideas have situated her arguments on time being one of the important factor for constructing place as firm and deep rooted, as she states the world itself is not stable and the notion of place may vary as according to the changing dimensions of the world. Therefore highlighting his views on place being dynamic she states that place identities are produced by history and connections as places cannot be captured by the idea of hard boundaries.

Physical boundaries do not justify places, but passes social relations and in turn creates social places, but the places created by social relation are not absolute as they obtain character from other associations. Boundaries are nothing more than a method of branding social space, more attachment and determination comes into play while developing identity within the enclosed place, as they are also important for place making.

Rose (1995) while talking about Place and Identity brings forward the discussion about how the sense of place discusses about the relationship between sense of place and feelings, which are often loaded with meanings. Belonging, Relation and Contrast as highlighted by Rose plays an important role in adding meaning to the sense of place, as these three components are interrelated and overall shapes identities.

Talking about the identity and place being conceptualised as socially produced, the relation between both has been treated as unproblematic.

At this juncture of discussion about Place and Identity the work of Agnew (1987) which talks about giving less importance to the study of space in both global and local terms discusses about how the study of space was overlooked as more importance was laid upon power and identity, which was at the centre in social sciences. Hence, the importance of Place and Space in development of Identity was neglected. Similarly, as Agnew argues less emphasis was given

to the study of place and space in relation to identity formation, even in Human Geography, even after the development of discipline.

Looking at the nature of discussion and approaches towards the study of Place, various scholars have poured in their thoughts and brought forward their arguments, similarly geographers have contributed largely for the same. In relation to the discussions about Place being social construct which was brought forward previously, geographers have mostly focused on how Place is related in terms of creating Identity.

William and Smith (1983) discusses about the idea of National creation of Space, reflecting upon the processes involved in Place or making of Homeland. Similarly, Jackson and Penrose (1993) have talked about the cultural and political discourse about place and territory as interlinked and how the perception of a particular group matters in establishing the link between identity and space, in relation to social and geographical locations.

Hence, with the focuses on the relationship between Power, Place and Identity. Paasi (1996) while discussing about social construction of place has pointed out the processes through which place can create social identities. Paasi has highlighted the importance of borders in creating consciousness over space, which in turn produces and or reproduces identity.

Similarly, Paasi (2001) illustrates that local identities are the result of differences be it in the form of cultural or natural. Through this differences a particular region is also distinguished as compared to others and this further paves way for creation of local identities.

Barth, (1969) says territory lies central in relation to ethnic identity, focusing on the importance of territory for the formation of identity. Homeland and Belonging are connected to ethnicity or vice-versa, based on myths and history and so geographical boundary makes belonging familiar and concrete and nurture attachment and belonging.

Winichakul, (1997) brings forward the original insights into the emergence of new territorial entity, as he investigates the influence of maps and modern techniques through which the territorial entity becomes imaginable. Through his arguments on rise of ‘geo-body’ he states that the idea of territorial entity is more exact through the idea of maps, likewise maps has also played an important role in shaping the relationship between territorial entity and ‘we-people’.

1.2.2 Strategic Imaginative Geographies

The literatures on construction of Space highlights Imaginative Geographies not only as interpretations of objective truth, but rather as the representation of unnoticed reality. Therefore, Imaginative Geographies are more often engaged in defining and interpreting the world.

The advocates of Critical-Geopolitics have shown that Imaginative Geographies when associated with Power and Knowledge can attain dominant character and prove to be of great importance to validate and argue over the physical assumptions of space. Therefore to build on the connection between Space, Place and to understand Gorkhaland strategic imaginative Geographies has been applied.

Reuber, (1999) says that the selective representation of claimed territory as strategic imaginative geographies, as constructed by conscious actors reflecting their objective over the claim of space.

Radcliffe, (1998) illustrates imaginative geographies are images and discourse built around a place, which are constructed and de-constructed within a cultural setting interwoven in socio-economic grounds.

Therefore, she states that strategic imaginative geographies to be geographies of identity, which builds the feelings of belongingness and attachment to places

Said, (2000) while highlighting the role of Imaginative Geographies has talked about the role of space in human affairs, and has highlighted the importance of imaginative geographies in construction of space, discussing about memory and geography in want for capturing the said objective. Said, further has elaborated on how geographical imagination holds the power to shape and express ethnic consciousness and identities.

1.2.3 Literature on understanding Gorkhaland Movement

Subba et.al (2009) in their book “*Indian Nepalis, Issues and Perspectives*” has well expressed Gorkha identity and the Gorkhaland movement building arguments and uniformly contesting the stereotypes, highlighting the facts of how the Gorkha identity is imagined by the self and how it is placed in larger academic literature. Thus Gorkha identity is more of a cultural identity emerging out of common culture and expressed through different imageries.

Sarkar (2010) in his article “*The Land Question and Ethnicity in the Darjeeling Hills*” has stressed on the fact that, the cause of ethnic movements may have multiple reasons Regarding the Gorkhaland Movement, he argues by saying that it is neither entirely the outcome of sentiments nor influences, but talks about Gorkhaland Movement being the product of social order.

Similarly, (Dasgupta, 2012) highlights the problem of Identity as an internal affair of nation which emerges out of the overall problem of the uneven development of different nationalities in our country.

While talking about the issues of Identity many of the scholars have located their study on Gorkhas being the martial race, the ethnicity question and the movement overall but (Rai, 2009) in her book "*Gorkhas the Warrior Race*" has talked about, how the failure in development schemes (i.e. development planning) in India has led to the generation of display of separate ethnic expressions like Gorkhaland movement and many others.

Similarly looking at the recent studies, (Bagchi, 2012) has tried to probe into the subjective world of the statehood movement (p. xv), presenting the loose assembling of chronologies comprising Darjeeling and the Gorkhaland Movement. While Bagchi has tried to highlight different facets of the movement and the question of ethnicity his argument on contestation of crisis of statehood lacks analytical depth.

In addition, the study on Gorkhaland lacks theoretical orientations at present and why and how the idea of Gorkhaland Came into existence still remains unexplored in the main stream academia and discussions. The few existing literatures mostly focuses on the development of the movement and the question of ethnic identity. As Gorkhaland has been discussed from various grounds, one can also trace the highly romanticised and blurred account of Gorkhaland and its history as presented by various non-Gorkha scholars.

However, it is to be noted that most of the works on Gorkhaland are old, hence there is a need for new studies to highlight how the Idea of Gorkhaland emerged with time, which is also the need of the hour. Thus it is very important to understand Gorkhaland in larger sphere, where the absence of contested arguments and research has moreover blurred the Idea of Gorkhaland at the contemporary times.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The rationale of the study is to historically map out the role of Space and Place in the creation of 'we-self' and 'Homeland' with special reference to Gorkhaland. Much of the earlier works on Gorkhaland lacks to provide theoretical orientations, hence the present study would focus on opening new academic discourse over the issue of Gorkhaland, which could supplement further contestations, research and reflections.

1.4 Objectives

- I.** To analyse the Political, Social and Economic discourse on Gorkhaland
- II.** To examine the formation of Gorkhaland with the lens of Place and Space.

1.5 Methods

Knowing is always a relation between the knower and the known (Smith, 1990).

The focus of the study is directed towards the discourse of how a place as specific space, or Homeland is produced. Likewise, it becomes important to look into the discourse of Homeland for developing understanding.

'Homeland' is to say 'Abstract'. It is the product of discourse in relation to time, thus the study seek to underline the discourse of Homeland in context to Gorkhaland. Thus, the concept of space and place has been adopted to examine the social construction of Gorkhaland.

In order to meet the above stated objectives, mainly the qualitative approach has been engaged in this study. As qualitative approach is more competent in assessment of attitudes, subjectivities, opinions and behaviour (Goddard and Melville, 2004).

Likewise, qualitative approach is concerned with qualitative phenomena i.e. relating to quality or kind³.

Both Primary and Secondary sources of data have been incorporated in this study. Similarly, the methods applied for collecting primary data are many, yet for the pursuance of this study Unstructured interviews in the form of formal conversations has been applied to understand the important aspect of the problem. The interviews seek to follow flexible approach.

Purposive sampling has been applied for the selection of sample, for knowledge construction and to engage with the study. Overall 50 samples were interviewed for the pursuance of this study owing to the appropriateness, complexity and availability of time and respondents. The selection of samples was shaped by my belief that the sample has to be representative. Therefore, 30 common people, 6 Academicians, 5 Social Activists, followed by 4 Journalist and 5 Political leaders from different Political parties were interviewed. Similarly, Purposive Sampling was embedded in this study, as it produces satisfactory outcomes for the study.

Mostly the interviews were conducted in Nepali language and some were recorded with due permission of the respondent. Likewise, the interviews were transcribed and translated in English for the convenience of the study. Normally, the questions were centred on the very idea of Gorkhaland and themes were generated accordingly. Along with this field observation has been embedded in this study to critically examine and understand the issue.

To support the data collected from the primary sources, the study engages the secondary sources, relevant journals, articles, books, various reports, and internet websites.

³ See Wayne Goddard, Stuart Melville (2004) "*Research Methodology: An Introduction*".

Further, informal secondary sources embedded in the pursuance of this study includes, The Gazetteers of Darjeeling and Bengal, various handbooks and official reports.

Similarly, for narratives on present issue of Gorkhaland, a great deal of references were taken from news dailies, both local and national and other relevant sources along with online portals to track everyday narratives of the events related to the issue.

To understand the Discourse of Gorkhaland as Homeland, and to analyse the information gathered from both primary and secondary sources i) Discourse Analysis and ii) Narrative analysis has been applied to summarise the study.

Discourse in this study has been taken as “*set of statements which lies on some discursive formation*” the study thus adopts the Idea of Michel Foucault as stated in “*The Archaeology of Knowledge*” Foucault has defined discourse as knowledge produced through social practices along with language and narratives, embed with meanings⁴.

Similarly, as narratives are viewed as social products that are produced by people in the context of specific social, Historical and Cultural locations. Narrative is also considered as a key through which people produce an identity, links past to the present and helps connect intimate details of experience to broader social and spatial relations. Therefore narrative analysis has also been applied to analyse the information in this study.

Further, map of Darjeeling has been produced with the help of Geographical Information System

⁴ See Michel Foucault, (1992) “*The Archaeology of Knowledge*” Routledge: India (Reprint).pp.120-131 (Translated by A.N. Sheldon Smith).

1.6 Organisation of Chapters

The following study has been divided into five chapters and the sequence of the chapters has been designed as follows:

Chapter I: The first chapter of this study highlights the Statement of the Problem, Literature Review, with an emphasis on theoretical and conceptual analysis of Space, Place, Strategic Imaginative Geographies and Gorkhaland Movement, followed by Objectives of the Study, Research Methodology, Rationale of the Study and Organisation of the Study.

Chapter II: Chapter Two in this study highlights the Historical evolution of Darjeeling as a Place. Thus setting the background for analysing the discourse of Gorkhaland and Gorkha Identity in accordance to socio-political and economic discourses.

Chapter III: Chapter Three in this study focuses on concept of Space, and Place in analysing the genesis of Gorkhaland as imagined Homeland.

Chapter IV: Chapter Four presents a study on Development, Identity and question of Representation as popular geographies of Gorkhaland. The chapter tries to incorporate various arguments, views and contestations in justifying the Idea of Gorkhaland.

Chapter V: Chapter Five concludes the study with critical discussions and understandings.

CHAPTER 2

GORKHALAND, GORKHA IDENTITY AND ITS DISCOURSE

“Political Struggles are not fought on the surface of geography, but through its very fabric/action⁵”

.... (Steve Pile, 2000)

2.1. Introduction

Places do not change frequently, therefore the role of history becomes important in mapping the production and transformation of place. Hence, as place is projected as the product of history, involving stratified segment of history, the social conditions and representations, history and its role has been applied extensively in this chapter, to situate and produce Gorkhaland within it in accordance to the ongoing politics of place.

Furthermore, the role of imperial power in territorialisation of place has been highlighted historically, as while investigating the Politics of Place, history has served as an effective tool in highlighting various images of a place. Therefore, history in this section has been taken as ontology and interpretation at various levels.

Similarly, the very word ‘Gorkha’ has been portrayed as option to the Nepalese of Indian origin, living in the district of Darjeeling, in North West Bengal. The Gorkha Identity over the years has been contested for the demand of separate state, as Gorkhas’ imagined Homeland.

However, owing to the similar demands in the country. Gorkhaland is moreover projected as a remedy to the discrimination meted out in various spheres, be it socio-economic, political or cultural. ‘Gorkha’ as identity, despite its colonial construction has been debated quite often and

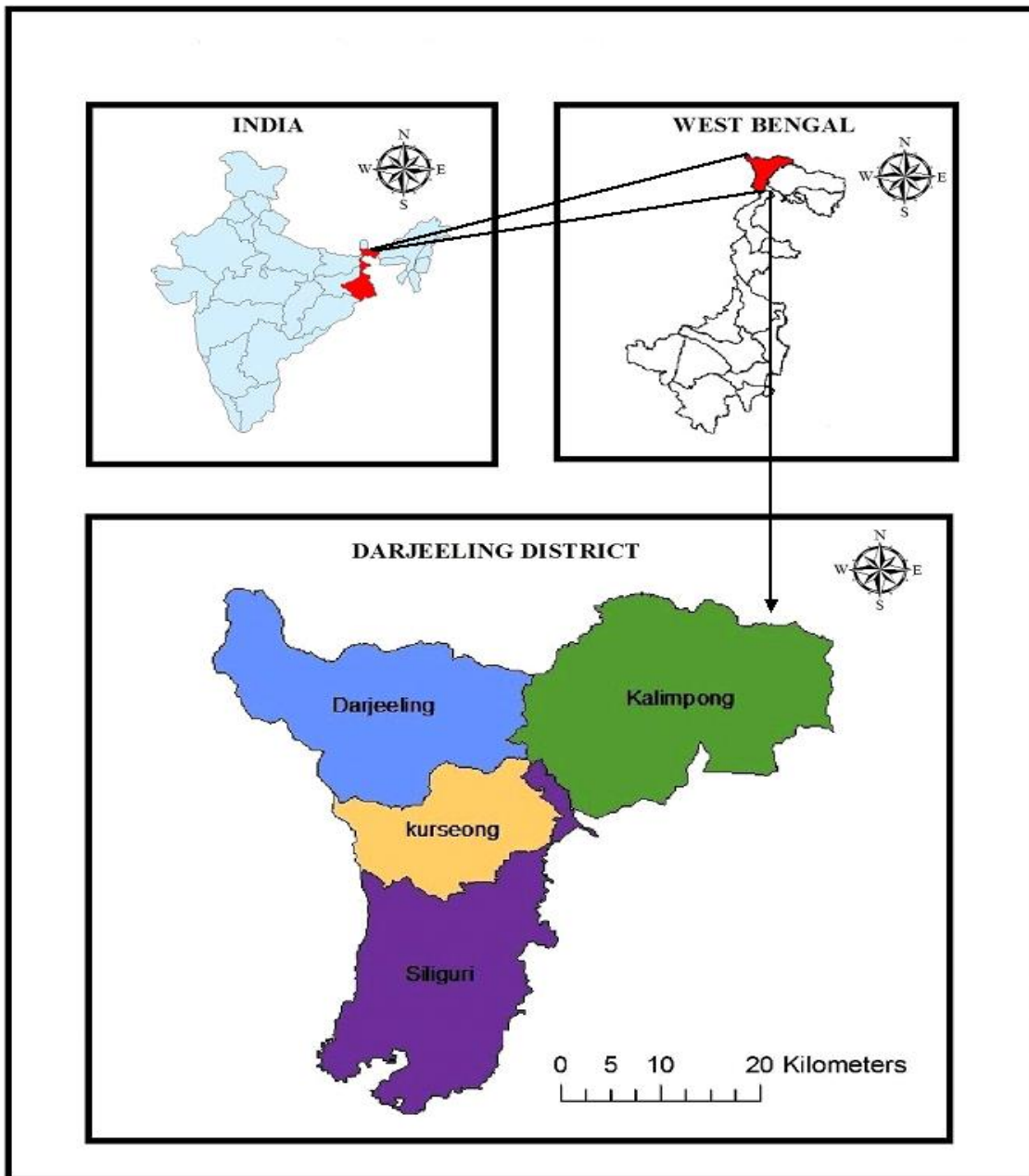
⁵ Steve Pile, (2000). “The Troubled Spaces of Frantz Fanon” in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (ed), Thinking Space, Routledge: London and New York, p.273.

thus this very contestation highlights the development of Gorkha identity as a necessity to claim legitimacy in various grounds.

Likewise, the question of self and other in context of Gorkhaland and Gorkha identity has over the years strengthen the very idea of Gorkhaland, which till date has sustained the claim for Homeland and recognition owing to various discriminations as mentioned above.

The demand for Gorkhaland stands to be one of the oldest demands for statehood in the country, which has a distinct aspect to it in relation to the place itself i.e. Darjeeling, as compared to other similar demands within the country.

Therefore, to understand and map out the very discourse of Gorkhaland and Gorkha Identity, it becomes important to clarify the very genesis of the Idea of Gorkhaland. The spatial history of a place here becomes important in unfolding the transformation of space and place into which it is represented. Therefore the following section highlights the spatial history of Darjeeling as a place.



Map. No: 1. Map of Darjeeling District along with Sub-Divisions

Source: Developed by Author, by adopting the District and Sub-Divisions boundaries from
Map of Darjeeling, Census of India, 2011

2.2. Darjeeling: An Imperial Landscape

“A great amount of warring, betraying, bartering had occurred; between Nepal, England, Tibet, India, Sikkim, Bhutan; Darjeeling stolen from here, Kalimpong plucked from there – despite, ah, despite the mist charging down like a dragon, dissolving, undoing, making ridiculous the drawing of borders”. (Desai, 2006)

The history of Darjeeling has been contested by various scholars on diverse grounds, with efforts to establish the originality of the early communities settled there. The history of Darjeeling is juxtaposed in various discourses. The history of Darjeeling as a place is often brought into light with the resumption of Gorkhaland movement, the demand for separate state within the Indian union, as contested by the Gorkhas in Darjeeling hills. Therefore, the history of Darjeeling as a place holds prominent position in illustrating the claim for homeland.

The history of Darjeeling has been linked to Sikkim and Nepal in the pursuit of establishing the identity links, which has moreover confused the very position of Darjeeling as a place. Various school of thoughts have discussed the history of Darjeeling from various lenses, yet the history of Darjeeling as a place remains matted in time. This may be due to the lack of writing the history by experts, as the history of Darjeeling has been drafted by various elites and mostly non historians.

After analysing various literary contestations which unfolded with time over Darjeeling, prior to 1835 the history of Darjeeling is moreover astray. The history of Darjeeling as a place unfolds in relation to British and after the process of consolidation soon after its annexation from Sikkim.

Etinne Baliber, in *“The Nation from History and Ideology (1991)”* states that nations are borne out of empire. This stands true in case of the most Himalayan nations and in case of India too, and as such the history of Darjeeling is intertwined with Sikkim so the contestation placed

forward by Baliber matches to the interpretation of Darjeeling, as the British extended their colonial empire to Darjeeling, thus the space which once remained unexplored and uncivilised was superimposed by the empire likewise, the history of Darjeeling as a place unfolds.

2.2.1 Annexation of Darjeeling

The 'Deed of Grant' and the possession of Darjeeling is perplexing till date, Subba in "*Ethnicity, State and Development: The case of Gorkhaland Movement*," has highlighted the enigma in relation to the deed of grant, stating that it was major Lloyd who played an instrumental role in obtaining Darjeeling from the then Raja of Sikkim through various stages of negotiations, likewise Darjeeling was annexed by the British in October 31, 1835 (Subba, 1992, p.35-36).

Similarly, Fred Pinn in his book, *The Road of Destiny: Darjeeling Letters (1996)*, has stated that the process of negotiations started on 23rd January, 1835 with Chogyal of Sikkim (Pinn, 1990). Similarly, by 1st February 1835 Lloyd was successful in getting a deed of grant from the Raja of Sikkim (Dozey, 1922; O'Malley, 2001). Hence, the Deed of Grant as presented in Gazetteer of Darjeeling by O'Malley reads as follows:

"The Governor-General, having expressed his desire for the possession of the hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I, the Sikkim puttee Rajah, out of friendship for the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is, all the land south of the great Rangit river, east of the Balasun, Kahali and little Rangit rivers and west of Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers" (O' Malley, 2001: p. 26).

The Gazetteer of Bengal and the early accounts of British officials clearly highlights the interest of British over Darjeeling, the suitable climate and the objective of developing a sanatorium

for the British Soldiers and officials, along with establishing Darjeeling as the summer capital were the primary factors that led to the annexation of Darjeeling (Dash, 1994: p. 37-38, Dozey: p.3).

Similarly, other important reasons behind the annexation of Darjeeling includes the strategic location of Darjeeling and its geo-political importance as a place surrounded by four international borders.

Darjeeling would serve as an important location as the policy of British at that point of time was developing trade relations with Tibet and central Asia. Therefore, the importance of Darjeeling was mapped out by British in Safeguarding the North East Frontier too (Dasgupta, 1999).

2.2.2 Whose Land it is?

The Gorkhas/ Nepalis living in the hills of Darjeeling has often been stereotyped as migrant community and the Lepchas has been projected as the originals of the place. The population figures has played an important role in developing the contestation as the census of 1991 records 249,117 souls living in Darjeeling, which prior to the census was recorded to be 100 souls, whom were mostly recognised as Lepchas inhabiting the place.

Katwal, in *“A History of Darjeeling Region: Revisited through lens of the Gorkhaland Movement”* confronts the very idea of migration and increase in population. He argues that the early population as projected by Campbell and Lloyd i.e. of 100 souls was only the population of Observatory hill.

Therefore, Katwal contends that other natives were excluded and not enumerated, primarily because of varying altitudes, extreme locations and nomadic way of life, which made impossible to record them (Katwal, 2014:94).

Similarly in this regard, History of Darjeeling, Bhutan and Nepal has been highlighted by T.B.Subba, placing his argument as historically Darjeeling was partially ruled by Bhutan and Nepal the movement of people in this region was free as they moved from one territory to another, therefore the people cannot be termed as immigrants (Subba, 1992:38).

Even at the contemporary times the politics of Divide and Rule has been practiced by West Bengal government to destabilise the unity of the hill community by dividing various tribes into castes and sub-castes from larger Gorkha fold. Hence, the practice of politics of Divide and Rule has further developed and strengthen the aspiration for separation.

Subba, in contestation of politics of Divide and Rule highlights the case of recognition of Nepali language, which was tactfully invalidated by then chief minister of West Bengal, B. C. Roy.

2.2.3 Population Movement and Dawn of Settlement

The annexation of Darjeeling hills under the colonial British rule fostered rapid development of the areas giving rise to the urban sectors and industries. Though Darjeeling was developed as urban centre by the erstwhile British Government, the migration of people from the adjoining areas cannot be overlooked. The migration along with development of the region was induced by the British. Similarly, the process of migration initiated the development of Nepali settlements in the region, which was supported by the then colonial masters in Darjeeling hills.

This process of migration was initiated by the British to outnumber the Buddhist Population in the region, as British were not in good terms with the Lepchas and Bhutias in the region (Samanta, 2000:45).

The Bhutias and Lepchas were indigenous of Sikkim and were in close proximity with Tibet. Similarly on the other hand Gorkhas were loyal to British and had gained confidence and trust for not breaching the loyalty against the British. Furthermore the recruitment of Gorkhas in the British Indian Army and the assistance and material support delivered by the Gorkhas in 1857 during the Sepoy Mutiny further assured and guaranteed the British Government about their loyalty.

Risely (1894) describes Gorkhas to be "*friendly to our Governments*" likewise, the migration of Nepalis were important in keeping a close eye over the Bhutias and Lepchas. Further, the reasons behind migration of Nepalis to Darjeeling and adjoining areas can be supplemented with the help of 'Push' and 'Pull' factors.

The prosperous development of Tea industry in the region since 1852, provided the economic opportunities, similarly the industry being based on large labour force created the demand of potential labour owing to more job opportunities, likewise the commercialisation of Tea industry increased the demand of labour. Therefore, by the dawn of 1876, with the rapid employment the tea workers constituted about 90% of the people migrated basically from Eastern Nepal (Hutt, 1997, p. 112).

Similarly, the Nepali community grew between 1852 and the last quarter of nineteenth century enormously, as the Tea industry was declining with the beginning of twentieth century (Ibid).

Likewise the 'Santhal Uprising' has been highlighted as one of the major reason for migration and recruitment of hill people in the tea industry, as the Santhals were against the colonist for

forced labour and similarly on the other hand the Santhals could not adapt to the cold climatic conditions of the hills as they were the natives belonging from Deccan plateau.

Thus, with the availability of the cheap labour from eastern Nepal to work in the tea plantations saw the growth of Nepali community in abundance (Lama, 2009, p. 88-87).

The labour force migrated from Nepal were paid in the form of cash, and were granted forest lands for settlements. The payment in the form of cash, which was rare in their lands further the payment in terms of cash also attracted abundant labour force to work in the labour intensive tea plantations in Darjeeling hills.

In this context, the popular saying, “*chiya ko boot ma paisa falcha re*” (money grows in the tea plants) further speeded up the process of labour migration.

Likewise, the Nepalis proved to be productive to the British, not only as a labour force in tea plantations but also in other allied activities along with the use of steam engines and other engineering activities (O’Malley, 1999, p. 72). Likewise, apart from the tea labourers the recruits in the army were also provided with cash.

Further, with the initiation of Darjeeling Himalayan Railways in 1881, more migrants came in from Nepal to Darjeeling, the labourers were mostly involved in marginal works such as coolies’ et.al. The opening of railways further provided employment opportunities in the hills of Darjeeling, therefore maximum number of labourers belonged to Nepali Community.

Kumar Pradhan (1982, p, 13-14) argues that Nepali community was present in Darjeeling before 1835, and the beginning of migration from adjoining areas and Nepal. Similarly, the argument placed forward by Pradhan in this context is based on the literature and written documents of Nepal prior to 1815 and around which provides the evidence of mobility between peoples “*The going and the coming between eastern Nepal and Darjeeling*” (cited in Hutt, 1997, p, 12).

Census report of 1871 highlights that 42% of the total population were '*Kirats*' of eastern Nepal which constituted the major chunk of Nepali community in the hills (Samanta, 2000: 20).

Similarly, after the annexation of Kalimpong in 1865, the migration from Nepal was further encouraged which led to the development of agricultural sector in Kalimpong as tea was not suitable for the region climatically. Likewise, agriculture became distinguishable feature of Kalimpong.

The migration was encouraged as Nepalis were established cultivators in the Eastern Himalayas. The settled form of agriculture and cultivation for British were solely about generating more revenues. Therefore, as O'Malley points out in District Gazetteer of Darjeeling the increase of Nepali migrants were notable in Kalimpong as was the case of Darjeeling. Similarly, the growth of population was observed, since its acquisition till 1901 the population of Kalimpong increased by 55.9% (O'Malley, 1999, p, 36).

The recruitment in the British Indian Army was another important factors which significantly contributed for the settlement of Nepali population.

Darjeeling provided a viable place for those who were in search of better livelihood prospects, a society unfound on the basis of castes or religious bias and sectarian attitude free from the hegemonic and dictatorial rule as seen in case of the Rana rule in Nepal. "The increasing importance of Darjeeling under free institutions was a source of loss and frustration to the lamas and leading men in Sikkim, headed by the Dewan Namguay, who were sharers in monopoly of all trade in Sikkim and lost their rights over those slaves who settled as free men and British subjects in the Darjeeling territory (Dash, 2011, p, 39)

The detreating relation of Sikkim with the Company was not merely the result of the above stated factors but was paved when the potential of the land was verified well enough during the ever first visit of Lloyd and J.W. Grant in 1829 who visited the "*Old Gorkha station called*

Darjeeling” (O’Malley, 1999, p, 20, Dash, 2011, p, 37). The Company’s custody over Darjeeling and their vivid involvement in altering the ceded area into a urban hill resort led to the en suite of resentment on the part of Sikkim against the British (Sinha, 2007).

The British were well calculative and assured that the migration not merely from Nepal would be possible but as Lloyd states that if that part of the hill was kept under the British hold the migratory stock would not merely include the Nepalese but even the Lepchas who had emigrated to Nepal due to the tyrannical nature of the Rajah who would be willing to work for the British. (O’Malley, 1999, p, 20).

Fig: 2. Decadal Population Growth in Darjeeling (1901-2011)

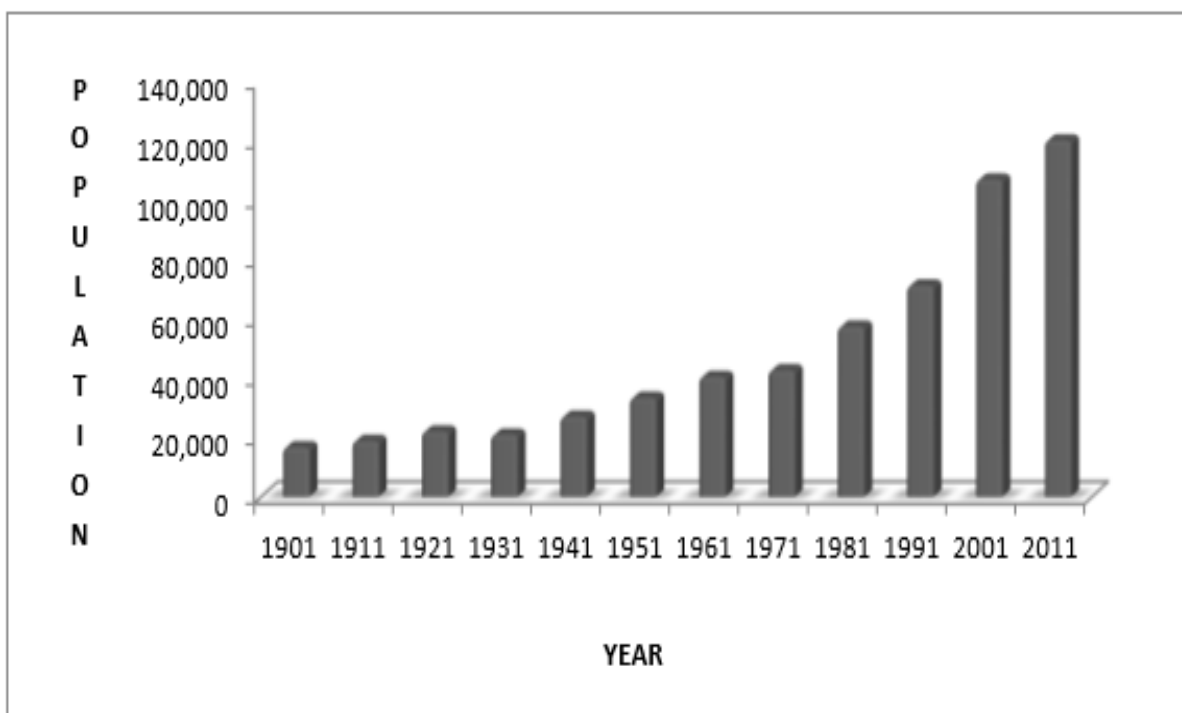


Table 2 highlights the trend of decadal population growth of Darjeeling and its growth rate since 1901 to 2011. After the dawn of settlement and population movement Darjeeling observed fluctuation in the growth of its population. The population of Darjeeling has been increasing ever since it was annexed by British from King of Sikkim. All the decades except 1921 to 31 showed positive population growth. This decade can be understood as a great

distinctive decade, because only this decade demarcated the population growth in the negative manner. The growth rate of population during this decade dropped down to - 4.82 percent, with reference to some literature it was known that this was mainly due to abnormal mortality due to plague, cholera, malaria, fever along with famines and other natural calamities leading to negative growth rate of population during this decade. Again from 1941 to 2011 the population growth of Darjeeling showed positive trend. Darjeeling has experienced a significant growth of population since 1970's onwards. The highest growth rate of the town was seen during 1990's with 49.98 percent and it was far above the national, state and district level.

Further, during the decade 2001 to 2011 the growth rate of the town went down as compared to previous decade. During this decade mainly flourished the era of globalization and the socio-cultural status of the people were much developed due to increasing literacy level.

2.2.4 Administrative Profile of Darjeeling

The District was formerly a non-regulation District, that is to say, Acts and Regulations did not come into force unless they were specially extended to the District (Dash, 1947). Darjeeling had no representative in the legislative council constituted under the Government of India Act 1919. It was excluded and declared a backward tract. The Administration of Darjeeling District was not subject to vote of the Legislature.

The effect of exclusion was that any act passed by the Legislature which extended to the whole of Bengal automatically applied to Darjeeling District, unless the Government in the council directed that the Act in question should not apply subject to such notifications as the Governor thought proper.

As the District was partially excluded area under section 92 of the Government of India Act of the Provincial or Central Legislature applies to it unless the Governor by public notification so

directs, the Governor General possessed the power of adopting legislation for the non-regulated provinces by means of executive orders.

The district was included under the general regulation system for a brief period of 1861-70, thereafter the Act of 1870 once again took it out of the regulation system. However the administrative set up for the Darjeeling district which was considered to be less effective was for a short duration of time i.e. from 1870-74. Further; the District was brought under the purview of Scheduled District Act, 1874 during the time of British India.

The administrative arrangement for Darjeeling as the Scheduled District remained unchanged for a long period of time. In 1909 The Indian Council Act was formulated and this Act too brought no change. However in 1919, The Government of India Act, retaining all the provisions of Scheduled District and their administration framed new terminology and Darjeeling was put under 'The Backward Tracts'.

Thus Darjeeling was a Backward Tract and remained so till the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935 which declared the district along with some others as a partially excluded area. Such administrative arrangement that provided the district of Darjeeling the status of partially excluded areas remained till the attainment of the independence of India.

Thus, it is possible to assert that the district of Darjeeling had been kept outside the purview of general administration and that it remained isolated throughout the greater part of British rule in India.

2.2.5 Education as a Tool

The course of Darjeeling's history, struggling for Homeland is clearly associated to the introduction of formal education by the British, which moreover shaped the cause of Darjeeling as a Social Space.

The role of Catholic influences in developing and uplifting the general masses on both mental and spiritual grounds were visible during 1840's (Dozey, 1992, p, 103). Therefore as Katwal highlights, there were total of 2731 boys and 466 girls, with total of 95 primary schools in the whole district (Katwal, 2014, p, 45).

Thus, this introduction of formal education in turn developed and cultivated consciousness among the educated youths drawing attention to prevailing social conditions around them. Similarly, the notion of colonialization was developed, being colonised by the British and then the Bengalis, highlights Chakraborty (Chakraborty, 2000, p, 259).

2.3 Struggle for Separation:

Struggle for separation has been part and parcel of Darjeeling, Representing the three hill community viz. Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha the very first demand for autonomy, "Separate Administrative Setup" was place forward by "*Hill Men Association*" before the government in 1907, and this was the very first step which marked differences between the hills and plains (Dasgupta, 1999, p, 58).

The birth of formal education in the hills and political consciousness helped understand the existing social realities and conditions in the hills, therefore the memorandum for separation was placed forwarded, similarly, other factors which led to the idea of separation is Anti-Partition movement in Bengal (1905-1911), The quest for unified Bengal, started movements

in the eastern region, based on linguistic grounds, likewise Darjeeling at that point of time was regarded as “Scheduled District” though attached to Bengal Presidency at that point of time for administrative reasons. The people of Darjeeling hills claimed to be different historically, socially and culturally ignited the flames of separation thus claiming autonomy.

2.4 Socio-Political Discourse of Gorkhaland

Communist Party of India started to highlight the issue of Gorkha identity from 1940 onwards and undertaking the issue of identity the idea of ‘Gorkhasthan’ was developed involving the larger fold of tea plantation workers in the region. Similarly, the leaders of Communist party failed to convince the leaders of major political parties even after their repeated and continuous effort. Therefore, considering the situation and outcome of various approaches put forward in attaining the said demand the communist party somehow kept the demand for ‘Gorkhasthan’ at low ends(Ibid, 2000, p , 97)

However, after the formation of AIGL (All India Gorkha League) under the leadership of Damber Bahadur Gurung the demand for ‘Gorkhasthan’ was reformed. The demand was based on taking forward the issues related to the Gorkha Identity and the recognition of Nepali language. Similarly, the rise of AIGL in Darjeeling hills was the major reason behind downfall of Hill Men Association in the hills, which was ultimately dissolved. Therefore, after gaining popularity and majority in the hills and owing to the demands vis-à-vis the issue of Identity and language, AIGL ultimately redesigned its objectives. The revised objective of AIGL were as Follows:

- 1) To get the Gorkhas recognised as a separate minority community.
- 2) To get them represented in the provincial legislatures wherever they are settled.

3) To get them represented in the interim governments and

4) To free all held as political prisoners by the British Government (Chatterji, 2007, p, 126).

Similarly, the above mentioned issues which were highlighted by AIGL was not taken into consideration by the then British Government, which ultimately led to dissatisfaction among the general masses in Darjeeling hills. Therefore, following the political developments the AIGL started the demand for the recognition of Nepali language in the State and demanded that Nepali language be made the official language in Darjeeling Hills.

Christian missionaries played an important role in improving the Nepali language by translating the Bible into Nepali. Along with the Christian missionaries the Nepali literati also played an important role which further led to the development of Nepali language which further led to the assemtation of cultural and ethnic development of identity (Dasgupta, 1999, p, 59).

Nepali language has moreover played an important role in developing the notion of ethnic identity in Darjeeling, it has also served as a tool in portraying cultural differences, unity and political consciousness over the period of time (Sarkar, 2013, p. 52).

Likewise, during the time of Independence, the Indian government was cautious about the further division of Bengal (Dasgupta, 1999, p, 61).

It was during this period of time various demands for autonomy was gaining momentum, similarly, at this very point of time the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule of the constitution was voiced.

Following which the movement gained momentum and the inclusion of Nepali language was advocated by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chaterjee, member of Language Commission. However, the non- inclusion of Nepali language induced sense of discrimination, which further amplified the frustration of the Gorkhas.

Soon after the non-inclusion of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule, various organisations like All India Nepali Bhasa Samity, Bharatiya Nepali Rashtriya Parishad arose to advocate the issue of Nepali language and to keep it away from political forums. Therefore, the efforts of various organisations led to the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule in 1992, by 71st Amendment of the Constitution. The Nepali language was recognised as the language of the country (Samanta, 2000, p. 86).

The language movement further developed the sense of homogeneity and consciousness in the region and developed ethnic conscious amongst the hill masses which further increased the participation of the people in the movement.

Similarly, the Communist Party of India also stressed the need of including Nepali language as the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges. Further AIGL and Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity (ABNBS) formed alliance for the language movement and was initially well-attended and vibrant, which became routine and repetitive (Ibid, 2000).

Therefore, in 1980 the very first demand for separate state of Gorkhaland outside West Bengal consisting of Darjeeling district and the Dooars of Jalpaiguri was voiced by Pranta Parishad.

Pranta Parishad was supported by various Political outfits like AIGL, The Congress, the Janata Party, and ABNBS etc. The very movement started by Pranta Parishad was confined to urban masses and students and could not garner enough support at that point of time as it was not a political organisation (Ibid, 2000, p. 90).

Other setback for the Parishad was the heterogeneous leadership. Similarly, Pranta Parishad was organisationally weak, therefore the organisational weakness of Pranta Parishad gave rise to Gorkha National Liberation Front under the leadership of Subhas Ghising.

Similarly, GNLF received unprecedented support from the general masses at that particular point of time, which was never received by any political party or organisation at that point of time.

Ghising's leadership was instrumental in garnering enormous support and mobilising the masses demanding for the creation of a separate homeland for Nepalese in India. The main demand put forwarded by Ghising was to abrogate the Indo- Nepal Treaty 1950⁶, which according to him was the main hurdle in categorizing the Nepalis from Nepal and the Indian Nepalis which has created a doubt regarding their national identity. Ghising has put forwarded the argument that Article VII of the treaty should be scrapped immediately which has made the Gorkhas absolutely stateless or identity less thus creating not only a national problem but the international problem as well.

Article VII "The governments of India and Nepal agree to grant on a reciprocal basis to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other, the same privileges in matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of the similar nature" (Subba, 2009,p , 150)

Ghising interpretation of this article was that it had made the Indian Nepalis "reciprocal citizens" and not "*Bonafide citizens*" of India as such their life and future was insecure .The fear which Ghising projected was successful in strengthen the determination of the people to fight fearlessly in this movement. Furthermore, the incident of expulsion of the Nepalis from Meghalaya played on the anxiety of the Nepalis in Darjeeling regarding their status in India and, in the process, helped Ghising to gather further support around him in intensifying the movement.

⁶ See Annexure I

The movement undertaken by GNLF was marked by certain special features which were not found in the earlier movements. Ghising tried to find out the solution to the issue, first by using the nomenclature 'Gorkha' for the Indian Nepalese, instead of Nepalese and the constitutional recognition of Gorkha language which would be an important step towards getting constitutional recognition of the land, that is "Gorkhaland".

After indulging for two years (1986-88) in a violent separatist movement for Gorkhaland, Ghising halt the demand for Gorkhaland and agreed to the formation of an elected Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC)⁷ within West Bengal.

The constitution of Hill Council intended to ensure genuine territorial autonomy by giving the chance to control its social, economic, cultural and educational development. Dreams about the dreamland of Gorkhaland were shattered for some section of the people who were not satisfied with the acceptance of DGHC. However issues have been continued to raise regarding the immediate upgradation of DGHC into full- fledged State of Gorkhaland.

Similarly, after the failure of Ghising's leadership to qualify the test of time with the fact that no considerable changes have been reflected so far since the beginning of the new millennium even though the demand of Gorkhaland used to be reiterated with times. In an attempt to persuade both the internal and external political pressure Ghising sought recourse to a new brand of politics the politics of bringing DGHC within the purview of Sixth Schedule.

He again came to the track in convincing the masses regarding the benefits of Sixth Schedule and started pressurizing the Government. However on November 30, 2007 Government decided to place the Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha which sought to amend

⁷ See Annexure II

the Constitution to include DGHC in the Sixth Schedule (Sarkar, 2013, p. 94). By then radical transformation took place in the hill politics.

New political outfit Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJMM) in 2007 under the leadership of Mr. Bimal Gurung rejecting the proposal of Sixth Schedule and ousting Subash Ghising almost permanently from the hill politics, the movement so called Antim Ladai (Nepali word meaning a final battle). With no time the social issues took a new turn into a political agenda, which kicked off the idea of forming a new political get up i.e. Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. People more enthusiastically as before came forward to support Mr. Gurung who was perhaps one of the Councillor of DGHC and was among the most well trusted companion and also considered as right hand cohort of Ghising (Sarkar, 2013, p. 95).

Looking at the strategies of both the party line, theoretical exposition of the Gorkhaland tangle has not changed much, though the mantle of leadership has changed from the GNLF and its chief Subash Ghising, to the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJMM) and its chief leader Bimal Gurung (Sengupta et.al, 2013). His political socialisation with the GNLF party follow similar kind of approaches or non-cooperation movement followed by Ghising, namely non-payment of taxes, electricity bills, telephone bills, Gorkhaland number in vehicles instead of West Bengal, restricting tea and timber movement outside the hills etc.

Apart from all these activities, Mr. Gurung declared its mandate regarding the compulsory maintenance of traditional Nepali dress as an indication of ethnic distinctiveness, a sense of belongingness to a community, to show the cultural differences of the Nepalis / Gorkhas in the hills. The declaration was made public in early September 2008 which created a hue and cry among the masses as the decree attempted to recast tradition for reaffirming cultural differences and thereby add a new vitality within the renewed call for the Gorkhaland movement (Sarkar, 2008, p. 3).

One striking point of the GJMM- led movement is that the renewed call for Gorkhaland this time very consistently emphasised on issue of inclusion of Dooars and Terai regions within the proposed Gorkhaland territory.

Eventually, in the process a tripartite agreement was held between the Central Government, State Government and Gorkha Janmukti Morcha for the formation of an administrative arrangement, i.e. Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA)⁸ in the hills. To usher normalcy, peace and development in the hill region of the district of Darjeeling, West Bengal State Assembly passed GTA bill with 68 amendments on September 2, 2011⁹ (Sarkar, 2013, p . 98).

However, the acceptance of GTA was somewhat a step towards new epoch for some and an infidelity for some which led to huge disagreements in the hill politics till date. The common people of the hills were however, non- enthusiastic and confused to some extent over such questions like how the new settlement is better qualified than the earlier experiments. Is it really a substitute for or a stepping stone towards the much awaited Homeland? (Ibid, 2013, p. 104)

2.5 Socio-Economic Discourse

The History of Deprivation and Discrimination in relation to struggle for separation is part and parcel of Darjeeling's history as noted by various scholars. As a colonised space, the development of Darjeeling is linked to British raj, accordingly the tea industry and plantation labour started along with the expansion of British raj in Darjeeling.

Similarly, along with the establishment of tea industry, the exploitation also started in Darjeeling, on the other hand tea industry is one of the largest employers in the state and is based on a very high fixed land-labour ratio, with 3.5 workers per hectare which implies

⁸ See Annexure iii

⁹ See Annexure iii

intensive farming of land and provides service for around more than seventy percent of the population directly or indirectly (Datta, 2010, p. 145).

Similarly, according to the Economic Review published by Government of West Bengal¹⁰ large percentage of the working population i.e. 75.20% in Darjeeling is engaged in non-agricultural work which including Tea Plantation, similarly 14.59 % are cultivators and 10.21% is involved as Agricultural labourers.

Therefore, over the years backwardness, and feeling of oppression in context to hierarchical system has internalised in segregating successfully the construction of identity, the imaginary identity of the Gorkhas.

The socio-economic conditions of the plantation labourers in Darjeeling reveals the quality of life, as major chunk of population is linked to plantation industry. The question of ownership of land has developed the notion of anxiety amongst the people in the region, for which Gorkhaland is imagined as the ultimate solution to the problems faced by people in daily life.

Interaction with one of the labour Mr. Machendra Subba¹¹, employed at Singell Tea Garden revealed the sense of insecurity, which is the scenario in larger scales too.

“We are sustaining our lives by giving our blood and sweat to this land ...we don't have money (good wages), nor we have our own land (the land belongs to the Estate), if Gorkhaland happens hope things will be better here...” (Interview, 2018).

The sense of insecurity portrays the fragile state of Gorkhas as highlighted above

¹⁰ See The Economic Review (2011-12: 112) published by the Finance Department, Government of West Bengal.

Also see Dekens (2005, p. 83- 84).

¹¹ Plantation worker interviewed by author, on October, 2018

“We fear someday our fate might turn as such of Rohingyas...our forefathers worked here, even we are working ...Gorkhaland is necessary for us” (Interview, 2018).

The feeling of insecurity and neglect over the years be it by the colonial masters or by the State, the uncertainty of land and life, the ownership of resources, lack of opportunities and ill treatment by the Administration as highlighted has sustained the socio-economic discourse of Gorkhaland over the years. Likewise, the assertion of Gorkha has helped galvanise the support for the cause highlighting the socio-economic conditions as large part of the tea plantation population has been important in context of political mobilisation (Subba, 1992).

Thus, highlighting the condition of tea estates which was once the centre for class struggle with due course of time has transformed into the struggle for identity.

Therefore, from the discussions placed above in relation to history of the place and images of daily life along with language has played an important role in designing the idea of Gorkhaland as in relation to its socio-economic Discourse.

Similarly, the economic deterioration of Darjeeling has been cited as the basic cause for transforming the region into vortex of Gorkhaland, which is the result of political consciousness generated over a period of time.

The ownership of land is rarely discussed in contesting the Idea of Gorkhaland, and often overlooked, yet, as highlighted above the major chunk of population being employed in Tea industry the total area covered under tea in Darjeeling is roughly about 719km² which is owned mostly by the private firms and government enterprise out of the total area of 2092.5 km². Though recently the tea garden workers are being granted the ownership of land and land rights, the contestation of Gorkhaland in terms of ownership of land has also channelized the very Idea of Gorkhaland amongst the common fold.

Likewise, contradictions are drawn quite often while discussing the socio-economic discourse of Gorkhaland as Darjeeling was once classified as 'Backward District' by the planning commission yet, in contemporary times Darjeeling does not fall under the purview of 'Backward district'.

Similarly, looking in the retrospective, the emergence of Darjeeling as regional economic space was marked by the process of annexation. Therefore, the crystallisation of processes over the claim of Homeland in relation to the economic space and its discourse is highlighted quite often.

As highlighted above, the establishment of the tea industry in the region further developed the notion of Ruler and the Ruled, thus the socio-economic condition of the region was added to justify the claim for homeland. The ownership of land and resources and the monopoly of the Bengali elites after the British Raj, and the highhandedness of the state administration is also the root cause for developing the idea of difference among the people, which strengthens the idea of Gorkhaland from socio- economic lenses.

The issues in relation to socio-economic condition of the region, further gave rise to the idea of separation, the domination of many by few created the sense of marginalisation. The issues related to underdevelopment, unemployment, lack of opportunities and backwardness of the region is highlighted simultaneously in claim of Homeland.

Similarly, Srijana Rai in "*Structure and Growth of Workforce in Darjeeling District of West Bengal: A Census Based Study*¹²" highlights the increasing trend of work force participation in the region based on the data compiled from census reports of 1991 till 2011. As Rai highlights though the work force participation rate is increasing, similarly, on the other hand both the rate

¹² For Calculation and Methodology see: Rai, S. (2015). Workforce Participation in Darjeeling District of West Bengal: A Census Based Study. *International Journal of Futuristic Research* .2(8), 2577-2588.

of male and female as main workers are showing a decreasing trend. Likewise, marginal workers in Darjeeling is increasing which indicates the marginalisation of workforce in Darjeeling district. Rai contends her findings by stating that the women are more in numbers as marginal workers as compared to men, similarly, the work force participation rate of males is higher as compared to females in terms of Urban Workforce. She concludes her analysis by stating that migration of workforce to urban areas for better employment opportunities and employment as the prime reason along with worsening economic conditions in the hills. Therefore, the participation of work force including both main and marginal workers in Darjeeling also portrays the economic conditions and lack of opportunities in Darjeeling which moreover justifies the changing socio-economic condition of the region, which has fostered the sense of marginalisation in relation to lack of opportunities and underdevelopment which is brought forward in justifying the Idea of Gorkhaland.

Table: 1. Workforce Participation Rates for Total (Main+ Marginal) Workers in Darjeeling District.

Category	Person			Male			Female		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
Total Workers	34.22	35.39	37.02	47.13	48.51	51.17	20.09	21.38	22.44
Main Workers	33.71	29.76	28.85	46.77	43.23	42.29	19.42	15.38	15.01
Marginal Workers	0.51	5.63	8.17	0.35	5.28	8.88	0.68	6.00	7.43
Rural Workers	36.17	37.04	38.30	46.77	47.92	50.27	24.82	25.65	26.01
Urban Workers	29.78	31.94	35.05	47.92	49.72	52.55	8.89	12.16	16.93

Source: Structure and Growth of Workforce in Darjeeling District of West Bengal: A Comparative study. (Adopted from Salina Rai: Structure and Growth of Workforce in Darjeeling District of West Bengal: A Census Based Study.

Similarly, various institutions for governance and development adopted and applied in the region, be it DGHC or GTA as a catalytic agent to homogenise the demand of Gorkhaland has moreover failed to solve the grievances. Therefore, the Imagination of Homeland in the form of Gorkhaland still prevails, and the people continue to pin their anticipations for better life exclusively on the image of Gorkhaland and not any substitute imaginations.

Table 2: Administrative Profile of Darjeeling District

YEAR	CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS
1861-1870	The district was under The non-regulated system.
1870-1874	It was put under the regulated system of India
1874-1919	The Act of 1870 took it away from the general regulation system
1919-1935	The Scheduled District Act, 1874 brought it under its purview
1935-1947	The Act of 1919 declared the district as Backward Tract
1947+	The Government of India Act 1935 declared it as the Partially Excluded Area
1988	After the Independence the District was included in the Presidency division
1988-2011	The DGHC Act of 1988 led to the formation of an autonomous council consisting of the three hill subdivision of the district for the socio- economic and cultural development of the hill area of the district.
2011- Till Date	The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act of 2011 led to the formation of self-governing body constituting the three hill sub-divisions and some moujas of Tarai to administer the region so that the socio-economic, cultural, educational. Infrastructural and linguistic development is expedited and to establish the ethnic identity of Gorkhas, there by achieving the all-round development of the people of the region.

Source: Adopted and modified since Khawas, 2002. Multilevel Planning in India: An experience of Darjeeling District with special reference to Urban Governance and Urban

Local Bodies. (pp.20)

Table 3: Political Profile of Darjeeling

Year	Chronology of Events
Prior to 1700	The present district of Darjeeling was part of the Kingdom of Sikkim.
1706	Kalimpong along with the adjoining Dooars was annexed by Bhutan.
1800	Darjeeling along with its adjoining hills (Kurseong) with adjacent Tarai (Siliguri) was taken by Nepal.
1835	Darjeeling along with its adjoining hills (Kurseong) was ceded to British India taken by Nepal
1850	The adjoining Tarai (Siliguri) was taken by British India and included in Jalpaiguri District.
1865	Kalimpong Hill along with the adjoining Dooars was annexed by British India and included in Jalpaiguri District.
1866	The Hills of Kalimpong were included in Darjeeling District. Leaving the Dooars
1880	Siliguri was taken out from Jalpaiguri and included in Darjeeling District, giving the final shape of the District.
1905	The District in the present shape was included in the Bhagalpur of Bihar (then an undivided Bengal).
1912	The District was included in the Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh).
1947	After the Independence of India the District was put under the State of West Bengal.

Source: Adopted and modified since Khawas, 2002. Multilevel Planning in India: An experience of Darjeeling District with special reference to Urban Governance and Urban

Local Bodies. (pp.20)

CHAPTER 3

Space, Place and Gorkhaland

“If two different authors used the words ‘Red’, ‘Hard’ or ‘Disappointed’, no doubt that they mean approximately the same thing ...But in the case of words such as ‘Place’ or ‘Space’, whose relationship with psychological experience is less direct, there exists a far-reaching uncertainty of interpretation.”

... (Einstein in Malpas, 1999, p. 19).

3.1 Introduction

Space and place has been an integral part of inquiries across all the disciplines of sciences and humanities, drawing attention right from classical period relating to enquiries from both human and physical world.

Despite of the fact that space and place as a term is highly contested, multiple meanings, various theoretical and methodological contestations still exists in the application of social sciences. Likewise, there has been contestations by geographers on the very nature of space and place as an organising concept which has resulted in developing frequent arguments related to space and place.

Space and place moreover has been the result of various traditions in geography be it physical or human. Space and place holds different meanings, different perceptions to different people in different fields. Therefore, most often the meaning acquired by space and place has been contested by the use of it.

The notion things are always flying apart than coming together has over the years become a process of statement in context to the recent discussions about space and place. Similarly,

Representation, Identity and Differences as such has been phrases to evoke certain sense of centrifugal association with space and place.

However, the concept of flying apart¹³ portrays changing conditions of life and social conditions of life and social construct rather than the making of self. Hence, identity and homeland is more imaginary and often re-created according to space and place.

Highlighting the political consciousness of human experience viz. memory, imagination, emotions, perceptions, actions and many more, which is always aligned along with the notion of space and place.

Therefore, social construction is not only a deeper truth and reflection of reality in the contemporary times, but social construction as such has been a concrete and complex intervention in the making of the 'Real'.

The ontological and epistemological approach of this thesis is grounded in social constructionism. Hence this paradigm views reality as a social construct, as opposed to realist or positivist views that understands reality has some 'objective' quality that can be revealed. Constructionism is based on the notion that reality is a product of imagination and thoughts; each individual sees and understands the world and their experiences through personal belief systems (Etherington, 2009) .

¹³ Concept adopted from: Marshall Berman's '*All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*' (New York: Penguin, 1982).

3.2 Space and Place

The focus of this section is to build on the lucid understanding of Space and Place that are applicable for this study. This is not a complex definition, yet an attempt here is to build simplistic and important boundaries for this study.

In contemporary contestations it becomes complex to map the conception and chronology of space and place, as historically space and place has developed over a long period of time. Thus it becomes hard to locate its development.

Several philosophers and scholars have tried to locate and plot its development citing the complexity between metaphysical and natural sciences. Yet the debate on space and place unfolds only after the development of independent disciplines in the nineteenth century (Best, S. & Kellner, D, 1997). Similarly geographers too have brought forward their contestations in quest of understanding space and place.

3.2.1 Space, Place and Human Geography

Many disciplines have over the years contested Space and Place, yet Human geography has developed more thinkers on space and place. Though many non-geographers too have contributed and influenced the thoughts on Space and Place. To quote Foucault's work (1972:1988) have influenced thoughts in Human Geography in general and Space and Place in Particular over the years.

Foucault's '*Of other spaces (1967)*' highlights and provides the passage for interdisciplinary approach on Space (Warf & Arias, 2008). As Foucault illustrates "*great obsession*" with evolution-was the obsession with historical thoughts of nineteenth century (Foucault 1986, p. 22). The problem of this history was its focus on ideas in time without taking seriously both

their origin and the ground upon which the intellectuals were standing, namely, their own context. These taken-for-granted and context-less ideas gave a false sense of ‘objectivity’ and academic ‘neutrality’.

Similarly, Lefebvre positions his contestation of Space and Place as categories of power (Lefebvre, 1991, p .26). Thus, Lefebvre highlights three characteristics of Space, Place in relation to power as follows:

a) Perception

b) Conception

c) Experiences

Further, Lefebvre highlights lived space which he states is intricately constructed on people’s experiences of place, in relation to acquire action comfort and privileges from their spaces. Thus, it is in ‘Real’ space that idealistic opportunities’ are built within ignoble people(s).

Lamenting on common ground ones ‘*exploited*’ and ‘*excluded*’ find new ways of executing the relations applied upon their Spaces. Other scholars portrays the very proposition of Lefebvre’s approach as least concerned about historical debate over Space, which challenges and foreshadows Space in terms of capitalism¹⁴.

¹⁴ Developing on the work of earlier thinkers of space, Edward Soja has highlighted a contemporary picture to the discussion. In introducing “Third-space” Edward W. Soja (1996) states, “*my objective in Third-space can be simply stated. It is to encourage you to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent spatiality of human life: place, locations, locality, landscape, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography. In encouraging you to think differently, I am not suggesting that you discard your old and familiar ways of thinking about space and spatiality, but rather that you question them in new ways that are aimed at opening up the expanding scope and critical sensibility of your already established spatial or geographical imaginations*” (1996,p.1).

Although most of Soja’s work had an American background at the core, it is most significant for any exegetical work. Soja developed Lefebvre’s thoughts and gave them a postmodern tinge. Instead of thinking about space from a Marxist slant (Lefebvre), Soja develops the notion to cover wider horizons and to have the three spaces: (i) First-space (geophysical realities as perceived); (ii) Second-space (mapped realities as represented); (iii) Third-space (lived realities as practiced), each viewed as inseparably connected (1996,p. 86).

Other geographers have also attempted to address the spatial concerns other than socio-economic dualism, as space was often viewed as subjective and destructive. Tuan, state that varying attitudes of Place is developed by people as according to their milieu and experiences. Thus 'geometric relationship framework is not applicable, as meaning of life stands to be important in this context' (Hubbard et. al, 2004, p.5).

Therefore, Tuan through the idea of '*topophilia*' and '*topophobia*' has highlighted the 'desires' and 'fears' that people link with specific places (Hubbard et. al, 2004, p .5). Thus, this directed geographers towards more 'sensual, aesthetic and emotional dimension of space', which was often discussed as non-objective, considering it to be less applicable in examining space and place (Hubbord et. al, 2004, p.5).

Space and place is intricately related and depends upon one another in understanding the social construction. Though space and place is often contested often in various philosophical and theoretical grounds in their academic pursuit of social realities. Moreover, space and place over the years have become theoretical terms concerning various disciplines, mostly geography.

Contemporary human geography has increasingly focused on space and place as to define its own distinctiveness. Theoretical attempts have been made to bring together the concept together at times as space and place is interdependent.

John Agnew¹⁵, has framed space and place as conceptual twins, supplementing and complementing each other, as space and place when brought together provides full potential in understanding the concept in a holistic manner.

¹⁵ John Agnew is a professor of geography at UCLA, Los Angeles, USA. He has authored numerous books that include *Place and Politics in modern Italy* (2002), *Making of Political Geographies* (2002) and *Geopolitics* (2003).

As Agnew argues place is the result of web of spatial temporal connections in which political agency is embedded¹⁶. Therefore, such statement from Agnew clearly indicates place to be significant in understanding socio-cultural practices, and place is not just a physical entity.

Hence, all activities, practices and experiences are place bound and place specific. Therefore, the interdependence and internal relation between space and place is important in understanding the social construction.

3.2.2 The Social Construction of Space and Place

Understanding Place within social landscape needs attention to construct “Sense of Place” as the “sense” has remained unnoticed in highlighting the relationship between Space and identity, where space has moreover remained neutral, and thus cultural differences, historical memory and societal organisations are added (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992).

A unity of place and people defining “ourselves” and “others” masks the process of production of difference in the world. The social construction of space and place clearly highlights a generalised idea through which a space gains clear identity as a place. Space is categorised as “Imaginative Geographies”, practices, representations and above all the conceptions leads to the formation of geographic space as associated with various characters and identities built upon events.

The social construction of space and place with various elements thus becomes corner stone, incorporating and guiding actions and use of space and place. Thus the works of Lefebvre

¹⁶ John Agnew, Space: Place, In Paul Cloke & Ron Johnston (eds.), *Spaces of Geographical Thought*, and London: Sage publication, 2005, p. 83.

stands relevant in the course of this study, highlighted as the theories for social construction of space are as follows:

3.2.3 Henri Lefebvre

Henri Lefebvre is considered to be one of the leading scholars and pioneer in analysing space. Lefebvre's main contestation is about space being socially produced and not neutral. In views of Lefebvre space was seen as means control and representation of power and not viewed as some container to be filled, but as dynamic and constructed humanely (Lefebvre,1991,p. 26).

Thus, Lefebvre brought forward the counter notion to capitalist practice of space. Lefebvre viewed space as the centre of producing knowledge 'False Consciousness' which Lefebvre as points out has helped to build the ideological nature of space, the theory of space.

Lefebvre's contestation highlighted that space was 'Social Construction' as he stated physical locations defines people as who they are/were and accordingly things are categorised resulting to the reproduction thus maintaining status quo.

Therefore, Lefebvre idealised space in three categories:

- 1) Perceived Space: 'Real' space physical space created by people (Lefebvre, 1991.p. 45)
- 2) Conceived Space: The discourse applied to communicate and think about space, he lamented this space to be mental space which helps in reconstruction or reproduction of space.
- 3) Lived Space: The space with ideal possibilities as highlighted by Lefebvre where the ostracised people finds the passage to recollect the limitations of capitalist control on space, thus Lefebvre illustrates this space to be space of dreams.

Similarly, In ‘*The Production of Space*’ Lefebvre presents a ‘spatial triad’ that can help to discover and comprehend the complication of space. Lefebvre was the first to develop the idea of questioning space (Reijnen 2011, p .71), thus giving space an active role. Lefebvre views space as a social construct. Lefebvre focused on the process of thinking and its importance, of conceiving reality in fluid movement, which stresses on ‘exploring how gets space actively produced’ (Merrifield 2006, p .105).

Lefebvre’s theory is chosen as it is thought to help provide an inclusive analysis of the interaction between physical space and different spatial actors and their conceptualizations and claims. Lefebvre’s theory on space is one of the few theories which incorporates social issues. Therefore, the spatial triad as proposed by Lefebvre is supposed to be useful because it assumes that space is a social product and where the phenomena occurs and activities takes place. Therefore, the concept of space and place as highlighted above becomes important as it provides the opportunity to understand the claim for Homeland.

Table: 4. Terms used to describe Lefebvre’s spatial Triad.

Spatial practices	Representations of space	Representational space
Perceived space	Conceived space	Lived space
Physical space	Mental space	Social space

3.2.4 Edward. W. Soja

Soja illustrated the notion of space as proposed by Lefebvre in his contestations related to space maintaining Lefebvre’s three spaces, but with different terminologies.

- 1) First space: which Soja highlights as physical space
- 2) Second Space: which he states as mapped and represented

3) Third Space: lived space, which is practiced and where realities takes place.

Therefore, Lefebvre's contestation about space stands important and closely linked (Soja, 1996, p. 68).

Thus, taking Lefebvre's three categories of space, Soja has built on the idea of third space which is important in decoding and understanding the social construction of Space and Place.

"My objective in Third space can be simply stated. It is to encourage you to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent spatiality of human life: place, locations, locality, landscape, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography. In encouraging you to think differently, I am not suggesting that you discard your old and familiar ways of thinking about space and spatiality, but rather that you question them in new ways that are aimed at opening up the expanding scope and critical sensibility of your already established spatial or geographical imaginations" (Soja, 1996, p.1).

Similarly, apart from Lefebvre and Soja, scholars like Tuan and Massey have also contributed in understanding the concept of space and place, whose contribution cannot be overshadowed. Yet at this juncture cannot be afforded within this limited space.

Therefore, space is a holistic expression of existence, thus the social construction of space holds importance in the quest of inquiries, the contestations posed by Lefebvre and Soja has been highlighted as follows to relate to the social construction of Gorkhaland.

Lefebvre	Perceived	Conceived	Limited
Soja	First	Second	Third
Gorkhaland	'Real' Place and Space that can be located	Place and Space that can be narrated: in context to Gorkhaland	Symbolic and Theoretical function of space and place

The above table has been drawn from theoretical understandings of Lefebvre and Soja's contestations thus relating to build on the notion of social construction of Gorkhaland from the lens of space and place. Therefore, in contesting the views placed together in relation to space, place and Gorkhaland it can be read as perceived space, which can be located physically in relation to the meanings attached to social space.

Likewise the imaginations and narratives can translate this space in portraying the social construction of 'Real', strengthening the theoretical contestations of space it represents. Similarly, the social construction of space in relation to the present study does not stand neutral as such the notion of third space as highlighted by Soja is often contested and appeals critical response.

3.3 Representational space and Gorkhaland:

This section focuses on the experience of space, it is about the lived space of Gorkhaland, and hence it incorporates feelings, associations and memories related to places and spaces which can be both personal and shared. Owing to the character of representational space or lived space the section focuses on narratives and stories as placed forward.

'Nostalgia', the history of Darjeeling along with discourse of Gorkhaland movement as highlighted in the previous chapter portrays the lived experience of the people to a large extent. Therefore, the imagination of Gorkhaland as Homeland is strongly shaped in relationship to the past. One of the respondent,

Gauri Lepcha (57) describes his views as: *'Gorkhaland is not just an option, it is our dream of better tomorrow, I fear whether I will live long to see our dream come true... the struggle has been long... I have observed every movement, yet I fear what future holds'*

Someone else expresses a similar sentiment: *"We have struggled since long, yet we have achieved nothing, we have given everything to achieve Gorkhaland..... At the end of the day it's like the same old story....can you imagine how hard it is to live like this..."*

They often expressed their emotions, longing for Gorkhaland and never ending aspiration Navin Chettri exclaims: *'I remember the times when every individual supported the cause for attaining Gorkhaland, be it any one young or old.... Over the years the monotonous approach and the results have diluted the spirit of our people...the first movement was supported by people ...similarly the recent movements too...yet we failed '*

Likewise, Yogendra Rai says: *'The results of the movement have so far has disappointed the people... the common people... if we aim to attain our Homeland i.e. Gorkhaland the movement has to be people centric ...the people here have lost hopes due to various outcomes and to attain Gorkhaland we must engage the people... as it is for our people...our land'*

From the above highlighted views it can be stated that the emotions are stronger in context of Gorkhaland it is clear from the expressions that nostalgia prevails in relation to Gorkhaland, the feeling of missing something is evident, therefore, it can be learnt that it is the emotions that have sustained the Idea of Gorkhaland.

Similarly, on the other hand important to their conceptualization of Gorkhaland, is the idea that Darjeeling as a place was never a part of Bengal, the marked differences highlighted in relation to socio-political, economic and cultural factor also adds to the imagination of Gorkhaland.

“Our place has been captured by Bengal, and today they highlight Darjeeling as integral part of Bengal Historically, we were never a part of Bengal.... Nothing is in common with them... be it language, culture or even our society...they have marginalised us...”

The feeling of seclusion and marginalisation of the region plays an important role in people’s experience of the place. Even though Darjeeling has been highly romanticised, the administrative profile of the place and issues related to development has also been brought forward to highlight the Idea of Gorkhaland.

Salina says: *“Romanticised image of Darjeeling has till date portrayed its fabricated image ... The world famous Darjeeling Tea ... Tourism...the scenic beauty ... Darjeeling today is dying... the exodus of youths...lack of opportunities...better facilities and what not, the list is long and issues are complex... the deteriorating condition of Darjeeling is never highlighted”*

3.3.1 The Importance of Homeland

The generalised view on Gorkhaland becomes obvious from the following statements: *‘To have a Homeland to call our own is to have security and Identity. And to have the identity one must have Homeland,’* as the Identity of Gorkhas has been under the lenses of hegemony since long. The fundamental conception is that Gorkhaland is also seen as a resource, a resource which fulfils the space of both Identity and Homeland’.

Therefore, the perspective on space and place is dominated by their spatial practices and knowledge. Hence, the space, place of Gorkhaland is understood from a functional perspective and thus mostly attached with a core value.

This view of Gorkhaland is illustrated for instance by how the Gorkhas face discrimination quite often. Furthermore, it is evident that there is a feeling of difference the notion of self and other. Similarly, the knowledge of imagining Gorkhaland as Homeland has sustained the very contestation of Homeland.

The difference between the conceived and lived space becomes clear for instance from the perspective of the people, born and raised in the region, as they mostly holds the view: *'...Gorkhaland may be discussed from various perspectives, experiencing the place and commenting on a place from distance holds vast difference, likewise, Gorkhaland may be portrayed and discussed as violent or unreasoned struggle...we live here, our ancestors too.. Therefore we know what Gorkhaland is for us ...'*

The trust in the knowledge, accumulated over generations in context to land and the local reality and the lived experiences holds central position in highlighting the social construction of Gorkhaland, because it is lived and agreed.

3.3.2 Representations of Gorkhaland

The most important representation of space in case of Gorkhaland is of course the imagination of Homeland which forms the basis of the spatial narrative. Therefore, Lefebvre has discussed about the historical, political and economic situation in which the production of space is possible. Many processes have influenced the formation of idea of Gorkhaland, which is very much the product of time.

As Lefebvre contends how processes that are functional over space, which in context of Gorkhaland are Historical-Cultural differences, marginalisation, exclusion, socio-economic grievances, the notion of self and other et.al. Adds meaning in a place. The creation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill council and Gorkhaland Territorial Administration in the past moreover can be framed as an attempt to foster Governance in the region. For instance, the development council or be it any set up has not induce of the people. Likewise, the Idea of Gorkhaland over the years have gained momentum and has strengthen with time.

In addition, the idea of Gorkhaland as Homeland has been highly advocated as a solution. Therefore, the idea of Homeland subsumes all other imaginations. As stated earlier, the perception of space is considered as the main approach in generating the Idea of Gorkhaland. The narratives of Gorkhaland moreover permeates the discourse of Gorkhaland through its economic arguments, justifying the Demand. It portrays the image of Gorkhaland as an “*Horn of Plenty*’.

Further, the association with the land and its ownership seeks to establish the linkage which strengthens the spirit of Homeland in this regard. Therefore, Gorkhaland is presented as the Homeland of Gorkhas. The idea of Gorkhaland bodies on concept of spaces boiling it down to two main contestation: Homeland and Identity.

The notion of social construction of space and place of Gorkhaland can be supplemented further with the help of Imaginative geographies to build on the contestations related to construction of space and place.

3.4. Imaginative Geographies

The Imagination of 'Real' has not diluted the sphere of Imagination, it has indeed combined the critical potential of imagination. Applying Strategic Imaginative Geographies, imagination has been posed positively in this context of analysing the real.

Imagination has been portrayed as in relation to significance of human imaginations symbolic practice and material experiences. Imagination is inclusive of external and internal factors situated in space and place. Therefore, the recognition of imaginative process has been developed in accordance to the attention of Identity, Belongingness, Symbolic boundary and consciousness of place (Cohen, 1982, 1985).

Imaginative geographies is related to the functioning, experiences and social actions. To be precise imagination is to create mental pictures.

According to Anderson, "Imagination is not limited, rather imagination is expressive and pro-creative. Making things possible." Thus, it plays an important role in expressing the experiences, belonging and identity with place (Anderson, 1983).

The locus of imagination for geography is located around symbolic, metaphysical sphere of social relations and social identifications. Hence, to quote Benedict Anderson's *'Imagined Communities'* (1983). Has been pivotal in theorising context of homeland and identities along with Sarah Radcliff's Idea of Imaginative Geographies.

Anderson, positions his *'Imagined community'* as constructed and discursively made possible, 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members ,meet or hear of them... yet in the minds of each lives the image of communion' (Anderson, 1983, p.15).

Therefore, imagined geographies has been highlighted to interpret object reality or more precisely the unnoticed reality, proving to be dominant in validating arguments over the physical assumption of space.

Said, (2000) has highlighted the importance of Strategic Imaginative Geographies in contestation of space, which he argues holds power to construct and express Identity and claim for the idea of Homeland. Thus, imagining in this context does not remain independent from the real but is related to real.

The conceptualisation of imagination portrays the possibilities of thinking about geography and human activities and relations. The building of identities and the notion of homeland also stands firm in contesting the social construction of space.

Therefore, the notion of Identity and Homeland remains integral to this process of imagination and social construction of space and place.

3.5 Imagining Gorkhaland

In context of Gorkhaland, the expression ‘Homeland’, frames elements in becoming the place. As according to historically specific circumstances and amidst the dominating forces and expressive local practices.

The politics of space in question of Gorkhaland can be connected and analysed through various lenses, yet more specifically looking at Gorkhaland from the lens of space and place moreover highlights the concept of regional imbalance, disparity and differences in ideas as it is evident through this praxis, geography of place in which space, place and identities are mediated, are also inverted and installed.

Therefore, building on the background of Darjeeling hills and the very term “Gorkhaland” imaginative geographies has been applied to carefully analyse the Idea of Gorkhaland from the lens of space and place altogether. Similarly, imaginative geographies has been applied to connect with the narratives and to build on the idea of homeland and Identity in context to the idea of Gorkhaland.

Darjeeling as a Place barely conjures the violent and spirited history that the place has observed and is still observing. As a Deed of grant Darjeeling was handed over to the East India Company in 1835. Likewise, after Anglo-Bhutan war in 1866, the district took its current shape. Though Darjeeling was added to Bengal Presidency, it was retained as special an “excluded” and “scheduled” district and as a “Backward tract”. As highlighted by Samanta, Thus, Darjeeling became part of West Bengal after independence (Samanta 2000, p.23).

Today Darjeeling hills (including the sub-division of Kurseong and Kalimpong¹⁷) is dominated by Nepali speaking Population. Soon after the Deed of Grant in 1835, the colonialists started

¹⁷ The Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling hills became the 21st District recently as announced by the Government of West Bengal, on 14 February, 2017.

developing Darjeeling as a hill station. The development included the construction of roads, infrastructures and the famous tea gardens.

With time Nepali became the lingua franca of Darjeeling, as it was inhabited by Nepali population in majority and gradually the question of “Gorkha” identity developed with time (Samanta , 2000, p. 23; Subba 1992, p. 65).

During the period 1907 the very first demand for autonomy was voiced by the “Hill people” underlining the geographical, racial, religious, linguistic, and cultural differences between themselves and other groups in Bengal (Samanta, 2000, p. 232; Subba 1992,p. 76).

Successively, with time the very demand channelized into the idea of “Gorkhasthan” likewise, in 1986 Subash Ghising coined the term “Gorkhaland.” As to quote Ghising his idea of Gorkhaland was positioned as follows:

“It is by being known as West Bengal that... its people affirm their Indian identity which is different from the identity of the people of Bangladesh who also are Bengalis. We Indian Nepalis who have nothing to do with Nepal are constantly confused with “Nepalis,” that is, citizens of Nepal, a foreign country. But if there is Gorkhaland then our identity as Indians belonging to an Indian state... will be clear. If there is no Gorkhaland, we will continue to be identified as Nepalis, under the stigma of being citizens of a foreign country residing here out of courtesy”. (Subash Ghising in Frontline 1986 (August), cited in Lama 1994, p. 52)

Darjeeling has been constructed as a “Different place” in the overall local narratives and thoughts and also as a “Homeland.” The differences with the state has been highlighted as to legitimise the very idea of Gorkhaland since its inception. Differences are not only sought after in terms of development and overall welfare of the region but rather in terms of social realities owing to space and place in general. Thus, language and culture has been highlighted in this

context with reference to the first movement in 1986, as the expression was clearly placed to claim Darjeeling as ethnically distinct Place.

Similarly, to strengthen this claim of Darjeeling as a distinct place History has also been put forward as mentioned above, historically the status of Darjeeling has been portrayed as an “excluded” and “scheduled district” till this date.

Likewise, reflecting on the social construction, second imaginative geographies of Darjeeling reflects Gorkhaland to be Home for all Indian Gorkhas’ as to build on the very idea of “Homeland” as the majority of the population perceives Darjeeling to be the centre for all the Indian Gorkhas, socio-politically. As a result of these imaginations of “Darjeeling as a different place,” and “Darjeeling as the centre of all Gorkhas,” the picture of Homeland has been drawn in the form of Idea of Gorkhaland as a whole, expressing the differences with the core. Darjeeling has also been described as a linguistically and culturally homogenous place, which further strengthens the idea of Homeland and construction of Gorkha identity.

Further adding to the difference of perceptions, historically the Imagination of Darjeeling (Gorkhaland) can be linked with the ancestors and past as Smith illustrates that the imagination of land is indispensable element of community history which through narrations becomes ancestral homelands (Smith, 1996b, p. 589: 1996b, p. 454). Therefore, Gorkhaland is often referred to as the place of ancestors, which adds to why the imagination of homeland has been created. Thus the question of Blood and Sweat of ancestors in relation to place unfolds the question of homeland.

Likewise, this contestation highlights the creation of Idea of Homeland, as the very imagination of Gorkhaland as home of ancestors produces the image of homeland, where symbolic dimension of space comes into play.

Thus, viewing Gorkhaland from the lens of space and place ,particularly at its social construction, various layers of relations can be superimposed in space and place through interplay of various mechanisms expressing and symbolising the idea of Homeland, which further reproduces the meaning of belonging to a particular community in a particular geographical site i.e. space and place.

Gorkhaland as an idea or expression is moreover a struggle for place, and installing the question of identity in this canvass is simple yet complex as identity is acquired naturally and not possessed, but is moreover contested, lost and retrieved as Gupta and Ferguson puts forward. Drawing upon the social construction of Gorkhaland the space, place here represents a way of exploring origins, imaginations and unity of community, inclusive of past and present identity in accordance to the contemporary times.

Expression of Gorkhaland as an idea is perhaps the result of ongoing social construction as to quote Kroetsch, *“the conscious localising of Identity creates sites from which individuals, communities even nations narrates themselves into existence”* (Kroetsch, 1989, p.179).

Hence, social construction plays an important role in intensifying the realisation of self *“Self-consciousness”* and *“Pride of place”*, therefore reflecting identity as its product. Thus, the social construction of space, place of Gorkhaland is moreover a matter of invention, ‘An Idea’

CHAPTER 4

Development, Identity and Question of Representation

4.1 Introduction

The discourse of Gorkhaland as presented in the previous chapter highlights the resurrection of the movement in response to changing time, situation and circumstances. Likewise, the sense of oppression, the ownership of resources and the question of representation and identity in relation to complex socio-political arrangements have nurtured the very idea of Gorkhaland even in the contemporary times.

Thus, the popular geographies of Gorkhaland has sustained over the period of time through '*Imaginary Bridge*' constructed in between land and people, which has supplemented the imagination of Homeland.

Similarly, Gorkhaland provides an interesting case, yet complex matted with the issues of representation and question of identity which demands cultural, material and symbolic understanding of the problem.

Therefore, this chapter highlights the popular geographies of Gorkhaland, exploring the contestations and views on development, Identity and Representation.

This chapter is based on critical observations and informal interviews conducted in pursuance of this study. The selection of interviews and respondents was governed by my self-conscious mind and shaped by my conviction that the sample has to be representative. The common people, Politicians of major Political Parties in the hills, Academicians, journalist and social activist were interviewed to draw contestations and take a broad view about Development, Identity and the question of Representation.

TABLE: 5. Category of Participants

	Respondents	Number	Male	Female	Age group
1	Common People	30	15	15	20-65
2	Academicians	6	4	2	35-50
3	Social Activists	5	2	3	25-35
4	Journalist	4	3	1	30-40
5	Political Leaders	5	3	2	30-45
	Total	50			

Source: Field Work, September-October, 2018

4.2 Anxious Belongings

The discourse of Gorkhaland and Gorkha Identity Highlights that it is the result of consciousness developed over time and the socio-political and economic conditions prevailing around the region. The Idea of Gorkhaland Highlighted the question of land and identity, which developed emotional sense of belonging amongst the people, therefore nurturing the Idea of Gorkhaland being an ultimate solution to all the problems, most importantly the question of Identity and Representation.

Similarly, 'Gorkha' identity has been the call for claimed Homeland. In this context many a times the Treaty of friendship between India and Nepal¹⁸ has been pointed out for creating the confusion, as the identity of Indian Gorkhas has been highly misrepresented and often misunderstood.

¹⁸ See Annexure I

Therefore, on the question of Identity and Representation most of the elites from various backgrounds and even the common people in the region holds the view that struggle for separation is the process of drawing boundary, to legitimise and further justify the claim of Homeland. Hence, Gorkhaland as Homeland is to delineate from Bengal and Nepal too, which strengthens and highlights the anxious belonging to an Imagined Homeland.

4.3 Identity and Representation

The generalised views drawn from the interviews and conversations highlights Gorkhaland as a rational solution to the question of Identity and representation. As the cases of being labelled as foreigners were mostly highlighted during the course of this study. *“We are here along with the land”*.

The question of land and belonging, control of resources and marginalisation has been mostly expressed in justifying the claim for homeland. From the discussions with distinct participants it was clear that Gorkhaland expresses subjectivities surfacing around aspiration of recognition and justice alive in the form of Imagination of Homeland.

Therefore, socio-cultural difference in relation to identity and representation and expression of various imaginaries, pride and self-respect has been the key contestations as expressed.

Almost all the respondents expressed and regarded that the misrecognition, deprivation and misrepresentation has channelized the feeling of insecurity among them and that they now feel secluded and marginalised, likewise, on question of misrepresentation mostly the Academicians and Politicians holds the view that Article VII of Indo- Nepal friendship treaty has produced the idea of Gorkhas being Foreigners in their own land.

Similarly, the consolidated views on Identity of Gorkhas as highlighted, stands as the term Gorkha or be it Gorkhaland is associated with security. The application of the term Nepali was discussed frequently, therefore highlighting its drawbacks in confusing the identity of Gorkhas, As Nepali is often related or represented as belonging from Nepal. The discussions and views placed forward describes that Gorkhas share close proximity with Nepal, yet in context of Gorkhaland the Colonial history of the region holds important position, along with socio-cultural differences.

4.4 Development Vs Identity

The above discussions highlights the rhetoric based on the question of Identity and Representation, through the discussions and views portrayed by various participants, similarities were found regarding the feeling of belonging and being different, being different from rest of the West Bengal and Nepal.

Similarly, Gorkhaland is often contested in terms of Economic contestations, therefore the notion of exploitation and neglect has over the years culminated in socio- economic marginality. The generalised views drawn in context of Development vs Identity, highlights Gorkhaland to be more based and contested for Identity, which often overlooks the issues related to development. The defendants believe that Gorkhaland in the form of Homeland would end the insecurities related to identity.

Similarly, Out of the total 50 respondents, 39 of them believed that Gorkhaland is about identity. While rest views Gorkhaland to be the answer to both i.e. Development and Identity.

“Gorkhaland is no doubt about identity ‘but it is also about development”

While contesting Gorkhaland in terms of Development the economic condition of the region is discussed, as economy of the region is mostly dependent on tea and tourism, the deplorable condition of both has fostered the notion of neglect. The ownership of resources is also expressed in terms of issues related to development. The region being rich in terms of natural resources. Further, the feeling of exploitation has highlighted development to be one of the important factor for justifying the Idea of Homeland.

Likewise, on the other hand it was observe that though underdevelopment of the region is marked quite often for legitimising the demand for Gorkhaland, the ethnic element and the emotions are embedded in Gorkha Identity.

The exploration of various indicators of Development as such Human Development index suffice Darjeeling to be more developed as compared to other Districts of West Bengal. The table below highlights the position of Darjeeling based on various indices¹⁹.

Table: 6. Comparing Human Development Index in West Bengal²⁰

	Health Index	Income Index	Education Index	H.D.I
West Bengal	07.0	0.43	0.69	0.69
Kolkata	0.82	0.73	0.80	0.78
Darjeeling	0.73	0.49	0.72	0.65
Jalpaiguri	0.61	0.38	0.60	0.53
Malda	0.49	0.36	0.48	0.44

Source: West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004:13.

¹⁹ For detailed Calculation and Methodology of Indices see Guha-Ray, 2003.

²⁰Cited in:

Chettri, Mona, (2013). *Ethnic politics in the Nepali public sphere: three cases from the eastern Himalaya*. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London

The notion of marginalisation and underdevelopment is based on the perception of economic status in case of Gorkhaland as it is evident from the table above that Darjeeling is placed in a much better position than Malda and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal.

Therefore, the question of underdevelopment as highlighted above in the previous section can be contested in terms of problems faced by the people in the region on daily basis.

“There is nothing here... be it proper health care facilities... No infrastructural developments... employment opportunities and so on...even for a small work either we have to travel to Siliguri Calcutta”

Therefore, the frustration and resentment is often expressed against the State controlled administration, which further highlights the economic side for justifying the Idea of Gorkhaland.

Similarly, the question of economic backwardness of the region has moreover developed the sense of marginalisation and fostered intense sentiments for separation and change. Likewise, the data generated from basic development indicators highlights the proposed Gorkhaland region²¹ comprising of various Districts are well ahead than rest of West Bengal. The region has 80.79% of household with safe drinking water as compared to 95.47% in rest of Bengal, similarly, 91.61% of household has access to electricity and 52.87% has access to improved sanitation facility. Likewise, the region is far ahead than rest of west Bengal in terms of usage of clean fuel which covers 86.1% of total household in comparison to rest of West Bengal i.e. 27.46 % .

Therefore, while discussing about the male and female literacy rates in the region the proposed Gorkhaland region has 68.68% of women who are literate and similarly, 81.08 % of men who

²¹ The Proposed Gorkhaland Region Comprises of Darjeeling, Kalimpong (Recently Declared as District).

are literate in the region. Likewise, it can be stated that the pattern of development indicators highlight that the proposed Gorkhaland region is not far behind in terms of development as compared to rest of West Bengal. The region in terms of Development indicators does not appear to lag behind.

Similarly, for the implementation of development in the region formerly DGHC and in contemporary times GTA has been created to meet the demands of the people, for a stronger voice of the people in decision making and implementing planning and development. Yet the dissatisfaction with the current and past institutions of governance in the region was highly expressed, as both the institutions have failed to address the issues related to development in the region. *“Be it DGHC or GTA, both have failed to resolve the issues, rather exacerbated it”*.

Similarly, Development Boards on the basis of communities have been formed in the region to impart development, Therefore, mostly the views on Development Boards stands as *“It is the politics of Divide and Rule practised by West Bengal Government against Gorkha community.”* Therefore, the establishment of development boards is viewed as problematic owing to the communal harmony of the region.

Very few expressed that it would serve as a tool to protect cultural identity, yet the notion of Gorkha Identity overrules other form of Imaginations, therefore from the generalised views and various contestations which were brought forward it can be said that the very idea of Gorkhaland is linked to identity and not development.

Therefore, Gorkhaland conveys Imagination of Homeland and better life as the solution to all the problems. Similarly the utopian Image of Gorkhaland as Homeland of Gorkhas marks it as a powerful tool to justify the claim for homeland.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This study attempted to interrogate the Social Construction of Space, Place of Gorkhaland. It has explored and analysed the discourse of Gorkhaland, discussing the claim for homeland and the construction of space, place in relation to Gorkhaland.

In lieu of conclusion, it can be said that the imagination of Gorkhaland as Imagined Homeland is the product of Disjunction in space. The fundamental anxiety of this study has been a critical analysis of geographical imaginations of a particular historicised place. More particularly, this study attempted to analyse how identity groups are able to claim a particular territory as 'homeland' how they imagine and justify the claim over space.

The idea of Gorkhaland as a specific space, place "A Homeland" is possible only after a series of disjunctions in space as the history of Darjeeling and the discourse of Gorkhaland as highlighted in chapter two clearly highlights the series of disjunctions. The study pointed out the disjunctions Of Darjeeling as a place and space. Gorkhaland as homeland of Gorkhas did not constitute a meaningful point of reference, before Darjeeling became an identifiable place after the annexation it was a moving place, an identifiable political centre, not necessarily an identifiable fixed geography.

Darjeeling as an identifiable fixed geography, could only emerge only after it was attached with Bengal, the Darjeeling hills thus then became major space. By strategically highlighting its discourse, the political elites sustained a fairly successful Idea of Homeland i.e. the idea of Gorkhaland.

The Space, Place of Gorkhaland was the geography of 'wild' which never accepted being part of Bengal, as historically British annexed the land from the then Raja of Sikkim. On the other hand, the open geography also allowed movement into the region thus the dawn of Migration

and Settlement has been highlighted. Further, the use of 'Gorkha' was seen as one of the important resources of opening the process of unification for the ideology of claim for Homeland.

This change signified distance and difference from the previous notion of space and place: the colonial space, When the British moved into the place, they introduced new geographical networks of place and population, which in many ways, disjuncted earlier notion of place.

On the other hand, these contending discourses of Gorkhaland radically transformed the idea of Homeland by installing the question of identity. In the contemporary period spatial imagination of Gorkhaland has shaped its modern notion of Homeland. Thus, the spatial imagination and the representation and representational space as discussed in chapter three presents nostalgia as an important character in articulating the claim for Homeland.

Darjeeling has been constructed as a "*Different Place*" in the overall local narratives and thoughts and also as a "Homeland." The differences with the state has also been highlighted as to legitimise the very idea of Gorkhaland since its inception. Differences are not only sought after in terms of development and overall welfare of the region but rather in terms of social realities owing to space and place in general. Thus, language and culture has also been highlighted in this context with reference to the first movement in 1986, as the expression was clearly placed to claim Darjeeling as ethnically distinct Place.

Likewise, the conceptualisation of imagination portrays the possibilities of thinking about geography and human activities and relations. The building of identities and the notion of homeland also stands firm in contesting the social construction of space.

Therefore, the notion of Identity and Homeland remains integral to this process of imagination and social construction of space and place.

On the other hand the discourse of Gorkhaland and Gorkha Identity Highlights that it is the result of consciousness developed over time and the socio-political and economic conditions prevailing around the region. The Idea of Gorkhaland Highlighted the question of land and identity, which developed emotional sense of belonging amongst the people, therefore nurturing the Idea of Gorkhaland being an ultimate solution to all the problems, most importantly the question of Identity and Representation.

Similarly, 'Gorkha' identity has been the call for claimed Homeland, likewise the struggle for separation is the viewed as process of drawing boundary, to legitimise and further justify the claim of Homeland. Hence, Gorkhaland as Homeland is to delineate from Bengal and Nepal too, which strengthens and highlights the anxious belonging to an Imagined Homeland.

In addition, the idea of Gorkhaland as Homeland has been highly advocated as a solution. Therefore, the idea of Homeland subsumes all other imaginations. As stated earlier, the perception of space is considered as the main approach in generating the Idea of Gorkhaland. The narratives of Gorkhaland moreover permeates the discourse of Gorkhaland through its economic arguments, justifying the Demand. It portrays the image of Gorkhaland thus presenting Gorkhaland as "*Horn of Plenty*".

The strong connotations of the idea of Homeland can be evaluated from the production of group-politico-territorial identities and their ardent demand for separate homeland territories. The claim of Homeland cannot be expressed as a one-time-change rather it is an expansive process through which homeland images are found to be constructed. Examining the case of Gorkhaland it is understood it is being gradually drawn to the '*body*' and its '*formations*' in their longing to map their 'own' territory into the imagined would be homeland.

Therefore, to conclude Gorkhaland today is a contested homeland of Indian Gorkhas, Instead of trying to define Gorkhaland from the lenses of identity and question of land, it would be more useful to concentrate on the production of contending histories and geographies .The idea of Gorkhaland as Homeland should not be overlooked as etymological. Gorkhaland constructs geographies, and is an attempts to re-conceptualise space. It would be motivating to focus on the imaginative geographies of these new notions and identities of place.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE I

Indo-Nepal Treaty

31.07.1950

The Government of India and the Government of Nepal recognizing the ancient ties which have happily existed between the two countries for centuries; Desiring still further to strengthen and develop these ties and to perpetuate peace between the two countries; Have resolver therefore to enter into Treaty of Peace and Friendship with each other, ad have, for this purpose, appointed as their plenipotentiaries the following persons, namely, the Government of India, his Excellency SHRI CHANDRESHWAR PRASAD NARAIN SINGH, Ambassador of India in Nepal; the Government of Nepal, MOHUN SHAMSHER JANG BAHADUR RANA, Maharaja, Prime Minister and Supreme-Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, who having examined each other's credentials and found them good and in due form having agreed as follows:

Article I

There shall be everlasting peace and friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal. The two Government agree mutually to acknowledge and respect the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of each other.

Article II

The two Governments hereby undertake to inform each-other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighbouring States likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two governments.

Article III

In order to establish and maintain the relation referred to in article I the two Governments agree to continue diplomatic relation with each other by means of representatives with such staff as is necessary for the due performance of their function. The representative and such of these staff as may be agreed upon shall enjoy such diplomatic privileges and immunities as are customarily granted by international law on a reciprocal basis. Provided that in no case shall these be less than those granted to persons of a similar status of any State having diplomatic relation with either government.

Article IV

The two Government agree to appoint Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice Consuls and other Consular agents, who shall reside in towns, ports and other places in each other's territory as may be agreed to. Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and Consular agents shall be provided with exequators or authorization of their appointment, such exequatur or authorization liable to be withdrawn which issued to, if considered necessary. The reasons for the withdrawal shall be indicated wherever possible. The persons mentioned above shall enjoy on a reciprocal basis all the rights, privileges, exemptions and immunities that are accorded to persons of corresponding status of any other state.

Article V

The Government of Nepal shall be free to import, from or through the territory of India, arms, ammunition or warlike material and equipment necessary for to this agreement shall be worked out by the two governments acting in consultation.

Article VI

Each government undertakes, in token of the neighbourly friendship between India and Nepal, to give to the national of the other, in its territory, national treatment with regard to participation in industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contract relating to such development.

Article VII

The Government of India and Nepal agree to grant, on reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and privileges of similar nature.

Article VIII

So far as matter dealt with herein are concerned, the Treaty cancels all previous treaties, agreements, and engagements entered into on behalf of India between the British Government and the Government of Nepal.

Article IX

This Treaty shall come into force from the date of signature by both the Governments.

Article X

The Treaty shall remain in force until it is terminated by either party by giving one year's notice.

Done in duplicate at Kathmandu the 31st day of July, 1950.

Sd/- Chandreshwar Prasad, Narain Singh

Rana For Government of India

Sd/- Muhun Shamsher Jang Bahadur

For Government of Nepal.

ANNEXURE II

MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT Dated: 22.08.1988

Between Government of India, Government of West Bengal and Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council for creating a New Council for the Hill areas of Darjeeling District, under the Sixth Schedule of Constitution of India.

1. The Government of India and the Government of West Bengal have been making concerted efforts to fulfill the aspirations of Hill people of Darjeeling District (West Bengal) relating to their cultural identity, language, education and economic development.

2. On consideration of various demands of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and consequent upon Tripartite Meeting held on 25.7.1988 at New Delhi between the Union Home Minister, Government of West Bengal and Shri Subash Ghisingh, President, GNLF, a Memorandum of Settlement (Darjeeling Accord) was signed on 22.8.1988. Pursuant to another meeting between the Union Home Minister and Shri Subash Ghisingh, President GNLF at New Delhi on 25.7. 1988, a further Memorandum of Settlement was signed on 23.8.1988.

3. Pursuant to the above mentioned Settlement, GNLF agreed to drop the demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland and an autonomous hill council, viz, Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), was set up under „The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Act, 1988“ notified by the Government of West Bengal on 15.10.1988. The hill areas under DGHC comprised of the three hill Sub-Divisions of Darjeeling District, viz, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and 13 mouzas of Siliguri Sub-Division of that District.

4. However, Shri Subash Ghisingh (former Chairman and Chief Executive Councilor, DGHC, presently Administrator) had been demanding constitutional status for the DGHC as, according to him, the abovementioned Settlements could not fulfill the aspirations of the people of Darjeeling. A series of tripartite meetings were held between Government of India,

Government of West Bengal and Shri Subash Ghisingh to review the implementation of Darjeeling Accord and further issues arising from it. As a result of these meetings, it is hereby agreed in principle to create a selfgoverning body for the Darjeeling hill areas in the State of West Bengal.

5. The objectives of this agreement are to replace the existing Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council by an Autonomous Self Governing Council to be known as Gorkha Hill Council, Darjeeling under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India following due consultative, Legislative and constitutional processes by the State and Central Governments so as to fulfill economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land-rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the hill people; and to speed up the infrastructure development in the hill areas.

6. Area: The area of the proposed Council under the Sixth Schedule shall comprise all the mouzas, villages and areas as per Annexure A to be notified by the State Government. Any further alteration to the list can be made on the basis of mutual agreement between the Govt. of West Bengal and DGHC, prior to the enactment of Constitution Amendment Act. The above mentioned mouzas, villages and areas shall be comprised in 3 contiguous hills SubDivisions viz, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong of Darjeeling District after reorganization of the existing Sub-Divisions of Darjeeling district by the Government of West Bengal within a period of 3 months of the signing of this agreement.

7. Status of New Council:

7.1 The Government of West Bengal would repeal at appropriate time the existing „The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Act, 1988“ to pave the way for creation of a new autonomous Council under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Government of India would initiate necessary consultative, legislative and constitutional steps to amend Article 244 of the

Constitution appropriately, to include administration of the hill areas of State of West Bengal in the Sixth Schedule.

7.2 The provisions of the Sixth Schedule as and when amended and other relevant Articles of the Constitution of India will apply to the new Council, mutatis mutandis in terms of this Settlement. The safeguards for the non-tribal in the new Council area, inter-alias, will include the following:

7.2.1 Provisions of para 1(2) of Sixth Schedule regarding Autonomous Regions will however not be applicable to the new Council.

7.2.2. A provision will be made in para 2(1) of the Sixth Schedule for increasing the number of members for new Council up to 33 out of which 10 will be reserved for Schedule Tribes, 15 for non-tribal communities, 3 open for all communities and 5 to be nominated by Governor of West Bengal from the unrepresented communities. From new Council area, at least two should be women. Nominated members will have the same rights and privileges as other members including voting rights. Election from the 28 constituencies of the new Council shall be on the basis of adult franchise. The terms of the elected members of the new Council shall be for 5 years.

7.2.3. Safeguards for the settlement rights, transfer and inheritance of property etc, of non-tribal will be suitably incorporated in Para 3 of the Sixth Schedule. Any such Law may be made by the new Council in this regard will not in particular:

(a). Extinguish the rights and privileges enjoyed by any citizen of India in respect of his land at the commencement of the new Council, and

(b). Bar any citizen from acquiring land either by way of inheritance, allotment, settlement or by way of transfer if such citizens were eligible for such bonafide acquisition of land within the new Council area.

7.2.4. Provision will be added in para 6 of Sixth Schedule that in the new Council area, language and medium of instruction in educational institutions will not be changed without approval of the State Government.

7.2.5. Para 10 of the Sixth Schedule will not be applicable to the new Council area.

7.2.6. The amendments to the Sixth Schedule shall include provision in such a manner that non-tribal are not disadvantaged in relation to the rights enjoyed by them at the commencement of the new Council and their rights and privileges including land rights are fully protected.

7.3. These amendments will be carried out after following due consultative and legislative processes.

8. Powers and functions

8.1. The new Council shall have legislative powers in respect to subjects mutually agreed with State Government to be transferred to it. The list of Subjects is given in Annexure B. Any further alteration to this list can be made on the basis mutual.

8.2. There shall be an Executive Council comprising not more than 6 Executive Members from amongst the members of the General Council, one of whom shall be the Chief and another one the Deputy Chief of the said Executive Council. To ensure adequate representation for the non-Tribal members in the Executive Council, at least 2 members of the Executive Council would be non-Tribal. There shall be no bar on nominated members being appointed as members of the Executive Council.

8.3. The New Council shall have the full control over the officers and staff appointed by it and this and connected with the delegated subjects working in the Council area. In case of all India Service Officers and State Government officer on deputation to the Council, it can only

recommend suitable action to the State Government. Annual Confidential Reports of all the officers shall, however be written by the appropriate authority in the new Council.

8.4. The new Council shall also be competent to make appointments for all posts under its control in accordance with the rules of appointment followed by the Government of West Bengal. However, the posts, where recruitment is made on the recommendation of West Bengal Public Service Commission, shall not be covered under this provision. The new Council may constitute a Selection Board for appointments to be made by it and may also make rules, with the approval of the Governor of West Bengal, to regulate appointments and to ensure adequate representation for all communities living the new Council area.

8.5. All new posts within the Council are created with the concurrence of State Government. The Council shall also abide by the decision of the Government of West Bengal in respect of abolition of temporarily keeping vacant any post.

8.6. Development functions and bodies within the competence of DGHC shall be transferred to the new Council.

8.7. The new Council would have the same powers of supervision over the lower tiers of Panchayats as the existing DGHC. The existing arrangement of lower tiers of Panchayats would continue under the new Council. In the event, Panchayati Raj System ceases to be in force in the new Council area, the powers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in such matters shall be vested with the new Council.

8.8. The Offices of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police will be outside the superintendence and control of the new Council.

8.9. The State Government would provide an amount, to be decided every year on population ration basis, as grants-in-aid in two equal installments to the new Council for executing development works. The proportionate share for new Council shall be calculated on the basis

of the plan funds available after setting aside the funds required for earmarked sectors and the salary. This amount may be reduced proportionately if the State plan allocation is reduced or there is plan cut due to resource problem. In addition, the new Council will be paid a suitable amount of plan funds and non-plan funds to cover the office expenses and the salaries of the staffs working under their control. The new Council shall disburse the salaries of the staffs under their control and would ensure strict economy in the matter.

8.10. The new Council shall prepare a plan with the amounts likely to be available for development works, both under State share and Central share, covering any or all the activities of the departments under their control. The Council shall have full discretion in selecting the activities and choosing the amount for the investment under the same in any year covering all groups of people in a fair and equitable manner. This plan will be a sub set of the State plan and would be treated as its integral part. Once the plan of the State, including the new Council plan, gets the approval of the Planning Commission, the new Council authority shall start execution of their plans in the new Council area. Modifications, if any, made by the Planning Commission in the new Council proposal shall be binding on the new Council authority. The State Government shall not divert the funds allocated to the new Council to other heads and also ensure its timely release. The new Council may have Planning Department to prepare the plans for the new Council is to be submitted to Planning Commission through the Government of West Bengal.

8.11. The Executive functions of the new Council shall be exercised through its Principal Secretary who shall be an officer of the rank not below that of Commissioner/Secretary of Government of West Bengal. The sanctioning powers of Government of West Bengal shall be vested with the Principal Secretary of the new Council and sanctioning powers of head(s) of the Department(s) including for technical sanction shall be conferred on the senior most officer

of that Department preferably not below the rank of Additional Director, who may be designated as

Director of the new Council for that department. The principal Secretary and other officers shall exercise their powers under the overall guidance and supervision of the new Council.

9. Additional Development Packages for the new Council:

9.1. The State Government, within the limitation of financial and other constraints, may offer or allow the new Council to offer, possible and sustainable additional incentives for attracting private investment in the new Council area and would also support projects for external funding.

9.2. In order to accelerate the development of the region and to meet the aspirations of the people, the Government of India will provide financial

assistance of Rs 30 crore per annum for 5 years for projects to develop the socioeconomic infrastructure in the new Council areas over and above the normal plans assistance to the State of West Bengal. Suitable mechanism will be built in the system to ensure that the funds are transferred to the new Council in time and a regular interval. A list of projects which should be considered to be taken up in the new Council are as is Annexure C.

10. Interim administration: Immediately after signing of the Agreement and till such time the process of Constitutional amendment is carried out, and the new Council is put in place, the administration of the area shall continue to be with the existing DGHC constituted under the existing Act. To achieve the objectives of the present MoS, The steps as enumerated hereunder would be taken by the parties to the settlement:

Sd/-

V.K. Duggal.

Home Secretary,

Government of India.

Sd/-

Subash Ghising

President, GNLF

Sd/-

K. Deb.

Chief Secretary, Government of WB.

ANNEXURE III

Memorandum of Agreement

Whereas the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) has been demanding for quite some time past a separate State of Gorkhaland for the hill areas of Darjeeling district including some areas of Siliguri Terai and Dooars (hereinafter referred to as the Region) ;

And

Whereas both the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal have repeatedly emphasized the need for keeping the region as an integral part of the State of West Bengal ;

And

Whereas after several rounds of tripartite meetings at the ministerial and at the official levels, the GJM, while not dropping their demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland, has agreed to the setting up of an autonomous Body (hereinafter referred to as the new Body) empowered with administrative, financial and executive powers in regard to various subjects to be transferred to the said Body for the development of the region and restoration of peace and normalcy there at;

And

Whereas the objective of this Agreement is to establish an autonomous self-governing Body to administer the region so that the socio-economic, infrastructural, educational, cultural, and linguistic, development is expedited and the ethnic identity of Gorkhas established, thereby achieving all round development of the people of the region;

And

Whereas all issues including issues relating to transfer of subjects to the new Body have been agreed in various tripartite meetings at the official level;

And

Whereas after several round of Tripartite discussions between the Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the GJM, an agreement was reached in respect of all the issues;

Now, therefore, the Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the GJM, keeping on record the demand of the GJM for a separate State of Gorkhaland, agree as follows:-

1) An autonomous Body, which shall be called the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), will be formed through direct election. A Bill for this purpose will be introduced in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly;

2) While under the provisions of the Constitution transfer of legislative powers to the new Body is not possible, the power to frame rules / regulations under the State Acts to control, regulate and administer the departments / offices and subjects transferred to the new Body will be conferred upon the new Body ;

3) The administrative, executive and financial powers in respect of the subjects transferred will be vested in such a way that the new Body may function in an autonomous and effective way;

4) The subjects alongwith all Departments / Offices to be transferred to the new Body is appended as Annexure – ‘A’.

5) The area of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration shall comprise the areas of the entire sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong with extended areas of Kurseong. In regard to transfer of additional areas of Siliguri Terai and Dooars to the new Body, a High-Powered Committee will be formed comprising four representatives of GJM, three representatives of the State

Government (one from the Home Department; the District Magistrate, Darjeeling; the District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri); the Director of Census Operations representing Government of India, apart from the Chairman of the Committee to be appointed by the State Government. The Chairperson of the Board of Administrators, DGHC will be the convener of this Committee. The Committee will look into the question of identification of additional areas in Siliguri Terai and Dooars that may be transferred to the new Body, having regard to their compactness, contiguity, homogeneity, ground level situation and other relevant factors.

The Committee will be expected to give its recommendations within a short period, preferably within six months of its constitution.

6) The work of this High-Powered Committee will run parallel to the electoral process which will be based on the existing area delimitation. However, the empowering statute will have a provision for transfer of the additional areas from Siliguri Terai and Dooars that may be agreed upon, based on the recommendation of this Committee.

7) In regard to transfer of all forests including reserved forest, it was agreed that the State Government will make a reference to the Central Government on the issue of reserved forest as the power delegated to the State Government under the Central statute cannot be delegated to any other authority straightaway. However, all offices catering to the unreserved forests under the jurisdiction of GTA would also be transferred to GTA.

8) Regarding Tribal status to Gorkhas except the Scheduled Castes, the GJM or any organisation representing the Gorkhas will make an application to the Backward Classes Welfare Department of the State Government, which is the authority to process such claims. The Department, upon receiving such application supported by necessary documents will conduct a study through the Cultural Research Institute, Kolkata. After examination by the Department, the matter will be referred to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. The

recommendations already submitted to the National Commission will be followed up by the State Government. The Government of India will consider for granting ST status to all the Gorkhas excepting SC.

9) In regard to regularization of all ad-hoc, casual, daily wage workers of DGHC, regularization by way of outright absorption is not feasible due to the current legal position as enunciated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. However, those employees who have put in 10 years of continuous service would be guided by the Finance Department's order of 23rd April, 2010. Those outside this ambit would be extended an enhancement in wages. This would be equivalent to 75% of the remuneration admissible under the order of the Finance Department subject to a minimum of 5,000/- per month for those who have not completed 10 years of continuous service. As and when they complete 10 years of continuous service, they will be eligible for the full benefit in terms of the order of 23rd April, 2010. The employees will, however, have the liberty to apply for normal recruitment to any other posts of State Government. It was also agreed that the State Government will make necessary financial provisions for bearing the additional non-plan expenditure for this purpose.

10) There shall be a GTA Sabha for the GTA. There shall be a Chairman and Deputy Chairman to conduct the business of Council. The GTA Sabha shall consist of forty-five elected members and five members to be nominated by the Governor to give representation to members of SC, ST, women, and minority communities. The M.Ps, M.L.As, and Chairpersons of municipality(s) of the region shall be Ex-officio Members to this GTA Sabha. The term of the GTA shall be five years.

11) The Executive Body shall consist of a Chief Executive who will nominate fourteen members out of the elected / nominated members as Executive Member. One of them shall be the Deputy Chief to be nominated by the Chief Executive.

12) Every member of the GTA shall before taking seat make and subscribe before the Governor or one of the elected members appointed in that behalf by him an oath or affirmation. The Chief Executive shall be administered an oath or affirmation by the Governor.

13) There shall be a Principal Secretary of the GTA, who shall be of the rank of the Principal Secretary/Secretary to the State Government and who shall be selected by the Chief Executive from the panel sent by the State Government and shall be paid from the GTA Fund such salaries and allowances as may be fixed by the State

Government. The Principal Secretary once deputed to the GTA shall not be transferred for a period of at least two years without the consent of the GTA.

14) The Government of India and the Government of West Bengal will provide all possible assistance to the GTA for the overall development of the region. The Government of India will provide financial assistance of Rs. 200 crore (Rupees Two Hundred Crore) per annum for 3 years for projects to develop the socio-economic infrastructure in GTA over and above the normal plan assistance to the State of West Bengal. A list of projects which may be considered to be taken up by the GTA is at Annexure –‘B1’. List of projects to be separately taken up by the GTA with the State/Central Government is at –‘B2’.

15) The Government of India/ State Government will provide one time financial assistance required for development of administrative infrastructure viz., GTA Sabha House, Secretariat Complex and the residential quarters for the elected members of GTA and the senior officers.

16) The allocation sanctioned in the budget of GTA and all funds sanctioned by the State or the Union Government which remain unspent at the close of the financial year shall be taken into account for the purpose of providing additional resources in the Budget of the following year or years and the fund requirements will be met on a yearly basis.

- 17) The Government of West Bengal shall provide formula based plan fund with 60 per cent weightage on population and the balance weightage on area backwardness, hill areas and border areas in two equal installments every year for executing development works.
- 18) The Government of West Bengal shall provide Non-plan grant including provisions for bearing the additional Non-plan expenditure for existing employees payable in two installments in respect of the offices / departments transferred to GTA.
- 19) The fund received from the Government of India shall not be diverted and the State Government shall release the fund in time.
- 20) The GTA will have the power of creating Group B, C and D posts with the approval of Governor. The recruitment to Group B, C and D posts will be through a Subordinate Service Selection Board to be set up for this purpose.
- 21) The State Public Service Commission shall be consulted for the recruitment of Group – ‘A’ officers.
- 22) The State Government will set-up a separate School Service Commission, College Service Commission; open an office of the Regional Pension and Provident Directorate; and set up an office for Registration of land, building etc., marriage, society etc. in the GTA area, subject to extant rules and regulations.
- 23) The Governor of West Bengal shall obtain a report on the functioning of the GTA and cause that report to be laid on the table of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly annually.
- 24) The Government of West Bengal will initiate action to re-organize / reconstitute the territorial jurisdictions of sub-divisions and blocks.

25) The GTA, once established, will separately take up the issues relating to grant of incentives, subsidies, waiver of taxes and tariff and other benefits as appropriate to the region's backwardness, with the Central and State Governments.

26) A three-tier Panchayat will be constituted by elections in the GTA region, subject to the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution of India. Notwithstanding anything contained in the West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973, or the West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993, the GTA shall exercise general powers of supervision over the Panchayats and the Municipalities.

27) Since the formation of new authority will take some time and since the developmental works in the hills, which have already suffered badly, cannot be allowed to suffer further, there will be a Board of Administrators in DGHC which would be fully empowered to exercise all the powers and functions of the Chief Executive Councilor under the DGHC Act, 1988 and to decide on the much needed developmental works in the hills. The Board of Administrators will comprise MLA, Darjeeling; MLA, Kurseong; MLA, Kalimpong; District Magistrate, Darjeeling and Administrator, DGHC in keeping with the provisions of the sub-section (1) of Section 17 of the DGHC Act as amended vide Kolkata Gazette Notification of 22nd March, 2005.

28) The GJM agrees to ensure that peace and normalcy will be maintained in the region.

29) A review will be done by the State Government of all the cases registered under various laws against persons involved in the GJM agitation. Steps will be taken in the light of the review, not to proceed with prosecution in all cases except those charged with murder. Release of persons in custody will follow the withdrawal of cases.

30) The GTA youth would be considered for recruitment in the Police, Army and Para Military Forces subject to their suitability for such appointment.

31) The implementation of the provision of the Memorandum of Agreement shall be periodically reviewed by a committee representing the Government of India, Government of West Bengal and GJM.

32) The Government of West Bengal shall repeal the DGHC Act, 1988 along with formation of GTA to be constituted by an Act of the legislature.

Signed on 18th July, 2011 at Darjeeling in the presence of Shri P. Chidambaram, Hon'ble Union Home Minister and Mamata Banerjee, Hon'ble Chief Minister, west Bengal.

(Dr. G.D. Gautama)

Additional Chief Secretary,

Home and Hill Affairs Department

For or on behalf on the Government of

West Bengal

Shri Roshan Giri

General Secretary

Gorkha Janmukti Morcha

(Shri K.K. Pathak)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

Ministry of Home Affairs

For and on behalf of the

Government of India