

**CHANGING NATURE OF GORKHALAND
MOVEMENT: 1906-2015**

A Thesis Submitted
To
Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
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May, 2023

Date: 3/05/2023

Declaration

I, **Prerna Tamang**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the thesis titled "**Changing Nature of Gorkhaland Movement: 1906-2015**" submitted to **Sikkim University** for the Award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is my original work. Any content or any part of this thesis has not been submitted to any other institutions or for any academic purposes.

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MAP

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ABBREVIATION.

ABAVP	<i>Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad</i>
ABNBS	<i>Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samiti</i>
AIGL	All India Gorkha League
AINSCA	All India Nepali Scheduled Caste Association
BJP	<i>Bharatiya Janata Party</i>
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPRM	Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists
DDCC	Darjeeling District Congress Committee
DDHPLIC	Darjeeling District Hill People Language Implementation Committee
DGHC	Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council
GATA	Gorkha <i>Adivasi</i> Territorial Administration
GDF	Gorkha Democratic Front
GDNS	<i>Gorkha Dukha Nivarak Sangh</i>
GJMM	<i>Gorkha Janmukti Morcha</i>
GNSF	Gorkha National Student Front
GNYP	Gorkha National Youth Front
GNWO	Gorkha National Women Organisation
GNLF	Gorkha National Liberation Front
GP	<i>Gram Panchayat</i>
GTA	Gorkhaland Territorial Administration
GVC	Gorkha Volunteer's Cell
GWO	Gorkhaland Welfare Organization
GNEO	Gorkha National Ex-Servicemen Organization

JAKS	<i>Janamukti Asthayi Karmachari Sangathan</i>
NSGN	Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland
PDF	People's Democratic Front
PLA	People's Liberation Army of Manipur
SDPO	Sub-Divisional Police Officer
SRC	States Reorganization Commission
SSC	School Selection Commission
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
WBPC	West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee
WBCS	West Bengal Commission Scheme

Map 1

Darjeeling District

(Includes Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong region)



Chapter- I

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In post-independent India states were reorganized based on of ethno-linguistic criteria, targeting the homogenous nature of community with similar linguistic background this policy failed to eradicate the problem of “entrapped minorities” as many states within the Indian federation continued to include peripheral minority groups that were linguistically and culturally different and politically and economically subordinate to the majority ethno linguistic communities that wielded power in the states.¹

Demands for new states are not recent phenomena in India. There was a demand from different regions, for reorganization of states on linguistics basis. Consequently, in June 1948, the Government of India appointed the Linguistic Provinces Commission under the chairmanship of S.K Dhar to study the feasibility of organizing states on a linguistic basis. The report submitted by the Dhar commission was rejected. However, Andhra was created as the first linguistic state by separating the Telugu speaking areas from Madras State. In 1956 the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) suggested rearranging the administrative boundaries of states after independence to accommodate various demands for linguistically more homogenous states.² But despite this broad internal reorganization of India, in addition to Gorkhaland there are still about thirty demands for new states in various areas of the country, including “Vidharba” (in Maharastha), “Bundelkhand” (in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh),

¹Robert Hardgrave & A. Stanley Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990:123.

²Miriam Wenner, “Challenging the State by Reproducing its Principle: The Demand for Gorkhaland between Regional Autonomy and the National Belongings”, *Asian Ethnology*, Vol. 72, No.2, 2013: 200.

and “Bodoland” (in Assam). The importance of statehood movements was underlined in July 2013, when the government’s announcement to give into the long-standing demand for Telangana to be carved out of Andhra Pradesh sparked fierce protests in other parts of the country, where demands for Bodoland (Assam), Kamtapur (West Bengal/Assam), or Vidarbha (Maharashtra) were reiterated.³

Similarly, the demand for Gorkhaland is not a recent political phenomenon. The region surrounding Darjeeling and the Dooars in North Bengal, India termed as Gorkhaland.⁴ It is impossible to comprehend the Gorkha Identity Problem in isolation. Locating it within the framework of nation, region, culture and history is necessary here.⁵ For generations, the people of Darjeeling have searched for, yet been perennially denied. The demand for the recognition of the distinctiveness of the region was made as early as 1907 and has been represented through various memoranda, parliamentary bills, and negotiations and manifestly in the form of mass movement of the 1980s.⁶ The long history of the movement not only proves its antiquity but also establishes the distinct history of the region. This demand is a protracted movement, which has been raised by Gorkhas to preserve their cultural identity, which has been tangled around to prove their Indian nationality and citizenship. The process of immigration of people from Nepal to India during the colonial period has been a contentious issue, where lies the complexity of maintaining the ethnic identity of Gorkha.⁷ In the past six and half decades several smaller states have been carved out from bigger states with or without any movement. There is a state without a movement for example Chhattisgarh. In Chhattisgarh, there was no

³*Ibid.*, 2001.

⁴Bandana Rai, *Gorkhas the Warrior Race*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication, 2009: 279.

⁵Bidhan Golay, “Rethinking Gorkha Identity: Outside the Imperium of Discourse, Hegemony and History” *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Vol.2, No. 1 & 2, 2006: 25.

⁶Rai, 2009, *Op.cit.*, 279.

⁷*Ibid.*,

strong popular statehood movement, nor strongly mobilised politics connected to the idea of a Chhattisgarh region. Although statehood for Chhattisgarh was proposed as early as 1948, it was competition in the 1990s between the two national parties vying for power in the region-Congress and the BJP- that brought the issue to the fore rather than pressure from social movements.⁸ Then why deny this right to the Indian National of Nepali origin- the Gorkhas. But all the efforts so far have been thwarted.⁹ The state of Gorkhaland is not only about territory but about identity, political emancipation, preservation of culture, development, preserving a way of life, development of community; in short it addresses the core fifty lakh Gorkhas who are the guardians of peace of the Indian Nation.¹⁰ Whether to call themselves a Gorkha or a Nepali has always remained a debatable issue which is yet to be resolved and both terms are used synonymously. However, a different nomenclature does not give any assurance that their problem of identity will be solved. The need to secure an Indian identity for themselves is their utmost priority.

The identity used to refer Nepalis or Gorkha paved the way for consolidation of community in asserting their authentic identity through political mobilization. Like several regional or autonomy movement which are founded on a sense of deprivation, marginalization and are economic in orientation the struggle of the Indian Nepalis relates to similar issues as the relegation of their citizenship and the legitimate right to be claimed as Indian by the people of India which can be fulfilled by forming the separate state of Gorkhas.¹¹ Statehood movements in India therefore do not only

⁸Louise Tillin, "Statehood without a Movement: Chhattisgarh" in (eds.) *Remapping India: New States and Their Political Origins*, Oxford University Press: 2013.

⁹Brig C.S. Thapa, *Gorkha Society and Politics*, Darjeeling: DPS Publishing House, 2016: 107.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 108.

¹¹Rai, 2009, *Op.cit.*, 386.

reflect people's aspirations for development, participation and autonomy, but their desire to protect their identity, culture and ethnicity.

1.2. Statement of Problem

In India the decision to create new states lies with the central government and is constitutionally anchored in Article 3 that allows for the creation of new states or changing the boundaries of existing ones. In recent years, ethnic groups in various states in India have politically mobilized in support of separate statehood status within the Indian federation to be achieved mainly by breaking-up the existing states in which they live. States are free to adopt their own language of administrative and education instruction from among the country's officially recognised language, the Scheduled language. The demand for Gorkhaland is based on the provision in Article 3(a)¹² of the Constitution of India. The demand for Gorkhaland has always meant for the creation of a new state within India but not for a separation from India. Even Nepali language, which was recognised in the Eighth Schedule on 20th August 1992, emerged as a distinct language around 1000 AD. Within Bengal become the new state that the Indian Gorkhas have been waiting, much as Gujarat was made of Bombay, Haryana from Punjab, Andhra from Madras, Uttarakhand from Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand from Bihar. Hence, these states formation have to contribute to the richness and diversity of India and has also led to more competent governance, in the same way the creation of Gorkhaland would only be in the larger concentration of the nation.¹³ Like other demands for separate state, Gorkhaland Movement led by Indian Gorkhas also had gone through the same methods of agitation i.e., protest, strike, meetings with different agenda and discussion. Unlike other states, Gorkhaland has

¹²Article 3(a) includes the power to form a new State or Union territory by uniting a part of any State or Union territory to any other State or Union territory.

¹³Wenner, *Ibid.*, 201.

been denied by the Government even though the situation and demand were similar to the other state (Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Andhra Pradesh). The constant denial makes up the case for the study of causes and involved political issues.

The component of movement is both dynamic and static in nature as the process gets changed and transformed over the period. Most of the Leaders of Darjeeling perceived statehood demand only for personal gain and when they were out of power and a vehicle through which to return to power. Political Leaders has misled the mass in multiple ways by making false promises regarding the statehood issues which led to constant change in the mode of the Gorkhaland Movement. For some time movement goes on a serious note but all of sudden the movement gets slowed down. Above all, it represented the wrong impression in front of the government authority and the common people of Hill. As a result, the movement is not yet success.

The Government's response to the movement/agitation was a predicament. The government has stopped viewing the Gorkha agitation as a political issue. It was viewed as an agitation that disturbed local law and order, and ranting Gorkhas regional autonomy might result in identical requests from other parts of India and eventually national disintegration.¹⁴ The movement received the differential opinion from both the central and state governments about the nature of the movement. The alternative solution or to cover up the situation both the DGHC and GTA formation pave the way. Both bodies are constituted as autonomous bodies although with no legislative powers and both the institutions emerged amidst the zigzags of political compromise and compulsion.

¹⁴Iqbal Narain & Nilima Dutta, "India in 1986: The Continuing Struggle". *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No.2, February, 1987:181-193.

Hence, this research work explores the changing nature of Gorkhaland Movement and the failure of past attempts and the ultimate goal of separate state process have become necessary to initiate a comprehensive analysis of the changing nature of the movement.

1.3. Review of Literature

The literature review will be an important component of this study. Though many scholars have accomplished their work on Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling, very less amount of work has been done on the changing nature of the Gorkhaland Movement through the study of politics of denial and internal issues that prolong the denial. Swatahsiddha Sarkar¹⁵ briefly talked about the history of Darjeeling Sikkim region and tried to shed the further light on the unlikeness of Telangana and Gorkhaland Movement. But the author has failed to examine both the demands and the ways of their struggle for the statehood. However, the author points out that Gorkhaland's struggle in no way loses its importance even if it may not be similar to Telangana Movement. Secondly in his book named "Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response"¹⁶ looks into the effective and malfunction of regional autonomy form. The author claims that in the imagination of the state, the problem of Gorkha ethnicity is expressed by a single party and its leader that represents the broader masses to forward their elitist benefits, which render its approach state-centric and elite-based.

¹⁵Swatahsiddha Sarkar, "How (Not) to Write Hill History", *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol. 51, No.5, January 2016.

¹⁶Swatahsiddha Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd, 2013.

Rajat Ganguly¹⁷ talks about several ethno-political movements which have recently succeeded in their quest for separate statehood after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in New Delhi authorized the breakup of Madhya Pradesh to create Chhattisgarh, Bihar to create Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh to create Uttaranchal. While these successes are noteworthy, the relatively large number of similar movements is waiting in several other states. It is in this context that the Gorkhaland agitation in West Bengal has acquired significance. The author in his article analyzes the main reasons behind Gorkha nationalism in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal; explains the political process that led to the demand for Gorkhaland and the formation of the DGHC; and evaluates and assesses the impact of the DGHC in the context of the current political climate in Darjeeling to determine, as far as possible, the likelihood of the Gorkhaland demand and agitation being resurrected shortly. In this article, he has straight away narrates the whole starting history of the demands of a separate state beginning in 1907.

After various struggle how autonomous agreement took place between the Government of West Bengal and the leader of agitator in 1988. But the author has not talked about the denial of a separate state for Indian Nepalis. The demand was not a recent phenomenon and even many have sacrificed their lives in a process, still the gap is visible between demand and fulfilments. The author narrates the history of the demand of a separate state but somehow, he did not deal with the question “why” or “why not?” a separate state for them. Miriam Wenner¹⁸ too pointed out the rise of Gorkha Nationalism and the demand for a new separate state. The political leaders of the Gorkha parties strategically formulate their demands in the ideological language

¹⁷Rajat Ganguly, “Poverty, Malgovernance and Ethno Political Mobilization: Gorkha Nationalism and the Gorkhaland Agitation in India”, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol.11, 2005.

¹⁸Miriam Wenner, “Challenging the State by Reproducing its Principle: The Demand for Gorkhaland between Regional Autonomy and the National Belonging” *Asian Ethnology*, Vol. 72, no. 2, 2013.

of the (Indian) nation-state, reflecting its basic ideas and principles. Their state would guarantee full recognition as Indians; adherence to the Indian constitution and principles of democracy and nonviolence; and the connection of the demand for Gorkhaland to the national security discourse. A separate state is not simply a piece of land, it is also a genuine, constitutionally recognized part of the nation ensuring equal rights and obligations as other states and groups in India presumably already have. The author has tried to look at the overall situation of Indian Nepalese. But she has not mentioned why the government of West Bengal is not giving any particular response to it, and the reason of denial of a new state, as the movement, is missing in her article.

Meeta Spencer¹⁹ in her book proposes some reminiscent measures to promote democracy and also to protect minority rights. The book gives an apprehensive study, it brings out an investigation cum talk about (analyze its causes and consequences) the various separatist movements. Some of which have achieved their goal and some have not as it rightly brings out the point that the world is facing a trend of separatist movement, or movements within movements.

Ashutosh Kumar²⁰ in his book he has tried to go beyond the State and look into the region within the State. This book attempts to look at the regions within the state as a distinctive identity. The book is useful but less information is mentioned about the separate state.

¹⁹Meeta Spencer, *Separatism Democracy and Disintegration*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990.

²⁰Ashutosh Kumar, *Rethinking State Politics in India, Regions within Regions*, India: Routledge, 1911.

Rajani Rajan Jha & Bhavana Mishra²¹ article talks about the Centre-state relation focusing on West Bengal. The article addresses and examines the relationship between one of the longest surviving non-congress state governments in India i.e., the left Front Government of West Bengal and the Central Government between 1980-1990. They highlight the various issues involved with the strained relationship between the West Bengal Government and the Central government, issues were Haldia Petro Chemicals Project, Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project, Economic & Financial Problems, and Problem relating to food grains and other essential commodities, the Gorkhaland controversy and other miscellaneous problems. The article overshadows the Gorkhaland issues and talks very less about the outcome of the movement.

Prabhat Datta²² in his article examine the factors which led to the Gorkha unrest in the hill district of Darjeeling in West Bengal and focused basic features of the Gorkha Hill Council which is regarded as the only measure for solving such kind ethnic problems in India. He analyzes the responses of both the Government towards the movement. In his second article²³ talks about the Hill Councils works and it was used as a tool by the GNLFF leaders for political gain. The Hill Council was an administrative set up to accommodate the aspiration of the Hill people of Darjeeling, but it failed to do so. The author also suggests that the failure can be accredited to the leadership as they tried to make the most out of it.

²¹Rajan Jha Rajani & Bhavana Mishra, "Centre-State Relations, 1980-90: The Experience of West Bengal", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.54, No.2, April-June 1993.

²²Prabhat Datta, "The Gorkhaland Agitation In West Bengal", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 52, No.2, April-June 1991.

²³Prabhat Datta, "The Hill Council Experiment in West Bengal: A Case Study", *The Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55, No.1, Jan-March 1994.

Mahendra P. Lama²⁴ in his book he tries to highlight the demand for Gorkhaland within the Union of India as one of the aged demands in the History now. The author gives a detail account of Subash Ghising, his throughout the journey of politics and who was able to acquire the shape of a mass movement for the first time for the a separate state.

Lousie Tillin²⁵ in his article, the demands for political autonomy or statehood within the federal system have been used as a frame for social movement mobilization. It focuses on the most recent states to have been created in India: Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand which came into being in 2000. This article draws attention to the process which has brought broader issues into question, drawing social movements and political parties into alignments about the idea of creating new states as she points out that identity-based movement have engaged more successfully with electoral politics. In slight contrast, this article resists posting too sharp a distinction between identity and interest-based movements. Rather it seeks to examine why some movements or parts of such movements, have chosen to foreground claims based on regional identity at particular points in time. But author failed to examine that not all political movements have been fore grounded and noticed by the government.

Bidhan Golay²⁶ his paper makes an effort to trace the history of the Gorkha identity back more than a century or to emphasise the development of the colonial public sphere in Darjeeling during the twentieth century. He also talked about conflation

²⁴Mahendra P. Lama, *Gorkhaland Movement Quest for an Identity*, New Delhi: Sona Printers in Collaboration with Sabina Publications, 1996.

²⁵Louise Tillin, "Questioning Borders: Social Movements, Political Parties and the creation of New States in India", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 1, March 2011.

²⁶Bidhan Golay, "Rethinking Gorkha Identity: Outside the Imperium of Discourse, Hegemony and History", *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 1&2, 2006.

between the Colonial identities and Martial identity. The needs of the state and their flaws in relation to statehood were not discussed greatly by the author.

Basant Lama²⁷ pointed out that the Nepalese inhabitants of the Darjeeling hills have been viewed as migrants from Nepal and therefore called “foreigners”. The allegation of being “foreigners” used by those opposed to the statehood movement demand for a separate state, paradoxically feeds the insecurity of the Indian Nepalis. Even C.K. Shrestha²⁸ discussed the Indian Nepali community’s identity dilemma and the prejudice it experiences due to being labelled as a “Foreigner” in their homeland. He has mention how Indian Nepali have been facing the challenge every day and feeling as a homeless person so on and so forth that the demand of a Separate state became the main agenda of Indian Nepali. However, the author did not talk much about the demand of statehood and more focuses on the issues of identity and also Sharwan Kumar Acharya²⁹ in his article, “Consolidating Nepali Identity: A Cultural Planning Perspective” has briefly highlights the identity issues amongst the Indians Nepalis. It takes a positive approach to the issues and contends that identity issues can integrate community and strengthen shared identity amongst the Nepalis through positive public policy initiatives.

Ranabir Sammdar³⁰ in his book author discusses on the autonomous trial case studies in Darjeeling and the border North-east region and in the second part of this book

²⁷Basant Lama, *The story of Darjeeling*, Kurseong: Nilima Yonzone Lama Publications, 2008.

²⁸C.K. Shrestha, *Gorkhas's Quest for Indian Identity*. Siliguri: Gorkha Bharati Vichar, 2013.

²⁹Shrawan Kumar Acharya, “Consolidating Nepali Identity: A Cultural Planning Perspective” in T.B Subba and A. Sinha (eds.) *Identity and Nationality of Indian Nepalis*, New Delhi: Indus Publication, 2009.

³⁰Ranabir Sammdar, *The Politics of Autonomy: Indian Experience*, New Delhi: Sage Publication India, 2005.

dealing with the practice of autonomy Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty³¹ sheds light on Darjeeling's history beginning in 1835, when the Raja of Sikkim handed ownership to the East India Company. He has given the reason of Nepali migration due to the tea plantation which has attracted the job seeker. His work has been based on identity formation among the Nepalese and how it has emerged on politics of identity. He has also talked about the demands of statehood and later how the autonomy worked which was accepted as the agreement so called DGHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) by Subhas Ghising the leader of GNLF (Gorkha National Liberation Front).

Atis Dasgupta³² in his article, "Ethnic problems and movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling" has briefly talked about the history of Darjeeling and the causes which led the people of Nepal encouraged themselves to settle in Darjeeling. Additionally, he has talked about well-known individuals like Parasmoni Pradhan, Dharanidar Koirala and Surya Bikram Gewali. It was thanks to their hard work that Nepali was accepted as a vernacular language by Calcutta University in 1918. He also viewed on how the demand for a separate state has come up within the heart of Darjeeling people. T.B Subba, *Et.al*³³ discusses the Gorkha identity and the Gorkhaland movement in a detailed manner while engaging in and fostering uniformity, representation, and stereotypes. He emphasised the various ways that the Gorkha identity is imagined by the individuals as well as the various ways that the Gorkha identity is understood in urban as well as traditional Indian intellectual frameworks. In a culturally particular sense, the term "Gorkha Jati" refers to a cultural identity that is expressed through images and symbols drawn from the region's composite culture. The Gorkhas are

³¹Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, "Silence under Freedom: The Strange story of Democracy in the Darjeeling Hills", in Ranabir. Samadder (eds.), *The Politics of Autonomy: Indian Experience*, New Delhi: Sage Publication India, 2005:173-195.

³²Atis Dasgupta, "Ethnic Problem and Movement for Autonomy in Darjeeling", *Social Scientist*, Vol.27, No. 11/12, Nov- Dec 1999.

³³T.B. Subba, *Et.al. Indian Nepali: Issues and Perspectives*, New Delhi: Ashok Kumar Mittal, 2009.

dispersed throughout South Asia, and the majority of them have assimilated the customs, languages, and consider the Gorkha identity as a post-national identity or a South Asian identity under this situation.

D.S Bomjan³⁴ in his book talked about the history of Darjeeling and statehood demands which also gives a description of the significant events in Darjeeling's history. The incidents like killing of tea garden worker and the response to this incident by the Government.

Brig C.S Thapa³⁵ in his book talked about the crisis of identity among Indian Nepali. He served the country in the Indian Army and faced some questions regarding identity. In his book, he has analyzed the demand of Gorkhaland and many aspects of Identity and also talked about the important role played by Indian Gorkhas for the country.

Amiya K Samanta³⁶ she has critically analyzed the movement and issue of identity. His research aim to emphasise Indian Nepalese people's ethnic exclusivity and Ranju R Dhamala³⁷ in her article she attempts to explore the issue of the identity of Nepalis settled in India within the broader framework of Indian nationality. The paper argued even though Nepali has been living for almost two centuries and had made significant contribution still fail to recognise the community as an integral part of India.

³⁴D.S. Bomjan, *Darjeeling- Doors People and Place under Bengal's Neo- Colonial Rule*, Darjeeling: Bikash Jana Sahitya Kendra, 2008.

³⁵Brig C.S Thapa, *Gorkha Society and Politics*, Darjeeling: DPS Publishing House, 2016.

³⁶K. Amiya Samanta, *Gorkhaland Movement, A study in Ethnic Separatism*, New Delhi: A.P.H Publishing Corporation, 2000.

³⁷Ranju R. Dhamala, "Identity Formation and Identity Maintenance: Nepalis in India" In T.B Subba *Et.al. Indian Nepali: Issues and Perspectives*, New Delhi: Ashok Kumar Mittal, 2009.

T.B Subba³⁸ he has highlighted the roots of the Gorkhaland Movement and tried to explain how the Gorkha identity evolved over time and in what way the ethnic movements in the region have been connected with the present movement for separate statehood. The author also talked about the impact of violence and counter-violence that occurred in Darjeeling. Secondly in his article entitled “The Nepalis in Northeast India: Political Aspiration and Ethnicity”³⁹ has given a concise introduction about the Nepalis of Northeast India conceptually, historically, demographically and politically. He tries to clarify the word ‘Nepalese’ and ‘Nepalis’ and the difference between the two. He tried to highlight the issue regarding the confusion about the identity of Nepalese of Nepal and Indian Nepalis. He also talked about the immigration of the Nepalis to North-east India began in early nineteenth century in 1817.

Bandana Rai⁴⁰ in her book has stated that has claimed that India’s failed and inconsistent development plans are to blame for the emergence of a variety of distinct ethnic manifestations, including the Gorkhaland Movement and many others. Townsend Middleton⁴¹ in his book examined the escalating politics of recognition, the violent struggle for Gorkhaland to the tribal turn of the 2000s and the people of Darjeeling in their search of rights. The entire book is consisting of ethnographic state and community politics in Darjeeling Hill.

Romit Bagchi⁴² in his book, he has mentioned about the struggle of Nepali-speaking community with the State of West Bengal in many aspects. The author makes an

³⁸T.B. Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development in Darjeeling: A case Study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1992.

³⁹T.B. Subba, “The Nepalese in Northeast India: Political Aspirations and Ethnicity”, in A. Sinha and T.B. Subba (eds.) *The Nepalese in Northeast India a Community in search of Indian Identity*, New Delhi: Indus Publication, 2003.

⁴⁰Bandana Rai, *Gorkha the Warrior Race*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication, 2009.

⁴¹Townsend Middleton, *The Demands of Recognition: State Anthropology and Ethnopolitics in Darjeeling*, Stanford, California: Stanford University, 2016.

⁴²Romit Bagchi, *Gorkhaland: Crisis of Statehood*, New Delhi: Saga Publication, 2012.

effort to go into more troubled hills and makes an effort to subjectively examine the prevalent prejudices. Bagchi approaches the demands from several angles, as well as the issue of ethnic group unity, the movement's development, Subhas Ghising to Bimal Gurung journey, and the realisation of the statehood ideal. Given the odds against the creation of a district state, the problem appears insurmountable, and the populace is sorely aware that this shared fantasy is impossible. Nagendra Gorkha⁴³ in his book outlined the fundamental requirements for independent states and mainly concentrated on the Subhas Ghising-led movement of the 1980s. The book provided the important information about only one specific leader but he did not highlight the other's work.

Surendra Munshi & Tridib Kumar Chakrabarti⁴⁴ the article examines the developments towards the formation of a policy concerning the national languages of India. The article pointed out that India as a multilingual society and all the language must grow in their respective region. The demand for the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution is also discussed and measured throughout the article. Snehamoy Chaklader discusses the Bodoland Movement and two Sub-Regional Movements and the Gorkhaland Movement of Darjeeling.⁴⁵ This book focuses on the both the movements entangled with ethnic issues and also throws light on the movement for Constitutional Recognition of the Nepali Language. Mohan P Dahal⁴⁶ talks about Ratanlal Brahman, the first Communist leader from Darjeeling who also served as a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly was discussed in

⁴³Nagendra Gorkha, *Gorkhaland Dekhi Gorkhaland Samma (Nepali)*. Darjeeling: Vaishlu Publication, 1996.

⁴⁴Surendra Munshi &, Tridib Kumar Chakrabarti, "National Languages Policy & the case for Nepali", *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 14, No. 15, April.14, 1979.

⁴⁵Snehamoy Chaklader, *Sub- Regional Movement in India*, Kolkata: K.P Bagchi and Company, 2004.

⁴⁶Mohan P. Dahal, *Jhukdai Najhukne Pahar Ko Chhora (Nepali)*, Darjeeling: Pratima Publication, 1993.

his biography and Dahal also throws lights on the Communist Party's involvement in establishing Darjeeling's working-class unions. In another biography Mohan P. Dahal⁴⁷ in his biography of Ganeshlal Subba, the author highlights the significance of Ganeshlal Subba to the development of the Communist Party in Darjeeling.

The above review of literature on Gorkhaland Movement shows that is a gap in the studies related to delay of Gorkhaland and this is high time where the issues have to be addressed at a larger extent. Therefore, the goal of the present study is to conduct in-depth research on the changing nature of the struggle of the Gorkhaland Movement.

1.4. Objectives

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To examine the genesis of Gorkha Identity and the nature of Gorkhaland Movement.
- Viewing the demand for Gorkhaland in light of the Nepali Bhasa Movement.
- To critically evaluate the role of Leadership and its success and failure in creating the Identity for Gorkhaland.
- To analysis the attitude of State and Central governments towards the Gorkhaland Movement.

⁴⁷Mohan P. Dahal, *Ganeshlal Subba: Vyaktitwa Ra Kritittiwa (Nepali)*, Jalpaiguri: Muktti Publication, 2007.

1.5. Methodology

The research is primarily qualitative and based on historical methodology. Interview cum discussion has been carried out with the representative of the concerned parties and social groups.

The study is substantiated by both primary and secondary sources. These include memoirs, biographies, published research, gazetteers, official documents, leaflets memorandums and letters, books, journals, articles and which are both in English and Nepali vernacular. Some of the primary sources and published articles in Newspapers and materials from the Directorate of West Bengal State Archives (IB Branch), Directorate of West Bengal State Archives (Head Office), Centre for Himalayan Studies (NBU) and Kalimpong and Pedong library have been accessed and studied. The relevant newspapers and magazines published in the early part of this century also have been acknowledged in this present study.

1.6. Chapterisation

The present study is organised into the following chapters based on the aforementioned arguments and discussions:

Chapter I: *Introduction*

This chapter introduces the Statement of the Problem, a review of the literature on various works done on the Gorkhaland Movement, and also discuss the Objective of the Study and the methodology.

Chapter II: *Evolution of the Gorkha Identity and Changing Nature of the Gorkhaland Movement*

The second chapter focuses on historical background of the Darjeeling region and the genesis of Gorkha/Indian Nepali identity or the consciousness among the people. The

chapter also discusses the genesis of the demand for the Gorkhaland Movement. It further deals with the nature of demand for a separate statehood and to understand the nature of the movement, the movement was divided into three different phases.

Chapter III: *Nepali Bhasa Andolan: Revisiting the language Movement*

The third chapter focuses on the language Movement and the link between the language and identity. The chapter deals with starting from the first memorandum till the inclusion of the Nepali language and how it triggered the demand of statehood. As both the demand goes hand in hand but yet the statehood demand is still pending.

The chapter tries to analyze the language movement through the lens of demand of separate statehood.

Chapter IV: *Leadership and the Gorkhaland Movement*

The chapter focuses on the role of different political leaders and their different strategy for separate statehood. The chapter also deals with the success and the failure of different political leaders throughout the process of statehood demand. The chapter also highlights the nature and the different phases of leadership and at each phase, the leadership engaged different strategies and tactics, changing the nature of the movement according to their strength and character.

Chapter V: *Government and Statehood*

The chapter evaluate the views and decisions for the demand for a separate statehood “Gorkhaland” for Indian Gorkha from the Government. The chapter also highlights the sharp different opinions between the Central government and the State government on the nature of demand and response to the movement.

Chapter VI: *Conclusion*

This chapter analyses all chapters and a detailed outcome of the study.

Chapter -II

Evolution of the Gorkha Identity and Changing Nature of the Gorkhaland Movement

2.1. Introduction

Some movements in India have given birth to controversies over the history of the regions from where such movements have emerged; they claim that their demands are justified on the basis of their history. The problems occur when such demands are denied by the then-ruling power. Such has happened in the wake of the Gorkhaland Movement too. The Gorkhas or Indian Nepalis have propagated a history of Darjeeling and its peoples while the state government, which is controlled absolutely by the Bengalis, has presented another history of the region and the people.⁴⁸ To have a complete understanding of the history of Gorkhas one should have complete analysis of community before encompassing any sort of understanding. According to Subba, an authentic history can only be written and achieved if one does not lose sight of the association between 'text' and 'context'.⁴⁹ It may be further said that the history of a region should not be mixed up with the history of the people. The former is often space bound but the latter is seldom so. It gives the chance to emerge unnecessary debate over what length of time a people require in being eligible to claim a region it inhabits.⁵⁰

Therefore proceeding on any subject matter of the Gorkhaland Movement and their struggle in India, it is essential to look into the detail of historical facts or roots to understand the movement so vivid in nature.

⁴⁸T.B Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development: A case study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling*, Delhi: Har- Anand Publication, 1992:27.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 29.

2.2. History of Darjeeling

The name “Darjeeling” is a combination of the Tibetan terms “dorje” which means thunderbolt (and was originally Indra’s sceptre), and “ling” which means location or territory, hence “the land of the thunderbolt”. Currently, Darjeeling, sometimes referred to as the “queen of hills” is more than merely the tranquil and lyrical shades of various hues, the greenery of the tea garden, but to quote. The history of Darjeeling is deeply rooted in the imperial legacies of the British Raj, surprisingly, the use of the Gorkha, a colonial construct, to critics the current political backsliding and neo-colonization of Darjeeling.⁵¹ Darjeeling was essentially a buffer zone between Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan; it was never ruled by of a single kingdom. History places Siliguri and the three Sub-divisions Darjeeling, Kurseong⁵² and Kalimpong⁵³ in the initial element of Sikkim. The history of Darjeeling is a serious issue that requires careful interpretation based on its physical, local and socio-political historical records. The history of Darjeeling begins only after the British East India Company. O’ Malley claims Darjeeling existed before 1835 “then formed the part of the dominions of the Raja of Sikkim, a petty ruler who had been engaged in an unsuccessful struggle against the growing powder of the warlike Gurkhas”.⁵⁴ From the 19th century onwards the East India Company was brought into direct relation with this hilly region. Before which, its history is difficult to decipher. About historical context, even today debates are still an unending process. Till year 1816, Sikkim and the whole territory, belonged to Nepal, which was believed to conquer through the Sikkimese conquest. The British

⁵¹Mona Chettri, “Choosing the Gorkha: at the crossroads of class and ethnicity in the Darjeeling hills”, Department of South of Asia: *School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 2013:1.

⁵²Kurseong derived from the word “*Kurson-rip*” Lepcha word which means “Little White Orchid” the valley was known to be as “The Land of White Orchid” because of the white orchids bloomed in this valley.

⁵³Kalimpong name derived from many language and having different meaning. It is said that it has been derived from the Lepcha word “*Kalenpung*” meaning Hillock of Assemblage, it is also said to have been derived from the Tibetan words “*Kalang*” meaning King’s Ministers and “*Pong*” meaning Stockade.

⁵⁴L.L.S O’ Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, Delhi: Logos Press, 1999: 19.

formally declared war on the Gurkhas in 1813. General Ochterlony was able to beat them in these campaigns. The Treaty was signed at Segoulie⁵⁵ in the end of 1816 and the Nepalese give up the 4000 square miles of land mentioned above. By another the treaty signed at *Titalya*⁵⁶ on February 10th 1817 the Raja of Sikkim received the territory, with the apparent goal of securing Nepal's future an ally's kingdom, and preventing any further Gorkha expansion.⁵⁷ The East India Company gains from the signing of the two accords. The treaty of *Segoulie* (1816) restricted Gorkhas military power which made Company less worried about the income and the treaty of *Titaliya* (1817) becomes vital because it placed the company in a favourable position by requiring Sikkim, which had been granted sovereignty, to refer to the company all disputes between his subjects and other neighbouring states.

The Gorkhas history was to be rephrased with the transfer of Darjeeling to the Company by the Raja in 1835. Col. Llyod brought up the issue of the transfer of Darjeeling during visit with resident of Malda J.W. Grant, to resolve the boundary problems between Sikkim and Nepal, proposing either payment in cash or land in exchange.⁵⁸ Grant and Llyod were the ones who first suggested building a sanatorium at "the old Goorkha station called Dorjeeling". The ideas emerged because of suitable climate and the scenic beauty was put forward in 1830 a second survey was made by the Deputy Surveyor-General, Capt. Herbert along with the company of J.W. Grant⁵⁹ Darjeeling was ceded to the Company in 1835 by the 'Deed of Grant' on February 1st, "out of friendship".

⁵⁵Treaty of *Segoulie*: By this treaty the Nepalese soldiers were taken by the British which later were turned into the Gorkha Regiment.

⁵⁶Treaty of *Titalya*: The Treaty of *Titalya* was signed between the Chogyal of Sikkim and the British East India Company (EIC) which guaranteed security of Sikkim by the British and returned Sikkimese land annexed by the Nepalese over the centuries.

⁵⁷E Dozey, *A concise History in the Darjeeling District since 1835*, Calcutta: Jetsun Publication House, 1922:2.

⁵⁸Fred Pinn, *The Road of destiny: Darjeeling Letters 1839*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1986:2.

⁵⁹O' Malley, 1999, *Op.cit.*, 20.

*“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 this Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I, Sikkimputtee 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, Kahail and little Rangit rivers and West of Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers”⁶⁰ In return the Raja received an payment of Rs 3000/-, which was afterwards raised to Rs 6000/- per annum. This exchange, however, considered at that time from the financial point of view was entirely in the favour of the giver as the revenue derived from the hill never exceeded Rs 20/- the year”.*⁶¹

The Deed of Grant dated 1st of February, 1835 has been subject to scrutiny ultimate answers are yet to come. The deed of grant considering it to be dubious has been put forth originally by Pinn in his book entitled “The Road of Destiny” (1986). He questions how he could obtain the grant dated February 1, 1835 if Llyod just submitted a formal request for the transfer on February 19, 1835. Pinn said that the land’s granting was accompanied by a permit to erect a home in addition to being done out of goodwill or for the benefit of the “sick people”. It was Lloyd who had “made the amendments of his own initiative and without consultation with the Government”.⁶²

The Raja never seemed interested in selling Darjeeling. Additionally, because the Raja was unwilling to go with Darjeeling until his demands were met, the Council of Directors addressed a command to Llyod on June 15th, 1835, which stated: “*In reply*

⁶⁰Arther Jules Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*. Calcutta: Govt. Printing, 1947:38.

⁶¹Dozey, 1922, *Op.cit.*, 3.

⁶²Pinn, 1986, *Op.cit.*, 123.

to your letter dated 25th ultimo. I am directed to inform you that the Hon'ble the Governor General of India in Council judges from your letter that the Rajah of Sikkim is not to cede Darjeeling. "You are therefore desired to abstain from urging any further negotiation having that object in view".⁶³ In response, Lloyd he had already obtained the grant. The 'transfer' of Darjeeling has been widely viewed as the Company's "annexation" of the region. When the transfer of Darjeeling was discussed, Capt. Herbert said that the village was empty of residents and that it contained the "Observatory Hill and its immediate vicinity". "It was this locality as described by Llyod and Herbert which the Governor-General wished for his sanatorium, and it was 'that place only the council assumed Llyod was negotiating for'.⁶⁴

As payback for Namgyal Dewan, the Rajah of Sikkim's brother in law, imprisoning Hooker and Campbell in 1850, the British consolidated the hills of Darjeeling by annexing the Siliguri division.⁶⁵ After the Indo- Bhutanese War in 1864, Kalimpong was annexed for the second time (in 1865) and it eventually united with Darjeeling in 1866.⁶⁶ The area of Doors belonged to Sikkim itself which has been conquered by Bhutan in 1706 and later occupied by the British in 1865.⁶⁷ The Raja of Bhutan took control of the Kalimpong division, which historically belonged to Sikkim, in 1706. Bhutanese conquests were accomplished between 1700 and 1706, under the administration of the third Chogyal, Chagdor Namgyal.⁶⁸ Chogyal eventually returned to the throne with the intervention of Tibet.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 126.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁵Dozey, 1922, *Op.cit.*, 5.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*,

⁶⁷Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 36.

⁶⁸H Risley, *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1894:12.

Darjeeling was a non-regulated area until 1874, a scheduled district from 1874 to 1919, and a backward tract from 1919 to 1935. Finally, it was designated a “partially excluded area” by the Government of India Act 1935 till India’s independence. Even though Darjeeling was politically a part of West Bengal since 1866, it was not fully united with it until 1947.⁶⁹

The British’s curiosity and interests in Darjeeling are undeniable. The oppressive heat of the plains in India prompted the development of hill resorts like Shimla, Mussoorie, and Nainital. They preferred hill stations not only to escape from the hot climate but considered a spot for rejuvenation of ailing British as well. After the Anglo-Nepalese war in between 1814-1816, the British discovered that “the health and spirit of the men improved dramatically during their sojourn in the hills”.⁷⁰

It is hard to deny that Darjeeling’s scenic beauty and temperate environment are what first piqued the British’s curiosity. China, Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal all share a political border with Darjeeling on the international level. The eventual control of all the passes leading to Lhasa was implied by the geopolitical control of the area. Since Sikkim controlled the Kalimpong–Lhasa trade route, also known as the “Jelep Pass”, it served as the quickest commercial route to Tibet.

The overland commerce with Tibet and Central Asia and the resulting need to defend India’s northern Frontier against Tibet and China were the key drivers of 19th century British policy towards Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan.⁷¹ O’Malley writes, “*On all ground, he strongly urged the importance of securing possession of the place, and, in*

⁶⁹Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*,36.

⁷⁰Swatahsiddha Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2013:213.

⁷¹Atis Dasgupta, “Ethnic Problems and Movements for autonomy in Darjeeling”, *Social Scientist*, 1999: 44.

*particular, pointed out its advantages as a centre which would engross all the trade of the country, and as a position of great strategically importance, commanding the entrance into Nepal and Bhutan”.*⁷²

The selection of Dr. Campbell as its Superintendent in 1840 is another example of the colonist progress. In 1856 there was a commercial tea industry. Dr. Campbell deserves the praise for starting the research on it in 1941.⁷³ Within ten years following the year of transfer, in 186, the commercial tea sector had evolved swiftly, with at least 39 gardens, 10,000 acres under cultivation, and an output of 433,000 lbs of tea. By the year 1856, tea had moved from the experimental to the commercial stage.⁷⁴

Table 2.1: Record of Tea Garden and Net Production

Year	No. of Gardens	Area under cultivation (in acres)	Net Production(in Lbs)
1866	39	10,000	4,33,000
1870	113	18,888	39,28,000
1885	175	38,499	90,90,000
1895	186	48,692	1,17,14,551

Source: Darjeeling District Gazetteers, by L.S.S.O’ Malley, 1907

During the year between 1839 and 1842 communication system was taken into a serious concern, Lieutenant Naiper of the Royal Engineers was given this duty. The route from Darjeeling with Siliguri, Chowrasta to Ghum and then uphill to Sinchal connected and then ran towards Kurseong and descended towards Pankhabari. This road is known as the “Old Military Road”.⁷⁵ From the year 1881 because of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway popularly came to be known as ‘Darjeeling Toy

⁷²*Ibid.*, 20.

⁷³Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 45.

⁷⁴O’Malley, 1999, *Op.cit.*, 113.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*,132.

Train'. The building of railways made a significant role to the development of European towns, particularly around 1850, when rapid urbanization, better known as "the railway British".⁷⁶

2.3. Nepali Migration into Darjeeling Region

The British occupation of Darjeeling's slopes resulted in the creation of an area that attracted many people in search of shelter and food. Although Darjeeling was created as an urban centre by British East India Company official starting in the eighteenth century, its development was also aided by the hard work of residents of the surrounding region, particularly those from East Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. The Lepcha and the Bhutias, who were Buddhists who lived in Sikkim, were outnumbered by the large movement of the people that the British fostered among Nepalis. Besides, the Nepali settlement gained much momentum in the newly acquired lands of the British.⁷⁷

Following their enlistment in the British Indian Army and their display of armed resistance during Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the Gorkhas gave the British government assurance of their allegiance. The rising statistics of Nepali migration was also felt in the place called Bhutan after the *Sinchula* Treaty of 1865.⁷⁸ There must be many reasons for the migration of the people of Nepal to Darjeeling. The reason must include willingness and unwilling factors as well. More easily, can be called or mentioned which causes movement of the population based on the 'push' and 'pull' component. Let's talk about what makes Darjeeling so appealing.

⁷⁶Aditi Chatterji, *Contested Landscapes: The story of Darjeeling*, Kolkata: Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), 2007: 42.

⁷⁷A.K. Samanta, *Gorkhaland Movement: A study in Ethnic Separatism*. New Delhi: APH Publishing House, 2000:45.

⁷⁸Risley, 1894, *Op.cit.*

The successful development of the tea industry starting in 1852 allowed for a clear observation of the economic viability of hills. Due to the labour-intensive nature of tea, there was a greater demand for prospective labour force recruitment, which was fuelled by the commercialization of the tea business. By 1876, 19000 tea workers had been employed, making up nearly 90% of the population of eastern Nepal.⁷⁹ Due to the demise of the tea business in the twentieth century, the Nepali community experienced tremendous expansion between 1852 and the end of the 19th century.⁸⁰ The ‘Santhal revolt’, during which locals from the Deccan plateaus were enlisted, is largely responsible for the decision to hire hill people as tea labourers. They rebelled against the colonists because they could no longer stand the harsh weather and forced labour. Because of this mistrust of the locals and the accessibility of cheap labour from the hills of eastern Nepal, the community flourished.⁸¹ The existence of the Nepali people before both the founding of the tea industry in 1835, claims Kumar Pradhan.⁸² His claim is supported by writings from Nepal between the years 1815 and 1826, which mention “the going and the coming between eastern Nepal and Darjeeling”. The industrial and commercial nature of hills not only needed sufficient amount of labour in the tea sector but they were also being paid in the form of cash and were additionally granted forest lands. The Nepalese were useful to the British because they could easily understand the responsibility and usage of steam engines and other British equipment, in addition to providing cheap labour in large quantities. For individuals who were enlisted in the army, the policy of remuneration in cash was

⁷⁹Michael Hutt, “Being a Nepali without Nepal: Reflections on the South Asian Diaspora”, in David Gellner, Joanna Pfaff- Czarnecka and John Whelpton (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom*. Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997: 112.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*.

⁸¹Basant B. Lama, *The story of Darjeeling*. Darjeeling: Mani Printing House, 2008: 88-87.

⁸²Kumar Pradhan is one of the intellectual statures of Darjeeling and author of book entitled with “The Gorkha Conquest: The process and consequence of the Unification of Nepal”.

in effect.⁸³ Therefore, the well-known saying “*chia ko boot ma paisa falcha*” (money grows in the tea plants) encouraged the relocation process even more.⁸⁴ When the Darjeeling Railways were built and opened to travel in 1881, many more workers from Sikkim and the Nepali hills arrived to work on clearing forests and other difficult, physically demanding tasks like the coolies. According to the 1871 census, the kiratas of eastern Nepal made up 42% of the overall population, which included the entire Nepalese people.⁸⁵ The agriculture sector was also one of the major factors which lead to inviting large-scale of Nepali migrants from Nepal. In Darjeeling, tea was growing and acted as life supporting system for many whereas in Kalimpong agriculture boomed progressively. Though Kalimpong was integrated with Darjeeling *Sardar* much later in 1865, the surge of Nepali immigrants was not only noticeable in Darjeeling *Sardar*, but a similar situation was discovered in Kalimpong as well, as he states that between the year of its acquisition and the year 1901, the population had expanded by 55.9%.⁸⁶

The Gorkha recruitment in the British India Army was the other significant migration factor that contributed to the settling of the Nepali community. The Gorkha General Amar Singh Thapa was driven to recruit because of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1815. As a result, the Company hired three battalions in 1815: the 1st and 2nd Nasiri (Friendly) Battalions as well as the Sirmoor Battalions. The idea of the “martial race” was introduced to the globe during this conflict.⁸⁷ The British India Army recruited Gorkhas for the Post-Anglo-Nepalese Wars of 1814-16 but the recruitment was being

⁸³O’Malley, 1999, *Op.cit.*, 72.

⁸⁴Dhan Maya Rai, 71 year old (interviewee is resident of Upper Pedong; interview was taken at her resident 2018, 4.30pm).

⁸⁵Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*,20.

⁸⁶O’Malley, 1999, *Op.cit.*,36.

⁸⁷T. Kumar Pemphahishey, *Roadmap on the Trail to Gorkhaland (Partially Excluded Area- The Constitutional Guarantee)*. Siliguri: Darpan Publication, 2013:30.

disfavoured by rulers in the lands of Nepal. The possible reason can be that granting such recruitment within the period may lead to colonization Nepal by the British Government. The recruiting centre that started in 1902, recruiting mostly the Rais and the Limbus, was located close to Darjeeling in Ghoom. Over 55,000 people were hired within the year of 1908.⁸⁸ To prevent the interference of labour work in the tea gardens direct recruitment was strictly banned. If proved to have obtained such recruits from the garden, the recruiters were likewise penalised.⁸⁹ After they retired from the Indian British Army, most of them settled in India.

Table 2.2: Census Data on Population in Darjeeling District and its percentage increase in decade

Year	Total Population in the district of Darjeeling	Percentage increase in decade
1881	1,55,179	
1891	2,23,314	43.91%
1901	2,49,117	11.55%
1911	2,65,550	6.60%
1921	2,82,748	6.48%
1931	3,19,635	13.05%
1941	3,76,369	17.75%
1951	4,45,260	18.30%
1961	6,24,640	40.29%
1971	7,81,777	25.16%
1981	10,24,269	31.09%
1991	13,35,618	30.40%
2001	1,609,172	20.48%
2011	1,846,823	14.7%

Source: Census Report (1881-2011) cited in Amiya. K. Samanta, Gorkhaland Movement.

In the absence of any recorded history of the region before the British intervention, the early population figures for Darjeeling are not available. The first tentative idea one gets is after the visit of British Officials to this region in the 1830s. The

⁸⁸W. Brook Northey and C.J.Morris, *The Gurkhas: Their Manners, Customs and Country*. New Delhi: Life Span Publishers and Distributors, 2014: 26.

⁸⁹Eden Vanisttart, *Gurkhas*. New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 2012:158.

population was reported to be around one hundred at the time of Campbell's visit to Darjeeling in 1839.⁹⁰ Again the then superintendent Dr. Campbell had reported the number of inhabitants to be 10,000 persons in 1850. A rough census of the area was conducted in 1869 where the inhabitants aggregated to over 22000 people.⁹¹ Reliable population data of Darjeeling region is only available from 1872 onwards. Thereafter the region witnessed considerable increase in population.

The first regular census of the district, conducted in 1871-72 puts the total population to be 94412 persons. The population increased to 155,179 persons in 1881. The population of Darjeeling district rose to 223,314 persons in 1891. The high growth of population was mainly due to the large-scale immigration which was the result of the establishment of tea gardens. This led to investment for the development of infrastructure and employment generation. The introduction of tea plantations in the region was the single most important factor that contributed to the high growth population.⁹²

The census data indicates that the population grew more quickly in 1891(43.29%). A large number of migrants came from nearby nations in 1891, drawn by the British's strategic growth in Darjeeling. Again in 1961, the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950 was to be responsible for the increase in population size.

The history of the early Nepali migration cannot be complete until if one overlooks the 'push' factor. The enclosure of the 'push' factors is necessary to have the complete picture of facts. The socio-economic condition of Nepal was one of the leading factors for the migration of certain amount of people. The Nepali-Hindu

⁹⁰L.S.S.O. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, Government of West Bengal, Department of Higher Education, Calcutta, 1907: 35.

⁹¹*Ibid.*,

⁹²*Ibid.*,

social strata designated the Kiratas of east Nepal as the “sudras” due to the widespread existence of the caste system.⁹³ Under the reign of Junga Bahadur Rana, with the introduction of the civil code, known as *Muluki Ain* of 1854⁹⁴, caste stratification became much more obvious and strict. Although slavery was successfully eliminated much later, in the year 1924, it was still a very prevalent system. The deformation of the tribal landownership known as the ‘kipat’⁹⁵ in Eastern Nepal led to socio-economic crisis of landlessness and debt among its natives leading to emigration into Darjeeling.⁹⁶ The encroachment of the parbatiyas⁹⁷ on arable fields was the cause of this flight of people. Following the unification, the bulk of the parbatiya farmers were urged to relocate to eastern Nepal as a result of the Gorkhas Conquest. As a consequence of this, between 1840 and 1860, 12-15% of the kiratas population moved to Darjeeling.⁹⁸ The term known as ‘*chakari*’ and ‘*afno manche*’⁹⁹ gained importance during the reign of Rana. The religious ritual practise of deference, which was first extended to Nepali’s ruling class and eventually to everyone in specific positions of power, are where the term “*chakari*” originates.¹⁰⁰ If Prithivinarayan Shah’s unification resulted in the imposition of ‘one culture, one language’ which was Hinduism and Nepali, then the Rana rule placed social-economic and political freedom and recognition within the reach of the affluent and the powerful. Darjeeling offered a feasible option for individuals looking for

⁹³Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*, 20.

⁹⁴The three caste systems were recognised by the *Muluki Ain* of 1854. The concepts of purity and impureness, as well as superiority and inferiority, were used to separate the group. The untouchables (sano Jat), who are in third place, are the Bahuns, who are referred to as the Tagadaris (those who wear the scared thread). The Matwali Jats, who are primarily members of the Mongoloid races and East Nepalese citizens, have experienced a large exodus from this population and territory, primarily as a result of the abuses the civil code has inflicted upon them.

⁹⁵It was a system of tribal landownership amongst the people of east Nepal namely the Kiratas (Limboos and Rais) where the transfer of land was possible only within its blood line or community.

⁹⁶O’Malley, 1991, *Op.cit.*, 37.

⁹⁷Hill or *khas* people

⁹⁸Pradhan, 1991, *Op.cit.*, 26.

⁹⁹It refers to one’s own circle of associates who could be approached whenever the need arises.

¹⁰⁰Dor Bahadur Bista, *Fatalism and Development: Nepal’s struggle for Modernization*. Patna: Orient Longman, 1991:5.

improved employment opportunities, a society free caste-based discrimination, religious prejudice, and sectarian attitudes, as was the situation under the Rana reign in Nepal. The British had full confidence that migration would be possible, and just from Nepal. According to Llyod, if the portion of the hill was under British control, the migratory stock would also include Lepchas who had relocated to Nepal because of the Rajha's autocratic rule since they would be eager to work for the British.¹⁰¹

2.4. Genesis of Gorkha Identity

According to Hutt, the Nepali language is the primary basis for Nepali ethnic identity outside Nepal. Apart from this *kurki* (short sized knife), *Dhaka topi* (Nepali traditional cap) is often used as another means of self-identification.¹⁰² Nepali was accepted as the 'lingua franca' by communities like Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Mangar, Tamang, Newar, Sunuwar, Thami, etc., in Darjeeling, Sikkim, and other parts of India which facilitated the development of collective consciousness of these peoples. After the collective consciousness grew amongst the people, it became easy for them to identify themselves as Nepali, and the process was facilitated by the colonial political socialization under colonial rule. The social, economical, and political exigencies of the Colonial political economy provided an atmosphere in which the political culture of Gorkhas developed which was different from that of Nepal. In India an integrated homogenous Nepali community emerged with Nepali as the lingua franca whereas, the case was not the same in Nepal; Nepali was the state-imposed national language. In this regard, Ramakrishna Sharma, a well known critic from Darjeeling, observed that Nepali society had come into existence in Darjeeling much before Nepal.¹⁰³ Paul Brass writes "*The process of creating communities from ethnic groups involves the*

¹⁰¹O' Malley, 1999, *Op.cit.*, 20.

¹⁰²Hutt, 1997, *Op.cit.*, 112.

¹⁰³Rajendra P. Dhakal, "The Urge to Belong: An Identity is Waiting", in *Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspective*, ed. A.C. Sinha et.al, New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 2009:152.

selection of particular dialects or religious practice or styles of dress or historical symbols from a variety of available alternatives”.¹⁰⁴ In this context Gorkha/Nepali identity and language played a vital role in creating a community. Literature played a major role in consolidating the Nepali identity, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. Through one language exclusion, the different subgroups such as Lepcha and Bhutias had clubbed themselves under the larger Nepali society in India. The emergence of consciousness emerged slowly and gradually among the native people. Many factors lead to the birth of Gorkha/Indian Nepali Identity. Let us dwell on them one by one to understand the emergence factors briefly.

2.4.1. Impact of Education

The Lepcha, Nepalis, and the Bhutia, who were the first settlers, were having positive impact of non-formal education. Llyod called them “semi-barbarous” in nature.¹⁰⁵ The hills became the epicentre of European and Anglo-Indian education with the arrival of British authority. The prospect of missionaries in India, who were predominately from the United Kingdom, was opened by the Charter Act in 1813. Additionally, missionaries from other parts of the country were invited under the Charter Act of 1833. Soon after the British colonised the Darjeeling hill tract in 1835 and introduced a new religion termed “Christianity”, it can be stated that the Germans started the first recorded history of schooling.¹⁰⁶ The Christian Missionaries made the first attempt to improve the population’s mental and spiritual state in the 1840s. The prominent persons called Rev. Mr. Macfarlane who developed a textbook in Hindi and made it a

¹⁰⁴Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1991:25.

¹⁰⁵Dick. B. Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills: An Historical Survey: 1835-1985*. New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 2008:45.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 81.

common language.¹⁰⁷ From 1860 onwards the general understanding of education began and with the recommendation of Bishop new schools were open for European children. As result, the school named St. Paul's school was relocated from Calcutta to Darjeeling in the year 1864.¹⁰⁸ Hence, other schools for boys and girls followed such as in Darjeeling were the St. Josephs, Mount Hermon, Loreto Convent, and Turn Bull. In Kalimpong were the Grahams Homes, Scottish Universities Missionaries, and in Kurseong were the Goethal's Memorial, Dow hill and Victoria. Most of which were boarding schools.¹⁰⁹ In the entire district, 95 primary schools had been built by the end of the nineteenth century, serving 2731 boys and 466 girls.¹¹⁰ Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Rev. Lakshman Singh Mukhia, Rev. Surya Suryaman Mukhia and Sukham were the school's best graduates. Following the tenet of 'each one teaches one' such students after completing of their studies. As a result, a few schools were established in the adjacent villages and tea estates.¹¹¹ Some of the drama, art, theatre, literature and music flourished but most important was the activation of political and socioeconomic consciousness. As a result, the indigenous rudimentary brains started to form ideas like self-determination, self-worth, rights and justice.

They began to challenge the dual domination of the British by the Bengalis as a result of their awareness of their social situation in particular.¹¹² Hence, education marks the beginning of questioning the self identity among the native people.

¹⁰⁷Dozey, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 103.

¹⁰⁸O'Maley, 1999, *Op.cit.*,

¹⁰⁹A. J. Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*. Calcutta: Government Printing. 2011.

¹¹⁰Aswant Katwal, "A History of the Darjeeling Region: Revisited through the Lens of the Gorkhaland Movement". *Journal of Social Science*, Vol.5, No.1, 2014:95.

¹¹¹Dewan, 2008, *Op.cit.*, 111.

¹¹²S. Chakraborty, "Identity, Movements and Peace: The Unquiet Hills in Darjeeling", in H. Reifield & R. Sonadrata (eds.), *Peace as Process*. New Delhi, 2000: 259.

2.4.2. Role of Language and Literature for the emergence of Nepali Identity

Language and Literature played a significant role to build an important impact on people's lives. Towards the second decade of the nineteenth century a number of the middle class has emerged in Darjeeling. Pratyoush Onta¹¹³ acknowledged the improvement of the Nepali language and literature. The formation of various organizations like Nepali *Sahitya Sammelan* in 1924, Gorkha *Dukha Niwarak Sammelan* in 1932, Sri *Hitkari Sammelan* in 1945, *Himalayan Kala Mandir* in 1950 and others who were actively redefining and developing a new a sense of self appeared in numbers. The Nepalis of India fought a very long battle to include the Nepali language in the Eight Schedule. Various organizations have come out with strong motives and the goals for adding the Nepali language as to the Eight Schedule of Indian Constitution. The '*Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Sangharsha Samiti*' was formed in 1967 in Darjeeling; '*Assam Nepali Sahitya Sammelan*' was set up in Udalguri, a branch of '*All India Nepali Bhasa Samiti*' was set up in Guwahati in 1972, and the '*Nepali Sahitya Prachar Samiti*' was set up in Siliguri, Darjeeling District, in 1978. They organized meetings made a resolution and presented a memorandum to the respective both State and Central government for recognition and inclusion of their language in the constitution of India.¹¹⁴ Hence, the measure of work indicates that not only the resident of Darjeeling but all Nepali people of India has got strong awareness of self-identity and feel affection for the language they speak. The language makes oneness among the people a part of being residing in a different corner of India. The movement for language that disseminated the issue of identity and insecurity led to the larger movement of Statehood. One of the most important

¹¹³Pratyoush Onta is a Nepali historian and a founding editor of studies in Nepali History and Society started in 1996.

¹¹⁴L. Bhandari Purushottam, "Evolution and Growth of the Nepali Community in Northeast India", in *The Nepalis of Northeast India: A Community in search of Identity*, (eds.) A.C. Sinha & T.B Subba, New Delhi: Indus Publishing House, 2003:112-113.

factors that have sustained the Gorkha/Nepali identity for more than a century is the socio-political activities centring on the Nepali Language.

Beside language another factor that helped in consolidation of a strong Nepali Identity in India was literature. In this context, dealing with few a prominent figure of Nepali poet whom became a source of inspiration and revivalism of the Nepali identity in India is more essential. One of the most prominent figures was Bhanubhakta (1816), who wrote Nepali Ramayana, giving much emphasis on spiritual growth and salvation to reform Nepali society. According to Bhanubhakta, for a secure blissful collective life, there could be no better model for a society than the one portrayed in the ancient Indian epic. Bhanubhakta has sung eloquently, “*Ati durlabh janos bharat bhumik janma janale*”, which means blessed is the man who is born in India.¹¹⁵ A few eminent poets of the twentieth century were Lakshmi Prasad Devkota, Pandit Dharanidhar Sharma, and Agam Singh Giri; they played an essential role in Indian Nepali Nationalism. Lakshmi Prashad Devkota wrote voluminous epics *Shakuntala* in three months and dictate *Sulockana* in ten days. The epic *Shakuntala* in Nepali written by him says that the memories and ideals of ancient India were very dear to his heart which he bequeathed to the Indian Nepalis. Pandit Dharanidhar was another gifted poet who served as a medium for the crystallization of the feeling of Indian Nepali nationalism.¹¹⁶ *Naivedya* (1920) was a collection of poems by Pandit Dharanidhar Sharma which was accepted by Indian Nepalis as their national Gita. Agam Singh Giri became one of the most delegate poets of Indian Nepalis. His work entitled “War and the Warrior (1970)” was his last work with the keynote of Nepalis life in India

¹¹⁵Indra Bahadur Rai, “Indian Nepali Nationalism and Nepali Poetry”, *Journal of South Asian Literature* 1994:151

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 153

and their search for identity.¹¹⁷ Some of the mentioned prominent figures of Nepali Literature were from Nepal; their thought-provoking works lead to emergence of self-identity and nationalism among the Nepalis of India.

यसैले आज:-

(Yasaile Aaja)

सुन चाँदी भन्दा महंगो यो माटो

(sun chadi bhanda mahago yo mato)

साठ्ठी लाख गोर्खाको मुटुको गाँठो हुन पुगेको छ,

(sathey Lakh Gorka ko mutuko ghatho huna phugeko Cha)

“आत्मा-आत्मामा विप्लव बालेर क्षितिज नयाँ खोज्नु छ।”

(atma-atma ma bilap bhlera chitiah naya khojnu cha)

(अगमसिंह गिरी) (Ajamsingh Giri)

यसो अत्याचार देख्दा-देख्दै पनि

(yesho atyachar dekda-dekdai pani)

पत्थरको मुटु बोकेर केन्द्र तिमि चूप लागेर नबसी देऊ,

(patharko mutu bhokar kandhra timi chup lagera nabasai dhew)

चाडै ‘गोर्खाल्याण्ड’ देऊ, बरू श्रद्धाले पुजा गर्छु।

(charai ‘Gorkhaland’ dew, baru sradhale puja garchu)

आफ्नो माटोको उद्धार पछि भन्न पाउन पर्छ हामीले,

(afnu mato ko utharpachi vanna pawna parcha hamile)

वरिपरि पहाड बीच सानो गाउँ

(waripari pahar bich sano ghaw)

गोर्खाल्याण्ड हो यसको नाँउ ॥¹¹⁸

(Gorkhaland ho yesko naw)

(Translation)

So today: -

This clay is more expensive than gold or silver

The heart of six million Gorkhas has been knotted,

“We have to find a new horizon by revolting in the soul”

(Agam Singh Giri)

Even after witnessing such atrocities

Carrying a heart of stone, don’t be silent in the centre,

Give ‘Gorkhaland’ soon, instead I worship with reverence.

After the salvation of our soil we should be able to say,

A small village in the middle of the surrounding mountains

Gorkhaland is its name.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸Prasad, Binu. *Gorkhaland Jankari*, Part II, Kalimpong: Binu Prasad (*Vagoli*), 1987:4.

First Grammar of Nepali was published from Calcutta in 1820. In 1840s scriptural scripts were published from Darjeeling by the Moravian Missionaries. British administrative recognized the importance of language and encouraged its study. Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan edited *Gorkha Kabar Kagaj* was published from Darjeeling in 1901.¹¹⁹ The Twentieth century has been seen some excellent works being produced in Nepali literature by young writers across India. Literary magazines such as *Udgaar* published by *Sikshak Sahitya Sabsthan* in Gangtok, a weekly named *Dehwarta* edited by Taraknath Gajurel in Assam, Rani Bhanjyang, a monthly edited by Indra Kumar Subba from Manipur, Damsang Garhi edited by Bhim Pradhan from Kalimpong and *Sabda* edited by Sidhartha Rai in Mirik are some of the determined hard work made by young Nepali writers and poets to accelerate the pace for enriching Nepali literature in India.¹²⁰ Parasmoni Pradhan was the one who made efforts in Darjeeling hills to give a separate identity. He started *Gorkha Shatiya Samaj* and made an effort to introduce Nepali in the school curriculum like Hindi and Bengali. It was only his remarkable work which led to the introduction of Nepali Language in schools and Colleges on 24th July, 1924. His magazine *Chandrika* started by him in 1918 was published from Kurseong and through this magazine; he tried to emulate the sophistication of the Nepali Language.¹²¹ There were other numerous journals namely *Upanayastrarangini* (1902), *Sundari* (1906), *Madhavi* (1908), *Chandra* (1914), and *Gorkhali* (1915) which advocated in one form or the need for language developments as being a key to the overall development of Gorkha/Nepali identity.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 157.

¹²⁰R.P Lama, "Nepali Scene: Sahitya Varsha", *Indian Literature*, Vol. 35, No.2, March-April 1992:161.

¹²¹Onta Pratyoush, "Creating a Brave Nepali Nation in British India: The Rhetoric of Jati Improvement, rediscovery of Bhanubhakta and the Writing of Bir History" *Studies in Nepali History and Society* Vol1, No.1, June 1996:44.

Apart from language and literature, some influencing songs written by prominent composers also made an important impact on people's hearts. The ways of writing and each word of lyric go into people's hearts.

गोर्खाल्याण्डको गीत

(Gorkhaland geet)

...

नसोँच्छौँ धन नमाछौँ मन

(Nasochchw dhan namanchw maan)

भारत नै कर्मभूमि ठान्दछौँ ।

(Bharat nai karmabhoomi thanchaw)

पुख्यौँली माटोको टीका लगाई

(Purkhawlee matoko tika lagai)

भारत नै जन्मभूमि मान्दछौँ ॥ १॥

(Bharat nai janbhoomi mandachaw)

भारतमै जन्म्यौ भारतमै मछौँ

(Bharatmai janmayou bharatmai marchaw)

हो गोर्खा हामी भारती ।

(Ho gorkha hami bharati)

गोर्खाको गुणलाई भारतले बुझे

(Gorkhako ghunlai bharatle bhujay)

गोर्खा हुन् देशका महारथी ॥ २ ॥

(Gorkha hu deshka maharathi)

...-के० डी० लामा, कालेबुङ (KD Lama, Kalebung)

(Translation)

“Song of Gorkhaland

...

We don't think we don't have money

We consider India as the land of karma.

Vaccinated ancestral soil

We consider India as our homeland.

Born in India, we die in India

Yes, Gorkha, we are Indians.

India understood the virtues of Gorkha

Gurkhas are the great heroes of the country.

...-KD Lama, Kalebung”

2.4.3. Role of Media for the emergence of Gorkha Identity

Media has played an important role that has attributed to the political consciousness of Gorkha/Indian Nepalis. The interest of people to join the movement has been influenced by media coverage, particularly in the hills. Newspapers like *Himalaya Darpan*, *Daynik Jagran*, *The Telegraph* and *The Statesmen* are some of the important sources that medium to which reported in the hills, the present political situation. The local television stations including *24 Ghanta* (Bengali), *Siliguri Channel* (CCN), *Kalimpong Television*, *Hamro Channel* (Darjeeling) as well as several national television stations like *Zee News*, *Aaj Tak*, highlight ongoing issues pertaining to the movement. The well-known adage says “every side of a coin has another side” in the same way media also plays both positive and a negative ways in aspect of reporting the news. Instead of providing a forum for public expression, the media merely serves to advance the interests of politicians. According to elites and government networks, those topics are highlighted in the media as being crucial. The media’s position in the Government movement, however, has been disputed and controversial due to the fact that it neglected to emphasise and acknowledge the Gorkha true situation. Particularly in the national sphere, the people’s ideology and information hardly make it to the media. The national party leaders and administration have always set the agenda for national media, which tends to be more unfavourable and uninterested in Gorkhaland.¹²² So far media has become more influential prognostic about the fact of the hill people as compare to the 80s report with the present scenario. The media covered the news of “Prashant Tamang” from Darjeeling participating in the ‘Indian Idol’, a national-level singing/popularity contest. As being a Nepali from Darjeeling, he right away became a representative of the millions of Indian-Nepalis and their

¹²²Preksha Sharma, “Role of Media in Gorkhaland Movement”, Darjeeling: *Times.com*, 2009:1.

aspiration of acceptance and assimilation within the Indian nation, and a representation of unity for Nepalis living in diverse parts of the world.¹²³ The euphoria and support not only led to Prashant Tamang winning the singing contest but also led to the end of Subhas Ghising era in politics¹²⁴ and the formation of the *Gorkha Janmukti Morcha* by Bimal Gurung.¹²⁵

Prashant Tamang story rekindled interest in the Gorkhaland problem, while on the other side; identity consciousness among the populace began to spread. As a result, the media was crucial in enhancing the identity of Indian Gorkhas and Nepalis.

2.5. The Changing Nature of Gorkhaland Movement

The democratic process in India is naturally producing the desire for Gorkhaland. It shows an effective ascent of Indian democracy.¹²⁶ After the collective consciousness grew among the people, it became easy for them to identify their needs for them. They were distinct from Bengal in terms of history, ethnicity, society, linguistics, and culture. The movement was going on from the last over a century as the Darjeeling inhabitants have been actively seeking an autonomous homeland.¹²⁷ Therefore, the demand is not sudden; rather, it appears to be result of an ongoing dispute that dates back more than a century. The demand for Gorkhaland rises with the question of Gorkha identity as being a “foreigner” and “not a citizen of India” whom such examine continues to the Indian Gorkha even today.¹²⁸ The demands were put forwards by the different origination and groups with the same agenda time and again. It has taken place in different phases with changing nature of the movement. Let’s

¹²³Chettri, 2013, *Op.cit.*, 229.

¹²⁴Subhas Ghising was a prominent figure of Darjeeling and was a Founder of Gorkha Liberation Front.

¹²⁵He is the founder of Gorkha *Janmukti Morcha* a political party voiced for the demand of Gorkhaland.

¹²⁶Shivraj Sharma, *Gorkhaland Darpan*. Darjeeling: Gorkha books Store, 1989: 231.

¹²⁷Lama, 2008, *Op.cit.*, 191.

¹²⁸T.B. Subba, “*Being a Nepali n North East India: Predicaments of a Privileged Nation*”, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 2003:4.

dwelt one after another about the demands and concern about the self-identity and security for upcoming generation.

2.5.1. First Phase of the Movement (1907-1980s)

The British administration received the earliest-ever request for a “separate administrative set-up” for the Darjeeling district from the “leaders of the Hill people” in 1907. The Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese were known to as the “Hill people” in this context.¹²⁹ According to Chakrabarti¹³⁰ the demand is arisen due to the widespread idea of reforms and the anti-partition wave in Bengal. The “representative of the Darjeeling” or the voice of the Hill Men’s Association, led by S.W. Ladenla delivered the memo to Lord Chemsfords, the viceroy of India at the time, and E.S. Montagu, the country’s then secretary of state for India, on November 8, 1917. S.W. Ladenla (Bhutia), Yen Singh Sitling (Lepcha), Khadge Bahadur Chhetri (Nepali), Prem Kumar Kumai, Meghbir Singh, Lachuman Singh, Narprasad Kumai, Deonidhi Upadhyaya and others all signed the memorandum. The demand for a separate Administrative Arrangement for the area that includes the entirety of the Darjeeling district and the section of the territory captured from Bhutan in 1865 and linked to Jalpaiguri was made in the memorandum. The demand of the Darjeeling District representatives is found to have been supported by unquestionable evidence of the unique nature of the region’s history, culture and geography, which is the homeland of people who speak and adhere to completely different languages, customs, traditions, and mindsets from those of Bengal.¹³¹

¹²⁹Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 76.

¹³⁰Dyutis Chakravarti, “Gorkhaland: Evolution of Politics of Segregation”, *Special Lecture* No. X. *Centre for Himalayan Studies*, University of North Bengal. Darjeeling (April, 1988):4.

¹³¹D.S. Bomjan, *Darjeeling- Dooars People and Place under Bengal’s Neo- Colonial Rule*. Darjeeling: Bikash Jana Sahitya Kenda, 2008:78.

The memorandum submitted by Hillmen's Union got fully support from different associations like Planters of Darjeeling, the European Association and so on. However, the Darjeeling district was designated as a "scheduled area" by the Government of India Act 1919, shattering the expectations of many. The Union made another attempt in 1934, presenting a message to Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir John Anderson on behalf of Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalese requesting the protection of minorities in the highlands.¹³² Darjeeling was designated as "partially excluded area" under the Government Act of 1935, and as a result, only one member could be chosen to fill the reserved seat. This was once again insufficient to prevent majority rule. The squad 'NEBULA' (NE for Nepali, BU for Bhutia and LA for Lepcha), has adopted the term "Gorkha" and the Nepali language as a way to foster a sense of fraternity among the cultures.¹³³ Beginning in 1940, the Communist Party of India began expressing concern over Gorkha identity and promoting the idea of a separate state called "Gorkhasthan" in collaboration with the hillside workers on tea plantations. The Communist Party's leaders worked hard to persuade the powerful political parties to support the idea, but they were unsuccessful. The CPI maintained a low profile about its desire for a separate "Gorkhasthan" in light of the political climate.¹³⁴

In Dehradun, the All India Gorkha League (AIGL) was established as early as in 1923 when Darjeeling was busy trying to introduce "Nepali" as a medium of instruction in schools. Later on, most rigorously formulate under the leadership of D.S Gurung whose very concern for his people had inspired him to study law.¹³⁵ The aim and objective of All India Gorkha League were (1) to forge unity among the Gorkhas scattered all over India, to preserve Gorkha tradition and culture, (2) to fight for the

¹³²Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*, 83.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 83.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 97.

¹³⁵Subba, 1992.,*Op.cit.*,84.

right of the Gorkhas in India, (3) development of Nepali language and its use, (4) establishment of political right among the Gorkhas, (5) to promote friendship and harmony with all the communities in India.¹³⁶ The 10th session of the AIGL conference held at Nagaisurie Football Ground, Matelli- Bazar, and District Jalpaiguri from 27th January 1955 to 30th January 1955. The number of participant ranged from 30 to 50 (Gorkha young boys and girls) and they carried Gorkha League Flag with the slogans *Jai Gorkha, Gorkhali-Jago-Jago, Gorkha League Amar Rahos, Jhanda Uncha Rachos, Gorkha- Neta Amar Rahos* etc.¹³⁷

Christian missionaries who translated the Bible into Nepali initiated initiatives to advance Nepali as a language and with the full support of prominent personalities of Nepali literature and those were Parasmoni Pradhan, Dharanidhar Koirala, D.S. Gurung Surya Bikram Gewali.¹³⁸ According to historical evidence, the Nepali language has functioned in the Darjeeling hills as a creator of ethnic identity, a means of expressing cultural diversity, a source of national cohesiveness, and most crucially, as a tool for establishing a political community.¹³⁹ The incorporation of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution became a point of unification for a number of demands for autonomy. In order to maintain the agitation over the language, many groups, such as All India *Nepali Bhasa Samity* and *Bharatiya Nepali Rashtriya Prashad* were established to push for the designation of Nepali as the national tongue. One of the arguments presented by the *Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasha Samiti* (ABNBS) for recognition of Nepali in the Eighth Schedule is as follows: “Many privileges accruing from the constitutional recognition of Nepali will

¹³⁶Government of West Bengal, Higher Education Department, State Archives Branch, File:17, No. 44, Subject: *All Gorkha League H.Q. Kalimpong, Darjeeling*. I.B 1944-46 Part III, 87.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 1046.

¹³⁸Dasgupta, 1999, *Op.cit.*, 59.

¹³⁹Sarkar, 2013, *Op.cit.*, 52.

help the development of a linguistic minority and will go a long way to bring about a deep emotional integration in our nation". In a pamphlet, *Case for Constitutional Recognition of Nepali*, it has been shown that based on any possible criteria such as regional concentration, size of population, developed literature, etc., a strong case exists for recognition of Nepali.¹⁴⁰ As the demand increased for separation and more autonomy, the demand for the acknowledgment of Nepali as an official language in Darjeeling Himalayan began gaining momentum in the Nineteen Fifties. This promulgated the demand for the inclusion of the Nepali Language in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution in the early seventies. It was during these movements that the population composition "changed" as numerous Lepchas and Bhutias were counted as Nepalese to prove a majority of Nepali Speaking population.¹⁴¹ In the end, the Constitution's 71st Amendment in 1992 added the Nepali language to the Eight Schedule.¹⁴² The language issue made more consistent and inspired to join the movement that expresses ethnic exclusivity. Later on, this movement which also took the name "Nepali Language Movement" attracted the interest of the Communist Party of India which presented a memorial emphasising the necessity of utilising Nepali language as a medium of teaching in schools and colleges. The difficulty with Nepali language brought *AIGL* and *Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity* (ABNBS) together, their joint activity was at first well-attended and lively but later becoming somewhat conventional and tedious.¹⁴³ After all of these efforts and the passing of D.P Rai, the AIGL supreme, the party AIGL eventually lost its directorial power.

¹⁴⁰Surendra Munshi, "Nepali and the Eight Schedule", *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol. 16, No. 24, (22nd February) 1982:10.

¹⁴¹R.N. Thakur, *Himalayan Lepchas*, New Delhi: Archives Publishers and Distributors, 1988: 62.

¹⁴²Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*,86.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*,

Hence, the first phase of the movement favoured the legal Constitutional method of struggle i.e., submitting various memorandums for the demand of separate set-up administration, especially by the Hillmen's Association. This phase movement was mixed as the autonomy demands started to merge, and they often hinged on adding Nepali to the Constitution's Eighth Schedule. Hence to keep the language issue flaming, many groups, such as *All India Nepali Bhasa Samity*, *Bharatiya Nepali Rashtriya Prashad* were established to push for designation of Nepali as the national tongue. The Political movement was followed by the linguistic movement. Firstly, the movement was simply identified as a political movement then more inclined toward the language movement. But then, the movement was not only confined to the Darjeeling region but the movement spread all over India. All the organizations were appealed to send official letters to Prime Minister for the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The Legislative Assembly of the state of West Bengal passed the declaration authorising the addition of Nepali in the Eight Schedule on July 2nd, 1977. Tripura followed on June 28th, 1978 and by Sikkim on September 22nd, 1982.¹⁴⁴ The language movement and the demand for statehood movement went hand in hand. Hence, the First phase of the movement has transformed from statehood movement to the language movement and then again back to the statehood movement.

2.5.2. Second Phase of the Movement (1980-2007s)

More systematic demand for separate statehood for the district of Darjeeling and the adjoining Dooars area of Jalpaiguri appeared after the establishment of the *Pranta Parishad* in April 1980.¹⁴⁵ The political bodies such as AIGL, the Congress, the

¹⁴⁴Also available in Nepali "Bhasa Andolan" re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

¹⁴⁵Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 98.

Janata Party, ABNBS etc., joined the *Pranta Parishad*. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) was formed under the leadership of Subash Ghising on July 24, 1980 and the *Swantra Manch* was established in May 1985, both the organizations have the same agenda of separate statehood.¹⁴⁶ The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), which was the movement's second phase and was led by Subash Ghising, paved the way. His leadership was more effective in galvanising the populace and elevating the call for the establishment of an autonomous for Nepalese in India. Subhas Ghising's version of Darjeeling's history and his point were different from the rest. According to him, the Treaty called Indo-Nepal Treaty 1950¹⁴⁷, which was the key worrying aspect in distinguishing Nepalis from Nepal and the Indian Nepalis which led to confusion over their sense of nationhood.

“Article VI Each government undertakes, in token of the neighbourly friendship between India and Nepal, to give to the nationals of the other, in its territory, nationals' treatment with regard to participation in industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development”.

*“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”.*¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*,

¹⁴⁷A bilateral treaty between India and Nepal established tight strategic ties between the two South Asian neighbours which term as the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (Official name: Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the Government of India and Nepal).

¹⁴⁸T.B. Subba, “Race, Identity and Nationality: Relocating Nepali Nationalism in India” *Research Gate*, Sage Publication, 2018:11.

Ghising has advanced the argument that Article VII of the treaty should be immediately annulled since it has rendered the Gorkhas destitute or without an identity, creating both a national and an international problem. According to Ghising's interpretation of this clause, it reduced Indian Nepalis to "reciprocal citizens" rather than "bonafide citizens" of India, making their lives and future uncertain. Hence, he had successfully projected his thoughts among the people which led them to fight fearlessly in the movement. Ghising made an effort to resolve the problem by using the term "Gorkha" to describe Indian Nepalese rather than Nepalese and the legal designation of the territory "Gorkhaland".

Ghising was able to establish six frontal organizations, namely Gorkha National Youth Front (GNYF), Gorkha National Women Organization (GNWO), Gorkha National Students Front (GNSF), Gorkha Volunteer's Cell (GVC), and Gorkha Welfare Organization (GWO) with a variety of supporters and a range of interests, despite the fact they were all driven by the same demand for Gorkhaland.¹⁴⁹ Provocative remarks and slogans such as "*Gorkhaland Jindabad*", "*Hamro Mato Farkai Deo*" (Give back our land), "*long live Gorkhaland*" etc., were used to set fire to the mass sentiment.

¹⁴⁹Sarkar, 2013, *Op.cit.*, 69.

Fig.2.1. Supporters of the GNLF brandishing the Kukris at Rally



Source: *THE WEEK*, “Brandishing the Kukri: The Gorkhas of Darjeeling raise a new war cry”. 15- 21. 06. 1986. The picture captured by Asoke Bose.

During the rally, the mass cries out for the demand with brandishing the kukri. They demonstrated a rally with the slogans- “We want Gorkhaland”. Not only that the Gorkhaland calendar was also launched and made a symbol of how strong their demand for statehood. More than 20,000 calendars have been sold not only in Darjeeling but in Dehra Dun, UP and Assam excessively.¹⁵⁰ A group of mass supported GNLF and participated in all the activities where as another group of mass was against the violent activities of GNLF. Not all the Nepali-speaking people of Darjeeling considered Ghising and his party as the messiah they were waiting for. At least two Gorkha organizations- the All India *Nepali Bhasa Samiti* and the *Pranta Parishad*- were maintaining a careful distance from GNLF. Some, like the Gorkha League MLA from Kalimpong, Ms. Renu Leena Subba, as well as the members of Kalimpong municipality and *zilla parishad* had even raised their voices against

¹⁵⁰*THE WEEK*, “Brandishing the Kukri: The Gorkhas of Darjeeling raise a new war cry”. 15-21. 06.1986.

Ghising's militant methods.¹⁵¹ Hence, **Fig.2.2** shows Nepali-speaking inhabitants of Darjeeling, displaced by the Gorkhaland agitations, stage a sit-down demonstration in Siliguri to protest against GNLF violence and intimidation.

Fig.2.2. Sit-down demonstration protest against GNLF violence



Source: *The Statesman*, “Nepalis against GNLF stir”. 07. 11.1986.

Three distinct phases of the movement's recorded chaotic phase may be seen. Inter-party fighting in the highlands in 1986, which resulted in the buried of important political party headquarters and the deaths of their supporters, served as a clear indication of this phase. In similar cases i.e., Mr. R.P Sinha, Superintendent of Police, said over telephone that the GNLF men ransacked the houses of five CPI (M) workers in the estate and set them on fire at Takdah tea estate. According to a senior Government official in Calcutta, the GNLF men who barricaded the road protested against the arrest of two people from their party. The houses of Mr. Ratan Bahadur Rai, a CITU leader, and two others were set on fire during the GNLF attack on

¹⁵¹*SUNDAY*, An Ananda Bazar Publication. Vol.13. Issue.13, August 31-September 6, 1986.

October 10, 1986.¹⁵² When GNLF supporters were arrested for the case of house burning incident, a supporter of GNLF attacked police with bombs and rolled boulders down the hillside. Several constables were injured.¹⁵³ Again, the news reported by *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, on October 14, the two people were killed following a clash between CPI (M) and GNLF, the dead were identified as Saran Subba of Karjali Village, a CPI (M) supporter, and Rajkumar Subba of Lower Lamagaon, who was a GNLF supporter.¹⁵⁴ Hence, during the first phase, much evidence shows the clashes between the inter-party but at the same time, one of the senior police officer's statement left people to rethink again about the first phase of 1986. As he said at *Writers' Buildings* that the district administration was being harassed by frequent reports of violence in different parts of the district, most of which were found to be untrue.¹⁵⁵ The statement given by Mr. Saroj Mukerjee, secretary of the West Bengal CPI (M) State Committee, "*before giving any certificate to Mr Subash Ghising, GNLF president, Mr. Ashoke Sen¹⁵⁶ should be sure that Mr. Subash Ghising would be satisfied with regional autonomy*".¹⁵⁷ The Left Front wanted the protest day to be observed between November 12 and 14 as Mr. Mukherjee said while briefing newsmen and also claimed that 15 CPI (M) supporters had so far been killed by GNLF. He stated that "*The Gorkhaland supporters have also set fire to 180 houses and rendered 1,200 persons homeless. We have provided shelter to them near our party office in Darjeeling as well as in Siliguri town. The state government has also been asked to provide relief to them*".¹⁵⁸ Again the clashes between two parties

¹⁵²*The Statesman*, "Tea estate attacked by GNLF activists", 12.10.1986.

¹⁵³Chanda, Arup. Kumar, "GNLF men attack police with bombs, set houses ablaze", *The Telegraph*, 16.10.1986.

¹⁵⁴*The Telegraph*, "Violence erupts in Darjeeling", 14.10.1986.

¹⁵⁵*The Statesman*, "GNLF men set fire to 10 houses", 16.10.1986.

¹⁵⁶Ashoke Sen was a Union law Minister who has been served as law minister from the tenure of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to that of Rajiv Gandhi.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*,

¹⁵⁸*The Telegraph*, "L F calls Bangla Bandh". 19.10.1986.

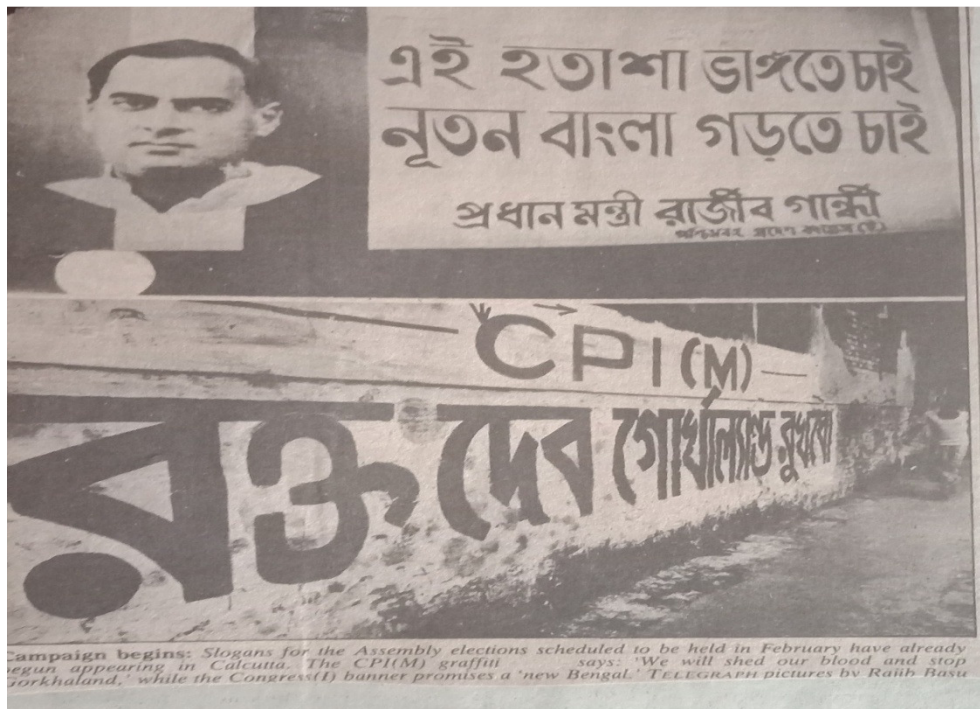
went into a different level as more than 50 houses belonged to CPM supporters were set ablaze in Tukvar Tea garden by GNLf activities. Three people were injured in the clash. However, there was no report of police firing. According to official sources, more than 800 GNLf supporters from Tukvar, Badamatam and Phoobshering tea gardens attacked the Limbu *Bustee*, a stronghold of the CPI (M), and set fire to the houses.¹⁵⁹ During this first phase killing and the violence act was seems as normal as each news broadcasted incidence in such an easy way. *The Statesman* newspaper dated. 11.11.1986 reported the death of two GNLf activists including 15 policemen were seriously injured when the Central Reserve Police Force fired on an armed crowd of GNLf supporters at Ging tea estate in Darjeeling *Sadar* Thana area.¹⁶⁰ The other incident i.e., the members of GNLf launched an indefinite relay hunger strike at Bagrakote tea Garden in Dooars. The hunger strike was in protest against the “suppression of political and civil rights by the administration and the indulgence in violence by the CPI (M) in connivance with security forces”. A total 29 GNLf members participated subsequently joined by the women, the students and the youth wings.¹⁶¹ The poster campaign was also shows the rivalry between the CPI (M) and GNLf.

¹⁵⁹*The Telegraph*, “50 houses set ablaze by GNLf men”. 09.11.1986.

¹⁶⁰*The Statesman*, “Two GNLf men killed in police firing”. 11.11.1986.

¹⁶¹*The Telegraph*, “Hunger strike in Dooars”. 17.11.1986.

Fig.2.3. Slogans for the Assembly elections and the CPI (M) Graffiti



Source: *The Telegraph*, 16.12.1986, Picture by Rajib Basu.

The above graffiti was slogans for the Assembly elections and the picture shows the evidence, of the clashes between the CPI (M) and the GNLFF party. The CPI (M) graffiti appear in red, black and blue and are intended to have an emotional appeal which says: “*We will shed our blood and stop Gorkhaland*”, and “*Kanchenjanga is a witness to our fight for the nation’s unity*”, while the Congress (I) promises a “*new Bengal*”.¹⁶² “*We shall give our lives but will not allow the snatching away of Darjeeling from West Bengal*” proclaimed the graffiti in Sarat Bose Road, “*The whole of India will be in flames if there is a division of Bengal*” says the posters and wall writing at Beliaghata. The Congress (I) leaders pointed out that the CPI (M) poster campaign was confined in the Bengali middle class area of Calcutta and the suburbs. “*They have deliberately avoided the non-Bengali inhabited areas as objectives were to get their party’s message across to the Bengali urban middle class*

¹⁶²*The Telegraph*, 16.12.1986.

voters".¹⁶³ Hence it has proved that during this first phase of 1986, inter-party clashes have been seen at the utmost level in the entire Darjeeling area.

The second phase (1987) started with the counter movement spearheaded by the CPI (M) men to combat the armed attack of the GNLFF killing and counter-killing. Violence continued in parts of Darjeeling district as a GNLFF leader was killed and at least 40 houses were burnt by clashing groups at different places. Darjeeling remained totally cut off from the rest of the country following the indefinite strike called by transport owners and operators to protest the use of private vehicles for carrying security forces. An Official source said that Raj Kumar Vaishya, a GNLFF leader of Kulbang under the Phulbazar police station, was murdered and at least 100 houses had either burnt or damaged. Likewise, the sources said 20 houses of CPI (M) workers were burnt or damaged by GNLFF supporters at Rishihat under the Jorbangla police station.¹⁶⁴ Regarding the issue of the transport strike, hundreds of residents crowded the Chowkbazar as posters were put up saying "the transport strike has been called off following a negotiation with the district administration and all buses, taxis, trucks would play tomorrow".¹⁶⁵ Meanwhile, tension continued to prevail in Bijonbari and several tea gardens clash between supporters of CPI (M) and the GNLFF supporters.¹⁶⁶ Thus, during this second phase violence and tension goes a high degree in the entire Darjeeling District.

¹⁶³*The Statesman*, "Graffiti war over Gorkhaland". 08.11.1986

¹⁶⁴Arup Kumar Chanda, "GNLFF leader murdered in Darjeeling", *The Telegraph*. 20.10.1986

¹⁶⁵*The Telegraph*, "Darjeeling transport strike called off". 21.10.1986.

¹⁶⁶*The Statesman*, "Darjeeling Transport Strike Withdrawn". 21.10.1986.

Fig.2.4. Black Flag by the GNLF protest against attacks by CPI (M) supporter



Source: *The Telegraph*. 21.10.1986. A picture captured by Abani Ghosh.

Fig.2.3. shows the residents of Kurseong go about normal business even as policemen in jeeps stand vigil against possible trouble. In the background across the streets can be seen the black flag put up by the GNLF to protest against the attacks by CPI (M) supporters.¹⁶⁷

The third phase (1987-1988) to normalize the situation the government deployed armed force as GNLF went onto more destructive mode.¹⁶⁸ Mr. Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, President of WBPC (I), he alleged the agitation was destroying the economy of not only Darjeeling but all of West Bengal.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷*The Telegraph*, 21.10.1986.

¹⁶⁸Sarkar, 2013, *Op.cit*., 74-75.

¹⁶⁹*The Statesman*, "GNLF agitation destroying State economy: Das Munshi". 09.11.1987.

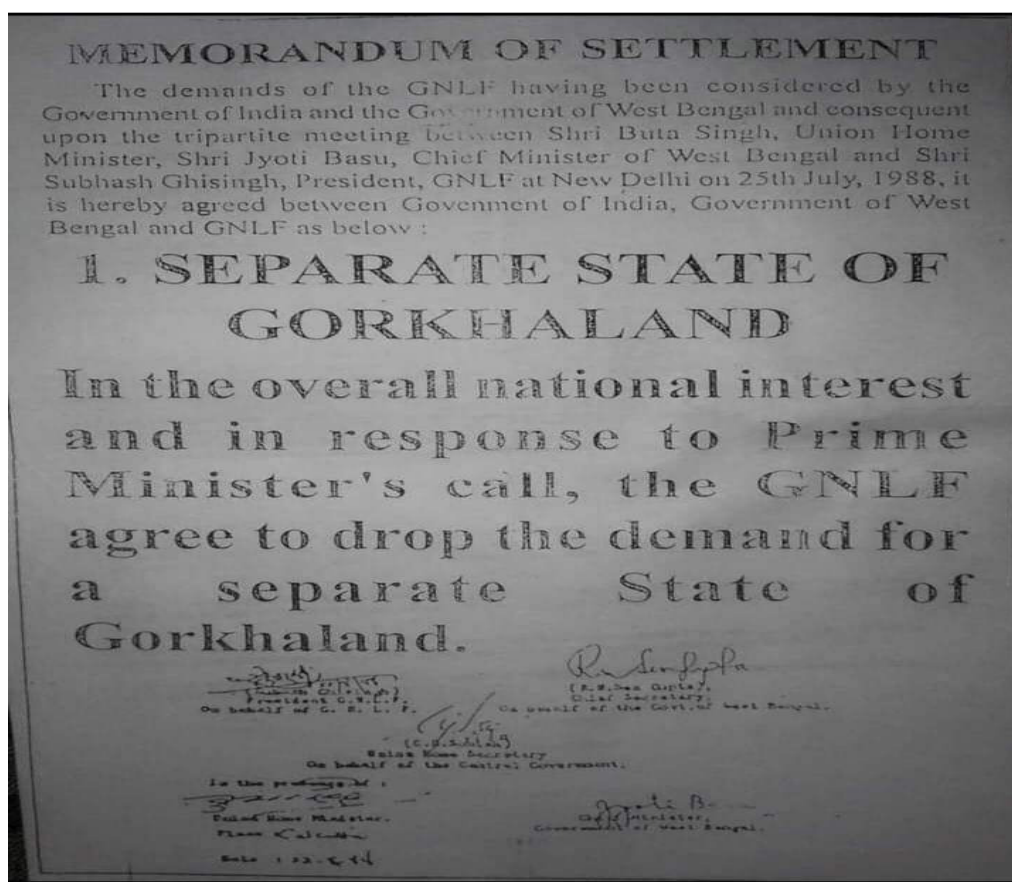
Fig.2.5. Country made weapon seized in Darjeeling



Source: *The Telegraph*, “Seized in Darjeeling”, 16.11.1986. *The Telegraph* picture was taken by Abani Ghosh.

The above **Fig.2.5** shows an evidence of country-made weapons in large numbers have been seized by the police from the Singtam tea estate and neighborhood where clashes between supporters of the GNLFF and the CPI (M) have left tenements gutted and hundreds homeless.

Fig.2.6. Memorandum of Settlement



Source: *The Statesman*, “Memorandum of Settlement”, 27.07.1986.

After two year (1986-88) of indulging in a violent separatist movement for Gorkhaland, the agitation had left an estimated 297 dead and some 1,164 private homes destroyed.¹⁷⁰ In the end, Ghising decided to form an elected Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) within West Bengal instead of continuing to push for Gorkhaland. The above **Fig.2.6** shows the evidence and the clarification of memorandum of Settlement, ending the agitation. The Times of India termed the tripartite accord as a major victory for the Indian State.¹⁷¹ With the formation of DGHC power has come to a certain session of people and it’s also ensuring a chance to control its social, economic sectors. Some section of people’s dream was shattered

¹⁷⁰Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*,54.

¹⁷¹*The Times of India*, 24.08.1988.

by those who were not agreed with the acceptance of DGHC, providing limited autonomy within the state of West Bengal, under Ghising (GNLF) control for the twenty years (1988-2008). But the Gorkhaland Agitation did not provide the ultimate solution of people's angst over belonging. However, statehood issue have been continued to rise further.

2.5.2. a. Movements for Scheduled Tribe Status (1990-2000s) & Sixth Schedule Tribal Autonomy (2005-2007s)

With the failure of the Gorkhaland Movement and settled with DGHC, the people of Darjeeling sought new political possibilities as the clashes and protest activities in between the period of 1980-1986s had left the public on unrequited stage. Meanwhile, India was embracing unprecedented socio economic transformation. The liberalization of the national economy in the 1990s was attended by increasingly violent controversies over affirmative action, as the government moved to implement the Mandal Commission's suggestions to increase the quotas for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backward Classes.¹⁷² Movements for Scheduled Tribe status quickly spread through the hills, bearing promises of recognitions, rights, culture rebirth and new forms of social belonging.¹⁷³ The Mandal Commission recommendation considerably altered the politics in hills and shaped the discourse on recognition.¹⁷⁴ Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, movements for tribal recognition and autonomy swept through the hills, as communities sought new routes to rights and

¹⁷²Townsend Middleton, *The Demands of Recognition: State Anthropology and Ethnopolitics in Darjeeling*, Stanford, California: Stanford University, 2016: 47

Sumit Guha, "The Politics of identity and enumeration in India c. 1600-1900", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.45, No.1, 2003: 162.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*,

¹⁷⁴The recommendation of Mandal Commission, group such as Bhujel, Newars, Mangars, Nembang, Sampang, Bungeheng, Thami and Jogi were recognized in the West Bengal state list of OBC in 1995. In this OBC list prepared by the West Bengal government, some groups like Sunuwars were excluded and were not recognized as OBC till 1999 and Dewan and Rai till 2001. http://www.anagrasarkalyan.gov.in/htm/obc_list.html Accessed on 16 May, 2020.

inclusion in the nation-state. Attaining a tribal majority would facilitate the Darjeeling Hills becoming an autonomous tribal area, the provisions of which are laid out by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Where Gorkha politics failed to deliver recognition and autonomy, tribal politics would succeed.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, Ghising's demands that the whole Gorkha people be classified as a hill tribe increased the demand for ST designation. The Department of Information and Cultural Affairs (DICA) of the DGHC adopted ardent programmes, and the organization named *Bharatiya Gorkha Janjati Manyata Samiti*, to display the tribal heritage. Ghising promoted stone worship (*shila*) established the *Bonbo National Festival* and invited ethnic organizations to display signs of their tribal distinctiveness during Tourist during the DGHC's tourist funfair. Since, the addition of Tamang and Limbu in the ST's list in 2003, Ghising insisted the constitutional acknowledgment of Darjeeling under the sixth schedule of the constitution.¹⁷⁶ Ghising, who had once opposed the labelling of Gorkhas as "tribal", himself, initiated the demand for Sixth Schedule status. The West Bengal administration proposed adding ten hill tribes to the ST category.¹⁷⁷ The West Bengal administration proposed adding ten hill tribes to the ST category.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs rejected such recommendations.¹⁷⁹ A memorandum of Settlement, which dictated the formation of a new Council under the Sixth Schedule in 2005, was used to resolve this issue definitively. The Memorandum of settlement for Sixth Schedule status for Darjeeling

¹⁷⁵Middleton, 2016,*Op.cit.*,3-4.

¹⁷⁶Nilamber Chhetri, "From Jat-Jati to Janjati: Demands for Recognition as Scheduled Tribe and Claims of Indigeneity in Darjeeling", *Sociological Bulletin*, Sage Publication, Vol. 66, No.1, 2017:81.

¹⁷⁷The letter from S.K. Dutta, Director and ex-officio Joint Secretary to Government of West Bengal, to ten different caste/communities of Darjeeling, dated 29 August 2007 (No. 265/CRI, dated 10 May 2007) (Tamu Choj Dhi office/ Darjeeling).

¹⁷⁸The letter from S.K. Dutta, Director and ex-officio Joint Secretary to Government of West Bengal, to ten different caste/communities of Darjeeling, dated 29 August 2007 (No. 265/CRI, dated 10 May 2007) (Tamu Choj Dhi office/ Darjeeling).

¹⁷⁹Letter of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, dated 28 January 2010 (Ref. No. 12016/08/2009-C&LM-I). (Tamu Choj Dhi office/ Darjeeling)

was signed on 6th December, 2005. The salient provisions of the Memorandum of Settlement included formation of Gorkha Hill Council by replacing the DGHC. The proposed council was opposed by many organizations, such as All India Nepali Scheduled Caste Associations (AINSCA) and other tribal organization opposed the bill, but the *Gorkha Janmukti Morcha* (GJM), a newly founded party led by Bimal Gurung, mounted the biggest opposition, who eventually launched the new phase of the Gorkhaland Movement in 2007. Though the Gorkhaland Movement came to a conclusion with the formation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) on 18 July 2011, the demands for recognition as ST status were carried out unabated.¹⁸⁰

2.5.3. Third Phase of the Movement (2007-2015)

There is a saying ‘Time is not going to remain same for everyone’ in same way Ghising period did not last long. His leadership has failed to maintain the people’s confidence in him. The matter gets worse when he attempts to persuade DGHC within the purview of the Sixth Schedule. By the time after he once more succeeded in influencing the public on the Sixth Schedule and its political resolution, the government decided to introduce a Constitutional Amendment Bill into Lok Sabha that would have added DGHC to the Sixth Schedule on November 30, 2007.¹⁸¹ With due time Subhas Ghising’s period was over and after him, a radical transformation took place in the Darjeeling Politics.

The creation of a new political party *Gorkha Janmukti Morcha* (GJMM) in 2007 under the guidance of Mr. Bimal Gurung brought changes in the atmosphere of Darjeeling Politics. He rejected the proposal of the Sixth Schedule and ousted Subhas Ghising almost permanently from the hill politics. Prashant Tamang resident of

¹⁸⁰Chettri, 2017, *Op.cit.*,

¹⁸¹Sarkar, 2013, *Op.cit.* ,94.

Darjeeling who went to Indian Idol show also made the people in one accord to make him a winner of the show. The Prashant Tamang Fan Club, led by Bimal Gurung, pushed the populace with the help of the Indian Idol participants to win the competition. This social issue gave political discourse a fresh start and sparked the idea of creating a new political outfit, i.e., Gorkha *Janmukti Morcha* (GJMM). Bimal Gurung was able to touch the people's hearts and he got more supporters and they had come more enthusiastically as before to be with Mr. Gurung.¹⁸² The movement strategies were the same, only the mantle of leadership changed but GJMM introduced a novel combination of Gandhigri and non-violence and situation were much peaceful than earlier ones. One striking point of the GJMM led movement of renewed movement consistently emphasized the matter of enclosure of Dooars and Terai regions contained by the proposed territory. Therefore on 29th June 2008 GJMM Chief Bimal Gurung proclaimed the creation of a separate organization Gorkha *Janmukti Adivasi Morcha* (GJAM) at meeting held at Gorubathan.¹⁸³ The callous and unmindful attitude of the West Bengal government and subtle attempt by CPM to ferment a divide between the people of hills and plain of Darjeeling district, the GJMM organized Fast-unto- Death program at the Sub-divisional Office at Siliguri from February 21st, 2008. But the police barricaded and blockaded the different points of roads connecting Siliguri and arrested the people having so-called Mongoloid Face, who had reached the proposed site of Fast-unto-Death at Siliguri.¹⁸⁴ Due to the movement's call for a non-violent form of complaint (rally, hunger-strike) which gave the emergence of a non-cooperation movement and Home Rule Movement by means of not paying taxes to the Government counting electricity bills, and land taxes and housing taxes, etc. GJMM also has to remain adamant but change its tactics if

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁸⁴*The Telegraph*, 21.02.2008.

necessary for its political survival. The most unique method in this phase used by GJMM was “SONG” wherever they had conducted meetings they played the music “*Hamro payro Gorkhland, Hami sabai ko Gorkhland*” through the songs made the environment into different levels. In the post-2007 one of the important aspects that came into being was the “Public Forum” people’s opinion given take was seen during this phase of movement. Multiple hunger strikes interspersed with clashes with state government officials have been the strategy that is used by the party.

Mr. Gurung issued his order mandating maintenance of traditional Nepali attire because it was thought that doing so would foster a sense of solidarity and unity among the populace. Since the decision aimed to reinterpret tradition for confirming cultural distinctiveness, it was made public in early September 2008 for cultural wear, which caused a shade and weep among the populace and gave the Gorkhland Movement a new boost.¹⁸⁵ However other aspect also brings out which was the sense of unity among the people and a sense of belonging to a community. His word was followed by the every possible person at the workplace except school students everyone had to follow and wore the traditional dress. At the same time, the Graffiti of GJMM symbolized the unity among the people of Hills despite the fact of different religion and tradition within the caste and sub-caste.

In February 2011, three members of the Gorkha *Janamukti Morcha* (GJM) were shot dead by the West Bengal police while trying to enter the Jalpaiguri district. The attempt to enter the district was part of a *padayatra*¹⁸⁶ initiated by Bimal Gurung, the leader of GJM, to claim the district to be part of the demand for Gorkhland.¹⁸⁷ The

¹⁸⁵Swatasidhha Sarkar, “Recasting Tradition: Dress, Difference and Dissent in Darjeeling Hills”, *Mainstream Weekly*, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, December 20, 2008:3.

¹⁸⁶Padayatra means a journey on foot.

¹⁸⁷*The Telegraph*, 09.02.2011.

GJM wants this state, comprising Darjeeling district and its adjoining areas, to be carved out of West Bengal. Its supporters engaged in day-long strikes, sitting sometimes for hours outside in the cold, while others attended demonstrations or hunger strikes in order to pressure the government to grant them Gorkhaland.¹⁸⁸

The GJMM's unwavering backing of the Trinomool Congress alliance throughout the Dooars and Terai for the Assembly election, which ensured victory from all three hill constituencies, was the other key moment. The state government accepted the Gorkhas assistance in this regard and has resisted Indian Gorkha's persistent demand.

The Central Government, State Government and Gorkha *Janmukti Morcha* held a tripartite agreement for the creation of an administrative agreement, i.e., named as Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) in the hills. To uphold peace and development in the hill region of the district of Darjeeling, the West Bengal State Assembly passed the GTA bill with 68 amendments on 2nd September 2011.¹⁸⁹ Although the acknowledgement of GTA gave some people fresh optimism, it angered others and caused debates in hill politics that continue today.¹⁹⁰ The question must arise among the common people of what is the difference from both the settlement.

¹⁸⁸Miriam Wenner, "Diasporic Imaginations of Darjeeling: Gorkhaland as an imaginative geography", in T.B Subba & A.C. Sinha (eds.), *Nepali Diaspora in a Globalised Era*, New Delhi London New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2016: 108.

¹⁸⁹Sarkar, 2013, *Op.cit.*, 98.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 104.

Map.2.1: Proposed Map of Gorkhaland



Source: Available at: <http://upload.wikimedia.org> Accessed on 21/03/2019.

The above 2.1 Map was the official proposed map of Gorkhaland under Gorkha *Janmukti Morcha* including three hill sub-division, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong along the Siliguri sub-division.

Again, the new turning point has come with the formation of long waited Telangana state nearly a struggle of fifty year. Telangana State's formation was declared by Union Home Minister, P. Chidambaram on 2nd June 2014 which has tickled another separatist movement. Hence, Mr. Gurung called for a renewed Gorkhaland agitation and given a statement regarding the formation of the 29th state of India and how the

government sidelined more than a hundred years of demand for Gorkhaland.¹⁹¹ The people came with more vigour and vitality and the comeback heat could be seen in the hills. The news of the 29th state of India brought the people of Darjeeling hills more energetic and more focused so much so that in the process one person named Mangal Singh lost his life. This incident intensified the movement and for 72 hours *bandhs* (strike) was declared by Mr. Bimal Gurung. On July 30, 2014, he formally announced his resignation as GTA'S chief executive in order to advance the Gorkhaland Movement.¹⁹² The typical way of life for the people living in the hills was disrupted when a three-day strike turned into an indefinite one. Despite long-term *bandhs* (strikes) GJMM was unable to guarantee a favourable response from the central and the state. Despite *bandhs* (strikes) lasting a whole month and the detention of numerous activists. People on the hills were unhappy and restless as a result of the attempt and GJMM's failure of ensuring the demands of statehood led to missing out the popularity among the common people. But for some of them, the establishment of a new government represented a reawakening. They have faith that the new administration, which will usher in a new era, would make their wish for an independent state a reality.¹⁹³

The common people of the hills were, however, not interested and puzzled to some extent regarding the new settlement and comparing how the new settlement is better than the earlier one (DGHC & GTA).

¹⁹¹Banerjee, Amitava, "GJM does a balancing act on day one of renewed Gorkhaland agitation", *Hindustan Times*, January 21, 2013.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*,

¹⁹³*Ibid.*,

2.6. Conclusion

The demand of Gorkhaland appears to have been the subject of a political conflict for more than a century. The demand for Gorkhaland could be traced back to 1907. Even though Darjeeling was created as an urban enclave by British East India Company officials starting in the eighteenth century, it took the tough labour of residents of the surrounding region; particularly those from East Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Nepalis were encouraged to immigrate by the British. The British encouraged a significant influx of immigration in order to overwhelm Sikkim's Buddhist Lepcha and Bhutia populations. Besides, the Nepali settlement gained much momentum in the newly acquired lands of the British. Besides, the Nepali settlement gained much momentum in the newly acquired lands of the British. There are many pull and push factor which led to settlement of Gorkhas in Darjeeling hills. With the advent of formal education and the advancement of language and literature led the emergence of self-identity among the people. After the collective consciousness grew among the people, it became easy for them to identify their needs for them. They were distinct from Bengal in terms of history, ethnicity, society, linguistics, and culture. Different Political parties organized meetings and made agendas for the separate state. Though different party has come up with different time but their main motives was the same. The first phase of the movement was favoured the legal Constitutional method of struggle i.e., submitting various memorandums for the demand of separate set-up administration, especially by the Hillmen's Association. The demands for autonomy began to converge with tended to hinge on the inclusion of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution. Hence, to keep the language issue flaming, a different organization likes All India Nepali *Bhasa Samity*, *Bharatiya Nepali Rashtriya Prashad* was formed to agitate for the recognition of Nepali as the language

of the country. Subash Ghising served as the movement's leader throughout the second phase, which saw the creation of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). More people were mobilised under his leadership, and more people called for the establishment of a separate state for Nepalese in India. Subhas Ghising's version of Darjeeling's history and his point were different from the rest. Beginning with the second phase (1987), a counter movement led by CPI (M) men was under way to fight back against the GNLF's armed overpower, which essentially involved murdering and counter killing. Violence continued in parts of Darjeeling district as a GNLF leader was killed and at least 40 houses were burnt by clashing groups at different places. The third phase was emerged under the leadership of Bimal Gurung; the movement was non-violence exactly opposite of pervious movement somehow, in the end Gurung failed to bring out the actual goal of Indian Nepalis. After such massive peaceful agitation, rally, and hunger strike ultimately turn out the replacement of DGHC which was nothing new. A Gorkha Territorial Administration was formed an Autonomous District Council instead of state. The movement has transformed from one stage to another and above all consistency towards the demands did not exist. Thus, the movement seemed to be a never-ending process and still continued so far.

Chapter -III

Nepali Bhasa *Andolan*: Revisiting the Language Movement

3.1. Introduction

The importance of language is perhaps even more in India than anywhere else because here the different federating states have different dominant linguistic groups and several marginalized linguistic groups.¹⁹⁴ Hence, India is one of the most multilingual societies and it's well known for the ethno-political, socio-religious and ethno-culture.

A people not only transmit the store of all its memories through the vocabulary of its language, but in syntax, word sound and rhythm it finds the most faithful expression of its temperament and general emotional life. The rare cases wherein people has retained its individuality despite the loss of its language do not disprove the conviction of a people or national group that they are defending in language the very cornerstone of their national existence.¹⁹⁵

According to E. Sargarin and J. Moneymaker the language is the most important link between an individual and the society and the medium of a human interaction which enables people to assert their identity. Identity is defined as the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories. Identities may be linguistically constructed both through the use of particular language and linguistic forms associated with specific national, ethnic or other identities and through the use of communicative practices. Hence language and communication are critical aspects

¹⁹⁴T.B. Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development: A case study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling*, Delhi: Har- Anand Publication, 1992: 104.

¹⁹⁵E. Sagarin and J. Moneymaker, "Language and Nationalist, Separatist, and Secessionist Movement" in Raymond L. Hall, (eds.) *Ethnic Autonomy-Comparative Dynamics: The Americas, Europe and the Developing World*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1979: 19.

of the production of a wide variety of identities expressed at many levels of social organization.¹⁹⁶

Any research into the nature of language in its social context is an exploration of man in constant interaction with the other. The norm and form of social behavior are encounters being negotiated or encounters constantly renegotiated. Hence Language in its social context is thus an interdependent phenomenon. The use of the language entails not only knowing the language but also knowing how to use language in situations and contexts.¹⁹⁷

3.2. Language and Identity

The link between the language and identity is very strong and indispensable. The language-identity link is especially indispensable for those who consider language as an ultimate maker of ethnicity, nationality etc. For example, the German Romanticism of the early nineteenth century assumed that language was the central pillar of nationalistic group feeling. As Herder¹⁹⁸ had proclaimed:

“Even the smallest of nations...cherishes in and through its language the history, poetry and songs about the great deeds of its forefathers. The language is its collective treasure”.¹⁹⁹

Fishman²⁰⁰ comments on why language is such a salient dimension of a group's identity:

¹⁹⁶V. Paul Kroskrity, “Identity” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, Vol.9, No. 1/2 June 1999:111.

¹⁹⁷Jennifer Bayer, “Language and Social Identity”, in Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, (eds.), *Multilingualism in India*, New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2007:101.

¹⁹⁸Johanna Gottfried Herder was a German poet, philosopher, literary critic and folksong collector.

¹⁹⁹Shailendra Kumar Singh, *Multilingualism*, New-Delhi: Bahri Publications, 2001:158.

²⁰⁰Joshua Aaron Fishman was an American linguist who specialized in the sociology of language, language planning, bilingual education and language and ethnicity.

*“It becomes clearer why language is more likely than most symbols of ethnicity to become a symbol of ethnicity. Language is the recorder of paternity, the expresser of patrimony and the carrier of phenomenology. Any vehicle carrying such precious freight must come to be viewed as equally precious, as part of the freight, indeed, as precious in and of itself”.*²⁰¹

In societies where other cultural factors which act as binding forces loosen, language trends to become the dominant trait of identity. The Anglo-Indian in India is a minority, faced with a crisis of identity. The community is of multi-ethnic ancestry. Their adoption of English as their mother tongue has resulted in the ‘stamping out’ of their respective ancestral European languages. In Kerala, the assimilation of a group of Anglo-Indians with the local languages speakers led to their loss of Anglo-Indian identity. The Urdu speakers in the South, once they were isolated from the mainstream, developed local identities, and they had to seek a larger identity through the standard.²⁰² Dau²⁰³ has discussed in his work that the speakers of *Dakkhini* Urdu regards standard Urdu as a symbol of larger identity for speakers of non-standard Urdu in other parts of the country. Language as a symbol of social identity is also influenced by political manoeuvrings. According to Pattanayak whether it is economics, defence or diplomacy, language plays a significant role. Language is the most important tool in understanding one’s collaborators, competitors and adversaries and in developing coping abilities to meet the challenges of a world in flux. During the world wars all warring powers in general and Germany in particular used linguistic evidence for the detection of spies. Mispronunciation of place names, and names of people gave the spies; therefore, spy training schools all over the world put

²⁰¹J.A. Fishman, “Language and Ethnicity”, in H. Giles, (eds.) *Language Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations*, London: Academic Press, 1977: 102.

²⁰²Bayer, 2007, *Op.cit.*, 106-107.

²⁰³H.R. Dua was an author of A study of the *Dakkhini* Urdu Speakers in Mysore city.

great emphasis on language training. In other words, whether it is developing internal competences to meet the rising expectations of small groups speaking diverse languages and dialect at home or developing external competences to cope with a complex world, where societies increasingly confront one another because of the invasion of their privacy by the electronic media, language needs a priority.²⁰⁴

From the above discussion, it is quite evident that the notion of language identity is not a compartmentalized entity but overlaps with the individual group, regional and national identity. While discussing identity and language in most cases ethnicity is the primary focus of group identity and that language and ethnicity are co-extensive, or one is a derivative of the other. There are groups in India like the *Malto* speaking *Paharia* of the Santal Parganas who are specifically defined as belonging to a particular ethnic group. The *Paharia* identifies himself as *en malen*, “*I am the language speaking man*”, and rejects others as *ah gohel* “*he is a different language speaking outsider*”. The Indian census gives “*Pardeshi*” and “*Bahargaon*” as mother tongue labels. When a person declares one such label as a mother tongue, what he implies is that he does not form part of the local speech community. It is apparent from this that language is the most important identity marker.²⁰⁵

3.3. Language Policy of India

The specific provision contained in the Constitution of India on the language question is to be found in part XVII of the Constitution, entitled, “Official Language”.²⁰⁶ These provisions, Articles 343 to 351, are discussed separately as the language of the Union (Articles 343, 344), Regional Languages (Articles 341-347), Language of the

²⁰⁴D.P. Pattanayak, “Language and Politics” in *Language and Social Issue*, Princess Leelavathi Memorial Lectures, Mysore: University of Mysore, 1981.

²⁰⁵B.P. Mahapatra, “Ethnicity, Identity and Language”, *Indian Linguistics*, Vol. 4, No 2, June 1980.

²⁰⁶The Constitution of India (as modified up to the 1st January, 1973), Commemorative Edition, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India. 1973.

Supreme Court, High Courts, etc., (Articles 348, 349), Special Directives (Articles 350, 351). Article 344(I) and 351 has been appended to the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Besides, the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, and the Constitution (Twenty-first Amendment) Act, 1947, are relevant for consideration of the Language part.²⁰⁷

The Constitution guarantees the following cultural and educational fundamental rights. Article 29 guarantees the right of any section of the citizens to preserve its “distinctive language, script or culture”. Article 30 further assures that all minorities have the right to create and run educational institution, “Whether based on religion or language”, to establish and administer educational institutions, with the additional safeguard that the State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any religious or linguistic minority.²⁰⁸ The specific constitutional provisions relating to the language issue, makers of the Constitution were concerned with the role English in independent India. Hindi in *Devanagiri* script was prescribed as the “official language” of the union, subject to the continuance of English for the “official purposes” of the Union for a limited period of fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution (Article 343). Article 345 allows the legislature of the State to adopt any one or more languages in use in the state (or Hindi) as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the “official purposes” of that state in place of English.²⁰⁹ According to Article 347, if the President is satisfied that a “substantial” portion of the population of a state wants the language that is spoken there to be recognised by that state, he may order that use of that language be made “officially recognized” throughout that state or any part of it for the purpose he may

²⁰⁷Durga Das Basu, *Introduction to the Constitution of India*, New Delhi, 1978: 20.

²⁰⁸Surendra Munshi and Tridib Kumar Chakrabarti, “National Languages Policy and the Case for Nepali”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.14, No.15 (April. 14) 1979: 701.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*,

specify. Every person has the right to submit a representation for the resolution of any grievance to any of the language in the Union or the state, according to Article 350. The Article 350A and 350B, inserted by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, direct those adequate facilities shall be provided for training in the mother tongue at the primary stage of instruction to children belonging to “linguistic minority groups”, and also that there shall be a Special Officer for linguistic minorities to be appointed by the President who will look into every issue involving the constitutional protection for linguistic minorities. The Article 351 provides that it shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindu language and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expression used in Hindustani and in the other “languages of India” specified in the Eighth Schedule and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on the other Languages.²¹⁰

The Eight Schedule originally listed the following fourteen languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu.²¹¹ By the Constitution (Twenty First) Amendment Act, 1967, Sindhi was added to the schedule and that brought the total of languages mentioned in it to ‘fifteen’. These are supposed to be the ‘languages of India’, though the framers of our Constitution were aware of the presence other languages of India, therefore, the Eighth Schedule was given the simple title of “Languages”.²¹² In the course of the formulation of language policy in independent India, it has been increasingly realized that the Eighth Schedule is not an exhaustive list of Indian

²¹⁰*Ibid.*,

²¹¹Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Languages and Literatures of Modern India*, New Delhi: Bengali Publisher, 1963:8.

²¹²Surendra Munshi, “Nepali and the Eighth Schedule”, *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol. 16, No. 24 (February) 1982:9.

languages. At the same time, the languages listed in the Eighth Schedule have been more and more viewed as “national Languages” of India. By 1963, it was admitted as India was a multilingual society and the languages listed in the Eighth Schedule had equal status as national languages. Hence, the Eighth Schedule represents the recognized national languages of India. To become ‘effective means of communicating modern knowledge, the Government directed to make a concerted effort in their favour so that they may grow rapidly in richness in terms of communication.’²¹³ This was emphasized during the Lok Sabha debates in 1966 on the question of granting Sindhi ‘a place of pride in our Constitution’. Special effort was made to point out that so long as Sindhi was not included in the Eighth Schedule, no ‘directive for the development of that language’ could be provided.

More than any support that may be officially extended to a language on its constitutional recognition, it is pointed out by M.P Jain in his Indian Constitutional Law, 1970, a matter of ‘psychological and emotional satisfaction’ to the speakers of a particular language to have their language listed in the Eighth Schedule. This was well illustrated by the Lok Sabha debates on the inclusion of Sindhi. An appeal was made to the House for an understanding of the feelings of the speakers of Sindhi in India, a community that had paid the price of partition in the country and had substantially contributed to the national life.

Though the Eighth Schedule as seen above, is important in many respects to it regarding the inclusion or exclusion of languages remain unclear. Nehru’s assurance that the non-inclusion of a language in the list does not mean that it is not an Indian language is valid. However, there is no clear indication on the considerations which would qualify a language for inclusion in the schedule. The criterion of a language

²¹³*Ibid.*,

being ‘more widespread ‘in order to qualify for recognition does not appear to have been applied in a mechanically, on that basis, Sanskrit could not have been included in the schedule.²¹⁴

3.4. Emergence and Development of Nepali Language

It is believed that language is what keeps human civilization alive. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, language is ‘a system of communication made up of sounds, words, and grammar, as well as the mode of communication’ preferred by residents of a specific nation. India being a diversified country, it is Mecca of many languages and dialects, Nepali being one of them.²¹⁵ Nepali emerged as a distinct language around 1000AD and is believed to have evolved from Sanskrit and later *khas*²¹⁶ language. The Nepali language is widely spoken in the state of northern district of West Bengal especially in Darjeeling, Sikkim, many pockets of north-eastern states, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab. The birth and growth of the Nepali language took place in the Indian sub-continent long before the distinct separatism between India and Nepal of Today. Hence, while tracing the history of the Nepali language, it is essential to refer to Nepal as well as India.²¹⁷ Before Nepali came to be known as Nepali, the language during different stages of its development was called by various other names like *Khas-Kura*, *Parbate* or *Parbattiya* and *Gorkhali*. The word ‘Nepali’ gained currency more in Darjeeling than in Nepal. When the ruler of Nepal preferred to call it *Gorkha Bhasha Pracharini Samiti*, its speakers in India particularly

²¹⁴Munshi and Chakrabati, *Op.cit.*, 704.

²¹⁵Nepali “Bhasa Andolan” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

²¹⁶The language was called *khas* speech and also called *khas Arya* (Nepali) an Indo-Aryan ethnolinguistic group native to the Indian Subcontinent, which is now present day Nepal and Indian states of Uttarkhand (Kumaon-Garwal), Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

²¹⁷Giri, Privat. “Origin and Development of Nepali Language”, 6th June 2013 <http://www.Darjeelingtimes.com/opinions/general/5790-origin-development-of-nepali-language.html>. Accessed on 7th May 2020.

Darjeeling got its name changed to Nepali from *Khas-Kura*, *Prabate* or *Gorkhali* in the curriculum of the Calcutta University in the first decades of the last century.²¹⁸

To understand depth of the Nepali language, need to have a better understanding of the origin and the development of the Nepali Language. It is really important to identify Nepali was generally known as *Khas-Kura* or *Parbate* or *Gorkhali* during different phases of its history. Brian H. Hodgson²¹⁹, his book has two parts, first part starts with the notes on 13 distinct and strongly marked dialects being spoken in Nepal. They are referred to as *Khas* or *Parbatia*, the Magar, the Gurung, the Sunuwar, the Kachari, the *Haiyu*, the *Chepang*, the *Kasunda*, the *Murmi*, the *Newari*, the *Kiranti*, the *Limbuani* and the *Lapchan*. Except the *Khas* dialect, which is Indo-European, Hodgson declares that all the remaining are of Tibeto-Burman family, *Khas* was the language spoken in the great Kingdom or empire of the *Khasas* which was established by the 12th century, which covered sections of South-West Tibet, Western Nepal, and Utter Pradesh in India.²²⁰ The speakers of the *Khas* language moved eastward in the lower valleys between 1255 and 1533. They moved or migrated eastwards after the decline and disintegration of the *Khasa* empire with the advent of high caste Brahmans and Rajputs from India who found refuge in Western Nepal after Muslim conquest of *Rajputana* and Western India. However, the speech of the *Khasa* was adopted by the new immigrants though influence of their speeches on *Khas* language cannot be denied. One of such princedoms was called *Parbat*.

²¹⁸*Ibid.*,

²¹⁹Author of book called *Essay on the Language Literature and religion of Nepal and Tibet: Geography, Ethnology and commerce of those Countries*, London: Trubner & Company, 57& 58 Ludget Hill, 1874.

²²⁰H. Brian Hodgson, *Essay on the Language Literature and religion of Nepal and Tibet: Geography, Ethnology and commerce of those Countries*, London: Trubner & Company, 57& 58 Ludget Hill, 1874: 10.

Many scholars opine that the dialect of *Parbat* was the predominant one and this explains why *Khas-kura* came also to be known as *Parbate*.²²¹

With the help of the high caste Brahman, the descendents of the princes claiming Rajput origin brought more territories under them. Dravya Saha²²² dislodged the tribal chief of Gorkha in 1559 and subsequently, this new principality expanded at the cost of its neighbours. His descendent, Prithvinarayana Saha²²³, conquered the kingdoms of Nepal Valley in 1768-69 and shifted his capital from Gorkha to Kathmandu. Thus his enlarging kingdom came to be known as Nepal. He and his descendents seized more and more territories to the east and the west of the Nepal valley and by 1809 the kingdom of Nepal took its present shape. The *Khasa* speech was spoken in Gorkha. The ascendancy of Gorkha gave a new importance to this language then came to be called *Gorkhali* by the people of subdued region.²²⁴ It will be a mistake to think that *Khas-kura* spread only as the result of the conquests of Gorkha. There are records to the conquests of Gorkha. There are records to suggest that it spread to other principalities even before they were conquered. The language during its transition from *Khas-kura* to *Parbate* to *Gorkhali* to present Nepali has immensely transformed incorporating words from multiple dialects. The process of standardization of Nepali is still going on.

Darjeeling Nepali, in general, helped numerous communities who had emigrated from Nepal progressively form a sense of cultural unification and an ethnic connection. Even the Lepchas and Bhutias eventually accepted Nepalis despite their religious and

²²¹Giri, 2013, *Op.cit.*,

²²²Dravya Shah was the king of the Gorkha Kingdom in Nepal.

²²³Prithivi Narayan Shah was the last ruler of the Gorkha Kingdom and first monarch of Kingdom of Nepal in the Indian subcontinent. He claimed to be a Gorkhali monarch of Rajput origin and he was credited for starting the campaign for the unification of Nepal.

²²⁴Giri, 2013, *Op.cit.*,

linguistic differences with them, which helped make Nepali as lingua franca a reality by the end of the 19th century.²²⁵ In 1784 Sir William Jones established the Bengal Asiatic Society (later known as the Royal Asiatic society). Under aegis of society William Jones, Franz Bopp, William Carey, B.H. Hodgson, Hunter Friedrich Max Muller, John Beams, George Campbell and many other scholars studied Indian Languages and literature with profound interest. According to a Linguistic survey of Indian Languages conducted by a Commission set up under the leadership of William Carrey in 1816, Nepali was shown as one of the 33 Indian languages.²²⁶ In 1820, Prof. Ayton wrote “A Grammar of Nepali Languages” which was the first Nepali Grammar published by Fort William, Calcutta. Next to Prof. Ayton wrote, Rev. Turnbull wrote another Nepali Grammar in 1887 and published from India. Sir George Grierson, the most notable and foremost linguist of Indian languages in his “Linguistic Survey of India” published in 1916 gave a fair place to Nepali as one of the Indian Language. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee has also described Nepali Languages as one of the Indian Language and again in 1963 he emphatically demanded recognition of Nepali language as one of the major language of India in his famous work “Language and Literature of India”.²²⁷

The move to improve the Nepali language was initiated by Christian missionaries. Later, Nepali was added as a language in the schools that Rev. William Macfarlane introduced in Darjeeling. Kumar Pradhan, a noted historian, argues that if Nepali was not a popular lingua franca, the German priest would never have translated their

²²⁵ Atis Dasgupta, “Ethnic Problems and Movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling”, *Social Scientist*, Vol.27, No.11/12 (November-December) 1999:56.

²²⁶ G. Sihna, “Nepali Language” *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol.6, No.22.March 11, 1972:2.

²²⁷ B.D Basnet, “On 8th Schedule Parliament Speech” *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol.14, No.41 July 19, 1980: 2.

preaching material into Nepali and prepared Nepali dictionary by 1841.²²⁸ One of the first Nepalis to convert to Christianity, Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan, transcribed the Bible into the Nepali language. It was only after the emergence of middle-class Nepali literati led by the personalities like Parasmoni Pradhan, Dharanidhar Koirala and Surya Bikram Gewali that the cultural identity of the Nepalis of Darjeeling began to assert itself. It was because of their efforts that in 1918 Calcutta University recognized Nepali as a vernacular language for the purpose of composition in the Matriculation, Intermediate and B.A examinations. In 1920, the first authentic revision of Nepali grammar was done by Parasmoni Pradhan, who himself was an Inspector of Schools and who made early efforts in Darjeeling hills to give a separate Nepali Identity.²²⁹ He has started *Gorkha Shatiya Samaj* where he and his friend made an effort to introduce the Nepali language to the school curriculum. Dharanidhar Koirala composed simple poems dealing with the themes of social reforms, urging all Nepalis to the task of national awakening. Surya Bikram Gewali, in his writings gave a nationalist perspective on the Nepali royal and martial heroes. This literary movement was further strengthened by the publication of a Nepali monthly paper *Chandrika* which was edited by Parasmoni Pradhan in 1918. However, it was in 1901 that the first Nepali journal was published from Darjeeling and it was entitled as *Gorkha Khabar Kagat*. The famous *Gorkhapatra* was simultaneously published from Nepal. The journals, published from 1900 to 1940, concentrated on different aspects of Nepali society, culture and language. The social evils were criticized and a radical change outlook was advocated. Nepali *Shaitya Sammelan Patra*, published in 1932, contributed to the development of serious prose in the language.²³⁰ The other numerous Journals were namely *Upanyastaragini* (1902), *Sundari* (1906), *Madhavi*

²²⁸Pradhan, Kumar. *Pahilo Pahar*, Darjeeling: Shyam Prakasan, 1982:23.

²²⁹Dasgupta, 1999, *Op.cit.*, 57.

²³⁰*Ibid.*,

(1908), *Chandra* (1914) and *Gorkhali* (1915) which advocated the need for language development “Nepali Language”. *Gorkhali* was the first Nepali weekly in the name of Suryavikram Gyawali to be published from Banaras.²³¹ During the twentieth century, some excellent works were produced in Nepali Literature in India by young writers. The works like *Rani Bhanjyang*, a monthly edited by Indra Kumar Subba from Manipur, *Udgaar* Published by *Sikshak Sahitya* in Gangtok, a weekly named *Dehwarta* edited by Taraknath Gajurel in Assam, *Damsang Garhi* edited by Bhim Pradhan from Kalimpong and *Sabda* edited by Sidhartha Rai in Mirik are some of the efforts made by young writers and poets to highlight the importance of Nepali Literature in India.²³²

3.4.1. Steps to promote Nepali Language

Toward the second decade of the nineteenth century, a sizeable number of the middle class has emerged in Darjeeling. They were primarily engaged in educating the masses to form a strong Nepali Community within India. Civil society organizations like *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan* in 1924, *Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sammelan* in 1932, *Sri Hitkari Sammelan* in 1945, *Himalayan Kala Mandir* in 1950 and many others emerged which were involved actively in redefining and creating a new self-identity based on the idea of kinship (Nepali *daju bhai*). The most important factor in this amalgamation was the standardization and universalism of the Nepali Language.²³³

The Tiny TOT Academy was started in 1979. The main objectives of the Academy were to develop and promote the study of the Nepali language and culture in the state, to make effort to translation scholarly, literary and reference works from other

²³¹Deepika Gahatraj, “Identity Formation and Identity Crisis: Nepalis in India”, *South –Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, Vol.3, Issue.5, 2016: 37.

²³²R.P Lama, “Nepali Scene: Sahitya Varsha” *Indian Literature*, Vol. 35, No 2, (March-April) 1992:161.

²³³Gahatraj, *Op.cit*, 33.

languages and to translate them into Nepali and to publish them, to publish popular classic in Indian languages by translating them into Nepali and to work towards creating proper atmosphere for research work in the Nepali language.²³⁴ The Government of West Bengal in the Information and Cultural Affairs Department has taken following steps to increase the use of the Nepali language in the three hill sub-division of Darjeeling:

Nepali Language Class: The Information and Cultural Affairs Department, Darjeeling, has conducted Nepali Language Classes for Non-Nepali government officers and employees since February, 1979. The first phase of the training was completed at Darjeeling *sadar* by December, 1980. The second phase of such training classes has also started at Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong sub-divisions. A good number of government officers and employees have attended these classes.

Nepali Type-writing Class: Nepali Typewriting training program was conducted at *Sadar* Sub-division. Every year 100 trainee from different government officers was able to avail of such a program. After the completion of the said training at Darjeeling *Sadar* same program was started at Kurseong and Kalimpong. Hence, the program helped in overcoming the shortage of Nepali typists and thereby helped all local officers to carry out their daily correspondence work in Nepali.

Nepali Language Implementation Cell: The information and Cultural Affairs Department initiated a Nepali language Implementation Cell for translating various forms, registers and leaflets etc., of the government and semi-government departments into Nepali to help them expedite the use of Nepali in their day to day

²³⁴B.D Basnet, "Tiny TOT Academy", *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol.16, No.23, February 8, 1982:48.

office works. To speed up the work another such cell has been set up under the direct control of the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling. A Nepali cell under the legislative department has also been set up at Darjeeling for the said purpose.

Publication of Books: Sixty prominent and distinguished Indian Nepali writers have been requested by the Nepali Academy, Darjeeling, to write books on different aspects of Nepali literature. To mention just a few Dr. T.B Chettri was given the assignment to write on 'A brief history of Modern Bengali Literature'. Bangde's *Muluk Bahira* translated into Hindi by Shri Durga Ram, Darjeeling. In the same way Shri Durga Prasad Shrestha has taken the venture of translating selected Indian Nepali short stories into Hindi. Prof. Babulal Pradhan was given assignment on terminology where as Prof. Ramnath Adhikari had to collect the best Indian Nepali essays and Prof. Kumar Pradhan about the History of Darjeeling.²³⁵

Certificate Course in Nepali: According to a communication sent by Secretary, Council for undergraduate studies, and Calcutta University to Justice R.K Sharma, who is a member of Language Sub-Committee of Calcutta University, the University has proposed to open a Nepali language certificate course in the Post-graduate Arts department. The communication further adds that the problem of teaching Nepali to B.A, B. Sc, B. Com candidate has to be solved. Therefore, the University requested to appoint Nepali language teachers at least in one Government College since the Government has accepted Nepali as one of the State languages.²³⁶

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

²³⁶ B.D. Basnet, "Certificate Course in Nepali" *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol. 17, No. 26. August 25, 1979.

These were the possible initiative taken by respective authority to enhance or promote the Nepali Language in three sub-division of Darjeeling. But how long it was effective and lead to the development process is still yet to analyze.

3.5. The Nepali *Bhasa* Struggle: The struggle for survival

Language has always played an instrumental factor in creating the growth of the identity creation of any community. Language provides not only the objective perspective for emphasizing group boundary but brought into one community. As Paul Brass has mentioned “the process of creating communities from ethnic groups involves the selection of particular dialects or religious practices or alternative”.²³⁷ In this context of Nepali identity, language played a vital role in creating a community from many ethnic groups. Hence the exclusion of ethnic identity as the different sub groups such as *Lepcha* and *Bhutia* had clubbed themselves under the larger Nepali society in India.

According to the T. B. Subba²³⁸ the Nepali language movement can be classified into three tentative phases. The first phase beginning in the early 20s was characterized by the stipulate for foreword of “Nepali” as a medium of instruction. The second phase beginning in 1953 clamoured for recognition of “Nepali” as an official language in Darjeeling. The demand for its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution was elevated in this phase but it remained dormant. The third phase begins in 1972 and is wholly obsessed with the demand for its constitutional recognition.²³⁹ The Nepalis of India fought a long battle for the enclosure of the Nepali language in the

²³⁷Paul. R Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1991: 25.

²³⁸T.B Subba is Professor of Anthropology at North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India. His research interests include ethnicity, development, culture and diasporic studies. He has done intensive fieldwork in Darjeeling, Sikkim and East Nepal.

²³⁹T.B. Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development: A case study of the Gorkhaland Movement*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD, 1992:92-93.

Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The movement was not only confined to Darjeeling but the movement turns into another level with the support of Deharadun, Assam, Sikkim and so on. Let's critically look on at the different phase of the Language Movement and the role of the people and organizations during that particular time.

3.5.1. The First Phase (1920-1952)

The foundation of first phase of this movement was started long before 1920. Even as 1816 Reverend William Carey identified “Nepali” as one among the 33 primary Indian languages. The Fort William College, Calcutta had a course in Nepali in 1820. J. A. Ayton's *A Grammar of the Nepalese language* was published in 1820, the Holy Bible was translated into Nepali in 1822 and the universities of Allahabad and Calcutta recognized it in 1911 and 1918 respectively.²⁴⁰ In carrying, further the assignment thrust upon the literate people by the unseen destiny the establishment of Nepali *Sahitya Sammelan* had taken place on 25th May 1924 in Darjeeling. The “*Sudhapa*” or the trio of Suryabikram Gyawali, Dharnidhar Sharma and Parasmoni Pradhan was the motivating spirit behind this *Sammelan*. The *Sammelan's* main focus was to popularize Bhanu Bhakta's Ramayana which became popular among the Indian Gorkhas that *slokas* (rhymes) from it were chanted during the language movement for the enclosure of Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 1970s, virtually making Bhanu Bhakta the symbol of the movement. A number of his statues and busts were installed in different places and important roads were named after him in Darjeeling and Sikkim. However, the sense of affinity with India in the writing of Bhanu Bhakta was more romantic than national. He wrote: “Ati durlabh janos bharat bhumiko janma janale” (Blessed is the man who is born in

²⁴⁰Kumar Pradhan, *A History of Nepali Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1984:10.

Bharat”.²⁴¹ With their relentless efforts, several textbooks were published by 1926. The recommendation for the Nepali language was made in 1927 by the Griffith Committee instituted by the Bengal Government. Initially, it was for primary-level education but was subsequently raised to higher levels.²⁴² The Nepali *Sahitya Sammelan* after passing many odds, dales and valleys; it stands as one of the oldest literary organizations of Gorkhas in India with its building situated at Sonam Wangdi Road. But the progress was not seen much in the process which they had meant before the establishment. The pace with which the organization had stridden in the beginning seemed to have lost the zeal with time; the works were not at all satisfactory. As the passing of time led to the change of generations that inevitably changed the body of the Nepali *Sahitya Sammelan* also as it was continually successive body. The two mindsets of people have been found at a particular time, one whose ideology and philosophy are associated with art and literature. The second was neither opposing nor supporting the whim that was thrust on them.²⁴³

There was a political pressure during the particular period on the institution for changing the name from Nepali *Shaitya Sammelan* to Gorkha *Sahitya Sammalen* from Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), political party of Darjeeling. The controversy regarding the name of language had reached the highest pitch when the bust of poet Bhanubhakta Acharya, installed at Chowrasta Darjeeling by the founders of Nepali *Sahitya Sammelan* in 1949, was decapitated as a means adopted by the proponent of Gorkha Bhasa to subdue the lovers of Nepali Bhasa. But the act of decapitation of the statue was turned in a boomerang. They were opposed using the

²⁴¹Rajendra Prasad Dhakal, “The Indian Gorkhas Changing Orientation of a Diasporic society” in T.B Subba & A.C. Sinha (eds.), *Nepali Diaspora in a Globalised Era*, New Delhi London New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2016: 96-97.

²⁴²Subba., 1992, *Op.cit.*, 93.

²⁴³D.S. Bomjan, *Darjeeling-Dooars People and Place under Bengal’s Neo-Colonial Rule*, Darjeeling: Bikash Jana Sahitya Kendra, 2008:52-53.

term “Nepalese” they were a GNLF party that placed more emphasis on dividing Gorkhas who resided in India from “reciprocal Nepalese” citizens in India. The use of “Gorkha” instead of “Nepali” was recommended by GNLF. After viewing such recommendation the Nepali *Sahitya Sammelan* on 30th April, 1932 and 15th May sent letters to the then Calcutta University with the information of appropriateness and pertinence of calling the name of the language as Nepali language.²⁴⁴ Calcutta University responded with consent to use Nepali against others’ names on 20th May 1932. Thus, the language of Gorkha is found to have been officially christened in Nepali in the year 1932.²⁴⁵

3.5.2. The Second Phase (1953-1971)

The progress for the acknowledgment of Nepali as an official language of Darjeeling gained impetus, particularly after the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) of 1953. The following lines from the Commission’s report published in 1955 boosted the hopes of the Nepalis in Darjeeling:

*“If 70 percent or more of the total population of a district consist of a group which is minority in the state as a whole, the language of the minority group and not the state language should be the official language in that district”.*²⁴⁶

But sooner the hopes get scattered when the West Bengal legislative Assembly resolved that Bengali should be adopted as the only language for administrative and official purpose in the state. According to T.B Subba in this above context, the level of ignorance gone to such a level that Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then Chief Minister of

²⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 53-54.

²⁴⁵*Ibid.*,

²⁴⁶State Reorganization Commission Report. Delhi: Govt. Printing, 1955:212 as mentioned by T.B Subba in his book *Ethnicity, State and Development: A case study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling*.

Bengal in February 1961, declared the Nepali comprised only about 19 percent of the population in the district of Darjeeling and 26 percent in the Darjeeling Hill. Bidhan Roy's percentage figures for the Nepalis in Darjeeling based on the 1951 census, which is acclaimed by most intellectuals in West Bengal to be the best census ever brought out, were protested by Nepali intellectuals and politicians, who saw it as a deliberate attempt by him sabotage the cause of the Nepalis.²⁴⁷

On March 31, 1961 an all party convention was held at Gorkha *Dukha Nivarak Sangh* (GDNS) Hall in Darjeeling and the Bhasa *Manyata Samiti* or the Darjeeling District Hill Peoples Language Implementation Committee (DDHPLIC) was constituted and signed by educated leaders like Ganeshlall Subba of the CPI and Indra Bahadur Rai of the AIGL. They raised the issue regarding the census and questioned how a figure of 67 percent suddenly came down to 19 percent in the 1951 Census. Similarly, the protest was also made in various writings in newspapers and magazines published in Darjeeling.²⁴⁸ Thus the resentment and dissatisfaction born in the minds of the people against the subtle design of the government of Dr. B.C. Roy was built up into a movement. And the movement completely led by Ratanlall Brahmin, Indra Bahadur Rai and Ganeshlall Subba. Among them, Ratanlall Brahmin was the founder member of the Communist Party of India in Darjeeling. Indra Bahadur Rai was a writer and intellectual of wide repute and Ganeshlall Subba was known as the first learned intellectual to have joined the Communist Party from the Nepali Community of India. Under their leadership, the movement runs smooth without any loss of life and property. On 25th September, 1961 sanction and approval of Nepali as a second official language was accorded in the state of West Bengal under State Assembly's

²⁴⁷Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*,94.

²⁴⁸*Ibid.*,

adoption of the 1961 West Bengal Language Act's clause on the subdivision of Darjeeling hills.²⁴⁹

The official demand concerning the recognition of Nepali language was started by Anand Singh Thapa of Deharadun on 18th Jan 1956, was editor of a magazine named “*Jagrat Gorkha*” and in his memo concentrated on to the President of the Republic of India, he ask, ‘...*Is it a matter of unfair that, despite our constitution’s assurance that any language used by the State’s citizens may be used as the official language, the government refuses to recognize which used by more than five million people?*’ ‘*Should the Nepali Language be considered as a foreign language in free India?*’²⁵⁰

The demand on behalf of Nepali citizens of India put forwarded by Anand Singh Thapa, to the Chairman of the Official Languages Commission the President forwarded the issue. In a letter to Mr. B.G. Kher, the Chairman of the Commission claimed that because Nepal was a sovereign nation; its language was unable to be listed in the Constitution’s Eighth Schedule. So with this regard Thapa and his friends wrote back that the language panel chief’s case for not including Nepali language in the Constitution was myopic. They argued that if Kher’s rationale was to be accepted then the Urdu language should not have been given recognition either; after all, it was the official language of a foreign country.²⁵¹ His effort was immense in the history of the language Movement. Not only he but many eminent figures who have contributed fully fledge the movement. The Nepali language was demanded to be included on December 22, 1971, at the proposal of Sri Ratanlal Brahmin, who was a member of all political parties participating in Parliament. Besides the M.Ps. of the C.P.M, the signatories to this memorandum include leaders of all major political parties; such as

²⁴⁹Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*, 57.

²⁵⁰Nepali “*Bhasa Andolan*” re-telling the story, *Op.cit.*,

²⁵¹Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*,55.

Prof. Hiren Mukherjee and Dr. Ranen Sen of the C.P.I., Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee of the Jana Sangh, Prof. Samar Guha of the P.S.P., Sri Raj Narain of the S.P., Sri Tribid Chowdhury of the R.S.P., Sri Priya Ranjan Munshi and three of his colleagues of the Congress®. Thus it is seen that all major political parties of the country have set their hands and seal to this memorandum incorporating the legitimate demand of the five million and more of the Nepali speaking population of India.²⁵² The other important amalgamation was this amalgamation was the standardization and universalisation of the Nepali language.

The second phase of the movement activities includes i.e., writing on walls in subdivision towns, *bustees* (village) and sending out telegrams and letters to the Prime Minister and her Cabinet Ministers. Funds, door to door subscriptions have been raised. The Gorkha League held their meeting after elections and had decided to send a five member delegation to Delhi to convince the Centre of the urgency of language inclusion.²⁵³

3.5.3. The Third Phase (1972-1980)

Before the establishment of *Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity*, Guwahati Nepali Student Union was formed nearly four years earlier than *Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity*. The Gauhati Nepali Students Union in its meeting on 10th March, 1968 in the premises of Gorkha M.E School, Paltanbazar expressed its deep concern on the matter that despite Nepalese demands several times the Government of India has not yet recognized the Nepali language in the Eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution. Therefore, as more than 30 lakh of Nepali population deserves the recognition of the

²⁵²*Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, December 22, 1971: 3.*

²⁵³*Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, "People and Parliament: Will the Language Issue Remain A Private Member Bill?", Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, Vol. 5, No. 23, April 1, 1972.*

Nepali Language, the Gauhati Nepali Student's Union requests the Government to realize the need of the Nepalese demand and recognize the Nepali Language in the Indian Constitution.²⁵⁴

Prem Sherpa and Haran Allay led the establishment of the Nepali *Prayok Gara Abhiyan Samity* in 1971. The organization lifted the language movement and the motive behind the formation of *Samity* was language recognition. They highly recommended using the Nepali language in every aspect like in any notification, at Government office, place name, vehicle number etc. The organization was active and clubbed later in 1972 with *Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity*. The organization was active and clubbed later in 1972 with *Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity*. This committee's major goal was to bring all national cultural, literacy, spiritual, social, political and other organizations together.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴*Prakrit Bhasa Besesangha* (Nepali) mentioned at Sotang, Subhas Book called *Bhasa Andolan: Itishaas Ra Upalabdi* (Nepali).

²⁵⁵Subash Sotang, *Bhasa Andolan: Itishaas Ra Upalabdi* (Nepali), Kalimpong: Subtabdi Publication, 2019:116.

Fig.3.1. Glimpse of meeting gathering of *Akil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samity*



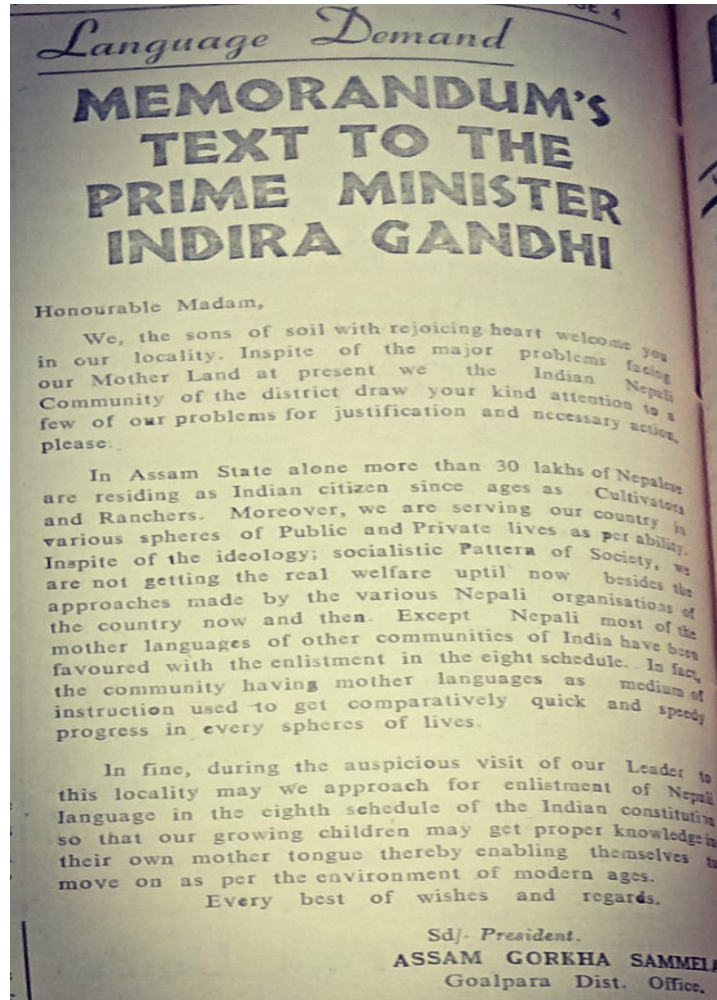
Source: Lob Thami son of active member of Language Movement Late Basant Kumar Thami²⁵⁶

All India Nepali *Bhasa Samity* held a public meeting at Chok-Bazar, Darjeeling on the 27th July 1974. Speakers, while referring to the four interviews that the language Delegations had with Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi the past and her repeated assurances of considering the demand for the inclusion of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution expressed their deep concern and resentment at the indifferent so far adopted by the Govt. of India. They made it categorically clear that all India Nepali *Bhasa Samity*, a purely cultural body formed with the only purpose of including Nepali in the Eighth Schedule, has firm belief and conviction in the peaceful and democratic solution to the problem. But the speakers also made it clear that if their legitimate demand remained unfulfilled then they would be left with no alternative option but to adopt some means that might not be quite in keeping with the democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution. The Dibrugarh on 16th & 17th

²⁵⁶Also available in Nepali “Bhasa Andolan” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

February, the *Samity* Secretary spoke of the Observation of Demand Day in various parts of the first All India Session of the *Samity* in Assam in December 1974.²⁵⁷

Fig.3.2. Memorandum submitted by Assam *Gorkha Sammelan*



Source: *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly*. Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, February 5, 1972.

The *Bhasa Samity* organized a public meeting at Darjeeling in which speakers from various political organizations also participated. Some speakers, while welcoming the unanimous decision of the General Committee of *Sahitya* Academy stated that only

²⁵⁷*Himalayan Observe: An Independent Newsweekly*. "Bhasa Samity Press Statement", Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, August.15, 1974:8.

the Nepali Language's inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution will fulfil the popular demand and asked the people to strive for the same in Kalimpong, Kurseong, Gangtok, Dooars, Assam, Dehradun, the news has been warmly received by literatures, intellectuals and rest of the people.²⁵⁸

“When you strike a king”, said Ralph Walden Emerson²⁵⁹, “you must kill him”. On 29th May 1979, the Nepalese people of Darjeeling district struck at the octogenarian Prime Minister, Moraji Desai who, after his taking over as the premier has, time and again, whiffed aside the genuine demand. The Nepalese people of Darjeeling led by the All India *Bhasa Samity*, observed a “complete *bandh*” of the entire district of Darjeeling which lasted for 12 hours. The Prime Minister who was received by the Governor Mr. T.N. Singh and Mr. Jyoti Basu at Lebong Helipad at 9:40 A.M. drove to the Rajbhavan-a silent drive which nobody heeded. Darjeeling looked ‘dreary and completely deserted’ with all the government institutions, offices and shops closed. The traffic remained standstill and hardly any people came out of their houses. Meanwhile, however, the police personnel nearly 6,000 brought from Calcutta and security men kept a strict vigilance wherever the Prime Minister went.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸*Himalayan Observe: An Independent Newsweekly*. “Sahitya Academy Recognises Nepali Language”, *Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol.8, No.14, December 7, 1974.

²⁵⁹He was an American Essayist.

²⁶⁰Hem Lall Bhandari, “The Language Struggle: A New Chapter”, *Himalayan Observe: An Independent Newsweekly. Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, June. 9, 1979: 3.

Fig.3.3.The All India Nepali *Bhasa Samity* members and the Prime Minister



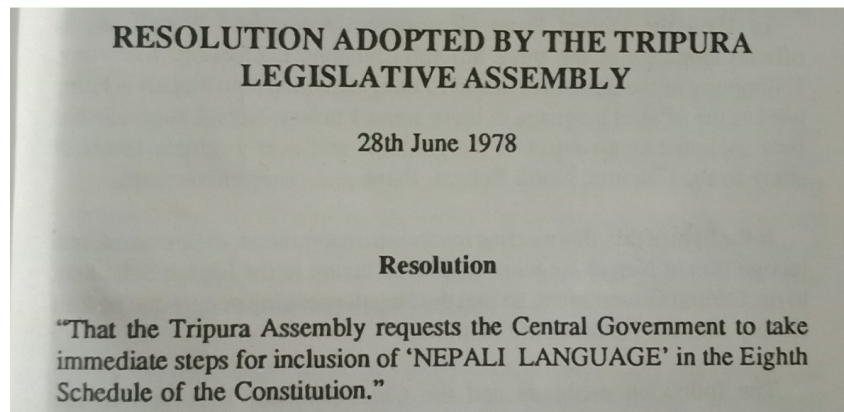
Source: Lob Thami son of active member of Language Movement Late Basant Kumar Thami²⁶¹

The reason why the All India Nepali *Bhasa Samity* proclaimed a ‘total *Bandh*’ of the district was because the *Samity*, representing 60 lakh Nepali speaking people had led a delegation to the South Block in late 1977 with an appeal for the inclusion of the Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. In course of discussion, Mr. Desai, instead of conceding the genuine demand had vigorously abused the delegates with a grave threatening to stop the recruitment of the Nepalese in the Indian Army. He had even gone to the extreme of questioning the ‘nationality’ of the Indian Nepalese besides a warning that he would even ‘derecognize’ the Nepali Language which was accorded recognition by the *Sahitya Akademi* or the National Academy of Letters in the year 1974. He asks Indian Nepalese delegations why not Nepal has recognized Hindi in Nepal. Sir Moraji Desai should ask that fond question

²⁶¹Also available in Nepali “*Bhasa Andolan*” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

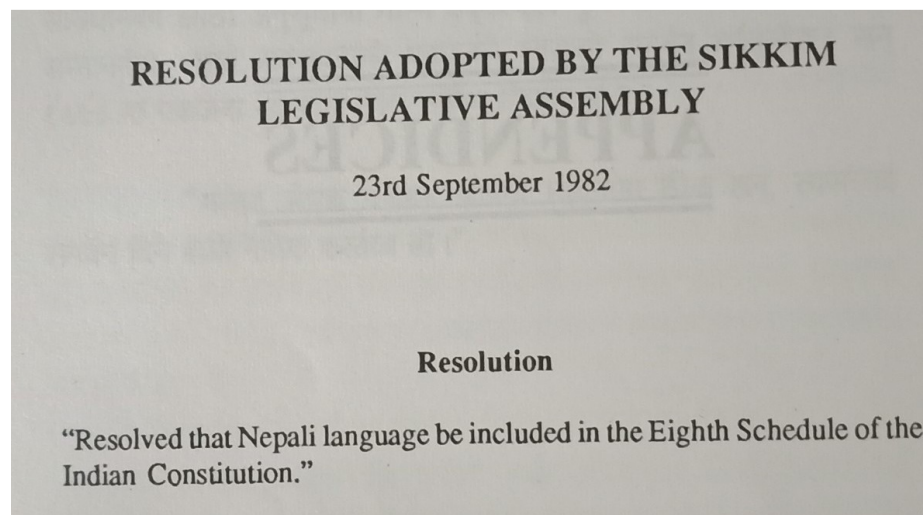
of his to the Government of Nepal and to the Indian Nepalese who are Indian citizens and who have nothing to do with Nepal. Indian Nepalese are not answerable for what Nepal does or does not do.²⁶²

Fig.3.4. Tripura Resolution



Source: *Nepali Rashtriya Parisadh*, “Nepali Bhasa ko Prichay Ani Sawdhanik Manyehtha ko Prasna” New Delhi: Safdarjing Enclave, 1992.

Fig.3.5. Sikkim Resolution on Nepali Language



Source: *Nepali Rashtriya Parisadh*, “Nepali Bhasa ko Prichay Ani Sawdhanik Manyehtha ko Prasna” New Delhi: Safdarjing Enclave, 1992.

²⁶²Rai, I.B. “All- India Nepali Bhasa Samiti”. *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, June 2, 1979:4.*

In the year 1978 and 1982, the Government of West Bengal, Sikkim and Tripura have duly passed the Resolution urging, the Centre for the immediate inclusion of the Nepali language. Furthermore, Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan, in his letter dated 19th December 1978 addressed to the Prime Minister, Mr. Moraji Desai has sympathetically conceded to the demand saying, “I feel that inclusion of Nepali in the Eighth Schedule may help the process of cultural integration of the Nepali speaking population with the National mainstream”. He further writes ‘I hope you would investigate the situation and take the appropriate action in this regard’.²⁶³ In the late afternoon of 30th May 1979, had an interview with Prime Minister and Janata Party at the Rajbhavan, regarding the language question Mr. Desai retorted with his premeditated remark: ‘Nepali is a “Foreign Language” and there is no constitutional recognition’. The *Bhasa Samity* boycotted the meeting with the Prime Minister after getting his speech and as Janata Party Members came out of the Rajbhavan shouting slogans_ ‘Morarji Desai-Murdabad’.²⁶⁴ From the very early hours of 31st morning, people started pouring in toward Singamari and the Lebong Helipad to drive away the Prime Minister with black flag demonstrations. Almost 15 people were seriously wounded when the police *lathi*-charged the peaceful agitators and as many as 160 demonstrators were arrested by the police near Tenzing Rock, where the incident took place.²⁶⁵

²⁶³Bhandari, 1979, *Op.cit.*,

²⁶⁴*Ibid.*,

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*,

Fig.3.6. Glimpse of *Padayatra*²⁶⁶ for the demand of inclusion of Nepali *Bhasa* in the Eighth Schedule



Source: Lob Thami son of active member of Language Movement Late Basant Kumar Thami:²⁶⁷

From the above information only one aspect has been seen through different parties and places, Nepalese from different corner of India came together and faced ups and down and made efforts for the enclosure of Nepali Language in the Constitution.

3.6. People's Stand on Nepali Language (Movement)

In the 1970s the movement began with a solid point advocating the enclosure of Nepali in the Eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution can be considered as a period of rediscovering themselves. The perceived apathy of the Indian government was greatly exacerbated by a clumsy and insensitive statement made by Prime Minister

²⁶⁶A pilgrimage on foot, especially build for religious purposes or expressing charitable, social or political concern.

²⁶⁷Also available in Nepali "Bhasa Andolan" re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

Morarji Desai in 1979 that ‘Nepali’ was a foreign language and that the Gorkha Regiment could be thrown into the Bay of Bengal deeply wounded the sentiments of the Gorkhas. The gravity of such a statement made by the highest Indian authority during his official visit to Darjeeling was strongly condemned by one and all. A community that had sacrificed thousands of its men while securing the borders of the nation was shaken with disbelief.²⁶⁸ As Parasmoni Pradhan placed a letter written by the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling, which runs as follows:

*“The Sahitya Akademi at the meeting of its Executive body held on 03.12.1974 has recognized Nepali as one of the literary languages of India”.*²⁶⁹

How can such an advanced language of India are called a foreign language by a responsible person. Mr. Kaa Naa Subramanyam, an eminent man of letters of India has rightly observed as follows in a meeting organized by the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies at Simla on the “Problem of the Languages of the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution”.

“Language has of late in India, been developed as a tool of politicians, it is high time that writers and journalists and other creative users of language refused to play the politician’s game”.

Not only in British India but also in the Mughol Empire Nepali language was embraced and treated on equal basis. To support this fact the letter from Syed Medhi Ali Meerza, grandson of the last Nizam of Murshidabad published in Amrita Bazar Patrika of 04.11.70.

²⁶⁸Dhakal, 2016, *Op.cit.*,99.

²⁶⁹Paras Mani Pradhan, “Is Nepali Language a Foreign Language?”, *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, June 16, 1979:2.*

“Perhaps it is known that the entire Bengal, Orissa and Assam comprised of one large province under the hereditary ruler and formed an important part of Mughal Empire. At the time Bengal did not comprise of only the areas it contain today, each region of this vast territory, and then loosely called Bengal had its own languages Assamese, Nepali, Hindi, and Urdu, Oriya and Bengali and each of these languages had their further sub-regional dialect”.²⁷⁰

Secondly, the following Notification circulated by the Chief Secretary to Govt. proves that Nepalese *Paharis* or *Khas-kura* was the name prevalent in Government documents which was changed later in 1926 A.D. i.e.,

No.11499 A
Government of Bengal
Appointment Department
NOTIFICATION
Calcutta, the 30th July, 1926

The following amendment is made in rule 1, 2, 3, and 5 in Appendix VI of the Department Examination Rules:

Substitute Nepali for ‘Nepali *Paharia* and Nepalese *Paharia* or *Khas-Kura*’ wherever they occur in these rules.

By order etc.
Sd/-A.N. Moberly
Offg. Chief Secretary to
Govt.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰*Ibid.*,
²⁷¹*Ibid.*,

Another notification given below proves that Nepali was the recognized principle language of the Government of Bengal.

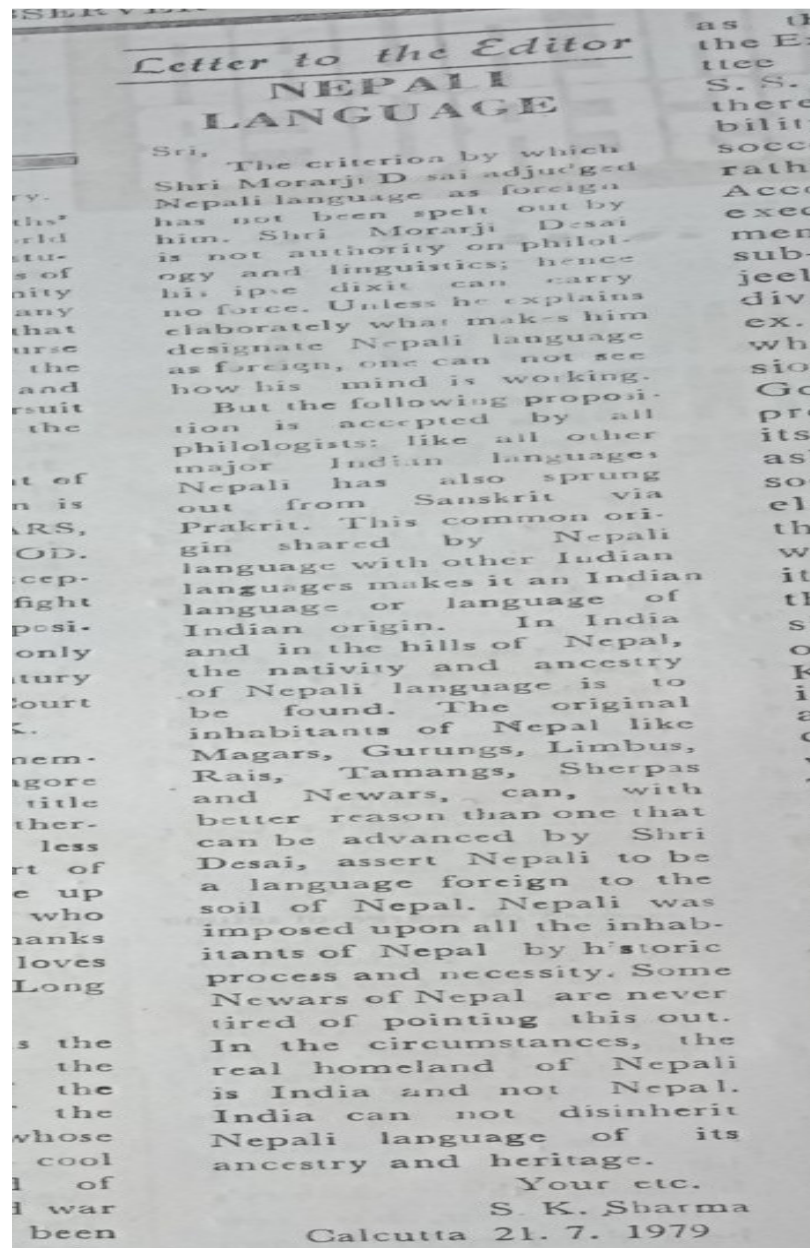
NOTIFICATION

No.422P- The 8th January,1927- as required by section 3(i) (I) of the India Naturalization Acts 1926, the Governor in Council is pleased to declare the following to be the principle vernaculars of the province: (1) Bengali, (2) Urdu, (3) Hindi and (4) Nepali.(Vide page 86, Part I, Calcutta Gazette dated 13.1.27)

Sd/-W.D.R. Prentica
Chief Secretary to the
Govt. of Bengal

The above Information is the fact which shows the Nepali language is not a foreign language and the sources was presented by Parasmoni Pradhan. Numerous letters were placed to the Editor regarding the certain issues and thought of their own for the language movement.

Fig.3.7. Letter to the Editor by S.K. Sharma



Source: *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, July 28, 1979.*

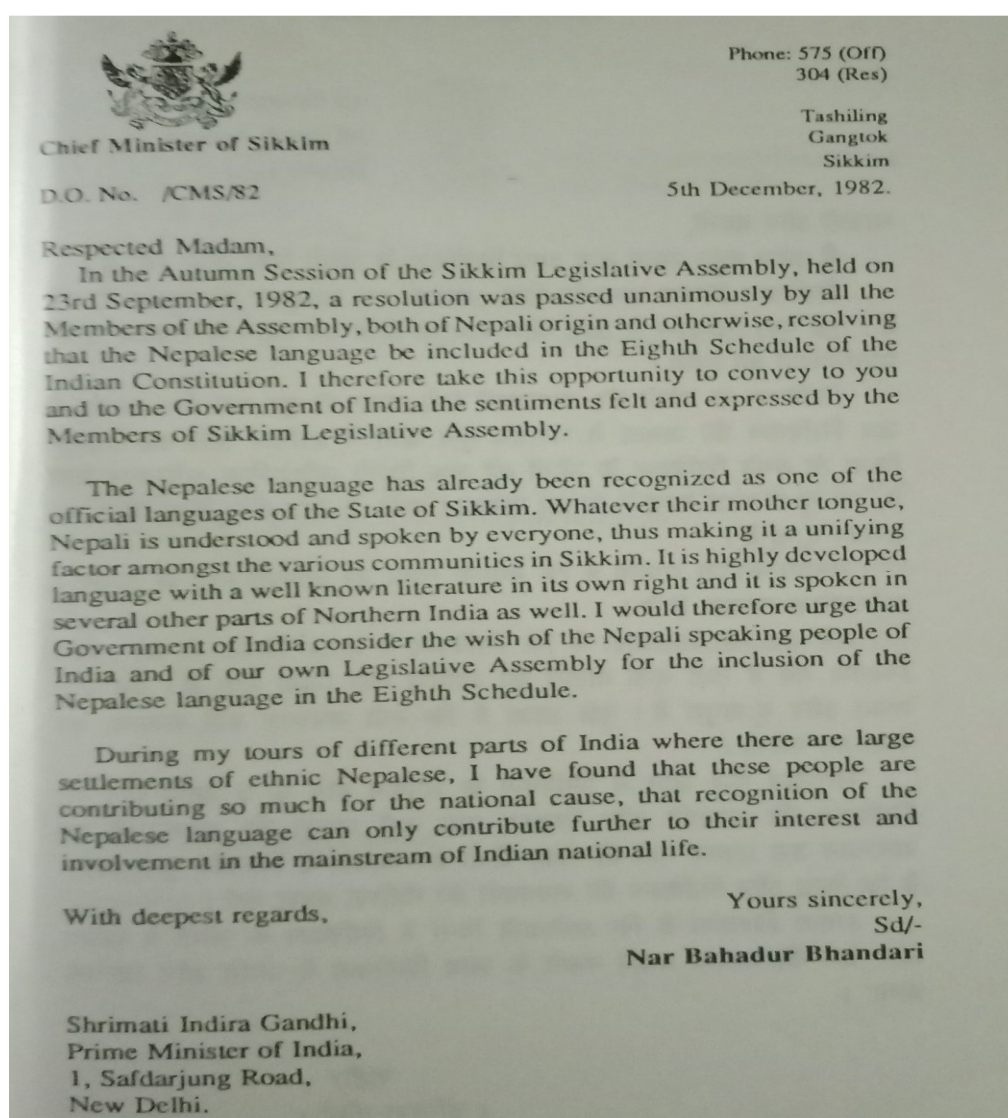
The above **Fig.3.7** the letter to the editor was evidenced by commoners who have massive concerned for the language. His act of writing to the editor showed the nature of his apprehension of language.

In the year 1971, Ratanlall Brahmin of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) was elected to the Lok Sabha from Darjeeling Parliamentary Constituency. On being an honorable member of parliament from Darjeeling, Ratanlall Brahmin attempted to take the oath of his membership of Parliament in the Nepali Language on 22nd March, 1971. But the then Speaker of Lok Sabha Dr. G.S. Dhillon did not permit him for taking the oath of office of his membership of Parliament in his mother tongue. But after the lapse of three months of the denial of taking the oath in Nepali, the same Ratanlall Brahmin was allowed on 29th June, 1971 to speak in Nepali. Thus being able to speak in Nepali for the first time in the history of Indian Parliament he had submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 22nd December, 1971 with signatures of seventy four members of Parliament demanding constitutional recognition of the Nepali language.²⁷² Not only but if any individual goes through the struggle period of the language movement one finds such a personality who has shown stubborn nature for the sake of their mother tongue. A fine example would be Mrs. Dil Kumari Bhandari a member of Lok Sabha from Sikkim. The most striking point was on 1991 during general election; Dil Kumari Bhandari was elected as M.P and she works for the language movement. She tabled the private bill and spoke about the logic behind the requirement and dream of Indian Nepali. On 8th July, 1992, the Nepali language enclosure bill was also distributed; however it was not brought before the Legislature. When Dil Kumari Bhandari provoked a discussion on 19th August, 1992, there was complete commotion throughout the movement. She even said, “*If Nepali is foreign Language then who am I?*” standing in front of a speaker.²⁷³

²⁷²Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*,58.

²⁷³Nepali “Bhasa *Andolan*” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

Fig.3.8.The Memorandum submitted by Chief Minister of Sikkim



The contribution of Sikkim to the inclusion of the Nepali language was never forgotten. Hence such contribution of people could be seen throughout the Nepali Language Movement.

The articles by Hem Lall Bandari (1979), S. Subba (1979), B. Ram Rai (1977), G.L Subba and T.B Subba (1979) have dealt with the validity of the demand for its Constitutional recognition. These articles show the reason why the Nepali Language should include in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. After the close attention toward the language movement, several poets, writers and authors emerged

in the process and had immense contributions. The contributions of Paras Mani Pradhan and Gyawali are quite exaggerated and there is a need to revisit the narrative.

3.6.1. Government & Political Parties on Language Movement

The state government resisted the demand for a separate state for Nepalis. It was argued that “there were obvious limits to the number of states which could be created out of India territory. The demand for linguistic reorganization in the mid-fifties was related to the major linguistic groups. To apply this principle to all linguistic groups would lead to the creation of hundreds (if not thousands) of Indian states, each with a tiny population of a few lakhs and even containing minorities which in their turn would demand further division of such micro-states”. It was further argued that if every linguistic group with a population of three lakhs can attain statehood, there would be about 2500 states in India.²⁷⁴

It is further evident from the above statement that the state government was never in the favour of a separate state through linguistic recognition. The Journey of the Language Movement was never easy it had both pros and cons responses from the commoners and the Political Parties. Of course the fight of Language recognition was not without TEARS, SWEATS and BLOOD. The demand, which had its justification within the bound set by the Indian Constitution, also had become the Election Manifesto of practically all the political parties of Darjeeling hills. On the one hand people shouted a slogan, ‘Language is our life’ and on the other hand the Government’s spokesman not hesitated in describing the demand as emotional and

²⁷⁴Prabhat Datta, “The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.52, No.2, April-June 1991:234-235.

intimate connection with the security of the country.²⁷⁵ Now let's observe different Political Party's stand on Language Movement.

The political parties, social organizations, literate circle and the public representatives were seen to have been making a persistent demand to the Government of India for the constitutional recognition of Nepali Language till 1971 not united but in their ways.

The District Committee, Communist party of India hailed the new awakening and national aspiration among the Nepali Speaking people and congratulated them for their mighty and peaceful demonstration and *hartal* in protest against the comments of Prime Minister who went so far as to say that the Nepali Language was foreign language. The Committee also thanked all the non-Nepali speaking people who supported the democratic demand of the Nepali Speaking people and helped in maintaining communal harmony in the course of the movement. Not only that, the party called upon all the political parties and Nepali *Bhasa Samity* argued for unity and work together for the achievement of constitutional recognition of the Nepali Language.²⁷⁶

On 14th July 1979 Indira Gandhi has visited Darjeeling as Congress (I) President In the meanwhile congress lost the election on centre. She had extended negotiations with the *Bhasa Samity* members and gave a positive response for the recognition of Nepali Language. During the election time, West Bengal Congress (I) manifesto put forward the demands of the Nepali Language issue as well. In the mid September

²⁷⁵“Nepali Language in search of a Solution” *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, September 7, 1974:2.*

²⁷⁶*Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, July 21, 1979:4.*

1979, Indira Gandhi has forwarded a signed letter addressing the Sikkimese “*Hamara Congress Chatha Hai Ki Nepali Bhasa Aap ki mang Anusar Sawdhanik Manyeta Mele*” (Our Congress wants your demand may fulfil according to your will). Right after when she came into power she has not done any major role in the inclusion of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.²⁷⁷ As Indira Government did not give any positive response and *Bhasa Samity* and Nepali speaking citizens kept pressing the issue through rallies, *Dharna*, writing in papers etc. Also, three days hunger strike was started on 2nd October 1983 in the national capital and many places in India which were a grand success. They had the full of slogans, *dharnas*, all on the language issue. But as a man is known by his actions, so also is the sincerity of purpose of a Government. Once more, the prime minister received a succession of memos and reminders. A bill about the enclosure of the Nepali language was introduced by CPIM M.P. Sathya Gopal Mitra on March 15, 1985, and it was accompanied with an unfulfilled guarantee from the government.²⁷⁸ But on 20th December, 1986 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has visited Darjeeling and the virtually empty stands he addressed the speech and said the Nepali language will be incorporated in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution for acknowledgment as an Indian language. Addressing a Press Conference at the Lebong helipad he said, “*Three or four languages are waiting to be included and Nepali is one of them*”.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷*Nepali Rashtriya Parisadh*, “Nepali Bhasa ko Prichay Ani Sawdhanik Manyehta ko Prasna” New Delhi: Safdarjing Enclave, 1992:27.

²⁷⁸Nepali “Bhasa *Andolan*” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

²⁷⁹Ashish Chakrabarti, “Nepali to be included in Eighth Schedule, says Prime Minister” *The Statesmen*, 21.12.1986.

Fig.3.9. Collaboration Meeting for Inclusion of Nepali Language in Eighth Schedule



Source: Lob Thami son of active member of Language Movement Late Basant Kumar Thami²⁸⁰

On 11 & 12th July 1990 at Gangtok, Sikkim national conference was held and the gathering was from Jammu Kashmir, Manipur, Delhi and Kolkata all together they were 850 representative members from such respective places and also Indian Congress (I), Janta Party, Forward Block, CPM, *Bharitya Janta Party*, Sikkim *Sangram Parisadh* of 7 members along with *Bhasa Samity*. The then chief minister of Sikkim, Nar Bahadur Bhandari pledged his support for the inclusion of Nepali in the Eighth Schedule. In the meeting, the main objective was to get inclusion peacefully.²⁸¹ It was headed by Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari.

The CPI (M) has, it seemed, supported the language demand. It was Chief Minister Jyoti Basu who wrote on several occasions to Central leaders pleading for its recognition in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

²⁸⁰ Also available in Nepali “*Bhasa Andolan*” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

²⁸¹ *Nepali Rashtriya Parisadh, Op.cit.*,23

A Home Department circular no. 666/79 CS “issued by the Chief Secretary to Home Secretary was worth pondering over. The circular’s subject was ACCELERATING THE PACE OF INTRODUCTION OF BENGALEE AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN THE BUSINESS OF THE STATE GOVT.

The circular states,

*“In the meeting held in the room of the Chief Minister on July 25, 1979, on the subject noted above it was decided that immediate steps should be taken to prepare Bengalee versions of the official forms used by the General Public. All departments should therefore immediately contact the Bengalee translator for the said purpose and send to him the relevant forms along with Bengalee versions of all or any of the same, if prepared at their end in the meanwhile. In sending the forms to the Bengalee translator priority should be given to those which are in much use of the public...”*²⁸²

The circular is silent regarding any exception for the hill areas where the majority uses a different language. When the meeting was held in the chamber of the Chief Minister while the policy was being formulated to understand that Darjeeling and its people was not in the minds of the Chief Minister. Should also infer that the bulk of correspondence which passed between the Information Minister and the *Bhasa Samity* and which was printed and widely circulated among the people were not the policy statements of the Govt. And, his coming to Darjeeling, paying homage to poet Bhanubhakta Acharya at public function was only sentimental crumbs thrown before the people.²⁸³

²⁸²Basnet, B.D, “Spell Out the Language Policy”, *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, Vol. 14, No.33, May 31, 1980.*

²⁸³*Ibid.*,

The language protagonists, the people to whom language is so dear in their hearts, who prepared to undergo penance for its recognition and its rightful niche demand that the Chief Minister issued a press statement, while he was in Darjeeling, clarifying the policy of his Government regarding the use of Nepali Language in the three hill sub-divisions. People were aware of fact that the Government was riding rough-shod over minorities and a clear instance of linguistic imperialism.²⁸⁴

3.7. Language & Autonomy

It will be remembered that it was Sri Niren Ghosh M.P of the C.P.M. who had set the ball rolling in the matter of inclusion in December 1966. On 08.12.66 when the bill for inclusion of the *Sindh* language as the fifteenth language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution was being taken up for consideration in the Rajya Sabha, Sri Ghosh moved an amendment to it to include Nepali as the sixteenth language in the Eighth Schedule which was rejected by the house.²⁸⁵ A vast majority speak the language not only inside the district but in Assam, parts of U.P & H.P and the Nepali speaking in Sikkim and Bhutan. A conservative estimate of the total number of people speaking the language is not less than 6 million in the country including the valiant armed forces, the armed police and para-military force of the country. Sri Ghosh had made painstaking efforts to dig out facts and figures about the Nepali speaking population state-wise from the 1961 census and he quoted them in support of his contention that the figure of the Nepali-speaking population in India exceeded that of the *Sindhi* speaking population.²⁸⁶ Hence, such a movement brings out the efficient supporter for

²⁸⁴*Ibid.*,

²⁸⁵Ganeshlall Subba, "The language and Autonomy Demand" *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, February 5, 1972: 2.*

²⁸⁶*Ibid.*,

the implementation of the Nepali Language not only, it triggered the demand of statehood more efficiently.

Since the beginning of the forties and especially fifties, the demand for autonomy within West Bengal has been hanging fire although all major political parties are more or less committed to it. There was an opportunity in 1960-61 during the language movement to create such an all embracing movement on the demand for autonomy. During the language movement on the verge of language recognition, autonomy demand was placed in front of the Government of West Bengal. An attempt was made in mid-1970 to bring together the entire major political parties of the District- the Gorkha League, Communist Party of India (M) and the Congress (R) –on a common platform for devising ways and measures of realizing the demand of autonomy and recognition of the Nepali Language as a national language of the country. In 1981 *Pranta Parisad* submitted a memorandum demanding a separate state to the Government of West Bengal. Another important attempt was during in 1986, the movement reached the do-or-die phase led by GNLF (Gorkha National Liberation Front) under the leadership of Subhas Ghising.²⁸⁷ However, the demand was as early as 1907 for separate statehood but the process of Language Movement or on verge of movement, twin demand (Language & Autonomy) was initiated. The above demands mentioned in different years clearly stated that the language movement kind of being boosting factor for further demand.

With growing support for the Gorkhaland movement spearheaded by Subhas Ghising, the demand for abrogation of the Indo-Nepal Treaty intensified, as it began to be seen as a stumbling block in their desire to be recognized as full citizens of India. The

²⁸⁷Subash Ghising was an Indian politician and was the leader of Gorkha National Liberation Front which he founded in 1980.

movement tried to create an image of Gorkhas as independent of and unconnected with Nepal. The GNLF discarded the term ‘Nepali’ and exhorted everyone to use the term ‘Gorkha’ and declared Agam Singh Giri, a Darjeeling-born poet as *jatiya kavi* in place of Bhanubhakta, who was born in Nepal. The logic may have been naive, but its poignancy made a deep and wide impact, leaving a few intellectuals divided on the issue. With the recognition of the Nepali language by the *Sahitya* Academy in 1973, the process of their emotional disconnection from Nepal was almost complete. In their desire to be Indian, they even tried to exclude the writings of authors from Nepal on Nepali literature.²⁸⁸

3.8. Inclusion of Nepali Language

A dense of uncertainty and improbability had covered the circle of protagonists of the Nepali Language in Darjeeling as GNLF being fattened with administrative power and organizational strength was making hue and cry for recognition of Gorkha *Bhasa*, along with threat and intimidation to the people and individuals who were associated with the camp for demanding the recognition of Nepali Language. It had become clear that the struggle for inclusion of the Nepali Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution at the decisive hour was set to encounter the political and diplomatic exercise in Delhi and physical fight in Darjeeling, among the people who were speaking the same language.²⁸⁹ And knowing well the pros and cons involved in making the demand for recognition of the Nepali language, the protagonist of Nepali *Bhasa* while preparing for holding the public meeting on 20th August, 1992 at Chowk Bazar *Gitangay Dara*, they received the message of recognition of the Nepali Language along with Manipuri and Konkani over phone from Delhi. The news of the

²⁸⁸Dhakal, 2016, *Op.cit.*,100.

²⁸⁹Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*,74.

recognition of Nepali Language spread every possible corner of Darjeeling town.²⁹⁰ The former Rajya Sabha member, Mr. R.B. Rai, writes, *‘I learned that the Lok Sabha had approved the bill. I quickly made my way to the main hall, where I overheard Dil Kumari Bhandari and other lawmakers conversing happily...For me, it was a very fulfilling experience...’* In his following the bill’s passage in the Rajya Sabha, he said, *‘I am thrilled by the faith and confidence expressed to us. By giving Nepali-speaking individuals a sense of ethnic identity and integrating them into society, the historic event will significantly contribute to the nation’s Integrity.’* Thus the Notification on the Nepali Language was issued on 01.09.1992 which was seventy-first amendment of the Indian Constitution.²⁹¹

It is interesting to note that the Nepali language movement initially started in Dehradun had its epicentre in Darjeeling during 1960s and 1970s and was later at Sikkim during 1980s and early 1990s. For the Indian Nepalis who always desired to distinguish themselves from the Nepalese Nepal, the constitutional recognition of their language was a historic event. Nonetheless, the politics of identity and recognition of separate statehood doesn’t end there and the movement continues. This is evident from the fact that the language movement received massive support from all Nepali speaking populace and organizations across the country.

3.8.1. What is Next?

For the entire Nepali-speaking populace of India, the fight to have the Nepali language added to the Constitution’s Eighth Schedule was a momentous occasion. Anand Singh Thapa’s first memo and the incorporation of language experienced a

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*,

²⁹¹ Nepali “Bhasa Andolan” re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

succession of ups and downs. Hence, the process was not easy yet the other demand is still pending to date.

Let's recall some facts from the past decade and try to draw lessons from history. In 1961 there was a united movement of all Political parties, sparked off by student demonstrations, demanding inclusion of the Nepali Language in the B.A. syllabus in 1960 the N.B. University. Because of a united movement of all political parties on the issues involved it achieved substantial success: Nepali was included in the B.A. syllabus and it was recognized as one of the official language in the three hill subdivisions of the West Bengal Official Language Act passed in September 1961. It is clear that without a powerful united movement of all political parties one will not achieve the ultimate goal. Therefore, the next step for Indian Nepalese is to achieve the statehood demand within West Bengal, a separate state.

Now the next question is: What have they achieved so far (Indian Nepalese)? And what they have done so far to achieve their birth right? It is no use whining and cursing the leaders for their failures: after all they elected them as a representatives and a leader. All that is required to be done now is to launch a district wide campaign for the realization of the demand on the basis of a common platform representing all the major political parties, groups, cultural institutions and progressive intellectuals. But the big question mark is: will it be done?²⁹² The upcoming chapter will be dealing the role of leaders in the process of demand of the Gorkhaland Movement, their strengths and weakness, and failure and success. Mostly the changing nature/ strategy they had taken for the demand of a separate state.

²⁹²Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 1972.

Chapter -IV

Leadership and the Gorkhaland Movement

4.1. Introduction

The movements can emerge, evolve and changes occurred within the process in terms of its method. The means of movement are both dynamic and static as the process its get changed and transformed over the period. For example, the ideologies of a particular movement change with new strategies and programs.²⁹³ Political movements are bound to be dynamic to survive. Dynamism is the epicentre of all political activities. As the political movement grows it takes different shapes, visions and characters.²⁹⁴ For any kind of particular movement like a Social movement or Political movement, Leaders played a significant role. Since leaders play a critical role in collective action, shaping movements in numerous ways like defining goals and advancing strategies, mobilizing followers, galvanizing organizations, and forging coalitions, they significantly influence responses to external repression. Moreover, the actions of the leaders, and their rhetoric and style affect the conflict outcomes in movements.²⁹⁵ Some studies define leaders as one who perform key tasks in a movement such as recruitment, mobilization of resources, and formation of movement organizations and it also needs to be emphasized that movements make leaders as much as they are made by them.²⁹⁶ Thus, both movement and leader run hand in hand or correlate them. Generally, the movement members and leaders have different ideologies sometimes they do mixed match the ideas in terms of the social,

²⁹³Padam Nepal, "How Movement Move? Evaluating the role of Identity and leadership in Environment Movement Dynamics in India with special Reference to the Normada Bachao Andolan", *Hydro Nepal*, Issue No. 4, January, 2009:24-29.

²⁹⁴Taranga Pandit, "Gorkha National Liberation Front Movement-its Political Character", *Swachanda: Nuts Darjeeling Saga*, Vol.1, Kalimpong: Pustak Bikrita, 05 July 1986:8-9.

²⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 26.

²⁹⁶*Ibid.*, Author quoted from John McCarthy and Zald Mayer, "Resource mobilization and social movement: A partial theory", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Issue No. 82(6), 1977:25.

economic and political spheres. As a result, the movement tends to go in different directions and alteration of the movements formed due to the dialectical interaction of the various components over the period. Thus, the chapter deals with the role of Leadership with special reference to the Gorkhaland Movement of West Bengal, India. The present study shall dwell on the success and the failure of the leaders of the movement and the changing pattern of their leadership qualities over some time.

4.2. Changing Patterns of Political Leadership in the Gorkhaland Movement

Indian Nepalis had been calling for the establishment of a distinct state called Gorkhaland inside the boundaries of the Indian federation as well as a homeland within India. Historically, the Gorkhaland Movement can be traced to 1907. Since then, various organizations have held the reins of power. There was no common forum for interaction between the three main hill communities of the Darjeeling Hills until the establishment of the Hillmen's Association. Sonam Wangel Ladenla and his other partners led the first-ever appeal for a "separate administrative set-up" for Darjeeling district in 1907. The Hillmen's Association petitioned the Chief Secretary, the Government of Bengal for the administrative separation of Darjeeling, the copies of the petition were also sent to E.S. Montague, Indian Secretary of State at that time.²⁹⁷

On October 25, 1930, Hillmen's Association, in alliance with other local associations, sent a memo to Sir Samuel Hoare. This memorandum was jointly signed by the following: (i) H.P. Pradhan, President, Hillmen's Association, Kalimpong, (ii) Lt. Gobardhan Gurung, President, Gorkha Officers Association, (iii) P.M. Sundar,

²⁹⁷T.B. Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development: A case study of the Gorkhaland Movement*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD, 1992:76-77.

Secretary, Kurseong Gorkha Library, (iv) N.B. Gurung, Secretary, Hillmen's Association, and Darjeeling.²⁹⁸

The organization has both positive and negative points. For example, one of the authors pointed out the flaws of the Hillmen's Association. According to T.B. Subba, the memorandum placed by the Hillmen's Association makes no pretension about the "hill people" and highlights the problems of the "Gorkhas" only. Secondly, expresses no care for the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri district in the memorandum submitted in 1930. The memorandum written on August 6, 1934, delivered to Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal at the time, is completely silent about the Dooars region of Jalpaiguri district as described in the memorandum from 1930.²⁹⁹

After the death of Laden La in Late 1936, the Hillmen's Association works slow down. But the procedure was carried out until the end of the Second World War under the presidency of an accomplished lawyer named, Rupnarayan Sinha. The last action taken by this association was a memo sent to Lord Pathick Lawrence, the then Secretary of State for India, through R.G. Casey, the then Governor of Bengal, and the Viceroy of India, repeating its earlier demand to 'exclude Darjeeling from the Bengal Province and to create a separate administrative unit under a Chief Commissioner'.³⁰⁰

4.2.1. The All India Gorkha League Leadership & Status of Darjeeling

The first political party in the Darjeeling hills was founded in the 1940s and was called the All India Gorkha League (AIGL). There emerged a young lawyer from Calcutta, whose very concern for his people had inspired him to study law. His name

²⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 79.

²⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 80.

³⁰⁰Deo Prakash Rai, "Rejoinder to Demand for Creation of Gorkhasthan" *The Hindustan Standard*, 10.05.1953.

was Damber Singh Gurung he began to meet noted persons from Kurseong and Darjeeling and discuss the problems of the Hillman. After a couple of such discussions, a meeting was held on March 7, 1943, at George Mahbert Subba's school in Siliguri. Thus, Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis gathered there and resolved to form an association called All India Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha Association. Rupnarayan Sinha, its first secretary and a busy lawyer, however, could not pay much attention to this Association.³⁰¹

The Association changed its name to All India Gorkha League on May 15, 1943 in a formal meeting held at Rink Hall, Darjeeling and D.S. Gurung was made its first President. The main objectives were to forge unity among the Gorkhas in India, (a) Formation of a strong organization of the Gorkhas scattered all over India, (b) fight for the right of the Gorkhas in India.³⁰²

Beside the above two main objectives, other objectives were included such as- Protection of culture and Nepali Language, etc. The Constitution of All India Gorkha League was finally adopted in 1946 at a time when British were preparing to quit India and the Indian National congress was brandishing their Club for a new administrative setup in New Delhi.³⁰³

Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur to the east and Dehradun, Bhagsu, Kangra to the west were among the many areas of India where it eventually expanded. The bulletin of this League named Gorkha reached where the leaders could not. On February 1, 1944,

³⁰¹Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*,84.

³⁰²Government of West Bengal, Higher Education Department, State Archives Branch, File:17, No. 44, Subject: *All Gorkha League H.Q. Kalimpong, Darjeeling*. I.B 1944-46 Part III, 87.

³⁰³N.B. Gurung, "Has Gorkha League Outlived Its Utility", *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, 20.05.1972:4.

D.S. Gurung sent a memorandum to the Viceroy Wavell who expressed concern about the uncertain future of the Gorkhas. It said:

“While admitting the fact that minor communities are assured, that their interest will be guarded, the safeguard being specially provided in the articles of treaty between the British Government and any future federation of India, the Gurkhas naturally do not feel reassured because till now the Gurkhas have not been recognized as a community in India”.³⁰⁴

His dedication to the Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas was immeasurable and his work was efficient. After analyzing the memorandum which he has sent to Viceroy made realized his genuine concern for the uncertain future of Indian Nepalis. Until 1947, the AIGL worked hand in hand with the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI). On May 14, 1944, the first open convention of the AIGL held in Darjeeling and had supporters of CPI and also the Congress from Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Tejpur and Nowgaon in Assam.³⁰⁵ The second convention of this league was held at Gorkha Bhawan, Kurseong, on May 12-13, 1945. It was then Tikaram Sharma, the legendary headmaster of Kumudini Homes; Kalimpong proposed that members of other political parties may be allowed to be ordinary members but not governing body members of this League. Thus, in the newly constituted committee, D.S. Gurung was the president, Randhir Subba, Mangal Narayan Pradhan and Charudatta Rai as vice-presidents from Kalimpong, Kurseong and Shillong respectively, Shiva Kumar Rai from Kurseong was the secretary, and Tikaram Sharma from Kalimpong was the vice-secretary. Their objectives were:

³⁰⁴Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 85.

³⁰⁵P.P. Sharma, “Hamro Darjeeling_Ek Aitihāsik Paryābekshan”, *Aba*, Vol.5, No.12, 1986:5.

- (i) To have the Gorkhas acknowledged as a distinct minority group
- (ii) To ensure their representation in the provincial legislatures wherever they are settled.
- (iii) To ensure them representation in the interim governments and
- (iv) To free all Gorkhas held as political prisoners by the British Government.³⁰⁶

The third session of the AIGL held on October 18, 1946, in Shillong. The main objectives were (i) to recognize the Indian National Congress (ii) to supported Quit India (iii) to be recognized as minority community in free India. Again the meeting was held on March 11, 1947, at Kurseong with the members: Bomzam, L.D (Jamadan), Kalu Tamang, Brahmin Ratanlal.³⁰⁷

The AIGL, led by Damber Singh Gurung, first proposed the concept of merging Darjeeling and Assam at the beginning of independence. The proposal to designate Darjeeling as a Chief Commissioners Province outside of Bengal was made by Rupnarayan Sinha, the then- President of the Hillmen's Association. Damber Singh Gurung criticized the concept of Chief Commissioners Provinces and proposed alternatives, i.e., combining Darjeeling with Assam and making the phrase "Assam Chalo" more well-known. Damber Singh had the opportunity to extend the reach of AIGL at this time, addressing the concerns and challenges of the local Gorkha population in Assam and Shilong. It soon succeeded in opening branches in various locations around Shilong and Assam.³⁰⁸

After D.S Gurung passed away in 1948, N.B. Gurung assumed the role of League President. On 29th April 1949, he sent a memo to then- Prime Minister Jawaharlal

³⁰⁶P.P. Sharma, "Hamro Darjeeling_Ek Aitihasik Paryabekshan", *Aba*, Vol.5, No.13, 1986:5

³⁰⁷Government of West Bengal, 1944-46, *Op.cit.*,

³⁰⁸*Ibid.*,

Nehru requesting the elimination of the district Board member nomination³⁰⁹ process.³¹⁰ Under Randir Subba, the AIGL presented requests for the creation of Uttarakhand Pradesh in 1949. They wanted the state to include the Darjeeling District and Sikkim, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. It can be called as the most important event in the post-Gurung history of AIGL.³¹¹ A meeting was held on November 30, 1949, in Darjeeling attended by delegates from Darjeeling hills, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar. Rupnarayan Sinha, Shib Kumar Rai, Ari Bahadur Gurung, Randir Subba were the ones in charge. The size of AIGL's support base was evident in 1952 when Dalbhadur Singh Gahatraj, Shib Kumar Rai and George Mahabert Subba were elected to the West Bengal Assembly, permitting AIGL to gain all three seats from the Darjeeling districts. Again in 1953 by Election at Kalimpong Gorkha League gave a sweeping victory against Communist Party. Gorkha League's 4 M.L.As sat on the Government bench, one member Sri S.K Rai having been offered by Minister Ship but what about the people? The question was left unanswered. Five years passed in no time, young Leaguers took the cue that Gorkha League was an easy sail to lift anyone to be a M.L.A. The same thing was repeated in 1957 then again in 1962. This lure of high position has turned Gorkha League as an M.L.A. turning machine and nothing have gained.³¹²

Outperforming other leaders in the hills, Deo Prakash Rai emerged as a youthful leader representing the new generation and an exemplary member of the AIGL. After Deo Prakash Rai passed away in 1981, AIGL began to decline since the remaining members could not keep the group's supporters and members united. One of the

³⁰⁹Dr. P.C. Ghosh Government in west Bengal had continued the system of nominated membership in the District Board of Darjeeling and the system of election had been introduced in other parts of West Bengal Immediately after Independence.

³¹⁰Randhir Subba, *Gorkha*, Darjeeling: Publishing House, 1955:13.

³¹¹Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 86.

³¹²Gurung, 1972, *Op.cit.*,4.

factors contributing to the demise of the AIGL was the founding of *Pranta Parishad* in the 1980s, as its members began defecting to it due to its rational and conciliatory stance at the time. *Pranta Parishad*, calling for nothing less than complete sovereignty for Darjeeling hills is acceptable, could sustain only for a short period owing to its leadership crisis. The rise of the GNLF under the direction of Subash Ghising outlasted the AIGL, the oldest political party in the hills and the country's symbol of Gorkha unity. The AIGL also sent a memo to Zial Singh, the president at that time, requesting a separate state for the Gorkhas. The new mode of appealing has been started by AIGL under the leadership of Zial Singh to come together with different political parties for statehood.³¹³

4.2.2. The CPI & the Nepali Communist Leader: Ratanlal Brahmin

The Meerut Conspiracy of 1929-32, marked the starting point of the communist ideology in India; it was fuelled by the communist ideology, particularly by Karl Marx's literature, in many region of India.³¹⁴ The actions of Ratnalal Brahmin, also known as Maila Baje, are a factor in the history of the Communist Party's development in Darjeeling. He was worried about being crushed by the British government from the start, even before joining the communist party. Because he felt unable to change what was happening, he decided to stand up against the persecution

‘He used to witness the helpless existence of his own Nepali people. Being in the tea garden like coolies. They were only paid 2 to 4 annas per day. There was no clothing on them. They dress ripped shirts and half-pants for work. After a meal, they are always considering about their next meal. They were not allowed to bring an

³¹³Government of West Bengal, 1944-46, *Op.cit.*, 88-89.

³¹⁴Monobina Gupta, *Left Politics in Bengal: Time Travels among Bhadrakol Marxist*, Orient Blackswan, 2010.

umbrella, wear nice shoes, or wear nice attire. When a Sahib travelled through the same road, they were compelled to turn around'.³¹⁵

The above lines are quoted from the biography of Ratnalal Brahmin written by one of the youth leaders from the Communist Party in Darjeeling during 1944-45, who was also an active member of the communist party. His name was Badrinarayan Pradhan. In 1943 saw Bengal experience a famine that became known as “The Great Bengal Famine” and caused by the horrible war (Second World War). In Bengal, hunger, starvation and death has all but become the norm. The political parties were compelled to carry the freedom struggle during these terrifying catastrophic hours while also organizing a movement against people who accumulate and black marketers among the rural masses.³¹⁶ The hunger and lack of available food had an impact on Darjeeling as well. Thus, Ratnalal Brahmin and his friends took initiative to distribute food beverages by breaking the godowns and plundering the hoarded items for distribution to the famine-starved people of Darjeeling town.³¹⁷ They urged the shopkeepers to sell the food items at a reasonable price and additionally, they distributed some flyers in various location which states:

*“Jaba samma sahu-shet haruko godam ma anna-tel cha taba samma khana napayera na hami marchaw, na janta lai marna dinchaw”.*³¹⁸ (Till the time the food is there in the godowns of the shopkeepers, nor we will die neither we will let our people die with hunger).

³¹⁵Badrinarayan Pradhan, *Gaff Saff ma Ratnalal Brahmin (Maila Baje)*, Siliguri: Pratima Publication, 2009:3.

³¹⁶D.S. Bomjan. *Darjeeling Dooars People and Place under Bengal’s Neo-Colonial Rule*, Darjeeling: Bikash Jana Sahitya, 2008:94.

³¹⁷*Ibid.*,

³¹⁸Mohan.P. Dahal, *Jhukdai Najhukne Pahar ko Choro*, Darjeeling: Pratima Publication, 1993:20.

Sushil Chatterjee was excited to see Ratnalal Brahmin after hearing about his actions. Ratnalal Brahmin too was impressed and influenced by hearing the ideals of the Communist Party from Sushil Chatterjee. Thus, the Communist Party helped established him as a leader, and in turn, he made the Communist Party in Darjeeling District.³¹⁹ Darjeeling saw the formation of several unions for the first time during the communist party, with the Driver union being the first, and after that many other Union has been formed named as *Rikshaw-man* Union, *Gariman* Union, *Din Mahdoor* Union, *Chattra* Federation, *Mahila Samity* and *Kisan Sabha*.³²⁰ In Darjeeling, no political party had ever united all segments of the working class under one banner before Ratnalal and his companions did so. From 1940 onwards the communists actively were involved with the problem of Gorkha identity. They created the “Gorkhasthan” independent state plan to have an effective impact. By using this as propaganda, they established a stronghold in the hilly regions, especially among the Tea plantation workers.³²¹ By rejecting all other party strategies, the Communist Party began its fight for a free “Gorkhasthan” in a free India. During the 1946 election, the Communist Party of India renewed its call for the Gorkhas of Darjeeling district, Assam, and other regions of India to be represented in the Constitution Assembly by a few of their men who would be chosen by the district’s entire Gorkha population. To protect the constitutional rights of the thousand of Gorkhas residing, adult suffrage is being discussed in Assam and other regions of India where there are significant populations of Gorkhas.³²²

³¹⁹Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*,94-95.

³²⁰R.B. Rai, *Pahari Quiro Vitra Ko Pahilo Lal Tara*, Darjeeling Hill Zonal Committee C.P.I (M): Darjeeling, 1991:26-27.

³²¹Amiya K. Samanta. *Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism*, New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2000: 97.

³²²*The Week*, “CPI wanted Gorkhaland”, November 9-15, 1986.

Leaders of the Nepali Communist Party from Darjeeling, Ratanlal Brahmin and G.L. Subba, took the demand for regional autonomy seriously. They with the help of a few junior activists like Charu Mazumdar and Sourin Basu formed the district committee of the Communist Party with one of the initial measures the district committee approved in 1944 was the creation of regional autonomy for the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling district. When the CPI Committee approved the resolution, Brahman and G.L. Subba, the district committee Secretary, were inspired to create the “Gorkhasthan” plan made earnest efforts to get the plan approved accepted by the All India Gorkha League (AIGL), a very influential political party of the Nepalis in the district.³²³ G.L. Subba wrote to the General Secretary of the AIGL on May 9, 1946, outlined the plan of Gorkhasthan- *“One thing has guided our decision to launch the campaign for a free Gorkhasthan in a free India, rejecting all other plans of other parties including yours, the recognition of the fact that Gorkhas constitute a distinct nationality of India with a very bright prospect of developing as a mighty nation living as a free and friendly neighbour with other people of India, for which recognition of their right of self determination of the bulk of the Gorkha people living in Nepal and Sikkim. We request you to forget all prejudices in judging our plan as we believe we did while judging yours...”*³²⁴ The same repeated in their memorial submitted to the Constituent Assembly on April 6, 1947.³²⁵ Ratanlal Brahmin and G.L. Subba’s CPI proposal called for the union of the “three contiguous areas of Darjeeling district, southern Sikkim and Nepal” to create a Free Gorkhasthan in a Free India.³²⁶ But at the same time, Subba argued that the Gorkhas of Darjeeling will continue to remain politically and economically divided from the bulk of Gorkhas of

³²³*Ibid.*,97-98.

³²⁴Subba’s letter refers to a pamphlet entitled “For a Free Gorkhasthan in a free India”, which was “being published by the People’s Publishing House, Bombay”.

³²⁵Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*,

³²⁶Sharma, 1986, *Op.cit.*,5-10.

Sikkim. Ratanlal Brahman won the 1946 election for the Provincial council as a result of the Gorkhasthan solgan's full support and substantial political mobilisation for CPI. Ratanlal Brahmin was elected as Bengal's first lawmaker from the hills to Assembly. Ratanlal Brahmin and Ganeshlal Subba were very serious and concerned about the regional autonomy. However, both of them Ganeshlall Subba, the then Secretary of CPI Darjeeling District Committee and Ratnalal Brahmin, the CPI MLA from Darjeeling were not agree upon for the demand of Gorkhasthan. However, in regard to Darjeeling politics, it is discovered that the demand was made while taking into account the previous national and international situation as well as the political and conceptual stance of the party.³²⁷ He and the Darjeeling unit of the party kept up the demand for Gorkhasthan alive and he was also credited with the authorship of a book in Nepali entitled "Gorkhalisthan" published in 1950. The book has been referred to by M.J. Akbar in his article "Seasons of Discontent" published in the Illustrated Weekly of India, August 30-September 6, 1986, 26-29.³²⁸ In consideration of the political situation after the Partition and Independence, the CPI minimised the demand for separate Gorkhasthan, and eventually, in 1951, it revised its earlier stand by dropping Nepal and Sikkim from the plan. There was no longer a single Communist Party of India following the division of the Communist Party, the Communist Party of India, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1964. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) was chosen by the majority of members of the Darjeeling District Committee of the Communist Party. A pamphlet titled "Programme and Demand for

³²⁷Cited in, Bomjan.D.S. Darjeeling Dooars People and Place under Bengal's Neo-Colonial Rule, in Rai.R.B. Pahari Quiro Vitra Ko Pahilo Chir Lal Tara, Darjeeling Hill Committee C.P.I. (M): Darjeeling, 1991:47-48.

³²⁸Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit*, 98-99.

Autonomy” was distributed in 1973 by the AIGL and the CPI (M).³²⁹ In 1957 the Communists jointly with the Congress and the All India Gorkha League, submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India for regional autonomy for Darjeeling and in 1967, as the major partner of the United Front Government, approved a resolution in the State Assembly demanding regional autonomy. Yet another resolution was passed on September 23, 1981 for creating a “statutory autonomous authority” subject to the “overall authority and control of the state government and legislature”.³³⁰ The Darjeeling District Congress Committee (DDCC) meeting held on August 25, 1968 at Kalimpong also passed a unanimous resolution demanding an “autonomous administrative set-up” for the hill areas of the district. In response to this meeting, one more meeting was conducted and held on September 21, 1968 at the Congress Bhawan, Calcutta in which the resolution of the DDCC was discussed. The meeting was held under the leadership of P.C. Chunder simply noted that “positive measures will have to be taken to resolve the problems”.³³¹

The Communist Party has played a part in the agitation of the Nepali language since 1947, although the most significant impact may be noticed after 1971. Ratanlal Brahmin of the Darjeeling Parliamentary Constituency was elected as a member of parliament following the fifth general election in 1971. Ratanlal began administering oaths in Nepali on March 22, 1971, which left everyone in the House in a state of shock. The majority of the Parliament members opposed this; even Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was also present at the moment. When the then Lok Sabha Speaker, Dr. G.S. Dhillon, intervened and prevented Ratanlal from speaking in Nepali, he once

³²⁹Subhas Rajan Chakrabarty, “Silence under Freedom: The strange story of Democracy in the Darjeeling Hills”, in Ranabir Samaddar (eds.), *The Politics of Autonomy: Indian Experience*, Delhi: SAGE Publication, 2005:183.

³³⁰Government of West Bengal, *Gorkhaland Agitation The Issue*, Information and Cultural Affairs Department, 1986: 25.

³³¹*Ibid.*, 21-22.

more again started to take the oath in that language. The Lok Sabha Speaker Dhillon stopped him by stating the language does not come in the list of the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Ratanlal, however, was unable to prevail in the face of widespread linguistic opposition; he was forced to take his oath in Hindi. Before taking oath, He expressed his desire for the Nepali language to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in the Hindi-language Nepali magazine *DIYALO*, which was occasionally published by the *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan*. He stated that,

“*Aja pachas lakh vana jyada chariyeka Nepali haruko aawaj yash bhawan ma bolna payina. Yo haak charo diyajawosh*”-(Today I am not able to speak the voice of more than 50 lakhs Nepalis of India inside this House. The right should be given soon).³³²

Ratanlal spoke in Nepali during a budget session that was taking place on June 29, 1971. Congress MPs at that time began to object, but the opposition rallied around Ratanlal and demanded that he be permitted to speak in his native tongue. In the Parliament, a debate has been started by saying Nepali language was foreign language but then Ratanlal was permitted to communicate inside the House in Nepali. In Lok Sabha history, a speech was delivered in Nepali for the first time. This incident was recorded and published in many newspapers, magazines and weekly papers. One of the most detailed information regarding the Lok Sabha incident was published by Himalayan Observer.³³³ Ratanlal Brahmin collected 74 signatures from Members of Parliament on a message that was sent to the Prime Minister for the Nepali Language

³³²Tulsibahadur Chettri. “Diyalo”, *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan*, Darjeeling, Vol. 11, No.41, 1971:49.

³³³“Maila Baje lai Fulko Mala, Lok Sabha ma Tinkle Nepali Bhasa Prayog Gare”, *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, July 3rd, 1971:1.*

protest on December 22nd, 1971, asking that the Nepali language be included in the Constitution's Eighth Schedule.³³⁴

The demand of separation from Bengal made by Darjeeling and its people from the very day of the birth of political consciousness was avoided on one way and other by the British. But the same demand at the time of independence of India, the Communist Party of India and had made it into a demand for a country called "Gorkhasthan". And the same party after the Independence of the country found to have modified the "Gorkhasthan" into Regional Autonomy. A Constitution amendment Bill envisaging regional autonomy for the three hill sub-division of Darjeeling District and the contiguous areas in West Bengal where Nepali-speaking people are in majority was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by the CPI MP, Mr. Gurudas Dasgupta. According to the objects and reasons of the Constitution (amendment) Bill, 1986, the alien rulers were insensitive to the claims, urge, and aspirations of the people of the area, and even after independence; their reasonable demands had not been considered favourably.³³⁵

Therefore, the constantly changing mode of demand has been seen under the Communist Party of India and not only with the leadership of Ratnalal Brahmin and Ganeshlall Subba but also other members of the party. They have immense impactful role in the recognition of demand of Darjeeling Hills.

4.2.3. GNLF under the Leadership of Subhas Ghising

One of the earliest demands in the history of contemporary India is for Gorkhaland to become a constituent state of the Union of India. Through this demand has over the

³³⁴Nepali "Bhasa Andolan" re-telling the story, <https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/nepali-bhasa-andolan-re-telling-story/> Accessed on 8th June 2020.

³³⁵*The Telegraph*, "CPI moves Bill for autonomy in Darjeeling". 22.11. 1986.

years taken various political turns and twists, it particularly acquired the shape of a mass movement only towards the end of the 1970s when Gorkhas in India were first urged to unite under one standard by Sri Subash Ghising and a new state called Gorkhaland was demanded. It was, to be exact, on April 22, 1979 from ‘ramparts’ of the famous *Geetange Daara* in Chowk Bazar in Darjeeling. Soon after, the Gorkha National Liberation Front was setup as a political party which for the first time comprehensively elevated the major issue of the identity of the Indian Gorkhas at the national Level.³³⁶ The party’s goals were to establish a separate state for Nepalese citizens within India, recognise Nepali as a language in the Constitution’s Eighth Schedule, revoke the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950 in order to allay Nepalese concerns about it and employ more “sons of the soil” by increasing army recruitment.³³⁷ *“I am an Indian and my first name often creates confusion in Bengali newspapers”* said Subash Ghising, the leader of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), when THE WEEK met him in one room residence in Jalapahar, Darjeeling.³³⁸ Ghising was a young, aggressive and radical leader of the Gorkhas who represented radicalism ideologically and strategically. The movement was a violent and radical method of protest under his supervision. At Dr. Graham’s Homes Kalimpong on September 1986, he has delivered his speech with regard to the movement and stated that:

“...this movement have reached to a far above the ground only because of sacrificed by our people (bloodshed). The movement witnessed violence and perplexity where everyone prayed and well wished for the movement but I am

³³⁶ Mahendra P. Lama, *Gorkhaland Movement Quest for an Identity*, New Delhi: Sona Printers in Collaboration with Sabina Publications, 1996: 1.

³³⁷ Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*, 117.

³³⁸ Tapash Ganguly, “I’m an Indian: GNLF chief also swears by Gorkhaland”, *The Week*, June 15-21, 1986.

*replying them by saying no more well wishes because nowadays well wishes are only meant for the newly married couples not for the revolutionaries. What to do with well wishes when the CRP and the Police men uses guns on us? Your well wishes do not work at all... ”*³³⁹

Leadership has proven a difficult concept to define, with the proliferation of definitions of leadership being more notable than any individual definition.³⁴⁰ Thus in the context of Ghising’s leadership quality, he was one able leader in many ways but one of the finest reason was- He brought Darjeeling area to national and international attention in the mid-1980s. He had a vast knowledge of culture, tradition and especially the people’s mentality. Hence he was able to grab the attention of people toward him as a leader. According to Colin Barker, a leader needs to be familiar with local expressions, values, and cultural elements in order to relate to the general public.³⁴¹ Ghising had a vast knowledge of the cultural and tradition of Darjeeling and had a deep understanding of the community. Hence he was the first to express the suppressed sentiments of Indian Nepalis.

Early in the 1980s, Ghising prepared the ground for his newly founded party and was able to attract a large following, which enabled him to incite the bloody Gorkhaland conflict.³⁴² Gorkha National Youth Front (GNYF), Gorkha National Student Front (GNSF), Gorkha Volunteer’s Cell (GVG), Gorkha National Women’s Organization (GNWO), Gorkhaland Welfare Organization (GWO) and Gorkha National Ex-Servicemen Organization (GNEO) are six frontal organisations he had

³³⁹Nagendra Gorkha, *Mato, Jati Ra Rashtriya Chinariko Prashnama Subash Ghisingko Aitihāsik Baktavyaharu*, Darjeeling: Trinetra Prakasthan, 1986: 28.

³⁴⁰Jennifer Earl, “Leading Tasks in a Leaderless Movement: The Case of Strategic Voting”. *American Behavioral Scientist*. Vol. 50, Issue. 10, June 1, 2007: 1327.

³⁴¹Colin Barker, Alan Johnson and Michael Lavalette, *Leadership and Social Movements*. Manchester University Press, 2001:109.

³⁴²Swatahsiddha Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd, 2013: 68.

successfully established. All these groups, as their titles would imply, had various types of supporters and engaged in various types of activities, but they were all united by the same demand for Gorkhaland. When Ghising launched the GNLF in July 1980, he might not have had an absolute plan as he was at an initial stage. He sent a letter to the Prime Minister of India, where he pleads for a separate State of Gorkhaland outside West Bengal. His letter³⁴³ to the Prime Minister was short and showing faith in the leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi, he put forward his demand in the following language:

“The Honourable Prime Minister of India
Shrimati, Indira Gandhi
New Delhi

This is the second time we remind you that we the Indian Gorkhas after independence are Stateless and futureless all over India. Our future was murdered by the Indian Constitution when our land and territory wrongly and blindly merged with West Bengal in 1956. It was a great mistake of the then Indian Government and returned our land and territory from West Bengal. We want our own Gorkhaland Government as other citizens of India enjoying the fruits of their toil of independence as promised by the First Independence Resolution of Congress Party on 26th January, 1930. Now up to you to decide our fate and not politically but constitutionally save our future. Gorkhas are always loyal to the nation and always salute your leadership.

Dated 2nd August 1980

-Subash Ghising
President
Gorkha National Liberation Front
Darjeeling³⁴⁴

³⁴³Copy has been obtained from Subash Ghising cited in Amiya K.Samanta. *Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism*. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2000: 120

³⁴⁴*Ibid.*,

After a few months later Ghising again sent with strongly worded telegram to the Chief Minister of West Bengal.

9th April 1981

“To
The Chief Minister of West Bengal
Shri Jyoti Basu
Writers Building
Calcutta

Please now take back your prison administration of Bengal from our Gorkhaland within six months. We firmly believe in democracy but not in slavery. Slavery cannot be compared with any ism of the world. Slavery is slavery. Gorkhaland state will always honour to its neighbor state Bengal and Bengali people.

Subash Ghising
Secretary General
Gorkha National Liberation Front Darjeeling”³⁴⁵

Neither the Chief Minister of West Bengal nor the Prime Minister of India responded to any of these letters. According to Amiya K. Samanta though Ghising set the goals in his communications to the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister, Ghising did not have a definite plan of action in the first few years. In 1983, in the context of the anti-foreigners agitation in the North-East, Ghising traced the roots of the citizenship issue of the Indian Nepalese in the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950, between Nepal and the Indian Gorkhas and “failed to keep the identities of the Indian Gorkhas and it has mixed up the citizens of Nepal and the India in a single big basket of illusion”. His only concern was regarding Article VII of the Treaty, which agreed ‘to provide, on a mutually beneficial base, to citizens of a particular nation in the territories of the other, equivalent rights in regards to their places of living, possession of belongings, engagement with trade and commerce, initiatives and advantages of corresponding form’. Ghising claimed that this has reduced the Gorkha people, who

³⁴⁵*Ibid.*,

lived in India for over a century, to the status of “reciprocal citizens”. And not the real citizens of the country and as such their status are uncertain.³⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, Ghising attempted to find a solution by classifying Indian Nepalese as Gorkha rather than Nepalese. Usually, all social and political organizations of Indian Nepalese have used both the terms “Gorkha” and “Nepalese” to denote the same race.³⁴⁷ Later on, the GNLF outlined 11 points in a gathering held in Ghoom on March 13, 1986, calling for Gorkhaland which included to abrogation of Indo-Nepal Treaty. Home Minister, Buta Singh made a point which was that the GNLF’s stand for the abrogation of the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950 was “misplaced and unwarranted and cannot be accepted” and he appealed to State Leaders to meet up with GNLF.³⁴⁸ On the Union home minister’s statement in Parliament the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu said, “Mr. Buta Singh wants me to meet the GNLF president, Mr. Subash Ghising, but I am not ready to meet a person who wants to divide Bengal”.³⁴⁹ Ghising met the Union home secretary, Mr. C.G. Somayya on December 17, in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum to the Centre listing the GNLF’s demands. The sources, however, sought to emphasise that there was no dialogue between the home secretary and the GNLF leader and it was the first official acknowledgement of Ghising having met representatives of the Union government.³⁵⁰ One of the strongest statements given by Ghising prior to statehood: “the GNLF had also directed the parties and individual groups to given in writing their support to the cause of Gorkhaland. Those who do not listen to the directives would be socially boycotted by the GNLF, its women, youth and students wings”. And also stated that the GNLF will observe “anti-Bengal day” on January 23, to protest against the

³⁴⁶Samanta, 2000, *Ibid.*, 123-124.

³⁴⁷*Ibid.*,

³⁴⁸*The Statesman*, “Buta Singh Rejects Plea for Gorkhaland State”. 07.11.1986.

³⁴⁹*The Telegraph*, “CM: Centre must condemn GNLF”. 08.11.1986.

³⁵⁰*The Telegraph*, “Ghising submitted memo in Delhi”. 25.12.1986.

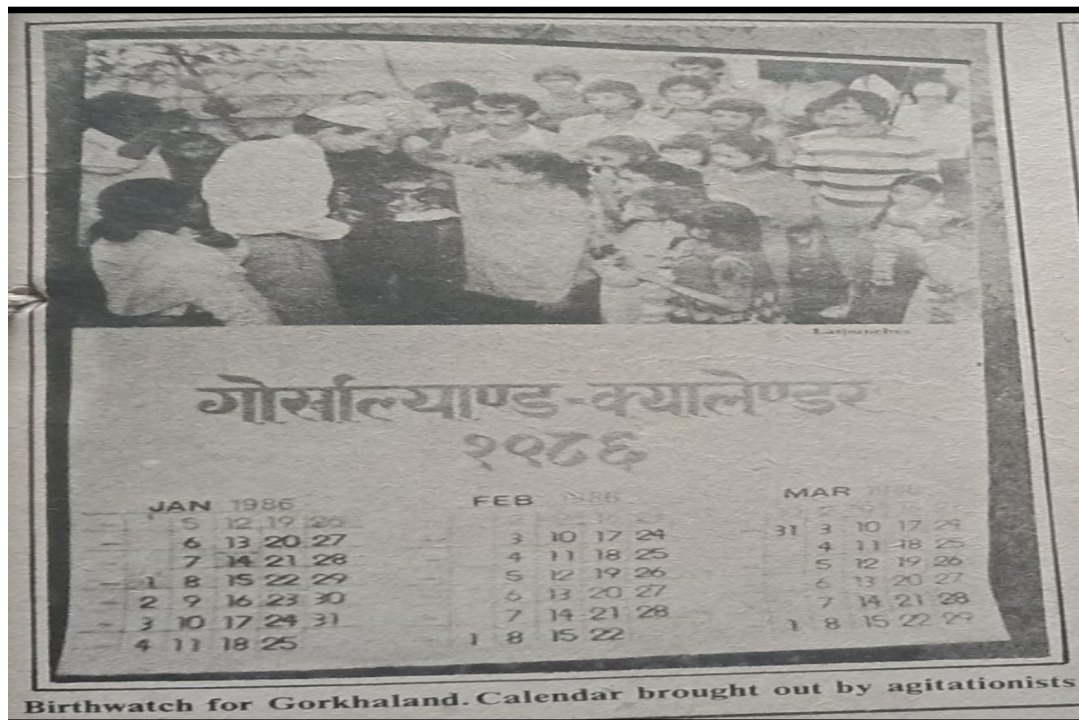
resistance to its Statehood demand expressed by leaders of the CPI(M)-led ruling Left Front and the WBPC(I).³⁵¹ “I am a poet not a politician”, once remarked by Ghising but his activities Centre’s recognition of him as the sole spokesman of the six million strong Nepali community in India. In an interview, Subash Ghising said *neither regional autonomy nor Union Territory would serve the purpose of “identifying the Indian Nepalese”*. In replying to a question whether he would accept the preconditions laid down by the Chief Minister for a dialogue, Ghising said- *“Why should we talk with Mr. Jyoti Basu since a separate State can only be granted by the Union Government under Article 3 of the Constitution?”* He pointed out that their demands were *“identification of Nepali-speaking citizens first and then economic issues and these could be solved only by the emergence of Gorkhaland and neither by regional autonomy nor the creation of a union territory in the Darjeeling area”*.³⁵² When he was asked about the Assembly election replied the GNLF would boycott the elections. *“This time it will be different and we will not allow it (election) in Darjeeling. Our struggle will end with the attainment of Gorkhaland”*, he concluded.³⁵³

³⁵¹ *The Statesman*, “GNLF call for anti-Bengal day on Jan.23”. 28.12.1986.

³⁵² *The Statesman*, “GNLF leader killed transport strike paralysis Darjeeling”. 20.10.1986.

³⁵³ *The Telegraph*, “Autonomy not enough: Ghising”.20.10.1986.

Fig.4.1. Gorkhaland Calendar



Source: *THE WEEK*, “Brandishing the Kukri: The Gorkhas of Darjeeling raise a new cry”. A Malatala Manorama Publication, 15-21. 06.1986.

In the mean time of movement under influence of the Ghising income source for the party also generated through thousands of multi-colour calendars sold at the rate of 8 each. A young bookshop owner in Darjeeling claimed that he sold 500 calendars and get one rupee as commission for selling one calendar and rest goes to Ghising. A dealer in electrical and electronic appliances in Darjeeling said that between June 1884 and April 1986, more than 30,000 cassettes of Ghising’s speeches have been sold in Darjeeling. Each cassette was priced at rs.30 and the dealer said that he was not charging any commission. “*The sales proceeds are deposited with GNLFF to enable the party to fight for our cause*”, said by a dealer.³⁵⁴ The statement shows that common people were also indulged in some work for the party to undergo the

³⁵⁴*THE WEEK*, “Brandishing the Kukri: The Gorkhas of Darjeeling raise a new cry”. A Malatala Manorama Publication, 15-21. 06.1986.

ultimate goal. Weather Ghising used the money for actual cause or not but he can grab mass attention toward him. Above all, he has threatened to lunch a widespread agitation if the Centre makes any attempt to crush the “Gorkhaland” movement. He declared that the creation of “Gorkhaland” within the Indian Union was the only solution to the problem of Gorkhas identity as Indian citizens.³⁵⁵

In a dramatic turn of events, Ghising was finally ushered into the impressive portals of the Union Home Ministry in New Delhi on January 28. It was his moment of glory overnight from an agitator he was transformed into an important political dignitary where provided security personnel and drove around in the official car.³⁵⁶ Union Home Minister Buta Singh, who held official discussions with Ghising, not only agreed to discuss the thorny issue of citizenship rights for Nepali-speaking people scattered around West Bengal, the North-east and northern Uttar Pradesh, but even asked Ghising to suggest what concrete steps the Centre should take to reconfirm their “Indian Identity”. After came back he organized the biggest GNLFF rally ever, crowded with thousands of adulating Nepalis. He declared- *“We have achieved a great victory- after 39 years of Struggle we have successes in getting the Centre to recognize our citizenship rights and by 1987 we will get Gorkhaland”*. The crowd loved it.³⁵⁷

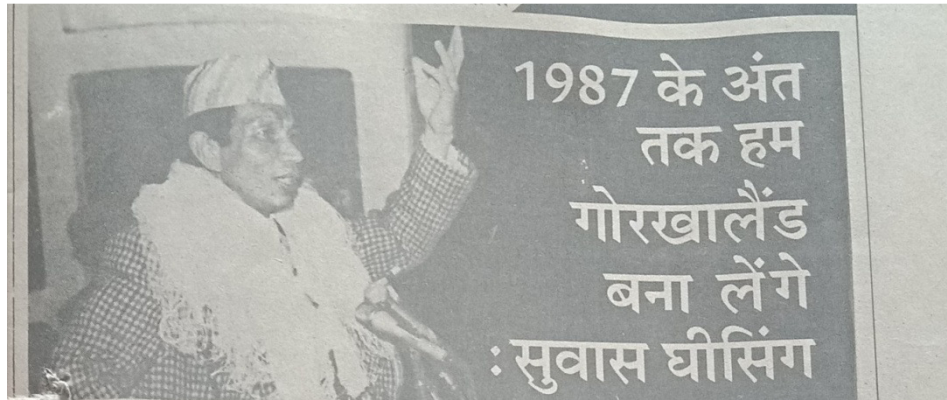
The below **Fig 4.2** shows the statement of Ghising stating: *“By 1987 we will make our Gorkhaland”*. He was known to be one of the confident leaders who could grab the attention of public at any time.

³⁵⁵ *The Telegraph*, “Ghising threatens agitation against Centre”, 25.10.1986.

³⁵⁶ Kalyan Chakravorty, “Power and Legitimacy” *India Today*, February 28, 1987:47.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

Fig.4.2. Glimpse of Subash Ghising delivering speech



Source: *Parivartan* (Hindi), September 29- October 5, 1986:11.

The *Week* (weekly magazine) met Subash Ghising in house on Dr Zarkir Hussian Road at Jalapahar, Darjeeling on October 15. The venue of interview was Ghising's one-room apartment in Darjeeling. When he was asked what he would do if demands were not fulfilled then his answer was— *“If our demand is not met before the assembly election of West Bengal scheduled for February 1987, then there will be a breakout of violence on a large scale all over the hill areas. And we would boycott the election”*. According to his statement, he was confident over the mass and rigid with his strategy.³⁵⁸

After the intense movement of two year of fighting and the loss of so many lives including property loss and this period would come to be remembered as the most traumatic chapter of the movement. Finally, the tripartite meeting was agreed between the Government of West Bengal and the Central Government and the GNLFF.³⁵⁹ The Gorkhaland National Liberation Front abandoned its call for a separate state in July 1988 and on August 22, 1988, Ghising was appointed head of the DGHC (Darjeeling

³⁵⁸Tapash Ganguly, “Gorkhaland by Feb, 1987, If not, there will be violence, says Subash Ghising”, *The Week*, November 9-15, 1986.

³⁵⁹D.T. Tamlong, *Darjeeling and North Bengal from An Administrator's Perspective*. Darjeeling: Mani Printing House Darjeeling, 2006:93.

Gorkha Hill Council) and “citizen notification” became official ³⁶⁰ were the major achievement of the movement.³⁶¹ The last decade of the Twentieth Century, Ghising was declared as the “Tiger of the Hills”. After the historic accord led to setting up of DGHC, then the rest is history. But a history that will remain incomplete till the State of Gorkhaland is attained.³⁶²

After 20 years of the formation of the DGHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) under GNLF, hardly any changes took place for the welfare of Darjeeling. Gradually the mass of Darjeeling Hill seems more frustrated with DGHC’s incapability to work as a full-termed governing body. Ghising’s significant actions included registering Darjeeling’s Sixth Schedule status and ignoring the Indian Nepalis primary goal of demanding a separate state. Thus, such an attempt of Ghising was seen by the masses as discordant of the people and also the process of weakening the whole picture of Gorkha Identity. Hence such steps of him, paved the way for the opposition bodies to out spoke against him claiming as a paranoid and corrupt megalomaniac. As Prashant Tamang was vying for the Indian Idol title, a campaign was launched to get vote for him. As a result, the movement raised a new Indian Gorkha identity. At the exact same time, the movement witnessed fresh leadership contenders emerge, pleading for the restoration of the Gorkhas’s promise of a distinct land within the confines of the Indian Constitution. A new political party with promising leadership qualities for statehood of the Hills people appeared in the Hills towards the end of 2007. Subash Ghising as a leader, he has successfully marked himself as a leader and he was also

³⁶⁰Citizen notification underlined the rights of “Gorkhas” to citizenship by following base (a) domicile in India as of January 26, 1950, (b) residence for at least five years before that date, (c) birth in India, and (d) birth of either parent in India.

³⁶¹Michael Hutt, “Being a Nepali without Nepal: Reflections on the South Asian Diaspora, in David Gellner, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and John Whelpton (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*, Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997:131.

³⁶²Lama, 1996, *Op.cit.*, 1.

able to make a mark in the Gorkhaland movement in multiple ways. Under his direction, the Gorkhaland Movement first manifested itself as an identity-based movement. Ghising's leadership is therefore responsible for the emergence of the sense of national identity and a motivated sense of community togetherness. His six frontal organizations and especially armed forces movements grab the attention of both national and local levels of media and also the government attention. Under his direction, the DGHC was established as an administrative entity to deal with Gorkha matters in India. Consequently, the uprising was properly organised under his leadership. Ghising's leadership, though, also had detrimental effects on the movement. The results of the unsuccessful growth of the Hills by DGHC under Ghising's GNLFF for more than 20 years look more aggravating than DGHC. His dictatorial behaviour and justification for adding the Hills to the Sixth Schedule were viewed as making concessions to Gorkhaland Statehood movement. The movement was initially started by him and reached its height under his leadership. Later, the movement was once more under his direction when it entered a compromising mode, and the sole goal "separate statehood" vanished with the alternative attempt to opt for Sixth Schedule status for the Hills.

4.2.4. Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) under the Leadership of Bimal Gurung

The dubious role of the GNLFF in accepting the Sixth Schedule and an attempt to enforce the same, as an alternative as well as to sabotage the demand of a separate state of Gorkhaland was vehemently opposed by one of its heavyweight Bimal Gurung. But to silence the protest against the proposed Sixth Schedule, Bimal Gurung was debarred from GNLFF on October 3, 2007. However, after some time, Ghising's political camp progressively began to see Gurung as an afterthought, which prompted

the creation of Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) on October 7, 2007 Gurung defamed Ghising's practices of ruling based on corruption, deception as a leader.³⁶³ Gurung announced the voice of Gorkhaland was rising again, 'leaders are selling the demand', he alleged that the GNLFF leaders had pawned their mother/Darjeeling Hill-
"*They quickly forget about the land and about the community...you cannot buy with money anymore. We are conscious and we love our land*". While delivering speech he ask other parties to join in one hand for the main cause and showing the flag declared, "*This is not a party flag but a flag of our jati...we will get Gorkhaland...*"³⁶⁴ The people of Darjeeling started questioning the reliability of Ghising as their leader. At this particular period, people were losing faith and had confused state of mind; as a result Bimal Gurung emerged as the redeemer of the people of Hills.³⁶⁵ In order to reassure his claim as a leader of the movement, the following at mass meeting at Siliguri in May 2008, swearing an oath on the Gita and the Bible, He promised not to betray the people and installed the GJMM as the sole representative of the statehood. Gurung emerged as a leader who had emotion for Gorkhaland, appeared a strong, generous and uncompromising leader of a new movement, which was transparent and owned by the people. The people's faith and expectation has gone high they believed that Gorkhaland would solve all their identity issue and demands. Several rounds of tripartite negotiations were done meanwhile seems hardly any significant progress towards statehood.³⁶⁶

Prashant Tamang, a singer from Darjeeling who was competing for the Indian Idol Session 3 Reality show on Sony Television and who ultimately won the show, was actively supported by Bimal Gurung in the meantime. Hence, Gurung came into the

³⁶³Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*, 135.

³⁶⁴Bimal Gurung delivered his speech at motor stand Darjeeling main Bazaar on 07 October, 2007.

³⁶⁵*The Hindu*, "GJM leader Bimal Gurung", 03.06.2010.

³⁶⁶*Ibid.*,

limelight through the campaigning of Prashant Tamang. As soon as GJMM was established under his direction, they made an announcement about a programme to destroy copies of the Memorandum of Settlement between the West Bengal Government and the Administrator of DGHC, Subash Ghising, for the grant of Sixth Schedule Status to DGHC. The burning of the copies as announced took place on November 15, 2007, throughout the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council areas as a joint program of the newly formed Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM). It was seen that the burning of the memorandum was carried with much enthusiasm and commitment by the participation of the general public.³⁶⁷

Fig.4.3. Glimpse of Bimal Gurung



Source: Aditi Phadnis, “Bimal Gurung, the man behind the Darjeeling protest”, *Rediff.com*, June 19, 2017.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*,

In Contradistinction to the GNLFF's violent practices, under the leadership of Gurung, there were major changes in the form of agitation that would be democratic and non-violent. The movement aims to attain the goal through the ways of non violence applying the Gandhian principles.³⁶⁸ The mode of movement was seems quite different and distinguishes it from the earlier movement. Initially, the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha developed more as an anti-Ghising and anti-DGHC forum and gradually worked out its programs of actions which were, however, nothing new in their nature and forum.³⁶⁹

Secondly, On the Gorkhaland map, in addition to the three hills of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong, Siliguri and portions of the Dooars that are located in North Bengal districts are also shown. However, despite having Dooars included, GNLFF did not include it in their map; as a result, when the DGHC was established, only the hill subdivisions were present. Bimal Gurung has managed not only to gather support from Indian Nepalis from plains areas but also from the Adivasis.³⁷⁰ Gurung focused his attention on the plains, particularly Siliguri and the Dooars region. In a very short period, the movement expanded its operations in the Dooars region and Siliguri plains, becoming a powerful association in the hills. Under Gurung Leadership, the indefinite strike was declared on February 20, 2008; against the determined impose of Sixth Schedule status would bring about breakdown among the people i.e., caste, creeds and religion. The strike was totally peaceful mode. The GJMM resumed fast-unto-death movement in Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Kurseong and also a group of people left Siliguri in the early morning to take part hunger strike demanding the scrapping of the sixth schedule. One of the police officials RJS Nalwa

³⁶⁸*The Hindu*, "GJM places demands, Buddhadeb says no division of West Bengal", 09.05.2008.

³⁶⁹Swatahsiddha Sarkar, "Gorkhaland Territorial Administration: An Overview", *Mainstream Weekly*, Vol.1, No.2. May 19, 2012.

³⁷⁰*Rediff.com*. "GJM leader Bimal Gurung: Utterly self-possessed and apparently ruthless", 03.06.2010.

went to the extent of telling that “*the protesters would be arrested...they will not be allowed to go on a hunger strike in front of the S.D.O Office in Siliguri*”.³⁷¹ But still, the Morcha supporters went on an indefinite hunger strike which was peaceful mode. There were 234 participants in the hunger strike and they had refused of taking medicines during hunger strike. Hence, many of them were rushed for hospitalization after the withdrawal of fasting. The Fast-unto-death movement from 17th to 29th February, 2008 became an eye opener as among 234 participants, there were 6 Marwari, 4 Bihari, 2 Bengali, 5 Muslim and 1 Harijan who were born and brought up in the region for which they were aspiring and struggling for separation from the administrative and political domination of West Bengal. But the coverage of the movement in its right perspective has been deliberately or accidentally overlooked by most of the national media belonging to public and private sectors.³⁷² A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs requested a new assessment of the ground realities in the hills as a result of these protests, which led to the bill amending the Constitution to implement the sixth schedule prominence in the hills being delayed.

The most considerable difference the leadership has with that of the previous leadership is its call for Home rule movement through the non-payment of government taxes, such as power bills and vehicle taxes, land taxes, housing taxes, etc. GL (Gorkhaland) number plates in place of WB (West Bengal) were asked to use in the Vehicles and also for shops were instructed to mark the home rule in Darjeeling by writing Gorkhaland on their sign boards.³⁷³ The GJM in its growing stage was seen to be very keen on maintaining unity among the different political parties operating in Darjeeling Hills for which it had held a meeting with the leaders and representatives

³⁷¹*The Telegraph*, 21.02.2008.

³⁷²Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*, 146.

³⁷³The information was given by Dawa Lepcha, an active member of GJMM.

of other political parties in Darjeeling. But the relationship with ABGL led by Madan Tamang and GJM gradually deteriorated.³⁷⁴ It is debatable to what extent Gandhian idealism has been successful, particularly in light of the 2010 murder of Madan Tamang³⁷⁵ who was the leader of *Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League*. One of the most vocal critics of the GJMM was Madan Tamang; he did not support the GJMM, whom he accused of corruption and deception. After the TMC government came into power in West Bengal, a tripartite agreement was signed between GJM, West Bengal government and the government of India.³⁷⁶ The primary goal was to create a self-governing autonomous entity to manage the area and foster the socioeconomic, infrastructural, educational, and linguistic growth of Gorkhas. Bimal Gurung under his leadership people in the Darjeeling district the Dooars and other parts of India overwhelmingly backed the leadership's desire for statehood but later in 2011 Gurung followed in the same footsteps of Ghising. His promise to achieve Gorkhaland by 10 March, 2010 otherwise he would commit suicide was not met. As an alternative, Gorkha Territorial Administration was formed an Autonomous District Council instead of state. At the same year 2011 the two combined party i.e., the Gorkha *Janmukti Morcha* and the *Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad (ABAVP)* came into conclusion with the proposal of the new administrative body called the Gorkhaland and Adivasi Territorial Administration (GATA) in the place of GTA.³⁷⁷ However, the demand was not taken seriously. Hence, the GTA was formed in 2012 to replace the DGHC which was formed in 1988 which administered the Darjeeling

³⁷⁴Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*,209.

³⁷⁵*The Indian Express*, "Gorkha Leader Madan Tamang killed, Darjeeling Tense", 21.05.2010.

³⁷⁶*The Times of India*, "Darjeeling tripartite pact signed for Gorkhaland Territorial Administration", 08.07.2011.

³⁷⁷*The Hindu*, "Plea to rename Gorkha Council", 30.11.2011.

hills almost for 23 years.³⁷⁸ Right after the formation of an administrative body GTA election was held on July 29, 2012, where GTA contested the election poll.³⁷⁹ Despite many critics from opposition parties, the GJM received 28 seats³⁸⁰ and GJM candidates won all the constituencies.³⁸¹ However, over the period, the GJM the functioning body has severe dissatisfaction and revived the demand once again. The resolution to recommend the formation of a separate Telangana state also geared up the demand of Gorkhaland.³⁸² Hence, with this view on July 30, 2013, Bimal Gurung resigned from the GTA.

4.2.5. Madan Tamang: A leader of AIGL in Darjeeling Hills

Madan Tamang had entered politics in 1969. In their collage days, he became more interested in politics and had a close relationship with the leader of AIGL, Deo Prakash Rai. Being associated with *Tarun Gorkha*, the youth wing of AIGL, Tamang has potential to speak fluently in front of the mass. Thus he was known for his oratory skill. In due course of time, he became the District Secretary of the Gorkha League in 1977, but eventually, he resigned from District Secretary of the Gorkha League in 1980s. After the resignation, he worked in *Pranta Parishad*, intimately related with Subash Ghising till Ghising started GNLF in 1980. In the meantime, Ghising's main adversary, the *Pranta Parishad*, launched a campaign to include the Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, working with groups like the Nepali *Bhasa*

³⁷⁸*The Times of India*, “Darjeeling tripartite pact signed for Gorkhaland Territorial Administration”, 08.07.2011.

³⁷⁹*The Hindustan Times*, “Gorkha Janmukti Morcha to contest GTA elections”, 30.05.2012.

³⁸⁰Vivek Chhetri,, Avijit Sinha, “Morcha gets 28, Gurung thanks CPM”, *The Telegraph*, Calcutta: 13.07.2012.

³⁸¹*The Darjeeling Times*, “GJM sweeps maiden GTA polls, not to give up Gorkhaland demand”, 02.08.2012.

³⁸²*Rediff.com*, “UPA finally grants Telangana: Hyderabad common capital”, 30.07.2013.

Manyata Samiti. In the year between 1986 and 1988, Tamang openly criticized Ghising for corruption and violence.³⁸³

Madan Tamang founded the Gorkha Democratic Front (GDF) in 1992 to oppose the GNLF's opposition to the constitutional inclusion of Nepali as Ghising and his party was opted for Gorkha instead of Nepali.³⁸⁴ Simultaneously, both rivalries seems extreme level, as in public meeting bashed each other. The AIGL, in alliance with other parties like the Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists (CPRM), Congress, and *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), founded the People's Democratic Front (PDF) against GNLF. In 2001, the Gorkha Democratic Front (GDF) amalgamated with AIGL, and under the leadership of Madan Tamang.³⁸⁵

Fig.4.4. Glimpse of giving an interview for THE WEEK by Madan Tamang



Source: Tapash Ganguly and R. Prsannan, “Land of contention”, *THE WEEK*, June 15-21, 1986: 24-25.

³⁸³Ranabir Samaddar, *The Politics of Autonomy: Indian Experiences*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005:191.

³⁸⁴*The Telegraph*, “Voice of Opposition, always”, 22.05.2000.

³⁸⁵*The Darjeeling Times*, “Interview with Mr. Madan Tamang, President of Gorkha League”, 07.12.2006.

The AIGL had been protesting the GNLF and Subash Ghising's alleged authoritarian actions while Madan Tamang served as its head. The most important effort spearheaded by Tamang was to oppose the Sixth Schedule proposal put forth by Subash Ghising in 2005 since it could not fulfil the goals of the hill people for a separate state of Gorkhaland. The leadership, however, did not offer a replacement for it or a detailed plan for achieving the creation of a separate state for Gorkhaland. Though they (Subash Ghising & Madan Tamang) were fighting for same cause there was no love lost between them. The statement by Tamang for Ghising- "*I don't think Subash Ghising is doing any good to our cause*" he added, "*his action and programmes suggest that he is a counter-leader who wants to bury all the hopes and aspirations of the Gorkhas by raising communal slogans...If in the name of a democratic movement he exhorts militancy and harasses people of other communities, we won't remain docile...In our movement all the residents of Darjeeling district, be they Nepalis or Bengalis or Marwaris, would take part*".³⁸⁶

Subash Ghising attempt to put into effect the Sixth Schedule caused a leadership void in the GNLF when Bimal Gurung opposed the idea, which resulted in Bimal Gurung expulsion from the organisation. On October 7, 2007, Bimal Gurung founded the *Gorkha Janamukti Morcha* (GJMM) with the goal of opposing the proposed Sixth Schedule and the creation of a breakaway state of Gorkhaland.³⁸⁷ The growth of a new party when the *Gorkha Janamukti Morcha* (GJMM) was being led by Bimal Gurung, Tamang did not remain silent; instead, he spoke out against Bimal Gurung and the GJMM, accusing him of being corrupt.

³⁸⁶Tapash Ganguly and R. Prasannan, "Land of Contention", *THE WEEK*, A Malatala Manorama Publication, June 15-21, 1986.

³⁸⁷Bomjan, 2008, *Op.cit.*, 135.

Madan Tamang, during his leadership always looked for unity work for the statehood and recommended collective leadership. The entrance of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, which reduced the Gorkhas to a tiny minority, was attributed by Madan Tamang to the Indian government's immigration policy. He also spoke against the friendly relationship between KPP President Atul Roy and GJM as Roy in the early day submitted a memorandum to the Union Home Ministry stating Gorkhas as non-Indians. Tamang opposed an agreement for an interim setup for Darjeeling Hill submitted to P. Chidambaram, Home Minister of India, which had been initiated by GJMM. Therefore, He emphasised that the sacrifices made by the residents of the Darjeeling Hills are made for the ultimate aim “state” of Gorkhaland, not for any kind of setup. In this issue, Tamang called for a meeting on May 8, 2010 with nearly eight different parties which includes the efforts to put up an interim agreement for the Darjeeling Hills are being opposed by the AIGL, CPRM, BJP, Gorkha Rashtriya Congress, and others. In the Darjeeling Hills, he made several attempts to organise public gatherings. He decided to hold meeting on May 21, 2010 to celebrate the 68th foundation day of AIGL. However, due to meeting scheduled by JAKS (*Janamukti Asthaya Karmachari Sangathan*) at same venue, Madan Tamang switched from Chowk Bazar to Clubside Motor Stand as his location. As he was arranging the basic for the meeting, some armed assailants came into the venue and hacked Tamang with Khukuri. He was taken to the Planter Hospital, but then He was sent to the District Hospital, where his death was pronounced.³⁸⁸

After Madan Tamang death, the push factor for a separate statehood temporarily changed its direction. The GJMM was blamed for his murder and the General Secretary of AIGL Laxman Pradhan had lodged an FIR against Bimal Gurung. The

³⁸⁸*The Times of India*, “Gorkha leader Madan Tamang hacked in Public”, 22.05.2010.

slogans against the GJMM served as a vehicle for the opinions of the Darjeeling locals. Following this episode, a number of the senior GJMM leaders as well as the members of the Study Forum³⁸⁹ filed their resignations from the party. Madan Tamang was a great orator and his ideology was different from other leaders which made him unique. In his Interview answering the question he pointedly said that if all the parties come together then it would be easier to get the ultimate goal.³⁹⁰ The murder of Madan Tamang presented the Morcha leadership with a significant challenge because the Tripartite Meeting between the Central Government, the State Government, and the GJMM was supposed to take place at that time, but the accusations against the Morcha leadership for Tamang murder cast doubt on the position of the GJMM Party leadership.

4.3. Leadership & Malfunctions

The movement was influenced with the strategy of leaders at the different point in time. The above paragraphs indulged with the roles and strategies and leadership for the demand for separate statehood. Now the question arises as to why they fail or shall they are considered a failure because the demand still yet to be fulfilled. In this paragraph, lets deal with the malfunctions of respective leaders who had directly or indirectly led nowhere for separate statehood.

Sonam Wangel Ladenla and his other partners led the first-ever appeal for a “separate administrative set-up” for the Darjeeling district in 1907. The Hillmen's Association was established in 1917, and it petitioned the Chief Secretary of the Government of Bengal and E.S. Montague, who was the Secretary of State for India at the time, for

³⁸⁹The Study Forum is a body of intellectual like Professors, Former IAS Officers constituted by GJMM to participate in the meetings and to make draft and suggestions.

³⁹⁰*The Darjeeling Times*, “Interview with Mr. Madan Tamang, President of Gorkha League”, 07.12.2006.

the administrative separation of Darjeeling.³⁹¹ The Hillmen's Association only submitted various memorandums and appealed to the higher authority. The Association never did other activities apart from submitting memorandums.

Secondly, under the leadership of Damber Singh Gurung, the All India Gorkha League came into existence in the year 1940. During his Presidentship, sessions were organized in different places and pointed out the important objectives of AIGL and submitted memorandums to the viceroy/higher authority. Under his leadership, articulated the idea of a merger of Darjeeling with Assam. The idea was not at all efficient but then he extended the activities to issues of Gorkha living in the region. Almost after the seven year of leadership of All India Gorkha League he died in 1948. After his death, the organization did not go as effectively as earlier. After considering the leadership of Damber Singh Gurung during his tenure the question arises why he was not successful in term of his approach. The point is if he was able to convince the higher authority power about the idea of the Assam and Darjeeling merger then was it productive steps rather the core idea of separate statehood quenched in the process.

The next important party that came into highlights in the Darjeeling region was the CPI party, Ratanlal Brahmin the Nepali Communist Leader. He was also known as *Maila Baje*. The Communist was dynamically involved and generated the idea of a separate state of "Gorkhasthan".³⁹² The CPI's Plan was for a "Free Gorkhasthan in Free India", by joining the "three contiguous areas of Darjeeling district, southern Sikkim and Nepal". At some point of time, they kept silent on the issue of "Gorkhasthan" but as soon as the tenure of election in 1946 rises the voice for the

³⁹¹Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 76-77.

³⁹²Samanta, 2000, *Op.cit.*, 97.

formation of “Gorkhasthan” started. Why do such an agenda rise only at election time, they could do such steps on normal days too.

Leaders of the Nepali Communist Party from Darjeeling, Ratanlal Brahmin and G.L. Subba, were vociferous proponents of local autonomy. Only they differentiated about the idea of Gorkhasthan as communist leaders. At the end, again they revised the idea of Gorkhasthan by dropping Nepal and Sikkim from the plan in 1951. In this context, one can understand that leaders themselves are not sure about the idea of their exact demand. They keep on modifying and changing the norms of demand and however during the non-elections time their demands- “Gorkhasthan” kept in low key. At the time of independence of India, the Communist Party of India had made a demand for a country called “Gorkhasthan”. But the same party after the Independence of the country found to have modified the “Gorkhasthan” into Regional Autonomy. Thus, the same agenda time and again twisted and turned into such a way that nobody would realize it.

In the early 1980s, under the leadership of Subhas Ghising new party was formed called GNLF Gorkha National Liberation Front. Subash Ghising as a leader, he has successfully marked himself as a leader and he was also able to make a mark in the Gorkhaland movement in multiple ways. The Gorkhaland Movement first manifested as an identity-based Movement under his direction. Subash Ghising's leadership is therefore responsible for the emergence of the sense of national identity and a motivated sense of community togetherness. The picture below **Fig.4.5** says a lot about him. Once he was delivering a speech he stated that- “*Nothing short of Gorkhaland Movement*”.³⁹³ But at the same time after so many years of violent

³⁹³THE WEEK, A Malatala Manorama Publication, November 9-15, 1986.

movement under the leadership of Ghising, he agreed to drop the ultimate goal which was Gorkhaland a separate state. Hence, the result of the tripartite meeting was DGHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council). Previous Ghising public speech stating: “By 1987 we will make our Gorkhaland” became a sort of banter.

During his tenure the movement marked such a high impact that national and local channel broadcasted the news of the movement. The movement was a kind of “DO and Die” situation. At that particular moment, Ghising was able to bring a permanent solution for the entire Indian Nepalis/ Gorkhas. But somehow he was settled with the one administrative body i.e., DGHC.

Fig.4.5. View of Ghising Delivering his speech



Source: *THE WEEK*, A Malatala Manorama Publication, November 9-15, 1986.

The posters hanging on the walls of Darjeeling ‘We have no states. All over India, we are subjected to constitutional torture. We want our government and the return of our land from Bengal. Our future is seriously in jeopardy. To be a slave is preferable to

death. Therefore, everyone must fight for Gorkhaland'.³⁹⁴ It signifies the needs of the people of Darjeeling District for the demands. The GNLF had adopted three pronged strategy to achieve the objectives. In the first place, it launched a violent movement in Darjeeling and issued calls for the boycott of the national festivals like the Republic Days to put pressure on the government at the centre and states to concede its demand. It had developed connections with other clandestine group operating National People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSGN). Chinese-made advanced arms allegedly bring into the state's northeast via Burma and purchased by GNLF activists. It was found by the police that some of the GNLF activists had undergone training in Mizoram under the supervision of the Mizo National Front soldiers. The nature of violence and arson during the June 1987 *bandh* suggested the involvement of the trained guerrillas. It contacted the foreign governments and the UN soliciting their support to its cause.³⁹⁵

The 1986s movement was so violent spearheading Ghising that a huge amount of property destroyed not only peoples from their region lost their lives during the inter-party clashes. Now the question arises as he did fine for the sake of statehood i.e., killing, mass disturbance, education quality hampered so and so forth. Despite of huge sacrifice he came to the conclusion of DGHC an administrative body where he became the chairperson for almost 20 years.

After Ghising, the new party emerged under the leadership of Bimal Gurung named as *Gorkha Janamukti Morcha* (GJMM). Though the movement was non-violence exactly opposite of the previous movement somehow, in the end, Gurung failed to

³⁹⁴Prabhat Datta, "The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.52, No.2, April-June 1991:228.

³⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 230.

bring out the actual goal of Indian Nepalis. After such massive peaceful agitation, rally and hunger strike ultimately turn out the replacement of DGHC which was nothing new. A Gorkha Territorial Administration was formed an Autonomous District Council instead of state.

Madan Tamang is known to be an opposition leader, who managed to stick to the demand for statehood but he spends his political life countering the other opposition parties. Under Madan Tamang direction, the AIGL has been criticising the GNLF and Subash Ghising authoritarian behaviour. The Sixth Schedule plan, which Subash Ghising initiated in 2005, was the focus of Tamang most major effort because it fell short of the public's hopes for Gorkhaland to be recognised as a distinct state. During the tenure of Bimal Gurung, he was also levelled as a corrupt leader by him. While delivering interviews Tamang usually talked about the unity and oneness brings success in every aspect. The question is why he always stands alone despite knowing the importance of unity.

The people of Hills have suffered long and patiently. An increasing percentage of the populace remains unemployed. Yet, the promises never cease. The speeches are never curtailed.³⁹⁶ Above all none of these leaders came into one platform for the cause of statehood. All they did was bashing each other even though together they had acted as well as they could. The most frustrating part was about the special treatment given to those who has supported them or followed them from behind at the time of particular tenure of leader. For them it was like getting tiny Gorkhaland for their entire life, getting job done within a second was only their main motives rather than the ultimate goal. Hence, this had created deep-rooted frustration among the people, which was

³⁹⁶*Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69, Regd. No. C-255, "No Gorkha Land in Future!", March 15, 1982:22.*

being exploited by reactionary and vested interests resulting in the demand for a separate state in the name of Gorkhaland. The demand was being exploited by interested and designing persons and parties. No political leaders have so far taken pains to explain its real frame work and viability. It has not yet been given a serious outlook because of failure misunderstanding and misgiving persists everywhere.³⁹⁷

4.4. The Media & the Movement

According to the 1977 report of the Register of Newspapers for India, India continued to be the second largest publisher of daily newspapers in the world in 1976, with a marginal increase to 875 from 835 in 1975.³⁹⁸ Starting from 1886 onwards, Darjeeling witnessed a large number of publications in Nepali, English, and Bengali and Tibetan language. During the colonial period also many Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas the demand a separate administrative setup speak through the power of writing, a huge number of magazines and newsletters. Several vernacular publications i.e., *Gorkha Bharat Jiban* 1886, monthly, edited by Motiram Bhatt and published from Benaras, was not only the first Nepali but also the first Neplease magazine, *Gorkha Khabar Kagat* 1901 by Ganga Prasad Pradhan, *Upanyas Tarbngini* 1902, monthly, Benaras, Pandit S.S. Sharma, were published.³⁹⁹ The magazines and newspapers were *Chandra* 1914, Benaras by Madhavprasad, *Gorkhali* 1915, weekly by Suryabikram Kewali and *Chandrika* 1918, monthly by Parasmoni Pradhan. But *Chandrika* discontinued after 12 issues due to economic constraints and so did *Gorkhali* after 1919.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷A.B. Pradhan, "Our Twin Demand Creation of a New District- A Prelude". *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly*, Reg.No.18436/69, September 23, 1972:2.

³⁹⁸Ramesh Dural, "Media and Politics: An Exploration of the Role of Media in Political Movements in the Context of Darjeeling Hills in West Bengal", *Political Studies*, Vol.11, March-October, 2015:113.

³⁹⁹Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 228-229.

⁴⁰⁰*Ibid.*,

In the later part of the 1950s, Tibetan publications started appearing after the refugees reached Darjeeling. They focused most of their writing on the dire circumstances of the refugees and their desire to liberate Tibet and about their culture and religion also in Nepali Novel named *Nayo* were written about the Tibetans as a refugee in India. According to T.B Subba, the Nepali Journalists till 1950s their writing was only focus on Nepal than India about injustices by the Ranas. Later on, the writings of P.P. Sharma in *Aba* dealt with statehood and identity. Their role in the political mobilization of the Nepalis for the attainment of statehood cannot be overestimated. The early newspapers and magazines had strong national evocations, which did help to build up a strong Gorkha Identity. During 1980s the editors like B.D. Basnet, the editor of *Himalayan Observer*, the *Swantra Manchko Bulletin* was edited by Narjit Singh Chettri, *Hemali Bela* edited by C.K. Shrestha, *Himalchuli* edited by Suhas Talukdar who was a *Sahitya Akademi* winner in 1978, had grown much mature and dealt with the significant writings. More than 90 percent of the Nepali journalism dealt with the rationale of the Gorkhaland Movement during the 1980s. The writings in 1986 and 1987 deal a lot with the defence of the movement as not “anti-national”, “secessionist”, etc.⁴⁰¹

At the same time, some journalism deals with full of negative remark about the leaders as well as on movement. Tapas Mukherjee wrote outrageously against the movement, as per his concern Nepalis were creating war with the Indian government.⁴⁰² An article published in *Frontline* magazine stated that the movement led by Ghising, a demagogic leader as a virulent threat to national unity and stability.⁴⁰³ At the same time, some of writers tried to analyze the issues of

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 230-231.

⁴⁰² Tapas Mukherjee, “Another Khalistan?”, *Sunday*, June 29-July 5, 1986.

⁴⁰³ *Frontline*, “The Gorkhaland Threat”, January 10-23, 1987.

Gorkhaland like Malini Parthasarathy who wrote for Frontline cover story about the issues and demands of Gorkhaland.⁴⁰⁴ The Statesman newspaper dated 04.01.1987 covered the news of Karnataka Chief Minister statement, Mr. Rama Krishna Hegde, felt that the GNLf demand for Gorkhaland is “both preposterous and dangerous and should not be conceded under any circumstance”. The demand for a homeland for the Gorkhas, according to him has sinister implications. “Division of Bengal should never be permitted” he affirmed.⁴⁰⁵ Hence, both for and against news broadcasted for the separate statehood issue during the movement.

Some pro-Gorkhaland journalists were: Arvind Mohan who wrote for *Sarita* in August 1986, Bishnu Khare in *Navabharat Times* of August 4 & 5, 1986, Raj Kishore in *Parivartan*, September 29, 1986, was also initially pro-Gorkhaland but turned quite neutral.⁴⁰⁶

Fig.4.6. Meme Templates (I)



Source: Govind Kholiya, “Par Ghising k pas rastha hi kya hai”, *Parivartan (Hindi)*, September 29- October 5, 1986: 18.

⁴⁰⁴Malini Parthasarathy, “A Perspectives on the issues and the Politics”, *Frontline*, January 10-23, 1987.

⁴⁰⁵Manash Ghosh “GNLF Demand Dangerous: HEGDE”, *The Statesman*, 05.01.1987.

⁴⁰⁶Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*, 242-243.

The above **Figure 4.6** meme templates tried to sarcastically explain the nature of the authority position and the demanding group. The meme depicted the before and after nature of both the group-government authority state of nature and the separate statehood demanding group as well. The second meme templates (below) **Figure 4.7** depicted sarcastically both the government leaders playing the emotion of entire Indian Nepalis.

Thus through the meme templates print media plays a vital role during the movement. It is more powerful medium as every aspect of people can understand seeing the meme what exactly they tried to mention through the memes. As it was mentioned earlier some memes show against the government or some show for the movement. However, both kinds of memes have been seen throughout the movement.

Fig.4.7. Meme Templates (II)



Source: Nikhil Chakravarty, “Centre and State must move in harmony over Gorkhaland”, *The Telegraph*, 09.11.1986.

Under Subash Ghising leadership, the print media accelerated the movement even further in the 1980s because he was a prominent literary character. During the movement he sent letters and memorandums to the government of India. His goal was

to get the national media's attention in order to prevent the movement from being put down. Likewise, during the Bimal Gurung period since 2007, electronic media has been mobilized where own homepage was created to provide information on various issues, strategies and developments in the movement. Following the passing of ABGL leader Madan Tamang, a weblog called *Madan Manch* was established as a place where members of the organisation could congregate and communicate. Therefore, the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling has experienced leadership's attempt to mobilize in media the course of the movement.

4.5. The Civil Society & the Movement

“True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people”.⁴⁰⁷ Emergence of people's consciousness towards the demand of having their statehood arises from the very beginning. Even Nepali language, which was recognized in the Eighth Schedule on 20th August 1992, emerged as a distinct language around 1000 AD. A number of civil society organizations, including *Himalayan Kala Mandir* (1950), *Sri Hitkari Sammelan* (1945), *Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sammelan* (1932), the *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan* (1924), and many others, developed and were fully engaged in reframing and building a self-identity. The struggle of Indian Nepalis is for the recognition and acceptance of their national identity by fellow Indians. The demand for the inclusion of the Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution was one such effort. Hence, the people became one of the important boosting factors for both the movement (*Nepali Bhasa Andolan* and Gorkhaland Movement). During the Subash Ghising's tenure, a massive mass participated in the movement. Some people lost

⁴⁰⁷M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*. July 28, 1946.

their life and the condition of life became miserable during the phase of the protest activities (1980s & post 2007s).

Fig.4.8.Participation of mass for an appeal of statehood



Source: Nagendra Gorkha, *Gorkhaland Andolan (Nepali)*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Gorkha Publishing Ltd, 1992.

They were having constant conflict between the livelihood and aspiration. At some point of time, the common people of the hills were, however, having fear of being left out if they were unwilling to be a part of the movement activities i.e., rally, protest etc. Political Leaders has misled the mass in multiple ways by making false promises regarding the statehood issues. They have represented wrong impression in front of the government authority and the common people of hill.⁴⁰⁸ The most devastating part throughout the movement was the inequality faced by the common people (the rich

⁴⁰⁸The statement given by Mahendra P. Lama during the virtual meet organize by Darjeeling-Dooars United Development Foundation and the theme was “A Separate State: The Way Forward” on 12th June 2021.

became richer and the poor became poorer).⁴⁰⁹ During the journey from Kalimpong to Darjeeling⁴¹⁰ an interesting conversation began between the two passenger stating that “*abo party politics ma lagnu parcha paisa kamawnu tareka yestai ho*” (will join the political party to earn money) and the other person agreeing on it. Through informal public conversations (was listening to the entire conversation) attempt to comprehend a local perception towards the political system of Hill. Such an impression was placed among the common people that they believed joining the political party means having wealth in different means i.e., getting contract, project and jobs and so on.

On the other hand, a group of prominent civil society members has taken the lead to bring all political parties in the Darjeeling Hills and the Dooars on board the ongoing stir for Gorkhaland. This initiative also includes an effort to build a platform for political parties of the hills and the plains to start a dialogue and forge an understanding on the statehood issue. Prominent educationalist and pro-vice chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University (Ignou) Mahendra P Lama, who was the moving force behind such an initiative, also stated that “It is vital that all political parties come together and speak in favour of statehood in a united voice”. Apart from Lama, the other advocates include prominent lawyer and Darjeeling Civil Society president B.R. Pradhan, Kisan Sangh Chief Bishnu Chettri, noted environmentalist Bharat Prakash Rai and Siliguri-based lawyer Jiwan Nath Adhikari. An appeal issued by them stating, “*This is a very critical moment for all of us to stand united both in the interest of our region and the country. We urge all national and regional political parties and their leadership in Darjeeling and the Dooars to rise above the usual political bickering, parochial thinking, partisan actions and one-upmanship, appeal to them to show that when it comes to a common cause like the*

⁴⁰⁹*Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰The journey from Kalimpong to Darjeeling on 13th December 2019

statehood demand, we are all one. We ought to respect a united platform”.⁴¹¹ Lastly, among the group, while suggesting some believed that implementing Sixth Schedule in the Hills will strengthen their position and some of them think reverse of it. Hence, It is high time that a trio meeting should be fixed among them (the Centre, State Government and political parties) to discuss the long-neglected issue.

4.5.1. Online Platforms as Alternative Media

Social media gained much importance because the people had lost confidence in forefront leaders. The numbers of group were created like The Gorkhali (17k followers), Gorkhaland Awareness Campaign (28k followers), National Forum of Indian Gorkhas People’s Movement and People’s Forum etc. These groups aimed to spread awareness plus update news related to the statehood struggle. Social Media brought about unanticipated support and solidarity from Gorkhas across the world. It took the movement from a leaders-centric to cause centric movement and made it available for public discourse. Hence, through such online platforms, leaders, political parties and also the government faced criticism for repeatedly compromising the public aspiration.

4.6. Analysis & Conclusion

The movement was shaped and created under the direction of a number of groups, including the Hillmen Association, the Gorkha League, the Communist Party of India, the *Pranta Parishad*, the GNLF, as well as the GJMM. As the movement’s leaders have changed, its approaches and goals have changed as well.

Under the leadership of Hillmen’s Association to the All India Gorkha League began with the demand of a separate administrative set-up for the Darjeeling Hills. After this

⁴¹¹Jaideep Mazumdar and Deep Gazmer, “Civil Society trying to unite voice for Gorkhaland”, *Times of India*, 06.08.2013.

demand, movement shifted into other mode under the leadership of CPI leaders who has switched the emphasis to the establishment of the region's own state, known as Gorkhasthan. In the meantime, leaders also concentrated on the language struggle to get the Nepali language added to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. For the Issue of the inclusion of the Nepali language, leaders have not seemed to unanimous stand. The demand for a separate state was the primary emphasis of the GJMM-led new phase of the Gorkhaland movement under the direction of Bimal Gurung.

At each phase, the leadership engaged different strategies and tactics, changing the form of nature of the movement according to their strength and character. At the initial stage, Hillmen's Association sent a draft and memorandum which only worked through sending such letters. The AIGL did the same work as Hillmen's Association favouring a constitutional method of struggle, whereas CPI with its leftist ideology favoured a radical strategy and approach, but nothing comes out of it. One of the most radical changes has been seen during 80s period under the leadership of Subash Ghising who advocated violent methods including the armed struggle for the protest. Before doing so he openly said while giving an interview– *“the movement would turn violent with a call for ‘do-or-die’ if the Centre joined hands with the Left Front government in West Bengal to suppress it with the CRPF and the Army. We have many ex-servicemen with us and we know how to defend ourselves if the Centre uses its forces to crush the movement”*.⁴¹² During this phase, private property and government property were destroyed, and people suffered at the utmost level. At the same time under his leadership mass movement for separate demand has come into being. The agitation was cover up by various national and local channels of media.

⁴¹²*The Telegraph*, “Ghising threatens agitation against Centre”. 25.10.1986.

Under his leadership, the movement hit the highest point as he was able to fulfil the actual demand of Indian Nepalis. Unfortunately, Ghising withdraw the demand and at last settled with the formation of DGHC Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council with some certain demands. Subash Ghising was so close to his goal yet so far.

Lastly, the movement under the Bimal Gurung GJMM (*Gorkha Janamukti Morcha*) was a drastically different mode of nature than the earlier one. The movement followed the Gandhi's ideology with Satyagrah and passive, peaceful methods and strategies. During the phase of Bimal Gurung, the public was frustrated with the failure of DGHC and against the Sixth Schedule working on by Ghising. On this verge, Bimal rose himself and the mass appreciated his non-violence strategy as public was dissatisfied an earlier phase of activities. Though both of their strategies were different but at the end Gurung also came into an agreement like Ghising. At the tripartite meeting, he came to conclusion and the formation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration for the Darjeeling Hills. The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, which was established in 1988 and managed the Darjeeling hills for almost 23 years, was replaced by the GTA in 2011 ending the cycle of violence that engulfed the area between 1986-1988. However, it failed to deliver any results. Like Ghising, Gurung was also at peak of the movement, he could have done something concrete for the Hills. Though GTA provided official recognition to 'Gorkhaland' but the GTA too lacked sufficient autonomy. What was new was perhaps a blend of Gandhigiri and non-violence on the surface with that of force, threat, and violence at the core. The movement remained more or less peaceful. However, cases of violence and of political murders did happen but not in a similar scale as in decade of the 1980s.⁴¹³

⁴¹³Sarkar, 2012., *Op.cit.*,

The opposition leader In terms of the Party resurgence, Madan Tamang admission into the AIGL has been a key step. Although he was ambitious, he made no alternative suggestions or took any explicit actions to make Gorkhaland a distinct state. At the same time, he was an eye opener for the mass highly criticized dictatorial activities of GNLF and he openly criticized Ghising for corruption. The attitude of both leaders (Ghising & Tamang) could be gauged from the answer they gave THE WEEK to the question of who would be chief of Gorkhaland, if ever such a state is formed. Tamang said: *“The day our demand is granted I would leave politics, I will be the last person to become the chief minister”*. But without any hesitation Ghising replied: *“If my people want, I can be the chief minister. It will be a small government and won’t be difficult to handle”*.⁴¹⁴ Later during Bimal Gurung tenure, he was not silent as he pointed out the drawback of the Gurung leadership. During the interview he was asked the role of being an opposition party, his reply was democracy- *“role in a democracy, at the moment we are fighting for the democracy, there is no democracy in the hills, so we are fighting for democracy, people cannot speak, there is no freedom of speech, freedom of expression, it has all been curtailed down, so our main aim is to restore democracy in the hills”*.⁴¹⁵ Throughout his life, till his last breath, he has been straightforward, as he tries to dig out the illegal activities of opposition parties deeds. Because of his outspoken character, he was murdered when he was busy preparing for the meeting. After his death movement turned into a different form, and the public seems confused and shocked. Thus, the movement has transformed into different phase along with the different leadership.

⁴¹⁴Tapash Ganguly and R. Prasanna, “Land of contention”, *THE WEEK*, A Malatala Manorama Publication, June 15-21, 1986:25.

⁴¹⁵*Darjeeling Times*, “Interview with Madan Tamang President of Gorkha League”, 07.12.2006.

Chapter-V

Government and Statehood

5.1. Introduction

The political consciousness of the Indian Gorkhas and their political involvement have always been suffered and suppressed at various levels. It was difficult for the government to respond to the movement or agitation. It said that the call for a separate state was an effort to split West Bengal in two according to them. The issue has also been treated in the same fashion as the issue of the Nepali language (discussed in an earlier chapter). It has been pending for a very long time. However, from time to time the movement also adopted violent method.⁴¹⁶ The various organizations and regional political parties has submitted a detailed history of the case to the Government of India wherein ingredients necessary for fulfilling the political, social and economic aspirations of the hill people have long been submitted. The previous chapter deals with the nature of the leadership of each leader at a particular time which leads to a different mode of movement with the change in leadership. Hence, the Government had to transact with different assemblies for the discourse of statehood. The movement received a new dimension following the differential opinion of the central and state governments about the nature of the movement. The Left Front government in West Bengal branded the movement as anti-national as it contacted the foreign countries soliciting support, issued a call to boycott national festival, and urged on the ex-servicemen to come forward and fight for Gorkhaland.

At the same time, the Prime Minister refused to consider the movement as anti-national. He argued that his concerned ministries had not received any evidence about

⁴¹⁶*The Hindustan Times*, 08.02.1988.

the anti-national character of the movement. He said that it was not anti-national because it did not seek to create an independent sovereign state of Gorkhaland.⁴¹⁷

The government has stopped viewing the Gorkha agitation as a political issue. It was seen as an agitation that interfered with local law and order, and it was believed that granting Gorkhas regional autonomy would spark similar demands from other parts of India and finally lead to India's dissolution of India and eventually national disintegration.⁴¹⁸ Benedict Anderson claims that societies should be judged by their imagined styles rather than actual veracity or untruth.⁴¹⁹ Hence, the demands for new states are not a recent phenomenon in India. In many parts of the nation, including Gorkhaland (West Bengal), Vidharba (Maharashtra), Bundelkhand (Uttar Pradesh & Madhya Pradesh) and Bodoland (Assam) there are continue to be unresolved demands for additional states.⁴²⁰

5.2. The Struggle for Statehood

The leaders of the various regional parties contend that only the establishment of an autonomous state can ensure the Gorkhas, who are similar to the Nepalese in terms of language and culture, a recognised Indian identity and ensure that they are politically represented while promoting the development of the area in the foothills of the Himalayas. Subash Ghising and the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) led a violent fight for Gorkhaland in the area from 1986 to 1988, which came to an end with the establishment of the autonomous Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). After 18 years of GNLF supremacy, in 2007, popular dissatisfaction with Ghising and

⁴¹⁷*The Telegraph*, Calcutta, 17.09.1986.

⁴¹⁸Iqbal Narain and Nilima Dutta. "India in 1986: The Continuing Struggle". *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No.2, February, 1987:181-193.

⁴¹⁹Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the origin and spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 2006.

⁴²⁰Miriam Wenner, "Challenging the State by Reproducing its Principles: The demand for 'Gorkhaland' between Regional Autonomy and the National Belonging" *Asian Ethnology: Performing Identity Politics and Culture in Northeast India and Beyond*, Vol. 72, No.2, 2013:200.

the DGHC ended in the formation of a new party, the Gorkha *Janamukti Morcha* (GJM) which revived the statehood struggle. GJM President Bimal Gurung proclaimed that in contrast to the 1986 movement, this movement would be “democratic, non-violent and Gandhian”.⁴²¹

Despite his pledge to stick to the statehood agenda, the GJM signed an agreement with West Bengal just-elected Trinamool Congress government following a four-year agitation and the central government for the establishment of a new autonomous council, the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). Bimal Gurung was chosen to lead the council in July 2012. The ferocious protest sparked by the Telangana notification and Gurung’s short-term resignation as GTA chief in July 2013, as well as the repeated reinforcement of the statehood request by other regional parties, propose that the independent Council model is not a long-term solution to the state of crisis. This is despite Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, who overwhelmingly declared to have fixed the Darjeeling issue.⁴²²

5.3. Two Different Responses

There were sharp differences of opinion between the Central government and the State government on the nature of demand and response to the movement. Whereas the West Bengal Government regarded it as anti-national and secessionist,⁴²³ the Central government regarded it as a law and order problem which the State government was trying to suppress by using the cadre of the CPM against the Gorkhas.⁴²⁴ The stand of the central government evoked sharp reactions from the

⁴²¹Miriam Wenner, “Understanding Gorkhaland” *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol.1, No.11, March 14, 2015: 33.

⁴²²*Ibid.*,

⁴²³Government of West Bengal, *Gorkhaland Agitation The Issue*, Information and Cultural Affairs Department, 1986:9.

⁴²⁴*Ibid.*,11.

different quarters. It was pointed that the centre pampered Ghising while blaming the Left Front government for complicating the situation. “The Congress (I) s short sighted game plan”, as *India Today* editorially wrote, “has suddenly given respectability to the GNLF’s Subhas Ghising...The centre, in effect, has helped him to stake the claim of being the spokesman of the 15 lakh Gorkhas in and around Darjeeling area. And he finds himself in a position to play off the centre against West Bengal in a situation where the two need maximum cooperation”.⁴²⁵

The Himalayan Observer, Editor B.D Basnet had taken an interview with the Chief Minister Joyti Basu⁴²⁶ and asked the separate state issue to know his views. His statement was, “*We will not accept the separate state demand. If the hill area is carved out into a separate state, I don’t know what benefit the people will get, and in what manner their problems would solved. We don’t like there should be division between the peoples living in the plain and the hills...*”⁴²⁷ At last, again he added by saying, “*I have already told you that we cannot agree to the demand for the separate state whether our party or any party would come to power in that state...*”⁴²⁸ Chief Minister Joyti Basu as per his statement is a concern; he has firmly said no to any such proposal for carving out a separate state for the hill region. When Jyoti Basu met the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in June 1986 the latter regarded the movement as a national problem and assured all help and necessary cooperation to the West

⁴²⁵*India Today*, editorial, 15.10.1986 quoted by Datta, Prabhat. “The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.52, No.2, April-June 1991:231.

⁴²⁶Former Chief Minister of West Bengal Joyti Basu (21 June 1977- 23 May 1982, 24 May 1982- 29 March 1987, 30 March 1987- 18 June 1991, 19 June 1991- 15 May 1996, 16 May 1996- 05 November 2000).

⁴²⁷B.D Basnet, “A Dialogue on Hills” *Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly, Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India*, R.N.18436/69, Regd. No.C-255, Vol.16, No.23 February 8, 1982:2.

⁴²⁸*Ibid.*,3.

Bengal Government in dealing with the problem. However, the Central Government in changed its views allegedly to suit its interests from time to time.⁴²⁹

The *Pranta Parishad*⁴³⁰ after returning from Delhi released a statement to the press which suggested that the meeting with Union Minister was fruitful as he asked the delegation to prepare a paper on the regional problem of the area. However, the inside story of the outcome of the 2 days meeting of *Pranta Parishad* delegation with the Home Minister said that the Minister emphasized on united approach by all sections of people and parties in the Hill area for achieving the goal of a separate state for the region.⁴³¹ However, at the same time, the centre has confirmed that there is no possibility of a Gorkhland shortly. Chief Minister Jyoti Basu has stated that his party will never entertain any such demand for a separate state for the people of Darjeeling District.⁴³² Hence, the *Pranta Parishad* unites with the Gorkha League in a campaign that called for a boycott of the 1982 Assembly polls.⁴³³ The slogan was: No- State, No –Vote. Despite the extensive campaign launched by the *Pranta Parishad* in three hill sub-divisions, political observers and officials felt that the boycott call will have an impact on the electorate.⁴³⁴ On the other hand, the Government made it clear in the Lok Sabha that it was opposed the division of West Bengal and categorically rejected the demand for a separate State of Gorkhland. Nor was it in favour of amendment of

⁴²⁹*The Times of India*, 22.09.1986.

⁴³⁰Pranta Parishad was organized in April 1980 for the demand of separate statehood adjoining Dooars area of Jalpaiguri and was joined by people from different political bodies like AIGL, the Congress, the Janata Party, ABNBS etc.

⁴³¹*Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly*, “What next for Separatists?”, *Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol.16, No.24, February 22, 1982: 4.

⁴³²*Himalayan Observer: An Independent Newsweekly*, “No Gorkha Land in Future”, *Registered Under the Registrar of Newspapers for India R.N.18436/69*, Regd. No. C-255, Vol. 16, No.25, March 8, 1982: 22.

⁴³³*Ibid.*,

⁴³⁴*The Statesman*, 15.05.1982.

the Constitution to provide for regional autonomy for the Darjeeling hill area.⁴³⁵ Even in his earlier statement, the Union Minister, Mr. Buta Singh denied meeting the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) until Mr. Subhas Ghising fulfils the conditions laid down by the chief minister of West Bengal, Mr. Jyoti Basu and also assured committee's members that there will be no division of West Bengal and the centre had been extending all help to the West Bengal government to maintain law and order.⁴³⁶ However, Mr. Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, Union Minister of State for Commerce and WBPC (I) president said in Calcutta that the State Government should take the initiative in holding talks with the GNLF leaders on the Gorkhaland Movement. He said that Delhi had no part to play in the matter. It was for the West Bengal Chief Minister to work out the modalities for talks, he felt and said, "I will soon talk to the Chief Minister" about this. He felt that the CPI (M) wanted to keep the issue alive till the Assembly poll, whether Mr. Jyoti Basu wanted it or not.⁴³⁷ After a few days later he added a comment on the Movement by saying, "We do not have least sympathy for the Gorkhaland agitation" rather the agitation destroying the economy of not only Darjeeling but all of West Bengal.⁴³⁸ Ironically, the economic issues were being raised by the Union Government again and again despite the categorical statement of Ghising that "they did not have any financial complaints other than those which are familiar all over in the country".⁴³⁹ Unfortunately, the movement issue was taken as a strategy to clear through Assembly polls. The meeting held in Delhi on November 3, 1986, where Mr. Basu reiterated the demand that the Centre must clarify its stand on the agitation. He gave a series of examples to show

⁴³⁵*The Statesman*, "Buta Singh Rejects Plea for Gorkhaland State", 07.11.1986.

⁴³⁶*The Telegraph*, "Ghising must agree to LF terms, says Buta Singh", 25.10.1986.

⁴³⁷*The Statesman*, "State must talk to GNLF", 04.11.1986.

⁴³⁸*The Statesman*, "GNLF agitation destroying State economy: Das Munshi", 09.11.1986.

⁴³⁹Government of West Bengal, *Gorkhaland Agitation The Issue*, Information and Cultural Affairs Department, 1987: 27-28.

how the Prime Minister and other Union ministers made contradictory statements making things more difficult for the state government. Hence some of the MPs sought clarification from Mr. Basu regarding the movement. Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee (BJP) pointed out that the movement was being justified it arose from the neglect of Darjeeling District. Mr. Basu replied that economically the districts of Purulia and Bankura were far more backward. Moreover, the “Gorkhaland” agitation had not touched on economic demands but was demanding a separate “homeland”, he said. On Mr. P. Upendra’s query on how far the CPI (M) was willing to accommodate the Gorkhaland demands, Mr. Basu said the CPI (M) believed in granting regional autonomy to ethnic minorities and had proved this in Tripura.⁴⁴⁰ Among those who attended the meeting were Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee (BJP), Mr. Madhu Dandavate (Janata), Mr. S.P. Malaviya and Mr. Virendra Verma (Lok Dal), Mr. V. Gopalswamy (DMK), Mr. Alladi Aruna (AIADMK), Mr. B.S. Ramoowalia (Akali Dal), Mr. Indrajit Gupta and Mrs. Geeta Mukherjee (CPI), Mr. Kishore Sahu (Congress S), Mr. Dinesh Goswami and Mr. Nagen Saitia (AGP) besides a host of CPI (M) MPs.⁴⁴¹ The above discussion on meeting and after examining the statement of Mr. Basu pointed out that he was never in the favour of movement or the separate state of Gorkhas. Mr. Jyoti Basu hold talks with the GNLFF unless it withdrew its violent movement in Darjeeling and dropped its demand for a separate State. Addressing the press conference, the Chief Minister said his Government was finding difficult to tackle the Gorkhaland agitation politically because leaders at the Centre were “speaking with many voice”. He believed that this was being done deliberately with an eye on the State Assembly elections. The West Bengal Government has distributed thousands of information leaflets on the Gorkhaland agitation in Nepali, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu.

⁴⁴⁰*The Telegraph*, “Opp. Backs Basu on GNLFF stir”, 04.11.1986.

⁴⁴¹*Ibid.*,

He particularly ridiculed the “movement for citizenship” by the GNLF and remarked that Ghising was himself of Darjeeling and had also once contested the State Assembly elections and lost. If he was not a citizen, how could he have contested the elections?⁴⁴² As soon as the meeting outcome has spread over the region, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi addressed members of the Congress Parliamentary Party, stated by saying, *“there is nothing anti-national in the movement of the Gorkhas. If there is anything anti-national it will be the sole responsibility of the state government to act accordingly”*.⁴⁴³ PM further added: *“The danger is that a section of the people is not happy with the West Bengal government. If the state government does anything to turn this section anti-national then it will be wrong on its part”*.⁴⁴⁴ Soon after his statement Ms. Mamata Banerjee (Congress-I) added to the confusion by shouting: *“The centre should give you protection since your government cannot, protect your own member”*. (This was a reference to Mr. Ananda Pathak (CPM), whose house in Darjeeling was burnt down).⁴⁴⁵ The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi once again categorically stated that West Bengal would not be divided. He accused the West Bengal government of allowing the CPI (M) cadres to confront “Gorkhaland” agitators instead of trying to bring peace, and simultaneously warned the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) that “violence would not pay”.⁴⁴⁶ Such a statement has clearly shown that neither the Central nor State Government was ready to provide the ultimate solution for the movement. Instead both the Government blamed and asking to take charge to act accordingly. The demands of the Gorkhas have never found favour with the federal administration. Mahendra Lama once said,

⁴⁴²*The Statesman*, “No Talks with GNLF until Violence Ends”, 03.11.1986.

⁴⁴³*The Telegraph*, “PM: Gorkha stir not anti-national”, 05.11.1986.

⁴⁴⁴*Ibid.*,

⁴⁴⁵*The Telegraph*, “GNLF debate disallowed, Opp. Walks out of LS”, 06.11.1986.

⁴⁴⁶*The Telegraph*, “No division, no autonomy, PM says again; CPM protests violence remark”, 14.11.1986.

'Historically, the Congress has played a role of broken promises and deceit in the hills'.⁴⁴⁷ In the 1969 election in West Bengal the United Front of the Left parties accepted both the demands of the regional autonomy and the inclusion of Nepalese in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Nepalese was earlier recognized as one of the Official languages along with Bengali by the Official Language Act passed by the West Bengal assembly in 1961. But the central government did not respond favourably to these demands. Yet, the Gorkhaland issue has been kept alive time to time for the Assembly polls.

5.3.1. Major incidents and the standpoint of the Government

The phase within 1907 to 1980s various memorandums and letter has been submitted to the higher authority by various Association and political parties. The movement was all about submitting memorandum and drafts. With the founding of the All India Gorkha League in 1943, the situation changed. The Nepali-speaking population began to recognise their language as a symbol of identity in the 1930s. The All India Gorkha League was founded as a result of the newly rising petty bourgeois element, which included small shops, business people, contractors, clerks, teachers and intellectuals, taking the initiative to organise a platform for expressing their interests. The AIGL wanted regional autonomy for Darjeeling and its merger with Assam rather than Bengal on the brink of independence. The Communist Party of India backed the call for regional autonomy and a Memorandum of Autonomy was submitted in Parliament by a CPI member in December 1937.⁴⁴⁸ In 1957, when Jawaharlal Nehru visited Darjeeling a memorandum demanding regional autonomy for Darjeeling Hill was

⁴⁴⁷Mahendra Lama, "Unquiet Hills", *The Statesman*, Calcutta, 20.04.1988 quoted by Datta, Prabhat. "The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.52, No.2, April-June 1991:232.

⁴⁴⁸Prabhat Datta, "The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.52, No.2, April-June 1991:227.

submitted to him. It was signed by the representatives of the Congress, Communist Party and All India Gorkha League. In the 1970s when Mrs. Gandhi visited Darjeeling, the rumour spread that she would announce the acceptance of Nepalese as a national language. But the hopes were belied. Morarji Desai had gone to the extent of saying that if the Gorkhas wanted to go back to Nepal; they were welcome to do so. He refused to concede anything to the Gorkhas. The resolution on regional autonomy was unanimously passed in the state legislature in 1981.⁴⁴⁹

The first mass movement was called under the leadership of GNLF. Since the very inception of the movement of a separate State by Gorkha National Liberation Front, there have been widespread remarks and statements. One of the major incidents was a three-day *bundh* (strike) observed at the call of GNLF from May 12 to May 14, 1986, shop-keepers and public servants were terrorized to keep their shutters down and stay at home, while road blocks were placed to halt the traffic. Two buses of North Bengal State Transport were damaged and several policemen were injured in the incident.⁴⁵⁰

The next serious incident happened in Kurseong, on 25th May 1986, when about 600 people, carrying deadly weapons, came to the Motor Stand in six trucks from Tindharia and Mahanadi, demanding release of persons arrested following roadblocks. Eventually, their number swelled to 2,500 and despite the declaration by the SDO that the mob was unlawful and that they should disperse, they began throwing bombs and brickbats at the police party, injuring SDO, CI and 15 other policemen, as well as two CRP personnel. When tear-gassing and *lithi* –charge failed to disperse to stop them. Thus, the imposition of curfew was imposed for the first time in the hills of Darjeeling in its whole history, and an undeclared *bundh* in the three hill

⁴⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 233.

⁴⁵⁰Chiranjib Kumar Kar, *Darjeeling Himalaya in Flames*, Varanasi-Calcutta-Darjeeling: Jetsun Publishing House, 1999: 22-23.

sub-divisions of the district on the following three days. The Government arranged for the evacuation of 3,000 stranded tourists from Darjeeling.⁴⁵¹ On 25th May, before the Kurseong firing, posters appeared in different parts of Darjeeling, making into following appeal to the Gorkha soldiers:

“Brave Gorkha soldiers protecting India- hear the news of Darjeeling. Central Government has deployed CRPF personnel in Darjeeling to kill our brothers and sisters, destroy houses and properties and have arrested many of our innocent people and sent them to the plains. Please quit the army at once, save our lives and fight CRPF- Your Relatives”. In another statement GNLf declared: *“We will fight unto death. If CRPF is used to contain the movement, we will unsheathe our kukris and behead them”.*

The next major incident took place on 27th July 1986 at Kalimpong, on the first day of the new phase of the agitation when a large mob collected at the periphery of the town with a kukri and attempt to march to the centre. When they were dispersed by the police, they regrouped in the Mela ground and on the road in front of the Kalimpong police station. Then they proceeded to attack the police station and personal inside. One policeman was knifed to death, both arms of another policeman were nearly chopped off, while the DIG of police was repeatedly stabbed and 25 policemen were injured. In this situation the police fired in self-defence, killing 13 and injuring another 38. This incident, again, was used by GNLf to declare another *bundh* for three days.⁴⁵²

The above major incidents were given an account and published by information and Cultural Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal 1986. Regarding such

⁴⁵¹*Ibid.*,

⁴⁵²Government of West Bengal, 1986, *Op.cit.*, 14.

incidents, a dozen of articles and writing has been provided from authors. But it depends on who was providing the report on such incidents. According to T. B Subba, the most authentic account of the July 27 incident has been provided by Bikram Khaling⁴⁵³ and his report had come out in the form of a booklet entitled “Blood, Sweat & Gorkhaland” in August 1986.

“The dead bodies of young boys and girls, all shot and mangled beyond recognition on that fateful Sunday of 27th July...”

“As the hands of the clock stuck 11.40 a.m... the town witnessed the first spurt of action when the jawans made the first lathi charge of the day on a couple of isolated groups of students...”

“The first blood of the day was drawn at about 1.15p.m when the CRP jawans intercepted the upcoming marchers from 7th Mile, an earmarked area, on their way to town”.

“Just when the head of the procession reached tri-junction just in front of the Police Station, a hail of stones of sizes big enough to be conveniently thrown, began to greet the advancing marchers. The stones came from the direction of the General Post Office building ahead... Thoroughly provoked and at the end of their dither, the angry mob started pelting the CRP jawans with the same stones in retaliation. This was the opening that the trigger-happy CRP jawans were looking for. No tear gas canisters were thrown, or any lathi-charge made to disperse the crowd. They simply came out shooting with the result that the Thana- junction was littered with bodies of the dead and wounded”.

⁴⁵³He was an author of booklet entitled *Blood, Sweat & Gorkhaland*, Gangtok: Universal Printers & Publishers, 1986.

The above important lines extract from Bikram Khaling booklet which was also quoted by T.B Subba.⁴⁵⁴ On the other hand, the former divisional commissioner of Jalpaiguri and the director general of Doordarshan, Mr. Bose, has justified the police firing at Kalimpong on July 27. In his report to the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, Mr. Ghose said if the police had not fired to quell a GNLFF mob the situation could have gone out of hand. The chief minister had asked Mr. Ghose to submit a report on whether the firing was necessary. Mr. Ghose submitted his report which has not yet been made public.⁴⁵⁵ The report said, “Nearly 1,000 GNLFF supporters, armed with kukris and led by the convener of the Kalimpong unit, Mr. C.K. Pradhan, had gathered at the local *mela* grounds and took out a procession to violate prohibit orders. Earlier, they burnt copies of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950 and raise slogans in favour of Gorkhaland. The report blamed the intelligence agencies for failing to pre-empt the mob and felt that more forces should have been stations at the police station.”⁴⁵⁶

After such major incidents especially after 27th July 1986, continuous clashes between CRPF jawan and GNLFF activist, firing killing and kidnapping became common.⁴⁵⁷ The district administration issued shoot-at-sight orders because of increasing incidents.⁴⁵⁸ The Union Home Minister Mr. Buta Singh asked the West Bengal Government of all assistance in introducing the law and order situation in Darjeeling and categorically stated that the Centre had rejected the Gorkha National Liberation Front demand for separate state.⁴⁵⁹ Hence he appealed to the Gorkha National

⁴⁵⁴T.B. Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development: A case study of the Gorkhaland Movement*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD, 1992:135-136.

⁴⁵⁵*The Telegraph*, “Kalimpong firing was justified, says report”, 16.10.1986.

⁴⁵⁶*Ibid.*,

⁴⁵⁷Subba, 1992, *Op.cit.*,138.

⁴⁵⁸*The Telegraph*, “Shoot orders in Darjeeling”, 19.11.1986.

⁴⁵⁹*The Telegraph*, 29.11.1986.

Liberation Front (GNLF) to give up its demand and to adopt peaceful and democratic methods for the redressing of genuine grievances.⁴⁶⁰ At the same time Mr. Das Munshi, Union Minister of State Commerce and WBPC (I) who earlier returned to Calcutta from Siliguri said he had held talks with party leaders from five district of North Bengal to “assertion the situation” prevailing in Darjeeling hills. He had learnt that the police were unnecessarily harassing the Nepalese-speaking people in plains. This was unfortunate and his party would bring such incidents to the notice of the Chief Minister he added.⁴⁶¹ However, the Anti-terrorist Act enforced in the three hill subdivisions, the law allowed the police almost total authority, and as a result, there have been more arbitrary arrests by the police.⁴⁶² On the very next day, many activists was detain under this Act.⁴⁶³ Hence, such actions have been seen throughout the years, some are genuine one and some are not.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal Left Front government is trying desperately to salvage the situation by promising a number of development plans for the hill region. It has demanded a special grant of Rs 30 crore from the centre for the hill region and has earmarked Rs 9.2 crore in the annual plan for implementing different ongoing projects in Darjeeling. By adopting these measures, the West Bengal government has virtually acknowledged the complaint made by the Nepali-speaking populations of Darjeeling that their economic needs required to be looked into from a humane and pragmatic point of view, instead of being dismissed as unimportant demands.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁰*The Telegraph*, “Give up demands Buta tells GNLF”, 07.11.1986.

⁴⁶¹*The Statesman*, “State must talk to GNLF”, 04.11.1986.

⁴⁶²*The Statesman*, 24.05.1987.

⁴⁶³*The Times of India*, 26.05.1987.

⁴⁶⁴*Economic and Political Weekly*, “Short-sighted in Darjeeling”, July 11, 1987: 1097.

5.4. Denial of Gorkhaland: An Alternative way out

The alternative solution or to cover up the situation both the DGHC and GTA formation pave a vital role. An immediate look at the provision of the accord would help one to realize that both the DGHC and GTA serve the same political-administrative purposes at the Sub-State Level. The basic question is whether the DGHC or GTA capable of reflecting the urge self-rule in any meaningful way. Both were created on the pretext of a chaotic situation and as a strategic design. Both the bodies are constituted as autonomous bodies although with no legislative powers and both the institutions emerged amidst the zigzags of political compromise and compulsion: compromise to the demand of separate state and to remain as a legitimate organizing body of the sub-State level federal administration.⁴⁶⁵ The only difference among the two is the GJM (*Gorkha Janamukti Morcha*) disagree to drop its establishment of an 'autonomous body' while calling for the creation of a separate State of Gorkhaland. It is worth noting that both the State and Central governments kept it on record that the GJM's aspiration for a separate State remains unabated even though a temporary truce has been reached, whereas the earlier DGHC agreement categorically maintained in the very first sentence that 'the GNLF has agreed to drop the demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland'. This is indeed a very significant departure in the way proposals for conflict containment was finalized in contemporary India. While in the case of the DGHC agreement the state appeared to be overpowering, in the case of the recent GTA accord the contending parties seem to have more teeth than earlier. This does not, however, mean that the significance of the

⁴⁶⁵Swatahsiddha Sarkar, "Gorkhaland Territorial Administration: An Overview", *Mainstream Weekly*, Vol. 1, No.22, May 19, 2012.

state has been diminished in a significant manner. There is hardly any deviation in the approach of the state regarding the settlement of problems.⁴⁶⁶

With the due process of Gorkhaland prior to the state response, over the last few years, certain reviving of old cultures has been seen within the Nepali community. Mass ambition has slowly faded away. Within the Gorkha (Nepali) community segregation of ethnic groups has been seen i.e., *Lepcha*, *Tamang*, *Bhutia*, *Rai*, *Limboos* etc. Gorkha as a one umbrella statement has not been seen as applicable over the few years.

Table.5.1. Census 2001: the Population figure of the three hill subdivision of Darjeeling

Name of the Division	Scheduled Caste Population	Scheduled Tribe Population	Others	Total
Darjeeling	20478	33693	333936	388107
Kalimpong	14793	38014	172413	225220
Kurseong	13818	13340	150106	177264
Total	49,089	85,047	6,56,455	7,90,591

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Government of West Bengal, 2008:13

Due to the formation and issuance of the Development Boards to the *Lepchas* and followed by *Tamangs*, the true animosity problem started. The division of the society that had been for so long coexisting despite their internal differences was made possible by the disputing of identities by emphasising the necessity for such benefits. Instead of resolving their socioeconomic issues, for which such systems were initially made viable, such state regulations have merely exacerbated their internal conflicts. The certain group of people those who are getting benefitted through Boards they do rarely bothered about the demands. The certain group of people those who are getting

⁴⁶⁶*Ibid.*,

benefitted through Boards they do rarely bothered about the demands. The state responds by giving particular beneficial boards which lead to differentiation between the tribal and non tribal communities. It affected the idea of “*Nepali, Bhutia, Lapche hami sabai Gorkhali*” which in short was abbreviated as ‘Nebula’. Due to the continuing identity privileges, the phrase “*Nepali, Bhutia, Lapche hami sabai Gorkhali*” must be used once more.

The actual problem of enmity began when Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (Trinamool Congress Party) granting of the Development Boards to the Lepcha in 2013, Tamangs Tribe in 2014, Bhutias and Sherpas tribes in 2015 to dismantle the growing sentiment of “Gorkhas and Gorkhaland”. The state government has given sum of money to the various boards for alleviation and for well-being. The Boards of Lepcha, Tamang, Bhutia and Sherpa have been situated in both Kalimpong and Darjeeling.⁴⁶⁷ Such an act created huge misbalanced among the people and the demand of a separate state as well. This is like to introduce a new source of division amongst them. Hence, the alternative methods used by the government of West Bengal to segregate them and to distracted them from their main goal and the importantly they use as political gain. As a result, Lepcha Bhutias or the receivers of the Boards became the supporters of the *Trinamool* Congress Party.

Nevertheless, the notion of ST quickly became a political tool for many local elites to gain power and resources. By capturing the sentiment of ST reservation, Ghising in

⁴⁶⁷Lepcha, Tamang, Bhutia & Sherpa Boards were formed and actively running with huge members especially in Pedong i.e., Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association/ Lepcha Development Board/ All India Lepcha Association, Tamang Development Board, Tamang Buddhist Ghedong Association, Akhil Bharatiya Buddhist Association.

2006 proposed a Sixth Schedule arrangement for the Hills that meet with strong criticism in the political sphere more than the cultural sphere.⁴⁶⁸

5.5. Conclusion

The Indian Gorkhas and their political participation have always been suffered and suppressed at various levels. The movement put the government in a difficult situation. It confirms that the desire for an independent state was an effort to split West Bengal apart into distinct states under state control. The administration has stopped seeing the Indian Gorkha agitation as a political issue. It was viewed as an agitation that disrupted local law and order, and granting Gorkhas regional autonomy would result in comparable demands from other parts of India. There were different opinions among the Central government and the State government on the nature of demand and response to the movement. The West Bengal Government regarded the movement as anti-national and secessionist⁴⁶⁹ whereas the Central government regarded it as a law and order problem which the State government was trying to suppress by using the cadre of the CPM against the Gorkhas⁴⁷⁰ and eventually causes national disintegration.

The alternative solution is imitative with the negotiation of respective parties i.e., GNLF along with central government and led the formation of DGHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) and therefore DGHC was replaced by GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Administration). The accord came up as a sequel to the long drawn urge of the Gorkhas to have autonomy and self-rule over the hilly tract of the district of Darjeeling, West Bengal. But both the bodies are constituted as autonomous bodies

⁴⁶⁸Sangay Tamang, "Becoming Twenty First Century Tribe: Between Gorkha and Tribal Identity in Darjeeling Hills", *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol.48, No.1, January- June, 2018: 71.

⁴⁶⁹Government of West Bengal, *Gorkhaland Agitation The Issue*, Information and Cultural Affairs Department, 1986: 9.

⁴⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 11.

although with no legislative powers. The craving for Gorkhaland is indeed a historic occurrence. The idea of a separate administrative arrangement for the Darjeeling hills was mooted during the early years of the twentieth century and then onwards the demand for segregation went on unabated.⁴⁷¹

Due to the formation and issuance of the Development Boards to the *Lepchas* and followed by *Tamangs*, the true animosity problem started. Such an act created huge misbalanced among the people and the demand of a separate state as well. This is like to introduce a new source of division amongst them. The division of the society that had been for so long coexisting despite their internal differences was made possible by the disputing of identities by emphasising the necessity for such benefits. Instead of resolving their socioeconomic issues, for which such systems were initially made viable, such state regulations have merely exacerbated their internal conflicts.

⁴⁷¹Sarkar, 2012., *Op.cit.*,

Chapter -VI

Conclusion

6.1. Conclusion

The region surrounding Darjeeling and the Dooars in North West Bengal, India, is termed as Gorkhaland.⁴⁷² The Problem of Gorkha Identity cannot be understood in isolation. The need here is to locate it within the compound of nation, territory, culture, and history.⁴⁷³ For generations, the people of Darjeeling have search for, yet been perennially denied. The demand for the acknowledgement of the region's identity was first voiced in 1907 and has since been expressed through a number of memos, parliamentary legislation, and talks, as well as overtly in the form of the 1980s popular movement.⁴⁷⁴ The movement's lengthy existence not only demonstrates its age but also illustrates the unique history of the area. The Gorkha people have been fighting for a long time to protect their traditional identity while also trying to establish their Indian citizenship and nationality. Immigration from Nepal to India during the colonial era has been a difficult topic since it has complicated efforts to preserve Gorkha ethnic identity.⁴⁷⁵ In the past six and half decades several smaller states have been carved out from bigger states as they possessed distinct language, cultural, geographical and anthropological attributes. States i.e. Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana after a long-drawn struggle got a separate recognized state. Unlike other states, Gorkhaland has been denied by the Government even though the situation and demand was similar with the other state (Telangana, Uttarkhand, and Andhra Pradesh). On the other hand there is state

⁴⁷²Bandana Rai, *Gorkhas the Warrior Race*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication, 2009: 279.

⁴⁷³Bidhan Golay, "Rethinking Gorkha Identity: Outside the Imperium of Discourse, Hegemony and History" *Peace and Democracy in South Asia*, Vol.2, No. 1&2, 2006: 25.

⁴⁷⁴Rai, 2009, *Op.cit.*, 279.

⁴⁷⁵*Ibid.*,

without a movement for example Chhattisgarh. In Chhattisgarh, there was no strong popular statehood movement, nor a strongly mobilized politics connected to the idea of a Chhattisgarh region but still Chhattisgarh was proposed as early as 1948.

The desire for Gorkhaland appears to be the result of a political conflict that has lasted for more than a century. The demand for Gorkhaland could be traced back to 1907. The Darjeeling people have been relentlessly pursuing their demand for an autonomous state for more than a century. Different Political parties organized meetings and made agendas for the separate state. Though the different party has come up with different time but their main motives was the same. The first phase of the movement was favoured legal Constitutional method of struggle i.e., submitting various memorandums for the demand of separate set-up administration especially by the Hillmen's Association. The incorporation of the Nepali language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution became increasingly important as the demands for autonomy started to converge. Hence to keep the language issue flaming, a different organization likes All India Nepali *Bhasa Samity*, *Bharatiya Nepali Rashtriya Prashad* was formed to agitate for the recognition of Nepali as the language of the country.

Subash Ghising served as the movement's leader throughout its second phase, which was conducted under the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) flag. More people were mobilised under his leadership, and there was a greater push for the establishment of a Nepalese homeland in India. Subhas Ghising's version of Darjeeling's history and his point were different from the rest. The second phase (1987) began with a countermovement led by CPI (M) troops to fend off the GNLF armed assault, which essentially involved killing and counter killing. Violence

continued in parts of Darjeeling district as a GNLF leader was killed and at least 40 houses were burnt by clashing groups at different places.

The third phase was emerged under the leadership of Bimal Gurung; the movement was non-violence exactly opposite of the previous movement somehow at the end Gurung failed to bring out the actual goal of Indian Nepalis. In general, this movement has proven effective in enlisting the support of the public, which has led to widespread engagement of common people. However, the demand was sidetracked by the replacement of DGHC which was nothing new. A Gorkha Territorial Administration was formed an Autonomous District Council instead of a separate state. Some people believed the formation of GTA was an achievement to a certain extent but for some, it was kind of blowing apart from their aspirations. As Sarkar has rightly mentioned the signing of the GTA deal is described in this article as a “historic day” or as a day of “unsupportable political struggle” for the masses.⁴⁷⁶ The common people suffered the most as they followed the leader and their political party decision i.e., the non-payment of bills of electricity or any other forms of tax to the government. But years later, everyone had to pay bills with an accumulated amount which was not easy for the common people to pay off. Only visible feature was paying the bills apart from this, there were a number of additional issues, and as a result, the GJMM in the hills disintegrated and the movement became silent. On the other hand, a group of prominent civil society members has taken the lead to bring all political parties in the Darjeeling Hills and the Dooars on board the ongoing stir for Gorkhaland. This initiative also includes an effort to build a platform for political parties of the hills and the plains to start a dialogue and forge an understanding of the

⁴⁷⁶Swatahsiddha Sarkar, “Gorkhaland Territorial Administration: An Overview”, *Mainstream Weekly*, Vol. I, No.22 (May 19) 2012: 12.

statehood issue. Social media gained much importance because the people had lost confidence in forefront leaders. The numbers of group were created like The *Gorkhali* (17k followers), Gorkhaland Awareness Campaign (28k followers), National Forum of Indian Gorkhas People's Movement and People's Forum etc. These groups aimed to spread awareness plus update news related to the statehood struggle. Social Media brought about unanticipated support and solidarity from Gorkhas across the world. It took the movement from a leaders-centric to cause centric movement and made it available for public discourse. Hence, through such online platform, leaders, political parties and also the government faced criticism for repeatedly compromising the public aspiration.

From the year 1907 to 2015 the nature of movement was changing from one phase to another. Hence, the reason for such changing nature of movement was the leadership qualities of leaders of different political parties of Darjeeling hill. This has caused disunity and caused the movement to experience an obstacle. Louise Tillin has rightly pointed out in her article that the principle ways in which regional politician within a region of a large state for which statehood is claimed— are accused of failing to seriously pursue goals of statehood, despite paying lip service to such goals. The first applies to those politicians who are perceived as raising demands for statehood only for personal gain, typically when they are out of power. A common refrain made in relation with statehood demands that are particularly associated with an individual politician goes something like: “*He only raises the issue at election time. He didn't do anything about it when he was in power*”.⁴⁷⁷ Thus the demands of a separate state/so called Gorkhaland Movement can be level as such statehood demands where the idea

⁴⁷⁷Louise Tillin, “Statehood and the Politics of Intent”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.46, No.20, May 14-20, 2011: 36.

of statehood is perceived as being attractive when a politician is out of power and a vehicle through which to return to power.

The Government's response to the movement was a predicament and their response was also changing in nature. It confirms that the desire for a separate state was an effort to split West Bengal apart into distinct states under state control. The administration has stopped seeing the Indian Gorkha agitation as a political issue. It was viewed as an agitation that disturbed local law and order, and granting Gorkhas regional autonomy would lead to similar demands from other parts of India. There were different opinion among the Central government and the State government on the nature of demand and response to the movement. The West Bengal Government regarded the movement as anti-national and secessionist⁴⁷⁸ whereas the Central government regarded it as a law and order problem which the State government was trying to suppress by using the cadre of the CPM against the Gorkhas⁴⁷⁹ and eventually causes national disintegration.

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⁴⁷⁸Government of West Bengal, *Gorkhaland Agitation The Issue*, Information and Cultural Affairs Department, 1986: 9.

⁴⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 11.

was mooted during the early years of the twentieth century and then onwards the demand for segregation went on unabated.⁴⁸⁰

Due to the formation and issuance of the Development Boards to the *Lepchas* and followed by *Tamangs*, the true animosity problem started. Such an act created a huge misbalanced among the people and the demand of a separate state as well. This is like introducing a new source of division among them. The division of the society that had been for so long coexisting despite their internal differences was made possible by the disputing of identities by emphasising the necessity for such benefits. Instead of resolving their socioeconomic issues, for which such systems were initially made feasible, such state regulations have merely exacerbated their internal conflicts. Therefore such an act turns the nature of the movement constantly changing with no impact. This movement seemed to be a never-ending process and still continued so far.

⁴⁸⁰ Sarkar, 2012, *Op.cit.*,

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Appendix I

GORKHA NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

(State Committee)

Head Office : Darjeeling, GORKHALAND, BHARAT

(Letter to the Prime Minister of India and copy submitted to the King of Nepal)

*The Honourable Prime Minister of India
Shri Rajiv Gandhi
New Delhi*

9th July, 1986

Your Honour,

The Gorkha National Liberation Front adopted a Resolution on the 29th June 1986, that the Clause No.7 of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 21st July 1950 will be burnt on 27th July 1986 at different places by the whole victimized Gorkhas of more than six million in India, in protest against the Governments of both the countries of India and Nepal, by condemning the damaging terms and conditions of the said clause no.7 of the Indo-Nepal Treaty as the clause is directly against the will of the Gorkha people of ceded land of Sugauli Treaty of 2nd December 1815 and Cinchula Treaty of 11th November 1865 and further it has clearly pointed out and labelled the whole settled ethnic race of the Gorkhas as foreigners, immigrants or reciprocal people in every part of the country of India and the parts of their own ceded land of Sugaulee Treaty and Cinchula Treaty, and it has also pointed out that the whole Gorkhas came to India from the country of Nepal just after the year of 1950 on the basis of reciprocity and there was not even a single Gorkha in India before the crucial date of 21st July 1950.

Your Honour, if the Gorkhas came to India with their historic land and territories then the whole settled Gorkhas have every legal right to claim a citizenship of India on the basis of incorporation of territory as mentioned in the Citizenship Act of 1955 and also they have got every legal right to demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland within the Indian Union for the sake of their clear Indian identity, homeland and destiny.

Now the verdict lies with your honour, on the burning question of the Gorkhas in India before burning the Clause No. 7 of the said Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950.

For and on behalf of the whole victimized Gorkhas of India

Subash Ghisingh
President

Gorkha National Liberation Front Gorkhaland Bharat

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY WEST BENGAL
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

WEST BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Bulletin—Part I

(Brief record of the proceedings of the House)

July 2, 1977

Motion under rule 185.

Shri Biren Bose moved the following motion:

“The Nepali speaking people of India have long been demanding the constitutional recognition of the Nepali language:

In 1969 the United Front Government recognised Nepali as the official language of the three hill sub-divisions Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong of the State in addition to Bengali. Since then Nepali is being used as the official language in these areas. Further, Nepali language has been included as a subject in the graduate and post graduate levels of study in the Calcutta, North Bengal, Patna and other universities.

In the light of this, this meeting resolves to recommend, the constitutional recognition of Nepali language and its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule, to the Central Government, so that the Nepali speaking people can be knit closely into the National life of India.”

The following members and the Chief Minister took part in the debate:

1. Shri Haripada Bharati,
2. Shri Dawa Narbu La,
3. Shri Deo Prakash Rai,
4. Shri Bijoy Pal,
5. Shri Nirmal Kumar Bose,
6. Shrimati Renu Leena Subba,
7. Shri Manohar Tirkey and
8. Shri Jyoti Basu.

Shri Biren Bose exercised his right of reply.
The motion was carried nem con.

Appendix III

INDIAN YOUTH CONGRESS

President
PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI

3 Raisina Road
New Delhi-110001
Ref No. IYC/41-6/78/64

Date: 11.6.78

Dear Mr. Rai,

Received your letter dated 6.5.78. Mr. Rasaily explained me the position earlier also. In fact I was going to attend your Conference in Darjeeling, but due to my urgent pre-occupations in High Court I was frustrated and as such I could not attend the same.

So far the Nepali language is concerned the stand of the W.B.P.C.C. and our previous Government was absolutely in favour of its Constitutional recognition. I feel that now it must get all India support and I am taking personal interest to see that it gets the all India support.

Some important aspects of linguistic addition will be discussed in our Working Committee very shortly and I assure you that your desire and your stand will be honoured in that meeting.

I once again express my strong and sincere support to the cause of Nepali language and for its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of our Constitution.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(Priya Ranjan Das Munsi)

Shri Indra B. Rai,
Member, Sahitya Akademi,
15/1 Toong Soong Road,
Darjeeling District,
West Bengal.

THE BEGINNING OF GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

SUBASH GHISINGH, THE PRESIDENT OF THE GORKHA NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT SENT HIS FIRST LETTER TO SMT. INDIRA GANDHI, THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA ON AUGUST 2, 1980

*The Honourable Prime Minister of India
Shrimati Indira Gandhi
New Delhi*

This is the second time we remind you that we the Indian Gorkhas after independence are Stateless and futureless all over India. Our future was murdered by the Indian Constitution when our land and territory wrongly and blindly merged with West Bengal in 1956. It was a great mistake of the then Indian Government. As a result of it Indian Gorkhas were politically tortured all over India. Now please correct the mistake of the then Indian Government and return our land and territory from West Bengal. Under no circumstances we can remain in West Bengal. We want our own Gorkhaland Government as other citizens of India enjoying the fruits of their toil of independence as promised by the First Independence Resolution of Congress Party on 26th January, 1930. Now upto you to decide our fate and not politically but constitutionally save our future. Gorkhas are always loyal to the nation and always salute your leadership.

Sd/ Subash Ghisingh

President

Gorkha National Liberation Front

Darjeeling

Dated 2nd August 1980

(* Bulletin No.1 of the GNLF, dated 27.9.80)

Appendix V

*Telegram to the Prime Minister
Shri Rajiv Gandhi*

To

Dated 3rd December, 1984

*The Honourable
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi*

The Gorkha National Liberation Front had full hope and confidence that the demand of a separate of Gorkhaland will be conceded by the Central Government of India under the leadership of late Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi but unfortunately she passed away without giving any justice to the Gorkhas. We already boycotted two elections for the same demand of Gorkhaland in the year 1981 and 1982. Now again we are bound to boycott the coming Parliamentary election of 24th December 1984, in protest against the apartheid and genocide crime done by the states and Central Government of India to the aboriginally settled ethnic race of the Gorkhas in every parts of the country of India and the parts of their own ceded land of Sugauli Treaty of 2nd December 1815 and also for the demand of a separate state of Gorkhaland within Indian Union.

We always have faith in democracy and democratic movement but the Central Government of India is always against the democracy and democratic movement and have always encouraged the people to take up arms for the achievement of their legal demand. This is the main defect or actual political blunder of the Central Government of India since Bharat independence and it has directly damaged the true life of democracy, national integration and unity of the country. Vote boycott is the best democratic weapon of the people to protest their government in a democratic country of the world but the Central Government of India did never salute it and other democratic movements of the country and it always tried to suppress the democratic voice of the people by using illegal method of unnecessary army operation, police torture, raids and killings to its own people.

Hope that it will never repeat again in future to save the country from internal danger and the people of India will get justice on liberty, equality, fraternity and opportunity under your dynamic leadership. Now, on behalf of my organisation and my settled Gorkha people of India, I pray your honour for immediate creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland for the sake of political status and Indian identity of the whole destitute Gorkhas.

(Subash Ghisingh)
President
Gorkha National Liberation Front

*Telegram to the Prime Minister
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To

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(Subash Ghisingh)
*President
Gorkha National Liberation Front*