

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methodology**

Data for the study were collected from both the secondary sources. The primary sources of data have been collected from Questionnaire, face to face interview methods. The Questionnaire method includes –

- Structured and unstructured questions
- Open ended and close ended questions

The secondary sources of data have been collected from books, journals, census of India 1999 and 2001, published materials, various local and national news papers, periodicals etc.

### **Research Questions**

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions –

1. What is the role of women in social affairs of the Hills?
2. What are the political affairs of the Hills?
3. How far 33% reservation of seats for women will lead to their empowerment in Hill areas of Darjeeling?

4. Whether 73rd & 74th amendment is real or mere proxies of women's political participation in Hilly areas of Darjeeling?
5. Is empowerment merely a synonym for the democratization of politics in grassroots level?
6. What are the future prospects of women empowerment?
7. What is the level of actual empowerment of the women?
8. What are the major hurdles on the way of empowerment?
9. What is the level of participation of the women in political affairs?
10. What is the extent of participation of the women from upper & lower strata of the society?
11. What is the exact no. of women's political participation in the weaker sections of the society?
12. What are the factors that can contribute towards real empowerment of women?

### **Objective of the study**

Unlike, the intellectual community like Bengali and the communities like, Marwaris Gujaritis, Sindhis, Beharis and the Upians (people of Uttar Pradesh) the merchant communities whose business skills and network are in their blood. The original Nepali people of Hills are neither gifted with business skills nor intelligent in

their nature and character. These people live their lives literally by 'the sweat of their brow'. They do not own any farm lands except from the people of Kalimpong subdivision and to a larger extent Mirik, people have their own land and in the other parts of Darjeeling Hills all the agricultural land belongs to Tea Gardens. Beside this, Darjeeling Hills does not have any commercial enterprises and scope of building any industries and factories through which career opportunities of the youths of hills can be fulfilled and the economic and political condition of this area can be resolved.

The agitation in hills and the demand for separate land for Indian Gorkhas started on the basis of separate identity of Indian Gorkhas are bonafide Indian citizens of Indian origin from several generations they are born and brought up in India. Their identity as Indian citizen is always confused with the identity of a Nepali of Nepal (p. 227, The Story of Darjeeling, Basant B. Lama)

When the first batch of Indian Nepalese, or Gorkhas as they like to be called, settled in what is now Darjeeling, there was nobody to record their history. But Darjeeling was already having a resident population when the British, after a ravaging war with the fierce warriors, brought them down with guile to annex the hill tracts in 1814. That was almost 200 years ago. A decade after that General Lloyd and J W Grant of the East India Company began the first British settlements in Darjeeling, finding this place suitable for both as a getaway and sanatorium for the British administration.

The region was formally adopted by the British in 1837 and a road from Pankhabari to Ghoom, and then up to Darjeeling, leapt up almost immediately as a hotel was established in Kurseong for European travellers. By 1866, Darjeeling district as we know today was complete. But the people in hills were marginalized and dispossessed through centuries and they were fighting for poverty, unemployment, water scarcity, lack of quality higher education, roads, and mass unemployment problem which was rising day by day.

Moreover, the people of Darjeeling are very much sensitive about their historical greatness and think that their contribution is not given due recognition and all these years their economic, political, ethnic, and cultural interests have been neglected. The demand for a separate state by the Gorkhas is not a new one it was both during pre-independence and post-independence period, this demand left its impact deeply on the life Hill people as well as plain people. During the British rule in India, a separate administration set up was demanded by the Hill people's Association during 1907 and 1919 for geographical, racial, historical, religious, linguistic, economic and political issues by the leaders like, Bahadur Rai, Hari Prasad Pradhan and Ladenla of Hillmen's Association.

After the independence of India, it was Gorkha League, the first political party in Darjeeling Hills in the early forties demanded a separate land for Gorkhas or Nepalese.

The demand for separate state for the people of Darjeeling Hills became more vocal and came into limelight by the fresh agitation which was started by the newly formed political party, Gorkha National Liberation Front and its supremo Subash Ghising. But the agitation of 1980s in Darjeeling Hills for the separate state ended in bitter way and by the violent killing of Hill people by the military force. The wounds thus are centuries old and needs sensitive and diplomatic handling of this region.

More importantly, Subash Ghising sold his Gorkhaland dream 20 years ago and left Darjeeling hills more disrupted. It is generally said that, the socio, economic and political development in Darjeeling hills has gone 20 years back after the unsuccessful agitation of 1980s.

Socio-economic indicators of the Hills show that a staggering 75% of the populace, according to Laden Tenzing of Tenzing Wine Store in Kurseong, are Alcoholics. Though culturally a wine-drinking people, he says neither he nor his father remembers so many people hitting the bottle. This time around, the agitators need to be brought to the table and efforts made to address immediate issues, ensuring that the escape hatch of all the piled up despondence and hopelessness is not violence. Not again. (Indian Gorkhas are not rebels without a cause: The Times of India)

People in Darjeeling Hills live by daily earnings and it would be really hard time for them to face these Strikes. Darjeeling totally depends on tourism and telling the tourist to leave Darjeeling for

upcoming indefinite strikes would sound some more difficult. Subash Ghising never wanted intellectuals nor women to be a part of his movement. Bimal Gurung has initiated the second Phase for Gorkhaland from the year 2007. However, Bimal Gurung is opposite. He wants all the intellectuals to be part of his movement and the main vanguards of the revived movement in hills this time are '**Women Wing**' popularly known as **Nari Morcha**.