

Preface

The present thesis *Leadership and Protest Movement Dynamics: A Study in the Context of Gorkhaland and Kamtapuri Movements in West Bengal* is a qualitative research about significance of historical practices of leadership in determining the objectives, goals, ideological grounding, strategies, and tactics of the movement. In other words, it is about how leadership influences protest movement dynamics. The work examines the nature of leadership in the two protest movements in North Bengal region of West Bengal: the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling Hills and the Kamtapur Movement in Terai and Dooars region of North Bengal, both of which are fighting for territory based recognition by way of creation of separate states. It is also interesting to note that both the movements under study have a fairly long history having traversed a long journey, involving multiplicity of actors, with frequent changes in objectives, strategies and techniques of protest, led at different times by different types of leadership. This long history permits us to evaluate the role played by the movement leadership in defining the objectives of the movement and designing its protest framework and strategies. Such a study is desirable as it enables a rereading of the political leadership involved in the movement and helps analyse the ways and means of addressing the issues by the state for political stability and development.

I am indebted to several scholars and teachers from whom I have benefited in course of the present study. First and foremost, I acknowledge my indebtedness to all learned scholars whose works I have referred to in the study. I would also like to thank my revered teacher Professor Md. Yasin of the Department of Political Science for encouraging me in the present endeavour and providing me with his valuable guidance and supervision. I would also like to thank all my colleagues, both teaching and non teaching in the Department of Political Science, North Bengal University for their support and cooperation. I also owe my gratitude to faculty members of other Departments of the University who have supported me directly or indirectly in the preparation of my thesis. I also thank the staff members of the Central Library, North Bengal University, Library of the Centre for Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University, the District Library Darjeeling, among others, for their support. The present work would not have come to shape without the support and help of those who have made the aforesaid protest movements a 'lived experience', with whom I had the opportunity to consult, interview and gather information for the present study. Finally, I thank all my family members and particularly my wife Smriti and daughter Akshada who had been a constant source of inspiration in my academic pursuits.



Ramesh Dural