

## CHAPTER II

### The History of Darjeeling and the Gorkhaland Movement

#### **2.1 Gorkhaland - Introduction:**

This chapter takes a close look at the history of the Darjeeling Hills starting from 1780s that is when Darjeeling formed a part of dominions of the Chogyal of Sikkim. To understand the rise of the demand for Gorkhaland in the Hills by the majority Nepali speaking people, it is very necessary to understand the convoluted history of Darjeeling Hills consisting of wars, deeds, treaties and transfers, it is a very difficult task to dig deep into the uneven panorama of historical facts because deliberate deformation of history often fabricate the truth. The flow of migration of people due to developmental activities in the hills inexorably encouraged the articulation of a distinct identity among the Hill people which is completely different from the rest of Bengal led to the demand for a separate state as a result of a sense of exclusiveness and deprivation among the hill people.

The anticipated state of Gorkhaland in the Union of India is to be formed by carving out the Darjeeling District and the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. Gorkhaland is a proposed state in India demanded by the majority Nepali speaking people of Darjeeling hills and the people of Gorkha ethnic origin in Dooars in northern West Bengal. The movement for Gorkhaland has achieved impetus in the line of ethno-linguistic-cultural sentiment of the people who wish to recognize themselves as Gorkha.

#### **2.2 The Emergence of the Gorkhas:**

The term Gorkha is used by the people of Darjeeling to differentiate themselves from the Nepali speaking people of Nepal. Indian Gorkhas are indigenous people living all along the Himalayan belt and the North-East states of India. The Gorkhas inhabit areas in J&K, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Darjeeling, Assam, and all other states in the North- East region of India.

In all of these regions the Gorkhas claim to have a long history going back to the pre-independence days. The Gorkhas have contributed to the history of these places as soldiers,

administrators, plantation workers, agriculturalists, and as educationists. It is gradually the Gorkhas had spread to different parts and now they live in the major cities of India. The Gorkha community is not confined to any region particularly the hills but present all over the country.

The Gorkhas have made very important contributions to the Indian Freedom Struggle. Many young Gorkha soldiers laid down their lives during the Freedom Struggle. Post-independence, Gorkhas have richly contributed to the nation-building as brave soldiers defending the borders of India, members of the Constituent Assembly, Parliamentarians, Chief Ministers, MLAs, educationists, academicians, administrators, journalists, writers, sportspersons, and artists. Gorkhas speak Nepali language which is included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The ethnic identity of 'Gorkha' comes from the district of Gorkha within Nepal which was the kingdom of the Prithvi Narayan Shah. In 1835 there were 10,000 Gorkhas in the Darjeeling Hills. By the start of the twentieth century, Gorkhas made a modest socio-economic advance through government service, and a small anglicized elite developed among them. In today's Darjeeling, however, the term Gorkha tends to be applied to all Nepali-speaking people. It is a political rather than an ethnic label to embrace a multi-ethnic group consisting of indigenous tribes of the area and Nepali immigrants with Indian citizenship. What unites them all is probably their common aversion to the Bengali majority (Network, 2008).

As per as the *Gazette notification*<sup>10</sup> of India on the issue of citizenship of the Gorkhas the following was notified: Whereas it has come to the notice of the Central Government that there have been some misconception about the citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution of India of certain classes of person commonly known as Gorkhas, who had settled in India at such commencement. And whereas it is considered necessary to clear such misconception it is hereby clarified as follows:

(1) As from the commencement of the Constitution, that is as from 26-1-1950, every Gorkha who had his domicile in the territory of India, that is, in the territories which on 26-1-1950 became

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<sup>10</sup> <https://bangaloregorkha.wordpress.com/documents/gazette-notification/> accessed on 29/7/2014. (also see annexure for further details)

part of or constituted the territory of India as defined in Article-1 (2)of the Constitution of India and-

(a)Who was born in the territory of India or

(b) Either of whose parents was born in the territory of India.

(c) Who had been ordinarily resident in the territory of India for not less than five years before such commencement shall be a citizen of India as provided in Article 5 of the Constitution of India.

(2) No such person as is referred to in paragraph (1) above shall be a citizen of India or be deemed to be a citizen of India if he has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any foreign State, as provided in Article 9 of the Constitution of India.

(3) Every person who is citizen of India at the commencement of the Constitution as aforesaid shall continue to be such a citizen subject to the provision of any law that may be made Parliament as provided in Article 10 of the Constitution of India.

(4) The provisions of the Citizenship Act 1965 and the Rules and orders made there-under shall apply to the persons referred to in paragraph (1) after the commencement of Constitution (ibid).

### **2.3 History of Darjeeling district Area:**

The name ‘Darjeeling’ came from the Tibetan word ‘dorje’ meaning thunderbolt (originally the scepter of Indra) and ‘ling’ a place or land and hence ‘the land of the thundebolt’ (Dasgupta J. , 1970). So far as old records are concerned, Tibetan monks from 1757 to 1763 completed building a Budddhist Monastery on the flat land atop the observatory Hills as a branch of the Pemionchi Monastery in Sikkim. The chief abbot of this newly built monastery was named after Rinzing Dorji Lagden La<sup>11</sup>, so the Tibetans called it ‘Dorji-Ling’(ling house or abode or monastery) meaning ‘the place where Dorji lives’ (Noorani, 1987).

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<sup>11</sup> Nicholas & Deki Rhodes: A man of the Frontier, S.W. Laden La 1876-1936, His life and Times in Darjeeling and Tibet,2006.

The tract of territory that at present goes by the name Darjeeling, is literally a land of historical ironies. It had belonged to one, acquired to India by another and is claimed by group which have only a century old association with it (Chakrabarty, 1988, p. 5).

The history of Darjeeling is intertwined with that of Bengal, Sikkim and Nepal. A land mark year in the history of Darjeeling district was 1835, but it would be appropriate to trace its history before that. Prior to its acquisition by the East India Company in 1835, Darjeeling formed a part of Sikkim and for a brief period of Nepal. However neither the history of Sikkim, nor the history of Nepal furnish any account of its early history<sup>12</sup>. The area of Darjeeling formed a part of dominions of the Chogyal<sup>13</sup> of Sikkim before the 1780s, who had been engaged in unsuccessful warfare against the Gorkhas of Nepal. From 1780, the Gorkhas made several attempts to capture the entire region of Darjeeling. By the beginning of 19th century, they had overrun Sikkim as far eastward as the Teesta River and had conquered and annexed the Terai.

In the meantime, the British were engaged in preventing the Gorkhas from overrunning the whole of the northern frontier. The Anglo-Gorkha war broke out in 1814, which resulted in the defeat of the Gorkhas and subsequently led to the signing of the Sugauli Treaty in 1815. Sugauli Treaty: According to the treaty, Nepal had to cede all those territories which the Gorkhas had annexed from the Chogyal of Sikkim to the British East India Company (i.e. the area between Mechi River and Teesta River). Later in 1817, through the Treaty of Titalia, the British East India Company reinstated the Chogyal of Sikkim, restored all the tracts of land between the Mechi River and the Teesta river to the Chogyal of Sikkim and guaranteed his sovereignty<sup>14</sup>.

With the intervention of the British, the Gorkhas were prevented from turning the whole of Sikkim into a province of Nepal and Sikkim including the present District of Darjeeling was retained as a buffer state between Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet (Kluyev, 1981).

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<sup>12</sup> Webster's Third New International Dictionary II, 1982, cited in Satish Chandra et al(ed), Regionalism and National Integration, Jaipur Alakesh 1976, pp80-81.

<sup>13</sup> A title meaning a king with reference to Sikkim in its monarchical History, who rules with righteousness, duly performing the rites in accordance with the Buddhist scriptures as presided over by the Lamas.

<sup>14</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorkhaland> accessed on 14/2/2013.

The controversy did not end there. Later, in 1835, the hill of Darjeeling, including an enclave of 138 square miles (360 km<sup>2</sup>), was given to the British East India Company by Sikkim, executed with a Deed of Grant. (also Annexure I for further details ).

In November 1864, the Treaty of Sinchula was executed, in which the Bengal Dooars, which originally had been under the Cooch Behar State and taken over by Bhutan in the second half of the eighteenth century with the passes leading into the hills of Bhutan and Kalimpong were ceded to the British by Bhutan (Debnath, 2010). Kalimpong as well had been a part of Sikkim and was occupied by Bhutan in 1700; but according to the Treaty Sinchula was ceded to British India along with the eleven Bengal Dooars; though seven Assam Dooars had already been taken over by the British in 1842. The present Darjeeling district can be said to have assumed its present shape and size in 1866.

#### **2.4 Anglo Nepalese War (1814-1815):**

From 1790-1816, Darjeeling and its immediate adjacent area were swamped by the Gorkhas of Nepal. After the Anglo Nepalese War (1814-1815), the Treaty of Sigauli ( see Annexure for further details) was signed between the Gorkhas and the East India Company. Darjeeling was taken from the Gorkhas of Nepal by the British and returned to the Sikkimese after the Treaty of Titaliya. In 1835, Col Lloyd became the representative of East India Company for Darjeeling. During his tenure Darjeeling was annexed into the British Indian Empire. However the original map of Darjeeling came into existence only after the induction of Kalimpong and Duars area after the Anglo-Bhutanese war of 1864 (Treaty of Sinchula). Darjeeling as we know of today was organised in 1866.

#### **2.5 Significance of Darjeeling in Gorkha realization.**

In 1835, when British authority was extended to Darjeeling it was virtually uninhabited with the population strength stood roughly around a hundred or so though formally it boasted the residence of one of the principal kazis and had been occupied by a large village. The population was mostly of Lepcha origin. When Cambell visited Darjeeling in 1839, he found there dense forest with negligible habitation (Dash, 1911) (Chakrabarty, 1988). The Britishers had divided the conquered territory into various categories like regulated, non regulated areas on the basis of location character and importance. The Council Act of 1861 abolished such distinction. Prior to

1861 and from 1870–1874, Darjeeling District was a ‘Non-Regulated Area’ (where acts and regulations of the British Raj did not automatically apply in the district in line with rest of the country, unless specifically extended) for preservation of indigenous system of simple natives.

From 1862 to 1870, it was considered a ‘Regulated Area’. The term ‘Non-Regulated Area’ was changed to ‘Scheduled District’ which kept the area outside the ambit of general law which was in operation throughout the country, in 1874 and again to ‘Backward Tracts<sup>15</sup>’ in 1919. The status was known as ‘Partially Excluded Area’ from 1935 until the independence of India. However, the district had been kept under the overall jurisdiction of Bengal since 1912.

Following this in 1907, the first ever demand for “a separate administrative setup” for the District of Darjeeling was placed before the British government by the “leaders of the hill people”. The “Hill people” here referred to the Lepchas, Bhutias and the Gorkhas. Their main reason for doing so was their growing sense of insecurity against the educated hordes of the plain. The demand was ignored (Chakrabarty, 1988).

The memorandum of 1907, cannot be acknowledged as a concrete and crystallized effort on the part of the leaders or the elite section of the hill people. The term hill people is not used here as a special category. The author merely repeats the term used by the memorial list themselves. In 1907 memorandum was just a spark. More systematic and articulate demand for either a special status demand or autonomy from Bengal appeared in the year 1917. Once more just two yrs before another reform i.e Montague Chelmsford reforms and the subsequent govt of the India Act 1909. A deputation of Hillman off Darjeeling under the leadership of SW Ladenla and Kharga Bahadur Chettri met the then secretary of State for india Lord Chelmsford and presented the proposal for administrative separation from rest of Bengal<sup>16</sup>.

In 1917 the Hillmen's Association came into being and petitioned for the administrative separation of Darjeeling in 1917 and again in 1930 and 1934. Later in March 1920, Darjeeling planters association, european association and hillman’s association in a joint meeting at Darjeeling resolved that the Darjeeling district including the portion of jalpaiguri annexed from

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<sup>15</sup> Art 52 A (2) Government of India Act 1919.

<sup>16</sup> Charakbarty, 1988 for details see D.B Gurung, Political Socialization of the Indian Nepalese in the early twentieth century in North Bengal Review June and December 1981, ppp-118.

Bhutan in 1865 should be excluded from Bengal when the reforms scheme 1919 act will be introduced in India<sup>17</sup>.

The ethnic consciousness of Gorkhas increased with the growth in their numbers. They organised themselves into a number of organisations<sup>18</sup> and put forward many demands asserting their identity, thereby giving birth to a stronger Gorkha ethnicity and identity. Their demands ranged from wanting powers in the local district administration to wanting a separate, autonomous province. However, it was the GNLF, under the leadership of Subhash Ghising, who took the lead and became their sole spokesman in the 1980s. The GNLF raised many demands over time, such as a separate state of Gorkhaland; inclusion of Nepali/Gorkhali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution; granting of citizenship to pre-1950 settlers; abrogation of Clause 7 of the Indo-Nepalese Treaty of 1950; and the creation of a separate Indian Gorkha Regiment. (Kaushik, 2009).

## **2.6 Tea Plantation**

The thrust of the English East India Company towards Darjeeling and the adjacent region was motivated by several factors. One of the major reasons emanated from the geo-political importance of Darjeeling as a part of Sikkim with which the British commercial compulsions were also closely associated. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the British interest in the overland trade with Tibet and Central Asia and the concomitant urgency for safeguarding the Northern border of India against China and Tibet turned out to be the guiding parameters in the British Policy towards the kingdoms of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. Sikkim was of special interest to British rulers because of its strategic position. The borders of the kingdom of Sikkim touched China, Nepal, Bhutan and India. The small kingdom commanded the historic Kalimpong-Lhasa trade route which was the shortest one from India to the heart of Tibet. Two main ranges of the Himalayas – the Singalila range and the Chola range – enclosed Sikkim on the North of Darjeeling district and it was bounded on either side by Nepal and Bhutan. The major factor which motivated the drive of the British rulers towards Darjeeling was the possibility of the growth of tea industry in the district. In 1834 Lord William Bentinck had appointed a committee

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid see Gurung N.B Darjeeling (in Nepal), Kalimpong, 1971, pp.6-7.

<sup>18</sup> Examples include: Gorkha Samiti, Hillmen's Association, Gorkha Association, Hill People's Social Union, All India Gorkha League, Gorkha National Liberation Front, and so on.

to suggest ways and means for developing tea industry in India. In 1841 Dr. Campbell started in Darjeeling the experiment of growing tea plant with a few seeds from Chinese stock. Campbell's experiment followed the progress report of Jackson on tea plantation in Darjeeling. Tea cultivation on commercial scale began in the district from 1856 onwards and the industry flourished rapidly which attracted the British planters in considerable number. The following table would show the rate of growth of tea industry in Darjeeling during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Dasgupta, 1999).

**Table II.1**  
**Area under Tea Cultivation**

Year	No. of gardens	Area under cultivation (in acres)	Net production (in Lbs)
1866	39	10000	433000
1870	113	18888	3928000
1885	175	38499	9090000
1895	186	48692	11714551

(Source: Darjeeling District Gazetteers by L.S.S.O'Mally, 1907)

Along with tea plantation, the prospects of forest products and cinchona plantation had also attracted the British. The most remarkable feature of the forests of Darjeeling, which constituted more than 90% of the hill areas of the district in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and which even now cover 54% of the hill region of the district, has been the amazing variety of special laden with immense possibilities of commercial utilization.

## **2.7 The growth of Nepali Identity:**

The other important aspect of Darjeeling agitation during pre independence days was the concern of the hill people for their identity as distinct from the plain's men. Time and again they emphasized their historical, cultural and racial specialities to justify the demand of autonomy. But these identity quests till then was suffering from extra territorial loyalties. In 1930 memorandum of the Gorkha settled and domiciled in Darjeeling stated, "that the Gorkhas although domiciled in british india still cherish the customs and traditions of their ancestors"<sup>19</sup>. And the 1934 memorandum of hillsman association remarked: " hill people of this district still cherish the same tradition.... As they prevail in the home of their origin"<sup>20</sup>.Despite this limitation a new identity was gradually emerging. The Lepchas, Bhutias and various groups of tribesmen, a large section of whom came from Nepal in this process of transformation became the "hillman" and later all were to be bracketed under the umbrella identity : The Gorkha.

## **2.8 The growth of Nepali language and literature in Darjeeling Hills.**

The Census Report of 1901 shows that there existed a linguistic heterogeneity in Darjeeling hills and the process of assimilation not yet started. Linguistically, the number of Nepali speaking people in Darjeeling district was 40,101 out of total of 1,42,492 hill people. Had the demand of 1907 been accepted Nepali nationality in Darjeeling hills could never have emerged (Debnath, Social and Political Tensions in North Bengal (Since 1947), 2007).

Language has always played an instrumental factor in creating growth of identity creation in any community and the growth of Nepali Language is no exception.The following is a table which shows growth of Nepali language among different communities in the Darjeeling hill region.

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<sup>19</sup> From Chakrabarty 1988 see Why Gorkhaland p-54.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, p-57

**Table –II.2**  
**Linguistic Analysis of the hill people of Darjeeling District**

<b>Communities</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Number</b>
Rai		33,133
Chhetri	Nepali	11,597
Sanyasi	Nepali	1,151
Brahman	Nepali	6,470
Magor	Magar	11,912
Newar	Newari	5,770
Tamang	Tamang	24,465
Gurung	Gurungi	8,378
Limboo	Limboo	14,305
Sunuwar	Sunuwari	4,428
Yakha	Nepali	1,143
Dami	Nepali	4,643
Kami	Nepali	9,826
Sarki	Nepali	1,823
Dharti	Nepali	3,428
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,42,492</b>

(Source: Census Report of 1901)

In spite of the above ethnic complexities of the Darjeeling district, a composite culture began to take shape in the three sub-divisions from the beginning of the present century. The bond of unity was provided by the Nepali language which, in Nepal, used to be known as ‘Khaskura’ or ‘Gorkha’ since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In Nepal, however, ‘Khaskura’ language mostly remained confined to the upper castes of Brahmin-Chetris even after the Gorkha ascendancy under Prithvinarayan Shah and it could not easily form a link for linguistic or cultural affinity with the various low-caste ethnic groups of Nepal who spoke Tibeto-Burman languages. But in Darjeeling the situation was altogether different. The low-caste Nepali migrants like the Rais, the Limbus, the Pradhans, the Tamangs and the Kirats, who spoke Tibeto-Burman dialects, picked

up a second language 'Khaskura' Nepali of the upper caste Brahmins and the Chetris. In India, in general, and in Darjeeling in particular, Nepali language gradually forged a bond of cultural unity and an ethnic link among various groups who have migrated from Nepal. Even the Lepchas and bhutias, in spite of their religious and linguistic differences with the Nepalis, slowly but ultimately accepted Nepali as the lingua franca in the hill-subdivisions of Darjeeling.

The move to improve Nepali language was initiated by the Christian missionaries at Serampore in Hooghly district of Bengal during the 1820's. A Grammar of Nepali Language was published by them. Later on Rev. William Macfarlane introduced Nepali as a language in the school which he established in Darjeeling. However, all these efforts of Christian missionaries were mostly motivated by their proselytizing zeal. Ganga Prasad Pradhan, one of the earliest Nepali converts to Christianity, translated the Bible into Nepali language. It was only after the emergence of Nepali literati led by personalities like Paras Moni Pradhan, Dharanidhar Koirala and Suryavikram Gewali that the ethnic cultural identity of the Nepalis of Darjeeling began to assert itself. It was because of their efforts in 1918 Calcutta university recognized Nepali as a vernacular language for the purpose of composition in the matriculation, intermediate and BA examinations. In 1920, the first authentic version of grammar was done by Paras moni Pradhan who himself was an inspector of schools. Dharanidhar Koirala composed simple poems dealing with the themes of social reforms, urging all Nepalis to the task of national awakening. Surya Vikram 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 Paras Moni Pradhan in 1918. However, it was in 1901 that the 1<sup>st</sup> Nepali journal was published from Darjeeling and it was entitled as *Gorkha Khabar Kagat*. The famous Gorkha Patra was simultaneously published from Nepal. The journals published from 1900 to 1940 concentrated on different aspects of nepali society, culture and language. The social events were criticized and a radical change in the social outlook was advocated. Nepali Sahitya Sammelan Patra, published in 1932 contributed to the development of serious rose in the language (Dasgupta, 1999).

Political mobilization in the late 50s took a new shape with the ascendancy of language demand over other issues. It is true that consideration of the relationship between language and identity is fraught with difficulties yet language can broadly be viewed as one of the essentials for

formulation and maintenance of identity. Language provides the objective perspective for emphasizing group boundary. It is this sense, it is seen as an outward sign of a group's peculiar identity and a significant means of its continuation<sup>21</sup>. The language demand brought the various hill groups and tribes closer and accelerated the pace of integration of hill people and growth of Gorkha identity. The differences between 1951 and 1961 census of India demonstrated this point beyond any contemplation, for more and more people recorded Nepali as the mother tongue in place of tribal dialects. In 1961, the numerical strength of nepali or Khaskura speaking people in Darjeeling district rose to 369000 (59.9%) of the total population from a meagre 889000 (19.9% 1951). The growth was chiefly at the expense of various other tribal dialects other than the normal one<sup>22</sup>. (Chakrabarty, 1988)

The demand for inclusion of Nepali as a major language of India at as an official language in Darjeeling under Articles 345 and 347 of the Constitution of India was raised by the Gorkha League and other Associations. Under Article 245 the Legislature of a state may adopt 1 or more languages in using the State as the language or languages to be used for official purposes of the State and under Article 347 the President may direct the use of a language throughout or in a part of the State for official purposes provide He is satisfied that a substantial portion of population in the State or in a part so desires.

The State reorganization Commission report 1954 also dealt with this problem of linguistic minority and clarified the expression 'Substantial Portion of population' by '.....a state should be recognized as unilingual only where one language group constitutes about 70% or more of its entire population, and that where there is a substantial minority constituting 30% or more of the population, that State should be recognized as bilingual. The same principle might hold good at the District level that is to say, if 70% or more of the total population of a District consists of a group which is minority in a State as a whole, the language of the minority group and not the State language should be the official language in that District'<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> J Edwards, Language, Society and Identity, Blachwell, 1985,pp23 from Chakrabarty 1988.

<sup>22</sup> District Census Handbook, Darjeeling 1961, pp39-40 from Chakrabarty 1988.

<sup>23</sup> The Report of the SRC 1955, Paras:783-4,p.212.

Along with the growth of literally movement for nepali cultural identity, ethnic exclusiveness was also expressed through the demands of autonomy in Darjeeling which was not always homogeneous in nature.

## **2.9 The rise of Gorkha league: Origin of the Movement:**

On 15 May 1943, All India Gorkha League came into existence in Darjeeling. The foremost objective of the league was to integrate the gorkhas. It gained additional support after World War II with the influx of ex-soldiers from the Gurkha regiments who had been exposed to nationalist movements in Southeast Asia during service there. On 19 December 1946, the party's heart and soul, D.S. Gurung even made a plea in the Constitution Hall before the Constituent Assembly for recognition of Gorkhas as a minority community "Sir, the demand of the Gurkhas is that they must be recognized as a minority community and that they must have adequate representation in the Advisory Committee that is going to be formed. When the Anglo-Indians with only 1 lakh 42 thousand population have been recognized as a minority community, and Scheduled Castes among the Hindus have been recognized as a separate community, I do not see any reason why Gurkhas with 30 lakhs population should not be recognized as such."<sup>24</sup> But leaders within its own ranks such as Randhir Subba, were not satisfied with this meagre demand. Soon after the death of D.S. Gurung, Randhir Subba raised the demand for a separate state within the framework of the Indian Constitution called Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand could be composed one of the following ways:

Darjeeling district only or

Darjeeling district and Sikkim only or

Darjeeling district, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Dooars and Coochbehar or

Darjeeling district, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <http://nepaleseingoettingen.blogspot.in/2008/06/what-is-gorkhaland-movement.html> accessed on 03/09/2013.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid accessed on 03/09/2013

## **2.10 The demand for Gorkhasthan:**

Gorkhasthan, 'sthan' meaning 'place or land' translated loosely into English means Gorkhaland. However, the concept of Gorkhasthan as proposed by the Darjeeling District Committee of the Communist Party of India was radically different from the concept of Gorkhaland as proposed by other political parties since the 1980s. The two hence should not be taken as one and the same (Roy, Gorkhas and Gorkhaland A Socio Political Study of Gorkha People and the Gorkhaland Movement, 2012, p. 341).

This movement had such an impact that it was even discussed even by the masses. The movement never gained momentum as its leaders were organized to other purposes. On April 6, 1947, two Gorkhas Ganeshlal Subba and Ratanlal Brahmin members of the undivided CPI (Communist Party of India) submitted a romantic memorandum to Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Vice President of the Interim Government for the creation of Gorkhasthan – an independent country comprising of the present day Nepal, Darjeeling District and Sikkim (excluding its present North District). It can be so stated that the demand was more of a kind of gaining attention. It never was genuine. During the 1940s, the Communist Party of India (CPI) organized Gorkha tea workers. In presentations to the States Reorganisation Commission in 1954, the CPI favored regional autonomy for Darjeeling within West Bengal, with recognition of Nepali as a Scheduled Language. The All India Gorkha League preferred making the area a union territory under the Central government. In all from the 1950's to the 1985, first the CPI (1954), then the Congress (1955), then the triumvirate of Congress, CPI and AIGL (1957), then the United front (1967 & 1981), then again Congress (1968) and finally CPI(M) 1985 swing along with the pendulum of Regional Autonomy for Darjeeling.

In Independent India, ABGL was the first political party from the region to demand greater identity for the Gorkha ethnic group and economic freedom for the community. The rise of Darjeeling Prantha Parishad In 1980, the Pranta Parishad of Darjeeling wrote to the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, with the need to form a state for the Gorkhas of India.

## **2.11 The rise of Ghising and GNLF : Formation of DGHC**

In the 1980s, it was Subhash Ghisingh who raised the demand vigorously for the creation of a state called Gorkhaland within India to be carved out of the hills of Darjeeling and areas of Dooars and Siliguri terai contiguous to Darjeeling, at this time the West Bengal had a Left Front ministry.

The demand took a violent turn, which led to the death of over 1,200 people which is an official figure. This movement culminated with the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988 also known as DGAHC for a short time. The period from 1982-1988 saw the people of Darjeeling in agitation for the formation of a separate state. However after an agreement between the Government and the Chief of the GNLF Subhash Ghising, the agitation came to a halt and paved the way for the formation of an autonomous council for the social, economic, educational and cultural achievement of the hill people. The DGHC administered the Darjeeling hills for 23 years with some degree of autonomy. The fourth DGHC elections were due in 2004. However, the government decided not to hold elections and instead made Subhash Ghisingh the sole caretaker of the DGHC till a new Sixth Schedule tribal council was established. Resentment among the former councillors of DGHC grew rapidly. What was so inopportune was Ghising had himself kept aside the developmental issue and started diverting the attention of the hill people on not so very wanted issues after the DGHC was formed. He repeatedly threatened to restart a fresh agitation for the state of Gorkhaland.

## **2.12 The No Mans' Land Theory**

Purposeful misrepresentation of history to achieve a point is a familiar strategy used to capture a particular line of reasoning. History is witness to such things all over the world. Seeking support in history while striving for a cause is a common psychological propensity and trends towards either exaggeration or distortion. This is also a common propaganda-trick to gain respectability.

As far as the Gorkhaland movement is concerned the same thing happened from the very beginning when the GNLF under Subhash Ghising's leadership propped up the 'historical land theory', citing instances from history to claim that what has come to be known as Darjeeling was the land ceded by Nepal to British India in the course of war and treaties over the years. He

wrote the letter to King Virendra of Nepal in 1983 and also forwarded copies to several heads including Queen Elizabeth. (Bagchi, 2012, p. 10)

Ghising alleged that an international conspiracy to form a “Greater Nepal” was being hatched by joining together Darjeeling, Sikkim, the Duars and parts of lower Bhutan, with the ultimate aim of joining Nepal. In January 1992, he argued that Darjeeling and its adjoining areas were leased out to British India by Nepal and that, after independence, the lease had expired and nothing was done to sign a new treaty. Since Nepal has not reclaimed the territory, the hills of West Bengal formed a “no man’s land”. He declared that no elections could be held in the hills until it was proven that the region had been incorporated into the Indian Union after British rule (Kaushik, 2009).

One thing must be mentioned here. The line of theoretical exposition of Gorkhaland tangle has not changed much, though the mantle of leadership has changed from the GNLF and its Chief Subhash Ghising, to the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha leader Bimal Gurung. There is no evidence that Gurung’s version of Sugauli Treaty is different from Ghising’s and the bare facts of history however tell a different story. The hilly terrain of Darjeeling district was never a part of the Nepalese kingdom except for nearly three decades. Nepal invaded Sikkim which was then under Tenzing Namgyal (1769-90), the sixth Chogyal in 1787 and annexed some parts of what are known as Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri previously known as East Morgan in 1789 (Bagchi, 2012).

The East India Company captured these areas from Nepal in the course of confrontation in 1815. The Sugauli Treaty was signed the same year, though it was ratified the next year. The company turned the areas to Sikkim through a treaty known in history as the Titaliya Treaty signed between the company and the Sikkimese government in 1817. The East India Company took over parts of what are known as Darjeeling and Kurseong subdivisions from Sikkim in 1835 by way of a gift deed signed between itself and the Sikkim government, the express purpose being to set up a sanitarium and what is presently known as the Kalimpong subdivision was ceded to British India in course of the Sinchula Treaty, signed in 1865, following a war between the East India Company and the army of Bhutan (ibid).

But Ghising did not get much support for his formulated theory by his own political circle. He moved a 25 page writ petition under art 32 of the Constitution to seek “an appropriate direction from Supreme Court to the Union Home Ministry for initiating necessary legislative actions under Art 4 read with Article 2 and Article 253 of the Constitution of India for the absorption and formal admission in the Union of India vide Art1(3)(C) of the territories of Kalimpong, the Assam and the Bengal Dooars are acquired as lease-hold territory from Government of Bhutan vide treaty of Sinchula dated November11, 1865 as amended by the Treaty of Punakha dated January8,1910 and the Indo –Bhutan Treaty of August 8, 1949 as also the territories of Darjeeling which is ceded territory of Nepal vide Treaty of Sequale of 1815, treaty of 1923 and the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950”. (Kumar B. B., Small State Syndrome in India, 1998, p. 95)

Since the above mentioned area were not formally assimilated in India so no parliamentary legislation or constitutional amendment under Art.368 was passed as per the petition placed by Ghising. He claimed that the interest of the inhabitants were in jeopardy and the “ambiguity of the status” had stalled development work. Ghising and the DGHC continued to pass resolution and write to appropriate authorities to do the needful in the case. However A Division Bench of the Supreme Court dismissed the case on the ground of being a ‘political issue’(ibid, 96).

It was after this verdict that Ghising started talking to solve the issue politically.

### **2.13 The GNLF demand for Gorkhaland:**

The GNLF made numerous demands to the Central Government and the State Government. The GNLF published a Bulletin<sup>26</sup> stating the state of Gorkhaland as demanded by the party. The Bulletin reads:

- i. The name of the state would be Gorkhaland
- ii. The state of Gorkhaland would have 8 districts
- iii. The state of Gorkhaland would have 21 sub-divisions
- iv. The state of Gorkhaland would have 39 constituencies
- v. The capital of the state would be Darjeeling
- vi. Each District would have a District Court
- vii. The High Court would be at the State capital (Roy, 2012, p. 368)

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<sup>26</sup> Gorkhaland Bulletin, Gorkha National Liberation Front, Issue 1, Vol.1.27 August 1980.

## **2.14 The demand for the dissolution of the 1950 Indo-Nepal treaty of Peace and Friendship**

The 1950 India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (official name Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between The Government of India and The Government of Nepal) is a bilateral treaty between Nepal and India establishing a close strategic relationship between the two South Asian neighbours. The treaty allows free movement of people and goods between the two nations and a close relationship and collaboration on matters of defense and foreign affairs. After an abortive attempt in 1952 of the Communist Party of Nepal to seize power with Chinese backing, India and Nepal stepped up military and intelligence cooperation under treaty provisions, and India sent a military mission to Nepal<sup>27</sup>.

The GNLF was against the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship and demanded its immediate abrogation particularly Art.7 & 8 by which an open border between India and Nepal was established and the GNLF leadership believed that due to this article the Government of India deemed Gorkhas in India as reciprocal citizens of Nepal even though they were legally Indian Citizens. The party thus demanded the immediate abrogation of the treaty and the closer of the open border so that the problem arising between the Gorkhas of India and the reciprocal citizens of Nepal could be resolved.

Furthermore the GNLF argued that since the 1950 Treaty cancelled all the Treaties including the Segauli Treaty, signed between the Government of Nepal and the British East India Company in India, the Sovereign authority over Darjeeling Hills including all the northern parts of the states of Himachal Pradesh, UttarPradesh, Bihar and West Bengal reverted back to Nepal. It thus, requested the Government of India and Nepal to clarify their stand on the legal statuses of the said lands (Roy, 2012).

## **2.15 Nepali language in the 8<sup>th</sup> schedule and GNLF's opposition**

The GNLF opposed the inclusion of Nepali Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The party instead wanted the inclusion of Gorkhali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The party supremo Subhash Ghising had earlier supported the inclusion of Nepali Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution since the formation of the 'Niolo Jhannda' furthermore in the initial days of the GNLF formation Ghising even went to the extent of

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<sup>27</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1950\\_Indo-Nepal\\_Treaty\\_of\\_Peace\\_and\\_Friendship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1950_Indo-Nepal_Treaty_of_Peace_and_Friendship) accessed on 16/05/213

declaring in the Gorkhaland Bulletin that Nepali would be the official language of the state of Gorkhaland. However with the increased focus on separating the Gorkhas in India from the ‘reciprocal Nepalese’ citizens in India, Nepali language was replaced by Gorkhali<sup>28</sup> language.

### **2.16 The Gorkhaland movement and the onemanship of GNLF in Darjeeling hills**

The GNLF initiated a mass movement against the State and Central government demanding the formation of Gorkhaland. The movement immediately turned into violent clashes between various labour unions affiliated with GNLF and CPI(M) began taking course. The CPI(M) led State Government headed by Jyoti Basu quickly sought to counter the rise of the GNLF and thwart the ‘separatist tendencies’ that it thought the GNLF was increasing in the region. The GNLF called for the Assembly Polls condemning the state sponsored terrorism. The demand took a violent turn, which led to the death of over 1,200 people<sup>29</sup>. Subhash Ghising led the first GNLF delegation<sup>30</sup> to New Delhi in 1982.

### **2.17 Acceptance of DGHC and the powers of the council as Responses to Gorkhaland - Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council:**

Following the agitation that began in 1986, a tripartite agreement was reached between Government of India, Government of West Bengal, and Gorkha National Liberation Front on 25th July 1988 to set up an autonomous Hill Council (DGHC) under a State Act for “the social, economic, educational, and cultural advancement of the people residing in the Hill areas of Darjeeling District”. The Council covered the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling district and a few Mouzas within the Siliguri sub-division.

The Council was given limited executive powers but in the absence of legislative powers the aspirations of the people of the region could not be addressed. The non-inclusion of the Dooars region in the Council became a major reason of discontent. The people of the Dooars had equally participated in the movement and thus felt deceived. The Council also created a divide between the Hills and the Dooars which till then had shared a common history and heritage. All of these factors had created serious fault-lines in the Council right at the time of its inception. Over a

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<sup>28</sup> GNLF wanted the language spoken by Indian Gorkhas to be known as Gorkhali or Gorkha Bhasa.

<sup>29</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorkhaland> accessed on 23/7/14.

<sup>30</sup> The delegation composed of Subhash Ghising, B B Gurung and Nawin Tamang.

period, these fault lines, along with the apathy of the state government, led to a renewal of the voices demanding Gorkhaland. Proposal to Include Darjeeling in the Sixth Schedule In 2007, the Government of India, in consultation with the Government of West Bengal and the Council administrator, brought two amendment bills to the Parliament – Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2007 and the Constitution (107th Amendment) Bill, 2007 These bills sought to provide Sixth Schedule status for the Darjeeling Hill Areas. Given the serious trust deficit in the Hills about the functioning of the Administration and the State Government, the two bills were seen as another conspiracy to deny the aspiration of the people. Following opposition the Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs which was headed by Sushma Swaraj. In the hearings held by the Committee, all Gorkha groups rejected the proposal and reiterated that the aspirations of the people could only be met by the creation of a State. Based on the hearings and consultations, the report presented to the Rajya Sabha recorded, “The committee would like to caution and advise the ministry of home affairs (MHA) to make a fresh assessment of the ground realities all over again before proceeding with the Bills in the two Houses of Parliament.<sup>31</sup>”

Ghisingh, was not willing to hold any elections in what he saw as his sphere of influence, blamed the state government for the slip and refused to participate in these elections. He also threatened to revive the demand for a separate state. The issue of panchayat elections generated a split within the GNLf. A faction led by Madan Tamang broke away and formed a new party called the All India Gorkha League (AIGL), which participated in these elections and won a sizeable number of seats. In due course of time, the AIGL also became a platform for airing public grievances against Ghisingh for his allegedly autocratic and corrupt ways. In May 2005, the AIGL organised a massive rally to revive the demand for a separate state, but failed to mobilise mass support.

## **2.18 Incorporation of Nepali language in 8<sup>th</sup> schedule**

Ghising raised controversy over the status of Nepali language and the Nepalis in India. The DGHC Chairman declared Nepali as a foreign Language and all Nepalis as foreigners. He

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<sup>31</sup> 129th Report on the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) bill, 2007 and the Constitution (107th Amendment) Bill, 2007. Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, February, 2008. Para 7.11.

demanding the inclusion of Gorkhali, rather than Nepali in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. He even threatened to evict Nepalis from Indian soil by force and launch the agitation for the recognition of Gorkhali rather than the Nepalis as Indian citizens and Gorkhali language in place of the Nepalis. Ghising termed Nepali speaking people 'reciprocal people' and Nepali as the language of the 'reciprocal people' in terms of reference of the Article 8 of the Indo-Nepalese Treaty, which reads:

*"the Government of India and Nepal agree to grant on reciprocal basis to the nationals of the nationals of one country in the territories of other, the same privileges, in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce and privies of similar matter".* (Kumar B. B., Small State Syndrome in India, 1998)

## **2.19 The rise of Bimal Gurung and The rise of Gorkha Janmukti Morcjha Agitation under GJM**

Tranquility in the scenic town of Darjeeling and adjoining areas has been devastated by an agitation demanding a separate Gorkhaland and the removal of Subhash Ghisingh from the post of Chairman of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). The agitation as declared is part of a protest movement against the Indian government's plan to grant Sixth Schedule status to the region. The movement is led by the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJMM), which gave a call for an indefinite bandh on February 13 in support of these demands.

The top player in the ongoing agitation is the Bharatiya Gorkha Bhutpurba Sainik Morcha, an organisation that was recently formed under the aegis of the GJMM by the roughly 40,000 strong Gorkha ex-servicemen who are settled in and around Darjeeling. Interestingly, the services of these ex-servicemen were earlier utilised by Ghisingh (himself an ex-serviceman) during the Gorkhaland agitation in the mid-1980s. But on February 13 they changed their loyalty from Ghisingh to the newly formed Morcha. Faced with popular opposition, Ghisingh resigned as the caretaker administrator of DGHC on March 10. But his resignation is unlikely to restore peace because the demand for a separate state including not only Darjeeling Hills but also the Dooars is getting shriller.

Bimal Gurung was formerly a Gorkha Volunteers Corps member who fought for the creation of a Gorkhaland state in India during 1986-1988 under the Gorkha National Liberation

Front (GNLF). He became a councillor representing Tukver constituency in the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) after the previous councillor Rudra Pradhan was murdered in Darjeeling. He became a close aide of Subhash Ghisingh, the leader of GNLF and chairman of DGHC. Later, he turned against his mentor to launch the second agitation for a Gorkhaland state. Immediately upon formation of GJM, Bimal renewed the demand of the formation of a Gorkhaland state comprising the Darjeeling district and many areas of the Dooars. The total area of the proposed state is 6450 km<sup>2</sup> and comprises Banarhat, Bhaktinagar, Birpara, Chalsa, Darjeeling, Jaigaon, Kalchini, Kalimpong, Kumargram, Kurseong, Madarihat, Malbazar, Mirik and Nagarkatta. Unlike the 1980s, GJM has maintained that the struggle for Gorkhaland would be through non-violence and non-cooperation. Bimal received mass support from the people of Darjeeling district, Dooars and other parts of India for his statehood demand<sup>32</sup>.

The demand for Gorkhaland took a new turn with the assassination of Madan Tamang, leader of Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League. He was stabbed to death allegedly by Gorkha Janmukti Morcha supporters on 21 May 2010, in Darjeeling, which led to a spontaneous shutdown in the three Darjeeling hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong<sup>33</sup>. After the murder of Madan Tamang, the West Bengal government threatened action against Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, whose senior leaders are named in the FIR, meanwhile hinting discontinuation of ongoing talks over interim arrangement with the Gorkha party, saying it had "lost popular support following the assassination"<sup>34</sup>.

On 8 February 2011, three GJM activists were shot dead (one of whom succumbed to her injuries later) by the police as they tried to enter Jalpaiguri district on a padyatra led by Bimal

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<sup>32</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bimal\\_Gurung](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bimal_Gurung) accessed on 29/6/213.

<sup>33</sup> "Gorkha leader Madan Tamang killed, Darjeeling tense". *The Indian Express*. 21 May 2010. Retrieved 20 March 2012. "Gorkha leader Madan Tamang hacked in public". *The Times of India*. 22 May 2010. Retrieved 20 March 2012.

<sup>34</sup> "Tamang's murder threatens to derail Gorkhaland talks". *The Times of India*. 26 May 2010. Retrieved 20 March 2012.

Gurung from Gorubathan to Jaigaon. This led to violence in the Darjeeling hills and an indefinite strike was called by GJM that lasted 9 days<sup>35</sup>.

In the West Bengal state assembly election, 2011 held on 18 April 2011, GJM candidates won three Darjeeling hill assembly seats, proving that the demand for Gorkhaland was still strong in Darjeeling. GJM candidates Trilok Dewan won from Darjeeling constituency<sup>36</sup>, Harka Bahadur Chhetri from Kalimpong constituency, and Rohit Sharma from Kurseong constituency<sup>37</sup>. Wilson Champramari, an independent candidate supported by GJM, also won from Kalchini constituency in the Dooars<sup>38</sup>.

## **2.20 The fall of GNLF**

The Sixth Schedule Constitutional (Amendment) Bill, 2007, and the Constitutional (107th Amendment) Bill, 2007, introduced in Parliament by then Union home minister Shivraj Patil. The bill was immediately referred to the standing committee on home affairs. There was a lot of opposition to Ghising's idea of a sixth schedule status. There was a four-day general strike to protest the demand for Sixth Schedule status. Hundreds of Morcha supporters had assembled at the strategic points across the hills to stop Ghisingh from entering the region on his return from Delhi. Ghisingh stays at Pintail Village. The state government had further refused to extend the tenure of Ghisingh as "caretaker" administrator at that point of time in the year 2008. Ghisingh had rushed to Calcutta to meet then chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. Then Bhattacharjee had invited Bimal Gurung at the Writers' for the first time even as the Morcha intensifies its hunger strike and general shutdown. The standing committee on home affairs advised the government to go ahead with the implementation of the Sixth Schedule bill with "caution". Bill

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<sup>35</sup> "2 killed in police firing on GJM protesters". *The Hindu* (Chennai, India). 8 February 2011. Retrieved 20 March 2012.

<sup>36</sup> "GJM wins Darjeeling constituency by record margin of votes". *Hindustan Times*. 14 May 2011. Retrieved 20 March 2012.

<sup>37</sup> "GJM wins three Assembly seats in Darjeeling". *Zee News*. 13 May 2011. Retrieved 20 March 2012.

<sup>38</sup> "GJMM to finalise stand today". *The Statesman*. 13 May 2011. Retrieved 20 March 2012.

is shelved after this. Ghisingh resigns as caretaker administrator of the DGHC “on the request of the chief minister”. This marks the end of his onemanship rule in the hills.

The fall of GNLF, Ghisingh is himself responsible for the decline and it is very interesting to study that what could be the reason that was so strongly encouraging him for the Sixth Schedule. Ghisingh was time and again advocating that the inclusion of Darjeeling was the second best choice that was available. But this was not the truth Ghisingh had some hidden intention, he was more interested in the glaring power that was provided according to the Sixth Schedule status.

### **2.21 GJM Agitation Intensifies**

The GJM agitation got highly intensified when the morcha had aimed to boycott all the payment of taxes to the state government. Police lathicharge on ex-serviceman rally at Darjeeling More in Siliguri. Morcha called a strike in the hill. Bimal Gurung when addressing the hill people to strive for the cause made a statement that he was fully confident that Gorkhaland can be achieved. During that time the Morcha asks hill people to replace “WB” with “GL” on vehicle number plates. Drive fizzles out after vehicles with “GL” on number plates are attacked in the plains and seized by police. It was reported that Pramila Sharma, a Morcha activist, was killed by a bullet allegedly fired from the house of GNLF leader Deepak Gurung. Houses of GNLF leaders are turn upside down and burnt across the hills. Ghisingh leaves the hills the next day, making Jalpaiguri his new address. The Centre invites the Morcha and the Bengal government for the first time for talk. Morcha makes it mandatory for hill people to wear traditional dresses during the month-long tourist season. It asks hill shopkeepers to write “Gorkhaland” on shops signboards. Subsequently, “West Bengal” is replaced with “Gorkhaland” on boards of government offices.

### **2.22 The Sixth Schedule Status:**

Discontent with the denigrating attitude of administrative officials in the plains and a growing sense of insecurity against plainsmen led the Gorkhas to demand a separate administrative set-up for Darjeeling District as early as 1907. The movement was peaceful and it was alternately courted by many political parties who proposed different alternatives. The Communist Party of India favored regional autonomy for Darjeeling within West Bengal. AIGL demanded the status

of Union Territory. The Congress, the United Front and the CPI (M) all supported the demand for a special status for Darjeeling district within the Indian Union.

The situation, however, changed dramatically when the proposal to grant Sixth Schedule status to the Darjeeling Hills was made in the winter session of Parliament in 2007. Granting of Sixth Schedule status would make the way for the formation of an Autonomous Hill Council with more powers than the present Council enjoys. There are, however, opposing views on the advisability of such a course. Ghisingh is in favour of the bill since, according to him, conferring Sixth Schedule status to the Council would provide it with much needed constitutional recognition. The West Bengal government also supports Ghisingh's demand. But the GJMM, which was formed in October 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung, goes up against this move, claiming that Sixth Schedule status will be against popular sentiment, which in fact aims for a separate state.

The Centre appears to be duty vault to impose Sixth Schedule on the Darjeeling Hills since it had signed a tripartite agreement with DGHC and the West Bengal government to this effect on December 6, 2005. The big question is why both Ghisingh and the Central government are so eager on granting such a status to Darjeeling, where only 31 per cent of the population is listed as tribal? It appears to be an evident case of Ghisingh's machinations to achieve his control of the Council. The last election to the Council was held in 1999, and its term expired in March 2004. Since then, Ghisingh had been postponing elections on one pretext or the other, the latest being the implementation of the Sixth Schedule. According to the accord of 2005, elections to the Council could only be held after the full implementation of the Sixth Schedule. But till his resignation Ghisingh remained at the controls of the affairs for which purpose he was given six extensions as the care taker administrator of the Council by the government.

The implementation of the Sixth Schedule will, no doubt, increase the status of the DGHC by conferring it with greater administrative and legislative powers. But it is also seen as a scheme to perpetuate Ghisingh's reign. According to the 2005 tripartite accord, the Council will have 33 seats, out of which 10 will be reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 15 for non-tribals. Three seats will be open for all communities and five members will be nominated by the Governor of West Bengal from the unrepresented communities, of which at least two should be women. The inclusion of Ghisingh's tribe, the Tamangs, along with Limbus in the list of Scheduled Tribes in

2005 armored his chances of winning more seats in the Council since Tamangs and Limbus are numerically preponderant in the Hill district. The Centre seems to have obviously fallen for Ghisingh's political maneuver and played along since it regards him as the sole representative of the people of Darjeeling Hills.

It is fairly obvious that the imposition of the Sixth Schedule, which is meant to protect and promote the socio-cultural and economic aspirations of tribals in the states of the Northeast, is not likely to resolve the issue. The Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled areas of West Bengal are being governed by the Fifth Schedule. If the tripartite agreement of 2005 is implemented, then according to Article 244 part (1) & (2) of the Constitution, not only the Hill Council but the entire State would come under the jurisdiction of the Sixth Schedule, since a State can have either Fifth Schedule or Sixth Schedule in operation but not both. which would mean that other tribes in the state such as the Koch, Rajbanshi, Bodo, etc. who till now are under the Fifth Schedule would be included in the Sixth Schedule. If this happens, then there would be strong rivalry and conflict between them to avail of the benefits granted under Sixth Schedule, such as reservations in jobs and education. In addition, demands for the creation of autonomous councils might pour in from the tribal communities from different parts of the country. Already similar demands from Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur have been coming up and are under consideration.

### **2.23 Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)**

With rising discontent against the Council administration and the put on ice of the proposal of Sixth Schedule status to the region, another wave of a mass movement for Gorkhaland began in 2007. The Chairman of the Council was dislodged and banished along with his party members. A new leadership took over the movement. After three years of agitation for a state of Gorkhaland, the party leading the movement reached an agreement with the state government to form a semi-autonomous body to administer the Darjeeling hills.

The Memorandum of Agreement for GTA<sup>39</sup> was signed on 18 July 2011 at Pintail Village near Siliguri in the presence of Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram, West Bengal Chief Minister

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<sup>39</sup> "Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Agreement signed". Outlook. 18 July 2011. Retrieved 16 March 2012.

Mamata Banerjee and movement leaders. A bill for the creation of GTA was passed in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on 2 September 2011. The GTA will have administrative, executive and financial powers but no legislative powers. The GTA agreement too has evident integral flaws. First, lack of legislative power. Second, Dooars again has been left out and instead a verification team has been set to identify “Gorkha majority” areas in the Dooars. It can be understood by such action that it could be a divide and rule policy played in Dooars. United Dooars has a distinct history and culture. Diversity has been the mark of Dooars culture as the Gorkhas, Adivasis, Rajbongshis, Bengalis, Meches, Boros and other people groups have lived together with each other for decades. The move to identify “Gorkha majority” areas will not only deny the aspiration of the people of the region but will also divide the area along communal lines.

The memorandum of agreement for the formation of a Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), a semi-autonomous administrative body for the Darjeeling hills, was signed on 18 July 2011. Earlier, during the West Bengal assembly election (2011) campaign, Mamata Banerjee had promised that the issue of Gorkhaland would be resolved. While Mamata implied that this would be the end of the Gorkhaland movement, Bimal Gurung reiterated that this was just another step towards statehood. Both spoke publicly at the same venue in Pintail Village near Siliguri, where the tripartite agreement was signed. A bill for the creation of GTA was passed in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on 2 September 2011. The West Bengal government issued a gazette notification for the GTA Act on 14 March 2012, signalling preparations for elections for the GTA. In the elections of the GTA held on 29 July 2012, GJM candidates won from 17 constituencies and the rest 28 seats unopposed.

It is pertinent to note that according to the leadership of Gorkhaland movement the demand for Gorkhaland has always meant the creation of a new state within India and never has the demand had any separatist manner. The new state that the Indian Gorkhas have been demanding would be created out of Bengal the same way the state of Gujarat was created out of Bombay, Haryana out of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh out of Madras, Uttarakhand out of UP, Jharkhand out of Bihar, and Chhatisgarh out of Madhya Pradesh is what the leadership think.

Just as the creation of these states have gone on to contribute to the richness and diversity of India and has also led to more efficient governance, so also the creation of Gorkhaland would only be in the larger interest of the nation.

#### **2.24 Demand for Gorkhaland still exists:**

Even though the GTA is signed, the voices demanding Gorkhaland refuse to die down. For fear of repercussion, the signatory party to the GTA keeps harping about Gorkhaland and making unclear statements about both the GTA and Gorkhaland. Besides being seen as a major climb-down from the demand for a state, the agreement is also perceived as a betrayal of the peoples' aspiration of a state of their own. Dooars, of course, continues to simmer.

The history of the movement and the responses to the movement clearly point up that the demand is for nothing diminutive of a full-fledged state and that any other administrative arrangement will only be unsuccessful. As long as the complete power to legislate is not made available to the people of the region all arrangements will only prove to be provisional and useless.

Further more given that the Gorkhaland agitation is taking place in the strategically sensitive area of Siliguri location where the governmental authority needs to knob the situation carefully and earnestly, and must not allow the situation getting out of control. At the same time, it is important that before formulating a solution, it takes into consideration the sentimental aspiration of the people of the Hill district.

A closer assessment of the situation reveals that there is a kind of growing consensus among the major political parties to grant statehood to the Hill people of Darjeeling District but how far the state will be viable is again a big question. It has been reported that both the Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party have extended their support to the GJM's demand for a separate State in November 2007. In addition, the Parliamentary Standing Committee to which the Bill was referred has advised the Indian government to take into account the "ground realities" before taking a decision.

It can be so stated that the Gorkhaland issue has gradually matured from a demand for a separate administrative set-up to full fledged statehood. The agitation in the 1986 was a violent

one which to an extent was able to bring in notice the issue of Gorkhaland before the big shots and major political parties in the country. However the CPIM led West Bengal government dismissed the movement as a law and order problem. The demand for Gorkhaland has also led to the rise of regional upsurges particularly in the Doars Terai and Siliguri. A number of political and social organizations have since been formed to oppose the formation of Gorkhaland and some political parties are formed with the objective of attaining Gorkhaland. They include Jana Chetna, Bangla O bangle Bhasa Bachao Committee, Amra Bangali. The political parties formed which claim of attaining statehood are Gorkha Rastriya Congress, United Gorkha Revolutionar Front, Gorkha Liberation Organization, Sikkim Democratic Front and Bhartiya Gorkha Parishang.

Even though the GTA is signed, the voices demanding Gorkhaland decline to go dead down. For fear of repercussion, the participant party to the GTA keeps harping about Gorkhaland and making unclear statements about both the GTA and Gorkhaland. Besides being seen as a major drop from the demand for a state, the agreement is also perceived as a betrayal of the peoples' aspiration of a state of their own.

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**2.I Map of India showing Telangana in red**



