

CHAPTER-VIII

CONCLUSION

The colonization of the Darjeeling Hills largely transformed the socio-economic profile of this sparsely populated hill region. Since 1835, the British selected this sleepy settlement mainly to establish a sanatorium and for trade. The emergence of Darjeeling hills as a hill station and the introduction of tea gardens and development of economy, urbanization was a phenomenon which closely connected with colonialism.

Colonization of Darjeeling after its annexation by the British changed the shape of administrative structure. They annexed Darjeeling and converted it into a hill station being an ideal place for sanatorium and for its strategic importance. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the British started consolidating its power through a series of territorial acquisitions from Sikkim and Bhutan. The safest and shortest trade route through Sikkim to Tibet may be the reason for annexing the Darjeeling by the East India Company. Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal had confronted with each other to establish a political control in Darjeeling before the advent of the East India Company in 1835. The British wanted to check the growing power of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in this region and also wanted to expand their political boundary in the Himalayan region. With the expansion of tea gardens in Darjeeling hills, construction of roads and railways begins which improved the methods of communication in this region.

It observed from the chapter II that the colonial Darjeeling mostly was uninhabited except few Lepchas and Bhutias, who were the original inhabited people in this region. The administrative and economic development by the British led to the formation of new urbanized Darjeeling hills by taking initiatives for the fulfillment of their Imperialistic aspiration. The British developed transport, communication, plantation economy, trade and commerce in Darjeeling. They also developed a group of western read British educated elite class for their own sustainability. So the British developed Darjeeling according to their wants and necessities. On the other hand, the cantonment and the town of Darjeeling were established to provide a place of rejuvenation to British troops and civilians away from the heat and dust of the plains. After Independence Darjeeling demography, economy, administrative and cultural spheres underwent radical changes. The Bengali population in the district who were major shareholders in the government

was reduced to a substantial minority. The British mentality and the corresponding material transformations had significantly brought changes in the socio-political and demographic consolidation in colonial Darjeeling. It continued unabated in different forms of ethnic convergence and assertions in the post-colonial Darjeeling. The post-colonial Darjeeling is intimately associated with commodity capitalism, migration and the reshaping of local and national ideologies around gender, race, language, citizenship and religion.

The economic transformation of Darjeeling hills after the introduction of tea gardens and increasing trade affairs became productive region. The Nepali migrants were attached to the tea gardens during colonial period. Both tea and tourism provided a large pull effect for the people who migrated from neighbouring Nepal, Sikkim and to some extent from Bhutan. The most important effects of colonial capitalism were that through its civilizing mission it transformed the docile and hardworking hill people into a proto-wage labourer. Darjeeling grew as an urban settlement not by the agricultural surplus rather it received its urban form to fulfill the health, strategic and economic and social aspirations of the British. The sanatorium town as well as the Darjeeling hills became a part of the colonial economy. The immigration in this region largely occurred to meet the labour requirements on the tea gardens mainly from all the neighbouring countries like Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, and Nepal. The economic growth and urbanization simultaneously take place which acted as a pull factor to transform this area into a land of settlers. The push factors from the own home land was also responsible for the migration of the settlers in this region. The migration in this region was induced migration or invited migration by the colonial power which became a part of historical process of this territory. The labour requirements in the beginning and recruiting of Nepalese in the British army influenced the population growth in this area. The improvement of communications paved the way for great quantities of tea exported to Sikkim and Tibet replacing brick tea imported from Lhasa and China. The military administrative efforts, road linkages, plantation, tourism, enhanced economic and trade activities, population rise etc. finally gave Darjeeling urbanized. The Darjeeling district was known to all by the name of Darjeeling, an important hill station. Though, it was in fact a place which falls on the way to Darjeeling, the Queen of Hills. The British were concerned at the initial stage to develop it into a sanatorium, the purpose for which it was acquired.

The impact of colonial and post colonial rule makes various changes throughout the population history in Darjeeling. The physical environment, multiplicity of culture, tradition etc. have played a major role in moulding the socio-economic and political structure in Darjeeling. From 1861 onwards the mercantile groups started to pay their attention on Darjeeling. The Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith indicates that the consequences of population growth on economic development have attracted the attention of economists.

The early settlers of Darjeeling were mostly engaged in agriculture. After the establishment of experimental tea plantations by the British; Darjeeling became a successful commercial tea industry around 1856. It has shown specifically the Colonial period, the urbanization and expansion of the British Colonial economy. Economy and demographic changes are interrelated to each other. Population growth affects economic development by promoting economic development and retarding economic development.

Migration of people from one region to another is also an important instrument for achieving economic development. Demography studies distribution of the population in every region. The regional distribution of population deeply affects the economic activities of the society and economics helps to provide useful information to demography as it happened in the case of Darjeeling. The marginalization of few indigenous communities like Lepchas, Bhutias and emergence of newly migrated Nepalese helped to change the demography in this region. The migrated people during the colonial period became a dominant section in society, economy and in politics after India's independence. It affected the demographic and especially social structure in this region.

The first recorded instance of the demand for separation of Darjeeling hill region from Bengal can be traced to the year 1907, barely forty years after the formation of Darjeeling (1867) as a district. The Hillmen's Association submitted a memorandum in 1907 before Morley Minto Reforms, the then leaders of the Hill people of Darjeeling submitted a memorial to the British Government demanding a separate administrative set up for the District of Darjeeling. Ten years later in 1917, another demand of the Nepali speaking people of the hills of Darjeeling for a separate administrative was launched. The Hillmen's Association sent a memorandum to the chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal in 1917, in response to the invitation issued by the Government to the people of India to make representation to be laid before the Secretary of

State. In the wake of Communal Award, the unity of these groups was sought to be strengthened by forming the Hill People's Social Union. On December 23, 1934, a public meeting of the hill people i.e. the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis of Darjeeling was held under the Presidentship of Sardar Bahadur S.W.Ladenla. With the patronage of this Union "a Nepali periodical known as "NEBULA" (NE for Nepali, BU for Bhutia and LA for Lepcha) was launched with a view to promoting a sense of brotherhood among the three hill communities and making Nepali language a language of communication with the non-Nepali people. The common ethnic term "Gorkha", and the Nepali language thus accepted by them.

It also remarkably changed after Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950 by regulating some important laws between the two countries. The first violent method of the movement for autonomous state began since 1980's. As early as 1981, the AIGL submitted a memorandum to the President of India demanding separate state of Darjeeling Parvat Aicaya on grounds of national security, development and justice to linguistic minority. In the 1980s, another movement of Nepali speakers demanding that the Darjeeling District be converted into a Gorkhaland state turned violent. In December 1983, Mr. Subhas Ghising submitted a memorandum to the King of Nepal, requesting him to take measures to settle certain imaginary geopolitical disputes with India concerning the migrated people from Nepal to India. According to 6th and 7th Articles of the Indo-Nepal Treaty, all the people of Nepalese origin residing in India, including the 'bonafied' Indian Citizens, are all Nepali nationals, which is not true. On 19th May Ghising had come out with a press statement against the treaty saying that, "It has mixed up the citizens of Nepal and the Indian Gorkhas in a single basket of illusion."

The important aspect of the movement during colonial Darjeeling was the concern of the hill people for their ethnic identity as distinct from the plain's men. They emphasized their historical, cultural and racial differences to justify the demand of autonomy. Language has always played an important role in creating growth of identity creation in any community and the growth of Nepali Language is no exception. The fight of Gorkha community reflects their struggle to secure identity. The constructed view of identity has been posing a threat to humanity in the name of separatism. It is one of the leading threats to Indian nation-building.

The concept of 'Gorkhasthan' proposed by the Darjeeling District Committee of the Communist Party of India was different from the concept of 'Gorkhaland.' Gorkhasthan sought to establish a union, a Republic of the Proletariat, especially of its kingdom of Nepal, southern parts of Sikkim

and Darjeeling. And, 'Greater Nepal' sought to expand the present contours of the republic of Nepal to the area it encompassed during the rule of King of Nepal Prithvinarayan Shah. So, the main difference between the two is that: 'Gorkhasthan' sought to engulf Nepal but 'Greater Nepal' sought to expand the territorial dominance of Nepal.

In the 1980s, a movement of Nepali speakers demanding that the Darjeeling District be converted into a Gorkhaland state turned violent. The Central and State Governments reestablished stability by concentrating power in a single political party i.e. Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and ultimately, a single person i.e. the GNLF leader Subhas Ghising. This demands for separation from Bengal date back to the early 1900s, but they came to national prominence at the beginning of the 1980s. The language identity, multidimensional socio-economic and ethnic identities culminated to several forms autonomy movement in the hills of Darjeeling. The GNLF under Subhas Ghising raised their voice with some issues related to ethnic identity, citizenship, and recognition of Nepali language, separate state of Gorkhaland and Gorkha regiment during 1980's. But the heart of the demands of the GNLF had been the demand for the creation of Gorkhaland taking into account the areas which are domiciled by the Nepalis. The expulsion of Nepalis from Meghalaya added the fuel to the injury of the GNLF movement. The 40-day *bandh* was self-defeating. Many people fled to Siliguri and took shelter there. Those who stayed in the hills suffered terribly due to the shortage of food, drinking water, fuel etc. Moreover, the agitation cost over 300 lives and it caused the loss of about Rs. 150 crore worth of property. In this situation everyone wanted the end of this type of movement. As Ghising's reign continued, few in Darjeeling were willing publicly to criticize the DGHC regime because of the threat of violence against dissenters. However, the DGHC'S corruption and failure to significantly improve Darjeeling's public services also made it and the GNLF extremely unpopular. Ghising's explanation for this suspension of democracy was that the DGHC needed to be added to the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which is the national list of tribal councils.

The Gorkhaland movements have required a separate state for themselves to improve their socio-economic conditions and are gathering popular support. Many times, the demand of separation arises out of suppression or, in other words, social injustices, which eventually pose severe threat to the multicultural notion of Indian identity. Some of the political demands for self-determination are centrally linked to the idea of a distinct identity of an ethnic group. A new chapter started in the history of the Gorkhaland movement in 2007. It was a departure of

Subhash Ghising from the political arena of Darjeeling and the emergence of Mr. Bimal Gurung, the leader of the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha.

It can be said that the Gorkhaland movement indicates some important features like a) multiplicity of factors ranging from their identity crisis to development issues, b) in many times the movement is negotiated with special provisions for themselves from the state agencies, c) leaders' opportunism and d) the several numbers of violent agitation. Generally, the politics of strike, violence and counter violence severely affect the life of the common people, the tourism and tea industry in the hills of Darjeeling. Although the government declared a possible resolution of the Gorkhaland issue and finally the new trends indicate virtual monopoly of GJM in the three hill sub-divisions in the district.

The 'unity in diversity' is the strength where 'disparity' is one of the main causes of conflict within the Indian states. The reason can be due to the existing political situations of the hills of Darjeeling. The local masses participated actively in the movement, so in the process also became interested in politics. The transformation of this ethnic movement got reshaped in the form of demand for a separate politico-administrative institution in the hills of Darjeeling. The leaders and the people in the hills of Darjeeling felt the need of such arrangements to carry forward their demands for self-rule. GJM after hard pressing the demand of Gorkhaland, was also made to sit in for negotiation. As an outcome of repeated negotiation with the Government of West Bengal, the GJM accepted the formation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). The GTA Memorandum of Agreement included that "a three-tier Panchayat will be constituted by elections in the GTA region, subject to the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution of India. Under the West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973 and the West Bengal Municipal Act, 1933, the GTA shall exercise general powers of supervision over the Panchayats and the Municipalities. Generally, there is new expectation for execution of a larger number and more effective schemes for socioeconomic development and upliftment of the people of Darjeeling Hills through the efficiency under the GTA.

The political movement in any society at any point of time is an outburst of the people's long suppressed aspiration of ethnic identity, economic development and freedom. The agitation tinged with political motivation and mobilization by the local elite. Economic backwardness of the district is a major reason for the demand of a separate state. The economy of Darjeeling after

1947 had been going through a downward slope. The people of the district joining the agitation on account of economic backwardness and went on to strengthen the argument of the GJM that Darjeeling is neglected by the state government. Darjeeling hills are one of the least economically developed regions of our country. The scenic beauty and an aura of sanctity of Darjeeling make it one of the most important tourist centres in India and abroad. The developmental initiatives can be rebuild and restore for the very basic foundation of the societies that is affected by political agitation in the hills of Darjeeling. The regional planning strategy would be capable of addressing social, economic, political, demographic and environmental issues for bringing up the regional development, employment, income and general improvement in the quality of human life.