CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, the Indian State has been witnessing the erosion in authority and stability, owing to the existence of a host of factors like the perceptions of socio-cultural alienation, structural and operational imbalances in society (Yasin and Dasgupta 2003), and a sense of 'otherisation' and deprivation. This situation has culminated in the eruption and proliferation of protest movements with the pronounced aims of expressing dissent from conditions of powerlessness, deprivation, injustice or loss of identity; and seeking various remedial empowerments and entitlements (Yasin and Dasgupta 2003), creating a situation of 'governability crisis' (Kohli 1981). With the multiplication of such protest movements, a simultaneous proliferation of the literature on protest movements has also taken place in India (Bailey 1969 ; Dhanagare 1976; Malik 1977; Badrinath 1977; Shah 1977 and 1990; Rao 1979; Calman 1985; Frank and Fuentes 1987; Desai 1990; Chaube and Chakraborty 1999; Singh 1991). However, almost all of these studies have adopted an institutional or a neo-institutional theoretical position to comprehend the protest movements in India. Hence, they have ignored the role of the 'strategic agency' (Giddens 1984) of the heterogeneous actors involved in such protest movements, of which movement leadership is the most prominent. Yasin and Dasgupta are of the opinion that leadership occupies an important place in the protest movements as the leaders are instrumental in translating the objective causes into subjective

consciousness articulating causes of deprivation of which the mass that is being mobilized may have little or no knowledge. It is further contended that leadership is responsible for organising a protest movement. Nepal (2007 and 2009) further elaborates the role of leadership in protest movements. The study which focuses specifically on the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan establishes that leadership plays a crucial role in producing dynamism and transformations in protest movements. Therefore, understanding of a protest movement dynamics warrants a study of the role of leadership in such movements. In this context, the present work is designed to explore the role of leadership in protest movement dynamics in India through a study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling Hills and the Kamtapuri Movement in the terai area of North Bengal, in West Bengal.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Leaders are central to social movements, yet scholars have devoted relatively little attention to understanding the concept of leadership or its effects on movements. There are numerous ways in which leaders generate social change and create the conditions for the agency of other participants. Leaders play a critical role in collective action, shaping movements in numerous ways. They define goals and advance strategies. They mobilize followers, galvanize indigenous organizations, and forge coalitions. They influence responses to external repression, and their action, rhetoric, and style affect conflict outcomes. Yet, despite leadership's significance, it remains an understudied topic among

collective action researchers, because of the recent emphasis on structures of opportunity. The two movements taken for the present study, the Gorkhaland and the Kamtapuri movements are the movements located in the periphery of the Indian federal structure, expressing dissent from conditions of powerlessness, deprivation, injustice or loss of identity; and seeking various remedial empowerments and entitlements. On the one hand, they have attracted little attention of the scholars on protest movements, and on the other, they reveal recurring waves of protests under different leadership (seen at least, for example, in case of the Gorkhaland Movement). Despite such instances in these movements, whatever studies have been made on these movements so far have conspicuously paid no serious attention to the role of leadership in determining the fate of the movement. Hence, there is a need to examine both the structural limitations and opportunities for social movements and the ways in which leaders make a difference within structural contexts. This constitutes the problem of the present study.

We also believe that comparative methods offer the best basis for hypothesizing about leadership's role in movements. Accordingly, we have used a variety of comparisons involving two different movement sets: the Movement for Gorkhaland in Darjeeling Hills; and the Kamtapuri Movement in the Terai of North Bengal, i.e., movements seeking similar goals at the same time in the same state under near equivalent structural conditions. In such cases, the role of agency stands out sharply, distinguishing those leaders who were able—or unable—to take

advantage of these conditions. A second methodological rationale for selecting our cases is the leverage they give us in making cross-case comparisons. We argue that through the present study, the social movement theory would benefit greatly from an examination of the leadership dynamics in protest movements.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Early studies of social movement leadership (e.g., Blumer 1951; Lang and Lang 1961; Roche and Sachs 1955) identified the functional roles filled by different types of movement leaders at different stages in movement development (Wilson 1973:195-196). Gusfield (1966), points to the conflicting requirements for a leader to function both within the movement as a *mobilizer*, inspiring participants, and outside the movement as an *articulator*, linking the movement to the larger society. More recent work further analyzes the complexity of leadership roles at different levels within movements, the conflicts between different leadership tasks, and changes over time in movement leadership (see Aminzade et al. 2001; Goldstone 2001; Herda-Rapp 1998; Klandermans 1989; Marullo 1988; Melucci 1996; Nelson 1971; Robnett 1997; Staggenborg 1988; Turner and Killian, 1987). Beyond analyzing the various roles and functions of leaders in social movements, researchers have also examined the ways in which leaders gain legitimate authority in social movements. Many draw on Weber's theory of charismatic leadership, a relational approach that assigns a key role to followers in imputing charisma to leaders (Platt and Lilley 1994). Weber (1968)

elaborates the movement forms associated with charismatic leadership, including the emotional character of the community and the appointment of officials based on loyalty to the charismatic leader. Despite Weber's focus on the interactional nature of leadership, however, the notion of charisma is commonly used to refer to a personality type, and Weber's insight into the effects of leadership on movement characteristics has been neglected. Melucci (1996) argues that the Weberian theory of charisma lends itself to neglect of the social relationship between leaders and followers; viewed as giving themselves up to a charismatic leader, followers lack agency.

In Robert Michels's (1962) theory of political leadership, followers willingly cede agency to their leaders. The masses are grateful to leaders for speaking and acting on their behalf, even though leaders become political elites whose interests conflict with those of their followers. Large bureaucratic organizations, in Michels's view, are necessary to large-scale movements and parties, but they inevitably become oligarchical as leaders are motivated to preserve their own power and positions. Leaders become part of the power elite (Yasin and Dasgupta 2003), more concerned with organizational maintenance than the original goals of the movement. The masses allow this to happen through apathy and a lack of competence in comparison to their skilled leaders. Numerous theorists have disputed Michels's argument regarding the inevitable transformation of organizations into oligarchy, arguing that we need to examine the variety of organizational forms that actually constitute movements and the

processes that allow some organizations to operate democratically (Barker 2001; Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956). Zald and Ash (1966) argue that movement organizations change in a variety of ways in response to external environmental factors as well as internal processes. Member apathy, when it occurs, does allow leaders to transform the goals of members, but in some instances leaders transform organizations in a radical rather than conservative direction (Zald and Ash 1966:339). Other theorists have detailed both the ways in which leaders influence movement organization and how movement characteristics shape leadership. Expanding on Weber's relational approach, Wilson (1973) distinguishes among charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic types of leaders and associated types of movement organization. Leadership type affects centralization of decision-making, division of labour, and the extent to which the organization is subject to schism. Eichler (1977) similarly associates bases of leadership with organizational characteristics and outcomes.

Collective behaviour theorists have argued that social structural conduciveness is necessary but not sufficient for movement mobilization; leaders create the impetus for movements by providing examples of action, directing action, and defining problems and proposing solutions (Lang and Lang 1961). Smelser (1962) argues that leaders are essential to mobilization and can play a role in creating other conditions in the value-added process of collective behavior, but they also need structural strain and conduciveness, generalized beliefs, and precipitating factors to

generate collective behaviour. Resource mobilization theorists have viewed leaders as political entrepreneurs who mobilize resources and found organizations in response to incentives, risks, and opportunities; supporters are seen as rational actors who follow effective leaders (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977; Oberschall 1973). Factors such as the availability of outside support and the operation of social control affect the emergence of leaders (Oberschall 1973). Political process theorists have analyzed the impacts of structures of political opportunity, but in doing so they have paid little attention to leadership–a problem acknowledged in recent discussions of the role of leaders in recognizing and acting on opportunities (Goldstone 2001; Aminzade et al., 2001).

The relative neglect of leadership in social movement theory results from a failure to adequately address the importance and limitations of both structure and agency. The political process approach emphasizes structures of political opportunity to the neglect of human agency (Goodwin and Jasper 1999). The entrepreneurial-organizational version of resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 2002) actually overemphasizes agency in arguing that issue entrepreneurs can manufacture grievances. The theory neglects agency in its treatment of mobilizing structures. Although resource mobilization theory implicitly assumes that leaders are directing movement organizations, analysts have generally not examined the emergence of leadership and the ways in which leaders affect movement strategy and outcomes. Therefore, we argue that social movement theory would benefit greatly from an

examination of the numerous ways in which leaders influence social movements and thus generate social change and create the conditions for the agency of other participants.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature is an integral part of social science research. Accordingly it has significance to justify the area of research that has been undertaken. At the theoretical level, we have abundant literature on the notion and theoretical underpinnings of leadership in protest movement dynamics.

- **Burns (1978)** presents a theory of leadership as a dynamic reciprocity between ordinary people or followers and the political and ideological leaders. His argument is that mutual need, empathy, and growth characterize all genuine leadership.

- **Eichler (1977)** associates bases of leadership with organizational characteristics and outcomes.

- **Welsh (1979)** attempts to analyse the concept of political elites and their leadership behaviour, drawn from a variety of political settings. He also attempts to clarify the notions of elite and leadership, while illuminating the relationship between substance and method, i.e., between what we know and how we find out.

- **Smelser (1962)** argues that leaders are essential to mobilization and can play a role in creating other conditions in the value-added process of collective behaviour, but they also need structural strain

and conduciveness, generalized beliefs, and precipitating factors to generate collective behaviour.

- **Northouse (2007)** analyses leadership theories and examines how theoretical approach can be applied to the real world organizations. He also examines how leadership varies across cultures and which specific leadership attributes are universally endorsed as desirable and undesirable. Further, he also makes an analysis of the Team Leadership and emphasises on the Team Leadership Model to illustrate how this can be used in organisations.

- **Yasin and Dasgupta (2003)** are of the opinion that leadership occupies an important place in the protest movements as the leaders are instrumental in translating the objective causes into subjective consciousness articulating causes of deprivation of which the mass that is being mobilized may have little or no knowledge

The review of literature on the study of 'Leadership and Protest Movement Dynamics: A Study in the context of the Gorkhaland and Kamtapuri Movements in West Bengal' necessitates the review of literature at least from two different perspectives. Firstly, the literature on the Gorkhaland Movement and secondly, on the Kamtapuri Movement. The Gorkhaland Movement and the Kamtapuri Movement are the two most important sub-regional movements in North Bengal. However, these

two movements have received very little scholarly attention. Most of the available literature on these two movements have focussed on the movements as they happened, and, conspicuously enough, there is no literature produced as yet on the role played by the movement leadership in movement dynamics. The two movements may be taken separately for survey of the existing literature on these two movements. We shall take up the review of these two set of literature in the following sections.

On the Gorkhaland Movement, we have some academic literatures, which have been reviewed below:

- **Mishra (1986)** analyses the Gorkhaland movement as a reflexive agitation. He holds the view that the unjust treatment meted out to the Indian Nepalis elsewhere is India is the primary cause of the movement and believes that the movement therefore reflects the 'transferred anger'. The focus of the study is on the causal aspect of the movement. His thesis, however, has been refuted by many including an 'insider' scholar Subba (1992) who has seriously objected to the thesis with strong evidences against it.

- **Chakrabarti (1988)** also dwells on the causes of the Gorkhaland Movement and traces its evolution, labelling it as a 'segregationist' movement. He locates the evolution of the movement basically to the administrative failure.

- **Milindo Chakraborti (1988)**, yet another work attempting to clarify the causes of the movement from a political economic perspective, attributes the origin of the movement to the failure of the proper implemental of the rural development schemes in general and the IRDP in particular. He contends that wherever there was a successful implementation of the IRDP, it had least support to the movement and cites the example of the Bijanbari Block which he refres to as 'Bijanbari Syndrome' in his work. This work also pays no heed to the role of the political leadership in shaping the movement.

- **Subba (1992)** analyses the movement as a peoples' struggle for political space within the constitutional framework of Indian federalism. He analyses the movement in its historical context touching upon the political, economic and ethnic history of the people of Darjeeling district. Despite being an ethno-political analysis, the work too ignores the contributions of leadership to the origin, development and dynamics of the said movement.

- **Timsina (1992)** is a descriptive history of the causes, origin, and evolution of the Gorkhaland movement, well presented with statistical inferences on the relative deprivation of the people of the Darjeeling Hills vis-à-vis the plainsmen in West Bengal. No analysis has been made about the leadership's role in the movement.

- **Dasgupta (1999)** also has dealt with the historical evolution of the Gorkhaland movement up to the Darjeeling Accord (1988) and the consequent formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC).

- **Sarkar and Bhaumik (2000)** is a work of a different kind, wherefrom some aspects pertaining to the development of the movement could be understood. It neither deals with the movement per se, nor with the leadership and its role.

- **Sarkar (2001)** is a sociological analysis of the movement as an ethnic movement. The study dwells on the process of ethnic mobilisation and the creation of ethnic identity of the Gorkhas following a constructivist approach to the study of ethnicity. This work also fails to take in to account the role of leadership in the protest movement.

- **Chaklader (2004)** studies the Gorkhaland Movement as a sub regional movement like the Bodoland Movement of Assam. The study unfolds the different phases of the Gorkhaland Movement beginning from the language movement to the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. The study concludes with a noite that it is not economically viable to grant Gorkhaland as a state

or a Union Territory for its size. However, it does not account for any factor lending dynamism to the movement.

- **McHenry Jr. (2007)** attempts to show that economic inequality is not a sufficient condition for the development of a secessionist movement. Of many examples cited, Gorkhaland movement is one where he shows that the economic factor does not constitute the reason for mobilisation for protest. This is not a work focussed directly on Gorkhaland Movement, and hence, other aspects of the movement have not been touched upon.

- **Bomjan (2008)** is not a work that specifically deals with the movement. The work attempts to unearth the injustice perpetrated by the 'progressive Marxist community of Bengal on the minority and underdeveloped Gorkha community'. A brilliant piece of composition, the work is a historiographical account of the Gorkha community in Darjeeling, touching the areas of society, economy and polity of the community.

- **Ganguly (2005)** makes an analysis of the genesis of the movement, its aftermath and the settlement of the problem and also its future prospects. He looks into the movement eruption as a result of persistent underdevelopment, and poverty combined with serious malgovernance.

- **Patra (2007)** scrutinises the movement as vociferous, not merely linked to the economic development of the Darjeeling hills, but issues of Identity being the prime concern.

- **Jana (2010)** views the movement as the articulation of backwardness in the form of agricultural and industrial backwardness, poverty, poor infrastructure facilities as health and education in the region. He argues that the backwardness in the region had affected different ethnic groups adversely which is the cause of the movement, and the Gorkhas of the hills of Darjeeling is no exception.

It is surprising to note that only a few academic studies have been done on the Kamtapuri movement. The available literature on the said movement has been reviewed in the following sections:

- **Basu (1994)** has studied the Kamtapuri Movement as an identity based movement. Despite labelling it as an ethnic movement, Basu has ignored the leadership aspect of the movement and its contributions to movement dynamics.

- **Karlsson (1997)** is a sort of an ethnographic study of the Koch and Rajbanshi tribes. It views the Movement as a subaltern resistance built on ethnic mobilisation. However, the study is silent on the dynamic aspect of the movement.

- **Barman (2007)** views the Kamtapuri Movement as a site of contested regionalism. Primarily a historical work, it explores the annals of Koch-Rajbanshi history and briefly presents the nature and content of the Kamtapuri Movement.

- **Halder (2000)** makes an attempt to look into the movement as mobilisation of people by the leaders on the problems of cultural and linguistic identity of the Koch- Rajbanshis, the danger of the original inhabitants being outnumbered by the outsiders and illegal migrants, economic backwardness of the people, poverty, lack of education and employment, and the neglect of the government. She contends that a combination of historical, demographic, cultural and economic elements create a situation favourable for ethnic-regional mobilization.

- **Mukhopadhyay (1987)** provides a sociological analysis of the movement by locating the genesis of the movement in the dynamics of the Rajbanshi community. He further argues that the sense of distrust among the Rajbanshi community against the Bhadralok is a result of transformation that has taken place in the recent years and has contributed to the eruption of the movement.

- **Mukhopadhyay (2005)** also examines the movement from a cultural perspective. He dwells into the existing cultural differentiation between the indigenous Rajbanshis and the

outsiders (Bengalis) and the consolidation of the lingo-cultural identity of the Rajbanshi community.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Review of literature has revealed certain information gaps. The area of our present concern has however been left largely unexplored. The following research questions have been designed to bridge the gap. The identified research questions are:

1. What are the general factors that account for the dynamics of the protest movements?

2. How does leadership affect the emergence, mobilising patterns, the 'framing' process, media coverage, and outcomes of the protest movements?

3. What attributes of the leader (such as social background, personality, psychological characteristics, charisma, programmatic ideas, etc.) affect the protest movement dynamics relatively at a higher magnitude?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

From the review of literature presented above, it is revealed that all the studies have paid little or inadequate attention to the role of leadership in movement dynamics in the two movements proposed for the present study. More so, the scholars have conspicuously left the dynamic aspects

of the movements unexplored, lest the role of leadership in movement dynamics. Hence, there is a visible gap in the available literature on the proposed area of the present study. Therefore, the present work attempts to bridge this research gap through the study of the role of leadership in protest movement dynamics. The present study thus opens the possibility of formulating a broad conceptual framework to understand the role of leadership in the emergence, organization, strategy and outcomes of protest movement dynamics. The findings of the present study are envisaged to provide information about how leadership influence movements by setting goals and developing strategies, creating movement organizations and shaping their structures, and forging connections among activists, organizations, and levels of action. Therefore, the subject of the present study constitutes a matter of utmost significance.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present research is based on an exploratory method which includes interviews with some of the leaders of the movement. The present study could have been more intensive if the researcher could have become a participant observer and could include the on going processes of the movement. Moreover, the limitations with the present study have also been due to non availability of enough literatures, particularly in the case of Kamtapur movement where very little academic exercise has been made so far. The present study therefore, with these limitations, intends

to map the role played by the leadership in the protest movement dynamics of the Gorkhaland movement and the Kamtapur movement.

METHODOLOGY

Considering the nature of the research problem as stated above, we have adopted an analytical exploratory and descriptive method of study. To this end, an extensive analysis of the documents, reports, newspaper clippings, movement newsletters, and fliers were done. We also conducted field survey. For the collection of primary data, the following tools and techniques were used: in-depth interviews (semi-structured and structured), non-participant observation, story narration, and informal discussions with primacy. To increase the validity of our observations, we used four methods to gather data on the mobilizing process: participant observation, interviews with leaders and organisers, surveys of protest movement participants, and the collection of written documents. This is because we adopted a 'mixed' method, a sort of a hybrid methodology, synthesizing the merits of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The mixed research design generally employs three techniques for conducting interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured or informal (Morse and Field: 1995). We however, focussed more on semi-structured interview both to control the nature and extent of vagueness as well as to focus on the area of our concern. According to Chambers (1994) semi-structured interviews entail having a mental or written checklist, but being open-minded and following upon the unexpected. The respondents were asked a set of prepared questions in

the structured and semi-structured interviews, whereas, the interview followed a more flexible approach. Apart, the non-participant observation method of data collection was followed as because, the non-participant observation is a method of data collection whereby an investigator attempts to attain some kind of membership despite a degree of detachment from the group under study, and thereby, attempts to adopt perspective of the people in the situation being observed (Frankfort, Nachmias and Nachmias: 1999). Despite living amongst the community, the researcher adopted a non-participant observer's role in order to avoid subjective bias from creeping into the data. Transect walk/ Field mapping were undertaken for the verification of the respondents' responses through personal observations. We were participant observers in these movement organisations, assuming the role of insiders or members as we attended planning meetings and demonstrations.

We also used the inductive grounded theory approach in our coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). We inductively derived an extensive coding list, including categories for characteristics of events, organisations, leaders, and political context. We also added some categories deductively, after discussing possible explanations for our field observations. Then we coded our data into the complete list of categories by creating a separate coding template for each event and bringing together information from each of our sets of field of notes on that specific event. This enabled us to compare characteristics of each of the protest movement organisation under study.

CHAPTERISATION SCHEME

The present study is intended to map the role played by the leadership in the protest movement dynamics. To this end, we have developed the present work in 6 chapters as under:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Leadership and Protest Movement Dynamics: Theoretical Explorations

Chapter 3: Leadership and the Gorkhaland Movement

Chapter 4: Leadership and the Kamtapuri Movement

Chapter 5: Leadership and Movement Dynamics: Movements Compared

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion.

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