CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study entitled '*Leadership and Protest Movement Dynamics: A Study in the Context of Gorkhaland and Kamtapuri Movements in West Bengal*' has discussed the evolution of the protest movements in North Bengal region of West Bengal with particular reference to the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling Hills and the Kamtapur Movement in the Terai and Dooars. The study has evaluated the role of political leadership in the life and course of these protest movements and attempted to locate the leadership types in the available theoretical models on political leadership. The study has designed some three odd research questions to guide us along our research. The purpose of the research as stated in the introduction (See Research Questions) is to trace the role played by the political leadership in determining the nature, course, character and content of the movement, and finally the fate of the movement as such, and the overall consequences of such role of the leadership on the protest publics in particular and the society in general. It has been attempted to analyse the role of the political leadership as well as the role and response of the state towards the movement. Further it also aimed to compare and contrast the role of leadership in protest movement dynamics, however, by way of analyzing the two movements which are apparently in a similar geopolitical and administrative space with similar objectives and demands, but are markedly different in terms of parameters and reasons

for mobilization to protest. The following sections on the summary of chapters and major findings would point out the answers to our research questions.

The present work has been designed in six chapters. Our summary consists of three sections. The first section is an overview of the different chapters. The second section throws some light on the major findings of the present study, and, the final section points out to the necessities of and agenda for future research on the area.

Summary of Chapters

We started off our investigation in an organic manner, moving from general to particular. Chapter 1 is entitled *Introduction*. In this Chapter, we have introduced the problem under study, presented a brief overview of the existing literature on the subject to justify the necessity of the present research, designed our research questions, developed the framework for the study and explained our methodological orientations. The section also points out the significance of the present study and makes an honest confession on the major limitations of the study. The chapter also, at the end, finally gives a bird's eye view of the organization of the entire thesis.

Chapter 2 bears a title *Leadership and Protest Movement Dynamics: Theoretical Explorations,* which is self explanatory of its contents. It introduces the concept of leadership with a particular focus on political

leadership and explores various theoretical models on leadership, conceptualises protest movements and surveys its various theories, links the relationship between protest movement dynamics and the movement leadership, and finally, proposes to analyse the leadership of the movements taken for study and the leadership styles therein and examine whether they fit in to any of the existing theoretical models on leadership.

The third chapter entitled *'Leadership and the Gorkhaland Movement'* presents a brief profile of the study area, analyses the contextual underpinning on the origin of the Gorkhaland movement, its course, character and content in the first part. In the second part of the chapter, the role of leadership in the dynamics of the Gorkhaland movement has been studied.

Chapter 4 bears the title *'Leadership and the Kamtapur Movement'*. The chapter introduces the geographical area of North Bengal covered by the movement as the site of the movement under study and analyses the context of the origin of the Kamtapur movement tracing its history since the Hitasadhini movement of the Rajbangshis for Khastriyaisation. The chapter also maps the course of the movement and analyses its character and content in the first part. Finally, the chapter evaluates the role played by the Kamtapuri leadership in determination of issues and objectives of the movement, the strategies adopted by the movement leaders at different points of time, and as to how this leadership changes

and the role of various leaders has led to the emergence of the Kamtapur in the present form and content.

In Chapter 5, 'Leadership and Movement Dynamics: Movements Compared', we have compared the territorial location of the movement, broad objectives of the two movements, their central issues, particularly 'identity' question and the demand for separate 'state', and, the question of 'underdevelopment' in the region and the 'political articulation of underdevelopment' in the two movements. Finally, a comparative analysis of how political leadership has influenced the content, course and character of the movements under study has been undertaken. This has been analysed under a couple of broad categories like the ideological commitment of the movement leadership and movement dynamics, strategies of protest adopted by the leadership and its impact on movement dynamics, leadership conflicts and movement dynamics, and, the role played by the state level leadership in determining the movement character and content.

Major Findings of the Study

The present study began to explore the role of leadership in protest movement dynamics with a particular study of the two movements in the North Bengal region of West Bengal: the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling Hills and, the Kamtapur Movement in the plains of North Bengal. The first objective of the research was to explore the general factors accounting for protest movement dynamics. A protest movement

has both structural and agency components. The study unfolded an interplay of various components of the movement itself and some external factors accounting for the transformation of the movement objectives and goals, ideological groundings of the movement, strategies and tactics employed by the movement, and the achievements and/or failure of the movement. The interactions between the agency and structural components (the actors) of the movement determine how movements change and transform in course of their emergence and growth. These components/elements may include socio-structural components like the caste/class and religious affiliations of the movement actors (leaders and supporters), culture and ethnicity, which are organised in an hierarchical order of exploitation. These socially embedded movement elements have the potential to mar the efficiency of movement mobilisations. Whereas in case of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling Hills it is the ethnic background of the people and the caste--tribe dichotomy that have produced contradictions within the movement, in case of the Kamtapur Movement, it is again the caste--tribe dichotomy that affects the movement mobilisations. For instance, in Darjeeling the pan Gorkha ethnic identity demands that all other identities are subsumed under Gorkha identity for the greater cause of the Gorkha community as a whole in India, the smaller ethnic groups like the Lepchas (often regarded as indigenous community of Darjeeling Hills) and the Bhutia community feel that they are not Gorkhas. Lepchas have even claimed that Darjeeling Hills historically belongs to them and hence, it is a 'Lepchaland', and therefore, they cannot support for Gorkhaland. This

has limited the scope of mobilisation for the movement. Similarly, Lepchas, Bhutias and Sherpas are recognised as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution of India. The STs get extra perks by way of reservation in educational institutions, in government jobs, and in institutions of local governance. The bandwagon was later joined by other communities like Tamangs and Limboos. Obviously therefore, in the age of ever shrinking , resource base wherein competition for access to resources is intensifying day by day, they would prefer not to join the upper castes in their struggle for recognition as a caste community which would possibly jeopardise their status. Thus, this division on embedded elements as stated above has limited leadership's efforts at movement mobilisations. Similarly, in case of the populace in the Kamtapur movement, the population is divided in terms of caste and tribes. Whereas most of the supporters of the movement belong to Scheduled castes communities, others belong to upper caste Hindu fold. This difference is not insignificant in terms of its impact on movement mobilisation. However, contrary to the Gorkhaland movement, the most significant noticeable part in the Kamtapur movement has been the kind of large alienation of educated upper strata of the Rajbanshi community from the movement. This segment of the society feels comfort to be aligned with the mainstream Bengali culture. Thus, whereas the Gorkhaland movement has its support base mostly among the upper castes, the Kamtapur movement has its support base among the low or uneducated lower class of the Rajbanshi community. in view of this trends of alienation of the educated upper class of the Rajbanshi

community the leadership of the movement has reduced to be relatively weak and as such, devoid of leaving significant mark in the movement dynamics. In the same manner, cultural affiliations and historical legacies of the communities in the movement, national constitutional and legal framework, movement ideology, resource base of the movement, party politics, among others also impact the movements and produce movement dynamism. However, from the two movements undertaken for study, it is revealed that leadership impacts the dynamism and transformation of the movement the most.

The second important thrust area of the present study was to explore as to how leadership affects emergence, mobilising pattern, framing process, media coverage and outcomes of the protest movement. From the study undertaken of the two movements, it is found that generally a feeling of deprivation in the leadership of a particular community acts as a motivating force to mobilise for protest. However, it does not hold good for all protest movements. In the Gorkhaland movement, the emergence of Ghising as a political leader spearheading the protest movement, owes to his sense of deprivation as a lived experience during his service tenure in the Indian Army. Similarly, the emergence of the second phase of the movement in post 2007 period is due primarily to the sense of humiliations and deprivation experienced by Bimal Gurung, the chief architect of the movement, on being ousted by the GNLF. However, such clear instances could not be located in case of the Kamtapur movement. Further, a leader's ability to manipulate and mobilise media of

communication to the general public can generate euphoric situations intensifying movement support. This was found in case of the Gorkhaland movement which could manipulate and mobilise various types of print media at local level, sometimes at the regional, national and international levels. The ultimate outcome of this ability of the leadership has been somewhat positive for the movement as revealed from the recognition of the Nepali language under the Eighth Schedule of the constitution, and the creation of DGHC-an autonomous council for self governance for the Gorkhas in 1988 under GNLF; and the possible creation of a similar arrangement in the form of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration as a result of efficient media mobilisation, among others, by the GJMM leadership in the current phase of the movement. Contrarily it is seen that the leadership of the Kamtapur movement could neither efficiently mobilise media-print and /or electronic and as a result failed to evoke any positive response by the state towards the movement. Infact, the leadership in the Kamtapur movement appears to be weak, not so articulate, and hence, not so appealing to the masses. Being weak in terms of their social, economic, political and most important educational position, it could not mobilize the community to crystallize a well organized movement. This phenomenon may be attributed to the passive attitude of the upper class of the community towards providing leadership to the movement. The Kamtapur movement is found to be led by those who have attributes of the followers only. Even among them, several groups and sub groups are found constantly condemning each other thus making the movement weaker. The movement leadership has failed to

get the Kamtapur language recognised under the Eighth Schedule of the constitution on the one hand and the demand for separate state for Kamtapur has always remained an elusive dream on the other.

Finally, the present work also attempted to locate as to what attributes of leadership affect protest movement dynamics (Research Question No. 3). From the present study it was found that all attributes of a leader ranging from social/family background, personality traits of a leader, leaders psychological characteristics, and the programmatic ideas affect the course and character of a movement, including movement outcomes. The study unfolded the fact that in case of the movement, the two prominent leaders had a social background of having grown in violent environment. Whereas Ghising's life was moulded by his experiences in the military services, Bimal Gurung was an armed cadre under Ghising's leadership in the 1980s movement. If Ghising, moulded by this social-professional upbringing could venture for a violent struggle which could take the movement to its pinnacle with returns as good as the establishment of an autonomous council for the Gorkhas, Bimal's experiences moulded his outlook in an opposite direction, preparing him for a non-violent, passive resistance, again with a potential to give a rebirth to the movement from its possible decay, resulting in a, still debated, alternative administrative set up for the Gorkhas in Darjeeling Hills. Similarly, programmatic ideas of the leaders with appropriate strategies for the movement have strong potential for movement outcomes. For instance, in case of Gorkhaland, keeping in mind the

contemporary compulsions of politics, Gurung adopted Gandhian protest model, which could work wonders when people shunned violence. However, if the movement leadership do not show innovativeness in terms of programmatic ideas, the outcome of the movements is not likely to be attractive. This is revealed by the persistent failure of the Kamtapur movement, the leadership of which has not shown any innovativeness in terms of programmatic ideas or strategies of protest. This is due mainly to the poor educational background of the leadership as well as the low credibility of the leadership before the masses. And the lack of credibility has been due to the absence of those of the community who matter most to the community. Innovative ideas and relevant strategies could have been articulated had the educated section of the community come forward and assumed the leadership of the movement.

Besides, beyond the few specific questions outlined by way of research questions of which we have looked for answers through the study, there are other elements which strongly influence movement dynamics. For instance, as revealed from the present study, the 'fund' sources of a movement, the ideological groundings of the leadership, the conflicts within the leadership of a given movement are other factors which shape the movement dynamics.