

**Ethnicity and Politics of Identities:
A Study on Gorkhaland Movement**

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**Submitted by
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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled **“Ethnicity and Politics of Identities: A Study on Gorkhaland Movement”** submitted to **Sikkim University** for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my original work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Ethnicity and Politics of Identities: A Study on Gorkhaland Movement**” submitted to **Sikkim University** in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences** embodies the result of bona fide research work carried out by **Ms. Pratishtha Dewan** under my guidance and supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree, diploma, associate-ship, fellowship.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

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Chapter I

Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Post- Independence, India endeavoured on the path of nation building process with popular claims such as ‘unity in diversity’. The encapsulation of a multiple, diverse and undoubtedly distinct societies that the country has taken into its fold have lead to the consciousness of a greater demand for socio- economic and political recognitions. Post-independence 1947, apart from the interest of securing and reviving their economic and political spheres the heterogeneous societies of India also sort to identify their welfare in the sphere of social and cultural growth. Hence, they continued to be spaced out on the grounds of religion, language, culture, and race to name a few. The notion of diversity has been doubly understood and interpreted ideally with the model of secularism. The presence of diversity which eventually flattered the primary feature of India as land of multiple colours, post-Independence, would be erroneous to consider as a sole vital outcome of modern and independent India alone.

The construction exclusively concerned with the claims of ‘unity and diversity’ coupled with the model of secularism were also being entertained or one might say was being put to practice even in the ancient and medieval India ages ago. For instance, Akbar’s emphasis on religious tolerance and secularism which specified state to ensure that “no man should be interfered with on account of religion, and anyone is to be allowed to go over to a religion that pleases him’’ (Smith. A. Vincent cited in Sen, 2005:18) On a positive note, India has witnessed and served to be the cradle for much heterogeneous religion such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism and Christianity. A home for many races and cultures such as the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, Christians, Parsis and many more. The ideology of secularism puts greater emphasis on the acceptance of diversity and the plurality of its society. Nevertheless its negative attributions have not merely led to the religious compartmentalization, but the division of the land based on one’s caste, colour, language, race and region, to name a few, has been in a continuous journey.

India as it stands today has been the chief making of the massive heterogeneous plural societies, their cultural ideologies, intellectual understandings, and histories. Sen (2005) in his glorious work, *Argumentative Indians* state that secularism in India, though constitutionally recognized in post –independence has the imperative ingredients of past Indian intellectual history, arguments (public in nature) based on reason and involved issues of pluralism. The crucial reference to Akhbar’s secular religion known as *Din-i-lahi*¹ makes the case much more relevant in context.

Prior to the existence of a free India, the land was divided into two major authoritative divisions- The British India and the 565 Princely states or native states headed by their respective potentates. The latter though formed the part of the Indian sub-continent were not under the direct imperialistic clasp of the British but paradoxically the British gained suzerainty over them whereby still acknowledging their internal autonomy, sovereignty and self-governance.

The year 1947 becomes momentous in the making of an independent Indian nation free from the exhausting, imperialistic clutches of the British Raj. With the passing of the Indian Independence Act 1947 it resulted into the fissure of the colossal Indian land giving birth to an entirely two new independent nations- India with Jawaharlal Nehru as its first Prime Minister and Pakistan with Muhammad Ali Jinnah as its Governor General. Such a bifurcation paved the hard way for further recognitions on the basis of one’s caste, culture, religion, region, ideology and ethnicity. The Act provided to the princely states the choice to accede to one of the two newly formed independent Nation or continue maintaining their sovereignty. In response to it and in majority the integration took side in favour of the independent India. Hence, “ethnicity and nationalism are not givens but are social and political constructions” and “ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state” (Brass, 1991:8).

The acceptance of secularism and diversity in post-India with the framing of the Indian Constitution in 1950 not only escorted the approval to be one of the world’s largest democratic Nation characteristically Sovereign, Union ,Republic and Federal in nature but would also like to add that the presence of considerable amount of heterogeneity and

¹ Though unsuccessful in being propagated among Akhbar’s subjects, it was a religion based on synthesis of various other religions. Along with it a secular calendar “Tarikh-ilahi” for India was also planned (For further reading refer to Amartya Sen’s *Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity*. 2005).

heterodoxy in one's understanding and perception of a secular India lead to greater demand for Constitutional Recognitions on the line of one's ethnicity. The partition of India, the formation of the State Reorganization Commission 1953 ² supports the cause as the SRC aimed to create a homogeneous cultural society on linguistic grounds such as language. The creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1960 well serves the point. The varsity of the issue of language (one of the essential criteria for the issue of differentiation in ethnic groups) is that it "becomes not merely a means of communication, but a priceless heritage of group culture" (Brass, 1991:22). The success story of Andhra Pradesh reverberated in the minds of other sections of societies considering themselves to be linguistically distinct, the urgent need and aspirations to assert for the same. "The State Reorganization Commission materialized language-a cultural substance- into a resource for political burgeoning and encouraged regional political outfits to clamour for separate territorial arrangement on the basis of linguistic principle" (Sarkar, 2013:52).

In India, fanning the issue of sectarianism is concordant not merely based on religion and language, but also most recently and impressively on the grounds of one's caste, which has also been in advance well perceived through the affirmative actions. Though the recognition of secularism has well titled the bricks for democracy but in contrary such recognitions and form of government has also to witness hideous social cataclysm as seen in case of demolition of Babari masjid (1992) and the Gujarat riot (2002). The Mandal Commission has further blazed the sectarian concept and increased the inter caste rivalry to achieve benefits of the reservation quotas which seem to have nurturing the issue of ethnic democracy, ethnocentrism, ethno nationalism and caste votes in a fanfare. "A nation, therefore, may be seen as a particular type of ethnic community or rather, as an ethnic community politicized, with recognized group rights in the political system" (Brass, 1991: 20). The partition of India, the formation of the State Reorganization Commission, 1953 and the reservation policies become one of the many earliest reasons for highlighting the problems of contentions regarding one's identity, class, caste, ethnicity, regions and constitutional rights many a times becoming crucial disputations clad with political and economic scheme. In reality, the partition of India actually horrified "the fragile concept of Indian nation opened up the

² It was a major Act which reformed India's states and boundaries along linguistic lines. Creation of states on linguistic lines had actually been accepted by the Indian National Congress in its Nagpur Session, pre-Independence, 1920.

prospect of further disintegration of the newly created Indian States'' (Samanta, 2000: Introduction: xxi).

The issue of ethnic identity has been creating immense enmity within the societies. The term identity itself conveys various form of understandings concerned essentially with one's collective social and everyday life. A strong feeling of belongingness latches on to it. Identity is but a collective self-understanding, creating solidarity and groupings enabling collective actions to be possible (Taylor, Charles cited in Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). One's ethnicity has predominantly become obligatory in defining one's identity. Defining ethnic identity is multivalent and multidimensional in nature. Horowitz defines it as a concept which "easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language and religion; it covers 'tribes', 'races', 'nationalities' and 'castes'" (cited in Chandra, 2005). "An ethnic group is characterized by a multiplicity of attributes like religion, sect, caste, region, descent, race, color, language, culture and so on" (Samanta, 2000: Introduction: xxii). De Vos defines ethnic identity as 'subjective symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people...of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other groups' (cited in Brass, 1991:19). Issues pertaining to ethnicity and consequentially leading to identity formation has become an imperative discourse among the many marginalized and minority communities. The compartmentalization of the respective societies by defining definite boundaries between 'us' and the 'others' on the grounds of sharing a distinct ethnic identity opposite from that of the 'others' have become inevitable in post independent India

The grievances pertaining to ethnicity and identity has been well voiced through social movements in India. Though the issue of social movements is not uncommon to the Indian land but the ever first post-independent social movement in reference to the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1960 on the basis of ethnicity impinges in cementing the road to other such demands and movements. The Bodoland movement in the state of Assam, Gorkhaland movement in North Bengal, Jharkhand movement in Bihar are some of the best instances. India is not merely a land of contradiction speaking on the basis of religion, caste, culture, race, and many more but also has peculiar divisions of varying geographical terrains. Such contradictions if scrutinized have histories and oddities of their own. The major concerns of the leaders of independent India were fundamentally designed to cure the country's problem of plurality. Though the State Reorganization Commission had been set up to fulfil the aspirations of the heterogeneous societies on the bases of language it was relatively ineffective in satisfying the aspirations of the diverse ethnic communities (Oomen,

2004).Considering the plurality and the ethnic diversity of the post-independent India, her political aspirations have been worn to shred “between the politics of identity and the politics of culture” (Sarkar, 20013:2).

The articulation of the Gorkha’s proposition for a separate native soil (Gorkhaland) has been engaged in the Indian politics for more than a hundred years on the alleged reasons being language, region, diverse and distinct culture and community which has been overall clad with the notion of securing a legitimate Indian identity. Hence, the movement has in the main discussion been measured on the bases of ethnicity. Sarkar (20013:3) poses two vital assertions the first being that the movement is not secessionist in nature as it demands for self- governance within the sovereignty of the nation-state. Secondly, it is about their affirmations of collective rights and recognitions on the lines of their cultural and social distinctiveness.

Sen (2005:34) states that though the concept of plurality in India has accepted the varied groups as legitimate whereby allowing to profess their respective cultures and beliefs paving the way for tolerance and hence acknowledging their ‘equity of recognition’ is rather not sufficient and proper. He puts to practice the sanskritic word ‘*swikriti*’ meaning “acceptance in particular, the acknowledgement that the people involved are entitled to lead their own lives”.Such acceptance comes in the absence of having not being compared with the other groups or without the conferring of affirmative equality to them which makes us understand that such allowance should be ascribed. The issue of acceptance which I would like to argue is rather immensely and quite frequently concerned with feeling of belongingness having a subjective realization and boundary demarcation which can be well comprehended only in the existence of the ‘others’

The history of Darjeeling Hills³, the focal place from where the Gorkhas are voicing their grievances, is massive in content as well as complex and critical in nature. Historically as it is seen, the political and geographical boundaries of the Hills have been subject to constant alterations and contentious in character paving the ground for ethnic diversity.The history of Darjeeling has been invariably intertwined with the history of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan, Bengal and the British Raj thereby producing histories of their own with changing time and circumstances.

³Shall use to refer to the three sub-hill divisions namely, Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong and Kurseong.

The socio-economic and political advancement of the Hills with the coming of the British had not merely facilitated the migration of the people leading to cultural assimilation but with the passage of time the migration encouraged by the British led to ethnic diversity leading to the consciousness of their identity invariably linked with their security, socio-economic up gradation as well as their need for political recognitions. Henceforth, the hills define the epitome of a heterogeneous society.

The birth of the Hill Men's Association in 1907 voiced such issues and aimed at creating a homogeneous niche for Nepali ethnic society under one umbrella term, 'Gorkhali' irrespective of their respective diverse ethnic backgrounds. Such a realization had found its surface due to education facilities, print Medias, and open discussions.⁴ Later the political organizations, All India Gorkha League, went further ahead with the demand for separate statehood followed by political parties such as the Pranta Parishad and Gorkha National Liberation Front in the 1980's and most recently by Gorkha Janamukti Morcha . As Greetz rightly states, that "it is a desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes and opinions matter and it is the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state; it is a search for an identity, and a demand that they be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as being somebody in the world" (Greetz, 1973). The beginning of the twentieth century henceforth bore witness to the question of Nepali identity.

Issues pertaining to ethnicity and consequentially leading to identity formation has become an imperative discourse among the marginalized and minority Gorkha community. Edwards (2011) had rightly stated that the feeling of belonging to a group constitutes an important part of any identity. Such a feeling of belongingness is a subjective realization which can be well comprehended only in the existence of the 'others' Though the 'others' in case of Gorkhaland movement has always been referred to the 'Bengalis' with whom the Gorkhas share diverging ethnic background but at present the concept of 'Gorkhali' needs to be deconstructed. Oommen (2004) rightly states that social movement leads to the realization of other goals; they are the medium for change. The struggle for a separate state as 'Gorkhaland' has been the crucial agenda immemorially, but concurrently the observance in

⁴For better understanding of the contribution and the role of theatre in framing the Nepali identity the researcher has referred to the unpublished research work by Giri, Private. 2014. *Theatre and Public Sphere in Darjeeling: Staging Gorkha Identity Politics*. Department of Mass Communication, Sikkim University.

the rise of '*janajati*'⁵ where the 'others' is used to rather define the separate and diverse ethnic groups within the Nepali society other than one's own has begun to take its ground.

Benedict Anderson's concept of '*the imagined communities*' become quite relevant in describing the Gorkha identity and its society. Such a movement has triggered the issue of ethnic democracy whereby the *janajati* groups to name a few such as Rais, Dewans, Mukhia, Thami and others have started asserting their rights for a secured identity by being listed as Scheduled Tribes. As Hangen (2010) rightly states that the ethnic inequalities have invariably been associated with socio-economic indicators. The situation of *janajatis* with its much emphasis on cultural revivalism is but not free from socio-political and economic charges.

1.2 Review of Literature

1.2.1 Understanding Ethnicity

Hal.B.Levine (1999) defines ethnicity as "that method of classifying people (both self and other) that uses origin (socially constructed) as its primary reference. Greetz (1973) states ethnicity is a derivation of individual's social existence based on factors such as region, kin connection and communities who have a common or shared religion, language and social practices. "These congruities of blood, speech, customs and so on are seen to have an ineffable and at time overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves." Ethnicity defined on the "psychological dimension for a membership in a group correlates to the group's attributes against other groups which becomes an "objective reality" for its members (Plax, 1976). Max Weber defined ethnicity as, "ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists" (quoted from Hutchinson & Smith, 1996 in Chandra, 2005).

Glazer and Moynihan (1975) tries to understand structuring ethnicity based on primordial approach which emotions play a major role and affect in explaining ethnic identities. The

⁵ The term has been borrowed from Nepal. Janajati refers to the minority groups belonging to the non-Brahmin castes (Matwali) that have started to demand for greater autonomy and recognition for separate states depending on one's distinct ethnic lines and affirmative action respectively.

primordial ethnic identities are hence considered to be a permanent aspect of the human world. For Greetz (1973) a prominent figure associated with the primordial loyalties of ethnicity states that ethnicity are 'given' social existence which essentially comprise of kins, region and communities based on common religion, language and social practices which are indefinable and overpowering.

Barth (1969) employs the use of primordial as well as situational approaches while studying ethnicity. For him the existence of any common or shared culture owes its credit due to the formation of ethnic groups rather than its mere existence. For him, a social group could be well maintained through boundaries, a subjective creation. Culture, on the other hand was not a necessity for mobilizing a social group or any ethnic group (ibid: 14). On the contrary, ethnicity along the primordial loyalties attracts cultural amalgamation and symbolic qualities as indispensable attributes whereby the society and culture bow to its determination. Consequently, the "ethnic identities and hatred naturally draws people into persistent identities and antagonisms" (Levine, 1999). Timothy Baumann (2004) states that ethnicity falls under the dichotomy of "Us" and "Them" where the majority forms the "Us" and the minority "Them". His construction of ethnicity has been on the major debate between the primordial and the instrumental where both the approaches have political and economic ambitions.

1.2.2 Understanding Identity

James.D.Fearon (1999) states that though the definition of 'identity' varies it nevertheless invoke the need for recognition. Identity is to be understood as a social and personal category. The former composed of expected behaviours, membership rules and alleged attributes of the individuals. The latter categories constituted of distinguish qualities that the individuals took pride in and thought to be consistent and socially consequential.

Richard Jenkins (2008) asserts that 'identity' has two essential principles grounded on similarity and difference. "Identity' as such is not a given phenomenon or should not be taken for granted, it is rather established. As a consequence, identity classifies the society and correlate "oneself with, or attach oneself to, something or someone else (such as a friend, a sports team or an ideology". Fearon (1999) identifies the key uses of 'identity' as the primary foot for socio-political actions. Identity is hence aimed at securing and maintaining a feeling of "sameness" for mobilizing collective actions. Brubaker and Frederick Cooper (2000) states

that it is a collective observable fact rooted in the belief of “sameness” (as a member of the group) which becomes its objective reality of one self and subjective reality marked by one’s experience or perception of sameness making the ‘identity’ strong as its boundaries are well maintained and acknowledges homogeneity.

George Schopflin (2001) argues that identities are anchored around morale values such as right/wrong, polluted/unpolluted and desirable/undesirable. As a consequence leads to the formation of hierarchical identities based on judgments of the individuals concerned. The creation of identities is not an inevitable production of a country’s history or culture rather the involvement of human agencies and their creativity (Hangen, 2010).

1.2.3 Politics of Ethnic Identities

The ethnic identity becomes crucial in comprehending the “psychological” dimension of ethnicity whereby, factors such as “emotional commitment”, “traditionalistic allegiance” with the past histories with a feeling of “nostalgia”, “positive saliency” without the identification with the group (Plax,1976). Group commitment of certain ethnic identity becomes indispensable concept which demands the fear of avoiding violation of one’s ethnic norms which actually binds the group solidarity along with its identity (ibid: 134). Identities are social construction based on ‘primordial ties, interests and boundaries’ in which ‘the state institutions along with their elites and leadership play a significant role’ (Hangen, 2010:122).

Ethnic identities are “imagined communities” and subset of larger and general identities (Yinger. 1985). Ethnicity as such has been divisive and in repressive in its advance (quoted from Morgan, 1981 in Yinger, 1985). Identities in political arena can well lead to polarization, homogenization of diversity and conflicting interests among the ethnic and cultural communities sharing the same civic space (Polletta and Jasper, 2001 c.f. Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and Gerard Toffin (eds), 2011). The politics of identities as stated by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) is torn between the ‘weak/soft’ and the ‘strong/ hard’ identities. The former suggests identity to be much fluid and negotiable where as the latter is much constant and static. Identity categorization on the lines of the above mentioned categories is not just suggestive of its instrumental and primordial loyalties respectively but is to quote the authors “too ambiguous, too torn between hard and soft meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers” (ibid:2). Adding to it Oommen (2010:39) argues that such elements of the primordial and the instrumental identities get easily intertwined while

structuring identities as the primordialists argue that it is a universal latent phenomenon which is called upon by the deprived communities at the erosion of their privileges while the latter (instrumentalists) in contrast believe that identities are but a historical construction.

Chandara (2005) argues that when ethnic identities are politicized it gives rise to more than one ethnic party. Manor (1996) brings forth to light the varied faces of ethnic identities in terms of Indian context such as which are based on language, religion, caste or even at times based on tribal or adivasi identity. Such identities alter with changing circumstances and interests. The State's institutional structures such as the 'affirmative action policies, language policies, policies on the creation of new federal units whereby the individuals of the concerned ethnic party serves the State by being its patron as the primary principle of ethnicity has always been 'exclusion'. Ethnic party as such appeals to its concerned voters by voicing their interests at the cost of the exclusion of other groups hence being central strategy for mobilization and destabilization of the system (Chandra, 2005). Samanta (2000) states that ethnicity is "essentially a political phenomenon" whereby the apparatus required for its mobilization are usually the ethnic traditions, customs and the cultural variations which enhances grave political cleavages. "The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantages" (Brass, 1991). Such cultural symbols eventually become the crucial markers for the membership of the group which are called forth in crafting political identity. Hence, for Brass the creation of ethnic identities are instrumental and a sole outcome of the competition of the political elites over the limited resources. (ibid).

Hangen (2010) argues that the flourishing of the ethnic consciousness leading to one's creation of ethnic identities which become politicized aims at not merely reviving their lost traditions and cultures but also voice against their subjugated social-economic and political interests, rights and recognition with demands for affirmative actions and statehood. Steinberge (1981) argues that ethnicity blinds people of their inequities. "It leads to cultural rather than opportunity' explanations of inequality" (quoted in Yinger, 1985). The ethnic demand for a separate state takes shape with the aim of securing a concrete and stable "cultural identity" as the ethnic tension between the dominant and the subjugated group flares up.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The Gorkha's movement for a separate state as 'Gorkhaland' on the bases of asserting a secured and concrete identity is not of recent origin but is a struggle of nearly a hundred years back from now which was realized with the birth of the Hill Men's Association (1907) who cried aloud its primary and universalistic slogan, "*Nepali, Bhutia, LapchehamisabaiGorkhali*" which in short was abbreviated as '*Nebula*'⁶. Such was the supreme ideology of the three diverse communities which were impregnated with the imprint of secularism aimed at unifying the Nepali society as a whole.

The present Gorkha status under the leadership of Mr. Bimal Gurung⁷ has been witnessing concurrent rise in the *janajati* movement. Gorkha is an umbrella term dressed in the essence of unity in diversity but the present situation depicts a picture where the diverse communities of Gorkhali are also tilting towards reviving their respective age old and long forgotten cultures with primordial assertions. Also, the demands for the developmental schemes and reservation policies have been aspired on ethnic lines.

The U.N. interference signified the year 1993 as the 'Year of the Indigenous People' which had its influence in boosting the entire affair of the *janajati* people in asserting their rights for their respective identities (Hangen, 2010). Henceforth, the notion and the application of a homogeneous and singular 'Gorkha identity' in describing the heterogeneous Nepali society appear to be under question. Revisiting and precisely defining and comprehending the massive and complex history of the Gorkhas and their notion of identity have become crucial since ethnicity and identity have been seen as a social and fluid construction in every historical context of the society having concerned motives and furnishing the course for the rise of ethnic democracy and cultural mobilization realized through the *janajati* movement as depicted in the present scenario.

In order to make the above statement more concrete the reference to the hosting of Kiranti Khambu International Conference on annual basis serves the best instance of cultural

⁶It was a monthly magazine of the Hill Men's Association which fortunately becomes the famous slogan of the then Gorkhali people. '*Ne*' stood for Nepali, '*Bu*' for Bhutia and '*La*' for Lepcha.

⁷ Mr. Bimal Gurung is at present the political supremo of Darjeeling District, the founder of the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha founded in the year 2007. It has been spearheading the issue of Gorkhaland and is perceived by most to be the dominant regional party of the hills after the fall of its previous political party, i.e. Gorkha National Liberation Front under the leadership of Subhas Ghising.

mobilization and the struggle for socio-cultural and political recognitions by demarcating themselves as a distinct ethnic (tribal) group. Apart from such conferences, ethnic communities such as Rai, Dewan, Gurung, Bhujel, Thami, Sunuwar, Jogi, Khas, Magar and Newar are the ten major groups from the hills who have been asserting their rights for the recognition as Scheduled Tribes. On the other hand the tribal categories are as well struggling for the recognition of Development Boards on the line of their respective ethnic identities⁸. Struggle for such colossal demands and recognitions at present in the hill has transformed it into a contested land with ethnic and indigenous claims and recognitions who portray a close link with the rise of the *janajati* movement which has been a new phenomenon among the hill communities

Hence, perplexities embarked in understanding the identity claims of the Gorkhas and their realization of other socio-political and economic goals vividly illustrated through *janajati* movements remain essential for affirming their new identities. Studies related with the Gorkhas have been done, though invariably linked with the demand for greater autonomy (separate state). The revivalism of their primordial loyalties have at recent started to emerge where the cultural symbols in the form of language, customs, primitive form of religions have gained enormous importance even in the present environment dominated by westernization and modernization along with the constructivist and instrumentalist approaches being invariably realized. Studies based on it have been limited. Hence, the work shall try to provide new orientation towards the study of the Gorkhas, their notion of identity, and their demand for a greater autonomy and concurrently it shall also try to throw light upon the politics embedded in creating, manipulating, prioritizing and subjugating certain identities for the socio-political and economic achievements crucially attached with the government's policies such as reservation issues.

⁸ The competition for the recognition of indigenality and Development Boards rose when the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Ms. Mamata Banerjee in 2013 granted to the Lepchas, one of the ethnic communities of Darjeeling, the recognition of being the indigenous ethnic group of Darjeeling Hills along with a Development Board. At recent, the Tamangs and Sherpas have also gained such boards in 2014 and 2015 respectively including the Bhutias in 2015.

1.4 Analytical Framework

1.4.1. Research Questions

- Do all the people of the hill ascribe themselves as belonging to a common heritage of being a Gorkha?
- How and why cultural mobilization of the multiple ethnic groups through janajati movement being marshalled and what understandings do they have regarding janajati?
- Do the state policies and politics have relevance in justifying and legitimizing one's identity?
- What are the contemporary discourses about Gorkha ethnicity and identity?

1.4.2 Objectives

- To study the consequences and impacts of the janajati movement among the hill communities of Darjeeling in defining their ethnic identities.
- To understand the relevance and the existence of the Gorkha/Nepali jati in contemporary society.
- To understand the importance and the role played by the State in creating an ethnic and indigenous identity of the hill communities

1.4.3 Methodology

The research is primarily qualitative in nature whereby the primary sources of data has been collected with the help of research tools such as, the use of semi structured, open ended interview schedule and observations. The holding of group discussions was initiated among the different sections of the Gorkha society such as the representatives of the concerned ethnic parties. It provided a variety of perspectives and understanding on the concerned topic. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques have been employed to select the respondents.

Secondary sources of data incorporates the use of books, journals, articles, published and unpublished research works, gazetteers and official documents.

The area selected for the study is Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong and Kalimpong as Darjeeling Hill has been basically formed on the basis of these three primary sub-divisions and the Gorkhland movement has been primarily and invariably active and influential in

these three sub-divisions. Moreover, the *janajati* movement has been simultaneously observed in these areas. The respective ethnic associations have been located and functional not merely in the Darjeeling Sadar but also in the other two mentioned sub- divisions. The interviews have been conducted according to the preference of the respondents which comprised mainly in English and Nepali. The use of cameras and note keeping exercises were maintained to keep the data visually and technically concrete and easy to revisit the documentations.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The aim of the study was to bring into focus the perception and the understanding of Gorkha/Nepali community and its identity as perceived by the multiple ethnic (tribal and non-tribal) communities of Darjeeling hills at large. With time being limited and the political scenario unstable and critical the data has been mainly collected by interviewing only a few willing section (non-tribal) of the Gorkha/Nepali community, the political parties, Developmental Boards along with their respective representatives also being excluded. The other limiting concern of the work has been with the limited literature on the issue of ‘janajati’ especially in context with Darjeeling hills which happens to be a recent phenomenon concerning the hill politics and identities.

Chapter II

Historical Context

2.1 Introduction

The justification for better and vivid understanding of the issues pertaining to the Gorkhas in India can be well justified, if not completely, by trying to understand their massive, intricate and compound history which had its roots engraved mainly in the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal. The history of Gorkhas is not merely composite and colossal but nevertheless entangled with the history of Sikkim and Bhutan as well. Gorkha identity gains much importance, significance and turns into, at times, the primary topic for speculations among the general masses and an intense topic for discussion among the intellectuals and the academicians. One of the most frequently observed squabbles and controversies encompassing the issue of ethnic movements at national and international platforms have been the historical subject matter relating to the ethnic groups, their culture, their regional boundaries, their identity, rights, recognitions, belongingness and authenticity. The struggle of the Gorkhas is seen as one such case.

History and its interpretation is manifold, the selection of which rests on the calculative benefits sustaining the cause and the argument of the concerned section of the society. The Gorkhaland movement as such illustrates the point where the selection of the history concerning its people and region becomes crucial and sensitive as it legitimizes their identity and rights at par with the other national categories of India. The point can be well exemplified when the former and late Gorkhaland leader Subhas Ghising opted in favour for the usage and recognition of the term 'Gorkha' as the language of the hill people under the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution rather than the word 'Nepali'. The rationale for such an approach was to demarcate and break the identity link of the hill people from Nepal. The popular misnomer with the usage of 'Nepali language' was the constant association and identification of the Nepali speaking people of India to be identified as illegal immigrants from Nepal. Delinking and validating the Nepali Indian identity with the inclusion of the word 'Gorkha' has been the pertinent objective of the movement irrespective of the political changing leadership.

Understanding the Gorkha's history by the people within and outside the hill community should be an essential criterion before asserting any sort of complete

understanding based on the community and its movement. As Subba (1992:28) rightly states that an authentic history can only be written and achieved “if one does not lose sight of the association between ‘text’ and the ‘context’”. The late political supremo, Mr. Ghising while in the selection of his history overlooked the ‘text’ in the sense that the word ‘Gorkha’ (which was believed by him to remove one of the identity crisis faced by the Indian born Nepali) had a direct linkage with the country Nepal where the place still exists even to this day and from where the ‘Gorkha nomenclature’ owes its origin. Hence, it most likely negates his approach.

Sen (2006) argues that the value of history in interpreting identity of the individuals as belonging to a particular group is insufficient due to the arrays of identity categories and roles the individuals belong and perform. But in contrary and if positively viewed, the historical magnitude ascends as it assembles a common feeling of partisanship on the ground of shared collective history which becomes and has been an irrefutable fact and criteria cementing the solidarity in ethnic movements. The ‘context’ on which Ghising fought and argued sufficed the circumstances for that period as he aimed at building a homogeneous ‘Gorkha society’. The task of homogenizing the community brushing aside its diversity was crucial for the hill politics to materialise as Subba (1992:37) states that the Gorkhas/ Nepalis⁹ were the total sum of over nineteen endogamous groups who practiced different religions and spoke different languages. Before the political boundaries of Nepal and Sikkim were actually drawn, these hills formed a contiguous area where these endogamous groups moved about freely (Pradhan 2009:7). The ‘context’ was validated as it brought to light and popularity the general consensus and recognition of the word ‘Gorkha’. But unfortunately, the link between Ghising’s historical interpretation between the ‘text’ and the ‘context’ proved feeble.

Before proceeding on any subject matter relevant to the study of the Gorkhas and their struggle in India, it is to be born in mind the three essential issues which have much to do with the creation of the history of modern Gorkha/Nepali identity. Firstly, the presence of the nineteen endogamous groups with varying religious and linguistic diversities coupled with the unhindered historical movement between Sikkim and Nepal has resulted not only to the cultural and ethnic diversity but also led to their cultural assimilation. Secondly, the socio-political, economic conditions prevalent in Nepal and Sikkim led to the alteration in the

⁹The words ‘Gorkha’ and ‘Nepali’ for most of the time have been used synonymously and for a simpler understanding the researcher shall use it interchangeably as well for the moment. The complication between these words shall be dealt in the upcoming chapters.

socio-demographic profile of the concerned territories especially advanced through the process of migration. Thirdly, the creation of Darjeeling hills marked by its progressive developments post 1835 as an appropriate site for a sanatorium and a profitable hillstation provided a suitable niche for the admixture of the assorted communities to build a history of their own. The urge for a Gorkha/Nepali identity which encompasses around such basic issues has corollary led to the initialisation of the foundational comprehension of the relevance of Gorkha's existence, their struggle for survival and their ethnic multiplicity which well resounds by their participation in the 'Gorkhaland movement' and more evidently with the rise of the 'janajatis' in the present scenario.

2.2 Genealogy of the word 'Gorkha'

The construction of ethnic identity is not a matter of fortnight but has a historical process of its own. The usage and its authenticity lie with time and circumstances. The foremost important move towards understanding the issue of the Gorkha ethnic identity lies by referring to the concise history of Nepal at first hand where the word, the race, precisely and undoubtedly had its derivation from. As such the inclusion of the history of Nepal becomes inevitable while dealing with the question of ethnic and cultural identity of the hill people as 'Gorkhas'.

The early hours of Nepal's history cannot be convincingly stated as it is, if not completely, believed to be muddled up with mythologies making problematic to differentiate facts from myth (Vansittart, 1992:10). Modern Nepal¹⁰ as it stands today has been the end result of the eighteenth century conquest and unification by the ardours and striving conviction of the ninth ruler of the house of Gorkha, Prithivinarayan Shah¹¹ who dared to

¹⁰ The term Nepal prior to the merger referred simply to the Kathmandu Valley in the east. It was during the fifth century under the rule of the eighth Malla ruler, Yaksha Malla that the valley was divided between his three sons into Bhatgaon, Patan and Katmandu. The term Nepal henceforth was monopolised by the kingdom of Kathmandu alone (Bista, 1991: 26). The bifurcation of the valley proved fatal for the survival of the Malla dynasty which was eventually taken over by the rising Gorkha power, Prithivinarayan Shah from the year 1769 A.D. mainly taking the advantage of the consistent enmity and jealousy among the three divided principalities.

¹¹ Prior to its unification, the present modern lands of Nepal were under the control of petty rulers governing multiple principalities. Nepal as a country was rather unrealised. It is after the consolidation of the country does its history stand in order and easy to decipher. Prithivinarayan Shah is but most confidently deemed to be the propagator of the great house of Gurkha, gratifying the long cherished dreams of his ancestors. He was coronated at the age of 12 in 1742 A.D.

envisage bringing to reality his dream of 'Greater Nepal' (though at present the concept of Greater Nepal can be highly debatable, subject to critical scrutiny). The history of the Shah dynasty carries much of the importance as it is principally credited for being the forbearers of the word 'Gorkha'.

Many legends have been heard regarding the origin of the word. Historically, the geographical seats have much affiliation in unfolding and asserting people's identity, culture and ethnicity. The cradle for the Gorkha nomenclature has been derived from a small principality in west of Nepal called 'Gorkha'.¹² The land came to be known by the name due to the installation by a 'Nath Jogi' an idol of "Gorakhnath" there. Secondly it is also believed to have been derived from the Tibeto-Burman word "Garkha" meaning "a cluster of villages" and lastly it is believed to have linkage with the word "Kharka" meaning "grassland or pastures" (Pradhan, 2009:22). As the word has been fastened with such multiple assertions having no consensus of an assured linkage the second proposition according to Pradhan (2009) seem to hold validity over the construction of the word due to the presence of the Lichhavi inscription found in the principality itself. Irrespective of such varied understandings the linkage of the term with the 'Goraknath idol' has quite commonly gained momentum even till now though this is not to say that it has been completely accepted. The choice of version may differ.

The successful propagation of Gorkha nomenclature has been due to three reasons. The foremost being the military expansionist policy of the Gorkha rulers where they conquered and annexed most of the mountainous lands further west of Nepal such as Kumaon and Gharwal and to the east, the land of the kiratas who share a close border with Sikkim. As a result Gorkha cultural and political hegemony became predominant. The unification of the

¹² The principality of Gurkha before it was taken by the Shah dynasty was ruled by a Khandka king of the khas tribe (Vansittart, 1992: 31). The genealogy of the Shah dynasty is traced with the royal family of Chittor. The Mohammedan invasion of India by Zahiruddin Muhammad Barber paved the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India in 1526 after the defeat of the Delhi Sultanate, Abrahim Lodi in the battle of Panipat. Though great resistance was witnessed on the part of the Rajput Rajas, nevertheless, on the other hand, petty rajas in avoiding the Mughal assault fled to the hills of Kumaon and Gharwal and even into the deeper areas of west Nepal, but such migrations in its initial phases barely had an effect on the eastern Himalayas where the Rais and Limboos dwelled (Lama, 2008:17). Such a migration led to the cultural mixture of the khas and the migrants. The former were previously known as nomads.

fragmented petty principalities, kingdoms and its rulers under a singular monarch (the Shah dynasty) sowed the seed of a common identity and language i.e. the Gorkha/Nepali. Secondly, after the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816 accredited the Gorkha soldiers as a 'martial race'. The Gorkha's military intrinsic worth was perceived to be a greater threat and nuisance on the part of the British which the latter later on after the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816 brought to their side for defending their legitimacy and dominance in the Indian lands. Lastly and most importantly is the hundred year's old Gorkha ethnic movement in Darjeeling which has grasped the attention and interest of multiple political parties at regional and national level. The research agendas, intellectual forums and public debates have well incorporated, broadened and help promulgate the subject matter.

2.3 Geographical and Ethnic Division of Nepal

Many kingdoms in the land of Nepal had their prospects of rising which eventually under then prevailing circumstances ceased to exist followed by other kingdoms. The rise and fall of varied dynasties and kingdoms paved the groundwork for various socio-cultural assortments. The Gorkhas bear a testimony to such historical course. Nepal in general as a country bears witness to the existence of multiple dynasties with its glorified kings and emperors. The valley in particular had a reputation of being opulent catching the attention of such rulers. The most prominent in the ancient history being the Kiratas (who had 29 kings) ruled over the valley with its first king as Yalamber, for more than a thousand years and preceding them were the Gopala (cowherd) Dynasty set by Ne Muni which was succeeded by the Ahirs from the plains of India. Nepal since time immemorial has remained under the constant influence of the Gangetic plains of India making it obvious for the rulers from such areas to have their strongholds in the land. The most outstanding among them were the Buddhist Sakyas, the Lichhavis and Guptas, and the Mallas. But most probably it was the Mallas, after the downfall of the Lichhavi dynasty, who took to dominance over the Valley by fourteenth century which was to last till the eighteenth century (Bista, 1991:24) followed by the Shah and the Rana dominance.

Since the dawn of time Nepal has remained as the land of contradictions and diversity on the lines of physical geography, culture, society and the people. Undoubtedly being a landlocked country it shares borders being crammed between the two powerful countries with China in its northern division, and India in the southern, western and eastern divisions.

Lying among the young fold mountains of the world, the physical geography is a matter of vast variations. For instance, referring to the general description given by Samanta (2000:1-2) to the north of the country rests the region of 'Bhoto' a Tibetan derivation derived from the word 'Bhot' referring to Tibet. Its inhabitants share a close proximity with the cultures of Tibet. The western zone of the country is known as the 'Pahad' or the 'Hilly region' featured with rugged terrains and hills of lesser altitude with valleys and meadows and runs across the middle of the country. The south of the country is known as the 'Mades' or the 'Terai' very rich in agriculture and dense forest with abundance of wild animals.

The geographical divisions brings to light that with definite demarcation of land and territories, authenticity, aborigine and indigeneity of different stock of human races were segregated and demarcated almost along the entire breadth of the country as Bista states, "traditionally, the regions of Nepal were identified by the names of its various ethnic communities" (1991:12). For a better understanding of such divisions it would be apt to provide a suitable illustration. The 'Pahad' was divided into three ethnic zones vertically on the west. The land of the Khas tribe was known as the Khasaan which was to the far west of the country. Magrant, the land of the Magars was to the east of the Khasaan and was followed by the Kali Gandaki region traditionally known as the Gandaki Pradesh. It is also to be noted that the western part of the country was further divided into two rajs known as the "Baisi Raj" and the "Chaubisi Raj" who paid tributaries to the Raja of Jumla before the Unification. Kathmandu Valley lays east to the Gandaki zone which "contained nearly 300,000 souls, most of whom were Newars and Murmis (Vansittart, 2012:6) To the east of the valley was the Kirat region known as the 'Kirat Pradesh' which homed ethnic groups such as the Limbus, Rais, Yakhas. The Kirat region was divided into three zones such as the wallo kirat (near kirat) the area from Sunkosi River to Likhu. Manjh Kirat (Middle Kirat) between the Likhu and Arun River and lastly the Pallo kirat (far kirat) stretching from the Arun to the Indian border (Bista, 1991:12). The land of the Khambus or Khambuwan was in the Middle kirat and the Pllo kirat was identified as the land of the Limbus or Limbuana. The region of Kirat becomes one of the most prominent in ethnic mosaic as it also housed the Sunuwars, Murmis (Tamangs), Yolmos and Sherpas. The Lepcha too were the indigenous group and settled in the far Kirat region. The south of the country was called 'Madesh', the land of the Tharus. Prior to the unification, the Tarai had no whatsoever connection with people of the hills. The region had dense forest and malarial. It should be noted that before the unification

the rajahs of such ethno-geographically divided regions were mostly involved in unending squabbles and wars and distanced from the India.

The complication of the country's ethno-geographical division has been supplemented with the division of the inhabitants' races. It is likely to be believed that the land was for the most part of the time inhabited by the Mongolians. To quote in the words of Vansittart, "probably from one of the great waves of Mongolian conquest, which spread through the breadth of Asia from east to west, some side wave was washed over the bleak snows of the mighty Himalayas, into the fertile plains and valleys of Nepal. Finding here a cool and bracing climate and a fertile soil, this mass of Mongolians settled down and adopted the country as their own" (1992:59). The existence of such a race was also coupled by the presence of the Indo-Aryan races especially after the Muslim Invasion which prompted the migration of the people from the adjoining areas of India. The immediacy of the Tarai region with the Indian land supports the point. In addition to it, the invasion of the Muslims forced the inhabitants of the Northern as well as the Gangetic plains to take refuge in the western and southern divisions of the country. Prior to such migration, movement of the people from India was also well evident especially seen by the visit of Asoka in about 250 B.C. Migration not only created the admixture of the two races but the socio-cultural assimilation was unavoidable whereby the country became the "melting pot" of diverse cultural practices and races.

The language spoken by the masses belongs to the Tibeto-Burman usually spoken by the Mongolians i.e. the Kirats, Mangars, Gurungs, Lepchas, Tamangs, etc. and Indo-Aryan who speak Nepali or Khas-Kura though Nepali has become the lingua franca. The representation of the diversity of the people's ethnicity along with the country's geographical division can put oneself in a state of complete bewilderment. The acknowledgement not merely of the Indo-Aryans but as well the Tibetan-Mongoloids from the far north adds to the ethnic diversity and fluctuation of the country.

2.4 Geographical Formation of Darjeeling Hills

The evolution of Darjeeling is a matter of great concern and interest creating controversies and bewilderment over its geographical, regional and socio-political historical documentations. The variety of the chronological historical deeds and happenings cannot be wholly stated nor can it be wholeheartedly accepted. As the historical discussion of

Darjeeling comes to play one must perpetually remember the fact that it has been resourced through the original writings of the British employed officials, botanists and travellers replacing the forte of well skilled historians or anthropologists. This is not to strictly confirm that the documents provided by such British officials, botanists and enthusiastic travellers are not valid or the ones provided by the historians can only authenticate the facts. Specialization of work one indulges into can make a whole lot of difference enlarging the scope for better and clearer understanding (Subba, 1992 originally deals with the issue). Whatever knowledge one can have appropriate to the hills of Darjeeling rests solely on the intellectual capacity and experience gathered by the Imperialists.

The history of Darjeeling enters late in the scene only after the arrival of the British East India Company to whom the land was ceded by the Raja of Sikkim in 1835. Prior to which, its history is difficult to decipher. Even to this day, debates take place regarding its historical lineage. Referring to O'Malley, Darjeeling prior to 1835 "then formed the part of the dominions of the Raja of Sikkim, a petty ruler who had been engaged in an unsuccessful struggle against the growing power of the warlike Gurkhas" (1999:19). The hazard of boundary dispute was then a common state of affair. A stable political boundary demarcation was well equalized by the British East India Company between the two countries. Dozey writes, "Prior to the year 1816 the whole territory known as British Sikkim belonged to Nepal, which had won it by conquest from the Sikkimese. Owing to the disagreement over the frontier policy of the Gurkhas, war was declared towards the close of 1813 by the British, and two campaigns followed in the second of which they were defeated by General Ochterlony. By a treaty signed at Segoulie at the end of 1816 the Nepalese ceded the 4000 square miles of territory referred to the above, which in turn by the treaty signed at Titalya on February 10th, 1817, was handed over to the Raja of Sikkim with the apparent object of hedging in Nepal with the kingdom of an ally, and preventing all possibility of further aggrandisement by the Gurkhas" (Dozey, 1922: 2). The lack of proper boundary maintenance also suggests that the region had to owe its alliance and allegiance to whoever conquered and annexed it.

The signing of the two treaties placed the East India Company in the most advantages position. First, the treaty of Segoulie limited the military expansion of the Gorkhas, by whose advanced military aptitude the Company was alarmed as they feared of losing the revenue generating areas. Secondly, the treaty of Titaliya (1817) becomes crucial as it positioned the Company on the vantage point due to the fact that granting sovereignty to Sikkim conditioned

her to refer all the matters of disputation between his subjects and the other adjoining states to the Company. The history of the Gorkhas was to be rephrased with the transfer of 'Darjeeling' to the Company by the Raja in 1835.

The possibility of the existence of Darjeeling owes its debt to the ambitious effort of Col. Llyod who during his visit in 1829 accompanied by J.W.Grant, Resident of Malda to settle the boundary disputes between Sikkim and Nepal "raised the subject" for the transfer of Darjeeling "offering either payment in money or land in exchange" (Pinn, 1986:2). Being captivated by the suitable climate and the scenic beauty, the idea for the construction of a sanatorium was forwarded for which in 1830 a second survey was made by the Deputy Surveyor-General, Capt. Herbert along with the company of J.W. Grant.¹³

Darjeeling was thus given to the Company 'out of friendship' in 1835 through the 'deed of grant' on the first of February. The deed reads as follows:

"The Governor-General having expressed his desire for the possession of the hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of this Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I, Sikkimputtee Rajah, out of friendship for the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is, all the land south of the Great Rangit river, East of the Balasun, Kahail and little Rangit rivers and West of Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers" (Dash, 1947: 38, O'Malley, 1902:21). In return the Raja received an allowance of Rs 3000/-, which was subsequently raised to Rs 6000/- per annum. This exchange, however, considered at that time from the financial point of view was entirely in the favour of the giver as the revenue derived from the hill never exceeded Rs 20/- the year" (Dozey, 1922:3).

The complete consolidation of the hills of Darjeeling as it stands today was with the annexation and the incorporation of the Siliguri subdivision in 1850 by the British as retaliation measure for imprisoning Hooker and Campbell (Superintendent of Darjeeling) by Namgyal Dewan, brother-in-law of the Rajah of Sikkim (Dash, 2011:34, Dozey, 1922:7, Subba, 1992:36). The second annexation was that of Kalimpong in 1865 after the Indo-Bhutanese war of 1864 and finally being merged with Darjeeling in 1866 (ibid). The

¹³ Though the anticipation for the possibilities of constructing a sanatorium at "the old Goorkha station called Dorjeeling" was originally proposed by Grant and Llyod, the apprehensive on the part of those two British officials concerning Darjeeling's winter had proposed an alternative site i.e. Ging (below Darjeeling) (O'Malley, 1999:20).

Kalimpong division was captured by the Raja of Bhutan in 1706 which historically formed part of Sikkim territory. It was during the rule of the third Chogyal, Chagdor Namgyal, 1700-1706 that the Bhutanese invasion was successful due to the underhand of the Chogyal's half-sister Pande Wangmo who thought was the legal heir to the throne as she was the eldest (Risley, 1894:12). Chogyal was later restored to the throne due to Tibet's intervention. Sikkim owed much of his religious, political, social and economic alliance with Tibet. Even after the withdrawal of the Bhutanese regime from Sikkim it retained their position at Damsang, up to the hill of Tegong-la, which is the current Kalimpong sub-division of Darjeeling District. Even to this day, the resident of the royal Bhutanese family known as the 'Bhutan House' can be seen functioning well in the Kalimpong sub-division.

Doors which too have been affected by the present movement of Gorkhaland belonged to Sikkim having been conquered by Bhutan in 1706 and later being occupied by the British in 1865 (Subba: 1992:36). "Till as late as 1874 Darjeeling was a 'Non-Regulated Area', from 1874 to 1919 it was a 'Scheduled District' and from 1919 to 1935 a 'Backward Tract'. Finally from 1935 till the independence of India, it was a "partially excluded area" by the Government of India Act of 1935. Until 1947 Darjeeling was administered but not fully integrated with West Bengal though politically it was a part of it since 1866 itself. (ibid).

2.5 Baffling issue over the Deed of Grant (1835)

The deed of grant dated 1st of February, 1835 has been subject to severe scrutiny from which a proper solution for deducting a genuine answer cannot be convincingly done. The deed of grant considering it to be dubious has been put forth originally by Pinn in his celebrated book entitled "*The Road of Destiny*" (1986). He states that if a formal request for the transfer was made by Llyod only on 19th of February 1835 then how could he get hold of the grant dated 1st February 1835? The other point of discussion according to Pinn is the granting of the land not merely out of friendship, or for the "sick people" but also of a licence for building a house (Pinn, 1986 cited in Subba, 1992:35) in the expectation of gifting Deogram to Sikkim for exchange of Darjeeling, "capturing Rummo Pradhan and some Lepcha Chiefs and hand them over the Sikkim and extend Sikkim's western boundary" (ibid).

The Raja never had the interest of parting with Darjeeling. Moreover, considering that the Rajah was not willing to part with Darjeeling without his propositions being fulfilled, the Council of Directors commanded Llyod on 15th June 1835 which read, " In reply to your

letter dated 25th ultimo. I am directed to inform you that the Hon'ble the Governor General of India in Council judges from your letter that the Rajah of Sikkim is not to cede Darjeeling. "You are therefore desired to abstain from urging any further negotiation having that object in view" (Pinn, 1986:126). In reply Lloyd informed that he had already acquired the grant. The 'transfer' of Darjeeling has been well perceived to be a sort of 'annexation' by the Company. When the talk for the transfer of Darjeeling took place, Darjeeling was a "village represented by Capt. Herbert to be destitute of inhabitants and no more but that place" which included the "Observatory Hill and its immediate vicinity" (ibid: 120). "It was this locality as described by Lyod and Herbert which the Governor –General wished for his sanatorium, and it was 'that place only the Council assumed Lyod was negotiating for'"(Pinn, 1986:120). During the transfer, surprisingly, included "all the land South of the Great Rangit river, East of the Balasun, Kahail and Little Rangit rivers and West of Rungno and Mahanadi rivers" (Dash, 2011:38).

Hence, combining all the intellectual efforts of renowned scholars nothing solid, authentic and reasonable answer can be brought. As confusing as it appears, hence, it's unavoidable to avoid the underhand Col. Lloyd might have had, altering the deed according to his convenience and including his personal interest in the hill.

2.6 British's interest towards Darjeeling

The British's curiosity and interest towards Darjeeling is undeniable so as their love for comfort. The parching, prickly heat of India being unbearable to them led to the establishment of the hill stations such as Shimla, Almora, Mussorie and Nainital, to the north of the country, to its south Ooty, Mahabaleshwar and Poona by the year 1929. The purpose of the hill stations was not the mere escape from the torment of heat but also served as a vital spot for the rejuvenation of ailing British. After the Anglo-Nepalese between 1814-1816, the British discovered that "the health and spirit of the men improved dramatically during their sojourn in the hills" (Sarkar, 2000: 213). Presently, such hill stations have been the destination for tourist attraction and get away holiday spot accumulating massive commercial growth. Originally, "they were called sanatoria, and served as convalescent homes for the employees of the East India Company of the lower income groups in urgent need of change of climate" (Pinn, 1986:1) as they could not afford to travel back home often or to other cool foreign vocational spots which was the opportunity of the mere rich British people. The Bengal presidency which formed one of the two major cities of Colonial rule (the other two

being Chennai and Maharashtra) was devoid of a proper hill station. Cherrapunji in the North Eastern region though available was in tentative position due to its excess dampness. Darjeeling with the transfer from Sikkim in 1835 was successfully converted more into an advanced urban sector, popular hill station rather than a site for a sanatorium though the latter was founded in the year 1852.

The scenic beauty and the cool climate of Darjeeling though can hardly be overlooked which attracted the interest of the British, the strategic geo-political location of the place also becomes the prime *raison d'être*. Darjeeling shared international political border with China, Tibet, India, Bhutan and Nepal. The geo-political control of the place meant the ultimate control of all the passes leading to Lhasa. The dominance over the Kalimpong-Lhasa trade route known as the 'Jeplea Pass' by the Sikkim served the shortest trade route to Tibet.

The 19th century British policy towards Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan was mainly guided by their interest in the overland trade with Tibet and Central Asia and the accompanying urgency for safeguarding the northern border of India against Tibet and China (Dasgupta, 1999:43, Samanta, 2000:44). The geo-political importance of the place has also been well stressed by Llyod who brings out the actual motive of the Company. O'Malley writes, " On all grounds, he strongly urged the importance of securing possession of the place, and, in particular, pointed out its advantages as a centre which would engross all the trade of the country, and as a position of great strategical importance, commanding the entrance into Nepal and Bhutan" (1999:20).

The treaty of Titaliya 1817 was detriment on the part of Sikkim Raja to whom "the Company restored the whole of the country between the Mechi and the Tista and guaranteed his sovereignty" (Dash, 2011:37) but in reality placed the British to the Lord paramount having right to intervene and to be called upon to settle the disputes concerning the State and its subjects. The occupation of Darjeeling would well assure their political and economic interests.

The advancement of the Colonists can be additionally illustrated with the appointment of Dr. Campbell as its Superintendent in 1840. The first hotel was established at Kurseong. However, the Dorjeeling Family Hotel and Castleton were the other two hotels of that period. Establishments such as the setting of commercial tea industry in 1856 took place. The credit for the founder of tea goes to Dr. Campbell, who first initiated the experiments on it in the year 1841 (Subba, 1992:45). By 1856 tea expanded from being at experimental to a

commercial stage. By the year 1866 within a time span of ten years from the year of transfer commercial tea industry advanced rapidly with no less than 39 gardens with 10,000 acres under cultivation and an outturn of over 433,000lbs of tea (Dash, 2011:74, O'Malley, 1999:113). The number of tea garden trebled between 1866 to 1874 making 82 per cent of the areas cultivable for tea while the outturn had multiplied nearly ten times (O'Malley, 1999:74). Sadly, the depression in tea industry began from 1897 due to the stiff competition by the expansion of tea industries in India and Sri Lanka known in those days by the name, Ceylon

Communication system was too improved the responsibility of which was handed to Lieutenant Naiper of the Royal Engineers (Dozey, 1922; O'Malley, 1999, Pinn, 1986). The planning of the road connecting Darjeeling with Siliguri was laid between 1839 and 1842 (ibid). Hence, the first ever Darjeeling road ran from Chowrasta towards Ghum and ascended towards Sinchal ridge. It then ran towards Kurseong and abruptly descended towards Pankhabari¹⁴. The starting of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway by the year 1881 famously known as the 'Darjeeling Toy Train' added to the hills the vistas for further profitable economic urban expansions. In general, the construction of the railways had immense contribution towards the growth of European towns especially after 1850 marked by rapid urbanization best described as "the railway British" (Scargill, 1979, Chatterji, 2006 cited in Chatterji, 2007:42). The construction of the ropeways in the mid 1800's was well connected with tea gardens which conveniently and swiftly aided to the transportation of tea and industrial goods increasing the economic viability of the hill.

2.7 The History of Migration: Dawn of Gorkha/ Nepali settlement

The acquisition of the hills of Darjeeling under the Colonial rule led to the sharp development of the areas marked by the presence of urban sectors and growth of industrialisation. Though Darjeeling as an urban sector has been the brainchild of the British administrators of the East India Company from the eighteenth century onwards, the arduous

¹⁴This road is known as the 'Old Military Road'. It was "impractical for wheeled traffic, was inadequate to supply its wants and the need for having a cart road was still further emphasized by the Sikkim expedition of 1860, when stores had to be hurried up to the front" (O'Malley, 1999:132). As a result the construction of a cart road was sanctioned known as the 'Hill cart Road' and which Fred Pinn refers to it as the "Road of Destiny" completed by 1866.

labour of the people from the adjoining areas especially from East Nepal followed by Sikkim and Bhutan cannot be simply brushed aside.

The position of the British as the Lord paramount over Sikkim and the ceding of Darjeeling were not sufficient to protect its socio-political and economic positions. The British as a result encouraged migration of Nepalis. The encouragement of massive amount of migration of such a stock of people according to the British was solely done to outnumber the Buddhist population of Sikkim such as the Lepchas and the Bhotias. Moreover, Nepali settlement gained much support in the newly acquired lands of British i.e. Darjeeling, as they were the long-established enemy of the Lepchas and Bhotias (Samanta, 2000:45). The question of the Gorkhas contravening their loyalty against the British was seldom feared by the latter. On the contrary the Bhotias and the Lepchas formed two of the major indigenous ethnic inhabitants of Sikkim who shared a close cultural and political allegiance with Tibet. The exclusion of apprehension on the part of the British was out of question due to the presence of such political and cultural homage making the two dominant ethnic groups unable of escaping the former's suspicious and critical fold.

On the contrary, and furthermore the Gorkhas after their recruitments into British Indian Army and the martial support exhibited during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 guaranteed their loyalty towards the British Government. Risely (1894) describes them as having to be "friendly to our Governments" and whose encouraged migration would keep the Lepchas and the Bhotias under the constant vigilance of the British. The growing figures of Nepali migration was also felt in Bhutan after the signing of the Sinchula Treaty of 1865. The migration of the people from Nepal to Darjeeling and Sikkim can be construed with the factors of 'push' and 'pull'. Let us firstly dwell on the pull factors of Darjeeling.

The economic viability of the hills could be well observed with the prosperous materialization of tea industry from 1852. The tea being labour intensive required more recruitments of potential labour force and the commercialization of tea industry fuelled the need. The rapid employment of the tea workers by 1876 covering a figure of 19,000 constituted about 90% of the people from eastern Nepal (Hutt, 1997: 112). Hence, between 1852 and the end of the nineteenth century the growth of Nepali community flourished immensely as the tea industry declined during the twentieth century (Ibid). The probable choice for the hill people as tea labourers was mainly due to the 'Santhal uprising' where the natives from the Deccan plateaus were recruited. Unable to bear the cold climate and the forced labour they rose against the Colonists. Thus distrustful of the natives and the

availability of cheap labour from hills of eastern Nepal, the community rose in abundance (Lama, 2009: 88-87).

The industrial and commercial nature of the hills not only needed sufficient amount of labour force in the tea sector but they were also being paid in the form of cash which was unheard of in their lands and were additionally granted forest lands. Hence, the then popular saying, "*chya ko boot ma paisa falcha*" (money grows in the tea plants) speeded up the process. The Nepalese were productive to the British as they not merely provided cheap labour in abundance but could easily grasp the responsibility and understanding towards the use of steam engines and other British engineering (O'Malley, 1999: 72). The policy of payment in cash was also applied for those being recruited in the army.

With the construction of Darjeeling Himalayan Railways which was made open for the traffic in 1881, many more workers came from the hills of Nepal and Sikkim who were engaged in the clearing of forests and other sturdy laborious works such as the coolies were entirely of Nepali community. Kumar Pradhan (1982:13-14) one of the intellectual figures of Darjeeling argues that the presence of the Nepali community was even prior to 1835 and the establishment of tea industry. His argument is based on the writings of Nepal in 1815 and 1826 which state that there was "the going and the coming between eastern Nepal and Darjeeling (cited in Hutt, 1997:12). The 1871 census shows that the total population of the Nepalese community which meant the kiratas of eastern Nepal constituted 42% of the total population (Samanta, 2000: 20).

The agricultural sector too bloomed with the annexation of Kalimpong in 1865 which invited large section of Nepali migrants from Nepal. If tea was the distinguishing feature of Darjeeling then agriculture was for Kalimpong. The settlement of the Nepalese from Nepal and the encouragement of agriculture were solely done as the people were versed with the form of settled cultivation through the Eastern Himalayas. The cultivation of lands meant generation of more revenues¹⁵. Though Kalimpong was integrated with Darjeeling Sadar much later in 1865 the Bengal District Gazetteer of Darjeeling by O'Malley confirms that the

¹⁵One of the important points to be remembered here is that revenues were crucial for the Company as it was their only life supporting system. This was the exact reason for which the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816 took place as they violated the 'Policy of limitation' which restricted the Gorkha's deeds within the confines of the hills and not to intervene into the lowlands of the Tarai.

increase of Nepali immigrants were not only evident in Darjeeling Sardar but a similar situation was found in Kalimpong as he writes that from the year of its acquisition to the year 1901 the population had grown by 55.9 percent (1999:36).

The other major factor of migration which contributed towards the settlement of Nepali population was the Gorkha recruitment in the British Indian Army. The Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1815 compelled the Gorkha General Amar Singh Thapa for the recruitment. As such in 1815 three battalions – the 1st, 2nd Nasiri (friendly) Battalions and the Sirmoor Battalions came to serve the Company (Pempahishey, 2013:30). It was this war which brought to the world the recognition of the ‘martial race’.

The recruitment being disfavoured by rulers in the lands of Nepal¹⁶, in 1887 a formal Headquarter was opened at Gorakpur which mainly recruited the Mangars and the Gurungs from central Nepal. Ghoom near Darjeeling was the recruiting centre which began in 1902 recruiting mainly the Rais and the Limbus. By the year 1908, 55,000 persons were recruited (Northey and Morris, 2014: 26). Direct recruitments were strictly prohibited in the district of Darjeeling thinking it would interfere in the labour work in the tea gardens (Vanisttart, 2012:158). As such the persons were brought directly from Nepal or Sikkim. Keeping in mind the ‘martial race’ the coolies working in the tea gardens were prohibited as they were considered to be of poorer martial quality than those brought directly from Nepal. The recruiters were also punished if found of bringing such recruits from the gardens (ibid). The principle of ‘division of labour’ was seriously undertaken by the British stressing more on specialization of works which had a major role in setting up a well organized urban town planning. However, the inclination to settle in India after the retirement from the Indian British Army boosted the settlement of the Nepali community. Only about one third of the 11,000 Gurkhas discharged from the service after the First World War chose to return to Nepal and the rest settled in India (Hutt, 1997:113).

The massive amount of pull factors cannot be sufficient enough to understand the history of the early Nepali migration and their reason for the settlement in Darjeeling. Hence,

¹⁶ Post Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816 the Gorkhas was being recruited into the British Indian Army. Surprisingly, such recruitments were disfavoured within the borders of Nepal by the Shah rulers. The probable reason can be deduced to an understanding that granting of such recruitments into a foreign defence system would ultimately with passing of time would allow the British to colonize Nepal. Nepal as such was a land of mysticism increasing much of the Colonist’s curiosity to explore the unexplored land.

the inclusion of the 'push' factors completes the knowledge. The socio-economic condition which prevailed in Nepal post unification was detriment for the tribal population. The prevalence of caste system placed the Kiratas of east Nepal as the 'Sudras' in the Nepali-Hindu social hierarchy (Samanta, 2000: 20). Caste hierarchy became much more prominent, severe and visible with the introduction of the civil code; Muluki Ain of 1854¹⁷, under Junga Bahadur Rana. The system of slavery was quite pervasive which was successfully abolished much later in the year 1924. Similar case of maintaining slaves were rampant in Sikkim and Bhutan. The deformation of the tribal landownership known as the 'kipat'¹⁸ in Eastern Nepal led to socio-economic crisis of landlessness and debt among its natives leading to emigration into Darjeeling. The other push factor being the increased population pressure on the eastern lands of Nepal favouring massive immigration from such areas (O'Malley, 1991:37) The explanation for such exodus of people was by the encroachment on cultivable lands by the parbatiyas (Hill or khas people). The majority of the parbatiya cultivators post unification were encouraged to settle in eastern Nepal as a result of Gorkhas Conquest. Consequently, 12-15% of the kirata population immigrated to Darjeeling between 1840 and 1860 (Pradhan, 1991: 126) The other push factor can be deduced to the social system prevalent and peculiar to the Rana rule known as '*chakari*'¹⁹ and '*afno manche*'²⁰ which gained much of importance in the land. It was a system of social segregation which advocated the policy of inclusion and exclusion where only certain group members gained privilege.

¹⁷ This nineteenth century civil code characterised the hierarchical division of the society based on caste though this is not to say that such a segmental division was void prior to its enforcement. The Muluki Ain of 1854 recognised three hierarchical caste groups (jats) based on the notion of pure and impure, ritual superiority and inferiority. The Bahuns occupied the top most position known as the Tagadaris (Sacred thread wearer), the middle known as the Matwali jat who formed the major bulk of the population and the bottom, the untouchables (sano jat). Primary concern here is with the Matwali jats which included mostly the Mongoloid races such as the people from East Nepal. Massive out migration has been felt from this section of people and region mainly to escape the maltreatments posited by the civil code upon them.

¹⁸ It was a system of tribal landownership amongst the people of east Nepal namely the Kiratas (Limboos and Rias) where the transfer of land was possible only within its blood line or community. The Gorkhas invasion led to their conversion into 'birga' owned by the government or high caste Bahuns. It ultimately led them to be landless and poverty stricken.

¹⁹ The origin of chakari (sycophancy) lies in the religious ritual practices of obeisance, which was extended to the governing classes and then to all in certain positions of power in Nepal. It curbed the general sense of development of society. Those who practised over generations could raise above one's class and caste status (Bista, 1991:5).

²⁰ It refers to one's own circle of associates who could be approached whenever the need arises (ibid: 98).

If the unification of Prithivinarayan Shah led to the imposition of ‘one culture, one language’ that being Hinduism and Nepali language then the Rana rule made the social-economic and political liberty and recognition within the reach of the mighty and the powerful. Bista (1991: 27) brings out clearly in his work the era of ‘*Dark Age*’ which shadowed the country emphasizing on the authoritarian and dictatorship of the Rana rule as he writes, “anyone with a concern for the society at large and to the future of the country had to be the enemy of the Ranas. So they singled out, punished, jailed and executed anyone who fought for the people’s welfare on the pretext that it was a high treason”.

A land which was “deserted” and “sparsely inhabited” with a population of not more than a “100 souls” in 1839 raised to 10,000 by 1849 the credit solely to be borne to Dr. Campbell who encouraged such massive amount of settlers (O’Malley, 1999:22). Inspecting officer, Mr. Jackson in 1852, writes, “Whatever has been done here has been done by Dr. Campbell alone” to which he further adds:

“ an excellent sanatorium had been established for troops and others; a Hill corps has been established for the maintenance of order and improvement of communications, no less than 70 European houses have been built, with a bazaar, jail and buildings for the accommodation of the sick in the depot;; a revenue of Rs 50,000 has been collected punctually and without, balance; a simple system of administration of justice has been introduced, well adapted to the character of the tribes with whom he had to deal; the system of forced labour formerly in use has been abolished and labour with all other valuables has been left to find its own price in an open market; roads have been made; experimental cultivation of tea and coffee has been introduced and various tribe of inhabitants have been conciliated and their habits and prejudices treated with a caution and forbearance will render further progress in the same direction an easy task”

(O’Malley, 199:22-23, Dash, 2011: 38-39)

Darjeeling provided a viable place for those who were in search of better livelihood prospects, a society unfound on the basis of castes or religious bias and sectarian attitude free from the hegemonic and dictatorial rule as seen in case of the Rana rule in Nepal. “ The increasing importance of Darjeeling under free institutions was a source of loss and frustration to the lamas and leading men in Sikkim, headed by the Dewan Namgyal, who were sharers in monopoly of all trade in Sikkim and lost their rights over those slaves who settled as free men and British subjects in the Darjeeling territory (Dash,2011: 39) The

deteriorating relation of Sikkim with the Company was not merely the result of the above stated factors but was paved when the potential of the land was verified well enough during the ever first visit of Llyod and J.W. Grant in 1829 who visited the “old Goorkha station called Dorjeeling” (O’Malley, 1999:20, Dash, 2011:37). The Company’s custody over Darjeeling and their vivid involvement in altering the ceded area into a urban hill resort led to the en suite of resentment on the part of Sikkim against the British (Sinha, 2007).

The British were well calculative and assured that the migration not merely from Nepal would be possible but as Llyod states that if that part of the hill was kept under the British hold the migratory stock would not merely include the Nepalese but even the Lepchas who had emigrated to Nepal due to the tyrannical nature of the Rajha who would be willing to work for the British. (O’Malley, 1999:20).

2.8 The Birth of Formal Education

The industrial and urban look of Darjeeling was further heightened with the setting up of formal and modern educational system. The stage of enlightenment thus touched the hills much sooner than its counterparts i.e. Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. Though, the primary motive for the occupation of Darjeeling was for the construction of a sanatorium, which was only built in 1883, the additional advancement especially with the construction of the Hill Cart road, the possibility of better connectivity with the plains enlarged inducing the Europeans to establish schools for its children.

The prevalence of non-formal education was quite popular among its native settlers who comprised of the Lepchas, Nepalis and the Bhutias. They were according to Lloyd “semi-barbarous” in nature (Bayley, 1838 cited in Dewan, 2008:45). They were animists and nature was their primary teacher. With the advent of the British rule in the hills it became the centre for European and Anglo-Indian education. The Charter Act of 1813 opened the prospect of the Missionaries in India which was dominated by those from United Kingdom. The Charter Act of 1833 also invited missionaries from other the countries. The first history of education in the Darjeeling hill tract can be said to have begun by the Germans shortly after its colonization by the British in 1835 along with the introduction of a new faith called ‘Christianity’ (ibid: 81).

The early efforts to uplift the population both mentally and spiritually were made by the Catholic Order and the Christian Missionaries during 1840s Rev. Mr. Start, a private

missionary, and Mother Teresa Mons devoted their life in this direction with a result a convent was fully established in 1846. Other persons of prominence in this field are the chief being the Rev. Mr. Neible, who composed 9 Lepcha primers, and the Rev. Mr. Macfarlane, who made Hindi as a lingua franca ²¹and prepared text book in it' (Dozey 1922: 103) Education in its general understanding began when in 1860 the Bishop Cotton recommended opening of schools for the European children. As result, St.Paul's school was transferred from Calcutta to Darjeeling in 1864 (O'Malley, 1999). Hence, other such schools for boys and girls followed such as in Darjeeling were the St. Josephs, Mount Hermon, Loreto Convent, Turn Bull. In Kalimpong were the Grahams Homes, Scottish Universities Missionaries and in Kurseong were the Goethal's Memorial, Dow hill and Victoria. Most of which were boarding schools (Dash, 2011).

The expansion of such schools served the purpose of "parents who could not afford to send their children to Europe at an early age to receive education" (Dash, 2011: 42). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, 95 primary schools had been established with 2731 boys and 466 girls, in the whole district (Katwal, 2014: 95).

Mr. Macfarlane deserves the credit for the establishing primary schools all over the districts with trained teachers. Granting of scholarship was also possible with the aid of Government. Eradication of illiteracy and to raise the natives' civilization standards were the primary target of such Missionary workers. Some of the best products of the school were Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Rev. Lakshman Sing Mukhia, Rev. Surya Suryaman Mukhia and Sukham. Believing in the motto of 'each one teach one' such students after completion of their education were encouraged to further their task of imparting education. Consequently small number schools were opened up in the nearby tea gardens and villages (Dewan, 2008:111).

The starting of the formal education system and the pious effort of the Missionaries in the hope of civilizing the natives opened the road to greater horizons i.e. the western culture and food habits were brought into the hills. Subjects of drama, art, theatre, literature and music flourished (Lama, 2007) but most importantly were the arousal of socio-economic and political consciousness. Consequently, the question of self-determination, self-esteem, rights

²¹ The medium of instruction was chose to be Nepali but due to the dearth of pedagogical materials in the language and the close linguistic affinities it had with Hindi, he ultimately chose the latter as the medium of instruction and issued text books on it.

and justice began to take shape in the minds of the simple natives. The consciousness of their social condition in particular led them to question the double dominance that being of the British followed by the Bengalis (Chakraborty, 2000:259). The class differentiation became more visible as the majority of the hill people were engaged in tea gardens and other menial jobs such as being employed as coolies. Whereas on the other hand the Bengalis held white collar jobs in the lower and middle echelons of British administration as they were educationally well advanced and trade too were controlled by them (ibid:257-258).

The heightened differentiation and the monopoly of the outsiders were unbearable to the educated natives. The Darjeeling hills had gained much of the advancement since 1835 for which the natives had a definite and crucial contribution. In the process, their social existence was considered to be at stake for which they were determined to resolve. The dawn for assertion to what was considered to be their right and to rise above the deferential position was undoubtedly considered to build the bricks for the demand of separatism from the state of West Bengal from the early twentieth century.

2.9 Conclusion

A concise account of the early history of the formation of Darjeeling hills and the involvement of political disputations in its making cannot be overlooked as long as one is eagerly interested in understanding the region's history. The major role employed by the East India Company in urbanizing the 'sparsely inhabited' and 'deserted' land into a fast growing socio-economic hub and popular British Hill station encouraged the massive exodus of people especially from Nepal who had much to contribute towards the building of the hills into an early urban sector. Nepali migration began to found a permanent settlement beginning from the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century outside Nepal's present modern borders (Hutt, 1997:109) especially in Sikkim, Bhutan and Darjeeling. The Liberal and the newly found hill society of Darjeeling represented multiplicity of socio-cultural stock living as British subjects availing better livelihood opportunities undifferentiated on the basis of ethno-geographical measure. To put in the words of A.C. Sinha (2007), concerning the quality of migrants he writes, "apart from genuine migrants, slaves, criminals, and even political fugitives began to take shelter in this New Haven". The geo-political position of Darjeeling happens to serve the best interests of the British. The nineteenth century European theorists perceived the role of the mountains as well defence mechanism Control over mountain passes or a ridge over a mountain actually provided good view over the flanking

country from its crest hiding the actual location of the district (Von Clausewitz, 1908 cited in Chatterji, 2007:84).The diplomatic approach of the British with The establishment of hill stations as their summer escape or a site for health restoration camouflaged their genuine intention of defending their borders. Addition to which, the political encounter of 1817, the treaty of Titaliya provided the British the legitimate trading rights, an access to trade with Tibet through the subjugated state i.e. Sikkim. The beginning of the nineteenth century Darjeeling marks the arousal of self realisation of their rights, needs and recognition which becomes a crucial turning point in the history of Darjeeling owing much of its credit due to the educational adventure initiated by the Christian Missionaries. The educational enlightenment and their unchanging socio-economic and political deprivation and subjugation by the hands of the ruling class firstly the British and later by the Bengalis furthered the historical context of the region vocalised through the demand for separation from West Bengal.

Chapter III

Dawn of Separation and Struggle for Gorkha Identity

3.1. Introduction

It would be wrong to say that Darjeeling's history is merely concerned with its infrastructural developments and the establishment of tea industry, a major economic accomplishment of the British. The socio-economic vitality of Darjeeling induced the migration from its adjoining areas gaining much of the direct hold up from the British. As a consequence, cultural plurality coupled with a heterogeneous society was inevitable. In general, the affair encircling the Gorkha identity and the demand for statehood is not merely rested on the idea of delivering a justified society for the Gorkhas but is a major issue of contestation drawn on the grounds of ethnic majority and minority. Selecting and defining a precise ethnic variable is rather indefinite as it fluctuates with time and place.

The insist on separation from Bengal in the early nineteenth century marks the turning point furthering the region's historical account and printing the ever first political consciousness and participation of the hill people in affirming their needs and rights. If viewed properly, the historical comprehensiveness of Darjeeling can only be justified with reference to the century old struggle for separation of the early nineteenth century with the formation of a hill society having political overtones,

The progression of struggle for the recognition and acceptance of Gorkha identity, their push for the need of segregation from West Bengal with the aim of securing a tenable niche for the secured interest and perpetuation of the hill identity as Gorkhas, which is still in vogue even in the present century, has never had a unilinear headway. The concern for Gorkha identity as a socio-ethnic movement coupled with the invariable linkage with political motives has been a common issue since the time of inception. The emphasis in the present section shall be on the evolution of the Gorkha's struggle for segregation and their eventual outcome with changing time and circumstances.

3.2. Pre-Independence Scenario: Demand for Separation and Formation of a Political Hill Society

The struggle for separation of Darjeeling hills from Bengal has been reverberating since the year 1907 irrespective of the demand's altering political boundaries and goals. The commencement of the hill's political career and the urge for securing a sheltered socio-economic and political habitat was for the first time put forth by "the leaders of the Hill People" represented by the members of the hill community namely, the Nepali, Bhutia and the Lepchas (the Hill Men's Association). The Hill Men's Association served to be the vocal cord for voicing the very first humble and non-violent demand for separation during the beginning of the 19th century.

The demand for segregation was primarily done on socio-geographical and ethnic lines the solution for which was well seen by placing into view the demand for a "separate administrative set-up". Though there has been a general acceptance of the partition of Bengal, 1905, fuelling the issue for demanding a "separate administrative set-up", on the contrary Subba (1992:76) debating against the proposition put forth by Chatterji argues that the rationale for placing such a demand was not completely influenced by the partition neither by the Morley-Minto Reform Committee (1909)²². He rather attributes to the imbalance of the ethnic dichotomy, the hill community and the Bengalis, who had been interacting for a period of forty years, resulted into the socio-economic dependency. As a consequence, the superior and the upper hand position of the Bengalis lead to the fissure between the three major hill communities (Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha) as the Bengalis had become the dominant ruling class in the hills due to their occupancy of holding major upper socio-economic and political stratum. Regarding the Reform of 1919 the year itself suggests that the Hill Men's Association had placed their demand two years ahead.

Dwelling in the intention of drawing a precise conclusion on whether the first demand was greatly influenced by the partition wave of Bengal or due to the inherent socio-cultural differences from the Bengalis along with their intolerable subjugating attitude against the hill people will lead us to no accurate conclusion. Nevertheless, the demand was fruitless and was unheard even when placed for the second time on November 8th, 1917 before the Chief

²² In order to provide the locals with more legislative powers the then Government of India in 1906 introduced new reforms which formed the primary basis for the Gol Act of 1909 known as the Morley-Minto Reforms. .

Secretary, Government of Bengal demanding the creation of “a separate unit”. The memorandum was headed by hill signatories from the three ethnic societies namely- S.W.Ladenla (Bhutia), Dr. Yensing Sitling (Lepcha), Khadga Bahadur Chettri, Prem Kumar Kumai, Meghbir Singh, Lanchman Singh, Nar Prasad Kumai, Deonidhi Upadhya, and others representing the Nepali community (Subba, 1992:77).

The ‘unit’ comprised of the present district of Darjeeling and the Doors area of Jalpaiguri as mentioned in the earlier memorandum of 1907 (Pempahishey, 2013:6; Subba, 1992:77). The Montagu Chlemsford Report 1918 even failed to acknowledge the memorandum of 1917 which voiced the problems of the Hills. The 1917 memorandum additionally recommended the creation of North East Frontier Province (NEFP) comprising of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Doors and Darjeeling. The rationale behind the demand for NEFP as Samanta (2000:80) quotes, “were linguistic, racial and even climatic as the plains are entirely unsuited to the hill people, who are unwilling to go to the plains”.

Similar demands were repetitively made in 1920 by the Hill Men’s Association in collaboration with Darjeeling Planter’s Association and the European Association. The three ethnic communities after a long historical interaction had not merely built a strong socio-economic interdependence, but after 1907 with the birth of the Hill Men’s Association their political determination and unity enabled them to assert a unified hill identity. The primary motive for the establishment of the Association was to uphold the legitimate political interests of the hills. The breaking point rose between these hill communities with the submission of the memorandum of 1930 stating the very same demand for a separate administrative unit which clearly and solely highlighted the problems of the Gorkhas. Interestingly, the signatories to the memorandum belonged purely to the Nepali community (Subba, 1992:79; Samanta, 2000:81). Gorkha as a unanimous identity of the hill people had not been materialised then. Subba(ibid) argues that the memorandum stood in opposition to the unified idea of a hill society as it firstly stated the sole concerns of the Gorkhas and secondly, it paid no concern with the Doors area of Jalpaiguri district. Hence, it eventually indicated the dominance of the Gorkhas creating the cleavages between the three ethnic societies.

The majority of the Nepali population in the hills and its unwavering dominance over the Association could not be hidden which paved the way for building a cold relation amongst the three ethnic communities. The submission of the numerous memorandums in the

early nineteenth century under the Hill Men's Association headed by S.W.Ladenla, who had become one of the primary political figures, though portrayed to unify its diverse members and communities, the ideological discrepancy was unavoidable to mask. The previous submission of a separate memorandum in 1920 by the Kalimpong Samity headed by Bahadur Bhimdal Dewan and Sir P.M.Pradhan head of the People's Association suggests a contrary proposition. Samanta (2000:80) writes that the Hill Men's Association proposed to create an intermission between the plains and the hills on the grounds of ethno-political and cultural identity as a response to which the Kalimpong Samity opposed the exclusion of Darjeeling from the 1919 Reforms with the fear of pushing the land into utter backwardness. The other cause of disagreement and contention that was prevailing in the hill society was the over-emphasis on the sole cause of the Gorkhas which mainly comprised of the Nepali population whose numerical strength was on the rise. The conformity on it is well presented in the words of O'Malley (1999:39) as mentioned in the District Gazetteer of Darjeeling whereby he asserts that "the population is mainly Nepalese".

With the formation and the complete colonization of Darjeeling by 1866, Nepali community rose its numerical hold over other two minority communities (Lepcha and Bhutias) making Nepali as the lingua franca of the hills. Additionally, at the national level the Congress Nagpur Session of 1920 fanned the insecurities of such minority groups as the Session decided to reorganize its provinces on the basis of language. Consequently, on the part of the Nepali intellectuals the struggle demanding for the approval of Nepali language as the medium of instruction in schools took place. As an initiation on the part of the Bengal Government, it appointed a committee to verify the validity of the demand put forth by the Nepalis to which the political representatives of the hills along by being a member of the Hillmen's Association namely, S.W. Ladenla and Dr. Yenshing Lepcha opposed. As far as Nepali language as the medium of instruction was concerned, in 1927 it saw its success.

The credibility for the success of 1927 can be mainly due to two primary reasons. Firstly, the numerical strength of Nepali community was far better than the Lepchas and the Bhutias. As a consequence their cultural dominance especially in the form language was far more superior to the other two. Secondly, the outcome of the Nagpur session of 1920 where linguistic priority was given was inescapable on the part of the hill Nepali intellectuals such who went on to claim what was believed to be their right.

Later Ladenla aspiring to set a political career and his community standing no chance against the majority of Nepali community stood for the proposition. As a consequence, fearing greater internal damage of the hill society the submission of the memorandum, August 1934 which emphasised on securing the hill identity and job reservation was done. Additionally, in the same year on 23rd of December, the Hill Men's Association was renamed as the Hill People's Social Union with S.W. Ladenla as its president. The mass meeting of 23rd December, 1934 was held at Madan's Rink Theatre (formerly known as the area occupied by Big Bazaar and Inox) attended by over 600 people from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Sukhia Pokhari, Kurseong, Tea Gardens and other remote villages (Nebula, 1934:1). The Union's aims and objectives were follows:

- (a) To foster brotherhood and to augment further the existing ties of social unity among the different Hill-People, viz. The Nepalese, The Bhutia and the Lepchas;
- (b) To promote social intercourse among the different sections of the different Hill-people, with a view to bringing about their general upliftment and to encourage the growth of education among them;
- (c) To provide facilities for recreation-indoor and outdoor, in the towns in particular and in the district in general;
- (d) To help the members during difficulties and distress and also, should the occasion arise, to help others in need;
- (e) To afford Shelter and accommodation for members and guests, wherever there is a local branch of the Union;
- (f) To start an Unemployment Bureau;
- (g) To educate public opinion among the Hill-people to learn to compose their differences among themselves.

The Hill People's Social Union's main purpose was aimed at preserving and maintaining the 'fraternity' of the three communities and resolving the internal fractures between the three hill communities. Its other purpose was also rested at upgrading the society's socio-economic and political spheres as well. Besides, on February 1935, the Union published a monthly magazine by the name 'Nebula' in Nepali medium. The success of the Hill People's Union can be conformed as far as the motive of the Union and its leaders were concerned, "the Nepalese, Lepchas and the Bhutias accepted the common ethnic term 'Gorkha' and the Nepali Language" (Samanta, 2000:83). Though 'Nebula' was a monthly magazine, it was synonymously used to refer the Hill People's Social Union.

Ladenla's rising fame and reputation as Bahadur Sardar of the hill society endowed him with much political responsibilities. Darjeeling's accorded status as a "partially excluded area" in 1934 offered a seat to Darjeeling for the Provincial Legislative Council in the year 1937 for which S.W.Ladenla was to contest. It was on the motto of "Nepali, Bhutia, Lapche hami sabai Gorkhali" along with the above mentioned aims and objectives of the Union that S.W.Ladenla proposed to contest for the general election. It was also considered by him that contesting for the general election would serve best to fight the cause for the hill people (Rhodes et.al, 2006: 70). The Hill People's Union not only served the actual cause of the Hill Men's Association (to project out loud cohesively the grievances of the hill people) but Ladenla as a rising political figure preventing it from being converted into a sole 'Gorkha Association' (Subba, 1992:81) On the night of December 25th, 1936 at Kalimpong division canvassing for the election under the banner of 'Nebula' S.W. Laden took his final breath, the cause of such a misfortunate event being unknown. Hence, the Hill People's Union gradually started to witness its feeble political hold over the hill society.

The re-emphasis on Darjeeling's administrative status as 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' area as discussed in the previous chapter dealing with its historical formation becomes essential when the question of "separation" comes to the fore front. Darjeeling was never under the control of a Province/State but rather under the direct purview of then Governor General or Viceroy of India. Its administrative position has been fluctuating. Mentioning of such a demand under a "separate administrative unit" finds relevance with its administrative position.

Darjeeling being a "Scheduled District" was transformed into a "Backward Area" under the Gol Act of 1919. The Government Indian Act of 1935 reframed the "backward tract" into "excluded" or "partially excluded" areas. The memorandum of August 4th, 1934 submitted by the Hill Men's Association to Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir John Anderson (Governor of Bengal) demanded the safeguard of the minorities of the hills. Darjeeling's administrative position as being "excluded area" benefitted the hill under two respects namely- first it avoided alienation of the tribal to the plainsmen and secondly, the preferential treatment in government appointed jobs (Subba, 1992:80). On the contrary, if a minimum safeguards of the hill people were not assured then the only alternative would be the granting of a total exclusion from Bengal in the form of an independent administrative unit headed by the Central Government and the expenditure met by the Imperial budget (Samanta,2000: 82).

The Government Act of 1935 under section 92 included Darjeeling into “partially excluded area” and the demand for the “separate administrative unit” was curbed.

If viewed rationally, Darjeeling in pre-Independence era had become the focal point of industrialisation and urbanization gaining much of its income from tea industry and trade furthered with the aid of well road connectivity. Soon, it became the reason for resentment among its neighbouring political countries such as Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The validation of inclusion of ‘scheduled’, ‘excluded’ or ‘non-regulated’ areas or districts has been so to protect the land and its natives from dying out and its preservation and propagation has been the ultimate priority of the ruling government and the society. Divertingly, the declaration of Darjeeling as “excluded area” was the sole purpose of the British to protect their huge capital invested in tea gardens and to divert the Nepalese from being influenced by the nationalist movement (Samanta, 2000:78) as it was the sole race on which the British relied for their military adventures and defence mechanisms. Hence till Independence (1947) the administrative position of Darjeeling as “partially excluded area” was maintained after which it became one of the districts of West Bengal.

3.3. Post-Independence Scenario: Continuation of the Gorkha Struggle for Recognition

3.3.1 Birth of All India Gorkha League and the Uttarakhand Demand

With S.W.Ladenla passing away the Hill People’s Union had not only begun to frail but the freedom struggle was steadily gaining its impetus throwing into disarray the national political state of affairs. From every nook and corner of the country, irrespective of one’s religion, caste or race the participation for the freedom struggle was pouring in. On the contrary, the anxiety, obscurity and the uncertainty of the minorities over the question of their relevant existence of a legitimate identity as Indians crafted a sense of trepidation. The Gorkhas were not even spared from such angst.

The All India Gorkha League saw the day’s light against such political turmoil on May 15th, 1943 led by a young lawyer from Calcutta, Damber Singh Gurung, who gained the socio-political reputation emerging as the “messiah of the Gorkhas” (Subba, 1992: 84). The League was actually formed as early in the year 1923 when the struggle for Nepali language as the medium of instruction in schools had gained its thrust. The question of the existence of the Hill People’s Union with the birth of the League becomes crucial when discussing the

political participation and representation of the three hill communities in their consistent struggle for affirming the Gorkha hill identity and the demand for separation from Bengal. Though the league was functioning from the year 1923 as stated above, its formal existence was seen only after 1934. It could have thought of forming it prior to 1934 but due to S.WLadenla heading the president ship of the Hill Men's Association (ibid) the strong charismatic and intellectual support that Ladenla provided was invincible. Though it has been commonly accepted that with the demise of Ladenla in 1936 the Association which had turned into a Union in 1934 had not merely become insubstantial but by 1943 was made obsolete but the doing away of the essence of its members was hard to turn off. On March 7th, 1943 some odd sixty members i.e. the Bhutias, Lepchas and the Nepalis gathered at George Mahbert Subba School in Siliguri and formed an association entitled as "All India Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha Association". The conversion of such an Association into All India Gorkha League in the same year in the month of May 15th happened due to the withdrawal of the Bhutias and the Lepchas, making Jnan Tshering Sitling from the Lepcha community the sole non-Nepali member of the League. Subba (1992) asserts that even with the withdrawal of the two communities the league upheld its dogma in a cohesive way, on the hand where the Nepali community who stood in absolute majority could have unheeded the issues of the withdrawing communities.

The popularity of the League outgrew that of the Hill Men's Association and the Hill People's Social Union as the latter two could only materialise in the Kalimpong and Kurseong sub-divisions. The League on the other hand had spread to other parts of India such as Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam to the east and Dehradun, Bhagsu and Kangra to the west. The publication of its monthly magazine called 'Gorkha' coupled with the rapid and numerous regional and national propagation of the League acted as a catalyst in enhancing its political success. The magazine could reach its readers where the soul could not. It was for the first time that the problems of Gorkha ethnicity, their marginalization and their insecurities concerning their unsecured future in a debatable Indian land were regaining a national push. Additionally, the League brought into its fold not only the concerns of the hill people but of the Gorkhas at large who had settled in different regions of the country. With such ascending political support highlighting the problems of Gorkhas in India it becomes inescapable to consider the inevitability to avoid the turning of the League into a Gorkha dominated association. The aims and objectives of the League suggest so. The following were its outlines:

1. To organise and consolidate all the Gurkhas spread throughout India and elsewhere into one organic whole.
2. To make every one realise that the Gurkhas belong to the great martial race.
3. To preserve the civilization, tradition and culture of the Gurkhas.
4. To further the development of the Nepali language and make the propaganda for in use.
5. To establish the political rights of the Gurkhas in India
6. To promote friendships and harmony with all the communities of India.
7. To have connection with the Independent kingdom of Nepal the mother country of the Gurkhas with devotion and loyalty.
8. Special:___ To mobilise the Gurkhas spread all over India and to render every possible help specially by supplying manpower to the allies in bringing the present world war into speedy and victorious end

From the above stated objectives and aims one can clearly say that the notion 'Gorkha' has been often reverberated. Moreover, the League's major foundation was built on essential criterion namely to recognise Nepali language, assert the political rights of the Gorkhas and the conferment of citizenship on the Gorkhas residing in India. The peculiar point worth noting in the above outline is the point mentioned in number seven which was deleted in the second constitution adopted in 1948 (Samanta, 2000: 88). Though the demand for the separation continued but how far the League's cohesive ideology was maintained it remains under vagueness.

Reconsidering the issue of separation, post Dambur Singh Gurung's death in 1848, the demand for 'Uttarakhand' received much of the attention even among the general masses. The Uttarakhand Movement was conceived by Randhir Subba, in 1949, the think tanker of the movement as well as the editor of 'Gorkha'. The proposition was put forth by him by addressing the problems of "the 6000,000 Nepalis in a Bengal of 22.3 million Bengalis" (Lama, 2009:210). As such the ethnic hostilities were deepening in Bengal where the 6 lakh "Gorkhalis" including the Lepchas and the Bhutias had no secured future among the two crore Bengalis. The withdrawal of the leaders from the League was also assured if the movement was supported by other communities such as the Bengalis. The unfaltering leadership of Randhir Subba posited a solution for such a crisis by demanding a "separate provincial legislature" under the name of "Uttarakhand" which would comprise of:

- (a) Darjeeling district, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Doors and Coochbehar, or
- (b) Darjeeling district, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar or
- (c) Darjeeling district and Sikkim, or
- (d) Darjeeling district only (Subba, 1992: 87)

The proposition was quite positively taken not only by the majority of the hill people but as well from other places such as Doors and Coochbehar. The few notable figures from Coochbehar division was represented by Satish Chandra Singha Roy (former Minister-Government of Cooch Behar), Jalandhar Sarkar, D.S. Bhattacharjee, RajendranathBhuiya. The Jalpaiguri was represented by D.Roy, George MahbertSubba, MotilalNarjnare, M.M.Sarkar, Radha Mohan Singh, B.B. Khadgha, and Abdul Siwan (Lama, 2009:210). On October 29th, 1949 Uttarakhand Sangh Committee was also formed with the active participation of the members from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar with Rupnarayan Sinha as its president. Never had a movement gained a reputation of massive admiration as the thought of ‘Uttarakhand’ brought to the minds of the people a hope for a “permanent home” which “had spread like a wild fire in the minds of all the Nepalis in India” (Subba, 1992:89).

The Uttarakhand movement could not escape from the clutches of disputation which was set into the open by the members of West Bengal Congress Committee (WBPCC) six years later in 1955, 21st March. The memorandum was submitted by Atulya Ghosh, Bimal Sinha and Shankar Das Bannerji to the SRC invalidating the feasibility of “Uttarakhand”. Unfortunately on the part of vocalising the Gorkha’s cause and to the fortunate of the oppositional group, the forerunners of the movement had either wholly abandoned the idea or left the country.

The All India Gorkha League had to go through a similar fate as that of the Hillmen’s Association with President Damber Singh Gurung’s premature death on April 7th, 1948 creating a vacuum for political leadership.. The hope and the future of the Gorkhas in India were put at an unstable and murky status. Replacements provided by Deo Prakash Rai and RandhirSubba also proved inadequate (Subba: 86).

3.3.2 The Rise of CPI and the Demand for Gorkhasthan

The segregationist movement in the hills has been heard quite often being associated with the political endeavours initiated by the hill people alone. The Gorkhasthan movement

was moved by the CPI and was the outcome of its 1942 resolution which embraced amenablely that “every section of the Indian people which has a contiguous territory as its homeland, common historical tradition, common economic life would be recognised as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous State within the free Indian Union or federation or will have the right to secede from it if it may so desire”(Resolution of the Central Committee of CPI, 1942 cited in Samanta, 2000:97).

. The proposal of Gorkhasthan was raised by the undivided Communist Party of India in 1947. The CPI had its first entry into the hill in 1944 and at its onset it worked with the AIGL after which in the following year it got delinked with the party. CPI in the hills historically has a close linkage with the tea gardens²³. The popularity that CPI gained was with the much work of Ratanlal Brahmin popularly referred by the locals as “MailaBajey” and Ganesh LalSubba. The former knew dealing with the workers of the tea gardens and the latter handled the intellectual arenas. Additionally, knowing well the Gorkhas cause and reason for distress, Ratanlal Brahmin making the best possible note of it sold the concept of ‘Gorkhalism’ (Subba, 1992:90). Issues encircling one’s ethnicity arouse the individual’s emotional character rather than the rational one. The idea of Gorkhasthan not only engendered popularity but ensured Ratanlal Brahmin a victory in 1946 in the election to the Provincial council. Thereafter, CPI of Darjeeling district constantly ignited the fire of Gorkhasthan rubbing the affair of ethnic exclusiveness (Samanta, 2000:99).

The emotional support was much needed for the prosperity of the party in reality and ‘Gorkhalism’ in the minds of the people. Hereafter, the two hill leaders of the CPI in consultation with its leaders in Calcutta submitted a memorandum on April 6, 1947 to Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Vice-President of the interim Government of India, Liaquat Ali Khan, the then Finance Member of the Government and as well to the leader of the Muslim League Assembly Party (Lama, 2009:2004). The memorandum demanded for the creation of “Gorkhasthan” which comprised of Nepal, Sikkim (excluding its northern part) and Darjeeling district (ibid). The rationale as provided by the party’s memorandum has been on the basis of the geographical, cultural and linguistic homogeneity the three regions had to offer. It further stated that the creation of such an independent nation would depend on the

²³ Tea garden has been the primary focus as the major population of Darjeeling hills had found their settlements in such areas. The CPI was not just successful in arousing the emotions of the people on ethnic lines but was for the first time the realization of class consciousness ‘for itself’ among the tea workers categorised as the proletariat gained momentum.

referendum by which the Gorkhas national development would be certified (WG, 1986:32 cited in Subba, 1992:90).

The political banners under which the rights of the hill people were fought invariably belonged or had the essence of the hill ethnicity and supported by the very hill people as vividly seen in case of the Hill Men's Association or the All India Gorkha League. The growth of CPI and its political support for the greater cause of the hill demonstrates as to how the Gorkha cause was being. The case of "Uttarakhand" was not the sole controversial movement as witnessed in post-Independence India. As Gorkhaland movement has become a controversial case even in the present context it nevertheless was never devoid of such provocations even in its historical progression. The creation of Gorkhasthan was not just ideal but its achievability was at the margin. Sikkim then was a protectorate of the British and Nepal was entirely a foreign country. The Gorkhasthan movement has on the contrary created much negativity as far as the demand of the Gorkhas separation from Bengal is concerned. For that matter, the issue of Gorkhaland in the present context and with much exactitude during the political reign of Subhas Ghising (1986 agitation onwards) the demand was viewed as having much clandestine objectives, such as the formulation of 'Greater Nepal', even by the intellectuals and the spectators of the movement. The Gorkha' role and participation in the freedom struggle are questioned immensely and viewed as a secessionist approach.

After the Partition and Independence of India administrative and political squabble was in the air. Especially with the formation of the State Reorganization Committee, 1953 which recognised India on the basis of Language had not sufficiently satisfied the hopes and problems of its 'entrapped minorities' as a result of which its diverse ethnic and linguistic minorities urged for the demand for a separate statehood or autonomy (Ganguly, 2005:65). The Gorkhasthan issue was though not abandoned altogether by the CPI then but was kept at a low profile. It was from 1952 onwards that Gorkhasthan all in all did not reiterate. The demand for "regional autonomy" was for the first time placed by the party in 1954 for the hill district of Darjeeling following the same the Darjeeling District Congress Committee (DDCC) placed the demand in 1955 under the term as 'statutory district'. In 1957, a joint demand for regional autonomy was made by CPI, Congress and AIGL. On August 25th, 1968 the DDCC in its meeting held in Kalimpong passed an undisputed resolution for the creation an "autonomous administrative set-up" (WG, 1986:21 cited in Subba, 1992:92). In 1982 in relation to the joint political proposition of 1968, a Parliamentary Bill was wished-for the

creation of an “autonomous region” by the then ruling party of Bengal (CPI) represented by Samar Mukherji, former speaker of Lok Sabha, Somnath Chatterjee and the Darjeeling Lok Sabha MP, Ananda Pathak. In 1985, 9th August, after three years, Ananada Pathak moved the Constitution (Amendment) Bill suggesting that:

“Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, Parliament may, by law, form within the State of West Bengal, an autonomous region comprising such areas, as may be specified, of the district of Darjeeling and neighbouring district where the Nepali speaking people are in majority and create for the administration of such region a District Council” (Subba, 1992:92 and Lama, 2009:215).

However, the bill was crushed by a count of 47 votes where only 17 stood for it. The demand for autonomy was conceived by the Union Home Minister as having “dangerous implications” which would likely pave the ground for the “victory for separatist forces” (Samanta, 2000:104). More to the point, such trounce led Samanta (2000) to believe that the CPI-M knowing that the bill would be rejected it was on their part to project the Congress as the “villains blocking the way to the self-government of the Gorkhas and “underscore their ‘honest intention’ to grant wide autonomy to the hills” (ibid: 104). The success of the bill was inferred with the grant of Autonomous District Council. The political wrangles flanked by the Communist and the Congress diverted the interest of the hill people away from the two parties. On the contrary, the multiple rises and fall of the political parties vocalising the grievances of the hills, triggered the issue of sensitivity of ethnic identity.

3.3.3 Demand for Statehood: The Gorkhaland Movement

The era of 1980’s in the hills projected a clear-cut presentation and the pioneer for the demand of separate statehood with the inception of hill based political parties such as the Pranta Parishad, Gorkha National Liberation Front and Swatantra Manch. The demand put forward by such parties for statehood would encompass the Darjeeling District and the adjoining Doors area of Jalpaiguri. The Gorkhaland demand of the 1980’s stand in marked precision as it invoked for the first time the Article 3 of the Indian Constitution doubly asserting their right for a creation of a state and their recognition as Indian citizens. The other marked feature of the post-Independence Gorkha struggle of the 80’s for separation has been seen in its political approach. With the fragile status and finally the complete defunct of the

AIGL in 1983 by the death of their general secretary and the political supremo of then Darjeeling, D.P. Rai ,political party mainly the GNLF began to rose in power.

The political history of the regional parties such as the Pranta Parishad and GNLF would be interesting to note here. Recoiling the political narration of Darjeeling, 'Gorkhaland movement' as it is popularly known today, has been referred under the concept for the demand of a 'separate administrative set-up or unit' and 'regional autonomy' in the pre and early independent India. The pioneer of the movement under the concept and demand for Gorkhaland was started appropriately by the Pranta Parishad followed by GNLF and the Swantantra Manch beginning from 1980 onwards. The rising popularity of GNLF under the leadership of Subhas Ghissing overcame the political standing of Pranta Parishad which was facing internal fractures due to its heterogeneous character of shifting leadership, the presence of multiple parties and their ideological divergence such as the Congress-I and the AIGL. Besides, the Parishad's standing was deteriorating due to the presence of the questioning character of its members like G.S. Chamling considered being an agent of the King of Nepal (Samanta, 2000:90). Moreover, the growing political career of GNLF and their rising violent approach altered the membership of Pranta Parishad towards GNLF from 1986 onwards which enhanced the latter and redundant the former.

The ideology of a "threatened" or "lost " identity of the Gorkhas not only fanned the entire affair of the Gorkha identity in 1986 but also served as the principle rational of the Gorkhaland movement under the political guidance of Subhas Ghissing. Such rationale base of the movement has been considered by Subba (1992) as having no clarity while defining with exactitude the opinion of the Gorkha identity crisis whether on the cultural or political lines. The former suggested cultural-linguistic undertone and the latter was the subject matter of nationality (Subba, 1992 cited by Chatterji, 2007:139). The grounds on which the movement started were not merely of the economic stagnation and the weak political representation of the hill people, which has been the common knowledge as long as the movement is concerned, but due the massive ejection of the Nepalis from the North Eastern states of India. In the years between 1980-86, 13000 and 17000 were forcefully driven out from Meghalaya, 8000 from Mizoram 1967 and in 1980 2000 from Manipur. Moreover, thousands of Nepalis fled from Assam after 1979 (Hutt, 1997:124). Unable to escape similar fate, internationally speaking the condition of Nepalis were no good. For instance, the expulsion of substantial Nepali population from Bhutan and Burma has positioned the community in a state of socio-economic and political ambiguity. Such expulsion has been

done on the foot confirming to the ideology of *bhumiputra*(son of the soils) (ibid). Such an issue has been a rather ongoing cycle, a socio-political hazard, exposing the vulnerability of Nepali society with the latest case felt in the North Eastern state of Manipur, 2015.

The rising success and popularity of Ghising and the propagation of the Gorkhaland movement gaining much appreciation in the hearts of the common people was much due to the fact that Ghising brought to the fore front the crucial topic of legitimacy i.e. the issue of identity and citizenship. Furthermore invoking Article 3 of the Indian constitution which empowered the Parliament to create new states or redraw the boundaries of any existing states with the prior consultation of the concerned state or states (Khosla, 2012) very well cultivated the sentiment coupled with fear among the masses which well pushed them to contemplate over their authenticity in India. Adding to it, the new agenda that was added to the movement was the issue of segregation of the Nepalese born in India and Nepal. The theory of “transferred anger” posited by B.P.Misra regarding the rationale behind the movement suggests so. According to such a theory, the categorization of the Nepali community became the primary need due to the mass ejection of Nepali people from North-East. Such an ejected community suffered the disability of nonconformity of Indian citizenship. The primary objectives of the Gorkhaland movement under GNLF were as follows:

“(a) A separate state of Gorkhaland within the Indian Union;

- (a) The question of citizenship of the settled Gorkhas to be resolved on the basis of incorporation of territories (as provided for in section 7 of the Indian Citizenship Act 1995 and for this purpose a notification to be issued by the Government of India;*
- (b) A separate Indian Gorkha regiment exclusively for the Indian Gorkhas to be created;*
- (c) Inclusion of Gorkha language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.*

Further, demand for the abrogation of Article 7 of the Indo-Nepal Freindship Treaty of Nepal found place among the prime demands of GNLF at a later stage of the movement” (Khawas, 2009:176)

The raison d'être behind the Gorkhaland movement has been the economic factor. Not only did the political parties such as CPI (M) which led the government then segregated and passed over the issues of the hill (Sen, 1986 cited by Ganguly, 2005:34) but the lacking initiative of the State Government in augmenting the economic stipulation of the hills thwart

the hopes of the hill people. Setting of the Hill Development Council in 1974 even failed to bring instrumental economic alteration for the society (Samanta, 2000:110). The line of attack of the Planning Commission for the hills had been to bridge the economic inequality and reduce poverty but such policy was hardly implemented by the West Bengal Government. Simultaneously, the tea industry, the pride of the hills, was not just depreciating but was on the verge of being morbid and the population pressure on the agricultural sector added to the problems and grievances of the masses and disenchantment with the state government (ibid).

Apart from the economic stagnation of the hills Subba (1992:121) views that the rationale for the movement has been primarily caused by the “transferred jealousy”. The concept has been used by Subba in a comparative manner whereby he evaluates the prosperity of Sikkim post 1975 (after the merger with the Indian Union) with Darjeeling whose prosperity and advancement of any sort was shriveling. Darjeeling pre-merger provided the cultural and educational dominance over Sikkim which altered after 1975 as it became one of the Indian Union state where the funds for it was far greater in number than for Darjeeling. The other cause posited by Subba has been on the basis of tourism industry which is even to this day the foremost source of hill’s financial system especially after the establishment of West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation (WBTDC). He observes that with the coming of the WBTDC the major share of the profit is held by the merchant capitalist from the plains and the Corporation rather than assisting the interests of the Nepalis who form 70% of the population. Consequentially, the economic dominance of the people from the plains and the marginal integration of the hill people in tourism sector abridged the ethnic relations between the two.

The response of the movement against such deprivation was started off with their remonstrance against the marginalization of Indian Nepalis, burning of State Reorganization Commission Report of 1955 which granted the annexation of the hills by West Bengal and the abrogation of the Article 7 of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950 which questioned the legitimacy of the Nepali identity as illegal immigrants from Nepal through the eleven point agendas on 13th March 1986 in a meeting at Ghoom. The adherence to such objection has been popularly known in the history of Gorkhaland movement as the observance of ‘Black Flag’ day. Additionally, the boycott of the general elections and also of the MP’S and MLA’S who opposed the movement were followed. The 1986 agitation is characterized much with the frequent bandhs and strikes followed by numerous violence and counter- violence

between GNLF activists and the CPI (M) cadres, between the police and the paramilitary forces (Subba, 1992:123). Corollary, it was the common public who bore the wrath and the inconvenience of the frequent clashes and bandhs. The tea industry came to a standstill, tourist influx decreased, schools were shut down, and food was running out of shortage. Considering the possibilities of having adverse effect on the probity of the recruited Gorkhas in the Indian Army, the Center in a tactful manner cautioned the State Government to which mission 'Hamdard' was launched by the army in the hills providing medical care, rations, canteen services, transportation and construction of temporal accommodation (Samanta, 2000).

The movement not only mounted the approval and support of the masses as Ghissing for the first time appealed its public the permissible and historical validation but the movement on the opposite bore allegation of being secessionist rupturing the national integrity and unanimity. The CPI (M) representative B.T. Randive charged the movement to be "an attack on the unity and integrity of India by the imperialist forces" (ibid: 110). The 'Operation Gorkhaland' was conceived as the master plan of the CIA which fell in line with 'Operation Brahmaputra' devised to disjoint the entire North Eastern region and India in particular (Randive, 1986:7-8 cited by Samanta, 2000:110). The demand for Gorkhaland not only led to the belief of the fragmentation of Bengal but a greater fear was envisaged i.e. the successful creation of 'Greater Nepal'²⁴ which was still afresh in the minds of the people. Hence, the opposition to the movement was probable.

Report on Ghissing's letter seeking help from the king of Nepal and to the United Nations Secretary and addressing the issues of genocide and the apartheid condition of the people alarmed the Center more than Darjeeling's aggravated condition. The Union Home Minister then, Buta Singh requested to open a dialogue with Ghissing and the Bengal Government to which the latter was willing if Ghissing withdrew his letters to the King and abandoned the idea of the partition of Bengal. The dialogue which took place in 1987 consequentially led to the permission of autonomy. After several rounds of discussion, on 10th July, 1988 the proposal for the creation of the Hill Council was officially accepted. On August 22nd, 1988, Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC)²⁵ was granted by the West

²⁴ The creation of Greater Nepal would comprise of Darjeeling hills, Sikkim and Nepal.

²⁵ Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong, Kalimpong and few mouzas from the Terai region was incorporated. Apart from the recognition of DGHC, Citizen notification was also provided which underlined the rights of "certain classes of persons commonly known as the Gorkhas" to citizenship by the virtue of (a) domicile in India as of 26

Bengal State legislative Act in the form of a regional autonomy. According to Sarkar and Bhaumik (2000), the objective of the DGHC was to function as a federative device sufficing the political needs of the people concerning the student ethnic assertion, the trivial existence of the hill people and defend against the stringent criticism voiced by the political structures running the state machineries (cited by Chatterji, 2007:145). The crucial aim of granting DGHC was to evade the issue of regionalism but was short-lived. The major downfall of the Council can be ascribed to reasons such as the low transfer of funds from the state, functional inappropriateness, structural weakness.

Feeling betrayed by the Gorkha leaders the hopes of the public were crushed who thought their identity crisis would be resolved via the creation of Gorkhaland state an alternative measure was taking shape simultaneously. The reservation movement had clutched the attention nationwide. The piling attention towards the reservation policies rose in the year 1991 when the then Prime Minister of India, V.P. Singh implemented the recommendation of Mandal Commission which stated 27 per cent of job reservation at center and the states for the Other Backward Classes (OBC's) for which many communities fought for their enlistment into such category. Additionally, the fight for the recognition on the bases of not just caste but also indigeneity gained momentum when the U.N. fueled the issue by declaring the year 1993 as the 'Year of the Indigenous People'.

Darjeeling not being oblivion to such affairs, the marginalized society "began to organize themselves vigorously in search of their lost identities" (Subba, 1992). Ghissing once again took to his responsibility and out of sheer self political interest, demanded for the inclusion of the Hill Council under the Sixth Schedule. His Independence Day address in 2000 brought to the fore front the party's political agenda post the formation of DGHC, was to include the Council under Sixth Schedule and recognize Darjeeling as a Tribal region. Though it was his political strategy to save his hegemonic political career, unfortunately, his appreciation and charisma had already been uncovered.

The second phase of the Gorkhaland movement surfaced in 2007 which attributes to the ultimate downfall of Ghissing's political rule when he disapproved to support Prashant Tamang, a local Nepali boy, contesting in a popular national reality show, 'Indian Idol'. Not only, did the society witness the victory of Prashant Tamang but it provided to the unheard

January 1950, (b) ordinary residence for the minimum of five years before that date, (c) birth in India, and (d) birth of either parent in India (Subba 1992: 269-270, cited in Hutt 1997:131)

society a major national platform to claim their legitimate identity as Indians. No matter how ethnically diverse the hill society was, but for the first time it ensured the Gorkha unity at large. The sensational 'Indian Idol' provided yet again another political platform to the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) who passionately supported the cause for Prashant Tamang under the leadership of Bimal Gurung creating much of the anti-GNLF impression among the general public.

GJM was a counter challenge to GNLF and especially to Subhas Ghissing which yet again dared to become the political supremo of the Gorkhaland movement till date. The movement at present has been covering the very repetitive issues for the demand of Gorkhaland under the Gandhian principle. How far it has been successful in staying true to such ideal ideology is a matter of contestation especially concerning with the assassination of Madan Tamang in 2010, the stubborn leader of Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League. But comparatively viewed its approach has been much sober and constitutional. Undoubtedly, it is the principally dominated supreme political party, but the question circling around the issue of its dependability, a platform which would raise the genuine concerns of the hill people has been under critical scrutiny especially after the granting of the Gorkha Territorial Administration in July 19th, 2011 instead of a state. The historical repetition of the failure for the recognition of a state has not merely challenged GJM's authenticity but the reservation issue which has remained fresh among the people has triggered the other side of the movement, the *jana andolan*. Such andolan has served to be an open challenge to the ruling party, who fear of being undermined. Simultaneously

3.4 Conclusion

1907 with the birth of the Hill Men's Association and its transformation into Hill People's Social Union in 1934 marks the turning point in the political history of Darjeeling hills where for the first time an urban society, which was then the center of jealousy of its neighboring countries, was being nurtured to project the solidarity of the diverse hill communities under one umbrella term as Gorkhas. The genesis of the demand for the separation from Bengal had invariably been rooted in the making of the history of Darjeeling hills popularizing the Gorkhaland movement even to this day. Unfortunately, the constant political flux whether concerning the formation of regional parties and their concerned diverging demands or the earnest effort of national parties such as the CPI, CPI (M) and the Congress to claim their dominance over the region has altogether made the movement rather

more unstable and debatable as far as its political agendas are concerned. Amongst such bafflement, the crushing hope of achieving the status of statehood as Gorkhaland, which has been the primary principle of the movement since time immemorial, comes out rather more vividly.

The constant resurfacing of the demand for separation under multiple concept by multiple regional and national political parties rather merely led to the birth of creating multiple political supremo, the most outstanding being Subhas Ghising and the 1986-1987 Gorkhaland agitation who with the passing of time rose to be a dominant political figure where the democratic values were at times kept at margin. The movement nevertheless unfolds new schedules in asserting their authenticity as long as the issue of identity and citizenship is concerned. The present movement under GJM serves the point. The reverberation of the Gorkhaland movement has obviously been consistent but has also led to the realization of other goals, that being the rise of ethnic democracy triggered by the reservation issues.

Chapter IV

Theoretical Understanding

4.1 Defining Ethnicity and Identity: Framing of the Conceptual Tools

Defining conceptual terms such as ethnicity and identity has become one of the major intellectual hurdles among the social scientists. The difficulty pervades as the concepts are multidimensional and ambivalent in nature. The vernacular interpretation is easy to grasp but its analytical comprehension lacks much of the decisiveness it ought to have. The lack of analytical imprecision overshadowing the concept of ethnicity has led to its continuous overlapping with terms such as race and nation. The former describes the physical features asserting the historical external imposition denoting ‘them’ while ethnicity is likely about defining voluntarily self-identification for the ultimate aim of identifying ‘us’ (Ansell, 2013:64). Ethnicity can however and more openly negotiates identity in multiple ways and situations making it less outwardly a visible marker whereby on the other hand race rather projects a definite historical institutionalised maker. Nation the other aspect has centralised attention towards self-definition, sovereignty and political rights speaking of which has lesser connectivity with ethnicity but not devoid of it (ibid: 65). A clear cut, definitive demarcation and analytical precision can hardly be derived as the overlapping of ethnicity is unavoidable and the word itself portrays arrays of interpretation. : For instance, Horowitz (1985) states that "Ethnicity easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion; it covers ‘tribes,’ ‘races,’ ‘nationalities,’ and castes."According to Max Weber, “ethnic groups are those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists” (Hutchinson & Smith 1996:35 quoted in Chandra, 2005:402). The commonly accepted version while defining ethnicity has been based on the ascribed and inherited qualities which Chandra (2005) calls it the ‘descent based attributes’ which has both subjective and objective notions.

Calling upon the intellectual task of defining identity has too never been void of clear analytical understanding. Identity to which an individual is tied to is multivalent and the importance to which identity the individual attaches is defined primarily by the choice the individual makes. The word has been primarily used in two senses – social and personal. The

former points to the labels and rules deciding one's membership and (alleged) features and the latter includes characters which are socially consequential for which the individual takes pride in and is unchangeable (Fearon, 1999:2). The social category or the sociology of identity has much to do with the formation of collective identity and the personal covers domain of the physiological interpretation of identity. Identity is not merely understood as a right to which an individual is entitled to but also a source for demanding individual's self respect. Serves also as a primary maker of difference and similarity an indisputable fact applied even to the realm of things (Jenkins, 2008:17). The social category of identity strongly suggests so. Hall (1996:4-5) advocates that identity has been the product of difference and exclusion constructed through difference and functions as identification enhancing attachments merely because of the idea of difference. Identification concerning the subject matter of identity is to be rather conceived with much serious magnitude. Though Identification has a psychodynamic understanding very well linked with Freud, acknowledging emotional drives, on the other end its categorizes, describing and defining a person's befitting belonging to a certain category making sense of his or her social world. The matter of classification of others and oneself is crucially possible based on the interplay of similarity and difference (Jenkins, 2008:22). Identification involves complex and more often ambivalent processes and identity a condition making it an easy fit between the individual and the social (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:17).

The issue of Identity has been greatly associated and put to practice forming a convincing relation with subject matters concerning social movements tied intrinsically with identity issues rooting inherently with the cause of ethnicity. Ethnicity has become one's identity and its growing grip over the human world has resulted into the manifestation of the visible and explainable but yet intangible phenomenon. Ethnic identities are for the most part a representation of collectively rather than individuality, are unquestionably emotionally driven, laden and bounded by group compactness, commonality, and feeling of oneness. The crucial question which arises out of such ultimate definitive characteristic is what, when and how exactly can it assume such definitive characteristic? On what foundation does it abide to? The answer to the queries can be deduced to the consensual answers provided by social scientists based on the discourses of difference and similarity resting on the notion of inclusion and exclusion. Questions of varying curiosities are not hard to come across but satisfying them are also a matter of theoretical capabilities and broadened understandings often being multivalent and highly debatable in context.

Structuring of identity along ethnic lines cannot solely suffice on the discourse of exclusion and inclusion or similarity and difference though they quite significantly have contributed to its working scheme. The theoretical framing of ethnic identities can be well interpreted through the popular debate between the 'primordialism' and instrumentalism which has even been understood as circumstantialism and constructivism as well. Speaking of which the constructivism share similar theoretical understanding which covers the premise of instrumentalism the only difference rests in the fact that the former is sometimes referred to racial formation theory as propagated by sociologists, Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) who view race as a social historical construct (Ansell, 2003:48).

Immortalization of ethnic ties has been the primary base, objective and approach of the primordialists. Such ties are considered eternal and unchanging. The intractable supremacy of ethnic ties not only laid the source for cultivating identity but also generated and maintained social solidarity and a feeling of belongingness. Greetz (1963) concerned with the primordial loyalties assessed that such attachments rose from the "assumed givens of social existence" of the human social world. The "givens" encompasses not just the immediate congruity and kinship relations but is also inclusive of being born into a particular community, religion, culture and speaking a similar mother tongue. Additionally, the inexpressible features and qualities of the primordial arena such as the blood, attitude, beliefs, and speech are rather too intense. The solidarity thus ensured by the attachment to primordial loyalties generates due to the unqualified importance the individual ties to itself and are not generative of social interaction. Such bonds arise out of non-rational human personalities and also by way of spiritual and natural affinities which at times can prove fatal to the development of a civic society (also cited by Bacova, 1998:31-32 and Brass, 1991:69). The common argumentation of the primordialist rests on the idea that every individual "carries with him through life 'attachment' derived from the place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices that are 'natural' for him, 'spiritual' in character, and that provide a basis for an easy 'affinity' with other people from the same background (Greetz, 1963:108-110 and 128). The basic assumptions one can derive about the primordial ties and the framing of one's identity along such a line indicate not only to be a "historically given" entity, universal and eternal but also suggests the possibility of its dominance over the individuals and the membership into a particular social community and group is based on ascription. Hence, identity is not negotiable, leaving no space for flexibility and most probably is biologically determined.

The instrumental school of thought has provided a counter narrative regarding the theoretical understanding of identity. Predicted to lose the grip of ethnic ties by the early twentieth century scholars in a gradual manner hence proved erroneous. With the gradual up gradation of human civilization, technology, needs and wants rose. Ethnicity as an identity became more durable than a recanted notion. Identities enjoyed the privilege of being sturdy recasting and reinventing into it new meaning with altering circumstances, competing for the scare resources i.e. jobs, political powers, housing or social categories to name a few (Ansell, 2013:31). Brass (1991:16) being an instrumentalist asserts that ethnic identities are formed due to the dynamics of elite competition within the determined political and economic boundaries therefore asserting the group interests. The policy of demarcating groups who are “similar to each other and collectively different from others” serves as a basic tool for pressing “more effectively ethnic demands against rival groups). As per the school of thought, it is a rational reaction, not based on given attributes, to meet the pressurised demands of society but constructed with altering developments and during one’s course of life (Bacova, 1998:8). Barth (1967) highlights the intrinsic aspect of ethnicity such as language, religion, territory as spontaneously altering indicating its unfixed, fluid and flexible nature. The demarcation of ethnic communities and groups are done by isolating them from others, others demarcating them and the demarcation by themselves (cited in Bacova, 1998:36). The instrumentalist character of identity portrays not just a rational choice but is calculative driven towards one’s advantages (social, economic and political) and is a deliberate social construction. Not being biological determined, and having the ability to achieve creating larger space for elasticity is also to say that such identities are unstable, negotiable, fluid and temporary.

The theoretical aspects of the conceptual tools shall henceforth be applied to study in the making of Gorkha identity trying to explain from the rational and the non-rational choice of ethnic identity.

4.2 Construction of Hill Ethnic Identity: Issues and Concerns

A concise socio-economic and political account of Darjeeling hill society has been dealt in the early chapters serving as a mere introductory background for the study of the hill society. Considering the Gorkhas/Nepali as a ‘given’ identity of the hill society points to the inadequate ability in comprehending the true making of such an identity as it is known today and the acknowledgement of such a ‘given’ identity would over simplify the situation as mere

Gorkha/Neplai identity. The inclusion of the analytical interplay concerning the structuring of Gorkha/Nepali identity shall try to provide an alternative understanding of the mere 'given' identity of the hills for which the work shall try to prioritise the understanding of the materialization of the hill identity investigating on the lines of the colonial and the socio-cultural constructions.

4.2.1 Colonial Construction

The interpretation of identity of the hills as Gorkhavis a vis Nepali has been identified and put to practise synonymously within and outside the society itself. For a layman in general not much of a difference is realised or entirely finds no difference at all with the interchangeable usage of the terms. Demarcation of the terms become crucial while assessing and interpreting the hill society, printing impressions and impacts completely different but yet finding a common social existence.

The early hours of marking out a classic understanding of the term 'Gorkha' has led us to consider the history of Nepal under the dominance of Gorkha ruler, Prithivinarayan Shah and the principality of Gorkha from where the Gorkha nomenclature owes its foundational discourse becoming a guaranteed fact and a common source of reference. Understanding the term not simply calls upon the Gorkha principality whose soldiers were popularly known by the name then, but it was most crucially by the hands of the British colonists that such accomplished martial qualities as the very first identity got external introduction to the world and its final embodiment as a 'martial race'.

The martial race theory carries much of the primordial ascription as it popularises the idea of biological determinism. According to Lionel Caplen (2006, 260-261) it rested on two basic premises. First, it was inherited making the quality natural, associated with specific race. Second, it laid importance to environmental determinism categorizing geographical terrains such as the hilly and cooler climate generative of martial habitat producing warlike people. On the other hand the hot plains a source for timid, unwarlike and servile race. Confirming to the narrow, scientific racism, the colonists maintained the purity of the 'martial race' avoiding any possible infiltration. This can be well conformed by referring to the recruiting policies provided by Eden Vansittart a prominent recruiting officer himself in his two entitled books namely, *'Notes on Nepal'* (1992) and *'Gurkhas'* (2012). It is to be seen that Gorkhas were drawn and recruited from the two hilly mountainous divisions of the

country- Western and Eastern Nepal. Races such as Khas, Magars and Gurungs were drawn from the West and Limbus, Rais, Sunuwars and Lamas from the east. Strict check on the purity of the 'martial race' was furthered by *gallawallas*. Such recruiting agents by bringing in recruits of proper race directly from Nepal were given monetary or regimental rewards or punished for the violation of bringing poor recruits from the labour classes working in tea gardens in Darjeeling (Vansittart, 2012: 154).

The indentation as a 'martial race' upon the Gorkhas though has been the Colonists 'discovery' highlighting the superior martial qualities being biological determined and non-negotiable also served the constructive and instrumental aspirations for the latter. The instrumentalist nature while constructing the Gorkha martial race quite negates the idea which Lionel Caplan held. To quote in his words, "the theory of martial race did not emerge *sui generis* to meet specific military needs, rather it was a deeper manifestation of the wider European doctrine of biological determinism or scientific racism". The political scenario in India prevailing then (1857 uprising) is essential to be taken into account which had a direct link with the political needs of the Colonists. The need of the hour was to search and replace, curtailing the Hindu soldiers with Brahmanic chauvinism with a much loyal one. Who could have better befitted the position than the Gorkhas who showcased the least of it and an urgent need to restrict their growing dominance by completely colonising their bodies via recruitments into the British Indian Army. The theory of 'martial race' not simply flooded the British Indian troop with the abundance of virgin Gorkha racial categories but also served to guard the highly sensitive frontiers in the North West threatened by the Russians. Additionally, with the colonization of Darjeeling hills whose socio-economic viability and prosperity aspired for better livelihood prospects was irresistible to resist on the part of the common deprived people from Nepal inevitably leading to large exodus of people from the land selling their cheap source of labour in the new found haven. To borrow the words from Ghosh (1999), the physical sturdiness of the plain, arduous hill workers were ultimately converted into 'proto wage labourers'. By opening recruiting depots in Ghoom, Darjeeling (1902) and the influx of Nepali migrants not simply assured their loyalty towards the white masters but was a protective political coverage for the latter. Basing on such historical records, it has led Golay (2006: 32) to argue that the colonist construction of Gorkha identity as a 'martial race' was in reality the colonization of their body. The physical colonization nude them of their freedom, the diverse fluid ethnic identities were silenced

onrecognising one identity- the martial identity. They were relocated as “deterritorialised subjects of history” (ibid).

4.2.2 Socio-Cultural Construction

No doubt that the British had the major contribution in framing the early histories of Darjeeling hills but the colonization of the Gorkhas and the Darjeeling territory inviting massive migrants from Nepal served to be the “unconscious tool of history” or “the invisible hands” who inspired the settlers to assert a refined self-identity of their own on the lines of language (Nepali bhasa). The original reference to the word was *khaskura* as they were spoken by the subjects of the Khas empire²⁶ of the 12th century which comprised of Western Nepal, parts of Uttar Pradesh in India and parts of south-west Tibet (Pradhan, 1994 cited in Giri, 2014:33). The usage of the word ‘Nepali’ apart from Gorkha or Gorkhali had its practical usage with the political ascendancy of the Gorkha ruler, Prithivinarayan Shah popularly known as the ‘Gorkhas conquest’ which began from 1778 onwards leading to the consolidation of Nepal as it stands today. The urge for a national identity in Nepal hence led to the imposition of the Khas language quite popularly known as the *Parbate, Parbatiya* which was timely referred as the *Gorkhali* or the *Nepali* and was well adopted by the linguistically and ethnically diverse population of the country. Hence, the very first construction of Gorkha/Nepali identity was constructed by the State undermining the linguistic and cultural diversity of its population.

The migration history of the Nepalis which was just not a matter concerning the movement of the socio-economically deprived physical entities but also of the immaterial aspect of culture i.e. language forming the primary base on which a mature and refined identity was to be carved out which enabled Brass (1991:22) to understand language not only as a source for communication but a “priceless heritage of group culture”. It is to be seen on the ground struggling to create a “priceless heritage of the group” that the immaterial aspect of culture began to be materialised in the making of a composite Nepali hill identity²⁷.

²⁶ The disintegration of the Khas Empire led to the emergence of petty principality over its ruins and the most important of them was the Gorkha principality.

²⁷ Though Benaras was the educational hub which inspired most of Nepali literary writings the Nepali diaphora community there were found less bounded than Darjeeling. Hence Darjeeling emerged as a new symbol for creating Nepali identity.

The growing usage of Nepali language in the eastern Himalayas accelerated by the growing Gorkha power, until the British obstruction, and later by the migration process soon become the lingua franca of the region speaking of which it gained much of the due respect in constructing a Nepali identity for diaspora community of Nepali migrant settled in India and specifically in the hills of Darjeeling. The need for constructing such a composite identity on the lines identifying an explicit language as ‘Nepali’ was targeted for bringing into existence a homogenous sense of shared belonging. The understanding for the arousal of belonging primarily rested on two reasons. Firstly, the growing prospect of migration with the birth of Darjeeling led to the early and massive migrant settlement in the tea gardens creating a viable prospect for cultural and ethnic assimilation and acculturation. The long multicultural existence beginning right from the 1800’s not only led to the need for identifying a consensus over the use of a common language outside their private spheres for viably communicating but living with a vague identity confirming to double consciousness (living in British colonial India and still longing for their motherland) rather required for a much assertive identity. Secondly, the actual manifestation of Nepali language confirming to the idea of *jati* was furthered by constructing civil societies. Nepali Sahitya Sammelan (1924), Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Samelan, (1932), Sri Hitkari Sammelan (1945), Himalaya Kala Mandir (1950) were of the noted civil societies who redefined the Gorkha identity creating a self-identity based on kinship- Nepali *daju bhai* (Golay, 2006: 40). Nepali Sahitya Sammelan was in fact first ever to emphasize on the gradual shift from ‘Gorkha’ to ‘Nepali’.

The notion of ‘daju bhai’ was created basing not on the actual ties of kinship but on ‘jati’ (race) that was bounded by a common thread (sudra) of common experience, shared sentiments and a single language (Nepali) which no race in particular could consider there alone (Pradhan, 198:37-44 cited in Hutt, 1997:117). Structuring of ‘Nepali identity’ or ‘nepali jati’ was inclusive rather than being exclusive and quite opposite to the affective qualities of identity usually claims to, as it incorporated the varied races of the diverse multilingual and multicultural society.

The identification, propagation and the internalization of Nepali as an identity was made possible with the education facility available in Darjeeling and the role of print capitalism in Benaras. Benaras then served not only a site for the Nepali political fugitives but also a primary educational hub the access to which was limited to the few Nepali elites of the time mostly belonging to the upper caste (tagadharis). Print capitalism then opened

avenues for consumption, pleasures and ways of imagining society and community (Gaenzie, 2011). Print capitalism hence encouraged and opened avenues for the Nepali intellectuals to promote Nepali literatures through the introduction of printing press specialising in Nepali books the notable ones being- Bharat Jiwan Press, Hitchintak Press, Bansidhar Misra's Gauri Press and Sakhi Vinayak Gurkhi Press (Orsisni, 2004:136). The greatest impact it ever made was with the utmost creation of Nepali public sphere through Nepali theatre journals and books highlighting many of the socio-political and economic conditions of the society. The viable educational ground in Darjeeling was just not teaching its illiterate to read and write but the means of Benaras supplemented it with well furnished literary writings disclosing the dominant discourses concerning the society (Giri, 2014:39).

The acceptance of a 'Nepali identity' (immaterial culture) was possible in a society demarcated by multiplicity of culture and history not because of the need felt for the primordial loyalties but to put into relevance the idea of Gellner 'the prioritization of the language of the 'alma mater' (the instrumental means of communication), the sole product of industrialization and the demand for need of a standardised education bringing the community (polity) and culture together (Gellner, 1983 cited by Bacova, 1998:38). The instrumental character of staging and writing hence began to assert and mould Nepali Indian nationalism in general while delinking them from Nepal in particular in the latter half of the nineteenth century²⁸. Structuring of 'Nepali identity' on the premise of language fructified outside Nepal validating Nepali ethnicity for the primary cause of self identification.

4.3 Politicization of Gorkha /Nepali Identity

The structuring of Gorkha and Nepali identity was never void of politicization. Irrespective of the words differing definitions, its politicization were commonly done under the notion of 'belonging'. If belonging is to be understood as "emotional attachment, about feeling at home,...and about feeling safe (Yuval-Davis, 2006:197) then its pollicisation done by specific parties such as the All India Gorkha League, CPI, Pranta Parishad, GNLF and GJM (refer to the political chapters) magnified the issue by associating it with the issue of identity. The latter has a cognitive understanding based on which it maintains its borders deriving into

²⁸ Giri, Private. 2014 in his work 'Theatre and Public Sphere in Darjeeling: Staging Gorkha Identity Politics', talks about the 'alternative paradigm' of staging theatre in Darjeeling from mid 1950's to mid 70's projecting the need for creating an identity as Indians and delinking its association with Nepal.

exclusive sense of belonging which involves a critical process of defining and maintaining boundaries of the group according to where they belong. (Bhambra, 2006:32 cited in Pandey, 2011:99). The need for asserting one's belongingness or to where the group belongs is not a mere matter of understanding the peripheral identification denoting one's wide-ranging status but becomes crucial when the affective elements of identity binding the people together start where the idea of 'we' starts and 'they' begin'.

Beginning of the politicization of Nepali language materialized only after 1900 with the aid of the educated elites and its timely recognition under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 1992. The genesis of Nepali language movement can be traced back from the year 1920 when the National Congress party of India in its Nagpur Session decided to form provinces on the basis of language to which the hills society of Darjeeling demanded for its inclusion in primary education which was successfully achieved in 1927 by the Griffith Committee. In post Independent India, the linguistic movement gained momentum with the framing of the State Reorganisation Committee (1953) which declared for the recognition of the minority language as one of the official languages of the state if 70% of the population of the district spoke the same (minority language). Census incongruity was seen when the district's population was shown to measure 26% according to the 1951 census when it was projected to be 86.8% in 1941 as stated by Dash (2011:63) in the Bengal District Gazetteer of Bengal, 1947. Population would have actually ascended instead of descending. Finally, it got recognised through West Bengal Official Act of 1961. The serious step for its recognition under the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution was originally voiced from Dehradun in 1956 by A.S. Thapa which reached its prominence by the year 1972. Though its Constitutional recognition assured and authenticated their national existence at par with other subjects of India but the issue of legitimization of identity did not end there²⁹.

Language a category of identity well triggered the issue of the Gorkha/Nepali identity at a national platform especially by the 1986 agitation led by Late. Subhas Ghising. Knowing that the Indian Nepalis were deeply and emotionally attached to Nepali Language, which had the inscription of shared history an experience of the past, in an alien land would

²⁹ Refer Subba, 1992. 'State Ethnicity and Development: A case Study on Gorkhaland Movement'. New Delhi: Vikas Publication. He has divided Nepali language movement under three chronological phrases. The major debate encircling its Constitutional recognition was with its usage 'Nepali' or 'Gorkha'. Ghising being the promoter of the latter did so in order to differentiate the Indian born Nepalis and those born in Nepal. But it was recognised under the term 'Nepali' than 'Gorkha'.

definitely aid in the instrumental orientation of the language to build a sense of unity among the diverse group coming historically from different places of Nepal where they spoke their respective dialects (Samanta, 2000:128). The mastery of the leader over the language quite emotively aroused the sentiments of its subjects to marshal. The non-Nepalis such as Bhutias and Lepchas were too integrated into Nepali circle as historically were swamped by the outnumbering population of Nepalis (ibid). Language thus became not only the pillar of the Gorkha movement but a major sign of Nepali nationalism outside Nepal³⁰, the accomplishment of the dream of four caste and thirty six varnas blooming together as flowers in a garden³¹, the keystone of their national existence. Such a national existence has been threatened and subject of stereotyping them as illegal immigrants from Nepal. The concerning topic even today is the issue of 'Gorkhland movement' which had its genesis from 1907 with unsuccessful outcome while still taking into its hand the responsibility of assuring a guaranteed and secured identity for the Nepalis settled in India.

This very issue has been politicised by popularising the concept of 'identity crises' by the society at large. Even after being entitled to Voter's ID card, ration card, PAN card or Adhar cards which legitimises one's nationality and citizenship issues the problem arises due to the practice of stereotyping the community as illegal migrants from Nepal. Escaping from such a crisis is believed to be solved by the granting of autonomy in the form of a state which signifies the culmination of the politics of belonging and identity formation where the community begins to identify 'we' and 'they'.

Words denoting one's ethnicity such as Gorkha, Gorkhali and Nepali are loaded with symbolic power and have been used interchangeably depending on the political and social conveniences being lost in political mileage. For instance, tracing back to the period of the Hill Men's association in 1920, S.W. Ladenla and Dr. Yenshing from the Bhutia and Lepcha communities respectively opposed the recognition of Nepali language in schools which was withdrawn later especially keeping in mind the political career of Ladenla which was not possible to realise without the support of the Nepali population who were in majority then

³⁰ The Ranas who ruled Nepal after the Shah Dynasty did little to promote patriotism and loyalty towards the state as they were threatened by it. The feeling of patriotism, national sentiment were diluted making known solely to their own kins and narrow limited locales (Bista, 1991: 21)

³¹ The notion was actually delivered by Prithivinarayan Shah in his political sermon. The garden of flowers is a metaphor signifying the diversity of the subjects of Nepal which he hoped to unify. Refer Pradhan, Kumar.2009. 'Gorkhas Conquest'. Calcutta: Oxford University Press.

(Subba, 1992:45). The other occasions are during the wake of the 1986 agitation slogans such as “*ayo bhatrakali, bir Gorkhali*” was instrumental in arousing the affective attributes of ‘bir gathas of Gorkhas’ having suffered injustice time and again. It subjectively aspired the inspiration for ‘bir Gorkha jati’ immortalising its ideal valour which persists even now calling into use in times of political needs.

Chapter V

The Politics of Identities: Redefining Gorkha Identity

5.1 Introduction

The historical persistence of the Gorkha issue has not solely led to the acknowledgment of having been lasted for over a hundred years with shifting regional political ascendancy and their respective tenets but have also imperatively resulted for the greater dissemination of the affair making it rather intricate and debatable especially in the present scenario (under the political guidance of Bimal Gurung from the year 2007). The historical documentation of Darjeeling hills since its inception from 1835 onwards, on the basis of its socio-economic and political subject matter, depicts a decisive understanding of the society in the absence of which would have created a vague understanding for any studies focused primarily on the subject of Gorkha ethno-regional identity and their struggle for recognition, irrespective of having assumed cultural or political tinge.

The retrospective outlook and the historical understanding of Gorkhaland movement since its inception from 1907 commonly latching on it the concern of the Gorkha identity, hitting the very essential cord of the movement, has not flinched an inch(speaking of the issue on the grounds of general understanding). Generally speaking, the movement essentially encapsulates the prioritised agenda of the Gorkha identity considering to have faced extreme socio-economic and political suppression from the plains (the Bengalis) and the former's legitimacy (identity and citizenship) being at margin within the independent India. Determined to resolve such oppression and marginalised status, the recognition of statehood to the minority Gorkha community i.e. 'Gorkhaland' has been invariably proposed as a remedial measure. On a positive note, the struggle being timeless has been painstakingly trying to uphold the movement in its entire possible manner with commendable hopes of being granted a defined Gorkha territory, though in many occasions it proved feeble in achieving its primary demand. Reimbursing the failure, the State acknowledged for the creation of Darjeeling Gorkha Territorial Area which can be considered equivalent of revisiting and repeating the history of 1988 when D.G.H.C. was accepted in lieu for a state for which more than a thousand souls were lost.

Turning off the general approach, the movement can be viewed as a multifaceted on-going cycle with no unilinear headways. Moreover and importantly, defining the issue of

identity of the Gorkhas merely on a singular notion of 'Gorkha ethnic identity' as the sole identity of the hill community, which forms a commonly accepted epistemological grid, has been facing serious questions and intellectual inquiries triggered by the rise of 'janajatis' and their demand for ethnic democracy.

The tradition of cultural presentation of the community has been so far done resting on the issue of Gorkha jati, or Nepali jati. Importance has to be given in defining such cultural presentation. Golay (2006) considers that the word 'jati' having loose and arrayed meaning and its incorporation with Gorkha as a jati signified "the cultural identity" of the community "expressed through imagery and symbols derived from its composite culture". The representation of the "composite culture" through imageries and symbols" suggest that 'Gorkha jati' is to be understood as monolithic cultural interpretations of the varied aspects of varied cultures which are also suggestive of the internal cultural diversity of the community. This very interpretation of the term has two basic understandings, the opposite sides of the same coin. First, the prevalence of cultural consensus if the word suggests encompassing the wide-ranging cultural groups into a singular fold, accepting the cultural pluralism of the society, then the problem of ethnic compartmentalisation would be absent. Second, the possibility and the need for its de-construction, as it were constructed to form a singular identity, which with passage of time could fragment to assert their respective cultural autonomies.

The historical development of Nepali language and literature stimulated the growing awareness and appreciation of Nepali language which one was proud of: it was the language of culture which invoked a common historical and cultural heritage (Gaenszle, 2011: 215) bounding the society under one cultural fold. Hence, the language convenience, being the lingua franca of the society and with the support of the print capitalism and civil societies, Nepali as an identity rose to its prominence. The politicisation of language and the race as an essential base for igniting ethnic identitarian movement of the hills of Darjeeling projected a struggle of the Gorkha community at large. Additionally, the history of ethnic separatism has customarily led us to consider a contestation between the Gorkhas and the plainsmen i.e. the Bengalese, the sole design of ethnic cleavage. Considering the two groups as the historical occupancies of the minority and majority, the subjugated and the dominant groups respectively seem to project a hegemonic idea of power and dominance. The de-construction of Gorkha jati becomes mandatory in a phase where the dominant identity of the hill as "Gorkha" has started to erode being overshadowed by the new construction of multiple ethnic

identities that are but a conscious participant in the making of 'janajati' identity indicative of internal contestation.

5.2 Why Janajati Identity in the Hills?

The Nepali community of Darjeeling includes the descendents of those migrants who planned on settling in this region on a permanent basis though there were even those who choose to return back. The settlers not only began to be identified with the national identity but the post –independent India witnessed them demanding their full cultural and linguistic rights more violently especially during the 1986 agitation. This has fairly been one aspect of the struggles marshalled by the community for asserting their legitimacy but the contemporary discourse on Gorkha community has been on the struggle in framing an ideal secured identity circling around the issue of 'reservation' policies framed by the Indian constitution and by the interference of the UN declaring the year 1993 as 'the year of the Indigenous People'³² (refer, Subba: 2001:3, Hangen, 2000:57).

The early steps undertaken for affirmative action through reservation policies were devised to provide equality to its masses whose primary stake holders had been identified and categorised under the nomenclature of Scheduled Castes and Tribes after the passing of the Kaka Kalekar Commission in 1953. But with the passing of the Mandal Commission, 1990, additional category was identified as OBC's (Other Backward Classes). It was after the governmental introduction of a new benefit schedule incorporated in 1990 that concrete benefits began to trickle down to the reserved categories (Shneiderman and Turin, 2006).

The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the OBC's were entitled not just as the reserved categories or the backward classes, but were the traditional victims of deprivation and injustice, and the constitutional measures were seen as a tool for providing social justice and for many times an ideal replacement for the same. The socio-economically deprived members for the first time were provided better educational and economical opportunities. Educationally, the advantage that a backward class can avail to is- relaxation in the marks during admission and while appearing for certain examinations, exclusive access to

³²Such a declaration enabled the heterogeneous society of Nepal to search for their lost identities claiming to be ethnic and indigenous. The cultural proximity of Nepal and Darjeeling hills cannot be simply brushed aside as the cultural borrowing from Nepal has been an ongoing cycle since the time of inception. Hence, the latter quite evidently comes under the former's cultural influence allowing the declaration to have a major impact on the diverse communities of Darjeeling

reserved positions in universities and vocational schools. Economic assistance is also provided such as lowering of loan interests and reserved job positions in government agencies. The facilities as enjoyed by the OBC categories are much lower than its other counter parts. The ethno-lingual diverse communities of Darjeeling were too aspiring for the inclusion which was first realised after the agitation of 1986 and later but more vividly after the second round of the movement under the leadership of Bimal Gurung.

Apart from being disenchanted by the failure of the Gorkhaland movement consecutively, the reasons of two most importance which has elicited the race for a privileged identity, creating internal disparity and feeling of inequality was with the early recognition of the Limboos and the Tamangs into Scheduled Tribe list in 2003³³ at the cost of invalidating the right over such identity of their other Gorkha brethrens (the ten janajati groups). When question surrounding the issue of hill tribal identity erupts, the census of 1931 becomes crucial while legitimising the entire population and area under the legitimate view of being 'Tribal' as the census had clearly declared so³⁴. Basing on it, much of the arguments are being fought. Adding to it, the field of education and jobs has created tough competition. The burden of such competition is believed to be lessening if the community is enlisted under the backward classes as Scheduled Tribe

Janajati has become a popular parlance when issues concerning one's ethnic identity are debated especially on two grounds- first its legitimacy for the entitlement of scheduled tribe category and second its indegeniality. The word actually being an alternative for 'tribe' has been referred in Indic word as 'janajati' or 'adivasi' (Subba, 2012:69). Though the word has also been used in other parts of India, the Gorka/Nepali community having had long cultural ties with the country of its ancestors –Nepal hence it becomes expected that the word has much of the essence derived from its neighbouring country where too it has been resounding with full strength. Validating the point Shneiderman and Turin (2006) writes

³³It was understood that due to the political assistance the two groups were liable for such entitlements. For instance, Subhas Ghissing belonging to the Tamang group as the Chairman of the DGHC and the Limboo/Subba being represented by its Vice- chairman (field work, 2015: April to June).

³⁴.Superintendent of Census Operations, Bengal.1933.*Extract Copy from the book of Census of India, 1931: Volume V, Bengal and Sikkim: Part 1*. Calcutta: Central Publication Branch.The census of 1931 mentions the hill tribes of Darjeeling who at the present scenario constitute the janajati groups including both the tribal and the non-tribal categories. The hill tract then came under the 'non-regulating' administrative area (Report by A.E. Porter).

“Most of the permanent settlers in Darjeeling and Sikkim were members of Nepal’s ethnic groups, now commonly referred to as janajati”.

The popularity of the word in Nepal gains from the fact that the word rose to its prominence highlighting the identity of the subjugated masses specially those belonging to the Mongoloid origin dominated by the Aryan who belonged to the upper cast³⁵. But in case of Darjeeling by orienting oneself as ‘janajati’, is not merely indicative of asserting the tribal identity serving as a tool for voicing grievances of its socio-economic backwardness but has simply magnified the internal- ethnic identity of being diverse where cultural characteristics and the need for authenticating it have become a greater concern and contestation. Janajati as an ethnic identity rises as an outcome of the group interaction of the diverse Gorkha jatis determined by the differential power relations and limited but selective access to the social, economic and political resources of the state between the recognised (tribal) and the unrecognised (non-tribal).

5.3. Making of Janajati Identity in Darjeeling

The issues of ethnic identities have strongly and increasingly held into its clutches the human world. The problems of identities have in fact become to be identified as the problem of the modern world as identity has been affiliated not only within the psychological dimension but extend to the social, cultural, regional, national, political domains. Though the cultural identity is ever present in the society, political identity fluid in nature but the increasing emphasis on social identity has been felt in many of the developing countries where tribe and kin group and not region or nation become the crucial crust for basing social identity (Colliere, et.al, 2001: 131). The statement though has its own points of relevance it suggests a narrow perspective as regions and nations are also crucial while framing a social identity as they project the territorialisation of the concerned groups. Second, Social identity is just not a given identity but is also constructed and instrumentalised on whose interplay identities become means to reach out for its goals.

³⁵Though the word carries much of the essence from that of Nepal, variations in its usage has also to be understood. For instance, in Nepal, the word portrays strong objection towards the cultural hegemony of the upper caste i.e. Bahuns (Brahmins/ Tagadhari jat) over the Matwalis on lines of religion, language and race. On the contrary, in Darjeeling such oppositions are scarcely present and even if it is felt it has been mainly done on the opinion of asserting their constitutional rights as ‘tribal’ where the primitive culture and its distinctiveness are instrumentalised.

Gorkhas were the deterritorialized subjects of the history, who were stripped of their past but their relocation in the newly found haven (British Darjeeling) which with the passing of time and its mechanical upward gradation have begun to orient their past, territorializing their existence in the newly found identity as 'janajatis'. But the question of immense importance is who constitutes the group? How such an identity is created? What is the primary basis on which it's created? Who identifies its relevance for the inclusion? What sort of impact has it imprinted on the society?

The democratic nature of a nation very well catalyzes the possibilities for the creation of ethnic movements and ethnic parties as democracy endorses the idea of equality (Hangen, 2001) and equality is what the reservation has been all about. Though the primary target of the group has been its inclusion in the Scheduled list, the politicization of such an identity starts by asserting its ethnic identity as 'nationalities' of a nation subject to unique cultural heterogeneity, distinctiveness and equal in the eyes of the state. Hence, asserting ethnic identity does not only mean "origin" referring "to an individual's ancestral heritage" (Baumann, 2004:12) where cultural socialization plays an important role by disseminating the ancestral values. On the other hand it is also a "subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition, either as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups" (Brass, 1991: 19).

The following table shows the list of the interviewed janajati groups demanding reservation for Schedule Tribe category.

Table.5.3.1

Name of the janajati groups	Name of the organisations	Scheduled category along with the year of recognition at state or central level
Sunuwar/Mukhia	Sunuwar (Mukhia) Samity	OBC (State) 2002
Yogi/Jogi	Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh All India Kirat Yakha	OBC (Central)2005
Newar	Akhil Bharatiya Newar Sangathan	OBC (State) 1995
Rai/ Khambu	Kirati Khambu (Rai) Sanskritik Sansthan Kendriya Kalyan	OBC (Central) 2011
Dewan/Yakha	All India Kirat Yakha (Dewan) Chumma Darjeeling	OBC (State) 2011
Khas/Sanyasi	Khas Bharatiya Hitkari Sammelan	_____

Source: Field work, 2015: April to June.

The other janajati groups are Gurung, Mangar, Thami and Bhujel. The exclusion from the table has been done as they were not interviewed.

The following table shows the janajati groups who have been already entitled to the Schedule Tribe category.

Table 5.3.2

Name of the janajati groups	Scheduled Tribe category along with the year of recognition
Lepcha	1950
Bhutia	1950
Dukpa	1950
Sherpa	1950
Yolmo	1950
Tamang	2003
Limbu	2003

Source: Field work, April to June.

The above mentioned table 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 indicates the names of the two broad groups of janajatis who are widely spread throughout the three hills of Darjeeling. The first group in Table 5.3.1 hlight groups also belonging to the backward class of OBC's but such a category having entitled to lesser socio-economic privileges and desiring to have much more than what they are entitled to are requesting for their inclusion as tribes. The other reason of dissatisfaction with the inclusion in such a category is with its internal categorization as 'creamy' and 'non- creamy' layers. Enlistment in the former category cannot avail to any of the socio-economic and educational facilities and subsidies which by belonging to the latter can do so. Additionally, the groups included in the OBC category is overloaded then as seen in the other categories nation wise. Such a categorisation and overpopulation is absent in case of Scheduled Tribe categories as well as in the Scheduled Caste. The identification for the 'non-creamy' layer is done on the basis of verifying the income certificate of the applicants (applied also in the other two classes). The other documents such as school examination certificates, residential proof, birth certificate, are also required for all the three backward classes.

The ethnic groups as stated above in both the tables as well as the one's not included in the tables function within the direction and the guides outlined by their respective ethnic organisation headed by the President, Secretary, Joint-Secretary and the Treasure who form a

major part of the Central Board Committee. They are the major organ of the ethnic groups. Such organizations have been functional from post-Independence period recognised under the West Bengal Societies Act, 1961. They are just not the sole preserver of the respective cultures but play a major role for organising the dispersed ethnic groups to be recognised under the relevant organisation depending upon their ethnic identity. Membership fee is also applicable. The survival and the creation of ethnic groups rests not merely by setting up such ethnic organisations but by creating collective identity based on differentiation from the 'others' leading to an objective distinction and shared consciousness which requires the need for being politicised (Brass, 1975, 1991).

'Tribe' as a human categorization was mainly introduced by the British raj upon the Indian Subjects which was already in vogue in Europe and non-European communities of Africa, Asia, Australia and America to denote the less civilised social groups (Rath, 2012:2). The application of the very term was put to practice after the test census of 1872 and the regular decennial census of 1881 which brought a division of the Indian population based on caste and tribe (ibid). The first compound appearance of tribe as a group and section appeared under Article 342 who was to be scheduled for the purpose of the Constitution.

The races for the enlistment of the various ethnic groups have begun mainly to gain the benefits provided by the government but the crucial point of discussion comes to the forefront when questions concerning their selections in the category are raised. The official indicators provided by the government for the identification and classification of the communities under Scheduled Tribe are- primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shy of external contact and backwardness³⁶. Setting the criteria whose fulfilment is a must the diverse communities of Darjeeling who had forgotten to cherish, began to visit their past, the so called primitive cultures.

Revisiting the past history has made such groups more conscious of their identity less as the valiant 'Gorkhas' and more of their distinct identity as Rai, Limbu, Khas, Mangar to name a few. Such conscious identity has much to do with asserting their cultural distinctiveness or rather say declaring to be primitive. But how can one consider a culture to be primitive? Or what is to be primitive? As an answer, the variables upon which it is decided

³⁶ Sharma, Nidhi. 2015. Government to streamline procedure, change criteria for classification of communities as Scheduled Tribes', *The Times of India*, 14th September.

are- food (eating raw, half-cooked, fermented or the unusual parts of the slaughtered animal or the animal itself), dress (use of feathers, animal skin, bones), language (having own scripts), dance, rituals (use of faith healers, animism) have become a powerful symbol denoting their primitiveness. Such 'primitiveness' is staged when the members of the expert group such as anthropologists from Calcutta come and verify them. Ethnographical reports are made on them which is forwarded to the state government who sends a proposal to the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry which is forwarded to the Registrar General and if agreed upon finally to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. Unfortunately, the demands have not yet been granted to the aspiring groups though the required procedures have been made. The verification process has been an ongoing cycle though on their unfruitfulness reasons are what the concerned governmental bodies are failing to produce (field work, 2015: April to June).

The role for the propagation of such cultures and to be more precise, the familiarization and its embodiment has started to be done by organising cultural programmes, forums, seminars, internal conferences and even encouraging its learned ethnic members to conduct studies on it. The role of print Medias have gained much importance for its propagation. Selling of books, CD's, based on the concerned ethnic languages and its history, as well as calendars highlighting special day observance, performing cultural dances as well as selling their food thought traditional to them were seen during the second Kiranti Rai International Conference, held on 21st and 22nd of February. The presence of the participants from various parts of India as well as from Nepal, United Kingdom, Hong Kong and America were also seen. Visualising than defining primitive culture becomes perhaps easier. The primitive projection as stated above emphasises not merely on its distinctiveness or rather highlighting its 'weirdness' which is considered to be inherited makes us to quote Franz Boas "individuals as living in his culture, and the culture as lived by the individuals" (Benedict, 1959: xv).

The other criteria of selections such as geographical isolations are hard to comply with as the hills are well connected with transportation facilities such as with the construction of paved roads and automobile facilities. The issue of migration is also rampant on the grounds of higher education, work, and marriage, to name a few. The inflow of tourists' is also witnessed who comprise of national and international backgrounds. Hence, these very factors also refute the other criteria 'shy of external contact' as if all individuals, apart from

the tribes do not feel shy. It is more psychologically driven than cultural specific of the tribe communities in modern society.

5.4 Consequences of Janajati

The rise of janajatis and the importance that the culture has started to have hold in the hills has a double effect. On a positive note janajati as a group have successfully emerged voicing the grievances of the major ten ethnic groups under one concept of identity and coordinated by the '*Bharatiya Gorkha Janajati Manyata Samiti*'³⁷ an organisation representative of the ten major janajati groups about from their respective ethnic associations. But the unfortunate sides of it are more to be calculated than the fortunate ones. In search for its cultural distinctiveness, revival as well as contestation over certain cultural practices has come to the forefront creating ideological discrepancy for instance, as seen in case of the Rai ethnic groups over the continuation of observing one of the most essential festival 'desai' which came under the limelight in 2012.

Observance of the festival meant to signify that they were Hindus and satisfying the criteria of primitive trait was out of bounds (as the feature specified was to be animist). Hindu if not mistaken has also been one of the oldest religions of the world. Additionally, as seen in North Eastern communities such as Meitris, Bodos who profess Hinduism are also included in the Scheduled list of tribes. Surujit Sinha's study on the Bhumij community of West Bengal also indicated that a certain section of the community was practicing Hinduism since 1940's. Due to this debatable criteria, the indicators have been proposed to be altered which includes- autonomous religious practices, though Hindu way of life is not a bar, marital relationship with other tribes but not the non-tribal, distinctive culture, historical and geographical isolation, socio-economic and educational backwardness and distinctive language³⁸.

In the process of reviving their old cultures retaining of their former historical ethnic names has also become crucial as seen in case of the Rais, Dewans, Limbus (as shown in table 5.3.1 and 5.3.2). Retaining of such names denote their former glorious suggesting

³⁷ The organisation was originally founded by Late. D.N. Pradhan under the title 'Gorkha Janajati Kalyan Samiti' founded in the year 2010. The organisation and its executive members were reshuffled due its disorientation after the untimely death of its founding member.

³⁸ Mohanty, Basant Kumar. 2014. 'Hindu Gods cast spell on ST Tag report- Panel recommends fresh criteria for inclusion in list, drops condition of animist traditions'. *The Telegraph*. June 9th.

distinctive culture and history³⁹. land has been divided into two groups- the tribal (the dominant elites) and the non- tribal (the mass subjects⁴⁰) but the actual problem of animosity began due to the creation and the granting of the Development Boards (under the minister ship of Mamata Banerjee from the Trinamool Congress Party) to the Lepchas in 2013 followed by Tamangs (2014), Bhutias and the Sherpas in the year 2015. The point of peculiarity here and which has attracted much of the people's attention is the Tribal categories being invariably entitled to such Boards. Much attention has been given to it with the fact that enormous sum of money is attached to it. Hence, the feeling of jealousy is inevitable. The other point of relevance which has polarised the society is on the basis of the political preferences. The receivers of the Boards, not necessarily the entire recognised tribal section of the janajati group, are considered to be recognised under the political banner of the Bengal party-Trinamool Congress. The boards (Lepcha and Tamang) have been situated in Kalimpong and those of Sherpas and Bhutias in Darjeeling. As a result of the political preference, the internal bifurcation of the communities has been seen as in case of the Lepchas and Bhutias-supporters of Trinamool and Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (refer figure 5.4.1 and 5.4.2).

³⁹ Refer. Subba.T.B. 2001. *Politics of Culture: A Study on Three Kirata Communities in the Eastern Himalayas*. Chennai: Orient Longman. for a detailed study on how the conversion from the older to the present ethnic names took place.

⁴⁰The non-tribals are the mass subjects due to the fact that having been able to form a group under the concept of janajatis indicating their numerical strength and categorised as 'other' in the census figure of 2001 but are devoid of the power which is here seen with the opportunity of being enlisted as tribe and holding of development boards. Dominant elites are those who have the power but its numerical strength is less as seen in the census figure 2011 categorised under ST. Basing on the definition provided by Hasmath, Reza. 2011. 'The Complexities of Ethnic Diversity', in Reza Hasmath, (eds), *The Managing Ethnic Diversity: Meanings and Practices from an International Perspective*, pg. 1-10. U.K: Ashgate Publishing Limited, classification has been made. Refer Figure: 5.4.3

The following figure shows the internal polarization of the ethnic communities-Lepcha and Tamang

Figure 5.4.1

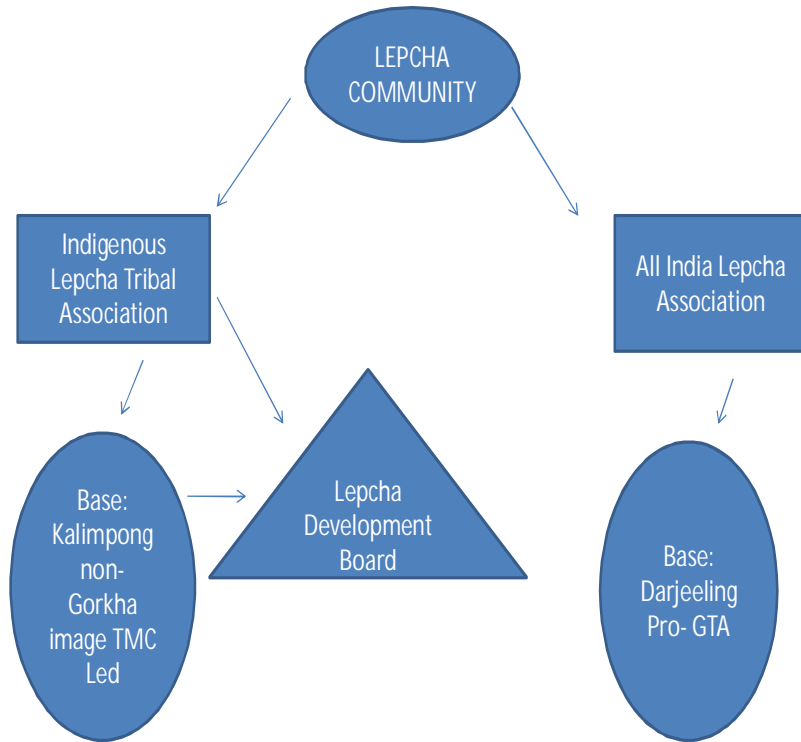
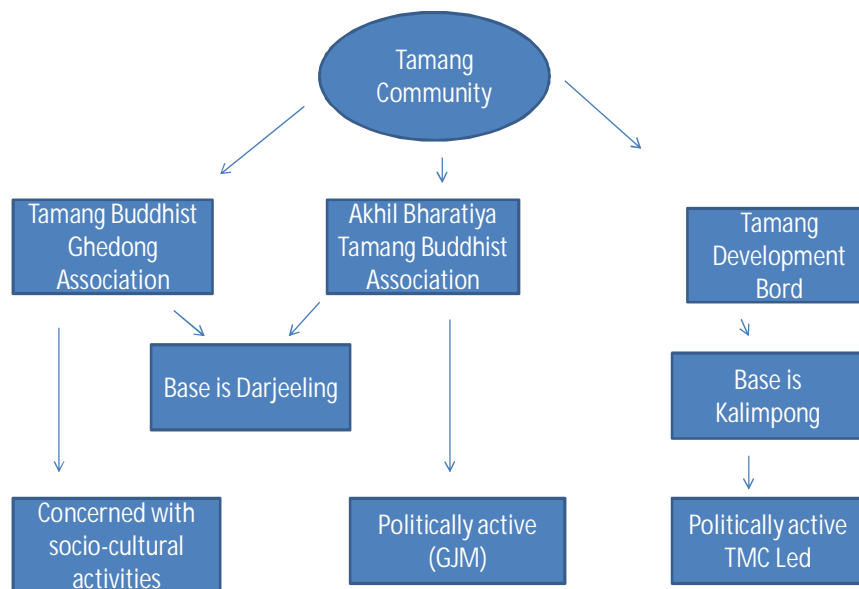


Figure 5.4.2



Even though society's political polarization has been done due to its respective elite's differing ideologies, the general masses of the respective ethnic groups are not kept away from availing the facilities ensured by the Boards, the freedom of choice depends much upon them.

Speaking generally, the feeling of subjugated (not being entitled as a tribe) and perceiving the tribal group to be the dominant elite has heightened the ethnic sensitivity and enrolment into the respective ethnic groups becoming mandatory. While applying for the certificate as a backward class requires a letter from such ethnic organisations apart from other discussed documents above, specifying their authentic membership and imprinting on it the identity of that ethnic group. Hence, framing of the collective identity and its mobilisation is ensured by the role played by such organisations taking the centre stage in the hills.

The following table shows the population figure (reserved categories) of the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, census 2001

Table. 5.4.3

Name of the Division	Scheduled Caste population	Scheduled Tribe population	Others	Total
Darjeeling	20478	33693	333936	388107
Kalimpong	14793	38014	172413	225220
Kurseong	13818	13340	150106	177264
Total	49,089	85,047	6,56,455	7,90,591

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Government of West Bengal, 2008:13

5.5. State and the Creation of Hill Ethnic Identities

The relation of the state in labelling and creating ethnic identities go a long way when one is concerned about the making of the ethnic hill identities. For instance, Yakthumbas who are now known as Subbas, Yakha as Dewan and Khambu as Rai has been the end result of the labelling system by the Shah rulers who conferred on them such labels which meant chiefs holding certain offices (Subba, 2001:33-34). On the other hand, Tamangs came to be known as a singular ethnic group with its alteration from 'Bhote' or 'Murmi' due to their economic importance availed by the state especially in the field of forced labour (Holmberg, 1989:30 cited in Hangen, 2000:27). The same ethnic identities are hence not fixed for the entire life and as a variable subject to constant change with changing circumstances especially with political conveniences.

It is both the generator and provider of resources as seen in case of Darjeeling, it generated the possibility for Development Boards aimed at safeguarding the cultural practices of the tribal groups such as Lepchas, Bhutias, Sherpas and Tamangs with heavy funds but also initiated the polarization of the hill society into two competing groups- one who are the

holders of the Boards as well as enlisted in the tribal list (the dominant elite) and the other which represents being devoid of it (mass majority). The procedure for the identification, selection, categorization and approval for being enlisted in scheduled tribe list undertaken by the government has never been able to escape from the critical gaze of the mass subjects. The accuracy, objectivity and impartiality fairly being questioned, for instance, highlighting the case of Limboos. They are one of the recognised tribes of the hills and a major ethnic group who form the Kirat community, the others being Rai and Dewan. The latter two have been devoid of such entitlements though having shared historical and cultural proximities with the former. One cannot help to avoid but notice the discrepancy that has erupted between such a group driven by the inclusive and the exclusive policy of tribal identity. In such a situation it becomes important to understand that state cannot be objectively neutral but to recall Brass (1991: 255) is a “relatively autonomous entity that tends, however, both to favour some classes and ethnic groups at particular points in time and also to develop relationships with elites within selected communities to serve its own interest”. Apart from creating policies such as provisions for reservations and its right to entitlements with the sole target for creating equality for the minority groups actually triggered the button for the creation of new identities. The creation of the janajatis in the hills serves to illustrate the point of the argument.

The state apart from playing the role of the generator and the provider it also has the legitimate power to identify, to name, to categorise and to state who is who (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:15). State, modern or old, has become an important identifier for the classification of its subject's physical as well as symbolic forces. The importance of the state increases in playing the role of an important identifier as it has the resource, material in authenticating certain identity. Such a role of the state in case of Darjeeling can be seen in the case of issuing Gorkha certificate.

The issuing of Gorkha Certificate ⁴¹(refer annexure I) by the government of Bengal has created much of the heated argument and further polarization of the already polarised

⁴¹ The report on the Gorkha list was prepared under the recommendation of Dr. K.S. Singh, IAS (Rtd) and the ex-Director General of Anthropological Survey of India. The certificate is issued under the GTA by the due permission granted by the state and the central government. The certificate authenticates not only one's belonging into the Gorkha community but also provides relaxation in height and weight during recruitments into armed forces, para military and police in the lower grades. Failing to submit the required certificate for such government vacated jobs can be liable for being disqualified. (Refer annexure I for the sample of the form

society. The certificate grabs much of the limelight after the politicization of the demand for scheduled tribe and the coming of the development Boards. Issuing and gaining entitlement over it legitimised one's belonging to the Gorkha community and its disentanglement meant the opposite. Much perplexity and critical question rises, first, regarding the existence of the diverse communities as part of the Gorkha jati. Second, it questions about the inclusive policy of the Gorkha identity. Third, the relevance of 'Gorkha jati' as a legitimate identity of the hill society as a whole.

The certificate has clearly distinguished groups belonging to Gorkha jati and those who do not. Prominent members from the janajati groups namely- Jogi and Sanyasi are excluded on which dissatisfaction has been pouring in from such groups. Expressing discontentment to the recognition of the Development Boards to the tribal categories and the exclusive nature of the Gorkha Certificate various official letters were sent to the Government of Bengal especially by the President of the Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh⁴² questioning the authenticity of the judicial nature of the government machineries and even at times going beyond by considering such machineries as "unconstitutional and blatant and unethical practice to implement such motivated scheme" and "a sinister design and hidden agenda to imbue discontent, disharmony and conflict among the Nepali/Gorkha People" (refer annexureV).

The point which attracts most of the interest here (Gorkha Certificate) is the resentment shown not with the exclusion of the latter four groups forming the crux of the debate but with the exclusion of Jogis and Sanyasi communities who are believed to have a close historical linkage with Nepal (refer annexure II, and III).

5.6 Points for Discussion

Creating communities out of dominant ethnic identity involves the careful selection of the cultural symbols out of the many other cultural attributes. The need for being recognised

required for applying the certificate. It as well as indicates the names of the group liable for. Annexure III mentions a case where an applicant for the job of a constable under West Bengal Government was barred from availing such an opportunity due to the absence of the certificate). The issue of the exclusion of Sikkim community is not dealt in this present work as it constitutes a separate state.

⁴² It is but with the permission of the respondent that the interview was taken and documents were provided. The quoting of the statements has been taken from the documents provided by the respondents and with his sole permission

as a 'tribe' by adhering to the indicators (both, the new and the old) has made the communities contest for its better projection, the projection of its backwardness as sign of privilege rather than its opposite. But what is to be noted here is that though the official indicators for being included under the scheduled Tribe list have been specified it was never defined, devoid of academic definitions. Culture has never had an independent existence or is neither an isolated symbol in constant equilibrium of harmony with other culture but is rather subject to constant conflict within and outside its domain for the better appropriation of the available resources (Subba, 2001:4). No definition of exactitude can be found when defining the primitive attributes of culture, but becomes primitive when viewed by the outsider who is but alien to such practices. Defining oneself to be primitive or being primitive is rather difficult as modernity and westernization is unavoidable to be dodged

The notion 'primitiveness and distinctiveness' while talking about culture and society is much overrated and subjective. This is not to say that cultural ethnic identity cannot be objective based on descent and blood but are also subjective to alteration. Brass (1991: 70-71) talks about the alteration of the primordial aspects of identity such as kinship, language, religion, origin an impact made by the tools of modernity, the bilingual nature of society, migration to name a few. Acknowledging, such factors brings to light as well as challenges the government set indicators for indentifying tribes. Hence, the representation of the ethnic identity as primordial by the janajatis (recognised and recognised) is a matter of subjective orientation as the subjective categories are 'factors chosen by the group out of other countless categories of factors used as a common resource of achieving their goals' (Stavenhagen, 1986 cited in Chatterji, 2007:3).

The bifurcation of the society into two groups- tribal and non-tribal followed by the official recognition of Gorkhas and the non-Gorkhas has not only created the polarization of the society into differential identities but has also called into play the question of indigenality and aboriginality. Though the issue concerning the aboriginality is not something new to the land but varies in context⁴³. In the present context, the diverse ethnic communities are contesting for authenticating their identity as the aborigines of Darjeeling hence serving the second objective for using the word janajati, a manifest interest. The word has been used even in different parts of India suggesting variations in the choice of words but

⁴³ Refer to the section on the politicization of Gorkha/Nepali identity.

retaining the real essence indicating their aboriginality. For instance, in Oriya the term is Adivasi (early inhabitants), in Hindi Adimjati (primordial ties) (Rath, 2012:5).

Basing on the material derived from the field work, the term janajati has been associated with concept such as 'son of the soil', aborigines, indigenous people, backward and native who are very similar with the English interpretation of tribe (refer, Subba, 2012:69). If this is what being a janajati means then it is likely to be challenging the hegemonic understanding of the history of aborigines of Darjeeling, the Lepchas, who were considered to inhabit the land first and was found to be with a population of '100 souls' (refer O'Malley:1999:22) and stereotyping the Gorkha community as migrants. Furnishing counter narratives, references suggesting so have been done, to name a few- Katwal (2014: 94) posits some interesting counter-arguments in his article titled "A History of the Darjeeling Region: Revisited through the Lens of the Gorkhaland Movement" stating that the founders of Darjeeling, Campbell and Hooker could not have surveyed the entire area of rivers and sharp ridges and the figure of '100' souls then referred only to the area covered by the observatory Hill and not the entire district. Secondly, the figures of the hill tribes such as Lepchas, Limboos, Mangars and others could be assessed due to their nomadic life and living in higher altitudes of Darjeeling and Western Sikkim (cited in Giri, 2014). Subba (1992: 39) refers to the historical reference provided by Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshi Drolma entitled 'The history of Sikkim' (1908) where the presence of Mangar were described. The legitimacy of the Lepchas as the sole aborigines of the hills has been unsuccessful in escaping the critical gaze of some of the ethnic groups who suggest that the alleged group were actually not the original settlers of the area if relied on anthropological studies but were migrants of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram (refer annexure IV). Subba further states "that political Darjeeling emerged out of Sikkim which was partly ruled by Bhutan and partly by Nepal...The people coming from such conquering countries cannot be termed as "immigrants" (1992:38).

The relevance of the issue concerning the fragmentation of the society comes not merely with the demand for Scheduled Tribe recognition or with the introduction of the Development Boards to the few selected ethnic groups but also with the issuing of the Gorkha certificates which suggests, to borrow from Foucault, the introduction of the mode of 'governmentality'. The latter puts to define who the Gorkhas are and who are not in the minds of the common subjects by well supplementing untimely answers to such questions. Due to the exclusion of the two primary groups considered to be part of the broader Gorkha

community but even excluding groups such as the Lepchas, Bhutias, Dukpas, and Yolmos who during the period beginning from 1907 had major role to play in the making of the hill society with S.W.Laden as its primary figure and the mass approval of the popular slogan, “*Nepali, Bhutia, Lapche, hami sabai Gorkhali*” has ultimately and prematurely tried to define the notion of ‘Gorka’ and ‘Gorkha jati’. In doing so, it has created internal bafflement and ‘othering’ of communities especially the Lepchas, Bhutias, Dukpas and Yolmos on the pretext of having shared historical linkage with Tibet than with Nepal. ‘Gorkha’ by the official body (Anthropological Survey of India) has described as “a blanket term which includes communities of Nepal or who originally came to India from Nepal” (refer annexure II and III).

True, that migration did take place and that is an umbrella term but what is to be understood here is of the political history of the area. To quote again, Subba(1992:38) writes “that political Darjeeling emerged out of Sikkim which was partly ruled by Bhutan and partly by Nepal....The people coming from such conquering countries cannot be termed as ‘immigrants’. The exclusion of Lepchas on the note of not having shared historical linkage with Nepal also needs to be verified. Vansittart (1992:56) states “amongst the aborigines of Nepal must be counted the Mangars, Gurungs, Newars, Sunuwars, Khambus, Yakhas, Yakhthumbas, Murmis and the Lepchas. All of these are undoubtedly descended from Mongolian or Tibetan stock”. Such a quoted statement talks not only of the Lepchas having shared linkage with Nepal but challenges the idea of them being the sole autochthones of Darjeeling. Additionally, Kumar Pradhan a renowned Nepali historian also states in his book ‘Gorkha’s Conquest’, (2009) that Rai, Mangar and Limbu were present in the areas of present Sikkim and Darjeeling in the twelfth century. It holds much of the validity by the fact that even till now most of the western Sikkim has Limboo dominated settlements namely Sombare, Hebermec and in the north of the state Mangsila. The presence of the Limboos has also been stated by O’Malley (1999:39) as he writes “Beyond a few Lepchas and Limbus with their little clearing in the forests, an occasional raid from Nepal, or a stray visitor from the table lands of Tibet, the Darjeeling Hills were practically uninhabited”. The presence of Mangars was also seen as stated by Subba (1992:39) while referring to the ‘History of Sikkim’ compiled by Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshe Drolma.

Coming back to the case of the exclusion of the Jogis and Sanyasis, relevant answers have not been furnished by the concerned official bodies on whose basis the list of Gorkhas were made even though having shared history-cultural, economic, social and political with

the land of Nepal. The case of the ethnic community 'Yogi (Jogi)' becomes much debatable as they have been the followers of '*Guru Gorakhnath*' on whose installation of idol in Gorkha the term owes its nomenclature from⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ Research studies on this ethnic community seem to be very limited and stand as a minority community in Darjeeling with an estimated population of less than 2000 in whole of West Bengal (refer annexure: II)

Chapter VI

6.1 Conclusion

Keeping track of Gorkhaland movement has never been an easy way but it is nevertheless an accepted fact that the issue has been the end result of the colonial and neo-colonial administrations. The historical struggle of the Gorkhas projects the community suffering from socio-economic and political under representation which is still being debated. The primary concern encompassing Darjeeling hills on account of authenticating its identity as part and parcel of the Indian society, the bonafide citizens of India has remained to be the ultimate rationale for movements in the past and with a possibility of its continuation in the future. But the work of concern here is to highlight the altering discourse on it.

The erosion of the old identities have embarked on a journey of dislocating the compound identity of the hills giving rise much to identity problems. Identities are in a constant flux where its core component culture becomes a debatable issue and an easy target for manipulation. The present notion of 'identity crisis' in the hills arises when the society represented as the community of 'Gorkha' for more than a hundred years is torn between its subjective (primordial loyalties) and objective (instrumental/constructive) realisations. Tradition has been set in the history of the hill communities idolising the '*bir gatha*' of the 'Gorkha jati' creating a utopia image which was politicised time and again by the altering political elites, a mere catchword for covering their political incapability. Time has been reached where the fragmentation of the Gorkha jati has started to gain its momentum though this is not to say that such discrepancy is a modern phenomenon. For instance, the reformulation of the Hill Men's Association in 1934 into 'Hill People's Social Union' served to unite the three major ethnic communities namely Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha popularised as '*NeBuLa*'. The existence of such discrepancy can be said to have existed even then which was brought to light when the President of the newly found Union, S.W. Ladenla delivered in his speech by saying "*as speakers after speakers have addressed today, the great and salient fact of the brotherly feeling that exists among the Nepalese, the Bhutias and the Lepchas in the rural areas must further be augmented and must also be brought into play in our urban areas, where petty and inconsequential differences unfortunately exist among these three people*" (*Nebula*, 1934:6).

Acknowledging the diversity of the society, externally, has never been a challenge owing much of its credit by the colonisation of Darjeeling; it is but the epitome of a melting pot. Given the history of Gorkha, its authenticity has been much diluted with passing of time. For instance, defining historically, it included Magar, Thakur, Khas and Gurung which with the introduction of the martial race also included other groups such as Limbus, Rai, Lama and Sunuwar. After setting of the political boundaries of Darjeeling by the colonists it became rather more fluid encompassing the Bhutias, Lepchas and the other sub-groups of Nepali origins. The umbrella term encompassing such diversity under a singular identity has been well served by the application of the term Gorkha. Asserting an inclusive and flexible identity has also been provided by the formulation of Nepali jati beginning from the early twentieth century. The former asserts the commonality of a community based on shared historical experiences with the formation of Darjeeling post 1835 and the latter on the commonality of language irrespective of the variety of dialects its diverse ethnic groups spoke. The nebulous identities were made concrete.

The popularity of the usage Gorkha subdues that of 'Nepali' as it has the most qualitative core of arousing the deepest sense of identity, driven more by emotions and sentiments being put to practice time and again with altering political and economic needs. The other reason for its prioritisation is also due to the fact that the identity of the hill people was for the first time being identified as 'Gorkhali, 'Gorkhe' or 'Gorkha', denotation of an archaic belonging. Nepali on the other hand was devised much later. Irrespective of the differing notion of foundations categorising the hill identities based on Gorkha or Nepali would be erroneous and problematic. Gorkha serves to be their community with Nepali as their primary language. Nevertheless, it undoubtedly served as a blanket term; the identities based on their internal diversities based on language and race became non-functional. The insecurities that the community as a whole for many decades had been facing led them to mould a shield representing the homogeneous identity as Gorkha/Nepali. Its qualitative core bonded its threatened diverse society providing them the deepest, rational identity. The propagation of Gorkha/Nepali nationalism can be interpreted to be "an imagined community" to borrow from Anderson's concept of nation "the members of even the smallest nation, will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1991:6).

When inequality pervades in a society the lines of differences become more apparent than similarity, even felt more if it takes place within a historically structured composite

society. Asserting an identity as 'janajati' within the hill society has become a biggest challenge when speaking of the existence of Gorkha/Nepali jati. The interference of the state has much to do when speaking of constructing as well as disorienting the old identities of the concerned society. If diverging elements of culture, language, religion, race and history were the driving force for the demarcation of the hills with the plains then these very diverging elements have also brought about cleavages within the hills and much greater with the introduction of the reservation policies, Development Boards and the Gorkha certificate. It is on these parameters and the issue of 'janajati' that the work has argued that the identities are created with changing circumstances often leaving little space for the differences to exist between a given and a constructed identity.

With the introduction of the Gorkha Certificate, the notion of Gorkha has been redefined with its exclusive policies perceived by many as a repressive device for subduing the society from the primary motive of dislodging the Gorkha community as a qualitative core which has been vocalising the issue of the society for ages. Therefore, it rather becomes clear that no shared historical experiences or cultural practices aid in the construction of identities which are perceived to be ascribed but are rather defined by the invariable involvement of human agencies in constructing so with the interest of its own.

The present characterization of the hill society not only faces the bafflement over the issue of who is a Gorkha and who is not, who are the autochthones and who are not, but have fallen victim to the state's polarization policies as seen in case of the race for janajati entitlement coupled by the entitlement for Development Boards. The contesting identities by prioritising the need for such benefits has paved the way for the fragmentation of the society who had been so long living together irrespective of their internal divergences. Such state provisions have only heightened their internal differences rather than solving their socio-economic problems for which originally such mechanisms had been made functional. Amidst such bafflement and internal cohesion, the cultural diversity which the society was proud of is likely to be on the verge of breaking down. The diversity of the hills and its politicization has unfortunately made its people more conscious of their personal ethnic markers and checkpoints many a times forcing the existence of Gorkha/Nepali jati in oblivion. The

predicament of the contesting identity privileges has once again signalled for the dire need to invoke the idea of “*Nepali, Bhutia, Lapche hami sabai Gorkha*”⁴⁵.

Figure. 6.1.1



Source: Field Work, 2015: April to June.

The picture above invokes the notion of ‘*NeBuLa*’ (the three men standing above) and the map of Darjeeling depicts the unification of the diverse society. The writings on the poster make reference to the diverse ethnic groups of Darjeeling as the variety of flowers blooming in the garden indicative of the acceptance of its heterogeneous components. It makes the hill society aware of its internal fractures which are to be avoided at any possible means⁴⁶.

⁴⁵Numerous advertisements were held indicating the need for the society to bind, where the popular concept of “Nebula” was called upon (Field work, April to June. Refer the picture in figure 6.1.1)

⁴⁶ The poster was done by the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, the prominent regional political party of Darjeeling Hills headed by Mr. Bimal Gurung.

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ANNEXURE - I

To

The Sub-Divisional Officer
Sadar, Darjeeling

Sub: Application for issuance of Gorkha Certificate

Sir,

I would like to request you to kindly issue a **Gorkha Certificate**. My details are as follows.

1. Certificate Required for the purpose of _____
2. Name of the applicant : _____
3. Father's Name : _____
4. Permanent address. in _____

5. Religion : _____
6. I belong to the Caste/Sub-Caste (Please tick relevant)"

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Chettri | <input type="checkbox"/> | b) Rai | <input type="checkbox"/> | c) Tamang | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Thami | <input type="checkbox"/> | e) Bhujel | <input type="checkbox"/> | f) Nepali Brahman | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Thakur | <input type="checkbox"/> | h) Sherpa | <input type="checkbox"/> | i) Damai | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Gurung | <input type="checkbox"/> | k) Yakha | <input type="checkbox"/> | l) Kami | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m) Magar/Manger | <input type="checkbox"/> | n) Newar/Pradhan | <input type="checkbox"/> | o) Sarki | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| p) Sunwar | <input type="checkbox"/> | q) Limbu | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

I declare that all information given above is true to the best of my knowledge and if proven otherwise my application / certificate may be rejected / cancelled at any time and action taken against me.

Date / / 201__

Full signature of the Applicant

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Office of the Block Development Officer
Jorebunglow Sukhiapokhri Development Block

Memo No _____

Date / / 201__

Forwarded to the Sub-Divisional Officer, Sadar, Darjeeling with recommendation for issuance of **Gorkha Certificate**.

Block Development Officer
Jorebunglow Sukhiapokhri Development Block
Darjeeling

ANNEXURE - II

गोर्खा योगी संघ !



गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ दार्जीलिङ GORKHA YOGI (JOGI) KALYAN SANGH

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

c/o Mr. K.B. Yogi, 12, D.B. Giri Road, Bara Kak Jhora,
Darjeeling - 734101 Mobile : 94348 76720
Regn. No : S / 1L / 47735 of 2007-2008

Date : 20.2.2013

To

The Secretary
Home (Political) Department
Govt. of West Bengal,
Writers' Building, Kolkata 700001

Sub. : Actual determination of the Gorkha and the Sikkimese Community

Sir,

We would like to request you to kindly refer to letter No. 13-229/2000/ESH, Dated September 10, 2004 of Head Office of Ministry of Culture, Department of culture, Indian Museum Complex, Kolkata – 16 on the above mentioned subject addressed to the Assistant Secretary, Home (Political) Govt. of West Bengal. It is mentioned in this letter that the criteria to determine whether one community belongs to the Gorkha or Sikkimese are prepared on the basis of the monumental documents prepared by Dr. K. S. Singh, IAS (Retd.), the ex-Director General, Anthropological Survey of India. On this basis the following castes/communities only are categorized as the Gorkhas among the people of Nepalese origin : 1. Chettri 2. Rai 3. Tamang 4. Thami, 5. Bhujel, 6. Nepal, 7. Damai, 8. Gurung, 9. Yakha, 10. Kami, 11. Magar/Mangar, 12. Newar/Pradhan, 13. Sarki, 14. Sunwar, 15. Thakuri, 16. Sherpa and 17. Limbu.

On the outset it must be pointed out that this list of so called Gorkha Castes / Community is incomplete . As per the national census report, 2001 of the Govt. of Nepal, there are 102 (One hundred and two) identified communities and other unidentified are clubbed under the head "others". Two distinct communities not included

in this list of Gorkha, among others are Yogi/Jogi and Sannesi (Das Nami). The former are the descendents of the followers of Gorkhnanath and the later are the members of community who were baptasized by the Sankaracharyas of Joshimath or Dwarkamath or Singerimath or Gobardhanmath. Both of them are bonafide Gorkha/Nepalese living at present in Nepal, Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh and other states.

It is a well known fact that the contribution of foreigners, especially the British in the anthropological studies regarding the people of India and Nepal are of great importance and significance. But one cannot claim that all their studies and findings are Sacrosanct and fool proof. Take for example the case of the Sherpa Community in the list of Gorkhas. While the people like Drukpa, Yolmo (Kagatey) are omitted from the list on the ground that they belong to the greater Bhote (Tibetan) Civilization while the others like Sherpa, Tamang who claimed their original home in different parts of the present day Tibet are included in this list quoting the administrative records and documents of the British era. This argument is biased and prejudicious and is against the natural justice.

2. Now the pertinent question is – who are the Gorkhas ? The Anthropological Survey of Indian in their comment in the letter referred to above had admitted that the term Gorkha or Gurkha is a blanket term which includes the communities of Nepal or who originally came to India from Nepal. Historically speaking, the citizens or people of Gurkha Kingdom located in the North West of Kathmandu in Nepal are called the Gorkha. There is a general consensus among the scholars and historians that the word Gorkha is derived from the holy and famous temple of Gorkhanath situated in that Kingdom. In the second half of the 18th Century, Prithivinarayan Shah was the ruler / king of Gorkha State and he is credited for the formation of unified nation state of the present day Nepal by conquering annexing various petty Kingdoms of Kathmandu Valley, Limbuwan, Khambuwan and other of eastern region. As a matter of fact his kingdom extended from Kangra Valley of Himachal and Uttaranchal in the west to part present day Darjeeling and Sikkim till British Nepal war of 1815 and the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli in 1815-16. IN this background, truly speaking, some communities included in the list of the Gorkhas prepared on the study by Dr. K.S. Singh, Ex.-Directory of the Anthropological Survey of India, like Newar/Pradhan of Kathmandu Valley, Limbu, Rai and Khambu of Limbuwan & Khambuwan and even the Sherpa of Solokhombu region under Sagarmatha range and some other do not actually belong to Gorkha Community. It was the Britishers who while recruiting the soldiers for their army from the martial race like Limbu, Rai, Gurung, Mangar etc

coined the word Gorkha for their convenience and formed many Gorkha Regiments in Indian Army. It is justified to include all the communities of the Nepalese origin into the general category of the Gorkhas except the people of the greater Bhote (Tibetan) civilization and the Indian origin people from Bihar, U.P., Bengal, Punjab, Musalmans and others of the plain areas.

3. There appears to be some misconception regarding the Yogi/Jogi of Nepalese origin among the general public as well as some scholars, researchers and anthropologists also. In the general term, Yogi is a person from any community creed or caste who practices "Yoga" and becomes proficient in the Yoga-Sadhana. Depending on this religion and spiritual faith & path there are Yogi's from Saivites, Vedanti, Vaishnavites, Saktas, Advaitavadi of Sankaracharys tradition and similar such denominations. There are yogis even among Mahayani and Vajrayani Buddhists and the Tantrik practitioners. But we the Yogis/Jogis of Nepalese origin are the followers of Guru Gorakhnath and are completely different from these yogis in terms of religious and spiritual faith, social and cultural traditions. To club us together with other yogi is illogical and untenable.

Gorakhnath is an acknowledged Saint of considerable repute. He is considered by any religious and spiritual leaders as a social, spiritual and religious reformer of 10 – 11th century. He is not a mythological figure but a person of historicity.

Guru Gorakhnath had come to Nepal at the invitation of his Guru, Matsyendrath. He had to face stiff opposition and sometimes violent clashes from the powerful and dominant saivites in the propagation of his faith. In the initial stage his followers were from all sections of the society and due course of time in the intervening period of 8/9th centuries, these followers are converted into a distinct community and caste in Nepal and elsewhere. And this is the present day reality. Their descendents are found in Darjeeling Doars and Terai of West Bengal and some parts of Sikkim, Assam, Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh.

4. The Pheri Culture adopted by Yogi/Jogi of Nepal is attributed to the collection of provisions for the maintenance of supporters/followers in the camps during the religious conflict and clashes between Gorakhnathis and Saivites. This practice and tradition continued and became an integral component in the cultural heritage of Nepal. This tradition was later on utilized by Prithvi Narayan Shah to collect intelligence reports about the military strength and other logistic positions of the enemy in his eastward conquests of Kirat and other kingdoms. The descendants of those Yogi/

Jogi later on settled there and this Pheri Culture is prevalent these days mostly in the eastern region of present day Nepal. So Gorakhnathi Yogi/Jogi has integrated completely in the Nepalese/Gorkha society as a separate and distinct community.

5. As per census report of 1951, the members of Yogi Community numbering 474 had been enumerated as a separate caste like Rai, Gurung, Tamang, Mangar, Bhujel, Sunwar etc. (The District Gazetteers, Darjeeling_ March 1980, page no. 103-04) In the similar manner, Jogi is one of nine communities of Nepalese\Gorkha among Bhujel, Newar, Mangar, Nembang, Sampang, Bungcheng, Thami and Dhimal classified as backward classes in terms of notification no. 1179-TW/EC/M- 6/82(10 dated 1st December, 1995 issued by the Govt. of West Bengal in the Department of Scheduled Castes & Tribes Welfare.

6. We are not against any communities for inclusion of their names ⁱⁿ the list of Gorkhas nor do we plead their exclusion. But in the back ^{grounds} ~~of~~ ^{of} facts mentioned in the foregoing Paras, our community generally known as Jogi, Yogi, Kunwar, Nath etc. of Nepalese origin ^{will} also be listed as Gorkha People.

The letter no. 13 – 22a/2000/Estt. Dated September 10, 2004 of the Anthropological survey of India under Ministry of culture, Govt. Of India has not instructed or specified not to issue Gorkha certificate to the other member of community of Nepalese/Gorkha origin except Lepcha, Drukpa, Kagatey, Bhote etc.

The total population of our community Yogi/Jogi in whole of West Bengal is estimated to be less from 2000 (Two Thousand). Their habitation is mostly in tea gardens and villages of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district. Our community is the most backward in the sphere of education, economy, culture & politics. Some educated youths being unable to pursue higher education due to their financial condition seek employment in the Indian Army, Para-Military Forces and the police in the lower grade posts. For this purpose they need Gorkha Certificates for production to these appointing authorities.

It is, therefore, our humble and earnest request to kindly review this list of Gorkha community of Nepalese origin and to circulate a modified list with inclusion of Yogi/Jogi and some other omitted communities also.

In order to establish our Gorkha identity, our organization has been registered as Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh with Regn.No. S/1L/47735 of 2007-2008 and also to differentiate us from other Indian Yogi/Jogi community.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

(K.B. Yogi)
President
Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh,
Darjeeling

Copy for information and necessary action to :

1. The Director,
Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, Department of Culture,
Indian Museum Complex,
Jawahar Lal Nehru Road, Kolkata – 700016
With a request to kindly review this list of Gorkha.
2. The Principal Secretary,
Govt. of West Bengal,
Backward Classes Welfare Department,
Writers' Building – 700001
3. The Director,
Cultural Research Institute,
P ¼ CIT Scheme \II M
Ambedkar Bhawan, VIP Road, Kakurgaochi
Kolkata – 7000054

4. The District Magistrate,
Darjeeling/Jalpaiguri/Cooch Bihar
5. The Sub-Divisional Officer,
Darjeeling/Kalimpog/Kurseong/Siliguri/Jalpaiguri Sadar/Alipurduar with request
to kindly issue Gorkha Certificate to Yogi/Jogi applicants at your discretion and
full satisfaction by examining their Nepalese origin and ethnicity.
6. The Executive Director, Backward Classes Welfare Department,
Gorkha Territorial Administration, Maidon, Chowrasta, Darjeeling

(K.B. Yogi)
President
Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh,
Darjeeling

ANNEXURE - III

गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ संजीवित



गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ संजीवित
GORKHA YOGI (JOGI) KALYAN SANGH

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

c/o Mr. K.B. Yogi, 12, D.B. Giri Road, Bars Kakt Jhora.

Darjeeling - 734101 Mobile : 94348 76720

Regn. No : S / 1L / 47735 of 2007-2008

To,

Date: 19.09.2013

Miss Mamata Banerjee
Hon'ble Chief Minister
West Bengal
Writers' Buildings
Kolkata - 700001

Sub: issue of Gorkha Certificate to Yogi/Jogi Community of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Districts.

Respected Madam,

With reference to the aboved mentioned subject we, the Yogi/ Jogi of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district are once again compelled to approach you directly after failure to get any positive response from the concerned authorities. As a matter of fact, we had requested you on the earlier occasion also advocating the case of one Miss Puja Jogi of Jalpaiguri district to obtain Gorkha Certificate for recruitment as female constable in West Bengal Police Commissionerate (Copy of letter dated 14th Sept. 2012 in enclosed for ready reference).

We need Gorkha Certificate not for any reservation in employment, admission in educational institutions or any other benefit but just for relaxation in height or weight in recruitment to armed forces or Para-Military forces or Police in the lower grades. There is hardly 5/6 applicants in a year from Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts for Gorkha Certificate.

We, the Yogi/Jogi Community is the most backward people in all sphere of life in Darjeeling hills and Dooars region of the State. Our total population in West Bengal is less than 2000; it is less then the so-called vanishing tribe TOTO of Totopara of Jalpaiguri district. There are no other community among the Nepalese as backward as the Yogi/ Jogi community.



जय गुरु गोरख नाथ !



गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ दाजीलिङ GORKHA YOGI (JOGI) KALYAN SANCH

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

c/o Mr. K.B. Yogi, 12, D.B. Giri Road, Bara Kak Jhora,
Darjeeling - 734101 Mobile : 94348 75720
Regn. No : S / 1L / 47735 of 2007-2008

It appears that there is confusion and ignorance among the scholars, anthropologists and general public about the nomenclature of our caste as Yogi/Jogi. It is one of the castes among the Nepalese/Gorkha. The distinguishing factor is that we are the followers of ^{Gymn} Gorakhanath. The term Gorkha is derived from Gorkha kingdom situated in the West of Kathmandu Valley. The Kingdom itself was called Gorkha because of the fact that a sacred Gorkhanath temple is located there.

Our mother tongue is Nepali/Gorkha language. Our culture, customs, physical feature and tradition are typically Nepali/Gorkha. In the District Census, Report of 1951, our community is enlisted among other Nepalese Gorkha castes. Nine Communities of Nepali/ Gorkha origin, viz. 1. Bhujel, 2. Newar, 3. Mangar (Thapa, Rana), 4. Nembang, 5. Sampang, 6. Bungchheng, 8. Thami 9. Jogi & 10. Dhimal are classified as **Other Backward Classes** under notification No. 1179 – TW/EC/M-6/82 dated 1st December 1995 of the Govt. of West Bengal in the Department of Scheduled Castes & Tribes Welfare.

From these documentary evidence it is amply proved that Jogi(Yogi) is a distinct Nepali/Gorkha community in Darjeeling hills, Terai and Dooars region of West Bengal. But in the list of Gorkha circulated by Home (Pol.) Department, Govt. Of West Bengal on the basis of No 13 – 229/2000/Estt. Dated 10th Sept 2004 issued by the Ministry of Culture Govt. of India, Indian Museum Complex, Kolkata – 16, the name of our Jogi/Yogi, Das nami Sannesi / Sanyasi (Giri, Puri, Bharati etc) are excluded. It is stated in the order that this list of Gorkhas are prepared on the recommendation of Dr. K.S. Singh, IAS(Rtd), the ex-Director General, Anthropological Survey of India. Dr. Singh may be learned and widely regarded scholar/anthropologist but his list of the Gorkhas is not comprehensive. It is incomplete and incorrect in interpretation of the term Gorkha. To cite few examples. He has excluded Bhutia, Dukpa, Kagatey(Yolmo), Sikkimese on the ground that they belong to

जय गुरु गोरख नाथ !



गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ दार्जीलिंग
GORKHA YOGI (JOGI) KALYAN SANGH

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

c/o Mr. K.B. Yogi, 12, D.B. Giri Road, Bara Kak Jhora,
Darjeeling - 734101 Mobile : 94348 75720
Regn. No : S / 1L / 47735 of 2007-2008

greater Bhote (Tibetan) civilization but strangely, he has included the community like Sherpa, Tamang etc who claim themselves of Bhote(Tibetan) civilization in the list of Gorkha. The dress, culture, custom, religion and tradition of Sherpa people are completely like that of the Tibetans. The Sherpa even claims that they are of Tibetans origin and Bhote civilization. Our concern and claim for natural justices is for Yogi/Jogi only. We are not advocating the inclusion or exclusion of any other community.

Anthropological Survey of India & Dr. K.S. Singh have admitted that the nomenclature **Gorkha** is a blanket term to include those communities who originally came from Nepal. Yes, our ancestors are reported to have come to Darjeeling hills and else where from Nepal century and many generations back. And we are the bonafide Nepali/Gorkha people.

In the back ground of these facts, the discrepancies and contradiction, the list of Gorkhas circulated by Home (Pol.) Department Govt. of West Bengal on the recommendation of Anthropological Survey of India is not complete and sacrosanct. It needs immediate review and modification to include Yogi/Jogi & some other eligible communities and also to exclude some other from the list of Gorkha.

On some occasions, we had requested the District Magistrates and Sub-Divisional Officers of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts to apply their discretionary power to grant Gorkha Certificate to Yogi/Jogi Community also after verification and their full satisfaction that the applicants belong to Nepali/Gorkha community. Some have issued the certificates while most of them stick to the list prepared by Home (Pol.) Department. We agree that the certificate Issuing Authority has to follow the rules and orders of the Govt. but that this does not mean that they have to be Slaves of rules. They can be conscious and satisfied to the use of their discretionary powers in the light of the situation and proper perspective of the subject matter under consideration.

जय गुरु गोरख नाथ ।



गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ दाजीलिङ
GORKHA YOGI (JOGI) KALYAN SANGH

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

c/o Mr. K.B. Yogi, 12, D.B. Giri Road, Bara Kak Jhora,
Darjeeling - 734101 Mobile : 94348 75720
Regn. No : S / 1L / 47735 of 2007-2008

In fact, we had requested the Principal Secretary, Home (Pol.) Department, Govt. of West Bengal, Kolkata in our letter dated 20.02.2013 to kindly modify and issue a fresh list of Gorkhas (Copy enclosed for ready reference) with copy to all concerned. We have not yet received any communication about the decision of the Govt. on this matter.

As recently as on 10th Sept. 2013, one Madhyamik passed Miss Sapna Yogi of Karballa Tea Garden under Banerhat P.S. of Jalpaiguri district was deprived of an opportunity for recruitment as a constable under West Bengal Police for want of just a Gorkha certificate and was thus she lost an opportunity of a regular Govt. employment.

We understand that it will take time for State Govt. in Home (Pol.) Department to issue a modified or supplementary list of Gorkhas. It may be a long intra-departmental process and formalities to prepare the conclusive list.

In the mean time, it is our humble request to you to instruct the Home (Pol.) Department to issue an order to the District Magistrates and Sub- Divisional officers of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts to kindly grant Gorkha certificate to very few applicants from marginalized minority and back ward caste of Yogi/Jogi community after ascertaining that they actually belong to people of Nepali/Gorkha origin.

Thanking You.

Yours faithfully

(K.B. Yogi)

President

Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh,
Darjeeling

जय गुरु गोरख नाथ !



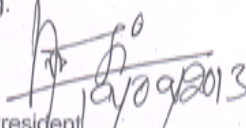
गोर्खा योगी (जोगी) कल्याण संघ दाजीलिङ
GORKHA YOGI (JOGI) KALYAN SANGH

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

c/o Mr. K.B. Yogi, 12, D.B. Giri Road, Bara Kak Jhora,
Darjeeling - 734101 Mobile : 94348 75720
Regn. No : S / 1L / 47735 of 2007-2008

Copy for information and necessary action to:-

1. The Secretary, Home (Pol.) Department Govt. of west Bengal, Writers Building, Kolkata – 700001.
2. The Principal Secretary, other Backward classes welfare Department Govt. of West Bengal Writers Buildings, Kolkata – 700001.
3. The District Magistrate, Darjeeling/Jalpaiguri
4. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Sadar/ Kalimpong/ Kurseong/ Siliguri/ Jalpaiguri Sadar/ Mal/ Alipurduar.
5. The Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, Indian Museum complex, J.N. Road, Kolkata – 700016.
6. The Director, Cultural Research Institute, P1/4 CIT Scheme VIIM, Ambedker Bhawan, VIP Road, Kakurgachi, Kolkata – 700054.
7. The Executive Director, Backward Classes Welfare Department, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, Maldon Chowrasta Darjeeling.


President

Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh,
Darjeeling

President
Gorkha Yogi (Jogi) Kalyan Sangh
Darjeeling

ANNEXURE - IV

To,

Miss Mamata Banerjee,
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
West Bengal,
"Nabanna", Howrah-711102.

Dajeehos

Date : 19th March 2014

Reg. : Constitution of Lepcha and Tamang Development Councils.

Respected Madam,

With reference to the subject above, we the deprived communities of this region would like to express our dissatisfaction, disapproval, protest and disgust on the decision of Trinmool led State Govt. of West Bengal on plea of backwardness, under-development and also to conserve and develop their respective language, culture and tradition by forming **Development Councils for Lepcha and Tamang tribes.**

It is not clear and understood how the State Govt. used economic, development and cultural parameters indicators and yardsticks to determine the backwardness and underdevelopment of these two communities.

If one has to rely on Anthropological studies, the Lepchas are not the aboriginal people of this areas. They have taken shelter in the then unpopulated or sparsely populated Himalayan region for safety of their clans. They are migrants from the present day Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram states of India. Their ethnicity to be traced to Tibeto-Burman origin.

The renowned historian Late Kumar Pradhan has mentioned in his books that Rai (Kirat), Mangar and Limbu were also present in the present day Sikkim and Darjeeling in the twelveth century. So, the claim of the Lepchas being INDEGENOUS/ABORIGINAL sounds hallow and hypothetical.

Let us now examine in impartial and objective manner the present day socio-economic conditions of Lepcha and Tamang for whom the State Govt. decided to notify respective Development Councils for their all round development.

[A] **LEPCHA** : They are among the largest communities in the state of Sikkim and Darjeeling region. Majority of this tribe are Christians and the remaining are Buddhist. They claim to be the worshippers of nature; like them, most of the hill tribes like Kirat, Limbu, Mangar, Thami, Bhujel etc. fall under the same category. At present, most of members of this tribe are holding high Govt. post - to cite few examples :-

(i) **Police :-**

- (a) Daniel Lepcha, IPS, IG of West Bengal Police.
- (b) Smt. Simmick, IPS, Special Supdt. of Police, West Bengal.
- (c) Smt. Lepcha, Addl. Supdt. of Police, W. B.

(ii) Administration :-

(a) Mr. D. T. Tamlong, IAS (Retd.) was Principal Secretary in Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council.

(b) Mr. G. Namchu, IAS (Retd.), Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal and present the Managing Director, Lepcha Development Council, Kalimpong.

(c) Mr. Don Bosco Lepcha, IAS, Secretary, Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, Darjeeling.

(d) Mr. N. Tasso, WBCS (Ex), Additional District Magistrate, Raiganj, Uttar Dinajpur.

(e) Mr. Augustine Lepcha, WBCS (Ex.), Addl. District Magistrate, Balurghat.

Other recently retired WBCS (Ex) officer holding the rank of ADM are Mr. P. Sada and Mr. O. P. Phippon.

Beside this there are many Dy. Magistrates and officers in Commercial Tax, Income Tax and Land Departments.

(iii) Forest : Mr. N. Lepcha, IFS, Addl. Principal Conservator of Forest, West Bengal. His wife Mrs. Juliana Lepcha is a Senior WBCS Officer.

On this basis now one can accept and approve that Lepcha tribes are backward?

They are fairly represented in the political system also. They had MLA (Mr. Gaulan Lepcha) and Councillors in the present G.T.A. also.

Compared to them, there is not a single IAS, WBCS, Forest & Allied service officers from the equally, if not more backward hill tribes like Thami, Bhujel, Sunwar, Mangar, Jogi, Sunnesi etc.

[B] TAMANG : Like the Lepchas, the Tamang is also numerically larger community in Darjeeling district and Dooars area of Jalpaiguri district. This tribe can also be considered the most developed community of this region compared to other tribes. They are dominant and developed in the field of :-

(i) Politics :- Tamangs are also major and prominent community in Hill Politics. To cite few examples :

(a) Mr. Subhash Ghising, Leader of Gorkha National Liberation Front and Gorkhaland Movement and held the post of Chairman and Administrator of Darjeeling uninterruptedly for about 20 (twenty) years from 1988-2008.

(b) Tamang Dawa Lama of CPM was Minister of State in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Fire Service in Left Front Govt.

(c) Late Madan Tamang : He was the leader of All India Gorkha League till his recent murder.

(d) Representation of Tamang Community in both Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) and Gorkha Territorial Administration is much on the higher side compared to other Hill tribes. As an illustration, it may be examined.

DGHC - Subhash Ghising, K. C. Lama, T. N. Ghising, Bhanu Lama, S. K. Lama, Late Prakash Theeng, Dawa Pakhrin, R. P. Waiba.

GTA - Binoy Tamang, Rabindra Lama, Urmila Rumba, Ramesh Lama, Norbu G. Lama, Arun Tamang, Neema Tamang, Kalpana Tamang and Chandra Kr. Tamang.

Even the nominated Sabhasad in GTA is Shri Satish Theeng of Samsingh Tea Garden belongs to Tamang community.

It is thus undisputedly clear that Tamang tribes are the dominant political players for a long time in Darjeeling region.

(ii) Education : Tamang community are among the most educated people in this area. The following few examples will corroborate this statement.

(a) Dr. Mahendra P. Lama, Founder - Vice Chancellor, Sikkim University.

(b) Dr. G. S. Yonzon, Ex-Principal, Kalimpong Govt. College.

(c) Dr. Jas Yonzon, Ex-Principal, Bijanbari Degree College.

(d) Dr. Milan Tamang, Officialing Principal, Jorebunglow Degree College, Darjeeling. There are many Ph. D. / Doctorate holders among them.

Few years back, as many as five Headmaster/Headmistress of Higher Secondary Schools were from Tamang Tribe (Pankhabari H. S., Jinglam H. S., Lamahatta H. S. etc.)

(iii) Business/Contractor/Real Estate Developers : Most of the prominent contractors of this region are from Tamang Community. In the recent crackdown of Gorkhaland movement leaders by the State Govt., two contractors of Tamang Community, namely Mr. Zimba of Mirik and Mr. Lama of Bijanbari were arrested by the Police on the alleged financial support to the movement.

There are many retired and serving officers in State Civil Service, Allied Services, Land Reforms and Police Departments from members of Tamang Community. In spite of the much better political, economical, educational and cultural development of **Lepcha** and **Tamang tribes**, the State Govt. decided and declared to constitute Development Councils in respect of these two elite communities while the most backward tribes like **Thami, Mangar, Bhujel, Jogi, Sunwar** etc. of Hill tribes are deliberately left out.

It is the glaring example of lop-sided, unjust and partisan decision of the Trinmool led State Govt. with ulterior motive, sinister design and with hidden-agenda to divide and rule the hill people with such an outrageous, irrational and blatent arrogant attitude and action.

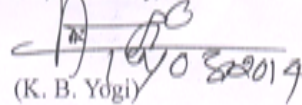
We, the marginalized and other backward communities would like to express our Protest, Disagreement, Dissatisfaction and Disgust against the discriminatory, unjustified and irrational decision of the State Govt. to form Development Councils for only some selective hill tribes ignoring other similarly backward and deserving communities.

In the meantime, it is requested to kindly conduct an impartial spot enquiry through the appropriate state govt. machinery to find out the veracity of facts stated in the foregoing Paras.

And finally it is to be clarified that we do not harbour any malice, grudge, ill-feeling, hatred and envy towards Lepchas and Tamang people on formation of their respective Development Councils. We have been living to-gether for ages with mutual respect, goodwill, family relation and communal harmony and will do so in future also. We wish them the best and all success for the conservation and development of their languages, culture, heritage and traditions. We are not against them but we are definitely against policy and decision of the State Govt. to imbue feud, animosity and rivalry among us to pursue their goal to thwart and abort our unity. And we are also against the policy of majoritiasm.

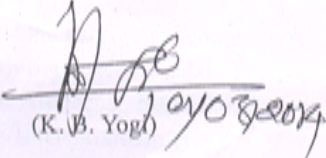
With regards,

Yours faithfully,


(K. B. Yogi)

Copy for information, perusal and necessary action :-

1. The Minister-in-charge,
Govt. of West Bengal,
Backward Classes Welfare Department,
Kolkata - 700001
2. Shri Surya Kant Mishra,
Leader of Opposition,
West Bengal State Assembly,
Kolkata-700001.
3. Shri Manas Bhuiya, MLA,
West Bengal State Assembly,
Kolkata - 700001.


(K. B. Yogi)

ANNEXURE - V

Darjeeling
17th June 2015

To,
Ms. Mamata Banarjee,
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Govt. of West Bengal,
"Nabanna", Howrah-711102.

Reg:- Constitution of Sherpa Development Board.

Respected Madam,

It is unfortunate but we are compelled once again to bring to your kind notice the grave violation of the provisions of the Constitution of India by the act of your Govt. in constituting a **Sherpa Development Board** in Gorkhaland Territorial Administration areas in the recent past.

We had already expressed our dissatisfaction and disgust in your acts of forming **Lepcha** and **Tamang Development Boards** in this region for the reasons abundantly illustrated and highlighted in our letter Dated 19th March 2014. A copy is enclosed again for your ready reference.

It is evident that your Govt. are hell-bent to execute your sinister design and hidden agenda to imbue discontent, disharmony and conflict among the Nepali/Gorkha people through your unconstitutional and blatant & unethical practice to implement such motivated scheme through the misuse of Govt. machinery. It is demonstrated by the decision of the State Govt. to form another Development Board for **Sherpa community**. What is surprising in the fact that your action is selective and discriminatory in nature to help a few section of our society who are already well off-socially, educationally and politically compared to another section of neglected, marginalized and deprived communities like **Thami, Bhujel, Mangar, Jogi (Yogi), Sunuwar, Newar** and other communities of this region. It has already been abundantly and unmistakably narrated in our letter Dated 19th March 2014.

Compared to above mentioned communities Sherpa people are much more advanced in terms of education, govt. employment, business and social segments. Few examples are as follows:-

1. Govt. services:- Smt. D.T. Sherpa, IAS, Secretary, PHE Department, Govt. of West Bengal, Sri Tashi Sherpa, WBCS (Ex), Secretary, North Development Department, Sri Lakpa Sherpa, WBCS (Ex) Addl. District Magistrate, Raiganj, Uttar Dinajpur. Besides this, there are many WBCS Officer from Sherpa Community posted in different District/Sub-Division/Blocks of the State.
2. Shri T.F. Sherpa, IPS, DIG of Police, West Bengal, Shri Dawa Sherpa, IPS, DIG, U.P. and many others in Police Department of West Bengal.
3. Majority of Commercial Tax Officers from Darjeeling hills among the tribal quota are from Sherpa Communities.

In the same way there are many Revenue Officers and SRO-II from this community. They are business-minded people. Hence they own many commercial/business establishments here and elsewhere.

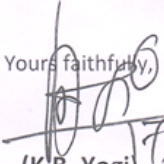
In these sectors, there are none from **Thami, Bhujel, Jogi, Mangar, Sunuwār, Newar** etc communities.

In these backgrounds and facts, the decision of your Govt. to form Development Boards for few advanced communities like Lepcha, Tamang, Sherpa is:-

1. Against **Article 14 & 16 of the Constitution** of India (Non-discrimination of Citizen).
2. Backwarded contemplated by Article 16 (4) is social backwardness. Educational and economics backwardness may contribute to social backward.
Your decision to form these Development Board is against the spirit of Indian Constitution.
3. Recommendation of National Commission for Backward Classes are to be adequately considered by the Union/State Govt.
Your Govt. has not followed this mandatory procedure.
4. Outdated statics quoted by State Govt. cannot provide accurate parameters to measure backwardness.
5. State Govt. had not adopted any rational criteria for determination of backwardness.
6. Decision of your Govt. based on wholly extraneous consideration and actuated by political motive namely to gain electoral advantage or to pursue the policy of divide and rule Nepali/Gorkha Communities to obstruct them from struggle /movement seeking identity, political security and self-determination.

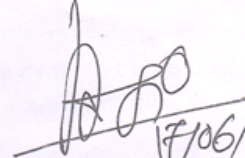
There is no further need to mention that the decision of your Govt. to constitute Development Boards for Lepcha, Tamang and Sherpa Communities who are already much more advance in all spheres is unconstitutional and discriminatory which gives enough opportunity and scope for other much backward communities of Darjeeling Hills for natural justice to seek the shelter of the Court for redressal of their grievances.

With regards.

Yours faithfully,

(K.B. Yogi) 7/06/2015

Copy for information and necessary action:-

1. The Minister-in-Charge, Govt. of West Bengal, Backward Classes Welfare Department, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700091.
2. Shri Surya Kant Mishra, Leader of Opposition, West Bengal State Assembly, Kolkata-700001.
3. Shri Manas Bhuiya, MLA, West Bengal State Assembly, Kolkata-700001.
4. The Principal Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal, Backward Classes Welfare Department, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700091.


7/06/2015
(K.B. Yogi)

q/c

ANNEXURE - VI

Date:

Questionnaire

Name of the Organization:

1. For how long has this organization been active and has it been officially recognised by the State/ Central Government?
2. How many members are there in your organization?
3. What sort of assistance (s) does your organization receive from your registered members?
4. What are the activities the members of the organisation being involved in?
5. How has the organization help bring about cultural revivalism through such activities?
6. How according to your perception does the revivalism of the long forgotten ethnic cultures and practices help create and maintain the ethnic stability (ethnic identity) of your ethnic group?
7. The Nepalis at large have been celebrating the major Hindu festival 'Dasai'. The boycott of the festival (Dasai and can mention others as well if there are any) was being pursued. What could be the possible reasons for it?
8. What sort of impact will it have on the Nepali community as a whole when the various ethnic communities sort to revive their respective cultures?
9. The Darjeeling Hills has been witnessing a new phenomenon the 'janajati andolan'. As one of the ethnic groups of the hills, the term 'janajati' has been used to designate your status. Hence, what sort of understanding does the word have?
10. Apart from cultural revivalism your struggle for the demand as reserved category as schedule tribe has been prominent as a janajati group. Does such a struggle have any relevance in justifying your identity? If yes, could you explicitly explain the matter?
11. Is it possible to see any sort of difference (s) between the two ethnic identities i.e. 'the Gorkha' and 'janajatis'?
12. Do you think that the janajati representations have greater and stronger claim in asserting your identity than the widely and consistently used representation of Gorkha identity?
13. With the recognition of Development Boards by the State to few of the ethnic communities of Darjeeling what sort of impression does it have or has made on the other ethnic groups of the hills and the Nepali society as a whole?

14. What sort of response has the government provided in creating and maintaining the identities of the hill communities?