

## Tracing The Origin Of Indian Gorkhas In Darjeeling And The Problem Of Their Identity Crisis

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### Abstract

Indian Gorkhas are the citizens of India who speak Nepali language which is included in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution. The term is used to differentiate the ethnic Gorkhas from Nepalis who are the citizens of Nepal. They are the indigenous people of Northern and North Eastern India. As far as the origin of the Gorkhas in Darjeeling is concerned, in 1860s, there was a large amount of labour movement from Nepal to Darjeeling due to the rapid growth of tea plantation, commercial activities and the construction of the Darjeeling town. Apart from Nepal large Gorkha population from Assam also moved to Darjeeling. They were attracted by the greenery forests and large tracts of land for grazing. Further, in Darjeeling the Hindu caste system hardly existed unlike in other places because all the Gorkha community were engaged in plantation works and were manual labourers. Thus, Darjeeling was more liberal, and comparatively freer without any social menaces and the Gorkhas started settling in Darjeeling and started identifying themselves as Indian Gorkhas. These Indian Gorkhas are the citizens of India, but they have been facing identity problems constantly. In many instances they have been labeled as an outsider or a foreigner. Thus, the Indian Gorkhas are continuously fighting for their common identification in a big country like India without being labeled as an outsider. The basic aim of this paper is to look into the origin of Indian Gorkhas in Darjeeling, their customs, cultures, and traditions and the

problem of their identity crisis. The paper also discusses about the perspective of the Indian government with regards to the demands and challenges faced by the Indian Gorkhas. This study is based on the secondary data available from both online and offline sources, which has been subjected to critical evaluation and reviewed.

**Keywords:** Origin, citizens, identity, Gorkhas, Darjeeling, Indian Gorkhas, perspective, Indian government.

## INTRODUCTION

The word Gorkha is basically a Pali deformation of a Sanskrit term which is used to refer the Khas people. The Khas are mentioned in the “itihasa” meaning traditional accounts of past events like Mahabharata, Puranas, Manusmriti and so on. They are the ancient group of people who emigrated to the Indian Subcontinent from Central Asia before the Indo- Aryans and occupied the foothills of the Himalayas. The Khas were sometimes referred as ‘Go rakkha’ – ‘protectors of cows’ in many past events. Thus, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E when Buddhism began to make a magnificent impact in the Himalayan region, the Sanskrit term ‘Go rakkha’ began to deform in Pali as ‘Gorkha’ and hence, ‘Go rakkha’ started being known as ‘Gorkha’(s).

So far the Indian Gorkhas are concerned; they are the indigenous people who live along the Himalayan belt and North- East states of India which is now covered by the areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Darjeeling, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, and all other North-East states of India. They encompass enormous number of different tribes and ethnic groups, which are a part of political and social units. Most of the written historical records about the Indian Gorkhas have begun with the British colonization of Indian subcontinent. They have emerged as an integrated people from disintegrated tribes and ethnic groups. During the arrival of East India Company the Gorkhas exercised an impregnable presence in the North and anaorth Eastern India. After the Anglo- Gorkha war (1814), which was fought between the British forces of East India Company and the Gorkhali army of Nepal kingdom, the Gorkha people divided into two groups of people, first, was the citizens of the Nepal Kingdom and other was the people who got scattered

and fragmented in the regions of the East India Company who after independence called themselves Indian Gorkhas.

### **ORIGIN OF THE INDIAN GORKHAS IN DARJEELING**

Previously Darjeeling was a part of the dominion of Sikkim who was in continuous unsuccessful warfare with the Gorkhas. When the Anglo-Gorkha war also known as the Anglo- Nepal war broke out in the year 1814, the defeat of the Gorkhalis of Nepal in the hands of the East India Company led to the Treaty of Sugauli, 1815, in which Nepal had to give over all the territories which the Gorkhas had annexed from the Raja of Sikkim to the East India Company. Later in 1817, with the Treaty of Titalia the Raja of Sikkim was restored by the East India Company with all the lands between Mechi and Teesta river and guaranteed his sovereignty. But ten years later Sikkim and Nepal once again got into a dispute which was accordingly referred to the then Governor General for the settlement. The settlement and the negotiation however, ended with the execution of the Deed of Grant by the Raja of Sikkim on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1835. As per the deed Darjeeling was gifted to the East India Company as their sanatorium and summer resort by the Chogyal Raja of Sikkim.

After the acquisition of Darjeeling by the East India Company, Darjeeling started rapid growth of tea plantation, and other commercial activities and apart from these the construction of the Darjeeling town itself required a lot of labour which led to the intense demand of labour and Britishers allowed the labour movement from Nepal. Assam also had a significant population of Gorkhas who migrated to Darjeeling as a labour. The Gorkhas was also attracted to Darjeeling because of the lush green forests, mountains and the vast tracts of lands for grazing. Since all the Gorkhas in Darjeeling was either engaged in tea plantation or worked as a labour, the strict hindu caste system which was prevalent in Nepal and other places was hardly followed here and this also became one of the reasons for the migration of Gorkhas in Darjeeling. Thus, Darjeeling was more liberal, freer and without any social menaces and the Gorkhas those who were fragmented in the regions of the East India Company after the Anglo-Nepal started migrating and settling here and after independence started identifying themselves as Indian Gorkhas. Hence, Indian Gorkha identity is more likely a self- constructed identity.

## **CULTURES, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS OF INDIAN GORKHAS OF DARJEELING**

Gorkhas of Darjeeling have an innumerable and detailed customs and traditions. Apart from their religious rituals, they celebrate a great number of festivals which involve dancing, singing, and feasting. They are known for their ever smiling faces, cheerful spirit and their colourful dresses. A Gorkha by all accounts lives to relish, shine and die with integrity.

### **Culture**

The culture of Gorkhas of Darjeeling is linked with religion and the religious practices are essential to their life. The most followed religion by the Indian Gorkhas are Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Men, women, and children visit temples in the morning holding plate of offerings and performing religious rituals. After the completion of the religious rituals the priests apply 'tika'<sup>1</sup> as a mark of blessing on the foreheads of the devotees. Buddhists and Christians also regularly visit their respective monasteries and churches. All the Indian Gorkhas in Darjeeling whether be it Hindu, Buddhist or Christian, celebrate all the festivals together and the harmony prevails in the atmosphere. There is a great deal of religious harmony and tolerance among the Indian Gorkhas as they fear and respect all Gods. The Hindu priests commonly known as 'bahunbaje' or 'baje'<sup>2</sup> and the shaman known commonly as 'jhakri' are highly respected and their advice are sought on the different day to day affairs of life. The Hindu priest and Buddhists monks advice on various religious strands of their life whereas the shamans are available only on request to fend off evil spirits, bad luck, imprecation and often to predict future. Apart from the priests, monks and shamans the Indian Gorkhas of Darjeeling are also very respectful towards the 'reincarnated 'women' known as 'mata'<sup>3</sup> who is the incarnation of 'Durga Maa' in Hinduism. Matas are primarily women and offer the same services as the shamans but in a slightly different manner. They never leave their temple

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<sup>1</sup> Vermillion

<sup>2</sup> Meaning Grandfather

<sup>3</sup> Literally translated into English, it means Mother

unless an unavoidable circumstance comes to light while the shamans make it a point to visit the house of the inflicted<sup>4</sup>.

Songs and dance also play an essential role in the day to day life of the Indian Gorkhas of Darjeeling. In the evening the religious songs and passages from the scriptures are sung in the temple. Many young boys and girls mimic Hindu Gods and Goddesses and dances around the temple in the religious songs. Many young girls also mimic 'Durga Maa' during the festival of Dussherra. Institutionalized religious participation is limited to Hindu Brahmins. Many people, however, can give up their social lives and practice 'Sanyasa' at any time in their lives. Few Gorkhas abandon their social lives to lead a hermit's life. Among Buddhists, it is customary for a family to send either the eldest or youngest son to a monastery to become a monk. On their side, Christians arrange numerous Bible study and prayer groups that visit the homes of fellow Christians and offer assistance and support as needed. Young people are encouraged to enrol in theology courses, and doors are opened to anyone who wishes to devote their life to the church.

### **Indian Gorkha Women of Darjeeling**

Girls are loved and respected from the moment they are born. Because there is no dowry system in Indian Gorkha community, girls are not considered a burden by their parents. Girls are taught alongside boys and given ample opportunities to thrive and prosper. If a community member makes a marriage proposal to a girl, she is asked for her opinion. The decision is based on her decision. Expectant mothers are well protected and supported. Mothers are very significant in the Indian Gorkha household. She wields considerable power and, at times, even defies her father. She is regarded with reverence and compassion. Property is often given equally among offspring, both sons and daughters, even after they marry, according to Gorkha households. Indian Gorkha women have an important role in all religious, social, cultural, and

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<sup>4</sup> The Shaman holds that a person's mind, body, and surroundings are where his or her problems dwell. Therefore, the Shaman must not only purify the patient's body and mind but also his home and surroundings in order to heal him of his illness.

familial festivals and functions. They are, in reality, the primary participants and organisers of such celebrations.

### **Values of the Family**

The Indian Gorkhas of Darjeeling, like the majority of their Indian counterparts, believe in caring for their parents and the old. The father is still the family's highest authoritative figure. He is well supported and helped by his mother. The sons and daughter-in-law take on the role of constituent elements and endeavour to serve the family elders. The authority passes down through the elders. Microfamilies have formed in recent decades as Indian Gorkhas have been progressively pushed into metropolitan areas. Individualism has also begun to take deeper roots among teenagers, and as a result, an increasing number of them wish to live apart from their parents. Marriages have been primarily based on love, with elopement marriages outnumbering engagement marriages.

Religious practises help to reinforce a sense of family worth. Indian Gorkhas, particularly Hindus, celebrate 'Bhai Tika'<sup>5</sup> at the end of the Tihar (Diwali) holiday. On the 'Bhai Tika,' sisters perform elaborate ceremonies and pray for the safety of their brothers. Other religious rituals and festivals that strive to enhance family values include ancestor worship ('Pitri Puja,' remarriage ceremony for parents on their 50th wedding anniversary,' and so on. Rituals designed to mark the many stages of a child's development, such as a "feeding ceremony" or a "naming ceremony," help to build family values by bringing family members together.

### **Wedding and Courtship**

Prior to getting hitched, a boy or girl from Gorkha basically falls in love. Love is ultimately the answer, albeit parents are known to look for ideal partners for their children. When the two families involved learn of the meeting of a boy and a girl, there isn't much of a commotion. In the free culture of the Indian Gorkhas, it is customary for a boy and a girl to present the person they are courting to their family. Courting couples are permitted to visit one

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<sup>5</sup> The custom of a sister applying vermillion paste to a brother's forehead is the source of bhai tika. While doing so, the sister prays to God to keep her brother safe from harm.

another, but they must do so under close supervision. When a relationship between a couple becomes serious, the families get together to formally declare their union.

Many courting couples would just up and leave if there is any potential of opposition to their union. The couple spends a few days apart after eloping before going back to the boy's house. The boy's parents promptly come together and send a "delegation of elders" to the girl's family to inform them of their ward's elopement. 'ChorkoShor' is the term for this. It roughly translates to "owing up to the crime of stealing" in English. The 'delegation of elders' begs for the boy's transgression to be pardoned while also expressing the girl's devotion to him. After that, the pair is invited to the "blessing ceremony" known as "DhokBhet"<sup>6</sup> by the girl's family, who are now convinced of the boy and his family's sincere wish to raise their child well. The elders of the family and clan are introduced to the couple, and the groom in particular, at the blessing ritual, and their blessings are requested. At the same moment, the two families mix together and become a single family. Elopement marriages are typical among Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. The ceremonies and procedures may differ from one family to another and from one faith to another, but the fundamental structure fundamentally stays the same.

Families who wish to have their wards get married in the neighbourhood favour engagement marriages. Numerous suitors are given copies of the girl's ancestry, horoscope, and general profile. A suitor is chosen based on their personality, financial situation, and family history. The engagement ceremony is then solemnised when the girl is introduced to the suitor and makes her decision. Within a month or two, the couple gets married, after which the elders from both families bless them. Marriages between different races and castes are accepted and frequent. Inter-religious unions are likewise permitted and ostensibly common.

It's interesting that widows are permitted to wed. A widow, however, is not permitted to get married until after giving birth to the child if she is pregnant. It is thought that if a widow marries while she is expecting a kid, the child, if a female, would also marry her "would-be father."

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<sup>6</sup> Translated into English it means, Reverence meet

Depending on the financial resources of the bridegroom's family, wedding ceremonies might be complex or straightforward, large or tiny. Rich feasts are served to visitors, family members, and close friends, who are also asked for their blessing and well wishes for the newlyweds.

### **Rites and Rituals**

In essence, rituals and rites start the moment a person becomes pregnant in a mother's womb. The announcement of the daughter's or daughter-in-law's pregnancy brings the family together in celebration. Gifts and special attention are showered upon the expectant mother. She receives blessings, guidance, and presents from the female family elders. When a child is born, a feast is prepared in celebration, and the immediate family is invited. Elderly women are also encouraged to assist with childcare. The naming ceremony occurs seven or nine days after the baby is born. Following this ritual, the baby's name will be given by the priest in the case of a Hindu baby, a monk in the case of a Buddhist baby, a father in the case of a Christian baby, and so on. A feeding ceremony is organized in the sixth or eighth month after the infant is born. This ritual, also known as "BhaatKhhwai" or "Rice Feeding," signifies that the kid has reached the age at which he or she can eat "whole food" in addition to breast milk from the mother.

In the Hindu Indian Gorkha society, only Brahmins or Bahuns perform the Thread Ceremony. A boy who has achieved puberty is offered a "sacred thread" during the Thread Ceremony, welcoming him into the domain of the Bahun (Brahmins). Wearing 'sacred thread' is also a symbol of the transfer of religious responsibilities from father to son. The now-manly youngster is supposed to study his father's sacred craft, learn it, and uphold the family's traditions.

Due to the reincarnation theory held by both Hindus and Buddhists, a person's death does not mean the end of their existence or the destruction of their self, but rather that they are passing over to another being based on their Karma. In essence, a funeral service is a "pass over ceremony" where all necessary preparations are made for the deceased's soul to transition smoothly into another creature. The hand over rites must be overseen by the oldest of the boys. In the absence of an eldest son, closest sibling, or most recently, eldest daughter, the duty of



overseeing the "pass-over" ceremonies is permitted. It is called "Kora" in Nepali. The person who sits on "Kora" prepares his own meals, cleans his own dishes and clothes, and avoids communication with others save in cases of emergency. He reads puranas, the Bhagavad Gita, and other holy texts throughout his free time. He doesn't utilise any comforts, even a bed, to sleep. Additionally, he is the one who lights the first flames on the funeral pyre. He lies down on the ground, ideally on straws, and is covered by a plain bed sheet and a blanket. While this is going on, the family's other members are keeping their mouths shut, maintaining their composure, and reflecting on the lessons their loved one's passing has taught them. After 45 days of sorrow, the person taking Kora is finally released from his obligation, and offerings are made to the Gods and the ancestors. Regardless of whether they sat on "Kora" or not, the deceased's sons are required to shave their heads in honour for the departed and as an additional reminder of the "ultimate truth of life." Following the completion of these rites, the Kam, or "rejoicing of the successful pass-over," of the deceased to another entity is organised, as well as the reassignment of the grieving family to this realm.

### **Festivals**

More than 53 little and significant festivals are observed by Gorkhas. The celebrations are typically grandiose and last for several days. However, others are brief affairs that just last a day. Family members are once more reunited, even if only for a short time, in an atmosphere of full peace, joy, and pleasure. MagheSankranti, BasantPanchami, Saraswati Puja, MahaShivaratri, FaguPurnima (Holi), ChaitraDashai, Buddha Jayanti, and others are a few of the Indian Gorkha festivals.

### **Cuisine of the Indian Gorkha's**

Both in terms of quality and content, Indian Gorkha food is abundant. The Bahuns, in particular, are devout vegetarians among the Khas. They favour dairy goods like butter, curd, and cheese. The Chettris don't eat beef or beef products. However, they do eat mutton and chicken. The Gorkhas of India also eat pork. 'KodokoJaar'<sup>7</sup> and 'Bhaat Ko Jaar'<sup>8</sup> are two of their most well-

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<sup>7</sup> Alcoholic beverage made of millet

<sup>8</sup> Alcoholic beverage made of rice

known alcoholic beverages. Both of these are strong alcoholic cocktails that are best enjoyed with "fried chilli buff" or "fried chilli pork." Additionally, Gorkha food ranges from the most inventive to the bizarre-appearing. For example, "Kinema" has the worst odour of any food one has ever encountered, but its medicinal usefulness outweighs its odour. On the other hand, a bowl of "Gundruk" soup with minced meat in it is tasty and incredibly healthy. Blood purification is another medical effect of "Gundruk" on the body. Other classics include other meat pickles like "sungurko khuttako aachar"<sup>9</sup> and "khasiko khuttako aachar,"<sup>10</sup> among others. The pickles themselves are nothing special, despite the dish names being blatantly unappealing. They are a fiery endeavour indeed that ushers in a mouthwatering journey of delight. The most well-known Indian Gorkha dishes include Choyla, which is grilled or roasted pork typically served as an appetizer with alcohol, Kwati is a bean soup cooked using a variety of beans. The wonderful Sel Roti, which is made by combining pulverized rice, flour, sugar, butter, and spices and frying it in oil over a sizable skillet, Aloo dum, which can be made at any time for any occasion.

### **Tradition of Herbal Medicines of Indian Gorkhas**

Gorkhas are able to reap the 'medicinal' benefits of nature that many people are unaware of since they have a deep understanding of their surroundings. In "Gorkha and other Ethnic Herbal Medicines,"<sup>11</sup> written by H.K. Pradhan, he lists more than 512 herbal remedies used by the Gorkha people. These treatments cover anything from paediatric disorders like round wedding and bed wetting to umbilicus infections. Additionally, there are treatments for conditions like Asthama, Diabetes, Filaria, Cerebral Fever, Dandruff, and Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding. The Indian Gorkha people have a long history of using herbal medicine, making it 'difficult' to pinpoint where it originated and how it developed.

### **Attire of the Indian Gorkha's**

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<sup>9</sup> Pickles made from pig's feet

<sup>10</sup> Pickles made from goat's feet

<sup>11</sup> Gorkha and other Ethnic Herbal Medicines, Pradhan, H K, Universal Publishers, Florida, USA

Indian Gorkhas are affluent, well-dressed people who are well renowned for paying close attention to their appearance. For both men and women Indian Gorkha, the "DauraSuruwal" and "Guniu Cholo" are by far the most popular traditional attire. In essence, "Guniu" is a full-sleeved cotton shirt worn on top of a cotton sari that is wrapped around the torso. Within the Indian Gorkha people, there are subtle differences in Guniu Cholo that may be found among the many ethnic groupings. The Gorkha ladies are additionally adorned with golden 'Chyapte sun',<sup>12</sup> 'Nagedi',<sup>13</sup> 'Sirbandi',<sup>14</sup> 'Mundri',<sup>15</sup> 'Kalli',<sup>16</sup> etc., which enhances their beauty and exotic appeal.

Male Gorkhas generally dress in what is known as "DauraSuruwal"<sup>17</sup> The designs of the clothing are inspired by a number of different religions. Eight strings are used by the Daura (the knee-length shirt) to bind itself around the torso. Additionally, the Daura's five pleats represent Pancha Buddha or Pancha Ratna, and its closed neck represents the snake that encircles Lord Shiva. In contrast, the Suruwal has a straightforward design that is loose in the thighs and groynes and tight around the calves. 'Eejar' string, which is used to tie clothing around the waist, is used. Even though the waist coat is not a part of the Indian Gorkha traditional attire, it is worn over the Daura. It is thought that the British, who were the first Europeans to have strong ties with the Gorkha people of India, were responsible for the practise of wearing a waist coat. However, no Indian Gorkha male outfit is complete without "Dhaka ko Topi" on the head. Literally, "Dhaka ko Topi" refers to a headpiece fashioned of Dhaka, a fine cotton fabric.

### **The Tradition of Music**

The Gorkhs are a fun-loving family, and music is a huge part of their lives. Music is both spontaneous and planned, straightforward and complex. In their towns, cities, and villages, many Gorkh people enjoy playing impromptu folk music. Folk songs are frequently sung to the accompaniment of an acoustic guitar by friends,

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<sup>12</sup> Ear rings made of gold beat into rough plates

<sup>13</sup> Small nine gold beads forming a necklace

<sup>14</sup> Gold ornament used to cover forehead

<sup>15</sup> Gold ring for a finger

<sup>16</sup> Silver or gold bangles

<sup>17</sup> Also known as labeda suruwal made up of cotton cloth

neighbors, and family members while they hang out in the courtyards, living rooms, and rooftops. In villages, these spontaneous jam sessions take on a more "ethnic" feel when men and women participate in singing and dancing while traditional musical instruments are played. A more formal environment, possibly at a festival, is where appropriate folk songs and dances are performed. There are planned parades with dancing ensembles and musicians. Major tourist attractions include some of these processions, such as the yearly 'Phulpati processions'<sup>18</sup> that are held on the seventh day of the Dashai.

### **THE DEMAND FOR GORKHALAND**

The proposed name for a new state that includes the regions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong is Gorkhaland. Supporters of Gorkhaland also call for the proposed state to encompass 398 contiguous and non-contiguous mouzas in the neighboring Terai and Dooars regions of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri. The predominant ethnic group in these areas is Gorkhas. Nepali people made up 61% of Darjeeling's total population in 1901, according to the census data (Mukherjee, 1980). A new cultural space was created in the area as a result of the Gorkhas' arrival there. Therefore, the formation of a new culture, increased Gorkha ethnic awareness, and decreased Bengali presence in the Hills exacerbated the need for a distinct state.

The Gorkhaland movement's main goals are the preservation and advancement of the West Bengali Nepalese minority group's language, culture, and identity. Once the state of Gorkhaland is established, the movement's supporters believe that other Indians will stop referring to Gorkhas as "foreigners." It is important to preserve the Gorkhas' uniqueness as Indians. Actually, this shift shows that a marginal group is becoming more self-aware. The movement is active, and those behind it only want to break away from its parent state, not from India.

### **Why Gorkhaland?**

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<sup>18</sup> Refers to a Gorkha Hindu custom of worshipping Durga. On this day in Darjeeling musical processions are brought out from every ward of the town.

Before addressing the issues behind the demand, the main question is why is the movement limited mainly to the Darjeeling region? The reasons are that most of the Indian GorkhaNepalese live in this area; the gap created by the British between the Bengali majority and the Nepalese minorities; the state of West Bengal follows a partial policy regarding the Darjeeling region. In the context of justifying Gorkhaland's demand, several reasons were also brought forward by those who supported it.

- The IndoNepal Friendship Treaty of 1950, which does not distinguish between Indian and Nepali citizens in any way, has been identified by the backers of Gorkhaland's demand as an issue that must be addressed. There's no other opinion of the existence of a common lineage between India and Nepal, but it couldn't have been wise to confuse them with Nepali Gorkhas. Because of the IndoNepal Friendship Treaty, Gorkhas from Nepal have been granted full rights such as education, employment, property ownership, business establishment and so on, but without right to vote. Also, there has been a myth among Indians that the Indian Nepalis are also citizens of Nepal because of this treaty. The concept of "double homeland", which they face in the face of an identity crisis, was born of such a misconception. In order to reduce the widespread confusion, it is also necessary to lay down clear definitions of "Nepalese" and "Nepali". The term Nepali refers to the ethnic identity of the Indian Gorkha Nepalese, while Nepali refers to the nationality of the citizens of Nepal. "When we go to other parts of the country, they still treat us as foreigners," said Amar Singh Rai, a retired professor of political science. We're from Nepal, they think. They need to know that we're Indian Nepalese. "We tell them, in Darjeeling, our homeland, that we were born and brought up there."
- The second issue raised by the agitators was the prejudice shown by the National Realignment Commission to the agitators in 1956, when the linguistic restructuring of the Indian territory was taking place. It is alleged that the 1951 census was rigged by the West Bengal government to prevent the division of the state. The Nepali-speaking

population was considered a minority and was barred from leaving the state because of the language.

- The third issue that Indian Gorkhas raised was the unfair treatment they faced at the hands of the state governments. Almost every state in northeastern India has seen political mobilization and hostility against immigrants in one form or another, leading to the purge of non-indigenous groups. . At first, such enmity was not widespread, in fact, Nepalese were welcome into the area as they responded to the labor needs of the local population. Later, however, anti-foreigner policy emerged through the 'Destabilization of the Son in the Land' in Assam and this was followed by many Indigenous movements in the rest of the northeastern regions. . Following the agitation by the Assamese Student Union against the large-scale immigration of Nepalese from Nepal and Bangalais from Bangladesh, an agreement was reached between the protesters and the government that all foreigners arrive settled in the state after March 25, 1971 will be relocated from the state. As a result, in 1979, an "anti-foreigner" movement was launched in the northeastern states of India. In just one day, about 17,000 Gorkhas fled the hills of Meghalaya to the town of Byrnihat on the Assam-Meghalaya border (HK Pradhan and Vikas Pradhan, 2005). In addition, in 1980, direct attacks were carried out against the Nepalese in Manipur, causing them to be displaced and moved to safe areas. Rebels and separatist groups attack villages, massacre residents and burn houses to pressure other ethnic groups to leave disputed territory (Nath, 2005). Although the Government of India clarified its stance towards Nepalese in 1984, holders of "restricted area permits" will not be considered "illegal immigrants" and are protected guard. Even then, ethnic cleansing continued and Nepalese were displaced from Assam. Many of the deported Nepalese took refuge in the state of West Bengal, but there the Nepalese were also treated less favorably than the favorable treatment accorded to the Bengalis.
- A fourth issue raised by supporters of Gorkaland is that of language. The Nepali language spoken in this region is an amalgamation of various dialects used by different castes

and tribes such as Shekpura, Rimkura and Rajkra (Sarkar, 2014). As mentioned above, there was a sense of insecurity among Indian Nepalis who were stigmatized as foreigners. Their concern was that in 1956 he B.G. Chairman Kel of the Language Commission stated that Nepali was a foreign language (Chaklader, 2004). Under these circumstances, Nepalis residing in India understood that they would be treated as Indians if their language was recognized in Article 8 of the Annex to the Indian Constitution. Further, a closer examination of Articles 344, 1 and 351 of the Indian Constitution reveals that the languages included in the Indian Constitution list must be rich enough to contribute to the richness of the Hindi language. For this reason, the Nepali language written in the Devanagari script and derived from Sauraseni Prakrit can be included in the constitution. Various other small language groups, such as Newari, Gurung, Limbu, and Lepchas, also accept Nepali as their language instead of Bengali. Defenders of the Nepali language also argue that Urdu and Sindhi are Pakistani languages, but why not Nepali when they are stipulated in the Indian constitution. In 1956, the editor of Jagat Gorkha, Ananda Singh Thapa, sent a memorandum to the Committee on Official Languages requesting addition to the 8th list, but the proposal was rejected by the chairman (Chaklader, 2004). ). This caused great unrest among the Indian Nepalese and exacerbated their willingness to enforce their demands. Rallies, marches, demonstrations and strikes were held under the leadership of the All India-Nepal Basa Samiti. As a result, the West Bengal State made Nepali the official language of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong, where Nepalese are the majority, through the West Bengal Official Language Act of 1961. In 1977, the State Legislative Assembly passed a resolution asking the parliament to amend the Indian constitution to make Nepali the official language. Additionally, the 1981 Indian census named the language Golhari/Nepalese. The movement was further boosted by the establishment of his Rashtriya Diocese in Bharat Nepal in June 1990. The movement, with support from West Bengal, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Tripura state legislatures, passed a resolution to recognize the

Nepali language in the Indian constitution. Ultimately, all efforts paid off and Nepali was added to her eighth list along with Konkani and Manipuri by the 71st Constitutional Amendment of 1992. However, the West Bengal state government has imposed Bengali as a mandatory official language throughout the state, including Darjeeling district. Undoubtedly, the state government has accepted Nepali as the second official language of the state, but all important official documents are still published in Bengali. Furthermore, at the educational level, except for the University of Calcutta and the University of North Bengal, Nepali is not used as a language at the graduate and postgraduate levels. The fifth point, which further strengthened the demands on Gorkhaland, was the recommendation of the Nepalese Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee to dissuade its citizens from joining foreign armed forces. This means that in such cases, the Gorkhas of India will have to provide additional labor to fill the vacancies. This is another strong argument of Gorkhaland. This is because regiments in the Indian Army are often state-focused, for example the JK Rifle Light Infantry represents Jammu and Kashmir. "Punjab and Sikh Light Infantry Regiment", Punjab. Such as the "Jat Regiment" in Haryana. Therefore, if the Indian army acquires a Gorkha regiment composed entirely of Indian Gorkhas, without including the Gorkhas from Nepal, there could be a state for the Gorkhas in India. This may solve the problem of Gorkhaland state.

The sixth issue raised by agitators is the region's economic shortage. The main economy of Darjeeling district depends on tea, timber and tourism. However, over time, these industries went into recession due to the negligence of the state government. The number of active tea plantations in the area has decreased as they have become ailing or unprofitable. As a result, a large number of tea farmers are unemployed. The same is true for the wood industry. Darjeeling is fortunate to have abundant forest resources, but due to stiff competition from other states and the plains, the logging industry in the hills has declined. Furthermore, as a result of the establishment of the West Bengal Forest Development Corporation in 1974,



the forests in Darjeeling were cleared without proper reforestation, leading to an imbalance in the ecology of the area. (Kaushik, 2007). The region's third largest industry, tourism, is also affected by the permit system. In addition, frequent protests, strikes and marches in the area have affected tourist arrivals to the state.

The seventh story shows that the Gorkhas were loyal to the Indian state. They are associated with India's freedom struggle. In 1921, the All India Gorkha League was organized in Dehradun, consisting of retired soldiers for the cause of Indian nationalism. Major Dal Bahadur Thapa and Captain Durga Malla were hanged by the British for their connection to the INA. Gorkhaland's supporters blamed the government for ignoring Gorkhas' contribution to the independence movement. The Gorkhas participated in Gandhi's Dandi March and were close associates of Gandhi and other national leaders. It is a pity that the names of freedom fighters such as Jangbir Sapkota and Captain Khadka have not been found anywhere. Even in the book "The Role of Honor" published by INA Kolkota, "Major" is mentioned as the highest rank given to Durga Malla, an INA Gorkha (HK Pradhan and Vikas Pradhan, 2005).

### **THE GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE DEMAND FOR GORKHALAND**

The Government of India and the Government of West Bengal have made concerted efforts to meet the aspirations of the hill people's in Darjeeling district (West Bengal) for their cultural identity, language, education and economic development. Darjeeling Hills is a big challenge for the government. There is a strong demand for the separate state of Gorkhaland. On account of the demand Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Agreement was signed on 22 August 1988 between the Central Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the Gorkha National Liberation Front in Kolkata. The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Act 1988 (West Bengal Act XIII 1988) was enacted by the West Bengal Legislature, approved by the President of India and first published in the Calcutta Special Gazette on 15 October 1988. The Council has broad control over finance, education, health care, agriculture and economic development within its jurisdiction. The DGHC was

administered by the GNLF from 1988 to 2005 for three consecutive terms with SubhashGhisingh as president. The fourth election for the DGHC will be held in 2005. However, the government decided not to hold the election and instead appointed SubhashGhisingh as sole interim administrator of the DGHC. In March 2008, Ghisingh was forced to resign as caretaker after losing public support in the Darjeeling hills to GorkhaJanmukti Morcha, led by Bimal Gurung. From March 2008 to August 2012, the West Bengal government appointed IAS officials as trustees of the DGHC and no council elections were held during this time.

The DGHC failed to achieve its goal of forming a new state, leading to the fall of SubhashGhisingh and the rise of another GorkhaJanmukti Morcha (GJM) party led by Bimal Gurung in 2007, launching a campaign. The second move aimed at establishing a state in Gorkhaland. After three years of campaigning for a separate state of Gorkhaland, the GJM reached an agreement with the state government to create a semi-autonomous body to manage the Darjeeling hills. Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal established the autonomous Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) to allow residents to manage their own affairs. The GTA Agreement was signed on 18th July 2011 by the Centre, the Government of West Bengal and the GorkhaJanmukti Morcha (GJM, the leading regional political party of Darjeeling), and after being approved by the President of India in March 2012, the GTA was established. The GTA replaced the Darjeeling Gorkha Hills Council, which was established in 1988 and has been in charge of the Darjeeling Hills for 23 years. Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts are part of the Gorkhaland Territorial Authority (GTA) under the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act 2011. Under Section 26 of the GTA Act 2011, the GTA is vested with administrative, executive and financial powers mainly involving 59 subjects. Since its creation, the GTA has focused on the development of the region's socio-economic infrastructure, education, culture and languages, while keeping in mind the Gorkha ethnic identity and prioritizing the peaceful coexistence of all communities that characterize the unity of the hills. aimed to promote.

There are many possible resolutions that can be adopted by the government.

The government could create a stable and accountable government in Darjeeling and end one of the most enduring movements for a separate state in India by giving more power to the territory governing body of Gorkhaland (GTA), also creating a transparent and open electoral process. It should be understood that the increase in GJM is due to the government's failure to organize the 4th DGHC election. Parliament could amend the Constitution of India and include an autonomous region within West Bengal by adding a provision like 244 A, providing such a method for Assam. Furthermore, any new state must have the necessary infrastructure, administrative resources, and political capital, as well as the right and correct arrangements, or it risks inciting a tendency toward division. Accordingly, a more negotiated agreement should be reached through peaceful dialogue and political mobilization. Economic and social viability must take precedence over political considerations.

## CONCLUSION

The entire struggle of the Gorkha community reflects the centuries-long struggle to preserve its identity and gain a respectable place in the Indian confederacy. The struggle continues with many hopes and dreams, but claiming sovereignty over Gorkhaland raises many questions that need to be answered. Darjeeling has only one district. So will the new state be able to provide enough resources for its people or will it depend on the central government for this? What guarantees that these small countries will definitely achieve the goals they have set? Can ethnicity be considered the basis for forming a new state when in India there are several ethnic groups? Will the state of Gorkhaland create new minorities in the new state because of the Lepchas, Bhutias and other minorities residing in the area?

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