

WHY GORKHALAND?

In any Movement for a separate state, the question of WHY always arises. This booklet answers in brief the WHY of the Indian Gorkha's justified, peaceful, democratic, constitutional and Gandhian Movement for a separate state within the Indian Union.

It may not be possible to capsule the answers in a single document. Our attempt is to produce a series of documents that will explain the demand for separate state of Gorkhaland.

The demand for our national, linguistic and political identity has been reiterated ever since 1907. Our History—Pre and Post Independence, bears testimony of our firm resolve and determination to highlight our cause.

GORKHA JANAMUKTI MORCHA

1. HISTORY:-

(a) Pre-Independence-----

The proposed Gorkhaland area i.e. Darjeeling District and the adjoining Dooars area under Jalpaiguri District were parts of two kingdoms of Sikkim and Bhutan before the advent of the British. This fact is admitted by the West Bengal Government also in its White Paper called “Gorkhaland Agitation-An Information Document” published on 29.10.1986.

Nowhere in the pre-British history of Bengal, areas under present Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri were ever ruled or possessed by any King, Raja or Royalties of the plains of Bengal, nor the latter had any suzerainty over these areas.

The above mentioned areas came under British occupation in three phases. In 1835, by a Deed of Grant, where the Rajah of Sikkim ceded a portion of Darjeeling Hills to the British for setting up a Sanatorium. In 1850, the rest of Darjeeling Hills and the Terai area, west of Tista river were annexed by the British. In the third phase, following a war with Bhutan in 1864, the east of the Tista river comprising the present Kalimpong and Dooars area were annexed.

Thus after annexation of the areas, the British tagged these areas to the then Bengal Presidency. However, these areas were kept as Scheduled District, that is, Non-Regulation District which implied that the Acts and Regulations of Bengal Presidency were not to come to force unless specially extended. This arrangement continued till 1919.

The Government of India Act, 1919 constituted a Legislative Council for Bengal but Darjeeling had no representation. Darjeeling District was declared an Excluded Area thus keeping the Darjeeling District outside the purview of the Legislature of the Bengal Presidency.

Again as per the Government of India Act, 1935, the area was made Partially Excluded under which only with the concurrence of the Governor, Acts of the Provincial or Central Legislature would be applicable to Darjeeling District. This arrangement continued till Independence.

The above mentioned facts show how Darjeeling and Dooars were administered separately and kept outside the influence and purview of the Provincial Government of Bengal

Though the above arrangements were there, the people of these areas

irrespective of the caste, tribe, race, language, jointly demanded separation from the Bengal Province.

1. In 1907, the Hill people of Darjeeling submitted a memorandum to Morley-Minto Reforms demanding a separate administrative set-up.
2. In 1917 The Hillmens Association submitted a memorandum to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, the Secretary of State of India and the Viceroy for the creation of a separate administrative unit comprising the Darjeeling District and adjoining Jalpaiguri District.
3. In 1929, the Hillmen Association again raised the demand before the Simon Commission.
4. In 1930, a joint petition was submitted by Hillmen's Association, Gorkha Officers' Association and the Kurseong Gorkha Library to the Secretary of State of India, Sir Samuel Hoare for separation from the Province of Bengal.
5. In 1941, the Hillmen's Association under the Presidentship of Shri R.N.Sinha urged the Secretary of State of India Lord Petrick Lawrence to exclude Darjeeling from the Province of Bengal and make it a Chief Commissioner's Province.
6. In 1943, The All India Gorkha League demanded that the District of Darjeeling together with Dooars be separated from Bengal and included in Assam Province under its call "Assam Chalo".
7. In 1947, to be precise on 6.4.1947, the undivided Communist Party of India submitted a memorandum to the Constituent Assembly with copies to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Vice-President of the Interim Government and Liaquat Ali Khan, Finance Minister, Interim Government, demanding the formation of Gorkhasthan comprising Darjeeling District, Sikkim and Nepal. In the memorandum it is written "in the opinion of the Communist Party of India, the District of Darjeeling belongs to the Gorkhas and it is their homeland".

(b) Post-Independence----

India became Independent on 15.8.1947. Darjeeling and the Dooars became part of West Bengal. The wishes of the people remained unfulfilled and the area once again became a colony ruled by new masters. There was greater deprivation, discrimination and exploitation. The joys and the fruits of the newly found freedom became a distant dream. But this did not deter the people from their

demand for a homeland.

1. In 1952, the All India Gorkha League under the Presidentship of Shri N.B.Gurung, met Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India in Kalimpong and submitted a memorandum demanding separation from Bengal.
2. In 1955, the President of District Shamik Sangh, Shri Daulat Das Bokhim, submitted a memorandum to the Chairman, State Reorganisation Commission, camp Raj Bhawan, Darjeeling, demanding formation of a new state comprising Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar Districts.
3. In 1968, Darjeeling District Congress Committee passed a resolution to form an Autonomous Administrative set-up for Darjeeling and the same was adopted by the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee in Calcutta.
4. In 1981, Pranta Parishad under the Presidentship of Shri Indra Bahadur Rai submitted a memorandum to Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India demanding a separate state for Darjeeling and the contiguous areas.
5. In 1977 and 1981, the West Bengal Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous resolution supporting the formation of Autonomous District Council comprising Darjeeling District and contiguous areas and the same was forwarded to the Central Government with a request for consideration.
6. In 1983, CPI(M) MPs, Shri Ananda Pathak, Shri Somnath Chatterjee and Shri Samar Mukherjee moved a Private Members' Bill in the Lok Sabha for the amendment of Article 244 of the Indian Constitution to grant Autonomous District Council as proposed by the West Bengal Assembly. Again, the same Bill was moved by Shri Ananda Pathak in 1985 in the Lok Sabha where it was rejected.
7. In 1986, Shri Subhas Ghising launched a violent agitation demanding a state of Gorkhaland which culminated in the formation of the Gorkha Hill Council as per the Tripartite Agreement.
8. In the wake of strong public opinion for separation from Bengal, the Darjeeling District Congress Committee submitted a memorandum to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, for a separate state.
9. In 1998 and 1999, delegations comprising different political parties submitted memoranda to the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as well as Congress President Smt. Sonia

Gandhi for creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland.

10. In 2005, a fresh Tripartite Agreement was signed to grant Sixth Schedule status to the existing DGHC with more powers, funds and areas. This was, however, rejected vehemently by the people of Darjeeling. A fresh agitation, under the leadership of Shri Bimal Gurung was launched by the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha.

All the above facts amply prove without doubt that the demand made by different social and political organizations at different times of Pre and Post Independence History of India for the last 102 years was separation from Bengal. Formation of Gorkhaland will undo years of injustice committed by British imperialism in incorporating Darjeeling and Dooars to the Province of Bengal.

2. MISREPRESENTATION BEFORE THE SRC:-

The State Re-organisation Commission in 1956 recommended creation of 14 states on linguistic lines. The census of 1951 for Darjeeling District was mischievously manipulated by the Government of West Bengal to project the Nepali-speaking population as a miniscule minority and their by deny them states on linguistic lines. The Nepali-speaking population was shown as only 17% though the Census Officer Shri A Mitra, ICS had clearly stated that the number of Nepalis/Gorkha's was 2.90 lakhs i.e. 66%. The people of Darjeeling then were too naive and gullible to understand the implications when the dialects were being mentioned as their mother tongue. The Government of West Bengal played this card before the SRC when they visited Darjeeling in 1955 to drive home the point that the Nepalis/Gorkhas were in a minority.

Today, however, states have been created on considerations other than Linguistic. The observation of the Nehru Commission, 1928 has been so prophetic that there is a need to look into the demand for Statehood on principles other than linguistic. Geographic, economic, financial, administrative efficiency are considerations but the main consideration should be the wishes of the people linguistically subjected to by a linguistic majority.

3. IDENTITY.

The demand for Gorkhaland is basically a question of the Gorkha Indian political identity—as the spectre of “alien-ness”, “foreigners” and “evictions” continues to haunt the Indian Gorkhas even today.

Why is there this “identity crisis” for the Gorkhas despite their being Indian citizens for centuries, having either come with the territory that

became British India under various Treaties or as part of the population movement over the centuries?

Why is Gorkha Indian-ness so loosely received across the country that they have to emphasize their nationality by compounding their identity with their nationality? Why do Gorkhas have to identify themselves as “Indian Gorkhas”? Other communities do not need to do this!

Why did leaders in the past like Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel doubt our sincerity and patriotism or for that matter Prime Minister Moraji Desai call our language a “foreign” language? Even to-day responsible leaders in Bengal like Shri Ashoke Bhattacharjee and writers like Shri Sumanta Sen irresponsibly label us “outsiders”.

The solution to the “identity crisis” urgently requires that the Gorkhas be treated on the basis of equality and trust just as other citizens of this country.

The Gorkha's search for their “identity” must not be misconstrued or misinterpreted.

The Gorkhas must be recognized as equal stake-holders in the governance of the country and its future.

Recognition of Gorkha “identity” will signify their assimilation into the mainstream of Indian life and thereby further the process of nation-building. A separate state will reiterate their “Indian political identity” and their Indian-ness.

4. DEPRIVATION/DISCRIMINATION:-

The politically awakened Gorkhas have now realized how, for the past sixty plus years they have been deprived and discriminated against in all the spheres by the West Bengal Government. Indian Gorkhas feel like second-class citizens. Their self-respect, pride and dignity has been hurt, there is a feeling of neglect and frustration at being wronged.

(a) SOCIO-CULTURAL ENTITY

The Indian Gorkhas having a distinct socio-cultural entity and concentrated in contiguous districts of North Bengal are fighting for the formation of a separate State within the Indian Union in order to preserve, protect and promote their distinct identity. The Gorkhas, Bhutias and the Lepchas have a social, cultural and linguistic affinity with the tribals of the Dooras region i.e. Santhals, Uraons, Mundas, Totos, Rabhas, Mechey, and Raj bangshis. Nepali is their lingua-franca and is spoken throughout the length and breadth of Dooras.

Instances of cross-cultural interconnection and inter-racial marriages are aplenty.

There are remarkable affinities too in respect of their rites and rituals. Among the Santhals there is no dowry system similar to that of the Gorkhas. Their family pattern and their gastronomic habits are also akin. Animism or Shamanism is the cult of the inhabitants of Dooars as of a great bulk of the Gorkha people. All their festivals are related to the worship of nature.

The demand, when fulfilled will ensure the protection of the Gorkha's distinct socio-cultural identity. It will bring minority communities like ours into the mainstream and inculcate a sense of belonging.

(b) LINGUISTIC:-

The West Bengal Government imposed Bengali language compulsorily as the Official Language all over Bengal including Darjeeling District. All political parties launched an agitation against this imposition in 1961. Finally, the Government relented and made Nepali the second Official Language in the Hills of Darjeeling. Even now, Officers from the Hills are required to pass Bengali language test for confirmation of services whereas officers from the plains are awarded Rs. 1500/- for passing in Nepali language test.

Despite Nepali being the Official Language in the Hills, many important documents are still published in Bengali.

Barring North Bengal University and Calcutta University, other Universities in Bengal have not introduced Nepali as a Language at the Under-Graduate or the Post-Graduate levels.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE:-

Immediately after Independence, the West Bengal Government headed by Dr. B.C.Roy abolished the system of nomination of members to District Boards and Municipalities except Darjeeling. Despite the representation made by the people to the Chief Minister, the system of nomination ensured the control by a certain community, thereby depriving the local majority community direct participation for a long time.

Unlike in other Districts where the Government appoints the District Magistrate, in Darjeeling District the Government appointed a Deputy Commissioner who wielded more powers and authority over Khas lands, Bazars, District Boards, Municipalities etc.

Special Central Assistance given by the Central Government for the

accelerated development of Hill Areas are always released at the fag end of the financial year after being utilized by the State Govt for its own purpose. Many times these have been diverted to Siliguri for setting up the Himul Milk Factory, Kanchan Fruit Processing Factory, Himul Cattle Feed Factory and even the Kanchanjunga stadium, thus depriving the Hills.

(d) ECONOMIC:-

Darjeeling and Dooars have been economically exploited and neglected. The two major sources of sustenance –Tea and Tourism are marked by deplorable conditions. Whatever resources that are accrued are transferred. Forests are depleted. Cinchona is in shambles. The Toy Train-a Heritage has no local stake-holders.

The Government has made no concerted effort to reopen the large number of sick and closed Tea garden in the Dooars and Darjeeling. Tourism, on which so many families depend for their livelihood is in a state of neglect due to lack of infrastructure and proper planning. The rulers and bureaucrats in Kolkata have never understood and appreciated the disposition of the people in the Hills and Dooars and the dynamics of the region.

(e) EDUCATION:-

Higher Education:-

In comparison to the plains, the Government has not been encouraging enough in terms of establishing new Colleges. Starting new Colleges in Bijanbari, Sonada and Mirik were politically motivated. The demand to start a new College in Darjeeling town has gone unheeded.

The Colleges, which are affiliated to the University of North Bengal have no autonomy to function on lines that are suitable to the Hills because of University norms, directives and interference. Appointments are political-biased. NET/SLET qualified hill candidates have little chance of selection if they do not have the blessings of a particular party. No permanent principal has been appointed to Darjeeling Government College and Southfield Womens College in Darjeeling.

The large number of vacancies have not been filled by the College Service Commission and the Public Service Commission. Post-graduate courses in various subjects have not been introduced. The Government has established two new Universities in Malda and

Midnapore but despite the long-standing demand for a Hill University, our plea has gone to deaf ears.

Secondary/Primary:-

The condition in Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools are not conducive for imparting quality education. Though the DGHC was handed over the responsibility to administer these schools, the Government cannot absolve its responsibility in ensuring proper functioning of the Education Department. As a result, to-day there is a major problem of contractual teachers.

To cater to drop-out students, the Education Ministry set up Rabindra Mukta Vidhayalaya where the medium of instruction is Bengali. This is gross injustice to Nepali and Hindi speaking students.

TECHNICAL/MEDICAL/VOCATIONAL:-

The Government has never been favourable towards our need for Technical Institutions. There are neither Medical Colleges nor any Vocational Institution to cater to the need of our student community.

For these our students have to go outside. Why this denial?

Are our students incapable of being doctors or engineers? This neglect has been the root cause for our youth going astray and the “brain drain”. Besides, there is no reservation for Hill students in Medical, Engineering, Management and Technical Colleges. Similarly there are no reservations in State Civil Services.

(f) HEALTH

The State Health Services in Darjeeling and Dooars is nothing to write home about. It is marked by total neglect. Darjeeling, being the District Headquarter does not cater to the emergency health needs. There are no ICUs. For any major health problem patients have to be rushed down to Siliguri. The Sadar Hospital has no provision for CT-scans. Darjeeling has no Trauma Care Centre, Neuro Surgeons, Psychiatry Department, Research Centres, specialists MRIs etc.

The people of the Hills have been denied these basic health amenities. The Health Centers in the villages and remote places are non-functional due to lack of medicines or the non-availability of compounders and Doctors.

5. OPPRESSED AND MARGINALISED

The Gorkhas and the Adivasis have been subjected to “the tyranny of the majority” in West Bengal. The West Bengal Government's policy has always been of gross neglect, lack of concern, oppression and studied marginalization. This disrespect for the Gorkhas and the Adivasis has caused a deep sense of alienation and frustration.

(a) DELIMITATION:-

The desire and the hope of the Hill people to elect their representative to the Lok Sabha and increase the number of MLAs in the State Assembly were belied when their plea before the Delimitation Commission, 2002 that the Chopra MLA Constituency of North Dinajpur District be replaced by the Mal Constituency where there is a substantial number of Nepali-speaking population, was rejected at the behest of the Marxists. The Commission also ignored the demand for more representation in the State Assembly for Darjeeling Hills.

(b) GRANTS:-

One wonders why Siliguri, a sub-division of Darjeeling receives more grants and financial assistance than Darjeeling, a District with a separate administrative set-up?

(c) NORTH BENGAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL:-

Darjeeling, being a part of North Bengal, is not included in the North Bengal Council. Why this discrimination?

(d) SILIGURI-JALPAIGURI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:-

What is the rationality of constituting the Siliguri-Jalpaiguri Development Authority when Jalpaiguri is a separate District and Siliguri is a sub-division of Darjeeling? The Development Authority should have been with Darjeeling!

(e) DARJEELING GORKHA HILL COUNCIL-A TROJAN HORSE.

The Darjeeling Hill Council set up by the West Bengal Government in 1988 under a State Act, in its 20 years of existence has proved beyond doubt that it was a “Trojan Horse” of the Leftist Government of West Bengal.

The DGHC failed miserably “to satisfy the aspirations of the easily identifiable people”. Despite its long tenure the DGHC did not provide regional autonomy to the Hills. Its total failure is evident in the fact that the West Bengal Govt tried desperately to replace it with an institution under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Despite the assurance that “the Government will make all out efforts to implement the agreement both in letter and spirit /the DGHC was formed structurally weak and financially crippled.” It is totally dependent on the State which itself is heavily in debt and has no independence to raise and mobilize its own resources.

At the same time the West Bengal Government truncated the Darjeeling District by creating an institution known as the SILIGURI MAHUKUMA PARISHAD, an intermediate tier of the Panchayat but elevated it to the status of Zilla Parishad. Such an Institution is found no where else in India as Article 243B does not provide for an intermediate tier to be given the status , power and responsibility of a Zilla Parishad. It is against the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

Besides this, the Government of West Bengal has not conducted elections since 1989 to constitute Panchayat Samitis, the intermediate tier, in the Hills. This is a violation of Article 243E of the Constitution. The West Bengal Government has also not held elections since 2004 to the Gram Panchayats in the Hills.

Instead of restoring the three tier Panchayats in the District of Darjeeling the West Bengal Government is keen on resurrection of the DGHC with more powers and funds so that its fiefdom in the Hills is protected. It is interesting to note that the present DGHC has no elected representatives of the people as elections to the DGHC have not been held since 2004.

The people of Darjeeling want the DGHC Act to be repealed and this demand was raised by the GJMM in writing to the State Government and the Union Government. This issue was also raised at the two Tripartite Meetings in New Delhi. The GJMM has also demanded the restoration of the Three-tier Panchayat System as envisaged in the Constitution.

6. STRATEGIC LOCATION :-

- (a) **Siliguri Corridor-** The Siliguri corridor known as the “Chicken’s Neck” is a strategic gateway to North East. The 'corridor' extends length wise 200 kilometres approximately with the width between 10 to 50 kilometres. This peculiar geographical configuration places the

North Eastern states of the country at a disadvantage for lack of strategic depth. The only road link to North East i.e. NH-31 and 31 C and the Northeast railways runs through this corridor connecting the mainland with the Northeastern region. Some of the vital installation like Bagdogra Airport, Hasimara airfield and oil pipelines are also located in this strategic area. Siliguri shares international borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

It is observed that a large number of Bangladeshis are settling in Siliguri area continuously since 1947. They are treated as vote banks by the ruling party in Bengal. All of them procure ration cards easily and enter their names in the voter lists in collusion with the ruling party. In the process, the Gorkha community which used to be in majority earlier have been gradually reduced to a minority. This demographic soft assault from a neighbouring country is a direct security threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the Nation.

By creating a separate border state of Gorkhaland, this demographic soft assault by illegal immigrants and extremist from neighbouring countries can be effectively checked as the Gorkhas of India have always proved their unstinting loyalty to the nation.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF EAST-WEST NATIONAL HIGHWAY CORRIDOR ROUTE PROJECT BY THE NHAI IN NORTH BENGAL-DOOARS AREA.

In the Golden Quadrilateral National Highway Project sanctioned by the Government of India, 366 kms of the East-West corridor falls in North Bengal area starting from Dalkhola in Bihar border and ending at Sankosh river bridge near Assam border. The Project originally approved is for widening of the existing NH 31 and NH 31C to four lane which is easier and cost effective. National Highway 31 passes through strategically important Siliguri corridor which is the gateway to the North-East.

It is learnt that the Government of West Bengal arbitrarily changed the Highway to a new alignment from Ghoshpukur via Fulbari to Falakata in South Jalpaiguri District on the pretext that the East-West corridor will be shorter by 24 kms. This new alignment proposal of the West Bengal Government is too close to the Bangladesh border whereas the original alignment proposal to widen the existing NH 31 and 31C passing through the “chicken neck” i.e. Siliguri and Dooars corridor is considered strategically more secure. Former Members of Parliament from Darjeeling, Sikkim, Dooars and Bodoland have strongly objected to this new alignment as

proposed by the West Bengal Government. They have requested to stick to the originally approved alignment of NHAI.

It is learnt that the Ministry of Shipping and Highway approved/sanctioned the new alignment starting from Goshpukur joining SH12A via Fulbari, Mainaguri, Dhupguri, Falakata and Sonapore as arbitrarily proposed by the West Bengal Government in its letter DO No.244-CS/2006 dated 8.8.2006 addressed to the Chairman NHAI. It is observed that the new alignment is closer to Bangladesh border which will further facilitate easier illegal immigration from Bangladesh to Dooars area in North Bengal, which would adversely impact the demographic profile of the Gorkha and Adivasi people of Dooars.

It is suggested that the entire issue should be re-examined by the highest authorities of the Government of India as it has significant implications in terms of National security.

Only a separate state of Gorkhaland can act as a check against communist neo-colonial expansionist politics and prevent the North-East from being carved out as a client state. Only Gorkhaland can be a “buffer” in relation to the neighbouring states.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT:-

The recent Cyclone Aila clearly exposed the poor preparedness of the State Government and the District Administration in taking preventive measures to minimize the loss of human lives and properties. The Government's lack of understanding of the physical terrain of the Hills or its casual attitude needs to be rectified. The Disaster Management Plan of Darjeeling should be recast and streamlined.

7. CONTRIBUTION OF THE GORKHAS:-

It is high time that the contribution of Indian Gorkhas in nation-building be acknowledged by all. Their identity must be recognised. They fought for British India for 200 years and have fought many wars in defence of India's sovereignty. The track record of Indian Gorkhas, when comes to preservation and strengthening of the unity and integrity of the country, is second to none.

How else can one explain the fact that the statehood demand, with over 100 years of history, has never mutated itself into a secessionist

movement, inspite of an environment that can be described as very conducive for such a venture.

The answer lies in the patriotic spirit of the Indian Gorkhas who fought alongside their other Indian brothers and sisters to secure the freedom of the country. From Shahid Durga Malla, whose awe inspiring statue stands in the premises of Parliament, to other freedom fighters like Dal Bahadur Giri, Lal Bahadur Basnet, Lachuman Limbu, Bhim Bahadur Khadka, Narbir Lama, Tej Bahadur Subba, Digbir Singh Ramudamu, Jangbir Sapkota, Gaga Tsering, Bhakta Bahadur Pradhan, Pushpa Kumari Ghising, Putali Maya Devi, Pratiman Singh Lama, Harish Chhetri and Helen Lepcha.

This spirit of nationalism over time has been tempered by years and years of service by Indian Gorkhas in the Indian Army. From the 1962 Chinese aggression to the Indo-Pak War in 1971 to the Kargil ingression, Gorkhas have been in the forefront to fight for the country and safeguard its border. Indian gorkhas have left no stone unturned to fulfil their responsibilities. A separate state will boost the morale of the Gorkha troops.

8. SMALLER STATES:-

Smaller states will bring about administrative efficiency. A separate state of Gorkhaland can be a corrective against disparities and imbalances in the region.

9. ARTICLE 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION :-

The provisions in Article 3 clearly implies that the boundaries of states are not immutable. This was seen in the creation of 3 new states in the year 2000. Also in it there is an explicit recognition of the fact that every community with different culture and linguistic background has the inherent and inalienable right to determine itself as a state; to develop itself according to its own ethos and pace, give the people the opportunity to taste and experience the delicacy of democratic process, thereby help enrich the cultural heritage of the community.

Therefore the demand is an expression of the belief in the best democratic tradition that the right to a state of our own within the Indian Union is an inherent and inalienable right. It is therefore not a matter of acceding to the demand condescendingly but giving what is rightfully ours.

10. MARXIST CONSPIRACY:-

All these years, the Marxists have conspired to dilute the Gorkha population in the Dooars and Siliguri region. Under the patronage of the CPI(M) illegal immigrants from Bangladesh have settled comfortably in Siliguri and other parts of North Bengal. To-day, it is they that pose as patriots and defenders of India's territorial integrity. ***All should remember that Gorkhas have shed far more blood for India than most other communities.*** As victims of centuries-old oppression, inequality and injustice, the Gorkhas struggle for recognition, freedom, dignity and justice must be looked into dispassionately. Gorkhas must be given greater space and share in the decision-making process.

So, for how long are the Indian Gorkhas to suffer in the hands of exploiters and oppressors? The Gorkhas, have with all humility, accepted what was doled out by the Government of West Bengal. All the so called “development” that the Government has undertaken in the Hills and Dooars has invariably taken on the character of colonial exploitation in the interest of Bengal. The search for our identity will only end in a separate state for all Gorkhas.

July, 2009

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PROFILE OF PROPOSED STATE OF GORKHALAND

The total area of the proposed State of Gorkhaland comprising the present Darjeeling District and the contiguous area of Dooars in North Jalpaiguri district is approximately **6450 square kilometres** .

The Total population of the proposed State of Gorkhaland is approximately **30 lakhs** as per 2001 census.

The three sub-divisions of Darjeeling district i.e. Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong are hilly areas whereas Siliguri sub-division is in the plains. The district of Darjeeling lies between 26°31' and 27 °13' North latitude and between 87° 89' and 88° 53' East longitude.

Similarly the contiguous area of Dooars falls in the Terai. The entire tract of Darjeeling and Dooars are primarily tea producing areas with very rich reserve forests.

Darjeeling is popularity known as “Queen of Hills”, a tourist paradise. Darjeeling produces world famous tea, known as the “Champagne of Tea”, which fetches sizable foreign exchange for the country.

Darjeeling has got a huge power generation potential. Darjeeling is also famous for its “Toy Train” which has been accorded the status of International Heritage by UNESCO. Darjeeling is strategically located in the North East corner of the country sharing international boundaries with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet as shown in the map enclosed. The majority community in Darjeeling are Gorkhas. Other minority communities are Bhutias, Lepchas and other.

Dooars, which is contiguous to Darjeeling area is in the foothills of eastern Himalayas bordering Bhutan. Tea Gardens form the backbone of economy of Dooars. The vast region of Dooars is the nerve to a large number of ethnic communities. The colourful rituals and unique lifestyles of the Nepalis, Uraons, Mundas, Totos, Rabhas, Mechey, Santhals and Rajbangshis make it a veritable paradise for lovers of ethnic and ecotourism.

