

Research Article

Land Question, Ethnicity and the Gorkhaland Movement: The Political Economy Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The demand for the separate state of Gorkhaland by the people of Darjeeling Hills and adjacent Dooars region, in the state of West Bengal, is probably one of the oldest unfulfilled demand in Indian subcontinent today. Scholars have attempted to understand and interpret the movement from diverse perspective but what seems to be unaccounted in the existing literatures is the political economy understanding of the movement. This paper attempts to fill this gap. The paper tries to locate the identity question to the right over land of the people in which they have historically resided and toiled. The paper argues that not only scholars but even those who were/are leading the movement have looked at the two (identity and land) separately and these have obstructed them to have nuanced understanding of the movement that partially, if not entirely, lead to compromise of the issue at least on the part of its leadership.

Keywords: Gorkhas, Darjeeling, Underdevelopment, Marginalisation, Ethnic identity, Nationality, Neo-Colonial

INTRODUCTION

The demand for separate state by the 'Gorkhas' is probably one of the oldest unfulfilled demands in the Indian subcontinent today. The demand sprang even prior to the formation of India as a new nation state. However, the demand has been misunderstood and misrepresented by 'Indian ruling classes' and its

‘intelligentsia’. Although the demand was almost unknown to the rest of the nation, it came to limelight, both nationally and internationally, when it took the violent shape in the 80s of last century. It drew the attention of large number of scholars who in turn tried to understand the various intricacies of the movement from various perspectives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Two views seem to have dominated and occupied the analysis of scholars on the Gorkhaland issue. One set of scholar locates the movement in the ‘underdevelopment’ of the region and others in the recognition of Gorkha ‘ethnic identity’. Datta (1991) is of the view that the ‘capitalist’ model of development along with the ‘feudalism’ in India has created the ‘regional imbalance’ in the country, which has either directly or indirectly erected discontent among the ethnic groups. The increasing interest and the intervention of ‘imperialist’ countries facilitates the middle class of such region to take advantage of the situation and mobilise the masses in the ethnic line in their prospect to become regional bourgeoisie and this, according the Datta, is what explains the Gorkhaland Movement.

Ganguly (2005) argues that the endemic poverty and the underdevelopment convince the minority ethnic groups (Gorkhas) that they are being deprived by majority community that controls the state government and the way out of this is the creation of the state entering into direct relationship with the central government for guidance and assistance. Dasgupta (1992) also relates the Gorkhaland movement to the general problem of the uneven development of different nationalities in Indian subcontinent. McHenry (2007) intends to correlate the economic inequality to that of the separate statehood demand and argues that it makes much sense in case of Gorkhaland movement also. Subba (1992) opines that the Gorkhaland movement was born out of ‘neo-colonial’ system, where Gorkhas were for long kept politically voiceless, culturally insecure and economically deprived and even their cultural heritage and demographic figures were misrepresented if not temper with. The development awards were doled out to them sparingly, after conforming their loyalty.

There is no disagreement about the implication of the neo-colonial setup on Gorkhas community, but it is also doubtful to wholly situate the Gorkhaland movement as the byproduct of neo-colonial system. One would wonder what explains the demand in the colonial times. According to Giri (2008), lack of development as the sole cause of Gorkhaland movement is the conspiracy of the ruling classes that will only strengthen the current crisis. The developmental issue is one of the causes for rebellion, but the Gorkhaland movement is about the identity for the Gorkhas, opines Giri (2008). Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJM, 2009), the forerunner of the present phase (since 2007) of Gorkhaland movement in its leaflet writes – *the*

demand for Gorkhaland is basically a question of the Gorkha Indian Political Identity – as the specter of “alien-ness”, “foreigners” and “eviction” continues to hunt the Indian Gorkhas even today. Although GJM (2009) rightly points out the problem faced by Gorkhas in India but emphasises more into the question of economic ‘deprivations’ and ‘discrimination’, which later becomes the main agenda in the present phase of movement. The statehood demand for the recognition of Gorkha Indian Political Identity is what makes the statehood demand ‘unique’ unlike many other statehood demands of Telengana, Vidarba, Bundelkhand and so on, which have solely resulted owing to economic backwardness/uneven development.

The economic factor plays a vital role and is the vehicle of the social change, as Marx (2010) would have put it. But Marx (1973: 41) also warns us not to confuse ‘appearance’ with ‘essence and for him it is essence, the organic relationship that underpins the phenomena, that gives us the rich totality of many determinant and the relationships. In the study of economic aspect of the Gorkhaland movement, the ‘appearance’ has preoccupied the prime importance than the ‘essence’. Thus, most of the studies conclude with ‘uneven development’, ‘economic inequality’, ‘regional imbalance’ and so on as the root cause of the movement. These analyses situate the Gorkhaland movement in the general problem (underdevelopment/ economic backwardness) faced by the people in the Indian subcontinent.

What has remained completely unaccounted in the existing literature is the ‘land question’ (Sarkar, 2010) in which the Gorkhas have historically lived and toiled, and upon which the whole social, economic, linguistic and cultural development of the Gorkhas nestle. Not only have the scholars, but even the leaders also who emphasise more on the Gorkha ethnic identity of the movement have failed to understand this fundamental relationship. The land that historically belonged to one ethnic group but lost to the other ethnic groups, at certain historical epoch, also takes away the former identity. The paper intends to link the question of land and the question of identity in order to have nuanced understanding of the movement. The Gorkhaland Movement cannot be understood without taking account of the people’s history.

HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF GORKA ETHNIC IDENTITY

The word ‘Gorkha’ has been used deceptively by the intelligentsia of Indian ruling classes and most un/fortunately by the left front government of West Bengal during its tenure of 34 years rule in the state in order to term them (Gorkha) as foreigners who have migrated from Nepal in the second half of the nineteenth century (Dasgupta, 1999; Government of West Bengal (GoWB), 1986). However, some scholars argues that this is not wholly correct because according to historical evidence they have also emigrated from various places in India like Rajputana,

Kannauj, Chittore, Bengal, Mithila and Orissa during the Muslim power in India (Subba, 1992).

The labelling of the Gorkhas as a foreigner is based on the observation made by the two British officials who found 100 Lepchas hut in the region (Government of West Bengal (GoWB), 1986). Giri (2008) rightly challenge this contestation arguing that the duo was not trained historian and also they did not venture the whole region during their visit. This is for obvious reason that they had come to the region for specific task of resolving the frontier dispute between Nepal and Sikkim (Bomzon, 2008) The presence of the Gorkhas in the region date back to even before the formation of the Sikkim which is found in the historic transcript 'history of Sikkim'¹ by Maharajah (King) Thaodup Namgyal and Maharani (Queen) Yeshey Dolma written during their imprisonment by the East India Company (Wangyal, 2008).

Historically, the word 'Gorkha' has evolved to connote all the people who are associated to the region irrespective of their race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, culture, language and so on. This is mainly because of two reasons: (1) the British started recruiting in the British Gorkha army irrespective of their ethnicity. In other words, not only Chettri, Thakur, Gurung, Mangar, who are the real Gorkhas, but also Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Sunwar or any other tribe were recruited in the army and acquired the Gorkha identity. (2) Over the period of time, through the social production and social interaction among various ethnic groups of different origin gave rise to the Nepali language, also known as Khas Kura or Gorkhali, which is distinct from the Nepali language spoken in Nepal. The communities like Lepchas, Bhutia and Tibetan took Gorkha language for communication and this syncretic development of the language served as a foundation for the emergence of Gorkha ethnic identity (Ghosh, 2009: 11). All this development has lead the various groups of different ethnic origin to identify themselves as one, that is, the Gorkha Community. Therefore, at present, the term Gorkha is used to denote any of the various people living within the confine of the Gorkha territories (Parmer, 1990: 11).

PROCESS OF ALIENATION FROM LAND

The region that the Gorkhas are demanding to carve out of Bengal and create the separate state was never a part of India. The territory historically belonged to Sikkim². This fact was well taken and acknowledged by the Government of West

¹The manuscript was later translated by Kazi Daosamdub and Published in the form of book 'History of Sikkim'.

²Some scholars argues that Kalimpong subdivision of the present day Darjeeling District was part of the Bhutan, but according to some scholar Bhutan took Kalimpong from Sikkim and later same was taken back by British from Bhutan.

Bengal in the Information Document (Government of West Bengal (GoWB), 1986). In order to nullify the democratic demand of Gorkhaland, the left intellectuals and the ruling intelligentsia emphasises more on immigration that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century (see Dasgupta, 1999). However, what they audaciously strive to forget is the history.

Around 1777, King Prithvinarayan Shah of Nepal invaded and captured not only Sikkim which includes present day Darjeeling district and the Dooars region but also the kingdoms of Kumaon (present day Uttarakhand), Kingdom of Garhwal (present day Uttarakhand) in the west and much of the Terai region of the south to the Nepali Kingdom. The Gorkhas remained masters of Sikkim, beyond the Teesta, while the Rajah (King) took flight and all Sikkimites were compelled to take refuge in the valleys of the river, hills and caves, suffering privations and hardship (Namgyal and Dolma 1908 cited in Wangyal, 2008).

The Nepal ceded the entire captured territories to the British, following the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814–1816 in the Treaty of Sagauli on 4 March, 1816. Therefore, it is argued that the Gorkhas came with their land (Bomzon, 2008) not the other way around, as has been argued by many scholars, that they started pouring into the region in the middle of the 19th century after the British took over the control of the region in the form of grant from the Rajah of Sikkim³ in 1835. It is true that the many from the neighbouring region of Nepal started influxing in to the region, but it was also the time that the British started developing some of the industries such as tea, cinchona plantation and the infrastructure such as road, railway tracks, town halls, houses for which they needed large number of labour forces (Roy, 2012). Hence, there was a compulsion for the British to encourage able-bodied people's immigration in serving their own purpose (Bomzon, 2008; Sarkar, 2014). Thus, the present day Darjeeling and the Dooars region is the finest creation from the blood, toil, tears, sweat and sleepless nights of all people residing in the region before or after the British took hold of the region. This part of the story is sadly missing in the work of scholars and governmental reports.

During the British rule although the region was administered first from the Bihar province and later from the Bengal province the region enjoyed the status of 'non-regulated area', that is the rules and laws that were applicable to the rest of India

³It is also argued by some of the scholars that the grant was conditional upon three demands that the King Chogyal put in front of British which never got fulfilled. It is also said that the King gave a short deed of grant which did not define the boundaries of the land to be handed over. Lloyd produced his own deed on which the King stamped his *lal mohar* (Royal Seal) (see Wangyal, 2008). It was only when British started building roads and house the king come to know about the area in the deed that Lloyd produced and in which he put his royal seal after which he protested and the British sent the compensation of one double barreled gun, a rifle, 20 yards of red broad cloths and two shawls.

were not automatically applicable to the region, until 1935 when it becomes partially⁴ the part of Bengal and completely after British left India despite the continuous demand and struggle for self-rule at various juncture even prior to India's 'independence'. Complete merger of the region to the Bengal happened without consultation, opinion of the people and without explanation to the people of the region.

Another blunder that was carried out by the new rulers of new nation is by entering into the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (31 July 1950), which made Gorkhas the reciprocal citizen of the country⁵. All these brought the Dark Age in the history of Gorkhas, first, by making the region integral part of the Bengal and second, by alienating them from their land constitutionally in which they have shed blood and sweat for long time.

SARDAR CLASS, WORKING CLASS AND THE ETHNIC MOBILISATION

Darjeeling is located to the north of West Bengal of India with an area of 3,149 square kilometres. According to Census report in 2011, the district had the population of 1,842,034 out of which almost 50% were female. The region also shares the international borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and few kilometres away from the border shared by Sikkim and China. The region also connects the whole of northeastern state of Indian subcontinent. Hence, the region is also known as 'chicken neck'.

Apart from its geo-political importance, the Darjeeling is internationally known as the producer and the exporter of the world famous 'Darjeeling Tea' and also has gained reputation as the favourite tourist destination because of its beauty. Thus, the tea industry and the tourism form the backbone of the hills economy. However, the tourism is confined to few spot and is a seasonal occupation benefits accruing few. The tea industry thus is the main economic activity of the people of the region. Over 175 square kilometres of the total area in the region is occupied by 87 tea estates producing over 10 to 12 million kilograms of tea annually, and employment of more than 50 per cent people of the district⁶ depends on it as the main source of livelihood.

⁴Only with the concurrence of the Governor the provincial or central legislature would be applicable to the region.

⁵Article 7 of the Treaty reads 'The Governments of India and Nepal agree to grant, on a reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of a similar nature'. Article 10 of the Treaty also mentions, 'the treaty will remain in force until it is terminated by either party by giving one year's notice'. However, there has been continuous demand of the repeal of the Treaty from the political parties of Nepal such as United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist which they consider the treaty unequal but till date not a single step has been taken.

⁶<http://darjeeling.gov.in/darj-tea.html>.

Although the Darjeeling tea is considered as one of the most expensive tea in the international market because of its distinct flavour but the plight of people for centuries out of whose blood and sweat this flavour has been made possible is little known to the outside world. The people of the region had great expectation and hope from the freedom struggle of India which, they thought, would emancipate them from the claws of British exploitation and will allow to enjoy the fruits of the land, where they have resided and toiled for centuries. However, their commitment and sacrifice went in vain as the new ruler maintained the same colonial map and the region, that enjoyed the status of 'non-regulated area' during the colonial time, became integral part of West Bengal against their aspiration.

The ownership⁷ of the tea estates⁸ and the huge tract of land covered by the forest got transferred to the West Bengal State Government, thus accrues significant revenue by leasing tea estate and cinchona plantation land to the private players who are mostly foreign and Indian nationals. The colonial power had already set the stage for the new comer⁹ to extract maximum surplus by providing the housing inside the estate for the workers. Wages in the Darjeeling and the Dooars tea estates have been kept at the minimum subsistence level of Rs 90¹⁰ per day which is far below the wages of their counterpart in the state of Kerala which is Rs 254 per day.

Tea garden has witnessed series of violent struggle by the workers against the owner and its management for basic economic right. Consequently, large number of tea gardens has been closed. In 1951, the number of tea garden in the hills was 138, but today it has decline to 86. Workers of the closed tea garden collectively tried to manage and run the abandoned tea garden, but the state sold the same to some private player in 2006 (Bomzon, 2008). Locked out or the closing down of the garden has become the popular instrument of lowering wages at the hand of owners. The tea garden owners have greatly violated even the minimum right prescribed by the Plantation Labor Act of 1951. In some cases, the tea estate is shut down throughout the year and opens only during the plucking season, and after harvesting it's shut down again denying the basic right such as ration, medical facility, bonus and so on, which the state is very much aware. There are instances that the workers of the closed down/locked out tea estate have requested the tea management to run the estate even at the costs of losing all their statutory right and the minimum wage offered by the management and the owner. Gothoskar

⁷Here ownership is used in terms of transferring the title.

⁸The area under tea cultivation before independence was more than 20,000 ha.

⁹Some tea garden is also run by the state government of West Bengal, but there is not much difference whosoever runs the estate. There are also owners who have been in business since from the colonial times.

¹⁰It includes low quality ration and fuels. The new wages has been increased from Rs 67 to Rs 90 in 2011.

(2012) rightly argues that this is how the several generations after generation of workers, who are mostly disadvantage section of the society, have been kept under starvation and poverty.

In 2013, 95 tea garden workers of Dhekhlapara tea estate have threatened of committing suicide owing to starvation in their letter to the state Chief Minister. Baburam Dewan of Chongtong tea estate at Darjeeling committed suicide in protest of the exploitation of worker in the estate at the hand of management and the owner. No necessary step has been taken up by the state instead align with the owners, and the management thought out the history of workers struggle in the region.

Similarly, the workers of the cinchona plantation have also been facing the similar problem. According to the leaders of the movement, industry was flourishing in the colonial times but was completely neglected after the inclusion of the region in West Bengal. There is a constant attempt of the State to privatize the industry, which in turn has created the feeling of insecurity and havoc among the workers. The process has already taken its course as some of the cinchona plantation has been sold to the National Hydro Power Project without people's concern. Significant number of population has been settling in the forest area of the region over the centuries. Before the advent of British in the region, whole region was covered by forest and the setting up of some of the industry and the development of the infrastructural and developmental project, such as roads, railways, town halls and so on, led to deforestation. Still 38% of the region is covered by forestland. Different colonial act, treaties and 'modernisation process' snatched the ownership right from the people, who hitherto heavily depended on forest for livelihood and enjoyed the fruits of the forest.

The commonality among the people of tea garden, cinchona plantation and the forest region, which constitutes more than 70 per cent of the population of the district, is that they have no right over land. A tea garden worker from the Ring Tang tea estate of the Kurseong subdivision says, *We don't have any right as such. If there is a hole at the rooftop and if it rains and gets inside house. We have to take permission from the management even if we have sufficient money to repair it.* A resident of the Bagora Forest area of the Kurseong subdivision uttered similar anxiety, *if the Forest department comes tomorrow and asks us to vacate the place*¹¹. Signing the treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950 between the Indian Government and the Nepali Kingdom, which made the people 'outsider/foreigner' and the eviction of large number of Gorkhas from various parts of northeastern state of the Indian subcontinent only strengthens this belief.

¹¹These are the conversation that I had with some of the people in the region. This is the general view that exist among the people of the region.

The alienation of large number of people from their own land installed the feelings of belonging nowhere, hence identity crisis. The shared memory of the past in the territory facilitates the diverse groups to come under a common umbrella (Gorkha) to reclaim the right over the land at the corridor of the power that be. It is precisely because of this reason the people of these regions actively participates in the movement and the whole region becomes the battle zone. The petty bourgeoisie or sardar class¹² of the region historically have played an important role in bringing these diverse groups under one umbrella ‘Gorkhas’ and install the dream of their own ‘homeland’¹³ where their children could freely play and no one would evict them (Subba, 1992).

CHRONICLES OF GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

The fight to bring back the lost land dates back to 1907 when the ‘Hills Men Association’ submitted the memorandum demanding the separate administrative unit. However, the British did not entertain the demand put forwarded by the association. After the first unsuccessful attempt, several attempts were made both by the association and All India Gorkha League without the desired outcome. Interestingly, the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) even submitted a memorandum to the constituent assembly in 1947 demanding the formation of ‘Gorkhasthan’ – an independent nation comprising of the Darjeeling district, Nepal and Sikkim (excluding its present north district) in the line of Pakistan (Rai, 2009).

The Gorkhas actively participated in the freedom struggle of India and after the British left fresh demand for the separate state were made, but the demand was rejected in the sturdy lexis on the ground of weakening country. The undivided CPI changed its position from Gorkhasthan to the regional autonomy in the early 1950s. From 1950 until the arrival of the Subash Ghishing led Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), the demand remained at the level of Union Territory. The ground for Subash Ghishing was already made by Prantaparishad¹⁴. It was during his time the term Gorkhaland was coined. Ghishing revived the demand for separate state (now Gorkhaland) and also promised the inclusion of the Dooars region that captured the people’s imagination. The movement took the shape of violent agitation and the huge state repression was carried out both by the centre and the state governments. More than 1,200 people sacrificed their lives for the cause, but the GNLF dropped the Gorkhaland demand and compromised with Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) on 5 September 1988. What followed

¹²The sardar class is those segment of people within Gorkha community who are engaged in petty business and contracts.

¹³The word was extensively used by Subash Ghishing in his speeches in the Gorkhaland Agitation of 1988, which means their own land/land for the Gorkhas that is Gorkhaland.

¹⁴Prantaparishad, a party, was formed for the purpose of separate state for Gorkhas which failed to mobilise the masses and remained confined to the intellectual circle.

were the autocratic rule of Subash Ghishing and his sycophants under the shelter, protection and the patronage of the left front state government and the centre.

After 22 years of sleepless nights, people burst out again in 2007 when Bimal Gurung, former councilor of DGHC and the close associate of Ghishing, stood against state, centre and Ghishing's decision, of granting status of Sixth Schedule to Darjeeling district in place of existing DGHC, by demanding no more and no less than the separate state for Gorkha. Bimal Gurung formed his own party GJM in 2007 promising Gorkhas their own homeland by 10 March 2010. Consequently, large number of people rushed after Gurung and his newly formed party. However, the cause for the separate state of Gorkhaland again received set back when GJM, state and the centre agreed upon the status of *Gorkhaland Territorial Administration* (GTA) for the region in 2012.

GORKHALAND MOVEMENT AND THE COMPROMISES

Like any other nationality movement, the Gorkhaland movement has historically been lead by the petty bourgeoisie (see Stalin, 1953). They have their origin in the colonial period when they were granted huge plot of agricultural land in lieu of supply of labourer in the tea estate to the British. The sardar class started cultivating land reaping rich benefit and began to prosper along with the British (Roy, 2012). During the British rule the market for the capital of the petty bourgeois class were limited and was in the mercy of their colonial master. Tea being the main industry in the region; they could only own two tea estates out of 143 during the colonial times. This was also the time of political consciousness for this class. They knew the importance of the protected market and reacted against the colonial power for the inclusion of the Darjeeling in the Bengal and demanded the separate administrative unit with an administrator at the head of the area assisted by the executive council (Datta, 1991).

After the transfer of power and, particularly, the inclusion of the land in West Bengal, their survival became steeper. Whole region became the monopoly of the West Bengal that obstructed their development. None of the regional petty bourgeoisies could own even one estate. Bengali filled in almost all administrative posts and the managerial posts. Therefore, limited scope was left for the independent development of the regional petty bourgeoisie.

The rule under Bengal administration of the region made their capital incompetent to the big foreign and national capital in the market. The only way out from this crisis is what they find in raising the separate statehood demand. In doing so, they are able to exploit the unique history of the region and successfully unite the people on the Gorkha ethnic identity promising them own homeland. The political representative of this class, Subash Ghishing, cries, *We are stateless. We need our*

own administration. It's better to die than to remain like a slave/Gorkhas and their ceded land and territories were left at the crossroads (by British)/the past treaties and agreement of the then British government and Nepal remained neither revoked nor suspended, and thus the future status of the ethnic Gorkhas [Government of West Bengal (GoWB), 1986].

However, the question of (home) land gets lost somewhere during the agitation and the development agenda becomes the priority. Thus, after the compromise of the Gorkhaland movement in the 1980s Subash Ghishing says, *now the state government has agreed to add Gorkha in the council, the problem is over* (Roy, 2012). In the Gorkhaland movement of 2007, the GJM agreed upon with GTA. The memorandum of understanding signed by the three parties (Centre, State and GJM) in 2011 says, *this Agreement is to establish an autonomous self governing Body to administer the region so that the socio-economic, infrastructural, educational, cultural, and linguistic, development is expedited and the ethnic identity of Gorkhas established, thereby achieving all round development of the people of the region.*

The Indian ruling classes know that the region was never a part of India and also know the consequences of the instability in the region as the region connects the whole of north eastern states and shares borders with several nations. Thus, they have been planning to grant the region the status of Sixth Schedule, as the people were unhappy with DGHC setting. The Sixth Schedule and for that matter current GTA should be seen as overcoming the crises for short term¹⁵. This is precisely because it is the only ownership over land that gives the Gorkhas real identity as has been shown by past experiences.

The petty bourgeois of the region knows that the fight, with Indian ruling classes with all state mercenary at their hand, for the separate state is a difficult task as the experience of the Gorkhaland Agitation of 1988 has already proven them. However, the new administrative set becomes much viable option for their survival as the class.

CONCLUSION

The root cause of the Gorkhaland movement is not the underdevelopment or the economic negligence of the region but the struggle for bringing back the 'Land' that was lost at certain historical conjuncture. The economic backwardness or the underdevelopment of the region is the concern, but the information document of the Government of West Bengal itself suggests despite poverty in the hills, its position stands to be better than the average (in terms of various economic

¹⁵Interestingly, the Government of India was planning to grant council prior to the Gorkhaland Movement of 1980s

indicators) in the rest of the state and decidedly better than the condition in any other North Bengal district or any district on the western part of the state that is Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum or Midnapur. Only the economic backwardness is the answer for century unrest in the hills then why no such demands are cropping up from other backward regions. The developmental project cannot be panacea for the region. The real concern is the lost territory, as was pointed by Subash Ghising, therefore, the lost identity. It is the right over land, by creating separate state for Gorkhas, gives them their real ethnic (political) identity, as has been proven by history, and on which the whole social, economic, cultural, linguistic development nestles. Failing to understand these relationships would only aggravate crisis in the region.

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