

## Preface

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This book *Gorkhaland: The Dormant Volcano*, is a comprehensive account and searching analysis of the resurgent Gorkhaland agitation when it was at its peak. Mr. Subas Ghising the leader of the erstwhile Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) movement and the uncrowned monarch of the hills was thrown out by his own comrades and the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council which was formed in 1988 was rejected. The new movement was led by Bimal Gurung and his new party, the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJMM) with the renewed demand for a separate state. The hills were turbulent with the air of violence and despite repeated rounds of talk no peace agreement was possible. After about one year the entire political scenario of the state went *topsy-turvy* with the cataclysmic fall of the Left Front Government in the Assembly elections of 2011 and the installation of the coalition of the Trinamool Congress Party and the Indian National Congress Party at the helm of affairs. This had its far reaching repercussions on the Gorkhaland movement and the agreement between the centre, the state and the GJMM which had proved elusive till then, became a reality in July 2011 with the new promise of peace and development. The prospects of peace have received periodic setbacks but till date, the agreement has endured. The book has been updated with the latest developments.

The present book is the product of the findings of the UGC Major Research Project entitled *The Gorkhaland Agitation: Emergence and Resurgence: A Study in Crisis Management* which was undertaken by me as Principal Investigator in February 2010. I must begin by thanking the University Grants Commission for sanctioning and sponsoring this research project without which, the book would not have seen the light of the day.

I had to undertake a number of trips to the hills and interview the leaders of the GJMM movement as well as those of opposition parties like All India Gorkha League (AIGL), GNLF, Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists (CPRM), etc., to acquaint myself with their changing response to the rapidly changing political landscape. I found all Gorkha leaders extremely helpful and cooperative. The very fact that I had undertaken a Research Project on the Gorkha filled them with satisfaction and they extended their unfailing help to me. I am particularly indebted to Smt. Asha Gurung who arranged my interview with her husband Bimal Gurung, President of the GJMM. I also thank Dr. Harka Bahadur Chetri and Shri



Roshan Giri who were ready to give interviews whenever needed. Roshan Giri also provided some important contact numbers. Mr. Subas Ghising could not meet me in person due to ill health but sent me a wealth of documents on the GNLFF for which I am grateful. I can never forget my debt to Shri Arun Upadhyay, General Secretary of All Assam Gorkha Students Union (AAGSU) who helped me cultivate contacts with the leaders of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisang. I also remember with gratitude, the help I received from Nanda Kirati Diwan of the AAGSU who evinced keen interest in my Project. I thank from the core of my heart, Shri Pratap Khati of AIGL and D. S. Bomjan of CPRM who took the trouble to come to my hotel room in Siliguri to give interviews.

I am especially indebted to my teacher Shri Dipankar Basu for helping me cultivate important contacts, assisting in material collection and providing valuable advice. I am eternally beholden to Smt. Namrata Pariyar my Former-colleague and presently Head of the Department of Political Science, Darjeeling Government College for helping me collect samples for data analysis. Thanks are also due to Dr. Padam Nepal of St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, for the unstinted help he extended to me. Dr. Digbijoy De Sarkar, a renowned academician of North Bengal provided authentic source material of immense value which enhanced the academic quality of the work and also facilitated data collection in the most scientific way, for which no word of thanks can be adequate. My teacher Prof. Omprakash Mishra provided me the contact numbers of some important personalities whom I could interview using his reference for which I am thankful. I also cannot forget the voluntary help provided by my research scholar Oli Mohammad who was associated with one of my earlier research projects. Shri Soumitra Banerjee also deserves heartfelt thanks for providing some highly useful references which unexpectedly enriched the Project work with new inputs almost at the fag end of the study. In this connection, I must thank Shri Alok Roy and Shri Sujit Patro who provided significant information about the Tea Industry of India and the world over which imparted a new dimension to the research work.

I cannot adequately acknowledge my gratitude to the authorities of University of Kalyani for their patronage and indulgence. The then Vice Chancellor Dr. Alok K. Banerjee was a source of constant encouragement. Special thanks are due to Sri Mridul Kundu, Sri Harekrishna Das and Sri Sanjeev De for their ceaseless support which stood me in good stead. My colleagues in the department along with the office staff always extended their help and cooperation to me in every conceivable way.

I hereby take the opportunity to personally thank the 186 Gorkha and 184 non-Gorkha interviewees who answered the queries put to them via questionnaires, which engendered the primary data of this research. I also thank the expert panel of scholars, politicians and administrators who provided valuable information. The renowned MP Mr. Jaswant Singh and Former-minister of West Bengal, Dr. Manas Bhuniya spared their valuable time for me the debt for which I cannot repay. Mr. Gautam Deb, Minister for North Bengal gave a very informative interview when he was MLA from Siliguri under the Left Front regime. I must also make special mention of Justice Shyamal Sen, Chairman of the High Powered Committee who spared much of his valuable time for me and also provided useful information. He also included my name in the report of the High Powered Committee. Eminent lawyers like Shri Arunava Ghosh, Milan Dutta and Ex-Mayor KMC, Shri Bikash Bhattacharya provided copies of Court documents which are normally inaccessible and also answered my queries meticulously for which I remain grateful for ever. Mr. Birsa Tirke of Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad furnished a rich mine of material on the subject. Manas Banerjee, a journalist of North Bengal provided some contact numbers which proved to be of great help.

I also thank my publisher **A.P.H. Publishing Corporation** for undertaking to publish this book.

Finally, I thank my wife Sohini for voluntarily accepting the desultory drudgery of proof correction with exemplary equanimity and undertaking the arduous task of preparation of bibliography without being plaintively lachrymose or impatiently petulant. With the prodigious fecundity of intellect and the congregated profundity, ingenuity and perspicacity of thought, she elevated the project work to a qualitatively higher pedestal.

Though all care has been taken to ensure perfection of the book, yet minor typographical errors cannot be ruled out, the responsibility for which, lies squarely with me. If this book proves helpful to scholars, students and the interested readers, I shall be gratified that, my effort has not been in vain.

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