

# An Overview of Women in the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling (2007-2015)

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## Abstract:

Darjeeling Hills have invited much attention both at home and abroad not just for the natural beauty and tea but also because of the protracted ‘sometimes dormant, sometimes active’ Gorkhaland movement. The *Gorkha* in the region have been constantly challenged by contending communities to prove their authenticity as citizens, their loyalty to the Indian nation and prove their ‘Indianness’. Not surprisingly the *Gorkha* have projected their identity as ‘brave mercenaries’ (Bir Gorkha) to systematically overcome the large perceptions of Gorkha as ‘darwans (Gate Keepers/Security Persons)’, non-represented, stateless, ‘foreigners’, illegal migrant people etc.

The colonial encounter and the masculinisation of the Gorkha as ‘brave mercenaries’ continue to mould and shape ‘everyday lived politics’. The Gorkhaland Movement has been ostensibly marked by symbolisms of sheer male chauvinism and celebration of the adrenal exhibition. The paper attempts to locate women in the second generation Gorkhaland movement and give some answers to the question: ‘Where are the women?’

**Keywords:** Gorkha, Gorkhaland, Mercenaries, Women, Identity.

## I

### Second Generation Gorkhaland Movement

Darjeeling Hills have invited much attention both at home and abroad not just for the natural beauty and tea but also because of the protracted ‘sometimes dormant, sometimes active’ Gorkhaland movement. The aspiration for cartographic representation of a community’s collective identity can be indelibly stubborn for instance a comment made by Mamata Banerjee the Chief Minister of the state of West Bengal at the Mall, Darjeeling stirred the murmurings for a separate state of Gorkhaland all over again:

“...But let me tell you that Bengal will not be carved. I have not come to the hills to ‘capture’ it, but to work together with the GTA for the prosperity”...” We need to develop the Hills and for this I will come here every time as it is my right”, the CM added. Morcha supporters shouted back: “We don’t want development. We want Gorkhaland.”<sup>1</sup>

The ethnic minorities of North Bengal have been rallying their identity against the silhouette of ‘underdevelopment’ and ‘step-motherly treatment by the South’ that is Kolkata or South Bengal. The restricted exploration and of the regions potentials has in turn fuelled the strong sense of *relative deprivation*<sup>2</sup> among the people ranging from anti-Outsiders feelings<sup>3</sup> to ‘anti-South Bengal’ feeling to ethnic fissures etc., further substantiating the complex axiomatic relationship between material inequality and political instability. Added to all these *Gorkha* in the region have been constantly challenged by contending communities to prove their ‘Indianness’. Not surprisingly the *Gorkha* have projected their identity as ‘brave mercenaries’ (*Bir Gorkha*) to systematically overcome the large perceptions of *Gorkha* as ‘*darwans* (Gate keepers/security persons)’, non-represented, stateless ‘foreigners’, illegal migrant people etc. Coupled with this challenge the *Gorkha* community is faced with perplexing issues of self definition ‘Nepali’, ‘*Bhoplai*’ ‘*Bhartiya Mool Nepali*’ or ‘*Gorkha/Gorkhey*’.

<sup>1</sup>Deep Gazmer, (2013), Mamata, Gurung ties in freezer over statehood: CM rules out split, GJM cries Gorkhaland. Darjeeling. *Times of India*, Kolkata, 30 January, P1, 5.

<sup>2</sup>W. G, Runciman (1966). *Relative Deprivation & Social Justice*. Berkley; university of California Press; Ted Robert Gurr, (1970). *Why Men rebel*, Princeton University Press. Also see, John Rapley (2005), ‘Inequality & Instability’, Chapter 1 in John Rapley (2005). *Globalization and inequality: Neoliberalisms Downward Spial*. New Delhi: Viva Books Pvt. Ltd.

<sup>3</sup>Myron Weiner (1978), *Sons of the Soil: Migration & Ethnic Conflict in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

## II

### Women and Second Generation Gorkhaland Movement

The colonial encounter and the masculinization of the *Gorkha* as ‘brave mercenaries’ continue to mould and shape ‘everyday lived politics’. In a movement (Gorkhaland Movement) ostensibly marked by symbolisms of sheer male chauvinism and celebration of the adrenal exhibition, one is made or make a query out of curiosity ‘Where are the women?’ a ready response to which would undoubtedly be ‘They are everywhere’.<sup>4</sup>

Women in the second generation Gorkhaland Movement (2007-2015) played a visible role through the Nari Morcha that was formed on 18th October 2007 with seven members for core committee. Gradually the units of Nari Morcha began to be formed in every part of Darjeeling hills and Dooars and Siliguri drawing women from the different levels of society. At present according to the party records there are around total 340 units that have been formed. The organizational structure of Gorkha Jan Nari Mukti Morcha is somewhat similar to the structure of Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM). GJMM has different committees at different level. At the top it is the core committee comprising of seven members from the places Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Siliguri, Kurseong, Mirik and Dooars. The Darjeeling wing of Nari Morcha has two members at the core committee and Kalimpong, Siliguri, Kurseong, Mirik and Dooars each have one member. Below the core committee it is the central committee. There is no fixed number of members in this central committee. The number of members of the central committee changes from time to time. It is said that sometimes the President of the Party i.e. Bimal Gurung makes changes in the

<sup>4</sup> Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (2016). ‘Enduring ‘Muslim-Ness’ in an Ostensibly Multicultural Terrain: Muslim Women in Darjeeling Hills’. *Women’s Link*, Vol. 22. No.1, January-March, 2016. pp. 38-48; Anup Shekhar Chakraborty and Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty (2015b) ‘Ambiguous Identities: Statelessness of Gorkhas in North-East India’ in Paula Banerjee, Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury & Atig Ghosh, (Ed.). (2015). *The State of Being Stateless: An Account of South Asia*. New Delhi: Orient Black Swan Pvt. Ltd. pp.207-245. Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (2015a). ‘Gleaning the Politics of Cartographic Representation and Gorkha/Gorkhey Identity in Darjeeling’ (Chapter 9) in Tirthankar Chakraborty and Tabesum Begam. (Ed.). (2015). *The Barefoot Transformation: West Bengal and Beyond – Reviewing State Politics in India*. pp. 117 – 141. Kolkata: Levant Books. Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (2014). ‘Variegated Women in an Ostensibly ‘Masculinized Public Sphere’: Public Participation and Women in Darjeeling Hills’ in Samhita Chaudhuri, Manojit Dasgupta & D.C. Roy (Ed.). (2014). *A Comprehensive District Profile of Darjeeling*. Shiv Mandir, Siliguri: National Library. pp. 146-156.

number of members to the central committee. Central Committee is followed by Mahakuma Committee. Mahakuma Committee is comprised of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and executive members, advisors and observer. Below the Mahakuma Committee there are the shakas and prashakas. Seven to eight prashakas from a shaka. The members of shakas are the representatives of prashakas. Women also played active part in the GLP is a self styled para military outfit of the GJMM. The members are young boys and girls who have undergone intense army style combat training under ex army men of Gorkha origin. Earlier they demand a camouflage uniform which has now been replaced by track suits either bottle green and yellow or red and black in colour.

The second generation Gorkhaland movement has witnessed the marked visibility of women in the public in the form of 'Fast- Unto death', relay hunger-strike, Gherao/Dharna, Processions, Mobilization Strategy, Social Boycott, Hartal/Bandh etc. Bimal Gurung has employed several tactics to attract women into the movement for instance invoking the spiritual and mythical attributes of women as divinity- *Durga Chandi, Kali* or legendary Rani of Jhansi. Technological development furthermore intensely contributed to the women's participation in the second generation Gorkhaland movement. Improvement in Telecommunications, mobile phones and surface transport effected womens mobility and visibility in the second generation Gorkhaland movement. Women in the present movement have been vocal through the platform of the Gorkha Jana Nari Morcha (GJNMM), Gorkhaland Personnel (GLP) Vidyarthi Morcha etc.

Chakraborty (2014; 2015a; 2015b; 2016) sums up women's contribution in the second phase Gorkhaland movement as follows:

1. Women under the banner of GJMM have played the lead role in social boycott of leaders such as GNLF supremo Subhash Ghising and Shanta Chettri of Kurseong MLA. The sympathizers and supporters of GNLF were forced to leave their family, home and place. NariMorcha even asked their family/relatives not to keep any kind of relation with any GNLF member, for

instance, former Siliguri MahakumaSabhapati and CPI(M) cadre Mani Thapa's relatives of Mahanadi near Kurseong, were asked not to keep any relation with her.

2. In a gherao on July 25, 2008 Pramila Sharma, a Morcha activist, was killed by a bullet allegedly fired from the house of GNLFF leader Deepak Gurung. Pramila Sharma was immediately declared by the GJMM as the First '*shaheed*' (martyr) of the second Gorkhaland movement.<sup>5</sup>
3. Dress code/ ethnic wear tactics, was imposed on the people in the hills the people for a period of one month, to reflect Nepali/*Gorkha* cultural nationalism.<sup>6</sup> Women sang and danced on the streets and made sure that the dress code was strictly followed. The display of ethnic wear in cultural programs and in the rallies during the period enabled women to assume the role of vanguards of *Gorkha/Nepali* culture. Besides they used Gandhigiri<sup>7</sup> tactics to make people wear ethnic attires by offering flowers to them.
4. The Dooars Abhiyan program was announced by party in January 2009 approximately five thousand of women from different parts of hills came to Gorubathan to participate in this program under the GJMM expenses. Inaugurating the Gorkha-AdivashiMela Smt. Asha Gurung member of central committee and wife of Bimal Gurung, president of GJMM, asked for three things -*Believe, Voice and Time* from people to achieve Gorkhland Women's role as active participant within the movement attracted regional and national media on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2009 when NariMorcha rallies were attacked by members of Adivasi Bikas Parshad, Jan Jagaran and Bangla

<sup>5</sup>Zeenews. (2008). GJM declares Pramila Sharm as its first martyr. Siliguri: Zeenews Bureau Report. Sunday, July 27, 2008 ([http://zeenews.india.com/news/states/gjm-declares-pramila-sharm-as-its-first-martyr\\_458331.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/states/gjm-declares-pramila-sharm-as-its-first-martyr_458331.html) accessed on 4.09.2012); The Assam Tribune. (2008). GJM's first 'martyr' cremated. Guwahati: *Assam Tribune Northeast*. Darjeeling: Assam Tribune Correspondent. Tuesday, 29 July 2008.

<sup>6</sup> GJMM asked people in the hills to dress in traditional or cultural outfits from 7<sup>th</sup> October to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to have a re-look at the word /term 'Gandhigiri' because in ordinary parlance we often use hindi terms such as 'Goondagiri', 'Dadagiri' (also 'Didigiri') to refer to brutish force or tactics employed by goons, anti-socials, thugs, cons etc. And here we are served with a new term 'Gandhigiri' with the suffix 'giri'.

BhashaBachaoorganisations and local people at Gurzong near Malbazar and other parts of Dooars. Several women and men with minor and major injuries were hospitalized in hospitals. Morcha leaders suspected that the police's role to maintain normalcy was a strategy to attack the people within the movement and destabilise the movement and blamed that it failed to protect the members of NariMorcha and to check the opponents. The members of women wing confronted resistance even at Siliguri. The incident changed the nature of the role of women from passive to direct participants.

5. The Nari Morcha performed the role of community policing geared to check consumption and sale of Drugs, Alcohol, Gutkas, tobacco etc. They were the self styled agencies for discipline and order for instance, safeguarding vehicles, providing security to the participants of movement during rallies, meeting, mass gathering and maintaining normalcy at the time of strikes.
6. Nari Morcha felicitated youth icons and celebrities, and donned the task of self-appointed moral police etc.<sup>8</sup> Women neglecting their personal and family life they became the vanguards to throw away the evils from the society but as a consequence society today witness few broken families.<sup>9</sup>

Women as variegated participants within the movements act as transmitters of the cultural order of the ethnic collective. Women, it is assumed are encouraged to get involved in the movement as force of passive resistance, to check the level of violence and counter violence. Discussions with women however, revealed a different a different response to queries related to reasons for women's visibility in the second generation times'; to 'avoid miscommunications/social boycott', 'vested interest' etc. Women no doubt perform pertinent roles as 'reproducers---biological, ideological

<sup>8</sup>See, The Statesman. (2011). Morcha women's wing gives Hills youths their own role model. Siliguri: *The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim Plus*. Kurseong: Statesman News Service (SNS). 14 July. Friday 15 July. p.13; The Statesman. (2012). GJMM women's wing to agitate against sant. Siliguri: *The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim Plus*. Kurseong: Statesman News Service (SNS). 6 June. Thursday 7 June. p. 13; The Statesman. (2012). Women complain to DM against baba. Siliguri: *The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim Plus*. Siliguri: Statesman News Service (SNS). 7 June. Friday 8 June. p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>Based on informal discussion.

and cultural' contribute to 'Mothering a Nation and Nationalism.' But it is equally true that the spatiality of their role is directionalised and scripted by the patriarchy and their vocality in the decisions making is largely muted.

The variegated existence of women in the second generation Gorkhaland movement sometimes as cultural troupe, sometimes as trained combatants. Women as combatants in the GLP are visibly projected as the 'lethal women' armed and trained to be agents of Nari Shakti' (women power). The training, the outfits and the expressions donned by women is that of military and the *bir Gorkha sepoy*. In other words women are made to appear aggressive and made 'fit' to enter into the 'male dominated political arena' in strong defiance of the traditional patriarchal ordering of things and people.

### **Some Concluding Observations:**

Coming to the issue of women in the second generation Gorkhaland movement we can locate as variegated participants within the movement. Though the movement is undoubtedly directionalised as scripted by patriarchy it does permit in very limited sense vocality to women. The activities of the Nari Morcha can be seen as realities affirming the limited vocality and maximum visibility in ground zero. However, the presence of women in public spaces should not be interpreted uncritically to mean empowerment, though their entry into the 'male dominated political arena' marks a strong defiance of the traditional patriarchal ordering of people.

### **Notes & References:**

1. Deep Gazmer, (2013), Mamata, Gurung ties in freezer over statehood: CM rules out split, GJM cries Gorkhaland. Darjeeling. *Times of India*, Kolkata, 30 January, P1, 5.
2. W. G, Runciman (1966). *Relative Deprivation & Social Justice*. Berkley; university of California Press; Ted Robert Gurr, (1970). *Why Men rebel*, Princeton University Press. Also see, John Rapley (2005), 'Inequality & Instability', Chapter 1 in John Rapley (2005). *Globalization and inequality: Neoliberalisms Downward Spial*. New Delhi: Viva Books Pvt. Ltd.

3. Myron Weiner (1978), *Sons of the Soil; Migration & Ethnic Conflict in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
4. And here in lies the weight of Huntington's argument that rapid economic growth as propelled by globalization tended at least in the short term to coexist with a widening pattern of income distribution- a rule of thumb among economists known as the Kuznets' Curve has led not to rising contentment but no greater discontentment. For details See Samuel Huntington (1991). *The Third Wave Norman*: University of Oklahoma Press: S. Kuznets (1971). *Economic Growth of Nations: Total Output and Production Structure*. Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press.
5. For this study I use the term 'Gorkha' or 'Gorkhali' as a blanket term to denote all ethnic tribes who migrated from Nepal to British India and who speak the 'Khas Kura' the lingua franca of Nepal. The present work does not intend to delve on the debates on the correct nomenclature for the said group as argued by A.C. Sinha in the Prologue to A.C. Sinha & T.B. Subba (Ed.) (2003). *The Nepalis in Northeast India: A community in Search of Indian Identity*. New Delhi/Indus Publishing Company/ICSSR, New Delhi/NERC Shillong/DRS, NEHU, Moreover. I consider it more appropriate to refer to the said group as 'Gorkhali'/'Gorkha' because of their colonial linkages as migrants either recruited in the British Indian Army or Administration.  
 What is interesting to note is the fact that the term 'Gorkha' is basically the name of a district in present day Nepal, and later the term acquired a special meaning in British martial discourses. The term 'Gorkha' has got a community appellation and transformed its culture-historical underpinnings into an ethno-political one. See, Pravesh Jung Golay. (2009). Chapter 3, 'Ethnic Identity Crisis, History & Cultural Anthropology: Imperium of Discourse, Hegemony, & History' pp. 73-94, in T. B. Subba, A.C. Sinha. G.S. Nepal & D. R. Nepal. (Ed). (2009). *Indian Nepalis: Issues & Perspectives*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
6. *The Statesman*. (2011). ABVP, BOBBBC to stage agitation against GTA. Anti-Gorkha groups to begin movement. Siliguri: *The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim Plus*. Siliguri/Jalpaiguri: *Statesman News Rashtriya Shiv Sena* activists stage demonstration at Hasmi Chawk in Siliguri protesting against the proposed tripartite talks on the Darjeeling issue next Week. Eight organizations have convened a 24 hour North Bengal bandh on Friday. On Monday SNS Siliguri: *The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim Plus*. Darjeeling: *Statesman News Service (SNS)*. 11 July, Tuesday 12 July, p. 13.  
 Also see Ganguly, Tapash(1986). (Interview) "I'm an Indian": GNLFF Chief also swears by Gorkhalan. This week, Kottayam, June 15-21. 1986 in Lama. Mahendra P. (1996).

Gorkhaland Movement: Quest for An Identity, New Delhi: Sona Printers/Department of Information & Cultural Affairs, DGHC. Pp.38-39.

7. See, Story from BBC News. (2009) Brown defeated over Gorkha rules. 29 April 2009. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8023882.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/8023882.stm) (accessed on 23.01.2012); Story from BBC NEWS. (2009) No. 10. Denies Lumley ‘Gurkha snub’. 05 May 2009. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8034131.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/8034131.stm) (accessed on 23.01.2012); Story from BBC NEWS. (2009) No. 10. Denies Lumley ‘Gurkha snub’. 06 May 2009. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8034131.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/8034131.stm) (accessed on 23.01.2012).
8. For instance, the Bangla O Bangla Bhasha Bachao Committee (BOBBBC) has time and again questioned the Indianness of the Nepali/Gorkha population in North Benhal and has ever submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission requesting the office to withhold the inclusion of Nepali speaking population in the electoral rolls.
9. The image of mercenaries as ‘Mughlan’ and ‘Lahorey’ continuous to cloud the construct of the brave invincible warrior . For instance ,Gorkhas who served in the Mughal aemt ie. Mughlan (Mughal return), Gorkhas who served in the British armies and placed in and around Lahore ie, Lahorey (Lahore return). The Gorkha have time and again attempted to mister their community identity aganist the experience of the Colonial encounter and this identity of a ‘Bir Gorkha’ (Brave Gorkha) continues to mould and shape ‘everyday lived politics’.
10. For instance, the indefinite sit in and hunger strike before District Magistrate office at Darjeeling 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008 demanding the removal of Subash Ghising as the care taker of DGHC and opposing the sixth schedule Bill for Darjeeling district. The state government obliged to sit for dialogue with GJMM leaders. Secretarial meeting was held between state government and Morcha delegation . The meeting with state secretary AK Deb facilitated the withdrawal of indefinite hunger struke programmes.
11. The GJNMM by organising women’s awareness programs intends to make an effort to impart affection towards community , culture,traditions and making women aware of the necessity of the movement and the need for a separate state for the betterment of the Gorkha people. GJNMM has been oprating within the grass root level of society with the intention to consolidate their support base as well as ensure financial and material support for GJMM. The primary concern of GJNMM has been to mobilize people on the issue of Gorkhaland irrespective of social status.

12. Women under the banner of GJMM have played the lead role in social boycott of leaders such as GNLFF supremo Subhash Ghising and Shanta Chettri of Kurseong MLA. The sympathizers and supporters of GNLFF were forced to leave their family, home and place. Nari Morcha even asked their family/relatives not to keep any kind of relation with any GNLFF member, for instance, former Siliguri Mahakuma Sabhapati and CPI(M) Cadre Mani Thapa's relatives of Mahanadi near Kurseong, were asked not to keep any relation with her.
13. The GJMM made timely and very convenient use of historic figures to relate to contemporary public mobilisation for consolidation divergent voices into one framework or seemingly one framework. For example, Zee TV was airing the 'Jhansi Ki Rani' during the said time and the serial served the purpose to connect the collective aspirations of the Gorkha people for a separate state with that of the mutiny led the minds of the public. The limited historic message of the TV serial was consumers and craftily used to connect the minds of the public. And women being in most cases the ready consumers of soap serials to connect could relate with this TV serial and swayed to the movement which called for women to come into the open into the streets.
14. Television and media assisted women to access the information of programs carried on by others members of the units. Women are enthusiastically taking part in the movement because they did not want to remain behind. Along with men, women were willing to fight for a good cause of ethnic identity. Women no longer wanted to remain as a marginal section of the society.
15. Nari Morcha was formed on 18th October 2007 with seven members for core committee. Gradually the units of Nari Morcha began to be formed in every part of Darjeeling hills and Dooars and Siliguri drawing women from the different levels of society. At present according to the party records there are around total 340 units that have been formed. The organizational structure of Gorkha Jan Nari Mukti Morcha is somewhat similar to the structure of Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM). GJMM has different committees at different level. At the top it is the core committee comprising of seven members from the places Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Siliguri, Kurseong, Mirik and Dooars. The Darjeeling wing of Nari Morcha has two members at the core committee and Kalimpong, Siliguri, Kurseong, Mirik and Dooars each have one number. Below the core committee it is the central committee. There is no fixed number of members in this central committee. The number of members of the central committee changes from time to time. It is said that sometimes the President of the Party i.e. Bimal Gurung makes changes in the number of members to the central committee. Central Committee is followed by Mahakuma Committee. Mahakuma Committee is comprised of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer

and executive members, advisors and observer. Below the Mahakuma Committee there are the shakas and prashakas. Seven to eight prashakas from a shaka. The members of shakas are the representatives of prashakas.

16. The GLP is a self styled para military outfit of the GJMM. The members are young boys and girls who have undergone intense army style combat training under ex army men of Gorkha origin. Earlier they demand a camouflage uniform which has now been replaced by track suits either bottle green and yellow or red and black in colour.
17. Vidyarthi Morcha as the students wing of GJMM has its overwhelming presence in present hill politics in Darjeeling. Females have a strong presence as ordinary members though the official positions are held by male members.
18. According to Joya Chatterji, there is no one universally true and fundamentally knowable Islam, no standardized and essentially unchangeable system of Islamic ritual and belief, no authentic soul or spirit of Islam or indeed of the Muslim community. Different and often contradictory meaning of Islam compete for hegemony. See, Joya Chatterji (1998). *The Bengali Muslim: A Contradiction in Terms? An overview of the Debate on Bengali Muslim Identity*, in Mushirul Hasan (Ed), *Islam, Communities and the Nation Muslim Identities in South Asia and Beyond*. Delhi: Monahar pp 266-272.
19. To the contemporary debates concerning relationship between on the one hand normative and textual Islam, and on other changing social and political practices, Muzaffar Alam adds that the original language and traditions of Islam could not escape modification in the lands where they spread their faith and established their power. This was manifest both in the accumulative character of the meanings of shariat as well as in the substitution of the sacred Arabic language by a relatively secular persona. However, he also contends that forces militating against the assimilative tradition were simultaneously active. Thus, while Persian acted as a potent agent of assimilation, it also encouraged a kind of anti tolerance worldview at elite levels.
20. All this further reaffirms Horowitz formulation that 'though ethnicity is commonly tied to territory changes in territorial boundaries can lead to significant changes in ethnic identities. Individuals may also regard each other as ethnic strangers in one place, but as ethnic kin in another where they may discover both common cultural commitments and common material interests in the face of competitors from radically different cultures. Horowitz argues that ethnic identity can be shifted upwards for downwards to more inclusive or narrower levels to meet situational exigencies. Ethnic and national groups can similarly fuse

or split apart. Such processes may combine ‘primordial’ sentiments and strategic calculations.

21. Zeenews (2008) GJM declares Pramila Sharm as its first martyr. Siliguri: Zeenews Report Sunday July 27, 2008. The Assam Tribune (2008) GJM first martyr cremated Guwahati: Assam Tribune Northeast, Darjeeling: Assam Tribune Correspondant. Tuesday 29 July 2008.
22. GJMM asked people in the hills to dress in traditional or cultural outfits from 7<sup>th</sup> October to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008.
23. It is interesting to have a relook at the word/term Gandhigiri because in ordinary parlance we often use Hindi terms such as Goondagiri, Dadagiri (also Didigiri) to refer to British force or tactics with the suffix giri. An act denoting Gandhian methods stylized in Bollywood and serve to the audience through the medium of films which claim to re-invent the teachings of Gandhi with reference to temporal and spatial needs of contemporary India. For instance, to lie or to use unfair means for a good/noble cause is considered to be an equivalent to a thousand truths. Similarly acts stylized on Robinhood i.e. robbing the rich and distributing the booty to the poor is also seen as pious and noble and therefore Gandhian in character. However what goes amiss in these popular readings and imagery via Bollywood is that Gandhian means and ends gets brutally smashed little do we realise that the means was as sacrosanct for Gandhi as the ends. See, Chapter III, Means and Ends in Krishna Kirplani (Ed) 1958. All men are Brothers: Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as Told in His Own Words. Switzerland: UNESCO, Paris pp 81-84; Also See, Robert Audi (Ed) 1995 (1999). The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press J V Bondurant (1958) Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict, Princeton NJ. Princeton University Press, G Dhawan (1951). The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Ahmedabad, India Navajivan Publishing House; MK Gandhi. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi New Delhi Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India; MK Gandhi Non Violent Resistance, New York Schocken Books; R N Iyer (1973) The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi New York Oxford University Press, George Woodcock (1971), MK Gandhi in Garrett Ward Sheldon (2001) Encyclopedia of Political Thought, New York Facts on File, Inc pp 119-120.
24. The Dooars Abhiyan program was announced by party in January 2009 approximately five thousand of women from different parts of hills came to Gorubathan to participate in this program under the GJMM expenses. Inaugurating the Gorkha Adivashi Mela Smt Asha Gurung member of central committee and wife of Bimal Gurung president of GJMM asked

for three things Believe Voice and time from people to achieve Gorkhaland Womens role as active participant within the movement attracted regional and national media on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009 when Nari Morcha rallies were attacked by members of Adivashi Bikas Parshad, Jan Jagran and Bangla Basha Bachao organisations and local people at Gurzong near Malbazar and other part of Dooars. Several women with minor and major injuries were hospitalized in hospitals. Morcha leaders suspected that the police's role to maintain normalcy was a strategy to attack the people within the movement the destabilise the movement and blamed that it failed to protect the members of Nari Morcha and to check the opponents. The members of women wing confronted resistance even at Siliguri. The incident changed the nature of the role of women from passive to direct participants.

25. See, The Statesman (2011) Morcha women's wing gives Hills their own role model. Siliguri: The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim Plus Kurseong Statesman News Service (SNS) 14 July Friday 15 North Bengal & Sikkim Plus. Kurseong Statesman News Service 6 June Thursday 7 June p 13 The Statesman (2012) Women complain to DM against baba. Siliguri The Statesman North Bengal & Sikkim plus. Siliguri The Statesman News Service 7 June Friday 8 June p 13.
26. Based on informal discussions.
27. Few women actively participated for they felt that it would secure their future interests in terms of jobs and financial security of their near and dear ones including children, legalisation of their illegal landholdings pending legal cases etc (Based on informal discussions).
28. To provide further support to the movement for separate state, members of Nari Morcha organized the Organizational unity and awareness programmes, cultural programmes etc. Under the home rule started collecting food material during public gatherings was assigned to the members of GJNMM. The task of collecting food from various sources for the large number of people gathered at Grubathan. Kalimpong to carry out the party's programmes. In some cases they were involved personally/physically in moving essential commodities i.e. food, oil etc from one assigned areas to the other. Members of Nari Morcha worked as nurses and looked after the people who sat for hunger strikes. Gorkha Jan Nari ukti Morcha also organized felicitation programs to those people who confronted the opponents at Dooars and Siliguri. Such programs were basically organized to boost up the morale of participants. The different shakas and prashaka of GJNMM also took initiative to make people aware of evil practices in their society by organizing awareness programme and poster, one of such practice they dealt was the sale and consumption of alcohol. For instance, St. Mary's branch of Nari Morcha seized illegal liquor and banned selling and consumption of liquor alongwith Gutkas (assorted flavoured betelnuts). Nari Morcha increased its policing activities over the areas of proposed Gorkhaland.