THEORIZING THE GORKHALAND MOVEMENT: INTERPRETING ITS NATURE AND ISSUES FROM BASIC HUMAN NEEDS THEORY

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Abstract

Gorkhaland Movement as such refers to the century old demand of the Gorkhas for autonomy and self determination which has culminated into their demand for a separate statehood within the Indian Union. The paper seeks to understand the nature and issues of the Gorkhaland movement from a theoretical perspective by interpreting the movement through Basic Human Needs (BHN) theory espoused by Burton. Burton by ‘Basic Human Needs’ does not refer to food, clothing and shelter as simple interpretation of the term would suggest. His BHN theory encompasses a wider dimension and includes aspects like recognition, identity, development, values and interests. The paper will also deal with various aspects such as ‘conflict escalation’, ‘conflict widening’, ‘conflict triangle’ etc. which are important to get a profound insight into conflicts. Apart from it the paper contends that the movement is a protracted one, thus demanding an in depth study and practical approach to it. Moreover, the paper will also highlight the importance of BHN theory and address the question like ‘why human needs matters?’ What such an approach will do is that it will help us to understand the movement from a wider and objective perspective which till now has been lacking. Further, understanding the nature and issues involved in the movement is very important as without such understanding the solutions are hard to achieve. In crux, such an attempt will not only help in understanding the movement as such but will also help us to understand the base of statehood demands in general.

Key Words: Gorkhaland movement, Basic Human Needs theory, protracted conflict.

Brief overview of the Gorkhaland Movement

Gorkhaland Movement basically refers to the age old demand of the Gorkhas for a separate state of their own, within the Indian union. The movement aims to distinguish Indian Nepalese from the nationals of Nepal. Gorkhaland supporters therefore prefer to call themselves Gorkhas’ and their language Gorkhali rather than Nepali. However, when the Eighth Schedule of the
constitution was amended in 1992 to make it a scheduled language, the term Nepali rather than Gorkhali was used. The demand for Gorkhaland is basically driven by the identity crisis according to the Gorkhas, is also a question of self determination and about participation of the Gorkhas in the Indian national governance thereby accelerating their integration in the national mainstream. Further, Rajat Ganguly in his article “Poverty, Malgovernence and Ethnopolitical Mobilization: Gorkha Nationalism and the Gorkhaland Agitation in India” contends that it is also a demand to reclaim their lost territory.¹

In fact, Darjeeling and its adjoining areas were never parts of West Bengal prior to 1866. The history of Darjeeling runs closely with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Darjeeling District including kalimpong a subdivision of present Darjeeling was part of Western Sikkim. In fact, the area of Sikkim ran extensively in the years and reached as far as eastern Nepal. After Prithvi Narayan Shah’s conquest and unification of greater Nepal, Darjeeling came to be part of Nepal.²

Owing to the disagreement over the frontier policy of the Gorkhas, war was declared towards the close of 1814 by the British and by the treaty of Segowlee in 1815, the Nepalese ceded 7000 square miles of territory to the British.³ Only a part of the region ceded from Nepal was returned to Sikkim by the Treaty of Titalia in 1817. But it was taken back again by the British for the purpose of sanitarium in 1835. The remaining parts of Darjeeling and its adjoining areas were taken by the British by means of annexation. In 1706, Kalimpong was taken by Bhutan from the raja of Sikkim which it retained till 1865. Under the Treaty of Sinchula between Bhutan and the East India Company in 1865, a part of Doars and Kalimpong were ceded to the Company. After that in 1866, all these areas were incorporated and kept under Bengal administration for administrative convenience. This can further be substantiated by the document which was issued by the Government of West Bengal on 29th October 1986 entitled ‘Gorkhaland Agitation, The Issues and Information Document’ in which it states “historically what is known as the district of Darjeeling today, was parts of two kingdoms during pre-British period—the kingdoms of Sikkim

¹ Rajat Ganguly writes that “The Gorkhas who primarily inhabited the hill districts had also been predominant in the Doors, and Siliguri areas till early 1940’s. It was refugee influx from Bangladesh which tipped the balance against the Gorkhas. Between 1941 and 1959 Siliguri town grew by 61.2 percent, while from 1951-61 Siliguri grew by 101.5 percent owing to huge refugee inflow (Thulung 2008). The influx of refugee became all the more prominent after the partition of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. This meant that other than in the hill subdivisions, the Gorkhas had become a minority in the plains. Thus, the inclusion of Siliguri and the adjoining Doors area in the revamped demand of a separate Gorkhaland is an attempt to reclaim their lost territory.”


³ Ibid.
and Bhutan. Following wars and treaties signed with these two kingdoms, this territory came under the control of British Empire in India.

However with regard to the demand of a separate state, it can be said that the genesis of the demand for separation has its origin in the pre-independence phase itself in 1907. Thus, the separation from Bengal was primary to the Gorkhas since early days and if we make a close observation, the base has always been the fundamental difference in language, culture, traditions and ways of life between the Bengalis and the Indian Nepalese or the Gorkhas along with the issues of identity, development, issues of discrimination etc. However, it was only in 1980s the movement started only in 1980s, demands for statehood were made since late 1940s. Hence, this period was marked by the submission of various memorandums. When it comes to Gorkhaland movement, there are two important phases of the movement spearheaded separately by Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) under Subhash Ghishing in early 1980s and by Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha (GJMM) under Bimal Gurung since 2007.

Introduction

The first question that comes to our mind is why we need to theorize any movement; or what is the benefit of giving conflicts a theoretical orientation. But before that we need to understand what theory is. The simplest definition of theory would be to view it as, ‘a platform from where we can perceive certain phenomena.’ In other words theory becomes important as it gives us a platform to understand certain things or analyze certain happenings. And therefore, with regard to the Gorkhaland Movement theorizing is integral as it would help us to understand and make sense of the movement. This understanding is important primarily because without understanding the movement, the apt solution would be hard to imagine. The need for theorizing the movement is a conscious effort; as very few people have understood the movement as it should have been. Also theorizing the movement will help us to understand the lacunas which are inherent in the movement. Hence to understand the movement, Burton's “Basic Human Needs” (BHN) theory has been used. The BHN theory however, has been substantiated by other

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4 On 16th March 1907, the representatives of Bhutia, Nepali and Lepcha communities submitted a memorandum to the British Government demanding a separate administrative set-up. However, this demand was made by non-political organizations and hence there is no concrete evidence or a copy of memorandum to contemplate the issues raised.

5 Till now more than 30 memorandums have been submitted for separation, whether it for a separate administrative set-up or for a separate statehood.
related theories and concepts which will be explained later.

It is also in the fitness of things to start with an effort to explain what conflict is, or how a conflict situation arises as the Gorkhaland Movement is basically a conflict situation between the West Bengal government and the Gorkhas. Conflict situation arises, when there are two or more parties, possessing or pursuing mutually incompatible goals. This incompatibility of goals arises due to various factors, which again will be explained in greater details later. Here it is also important to bring Johan Galtung’s “Conflict Triangle” or “A, B, C triangle” which will help us to understand how incompatibility of goals lead conflicting or contending parties to generate certain (hostile or cooperative) attitudes and behavior, which in turn would magnify or pacify the conflict. According to Norwegian peace researcher, Galtung, there are three components of conflict. The structure of which is given in the diagram below. ‘C’ is the source of conflict or incompatibility of goals; ‘A’ refers to attitudes which the parties have against each other and ‘B’ is the behavior which is the result of certain attitudes. Now if there is a hostile attitude, it leads to hostile behavior and this in turn increases the source of conflict, which again leads to more hostile attitude and behavior. What becomes clear here is that in a conflict situation all these three aspects of conflicts are closely related to each other and each influence the other. As shown in the diagram certain mutually incompatible goals will lead to certain negative attitude among the parties and this might lead to certain negative behavior. However, it is very important to note that in a real conflict situation it is very difficult to segregate these three aspects of conflict. There can be case where parties’ mutually hostile attitude may be the real source of conflict even when the source of conflict may not be that grave. These three aspects have been tagged separately, just for academic convenience.

C) Contradiction

![Diagram of Conflict Triangle]

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When we talk about conflicts, we basically talk about latent and manifest conflict. Latent conflicts are those where there may be the source of conflict, but we do not see any sort of behavior or attitude among the parties. This lack of behavior or attitude, basically results for two main reasons. Firstly, we may not see any hostile behavior or attitude due to asymmetry in power relations among the contending parties. In other words one party may be much stronger or weaker than the other party. Secondly, some conflicts may remain latent simply due to the fact that it is not recognized by one or both parties. Since it is not recognized, negative attitudes and behavior is absent here. On contrary, manifest conflicts are those that exhibit both Conflict Attitude and Behavior. Protracted conflicts are more serious form of manifest conflict and generally they are difficult to resolve and are enduring. The solutions are very hard to find because it may involve material and non-material human values. This has been aptly encapsulated by John Burton in his theory of “Basic Human Needs Theory”. The Gorkhaland Movement is one such example of protracted conflicts. Thus, attempt is made here to understand the movement from the perspective that Burton offers. This theory has been chosen as it gives us a perfect platform to understand protracted conflicts such as the “Gorkhaland Movement”.

Traditionally, conflicts were seen to arise due to human aggression, basically male aggression. This traditional view has been severely criticized by scholars like Burton, who contend that aggression merely is not the cause of conflicts. There are certain factors which feeds this aggression. Thus, Burton criticizes conflict to be viewed in physical terms. He further says that conflicts arise mainly to satisfy non- material human needs, values and interest. The alternative “Human Needs Theory” has evolved only in the last few decades, and largely as a reaction against the limited separate discipline explanations of social problems. The human needs theory brought a revolution in the way conflict was looked upon and also brought new techniques of perceiving the problem and its resolution. According to Burton, it is important to understand that societies and structures must adjust to the needs of the people and not the other way round. Workers must be given recognition as persons if social and domestic violence is to be contained, young people must be given a role in society if street gangs are to vanish and teenage pregnancies are to decrease, ethnic minorities must be given an autonomous status if violence is to be avoided, decision-making systems must be non-adversarial if leadership roles

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are to collaborative.\textsuperscript{7} Before the emergence of the human needs theory, conflicts were seen as the product of human aggression. However, the causes of that aggression and its absence in other social/temporal worlds were still to be accounted for. The reliance on controlling such conflicts was primarily coercive means and there were lacunas in such an approach towards conflict resolution. Thus Burton through his human needs theory tried to fill these lacunas. According to Burton what has not been realized is that conflicts are being defined in material/physical terms even though there are non-material human values and needs also involved.

Now the integral question here is why the concept of human needs matter. Human needs theorist argue that one of the primary causes of protracted or intractable conflict is people’s unyielding drive to meet their unmet needs on the individual, group, and societal level.\textsuperscript{8} For example; the Palestinian conflict involves the unmet needs of identity and security. Countless Palestinians feel that their legitimate identity is being denied to them, both personally and nationally. Numerous Israelis feel they have no security individually because of suicide bombings, nationally because their state is not recognized by many of their close neighbors, and culturally because of anti-Semitism. Israeli and Palestinian’s unmet needs directly and deeply affect all the other issues associated with this conflict. Consequently, if a resolution is to be found, the needs of Palestinian identity and Israeli security must be addressed and satisfied on all levels.\textsuperscript{9} Similar contentions can be made of the separatist movements in India such as Kashmir, Nagaland, Assam, or for that matter the Gorkhas demand for a separate state of their own within the Indian federation.

Apart from understanding the Gorkhaland Movement of Darjeeling district in West Bengal from a theoretical perspective, the chapter also intends to provide both descriptive and analytical perspective about the theory and the movement as such. The contention here is that the movement can be best understood from John Burton’s “Human Needs Theory”. Human Needs theory basically postulates that any conflict is the result of the violation of basic human needs. Needs are of two types biological needs and social needs. Burton by basic human needs does not imply food, clothing and shelter (biological needs) as the literal interpretation of the term would suggest; his human needs encompasses a wider dimension such as identity, recognition and

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
security. Burton has problematised the traditional view of conflict which is defined in physical terms or on the basis of observable things, even though there are non-material human values involved in it. The human needs theory also becomes important in the prevailing view that all potential conflictual behaviors can be deterred or contained provided sufficient coercion is employed. However, it is important to understand that conflicts cannot always be deterred or solved by coercive means, especially when it comes to values and needs. This can be aptly exemplified by bringing in the examples of conflicts in Kashmir, Nagaland, Palestinian etc. where the use of force has not been able to solve the issue. Moreover, despite the fact that there lies a power asymmetry in the above mentioned conflict scenario, this asymmetry has not been to stop the relatively weak party to engage in conflict with a party which is much stronger. In other words power asymmetry does not matter when basic human needs are involved. This can be aptly illustrated by understanding asymmetric conflicts. Apart from symmetric conflict, conflicts may also arise between dissimilar parties such as majority and a minority, an established government and a group of rebels, a master and his servant, an employer and her employees, a publisher and his authors. These are asymmetric conflicts. Here the root of conflict lies not in particular issues or interests that may divide the parties, but in the very structure of who they are and the relationship between them. It may be that this structure of roles and relationships cannot be changed without conflict.\(^{10}\) In other words, conflicts cannot be solved by the use of force and no threat can deter when there are human behavioral needs at stake.\(^{11}\) Such complex conflicts include not only communal conflicts or ethnic disputes but also other conflicts within and between societies, ranging from family violence and drug related disputes and the conflicts that underlie them, to the conflicts that result from foreign interventions and threats to independence.

The crux however, is to understand that conflicts are also the struggle to satisfy non-material human needs. This struggle in fact is the prime source of conflict.\(^{12}\) Thus, it is this non-fulfillment of these basic needs which leads to frustration and which leads to aggression and finally conflict. Further, it is also imperative to differentiate between ‘disputes’ and ‘conflicts’.

\(^{10}\) Oliver, Rarnsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, Hugh Miall. (2005) *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Polity, p. 21


Burton distinguishes conflict from the related term of ‘dispute’. He defined ‘conflict’ as an action over these non-negotiable human needs, whereas a ‘dispute’ was over negotiable values.\(^\text{13}\) Disputes were those confrontations that could be settled by traditional means of negotiation or arbitration, while conflicts had to be resolved by analytical processes. These required a facilitator who could help the parties to reveal the hidden behavioral realities of a complex conflict situation.\(^\text{14}\) In short, disputes are over physical resources and conflicts are over human needs and aspirations.

The Gorkhaland case is a deep-rooted conflict, the examples of which include conflict with authorities, between authorities, and among persons and groups within societies. It involves cases that arise out of demands on individuals to make certain adjustments in behavior that are unacceptable, and probably beyond human tolerance and capabilities. Symptoms of deep-rooted conflict include hostage taking, illegal strikes, public protests movements, ethnic violence, terrorism, gang warfare and many other forms of intractable opposition to authorities at one social level or another.\(^\text{15}\) In such cases it is not possible to contain conflict within the existing framework for a longer period of time. Thus, for conflict resolution in such cases to be durable, there is the need to alter existing norms, institutions and policies. Further, concrete analysis of such problems needs to be done and appropriate conflict resolution techniques need to be implemented. Here the focus needs to be on conflict resolution rather than the containment of dissident behaviors or conflict management.\(^\text{16}\)

Burton has argued that if an actor cannot fulfill his or her basic human needs one way, he or she will attempt to do so in other ways. If they cannot do so within the existing “status-quo” system, they may create parallel, “revolutionary” systems for doing so.\(^\text{17}\) Further he says that conflicts may also arise when individuals are constrained from celebrating who they are, from being recognized with respect and dignity, and from being secure from cruel.\(^\text{18}\) Also barbaric treatment of any racial, ethnic, religious groups by others is also seen as a recipe of conflict by Burton. Thus, what Burton’s basic human needs theory contends is that if certain human needs

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\(^\text{14}\)John, Burton. “Conflict Resolution: Towards Problem Solving”, The International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 6, Number 1


\(^\text{16}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{17}\) J.D.Sandole,. (2001) “John Burton's contribution to conflict resolution theory and practice” The International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 6, Number 1

\(^\text{18}\) Ibid

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are not satisfied, there will be conflict. The specialty of such conflicts is that these conflicts will be of such a character that no suppressive means will contain it. Attempts to suppress it will lead, on contrary to exponential increase in conflict.19

One of the major obstacles in dealing with basic problems such as deep-rooted conflict has been the absence of an adequate theoretical framework and, even more serious, the absence of a realization that such a framework is necessary for solving a problem.20 Thus, human needs theory tries to give the concept of conflict a theoretical framework. Humans need a number of essentials to survive. According to the renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow and the conflict scholar John Burton, these essentials go beyond just food, water, and shelter. They include both physical and non-physical elements needed for human growth and development, as well as all those things humans are innately driven to attain.21 What Burton contends is that aggressions and conflicts are the direct result of some institutions and social norms which become incompatible with inherent human needs.

Further, he says that aggressions and anti-social behaviors are stimulated by social circumstances. There are human limits to abilities to conform to such institutions and norms: the person is not wholly malleable.22 On contrary, the needs that are frustrated by institutions and norms require satisfaction. These needs will be pursued in one way or the other as these needs are what Burton says even more fundamental than food, clothing and shelter. These are followed by the need for safety and security, then belonging or love, self-esteem, and finally, personal fulfillment. Burton and other needs theorists who have adopted Maslow’s ideas to conflict theory, however, perceive human needs as an emergent collection of human development essentials. Furthermore, they contend that needs do not have a hierarchical order. Rather, needs are sought simultaneously in an intense and relentless manner. Needs theorists’ list of human essentials include: safety and security, belongingness and love, self-esteem, personal fulfillment, identity, cultural security, freedom, distributive justice and

participation.\textsuperscript{23} Needs such as personal recognition and identity that are the basis of individual development and security and denial by society of recognition and identity would lead, at all social levels, to alternative behaviors designed to satisfy such needs, be it ethnic wars, street gangs or domestic violence.

**Gorkhaland Movement and Basic Human Needs Theory**

As stated earlier human needs propounds that conflicts are the product of the violation of the basic human needs. Under basic human needs come “needs”, “values” and “interests”. Now we will try to make sense of the Gorkhaland conflict as a conflict which arose out of the violation of the basic human needs of the Gorkhas.

**NEEDS**

Needs are non-negotiable interests and it reflects universal motivations.\textsuperscript{24} Maslow and scholars like Burton have argued that in addition to biological needs such as food and shelter, humans aspire for other human needs such as social needs, which are related to growth and development.\textsuperscript{25} In fact, these needs are more pertinent than the biological needs says Burton and are also core reasons of deep-rooted conflict as individuals can take recourse to any means to achieve the basic human needs. In Burton's view, the needs most salient to an understanding of destructive social conflicts were those for identity, recognition, security, and personal development.\textsuperscript{26} The issue of identity is the main motivation behind the Gorkhaland movement in West Bengal. “It is a given fact that people have multiple identities; from having a sense of belonging to a caste, a regional community to a national identity with the country that one belongs to, citizens have many identities. Like in many cases, as is the case of Indian Gorkhas, it is possible that the nation may not recognize or have misconceptions regarding the national identity of a community”.\textsuperscript{27}

The Gorkhas in West Bengal feel that their identity is in crisis and at stake. The

\textsuperscript{25} ibid
\textsuperscript{27} Priyadarshinee Shrestha, (2006) *Separation for Integration: A Case Study of Indian Gorkhas*, Mark Printers, Delhi p 9
Gorkhas feel that their identity is threatened due to numerous insecurities they face regarding their identity. The Gorkhas Indian-ness is so loosely perceived across the country that they have to emphasize their nationality by compounding their identity with their nationality. The Gorkhas question as to why they have to identify themselves as “Indian Gorkhas”? Other communities do not need to do so. Like many other Indians, Gorkhas too are struggling in Delhi in search of better economic opportunities. There are Bengalis and Punjabis, for example, with their counterparts residing in other countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively. However, they have never been taunted as Bangladeshi or Pakistanis. In this case, however, the term Nepali or foreigner has often been used by the mainstream Indians. Such instances of Gorkhas being termed as foreigners are prevailing all over India and even in West Bengal where the Gorkhas reside. Why is Nepali- speaking Indians often confused with the Nepalese of Nepal? Why do the mainstream Indians not appreciate the fact that there are about five million Nepalis who are *bonafide* citizens of the Republic of India?

The aberration in perception of the Gorkha’s national identity in India is so strong, even the persons holding highest political posture inflicted with it. To cite a few examples- when a delegation led by All India Nepali Bhasa Samity met the Late Prime Minister Morarjee Desai in the context of granting recognition to Nepali language in the Eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution his blunt reply was – “Will (your) Nepal agree to grant recognition to Hindi language?” clearly implicating that all the members of the delegation were from Nepal. He had humiliated the delegation by making acid remarks like “Be happy with whatever you are getting and don’t mention to me about your role in the national defense, I may even ban the recruitment of the Gorkhas in the Indian Army”. Another example can be put here to prove how the Gorkhas face the identity crisis in India. For instance, Mr. C.K. Shrestha was invited in ‘All India One Act Play Competition’ in Cuttack 2007, which is a multi lingual competition; wherein he was one of the judges. The organizing committee (National Committee) honored

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28 GJMM, (2009), *Why Gorkhaland?* http://api.ning.com/files/p*sOJE*0NT18RJdbgNeqItBWk2eB3s4sKSv6ij0kcJps8a0990LrFHWr0X3Zg6jFq2Sb8H O*5XkDr3V*ryjFIVv0n5IN7Y/WhyGorkhaland..pdf
30 From the interview: An account of one of the person who was part of the delegate.
31 ibid
Mr. C.K. Shrestha with Natakiya Bhushan. The committee had prepared a citation in which it was written that Mr. Shrestha was honored for his long contribution towards Nepali drama and theatre which at national level was also beneficial for the development of Indian theatre and drama. Mr. Shrestha was honored by the Governor of Orissa himself. After the facilitation, one of the MPs asked him in Hindi “Shrestha ji aap Nepal kab ja rahae ho” meaning when will you return to Nepal?32 This is exactly the plight of the Indian Gorkhas who are easily perceived as citizens of Nepal even by those in the mainstream polity of India.

According to the Gorkhas, the solution to this “identity crisis” urgently requires that the Gorkhas be treated on the basis of equality and trust just as other citizens of the country. This leads Gorkhas to search for their identity. They contend that they must be recognized as equal stake holders in the governance of the country and its future. According to them a separate state will reiterate their “Indian political identity” and their “Indian-ness”. Thus, the issue of identity becomes very important and they demand a separate state to safeguard their identity. A separate state would also integrate the Gorkhas into the Indian mainstream polity and thus will enable them to be part of it. Identity, other than culture, religion or language, is also formed by the group or community’s belongingness to a particular state. In other words, linguistic or ethnic identity coincides with the state of belonging of such community. For example, the identity of a Bihari or an Assamese has more to do with the state they belong to rather than the language or ethnic identity. The ethnic and linguistic differences get absorbed into a larger identity created by their sheer belongingness to the state. Thus, a separate state of Gorkhaland would give the Gorkhas an identity of their own.

Recognition is another issue which is closely related to identity and the Gorkhaland movement. Identity and recognition are linked; we have an identity because others recognize us, and hence there is no identity without recognition. The Gorkhas feel that they are not considered as Indians. Thus they assert for recognition of their community, which they feel, has been marginalized. Individual recognition or community recognition is integral as it would make the individuals of certain community its legitimate citizens and would enable a community to live with dignity in the country. Recognition is a pertinent issue in Gorkhaland movement as the Gorkhas aspire to be recognized as legitimate citizens of India. To illustrate the point of Gorkha’s search for recognition, mention may be

32 From the interview
made of an instance when a national delegation of Nepali speaking Gorkhas was demonstrating at the Boat Club, New Delhi, for the constitutional recognition of Nepali language, the police cracked down upon the delegation eventually arresting a number of Gorkha leaders. The Police Station arresting them entered in their official report that they were all from Nepal. Even the people from the Central Intelligence were interrogating them as if they were all Nepalese citizens.\(^{33}\)

According to Subba “there are lots of misconceptions about the citizenship of the Nepalis in India both among the Nepalis themselves and among other Indian citizens. Further, misconception has developed after the citizenship notification by the centre on August 23, 1988. This notification recognizes ‘Gorkhas’ and not ‘Gorkhalis’ or ‘Nepalis’ as Indian citizens according to the article V of the Constitution.”\(^{34}\) Thus, the Gorkhas’ demand for separate state is do away with this stigma. Further, he says that ‘Indian Nepalese’ and the people of ‘Nepali origin’ are not hundred percent same, which is a common misconception by most of the Indians including Bengalis.\(^{35}\) Viewed in this perspective, the movement can be seen as a conflict situation which arose out of the issue of recognition.

Security of the Gorkha community is another issue deeply related to the movement. The Gorkhas have faced security concerns in various parts of the country. “The condition of the Nepalis in Northeast is all the more pathetic. In 1986, the Nepalis of Meghalaya became refugees in large scale. In Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram they are often treated as second class citizens. Land pattas are not issued to them in this region, even if they had settled there more than a century ago. In tribal Belts and Blocks and Autonomous Councils of Assam like Bodo, Rabha, Mishing, and Lalung, the Nepalis face the problem of land ownership, education, employment and voting right. They are deprived of the right to education even at primary level through the medium of their mother tongue”\(^{36}\) Further Subba says – “In the government/public service sector the Nepali community is discriminated. The government machinery is accustomed to evict them from their native places. The government invalidates their grazing permit, which

\(^{33}\) An account of one of the person who was part of the delegate  
\(^{35}\) Ibid. p 53  
\(^{36}\) Ibid. p 122
was introduced by the British government. Some of the backward castes of the Nepali community- like Kami, Damai, Sarki (Mizar), Gaine, Bhujel, Danuwar - should have been included in the Scheduled Caste list but till date the matter has failed to draw the attention of the government. Further, Rai, Limbu, Mangar, Tamang, Gurung, Bhoote are not recognized as Scheduled Tribes. The pressure of regionalism, local chauvinism, and terrorism, especially extortion activities are very high on the ever-oppressed Nepali community. Police atrocities on the Nepali community are also very common.\textsuperscript{37}

The Gorkhas perceive that their security is gravely threatened in all parts of India. Probably or partly this explains as to why the Gorkhas feel the need of a separate state for themselves. They feel that they will be culturally, economically and politically secure if they have a state of their own. Further, the movement can also be seen as the self assertion for personal development of the Gorkhas. However, it is important to know that the concept of development has a holistic implication; development encompasses aspects like economic, social, cultural, political or even personal development. The Gorkhas feel deprived under the Bengal administration which has had an adverse effect on the development of the Gorkha community as a whole. When it comes to the Gorkhaland Movement, the development issue has been dealt incompletely by both outsiders and the Gorkhas themselves. Such a notion has focused entirely on material development and has undermined the other developments such as personal development, community development, cultural and political development etc. If we see it from political development perspective, it is a fact that the Gorkha representation in the West Bengal politics at higher level is almost nil. The Gorkhas being part of Bengal for many years have not been able to represent themselves in the mainstream polity. Since the Gorkhas don’t have representatives to bring forth their needs and problems, they will always be marginalized. Thus through the creation of a separate state, the Gorkhas feel that they will gain political power; it would automatically look into the lacunas of the Gorkha community. Also the ever weakening of its social norms and values makes it demand all the more strong. Thus, the movement can also be seen as an attempt to preserve its social and cultural norms and values.

The Gorkhas also feel deprived economically. Though Darjeeling district is far more economically sound than many other districts of West Bengal, the Gorkhas contend that the region has not been developed as it should have been. Perhaps, their movement

\textsuperscript{37} ibid
for separate state is also driven by their desire to have more economic power and the realization of its importance. The Gorkhas feel that all these factors are hindering their personal development. It is true that Siliguri, a sub-division of Darjeeling receives more grants and financial assistance than Darjeeling, a district with a separate administrative set-up. Further, Darjeeling, being a part of North Bengal, is not included in the North Bengal Council. The Gorkhas raise their voice against this discrimination. They question the rationality of constituting the Siliguri-Jalpaiguri Development Authority when Jalpaiguri is a separate District and Siliguri is a sub-division of Darjeeling. In fact, the Development Authority should have been with Darjeeling. Further, development is closely associated with opportunity and they contend that they are not provided with opportunities, which would be pivotal in developing the Gorkha community. Hence all these factors make the movement inevitable and most importantly these factors make it a protracted conflict.

VALUES

It is difficult to give a concrete definition of values as different scholars have given various definitions of values. Values are those ideas, habits, customs and beliefs that are characteristic of particular social communities. They are the linguistic, religious, class, ethnic or other features that lead to separate cultures and identity groups. In simple words values are belief systems and are also defined as cultural value to express the needs and desires of individual or communities. Values differ from needs in a sense that values are those aspects which we carry from generations or which we are proud of. Hence when our values get threatened we tend to be sensitive, touchy and protective and it invariably makes us aggressive and violent. Another important aspect of value is that it is akin to culture but it is not important as needs. However, value becomes important when needs have to be expressed; it is expressed in terms of value. When we talk about such ethnic conflict such as Gorkhaland conflict, we basically talk about social value. Also the survival of identity depends on value and this makes the importance of value more pronounced. Also when we talk about social value identity is part of it. So values

38 GJMM, (2009), Why Gorkhaland? http://api.ning.com/files/p*OJEx0NT18RJdbgNeqfltBWk2eB3s4sKSv6ij0kcJps8a0990LirFHWr0X3Zg6jFq2Sb8H O*5XkDr3V*ryjFIVv0n5IN7Y/WhyGorkhaland..pdf
39 ibid
are intrinsically related to identity. When values of a community are relatively deprived, it leads to injustice. When a community feels that its norms and values are deprived and injustice is inflicted on them, it leads to conflict. Values can also be linked to survival and development and the threatening of which leads to conflict. If we have to apply these into Gorkhaland conflict than it is obvious that the Gorkhas feel threatened about the values which they carry from generations to generations; and the belief system which they are proud of and which is integral to the survival of their identity. Thus, there is conflict situation between the West Bengal government and the Gorkhas due to issue over values.

**INTEREST**

Interests refer to the occupational, social, political and economic aspirations of the individual, and of identity groups of individuals within a social system. Interest is important to understand conflict, but it is subsidiary to needs and values. Interests are held in common within groups in a society, but are less likely to be held in common nationally. Interests typically are competitive having a high win-lose component. Interests can also be categorized into two that is, negotiable interests and non negotiable interests. Negotiable interests are more of material character and hence can be negotiated, but non-negotiable interests are more into basic human needs which are not negotiable and the violation of which are a sure recipe of conflict. Interests are not in any way an inherent part of the individual as are needs, and values might be. That interests are transitory and it changes with changing circumstances can aptly be proved by the Gorkhaland case. The Gorkhaland Movement of 1980’s was started to achieve a separate statehood for the Gorkhas. When it was the only aim, the magnitude of conflict between the Gorkhas and the Bengal administration was high. But the conflict de-escalated when Ghishing accepted the Hill Council. Thus, there was the shift of interest from a separate statehood to DGHC which ended the conflict temporally. Similarly, the current Gorkhaland movement spearheaded by Mr. Bimal Gurung had vowed to accept nothing less than a separate state and revived the Gorkhaland Movement. Subsequently, it escalated the conflict for a brief period. However, the interest again changed to interim set-up. This shift in interest in fact has de-escalated the conflict. However, the conflict is bound to escalate, if and when, the interest

42 ibid  
43 ibid
changes from the current interim set-up GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Administration) to a demand for statehood. Thus, it is evident that interests are not inherent in humans as values might be. They typically relate to material goods or occupancy of role. It is the interests which influence policies and tactics in the pursuit of needs and values. Since there was a shift in interests in both the regimes, conflict de-escalated. This makes us clear as to how interests play an important role in conflict escalation or de-escalation.

It is clear from the above contentions that interests are negotiable while needs and values are not. Needs in particular, are inherent drives for survival and development, including identity and recognition. Needs for identity that are frustrated or denied may give rise to behavior, and even with the interests of the individual. This is the core of contemporary domestic and international problems. Ethnic conflicts are being treated in sixty or so countries, where boundaries have been drawn as a result of colonialism or conquest, as though the individual can be coerced to accept majority rule which denies ethnic or cultural identity. The distinction between interest that are negotiable, on the one hand and values and needs are not, on the other, was only realized in late 1980s. It is an insight gained primarily from facilitated conflict resolution processes. This seeks to be analytical and to reveal the underlying source of conflict, rather than merely to negotiate from fixed positions of relative power. The distinction between needs, values and interests must be made to understand conflicts in a proper sense and the formulation of policies to avoid or to resolve them.

Human needs theorists offer a new dimension to conflict theory. Their approach provides an important conceptual tool that not only connects and addresses human needs on all levels. Furthermore, it recognizes the existence of negotiable and nonnegotiable issues. That is, needs theorists understand that needs, unlike interests, cannot be traded, suppressed, or bargained for. Thus, the human needs approach makes a case for turning away from traditional negotiation models that do not take into account nonnegotiable issues. These include interest-based negotiation models that view conflict in terms of win-win or other consensus-based solutions, and conventional power models (primarily used in the field of negotiation and international relations) that construct conflict and conflict management in terms of factual and zero-sum game

45 Ibid p 40
46 ibid
47 ibid
perspectives.48

The human needs approach, supports collaborative and multifaceted problem-solving models and related techniques, such as problem-solving workshops or an analytical problem-solving process. These models take into account the complexity of human life and the insistent nature of human needs. Problem-solving approaches also analyze the fundamental sources of conflict, while maintaining a focus on fulfilling peoples’ unmet needs. In addition, they involve the interested parties in finding and developing acceptable ways to meet the needs of all concerned.49

Burton's human needs theory gives us the perfect platform to view conflicts such as the Gorkhaland Movement. Burton aptly explains that preferences of needs and desires are not always materialistic as the traditional view of conflicts propound. Without undermining the role of aggression in conflict, his theory debunks the idea that human aggression is the source of conflict. What he says is that it is basically the violation of the basic human needs like identity, recognition, development and security along with values and interests that actually cause conflicts. Further, these factors lead to frustration, which leads to aggression and finally conflict. However, to strengthen or substantiate Burton's human needs theory we can also look at conflicts from material and possessional goals perspective. This has been aptly illustrated by the Gorkhaland movement which can also be seen as a movement to secure better resources, educational institutions, jobs etc.

However, the more pertinent issue behind the Gorkhaland Movement is identity, recognition, security and the overall development of the Gorkhas. Viewed in this light, the real cause of the Gorkhaland Movement is the violation of the basic human needs (as Burton understands) of the Gorkhas and hence, the Basic Human Needs theory perfectly explains the Gorkhaland Movement.

49 ibid