



Novel Insights, *An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*

A Peer-Reviewed Quarterly Research Journal

ISSN: 3048-6572 (Online) 3049-1991 (Print)

Impact Factor: 4.25 (IIFS), 8.2 (IJIN)

Volume-III, Issue-I, August 2026, Page No. 01-10

Published by Uttarsuri, Sribhumi, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://novelinsights.in/>

DOI: 10.69655/novelinsights.vol.3.issue.01W.111



Women and Gorkhaland Movement: A Quest for their Identity

Dr. Nivedita Saha, *Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Kalyani, Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal, India*

Received: 16.08.2026; Accepted: 27.08.2026; Available online: 31.08.2026

©2026 The Author(s). Published by Uttarsuri Publication. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Abstract

While there has been a vast literature on social movements and specially many on ethnic and identity-based movements, very few delve on the participation and contribution of women in these movements. It has been observed that in most of these movements' women are not given equal position, nor attention compared to their male counterparts as most of them are structured along gender lines. Time demands that their participation and involvement be researched upon. Their involvement has not only influenced ground level participation but also the decision-making process. Therefore, their role in these movements have raised several issues and queries. Why despite being visible, they are made invisible in the annals of history of these movements? Why have they been marginalized and silenced? The present study is an analytical one with an objective to explore the various dynamics of the participation of women in the Gorkhaland movement, both in the pre-and-post-independence period. For corroboration of the Gorkha identity is not complete without referring to their participation.

Keywords: Gorkhaland, Women, Political Participation, Movement, Empowerment

While there has been a vast literature on social movements and specially many on ethnic and identity-based movements, very few delve on the participation and contribution of women in these movements. Feminist scholars have paid considerable attention in writing scholarly articles on women's movements yet even they neglected the contribution of women activists involved in movements which are specifically not gender specific but based on identity and ethnicity. Time demands that their participation and involvement be researched upon and viewed from a different perspective. It has been observed that in most of these movements' women are not given equal position nor attention compared to their male counterparts as most of these protest movements operate among the gender lines. Analyzing from this context, Taylor stated that "... even in movements that purport to be gender-inclusive, the mobilization, leadership patterns, strategies, ideologies, and even the outcomes of social movements are gendered."ⁱ From framing strategies to evolving the structure of the movement, women's concerns are totally excluded yet they participated en masse in them. Women are made invisible even in the ultra-Left supported Naxalite movements.

It is crucial to evaluate identity-based and ethnic movements through a gendered lens in order to comprehend their ideology, organization, strategies and leadership orientation. Identity-based and ethnic movements have long histories of violence, militarization, oppression and the question of gender are deeply intertwined within it. These movements are not exclusively women's movements yet for better insight and in-depth understanding gender role needs to be studied as most these movements demonstrated gendered forms of relationships. In the Indian perspective writers have mostly concentrated on women's movements and different phases of it, neglecting the participation of women in ethnic and identity-based movements. Involvement of women in contemporary social movements has been a spectacular sight. Their involvement has not only guided ground level participation but also the decision-making process. Therefore, their role in these movements have raised several issues and queries. What are women's stories? Why regardless of being visible, they are made invisible in the annals of history of these movements? Why have they been marginalized and silenced? The present study focuses on and aims to explore the various dynamics of involvement of women in the Gorkhaland *andolan*, both in the pre- and post-independence period. For corroboration of the Gorkha history is not complete without referring to their participation.

Most of the literature on Gorkhaland movement failed to cultivate the complex institutional gender relations. Because of the hill society's agrarian structure and plantation economy, which are largely responsible for women's widespread participation in a variety of tasks outside the home, Gorkha women were visible in the movement. Yet they were made invisible by the main-stream literature. According to Dipti Tamang "Women, and the impact of political conflict on them has barely been documented in Darjeeling hills. Their stories remain untold, unheard and unappreciated despite women having borne the most disastrous outcomes of the conflict."ⁱⁱ In fact, both the phases of the movement were referred to and named after their male leaders. Both Subash Ghising and Bimal Gurung encouraged women to participate in the movement and respective women's wing were also established, yet they were relegated to the background both in the organizational and structural hierarchy of the parties that were formed.

Gorkha women's involvement in the fight for Indian independence:

The root of Gorkha women's involvement in the political arena can be traced back to their participation in the freedom struggle. Historical facts prove that Gorkha women participated in the Anglo Gorkha war of 1815-16. C. B. Khanduri and F. Fabi testified that Gorkha women fought this war dressed as Gorkha men.ⁱⁱⁱ William Fraser stated in his book, *India Revealed: The arts and adventures of James and William Fraser* that Gorkha women got themselves involved in this war. They contributed by throwing stones at the British opponents. For Fraser himself was hit by five stones thrown by a Gorkha women.^{iv} Therefore, when scholars celebrate the valour of Gorkha men, they at the same time should glorify the endeavors of Gorkha women too; who have also demonstrated their fierce martial spirit and indomitable courage.

In the beginning of the 20th century, S. W. Ladenla, Additional Superintendent of Police stood as the lone female who broke the existing gender barriers and took part in the freedom struggle. She advocated a distinct administrative unit for the hills and founded the Hillmen's Association in Darjeeling with other Gorkha elites. Helen Lepcha, known as *Heleni Boju* was born in 1902 at Sangmu village in southern Sikkim. She was influenced by M. K. Gandhi's

ideology and joined the freedom struggle. It was the leader who rechristened her as Savitri Devi. She provided leadership of the movement in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh especially in the coal mine areas. In Calcutta (now Kolkata), Heleni Boju organized a demonstration of coalmine workers. In the hills she solicited house to house urging people to boycott foreign goods. She was awarded with Tamrapatra by the government of India for her exemplary contribution in the freedom struggle. It was claimed by many that she along with local Gorkha's helped Subhas Chandra Bose to escape from India; but this a debatable topic.

Maya Devi Chhetri and Putalimaya Devi Tamang (Poddar) also played a noteworthy role. Maya Devi Chhetri became the President of the Kurseong division of the INC. She actively participated in the labour movement and organized the Milkmen Union and the Tea Labour Union. In 1952 Chhetri was elected as the first member of the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal. Being a MP, she started the Nepali Association at Delhi with the intention to unite all Nepali speaking people in Delhi under one umbrella. After her retirement she became the Vice Chairman of Darjeeling District Zilla Parishad and member of the District School Board.^v

Putalimaya Devi was the first Gorkha women to be arrested and imprisoned for four years. She participated in the Swadeshi movement and urged Indian Nepalese to boycott foreign goods. She was influenced by Gandhi's ideology and strived her utmost to spread patriotic feelings amongst the masses. Putalimaya Devi also established a women's organization that would make khadi clothes. She opened night schools and Harijan Samaj to bring consistency in the nationalist movement. Post independence she devoted herself to social work and was affectionately called "Mataji" by other Gorkhas.

Few Gorkha women also actively participated in the *Jhansi ki Rani* Regiment of the INA led by Subhas Bose. Indrani Thapa and Savitri Thapa were members of the Bal Sena or group of teenagers in the INA. They volunteered to act as human bombs. Strapping bombs to their bodies, they crawled under two approaching tanks - camouflaged as bushes. They destroyed the tanks moving towards the INA camps, killing themselves in the process. Netaji was awestruck by their acts of bravery and valour.^{vi}

After independence women representatives to Parliament and West Bengal Legislative Assembly, like Maya Devi Chhetri, Renulina Subha, Santa Chhetri, and Sarita Rai made noteworthy effort for upliftment of women in the hills. Renulina Subha, MLA from the hills participated in many demonstrations in the Assembly and in the year 1977-78 took initiative to close all liquor shops in Kurseong, Kalimpong and Darjeeling. Subba also took steps to solve basic problems like health, sanitation, drinking water, education etc. Subha debated for the acceptance and acknowledgement of the Nepali language in the Assembly. In this endeavour she was supported by Dil Kumari Bhandari, Lucky Devi Sundas and others, though they did not support the separate statehood movement.^{vii}

However massive participation of Gorkha women in the freedom struggle was restricted as most of them were busy in earning their livelihood. Basically, both general Gorkha men and women were not exposed to politics and the movement remained elitist in nature. Gorkha women at that time and still now are deemed to be excellent pickers of tea leaves for their thin lithe fingers. Women as labour was also cheaper and could be employed at lower wages than their male counterparts. This discrepancy in wage structure persists even today. The eruption of the Gorkhaland movement under the leadership of Subash Ghising in the 1980s enlisted their participation in the political process as a collective entity.

The desire to establish new states is not a fresh development. Since the day of independence, it has been a recurring theme. The process behind this internal remapping is frequently interpreted in studies as representing the conflict between regionalist aspirations of communities demanding greater autonomy, cultural recognition, and better development prospects on the one hand, and a pan-Indian national ideal on the other. The Gorkhaland demand is a long-standing effort by Nepali-speaking Indian nationals (commonly referred to as Gorkhas) to establish a separate state of Gorkhaland within the Indian union. Gorkhaland is a traditional sub-nationalist movement with roots spanning more than a century, similar to those that have given rise to other states. Above all, Gorkhaland is a desire for the Gorkhas to be acknowledged, respected, and included in the Indian union.

Involvement of women in the Gorkhaland movement under the leadership of Subash Ghising:

From the initial phase of the movement, the Gorkha women got themselves involved in the struggle both mentally and physically. Realizing that they can play a noteworthy role, on 30th August 1986 Subash Ghising (supremo of the GNLF) established a separate wing for them; the Gorkha National Women's Organization (GNWO). A meeting was convened at Kurseong at the Muntipit ground. In this gathering a decision was taken to form a separate faction for the women members. On the same day, a tentative committee was established with Hema Lama as president, Mira as vice-president, Bharti as general secretary, Tilomtama Rana as general secretary, Kuwang Pradhan as secretary and Bhangali Tamang as treasurer, in addition to these ten other women were nominated as members. The basic mission of this new wing was to convey the message to each and every Gorkha women that they should whole-heartedly fight for the establishment of a separate state, i.e., Gorkhaland.^{viii}

A new Committee of the GNWO was constituted in November 1986. This provided a robust infrastructure to the movement with an objective to bring all the women activists under one umbrella. The committee members were selected democratically from different zones of the region. The members of the GNWO became part of every protest activity from then on in the hills. These activities were performed in the public arena witnessed by many. But organizing a movement calls for certain tasks which are invisible - not visible to public eye. Women activists performed certain tasks which were invisible, unnoticed and even not recognized. These tasks included things like preparing meals, keeping minutes, and notifying people about forthcoming meetings. These tasks were bracketed as family dimension of the movement. They also performed risky jobs like acting as a spy - transforming messages from one place to another. Performing such tasks calls for great courage, even at times risking their lives, dying unsung, unrecognized.

Tila Maya Pradhan, Sampurna Rai, Kalpan Rana, Barbara Sherpa, Prava Dewan, Gopi Maya Gurung, Saraswati Tamang, Tilothama Rana, Nimcheki Pradhan, Hema Lama were the prominent Gorkha female leadership from the hills.^{ix} In the first phase (April to October, 1986) of the movement women performed various tasks like, nursing the wounded, distributing rice and clothes during the prolonged bandhs and collecting funds. On 27th July police open fired on a GNLF rally, killing 13 and more than 50 injured. Ganga Maya Biswakarma, an old woman from the region was killed along with other men folk. Oral narratives describe her as a legend who was a very courageous woman. Ghising acknowledged her contribution by naming the Rock Garden in Darjeeling as 'Ganga Maya

Park'. The first woman to be arrested under the terms of TADA on December 25, 1986 was Indrakala Pradhan, who was held for almost a month. She was also a part of the delegation which went to Delhi for talks on the statehood issue.^x The majority of the Gorkha men activists fled into the woods when the movement reached its zenith and the police and CRPF posed a real threat. Then, women took on jobs that had previously been completed by men, such as cremating corpses.

Women's participation in the second phase (November 1986 to April 1987) of the movement was restricted and even dwindled with time due to the violent nature of the protest and lack of media coverage. Violence unleashed by the state in the name of police action was also responsible for lesser participation of Gorkha women. No Commission of Inquiry was instituted to look into the allegations of sexual atrocities committed against women.

On August 22, 1988, the state administration and the GNLF agreed a memorandum of settlement for the creation of DGHC. Though women had no role to play in it yet they accompanied their men folk when the agreement was signed in Raj Bhavan, Kolkata. The autonomous body that was constituted would consist of 42 councilors. The job performed by women changed after the establishment of this body. The task did not remain voluntary in nature - women actively took part in electoral politics. But only three (7.14%) women councilors were elected during the first tenure of the DGHC and two (4.76%) during its second tenure. The three elected women councilors were Nim Chiki Pradhan, Hema Lama and Gopi Maya Gurung. Santa Chettri was the nominated councilor of the DGHC from 1996 to 2011. She was also the member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly during the same period. She was the first MLA to raise the demand to have a Nepali language interpreter in the Assembly. Though Nepali language was Constitutionally recognized in 1992, it was not used in the state Assembly. Her demand was fulfilled and a Nepali interpreter was appointed. She also made a tiresome effort to implement the Integrated Child Development Scheme in the hills.^{xi}

Though women performed a praise worthy role in the movement yet the task performed by these invisible soldiers was never acknowledged nor noted with due respect. They became victims of molestation, harassment, exploitation, and discriminatory treatment. For example, Sangita Pradhan was killed in a protest rally by the CRPF at Kalimpong on 27th July 1987. Thus, women from all works of life, cutting across religion, class and caste were mass supporters and backbone of the GNLF movement. They were voluntarily involved mainly entrusted with the tasks of raising funds, protest marches and nursing the wounded. Carrying on these jobs was difficult as in those days the only form of communication was through print media. That too was difficult due to the censorship of press. Overcoming all these difficulties Gorkha women were not silent spectators. They did their utmost in a patriarchal Gorkha social structure. Yet most of the historiographies that were compiled highlighted the contribution and valour of Gorkha men. None chronicled the notable jobs performed by the Gorkha women.

Involvement of Gorkha women in the *andalon* organized by Bimal Gurung

GJMM as a separate party was established on 7th October 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung, who was a close confidant of the former leader Subash Ghising. The Gorkha Jana Mukti Nari Morcha (GJMNM) was established soon after on 18th October 2007. Asha Gurung, the supremo's wife was nominated as the President of this new frontal organization

along with seven core committee members. It was formed with an objective to mobilize the participation of Gorkha women in this new movement. 350 units of the *Nari Morcha* was set up in the hills, Dooars and Terai. The women's wing was exclusively entrusted with the task to recruit Gorkha women to enhance mobilization and make them aware of the issue of Gorkhaland irrespective of their social status. Bimal Gurung used several tactics and strategies and encouraged women to break the predominantly existing patriarchal notions of domination. For example, at that time Zee TV was airing the serial *Jhansi ki Rani*. Gurung used this soap to encourage women to come out and fight for their land as Rani of Jhansi did because most of them were ready consumers of soaps and serials. Gurung also invoked the spiritual and mythical attributes of women as divinity – Durga or Kali to influence them. Social media and improved means of communication also helped in spreading the news of the movement and enhanced visibility encouraged women to be a part of it. Many Gorkha women were deterred by violence during the Ghising phase, but many were drawn to Bimal Gurung's championing of the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence.

As a result, many Gorkha women started associating themselves with the GJMNM and participated in public protests regardless of their age, caste, religion, or class. Whether it was a hunger strike, hartal, picketing, procession, road blockades, rail roko, jail bhara andolan, protest at Jantar Mantar (New Delhi), social boycott of opposition leaders, awareness campaigns, etc., they were in the face of every protest. On behalf of the party, female GJMNM members also traveled to Delhi in delegations. This enabled them to become the face of media and these televised media bytes in every living room of the hills encouraged others to join the movement. Their images were displayed in various newspapers and social media sites. According to Sumit Mukerji Gorkha women would not even hesitate to take up arms if the movement demanded so.^{xii} Yet this visible participation and involvement did not mean that they were part of the decision-making process. Sundas, member of GJMNM from Lalkuti, Darjeeling reiterated that “women in Darjeeling were vocal in the movement but were not politically empowered as it was controlled by Gurung.”^{xiii} The *andolan* and even women's role was scripted by men in position and especially by the GJMM supremo, Bimal Gurung.

Even within the *Nari Morcha* women were divided into two groups. The first segment consisted of women from sound economic backgrounds, educated, experienced, vocal and always in touch with the central committee leaders who provided leadership to the movement. The second group consisted of women who were mainly housewives, self-employed, not from a well-off economic background, did not participate in the decision-making process and were ready to sacrifice their lives - if the movement demanded so. The first category of women rarely mingled with the second one.

Initially the movement was launched to demand the resignation of Subash Ghising and suspend the implementation of the Sixth Schedule. Bimal Gurung had such faith on his women cadres that he declared that if Ghising dared to enter Darjeeling - he would have to cross thousands of *Nari Morcha* workers.^{xiv} The *Nari Morcha* took out rally against Subash Ghising, ranted slogans against him and gheraoed the offices of the DGHC and GNLF officials demanding audit of the accounts. On 23rd July 2008 Pramila Sharma was killed, while demonstrating outside the house of GNLF leader Deepak Gurung at TV Tower, Darjeeling. She was declared as a martyr by the GJMM and Rs. 1.5 lakh was given to her family as compensation.^{xv}

In 2009 as a part of the Dooars Chalo Abhiyan, the *Nari Morcha* collocated the Gorkha-Adivashi mela at Gorubathan. Approximately five thousand women from different parts of the hills came here to participate in the mela. The major objective of this amalgamation was to make people in Dooars aware and convince them about the advantage of a separate state. However, the situation turned into bloodshed in places like Gorubathan, Nagarkata, Malbazar and Jaigaon. On 16th January Nari Morcha rallies were attacked by members of the Adivasi Vikas Parishad, Jan Jagran and Bangla Basha Bachao organizations near Malbazar and other areas of Dooars. Several women with minor and major injuries were hospitalized. 'The incident changed the nature and role of women in the movement from passive to active participants.'^{xvi} As a result, members of the Nari Morcha demonstrated against the role of police by organizing hunger strikes in many places of Dooars and Terai. In protest of the Dooars Chalo Abhiyan's repression, they also planned a march from Chowrasta to the Sadar police station and marked a Black Flag Day. GJMNM conducted felicitation functions for those people who confronted the opponents (mainly the Bengalis) to boost the morale of the activists.

In 2011 a *padyatra* was organized by the GJMM as part of the 'March for Gorkhaland' programme from Gorubathan to Jaigaon. About 3,000 GJMM supporters gathered in Sibchu for the event, this was orchestrated in defiance of a prohibitory order under section 144 of the CrPC. Police opened fire after the situation became violent. One Gorkha woman later passed away, and two others perished. They were Bimala Rai of Kalimpong, age 24, and Vikey Lama of Dooars, age 16. Twenty-three-year-old Nita Khawas died four days later. According to the testimony of the IG North Bengal women were put in the forefront. It has also been testified by the police officials that they were forced to open fire when Nari Morcha activists hacked a woman home guard Karuna Tigga with a Khukri.^{xvii}

As a result of this firing GJMM called a strike in which women activists took part in large numbers all throughout the region and GJMNM activists undertook a fast unto death in front of the office of the District Magistrate. Names of some Gorkha women who were in the forefront of this programme were Deepa Tamang, Mamata Chettri, Bindiya Lama and Nirmala Devi. They refused medical treatment and even 52-year-old Nirmala Devi who suffered from a kidney failure was adamant about continuing with the fast.^{xviii} In order to secure justice and to protest against the killing in Sibchu, a 'Black Flag Day' was observed on 10th February under the leadership of Asha Gurung. On 15th of the same month self-detention programme or *jail bharo andolan* was initiated which continued till 22nd February. It was reported that the participation of women activists were more than their male counterparts in this protest movement.^{xix}

Yet another noteworthy role performed by the women members of the GJMNM was their participation in a demonstration in front of the Jantar Mantar in Delhi from 26th February 2011 to highlight the demand of a separate state for the Gorkhas. According to Dipti Tamang the proportion of women members present there was more than men.^{xx} The major objectives of this dharna was to put pressure on the government to allow Bimal Gurung to lead a rally from Kumani village to Sunkosh in Dooars, justice for the Sibchu massacre and removal of the Indo-Tibetan police force from the hills, including Terai and Dooars. The women members also protested against atrocities committed against them - demanding the reduction of state police and other paramilitary forces from the hills. The GTA was established in 2011 for the hill district. This 50-seat governmental structure was established

by direct election. Only nine seats were reserved for women overall. In terms of percentage, it was 18%, which is less than the 33% set aside for women by the Indian Constitutional Amendment Acts 73 and 74.

In 2017 when the movement resurrected again many top leaders of the GJMM went into hiding - creating a vacuum in the leadership hierarchy. This void was filled up by the women activists from the hills. On June 15, Mamata Banerjee's government raided Bimal Gurung's house for nearly a couple of hours in search of arms after a tip-off forcing Gurung to take refuge underground. The GJMM women's wing staged a demonstration outside the house while the raid was being carried out. The very next day three supporters were killed and five critically injured by police firing near St. Joseph's College at Singmari when a rally organized by the Nari Morcha turned violent. Members of the GJMNM engaged themselves in picketing and administering torch light marches every evening. They even delivered speeches to motivate common people to carry on with the strike. In absence of top leaders and infighting amongst them, the women activists took upon themselves to submit memorandums to the government, in this process sometimes they were arrested. They also became the representatives to negotiate both with the central and state authorities.

Gorkha women also played a noteworthy role during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Women came forward to distribute relief materials. Keeping in mind the terrain of Darjeeling it was a risky and challenging job. When Bimal Gurung established the Covid-19 isolation centers, it was the women members who encouraged people to avail of the facility affected by this deadly disease. A few of them even took on the duty of preparing meals for the sick.

Conclusion:

As noted above Gorkhaland movement witnessed an en mass participation of women in both of its phases; be it under the stewardship of Subash Ghising or Bimal Gurung. Though they were more visible and active during the second phase of the movement. They have performed multiple tasks and were the survivors of the conflict. Gorkha women have borne its direct outcomes and consequences. Yet their significant contributions remained outside the scholarly discourses and narratives. Their involvement in the movement was even marginalized and largely obscured in the historical accounts of the conflict. Insufficient research on this topic is a pointer to the patriarchal structure of the Gorkha society that categorized women's involvement to be mainly supportive and secondary in nature. Oral testimonials verified that men's contribution to the movement was considered more important than sacrifices rendered by Gorkha women. Further it shas been assumed that women are incapable of 'doing politics' or 'lack interest'.^{xxi} Thus, socio-cultural inhibitions and patriarchal norms acted as a deterrent to women emerging as key figures in the political sphere.

However, the liberating effect of the movement helped Gorkha women to break the public/private divide, shattering the traditional restrictions. The participation of women in large numbers was overwhelming. Women formed the base of the movement - attended meetings, participated in gheraos, hunger strikes, demonstrations and even attentively listened to speeches delivered by the leaders. Media played an important role in enhancing the political awareness of women. Literacy also played a positive role in increasing their political conscious. The rate of women literacy increased from 62.9% in 2001 to 73.33% in 2011. Various studies testified that educated women residing in cities were more interested

in joining politics rather than those in the rural areas, who were less educated than their urban counterparts. Gorkha women living in villages hardly got time to engage in other activities, be it social or political, as they are busy in earning their livelihood. While educated women with higher secondary and other higher degrees like Asha Gurung, Prabha Chettri, Urmila Rumba, Munjula Subba, Meena Rai, Santi Subba, Jyoti Gurung, Kamala Adhikari, etc., emerged as prominent leaders of the movement, holding important positions.^{xxii} They were mobilized and made aware of their social, economic, and political rights by the establishment of *Nari Morcha's* during both stages of the revolution.

However, the aim is to see an autonomous, structured, and gender-specific women's movement that is distinct from the Gorkha cause. Women are mostly excluded from decision-making responsibilities, and very few have reached important leadership positions. Politically they are not empowered, they simply follow the dictates and decisions taken by the male leaders. They are projected as followers and supporters of the movement. They have been denied access to political power and are not treated as equals. Many even accuse that the leaders use them as shields; in every protest movement they are made to stand in the front and have been victims quite often. Participation of women in large numbers and their visibility gives an impression of empowered women. But sadly, this does not alter the entrenched gender practices in the Gorkha society. Which is evident from the lack of women representation in both the DGHC and GTA; both of these autonomous bodies were male dominated. The 73rd and 74th Amendment of the Constitution introduced reservations on the basis of gender, mandating to about 33% reservation for women in the local bodies of administration. Prior to the implementation of this amendment representation of women was dreadfully low; it had slightly increased post-amendment. Both the DGHC and GTA have not implemented any policies to enhance women's security, nor even have introduced welfare schemes for women. Moreover, participation of women in politics is viewed as 'promiscuous' and 'lacking discipline'.^{xxiii} This deeply embedded notion of honour and shame have dissuaded women from joining politics in the patriarchal Gorkha social structure.

All said and done it can be concluded that Gorkha women were more active and visible in the movement led by Bimal Gurung than that of Subash Ghising. Print media, electronic media and development of technology played a vital role in spreading the news of the movement which guaranteed enhanced participation. Education too played a significant role that made women aware and conscious of their rights which was missing during the GNLF days. Yet in both the phases women were not given equal share in the political process. Politics of inclusion and exclusion was all pervasive in the Gorkha society. However, it cannot be negated that women have made their mark in the history of Gorkhaland movement. Despite the state government's restrictive policies, they made their presence known.

ⁱ Taylor, V. (1999). Gender and social movements: Gender processes in women's self-help movements. *Gender and Society*, 13(1), 8–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124399013001002>

ⁱⁱ Tamang, D. (2020a). *Women and the ethnic conflict of Gorkhaland: Contesting history*. Zubaan.

ⁱⁱⁱ Khanduri, B. C., & Fabi, F. (1997). *A rediscovered history of the Gorkhas*. Gyan Sagar Publications

-
- iv Mukerji, S. (2014). Women in the Gorkhaland movement. *Expression Journal*, 1–6.
- v Ghatani, P. (2019). *The role of women in Gorkhaland movement post 1986* (Publication No. 359601) [Doctoral dissertation, Jadavpur University]. Shodhganga.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/359601>
- vi Mukerji, Sumit. (June, 2014): Op. cit, pp 2-3.
- vii Ghatani, Priti. (2019): Op. cit, pp 47-48.
- viii Chhetri, K. (2020). *A sociological study of the hill region of Darjeeling district* (Publication No. 403104) [Doctoral dissertation, University of North Bengal]. Shodhganga.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10603/403104>
- ix Ghatani, P. (2016). Women and politics in Darjeeling. In S. Chatterjee, R. Khatun, S. Sengupta, S. Das, M. Chakraborty, & M. S. S. Mollah (Eds.), *Our place our space our case: Women's issues in contemporary perspectives* (pp. 168–180). South Calcutta Girls College.
- x Tamang, Dipti. (2020): Op. cit, p 16.
- xi Ghatani, Priti. (2019): Op. cit, p 52.
- xii Mukerji, S. (2014, June). Women in the Gorkhaland movement. *Expression Journal*, 1–6.
- xiii Personal interview given by Ranjana Sundas to Priti Ghatani. Ghatani, Priti. (2019): Op. cit, p 97.
- xiv Mukerji, Sunit. (June, 2014): Op. cit, p 4.
- xv Himali Darpan. (2008, July 26). Subash Ghising along with wife and son reached Siliguri. *Himali Darpan*, 7.
- xvi Tamang, A. (2018, October). An overview of women in the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 5(10), 353–365.
<http://jetir.org>
- xvii Mukerji, S. (2014, June). Women in the Gorkhaland movement. *Expression Journal*, 1–6.
- xviii Rai, A. (2016, May). Women in Gorkhaland movement: The question of empowerment. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 5(6), 343–348. <http://ijird.com>
- xix Lama, S. (2014, June). Role of women in Gorkhaland movement: Assessing the issue of power sharing. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 2(2), 75–85.
- xx Tamang, Dipti. (2020): Op. cit, p 18.
- xxi Tamang, D. (2020a). *Women and the ethnic conflict of Gorkhaland: Contesting history*. Zubaan.
- xxii Rai, Ashlesha. (2015): Op. cit, p 102.
- xxiii Tamang, D. (2020b). Rethinking “participation” in Women, Peace and Security discourses: Engaging with “non-participant” women’s movements in the Eastern borderlands of India. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 22(5), 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2020.1803098>