

Daily Current Affairs

(National News & Articles)

Article on Gorkhaland

Our constitution provides 22 scheduled languages (8th schedule of Indian constitution) and in fact, more than 2000 languages and dialects are spoken in India that's why we represent unity in diversity. In 1956, the states were reorganized based on language in general (like Tamil speaking people into Tamil Nadu and Telugu speaking people into Andhra Pradesh from Madras Presidency) and later on also, this very policy was applied (like in case of division of Bombay State into Marathi speaking



Maharashtra and Gujarati speaking Gujarat in 1960, The division of Punjab (Punjabi Speaking) and Haryana (Hindi Speaking) in 1966). So, Union has always respected the culture, tradition and language to represent its true inherent character of civilization. However, This is not very justified in case we go for a state for every language and dialect. Like Sindhi is a scheduled language spoken in Gujarat and few southern pockets of Rajasthan but India has not created a separate state for Sindhi Speaking people and same is the case for other scheduled languages like Maithali in northern Bihar. So, creation of a separate state only based on language and cultural uniqueness is not very justified and India has to see many more other criteria/conditions before going to create a new state.

Gorkha people of northern West Bengal living in Darjeeling Hills and Siliguri Hills etc in Tarai and Dooar regions in the foothill of Himalaya have been raising the demand for separate statehood from quite some time. They speak Gorkha and Nepali languages. They have hilly culture and certainly that is unique.

Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was formed 1988. It could not satisfy the aspiration of the people and agitation continued. After downfall of previous leader Subhash Ghisingh (leader of Gorkhaland National Liberation Front and the chairman of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council 1988-2008), New leader Bimal Gurung rose in 2007 with another party Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM). There was a meeting among Central govt headed by P Chidambaram, Govt of West Bengal headed by Mamta Banerjee and GJM on Jul 18, 2011 near Siliguri and they agreed for creating of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA).

GTA will be a semi-autonomous administrative body of Gorkhaland with executive and financial powers but no legislative power. It means GTA can work as a district administrator in bigger region (than a district) but it cannot function as a state assembly. It will be an executive body we can say and will be having more say in determining and executing the plans.

There will be election for the members of GTA in Gorkhaland and MLA will also be sent to the assembly of West Bengal from this region.

A bill for the creation of GTA was passed in the West Bengal Assembly on Sept 2, 2011 and sent to president for assent which she gave Mar 7, 2012. The bill was not required to be passed from parliament as there was no state reorganization or creation. Afterward, it was notified in the gazette of the state on Mar 14, 2012 and further meeting with GTA/State Govt took place with the view to go for GTA election in Jun or Jul 2012 in case they can finish the pending tasks.

As there is demand to include more pockets into GTA, A 10-member joint verification committee headed by a retired High Court judge (Justice Sen) has been constituted.

This committee will provide report by Jun 2012 that which all pockets of Siliguri, Tarai & Dooar regions should be included in GTA apart from Darjeeling Hills. The demand for inclusion of more regions became strengthen when in Oct 2011 Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad (ABAVP) joined hand with GJM to press the govt.

We need to wait how successfull the GTA will be in coming days. In my views, It is a perfect solution seeing the current demands for statehood where India can satisfy the aspiration of particular region/cultural group and at the same time more fragmentations of states can be avoided as creating of state is constitutional issue and sharing the legislative power with more stake holders.

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