



Crisis of Good Governance and Autonomy Movement: From Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council to Gorkhaland Territorial Administration

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ABSTRACT

Good Governance is purposive and development oriented administration, which concerns the improvement of quality of life of the mass people. Governance is also considered as the citizen-friendly, citizen-caring, responsive, consensus oriented, equity and inclusiveness goal and result oriented administration. It requires effective participation of people in state, civil society and private sector of activities that are conducive to humane development. This paper is trying to highlights the crisis or the failure of good governance may result autonomy movement - with special reference to Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council to Gorkhaland Territorial Administration in the state of West Bengal, India.

KEYWORDS

Governance, Good Governance, corruption, non-responsiveness

Introduction

Governance is purposive and development oriented administration, which concerns the improvement of quality of life of the mass people. Governance is also considered as the citizen-friendly, citizen-caring, responsive, consensus oriented, equity and inclusiveness goal and result oriented administration. It requires effective participation of people in state, civil society and private sector of activities that are conducive to humane development. This paper is trying to highlights the crisis or the failure of good governance may result autonomy movement - with special reference to Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council to Gorkhaland Territorial Administration in the state of West Bengal, India.

Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are:

1. To analyse the crisis of good governance;
2. To analyse the causes of autonomy movement;
3. To analyse the impact of bad governance.

Reviews

M.G. Ramakant Rao (2008) – This book lays importance on the characteristics of good governance. He highlighted the following characteristic of good governance – participation, Rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness and effectiveness.

R.N. Prasad (2002) – This book dealing with the some of the burning problems/challenges/issues on perspective of the Indian governance like social, political, economic an administrative, arising out of the failure of state and nation building. In order to resolve the conflict/problems he emphasises a major structure shift and institutional change in the existing socio-economic model of development. The positive role of the state in resolving the social, political and economic conflicts is emphasised.

Shylendra (2009) argues that there are three actors of development – state, market and civil society and they have to work together for arriving at a synergetic solution of development problems and good governance.

Research Questions

On the basis of the aforesaid objective this paper is trying to answer the following questions:

1. What are the major causes that transform good governance to bad governance in India?
2. What are the major causes of autonomy movement in Darjeeling in the state of West Bengal?
3. What are the major or possible solutions of autonomy?

Problems of Good Governance

- i. Lack of transparency: One of the major problems of good governance is lack of transparency. It is the duty of the government to make aware of the people regarding plans and programmes.
- ii. Red tapism: Delay in doing work for the people also produced bad governance.
- iii. Corruption: Corruption may be regarded as one of the greatest hurdle of good governance.
- iv. Non-responsiveness: Non-responsiveness on some important issues is also the problems of good governance.
- v. Underdevelopment: Underdevelopment is also the cause of good governance.

Autonomy Movement in Darjeeling: From DGHC to GTA

As one of the foremost states of India, West Bengal, which has experienced the pangs and pains of partition twice over. Different ethnic groups of people, race, religion etc makes West Bengal unique in character. But, it is a testimony that a 'melting pot' will absorbs all sections of people of different hues and colours and yet throw up dilemmas of such magnitude that will generate debates and create social tensions through the ages. The state of West Bengal harbours the Queen of the Himalayas – Darjeeling hills, which was once upon a time was the diamond in the crown of British India. The British have long left India, but have left behind a legacy, that once served them as their sanatorium and reminded them of their homes, that is the Darjeeling hills. The state of West Bengal not only inherited the pristine beauty of the majestic hills of Darjeeling but also the accompanying problems of integration and unity of the region with the rest of the state. Since 1907 the demand for the separate state of Gorkhaland making the state as well as central governments to look into the matter seriously many times. The demand for the separate state of Gorkhaland has reached its high in the late 1980s with the formation of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). With the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1998 as an alternative solution in place of Gorkhaland the intensity of the movement decreases upto certain extend.

GNLF to DGHC

The autonomy movement in Darjeeling has long history and the contribution of the Gorkhas to the creation of a separate identity of Darjeeling has been well established. The Nepali-speakers in the state of West Bengal have a long-standing demand that the Darjeeling district along with some parts of Duars be converted to Gorkhaland, which would be a new state within the India federation' (Lacina, 2013). According to Sen (1989), the Darjeeling town, occupied by animist Bho-

tias, Lepchas and Tibetan and Budshists whose population was about 100, first came under the control of British East India Company in 1835. After 1835, when the British began importing tea-workers from Nepal, the demography of Darjeeling began to change very rapidly. By 1849, the town had more than 10000 residents (Sen, 1989) and 94,712 residents in 1872 (Subba, 1989). Since the 1950s, the Nepali-speaking people of Darjeeling started calling themselves Gorkhas (Subba, 2003).

Before the formation of the GNLf in 1986 under the stewardship of Subash Ghisingh, there was the Hillmen's Association formed in 1917, the All India Gorkha League formed in 1943 and the Pranta Parishad formed in 1980. In 1907 and 1934, the European settlers in Darjeeling formed the Hillmen's Association that called for a separate administrative unit for the Nepali, Bhutia and the Laepchas (Chakraborty, 2005). The All India Gorkha League (AIGL) formed in 1943 from the union and the communist movements in tea gardens of the Darjeeling hills demanded that Darjeeling be made a part of Assam (Thapa, 1997). Violent clashes between the administration and the supporters of Gorkhaland erupted in the period 1986-88 in which 300 people were killed and crores of property destroyed (Crossette, 1989; Shreshta, 2003). This prompted the Centre and the West Bengal state governments to enter into a trilateral agreement in 1988, which created the DGHC (Sarkar & Bhaumik, 2000). The creation of DGHC quieted the demands of Gorkhaland until 2006.

GJM to GTA

The Gorkha Janamukhti Morcha (GJM) was formed in 2007 under the stewardship of Bimal Gurung. The formation of the new party, GJM was largely a result of the GNLf-run-DGHC failing to meet the aspirations of the people of Darjeeling hills and failing to fulfill the eternal demand of a separate Gorkhaland state. The then second-in-command in the GNLf broke ranks in 2007 to form the GJM. Seeing the huge electoral victories engineered by the GJM in 20011 at West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections the West Bengal Government were compelled to think for an alternative solution instead of separate state of Gorkhaland. As a result, the GTA was formed on the basis of a trilateral agreement on July, 2011 between the centre, the West Bengal state government and the GJM. The DGHC was banned and GTA was formulated. In March 2012, again the GJM placed their demand for the territorial or jurisdiction expansion of GTA. In the summer of 2012, the GJM won all the forty five seats in the GTA Sabha, including twenty-eight uncontested. However, when around 2000 GJM activists, including ten elected GTA Sabha members were arrested and put behind bars by the West Bengal state government during the two-month long Gorkhaland agitation starting from July 2013, clouds started gathering on the horizon of the Darjeeling hills once again. For the time being the demand of a separate state of Gorkhaland has been buried under the grandiose artifice of the GTA. But, the dream of a separate state of Gorkhaland continues to linger on in the hearts of the many Gorkhas, not only of the Darjeeling hills, but all over the world. The moot question is, whether the GTA be able to satisfy the demands and the aspirations of the residents of the Darjeeling hills, or will GTA be rejected in the future in favour of a separate state of Gorkhaland; the answer lies embedded in the womb of time.

Causes of Autonomy Movement in Darjeeling Hills

There are many causes of autonomy movement in Darjeeling and are as follows:

- i. Historical cause
- ii. Lack of development
- iii. The cultural set up of the region
- iv. Non-responsiveness of the state government towards some issues
- v. Exploitation from state government
- vi. Attitudes of the state government.

Suggestions

In order to tackle the autonomy movement the following measures can be adopted:

1. Active involvement in political governance: The state government should not play any divide and rule politics but active involvement in political governance may produce fruitful end.
2. Humane Approach: The confrontation is not the solution of any autonomy movement. Approach should be a humane one.
3. Development: The area is rich in natural resources and meaningful developmental projects should be initiated.
4. One should respects the cultural dimensions of others community.

Conclusion

Regional autonomy movement is one of the serious problems of India. It should be tackle with more and more consciously. The regional autonomy movement for the separate state of Gorkhaland in Darjeeling in the state of West Bengal is the product of bad governance. We know that Darjeeling has been experienced two settlements Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) and Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) from 1988 to till date and the movement is still going on. Is this not the crisis of good governance?

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