

**Interrogating Gorkha as Martial Race: Category based on Discrete Identities**

by

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**Abstract:**

*Drawing from the review of existing literatures on Gorkhas this paper charts the historical genealogy of the Gorkha identity and its evolution from a martial race category to a social and cultural identity. The paper draws attention to the constructed nature of Gorkha identity as martial race, and highlights how this martial category subsumed many discreet ethnic groups within its fold, while providing minimal space for perpetuation of cultural differences. The paper argues that the collective nature of Gorkha identity was structured in the past through the martial thinking and is still perpetuated in the present context but in a renewed and reinvigorated form.*

**Keywords:** martial race, Gorkha, identity, army, culture, ethnic groups.

‘In my humble opinion they are by far the best soldiers in India, and if they are made participators of our renown in arms, I conceive that their gallant spirit and unadulterated military habits might be relied on for fidelity; and that our good and regular pay, and noble pension establishment, would serve to counterpoise the influence of nationality especially in the Magar and Gurungs.’

Brian Houghton Hodgson

(1833)

‘The Gurkha, from the warlike qualities of his forefathers, and the traditions handed down to him of their military prowess as conquerors of Nepal, is imbued with and cherishes the true military spirit.’

Eden Vansittart (1896)

The study of groups and communities in a post-colonial country like India poses great challenges, as the structures of group identities and boundaries underwent systematic changes within the structures of colonial governmentality. In many ways the colonial strategies to control and discipline the population of India led to the development of different notions of people, and structured identities of many groups and communities.<sup>1</sup> The group’s internal constitution, as well as their conception of the group boundaries was shaped by the way colonialist wrote, envisioned, and represented them, which in turn created essentialized identities.<sup>2</sup> The myriad aspects of colonial governance initiated a discourse whereby new subjectivities were created through different categorization process like census operations and large-scale ethnological studies. This is the apt case of the Gorkha/Nepali as martial race and their present predicament in India.<sup>3</sup>

This paper does not dwell into the regimental and military history of the Gorkha, it rather attempts a critical analysis of the early text like the handbooks prepared by the Army officers as they form the source of early details on Gorkhas. The paper will analyze how Gorkhas were represented in the official publications and other anthropological writings which heralded the stereotypes of martial race. <sup>4</sup> It will argue that the Gorkha as a martial category subsumed many ethnic groups within its ambit, and in subsequent years assumed a socio-cultural and political form especially in a region like Darjeeling.

The bulk of literature on the Gorkhas belongs to the class of writings by British administrators, scholars, and army officers who served in the British army. The literature can be aptly classified as regimental histories; recruitment handbooks and coffee table books which speak volumes about the manners and customs of the Gorkhas, along with their tales of gallantry. Most of them are didactic in nature, where gallant past accounts are construed which provide legitimacy to the present and future. Most importantly, these accounts create an image of gallant soldiers who are uprooted from their own history and incorporated into the grand narrative of martiality.<sup>5</sup> The literature is conspicuously silent on the views and opinion of different ethnic groups, and their conception regarding the category of martial Gorkha. Even the literatures produced by the Indian scholars tend to celebrate the category of the Gorkha as a martial race, without paying much attention to understand the ways in which the identity of Gorkha was constituted in the minds of the people.<sup>6</sup> The Gorkha martial category helps us to explore new avenues of identity claims, and note the dynamics of categorical identity formation in Darjeeling. In order to highlight these aspects this paper looks into the historical process involved in the formation of Gorkha identity, and sets a framework to explore the present through the idiom of the past.

### **Encountering the Gorkhas:**

Many scholars give diverse explanations for the origin of the name Gorkha, however in contemporary times most agree to the fact that the name Gorkha came from a principality located in Nepal. Prithivinarayan Shah who unified Nepal in the late eighteenth century came from this principality. He was known as the Gorkha King and his troops were known as Gorkhali force.<sup>7</sup> The origin of the Gorkha rulers in Nepal is

shrouded in mystery and historians tracing the genealogy of the Gorkha dynasty<sup>8</sup> have analyzed the Royal chronicles called *Gorkha-vamsavali* which narrates the migration of the high caste Hindus from Rajasthan to the hills of Nepal following the Muslim invasion.<sup>9</sup> The historical narrative of the Gorkha dynasty as recorded by Hamilton (1819) recounts the story of two brothers *Khancha* and *Mincha* who inherited lands in the Magar country, *Khancha* in the neighborhood of Birkot and *Mincha* at Nawakot. *Khancha* subsequently extended his realm to include Gulmi and Ghandrung and *Mincha* extended his realm to Kaksi and Lamjung by subduing the Gurung of the region.<sup>10</sup> It was from this latter branch of Lamjung that we first hear of Drabya Shah who was able to seize the little principality of Gorkha.<sup>11</sup> It was Pithhvinarayan Shah of this lineage who conceived the idea of extending his realm to the Kathmandu valley. When he came to power in 1743, he started a campaign to conquer the *Baisi* and *Chaubisi* principalities.<sup>12</sup> Though faced with a stiff resistance from the Newars in 1757, yet Gorkhas subsequently ran over Kirtipur in 1766, after which Jayaprakash Malla sought British help to resist the invading Gorkha army. In 1767 the British anxious to maintain a steady trade relation with Nepal and Tibet, send an expedition under Captain Kinloch to assist Newar kings against the Malla. However, the expedition failed and Kathmandu soon fell into the hands of the invading Gorkhas on the day of *Indra Jatra* festival.<sup>13</sup>

After the conquest of Kathmandu, Patan soon fell, followed by Bhadgau a year after. So by 1769 the conquest of Nepal valley was completed and Prithivinarayan shifted his capital to Kathmandu on 21 March 1770.<sup>14</sup> After the conquest of the Kathmandu valley the Gorkhas marched in both the western and eastern direction establishing its proprietary rights over the smaller principalities. On the western front the Gorkhas occupied Kumaon in 1791, Garhwal in 1803 and on the eastern front they

occupied Sikkim and Darjeeling in 1789.<sup>15</sup> From the year 1804 onwards they resumed the campaign of territorial expansion in the region west of Kumaun. However, their plan to expand westward into Kangra region was stalled due to the dispute they entered with the British East India Company. Following such events war was imminent, and it was formally declared on 1 November 1814. The war eventually came to an end with the Treaty of Sugauli (signed on 2 December 1815 and ratified on 4 March 1816), which determined the boundaries between Nepal and British India, and provided for establishment of British Residency in Nepal. The treaty did not mention about the recruitment of the Gorkhas into the British India Army. However, after the conclusion of the war, the commissioner of Kumaon Edward Gardner wrote to the Government urging to recruit Gorkhas into the regular troops of British India army, and this proposal was welcomed by the Governor General.<sup>16</sup>

### **Recruitment of the Gorkhas:**

The recruitment of the Gorkhas into the Company's Army started even before the conclusion of the Anglo-Nepal war. British officers like Captain Hearsay recommended the recruitment of the Gorkhas during the advent of Anglo-Nepal war.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, British General Ochterlony played a crucial role in the early recruitment of the Gorkhas, it was during the course of the war that he requested the Company's government to recruit Gorkhas; which was duly accepted by Lord Moira, and an order was issued on 24 April 1815 to raise three Gorkha battalions. The first battalion raised was *Nasiri* or *Nusooree* battalion which was formed to take part in the operation against the Malaun, the second battalion was recruited mainly from the Gorkha prisoners held at Dehru Doon and was named *Sirmoor rifles*. *Kumaun battalion* was raised at the same time

from amongst men who were defeated at Almora.<sup>18</sup> Progressively all these regiments underwent title successive changes in subsequent years.<sup>19</sup>

The recruitment of the Gorkhas into the ranks of the Company's army was founded on the martial thinking which was gradually taking shape in the Indian sub-continent. The martial race theory was part of the European doctrine of 'biological determinism' or 'scientific racism', which required more than the discursive construction.<sup>20</sup> The martial race theory became more concrete, codified, and took an official shape following the events of 1857. Seemingly after the mutiny of 1857, colonial anthropology was obsessed with the question of caste and its specific characteristics, thus it became the sole determining factor for recruitment in the British Indian army.<sup>21</sup> Recruitment of groups such as Gorkhas was contingent on their essential difference from people of the Indian plains, and loyalty to the British. McMunn emphasizes this fact when he writes, 'the bulk of Gurkha tribes are in no great sympathy with the races of India, and in the army would far rather associate with the European soldiers than with other Indian troops'<sup>22</sup> Martial race was thus designed to recruit relatively backward minorities who would be dependent on the British for their sustenance.<sup>23</sup> Enloe (1980) refers to this process of labeling people from remote rural setting as 'Gurkha syndrome'.<sup>24</sup> The deliberate attempt to lure Gorkha recruits through economic benefits is best captured in Napier statement- 'No pay no Goorkha.'<sup>25</sup>

Martiality was then a product of the economic vulnerability of a group and their geographical isolation. This was most evident in the case of the Gorkhas, where certain districts and regions of Nepal were singled out, which were thought to produce good recruits, and some others were demarcated as regions producing poor recruits. In their

search for the best fighting men from the hills the British ethnographers and military officers downplayed the differences of culture, traditions, and customs of different groups, and only highlighted their similitude as hill dwellers.<sup>26</sup> The importance of place was paramount in identifying martial groups. Ethnic groups were perceived to retain their martial quality only in their natural habitat. British officers shared the views on miscegenation and insisted that intermarriage would undeniably contaminate the blood and led to inferior breed.

Two central qualities actively associated with the martial races were that of 'honour' and 'shame.'<sup>27</sup> In this way the martial races stood in complete opposition to the 'criminal castes/tribes.' If the natural instinct of the martial race was warfare, in contrast the natural proclivity of criminal castes was crime. It seems that the martial race theory was promulgated to invert the inherent trait of criminality, to check its negative content, to channelize it through disciplinary regimes for productive forces. Therefore, as Omissi (1994) suggests many groups like Mapillas, Mers, and Minas could be categorized as both 'criminal' and 'martial.'<sup>28</sup> The British recognized the proclivity of both towards violence, so if unchecked it could pose as a serious threat to the Raj itself. So martiality was a combined manifestation of 'enumerative' plus 'surveillance' modality of the colonial state. In this logic criminality was unrestrained martiality, therefore, to control it criminality was made to stand in stark opposition to martiality.

Though the Gorkhas served in the British India Army since 1815, yet they came to be seen as a corps d' elite only after the mutiny of 1857. The first *Nussuree Gurkha* battalion was raised through the combined effort of Lieutenant Robert Ross, and Lieutenant Frederick Young, who formed corps with men from Gharwal. The disposed

peasants from Kumaon and Gharwal later enlisted heavily into the ranks of Gorkha soldiers. Thus, during and immediately after the Anglo-Gorkha war; regions such as Kumaon, Gharwal, and Sirmoor served as pool for the Gorkha recruits. Early recruits were actually Gharwalis and Kumaonis who were predominantly recruited as irregular levies. These recruits were later molded into Company's image of a gallant Gorkha soldier.<sup>29</sup>

Gorkha was not a homogeneous group, as men were drawn from a host of peripheral ethnic groups. The variable definition of the Gorkha, needs to be probed given the fact that the first recruits as a Gorkha during the Anglo-Nepal war were men from the Garhwal hills. Though recruited as Gorkhas, these early recruits were depicted as 'strictly speaking not Gorkhas.'<sup>30</sup> This form of categorization provides sufficient ground to critically interrogate the category of the Gorkha and trace its connection to the purported martial race category. Structured as a martial race the category of Gorkha was extended to include various groups and communities in subsequent years. Groups such as Limboos and Rais who had resisted the Gorkha expansionist drive in the past were categorized as Gorkhas in the reimagined configuration of martial race.

The first European to report about the martial qualities of the Gorkhas was Hamilton (1819), which became even more prominent in the reports of Hodgson (1833), who then Assistant Resident at Nepali court proposed a direct recruitment of the Gorkhas.<sup>31</sup> For Hodgson, recruitment of men from Nepal into Company's army was a tacit move to check the ever growing strength of the Gorkha state.<sup>32</sup> This view was actively supported by Campbell- the then Assistant Surgeon at the Residency (later on to become the first superintendent of Darjeeling). Though the British resident Edward

Gardiner urged the Government of India to consider the recruitment of the Gorkhas, the Nepali court was suspicious of such an idea. Infact, the Nepali court confiscated the land grant of the soldiers who joined the British India army. In most cases the Nepali government adopted measures to thwart the recruitment, while maintaining cordial relation with the British. In all instances the Nepali court under Prime Minister Jang Bahadur Rana viewed the recruitment as a strategy adopted by the British to curtail the growing strength of the Gorkhas. Thus, to counter such strategies the Nepali court put a ban on the movement of the families outside Nepal, and the soldiers were prevented from returning home. The court also issued proclamations to punish the agents sent by the British for recruitment.<sup>33</sup> Given these obstacles clandestine recruitment was carried out by the British during this period.<sup>34</sup> All this while, the Nepali government under Jan Bahadur followed an obstructionist policy, which was adopted by the subsequent rulers of Nepal like Ranodip Singh. However, under heavy pressure from the British government, Ranodip Singh agreed to circulate notice to the recruits throughout the country, and to collect the recruits himself. During the reign of Bir Shamsheer a proposal to raise five Gorkha battalions was raised and was accented to by the Nepali court.

The recruitment of the Gorkha grew exponentially in 1862; there were five battalions of the Gorkhas which grew steadily to 13 in 1885, to 15 in 1892 and 20 in 1914.<sup>35</sup> The first eight *Gurkha Rifles Regiments* recruited mainly from the Magars and Gurung groups, the 9<sup>th</sup> *Gurkha* exclusively from the Khas and Thakurs, and the 10<sup>th</sup> *Gurkha* regiment from the Rais and Limbus.<sup>36</sup> This policy elevated the status of the Gorkha as elite soldiers within the British India Army. Soon regimental histories were written and regimental homes started in different region. <sup>37</sup> The 1st regiment of Gorkha

Rifles was stationed at Dharmsala, the 2<sup>nd</sup> at Dehru Dun, the 3<sup>rd</sup> at Almora, and the 4<sup>th</sup> at Bakloh. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> were located at Abbottabad, the 1/8 at Shillong, the 2/8 at Lansdowne, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Dehradun, and 10<sup>th</sup> at Maymyo.<sup>38</sup> The overall image of the Gorkha was shy and docile who became ferocious warrior under the British command, as Northey and Morris writes, 'though shy and somewhat reserved at first, he attaches himself closely to those under whom he takes service.'<sup>39</sup> As the recruiters wanted to enlist the most martial races, strong emphases was laid on determining recruit's detail, and avoid scrupulous claims of martiality.

### **Ethnological Accounts and Enumeration of Martial Gorkhas:**

As the history of Nepal was crisscrossed by overlapping ethnic ties, where cultural boundaries often overlapped the early accounts on Gorkhas present a very confusing picture of ethnic boundaries. Socio-culturally, historically and regionally the people of Nepal belonged to different ethnic, linguistic and racial groups like a) *Parbatiya* comprised of the Nepali/Khas Kura speaking population, b) The *Newars*- the Newari speaking groups who had their own elaborate system of caste hierarchy, c) The *Bhote* or the Tibeto-Burman language speaking groups and d) The *Kirat* groups of eastern Nepal classified as Rais and Limbus.<sup>40</sup> Along with these there were also host of ethnic groups like the Magars, Gurungs, Sunwars, Bhujels etc., who had their own cultural autonomy prior to the Gorkha conquest. Given the prevalence of martial race discourse many of these groups were categorized as Gorkha. In the early days recruitment to the Gorkha regiments were confined predominantly to Magar and Gurung tribes, followed by Khas and Thakuri. Formed in such a manner, the category of Gorkha was both inclusive as well as exclusive. It was inclusive as the category of

Gorkha was open to include groups of the eastern Nepal like Rais and Limboos who had resisted the Gorkha conquest for years. However, it was exclusive in the sense that many other groups like Lepchas, Tharus, Agri, Kumhal, Manjhi who predominated in Nepal and the adjoining areas were excluded.<sup>41</sup>

In the martial discourse the question was not whether, one is a Gorkha or not, but rather one was *true* Gorkha or not. This was epitomized in questions such as ‘what is a Gorkha’, rather than ‘who are the Gorkhas.’<sup>42</sup> Gorkhas was not an ethnic label, but an empty signifier, that got signified through the discursive articulation embedded in the martial discourse of bravery and machismo. So, the concern was not just to identify the Gorkhas, but to find what made someone a true Gorkha. This quality of martiality was itself an invention concocted by the British, thus the question ‘what is a Gorkha’ was a reinforcement of the idea of martiality. Within these categories specific attributes were associated to each ethnic group which in turn created stereotypical representations.

The first and the most systematic account on the martial races of Nepal is provided by Hodgson, who includes four major groups mainly the Khas, Magar and Gurungs as authentic Gorkhas. Hodgson classifies the *Khas* as speakers of ‘corrupt dialect’ and regards them as more or less pure Rajputs of other Kshatriyas origin.<sup>43</sup> Despite acknowledging the martial status of the Khas; Hodgson does not regard them as best suited for recruitment owing to their caste prejudice, and their devotion to the house of the Gorkhas. He classifies the Khas group into twelve major clans each containing host of sub-clans. The problem of in-determinability of group boundaries in multiethnic and caste society is evident in the classification. In such classifications the Ekthariyas are singled out from the Khas sub-division and a separate list of twenty five

sub-divisions within it is provided. Similar is the case of Thakuris, who are singled out like the Ekthariyas with eleven named sub-divisions within it.

Discussing the other two martial groups namely Magars and Gurungs Hodgson argues that they are Hindus, only 'because it is the fashion.'<sup>44</sup> He divides the Magar group into three major sub-divisions or clans namely the Ranas, Thapa, Alaya which are further sub-divided into many sub-clans. Interestingly, Hodgson does not discuss sub-divisions within Gurung, and only provides a list of forty two clans within the group, without naming any sub-clan within it. So what passes as sub-division or clans in the case of Gurung are indeed named sub-clans of the major subdivisions. Anomaly of this nature is evident in the data collected by Hodgson; however, more important and illustrious in his classification is the identification of the martial groups from the wide array of ethnic groups in Nepal. These detail provided by Hodgson led to the identification of martial races of Nepal and structured martial race thinking in subsequent years.

The most detailed and comprehensive account on the groups categorized as Gorkhas is presented by the army handbooks compiled by British army officers (self-styled as ethnologists) such as Eden Vansittart and C. J. Morris. These handbooks classifies the tribes best suited for recruitment, and also provide a readymade guide for the recruiters to determine the best clans from within the tribes, so as to avoid scrupulous claims of martiality.<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note that the spelling of the name Gorkha itself underwent changes in these handbooks so the first volume by Vansittart (1890) spells the name as *Goorkhas*, which is spelt as *Gurkha* in 1906 and subsequently retained in all publications. Defining Gorkhas Vansittart writes, 'the term Gurkha is not

limited to any particular class or clan; it is applied to all those whose ancestors inhabited the country of Gurkha, and who from it subsequently extended their conquest far and wide over the eastern and western hills.’<sup>46</sup> The handbooks make ample use of the details provided by ethnological studies such as that of Hodgson in determining the best recruits. In some cases officers like Vansittart also compiled cultural details of the groups under question through the recruits themselves. These handbooks also provide anthropometric measurement, especially that of chest and the height of the groups classed as Gorkhas. The most common facet discernible in the accounts presented on the Gorkhas is the grouping of ethnic groups into some loosely defined and structured units. Thus, the first unit is composed of Hinduized Khas language speaking groups such as Thakur and Brahmins, the second groups is composed of Magar, Gurung, Sunwar, and the third is composed of Kahmbus, Limbus and Yakkhas collectively labeled as *Kirati* groups.

Vansittart while discussing the Thakurs regards the *Sahi* clan among them as the best for recruitment followed by *Malla*, *Sing*, *Sen*, *Khan* and *Sumal*. Vansittart names (twenty three clans) of Thakurs, from which two clans *Sahi* and *Mal* are further sub-divided into sub-clans.<sup>47</sup> This can be contrasted with the details of Morris who provides a total of (twenty one clans) within the Thakurs with *Sen*, *Sig*, *Khan*, *Malla* and *Sahi* clans being further sub-divided into sub-clans.<sup>48</sup> The confusion stem from the fact that in many regards the accounts prepared by them underwent systematic revisions and with more clan names being identified, these officers seem unsure whether to name a unit within the group as an independent clan or a sub-clan.

For Vansittart the Thakurs share great cultural affinity with the Khas groups which he links to the Rajput lineage. Especially the *Ekthariariah* clan within the Khas is presented as pure descendants of Rajputs and thus superior to all other clans of Khas. Vansittart provides a total of nineteen clans of the Khas group which are further sub-divided into many sub-clans, with Baniya clan with the least of (one) sub-clan and Khattris with most the number of (one hundred and thirty one) sub-clans.<sup>49</sup> In this form of categorization *Matwala Khas* is depicted as a separate category with eighteen major clans, with three clans namely (*Panre, Rawal and Saon*), which are further sub-divided into many sub-clans.<sup>50</sup>

The colonial self-styled ethnologists took great care to secure the most authentic recruits from the tribes classified as martial, so they specified the real contours of the groups under question. Vansittart classifies Gurungs into two great divisions the *Charjat* and *Solahjat*. He describes the *Charjat* to be of superior standing than the *Solahjat*. Lot of discrepancy is evident in the accounts presented by both Vansittart and Morris, especially relating to the sub-clans structure of Gurungs. Vansittart states that the *Charjat* among the Gurungs are composed of four major clans of i) *Ghale* (with twelve sub-clans), ii) *Ghatani* (with twenty eight sub-clans), iii) *Lama* (with the twenty four sub-clans) and iv) *Lamchane* (with the most number of thirty six sub-clans).<sup>51</sup> The corresponding figure of sub-clans in the account presented by Morris is larger, *Ghale* (with nineteen sub-clans), *Ghotani* (with fifty nine sub-clans), *Lama* (with forty sub-clans), and *Lamchane* (with eighty three sub-clans).<sup>52</sup> Similar is the case of the *Solahjat Gurungs*, who in both the records are not divided into sub-divisions but categorized into amorphous clans. Vansittart classifies (ninety three) clans within them<sup>53</sup>, whereas

Morris classifies them into (one hundred and thirty nine) clans.<sup>54</sup> In both the records the *Ghale* clans is considered the most superior, being of the ruling clan and also difficult to procure. Vansittart speaking about the Magars cautions that, though groups such as *Bohra, Roka, Chohan, Jhankri, Khas Matwala* of Western Nepal claim to be Magars they are indeed not true Magars. For Vansittart the real Magars are divided into six major clans namely, i) *Ale* (with fifty sub-clans), ii) *Burathoki* (with twenty one sub-clans), iii) *Gharti* (with fifty five sub-clans), iv) *Pun* (with forty one sub-clans), v) *Rana* (with seventy sub-clans), vi) *Thapa* (with one ninety nine sub-clans).<sup>55</sup> Amidst these six clans, the recruits from the *Ale* clan are considered to be the best. The effort on the part of these accounts to structure the contour of groups by eliminating any form of overlapping identities is most evident in the case of *Thapa*; a clan name shared both Magar and Khas

Much more confusion is evident in the treatment of the Kirati groups such as Limbus, Khambus and Yakkhas. Confusion regarding the Kirati group mainly sprung from the titles they were conferred by the Gorkhas. After conquering the Kirati lands of eastern Nepal the Gorkha rulers had conferred titles to these groups, like *Rais* to Khambus, *Subba* to Limbus, and *Diwan* to the Yakkhas. Further, these three tribes followed a custom of adoption and conversion in which an orphaned or an adult could be adopted or converted into other tribe following certain ceremonies. Vansittart divides the Limbus into ten districts (ancestral home or *Kipat*) and accordingly divides the clans *Swang* in terms of their claim to those ancestral homes. Therefore, within the ten ancestral home or Kipats (or *Laji* in Limbu language) he lists a total of (forty four) *Swangs* or clans, which are further sub-divided into four hundred and twenty seven

sub-clans. Along with it he also provides a list of (seventy eight) sub-clans which could not be associated with any of the (forty four) *Swangs* or clans.<sup>56</sup> The corresponding figure provided by Morris is (fifty six) named clans with (five hundred and fifteen) sub-clans, and (thirty five) sub-clans not associated with any clan.<sup>57</sup>

Correspondingly the Khambus or Kirati Rais are treated as identical to the Limbus, so much so that Vansittart refrains from providing the details of Rai customs and traditions. This applies equally well for *Yakkhas* (Diwan) who are said to be assimilated with Rais to such an extent that the two had become indistinguishable. One of the persistent sources of trouble dealing with the so called Kirata group is evident in noting the exact contours of the group. Standard classificatory models based on language and religion could not account for the heterogeneity of the social units. Especially, the social structure defined through the ever changing clan model acted as the chief source of ambiguity. Vansittart provides an exhaustive list consisting of (forty six) named clans of the Rais which are further sub-divided into more than (six hundred and thirty two) named sub-clans. Further, he also provides a list of (one hundred and sixty) named sub-clans, which could not be classified under any of the clans.<sup>58</sup> The corresponding figure in Morris is much more higher i.e., (seventy eight) named clans, in which *Yakha* is placed as one of the clans, each of these clans are sub-divided into many sub-clans along with the list of (one hundred and thirty three) sub-clans which could not be placed within any of the named clans.<sup>59</sup>

From the accounts thus presented, it is evident that the effort on the part of the British officers was to club the groups into neat, and order of ranks which could then en-masse be transferred to the category of the Gorkha. The best instance of this drive is

presented in the case of *Sunwars* and *Murmis* (Tamangs). In Vansittart's account Sunwars are presented as being closely associated with the Gurung and Magars. They are divided into two major sub-divisions the *Das Thare* and *Barahthare* clans. The *Das Thare* is further subdivided into (ten) sub-clans, and the *Barahthare* into (four) major clans with (ninety six) sub-clans within them.<sup>60</sup> Similar is the case with the Murmis or Tamangs, they are described as a group with close affinity to the Bhutia or the Tibetan stock. Murmis are divided into two major subdivisions; namely the *Barathamang* and *Atharajat*, the former considered superior to the latter. Though Vansittart claims that there are no clan organizations among the Murmis, yet he provides a list of (fifty three) clans of *Barathamang* and (three clans) of *Atharajat*.<sup>61</sup> They are considered to be potential recruits even if not classified as the martial race of Nepal.

### **Representation of Gorkhas and the Creation of a Homogenous Martial Category:**

The recruitment of the Gorkhas into the Company's and later the British India army was interwoven with series of narratives which Des Chene (1993) calls as 'Gurkha tales', which associated Gorkhas with amazing feat of bravery and courage. This is epitomized in statements of the recruits such as - "*Kafar hunu bhnada marnu ramro*" meaning, 'it is better to die than to be a coward'.<sup>62</sup> The associated theme of bravery and loyalty runs throughout the narratives on the Gorkhas, Ensign John Shipp terms the Gorkha soldiers as the 'braves of the brave,' further, he writes, 'run they would not, and of death they seem to have no fear, though their comrades were falling thick around them.'<sup>63</sup> Kirkpatrick describes them as 'brave, sufficiently tractable, and capable of sustaining great hardships.'<sup>64</sup> The essential quality of bravery is seen as biologically and

historically ingrained among the Gorkhas. One of the most enduring images of the Gorkha that is passed on from one generation of officers writing about them to the subsequent generation is the integrity of the Gorkhas and their feat of unsurpassable courage. Volumes after volumes written on the Gorkhas speak about the extraordinary task performed by them; some of which seems closer to myths than actual historical account.<sup>65</sup> These narratives highlight the courage of the Gorkha; his willingness to fight and even to accept death cheerfully. In other narratives, the physical toughness of the Gorkhas is presented in a manner which exceeds reasoned judgment. They are depicted as being fond of fruits and vegetables, and as good sportsmen, and most accounts abound the legends associated with their adventures in the forests. Allied with the positive image of being brave, loyal, and cheerful, the Gorkhas are also represented as possessor of vices such as, an unhygienic form of life, predisposed to drunkenness and gambling. Along with this Gurkhas are also represented as being superstitious, with their unchallenged faith on wizards, witches, and witchcraft.<sup>66</sup>

In the British records, one of the characteristic associated with the Gorkhas is their childlike quality, and the gross lack of intellect. Gorkhas are treated as cherished pets, who shared with the British the quality of being gentle, as well as brave. In many of the accounts Gorkhas are viewed as nearly equal to the Europeans, especially owing to the essential trait of courage and loyalty.<sup>67</sup> Gorkhas as a special force were made to think of themselves as belonging to different racial and cultural group from the rest of the Indians and similar with the Europeans. Looking at these features Caplan asserts that the accounts on Gorkhas cannot be classed as orientalist in the same manner as Said (1978) and others associate with such texts and genres; whose sole focus is domination.

In his analysis, the text viewed the Gorkhas as similar to the Europeans and was not exoticized as the 'other.'<sup>68</sup> This kind of analysis runs into problem as the power to represent still lay at the hands of the colonial masters, and the subject was denied its voice over its very constitution and predicament. The overpowering role and power of these texts can be gauged from the fact that it was able to create both the positive as well as the negative image of the Gorkha. The creation of such binaries can itself be viewed as a strategy in controlling and disciplining groups. So on one hand the Gorkhas are presented as warlike people, yet, at the same time they are also represented as docile and peace loving subjects.

Colonial authorities not only created a category of the martial race but also infused it with cultural elements which structured the identity structure of the Gorkhas. In the colonial imagination regiments were the only space where a where a feeling and sense of camaraderie developed between people who were otherwise divided by their divisive loyalties. This camaraderie in the case of the Gorkhas was developed through the imposition of the Hindu culture over the recruits from different ethnic groups. Thus, after serving overseas, recruits were made to undergo the ceremony of *Panipatiya* and *Bhor Patiya* as per the norms of Hinduism.<sup>69</sup> The regiments also incorporated some Hindu customs and named it as Gorkha customs to redress any conflict and grievances emanating within the regiments. Despite being aware of the ethnic differences, most accounts paint the picture of the Gorkhas as Hindu groups following strict caste norms. Caplan argues that in most writings-'differences were rendered insignificant by the premise of a common biology, which transmitted the collective martial inheritance.'<sup>70</sup>

Gorkha as a category was thus sustained by narratives of racial uniformity and martial proclivity.

**Enlisted and categorical Identities:**

Structured as a martial race, the Gorkha can then be regarded as a category, a collective label for the diverse ethnic groups. Formed as a martial category Gorkha subsumed diverse ethnic groups under a collective categorical identity. However, it also provided some room for the perpetuation of exclusive ethnic identities. Firstly, the categorization of groups for the recruitment purposes was done on the basis of their own ethnic identities, thus in order to become an authentic Gorkha, firstly one had to be an authentic Magar or Gurung etc. These identities therefore can be regarded as ‘enlisted identities,’ as the ethnic groups recruited in the regiments were recruited owing to their sense of being an authentic Magar or a Gurung. Infact, many recruits enlisted themselves into the ranks claiming to be a pure Magar or a Gurung, as enlistment was contingent on their claims to authentic ethnic identity. The concept of enlisted identity therefore resonates very well with what Bilgrami calls ‘subjective identities’ i.e., ‘a person is said to have a certain identity owing to some characteristics she has and with which she identifies, then identity is being thought of in its subjective aspects.’<sup>71</sup> It entails the process in which the subject himself/herself endorses the characteristics that is pre-given. The most important part of subjective identity is the un-revise ability of the endorsed values and its projection into the future.<sup>72</sup> The recruitment process itself created a dual form of identity as enlistment was first and foremost contingent on ethnic group’s exclusivity and purity, which was verified by the recruiting officer. However, the very process of labeling them as a martial race also created a homogeneous ‘categorical

identity' of the Gorkha. This categorical identity relates to what Bilgrami calls as 'objective identity', that is the identity in question does not require behavioral aspects of the subjects to reflect their identity; rather, 'the characteristics and the identity are given by the delivery of some (social, political, economic, or biological) theory regarding these subjects.'<sup>73</sup> Gorkha as a categorical identity represents an apt case of objective identity. Though, colonial military discourse may have developed the category of Gorkha, to state that Gorkha was essentially a construct of the regimental culture would be an overstatement. There were other historical processes involved in the transformation of this collective identity into subjective identity.

In the context of Darjeeling, the name Gorkha became readily acceptable owing to the political mobilization which assured an indigenous and national identity to the inhabitants, thus distancing them from citizens of Nepal. In the past many other names such as *Gorkhali*, *Bharpali*, *Bharatiya Nepali*, *Bhargoli* and *Bharatiya Gorkhali* were devised, however, over the course of time the name Gorkha was retained to refer to the collective identity of the Nepalis in India.<sup>74</sup> The usage of this category by the post-colonial Indian state further added to its popularity. The current definition of Gorkha in official annals adheres to the stereotypical image construed during the colonial period.<sup>75</sup> Given these developments categories such as the Gorkha have assumed a social significance in the cultural life, and have a large bearing on the post-colonial imagination of the Nepali community in India.

The cultural negotiation of this collective identity was a marked phenomenon during the course of my fieldwork. On the social and cultural parlance people identified strongly with the Gorkha identity, but expressed reservations regarding its applicability

to groups such as Marwaris, Bengalis, and Biharis etc. However, in all unanimity they regard Lepchas and Bhutias as authentic Gorkhas, groups who are otherwise not listed as Gorkhas in the official lists. The construction of clear cut social and cultural boundaries was complicated by the political contingency, thus in the social parlance Gorkha is treated as a historical and political category including communities residing in the region of Darjeeling, and supporting the cause of Gorkhaland. Though Gorkha identity over the years have assumed the status as a collective political identity of Nepali speech community; yet at the social level it is not confined to the Nepali speaking groups alone. This goes contrary to the statist definition of the Gorkha as a blanket term which includes only the Nepali language speaking population.<sup>76</sup>

In the colonial discourse, only an authentic ethnic group of Nepal could be readily enlisted into the ranks to become an authentic Gorkha. In the post-colonial setting the categorical identity of Gorkha took precedence over distinct ethnic identities. In this regard it can be argued that the category of the Gorkha itself was formed, and was crystallized as a social and collective identity within a specific socio-political condition in India. It was informed and invigorated by the social and political importance laid to it, as it was selected to represent the aspiration of the community. In this process the martial quality of the groups was reinvigorated in the imagination of a cultural community and it gets renewed every time these groups assert its place in the nation, or demands rights and recognition from the state.

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Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> Trautmann, Thomas. R. and Carla M. Sinopoli, In the Beginning Was the Word. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 45, 4 (2002): 494.

<sup>2</sup> Colonial governmentality initiated large-scale documentation practices like census operation and ethnological studies which attributed certain traits to cultural groups which were considered essential in defining the identity of the groups. These forms of representations were later codified in official documents (see Cohn, Bernard. S, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987); Kaviraj, Sudipta. *The Imaginary Institutions of India*, in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (eds.), *Subaltern Studies Vol: VII* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 1992, 1-39); Dirks, Nicholas. B, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and Making of Modern India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Though the name *Nepalis* and *Gorkhas* are used interchangeably in India, however, *Gorkha* is preferred by social and political organizations of Nepalis in India, to distinguish themselves from the citizens of Nepal. The name *Gorkha* is spelt as *Gurkhas* or *Goorkhas* in the Western writings. In this text the name *Gorkha* will be used throughout. Only at places where the historical sources are quoted the word *Gurkha* or *Goorkha* will be reproduced.

<sup>4</sup> For an exhaustive analysis of the literature on martial race see, Kausik Roy, *Beyond the Martial Race Theory. Calcutta Historical review*, vol. 21-2 combined (1999-2000), 139-54.

<sup>5</sup> Grand narrative or master narratives is a concept developed by Jean-François Lyotard (1979) to show how abstract ideas and thoughts shape actual human events. Formed within the discourse of knowledge and power these narratives are authoritarian and totalizing in nature, which seek to explain discreet historical events with a single narrative structure. See Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. (Translation from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979.

<sup>6</sup> For Indian literature on the Gorkhas see Rai, Bandana, *Gorkhas: The Warrior Race* (New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2009); Rathaur, Kamal Raj Singh., *The Gurkhas* (New Delhi: Nirala Publications, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Landon, P, *Nepal*, (Vol I) ( London: Constable, 1928) 28.

<sup>8</sup> Many accounts have been provided by scholars for the origin of the name Gorkha. Many believe it to be derived from the Sanskrit word *Gau Raksha*, thereby thereby linking it inextricably with the Hindu world, or some other treat it as deriving its name from the *Gorakhnath* sect which had become popular in the Himalayan region.

<sup>9</sup> There was a slow but a steady process of Rajputanization of the Gorkha dynasty after Darvya Shah seized the principality of Gorkha. A Book compiled under the patronage of Ram Shah *Rajavamsavali* traces the origin of the dynasty to Rawal kings of Mewar of Rajasthan. This narrative was later incorporated into the *Gorkha-vamsavali*. See Pradhan, Kumar, *The Gorkha Conquest* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1991) 23.

<sup>10</sup> Hamilton, F.B, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1819).

<sup>11</sup> In their campaigns Gorkha were supported by members of six families, namely, *Pande, Aryal, Panta, Rana, Khanal and Bohra*, who all constituted the *Thar-ghar*. Historical accounts suggest that Dravya Shah subdued the principality of *Liglig* and *Gorkha* taking advantage of tradition among Gurung Ghaes and Magars to select the man who wins the race as their chief. For details see Pradhan, Kumar, *The Gorkha Conquest* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1991) 24.

<sup>12</sup> Baisi and Chaubisi were respectively the twenty two and twenty four principalities on the western and central part of Nepal. There seems to disagreement on the exact account of these principalities as several of the chiefs entered into league with other principalities for mutual defense, or sometimes they were connected through descent thus creating confusion in determining the exact historical genealogies. Hamilton in his account list *Jumal, Jajurkote, Cham, Acham, Roogum, Musikotte, Roalpa, Mullyanta, Bulhang, Dylick, Suliana, Bampi, Jehari, Kalagaon, Ghoorikote*,

*Gootum, Gujoor, Darimeea* as Baisi principalities and accordingly he lists *Piuuthana, Malebum, Galkot, Isma, Dhurkot, Argha, Khachi, Gulmi, Palpa, Garahang, Poin, Satahung, Birkot, Nayakot, Kski, Dhor, Gajarkot, Rising, Ghiring, Tanahung, Lamjung, Gorkha, Tarki, Musikot* as Chaubisi principalities. Hamilton, F.B, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1819).

<sup>13</sup> For the eyewitness account of the conquest of Kathmandu by the Gorkhas see Father Giuseppe, *Account of Nepal*, in William. J. Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (Printed for William Miller by, W. Bulmer and Co. Cleveland-Row. London, 1811) Appendix no. III: 380-385.

<sup>14</sup> After shifting his capital to Kathmandu Prithvinarayan Shah also requested the Mughal emperor to grant him the title of 'Maharaja Samsar Bahadur Jang' and in 1770 it was granted. See Regmi, D.R *Modern Nepal*, Vol I. (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1975) 221-24.

<sup>15</sup> Gorkha rule was characterized by political instability and the administration was actually carried out by various members of the royal family like the Queen Mother (1778-85), King's Uncle (1785-94), royal concubine (1800-3), the Chief Queen (1803-4), an ex-King who had abdicated the throne (1804-6), and a member of Gorkha political leadership (1806-37). See Regmi, M.C, *Imperial Gorkha: An Account of Gorkhali Rule in Kumaun (1791-1815)* (Delhi: Adriot Publishes, 1999) 3.

<sup>16</sup>The Governor General gave his accent to the proposal advanced by Edward Gardner which read as, 'the Governor General is pleased to authorize you to entertain as provincial troops for service in the hills, a portion of Gorkhas or nipalese, especially such as have families resident in Kumaon and Gharwal'. Source Rathaur, Kamal Raj Singh, *The Gurkhas* (New Delhi: Nirala Publications, 1987) Appendix II. 113.

<sup>17</sup> Farwell Byron, *The Gurkhas* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books Ltd, 1984) 32.

<sup>18</sup> Bolt, David, *Gurkhas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967) 60.

<sup>19</sup> After the mutiny of 1857, five Gorkha battalions were reorganized on regular basis into Rifle regiments, thus Nusseree Battalion (66<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Regiment of Bengal light infantry in 1850) was made into 1<sup>st</sup> Gorkha regiment in 1861, similarly, Sirmoor battalion was made into 2<sup>nd</sup> Gurkha Regiments, the Kumaon battalion into 3<sup>rd</sup> Gurkha regiment and an extra Gorkha regiment was raised in 1857 which was made into 4<sup>th</sup> Gurkha regiment, the Hazara/Gurkha battalion raised in 1858 was made into 5<sup>th</sup> Gurkha regiment. Each of these regiments was granted its permanent locale, the 1<sup>st</sup> Gurkha rifle was stationed at Dharamsala, the 2<sup>nd</sup> at Dehradun, the 3<sup>rd</sup> at Almora, the 4<sup>th</sup> at Bakoh and the 5<sup>th</sup> at Abbottabad. Besides the five regiments a large number of Gorkhas were enlisted in the 42<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> infantry regiments (Rathaur 1987: 53-54). For Progressive title changes in Gurkha Infantry while in British Service see Farwell (1984) Appendix C (pp. 296-299).

<sup>20</sup> Scientific racism developed as a part of colonial strategy to map and document the lives of the people in scientific terms. It justified the idea of racism, racial inferiority and superiority using ostensibly the language and vocabulary of science. Scientific racism led to a deterministic thinking in which every human action was causally viewed and understood as determined by racial traits.

<sup>21</sup> See Alavi, Seema, *The Sepoy and the Company* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> MacMunn, George, *The Martial Races of India* (London: Samson, Low and Marston, 1932) 195.

<sup>23</sup> Greenhut, Jeffrey, *Sahib and Sepoy. Military Affairs.* 48, 1 (1984): 15.

<sup>24</sup> Enloe, C.H., *Ethnic Soldiers* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980).

<sup>25</sup> See Khanduri, Chandra. B, *A Re-discovered History of Gorkhas* (New Delhi: Gyan Sagar Publications, 1997) 225.

<sup>26</sup> Caplan, Lionel, *Martial Gurkhas* in Kaushik Roy (ed): *War and Society in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) 229.

<sup>27</sup> Omissi, David, *The Sepoy and the Raj* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1994) 78.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Alavi, Seema, *The Sepoy and the Company* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995) 277.

<sup>30</sup> Bolt, David, *Gurkhas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967) 20.

<sup>31</sup> Hodgson- was an assistant resident in the court of Nepal from 1829-1831, later to become the Resident after Sir Herbert Maddick in 1833-43. Later in his life i.e., in 1845 he moved to Darjeeling and devoted his stay to study the language and culture of the hill people. He was elected by the Ethnological society as an Honorary Fellow, he wrote extensively on the languages of Kocch, Bodo and Dhimal tribes, he also invented an orthography of languages which did not have alphabets or books. For more on him see, Hunter, William, Wilson, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson: British Resident at the Court of Nepal* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, Reprint 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Hodgson, B H., Origins, and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal. *Journal of Asiatic Journal of Bengal*, 17 (1833): 217-224.

<sup>33</sup> Mojumdar, K, Recruitment of the Gurkhas, *United Service Institution Journal*. 102 (1972): 143-57; Mojumdar, K, *Anglo-Nepalese relations* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1973).

<sup>34</sup> Banskota, Purushotam, *The Gurkha Connection* (New Delhi: Nirala Publications, 1994) 57.

<sup>35</sup> Omissi, David, *The Sepoy and the Raj* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1994) 11.

<sup>36</sup> Bolt, David, *Gurkhas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967) 79-80.

<sup>37</sup> Each of the Regiments had its own history such as for the **1<sup>st</sup> Gurkha** we have works of Petre, F.L, *The 1<sup>st</sup> King George's Own Gurkhs Rifles, The Malaur Regiment, 1815-1921* (London: Royal United Service Institution, 1925); Bellers, Brig. E.V.R, *The History of the 1<sup>st</sup> King George V'S Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment)*. Vol II (1920-47) (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1956.). For the **2<sup>nd</sup> Gurkh Rifles** see Shakespear, Col. L.W, *History of the 2<sup>nd</sup> King Edward's Own Goorkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles), 1815-1910*. Vol I & II) (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1912); Stevens, G.R. and Leslie, Waterfield Shakespear, *History of the 2<sup>nd</sup> King Edward's Own Goorkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles): 1921-1948*. (London: Gale and Polden, 1952); Smith, E.D, *The Story of the Sirmoor Rifles* (London: Birch Publications, 1969). Harold, James Douglas and Denis Sheil Small, *A Pride of Gurkhas: the 2<sup>nd</sup> King Edwards' VII Own Goorkhas, 1948-1971* (London: Leo Cooper). For the **3<sup>rd</sup> Gurkha Rifles** we have works of Woodyatt, Nigel. G, *The Regimental history of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, 1815-1927* (London. Philip Allen, 1929); Barclay, Brig. C.N. ed. *The Regimental History the 3<sup>rd</sup> Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, 1927-1947*. Vol. II. (London: W. Cowes, 1953). For the **4<sup>th</sup> Gurkha** Macdonell, Ronald and Marcus Macauley, *A history of the 4<sup>th</sup> Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles, 1857-1937*. 2 Vols (London: William Blackwood, 1940). For the **5<sup>th</sup> Gurkha** we have *History of the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Gurkha Rifles 1858-1928*. Vol I (Aldeshot. Printed and published for the Regimental Committee by Gale and Polden, 1930). For **6<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles**, Ryan, Maj. D.G.J., Maj. G.C. Strahan & Capt. J. K. Jones, *The Historical Records of the 6<sup>th</sup> Gurkhs Rifles (Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles)*. Vol. I. (1817-1919). (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1925); Gibbs, H.R.K, *Historical Records of the 6<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles*, vol. 2 (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1955); Messenger, Charles, *The Steadfast Gurkha Historical Records of the 6<sup>th</sup> Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles*. Vol III, 1948-1982. (London, 1986). For **7<sup>th</sup> Gurkha** we have, Smith, E.D, *East of Kathmandu: The Story of 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles* (1976). For the **8<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas**, Huxford, H.J, *History of the 8<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles, 1824-1949*. Vol I. Aldersgot: Gale and Polden, 1952). For **9<sup>th</sup> Gurkha**, Poynder, Lieu-Col.F.S, *Regimental History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles, 1817-1936*. Vol. I. (London. Royal United Service Institution, 1937). For the **10<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas**, Mullaly, Brian. Reginald, *Bugle and Kukri: The Story of the 10<sup>th</sup> Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles*. Vol I. (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1957).

<sup>38</sup> Farwell Byron, *The Gurkhas* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books Ltd, 1984) 145.

<sup>39</sup> Northey, W. Brook and Morris, C.J, *The Land of the Gurkhas* (London: Hefer and Sons, 1937) 98.

<sup>40</sup> Hofer, Andreas, *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal* (Patan: Himal Books, 1979) 111.

<sup>41</sup> Gibbs, H.R.K, *The Gurkha Soldier* (Calcutta:Thacker, Spink and Co. LTD, 1944) 34.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Hodgson, B H, Origins and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal, *Journal of Asiatic Journal of Bengal*, 17 (1833): 218.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Roy, Kaushik, Introduction: Armies, Warfare, and Society in Colonial India, in Kaushik Roy (ed) *War and Society in Colonial India (1807-1945)* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) 7.

<sup>46</sup> Vansittart, Eden, *Gurkhas* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing (1906): Reprinted by Asian Education Services. New Delhi, 1991) 48.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid: 66.

<sup>48</sup> Morris, C. J, *The Gurkhas: An Ethnology* (New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation. New Delhi, 1985) 70-71.

<sup>49</sup> Vansittart, Eden, *Gurkhas*, 1991: 74-76.

<sup>50</sup> ibid: 76.

<sup>51</sup> ibid: 81-82.

<sup>52</sup> Morris, C. J, *The Gurkhas: An Ethnology* (New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation., 1985) 70-71. Reprinted of the second Revised Edition of 1936.

<sup>53</sup> Vansittart, Eden, *Gurkhas*, 1991: 82.

<sup>54</sup> Morris, C. J, *The Gurkhas*, 1985: 72-73.

<sup>55</sup> Vansittart, Eden, *Gurkhas*, 1991: 89-91.

<sup>56</sup> ibid: 127.

<sup>57</sup> Morris, C. J, *The Gurkhas*, 1985: 92-100.

<sup>58</sup> Vansittart, Eden, *Gurkhas*, 1991: 135-36.

<sup>59</sup> Morris, C. J, *The Gurkhas*, 1985: 103-116.

<sup>60</sup> Vansittart, Eden, *Gurkhas*, 1991: 139.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid: 144.

<sup>62</sup>Tuker, Francis, *Gorkha* (London: Constable, 1957) 94.

<sup>63</sup> ibid: 90.

<sup>64</sup>Kirkpatrick, William. J, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (London: Printed for William Miller by, W. Bulmer and Co. Cleveland-Row, 1811) 215.

<sup>65</sup> <sup>65</sup> Farwell, Byron, *The Gurkhas* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books Ltd, 1984) 49

<sup>66</sup> Northey, W.B and C.J. Morris, *The Gurkhas* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1928) 104.

<sup>67</sup> Toker, Francis, *Gorkha* (London: Constable, 1957) 122.

<sup>68</sup> Caplan, Lionel, Bravest of the Brave, *Modern Asian Studies*. 25, 3 (1991): 594.

<sup>69</sup> Both the ceremonies of *Panipatiya* and *Bhor Ptiya* was designated for the abluion of sins, the former for the overseas travel and the latter for breaking the caste rules like commensality.

<sup>70</sup> Caplan, Lionel, *Warrior Gentleman: Gurkhas in the Western Imagination* (London: Berghahn Books, 1995) 120.

<sup>71</sup> Bilgrami, Akeel, *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2014) 245.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*: 251.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*: 256.

<sup>74</sup> Hutt, Michael, "Being Nepali without Nepal, in David N, Gellner, J, Pfaff-Czarnecka and J, Whelpton (eds), *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 1997) 101 –44.

<sup>75</sup> The issue of Gorkha regiment emerged during the time of Independence; the issue was resolved through the 'Tripartite Agreement' reached between India, Nepal, and Britain on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1947. A referendum was conducted in each of the battalion to determine as to which country Gorkhas were willing to serve. At the end of the referendum British had just four regiments i.e., 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, while India inherited six regiments the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, later it also raised the seventh regiment, i.e., the 11<sup>th</sup> Gorkha Rifles in 1947.

<sup>76</sup> The document under question was collected during the course of fieldwork dated January 12, 2014, from the Sub-Divisional Magistrates' office in Kalimpong. It was a letter from the Anthropological survey of India. Ministry of Cultural Department. Government of India. Titled : *Actual determination of the Gorkha and Sikkimese Communities*. No. 13-229/2000/estt. Dated September 10, 2004, specifying nineteen ethnic groups under the category of the Gorkha. The report states that the 'Gorkhas belonged to both the Hindu and Bhuddhist fold and also the admixture of both the religions'