Historical Roots of Nepali Public Sphere in Colonial Darjeeling

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Abstract

The focus of this article is to trace the roots of the early Nepali public sphere in colonial Darjeeling.[1] It tries to establish that the Nepali public sphere here emerged within the context of a gradual transformation in the social organisation of symbolic power beginning from the last decades of nineteenth century; a transformation led by three significant changes viz. the adoption of Nepali language as the lingua franca of the Darjeeling Hills, spread of western liberal education, and the development of Nepal literature. The paper argues that these changes pressed for an increasing desire among the Nepalis of Darjeeling to create their own discursive space where the issues concerning their community could be highlighted and deliberated upon. This guided the development of various institutions of Nepali public sphere towards the early twentieth century giving rise to new forms of interaction and new kinds of social relationships in which information and symbolic content could be exchanged between individuals. The transformation in the social organisation of symbolic power enabled the construction of a new type of Nepali community and along with it the emergence of the early Nepali public sphere in colonial Darjeeling.

Keywords: Public sphere, Darjeeling, Nepali, Colonialism, British.

Jurgen Habermas defines the term 'public sphere' as "the realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed."[2] He was one of the first scholars to historicise the emergence of 'public' as a category in political life. He regards the eighteenth century European bourgeois public sphere "as the realm of social life, outside the state and economy, where citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion - that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions - about matters of general interest."[3] According to Habermas, the European society of the high middle ages possessed a type of representative public sphere characterised by public representation of power by the feudal authorities and public sphere as a unique and distinct realm came into being with the national and territorial states.[4] One of the primary goals of this bourgeois public sphere that rose during the late eighteenth

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[1] Although the term 'Darjeeling' in general is employed to refer to the district of Darjeeling, here, the term signifies only three sub-divisions of the district of Darjeeling, namely, Darjeeling Sardar, Kalimpong sub-division and Kurseong sub-division. Hereafter, Darjeeling Hills and Darjeeling would be used interchangeably to refer to the above region.

[2] Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopaedia Article," *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 49.

[3] Jürgen Habermas, The Public Sphere.

[4] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge Massachusetts: The MITPress, 1989)

century was to make political and administrative decisions transparent.[5] Their claims to power vis-à-vis public authority were directed not against the concentration of power but rather on the very principle on which the existing power was based.[6] "It was only with the establishment of the bourgeois constitutional state was the intellectual press relieved of the pressure of its convictions. Since then public sphere and its institutions in Europe has been able to abandon its polemical position and take advantage of the earning possibilities of commercial undertaking."[7]

A glimpse at the basic literature on public sphere of India will allow us to comfortably understand the dominant theme underlying the discourse. Indian scholarship on public sphere has particularly emphasised discarding the European influences in the development of critical reasoning in India. In an attempt to trace the non-European roots of public sphere of India, Amartya Sen brings forward the activities of early Indian Buddhists whose commitment, he considers, has produced some of the earliest open general meetings in the world – the so-called 'Buddhist councils'. According to him, the first of the four principal councils was held in Rajagriha shortly after Gautama Buddha's death; the second about a century later in Vaisali; and the last occurred in Kashmir in the second century CE, but the third- the largest and the best known of these councils- occurred under the patronage of Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE, in the then capital of India, Pataliputra.[8] He argues that "these councils which drew delegates from different places and different school of thoughts were not only concerned with resolving differences in religious principles and practices, but they evidently also addressed the demands of social and civic duties, and furthermore helped, in a general way, to consolidate and promote the tradition of open discussion on contentious issues."[9]

Christopher Bayly takes a similar position in proposing that "public opinion—the weight of reasoned debate—was not the preserve of modern or western politics."[10] Bayly suggests that the north Indian ecumene[11] of the nineteenth-century which functioned as a critical reasoning public, with the literati or official using poetry, satire, letter-writing, placarding, festivals, and religious congregations to exercise a degree of critical surveillance on the activities of the state was closer in spirit to the groupings of philosophers, urban notables, and officials in the world of late antiquity—the Christian-Greek ecumene—than it was to Habermas's modern public[12]. He argues that the friable and ambiguous authority within the Indian conceptual systems encompassed by religious principles and despotic kingship led the learned and respectable 'middling

[5] Hohendahl and Russian, "Jürgen Habermas: The Public Sphere", *New German Critique*, no. 3 (1974): 45-48.

[6] Habermas, *The Public Sphere*, 49.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity* (Penguin Group, 2005), 7.

[9] Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*.

[10] C.A. Bayly, "The Indian Ecumene: An Indigenous Public Sphere", in *The Indian Public Sphere: Readings in Media History*, ed. Arvind Rajagopal (Oxford University Press, 2009): 50.

[11] Christopher Bayly use the word ecumene to describe the form of cultural and political debate which was typical of north India before the emergence of the newspaper and public association.

[12] Bayly, *The Indian Ecumene*, 50.

sort' to take it upon themselves to maintain a constant, critical vigilance over the doings of the state and society.[13]

In contrast, Sanjay Joshi, however, sees colonialism providing the circumstances for the public sphere to come into being. Referring to an instance in Lucknow when seven major *awqaf* (Muslim trusts) set up by the erstwhile rulers of Awadh were taken over by the state in 1868 on the grounds that these were 'public' bequests and needed protection of the state, Joshi argues that the colonial state promoted the notions of 'public welfare' and the language of 'public-ness' to further their own interests.[14]

The study of Nepali public sphere in colonial Darjeeling in this paper is neither an attempt to sketch its structural transformation nor would it exclusively deal with its varied influences. It is simply an effort to analyze the various historical processes contributing to the development of the early Nepali public sphere in colonial Darjeeling. While tracing the roots of the emergence of public sphere in Darjeeling Hills, the paper attempts to establish that the Nepali public sphere here emerged within the context of the gradual transformation in the social organisation of symbolic power beginning from the last decades of nineteenth century. The term 'symbolic power' is borrowed from Thompson, who defines the term as "the capacity to use symbolic forms - understood generally as any expression which conveys information or symbolic content- to intervene in and influence the course of actions and events."[15] There are three significant changes leading to the shift. First is the gradual adoption of Nepali language as the lingua franca of the Darjeeling Hills. Second is the spread of formal education and third, the development of Nepal Literature.

Adoption of Nepali Language

Wright rightly says, "If people do not communicate, or could not communicate because they were linguistically incomprehensible, a public sphere cannot be said to exist."[16] Similarly, Montgomery also argues that: "Language informs the way we think, the way we experience, and the way we interact with each other... It is the basis of community and systematic knowledge about language and practical awareness of how it works is fundamental to the process of building mature communities."[17]

The gradual adoption of Nepali language among the linguistically and ethnically diverse tribes of the eastern Himalayan region became the basis for the building of a composite Nepali identity and culture throughout Nepal, Darjeeling and Sikkim. This historical process that began soon after the ascendency of Gorkha kingdom (situated presently at Western Nepal) under the leadership of Prithivinarayana Shah and his successors. The *Gorkhas*/Nepalis are the total sum of over nineteen endogamous

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

[15] John B Thompson, "Social Theory and the Media", in *Communication Theory Today*, ed. David Crowley and David Mitchell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 27-49.

[16] Scoot Wright, "Language, communication and public sphere: Definitions", in *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere* ed. Ruth Wodak and Veronika Koller (Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 2008), 23.

[17] Martin Montgomery, *An Introduction to Language and Society*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 251.

groups who practiced different religions and spoke different languages[18]. Before the political boundaries of Nepal and Sikkim were actually drawn, these hills formed a contiguous area embracing a number of small principalities.[19] The language which is today known as *Nepali* was formerly referred as *Khaskura* primarily because the language was spoken in the great kingdom or empire of the *Khasas* which was established by the 12th Century and included Western Nepal, parts of Uttar Pradesh in India and parts of south-west Tibet.[20] The Khas Empire later disintegrated and a number of petty principalities arose on its ruins. One of these principalities was called *Gorkha*. It was from here that Prithivinarayana Shah and later his successors began their conquest popularly known as *Gorkha Conquest* beginning from 1778 and consolidated the territory which today is known as Nepal. The expansionist policy of the Gorkha kings stopped and the boundary between Nepal and Sikkim was fixed only after the intervention by the British through a treaty signed at Segoulie in 1816. The treaty ensued in the cession of Darjeeling Hills (excluding Kalimpong region) by Nepal to Sikkim; the territory which was later ceded to British during 1835. Although, the Khasa speech was spoken in Gorkha, the ascendency of Gorkha kingdom gave prominence to Gorkha over Khaskura as name of the language. These various tribes spread across the boundaries of Nepal, Darjeeling and Sikkim over the years were gradually identified as Gorkhas or Nepalis and the language which they spoke was interchangeably called as *Khas-kura*, *Parbate* or *Parbattiya*, *Gorkhali* and *Nepali*. The ambiguity on the name of the language may be the reason why when Calcutta University recognised Nepali language for study and examination purposes in Darjeeling Hills in 1918, the language was enlisted as "*Nepali Pahadiya* or *Khaskura*." It was the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan which convinced the government of Bengal to issue a notice on 30 July 1926 saying that in its usage the name "Nepali Pahadiya or Khaskura" would be replaced with just "Nepali."[21]

In spite of the fact that Prithivinarayana Shah and his successors were successful in consolidating what today is referred to as modern Nepal, they failed in culturally amalgamating these varied and ethnically diverse tribes. Two major reasons contributed to this process. First, the Ranas who ruled Nepal after Shahs made little effort to promote patriotism and loyalty among the people of Nepal towards the state as they felt threatened by it.[22] National pride and sentiments were diluted and essentially centred on very narrow and limited areas of their locale and among their own kin groups.[23] Second, the various tribes of Nepal hardly got an opportunity to interact with one another because of the spatial organisation of Nepal on the basis of ethnicity.

[18] T Subba, *Ethnicity, State and Development: A Case Study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1992), 68

[19] K Pradhan, *The Gorkha Conquests: The Process and Consequences of the Unification of Nepal with particular reference to Eastern Nepal* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

[20] KumarPradhan, *A History of Nepali literature*, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994)

[21] Pratyoush Onta, "Creating a Brave Nepali Nation in British India: The Rhetoric of Jati Improvement, Rediscovery of Bhanubhakta and the Wring of Bir History", *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, no. 1 (1992): 53.

[22] Dor Bahadur Bista, *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle for Modernization* (Hyderbad: Orient Longman, 1991), 21.

[23] Bista, *Fatalism and Development.*

It was only with the establishment of Darjeeling that these tribes who basically came here searching for secure and stable livelihood opportunities got an opportunity to live together, particularly in tea gardens, therefore opening new prospects for assimilation. In addition, there was a collapse of social hierarchies as the basis of honour. Unlike in Nepal, Darjeeling acknowledged the value of formal education and professional qualification over birth and ethnic or caste origins. Darjeeling sufficed as the appropriate space where the process of acculturation materialised leading to gradual concretization of a composite *Gorkha*/Nepali identity as one ethnic group towards the later decades of the nineteenth century. The process of acculturation and assimilation that materialised also accounted for the gradual adoption of Nepali language as the lingua franca enabling the creation of common communicative space among various tribes of the hills of Darjeeling. Though people spoke their own respective languages or dialects at home, learning and speaking Nepali language became extremely essential for every individual while interacting outside their private spheres. In the process, Darjeeling witnessed a rapid standardization and development of Nepali language and Nepali language spoken by the people of Darjeeling immensely varied from the one spoken in Nepal because the former immensely incorporated words from multiple dialects of other hill tribes.[24]

Spread of Formal Education

The adoption of Nepali language was paralleled by a second shift. It was brought about mainly by the growth of formal education in Darjeeling Hills. Education is very crucial to our understanding of the public sphere because it imparts the institutional framework for the rational and critical discourse that comprises the public sphere. The fundamental criterion for admission into the eighteenth century bourgeois public sphere, according to Habermas, was education.[25] The logic behind such formulation is evident considering that no sensible discussion can take place without the knowledge among the participants regarding the prevailing conditions of their society.

The early effort towards education came from the initiatives of the German Moravian missionaries. Rev. William Start using his private means opened the first school for the Lepchas in Darjeeling as early as 1841.[26] Another person of prominence in this field was Rev. Mr. Neible who composed the Lepcha primers.[27] Though the chief objective of these missionaries was the conversion of the Lepchas,[28] they sowed the seeds for the future educational activities in the region. The official enterprise in the field of education commenced with the establishment of Darjeeling School on 20th September, 1856. This came as part of the new educational policy prescribed for India by the Wood's Despatch 1854 which pressed the responsibility of education of the

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[24] Pradhan, *A History of Nepali literature.*

[25] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, 85.

[26] L.S.S. O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, (Alipore: Government Printing, 1907), 50.

[27] E Dozey, *A Concise History of the Darjeeling District since 1835* (Calcutta: Jetsun Publishing House, 1992), 103.

[28] D Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills: An Historical Survey: 1835 – 1985*(New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1991), 81.

common people of India upon the British Government.[29] The establishment of school at Darjeeling was particularly intended to educate the children of the native inhabitants. The languages studied by the students in the school were English, Urdu and Hindi.[30]

This initial official experiment of imparting education to the native children through Darjeeling School, however, did not fructify because of very poor enrolment of students. After fourteen or fifteen years of its establishment, the number of students receiving instructions at the school was only 36, a really dismaying figure in a district which had, according to 1871 census, 12,116 boys and 9,913 girls under the age of twelve.[31] However, slow progress of education was a phenomenon experienced then by the entire British India and this concern was the main reason why the British Government constituted Indian Education Commission which submitted its report in 1882. The Darjeeling School was later spilt into Bhutia Boarding School for the Bhutias and the Lepchas, and the Darjeeling Zilla School for Bengalis and Hindustanis. The chief objective behind establishing the Bhutia Boarding School was to train Bhutia and Lepcha students who would survey and explore the Trans-Himalayan regions.[32] The Darjeeling Zilla School on the other hand fulfilled the educational needs of the other inhabitants of the region.

The real transformation in the field of education in Darjeeling Hills materialised only during the beginning of last three decades of the nineteenth century after the coming of Rev. William Macfarlane, a Scottish Missionary. Soon after he reached Darjeeling on June 1870, Macfarlane opened a Normal School, "a training schools for teachers that he had thought to be of foremost need before anything else to set himself to his gigantic task of spreading elementary education among the vast illiterate masses of this hill region."[33] He also convinced the government to provide scholarships for the students during their course and fixed upon Hindi as the medium of instruction and prepared some text books on it.[34] The body of trained tutors which came out of the Normal School at Darjeeling and Kalimpong[35] promptly engaged themselves in spreading elementary education in the nook and corners of the hills of Darjeeling. By the close of the nineteenth century Lower and Upper primary schools were scattered all over mountainside.[36] These schools not only laid the foundation of primary education but concurrently helped fructify the official initiatives of the British for higher education in Darjeeling hills as they fetched much needed students for the Darjeeling Government High School[37] established in 1891. Towards the end of the nineteenth century 95

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[29] Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills,* 83.

[30] Ibid., 85.

[31] Ibid., 87.

[32] S.C Das, *Narrative of the Incidents of My Early Life* (Calcutta: R.D. Press, 1969), 15.

[33] Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills*, 109.

[34] Ibid., 107.

[35] The Normal School at Darjeeling was later transferred to Kalimpong in 1886 for the same purpose.

[36] Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills*, 145.

[37] Darjeeling Government High School was raised after merging the Bhutia Boarding School and Darjeeling Zilla School.

primary schools and a Government High School had been established which catered to the educational needs of the people of Darjeeling.[38]

The growth of these educational institutions gradually transformed the balance between the private and public culture of the native people of the Darjeeling Hills. The new emergent educated and conscious youths became increasingly aware of the prevailing social conditions. The Nepalis who were previously bounded within their respective private spheres slowly started becoming inquisitive regarding matters concerning their community and consequently felt the need to create a space where such issues could be highlighted and deliberated upon.

Growth of Nepali Literature

Subsequently, the period also witnessed the rapid development of Nepali literature within the Nepalis, particularly in India. The technical basis for this was the introduction of print in India during the later decades of the eighteenth century. After an early start in Calcutta, print and publishing came to North India around 1830, when litho presses were established in the cities of Lucknow, Kanpur and Benares. Orsini writes, "As a famed site of education and learning, a large commercial and manufacturing centre, Hindu pilgrimage destination of national importance and the site of the early British experiments in education, Benares seemed to have all the prerequisites to become a centre for publishing, with its large population of teachers, students, merchants and pilgrimage, i.e. of many potential writers and readers."[39] Initially purely functional to the educational and religious needs of the city's resident, the publishing market of Benares increasingly got commercialised towards 1880s.[40] Their success and continued survival generally depended on their capacity to reproduce and sell printed materials in a profitable way- that is, it depended on their capacity to effectively commodify symbolic forms. Therefore, commercial printing in Benares after reproducing the popular genres of Indian classical languages which were in oral or manuscript form began exploring other potential markets. Under such circumstances many other languages like Bhojpuri, Bengali, Marathi, Nepali and others which had a rich oral tradition found their way in print collections. Benares essentially became the centre for the publishing and literary sphere of the Nepalis towards the last decades of the nineteenth century: it was here that Bhanubhakta's Nepalese Ramayana was published in 1884 by Ramkrishna Varma.[41] The origins of the progress of Nepali literature can be traced from this period. Bhanubhakta's Ramayana is considered as the landmark publication in the history of Nepali literature because it unfolded a new arena for a number of Nepali students, mostly Brahmans who came from Nepal to Benares to pursue Sanskrit education in Sanskrit *pathshalas*. They increasingly became curious regarding the state of their own language. One such figure of eminence was Motiram Bhatta who after being inspired by the works of Bhanubhakta started participating

[38] O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers.*

[39] Francesca Orsini, "Pandits, Printers and Others: Publishing in nineteenth-century Benares", in *Print Areas: Book history in India*, ed. Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004): 116

[40] Orsini, *Pandits, Printers and Others: Publishing in nineteenth-century Benares*,116.

[41] Ibid., 121.

in and organizing discussions on the Nepali language with other Nepali residents and students of Benares.[42] Gradually a number of printing presses that specialised in Nepali books were established in Benares of which the prominent ones were Bharat Jiwan Press, Hitchintak Press, Bansidhar Misra's Gauri Press and Sakhi Vinayak's Gurkhi Press.[43] In addition, scores of literary writings found space in Nepali journals that were published from Benares right from the early years of the twentieth century. Journals like Upanyastarangini, Sundhari, Madhavi, Chandra and Gorkhai were published from Benares during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The development of these avenues opened new opportunities where symbolic forms could be reproduced and diffused among Nepalis on a scale which had not existed before. The emerging Nepali literary sphere of Benares immensely contributed to the knowledge and learning system of the Nepalis of Darjeeling. Whereas the growth of formal education back at home taught the otherwise illiterate Nepalis of Darjeeling the art of reading and writing, the succeeding development of Nepali literary writings at Benares and its transmission to Darjeeling made them aware of the dominant narratives and discourses concerning their community.

The Development of Nepali Public Sphere

The assessment of the steady transmission of Nepali publishing from Benares to Darjeeling is really important when conceptualising the growth of early Nepali public sphere of Darjeeling. This transmission made Darjeeling the centre of Nepali community which brought about a fundamental transformation in the social organisation of symbolic power in India. Darjeeling slowly became the new base of symbolic power. The technologies of cultural production which were limited to Benares during the nineteenth century began appearing in Darjeeling at the start of the twentieth century. The first ever Nepali play staged, Atalbahadur, was produced by Dhanbir Mukhia under the aegis of Gorkha National Theatrical Party in 1909 in Darjeeling. This play was written by Pahalman Singh Swar and was published from Benares in 1906. The Gorkha National Theatrical Party was immediately followed by the institution of several other social and cultural organisations during early decades of twentieth century. These organisations like the Children Amusement Association (1909), Himalayan Amusement Association (1913), Gorkha Library (1913) Nepali Sahitya Sammelan (1924) and Gorkha Dukha Niwarak Sammelan (1932) demonstrated in its own way the public face of a nascent Nepaliness.

The most important factor that accompanied the transmission of Nepali publishing from Benares was the symbolic forms engraved within their tradition. In the first two decades of the twentieth century a discourse of self-improvement, designed broadly around the two themes of general education and the progress of the "Gorkha language" was generated from Benares by a small group of Nepalis.[44] The influence of these cultural discourses in motivating the educated Nepalis of Darjeeling who towards the second decade of twentieth century made it their cultural project to institutionalise Nepali

[42] Onta, *Creating a Brave Nepali Nation*, 55.

[43] Orsini, *Pandits, Printers and Others*, 136.

[44] Onta, *Creating a Brave Nepali Nation*, 36.

language in the education system cannot be disregarded. These educated Nepalis of Darjeeling were not only familiar with the Banaras-based literary activities but also utilised the resources there to fight for their cause.[45] Symbolic forms which came from Benares, however, underwent a colossal transformation in Darjeeling. The subject of *jati*(community) and *bhasa*(language) itself was subject to constant introspection. In the meeting that was called with the intention of establishing the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan, Hari Prasad Pradhan, a lawyer who chaired the occasion stated:

> We have thought that the name of this sammelan should be 'Nepali Sahitya Sammelan' because the word 'Nepali' has a broad meaning. This word designates all the jatis of Nepal such as *Magar, Gurung, Kirati, Newar, Limbu* etc. and also states that these *jatis* and others are part of a single great Nepali nation. Some people might suspect that this organization is trying to uplift the language spoken by the Gorkhalis but it is not necessary to think that way because Nepali has become the lingua franca of the hills. People who live here might speak different languages but there is noone who does not understand Nepali... Also it does not suit for any jati to claim that this language is only their language.[46]

The educated Nepalis of Darjeeling first identified the need to redefine the concept of *Nepali jati* and *bhasa* as an essential element of unifying their own self-identity as an inclusive community. Such need arose because, unlike Benares, Darjeeling's Nepali community was far more ethnically diverse and contained a large number of non-Brahmanic educated populace. The Nepali Sahitya Sammelan soon after its formation was engaged in projects that inculcated self-consciousness and promoted self-improvement of the *Nepali jati*.

The above developments gave rise to new forms of interaction and new kinds of social relationships in which information and the refined symbolic content could be exchanged between individuals. It became possible for more and more individuals to acquire information and symbolic content both through face-to-face and mediated forms of interaction. The transformation in the social organisation enabled the construction of a new type of Nepali community and along with it the emergence of the Nepali public sphere in colonial Darjeeling.

However, there are other significant developments whose implicit contribution in moulding the emergent Nepali public sphere needs mention. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw the outgrowth of public activities and the building of public institutions in Darjeeling. Nrpendra Narayan Hindu Public Hall was established in Darjeeling by the association of Hindu Bengalis as early as 1873.[47] Jnandil Das, a Joshmani saint, made Darjeeling the centre of his crusade for the Joshmani Movement[48]

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[45] For example, Parasmani Pradhan used the pages of the weekly produced from Banaras, *Gorkhali*, to fight for the cause of institutionalisation of Nepali language in the education system.

[46] Onta, *Creating a Brave Nepali Nation*, 55.

[47] Kumar Pradhan, *Pahilo Pahar* (Darjeeling: Shyam Prakashan, 1982), 81.

[48] The Joshmani Movement was founded by Shashidhar towards the latter half of the eighteenth century. It was a religious movement indigenous to the Nepali society. The movement protested against the prevalence of the caste system, superstition, and animal sacrifice.

which rapidly spread throughout Darjeeling and embraced all the tribes of the region.[49] He completed his major work Udaylahari containing one hundred and nine stanzas while in Darjeeling in 1877. This work of Jnandil Das, contends Rai, as one of the foremost makers of the Indian Nepali nation. Similarly, various Hindu religious and social organisations like Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj and Ramkrishma Mission also arrived in Darjeeling during the last decades of the twentieth century.[50] Although these activities and institutions did not appear from the initiative of the Nepalis of Darjeeling and nor did the Nepalis directly participate in it, however, they gradually became familiar with institutions of modern associational life and began emulating and experimenting them within their own community.

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[49] Indra Bahadur Rai, "Indian Nepali Nationalism and Nepali Poetry", *Journal of South Asian Literature* XXIX, no. 1 (1994).

[50] Pradhan, *Pahilo Pahar*, 81.