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## **Gorkhaland - Constitutional innovation**

### **Why in news?**

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The agitation for a separate Gorkhaland state has been going on in West Bengal.

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### **What is need for addressing the Gorkhaland?**

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- The Nepalese and Lepchas living in Darjeeling and the adjoining areas have a more distinct culture and history than the Bengalis in rest of the state.

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- But since 1835 Darjeeling has been administered by the authorities in Kolkata.

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- The agitations are also becoming costly for West Bengal and the country, economically and for other reasons.

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### **How this conflict can be solved without bifurcation?**

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- Article 244 A provides for an autonomous state for certain tribal areas in Assam with its own legislature and council of ministers.

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- By a small constitutional amendment, the applicability of this article can be extended to West Bengal even other states.

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- This will enable the establishment of an Autonomous State of Gorkhaland, with a legislature and council of ministers within the existing state of West Bengal without bifurcating it.

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### **What will be advantages of such decision?**

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- This solution will enable West Bengal to return to the path of development and welfare.

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- The Autonomous State can concentrate on the aspirations and welfare of the people of the region.

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- It can be an opportunity to secure all-round advancement of the STs, Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes

and the poor.

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- This solution can be extended to other states where there is a demand for the formation of new states.

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- But a massive drive to build public opinion, both among Nepali-speaking and Bengali-speaking people, has to be undertaken.

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- The Nepali-speaking people must be told that an autonomous state will enable them to assume control over their future and development.

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- Similarly, Bengalis should be assured that they will not lose Darjeeling, which will continue to be part of West Bengal while being the capital of the Autonomous State of Gorkhaland.

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**Source: The Indian Express**

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