

ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS IN TRIPURA

**MA [Political Science]
Third Semester
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Reviewer

Dr Biswaranjan Mohanty

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, SGTB Khalsa College, University of Delhi

Authors:

Neeru Sood, Units (1.4.3, 1.5, 1.10, 2.3-2.5, 2.9, 3.3-3.5, 3.9, 4.2, 4.4-4.5, 4.9) © Reserved, 2017

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• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Administration and Politics in Tripura

Syllabi

Mapping in Book

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2. State Formation in Ancient Tripura.
3. History of Tripura Raj-Ancient, Medieval, Modern.
Rise, Reform and Recline of the Raj: Tripura's Ties with Tagore.
4. Tripura's Merge with the Indian Union.

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(Pages 3-60)**

Unit - II

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3. Revenue Administrations.
4. Welfare Administration Schemes.

**Unit 2: Administration in Tripura
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INTRODUCTION

Tripura is a small land-locked state located on the eastern side of India. With a population of approximately thirty-lakhs, Tripura is a part of the 'seven sister states'. It shares its boundary with Bangladesh on majority of its sides and has very valuable forest, bamboo, rubber and natural resources. Ethnically too, the region is very rich in its culture with varied tribal population. The state in the modern times has suffered a lot due to the discord between state forces and the tribal organizations.

From the social perspective, it is very important that we learn about the history of rulers in the state from the medieval times, arts and culture of the state, origins of the formation of the state Tripura and the resistance which surfaced in the process. Moreover, the understanding of the merger of the state with the Indian Union and the insurgency and human security help us understand the social fabric of the state.

From the political perspective, and for effective administration, there is also a need to learn about the general revenue and the welfare administration of the state, the decentralization structure, electoral politics and the status of human development in Tripura.

This book, *Administration and Politics in Tripura*, has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with 'Introduction' to the topic followed by 'Unit Objectives'. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with an 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the reader's understanding of the topic. A list of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit that includes short-answer as well as long-answer questions. The 'Summary' and 'Key Terms' section are useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tripura is a small state in the North East region of India. It is a land-locked state which is bounded by other Indian states and the neighbouring country Bangladesh. Being at a sensitive location, the state of Tripura is prone to insurgency which is a cause of continuous conflict and disturbances in the state.

The history of the state of Tripura is a great one where the state has been ruled by the Kings of the Manikya Dynasty for over 500 years. Under the rule of these kings, Tripura was always an autonomous and independent state. In fact, under the kings, Tripura was a progressive state, but it saw a decline when the state came in contact with the Mughals and later the British.

The state was conceded to the Indian Union in 1949 and after the independence of the country, the state was cut-off from the rest of the nation. This has somehow resulted in what the state is at present with the majority of population being tribal. The tribal population of the state is cut-off from the rest of the nation and leads a destitute and poor life. The state also does not have developed infrastructural facilities which makes the state backward and poor. In addition, the influx of a large number of refugees and the close proximity of the state to Bangladesh has further affected the development of the state in an adverse manner. In this unit, you will learn about

Tripura it's land, people, religion and language; the state formation in ancient Tripura; the ancient, medieval and modern history of Tripura; the rise, reform and recline of the Raj; Tripura's ties with Tagore and Tripura's merger with the Indian Union.

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1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the history of the state of Tripura
- Assess the ruling dynasty of the state of Tripura
- Explain the rise and decline of Tripura
- Describe the relationship of the kings of the Manikya Dynasty with Rabindranath Tagore
- Discuss Tripura's merger with the Indian Union

1.2 TRIPURA: THE LAND, THE PEOPLE, RELIGION AND LANGUAGE

In this section, you will learn about Tripura: the state. We will discuss in detail the physical features of the land; the inhabitants of the state, the major religion that is followed; and the dominant language.

1.2.1 Tripura: The Land

Tripura is a small, land-locked, hilly state, surrounded by the Cachar district of Assam and the Mizo hills of Mizoram in the eastern side, Comilla and parts of Noakhali district of Bangladesh in the western side, district of Chittagong and some parts of Noakhali in the southern side and Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the northern side. As per the records of the Registrar General of India, the area of Tripura is 10,486 sq km; whereas the Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, Government of Tripura mentions it as 10,491.69 sq km. It is located between 22°56' and 24°32' north latitude and 91°10' and 92°22' east longitude. It shares an international border with Bangladesh which is about 856 km in length. It also shares a 53 km long border with Cachar district of Assam and 109 km long border with Mizoram.

Hill-Ranges and Rivers of Tripura

The hills in the state run from north to south, parallel to one another till they disappear in the plains of Sylhet in Bangladesh. Tripura is predominantly a hilly state comprising about 60 per cent of its land, while the remaining 40 per cent is flat plain.

The six principal hill ranges in Tripura are as follows:

- Jampui
- Sakhan Tlang
- Longtharai

- Atharamura
- Baramura
- Devatamura

- 1. Jampui hill range:** It is situated in Dharmanagar sub-division and is 74 km in length. It is the highest range of Tripura. The highest peak of the state, *Betling Shiv* (approximate height 3,200 feet), is visible from this range. It is inhabited by the Lushai and Reang tribes, who entirely live on the orange cultivation. Therefore, it is popularly known as the 'Orange basket' of Tripura. These ranges are covered with dense forests of shrubs, canes and creepers.
- 2. Sakhan Tlang hill range:** It forms the boundary between the Dharmanagar and Kailashahar sub-division. The northern part of this range is known as Unakuti. It is also pronounced as *Sakkanklong* hill range. The length of this hill range is 58 km and that of Unakuti 20 km. Its height decreases in the north and joins a low ridge, which runs into Sylhet (Bangladesh). The area is suitable for tea plantation and the best tea gardens of Tripura are located here. The 'Sakhan' (approximate height is 782 m) is its highest peak and is inhabited by Lushais tribe. Other important peaks of this range are: Thangrimaman, Cobel and Kamunta. The area is sparsely populated and covered with jungles.
- 3. Longtharai hill range:** This hill range forms the boundary between Kailashahar and Kamalpur sub-divisions and is about 48 km long. Its highest peak is Longtharai (approximate height is about 482 metres).
- 4. Atharamura hill range:** Atharamura hill range starts from Amarpur sub-division and runs into the southern part of Khowai sub-division. It rises at Niungmarueta up to a height of 481 metres. It derives its name from the fact that it has eighteen peaks.
- 5. Baramura hill range:** This hill range runs into Khowai, Amarpur and Udaipur sub-divisions. The length of the Baramura range is about 47 km.
- 6. Devatamura hill range:** This hill range is situated in the lower portion of the Baramura hill range. It is about 85 km long.

Rivers play a prominent role in the formation of human civilizations. Similar is the case in this tiny state of Tripura. The important rivers of Tripura are: Burima, Gomati, Khowai, Howrah, Longai, Dhalai, Muhuri, Feni, Juri, Manu.

The rivers of Tripura are generally ephemeral in nature. Their flow is dependent on rainfall, overflowing in the rainy season and running almost dry during summer months. Due to deforestation in the catchment areas of such river systems, all the navigable rivers have become almost dry during the lean seasons. The water of the river is muddy during rainy season and polluted during the lean periods.

1.2.2 People

The Bengalis and tribal people constitute the two major ethnic groups in Tripura comprising the bulk of the population. The prominent tribal communities are Tripuri,

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Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Halam, Kuki, Lushai, Mog and Chakma. If you locate their origin, you will find that from the anthropological and linguistic point of view, they are Tibeto-Burmese. Most of these tribes have similar ethnological characteristics and possess identical cultural and social traits. Besides these tribes, there are Uchai, Garo, Santhal, Chaimal, Orang, Munda, Bhutia, Lepcha, Bhil and Khasia tribes.

Tribes of Tripura

Altogether, there are nineteen tribes in Tripura. They are divided into two major groups:

- Aboriginal
- Immigrants
- **Aboriginal tribes:** These group comprises of Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Lusai, Uchai, Chaimal, Halam, Kukis, Garos, Mog and Chakma tribes. All the tribes have migrated to this territory from a place between Tibet, up hills of Burma like Arakan hill tracts and Shan State and adjacent to China.
- **Immigrant tribes:** Tribes like Bhil, Munda, Orang, Santhal, Lepcha, Khasia, Bhutias are the immigrant tribes who came and settled here for economic reasons. Most of them are Central Indian Tribes who came from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. Some of these tribes are, however, Northern-Frontier tribes who came from Bhutan, Meghalaya, Sikkim and North Bengal. Chakmas and Mogs are Arakan tribes, who entered Tripura through Chittagong hill tracts. Except the Garos Uchai, Chaimal and, Khasias, the rest of the non-indigenous tribes came into Tripura as tea garden labourers from Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and ultimately settled here.

Other than these nineteen scheduled tribes, there are some Manipuris whose original home was in Manipur. They settled here due to matrimonial relations established between the royal families of Tripura and Manipur. Some of them also settled here during the Burmese invasion of Manipur in AD 1824. In the past, the tribal population predominated, but with passage of time cultural contact with the neighbouring areas was established which led to a steady increase in the population of plainsmen.

Linguistically, the tribes of Tripura are divided into three groups:

- **Bodo group:** Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Uchai and Noatias are Mongoloid and belong to Bodo linguistic group.
- **Kuki-Chin group:** Kukis, Lusai and most of the tribes under Halam tribes linguistically belong to Kuki-Chin group and speak in Kuki-chin language.
- **Arakan group:** Mog and Chakmas speak in Arakan language.

1. Tripuris

The Tripuris are the largest tribal community in Tripura. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman stock. They were the first to migrate to this territory and can be termed as an aboriginal tribe of Tripura. As per the 2001 Census, their numerical figure is 5,43,843. Thus, numerically they are the highest among all the tribal groups. Tripura

was ruled by the Tripuri kings till it merged with Indian Dominion in 1949. Tripuris are mainly Hindus. They follow both Sakti (Shakti) cult and Vaisnavism cult. Besides, they have deep belief in different deities, rites and rituals.

The Tripuris celebrate the festivals of Garia, Kharchi and Ker Puja. They perform colourful folk dances like Garia, Lebang, Musak, Surmani, Tangbiti and Mamita. These dances are accompanied by melodious folk songs and music of flute, Sarinda, Champreng and other string instruments. Earlier, the Tripuri society was controlled by the regional social councils which had the authority to exercise power over all social and economic disputes among the community members. In fact, the chief of these councils were selected by the then kings of Tripura. But now-a-days, with the abolition of monarchy, these councils are non-existent. All sorts of minor problems are looked after by village panchayat or other legal bodies. Due to social transition in all spheres of life, particularly in the field of agriculture, socio-cultural domain, economic, educational and health awareness, Tripuris are now treated as an advanced tribal community.

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2. Reang

Reang is the second largest tribal community of Tripura. They are recognized as one of the seventy-five primitive tribes in India. As per 2001 Census, 1,65,103 number of persons belong to the Reang community. Reang is said to have come first from the Shan state of upper Burma (now Myanmar) to the Chittagong hill tracts and then to the southern part of Tripura. Similarly, other groups have entered Tripura via Assam and Mizoram during the 18th century. Reangs are highly concentrated in south Tripura and in Longthorai Valley sub-division. They belong to the Indo-Mongoloid racial stock. Their language has affinity to Austro-Asiatic groups under Tibeto-Burman family. Ethnically, Reangs are divided into two major clans:

- Meska
- Molsoi

The language of the tribe is Kaubru which sounds like the Kuki language, though broadly it is Kik-Borok (language of men).

Reangs are still a nomadic tribe and a large number of them maintain their livelihood by practising Jhum cultivation and other food gathering activities like collection of fruits, leaf, plants from the jungles, fishing in stagnant water in hill slopes, hunting of wild animals and birds. Reangs have faith in different deities like Buraha, Bonirao, Songrame, Jampira, Mangisiri and Lampra. There are also some female deities like Metaikotorma, Tuibuma, Mailoma and Ganga. Reangs believe in spirits and the existence of soul. They are followers of Hindu religion. A good number of Reangs are followers of Vaishnavism. Traditionally, Reangs are endogamous and do not marry outside their community. Divorce and widow remarriage are permitted by the village Council. The chief of the council is known as 'Rai'. They cremate their dead beside a river or *charra* after observing a series of rites, rituals and funeral procession. The folk life and culture of the Reangs are culturally very rich. 'Hozagiri' dance accompanied by melodious tune of the flute is the most attractive. This dance is popular within the country as well as abroad. Due to social transition

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and modern way of life, considerable changes have taken place among the Reangs in the field of agriculture and other economic activities, social and cultural life, awareness for education, health and sanitation. The Reangs are now an enlightened tribe of Tripura.

3. Jamatia

Jamatia is another tribal group of Tripura having distinct feature of Mongoloid origin. Their language is similar to that of Tripuris which is Kok-Borok, a language belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family. As per the 2001 Census, their population strength in Tripura is 74,949 and are treated as the fourth largest tribal group of Tripura. The Jamatias are regarded as a fighting class and were probably an admixture of the original inhabitants of the territory.

The term 'Jamatia' has originated from the word *Jamayet*, which means gathering or mobilization. The royal army of Tripura was constituted mainly of the Jamatias, for which they were exempted from house taxes. Previously, this tribe practiced jhum cultivation. But, like other tribal groups of Tripura, they also took to plough cultivation. At present, most of them depend on plain-land cultivation beside other allied economic activities. They follow Hindu religion and have embraced Sakti (Shakti) cult and Vaishnavism. Their supreme, traditional, social institute is *Hoda Akra*, which preserves and promotes their social taboos, customs and religion.

The 'Hoda' sorts out all types of social and criminal disputes between community members. They are fond of their traditional folk culture and observe drama, Garia festival and other common dance forms of Kok-Borok speaking tribes. They practice a special form of Garia dance which denotes their Hindu based religious culture. A large number of them are followers of Vaishnavism and observe all events as per tradition. Like other tribes in Tripura, they cremate their dead and observe 'sradha' ceremony, followed by a community feast. Although maximum number of this tribal community are Hindus, a small percentage among them are followers of Christianity. The changes that have occurred in the Jamatia society are mainly due to modern way of life. This is reflected in the fact that they are now literate and their participation in every walk of life has brought about significant improvement in their socio-economic life.

4. Noatia

Noatias are a part of Tripuri tribe and are still treated as new comers. In fact, Noatias have been at Arakan hill tracts for a long time, before they migrated to the southern part of Tripura via the Chittagong hill tracts. Ethnically, Noatias have similar origin like other Mongoloid tribes and their language is Kok-Borok. According to the 2001 Census, their population figure is 6,655. They are mostly found in south Tripura and Longthorai valley sub-division.

The term 'Noatia' means new Tripuris. So, they are different from Puran Tripuris. It is said that Noatias is not the actual name of the tribe. Originally, they were Tripuris. Legend has it that once a furious war took place between the then king of Tripura and the Arakan king. In the ensuing battle, the Arakan king won and

captured hundreds of the Tripuri army. During the course of their stay in Arakan, the captured Tripuri army came in contact with the local tribe which influenced their language and culture. Even now the influence of the old culture is visible among them in their physical structure, skin colour, food habit, language, rites and rituals.

Noatias have eleven major clans. These clans are as follows:

- Anokia
- Khaklu
- Totaram
- Murasing
- Noatia
- Deildak
- Keowa
- Garjan
- Tongbai
- Kalicha
- Aslong

Majority of the Noatias are Hindus and observe all pujas and festivals as per their tradition and customs. Vaishnavism, too, has a great influence on them. Like other Kok-Borok speaking tribes, they also observe Garia and Baisu festivals.

5. Uchai

As per 2001 Census, the population of Uchais is only 2,103. They are concentrated mainly in Amarpur and Belonia sub-divisions. Uchais and Reang are of the same origin and ethnically belong to Mongoloid tribe. The culture and language of Uchais are also similar to that of Kok-Borok speaking tribes like Reang, Tripuris, Jamatias. They live in Tong (Gaireng) house built out of chan grass and bamboos. Traditionally, Uchais were Jhum cultivators and still practice it in high tillas and slopes. In this type of agriculture, they have to produce everything they need. They depend on economic and food gathering activities in the forest. They also hunt wild animals, birds. Now-a-days, Uchais are practising plough cultivation. Like other tribes they are settled in plain areas.

Uchais live in clustered villages. In one village, there may be maximum fifty families living together. There exists a cordial relationship between all members of the family irrespective of age. The younger ones are expected to follow the elders's instructions/decisions in family matters. All major works within the family are generally done by the women. The male folk remain busy with economic activities. Young members of the family help their parents in the jhum field and other domestic works.

Marriages among Uchais are held between the age of 16-20 years. The social council of Uchais was very rigid earlier but is not so active now. However, the chief of the council still sorts out primary problems and disputes among the community members.

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The Uchais are followers of Hinduism. They also believe in supernatural forces. The major deities worshipped by this tribe are Radhak, Garia, Ker, Ganga, Puja, Naksu and Motai. Uchais dispose their dead body by cremation after following rites and rituals and funeral procession. However, a few members of this tribe are followers of Christianity and follow the religious customs and traditions. The traditional dress and musical instruments of the Uchais are very attractive. They observe their ceremonies with great joy.

6. Halam

Halam belongs to the Cocase-Mongoloid origin of Kukichin tribes. This tribe's language is also more or less similar to that of Tibeto-Burman family. They are also known as Mila Kuki. Halams are divided into several sub-clans which is referred to as *Barki-Halam*. The major sub-clans of Halams are as follows:

- Kaloi
- Kov-bong
- Keipeng
- Bong
- Saka chep
- Thanga chep
- Dab
- Bongser
- Molsom
- Rupini
- Rangkhwr
- Chorai
- Langai
- Kaireng
- Ranglong
- Naveen
- Murasing

According to the 2001 Census, the total population of Halam is 47,261. Halams are generally followers of Hinduism. They practice Sakti-cult. Vaishnavism is spreading among some of the sub-clans like Murasingh, Rupini and Kaloi. Christianity is also being embraced by the Halams.

The Halams are settled in Kamalpur, Sadar East, Molsom Bari and Kwipilong of Udaipur, Ampu, Ambasa. Among the Halams, Kolai, Murasing, Rupini speak in Kok-Borok and their social and religious culture is similar to that of the Tripuris. Halams live in typical *Tong Ghar*, specially made of bamboos and chan grass.

Apart from plain-land cultivation, they still practice Jhum cultivation and engage in other substitute work. A good number of them are employed in the

Government sector. The marriageable age among the Halamsis is between 21-24 for boys and 18-20 for girls as they still honour their customary laws in setting up marriage alliances.

The Halams have their own social institute and village council. The council looks after all sorts of social disputes over land, crime against women and children. They cremate their dead and observe funeral rites according to their customs.

The various sub-clans such as Kaloi, Rupini, Molsom observe their colourful dances with great joy and vigour.

7. Mog

Originally, Mogs belong to the Arakan tribe and have migrated to Tripura through the Chittagong hill tracts. The language of this tribe falls under Tibeto-Chinese family and is also linked to the section of Assam-Burmese language. Mogs are followers of Buddhism.

They mainly practice Jhum cultivation. They have a social administrative council. The chief of this council is called a 'Chowdhury'.

The Mogs cremate their dead after observing rites and rituals. 'Wah' festival is the annual meeting platform for the whole community. This is accompanied by a combination of folk songs and dance.

The social culture and belief of this are influenced by the Burmese culture. Traditionally, this community is famous for their herbal medicines. Besides the regular economic activities, some of them earn by means of curing diseases with indigenous treatment.

According to the 2001 Census, the population of Mog is 30,385. Mostly, this community is settled at Sabroom and Belonia.

8. Chakma

The main religion of this tribe is Buddhism. The Chakmas are known to be a tribe of South-East Asia. They had first migrated to Arakan hills of Burma and then to the Chittagong hill tracts and finally to Tripura. A major chunk of them, in course of time, migrated to Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh from their original homeland. According to Census report of 2001, Chakmas population is 61,793.

Mostly Chakmas are settled in Belonia, Sabroom and Amarpur in South Tripura, Dhalai and Northern district of Tripura in Chamanu, Gandacherra, Kanchanpur and Machmara. Among the Chakma tribe, there are three major groups like:

- Anokia
- Tandugia
- Mangla

Linguistically, the Chakma language is mixed loan words taken from the Indo-Aryan language, Tibeto-Chinese and mainly Arakan language. Their language is also described as broken Bengali-Assamese. Chakmas have their own script in Burmese alphabets, which however is not in use. Rather the Bengali script is being used by them as it is easy to learn.

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The Chakmas practice jhum cultivation, plain-land cultivation and other economic activities like growing of vegetables and fishing. Chakmas are expert in trapping animals and are well known for trapping wild elephants. In Gandacherra region, a large number of Chakmas earn their livelihood as fishermen and boatmen in Dumbur water area. In present times, Chakmas do not depend fully on Jhum and settled cultivation as a good percentage among them are now literate and employed in different Government department as well as other sectors.

Chakmas are followers of Buddhist religion. The three major festivals observed by Chakmas are:

- Bizu Festival
- Kathin Chibar Dan
- Buddha Purnima which is very popular

The chakmas follow social customs and customary laws strictly as directed by the village council which is headed by *Karbari*. Karbari, generally, looks after and settles all sorts of disputes among the community members. The marriageable age among Chakmas are held between the age of 18-21 years. Village *ojhas* conduct marriages as per their religious customs. Chakmas cremate their dead after observing several rites. A Buddhist Bhiskshu conducts the last ritual of the dead on the seventh day. A community feast is also held in memory of the departed soul.

9. Garo

The Garos are one of the immigrant tribes of Tripura. Their original home is at Meghalaya (Garo hills), Kamrup Goal Para and Mymansingh of Bangladesh. This tribe migrated after AD 1950. Their present population status is 11,180. They are mainly concentrated in Udaipur sub-division and Sadar sub-division.

Garos belong to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family and belong to the Mongoloid racial stock. Garos are a matrilineal tribe. The mother in the family is treated as an authoritarian head. Therefore, the property right goes to the daughter of the family. Garos are mainly followers of Hinduism. But, in the last fifty years, many have converted to Christianity. Garos' *wan-gala* festival has great importance in their life. This festival, accompanied by colourful dance, song and music takes place when the new crop is harvested. They are mainly concentrated in Ambassa of Dhalai district. They call themselves *Saimar*. They speak in a language which originated from Kuki-Chin group of languages.

10. Kukis

'Kuki' is a word pronounced by people to refer to a group of tribes like Darlong and Lusai. The Lusai tribe of Tripura used to live in Jampui and Shakan hills of North Tripura. They call themselves as Mizos. They never call themselves as Lusai as the word 'Lu' means head and 'sai' means cutting (head hunter), though, they were once treated as head hunters.

Darlong is another community under the Kuki tribe. The population strength of the Kukis is 11,674. They live on hill tops and maintain their livelihood through

Jhum cultivation and producing fruits. Now-a-days, they have become accustomed to plain land cultivation and rearing of animals. Kukis are expert hunters of wild animals. Linguistically, they speak a language which originated from Kuki-Chin linguistic family. Kukis are fond of dance and music. They do not arrange marriage alliances outside their community. Traditionally, they worshipped lord Shiva and different other deities and spirits. But in the last fifty years, majority of them have embraced Christianity. They have their own customary laws and village council. 'Lal' is a term used to denote the village chief. This is the reason why the Darlongs use 'Lal' before their names. The village chief generally resolves all sorts of social and religious disputes including disputes related to marriage and divorce. Kukis are socio-economically a more advanced tribe.

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11. Lusai

Lusai is another tribe under the Kuki-Chin group. They are mainly concentrated in Kanchanpur sub-division of North Tripura. Lusais are commonly known as Mizos. They belong to the Mongoloid race. As per the 2001 Census, their population strength is 4,777. Their culture is similar to that of the Mizos. The homeland of the Lusai's is the Jumpui hill. Lusais practice Jhum cultivation and hunting of wild animals. This community is famous for orange production. Earlier, the Lusas were known as head hunters. During first half of 19th century, most of the Lusais converted to Christianity, which is their predominant religion till today. Their Bamboo dance (Cheraw dance) is very popular. Literacy rate among them is comparatively higher in comparison to other tribes. A large number of them work in the government sector and other economic fields.

12. Khasia

Khasias belong to the Austro-Asiatic racial stock. Linguistically, they can be grouped under Mon-Kher groups of language. Their society is matrilineal. The Khasias are a part of the Meghalayan tribe. According to the 2001 Census, their population strength is only 630. They live mainly in Kailashahar and Dharmanagar. The Khasis have no ethnic relation with other tribes of Tripura. They have been staying at Tripura from 18th century onwards for economic reasons. The Khasis have their own garden of betel leaf which is popularly known as *Khasia Pan*. They also rear a large number of cattles. The Khasis used to be mainly Hindus but from the end of the 18th century, most of them have embraced Christianity. Beside this, they also follow their amnesic rites and rituals. Their cultural life forms an important component of Indian culture.

13. Lepcha

Lepcha, a tribe from the Himalayan range live in the North-eastern part of India. They largely reside in Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, Sikkim and Darjeeling. They have migrated to other North-eastern states for economic reasons. Their population strength is only 105 as per the 2001 Census and are mainly found in Dhalai district of Tripura. Lepchas belong to the Mongoloid racial stock. Their language is an admixture of Nepalese and Sikkimese and is similar to the Indo-Chinese group of languages. They call themselves as 'Rong'. Besides cultivation of agricultural and horticultural crops, Lepchas rear cattles. Originally, Lepchas were

worshippers of nature and believed in witchcraft and spirits. Eventually, they embraced Buddhism. In Tripura, they are known as Nepalese.

14. Bhutia

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Bhutias are a Himalayan tribe. Like the Lepchas, they also belong to the Mongoloid racial stock have linguistic affinity and pursue similar religious activities. During the reign of the Tripura kings, Bhutias were recruited in the royal army for their warrior-like character and physical strength. But, in course of time, they left Tripura for their original homeland. As per the 2001 Census, their population strength is only twenty-nine. Most of them are employed in government sectors like the Para-military.

15. Munda

Mundas are a central Indian tribe and recognized as an immigrant tribe of Tripura. The original homeland of the Mundas was at Chota Nagpur. Mundas are a Proto-Australoid group. Mundari is their language which belongs to the Austro-Asiatic family. Mundas live in villages with other tribes. They work in tea gardens, participate in group hunting with bows and arrows. They enjoy group dancing and singing consumption of country liquor irrespective of age in ceremonies and festivals. Mundas are followers of Hindu religion. They worship their traditional deities as well.

In every village, the following three important features are present:

- Sarana
- Akhra
- Sasan

Beside these, Pahan (Priest) play an important role in the life of Mundas. A Pahan looks after all religious rites and rituals, community festivals, marriage and funeral rites. The Mundas are economically backward, though a lot of improvement in their socio-economic condition has been observed in recent years. They depend on the village Mahajan.

The Mundas were brought to work in the tea gardens and brick fields during the first half of 19th century by the kings of Tripura. Their present population as per 2001 Census is 12,416 and are mainly concentrated in Kailashahar, Manu valley tea estate and other tea estates in the state.

16. Orang

Orang is an immigrant tribe, who migrated to Tripura from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. This tribe mainly resides in north Sadar and major tea gardens. They mainly depend on agriculture, as plantation workers in tea gardens and labourers in brick fields. According to the 2001 Census, the numerical strength of the Orangs are only 6,223. Orangs live in clustered villages, wherein there may be 30 to 50 families residing. They built their houses with mud, chan grasses and bamboos. They do not have any window in their house. Orangs speak in broken Hindi which may be grouped under the Australoid group of languages. They speak in Hindi mixed with Bengali which have originated from the Dravidian family. The Orangs

are mainly Hindus and practice Sakti cult. They celebrate various festivals such as Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Holi, Laxmi puja etc.

The women of this tribe decorate themselves with silver ornaments and saris. They use various flowers for hair dressing. The sardar of a village acts as the chief of the village and looks after the well-being of the people. The village priest also acts as the religious head and oversees marriage ceremonies. The 'Jhumur Dance' of this tribe is immensely popular. They cremate their dead after observing a series of rites and rituals. They depend on earning of wage by the dint of physical labour. The literacy rate among them is expanding and they are developing economic consciousness. This tribe is taking part in the development activities of the State in every sphere.

17. Bhil

Bhils are one of the oldest tribes in India. They once ruled over parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Malwa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. They are a cross breed of the great Munda race and a wild tribe of India. Bhils are one of the Dravidian racial tribes of western India and belong to the Austroloid group. They speak a language which is Dravidian in origin. The population of the tribe as per the 2001 Census is 2,336. This tribe had migrated to Tripura from central India mainly from the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Their economic activities centers around agriculture, working in tea gardens and brick fields.

They are mainly concentrated in Akinpur of Belonia, Bagan Bazar of Khowai sub-division. Majority of the Bhills are Hindus. They worship Shiva, Durga, deities of forests and evil spirits. However, a small percentage of them follow Christianity. They cremate their dead after following series of rites as per their traditional customs and beliefs. Bhils are also fond of music and dance accompanied by traditional tunes of flute and drum. Bhils in other parts of the country are well literate and enjoy modern lifestyle.

18. Santhal

Santhals are among one of the immigrant tribes in Tripura. They belong to the Austro-Asiatic racial stock. Their original homeland is in West Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. They have migrated to this state as tea garden labourers. As per the 2001 Census, their population strength is only 2,151. They are mainly concentrated in Simna and Mechliban tea garden areas of Sadar sub-division. Their main occupation is working in the tea gardens.

They follow Hindu religion and practice the Sakti cult. Besides, Santhals have animistic faith being handed down from generation to generation. Their priest acts as the religious head. Some amongst them have converted to Christianity. Their main festival is Holi, which is accompanied by consumption of liquor (country made) and dance in groups with the melody of drums and sing their traditional songs. Apart from working in tea gardens, they also practice agriculture and hunting of wild animals. It is noteworthy that most of them do not own land. Land is usually allotted to them by tea garden owners, which is cultivated by them to produce paddy and vegetable.

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19. Chaimal

Chaimal is considered to be the smallest tribal group of Tripura. As per the 2001 Census, the total population of this tribe is only 226. They are mainly settled in Ambassa of Dhalai district. This tribe belongs to the Cocaso–Mongoloid group. They speak a language which originated from the Kuki Chin group of languages. They mainly practice Hinduism and follow its rites and rituals. Chaimals practice Jhum cultivation. Like other tribes, they have their own form of folk songs, dance and music. They are also known as ‘Saimar’.

1.2.3 Language and Religion

Language is an important symbol of group consciousness and solidarity. In a pluralistic society such as ours, what is remarkable is not just the numbers and variety of dialects, but that each one of them reflects a distinctively definable community having distinctive traits, traditions, attitudes, beliefs, customs and habits. Sometimes a combination of the dialects spoken in a homogeneous territory having some common characteristic traits develops into a language. A language in conjunction with culture, religion and history is an important component of nation formation. Its functional and symbolic value has far reaching significance in the transitional continuum from continuity to ethnicity and from ethnicity to formalized nationality.

Empirical study on the basis of historical evidences show that no aboriginal tribal communities of Tripura had their own written script, all being in a form of colloquial expression. So, the rulers of Tripura had to look for a written language for the sake of administrative works. It is stated that Bengali, the flourishing language of the neighbouring plain, was adopted as the state language of Tripura.

Bengali always found a place of honour in the royal court of Tripura. Till the integration of Tripura with the Independent India, Bengali had functioned as the official language of Tripura. It is understood that the kings of Tripura had adopted Bengali as the language of the royal family, by which a new culture among the tribal people could be witnessed. Later on, the tribal people of Tripura started to speak in Bengali instead of their mother tongue Kok-Borok. They seemed to be engaged in other Bengali cultural pursuits like literature, dance, music, rites and rituals.

Altogether there are nineteen tribes in Tripura speaking different languages, but the majority of them speak Kok-Borok language.

But linguistically, the tribes of Tripura can be divided into three groups:

- (1) Bodo groups
- (2) Kuki-Chin groups
- (3) Arakan groups

Kok-Borok Language and Literature

Out of the total tribal population of Tripura, the Kok-Borok speaking tribal communities occupy the majority. Out of the nineteen tribal communities, eight communities viz. Tripuri, Reang, Noatia, Jamatia, Rupini, Koloi, Uchai and Murasing speak in Kok-Borok. According to the Census of 1991, tribal population in the state stood 8,53,345

out of 27,57,205 being the total population of the state. Out of the total tribal population, the Kok-Borok speaking tribal population comprising the above mentioned eight communities is presumed to be about seven lakhs.

Other minor tribal communities of the State have also used the Kok-Borok language as a medium of communication. In the recent past, the Halam communities call the Kok-Borok—‘RajaniKok’ (Language of the Kings). This Kok-Borok is the sister language of the Boro, Garo, Koch, etc. of the North-East descending from the Tibetto-Burmese language family.

At present, Kok-Borok language has been recognized as a language of literature. Therefore, it deserves a language of lively amplitude and distinctive originality. The linguists are of the view that if the modern method of the linguistics is followed, then the development of this language is certain.

The first Kok-Borok magazine was published in the mid-fifties. From the seventies, there is a continuity of development process and activities in creating Kok-Borok literature. Though, there is still dispute in matter of Kok-Borok script and spelling method, the number of publication of Kok-Borok books on poems, short stories, novel, drama and books of translation are gradually increasing and has taken an important position.

The State Government of Tripura has recognised Kok-Borok as one of the official languages of the state in AD 1979. The important Government notifications, publicity booklets are being published in the Kok-Borok language along with Bengali. The Kok-Borok language was introduced as a medium of instruction for the Kok-Borok speaking students at the primary level about twenty years back and it has now been extended up to degree level classes.

Development of Kok-Borok language and Literature

The Kok-Borok language and literature developed in the following manner:

- It is stated that Radhamohan Thakur has written the grammar book of Kok-Borok called *Kok-Borokma* which was published in 1900.
- *TraipurKothamala*, the Kok-Borok-Bengali-English translation book has also been written by Radhamohan Thakur and was published in 1906.
- *Kok-Borokma*, the Kok-Borok grammar book was written in 1897 jointly by two authors named Daulot Ahmed and Md. Omar.
- The first Kok-Borok Magazine *Kwtal Kothoma* was first edited and published in 1954 by Sudhanwa Deb Barma, who was one of the founders of the Tripura Janasiksha Samiti, and a social worker and a political personality of the state.
- Sudhir Krishna Deb Barma had written two Kok-Borok books named *Koktang* and *Surungma Yakhili* which were published in 1954 and 1962 respectively.
- Kok-Borok Dictionary named as *Kokrobam* was written by Ajit Bandhu Deb Barma, and was published by the Education Directorate in 1967.
- The Kok-Borok textbook for children *Cherai Surungma (Bagsa)* was published by the Education Directorate in 1958, which was written by Mahendra Deb Barma.

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- A number of Kok-Borok and Bengali Magazines were patronizing the thoughts and aspirations of the tribal people. Some of those were —
 1. *Koktun*, edited by Ajoy Deb Barma and Surjya Reang,
 2. *ChiniKok*, edited by Ajoy Deb Barma & subsequently by Nirmal Deb Barma
 3. *Tripura Kogtun*, a Kok-Borok mouthpiece of the Information Cultural affairs and Tourism Department of the Government of Tripura, edited by Shyamlal Deb Barma
 4. *Yapri*, edited by Narendra Deb Barma of Kok-Borok and tribal culture, One — ‘Tripura kok-Borok Unnayan Parisad’ was established under the Chairmanship of Bir Chandra Deb Barma in 1967.
- Tripura Kok-Borok Sahitya Sabha was founded by Sailendralal Tripura, which organized regular discussion on the Kok-Borok development and tribal culture through annual conferences and seminars.

Education and Literature

We all know that education plays a significant role in human life. Without education, a person is considered uncivilized and uncultured.

According to A. W. B. Power, the first political agent of Tripura, ‘The people were virtually without any education. While the hill people were totally illiterate, the people of the plains were marginally better. There were only two schools in the Raja’s territory, one at Agartala known as Anglo-Vernacular School, or the Maharaja’s School and the other at Kailasahar, which was opened only in 1872.’

As the matter of fact, it was in the able reign of Birchandra Manikya that for the first time elementary education was started for both boys and girls in AD 1872 and written laws were introduced and the domestic slavery was prohibited in AD 1878.

Under the patronage of Bir Chandra Manikya ‘Rajaratnakaram’, a well-known historical work was published. During this time, Dinesh Chandra Sen wrote *Vanga Bhasa O Sahitya*, the history of Bengali literature.

Gifted with a fine literary taste, Radhakishore Manikya followed the old tradition of patronizing learning. The original *Rajmala* was re-edited during his reign and we are told that Pandit Chandroday Vidyabinode was entrusted with this task. It is also known that the *Rajmala* was completed in four volumes in AD 1902. Only a few copies were printed and these were exclusively meant for the members of the royal family. These were kept in the library of the royal palace.

The *Silalipisamgraha* (collection of stone inscriptions), an unfailing source of historical studies, was a notable work of Chandroday Vidyabinode who got liberal patronage by the king. Vidyabinode also re-edited and published the *Brihannaradiya-Purana* in AD 1907.

The *Tripura State Gazette*, an official newspaper, was first published during his enlightened rule. A great educationist, Radhakishore Manikya spent a large amount

of money for the diffusion of education. Apart from a new high school, a number of girl's schools and primary schools were established in different parts of his kingdom, including the Tulsibati Girl's School at Agartala named after his consort. A free boarding for the Thakur boys and the Kumaras (princes) of the Royal House was established in AD 1900.

The foundation stone of the present M.B.B. College, Agartala, was laid by Maharaja Bir Bikramkishore Manikya on 7 May 1937 and it proved to be a milestone in the field of higher education in Tripura.

As per the latest Government reports of this state, there has been an improvement in the provision of basic school infrastructure in the 1990s, particularly with respect to school buildings and drinking water facilities. The last decade from 1998-2008 is a period of development in the field of educational facilities in Tripura. During this period, the total enrolment of students in General Degree Colleges has increased from 16,806 to 25,960. Scope of studying engineering course has also been enhanced from 250 seats to 670 seats during this period. Two medical colleges with 100 seats meant for Tripura students besides 9 seats in the Fishery and 23 seats in the agricultural colleges opened in the year 1999-2000 and 2008-09 respectively. (Source: Saha, Palas, Tripura 2010 Year Book).

Christianity in Tripura

Christianity has taken deep roots in the religious aspect of Tripura. A small minority of the tribals of Tripura have embraced Christianity for various reasons during the present century. But, it is clear that Christianity in Tripura started with the advent of the Europeans. Its early history can be traced back to mid-20th century or even earlier.

Origin of Christianity

History is the evidence of this fact that Maharaja Amar Manikya (AD 1577– 1586) had an artillery regiment in his army consisting of Portuguese soldiers. The Portuguese were well-known for their valour in armed clashes and showed their fortitude on various occasions. Amar Manikya, who was always facing danger of invasion by the Moghs of Arakan, employed Portuguese gunners in his army to encounter the Moghs. In Rajmala, the Portuguese armymen are known as 'Ferangi Sainya'. When the king led all his troops to the Rasanga war the 'Ferangi', i.e., the Portuguese regiment marched forward in boats packed to capacity. King Amara Manikya was pleased to see the army on the march. The Portuguese armymen employed by Amar Manikya were all Christians by religion. The Portuguese regiment was settled at Udaipur, capital of Tripura, constituted the first Christian Population of Tripura in mid-16th century.

But Christianity remained confined to them in those days. Since then the Portuguese remained in service of the kings of Tripura for a long period. When the capital was shifted to Agartala about AD 1760–61 by Maharaja Krishna Manikya, the Portuguese army men also followed him to the new capital at Agartala and the Portuguese soldiers settled at a new place called Mairam Nagar in Agartala.

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As per the District Gazetteer of this state, the Portuguese who had settled in the neighbourhood of Satgaon in the second quarter of the 16th century, had exercised considerable authority on the eastern and north-eastern coasts against the Moghs when they attacked Tripura during the reign of Maharaja Amar Manikya (1577-85). To counteract the attack of the Moghs he raised Portuguese artillery who were very loyal to the Tripura Raj.

As per the views of K. P. Sen, the Portuguese soldiers were in service even during the reign of Maharaj Birendra Manikya (1862-97). Later, the Tripura army was practically dissolved by the British. The Portuguese soldiers settled in Mariamnagar and they turned into cultivators for their livelihood. They still lived there by and are agriculturists. The Portuguese had established matrimonial relation with local Hindu women since the early days of their settlement there. So they are often called Indo-Portuguese. Their names are a mixture of Indian and Portuguese words e.g. Venu Moucher, Helen, Monika Lagardu, etc. You will find that in these names the latter part is Portuguese and the former part is Indian (Venu, Helen, Monika). They have founded a church at Mariamnagar, which belongs to the Roman Catholic sect. Therefore, we can say with surety that the early Portuguese settlers of Udaipur and Mariamnagar, Agartala are the first Christian population of Tripura. By marrying Indian girls, they spread Christianity among the Indians. This is termed as the first phase of Christianity in Tripura and it was confined to the Portuguese population. The tribals of Tripura were not yet involved in this religion brought by the Portuguese settlers of Udaipur (18th century).

It cannot be said that the people were totally indifferent to this religion. Apart from the Portuguese settlers of Mariamnagar who were counted as ordinary army men, British officers of high rank frequently visited the state capital. The Tripura Raj family also always contacted the British authorities of Calcutta for various problems on disputes about succession to the throne. All this had an effect on the culture and religion of the people. Already people of Calcutta were inclined to English education, English culture and Christian monotheism with its 'nirakaraupasana' (worship of God without image or idol).

Role of Christian Missionaries in Spread of Christianity

Christian Missionaries played a very significant role in spreading their religion. They began to visit the remotest part of this state and tried to propagate the new religion.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries passed without any tangible progress of Christianity in Tripura. The Mariamnagar colony of Portuguese Christians however continued. With the dawn of the 20th century, from AD 1910-1911, hectic propagations were started by Christian Missionaries in the hills of Tripura. Most of the hill people of interior areas were very poor, uneducated, ill-fed, ill-clad, and without any clear idea of religion. This was more applicable with regard to the tribals of the remote areas, notably the Kukis and Lusais of the North-East.

The early Christian Missionaries attempted to spread their religion among these tribals of interior areas, hilly areas, where the living-conditions of the people seemed to be a very difficult one. A Christian missionary from Manipur entered

Tripura in about AD 1910 to work among the poor Kuki tribe. It was known as the Thadu Kuki Mission of Manipur. The mission, however, could not make much headway. After about twenty-five years, a leader of the mission got the idea to invite some foreign agency for the purpose.

In 1935, Mr H. Rankhal of the T. K. M.M Mission went in search of a foreign mission which could take up the work of preaching Christianity among the tribals of Tripura. Mr Rangkhall invited the New Zealand Baptist Mission (NZBM) to come to Tripura and baptise the tribals. The mission accepted the invitation gladly and lost no time in sending a representative to Tripura. By 1938, he obtained permission from the then Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya (1923-47) to preach Christianity and establish a church. He was allowed to occupy a big plot of land at Arundhuti Nagar in Agartala for building the Church which still exists. Rev. Jones was an enthusiastic worker and he was able to establish more than hundred primary schools among the tribals by the year 1967, including the mission school at Arundhuti Nagar, Agartala.

In the meantime, the Government of Tripura had also started Government schools in tribal areas. The foreign mission confined its work in preaching the contents of their religion. During this period large scale conversions were made by the missionaries from among the tribals of the remote areas. Apart from preaching Christianity among the tribals, the foreign missionaries also secretly indoctrinated the tribal people politically. A feeling of separation was created among them. Noticing this, the Government of Tripura ultimately asked the foreign missionaries to quit the state. As a result, the foreign missionaries left Tripura but have left behind able successors from among the Indian Christians, who are continuing the work with the same zeal. Many other Baptist Missions such as the Anglican Church, Free Church of India, Baptist Christian Union, and Roman Catholic Mission have also come to Tripura to propagate Christianity. They all have contributed in propagating Christianity in Tripura, especially among the tribals. Though all of them have left Tripura but still have connection with the Christian establishments in Tripura. They are patronizing all Baptist activities in Tripura and also financing the missionary work here to a great extent. Lakhs of rupees are spent by them every year for the same. The chief donating countries are New Zealand, England, the US and Canada.

Spread of Christianity

There are Christians in almost all the tribes of Tripura due to long drawn work of the missionaries. Though the number is not equal in all communities there are some tribes who have a large number of populations professing Christianity. They are the Lusais (or Mizos) and the Kukis tribes of Tripura.

1. Christianity among the Lusai people

- The Lusai people used to live in the Jampui Hill in North Tripura. They are also called 'Mizo' today. They originally lived in the Lusai Hills, now called Mizoram. From there they entered the Jampui Hills of Tripura, which is adjacent to Mizoram.

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- The impact of Christianity on the Lusai people of Tripura was great. The Christian missionaries came to help them in education and many other fields, and side by side, they preached Christianity.
- In the Census of 1931 out of 2,175 Lusais of Tripura, 2,102 people were recorded as Christians, only 73 persons were non-Christians, i.e., Hindus. With the span of time, the entire Lusai people of Tripura have embraced Christianity.
- In the Census of 1971, the number of Lusais was approximately 3,700 and in the next census (1981), this number remains almost the same.
- Jampui Hill, which is the main habitation of the Lusais of Tripura, is divided into ten villages and each village is populated mostly by the Lusais and in a small degree by the Reangs. Each village has a church. It has three churches—two for the Lusais and one for the Reang Christians.
- The local language is the medium of service. Drum beating and music accompany the prayer.
- Three main festivals are observed—Christmas, Good Friday and Easter. But one notable fact is that the church is mainly attended by the old people, the women and children. The young men seem to be more interested in the youth club of the village.
- Since the counting of sixteenth year begins from the day of conception, sixteenth year actually falls in the 15th year of age. It is not clear whether there is any connection between the age of Lusai baptism and that of Brahmanical Upanayana. But the similarity is remarkable.
- It is said that up to AD 1870, the Mizos or Lusais professed a religion which was a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism. But as per the local myth and traditions, the Mizos had attacked a tea garden near Silchar. There, they killed the British Manager Mr Winchester and kidnapped his daughter. Due to their bad deeds, the British Government was enraged and a British army was deployed to deal with the Mizos. The army rescued the girl and struck terror in the hearts of the tribals. This led to their gradual submission to the British Government and adoption of Christianity. They invoked Jesus Christ as the supreme deity for bliss and happiness.

2. The Kukis

- The Kuki tribe is one of the nineteen scheduled tribes of Tripura. They stand eighth in respect to population among the nineteen scheduled tribes of this state. They are a branch of the Lushais. According to the old records, the term 'Kuki' is wider and it includes many tribes Lusai, Khasi, etc. The word Kuki is now rarely used. This is probably because of their early history of frequent raids and violent activities. They also had the habit of wearing almost no clothes. Some of them were stark naked. This habit still persists among the tribe to some extent in the interior areas. Kuki women are still seen in jungles without any upper garment. The phrase 'Lengt a Kuki' (the naked

Kuki) is still used in rural areas with regard to any boy or girl or any 'Lunatic person' who goes naked. This indicates that the Kukis remained naked in the past. For all these reasons the word Kuki is not now in general use. In its place a new word Darlong (or Darlong Kuki) is used. This word is also used as a surname by the members of this tribe. The Kukis were basically Hindus. They worshipped many tribal deities. Since 1931 it is noted that some of the Kukis adopted Christian religion.

The number of Christians among the Kukis or Darlongs has increased to a great extent, though the number of Hindus among them is still greater. The following table will show the comparative strength of Christians and Hindus among this tribe.

Table 1.1 Strength of Christians and Hindus among the Kukis

Year	Number of Kukis	Hindu	Christian
1921	4005	4005	Nil
1931	1479	1207	172
1941	1522	1522	Nil
1961	5531	3185	2345
1971	7775	3000 (approx)	4000 (approx)
1981	5500	3000 (approx)	2500 (approx)

It is clear from the above table that the Hindu-Christian ratio among the Kukis is almost equal. The tribe is not yet fully baptised like the Lushais. The Kukis, living in close contact with the Lushai in North Tripura are Christians by association.

3. Garos

- Garo population of Tripura is almost equal to the Kuki (about 6000). The Garos are divided into four sections or sects in respect of religion. In the recent past a large number of the Garos have also embraced Christianity.

4. Reangs

- As to the religion of the Reangs, it is noted that the majority of them belong to Hinduism. According to the Census of 1981, there are about 5000 Christians among the Reangs.
- Most of the Christian Reangs live in the Jampui hills as neighbours of the Lusai Christians. The plains dwelling Reangs are mostly Hindus and worshipping Hindu as well as tribal deities.
- There are Christians among other tribes also, but their number is negligible. Some educated tribals of these communities have adopted Christianity as a fashion, as the educated Bengalis have the fashion of taking *diksa* from a modern Thakur.

Christian Establishments in Tripura

Christian establishments in the state of Tripura are quite a few. These comprise in the form of churches, schools and small centers of the Christian missions.

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The biggest churches are situated at the following places:

- (a) Arundhuti Nagar, Agartala
- (b) Phuldungsai (Jampui Hill)
- (c) Mariamnagar, a village, a few miles North-East of Agartala
- (d) Vangmun (Jampui Hill)

As of today we do not have the exact number of churches in Tripura, many of them being stationed in remote hill areas. Smaller centres are there in several places including one at Amtali (Agartala) and another at Ganganagar in Dharmanagar sub-division about two miles from Dharmanagar Town. The place is known as Mission Tilla.

There are several schools at Agartala run by the Christian missionaries. These are St. Paul's School, Holy Goss School, and another school near Amtali in the outskirts of Agartala. The schools are all secondary schools and are of high standard. Affluent people of the town send their children to these schools for good knowledge of English and Western culture. Rudiments of Christianity are also taught through various means. Teachers are mostly Christians.

The Mariamnagar Church has a big library which contains many valuable books and documents pertaining to Christianity. The Father is liberal enough to issue these books to interested readers from outside for detailed study. This is a good service rendered by the Church authorities. The Church missions in the hill areas also render other valuable services to the local public, such as supply of text books free of cost to the poor school students, free medical treatment, supply of baby food and the like.

They also have published the Bible in Kok-Borok or Tripuri languages. All this attracts people to the missions and the religion preached by them.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Which two major groups are the tribes of Tripura categorized into?
2. Name the important rivers of Tripura.
3. Name the categories in which the tribes of Tripura can be divided linguistically.

1.3 STATE FORMATION IN ANCIENT TRIPURA

In this section, we will look at the state formation in ancient Tripura; we will also have a look at the pre-colonial Manikya period.

1.3.1 Ancient Period

The early history of Tripura is shrouded in myths and legends. According to the legends, the state of Tripura was founded by Druhyu, a son of emperor Yayati, who

belonged to the Lunar dynasty. His capital is at Pratisthanpur. He is stated to be the first historical and by far the most important ruler of the dynasty. One of his descendants, Daitya, is said to have come to 'Kirata Desha' and established his kingdom in 'Tribeg', which is now in the present Nowgong district of Assam. Tripura, the son and heir of Daitya, was succeeded by his son Trilochan. He married the daughter of the neighbouring Raja of Hirimba (Cachar). Trilochan's eldest son inherited his kingdom.

It is difficult to find any recorded source which provides information on the origin of 'Tripura'. According to Captain Lewin, 'The origin of the name Tipperah is doubtful.' For this reason, it has been stated that in the ancient period, prior to the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal, Tripura was politically not considered a state. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, who had reached Kamrup in AD 642-643, noted the names of almost all the contemporary kingdoms situated in north-east India, but had not mentioned the name of Tripura. It can be inferred that had there been such a powerful kingdom under the name of Tripura, it would not have missed the notice of a keen observer like Hiuen Tsang.

The Vedas, the Upanishadas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas perhaps do not mention the name of *Tripuradesa*. The mythical demon *Tripurashura* should not be confused with *Tripuradesa*. It should be noted that Tripur and Tripura do not mean the same kingdom. If you go through the *Brahmandapuram*, in its forty-ninth chapter, a geographical account of ancient Bharat is given. You may find that Tripura was mentioned as 'Traipur' and it was situated near the Vindhya-chal in central India, but people consider it as Tripura.

The archaeological evidences found in the region prove that a large portion of this region, particularly south-western part of the present state of Tripura, was politically attached to the kingdoms of eastern Bengal known as Samatata, Vanga and Harikela. The Tippera copper plate grant of Samanta Lokanatha brings into light a list of feudatory chiefs who ruled east Bengal in the middle of the 7th century. This also points to the fact that the state of Tripura did not exist in the ancient period.

All the above historical facts prove that of the state of Tripura did not have any separate entity in the ancient period. Most of the western and southern parts of Tripura was attached to eastern Bengal under various dynasties and had no separate political status. Rajmala, a chronicle of the royal family of Tripura narrates that the ancestors of this family shifted their capital from Nowgong district to the district of Cachar on the bank of river Barak. Afterwards, they proceeded south-west and settled in Dharma Nagar and established their capital on the bank of Juri river. It was from Dharmanagar that they came to the centre of the present state of Tripura. According to Shri Kailas Chandra Singh, 'In Tripura, "Tui" means water and by adding "Pra" which means near, the word "Tuipra" was formed. It is from "Tuipra" the people were referred as "Tipra" and the land came to be known as Tripura.'

1.3.2 Pre-colonial Manikya Period

The actual process of state formation in Tripura began during the reign of the Manikya rulers, which is also known as the medieval period or the pre-colonial period in the

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history of Tripura. The Tripuri rajas are said to have assumed the title of 'Manikya' from the time of Ratna Pha, who, according to Professor Kalikaranjan Qanungo, was a contemporary of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban. Ratna Phawas was defeated by Sultan Mughisuddin Tughril in about AD 1280. Upon his submission, he was honoured with the title of 'Manikya' by the Muslim ruler.

According to Amalendu Guha (author of *The Ahom Political System- An Enquiry into the State Formation Process in Medieval Assam*), 'Statehood emerged only when a community was either capable of producing surplus sufficient for the maintenance of a non-producing public authority, or systematically appropriating tribute, the requisite surplus, from the subject or both. Smaller the surplus, less elaborate was its public authority structure. In North-east India, tribal state formation, early or medieval was possible by generation of the requisite surplus from either their own or other people's wet rice cultivation.'

The process of state formation started in the early 15th century, when Tripura chief, Chhengthung Pha, later named as Maha Manikya, succeeded in subjugating other tribes namely the Jamatias, Kukis, Reang and others. *Rangamati* (the present Udaipur in South Tripura) was annexed by Jujhar Pha, the seventy-fourth raja of Tripura. Rangamati was made the capital of the kingdom from Raja Lika onwards. Later, the name was changed to Udaipur by Udai Manikya, a king of the Manikya dynasty.

The followings factors initiated the process of state formation in Tripura:

- **Early contact with the Bengalis:** The Tripuris' early contact with the Bengalis proved to be one of the main factors for the state formation process in Tripura. It is believed that trade and commerce facilitated the contact between the Tripuris and the Bengalis. The king of Gour conferred the title of 'Manikya' on Ratna Pha and thereon, the successive kings of Tripura have been using it as a suffix to their names.
- **State formation under the leadership of Fa:** The Rajmala gives an account that the forefathers of the kings of Manikya dynasty established their kingdom in different places before the formation of the state of Tripura. However, whether the account of Rajmala is authentic or not needs verification. It is believed that the hill tribes of Tripura under the leadership of 'Fa' entered Tripura and initiated the process of state formation.
- **Unity among the tribes:** The tribes were a united and well organised group. Various tribal groups were given important social position, for instance, the Jamatias were recruited in the army, the Halams enjoyed important social position.
- **Communication between the Tripuri tribes and the people of the plains:** The communication between the Tripuri tribes and the people residing in the plains, proved to be a determining factor in the state formation. This tribal group was more acquainted with the people of the plains as compared to other tribes. Because of this close association, the tribes

benefitted from the political and socio-economic organization of the people of the plains.

- **Role of economy:** The economy played a very pivotal role in the state formation process. The Tripuri tribe along with other tribes of the state were engaged in Jhum cultivation, which proved to be a milestone in improving their economic condition. Economic advancement among the tribal communities, in general, and among the Tripuri, in particular, can be attributed to the extension of cultivation through settled agriculture and organised village communities for generating surplus needed for the state. As a matter of fact, the Tripuris excelled in the Jhum cultivation. They produced surplus products like paddy and jute. In addition to these agricultural products, they also obtained large quantity of forest products. They engaged in trade and commercial activities with the people of the plains. They earned substantial amount of profit by selling the surplus products, which contributed significantly in the state formation process. Tavernier, a foreign traveller, who had come to Bengal during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, had mentioned in his travelogue about two Tripuri merchants and about a Tripura king who had a silk industry.
- **Importance of individual ownership on land:** Some economists had given importance to individual ownership of land in the state formation process. The kings of Tripura acknowledged the ownership of land by the people residing in the plains. It is believed that Ratna Manikya invited many Bengalis to settle in Tripura and even allowed them the right to own property. Among the new settlers, many were related to Baro Bhuyias—the twelve zamindars of Bengal. The people of the plains practiced plough cultivation which increased the production from land. This also increased the revenue of the king. The king used to collect forest materials as tax from the hill people. All these contributed to the organization of an efficient system of administration and the army, which was essential for the state formation process in Tripura.
- **Brahminical influences and the role of Hindu religion:** Temples bearing architectural designs from neighbouring states, immigration of peasant communities to the territory played a vital role in making the Hindu religion influence the indigenous inhabitants. The Brahminical influence was also facilitated by land grants to the Brahmins, which led to the extension of cultivation and the establishment of rural settlements in territory of the ab-origines. The imposition of a feudal superstructure on a tribal society can be attributed to the breakdown of the tribal social structure and its fragmentation into a distinct social stratum. At the top was the elite, belonging to the royal lineage, occupying the seat of power. They were sanskritized to a great extent, married other Kshatriya royal families, build temples around their territorial jurisdiction. They also validated their sanskritized religious supremacy by taking part in national pilgrimages and organizing regional fairs and festivals. Later, these festivals

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and fairs were secularized and universalized and attained the status of 'national festival of Tripura', which promoted the feeling of sub-nationalism.

- **Assistance of powerful neighbouring states in providing security:** It was essential for a newly formed state to have the assistance of the powerful neighbouring states in matters related to security. From the very beginning, the kings of Tripura accepted the suzerainty of the powerful sultans of Bengal and provided them with elephants. In lieu of this, they were recognised as a tributary state and received assistance from the sultans. The *Rajmala* tells us that Ratna Pha occupied the throne of Tripura with the help of Sultan of Gaur.
- **Muslim administration and military system:** The kings of Tripura followed the administrative system of the Muslim dynasty and the military set up of the kingdom of Gaur. The process of state formation began in the early 15th century. Owing to a series of invasions and chaos within the kingdom, it was essential that the military structure of the state be re-organised and an efficient system be set up. This contributed significantly to the development of the state.

Surajit Sinha remarks, 'Although, the concentration and expansion of political power of the heads of kingdoms and states in the tribal regions critically depended on the power of the king to extract surplus and exploit the technological productive power of the subjects, it is also observed that the head of the polities were expected to partially re-distribute the wealth through the organization of feasts and sacred festivals, buildings of temples, construction of tanks.' Records have shown that the king of Tripura used to organize a grand feast for the tribal subjects on the day of Dashami of the Durga puja, known as 'Hasam Bhojam'. The kings of Tripura constructed many tanks (dighi) all over the state and erected a lot of temples. The Royal Family was involved in the celebration of the Kharchi Puja and Ker Puja.

Besides *Rajmala*, there are other sources which provide information on the process of state formation in Tripura. The illustrated book *Ain-i-Akbari*, written by Abul Fazl mention the reign of Vijay Manikya I (AD1532- 1563), 'Adjoining Bhati is an extensive tract of territory inhabited by the Tipperah tribes. The name of the ruler is Vijay Manik. Whoever obtains the chieftainship bears the title Manik after his name and the nobles that of Narayan. He has a force of two hundred thousand footmen and a thousand elephants. Horses are scarce.' Stewart, a European historian, has written in his book *The History of Bengal*, 'The province of Tippera, which from time immemorial had been an independent kingdom, was annexed to the Mughal empire.' This did not mean that the state lost its independent status. It was only the portion to the west and south of the district of British Tippera that was converted into the zamindari of Roshanabad. This fact becomes clear in Irfan Habib's book *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, in which he mentions Tripura as Tipara. According to a famous book *Bharistan – i- Ghayabi*, 'The king of Tripura resisted the Mughals with an army of one thousand cavalry, sixty thousand infantry and two hundred elephants.'

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. What is *Rajmala*?
5. Name the foreign traveller during the reign of Shah Jahan who mentioned two Tripuri merchants and a Tripura king with silk industry in his travelogue.

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1.4 HISTORY OF TRIPURA RAJ: ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND MODERN

In this section, we will learn about the ancient, medieval and modern history of Tripura.

1.4.1 Ancient Period

There is a paucity of sources regarding the administration of Tripura prior to the reign of Ratna Manikya. The *Rajmala* also does not throw any light on it. The history of administrative control of the Tripura government can be found in the early chronicles and are based mainly on myths and legends. In ancient period, there was no powerful monarchy, who effectively controlled the entire tract.

In ancient period, a large part of this region was under the control of various dynasties such as Vanga and Samatata. These dynasties, in all probability, had no effective control over the entire region. The hilly region, inhabited by several tribes, settled themselves under their respective chiefs. Each tribe had its own social and administrative set up. The chief of the Tripuri tribe, whose title was 'Pha', was able to exercise his influence over the chiefs of other tribes. The 'Pha' ruled over his people with the help of tribal administrative organization. Chantai or priest worked as a minister and gave advice to the chief in various internal and external affairs.

The other tribal officials were Ghalim, Cabra, Baruah. There was no land revenue system. The tribes had to give some forest products and tributes, had to perform civil and military duties, if required to their nominal head, the chief of the Tripura tribe.

Administrative system of the Tripuris

The Tripuris are the largest ruling tribe in Tripura. When the chiefs of this tribe extended their areas to the plain land and its adjoining districts, they were influenced by the Hindu society and culture of the neighbouring states. Each of the Tippera village was self-governed. While, the men in the village could participate in the affairs of the council, the women did not participate in the activities of the government.

The designation of the chief varied from village to village. He was, either called a 'Chaudhuri' or 'Sardar'. The following chart shows the designation and duties of the village panchayat of a Tripuri village:

Table 1.2 Designation and Duties of Village Panchayat of a Tripuri Village**NOTES**

Sl. No.	Designation	Duties
1.	Chaudhuri/ Sardar	Chief of the village, head of the administration, distributes Jhoom fields, supervises ceremonies, settles disputes and collects taxes
2.	Karbari	Secretary to the chief, assists the chief in all matters, supervises the work of the village administration
3.	Ojhai/Akcai	Priest of the village, supervises all religious ceremonies and marriages, treats diseases
4.	Bhandari	Storekeeper, looks after store in ceremonies, marriages and religious occasions
5.	Khandal	Peon and sepoy, informs the villagers about any meeting

The rulers of Tripura gave up their original title of 'Pha' and took the title of 'Manikya'. According to *Rajmala*, king Dangar Pha divided his kingdom into seventeen divisions and placed them under his sons. These places were as follows:

- Kachrang
- Acharang
- Rajnagar
- Agartala
- Dharmanagar
- Tarak
- Bishalgarh
- Khutimura
- Lakbari
- Madhugram
- Thannangchi
- Bank of river Mohuri
- Lawganga
- Barak
- Telarang
- Dhoopathar
- Manipur

Administrative System of the Reangs

As stated earlier, the Reangs are the second largest tribe after the Tripuris and presumably ruled over parts of the state. Their administrative set up was a three-tier

system at the village, clan and tribe level. The chief of the village was known as a *Chaudhuri*.

Table 1.3 The Village Council of the Reangs

Sl. No	Designation	Duties
1.	Chaudhuri/ Kami Fang	Village headman
2.	Kher Pang	Manager, storekeeper
3.	Akcai	Priest
4.	Khandal	Peon and bodyguard
5.	Daoa	Messenger

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- **The zonal council of the Reangs:** The village council is followed by the zonal council. There were three zonal councils. Three chiefs were selected from three zones. The chief of a zone would be addressed as *Huklai Chaudhuri*. *Hazra* and *Dehazra* would assist him. For the smooth functioning of the administration of the Reang community, the *Huklai Chaudhuri* acted as a link between the central and village administration.
- **The state level council of the Reangs:** There were twenty-seven administrative heads for the fourteen *dafas* and they had nineteen different designations. The heads together formed the central administrative machinery of the Reangs. While *Roy* was king for the whole tribe, *Kachkau* acted as a minister to him. The following table describes the apex body of the Reangs:

Table 1.4 Apex Body of the Reangs

Sl.No.	Designation	Duties
1.	Roy or Kami Kachkao	Chief or Raja
2.	Chapia Khan	Prime Minister
3.	Chapia	Minister
4.	Hukulai Chaudhuri	Zonal chief
5.	Chheng Krak	Chief of the army
6.	Akcai	Priest
7.	Vaidya	Physian
8.	Yak Sunga	Swordsman
9.	Bhandari	Treasurer/ Store keeper
10.	Khang Kalem	Tax collector
11.	Dalai/Dar Kalai/Dharia	Assistant priest
12.	Hazra	Assistant zonal chief
13.	De Hazra	Junior Assistant zonal chief
14.	Daoa	Messenger
15.	Duguria	Band party master

All the tribal village councils in Tripura have certain similarities amongst them. Their main source of information is traditions and beliefs. There is no reliable source available at our disposal which gives us information about their genesis. Each tribe had an electorate system of self- governing institutions. However, it is a matter of great concern that at present, only the remnants of such institutions are found in the village councils.

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1.4.2 Pre-colonial or Medieval Period

Originally, the rulers of Tripura had not assumed the title of 'Manikya' and were known by the title of 'Pha'. It is said that the Tripura rajas are said to have assumed the title of Manikya from the reign of Ratna Manikya. Henceforth, the traditional title of 'Pha' or 'Fa' was not used in future.

It was Ratna Manikya, who brought three Bengalis named Bara Khandab Ghosh, Pandit Raj and Joynarayan Sen from Lakshanabati to govern his nascent administration. He created the post of 'Seristas' and introduced both Bengali and Persian as the official languages. The administrative system had three distinct features of Hindu, Muslim and tribal. The *Rajmala* mentions, 'distant or newly conquered provinces were ruled by Laskars. Nasul and Chhambulnagar (Kailashahar) were administered by such rulers. Laskars were held in great esteem and wielded overall authority over their regions.' The State structure of the Manikya period were organized in the following manner:

Kingship and form of the government

The rulers of Tripura who took the title 'Manikya', were assisted by a group of nobles known as *Narayans* who were related to the king through blood and possessed an army. Their post was hereditary. The king had the full autonomous power over the administration of the state. As head of the state, the king of the Manikya dynasties paid due attention to the maintenance of law and order. The early Manikya rulers supported the Brahmins in the form of endowing them with land grants and money. Some of the rulers were patrons of art and literature. During the reign of Dharma Manikya I and Dhanya Manikya. The literary activities of the state of Tripura had reached its climax. Music was also popularized by the kings of this dynasty. It was probably Ratna Manikya who introduced administrative reforms based on the Muslim system of administration. It is generally believed that he created four officials posts at the centre in accordance to the Muslim administrative system. These posts were as follows:

- **Suba:** He was the main officer who acted as commander-in-chief of the army. Owing to his position as head of the army, his influence was extensive. Generally, the office of the suba was confined to the members of the royal family and the relatives of the kings. For instance, Daitya Narayana, father-in-law of Vijay Manikya I, Rajadhara Narayana, the second son of Amar Manikya, Govinda Deva, the eldest son of Kalyana Manikya, held the position of Suba. But, there were exceptions to this rule. Ray Kachag, who held the post of suba, was not related to the royal family.
- **Uzir or minister:** The Uzir or Minister had one of the important posts in the central administration of the kingdom. He was incharge of the revenue department. Before the reign of Krishna Manikya, the Bengalis were appointed as uzir. But, Krishna Manikya had appointed his own relative Jaydeva as his uzir. It is believed that Vijay Manikya introduced the post of uzir to curtail the power of the generals. It is said that the members belonging to the family of the well-known Khandava Ghosh held this prestigious post for a long period of time.

- **Nazir:** The Nazir had a significant role to play in the administration of the Manikya period. The job of the Nazir was to manage the police department. Thus, he was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the country. The relatives of the kings used to hold the office of Nazir.
- **Diwan:** The Diwan was in charge of the finance department. He looked after the accounts. This post was hereditary in nature. Previously, the Bengalis were appointed as diwan. Krishna Manikya appointed two diwans, one Bengali diwan to look after his zamindari in the plains and the other who was a relative of the king to look after affairs in the hills. As the administrative system became more complex the number of officials were increased. During the reign of Ratna Manikya II, several references of officials like Uzir, Nazir, Nemujir, Karkoon, Kotowal, Muchib, and Diwan can be found. The tribal organization and customs were not neglected completely. The administration of Tripura in the medieval period was an admixture of tribal, Hindu and Muslim system of administration.
- **Yubraj:** As a successor to the king, *Yubraj* or crown-prince was next to the king in power and stature. He was in-charge of the revenue, soldiers and elephants. He had to take the lead in the field when occasion demanded. The issue of succession worried the king and to avoid any crisis, the post of 'Yubraj' was created by the king. The idea behind the creation for the post was to ensure the succession of the prince during the reign of the king himself.
- **Barthkur:** Barthakur was next to Yubaraj in power and position. He had to collect elephants from the forest. This post was created by Ramdev Manikya (AD1673-1682) In order of succession, Barthakur was third in line. In case of any accident, or death of the Yubraj, the Barthakur was expected to take charge of the administration.
- **Thakur:** The other members of the royal family of Tripura were known as *Thakur*. It was Kalyan Manikya (AD1624- 1660), who conferred the title of 'Thakur' on those princes who could not become kings. The number of Thakurs were enormous and they held powerful posts in the administration. Their position was similar to that of nobles or urban class of aristocrats. The King and his family lived in the capital. The capital and its adjoining villages were under the direct control of the king. The plains of Tripura and adjoining areas around the capital were divided in several *parganas*. Each *pargana* was ruled by an officer known as *chowdhury*. Peripheral regions and newly conquered provinces were ruled by *laskar*, who exercised overall authority over their respective regions. We also find a reference to *thana* which was used as a military base in a newly conquered land. The in charge of a thana was known as the *thanadar*. However, the tribal chiefs, retained their hold over their respective tribes and ruled according to their own system.
- **Justice:** There were no codified law. Justice was dispensed according to a primitive system of equity and good conscience. There was no regular judicial procedure. The rulers were the judges. There was no permanent jail. The prisoners under trial were kept in a camp. The punishment for crimes was severe and criminals were beheaded publicly.

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Sources of Income

The revenue from the plains, tribute from the tribal chiefs which mainly came in the form of elephants and forest products were the main sources of income of the king. There was the currency system. The people, who were under the direct control of the King, had to pay taxes. There was no system of land revenue in the hills. As the plough cultivation was not in practice in the hills, the king had to levy a house tax on each family. Tavernier, in his account had mentioned that the king of Tripura had a gold mine and a silky factory. Workers had to work six days in a year in the mine or in the silky factory. Revenue of some paraganas were allotted for the expenses of the queens and members of the royal family.

The Army

In the medieval period the rulers of Tripura were often in confrontation with the sultans of Bengal. As such they maintained a large army. Abul Fazl in his book had mentioned that Vijay Manikya possessed two hundred thousand footmen and a thousand elephants. The *Rajmala* states, 'Vijay Manikya recruited ten thousand Afghan horse soldiers in his army and possessed five thousand speed boats.' Amar Manikya maintained Portuguese artillery as well. The generals of the army were selected from the rank of Narayans, who were related to the king by blood and belonged to the Tripuri tribe. The Commander-in-Chief of the army, was known as suba, took the title of 'Daitya Narayan' Nazir, had to maintain law and order in the country. He also had to participate in wars, if the need arises. The royal army consisted of the traditional four limbs (*chaturanga*) viz. infantry, cavalry, navy and elephants.

The army was equipped with various weapons. The chief weapon used during this period was *Khadga* (sword), bow and arrow were also in use. Pointed and poisoned bamboo poles, poisoned arrow and many other indigenous weapons were used in the warfare. It is also stated that the Tripura troops used cannons.

Michip

The actual meaning of the word 'Michip' is coordinator, interpreter and linkman. The practice of selecting people among the *Thakurs* to serve as coordinators between the king and the tribal communities is an old one. It was the duty of the Michip to look after the welfare of the tribe who were under his leadership, to provide food and lodging to them when their leaders used to visit the capital. He also listened to their grievances and brought them to the royal court to be addressed by the king.

Hasham Bhojan

The practice of organizing an annual royal feast at the capital was known as *Hasham Bhojan* or *Asha Bhojan*. All the tribal chiefs and headmen were invited and entertained, once a year, at the time of Durga Puja in the month of October. It was a grand occasion and dialogues were exchanged between the king and his subjects.

1.4.3 Modern Period

Some historians from the accounts of *Rajmala* contend that the state of Tripura is a very ancient one and that the ruling houses of Tripura are one of the oldest ruling dynasties in India. But no reference to Tripura can be found in ancient inscriptions and records. Even when Hieun Tsang visited India, he mentions Bengal and Kamalanka but not Tripura. The reasons could be many for the same. Historians who believe Tripura to be an ancient kingdom state that may be Hieun Tsang was not aware of the name Tripura or may be Tripura was under suzerainty and did not have much political importance.

In AD 507-508, Maharaja Varma Gupta ruled over the Samatata or Eastern Bengal and granted land in Tripura region. This therefore proves that a portion of Tripura was under suzerainty. In the Tippera plates of the 7th century, there is also a reference to the feudatory chief in the state. In the 10th century, Eastern Bengal was under the rule of the Chandra Dynasty and the original home of the rulers of this dynasty was in Rohitagiri identified with the Lalmai Hills of Tripura.

Thus, from this we know for fact that Tripura as a state was not formed in the ancient period. Tripura was in fact divided into several smaller regions and each region had its own feudal chief. It is possible that one of the feudal chiefs was the chief of the Tipra tribe and these feudal chiefs were under the suzerainty of the Smatata kingdom. After the fall of the Chandra Dynasty, the Tipra tribe established an independent kingdom of Tripura. But before we move on to the modern period, it is very important that we learn about the Manikya dynasty, which is as established one of the most important dynasties of Tripura. They were the rulers of the region up until the integration of the state with the Indian Union.

The first time ever the Tripura Raj came into a conflict with the Mughals was in AD 1270. In this year, A Hindu Chaudhary passing through the Tripura Raj on his way to the court of the Mughal Subedar at Gour complained of being robbed of his possessions and not being helped by the officers of the Tripura Raj. The Mughal Subedar was happy to help the Chaudhary by taking a large army to attack the Raj but was repulsed and defeated.

The 97th Raja of Tripura had eighteen sons of whom the youngest son Ratna was the most intelligent one and who was also exiled by his father. Ratna was an experienced person and had travelled far and wide. During his exile, Ratna took shelter in the court of King of Gour. During this period, Ratna's father died and the eldest brother ascended the throne. Pleased by the manners of Ratna, the King of Gour gave him four thousand soldiers to recover the throne of Tripura. With this help, Ratna was able to defeat his brother and ascend the throne of Tripura. Ratna even presented a valuable ruby called Manikya and one hundred elephants to the King of Gour. The title Manikya was bestowed upon Ratna by the King of Gour and thereby the dynasty of these rulers came to be known as Manikya Dynasty which proved to be the most powerful dynasty in the history of Tripura.

Ratna Manikya brought with him from Gour some Brahmins and Kayasthas and this is when Hinduism made its first appearance in the tribal community of

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Tripura. Ratan Manikya even introduced some administrative reforms in Tripura in line with the Muslim system of administration in Bengal. Ratna Manikya ascended the throne of Tripura in AD 1279 and died in AD 1323 after which his son Pratap Manikya ascended the throne.

Pratap Mankiya had no son and so was succeeded by his younger brother Mukut Manikya. The *Rajmala* identified Mukut Manikya as a powerful ruler who even formed an alliance with Arakan to check the Muslim progress. Maha Manikya succeeded Mukut Manikya and since he was not a powerful ruler, he submitted to the Sultan of Bengal.

Dharma Manikya who was the son of Maha Manikya was a very powerful ruler. His contemporary rulers of Bengal were very weak and so Dharma Manikya was able to regain some of the lost portions of Tripura. Dharma Manikya was a devout Hindu and may be regarded as one of the first powerful kings of Tripura in the medieval period. After the death of Dharma Manikya, the leaders of the army became all powerful and could do anything they liked. They placed the youngest son, Pratap Manikya on the throne of Tripura while the eldest son, Dhanya Manikya escaped from the palace. Pratap Manikya was becoming restive under the growing reign of his generals and so tried to rule in practice which had adverse effects and so he was killed by his generals.

After the murder of Pratap Manikya, the leaders of the army raised Dhanya Manikya to the throne of Tripura. Dhanya Manikya may be regarded as one of the greatest rulers of Tripura who even put down an iron hand on the army generals. He even subjugated several neighbouring territories up to the frontiers of Burma thereby expanding the territory under his control. He was even able to conquer a few parts of Bengal and even the Kuki tribe accepted his supremacy.

It was during the reign of Dhanya Manikya that Sultan Husain Shah made strenuous efforts to conquer Tripura. Husain Shah was not able to succeed and was defeated by the army of Dhanya Manikya. The Tripura Raj was at its zenith during the reign of Dhanya Manikya. It was Dhanya Manikya who attacked and captured an important Mughal garrison at Chittagong.

Dhanya Manikya was also a great patron of arts and literature. He helped in the spreading of Bengali language and even got several temples built. Dhanya Manikya died in 1520 and was succeeded by Deva Manikya who was defeated by the Mughals.

Vijay Manikya was the next great ruler of Tripura. He was able to defeat the rulers of Jayanthia and Shylet, both of which became tributary states of Tripura. He even tried to regain Chittagong. Though he failed in the first attempt, in the second one, he was able to defeat the Afghans and recapture Chittagong. Vijay Manikya was also a contemporary of Akbar and Abul Fazal in his *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions Tripura as an independent kingdom.

After the death of Vijay Manikya, Ananta Manikya came to the throne of Tripura. He declared war against the Mugh Raja Sikander Shah but was repulsed because the Mugh Rajas had the support of the Portuguese gunners. The Portuguese had become pirates and found service under the Mughls and even under the Rajas of

Tripura. After Anantya Manikya, Uday Manikya became the Raja of Tripura. After him Joy Manikya succeeded the throne, but both were weak rulers.

Amar Manikya, the son of Deva Manikya was able to restore the old dynasty of Ratna Manikya. Though old, he was an energetic ruler and even forced the zamindars of Bhulua and Tarap to pay him tributes. He even conquered Shylet in AD 1581. During the later years of his reign, Sikander Shah, the ruler of Arakan established an undisputed sway across Chittagong and to save from attacks of the Mughls, Amar Manikya shifted his capital from Udaipur to Amarpur. Amar Manikya was however unable to suppress the Mughls and committed suicide.

Rajdhar Manikya ascended the throne after the death of his father. He re-established the capital to Udaipur but himself stayed away from the battle-field and devoted himself to religious activities. Josodhar Manikya was the son of Rajdhar Manikya and ascended the throne in AD1600. In order to establish a suitable base for military operations against the king of Arakan, Ibrahim Khan, the Governor of Bengal under the orders of Jahangir launched an operation against Tripura in AD1618. Josodhar Manikya was defeated after a battle of two years and imprisoned. The Mughals held Tripura for almost two years after which an epidemic forced them to leave the territory.

Amidst the rulers of the Manikya Dynasty, came another powerful ruler not from this dynasty. This ruler was Samser Ghazni. After the death of Vijay Manikya, Samser Manikya occupied Udaipur which was the capital of Tripura at that time. Samser Ghazni eventually emerged as the ruler of Tripura for about seven years. Samser Ghazni was a powerful and ruler and an efficient administrator. He extorted money from the rich and miser zamindars. He even donated rent-free land to a large number of poor people. He was however not popular amongst the royalists and the wealthier sections of the society who formed an alliance with the Nawab of Bengal and the English in throwing off Samser Ghazni from the throne of Tripura.

After the fall of Samser Ghazni, Krishna Manikya became ascended the throne in AD 1760 and made Old Agartala his capital. Krishna Manikya soon after his accession got into quarrels with the Nawab of Bengal as well as the English. The Foujdar of Nawab invaded Tripura and at the same time the Nawab sought the help of the British. The British thereby got the opportunity to extend their powers to the North East especially towards Tripura.

On the 20 January 1761, Governor Vansitart wrote from Calcutta to the President and Council of the Factory at Islamabad (Chittagong) as follows: 'With regard to the Tipperah Rajah, as the Nawab's Foujdar has been obliged from his ill behaviour to take up arms against him we desire that you will use your endeavours to reduce him due state of obedience to the Government of Islamabad, acquainting us then what advantages may accrue to the Company from the possession of that Country, and we will answer any representations the Nawab (the Nizam) may make on the subject.'

Under these instructions, the chief at Islamabad dispatched Lieutenant Matthews with 200 sepoy and 2 guns to Tripura. The King of Tripura was prepared to meet these sepoy at the fort of Kailgar. However, because of the treachery of a

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Bakshi, the soldiers of the Tripura army fled without fighting and the king surrendered to the British. The English flag thus got hoisted at Tripura.

‘A Collector of revenue was despatched from Chittagong with instructions to enquire into the resources of the country and demand payment of the expenses of the expedition. The Collector found the province desolated by the Nawab’s troops and was compelled to take payment by installments “as the Rajah was very low in cash.” The revenue for the first year was fixed at one lakh and One Sicca rupees.’

Thus, Krishna Manikya was deprived of his land and was restricted to a very small territory. Sources state that Balram Manikya was considered to be the king of Tripura by the Nawab of Bengal but Krishna Manikya with the help of the English governor at the Chittagong factory was able to regain his throne.

After the death of Krishna Manikya, fresh quarrels broke out in the region and to avoid civil war, the queen Jahanavi Devi took the administration in her hands and ruled over Tripura for more than two years. While she was an able administrator, it was during her reign that the British started interfering in the internal administration of Tripura.

In 1785, the charge of administration of Tripura was handed over to Rajendra Manikya. Rajendra Manikya married the daughter of the king of Manipur and therefore was able to maintain friendly relations with Manipur.

After the death of Rajendra Manikya in 1804, fresh quarrels over succession broke out in Tripura. The succession of Ramganga Manikya was challenged by Durgamoni. However, in 1804, Ramganga Manikya was able to ascend the throne. Durgamoni took the help of the kukis and attacked Ramganga Manikya but was defeated. Durgamoni sought British judgment in the court and in 1808, the English Government recognised Durgamoni as the Raja of Tripura. In 1809, Durgamoni ascended the throne with the title Durga Manikya.

In 1813, when Durga Manikya died and had not appointed any successor, Ramganga Manikya ascended the throne. Though his succession was challenged by other claimants to the throne, the British government recognised Ramganga Manikya as the king of Tripura. Ramganga Manikya also provided all possible support to the English in the first Anglo-Burmese War.

In 1829, Krishna Kishore Manikya ascended the throne of Tripura. It was in his reign that the commissioner of Chittagong proposed to annex the state of Tripura as a British territory. The king however strongly protested. On 27 December 1838, Lord Auckland recognised Tripura as an independent state and the king established his capital at present Agartala then known as Natun Haveli.

Ishan Chandra Manikya succeeded his father in AD 1850 but faced financial problems. However, his Guru Bipin Bihari helped him through the financial trouble by confiscating several rent-free lands and bringing about efficient reforms in the administration. Ishan Chandra Manikya during the Mutiny of 1857 provided all possible help to the British against the sepoys. The sepoys of Chittagong were not allowed to enter Tripura while the king sent an army in aid of the British.

The following quotation states clearly and concisely the relationship existing between the British Government and the Tripura Raj and the Raja: 'The British Government has no Treaty with Tipperah. The Raja of Tipperah stands in a peculiar position, in as much as in addition to the Hill Territory known as "Independent Tipperah" he is the holder of a very considerable Zemindary in the district of Tipperah in the plains; he receives his Investiture from the British Government, and is required to pay the usual Nuzzerrana. The succession has been usually determined by the appointment of a "Joob-Raj" or Heir Apparent, whom the Rajah is considered incompetent to appoint, until he has himself been invested by the British Government. The present "Rajah" (Isanchandra Manikya 1849-1862) was recognised by the Government in 1849. Independent Tipperah is not held by gift from the British Government or its predecessors or under any title derived from it or them, never having been subjected by the Mogal.'

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After the death of Ishan Chandra Manikya, his brother Bir Chandra Manikya ascended the throne at Tripura in AD 1862. With him becoming the king, a new age ushered into the state of Tripura. Bir Chandra Manikya introduced many reforms and the western method in the state. This made Tripura a modern state. The king even codified criminal and civil law. Excise stamps and the system of registration were also introduced in the state. He even abolished sati from the state.

In 1863, the Jamaitas under their leader Parikshit rose in arms against the Government. The reason for the unrest was the oppression of the officials. The Royal force was unable to suppress the revolt and was defeated by the Jamaitas. After this, the government took the help of the Darlong Kukis against the Jamaitas. The Jamaita leader Parikshit was captured. However, once the king realised that the revolt was against oppression of officials, all the captured Jamaitas were released and converted to Vaishnavism.

The British took advantage of the Lushai revolt and took away 850 square miles tract from Longai river to Dhaleswari in an unjust manner. In 1871, on the suggestion of the British government, a separate political agent was appointed to advise and assist the king in administering the Tripura Hills. This post was abolished in 1878 and a conduct of political relations was entrusted to Magistrate of Plain Tripura and an officer of the status of Deputy Magistrate was appointed and stationed at Agartala.

Bir Chandra Manikya was a versatile genius and also a great administrator. He was a great patron of literature, music and arts. Radha Kishore Manikya succeeded his father and like his father, he was a visionary. He introduced the modern education system in Tripura. The health, agriculture and police department were also reformed in line with the European model. He even brought about reforms in land revenue and taxation which resulted in an increase in the state income. He even established a few colleges in Agartala. He was a broad-minded ruler and even started a free college at Agartala. However, this college because of the protest of the British government was soon shut down. He was also a great patron of literature, arts and religion.

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Birender Kishore Manikya ascended as the Raja of Tripura after the death of Radha Kishore Manikya. A benevolent ruler and an able administrator, he did a lot for the welfare of the people of his state. It was during his reign that industry was established in Tripura. When the king died in AD 1923, his son Bir Bikram was a minor and so the administration of the state was entrusted upon a council of ministers. The coronation ceremony of Bir Bikram took place in August 1927. When he became the king and took charge of the administration, he did his best for the all-round development of Tripura. He did his best to improve agricultural practices and even abolished Jhum cultivation. To develop means of communication, he spent a huge sum of money. He even wanted to establish a Rural University and colleges under the Vidyapattan Plan. After the communal riots of 1946 and 1947, he even let refugees from East Bengal settle in Tripura. He died in 1947 but before his death, he had decided to accord Tripura to the Indian Union.

The Tripura Merger Agreement was signed by Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi who was regent of her son Kirit Bikram who was a minor when his father died. The administration of Tripura as per the agreement was taken over by the Government of India on 15 October 1949.

One of the most important episodes during the reign of Bir Bikram was the Reang Unrest of 1942-43. The movement started as a protest against the existing feudal system of the society which was highly oppressive in nature. The Reangs were oppressed by the headmen and the Chaudharies and so they approached Ratanmuni who was a hermit and a Noatia by tribe. It was under him that this socio-religious movement took shape. The followers of Ratanmuni disobeyed the Chaudharies as well as the headmen and even prevented Brahmins from chanting mantras. These incidents were reported to the King and Ratanmuni was arrested and kept in Agartala. Ratanmuni however managed to escape. At the same time, food crisis hit the region and a famine spread across the state in many areas.

The disciples of Ratanmuni established a Dharam Gola in their villages and the number of followers of Ratanmuni kept on increasing. The king ordered the Chaudharies to collect Reang youths as soldiers but this could not be done because at the same time Ratanmuni and his disciples were preparing to revolt against the king. The king sent a strong army against the Reangs and the Reangs could not stand against the strong army. Their villagers were burnt and a lot of Reangs were arrested. They were however released on the ground that they revolted against the Chaudharies and not the king. Ratanmuni was arrested by the British government when he was crossing the Indian border into Burma.

Activities and revolts like these were the beginning of growth of political consciousness in Tripura. Chhatra Sangha established in 1927 in Tripura was centre of revolutionary activities. In 1926, the Chhatra Sangha was amalgamated into a new organization known as the Bhratri Sangha. This centre became the centre of all revolutionary activities in Agartala during the Nationalist Movement. On 26 January 1930, the members of the Bhratri Sangha called for a strike in schools and observed the Independence Day. Many students were expelled from schools and several members of the Sangha were arrested. The Tripura Government signed a pact with

the British Government that the British could arrest any suspected person from the territory of Tripura.

In 1938, the Bhratri Sangha made a resolution to follow on the lines of the Congress. In 1938-39, a new organization called the Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad was thus formed and the ideas and objectives of the Indian National Congress were adopted. This organization was subsequently affiliated to the Indian State People Conference. The Indian State People Conference gave expression to the resentments of the poor peasants against the feudal lords and put forward the demands for land reforms.

In 1940, Tripura State Congress was formed and the Tripura Gana Rajya Parishad was merged into it. The Tripura Rajya Praja Mandal was established which demanded a completely responsible Government of Tripura. The king of Tripura alarmed at the activities of the people adopted a policy of repression but the revolutionary movement in Tripura was still in line with the National Movement in India.

The State of Tripura was considered as a generous state and the last king ruled in this state was Maharaja Birbikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur. After his death in 1947, a Council under the leadership of his widowed wife Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi took over the charge of the administration on behalf of minor prince Kirit Bikram. The kingdom came to an end on 9 September 1947 and Tripura was combined with the Indian Union as a part 'C' State, administered by the Chief Commissioner. Tripura became a Union Territory on 1 November 1956.

The territorial council was formed on 15 August 1959, which was later dissolved and a Legislative Assembly with a council of ministers was formed in July, 1963. Tripura became an independent state in 1972. On 1 September 1970, Tripura was divided into three districts, namely, North Tripura, South Tripura and West Tripura. Later the fourth district called Dhalai was created which started functioning from 16 April 1995.

Historical facts signify that all though Tripura was occupied by force of arms in 1761, political agents were not appointed in the state till 1871. It was an independent administrative unit under the Maharaja even during the British rule in India though this independence was qualified, being subject to the recognition of the British, as the paramount power, of each successive ruler.

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6. Name the ruler from whose reign the Tripura rajas are said to have assumed the title of Manikya.
7. What is the meaning of the term 'Pha'?
8. Who was the Manikya king after whose accession, a new age ushered in the state of Tripura?

1.5 RISE, REFORM AND RECLINE OF THE RAJ: TRIPURA'S TIES WITH TAGORE

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In this section, we will discuss the rise, reform and recline of the Raj and the connection Rabindranath Tagore shares with the state of Tripura.

The period between AD 1400 and AD 1948 is called the period of monarchy in Tripura wherein the state was ruled by the kings of the Manikya Dynasty. The period between 1400 and AD 1563 is known as the Golden Period of the State and an era of expansion when thirty-five kings of the Manikya dynasty ruled the state. The period between 1563 and 1793 was called the era of decline and the period between 1793 and 1948 was the era of change in the state. In all these phases of history, the state of Tripura was always at war with the neighbouring kingdoms.

It was in the year 1563 that Tripura reached its zenith of glory and that too was due to the contemporary Mughal ruler Akbar. It was during this period, that the Manikya kings extended their empire to a vast territory. This vast extension of the territory also resulted in constant conflicts with Arakan, Cachar, Ramgamati, Kamrup and even Gaur across the Brahmaputra. As a result, the state was distinctly demarcated with the Bengali population occupying the plains and the tribal population occupying the hills. This demarcation still remains visible in the state of Tripura.

This demarcation was also a bone of contention within the state and was aggravated by the Manikya kings in the early 15th century when several Hindu and Bengali families were allowed to seek refuge and settle in the plains of the state. These people adopted Vaishnavism and built several temples. The settling of Brahmins in different parts of the state gave rise to several beliefs and practices which even today can be seen practiced by the tribal population of the state. The presence of a diverse population and their cultural practices was and still is a cause of conflict in the society in Tripura.

The period between 1563 and 1783 is known as the era of decline in the state. This is the period when the Mughals were able to get a foot-hold of the state of Tripura. The Mughals almost after a century of their rule were able to get hold of Chittagong and Commila. The presence of the Mughals led to the fall and shrinkage of the empire or the Tripura Raj. Tripura lost substantial amount of its plains to the Mughals being left with just 600 square miles of plains known as Chakla Rushnabad and 300 square miles of hills.

An excerpt about the condition of Tripura under the Mughals is as follows:

Tripura was under the occupation of the Mughals for about three years (1618-1620). The invaders captured elephants and royal treasures. The Mughal army marauded and looted the wealth of the subjects. The Mughal soldiers cheerfully and openly enjoyed the pleasure of rape and ravage and they used to foray for sumptuous dishes. They killed many people. They drained of large tanks in search of treasures. They prohibited the worship of Chaudda Devata and the Tripureshwari Kali. They encouraged the mullas, Pirs and Fakirs to convert many Hindus to Islam by forcing them to eat beef.

The state of Tripura remained neglected and under-developed to the extent that the only means of communication even in the early 19th century was just waterways. The kingdom was small and manageable but the constant wars with Mughals and a loss of territory meant a loss of revenue for the kingdom. Thus it was natural for the rulers to mitigate the loss by reclaiming the marsh land in the hilly regions of the state and also taxing the tribal population. The king therefore encouraged a lot of Muslim cultivators during the end of the 17th century and increased tax on the tribal population. The king even established Bengali as a language of the court. It was during this period only that the Moghs also migrated from Chittagong to Tripura. With the loss of territory and the empire becoming smaller, this migration of Moghs also added to the woes of the state. This also added to the pressure on the tribes who were already burdened by tax.

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In the 18th century, the situation with land became even more acute. This was the period when the king lost the South Western part of his kingdom to the Nawab of Bengal because of a family feud. The royal family of Tripura finally agreed to pay a sum of rupees five thousand as tax to the Nawab of Bengal by holding the Chakla Rushnabad or the plain area of the state as zamindari under the Nawab. This tax was to be paid every year and the state of Tripura and its territory was reduced to just the hilly tract with the plain tract now being held under Zamindari.

In 1755, the state of Tripura was invaded by the Burmese and another migration took place that of the Manipuri tribes. With the Manipuri tribes now coming in to settle in the state, the condition of land became even more alarming. The Manipuri tribes were however openly accepted and allowed to settle in Tripura because the king of Tripura had entered into a marital agreement with the king of Manipur. The coming of the Manipuri tribes left negligible land available for the native tribal population of the state of Tripura.

Meanwhile, another historic event took place. This was the contact with the East India Company in 1761. It was in this year that the Nawab of Bengal took the help of the East India Company to settle the payment arising out of zamindari. The East India Company in return for helping out in the settlement of the payment got the diwani of Bengal. The diwani rights enabled the East India Company to collect revenue from the plains which eventually became an issue between the king and the company. The issue between the king and the company was finally settled in 1793 when the zamindari of the plain area of the state was awarded to the king and the hilly tract was made an independent area. The contact with the East India Company brought to the state a new system of administration in Tripura which was alien to the tribal population of the state and therefore resulted in revolts and contention in the state.

The issue of revenue collection and the policy of the East India Company towards the king led to revolts by the tribes of Tripura. During the period from 1761 to 1765, the East India Company increased the collection of rent payable by the Zamindar from rupees 66,695 to 1,05,000 which was a very heavy burden on the king, who in turn passed it to the peasant who could not pay tax and lost his land rights. The condition of the tribal population was so bad that they along with the

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Moghs revolted against the king but were brutally thrashed by the king. The same phase was prominent in the second part of the 18th century when the king's property was decreasing and the tax demands from the East India Company were increasing. This led to the oppression of the tribal population which further deteriorated the position of the tribes in the state.

J. D. Mandal writes, 'About 550 years ago, this hilly Tripura was ruled by the Hindu Bengali kings of Bengal. After being driven by famine from Burma (Myanmar), some tribals under the leadership of Mouchang-Fa entered into this SRI BHUMI. A battle was fought against the intruders. Later, the Bengalee king allowed the homeless refugee tribal people to reside in the southern part of the land. There gradually developed a friendship between the Bengalees and the tribals. And later, the descendants of Mouchang-Fa established the Manikya Dynasty in Tripura. Though Tripura was called an independent kingdom, really it was not independent. During last part of Mughal Empire, the kings of Tripura (hill Tripura) had to pay elephant tax, i.e., supplying a good number of elephants per year to the emperor of Delhi. On the other hand, the plain part of Tripura, i.e., Chakle-Roshanabad had gone under the control of Nawab of Bengal during reign of king Dharma Manikya (1713-29). The king became a Zamindar paying Rs.50,000/- as revenue to the Nawab. During the British rule, everything of Tripura (plain & hill) was under the control of the British. Thus the state was a part of India government.'

In the first half of the 19th century, Tripura gained close proximity to the British Empire. The kings of Tripura assisted the British in the Burma Campaign of 1824 and also in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny of Chittagong. There were however also revolts by the tribes in 1826, 1836 and 1844 which did not allow the British to show complete faith in the king of Tripura. In the second half of the 19th century and under the condition of unrest and in the adverse notice of the British, the king of Tripura committed another mistake- that of appointing his Guru, Bipin Bihari Goswami who was a Hindu Brahmin, to oversee the state of the affairs of Tripura and Balaram Hazari as the diwan to collect the revenue. This was basically done by the king of Tripura to please the British government by somehow improving revenue collection and improving his credentials in front of the British. Coercive action was now taken to collect the revenue from the peasants which ultimately led to a Revolt in 1857.

Goswami also adopted a ruthless and repressive policy to collect more taxes from the Reangs. This was done even in spite of two droughts in the state and this led to a revolt by the Reangs in 1860. This revolt was also supported by the Kuki tribe. These revolts were however suppressed brutally by the authorities.

Between 1860 and 1863, the issue of succession to the throne by Bir Chandra Manikya came to the fore which led to another revolt by the Jamatia tribes. The Jamatias had an apprehension that they might have to pay double the tax and so they refused. They even revolted against the forced labour system which was adopted by the tax collectors during their tours to the tribal areas for tax collection. The king wanted to suppress this revolt and did so with the help of the Kuki tribes but let the Jamatia leader Parikshit free after converting him to Vaishnavism.

During this period only, the Kuki tribe attacked the British territory bordering Tripura several times. The British government started doubting the intentions of the king and therefore appointed a political agent to assist the king in the political affairs of the state and for improving the administration. British agents were appointed between 1871 and 1828 while from 1878 to 1890, U. K. Das, a Bengali was appointed as an ex-officio agent of the British.

The assessment of the annual administrative reports highlighted the problems with the socio-economic environment of Tripura. The state of Tripura had problems with financial management. The pressure of tax on the peasants and tribes and their corresponding suppression, the lack of communication facilities, medical facilities as well as education were also great problems for the state. The British also implemented their criminal and civil procedure code which was alien to the tribal population. This new scenario created further problems and contention between the under-privileged people of the hills and the wealthy privileged ones living in the plains.

The penultimate phase of the 19th century saw the implementation of the Tenancy Act in 1885-1886. Under this Act, the British government gave Bengal subjects tenancy rights at a very low cost to attract cultivation and thereby boost the land revenue. A settlement was made in which 30,000 hectares of plain land was to be brought under cultivation for collecting more revenue. Thus, the pressure on land further increased. The king simultaneously also granted tax free land to high caste Brahmins, Muslims and government officials which further increased the pressure on land. Thus, the total available land to the native tribal community kept on diminishing.

The Tripura administration also banned shifting agriculture in the forest area in 1887 to protect forests. The Jhoomia Rehabilitation Scheme also attracted more non-tribal population than the tribal population. This made land for the native tribes even scarcer. Thus, the economic land reforms that were introduced by the king to please the British government ended in a failure. In fact, these reforms resulted in the loss of land and aggravated the land problem for the tribal population.

The first half of the 20th century saw a greater influx of non-tribal population in the state because of the settlement policy of the king of the state. During the first half of the 20th century, the king attracted more and more Plain Landers into the state to reclaim more and more marsh land from the hilly areas to boost the revenue. Thus between 1911 and 1921, a lot of Muslim farmers from neighbouring land of Bangladesh were made to settle in Tripura. The forest rule of 1903, declared 3861 sq. miles as reserve forest in 1908-07, thus aggravating the land availability for the tribes in interior areas who were dependent on forest land for their livelihood, even further. Considering the plight of the tribes, orders were issued in 1913 allowing tribes to use forest products which in no way helped to alleviate their problems. Sensing this, 28,490 hectares of land in 1939 and 5,05,053 hectares in 1941 were reserved for the six tribes of Tripura, leaving nothing for the remaining twelve tribal communities which once again confirmed the infirmity in the policy of the king. At this point, the first batch of refugees came into Tripura after the widespread communal riots of 1941. The king made a proper plan for their rehabilitation by forming a

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fourty-one member committee to manage shelter for them adding to the woes of the native tribes of the state.

Because of the attention of the king on refugees and their rehabilitation, the tribes were even further neglected and this gave rise to major tribal revolts. There were three major tribal revolts within a span of six years between 1943 and 1949. These revolts were however ruthlessly crushed by the king. The first of these revolts was by the Reang tribe led by Ratanmani Reang. Ratanmani Reang refused to provide man power for the Second World War and also pay taxes. This revolt was crushed in 1943. The second revolt was by the Jamatia and Debarrama tribes in Golaghatti. These tribes could not pay taxes and were suffering from severe shortage of food due to a two-year drought. This revolt was also suppressed. The third revolt was in 1949 when the tribal population revolted against the oppression by the king's army when the tribes were demanding facilities like education. This revolt ended when three girls from the Debberma tribe were killed.

An intriguing feature of Tripura was that when the entire nation was reeling under the spirit of freedom struggle, Tripura remained untouched by the spirit of the same. This was mainly because the Maharaja or the king of Tripura was popular amongst the Bengalis whom he had helped to settle in Tripura. The king was dependent on the British and the Bengalis did not want to antagonise him or the British by taking part in the freedom struggle in any manner. In addition, the tribal population lived in seclusion and was cut off from the main stream and the other population of not only the state but also the country and therefore was not in many ways affected by the National Movement.

1947, the year in which India attained independence and the year in which the king Bir Brikram Manikya died brought about radical changes in Tripura. These events not only changed the polity but also the geography of the state of Tripura. Before the death of the king, he had already decided on the merger of Tripura to the Indian Union and had even appointed a minister to represent the state in the Constituent Assembly. However, the death of the king made the British in India appoint the Queen to head the Council of Regency on 8 August 1947. The Queen took active part in the process of merger by even representing to the Home Minister, the boundary question of the State by including the Chittagong Hill tracts, the Noakhali and Sylhet districts with Tripura which was ignored by Radcliff Boundary Commission. If the boundary question was settled as proposed by the queen, the State would have had enough plain land and railways to make it more economically viable thereby avoiding one more embedded defect. The office of Chief Minister created by the monarchy was subsequently abolished on 20 December 1947 by Government of India and a Dewan was appointed to assist the Queen till its accession to the State. The Dewan continued after the accession till Tripura was made a Part C State in 1951.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the then Minister of Home Affairs, gave the following message on the occasion of the Merger of Tripura on 15 October 1949:

The State of Tripura, with the isolated situation yet occupying a position of strategic importance of the Eastern borders of India, has an ancient history and

a rich culture. The partition of the country has, however, brought in each train for this small State a host of problems, which, in the present state of its development was impossible for it to solve on its own resources. The State has potentialities and the sources, which if tapped and properly exploited, would be an asset to the country. For all their reason, the Government of India and Her Highness, the Maharani Regent acting on behalf of Minor Ruler, came to the conclusion that in the interest of the welfare of the State and of the country as a whole, it was essential that the Centre should make itself directly responsible for its administration and its wellbeing. I am most grateful to Her Highness for having come to this agreement. Her was not any easy task in the peculiar circumstance in which she found herself. I am sure that providence will reward her for the courage and boldness with which she has taken this decision. To the people of Tripura, I can only say this: though far (and remote) from the capital city of the country, will always claim our attention and we shall do our best to ensure that its link and connection with the main land are strengthened and it comes nearer to us. They will not stand-alone to battle with the manifold problems that confront them. They will have the resources and the assistance of the Centre on which they can count. With their cooperation and help, we hope that we shall deal with their problems efficiently and effectively. May God bless our joint effort with success.

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The transition of Tripura from a democracy to a Parliamentary democracy took a torturous route between the years 1949 and 1972. When the Dewan system was opposed and a demand for popular elected government was made, the Government of India responded in 1951 by declaring Tripura Part C State with Electoral College and no legislative powers to the Chief Commissioner. When the demands were further increased, the Government of India responded by appointing a Council of Advisors to the Chief Commissioner in 1952. When the appointment of the advisors was opposed, a Tripura Territorial Council was formed with diarchic dispensation. When even this failed to satisfy the ones who wanted a self-government, Tripura was made a Union Territory in 1956 and Tripura Territorial Council was converted to Legislative Council under a Lt. Governor. When this system did not perform well and a demand for statehood was put forward, the same was granted on 21 January 1972. Thus, this process of transition took a long time of almost twenty-three years.

This period of transition also coincided with the influx of a large number of refugees. This influx of a large number of refugees led to land as well as settlement problems in the region. Economic backwardness and political aspirations of the tribal community were relegated to the background once again.

Thus, Tripura, the state once ruled by the Manikya Dynasty was reduced to a land for displaced people and communal riots especially after the partition. The once progressive, peaceful and tranquil land was reduced to a state that witnessed much turmoil and bewilderment. Tripura in fact became an easy quarry to settle for those people who were politically removed and socially persecuted due to communal turmoil and partition of the country. The state, thus, saw its zenith and because of impractical reforms was reduced to a small portion of land with the population coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds and living in conflicts.

1.5.1 Tripura's Ties with Tagore

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Rabindranath Tagore was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore who was a leader of the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj was a socio-political sect in the 19th century that sought to bring about reforms in the Indian society. He was educated at home and was even sent to England for formal schooling. Rabindranath Tagore however did not complete his schooling and returned to India. He even attempted to study law but after returning to India, he pursued his career as a writer, playwright, song-writer, poet, educator and philosopher. During the early fifty-one years of his career, he achieved a lot of success, especially in Calcutta (Bengal) where he was born and raised. Till this point of time, he was little known outside Calcutta and outside India.

This however changed when in 1912, he returned again to England with his son. Rabindranath Tagore was now a man of fifty-one and for the first time he made an attempt to translate his Bengali works into English. *Gitanjali* was the first work that he translated into English without any expectations. Rabindranath Tagore had penned down all his translations in a small notebook. One of his English-artist friends in England asked for the translated works and upon reading these, he compelled W. B. Yeats to read the translated notebook. *Gitanjali* was published in English in September 1912 by the Indian Society in London. Rabindranath Tagore and his works thereafter became a sensation in the English literary world.

The works of Tagore introduced a mystical and sentimental beauty of the Indian culture to the West. In 1913, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature and became the first non-westerner to do so. Rabindranath Tagore became famous overnight and began to tour the world promoting inter-cultural harmony and understanding. When Tagore was not travelling, he would stay in his hometown Calcutta where he remained active as a literary, spiritual and a socio-political force. In 1915, he was also conferred knighthood by King George V.

In 1919, following the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre in Amritsar, Rabindranath Tagore renounced knighthood. Rabindranath Tagore stayed away from politics. He was averse to nationalism and militarism. He was in fact a promoter of the spiritual world and the development of a new world which was based on multi-culturalism, tolerance and diversity.

As a writer Tagore usually worked in Bengali but after the success of *Gitanjali*, he translated many of his other works into English. He wrote over one thousand poems; eight volumes of short stories; almost two dozen plays and play-lets; eight novels; and many books and essays on philosophy, religion, education and social topics. Aside from words and drama, his other great love was music, Bengali style. He composed more than two thousand songs, both the music and lyrics. Two of them became the national anthems of India and Bangladesh. In 1929 he even began painting. Many of his paintings can be found in museums today, especially in India, where he is considered the greatest literary figure of India of all times.

The Nobel Laureate also had close connection with the princely state of Tripura and its four successive rulers of the Manikya Dynasty. The kings of the

Manikya Dynasty were patrons of art and literature and especially Bengali literature. Bengali language and culture was always promoted by the kings of the Manikya Dynasty right from the rule of Ratna Manikya. It was during a political crisis that Krishna Kishore Manikya first came in contact with Rabindranath Tagore's grandfather- Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore to obtain his assistance.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote his maiden letter to Bir Chandra Manikya seeking permission for ingredients of Tripura's history on which he later based three of his celebrated novels *Rajarshi*, and his dramas *Visarjan* and *Mukut*. In this maiden letter, he even mentioned of the familial ties to the king.

In the year 1881, when the king was in a state of shock because of the untimely death of his queen, he read Rabindranath Tagore's *Bhagna Hriday* which was a celebrated love poem of the literary genius. The king found resonance of his agony in the lyrics of what Tagore had written. On reading this poem, the king sent his political secretary to congratulate the poet on his behalf.

King Bir Chandra Manikya was quick to befriend Rabindranath Tagore who was very young at that time. Tagore was invited as a guest of honour in 1894 and 1896 to Kurseong. Rabindranath Tagore was shy to express his ideas and feelings but was treated as an equal in all literary discussions that were held in the court of the king. Bir Chandra Manikya also was pained at the criticism that Rabindranath Tagore's works received at that time. He even wanted to buy and install a full-fledged printing press for printing and publishing the works of Rabindranath Tagore for which he was also ready to spend a sum of one lakh rupees which at that time was a princely sum. However, this could not be done as Bir Chandra Manikya died in 1896.

Radha Kishore Manikya, the son of Bir Chandra Manikya also maintained great relations with Rabindranath Tagore. Radha Krishna Manikya ascended the throne in 1897 and died in 1909. During the reign of Radha Kishore Manikya, Tagore visited Tripura five times. On several occasions and when the king found himself in deep trouble or in problem with managing the state, he sought the help of Rabindranath Tagore. The king even sought the advice of Rabindranath Tagore in all matters of state right from the appointment of ministers, drafting the state budget, framing a code of conduct for the royal officers, and dealing with erring officers. Rabindranath Tagore also assisted the king in all possible ways and showed immense skills in these areas. The erstwhile Tripura royal family still preserves the rare historic documents written in Tagore's own handwriting where he has shown his remarkable ingenuity in matters of public finance, state policy, principle of education and other such matters. Radha Kishore Manikya virtually became dependent on Tagore in all the areas of day-to-day administration which irked the officials of the royal court. Tagore however did not leave the side of his friend at any time.

The association of Radha Kishore Manikya and Tagore had long lasting impact on Tripura's ties with Bengal. Radha Kishore Manikya contributed liberally to the literary, cultural as well as scientific endeavours of Bengal. Tagore once approached the king for financial grant for Jagdish Chandra Bose and his scientific research. The king at that time was in great financial crisis himself because an earthquake had

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struck the palace at Agartala and the marriage of his son was approaching. Radha Kishore Manikya however being generous did not fail to rise at the occasion and granted a sum of fifty thousand rupees only on the stipulation that his name not be made public. Radha Kishore Manikya even sanctioned a grant of one thousand rupees annually to Viswa Bharati which was Tagore's school. This grant continued for almost fifty years till the death of the last Manikya ruler.

Birendra Kishore, the son of Radha Kishore had the artistic acumen of his grandfather. He was a painter as well as a musician. He also extended liberal financial grants to Viswa Bharati. When Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize, the king organised a function in Tripura in honour of Tagore. It was during his reign that Tripura relationship with Tagore acquired a cultural role.

In 1926 and on his last visit to Agartala, Rabindranath Tagore was introduced to Bir Bikram Kishore. Following in the footsteps of his ancestors, Bir Bikram Kishore also extended support and respect to Rabindranath Tagore. During his last visit to Agartala in 1926, while addressing a public meeting Tagore had another occasion to pay his tributes to Tripura. In response to the genuine love showered on him by the Kishore Sahitya Samaj of Agartala, Tagore in his inimitable words said, 'Gone too are those days, I had the good fortune to receive great honour; it has been my privilege to receive honour even at the hand of kings in the West. But the tribute I received from a prince of my own country is to me, personally speaking, of much greater value. That is why my relation with this State of Tripura is not just that of a guest for a day. That relation is indeed wedded to the memories of the father and the grandfather of the present king.'

In 1939, Bir Bikram Kishore also visited the Shantiniketan and deputed Buddimanta Singh as a Manipuri dance teacher at Shantiniketan. After this, several Manipuri dance experts from Tripura went to Shantiniketan and evolved a dance form known as Rabindra Nritya. Bir Bikram Kishore also conferred upon Rabindranath Tagore the title 'Bharat Bhaskar' just three months before the poet's death. Tagore's 80th birth anniversary was celebrated at the royal Durbar of Tripura. An emissary was sent to Shantiniketan to formally confer on Tagore this last tribute of Tripura. The ailing poet was so moved by this generous royal gesture that he made no secret of his feelings, 'Such a free and disinterested bond of friendship between an immature poet whose fame was yet uncertain and one enjoying royal distinction is unprecedented in the history of any literature. The distinction that this royal family has conferred on me today illumines the final horizons of my life.'

Works of Rabindranath Tagore on Tripura

Rabindranath Tagore had great relations with the kings of the Manikya Dynasty of Tripura. Rabindranath Tagore made the state of Tripura immortal by writing about the Maharajas of the princely state of Tripura. These included *Mukut* which was a drama and *Rajarshi* which was a novel.

Rajarshi was based on the life of Govinda Manikya which was dramatized into Bisarjan or a sacrifice. The *Rajarishi* is a novel that tells about how Govind Manikya stopped cruelties like animal slaughter in his kingdom. The book tells about

how Govinda Manikya emerged as a philosopher and a king of the people of Tripura. The drama *Bisrajan* based on the book *Rajarshi* is considered to be the finest dramas written by Tagore. The drama *Mukut* is based on the events of the reign of Amar Manikya.

Tagore visited Agartala seven times between AD 1900 to 1926:

- First visit -27 March 1900
- Second visit - 5 November 1901
- Third visit - 1 July 1905
- Fourth visit - 10 November 1905
- Fifth visit -2 April 1906
- Sixth visit- 9 November 1919
- Seventh (last) visit -26 February 1926

In the year 1919, he was invited to visit the Umakanta Academy in Agartala. In 1926, on his last visit he was again accorded a grand welcome at the Umakanta University. He also composed five songs on the spring season during his stay at the Kunjaban Palace which is the official residence of the Governor of Tripura.

Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary in Tripura

Rabindra Jayanti is the day that marks the birth of Rabindranath Tagore. In Kolkata, this day is known as Poncheeshe Boisakh and is celebrated ceremoniously all across West Bengal. This day is celebrated with equal fervour at Shantiniketan.

Tripura, the princely state with which Rabindranath Tagore had close ties prepared for a year-long 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Rabindranath Tagore. On this occasion, Tripura also decided to set up a museum and research as a tribute to Rabindranath Tagore at ninety-three year old Pushpavant Palace where the bard last stayed when he visited Tripura in 1926.

The Chief Minister Manik Sarkar also announced a package to pay tributes to Rabindranath Tagore who had close relations with almost four successive rulers of the Manikya Dynasty in Tripura. Under the package, it was also announced to build a 1800 seat Tagore Memorial Centre in Agartala. The cost of the memorial was estimated at 275 crores with a full-size statue of Rabindranath Tagore to be installed at the front of the centre. It was also decided that the government degree college at Bishalgarh in Western Tripura would also be named after Tagore. 'Through year-long commemorative programmes, we would take Tagore's works to every place and every man, woman and youngsters,' said the chief minister.

Artists from India and Bangladesh also participated in the year-long celebrations. These artists performed cultural shows including dramas that were penned down by Rabindranath Tagore. Bangladesh's Monipuri Theatre group also staged Tagore's play *Debotar Grash*. The celebrations of Rabindranath Tagore's 150th birth anniversary began across the state with colourfully attired schoolchildren hitting the streets with songs and dances authored by India's first Nobel Laureate. Leading cultural outfits like Chhandaneer, Rabisudha, Rabi Tirtha and Kabyalok

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launched daylong special programmes to celebrate the event. Several competitions especially in painting were also held because Tagore in addition to a writer was also a great painter.

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Contribution of Tripura in Adoption of Manipuri Dance at Shantiniketan

Tripura has played a significant role in introducing Manipuri dance to the Shantiniketan. This basically happened because of the strong ties of Rabindranath Tagore with the Manikya kings of Tripura. The relationship between Rabindranath Tagore and the kings of the Manikya dynasty is a cherished chapter in the history of Tripura. Rabindranath Tagore visited Tripura seven times and it was during these visits that he was drawn to Manipuri dance form.

Rabindranath Tagore during his visits to Tripura realised the prospects and potentiality of the art of dancing and this is one of the reasons why he was always keen on adopting dance-training in Shantiniketan. Shantidev Ghosh writes that 'Gurudev did not merely want to train dancers. His aim was to impart all-round education, knowledge and other faculties of art to mould the society into a creative and peaceful entity. His idea was to adopt the art of dancing as a means towards such an end.'

It was in 1306 that Rabindranath Tagore first witnessed the Manipuri dance form. He witnessed the same on his other visits to Tripura and he even requested Brajendra Kishore Manikya to find an experienced dance teacher to be deputed at Shantiniketan. This is when Buddhimanta Singh was sent to Shantiniketan to impart training in Manipuri dance. Buddhimanta Singh stayed in Shantiniketan for some years and his contribution to the development of Manipuri dance form is great. Initially, only boys were trained in the dance form but later girls were also inducted in the same.

After the return of Buddhimanta Singh, Tagore again wanted a dance teacher from Manipur and this time the king of Tripura sent the dance teacher of the royal house. Nabakumar played a pioneering role in shaping the dance form Nateur Puja. In 1935, another famous Manipuri dancer Rajkumar Chandrajit Singh went to Shantiniketan and played an important role in giving shape to a unique style in dance drama *Chitrangada*.

In 1919, Rabindranath Tagore while visiting Sylhet witnessed the *Rakhhal Naach* where Neeleswar Babu played the main role of the Naach. Rabindranath Tagore was really impressed by the dance and in 1935, Neeleswar Babu got a chance to work at the Shantiniketan. At this time, the poet was contemplating staging the *Chitrangada* and Neeleswar Babu got a role to play in the same. In 1935-36 another dance teacher, Shri Vasanta Singha, went to Shantiniketan in the preparatory stage of *Chitrangada*. Shri Vasanta Singha was the dance teacher in the royal palace. During the reign of Maharaja Bir Bikram, Shri Vasanta Singha successfully performed as the director of dance recital in the function arranged in the capital palace.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9. Why is the period between 1563 and 1783 known as the era of decline in the state of Tripura?
10. Which novel by Tagore is based on the life of Govinda Manikya?

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1.6 TRIPURA'S MERGER WITH THE INDIAN UNION

Tripura was one of the princely states under British India. After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya on 17 May 1947, his minor son Kirit Bikram became the Maharaja of Tripura. A council of Regency was formed under the presidentship of Maharani Kanchanprabha Devi (widow of Bir Bikram Manikya) to run the administration of the state. Other members of the council were Maharaj Kumar Brajendra Kishore Deb Barman, Major B. B. Deb Barman and Mr S. V. Mukherjee holding the posts of vice president, a general member and chief minister as well as *Dewan* respectively. Three non-official ministers were selected who were to be associated with the chief minister and his official colleagues. They were Captain Maharaj Kumar Durjoy Kishore Dev Varman Bahadur, Kumar Nandalal Dev Varman Bahadur, and Moulvi Tamizuddin Ahmed Chowdhury Khan.

In spite of promises for a better constitutional reforms and almost equal position given to the non-official ministers, the council under regency of the Maharani could not satisfy her people, who were demanding a fully responsible government. Shri Pattavi Sitaramaya, Vice-President, All India States' People's Conference also wrote to Shri S. V. Mukherjee to establish a responsible government in Tripura as quickly as possible.

Within few months of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya's death, a conspiracy was plotted for annexing Tripura with Pakistan. It is believed that the plan of annexation was known to the Bengal Boundary Commission. The conspiracy was plotted specially after Chittagong hill tract, Chaklaroshnabad, Sylhet district had gone to Pakistan leaving Tripura isolated and cut off from the mainland. Moreover, success in forcible occupation of a portion of Kashmir and abetment from a corner of the state authority encouraged the pro-Pakistani group to conspire and hatch a plot for annexing Tripura to Pakistan.

In Tripura, the *Anjuman Islamia* with Abdul Barik Khan, alias Gadu Mia, and Sirajul Islam, alias Pyera Mia, respectively hatched the conspiracy. Besides, reports from East Pakistan began to come in that *Ansar Bahini* was getting ready to attack Tripura. In view of considerable reduction in the palace guards, the threat was one to be reckoned with. Also, there was no force of the Indian Government present in the state at that time.

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Although a socio-religious organization, *Anjuman Islamia* had a strong political inclination towards the Muslim League. Maharaj Kumar Durjay Kishore Debbarma, step brother of Maharaja Bir Bikram, was a close friend of Gadu Mia and had a business partnership with him. Subsequently, he became an interim Minister of the state. Gadu Mia and other pro-Pakistani elements were believed to have allured Durjay Kishore that if Tripura state could be included in Pakistan, the latter would be made the Maharaja of Tripura. Another top executive authority of the State who was believed to have indulged in the conspiracy was Satya Vrata Mukherjee the Chief Minister of the state and a member of the Council of Regency, appointed by the British Government. When the decision of the Maharaja regarding his joining the Indian Dominion was made public, *Anjuman Islamia* reacted sharply. It raised the question as to whether the Maharaja alone could decide of joining the Indian Dominion. Durjay Kishore also gave a tacit support to him. Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya died a sudden death. It was at that time that Durjay Kishore formed the organization Bir Bikram Tripura Sangha. Though its objectives were related to social reform and service, it nursed an anti-Bengalee feeling at heart. The *Sangha* had its militant wing styled in local dialect as *Seng-Krak* (at that time translated as beheading at one blow). It was *Seng-Krak* through which the cult first appeared in Tripura. It was the symbol of that cult which always tried to encourage violent clashes between the tribals and the Bengalis in Tripura. The *Seng-Krak* began to incite the tribal people through the propaganda that the Bengali refugees had grabbed Tripura State. The Muslims and the Tribals in Tripura had no means to survive other than supporting the move for merger of Tripura with Pakistan.

Big rallies of the Muslim National Guards or *Ansar Bahini* began to take place at various places in East Pakistan bordering Tripura. A big Muslim rally was also organized at the very heart of Agartala. The prevailing situation was very alarming for the Indian Government. According to the Intelligence Bureau of India, 'This information is confirmed by an independent source which says that the Muslim League National Guards in East Bengal are carrying on open propaganda that Tripura State belongs to Eastern Pakistan and that preparations are being made to invade Tripura. Several pamphlets inciting Muslims to conquer Tripura and annex it to East Bengal are in circulation in East Pakistan.'

In such a scenario, the *Tripura Rajya Praja Mandal* launched a strong resistance movement against the conspiracy. The central committee of the Communist Party of India called upon the people of Tripura to resist the conspiracy with all efforts and to retain the state. The Tripura State Congress also started hectic campaigning. The *Tripura Rajya Praja Mandal* formed in 1946 by the ex-members of the *Tripura Rajya Janamangal Samity*, the leaders of Tripura *Janasiksha Samity* and the students and workers of the cultural fronts of the communists, started movements on two fronts. On the one hand, the *Praja Mandal* offered a strong resistance against the pro-Pakistani conspirators, and on the other hand, it opposed the anti-Bengalee propaganda of the *Seng-Krak*. A big contingent of volunteers of the *Praja Mandal*, mostly the tribals marched on the roads of Agartala town on 12 July 1947, raising slogans which were expressive of determination of resisting the conspiracy for annexing Tripura state to Pakistan. On the same day, a big public

meeting was held at Umakanta Academy ground. It was addressed by *Yubraj* Remendra Kishore Deb Burman (Nani Karta) and others. The speakers demanded immediate removal of S. V. Mukherjee and pledges to thwart, at any cost, the conspiracy for annexing Tripura to Pakistan. The Regent Maharani and her son was then staying at Shillong for security reasons. She was made aware of the latest situation prevailing in Tripura. The Regent Maharani immediately reported the matter to Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister of India.

A detailed report on the situation of Tripura was communicated to the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Umeshlal Singha, Secretary, Tripura State Congress Committee rushed to S. M. Ghosh, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, for advice. S. M. Ghosh sent Umeshlal Singha and two other Congress workers of Tripura to Vallabhbhai Patel on 29 October 1947 where in a letter he explained the situation of Tripura. In the reply to the letter of S. M. Ghosh, Sardar Patel assured him that all possible action would be taken.

Sardar Patel informed Nehru of the steps being taken on the subject. He informed that a programme of improvement of communications had already been decided and steps had been taken to ensure that Tripura had independent communications of posts and telegraphs and wireless with the Central authorities. Moreover, he wrote that Assam Government was asked to post a force of the Assam Rifles in the State and that Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari would be appointed an Agent of the Central Government to deal with Tripura State. Being distressed to hear that tactics similar to those employed in the case of Kashmir were being resorted to by Pakistan for creating troubles in Tripura State, K. C. Neogy, Central Minister for Refugee and Rehabilitation, who was earlier associated with Tripura State as Legal and Constitutional Adviser, wrote on 6 November 1947 a letter to Sardar Patel. In his letter he suggested to send 'a responsible military officer to Agartala, the Capital of the State, to make enquiries on the spot as regards necessary precautionary measures.' Similarly, Dr Syama Prasad Mukherjee, Central Minister for Industry and Supply, also wrote to Sardar Patel on 7 November 1947 requesting him to take prompt action in the Tripura affairs. He wrote: 'Mr Guha, who is one of the Ministers in Tripura, has addressed a letter to Mr (V.P.) Menon explaining the whole position. The matter perhaps will be placed before you as soon as Mr Menon has considered this letter. The Muslim League is helping in the formation of a committee of action which will take steps on Kashmir lines to compel the State to join Pakistan. Fortunately, the majority of the people in Tripura are Hindus. If we can help the state on the lines indicated by Mr Guha in his letter to Mr Menon, we may be able to mobilize Hindu opinion within the state to resist aggression. I have no doubt the matter will receive your due attention, and in consultation with the Defense Ministry direct immediate action to be taken'. In his reply, Sardar Patel assured both K. C. Neogy and Dr Syama Prasad Mukherjee that some actions had already been taken and that communications had been put on a proper basis independent of Pakistan. Moreover, the Eastern Command was put on alert for military assistance in case of need.

As a result of the resistance movement and some actions being taken by the Government of India, the *Anjuman Islamia* and other pro-Pakistani elements sensing

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danger, ultimately retreated. Thus, a chapter of conspiracy for annexing Tripura to Pakistan came to an end.

From the official correspondence between Sardar Patel and Nehru mentioned earlier in this discussion it is clear that the Government of India responded immediately by sending men and material to put end to the inimical external inroads and influences. Now the council of Regency was dissolved according to the advice of the Indian Government and Maharani Kanchanprava Devi became the sole Regent on 12 January 1948. The Government of India decided to remove S. V. Mukherjee from his office and accordingly he was asked to resign. His resignation was accepted on 27 November 1947. Durjay Kishore Deb Burman was also asked to resign and his resignation was accepted on 17 January 1948. Moreover, he was asked to stay outside Tripura for certain period of time.

To streamline the administration of Tripura, the Government of India abolished the office of the Chief Minister of Tripura. In its place, the office of the *Dewan* was introduced and A. B. Chatterjee was appointed as the *Dewan* of Tripura. He joined in his office on 20 December 1947. After him assuming office, the Council of Regency was dissolved on 12 January 1948. Maharani Kanchan Prava Devi was allowed to continue to remain as the sole Regent of Kirit Bikram Kishore Deb Burman.

In spite of Maharani's professed sincerity and respect for the opinion of her people, her excuse for the dissolution of the ministry seems to be a lame one. It is perfectly clear from the circumstances that she was guided by the Government of India in all her actions at the time. Otherwise, with her sincere adherence to the Constitution of her late husband, she could have appointed a fresh council of ministers with the recommendations of the new chief minister. The dissolution of the Ministry and conferring of powers to the single hand of the *Dewan* was, after all a retrograde step in the process of democratization of the administration, followed so far in the attempt of modernization of the government by the rulers of the State.

During her regency, the Maharani made a proclamation on November 11, 1947, reiterating the decision of the Late Maharaja by saying that Tripura State had joined the Indian Union before 15 August, 1947. 'The accession of this State to the Indian Union was decided by the Late Ruler after due consideration and full consultation with all sections of the people'. She further assured that appropriate steps would be taken and all attacks would be resisted firmly for self defense and existence.

The Tripura merger agreement was signed on 9 September 1949 in New Delhi. Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi as Regent and on behalf of her minor son, signed the agreement. By this agreement the Maharaja of Tripura ceded to the Dominion Government 'full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to Government of the state' and agreed to transfer the administration of the state to the Dominion Government on the fifteenth day of October, 1949.

The agreement also provided that the Maharaja 'shall be entitled to all personal rights, privileges, immunities and dignities enjoyed by him as the ruler of Tripura, whether within or without the state, immediately before the 15 August 1947. No mention was made in the merger agreement about the *zamindari* of

Chaklaroshnabad which was therefore included into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The silence of Maharani K.P. Devi to get the *zamindari* of Chaklaroshnabad, included in her merger agreement casts a doubt on her political wisdom. Had the *zamindari* been included in the state of Tripura the refugee problem would not have been so acute and injurious to the already existing people of this country.

Thus, Tripura became one of the 657 princely states of India when Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi signed the Instrument of Accession on 13 August, 1947 on behalf of her minor son Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya. Princely Tripura was integrated with the union on 15 October, 1949 and a Chief Commissioner took over from the Regent Maharani and in 1950 Tripura was given the status of a part C state.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

11. After the death of which leader was the conspiracy plotted for annexing Tripura with Pakistan?
12. Name the organization which was the symbol of that cult which always tried to encourage violent clashes between the tribals and the Bengalis in Tripura.
13. When was Tripura integrated with the Indian Union?

1.7 SUMMARY

- Tripura is a small, land-locked, hilly state, surrounded by the Cachar district of Assam and the Mizo hills of Mizoram in the eastern side, Comilla and parts of Noakhali district of Bangladesh in the western side, district of Chittagong and some parts of Noakhali in the southern side and Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the northern side.
- The hills in the state run from north to south, parallel to one another till they disappear in the plains of Sylhet in Bangladesh. Tripura is predominantly a hilly state comprising about 60 per cent of its land, while the remaining 40 per cent is flat plain.
- There are nineteen tribes in Tripura. They are divided into two major groups: Aboriginal and Immigrants.
- Linguistically, the tribes of Tripura are divided into three groups: Bodo group, Kuki-Chin group and Arakan group.
- Bengali always found a place of honour in the royal court of Tripura. Till the integration of Tripura with the Independent India, Bengali had functioned as the official language of Tripura.
- It was in the able reign of Birchandra Manikya that for the first time elementary education was started for both boys and girls in AD 1872 and written laws were introduced and the domestic slavery was prohibited in AD 1878.

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- Christianity has taken deep roots in the religious aspect of Tripura. A small minority of the tribals of Tripura have embraced Christianity for various reasons during the present century. But, it is clear that Christianity in Tripura started with the advent of the Europeans. Its early history can be traced back to mid-20th century or even earlier.
- Christian Missionaries played a very significant role in spreading their religion. They began to visit the remotest part of this state and tried to propagate the new religion.
- The early history of Tripura is shrouded in myths and legends. According to the legends, the state of Tripura was founded by Druhyu, a son of emperor Yayati, who belonged to the Lunar dynasty.
- The state of Tripura did not have any separate entity in the ancient period. Most of the western and southern parts of Tripura was attached to eastern Bengal under various dynasties and had no separate political status.
- The actual process of state formation in Tripura began during the reign of the Manikya rulers, which is also known as the medieval period or the pre-colonial period in the history of Tripura.
- The Tripura Merger Agreement was signed by Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi who was regent of her son Kirit Bikram who was a minor when his father died. The administration of Tripura as per the agreement was taken over by the Government of India on 15 October 1949.
- The period between AD 1400 and 1563 is known as the Golden Period of the State and an era of expansion when thirty-five kings of the Manikya dynasty ruled the state. The period between 1563 and 1793 was called the era of decline and the period between 1793 and 1948 was the era of change in the state. In all these phases of history, the state of Tripura was always at war with the neighbouring kingdoms.
- The Nobel Laureate also had close connection with the princely state of Tripura and its four successive rulers of the Manikya Dynasty. The kings of the Manikya Dynasty were patrons of art and literature and especially Bengali literature. Bengali language and culture was always promoted by the kings of the Manikya Dynasty right from the rule of Ratna Manikya. It was during a political crisis that Krishna Kishore Manikya first came in contact with Rabindranath Tagore's grandfather—Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore to obtain his assistance.
- Tripura was one of the princely states under British India. After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya on 17 May 1947, his minor son Kirit Bikram became the Maharaja of Tripura. A council of Regency was formed under the presidentship of Maharani Kanchanprabha Devi (widow of Bir Bikram Manikya) to run the administration of the state.
- Within few months of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya's death, a conspiracy was plotted for annexing Tripura with Pakistan. It is believed that the plan of annexation was known to the Bengal Boundary Commission.

- In Tripura, the *Anjuman Islamia* with Abdul Barik Khan, alias Gadu Mia, and Sirajul Islam, alias Pyera Mia, respectively hatched the conspiracy. There was also another form of unrest supported by *Seng-Krak* which was the symbol of that cult which always tried to encourage violent clashes between the tribals and the Bengalis in Tripura.
- Tripura became one of the 657 princely states of India when Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi signed the Instrument of Accession on 13 August 1947 on behalf of her minor son Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya. Princely Tripura was integrated with the union on 15 October, 1949 and a Chief Commissioner took over from the Regent Maharani and in 1950 Tripura was given the status of a part C state.

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1.8 KEY TERMS

- **Pha:** It is the name given to the chief of the Tripuri tribe who was able to exercise his influence over the chiefs of other tribes.
- **Princely state:** It was a nominally sovereign monarchy under a local or regional ruler in a subsidiary alliance with a greater power.
- **Aboriginal:** It refers to the people inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists; indigenous.

1.9 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. The major categories in which the tribes of Tripura are divided are aboriginal and immigrant tribes.
2. The important rivers of Tripura are: Burima, Gomati, Khowai, Howrah, Longai, Dhalai, Muhuri, Feni, Juri, Manu.
3. Linguistically, the tribes of Tripura can be divided into three groups: Bodo groups, Kuki-Chin groups and Arakan groups.
4. *Rajmala* is a Bengali chronicle of the history of the rulers of Tripura.
5. Tavernier was the foreign traveller during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan who had mentioned in his travelogue about two Tripuri merchants and about a Tripura king who had a silk industry.
6. The Tripura rajas are said to have assumed the title of Manikya from the reign of Ratna Manikya.
7. ‘Pha’ is the name given to the chief of the Tripuri tribe who was able to exercise his influence over the chiefs of other tribes. The ‘Pha’ ruled over his people with the help of tribal administrative organization.
8. Bir Chandra Manikya is the king after whose accession a new age ushered into the state of Tripura in 1862.
9. The period between 1563 and 1783 is known as the era of decline in the state. This is the period when the Mughals were able to get a foot-hold of the state of Tripura.

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10. *Rajarshi* is the novel by Rabindranath Tagore which is based on the life of Govinda Manikya.
11. Within few months of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya's death, a conspiracy was plotted for annexing Tripura with Pakistan.
12. It was *Seng-Krak* which was the symbol of that cult which always tried to encourage violent clashes between the tribals and the Bengalis in Tripura.
13. Princely Tripura was integrated with the Indian Union on 15 October 1949.

1.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the tribes of Tripura.
2. How did Tripura Raj come in contact of the Mughals?
3. Briefly discuss religion in the state of Tripura.
4. Write a short note on Bir Chandra Manikya.
5. What was the Reang Unrest?
6. When did Tripura Raj start to decline?
7. Why did the tribes of Tripura revolt against the East India Company and the king?
8. What was the Tenancy Act?
9. Why was Tripura unaffected by the spirit of the national movement?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a detailed note on the Manikya Dynasty.
2. Describe the emergence of political parties in Tripura.
3. Why was the land problem in Tripura acute? Explain.
4. Write about the various tribal revolts in Tripura.
5. Discuss the relationship of the Tripura kings with Rabindranath Tagore.
6. Explain Tripura's merger with the Indian Union.

1.11 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 ADMINISTRATION IN TRIPURA

NOTES

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Political Institutions in Princely Tripura
- 2.3 General Administration
- 2.4 Revenue Administration
 - 2.4.1 Achievements of the Revenue Department in Tripura
 - 2.4.2 Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960
 - 2.4.3 Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Rules, 1980
- 2.5 Welfare Administration: Schemes
 - 2.5.1 District Health and Family Welfare Society
 - 2.5.2 Achievements of the Tribal Welfare Department in Education, Economic and Infrastructure Development in the State of Tripura
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Key Terms
- 2.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.9 Questions and Exercises
- 2.10 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Tripura is the second smallest state of India and was acceded to the Indian Union in 1949. Since then, the administration of the state was in the hands of the Government of India till the state achieved complete statehood in 1972. The state is administered like other states with a Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister. The state also has an Autonomous District Council that looks into the welfare of the tribal population of the state. The revenue and welfare administration of the state is looked after by different departments specifically set up for this purpose. In this unit, you will learn about the political institutions in princely Tripura, the general administration in the state and the revenue and welfare administration schemes.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the political institutions in princely Tripura
- Describe the general administration in Tripura
- Assess the revenue administration in Tripura
- Analyse the welfare schemes and administration in Tripura

2.2 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN PRINCELY TRIPURA

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The formation of various tribal groups in Tripura can be attributed to the demographic changes which gave birth to ethnocentric problems in the region. This was the result of the growing awareness among them about their rights and privileges from which they were deprived due to the huge influx of refugees. Therefore, tribals of Tripura were now confronted with a new challenge of safeguarding their tribal identity in the state where there was a lurking fear of being the minority community.

Some ethnocentric tribal organizations had been formed for protecting tribal interests in the face of rising of the non-tribal population in the region. After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya, his step-brother Durjay Kishore Dev Barman formed *Bir Bikram Tripur Sangha* for social reform, for resisting influx of refugees into Tripura and to safeguard tenancy right of tribals. The secretary of the *Bir Bikram Tripura Sangha* was Bidur Kartha and its office was at his residence at Agartala. The *Sangha* had its militant wing styled in the local dialect as *Sengkrak* or *Sing Krak* which symbolized the cult of clenched fist. It called for a showdown of the tribals against the Bengali refugees. Kunjeswar Debbarma (son of Jageswar Debbarma) was the leader of the wing which was known for its *Bangal Kheda Movement*. In 1949, the organization was declared outlawed for its violent activities when A. B. Chatterjee assumed the office of the chief commissioner of Tripura. Thus, the history of Tripura was marked by violent ethnic struggle even before coming into existence of TNV in 1980s.

After *Senghkrak* was banned, various associations came into existence to fight for tribal welfare. Mention may be made of 'Paharia Union' (1951) by Chandra Sadhu Rupini, 'Adivasi Samiti' (1952) by Suntijivan Chakma, Madhav Master for Chakmas and Adivasi Sangha (1953) (for Tripuris, Jamatias and Halams) under the presidentship of Lalit Mohan Debbarma and Adivasi Sangsad supported by the Jamatias.

In 1955 when the State Reorganization Commission recommended for the merger of Tripura with Assam, a tribal group of Tripura supported the recommendation with a motive to put an end to 'Bengali hegemony' in Tripura. Further, they were influenced by the idea of a separatist 'Tribal State'. Under the leadership of Sneha Kumar Chakma, they established a branch of the 'Tribal Union' at Agartala in 1955. They maintained a close rapport with other tribal leaders of north-east India. In 1956 the 'Tribal Union' was renamed, 'Eastern India Tribal Union'. This organization raised slogan for a tribal state comprising NEFA, Manipur, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Mizo Hills, Naga Hills, Tripura and other tribal areas of Assam.

Senghkrak appeared for the second time in 1967 and confined its activities mainly in Dasda Kanchanpur areas of North Tripura and drew the support mainly from a section of the Reangs and the Chakmas. It launched movement with the support of the Mizo National Front. In November 1967, wall posters appeared in Kanchanpur areas in the name of *Senghkrak* directing the Bengali refugees to vacate Tripura.

After Senghkrak, the next prominent tribal organization that came into existence was *Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad*, which was established in 1948 with the name *Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad* and renamed in 1951 as *Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad*. After the split in the CPI, in 1964, the CPI(M)-led organization was named, *Tripura Rajya Upajati Gana Mukti Parishad* commonly known as GMP.

The *Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad* was based on communist ideologies and aimed at protecting the tribal people from any kind of oppression. At the time of its formation, the condition of tribals in the hills was very grave. The tribals were already burdened with *titun* (forced labour without remuneration), *gharchuktikar* (family tax), *ghasuri* (tax on cutting grass) etc. Again there was a famine in 1948 when they were forced to pay revenues for the royal treasury. The situation worsened during the Golaghati killings (9 October 1948) when six tribal peasants and one Bengali-Muslim were killed in an unprovoked police firing. The killing added fuel to fire; in the hill areas tribal people rose with an inflamed mood. The *Dewani administration* in Tripura posted military forces in the hill areas who started repression on the tribals.

It was during this time that *Mukti Parishad* was formed in 1948. *Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad* came into being at the hands of some communist leaders such as Biren Dutta, Dasharath Debbarma (Deb), Aghor Debbarma and Hemanta Debbarma in order to save the tribals in the hill areas from repression and also to carry on social and economic reforms as well as political movements based on communist ideology. And interestingly, after the formation of the *Mukti Parishad*, the nature of the tribal movement underwent a radical change. Though the *Mukti Parishad* was carrying the legacy of the *Tripura Jana Shiksha Samiti*, its movement was spearheaded to resist violent repressions by violent means.

In short, the aims and objectives of the *Mukti Parishad* included:

- To organize the tribal people of Tripura and make them aware of the special rights and privileges guaranteed by the constitution of India and launch a sustained struggle for the realization of these rights
- To work for the all-round development of agriculture, industry, education and culture of the tribal people
- To protect the rights of the tribals and to fight for the growth and expansion of democracy and lasting peace in Tripura by establishing a good and brotherly relationship with other communities and progressive section of the non-tribal people
- To protect tribal interests on land
- Recognition of tribal language – *Kok-Borok* and granting of tribal autonomy
- Implementation of the land revenue and land reforms act 1960 and prohibiting any transfer of tribal land to the non-tribals
- Formation of an elected and powerful Tribal Welfare Board

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Mukti Parishad vehemently criticized the government for not taking any step for social, cultural and economic development of the tribal communities. It called upon the tribal people in general to launch a vigorous movement to change the sorry state of affairs. This appealed to the democratic section of the people of non-tribal community in particular to extend their support and solidarity towards the demands of the tribal people

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Who founded the Bir Bikram Tripur Sangha?
2. What is *ghasuri*?

2.3 GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

At the time of the merger of Tripura with the Indian Union, the main mode of farming was jhum cultivation or shifting agriculture. A small portion of land in the plains was under settled agriculture and the main crop was rice. Thus at the time of independence, the economy of the state of Tripura was mainly based on agriculture with no industrial base, little urbanization and almost negligible infrastructure.

Tripura is the second smallest state of India and is characterized by geographical isolation. Tripura is a state which suffers from problems like poor infrastructure, communication bottlenecks, inadequate exploitation of natural resources, low capital formation, absence of industry, poverty and unemployment. The state is rich in flora and fauna and oil and natural gas reserves but it lacks the resources that are essential for the optimum utilization these reserves.

Tripura has people of different ethnic origins mainly because of the fact that during and after partition, a large number of refugees settled in Tripura. The partition of India made Tripura more geographically and politically isolated from the rest of the country as the rail routes of the state were cut off. Tripura was even cut-off from India's railway network thereby aggravating the isolated position of the state.

Most of the population of the state lives in rural conditions. Over 60 per cent of the area of the state is classified as forest area which leaves less than 27 per cent area of the state available for cultivation. The population of the state is characterised by social diversity.

Tripura as has been stated was a princely state and its administration was taken over by the Government of India in 1949. In October 1949, Tripura Administration order was passed that provided for the appointment of a Chief Commissioner in the state and placed him at the Head of the State of Tripura. When the new Constitution of India was adopted in 1950, it made Tripura a state which was to be administered by the President of India by appointing a Chief Commissioner or a Lt. Governor. When the Chief Commissioner was put as the Head of State of Tripura, he introduced a completely bureaucratic set-up in the state.

The Parliament was empowered to allow a council of advisers or ministers to function in an advising capacity to help the Chief Commissioner. The President appointed three advisers in the state of Tripura in 1953. Territorial Council Act was passed in 1956 that provided for the formation of a Tripura Territorial Council comprising of thirty-two members of which thirty were to be elected by the people on the basis of adult suffrage and two were to be nominated by the Central Government. The Tripura Territorial Council began work with limited powers from 1957.

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In 1963, the Government of Union Territories Act was passed. This act provided for a Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers for certain union territories including that of Tripura. This Act provided for a thirty-member Legislative Assembly for Tripura wherein the Central Government could not nominate more than three members to the Legislative Assembly. According to this act, Tripura was to have a Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister was to be appointed by the President and the other council of ministers were to be appointed by President on the advice of the Chief Minister. The Council of Ministers was collectively responsible for and to the Legislative Assembly and enjoyed the office for as long as the President wished so. As per the Act, the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Tripura became operational in 1962.

The North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, was passed in the Parliament and assented by the President in 1972. In Tripura, this Act came into effect in January 1972 and as per the provisions of this Act, Tripura attained complete statehood and became a state of India. The Legislative Assembly of the State of Tripura now became a sixty seated assembly and the first elections in the state were held in March 1972.

The state government in Tripura is headed by the Governor appointed by the President of India and the administration of the state is run in the name of the Governor. The real executive of the administration is however the Chief Minister. The assembly is unicameral. The administration in Tripura is distinguished by the existence of separate legislative, governance and judiciary systems for tribal areas. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution applies to a large part of the state, which is under the jurisdiction of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). Of the total geographical area of 10,491 sq km, 7,133 sq km (68 per cent) is under the TTAADC. The purpose behind setting up an Autonomous District Council (ADC) is to provide for internal autonomy to the tribal people inhabiting these areas, and protect their social, cultural and economic interests, through granting them administrative and legal authority.

The executive head of the state in Tripura is the Chief Minister who is assisted by his Council of Ministers. The political executive is assisted by a permanent civil executive in the form of a Chief Secretary. The Chief Secretary along with the various heads of departments of the state ensures that the state is administered under coordination of all the departmental heads under the Chief Secretary. The Chief Secretary is in turn assisted by an Additional Chief Secretary.

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There are twenty-six departments in the state of Tripura which include the following:

- Agriculture
- Animal Resource Development
- Co-operation
- Education
- Election
- Finance
- Fisheries Department
- Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs
- Forest
- Health and Family Welfare
- General Administration
- Home
- Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism
- Industries and Commerce
- Labour
- Planning
- Law
- Public Works
- Revenue
- Power
- Rural Development
- Science, Technology and Environment
- Tribal Welfare Development
- Urban Development
- Welfare of Scheduled Castes, OBCs and Minorities

Each of these departments is headed by a Principal Secretary who is supported and assisted by several other officials in discharging the required duties.

For administrative purposes and administrative ease, the state has been divided into eight districts, twenty-three sub-divisions, fifty-eight blocks and Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. The following table shows the administrative set-up of the state:

The eight districts of Tripura include:

- **North Tripura District:** Headquarter, Dharmanagar
- **Unakoti District:** Headquarters 'Kailashahar' (New)

- **Dhalai District:** Headquarter, ‘Ambassa’
- **Khowai District:** Headquarter, ‘Khowai’ (New)
- **West Tripura District:** Headquarter, ‘Agartala’
- **Sepahijala District:** Headquarter, Bishramganj’ (New)
- **Gomati District:** Headquarter, ‘Udaipur’ (New)
- **South Tripura District:** Headquarter, ‘Belonia’

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Each of the districts in Tripura is headed by a District Magistrate (DM) and Collector who is responsible for the development and administration in the district. The DM is also the head of the CD blocks and Panchayati Raj administration of the district. Under the DM, there are sub-divisional officers in-charge of the sub-divisions of the state. Each block is headed by a Block Development Officer. Since the start of the process of decentralization of governance, the blocks have been brought under the general supervision of the Panchayat Samitis, which consist of local elected representatives headed by an elected Chairman. The BDO is the ex-officio executive officer of the Panchayat Samiti. Under one block, there are Panchayat Samitis and Block Advisory Committees, some of which are overlapped. In fifty-eight blocks, there are thirty-five Panchayat Samitis and forty Block Advisory Committees. The lowest unit of administration in the state is a revenue village known as Mouja.

The North Tripura District is divided into three sub-divisions—Dharmanagar, Kanchanpur and Panisagar. There are eight blocks in the district to carry out the developmental activities. These blocks include Panisagar, Kadamtala, Damcherra, Dasda, Jubarajnagar, Laljuri, Kalacherra and Jampui Hill. There is one Municipal Corporation at Dharmanagar and one Nagar Panchayat at Panisagar. Main tribes of the District are Tripuri, Kolo, Halam, Chakma. Tripura initially was a one district state but in 1970 it was bifurcated into three districts, North Tripura being one of them. North Tripura District was later bifurcated to create a new district in Tripura. North Tripura District has eleven assembly constituencies and is in the Lok Sabha constituency of Tripura East.

The South Tripura District has its headquarters at Belonia. This district was created with an objective of delivering better public services to a major chunk of population that resides in the rural areas. The new district has three Sub-Divisions, eight RD Blocks, three Nagar Pachayats, ninety GPs and seventy ADC Villages. The district is located in the southern-most tip of the state but it has the advantage of being connected to the state capital by the means of the National Highway 44. The three sub-divisions of the district include Belonia, Santirbazar and Sabroom. The eight blocks of the district are Rajnagar, Bokafa, Hrishyamukh, Jolaibari Satchand and Rupaichari. The district administration along with all the departmental heads works to ensure that the objective with which the district was created is met.

The Dhalai district was created in 1995 by bifurcating North Tripura and including a part of Amarpur sub-division of the South Tripura district. The objective of creating the district was to provide good governance to a large tribal population and for the development of the inaccessible areas in the state. The district is named after the Dhalai river which originates in this district. The Dhalai district is located

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between two hill ranges—Atharamura Range and Sakhan Range. Most of the district is a hilly tract and 70 per cent of the area is covered with forests. The district headquarters are at Ambassa which is connected to the state capital Agartala by the National Highway 44. The Dhalai district is surrounded by Bangladesh in the North as well as the South.

For administrative purposes, the Dhalai district is divided into four sub-divisions, eight blocks and twenty-four tehsils.

Table 2.1 Major Subdivisions in Dhalai District of Tripura

Sl. No	Name of the Subdivision	Headquarters	Number of Blocks	Name of Tehsils
1	AMBASSA	Ambassa	Two, Ambassa, Ganganagar	Ambassa, Dalubari, Nalichara, Shikaribari & Ganganagar
2	KAMALPUR	Kamalpur	Two, Salema & Durgachowmuhani	Kamalpur, Barasurma, Mahabir, Manikbhandar, Mayachari, Baralutma, Halhali, Salema & Kachuchara
3	GANDACHERRA	Gandacherra	Two, Dumburnagar, Raishyabari	Gandachara, Jagbandhupara, Raishyabari & Hathimatha
4	LONGTHARAI VALLEY	Chailengta	Two, Manu & Chawmanu	Manu, Chailengta, Karamchara, Chawmanu, Manikpur & Gobindbari

The Dhalai district shares its Lok Sabha constituency of Tripura East. The Dhalai district is the most backward district of Tripura socio-economically. In fact, it was named one of the 250 most backward districts of the country. It is also the only district of Tripura which receives grants from the Union Government under the Backward Regions Grant Fund. Almost 74 per cent of the population of the district is still dependent upon agriculture in this district. A lot of developmental work thus needs to be done in the district to raise the standard of living of the population, most of which is classified as living below the poverty line.

This district has a zone of Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council which is headed by a Zonal Development Officer. The Sub-divisions are headed by a Sub-Divisional Magistrate and Collector, who is in charge of revenue, elections, land records, birth and death registration, tribal welfare and law and order. At the R.D. Block, a Block Development Officer is the administrative head who implements all the government development schemes in the villages. At the village level, the Rural Panchayat Secretary assists Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat in administration.

The district has two municipal councils at Ambassa and Kamalpur and 137 Gram Panchayats which are headed by a chairperson. At the rural development block level, the Block Advisory Committee and the Panchayat Samiti is headed by a chairperson. The Zila Parishad is the apex institution of administration at the district level here.

The Gomati district has its headquarters at Udaipur and has a population of almost 4.42 lakhs. The district is bounded by the Dhalai district, South Tripura District, Khowai District and Sipahijala District. There are three sub-divisions and eight blocks in the district. About half the population of the district inhabit the TTAADC

areas of the district. The main tribes of the district include Jamatia, Tripuri, Reang, Halam and Chakma. About 37.5 per cent of the population of the district comes under the category of Scheduled Tribes while almost 17 per cent of the population is classified as Scheduled Caste. A large population of the district are agricultural labourers and depend on agriculture for livelihood. Majority of the population of the district lives below the poverty line and because of the lack of economic resources and an economic base, the dependency on the government is very high. The non-working population of the district accounts for almost 68 per cent of the total population which in turn implies the economic weakness of the district. The agricultural activities are carried out in small holdings and farming is merely subsistence level farming. This is one of the main reasons why the administration of the district is undertaking several projects for the district to attain self-sufficiency in food.

The Khowai district is a newly formed district of Tripura. The city lies on the banks of the Khowai river and therefore gets its name. The Khowai district is bordered by Bangladesh on the southern side. The population of the district is very less—as per the 2015 Census, the population was only 21,387. The literacy rate is high. The district is divided into two sub-divisions—Khowai and Teliamura.

The Sepahijala district is also a newly formed district of the state of Tripura from the former West Tripura district. Within this district, there are three sub-divisions, seven blocks, two Nagar Panchayats, nine Assembly Seats and three ADC seats all of which fall in the Tripura West Constituency.

Table 2.2 Major Sub-Divisions of Sepahijala District of Tripura

Sub-Division	Blocks	ADC Vill.	GP	Total hamlets	DCM Offices	Tehsils	Moujas
Bishalgarh	BLG	00	27	396	02	12	30
	CHLM	10	09				
Sonamura	NALC	04	21	331	03	17	63
	MBG	05	06				
	BOXN	03	18	172			
	KTL	05	16	164			
Jampajjala	JMP	25	00	420	01	08	26

Unakoti district is another newly created district of Tripura. This district was created by bifurcating the new North Tripura district. Kailashahar is the District headquarters of Unakoti District. The district has a total geographical area of 686.97 sq km. It is bounded by Bangladesh on the Western side, North Tripura District on the Eastern side and Dhalai District on the South-western side. The Unakoti district consists of two sub-divisions namely Kailashahar and Kumarghat. The district for development activities is divided into three blocks named Kumarghat, Pecharthal and Gournagar.

West Tripura is an administrative district of Tripura with headquarters at the state capital Agartala. The West Tripura District is bounded by Bangladesh in the north and west by Khowai district in the east and by Sepahijala district in the south. The district profile of West Tripura as per the 2012 statistics is as follows:

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Table 2.3 District Profile of Western Tripura

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Nos	Info	Details
1	Inauguration date	1 September 1970
2	Present DM	Kiran Gitte (IAS)
3	First DM	R Ghosh (IAS) from 5 November 1951 to 26 September 1954.
4	Present SP	RGK Rao (IPS)
5	Area in Sq. km	983.63
6	Population Density	1005
7	Population(2011)	988,192
8	Rural Population	577,453 (58%)
9	Urban Population	410,739 (42%)
10	Literacy	91.31% (& 94% & 88% respectively)
11	BPL Population	Rural 62%, Urban 30%
12	Cultivated Land	40% of district area
13	Irrigable Land	14623 Hectares
14	Power Connectivity	140/147 Villages
15	Self Help Groups	5468
16	Assembly Constituencies	14 (SDR: 8 MNP:3 JRN: 3)
17	TTAADC Constituencies	5 (Sadar: 1 MNP:2 JRN: 2)
18	Voters	583,434
19	No. of Colleges	21

The district of West Tripura has six sub-divisions—Sadar, Belonia, Bishakgarh, Sonamura, Khowai and Teliamura. There are sixteen blocks in the district—Mohanpur, Hezamara, Jirania, Mandwi, Bishalgarh, Dukli, Jampuijala, Melaghar, Boxanagar, Kathalia, Khowai, Padmabhil, Tulashikar, Kalyanpur, Teliamura and Mungjakami.

In the state of Tripura and consequently in its districts, there are two distinct mechanisms for governance and execution of developmental activities and administration. These mechanisms apply separately to ADC and non-ADC areas. The non-ADC areas are like other states and follow the PRI or the Panchayati Raj Institution of planning and governance. The Panchayati Raj system in Tripura was initially guided by the United Province Panchayati Raj Act of 1947. Under this Act, Gaon Sabhas were constituted in Tripura and all its districts. In 1984, however, the Panchayati Raj Act was brought into force in the state which replaced the United Province Panchayati Raj Act.

After the 73rd Amendment in the Constitution, the Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 was brought into force in Tripura. This Act provided a three-tier Panchayati Raj structure in the non-ADC areas. The Gram Panchayat was constituted at the village, the Panchayat Samiti at the block level and the Zila Parishad at the district level was constituted by the Act for administration purposes.

The Sarpanch is the head of the Gram Panchayat and is directly elected from the members of the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha is a body that consists of all

people registered in the electoral rolls. Gram Sabha is present in all villages of the state. Tripura Panchayat Act also provided for Gram Sansad to be constituted at the Panchayat constituency level (ward) for more effective involvement of citizens in development aspects. The PRIs are responsible for formulating plans for economic and social development of the people of the state. Social justice is also a responsibility of the PRIs as is the financial planning for the state.

Each Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad consists of seven Standing Committees:

- (i) Finance, Audit and Planning Committee (to be known as Finance Committee)
- (ii) Education, Environment, Cultural, Health and Sports Affairs Committee (to be known as Education and Health Committee)
- (iii) Communication, Rural Electrification and non-conventional Energy Committee (to be known as Works Committee)
- (iv) Industries, including Cottage Industry and Sericultural Committee (to be known as Industries Committee)
- (v) Social Justice Committee
- (vi) Agricultural, Food, Irrigation, Cooperation, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Committee (to be known as Agriculture Committee)
- (vii) Poverty Alleviation Programme, Social and Farm Forestry, Rural Housing and Drinking Water Committee (to be known as Poverty Alleviation Committee)

Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council or the TTAADC is a district council set up for areas in Tripura that have a predominant tribal population. The aim of setting up the Autonomous District Council was to hand over certain administrative and legal matters that dealt with the economic and social development of the tribal population of the state. The main objective of forming the District Council under Schedule VI is to remove within a short time the material disparities between the advanced and backward sections of the societies, to strengthen the bonds of unity between the tribal and non-tribal masses, to emancipate not only tribal people but all the deprived people from all types of injustice and exploitation. Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council is a symbol of integrity, harmony and unity of the tribal and non-tribal people of the state. Now it is marching through the concerted efforts of the masses.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. When did Tripura attain full statehood?
4. What is the distinguishing element of administration in Tripura?
5. State the objective of setting up an Autonomous District Council in Tripura.

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2.4 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

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The revenue department has been one of the most important departments in Tripura and its administration right from the days of the rule of the kings of the Manikya Dynasty. During the rule of the kings of the Manikya Dynasty, no land records were maintained or whatever were maintained were not adequate to meet the needs of the administration. The Revenue Administration Department was set up to look after the land management in the state. The department was headed by a secretary.

The revenue department plays an important role in the development of the state and the welfare of its people. This is mainly done by the department through land reforms. Revenue Department in Tripura is the Nodal Department that deals with the following matters:

- Issues relating to land revenue, land records as well as land reforms
- Issues related to the allotment of the land across the state
- Issues related to the protection of the rights and interests of the tribal population in their land
- Issues related to district administration
- Matters dealing with registration, relief and rehabilitation
- Matters of disaster management
- Issues related to the re-organization and creation of new administrative units
- Matters related to land-acquisition

In the mid-sixties, the revenue department started its first settlement operation under the administration of the Director of Land Records and Settlement for useful land management with the aim to survey land and prepare maps, settle land revenue and collect various statistics related to land revenue and also the abolition of the intermediary rights.

As a result of this first operation, the Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act was passed in September 1960 and was put in force in April 1961. Under the settlement operation, the entire land of the state was assessed according to the class of land as stated in the settlement operation and rules for land assessment and land revenue were framed. During this survey period, the status of the land and also the possession right of each plot of land was determined and the records were prepared taking into consideration the title and the physical possession.

The Directorate of Land Records and Settlements started functioning as an independent unit from April 1971. The main functions of the Directorate were listed as follows:

- Maintenance of Land Records
- Carrying out survey and settlement operation and updating the Record of Rights
- Implementation of Land Reform Schemes

The Land Reforms Cell was created in 1974-75 in the Revenue Department for implementing the land reform programme. Registration Organization of the department started functioning in 1950 for the purpose of registration of deeds and other documents related to land. Registration Organization has been set up in all districts and its sub-divisions. In 2003, the Disaster Management Cell was set up under the revenue department. The aim of this cell was to coordinate activities for disaster risk management, mitigation of disaster, rescue and relief operations during and after disaster.

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The Revenue Department carries out its various activities through specific agencies. These agencies include the following:

- The matters related to land records and their maintenance are looked upon and handled by the District Magistrate and Collectors and the Director of Land Records and Settlement through the field offices.
- District Magistrate and Collectors also look after the matters related to land revenue with the help of their field functionaries.
- Land reform matters are looked after by the District Magistrate and Collectors, Directorate of Land Records and Settlement and also the Land Reforms Cell.
- District Magistrate and Collectors and their field functionaries also look into disaster management matters and these are coordinated by the Disaster Management Cell of the revenue department. A Relief, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management Directorate is also being set up as the nodal organization to coordinate all disaster management activities.
- The Relief, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management Directorate also looks into the matters of relief and rehabilitation of refugees coming from the neighbouring countries or states. The District Magistrate and Collectors also look into the matters of relief and rehabilitation of citizens affected by extremist violence.
- Land Acquisition Collectors look into the matters concerning acquisition of land for various projects of the government.
- District Registrars through their sub-divisional officers look into matters related to registration of land and other registration matters.

The following are the objectives of the revenue department of the state:

- The revenue department is responsible for governing a progressing land revenue system.
- The department also has to maintain correct and proper land records in all kinds of land holdings.
- One of the objectives of the department is also to implement land reforms to safeguard the interest of weaker and the downtrodden section of the society.
- The department is also responsible for rendering relief to the people affected by natural and other calamities like floods, draught, earthquake, fire.

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The department also makes arrangements for relief and rescue of the people affected by the above calamities and also to arrange for mitigation of the affected people.

- The revenue department is also responsible for the creation and re-organization of new administrative units so that good and efficient governance can reach rural and tribal population in the most effective manner.
- The department is also responsible for acquiring and setting up new projects for the development of the people.
- The revenue department is also responsible for ensuring the genuineness of registration of deeds and documents especially the ones that come under the purview of the Indian Registration Act.

The revenue department in Tripura has various organizations working under it for revenue administration. These departments have their own roles and responsibilities and make revenue administration effective and efficient.

The various departments that play major roles in revenue administration in Tripura include the following:

- (i) District Administration:** The objective of the district administration is to enable good governance. The district administration also aims to provide developmental activities and facilities at the door-step of every citizen. The following activities are carried out by this organization to achieve the stated objectives and goals:
 - Implementing the various provisions of the Tripura Land Reforms Acts and other Acts that are associated with revenue administration
 - Carrying out various relief, rescue, rehabilitation and mitigation activities in the wake of disasters and calamities in the state
 - Arranging and acquiring immovable property for State or Central Government at fair and reasonable prices for the public purposes or for developing public amenities and facilities
 - Implementing various schemes that strengthen and improve revenue administration in the state
 - Providing various facilities to the citizens like e-governance so that the citizens can get easy access to documents, certificates and projects meant for their welfare
 - Arranging for administrative camps in backward regions so that the entire population can benefit from the administration
 - Implementing growth centered projects in various parts of the state
- (ii) Directorate of Land Records and Settlements:** The following are the objectives of this organization:
 - To maintain land records and maps
 - To computerise the land records

- To strengthen and improve revenue administration
- To carry out departmental publication of records as and when these are needed

(iii) **Registration Organization:** This is an important organization of the revenue administration and has the following objectives:

- To guarantee the genuineness of the registration of all deeds and documents
- To generate additional revenue to the exchequer of the government
- To avoid and prevent the execution of unregistered documents and deeds especially where registration is an essential and a statutory need

(iv) **Land Reforms Cell:** The main activities of the Land Reforms Cell include the following:

- To implement land reforms programmes
- To check the progress of the programmes implemented

The work load on the revenue department has been increasing with each passing day because of the increasing population as well as issues like land management and sustainable planning for the state. This is where Information and Communication Technology steps in and helps in bringing about effective changes in revenue administration of the state. The government of Tripura with the assistance of the Government of India is taking various initiatives to make the revenue administration effective as well as efficient. The revenue department is being changed and empowered functionally as well as financially so that the department can function in a more accountable and transparent manner. Computers are being used for modernization of the land revenue system and also revenue administration in the state. The National Land Records Modernization Programme has been initiated in the state to make revenue administration more effective.

The main objective of the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) is to develop a modern, comprehensive, transparent and effective records management system in the state. The aim of the NLRMP is to implement a land-titling programme based on the following principles:

- A single window to handle all land records
- Mirror principle that states that the records so maintained must match the ground reality or the actual facts
- The curtain principle which states that records of the title are a true description of the ownership status and re-checking and re-validation are not required
- Title insurance which states that the title holder is indemnified against any loss that arises because of any defect in the records

The following are the objectives and activities of the NLRMP:

- Computerization of land records with 100 per cent funding from the central government

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- Data entry through a computerization process
- Digitization of the cadastral maps
- Setting up computer centres at all levels of administration so as to provide quick and efficient services to the citizens
- Setting up state level data centres so that all land records can be preserved and maintained using information technology
- Providing online facility to the users of the revenue administration by inter-connecting the revenue officers

The revenue department does not contribute to the overall development of the state in a direct manner but it does render great services to ensure that good governance reaches the public especially the backward residents of the state.

The revenue department carries out the following activities for efficient revenue administration:

(a) **Registration:** The process of registration is online as well as manual though efforts are being made to make the process a completely online one. Registration of deeds are done in the Sub-Registry offices as per the Guidelines/instructions contained in Indian Stamp Act, 1899 with state amendments thereof, Registration Act, 1908, Tripura Registration Rules, 1954, Transfer of Property Act, 1882, Indian Conveyancer and notification of government in revenue department on table of fees. The process of registration typically is as follows:

- Checking of land valuation manually or online
- Comparing the land deeds manually
- Verifying, assessing and collecting the registration fees of the land deeds
- Entering the data related to the deeds
- Placing the deeds in English for registration
- Hearing of the parties at the office of the sub-registrar.
- Capturing the picture and finger prints of the buyer as well as the seller
- Comparing deeds through an online system
- Generating the permanent deed numbers through an online system
- Endorsing the deeds manually
- Signing and scanning of deeds before delivering them

(b) **Acquisition:** Land acquisition is a continuous process of the revenue department. The revenue department continuously acquires new land for the purpose of public welfare. The collectors are usually vested with the required powers to acquire land as and when needed. It is the collector who sends a complete land acquisition proposal along with all the details to the Revenue Department. The land acquisition is done on the basis of the provisions stated in the Land Acquisition Act. Once the

land acquisition proceedings are carried out in the required manner, the land records need to be updated and corrected.

- (c) **Land Distribution:** The state of Tripura is inhabited by a tribal population and their socio-economic status is not up to the mark. Most of this population practices jhum cultivation and therefore shift from one place to another in search of better pastures and land. Many of these people do not even have land for agriculture and live in poor economic conditions. Taking this fact into consideration, the government of Tripura has taken an initiative to provide land to the landless and home to the homeless. Through the revenue department, the state of Tripura has realised the fact that development of the state is not possible without raising the socio-economic status of the backward and the tribal population. The revenue department has therefore decided to provide a minimum quantum of land to such people and has even arranged for the allocation of IAY houses to these people. In fact, land distribution is one of the main ventures undertaken by the revenue department under land reforms. The land distribution in the state is done under the rules and regulations listed in the Tripura Land and Reforms Act, 1960 and Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reform Rules, 1980. The revenue department since its inception has been allocating and distributing the 'khas land' or the government land to the identified target groups. The target is to provide home to each and every family which is below the poverty line in the state.

The District Administration undertakes the process of land distribution through the Tehsil office. Proposals for the allotment are initiated by the Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) on the basis of the applications received by each Tehsilder in the Tehsil Kacharies. A mouja-wise Register is being maintained by the Tehsilder which contains the names of families with their details, already occupying khas land. This Register has to be updated in consultation with the Panchayat Secretaries of Gram Panchayats. The local Panchayat takes initiatives to select appropriate families who are really in need of land for home. It is the District Magistrate or Collector who approves the allotment.

The revenue department also undertakes the distribution of the 'khas land' to the state and central government departments and Public Sector Undertakings as per the rules. In this case however a requisition from the concerned department is essential and the allotment is also recommended by a Site Selection Committee. However, land is allocated only after the final approval of the revenue department.

- (d) **e-District:** e-District is an online platform for delivering government services to the citizens of the state. This project is an initiative of the government of India and is being made scalable in Tripura so as to improve the delivery of government services to the people of the backward regions of the state. The e-District application has already been launched in all the eight districts of Tripura on 31 March 2015 by

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the Directorate of Information Technology, Government of Tripura through the portal <http://edistrict.tripura.gov.in>.

- (e) **Disaster Management:** The state of Tripura is vulnerable to various natural and human hazards. The state is prone to cyclones, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, road accidents etc. These calamities have an adverse effect on the livelihoods of the people of the state. Disaster Management is therefore an essential activity for the state and the revenue department is the nodal agency for disaster management in the state of Tripura. The revenue department of the state has a Directorate of Relief, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management that looks into disaster management.

The Directorate has set up special disaster management teams in all districts, tehsils and sub-divisions of the state. These disaster management teams are provided with the special equipment and provided all the necessary training to manage disasters and provide relief and rescue operations to the people affected by disasters.

The directorate under the revenue department has undertaken the following activities on disaster management:

- Buildings have been taken up for retrofitting to minimise the loss from disasters
- Fourty-four helipads have been constructed for carrying out emergency rescue and relief operations
- The city of Agartala is under micro-ozonization
- Mock drills are carried out in all regions to prepare the people against disasters
- An interactive website on disaster management has been developed
- Several programmes have been undertaken like the Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) that provides all the essential information related to the disasters and managing disasters and providing relief, rescue and rehabilitation

2.4.1 Achievements of the Revenue Department in Tripura

The revenue department does not directly look into the development of the state of Tripura but undertakes several tasks and activities that are essential for the development and growth of the state. In the last few years, the revenue department of the state has been able to achieve the following:

- (i) Re-organization of District Administration
- (ii) Digitization of Map
- (iii) Computerization of Land Records
- (iv) Data Entry
- (v) Training

- (vi) Registration
- (vii) Forest Patta
- (viii) Allotment of land
- (ix) Acquisition of land
- (x) Mutation
- (xi) Administrative cum Health camp
- (xii) BADP
- (xiii) Growth Centre / ACA/SPA Projects
- (xiv) Disaster Management

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Reorganization of district administration was carried out by creating new districts from already existing districts in the state. More than 5000 map sheets have been digitized. The maps of districts of Dhalai, Unakoti, North Tripura, South Tripura and Gomati have been digitized and also uploaded on the website for the view and use of the citizens. Land records have been computerised and most of land related matters like mutation, khatian status, registration etc. have been computerized and online services are provided. Plot wise registration in the entire state has been carried out and computerised registration is under way.

During the year 2014 -15 from April to October 2014, approximately 283.76 acres of Government khas land have been allotted in favour of 2587 families. Several administration-cum-health camps have been organized by the department at various places. Disaster management has also been a successful venture for the revenue department of Tripura. The department has been able to set up disaster control rooms, provide disaster management equipment and has also provided trained staff in the state to help in rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations at the time of disasters.

The department is also making efforts to complete all the on-going projects within the stipulated time frames and steps are also being taken to fill infrastructural gaps by training the staff so that they improve their skills for an efficient and effective revenue administration.

2.4.2 Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960

The Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960 extends to the entire state of Tripura. According to this Act, the following are the provisions for maintaining land records and mutations:

- It shall be the duty of the survey officer to prepare a record of rights for each village showing the area of each survey number and other particulars and any other record or register, in accordance with the rules made under this Act.
- When a record of rights has been prepared, the survey officer shall publish a draft of the record.
- Every entry in the record of rights shall be presumed to be correct unless provided false or wrong.

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- No civil court has the authority to entertain any suit or application concerning any land, if it relates to the alteration of any entry in the record of rights finally published.
- For every village a register of mutations needs to be maintained in the prescribed format.
- The village accountant is required to enter every mutation report in detail in the register.
- Any objection or any disputed land cases also need to be entered in the register of mutations in the prescribed format.
- After the entries in the register of mutations have been tested and found correct, the entries shall be transferred to the record of rights and shall be certified by such officer as may be prescribed in this behalf.

2.4.3 Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Rules, 1980

The Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Rules, 1980, specify the following rules for the allotment of land in the state:

- The area of land to be allotted for agricultural purposes to an individual must not exceed one hectare.
- If the land is to be allotted to a cooperative society for agricultural purposes, the area of the allotted land must not exceed one hectare per member of the society.
- If land has to be allotted for construction of a house, the land allotment must not exceed 0.08 hectares.
- A collector can allot land for agricultural purposes to only that person who is economically very poor and will cultivate the land on his own.
- In general, the following hierarchy needs to be considered when allocating land for agricultural purposes:
 - o A Jhumia
 - o An under-raiyat who is evicted from any land and is landless
 - o Landless agricultural workers
 - o Landless individual evicted
 - o An individual not holding in excess of one standard hectare of land in area
- A person who has been allotted land for agricultural purposes needs to pay a premium at thirty times the annual land revenue assessed for the land.
- A person allotted land for construction of a house needs to pay premium equal to the market value of the land.

The following are the conditions of allotment:

- The allotted land will be heritable but not alienable
- The land may be surrendered in the manner specified in the allotment deed

- The allottee needs to bring the entire land under cultivation
- The allottee needs to pay the premium as decided in the allotment deed
- The allottee shall be entitled to plant trees on his land to enjoy the products thereof and to fell, utilise or dispose off the timber of any trees on his land
- The allotment can be cancelled in case of breach of any provisions of the Act

NOTES**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

6. How does the revenue department play an important role in the development of the state and the welfare of its people?
7. Define the curtain principle of the NLRMP.
8. Which department is the nodal agency for disaster management in the state of Tripura?

2.5 WELFARE ADMINISTRATION: SCHEMES

Tripura while being a small state in the North Eastern Region is the second most populous state in the region. The social composition of the population of the state is diverse with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. One third of the population is scheduled tribes while 18 per cent of the population is scheduled caste.

The population of Tripura has been increasing over the last several years which has given rise to several problems in the state. The state of Tripura is an economically backward state and an increase in the population has resulted in more pressure on the available land. Tripura is characterised by low income, overwhelming percentage of population below the poverty line, income leakage, unemployment etc. The population is rural in character and most of the cultivators practice jhum cultivation. Tripura is rich in forest resources but these are not exploited in the right manner and most of the forests are classified as degraded forest. Similarly, Tripura is rich in natural gas but even this resource has not been exploited to the full extent.

Tripura has poor infrastructure resources and lacks the required financial resources. With the partition of India, Tripura also lost its rail links with the rest of the country. Out of 2.70 lakh hectares cultivable land, only 1.17 lakh hectares have got an irrigational potential and so far, only about 0.50 lakh hectares have come under irrigation. Revenue collection in the state is also very low. Tripura because of poor financial resources depends heavily on financial assistance from the central government and is in need of grants most of the times. The quantum of development in Tripura is also very low. The central government has also not taken enough steps to extend the rail link and also has not done enough to work on linking the various parts of the state with the National Highway.

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Welfare of the people of state is therefore the most important for the state government. The state government has undertaken various schemes for the welfare of the tribal population to improve their standard of living. The government has undertaken several schemes for the welfare of the families living below the poverty line.

The following schemes have been undertaken by the state government in Tripura for the welfare of the people especially those living in the rural areas:

- **Rural Employment:** The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was enacted as an Act to give a statutory back up to the rural employment scheme. The main objective of the scheme is to enhance livelihood security in the rural areas by providing a minimum of 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to those who can work. This scheme is for those families wherein the adult male members are able to do unskilled manual work. The primary objective of the scheme is to augment wage employment on a daily basis. The scheme also has an auxiliary objective of natural resources management to encourage sustainable development. The scheme is carried out by the collaboration of the central and the state governments and also the Panchayati Raj Institutions. 90 per cent of the expenditure of the scheme is borne by the Central Government and the remaining 10 per cent by the state government. The District Magistrate and Collector coordinate the scheme at the district level and at the block level, the Block Development Officer also assists the District Magistrate and Collector in implementing the scheme. The programme is being implemented in the State as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Tripura (NREGS Tripura). The State Government has framed the Tripura Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, 2006 (TREGS, 2006) and the Tripura Rural Employment Guarantee Rules, 2006 (TREGR, 2006) in accordance to that of NREG Act.
- **Housing Scheme:** About 83 per cent of the population of Tripura live in villages and a lot of it below the poverty line. The government therefore needs to take initiatives for the upliftment of this poor section and improve the quality of their life by providing with the essential and basic infrastructural facilities. In this context, housing deserves special attention for framing development and growth policies for the poor section. The housing sector is in fact used globally to propel the economy as it provides employment and generates demand for building material in the economy. However, shortage of housing is a big impediment in the growth and development of the economy of the state of Tripura.

The house building scenario in Tripura is very poor mainly because of the fact that the construction cost is very high. The building materials like cement, stone, bricks, steel, tiles, marble, plywood, electrical equipment need to be transported from other parts of the country to this state and the transportation cost is therefore very high. In addition, the labour available in the state is unskilled and is not trained and informed enough about the

construction process. The need of skilled labour which then migrates from other parts of the country therefore adds to the construction cost. Also the building of houses and other construction activities result in carbon emissions which cause global warming and disturb the environment of the state.

The state government has therefore undertaken the implementation of housing scheme wherein the best and optimal approaches to construction of houses is undertaken. Under the housing scheme, efforts are being made to adopt energy efficient, disaster resistant, affordable technologies into appropriate construction of the buildings and houses. The main aim of the scheme is to undertake the construction of houses with disaster risk reduction and climate change adoption.

- **National Rural Livelihood Mission:** The National Rural Livelihood Mission is a flagship programme undertaken by the Government of India to eradicate poverty by reaching out to poor families. Under this mission, women self-help groups are formed that enable them to get attached to sustainable livelihood opportunities. Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM), is the state unit of NRLM, and is presently working in three Districts namely – Dhalai, Gomati and South Tripura District comprising of six resource Blocks—Ambassa, Dumburnagar, Killa, Matabari, Jolaibari and Satchand.

The following welfare schemes have been implemented by the government for women in Tripura:

- **Family Counselling Centre Scheme:** Family Counselling Centre Scheme has been launched by the government to protect the rights of women and prevent them from atrocities of the family as well as the society. These centres intervene in crisis situations and protect women and help them lead a decent life. There are two Family Counselling Centres that run in Tripura—one in Agartala and one in Udaipur. These centres undertake different measures to settle all types of discords between husband and wife and aim at peaceful reconciliation of the couple.
- **Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP):** The Support to Training and Employment Program for Women is being implemented by the Ministry of Tripura as a central sector scheme. The aim of this scheme is to impart skills to women so that they can get employed. This scheme also helps women in gaining skills and competencies that enable women to become self-employed and entrepreneurs. The scheme aims at helping women who are sixteen years and above. Under the scheme, the grants are given to an institution and not the state government. The assistance under STEP Scheme will be available in any sector for imparting skills related to employability and entrepreneurship, including but not limited to the Agriculture, Horticulture, Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari, Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and

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skills for the work place such as spoken English, Gems and Jewellery, Travel and Tourism, Hospitality.

- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:** Tripura is one of the states in which the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme is being implemented. The scheme is an initiative of the central government to prevent gender biased sex selection, ensure survival and protection of the girl child, ensure education and participation of the girl child. The scheme was initiated because of the decline in the sex ratio and also against women disempowerment.
- **One Stop Centre Scheme:** The One Stop Centre Scheme is being implemented in the state to protect women against violence in both public and private spaces. These centres provide the following services to women:
 - o Medical assistance
 - o Police assistance
 - o Psycho-social support and counselling
 - o Legal aid and counselling
 - o Shelter in form of short stay, food and clothing

At these centres, women are also benefited from peer support and also the support of the stakeholders like NGOs and other religious agencies.

- **Ujjwala (A comprehensive scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation and re-integration of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation):** Trafficking of children and women for sexual exploitation is a problem that is prevalent in the state of Tripura because of its close proximity to the international border. Cross-border trafficking is caused because of poverty, low status of women, lack of a protective environment and several other reasons. A multi-sectoral approach is essential to address this problem and Ujjwala does just that. The objective of this scheme is to prevent trafficking on one hand and also provide for rehabilitation and rescue of the victims. Under this scheme, several vigilance groups are formed and workshops and seminars are conducted for sensitising the target groups against trafficking. Ujjwala is implemented in Tripura with grants from the central government and also the implementing agencies. The central government provides 80 per cent of the grants while 10 per cent are obtained from the state government and the remaining 10 per cent from the implementing agencies.
- **Swadhar:** The Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances was launched by the central government in 2001-02. The scheme is also being implemented in the state of Tripura with 100 per cent grant-in-aid from the central government. The scheme through the provisions of shelter, food, clothing, counselling, training, clinical and legal aid aims to rehabilitate such women in difficult circumstances.

There are several other welfare schemes for women that are being implemented by the government of Tripura for the upliftment and empowerment of the women. A few of these include the following:

- Construction/ Expansion of Hostel Building for Working Women with a Day Care Centre
- Stree Shakti Puruskar
- Educational Work for Women on Women Atrocities
- Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls
- Working Women Hostel

Most of these schemes for the welfare of women are provided assistance in the form of grant-in-aid by the central government. The central government in some cases provides 100 per cent grants while in other cases, it provides a share of grants while the remaining are arranged for by the state government. In addition, the government is also undertaking the task of education of the girl child and women and also providing for adult education so that women get aware of their rights and are informed enough to lead a decent and self-sufficient life.

Ways in Which District Administration in Tripura is Empowering Women and Girls

Nandini is an initiative started by the state government in Tripura in the Gomati District. The programme is helping in the successful implementation of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Scheme. Nandini is a welfare programme that encompasses the work of district administration departments. Under this programme, the following activities and programmes are being conducted and implemented in Tripura:

- **Setting up of crèche:** A crèche was set up in the office of the Gomati district administration. This crèche was named Nandini and was launched to cater to the needs of the working women.
- **Setting up of a park dedicated to girls and their parents:** The district administration with the help of the Udaipur Municipal Corporation and Health and Family Welfare Department set up a park especially for girls and their parents. The park is named the Rabindra Udyaan and is taken care of by the community members.
- **Celebrating festivals with a purpose:** The Gomati district administration undertook an initiative to popularise the idea of women empowerment during the celebrations of Durga Puja which is one of the major festivals celebrated in Tripura. The district administration took the task of arranging the celebrations around the theme of saving the girl child and women empowerment.
- The Health and Family Welfare Department also trains ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists) on how to prevent domestic violence. This type of training enables help to reach women suffering from domestic violence and ensures their safety and protection.
- **Making women self-dependent:** The district administration is also undertaking the task of making women self-dependent. It also is working to provide supplementary nutrition to girls in the age group of six months to one year. In addition, it has also set up various vocational training institutions to help women learn tailoring skills so that they can become self-dependent.

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Ñ **All women polling booths:** Under Nandini, the participation of women in elections is highly encouraged and for this purpose two polling booths especially meant for women have been set up. At these polling booths, the staff as well as security personnel involved are women.

Ñ **Nandini Samman:** An award called Nandini Samman has also been started under this scheme. This award is implemented in all departments and is meant for women and girls who excel in different fields.

For the welfare of the children, the Tripura Council for Child Welfare has been established. The Tripura Council for Child Welfare was set up in May 1965 on the initiative of a few social workers. This council has been providing schemes for welfare of children and women irrespective of their caste, creed and religion. The council is governed by an Executive Committee and its office bearers mostly render voluntary services. Some of the schemes for child welfare implemented by the Tripura Council for Child Welfare are:

Ñ **Adoption Programme:** The Tripura Council for Child Welfare has been involved in adoption programmes since 1995. This is perhaps the most sensitive scheme of the council and is meant for the rehabilitation of abandoned, destitute and orphaned children. At present it maintains three homes named 'Sishu Greha' (Specialized Adoption Agency SSA), one at Agartala, one at Senahani of West Tripura and another at Udaipur under South Tripura for the abandoned, orphaned and destitute children.

Ñ **Short Stay Home:** The Tripura Council for Child Welfare maintains a short stay home at Jogendarnagar in Agartala. This short stay home is meant for women and girls under difficult circumstances. Most of the times, this home provides shelter to women and girls in crisis because of rape, sexual exploitations and marital problems. The sheltered are provided free food and bed and are even imparted vocational training and non-formal education.

Ñ **Special School:** The council also runs a special school for children affected by cerebral palsy and those who are mentally retarded. This school is located in Agartala and the aim of the school is to enable such children to know about things and learn to become self-reliant.

Ñ **Training:** The Tripura Council for Child Welfare also runs an Anganwadi Workers Training Centre. This training centre is residential and imparts training to the Anganwadi workers and helpers. The expenses for the training are borne by the Government of India and the state government has no financial contribution to it.

Ñ **National Trust:** The Tripura Council for Child Welfare has also been given the responsibility to monitor and promote activities related to the welfare of children suffering from Autism. This council is the State Nodal Agency Centre chosen by the National Trust to promote awareness about various disabilities that children may suffer from.

Ñ **Child Line:** The Tripura Council for Child Welfare is the support organization for the implementation of Child Line service in Agartala. Child Line is a nationwide emergency helpline for children in distress.

Ñ **Creche Programme:** The Tripura Council for Child Welfare runs crèches to render day care services to the babies of working mothers. It runs 126 creches- seventy-three in West Tripura, twenty in South Tripura, eighteen in North Tripura, eleven in Dhalai and four in Unokoti.

Ñ **Family Counselling Centre:** The council also runs Family Counselling Centres at Agartala and Udaipur for mitigation of family discords. The workers at these centres undertake different steps to settle family issues in a peaceful manner.

In addition to the above schemes, there are other welfare schemes as well which are undertaken for children in the state. Some of these include:

Ñ **Early Childhood Care Scheme:** The Early Childhood Care Scheme is important for the overall development of the children in the state where most of them live in poverty and do not have access to the basic amenities. One of the main objectives of the scheme is to ensure essential education to all children till the age of fourteen years. The main tasks undertaken in this scheme include ensuring increased enrolment in classes I-VIII and lowering the rate of drop-outs. To ensure that the scheme works in a successful manner, the state government as well as the central government are taking initiatives to remove all infrastructural deficiencies and improve the standard as well as the quality of education imparted to the children in their early years.

Ñ **Integrated Programme for Street Children:** The aim of this scheme is the development of children who do not have homes and family ties. Under this scheme, children from streets are withdrawn and placed under care and provided the required food, shelter, health care, sanitation, hygiene and clean water. The scheme also aims at preventing the exploitation and abuse of the destitute children.

Welfare schemes for people with disabilities by the Directorate of Social Welfare and Education in Tripura include the following:

Ñ **State Disability Pension:** The government of Tripura provides state disability pension to people who suffer from disabilities. People with disability of 60 percent and above are given a pension of rupees 500 per month and the ones who have disability above 80 per cent are given a pension of rupees 700 per month.

Ñ **Bus Concession:** The state of Tripura provides free bus travel to people who have complete loss of vision. 50 per cent concession on the fare is also given to the escort.

Ñ **Educational Scholarship:** The state government of Tripura also provides scholarship to students with disabilities from class I to post graduation. The rate of scholarship varies from one class to another.

Ñ **Unemployment Allowance:** The Directorate of Social Welfare and Education also gives an unemployment allowance of ₹1000 to those people who remain unemployed because of some disabilities.

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¶ **Incentive for Marriage between Disabled and Non-Disabled:** The state also provides an incentive when marriage takes place between two disabled people or one disabled and one non-disabled person. A grant of ₹ 5,000 is paid to the partner who is disabled and in case of both spouse with disability, the amount is jointly paid in the name of both.

The government of Tripura also implements several schemes for the welfare of the older people. For the welfare and care of aged people, old age homes have been set up in the state where the elderly people are provided food and shelter and also recreational activities. Old Age Pension is also a scheme of the government of the state wherein the elderly people are given a fixed pension per month. An Integrated Program for Older Persons is also undertaken by the government of the state. The main aim of this programme is to improve the quality of life of the older people. The programme basically caters to the basic needs of the older people like food, shelter and health care. The beneficiaries of this programme are the destitute elders.

2.5.1 District Health and Family Welfare Society

Under the National Rural Health Mission, the government of Tripura has constituted the District Health and Family Welfare Society in West Tripura, North Tripura, Agartala, Dhalai, Kailasahar, Ambassa, Udaipur and South Tripura. The main objectives of constituting the District Health and Family Welfare Society in Tripura include:

- To act as the nodal forums for all departments, NGOs and other institutions that take the task of welfare of the people in the society
- To implement and monitor the various health and family welfare programmes and projects in the various districts
- To receive, manage and account for the funds from the state as well as the central government for implementing the various welfare programmes
- To strengthen the technical and management capacity of the District Administration by recruiting individuals and agencies to look into the welfare of the people in the society
- To prepare and implement various health development plans
- To provide for total sanitation in all districts of the state
- To mobilize financial as well as non-financial resources for the successful implementation of the health and family welfare plans and activities
- To assist the hospital management societies in the region

The population of Tripura is mainly composed of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes from diverse ethnic backgrounds. These tribes depend upon agriculture for their livelihood and a majority of them live below the poverty line. The development and welfare of the tribal population is important from the perspective of the growth and development of the state as well as the economy of Tripura. The tribal population lives in backward regions and does not have access to even the basic amenities and facilities and is cut-off from the rest of the country. It is therefore important to

develop programmes and policies that help in raising the standard of living of this population and provide them with the basic facilities.

Keeping the welfare of the tribal population in mind, the Department of Welfare for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes was established in October 1970. The main objective of this department was the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who happen to be the under-privileged section of the state. Several plans and policies are framed and implemented under this department for the upliftment of this section of the society. This department was bifurcated into the Directorate of Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Directorate of Welfare of Scheduled Tribes in 1982. The Department of Tribal Welfare remains the nodal agency or department for planning, coordinating and implementing all activities related to the welfare of the tribal population in the state.

Tribal Sub-Plan is a policy adopted by this department for the accelerated growth of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Under this scheme, each development department of the state government of Tripura is required to set apart an amount from their budget provision for the implementation of schemes and policies meant for the welfare of scheduled tribes in Tripura. Each development department is required to quantify at least 31 per cent of the planned funds for the development of the scheduled tribes.

Twenty Point Programme is another welfare scheme which is being implemented by the state government for the welfare of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The main aim of this programme is to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life of the under-privileged and weak sections of the society. The programme covers various socio-economic aspects like poverty, education, housing, employment, agriculture, health, afforestation, drinking water, energy, protection of forests for the welfare and development of the tribal population of the state.

Tribal Advisory Committee has also been constituted in Tripura for the welfare of the tribal population. The purpose of this committee is to advise the government in matters related to the welfare of the tribal population in the state. A Tribal Sub-Advisory Committee is also constituted for ensuring that the schemes for tribal welfare are implemented in the required manner. This committee in addition to assisting the Tribal Advisory Committee also ensures that the financial and physical performance of the welfare plans is undertaken as per the recommendations.

25 Point Package was announced by the state government for the welfare and development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the state. The aim of this package was to accelerate the development of the tribal population in fields of education, health, infrastructure, economic upliftment and the promotion of tribal arts and crafts. The following were the provisions of this programme:

- **Education:** The programme provided for the Junior Basic Schools in ADC areas. The schools were to be set up in pucca buildings. High standard residential schools in six regions of the state were set up. Five schools in each of the districts of Tripura were to be set up for the tribal students with hostel facilities. These schools were also to be developed

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as centres of excellence for the promotion of sports and athletics among the tribal students. Vocational training and coaching centres were also set up under this programme for tribal students.

- **Economic development:** For economic development, an integrated programme was adopted under the 25 Point Package. Under this programme, youth was assisted under self-employment with an aim to improve the standard of living of these people. Thrift and credit groups were also formed for tribal women for the economic empowerment of women. Tea and coffee plantations were set up to provide employment opportunities to the tribal population under this programme.
- **Infrastructure development:** Safe drinking water was provided under this programme to every hamlet of the tribal population. Efforts were made to connect all backward tribal regions by road for the economic development of these areas. Tribal villages that did not have electricity were provided with electricity and many families were also allotted houses.
- **Health services:** Under this programme, primary health care centres were established in many tribal areas. Also hospitals in several sub-divisions were provided with enough beds and health specialists to provide the required health services to the tribal population.
- **Socio-cultural development:** Under this programme, comprehensive plans were undertaken for the overall development of completely tribal areas like Unakoit, Pillak etc. A museum was also set up and state level tribal cultural festivals were also held for the cultural development of the tribes.

Reservation Policy was also implemented in the state to protect the interests of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The state government introduced the reservation policy in 1978 whereby 31 per cent of seats in educational institutions and the same percentage of government jobs were fixed for the tribal population. The Tribal Welfare Department was announced as the Nodal Agency to look into the implementation of the reservation policy in the state.

Tripura Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TTWREIS) was established in 1997 with an aim to impart quality education to the tribal boys and girls. The prime object of the society is to establish, maintain, control and run Eklavya Model Residential School (EMR), Residential School and Ashram School in the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) area of the state where the students of interior tribal villages may get quality education in English medium to prepare them in various entrance and competitive examination. The students are provided lodging and education free of cost. At present four EMR, one Residential and three Ashram Schools are running under the TTWREIS.

2.5.2 Achievements of the Tribal Welfare Department in Education, Economic and Infrastructure Development in the State of Tripura

The following are the achievements of the Tribal Welfare Department:

- 1,40,579 number of ST students were provided Boarding House Stipend, Pre-matric Scholarship, Post-matric Scholarship and Merit Award.
- 800 ST students were provided coaching under the scheme of Coaching Centre for Drop-out students.
- 42,870 ST students were provided financial assistance for purchasing Text Books.
- 836 ST students were provided free coaching under the scheme of Coaching and allied scheme for Joint Entrance Examination, TCS/TPS, ITI and GNM etc.
- 52 ST students were sponsored for Nursing and Paramedical courses.
- 183 ST students of EMR Schools in Tripura appeared in AISSE (Class-X) under CBSE for the year 2012-13. All students successfully passed the examination.
- In AISSCE (Class-XII) 100 ST students appeared in the examination for the year 2012-13. All students successfully passed the examination.
- 1148 ST beneficiaries were provided financial assistance for Rubber, Tea and Coffee plantation.
- 50 ST women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were provided financial assistance.
- 22 ST hostels and 4 Tribal Rest Houses were completed.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9. What is the main objective of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme?
10. Why was the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme implemented?
11. Define the Tribal sub-plan.

2.6 SUMMARY

- The formation of various tribal groups in Tripura can be attributed to the demographic changes which gave birth to ethnocentric problems in the region. This was the result of the growing awareness among them about their rights and privileges from which they were deprived due to the huge influx of refugees.

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- After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya, his step-brother Durjay Kishore Dev Barman formed *Bir Bikram Tripur Sangha* for social reform, for resisting influx of refugees into Tripura and to safeguard tenancy right of tribals.
- The *Sangha* had its militant wing styled in the local dialect as *Sengkrak* or *Sing Krak* which symbolized the cult of 'clenched fist'. It called for a showdown of the tribals against the Bengali refugees.
- After *Senghkrak* was banned, various associations came into existence to fight for tribal welfare. Mention may be made of 'Paharia Union' (1951) by Chandra Sadhu Rupini, 'Adivasi Samiti' (1952) by Suntijivan Chakma, Madhav Master for Chakmas and Adivasi Sangha (1953) (for Tripuris, Jamatias and Halams) under the presidentship of Lalit Mohan Debbarma and Adivasi Sangsad supported by the Jamatias.
- In 1955 when the State Reorganization Commission recommended for the merger of Tripura with Assam, a tribal group of Tripura supported the recommendation with a motive to put an end to 'Bengali hegemony' in Tripura.
- After *Senghkrak*, the next prominent tribal organization that came into existence was *Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad*, which was established in 1948 with the name *Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad* and renamed in 1951 as *Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad*.
- At the time of independence, the economy of the state of Tripura was mainly based on agriculture with no industrial base, little urbanization and almost negligible infrastructure.
- Tripura as has been stated was a princely state and its administration was taken over by the Government of India in 1949. When the new constitution of India was adopted in 1950, it made Tripura a state which was to be administered by the President of India by appointing a Chief Commissioner or a Lt. Governor. The Parliament was empowered to allow a council of advisers or ministers to function in an advising capacity to help the Chief Commissioner.
- The North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, was passed in the Parliament and assented by the President in 1972. In Tripura, this Act came into effect in January 1972 and as per the provisions of this Act, Tripura attained complete statehood and became a state of India.
- The state government in Tripura is headed by the Governor appointed by the President of India and the administration of the state is run in the name of the Governor. The real executive of the administration is however the Chief Minister. The assembly is unicameral. The administration in Tripura is distinguished by the existence of separate legislative, governance and judiciary systems for tribal areas.
- In the state of Tripura and consequently in its districts, there are two distinct mechanisms for governance and execution of developmental activities and administration. These mechanisms apply separately to ADC and non-ADC

areas. The non-ADC areas are like other states and follow the PRI or the Panchayati Raj Institution of planning and governance.

- After the 73rd Amendment in the Constitution, the Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 was brought into force in Tripura. This Act provided a three-tier Panchayati Raj structure in the non-ADC areas.
- Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council or the TTAADC is a district council set up for areas in Tripura that have a predominant tribal population.
- The revenue department has been one of the most important departments in Tripura and its administration right from the days of the rule of the kings of the Manikya Dynasty. The revenue department plays an important role in the development of the state and the welfare of its people. This is mainly done by the department through land reforms.
- The varied departments of the Revenue department are district administration, directorate of land records and settlements, registration organization, and land reforms cell. The activities of the Revenue department include registration, acquisition, land distribution, e-district and disaster management.
- The state government has undertaken various schemes for the welfare of the tribal population to improve their standard of living. These schemes include rural employment, housings scheme, National Rural livelihood mission, family counselling centre scheme, Support to Training and Employment Program for Women, Ujjawala, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Swadhar, Adoption programmeme, child line, crèche support, staff disability pension, bus concession.

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2.7 KEY TERMS

- **Jhum cultivation:** It is an agricultural technique in which the land with trees and vegetation are first slashed and cleared and then burned after which the new crops are cultivated on the same patch.
- **Mouja:** It is a revenue village which is the lowest unit of administration in the state.
- **e-District:** It refers to an online platform for delivering government services to the citizens of the state.

2.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya, his step-brother Durjay Kishore Dev Barman formed *Bir Bikram Tripur Sangha* for social reform.
2. *Ghasuri* was a form of tribal tax for cutting grass in the region.
3. Tripura attained full statehood in the year 1972.
4. The administration in Tripura is distinguished by the existence of separate legislative, governance and judiciary systems for tribal areas.

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5. The main objective of setting up an Autonomous District Council was to hand over certain administrative and legal matters that dealt with the economic and social development of the tribal population of the state.
6. The revenue department plays an important role in the development of the state and the welfare of its people. This is mainly done by the department through land reforms.
7. The curtain principle of the NLRMP states that records of the title are a true description of the ownership status and re-checking and re-validation are not required.
8. The revenue department is the nodal agency for Disaster Management in the state of Tripura.
9. The main objective of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is to enhance livelihood security in the rural areas by providing a minimum of 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to those who can work.
10. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme was initiated because of the decline in the sex ratio and also against women disempowerment.
11. Tribal Sub-Plan is a policy adopted by this department for the accelerated growth of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Under this scheme, each development department of the state government of Tripura is required to set apart an amount from their budget provision for the implementation of schemes and policies meant for the welfare of scheduled tribes in Tripura.

2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What was the economic condition of Tripura at the time of the Partition of India?
2. What was the Tripura Administrative Order?
3. What was the Government of Union Territories Act of 1963?
4. Under which Act did Tripura achieve complete statehood?
5. What is the TTADC?
6. Write a short note on state administration in Tripura.
7. What matters are dealt with by the revenue department in Tripura?
8. Enlist the objectives of the revenue department of Tripura.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Give an overview of the political institutions in Princely Tripura.
2. Write a detailed note on the various districts of Tripura.
3. What is the Panchayati Raj Institution in Tripura.

4. Write an essay on TTADC and its role in the administration of Tripura.
5. Describe the various agencies through which the revenue department carries out its activities.
6. Discuss the various rural welfare schemes that are implemented in Tripura.
7. Write about the women welfare schemes in Tripura.
8. What are some of the welfare schemes which are carried out for children in Tripura?
9. How is tribal welfare administered and implemented in Tripura?

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2.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 POLITICS AND MOVEMENTS IN TRIPURA

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- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
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 - 3.2.1 Statehood Movement of Tripura: First Phase
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3.0 INTRODUCTION

Tripura and its politics witnessed several changes after Independence. Since Independence, tribal people in Tripura were confronted with a new challenge of safeguarding their tribal identity in the state and a lurking fear of the label of the minority community. As a result, some ethnocentric tribal organizations had been formed for protecting tribal population and their interests in the region. This unit will discuss the political transformation of Tripura which has been discussed under two phases.

Electoral politics in the state of Tripura has been dominated by the presence and activities of the Communist Party as well as the Congress. However, the activities of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) have been dominating and deciding the fate of electoral politics in the state. The governments of the state have however not been able to meet the needs and demands of the population of the state and especially the tribal population which has resulted in the emergence of pressure groups in the state. These pressure groups pressurise the government to frame policies that are for the benefit of the majority of the population of the state. These pressure groups and also other extremists have also been involved in various movements and uprisings for securing the basic rights and demands of the tribal population of the state. The role of various political parties and the role of pressure groups have been discussed in this unit.

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In this unit, the movements introduced by Ganamukti Parishad, Naxalite, Peasants and Labour in Tripura have been highlighted in detail. The causes of the naxalite movement in Tripura and the measures taken by the Government of India have also been discussed. The problem of forced labour that the tribal population of Tripura faces has also been analysed.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the glorious history of joint movement of tribals and non-tribals for the statehood of Tripura
- Assess the role of various political parties of Tripura
- Analyse the reasons which led to the formation of regional parties in India
- Discuss the role and characteristics of pressure groups in Tripura
- Explain the movements led by Ganamukti Parishad, Naxalite, Peasants and Labour in Tripura

3.2 TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL STATUS OF TRIPURA

We will discuss the transformation of political status of Tripura in two phases.

3.2.1 Statehood Movement of Tripura: First Phase

Till the time Tripura merged with the Indian Union, there was an aspiration for responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja of Tripura. But after the merger, the spearhead of the movement was directed at first, towards the introduction of a popular government in Tripura under the purview of the Government of Part 'C' States, 1951 and later, for a full-fledged state.

Tripura was made a Part 'C' state and ruled by a Chief Commissioner unlike six other Part 'C' States, namely Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Coorg, Bhopal, Ajmer and Vindhya Pradesh which were allowed to continue with their Legislatures and Council of Ministers.

It may be noted that there was a Council of Ministers in Tripura from 1939-1948, constituted by the Maharaja. He also agreed to constitute a legislative council under his constitution. In spite of this, Tripura was deprived of representative institutions though the Constitution of India empowered the National Parliament to allow the State Legislature to continue to function and allow a Council of Advisors or Ministries to function as the executive of that State for the purpose of aiding the Chief Commissioner or Lt. Governor in the administration. Accordingly, Parliament of India allowed Elected Legislatures and Council of Ministers in six Part 'C' States out of ten. But Tripura along with other three Part 'C' States—Bilashpur, Kutch and

Manipur—were denied any democratic and representative institutions under the Government of part ‘C’ States Act 1951.

The people of Tripura were extremely dissatisfied for not providing their State any Legislature or Council of Ministers in spite of having clear provisions in the Constitution. Therefore, they became suspicious about the goodwill of the Central Government and raised their voices and demanded introduction of a responsible government in the State.

Under the Chairmanship of Ananta Sayanam Aiyanger, Deputy Speaker of Parliament of India, a meeting was held with the representatives of the Centrally Administered Areas (Part ‘C’ States) in New Delhi on 10 February 1951. It was said that centrally administered areas were pockets of autocracy in the Indian democracy. By classifying some native states as Part ‘C’ states and by keeping them under the Chief Commissioner’s rule, the people of these areas were denied the right of self-government. Further, a resolution was adopted in the meeting calling upon the Central Government to take positive steps towards framing of laws in the current session of Parliament so that a responsible government might be introduced in each of these Part ‘C’ states at the time of the first General Elections. Moreover, it was also decided in the meeting that 25 February 1951 would be observed as a ‘Protest Day’ against the Chief Commissioners’ rule in all the part ‘C’ states. Therefore, it was clear that the Chief Commissioner’s rule was not welcomed.

In Tripura an appeal was made to the people to observe the ‘Protest Day’. A leaflet signed by thirty-two leading persons of Agartala was circulated, a copy of which was published in the local Bengali Bi-weekly, *Janakalyan*. Among those who made this appeal were—Nibaran Chandra Ghosh, Biren Datta, Tripur Chandra Sen, Jogesh Chandra Deb Barma, Birchandra Deb Barman, Amarendra Deb Barman, Sukhamay Sengupta, Jitendra Chandra Paul, NandalalC hakroborty, Dwijen Dey and others.

At Agartala, the ‘Protest Day’ was observed by holding a meeting with large number of people of all shades of opinion and colour. It was held at Children’s Park at Agartala under the Chairmanship of Advocate Nibaran Chandra Ghosh and addressed by some prominent persons like, Biren Dutta, Amarendra Deb Barma, Prabhat Ray, Birchandra Deb Barma, Sirajul Haq Choudhury, and others. A unanimous resolution adopted in the meeting, called upon the Central Government to introduce a responsible government in Tripura at the time of the first general elections. An organization named ‘Tripura Rajya Ganatantrik Sangha’ (TRGS) was formed which was a common platform for people of all shades and colour. Its President, General Secretary and Treasurer were Nibaran Chandra Ghosh, Jitendra Chandra Paul and Aswini Kumar Ray respectively.

Besides the introduction of a responsible government and a Legislative Assembly, the TRGS worked for creating a congenial atmosphere for holding the first General Elections in Tripura. And for that matter, it demanded for releasing all political prisoners, repealing the warrants of arrest against the political activists, withdrawal of militaries from the villages and hills and above all, restoration of civil liberties of the tribals.

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Centering on all these agendas, the TRGS organized a lot of meetings in different parts of Tripura among which two big public meetings were held—one at Agartala on 15 August 1951 and the other at Khowai on the following day. Responding to the demand of TRGS, 15 August was observed as a 'Demand Day' for the introduction of a responsible government in Tripura. In protest of keeping Tripura under the Chief Commissioner's rule against the people's will, a meeting was held at Agartala in which speakers of various political parties decried the 'undemocratic' and 'unconstitutional' steps of the Central Government. More than ten thousand people participated in the meeting at Khowai; most of them were tribals. Different speakers demanded immediate introduction of a responsible government.

Before the first General Election (1952), the united Democratic Front was formed in Tripura. The 'Congress leadership', according to the Communist party of India 'was collaborating with imperialism' and hence 'the advance towards democracy and independence had to be won not only in opposition to imperialism but also in opposition to the Indian bourgeoisie'. The front launched movements on the burning issues of the state. The front demanded the following things:

- Immediate installation of 'Vidhan Sabha'
- Introduction of a responsible government
- Abolition of Chief Commissioner's rule
- Granting of civic and political rights
- Proper rehabilitation of the refugees and the jhumias

After the election, the movement for responsible government was geared up by the Front. A demand was placed to the effect that the Electoral College which had no other function than to elect one representative to the Rajya Sabha, be converted into legislative assembly. But the demand was ignored by the Central Government. Finding no other alternative, agitational programme was launched all over Tripura. The government took action by banning all meetings, processions and demonstrations. However, the administrative repression could not silence the people and the struggle continued even inside the parliament of India as well

The Government of India was of the opinion that Tripura was a 'frontier' state which occupied a strategic position from the defense point of view. Therefore, it should continue as a centrally administered area. At that time there was only one organization namely 'Tripur Sangha' formed earlier by the Maharaja of Tripura, which demanded a Council of Advisers for Tripura in total disregard to the public opinion. The meeting of the Tripur Sangha held in May, 1950 adopted resolution urging upon the government of India to constitute a Council of Advisers from among the permanent residents of Tripura as per Article 240 of part VIII of the Constitution of India and also to take steps simultaneously for constituting a legislature in Tripura.

Minister of States, Dr Kailash Nath Katju, while addressing a public meeting at Umakanta Academy ground on 1 December 1952, announced that a Council of Advisors, Tripura would be appointed soon. He said that introduction of a Legislative Assembly in Tripura was not possible because of its socio-economic and strategic position. Since Tripura is administered according to the law framed by the people's

representative in parliament and the Chief Commissioner being appointed by the Central Government, democratic administration is prevalent in Tripura he argued.

The representatives of United Democratic Front met Dr Katju in a deputation at the residence of Chief Commissioner in the evening of 1 December 1952 and submitted a Memorandum demanding popular government in Tripura at least under the purview of Part 'C' States Act, 1951 as of six other Part 'C' States which were provided with Legislatures and Councils of Ministers under the Act. The demand though was rejected.

On 14 April 1953, a three member Council of Advisors was appointed for Tripura to aid and advise the Chief Commissioner. The members were Sachindralal Singha and Sukhamay Sengupta of the State Congress and Jitendra Mohan Debbarma of Tripur Sangha.

Those who were steering the movement for responsible government in Tripura reacted sharply against the appointment of the Advisors. In July 1953, it was heard that Dr Katju, Minister of States would table some Bills in the ongoing session of Parliament proposing amendments to the Government of Part 'C' States. Biren Dutta and Dasharath Deb, Members of Parliament from Tripura, sought to move an amendment motion proposing introduction of Legislative Assemblies in Part 'C' States like Tripura, Manipur and Kutch and transfer of power of the government to elected representative bodies. But they were not permitted.

A meeting of the Left parties was held on 5 August 1953 urging upon the Government of India to grant an elected Legislative Assembly in Tripura in the ongoing session of parliament (July-August 1953). Further it was resolved in the meeting to observe 15 August 1953 as the *Vidhan Sabha dabidibash* (Legislative Assembly Demand Day) all over Tripura.

As a part of the programme a big all-party public meeting was organized on that day at Netaji Subhash Vidyaniketan ground at Agartala. All India RSP leaders Samar Guha and Lila Ray were present in the meeting which was held with Jogesh Chandra Chakrabarty, a RSP leader of Tripura in the chair. Referring to the demand for Legislative Assembly, Samar Guha said that it was a fundamental right of the people of Tripura 'If they (Congress leaders) could grant Legislative Assembly in Coorg and also in Delhi, why shall not they introduce Legislative Assembly in Tripura?' – He questioned.

Among speakers in the meeting were communist leaders Nripen Chakrabarty and Saroj Chanda and non-communist but a leftist leader Swarnakamal Ray. A memorandum dated 14 August 1953 was sent from Agartala to the Government of India. It was signed by some leading persons like Swarnakamal Ray, Nibran Chandra Ghosh, Nagendra Krishna Ray, Dr Jyotish Chandra Chakrabarty and others. In the memorandum they aptly refuted the arguments of Dr Katju, Minister of States, and Government of India by saying that Tripura is not really a frontier state though it has East Pakistan on its borders. Besides democracy can never weaken the defense of a state, rather it strengthens defense. The memorandum demanded for introduction of either a democratic government immediately or to create a new state with

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government as provided for Part 'C' States in the constitution and consisting of Tripura, Cachar, Manipur and Lushai Hills Districts.

The under-secretary to the Government of India sent the memorandum to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Tripura for disposal. The Chief Secretary sent it to the Legal Remembrance who returned it on 12 October 1953 with the following comments:

...The grounds stated herein were all met by Dr Katju, the Honourable States Minister, in the public meeting when he visited the State some months ago. We have, therefore, for the present nothing to do in regard to the matter. The paper may be filed.

Thus, the matter was closed and public opinion for a responsible government in Tripura was denied.

The United Democratic Front launched agitational programme on the Republic Day of 1954 throughout the State. A public meeting held on that day at Agartala adopted resolution demanding Legislative Assembly in Tripura and also remission of arrear taxes of the poor peasants. After Independence and especially after the Constitution of India coming into force, democratic government was introduced in every part of the country. However, the Advisory Rule with Chief Commissioner at the apex of the administrative structure was imposed on Tripura and few other Part 'C' States. The system of administration, as introduced, was conspicuous by its autocratic country were an anachronism and therefore, a sustained movement for responsible government continued.

When the Seventh Constitution Amendment Bill was tabled in 1956 in the Lok Sabha proposing to make the Part 'C' States into Centrally Administered Areas, Dasaratha Deb, Minister of the Lok Sabha, elected from Tripura took part in the discussion. He expressed his deep resentment for not proposing in the said Amendment Bill, the provision for introduction of Vidhan Sabha in Tripura and also in some other Part 'C' States. He said that the 'Councils' which were proposed to be constituted in the Centrally Administered Areas could not satisfy the democratic aspirations of the people of these areas. He said that whenever he and others tried to raise in the Lok Sabha the question of introducing Vidhan Sabha in the Part 'C' States, the members of the Treasury bench shouted them down. He reminded that while framing the Constitution of India, some members of the Constituent Assembly were also strongly in favour of introducing Vidhan Sabha in the Part 'C' States and the Constitution of India was finally adopted with this provision also.

He pointed out that tiny area, small population, geographical location and some other factors were shown to be the hindrances for granting Vidhan Sabha in Tripura or Manipur. But he said categorically that deprivation of democratic rights of the people did in no way substantiate this argument. He hoped that Parliament would consider sympathetically the issue of introduction of a democratic government in Tripura and other Part 'C' States.

In this wake of movement for statehood and responsible Government, the State Reorganization Commission (SRC) chaired by S. Fazal Ali with two other members—H. N. Kunjru and K. M. Panikkar recommended for merger of Tripura

with Assam by abolishing its distinct politico-administrative entity as a Part 'C' State. The SRC recommended for merger of Tripura with Assam on the ground of administrative viability. The recommendation added fuel to the fire. A strong protest movement was launched in Tripura which forced the Central Government to allow Tripura to continue with its separate political-administrative entity.

The movement was steered by 'Swatantra Tripura Committee' and therefore, the movement is termed, here, 'Swatantra' Tripura movement. 'Swatantra' Tripura means Tripura with its separate politico-administrative entity as a unit of the Indian Union.

The Commission thought that democratic experiment in these States had proved to be more costly than it was expected or intended and this extra cost could not be justified by mere increased administrative efficiency or rapid economic and social progress. These States, according to the Commission, were not in a position to 'subsist as separate administrative units without excessive dependence on the Centre, which will lead to all the undesirable consequences of divorcing the responsibility for expenditure from that of finding the resources'.

Having considered all these factors, the Commission was of the view that except the two which would be centrally administered, the other Part 'C' States should be merged with the adjoining States.

Much before the report of the SRC was published, it had been in the air that the question of Tripura's merger with Assam was almost certain. Altogether eleven organizations of Tripura placed their views before the SRC and all were against the merger of Tripura with Assam. Some organizations opined for maintaining Tripura's separate entity. There were others which demanded for creation of a 'Greater Tripura' including Cachar District of Assam. Also it was opined by some groups that if there was no alternative other than merger, Tripura should be merged with West Bengal from the consideration of affinity of language, culture and heritage, but in no case with Assam.

In the meanwhile, a student's strike was observed on 4 October 1955 and a rally was held as a mark of protest against the plan of merger. The non-government school-teachers observed a strike and held a rally on October, 1955. The Government Employees Association, the Bar Association and other organizations sent telegrams to the Prime Minister of India protesting against the merger.

As regards Tripura, the Commission opined: 'As a small "Part C" State, Tripura cannot obviously stand by itself'. As the West Bengal Government had not claimed the territory, its merger with Assam, in the opinion of the Commission, 'could be supported among other reasons on the ground that it would be desirable to bring the entire border between India and Pakistan in this region under one single control, namely, that of the Assam Government.

The Commission further stated: 'Such a merger will also make it possible to cooperate development in Cachar and the contiguous area of Tripura. The Bengali speaking population after the merger will be a little more than one-fifth of the total population of the State. It should not be difficult for the Assam Government to allay the apprehensions of the Bengali speaking people by treating this area, which requires

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development, as a separate administrative division under a Commissioner. The special position of Bengali in this division should be recognized for official and educational purposes’.

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With the safeguards on these lines, the merger of Tripura with Assam would provide the people of Tripura with the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for representative government at the state-level without prejudicing their linguistic and cultural interest. The Commission further held: ‘Suitable safeguards can and should also be provided for the tribal people in the proposed administrative division’.

The recommendation of the SRC, sparked off an anti-merger movement in Tripura. The Swatantra Tripura Committee called out a general strike and *hartal* at Agartala on 11 October 1955. Shops, educational institutions remained closed and it was for the first time in Tripura that all activities in the Government offices and the Secretariat came to a grinding halt due to picketing.

While addressing a public meeting, Nripen Chakraborty said that unit of Swatantra Tripura Committee would be formed in every part of Tripura. The Swatantra Tripura Committee sent telegrams to Prime Minister, Nehru and Union Home Minister, Pant, conveying deep anxiety and strong indignation of the people of Tripura and a demand for maintaining Tripura’s separate entity.

The Ex-Political Sufferers’ Association in its special meeting held on 10 October 1955 adopted a unanimous resolution denying the recommendation of SRC for merger of Tripura with Assam and calling upon the Prime Minister, Union Home Minister, and the AICC to allow Tripura to hold its separate politico-administrative entity.

Tiny area, small population and little revenue income of Tripura were the major factors of consideration to the SRC for recommending Tripura’s merger with Assam. In order to obviate the factors, a counter argument was advanced by another section who opined for a ‘Greater Tripura’ with Cachar District of Assam. Through a memorandum submitted on 22 April 1954 and while appeared before the SRC on 3 May 1954, the All Tripura Refugee Association (ATRA) argued for creation of a Greater Tripura. Its argument was that introduction of a responsible government in Tripura was, of course, necessary but it could not be viable in a small territory like Tripura. Therefore, it argued for creation of a greater Tripura with Cachar District of Assam on the ground of viability and pursuant to the accepted principle of reorganization of States on linguistic basis.

Another organization which supported the demand was the Tripura Scheduled Caste Association. It held that the scheduled castes of Tripura would under no circumstances accept Tripura’s merger with Assam. It called upon the Government of India to hold a ‘referendum’ on the issue and to go by the result. In order to materialize the demand, a Greater Tripura Committee was formed on October, 1955 in a meeting of some leading persons and representative of seven organizations of Tripura under chairmanship of Advocate Hemachandra Nath. The Greater Tripura Committee decided to place its demand before the Union Home Minister during his proposed visit to Agartala. The Committee organized meetings and processions to popularize its demand.

On the question of reorganization of states in 1955, the Purbachal State issue was revived. The genesis of the 'Purbachal Scheme' was that since the major part of Sylhet went to East Pakistan at the time of partition of India, the Bengalis in Assam who felt that culturally and even geographically they belonged to Bengal, had found themselves somewhat isolated. They felt that they were put to an uncongenial environment. Under these circumstances, the proposal for 'Purbachal State' was submitted after partition of India.

The Purbachal Scheme originally provided for the constitution of a new State with Cachar, Tripura, the Mizo (Lushai) Hills, Manipur and NEFA. It was examined by the Indian National Congress in 1948 but was not pursued.

On the question of reorganization of State, the Cachar State Reorganization Committee revived the 'Purbachal State' issue and placed the demand before the State Reorganization Commission. The idea of 'Purbachal State' was floated by some leading persons in Tripura also. A memorandum drafted by Swarnakamal Ray and signed by others claiming 'democratic government in Tripura' was sent on 14 August 1953 to the Minister of States, Government of India. The memorandum came with the demand for introduction of a responsible government in Tripura; Manipur, Cachar, Lushai Hills to be called 'Purbachal' which was more viable administratively and economically. The suggestion as it was noted, was meant for the 'State Reorganization Commission' which was due to be appointed.

But the demand for Purbachal State, according to the Commission was like the demand for the creation of a hill state. The Commission felt that the Purbachal Scheme reproduced to some extent the proposal for the separation of the hill districts from the Assam (Brahmaputra Valley). The Commission did not entertain the demand for the creation of a Purbachal State. It said '...the creation of a new state, which may well mean only that one set of problems is exchanged for another, is not in our opinion an appropriate remedy for the grievances of the minorities, if any. Therefore, the SRC while preparing its report did not consider the demand of Purbachal State.

The recommendation of the SRC did not satisfy the leaders of the Cachar State Reorganization Committee. A meeting of the representative of Cachar State Reorganization Committee and other organizations was held at Karimganj on 21 October 1955 and it was decided that a fresh demand with reference to the report of the SRC would be placed before the Government of India for creation of either a 'Purbachal State' with Cachar, Tripura, Manipur and the Lushai Hills District, or a separate State with Cachar and Tripura. In the event of either of these demands not being acceptable, the merger of Tripura and Cachar with West Bengal was preferred. It was further decided that a team of representatives of the Cachar State Reorganization Committee would meet the Union Home Minister, Pandit G. B. Pant and Union Deputy Minister, A. K. Chanda during their proposed visit at Silchar and would submit a memorandum of demands. Accordingly, a telegram was sent to the Union Home Minister in New Delhi seeking a deputation. But in reply, the Union Home Minister informed the Cachar State Reorganization Committee that its representatives might call on him at Agartala on 4 November 1955, the date of his visit at Agartala.

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On 4 November 1955, Pandit G. B. Pant, Union Home Minister, A. K. Chanda, Union Deputy Minister of External Affairs and Bishnuram Medhi, Chief Minister of Assam came to Agartala on an official visit. The Swatantra Tripura Committee lodged with the Union Home Minister, a strong note of protest against the recommendation of the SRC for merger of Tripura with Assam and pleaded for maintaining Tripura's separate politico-administrative entity.

Further, it organized an unprecedented mass meeting of about seventy-five thousand people at Agartala in November, 1955. While speaking in the meeting held at Assam Rifles Ground at Agartala, Union Home Minister G. B. Pant said that the question of merger of Tripura with Assam was an undecided matter and it was only the recommendation of the SRC and therefore the Central Government should not be blamed for it.

The anti-merger movement was carried on with full vigour by the Swatantra Tripura Committee. The Committee held a conference at Agartala on 6 November 1955 amidst great enthusiasm and excitement. More than hundred delegates from different Divisions, belonging to different communities like Halam, Kuki, Tripuri, Bengali Hindu and Muslim attended.

The delegates reported how the people of Tripura were getting agitated over the issue of Tripura's merger with Assam and how the people in all walks of life were getting closer gradually braving all odds for greater movement.

The conference adopted some resolutions on action programme. It was decided to hold Swatantra Tripura Committee conference in each sub-division and to observe a week long anti-merger programme when the report of the SRC would be tabled in parliament for consideration. Moreover, it was decided to send a delegation on behalf of the Swatantra Tripura Committee to Delhi to discuss the matter with the central authority and to press for maintaining Tripura's separate entity. Also it was decided to raise a strong volunteer force and funds to carry on the movement'.

A delegation of Swatantra Tripura Committee consisting of four members, namely Swarnakamal Ray, Biren Dutta, Jogesh Chandra Chakroborty and Hemanta Bijay Ray left for Delhi on 14 November 1955.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) in its meeting held on 8 November 1955 in New Delhi examined the recommendations of the SRC. It accepted the recommendations partially. But it could not arrive at any decision in regard to Tripura. In order to find out a solution to some problems connected with the reorganization of States, the CWC constituted a high power sub-committee to arrive at a decision in regard to the future of Tripura and similar other States. The Sub-Committee was constituted with Jawaharlal Nehru, G. B. Pant, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and U. N. Dhebar.

In the meanwhile, the possibility of Tripura's merger with West Bengal as suggested once by the Greater Tripura Committee and the Cachar State Reorganization Committee was ruled out by the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly. In this situation, the Greater Tripura Committee mainly dominated by the

All Tripura Refugee Association gave a conditional support to Tripura's merger with Assam.

However, the Central Government did not attribute any importance to this demand of the Greater Tripura Committee. In April, 1956 it was heard that the State Reorganization Bill was ready and it would be tabled in parliament soon. Further, it was also heard that Tripura and seven other states were proposed to be made into Centrally Administered Territories to be ruled by Chief Commissioner who would enjoy more powers than Chief Commissioner of the existing part 'C' States.

At that stage, the Swatantra Tripura Committee, demanded that provisions for introduction of democratic governments in the Centrally Administered Territories must be there in the State Reorganization Bill and the Constitution of India should be amended accordingly.

The Joint Select Committee submitted its report on the State Reorganization Bill to the Lok Sabha on 16 July 1956. The Swatantra Tripura Committee carried on a sustained movement for protecting the separate politico-administrative entity of Tripura against the recommendation of SRC. Hundreds of meetings and processions were held. As a result, the Central Government at last accepted the demand of the Swatantra Tripura Committee. It was a great victory of the united movement of the people of Tripura. Thus, Tripura could maintain its separate politico-administrative entity. A Territorial Council came into being after the reorganization of states effected on 1 November 1956 and a democratic government was introduced in Tripura. People of Tripura accepted it as a temporary arrangement and called upon the people of Tripura irrespective of colour to remain united and to carry on movement for a full-fledged responsible government.

Both tribals and non-tribals carried on the movement for a responsible government. In view of the popular demand, the Central Government had to shift from its earlier policy to one of gradual democratization of Tripura Administration. Thus, after the reorganization of states in 1956, Tripura came to the threshold of democracy.

3.2.2 Statehood Movement: Second Phase

After the Second General Elections, Tripura Territorial Council (TTC) was formed under the Territorial Council Act, 1956. The Council consisted of thirty-two members out of which thirty members were elected on the basis of adult franchise and two members nominated by the Central Government. A diarchical form of Government was formed. Some of the wings of the Education, PWD, Medical and Agriculture Departments were transferred to the TTC, to be attained by it. Accordingly, the Medical and Public Health Department, Animal Husbandry wing of Agriculture, Department to construct roads, bridges and buildings were transferred to TTC to be run and managed under the direct guidance of the representatives of the people. Thus some autonomy was granted in local matters but with the provision of central interference at every step. This arrangement seemed to be a training of the public representatives in democratic government.

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The new arrangement, though partially fulfilled the demand for a popular government, could not satisfy the people's aspiration for self-government.

The Communist parties of India held public meeting at Agartala on 15 November 1957 in commemoration of the 'Day of November Revolution'. While speaking on the occasion, the leaders demanded that the powers of TTC, must be increased.

Besides agitation, some leading persons of Tripura took another step in 1960 when a Memorandum signed by them was circulated calling upon the countrymen to support the demand of the people of Tripura for a full-fledged responsible government. It was stated in the Memorandum that the Central Government was reported to have agreed to transfer some more departments to the Territorial Council in order to increase its sphere of activities and power. It was stated in the memorandum that the power of the Territorial Council might be increased to any extent but it could not either play the role of a Legislative Assembly or prevail over the all-powerful Chief Commissioner.

There was a mounting pressure on the Government of India for introducing a full-fledged responsible government in Tripura. The 'Santi Sena Bahini' (Volunteer Corps) under the banner of GMP held its conference from 18-20 March 1961 at Khowai. By a resolution of the Conference, the Santi Sena Bahini called upon the democratic people of Tripura to resist 'the autocratic rule of the Chief Commissioner and his anti-democratic acts and attacks on the democratic rights of the people of Tripura.

By another resolution, the Conference supported the demands of the people of Tripura, Manipur and Himachal Pradesh for Legislative Assemblies and asked the 'Santi Senas' to stand by the democratic people of Tripura in the struggle for Legislative Assembly.

Due to the increasing pressure, the Government of India decided to grant more constitutional status to Tripura. Accordingly, the Union Territories Act 1963 came into force on the 1 July 1963. 'A Union Territory', under the Act, 'shall be administered by an Administrator appointed by the President under Act, 239 of the Constitution. There shall also be a Legislative Assembly for each Union Territory. The total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly to be filled by persons chosen by direct election shall be forty in Himachal Pradesh and thirty in each of other territories. The Central Government may nominate not more than three persons as members of the Legislative Assembly.

With the introduction of the Government of Union Territories Act in Tripura, the TTC was abolished. The Tripura Territorial Council and the Tripura Administration thereafter merged into the government of Tripura. The first popular ministry was installed on 1 July 1963 in Tripura and the TTC, was converted into a Legislative Assembly.

The designation of the Administrator was changed from 'Chief Commissioner' to 'Lt. Governor' in the early part of 1970 but without any basic change in the structure of administration.

The machinery of representative Government in its dispensation was too inadequate to meet the increasing responsibilities. This time, the people of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizo Hills and the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) also agitated for fullest democracy. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the Central Government at last decided to grant Statehood to Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Union Territory hood to the Mizo Hills and the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).

The people of Tripura won the long lost battle. Tripura attained statehood. From the appointed date, a new state was established known as the 'State of Tripura'.

A machinery of Government consisting of a Governor as the constitutional head, a Legislative Assembly with sixty seats filled by direct election from single member territorial constituencies and a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly was introduced. The day of fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of the lakhs of people of Tripura came on 21 January 1972 when Tripura achieved a full-fledged responsible government. The people of Tripura got the opportunity to control their own destiny through their elected representatives chosen to carry out their mandates. With this, the transition of Tripura from absolute Monarchy to Parliamentary democracy was complete.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What were the demands raised by the Democratic Front during the period of 1952?
2. State the main purpose of Tripura Rajya Ganatantrik Sangha organization.
3. Name the six other Part 'C' states other than Tripura.
4. When did Tripura come to the threshold of democracy?

3.3 ELECTORAL POLITICS: POLITICAL PARTIES AND REGIONAL POLITICS

Tripura was under the rule of the Manikya Dynasty kings for nearly five hundred years. After the end of the rule of this dynasty, there were several political and socio-economic upheavals in the state of Tripura. The end of the Manikya Dynasty in particular was a disaster for the royalty since the kings were also looked upon as patriarchs. With the end of the reign of the kings, their say in the political and administration matters was limited and the tribal population was also affected adversely because of the great influx of refugees. By this time, the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) had already established a strong base among the tribes of the state and continued to demand the proper rehabilitation of the refugees. This was basically done to protect the rights and interests of the tribal community in the state. The CPI was under the leadership of Dasharath Deb and Nripen Chakraborty and continued to protect the backward tribal community from encroachment of their land and also economic marginalization. The State Congress

at that time was led by late Sachindra Lal Singha and Sukhamay Sengupta. The State Congress welcomed the influx of refugees as these settlers provided them with a strong electoral base.

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With the constitution coming into force, Tripura became a category 'C' state. The state came to be ruled by a Chief Commissioner without any state assembly. M. K. Roy who has been officiating as the Dewan of Tripura became the first Chief Commissioner when Tripura was acceded to the Indian Union as a category 'C' state. The first election to Agartala Municipality was held in November 1951. The election was held to elect a sixteen member municipality.

The first general elections took place in Tripura in January 1952 with the rest of the country. In this election, the CPI bagged both Lok Sabha seats and won by a convincing margin. A thirty member Electoral College was also constituted through secret ballot to choose the sole representative of the state to the Rajya Sabha. Again the CPI won by a convincing margin and Mr Arman Ali Munshi who was independent candidate was supported by the CPI and became the first representative of the state of Tripura in the Rajya Sabha.

Initially a single seat to the Rajya Sabha was provided for Tripura and Manipur to be represented for two years in the Rajya Sabha. After the stipulated period for Tripura lapsed, a similar Electoral College was formed in Manipur for two years. The Electoral College in Tripura however, remained in animated suspension and Maulana Abdul Latif was elected in 1956 as the second representative to the Rajya Sabha from Tripura. By now, the people of Tripura had started demanding for a representative government through an elected legislature. The state Congress was in favour of a representative government but the CPI was against the same. The first tentative step was taken by the President of India who acting upon the advice of the Union Home Ministry appointed a three-member advisory committee to assist the Chief Commissioner in running the administration of the state of Tripura. Senior congress leaders Mr Sachindra Lal Singha, Mr Sukhamay Sengupta and Mr Jitendra Thakur were nominated as advisors.

As Tripura was moving towards full-fledged statehood, the turmoil in neighbouring East Pakistan was posing great problems for India-Pakistan relationship. The political turmoil and the social disturbance in Pakistan led to huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan into Tripura. Tripura which was a small state with a very small population had an equal number of refugees to shelter. The state government in Tripura faced the daunting task of settling the refugees in the state while Tripura also became a launch pad for liberation war of Bangladesh against Pakistan. It was during this time that the then Chief Minister Sachindra Lal Singha developed poor relations with the Congress and earned the displeasure of Mrs Indira Gandhi. He lost the majority support in the legislative party and had to resign. This led to the imposition of President's Rule in Tripura in November 1971. The Union Government then headed by Mrs Indira Gandhi had to undertake the task of re-organization of the North East which meant creation of new states and union territories. After the Indo-Pak war of 1971, Dhaka fell to the Indian army and East Pakistan was lost by the Pakistanis. The second reorganization of northeast act was passed by parliament on 30 December 1971. The act became effective since

21 January 1972 making Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya full-fledged states and according union territory status on Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. The post of Lt Governor was immediately upgraded to that of governor and Mr Braja Kumar (B. K.) Nehru took over as Tripura's first governor.

The major political parties of Tripura included the following:

- (i) **Communist Party of India (Marxist):** The Communist Party of India (Marxist) commonly referred to as CPI (M) is one of the major political parties of India and is also a dominating political party in Tripura. The CPI (M) is a left-wing political party with a Communist political ideology. This party is deeply influenced by the writings of Lenin and Marx and propagates the ideas of social justice, equality, and a castles society. The CPI (M) claims to be a political party for the working class of India and aims at protecting the rights of workers, peasants, farmers and agriculturalists. The CPI (M) was formed in 1964 when some members of the Communist Party of India broke away from it. The CPI (M) split from the CPI because many of its leaders were of the opinion that the CPI was wrongly supporting the ideologies and policies of the Indian National Congress. Initially, the CPI (M) was referred to by several names but adopted the name CPI (M) during the Kerala Legislative Assembly Elections in 1965. The mass base of the party is drawn from the states of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala. The CPI (M) also leads the Left Front Alliance at the centre and forms a major opposition party to the ruling party at the centre. The CPI (M) is governed by a pyramidal hierarchical structure with the Polit Bureau at the head taking all the major decisions related to the party and its administration and functioning. The party operates on the principle of 'Democratic Centralism'.

Not everyone can become a member of the CPI(M). Potential comrades to the party are initiated into the teachings of Lenin and Marx by regular classes held by the party members or officials before these comrades become the ground-level members. The lowest rank in the party is the membership of the Branch Committee. The election symbol of the CPI (M) as approved by the Election Commission of India is a hammer and a sickle intersecting each other. This symbol is usually depicted on a red coloured flag. The symbol represents that the CPI (M) as a party is representative of workers, farmers, and labourers who work in the fields every day to earn a living. The hammer and sickle are essentially agricultural tools and weapons. The CPI (M) is of the opinion that the farmer works hard every day but is not paid enough and is also oppressed by the higher sections of the society. The CPI (M) with its Marxist ideologies and with the support of trade unions across the country addresses the issues of the workers.

As a national political party, the CPI (M) has made several contributions which are enumerated as follows:

- The CPI (M) made its strong presence felt in the states of West Bengal and Tripura where it is part of the Left Front and in Kerala as part of the Left Democratic Front. CPIM is in power in Tripura, headed by Manik Sarkar as the Chief Minister.

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- The CPI (M) has a number of principal mass organizations like Centre of Indian Trade Unions, All India Kisan Sabha, and Democratic Youth Federation of India. Each of these organizations works for the betterment of the poor and working class of the society.
- CPI (M) also has an All India Democratic Women's Association which has worked for the betterment of the women across the nation.

Achievements of CPI (M) in Tripura

Manik Sarkar, the Polit Bureau member of the CPI (M) and also the chief minister of Tripura in one of his speeches recently highlighted the achievements of the CPI (M) in Tripura. According to him, the state government had achieved the following objectives:

- Tripura has been able to achieve the second highest literacy rate in the country.
- The state has lowest difference in male-female literacy.
- Tripura has not registered a single case of farmer suicide over the last decade.
- The state government has also been able to implement land reforms, extend irrigation and facilitated bank finance for the promotion of agriculture in the state.
- The government has also taken several steps for the promotion and growth of industries including the food and agricultural industry, has exploration, rubber products and bamboo products. The growth of industries has provided the state with the required economic impetus.

The CPI (M) is the leading party in Tripura and is working constantly for the upliftment of the backward tribal population of the state. The CPI (M) is also working for the progress and growth of the state in all aspects and in all possible ways.

- (ii) **All India Trinamool Congress:** Tripura was governed by the Indian National Congress till 1977 after which the Left Front came into power in the state. The All India Trinamool Congress is a major political party of Tripura. The All India Trinamool Congress was formed as an off-shoot of the Indian National Congress. After remaining with the Indian National Congress, Mamta Banerjee formed her own party in Bengal called the All India Trinamool Congress. It is the fourth largest party in the Lok Sabha today.

The election symbol of the All India Trinamool Congress is 'twin flowers in grass' as approved by the Election Commission of India. The symbol has all the colours of the national flag and its slogan is 'Maa Mati Manush' which means 'Mother, Motherland and People'. The symbol of the All India Trinamool Congress represents the essence of India, of motherhood or the country. This party works for the welfare of the down-trodden people of the society.

The Trinamool Congress in Tripura is known as the Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress. Under the leadership of former leader of opposition and an MLA

of Tripura, Sudip Roy Burman, six MLAs deflected from the Indian National Congress and were followed by several ministers. These MLAs along with the ex-ministers, senior state and district leaders with the support of party workers joined the All India Trinamool Congress to fight the communists in Tripura. The Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress is working hard to achieve its goal of ousting the communists from the state of Tripura. The aim of the Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress is to form Maa Mati Manush government in the state of Tripura.

The Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress works for the oppressed and the backward tribal population of the state. It helps in the upliftment of the section of the society which is insignificant and also oppressed.

The following are the achievements of the All India Trinamool Congress:

- The All India Trinamool Congress has under it several frontal organizations. The student wing of the party is called the Trinamool Chhatra Parishad and has a domineering presence in many colleges in Bengal. The youth wing of the party is called the All India Trinamool Yuva while the women wing is called All India Mahila Trinamool Congress. Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress is the labour wing of this party. Together and at an individual level, all these organizations work for the betterment of the weaker section of the society.
- The Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress is also working and holds protests against the land-grabbing and eviction policies of the Communist Party. It also works for the welfare of the farmers as well as the peasants in the state.
- The Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress has also created several government jobs in the state for the poor people. It has also initiated welfare policies for the minority section in the state and has also implemented beneficiary policies in the state for girl child.

(iii) **Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP):** The Bhartiya Janta Party is today one of the most prominent parties in India as well as Tripura. The BJP is one of the most prominent organizations of the Sangh Parivar and is nurtured by the RSS. The BJP has as its agenda the national unity and integrity. The RSS and thereby, the BJP believes in 'Justice for All and Appeasement of None'. The BJP is one of the few parties to have a popular based governing structure. The workers as well as the leaders at local levels have a great say in all matters of the party and the highest post in the party is held by the President. The constitution of the BJP allows three year term for the President of the party. There are other important posts as well in the party, that of the Vice-President, Treasuries, General-Secretaries and Secretaries. The party also has a National Executive committee which includes of all senior party leaders from across the nation and this committee acts as the decision making body of the party. The structure of the party at the state level is also the same.

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In Tripura, the BJP is gaining popularity because of its work for the tribal population. The party, however, is nowhere near the CPI (M) when it comes to popularity but it is slowly and steadily increasing its voter base in the state. The party has prepared a roadmap for the development of the state of Tripura and strengthening its base in the state. The party workers are spreading awareness about the ideology of the party in the state of Tripura and trying to get facilities to the door steps of the people. In short, BJP is making every possible effort to gain a large electoral base in the state of Tripura.

- (iv) **Communist Party of India (CPI):** The Communist Party of India is another political party which has dominated the electoral politics of the state of Tripura. On 26 December 1925, a few ardent young patriots moved by the urge to free the motherland from colonial bondage, inspired by the Great October Socialist Revolution and fired with revolutionary zeal, braved imperialist persecution and came together in the city of Kanpur, to form the Communist Party of India with a view to fight for national independence and a future of socialism. The CPI was formed at the time of anti-imperialist struggle of the nation and was born out of the disillusionment of the national-revolutionaries. The CPI has been a very successful party in Tripura mainly because of the fact that the party workers do a lot of ground work and are also always available for the people of the state. The party workers work in villages and tribal regions of the state and therefore have a lot of following and support of the village community. The CPI worked for social justice and equality and also demanded reservation for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the state. It also worked against the caste-system and oppression in the society. The CPI however, lost its status as a national political party in 2014. In Tripura, the party is an ally of the governing Left Front. There are several frontal organizations associated with the CPI which work for the welfare of the peasants, workers, women, students and farmers.

Tripura and in fact all of the North East region of India has diverse socio-economic communities and therefore the region cannot be regarded as one homogenous administrative, political and geographic community. In the entire north east region, there are differences on the basis of the religion, race, caste, creed, language and political opinions. This gives each of the states of the North East a unique characteristic. Therefore, an interesting feature of all states of the North East is ethnic politics. Regional politics in the various states of the North East plays an important role in the administration of the states. In most of the states of North East, the ethnic people have united and have formed their own view which is much against the policies and plans of the central government. In addition, each of these ethnic communities has its own world-view and has developed a presence independent of the other communities. These ethnic communities have urged for autonomy within or outside the constitutional framework in all the states of the North East. The same holds true for Tripura as well.

This urge for autonomy and independent existence has led to the formation of several regional political parties in Tripura. These regional parties have been formed as it is believed that the national parties have failed to represent the people and meet the needs and demands of the various ethnic communities in the required manner. The number of regional political parties is increasing in Tripura as well as the other North Eastern states as these regional parties call themselves the true representatives of the backward population that inhabits the region.

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(v) **National Liberation Front of Tripura:** It is a leading regional party of Tripura. This party has about 550-850 members. The National Liberation Front of Tripura has the aim of seceding Tripura from India and establishing an independent Tripura state. The Baptists Church of Tripura was set up in 1940s by missionaries from New Zealand. Despite the efforts of the Church, only a few people converted to Christianity till 1980s. An aftermath of the same was the birth of the National Liberation Front of Tripura. The party has the backing of the Baptist Church of Tripura and has undertaken the task of freeing Tripura through the use of arms. The activities of this organization are so intense that it is often termed as a terrorist organization in India.

(vi) **Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra (INPT):** It is a political party in Tripura. The Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra was formed by the merger of Indigenous People's Front of Tripura and the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti in 2002. This party is considered to be political wing of the National Liberation Front of Tripura. The formation of this political party was pushed by the activities of the National Liberation Front of Tripura which wanted to unite all tribal nationalist forces under a single political party. The Indigenous People's Front of Tripura has a majority in the ADC of Tripura and therefore, the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra came to govern the ADC till 2003. In the summer of 2003, however, a few members of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAAADC) broke away from the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra and formed Nationalist Socialist Party of Tripura. Consequently, the Nationalist Socialist Party of Tripura with the backing of CPI (M) was able to win the majority in legislative assembly and the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra formed the opposition.

In the 2003 assembly elections, the INPT formed an alliance with the Indian National Congress wherein the INPT launched eighteen candidates from its side and the members of the Congress were forty-two. Six candidates of the INPT won but the party lost the elections as the Left Front won. The INPT as of now has one MLA to the Tripura State Legislative Assembly.

(vii) **The National Conference of Tripura:** It is a new regional political party which was formed in 2006. The National Conference of Tripura has been formed by Rabindra Kishore Debbarma, formerly of the GMP of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM) in Tripura, and Animesh Debbarma of The Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra (INPT).

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5. What was the aim of National Liberation Front of Tripura?
6. Why were several regional parties formed in Tripura?
7. State the aim of The Communist Party of India (Marxist).
8. What is the main objective of Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress?

3.4 PRESSURE GROUPS

In any country, especially a democratic one, there are several groups that are organized to directly or indirectly influence politics and the government. Such groups are formed by members who are united for a specific cause or for a specific interest. These groups are called pressure groups. Pressure groups in the existing times play an important role in the administrative system and its success. The pressure groups work in such a manner that they pressurize the government or the political system of the country to promote their interests or at least recognise these and not relegate these to the background. It has been observed that the administrative system cannot function properly and successfully without taking the viewpoint of these pressure groups into consideration. In India, especially where there is a scarcity of resources and acute poverty, the pressure groups exert a lot of pressure on the administrative system and machinery.

Pressure groups have been in existence ever since the government machinery became capable of delivering certain benefits to the citizens and the society. With the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of market oriented economies, these pressure groups became even more popular and active in their work. In the market oriented economies, the struggle over budget and the emergence of monopolies and trusts led to the formation of pressure groups. The advancement of technology further triggered the rate at which the pressure groups have been growing. The advancement of technology and the requirement of new skills led to new needs and desires which eventually led to the formation of new organizations and groups that could advance their common interests. With so much happening in the economy, the state assumed various welfare functions and the need to pressurise the state into implementing these welfare functions in the right interest arose which further led to the active involvement of pressure groups in the society.

Pressure groups in fact work for social integration, political articulation and act as catalysts for change by exerting pressure on the political and administrative system which in turn becomes more responsive and responsible.

A renowned political scientist, Samuel Edward Finer opined that pressure groups can be considered as ‘anonymous empire’; whereas Richard D. Lambert views it as ‘unofficial government’. The pressure groups influence public policy and administration and contribute to the determination of the political structure of the

society. Pressure group can be formally defined as, 'a social group which seeks to influence the, behaviour of any political officer, both administrative as well as legislative, without attempting to gain formal control of the government'.

A lot of times, pressure groups are considered synonymous to interest groups but pressure groups are not interest groups. Interest groups are groups organized by people who seek to promote specific interests. Interest groups are in fact well-organized groups of people who have common interests. It is the interest that unites the members of interest groups and the members work to seek, attain and protect these common interests. A pressure group, on the other hand, exerts pressure on the government or the administrative machinery for the fulfilment of its interests. Therefore, an interest group may also exist without exerting pressure on the government or the decision makers whereas pressure groups are interest groups that exert pressure on the administrative and political machinery. Thus, every pressure group is an interest group whereas every interest group is not a pressure group.

The difference between pressure groups and interest groups can be summarised as follows:

- An interest group is organized and interest-oriented whereas a pressure group is structured and pressure focused.
- An interest group may or may not influence government policies whereas a pressure group always influences the policies of the government.
- An interest group is softer in its outlook whereas a pressure group is very harsh in its attitude.
- An interest group is more or less protective in nature whereas a pressure group is protective and promotive in nature.

A pressure group is not a political party. Political parties are formed by individuals who share common interests and preferences and have a vision for the future. Political parties are in the true sense of the word 'political'. They are organized on ideological lines and have trained cadres and workers who are engaged in continuous political mobilization of masses. They use all kinds of political means to gain power and consolidate their position and attain and achieve their organizational as well as ideological goals. In a broader sense, the political parties are interest groups as they have a social base whose interests they need to promote and secure. As interest groups, the political parties act in the immediate context and act pragmatically. Political parties may even come to the level of pressure groups to extract benefits for their party and people. In such a situation, the distinction between a political party and a pressure group may completely disappear.

Pressure groups unlike political parties are formed to solve their immediate problems and are temporary as compared to the political parties. A pressure group may even be formed for a short time period if it does not aim at working for a long time period. This generally happens when the pressure group does not have a long-range programme. A pressure group may, on the other hand, be formed for a long time period when the interests to be achieved are universal in nature and take a long time to be achieved.

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Pressure groups are well-organized and may also be well-knit. They, however, do not have well-trained cadres and may not be involved with the people directly. The pressure groups usually do not deal with the people directly, however, they deal with government agencies and political parties. Pressure groups are far more flexible as compared to political parties as they never approach people to stake their claims for power. Therefore, like political parties, pressure groups never want to be in power and deal with the people directly. They are in fact formed in order to promote the common interests and make sure that these are met by the government machinery.

They play a significant role in the democratic functioning of a polity. They seek to promote, discuss, debate and mobilize public opinion on major public issues in the society and thereby, bring about changes in the public policy. These pressure groups in their process or activities educate people and widen their vision to participate more in the democratic process and raise their voice when faced with issues of interest. The pressure groups make use of various techniques and practices when working. These are discussed in the following pages:

- **Lobbying:** Lobbying is not an activity that pressure groups usually indulge in though the term 'lobbying' is often used to signify the activities carried out by the members of the pressure groups. Lobbying takes place when a few members of the pressure groups loiter in the lobbies of the legislatures with the view of influencing the decisions of the legislators by getting a chance to interact with the legislators. Lobbying is thus a communication process used by some members of the pressure groups to persuade the members to take decisions in their interest. Lobbying as a process is used in all administrative and political policy formation and links the citizens and the decision makers in the administrative system. Lobbying is, therefore, not an organization or a group but one of the activities that a few members of a pressure group can indulge in. Lobbying as a technique is used by pressure groups to influence the choice of candidates, formulation of election manifestos, and adoption of programmes by political parties thereby making it an important technique in the election campaign of the political parties. Thus, pressure groups in many ways support political parties during elections. 'The existence of pressure groups and the use of techniques of lobbying, rightly observes J. C. Johri, is conspicuous in a free and open society where the obligation of the government to consult the governed is recognised and institutionalised through guarantee of freedoms of speech, press and assembly along with the right of the people to petition the government for the redressal of their grievances.'
- **Use of party platforms:** Though pressure groups are not political parties, they do try to use the party platforms for furthering their interests. The pressure groups use lobbying, persuasion, speeches and contacts to try to get the support of political parties. These groups in order to secure the support and trust of political parties often take part in the election campaigns of the political parties and even influence the selection of candidates and formation of political mandates. Through these political parties, the pressure groups try to penetrate into the legislature and the assemblies. In fact, in

India especially, every political party has an interest group within its structure. These pressure groups are favourably inclined towards the party and further the interests of the party as well.

- **Electioneering:** Pressure groups often exploit election times for their advantage. The pressure groups never contest elections but a lot of times, they try to influence the choice of the candidates in elections. Some pressure groups even participate in the election campaigns of the political parties to which they are inclined. They take part in electioneering with the view of ensuring that it is 'their candidate' who emerges victorious in the elections. The pressure groups participate in electioneering to directly influence the results or the outcome of the elections. Behind the party labels, the pressure groups support the political parties to secure their interests and ensure that their demands are met or at least brought to the forefront.
- **Propaganda and mass media:** The development of communication and media technology has enabled the pressure groups today to make use of propaganda and media to further their interests. Pressure groups always try to secure such provisions in the election manifestos of political parties and then make use of media to secure public support to further their interests and demands. Advertisements in papers, means of mass media and other means enable the pressure groups to secure public attention towards their demands.

Through mass media, the pressure groups also seek public support in campaigns that are launched to seek their demands and interests. Through lobbying and contacts with the Press, the pressure groups make sure that their interests, demands and activities reach the general public. The pressure groups also write letters to the editors of newspapers and by taking part in discussions and debates on television and radios, these pressure groups make sure that everyone knows about them and their activities. Mass media is used by the pressure groups to get the goodwill of the public opinion and to bring about the desired changes in the government policies and functions.

- **Strike:** Strike has emerged as one of the most popular and common techniques to be used by pressure groups to further secure their interests and demands. The use of strikes is mainly done by stopping work for a short time period, the pressure groups try to coerce the responsible authorities to give in to the demands of the pressure groups. Strike is a weapon of offence used by pressure groups to demonstrate the harm, loss and inconvenience that can be caused by temporary stoppage of work. Strike involves direct application of pressure by the pressure groups to secure their interests and also exhibit the unity that the pressure groups have when it comes to their interests and their fulfilment. An indefinite strike is usually called for by a pressure group as an ultimate means to achieve their interests and demands. The indefinite strike method is a direct pressure method used to coerce the managing authorities to accept the demands of the pressure groups. In the words of Bondurant, "The

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strike is commonly used to affect economic pressure and is intended to hurt business, or to strain relationship so that normal functions are brought to a half, or at least inhibited.' When pressure groups call for a strike, normal functioning cannot be assumed till the demands of the pressure group have been met.

Bandh is also a form of strike which is a technique used by the pressure groups to secure their interests and demands. Bandhs are however, practiced on a large and a wider scale and cover more area than a strike usually does. A bandh involves a total stoppage of all work and activity by all the people of the bandh area and not a mere stoppage of work by the members of a pressure group or some groups or parties. It is kind of pressure technique in which organized violence can take place and, as such is a dreaded means of instant pressure. Bandh therefore, is a destructive weapon and is used by only large and powerful pressure groups.

- **Demonstrations:** Demonstrations are used by pressure groups to exhibit their solidarity and also to get the attention of the general public as well as the government on their demands. Demonstrations involve processions, rallies, dharnas and black flag marches. Demonstrations are used as a means of direct action by the pressure groups so that the managing or responsible authorities accept their demands. Demonstrations are perhaps one of the most recognised activities carried out by the pressure groups.
- **Gherao:** *Gherao* is a technique in which the members of a pressure group encircle the officials or the responsible authorities in a particular place and do not allow them to carry on their routine activities. This technique is used by the pressure groups to coerce the officials and responsible authorities to meet the demands of the pressure groups. Doctor J. C. Johri opines that '*Gherao* is the most reprehensible technique of agitation politics and its occurrence cannot be justified even by the canon of expediency. However, in actual practice, at least it is very true of our country; *Gherao* is frequently used as a weapon by the pressure groups, particularly by anomic interest groups, for securing the acceptance of their demands'.

Usually pressure groups first try to secure their interests and demands by activities like propaganda, lobbying and press and it is when these methods fail to achieve the desired outcomes, then the pressure groups resort to other methods and techniques like strikes, demonstrations and bandhs.

The following are the characteristics of pressure groups:

- Each pressure group is based on certain interests. A pressure group organizes itself on the basis of a specific interest and tries to adopt a structure of power in a political system to further these interests. In a democracy, there are several clashing interest groups and therefore, each interest group tries to dominate the political structure to suppress the other groups thereby resulting in clashes.

- Pressure groups make use of modern as well as traditional means of exerting pressure. Their traditional means include exploiting people on the basis of caste and religion to promote their interests. The modern means include demonstrations and use of mass media and the aim of using these means is to exert pressure on the responsible authorities so that the interests of the pressure groups are fulfilled.
- Pressure groups usually emerge because of increasing pressure on resources and increasing demand of the limited resources. In a developing economy, where the resources are limited, the demand for resources is ever increasing and therefore while some get access to these resources, the others are denied these resources. Those who are denied of the resources usually are unhappy and are bound to show their resentment. It is these people who ultimately form pressure groups so that their needs and demands can be met.
- Pressure groups are alternatives to inadequacies of the political parties. Political parties are basically formed to meet the needs and demands of the deprived sections of the society. However, most of the times, political parties fail to do so and are unable to meet the needs and demands of the poor and deprived sections of the society. This is where the pressure groups come in. These groups keep a check on the political parties and their policies and ensure that the needs of the deprived sections of the society are taken care of.
- Pressure groups represent changing consciousness. The pressure groups by putting forward their interests and demands bring about material consciousness. Through their activities, the pressure groups educate people and especially the backward ones who thereby become aware of their own needs and materialistic requirements. Through their awareness programs, the pressure groups make the general public aware of how the limited resources are going into the hands of a few and why the general public is being deprived of the same. For instance, in the State of Rajasthan, a people's organization known as 'Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghathan' (MKSS), could succeed in making the people question and demand information on money spent on roads; loans to poor and so on. This made the basis for the right to information movement. Similarly, the 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' (NBA) movement has generated consciousness amongst the people in questioning the actions of government regarding dam construction and its repercussions.

3.4.1 Types of Pressure Groups

Pressure groups can be classified as:

- **Institutional Interest Groups:** Institutional groups are formally organized and consist of professionally employed persons. These groups are a part of the government machinery and try to exert their influence but they do not have much autonomy. Institutional interest groups include political parties,

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armies and legislatures. When such pressure groups protest, they do so by constitutional means and in accordance with the rules and regulations.

- **Associational Pressure Groups:** Associational pressure groups are organized groups that are formed to pursue limited goals. Such groups include trade unions, organizations of businessmen and industrialists. Some examples of Associational Interest Groups in India are Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Indian Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions such as AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress), Teachers Associations and Students Associations such as National Students Union of India (NSUI).
- **Anomic Pressure Groups:** Anomic pressure groups are formed in the shape of movements that exhibit demonstrations and protests. The activities of such pressure groups can be constitutional or non-constitutional.
- **Non-Associated Pressure Groups:** These pressure groups do not have an organized structure and are not formally organised. These groups are formed on the basis of individuals, families, caste, religion and language.

Pressure groups in Tripura have grown basically because of the fact that the population of the state is mostly tribal and backward. The state is economically weak and the economy is also agricultural. The state also does not generate enough revenue to meet the needs and demands of the tribal population. The pressure groups in Tripura have organized themselves in such a manner that they neither support nor oppose any political party. The pressure groups try to remain neutral in politics but do not work independently. Pressure groups in Tripura rather work under the patronage of some political party or another and in general are required to consider their religion, caste, ethnicity and region rather than political ideology.

In Tripura, the pressure groups try to create lawlessness and disorder. They make use of all possible techniques of pressure and do not stick to any single technique of exerting pressure to secure their interests and demands. Most of these pressure groups in Tripura are anomic organizations and have no political commitment.

3.4.2 Pressure Groups in Tripura

In case of Tripura, the following kinds of pressure groups can be found:

- **Business Groups:** The business groups are the most important types of pressure groups. They are independent of political parties and also the most effective. These groups exert varied kinds of pressures; they try to influence planning, licensing bodies and economic ministries. In Tripura, where the economic resources are not optimally exploited, these groups play an important role in ensuring that the resources are made use of in an optimal manner and allocated properly to safeguard the interests of the local population.
- **Trade Unions:** Trade unions are by far the most important pressure groups that can be found in Tripura and in fact the whole of the country. Trade unions were present prior to independence as well and the communist movement and the growth of communist parties also played a major role in the growth of trade unions and their activities. Trade unions are closely affiliated to political parties across the country. The strength of trade unions is well

recognised by the political parties as well all important government organizations. Their main weapon is strike and they resort to strike whenever they want their demands to be fulfilled. With the increasing interest of the public sector undertakings in the state of Tripura because of the large resource base of the state, the activity of the trade unions has increased in order to prevent the interests of the workers.

- **Peasant Organizations:** Peasant organizations are considered as one of the most active pressure groups in the state of Tripura because majority of the population in the state is dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. Besides this, most of the people work on a daily wage basis and face a lot of exploitation at the hands of the elite or the ones in power. Peasant organizations at the state level are generally independent of the political parties and are based on regional basis. The demands of the peasant pressure groups relate to procurement prices of agricultural products, fertiliser subsidy, tenancy rights and electricity charges.
- **Student Organizations:** Student organizations in Tripura are pressure groups formed by the youth to ensure that education is made available to all. These pressure groups works to ensure that a good quality of education is imparted to the students and that the state achieves a hundred percent literacy rate in the state. Most of the student pressure groups are affiliated to some political party. The activities of these pressure groups are not confined to educational issues alone and they try to pressurise the government into formulation of policies that are beneficial for the student community. Twipra Students Federation is one of the most known pressure groups. This pressure group was formed as the Tribal Students Federation in 1968. Twipra Students Federation has been the foremost and the most popular ethno-nationalist pressure group among the tribal students of the state of Tripura. The aim of this pressure group was to protect the educational rights and interests of the tribal students who formed the majority of student population of the state. Like student organizations, there are teacher organizations as well that work to protect the interests of the teachers.
- **Community Associations:** In the state of Tripura, several community associations are also present. These pressure groups are formed on the basis of caste, class and religion and Tripura being a state with multiple cultural and ethnic diversities, these pressure groups are bound to emerge and take active part in the formulation of government policies that would be of advantage to the community at large. Organizations like Scheduled Caste Federation, Backward Caste Federation are known to be active in the state of Tripura.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9. State the aim of Twipra Students Federation.
10. When are Anomic pressure groups formed?
11. State the importance of pressure groups.

3.5 MOVEMENTS BY GANAMUKTI PARISHAD, NAXALITES, PEASANTS AND LABOUR

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The state of Tripura has a large number of tribal communities inhabiting the state. The tribal population of Tripura is considered to be backward in the sense that it is not only cut off from the rest of the nation but is also devoid of the basic amenities and facilities. The tribal population not only suffers from poor infrastructure but also from a poor and slowly developing economy. In addition, the state of Tripura because of its sensitive location and inappropriate geography is prone to several disasters that in turn affect the lives of the tribal population.

Conflict is a universal phenomenon and is much visible and prominent in the state of Tripura where the ethnic tribal population does not trust the non-tribal population. Tribal movements and other movements in the state of Tripura have been formative in bringing out these conflicts and also in the social development of Tripura. In fact, it is in Tripura only that the tribal movements assumed and are still assuming a strong character. These movements in Tripura aim at safeguarding and protecting the rights and interests of the tribal population. The movements also aim to forge political unity between the tribal and non-tribal groups so that the state can develop and progress.

3.5.1 Movements by Ganamukti Parishad

The leader in these movements in Tripura has been the Tripura Rajaer Upajati Ganamukti Parishad which is also known as the Tripura State Tribal People's Liberation Council. The Ganamukti Parishad is a Left-wing movement that works amongst the tribal population of Tripura. Being Left-wing movement, the Ganamukti Parishad supports social equality instead of social hierarchy and social inequality. This movement typically shows concern for those people in the society who are considered to be at a disadvantage as compared to other sections of the society.

The origins of the Ganamukti Parishad and in fact socio-political movements in Tripura can be traced back to the 1940s when the royal house of Tripura was trying to maintain its political hold over the state. The monarchy was however challenged at that time by the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India. Both the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India proposed democratic reforms but they were opposed by the royal house and that too in a stern fashion.

In 1946, members of the Janamangal Samiti, Janashiksha Samiti, the local cell of the Communist party and also the individual left-wingers together formed the Tripura Rajya Prajamandal or the Tripura State Popular Assembly. This assembly proposed to form a constitutional monarchy for the state. The Prajamandal included both communists and non-communists. A ban was proposed on the organization in 1948. The basis of this ban was the fact that the organization was considered to be under the influence of communists in East Pakistan. This caused the non-communist members of the Prajamandal to expel the communist members of the organization. However, the ban on the Prajamandal was imposed before the expulsions could

take place. This led to the arrest of several leaders of the Prajamandal and several cadres went into hiding. The royal government in repressing the Prajamandal did not differentiate between the communists and the non-communists and therefore, in many ways contributed to support the communists within the organization. The Prajamandal on the Independence Day took out a militant manifestation in Agartala. At the same time, the movement participated actively in the tribal struggle for land rights. After the partition of the country, Tripura received a major influx of refugees from East Pakistan and the Bengali money-lenders started to take over the agricultural land from the indebted tribal population. Prajamandal organized resistance against this and soon this resistance changed into a movement. The movement resulted in clashes in several regions and in one incident in police firing nine people of a tribal community were killed and several other injured. The military set up camps in the tribal areas of the state with the sole objective of uprooting the Prajamandal. The Prajamandal leaders considered that fighting against the increasing repression was of no use and so decided to dissolve the organization.

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In the void that emerged after the dissolution of the Prajamandal, the tribal leaders formed the Tripura Rajaer Mukti Parishad or the Tripura State Liberation Council commonly called the Mukti Parishad. The Mukti Parishad demanded the freedom of expression and association and also raised the slogan of 'Democratic Rights for the People of Tripura'.

In March 1949, Tripura was placed under the military rule and several leaders of the Mukti Parishad went underground to avoid arrests. In the tribal areas of the state, the Ganamukti Parishad organized armed resistance against the military rule. The Mukti Parishad also set up the Shanti Sena or the Peace Army inspired by the advances of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. This Shanti Sena routed the military troops of the administration from the tribal belts of the state. These areas came to be known as liberated areas where people's government was in power and the village committees were ruled by the members of the Ganamukti Parishad. It was these village communities that were managing the everyday affairs and the tribal population was not required to pay taxes to the government. Also, the tribal population did not feel the need to approach courts to express their queries. The Ganamukti Parishad slowly and steadily brought about a cultural revolution in the liberated tribal areas. As a result of which, evils like child marriage, oppression of women, forced labour and excessive alcohol consumption were all outlawed and abolished by the GMP. Thus, the GMP was able to bring about a change in the tribal society.

Armed resistance in the state lasted till 1951 and then the strategies of the Ganamukti Parishad changed because of the change in the political climate of the state. By this time, the Communist Party of India had started to hold strong foot-hold in the state and the polity of the state. By the end of 1949, several leaders of the Ganamukti Parishad had joined the Communist Party of India. The struggle of the GMP was taken over-ground with the support of the CPI.

In the first parliamentary elections in India in 1952, both the seats of the Lok Sabha were won by the Communist Party of India in Tripura. The elected MPs, Biren Dutta and Dasrath Deb were stalwarts of the Ganamukti Parishad. Dasrath

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Deb, the President of the GMP was still considered a guerrilla leader on the run and wanted by the police. The cases against him were not dropped until he was pardoned by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru when Deb was able to reach the parliament premises for his first session without having been recognised by anyone.

The bulk members of the GMP were from the tribal population but the Ganamukti Parishad was not an exclusive tribal organization. Once the armed struggle had ended, there were questions within the CPI regarding the future role of the GMP. Some leaders of the CPI were of the opinion that because the GMP had mainly agrarian associations, the GMP should be integrated with the peasant mass organization of the party. This would mean that the tribal and the Bengali peasants would fight united to further their interests. Others, such as Deb, were of the opinion that the tribals were not merely peasants but also constituted a separate sub-national entity and that the GMP should be a tribal organization articulating the sub-nationalist consciousness of the tribal community.

In the beginning of 1960s, there was a split in the CPI. The Communist Party of India stood divided into two camps on the issue of relationship with the Congress. In 1964, the split actually happened when two different congresses of the party were held—one by the CPI and the other by the CPI (M). However, it was agreed by both the units that the GMP would not be split. The GMP left intact for the sake of unity of the mass organization movement that it initially was. However, by 1967, the split also reached the GMP. This split ended in the victory of the CPI (M) and its leader within the GMP. The GMP was renamed Upajati (i.e., Tribal) Ganamukti Parishad. As a consequence of the split in the GMP, non-tribal members were not allowed to seek the membership of the GMP. Following this conference, the CPI formed its own GMP with Aghore Deberrama as the leader but since its foundation, this organization has not played any major role in the politics of the state.

In 1983, the All Tripura Peoples Liberation Organization (ATPLO) was integrated into the Ganamukti Parishad after giving up their arms. The ATPLO was triggered as a splinter group of Tripura National Volunteers and a turf war within the TNV turned into a bloody fight leaving the ATPLO no option but to integrate into the GMP. The GMP is today affiliated with the All India Kisan Sabha which is the mass peasant organization of the CPI (M). The GMP however maintains its own organizational characters and is an entirely tribal organization today.

3.5.2 Naxalite Movement

Naxalite is a term which is very commonly used in the Indian lexicon. Naxalite is basically a movement initiated by the Maoists who aim at overthrowing the constitution of India by force and establishing dictatorship in the country. The movement began in the Naxalbari block of the Siliguri district in Darjeeling. The social base of the movement varies in different regions and the Naxalite movement even today affects almost half of India's states. The conflict began in 2004 when the CPI (Maoist) was formed. The CPI (Maoist) was a rebel group which was formed by the members of People's War Group and Maoist Communist Centre.

In some regions, the Naxalite movements consist of peasants with small or no landholdings while in other areas it consists of tribal population. The movement in Andhra Pradesh is centric but has also affected the other states of North East. The term Naxalite, for people who are a part of this movement, refers to a movement or a struggle for basic rights. The naxalite are aware of what their basic rights are and what their struggle is for and at the same time have complete knowledge of the government machinery. The naxalite stand against the government and clash with it from time to time as they hold the government responsible for their condition. The ideology in the adivasi areas and especially the tribal regions of Tripura is however, not clear and the above stated ideology is seen missing because the tribal population does not know of what the movement stands for and the naxalite use these people to further their cause instead of fighting for and with them. The naxalite in Tripura therefore, is characterised by a motivational leader having the support of dispossessed poor people but the support base is so large that it presents a challenge to the government and the authorities on how to handle the situation or suppress the movement.

According to a *Times of India* report of 2 August 2011, 'The Maoists have attacked as many as 1241 economic targets, damaging railway properties, telephone exchanges, towers, electricity lines and power plants across nine states. The daily loss of innocent lives and the destruction of welfare utilities such as schools and economic targets are indeed staggering. India has never been so bloodied by its "own".'

The basis of the Naxalite movement is a war of ideologies. Naxalism is a war between democracy and all that it stands for and dictatorship which is against the freedom that democracy believes in. The armed wing of the Naxalite-Maoists is known as the People Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA). This organization is believed to have a large number of cadres usually in possession of small arms. The Naxalite claim to be supporters of the adivasi or the tribal population which is considered to be the poorest section of the Indian society. The Naxalite on the face of it claim to follow a strategy of rural rebellion against the government.

The causes of Naxalite movement in Tripura are enumerated as follows:

- **Social inequity and exploitation:** Inequity and exploitation of the tribal population are the main causes of Naxalite movement in Tripura. The tribal population was not only exploited by landlords and moneylenders but also the zamindars. The tribal population was landless and did not get enough share of either the crop or the revenue which led to poverty and destitution of the tribal population. The Naxalite movement supported this destitute tribal population in taking up arms against the government and its policies and to fight for its rights.
- **Alienation of forest land:** Alienation of tribal land and forest land was one of the major reasons as to why the tribal population could not develop economically. The alienation took place because of the restriction of access to forest land by government policies. Forest land was an exclusive domain of the tribal population and to implement the access restriction policies,

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the government even resorted to harassing the tribal population. This loss left the tribal population discontented and the Naxalite supported the tribal population in showing their discontent against the government.

- **Policies of the state:** The policies of the state also disturbed the equilibrium in the tribal society. The social structure of the tribal society was also conducive to mass mobilization which in turn affected the population adversely. The policies of the state filled the tribal population with resentment and the intervention of the Naxalite was a chance for the tribal population to raise its voice against the government.

The Naxalite conflict is an on-going one and it is also a destructive one. The Government of India has taken several measures to curb the movements of the Naxalite. Some of these include:

- Ban on the CPI Maoists has been imposed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967
- A unified command has been set up to carry out anti-Naxal operations in the naxal dominant areas
- The state police has been modernised and provided modern weapons and latest infrastructure to counter the naxalite attacks
- Central Armed Police Forces, Indian Reserve Battalions and Commando Battalions for Resolute Action have been sanctioned for the states where the Naxal activity is commonly observed so that anti-Naxal operations can be carried out
- The government is also providing additional resources for the development of the backward section of the society to improve the social and physical infrastructure that the tribal population has access to

Case Study 1: All Tripura Tiger Force

The All Tripura Tiger Force or the ATTF is an isolationist and Naxal group of Tripura. This group was formed in July 1990 by a group of former Tripura National Volunteers members. The ATTF is currently considered as a terrorist organization in India and 90 per cent of the administration of this group is Hindus while the rest are Muslims.

The aims of the ATTF include the following:

- To expel all Bengali speaking settlers in Tripura who settled in Tripura after 1956
- To return the tribal lands to the original tribal owners of the land and thereby protect the land rights of the tribal population under the Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act
- To purge the voter rolls of all immigrants and insurgents who settled in Tripura after 1956

Thus, this organization aims to establish a state free of immigrants. The objective of the ATTF is to establish Tripura as a tribal land since the tribal population is considered to be the ethnic inhabitants of the state.

3.5.3 Peasant and Labour Movements

Peasant and labour movements have also been an integral part of the society of Tripura. This is because the population of Tripura mainly relies on agriculture for its livelihood. The population of Tripura works on daily wages basis as labourers to earn the bare minimum. However, the state of Tripura is economically weak and backward and does not have the basic amenities. Most of the people are so poor that they cannot afford to own even small land holdings and therefore they have to work as labourers to earn their living. In this respect, they are exploited by the landlords and sometimes not even given their daily wage. This has also contributed to chronic poverty among the people of Tripura. This oppression and inequality in the society has led to several peasant and labour movements take shape in the state.

The Ganamukti Parishad was one of the first organizations in Tripura to have started a peasant movement. The organization was founded by Dasrath Deb who wanted to bring the tribal people on a common platform to rise against oppression and the weak state policies. Dasrath Deb led an armed struggle against the feudal rule of the kings in Tripura in order to secure the rights of the peasants.

The All India Kisan Sabha was also pivotal in peasant movements and uprisings in the state of Tripura. The All India Kisan Sabha was the peasant front of the undivided Communist Party of India. The All India Kisan Sabha started a movement called the Kisan Sabha Movement in Bihar and this movement spread all across the nation and even to Tripura. The main aims of the movement were as follows:

- To save the peasants from exploitation from all sections of the society
- To abolish the zamindari and the jagirdari system and return the land to the original owners of the land
- To save the peasants from economic exploitation and give them their rights and share at the economic front
- To reduce the rates of land revenue so that the peasants could earn a better livelihood
- To enable peasants waive off their debts
- To provide for better irrigation facilities

The All India Kisan Sabha has its presence in Tripura and continues to fight for the rights of the peasants in the state for their upliftment and to give them a better standard of living.

Forced labour is another problem that the tribal population of Tripura faces. Since the economic state of the tribal population of the state is very poor, most of the people fail to own even a small piece of land and therefore, have to work as labourers in the fields of other landlords. In most cases, the labourers work on a daily wages basis and even face exploitation at the hands of the landlords who at the end of the day do not pay the wages also to the labourers. This has led to the emergence of several labour revolts in the state of Tripura. The labour revolts usually are carried out by stoppage of work and many times also take a violent turn when the labourers take up arms against the landlords. Labour revolts in Tripura aim at stopping forced

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labour and to ensure that the labourers get the bare minimum which is their right so that they can at least sustain a livelihood.

For the welfare of the labour in Tripura, a Labour Organization was also set up in the state in 1951 under one labour office. This was upgraded to Labour Directorate in 1965 under the control of the Chief Labour Office. The Labour Directorate is responsible for:

- Preventing, investigating and settling industrial disputes in the state
- Enforcing the laws and settlements meant for labourers
- Implementing the labour laws
- Fixing the minimum wage rates and also revising the minimum wages
- Running welfare activities for the labourers

Case Study 2: Labour Uprisings in Tea Gardens

Over the last several years, there have been several labour uprisings in the tea gardens of Tripura by the labourers. The following have been the reasons for the uprisings:

- **Poor working conditions:** The working conditions in most of the tea plantations are not good and unhealthy. The labourers are forced to work in unhealthy working conditions which ultimately has an adverse effect on the productivity.
- **Low wages:** The labour is paid very less wages. According to the Minimum Wages Act, the labourers are required to be paid ₹169 daily though the demand was raised to ₹ 330 but the labour is paid much below this to the tune of ₹ 94 daily. This does not allow the labourers to meet their daily needs and cope with the inflation.
- **Women trafficking:** Women trafficking from the tea plantations is also one of the main reasons for the labour revolts. Trafficking of adivasi women is often heard of.

In addition, the labourers in the tea plantations were exploited and the work load on them is ever increasing which further adds to their woes. The workers are also forced to work overtime and those who have been provided houses in the tea plantations remain isolated from the rest of the people. Also the houses are in a dilapidated condition and do not have safe drinking water and not even proper sanitation facilities.

The labour uprisings by these workers of tea plantations were to secure their basic rights. The tea plantation labourers have been fighting for their rights and minimum wages so that they can at least manage a decent standard of living.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

12. What are the functions of Labour Directorate organization?
13. State the basis of the Naxalite movement.
14. Why are peasant and labour movements considered an integral part of the society of Tripura?

3.6 SUMMARY

- Till the time Tripura merged with Indian Union, there was an aspiration for responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja of Tripura.
- Tripura was made a Part 'C' state and ruled by a Chief Commissioner unlike six other Part 'C' States, namely Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Coorg, Bhopal, Ajmer and Vindhya Pradesh which were allowed to continue with their Legislatures and Council of Ministers.
- The people of Tripura were extremely dissatisfied for not providing their State any Legislature or Council of Ministers in spite of having clear provisions in the Constitution.
- Under the Chairmanship of Ananta Sayanam Aiyanger, Deputy Speaker of Parliament of India, a meeting was held with the representatives of the Centrally Administered Areas (Part 'C' States) in New Delhi on 10 February 1951.
- 25 February 1951 was observed as a 'Protest Day' against the Chief Commissioners' rule in all the part 'C' states.
- At Agartala, the 'Protest Day' was observed by holding a meeting with large number of people of all shades of opinion and colour.
- In protest of keeping Tripura under the Chief Commissioner's rule against the people's will, a meeting was held at Agartala in which speakers of various political parties decried the 'undemocratic' and 'unconstitutional' steps of the Central Government.
- The Government of India was of the opinion that Tripura was a 'frontier' state which occupied a strategic position from the defense point of view.
- A meeting of the Left parties was held on 5 August 1953 urging upon the Government of India to grant an elected Legislative Assembly in Tripura in the ongoing session of parliament (July-August 1953).
- The merger of Tripura with Assam would provide the people of Tripura with the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for representative government at the state-level without prejudicing their linguistic and cultural interest.
- The Purbachal Scheme originally provided for the constitution of a new State with Cachar, Tripura, the Mizo (Lushai) Hills, Manipur and NEFA.
- The possibility of Tripura's merger with West Bengal as suggested once by the Greater Tripura Committee and the Cachar State Reorganization Committee was ruled out by the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly.
- The Joint Select Committee submitted its report on the State Reorganization Bill to the Lok Sabha on 16 July 1956.
- After the Second General Elections, Tripura Territorial Council (T.T.C.) was formed under the Territorial Council Act, 1956.

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- As Tripura was moving towards full-fledged statehood, the turmoil in neighbouring East Pakistan was posing great problems for India- Pakistan relationship.
- The Union Government then headed by Mrs Indira Gandhi had to undertake the task of re-organization of the North East which meant creation of new states and union territories.
- The Communist Party of India (Marxist) commonly referred to as CPI (M) is one of the major political parties of India and is also a dominating political party in Tripura.
- Tripura was governed by the Indian National Congress till 1977 after which the Left Front came into power in the state.
- The All India Trinamool Congress was formed as an off-shoot of the Indian National Congress.
- The Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress works for the oppressed and the backward tribal population of the state.
- The Bhartiya Janta Party is today one of the most prominent parties in India as well as the Tripura.
- The National Liberation Front of Tripura has the aim of seceding Tripura from India and establishing an independent Tripura state.
- The Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra was formed by the merger of Indigenous People's Front of Tripura and the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti in 2002.
- The pressure groups work in such a manner that they pressurise the government or the political system of the country to promote their interests or at least recognise these and not relegate these to the background.
- Pressure groups have been in existence ever since the government machinery became capable of delivering certain benefits to the citizens and the society.
- Political parties are formed by individuals who share common interests and preferences and have a vision for the future.
- Pressure groups unlike political parties are formed to solve their immediate problems and are temporary as compared to the political parties.
- Lobbying is not an activity that pressure groups usually indulges in though the term 'lobbying' is often used to signify the activities carried out by the members of the pressure groups.
- Though pressure groups are not political parties, they do try to use the party platforms for furthering their interests.
- The development of communication and media technology has enabled the pressure groups today to make use of propaganda and media to further their interests.
- Strike has emerged as one of the most popular and common techniques to be used by pressure groups to further and secure their interests and demands.

- Demonstrations are used by pressure groups to exhibit their solidarity and also to get the attention of the general public as well as the government on their demands.
- *Gherao* is a technique in which the members of a pressure group encircle the officials or the responsible authorities in a particular place and do not allow them to carry on their routine activities.
- Pressure groups in Tripura have grown basically because of the fact that the population of the state is mostly tribal and backward.
- The tribal population of Tripura is considered to be backward in the sense that it is not only cut off from the rest of the nation but is also devoid of the basic amenities and facilities.
- The origins of the Ganamukti Parishad and in fact socio-political movements in Tripura can be traced back to the 1940s when the royal house of Tripura was trying to maintain its political hold over the state.
- In March 1949, Tripura was placed under the military rule and several leaders of the Mukti Parishad went underground to avoid arrests.
- The Ganamukti Parishad slowly and steadily brought about a cultural revolution in the liberated tribal areas.
- In the first parliamentary elections in India in 1952, both the seats of the Lok Sabha were won by the Communist Party of India in Tripura.
- Naxalite is basically a movement initiated by the Maoists who aim at overthrowing the constitution of India by force and establishing dictatorship in the country
- In some regions, the Naxalite movements consist of peasants with small or no landholdings while in other areas it consists of tribal population.
- Naxalism is a war between democracy and all that it stands for and dictatorship which is against the freedom that democracy believes in.
- The Ganamukti Parishad was one of the first organizations in Tripura to have started a peasant movement.
- The All India Kisan Sabha was also pivotal in peasant movements and uprisings in the state of Tripura.
- Since the economic state of the tribal population of the state is very poor, most of the people fail to own even a small piece of land and therefore, have to work as labourers in fields of other landlords.
- For the welfare of the labour in Tripura, a Labour Organization was also set up in the state in 1951 under one labour office.

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3.7 KEY TERMS

- **Naxalite:** It refers to a movement initiated by the Maoists who aim at overthrowing the constitution of India by force and establishing dictatorship in the country.

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- **Associational pressure groups:** It refers to groups that are organized groups that are formed to pursue limited goals.
- **Interest groups:** It refers to groups that are organized by people who seek to promote specific interests.
- **Pressure groups:** It refers to a group which tries to influence public policy in the interest of a particular cause.

3.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. The demands raised by the Democratic Front during the period of 1952 were as follows:
 - (a) Immediate installation of ‘Vidhan Sabha’,
 - (b) Introduction of a responsible government
 - (c) Abolition of Chief Commissioner’s rule
 - (d) Granting of civic and political rights
 - (e) Proper rehabilitation of the refugees and the jhumias
2. The main purpose of Tripura Rajya Ganatantrik Sangha organization was to create a congenial atmosphere for holding the first General Elections in Tripura.
3. Six other Part ‘C’ states other than Tripura were Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Coorg, Bhopal, Ajmer and Vindhya Pradesh.
4. Tripura came to the threshold of democracy in 1956.
5. The aim of National Liberation Front of Tripura was to unite all tribal nationalist forced under a single political party.
6. Several regional parties were formed in Tripura as it is believed that the national parties have failed to represent the people and meet the needs and demands of the various ethnic communities in the required manner.
7. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) aims at protecting the rights of workers, peasants, farmers and agriculturalists.
8. The main objective of Tripura Pradesh Trinamool Congress is to achieve its goal of ousting the communists from the state of Tripura.
9. The aim of Twipra Students Federation was to protect the educational rights and interests of the tribal students who formed the majority of student population of the state.
10. Anomic pressure groups are formed in shape of movements that exhibit demonstrations and protests. The activities of such pressure groups can be constitutional or non-constitutional.
11. Pressure group seeks to promote, discuss, debate and mobilise public opinion or major public issues in the society and thereby, bring about changes in the public policy. These pressure groups in their process or activities educate people and widen their vision to participate more in the democratic process and raise their voice when faced with issues of interest.

12. The functions of Labour Directorate organization are as follows:
 - (a) Preventing, investigating and settling industrial disputes in the state
 - (b) Enforcing the laws and settlements meant for labourers
13. The basis of the Naxalite movement is a war of ideologies. Naxalism is a war between democracy and all that it stands for and dictatorship which is against the freedom that democracy believes in.
14. Peasant and labour movements are considered as an integral part of the society of Tripura because the population of Tripura mainly relies on agriculture for its livelihood. The population of Tripura works on daily wages basis as labourers to earn the bare minimum.

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3.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. When were the first general elections held in Tripura and what was the outcome of these elections?
2. Write a short note on regional politics in Tripura.
3. How is a pressure group different from an interest group?
4. What are the differences between a political party and a pressure group?
5. How can pressure groups be classified?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the role of various political parties of Tripura.
2. Analyse the impact of the political turmoil in East Pakistan on Tripura.
3. Explain the characteristics of pressure groups.
4. Discuss the main aims of All India Kisan Sabha movement.
5. Identify the measures taken by the Government of India to curb the Naxalite movements.
6. Discuss the history of political movement in Tripura for responsible Government and Statehood.

3.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 DECENTRALIZATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN TRIPURA

Decentralization and Human Development in Tripura

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Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Process of Decentralization: Sub-Divisions, Districts, Blocks, Panchayat, ADC
- 4.3 Socio-cultural Dynamics in Tripura
 - 4.3.1 Social Condition in Tripura ever since the 19th Century
 - 4.3.2 Art and Architecture
- 4.4 Insurgency and Human Security
 - 4.4.1 Recent Activities of Insurgent Groups in Tripura
 - 4.4.2 Violation of Human Rights and Human Security by Security Forces in Tripura
 - 4.4.3 How Tripura Overcame Insurgency
- 4.5 Human Development in Tripura
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.9 Questions and Exercises
- 4.10 Further Reading

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Local self-government is one of the most important institutions playing a vital role in the administration of any country to solve the problems at the grass-root level. When it comes to the decentralization of administrative powers, the local self-government is perhaps the most important institution in the process. Tripura is one of the few Indian states that exhibit decentralization in its administration. Decentralization exists in both Autonomous District Council (ADC) and non-ADC areas in the state of Tripura.

Tripura is also a state that has been affected greatly by the level of insurgency and the regular influx of refugees. The sensitive location of the state and its close proximity to Bangladesh has resulted in large influx of refugees which poses social, economic and developmental problems for the state and its ethnic population.

Tripura is a state which is economically weak and backward and most of the people live below the poverty line. In essence, even though the government has been taking several initiatives, the human development in the state is low and the lack of the basic infrastructure and the fact that Tripura is isolated from the rest of the country make human development even more difficult. In this unit, you will learn about the process of decentralization, the socio-cultural dynamics, insurgency and human security and human development in Tripura.

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4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the process of decentralization of administrative powers in Tripura
- Assess the socio-cultural dynamics in Tripura
- Describe insurgency and its effects on the people of Tripura
- Discuss human development and its status in Tripura

4.2 PROCESS OF DECENTRALIZATION: SUB-DIVISIONS, DISTRICTS, BLOCKS, PANCHAYAT, ADC

Decentralization is a process wherein the administrative and fiscal powers and responsibilities are transferred over to the locally elected government bodies. Decentralization is formally defined as ‘the transfer of power and authority from Central/ State government to local self-government.’ The process of decentralization transfers responsibilities like planning, management, resource-raising and allocation and other functions of the government from the central government to the units of government that are locally present in a state or a union territory.

The process of decentralization is considered important because of the following reasons:

- Decentralization establishes a proper service delivery mechanism which ensures equal distribution of resources at the grass-root level.
- Decentralization helps in the bottom-up planning and also helps in participatory decision making.
- It is decentralization that ensures community based implementation of the developmental programmes.
- Decentralization helps in the achievement of higher economic activity in the region.
- Decentralization results in better accountability.
- Decentralization leads to more mobilization of resources and lower cost provision of the basic services.
- Decentralization helps in the formulation and implementation of need-based development plans.
- Decentralization helps in the provision of better and accessible services to the people.

Tripura is one of the few states where democratic decentralization has been an accepted policy for a long time. Elections have been regularly held in Tripura since 1978 when the Left-Front was elected for the governance of the state. The three-tier administrative structure was adopted by the state of Tripura in 1993 after

amendments were made in the constitution. Tripura now has a three-tier structure of elected local bodies. These are Panchayati Raj Institutions at gram panchayat, block panchayat (panchayat samiti) and district panchayat (Zilla Parishad) levels. In addition, Tripura also has the unique institution of the Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), vested with powers intended to ensure a large degree of self-government to tribal population.

Urban Local Bodies: The institution of municipality as an urban local body was first introduced in Tripura in 1871. This municipality was set in the town of Agartala by King Bir Chandra Manikya. At that time the population of the town was less than 875. The population of the municipality slowly increased and several Acts concerning the administration of the municipality were passed in succession over the next few years. In 1937, King Bir Bikram made a provision for the election of six elected commissioners and six nominated commissioners to represent the six wards into which Agartala was divided. Each ward was to have a double-member constituency—one elected and one nominated. In 1932, an Act on the lines of the Bengal Municipal Act was passed which was extended in 1961 to Tripura by the Government of India. In January 1973, the Act was amended in a number of important ways. The amended Act ‘...(provided) for municipalities in small hilltowns, and notified areas for developing towns, the reservation of seats for backward community and the extension of franchise’. The number of wards in Agartala was increased to ten from the previous six. But the municipality of Agartala was always under the direct rule of the government. When the Left Front came to power in 1978 in Agartala, it ordered elections to the municipality of the town. These elections were held in June 1978 and the Left Front which consisted of the CPIM, RSP and Forward Bloc won in all the wards.

Tripura enacted the Municipal Act, 1994 after the passing of the 74th Amendment Act in the Parliament. The Act provided for a Nagar Panchayat for a transitional municipal area, a Municipal Council for a small urban area and a Municipal Corporation for a large urban area. All these were to be placed under the administration of a Municipal Government according to the Act.

As of 2005, there are thirteen urban local bodies in Tripura, twelve of which are nagar panchayats and one is the elected municipal council in the capital city of Agartala.

According to the Tripura Municipal Act of 1994, any urban local body can be divided into a single member constituency. From these constituencies, one member has to be elected to the urban local body thereby giving complete representation to all the urban local bodies in the municipal council. Therefore, a municipal council can have 15-25 members while a nagar panchayat can have 5-15 members. The Act also allows for the nomination by the Governor of no more than three persons to a municipal council and no more than two persons to a nagar panchayat. The nominated members do not have the right to vote in the meeting of the concerned urban local body.

In January 2001 elections, the state government launched the programme Nagarodya in Agartala and all the nagar panchayats. The main objective of

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'Nagaroday', can be described as '... a programme of resource based participatory planning', is '... to ensure direct participation of the people in the process of planning and implementation with a view to provide better civic amenities and facilities to people living in urban areas and for improving the quality of life, environment and economic condition'.

The nagar panchayats and the municipality of Agartala seek to achieve their aims and carry on their work with the help of several departments. The main areas of development that these urban local bodies focus on include:

- Safe drinking water
- Sanitation
- Housing
- Urban infrastructure

The urban local bodies therefore respond to the developmental needs of the more vulnerable section of the urban population in the state.

Panchayat: Before Tripura became a part of the Indian Union, it was a princely state and most of the population was rural in nature. There were therefore traditional village level institutions that were based on tribal customs and that took important and administrative decisions. These traditional level institutions took important decisions on matters pertaining to the community as a whole and also related to the disputes occurring amongst the members of the community. But, these institutions were hardly democratic in nature.

Bir Bikram Manikya, the king of the state tried to introduce some reforms and organize a structure of local governments in the villages beyond the traditional tribal customs. An Act was passed in 1929 under which, '... a number of contiguous villages were grouped together to form a Gramya Mandali to which members were nominated by the King.' However, this process was aborted because of the developments that took place in the state.

The communist movements in 1950 in Tripura brought forward the question of democratic local self-governments. In May 1959, the United Provinces Panchayati Raj Act of 1947 was extended to seventeen community development boards in Tripura. This led to the beginning of the formation of self-government institutions in rural regions of Tripura. In 1962, the first statutory Gaon Panchayat was instituted in Jirania. Thus according to the Act, the Gaon Panchayat was the basic unit of planning and development in the state. The elected Gaon Panchayat was the executive body of the Gaon Panchayat. The election was not held through a secret ballot but by the show of hands. Thus, 467 Gaon Panchayats were instituted in the rural regions of Tripura in a phased manner by 1967. In addition, 2-3 Gaon Panchayats were also grouped together to form the Nyaya Panchayats to carry out the judicial functions related to the administration of the villages. These Nyaya Panchayats were however not very active.

It was in 1978, when the Left Front came to power that the issue of local self-government got the required boost. Territories of the village panchayats were reconstituted based on the migrations and changes in the settlement patterns and the

elections to the village panchayats were for the first time held through secret ballot and also political parties openly participated in these elections. In 1978, 691 Gaon Panchayats and 191 Nyaya Panchayats were constituted. Till 1978, Tripura had a single-tier system of village Panchayat. The Left Front with it also brought a legislation which led to the passing of the Tripura Block Panchayat Samitis Act. This brought into action a two-tier level of village panchayat administration in the state.

The Tripura Panchayati Raj Act was passed in 1983 and was put into force in 1984. This Act reduced the voting age to eighteen years from twenty-one years. It also made provisions for the representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Gaon Panchayats were entrusted with several responsibilities and even implementing programmes for integrated rural development.

This democratic decentralisation suffered a setback in 1988 when the Congress (I) and TUJS coalition came to control the state of Tripura. This government superseded all the existing Gaon Panchayats and appointed block development officers to supervise the functions of the Panchayats. The Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 came into force in 1994. This Act introduced the three-tier level of administration at the village panchayat level. As of 2011, there were four Zilla Parishads, twenty-three Blocks and 511 Gram Panchayats in addition to thirty-five BAC (Block Advisory Committees). In 2012, there was a reorganization of Districts post which the number of Panchayat Samitis stood at twenty-three, and there was an increase in the number of BAC to thirty-seven under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC - VI schedule area) which includes 527 Village Committees.

The legislation on Panchayats in Tripura provides for the representation of women, schedule castes and schedule tribes. At the block level and the Zilla Parishad level, the legislation provides for the following functional standing committees:

At the Panchayat Samiti Level, the functional committees include:

- Finance Committee (Finance, Audit and Planning)
- Education and Health Committee (Education, environment, cultural, health and sports affairs)
- Industries Committee (Industry including cottage industries and sericulture)
- Social Justice Committee
- Agriculture Committee
- Poverty Alleviation Committee
- Work Committee

The zilla parishad also has the same committees at the level of the Panchayat Samiti. Only the Works Committee is replaced by the Committee on Communication, Rural, Electrification and Non-Conventional Energy. All these committees consist of elected members, nominated members and officials with a provision that none of the members can be elected as the President of the standing committee.

The proposals of the standing committee are placed before the Panchayat Samiti or the Zilla Parishad for approval. The block development officer and the district magistrate serve, respectively, as the chief executive officers to the Panchayat

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samiti and the zilla parishad. At the level of the zilla parishad, the executive committee of the Zilla Parishad coordinates the work of the standing committees and monitors the activities of the Panchayat Samitis in respect of the works and funds assigned to them by the Zilla Parishad.

After the constitution of 3-tier elected bodies under the Tripura Panchayat Act of 1993, the state government transferred some powers and functions to the twelve departments.

Details of Devolution by Tripura State Government to Local Bodies, as per its orders in 1994:

1. **Rural development:** Poverty alleviation programmes like, JRY, SREP, IRDP, IAY, MWS, EAS.
2. **Food department:** Supply of food through fair price shops.
3. **Agriculture and horticulture:** Management of all rural markets, supervision and hiring centres.
4. **Education:** Promotion of 100 percent enrolment in primary schools, supervision of education programmes up to higher secondary levels.
5. **Social welfare and social education:** Supervision of social education centre/ adult education centre, management of ICDS, selection of beneficiaries of old age pension and construction of State Education Centre/ adult literacy centre, promotion of TLC balavihar programme, etc.
6. **Fisheries department:** Selection of beneficiaries, planning and management of leasing-out water areas, promotion of fishery development, supervision and management of community water areas, leasing out community water areas, etc.
7. **Health and family welfare department:** Supervision of family welfare and preventive health programme including health education, implementing national health programme, preventive measures as regards to health programmes etc.
8. **IFC and PHE department:** Implementation and allocation of funds to gram panchayats/ panchayat samitis for seasonal bunds.
9. **Revenue department:** Selection of beneficiaries for allotment of land, overall supervision of allotment of land.
10. **Animal resources department:** Supervision of veterinary, first aid, dispensaries, animal resource institutions in the zilla parishad.
11. **Industries department:** Supervision of the programme of cottage and small industries, selection of beneficiaries for self-employment programme.
12. **Forest department:** Identification of community land, non-forest government land for social forestry, promotion and supervision of social and farm forestry activity, along with evaluation.

Most of these functions relate to the supervision and monitoring of various welfare and development functions at the village administration level. In addition,

efforts are also being made to devolve other functions as well to the various departments of the administration.

Gram Sabha: The Gram Sabha is considered to be the basic unit of democracy at the grass-root level. The constitution of gram sabha ensures participation as well as accountability and thereby ensures better administration at the village level. The gram sabha also received special attention in the Tripura Panchayat Act of 1993. While the original 1993 Act had briefly specified the functions and powers of the gram sabha and the accountability of the elected gram panchayat to the gram Sabha, the second amendment to this Act, passed in 1998, elaborates and strengthens these aspects considerably. While the original Act of 1993 had specified only an annual meeting of the gram sabha, the second amendment provides for periodic meetings rather than just an annual one. It also introduces the concept of grama sansad, which means ‘...a body consisting of persons registered at any time in the Electoral Rolls pertaining to a constituency or a group of constituencies delimited for the purpose of last preceding election to the Gram Panchayat’.

Districts, Sub-Divisions and Blocks: For the convenience of administration and to ensure that the government services reach the entire population of the state, the state of Tripura has been divided into districts, sub-divisions and blocks. There are eight districts in Tripura each of which is under the administration of a District Magistrate or the District Collector. The districts of Tripura include North Tripura, South Tripura, West Tripura, Dhalai, Unakoti, Khowai, Gomati and Sepahijala.

The following table gives the demographics of the districts in Tripura.

Table 4.1 Demographics of Districts of Tripura

Sr. No.	District	District HQ	Population (2011)	Growth	Sex Ratio	Literacy	Area (km ²)	Density (/km ²)
1	Dhalai	Ambassa	377988	12.57	945	86.82	2400	157
2	Gomati	Udaipur	436868	14.15	959	86.19	1522.8	287
3	Khowai	Khowai	327391	14.15	961	88.37	1005.67	326
4	North Tripura	Dharmanagar	415946	17.44	968	88.77	1444.5	288
5	Sepahijala	Bishramganj	484233	14.15	952	84.14	1044.78	463
6	South Tripura	Belonia	433737	14.15	956	85.09	1534.2	283
7	Unakoti	Kailashahar	277335	10.85	966	87.58	591.93	469
8	West Tripura	Agartala	917534	12.57	972	91.69	942.55	973

The District Magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner is responsible for the smooth functioning of the district. The Superintendent of Police is responsible for the law and order functioning of the district. The district magistrate or the collector has the following roles and responsibilities.

As a collector, the district collector is required to:

- Perform land assessment
- Look into land acquisition
- Collect land revenue

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- Collect the taxes like excise, irrigation duties etc.
- Distribute agricultural loans
- Look into disaster management
- Act as the head of the District Industries Council
- Handle crisis management

As a magistrate, the district magistrate or collector needs to:

- Maintain law and order
- Supervise jails and police
- Hear cases under the prevention section of Criminal Procedure Act
- Arbitrate land acquisition

The districts are further divided into sub-divisions for the ease of administration. These sub-divisions make administering the districts very easy. The state of Tripura is divided into 23 sub-divisions as follows:

Table 4.2 Sub-divisions of Tripura

01.	Dharmanagar	13.	Jirania (New)
02.	Kanchanpur	14.	Mohanpur (New)
03.	Panisagar (New)	15.	Bishalgarh
04.	Kailasahar	16.	Sonamura
05.	Kumarghat (New)	17.	Jampuijala (New)
06.	Gandacherra	18.	Udaipur
07.	Ambassa	19.	Amarpur
08.	Kamalpur	20.	Karbook (New)
09.	Longtharai Valley	21.	Begonia
10.	Khowai	22.	Santirbazar
11.	Teliamura	23.	Sabroom
12.	Sadar		

The sub-divisions are further divided into smaller units called blocks. Tripura is divided into fifty-eight blocks for administrative purposes and each of the block is headed by a block development officer. The sub-divisions and the blocks are provided with several officers who look into the day to day functioning of these divisions of the administration. In addition, they perform various management and planning functions at their own level in the state. The decentralization of administrative duties and responsibilities in this manner in the state of Tripura helps in better administration and good governance.

Table 4.3 Blocks in Tripura

58 Blocks			
01.	Salema	30.	Kumarghat
02.	Durga Chawmuhani	31.	Pecharthal
03.	Ambassa	32.	Gournagar
04.	Ganganagar	33.	Chandipur
05.	Manu	34.	Kadamtala
06.	Chawmanu	35.	Jubaraj nagar
07.	Dumburnagar	36.	Kalacherra
08.	Raishyabari	37.	Dasda
09.	Bishalgarh	38.	Jampuihill
10.	Charilam	39.	Laljuri
11.	Jampuijala	40.	Panisagar
12.	Melaghar (Nalchar)	41.	Damchara
13.	Kathalia	42.	Bagafa
14.	Boxanagar	43.	Jolaibari
15.	Mohanbhog	44.	Hrishyamukh
16.	Khowai	45.	Rajnagar
17.	Tulashikhar	46.	Bharat Chandra Nagar
18.	Padmabil	47.	Satchand
19.	Teliamura	48.	Rupaichari
20.	Kalyanpur	49.	Poangbari
21.	Mungiakami	50.	Dukli
22.	Matabari	51.	Mohanpur
23.	Kakraban	52.	Hezamara
24.	Killa	53.	Lefunga
25.	Tepania	54.	Bamutia
26.	Amarpur	55.	Jirania
27.	Ompi	56.	Mandai
28.	Karbook	57.	Belbari
29.	Silachari	58.	Old Agartala

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Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC): Since the majority of the population of the state of Tripura consists of tribes, the government recognizes and accepts the fact that the development and welfare of the tribal population is essential for the overall development of the state. It is also essential to make sure that the governance reaches the tribal population of the state which thrives in the backward areas of the state. The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) also known as the ADC was constituted under the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution by the passage of Bill proposed by the Left Front government of Tripura. The first TTAADC was elected in the year 1982. The TTAADC was eventually brought under the sixth schedule of the constitution of India by certain amendments. The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council represents regional autonomy and is basically based on the principle of linguistic nationality. When the TTAADC was formed, tribal as well as non-tribal population played an imperative role. In fact, the TTAADC was a product of the

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joint efforts and struggle of the tribal as well as non-tribal communities for the recognition of identity and the rights of the tribal population which formed a majority of the population of the state.

The main aims of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council include:

- Providing internal autonomy in areas which have a majority of tribal population
- Protecting the social, economic and cultural interests of the tribal population
- Promoting the all-round socio-economic development of the tribal population

The TTAADC has twenty-eight elected members and two tribal members who are appointed by the Governor. In the state of Tripura, twenty-five constituencies are reserved for the tribal population. The TTAADC is headed by a Chairperson who is assisted by a council of ministers for conducting the legislative functions of the council. The TTAADC also has executive functions which are carried out by the Chief Executive Member with the assistance of an executive council of ministers.

TTAADC accounts for 70 per cent of the State's area and 30 per cent of its population. It is spread over all the four districts. Corresponding to the gram panchayats of the non-ADC area, there are 522 village development councils in TTAADC territory spread over thirteen blocks. There are 462 revenue villages spread over 151 tehsils in the TTAADC territory. The TTAADC runs 1375 primary schools and 442 social-education centres. It operates through five zonal and thirty-seven sub-zonal offices.

The following are the administrative matters that are looked into by the ADC exclusively:

- Allotment, occupation and use of land other than reserved forest land
- Management of forests not under the reserved forest land
- Use of canal water for irrigation and agricultural purposes
- Jhum cultivation
- Village committee or council matters
- Public health and sanitation

The TTAADC is also given legal powers wherein it has to frame laws and rules related to the following matters but with the permission of the Governor of the state:

- Inheritance of property in case of schedule tribes
- Marriage and divorce matters of schedule tribes
- Social customs of the schedule tribes
- Allotment, occupation and use of land other than reserved forest land by schedule tribes
- Use of water and canal courses for irrigation purposes

- Jhum farming
- Any other administrative matter

The following are the financial power of the TTAADC:

- The council is allowed to receive a share of forest royalties
- The council has the powers to levy and collect taxes for the maintenance of roads, schools and dispensaries
- The council can collect and levy taxes on entry of goods in the markets and good carried by ferries
- The council is also allowed to levy and collect taxes on animals, vehicles and boats
- The council can also collect taxes from professional traders and employment agencies

The council is also allowed to establish and manage schools, dispensaries, markets, roads, ferries, fisheries, cattle pounds, road transport and waterways. It is also allowed to control and regulate money lending and trade.

The TTAADC was established as a local self-government for the tribal population of the state of Tripura. However, the council has not been able to realise its full potential in the state because of several reasons. The TTAADC has been unable to mobilize its own resources and has been dependent on the central and state governments for its functioning. There is also a lack of commitment on the part of the non-Left political parties when it comes to promoting TTAADC for the welfare of the tribal population. Other reasons for the TTAADC not being a success include:

- Disruptive and destabilising role of the extremists
- Geographical and natural resource constraint
- Non-contiguous nature of TTAADC jurisdiction
- Inadequate levels of human development
- Absence of elected local bodies at gram and block levels in areas under TTAADC
- Lack of participation on the part of the people in the development process

Sources of Gram Panchayat Funds in Tripura

The following are the sources of funds for the Gram Panchayat in Tripura:

- Contributions and grants made by Central and/ or State governments
- Share of Central sponsored schemes and State Plan Schemes
- Contributions and grants made by zilla parishad, panchayat samitis and any local body
- Loans if any granted by the central and/ or state government
- Receipts on account of taxes, rates, duties, tolls and fees
- Receipts in respect of any school, hospital, dispensary or institution under the control of the gram panchayat

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- Sums received as gifts or contributions made by trusts or endowments made in favour of the gram panchayat
- Fines and penalties collected
- Any sum received by or on behalf of the gram panchayat

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Define decentralization.
2. What is a gaon panchayat?
3. How many members are there in the TTAADC?

4.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN TRIPURA

In this section, we will look at the socio-cultural dynamics which operates in the state of Tripura. This will include a discussion on the social conditions prevailing in the 19th and 20th century, migration pattern and the arts and architecture in the state.

4.3.1 Social Condition in Tripura ever since the 19th Century

Tripura is a tiny hilly state of North East India and it is inhabited by Bengalis as well as nineteen different tribal groups. Tripura had a feudalistic pattern of society, where the feudal privileges had a huge impact on the people. The king and his family along with his privileged officials lived in towns and plain areas, whereas most of the tribes lived in the interior villages of the hills.

The society of the tribal people of this state was mostly patriarchal, where the father dominated the family; but in the case of Garo and Khasi tribes, the family was matrilineal. The family was the basic unit of the tribe and the families belonging to the same tribe lived in a village, which was called 'Para' or 'Bari'. Generally, the villages were named after the chief of the village, while some villages were named after the small hill streams (*chheras*). The tribal society was dominated by the chiefs and each tribe had its own chief. Village disputes were settled in community trials which was presided by the chief of the village.

Social Reforms

As you know that due to the great efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Lord William Bentick the brutal social system of 'Sati' was stopped in India in AD 1829. Two Assamese envoys named Ratna Kandali and Arjundas Bairagi Katak recorded that all the wives of Ratna Manikya immolated themselves with their husband after being permitted by their mother-in-law. This is why, in Hill Tripura 'Sati System' (the practise of burning alive the widows of Hindus), was declared illegal and punishable in May AD 1889 by Bir Chandra Manikya at the earnest suggestion of Mr D.R.

Lyall. It was the king, Bir Chandra Manikya, who also stopped the system of slavery in Tripura in the year AD 1877.

Marriage Custom

If you look at the marriage custom of the different tribes of Tripura, you will find that the marriage customs of the tribes were primitive in nature. When a young man wished to marry a girl, he had to serve for some years in the house of his prospective bride. This practice was known as 'Jamaikhata'. The young man was supposed to perform all kinds of work during the crucial period of 'Jamaikhata'. He was also required to obey the commands of his father-in-law during this period. If found suitable, the girl was given to him otherwise he was compensated for his services and asked to leave the house.

Child marriage was rare and love marriage was practised. Widow remarriage was prevalent but for divorce one had to go to the adjudication of a jury of village elders.

Religion of the Tribes

There were four predominant communities in Tripura following different religions—Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. Most of the tribal people had their own tribal customs and beliefs but were broadly considered followers of Hinduism. The Mogs and the Chakmas used to follow Buddhism. The Lushais and some people of the Kuki and Garo communities embraced Christianity. Majority of the population were Hindus. The religion of the majority of the tribes was a mixture of Hinduism and animism but was on the whole called Hindus. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji observes, 'The Tipras like the other Bodo groups, had their tribal religion modified by Hinduism. But among them and under the aegis of the ruling house of Tripura a good deal of their old pre-Hindu religion and its rituals is preserved as part of the state religion.' Sacrifices formed an important part of their religion. Buffaloes, pigs, goats and fowls were the animals generally used for sacrificial purposes.

Artistic Inclination of the Tribes

If one observes the social life of the tribal people, one would see that the tribals used to spend their life in dancing, music and drinking. Most of them distilled their own liquor. The tribals maintained a high standard of workmanship in weaving and wood-carving and possessed a fine artistic sense which found eloquent expression in the beautiful design of 'Riha' or 'Risha', which means a small piece of cloth. This garment was remarkable for its colourful variety and texture.

Economic Condition

Most of the tribal people were agriculturists. They followed a peculiar system of cultivation known as 'Jhum cultivation.' The method of jhum cultivation was that each family selected a piece of bamboo jungle for cultivation. Jungles were cut down and cleared in the month of December and set on fire in the month of March. After the first spell of rain, they sowed cotton seeds, paddy and chilly. The paddy was generally reaped in September.

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As a matter of fact, the tribals in the hills who practised jhum cultivation had a self-sufficient economy. In their jhums they cultivated everything that they needed. In general, the tribals had a very good economic condition. Paddy, cotton, sesamum, chilly and vegetables were the most important jhum crops. It is stated that paddy was mostly produced for self-consumption, while other crops like cotton and sesamum were raised for both self-consumption and exchange.

It is stated that Jhum cultivation which is now regarded as a wasteful and uneconomic did not create any problem in the past because there was hardly any population pressure and there was abundance of virgin land. With the growth of population and for other reasons, fresh land for doing jhum cultivation became limited. Not only the total jhumable area was limited, but the productivity had also declined markedly.

The Political Agent has rightly reported in 1874, during a journey across country from Udaipur to Agartala:

I passed through Riang, Jamatiya and Rajbansi villages, the hills round which had been jhumed over and over again. Jhuming is a most exhaustible method of agriculture; three or four crops grown at the same time on the same soil, ... If possible, the land is allowed to lie fallow for ten years, when the jungles which has grown up in the meantime is felled and burnt, the ashes serving as manure. But the fear of Lushais prevents the jhumias from moving eastwards, the only direction where fresh virgin jhum land is available. The hills near the villages have, therefore, to be jhumed every three years or so, the consequences of which are short crops, and recourse to the Mahajan or moneylender.

W.W. Hunter has narrated about the economic condition of the people in 1876 that 'the people in the hills as a rule were very poor and improvident. A good season meant for them merely pigs to eat, and plenty of spirits to drink; a bad season was next door to starvation. It was difficult to estimate the cost of living among them, as they grew their own food, and bred their own pigs and brought away their corn to the market to pay taxes. The economic condition of the classes cultivating by the plough in the plains were better than those of the tribes in the hills. They were not generally in debt, although they did not hesitate to borrow money especially for any domestic ceremonies, such as a marriage.'

4.3.2 Art and Architecture

Let us have a look at art and architecture which has been a part of the cultural fabric of Tripura from different periods of history.

Early Period

Art and architecture play a significant role in the history of Tripura. Though, we do not know the exact beginning of art in Tripura as no terracotta art objects of these cultural epochs have been found from this area. The phenomenon may be primarily explained by the fact that systematic archaeological excavations and explorations at the old sites of Tripura have not yet been undertaken and such relics might be lying buried below the ground. The other reason for the non-discovery of such relics might have been perishable in nature such as clay, wood and bamboo, which appear

to have been the main media of expression of creative impulse of the artists of this region in the past.

Medieval Period

The historical background of Tripura is still shrouded into obscurity. Lying contiguous to Bengal, the art of Tripura of the medieval period, shared the same characteristic features of the contemporary art of Bengal to a certain extent. The plastic art tradition is clearly felt in the ample evidences in the shape of better preserved specimens, which though undated indicate that the trend in the medieval sculpture of this area runs parallel to the contemporary Bengal movement. Like the Bengal School, the medieval plastic style of Tripura has its foundation on the residual of the Gupta idiom, surviving in the 7th-8th century. In this context may be mentioned a few images from the Pilak-Jolaibari region, where we get one Buddha figure more or less of Bengal style. The art of Tripura of this period is represented by abundant sculptures hailing from all parts of the country. They were executed in coarse-grained sandstone and double-layered sandstone.

The 9th century Eastern India has left for us several lithic and metal sculptures. The composition is free from exuberant decoration. The body is soft, pliable and also rhythmic in nature. The naturalism and simplicity endows the sculptures with a charm of their own, recreating the eastern version of the Gupta classical concept. This appears to be true of the sculptural art of Tripura though no dated image has been noticed so far here. The abundant output of Buddhist sculptures from the Pilak-Jolaibari region may be dated to this period stylistically, if we consider the rounded top of the backslap, simple decoration, plain plinth without any projection, importance of the modeling of the central deity, absence of too many attendants, etc. These features more or less conform to the art trend of Bengal of this period. Unfortunately, all of the sculptures are badly corroded beyond a proper aesthetic appraisal. Majority of them are executed in stone having two layers, super imposed one above the other. This doubled-layered stone used by the artist of the Pilak-Jolaibari region during this period gives a peculiar appearance as a whole, for which they differ from all the well-known schools of sculptural art of the subcontinent as far as their appearance is concerned.

Art from 14th Century Onwards

You know that Tripura was able to maintain its independent entity as a Hindu kingdom during 14th century AD. In the realm of art, Tripura, which was integrally linked with East Bengal, found her neighbours with her source of creativity almost dried up. As a result, she had to look into her own source and to express her creative impulses in new icon-plastic terms. Art objects produced from the 14th century onwards were ideologically Indian, yet distinctively different in character and expression. As to the conceptual background, the artists might have followed such iconographic texts which are yet to be known. The art objects of Tripura of this period may be divided into two groups stylistically: (i) The colossal rock-carving art of Unakoti and (ii) The art during the reign of Manikya rulers.

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Art of Unakoti

The exact date of the beginning of the art of Unakoti is not known to us, because we do not get any reliable information pertaining to this period. The carvings are, undoubtedly, works of many hands. The most finished and sophisticated among them were probably executed by sculptors brought in from other areas and local artists tried to emulate their works.

Here at Unakoti, we find a vertical rock-cliff extending over about a kilometre and it contains laminated grey shales. The rocky walls of Unakoti hillock contain a series of colossal sculptures depicting both human and animal figures. The growth of large trees over the area, heavy rains and perhaps earthquakes have produced a serious damage, as a result of which most of the reliefs have now been disintegrated. Being victims of both natural and human fury, these magnificent rock-cuts are mostly worn-out and defaced.

In high and bold relief, they appear to narrate some Puranic tales, the threads of which are practically beyond recognition. Some of the surviving reliefs represent Hindu deities like Siva and his consorts, Ganesha and Vishnu. The objects, as seen and reported by K. N. Dikshit, are not in the same state of preservation at the moment. While some have been completely damaged, many others have been exposed as a result of occasional explorations. The corpus consists of full length figures as well as busts and heads. Among the numerous rock-cuts, the central bust along with two female attendants appear on either side of the headgear of the God is the first object that arrests the attention of the visitor. That the bust is undoubtedly that of Shiva is evidenced by the third eye, half-moon on the crest and trident as well as the accompanying figure of the bull; the female figures identified with Durga and Ganga on account of their respective vehicles (simha and makara) lend support to this view. The three eyed deity holds firmly a trident in the middle of the shaft with his grip in the manner which is not found in the classical or mediaeval art of Eastern India, though often met within the art of Burma. Rest of the hands are missing. The sculpture is carved out of flat square plane. The divine face with three bulging eyes does not express any mental state of bliss and calmness, as is seen in the images of earlier period. An interesting feature of the rock-cuts of Unakoti lies in the absence of eyebrows in most. The mouth is a long narrow slit with vertical lines representing teeth, broad ears, like those of an elephant, which is nowhere found in Indian art, are decorated with 'dheri' type of ear-ornament of the tribal people of Tripura, again a noteworthy feature of the art of Unakoti. The figure has a long moustache turned upwards ending in a loop.

Art During the Regime of the Manikyas

The sculptures of this period comprise Devatamuda rock-cuts, a few stela-carved icons, as well as those on stone pillars and stone plaques of temples bearing a stylistic affinity with the figures depicted on the coins of the Manikyas. The antiquity of these objects hardly goes back beyond the 15th century when these Indo-Mongoloid rulers came within the fold of Hinduism and the temple building and coin-minting activities began under the Manikya patronage. The first among them known to have accepted Hindu customs and rites was Ratna-Manikya I, as is evidenced by his

coins. There seems to be a hiatus of about two or three centuries between the art of the early medieval period (up to 12th century) and that of the period of the Manikyas from the 15th century onwards. Attempt of rounded modelling is, to some extent, visible in the stone plaques recovered from the Kalikaganj temple, dated AD 1889. The main figure is in general carved under a multi-fold arch which sprouted from pilasters from either side of the deity. The plaques are over-burdened with floral and vegetal designs.

The figures are characterized by heavy physiognomic form, broad face with high cheek bone, rounded eyes, short and faint eyebrows, broad shoulders and hips; legs have been shown in profile. Projected ears, though smaller in size, remind one of the ears carved at Unakoti rock-cuts. The *ayudhas* are clasped firmly by the grip of the hands. Though rigid and inexpressive, the figures are marked by a rounded softness, not met with in the above noted sculptures, albeit a general identity of style. The plaques are decorated exuberantly with floral and vegetal design as well as human figures but the individual carvings have not been harmoniously synthesized to create a compact composition as in the sculptures of earlier period (11th-12th century).

Aesthetically, the divine figures are crude, unsophisticated and mundane, bereft of any spiritual feeling, whatsoever. The creative articulation in terms of plastic materials (including terracotta, which has been dealt with in separate section) seems to have come to a close at the end of 18th century and the last examples of the epoch include the slate- stone plaques noted above. The next century witnessed a marked decline in plastic activities of Tripura. Perhaps due to lack of patronage and serious economic problem, the whole tradition becomes exhausted. Definitely ascribed to this chronological references to art activities in literature are also absent. Culturally, however, this time lag is significant since it seemingly coincides with the consolidation of the Indo-Mongoloid power in the North Eastern region of India, and the foundation of a new culture resulting from fruitful blending of the various Aryan and non-Aryan socio-cultural elements appears to have been born in the late 15th century.

A school of art which may be designated as the North-eastern Indian School of late medieval prosperously flourished in Tripura and Assam. This regional school of sculptor plays an important role in the Indian art no doubt. With the coming of this new school in operation, stone was again increasingly employed as the medium of artist expression but the artists used this material in a somewhat pedestrian manner betraying their lack of knowledge and experience inherited from the past. Sculptures of this epoch mostly of sandstone and rarely of slate-stone, are thematically connected with Brahmins. Strikingly enough, despite plenty of temples in Tripura, only two cult icons, meant for worship, have so far come to our notice. All other examples appear to be used as decorative feature of religious edifices. These sculptures were done in a very low relief, giving them a flat appearance and creating a two-dimensional effect. The animal vehicles of the deities are always in profile; the exact cause of this mode of depiction is not known. The modelling of thick sculptures are equally poor and in this respect they are far removed from the earlier phase. They are earth-bound and lack spiritual introspection. Further, they are stiff and rigid.

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The absence of a noteworthy aesthetic quality in these works may be explained by the fact that they were the creations of artists who had to find out and develop their own language. Notwithstanding the shortcomings, these sculptures have a primitive charm of their own; unfortunately, however, the sculptural tradition of Tripura failed to go beyond this charming primitivism and could attain aesthetic maturity probably because of constant political turmoil as well as the absence of suitable environment and necessary patronage to artistic activity.

Architecture

Architecture in Tripura can be discussed in the following heading.

1. Architecture of the Early Period

It is not known when building activity had started in Tripura. But the discovery of some of the cult icons of the 7th-8th century appeared to testify the existence of temples of the same period which were intended to enshrine in them. Not a single piece of lintel or a door-jamb or even a fragment of pillars, be it religious or secular, throw light on the genesis of ancient architecture has so far been discovered. The probable reasons of the non-availability of old monuments lie in the damp climate, perishable building materials, thick growth of vegetation and the fury of the invaders. Thousands of large-sized bricks with smooth surface and moulded plaques, similar to those of Mainamati, have been found scattered in the same area and they point to the existence of brick edifices which were contemporaneous with Mainamati culture. Like Pilak, the other notable site, Unakoti, has also yielded a number of bricks and a plinth (little of which is exposed now). Presumably, many such architectural monuments are lying buried only to be revealed by the archaeologists in the near future.

With regard to the architectural relics, the position of Tripura is worse than her neighbour Bengal. While the materials in the shape of representations of temple-types depicted in sculptural art and manuscript paintings, have enabled us to reconstruct the history of architecture of ancient and mediaeval Bengal, Tripura has not yielded any such remains except a single type of Stupa, portrayed on the back-slabs of the Buddhist sculptures as well as some terracotta seals recovered from the Pilak-Jolaibacli region. As mentioned before, this stupa-type is exactly similar in form to the 7th century bronze stupa found at Ashrafpur (Dacca, Bangladesh). This type of stupa architecture was also prevalent at Mainamati in the Comilla district, as evident from some seals, three stupas exposed in its Kotildinua section. The Stupas at Ashrafpur, Mainamati, and Pilak belong to one type: it consists of a square base, a circular drum, a hemispherical dome and a harmika with finials. The dome bulges little at the top in each case, and this feature is pronounced in the Ashrafpur example. As a result, the stupas are endowed with a contour like that of the bell-shaped Stupas of Burma of later days. We may venture to suggest that this stupa-type went to Burma through the Pilak-Joldibadi sector of Tripura sometime in the 8th-9th century A. D.

2. Architecture of the Manikya Period (late 15th-16th Century)

From the extant edifices, it is evident that the temple-building activity started in the early 16th century or towards the end of the 15th century under the Manikya patronage and practically came to a close in the last part of the 18th century due to decadence of the royal power. In other words, the majority of Tripura temples are assignable to the period between the 16th and 18th century. Most of them are concentrated at Udayapura, which had been the capital of Tripura till the first half of the 18th century, and have disclosed a forgotten chapter of Indian architectural development. A survey of Tripura monuments, now in various stages of preservation amply bears out the fact that they architecturally form a compact group. The present study has been confined to temples which are better preserved. The temples of Tripura during the period under review may be divided into two groups: (a) charchala stupa-sirsha temples and (b) three-storeyed tower-like edifices. Though both the groups appear to have stemmed from a common tradition of architecture, they are of different shape.

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- **Charchala stupa-sirsha temples:** It may be borne in mind when judging from the architectural viewpoint, that all the members of the edifices are not present in the standing buildings and ruined vestiges. It is possible to do so if we bring together every bit of evidence in order to reconstruct the forms and features of the temples of Tripura. Built of bricks, the edifices of this group are constituted of two individual structural members, e.g. torana and the single-parched main sanctum. The inner roof is spanned by pointed barrel-vault. The outer roof, as a rule, is placed directly on the vault and follows its outline in the exterior. The toranas are without any crowning though some have wrongly viewed that they share identical finial with the sanctum. The construction of torana has been made of two pointed keystone-arched doors in opposite directions and also windows of the same type on the side-walls. In general, the main temple is built on a raised platform or courtyard, approached from the torana by ascending staircases. The plinth is constructed more or less on the same level of the raised courtyard. The shrine is the combination of charchala sanctum and a low-height porch, the hind edge of latter being interlocked with the facade of the sanctum. Between the porch and the pointed arched entrance to the sanctum is the antarala, not exceeding an average length of 1 meter. The group plan of the sanctum is round inside and square outside. From the measurements of the outer surface and the inner space, it appears that the wall is sufficiently thick. The inner roof of the charchala is not visible. Walls of the porch and the sanctum have been made so thick that the inner sides of the charchala became solid and the rounded sanctum wall rises gradually tapering to the inner vault of the crowning. The inner walls are provided with small niches with pointed arch shape. No pillar or plasters was used inside the construction.
- **Storeyed-type edifice:** A unique tower-like brick-built monument is standing in the heart of the Amarapura town, once a temporary capital of Amaramanikya (1577-81). This three storeyed (three storeys are now clearly visible and there might have been a few more) edifice is locally known as the palace

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of Amara-manikya. The monument is standing in a much disastrous condition and it is hardly possible to shed considerable light on its architectonic. The remains of the tower appear to have a height of about 40 meters. It forms a rectangle from the ground. The walls have a thickness of about 2.80 meters. The monument faces east with an arched opening to the corridor from which the hall is approached by another arch. The interior is extremely dark and highly infested by bats and snakes. On the spot study has revealed the floor to be paved by bricks. Eight niches rise from the ground on east and west walls and they are of about 80 cms crowning, in totality may be unimpressive, but certainly important from the architectural point of view. A congenial meeting place of the Burmese and indigenous elements and a restorer of a forgotten style, Tripura thus plays an important role in the development of Indian architecture.

Tripura Style of Temple Architecture

Tripura is located in such a place where diverse civilizations and cultures meet. Being situated near Bengal and Assam, perhaps, Tripura was connected with Burma (Myanmar) via land routes along the Gomati, Surma and Cachar valley; Lusai Hills and Manipur on one side and Chittagong, Arakan on the other. Probably through the latter route the kingdoms of Pattikera and Burma maintained relations among themselves.

You may have an idea of the architectural specialties of the temples of Tripura, particularly those temples which are the examples of a special style termed 'Tribeg' or Tripura style of architecture. Example of 'Tribeg' style of architecture can be found in Tripura Sundari temple. Though it is a mixed culture yet with the unification of the local style it becomes a unique style of its own distinction.

When the Muslim invaders entered Tripura through the western routes the physical features of Tripura like the dense forests, undulated land, heavy rainfall and floods, unsuitable climatic condition that stood in the way of fast military movement, helped the kings of Tripura in offering resistance. As a result, the Muslims could not dominate the cultural life of Tripura, though the rulers of Tripura were defeated on many occasions by the Muslims and even their right of rule were passed temporarily to the Muslim.

The incomplete structure of the Mughal Mosque on the bank of Gomati at Udaipur, erected during the occupation of Udaipur in AD 1621 supports our contention.

Thus, the creative style of the people remained essentially indigenous. The style of house building of any region depends on the geographical condition, availability of building materials and the economic condition of the people. The north-eastern states of India, especially Tripura, are rich in bamboo, cane, timber, a peculiar grass named chan (sun grass). The people of Tripura, who dwell in both hill and plains of Tripura, use these materials to build their houses as well as temples.

As there is a scarcity of good stones in Tripura, people usually did not use stones for building purposes and used thin bricks instead. The common style of house building had been adopted perfectly in the style of temple building of the kingdom.

Thatched hut with a square ground plan are a familiar sight in rural Bengal from which the Chala type developed.

'Tripura style of temple architecture' is a unique style evolved out of the combination of Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim style of architecture. This style of temple architecture started in Tripura during middle of the 15th century and continued up to the middle of 18th century under the patronage of the Manikya Kings of Tripura. We can gather a fair idea about this style if we examine the architectural style of the temple of Tripura Sundari, which is regarded as one of the fifty-one pithadevis of India. The majority of the temples of Tripura were built with thin bricks, sand and mortar of lime. We find some stone slabs or bricks in a Vishnu temple popularly known as Jaganather Dol. No other stone made temples are found in this hilly state or in the Chakla Roshnabad where the kings of Tripura erected many temples.

The bricks used in constructing temples are very thin with average thickness of 1.5 inches to 2 inches. The bricks used in Tripura Sundari temples are also of the same thickness.

The magnificent architecture of Tripura Sundari temple and other temples can be assessed under the following features:

- **Base of the temple:** All the temples of Tripura stand on a rectangular or square base. This base is actually the 'Vita' of chala-hut. The height of the base differs from 3 feet to 4 feet from the ground level. It also varies from temple to temple.
- **Walls of the temple:** Generally, the walls of the temples are connected with each other by four palas (pillars) or mine rates visible from outside. The roof of the temple sits on these four pillars. The wall between the two pillars is made of thin bricks with equidistant *khaps* as is done in case of a hut. On the heads of the pillars are placed brick-made pitchers. Each wall of the temple of Tripura Sundari is decorated with six *khaps*. In case of ordinary huts, these *khaps* are used to make the *beda* strong but in case of temple walls these are decoration. The last upper *khap* and the roof of the Natamandira are in parallel line. The space between the two *palas* above the last *khap* is made like a polished protractor. On the protractor there are three annulus of the shape of a bow and gradual sloping outwards *chala* shaped roof rests on the upper annulus. These fine works of brick and mortar are still perfectly visible on the walls of the temple of Tripura Sundari whereas like other temples, the ornamentation has vanished due to lack of proper maintenance.
- **Chalas:** If you want to locate the four chalas, you will find that the 'Chalas are made gradually sloping outwards and are connected with the four corner pillars (palas) diagonally. On the top at the meeting place of the chalas which actually is the centre of the temple, the *amalaka* or the *gomboj* is erected. The chalas are thickly plastered and has a gradual slope to drain out the water quickly as it is a heavy rainfall area and also to avoid quick growth of weeds on the chalas.

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- **Stupa-Shirsha:** The stupa-shaped Amalaka, is situated on the two annuluses just above the meeting point of the four chalas. Upper portion of annuluses is decorated by bloomed lotus made of fine bricks. The amalaka is of the shape of an inverted top and becomes gradually thin upwards and meet with the circle on which rests the base of the stupa.
- **Dhawaja (Flag):** There are seven pitchers placed one above another on this bloomed lotus. This series of pitchers makes the flag stand of the temple on which a flag of brass is attached. The height of Tripura Sundari temple is about 75 feet. The crown of the temple is visible from quite a distance from the plain land around it.
- **Garbhagriha (sanctum):** Mostly, the walls of the temples are very thick. For that reason, the space of *Garbhagriha* is quite small. The outer measurement of the Tripura Sundari temple is 24 feet × 24 feet and the walls are of 8 feet thick, so only 156 sq feet is used as sanctum. The shape of the sanctum is circular in some temple, though the outer shape of the temple is square or rectangular. A platform is placed in the Garbhagriha on which the deities are placed. All other temples have only one door but Tripura Sundari has two gates, the main gate facing the deities in the west and another on the north side. Baring only three temples, all the old temples are empty now has no deities inside them. These deities were either removed or destroyed by the later raiders.
- **Inscription Plaque (name of the temple):** Generally, just above the main gate of the sanctum a plaque is plastered in the wall having a poem in Sanskrit with Bengali alphabets narrating the date of establishing the temple, the name of the deity and the name of the builder of the temple. In the case of Tripura Sundari temple the actual space for the plaque is covered by a silver dish while the inscriptions are inscribed in detail on the back wall of the temple.
- **Natmandir (Jagamohan):** Natmandirs are of great significance for temples. The natmandir of Tripura Sundari and Tripuresh Shiba temples are used till now. But the natmandir of Gopinath temple is completely damaged leaving only standing walls. These Natmandirs resemble the Jagannath temple of Odisha. The kings of Tripura visited Puri as pilgrims and brought images of Lord Jagannath for installing them in the temples built by them.
- **Torana (Entrance gate):** The toranas of Hari Mandir, Gunabati Vishnu Mandir and Vishnu Mandir of Ramdev Manikya are worth mentioning. There are Toranas in front of some temples. The Torana is a dochala type construction seen frequently in Bengal. Torana of Hari temple was built outside the Natmandir. From the ground floor, the steps lead to Torana. The Do-chala type Torana has gabakha on two sides. From torana steps lead to the floor of Natmandir.

(Source: Dr.Goswami, D.N., *Temples of Tripura*, Akshar Publications, Agartala, pp.13-19).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. Name two matrilineal tribes of Tripura.
5. Majority of Tripura temples are concentrated in which city and in which time period?
6. Name the two groups under which art of Tripura 14th century onwards can be divided stylistically.

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4.4 INSURGENCY AND HUMAN SECURITY

The word insurgency is closely linked with the North Eastern states of India. The North Eastern states of India are connected to the rest of India by the Siliguri Corridor which is a 23 kilometres wide strip of land. Since independence, the states of North Eastern region of India have been plagued with the problem of insurgency. There are several armed as well as non-armed factions that operate in the states of North East India all of which are insurgent groups. Some of these groups demand complete independence while there are other insurgent groups that demand regional autonomy. Tensions exist between these insurgent groups and the central government.

Insurgency can be defined as an organised armed struggle by a section of local population against the state. Insurgency is usually characterised by the presence of foreign help. The cause of insurgency can be many including ideological differences, ethnic and linguistic differences, political, social and economic differences and extremism or fundamentalism.

According to US Counter Insurgency (COIN) Operations Doctrine:

Insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself. An insurgent is a member of that group. When compared to their adversaries, insurgents generally have strong will but limited means. Although some insurgents have no interest in working within any political system, it is this relative disparity of means that normally drives groups to use insurgency to alleviate core grievances. Additionally, this relative disparity of means also drives the insurgents to use subversion, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism, in the face of capable counter insurgent forces. Insurgency requires few resources to initiate, yet it ties up significant resources to counter as the insurgents seek to exhaust the government in an effort to be effective in the long term. Insurgency allows a group time to potentially gain public support, expand, and secure external moral and material support; it seeks to erode the opposition's will, influence, and power. In its early phases, insurgency may only be loosely organized with competing interests amongst its subgroups. Typical insurgencies only become a military concern when normal political process and law enforcement methods are insufficient. Insurgencies are complex, dynamic, and adaptive; they can rapidly shift, split, combine, or reorganize.

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The genesis of insurgency and terrorism are multiple across the various parts of the world but in the case of Tripura, the main cause of insurgency is demographic destabilization. Tripura is perhaps the only state in the North East region of India that has been transformed by a tribal state to a state with non-tribal population because of the great influx of refugees from East Bengal. This great influx of refugees and immigration was not handled by the administration of Tripura since the partition of the country and the merger of the state with the Indian Union. Because the successive governments were more interested in the policy of vote-banks, the interests of the tribal population received a backseat. This huge scale immigration and refugee influx led to the tribal population becoming a minority in the state. This demographic change thus caused fear in the minds of the tribal population and gave birth to the issues of identity crisis and ethnic conflicts. Most of the tribal population got into continuous conflict with the Bengali settlers in the state of Tripura.

The tribal population also suffered from economic insecurities. These economic insecurities were the result of alienation of the land and restriction of access to the land which was native for the tribal population. The Bengali refugees or migrants who settled in the state of Tripura practiced advanced patterns of rice cultivation as opposed to the tribal population that still relied on jhum cultivation or shifting agriculture. Therefore, a large portion of land of the tribal population was transferred to the refugee population that had settled in the state.

Initially, when the immigration had started, there was no problem of insurgency. The tribal population shared whatever it had with the others. The kings of Tripura were the kings of the hilly regions and also enjoyed the zamindari of the Chakla-Roshnabad. The agricultural surplus of the Bengali tenants in the Chakla-Roshanbad was traded with goods from the tribal population and the system worked well till the beginning of the twentieth century. In order to earn more land revenue, the kings of Tripura started inviting non-tribal peasants for settling in the Chakla Roshanband region. This land alienation slowly caused great trouble for the tribal population of the state.

After the state of Tripura was merged with the Indian Union in 1949, the case of the tribal people was taken up by the Ganamukti Parishad (GMP). The GMP started a struggle against the government for securing the basic rights of the tribal population. The GMP was not only supported by the tribal population but also by the non-tribal population. On the other hand, the successive governments in the state did not show much concern for the welfare of the tribal population. The Congress government even tried to suppress the GMP and the movement which further created a sense of insecurity and resentment in the tribal community. The government even opened a few reserved areas for the non-tribal immigrants. The Tribal Land Reforms and Land Revenue Act was also amended in the 1974 which legalised the transfer of all tribal lands till 1968. Restoration of land to the tribal community was also not possible and while the Left-Front was able to restore some land, complete restoration was not possible and this did not solve the problem of the tribal community.

Insurgency in the state of Tripura can also be attributed to some extent to the backwardness of the state. Geographical remoteness and isolation were major bottlenecks in the development of Tripura. The lack of communication and transport

facilities and infrastructure led to the backwardness of the state and also its people. This adversely affected the tribal population which was already cut-off from the rest of the state as well as the country.

There were several other important issues that gave the required impetus to the insurgency in Tripura including:

- Feeling of neglect
- Economic and political marginalization within the Indian Union
- Unemployment
- Spread of education and awareness of the basic rights
- Growth of tribal middle class
- Porous international border
- Instigation of the outside sources
- Armed conflicts between tribal and non-tribal population

In such a situation, the fostering of violence is not surprising as the insurgents banked upon discontent of the tribal population.

The first case of ethnic insurgency in Tripura was expressed through the Sengkrak Movement in 1967 in Manu, Chaaumanu and Kanchanpur areas of North Tripura. This movement was also present in the Khowai region of the West Tripura district. The activists of this movement launched several violent attacks on the government officials as well but this movement was short-lived and was controlled by the administration in 1968.

The Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti also came into being in 1967 to check the influence of the communists on the tribal population in the state of Tripura. This organization was a regional tribal political organization which formed a militant underground group called the Tripura National Volunteers in 1978. The Tripura National Volunteers in collaboration with the Mizo National Front carried out several violent insurgent activities for over a decade. The riots of 1980 in Tripura were triggered by the Tripura National Volunteers. It was in these riots that an estimated 1800 people lost their lives and thousands of houses were put on fire. These riots left the people of Tripura in fear and put an end to the ideology of social-cohesion.

After these riots, a faction of the Tripura National Volunteers formed yet another extremist group called the All Tripura People's Liberation Organization (ATPLO) in 1980. However, the ATPLO was dissolved in 1983 when the leader of the group had to surrender to the government of the state.

The Left-Front was dislodged from power in the 1988 elections which have been considered as the most violent elections of the state of Tripura. This also put an end to one phase of insurgency in the state of Tripura as the members of the Tripura National Volunteers walked out of the jungles and signed the Peace Accord of 1988 with the Union Home Ministry and the Congress (I)- TUJS government which came into power in the state. This peace accord however failed to bring the peace in the state as the military and insurgent organizations raised their head again in the state and this time their fight was more dreadful and used sophisticated firearms.

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The Left-Front government returned in the state of Tripura in 1993 and the insurgent groups re-emerged with their violent activities. This phase of insurgency in the state was dominated by two groups- National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). The NLFT came into being in 1989 with the backing of the Baptist Church of Tripura. The NLFT has been advancing its cause through armed rebellion and is today a proclaimed terrorist organization in India. The NLFT seeks to secede Tripura from the Indian Union and establish an independent state of Tripura. The All Tripura Tiger Force was formed by local aboriginal tribes in 1990. The local aboriginal tribes formed this organization because they were being outnumbered by the non-tribal population and also because it was getting difficult for them to thrive economically and culturally because of the Bengali settlers in the state. The main aim of the ATTF was the expulsion of Bengali speaking immigrants from their territory.

These two organizations in order to spread their fear and to promote their cause have established a record of mass killings, kidnappings, extortion and arson etc. of common people as well as political leaders particularly those belonging to the CPIM. These groups highlight all the demands and interests of the tribal people of the state. These insurgent groups operate from their bases which they have established just adjoining Bangladesh. They use these bases to carry out guerrilla attacks and strikes on civilians as well as military forces.

These two groups are sworn enemies of each other and each tries to establish its supremacy in the region. The clashes between these insurgent groups however threaten the security of the common people. The NLFT also had decided to take part in all elections indirectly from the TTAADC to the assembly and also to back the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura. The NLFT threatens people who vote against the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura. The ATTF on the other hand threatens to boycott all types of elections. These two rival insurgent groups however join hands and come together on issues like expulsion of refugees from Tripura and to celebrate 15 October as Black Day. They even threaten people to boycott the celebrations of the Independence Day and the Republic Day.

The emergence of the militant Bengali organizations like the United Liberation Front in 1999 threatened the internal security of the state. The United Liberation Front started killing tribal people in retaliation by exploding crude bombs. This organization targeted areas that had mixed population. Thus in the war of the insurgent groups, blood begot blood and the groups kept avenging the loss of their members. The United Liberation Front was however dissolved when the president of the organization was arrested.

Insurgency is violent in character. This violence is however different from conventional warfare as it involves the indiscriminate killings of people. The insurgents target civilians as well as military personnel without giving any consideration to human life. The main aim of the terrorist and insurgent groups is to instil a sense of fear by means of violent attacks. The aim of the insurgent groups is to get the attention of the media and the government and also to invoke misappropriate reactions from the government.

The character of insurgency in the state of Tripura has changed over time as have the demands of the insurgent organizations. Some of the demands of the insurgent outfits in Tripura have included the following:

- Separation of the state of Tripura from the Indian Union
- Sovereignty of Tripura which for the insurgent groups was not negotiable in any manner
- Expulsion of refugees from Tripura who immigrated into the state after 1949
- Peace negotiations if any to take place at the third country under the mediation of the United Nations
- Full-fledged tribal state of Tripura within the Indian Union
- Upgrading the TTAADC to status of the Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam

Initially, the insurgent groups targeted the non-tribal population that of the Bengali settlers. At first, the demand was for a separate tribal state. However, the insurgent groups were propelled by the murderous hate campaigns against the settlers. The insurgent groups thus started killing, abduction, kidnapping, extortion, arson etc. of unarmed civilians of all ages.

The present situation of insurgency in Tripura is characterised by the following:

- Low level insurgency with cadres indulging in illegal tax collection and trans-border crime
- Number of insurgents surrendering is on the rise
- The NTLF and the ATTF have split into several factions as their popularity is decreasing
- Male cadres are deserting these organizations and therefore more women cadres are being used to carry out the destructive operations

The impact of insurgency has been phenomenal in terms of internal displacement of the unarmed civilian population of the state. The traumatised people of the interior of the state have been forced to leave their homes in search of safer places that has again led to demographic imbalance in the state. Demands for human-security are on an increase and implementing human security approach in the state requires changes at both the micro and macro levels.

Human security in the state of Tripura is much affected by the violent conflicts that take place in the state. Violence in the state unsettles the security of the common people of the state. Armed militancy of almost three decades has left Tripura bleeding and resulted in the devastation of several people of the state. Human security cannot be achieved without protecting people in conflict and post-conflict situations, shielding people forced to move, eradicating poverty, ensuring universal primary education, guaranteeing basic health service etc. Securing people also entails empowering the people, particularly the disadvantaged and marginalized section of the society.

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In Tripura, education security is also essential so that the people are equipped with life skills so that they can affect their security directly. The tribal population of the state has not been educated and even deprived of the basic educational facilities. The Jana Shiksha Andolan by the tribal elites has been paramount in opening of several schools in the interior areas of the state of Tripura. However, the education movement in the tribal regions of Tripura has not been successful again because of the activities of the insurgent groups who resorted to the kidnapping and extortion of teachers. This led to the desertion of these regions by many teachers ultimately resulting in the closure of the schools in these regions.

One of the main fall-outs of insurgency is the security of women. The rising insurgency has also increased the cases of violence against women. In fact, women have emerged as the most vulnerable section of the society when it comes to indiscriminate violence by the insurgent groups. The security of women in Tripura is at such a vulnerable stage that even women cadres are not safe in their hide-outs.

Another security threat because of insurgency in Tripura is the smuggling of arms and narcotics. The smuggling of narcotics, modern arms and narcotic drugs from both sides of the border of Tripura has been a direct outcome of the activities of the insurgent groups in the state. The porous nature of the border with Bangladesh and the ease with which smuggling takes place has posed another threat to the human security in the state of Tripura. The smuggling of drugs and narcotics has resulted in the emergence of drug abuse in the state especially among the youth. Because of the sensitive location of Tripura, human trafficking is also a great threat to human security in the state. The trafficking of women is also common place in the state and therefore is a threat for the security of the women in the state.

4.4.1 Recent Activities of Insurgent Groups in Tripura

Some incidents in Tripura by insurgent groups that have posed a threat to human security:

- In January 2004, five personnel of the Border Security Force were killed by the members of the National Liberation Front of Tripura. The personnel were killed in a landmine blast which was triggered by the NLFT. The landmine exploded when a vehicle with the Border Security Force Personnel reached Chaplingcherra in the South Tripura district of the state.
- In November 2005 when the BSF jawans were on patrol, to provide protection to the workers of the NPCC, a construction company in Tripura in the Shalai district, NLFT cadres ambushed the BSF patrol and showered bullets from automatic guns killing three BSF personnel.
- In May 2005, five people of the Chakma tribe were killed and nineteen houses were burnt in fire by the NLFT in two villages in the Dhalai district. The militants after the operation fled to their hideouts on the other side of the border.

Anti-insurgency or counter-insurgency entails the steps taken by the government against the rebels or the insurgent groups. The aims of counter-insurgency include the following:

- Dissuading the ones not affected by adopting the tactics of the insurgents
- Denying means to the terrorists
- Deterring support to terrorists
- Developing state preventive capacity
- Defending human rights

Human security deals with reducing and removing insecurities that plague the human lives. In Tripura, the Tripura State Rifles was created by the government to fight insurgency and rebels. Modernization of police is also undertaken as a means to fight the insurgents.

In spite of so many anti-insurgency steps, Tripura still remains a centre of conflict. Also the peace building attempts face a lot of difficulties. Utterly frustrated at the gradual but consistent shrinkage of both cadre and support base, different factions of both the ATTF and the NLFT, in order to make their existence felt, sometimes carry out savage attack on the poor people in the dark night.

4.4.2 Violation of Human Rights and Human Security by Security Forces in Tripura

Over the last several years, human rights and human security have been compromised in the state of Tripura by the security forces in the state. Security forces have been responsible for the gross violation of rights of the tribal people and have indulged in arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, torture, custodial killing and extrajudicial killings in the name of 'counter-terrorism' measures.

Some examples of instances include:

- On 7 January 2008, Dhananjay Debbarma, tribal student of seventeen years of age, was shot down by a para-military Tripura State Rifles (TSR) personnel. He had mistakenly thought him to be an insurgent during a counter-insurgency operation in Kunjaban under Kalyanpur police station of West Tripura district. Dhananjay was in the jungles to collect bamboo. Naturally, the death of the boy was saw violent protests from the tribals .
- On 21 April 2008, again during a counter-insurgency operation, the joint forces of 8th Battalion of TSR and Tripura Police of Longtorai Valley Police Station led by Officer-in-Charge Mr Hemonta Debbarma shot down three tribals identified as Choronjoy Reang (21), Pudirai Reang (23) and Sonaton Tripura at Bijoy Master Para under Longtorai police station in Dhalai district who had gone to their Jhum (shifting cultivation) field to work as usual in the Sakhan Sermun hill range also known as Bijoy Master Para.
- On 13 January 2008, four tribals were arrested by TSR personnel on returning to their houses after collecting fire-wood from a jungle. They were suspected of providing food to members of an AOG. It was known that while they were in custody they were also tortured.

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- The AOGs has a bad record of violating international humanitarian law which includes killing, torture and abduction. As per the police reports, there were seventy-four insurgency-related incidents in 2008 and the AOGs were responsible for the killing of eight civilians and the kidnapping of thirty-two other.
- Tribal political leader Sunil Debbarma was killed by suspected ATTF cadres at Sidhai in West Tripura district on 30 March 2008.
- On 26 April 2008, a railway labourer, was shot dead by suspected cadres of NLFT.
- 1,067 incidents of crime against women were recorded during 2007. These included 157 rapes, eighty-one kidnapping and abductions, thirty-six dowry deaths, among others. Sixty-three incidents of crime were recorded against children during the same period.
- On 26 February 2008, twenty-five persons including fifteen women were injured when TSR personnel resorted to lathi-charge upon the civilians during forcible evicting of 450 tribal families from government land.
- On 12 May 2008, Constable Sujit Das is alleged to have raped a 15-year-old minor girl at the staff quarter of Nepaltilla police station under Kailasahar sub-division in North Tripura district.
- Sandhya Reang was allegedly raped by the personnel of 9th Battalion of Tripura State Rifles (TSR) at Bata Para village under Twidu police station in Amarpur sub-division in South Tripura district on 7 May 2008. The report suggests that the personnel of the TSR entered the victim's house and commanded the victim's father to go fetch the local-made wine for them. After making the father leave the house, the TSR personnel allegedly raped the victim.
- There have been numerous cases of custodial torture in the jails of Tripura till 2008. In October 2008, allegedly a woman prisoner was tortured by the jail officials at the Agartala Central Jail. The victim was allegedly forced to work as a maid-servant by the sub-jailer, Bella Dutta in the jail. She was physically tortured when she refused to work.
- On 24 April 2008, an under-trial prisoner was allegedly tortured to death by jail officials.

4.4.3 How Tripura Overcame Insurgency

Insurgency in Tripura has been an insurmountable phenomenon and what was needed was a multi-dimensional strategy to overcome this problem. High voltage insurgency and an orgy of violence disrupted civic life and communications, and led to the closure of many educational and financial institutions, threatening the authority of the State. To overcome this problem, the state of Tripura developed a multi-faceted strategy to respond creatively to the situation of insurgency. Counter-insurgency operations that were set-up by the government were not hawkish in approach but were rather direct and combatted conflict openly. These operations were extensive

as well as took the help of central paramilitary forces and state police. Special police officers inducted and channelled to take charge of these operations.

Psychological interventions to correct the negative perception of the tribal population were also undertaken. Psychological sessions and brainstorming sessions were conducted so that the tribal population could be made aware of the negative impacts of insurgency. This strategy was carried through the media, both print and electronic, art groups, intellectuals, and interactive seminars and discussions.

Confidence building exercises were also conducted in insurgency bound pockets. The tribal population was offered employment and attractive rehabilitation packages in order to reduce insurgency. The government also undertook development of the tribal population and achieved fast delivery of basic services like safe drinking water, health care and rural connectivity. Socio-economic advancement was thus a major operation to check insurgency in the state.

To overcome insurgency, peace marches were also held in the state to instil confidence in the tribal population and to assure them that the government was working for their welfare. Micro-democratic institutions such as autonomous development councils, grampanchayats and village councils were strengthened, revitalised and legitimised. They turned vibrant and actively functional as local governance modules. This brought all the communities, and tribal population in particular, into the development stream giving them a sense of fulfilment.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7. What is the unique characteristic of insurgency?
8. When did the NLFT come into being?

4.5 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN TRIPURA

Human development refers to the process of enlarging the opportunities and freedoms for people and improving their well-being. While human development is essential from every aspect of a state or a country, it is not given due importance and also the credit. Human development is dependent on many factors and is also determined by several factors including the infrastructural facilities available, education and also the demographic statistics of a state or a country.

The first Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990 defined human development as, 'a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical of these wide-ranging choices are to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect.'

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Coming to Tripura, it is a small state located in the North Eastern Region of the country. It is also located on the frontiers of the country and as such has close proximity to the country of Bangladesh. Historical and geographical conditions of the state of Tripura have resulted in the state getting an economic structure which is weak and diversified with no manufacturing base and a weak infrastructure. Tripura is also isolated from the rest of the country and lacks the required road and rail links that affect the overall development of the state adversely. Insurgency and associated violence have also hampered the development of the state in all respects.

Human development as has been stated is concerned with the well-being of the people and is different from economic and social development. Human development deals with ensuring that people are provided with the resources essential for their well-being and development and in turn are able to make use of the resources in an optimal manner.

The Partition of the country in 1947 and the successive events have left an impact on the state of Tripura. The partition and the merger of the state with the Indian Union had an enduring effect on the social and economic development of the state. With the partition came a huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, into the state of Tripura. This had an impact on the economy as well as the demography of the state. The huge influx of refugees placed a heavy burden on the limited resources of the state and also resulted in an upheaval in the social composition of the state of Tripura. The partition also offered a major setback to the infrastructural development of the state as the state lost its rail routes to the west, south and north. Thus, the state was cut-off from the rest of the country and went into isolation. Partition and the immigration of refugees therefore aggravated the geo-political isolation of the state.

When Tripura merged with the Indian Union, the economic base was agriculture. Most of the cultivators practiced jhum cultivation and only some of the land in the plains of the state was under settled agriculture and the main crop was rice. The economy was thus completely agricultural based with no manufacturing and industrial set up that could help in the economic growth of the state.

We have already stated that demographic statistics have an impact on human development. Taking this factor into consideration, it is to be noted that Tripura has a population of just over 3 million people. The following features of the population of Tripura are of immediate relevance when it comes to human development:

- The urban population of the state contributes a very low share to the total population of the state. The urban population is just 26.17 per cent and most of this is in the West District of the Tripura. The urban population in addition to being very less is also unequally distributed.
- The population of the state is distributed unevenly across the various districts of the state.
- Social diversity is the main characteristic feature of the state of Tripura. Schedule Tribes account for one-third of the population of the state. The Reangs and the Tripuris contributed to almost 71 per cent of the population of the state. Thus, Tripura also has a plurality of language and dialects.

- In the state, there is also present the rural-urban divide. The overwhelming population of the tribes lives in the rural areas. Human development of the tribal population is therefore closely related to the economic growth of the rural areas.
- The rate of growth of population also affects the human development. The period from 1951 to 1961 was characterized by very high rates of growth, influenced by large-scale immigration from Bangladesh. There was a striking decline in the decadal growth rate during 1991–2001.
- Migration and population growth have affected the demographic profile of the state. Today, the tribal population which was once a majority in the state of Tripura has emerged as a minority group.
- Dalits constitute 17 per cent of the population of Tripura. Hindus constitute majority of the population in all districts and especially in the urban regions. 93 per cent of the Muslim population in the state is rural.
- The population of the state and its district is young.

Considering the population and the economy of Tripura, the following apply to human development in the state:

- Sustainable level of improvements is possible in human development even at modest levels of income. This applies to Tripura where the income levels are very low but still the state has managed to improve basic health care and also reduce child labour.
- Economic growth and human progress are not linked automatically. This is true for Tripura because even with low economic growth, Tripura has been able to achieve substantial human development which otherwise on the basis of propositions is linked with only high income generation and growth.
- Social subsidies are absolutely essential for poorer income groups for their human development. In states like Tripura, establishing a strong industrial or economic base is not enough for human development. In fact, public policies play an important role in the well-being of the population of the state of Tripura.

Literacy and education are important and intrinsic for human development. Education is important because of the following reasons:

- Education enables a person to gather knowledge of all aspects of life.
- Education makes a person more acceptable and productive.
- Education increases the chances of employability.
- Education leads to fulfilment.

Tripura has made substantial progress when it comes to education and literacy. In 2011, the literacy rate for persons above the age of six years is 87.22 per cent in Tripura, 74.04 per cent in India. It ranks among the top five states in the country in terms of literacy. Female literacy rate in the state of Tripura is very low. Also the literacy rate for rural population is very low as compared to the literacy rate for the

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urban population in the state of Tripura. This is because the level of income in rural areas is very low and so education of children cannot be supported in the required manner. In addition, the educational infrastructure available in the rural regions is inferior to what is available in the urban areas of the state. In rural areas of Tripura, there are gender based differences also wherein the education of girl child is almost negligible. Literacy rates in Tripura are quite high. Overall 91.01 per cent males and 82.73 per cent females are literate.

Health and longevity are also important indicators of human development. Expectation of life at birth is a component of Human Development Index. In 2001, life expectancy at birth for males and females in Tripura was seventy-one years and seventy-four years respectively. In terms of life expectancy, attainments in Tripura are higher than the national average, which is 61 for males and 62.5 for females.

Sex ratio is a simple indicator of gender equality. It is a measure of the relative longevity of males and females and is dependent on several factors. In 2011, there were 960 females per 1,000 males in Tripura as compared to 940 in India. The child sex ratio, that is, sex ratio of children of 0–6 years, indicates the degree of gender discrimination against young children. The child sex ratio in Tripura was 957 as compared to the Indian average of 914. Anaemia amongst children is a grave issue in the state of Tripura. The food of these children lack in essential nutrients like iron, Vitamin A, riboflavin, thiamine.

Table 4.4 Health indicators in Tripura vis-a-vis all India in 2010-11

Category	National	State
1 Birth rate, 2010	22.1	14.9
2 Death rate, 2010	7.2	5.0
3 Natural growth rate, 2010	4.9	9.9
4 Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), 2010	47	27
5 Couple Protection Rate (CPR)	56.03	65.08
6 TFR (Total Fertility Rate)	2.68	2.22
7 Maternal Mortality Rate	4.37	4
8 Sex ratio, Census-2011	940:1000	961:1000

Income and human development are said to be related to each other in a complex manner. Higher levels of income are essential to provide for basic services; it is not essential to wait for higher levels of income to expand the basic capabilities. Also, it is not essential that higher income levels lead to higher levels of human development.

The simplest indicator of income is the State Domestic Product. In 2013-14, the net income or Net SDP (NSDP) of Tripura was ₹2332898 lakhs. In 2003-04, this figure was ₹ 32,480 million. To put this in perspective, in 2001, Tripura's NSDP accounted for 0.28 per cent of India's national income, while the population of Tripura was 0.3 per cent of the Indian population. In 2012-13, the per capita income of the State was ₹ 57,402. The growth records of income in Tripura have been remarkable.

The compound annual growth rate of NSDP (at constant prices) was 5.2 per cent in the 1980s and 6.7 per cent in the 1990s. Since 1993–94, the new base year for estimates by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), the growth of per capita income in Tripura surpassed that of all States.

The sectoral contribution to the State Domestic Product still indicates that agriculture remains the main contributor to the State Domestic Product. The contribution of the secondary sector has not changed in the state while that of the tertiary sector has improved steadily. The tertiary sector accounts for 50 per cent of the State Domestic Product in Tripura.

Table 4.5 Share of different sectors in NSDP of Tripura and National Income of India over the years

Sector	Tripura			India		
	1980-81	1990-91	2002-03	1980-81	1990-91	2002-03
Primary	46.7	36.9	30.0	38.9	31.3	22.7
Secondary	10.5	10.3	18.6	19.7	22.0	20.5
Tertiary	42.8	52.8	51.4	41.5	46.7	56.9

Unemployment levels remain high in the state of Tripura. In urban areas, young men and women particularly face unemployment. Unemployment in Tripura is chronic in nature. The unemployment rates in rural regions are more than the rates in the urban regions but the workers in rural areas are mostly employed in agricultural activities. Expansion of employment opportunities is essential when it comes to the improvement of the economic status of the people.

Infrastructure is also important for economic growth. Tripura has witnessed a decline in terms of transport infrastructure cutting it off from the rest of the country. Power, telecommunication, banking are the sectors in the state that do not have proper infrastructure and therefore the economic development in the state has been slow and at an all-time low for over decades. The lack of basic infrastructure and transport connectivity is a major constraint on economic growth, employment generation and diversification of output and employment.

Housing is an important factor that indicates human well-being. Housing contributes to the social, physical and mental well-being of the people of a state or a country. The main purpose of housing is to provide shelter to the people and act as an element of focus of family life. Sanitation and drinking water are also important when it comes to well-being of people. The lack of sanitation and safe drinking water all are negative factors of human well-being.

In Tripura, a large number of people live in kuccha houses. The conditions of these houses are not satisfactory and these also lack all the basic facilities that contribute to the well-being of the people. In fact, 85.4 per cent of the rural population stays in kuccha houses which have poor indoor air quality, inadequate solid waste disposal facilities, insufficient lighting, building defects, and construction inadequacies. It is therefore essential that human development expenditure be done on these social facets of the society. However, Tripura because of the poor economic background

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and growth depends on the central government and its grants for its fiscal expenditures. In such a case, it is not always possible to put aside a fair amount of expenditure for human development. This is perhaps the main limiting factor when it comes to spending more on human development in the state.

Table 4.6 Human Development Index of Tripura 2001

	Education index	Health index	Income index	HDI
West District	0.77	0.82	0.26	0.61
South District	0.70	0.76	0.24	0.57
Dhalai	0.60	0.74	0.19	0.51
North District	0.72	0.80	0.25	0.59
Tripura	0.73	0.79	0.25	0.59

Table 4.7 Gender-related Development Index of Tripura, 2001

	Equally distributed education	Equally distributed index health index	Equally distributed income index	GDI West District
	0.76	0.82	0.17	0.58
South District		0.69	0.76	0.19 0.55
Dhalai		0.59	0.74	0.16 0.50
North District		0.71	0.80	0.16 0.56
Tripura		0.72	0.79	0.18 0.56

It has already been stated that public policies play an important role in the human development in a state like Tripura. Public expenditure is essential when it comes to human development. It is very important that finances be allocated for human development in the state and expenditure be made for the development of facilities that contribute to the well-being of the people of the state. Based on the UNDP reports, there are four ratios to indicate the priority assigned to states for expenditure on human development:

- Public Expenditure Ratio is the total budgetary expenditures as a proportion of the GDP.
- Social Allocation Ratio is the share of budgetary expenditure on social sector.
- Social Priority Ratio is the proportion of the social sector expenditure that is spent on human priority areas.
- Human expenditure ratio is a product of the first three ratios and measures the budgetary expenditures in human priority areas as a proportion of GDP.

There was an increase in PER between 1998-99 and 2001-02. This increase in PER after 1998-99 (36 per cent) can be attributed to the rise in the salary expenditure. From the time period 2007-08 to 2012-13, the PER was lower than the previous years and stood at 31.1 per cent.

It can also be seen that during this time period, there was a sizeable rise in the real per capita expenditure on social and social priority sectors. The expenditure is calculated as the sum of both revenue and capital expenditure. The increase in the per capita social sector expenditure was from ₹ 1103 in 1993-94 to ₹ 1778 in 2001-02. The social priority sector expenditure had also increased from ₹ 563 per capita in 1993-94 to ₹ 938 per capita in 2001-02. It must be noted here that the state of Tripura spends a significant amount on the social and human priority sectors when compared to other states of India with more population.

Table 4.8 Indicators of Expenditure on Human Development in Tripura

Year	Public Expenditure ratio	Social allocation ratio	Social priority ratio	Human expenditure ratio
1993-94	42.4	42.8	50.6	9.2
1994-95	45.3	44.5	52.7	10.6
1995-96	42.3	43.7	55.4	10.2
1996-97	41.7	45.3	53.1	10.0
1997-98	38.7	46.0	54.9	9.8
1998-99	36.4	47.7	54.2	9.4
1999-00	38.0	44.5	51.9	8.8
2000-01	39.5	42.4	53.3	8.9
2001-02	40.1	39.9	52.4	8.4

Ideally, the PER of state should be approximately 25 per cent, the SAR 40 per cent and SPR 50 per cent as per the UNDP's Human Development Report of 1991. This percentage then effectively leads to the HER of 5 per cent of the entire country.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

9. What is human development?
10. State the literacy rate in the state of Tripura as per the Census 2011.
11. Which factor is a major constraint on economic growth, employment generation and diversification of output and employment?

4.6 SUMMARY

- The process of decentralization transfers responsibilities like planning, management, resource-raising and allocation and other functions of the government from the central government to the units of government that are locally present in a state or a union territory.

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- Tripura now has a three-tier structure of elected local bodies. These are Panchayati Raj Institutions at gram panchayat, block panchayat (panchayat samiti) and district panchayat (Zilla Parishad) levels. In addition, Tripura also has the unique institution of the Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), vested with powers intended to ensure a large degree of self-government to tribal population.
- The institution of municipality as an urban local body was first introduced in Tripura in 1871. This municipality was set in the town of Agartala by King Bir Chandra Manikya.
- In May 1959, the United Provinces Panchayati Raj Act of 1947 was extended to seventeen community development boards in Tripura. This led to the beginning of the formation of self-government institutions in rural regions of Tripura. In 1962, the first statutory Gaon Panchayat was instituted in Jirania.
- The Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 came into force in 1994. This Act introduced the three-tier level of administration at the village panchayat level.
- The Gram Sabha is considered to be the basic unit of democracy at the grass-root level. The constitution of gram sabha ensures participation as well as accountability and thereby ensures better administration at the village level.
- For the convenience of administration and to ensure that the government services reach the entire population of the state, the state of Tripura has been divided into districts, sub-divisions and blocks.
- Since the majority of the population of the state of Tripura consists of tribes, the government recognizes and accepts the fact that the development and welfare of the tribal population is essential for the overall development of the state. It is also essential to make sure that the governance reaches the tribal population of the state which thrives in the backward areas of the state. The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) also known as the ADC was constituted under the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution by the passage of Bill proposed by the Left Front government of Tripura.
- Tripura is a tiny hilly state of North east India and it is inhabited by Bengalis as well as nineteen different tribal groups. Tripura had a feudalistic pattern of society, where the feudal privileges had a huge impact on the people. The king and his family along with his privileged officials lived in towns and plain areas, whereas most of the tribes lived in the interior villages of the hills.
- The society of the tribal people of this state was mostly patriarchal, where the father dominated the family; but in the case of Garo and Khasi tribes, the family was matrilineal. The family was the basic unit of the tribe and the families belonging to the same tribe lived in a village, which was called 'Para' or 'Bari'.
- In Hill Tripura 'Sati System' (the practise of burning alive the widows of Hindus), was declared illegal and punishable in May AD 1889 by Bir Chandra Manikya at the earnest suggestion of Mr D. R. Lyall.

- If you look at the marriage custom of the different tribes of Tripura, you will find that the marriage customs of the tribes were primitive in nature. When a young man wished to marry a girl, he had to serve for some years in the house of his prospective bride. This practice was known as 'Jamaikhata'.
- There were four predominant communities in Tripura following different religions—Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity.
- If one observes the social life of the tribal people, one would see that the tribals used to spend their life in dancing, music and drinking.
- Most of the tribal people were agriculturists. They followed a peculiar system of cultivation known as 'Jhum cultivation.'
- The historical background of Tripura is still shrouded into obscurity. Lying contiguous to Bengal, the art of Tripura of the medieval period, shared the same characteristic features of the contemporary art of Bengal to a certain extent.
- It is not known when building activity had started in Tripura. But the discovery of some of the cult icons of the 7th-8th century appeared to testify the existence of temples of the same period which were intended to enshrine in them.
- From the extant edifices, it is evident that the temple-building activity started in the early 16th century or towards the end of the 15th century under the Manikya patronage and practically came to a close in the last part of the 18th century due to decadence of the royal power.
- You may have an idea of the architectural specialties of the temples of Tripura, particularly those temples which are the examples of a special style termed 'Tribeg' or Tripura style of architecture.
- The word insurgency is closely linked with the North Eastern states of India. The north eastern states of India are connected to the rest of India by the Siliguri Corridor which is a 23 kilometres wide strip of land.
- The genesis of insurgency and terrorism are multiple across the various parts of the world but in the case of Tripura, the main cause of insurgency is demographic destabilization. Tripura is perhaps the only state in the north east region of India that has been transformed by a tribal state to a state with non-tribal population because of the great influx of refugees from East Bengal.
- Insurgency in the state of Tripura can also be attributed to some extent to the backwardness of the state. Geographical remoteness and isolation were major bottlenecks in the development of Tripura. The lack of communication and transport facilities and infrastructure led to the backwardness of the state and also its people. This adversely affected the tribal population which was already cut-off from the rest of the state as well as the country.
- The main aim of the terrorist and insurgent groups is to instil a sense of fear by means of violent attacks. The aim of the insurgent groups is to get the attention of the media and the government and also to invoke misappropriate reactions from the government.

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- Armed militancy of almost three decades has left Tripura bleeding and resulted in the devastation of several people of the state.
- Human development refers to the process of enlarging the opportunities and freedoms for people and improving their well-being.
- Human development is dependent on many factors and is also determined by several factors including the infrastructural facilities available, education and also the demographic statistics of a state or a country.
- Tripura has made substantial progress when it comes to education and literacy. In 2011, the literacy rate for persons above the age of six years was 87.22 per cent in Tripura, 74.04 per cent in India. It ranks among the top five states in the country in terms of literacy.
- Health and longevity are also important indicators of human development. Expectation of life at birth is a component of Human Development Index. In 2001, life expectancy at birth for males and females in Tripura was seventy-one years and seventy-four years respectively.
- Sex ratio is a simple indicator of gender equality. It is a measure of the relative longevity of males and females and is dependent on several factors. In 2011, there were 960 females per 1,000 males in Tripura as compared to 940 in India.
- In 2013-14, the net income or Net SDP (NSDP) of Tripura was ₹ 2332898 lakhs. In 2003-04, this figure was ₹ 32,480 million. To put this in perspective, in 2001, Tripura's NSDP accounted for 0.28 per cent of India's national income, while the population of Tripura was 0.3 per cent of the Indian population. In 2012-13, the per capita income of the State was ₹ 57,402
- Unemployment levels remain high in the state of Tripura. In urban areas, young men and women particularly face unemployment. Unemployment in Tripura is chronic in nature.
- There was an increase in PER between 1998-99 and 2001-02. This increase in PER after 1998-99 (36 per cent) can be attributed to the rise in the salary expenditure. From the time period 2007-08 to 2012-13, the PER was lower than the previous years and stood at 31.1 per cent.

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Decentralization:** It is the transfer of power and authority from Central/ State government to local self-government.
- **Jamaikhata:** It is a tribal custom where a young man who wished to marry a girl, had to serve for some years in the house of his prospective bride.
- **Insurgency:** It refers to an organised armed struggle by a section of local population against the state.
- **Human development:** It refers to the process of enlarging the opportunities and freedoms for people and improving their well-being.

4.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. Decentralization is the process where administrative and fiscal powers are transferred to the local self-government.
2. Gaon Panchayat is a local self-government unit at the rural level.
3. The TTAADC has twenty-eight elected members and two tribal members who are appointed by the Governor.
4. Two matrilineal tribes of Tripura are Garo and Khasi tribes.
5. The majority of Tripura temples are assignable to the period between the 16th and 18th century. Most of them are concentrated at Udayapura, which had been the capital of Tripura till the first half of the 18th century.
6. The art objects of Tripura 14th century onwards may be divided into two groups stylistically: (i) The colossal rock-carving art of Unakoti and (ii) The art during the reign of Manikya rulers.
7. Insurgency is usually characterised by the presence of foreign help.
8. The National Liberation Front of Tripura came into being in 1989.
9. Human development refers to the process of enlarging the opportunities and freedoms for people and improving their well-being.
10. As per the census 2011, the literacy rate for persons above the age of six years is 87.22 per cent in Tripura.
11. The lack of basic infrastructure and transport connectivity is a major constraint on economic growth, employment generation and diversification of output and employment.

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4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Why is decentralization important?
2. What is a gram sabha?
3. Write a short note on the temple architecture from the Manikya period.
4. Write about the roles and responsibilities of the district magistrate or collector.
5. What are some of the causes of insurgency in Tripura?
6. How do NLFT and ATTF operate?
7. What have been the various demands of the insurgent groups in Tripura?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the functioning of urban local bodies in Tripura.
2. Describe the Panchayati Raj Institution in Tripura.

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3. What are the various departments that carry out the activities and duties of the Panchayats in Tripura?
4. Write in detail about TTAADC.
5. Write an essay on the socio-economic conditions in the 18th century Tripura.
6. Describe the genesis of insurgency in Tripura and the present situation of insurgency in the state.
7. Discuss human security in Tripura and the threats to human security in the state.
8. Write a detailed note on human development in the state of Tripura.

4.10 FURTHER READING

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