Chapter V

Liberation Movement and its Response in Tripura
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The third Chapter of the present study reveals the total involvement of Tripura in the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. The present Chapter will show the all-out response of the people of Tripura including its Government in the said liberation movement. The observation of the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, which she shared with the other members of the Lok Sabha on 24 May, 1971, is as follows:

"Mr. Speaker, Sir,

"On the 15th and 16th May, I visited Assam, Tripura and West Bengal to share the sufferings of the refugees from Bangladesh, to convey to them the sympathy and support of this House and the people of India and to see for myself the arrangements which are being made for their care. I am sorry it was not possible to visit other camps this time. Every available building, including schools and training institutions has been requisitioned. Thousands of tents have been pitched and temporary shelters are being constructed as quickly as possible in the 335 camps which have been established so far".1

The Dainik Sambad of May 16, 1971, reported that the Prime Minister accompanied by the Central Education Minister, Mr. Siddharthasankar Ray, Ms. Padmaja Naidu, Ex Central Minister Triguna Sen, the Lt. Governor and the Chief Minister of the State visited the refugee camps at Narasingarh, Mohanpur, Durgabadi, Eashanpur etc. and she was not at all happy with the arrangements made so far for the refugees in the unscheduled camps like Eashanpur and Durgabadi Transit Camps. She was so benevolent that she conversated with refugees and patiently heard about the sufferings of the refugees and atrocities committed on them by the Military Junta of the Yahya Regime.2

Members of Parliament (M.P.) of TRIPURA speaks in the LOK-SABHA

Dasharath Deb, M.P, (Tripura East) on Refugees from East Bengal

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is going on in Bangladesh is known to the entire world. We are now discussing the problem here. The first thing is how to help Bangladesh freedom fighters is to be decided here and now …….
"During the last session of the Parliament also there was a unanimous resolution adopted expressing the support to these freedom fighters in Bangla-Desh. But the Govt. is still hesitating to recognize Bangla-Desh, their Government and to establish diplomatic relations with them. This delay is doing great harm to the cause of Bangladesh freedom fighters. …

"I would like to submit here that my state Tripura is worst affected state. The four states involved are Tripura, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Assam. Out of these, the worst affected is Tripura. I have visited so many refugee camps in our parts and find that their condition is deplorable. Lakhs of people are still in the open. In the Sabroom Sub-division itself, according to the latest census, the original population is only 53,000. But now, about 2 lakhs evacuees have entered there. Our people were telling us that even if the 53,000 people evacuated their homes and allowed these evacuees to take shelter, still, they could not give shelter to them. So, proper steps have to be taken in this respect. Epidemic has already been started in some parts and there is in sufficiency in medical facilities also. Medical arrangements must be there.

"Further, it must be remembered that Tripura is a very small State. After the addition of this new population, the prices of essential commodities have gone up and they are not available, and practically, our economy, has completely collapsed. The G. O. I. should take full responsibility to provide for all these evacuees. Otherwise, our state will be in terrible mess very soon.

"The other day, the Rehabilitation Minister had made a statement that evacuees who came to India should be shifted to other states, but should be kept in the border area. From four districts, evacuees are coming into our small state and how can our small state provide shelter to all of them? Already, we have about 9 lakhs people; I do not know how many more would be coming. If the decision not to shift them to other state is adhered to, I do not know what will happen to such a small state like Tripura. Therefore, I would submit that these evacuees should be shifted to some other states also. Otherwise, the Tripura state can not bear this new situation.

"Further, the operation of the Yahya Khan Military Junta in Pakistan which is indulging in the butchery in Bangladesh is endangering our security also. From Akhaura in Pakistan which is very near to our Agartala Town, the Pakistan Army has been shelling at our town continuously day and night. These bullets came to our town, and four persons were seriously injured and one killed. But we find that no step has been taken to meet this danger; instead, we find that our army keeps quiet and does not do anything; instead, they go to the border and raise the white flag of peace. What peace? We all know what sense of insecurity prevails in Agartala Town…………..
"With these words, I again say that our Govt. should not delay recognizing Bangla Desh Govt. Thus, India should immediately establish diplomatic relations with that Govt. and give all material help so that the freedom fighters can strengthen their striking power so that they can fight back the Pak army and Bangla Desh is fully liberated."³

**Questions on HEAVY WORKLOAD ON STAFF OF G.B. HOSPITAL, AGARTALA, DUE TO INFLUX OF WOUNDED PEOPLE FROM BANGLADESH**

Sri Biren Datta, M.P from Tripura West, asked the following questions in the Parliament (Question No. 2086)

a) Whether a number of wounded people from Bangladesh are sent to G.B. Hospital, Agartala.

b) Whether the stress on staff and scavengers has increased.

The Minister of State in the Health & Planning, Govt. of India, Sri D.P Chattopadhyaya responded:-

The answers for (a) & (b) = Yes i.e. the number of wounded people from Bangla Desh were sent to the G.B. Hospital and that was overburdened with the wounded people, both civilians and the Muktiyuddhas. So, the stress on the staff and scavengers had been increased to a great extent. The Minister, therefore, responded saying that a team of 12 Surgeons and Anesthetists was deputed to Tripura to meet the reported shortage of Surgeon there. They cleared the work load during their 15-day stay at Agartala and returned to Delhi on three batches on 6th / 7th and 8th June, 1971, leaving behind 3 specialists viz. 1 Ortho. Surgeon and 2 Anesthetists for following up of the cases under treatment. The requirement of other staff is being met locally.⁴ (italics are used by the research scholar to show the gravity of the problem)

**PAK SHELLING ON JOYNAGAR, RAMNAGAR AREAS OF AGARTALA AND THE PARLIAMENT**

In replying to the question number 2351 raised by Sri Biren Datta and Shrimati Bharggavi Thankappam, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home affairs etc. Sri Ram Niwas Mirdha stated (a) there was no shelling of Joynagar-Ramnagar areas of Agartala by Pak Army. However, on two occasions, i.e. on 11th and 15th May, 1971, Pak Army while engaged with the Mukti Fauz in East Bengal, fired indiscriminately from Pak area opposite Agartala area and some bullets landed in Indian Territory.
b) Two Pak refugees were killed and 11 Indian nationals and 4 Pak refugees were injured in these incidents.

c) Necessary relief and assistance were given in the cases.  

**Increase of Price of essential commodities**

Responding to question no. 982 of Sri Dasharath Deb, the Deputy Minister for Industrial Development Sri Siddheswar Prasad stated that,

(a) The prices of essential commodities have, by and large, remained steady during the period before and after the influx of refugees from Bangla Desh.

In response to the question no. 1851 raised by Sri Bhagenra Jha, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Sri Annasaheb P Shinde stated that the wholesale prices of common rice obtaining in the Markets of the various districts of West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura before the crackdown by Pakistan Army in Bangladesh and at present are given below:

<table>
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<th>Rs. Per quintal</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before Crackdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Week ending 20-03-71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B.</td>
<td>115 to 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>110 to 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>115 to 165</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The rise in price is partly seasonal.

Mr. Dasharath Deb was not only vocal in the Parliament but also he was very much active in
supporting the Bangladesh movement in the State. In a public rally on April, 16, 1971, at Udaipur, South Tripura, he appealed to the Government of India to recognize the Bangladesh Government in exile without any delay and to help the freedom fighters of Bangladesh by providing all kinds of support so that the innocent Bengalis could get rid of the barbarism of the Pak Military Junta. Mr. Deb threatened the black-marketiers and profit-mongers and requested the student-force to come forward and to stop all those immoral activities for the sake of the Bangladesh movement. He severely criticized the weak administration of the State Govt. in respect of management of the refugee problem. Before that rally, on April 13, Mr. Deb addressed a mass meeting at Teliamura, 50 km east of Agartala, and spoke on different aspects of the freedom movement of Bangladesh.8

On April 19, 1971, Mr. Deb led a delegation to meet the District Magistrate on Bangladesh issue on some important matters to draw the attention of both the State and the Central Government on the following points:

i) The tortured & bewildered people coming from Bangladesh had to face tremendous difficulty in exchanging the Pak money;

ii) Problems in communication arrangements;

iii) Inadquency in refugee managements;

So, the delegation under Mr. Deb stressed on the following :-

i) Transportation of food and essential commodities to the refugee camps should be on war footing;

ii) Harsh measurement for controlling price-hike;

iii) Control over hike on bus-fare;

iv) Control over unpleasant incidents for the sake of the refugees;

The District Magistrate (D.M) assured the delegation that suitable measures would be taken to sort out all such problems for the benefit of the evacuees.9

From the above, it is clear that the Hon'ble Members of Parliament, Mr. Dasharath Deb and Mr. Biren Datta were very much anxious about the condition of Tripura in view of the unhappy developments in East Pakistan and its bad consequences on Tripura. The Government of India
was very much categorical in responding to the questions raised by the MPs from Tripura. But the response on price-hike does not bear the actual fact in respect of Tripura; the various sources available on this issue show that there was an unprecedented price-hike in Tripura due to the influx of refugees in Tripura.10

**The Members of Territorial Assembly speak for the Liberation Movement**

With the merger of Tripura, a native State with special status, with Indian Union in October, 1949, it was categorized under Group 'C' and was being administered by one Chief Commissioner on behalf of the Govt. of India.11 After certain changes in the administrative structure, Tripura was declared a Union Territory in 1957 and by 1963 the first Territorial Assembly started its functioning with 30 members in total. Congress was in the Treasury Bench. The 2nd Territorial Assembly came into being in 1967 and it remained in function till 1971. The party position was as under.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI (M)</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Congress party formed the Ministry with allegation of poll-rigging. The 6- Member Ministry was as follows:-13

1. Sri Sachindra Lal Singh - The Chief Minister
2. Sri Krishnadhan Bhattacharjee - The Finance minister
3. Sri Tarit Mohan Dasgupta - The Labour Minister
4. Sri Rajprasad Choudhury - Deputy Minister
5. Sri Prafulla Ranjan Das - Deputy Minister
6. Sri Mansur Ali - Deputy Minister
The Opposition MLAs were:-

1. Sri Bidyachandra Debbarma - CPI (M)
2. Sri Abhiram Debbarma - CPI (M)
3. Sri Aghore Debbarma - CPI

Speaker/ Dy. Speaker

1. Sri Manindra Lal Bhowmik - The Speaker
2. Sri Usha Ranjan Sen - The Dy. Speaker. \(^{14}\)

There was only one lady member and she was Smt. Renu Chakraborty.

The Second Territorial Assembly was in function up to June, 1971 and was dissolved in October, 1971, when President's Rule was imposed in Tripura. The Assembly met twice in 1971. \(^{15}\)

By March, 1971, the all-out situation in Pakistan was very much grave as Awami League was in a position to form the National Government with absolute majority in the National Assembly as well as in the Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan. The Military Dictator Mr. Yahya Khan under the advice of Mr. Z.A. Bhutto unleashed reign of terror in East Pakistan instead of handing over power to the Awami League and its unquestioned Leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On 25th March, 1971, army was on the street with full-of arms & ammunitions and initiated brutal mass-killing of the people of East Pakistan under the code name "Operation Searchlight". This sudden change in the attitude of the ruling Junta of Pakistan created panic everywhere in East Pakistan especially in Dhaka. People started to flee from Dhaka to save their lives and prestige. \(^{16}\)

The 9-month long Liberation Movement of Bangladesh (March-Dec, 1971) was an epoch-making incident in the History of South- East Asia and it really partitioned Pakistan which was created on the basis of Two-Nation Theory in 1947. Immediately after the establishment of Pakistan consisted of two geographically separate Territories like West and East Pakistan with a land and sea-route distance of about 1200 miles, and 2400 miles respectively, the Bengali- speaking people of East Pakistan received a heavy shock while Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Farther of the Nation, made one statement in the Constituent Assembly on Feb 15, 1948 that "Pakistan being a Muslim State, Urdu will be its State language." This declaration ultimately led to the LANGUAGE
MOVEMENT in East Pakistan on Feb. 21, 1952 claiming the lives of some energetic students like Barkat, Salam, Rafiqur and others. "Thus, the language issue brought all the East Pakistanis together and created a sense of Nationhood in their minds."17

The Western Wing with their dominating and colonial attitude did not try to understand the sentiment of their counterpart in the East. As a result, the Cultural Heritage of the East was time and again discouraged; sometimes thwarted. In the 60's, the Pakistan Govt. put a ban on the literature and Music of Rabindranath Tagore; the same Govt. banned some popular books; e.g., "The Social History of Bengal" by Kamruddin Ahmed, "Sanskritik Sankat" (in Bengali) by Badruddin Umar etc.18

In other aspects of life like economy, politics, society, civil & military administration, British colonial exploitation was just replaced by West Pakistani one. West Pakistan practically treated East Pakistan as its colony. So, in all important issues, West Pakistan was dominant while East was a mere on-looker. The West Pakistanis had strikingly superseded its counter-part in controlling armed forces. Actually, the Army Selection Board closed its doors to the Bengalis on the plea that there was a lack of manpower with qualities of leadership among them.19

Statistics show that even by 1968, the representation of East Pakistan in the Civil Service of Pakistan was only 36%; in Class I Officers' cadre in the various Ministries and Departments of the Central Secretariat, the percentage of East Pakistani officers was on an average less than one- third of the total number.

Various research works have been done on the economic system of Pakistan. Only one example is set here to understand the nature of colonial attitude of the West. Harvard economists, namely, Edward S. Mason, Robert Drofman and Stephen A. Marglin have pointed out in general:-

* The per capita income in West Pakistan in 1969-70 was 61% higher than that in East Pakistan.

* In 1950-60 East Pakistan received only 20% development expenditure and West 80%. East Pakistan was lagging far behind the West in respect of Industrial Development and Export-Import balance. Maximum foreign economic assistance was utilized in the West wing. Glaring disparity is found between the East and West wing in respect of Agricultural development. West was very much ahead in this respect.
Bengalis of East Pakistan could not swallow all such glaring differences in the name of Pakistan or Islam or Muslim League.\textsuperscript{20}

Disillusioned and disgruntled, Bengalis began agitation just after Jinnah's declaration on the language issue and the agitation was intensified in the 60s while the popular Awami League party started Autonomy movement under 6-Point Demand. The Marshal Law Administrator General Ayub Khan failed in his attempt to curb the popular movement. The Agartala Conspiracy case was lodged against the Great leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others proved to be boomerang to the Pak Goverment and General Ayub had to quit. Under tremendous pressure from the East wing, the Army Administration under Yahya khan became bound to hold General Election in Pakistan in 1970-71 where Awami League acquired absolute majority and its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, elevated now as Bangabandhu, was supposed to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan. But the ruling Junta under pressure from Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, the leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, denied to hand over power and instead, unleashed a Reign of Terror in East Pakistan. Armed forces came out on the street and began to gun down general people, students, teachers, and intelligentsia. The old, the children, the women were not excused. At this stage, the Bengalis became perturbed and began to flee to the neighbouring India.\textsuperscript{21}

Tripura, a North-Eastern state, backward in all aspects of life, situated strategically at the heart of East Pakistan, opened its border to save the lives of the refugees. Influx of refugees started pouring in Tripura.\textsuperscript{22} The Territorial Assembly was not sitting idle about the developments in East Pakistan. On the Adjournment motion put forward by Sri Bidya Chandra Debbarma, a C.P.I (M) M.L.A, the Speaker requested the Leader of the House to make a statement.\textsuperscript{23} At this, Sri Sachindra Lal Singh, the C.M, made an emotional statement supporting the cause of the people of East Pakistan and condemning the massacre of unarmed civilian by brute force of a modern army. The C.M (Leader of the House) explained the philosophy for their support to the movement of the people of East Pakistan. He expressed his feeling thus: -

"I fully realize the feeling of the House on the present situation in East Pakistan. We are a democratic country and in the Fifth General Election, our countrymen have again demonstrated their unflinching faith in democracy and \--------. It is, therefore, but natural that our people will express great concern at the development in East Pakistan where the recent happenings have stood in the culmination of the democratic process that was ushered in the general election in Pakistan that was held in December last and the people have been undergoing a severe trial for their faith in democracy. It is well known that we are all for a democratic way of life and whoever
fights for democracy will always have our moral support. We have always condemned the massacre of unarmed civilians by the brute force of a modern army in any part of the world. Our heart goes out in sympathy for the people of East Pakistan at this hour of their trial. And I have no doubt that I voice the feelings of all of you when I say that we hope that the future generations of the people of East Pakistan will proudly say that their forefathers did not fail them at the hour of their greatest trial."

He finished his statement on that day (on 29th March, 1971 i.e. on the 5th day of the Crackdown in Dhaka) in a very strong tune: "I may reiterate that we stand for democracy and socialism and we shall condemn any forces that stand in the way of these noble ideals in any part of the world". The important Budget session had thus been adjourned and the Bangladesh issue was taken up for discussion. The Speaker first allowed 20 minutes for discussion on the issue but on strong demand from the members allowed 1 hour 15 minutes for the Opposition and 45 minutes for the ruling Party. But almost all the members crossed the time limit to express their great concern over the unwanted development in East Pakistan; they condemned the Yahya Govt. and expressed sympathy towards the cause of the Bengalis. The members understood the limitation of the House, so they requested the leader of the House to draw the attention of the Govt. of India so that Govt. of India took the issue to the UNO for its intervention for putting a stop to the untoward situation that was going on in Pakistan. Some members cited the examples of Korea and Vietnam where UNO involved its all forces to solve the crisis. Likewise, UNO should come forward in respect of Bangladesh issue. Some members requested the Govt. of India to recognize the Government of Bangladesh while it put forward such demand. From the discussion it is also revealed that the students as well as the youth of Tripura were very much anxious on the brutal killings of the Bengalis in East Pakistan.

What is astonishing is the fact that each and every member was very serious in assessing the situation in the neighboring country on the 5th day of the commencement of brutal killing in East Pakistan. The names of the Hon'ble Members and their statements in very short form are placed below to show their eagerness in this aspect:

Promode Ranjan Dasgupta:- In his speech he expressed his great concern over the Bangladesh issue and demanded the intervention of the UNO and the Govt. of India as well as of the P.M of India so that genocide might be stopped in any way.

Abhiram Debbarma:- Almost in the same tune, Mr. Debbarma condemned the fascist force of Pakistan who flooded the country with human blood and appealed to the Govt. of India to draw
the attention of the UNO to put an end to the developments that made East Pakistan almost a hell.

The other Hon’ble Members expressed their concern almost in the same spirit. We find Hon’ble Member Sri Naresh Roy initiating his speech with a very popular slogan of the Bengalis of East Pakistan, _JOY BANGLA_. Sri Kshitish Chandra Das and Sri Benoy Bhusan Banerjee informed the House about the anxiousness of the Students and Youths of Tripura on the plight of the people of East Pakistan due to the brutal atrocities committed by the Military Junta of Pakistan. Smt. Renu Chakraborty, the only woman member of the Assembly, expressed her emotion boldly that the people of Tripura had their blood-relation with the people of Bangladesh. She asserted that genocide might not be the internal problem of a country and she demanded intervention of the Govt. of India in Bangladesh issue. Sri Kshitish Chandra Das recalled that Bangladesh was once their _MOTHERLAND_. 28 The other Members who anxiously expressed their views on the issue were:

Sri Sunil Chandra Datta,
,, Aghore Debbarma,
,, Upendra Kumar Roy,
,, Debendra Kishore Choudhury,
,, Jatindra Kumar Majumder,
,, Tarit Mohan Dasgupta,
,, Suresh Chandra Choudhury,
,, Bidyachandra Debbarma,
,, Radhika Ranjan Gupta,

Sri Bidyachandra Debbarma brought an _ADJOURNMENT MOTION_ demanding immediate intervention of the Govt. of India in the Bangladesh issue but that was defeated in the Assembly. 29

**Summing up of the reaction of the members of the Assembly on 29th March, 1971:**

1) The Military Crackdown started in East Pakistan under Yahya Regime on 25th March, 1971, was highly condemned in the Territorial Legislative Assembly.
2) The Liberation Movement started spontaneously under the leadership of Awami League especially Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was wholeheartedly supported by all the Members of the Treasury Bench and the Members of Opposition.

3) The Members were conscious about the limitations of the Territorial Legislative Assembly to support the Movement directly, so

4) They appealed to the Govt. of India, its P.M. Shrimati Indira Gandhi to support the Movement strongly and to offer recognition to the Govt. of Bangladesh.

5) They also appealed to the Govt. India to draw the attention of the UNO so that the UNO could put pressure on the Govt. of Pakistan to stop genocide in East Pakistan and to solve the crises in the eastern part of Pakistan.

On 31st March 1971 i.e. on the 7th day of the commencement of the brutal killing, Shri Sachindra Lal Singh, the C.M, moved a resolution in the house,

"In view of the grave situation rising out of denial of human rights of the people of the East Bengal and atrocity committee (sic) by Yahia (sic) and his followers on the people of Bangla Desh, this House extends its full support to the freedom loving people of Bangla Desh in the struggle for establishing democratic right and requests the Govt. of India to recognize the newly formed Govt. of Bangla Desh headed by Sheik Mujibur Rahaman (sic) and extends all kinds of help to the people of Bangla Desh in their struggle for freedom.

This house also keeps on record its sorrow and for those who laid their lives for the cause of freedom and democracy of Bangla Desh".30

What a spontaneous zeal! The peoples' representatives of the state of Tripura was so anxious that they might be the first not only in India but also in the World to request the Govt. of India to recognize the newly formed Government of Bangladesh headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which was not yet formed officially. Almost each and every member of the Assembly participated in the discussion and supported wholeheartedly the resolution moved by the C.M. The Members could not restrain their emotion on the resolution and spoke & expressed their solidarity towards the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. The Members who stood & spoke vehemently to support the resolution were:31
The Chief Minister first thanked the Hon'ble Speaker and all the Members of the House for their strong support of the aforesaid resolution put forward by the C.M. himself. The C.M then thanked millions of Freedom Fighters who were ready to sacrifice their lives to the causes of their motherland, for the cause of democracy and for the humanity of the World. (Italics are used by the research scholar to show the importance of the opinion of the Chief Minister). The Speaker then put the Govt. Resolution to vote and the resolution was passed unanimously. Not only that, the members under Bidyachandra Debbarma demanded adjournment of the House on that day in view of the emotional atmosphere evolved during the discussion of the Resolution. As that was Budget session and important business were awaiting, the House could not be adjourned.32

During Monsoon Session, Govt. was bound to make a statement in the Assembly on 21 June, 1971 regarding the influx of refugees in Tripura. A 6-page (point-wise) statement was read out in the House which showed Government’s utmost endeavour to provide shelters to almost one million of refugees in a state of 15.56 lakhs of inhabitants.33
Summery of the Statement of the CM in the Assembly on 21 June, 1971

1) Addressing the Speaker the C.M. stated that in the last session he had already explained the unbearable circumstances created by the Military Junta of Pakistan which compelled the people of Bangladesh especially the women and children to leave their homeland. He had experienced the plight of that people.

2) The C.M. stated that the influx of refugees was still going on. In some hours, in the last week in the Sidhai-Mohanpur Area, came 20,000 refugees. Most of them were Muslims. He gave the approximate number of the refugees at that time which stood to ten lakhs. And the pouring of refugees in Tripura was still going on @ 15,000 to 20,000 per day.

3) He informed the House that on the part of a small state like Tripura, which was backward in respect of economy and communication, it was really difficult to shoulder the responsibility of a huge number of refugees. Already overburdened with over 15 lakhs of people, it was practically difficult to shoulder the responsibility of almost 10 lakhs of refugees. The situation was highly aggravated with the inflow of refugees in the state every day.

4) With limited resources, Tripura was doing its best with unquestioned and wholehearted support from the people of Tripura which pleased the observers coming from other parts of India and abroad. He admitted that in the distant Sub-divisions like Sabroom and Belonia, satisfactory arrangement for the rehabilitation of the refugees could not be made. Moreover, the refugees were to face other difficulties but it was natural due to abnormal, sudden and unthinkable influx of refugees; but utmost attention was being given for the welfare of the refugees.

5) The C.M. acquainted the Members of the House about Govt. arrangement for the welfare of the refugees:-

   a) Arrangement of shelter for 2.25 lakhs of refugees,

   b) 250 Tube-wells and 500 normal wells were dug,

   c) More temporary sheds were constructed; problems are there but these were to be overcome. Some camp materials were received from the Govt. of Australia.

6) The Govt. of Tripura had opened a new Refugee Rehabilitation Department with one Direc-
tor, 3 A.D.Ms, 26 Camp Supervisors and other employees. One Engineering Division was approved with one Executive Engineer, 4 Assistant Engineers, 26 Overseers and some other Clerks. Health care was also viewed seriously; due to lack of Medical personnel, refugee-doctors were being given appointment. The number of beds was being increased in the G.B. & V.M. Hospitals; arrangement was made to open one Dispensary for a Camp of 20,000 refugees. Immunization was operated to all most all the refugees.

7) The Govt. of India sanctioned till that time 3.2 crores of Rupees for the rehabilitation of the refugees and that Govt. assured to sanction more fund for the purpose.

8) Barring the 24 Camps already constructed, plan was prepared to establish 4 other camps which might accommodate 60,000 refugees each and that would be controlled by the Govt. of India. Plan was also prepared to send refugees to other states by rail from Dharmanagar if it was approved by the Govt. of India. Government of Tripura also took initiative to vacate the educational Institutions for normal educational works in the said Institutions. The Govt. of Tripura thanked those near relatives who took the pains to provide shelters to their relatives who came over here as refugees. The Govt. was trying to provide some relief to those relatives.

9) Limited number of refugees was being shifted to Guwhati by one American Cargo flight which is specially engaged for transporting foodstuff from Guahati to Agartala.

10) Demand for foodstuff was increasing day by day due to heavy rush of evacuees. The Government was very conscious about transporting of foodstuff from Dharmanagar Rail Godown to other parts of Tripura to keep the supply in order. Tripura State Transport Authority and the Military Authority arranged number of trucks for transportation of foodstuff. The Railway Authority tried to create problems but that could be averted due to the interference of the State government and support of the people.

11) The C.M. on behalf of the Govt. of Tripura and the people of Tripura took the opportunity to thank those friendly countries and International Organizations who extended their benevolent hands for the welfare of the refugees. The C.M. acquainted the House delightfully that the World-mind had awaked in favour of Bangladesh. So, Tripura received medicines, milk-powder, triples etc. by Air daily from various countries.

12) The C.M. assured the House that though overwhelming pressure was on the Government
due to heavy influx of the refugees, the Govt. would not hesitate to take due measure for the welfare of the refugees in the face of limited manpower and other facilities.\(^34\)

On this Report the Hon'ble Members demanded discussion very strongly and that was accepted by the Speaker and the C.M; the discussion continued to the next day session.\(^35\)

**Debate on the Statement of the Chief Minister on the floor of the Assembly House on 21. 6. 71 regarding influx of refugees in Tripura**

The Speaker intended to close this chapter immediately after the Chief Minister's Statement on the influx of refugees in Tripura. But the Members of Treasury Bench vehemently demanded discussion on this and Shri Tarit Mohan Dasgupta drew the attention of the Speaker saying that "Sir, it is very important." The Leader of the House i.e. the C.M. also eagerly agreed to have a discussion over the issue. So, the Speaker invited the Members to participate in the discussion.\(^36\)

It is clearly evident from the proceedings of the Territorial Legislative Assembly dated 22 June, 1971, which was a continuation of the discussion of the previous day that the Members were not at all happy with the Statement of the C.M on the refugee problem and the Government's handling of the refugee problem. Shri Tarit Mohan Dasgupta crossed his 15 minutes' time-limit to express his anger over the insufficient activities of the Government in arranging shelters to the refugees in Tripura. He suggested introducing *Dole System* in lieu of supplying dry ration to the refugees due to heavy corruption in the present system. He gives his opinion on the registration system of the refugees by the Police which was a very delaying process. He also suggested engasement of teachers and educated persons from the refugees in controlling the refugee camps just as the Govt. had engaged the refugee Doctors and the Compounders in maintaining the Hospitals and Health Camps.\(^37\)

Shri Aghore Debbarma was very much categorical in criticizing the Government's policy with regard to the handling of the refugee problems. He mentioned three particular problems of Tripura-

a) There were 27 thousand unemployed youths in Tripura; the Govt. could not handle the problem.

b) Heavy influx of refugees created enormous problems in rehabilitating them in Tripura.

c) There were communication problem in Tripura; no Railway extension up to Agartala.
In these circumstances, the Govt. was a total failure in handling the situation. So, Govt. should take initiative in deporting the excess evacuees to other States. Corruption should be averted immediately and Indian Foreign Policy should be very bold in restraining the Pak Forces in their limit.38

Shri Abhiram Debbarma was also very much categorical in criticizing the Govt. Policy over the issue. He was very much critical of the State as well as Central Govt. as both these governments followed very unconvincing policy with regard to Bangladesh. He said that the arrangements made by the Governments for 10 lakhs of refugees were very much unsatisfactory and under this condition the refugees could not leave anyhow. The refugees were not receiving the sanctioned amount of Rs.1.10 due to corruption. He categorically mentioned about 126 refugee families who were staying at Raima -Sharma area in South Tripura and who were not being provided with minimum requirement of the day. Deportation of refugees to Assam was very essential in view of the grave situation arising out of heavy influx; otherwise, this would lead to the collapse of the economy of Tripura. Unemployment problem, peasant problems, communication problems were being neglected in Tripura. Agriculture was disrupted; people suffered due to heavy rush of refugees. Repeated requests of the Speaker failed to normalize Shri Abhiram Debbarma who was vehemently criticizing the Govt. for its failure in all aspects of administration. He argued that on one hand the profit mongers were busy in looting; on the other hand, people are going to die due to heavy price hike.39

Shri Prafulla Ranjan Das stood in favour of the Chief Minister and his Statement and he debated the arguments made by the Members mentioned above. He argued that in the face of severe abnormal situation in Tripura like weak communication system, Tripura already rehabilitated all most ten lakhs of refugees; but flow was not abating. So, the problem was a National one and that should be understood by the Members. Then, there was a chaos in the House and the Speaker, the C.M, Abhiram Debbarma and others debated on the issue.40

Sri Promode Ranjan Dasgupta severely criticized the Govt. for its mismanagement of the refugee problem. He gave a picture of brutal atrocities committed by the Pak. Govt. in Bangladesh and he recalled the unanimous proposal of the House for recognition of Bangladesh by the Govt. of India. He argued that the Govt. of India should recognize the Government of Bangladesh and provide with arms and ammunition to the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. He then mentioned the deplorable conditions of the refugees staying at various places in Tripura especially in Sadar North i.e. at Mohanpur area. He indicated about the corruption which led to the poor infrastructure made
for the shelter of the refugees. He questioned the Government's decision which declares the opening of the Schools at Agartala Town and not the Schools at villages. This meant that evacuees would leave in the Schools at villages and thus, the education system would be thwarted. This was one type of discrimination and that should not be continued. He also questioned the system of registration in the police station which compelled the refugees to come to the Police Station from a very distant camp and to wait for long hours with their children and older ones. He suggested registration in the Tehsils. The Speaker intimated that his time was over but Shri Dasgupta continued to point out the corruption in sanctioning of diet to the refugees, in constructing shelters; the refugees were being squeezed in many ways, even the ladies sexually.41

Shri Jatindra Kumar Datta drew the attention of the Speaker on the sudden influx of the refugees which created real problems in Tripura in several ways. He indicated that the arrangement for drinking water by setting up of Tube-wells and other general wells was not sufficient at all. Shri Datta requested the authority to sanction dry milk for the children who were really infants. On the other issues he supported the Chief Minister.42

Shri Debendra Kishore Choudhury also severely criticized Govt.'s failure in respect of arranging temporary shelters to the refugees. He also requested the Govt. to open registration counter at the Tehsils and arrange for drinking water; the problem of drinking water already gave birth to serious hazards leading to serious type of cholera which already had taken 10 lives of the refugees.43

Shri Binoy Bhushan Choudhury stood in favour of the C.M. He criticized the attitude of the Opposition Members because they followed the double-standard policy in respect of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the refugees. He said that the refugees are the part and parcel of the people of Tripura. He, however, remained very sympathetic towards the refugee children whose death rate was very high. He demanded special arrangements for the children and the refugees outside the camps.44

Shri Nishikanta Sarker spoke in favour of the Government. He argued that it was not the corruption but the mistake in handling the huge number of the refugees in Tripura. He suggested some measures for the welfare of the refugees opposing the allegations of the Oppositions.45

Shri Bidyachandra Debbarma from the Opposition Bench drew the attention of the Speaker about the real condition of Tripura where starvation, corruption, ill-management in health-care and drinking facility were going on.46
The C.M. answered to the allegations but criticized the Members of the Communist Party on the ground of their ambivalency in respect of Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. He admitted that there may be corruption in a big issue but the Govt. was trying its best to do the best for the refugees. At the same time, the Govt. was not indifferent in respect of problems of the State itself. He expected that ultimate victory waited for Bangladesh and the people of Tripura would fight for the people of Bangladesh in their hardship condition.47

Proceedings on 23 June, 1971, reveal Grave Food Situation in Tripura.

The speaker requested the Hon'ble C.M. to make a statement on the food situation in Tripura.48

The C.M. gave a detailed statement on the food situation in Tripura. The main points of the statement:-

1) The food situation in Tripura was satisfactory in 1970 and in the first 3 months of 1971,

2) But the sudden influx of the refugees in Tripura made the food situation very grave; Tripura with 16 lakhs of people had to shoulder the burden of additional 13 lakhs of people coming from East Bengal,

3) Moreover, railway system was not functioning well for their weak infrastructure and strike in railway,

4) The average monthly supply of food-grain from Central Govt. to Tripura in first 3 months of 1971 was 1300 metric ton, but in June the average stood to 8000 / 9000 metric ton. The C.M. stated that on the constant increasing demand of food-stuff the Govt. of India increased the supply of rice and wheat to 40,500 and 11,000 ton respectively per month.

5) The flight used for deportation of the refugees was used to lift the food grains to Agartala from Gouhati to cope with the food crises.

6) High price-rise was noticed due to various reasons-such as, heavy demand, communication problem, price-hike at the production place

7) The supply of ration to the refugees was curtailed from 400g to 300g due to the shortage.49

The Member of the Opposition Bench Shri Bidyachandra Debbarma demanded debate on this grave issue but the Speaker did not allow.50
Private Members’ Business in the TLA on 23 June, 1971, on the Supply of dry ration to the refugees

At the call of the Speaker, a Resolution was moved by Sarbashri Promoe Ranjan Dasgupta, Kshitish Chandra Das & Suresh Chandra Choudhury. That was:-

"This House urges upon the Government to supply the scheduled dry rations to the evacuees from East Bengal residing outside the camps and besides dry rations, for other items the evacuees living in camps should be paid in cash; cooking utensils, clothing should be supplied to evacuees: separate accommodation for unattached boys, girls, and women should be made and special diet should be given to the sick, sucking babies, expected mothers and the infirm."51

After moving this resolution, Shri Promoe Ranjan Dasgupta offered a long statement supporting the resolution. He was followed by Shri Suresh Chandra Choudhury, Shri Sunil Chandra Datta, Shri Aghore Debbarma, Shri Jatindra Kumar Majumder, Shri Tarit Mohan Dasgupta, Shri Abhiram Debbarma, Shri Naresh Roy, Smt. Renu Chakraborty, and Shri Bidyachandra Debbarma. They supported the resolution on the following grounds:-

1) Due to corruption, the allotted ration could not be reached to the refugees.

2) It was not possible on the part of the relatives to shoulder the burden of the additional members numbering more than 20/22 in some cases.

3) There were number of unattached children and pregnant women.52

The Hon’ble Members offered some interesting suggestions for the welfare of the evacuees which were as follows:-

1) Partial ration in kind and partial in cash

2) Ration should be allowed to those who took shelters in the houses of their Relatives

3) Separate seat arrangement in all P.H.Cs, V.M & G.B Hospitals for the refugee-patients

4) For mental and physical health, Sports goods, Radio and Drill system should be provided to the camps

5) Special care should be taken for the unattached children and expectant women
6) Camps situated at Gandachhera, Raima- Sharma, Asharasmbari should be given importance because these remained uncared for many days

7) And, above all, corruption should be checked at any cost.53

After that prolonged discussion, the resolution was put to voice vote and it was passed unanimously.54

**Proceedings on 25 June, 1971, in the T.L.A: Private Members' Resolution for shifting the Refugees to other states.**55

At the call of Mr. Speaker, a Private Members' Business (Resolution) was moved by the Hon'ble Member Shri Aghore Debbarma on behalf of other Members like Shri Jatindra Kumar Majumder, Sunil Chandra Dutta and Naresh Roy which ran thus:-

"This House requests the Government of India to arrange the shifting of evacuees from Bangladesh, who has taken shelter in Tripura, to other provinces of India and to take the entire responsibility of the evacuees from Bangladesh."

They supported their resolution showing the following grounds:-

1) Tripura became over-burdened with huge number of refugees; it could not bear any more evacuees but thousands of refugees were pouring to Tripura every day,

2) With communication gap, unsound economy, backward location, Tripura could not provide any more shelter to the evacuees.

3) Tripura could not provide daily necessities to the refugees due to weak railway connection and other difficulties,

4) Necessary shelters could not be provided due to paucity of materials like thrash etc., refugees were to gather thickly in a single shelter which might cause various kinds of diseases. Medical aids could not be provided properly to the evacuees.

5) Emergent necessities were clothes at that time which could not be provided to the refugees specially to the women and children,

Then there was a prolonged debate on the issue; sometimes, the debate turned to be very
sentimental on the point that the movers and the supporters were not real supporters of Bangladesh Movement which ushered furore in the House.56

So, Hon’ble Member Shri Suresh Chandra Choudhury moved an amended resolution with the permission of the Mr. Deputy Speaker who was presiding over the session which ran as: -

"This House requests the Government of India to urge upon other states of India to share responsibilities of evacuees from Bangladesh equally with the bordering states overburdened with the problem, and to take the financial responsibility of the evacuees from Bangladesh."57

The debate continued unabated on this sentimental issue and ultimately the amendment was put and carried by voice vote. The following facts came out of the debate:-

1) The economy of the state of had been disrupted due to exodus of refugees,

2) Bengali sentiment had made the air heavy in the House while Shri Devendra Kishore Choudhury uttered that refugees were the part their blood and Bengali nationhood could not be wiped out from the history and from the map,

3) It was revealed from the debate that Assam, Meghalaya and Orissa were not at all interested to receive the refugees; even the refugees were being tortured in Meghalaya,

4) Tripura in the face of its own problem should provide all kinds of helps to the evacuees as well as to Bangladesh because, as Shri Tarit Mohan Dasgupta boldly said, "Our goal is to make the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh a victorious one," so, camps should be constructed on war-footing and military personnel might be appointed in organizing these camps.

5) The issue was not a regional but a National one; so, disagreement over the shifting of the evacuees came to the floor of the House,

6) Communalism was defeated and the communal elements kept themselves aloof in the digs and brotherhood won the battle.58

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Peoples' Representative of Tripura were not only sympathetic towards the cause of the Bangladesh Movement but also almost all of them thought the movement of their own. Notwithstanding the fact that the people of Tripura faced thousands difficulties, about one million of refugees were sheltered in Tripura by that time; other
facilities were provided as far as possible. Almost every people of Tripura like the peasants, the students, the teachers, the administrators, doctors, engineers, cultural activists, the Tribal people, the Manipuri community, the news agencies, the workers etc. thought the movement of Bangladesh as their own Liberation Movement. That was the force behind the members of the Legislative Assembly to stand for the ultimate success of the Bangladesh movement.

The issue of the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh and other related matters like providing shelters, food, clothes & health care to a sudden influx of refugees was a serious challenge to the Law-Makers of the State. What is mentioned earlier is that Tripura was not at all fit due to its special geographic position and economic weakness to arrange all such facilities to a huge number of rootless evacuees coming from East Pakistan. So, the issue again surfaced in the Legislative Assembly on 31 March, 1972, in the Hon'ble Governor's Speech. His Excellency referred to the economic distortion of the State due to huge exodus of the refugees. Participating in the discussion on the Speech of His Excellency, the Hon'ble Members expressed their anguish over huge corruption and other mismanagement in handling the problems of the refugees and other related matters. The Opposition Bench was very much vehement in criticizing the Government's activities with regard to the issue mentioned above.

Role of N.G.Os and other Associations

During the period of 1960's, the tyrannical rule of West Pakistan created such a ghastly situation in the East Pakistan where people were compelled to leave their land and managed to get shelter anywhere outside their country. The arrival of refugees in Tripura can be seen in context of political and humanitarian support and that helped them to continue their struggle for the liberation of their country. Despite the support extended by the Government of India vis-a-vis the government of Tripura, the support and cooperation from the Non-Government Organizations of Tripura (herein after NGOs) stand unique in the history of liberation movement; so, attempt is taken to highlight the contribution of those N.G.Os who supported their cause in different dimension. In order to sustain liberation movement, moral support was needed. The supply of arms and ammunition to the unarmed youths of liberation movement, arrangement of military training, food, clothes, shelters and medicine for the wounded were urgently required. Financial support matters much. The economy of Tripura was not enough to bear the burden of around 16 lakhs people who were getting shelter in different camps as well as in the houses of their relatives in 1971 in Tripura. Here lies the mechanism which was made available to the refugees of Bangladesh from government scheme and non-governmental rehabilitation measures and thus, one can find the role of N.G.Os
of Tripura in the liberation movement of Tripua. The N.G.Os in and around the State of Tripura, came forward unhesitatingly at the call of humanitarian issues to extend all support to the liberation movement of Bangladesh. The N.G.Os of Tripura discharged the duty of civil society which was witnessed in the form of national and international commitment to safeguard the democratic movement of Bangladesh against the authoritarian rule of West Pakistan. To extend cooperation at the call of humanitarian aid cannot be equated with the allegation of 'interference in the internal affairs of West Pakistan' and this attempt will explore the matters to justify hypothesis of humanitarian aids. In fact, where N.G.Os work they usually forget the geographical boundary of any nation. The Tripura Branch of Indian Medical Association took a leading role for extending medical care to the Muktiyoddhas and common men who came from East Bengal to Agartala. Mention may be made of Dr. Govind Chakraborty and Dr. Sunil Ranjan Chaudhury who formed two teams of doctors. Dr. Choudhury was himself the team leader. Sri Choudhury took the lead of the mobile team. Sri Chakraborty used to visit four refugee camps in Agartala every day and checked up more than four hundred patients every day. In order to extend the help to the wounded soldiers, eight primary health centers were opened. I.M.A (Indian Medical Association) also appealed to the common people to extend financial and medical support for this cause and appealed to contact Dr. H.S. Roy Chaudhury, I.M.A, Vice-president (Phone No. 138); Dr. M. K. Bhowmik, I.M.A, Tripura Branch, General Secretary (Phone No. G.B. Auto 45/42) and Dr. S.R. Chaudhury, I.M.A, Tripura Branch, Chairman, Mobile Medical Team (Phone No. 591) on any urgency.

The Tripura Branch of Indian Red Cross Society tried to make an arrangement for the availability of food and its distribution. Working Committee was formed which took decision to work with Indian Medical Association in this purpose. Supply of food would be made through District Magistrate. Distribution of clothes, Soaps and other edible items will be made through Smt. Joan Dias, the Lady Governor of Tripura. Arrangement was also made to open maternity and medical wards in the Govinda Bhallav Hospital (G.B. Hospital) at Agartala. In the Border areas, five medical centres were running under the care of Red Cross Society. For this purpose, one Mobile Team was in operation, making one permanent centre at Shantir Bazar under South Tripura. Red Cross Society visited 76 (seventy six) refugee rehabilitation camps.

The Tripura Branch of C.P.I (M) (Communist Party of India, (Marxist) was very much organized in the state, though nationally it had marginalized strength. It was the main opposition party in the State. C.P.I (M) in principle supported the cause of liberation movement. It believed that cooperation should be extended from all sides for the success of liberation movement. The local committee of C.P.I (M) appealed that the platform of Nonaligned Movement (N.A.M) where
India is a leading member can be used to pressurize the corrupt Military Junta of Pakistan. From the Central Committee of C.P.I (M), it was announced to all the Provincial States, having C.P.I (M) members, bordering Bangladesh to cooperate the liberation movement. The movement of C.P.I (M) at that time was the liberation of Bangladesh and to explore the avenues of cooperation for its success. To create pressure in favour of liberation movement, to extend help to Camp settlers, to collect medicine, arranging accommodation to those who are coming from East Pakistan, to extend medical facility to wounded youths of liberation movement -were the main activities of the Tripura Branch of C.P.I (M). Out of Seven processions carried out in those days, five processions were meant for the cause of liberation movement of Bangladesh, it was uttered by Manik Sarkar, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Tripura, in an interview with Sukumar Biswas on 5th March, 2001.64

C.P.I (M) has always voiced against authoritarian rule. When Vietnam was attacked by the USA, it was only C.P.I (M) which criticized the imperialism of the U.S.A. The opposition group, at that time, made a remark against C.P.I (M) members, "Communists can forget the name of their father, but they cannot forget the name of Vietnam." The support of C.P.I (M) may be viewed in this context.65

Manik Sarkar emphatically agreed that C.P.I (M) would stand by the people who were struggling against the tyrannical rule. "Their movement is the movement of C.P.M. Being a human being, it is our historical and ethical duty to support liberation movement. It is not our compassion but our moral duty," as remarked by Manik Sarkar in his interview with Sukumar Biswas.66 Manik Sarkar admitted that the refugee rehabilitation could not make a reverse impact on the society of Tripura. Common men were not inimical to them. He himself went to the border side with medicine and the freedom fighters became enthused to receive such gesture. He found one gun lying in the terrain which might be left by the soldiers. He carried it and handed over to the appropriate authority. It is derived from the fact that when people are involved in the greater cause, formal training is not required. Trained army could not throw their arms. It indicates that liberation movement of Bangladesh become the people's movement.67

The 6th February Committee was formed to give the broader base of Marxist activities in the State where members from Motor workers, students, teachers and other sections were involved. Ajay Biswas was one of its Joint Conveners. This Committee played a vital role by appealing all section of society in favour of liberation movement of Bangladesh.68 The extension of support to Muktiyodha by Tribal and non-Tribal community of Tripura was channelized under the
able and systematic movement and leadership of 6th February Committee, Ajay Biswas opines so. The 6th February Committee and *Tripura Writers' Association* (Tripura Lekhak Samiti) gave the press release in favour of the newly declared Government of Bangladesh for its early recognition from the Government of India. The 6th February Committee did its best to help the liberation movement. The *Dainik Sambad* gives the information that the said committee collected a fund of Rs. 6404.20 through its branches. The details are placed below:

**Table - 5.2 : Fund Collection for Refugees by the 6th February Committee, an NGO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tripura Government Teachers' Association</td>
<td>Rs. 172.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tripura Government Employees' Association</td>
<td>Rs. 934.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tripura Teachers' Association</td>
<td>Rs. 98.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tripura Technical Employees' Association</td>
<td>Rs. 168.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tripura Government Employees' Union</td>
<td>Rs. 30.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tripura Municipal Employees' Union</td>
<td>Rs. 300.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Water Supply Employees' Unit</td>
<td>Rs. 55.50/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalyanpur (Khowai) TECC</td>
<td>Rs. 173.50/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmanagar TECC</td>
<td>Rs. 650.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th February Damburnagar Committee</td>
<td>Rs.1601.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damchhara (Dharmanagar) Students' Union</td>
<td>Rs. 401.80/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Medical Representatives of Tripura</td>
<td>Rs. 85.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Life Insurance Employees' Samiti</td>
<td>Rs. 263.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Central Employees' Coordination Committee</td>
<td>Rs. 60.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through Street Squad</td>
<td>Rs.1461.00/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Subscription (Haralal Chakraborty)</td>
<td>Rs. 51.00/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As per the statement of the Cashier of the 6th February Committee submitted on 30.05.71, it is found that the bulk of the amount was expended for the cause of the liberation movement. Medicine, Garments, Shoes, Torch, Foodstuff etc. were the essential commodities which were collected & distributed to the Muktiyoddhas and the refugees.70

The same newspaper informs that the 6th February Committee met on a deputation with the Chief Secretary (the CS) of the State in the absence of the Lt. Governor on various issues related to the difficulties faced by the refugees. Before that deputation, the Committee arranged a big rally of the State & Central Govt.’s employess, students, women, trade unions and others and assembled in front of Fire-Brigade Choumohani; from there a team of 7 members met the CS and submitted a list of demands for the benefit of the evacuees. The CS could not give any assurance in this regard for the the committee members criticized the attitude of the Chief Secretary. It is also known that the Belonia Unit of the 6th February Committee arranged to supply food material, garments and essential commodities to the Muktiyoddhas who were under treatment at Belonia Subdivisional Hospital.71

The Committee hailed the decision of the Government of India which recognized first the Bangladesh Government in exile on December 6, 1971. The 6th February Committee demanded to the Govt. of India to seize all the American Finance Capital for their negative attitude towards the Bangladesh movement. It also demanded the Govt. to stop atrocities on the mass-movement and to adopt strong measures against the dishonest businessmen of the state who were only profit-mongers at the cost of the refugees.72

The Deed Writers’ Association of Tripura, in its annual meeting held on 25th April, 1971, decided to distribute clothes among the refugees of Buddhjung School Camp, Agartala. The subscriptions of Rs.301.00 were collected by minimizing their daily expenditure and that clearly indicates the support of the common people from the cross sections of the society.73 The Haradhan Sangh, situated at Agartala, in its meeting held at 25th April, 1971, decided to distribute chira and batasa (foodstuff) amongst two thousand refugees settled in Durgabari and State Congress Office. The General Secretary of the Haradhan Sangh assured to be ready to extend all kinds of cooperation for the relief operation of the Bangladesh refugees.74

At the call of the Association of Artists, Authors and Intellectuals, the Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, the 25th Baishakh, was observed as “Bangodesher Bandana” and appealed to all artists, authors and intellectuals to join the liberation movement of Bangladesh.75
The Tripura Saw Mill Shramik Kalyan Sagstha, Kumarghat, East Bengal Relief Society, Sara Bharat Mahila Sammelan, Kunjaban Branch, appealed to the the people to support Muktiyudha. The Centre of Indian Trade Union (C.I.T.U.) also appealed to various trade unions to extend help to Muktiyuddha and pressurized the Central Government to accord recognition to Bangladesh. The Tripura State Branch of the Council for Women's Education in its meeting held on 22th April, 1971 appealed to all the civilized nation of the World to create pressure on the Pakistan Govt. to stop atrocities of West Pakistani Army. The Tripura Motor Shramik Union too organized a Relief Committee and appealed to the people of the State to come forward for the cooperation of Muktiyuddha. The Ananda Marg Relief Committee opened relief centre at Khowai, Agartala and Belonia and distributed milk, baby food among the refugees settled in the camps of Tripura. Ganatantrik Nari Samiti too appealed to the Government of India to extend all possible help to the refugees of Bangladesh and recognize its independence. The Tripura Government College Teachers' Association, (T.G.C.T.A) condemned the tyrannical rule of Yahya Khan and requested the Indian government to look into the matter of refugees and urged to give recognition to the Bangladesh Government in exile. The organization expressed its desire to work with Tripura Red Cross Society together with Indian Medical Association and chalked out rehabilitation measures.

The Tripura State Congress Working Committee and the State Branch of Communist Party of India in its meeting held on 13th April,1971, welcomed the newly declared Government of Bangladesh and appealed to the Prime Minister of India for the recognition of the Government of Bangladesh in exile. The National Students' Union of India (N.S.U.I) expressed anguish over the price hike and the indifferent approach of the government, the mismanagement in the refugee-camps where intellectuals like teachers, doctors, artists were getting shelter. It criticized the political and commercial approach of the government. In a press release, it drew the attention of Lt. Governor and the Chief Secretary so that healthcare in the Camp might be taken up.

The Upjati Gana Mukti Parishad in its meeting on 28th April, 1971, where more than 300 hundred people assembled, invited Sri Dasarath Deb, M.P, and he addressed the meeting and supported the liberation movement of Bangladesh. The help in the form of arms and ammunition to the fighters of liberation movement instead of clothes etc. was more important, he said. Friendly nations should come forward to help the refugees in all the ways, said Sri Dasarath Deb. Subscriptions were collected through Lottery draw and Smt. Joan Dias declared in the meeting of the Women's Committee that one cycle, one watch and radio would be given as the prizes of the Lottery Draw and in that way, a fund of Rs.300 might be collected. The Lottery draw would be done in the Local Manikya Club at 5PM for which 3 refugee boys would be selected.
The Upajati Juba Samiti in its meeting of Central Executive Committee drew the attentions of both the Central and State Government to take appropriate measures to cope with the abnormal situation of the state due to the influx of refugees and urged the Govt. of India to take full responsibility of the refugees. The Samiti also appealed to the Govt. of Tripura to allow one hundred Rupee cash dole to each and every the hunger-stricken Tribal people caused by the unlimited entry of the refugees in the tribal areas.87

The Tripura Rabindra Parishad arranged week-long programmes to commemorate the 110th Birthday of Biswakobi Rabindranth Tagore in the backdrop of Bangladesh liberation movement. The whole programmes were divided into five sections: competition on Rabindra Sangeet, oratory, poet meet, art exhibition etc. and 45 artists were awarded prizes.88

The members of U.N.O Refugee Commission, World Food Organization, U.N.I.C.E.F and International Red Cross arrived Agartala on 11 May, 1971 and visited different Refugee Camps and collected the information and assured necessary help in this regard.89 On 1st August, 1971, the Purva Bangla Sahayak Committee organized a mass meeting. The speakers denounced the alleged corruption in the relief process of the refugees of Bangladesh.

Besides the N.G.Os of Tripuira, some references of the N.G.Os of Assam and Meghalaya (of the North-East Zone of India) which also showed their solidarity towards the Bangladesh Movement may be cited here:

The Cachhar Tea Garden Workers in an unprecedented move handed over a Cheque of Rs. 10,000/- to Mr. J. Sinha, the State Minister of Assam so as to reach the fund to the Chief Minister of Assam for the relief work of the refugees. That was the 2nd installment of the their one-day wages.90

The North Frontier Railway Officers' Association and the N.F Railway Class II Officers' Association collected from their members one day's salary for organizing relief operation for the people of Bangladesh. The NF Railway Women's Organization had also decided to contribute Rs. 10,000 (ten thousand only) out of their collection made in Basant Bahar scheduled to be held on April 3 and 4 to the Indian Red Cross Society. The Tele Communication Engineering Association, Assam Branch, Shillong unit had also decided to collect from all their members one day's salary for reorganizing relief operation for the people of Bangladesh.91

In two different meetings of the students organizations, held at the Church Field under the
presidency of Jnanadaviram Saikia and other at the office of the Assam Students’ Federation under the leadership of Sri Bidya Barua, the students expressed grave concern over the present political situation of Bangladesh and condemned the killing of the innocent people by the army men. The students of the various educational institutions also decided to observe a solidarity day in Assam on April 2, 1971 to register their protest against wanton killing of innocent people in Bangladesh by the West Pakistan Army. Not only this, but several thousand of school and college students of Shillong abstained from classes and took out a mile-long procession to protest against the mass killing of women and peace loving people of Bangladesh by Pak Army. The processionists wore black badges and carried black flags, shouted slogans, “Swadin Bangla Zindabad, Sheik Mujibur Long Live”, Yahya Bhutto Murdabad and also carried effigies of Yahya and Bhutto which they burnt. On their way to the Central Library, the processionists were addressed by Sri Dulal Chandra Barua and Phani Bora, both opposition MLAs, who condemned the mass killing of the people of Bangladesh and supported their cause of independent Bangladesh. They also urged upon the Government of India to recognize the new regime and give all kinds of help, and show necessary cooperation and solidarity and unity with the people of Bangladesh.

The Bar Association of Shillong, in an Extra Ordinary General meeting expressed its indignation and deep sense of sorrow at the brutal genocide of innocent and unarmed people of Bangladesh. A token contribution of Rs. 501 was decided to be remitted to the people of Bangladesh. The editorial of the Assam Tribune on 3rd April, 1971 gave the caption, "Support to Bangladesh" and it dedicated its front page with photograph having the caption, "Assam Students’ Protest". A public meeting was held at the Nabin Bardholi Hall under the Presidentship of the A.A.P.C.C Chief, Sri Bijay Chandra Bhagavati and formed an all party Central Relief Committee named as the Assam Rajyik Bangladesh Sahayak Committee. The 35-member Committee was formed with Sri Sarat Chandra Sinha as President and Sri Dholeswar Kalita, Sri Biswas Goswami and Sri Debendra Nath Sharma as leading personalities.

Shillong observed an Eight Hour Bandh on 8th April, 1971 to express solidarity with the people of Bangladesh who were the victim of assault by West Pakistan Army. The hartal was complete and spontaneous. All government offices, business firms, commercial institutions, schools remained closed and vehicles were off the road. The Assam Assembly also remained closed during the first half.

In short, it can be concluded that the N.G.Os of Tripura and that of Assam and Meghalaya helped the refugees of East Pakistan on humanitarian ground and indirectly helped the Muktiyoddhas to sustain their liberation movement, and to activate their moral and fighting spirit
against the Pak armies, which ultimately culminated on the 16th day of December, 1971, with the birth of Bangladesh. The contribution of N.G.Os of Tripura can be observed in a significant way; the Bengali population of Tripura under the banner of different N.G.Os came forward with medicine, clothes, shelter, and money for the people of East Pakistan who were getting shelter in different Camps of Tripura. Humanity surpassed the geographical barriers and no ethnic tension was observed in the entire process of the refugee's rehabilitation in Tripura and that certainly marks the unique character of the N.G.Os of Tripura in the liberation movement of Bangladesh.

 Freelence Photography

Shri Robin Sengupta, a freelence photographer, became a legendary figure in the eastern sector of liberation movement of Bangladesh for which he was awarded the "Friends of Liberation War Honour," an expression of respect and gratitude of the Bengali nation for his unique contribution to the War of Liberation of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh. He was felicitated along with other Friends of Liberation War by the President Md. Zillur Rahman, the Prime-Minister Sheikh Hasina, and the Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre at Dhaka on 20 October, 2012. The Government of Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh recognizes his contribution towards the Bangladesh Movement in the following way:

"While the Liberation War was going on, Shri Robin Sengupta at his personal risk entered Bangladesh a number of times and took many photographs of the mass killings and torture of the Pakistan Army and operations of the Mukti Bahini. During the nine month war, Shri Robin Sengupta documented photos of different battles and published them in different newspapers. These photographs helped in creating public opinion, awareness and sympathy towards the sufferings of the refugees and to the cause of the Liberation War. For his great contribution, Shri Robin Sengupta is awarded Friends of Liberation War Honour." 99

Kalyan Chakraborty, a renowned journalist and a contemporary of Robin Sengupta, evaluates the activities of Shri Robin Sengupta in the backdrop of the publication of the book, "Chitra Sambadiker Kameray Muktiyuddha" (Freedom Movement through the Camera of a Photographer) by Sahitya Prokash, Dhaka, (April, 2000). 68 rare photographs of that time taken by Shri Sengupta had been incorporated in the book which speaks for the liberation movement and the support offered by the people of Tripura. Within 5 days of the Operation Searchlight by the Pak Military Junta, the March 30, 1971, witnessed a protest movement at Agartala which, as Mr. Chakraborty assures, was the first mass movement in Tripura in support of the Bangladesh Move-
ment and that was framed by Shri Sengupta. The photographs depicted many important events like another mass protest movement of the man of literatures, artists & intelligentsia who met at Post Office Chowmohani of Agartala (May 3, 1971), the refugee emigration in Tripura, their livelihood, Senetor Kennedy's visit to the Refugee camps, the actual liberation war, the final stage of the war, the surrender of the Pak army under Lt. General Niazi at Dhaka etc. Mr. Chakraborty remarks that the works of Shri Sengupta deservs to be preserved for future generation and history.100

On several occasions starting from July, 2004, the researcher met Shri Sengupta at his residence at Agartala and had discussions on the freedom movement of Bangladesh. He did not hesitate to tell about his moves during the liberation period and the life-risks he had taken within 10 months of his marriage. His wife Rama Sengupta did never hurt him by any way while the Muktiyoddhas call on him at mid night to accompany them with his camera etc. She had full support for the liberation movement. His father Profulla Sengupta enthused him in many ways and his brothers Shambhu Sengupta and Bishu Sengupta were his partners in the profession of photography with their familiar studio, Sen & Sen at Agartala. He had written a valuable book on the memory of the Muktiyuddha, namely, Muktiyddhey Samhati O Maitreer Bandhane Tripura (in Bengali), published by Chitra Sambad Prokashan, Agartala, in 2002. On request, he informs about other photographers who did their best for the success of Muktiyuddha of Bangladesh. They were: Chitta Sen of Studio Senco, Mr. Debray of Studio Click, Sujit Debray and Biru Debarman of I.C.A.T (Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, Govt. of Tripura). He also
informs about a tragic incident of brutal killing of two professional photographers attached to the *Jugantar* published from West Bengal. These two men came to Tripura through East Pakistan after *Operation Search Light* and met Anil Bhattacharjee at his residence at Melarmath, Agartala, and with blessings of the elders they again entered the troubled East Pakistan and intercepted at Comilla by the Pak Army. They were interrogated and checked up whether they were Muslim or not. But they failed to be Muslim and were shot dead. The sad news reached Agartala and the scenario became unbearable in the media world; the belongings which the young journalists left in the residence of Anil Bhattacharjee and Sunanda Debi were kept for long time as a token of memory.101

**The Role of Newspapers in the Liberation Movement**

The newspapers published from Tripura in the later part of 60s & 70s were very much instrumental in wholeheartedly supporting the cause of Bangladesh movement. Actually, the mind setup of all the intelligentsia in Tripura was partly prepared by the newspapers; nobody, however, can ignore the role of aerial news like Aakash Bani (All India Radio) Agartala & Calcutta & Delhi; B.B.C (the British Broadcasting Corporation), Voice of America and others. All sections of people of Tripura took the Bangladesh movement as their national burden and humanitarian responsibility. The politicians, officers, intelligentsia, educationists, students, workers, cultural activists, lawyers, medical officers & Para-military group etc. came forward with whatever they got to support the Muktiyuddha of Bangladesh. In this circumstances, the press and free-lence photography played significant role in this regard. Not only that, the newspapers published from Tripura became the source-material for the news agencies of the whole country but these turned to be the source material for news agencies abroad.102

Tripura was not very much prominent in the publication world during that period. But its geographical position in respect of East Pakistan was very much strategic because Tripura was very much nearer to the heart of that country and Dacca, the Capital City, was within 80 kms of Agartala, the Capital Town of the state of Tripura. So, it was all possible to collect live news of the developments in East Pakistan (later on Bangladesh) from the border lands of Tripura as well as from Agartala.

The Newspapers published from Tripura during that period are as follows:-

The prominent Daily Newspapers were103:-

1) The *Dainik Sambad* (previously the Dainik Gana-Abhijan), edited by Bhupen Datta Bhowmik;
2) The *Dainik Ganaraj*, edited by Amar Gupta;

3) The *Dainik Rudra Beena*, edited by Khagendranath Chakraborty;

4) The *Dainik Jagaran*, edited by Jeeten Pal;

5) The *Dainik Nagarik*, edited by Mohan Lal Roy;

6) The *Dainik Janapad*, edited by Dr. Kamalkumar Singha;

**The prominent Weekly Papers :-**

1) The *Saptahik Samachar*, Editor, Anil Bhattacharya;

2) The *Saptahik Desher Katha*, Editor, Gautam Das;

3) The *Saptahik Simanta Prakash*, Editor, Mrinal Kar;

4) The *Saptahik Tripurar Katha*, Editor, Saroj Chanda;

5) The *Syandan Patrika*, Editor, Subal Kr. Dey;

This is the list of News papers provided by Dr. Abul Azad ; but some other News papers come to the hand of the researcher while going through this subject.

These are :-

1) The *Chhatra Sambad*, edited by Manik Sarkar,

2) The *Tripura Weekly*, edited by Biresh Chakraborty,

3) The *Gana Samhati* (Weekly), edited by Jaduprasanna Bhattacharya,

It is very much interesting to note that the refugee intelligentsia, educationists, organizers of Muktiyuddha, journalists had taken initiative from Agartala to publish weekly, half weekly and some other irregular Newspapers. The papers are:-

1) The Half-weekly Joy Bangla, President of editors: Prafullaranjan Sarkar;

2) The *Saptahik Swadinata*, editor, Arunabha Sarkar;
3) The *Bangla Desh*, editor, Abul Hasan Choudhury;

4) The *Saptahik Banglar Mukh*, editor, Siddikur Rahman Ashrafee;

5) The *Sandwip theke Dhaleswari*, editor, not mentioned

These newspapers, however, did not mention Agartala or any places of Tripura as its place of publication in consideration of security; the places of publication as found in those papers were: Mujibnagar, Bangladesh, or a place in Bangladesh etc. These newspapers were usually irregular due to war-like circumstances.104

**The main Characteristics of the Newspapers Published from Agartala (Tripura)**

These papers really stood for the cause of the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. An overview of the papers leads to the conclusion that these were actually mouthpieces of Bengali nationalism and Bangladesh movement in 1971. Following is the Subject-wise classification of the Newspapers:-

A) Utmost support to the liberation movement of Bangladesh and condemnation of the arrest of Bangabandhu:

1) Evaluated publication of news on Six-Point Charter of Demand, Mass Movement of ’69 and other political developments in East Pakistan;

2) Publication of various directives for the period before 26 March and other related matters coming out of the historical Speech of Bangabandhu on 7 March, 1971;

3) Treatment of Bangladesh Movement as a rightful one and drawing of the attention of World-mass for establishment of democracy in Bangladesh;

4) Outright protest against the arrest of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and condemnation of the attempt of Trial of Bangabandhu in the Martial Law Court.

5) Fervent appeal to the Govt. of India for supporting the liberation of Bangladesh and recognizing the Government of Bangladesh.

B) Propagation of cultural activities and other organizational matters related to the Liberation War.
1) Publication with importance of the news regarding Swadin Bangla Betar Kendra; different
pronouncement and news of Mujibnagar Government;

2) Publication of news urging the All India Radio (AIR) Authority to give importance to the
Bangladesh Movement while releasing their news to maximize the time-limit of patriotic
songs;

3) Propaganda of news on the views of the Government of India on Bangladesh Liberation
Movement, Mrs. Gandhi and other leaders' speeches, pronouncement of the State Govt. and
its views as aired by the Aakash Bani. i.e. AIR;

4) Publication with utmost importance of the news on Bangladesh Liberation movement led by
the students, teachers, intelligentsia, social & cultural activists, politicians, medical officers,
workers etc.

5) Propaganda with special care of the news related to different cultural and other activities
performed by the freedom fighters and refugees;

C) Utmost Endeavour to play the role of Humanity in sheltering the refugees,

1) Highlighting the necessity of proper arrangement of shelters for the refugees who were really
in a difficult situation due to influx;

2) Severe criticism of the unhappy situation, corruption, atrocities in the refugee camps,

3) Publicity of the news of the activities of the refugee leaders for the betterment of the lives of
the refugees along with the Govt. of India and the Govt. of Tripura;

4) Extreme criticism of the indifferent attitude and failure of the Govt. of India and the Govt. of
Tripura in extending their helping hand in the liberation movement of Bangladesh and in
rehabilitating the refugees;

5) Appeal to the Govt. to minimize the price-hike;

6) Appeal to the Govt. to arrange the return of the refugees just after the liberation war;

D) Direct and Indirect propagation for supporting activities of armed Muktiyoddhas:

1) Utmost Endeavour for participating in the Muktiyuddha;
2) Directives for the ways and means of the Muktiyuddha;

3) Request made to the Government to provide technical training and arms to the Muktiyoddhas;

4) Proper publicity of the success of the Muktiyoddhas in the battle-field;

E) Drawing the attention of the World body towards the Muktiyuddha

1) Request the intervention of U Thant, the Secretary General of the UNO, and of the peace-loving & democratic force of the World in the brutal atrocities in East Pakistan committed by the Pak Junta;

2) Severe criticism of the indifferent attitude of USA and China towards the barbaric genocide in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan;

3) Appeal to the World-mass for assistance and for recognition of Bangladesh;

4) Special publicity of the news of the relief made by alien countries;

5) Publication of the reactions of the World community on Bangladesh;

6) Publication of the news of the murder of the alien citizens and disregard of the Human Rights on the line of Geneva Protocol in Bangladesh by the Pak Govt.;

F) Utmost Endeavour in keeping the Internal Security and Communal Harmony

1) Sensitizing the people of Tripura about the damaging attitude of the Pak Junta in the frontier of Tripura and giving warning to the Pak Force;

2) Fervent request to the Govt. of India to tit the Pak Junta for its tat;

3) Appeal for keeping communal harmony and request made to keep harmony in the non-communal society. 105

Interestingly, the Newspapers published from Tripura did not disclose the exact location of the Mujibnagar Government, the training centres of the Muktiyoddhas, and other related matters due to strategic and security reasons. The reasons are classified in the following ways:-
1) Pakistan was propagating throughout the world that India was trying to destabilize Pakistan by interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan by sending its armed forces in civil dresses; in this situation, if news of utilizing Indian soil by the freedom fighters of Bangladesh was published in any way in the newspapers, Indian position in the World community would be highly critical and be dangerous for the liberation movement of Bangladesh;

2) If it was published in the Newspapers that Indian soil was being used in providing training to the Muktiyoddhas and arms were being handed over to the freedom fighters, Pakistan could utilize the situation to convince the world committee about the intention of India and could have the chance to prove India as an intruder in the internal affairs of its neighbouring country. Pakistan on its initiative might have attack Indian bordering states indiscriminately creating panic and heavy tension on Indian sides;

3) Tripura’s position was very much strategic in military point of view; geographically it was very much within the map of East Pakistan which covered almost 80% of the border of Tripura. Tripura had its easy link with the main land of India through airlines, but not by road or sea; landlocked by East Pakistan Tripura had its population over 15.5 lakhs and had to shoulder over 14 lakhs of refugees coming from devastated Bangladesh. Moreover, Agartala and other towns of Tripura were within easy range of Machine Guns, Mortar Shells, Cannon Shells and Air-strike. In the circumstances, all the strategic information was kept concealed for the national interest and for the sake of the liberation movement of Bangladesh. 106

All the newspapers coming out from Tripura in 1971 irrespective of their nature such as daily, weekly, half-weekly were very much friendly towards the freedom movement of Bangladesh and sheer critical towards Pak Junta. Almost 50% of the news of these papers and in some cases 80% was directly related to the liberation movement of Bangladesh. Some of the newspapers published special issues or delayed issues on Bangladesh movement. 107

THE DAINIK SAMBAD

Of all the Newspapers published from Tripura i.e. Agartala in 1971, the Dainik Sambad stood at the top. It totally dedicated itself for the cause of democratic movement leading to the liberation movement in Bangladesh. Its editor Bhupen Datta Bhowmik came up with all his forces in hand to stand forth as a freedom fighter with pen in hands in stead of gun. The Dainik Sambad seemed to be the real mouthpiece of the freedom movement of Bangladesh. Its office turned to be the actual dateline office for all news agencies of the World. The assistants of the editor were:
Bipul Majumder, Viswadev Bhattacharya, Bikach Choudhury and others. Under their tireless efforts, the *Dainik Sambad* carried to the world community the news of 75 million Bengali people who fought unto death against their Home enemy i.e. West Pakistani colonialism. All the correspondents of the *Dainik Sambad* went out on a routine schedule in all the morning during that period and came in the evening with hot news from Warfield and produced in papers in black and white. Then the news was briefed to the different agencies coming from all over India and abroad. That was the scenario of the day. Mr. Datta Bhowmik was of the opinion that the *Dainik Sambad* could have no exclusive news for itself because it had to play a historical role for the 75 million people of Bangladesh who fought tremendously for their motherland. The *Sambad Bhawan* was utilized for other purposes like meeting place of different correspondents, intelligentsias of Bangladesh, freedom fighters etc. and for intercepting secret frequencies of the military Junta of Pakistan and all these were handed over to the military commands of Muktiyoddhas. The transistor-monitoring was seriously operated by Prof. Mihir Deb of Maharaja Bir Bikram College, Agartala who used the *Sambad Bhawan* to receive hot news from *Swadin Bangla Betar Kendra*.

If anybody goes through any of the copy of the Dainik Sambad from March to December, 1971, it will be seen that the *Dainik Sambad* almost played the role of a leading News paper of Mujib Nagar Government. The reports and news of this paper were very much stimulating and enthusiastic for the freedom fighters of Bangladesh movement: some of the captions of the paper may be cited for ready reference:-

1) Mass-Upsurge in East Bengal: Mass-fighting in the war-field in Dacca, armed-fighting in the streets of capital city, conflagration, looting, killing etc. (4 March, 1971)

2) 30 killed, 100 wounded in the last two days; curfew in Rangpur and Khulna in the 3rd day of continuous strike in East Pakistan; Decision of Nurul Amin to boycott meeting with Yahya (5 March);

3) Real Mass-Upsurge in East Bengal: Civil War leading to fighting between mass-police on one side and the military on the other; firing from Machine-gun, 300 killed, 3000 wounded, the President would indicate the Future Course of Action today (6 March);

4) Bow-down of the Martial-law Administrator in front Mass-Movement; Meeting of the Council on 6 March; Speech of President (7 March).

7 March, 1971, is an epoch-making day for Bangladesh Movement; the historical Speech of
Bangabandhu at Race-course Maidan (Field) on that day created unprecedented enthusiasm throughout East Pakistan. Tripura was similarly stirred by that Speech; Bikach Choudhury informs that the people at Gol Bazar at Agartala shouted the same slogan as uttered by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7 March:-

"Abarer Sangram, Muktir Sangram,
Abarer Sangram, Swadinatar Sangram;"

The people utilized microphone to popularize this Speech amongst the masses. The people present at the spot started playing holi with different colours especially with Aabir. Then they started distribution of sweets amongst each other in joy. An old man of the gathering assured that that thundering tune was heard after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The heart of Bangla awoke; Bangladesh would really be in the map of the World.¹¹⁰

The Dainik Sambad came out with some special news on Bangladesh Movement. It had published an editorial in its issue following the great Speech under the heading: Laksha Parane Shanka naa Maane (Lakhs of Souls- No Fear) and hoped the victory of Bangladesh Freedom Movement; some enthusiastic mentions were: Pronounce, Bangalees, pronounce only one, JOY BANGLA. Say, after saluting the Flag of victorious Chariot, JOY BANGLA, VICTORY FOR BENGAL.

In the issue of 10 March, 7 reports out of 8 in the first page were related to Bangladesh Movement. The Supplementary of 26 March gave a number of reports on Bangladesh:

1) Last phase of Bangladesh Liberation Movement: real time for Liberation Movement vis-a-vis the military power announced, Fighting on the streets: Flame of Civil War throughout the Bengal: Fleeing of Yahya

2) Assemblage of military in the important places in mid-night: announcement of Martial Law Administrator: Political Movement: Prohibition of Strike: Ordinances on the limitation of arms;

3) Press Censorship announced;

4) First announcement from the Swadin Bangla Betar Kendra: Liberated Bengal; Street fighting between mass-police on one hand and the Military Junta on the other;
5) Assemblage of military on the Sabroom Border: Surrender of EPR in India, Firing at Ram Garh, 8 died;

6) Developments: what the circumstances were!

7) Stir at Agartala: procession of students;

In the same issue, the *Dainik Sambad* in its editorial, Last Directives of the Leadership informed the world that: the people of this Land eagerly waited for the news of complete independence of revolutionary Bengal.

The issue of 27 March shows that almost 95% news of the front page is related with Bangladesh Freedom Movement. On the same day it published a Special Issue of 2 pages which cost paisa 10 only. All the news was related to Muktiyuddha of Bangladesh. Some of the headlines may be mentioned below:

1) Foundation of Independent, Sovereign Government: appeal for help from the Radio Centre of rebellious Bengal to the countries which were anti-colonial, siege of Cantonment by the Mukti-Fouz (reprinted).

2) Tikka Khan, the military Bargi of Yahya, killed in the hand of Mukti-Fouz; directives issued for the surrender of the Bargis of Yahya;

3) Shelling on Hospitals;

4) Fierce Fighting over the capture of a Betar Kendra (Radio Centre)

5) Surrender of the Pak military;

6) Announcement of the Leader of the Mukti-Bahini;

7) Victorious procession of the Mukti-Fouz;

8) Reaction at Agartala.

It may be mentioned here that some of the news items were really exaggerated and was produced to highlight the activities of the freedom fighters and to excel the minds of the Muktiyoddhas, refugees and others who were engaged in the Freedom Movement. Such was the
news mentioned in serial no. 2 above.

Reaction of Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, finds its proper place in this issue on the arrest of Bangubandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Great Leader of Liberation Movement of Bangladesh, by the Pak Military Junta. "Mujibur can't be arrested: Prime Minister Indira" was the headline of the news which ran in the way, "Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi tells firmly in the Parliament today -

"I do not believe that Pak Junta can arrest Mujibur. Mujibur can not be arrested. The news of his arrest is baseless and fabricated by Radio, Karachi."

News under the headline "Reaction at Agartala" was as the following - People at Agartala eagerly went to the border to collect news of Bangladesh liberation movement where some leaders of Muktiyuddha came and the leaders appealed to the people not to gather at the border area. General Strike is observed at Agartala and the people participated in the strike spontaneously. In the evening, a spontaneous Torch-bearing procession and general procession came out in the streets of Agartala.

The issue of 29 March show that the people of Tripura appealed for the intervention of the U.N.O in the Bangladesh Movement. The news under the headline "Telegram from the People of Tripura for the intervention of U Thant" which is referred to earlier in the fourth chapter is again placed here to show its importance. The news is:

"Agartala, 28 March, attention of Mr. U Thant, Secretary General of the U.N.O, is drawn by the people of the State of Tripura to the recent development in East Bengal and appealed to the Secretary General to intervene to stop the genocide committed by the Pak Junta using Tank, Air-bombing on the unarmed people of East Pakistan." Other Bangladesh related news was also there in that issue such as - Sangram Sahayak Committee formed, Appeal of the bulletin of the Chhatra Sangram Committee, Barbaric activities of the Pak Military Junta, Standing on the Tripura-Bangla border: in the eyes of the journalist etc.

Under the headline "Demand of the People of Tripura" was news which appealed by a Radio message to the P.M of India to give importance to telecast of the news with regard to Mukti Bahini of Bangladesh Movement. It was also appealed to save Bengal and the Bengali nationalism of a neighbouring country. Demand also placed for expanding time for telecasting patriotic songs from the All India Radio at Agartala, Calcutta, Guwahati and Siliguri Centres.
The Dainik Sambad of 30th March gives the following information: "Reference to East Bengal in the Legislative Assembly: Demand for recognition for Swadin Bangla: Severe condemnation for Massacre." Important news was: Deployment of Military by Helicopter, Swadin Bangla in the way of recognition etc. Under the headline: No more waiting-Let us go forward, the editorial column demanded to the great powers of the world like Russia, China, and other countries for recognition of Bangladesh. It also said that ignoring international law Pakistan played holi with the blood of the Bengalis; so, what was the necessity for U.N.O adorning itself with high profile administration? Then the editorial appealed to the government of India to recognize Bangladesh, to help the Bengalis with full arms; otherwise history would make Indians ashamed.

The Dainik Sambad of 31 March also provided with a number of news on Bangladesh: the headlines are-

1) Today the Prime Minister would place in the Parliament All-Party Proposal;
2) Swadin Bangla Sarkar valid: eligible for Recognition: Sheikh Mujib;
3) Death-cry in Comilla Contonment;
4) Failure in the attack in Chattagong;
5) Death of 50 internationally famous educationists;
6) Santal in the side of Mukti-Fouz;
7) U Thant would release Press-statement within one-day;
8) 24-Hour Strike on 2nd April;
9) Bengal Strike today;
10) Sri Lanka would not allow Pakistan to cross its sky-boundary.

That issue of the Dainik Sambad gives the information that a proposal was initiated in the Assam Assembly for recognition of Bangladesh. During the Session of the Assembly Dr. Bhupen Hazarika unfurled a Flag of Bangladesh amidst the salutes from the Hon'ble Members. In the editorial column, the said issue again drew the attention of the World community for its recognition and active co-operation.
At the beginning, the Sambad could not justify all the news it published up to March, 1971 due to over enthusiasm and absence of actual source material; but from April to September it published the news based on the news collected by its own correspondents who tried to reach the places of occurrences. So, this news was somewhat impersonal. At one stage, it arranged to publish the remarks of foreign news papers and the foreign leaders. The issues of 21 October and 21 & 24 November may be cited as examples. The issue of 4 December gives more information on Indo-Pak War than Bangladesh movement. The Dainik Sambad of 6 December provides epoch-making news on the recognition of Bangladesh by the Govt. of India in the Parliament. Other news was: "Russian veto in the Security Council: Sino-American conspiracy failed" and "Some countries of the World including Soviet Russia will recognize Bangladesh." In the editorial under the heading "Joy Bangla" the Dainik Sambad remarked that Bangladesh established its honour playing with blood.

The issue of 16 December gives the Headline: "Appeal of Lieutenant General Niazi for Truce according to the direction of the Pak President: Direction of General Manekshaw for Surrender within 9am: Truce." Other important news was:

1) Russian atomic fleet towards Indian Ocean;

2) American 7th Fleet in the Bay of Bengal: severe condemnation in and outside the Parliament;

3) Russia recognizes Bangladesh: British Broadcasting corporation;

4) It will not be bearable if in the disguise of deporting the Americans, Pak military force is withdrawn: L.K Jha in Washington;

5) Dacca Radio is on now;

6) Yahya disposed off;

The Dainik Sambad established an unprecedented example in 1971 in performing its duty for the interest of the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh and for the sake of moral and humanitarian responsibility; on the other hand, this paper played another important role in sending faithfully all significant news to the International News Agencies; it really became the Supplementary Organ to the Bangladesh Government and Press Club for the freedom-loving people of Bangladesh. The Journalists of this country and of abroad came to this distant land and backward State without any hesitation as they got all kinds of help from the Dainik Sambad; it arranged food & Shelters to
those outsiders who came to its office. They collected news basing this organization. The Editor himself briefed the news of the movement to the journalists every evening.\textsuperscript{111}

As a result, the \textit{Dainik Sambad} had to be published 5 to 8 times a day during the liberation period. Bangladesh news covered 70\% to 80\% of the spaces of the said news paper. The Pak army knew the \textit{Dainik Sambad} and they tried to destroy this news agency.\textsuperscript{112}

\textbf{The Dainik Jagaran}

The \textit{Dainik Jagaran} started its running in the 1950s and rose to its youthful vigour during the Bangladesh Movement in the very beginning of 1970s. In supporting Bangladesh Movement, it stood second in the list of the News papers which gave wholehearted moral & psychological and other kinds of support to the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. The most of the lead news of the \textit{Dainik Jagaran} during that 9-month long movement were related to that movement.

This paper tried to enthuse the Muktiyoddhas of Bangladesh on one hand and organize the people’s mind of Tripura and other parts of India & abroad towards the Bangladesh Movement on the other. The issue of 5th October gave the following lead news:

1) Joy Prakash Narayan on Tour in Tripura;
2) Distribution of clothes amongst the refugees;
3) Fight in the border of hill Chittagong;
4) Cholera epidemic in refugee camps;
5) Hundred pujas in the refugee camps;
6) Front fighting in the Parshuram border;
7) Attack of Mukti Fauz on the passenger Launch;
8) Notification of Bangladesh College Teachers’ Association;\textsuperscript{113}

All copies of the \textit{Dainik Jagaran} are not available; the copies which were available were examined by Dr. Abul Azad and came to the conclusion that the Jagaran was tireless in supporting the movement and in this way it played a historical role in the Bangladesh Freedom Movement.\textsuperscript{114}
In time of searching original material, the researcher had the opportunity to find some of the original copy of the *Dainik Jagaran* in the *Rama Prasad Gobeshanagar, Gandhighat, Agartala*. All the available copies were cross-checked and the found the evaluation of the *Dainik Jagaran* by Dr. Azad on Bangladesh issue is true to the truest sense of the term.

**The Dainik Ganaraj**

This newspaper was also one of the important newspapers and it played significant role in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. The front page of the issue of 16 June represents the above idea in the following way:-

1) The real problem of Bangladesh is being suppressed: We would not hesitate to make the big Powers responsible: Indira Gandhi;

2) China offered 52 crores of Rupees to Yahya;

3) Bharat-Bangladesh Maitri Samiti: Tripura visit of the General Secretary;

4) Pak Shelling on India;

Other six news of the issue were related to Bangladesh Liberation War. These were:

1) The Australian Cargo is coming to Agartala today with goods for the refugees;

2) Dearness allowance should be paid to the teachers posted at the refugee camps;

3) The intelligentsia from Bangladesh come up for rehabilitation programme;

4) Refrigerator offered on behalf of *Carritus*;

5) Procession and Deputation organized by *6th February Committee* for the benefit of Bangladesh and its refugees;

6) Meeting of *Bangladesh Women's Refugee Rehabilitation Committee*;

This issue of the paper bears only one of the news in respect of Tripura which was regarding the formation of a new committee of the employees working in the Malaria Department.

The issue of 16 July gives the following news :-
1) The disgruntled Pak military Junta engaged themselves to burn villages after villages;

2) Pak shelling on Tripura;

3) Inform the Pak Military that We have come: Challenge of the guerillas to the Office-in-charge of a Police station;

4) Shocking appeal of the helpless refugee woman to the Chief Secretary: Severe accusation of death of husband due to hunger and without health-care;

The Ganaraj of 19 August gives huge number of information on the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. The prime news of that day was: Another Pak diplomat showed his loyalty to Bangladesh. The other important news on Bangladesh was:

1) Russo-Indian Treaty signed in Moscow;

2) Curfew time extended;

3) Four girls were abducted;

4) Over-reaction of B.D.O;

5) Destruction of a cart by a mine-destroyer shell;

6) Corruption in distribution of ration in the refugee camps;

7) Telegram to U Thant: Demand for saving the life of Sheikh Mujib;

8) Independence Day in the Chhechhuriya refugee camp.

Telegram to U Thant: Demand for saving the life of Mujib-----under this headline following was the news: Sri Sunil Dey, on behalf of the Bangladesh Swadinata Sahayak Committee (Sonamura), sent a Telegram to Mr. U Thant, the Secretary General, UNO, on 14 August. The Telegram demanded the interference of the Secretary General, United Nations, to save the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was detained in the Pak Jail averting the fake judgment attributed by the Pak Government. (This important news is referred to earlier in chapter IV).

The issue of 28 August of the Ganaraj gives a translated version of important news pub-
lished in the *Daily Telegraph* of London on 14 August on the Trial of Mujibur Rahman. Another important headline on the same day was: Official Inauguration of Bangladesh Mission in London: News from B.B.C: Abu Sayed Choudhury appointed as the Chief of the Mission.

A picture of influx of refugees into Tripura is readily available from the issue of 4 November of the *Ganaraj* which is placed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Nos. of registered Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Tripura</td>
<td>7, 19,791 nos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Tripura</td>
<td>4,33,673 nos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tripura</td>
<td>1,87,367 nos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,40,831 nos.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees Unregistered (approx. number)</td>
<td>68,000 nos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand total ------ 14, 08,831 nos.**

Above all, the *Ganaraj* tried its level best to support the Bangladesh Movement wholeheartedly as the movement was based on democracy and people's support; on the other hand, the newspaper evaluated Pak Govt. and its activities as undemocratic and barbaric.115

**The Dainik Rudrabeena**

Published from Agartala, this newspaper also played important role in supporting and popularizing the freedom movement of Bangladesh. It was its tireless effort to mobilize the public mind in favour of Bangladesh movement. The *Rudrabeena* of 30 May, 1971, provides the readers with some historical news under the headline - *Aatasher Sandha : Bangladesh Aagatader Pranochhwal Nazrul Smaran* (28 Evening: Spontaneous Remembrance of Nazrul by the People coming from Bangladesh). The news runs: Agartala, 29 May, a very lively programme on the birthday of Poet Nazrul Islam was observed by the citizens of Bangladesh at the lawn of the Hostel of MBB
College. It was presided over by Sri Angshoman Hore, Vice Principal, Ashotosh College, Chittagong, while the Chief Guest was Janab M.R. Siddiki, President of Chittagong District Awami League as well as M.N.A. The writers, journalists, artists, political leaders, intelligentsia and others paid their homage to the Great Poet who really fought for the downtrodden of Bengal as well as India and fought gallantly against the imperialism of the British Government in India.

The important personalities from Bangladesh who spoke on that historic occasion were - Janab Jinat Ali, Vice-President, Ikbal Hall, Dhaka, and an active member of the Chhatra League, Janab Badrul Hasan, Professor, Comilla Victoria College, Janab Bashirul Haque, Professor, Habiganja College, Shri Ajoy Roy, Reader, Deptt. of Physics, Dacca University, Janab Jahur Ahmad Choudhury and Ahmed Chhafa, the leaders of Awami League etc. The important personalities from Tripura who participated in the programme and expressed their views on that occasion were - Dr. Kartik Lahiri, Bijan Choudhury, Bikach Choudhury and a relative of Poet Nazrul, Shrimati Karabi Gupta.

The lead news of the Rudrabeena on all most all the day during the period of Muktiyuddha was related to the Bangladesh movement. Its special interest was on the cultural activities organized for the encouragement of the freedom movement of Bangladesh by the cultural activists of Tripura and Bangladesh who came as refugees. These activities greatly helped the said movement.\\116

The Saptahik Samachar

The Saptahik Samachar (a weekly Newspaper) edited by Shri Anil Bhattacharjee took the leading role like the Dainik Sambad in supporting and encouraging the Bangladesh movement. Shri Bhattacharya was a local correspondent of the famous dainik the Yugantar published from Calcutta. The Samachar at the first instance could not determine the actual nature of the freedom movement, so it thought that the freedom movement would be long drawn one. It supported at the beginning the hesitant policy of the Govt. of India in offering the recognition to the newly formed Bangladesh Govt.in exile. The editorial of the Saptahik Samachar published in its issue of 2 May, 1971, may be cited for example for the above notion. Within one and half month, however, the Samachar changed its view on the above issue and appealed to the Govt. of India to come forward to the cause of Bangladesh Movement with all sorts of help including arms. The paper argued that the problem of influx of refugees from East Pakistan could be solved by arms and not by easy method. The editorial of the Paper on 20 June criticized the slow-motion policy of the Govt. of India in regard to the Bangladesh movement. It raised the question: How does the PM of
India say to evacuate the refugees from Indian soil without trying to solve the crisis in Pakistan? We would suggest if long-drawn peace is to be ensured in the sub-continent, recognition of Bangladesh is an utmost necessity as well as supply of arms to the freedom fighters so that they could fight and make free their motherland. And then the problem of the refugees could be solved properly and peace would be ensured in India.¹¹⁷

The Saptahik Desher Katha

The *Saptahik Desher Katha* was the mouthpiece of the then Opposition Party, i.e. the Communist Party of India (Maxist), well-known as CPI (M) and this paper also supported the Bangladesh Movement. The *Saptahik Desher Katha* edited by Sri Gautam Das, was, however, very much critical to the standpoint of the Govt. of India with regard to Bangladesh movement as it did not approve the views of the Congress Party-led Government in India. The then C.P.I (M) leaders were: Shri Nripen Chakraborty, (the Opposition Leader), Dasharath Deb, (the veteran Tribal leader), Bhanu Ghosh, (the Party Secretary), Manik Sarkar, Baidyanath Majumder, Anil Sarkar, Samar Choudhury, and so on. These leaders first in Tripura approached for the recognition of Bangladesh and the Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from this party first raised their voice in the Territorial Legislative Assembly to pass resolution for recognition of Bangladesh and to approach the Govt. of India for the said objective. It is known from the statement of Gautam Das, the editor of the *Saptahik Desher Katha*, (which is now turned to be the Daily Desher Katha), that the Leftists in Tripura had their open heart to the refugees of Bangladesh and specially for the workers of the Left Parties from Bangladesh. The Party arranged shelters, food, and other necessary materials to the refugees and also helped to arrange arms training for the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. The newspaper propounded the idea that the Muktiyoddha of Bangladesh was the war between the down-trodden, neglected, humiliated Bengalis vs. West Pakistani imperialism which was led by the bourgeois capitalistic attitude.

Shri Das also informs that in the '71 movement the *Saptahik Desher Katha* publishes a good number news items for uplifting as well as popularizing the movement throughout the world so that the movement could attract the attention of the world-Community against the barbaric atrocities of the Military Junta of Pakistan. It tries to enthuse the youths of Bangladesh to come forward with enthusiasm to fight against the aggression coming from their brethren of West Wing.¹¹⁸

News Papers published by the Bangladesh Intelligentsia and Organizers of Muktiyuddha from Agartala but the place of publication remained concealed due to security and diplomatic reasons.
The Joy-Bangla

This half-weekly newspaper started its functioning from the beginning of April, 1971 and was published from Agartala under the able guidance of Shri Prafulla Chandra Sarkar on commercial mood. It had its popularity amongst the refugees and people leaving in the bordering areas of Bangladesh. The paper tried to entrust the refugees and keep them upright with regard to the developments that are going on in Bangladesh. But by the middle of June, the Govt. of Mujibnagar sent an instruction to stop its circulation as the Govt. itself started publication of a newspaper with same title.119

The Bangladesh

This paper started its functioning before 26 March, 1971, at Comilla under the guidance of Mainul Huda, the leader of the Yuba League. But with the starting of brutal killing in Dacca, the organizers ran away from Comilla to Tripura. Then it again started its functioning from Sonamura, a Sub-divisional town under West Tripura District. The 2-page paper turned to be weekly and deeply engaged it in publishing the success of the Muktiyoddhas in the war-field and brutal atrocities committed by the Pak military Junta. Then it shifted its place of publishing from Sonamura to Agartala (Masjid Road) while Abul Hasan Choudhury joined with its publication.120

The Banglar Mukh

In the middle of August, 1971, Mr. Siddikur Rahman Ashrafi published this paper officially from Mujibnagar, Bangladesh but really from Agartala. Earlier, it is mentioned that this practice was followed due to security and diplomatic reasons. It published some rare photographs of Mujibur Rahman while he was delivering his historical speech at Race Course on 7 March, 1971, and also some photographs of Muktiyoddhas while they were performing the heroic deed in the battlefield. This aspect of this newspaper placed it in a particular position at that time.121

The Saptahik Swadinata

Another important newspaper of this line was the Saptahik Swadinata which came to limelight on 1 September from Agartala under the guidance of Arunabha Sarkar (the editor) and Jahir Uddin Mahmud (the printer). The paper mentioned that it was published somewhere from eastern Bangladesh; it was due to the same reason mentioned above. The advertisement-donors were from Agartala: The New Ashoka Restaurant, the Shreema Stores, the New Star Hotel, the
Siddheswari Varieties' Stores, the Choudhury Brothers, the Tirthamayee Alumonium Products, the Watch Hospital, the Jharna Book Agency, the Baidik Kesharaj Company and Shree Hiralal Saha etc. All these advertisements were published in a artistic mood which might be compared only with the the *Banglar Mukh*.¹²²

**Students in the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh**

The students of Tripura were much aware about the political developments in the neighbouring country like Pakistan especially in East Pakistan. While the Pakistan Govt. was vehemently trying to defame the Awami league-leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by including his name in the infamous Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1968, the students of East Pakistan especially of Dacca organized a massive movement against the Military regime of Ayub Khan. This movement became an aggressive mass movement which compelled Mr. Ayub Khan to step down in favour of another Military Ruler, Mr. Yahya Khan in the succeeding year. The fall of Ayub Regime was very impressive news to the students of Tripura who hailed that students’ movements and the downfall of autocratic Ayub Shahi rule in their News Bulletin *Chhatra Sambad* dated, Agartala, the 7th April, 1969, edited by Sri Manik Sarkar under the headline --*Sangrami Pakistan--- Lal Selam* (Struggling Pakistan - Red Salute). The Tripura State Committee of Students’ Federation of India (popularly known as SFI) congratulated the whole students’ society and the struggling mass of Pakistan for their rebellion against the imperialistic and fascist power of Pakistan. In the same column, the students of Tripura expressed their hope that the Pak Military Junta would withdraw without any condition the Martial Law from Pakistan.¹²³

**Posterising at Agartala under SFI**

On various demands of the organization and especially CONGRATULATING THE STRUGGLING MASS OF PAKISTAN, the Agartala Committee of Students’ Federation of India arranged huge POSTERISING throughout Agartala Town.¹²⁴

Samsuzzuha Choudhury in his book *'Liberation War'* provides with some interesting and enthusiastic information about the role of the students of Tripura in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. In a sub-heading, namely, *Cordial reception and hospitality by the people of Agartala*, he speaks:

"When we reached the check post, the Indian border security force, B.S.F., raised objection to cross the border due to restriction for the entry of Bangladeshi people into India. Getting ob-
struction I felt sad and thought that perhaps we would have to return ourselves from that point. At that time some students and peoples of Agartala waited eagerly from other side of the border to learn the news of Bangladesh. They talked to us from other side of the border and wanted to know of our deplorable condition. From this side we informed them about the terrific incidents of mass killing on 25 March. We further informed them of our intention to go to Agartala. The students came forward to help us. They advised us to cross the border by the northern side of the check post. Since the border security forces did not object to that proposal, we moved to that direction. But there was one canal, which became our obstruction to cross the border. We were thinking how deep water there was. When we, after putting off our shoes, began to step down into the water, the two college students of Agartala came to us getting themselves wetted through chest level waters and forcibly carried us on their shoulders to other side of the canal. Coming to know from us the deplorable conditions of Bangladesh, they straightly invited us to come to the office the State Congress of Agartala. We delightedly accepted their invitation. Our heart became heavy with excitement and joy. We were walking through the streets of Agartala like the heroes of Bangladesh liberation war. While accompanying students and peoples, many curious people also joined us in the streets. In one time the scene of our marching appeared to be like a procession. The traffics and the pedestrians began to stand by side of the road and gave us passage to go forward. Many of them asked, 'Who are they? The students replied to them, 'Bangabandhu', 'They are the men of Joy Bangla'.------"

Under another sub-heading which runs thus-Visit to the office of State Congress--- Mr. Choudhury continues to inform about the role of the students of Tripura in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. He writes:

"Walking with the students we reached before sunset to the office of State Congress in the King's palace at Agartala. The students introduced us with the Secretary of State Congress. The Secretary received us cordially. He and his other colleagues expressed their ardent desire to know the condition of our country and began to question on many things. We described the heinous attack of Pakistani hyena on the residents of Dhaka and the news of declaration of independence made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. ---- The consultation with the leaders of state congress continued till night. After discussion with the secretary, the students took us to a hotel of the town for meals and thereafter they arranged our accommodation in the house of a student. Though we got shelter in one house, the people of neighborhood got the news of our arrival in the twinkling of an eye. Male, female, young men and also old men gathered there, as if everybody wanted to know the news of our country. The night became very deep in answering their ques-
tions. The students repeatedly requested them not to disturb us and in one stage arranged for our rest by somehow forcing them out.

…… "The students carefully arranged everything for sleep. We were very pleased at their entertainment.……"

In the following sub-heading----Return to Akhaura----Mr. Choudhury further tells his readers about the students.

"In the midst of such an excitement and worries I passed the night. When it was dawn, I called Rafique to get up from bed. We had to return to Akhaura quickly. Within a few minutes some of the students appeared before us. Then and there I requested them to bid farewell. They did not want us to leave without breakfast. That is what they requested us to wait. But in some way we forcibly took farewell from the students explaining that we should have to report our freedom fighters quickly the fact of our arrival at Agartala and the progress of our discussion with the leaders of Agartala. Some of the students helped us to reach the border. …Enter into the homeland we showed our allegiance to the gratefulness of the inhabitants of Agartala. We would remember forever their affections and behaviour towards us by some unknown students."

The contemporary Newspaper specially the Dainik Sambad provides the readers with huge information about the leading activities of the students of Tripura in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. On 8th March, 1971, following the historical Race Cource Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7th March, the students of Sonamura sub-division arranged a mass-meeting at Sonamura Town and declared their solidarity towards the democratic movement in East Pakistan. The speakers of the meeting depicted Sheikh Mujib as a great leader of that movement.

The students of Hostel 2 of M.B.B.College, Agartala, one of the prestigious colleges of Tripura, organized a big procession and being assembled in front of the college, they shouted slogans against the Military Regime of Pakistan and in favour of democratic movement in Pakistan. The students alleged that under the combination of Military Junta and the PPP (Pakistan Peoples' Party) brutal attack was unleashed on the people of East Pakistan. The students burnt the effigies of Yahya Khan, the President of Pakistan, and Mr. Julfiker Ali Bhuttu, the President of the PPP.

A students' rally was organized at Agartala on 28th March, 1971, with view to help the
people of East Pakistan. They formed a committee, namely, *PURVA BANGLA SWADINATA SANGRAMI SAHAYAK COMMITTEE* with Sri Sajal Laskar, Rakhal Raj Datta and Aniruddha De as the President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The students appealed to the people of Tripura to send their monetary and other help to Hostel number 2 of Maharaja Bir Bikram College.\(^{128}\)

The Agartala Town was flooded with angry students of schools and colleges of Agartala. The Town witnessed a new scenario of students rally & procession which was militant in nature while they assembled in the Children's Park and declared in slogans ---- "Swadin Bangla", "Banglar Janagan Swadin", "Yahya, Tomar Dashyuder Hath Bhangchhi, Bhangbo". The above outburst was the result of the culmination of the developments that were going on in East Pakistan.\(^{129}\) The above-mentioned committee in a press release demanded immediate recognition of 'Swadin Bangla Government'.\(^{130}\) On behalf of the said organization Sri Dulal Sen issued a notice requesting the entire Students’ organizations of all the schools to submit their subscriptions towards the liberation movement of Bangladesh through the prime ministers of all students' organization.\(^{131}\) The students’ union council of Abhoynagar School, Agartala, in a meeting announced their solidarity towards the liberation movement of Bangladesh and placed their demand to the Government of India for recognition of 'Swadin Bangla Government'. They proposed to collect minimum 25 paisa per head for providing help to the Muktiyuddha of Bangladesh.\(^{132}\) The students of Budhjung School decided to collect at least Rs. 2/- per head to help the liberation movement. They also resolved to purchase essential commodities and hand all these over to the actual representative of the movement. They sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of India for recognition of 'Swadin Bangla'.

**12- Hour Tripura Strike on 2nd April, 1971**

Various student and labour organizations announced a *Twelve Hour Tripura Bandha* from 6am to 6pm on 2 April, 1971. This was in protest of Yahya's *New Nazi massacre* in East Pakistan and in support of Liberation Movement in Bangladesh. The 'Jatiya Chhatra Parishad' and the 'Chhatra Parishad' issued separate Press Release to support the said state-wide strike. The Strike was very much spontaneous. No Member of the Legislative Assembly turned up though the Assembly was in session. The *Cinema Workers’ Union* supported this strike wholeheartedly and they did not operate Cinema shows before the withdrawal of the strike at 6pm. It was envisaged that the said strike would collapse the normal lifestyle in Tripura.\(^{133}\)
Class Boycott

The students of Bir Bikram Evening College (now Bir Bikram Memorial College) boycotted their classes and arranged a massive meeting in front of the College (M.B.B College Building; the building was same for both the Colleges). A 'Sangram Committee' was formed with 34 students and Sri Tapan Datta, Prabhash Kanti Ray were elected Joint Convenors of the Committee. Unanimous decision was there to request Government of India to recognize the revolutionary Govt. of Bangladesh and to arrange all kinds of supports for the liberation movement. They also decided to support the 12-hour strike on 2nd April which was revealed from the slogans made during a big procession in the Town of Agartala.134

Indefinite Class Boycott by the students of M.B.B College in support of the Muktiyuddha

The first year students of M.B.B College had resolved on 3rd April, 1971, to boycott their classes for indefinite period in protest of the barbaric atrocities unleashed by the Yahya Govt. in East Pakistan. Their boycott was in favour of the liberation movement of the Bengalis of Pakistan. It was, however, stated that the classes of second & third year students would continue as usual.135 The students of Prachya Bharati School, Agartala, had arranged an emergent meeting of the students on 8th April at 11 am at the school premises to show their solidarity to the liberation movement of Bangladesh. At noon of the day, the 5th April, the teachers and students of different institutions at Agartala had organized a long procession on the streets of Agartala to request the Govt. of India to recognize the Bangladesh Government immediately. They demanded immediate suspension of massacre in Bangladesh. They also appealed to the Govt. of India to help Bangladesh. The most striking feature was that the procession was adorned with the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as well as the National Flag of Bangladesh. "Aamar Sonar Bangla," the National song of the rebels of Bangladesh, was sung in the procession.136

At the call of the Jatiya Chhatra Parishad to support the liberation movement of Bangladesh basing five concrete demands, a Token 12-hour hunger-strike was observed at Belonia Sub-Division, almost 100 miles southwards from Agartala.137

Smt. Gauri Bhattacharya, a veteran woman leader, appealed to the women of Agartala and the female students of all schools & colleges at Agartala to observe "Rosenara Day" on 8th April, at the Children Park (Agartala) at 1pm.138
The Students' Union Council of Ramthakur College in Action

In a meeting, the Students' Union Council of Ramthakur College (non-Government) appealed to the Govt. of India to recognize the 'Swadin Bangla Sarkar' and to arrange all kinds of assistance to the said Government.\(^{139}\)

"Rosenara Diwas"\(^{140}\) observed at Agartala on 8th April

The students of some of the Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges at Agartala observed "Rosenara Diwas" and then came out in a procession in the Town. They assembled at Children's Park under the Presidentship of Srimati Shila Bhattacharya. The speakers highlighted the sacrifice of Rosenara for the Country. They appealed to the women folk of Tripura to come forward to help the freedom fighters of Banladesh by offering food, clothes etc.\(^{141}\)

Cultural Programme for the benefit of the refugees of Bangladesh

On 26th April, 1971, a Cultural Programme was organized at Maharani Tulsibati School at Agartala to help the distressed refugees coming from Bangladesh. Sri Krishnadas Bhattacharjee, the Minister for Education, inaugurated the Programme. An amount of Rs. 1001/- as collected from the programme was handed over to Sri Sachindra Lal Singh, the Chief Minister and the President of Bangladesh Sangram Sahayak Parishad (Central Committee) by Srimati Pratibha Dasgupta, the Headmistress of the School.\(^{142}\)

Art Exhibition on Bangladesh

At the joint venture of Jatiya Chhatra Parishad and Jatiya Yuba Parishad under the guidance of Tripura State Congress party, an Art Exhibition on Bangladesh was organized at the premises of the Congress Bhawan, Agartala. Sri Anjan Banik, an Artist, participated in painting.

Press Release of Chhatra Parishad on the assistance of the Freedom Fighters and the Refugees

The Chhatra Parishid issued a Press Release condemning Govt.'s inaction in controlling price-hike, indiscipline in arranging safe shelters to the intelligentsia coming from Bangladesh i.e. Professors, Doctors, Teachers, other Artists. The Press Release also condemned the business-like attitude of the Ruling Class towards the refugees. The Parishad requested the Govt. to take more care for health at the refugee camps. The students drew the attention of the Lt. Governor and the
Chief Secretary of the State. They appealed to all the people of Tripura to lower down their cost of living so that they could help the refugees by paying money etc.\(^{143}\)

**Press Release of Chhatra Block for Recognition of Bangladesh**

*All India Chhatra Block*, a student organ of the Forward Block, in a statement on 14 May demanded immediate recognition of the Republic, Independent and Sovereign Govt. of Bangladesh. The statement denounced the Central Government’s mute attitude to the brutal atrocities of Nazi force of Yahya Khan and the dilemma in recognizing the Bangladesh Govt.\(^{144}\) The *Chhatra Block* appealed to the student & youth force of the country to organize strong agitation to compel the Central Govt. to recognize Bangladesh.

**Street Corner of the Chhatra Block for the Recognition of Bangladesh**

The said *Chhatra Block* on 13 May organized a Street Corner at Surya Choumohani and on 14th May, at Bat-tala, Agartala. The Presidents of these Street Corners were Sri Tridip Roy Bhowmik and Pijush Debroy respectively. The real aims of these demonstrations were to draw the attention of the Central Govt. to offer recognition to the Govt. of Bangladesh. The speakers severely criticized the policy of the Govt. of India towards Bangladesh. They demanded recognition of Bangladesh at an early date. They appealed to the people of Tripura to resist the profit-monger and dishonest businessmen who began to squeeze the helpless refugees coming from disturbed East Pakistan. The speakers also threatened those heartless & dishonest Govt. Officials who were also trying to adopt unfair means to press hard the lives of the refugees in Tripura. The said forum organized Street Rally at Agartala on 12 May and demanded recognition of Bangladesh.\(^{145}\)

**Grievances of the Chhatra Parishad on the Mismanagement of Refugees**

The *'Jatiya Chhatra Parishad'* a student organ of the Congress Party, in a statement on 29 May expressed its anxiety over administrative inefficiency and fraudulence in the name of relief of the refugees staying in different camps in Tripura. They threatened the Govt. that if the Govt. failed to punish the corrupt govt. officials, the students would be bound to undertake civil disobedience movement to compel the Govt. to suppress the corruption. They appealed to the Anti-Corruption Department to come forward on this issue.\(^{146}\)

**Call of Students’ Federation**

*V State Conference of the Students’ Federation*, a student organ of C.P.I (M), was held
during 17 to 19 May, 1971 at the Community Hall at Agartala. In this regard, an open programme was organized in the Children's Park, Agartala, wherein the Chief Orator, Sri Nripen Chakraborty, the Secretary of C.P.I (M) State Committee, said that the students always remain in front of the mass-movement; he denounced the fascist aggression of Mr. Yahya Khan on the general people of Bangladesh. Sri Subhash Chakraborty, the then student leader of West Bengal, and Vice President of Students' Federation of India, in his speech as Chief Guest, criticised the foreign & domestic policy of Govt. of India, headed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi.\textsuperscript{147}

**Financial help of a School for the Liberation Movement**

The students, teachers and employees of Bodhjung High School at Agartala, collected Rupees 812/- and handed the money over to the Muktijudhyas through the Head Master, Sri Byomkeshananda Bhattacharya. On behalf of the Muktiyudhyas present in the meeting, Janab Lutfal Hi Sachchu, said, if the good-self of the Indians would not be inscribed in the golden script while true history of Bangladesh Independent Movement would be written, the true history of Bangladesh would not stand. The Prime-Minister of Students' Union Council, Mr. Rana Balbir Jung, also took part in the deliberations.\textsuperscript{148}

**Rally at post-office Chowmohani organized by SFI (Students Federation of India).**

A protest rally was organized on July 13 at the Post Office Chowmuhani, Agartala, by the Students' Federation of India under the Chairmanship of Sri Prasanta Kapalik to protest against America's help to Pakistan in the form of arms. Begam Motiya Chowdhury, a veteran leader of Bangladesh movement, who took shelter at Agartala gave fiery speech condemning USA's imperialistic attitude which tried to nip the Bangladesh movement in the bud by providing fire arms to Pakistan. She appealed to the democratic, freedom-loving people of the world to come forward to resist the imperialistic policy of the U.S.A. At the same time, she denounced the Chinese policy towards Pakistan. Some Students' leaders like Basudev kar, Jawhar Saha spoke on that occasion.\textsuperscript{149}

**The Students and the 'Bangladesh Diwas' on 2nd August**

On the demand of the recognition of Bangladesh and in protest of the barbarian activities of the military regime, the *All India Chhatra Block, Tripura State Branch and the Jatiya Chhatra Parishad* had called for the observance of 'Bangladesh Diwas' on 2nd August, 1971. This call was supported by 19 educational Institutions of Agartala and of its suburbs. The students orga-
nized processions and rally; they boycotted their classes in favour of Libration Movement of Bangladesh. After a big procession, the students rallied on the ground of Children's Park under the Chairmanship of Mr. Pijush Debroy. The speakers appealed to the Govt. of India to recognize Bangladesh. On behalf of Bodjung School, Mr. Tapan Roy informed that they had boycotted their Classes on the same ground. 150

On 3rd August, 1971, State-wide Students' Strike was observed on the call of the State Committee of SFI. The Strike was peaceful. No information of any untoward incident was noticed. This observance was a part of the 'Daavi Diwas' (Demand Day) called by the Students' Federation of India. The Students of Ranir Bazar School arranged procession and Street Corner on the same ground. 151

The Students of Bardwali HS School, Agartala

The Students & the Teachers of Bardwali Higher Secondary School arranged a meeting in the School premises to observe Bangladesh Day. Begum Motiya Choudhury, a veteran & young leader of Bangladesh Movement, was invited and she, in her speech, stretched on communal harmony of the people of this region. Lieutenant Abdul Rouf, the Principal of Narsingdhi College under Dhaka Division, also spoke on the occasion. The programme was presided over by the Head Master of the School, Sri Amalendu Ray. A cultural programme including patriotic songs and recitations was also arranged. The participants were Sri Mrityunjoy Chakraborty, Tapan Pal, Minu Chakraborty and others. A fund was collected from the students and the teachers and was handed over to Begum Motiya Choudhury for the Rebels of Bangladesh. 152

12-Hour Tripura Bandh: 52 Students Arrested

12-Hour Tripura Strike was observed on 31st August, 1971, from 6am to 6pm on the Call of the different Students' Organizations neglecting the Govt. prohibition on the Bandh (Strike). No untoward incident was reported. At the beginning, 5 students of different organizations were arrested during the time of picketing. In protest of this arrest, several groups of students arranged demonstrations in front Kotowali police station, Agartala disregarding 144 Cr. Pc. The police arrested 52 students in total and after 10pm, the arrested students were taken to Hospitals and then were set free. It is reported that the police were barbaric in handling the peaceful protest of the students. Some students were wounded while police lathicharged. Sri Dwijen De, a Forward Bloc leader, protested against the barbaric attitude of the police and then rang up to the Chief Minister regarding the atrocities of the police.
The Bandh was called in protest of unprecedented price-hike in Tripura. All other demands were related to Bangladesh i.e. the demand for stopping of corruption in the Refugee Camps, Security arrangement in the border area, and Recognition of Bangladesh.

The above report is to some extent a distorted one, according to a student leader of that incident. Sri Pijush Debroy, the then General Secretary of the Chhatra Block, and one of the arrested student leaders, recalled the incident in an Interview and informed about the students' organizations. These were i) Student Federation of India ii) Chhatra Block iii) ASFI and iv) Chhatra Parishad (Alianated). The leaders were: - Sri Manik Sarkar, Pijush Debroy, Prasanta Kapalik, Tapas De respectively. He also denied the report that the arrested students were released by 10 pm of that night saying that the students were produced to the court after 10pm and sent to the Agartala Central Jail by about 1am but released by 2am of the same night on the intervention of the Chief Minister.

He provides with more information about the objectives of the students' participation in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. The students were moved by the denial of democratic right to the people of East Pakistan while the Awami League secured unprecedented mass verdict in the General Election held in December-January, 1970-71. Moreover, there arose a 'Bangalee Sentiment' due to the unjust and unlawful atrocities unleashed by the Military Junta of Pakistan.153

Mass-Meeting under the Banner of Udaipur Branch of Chhatra Parishad for Release of Sheikh Mujib

On 11 September, 1971, a mass-meeting was organized at the premises of Baaghma High School under Udaipur Sub-Division under the banner of Udaipur Branch of Chhatra Parishad for immediate release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was under the custody of Yahya Military Regime. Sri Mansur Ali, State Minister, Tripura, highly criticized the fake judicial procedure imposed on Sheikh Mujib. Sri Prafulla Ch. Das, Minister for Jail & Animal Husbandry, spoke on that occasion. At last, Janab Muhammed Aziz, (Member of National Assembly), Pakistan, explained the background of the Bangladesh Movement.154

The discussion shows that the students in Tripura were very much politically conscious and they were ready to take any kind of pains to tackle the problems arising out of crises of the freedom movement in East Pakistan.
Teachers in action

Prof. Sirajuddin Ahmed in a write-up recalls that the teaching staff of the colleges at Agartala (Teachers of colleges at that time were popularly called 'Professors') were very much active in respect of the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. A group of teachers of colleges stayed in a rented house at Shibnagar, Agartala, and all of them were very much eager about the liberation movement. The teachers were: Prof. Ahindra Chakraborty, Jyotiprokash Roychoudhury, Sankar Bose, Dipak Choudhury, Swapan Das and others. The teachers and other intelligentsia organized a mass meeting at Post Office Choumohani on 27 or 28 March (he can not remember the actual date) and Prof. Kartik Lahidi, Bhismadev Bhattacharjya, Poet & Artists Salil Krishna Debbarma, Prof. Sirajuddin and some others spoke in favour of the liberation movement and severely criticized the barbaric attitude of the Pak Military Junta. The teachers read out some patriotic poems; chorus songs were sung in the meeting by the artists and Joy Bangla was their slogan. On 30 March, a procession in favour of Bangladesh Movement was led specially by the Teachers of Colleges. The procession attended by the people of all sections like the artists, poets, dramatists & drama-artists, men of literatures etc. A sizeable Civil Defence Unit was formed with the college teachers under the leadership of Prof. Satyaranjan Bhattacharya. The main duty of the Civil Defence Unit was to help the refugees, the wounded Muktiyoddhas and other destitutes. In the 2nd week of November, 1971, Agartala was under severe attack; Agartala was the main target of the heavy shelling of the Pak Army. Prof. Ahmed informs that members of the Civil Defence Unit did a lot to identify the shelling-wounded people from different parts of the town and get them reached to the Hospital. Prof. Dipak Choudhury wrote an article on the International political issues in the backdrop of the Bangladesh Movement and it was published in the local newspaper, namely, Gano Abhijan (Mr. Abu Taher was the Editor and Mr. Bhupen Dutta Bhowmik was the News Editor). It is known from the above write-up of Prof. Ahmed that the Bengali Department of M.B.B College, Agartala, arranged a discussion programme in their Department under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Ranendranath Deb which was attended by some renowned professors coming from East Bengal as refugees & who took shelters at the Politechnic Institute at Narasingarh. There was a remarkable interaction amongst the Professors. Prof. Sayed Ali Ahsan explained the political & social background of the Freedom movement of Bangladesh. He referred to the French Revolution of 1789 and read a poem of Shelly. Prof. Ahsan appealed for the help of the Govt. of India in the liberation movement. Prof. Anisuzzaman of the University of Chittagong also spoke on that occasion. Then, most of the professors used to write articles in the local dailies in their own name or using nick-name and that helped greatly to arouse the public opinion in favour of the freedom movement.
It is also known that Prof. Mihir Deb and Prof. Karabi Debbarman, both of M.B.B College, Agartala, were very much active and they did a lot for the liberation movement. Accompanying Prof. Ahmed, Prof. Deb visited refugee Camps and Training Camps of the Muktiyoddhas. Prof. Ahmed could recall the Melaghar (under Sonamura) Training Camp & the temporary Hospital and he had seen the training of the Mukti Bahini at that camp. In the same way Prof. Karabi Debbarma also used to accompany Prof. Ahmed and his wife while she visited the refugee camps at different places in Tripura. Sometimes, she distributed clothes, blankets etc. amongst the refugees. Prof. Debbarman was an active member of the Women’s Bangla Desh Refugee Relief Committee headed by Mrs. Joan Dias, the Lady Governor. She also worked under another Lady Governor, Mrs. Baleswar Prosad.155

Mr. D. B. Datta, the then B.D.O of Bishalgarh Block under Sadar Subdivision, told the researcher in an Interview at his residence that the preliminary task of refugee management was primarily done by the teachers of various Schools and Headmasters of the Senior Basic Schools were given the charge of the refugee camps. Mr. Tukku Miah, Head Master of Kadaimurah Higher Secondary School, informs that the teachers were mostly active in helping the devastated refugees at that area. The researcher gained practical experience in participating a long procession at the flag end of March, 1971, which was arranged by one the popular teacher of Boxanagar High School (under Sonamura), Mr. Probodh Deb. From the above, it may be presumed that the teachers throughout the state actively helped the liberation movement of Bangladesh. It became possible on the part of the teachers in view of the fact that most of the schools remained closed for three to four months due to the utilizations of school building for sheltering the refugees.156

**Cultural Activities for boosting the Liberation Movement**

What *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of the Bangladesh Movement, remarked in January, 1972, while he had just taken over the charge of the President of the liberated Bangladesh, in respect of the cultural activities during the liberation movement, is very much pertinent to be mentioned here. During a courtesy visit of Dr. Probhash Ranjan Dashgupta, Specialist Physician and an active Doctor during liberation movement at G.B. Hospital, Agartala, and Subimal Bhattacharjee, a prominent lyricist, at Banga Bhavan in Dhaka, the President shook hands with Dr. Dasgupta and said, "We are grateful to the people of Agartala and we can't forget your contribution". While he was presented the records of the songs of Liberation War with flower bouquet by Sri Bhattacharjee, the President again said, "Those who had composed and sang the songs on Mukti-yuddha, they are, I believe, all soldiers."157 What a practical observation! This is the greatness of a great leader and that brings tears of joy in the eyes of the
composer, Sri Bhattacharjee, and he remarked that that was the most joyful event in his life.\textsuperscript{158}

Subimal Bhattacharjee who was very much active during the liberation period, and Robin Sengupta, a popular freelance photographer who really went to the Warfield with the Muktiyoddhas in 1971 and who was also a cultural activists, provides us with valuable information on the cultural activities which boosted both the Muktiyoddhas as well as the evacuees on the soil of Tripura.\textsuperscript{159}

The artists of Tripura hailed the liberation movement by actively participating in various programmes arranged not for amusement but for enthusiasm to the freedom fighters and the bewildered refugees. It is known from the above source that famous vocal artists of East Pakistan, namely, Abdul Jabbaar, Aapal Mahmud, Swapna Ray, poet & lyricist Shahidul Islam and very well-known cinema artist, Karabi, came over to Agartala for safe shelter; these artists were given all possible help from the cultural activists of Tripura and they organized numerous cultural programmes in various spots of Tripura and, thus, collected fund for day to day expenditure of the artists. Robin Sengupta offered his Fiat Car for lifting the artists from one place to other and his drawing room for rehearsal. They arranged several cultural programmes in different places. Subimal Bhattacharjee informed that with the initiative of Sabinay Nag, a homely cultural sitting was arranged at Jirania, 15 km east of Agartala. The people present there offered money with honour to the artists as far as practicable on their part. Two more programmes were arranged: one at the then Town hall situated at the Children's Park and at the Campus Hall of Tulsibati Girls' School (both are now dismantled). Tickets were sold for these two arrangements and the famous artists from East Pakistan whose names were mentioned earlier performed in these two programmes. The local artists who participated were Supriya Bhowmik, Amiya Das, Bhupati Debbarman, Bhupesh Banik, Milan Bhattacharjee and others. The prominent Tablist Biswadeb Bhattacharjee was always remaining ready to accompany the artists. The most attractive figure was the cinema artist, Karabi.

Mr. Bhattacharjee continues to inform that for greater interest these artists had to leave Tripura to join the Swadin Bangla Betar Kendra at Calcutta. But the vocal artists of Tripura continued to participate in the programmes with Swadesh Geeti (patriotic songs) and enthused the participants of the liberation movement. Subimal Bhattacharjee wrote lyrics and heard through the prominent vocal artist Amar Pal. These cultural activities helped in strengthening the mental position of the freedom fighters, the refugees as well as the local residents.\textsuperscript{160} 10 June (1971) issue of Dainik Sambad, published from Agartala, provides the readers with an enthusiastic report on the benevolent activities of the newly established cultural organization, namely, Tripura Shilpi Sandhani Gosthi of Agartala South, which handed an amount of money collected from the selling of the tickets of cultural programme over to Lady Governor Srimati Dias for the relief of the refugees.
and at the same time, the Bangladeshi artists were honoured with remuneration. 6 July (1971) issue of the same newspaper gives the information that under the auspices of Bangladesh Sanskritik Sangtha, a month-long of programmes on patriotic songs were being organized in the camps of Muktiyoddhas for upholding their mental strength.\textsuperscript{161}

Satyabrata Chakraborty (pen-name- Kalyanbrata Chakraborty) evaluates the activities of the cultural activists in the following way: the poets & writers, intelligentsia, artists, and educationists left their political identities in view of supporting the Bangladesh Movement. They arranged discussion programmes, exhibitions; they sang patriotic songs, recited poems, staged procession to highlight the liberation movement and to boost up mental strength of all those who were involved in the liberation war. Shri Chakraborty told that there was a cultural upheaval throughout the state in support of the liberation movement. There was a spontaneous partipation of all the cultural activists coming from Tribal- non-Tribal, and Minority sections of people of Tripura. Even, the artists, intelligentsia, dramatists, writers, poets coming over to Tripura from East Bengal as refugees participated in the cultural activities without any restriction. In all the programmes, they condemned the barbaric atrocities committed by the Fascist force of Pakistan administration. During the 10 months of the liberation movement of Bangladesh every district town and subdivisional headquartes of Tripura witnessed not only active support but a madly enthusiasm from all sections of people specially from the cultural activists in supporting the liberation movement. A good number of literary works including short stories, poems, little magazine came out as a result of this enthusiasm. "Sandwip theke Dhaleswari", (From Sandwip to Dhaleswari), a little literary magazine, took its birth on 1 April, 1971, and this was edited by Chirabrata Raybarman and Shankhapallab Aaditya with a motto to highlight the liberation movement which was enriched by the literate persons both from Tripura and East Bengla who took refuge at Agartala. On that very day, at the Post Office Choumohani, people witnessed a day-long cultural assemblage and opening of an exhibition in support of Muktiyuddha. The most renowned and leading personalities of both the countries who actively participated in the day-long activities were Ranesh Dasgupta, Muniruzzaman, (East Pakisthan), Dr. Kartik Lahidi, Anil Sarkar, Mohanlal Ray, Krishnapada Datta, Bimal Choudhury, Aparajita Ray, Salilkrishna Debbarman, Prof. Mihir Deb, Prof. Karabi Debbarman, Shankhapallab Aaditya, Bhismadeb Bhattcharaya, Ajit Bhowmik, Pradip Choudhury, Kalipada Chakraborty, Prof. Dr. Sirajuddin Ahmed, Swapan Sengupta, Chidananda Goswami, Ahmad Safa, (East Pakisthan), Prof. Dr. Ranendrnath Deb, Nidhubhusan Hazra, Kiran Shankar Ray, Anil Bhattacharjee, Amitava Dasgupta, Shakti Halder, Manas Debbarma, Asit pal and others.\textsuperscript{162}
The Tripura Rabindra Parishad (Agartala) arranged various competitive programmes to celebrate the Birth-Day of World-famous poet, Rabindranath Tagore, in May, 1971, and this organization selected its subject matters like "Bangladesh, the Land, Human and Liberation" which definitely relates to the liberation movement of Bangladesh. It was really a "Bangladesh Bandana" Festival. The day-long celebrations were attended by renowned cultural-minded personalities of both the countries which also included the students, teachers, doctors, advocates, correspondents and general people.163

Medical Assistance

One of the most essential services in any kind of war is the medical service. Florence Nightingale became the role model of all the Nurses of the world because of the unbelievable services she provided to the war victims of the Crimean War (1854-1856). The medical establishment of the tiny state was not so much advanced in 1971 while the liberation movement of Bangladesh was going on. Notwithstanding numerous problems in the system specially lack of beds and medical staff, the existing arrangements were fully utilized for the treatment of the refugees as well as wounded freedom fighters. Salam Azad collected information from various sources specially from the Newspaper of Tripura published on 30 May, 1971. The hospitals in Tripura were overcrowded. Govida Ballav Hospital (popularly Known as G B Hospital), the premier Hospital of Tripura, situated at the capital city, with bed capacity of 315 was providing treatment to 700 patients most of whom were the refugees; surgical ward with 60 beds was arranging treatment of 130 patients mostly with bullet injuries. The Victoria Memorial Hospital (now the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Agartala) experienced almost the same condition. The maternity ward of the said hospital with 48 beds had arranged treatment to 111 patients; the O.P.D (Out Patient Department) of VM Hospital treated 3000 patients while that of G.B Hospital 2000 daily on an average.164 Fazlul Bari corroborated the said information and provided with more information on this touchy issue. He said that in normal situation the number of O.P.D patients were 800 and 1300 respectively on an average. Almost the same picture prevailed in other hospitals of Tripura due to the liberation movement. The most remarkable information in this regard is the fact that the sexually harassed women who escaped somehow to cross over the border to enter Tripura had safe shelter in the arrangement made by Momtaj Begam, the MNA (Members of National Assembly) from Comilla, and Gauri (Sunanda) Devi, prominent nurse & wife of Anil Bhattacharjee, the veteran journalist of that period. They could escape the social humiliation and, thus, had a new life and inspiration to live normal life. The gynecologists like Dr. Puspa De, Dr. Shila Ghosh, and Dr. Subodh Basak of VM Hospital were behind the screen of this arrangement. That was indeed a
great job but these women were victimized and sometimes at the cost of their lives the liberation war reached its final stage.165

Dr. S. B. Datta, the surgeon of Orthopedics Department of G.B Hospital, with his team, namely, Dr. Manoj Chakraborty, Dr. B.C Poddar, Dr. D.P Laskar, Dr. Ramgopal Saha and others did their best to provide medical assistance to the war victims of liberation movement. In an Interview, he informed the researcher that the period witnessed the unbearable sufferings of the people; thousands of injured patients coming to the hospital which seemed unabated. So, separate arrangement was made at the GB Hospital and V.M Hospital to cope with the emergency situation. It was a fact that the injured patients came over there after the conclusion of the liberation war because while the evacuees were returning to their homes, some of them got hit by the hidden mines and got injured. That was a terrible experience but the Doctors served the patients tirelessly and as far as practicable. Dr. Datta handed over a Xerox copy of a page of the *Dainik Janakantha* of 7 May, 2002, which bears the memoir of a firing-injured patient, Rokeya Choudhury, who received medical treatment at G.B Hospital under Dr. Datta and his team during liberation period. After almost 30 years she came back to Agartala and she searched about Dr. Datta but she could not meet Dr. Datta as he left Agartala for permanent settlement in Calcutta but left her address to a friend of Dr. Datta. By that time Dr. Datta had been at Dhaka to participate in the Muktiyuddha Utasav held at Dhaka in 2002. Dr. Datta visited the residence of Begam Rokeya and had a remarkable reception at the residence of Dr. Salauddin Choudhury, the Head of Atomic Commission of Bangladesh and husband of Begam Rokeya. The story indicates the passion that a Doctor received from his patient. Begam Rokeya said that they received not only homely treatment in this hospital but resurrection.166

Dr. Nimani Debbarma, the then Head of the T.B. Department attached to the V.M Hospital, speaks about the medical assistance provided to the wounded Muktiyoddhas and other refugee patients. He also speaks about a secret Hospital which was situated at the garden of Habul Banerjee near Bishramganj and which was established for the treatment of wounded freedom fighters. He was called in to Bishramganj by Dr. Abani Mohan Majumder (Medicine specialist) and a refugee lady doctor to check up a serious patient who was ailing in his bed. After check up he was found to be affected by T.B. and he recovered from that serious disease after proper treatment. Besides this treatment, Dr. Debbbarman and his team treated a number of patients in their Chest Clinic. He tells about a lady doctor, namely, Captain Nazira Begam, who often came to the G.B and VM Hospital with serious patients for better medical check-up and by this way, she became the family-friend of Dr. Debbarma.167
Dr. H.S. Roychoudhury was a renowned medical practitioner at that time. In an interview, he shared his experiences of that horrible period while Dr. Roychoudhury and his colleagues worked day and night for medical treatment to the patients who came to the G.B. Hospital with bullet or splinter or other kinds of injuries. It is really interesting to note that the doctors at G.B hospital met in a meeting on 28 March, 1971, review the situation arising out of the unprecedented genocide that happened in East Pakistan on 25 March. At least 30 doctors attended that meeting and it was decided to remain alert for emergency treatment of the wounded persons who might come over there for medical assistance. For overall survey of the unhappy incidents, Dr. Roychoudhury and Dr. Rathin Datta, who was also a very famous doctor at that period, went to Sonamura and heard about the incidents going over in East Pakistan. Then, they visited the northern side of Agartala i.e. upto Simna and advised the doctors attached to all the dispensaries to remain ready for emergency treatment of the patients who might cross the open border. In consultation with the then Director of Health Services, Dr. Harhari Chakraborty, cholera vaccines were collected and sent to the Dispensaries for first hand precaution for in-coming patient from troubled East Pakistan. The wounded persons started to infiltrate inside the state, as Dr. Roychoudhury informs, on & from 29 March. By that time, the Govt. of India under Mrs. Gandhi announced its solidarity towards Bangladesh movement. So, treatment started unabated and at least 3500 war casualties were provided with medical care which, according to Dr. Roychoudhury, was a record for a civil hospital. It was not an easy task for civil doctors but they did and became successful.\textsuperscript{168}

In the meantime, the Red Cross Society was reorganized with A.L. Dias, the Lt. Governor, as the President, Dr. Rathin Datta, as the administrator, according to the decision of the Govt. of India that all kinds of assistance coming over from other countries and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) would be distributed through the Red Cross. Dr. Roychoudhury and Mr. Benokrishna Majumder were selected as Branch Administrators. It was a Herculean task as there was lack of trained personnel. So, the refugee doctors, medical students, compounders and pharmacists were selected and appointed on simple honourarium. The doctors were paid Rs. 20/- per day and the compounders and pharmacists Rs. 15/- and others Rs. 12/-, respectively. This joint venture worked excellently under the able guidance of Dr. Rathin Datta. A good number of foreigners including US Senator, Mr. Kennedy and Indian dignitaries including Mrs. Ganghi visited the GB Hospital and they became satisfied which prompted foreign aids and active support to the liberation movement. The Tripura Branch of Indian Red Cross opened 8 Mobile medical centres with the help of the refugee doctors and their associates. At this time, the burden of Dr. Roychoudhury was shouldered by Dr. Abinash Tarafdar but the secret hospital like the hospitals at the garden of Habul Banerjee was visited by Dr. Roychoudhury as it was the decision the Govt. of India. The
total family of Dr. Datta and Dr. Roychoudhury including the mother of Dr. Datta got actively involved in the process of Red Cross activities. Their main duty was to distribute to the the articles like blanket, baby food and garments received outside through Red Cross. For tremendous services to the cause of the humanity given by Dr. Datta, the Govt. of Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh awarded him with the Friends of *liberation War Honour* as an expression of respect and gratitude of the Bengali nation. Dr. Roychoudhury informs that a team of 8 doctors under Dr. P.P.Goyel came from Delhi to help the local doctors in the process of Medical treatment to the Muktiyoddhas and the refugee patients. But while they found that the local doctors were doing well, they left after 4/5 days though their stay was scheduled for 3 weeks.169

There was another secret hospital at the B.S.F. Headquarteres at Shalbagan, just within 5 km of Agatala. Dr. Harun-ur-Rashid and Dr. Akhter Ahmed (both from East Pakistan) were the doctors who did very well to provide medical care to the patients in consultation with Dr. Roychoudhury and other doctors. There is information of two more secret hospitals: one was at Khasiamongal near Teliamura under direct supervision of the Indian army and another at Kadaimurah near Bishalgarh.

It was not only the medical care that Dr. Roychoudhury provided to the refugee patients & Muktiyoddhas but he and his wife provided shelters in his residential quarters a good number of refugees. A group of 11 women and 23 men (all were devastated and from Chittagong) oneday sought shelter to Dr. Roychoudhury. He opened his drawing room for that unknown people for the night irrespective of religious belief. There were Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists but then they were only the refugee from Joy Bangla. A Muslim young lady, namely, Anoyara Begam was given shelter to his residence and she stayed for 7/8 months. Major Khaled Musharraf, the sector Commander, often visited his residence along with Aminul Haque Badshah, the Press Secretary of *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahamm without hesitation and held meeting with Brigadier Bowa, the Army Chief from Indian side, throughout the nights. Mr. Badshah frequently visited his residence and sometimes came with 10/12 youths and requested his wife to arrange rice meal and Madam did what could be done. That was almost a regular feature. He could recall that at one time, almost at the end of the war, Colonel Osmani and Colonel Rob went to the G.B Hospital and Colonel Rob got admitted in the Hospital under Dr. Roychoudhury with bullet injury in the leg. Dr. Roychoudhury felt proud of the fact that his residence was being utilized for a noble cause; he admitted that he was the son of East Bengal and his paternal house was at Manikganj under Dhaka division. And he also felt that he was working for his motherland.170
Dr. Sujit Dey, a contemporary of Dr. Roychoudhury and Dr. Datta, became a legendary figure in the backdrop of the liberation movement of Bangladesh. Many sources on the liberation movement refers to his name because he was not only a benevolent doctor but a human being who like many others of Tripura dedicated his life and resources for the cause of the freedom movement of Bangladesh. Dr. Roychoudhury also gives the information that the residence of Dr. Sujit Dey at Agartala seemed to be a ‘mini conference room’ for the Commanders and freedom fighters of the liberation war. Major Zia seemed that residence as his rest room also; there was no certain time and date for his entry into the residence. For his remarkable contribution to the liberation movement, he is posthumously awarded *Friends Liberation War Honour* by the Govt. of Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh as an expression of the respect and gratitude of the Bengali nation.171

About the activities of the sisters, the researcher collected narrative news of a patient, namely, Rokeya Choudhury, who was treated with another injured relative Master Hirak under Dr. S.B. Datta with serious bullet injury and became fit after long treatment at G.B Hospital. She recalled about Rasomati, a sister, in the way: "A nurse Rasomati by name took care of us warmly; she loved us and fed us in time. It was her care which prompted our cure. It was really a matter of luck
to have a nurse like her in a foreign country." Ms. Choudhury appended a group-photograph of
their four sisters and the nurse Rasomati at the last page of her book.172

Gautam Das, a veteran journalist and a leading personality in Tripura, in various writings
informs about the benevolent activities of the *Peoples’ Relief Committee (P.R.C)*. This organiza-
tion was formed under the supervision of the C.P.I (M) to provide medical assistance to the victims
of the war and the refugees. The number of patients was so high that the hospitals at Tripura and
in West Bengal could not provide sufficient medical aids to the patients. So, a medical team was
formed with the specialist doctors both from East Pakistan and from Tripura and West Bengal and
with the help of refugee Medical students to provide immediate relief to the uncared patients both
in Tripura and West Bengal. He informed that Blood Donation Camps were arranged throughout
the country by the C.P.I (M) party and its allied organizations like the D.Y.F.I (Democratic Youth
Federation of India), the S.F.I (Students’ Federation of India) to collect blood for the wounded
freedom fighters and other patients. Thousands of youths donated blood on that occasion. That
blood is still flowing through the veins of many Bengali people who are still living in the liberated
Bangladesh.173

One can easily imagine that the condition of other District as well as Sub-divisional Hospi-
tals and the Primary Health Centres at different places of Tripura in the light of the above situation
of G.B. and V.M. Hospitals.

**Journalists in action**

While we have discussed the role of press in the liberation movement of Bangladesh, we
have seen the tremendous growth in the publication sector in Tripura. So, the liberation movement
accelerated the demand for local dailies which was catered by the journalists of Tripura. Not only
that, the national and international demand for hot news of Muktiyuddha made Tripura and the
journalists of Tripura very very important because of the geographical position of Tripura what we
have mentioned earlier. Besides his own Newspaper, Anil Bhattacharjee despatched news to P.T.I
in Calcutta, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Jugantar* office in Calcutta. Not only that, his resi-
dence at Melarmath became a mini conference room like that of *Sambad Bhawan* of the *Dainik
Sambad*, the Residence of the Chief Minister of Tripura. Hundreds of meetings were held in that
residence with the presence of veteran leaders of Bangladesh movement. Bhupen Datta Bhowmik
was another important personality in this field. He was properly assisted by Vismadeb Bhattacharya,
Bipul Majumder, Bikach Choudhury and Prof. Mihir Deb who worked for long time to trace vital
news from the transistor and it was Prof. Deb who could trace the *Call for Independence* as
announced by Major Zia-ur-Rahman from Kalurghat Radio station near Chittagong. The news had a lightening effect on the people of Tripura and the general people became very much eager to hear the radio news. The radio news was being connected with the microphone for the hearing of the public. The sale of radio increased to a great extent. Bikach Choudhury took the risk to go to Dhaka to witness and to report on the historical event i.e. the surrender of the Pak Army under Lt. General Niazi on 16 December. Prof. Mihir Deb was the man behind Mr. Bikach Choudhury to send him to Dacca. Mr. Choudhury was lucky enough to accompany Lt. General Arora, Head of the Eastern Command, from Agartala Airport. Mr. Choudhury and Mr. Barun Sengupta of Ananda

_Bazar Patrika_ were warmly received by the general people of Dacca and they were taken to Intercontinental Hotel at Dhaka and they were declared the guest of International Red Cross. Mr. Choudhury had put up a vivid picture of the surrender of 93000 Pak Solders under Lt. General Niazi. He witnessed the scenario while Lt. General Arora met Begam Mujib at a courtesy visit at her residence at Dhanmondi, Dacca. This group made the Danik Sambad very much popular not only to the people of Tripura but to the Muktiyuddhas also which provided them the mental strength to fight to their hardcore enemies.174

_Nurse Rasomati along with 3 Sisters of Rokeya Choudhury._
For their valuable contribution to the freedom movement of Bangladesh, Anil Bhattacharjee, Bhupen Datta Bhowmik, Prof. Mihir Deb were awarded with the Friends of Liberation War Honour by the Govt. of Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. The first two were chosen posthumously. No one can forget the names of Shri Jiten Pal of the Dainik Jagaran, Mohan Lal Roy of the Nagarik, Amiya Debroy of the Sebak (weekly), Gautam Das of the Saptahik Desher Katha, Kalyan Chakraborty, the press reporter of the Statesman and the editor of a very valuable book Apare Akattor published by Protyasha Prokashan, Agartala, in 1997 and others who did their best to highlight the cause of the Bengalis not only in India but throughout the world.

Mention may be made of the Press Reporters who came to Tripura from outside the State. They were: Anil Sen (Chief Reporter), Ganesh Singh (Chief photographer) and Anil Bhattacharya (Senior) from the Jugantar, Tushar Pandit from the Ananda Bazar Patrika, Amuly Ganguli, Monojit Mitra and Subrata Patranobish from the Statesman, Madhusudan Guha and Satyen Ghosh from P.T.I, Kirit Bhowmik and Subhash Chakraborti from the Times of India, Dipta Sen from the Hindusthan Times, Ajit Bhattacharyee, Falguni Bhattacharyee and Frank Morris from the Indian Express, Amar Raha from the Compus, Ranen Mukharjee from the Basumoti, Sudhir Thaplawal from the German T.V.

RESPONSE OF THE TRIBAL PEOPLE OF TRIPURA

The Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parisad (a very well-known Tribal Organization) in a Press Release on 1 April, 1971, asserted their whole-hearted support to the Muktiyuddhas of Bangladesh and vehemently demanded to the Govt. of India for the recognition of Swadin Bangla Government. The Parishad denounced the indiscriminate massacre of the Bengalis by the Yahya Government.

The Tripura Rajya Upajati Juba Samity by that time showed their full support and solidarity towards the liberation movement of Bangladesh and vehemently denounced the indiscriminate massacre of the Bengalis in East Pakistan.

The Upajati Gana Mukti Parisad is a historic organization for the development of the tribes in Tripura. It started its activities in the 1940s in the Princely period and did a lot for the educational and economic upliftment of the tribal people of Tripura. The influx of the refugees in Tripura as result of the Partition of India and consequent upon Hindu-Muslim riots in both Pakistan and India especially after 1947 was viewed seriously by the Tribal people of Tripura; the said organization, however, responded logically to this critical problem.
showed its utmost solidarity towards the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh in 1971. On April, 28, the *Upajati Gana Mukti Parisad* arranged a huge meeting of at least 3000 tribal people at Jacharay Bazar (Market). Mr. Dasharath Deb, (MP) Member of Parliament and Leader of that organization affirmed that all sections of the people of this country supported the liberation movement of Bangladesh wholeheartedly. He also said that the time required not for the garments but for huge numbers of arms and ammunitions for the Muktifauz. He appealed to the friendly countries of the World to come forward with all kinds of weapons which might help the movement positively; other-otherwise, mere support would not bear any result to the movement.  

The said Parishad arranged its Central Committee Convention at Duski (Moharchhara under Khowai Sub-Division) on 11-12 May, 1971, and discussed the issues like the development in East-Pakistan, political & economic situation in India. In its resolution, the Parishad appealed to Govt. of India to recognize the *Swadin Government of Bangladesh* and to arrange all possible help to the Muktiyoddhas. Among other resolutions were demands for the safe rehabilitation of the refugees, keeping of normalcy in price of essential commodities, formation of regional committee in the Tribal areas etc. After the Convention, the Organization arranged a public meeting at Moharchhara Bazar under Khowai sub-division under the chairmanship of Sudhannya Debbarma where Dasharath Deb was the principal speaker.

The *Upajati Juba Samiti* formed in 1967 especially for upholding the interest of the tribal people of the State did not hesitate to support the Bangladesh Movement. The Samiti became worried at the unprecedented influx of the refugees in Tripura and in its meeting of the Central Executive Committee evaluated the situation of Tripura arising out of the influx of the refugees and proposed to Govt. of India for solution of the problem and to take the entire responsibility of the refugees. In an another resolution, the Samiti observed that the paucity of food grains in the areas inhabited by the Tribals was caused by the influx of the refugees and urged upon the Govt. of Tripura to sanction Rs. 100 for every poor Tribal people to coup with the situation.

On the request of Mr. Sachindra Lal Singh, the Chief Minister of Tripura, and a staunch supporter of Bangladesh liberation movement, Mr. Anupam Debbarma of Krishnanagar, Agartala, allowed his house for the Office of the people of East Pakistan who came over here for their liberation from the yoke of West Pakistan. He even refused to receive the rent of the house but Mr. Singha arranged to pay Rs. 200 per month for the generous work. This was, according to Mr. Anil Bhattacharjee, a veteran journalist & active supporter of the liberation movement, first such type of office in a tribal house.
The Sessions of Tripura Territorial Assembly for the period from March 31, 1971 to February 23, 1972, saw the active and constructive role of the Tribal Members of Legislative Assembly who actively supported the liberation movement of Bangladesh. This issue is elaborately dealt with earlier in the same chapter.184

Mr. Kirit Bikram Debbarma, the former ‘Maharaja’ of Tripura, then a congress leader and an ex-M.P, was not idle on the issue and he visited some refugee camps like Mudabarhi, Gokulnagar and others under Bishalgarh P.S. He then left for Udaipur and visited some refugee camps before going to sabroom for the same purpose.185 We have already discussed above the very positive roles played by Dr. Nilmoni Debbarma and Prof. Mrs. Karabi Debbarma. Mr. Jitendra Choudhury, a well-known leader of Tripura coming from Tribal origin, expresses his positive views in a write-up on the liberation movement of Bangladesh. He wholehearted supported the liberation movement in view of the fact that the movement would usher in a democratic and secular system in Bangladesh. He informs that the Kalachhara area under Subroom Subdivision overburdened with the refugees coming mainly from Noakhali and Chittagong Division and the refugees became majority surpassing the number of local residents. All sectors like sports, cultural activities and business were dominated by the refugees at that time but no anti-refugee movement was traced in the area. Bhanulal Saha, another political leader of the state, corroborated this fact because he had practical experiences of the Sabroom area at that time while he was a school teacher there and actively participated in the relief management of the refugees. In an interview in his residential quarters at Agartala, he recalled that the refugees overwhelmingly surpassed the number of local people and as a result the grasses of the road were wiped out. The student volunteers were very much active in keeping area hygienic with bleeching powder etc.186

Sub-divisions in the liberation movement

Udaipur (South Tripura)

Tripura had ten administrative units at the time of the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh in 1971. These units are called sub-divisions. All the subdivisions were involved directly or indirectly with the liberation movement. Udaipur was one of the subdivisions which had no border-line link with the then East Pakistan. So, the freedom fighters and political leaders used Udaipur as a free sanctuary. Swapan Bhattacharjee,187 a resident of Udaipur & a senior Journalist attached with PTI (Press Trust of India) and the Syandan Patrika published from Agartala, had offered his views of practical experience of participation in the effort of liberation movement of Bangladesh.
What he has picturized in his write up has been summarized below: - he had direct link with the then East Pakistan; his father was a student of Victoria College at Comilla which still exists as famous college of Bangladesh. The historic speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of 7th March (1971) delivered at Racecourse field reached the willing ears of the people of Tripura through Radio programme and it stirred the hearts of not only the people of East Bengal but the people of Tripura also. Not all the families of Udaipur possessed radio at that time; so, the people gathered around the shops or the houses which possessed radio. Within a few days, the historic speech crossed over the border recorded in cassettes and these cassettes were aired with the help of microphone system twice or thrice a day. The people heard this stylish speech with utmost enthusiasm.

Sri Bhattacharjee adds that with the barbaric crackdown by the Pak Military Junta at Dacca on 25 March, 1971, the people of Udaipur could understand that war was knocking at the door. The evacuees from East Pakistan began to cross the border in a huge number for shelter and food etc. and large number of them reached Udaipur also. At the beginning, the local people could not understand what to do with the devastated people. So, the first duty of the local people there were to arrange food for the hungry refugees and the people came forward with cooked food which was distributed amongst the evacuees from East Pakistan. The then Chief Minister, Mr. Sachindra Lal Singh, in anticipation of the positive step from the Central Government, instructed the administrative machinery of the state specially the District and the Block administration to go ahead with the arrangement of relief works etc. The Block administration started its relief activities on a war-footing; camps were first opened in the Govt. buildings specially in the School & College buildings and Headmasters of Senior Basic Schools were made the Camp-in-Charges. This move, naturally, hampered the normal functioning of the education system in the state. The students of various Schools of Udaipur Town irrespective of their political allegiance came forward to take part in the procession under the leadership of Sri Bhattacharjee and his friends like Himangshu Chakraborty (now late), Mr. Utpalendu Bikash Saha (now the Hon'ble Justice of the Tripura High Court), Amal Datta (now, Head of the Vidyabhawan), Joypal Kanti Saha (at present, prominent businessman at Udaipur) which showed their solidarity towards the cause of the liberation movement of Bangladesh. Mr. Joypal Kumar Saha took the initiatives to organize the procession. The procession also raised slogans requesting the Government of India to accord recognition to the newly formed Govt. of Bangladesh.

Training Camp at Palatana under Udaipur

Mr. Bhattacharjee informs that a big training camp for the training of the freedom fighters
came up at Palatana, a deep forest by the south-west side of Udaipur. Captain. Sujat Ali, MNA (Member of National Army), was the Head of the Camp.

**Temporary Hospital at Dhwajanagar, the entry point of Udaipur**

A temporary Hospital for the treatment of the injured freedom fighters was established at Dhwajanagar, the entry point of Udaipur.

**Bangladesh Office at the Sporting Club at the north bank of Jagannath Tank:**

This office was opened by Mr. Abdullah-al-Harun Choudhury, Member of Provisional Assembly, and senior Vice President of Chittagong District Awami League. A number of leaders like Nurul Haque, M.N.A, Prof. Hanif, Kachi Saheb, Momin Ullah, leader of Noakhali District Student League and many workers of the party. Abdul Malek Ukil, a veteran leader of Awami League and who, later on, became the Speaker of Bangladesh National Parliament & Home Minister, took shelter at a small room of the Town Club with his two sons, four daughters and his younger brother, Anayet Ullah. It was too small a room for this big family but they somehow managed without any complaint. Mr. Bhattacharjee reports that he could not recall all the names because number was huge and he did not maintain diary. The relief work of the evacuees was maintained by the additional District Magistrate and Collector Mr. Sachchidananda Banerjee. He could maintain the relief work with ability but he could not succeed in stopping the corruption that crept up from the management of the refugees. Many people tried their luck and became rich corrupting the system.

**Bangladesh Mukti Sangram Sahayak Samiti** was formed at Udaipur with Kumud Bandhu Bhattacharjee (Meghu), ex member of the Tripura Territorial Assembly and a prominent Congress Leader, as the President of the Samiti. The Three vice presidents were: Ershad Ali Choudhury, the M.L.A from Udaipur, Paresh Chandra Bhattacharjee, prominent Advocate and veteran Educationist (the father of the Reporter), Abdullah-al- Harun, a well-known leader of Awami League from Chittagong. Captain Sujat Ali, the M.N.A, was selected as the Secretary of the Samiti. And the Cashier of the Samiti was Mrs. Sathi Bandyopadhyay, the wife of the Additional DM and Collector. She was a teacher of Udaipur Girls' Higher Secondary School. The Joint Secretary of the Samiti was Krishnanada Bhowmik, the Secretary of the Udaipur Merchant Association. A reference of Mrs. Majumder is found in the letter-head of the Samiti and she might be the wife of Mr. Nirmal Majumder, the Sub-Divisional police officer of Udaipur. The main activity of the Samiti was to run the Training Camp of the Muktiyoddhas at Palatana and also to run the Hospital at
Dwajanagar. The people of Udaipur subscribed open handed to the Samiti. After the conclusion of liberation war, an excess amount of Rs. 30000/- (Rs. Thirty thousand) was handed over to the Udaipur College Committee. Mr. Nurul Haque, M.N.A, used to arrange secret meetings on every night at 10pm at the Vivek Sangha with the leaders of liberation war. A young boy, named Bahadur, helped them in various ways; nobody was allowed to enter the club during the meeting and Bahadur worked as a gate-keeper and security guard.

Cultural programmes for boosting up of the refugees and the Muktiyoddhas were regularly organized at the Bichitra Hall of the Ramesh School, a very well-known school of not only Udaipur but of Tripura. The secretary of Rabindra Parishad, Mr. Nabadwip Das always took the leading part in organizing the cultural programmes with the active co-operation of Dhirendra Chandra Datta, the H.M of that School. A number of prominent Artists from East Bengal like Abdul Jabber, Apel Mehmud, Reza Karim, Swapna Ray and others who came there as refugees participated with their famous patriotic songs and thus inspired the people who were ready for the war.

The leaders of the C.P.I (Communist party of India) of that time like Sunil Krishna Das, Shyamal Choudhury and others organized a Samiti, namely, Shanti Sangsad and acted in favour of the liberation movement. They organized mass meeting. These meetings were addressed by the veteran leaders like ‘Ognikonnya’ Motia Choudhury, a well-known leader of the liberation war. Besides, national level leaders of the RSP (Revolutionary Socialist Party) like Tridip Choudhury, Makhan Pal and others came and delivered speeches supporting the liberation movement of Bangladesh. Senator Edward Kennedy of the USA visited the refugee camps at Udaipur and South Tripura. Kirit Bikram, the former ‘Maharaja’ of Tripura, also visited the refugee camps at Udaipur before leaving for Sabroom. The most interesting news is that the President and the Prime Minister of the Bangladesh Government in exile Syed Nazrul Islam and Tazuddin Ahmed respectively visited Udaipur in a secret mission on 15 October, 1971, and addressed a huge gathering of local and Bangladesh people without using microphone at the lawn of the Congress Bhawan. They urged the Bengalis to prepare for extreme fight against the Pak Military Junta. The Civil Defence Committee was formed to protect the interests of the citizen and of the refugees. So, Sri Bhattacharjee and his friend Himu were instrumental in organizing various programmes for the benefit of the Muktiyoddha and for the welfare of the refugees. It might be pertinent to mention here that Mr. Bhattacharjee and Shymal Choudhury were awarded with the Friends of Liberation War Honours by the Govt. of Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh for their remarkable contribution to the cause of liberation movement of Bangladesh on 1 October, 2013, at Dhaka.192

These types of activities were almost common throughout the state specially at the Sub-
Divisional Headquarters of the state of Tripura. The research scholar collected information by way of interviews from the eminent personalities of different subdivisions in this regard. Mr. Subal Rudra and Sahid Choudhury of Sonamura, Mr. Sudhan Das, Himanshu Ray and Dwijendra Chandra Majumder of Belonia, Pradip Sarkar and Sukhendu Bikash De of Khowai, Sudhir Das of Kamlpur, Sultan Ahmed and Md. Mafique of Kailashahar, Shri Amarendra Sharma of Dharmanagar, Md. Ayet Ali of Ampur, Brajagopal Ray, Dwijen Dey (both of the leaders of the Forward Block), Shri Anil Sarkar, Gautam Das, Samar Adya (the leaders of C.P.I(M)), Mr. Mukul Ghosh, a Police officer (now retired), Shri Jiten Pal, (Veteran Journalist),Mr. Shyamchand Baidya, Subrata Deb, both of Udaipur and so on. Mr. Subal Rudra in an interview at his resident at Melaghar on 3 January, 2012, asserted to the researcher that he had participated in the Muktiyuddha at Saldanadi (under Melaghar Sector). He told that instead of the sufferings of the general people due to the geographical location of Sonamura (just opposite to the Moynamati Cantonment situated at Comilla) and after being refugees in their own land (most of the people living along with the Indo-Pak border had to flee from their houses in the interior region to save their lives), the liberation movement received overwhelming support from residents of Sonamura. Mr. Rudra informs that Samar Choudhury, a veteran leader, worked hard for the welfare of the victims of the Muktiyuddha and also tells about the prominent training camps of the Muktiyuddhas situated at Melaghar, Matinagar and of the Secret Hospital situated at Jumer Dhepha (popularly known as the Garden of Habul Banerjee). Sahid Chowdhury informs that huge number of refugees from East Pakistan crossed the border for safe shelter at Sonamura and the refugees used Sonamura as a corridor to go to safer places of Tripura. He also informs that there was not a single School in the Sub-division which was not used for the shelter for the refugees and there was not a single private house in the sub-division which did not provide shelter to the refugees and also to their relatives who came over here to save their lives. Md. Mafique Miah, a ministerial staff of the state administration posted at Kailashahar under North Tripura, gives the information that each and every house at Kailashahar arranged shelter for the evacuees. He has the practical experiences of the relief and rehabilitation of the refugees as he was one of the camp incharges of the refugee camps. He informs about the outstanding performances of Maulana Abdul Latif of Kailashahar in managing the refugee problems at that sub-division. This veteran leader who was once a member of Electoral College, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and the Agriculture Minister of the State was very much secular minded and worked for Hindu-Muslim unity of the state; he in the period of liberation movement of Bangladesh worked hard for minimizing the sorrows of the devastated people coming from East Pakistan. A woman along with her 4 children came to Kailashahar along with huge number of refugees; he himself took initiative to arrange food and shelter at his own resident for atleast one month and then arranged a rented house for the family. For his re-
markable contribution for the liberation movement, the Govt. of Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh awarded him (posthumously) the *Friend of Bangladesh Liberation War Honour* which was received by his son, Sultan Ahmed of Kailashahar.\(^{193}\)

Almost same situation was prevalent in the other sub-divisions like Khowai, Kamalpur, Dharmnagar, Amarpur etc. But the case of Sadar Sub-division with Agartala as the state capital attracted the attention of not only national leaders but also of the international leaders. Agartala became the date-line for all news agencies throughout the world due to its strategic geographical location. As Lt. Gen. J F R Jacob reorts: "A team from Granada television headed by that very brave lady, Vanya Kewley, went from Agartala into East Pakistan and shot some revealing footage. We sent Geeta Mehta, along with the Granada crew, at the request of her father, Biju Patnaik."\(^{194}\)

It is mentioned earlier that the Bangladesh Government in exile was first formed at Agartala. All the military and civil leaders like Major K M Shafiullah, Major Zia, Major Khaled Musharraf, Shafayeat Jamil, Captain Rafique, Subid Ali Bhuiyan, Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, Motiya Choudhury, A.S.M, Abdul Rob, Abdul Kuddus Makhan, Shahjahan Siraj and many youths and student leaders are still popular in Tripura because of their activities for their liberation movement. Gautam Dash informs that a Transit Camp was opened at the initiative of the C.P.I (M) at the office of the Peoples’ Relief Committee near the Vivekananda Beyamagar (Vivekananda Sports Club), Agartala; mainly, the left-minded freedom fighters took shelter at the first instance and then they went to various training camps formed for the purpose of training for the freedom fighters. Salam Azad reports that there were very few leaders, intellectuals, writers and artists who took part in the freedom struggle of Bangladesh and yet had not gone to Tripura. Thirty five years ago, this small city and people became anxious to have current updated news from the broadcasting agencies like British Broadcasting corporation, Voice of America, for the happenings in Bangladesh. In fact, Agartala was getting prepared since the first day of March, 1971, as Salam Azad asserts. But this contention can't be taken as true; it is seen in the previous discussion that the people of Tripura was very much involved in any kind of developments in its neighbouring country specially East Pakistan because it is the mother land of almost 70 to 80% people of Tripura. Mr. Sachindra Lal Singh, the Chief Minister of Tripura, contributed a lot for this outstanding performance of the rebel leaders of East Pakistan for their liberation from the yoke of West Pakistan. He took the initiative to meet the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Gandhi, along with Awami League leaders like M.R. Siddique, Advocate Sirajul Haq, Abdul Malek Ukil and others. It was a very fruitful and successful meeting and helped the Government of India to take positive decision to help the Bangladesh movement. Sri Singh was very much active with regard to the liberation movement and on 17
April, 1971, he arranged a meeting of at least 100 prominent citizens of Agartala for a Central Committee to assist the freedom struggle of Bangladesh. A 15-member committee was formed with the CM as its Chairman. The other members of the committee were as follows: Sri Krishnadas Bhattacharjee (the Finance Minister), Mr. P K Das, Monoranjan Nath, Shukhamaoy Sengupta, U K Roy, MLA, Kartik Bhattacharjee, S K Choudhury, Principal, M B B College, H L Chattaejee, Principal, Women's College, Dr. Rathin Datta, Superintendent, GB and VM Hospital, Monoranjan Choudhury, Advocate, S Bhattacharjee, Chief of Communication and Tourism, M K Chakraborti, Deputy Director, Youth affairs, and K P Datta, Deputy Director, Education Department. The intention of the Government under Mr. Singh can easily be assessed from the magnitude of the committee. This committee appealed to the residents of Tripura specially of Agartala to remain cautious about activities of the unholy traders so that they could not maximize their profit at cost of the refugees. The Committee insisted to employ the technically qualified persons from refugee camps to respective jobs for resolving their monetary crises. The CM himself used to visit the refugee camps on almost every night after his usual routine work of the office.

On 21 April, the above committee met in meeting at the residence of the Chief Minister and after discussion they urged the intervention of the U.N.O to the Bangladesh affairs for its positive solution. Sri Sudhir Majumder, Aghore Deb, Kanan Goswami, Prasanta Ray and others spoke on the occasion. A number of intellectuals including the members of Chhatra Parishad, Government Employees' Federation, All Tripura Teachers' Association remained present in the meeting. In fact, the resident of the CM of Tripura became a "Mini Conference Hall" for the discussion and decision on the liberation movement of Bangladesh. For his excellent and historic contribution to the success of the Bangladesh Liberation Movement, the Govt. of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh awarded him (posthumously) the Friend of Liberation War Honour in 2012.

The Tripura Lekhak Sangha (the Writers Association of Tripura) was formed on 27 April at the Gandhi Ghat Smiti Gronthagar (the Gandhi Ghat Memorial Library) and arranged a discussion programme where a number of intellectuals from East Bengal took participation in the deliberation but their identities were not disclosed in the paper due to security reason. Dr. Kartik Lahidi presided over the meeting while Mr. Bhismadev Bhattacharjee, the General Secretary, anchored the programme.

Swadin Bangla Betar Kendra was shifted from Kalurghat, Chittagong Division, to Bakafa (South Tripura) and then to the Shalbagan, 5 km north of Agartala and the continuous war propaganda was aired from this temporary radio station which highly strengthened the Muktiyoddhas and the refugees' psychologically.
WOMEN OF TRIPURA IN ACTION FOR THE CAUSE OF LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN BANGLADESH

Women of Tripura remained not behind the curtain while people of East Pakistan had been facing brutal atrocities from their brethren of West Pakistan and their collaborators of the eastern part. It is surprising enough that in almost all cases the people of Tripura who were mostly Hindus by religion, had forgotten their bigotry while they offered their bed-rooms or shared the same room for the Muslim brethren coming from East Pakistan as refugees. Various sources especially Archival Records of Tripura and the Print Media provides with some historic events of the activities of women of Tripura. Instances may be cited here that mother Brahmin by cast came forward to act as a nurse during delivery of child by a Muslim woman. Priyabala Nag, a maid servant, acted as a nurse of a child. After one year while the child was demanded by the original parent Muslim by religion, Smt. Nag wept madly for the child.196

Gantantrik Nari Samiti in support of Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh

Condemning the massacre in East Pakistan by the Pakistani Military Junta, the Ganatantrik Nari Samiti of Tripura (the Democratic Women Forum) issued a Press Release on 3 April, 1971 and requested the Govt. of India to recognize the Swadin Bangla Government at the earliest. They also demanded all kinds of assistance to the Freedom Fighters who fought for the liberation of Bangladesh.197

Female Students in Action

The female students of different Schools and Colleges at Agartala observed 'Rosenara Diwas' at Agartala on 8th April, 1971. The meeting was presided over by Smt. Sheela Bhattacherjee. They appealed to the women in Tripura to wake up to the cause of Bangladesh with food, clothes and other assistances.198

SARA BHARAT MAHILA SAMMELAN : KUNJABAN BRANCH

The All India Women Conference, Kunjaban Branch, (Agartala) in a separate Press Release appealed to the Govt. of India for immediate recognition of Bangladesh and to arrange all kinds of help to the Muktiyoddhas.199
This body met in a meeting and resolved to appeal to the civilized Governments of the World to compel the Pak. Govt. to stop barbarous genocide of the civilians of Bangladesh.

**WOMEN’S BANGLA DESH REFUGEE RELIEF COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Joan Dias, Hon'ble Lady Governor of Tripura, was very much instrumental in forming a notable women's organization, namely, *WOMEN’S BANGLA-DESH REFUGEE RELIEF COMMITTEE* which worked tirelessly for the welfare of the refugees coming from East Pakistan i.e. Bangladesh. The main philosophy of the said organization is manifested in her speech given on 19th April, 1971.

"Friends,

I thank you for responding to my invitation to get together with a view to exploring ways and means by which the women in Tripura can be of some assistance to those who are undergoing great suffering in Bangla Desh. It is not sufficient that we merely express our sympathy for their cause. From the humanitarian point of view it is imperative that we examine in what way we relieve the sufferings of those who seek refuge in our territory. This problem will be tackled in a more comprehensive way by the Citizens' Committee which the Chief Minister is setting up. The Chief Minister has told me that he would like the women and social workers to assist. As you are aware, already about 20,000 refugees have entered our territory and a number of camps have been set up. Many more may be expected to come.

"Broadly speaking I would suggest that we confine our activity to spheres of relief which will not be covered by Citizens' Committee.

"Therefore, we need not canvas directly for the collection of funds. However, there would be no objection if we supplement the efforts of the Citizens' Committee by organizing such activities as having a raffle or arranging musical, dramatic or other shows, the proceeds of which could be sent either to the Citizens' Relief Committee or be utilized for some other purposes.

"Secondly, though Govt. is arranging for food and shelter to the refugees I have found in the camps that I recently visited that some of the refugees, particularly women and children will need some clothing and other essential articles like soap etc. We could, therefore, make an appeal to the public and commercial firms of this territory to donate items of clothing, toilet requisites, medi-
"Thirdly, I think that we should engage ourselves in the activity of visiting some of these camps, contacting the women and children there and identifying any problem which it is within our resources to solve.

"I, therefore, suggest that we may initially confine ourselves to these three broad spheres of activity. For this purpose, it would, I think, be useful to have 2 or 3 committees. One committee could be for visiting camps etc; the second for the collection, handling and distribution of clothing and other items; the third committee for organizing raffles, concerts etc. We can decide today how these committees should be formed. They should be given the power to co-opt and enlist other workers and be able to tell the women who offer help in what way they could be most useful.

"The General Committee which may consist of more or less of the members who are here present today and with powers to co-opt may meet periodically to review the work of the Sub-Committees. The Chairman of the General Committee as well as the Chairman of the Sub-Committees could also meet frequently to decide matters of policy etc.

"Finally, I would appeal to all to engage themselves in this humanitarian task with a sense of declaration and in a united manner." 201

The following distinguished ladies of Agartala attended a meeting of the Committee held on 5th May, 1971. 202

1) Srimati J. Dias,
2) Smt. O. Saigal,
3) Dr. (Mrs.) N. Chatterjee,
4) Smt. Sanghamtra Chatterjee,
5) ,, Anima Majumder,
6) ,, Renuka Chakraborty, MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly).
7) ,, Basana Chakraborty,
8) ,, Anu Datta,
9) Dr.(Mrs.) Swapna Dutta,
10) Smt. Anurupa Mukherjee,
11) ,, Pratima Basak,
12) Sister Eva,
13) Sister Maria,
14) Smt. Bina Gon Choudhury,
15) ,, Sunila Dev,
16) ,, Boisi Kipgen,
17) ,, P. Lyngdoh,
18) ,, I. P. Doss,
19) ,, Arpita Ganguly,
20) ,, Prativa Datta Gupta,
21) ,, Santi Dhar,
22) ,, Chitra Deb.

From the Minutes of the said meeting it is observed that the Committee is very much active in providing relief to the refugees coming from Bangladesh or residing in the camps in Tripura:

The Sub-Committee on Raffles was able to sell 3000 tickets, each for Re. 1/-, within a very short period. Srimati Kalia alone had sold nearly 2500 Raffle Tickets and deserved congratulations. Shrimati Dias thanked all other members who had taken great pains to sell tickets. The Committee decided to hold a draw of lucky numbers on 7th May at 5pm in the Officers' Club. The three prizes would be a Cycle, a Wrist-watch, and a Transistor. The left-out fund would be utilized for the welfare of the refugees according to Smt. Joan Dias. Smt. Dias announced that members of
the Committee would visit Nabagram and Lankamura Camps on their next visit.\textsuperscript{203}

It is also revealed from the minutes that the Visiting Sub-Committee was regularly visiting the camps. Some important camps visited by them during the preceding week were Kamalghat, Taltala, Madhuban, Narasingarh and Mohanpur. The Visiting Committee identified some important problems of the camps for immediate solution:-

i) Provision of good drinking water. In Bardwali School there was an inadequate water supply. The Chairman, Shrimati Dias, was informed of this and arranged a supply of 1000 gallons of water in the camps everyday. This was done within 24 hours.

ii) Construction of Latrines with some privacy,

iii) Lack of accommodation in the Narasingarh Camp where more than 100 people were staying in the veranda of the Polytechnic Institute-building.

iv) Need for more regular visits of medical units to camps,

v) Quick registration of the inmates in camps,

vi) Immediate reconstruction of the cook-shed at the Madhuban camp,

vii) The inmates of the Taltala camp were still to be vaccinated and inoculated,

It is seen that Shrimati Dias, Chairman, visited the two camps at Bani Vidhyapith and Bardwali School on 30th April, 1971, accompanied by Shrimati Renuka Chakraborty, Basana Chakraborty, Shrimati Gupta and Shrimati Anu Mukharji. During the visit, some clothes, biscuits, soaps etc. were distributed to the most deserving cases amongst the inmates of the camps. The Chairman thanked Shrimati Anu Mukherji for the collections made by her committee.

Dr. (Shrimati) Swapna Dutta was entrusted to sort out various relief materials received through Dr. Rathin Dutta from Indian Red Cross. Shrimati Sunila Deb had collected some old papers for sale for the benefit of the refugees. On the suggestion of Shrimati Karabi Debarman, the following lady-members were co-opted for door to door collection of clothing, toilet requisites etc. for the evacuees:

i) Smt. Deepti Roychoudhury -Jt. Secretary, AIWC Kunjaban Branch,
The proceedings of the next meeting held on 24th May, 1971, show the eagerness of the Women's Committee to arrange welfare for the refugees as far as practicable. Mrs. Kalia, an Hon'ble member of the Committee, had given her effort to collect the prizes from the local firms for raffle and thus saved at least Rs. 500/- for other expenses to be involved for the refugees. The Women's Committee had the credit of drawing the attention of the Delhi International Women's Committee which affirmed to send their collections in the form of cash or kind for distribution amongst the evacuees coming from Bangladesh. The Women's Committee was very much conscious about the health status of the refugee camps. So, the Committee considered it essential to provide the camps with First Aid Box including necessary medicines for headache, diarrhea etc. On the visiting report of the Badharghat Junior Basic School camp submitted by Smt. Sanghamitra Chatterji, the Committee had drawn the attention of the Chief Secretary (the CS) of the State to appoint Camp Commandant to each Camp so that the relief works could be operated smoothly. The CS expressed his inability to appoint Camp Commandant for each of the Camps due to huge number of Camps numbering more than 400 at that point of time. He, however, assured that he would see that the plight of the Camps in question would be looked into.

The CS informed that 2 Medical Mobile Vans had arrived; six Ambulances were expected shortly and Special Medical Tents were being put up to accommodate patients. From the Minutes it is known that the President of the Committee along with other members visited Lankamura and Nabagram Camps. "From the experience it was felt that an all out effort should be made to obtain garments for children of the age group 8 to 12. For this purpose it was decided that a sum of Rs. 500/- out of the cash balance of Rs. 3172/-should be handed over to Shrimati Mehta. She would purchase cloth at wholesale rate and employ local women for making up the required garments for the children."
In the meeting, a programme for visiting of Camps was finalized as per schedule mentioned below:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name of the Camps</th>
<th>Name of the Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. 5. 71</td>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Narasingarh</td>
<td>Smt. Madhabika Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, Deepti Roychoudhury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, Sunata Sinha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Three Chairmen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. 5. 71</td>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Debipur</td>
<td>Smt. Saroj Mehta,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, V.K. Kalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sister Eva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Three Chairmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 6. 71</td>
<td>8-30 am</td>
<td>Udaipur</td>
<td>Smt. Renuka Chakraborty, MLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, Anurupa Mukherjee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, Nilima Sengupta,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, Saroj Mehta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,, Sanghamitra Chatterji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sister Eva.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The minutes inform us that it had some branches, namely, *Bamutia Mahila Tran Committee* through which the Committee worked smoothly.\(^{205}\)

The Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the *Women’s Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee* held on 15. 6. 71 show that the activities of the Committee were increasing day by day for the benefit of the evacuees from Bangladesh. Point no. 3 of the Minutes reveals that the Committee had received two donations of Rs. 5,000/- each from the *Delhi International Women's Committee* for refugees in India. Moreover, the organizer (Tripur Shilpi Sandhani) of the *Variety Entertainment* at Bardwali School had on 06.06.71 donated Rs. 75/- plus Rs. 20/- contributed by Smt. Dias at the Show. Point no. 5 of the Minutes confirms the visit of the Team to the Chandrapur Camp at Udaipur on 3. 6. 71. The President had visited the Maternity Ward of the V.M. Hospital at Agartala to observe the condition of the refugee patients and arranged to distribute Sarees, Baby napkins and towels to the distressed female patient through Smt. Anu Datta.

Point no. 7 of the Minutes reveals the plight of the incoming refugees at the *Durgabari Transit Camp*. The Govt. arrangement for relief was very much insufficient; so, the Committee decided to sanction Rs. 300/- at the first instance and was placed at the disposal of Dr.(Mrs.) Chatterjee for supplying *Gur, Chira, Bananas* etc. as additional relief to the refugees. It was also decided that old clothes might be collected for distribution to the refugees in the Transit Camp at Durgabari through the kind offices of Mrs. N. Chatterji and her Band of Girl Guides who were already in service of the refugees at Durgabari.

To collect more clothes in cheap rate, the Committee decided to procure the article from Calcutta (Point no. 8). Smt. Anurupa Mukherjee had shouldered the responsibility of purchasing the clothes from Calcutta without charging her fair and cost of transportation as this would be borne by *Jamair* as a gesture of sympathy for the refugees (Point no. 9). Mrs. Dias acknowledged the invaluable help she received from Mr. Roy for organizing visits to camps, buying clothes & so forth (Point no.10). We come to know from Point no. 11 of the Minutes that the *Mariammagar Catholic Mission* had been doing commendable job by distributing clothes, vitamin tablets etc. to various camps; on the contrary, they had been donating that type of articles to the committee for the same purpose. That was possible due to Sister Maria and Sister Eva of that Mission who were also members of the Women's Committee. It is encouraging fact that the number of members of the Committee was increasing day by day and the number was raised from 22 to 35 in the fifth Meeting.\(^{206}\)
Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Committee reveal that in the scarcity of cash, the President herself advanced a sum of Rs. 1,566.50 to the Committee from her own account (Point no. 3). The President accompanied by Smt. Renuka Chakraborty, Smt. Sanghamitra Chatterji and Anu Datta visited Chandrapur Refugee Camp at Udaipur on 27. 6. 71 and distributed the following clothes (point no.4):

- Sarees .........................73,
- Dhuties.................114,
- Frock sets...................50,
- Boys' Shirts...............42,
- Babies' Towels...........30,

Point no. 7 of the Minutes gives a fantastic information about extending helping hand to the VM Hospital (now IGM) to help the under-staffed Children's Ward in maintaining cleanliness, as well as to render such assistance as might be asked for by the staff. On the report of Smt. Anu Datta who used to visit the Children's Ward of VM Hospital, it was decided to send the members daily at 10-30am according to the following programme for the next two weeks:

1. Smt. Nilima Sengupta...................... Every Monday,
2. ,, Joan Dias and Sunila Deb... ,, Tuesday,
3. ,, Amiya Chakraborty............. ,, Wednesday
4. Dr. (Mrs.) N Chatterji ............... ,, Thursday,
5. Smt. Pratima Basak ............... ,, Friday,
6. ,, Renuka Chakraborty ........ ,, Saturday.

Minutes of the SEVENTH Meeting of the Committee held on 12. 7. 71 provide us with more information about the activities of the Women's Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee. Point no. 5 confirms that the Committee spent Rs. 253.50 for purchasing Children's garments for distribution to the Camps to be visited on 14. 7. 71. Point 6 of the Minutes reveals that the International
Women's Committee, Delhi, had sent to the Relief Committee the following articles:-

Sarees, ......................... 1800 nos.

Dhoties, ............................. 1000 nos.

The organization also intimated that it would send Children's garments immediately.

Point no 7 shows that the President accompanied by Dr. Neera Chatterji, Smt. Sunila Deb and Smt. Pratima Basak visited Barjala Camp "B" on 30. 6.71 and the President accompanied by Smt. Renuka Chakraborty, Smt. Nilima Sengupta and Amiya Chakraborty visited Barjala Camp "C" on 7. 7. 71. The following clothes were distributed in these two Camps:-

**Camp---"B"**

Sarees ............................. 50

Dhotis ............................. 43

Frock sets .......................... 50

Boys' Shirts ........................ 34

Blankets ............................ 20

Boys' Pants ..........................15

Dhuries ..............................15

**Camp---- "C"**

Sarees .............................. 100,

Dhotis .............................. 100,

Frock sets .......................... 100,

Boys' shirts ........................ 100,
Boys' pants .................... 02,

Babies' Frocks with napkins ...... 25,

Babies Towels .................. 25,

Blankets ....................... 71,

Durries.......................... 03,

Visit to V.M. Hospital and distribution of Clothes

It is known from point no. 8 of the Minutes that the President while visiting the Children's and the Maternity Ward of V.M. Hospital on 29. 6. 71 observed that some refugee women and babies badly needed clothes; so, 8 Sarees, 7 napkins, and one baby frock were distributed to them through Smt. Anu Datta on 30. 6. 71.

On the report of Smt. Basana Chakraborty that the Members of a refugee family who had arrived from Chittagong and were staying in the hostel of the Craft Teachers' Training Institute at Agartala urgently needed some clothes, the President arranged to send 6 Sarees and 2 Dhoties to the Hostel through the Principal of the Institution (point no.9). During her visit to the Children's Ward of the VM Hospital Smt. Joan Dias, the President of the Committee, consulted Dr. G. Chakraborty about administering Vitamin tablets on the children and on his advice 3000 Vitamin tablets that were collected by the Committee were handed over to the said Doctor for the refugee children under treatment there (point no. 10). A new chart was prepared for visit to the Children's Ward of the VM Hospital as per following schedule (point no. 11) :-

On every Monday ........... Smt. Nilima Sengupta.

Tuesday --- Mrs. Dias & Smt. Mehta.

,, ,, Wednesday.......... Smt. Amiya Chakraborty,

,, ,, Thursday ............ Dr. (Mrs.) N. Chatterji &

,, ,,, Friday ............... Smt. Sunila Deb,

Saturday Smt. Pratima Basak,

Point no. 12 of the Minutes reveals that the Committee had decided to visit the Kathaltali Camp (Under Sadar Sub-division) on 14. 7. 71 and another Camp on 22. 7. 71 along with some members of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. The Committee decided to introduce 'Dhalia' (i.e. broken wheat) at the Transit Camp at Durgabari as well as at the Camp at the C.T. T.I (Craft Teacher's Training Institute) Hostel at Agartala. It had also taken initiative to increase the man-power in the Children's Ward of the VM Hospital by requesting Dr. Swapna Dutt to engage some of the Christian Nursing Sisters who had recently come to Agartala and were working at G.B. Hospital (point no. 13 & 14).

Minutes of the EIGHTH Meeting the WOMEN'S BANGLADESH REFUGEE RELIEF COMMITTEE held on 26. 7. 71

Point no. 2:- 'On 13. 7. 71 the President accompanied by Shrimati Mehta visited V. M. Hospital and distributed 8 Sarees and 8 Babies Frocks with napkins to the refugee women and babies there'. Point no. 3:- On 14. 7. 71 the President accompanied by Shrimati Kalia, Sister Eva, Sister Maria and two ladies from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Dr. Mukhduma Nargis and Mustari Shafi, visited Kathaltali Camp and distributed the following :-

Dhoties.........................58

Lungis.........................42,

Saries..........................100,

Frock Sets.......................87,

Boy's Shirts....................59'

Ganjees.........................20,

Boys' Pants.....................33,

Babies’ Frocks with napkins...25,

Babies’ Towels...............25,

Biscuits.........................560 pieces.
Point no. 4: On 18. 7. 71, The Committee received the following from the Delhi International Women's Committee:

- Frocks for Girls ………… 60 dozen,
- Shirts …………………….. 40 dozen,
- Shorts …………………… 40 dozen.

A letter of thanks and acknowledgement was sent to that Delhi Committee.

Point No. 5: On 20. 7. 71 the President accompanied by Shrimati Mehta visited V. M. Hospital and distributed the following to the refugee patients:

- Sarees ………………….. 20,
- Babies' Frocks with napkins.. 12,
- Nets ……………………… 17,
- Chaddars (old)…………… 34,

Point no. 6: On 21. 7. 71 the President and Shrimati Renuka Chakraborty visited the Kanchannagar refugee camp at Belonia and distributed the following clothes to the refugees:

- Sarees………………. 150,
- Towels for Babies…… 50,
- Dhuties for Widows ….. 50,
- Lungies………………. 100,
- Ganjees ……………….. 100,
- Girls’ Frock sets…… 144,
- Boys’ Banian…………… 100,
Point no.7:- On 23. 7. 71 the President accompanied by Shrimati Mehta and Dr. Swapna Dutt visited Barjala Refugee Camp under Sadar and distributed the following clothes to the refugees of Barjala as well as Sachindranagar colony:-

Sarees .........................152,

Dhoties......................... 50,

Lungis .........................122,

Gangies.........................122,

Girls Frocks....................100,

Boys' Banian....................100,

Towels for Babies............. 50,

Point. No. 10:- This reveals that Shrimati Renuka Chakraborty had replaced the present President as Smt. Dias, the present President, would leave the State of Tripura shortly.209

Distribution of Clothes amongst the Refugees

On 16 June, 1971, on behalf of the Women's Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee 400 nos. pieces of new clothes & garments were distributed amongst the Refugees who stayed at local Kalabagan Refugee Camp. Smt. Joan Dias herself was present on that occasion.210

With the transfer of the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. A. L. Dias, Lady Governor Mrs. Joan Dias also left the state and Lady Governor Mrs. Uma Prasad stepped in and the works of the Women's Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee went on unabated. It is seen that the said committee gave away huge numbers of relief materials to the refugees leaving in the various camps. For example, the committee distributed the following relief materials to the West Noabadi refugee camp (at the outskirts of Agartala) on 4 October, 1971:211

Shirts--------------------------------------------------------------------------------30;

Lungis--------------------------------------------------------------------------------120;
Another example may be cited here; the said committee under its president Srimati Uma Prasad distributed the following materials to the refugees at the Amtali refugee camp situated at the southern part of Agartala:

- Sarees: 500
- Dhutis: 200
- Banians: 200

**Smt. Renu Chakraborty as an Hon’ble Member of T.L.A**

The only Lady Member of the Tripura Legislative Assembly, Smt. Chakraborty was very much concerned about the unprecedented developments that were going on in East Pakistan. On March 29, 1971, while the members were discussing the Statement of the Chief Minister on the situation in East Bengal i.e. in Bangladesh, Smt. Chakraborty was not sitting idle in the House. She participated spontaneously in the discussion; condemned the Pak Junta for barbaric atrocities on the unarmed and fleeing Bengalis. She vehemently mentioned that liberation movement in East Bengal stirred the people of Tripura and the people of Tripura were very much hurt and shocked. She appealed to the big powers of the World and the Government of India through the Legislative Assembly to approach to the U.N.O for its intervention in the grave situation of Pakistan and to recognize the Government of Bangladesh. She wished the victory of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the democratic & rebellious Leader of Bangladesh.²¹²

On the resolution moved by the Chief Minister Shri Sachindra Lal Singh on 31 March, 1971, requesting the Government of India to recognize the newly formed Government of Bangla Desh headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and extend all kinds of help to the people of Bangla Desh in their struggle for freedom, Smt. Chakraborty wholeheartedly supported the resolution. She requested the House to draw the attention of the Prime Minister of India to take active role in
respect of Bangladesh. She expressed her goodwill to the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. 213

On private members' resolution moved by a group of members under Shri Promode Ranjan Dasgupta to provide dry ration to the evacuees residing outside the camp, some cash doll to the refugees residing in the camp, separate accommodation for unattached children etc. Smt. Chakraborty stood for the resolution and supported her argument with a brilliant speech. She was very much emotional while she crossed her time-limit set by Speaker and took more than her scheduled time to express her solidarity towards Bangladesh. 214

For obvious reason, it is not possible to review all the activities of the mothers and sisters of Tripura who did their best for the benefit of the liberation movement. There are lakhs of unsung persons of Tripura (both men & women) whose contributions can't be forgotten in the light of the freedom movement of Bangladesh.

Unsung sections of the society and the liberation movement

The following are the most remarkable aspects of the response of the unsung sections of the society to the liberation movement of Bangladesh. The peasants of the Dharmanagar Sub-division met in a meeting at the Congress Bhawan at Dharmanagar to request the Government of India to accord recognition to the Bangladesh Government in exile. Moreover, they demanded to the Government to set up shelters for the refugees at the northern side of the subdivision for the safety, security and proper health care of the refugees. The Tripura Branch of the Andaman-deported political prisoners met in a meeting on 16 May for requesting the Prime Minister of India to recognize the Bangladesh Government in exile at the earliest possible time. They also denounced the genocide committed in East Pakistan by the Pak Junta. On 11 August, 1971, the prisoners of the Central Jail at Agartala in an unprecedented move refused to take their lunch in protest of the fake trial of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was then under custody of the Pak Government. They also decided to hand Rs. 350/ (the value of their lunch on that day) over to the Chief Minister on the 15 August for the help of the devastated people of Bangladesh. A business organization popularly known as the Mitterson & Company (Agartala) gave away a Transister to a camp of the Muktiyoddhas so that the freedom fighters could be acquainted with on-going developments of the liberation movement. The Civil Accounts'Association, Assam Circle, stationed at Agartala, arranged bed sheets and Lungis for the Muktiyoddhas who were undergoing training in Tripura. The Ananda Margis in the month of May (1971) organized at least two benevolent programmes; first was the distribution of 1000 powrotis to the refugees at the Children
parks at Agartala on 10 May on the eve of half-century birth centenary of Sri Sri Ananda Murtiji and second was the organization of Relief camp at Boxanagar under Sonamura sub-division on and from 12 May. The main aim of this camp was to distribute dry & cooked food to the devastated refugees. Moreover, one medical-care camp was also opened to provide medical care to the destitutes.215

Notes & References

1. Lok Sabha Debates (5TH SERIES), Vol. II, May 24 to June 4, 1971, p. 185
6. ibid, Vol.no.III, (June7 to 18)1971, pp.122-123
7. loc. cit.
8. The Dainik Sambad, 16, April, 1971.
9. ibid. 21, April. 1971.
10. Chakraborty, Kalyanbrata (ed), "Apare Akattor", (in Bengali) Protyasha Prokashan, Agartala, Jan.1997, p.117.; also see the Speech of Dasharath Deb, MP, LokSabha where he mentioned that after the addition of the new population i.e. the refugees, the prices of essential commodities had gone up and these commodities are not available and practically the economy of the State had been collapsed as cited in the Lok Sabha Debates, 5th Series, Vol. II, op. cit. p. 222-223
12. Ray, Samiran (ed) - Tathya Panji Abong Nirdeshika ( in Bengali), Tripura Darpan, 2003;
14. loc. cit.
15. ibid.,
17. ibid., p. 217
19. ibid.,
20. ibid.,
24. ibid.,
25. ibid.,
26. ibid.,
27. ibid.,
28. ibid.,
29. ibid.,

31. ibid.,

32. ibid.,

33. ibid.,


35. ibid.,

36. ibid.,


38. ibid.,

39. ibid.,

40. ibid.,

41. ibid.,

42. ibid.,

43. ibid.,

44. ibid.,

45. ibid.,

46. ibid.,

47. ibid.,

49. ibid.,

50. ibid.,

51. ibid.,

52. ibid.,

53. ibid.,

54. ibid.,


56. ibid.,

57. ibid.,

58. ibid.,


60. ibid, pp. 62-75


62. ibid.

63. The *Dainik Sambad*, Agartala 30th April, 1971


65. ibid, p. 16

66. ibid, p. 17

67. ibid, p. 19.

69. ibid.

70. The *Dainik Sambad*, 4 June, 1971.

71. ibid, 17 June, 1971.

72. ibid. 12 December, 1971.

73. The *Dainik Sambad*, 30 April, 1971

74. ibid.

75. The *Dainik Sambad*, 6 May, 1971

76. The *Dainik Sambad*, 11th April, 1971 also see Sukumar Biswas, op. cit, p. 196.


78. ibid, p. 223.

79. ibid, p. 166.

80. ibid, p. 201.

81. ibid, p. 195.

82. ibid, p. 196

83. The *Dainik Sambad*, 14 April, 1971

84. The *Dainik Sambad*, 4 May, 1971

85. ibid.

86. ibid, 7 May, 1971.

87. ibid, 12 & 14 May, 1971.
88. The Saptahik Samachar, 30 May, 1971.

89. The Dainik Sambad, 12 May, 1971.

90. ibid. 13 August, 1971.

91. The Assam Tribune, 1 April, 1971.

92. ibid.

93. The Assam Tribune, 2 April, 1971.

94. ibid.

95. ibid.

96. ibid.

97. The Assam Tribune, 17 April, 1971

98. ibid. 8 April, 1971.

99. Oral interview with Robin Sengupta at his residence at Agartala after receipt of the Friends of Liberation War Honour on 3 November, 2013 at 6.00 p.m. He is so generous that he had handed over the xerox copies the certificates and a valuable photograph of the Honour giving ceremony.

100. The Dainik Sambad, 29 October, 2000, in the Book-review section in page-5. Dr. Md. Hannan also reviewed the same book very enthusiastically and praised Sri Robin Sengupta saying that he had fulfilled a great task for Liberation War of Bangladesh and for future generation of the Bengali nation, vide the Dainik Janakantha, Bijoy Diwas edition, 16 December, 2000.


102. Azad, Dr. Abul, -- Muktiyuddhe Tripurar Sambad Patrer Bhumika (Role Newspapers of in the Liberation Movement), Writers' Foundation, Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2004, p. 9 (Introduction). Dr. Azad evaluates the role of News papers published from Tripura specially
from Agartala during the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. We find almost the same evaluation of the Newspapers published from Tripura in the writings of Kalyan Chakraborti (a prominent press reporter attached to the Statesman and the editor of Apare Akattar published from Agartala in 1997 by Protyasha Prokashan and dedicated to the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh; More account is available in Haroon Habib's \textit{Muktiyuddha: Dateline Agartala}, Sahitya Prokashani, Dhaka, 1992.


104. ibid., pp. 26-27.

105. ibid., pp. 29-30,

106. ibid., pp. 30-32,

107. ibid., p. 32.


111. Azad, Dr. Abul, ibid. pp. 33-42.

112. Biswas, Sukumar (ed.), Interview of Prof. Mihir Deb, op. cit. p. 75.


114. Dr. Abul Azad, ibid. p. 46.

115 to 122, Dr. Abul Azad, ibid. pp.47-84.

124. ibid.


126. The *Dainik Sambad*, 10 March, 1971. It is observed that the Press in Tripura are very much eager to publish the news of the political developments in Pakistan.


128. ibid. 29 March, 1971

129. ibid. 30 March, 1971. This historical event finds its proper place in various print media. The *Tripura Weekly*, Agartala, 31 March, 1971, edited by Sri Biresh Chakraborty, had given priority to that event. It is reported that in that gathering, Mr. Md. Ekbal Aashrafi, a student leader of eastern Bengal, gave a thrilling speech describing the recent developments in East Pakistan.

130 to 132, ibid. 1 April, 1971.

133 to 134, ibid. 2 April, 1971.

135. ibid. 4 April, 1971.

136 ibid, 6 April, 1971.

137 to 138, ibid. 8 April, 1971.

139 to 141, ibid. 9 April, 1971.

142. The *Saptahik Samacher*, 02 May, 1971.

143. The *Dainik Sambad*, 02 May, 1971.

144. ibid 17 May, 1971.
145. ibid 21 May, 1971.

146. ibid 30 May, 1971

147. ibid 01 June, 1971.


149. ibid 14 July, 1971.


151. ibid. 04 August, 1971.

152. ibid. 06 August, 1971.

153. The Tripura Weekly, 01 Sept.1971. The referred interview is taken by the Scholar on 18th January, 2009, at his Resident at College Tilla, Agartala, Sri Debroy is now working as a School Teacher under the Govt. of Tripura.


156. ibid.


158. loc. cit.


161. The Dainik Sambad, Agartala, 10 June, & 06 July, 1971.

163. ibid. p. 47.


166. Interview with Dr. S B Datta at his Agartala Chamber on 2 Jan. 2010. Also, vide the *Dainik Jankantha*, a daily published from Dhaka, 7 May, 2002. (The Paper cutting of the *Dainik Jankantha* is given to the researcher by Dr. Datta). For detailed account see Rokeya Choudhury, *Akattorer Ghurnabortey Charkonnya*, Samragni Prokashani, Dhaka, 2001,

167. A write-up of Dr. Nilmani Debbrma, as cited in the *Souvenir, Bangladesh Mukti Utsava*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 3-5 May, 2002, edited by Dr. Mohammed Samad, on behalf of the Muktijuddha Utsava, Dhaka Bangladesh Organizing Committee, pp. 9-12.

168. Interview of Dr. H S Raychoudhury with Sukumar Biswas (ed.) op. cit. 63-72.

169. ibid. and Oral interview of Robin Sengupta at his residence at Agartala on on 16 December, 2013.

170. ibid.

171. ibid.


175. Official record collected from the First Secretary and Head of Mission, Mr. Obaidur Rahman,
Bangladesh Visa Office, Agartala, on 16 December, 2013.


179. ibid. April, 2, 1971.

180. ibid. May, 4, 1971;


185. Bhattacharjee, Swapan, in his write-up on *The Liberation Movement and Udaipur*; op. cit. also see the Dainik Sambad, 16 Sept. 1971.

186. A write-up of Jitendra Choudhury, a veteran leader and Minister, Tripura & coming from Sabroom as cited the *Souvenir, Bangladesh Muktiyndda Utsava*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, op. cit. pp. 13-16. And oral interview with Bhanulal Saha, who was a teacher at Sabroom during the movement period at his Residential Quarters at Agartala on 5 October, 2012. (He is now the Minister of Higher Education etc. department).

187. Bhattacharjee, Swapan, in a write-up, op. cit.

188. ibid.

189. ibid.

190. ibid. and many other sources like Samar Adya, a prominent student leader of that time and
Tukku Mia, former Head Master of Kadai Murah Higher Secondary School, Bishalgarh.


192. ibid, and Oral Interview with Shyamal Choudhury, a recipient of the *Friend of Liberation War Honour* on 16 December, 2013, at the Bangladesh Visa Office, Agartala.


196. An Article by Bikach Choudhury as cited in Biswas, Sukumar (ed), op. cit. p. 61; also, see The *Dainik Sambad*, 4 April, 1971.

198. ibid, 9 April, 1971.

199. ibid, 11 April, 1971.

200. ibid, 24 April, 1971.

201. The State Archives, Govt. of Tripura, Agartala, File no. WBDGCC, B--388, S-15, 1971, Name of the File : *Women's Bangladesh Refugee Relief Committee*.

202. ibid,

203. ibid, The Activities of the Women's Committee finds its proper place in the print media. The *Dainik Sambad*, 25 April, 29 April, 7 May, 1971 and the *Saptahik Samachar*, 25 April, 1
May, 1971 arrange well coverage to this news.

204. The State Archives, Govt. of Tripura, Agartala, File no. WBDRCC, B-- 388, S-15, 1971, op. cit.

205. ibid,

206. ibid,

207. ibid,

208. ibid,

209. ibid,


213. ibid. 31 March, 1971, pp-41-42.
