Chapter - VI

Impact of Liberation Movement
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The impact of the liberation movement in Tripura particularly in the field of transport and communication, suffering of the people in the border regions of Tripura like Agartala, Sonamura, Belonia, Khowai, Kailashahar, Kamalpur, Dharmanagar etc., education of Tripura, economy of the State, culture and literature, change in the polity--- growth of extremist movement, Indo-Bangladesh relations with special reference to Tripura have been dealt with in detail as far as practicable.

Transport and Communication

The miserable condition of surface communication of Tripura is observed from Mr. Amiya Deb Roy, (now late) Secretary, Tripura State Communication Committee, Agartala, (Estd. 1953) and Brigadier Jagdev Singh, AVSM, as well as Chief Engineer. Mr. Deb Roy had knocked all possible corners of the Government of India as well as Tripura with a request to improve the communication system of Tripura; he also arranged publication of news in national newspapers like the Ananda Bazar, the Handustan Statndard, the Statesman, the Hindustan Times, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, the Jugantar etc. In a letter on the subject: Transport, addressed to the Chief Commissioner, Tripura, Agartala (dated, Agartala, the 28 June, 1955), Mr. Deb Roy claims: "While reviewing the facts, it seems that Governments in both the State and Centre still do not realize 'loss of East Bengal' on the partition of India, had directly hit Tripura State in losing her all the communication avenues and it was therefore, Government had have the moral duty to restore the transport facilities in Tripura within a shortest possible time." In the next month, on 14 July, 1955, and after three years on 21 July, 1958, he wrote letters to Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, on the same issue for drawing the attention of the supreme authority of India for quick solution of the problem. An important line of the second letter runs thus: "We feel it necessary to invite your kind attention once again in the matter of transport bottle-necks of Tripura, one of the Union Territories practically situated in the pocket of East Pakistan." Another important letter is traced which was written to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, on 23 Sept. 1966, the first line of the letter runs in the way: "It would not be out of place to mention here that we in the eastern region are not at all happy over the transport system that has been prevailing since last over a decade." Brigadier Singh informs: All movements beyond Dharmanagar railhead, the Tripura gate towards Assam, were by road, a distance of about 200 kilometers up to Agartala. It was a one-
way, narrow, asphalted road that every now and then ran through villages, clumps of trees, thick undergrowth, low ranges of hills running north-south, over numerous streams and water courses with weak bridges. The road had to be broadened over selected stretches, the undergrowth cleared for better visibility, bridges strengthened, curves eased to enable heavy vehicles to negotiate them. A task force of Border Road Organization was allotted this job. Most of the other roads were unmetalled and the movement over them was slow. Brigadier Singh continues to inform that the roads were required to the bases of these divisions and thence to the objectives in East Pakistan. The Gumti (locally Gomati) was about 300 feet wide, muddy, and flowed sluggishly. Since the weight of the Corps offensive was astride this river, it had to be bridged at a number of places. But the Border Road Organization did not possess the bridging equipment. On the other hand, for the construction of almost 400 km of road, heavy earth-moving equipment had to be dismantled and moved down by the engineer units by road or rail from Gauhati (now Guwahati) / Tezpur to Dharmanagar, and thence by road to the following locations and then resembled at site. Brigadier Singh gives the information about Amarpur and Kakraban. The weak bridges at Udaipur, Amarpur and Kakraban were barely capable of taking jeeps; most traffic moved on ferries which operated alongside these bridges. Neither the bridges nor the ferries could take continuous heavy traffic of vehicles carrying troops to operational locations to stock up the maintenance areas. The existing bridges could not take vehicles even of laden weight of 4 to 5 tons. So, in the face of urgent necessity, the development of road surface communication in Tripura was started on a war footing. Brigadier Singh tells that hundreds of thousands of refugees were engaged to construct roads, build boats, and then put bridges on those boats, to dig piles into the soil and construct bridges on them. The time was limited; so, it was decided to train the persons responsible for the construction work and training camp was established at Amarpur in South Tripura.

Interview conducted on this matter confirms that huge construction of roadways had began on war footing in various parts of Tripura to facilitate the transport of war materials like arms & ammunitions, food supply for the Border Security Force (BSF), Para Military, Mukti-Fouz, Army etc. Brigadier Jagdev Singh, AVSM, remarked that the State Public Works Department of Tripura (PWD) could not help the Army in developing the surface connection due to their very busy schedule in providing shelters to the evacuees from East Pakistan and he said, "The Principal Engineer of the State had been placed in support of the Army, but he seemed to be too occupied establishing refugee camps and providing them the basic facilities" but "All we got was the fullest cooperation. The Infrastructure for the impending operations was developed with the optimum utilization of our total potential."
Surface transport from Agartala to Calcutta via Dhaka is a great achievement of post Muktijuddha era. But it was not an easy task because with the brutal killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his most of the family members on 15 August, 1975, the bilateral relation between the two countries came to a standstill and the relationship between the two worsened, as Rekha Saha puts it.6 The anti-India elements overwhelmed the political arena of Bangladesh for at least 2 decades after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib. The fact is evident from the following discussion. Since the 1980s, the Indian and Bangladesh Government had sought to negotiate an agreement permitting commercial vehicles to pass through Bangladesh highways in order to reach North-east states of India from the west, a concept described in India as the "Bangla corridor." Such an arrangement is being promoted for its benefit to bilateral commerce, the transport cost reduction for Indian businesses and additional revenue for Bangladesh. In 2006, both the governments began on a proposal to provide a bus service directly connecting Kolkata with Agartala, the capital of Tripura, which borders eastern Bangladesh. As of 2007, the travelling distance through Indian territory is an estimated 1700km (1056 miles) but a direct road link via Dhaka would shorten travelling distance to an estimated 400 km (249 miles), considerably reducing the cost of transport for Indian businesses, which have to transport goods & services through "Chicken's Neck" territory that is bordered by Bangladesh and southern Nepal. However, such an arrangement has been politically sensitive in Bangladesh and that can't be materialized till today.7 But one cannot deny some improvement in the bilateral relations in some sectors like surface communication etc. As Syed Anwar Husain analyses it: The third improvement as well as a welcome addition to the horizon of bilateral relations is the bus diplomacy, which has the potential to further and deepen the socio-cultural bonds on a people to people basis that had once existed and became a victim of the partition-psyche following 1947; and specially after the 1965 Indo-Pak War. On 7 April, 1999, after 52 years, the trial run of Dhaka-Calcutta bus service marked a major turning point in cross-border direct surface communication between Bangladesh and India.8 On the other hand, both the Government of India and Bangladesh stood firmly to improve the surface transport including road and railway connection through Tripura towards North-East. The people of North-East specially the people of Tripura feel it very urgent necessity to have communication facility through Bangladesh because it saves both time and money. After years of negotiation, the much awaited Dhaka-Agartala Bus Service was agreed upon on 11 July, 2001, to connect Bangladesh with eastern neighbour Indian state like Tripura.9

Railway connection between Agartala and Akhaura, a well-connected rail junction of Bangladesh, was expected in Tripura for long time. Very recently, the Government of India has sanctioned a new railway link to Bangladesh for easing surface communication in the mountain-
ous north-eastern states. India will build 15 kms. railway track linking Agartala with Akhaura, a well-linked junction towards port-city of Chittagong and tea-city of Sylhet and also the capital city of Dhaka. The total proposed project cost estimated to Rs. 267 crore. The Indian Railway Construction Company (IRCON) would lay the new railway tracts on both sides of the border. The Project is expected to be completed within 2014 and this was decided in the meeting of the Prime Ministers of both the countries i.e. India and Bangladesh in January, 2011.10

The Palatana Power Plant at Udaipur, Tripura, operated by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) would have been delayed and cost would have been maximized if the Bangladesh Government did not allow the transshipment of the very heavy turbines through its country using both the surface and waterways. The Telegraph (Calcutta, India) of 22 June, 2013, publishes important news with headline: President thanks Bangladesh Government for logistic support, bats for deeper energy ties: Pranab inaugurates Tripura power plant. "Without the Bangladesh government and its Prime Minister extending their generous co-operation by allowing transportation of heavy equipment of the project through its sea port at Chittagong and river port at Ashuganj, this project could not have materialized," Mr. President said in presence of Bangladesh High Commissioner, Tarek A. Karim. Advocating closer co-operation between the two countries in the energy sector, the President, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, informed the huge gathering at Palatana that NTPC ( the National Thermal Power Corporation) was implementing a power project in Bangladesh and such co-operation should increase for mutual benefits.11 The Hindu Business Line (19 April, 2011) informs that the movement through Bangladesh had been possible following a treaty signed by the Prime Minister of India and Bangladesh in January, 2010. The treaty allows India, for the first time, to use Bangladesh port and road for transportation of goods to the North-East. It is a great achievement on the part of Tripura as well as India for planting 726.3 MW Combined-cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant at Palatana, Udaipur, Tripura, with the help of Bangladesh. As the Hindu Business Line remarks: The authorities concerned had no other choice but to opt for river transportation through Bangladesh as the present road & rail connectivity (including bridges & culverts) between Kolkata- Agartala do not support movement of such a huge load.12 As a friendly gesture to Bangladesh, Sri Manik Sarkar, the Chief Minister of Tripura, remarks, while he was inaugurating the 21 MW Gas-based Thermal Power Project at Rukhia in Sepahijala District, on 21 Sept. 2013, "We can sell 100 mw power to Bangladesh from our share which further improve our relation with the neighbouring country and help develop our state."13

However, Transit is a much awaited issue between the two countries but it is still a pending issue and related with another much awaited Teesta River Treaty. The Government of West Ben-
gal under Mamata Banerjee does not approve the Central Government's move in this regard which is very sentimental issue in Bangladesh as well as in West Bengal. Syed Anwer Husain confirms that although demanded since 1972 India is thus yet to get the transit facility. Opposed in emotive terms, transit is considered by the main stream opposition headed by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as something that would endanger Bangladesh's security. Interpreted in narrow geopolitical terms it is suggested by the opposing elements that the hidden agenda of India is to use this facility for transporting military personnel and hardware to the turbulent North-East, and would thereby threaten sovereignty and security of Bangladesh.14

Suffering of people in the bordering regions

The geographical position of Tripura which protrudes into the very heart of East Pakistan made it vulnerable for direct hit in time of any international conflict. Anyone be astonished as to what A.A.K. Niazi, former Commander of Eastern Command, suggested to his Superior, General Hamid, in June, 1971, with regard to Agartala, Calcutta and Assam. His suggestion was that if the deficiencies of his Divisions, particularly in tanks and artillery, were made up, and if he was given one squadron of modern aircraft and anti-aircraft resources, and one infantry Brigade Group, "I would capture Agartala and a big chunk of Assam, and develop multiple thrusts into Indian Bengal."15 He continued to argue, "we should strike while the iron was hot: follow the rebels into their Indian sanctuary and render them ineffective as a fighting force, thereby deterring from helping them further. If we did that, millions of Indian civilians would head for places for safety, cluttering up the communication system, congesting public places, and creating numerous problems for the Indian civil administration; ... Up to now we had been fighting on our own territory and had been suffering physically and materially, but if the Indian Government was to see its own people suffering and its property destroyed, it would have to put brakes on its aggressive attitude."16 But General Hamid did not approve the suggestions put forward by Lt. General Niazi and said "But our Government is not prepared to fight an open war with India .... To sum it up, you will neither enter Indian Territory nor send raiding parties into India, and you will not fire into Indian Territory either. You should evict any hostile element entering East Pakistan."17 Yet, the Pak Eastern Command fired indiscriminately towards India not only before the visit of East Pakistan by General Hamid in June, 1971, but it continued to fire within Indian Territories unabated disregarding the order of General Hamid and thus causing the suffering of the people of the bordering regions which may be proved by the following information---

Mr. Samar Sen, the permanent representative of India in the UNO, gives only one day's firing
incident that occurred on 7 November, 1971, on the Tripura-East Pakistan border region.

> Pakistan army started firing towards the Indian village of Rahimpur under Kalamchoura police station in Tripura. Ten artillery shells and 14 bombs landed inside Indian Territory.

> Pakistan Army opened fire, LMG and MMG fire, towards the Indian village of Gourangala, Tripura.

> Pakistan Army opened fire towards the Indian village of Mandabag in Tripura. Several bombs of 3 inch mortar and a number of artillery shells landed inside Indian Territory.

> Pakistani Army subjected the Indian village of Kasba in Tripura to intermittent firing. Several shells landed inside Indian Territory.

> Pakistani Army opened fire towards the Indian village of Simna in Tripura. Several artillery shells landed inside Indian Territory when the Pakistani Army opened fire towards the Indian border outpost of Sidhai, Tripura.

> Several LMG, MMG and 2 inch mortar shells landed inside Indian Territory when Pakistani Army opened fire towards the Indian village of Amlighat near Sabroom police station.

> Pakistan Army opened fire towards the Indian village of Malua (actually Nalua) under Belonia police station in Tripura. Several artillery shells landed inside Indian Territory.

> Pakistan Army opened fire towards the Indian village of Belonia in Tripura.

> Pakistani troops opened unprovoked fire towards the Indian village of Chandannagar under Kamalpur police station in Tripura. Several artillery shells landed inside Indian Territory.

> Pakistani Army opened fire from Dhalai area towards Indian Territory bordering Tripura. Several artillery shells landed inside Indian Territory.

> Pakistani Army subjected the Indian village of Rangauti under Kailashahar police station in Tripura to heavy and intermittent firing.

> Several shells of 3 inch mortar fired by Pakistani army landed inside the Indian village of Puran Raj Bari in Tripura.
"That is the record of one day", utters Mr. Samar Sen, "I am quite sure the Council would not like to recite this litany military aggression from Pakistan day after day."18

Haroon Habib, veteran journalist of Bangladesh and a Freedom Fighter, recorded a good number of firing incidents which the Pak army aimed towards Indian Border that destabilized the normalcy in those areas. Not only the people of Tripura suffered very badly but the livestock & agricultural produces received a setback which badly affected the economy of Tripura. Pakistan started its sabotage activities on the soil of Tripura right from April, 1971, and continued up to first week of December, 1971. No states of India but Tripura had become the prey of direct attack of Pakistan army. The mines planted by the spies of the Pak army on the roads of Tripura often burst in the open air making the normal life abnormal and the indiscriminate firing took not only the lives of a number of the citizens of Tripura but also the lives of the refugees who took shelters in the bordering areas of the state to save their lives. Within one month of the Operation Search Light, starting from 25 March, 1971, the Pak army had thrown a Tank-fighting grenade which landed at Arundhutinagar, one and half km away from Agartala. He continues to inform that regular firing towards Indian States specially towards Tripura was started from May, 1971, onwards. Agartala badly experienced continuous attack from the Pak army on 15 May from midnight to the dawn of the next day which took the lives of 2 Indians and got injured 19 others who were admitted to the Govinda Ballav Hospital ( popularly known as G B Hospital), Agartala. It was reported that 297 injured persons of the bordering areas of Tripura were taken to the Hospitals of which 211 injured were from the refugees and others were the inhabitants of Tripura. On 24 May at about 10 am, almost 30 Pak army personnel encroached within Sahebpur village under Khowai police station. On the next day, at about 4pm, Pak army had fired from the Machine gun which resulted bullet injuries to the villagers of the Kulubadi village under Sonamura sub-division. On 30 May Pakistan launched 3 three-inch mortar shells from Colonel Bazar area which landed on Belabar Village, very near to Agartala. In the previous night, the Pak army threw 5 shells which landed at the Devipur outpost under Bishalgarh police station.19

Mr. Habib provides with more information on the suffering of the people who lived in the border region. On 17 July, the Laxmipur village was attacked by the Pak army which caused the death of some refugees and local inhabitants. On the same day, the Kalamchoura village under Sonamura subdivision suffered heavy loss; 6 villagers lost their lives under brutal attack of the Pak army. On 25 July, the security personnel and the Indian Villagers arrested 9 commandos of the Pak army in the outskirts of Agartala. These commandos planned to throw bombs on the Agartala airport, important bridges, cinema halls and the news paper offices. The security personnel recov-
ered huge amount of explosives, Dynamites and other arms and ammunitions. The month of August experienced more bloody attacks from the Pak Eastern Command under Lt. General Niazi. On 9th Sonamura was targeted with at least 14 Canon fires which resulted in the death of some refugees including some Indians. On 10 August, Rangamuda under Puran Rajbadi police station, Belonia, witnessed heavy firing from East Pakistan which left almost 300 refugees seriously injured of which some died later on. On the next day, the Pak army had begun Canon firing aiming Ranibadi B.O.P under Dharmanagar sub-division. This incident left 2 people injured seriously. 14th was a bloody August for Jalilpur village under Bamutia, eight miles away from Agartala, the capital town of Tripura. The day received heavy shock while the Pak army attacked in person and bayoneted 13 refugees; ransacked the village at least for half an hour; and, at last, took away 4 young girls who were never returned to their parents. The state of Tripura experienced almost same strategic attacks in the month of October; the worst affected subdivision was Belonia; it became a deserted place in that month. It was a continuous act of aggression on Belonia on the part of Pakistan. The weekly *Samachar* (published from Agartala) supported the above information. After a careful survey of the bordering areas, the weekly *Samacher* reported that on the face of these attacks and in view of the imminent war between India and Pakistan, an estimated 20,000 people of almost 400 families of Belonia left their houses for safe shelter in the distant hilly areas. The farmers could not harvest their paddy land due to this abnormal situation; and this certainly affected the economy of the state. The administrative functions of the Government were also affected very badly. No employees could dare to face the brutal firing of the Pak army. Almost the same situation prevailed in other bordering towns of Tripura specially Sonamura and Kamalpur towns. Agartala also became a deserted town; most of the people left their residences for safe shelters in the hilly regions. At least one lakh people in the bordering areas of Tripura became internally displaced. Thousands of Bunkers were excavated for immediate shelter in time of sudden attack by the Pak army.

Prof. Karabi Debbarman and Prof. Sirajuddin Ahmed corroborated the above findings of the weekly *Samachar*. Prof. Debarman in one write-up informs that the family members were sent to the hilly areas in Takar Jala and Golaghati in view of the fact that the members might escape the attack in those distant places. Besides the attack from the Pak army, rumour was also there that the Pak army could enter Agartala at any moment. Prof. Ahmed gives a vivid picture of the suffering of the people at Agartala. He said that his wife (Rabeya Begam) became shaky of the war-like situation and Doctor identified the abnormal behaviour of his wife as *war-phobia* for which he was advised to take his wife to Calcutta and that was done. He also gives the information that his land-lord left his Agartala residence (Shibnagar) to go to Nagichhera (some 10 kms. away.
The capital town Agartala, "the military capital of Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh" experienced a very bitter night on 24 October, 1971, while the Pak army had thrown 6 successive shells at about 8 pm. This brutality cost 4 lives and injured 20 others and destroyed a number of houses at the heart of Agartala. The life in the town came to a standstill; electric installations were badly damaged causing darkness in the town. The affected spots were: Banamalipur, jail road, the front area of the residence ex-Health minister Taritmohan Dasgupta in front of East Kotowali and Masjid road. On 3 December, the Pak army launched 3 successive Air attacks on Agartala; the Pakistani Sabre Jets had thrown rocket bombs on and around the Agartala Air Port. On 15 December, a group of at least 25 army personnel attacked Lankamura at the outskirts of Agartala; the Indian security forces responded positively but that could not save the lives of 3 Indian citizens. On the next day, the capital city had to receive 7 shells of Canon which landed at Bidurkarta Choumohani, Shakuntala road, and Madhya Parah and left many persons badly injured. The Government arranged awareness programmes to acquaint the people about the measurement in time of sudden attacks from the Pak army; blackout system was practiced for some days to alert the inhabitants about the Air attack.
The local newspapers were tireless in publishing the sufferings of the people of Tripura caused by the Pakistan army with their brutality. Some examples of these inhuman activities reflected in the local newspapers may be cited here. The Ganasamhati, a premier progressive Bengali weekly of Tripura, of 30 May publishes news on the page 4 highlighting the plight of the people of Tripura while the Minister of State, Mr. Monsur Ali, visited on 17 May South Himmatpur and Kalikrishnanagar under Sonamura Sub-division. These places were devastated with the firings caused by the Pak army; the army also ransacked and committed atrocities on the local residents. 30 houses were completely burnt and 13 families were badly affected. The refugees who took shelter at those places to save their lives could not remain safe because of the Pak atrocities. Two refugee ladies namely Sorojini Datta (65) and Peara Ahmed died following the incident.25

The Tripura Weekly of 23 June & 14 July gives the information that the Pak army continues its firing inside Tripura which affected Dimatali under Puran Rajbadi Police station under Belonia subdivision; Katlamara under Sadar Subdivision, Ganganagar under Kamalpur Subdivision, North Nabadwip Chandra Nagar and Sonapur village under Sonamura Subdivision, Amalighat Border Out Post (B.O.P.) under Sabroom Subdivision. The same newspaper of 28 July was published with the leading news on the front page: Ceaseless firing of the Pak army on Sonamura Town: 3 dead, 6 injured, many houses burnt, panic in peoples mind.26 The Dainik Sambad of 30 July published news on the front page on that vulnerable issue: throughout last 6 days the Khan Sena (the Pak army) and their coteries killed 4 persons and injured 16 others in the bordering regions of Tripura with indiscriminate firing. There was no provocation from Indian side; but the people had to suffer a lot. The said newspaper provides us with ample information on the liberation movement of Bangladesh and also the atrocities committed by the Pak army on Indian soil.27 The Jagaran, a daily newspaper of Tripura, of 26 September publishes news on the front page with the headline: 6 Indian citizens died with firing of Pak army. From the Govt. source, it was known that the firing of Pak army at Nalua under Belonia police station left 6 Indian citizens dead and 4 injured. That incident also caused the death of 4 cows. On the same day, the Pak army fired mortar inside Indian Territory in the Asharambadi area under khowai sub-division which injured 2 children. The same news paper of 5 December gives the information of the plight of the Indian and refugee people; it reports that ceaseless firing on the part of the Pak army on the Rangamurah Area left at least 40 people dead, 70 to 80 injured. The most of these people were of refugees; moreover, near about, 200 beasts were left either dead or injured.28

Air Attack on Udaipur

The Tripura weekly of 8 December reports on its first page that Udaipur, the queen city of
Tripura, was under air attack twice on 7 December. The first attempt was failed due to the repulsive attack of Indian force; but the second attempt cost one life of a refugee boy and injured three others including one lady.29

School and College education in Tripura

School and College education in Tripura had suffered a setback for a time being due to this movement. Maximum buildings of schools and colleges had been requisitioned for temporary shelters for the evacuees from East Pakistan at the first instance. The Headmasters of the Secondary Schools had been engaged to supervise refugee camps. Out of 9 months of the liberation movement, mainly the first three months from April to June, 1971, were totally unproductive in the education sector of Tripura because students and teachers had no places other than tree-shades for imparting education. But as it was a rainy season, tree-shades could not be utilized; moreover, the unnoticed firings from both the sides, the people could not lead normal lives. In an interview, Sri Samar Adya, a veteran student leader of Tripura, informed the Research Scholar that the Public Examinations scheduled in the month of March, 1971, was held in the month of July and the result was published in the month of November of the same year. He added that the Half Yearly and Annual examinations of most of the Schools specially of the schools of bordering areas had been hampered; i.e. the said examinations could not be held in time and in proper manner as schooling was not possible during that period.30 Another important aspect for setback in the education system during the period in question is that the people living in the bordering areas became internally displaced and they sought safe places for their lives than receiving education for their children. Sri Satyabrata Chakrabory (Kalyanbrata Chakraborty), a veteran journalist adds that many schools in the bordering areas remained closed for at least 10 months.31

The Economy of the State

The economy of the State also suffered a lot due to this movement. The Block Development Officers, the Sub-divisional Officers and most of the employees who were responsible for the development works in the state were engaged in the management of refugee problems. As Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India puts it: "Every available building has been requisitioned. Thousands of tents have been pitched and temporary shelters are being constructed as quickly as possible in the 235 camps which have been established so far." "The district authorities", she continues, "are under severe strain. Before they can cope with those who are already here, 60,000 more are coming across every day."32 The observation of Brigadier Jagdev Singh, AVSM, may also be cited here. He said that the Principal engineer of the state had been placed in support of the
Army, but he seemed to be occupied establishing refugee camps and providing them the basic facilities. "When I had the occasion to see the Lieutenant Governor (of Tripura) he was apologetic and explained how the state resources had been subjected to extreme pressures and that his staff was not at all in a position to help the Army. This he said in presence of the Corps Commander who maintained a fairly nonchalant demeanour. I learnt later that one of my officers had roughed up the engineer a bit, and he was sulking."33 The survey report of the weekly Samachar which is mentioned above in this chapter confirms that the Government employees did not dare to report for their duties in the offices due to continuous attack in the form firing and shelling made by the Pak army on the town and outskirts of Belonia Sub-divisional Headquarters.34 The Dainik Sambad, the leading newspaper of that period, in its publications of 24 July, 13, 21, & 28 August, 14 November, 1971, publishes some horrible incidents which adversely affected the economy of the state. The Dainik Sambad reported that the peasants of various sub-divisions of Tripura could not go to their paddy field in the month of July, the harvesting month, due to the indiscriminate firing caused by the Pak army. Sri Suresh Das, s/o Sri Lalmohan Das of South Hariharpur village under Hrishymukh area of Belonia sub-division got injured and admitted to the Hrishymukh Hospital. The Pak firing covered 2 kilometres within Indian Territory and the local inhabitants got panicked and kept themselves aside of agricultural activities. The said paper continues to report that on 8 August the Pak military used to fire artillery from Batuli village of East Pakistan targeting Indian village, Ragnachhara under Dharmanagar sub-division and that caused serious injury to one bull of a peasant of that village. On the same day, the Pak army targeted the Rangauti village under Kailashahar subdivision and that continued throughout the day. This paper claims that with the commencement of the Muktiyuddha in the month of March, 1971, the agricultural production in the bordering areas of Tripura opposite to the Teliapada of Sylhet district to the Fakirhat of Comilla district was severely affected. It was suspected that 40% of the Aous produce of that 400 square kilometer areas could not be collected; the most essential Aaman produce could not be ventured due to the feeling of insecurity by the peasants. The Mekhliband Tea estate under Sadar subdivision also suffered a setback due to the indiscriminate firing from the Pak army. The Dainik Sambad reports that from the very morning of 27 August, the tea garden workers experienced heavy firing which caused the life of one Indian citizen and left 4 more injured. The firings heavily damaged the tea garden. This firing incident created abnormal situation in that garden area. The same paper of 14 November claims in the same tune of the weekly Samachar which is referred earlier in this chapter. At least one lack people became internally displaced for the sake of their lives and they were all specially peasants; so, the land could not be cultivated in time and that remain barren and that caused a heavy drain in the economy of Tripura which was normally weak. The business
ventures for at least 3 sub-divisions like Sonamura, Belonia and Kamalpur came to a stand-still due to this abnormal situation. Only the emergency activities of the Government were kept alive with life-risks. The business of Belonia was shifted to Shantir Bazar; while that of Kamalpur and Sonamura at Salema-ManikBhandar and Melaghar respectively.\textsuperscript{35} The above situation was highly adverse to the economy of Tripura which was severely aggravated by the unprecedented refugee influx, the presence of huge number of Indian Soldiers and other personalities from various parts of India and of world. All these resulted in an imbalance in the economy of this small and backward state, as it is asserted by Mrs. Shyamalima Banerjee, a high official of the Govt. of Tripura.\textsuperscript{36}

**Change in the Polity & rise of Extremism in Tripura**

Mrs. Shyamalima Banerjee, in a write-up, gives a brief idea about the refugee influx in Tripura and the generous attitude of the Maharajas of Tripura in rehabilitating the refugees in Tripura starting from pre-partition period. She argues that bond between Tripura and Bengal was established in the remote past which had its history of interdependent cultural and socio-economic co-operation. A sizable area of Bengal (i.e. Tipperah later on Chakla Roshnabad) was under the suzerainty of Tripura for a long time and it remained with Tripura as zamindari of the Rajas of Tripura until the partition of India in 1947. The rulers of Tripura were the main patron of Bengali language; the Bengali revolutionaries during the British period had safe shelters in Tripura (For details see Chapter I). The Raypur (Dacca now Dhaka) riot in 1941 and the Noakhali riot of 1943 led thousands of Hindu Bengali people to enter Tripura for safe shelter and the Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Bahadur with his generosity opened doors for the devastated people with his exchequer fully opened for the evacuees.\textsuperscript{37} The Direct Action Programme of the Muslim League in August 1946 and the unprecedented communal violence between the Hindus and Muslims in the sub continent both before and after the Partition of India in 1947 shook the very foundation of the social system of this region and led the unprecedented influx of refugees into Tripura. Gayatri Bhattacharya\textsuperscript{38} compiles year-wise influx of refugees from 1947 to 1970-71 which is reproduced below:

![Table - 6.1: Influx of Refugees in Tripura from 1947 to 1970-71](image)

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266
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<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>4,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-63</td>
<td>Registration of refugees discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>1,00,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>13,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>1,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>12,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>3,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>4,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>5,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,09,998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This scenario naturally changed the demographic profile of the state of Tripura and the Tribal people lost the control of the State of Tripura and the Bengali refugees became predominant.
in all aspect of lives. Dr. Mahadev Chakraborty in an article remarks that the process of immigration of Bengalis in Tripura made the Tribal people minority in the society and polity which psychologically affected the mind set-up of the Tribal in Tripura. The tribal people lost their predominance in politics as well as in administrative system of the State of Tripura. This phenomenon along with other aspects gave birth to the extremist movement in Tripura. Suchintya Bhattacharyya in his book *Genesis of Tribal Extremism in Tripura*, S. R. Bhattacharjee in his book *Tribal Insurgency in Tripura*, Dinesh Chandra Saha in his book *Binghsha Shatabdir Tripura, Pat II- The Republican Era* deal with this matter in detail. The Foreword of the book of Suchintya Bhattacharyya was written by the then Governor of Tripura, Mr. K. V. Raghunath Reddy and he made a gist of the book chapter wise. It is shown that the non-Tribal infiltrators exploited the tribal people to the truest sense of the term and caused untold sufferings and miseries to them. The author argues that the Bengali immigrants were welcomed in the beginning for different reasons; but at one point of time, they became microscopic minority in the administration and they remained very much backward in their education system. The author points out that "after merger, little attention was paid for spreading education" of the tribal. The tribal people were unable to compete with the non-tribal people in securing positions in the administration in spite of reservations. The tribal people in class I post constitute only 2.4 % and those in class II posts constitute 4.33%. Considering the fact that tribal people constitute 28% of the total population in the state it becomes clear that they were nowhere near securing their legitimate position in the society as guaranteed by the Constitution. Land alienation is another important aspect in this scenario. This refers to the grim facts of immigrants grabbing the lands of the Jhum cultivators by paying them a nominal *nazrana* and their lives in perpetual debt and poverty. Suchintya Bhattacharyya points out how the loopholes in the Land Reform Act of 1960 were exploited by the immigrants to rob the tribal of their lands.

The fact cannot be denied that after the merger of Tripura with the Indian union on 15 October, 1949, and with the formation of new democratic government in the State, the administration urgently took up the problem of refugee rehabilitation on a war footing in view of their vote-catching policy. The result was that the tribal reserved areas were not spared but infiltrated by the non-tribal refugees. It was, indeed, unfortunate that in the name of rehabilitation the then state government requisitioned even the grazing grounds of the tribal people. Thus, the tribal people who lived in rural hilly areas and derived livelihood from land only, landlessness caused not only a sense of disappointment among them but also created socio-political instability in the state. They tried to resist the move by launching a political movement which they did in forming the Tripura Upjati Juba Samity (TUJS) in 1967 which ultimately gave birth to the most discussed & most
ferocious extremist group i.e. Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) in 1978 under its leader Mr. Bijoy Kumar Hrangkhawl. This organization tried to terrorise the non-Tribal people specially Bengali refugee settlers in the state. The long continued and persistent discontent, hatred and anger against the non-tribal people had taken violent turns in the late 1970s. The tribal people had accordingly organized themselves in such a way as to make all out efforts to terrorise the Bengalis so that they left the state. Subsequently, a convention was arranged in the month of March, 1978 at Taidu of South Tripura under the banner of Tripura Upjati Juba Samiti (TUJS). It was attended by the most important personalities like Mr. Hrangkhwal, Rajmahishi Bibhu Devi, a congress M.L.A. (Member of Legislative Assembly). The resolution passed unanimously in the convention had a new dimension; it demanded that all foreigners should be driven out of the state. The popular slogan was: Kachak Kufur Chhumchhiya; buri tata tang lia! (We are neither Congress nor Communists. We are for the Tribes only!) Thus was started the most unholy scenario in the State which culminated in a bloody riot of June, 1980. Mr. Hrangkhwal with his hide-out in Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh) and with full co-operation of the Mizo National Front (MNF) of Mizoram sheltered at the Chittagong Hill Tracts started insurgency in the south District of Tripura targeting mainly the police-barracks and markets within seven months of the formation of the extremist group. This policy reached its climax on 6 June, 1980 at Mandai Village of Sadar sub-division where more than 200 people were brutally killed by the extremist out-fits. It was such a ghastly measure that the then Home Minister of India had to confess that India had never before experienced such well-planned acts of mass killing as witnessed in Tripura.41

Dinesh Chandra Saha is of the opinion that the tribal middle class intelligentsia was guided by foreign hand and the Bangaal Kheda Movement of Assam of 1970s. Moreover, they were irritated with failure of the Government to restrain infiltration of the Bengali people from Bangladesh in the State though Indira-Mujib Treaty of 1972 made any kind of infiltration unlawful.42 Even the evacuees who came in 1971 for saving their lives did not go back en masse. Some of them went hiding in the society.43 The Chakma refugee issue may be cited here. Rekha Saha in her book India-Bangladesh Relations has observed: Owing to the Ershad administration's "war on Tribals" in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, till May 31, 1987, 50,527 refugees had crossed over to South District of Tripura. About 6000 of them found to be "missing" from camps set up by the state government, had mingled with local ethnic group. Ms. Saha claims that it had created serious ethnic problems in these areas. The refugees were cutting the forests and cultivating the lands which amounted to the encroachment on the economic rights of the local people. Consequently, tension always prevailed in these areas creating law and order problems.44
The Cultural Sector boosted up

The cultural sector specially the literature and music sectors of Tripura have tremendously been enthused by the liberation movement of Bangladesh. Many poems are written and published in the local dailies and the periodicals; the local newspapers published during and after the liberation movement of Bangladesh bears a good number of poems written in support of the Muktisuddha. The world famous speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7 March, 1971, left tremendous impression on the minds of the Bengali people all over the world. So, Prof. Mihir Deb wrote a poem supporting the Bengali mind of having democratic life in Pakistan and arranged to publish it in the local newspaper of 9 March. Prof. Sirajuddin Ahmed confirms that a poetry book, namely, *Bangladesh, Swadesh Abong Aami* (in Bengali) was published with poems written by Prof. Mihir Deb in the context of Bangladesh Liberation Movement. A good number of poets and writers come out of the situation: mention may be made some of them---- Prof. Sirajuddin Ahmed, Prof. Karabi Debbarman, Srimati Aparajita Ray, Sri Anil Sarkar (ex-Minister of the state), Sri Sitangshu Sekhar Das, Swapan Sengupta, Kamal Raychoudhury, Shankha Pallav Aditya, Swapan sengupta, Anil Kumar Nath, Nani Gopal Chakraborty, Fakruddin Ahmed, Nidhu Hazra, Rabindra Kumar Datta, Asim Datta Ray, Pijush Routh, Pradip Bikash Ray, Bimalendra Chakraborty, Nakul Ray, Prabir Chakraborty, Krittibas Chakraborty, Snehamay Roychoudhury, Satyen Bandyopadhyay, Ratul Debarman, Chandra kanta Murasingh, Prof. Sankar Basu, Sri Kalyanbrata Chakraborty, Sri Dilip Das, Sri Kalyan Gupta, Niranjan Chakma, Jugamaya Chakma, Oyamkhem Birmongal, Asish Das, Bimal Chakraborty, Akbar Ahmed and so on. Sri Anil Sarkar almost created history in composing poems on the Language Movement of Bangladesh as well as its liberation movement.

The Music section of the cultural field also received high temperament during and after the liberation movement. In an article, *Muktisyuddhe Sanskriti Charcha* (the Cultural Activities during Liberation War), Subimal Bhattacharya, an eminent composer, confirms that a good number of patriotic songs were composed and sung during after the liberation movement of Bangladesh. A song composed by late Gauri Prasanna Majumder and sung by late Angshuman Ray, both from Calcutta, became so famous in West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Bangladesh that it overwhelmed the mind set-up of each and every Bengali-speaking people to have their freedom from the rule of Pakistan. The song runs thus:

"Shono akti Mujibarer theke

*Loksha Mujibarer kanthadhani, protidhani*
Aakashe bataeshe othe roni

Bangladesh, Aamar Bangladesh” (in Bengali)

The composer himself translated his famous composition in the following way:

"The voice of not but a million

Mujibur singing

Bangladesh, my Bangladesh"

Mr. Bhattacharya continues to inform that within one and half month of the publication of this famous song the artists of Tripura became enthusiastic and he himself had composed a number of songs of which one song in the voice of artist Amar Pal of West Bengal gained momentum in field of liberation movement. The song is:

"Budi Ganga Nodire,

Tor buke dinga aami kyamne bhasai"

(O Budi Ganga River,

How can I float boat on your chest!)47

During the liberation period, some of the famous artists of Bangladesh came across the border to save their lives and the artists of Tripura made various attempts to arrange different cultural programmes in and at the out-skirts of Agartala to enthuse the freedom fighters, the refugees and the local residents.48

The most important phenomenon of the post liberation period is that the cultural exchange programmes have been increased tremendously between Tripura and Bangladesh. Subimal Bhattacharya confirms that after the conclusion of the liberation movement the artists of Tripura attended a number of cultural programmes in Bangladesh. For example, Bishwadev Bhattacharya along with Amiya Das, folk artist, participated in the Cultural Programmes organized at Comilla Cantonment.49 In the same way, the artists from Bangladesh were also invited to participate in the various cultural programmes arranged at the different places of Tripura specially in Agartala both in Government level and in private level. The conferences of poets both in Dhaka and Agartala are
common phenomena. Sri Ranjit Debnath, the then Director of School Education and Joint Con-
venor of the Mother-Tongue-Day Celebration Committee (1995) has informed that famous poets of Bangladesh like Syed Samsul Haque, Belal Choudhury, Rafique Azad, Samudra Gupta, Mohan Raihan, Mohammad Samad, Rafiul Hasan, Estiyak Alam were invited to participate in the said conference which was organized in the context of the celebration of the Mother-Tongue-Day on 21 February, 1995. A Souvenir, namely, *Matribhasha Diwas,'95, Ekushe February,* was published on this occasion with a message from the Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr. Dasharath Deb and one write-up & one poem from the then Education and cultural Minister, Sri Anil Sarkar.50

The *Muktiyuddha Utsavas, the Recitation Festivals, and Film Festivals* were frequently arranged to tie up the bond between Tripura and Bangladesh which was not seen in practice before the liberation movement. Muktiyuddha Utsavas were organized both on Government and private levels. The first of this type was organized at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, during 2-3 December, 1997, at the initiative of the Writers, a non-Governmental Organization, headed by Dr. Abul Azad of Jahangir Nagar University, Dhaka. He also took initiative to organize Muktiyuddha Utsava, Tripura and met the leaders of the then Government of Tripura and the date was fixed during 31 October to 1 November, 1998, to hold the said Utsava at Agartala but that was postponed. The Left Front Government of Tripura then took the initiative to organize Muktiyuddha Utsava at Agartala in January 2001 and a large number of eminent leadership, cultural activists, and journalists from Bangladesh attended the Utsava during 11 to 13 January. Some of the eminent personalities were: A.S.M. Abdur Rab, the Minister for Fishery Department, Mr. Kamal Lohani, famous intelligentsia and ex-Director of Bangladesh Radio, Mr. Mir Shoukat Ali, ex-Minister and Retd. Major General, Mr. Rashed Khan Memon, the President of Bangladesh Workers' Party, Mr. Syed Ahmed, Advocate and Member of Central Committee of Awami League. In the following year, Bangladesh Government arranged same kind of Muktiyuddha Utsava in Dhaka in May, 2002. Those were highly organized programmes. The Utsava in Dhaka were attended by prominent personalities from Tripura under the leadership of Sri Anil Sarkar, the Minister in Charge of Education. The present research scholar was one of the delegates of the utsava. A non-Governmental organization, *the Bharat-Bangladesh Maitree Sangha,* formed at Agartala, under the patronage of Sri Anil Sarkar, the Education Minister of Tripura and under the leadership of Narendu Bhattacharjee (the Secretary) also arranged *Bharat-Bangladhesh Maitree Utsava,* 2001, at Agartala, during 9-11 February, 2001.51

Bikach Choudhury observes that in the bloody days of 1971 the people of Tripura not only shared their foodstuff with the devastated people of East Pakistan but fought with their Bengali
brethren for the same language and for motherland with delightful hope for future friendship but that was forgotten for almost three decades. This created an unhappy situation in the minds of the intellectuals of both Tripura and Bangladesh. But the Muktiyuddha Utsava and the Bharat Bangladesh Maitree Utsava cleared the sky of unhappiness. The confluences of the participants from Bangladesh and of Tripura stood for another history. The embracement of the most familiar participants from Bangladesh wiped out all the anxieties that persisted in the mind of the intellectuals of Tripura. Sri Choudhury had written a number of articles in the local dailies like the *Dainik Sambad*, the *Tripura Darpan* hailing the festivals and the participants.52

The non-Government organizations, namely, the *Aabrittis Samsad of Comilla District* and the *Aabrittis Samsad of Agartala*, organized Recitation Festivals at Comilla and Agartala respectively. Besides, the Aabrittis Samsad of Comilla invited many artists from this state to their various functions; Anil Sarakar, the Minister of the State, Sri Chuni Debnath, the Secretary of the Nazrul Smriti Mancha, Agartala, Sri Sanit Debray, the Secretary of the Aabrittis Samsad, Agartala, Mr. Akbar Ahmed, Poet, Mr. Ashok Deb, Poet, Mr. Mojahid Rahman, the Joint Secretary of the Aabrittis Samsad, Agartala, Sri Chandra Kanta Mura Sing, Poet and a good number of artists went to Comilla to participate their Annual Functions.53 The Organizers of the Film Festivals specially of the Bangladesh Movies experienced tremendous turn-over of the audiences at Agartala. In this sector, the Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like *Cinedelve* and *Genesis* took the leading part; a number of Film festivals had been arranged specially at Agartala. Sometimes, the festivals were arranged at *Mofussil* towns like Udaipur and Khowai. Bimal Chakraborty reports about one of the Film Festival organized by the Genesis in December, 2003 with a remarkable caption: *Tripura Bangladesh mingled after 50 years*. The important movies shown in the Festival are: *Mateer Moyna, Chitra Nadir Pade, Lal Galu* etc.54 Sri Samiran Ray, the Editor of the *Tripura Darpan* and a leading personality of *Cinedelve* and the *Chhandanid* informs about the Film Festivals organized by the *Cinedelve*; the organization is formed mainly for organizing film festivals and this organization with Sena Bhattacharya as its Secretary did a lot to bring the movies of Bangladesh to the audiences of Tripura.55

Sri Ray also informs that another organization, the famous *Chhandanid*, had invited a good number of Artists from Bangladesh for performing in Tripura specially during the period of celebration of the Birth Day of Rabindranath Tagore. Similarly, *Padma-Gomati Cultural organizations* were set up both in Tripura and Dhaka; Prof. Safi Ahmed of Jahangir Nagar University and Sri Subhasish Talapatra of Agartala were Secretaries of Bangladesh Chapter and Tripura Chapter respectively. The prominent Artists of Bangladesh were invited to perform here at Agatala and
prominent artists from Tripura were invited to Bangladesh to perform there at Dhaka and Sylhet. Sri Ray informs that Drama Festival and Painting Exhibitions were also organized at Agartala with Artists from Bangladesh and they experienced huge turnover of audiences in those functions. These types of exchange programmes were absent before the liberation movement. The Sanskriti Samannay Kendra is a prominent cultural organization in Tripura headed by Sri Anil Sarkar, the Minister, Sri Gautam Das, the Editor of the Daily Desher katha, Dr. Mahadev Chakraorty, Sri Sisir Deb, Sri Sisir Majumder, Sri Sankar Basu and a good number of famous cultural personalities of Tripura. It has sub-divisional committees all over Tripura. This organization arranged a good number of exchange programmes including artists of Bangladesh and Tripura.56

The most prestigious issue of Bengali nationalism is the Mother-Language movement of 1952 whereby East Bengal lost some most valuable lives of youths like Salam, Barkat and Rafiqr etc. The State of Tripura played a prominent role in internationalizing the Ekushe February / Mahan Ekushe or the Shaheed Diwas (the Martyrs' Day) commemorating the bloody 21 February of 1952. The day was observed in East Bengal / East Pakistan as the Martyr's Day or the Shaheed Diwas, as informed by Mr. Obaidur Rahman, the First Secretary and the Head of Mission, Bangladesh Visa Office, Agartala, in a speech arranged at his office premises at Agartala on 21 February, 2012. The Research Scholar was present there as an invitee. But the Government of Tripura under the special attention of the Education Minister, Mr. Anil Sarkar and the Chief Minister, Mr. Dasharath Deb started to observe 21 February as MOTHER-TONGUE DAY from 21 February, 1994. Selina Hossain, a notable intellectual from Bangladesh, has mentioned that Tripura had set up an example by celebrating 21 February as MOTHER TONGUE DAY. In an article published in the Janakantha (21 February 1995), a well-known Daily of Bangladesh, she claims that 21 February crossed the border of Bangladesh and in 1989, a small organization, namely, Ekushe Samsad was formed in Calcutta to observe 21 February; but in 1994 she came to know from Anil Sarkar, the Education Minister of Tripura that 21 February was being observed outside Bangladesh under the auspices of the Government of Tripura certainly as the MOTHER-TONGUE DAY. She continues to write that 21 February is being observed as Mother-Tongue Day in the Umakanta Stadium at Agartala. The representatives of all languages present in Tripura come and participate in the deliberations. They come with their traditional dresses. ‘Aamar Bhaiyer Rakte Rangano, Ekushe February’ is sung as welcome song by the Artists Forum of Agartala. All most 300 artists participate in these functions. After that the each and every linguistic group perform cultural programmes in their languages.57 Janab Shantanu Kaiser and Samir Majumder, the President and the Secretary respectively of the Jatiya Rabindra-Sangit Sammilan Parishad, Comilla District Branch, wrote a letter to Sri Anil Sarkar to acquaint him the resolution adopted in the
meeting of the said organization held on 22 January, 2000. The main theme of the resolution is produced here: Tripura, a neighbouring state of Bangladesh specially of Comilla District, had been observing 21 February as Mother-Tongue Day years before the UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization) declared 21 February as Mother-Tongue Day on 17 November, 1999. The slogan of the people of Tripura is - Your Mother-Language, Mine Brother-Language. The declaration of UNESCO is actually the result of the solidarity and international attitude of this State of India shown to our Language-Martyrs and their sacrifices. For this reason, the members of the meeting thank and express their gratitude to the people of the State for their honours shown to all kinds of languages.58

The celebration of the Mother Tongue Day in Tripura becomes a festival and is celebrated throughout Tripura. Bikach Choudhury puts it: "We in Tripura feel that we should on this noble occasion try to broaden the base and celebrate MAHAN EKUSHE as MATRI BHASHA DIWAS or mother tongue day in order to pay our respects to all the languages spoken and practiced in this state of Tripura. It is with this idea in mind that in Tripura we started celebrating the MATRI BHASA DIWAS from the last year with the involvement of all linguistic communities in this state." He continues to write, "This year we have taken an ambitious plan to involve students of all ages, writers, intellectuals and people of all walks of life to celebrate the day in a befitting manner. Apart from the Central Programme at Agartala, the day will be celebrated in all sub-divisions with the active involvement of thousands of students, writers, intellectuals and literary workers. The main idea behind the celebration is to inculcate in young minds the greatest necessity to uphold the linguistic traditions of all communities in order to accelerate the pace of development and strengthen the unity of the nation."59 The achievement of the Government of Tripura in this regard is very much remarkable; now the celebration crosses the boundary of the sub-divisional Head-quarters. The Daily Desher Katha of 22 February, 2007, reports that a very remote village, namely, Rahimpur under Sonamura sub-division, observed the day with utmost honour and it started just 12 o’clock on 20 February, 2007, with floral tributes to the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952. Anil Sarkar, the Education Minister of Tripura, encouraged Janab Sahid Choudhury, the local MLA (the member of Legislative Assembly of Tripura) and Sri Jagadish Acharjee, a teacher of the Rahimpur High School, to organize the programme in befitting manner. It is really astonishing that a most backward village with 95% religious minority people arranged such a beautiful programme and the Research Scholar had the opportunity to anchor the whole programme throughout the whole night and in the very early morning of 21 February, a long & colourful procession of students (male & female), teachers, general people, artists, journalists, public representatives including Janab Sahid Choudhury toured the whole village with great enthusiasm.60
It is now a prestigious issue in this region; the sensitive issue is now related to the *Bhasha Shaheeds* of Silchar and the Bhasha Shaheeds of Tripura. 19 May is distinctively celebrated by the Government of Tripura in the honour of the 11 Martyrs who sacrificed their lives at Silchar Railway station in 1961 for recognizing Bengali as a State language of Assam. The Central function is now organized at Dharmanagar, North Tripura and one eminent writer is honoured with Rs. 5000/ and other credentials every year. 3 March is also observed in the honour of Dhananjay Tripura, who sacrificed his life for the recognition of their mother tongue, Kok Borak, in 3 March, 1975. In an interview, Sri Anil Sarkar, the Education Minister (Higher Education) and the Cultural Minister of the State affirms that he was totally influenced by the great event of 21 February, 1952 and he is determined to continue as well as to spread the movement all over the North-Eastern States and, if possible, all over Eastern India. So, he conceived a new organization i.e. the *Matree Bhasha Mission*. He firmly believed in the idea of Rabindranath Tagore when he remarked: *Matree Bhasha Matree Dugdha Sama* (in Bengali). The State President of the *Matree Bhasha Mission* is Dr. Gopalmani Das, ex-Principal, Bir Bikram Memorial College, Agartala, and he along with his team established a number of Units of *Matree Bhasha Mission* at different places of Tripura like Kamalpur, Teliamura, Kumarghat, Kailashsahar, Dharmanagar, Udhaipur. The Mission activities were also spread outside Tripura. The Mission Unit is opened in Guwahati with Anjali Sengupta as Secretary, in Kolkata with Amal Das as Secretary, in New Delhi with Ms. Nilima Biswas as Secretary.61

Another important aspect in this regard is that Mr. Rafiqul Islam (now late), member of the *Mother Language Lovers of the World* and one of the 10 signatories of the Prayer submitted to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General, UNO, New York, on 29 March, 1998, for recognizing 21 February as the *International Mother Language Day* is well connected with Tripura. During the liberation period, he, a man, born and brought up at Comilla District of the then East Pakistan, took shelter at Sonamura at the residence of his brother-in-law, Janab Ali Azzam, (Ranger of the Forest Department of Tripura) and took part in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. He was trained at Gakulnagar / Hapania Camps and at Dehradun.62

**The Communal Relations : Improved**

The impact of the liberation movement is clearly discernible in the Hindu-Muslim communal relations. The communal relations which became very bitter in this sub-continent specially with the Partition in India in 1947 started to be faded away in Tripura with the liberation movement of Bangladesh. Bikach Choudhury mentions some of the incidents in this regard: In the days
of Great Upheaval, it is seen in this State how the human forgetting their feeling of religion, cast & creed etc. stood for humanity Poor tribal mother shares her hunger-meal with the Bengali refugees; Mustak Ahmed, a Muslim freedom fighter, donates his blood to save the life of a Brahmin young girl of Agartala. Mr. Choudhury continues to inform that almost every house of Tripura shelters the evacuees of the neighbouring county irrespective of cast, creed and religion. Hardcore Brahmin House-wife acted as nurse in the delivery case of Muslim mother; a very simple lady of College Tilla, Srimati Priyabala Nag fed her breast milk to 3-month old Muslim orphan. The Muslim community which started to leave this state on a large scale in the sixties began to rethink about their migration from this state after the success of this movement. Similarly, with the conclusion of Indira-Mujib Treaty on 19 March, 1972, the flow of Hindu refugee immigration began to be faded away. But that was not a full-proof arrangement; Rekha Saha informs that the problem was first officially recognized when the three-day Indo-Bangladesh Conference on border problems began in Calcutta in April 1975. The Bangladesh Government was requested to take the responsibility for checking the influx but that Government expressed its inability to take any step owing to financial constrains. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in August, 1975, and with the Martial Law administration in Bangladesh, the refugee problem took a new turn. The Administration of Zia-ur-Rahaman and General Ershad did not take any measure for restraining the immigration of Bangladeshi refugee and this worsened the bilateral relation between India and Bangladesh. On the other hand, the Government of Bangladesh tried to deny the infiltration of the people from Bangladesh into India. Rekha Saha says that it was clear that since 1980 infiltration had become a major irritant in Indo-Bangladesh relations. Since West Bengal was already burdened with a large influx of Bangladeshi infiltrations and Assam was in turmoil over the foreigners’ issue and since Tripura and Mizoram were likely to undergo a similar experience, the External Affairs Ministry had during 1983-84 decided to take up the project of fencing the border between India and Bangladesh. Despite violent protests from Bangladesh, the Government of India went on with the project and completed the work baring some pockets. Though the effectiveness of the fencing is doubted in the intellectual arena, its result is not fully negative. In an interview, Janab Sahid Choudhury, the then Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) asserted that the fencing is effective in the Sonamura sector which is mostly affected by the frequent thefts, decoities, lifting of bulls and cows, cross-border smuggling, infiltration etc. But the news papers published from Tripura carries the news that the fencing are being cut by the Bangladeshi miscreants for lifting cows etc. Moreover, a good number of permanent residents of Tripura faces irritating problems regularly as their fertile land has gone within the fencing area which is guarded by the BSF (the Border Security Force). Actually, in some cases the residents of the border area almost lost their ancestral residential places along with their paddy land due to the fencing which was
constructed 150 yards within Indian Territory as per Indo-Bangladesh Border Treaty of 1974.68

Ups and Downs in the Relationship

A very good gesture from the Mujib administration is the opening of the Bangladesh Visa Office at Agartala in 1974. Anil Bhattacherjee, a notable journalist and an active sympathizer of the liberation movement of Bangladesh, informs in an interview that after the liberation movement, he was invited by the Government of Bangladesh and during a courtesy visit to Bangabandhu he had requested for opening up of a Visa office at Agartala because people of Tripura had to face difficulty in having visa from the Calcutta office and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman instantly passed an order to open a Visa office at Agartala. Bangabandhu admitted the brilliant role played by the poor people of Tripura in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. It may be mentioned here that this is the only Visa Office in the seven-sisters' North-East. (Now, it is eight sisters' North-East). This office greatly helped the people of this region to visit their mother land i.e. Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) frequently as well as to go to Kolkata and elsewhere in India via Dhaka minimizing the time period and saving the money. Moreover, the people can enjoy the beautiful scenery of Bangladesh and the delicious meals of Dhaka while passing through it.69

The export-import business between India and Bangladesh via Tripura has tremendously been increased and land port is constructed at the Akhaura Check Post by the Government of India. Mr. Habul Biswas, the Secretary, Agartala Export-Import Association, informs that by 1995 onwards the business gained a momentum. At the beginning Andra fish, Orange of Jampui Hill, Ginger from Mizoram and Shillong, Potato, Marine product i.e. dry fishes were exported via Agartala; on the other hand, Stone-Chips, Hilsa, Dry fishes, Food-Products of PRAN, Cement (specially Crown cement), Plastic Product of RFL, BENGAL and TALUKDER Companies were imported to India via Tripura. Recently, Land Custom Stations (LCS) were constructed and opened for operation at Srimatapur (Sonamura), Belonia, Khowai, Kailashahar, Raghna (Dharmanagar). Mr. Biswas continues to inform that long standing Bangladesh demand for minimizing custom duties on the products of Bangladesh has been implemented by the Govt. of India in the Maldives session of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1911. So, import from Bangladesh has been increased tremendously but export through Tripura is minimized due to heavy road cost. The goods are to be carried for export either from Guwahati or from West Bengal; moreover, Bangladesh imposes heavy custom duties on Indian goods but not such heavy duties has been imposed on the goods imported from China or other countries. This fact angers the business-circle at Agartala and other parts of Tripura, as asserted by Sri Habul Biswas. But this
business is effective in many ways. It minimizes the cross-border smuggling on one hand and on the other it provides some relief to the unemployed youths of both the sides. The business helps the economy of both the countries and helps in stabilizing the market positions of both the countries.70

The Indo-Bangladesh relations with reference to Tripura should be discussed in the vast canvas of Indo-Bangladesh relations as a whole because foreign policy of India is solely dealt with by the Central Government. A prevailing notion in this region is that the Government of Bangladesh would grant all the facilities like surface connectivity from Agartala to Kolkata via Dhaka, transit and transshipment etc. to the people of India specially to the people of North-East and more specially to the people of Tripura in response to the active support offered by the Govt. of India as well as the people of India and more specially by the people of Tripura, West Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya to the Bengali Nationalist for achieving their freedom. But these kinds of expectations may be regarded as one-way traffic as Muchkund Dubey, the High Commissioner of India, gave expression to such expectations in his observation at a Rotary Club meeting in Dhaka. He says: "Many of us in India tend to take Bangladesh for granted,…Either we expect too much from Bangladesh or we give it up together. We have in our mind presumed or set pattern of behavioural expectations from Bangladesh. If for an entirely valid legitimate reason, Bangladesh does not come up to this set pattern of expectations, we tend to over-react and sometimes go to the extent of characterizing this as ungratefulness.71 This feeling of "ingratitude" was reciprocated from Bangladesh in its fear of Indian 'patronage' and 'domination'.72 Moudud Ahmed explains this dilemma in the economic point of view; he notes that the transfer of the country's properties by the Indian Army, the influence of the Indian bureaucrats in the administration, large-scale smuggling across the border, withdrawal of the ban on export of raw jute and jute goods to India, the printing of currency notes in India, the raising of Rakkhi Bahini, devaluation of currency and the presence of Indian Army—all these only helped in increasing distrust of the people of Bangladesh during the early Mujib era. This is in Bangladesh termed as the "Indian Exploitation" of the Bangladesh's resources. All the political parties other than the Awami League raised criticism against some or all of the actions of both the Government of Bangladesh and India During the era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The right wing communal forces which were already banned by the Mujib administration became active from behind the curtain and campaigned vigorously against the domination of the 'Hindu India' over Bangladesh and tried to hold India responsible for all the miseries the people of Bangladesh were suffering from. Mr. Ahmed opines that these factors had led to worsen the relationship between the two countries right from the beginning.73
Under the given circumstances, Indo-Bangladesh relations vis-à-vis Tripura remains beyond expectations. The Muhuri Char Dispute has not yet been solved; transit and transshipment are not yet been granted to India which is seriously expected since the birth of Bangladesh by the people of the North-East specially by the people of Tripura. Mr. Ahmed points out that although the Indira-Mujib Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace (19 March, 1972) envisaged that the border of the two countries would be transformed into a "border of eternal peace and friendship", but practically this kind of declaration is impracticable. Because, the economic imbalances that exist between the economies of the two countries and the price differences in many commodities, smuggling across the border has always gone against the interest of Bangladesh. So, any "border of peace and friendship" could not have meant an open border without the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). The BDR or the BSF could only be withdrawn if the two countries had a fully integrated economy complimentary to each other. Unfortunately, this is not conducive to any of the country; on the other hand, from the Bangladesh point of view, even a liberal border would immediately cause large-scale smuggling ruining the economy of the country like Bangladesh.74

*Opening of Muktiyuddha Park at Chottakhola, Rajnagar, Belonia by the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Dipu Mani.*
*Courtesy : Sri Sudhan Das, MLA, Tripura*
The Ajker Fariad, a local daily published from Agartala, of 5 August, 2007, reports as its prime news on the front page on a Seminar organized on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh at Dhaka on the issue of Transit, with a headline: The Intelligentsia of Bangladesh against the Transit Facility. The view of the Seminar is that Transit Facility can't be allowed to India because it would endanger both National Security and the economy of the Country (i.e. Bangladesh).75

Notwithstanding the above facts, the people of Tripura always remain with the memory of the liberation movement of Bangladesh and with the hope of normalizing the relation between India and Bangladesh vis-à-vis Tripura. The people of Sabroom like other people of Tripura did a lot in the liberation movement of Bangladesh. They did not forget the vivid memory of the war. After at least 30 years of the Muktiyuddha, residents of Kalachhara area under Sabroom discovered a big graveyard while preparing the place for Natural Park and that ignited the memory of that horrible period. A number of dead bodies of the freedom fighters were buried at Kalachhara. Sri Jitendra Choudhury, the then Forest Minister of the State, initiated to hold Muktiyuddha Memorial Festival during 16-18 December, 2006, at that place which was attended by a number notable persons from Bangladesh along with a good number of artists under the leadership of Mr. Nurun Nabi, former Lt. Colonel and Bir Bikram, and Professor Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University. That was a glorious function with overwhelming audiences from the locality and from other places of Tripura. A foundation-stone of Indo-Bangla Maitree Park had already been laid down at Chottakhola, Rajnagar, under Belonia Sub-division in November, 2011, by Ms. Dipu Moni, the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh in the memory of the freedom fighters who underwent training at the Chottakhola training camp and according A.S.M. Abdur Rab, a veteran leader of liberation movement, the first batch of the Muktiyoddhas entered their motherland from this base camp. The present Govt. of Tripura has contemplated big project to improve this park with a fund of Rs. 10 crores, if the project is sanctioned by the Government of India. However, Sri Manik Sarkar, the Chief Minister of the state, has taken special initiative for the development of the park; a War Memorial will immediately be constructed at this park and statues of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister and ardent supporter of Bangladesh movement and Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, the Architect of Bangladesh, will be installed immediately in the park. Kamalpur Sub-division which suffered a lot due to the Bangladesh Movement showed again their solidarity towards Bangladesh arranging Bharat-Bangladesh Maitree Utsava in Kamalpur Town in December, 2011. That was a historic programme and many distinguished persons were invited from Bangladesh to attend the said programme. The most remarkable event of the function is the Honour shown to the widows of the freedom fighters of that locality who lost their lives in the liberation movement. Very recently, Kailashsahar also memorized the martyrs of the 21 February (1952) and a 4-day Grand
Function was organized at Kailashahar w.e.f. 21-24 February, 2014, which was graced by Syed Mohsin Ali, Honourable Minister for Social Welfare, Govt. of Bangladesh, who was a freedom fighter and fought the war basing Kailashahar. Almost 100 delegates from Bangladesh attended the function which included Conference of poets, Seminar, tour programme to the spots of Muktiyuddha at Kailashahar. Mr. Mohit Pal, a prominent Journalist and one of the Chief Organizers of the function, informs the research scholar that the most remarkable part of the Grand Function is the Dinner hosted by the Hon’ble Minister for the active participants and sympathizers of the liberation movement from Kailashahar who are still alive.  

The Shahbag Protest movement of Bangladesh has been hailed in Tripura and the State Committee of the Democratic Youth Federation of India, under its leaders Sri Tapas Datta, (President) and Sri Amal Chakraborty (Secretary) arranged a solidarity programme at Paradise Choumohani, Agartala, on 12 March, 2013, with a huge attendance of democratic minded people from all sections of Tripura like politics, medical service, judiciary, literature, art & culture etc. Mass-signature campaign was organized and hundreds of people signed against communalism and imperialism which emerged in Bangladesh politics to defeat the main idea behind the liberation movement of Bangladesh.

A Counter Shahbag Movement was also organized in Bangladesh which threatened the very foundation of the liberation movement of Bangladesh and this issue was seriously discussed at Agartala Press Club on 25 September, 2013, and an organization called "Friends of Bangladesh, Tripura Chapter" had been formed with Prof. Mihir Deb as its President and Sri Gautam Das as its Secretary to show solidarity towards the democratic & secular forces of Bangladesh. A seminar was also organized in the Sukanta Academy on 29 September (2013) which was attended by a group of intelligentsia and businessmen from Bangladesh and a good number of prominent people from Agartala.

Positive gesture is also found from the Bangladesh Government specially under the Awami League Government for normalizing the relationship between the two countries. The Awami League Government took very strong steps against the extremist hide-outs in Bangladesh which tremendously helped the Indian Government to face the extremist problems specially in Tripura and Assam. The most wanted extremist leader of Eastern India is Mr. Paresh Borua, the Commander-in-Chief of ULFA and recently Bangladesh Government took serious action against him and his party colleagues. Mr. Borua is sentenced to death along with other 13 High Profile Arms-smugglers of Bangladesh on 30 January, 2014. Before that, the Dainik Jugasankha, Guwahati, of
7 November, 2009, reports that two top leaders of ULFA, namely, Sri Shashadhar Choudhury alias Isfaqul Hossain, Self-styled Foreign Secretary of ULFA and Sri Chitrabon Hazarika alias Rafiqul Islam, self-styled Finance Secretary of ULFA, were arrested in Dhaka and pushed back to the Border Security Force (BSF) through Tripura Frontier and the leaders were being interrogated at the Gokulnagar BSF Camp, 20kms. away from Agartala. The staff reporter opines that in the absence of the Treaty of Exchange of Prisoners, this move of Bangladesh is very much positive. The All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) which was very much active in Tripura had been crippled after the arrest of its hard-core leader & President of the organization, Ranjit Debbarma, thanks to the cooperation of Bangladesh, as reports by the Hindu, (3 April, 2013). This is no doubt an action of friendship on the part of Bangladesh; similarly, police report of Tripura proves that the extremist activities which crippled almost whole Tripura specially in the 1990s and in the beginning of 2000 A.D. is now under control. The statistics shows a remarkable improvement in this regard.

Kidnapping: 92 in 2004; 10 in 2013
Civilian Killed: 55 in 2004; oo in 2013
Extremist related incidents: 184 in 2004; 06 in 2013

The Two-day Historic Visit of Sheikh Hasina

The two-day historic visit of Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the Daughter of the Country’s founding Father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dating 11-12 January, 2012, to Tripura University (a Central University) is looked as a unique one because the visit is the first official visit to Tripura by a Bangladesh Prime Minister since its creation 40 years back. This is seen as a compliment to the out-standing support of Tripura and North-Eastern States in the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh in 1971. The Hindu reports: On Thursday, when she was greeted by a capacity crowd at the huge Assam Rifles ground, where a civic reception was accorded to her by the Agartala Municipal Councilial, and earlier in the day, when she was conferred the honorary D. Litt. Degree by Tripura University, Sheikh Hasina was overwhelmed with emotions of memories and historical affinity of people of her country and Tripura saying that the campus of Tripura University was the site of a training camp of Muktijoddhas during the Liberation War of 1971, Sheikh Hasina said she was proud to visit the same place after 40 years.
She recalled: "Tripura was in those days flooded with refugees, who were more than its own population. It was indeed a unique situation. Nevertheless, through the nine months of our liberation war, the people of Tripura and India stood by our side and helped selflessly the forsaken millions, giving them food, shelter and other basic necessities. Our freedom-fighters also received training and support on this side of the border, and eventually fought with our Indian friends to the final surrender of the occupation forces and liberation of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971. How can we not remember with gratitude our friends in need in Tripura and India?"81

In her address, she categorically affirmed that the Bangladesh would not allow any kind of extremist organization to use its land. She was given a Public Reception at the Assam Rifles' Ground by the Agartala Municipal Council which was attended by high profile dignitaries of the State including the Chief Minister of the State. She publicly recalled the unconditional support offered by the people of Tripura to the liberation Movement of Bangladesh and expressed her gratitude for that.82

It may be now concluded with the words of Sri Jitendra Choudhury, a well-known Tribal Leader of the State: For the development and peace of South Asia, the friendly relation between India and Bangladesh vis-a-vis Tripura is an urgent necessity. So, the slogan should be --- no conspirators be allowed to use the 'Holy Lands' of both the countries. This should be the main philosophy behind the Great Liberation Movement of Bangladesh.83

Notes and References

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3. ibid, p.11

4. Oral Interview of N.K. Datta, former Engineer in Chief, Public Works Depertment (PWD), Govt. of Tripura, at his residence on 3 April, 2012.
5. Sing, Brigadier Jagdev, AVSM- op.cit. p. 12


10. https://www.igovernment.in/site/India_approves_new_railway_link_Bangladesh

11. The Telegraph, Calcutta India 22 June, 2013

12. The Hindu Business Line, 19 April, 2011

13. The Times of India, 21 September, 2013

14. Husain, Syed Anwar, op.cit-p.94

15. Niazi, A.A.K.-The Betrayal of East Pakistan, Monohar, Pakistan, 1988, p.66

16. ibid- p.65

17. ibid- p.67


Also see the *Ananda Bazar* of 25th April, 1971 which reported: India protested the attack on the residence of Sri Monsur Ali, the Deputy Minister, in Sonamura on 12 April, at 11 pm. On 14/15 April-One Nayak Mr. Mani Kumar was shot dead while he was on duty. On 17 April, the Pak Army again attacked the bordering area under Sonamura (PTI, UNI)

------ Mohammed Ayoob and K. Subrahmanyam in their Book *THE LIBERATION WAR*, report on the inhuman activities of the Pak Army in Kamalpur, Tripura. They write: In view of the persistent shelling from across the border into Kamalpur village in Tripura which resulted in 22 civilian casualties and 90 wounded, the Indian Border Security Force and the Mukti Bahini, with fire support from the Indian Army, were compelled to destroy the Pakistani gun positions opposite to Kamalpur.


24. Habib, Haroon, op. cit. pp.91-92. Also see The *National Herald* of 22 May, 1971 which reports under the Headline: PROOF OF GENOCIDE AT AGARTALA HOSPITAL Which runs as follows: NEW DELHI, May 20- The General Hospital in Agartala presented a picture of inhuman atrocities of the Pakistan Army on the innocent East Pakistani Bengalis, writes a UNI Correspondent after visit to the border areas in the eastern region. Hardly three kilometres from the East Bangal Border the 260-bed hospital was overflowing with patients mostly victims of the trigger-happy Pak-Army. All its wards were crammed with in-patients when a party of Indian & foreign journalists visited the Hospital on Wednesday. It had 530 patients, more than double its capacity. All available space was occupied by the patients. The crowding was more conspicuous in the surgical ward where patients were those riddled with bullets or hit by shells.

Among the Pathetic cases were a boy of 13 and girls of 9. Both of whom had lost their
eyesights because of Pak shelling... Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed, a railway Engineer, had a heavy bandage on his head. He was shot by Pak soldiers who entered his office.


26. The *Tripura weekly*-23 June, July, 28 July,


30. Oral Interview with D.B. Datta, ex-Block Development Officer, Tripura on 19 November, 2012; Dr. Braiaja Gopal Roy, well-known leader of Forward Block, Tripura on 24 July, 2005 at his residence at Agartala, Samar Adya, the then well-known student leader, on 1 Nov. 2006 at his office, Agartala.


32. Oral Interview with D.B.Datta, the ex- BDO, Bishalgarh on 19.11.12 The Statement of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the *Lok Sabha* on 25 May, 1971.

33. Sing, Brigadier Jagdev, AVSM. op. cit. p.12


37. ibid. pp.28-29


41. ibid- pp.123-124; 130-133;


43. Oral Interview with Sri Keshab Chandra Banik S/o Late Harimohan Banik, at his residence at Julaibadi, South Tripura on 08-12-1909; he informed the Research Scholar that a group of refugees got themselves rehabilitated at a hilly area at Julaibari which they reclaimed and the hilly area is popularly known as Sharanarthi Tilla i.e. (Refugee Hillock); the Sharanarthi is generally used by the local people in lieu of refugee. Also, see The Daily Janakantha, 4 May, 2002, (p.4) which reported that the religious Minorities (the Hindus) from the Zianaidaha District of Bangladesh began to leave the country silently to go to India due to the fact that they were the victims of terrorist activities and insecurity, which was the resultant of the change of power in Bangladesh. Actually, the Awami League Government under Sheikh Hasina lost to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) under Khaleda Zia in 2001.

44. Saha, Rekha - op.cit. p.182


46. For details see *Gomati, Matree Bhasha Divas*, (Gomati, Mother Language Day) Special
Poetry issue, Govt. of Tripura, Information Cultural & Tourism Department. 1402(Bengali Era).


48. ibid.

49. ibid.

50. Debnath, Ranjit, the Director of School Education, in The *Souvenir, Matree Basha Diwas, ‘95, 21 February*. Mother Language Day Celebration Committee,'95, Directorate of School Education, Govt. of Tripura, Agartala.


55. Oral Interview with Samiran Roy, the Editor, the Tripura Darpan, (A daily newspaper, Published from Agartala)- on 21.2.2012.

56. ibid. And also Oral Interview with Anil Sarkar, Minister of Tripura, on 21.2.12 at his residence at Agartala.
57. The *Dainik Janakantha* (Published from Dhaka, Bangladesh) 21 February, 1995. Also see the Purvabhas, (a tri- Monthly Magazine in Bengali Published from Agartala) Sharad issue, 2000, Published by Sri Samir Dhar on behalf of the Purvabhas Prakashani. pp. 181-184.

58. Leaflet including programmes of 21 February, 1995, published by the Information, Cultural and Tourism Department, Govt. of Tripura.


61. The *Buli*, Souvenir of Matree Bhasha Mission, Kumarghat Branch, Tripura. 2014. p. 38. Oral Interview with Sri Anil Sarkar, Minister of Tripura, on 22.2.13 at his residence.

62. Oral Interview of Farukul Islam, Chief Executive Officer, Tripura Board of Wakf, at his office on 21.2.13.


66. ibid. p. 175; also vide The *Janakantha*, op .cit.

67. Oral Interview with Janab Sahid Choudhury, the then Member of Legislative Assembly, Tripura, on 5.10.2011 at his residence at Agartala


69. Oral Interview with Sri Anil Bhattacharjee (Now late) at his residence at Agartala on 16.4.2003.

70. Oral Interview with Habul Biswas, Secretary, the Agartala Export-Import Association at his residence on 22.2.13.

72. Saha, Rekha, loc. cit.


74. ibid. p. 226

75. The *Ajker Fariad*, 5 August, 2007


(ii) Oral Interview with Sri Sudhan Das, Member of Legislative Assembly, Tripura, on 8.12.13 at Rajnagar, Belonia.

(iii) Oral Interview with Sri Sudhir Das, Member of Legislative Assembly, Tripura, on 7.2.13 at Agartala.

(iv) Oral Interview with Obaidur Rahman, the First Secretary & Head of Mission, Bangladesh Visa Office at Agartala, who attended the said Function at Kailashahar on 30.2.14.

(v) Oral Interview with Mohit Pal, a Journalist and one of the chief organizers of the function on 30.2.14 at Agartala.

77. Oral Interview with Sir Amal Chakraborty, Secretary, Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) State Committee, on 12.3.13 at Agartala.

78. Oral Interview with Prof. Mihir Deb, at his residence at Agartala, on 30.09.2013.


(ii) *The Dainik Sambad*, 31 January, 2014 (front page news)

(iii) *The Hindu*, 3 April, 2013

(iv) *The Dainik Jugasankha*, Guwahati, 7 November, 2009 (front page news)
80. http/tripurapolice.nic.in/Extremist Incidents.htm.


82. ibid.