CHAPTER - II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Tripura is the smallest state of North-East India. The origin of the name 'Tripura' cannot be conclusively traced back to any recorded source of history. According to Captain Lewin, 'the origin of the name of Tipprach is doubtful'. A common belief is that the name Tripura has originated from Tripurasundari - the deity of the land. It is believed that originally the land was known as Tipra, meaning a land adjoining the waters. It is a fact that in days of yore the boundaries of Tripura extended up to the Bay of Bengal when its ruler held sway from the Garo Hill to Arakan. It might be that the name appropriately derived its origin from its nearness to water. This Tripura has subsequently been converted into Tipra and from Tipra to Tripura. Tripura is the smallest state of India and is situated in the north-east region of the country. It is surrounded almost on three sides - west, north and south by Bangladesh and Mizoram and is connected with the west of the country through Assam in the north east its area is 10,491.69 sq. kilometer.

The territory of Tripura has had a very long continued history dating almost from pre-historic times but strangely no information is available on the administration of education in the territory up to the mediaeval times. History of Tripura prior to the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal is completely
under darkness. For the study of ancient history of Tripura we have to collect and analyse the information scattered in coins and inscription. But there are limited and scanty. Most of the inscriptions and coins belonged to the Muslim period. No coins of the Tripura Royal Family have been discovered so far prior to the Muslim period. When the Muslim power was firmly established in Bengal, the chief of the Tipra Tribe rose in prominence in Tripura region and founded a kingdom which later on came to be known as Tripura. For this period we have various sources of information. We have contemporary Muslim accounts with which we can verify the accounts of Rajmata. From Muktul Hussain written by Muhammad Khan in 1646 A.D. we came to know that Hamja Khan one of the ancestors of Muhammad Khan had a fight with the ruler of Tripura Hamja Khan is regarded as the contemporary of Nasrat Shah and Deva Manikya of Tripura “Baharistan - i - Ghajbi” of Muja Nathan written in the first half of 17th century gave a detailed accounts of the Mughal conquest of Tripura during the reign of Joshodar Manikya a contemporary of Emperor Jahangir. There were also some European travelers and traders who visited India during the Mughal period, gave some information about Tripura. Ralof Fitch who visited Tripura in the later half of the 16th century stated that Tripura had continued wars with Arakan. Taverneer who visited Bengal in the second half of the 17th century gave some information about Tripura and its merchants whom he met at Dacca and Patna. Peter Heleys and Vanden Broucake gave some references of Tripura under Kalyan Manikya. We have a large number of coins issued by the ruler of Tripura during this period. These coins having date
and names of the kings and queens were issued on their occasions – coronation pilgrimage and conquests. Inscriptions in Sanskrit languages and Bengali scripts in several temples and stones are of great values of this period. In Muslim period Arbi, Parsi and some regional language was the medium of teaching.

After the fall of Shemser Gazi, Krishnamoni, the son of Mukunda Manikya took the title of Krishna Manikya and ascended the throne in 1760 A.D. and old Agartala became his capital. Very soon Krishna Manikya was involved in quarrels not only with Reza Khan the Foujdar of Chittagong but also with the English. Taking advantages of the confusion caused by the revolution of 1760 at Murshidabad, the king of Tripura withheld the payment of revenues. The English authorities in Calcutta who were keen to acquire further territory interested in this matter and so interfered. On 20th January 1761 Governor Vanritart wrote to the President and Council of the Factory of Islamabad as follows:

"with regard to the Tripperah Rajah as the Nowab's Foujdar has been obliged from his ill behaviour to take up arms against him, we desire that you will use your endeavours to reduce him to his due state of obedience to the government of Islamabad, acquainting us then what advantages may accrue to the company from the possession of that country and will answer any representations, the Nawab may make on the subject." Thus, the operations in Tripura were by then placed under orders of the Chittagong Council. Mr. Varlert, the Chief of Islamabad dispatched Lieutenant Mathews with two
hundred sepoys and two guns to Trioua on 24th February 1761 A.D. The king of Tripura was prepared to meet them in the fort of Kaliagar near the present Kamalasagar station. Realizing that he could not stand against the Foujdar and the English the two great enemies at the same time, Krishna Manikya put himself in their hands. According to the local tradition, it was due to the treachery of Bakshi, that the solders of Tripura fled away without giving any fight. Thus, the English flag was hoisted over the plains of Tripura.

It is significant to note that although Tripura was conquered by force arms in 1761, no political agent was appointed in the state till 1871.

The Mughals after their conquest of Tripura, occupied the low lands which were known as Chakla Roshnabad and collected revenue through the rulers of Tripura whom they considered as zaminders of chakla Roshnabad. Regarding the hills, the chief interest of the Mughals was to collect elephants from the rulers of Tripura as tribute and so long as they got them they did not disturb the king.

After the conquest of 'chakla Roshnabad' by the British force in 1761 A.D. the revenue for the first year was fixed as Rupees one lakh and one sicca. The revenue was collected from the plains of Tripura known as 'Chakla Roshnabad' and not from the hills. Accordingly, the hills became independent Tripura and the Rajah who is an ordinary Bengal Zamindar on the plains regions an independent province over 3000 square miles of upland owing no law but his
sovereign will bound by no treaty subject to no control safe in his 'obscurity from criticism or reform.'

Both as regards its constitution and its relations with the British Government, the state of Tripura differed alike from the independent native state of India and from those which were tributary and dependent. Besides being the ruler of hill Tipperah, the Raja is also the holder of a large zaminderi called Chakla Roshnabad situated in the plains of the Regulation District of Tripura. This Estate, which covers 589 square miles, is by far the most valuable portion of the Raja's possessions, and yield a larger revenue than the whole of the kingdom of Hill Tipperah. It is held to form with the state of Hill Tipperah an indivisible Raj and consequently, when ever the succession is disputed, the question is decided by the British courts of Law, whose judgement with regard to the zamindari has hither to been always accepted as deciding also the right to the throne.

In 1871, a political agent was appointed to reside at Agartala with the special object of protecting British interests on the frontier, which suffered from Lushai raids carried out through the state into British territory. Mr. A B Power was the first political agent for Tripura. It was explained to the kind that this appointment did not denote a policy that would in any way prejudice his interests or interfere with the lawful exercise of his authority within his state. The appointment of political agent at Agartala was abolished in 1878, the Magistrate and collector of Tripura becoming Ex-officio Political Agent with an Indian officer as Assistant Political Agent at Agartala.
The late 19th century or at any rate, the period between 1871 and 1890 formed the 'Great Divide' in the history of Tripura. When one era ended and another began in the year 1871, the first ever political agency was set up at Agartala, the state capital, while in 1890, the agency was abolished. In between was a period of covert conflict of two antithetical forces; the forces of change represented by the British political agents, and the forces of tradition, represented by the Tripura Raj, under Birchandra Manikya (1862 - 1896) out of the conflict however, gradually emerged a modern Tripura. The two decades of political agency, thus, constituted the traditional phase of Tripura to modernization.

The duties assigned to the political agent were broadly of two categories - one relating to the Raja’s relations with the Frontier tribes and the other regarding the Raja’s internal administration. The Agent was instructed to travel about the frontier with a view to open friendly communications with the various tribes, he was also to control the Raja’s relation with them. In 1889 Birchanda informed the Bengal Government that he was willing to appoint the Assistant Political Agent, Uma Kanta Das, as his Minister, if the government has no objection. The later readily agreed as Das was not only a trusted officer but well acquainted with the problem of state also. On April 15, 1890, Das was relieved of the duties of the Assistant Political Agent, and he joined the Maharaja’s service as the Minister. There was no need to continue the Agency in Tripura, as one of the trusted and experienced officers of the Bengal Government was now in full charge of the affairs of Tripura. The different political Agents
published their reports. The report based on Education, Municipality, Fiscal etc different types of matter.

The educational report on 1872 - There are two schools in the state supported by the Raja, that at Agartala conducted on the same principle, as our Zillah schools, two masters teach English and two Bengali and Sanskrit. It muslers between thirty and forty scholars, many of whom belong to Raja’s family (his sons do not attend the schools. They are being taught privately and are all learning English). Others are son of men holding office in the state of talukdars living in the vicinity and others. One or two Mohammedans also attend. Nearly all belong to the better classes. The school is managed by a committee. One school was at Agartala and another school was opened by the Deputy Superintendent at Koilashar. The hill people are totally uneducated, while a few of the inhabitants of the plains on the border received instruction from village muktabs. The headmaster of the school at Agurtollah is away for the Durga Puja vacation, taking the keys of the school record boxes with him.

In the year 1873, there are two schools in the state, one at Agartala and the other at Koilashar. The school at Agartala is conducted on the same principles as Government Zillah Schools. There are two English teachers, one Bengali and one Sanskrit. There were 79 scholars on the books, a considerable number were being taught in English. Most of the boys are related to the Raja’s family, being sons of Thakoors, and some are sons of Talookdars and others in the vicinity. The school used to be supported by the Raja and was called the Maharaja’s
school'. But fees were taken from the scholars and monthly deductions made from the salaries of amlahs by way of voluntary subscriptions to the maintenance of the school.

The school at Kailashar was opened in November 1872. The grant from the state being Rs. 15 per month. There are now 46 students attending the school, of these 22 are Hindus, 10 Manipuris, 6 Muslims, 1 Goorkha and 1 Assamese, 6 of the boys learn English. When the school was first opened, there was an erroneous impression that the scholars were to be made converts to Christianity, at least, that was the excuse given. In the Agartala school, there were 72 boys on the roll, consisting of 33 sons of Thakoor, eight Deshwali. The daily average attendance was 41. the income of the school which was obtained partly by a grant the Raja and partly by private subscriptions was insufficient to meet the expenses, and the consequence was that the committee were obliged to reduce the salaries of the teachers.

The Koilashar school as 31 boys on the roll, consisting of 11 Hindus, seven Muslims, 10 Manipuris and 3 Goorkhas. Of this, number 10 boys learn English and Bengali and the rest Bengali only. The school was supported by a contribution from the state of Rupees 180 per annum, which only serves for the payment of the school masters salary. The other expenses are met by what is obtained on account of schooling fees.

In 1876, there had been some progress in education during the year. Statement shows what schools are open and the number of pupils attending
Orders have been issued for the establishment of a new school at Udaipur. A new school has been established in the Manipuri settlement at Agartala. New pathsalas have been established at Bisalghar and old Agartala and a girls as well as a boys pathsala has been opened at the Christian village of Mariamnagar. A Muktab for instruction in Persian had also been established at Agartala. At that time this institution did not derive any support from the state, and it was maintained at the expense of the Raja’s family tutor. The tutor of the Raja’s family had been entrusted with the supervision of the Education Department.

In 1897 many new schools had been opened during the year, particularly in pergunnah Bisalghar and there had been a real advance in the matter of primary education. The statement annexed to the report shows the number of schools in existence at the close of the year to be 18, against 6 at the close of the previous year. The school at the Udaypur and the Persian Maktab and Sanskrit Tole at Agartala are really old institutions revised during the year. The school at Kailashar was a very useful and well managed institution. The educational officers had shown much zeal for new girls schools as had been started. The Manipuri had no objection to send their daughters to these schools, and the numbers in attendance are large. The total of pupils in all the schools is stated to be 430 of whom 53 are girls. The number in the previous year was only 186. Having regards to the present circumstances of the people to the facility of larger and compact villages, to the fact that education can not be introduced among the
hill people and to the high rates of stipend which must be paid to the teachers of the existing schools.

Upto the year 1889 - 90, the number of schools was raised from 16 to 19 and number of pupil also increased. Another important step for the improvement or educational facilities was taken by upgrading the standard of examination of the English school at Agartala upto the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University.

From proceeding No. 19 of 1302 T.E. corresponding to 1892 A.D. it is learnt that in view of the status and economic condition of the common people pf the state, residing in places other than the capital, it was taken for granted that only primary education would be helpful to them and hence to man the pathsalas, it was decided to hold a special class in the vernacular schools of the capital to train the teachers of pathsalas. The successful teachers should then start such pathsalas in their respective village. The minimum qualification fixed for such teachers was ability to understand the text of Bodhodaya, a Bengali primer introduced in Primary Schools. It was further mentioned that out of 8 teachers, there must be two each from Manipuri, Tripuries and Bengali Committees and two from Kuki and Halam community.

During the rule of Maharaja Radhakishore Manikya (1906 - 1909) a new high school, one girls school, a few primary schools, one tole and a free boarding school for the children for the royal family and Thakur boys were established. A free second grade college was also started at Agartala in 1901.
Education is very backward and in 1901 only 2.3% of the population could read and write. In 1903 the number of pupils under instruction was 3,125 (boys 3,008 and girls 117). The number of schools in the same year was 103, including an arts college, a secondary school, 99 primary schools and two special schools.

The Maharaja, however, took keen interest in the advancement of education, particularly among the backward communities and provided cash reward to each tribal child attending school. A reward examination was also held in winter at several centres. The successful candidates as well as the teachers used to receive monetary rewards immediately after the examination. Besides the hill scholarship, a good number of stipends were also provided to the deserving students for higher education. In this connection it may also be mentioned that education in all stages had been free in Tripura upto 1915 - 16 and with a view to encourage self-help and also to make permission for the various needs of students, a scale of fees was introduced only in three existing high English schools from the beginning of the year 1916-17.

During 1916-17, some principles were laid down in regard to the medium of instruction. It was stated, 'In the M.E. and other lower schools teaching English, the medium of instruction shall be the vernacular language except in the case of Arithmetic. Geography and English were Anglo Vernacular text books would be of greater help to students. English being taught as a second
language and from class VII upwards in the H.E. schools all instructions to be given through the medium of English language.

But still the enrolment in primary schools did not come up appreciably. The administration took it as an apathy on the part of the parents who were not at all interested in schooling of their children. A circular was however issued in 1920 from the Department of Education, urging upon the Darogas, Nayabs and Tehsildars to take special interest in the matter of increasing the number of students and helping the teachers and inspecting staff in meeting the requirements of the schools.

A circular was issued by the Education Department in 1931 fixing admission fees and tuition fees for children reading upto class II. The circular stated that free studentship seemed to be the cause of dropout among the students. The Tripuris, Manipuris, Thakur boys and princess were however exempted from paying such fees.

A very bold step seemed to have been taken by the administration in 1931-32 when compulsory primary education was introduced in the state capital - Agartala under the State Act 2 of 1932. But, as the scope of the act was confined only to the municipal areas of the town covering the students of only four primary schools for all practical purposes, it is doubtful whether the act served any real purpose. After five years it was decided to expand its scope upto the valley of Howrah and to the linked areas of the sub-divisional town.
From the table given below it will be evident that the educational facilities even at the primary stage did not increase in proportion to the increase in population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Number of pupil</th>
<th>Percentage of primary children to total school going children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1907-08</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>4,011</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>4,842</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>4,215</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>5,110</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-46</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>5,115</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The anomaly between the increase in number of pupils and decrease in the percentage may be due to exaggeration of figures up to the twenties but that does not disprove that educational facilities remained almost static during this long period.

Tripura acceded to the Indian Union on August 13, 1947 but it took two years for its final integration which was effected on October 15, 1949. A new chapter in the history of educational administration in Tripura seems to have started from this period.

The progress in the field of general education has all the more been remarkable. It has already been stated that little attention was paid towards the growth of primary education during the time of the Maharajhas. Even in 1945-46, there were only 123 Primary Schools, mostly with classes I & II in Tripura. The total enrolment was @ 5,115 thus covering only 7.9 percent of the school going children of primary stage age group. But even this number does not give
the real picture of the condition of education prevailing at that time. Because it is not gain said that “the primary schools, whatever their numbers, functioned more in name and as emblems of royal dispensations than as any stable foundation for educational growth and this state of affairs continued up to the merger of this princely state with the Union of India in October, 1949 and even for quite some time after merger”.

In the year 1964, there were altogether 1,333 primary schools including 600 Junior Basic Schools in this territory and of there, 1317 were under management of the administration and the rest under private management. The total enrolment at the primary stage of all types of schools was 1,15,369, the number of girl students being 42,087 forming over 36 percent of the total. The total number of teachers was 3,411 and of them 1,072 happened to be trained.

In this background the modernization of Primary Education and its Curriculum started in Tripura during 1970s and it has been doing the same job till date. Now Tripura has become the second literate state in India and first in North East India overtaking Mizoram. In this context the quality primary education is to be examined by way of examining its curriculum so further initiative can be taken for quality primary education in the state. The researcher has tried to examine the scenery of curriculum in the world and most specifically in India so far improvement in the content of learning is concerned in the next chapter.