Chapter I

Introduction

Tripura is a small hill state, situated in the northeast of India. It covered an area of 10,477, sq.km. It lies between $91^\circ10'$ and $92^\circ21'$ east longitude and $22^\circ56'$ and $24^\circ32'$ north latitude. It is encircled by Bangladesh on three sides with long open borders of 839 km. Its only nexus with the Indian Union is simply in its northeastern border where roughly 162 km of its opening forms a boundary line partly in the north with the Karimganj district of Assam and partly in the east with Mizoram. On the other side of its border, it was encircled by the districts of Bangladesh like, Sylhet, Comilla, Noakhali, and Chittagong Hill Tracts respectively.

Though an independent Princely State, from 18th century onwards, Tripura began to lose possession on its own territory. The rulers of Tripura were subdued by the Mughals in 1722 and were forced to cede the greater part of their plain territories known as ‘Chakla Roshnabad’ and pay tributes for the retention of the rest. Thus Tripura, so long a mighty kingdom covering a wide area, gently submerged into mere forgetfulness by turning itself into a mere province within the Mughal Empire. However, the British policy towards Tripura was to some extent different from the general feudatory policy of Mughal rule.
The English East India Company came to be in possession of Chakla Roshnabad under the grants from Nawab Mirzafar and Mirkasim, which was eventually included and confined in the Dewani, granted to the Company by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam in 1765 A.D. Interestingly, when the British came into contact with Tripura they found a peculiar form of Government as well as administration existing in Tripura. The whole territory of the state was divided into two parts – the hills and the plains. In the hill, the ruler was independent, but in the plains, which were known a ‘Chakla Roshnabad’, the ruler was mere a Zamindars under the Nawab of Bengal.

Therefore, during the colonial rule, Tripura remained divided into two parts – the hills –, which was commonly called by the British as ‘Hill Tipperah’ (after 1920 as Tripura) and the ‘Chakla Roshnabad’.

According to the Traverse Survey of the Survey Department, Chakla Roshnabad covers an area of 533.77 square miles.\(^1\) The Zamindari of Chakla Roshnabad enclosed the vast areas of the districts of Tipperah (Comilla), Noakhali and Sylhet of the then Colonial Bengal.\(^2\)

Tripura continued to be a Princely State until it merged into the Union of India on 15\(^{th}\) October, 1949. However, after the partition of India in 1947, the Zamindari of Chakla Roshnabad went into the hand of erstwhile East Pakistan and the land of Tripura was confined only in the hilly region. From the Independence of India and her partition (15\(^{th}\) August, 1947) to the amalgamation of Tripura with the Indian Union

The year 1947 is historically remarkable, not only from Indian perspective but from the viewpoint of Tripura too. India attained her independence in the year in lieu of partition. The long deserving independence never came to the Indians in a form of delight or pleasures rather it brought a nightmare for them in the form of ‘partition’, especially for the peoples of Punjab and Bengal. These two states of Independent India witnessed the worst effect of partition in the form of mass butchery of common people due to communal riots and refugee. However, the unfortunate event on the part of Tripura was that, though the state was an independent princely state, she had to face the adverse effect of partition of India in the form of displaced persons and refugee. Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur though decided to amalgamate Tripura with the Indian Union before her independence but even before her amalgamation (15th October 1949) Tripura had to face the adverse consequence of migration. These flows of immigrants increased during the 50s’ and reached its zenith during the independence movement of Bangladesh in the year 1971.

Hence, it is an attempt to investigate historically the various phases of migration in Tripura from 1900 to 1971. An effort was made to find out the relation between the various phases of migration and the socio-economic transformation in Tripura. In this regards, from the theoretical aspects of migration it has been tried to investigate the various natures of migration in Tripura and its impact on the small hilly state. The present study also tried to analyse the connection between the political cataclysms in India during the period under study,
the political transformation of the state Tripura during the period, migration in Tripura in its various forms and the socio-economic impact of migration on Tripura especially by the Bengali immigrants.

**STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:**

Tripura was one of those native States, which almost readily agreed to merge in the Indian Union in the wake of independence on August 15, 1947. Until 14 October 1949, Tripura was a Princely State and thereafter it was integrated with the Indian Union as a Part ‘C’ State under direct administrative control of the Government of India.

Tripura began to feel the adverse impact of communal tension and political turmoil in Colonial India, culminating in the partition of India from a much earlier date. Partition of India disrupted the chain of socio-economic relationship that Tripura built up with Colonial Bengal, especially the eastern part of the province, which formed East Pakistan in 1947, and subsequently Bangladesh since 1971.

The strongest impact of partition of India on Tripura was exerted through the inflow of the migrants. Moreover, this flow of influx continues until it reached its zenith in 1971 during the period of Indo-Pak War.

The subject matter of the study as the title indicates is to deal with the nature of migration in Tripura from 1900 to 1971 and its impact. Due to several factors like Tripura Royal administrative requirements, communal anxiety and political disorder in Colonial India, partition of India, Indo-Pak wars and the communal and political turmoil in the East Pakistan, the people from that country migrated to Tripura and a major section of Bengali migrants who left for Tripura
transforms the demographic pattern of the state. The migration of the people during this period not only added a number of persons in the state but it also altered substantially the ethnic composition of Tripura’s population and also the resource use pattern. Hence, it becomes necessary for the researcher to investigate the nature of migration in Tripura in a historical perspective and to find out its socio-economic impact.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE:

Tripura, a small hilly state of northeast India, has long been neglected not only by the mainstream politics and administration but also by the academics. However, from the last few decades of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century various attempts had been made by the historians and the writers to highlight the history of Tripura.

Gayatri Bhattacharyya in her book Refugee Rehabilitation and Its Impact on Tripura’s Economy highlighted the flow of refugees into Tripura. In the book the socio-economic profile of the refugees are analysed, information regarding the rehabilitation of the refugees are arranged and the economic consequences of refugee rehabilitation in the state are discussed.

S N Guha Thakurta in his book Tripura highlighted the physiography of the State, its composite culture, its agriculture and industrial prospects and its various problems.

Pravas Ranjan Bhattacharjee in his book Economic Transition in Tripura, highlighted the causes of the economic transition in Tripura in the past 20th century, the nature and quantum of its physical resources
and the manner of their exploitation, economic institutions of organizing productive activities and the policies and programmes pursued by the community, rulers and the Government. He has also emphasized the significant aspects of political and social dualism that have conditioned the development process in the state.

Jagadish Gan Chaudhuri in his book *A Corpus of Tripura* highlighted the socio-economic life style of some specific tribes of Tripura and the impact of modernization on tribal life. His books like, *An Anthology of Tripura, Tripura, the land and its people* was the compilation of some essays written by various scholars and academics regarding the land and the politics, economy, social structure and social customs of its people.

J.B.Ganguli in his book *The Benign Hills* highlighted the rapid population growth of the state due to the immigrants and the resource use pattern both in the hills and the plains.

Bani Prasanna Misra, in his book, *Socioeconomic Adjustments of Tribals, Case Study of Tripura Jhumias*, gave much emphasis on the social and economic condition of the tribal people of Tripura, especially in the hills, their administration, demographic changes and its impact on the Jhum cultivation.

Bijon Mohanta in his book *Tripura in the light of Socio-Political Movements since 1945* highlighted how the socio-political advancements in Tripura had taken place through the united struggles of both the tribals and the non-tribal people especially the Bengalis.
S.R. Bhattacharjee in his book *Tribal Insurgency in Tripura*, discussed about the changing demographic pattern of the state due to the immigration and the features of tribal insurgency in the state.

Dipannita Chakraborty, in her book *The Land Question in Tripura* highlighted the connection between land systems and population growth in the state, a result of the massive refugee influx along with giving away of land for several economic and ecological necessities.

Besides these books, some other books of general nature like “District Gazetteer”, “Census Hand Book”, “Administrative Reports” etc. refer to some points, which have been used in the study.

**IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH GAPS BASED ON LITERATURE REVIEW**

The writers tried their best to highlight the socio-political and economic conditions of Tripura in the 20th century. In this regard, they mentioned in their writings the political crisis in Tripura before the independence of India and its partition, its amalgamation with the Indian Union, the migration from the East Pakistan, the refugee rehabilitation process in Tripura, its demographic changes and the political turmoil emerged due to the great influx.

However, the works referred to above are either some scattered contributions or partial analysis offering scope for further study of history. There is a fairly large and varied literature on migrants who came into North-east India from East Pakistan, but there is an almost complete absence of writings on the large scale migration in Tripura before its amalgamation and its post amalgamation period up to 1971. Therefore, ample scope remains for the further research of the
migrational period 1900 - 1971 of Tripura and its socio-economic impact on Tripura.

The researcher has consulted the available books, journals, archival documents, magazines related with this topic and it is observed that the topic of this dissertation has not been thoroughly investigated yet.

OBJECTIVES:

The basic objective of the present dissertation is to investigate the nature of the migration, which occurred in Tripura from the year 1900 to 1949 and from 1949 to 1971. Beside this, other chief objectives, which is out, are-

a) To analyze the theoretical aspects of Migrations in context of Tripura during the period under review.

b) The nature of differences between the two migrational periods.

c) The demographic changes, which occurred due to this migration.

d) Changes in the social conditions of Tripura.

e) Changes in the economic conditions of Tripura.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY:

The methodology adopted is descriptive and analytical in its account. It has highlighted the theoretical aspects of migration and based on those theoretical aspects it was tried to find out the nature of migration in Tripura from the year 1900 to 1971. The structural changes in demography of the state and the socio-economic impacts and consequences have been studied in an historical perspective.
Discussing these issues in a historical perspective requires a thorough study of the various theories of migration, census data, administrative documents, statistical records etc. and it is intended to cover maximum possible extent related with the topic. Hence, much more emphasis is given on collecting primary data.

Hence, both primary and secondary sources have been made of relevant topics, seminar papers, reports, journals, notifications, declarations, letters, and documents of the princely regime as well as those of the subsequent state governments, the digital collections of various libraries, internet and various books by distinguished authors consulted for preliminary observations.

In the present study, the archival materials like Royal administrative records, annual administration report of the Union territory of Tripura, published and un-published official papers, monographs and correspondence of high officials available in Tripura State Archives, Agartala and Education Directorate, Government of Tripura, Ramaprasad Gobeshonagar, Agartala form as unique sources for the primary data. Many unpublished documents, monographs, newspapers of those specific periods, various Government reports, which were not preserved by the Government of Tripura as well as by the Royal family of Tripura, from the personal collection of Late Ramaprasad Dutta have been consulted.

Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura was another major source for primary data. In the institute, almost all the census reports of Tripura, Statistical Records, Imperial Gazetteers, Tripura District Gazetteers, etc. have been consulted.
In addition, various records, documents, letters, reports, agreements etc. from the various digital library viz. Digital Library of India, Digital library of West Bengal Government, Digital Library of Delhi University, Digital Library of Osmania University, Digital Library of NEHU, Digital Library of California University, etc. were accessed. The website like www.archives.org also are major sources of primary data.

Some personal interviews have been taken in quest of materials. However, the interview of Mr. Robin Sen Gupta, the veteran filmmaker of Tripura and the only photographer who captured the whole episode of Bangladesh Liberation War and Bengali refugees in Tripura in the year 1971, in his camera, is much informative.

Various secondary sources as articles in magazines, journals, and books have been consulted which are preserved in the Birchandra State Central Library, various Public Libraries of the sub-divisions of Tripura, Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura.

However, the major sources of journals and articles are National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content, Digital Library of California University, National Library of Australia – Digital collections, Glasgow Digital Library, Digital Library of Delhi University, Digital library of West Bengal Government and UGC-infonet e-journals consortium of Assam University, Silchar.

CHAPTERISATION:

The entire work has been divided into eight chapters including the present one, which is simply introductory and contains the main
themes of the study along with a brief history of the state highlighting the various forms of migration in a historical perspective both the world and India as a whole and Tripura in particular. The methodology, which were adopted, and the sources of various data are also explained in this chapter.

Mobility is a distinctive trait of human society and various trends of migration is experienced by the human race for ages. The present distribution of human population over the world is the outcome of that trend of migration. The modern history of international migration is generally divided into four periods – viz. mercantile period (1500 – 1800), industrial period, period of limited migration and post-industrial migration. In the mercantile period, world migration was dominated by flows out of Europe and stemmed from colonization and economic growth under mercantile capitalism. In this period, the Europeans came to inhabit large portions of America, Africa and Asia. However, the exact number of migrants are un-known but it is true that the European migrants dominate the large parts of the world. The industrial period of migration begins from the 19th century and stemmed from industrial development in Europe and the spread of capitalism to former colonies in the New World. During the period of industrialization in Europe large scale of migration occurred. The last part of this period, considered as the “period of economic globalization” was characterized by huge flows of human being. In the initial stage of globalization the European migrants generally choose the European colonies, “that were themselves in the throes of rapid

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industrialization and development. The United States by itself absorbed around 60% of Europe’s total outflow and another 25% of the emigrants were scattered among Argentina, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.\(^5\)

The next important period is the ‘period of limited migration’. Due to the outbreak of the World War I and II, the migration rate all over the world was decreased. The chauvinistic restrictions imposed by the various countries and Great Depression of 1930’s virtually stopped all the movements. The movement that occurred during the World War II was “largely of refugees and displaced persons and was not tied strongly to the rhythms of economic growth and development”.\(^6\) In the post-industrial period of migration, a rapid growth of migration was observed worldwide. Migration now became a global phenomenon and its scope became global. Since 1960, Europeans have comprised an increasingly smaller fraction of world immigration flows and emigration from Africa, Asia and Latin America has increased dramatically. The variety of destination countries has also grown viz. Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands. During the 1970s, even long-term countries of emigration such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal began receiving immigrants from the West Asia and Africa. After the rapid growth of oil prices in 1973 several less developed but capital-rich nations in the Persian Gulf also began to sponsor massive labor migration as well. By the 1980s, international migration spread in Asia, not just to Japan but also to newly

\(^5\)Ibid. p. 3.  
\(^6\)Ibid.
industrilised countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.\(^7\)

In the Indian perspective, image of migration is rather different. The 20th century India witnessed three phases of migration viz. – i) during the period of Independence and the partition, especially from 1947 – 1952, ii) migration from 1952 – 1971, iii) migration from 1971 till date.

The persons those who have migrated from the East as well as from the West Pakistan to India are considered as refugees. Nevertheless, the definition of refugees as given by the 1951 Convention of Refugee is not relevant in the case of refugees of the post-partitioned India. The migrants from the 1947 to 1952 were considered as the ‘Old Migrants’. During the period of 1964-65, a huge number of refugees came to India due to the communal riots in Khulna and Dacca and the flows continued as the Indo – Pak war broke out in 1965. Moreover, those people were truly refugees and not migrants. This flows of refugees from East Pakistan continued until 1971.

The international migrants or the refugees are not generally acknowledged by the host country but it was a surprising event in the world history that the migrants were welcomed by the small princely state of Tripura. It is evident that in the 19th century and before the amalgamation in the 20th century the migrants especially the Bengali people entered Tripura from Bengal and settled there after getting the royal patronage. The kings of Tripura welcomed the Bengali immigrants and patronized them for their valuable contributions into the various fields of administration and for their contribution to the

\(^7\)Ibid. p. 4.
economic development of the State through recovering and bringing more and more lands under plough cultivation. Accordingly, Tripura became a place of endurance for the landless Bengali peasants of undivided India. It is therefore obvious that after partition a large number of Bengali migrants entered into Tripura for easy settlement. The inflow of migrants in Tripura, after independence, continued up to 1971.

Movements of immigrants were not a new phenomenon for the state Tripura. Tripura began to witness the flow of immigrants right from the last quarter of the 19th century and before its amalgamation Tripura witnessed a large number of immigrants especially from colonial Bengal immigrated into the state in search of jobs and livelihood. Moreover, due to smooth association between the colonial Bengal and Hill Tipperah, there was an excellent arrangement of socio-economic interaction, which started in the last part of the 19th century and carried on up to its merger with the Indian Union. This close affinity between the colonial Bengal and Hill Tipperah caused the movements of the people from one place to another.

Maharaja Radha Kishore Deb Manikya was the ruler of Tripura when this hilly region put her step in the 20th century. The last part of the Manikya dynasty of Tripura witnessed the emergence of a new culture in Tripura, which was the outcome of the migration from the Colonial Bengal and from the adjoining territories of Hill Tipperah.

Whether the rulers of Tripura whole-heartedly wanted to make a close affinity with Colonial Bengal is a matter of long discussion, but it is true that they had to admit the Bengalis into their territory to run the administration and other services. To modernize the administrative
system, revenue, judiciary etc. the ruler of Tripura was totally dependent on the educated intelligentsia of Colonial Bengal provinces. In addition, the rulers of Tripura, to extent plough cultivation and to increase the land revenue encouraged the Bengali cultivators of the neighbouring British districts to immigrate into the State. The Jangalabadi system introduced by the ruler of Tripura also encouraged the Bengali cultivators of the adjoining territories to immigrate into Tripura.

In Tripura, the people those who penetrated before the independence cannot be considered as refugees. On the basis of the documents like Tripura State Gazette Sankalan, 1903-1949, Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol.VI, by W.W.Hunter, Somendrachandra Deb Barma, Census Bivarani, 1341 T.E. (1931), Census Report 1310 T.E. (1901), they are truly economic migrants as they settled there to fulfill their economic interests. The people those who entered the state after independence and its amalgamation with the Indian Union are considered as displaced person or the refugees. The term migrant was also used by the Government of Tripura. However, according to the Census reports of India and different Refugee Registration Acts in India⁸ those immigrants can be considered as refugees. That flow of refugees continued until Bangladesh attained her independence in 1971.

Hence, two phases of migration has been observed in Tripura in the 20th century, which not only increased the number of population of

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⁸ The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Foreigners Order, 1948 are the primary documents dealing with the treatment of foreigners in India. Article 2 of the 1939 Registration of Foreigners Act defines a foreigner as “a person who is not a citizen of India.” The Foreigners Act of 1946 and the Foreigners Order of 1948 also uses this definition of a “foreigner”, especially the refugees.
the state but also altered substantially the ethnic composition of Tripura’s population and the resource use pattern. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the nature of migrations of the two different phases of this study and its impact on the social order and economy of the state.

Chapter II deals with various aspects of migration from the theoretical point of view. An effort was made to find out a relation between various theory of migration and its nature. In this chapter, various forms of migration have been discussed and it is tried to find out the application of those forms of migration into Tripura. Various phases of migration in Tripura have been analysed and the terminological differences, which occurred due the change of various phases, are undertaken. For better understanding, the chapter has been divided into two-segment viz. section I – Theories of Migration and Tripura and section II - Migration, Terminological variation and Tripura.

Chapter III deals with the nature of migration in Tripura from the year 1900 to 1947. To analyse the nature of migration, various causes behind the migration into Tripura are discussed. The close affinity between the Colonial Bengal and Hill Tipperah, which was the guiding force behind the migration, is studied. The intensions behind the rulers of Tripura to acknowledge those immigrants especially the Bengali immigrants are investigated in this chapter. The facilities provided by the ruling family to those immigrants are explored and based on the sources it is tried to demarcate the various forms of immigrants and to analyse their terminological variations.
In chapter IV the nature of migration into Tripura from the year 1947 to 1971 are analysed. Causes behind the huge influx of immigrants into Tripura are investigated, fluctuation in the flow of immigrants are highlighted, delineating the various forms of immigrants with their terminological differences.

In chapter V, a comparative study between the two phases of migration in Tripura, i.e. from 1900 to 1947 and from 1947 to 1971 is analysed based on the data and upshots of the previous two chapters.

In chapter VI the impact of migration into the society of Tripura are analysed. The demographic pattern of the state, which was transformed due the huge influx of immigrants especially by the Bengali immigrants, has an impact on the society, which was once dominated by the aborigines of the State. The fast penetrating Bengali culture and traditions into the Tribal society of Tripura during the period of this study, is the main theme of this chapter.

Chapter VII deals with the effect of migration on the economy of the state. The changing demographic pattern of the state, pressure on land, growth of urban and semi-urban centres, fragmentation of lands, changes in the techniques of cultivation, urbanization, changes in the agricultural production and other economic aspects of migration are analysed in the chapter.

The last chapter, i.e. chapter VIII deals with the ultimate findings of the whole thesis. In this chapter, the present study tries to find out the relation between the nature of migration and its impact and also between migration and developmental process, especially in Tripura.