



# Autonomy Movements in Tripura- A Historical Study

*Dr.Prabir Datta,*

*Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Adwaita Malla Barman Smriti Mahavidyalaya (Affiliated to Tripura University), Amarpur, Tripura-799101, at present deputed at IASE (Institute of Advanced Studies in Education), Kunjaban, Agartala, Tripura, India.*

## **Abstract:**

Tripura, an ancient state in Northeast India with rich traditions, has its long history since the ancient period. The significant book called 'Rajmala' detailed the historical discourses about Tripura. According to Rajmala, King Tripura was born into the Chandra dynasty and the state derived its name from him. The tale of King Yayati's son Druha and the Rajasuya yagna is likely mythical. The lineage of Tripura's kings continued for 93 generations. India being a free country signed an agreement called 'The Tripura Merger Agreement' in 1949 and as a result of the Agreement Tripura joined the Indian Union on certain conditions. After the joining of Tripura to the Indian union a new beginning regarding the nature of state politics came to light in the form of 'autonomy movements' for ensuring the rights of the aboriginal people. In this background, the present study has endeavoured to delve deep into the matter concerned.

**Key words:** Social movements, Aborigines, Janasiksha, Autonomy, Modernisation, Movement, TTAADC, 49th Constitution-Amendment.

**Aims and Objectives of the Study:** The following are the aims and objectives of the study:

- i. To trace the historical perspective of autonomy movement in Tripura.
- ii. To recapitulate the nature and outcome of autonomy movement in Tripura.
- iii. To highlight the constitutional status resulted from autonomy movement in Tripura.

**Research Questions:** For the present analysis, certain research questions have been framed and they are mentioned below:

- i. What is the historical basis and perspective of autonomy movements in Tripura?
- ii. Why did autonomy movements break out in Tripura?
- iii. To what an extent have the movements been successful to ensure autonomy for the people concerned?

**Methodology:** The present study being qualitative in nature attempted to find out the nature of autonomy movements in the light of historical perspective. The research wanted to understand the situation and context that led to the autonomy movements through several and successive stages. To gain insight into the issues and facts, necessary discussions were held with a few distinguished leaders of the aborigines and with the existing officials of the TTAADC. For the study data have been collected from both primary

sources and secondary sources. Thereafter, the data gathered for the said purpose have been interpreted and analyzed to throw light into the facts

## **INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

Socio-political movements have played too important a role in human commonwealth. They throw light on the dynamic aspect of the human society and also on various problems which have been in existence since decades and centuries. They represent a powerful instrument of social change. Some movements have brought about changes – some minor, some far-reaching. These movements may last for years or even decades. They play a vital part in the process by which socio-political problems are brought to public attention. These movements have taken place in the religious, political, economic, educational and other fields. In India several Socio-political movements have come off before and after independence. Tripura is not an exception to it.

Socio-political movements occurred in Tripura have played too significant a role in changing and shaping the life of the people of State. In fact the modernization process as well as the present democratic system of administration in Tripura is nothing but the direct outcome of these movements. Here a brief discussion of some of the important socio-political movements in Tripura has been mused upon. These are: The Janasiksha Movement, the Tribal Autonomy Movement and the Refugee Rehabilitation Movement.

### **The Janasiksha Movement**

After World War II got over, the Tripura Rajya Janasiksha Samiti was formed at a meeting taken place in the house of Hemanta Debbarma at Durga Chowdhury Para of Sadar on 27th December 1945 (11 Poush 1335 Twipra Era). It should be mentioned here that the term Janasiksha (mass education) was proposed by Jogendra Debbarma (teacher) of Hermabari (Debbarma, 2016, p. 69).

The Janasiksha Samiti was formed at the initiative of 11 educated tribal youths of Tripura. The important of them were – Sudhanwa Debbarma, President (a teacher of Umakanta Academy); Dasarath Debbarma, Vice-President; and Hemanta Debbama, Secretary. Amongst the other members of the organization were – Aghor Debbarma, Nilmani Debbarma, Surja Kumar Debbarma, Pravat Debbarma, Hiran Debbarma. The Samiti was a voluntary organization and the initiative to form the organization was taken mainly by Sudhanwa Debbarma, Aghore Debbarma and Hemnata Debbarma since 1942 (Debbarma, 2016, p. 63). The Janasiksha Movement was organized by the Tripura Rajya Janasiksha Samiti from 1945 till 1948. Afterwards, its aims and objectives were materialized by 'The Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad.'

**Context and causes of the Movement:** Some developments, background and causes of the Janasiksha Movement or mass education movement are mentioned below:

**Impact of the World War II:** The situation arising out of World War II necessitated the emergence of this type of Samiti. After the War, socio-economic condition of the people both tribal and non-tribal deteriorated. The standard of livelihood of the tribal people became worse than it was before World War II.

**Educational Cause:** Education to the common people was totally denied. The then King was indifferent to the question of mass education. As a result, the emergent tribal middle class went ahead to spread education amongst the common people.

**Economic Cause:** The economic system could not bring material advantage in the tribal society. The state represented the most backward agrarian economy of a feudal type. All classes of labourers, working men, artisans and *jhoomais* were compelled to work almost without any remuneration for the princes and their officials.

**Social Cause:**The condition of tribal society in Tripura prior to the Janasiksha Movement was much too deplorable. Superstition and prejudices had taken upper hand. Ignorance stood at the root of all exploitation. The educated tribal youths understood the need of the hour and they came forward to launch a movement for freeing people from the clutch of the age-old superstitions.

**Unemployment Problem:**The educated and half-educated tribal youths had little scope for employment in the administration of the State. In consideration of efficiency factor, Bengali intellectuals and officials found special privileges in the State's service. Meanwhile, some of the tribal youths had passed V to X classes. But many of them remained unemployed in the princely regime. However, the only avenue opened to them in the State service was to get job as militia in King's Body Guard forces. But mentally all were not prepared for this profession.

**Activities of School-Going Students:**King Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya awakened the tribal youths by founding two tribal hostels at Umakanta Academy, Agartala and Khowai H E School in 1933(Dey,1998, p.172). Besides, Oakhiroy Debbarma of Bisalgarh founded another tribal students' hostel at Golbazar, Agartala and the king accorded grant to it. Further, Birchandra Debbarma also founded a tribal students' hostel at Abhayanagar, Agartala without royal patronage. The tribal students of distant hills got, for the first time, the opportunity of receiving education alongwithRajkumars and Thakurs. The newly educated youths began to think about their identity in the Indian society and started playing a prominent role in the TRJM.

Under the circumstances, the then newly educated youths realized that in order to end the social injustices and superstitions, the people should be made conscious and aware. But that awareness was not possible without education. They further realized that in order to be organized against the feudal oppressions, the blind loyalty of the tribal people towards the crown should be replaced by the democratic ideals. From this backdrop, they started a movement called Janasiksha Movement. Hence this movement was but a challenge against the monarchy or feudalism.

**Nature of the Movement:**The Janasiksha Movement or Mass Education Movement was neither a political nor a religious movement. Rather, it was purely an educational movement. The movement basically got started in the two boarding houses of Tripura by a handful of Tripuri educated people. One of the boarding houses was established by Ramkumar Thakur of Kalyanpur and the other, by Wakhirai Thakur of Golaghati. The movement reached its zenith of success when Mr Dasarath Deb joined it, the most popular leader of the movement. The movement received massive response from about 488 schools of Tripura. However, the movement was mainly confined to the Borok people of Agartala, Khowai and Kamalpur sub-divisions of Tripura. On the other hand, the old-*elite-bosses* of the tribal people described the Janasiksha Samiti as '*a Polapaner Sangatha*', which means 'A Samiti of a few boys'(Debbarma,2016, p.109). But it is not altogether true. Because most of the people of the native tribal people actively took part in the movement.

**Aims of the Movement:**The Janasiksha Movement had fixed plenty of aims and objectives which were pretty well materialised by 'The Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad(Gan-Chaudhuri ,2004,p.61).' These are highlighted below:

- i. To inculcate a sense of pride and a kind of enthusiasm amongst the people of Borok, that is, Tripuri society.
- ii. To remove poverty;
- iii. To eradicate illiteracy;
- iv. To preserve and promote the age-old tribal culture;
- v. To stop exploitation of the tribal people by money lenders or mahajans;
- vi. To make indigenous tribal people aware of their rights, etc.



**Slogan of the Movement:** The most popular slogan of the Janasiksha Movement raised by all of the members of the movement during the period from 1945 until 1948 is mentioned below (Debbarma, 2016, p. 145):

*“Although we had eyes in the past,  
We could never see.  
Oh! 11<sup>th</sup> Poush  
You have returned our eyes.  
We have seen the shining Sun rising in the Sky,  
You have arisen people of this land.  
Birds getting awakened in the jungle are singing.  
The 11<sup>th</sup> Pous, the 11<sup>th</sup> Pous.”*

The other slogans of the movement are – *“Students’ Unity Zindabad”, “Subjects Tripura be united”, “We boycott Village Mandali Act”, “We want Proper distribution of controlled items-cloth, sugar, cotton etc”, “We shall no more lag behind”, “We are awakened”, “Chhichaditakhuk, Chhichadibukukh, Chhichadi, Chhichadi, Chhichadi (Awake brother, awake sister, awake, awake, awake)”*.

**Significance of the Movement:** The activities of the Janasiksha Movement were basically confined to the Borok or Tripuri Community. Critics say, the movement did not actually touch to the greatest extent the life of the other indigenous tribal communities of the State. Almost all of the leaders, members and active workers of the Movement belonged to the Borok. It was neither purely a movement for expansion of education nor truly a movement for introducing social reform. The Movement was not even directed, in the truest sense, in the line of the Marxian conception of class-struggle.

However, its significance can hardly be looked down upon. In fact, this movement is the most important milestone in the history of tribal transition in Tripura. Its propaganda work gave expression to the accumulated grievances of the tribal people against oppression, deprivation and mahajani exploitation. The major contributions of the Movement are stated below:

- i. It made indigenous tribal people of Tripura realize their rights;
- ii. It paved the way for self-development of tribal people to a great extent;
- iii. It brought about socio-cultural and educational awareness amongst the tribal people in Tripura;
- iv. It helped for cultural development of the native tribal people and creation of democratic attitude among the people of Tripura;
- v. It emasculated many of the superstitious ideas and customs of Tripuri society;
- vi. The activities of the movements laid the strong foundation-stone of the future education system of Tripura.

### **The Tribal Autonomy Movement**

One of the most important movements in Tripura is Tribal Autonomy Movement among the Tipra tribal people. Tribal Autonomy Movement in Tripura had its roots mainly in two issues - one being the foreigners’ issue and the other being linked with the secessions. Like every tribal autonomy movement in the North-East India, in Tripura also Autonomy Movement started with the slogan “To Drive out the Foreigners (Not sons of the soil).”

**Causes of the Autonomy Movement:** The main causes of the movement were-

- (a) Inflow of the Bangladeshi refugees,

- (b) Identity crisis among the tribal people,
- (c) Becoming a minority of the tribal people,
- (d) Alienation of tribal land in spite of the enactment of the Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act of 1960,
- (e) Government callousness to the basic amenities of the tribal people,
- (f) Imposition of Marshal Rule,
- (g) Food crisis, etc.

**The GMP and Autonomy Movement:** The Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad was formed in 1948 and it was renamed 'Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad (TRGMP)' in 1951 (Debbarma, 2016, p. 154). The Parishad with the help of the democratic minded non-tribal people started Autonomy Movement under the leadership of Dasarath Deb. The Parishad submitted a representation, demanding an area to be reserved only for the tribal people, to the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission (1960-61) constituted under the Chairmanship of Mr U N Dhebar. The main objectives of the Parishad as mentioned in its Constitution framed in 1949 are mentioned below:

- i. To organize the tribal people of Tripura and make them aware of their special rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution of India;
- ii. To launch a sustained struggle for the realization of rights;
- iii. To work for the development of agriculture, industry, education and culture of the tribal people;
- iv. To protect the rights of all tribal people;
- v. To fight for the growth and spread of democracy and ensure long-lasting peace in Tripura by the establishment of good and brotherly relationship between tribal and non-tribal people.

**Observation of Sahid Day:** In 1949 Marshal Rule was imposed at Khowai Sub-division. A good number of borok women gathered together on the road-areas to stop and blockade the movement of military forces. It was due to the activities of the tribal women the Commander of the soldiers, having been exited and unable to make up his mind, ordered the soldiers to fire bullets from their guns. The soldiers started such a massive firing that three women namely- *Kumari Debbarma, Madhuti Debbarma* and *Rupashree Debbarma* died on spot for the cause tribal autonomy on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1949. Therefore, Mukti Parishad observes Sahid Day on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March every year (Debbarma, 2016, p. 176)..

**Demands of the Movement:** The Tribal Autonomy Movement led by Dasarath Deb revolved about *three* principal demands. These are: Land, Language and self –government. In other words, protection of tribal lands, recognition of Kokborok as the second language and installation of a Tribal Autonomous Council in Tripura were three points of thrust of the Tribal Autonomy Movement in the beginning.

**Bir Bikram Tripur Sangha:** 'The Bir Bikram Tripur Sangha' was based by Durjay Kishore Debbarma, step brother of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya. Its main aims were social reforms, resistance of influx of refugees into Tripura and protection of tenancy right of the permanent inhabitant of Tripura. The Sangha had its own militant wing named 'Sengkrak' or 'Cheng Crak' or 'Sing Krank' (Debbarma, 2016, p. 194).. It is due to the efforts of the Sangha the Government of Tripura in March 1948 notified that 'the Prayer for land settlement of the people who are not subjects of Tripura State will not be taken into consideration without written permission of the Dewan of the State.' However, later on in 1949 the 'Sengkrak' was declared banned for its violent activities, though the 'Sengkrak' emerged again in 1967.

**Adivasi Sangsad:** 'The Pahari Union' was set up under the leadership of Chndra Sadhu Rupini In July 1951 and 'The Adivasi Samiti' was formed under the leadership of Sunitijivan Chakma and Madhab master in 1952. In November 1953 the political organization of the Adivasi Samiti named 'Adivasi Sangha' was constituted whose first President was Lalit Mohan Debbarma. Later on, these tribal organizations were

clubbed together to form a bigger organization called 'The Adivasi Sangsad.' The organization made the following demands:

- i. To set up of a Tribal Regional Council in Tripura;
- ii. To declare Tripura as an autonomous district;
- iii. To merge Tripura with Assam; and
- iv. To fill up of gazette posts by the non-Bengalees only.

**Demands for Tribal State:** 'The States Reorganisation Commission (SRC)' was appointed in 1953. The Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Mr Fazl Ali and its two other members were Pandit Hridaynath Kunzru and Sardar K. M. Panikkar. The Commission submitted its report to the GoI on 30 September, 1955. In its report the SRC recommended for the merger of Tripura with Assam. A group of Tribal people supported the recommendation so as to end the 'Bnagalee hegemony' in Tripura. This group established a branch of the 'Tribal Union' at Agartala in 1955, which was renamed as 'Eastern India Tribal Union' in 1956. This organization raised voice for the constitution of a 'Tribal State' comprising of NEFA, Manipur, Khasi and Jaintai Hills, Garo Hills, Mizo Hills, Tripura and all the tribal areas of Assam.

**TUJS and Autonomy Movement:** The Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti was formed by some younger tribal people of Tripura in 1967. Since the inception, the Organization worked vehemently for the benefit and welfare of the native tribal people. Under the banner of the Samiti approximately 324 tribal people went on to observe a hunger strike demanding their constitutional rights and autonomy on July 11, 1968. Again on the 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1970 the TUJS observed a 24-hour hunger strike in many parts of the state of Tripura. The TUJS put forward four main demands for granting greater autonomy to the tribal people of the State. These demands are:

- i. Restoration of tribal lands transferred to the non-tribal people since 1960;
- ii. Ensuring the policy of reservation for the tribal people in Government jobs;
- iii. Recognition of Kokborok as an official language and medium of instruction and adoption of Roman Scripts for Kokborok; and
- iv. Formation of a Tribal Autonomous District Council in Tripura.

**All Party Tribal Convention and Autonomy Movement:** The Government of Tripura promulgated an ordinance on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1974 in order to abrogate the already existing 'Tribal Reserve Area' (Gan-Chaudhuri, 2004, p.72). But the Ordinance made the tribal people of Tripura upset and angry. As a result of which, an All Party Tribal Convention was convened at Agartala on the 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1974 in order that they might protest against the Ordinance passed by the Government of Tripura. The Convention was attended by the Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad, the Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad, the TUJS, the Tribal Students' Federation, the Tribal Youth Federation and the Tripura Upajati Karmachari Samiti. The Convention adopted '*A 4-point Charter of Demands*' (Debbarma, 2016, p. 217). These are:

- i. Restoration of tribal lands transferred to the non-tribal people since 1960;
- ii. Recognition of Kokborok as State language;
- iii. Introduction of Kokborok as the medium of instruction at primary level of education; and
- iv. Revocation of the ordinance and preservation of the tribal compact area and introduction of an ADC.

**TNV and Autonomy Movement:** The Tripura Volunteer Force, a secret organization was formed in July 1978. The organization took anti-democratic, chauvinistic and separatist path to fulfill its goals. Having been influenced by the agitation against foreigners in Assam, the organization too went on voicing that the people who came to Tripura after October 15, 1949 were 'foreigners' (Das, 2012, p.123) and demanded their deportation from Tripura. The members of this organization started Block deputation all over Tripura on the



21<sup>st</sup> May 1980 and ‘Bazar Boycott’ from July 1 till July 7, 1980 with the aim of deporting the so-called ‘foreigners’ from the land of Tripura.

**Autonomy Movement and ADC Bill:**The tribal autonomy movement in Tripura reached a decisive phase in 1977.Later on, the left Front Government after coming to power made a decision to set up a Tribal Autonomous Council under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution. But the then Central Government under the Prime Ministership of Morarji Desai did not take an interest in it. Under this circumstances, the Left Front Government in Tripura decided to introduce a bill named ‘The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council Bill, 1979’ in the Tripura Legislative Assembly. The Bill was passed on March 23, 1979 and thus became an Act after having been assented to by the Nominal Head concerned on 20 July, 1979.

**Autonomy Movement and Formation of ADC under the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule:**Following‘The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council Act, 1979’ ‘The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council’ under the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution was set up on the 18<sup>th</sup> January, 1982. Thus a kind of self-government for the tribal people of Tripura for the first time was materialized. It was established with the aim of protecting tribals’ right to land, guaranteeing employment and ensuring the right against exploitation by the village money-lenders.

**Autonomy Movement and Formation of ADC under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule:**The TTAADC introduced in Tripura under the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution had not been able to satiate the aspirations of the native tribal people in the truest sense. Hence the demand for the establishment of ADC under the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule was by degrees increasing. Then during the Prime Ministership of Smt Indira Gnadhi ‘The 49<sup>th</sup> Constitution- Amendment Bill, 1984’ was introduced in the Indian Parliament. The Amendment Bill was passed and accordingly TTAADCunder the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule was based on April 1, 1985. The first General Election of TTAADC under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule took place on June 30, 1985 and the oath-taking ceremony took place on July 19, 1985.

**Significance of the Autonomy Movement:** The tribal autonomy movement in Tripura has a long history. The major significance of the movement can be enlisted below:

- i. The long cherished aspiration of the indigenous people of Tripura for self-government was fulfilled with the formation of TTAADC.
- ii. The Kokborok language has been recognized as an official language in Tripura. In this connection ‘The Tripura Official Language Act, 1964’ was amended in May 1979.
- iii. The Kokborok language has been recognized as a medium of instruction upto the primary level of education.
- iv. A Tribal Language Cell was created for designing and preparing lesson materials for the school-going children belonging to Borok or Tipra community.
- v. The policy of reservation for the native tribal people in government services has been ensured in the right earnest.
- vi. The native tribal people have been able to protect their traditional identity and overcome their identity crisis to a great extent.
- vii. The three principal demands, namely-land, language and local autonomy were pretty well fulfilled.

### **The Refugee Rehabilitation Movement**

Refugees are referred to those persons who leave their States in which they have permanent residents to escape persecution or military action. The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 defines refugees under Article 1 as : “ Any persons who owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race , religion, nationality , membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the

country of his nationality and is unable , or owing to such fear , is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear; is unwilling to return to it.”

In case of the State of Tripura, Refugees are those people who had come to Tripura from Chittagong, Noakhali, Comilla and Sylhet districts of East Pakistan and who had rested on Government for relief and rehabilitation. The refugee movement in Tripura basically started in 1950. It reached its climax in 1955-56 and gained a momentum in May-June 1960. The influx of refugees continued till 1971. The various aspects of the influx of refugees to Tripura and their movement for survival are briefly mused upon through the following heads:

**Influx of refugees to Tripura:** The influx and flow of homeless people from East Pakistan started after the partition of India and continued many years. The total number of displaced persons came to Tripura from East Pakistan from 1947 to 1971 were 6, 09,998 on official record (Debbarma, 2016, p. 236).. The displaced people included all sections of people, namely- business, traders, Middle class, peasants, day-labourers etc. Thousands of refugees started trekking to Tripura and took shelter wherever they got vacant places- school or college buildings, corridor of shops and even under the trees. Many of them passed away due to starvation and diseases. The administration of Tripura not only failed to provide relief and rehabilitation for the refugees but also met with a great fiasco to tackle the situation.

**Attitude of Central Government:** In the beginning there was no rehabilitation policy of the Central Government for the refugees of the East Pakistan. Mohanlal Saxena, the then Central Rehabilitation Minister, convened a meeting with the representatives of the displaced persons of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Bihar and Orissa at Calcutta on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1950. In the meeting Mohanlal pretty well clearly expressed that the Central Government would not bear any responsibility towards the refugees. Moreover, people came to India from outside were considered as displaced persons, not as refugees. This indifferent attitude of the Central Government towards the displaced people coming to Tripura from East Pakistan had created a crucial problem in Tripura.

**Refugee organizations and their activities:** Many an organization was established by the refugees to organize struggle for survival. In 1946 a horrible and spiteful riot took place in Noakhali, therefore, a large number of refugees came to Tripura and they formed the ‘Bastutyagi Janakalyan Samiti’. In 1949 the ‘Tripura Sabalambi Udbastu Sangha’ was formed under the leadership of Fanindra Prasad Sur at Udaipur. Besides, there were some other refugee organizations, namely- ‘Purbabanga Sankhalaghu Kalyan Samiti’ led by the communist leaders, ‘Congress Udbastu Sahitya Samiti’, ‘Tripura Rajya Nath Samiti’, ‘Tripura Rudrapal Samiti’ and so on. In 1950 an effort was taken to unite different refugee organizations in Tripura. As a result of this effort on July 13, 1950 the Tripura Central Relief and Rehabilitation Association (TCRRA) was formed with the eye of co-coordinating the functioning of different refugee organization. The TCRRA began movements for rehabilitation and rights of the refugees. It organized a refugee rally at Agratala on August 8, 1950.

**State-level Refugee Convention:** The State-level Refugee Convention was held at Agratala on February 3-4, 1951. It was presided over by Makhn Lal Sen, the editor of the Bharat. The Convention adopted a 18-resolution, some of them are as follows:

- i. To declare Tripura a Part B State and introduce a responsible government in Tripura;
- ii. To grant adult franchise to the refugees came to Tripura after the 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1949;
- iii. To complete the process of rehabilitation by April 1951;
- iv. To take remedial measures against all sorts of privation of the tribal people in Tripura;
- v. To provide equal treatment for all refugees came after and before 1950; etc.



**Tripura Central Refugee Association:** ‘The Tripura Central Refugee Association’ was set up on February 4, 1951. The Association aimed at uniting all of the refugees in Tripura under a single central organization. Thus, later on, it was renamed ‘All Tripura Refugee Association (ATRA)’ and its Bengali name was ‘Nikhil Tripura Udbastu Samiti’. The ATRA observed ‘East Bengal Day’ at Agartala and Udaipur on the 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1952(Dey,1998, p.61). It had submitted a memorandum to the Union Minister for Rehabilitation for taking measures for the overall development of the refugees.

**Sanjukta Bastuhara Parishad:**The Sanjukta Bastuhara Parishad was established in 1953. Biren Datta was its President and the Secretary of the Parishad was Amulya Kanchan Datta.The Parishad demanded proper rehabilitation of the refugees without encroaching upon the interests of the tribal people. In this connection the Parishad said that government khas land might be reclaimed for refugee rehabilitation. In 1953 a conference of the Sanjukta Bastuhara Parishad was held at Nutunnagar around 12 km away from Agartala. The Conference adopted a resolution for proper rehabilitation of the refugees and the jhumias in Tripura.

**Refugee Satyagraha Movement:** The Refugee Rehabilitation movement took the form of Satyagraha Movement for fulfilling the basic demands of the refugees in Tripura. An Anashan Satyagraha started at Durgabari, Agartala from April 18, 1960, which was initially attended by 7 male and 9 female Satyagrahi. But in the long run, the number of Satyagrahis increased to 42 in total.The ATRA also observed a programme of token hunger strike at Agratala, Kailashahar, Amarpur, Udaipur and some other parts of Tripura on May 2, 1960.The Udbastu Adhikari Rakkha Samiti took an initiative to organize a token of hunger strike at Isanpur on May 6, 1960. In order to support the Anashan Satyagraha, the CPI also organized a mass rally on May 3, 1960.Besides, the CPI gave a call for hartal at Agartala on May 16,1960.In the midnight of the 18<sup>th</sup> May, the police arrested all the 42 Satyagrahi on the charge of ‘attempt to commit suicide’ and ‘defiance of law and order’(Debbarma ,2016, p. 248). All the detenues were put to jail custody.

**Civil Disobedience Movement and its outcome:**A mass meeting was held against the arrest and police atrocities on the Satyagrahi and soon the meeting turned into a mass procession raising slogans – “ March ahead to Civil Disobedience” , “Immediate release of all the arrested Satyagrahi”, etc. One of the Satyagrahi named BiswambarNamadas passed away at VM hospital, Agartala on May 19, 1960 and therefore, the hunger strike started at Durgabari on April 18 , 1960 was withdrawn on the day on which MrNamadas died(Dey,1998, p.98). The death of MrNamadas added fuel to the fire, which ultimately resulted in the start of Civil Disobedience Movement. Under these circumstances,Mr N M Patnaik, the then Chief Commissioner of Tripura convened a meeting with some leaders of Agartala on May 22, 1960(Debbarma,2016,p.227). So fruitful was the outcome of the meeting that a comprehensive economic scheme was submitted to the Chief Commissioner by Swarnakamal Ray, a retired Director of the Rehabilitation Department of Tripura Administration. The Scheme consisted of four parts, namely-(a) Part-I: Land; (b) Part-II: Agriculture, horticulture, poultry, fisheries; (c) Part-III: Industries including three sugar mills; and (d) Part-IV: Miscellaneous.

**Declaration of the Central Government:** Towards the end of 1960, a declaration of the Central Government for the rehabilitation of the refugees was declared. The Declaration said that 27400 refugees of 83000 families had come to Tripura and amongst them 67000 families had already got rehabilitation assistance in some forms or the other. It was said that the Administration of Tripura had set up 75 colonies and a township near Agartala. In these colonies, 34000 families were rehabilitated and the rest were rendered rehabilitation in the places of their choices. Thus the rehabilitation work in Tripura was declared completed.

**Bru Refugees and their Existing Situation:** It is due to the serious ethnic violence between the Reang and Mizo Communities, the influx of the Bru / Reang families took place in various places of Kanchanpur Sub-Division, North Tripura District. The influx came off in two phases – first from October 1997 to September 1998; and second in November 2009. At present the number of refugees is 37137 of 6960 families have been staying in 8 camps located at two places, namely - Kanchanpur (Ashapara, Hezachara, Naisingpara, Naisingpara (New), Nabajoypara (New); and Panisagar (Kaskau, Khakchang and Hamsapara). On the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 an agreement has been signed between the Central Government, the Government of Tripura, the Government of Mizoram and a few representatives of Bru Organisation in order that the proper settlement of the Bru migrants may be made in Tripura (Report from the office of the Refugee Rehabilitation, Government of Tripura, 2020). Having followed the provision of the Agreement various places across the State of Tripura have been identified for their settlement with proper amenities and opportunities so that they may live as human beings.

**Major findings and concluding remarks:** The multi-faceted socio-educational-political effects of the Refugee Movement in Tripura are highlighted below:

- i. The Refugee Movement has left a significant effect on the education system of Tripura. There were only 123 primary schools and 9 secondary schools in Tripura when the State officially joined the Indian Union on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1949. But it was due to the initiative taken by the education-loving people among the refugees, several schools were set up to fulfill the needs and dreams of education.
- ii. Most of the refugees who came to Tripura belonged to the producing class. They were good agricultural workers, artisans, craftsmen. Hence their coming contributed much to the economic field of Tripura in matters of agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, handicrafts, sericulture, horticulture, etc.
- iii. The political support of the CPI was not so strong among the Bengalese as it was among the native Tripura tribal people. But when the mass organization of the CPI namely-Krishak Sabha, Khet Mazdoor, Women's Organization, Trade Unions, Students' Organization and Youth Organization actively took part in the Refugee Movement; then the CPI had been able to spread its organizational network to the Bengalese of Tripura also. As a result of which, the CPI came to power with an absolute majority in 1978 (Das, 2012, p.136).
- iv. The illegal transfer of tribal lands came off due to the chicaneries by a section of the displaced persons especially those who were traders, businessmen and mahajans. But the illegal transfer of tribal lands aggrieved the indigenous people to a great extent. The fundamental economic causes like land alienation and social causes like want of social security and crisis of identity created a kind of dissatisfaction among them. The peace loving and democratic minded tribal people fought against the injustice in a constitutional way; while a section of tribal people was politicized against it in a rather dangerous way, which ultimately led to the emergence of socio-political unrest in the whole State.
- v. The influx of refugees in Tripura gave birth to the foreigner issue right from 1947, when the 'Sengkrak' came into being. This secret organization having taken the path of violence demanded to drive the Bengali refugees out of the State of Tripura. Thus a cult of violence was given rise to by the 'Sengkrak', which was outlived in the activities of the many extremist groups of Tripura emerged afterwards.

**Conclusion:** From the forgoing analysis, it is obvious that social movements almost always play a pivotal role in the process of modernisation and development in human commonwealth. They ensure freedom, equality, justice, human dignity—sine quo non for the fullest development of human faculties. These are movements which make people accustomed to freeing themselves from dogmas and formulas—the ball and chain of underrating people's democratic rights, liberty and socio-political justice. Thus it has been proved

from many a historical instance that autonomy movements have cultivated people's minds, succeeded in freeing them from undemocratic control, enlightened people to internalise their social rights and underlined the very essence of democratic society with social justice. Hence, it would not be exaggeration to say that in the state of Tripura, the Janasiksha Movement, the Tribal Autonomy Movement and the Refugee Rehabilitation Movement have each come up with a new vista in the progress of human mind and public right founded upon democratic essence and spirit.

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