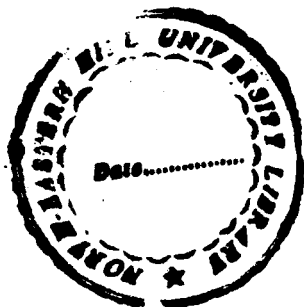


F240  
1365



**PROCEEDINGS OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

**SIXTH SESSION  
AGARTALA : 1985**

HIST-

B A

NEHU LIBRARY

Acc No. 240500 ✓ Edited & Published by  
Javanta Bhusan Bhattacharjee

Acc. No. 413/88 ✓ General Secretary

Date 4/3/88 On behalf of

Classified by North East India History Association

Subject by Department of History

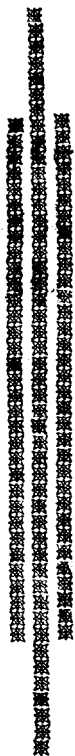
Entered by North-Eastern Hill University

Transcribed by Shillong - 793014

COMPUTERISED

ARCHIVE  
NOTIFICATION

NE  
954.16006  
PRO.6;2



Printed at the—  
SINGHANIA PRINTING PRESS  
Thana Road, Shillong-793001

## Preface

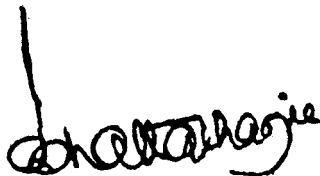
The Sixth Annual Session of the North East India History Association held at the Calcutta University Post-Graduate Centre, Agartala on October 3-5, 1985 was one of our most colourful academic meets in the region, attended by the largest number of delegates. Professor H. L. Gupta, formerly Head of the Department of History, Saugar University presided over the Session, which was inaugurated by Sri Nripen Chakravarty, Chief Minister of Tripura and graced by Dr. B. D. Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, North-Eastern Hill University as the Guest of Honour. Shri Dasarath Deb, Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura also addressed the delegates. Our colleagues, Professor J. B. Ganguly, Director, CUPG Centre, and Dr. Mahadev Chakravarti, Reader & Head, Department of Modern History at the Centre did us great honour as Chairman of the Reception Committee and the Local Secretary of the Session respectively.

We are grateful to the Calcutta University Post-Graduate Centre, Agartala for hosting the Session and warm hospitality offered to the delegates. The administration, members of the teaching faculties and the students' community in the Centre were all involved in the Session. The Centre received generous support from the Government of Tripura. The Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and their cabinet colleagues generously spared time from their schedules to be with the delegates and participate in academic discussions. They entertained the delegates and offered as gifts some publications on Tripura and excellent pieces of indigenous handicrafts as token of love and affection of the people of the State. The Directorate of Information and Culture, Government of Tripura, organised colourful programmes depicting the rich cultural heritage of Tripura. Study tours were organised to the places of historical importance. On the whole, the delegates shall cherish the fond memory of the Session for a long time.

The academic standard of the Session was also very high. We have maintained our tradition of steady growth in membership pattern and the number of papers presented and discussed. Tripura is one of such areas in our region where we do not have enough historical studies. In Agartala Session, we indeed achieved a major breakthrough. Majority of the papers presented there were on Tripura. These shall certainly generate further research. The volume is a collection of sixty two papers, empirical as well as

analytical and interpretative. Some of the papers, particularly by the colleagues in other disciplines, have added to the merit of the volume by fitting well in our scheme of recording the living history.

I am personally thankful to my colleagues Dr. J. P. Singh, Dr. M. S. Sangma, Dr. O. P. Kejariwal and Dr. Gautam Sengupta for the ready help in editing and publishing the volume.



Shillong  
The 22 August 1986

(J. B. Bhattacharjee)  
General Secretary  
North East India History Association

## Contents

	Page
1. Presidential Address — <i>H. L. Gupta</i>	1
2. Researches into the Origins, Antiquity, Nature and Functions of the Pre-Historic Meghalithic Cultures of the Hill People of North East India — <i>G. P. Singh</i>	23
3. Terra Cotta -In Bengal and Tripura — <i>Sumangal Sen</i>	36
4. Early Mediaeval Sculptures of Tripura : Some Observations — <i>Gautam Sengupta</i>	41
5. Pilak Civilization of Tripura — <i>Ashis Kumar Baidya</i>	48
6. Tribal Elements in the Coinage of Tripura — <i>Jai Prakash Singh</i>	51
7. A Unique Early Coin of the Manikya Dynasty of Tripura — <i>Jahar Acharjee</i>	56
8. Tripura in the Pre-Manikya Period — <i>Ramanimohan Sarma</i>	59
9. Sankritic Culture in Tripura — <i>Rabindranath Das Shastri</i>	69
10. The Land System of Govinda Manikya as reflected in the Land Grants — <i>D. N. Goswami</i>	77
11. The Date of the Sadiya Stone Pillar Inscription — <i>J. N. Phukan</i>	85
12. Cursory Glance on the Early Historical Perspectives of Tripura — <i>N. N. Acharyya</i>	91
13. The Religious History of the Tipras on the Background of Karchipuja — <i>Priyabrata Bhattacharjee</i>	99
14. Religion and Culture : The Khasi-Jaintia Experience — <i>Soumen Sen</i>	107
15. The Khasi System of Calculating Time — <i>M. P. Rina Lyngdoh</i>	115

16. Myth and Reality : A Study of the Development of Kingship in Early Assam	— <i>Monoranjan Dutta</i>	126
17. Myths, Rituals and Traditions : Some Aspects in State Formation in the Tai-Ahom State	— <i>R. Buragohain</i>	137
18. The Economic Content of the State Formation Process in Medieval Tripura	— <i>J. B. Ganguly</i>	146
19. Local Influence upon the Ahoms	— <i>Debasis Sen</i>	160
20. The Nature of the Ahom-Kachari Relations	— <i>I. S. Mumtaza Khatun</i>	163
21. Operations of Hussain Shah against Tripura- Its Nature	— <i>Debabrata Goswami</i>	170
22. Studies on the Writings on the History of Medieval North East India : Some Comments	— <i>R. L. Hungloo</i>	175
23. Matibar Barsenapati - An Assessment	— <i>S. Dutta</i>	183
24. The Role of the Raja of Tripura and the English in capturing the Mizo Chief Lalchukla	— <i>Suhas Chatterjee</i>	197
25. The Agony of "Charing Raja" Kandarpeswar Singha	— <i>S. K. Barpujari</i>	201
26. The Nature of British objection to the Trade Monopoly of the Raja of Cachar (1827-1830)	— <i>J. B. Bhattacharjee</i>	206
27. Cherrapunji Versus Darjeeling : The Search for a Sanatorium for the Lower Province	— <i>David R. Syiemlieh</i>	219
28. An Aspect of North East Frontier Policy of the Raj : an Overview	— <i>B. Datta Ray</i>	226
29. Dupleix's Trade Mission to Assam 1738-40	— <i>Amalendu Guha</i>	231
30. Coming of Tea in the Brahmaputra Valley : Change in Pattern of Trade	— <i>Keya Dasgupta</i>	239
31. Lushai Risings, 1890-95	— <i>Larimawia</i>	255

32. **The History of Vanga-loka in Tripura** ..... 261  
       — *N. C. Nath* ..... 261
33. **Tripura : Maharaja and His Subjects** ..... 265  
       — *Banikantha Bhattacharyya* ..... 265
34. **The British Policy and the Indian Princes** ..... 271  
       — *Dipak kumar Chaudhuri* ..... 271
35. **The Status of Princely Tripura during British Rule  
 in India** ..... 285  
       — *Bijan Mohanta* ..... 285
36. **Dismissal of Dewan Nilmani Das -A Case Study** ..... 295  
       — *S. K. Brahma* ..... 295
37. **Settlement on Land of the Silchar Tahsil under Colo-  
 nial regime** ..... 299  
       — *Ratna Dey* ..... 299
38. **Beginning of Silchar Municipality** ..... 305  
       — *Sujit K. Ghosh* ..... 305
39. **Social Reaction to Bania Exploitation : A Study of  
 Ideological Revolt of the Assamese against Mer-  
 chants and Usurers as found in a Nineteenth  
 Century Poetry Collection** ..... 311  
       — *Sajal Nag* ..... 311
40. **The Jorhat Sorbojonik Sobha : Its Role in Socio-  
 Political Awakening of Assam** ..... 316  
       — *Shrutidev Goswami* ..... 316
41. **Sonaram R. Sangma : A Study of his Life and  
 Works as a Garo Nationalist** ..... 323  
       — *M. S. Sangma* ..... 323
42. **Despatch of 1854 and Mass Education in Assam  
 during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century** ..... 335  
       — *Archana Chakravarty* ..... 335
43. **Development of Bengali News papers in Tripura** ..... 341  
       — *Rama Prasad Datta* ..... 341
44. **Brahma Religion and Social Change among the Boros** ..... 347  
       — *R. N. Mosahary* ..... 347
45. **Role of the Left Intellectuals : A Survey of British  
 Reaction, 1936-37** ..... 353  
       — *Subhas Saha* ..... 353
46. **Communist Activities in Tripura : 1939-42** ..... 363  
       — *Mahadev Chakravarti* ..... 363
47. **Terrorist Activities in Tripura (1930-33)** ..... 371  
       — *Ranjit Kumar De* ..... 371

48. Genesis of Labour Movement Among the Non-Plantation Workers and Wage-Earners in Assam — <i>Dipankar Banerjee</i>	383
49. The Merger of Manipur into India — <i>N. Joykumar Singh</i>	393
50. Accession of Manipur to the Federation : Issues at stake — <i>Bimal J. Dev &amp; Dilip K. Lahiri</i>	407
51. The Struggle for Responsible Government in Tripura (1947-1956) — <i>Benimadhab Majumdar</i>	417
52. Students' Movements in Tripura (1950-70) — <i>Himansu Pal</i>	425
53. Young Mizo Association : Its history, features, some aspects and its role in transforming Mizo Society — <i>Sangkima</i>	433
54. Mizo Problems leading to Insurgency — <i>J. V. Hluna</i>	442
55. Historical Survey of Tribal Uprisings in Tripura — <i>Suchintya Bhattacharya</i>	450
56. Mahishya Das of Cachar and their Social Background — <i>Nitish Ranjan Laskar</i>	454
57. Administrative System of the Garos of Tripura — <i>Sudhanshu Bikash Saha</i>	463
58. Immigrant Tribes in Tripura : A Few Observations — <i>O. S. Adhikari</i>	469
59. The Bishnupriya Manipuris in Tripura : Past and Present — <i>Rabindra Sinha</i>	478
60. Status and Education of Women in Tripura — <i>Binapani Majumdar</i>	482
61. Nongtalang Doloiship : A Socio-Political Study of an Administrative Unit in Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya — <i>L. S. Gassah</i>	492
62. Agriculture Potential in the North East — <i>M. C. Pandey</i>	501
<b>Appendices</b>	
A. Minutes of the Executive Committee	517
B. Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting	519
C. General Secretary's Report	523
D. Treasurers' Report	526
E. Audit Report	528
F. Members of the Sixth Session	530

## **Immigrant Tribes in Tripura : A Few Observations**

**O. S. Adhikari**

A survey was conducted in June-July this year in ten tea gardens of the State, six in North District and four in West District under the auspices of the Research Directorate of the Government of Tripura to investigate into the life and culture of the Bhils, Mundas, Oraons and Santals - the Central and Eastern Indian immigrant tribes who have settled in Tripura for nearly seventy years as a result of their recruitment in the tea gardens of the state. The basic point of investigation has been to enquire whether the concerned tribes have been confining themselves within the boundaries of their respective norms, values, faiths and customs inspite of their contact for years with the non-tribal as well as tribal population of the state or they have assimilated themselves with the broader stream of life flowing in the state leaving behind or breaking away from their age-old socio-cultural and religious bindings. The aim of the present paper is to present in brief the findings of the field survey.

When tea gardens were set up for the first time in Tripura in 1916-1917, administration encouraged the recruitment of Bhil, Santal and other tribals as workers for the tea gardens. Since then, they have settled in Tripura mostly as tea-garden labourers ; some among them have become farm labourers, brick kiln workers or day labourers while some have even become cultivators. The present study is confined to tea garden workers belonging to these four ethnic groups. This is done because tea garden workers are not too exposed to the outside world by virtue of the location of the tea gardens. So, if it is found that the immigrant tea garden workers have become assimilated with the rest of Tripura's population it can be assumed that those migrants belonging to the Bhil, Munda, Oraon and Santal tribes who have switched over to other occupations will be more assimilated with the rest of the people of Tripura.

In total fifty households belonging to these communities working in the tea gardens were surveyed. Of them, twenty were Mundas, fifteen were Oraons while the number of Santal and

**Bhil households surveyed were ten and five respectively. Keeping the objective of the survey in view a questionnaire was canvassed to each head of household.**

Although no clearcut answer as to when the concerned households settled in Tripura could be obtained, discussion with them revealed that in most cases it was the grand father or the father of the reporting head of household who migrated right from Bihar or from the tea gardens of Assam and adjoining districts of Bangladesh to this state to work as tea garden labourers either voluntarily or through indenture or contract. Out of the fifty cases, in less than half a dozen cases the reporting households have themselves migrated straight from Chotanagpur or Santal Pargana of Bihar to Tripura in the fifties and sixties. The inter-garden mobility of the tea garden workers is also a phenomenon that has been noted in the course of field survey. As a matter of fact, the recruitment process in the tea gardens in the early years cannot be exactly known from the published materials available. It may, of course, be speculated that the same system was followed in tea gardens of Tripura as in other tea gardens of North Bengal and Assam which means labourers were recruited through the contractors or 'arkatis'. Discussion with the elderly tea garden workers and the veteran leaders of the 'Tea Workers' Union during the field survey reveals that in some cases 'sardars' of the tea gardens were engaged to bring in labourers for the concerned tea gardens from their respective home-land while in other cases labourers themselves migrated to Tripura to work in the tea gardens or elsewhere or even to become agriculturists in Tripura on not being absorbed permanently or being retrenched from the tea gardens of adjoining Assam and Bangladesh where they were presumed to be absorbed. Had it been so, even then it may be speculated that there must have been some persons whether tea garden workers, sardars or pure contractors who acted as the liaison men. Needless to mention, this mechanism was not unique to the Bhil, Munda, Oraon and Santal alone but to all Central and Eastern Indian tribes and castes who came to work in the tea gardens of Tripura.

We shall now illustrate the observations of the field survey.

### **Food Habits**

The tribes under consideration have got into the habit of consuming wheat or flour while years before their immigration they reportedly did not prefer it. As a matter of fact, all these tribes are principally rice eaters and they still have a preference for it.

It is found during the course of field work that many households grow millet in the small kitchen garden behind or beside their houses and this garden also gives a beautiful look to their habitat. The new habit that has grown up side by side with their taking up works in the tea gardens is the habit of taking tea and even the minor children are found to be very much addicted to it. It may be noted that every working household gets a good quantity of made tea or green leaf free of cost from the garden authorities. The workers have developed a method of their own to produce made tea from green leaf. The made tea thus produced, needless to mention, is inferior in quality. Anyway, perhaps these tribes have become much more addicted to taking tea than anybody else outside the gardens having a habit of drinking tea. The respondents even say that drinking a cup of tea energises and inspires them a lot though they hardly use milk or sugar in preparation of tea.

### **Drinking**

The attachment of Indian tribes to liquor of one form or the other has been so deep that it may be said to be a part of their social milieu. Whether it is a festive occasion, a marriage, a funeral or any other ceremonial occasion or it is a normal day tribes are very much in the habit of consuming liquor. Such liquor is reportedly prepared from rice at home and even purchased from the local market. The habit is common to all age groups starting with adolescents. Though people of all age groups never sit together to enjoy liquor, the elders, it is learnt, do not mind if younger people drink. Needless to mention, it is their social system which permits it.

Two exceptional cases which we came across in the field study need special mention. Leaders of the Tea Workers' Union in both Durgabari and Tachai Tea Estate report that they have been able to reduce the drinking habits of the workers to some extent. In case a worker loses control over himself after taking liquor and is noticed by the fellow workers, the matter is brought to the notice of the 'Bagan Panchayat' and disciplinary action in the form of wage cut for a day or two is taken. This practice is reportedly proving to be a success.

In other gardens, however, drinking is rampant excepting in a handful of households belonging to each of these tribes in which the members have some formal education. It is a common scene that on the evening of pay day as well as on the day after, intoxi-

cated figures come out of many of the houses in the labour lines. When enquired about the amount spent on drinks, each household, however, blushes first of all and then remarks that "the question itself makes no sense" since "there is no guarantee that expenditure on drinks would be kept within such and such a limit ; all depends upon the mood, companionship, religious and rituals compulsions etc".

### **Dresses**

Dresses provide us yet another way of witnessing how the tribes under consideration have been changing their habits. The young men are dressing up very much in accordance with the days' fashion with polyester trousers, half-sleeves or full-sleeved vests and shirts, wrist-watches and even sun-glasses. In Tripura, the tea gardens are not very far away from the local towns or market places and are located beside a metalled or soled road with stone and brick chips. Thus the labourers are connected with the urban ways of living and this attracts the young boys to spend their off time not in the labour line but either in cinema halls in the town or at least in chatting in groups with fellow mates in tea stalls in the nearby market. The hair styles of many of the youngmen are found to resemble those of the film super-stars of the day. The tribal young girls are also not lagging behind. While they do not come to the town or market place as frequently as do their male counterparts their styles and fabrics of dressing clearly show how much they are falling into the habit of dressing up in the local non-tribal women fashion with 4.5 metre long handloom as well as power-loom sarees, sometimes even printed, cotton or polyester, full-sleeved blouses and other under garments. It is indeed very difficult to specify which of the four tribes of our interest is in the fore front in the question of adopting to the local fashion. Since all these tribes are placed in one and the same framework and since culture contact is increasing day by day there does not appear to be any a priori reason for believing that one would lead while the other would lag. After all, dress is the second most primary need of mankind and so, if fund permits, it is natural that one would try to dress himself in more and more up-to-date fashion, particularly when he has a regular contact with the urban way of living. The trouble with the tribal young boys is that they do not always cut their coat according to their cloth because of their lavish nature.

The field work does not reveal, however, any remarkable change in the dresses of the elderly men and women belonging to Bhil,

Munda, Oraon and Santal. Those who have retired and cannot work hard are found seated in their courtyards with a small piece of cloth around their waist and a waist coat at best. The elderly women are still found to wear sarees of inadequate length covering their bodies upto their knees seldom alongwith underclothes.

### **Dialects**

The field work envisages a remarkable experience in the field of tribal dialects. It appears that dialect is the first entity of a group of people that bears the impact of those of other group or groups the former comes across. Otherwise how can it be explained that Dhuma Oraon, a sixty year old retired tea-garden worker in Mekhlipara Tea Estate (who is also the first generation immigrant) has forgotten his mother tongue totally. On enquiry it was found that there are only four Oraon families in the garden and as he has little scope to use his dialect, he has forgotten it. But how is it possible that if one does not use his mother tongue for years he will forget it? This is a very difficult question. Not only this one fellow but many a household is found in the course of the field work in which not all members can speak its own dialect. When the children cannot speak the dialect of their parents this has got one simple explanation. The children always pick up the dialects of their parents but if the parents themselves do not converse in their own dialect, the children cannot learn it.

The dialect that is mostly used by the Bhils, Mundas, Oraons and Santals is the one admixture of the Bengali dialects of Sylhet, Noakhali, Comilla and Dacca which is in vogue throughout Tripura. Hindi is also mixed up in their dialects. Many of them can also speak a pure Bengali dialect known among them as "Jangli Bhasa". Why this is so called cannot be ascertained but how do they know it may be explained in terms of their temporary settlements either in the tea gardens of North-Bengal, Assam or in the neighbouring districts of Bangladesh.

### **Religion**

The people covered in this survey are found mostly to practice Hinduism. Only 5 (five) households have been identified in the field study as Christians (three in Tachai and two in Durgabari). In fact, people belonging to different castes and communities who have come to settle in the tea gardens of Tripura are mostly Hindus. It is, however, interesting to note that the people of all communities are found to take part in all sorts of rituals and festivals organis-

ed by one ethnic group or the other inside or outside the garden, not to speak of the surveyed tribes in particular. Thus Mahadeva or Shiva is the most widely worshipped god among the tribes under consideration. Besides, there are goddesses like Kali, Lakshmi, Manasa, Sasthi, Durga and the like worshipped by them. At the same time they are found to retain their animistic beliefs and worship the evil or ghostly spirits. There is, however, one point to note here. While the elderly people are trying to maintain their traditional religious ceremonies, many younger people do not even know their names. What they do know are Durgapuja, Kalipuja, Saraswatipuja, etc. which are solemnised in the non-tribal Hindu locality outside the garden or even by the fellow workers belonging to other ethnic groups inside the garden.

### Art

The rich heritage in the art of folk-song, folk-dance and folk-tale among the Bhil, Munda, Oraon and Santal still prevails among them in Tripura. What is however making tremendous headway among the young generation is the stories and songs of the silver screen. Playing of Hindi songs through Stereo or Microphone is a common scene in the tea gardens. Whether it is in the observation of rituals related to child birth, marriage, spraying of colour or in religious worship the use of record-players is found to be growing day by day.

So far as ornaments are concerned, womenfolk can only recall, when enquired, what their predecessors were used to. Today they even do not prefer those ornaments as, in their own view, they give a shabby look. What they use today are the cheap but beautiful ornaments made of rolled gold, plastics and glass which are popular among the non-tribal women in the locality as well. The elderly tribal women are however using whatever old ornaments like bangles, ear-rings, anklets made of zinc or brass that they still have in their possession.

Since for the tea garden labourers houses, as a rule, are provided by the garden authorities, we see more or less similar structure of houses for different ethnic groups working in the garden. The condition of houses, of course, are seen to vary, though not much, from one garden to other. A single medium-sized house made of mud wall with thatched roof and a small thatched kitchen are generally seen to be provided to all the working households in the gardens. Out of the ten gardens, one garden Haplongcherra Tea Estate in Dharmanagar Sub-Division, however, stands as an ex-

ception. Here the authorities have provided standard sized tin-roofed, mud-walled houses with fitted windows and with separate kitchen to many of its workers. In other gardens houses of the workers are not found to have full scale windows, instead, they have round shaped medium-sized holes on the walls meant for air and light and yet, they are seen to be neat and clean. The courtyards of almost all the houses visited are found to be particularly beautiful, broad, neat and clean testifying to the aesthetic and artistic sense of the households. Since there is plenty of fallow land in the tea gardens, whenever a worker feels the necessity of erecting a new house at his own expenses, he can easily do it but before that he has to take a formal permission from the management. Therefore, when the family size increases the households construct a new house generally of mud wall with thatched roof for accommodating new members. In case a house provided by the authority is in a dilapidated condition and requires repair or replacement either the authority concerned provides necessary materials and wages to the household for getting it repaired or built up a new, or gets it done by using other hired labour.

Thus, so far as housing condition is concerned it may be said that the tribes under consideration are living in houses which are well-built, neat and clean and are more or less well-ventilated.

### **Marriage System**

Consequent on the cultural contact with the non-tribal people of the State for over sixty years, the institution of marriage among the tribes is undergoing significant changes. Marriages by mutual consent are gradually taking places of marriages by service, by purchase and by elopement. Not even that, inter-community marriages are also reportedly taking place. The elderly people, when requested to comment on this during the field study, express their helpless position. They, however, normally do not come in confrontation with the younger members committing such act and are also gradually trying to adapt themselves to it. The anguish they still retain in their minds comes to an end with the birth of the first child to the couple and they even become very fond of the baby. One particular case may be mentioned here. Shri Haran Hembram, the eldest son of a retired tea garden worker, Surai Hembram of Manuvalley Tea Estate, working as office-staff at Kailasahar Sub-Judge's Court is reported to have married a girl belonging to non-tribal community by elopement. This incident caused some misunderstanding and commotion in his family which

subsided later when a baby was born to the newly married couple. The institution of the youth dormitory is no more in existence nor can it exist even theoretically in the labour lines of the tea garden constituent parts of which belong to heterogeneous ethnic groups.

### **Political Administration**

The age-old political institutions of the tribes which still prevail in their respective places of concentration cannot be found as such in Tripura. As the tea gardens of Tripura fall under one Gaon Panchayat or the other and as there are trade unions affiliated to either CITU or INTUC, people residing in them exercise their franchise to elect their representative in the respective bodies, besides taking part in the elections to the State Assembly and Indian Parliament. The Gaon Panchayats have replaced the traditional political institutions of the tribes. There is, however, an informal council of elders in each of the four ethnic groups covered in this study. In the internal matters like social functions, rituals, ceremonies, intra-ethnic clashes or inter-ethnic conflicts it is this council of elders which settles them. This settlement remains binding on all concerned.

The existence of trade unions in the tea gardens is an evidence of political involvement of the workers in general and the tribes under consideration in particular. In all the gardens surveyed excepting Durgabari and Tachi which are workers' run co-operative tea gardens and where the trade unions are affiliated to the Tea Workers Union only, trade unions are recognised by either the Tea Workers' Union or the Cha Mazdoor Union - the two state level organisations of the tea workers in Tripura, the former being affiliated to CITU and the latter to INTUC. So far as the strength of these two organisations is concerned, it may be said that the former has a definite lead over the latter the reasons for which lie in the continuous movements for higher wages, better working conditions, amenities and rationing for the workers launched by the Tea Workers Union under the banner of CITU. The Tea Workers Union on its turn has strengthened the left and democratic movements by extending its support to them.

### **Conclusion**

Notwithstanding that Tripura was introduced with the Bhil, Munda, Oraon and Santal not earlier than seventy years ago, they have been adapting to the way of life of the majority in the

state starting from food habits, dresses, dialects, religious faith, ceremonies, and to the political administration. Not even that, when requested to say a few words on how they view their homelands vis-a-vis Tripura the answer that comes out in many a case is particularly encouraging. "The hardship of the premigration days which our forefathers suffered from but for which they could not be so easily lured to the tea plantations is no more". In their own words, "today we are in a comparatively better position". In some cases the answer is still more encouraging: "Tripura is our homeland; we have no homeland other than Tripura". This particular answer comes from those households which have settled in the state two or three generations ago and who have the least reminiscence of their ancestral background. Notwithstanding the reports of repatriation of a few tea garden workers of Bihar by various tea garden authorities in the state in the seventies or of workers returning to their homeland on their own, only one or two respondents acknowledge regular contact with their kin in their homeland through postal communications and to the majority of them, the touch has been cut off totally. Nostalgic feeling is found to be almost non-existent among the respondents irrespective of whether they are young or old in age. On enquiry it is learnt that even the small number of elderly respondents who are the first generation immigrants and who still feel some attraction for their homeland do not dare to take the risk of traversing the long distance so as to reach there due primarily to financial involvement and marginally to the apprehension of not being recognised by the relations and fellow villagers therein. The younger generation is found to be totally indifferent and ignorant about their original abode. This change, however, is inevitable and it is good that the tribes under consideration as a whole have no feeling of isolation and have been adapting themselves to the socio-cultural and political milieu of the state over time. The process of assimilation is almost on the verge of completion among the surveyed immigrant tribes.