

TRIPURA

The Land and its People

GAN CHAUDHURI



Tripura is an exotic geographical entity at the north-eastern tip end of India. Largely inhabited by various tribes, it has had an uninterrupted but chequered history and culture, distinctly identifiable and peculiarly its own. The eleven contributed essays contained in this volume present a vast panorama of the land and its people while dealing with their politics, economy, social structure and social customs. The first two studies highlight many of the hitherto unknown facets of the geography and history of this tiny but perennially charming patch of land. The third study recapitulates the social and administrative organisation of the land through the ages. The fourth chapter recounts various archaeological evidences that link the antiquity of the land to times immemorial. The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters focus attention on the presence and utilisation of the rich natural resources which can be instrumental in investing a face lift to the economy and the life of the people in this state. The presence and the effects of the multi faceted political consciousness find a succinct exposition in the eighth, ninth and tenth chapters. The grand finale of the book is contained in its last chapter on local folklore, rescued, as it were, from oblivion. This composite work should be of interest to geographers, historians, economists, political scientists and sociologists who will find a veritable mine of information on Tripura as a whole in these studies.

JAGADIS GAN-CHAUDHURI (b. 1945) is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Bir Bikram College, Agartala. The name 'Tripura' has been a passion with him. He has brought to bear his versatility and academic approach to the multi-faceted Tripura in this work. Two of his other works : *The Tipras of Tripura* and *Folk Deities of Tripura* are in the process of completion.

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Edited by

JAGADIS GAN-CHAUDHURI



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PREFACE

THERE IS a growing interest among teachers and students, research scholars and general readers, politicians and public alike in the history and culture, politics and problems of Tripura. Some books, big and small, serious and popular, on the subject have appeared. There is, perhaps, still room, for such a volume as the one presented here.

The book is more like an anthology than a compendium. It is compiled in response to a request by the publisher. It seeks to make available to the interested persons some information and materials necessary both for first-hand knowledge and for deeper understanding. It does not cover all the areas of research.

The writings have not been selected at random, and instead of writing the book single-handed, scholars have been requested to contribute articles. In selecting topics, care has been taken so that the living issues and burning problems do not go untouched; while in assigning the tasks of writing the essays, it is sought to utilize the insight and knowledge developed by the learned scholars in their respective fields of long research.

By an economy of words, it has been possible to deal with the subjects within a handy volume. The mass of minor details which often obscure the essential points is detached and left aside. The contributors have not received enough time and space that might have been due to them; but an effort has been taken to maintain a symmetry and proportion.

The scheme of the contents has not been arranged according to an inevitable order of presentation. The essay on Geography, Physiography and Ethnography is perhaps the appropriate one to begin with. Three writings on political, administrative and religious history have been placed in the sequence now noted here. Next in order are three articles on economic problems. Essays on contemporary politics and local government, three in number, constitute the third group of papers. Thus, from the three groups of papers, the readers may trace the past, know the present and foresee the future of Tripura.

Chapters 1, 8, 9, 10 and 11 have been written by the editor; Chapter 2 by Prof. Nalini Ranjan Roy Chaudhuri, 3 by

Prof. Bani Kantha Bhattacharya, 4 by Sri Priyabrata Bhattacharya, 5 by Dr Jalad Baran Gangopadhyaya, 6 by Prof. Arun Kumar Gangopadhyaya and 7 by Dr Narendra Chandra Datta.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the writers for their contributions and co-operation. Valuable suggestions and information have been supplied by Mahārāj Kumar Sahadev Bikram Kishore, Sri Buddha Dev Barman, Sri Syama Charan Tripura, Sri Binay Dev Barman, Sri Bidhu Bhusan Chakraborti, Sri Manimoy Dev Barman, Sri Jyotirmay Datta, ex-Captain Thakur Nagendra Dev Barman, Prof. B.P. Mukhopadhyaya, Prof. Kanabi Dev Barman, Prof. Saroj Kumar Chaudhuri, Dr P.V. Nair, Prof. N.K. Chakraborti, Dr A.R. Das, Prof. B.K. Roy, Dr K.C. Lahiri and many others. Sri C.R. Das, Sri Ranjit Kr. Chakraborti and Sri Nani Gopal Roy have readily supplied me books and journals. I thank the Leeladevi Publications, Delhi, for publishing the work. Sri R.K. Barman of Maya Commercial Institute took the trouble of typing the manuscript.

Finally, I must gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to my *Guru* Professor Sudhir Ranjan Das of the University of Calcutta for his advice and *āsīrvād*.

Agartala,
TRIPURA

JAGADIS GAN-CHAUDHURI

1 June 1979

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4. A Tripura family in a leisurely pace drinking and smoking

The Perennially Charming Tripura

Jagadish Gan-Chaudhuri

THE NAME Tripura has a halo of mystery encircled around it. It signifies different things to different people. The story of its origins is shrouded in myth and legend. The arguments over the origin of the nomenclature Tripura remain inconclusive even today. Some scholars ascribe the name to the goddess *Tripura Sundari* of *Radhakishorepur*. Others treat Tripura as a derivative form of *Tri Puram*, meaning a land of three cities. There is also a popular belief that a mythical king called Tripur named his kingdom Tripura after his own name. Analysing the name etymologically some researchers have found it to be a combined form of two tribal words, *tui* and *pra*, which mean 'a land adjoining water'. Yet others well-versed in the Sanskrit learning of yore have identified it with a name Tripura that occurs in ancient Sanskrit texts. The search into the genesis of the name thus continues ; a definite version and interpretation of the name will, no doubt, emerge in times to come.

The modern state of Tripurā lies to the south-west of Āssām, and to the east of Bānglādes̄h, formerly East Pakistān. It is located

between the parallels of 22°56' and 24°32' north latitudes, and between 91°10' and 92°21' east longitudes. The state covers an area of 10,477 sq km and the shape of the territory is irregular. It is a curved strip of land, measuring about 183.5 km in length from north-east to west, and 112.7 km in width from south to north.

Tripura is a land-locked state and its geographical limits touch both national and international boundaries. Four-fifth of its land frontiers are enclosed by the Bangladesh districts of Sylhet in the north, Comilla in the west, Noakhali and Chittagong in the south and the hill tracts of Chittagong in the south-east. It is only on its north-eastern border that Tripura meets the states of Assam and Mizoram.

The frontier lines have been demarcated with the help of pillars, stone slabs and rivers. The border line between Tripurā and the British Indian Province of Bengal was demarcated in 1854 in accordance with the awards of two arbitrators, G.P. Leychester representing the British Government and W.F. Campell representing the Rājā of Hill Tipperāh. The western border of Tripurā is very much zigzag because of the malafide intentions of the British dwellers to include every inch of the fertile lands into the British territory, leaving hills and up-lands for the local ruler. Frequent dacoity, kidnapping, smuggling and stealing of cattle, crops and forest-products of Tripura by the people living beyond the western borders pose serious problems. The changes in courses of rivers marking the international border sometimes aggravate the situation leading even to the exchange of fire. This unbearable condition continues since the inception of Pakistan. As such, frontiers of Tripura are always in tensions. The story of the eastern border of Tripura is no less painful. On the plea of the inability of King Bir Bikram to suppress the Lushai-Kuki raids in the plains during 1860s, a tribal area of 850 sq miles between the Longāi and the Dhaleswari rivers, now in Mizoram, was temporarily taken over by the British Government for direct surveillance and was later unilaterally annexed to British India.

The climate of Tripura is almost similar to that of the other states in north-eastern India and Bānglādes̄h. It is neither too hot nor too cold. The average maximum temperature is 35°C in

May and June and the average minimum is about 10°C in December and January. Sometimes the temperature falls to 5°C in winter. Situated within the monsoon zone of the Bay of Bengal in the south, the territory receives an annual heavy rainfall of more than 200 cm and on account of the excessive humidity, malaria, black-fever, bowel-complaints, dysentery and cholera were very common diseases till recently. The principal seasons are summer, the monsoon, autumn, winter and spring. Summer is between March and May. The rainy season between June and September brings cyclones, hail-storms, thunder-storms and lightning in its wake, causing damages to houses, crops, trees and even deaths of animals and human beings. The pleasant autumn has a short lease of life from October to early November and then comes winter which continues upto January. Spring is brief and occurs in the month of February.

Geology

Geologically the territory is not very old. It seems to have risen from the sea bed in the late Tertiary age about forty million years ago. The land surface is mountainous and uneven and the whole terrain abounds in rivulets, brooks, rivers, hills, plains, valleys and lakes. The rugged topography gradually softens towards the west, the hill terrain giving place to the plains, the narrow gorges to wide valleys and the primeval forests to cultivated plants. But very wide, extensive and flat fields like the ones found in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are rarely found here. The west is more developed, busy and more thickly populated than the east. Almost all the towns and business centres have grown along the western border.

The rivers in this territory are Gomati, Hāorā, Longāi, Juri, Deo, Manu, Dhalāi, Khowāi, Muhuri and Fenī. The rivers are neither broad nor deep enough for navigation though some of them are wider now than before. The drainage is towards the south-west, the west and the north. All the rivers traverse Banglā-
desh before they fall into the Bay of Bengal. The steep descent, the zigzag course, the narrow breadth and shallow surface of the rivers combined with heavy rainfall and the loose structure of the soil cause tremendous soil-erosion and frequent floods. There are seven long ranges and numerous hillocks in Tripurā. The ranges

and hills are called *murā* and *tilā* respectively. The ranges are : *Jampai*, *Sākhāntāng*, *Longtharāi*, *Ātharamurā*, *Baramurā*, *Devāmurā* and *Sārdeng*. Of the hills, the highest are the *Jampai* (3200 feet) and the *Sākhāntāng* (2578 feet) respectively.

The flora of Tripurā, Āssām, Arunāchal, Mizorām, Manipur, Meghālaya, Nāgāland and Bānglādesh are mostly common. The greater part of Tripurā was densely covered with primeval forests even up to the middle of the present century. The various kinds of available flora are : grass, creepers, cane, bamboo, trees and vegetables. The common forest trees include the mythical *Chhāttim* (*Alstonia Scholaris*), the magical *Chāmal* (*Artocarpus chaplasi*), the fibrous *udāl* (*Sterculia villosa*), the heavy *hārgājā* (*Dillenia pentagyna*), the stately *garjan* (*Dipterocarpus turbinatus*), the light *popā* or *Toon* (*Toona cihata*), the red *roynā* (*Aphanomixias polystachya*), the sturdy *sonālu* (*Cassia fistiula*), *karai* (*Albizia procera*), *gāmāir* (*Gomelina arborea*), *kumirā* (*Careya arborea*) and *jārāil*, the thorny *māndār* (*Erythrina indica*), the ever green *jir* (*Ficus retusa*), the sacred *aswathha* (Peepul), the famous *vaṭ* (*Ficus bengalensis*), the stout *kanak*, the inflammable *āoāl*, etc. The varieties of bamboo generally available are *barāk* (*Bambusa balcooa*), *dalū* (*Neohouzeaua duloa*), *jāi*, *khāllāi*, *mittingā* (*Bambusa tuloba*) and *muli* (*Melocana bambosoides*). The two varieties of cane to be found are *gallā* (*Calamus viminalis*) and *jāli* (*Calamus floribundus*). The two kinds of thatching grass commonly found are *chhan* (*Imperata cylindrica*) and *ulu* (*Imperata* sp.).

There is also a large variety of flower plants, such as, marigold, rose, tube rose, china rose, sun-flower, cape jasmine, lotus, water lily, sacred basil, *Belpool* (*gasminoum sombac*), *Bokphool* (*Agatigrandiflora*), *Krishna Chūrā* (*Pionciana regia*), Cocks Comb (*Celosia cristata*), *Golāchi* (*Plumeria acutifolia*), *Karabi* (*Thevetia peruviana*), *Nāgeswar* (*Mesua ferrea*), *Eucalyptus maculata*, *Kalābati* (Indian shot), *Kadam* (*Anthocephalus cadamba*), *Sandhyāmani*, *Seuli*, *Khumpai*, etc. Those who gather wild roots, tubers, vegetables and fruits get ample materials in the forests, marshy places and valleys of Tripura. The common edible vegetables are *Qrums*, *Āmalaki* (*Emblimyrobalan*), *Āmilani* (*Oxalis corniculata*), *Āmrā* (Hog plum), *Bāgher dogā* (*Amorphallus sylvaticus*), *Battā* (*Artocarpus lakoocha*), *Chālītā* (*Dillenia indica*), *Dhekir Sāk* (*Polypodium*

sp.), *Halanche* (*Enlydra fluctuans*), *Jagna dongar* (*Ficus recemosa*), *Bhāte dongar* (*Ficus hispida*), *Kalamī, Kāṭṭas* (*Hasia hetexophylla*), *Māknā* (*Euryle ferox*), *Ool, Rāmkalā*, (*Musa rosea*), *Sitā begoon* (*Solanum torvum*), *Tārā* (*Alpinia allughas*), *Thānkuni* (*Cevtella asiatica*), *Vanāloo* (*Dioscoria* sp.), *Van tulsi* (*Ocimum basilicum*), *Vādālī* (*Paderia foetida*).

Tripura is a paradise for those who seek medicinal plants. It is virtually an herbarium. One tribal *ojhāi* aptly remarks that he finds no place to set his foot without treading over a medicinal herb and some of such plants that abound here are : *Arjun* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *Ākanda* (*Calotropis procera*), *Āswagandhā* (*Withania ashwagandha*), *bāsak* (*Adhatoda vasica*), *bhait* (*Clerodendrum sar-ratum*), *chhāttim* (*Alstonia scholaris*), *halisur* (*Acalypha indica*), *kālmegh* (*Andrographis pauculatus*), *kantakāri* (*Solanum xanthocarpum*), *kshet Paprā, satamool* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *pāthar Kuchi* (*Brayophyllum pinnatum*), *dhuturā* (*Datura metal*), *Jabā* (*Hibiscus rosa-sinesis*), *sarpa gandhā* (*Rauvolfia serpentina*), *padma pūrachi* (*Tonospora cordifolia*), *ghrita kumāri* (*Aloe indica royle*), *pūnar-nabā* (*Trianthima portulacastrum*), *nishinda* (*Vitex negundo*), *barun* (*Crataeva religiosa*), *tokmā* (*Hyptis suaveolens*), *Dād mardana* (*Cassia alata*), *morichā* (*Eupatorium odoratum*), *dūrbā* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *lajjyāvati* (*Mimosa pudica*), *Baj, kaet bel* (*Feronia limonia*). Certain valuable plants like *rudrāksha* (*Elaeocarpus sphenricus*), *āgar* (*Aquileria agallocha*), *dhup ghilā* (*Entada Scandens*), *baettā* (*Texminelia baterica*) are fast disappearing.

The cultivated plants are no less in number and variety than the primeval plants. New and high-yielding varieties of plants are being constantly introduced by private and public agencies, individuals and institutes. These are apple, banana, bean, beet, brinjal, betelnut, cabbage, cauliflower, betel leaf, bel, coconut, cucumber, date plum, garden pea, guava, garlic, ginger, Indian spinach jujube, jute, jack fruit, lady's finger, lemon, mango, maize, onion, potato, pineapple, palmyra, palm, papaya, parsnip radish, rubber, sugarcane, *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*), *sajnā, tejpātā*, tomato, tobacco, turnip, wheat, etc.

The fauna of Tripura, like its flora, resemble the one in the neighbouring states. The terrestrial fauna are richer than the aquatic fauna. There are myriads of microscopic protozoa that cause diseases like dysentery and diarrhoea. *Spongilla* and *Hydra* thrive

in humidity and water. Helminth parasites are common in crops, cattle and human bodies. Earthworms, leaches, butter-flies, locusts, and various insects are found in abundance. Scorpions, centipedes, millipedes, dipterian flies and mosquitoes are a nuisance. There are also prawns, crabs, applesnails, small snails, terrestrial snails, tree-snails, mussels, slugs, *Achatina* and *Helix*.

Tripurā is poor in piscean fauna. It is partly dependent on Bānglādesh for the supply of fish. The fishes commonly available here are *āir*, *along*, *bādā*, *bāchā*, *bāilā*, *bāim*, *bajari*, *bhāgnā*, *bhetki* or *meni*, *boāl*, *chāndā*, *chāpilā*, *chakpuni*, *chital*, *dārikā*, *gajār*, *ghania*, *gootham* or *betrangi*, *kātlā*, *kuchiā*, *katkatia*, *kai*, *khaiā*, *kāikyā*, *kālbāus*, *kānchi*, *lāthi* or *garai*, *maralā*, *māgur*, *mrigāl*, *pābdā*, *phalai* or *kanlā*, *poḥā*, *puḥi*, *ruhu*, *saul*, *sepli*, *singi*, *tengrā*, *ugal* etc. Toads and frogs are also commonly found. Of the reptiles there are many species like the python, *karait*, red snake, *lāudogā*, *sankhini*, *dhorā*, *dārāsh*, *kālnāgini*, *keute*, *chandra-berā*, are found. Besides snakes, *caḷotes*, gecko, draco, *mabuya*, *varanus*, chameleon, wall lizard, turtle, and tortoise are also found in abundance. Tripurā is very rich in avian fauna. There are : Jungle fowl, crow, crane, stork, bee-eaters, owl, jacana (*dāhuk*), kite, mayna, parrot, parakeet, kingfisher, wood pecker, *bau-kathakao* or *Phānthak Pāka*, cuckoo, vulture, swallow, *Shama*, golden oriole (*kutumba*), crow pheasant (*kuli*), *bulbul*, babbler, flower pecker, weaver bird, hornbill, large pied wagtail (*khanjan*), sparrow, sunbird, tree-pie, warbler, grey partridge, darter (*pān cowri*), teal (*bālihāsh*), pigeon, racket tailed drongo (*bhringaraj*), magpie robin (*doyel*), tailor-bird (*tuntuni*), etc. The wild mammalian fauna is on the wane but domestic livestock is increasing in number and variety. There are elephant, tiger, leopard, spotted deer, black deer, bear, porcupine, jackal, monkey, mongoose, cat, pig, squirrel, pangolin, mouse, *ud* or *bhodar*, bat, wild dog, wild goat, etc. Bison, rhinoceros and the white elephant are now virtually extinct. The white elephant occurs in the local folktales. A place called Ganda Chara is known for rhinoceroses. The common domestic animals include cow, goat, horse, cat, sheep, buffalo and dog.

The population of Tripurā is heterogeneous. Diverse ethnic elements can be traced in it. People of almost all the provinces of India, are found here. The Bengalees and the tribal people constitute the two major ethnic groups of Tripurā, making the bulk of

the population. The State is densely populated. Of all the seven states of north-eastern India, Tripurā's density (149) is second to that of Āssām (150). The following table shows the population of

TABLE 1.1
CRI (Tripura)

Year	Total Population	Percentage of Decadal Variation	Tribal Population	Percentage of Tribals to Total Population
1874-75	74,523		47,523	64
1881	95,637	28.33	49,915	55
1891	1,37,575	43.85	70,292	51.09
1901	1,73,325	25.98	91,679	52.89
1911	2,29,613	34.48	1,11,303	48.47
1921	3,04,437	32.59	1,71,610	56.37
1931	3,82,450	25.63	2,03,327	52
1941	5,13,010	34.14		
1951	6,45,707	25.25	2,37,953	37
1961	11,42,005	78.71	3,60,070	31.5
1971	15,56,342	36.28	4,50,544	28.95

Tripurā right from 1874-75 to the 1971 Census. The above figures indicate that the total population within a century has increased more than twenty times. The decadal growth rate shows fluctuations. A fall in the growth rate from the preceding figure is probably owing to the spread of epidemics like cholera and small pox. The 1961 figures show an abnormally high rate of growth. There may be some room for surmises about the accuracy of the census reports from 1874 to 1951 because of certain difficulties in the census operations emanating from the factors like the inaccessibility of the hills, poor communication, lack of elaborate administrative machinery, the fear of the people to furnish correct data and also the two world wars. The situation has improved considerably since the 1960s. The figures of 1961 and 1971 census are largely dependable. In addition to accuracy, the influx of the Bengali Hindus from East Pākistān is also responsible for the high rate of increase. During this period, besides the Bengalees, many tribal families also have immigrated from East Pākistān, particularly from the Chittāgong Hill Tracts.

Another important feature that is evident in the table is that within the same period whereas the population in general has increased 20 times, the tribal population has increased only about 10 times. If there is room for doubt for the general figures of earlier census operations, there is greater room for doubt about the correctness of the census figures about the tribals. Since 1961, their growth rate is not only steady, but also above the national level. Speaking comparatively, the Indian population increased by 24.57 per cent between 1961 and 1971 whereas in case of Tripura it increased by 31.92 per cent. The table also shows a gradual decrease in the percentage of the tribals to the non-tribals. Their percentage was above 50 till 1931. The figures are recording a decline since 1951 and the cause of this phenomenon lies in the immigration of the plains people. Though both the tribals and the non-tribals are increasing, the latter show a faster rate of growth because their increase is accelerated by immigration.

The Hindus constitute the major religious group in Tripurā. Most of the Bengalees, tribals, Marwaris, Manipuris, Malayalis, Nepalis, Oriyas residing here are the Hindus. The Muslims were once very powerful; even today they have strong holds in Sonāmūrā, Udaipur and Kailāshar. Many of them have left after exchanging property with the Hindus of Pākistān. The Mogs and the Chākmās are the Buddhists. The Christianity is fast taking roots among the tribals. The following table shows the distribution of the population according to various religions.

TABLE 1.2

CRI (Tripura)

Religion	1941	1951	1961	1971
Hindus	3,47,792	4,80,662	8,67,998	13,93,689
Muslims	1,23,570	1,36,940	2,30,002	1,03,962
Buddhists	7,724	15,403	33,716	42,285
Christians	328	5,262	10,039	15,713
Jains	—	—	195	375
Sikhs	—	—	49	318

The growth of literacy has been rather spectacular. The literacy increased from 2.28 per cent in 1901 to 30.86 per cent in 1971. The

number of schools, colleges and other institutions of education has gone up from 2 in 1874-75 to 3061 in 1973-74. Tripurā could progress more in the field of education but for the British government that foiled the attempts of *Rājā Rādhā Kishore* (1897-1909) to establish a College at *Āgartalā* and extorted funds from him for the establishment of the Victoria College at Comilla now in Bangladesh.

The present malady of the Schools is no less responsible for the slow progress. In urban areas in most of the schools, the number of teachers is far more than required ; whereas in the interior, schools have far less number of teachers. Most of the Junior Basic schools have only one teacher who hardly attends school. In the hills, schools hum with activities only when a school Inspector or a government minister are on a visit to the school or in the area.

The hills and forests of this tract abound in various games and are rich in flora. These natural gifts allured the early man to settle here as the food gatherer. The Tibeto-Burmese speaking tribes were, in all probability, the earliest inhabitants of this land and this is evident from certain place-names. They crossed the eastern, north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers and lived in and around Tripurā in successive waves. So these tribes are as much immigrants as any group of the people in the plains.

Out of 18 tribal communities, six aloclthonous tribes, namely, *Mundā*, *Orāon*, *Sāntāl*, *Bhil*, *Lepchā* and *Bhutiā* are numerically insignificant, socially isolated, and politically unorganised. The rest of the communities, such as, *Tiprās*, *Riāng*, *Jamātiā*, *Chākmā*, *Hālām*, *Noātiā*, *Mag*, *Kuki*, *Gāro*, *Lushāi*, *Uchai*, and *Khāsiā*, who claim to be autochthons had actually immigrated from the greater *Āssām*, *Burmā* and *Chiṭṭāgong Hill Tracts*. Formerly, they had a self-subsistence economy based on gathering, hunting, shifting cultivation, domestication of animals, basketry and weaving. The following table (No. 1.3) gives the names of the tribes and their numerical strength.

The *Tiprās* constitute the largest tribe. Their number is likely to suffer decrease in the next census because of the recent delinking of the *Laskars* from the list of the scheduled tribes. The recent trend of the *Noātiās* to be enumerated as *Tiprās* i.e., *Dev Barmans*, may make up the loss in numerical strength. Nevertheless, besides being the largest tribe, the credit of ruling the state

TABLE 1.3
C.R.I. (Tripura)

S. No.	Tribe	1951	1961	1971
1.	Tiprā	1,50,971	1,89,799	2,50,382
2.	Riāng	8,471	56,597	64,722
3.	Jamātiā	2,764	24,359	34,192
4.	Chākmā	7,277	22,386	28,622
5.	Hālām	1,644	16,298	19,076
6.	Noātiā	1,916	16,010	10,297
7.	Mag	3,789	10,524	13,273
8.	Kuki	2,721	5,532	7,775
9.	Gāro	7,362	5,484	5,559
10.	Mundā	51	4,409	5,347
11.	Lushai	1,947	2,988	3,672
12.	Orāon	—	2,875	3,428
13.	Sāntāl	736	1,562	2,222
14.	Uchāi	—	766	1,061
15.	Khasia	151	349	491
16.	Bhil	41	69	169
17.	Lepchā	5	7	177
18.	Bhutīā	19	7	3
19.	Chaimal	—	50	—

for several centuries goes to them. Besides the tribals, other peoples in Tripurā include the Bengalees, Manipuris, Nepalīs, Oriyas, Punjabis, Marwaris, Biharis, Malayalis etc. The Bengalee Hindus constitute the major group (66.94 per cent). In Tripurā, only 10.43 per cent of the total population live in towns and among them only 5.29 per cent of the scheduled caste people and 1.23 per cent of the tribal population are urban dwellers. What is more significant is that the Tiprās, because of their long association with monarchy, constitute the bulk of the tribal urban dwellers. It indicates a correlation between caste and community on the one hand and white collar jobs and urban habitation on the other.

In table 1.4, the number, name and numerical strength of the scheduled castes of Tripurā have been shown. According to the C.R.I. (Tripurā) 1951, 1961 and 1971 they constitute 7 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 12.39 per cent respectively of the total population of the state.

Obviously, there is diversity among the people of Tripurā,

TABLE 1.4
CRI (Tripura)

S. No.	Name of Caste	1961	1971
1.	Nama Sudra	46,383	74,980
2.	Jāliā Kaivarta	18,208	29,897
3.	Māli	15,362	21,134
4.	Māhisyaḍās	11,994	28,733
5.	Dhobā	10,887	19,953
6.	Chāmār or Muchi	3,640	4,228
7.	Gour	3,523	2,877
8.	Sabar	2,150	2,094
9.	Pātṇi	1,687	2,228
10.	Kanda	1,226	1,202
11.	Kol	1,067	519
12.	Bhuimāli	784	315
13.	Kharia	513	744
14.	Mehtor	456	626
15.	Koch	366	650
16.	Ghasi	327	72
17.	Gur	258	1,145
18.	Bāgdi	161	116
19.	Dum	155	143
20.	Keot	133	336
21.	Kahar	125	181
22.	Koir	118	100
23.	Musahar	52	7
24.	Kotāl	51	
25.	Kālindi	40	30
26.	Khadit	15	
27.	Kora	15	26
28.	Dandasi	10	
29.	Dhenuār	9	1
30.	Kan	5	23
31.	Gunār	4	
32.	Kanugh	1	15
33.	Bhunār		475

Several factors have combined to bring the ethnic groups here. The search for resourceful forests, inter-tribal feuds, and uncanny incidents might have been the reasons for the immigration of the tribal communities. The shortage of land, population pressure, poverty, political oppression and religious persecution were the spur to the immigration of the plains people. In addition, the land-grants by the *Rājās* and opportunity for jobs and business induced many plains people to come and settle down here. Moreover, a large number of them were the *Rājās*' subjects residing in Chākḷā Roshnābād. Many people had also emigrated. Following intra-tribal feuds, a large number of Rāngkhals of the Hālām community had left Tripurā for Hāflong in Āssām in the distant past. Failed to cope with the political situation during the communist movement in 1950s, many Garos left for the Garo Hills.

In any way, there were few hands to utilise the fertile fields and forests. When they came, people were required. Tripurā induced and welcomed immigrants. The problem of scarcity in lands, forest and jobs has propped up its ugly face. Now there is little need for additional workers. So rumblings of discontent and dissatisfaction against immigration are heard so much so that the government is discouraging and resisting immigration.

This, in brief, is all that constitutes the perennially charming Tripurā. It is a land with a distinctive character from the mainland of India and so are its inhabitants different from the people of India. The entire north-eastern region of India is uncommon in relation to the other regions of India and Tripura is unique in this uncommon region.