

THE TRIBES OF TRIPURA A DISSERTATION

S.B.K. DEV VARMAN

Tribal Research and Cultural Institute
Govt. of Tripura

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FOREWORD

The book titled '*The Tribes of Tripura-A Dissertation*' abled to create excessive demand among the Research Scholars, the 3rd edition of the book has already been exhausted. Considering the demand of the book for the readers, educationists, researchers and administrators attempt for printing *4th edition* of the book has been made.

Dated, Agartala
March , 2012

(Sailohnuna)
Director
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INTRODUCTION

Half dust, half deity, alike unfit to sink or soar—Byron.

So is man. Here, in this book I will try to present, in a compact form on account of a part of mankind—the Tribals of Tripura. The information regarding their culture, customs, geographical habitat and their origin is cumbered with many statistical details and such dreary portions of many studies which I believed would tax the patience of my readers have been carefully avoided. But at the same time I have not forgotten to give the salient features of the tribal societies as they existed and exist today.

While shifting the data collected by me from various sources I have tried to distill into one single compendious volume the essence of the numerous books, bulletins, etc. on the tribes of Tripura. In my inquiry into the different faceds of the Socio-economic profiles of the major Tribes I have drawn certain inferences and have raised certain counter-points. I am, therefore, open to criticism which I invite. Free inquiry, if restrained within the bounds, and applied to proper subjects, is the most important privilege of the human mind : and if well conducted is one of the greatest friends to truth. But when reason knows neither its office nor its limit, and when employed on subjects foreign to its jurisdiction, it then becomes a privilege dangerous to be exercised.

Tripura is a relic of a once powerful Kingdom of the name mentioned in the great Sanskrit epic Mahabharata and coming down to the historic period in the Ain-i-Akbari. The conquests of the Kings of Tripura gained for the kingdom possessions till in the sixteenth century its territory stretched "from the Sundarban, in the west and Burma in the east". Such a sprawling empire sheltered in its bosom people of many races belonging to different regions and climes. In the centuries ante-

of rivers and forests, and a mighty host of unseen beings, whom he must keep in good humour.

The Hinduizing process is going on among the tribals since very long and they are "tending towards Hinduism, and that many of them, as they rise in the scale of civilisation, lose their identity in the Hindu Community". Christianity has arrived in this land only recently. The activities of the Christian Missions has not, however, been confined to the propagation of their faith only. But their "services of education, especially in the instruction of the people in the vernacular languages, deserve mention. The growth of Buddhism in Tripura can be traced back to more than one thousand years when the Buddhists fled their country in the western India. From records available even to-day we may presume that Buddhism took its root in the Northern parts of the erstwhile Tripura from where it gradually spread to Burma in the East and the process was reversed when Ahom's were over-powered by fresh Buddhist invasions from Burma between 1750 and 1825. That Buddhism flourished in Samatata and Mainamati in Tripura is a proven historical facts. As to be precise I may quote Hunter "Buddhism readily coalesced with the preexisting religious of primitive races. Thus among the hill-tribes of East-Bengal, we see the Khyaungthas or children of the river passing into Buddhists without giving up their aboriginal rites".

I have also tried to put into this book important data pertaining to the Tribal people of Tripura. A list of other Scheduled Tribe Community is given in the Appendix. It is my wish that in the future publications these people will be treated in a detailed way in the context of their migration for Tripura.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my indebtedness to Shri I.P. Gupta, I.A.S. Chief Secretary who has taken a keen interest and guided me, and to my numerous well-wishers who have helped me with valuable materials.

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rior vast hordes of tribes migrated to Tripura in search of new pastures along the rivers or in the fastnesses, of the hills away from their natural enemies.

In tracing the original homes of the Tribes now settled in Tripura the traditional chronicles and myths have been taken resort to. "What is history but fables agreed upon", said Napoleon. And we read history through our prejudices.

The dialects of these people belong to the same big family of the Tibeto-Burman languages. Ethno logically most of the Tribes are of the same non-Aryan stock. Risley writes "no one who is acquainted with the population of the lower Himalayas can have failed to observe that in the West there has been a substantial intermixture of Indo-Aryan elements, while in the east the prevailing type down to the verge of the plain is exclusively Mongoloid". Though attempts have been made to contradistinguish the major types according to their existing social structure and cultural behaviour it must be confessed that anthropometry will find itself hindered, if not baffled, by the constant intermixture of types obscuring and confusing the data ascertained by measurements". In short, the tribals of Tripura are more or less akin both linguistically and anthropologically and represent a mixture of various races which have amalgamated within the historial period.

The important tribes of Tripura are divided religionwise into three distinct groups. These are Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. The Tripura Kshatriyas profess Hinduism. The Lushais, Kukis, and Garoes and mostly Christians. And Buddhism is prevalent among the Chakmas and the Moghs. But "animistic" rituals and fetish worship are still deeply ingrained in their religious belief. In spite of their confessed profession of the above three religions the Race-God, Tribe-God and then the family-God require in turn their oblation. Besides these, there are the spirits

HISTORY

From Legendary lores and mythology we gather that Druhyu who was banished by his father Emperor Yayati from Pratishtanpur wandered south along' the Ganges to the hermitage of sage Kapil and founded the city of Tribeg on Sagar Island in the estuary.

The 25th King of the Lunar dynesty King Pratorddan annexed the Kirat land and built his capital on the Bank of the Kapil or Brahmaputra and styled it as Tribeg to perpetuate the name of the city founded by Druhyu.

But whether Druhyu came to the South East after his banishment is a subject of controversy. In 'Khil Harivamsa' and "Vishnupuram' we find that he either went North or to the West. According to "Srimadbhagavat" he came to the South East. The Mahabharata (Bhisnuprava) describes as such Pragjyotishadanu Nripa Kowshalyahath a Brihad valah. Mekalain Kurubundyascha Traipurayscha. Samanvita.

The Mahabharata though overladen with fables forms the epic chronicles of the kings of the Middle land celebrates the Lunar Race of Hastinapura. The Kings of Tripura claimed descent from the Lunar lines of Kings. Many of the mythological tales of the Mahabharata are vedic antiquity and even a conservative calculation would assign the period of Druhyu to Tripur to nothing less than 1367 B.C. as Tripur was a contemporary of Yuthisthira.

Some scholars believe that the ancient land of Kirat Bhumi or Chirrhadac as mentioned by Ptolemy was named Tripura after the name of Tripur. But other historians hold that a part of the Kirat country was known as Tripura long anterior to the time of Tripur. It was Daitya who named his son as Tripur (Vabhava Tripurayantu Janana Tripureswaram Namachakre Maharajo Rajya namanu sarat : Rajratnakar).

Trilochana succeeded his father and ruled from Tribeg. It

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was he who installed the images of Chaturdas Devtas and brought Chantais (Chuantais in Halam means priests) from the Sagar Island in the Sundarbans. The eastern Sundarbans formed the Western boundary of the kingdom. "In ancient times there were on Sagar islands a famous Tol or Sanskrit college for pandits and a shrine of Siva erected by the Rajas of Tripura when their dominions spread far more westward than they do now. (Bengal and Assam, Bihar and Orissa : Somers Playne p. 243).

According to Saktisangam Tantra as supported by Raj Rajeswari Tantra the Kirat Bhumi comprised of Cachar, Sylhet, Tripura and Chittagong hill tracts. The Vayu puran describes Karat as "Vindypada Samudbhuto Berabakrah Supunyadah. The inhabitants were Mlechhas or a non-Aryan tribe" "Veda Kiratasavara Pulinda Mlechha jataya"—Amarkosh. But Ludwing, Zimmer and Vincent Smith believe that those people were basically of the Warrior clan.

King Dakshin removed his capital to Khalongma near the source of the Barabakrah or Barak in present day Mikir Hills. According to territorial history the domain north of the Barak was lost to the King of Heramba. For nearly thirteen hundred years upto 150 B.C. to the reign of Bimar they continued to rule from Khalongma. This period may be compared to the Dark Age in the European history. (From there the King Kumar shifted his capital to Chhambal on the bank of the Manu. Kings from Sukumar to Chitrasen, the 113th ruler, reigned from Chhambal. Pratit fled the country owing to constant wars with Heramba and carved out a new Kingdom in Prabanga (Markendeya Puran 57/43). To the author of Visvakosh Prabanga was a territory within Tripura). Alien in his 'Assam, district Gazetteers vol. II says that a thousand years ago the Karimgunge sub-divisions seems to have been included in the Tipperah Kingdom. (Hence it may be surmised

History

that up till the sixth century the kingdom included a major part of the south-eastern Assam until Jhu-jharu Fa moved his capital to Rangamati in 590 A.D.) after defeating the Lika Moghs and introduced the Tripura Era to commemorate his victory of Chittagong and the lower Bengal. But Sir Lethbridge believed that it was Birraj, the eighty-eighth in descend from Chandra who introudced the Tripura Era.

The title of 'Fa' was first adopted by Niladhwaja the 73rd ruler, and it remained so till the 'Manikya' appellation was conferred on Ratna Fa by Tughrol Khan in 1279 A.D. We find mention of Dharmadhar or Chheng I Khachhag in a copperplate granting a free-hold land to one Nidhipati in 1195 A.D. "In 1195 A.D. a Brahman named Nidhipati who was descended from the five original immigrants from Kanoj received a grant of land in whatis now known as Ita Pargana (Sylhet) from the Tippera King (Assam Dist. Gazetteers Chap. III (Sylhet) p. 22)

When Kirtidhar or Singhtung Fa ascended the throne in 1240 A.D. the Muhammadans had already entered the scene in Bengal and Lakshman Sen had lost his capital Nadiya to Bakhtier Khilji in 2101 A.D. Instigated by a nobleman called Hirabanta Khan the Nawab of Gaur attacked Tripura. Frightened at seeing the vast army of the Nawab, King Singhtung Fa, wanted truce. But the queen Tripura Sundari who looked down upon such cowardly conduct of her husband inspired the Tripurean soldiers to fight the enemy to the last. It is said that they won a glorious victory over the Pathans, the sword used by the queen is still worshiped.

The youngest son of Hariray or Danger Fa Ratna Fa ascended the throne in 1279 A.D. with the help of Moham-medan Ruler of Bengal Tughrol Khan. In the year 1279 A.D. he assembled a very numerous army and invaded the country

of Jagenagar (Tipperah). After having defeated the Raja in a general engagement he plundered the inhabitant and brought away with him immense wealth, and one hundred elephants' (Stewarts History of Bengal p. 44). Rev James Long wrote in the J.A.S.B. vol. XIX in 1850 that Ratna Fa with the aid of Mohammedan troops the conquered the kingdom and behead this brothers'. But the author of Rajmala held that Ratna Manikya got help from Sultan Samsuddin who ruled from 1347 A.D. Legend has it that it was he (Ratna Fa) who having presented a coruscating ruby to the Sultan got the hereditary title of 'Manikya' or jewel.

Dharma Manikya (1430-1462) was one of the greatest rulers of Tripura. He was a great patron of arts of letters. It was during his reign that the Rajmala was compiled by Banewsar and Sukreswar. He was as pious as he was brave. The army of Gour was reduced by him & Sonargaon was plundered. He defeated the King of Burma and had the Arakan King reinstated on the throne. He was succeeded by his son Dhanya Manikya, the greatest of the Kings of Tripura, in 1463 A.D. and ruled till 1515 A.D. His conquests won for Tripura the neighbouring small principalities of Meher Kul, Patikara, Ganga - Mandal, Bagasar, Bejura, Bhanugashh, Vishnujui, Langla, with the help of his general Rai Kachag he subjugated Khandal (Noakhali). He also occupied the Kuki land in the East and extended his Kingdom to the border of Burma. He annexed Chattal (Chittagong) and defeated the Pathan army of Hossain Saha (1494—1520) near Comilla. A fresh invasion was mounted by the Pathans under Haiten Khan. Though initially victorious the Pathans were humbled through a stratagen master-minded by a woman named Balgama. Dhanya Manikya was a devout Hindu ruler and many temples were got erected by him. The most famous being the

History

Tripureswari Temple of Udaipur which was build in 1501 A.D.

Vijay Manikya ruled from 1528 to 1570 A.D. It was during his time that the fortune of Tripura reached the Zenith. He defeated the Jaintia King and appointed Kalanazir as governor of Sylhet. Sultan Sulaimands army which was led by Mamarak Khan was mercilessly slaughtered and the commandar was taken a prisoner. The Sultan ceded all the land including Jatrapur in Dacca upto the Padma. It was a very crucial time in the history of India. With the advent of the Moghuls in Delhi the Pathans were gradually losing their hold in Bengal and Assam. Vijay Manikya took advantage of the situation prevailing then and the enclaught of his vast army through Sonargaon. Vikrampur and Sylhet was not even challenged by the Nawab of Gour Daud Shah.

In Ayin-I-Akbari as translated by Francis Gladwin we find mention of Bijoy Manikya "Bordering upon Bhattya is a very extensive country subject to the King of Tipperah him they style yeyah Manik (Bijoy Manikya). The military force consists of thousand elephants, two hundred thousand infantry but they have few or no cavalry".

Ananta Manikya succeeded to this throne by the help of his father-in-law. After reigning for 1^{1/2} years he was strangled at the instigation of his father-in-law Gopiprasad (J.A.S.B. vol. XIX) who styled himself as Udai manikya. His rule lasted upto 1576.

Amar Manikya ruled from 1584 to 1601 A.D. Though he retrieved the lost prestige of Tripura after the death of Vijay Manikya, he could not contained the Moghs and lost his country south of Udaipur. But even then Ambassador Ralph Fitch of queen Elizabeth I found in 1585. "In the delta'of the Ganges on the verge of Tripura the people not yet subdued by the Mughals".

The disintegration of the Kingdom commenced from the

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reign of Yosodhar Manikya (1613—23) who according to Bahay-i-stan was taken a prisoner to Imperial Delhi during the time of Jahangir for failing to appease the emperor by presenting elephants for which Tripura was famous. He never returned. According to his wish Kalyan Manikya, a colateral, was accepted by the people as then king in 1625 A.D. and he ruled till 1660 A.D. He preserved the independence of Tripura. Peter Heylen in 1652 found the Kingdom of Tripura, naturally fenced with hills and mountain and by that means hitherto defended against the Mongul, their bad neighbours, with whom they had continual quarrels". Even during the time of Auranzeb the Eastern part of India comprising Assam and the hilly regions paid no revenue to the Mughals (Edward Thomson's Revenue and Resources of the Mughal Empire). But from 1623 to 1625 it was under the Mughal rule. It is probable that during this period the famous Aulia Badar came to Udaipur and built the 'Badar Mukam' dargah.

The subsequent history of the Kingdom after Govind Manikya is a mere record of ruin and succeeding rulers were but creatures of the Mughals and later British. A century of struggle that followed however led to the ultimate Moham-medan occupation of a portion of plains which finally came under British rule in 1765 and held by the ruler of Tripura as a Zamindary forming an indivisible appanage of the State. As for the remaining portion, shorn as it has no doubt been gradually of a considerable extent of its area by various adverse forces at work, it has survived these hostile influences and retained to this day a shade of its ancient prestige.

The 178th Ruler Bir Bikram Manikya acceded the State to the Dominion of India in 1947.

LAND & ENVIRONMENT

BOUNDARY & AREA

As indicated by the nick-name 'Hill Tippera' which the state received in 1866, in contradiction to the British District of Tippera and by which it was generally known till the ancient designation of Tripura was substituted again includes extensive hill and forest tracts. Interspersed with intervening table lands and cultivable plains.

Tripura is situated in the eastern region of the Country. Bounded on the North, West and South by the District of Sylhet, Tripura and Noakhali of East Pakistan and on the East by the Lushai Hills and Hill Chittagong (now in East Pakistan). The territory as it stands now situates between 22.56, and 22.32, North longitude and between 91.10, & 92.20, East longitude with an area of 10451 Sq. Km. (length 183.5 Km. width 112.7 Km.) 60% of the total area consists of hilly land while the remaining 40% constitute flat land.

POPULATION.

According to 1961 Census, out of the territories total population of 11,42,005 Scheduled Tribes numbered 3,60,070. They thus constitute 31.53% of the total population. Originally a tribal state of Tripura does not comprise a Single or Sub-Tribe but comprise 19 different types of tribal communities. They are :—

(1) Tripura or Tripuri or Tippera (2) Reang (3) Jamatia (4) Chakma (5) Halam (6) Noatia (7) Magh (8) Kuki (9) Garo (10) Munda (11) Lushai (12) Orang (13) Santal (14) Uchai (15) Khasia (16) Bhil (17) Chaimal (18) Bhutia (19) Lepcha.

NATURAL FEATURES.

Nature has made Tripura into a prominently hilly region. Parallel to each other hills of Tripura rise in a succession of ranges running mainly North, South and each successive ridge

to the east rising higher as the spur approaches the main-mountain range. The Territory generally is regarded as one of the least inaccessible areas. Six principle ranges of hills namely (1) Debtamura, (2) Barmura (3) Atharamura (4) Longthorai (5) Sakhan and (6) Jampai, the average distant between 2 (two) ranges is 12 miles or 18 Km. The altitudes of these hill ranges very from 50 ft. to 3,000 ft. above sea level. The highest peak (3,200) is the Betalang Shiv. But her very existence is such an isolation brings enough difficulties and hardship for the people who live in this Frontier State with untold sufferings on one hand and who are left with no rail communication and forced to avail of the costly air journey to maintain their link with the rest of the country. However, some years ago the railway line was extended from Patharkandi in Assam to Dharmanagar town, the Northern most sub-divisional Headquarters of the Territory.

CLIMATE.

The Climate of Tripura is somewhat tropical in nature. The climate is generally hot and humid and with maximum temperature near about 35°C. and the minimum seldom below 11°C. The rainfall is in the neighbourhood of 210 Cm. During the winter season i.e. from November to February, weather remains almost dry and the rainfall being almost nil. But with the onset of February the temperature starts rising. From March onwards to May, occasional thunderstorm and rains take place. In May, Monsoon emerges along with a storm and heavy rain. During the rainy season the humidity reaches at about saturation point and heavy cloud is almost continuous and frequent rains occur. During rainy season i.e. June to September the temperature slowly diminishes, but the month of September is very sultry. During latter half of Sept., and throughout October, cloudy weather is replaced by bright sunshine. This bright period gradu-

ally lengthens due to advent of the winter season.

RIVER SYSTEM

Tripura have net works of the rivers and a small streams. Majority of these rivers have risen from the different hill ranges. There are twelve rivers basins. Seven of which are important. The rivers of Khowai Dhalai, Manu, Juri, Longai flow towards the north, Gumati by West and South West by the Fenny and Muhari (Randhawa, Mitra and Mehala, 1964). The banks are generally abrupt giving proof of the willy nature of the streams and the beds sandy, the rivers are generally tame and shallow in the dry season. But they become very turbulent and fierce during the Monsoon. They are subject to floods or sudden on rushes of water due to heavy rain on the hills slopest. A little more than ordinary rainfall in the hills is followed by a sudden rise of waters, which overflow the banks and down the country for miles around. Towards the end of October, the rivers begin to dwindle and by March even the mightiest of them except the Gumati and other few rivers are nothing but tame, narrow, shallow and limpid streams wandering through innumerable sand banks.

SOIL.

The Soil of Tripura are uncompromising. The soil is lateritic with very little water absorption capacity. The flat land in the Valleys known as 'Lunga' is alluvial, the forest soil or 'tillas' are generally loomy sand devoid of humus. Moreover, these soil which are grossly deficient in nitrates, Phosphorus and Potash as well as organic matter and trace minerals are acidic and, therefore, cannot be treated with the usual acid fertilizers. The mineral deficient thus created affect the health of plants, animals and men. This is true even in the forest areas because of the perpetual burning in the course of shifting cultivation. On the exposed up-land the combination of

Tropical sun and torrential rains has leached minerals from the Soil.

FLORA.

In Tripura most forests, are mixed. The species of main types being found growing either separately or intimately mixed together with Bamboos are found underneath Sal.

Garjan is growing mixed with the Sal and other deciduous miscellaneous species. The following important vegetation are worth mentioning Bot (Ficus Bengalensis), Bahei (Terminallia), Nim (Melia azadirachta), Karoi, Pip] (Ficus religiosa), Sal (Shorea robusta), Siris (Albizia Procera) Besides above trees various fruit trees are also found, most common of these are Bel (Aegle Marmelos), Jambura (Citrus decumana), Jalpai (Elacocarpus Seratures), Kalajam (Engenia Jambolana), Kanthal (Attrocarpus integrifolia), Lichi (Lich chineusis), Kamala (Citrus aurantium) etc.

FAUNA.

Tripura is famous for biggames. Thick bamboo and heavy sungrass forests are the favourite places for many biggames. At present, due to quick clearing of the forest, these animals have taken shelter in different reserve forest. Of course these reserve forests the following are some of the important wild animals worth-mentioning :—

Tiger, Leopard, Bison, Elephant, bear, Jungle-cut, Wild-dog, Wild-pig, Wild buffalo, Wild Goat and various types of Deer. Besides these above animals, there are various kinds of birds, snakes and other reptiles. The rivers streams and .] other water sources contain fishes, crabs and tortoise

PEOPLE

PEOPLE

PEOPLE
THE TRIPURIS

The Tribals of Tripura belong to the stock of Tibeto Burman. The tribes or races, of this group settled in India clinging to the skirts of the Himalayas and their Northeastern Off-shoots.

The tribes of Tripura divided into broad groups of ten communities i.e. the Tripuris, the Deshi Tripuris, the Jamatias, the Noatias, the Riangs, the Kukis, the Maghs, the Chakmas, the Halams and the Garoes. These communities are ethnically homogenous with certain variations in languages or dialects.

Of the above ten groups, the Tripuris are more numerous and dominant. The Tripuras along with the Deshi Tripuras, the Jamatias, the Noatias, and the Riangs are commonly known as 'Kshatriya'. Whether the status of Kshatriyas is applicable to others than the Tripuris requires an elaborate study.

The tradition and history of the Deb Barmans are contained in the Rajmala. A state record, an epic in Bengal is said to be the oldest composition in the language in existence. But as historiography was not practised in its true sense and the data given in the Rajmala beyond the 12th Century, are lost in myths and legends.

The Deb Barmans, of Tripura belong to the Indo-chinese stock with an admixture of Aryan blood. They however, have taken the status of Kshatriyas and claim descent from the Lunar Race. Their present title 'Barman' means "Armour"—term applicable to all Kshatriyas, and their family name was 'Pha' upto 1279 A.D. The family has recently intermarried freely with other stocks of in India. The present members of the erstwhile ruling Deb Barmans and collaterals trace their direct descents from the legendary twelve sons of the King Trilochana and are known as the Thakurs' since the time of Maharaja Kalyan Manikya. In the recent past through commingling and inter-marriages within the so called Tripur Kshatriyas even,

persons belonging to different families have acquired this exclusive title.

The Deb Barmans of the erstwhile ruling family and Thakur families are concentrated in and around the Capital town of Agartala, Their mode of living, mores and manners are similar in ethos to that of Aryan Hindus. Nevertheless in the religious observances and nuptials certain tribal worships and rituals are not only prevalent but essential. According to Sir Henry Maine the influence of the Smriti Shastras is almost non-existent on what is called the law of the tribal-societies, and in many places of India the influence and wide extension of unwritten customary law is distinctly noticeable, and both these—systems of which one is the codified law based on smritis and the other is the unwritten customary law found widely among the tribal societies—are recognised and accepted in India. The whole of the codified law of the country—that is, the law contained in the codes of Manu, and in the treatises of the various schools of commentators who have written on that code and greatly extended it—is theoretically connected together by certain ideas definitely of a sacerdotal nature, whereas the most recent observation proves that large bodies of indigenous customs have grown up independently of the codified law and comparing the written or un-written law, it appears clearly that the sacerdotal motives which permeate the first invaded it from without and are of Brahminical origin.

In Tripura also it is found that the ancient codes of inheritance and patrimony were not strictly followed but on many occasions it was the prevalent usages and customs that had modified the codes.

The 'Sanad' of lord Amphill, Viceroy and Governor General of India granted in 1904 read as follows :—'That the chiefship of the said state for the time being may, from time

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to time and at any time, nominate and constitute any male member of the said family descended through males from him, or any male ancestor of his, to be his Jubraj or successor and the succession to the said chiefship not heretofore expressly provided for, the usages of the said Raj family shall prevail."

The Puran Tripuras which include Deb Barmans are numerically more predominant than the eight other tribes. The Tripuras are sub-divided into different groups more or less according to their vocation, principally related to duties to the throne. The 12 (twelve) Hadas or Huddas-as these groups are called are not clans as commonly presumed. They are as follows :—

(1) Bachhal, (2) Siuk, (3) Koatia (4) Daityasing (5) Hujurja (6) Silatia (7) Apiya (8) Chhatratuiya (9) Deorai or galim (10) Subenarayan (11) Sena and (12) Julai.

Now a days all the Huddas excepting perhaps Galim through not in-existence as of yore still agitate the minds of the ethnologists to peep into the past hierarchy of a tribal community based on a very rigid social classification assigning to each group or class certain exclusive duties.

1. The Bachhal : There is a story prevalent that the Bachhals were the original inhabitants of Tripura though a contrary view that the erstwhile ruling dynasty had wrested the country from the Halams is given more credence. Their main duties in the past were carrying the Royal insignias of the 'Panja' and the 'Pan'. They also helped in marriages and worship by erecting bamboo fences which was known as Bital'.

2. The Siuks : Which meant hunters were engaged to provide tables games, Venison and victuals. They also helped the 'Koatias' in the construction of canopies and nuptial 'bedi' or a low geometrical pulpit, during state marriages.

3. The Koatias : The Koatias were bearers of betels but had other functions connected with Royal Assemblage and attended in the Kings and the high functionaries-Koa means betelnuts which is perhaps a deprivative from the word 'Goa' or Supari.

4. The Daitya Singh or Duising were the Royal standard bearers which was known as 'Gowl'. They were more numerous than the other 'hada' people. Most of them were conscripted in the Militias or 'Binandias'.

5. The Hujurias or.

6. The Silatias were of the same group and were mainly entrusted with sacrifices as were performed under a sacerdotal society and other religious observance. The 'Hujurias' appellation was coined—perhaps from Urdu—because of their constant presence at the Court.

7. The Apiyas were buyers of fish and perveyors of provisions and fire-wood.

8. The Chhatratuiyas were the carriers of the 'Rajchhatra' or the umbrella used by the Kings during state celebrations or functions. They also carried 'Chandraban' 'Suryaban' 'Mahimurat' chhatra and Arangi.

9. The Deorais or Galims were the tribal priests who performed the daily puja or worship or the Chaturdas Devatas (14 gods and goddesses) and were essential for the Ker and Kerchi pujas.

10. The Subenarayans had duties similar to that of Hujurias excepting that they had no duties in the palace. During 'Hasam Bhojan' a community feast after the final puja on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami they were called upon to fillet fish, meat etc.

11. The Senas or Chhenas: If any individual from among the ten communities cited above was ex-communicated or penalized for incest he was treated as an outcaste. Such a per-

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son was known as the Sena whose progeny could claim admittance to his respective clan after throwing a feast. The Services of the Senas were utilized for erecting make shift stoves, cleaning of dishes etc. after the "Hasam Bhojan".

12. The Julais : This community had the lowest position in the society and were no more superior than slaves. They were forbidden from using gold ornaments.

The Julais were sub-divided into eleven sub-groups depending on their work in a household.

(1) Das Paiya—Vendor of vegetables, (2) Manarai—bird catcher, especially mynas, (3) Totarai—Parrot or parakeet catcher or fowler, (4) Mamiplaksa Gleaner of 'binnidhan', a kind of cereal, (5) Maichha-plaksa—'collector of Jhum paddy, (6) Golchhari—grower of Black pepper, (7) Chelargrai—Preparation of 'Khar' a kind of alkali used in preparation of curries ; (8) Machharai—worker utilized for pestling and grinding of chillies, (9) (10) and (11) Adrai, Jitrai and Suikasa—their duties were not very clearly defined.

Generally, the Puran Tripuras or Tripuris, excepting the dwellers in the plains, live in a 'Tongs' or pile houses, on the hill tops. In the plains or in the foot hills their huts are so similar to those of the Bengalees. The places where they live in a group of 5-10 families are called 'Parahs' or 'Punji' and such parahs or punjis bear the name of the Sardars or headmen. The hut which is built on bamboo slits is about 2 to 3 metres above the ground and looks like a house on a machan. The ground just below the hut is fenced off and used as a pen for domestic animals like pigs, cattle, hens etc.

Each family which is known as 'Khana' lives in a separate hut. According to the Census of 1961 the Tripura numbered 1,89,799 and are scattered over all the sub-divisions.

Notwithstanding the spread of plough cultivation the

The Tribes of Tripura a Dissertation

Tripuras still stick to the age-old 'JHUM' or shifting cultivation on the slopes of hills. The Crops grown are paddy, maize, Kaoin, Sesame, Cotton, Cucumber, Pumpkin, gourd etc. Their staple food is rice, pork, chicken, dried fish and vegetable are their main subsidiary food. They are very fond of drink and practically each household brew their own requirement of both 'Arak'—distilled and pachchus* fermented drinks. From the 'Memoirs' of Jean Baptiste Tavernier the following may be quoted to show how much the Tripuris were fond of drinking. "I should have been able to learn many things from these merchants of Pipperah in reference to the nature and extent of their country if they had known how to give me as a good on account of it as they did of my good wine when I proposed a health. For my interpreter scare finished paying them a compliment, on my behalf, before the wine was drunk, and they gazed at one another while smacking their lips and striking their hands two or three times on their stomach with sighs."

Though Agriculture is their main source of livelihood, they sometimes go a hunting the augment their good supply. Among the Tripuris there are two types of marriage viz., Hiknamani and Kaijagmani. The first one is by mutual consent. The second one is a negotiated marriage where the parents play the major roles. The earlier practice of rendering assistance in agricultural activities by the groom for a year or so is gradually giving way to bride-price or 'Pamnao, which is paid by prospective bride-groom. If after working for a year by the prospective bride-groom, the marriage is not solemnized then a consolidated wages for the whole period is paid back. Widow re-marriage is common and divorce is also allowed. The system of child marriage was unknown but in the modern times through influence from without the Tripuris have adopted this custom without reservation.

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The womenfolk make their garments from hand woven fabrics. They use loom. Their clothes are known as Dubra and skirt (wrapped round the body below the navel), Pachhra and Saries. The breast-covers or Rias or Risha as it should be correctly termed is a length of cloth which (Hi-cloth, Shasmall) have intricate, Patterns. The Tripuris are very fond of jewellery and ornaments. Perhaps the Riangs are more fond of such ornaments. Usually that are made of silver, silver-coins, beads and seeds of a species of plantain known as 'Ramkala'. But the Tripuris, like the Reangs are no less lovers of flowers. They take much care in embellishing their Chignons with different varieties of flowers like Lily of the Valley, Cock's-comb, hibiscus and marigold. Of the various ornaments the following may be cited as examples :—

(1) Wakum or Earring, (2) Taiya, (3) Dheri or Jhumka, (Campanula or bell shaped ear-ring), (4) Rangtaba, (5) Hasli or crescent necklace, (6) Kanthi, (7) Mala or a String of beads, (8) Kesar, (9) Chudi or bangles and Yasitam and Kharus or anklets.

The Hinduism professed by the Tripuris are not dissimilar to the Hinduism professed by other tribals in India who were previously animists. Observance of certain religious ceremonies deviate no doubt considerably from the Orthodox. Hinduism inasmuch as such worships of tribal tutelary deities are conspicuous by their absence. With the spread of Brahminical influence the paleo-mongoloid Tripuris (cf. Sir Hervest Risley) had taken recourse to syncretism or blending of religions as by identification of gods and goddesses. The goddess of the river or the presiding deity has come to be known as Ganga. Among the deities the Chaudha Devatas (14 gods), Ganga and Balangi (presiding diety of the jungle) occupy the foremost place. Important yearly worships of the

Tripuris are Kherchi (on the 8th day of the full moon in the month of June/July or Asadh, Ker Puja and which is performed in Tuesday or Saturday just two weeks after the kherchi. During the Ker Puja for nearly 32 hours curfew is clamped down in hamlets or villages where long bamboo are worshipped and the people of particular village are forbidden to go beyond the area of Ker. The trespassers are penalised. The Tripuris have two type of priests e.g. Brahmin Pandits and the Tribal Ojhai or exorcist. The tribal priests are also known as 'Achais'. The Tripuri High priest is called Chantai.

The following are the 20 (twenty) principal languages of the Tibeto Burman group (1) Cachari or Bodo (2) Garo, (3) Tripura or Mrung, (4) Tibetan or Bhutia, (5) Gurung, (6) Murmi, (7) Newar, (8) Lepcha, (9) Miri, (10) Aka, (11) Mishi dialects, (12) Dhimal, (13) Kanawari dialects, (14) Mikir, (15) Singpho, (16) Naga dialects, (17) Kuki dialects, (18) Burmese. (19) Khyeng and (20) Manipuri. The languages or dialects included in the above group have not both a cerebral and dental row of consonants. Some of them have the aspirated forms of the surds, but not of the sonants. Others have both. All the dialects have words in common and some resemblance of grammar. (The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1877) by E. L. Brandeth.)

The Tripuri dialect which is known as Mrung belongs to Austro-Asiatic (Tibeto Burman) groups which comprises Kuki-chin languages of the eastern India. (Imperial Gazetteer of India Vol., i, 1909, ch. vii.).

The dead body is cremated. After completion, the crematory is washed and swept and Tulshi plant or basil is planted. An earthen lamp is lighted and sacramental offering of cooked rice and meat is made for seven days to the manes.

THE DESHI TRIPURIS

The Deshi Tripuris are treated as one of the five Kshatriya tribes. They, it is believed, have originated as a result of admixture between the Tripuris and the Bengali Hindus. Socially they are more akin to the Bengalees and many of them are Vishnuits. They also worship 'Sakti' the female principal of creation. Jhum cultivation is not known as most of them live in the plains. Their traditional occupations are agriculture, animal husbandry and trades. They are more proficient in agriculture than any other tribes.

THE RIANGS :

The Sub-divisions of Kailashahar, Amarpur, Belonia and Khowai and to some extent Dharmanagar have high concentration of this Tribe. The Riang population in other areas is negligible whereas in Sonamura there are hardly more than few families. The total Riang population at present is above 56,500 according to the Census of 1961.

The original home of the Riangs is said to be Mayanithlang in the Lushai Hills. It is believed—though its historical veracity cannot be ascertained at this distant time—that owing to some internal feud and vendetta a few chiefs in the persons of Tuilloha, Jangsika, Paisika and Tuibruha and their entourage left their hearth and home migrated to Tripura and Chittagong many centuries ago. There were two Riang commanders in the army of the King Dhanya Manikya (1463—1515 A.D.). This story of the Riangs migration from Shan Kingdom in Burma is also current. It might have taken place during the reign of Ratna Manikya I in the 14th Century.

The Riangs belongs to the Mongoloid racial stock and their dialect has been classified as belonging to the Austro-asiatic group of Tibeto-Burman family. The dialect is known as Polong-

O'. Their ethnical affinity with the Kukis is claimed by some. One group of the Riangs is known as Meska. It will be interesting to study whether they belong to the Great Mech Family mentioned by Hodgson. The Riang dialect is also known as Riang.

This tribes is divided into two major groups viz., Meska or Mechka and Malsoi or Malchhui. These are again divided into several sub-groups ;

(1) Tuimaiya fak, (2) Meska, (3) Charki, (4) Musa or Muchha, (5) Raichak or Raikachak, (6) Takh Mayakcha and (7) Waring or Wairem. The second group has again seven branches or section :

(1) Molsai, (2) Apet, (3) Nakhyam or Nagkham, (4) Chamrong, (5) Darbong, (6) Sagrai and (7) Riang or Ria Kachak.

Each of the fourteen 'dafa' or group has its own chief who is known as 'Rai'. The title is not hereditary. In the lower echelon mention may be made of Chapia Khan, Chapia and Darkalai who are the Heir apparent, heir presumptive and priest respectively. Other lesser but important persons are (1) Dalai, Bhandari, Kandal D-hazra Muria, Dugria, Daoa and Chheng Karak. They are assigned certain duties.

In the Riang dialect the Sardar is called 'Kachak' or 'Kanchan' (a later-day variation). The above groups are under 26 sardars. There are 19 appellations or designation one of which is given each of the twenty-six orders according to his rank and status in the community.

These Chiefs are again divided into two groups one is under the leadership of the 'Rai' and the other under the 'Kachak'. The retinues of the latter are lakchhang, Hajra, Kangreng, Kaima, Khan, Kalim and Khandal. Ordinary family disputes and other

The Deshi Tripuris

petty crimes are settled by the Rai or the Kachak.

They are an endogamous tribe and had very little contact with the Bengalees unlike the Tripuris. The spread of Hinduism among them was a slow process. Hence both socially and culturally they are in comparison much behind the Tripuris.

The Riangs are primarily an agriculturist tribe. They practise 'Jhum' cultivation like the Tripuris and the Kukis. Normally a site on the slope of a hill which they call 'Haping Halap' is earmarked for the 'Jhuming' and a crosslike bamboo pole is pitched. This serves as a warning to any trespasser. They then worship the presiding deity of Jhums (Bura-chha) for rich harvest. The sowing is done after the first rain of the season and the crop is harvested in winter. The main crops are Khul (Cotton), Mai (Paddy), Chal Kumra (Gourd), Thama Kang (Potato or yam), Thaichuma (Melon), Maichhiny (Maize), Khakalu (Pumpkin) and Benta (a variety of leafy spice). The harvesting is done by both the sexes. Hunting is generally done by them as a source of obtaining meat and play an important role in their subsistence. They also supplement their economy by gathering edible roots and creepers.

For shifting cultivation the Riangs pay house tax which incidentally was higher than the rates fixed for the Tripuris. At present there is no such discrepancy.

Drunkenness is the bane of this tribal society as addiction to alcohol is very great. A Riang distils his own drink from rice and will on the slightest pretext go the whole hog for throwing a drunken revelry, which is called 'Mela'. Their listlessness and want of thrift excite pity. Now a days however some of them are taking to settled cultivation. But still their poverty is proverbial.

Dance and music are an integral part of the Riangs. No other

tribes in Tripura are so fond of dance like them. This love of music lends colour to their otherwise drab life.

The traditional dress of the Riangs is very simple. The men wear a loin cloth (hand woven) and a piece of cloth as a wrapper for the upper portion of the body. The women wear a long piece of cloth called 'Rignai' or pachhra which is wrapped around the waist hanging down to knees. Owing to spread of education among this tribe choice is gradually changing. The breast garment is known as 'Riah', and patterns weaved by them appeared to be superior and more artistic. The two colourful pieces are woven by Riang women on most primitive looms. Mill made cloth and saris are much in vogue now.

The Riang women are very fond of personal decoration and take much care in hair-do. They love ornaments and flowers. Silver ornaments especially necklaces of silver coins (Rangbatang) have the pride of place.

Typical Riang hut which is built on a high bamboo platform is known as Tong'. The walls are made of split bamboos and has hempen gabled roofs. They live in a group of families generally on the tops of high hills. The settlements which they call 'Parah' are named after the sardars.

The Riangs are an endogenous tribe. They do not marry outside their tribal community. There are two types of marriage :—Halakchhai & Halakchham. And parallel cousin marriage is prevalent though declining. Cross-cousin marriage among the Riangs is an accidental development and operates as a stop gap. The marriage system is some what akin to that of the Tripuris. The bride groom is required to stay for years in the father-in-law's house before the wedding is performed. Child marriage is not allowed and divorce is permitted, by mutual consent. Widows are prohibited from

The Deshi Tripuris

wearing any ornaments for one year after the demise of their husbands. Monogamy is the present day profile of the Society.

Marriage is arranged through a match-maker 'Andra' who is sent to the house of the prospective bride for negotiation. Then the bride's people or party are invited to finalise the proposal while pork, rice, and drink are served. Again when the marriage is settled to the satisfaction of both the parties the parents of the bride group is required to feed the bride's party with pork, fowl, drink etc. as per demand. The final day of nuptials is fixed by the 'Ojhai'.

An extract from the "Anthropos, vol. 55 1960" by Mukherjee will further elaborate the cousin marriage among the Riangs.

"The frequency of parallel cousin marriage is declining by generation, partially because of the break down of the joint households, moreover, largely owing to the waning intensity of the feeling of 'Sandai' bonds and finally, for economic reasons (Possession of ploughland and trade in cash crops). What is significant is that parallel cousins are socially very important in the family. It may further be pointed out that although the Riang still retain the joint household (37.12%) not all these cases of parallel cousins marriages were arranged long after the separation of the brothers who lived in the joint households. Cross-cousin marriage among the Riang is an accidental development and operates as a stop gap.

Parallel cousins among the Riangs are tied up in the web of 'Sandai' bonds to which parallel cousin marriage owes its origin. A weakening of this bond or notion has, in recent years, led to the division of property and joint households, the non-performance of the Huda Akchoimi ritual (for the alienation of relationship among sandai) and a decline of parallel cousin marriage."

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The 'Sandai' bond includes father's father, his brother and children, etc. Mother's father, mother, her sisters and brother, husband's sisters, father's sister and her husband, Mother's brothers, and their children are included in 'Hakehhu' bond. An interesting feature in their custom is that a virgin (chhikla) woman is never given in marriage a widower.

The Riang pantheon so to say is rich with many gods and goddesses and numerous minor deities. Their religion is not very far removed from animism though there are many worshippers of 'Vishnu' and goddess 'Kali'.

Their important religious festivals are Ker, Ganga Puja, Garia, Chitragupra Puja, Matangi Puja etc. These religious observances are communal in nature and each family has to contribute money which is called 'Khain'. The surplus collection of 'Khains' is spent on welfare of the society.

Such religious festivals are almost always rounded up with meetings of the tribal chiefs. In such a meeting political, social and religious matters of important are discussed and necessary steps are taken to come to a solution.

The important deities of the Riang are 'Matai Katar (The supreme deity or deities like Shiva and Durga), 'Tuima (the presiding deity of rivers), Garia or Kalaia () Sangrama (the deity of the hills) Burachha (the Jungle-God) Bani Rao, Khulongma (the goddess of cotton) Mailong Ma (Laxmi) Buduirao (the gods of evil spirits) and Lampra or Kshamdhi (presiding deity of the seas and the sky).

Generally the process of disposal of dead is akin to the Hindu custom. The mortal remains is cremated. The obsequies is done in two stages i. e. Broksakami and Kothaineimi.

Broksakami : When a person dies his body is first bathed with Chakhuitui and Mairungtai or alkali water, and water ob-

The Deshi Tripuris

tained from washing measure of rice. After such ablution the body is dressed in Dhuti or 'Kamcha' and a 'rituku is tied round the head in the fashion of a headgear. In case of a woman a 'riah' and a 'rignai' (a short handwoven sari are used). Then an earthen pot filled with meat and rice is placed at the feet of the deceased and is followed by dance ritual throughout the night. And ricebear is freely distributed among the mourners excepting the family of the deceased who neither drink nor join the dance. The next morning the body is laid to rest on a pyre & burned. Among the vaisnavs the customs of burial is prevalent.

Kothainaimi : It is an annual ritual connected with the respectful and well-wishing offerings to the manes. In the past such a sraddha ritual was very complicated and costly as lots of drink, meat, rice, and dried fish were consumed by the community. Now a days in a very simple ceremony the bone or bone-ash of the deceased person is committed in a river.

THE JAMATIAS

From the etymon 'Jamat'—which in Bengali/Urdu means an assemblage—the tribe name 'Jamatia' is supposed to have derived. Or, as one school believes that the Jamatias were recruited in the army which was called 'Jamat' and subsequently came to be known as Jamatias. Whereas other hold that as they were in the habit of living jointly or in groups led to such nomenclature. It is clear from the above that the very name of the tribe suggests its not so ancient origin in this part of the Country. Perhaps they are an admixture of many tribes.

Previously they were mainly concentrated in Sonamura and Udaipur sub-divisions but in recent times they have scattered over to other areas. Economically they are more advanced than other tribal populace. Consequent on their adoptions of plough cultivation the migratory life contingent on shifting cultivation had been abandoned many decades back. They fall under the strata of cultivators and agriculture is their main source of livelihood. They do not live in Tongs or houses built on machans on the hillocks but make their dwelling houses like those of their Bengali neighbours.

Ethnologically they are akin to the Tripuris and their physical characteristics also resemble. The dialect is the same.

Handwoven cloth which was in vogue in the past is to a very great extent replaced by mill-made cloth and ready-made wears.

Speaking of religion they may be classified as Hindus divided into two main sects of Vaisnavas and Saktas. Many of them are Vaisnava mendicants who are called 'Sadhus'. They worship Shiva, Durga, the Goddess Tripura Sundari, and the Gomati (river). Communal worship of different gods by collecting "Khain" or monetary subscription from among their

The Jamatias

own Community members is prevalent. The priest is called 'Ojhai'. Daria is one who beats the drum. The Matai balnai is the bearer. The owner of the house where such a worship is held is known as 'Kherpang*'. They also perform the 'Durga Pujas' according to prevailing Bengali custom. Among the worshippers of Vishnu the yearly pilgrimage to holy places in India is a must. Generally they go in batches under experienced guides who collect money in advance against expenses to be incurred by them. These simple tribals are prone to extravagance on such preriginations and return absolutely empty handed. They not only spend what they have but even borrow to observe-certain rites as directed by the priests of those holy places.

The custom of marriage is similar to those of the Tripuris but service by marriage or 'Jamaikhata' is not so rigid. The time limit of two years can be reduced by mutual agreement between the husband and the wife. Though monogamy is the general rule the affluent among them may have many wives. Divorce is permitted. Adultery of any kind is a great offence. Widow marriage is allowed. The system of bride price is absent but both the parties are required to offer 'Langi' (a sweet variety of liquor brewed from 'mami' rice). Invitation is extended to the community by sending around cloves and betelnuts in platters of plaintain leaves.

The dead body is cremated according to Bengali custom. The period of the personal scriptural impurity after the death of a relative is thirteen days. The frontal piece of the cranium which is euphemistically called "Asti" 'Chintamani' is immersed with solemnities as the scriptures enjoin in a near by river or if possible in the Ganges.

The Jamatias are peace loving and disputes among them are generally settled by the "Mulluk Sardars" who sit in judge-

ment. Justice is meted out sometime in consultation with other sardars according to gravity of the situation confronting the two 'Mulluk' sardars. Mulluk means native land. These two headmen of the Community are elected persons.

THE NOATIAS

According to many the Noatias are a hybrid race divided into eleven clans of Keoa, Murasing, Achhlong, Garjan, Khalicha, Tongbai, Leitong, Deildak, Anaokia, Khakta and Totaram. Out of these only six clans are living in Tripura.

Traditionally they are more or less similar to the "Jamatias" excepting certain deviations with regard to disposal of corpse where they follow the Rieng customs.

The Noatias practise Jhum cultivation but plough cultivation and agriculture in conventional methods are becoming increasingly more popular.

The Saki cult is predominant though a marked spread of Vaisnavism is clearly visible in the tribe.

They weave their cloth and believe in making their requirement through loir -looms.

THE HALAMS

Ethnologically and linguistically the Halams belong to the Kuki Groups. They came in contact with the Ruling dynasty of the day and accepted the suzerainty of the Kings of Tripura. They are known as 'Mila Kukis' also. The Kukis call them 'Rang-long'.

According to hearsay or myth the Halams are said to have migrated from 'Khurpuitabhum' a place in the hills just to the north of Manipur. In kuki language 'Khur' means source and 'pui' is river. 'Ta' stands for 'from'. Hence it can be deduced or inferred that their original home was perhaps near the source of a big river flowing out of the Barail ranges which they through centuries have not forgotten. In 1828 there was a dispute between the Tippera state and Manipur regarding the possession of Thanghum, a village west of the Surma and Barak, close to Manipur. It may be surmised that their original home was near about this village. The 'Pui' or river may be the Surma (Mackenzies N.E. Frontiers of Bengal, p. 277).

The Halams are scattered all over the sub-divisions mainly in the central and the Northern areas of the State. They are divided into 17 clans or 'dafas' viz., (1) Kalai (2) Kulu or Khulong (3) Korbong (4) Kaipang (5) Kaireng (6) Chadai (7) Deb (8) Sakachef (9) Thangchep (10) Nabeen (11) Bongshel (12) Morchhum (13) Murdhakang or Murasing (14) Rangkhoh (15) Rukpini or Rupini (16) Langai and (17) Langlung.

The Murasings though included in the above list are 'Noatias' each of the clan either bears the name of the leader of the Community or is so designated according to its profession.

The Halam dialect is akin to the Kuki-chin group of the Tibeto-Burman family. But most of the Halams are bilingual and can speak the Mrung or Tripuri fluently.

Majority of them subsist on Jhum cultivation and even now

they have not adopted settled or plough cultivation. Their dwelling huts are similar to those of Tripuris. But small houses with mud plinths are becoming common especially among those who are settled near townships or trading centres. Their living standard is much below the Tripuris.

The womenfolk are fond of ornaments which are mainly of beads, conchs and they use ear-rings. Riah is not very common but a 'dubra' or a single piece handwoven cloth is wrapped round the body which covers the breast, midriff and hangs down to knees.

Like the Riangs, the titles of Rai, Kachak, Galim are prevalent among the Halams.

In spite of ethnic affinity with the Kukis, they are culturally nearer to the Tripur Kshatriyas. Most of them are sakti worshippers but among the kalais and Rupinis the influence of Vaisnavism is spreading. Their religion is, however, a mixed form of animism and Hinduism, a few also follow Christianity. They worship numerous gods and goddesses and believe in evil spirits. Of the important deities the following may be cited : (1) Shiva (2) Durga (3) Kali (4) Sundralopa, Sundarrai-Bakundrai, Srikalarai-kolorai, Kallaki, Kholongma, Nachensing, Bayoi Taisik neekra, Adam Raja, Long-thoria, Khumtalsin, Yamkaitho-yamanarayan, Chhepite, Dhaleswari, Khachamannu, etc. when propitiating the above deities, they also offer burnt fish and meat to Ghosts and Goblins. Only rice and banana are offered as altarage to Shiva and Yamanarayan. 'Bara Puja' is the most important festival which is held only once in 4 or 5 years. It is worship of the Surma River. Before performing such a puja, a handsome subscription is raised by the Community. Hundreds of goats, ducks, fowls, pigs and 2/3 bisons are killed for sacrificial offering which go simultaneously with libation. Liquoa is consumed in

The Halams

great quantities.

'Bara Puja' is generally ended in communal meeting whilst social, cultural, and criminal matters are discussed by the elders.

Monogamous adult marriage is the norm of the tribe though plural and child marriages are not uncommon. Marriage by service is giving place to bride-price which may go up to Rs.120/-. The period of voluntary service by the bridegroom is known as 'Damad' 'Utha'. Usually a proposal for marriage finalised by the groom and the bride where the parents have no say. No religious rites are observed in a marriage. The marriage parties are required to stand drinks to the members of the Community gathered for the function. Desertion by a wife is allowed but the wife and her husband must perforce pay a fine of Rs.120/- and twelve pots of drink. If the woman is enceinte and desert her husband, a child if born is claimed by the ex-husband as of right.

The dead body is cremated. For obsequial rite and funeral there is no fixed period and such rite is observed according to wish of the dependants. Food, clothes and wine are offered to the manes. These are given to the 'Ojhais' or the priests performing the funeral rites.

The superior status of the Halams during 'Hasam Bhojan' is noticeable. The representatives of the twelve important 'Dafas' or groups mentioned earlier must be present on the occasion. The 'Hasam' connotes soldiery'. Hence the communal dinner given on the day of Vijaya Dashami is meant for the army personnel. It had a political significance during those days when obedience of soldiers to their King was a Machiavellian necessity connected with Statecraft. ..

THE MOGHS

The history of Tripura is replete with anecdotes connected with the Moghs. According to legends Rangamati or Udaipur was within the Kingdom of Mogh which was then under the sway of the Lika tribe. It was 1380 years or so ago that this region was wrested from the Moghs or Maghs by King Jaiharu Fa of Tripura. For nearly 1200 years Rangamati was the capital of the kingdom of Tripura. As we do not possess written annals of such antiquity and as the oral traditions tell us little; but such 'hints' as these yield 'feebly point' to Arakan whence came these Moghs. In Persian language Arakan was mentioned as "Arakhong", "Rokham" or Roshang". In the chronicles of Burma and Arakanese "Rajoang" the kingdom of Mogh extended from the Megna to the borders of Pegu. Rambu was the capital which now forms a part of Cox-bazar in East Pakistan. The southern confines of Tripura during Vijay Manikya (16th century) touched the shores of the Bay of Bengal as far as Chittagong. In his travelogue Ralph Fitch writes, "From Satagon I travelled by the country of the king of Tripura, with whom the Mogens have almost continual wars. The Mogens which be of the kingdom of Recon and Rame, be stronger than the king of Tippera. So that Chatigan, or Portogrande is often times under the king of Ricon."

In the later part of the 15th century the first larger wave of Arakanese immigrants came to Chittagong and though they had lost the northern areas to the Muslims, the southern part remained under them and governed it through king Jaychandra of Chakrashala (1482—1510).

The local name of the Arakanese in Chittagong is 'Mogh' which was used to designate pirates in this part of the world.

The Moghs of Tripura and Hill Chittagong are the off-

The Moghs

shoots of these immigrants who owing to continued disturbances in Chittagong in the 17th century migrated to the deltaic regions of the Ganges and the southern parts of Tripura. They are now more or less scatter in the sub-montane tracts in Sabroom and Belonia. In the recent past they have gradually started settling in the plains.

According to Dr. Henry Bechert (Vol. IV educational Miscellany) the Arakanese are popularly known as Moghs, but they prefer to be called by the name 'marma' i.e. by the ancient name of the Burmans (Burmese). Their dialect is akin to Arakanese which is closely connected with Burmese.

Grierson classified Mogh language as belonging to Assam-Burmese group of the Tibeto-Chinese Family. The Moghs have distinct language of their own with a separate script.

The Moghs live in the plains by some Cherras Orrivulets. They do not live in Tong' houses but dwelling huts are constructed on mud plinths. Pile-houses though are not uncommon in some places. Kitchens and store houses are built separately. The curious custom of having large separated houses for the young men and young women still survives among the Moghs. But the unmarried girls are not herded together in a dormitory at night.

Earlier the system of village represented a stage half-way between the migratory cultivation of the 'runder tribes', and the settled agriculture of the Bengalees. To be more precise the Jhum or shifting cultivation is steadily losing its hold on the tribal economy of Tripura. Their staple food is rice. Meat and dried fish are preferred to vegetables and there is no inhibition as to what types of meat and other freshes are to be partaken of. Among the indigent the ingathering of roots and other edible forest produce is commonly practised. Ad-

diction to liquor is not so widespread but now a days home brewed drink is consumed.

Though according to many there are two endogamous divisions in the tribe endogamy is not strictly followed. The Clan 'Palamsa' is sub-divided into two exogamous sub-clans.

The Census of 1961 returned the following groups as belonging to the Chota (little) Palamsa :—

(1) Palangsa, (2) Patamsa, (3) Logeiasa, (4) Rekhoisa, (5) Karaonurusa, (6) Lungdungsa, (8) Kheuisa.

The Degree of freedom allowed to their womenfolk is one of the distinguishing characteristic of the Mogh society. Pre-marital dating is not barred and marriage is arranged through mutual consent. Divorce is allowed and re-marriage without any hinderance is permitted. Child marriage is not practised. Marriage ceremonies are simple and throwing feasts to the Community is not essential. There are three types of marriage i.e. by negotiation, by service, and love-marriage.

The Moghs are Buddhists excepting a very few who profess either Hinduism or Christianity. The supreme God is the 'Phora' or the Buddha. But Sari (chini) Kali and Ganga along with Baradevta. (chichi) are also worshipped. The Moghs have a clear concept of heaven and hell which in their dialects are known "Nerefun" and "Sagrafun". It may be Pali corruptions of Hindu "Swarga" (Heven) and Naraka (Hell). Every village has a Kheyang or temple of Lord Buddha which is looked after by a priest known as Shamphura who is a celibate. Among the important religious observances the following are important viz.

1. Boat festival, which takes on a full moon night in the month of September/October. But such a festival is not observed in Tripura.

2. Water festival which is somewhat akin to 'Holi'. The

The Moghs

religion of the hill Marmas, writes Dr. Bechert in his "Contemporary Buddhism in Bengal and Tripura", has been described by Claude Levi-strauss as a syncretistic religion in which elements of ancient animistic cults continue in spite of the official confession of Buddhism. Buddhism as practised by the Maghs are not much different from Burmese Buddhism. The Organisational structure of their order is similar to that of the Sangha of Burma.

The Moghs have their village council and the headman is called Bomarang, Chowdhury or Tahsildar. These functionaries are elected generally on the basis of their wealth and social status. In Tripura Mogh Tahsildars were of great help to the Government. In one of the earlier reports it was mentioned that the Chowdhury or headman was assisted by a 'Karbari' that is perhaps a misnomer. Such a title is commonly used by the Chakmas whose dialect is greatly influenced by Bengali. The Chowdhury or Bomarang presides over the meetings of the council and can levy a fine varying from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 100/-.

Their family bond is very strong and they have Patriarchal system. Patrimony is governed by their peculiar custom where the eldest son gets half the share of the property and the rest is equally divided among his co-sharers. Similarly the mother's wealth in ornaments is divided into such portions as required that the eldest daughter inherits almost half of them.

The mortal remain of a Mogh is cremated after observing funeral rites of offering food and water. Obsequies is performed with great pomp and pleasure and seven days after the death where the presence of their priest is decreed by the scripture. The priest meditate and pray for spiritual salvation of the Atman. According to one's capacity a feast is given to the priests and to the persons present on the occasion.

THE CHAKMAS

The Chakmas of Tripura are divided into

1. Milima, 2. Tanja, 3. Barua, 4. Koda, 5. Wuangsa, 6. Buma, 7. Kurchya, 8. Kadua, etc. eight sents or clans.

They are concentrated in Kailasahar, Amarpur' and Sabroom sub-divisions.

The Chakmas are Arakanese immigrants as would be evidenced by their dialect which is an admixture of Assam-Burmese groups of languages and as even today they inhabit the Central parts of Hill Chittagong tracts which is contiguous to these hills of Arakan or Arakan Yoma in Burma. In the Arakanese folklore we find mention of their battles against the local Kings as early as the 16th Century. According to their own historical traditions their earlier seats were in the southern hill tracts of Chittagong that extended along the Matamuri River.

The origin of the name 'Chakma', according to Risley has been derived from 'Tsamka, Tsak, Thek', a lohitic tribe of the Chittagong hill tracts. But recently Dr. Loeffler has in his book in German (Chakma and Sak) theorized, may be rightly, that the small tribe of the Sak in the border areas of Arakan and Chittagong descended from the same people as Chakma and concluded after linguistically studying the still surviving Sak dialect that they were akin to Kadu of Upper Burma or to the Lui of Manipuri. He pointed out further that the Saks seemed to have taken over Bengali language and became Chakmas. Though their language is a peculiar dialect of Bengali anthropologically they belong to the peoples of South-East Asia inspite of some modification in the physical characteristics owing to inter-marriage with Bengalees. A comparative study of both Risley and Loeffler will lead us to pinpoint quite emphatically an area extending from the eastern fringes of Manipur coterminous with Burma to the Frontier Division of Lohit in NEFA.

The Chakmas

Their dress shows similarities with the dress of Burmese and Shan people and there are certain customs which hint at a form of "Animism", which is common to them. From the above it is evident that their original home was in Burma and were either pushed westwards or were forced to seek new domains along the Western littorals. Thence further towards the North to Tripura, settling and migrating in stages in search of Jhum land.

Jhum cultivation is their main source of livelihood. At present, however, they are opting for agriculture through plough cultivation on a permanent basis. With the spread of education they are taking various professions. Now a days many of them have joined service and trades.

The social discipline of the Chakma Community as a whole is very strict and the leader or sardar who is known as "Dewan" weilds such powers as usages permit. Generally communal disputes, petty threft and minor offences are settled by the sardar. The "Khijayas," Talukdars," and "Karbaris," rank below the 'Dewan'.

The system of child marriage is not generally practised. Marriages are consummated by negotiations.

The Chakma women like other tribes, are adopt in weaving and use their own hand-woven clothes. A piece of cloth is tied around the body covering the breast, corsage measuring nearly a span by three and a half cubits. Men are accustomed to wearing mill-made 'Dhoties' and 'Shirts'. Ornaments used by the womenfolk are similar to those of the Bengalees.

Educationally the Chakmas are forging ahead day by day. Their food habits are to some extent comparable to those of the Kukis but they are not addicted to drink as the latter.

They profess 'Buddhism' and have been Buddhists since long. This is well established as Taranath's 'History of Buddhism in India' and sumpamkhan-po's. "History of Buddhism in IRise, progress, and Down fall of Buddhism in India," will testify.

The Tribes of Tripura a Dissertation

One will be spelled bound to see the maintenance of the temple of Lord Buddha in a Chakma village. An isolated tiny hill is generally selected for, making a temple where an atmosphere of calm and tranquility prevail in solemn and holy surrounding. Young monks with purple colour garb perform worship in all solemnity. Taking all these into account the religious standard of the Chakmas is at par with any advanced Buddhist Country. It really makes us thoughtful when we see a young Chakma entering the monk in disregard to the deductive attraction of Garhastra' life. Old religious manuscripts of even hundreds of years old are available in the houses of the Chiefs who read these holy books in evening dim lights.

There are four types of efficient connected with religious observance in the Chakma society. These four types are (1) Bhikkus, (2) Raulees, (3) Ozhas and (4) Gankulies, The Bhikkus are Buddhist monks. So are the Raulees who are essential for performance of customary rites which are inseparably linked with the life of a Chakma from his cradle to grave. The service of the Ozhas are utilised in propitiating the lesser gods and evil spirits. The Gankulies are minstrels who sing sentimental and simple narrative songs of the days gone by and wander from village to village. They also take parts in certain religious function.

The Chakmas cremate the dead. If necessary the body is placed in a wooden box for several days so the family members could conveniently collect at the place where funeral rites will be observed. The dead body is carried to the cremation ground where it is parcelled into small fragments for facilitating burning. Obsequies are performed in befitting manners according to ones financial capacity. The members of the family of the deceased make gift of money in honour of the departed soul.

THE GAROES

Among the important Tribes of Tripura the Garoes number the least which according to 1961 Census was 5,484 their main concentration being in the subdivisions of. Sadar and Udaipur.

Anthropographically they are inhabitants of the Garo Hills which lie between the plains of Mymensingh in East Bengal and the Khasia and Jaintia Hills. It is the abundance of Jhum land and undisturbed life that have led them to migrate to Tripura. Though the Garo Hills district—a constituent part of the new state of Meghalaya—has been named after them their original home according to Playfair was Tibet. But on the authority of Sir Ashley Edn the Garoes were driven out by the Tibetans from Bhutan but it is conclusive that they came from the Northern Mountains beyond Assam and spread over to different parts in the Brahmaputra reparation upto the confluence of the Manas—till they finally settle in the hills bordering the plains of Bengal. The Tribe-name of Garo is said to have derived from 'Garo' one of their original leaders. Playfair on the other hand, states that the name has been derived from a section of the tribe called Garo or Gaiching.

The Garoes of Tripura with the development of trade and commerce, transport and communication have perforce for their own sake become bilingual. They speak Bengali as well. The Garo dialect belongs to the Assam Burmese family and is placed together with other Bodogroups.

Goroos are mainly agriculturists and those who have land practise settled cultivation. The methods of agronomy are similar to those of Bengali neighbours. But shifting cultivation is prevalent in the remote areas and such a practice is more common with the landless Garoes. Now a days they trade their Jhum produce and purchase household necessities

like Oil, Spices, Salt and Cloths. Other occupations are Service, business, etc.

Marriage among the Garoes is strictly exogamous and the husband and wife, as of rule must belong to different septs or clan and 'Motherhood'. All persons, states J.K. Bose in his 'Nokram System of the Garoes of Assam', who trace their descent from a common ancestress belong to the same Machong or Motherhood. Cross-cousin marriage of both types are popular and very common. No bride-price or bride-groom price is paid. Divorce is permissible. But now a days the cases of deviation from this rule is not uncommon especially among the Christians. But marriage within the same 'Machong' is very rare.

Their dwelling houses are made of plaited bamboo-spilts with two thatched hempen roofs. They live in their colonial pattern or dispersed homesteads.

Their staple food is rice. Among the Christians beef or cow's milk is not tabooed. The Hinduised Garoes do not eat beef.

The Garoes considered cow's milk as excrement, but with the spread of education in Tripura such prejudice is disappearing. In Tripura it is perhaps owing to free mixing with the more civilized nationalities their food habit has undergone a thorough change and indiscriminate eating of any kind of meat is almost extinct.

Liquor-prepared from rice is brewed and partially distilled in indigenous way—has a place of honour in the daily life of a Garo. In Tripura the Garoes are known for their 'Pachua' a kind of beer brewed from 'Binni rice'. It tastes very sweet and is generally sipped through bamboo pipettes off a 'Langi' or small earthen pitcher.

The Garoes

Speaking of religion the Garoes are divided into four sections i.e. the Song-sanik, Baptist, Catholic, and Hindu. In the recent past a large number of them have embraced Christianity. Garoes are mostly Hindus but the trend of conversion to Christianity has been showing of late. The reason for such trend is the want of proper recognition by the Hindus. The Hindu Garoes worship Hindu God, offer evening light near image and holy plant Tulashi .

In a village the cremation ground is called 'Maungruram'. The burial ground is known as "Gopram". Among the non-Christians the presentation of a 'Rang*' or sacrifice of a buffalo at the time of funeral is done by the Mahari. The Mahari basically includes all the males and females of the same 'Machong' dispersed over a number of villages. But for all practical purposes, the Mahari of a particular women consist of the relative who can be contacted easily.

THE KUKIS/LUSHAIS

The Kukis or Hre-em as they call themselves are backward in comparison to the tribes in Tripura. They are divided into twenty six classes as under :—

(1) Paitu, (2) Chotlang (3) Khareng (4) Baibek (5) Amrai (6) Chamlen (7) Batle (8) Riyete (9) Balta, (10) Rangchon (11) Rangchiya (12) Chhailoi (13) Jangtei (14) Pailai (15) Beltu (16) Paite (17) Phun (18) Phuntei (19) Lentai (20) Hraltei (21) Sowalai (22) Powaktu (23) Dhum (24) Burdoia (25) Chhaljen (26) Rangte.

But according to the census of 1931 names of only 15 clans were mentioned and in many respects the names differed. 18 distinct clans were named by Col Shakespeare in his "Lushai and Kuki Clans". These are Lushai, Ralte, Kawlrhing, Kiangte, Rentlei, Changtha, Beithe or veite, Pawi or Pawite or Poi, Hmar, Lakhar, Thado, Chawte, Ngente, Tlan, Pantu, Raite Zawangte & Vangchia. Except for a few common clans names the former list though exhaustive than the latter may not be very authentic. The differences were perhaps due to anglicizing the spelling of these names by different authors.

Some believe that the Halams are also Kukis. According to Robert Cust the Halam dialect is grouped together with Thado, Lushai and Khyeng under Kuki language (c/f. Sr, W. W. Hunters. The Indian Empire p.p. 108-9). Only five among the above groups live in Tripura. Here they are known more commonly as Darlong Kukis or Lushais. The Kukis are not confined to Tripura alone but are spread over a very extensive area of over 16,000 sq. Km. comprising parts of Burma, Manipur, Cachar, Mizo Hills and Chittangong hill tracts. The Kukis are also known as 'Khachaks'. But Chacharis use the word 'Luchhai' a derogatory term which means the head-hunters. The word 'Lushai' is a corruption of 'luchhai'.

The Kukis/Lushais

The Kukis are concentrated in Kailashahar sub-division but of late they have spilled over to Dharmanagar and Amarpur areas. Their original home was the Lushai or Mizo hills. The emigration to Tripura was mainly due to availability of plenty of Jhum land. Even upto the reign of Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya a big chunk of the Lushai Hills as far as Tipaimukh on the trijunction of Manipur, Khachar and Tripura boundaries was a part and parcel of greater Tripura. This portion was annexed by the British in 1870's pretending to punish the Kukis during the so-called Lushai expeditions during the time of Lushai chief Lal Sookpilal.

In Major Rennell's map of Bengal published in 1781 it describes the eastern boundary of the state "as touching the confines of the dominion of Ava."

Even so late as in 1857 we find the following account of the extent of the state in Thornton's Gazetteer, another authorised publication that Independent Tripura was a extensive mountainous country bounded on the east by the territory of Burma and contains an area of 7632 sq. miles.

Hence the question of emigration of the Kukis to Tripura does not arise is as much as they could move about anywhere in the territory like any other subject tribes as they were doing for centuries. Col Shakespear in his 'Lushai' and 'Kuki' Clans stated. In the Manipur Chronicle the chiru and Anal are mentioned as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, while the Aimal make their first appearance in 1723. They are said to have come from Tippera the present Lushai district was more or less under the control of the Raja of Tippera.

The language of all the, Kuki clans is similar with certain variations in intonation and accent as governed by the physiography of the land they are living in. The Kuki dialect is more developed than Tripura (Tripuri). or Mrung and mellifluous according to Capt. Lewin (in Hill tracts of Chittagong p. 99).

The language belongs to the austro-Asiatic group as prepared by Hodgson. It has certain affinity with the Manipuri language.

They believe in Theism. The Kukis describe their high deity as Tathien Pu, or God. Besides this they worship various sylyan spirits. One of the most important festivals in 'Shiva Puja'. But it has nothing in common with Shivaite festival as observed by the Hindus. In the past they used to sacrifice bisons at the alter. This God is propitiated just before harvesting. Many Kukis now profess Christianity. Among the Christian, Lushais are more advanced educationally and economically. With the advance of Christianity animistic rituals and worships have been abandoned by them (the Lushai). The Lushais in Tripura profess Christianity. The Kukis do not believe in the world beyond death and neither do they whorship idols. They invoke the supreme deity for bliss and happiness not only for their own tribe but for all living beings. They proffer a big river, a tree, a hill, or a bamboo mat as a seat for their God-head. Some of their sacred invocatory hymns are as under :—

(1) A Khale Kamuyoi sang yotangra kanuyoi jei ceko jei ma luyong.

O white-complexioned Mother! come by the cosmic and slippery path and fill this place with your presence.

(2) Simakuna Markuna sang yoyangra simniyam sarthayan Tangi thim Rata yoyangra kanu.

The Deity of the North and the South of the East and West, the god of the seas, the deities from a far, come Ye all through the ariel route.

After such incantations they offer altarage by reciting the following hymn :—

Chhip Chhip na hong shipra jei reng jora.

Take ye all the offerings I have made Goats, Pigs, Fowls, or bison are then sacrificed.

The Kukis/Lushais

When the sacrifice is over they all pray in unison to the Almighty for his blessings. It is very surprising that members of once such a ferocious tribe ask for bliss and perpetual happiness not only for their selves but for their overlord and mankind. It is perhaps one of the most redeeming features in their otherwise savagas living.

Uka puma reng pathang miman dramo deshi Hoiraise, rajya hoirise, damron ung ren damrechhe.

O, my king and the God of my suzerain let thy blessings do good to man, my land and country; do good to us and the King.

The above hymns, according to socio-anthropologists of today are attributable to the Halams also. To hold such a view is not incorrect in as much as the Halams were earlier identified with the Kukis.

The Kukis are not accustomed to wearing many clothes. The women-folk weave cloth with the help of loin looms are improvised spinning wheels. Generally the Kukis both man and woman wear only short piece-cloth known as Pachhras wrapped round their waists and generally hang upto Knees. The upper portion of the body is left naked. The Kuki women are expert weavers. The 'Podi' or Cotton druggets or covering carpet woven by them are very artistic. The ornaments are carved out of tusks of elephants and boars. Even the breaks of hornbills are used. Strings of glass beads are also prized. The Lushais of Christian faith have taken to western habiliments but in spite of these they wear pachhras as stoles. Now a days the Lushai women use full-sleeve blouses and hand woven fabrics as skirts.

The Kukis are very indiscriminate in their eating habits and they are fond of meat. Beef is partaken of by the Lushais. Drinking is quite common with them which they call 'Zu'. Every important festival is accompanied by Carousel. Among the Lushais liquor is not so popular.

The Tribes of Tripura a Dissertation

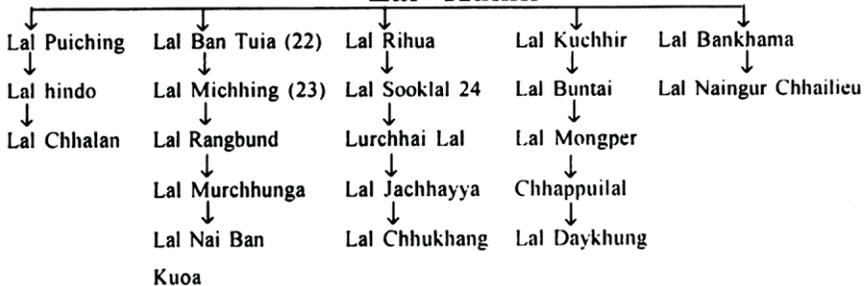
Generally the Kuki houses—which are built on bamboo platforms—are clustered in a circle in the midst of a dense forest. The central courtyard is common to all. Such a hamlet is called a 'Para'. They use bamboo leaves for thatching the roof. Each house accommodates about 30/40 persons with separate partitioned cubicles for individuals. Domestic animals are kept below the machans. A small portion of the dormitory is used as a privy. The excrements are devoured by the tethered pigs. This greatly solves the cleaning of night soils. They have separate rooms for visitors. The Lushais are mostly concentrated in the Jampui Hills. Their houses are built about 2' above the ground and have wooden walls and roofs. The floor is either made of bamboos or wooden planks. Pit type latrine is generally used though ethnic affinity is there the Lushais are culturally much more advanced than the Kukis. They have adopted many fine traits of the Christians.

The Kukis as of habit do not repair their houses. When these become unfit for habitation they just build new houses in a new site. This may be one of the reasons for repeated changing of their dwelling places.

The bond of unity among the Kuki communities is very praiseworthy. Internal discords or family feuds are few and far between. The 'Raja' or Sardar is the head of the community living in a 'Parah'. But he can not dispense justice by himself alone without consulting the elders. This serves as a check on the despotic tendency of the 'Raja' or the Sardar of a locality. Any breach of communal discipline entails severe punishment.

The Kuki rajas are known as 'Lal'. The chiefship is hereditary. The geneological trees from the 21st 'Lals'. Chhibbuta as recorded by the late Kukilogist B.G.S. Vakil is reproduced below with relevant records.

The Kukis/Lushais
Lal Chhibbuta (21)
Lal Chungpul
Lal Kumil



Raja Lal Rihua died in 1843, and Raja Lal Sukoolal or Sookpilal of head-hunting fame succeeded his father. In accordance with the tribal custom he made systematic raids on Kachubari village in Sylhet district on the 16th April, 1844 and the severed heads of the villagers were dedicated to the departed soul of his father.

It was on Raja Lal Daykhum that the first hereditary title of Raja was conferred by Maharaja of Tripura.

Like the Kukis the Lushai (Khachak) have their own hereditary 'Raja' recognised by the Tripura Durbar. It is certain that all these Lushai clans Law dealing with the Tippera Rajas and feared them greatly the great prestige the Tippera chief enjoyed among the Lushais who called him RENGPI (col. Shakespear p. 5)

Polygamous type of marriage is not prevalent. Womenfolk play important roles in the households and to some extent their spouses are made to play the second fiddle. Occurrence of adultery, fornication and incest is negligible. Pre-marital cohabitation though an offence is overlooked owing to the fact that such an action always resulted in marriage. Child marriage is not in vogue. Divorce is permitted with the consent of the Community. If the couples pray for 'divorce' then the one seeking such is made to pay compensation to the opposite party and has to

throw a communal feast. Widow or widower can re-marriage. Marriage generally takes place among them after attainment of maturity.

Their main traditional occupation is Jhum cultivation and hunting. In Jhum cultivation a patch of jungle on the hill slopes is burnt down and cultivated for a year or two before moving on to some area. In the cleared glades with the point of Takkal' or a chopper with haft little holes are dug and seeds of Paddy, cotton, Sesame, Cucumber, Pump-kin, Maize and melon sowed. These germinate and grow & are gathered or harvested according to season. They have not as yet adopted plough cultivation in any appreciable manner. Orange growing is a profitable occupation of the Lushais.

The Kukis used to Pay 'Gharchukta' Kar or tax per household to the state. The old and infirm, lepers, widows or widowers were exempted As vassals they were called upon to work for their feudal chiefs.

The Kukis were expert archers and were adopt in using spears and assigais. In the past they fought valiantly. A big and resonant disk made of bellmetal having a diameter of 5' and 6' was used as an instrument of percussion. They called it 'Ghong'.

The mortal remains of the Kukis are buried. An offeratory of flesh and wine is made to the departed soul and with great fanfare these were later feasted upon. In the past if a Lal or Raja died his dead body was placed in a huge dug-out log and encircling the log a ring of fire was enkindled which was kept burning for ninety days. After such a ritual the bones and skin of the deceased were buried in a pre-selected hole with tribal pomp and barbaric grandeur when cut-off heads of the plain dwellers were thrown in it. The Lushais are buried according to Christian convention.

APPENDIX-A
APPENDIX-A

Herein before attempts have been made to focus by way dissertation the multi-faceted tribal life in Tripura. But it is in no way exhaustive. Scores of other tribes from outside have in groups migrated permanently in search of occupations especially in the tea gardens. A list of them is appended below :

1. Oraon	(Chota Nagpur)
2. Kand	(Orissa)
3. Kandra	(—do—)
4. Kaur	(Chota Nagpur),
5. Kachhari	(Cachar)
6. Kisan	(Jalpaiguri)
7. Kurmi	(Bihar)
8. Koch	(Cooch-bihar)
9. Kora	(Munda type)
10. Kharia	(Chota Nagpur)
11. Turi	(Chota Nagpur)
12. Nagesia	(Chota Nagpur)
13. Newar	(Nepal)
14. Pan or Panika	(Chota Nagpur)
15. Pashi	(Dravidian)
16. Binjhia or Birjia	(Chota Nagpur)
17. Bhujan	(Chota Nagpur)
18. Bhumij	(Chota Nagpur)
19. Mangor	(Chota Nagpur)
20. Mahor	(Nepal) (Orissa)
21. Mundi	(Chota Nagpur)
22. Rai	(Nepal)
23. Rajbansi	(North Bengal)
24. Rajowar	(Bihar) (Nepal)
25. Limbu	(Chota Nagpur)
26. Lodha	(S.Pargana)
27. Santal	(Singbhum)
28. Ho	

APPENDIX—'B'

Basic Facts and figures

(Data relates to 1961 Census unless otherwise indicated)

Item	Unit	Particulars
Area	Sq. Kms.	10,451
Districts	Nos.	3
Sub-divisions	Nos.	10
Towns	Nos.	10
Development Blocks (as on 1-1-67)	Nos.	17
Altitude of Agartala town	ft.	42
Village (inhabited)	Nos.	4,932
Villages (Uninhabited)	Nos.	356
Total population	Nos.	11,42,005
Males	Nos.	5,91,237*
Females	Nos.	5,50,768*
Rural Population (% to total)	%	90.98
Urban population (% to total)	%	9.01
Scheduled tribes population	Nos.	3,60,070
Scheduled Castes population	Nos.	1,19,725
Density of population per Sq. Km.	Nos.	109 (138)
Literacy	%	20.2, (34.0)*
Reporting area 1964-65*	Hectares	10,66,000
Area under forests, 1964-65*	Hectares	6,352,52.0
Barren & Unculturable land, 1964-65*		5,666.00
Net Area sown; 1964-65*	Hectares	2,31,009.00
Area irrigated, 1964-65*	Hectares	17,199.00

Figures in brackets''show all India average

*** Provisional**

APPENDIX-A
APPENDIX—C

**STATEMENT SHOWING THE TRIBAL
POPULATION BY TRIBES.**

Sl. No.	Tribe	Population	Percentage
1.	Tripura or Tripuri, Tippera	1,89,799	52.71
2.	Riang	56,597	15.72
3.	Jamatia	24,359	6.77
4.	Chakma	22,386	6.22
5.	Halam	16,298	4.53
6.	Noatia	16,010	4.45
7.	Mogh	10,524	2.92
8.	Kuki	5,531	1.54
9.	Garo	5,484	1.52
10.	Munda	4,409	1.22
11.	Lushai	2,988	0.83
12.	Orang	2,875	0.80
13.	Santal	1,562	0.43
14.	Uchai	766	0.21
15.	Khasia	349	0.09
16.	Bhil	69	0.02
17.	Chaimal	50	0.01
18.	Bhutia	7	0.01
19.	Lepcha	7	0.01
TOTAL		3,60,070	100.01

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APPENDIX—D

STATEMENT SHOWING THE POPULATION OF THE
TRIBAL COMMUNITIES (MALE AND FEMALE)

Name of Scheduled Tribes	Population		
	Person	Male	Female
1	2	3	4
All Scheduled Tribes	3,60,070	1,84,174	1,75,896
1. Bhil	69	34	35
2. Bhutia	7	6	1
3. Chaimal	50	20	30
4. Chakma	22,386	11,626	10,760
5. Garo	5,484'	2,801	2,683
6. Halam	16,298	8,423	7,685
7. Jamatia	24,359	12,184	12,175
8. Khasia	349	188	161
9. Kuki including the following sub-tribes : —			
(i) Balte			
(ii) Belalhut			
(iii) Onhalya			
(iv) Fun			
(v) Hajango			
(vi) Jangtei			
(vii) Khareng			
(viii) Khephong			
(ix) Kuntei			
(x) Laifang			
(xi) Mizel			
(xii) Lentei			
(xiii) Name			
(xiv) Peitu. Paite			
(xv) Rangchan			
(xvi) Rangkhole			
(xvii) Thangluya	5,531	2,785	2,746
10. Lepcha	7	6	1
11. Lushai	2,988	1,484	1,504
12. Mogh	10,524	5,435	5,089
13. Munda including Kaur	4,409	2,267	2,142
14. Noatia	16,010	8,251	7,759
15. Orang	2,875	1,501	1,374
16. Riang	56,597	28,974	27,623
17. Santal	1,562	873	689
18. Tripura or Tripuri, Tippera	1,89,799	96,926	92,873
19. Uchai	766	390	376

Appendix
Appendix
APPENDIX—'E'
POPULATION

Sub-divisionwise (Population of the Scheduled tribes, 1961 Census.)

Sub-divisions	Total Population	Scheduled Tribes	
		Total	Percentage
1	2	3	4
1. Amarpur	56,365	39,525.	70.12
2. Belonia	84,827	27,163	32.02
3. Dharmanagar	1,27,548	33,700	26.42
4. Kailashahar	1,04,126	34,068	32.72
5. Kamalpur	61,675	19,932	32.32
6. Khowai	1,29,948	58,726	45.19
7. Sabroom	43,397	20,333	46.85
8. Sadar	3,66,076	97,218	26.56
9. Sonamura	77,969	8,251	10.58
10. Udaipur	90,074	21,154	23.49
TOTAL	11,42,005	3,60,070	31.53

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APPENDIX—'F'

(LITERACY AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBES BY SEX)

Area	Name of Tribes	Literate of Scheduled Tribes			% of total population of Scheduled Tribes		
		3	4	5	6	7	8
		P	M	F	P	M	F
TRIPURA	All tribes	36,059	31,996	4,063	10.01	17.37	2.30
	1. Bhil	1	1	-	1.44	2.94	2.30
	2. Bhutia	6	5	1	85.71	83.33	100.00
	3. Chaimal	4	4	-	8.00	20.00	-
	4. Chakma	1,755	1,644	111	7.84	14.14	1.03
	5. Garo	759	631	128	13.84	22.57	4.77
	6. Halam	1,104	1,026	78	6.80	12.18	1.01
	7. Jamatia	2,474	2,376	98	10.15	19.50	0.80
	8. Khasia	53	35	18	15.18	18.61	11.18
	9. All Kuki tribes	507	407	100	9.16	14.61	3.64

APPENDIX—'G'
LEVELS OF LITERACY AMONG SCHEDULED TRIBES

Levels of Literacy	Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	SCHEDULED TRIBE						1961 GENERAL POPULATION					
	2		3		4		5		6		7	
Total Population	1,84,174	100.00	1,75,886	1.63	3,60,070	.	5,91,237	.	5,50,768	.	11,42,005	.
Literate without												
Level of B.H.	24,225	13.15	2,878	1.63	27,103	7.52	1,02,119	17.3	33,974	6.2	1,36,093	11.91
Primary or Junior Basis	7,413	4.02	1,148	0.65	8,561	2.37	60,754	10.3	20,713	3.76	81,467	7.13
Matriculation and above	357	0.19	31 Neg.		394	0.10	12,187	2.06	1,441 0.3	13,628	1.2	
Non-Technical Diploma	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Tech. Diploma	3	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
University Degree												
(Non-technical)	30	2	0.01	32	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Technical Degree	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Total literacy		17.36		2.29		9.99		29.66			10.26	20.24

Source :— (i) Report of the Seminar on Employment of Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes p.p. 80-82 Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1965.

(ii) Census of India 1961 part II-C(i) Volume p.p. 122-123, Manager of publications, Delhi, 1965.

APPENDIX — 'H'											
STATEMENT SHOWING THE RELIGION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES OF TRIPURA											
Tripura Total Stated	Name of the Tribe	Total Others	Christian	Hindu	Buddhist	Muslim	Tribal Religions	Animist	Indefinite belief	Indefinite belief	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	All Scheduled Tribes :	360070	9591	317688	32790	...	...	...	10	11	12
1.	Bhil	69	1	68	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2.	Bhutia	7		7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3.	Chaimal	50		50	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4.	Chakma	22386	5	122	22259	...	...	...	...	...	...
5.	Garó	5484	169	3785	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
6.	Halam	16298	253	16044	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
7.	Jamatia	24359		24359	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
8.	Khasia	349	216	124	9	...	...	...	...	...	...
9.	Kuki including the following sub-tribes	5531	2345	3185	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
	(i) Balte				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(ii) Belahut				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(iii) Chhalya				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(iv) Fun				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(v) Hajango				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(vi) Jangtei				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(vii) Khareng				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(viii) Khephong				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(ix) Kuntei				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(x) Lajjang				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(xi) Longtei				...	...	...	...	...		...
	(xii) Mizel				...	...	...	...	...		...

Appendix

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
(xiii) Mmanne											
(xiv) Paitu, Paite											
(xv) Rangchao											
(xvi) Rangkhole											
(xvii) ThangJaya											
10. Lepcha		7	...	5	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
11. Lushai		2988	2950	22	16	...	...	...	...	...	...
12. Mogh		10524	6	121	10397	...	...	...	...	...	...
13. Munda including Kaur		4409	73	4334	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
14. Noatia		16010	5	16004	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
15. Orang		2875	24	2350	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
16. Riang		56597	1705	54882	10	...	...	...	...	...	...
17. Santal		1562	2	1560	..	...	...	...	...	...	...
18. Tripura or Tripuri, Tippera		189799	54	189698	47	...	...	...	...	...	...
19. Uchai		766	254	468	44	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source : 1. West Bengal & Sikkim-Special Tables for Scheduled Tribes, Part V-A, Census of India 1961, 1966.

2. Assam-Special Tables for Schedule Tribes, Part-V-A, Census of India 1961, 1965.

3. India, -Special Tables for Scheduled Tribes Vol. I, Part V-A (ii) Census of India, 1961, 1966 p p 302-308.

APPENDIX—T

STATEMENT SHOWING THE WORKERS AS PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES BY SEX.

Area	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Person	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5
TRIPURA				
All Scheduled Tribes				
	(Total)	51.59	54.76	48.26
1.	Bhil	62.31	73.53	51.43
2.	Bhutia	71.43	83.33	...
3.	Chaimal	50.00	70.00	36.67
4.	Chakma	52.51	54.66	50.20
5.	Garo	44.75	53.16	35.97
6.	Halam	54.24	56.49	51..83
7.	Jamatia	51.72	54.19	49.26
8.	Khasia	57.87	70.74	42.86
9.	Lepcha	85.71	100.00	...
10.	Lushai	41.83	43.19	40.49
11.	Mogh	52.80	57.66	47.61
12.	Kukis. including the following sub-Tribes :—			
	(i)Balte (ii)Balahut			
	(iii) Chhalya (iv) Fun			
	(v) Hajangoi (vi) Jangtei			
	(vii) Khareng (via)			
	Khepong (ix) Kuntei			
	(x) Laifang (xi) Lentei			
	(xii) Mizol (xiii) Namte			
	(xiv) Paituhaite (xv) Rangchan			
	(xvi) Rangkhole			
	(xvii) Thangluya	53.66	55.66	.51.64

Appendix

Area	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Person	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5
13.	Munda including Kaur	49.83	56.59	42.67
14.	Noatia	54.37	58.49	49.99
15.	Orang	55.17	59.69	50.40
16.	Riang	56.21	58.21	53.68
17.	Santal	58.32	60.09	48.48
18.	Tripura or Tripuri, Tippera	49.74	52.99	46.36
19.	Uchai :	54.44	57.18	51.60
Total population :		38.29	54.47	20.91

Source : 1. West Bengal & Sikkim—Scheduled tribes and Scheduled Castes, Part VA, Census of India, 1961, 1966.

2. Based on Assam—Sch. Tribes & Sch. Castes Vol. III, Part V-A, Census of India, 1961, 1965, p.p. 200-205.

3. India—Special tables for Sch. tribes, Vol. I, Part-V-A (ii), Census of India, 1966, 1961, p.p, 48-61.

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APPENDIX-J

**STATEMENT SHOWING THE NAMES OF
CHRISTIANS MISSIONS OPERATING IN TRIPURA.**

Area	Station	Name of Mission operating
1	2	3
TRIPURA		Tripura Baptist Christian Union. (NZBMS)
Agartala		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Amarpur P.O.		
Ambassa P.O.		
Kamalpur		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Arundhutinagar, P.O.		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Chailengta, P.O.		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Chandira		Seventh Day Adventists.
Jampui, P.O.		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Kailasahar, P.O.		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Kanchanbari, P.O. } Kanchanpur, P.O. } Kumarghat, P.O. }		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Laogang Bazar, P.O.		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.
Tripura		
Damcherra		Tripura Baptist Christian Union.

APPENDIX — 'K'

**STATEMENT SHOWING THE TRIBAL POPULATION IN
THE DIFFERENT TOWNS OF TRIPURA**

Area	Name of Town	Population	S.T. Population		State
			No.	%	
1	2	3	4	5	6
TRIPURA					
Agartala		54878	3346	6.10	M
Dharmanagar		13240	47	0.35	NM
Khowai		8782	102	1.16	NM
Radhakishorepur		8778	88	1.00	NM
Belonia		8744	62	0.71	NM
Kailashahar		8575	53	0.62	NM
M. Municipality					
NM: Non-Municipal Town					

Appendix
APPENDIX — 'L'
STATEMENT SHOWING THE TRIBAL POPULATION
OF INDIA
(1961— Census)

State/Union Territory	Total Population	S.T. Population	Percentage
1	2	3	4
1. Andhra Pradesh	35,983,447	1,324,368	3.68
2. Assam	11,872,773	2,068,864	17.42
3. Bihar	46,455,610	4,204,770	9.05
4. Gujrat	20,683,350	2,754,446	13.35
5. Jammu Kashmir	3,560,976	—	—
6. Kerala	16,903,715	207,996	1.23
7. Madhya Pradesh	32,372,408	6,678,410	20.63
8. Madras	33,686,953	252,646	0.75
9. Maharashtra	39,558,718	2,397,159	6.06
10. Mysore	23,586,772	192,096	0.81
11. Orissa	17,548,846	4,223,757	24.0f
12. Punjab	20,306,812	14,132	0.07
13. Rajasthan	20,155,602	2,309,447	11.46
14. Uttar Pradesh	73,746,401	...	—
15. West Bengal	1,34,926,279	2,063,883	1.53
16. Nagaland	369,200	343,697	93.09
Union Territories and Other areas.			
1. A & N. Island	63,548	14,122	22.22
2. Delhi	2,658,612	—	—
3. Himachal Pradesh	1,351,144	108,194	33.81
4. L.M. & A. Islands	24,108	23,391	97.03
5. Manipur	780,037	240,049	33.77
6. Tripura	1,142,005	360,070	31.53
1. Dadra and Nagar Haveli	57,963	51,261	88.44
8. NEFA	336,555	—	—
9. Pondicherry	369,079	—	—
TOTAL:	4,38,445,915	29,886,300	6.80

TRIBAL POPULATION

(As per 2001 Census)"

SI No	Name of the Tribes	Male	Female	Total
1	Bhil	1210	1126	2336
2	Bhutia	17	12	29
3	Chaimal	115	111	226
4	Chakma	32951	31342	64293
5	Garo	5613	5567	11180
6	Halam	23861	23384	47245
7	Jamatia	37542	37407	74949
8	Khasia	342	288	630
9	Kuki	5894	5780	11674
10	Lepcha	53	52	105
11	Lusai	2424	2353	4777
12	Mog	15393	14992	30385
13	Munda	6367	6049	12416
14	Noatia	3401	3254	6655
15	Orang	3200	3023	6223
16	Reang	84155	80948	165103
17	Santal	1189	962	2151
18	Tripuri	275784	268064	543848
19	[Uchai	1032	1071	2103
20	Generic tribes	3777	3321	7098
Total		504320	489106	993426

TRIBAL POPULATION RESIDING IN RURAL AND URBAN AREA
(As per 2001 Census)

SI No	Name of the Tribes	Male	Female	Total
1	Bhil	2323	13	2336
2	Bhutia	13	16	29
3	Chaimal	215	11	226
4	Chakma	63494	799	64293
5	Garo	11020	160	11180
6	Halam	46796	449	47245
7	Jamatia	74174	775	74949
8	Khasia	626	4	630
9	Kuki	11548	126	11674
10	Lepcha	93	12	105
11	Lusai	4758	19	4777
12	Mog	30079	306	30385
13	Munda	12209	207	12416
14	Noatia	6644	11	6655
15	Orang	6028	195	6223
16	Reang	164533	570	165103
17	Santal	2082	69	2151
18	Tripuri	523107	20741	543848
19	Uchai	2096	7	2103
20	Generic tribes	6159	939	7098
Total		967997	25429	993426

STATEMENT OF LITERATES AMONG THE TRIBES OF TRIPURA**(As per 2001 Census)**

SI No	Name of the Tribes	Male	Female	Total
1	Bhil	680	392	1072
2	Bhutia	16	10	26
3	Chaimal	60	30	90
4	Chakma	16179	9014	25193
5	Garo	3490	2704	6194
6	Halam	13245	8616	21861
7	Jamatia	23200	15379	38579
8	Khasia	132	58	190
9	Kuki	4152	3113	7265
10	Lepcha	50	44	94
11	Lusai	2038	1876	3914
12	Mog	7752	4971	12723
13	Munda	2258	1119	3377
14	Noatia	1615	886	2501
15	Orang	1210	610	1820
16	Reang	36285	18309	54594
17	Santal	642	243	885
18	Tripuri	170883	112923	283806
19	Uchai	679	441	1120
20	Generic tribes	2387	1441	3828
Total		286953	182179	469132

TRIBAL POPULATION

Sl.No. Name of the Tribe		Population (Census Years)			
		1971	1981	1991	2001
1	TRIPURI/TRIPURA	250545	330872	461531	543848
2	REANG	64722	84003	111606	165103
3	JAMATIA	34192	44501	60824	74949
4	NOATIA	10297	7182	4158	6655
5	UCHUI	1061	1306	1637	21 03
6	KUKI	7775	5501	10628	11674
7	HALAM	19076	28969	36499	47245
8	LUSHAI	3672	3734	4910	4777
9	BHUTIA	3	22	47	29
10	LEPCHA	14	106	111	105
11	KHASHIA	491	457	358	630
12	CHAKMA	28662	34797	36096	64293
13	MOG	13273	18231	31612	30385
14	GARO	5559	7297	9360	11180
15	MUNDWKAUR	5347	7993	11547	12416
16	SANTHAL	2222	2726	2736	2151
17	ORANG	3428	5217	6751	6223
18	BHIL	169	838	1754	2336
19	CHAIMAL	0	18	26	226
20	GENERIC TRIBES etc	36	150	0	7098
	TOTAL	450544	583920	853345	993426

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