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A STUDY ON THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE MUSLIMS OF TRIPURA

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Abstract:

Tripura is a small state of India union situated in the North-Eastern part of the Indian sub-continent. The state lies within the latitudes 22°56'N -24°32'N and between the longitudes 90°10' E-92°21' E. The area of Tripura, in ancient time, was said to be very extensive. Assam and Mizoram bound it on the north and the east respectively; while Bangladesh lies on the west; the northwest; the South and the South-east. Tripura did not have a distinct political status or demarcated boundary as it has today. One of the earlier kings of Tripura brought a number of Muslim families along with other Bengali castes of Hindu communities from the Muslim Sultan of Bengal and he arranged their permanent settlement in all over Tripura. Since then from time to time, the Muslim Bengalis like the major Hindu Bengali inhabitants migrated from the plain lands adjacent to the present Tripura which was regarded as District of Tipperah or State of Hill Tipperah. Only in 1920, the British government agreed to regard the territory as 'Tripura' instead of Hill Tripura. Muslims are the old dweller of this state and their history shows ups and down of their position in Tripura. The state has undergone significant socio-cultural change in the last four decades. Besides located adjacent to the densely populated plains of Bangladesh, Tripura has attracted a continuous flow of immigrants. This process reduced the original inhabitants to a status of linguistic minority. The decline of population in 1961 -1971 was the result of 'push -back' operation policy of the government. Muslims became backward in different fields of the society. Their socio-economic condition became pathetic and their position is below than the lower caste.

INTRODUCTION :

"The historical phase of India began with the Muslim invasion. Muslims were India's first historians."

Tripura is a small state of India union situated in the North-Eastern part of the Indian sub-continent. The state lies within the latitudes 22°56'N -24°32'N and between the longitudes 90°10' E-92°21' E. The area of Tripura, in ancient time, was said to be very extensive. Assam and Mizoram bound it on the north and the east respectively; while Bangladesh lies on the west; the northwest; the South and the South-east. According to the census of 1891, the people of Tripura were divided into two parts, i) Bengali and ii) Loutya race. Bengali: Bengalis are divided into three branches, e.g. Hindus, Muslims and Christians. It is impossible to describe the administration of Tripura before Muslims connection with the Tripura. Ratna Manikya followed the Muslims administration, military and soldiers system.

Muslims came in the NE region especially in Tripura before their connection with the western and the southern part of India. An uncle of Prophet Muhammad named Hamza (Amir Hamza) swayed in

adventurous probes in North East India in around 590-610 AD. Hamza (b.567- d.625 AD) was an early convert to Islam in 616 AD along with Umar (who later became the second Caliph of Islam). The first preaching by any Muslim was by three Sahabas in 615 AD when Sa'ad ibn abi Waqqas (b.594- d.764 AD) along with Khudawand and Qurnain reached Manipur by sea route via Chittagong, in the reign of King Naophang Ahal (Naophangba) of Manipur who ruled Manipur in 594-624 AD. They preached among the Pang ethnic people who were a Tai race cognate who all originated from Yunan in southern China. After preaching for some time, Waqqas and the two companions reached China where they again preached among the ethnic Hui Chi in 616 AD and onwards before going back to Arabia.

If we turn into the pages of history, it will be found that Tripura did not have a distinct political status or demarcated boundary as it has today. Huiuen Tsang who visited India in the first half of the seventh century referred to a kingdom called kingdom of Samatat which included a part of the central Bengal in addition of the region of the district Tripera. The archeological evidence shows that a large portion of this region was politically attached to the kingdoms of Eastern Bengal known as Samatata and Harikela. According to the History based on various manuscripts and iconographic accounts and archeological sources, from 507 B.C., to the 12th century A.D., the south western plain lands of the present state of Tripura was under various Hindu dynasties such as the Guptas, Naths, Ratas, Chandras, the Buddhists dynasties such as Khargas and also the rulers called the Varmanas, Pattikaras, devas of Srihatta which was finally invaded by Muslims in 1257A.D.

By 1006 A.D., the Muslims had settled in North-Western India. Muhammad Ghurr completed conquest of India by 1203. The Turks began moving into North and West of India in the 10th century, bringing Islam with them. They completed the conquest of Northern India c1200, and established the sultanate of Delhi in 1206. By the early 14th century, they virtually controlled all the North India.

In 1234 Tugral Kha, administrator of Lakxmanabati, attacked Jajnagar and he was defeated completely. Few historians imagined that Jajnagar was Tripura, but Major Stuart and Hunter called Jajnagar as the capital of Orissa.

Perhaps, in 594-95A.D. Muhammad Bakhtier Khilji captured Nabadwip. Laxman Sen, son of Ballal Sen, ruled Bangla at that time. When Bakhiter attacked Nabadwip, Laxman Sen fled to Rampal, the Capital of Bangla and stayed there. Tugral Kha was a slave of sultan Gyash Uddin Balban and appointed as sultan after the death of Malik Tatar Kha, Sultan of Laxmanabati.

Kumar Ratna Fa, after dismissing from his father's state, reached Laxmanabati. Malik Tugral Kha accepted him with great respect. Kumar Ratna Fa stayed there for some days. At last Tugral Kha sent a huge army to help Ratna Fa and captured the throne of Tripura in 692A.D. Muslim Historians called it the Muslim victory of Tripura by Tugral Kha. After having defeated the Raja in general engagement, he plundered the inhabitants, and brought away with him immense wealth and one hundred elephants. Muslim relation started with Tripura during Ratna Fa. When Chengthung Fa was the chief of Triperah, Muslim rule was established in Delhi. The Muslims were not contented by capturing only Delhi and its surroundings. They were ambitious to the extent of over empowering the entire Indian sub-continent. On the other hand, the tribal did not want to limit their activity to Triperah hills alone. They wished to expand their frontier of their domain to the adjoining plain areas also. This naturally brought them in confrontation with the Muslims. The Muslims always waited for an opportunity which could help them in wreaking vengeance over the Triperah. Ultimately the Muslim Bengal Gour ruler one such pretext. Many years ago, a Hindu merchant complained to the Emperor of Gaur, the Turk sultan of Bengal, that he had been robbed of his money and jewels while he was passing through the kingdom of Tripura on his way to present tribute to the Emperor. The indignant Emperor mobilized a huge army under the command of Hiravat Kha and invaded the state. King Chengthun Fa was fear -stricken and bargained for peace. His wife queen Tripura Sundari was indignant at his cowardice and chided him. She took command of her troop and roused them. The aroused Tripura army then set upon the invading hordes and slaughtered them. The rest of the Gaur forces led by their Hiravat Khan fled and the victorious Tripura troops cheered their glorious queen who had led them to victory. The Triperah become not only victorious but they created such an awe and terror among Muslims that they could not dare even to have retaliatory step against the Triperah.

To repay the Muslims exploitation Maharaja Dharma Manikya attacked Bangladesh. He defeated Sultan Abul Majahid Ahmmad and made him bound to get back his own kingdom. Dharma Manikya sent his eldest son as a permanent ambassador to the Muslim ruler in Gaur. The defeat suffered by the Muslims at the hands of Triperah was still fresh in mind of the Gour ruler. Thus the Gour Sultan planned to punish the Tribal by the hands of their own kith and kin. He instigated Ratna Manikya against his brothers and assumed to help in regaining the lost kingdom. Ratna Manikya fell into the laid trap and pledged to stand in arms against his all younger brothers. With the help of Gour forces he defeated the combined armies of his brothers and became the ruler of Tripura. In gratitude he presented elephants and riches to the Gour Sultan.

After The Death of Ratna Manikya, his Son Pratap Manikya ascended the throne. During his rule

Muslim rulers targeted Bangla. They left Samatat and were settled in Subarnagram(1323A.D.).

In 1338 A.D. Malik Fakir Uddin, taking the title 'Sultan Sekandar' raised Free-Flag in Bangla. His throne was Setup at Subarnagram. So it was very easier to attack Tripura from Subarnagram. In 1347 A.D., Pathan Sultan Samsuddin Abu Muzaffar Ilias Shah attacked Tripura. He defeated Pratap Manikya and captured Chattogram.

Dhanya Manikya is regarded as the greatest ruler of Tripura during the medieval period. He defeated Arakan Raj Brishava Dhaja and Hussein Shah. 'Kamrup and Komta' winner Hussein Shah could not endure this insult. Sultan Hussein Shah, the then Gour ruler (1493-1519 A.D.), made persistently strenuous effort to regain control over the areas captured from his kingdom. He collected soldier from Bengal XII parts and appointed Goura Mallik as his chief and then sent them to Tripura. Muslim defeated the Tripura soldiers and went towards Rangamati, the capital of Tripura. Tripur soldiers took shelter at Sonamati and made a dam in the river Gumati. Seeing the river dry, Muslim soldiers tried to override the river. But Tripur soldier broke the dam and it was impossible for the Muslim soldiers to protect their life. Most of them died. Rest reached at Chandigarh. But Tripur soldier, entering inside the Muslims, killed them with weapons. Some Muslim fled from there. But Hussein shah again built a huge army and sent Hatian Kha to capture Rangamatia. Senapati Chaychag move forward to defeat Hatian Kha but failed. Then they used previous method to withered away Muslims by the water current of Gumati. Hussein shah attacked Tripura for the third time. This time he, leaving the way of Comilla, went towards capital Kailargar (Jajnagar). His soldiers gathered near the bank of the river. Hussein shah captured some part of Tripura. Hussein shah, after winning the north-east states of Bengal, got the title 'kamru', 'komta' and 'Jajnagar winner'. But these places were not under the dominion of Muslim for a long time. Hussein Shah made persistently strenuous effort to regain control over the areas captured from his kingdom but so long Dhanya Manikya was alive all his efforts fell flat on the ground.

During the reign of Sher Shah, many part of Tripura were under Sher Shah Rule. Sher shah built a wide Rajmarg from Subarnagram to Punjab.

At the time of Vijay Manikya, the Afghans became a power to reckon with. It was the time when Afghan and Mughal were fighting each other to gain supremacy over Delhi and other parts of the country. For some time the Afghans gained control over Delhi. The clever and shrewd king Manikya thought it prudent to have a meaningful report with the Afghans. He recruited some Afghan officers in his army to impart training to his troops in new war strategy and war fare. Vijay Manikya, with the help of Afghan soldiers, captured many places and even some part of the Afghans. When Afghan officers were kicked out of the state force and some Afghan territories annexed by Vijay Manikya, the Afghan soldiers in his army revolted. They were captured and slain on the altar of fourteen deities. The Gour Afghan sultan was highly enraged by this gruesome act and he lost no time in invading Tripura. Vijay Manikya defeated the Afghans.

After the death of Sher Shah, Bijoy Manikya not only recaptured the lost part of Tripura, but also recaptured Tripura's north and south places. Bijoy Manikya captured Chattogram defeating Mag and the Muslims.

Kararani raced Orissa winner sultan Suleman sent three thousand horse and ten thousand walking soldiers with senapati Mohammad Kha to capture Chattagram. War continued up to eight month. Firstly Muslim gained but at last they were defeated. Mohammad Kha was brought to Rangamati and was killed before Chattordash Devata by Bijoy Manikya.

After some days he agreed to attack Bangladesh. With 26000 walking ,5000 horse rider and 5000 boat soldier he, defeating the Muslim of Sonarga moved up to the bank of Ganga and then returned home with huge amount of property, beautiful ladies Uday Manikya ascended the throne of Tripura in 1585. During his time Mughal moved towards Chottagram to capture it. Uday Manikya sent a troop of soldier to prevent them. Tripur soldiers attacked Muslim during night, but Muslim won the battle. Almost 34000 Tripur soldiers and 5000 Muslim died in this war.

Amar Manikya ascended the throne in 1597. So long Amar Manikya limited his annexation operations within Bengal, he always emerged victorious but the moment he crossed over to other areas he ran into difficulties. With the help of some Portuguese adventurers he attacked Arakan region then ruled by Muhammad Shah. In this move Muhammad Shah annexed Chittagong and entered the capital of Udaipur where he unleashed a terror of massacre loot and arson. In fact, he played a tack to deceitfully annex Chittagong area. Because of its physical environment the Tripura region and particularly its forests are known as heaven for elephants. The Mughal needed a region that could continuously supply them elephants for pomp and show for exhibiting their grandeur. For this interest the Mughal forces attacked Tripura. He defeated the Muslim ruler of Srihatta (Bangladesh) ruler Sheikh Islam Kha attacked Tripura. Amar Manikya sent Isha Kha with huge soldiers. Muslims were defeated and fled from the field.

In ancient time Tripura was surrounded by Brahmaputra in the west. So modern Dhaka and Maymansingha Districts some part was included to Tripura. It is true that Sultan Magiuddin Abdul

Muzaffar Iliash Shah first attack Tripura. From that time the plain land of Tripura was included to the Muslim state. Gradually, Pathan Sultans tried to capture plain land. In 1599 A.D. Tripura plain land was included to Mughal. The East and the South side of the Sarail and North side of Louhagarh were divided before Mughal capture as Heung, Beung and Kailargarh. The administrator of Udaipur Nurullah Kha changed three parts into one and gave the name Nurnagar. Now this place is named as Kasba.

In 1611, Rajdhar Manikya, son of Amar Manikya, ascended the throne. Bengal Muslim ruler sent army to attack Tripura, but was defeated. His son Rajdhar became the king in 1613. Jahangir was at the Mughal Throne. Khan Ibrahim Fatehjung was Jahangir's subedar in Bengal. He wanted to expand the frontiers of the Mughal Empire by annexing the Arakan region to it. For this purpose he had to widen his based in Bengal itself. Bengal governor sent a huge army to annex Tripura. Dhak as prisoners and Yahodhar died in Mughal detention itself in 1623 A.D. But a devastating drought and accompanying epidemics forced the Mughal forces to flee from Tripura. Jahangir ordered him to send some elephant and horse as taxes. But Rajdhar refused to fulfill their desire. Mughal then attacked Tripura and defeated Tripura. Mughal took away huge amount of wealth. Jashodhar agreed to pay elephant and horse every year. So Jahangir made him free. Mughal then captured the plain land of Tripura and appointed Jaminder to collect taxes. Some Muslim Jaminders was appointed in some parts of the districts. They rule the plain land of Tripura almost 2 years. Bangle's ruler sultan Suja attacked Tripura during the reign of kalyan Manikya. But Mughal become bound to leave Tripura defeated by kalyan Manikya. During the reign of sultan Suja in Bangla (1580 sake), Sube Bangla's amended taxes account was published where Udaipur was added. It signifies that Kalyan Manikya accepted the slavery of Mughal at the last amount.

It will not be wide of the mark to mention in this connection that it was during the rule of the unfortunate king Dharma Manikya II, the Muslims could establish their sway over the plains of Tripura changing its name to Chakla Rosonabad (the land of light). Since then the Tripura rulers were included in the list Zamindari right over Rosonabad in exchange of yearly revenue. Tripura remained subject to the Muslim yoke and its king was made and unmade at the pleasure of the Muslim rulers, till it came under the British paramountcy.

The Mughals conquered Cachar (neighbouring kingdom of Tripura) in 1612 under general Islam Khan after the conquest of Sylhet. The Mughal governor of Kamrup (now in Assam) named Sayid Mir Sufi had a peace-treaty with Manipuri king Khegamba in 1614 AD. Following this understanding, a road to Makak (Mughal Northeast India, probably Cachar or Sylhet) was opened in 1617 following which some Meiteis went to Makak. Indeed in 1614, a Mughal named Tanbir (Tonba) arrived in Manipur from Makak. But the Makak clan ancestors are traced to Mughal princes Shah Shuja (b. 1616- 1695 AD) and Mirza Baisanghar (b. 1605- d. 1691) who reached Manipur in December 1661 and 1669 respectively. In the year, three Muslims namely Mushra Kalimullah, wife Bibi Fatima and Isa Kramullah arrived in Manipur via Tripura in 1653 AD.

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan fell sick on 6 September 1657. His four sons Dara Sikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad were ready for the wars of succession. Shah Shuja was at that time the Governor (Subahdar) of Bengal. "Meanwhile Shuja also made himself the Emperor in late November 1657 at Rajmahal and assumed the pompous title of Abul Fauz Nasiruddin Muhammad, Timur II, Alexander III, and Shah Shuja Bahadur Ghazi." But after series of battles, Shah Shuja was ultimately defeated by the armies of Aurangzeb. "On 6th April 1660, Shuja fled from Chauki-Mirdapur to Tanda and thence to Dacca on 19th April. ...Shuja had to leave Dacca on 6th May for Arakan (via Tripura) and Mir Jumla (Mughal commander and new Viceroy of Bengal) entered Dacca on 9th May 1660."

After the demise of Kalyan Manikya his eldest son Govinda Manikya ascended the throne of Tripura in A.D. 1660 under the title of Govinda Manikya. This is not only known from the Rajmala, the state Chronicle of Tripura, but also from his bearing the date Saka 1512 (=A.D. 1660). Shah Shuja was given shelter by Tripura king Govinda Manikya in May 1660 but Aurangzeb came to learn of it who wrote a stern letter on the matter. Govinda Manikya (ruling 1660-61) did not reply and it probably cost his throne, while Shuja with his family fled to reach Arakan on 26 August 1660. Mughals enthroned Chhatra Manikya (ruling 1661-66) in Tripura while Govinda Manikya too fled to Arakan where he again met Shuja. On the breach of trust by Arakan king Sanda Sudama, Shuja fled back to Tripura whose king quickly dispatched Shuja to Manipur by supplying an elephants 1661, so that it might not antagonize the military force of Aurangzeb led by Mir Jumla. The Mughals lately came to know of the situation but Shuja was already gone. The Mughal prince Shankusum (Shah Shuja) reached Manipur in December 1661 according to Cheitharol Kumbaba. The Mughals sent a three men embassy to Manipur in late December 1661, this time to retrieve the aggrieved family of Shuja. At that time Shuja was taking shelter in at Haignang of Kairang (east of Imphal), now known as Shuja-lok (Shuja cave). In the meantime in Tripura, Chhatra Manikya was too dethroned and Govinda Manikya came back from Arakan to claim the throne and ruled Tripura again from 1667 to 1675. The Manipur king Khunjaoba sent back a three man embassy to the court of the Mughal emperor

Aurangzeb in 1662 while a Mughal ambassador named Nur Beg was held back in Manipur by the Qazi of Manipur named Muhammad Sani so that the retreating two Mughal messengers named Dur Beg and Rustam Beg should not tell about Shuja's existence in Manipur. Yet, Shuja was sent up to Ukhrul hill with some Muslims (already settled in Manipur) as precautionary measure from Mughal informers. Thus Tripura and Manipur kings played crucial roles in saving the life of Shah Shuja probably because they did not like the Mughal expansionist policy of Aurangzeb.

Prince Shah Shuja had a wife named Praveen Banu (Piara Banu, Pai Ribanu), a sister namely Sabe Banu, three sons- Zainibuddin (Bon Sultan or Sultan Bang), Buland Akhtar and Zainul Abedin, three daughters- Gulrukh Banu, Roshanara Begum and Amina Begum. Shah Shuja lost the war of succession, and bid Hindustan farewell on 6 June 1660 and fled to Arakan via Tripura-Chittagong.

The final day on sea route took Shuja to Arakan where he was received by an envoy of Arakan king Sanda Sudamma and escorted to a separate quarter for the Mughal prince. Niccolai Manucci wrote: "The date of flight (of Shuja from Dacca) was June 5, 1660 and arrived in Arakan on August 26, 1660." Harvey noted that Shuja came to Arakan as Sudamma promised to provide him some of his famous ships to take him to Mecca for pilgrimage. He broke the promise. When Shuja arrived in Arakan with half a dozen camel loads of gold and jewelry, the temptation was too great for the Arakan king. Princess Gulrukh Banu fell victim to Sudamma and she promptly died in suicide, while Sultan Bang and another brother died fighting. They ran amok, nearly succeeded in firing the royal palace of Sudamma in December 1660, while many Mughals were massacred. Arakan king mother was against the killing of Shuja, being a guest in the first instant. The Portuguese who were famous there as pirates, did save Shuja while robbed him of gold and jewels. The surviving Mughals with Shuja escaped back to Tripura on 16 May 1661 with much difficulty and arrived in Manipur in December 1661. While Aurangzeb's reconnaissance men were on the hunt for Shuja and for every bit of news. Conscious of this, Shuja's men spread false news that Shuja died fighting in Arakan, while others rumoured he shipped to Mecca. There were a thousand different tales about Shuja's fate and nothing could be conclusive. After all this trauma and travesty, Shuja helped by Mughals and Pathans of Arakan.

When Govinda Manikya ascended the throne, his step-brother Nakshatra Ray tried to oust him with the help of Bengal Subadar Shah Suja (A.D. 1639-59). He was dethroned. Throne less King Govinda Manikya was living at hilly province of the eastern side of Chattogram. Suja reached from Rangamati to the residence of Govinda Manikya as hilly province. Govinda Manikya accepted Suja with great respect and assured to help him. At the time of departure Suja gave a valuable 'sword' and a diamond ring to Govinda Manikya. Unfortunately Suja reached to the residence of king of Arakan. The king was pleased to see Suja's daughter and sent a proposal. But Suja refused this proposal. However, the king, fact fully, finished Suja and his family. On the death of Chattra Manikya Govinda Manikya regained the Gadi and during his second reign of three years had the wash lands of Pargana Maherkul in Chakla Rosonabad brought under cultivation. On the death of Govinda Manikya his son Ramdeva took the royalty assuming the title Manikya.

Sahajan's sons started quarrel to acquire the major throne during his life time. His second son sultan Suja was appointed as the ruler of Bangle. Aurangajeb defeated all his brothers and with his notorious senapati Mir Jumla, he defeated Suja. Suja fled from there towards Tripura. According to Muslim historians, sultan Suja reached to Arakan getting across the river Brahmaputra and then in the Rangamatia will hearing the news Aurangajeb wrote to the king of Tripura, Tripureshar, like a friend, will behave like enemy and kindly if he sent Suja to my residence, I would be very happy. But sultan had reached Arakan before the letter reached to Tripura.

During his rule Ram-Manikya is said to have led a predatory expedition upto the city of Sylhet (Bangladesh). But his younger brother Dvarika made a conspiracy with Nachir-Muhammad, the Dewan of Sarail and dethroned the ruling king. But all his efforts were in vain the deposed Tripura king clandestinely sent a letter to the Nawab of Bengal stating his misfortune and seeking his help. The letter called Rama Manikya to his court and after listening the whole story helped him to get back the throne. though the Rajmala does not record the name of the benefactor of Rama Manikya, he may be reasonably identified with Shayista Khan who assumed the office of the Subadar of Bengal in A.D. 1664 and ruled for about a period of 22 years altogether.

As Ratna Manikya II, son of Rama Manikya, was minor, his maternal uncle Balibhima Narayana became the de facto ruler. However, Balibhima Narayana soon fell in the disfavour of Shayesta Khan, the then subadar of Bengal, perpetrating oppressions on the people and as a result of the expedition sent by the latter Balibhima Narayana was defeated and imprisoned by the Muslim army.

In exchange of Shayista Khan during his Tripura campaign, Narendra, the cousin of Ratna Manikya, was placed on the Tripura throne by the former and Ratna Manikya along with his three sons was captured. Narendra Manikya wanted to capture Champaka Ray who held the post of Dewan at that time.

But Champaka Ray fled to Chittagong and thereafter to Dhaka. He along with Duryadhana, the younger brother of Ratna Manikya, and Mir Khan, an army general of Tripura influenced Nawab Shayista Khan who gave them military aid. They invaded Tripura with a huge force and the sanguinary battle of Chandigada Narendra Manikya was routed.

It is known from Tripura Buranji that there was an exchange of messengers between the courts of Assam and Tripura during the reign of Ratna Manikya.

Maharaj Ratna Manikya was ruling Tripura freely. Ratna Manikya fell on a victim to a sordid conspiracy hatched by his brother Ghanashyama which brought about a violent end to his life as well as his rule. Ganashyama with the help of Murad Beg, who was an influential employee under the king, grabbed the throne. It is also learnt that Murad Beg was sent to Dhaka where he recruited some itinerant forces and secured the help of Muhammad Safi, a local high ranking officer under Mir Murad, in favour of Ghanashyamdeva Badthakur.

Major Stuart wrote in his 'History of Bengal' though Tripura was plundered and defeated several times by the Muslim hand power, but in reality his freedom was not abolished in 1707 - 08 A.D. Hearing Nawab Murshid Kuli Khans's glorious story, Ratna Manikya gifted him elephant and teeth of elephant.

Mahendra Manikya was succeeded by his brother Durjayas Sinha under the name, Dharma Manikya. After few times nawab of Bengal defeated him and appointed Mughal zaminder capturing the plain land. He was a contemporary of Murshid Quli Khan (A.D. 1717-27). In 1722 A.D. Nawab Murshid Kuli Kha prepared a calculating of taxes "Jama Kamel tumor". But it had no relation with the places captured by the Tripura king. Actually after its ten years Tripura's plain land was included in Mughal's taxes calculation. He stopped paying taxes in the form of elephant which Govinda Manikya promised to send as tribute to the Mughal (supra, p. 108). As a result, Suja Ud Din, the Nawab of Bengal, was infuriated and taking advantage of this situation dispatched a strong military expedition against Tripura. The Tripura troops under the leadership of Ranabhima Narayana gave a heroic fight forcing the Mughal army to retreat with discomfiture. Jagatram alias Jagat Ray, a descendant of Chatra Manikya (A.D. 1661), wanted to oust Dharma Manikya from power. Though at the initial stages he was successful, he had to embrace defeat in the long run. Being expelled from the kingdom, he took shelter in the court of Aka Sadik, a zamindar of Patpasar Pargana, with whose help he wishes to recover the share of his inheritance. Aka Sadik being intimately acquainted with Mir Habib, an officer of the Naib Nazim at Dhaka, not only recommended the case of Jagatram to him but also pointed out the golden opportunity of establishing supremacy of the Mughals over Tripura. The Mughal troop entered into Tripura crossing the Brahmaputra River under the guidance of Jagatram. Dharma Manikya, though successful in some skirmishes, was eventually defeated and saved him by taking shelter in the contiguous forest, as the Rajmala wants us to believe. The Muslim soldiers inhumanly plundered Udaipur and took enormous wealth including the majestic Tripura elephants. After this fierce engagement the whole of the Tripura kingdom barring the hill sector was annexed to the Mughal Empire. A large number of Muslim troops were stationed here and Aka Sadik was appointed its Fauzder. The name of the tract was changed to Rosonabad (the land of light). Jagatram was placed on the throne on condition of paying a large portion of revenue to the Governor of Bengal.

Gaining the favour and support of Jagat Shet (Fateh Chand) Dharma Manikya found the splendid opportunity to make the Nawab of Bengal realize his legitimate claim over the royal throne. Being pleased with the deposed king the Nawab of Bengal (Suja Uddin) installed him on the throne in place of Jagat Manikya. In this way the rule of Jagat Manikya came to an end. Dharma Manikya was favoured with the zamindary right of Chakla Rosonabad by promising to pay an annual tribute of 5000 rupees. Since then the Tripura king was included in the list of zaminders under the Nawab of Bengal and the plain portions of Tripura was included in the Mughal Empire.

In 1732 A.D. Jagatram Thakur, grandson of Maharaja Chattra Manikya, with the help of Aka Sadek, Jaminder of Baldakhal, met with Mir Habib, famous Dewan of Dhaka. Thinking proper opportunity to attack Tripura, Mir Habib took the consent of Bangla's Nawab Motimanul Muluk, Suja Uddin Mohammad Kha suja Uddollah, Asad Jung Bahadur (Suja Uddin) and reached Tripura with soldiers with the help of Jagatram Thakur. Maharaj Dharma Manikya was defeated with Mir Habib and took shelter in the hill. Mir Habib declared Jagatram Thakur as the King of Tripura. Actually only plain land was occupied by Jagat Manikya. Nawab Suja Uddin gave the title 'Chakla Rosonabad' to the plain land of Tripura and imposing taxes Rs. 92993 per year gave to Jagat Manikya. A group of Mughal soldier was appointed in Comilla to protect Jagat Manikya. In 1886 British Govt. declared 'Hilly Tripura' as "Free Tripura".

Contemporary Manipur king Gareeb Niwaz (A.D. 1714-50) invaded Tripura in A.D. 1727 with a view to avenging the Tripura invasion noted above. In the war that followed Gareeb Niwaz defeated the Tripura king and brought a large number of persons for settling them in his realm. The conquest of Tripura by the Manipur King seems to be also confirmed by the fact that Gareeb Niwaz assumed the proud title Takhelnaba (the victor of Tripura) and by the testimony of the book Takhel Nganba (the conquest of

Tripura) written in connection with this glorious victory.

After Dharma Manikya, his brother Mukonda Manikya ascended the throne of Tripura. This time a Muslim Hazi named Munsum was appointed as a commandant. Tradition has it that during the rule of the reigning king Rudramani Thakur, a powerful young man and a descendant of Jagannatha wanted to oppose the Mughals by organizing a national Militia. In support of this it was pointed out that Rudramani, the Tripura general, who was sent to Matia hills for capturing elephants by the king organized a strong force with the aid of tribal chiefs, one of whom Buchar Narayana. He wrote to the king that the people of Tripura no longer wanted to maintain any relation with the Muslims. He also added that they might kill the Muslim Faujdar at Udaipur (Haji Munsam) and his men if and only the king would approve the proposal. But the king disfavoured the proposal as he was afraid of the Mughals. Moreover, he informed Haji Munsam, the Muslim Faujdar, of the conspiracy made by Rudramani. Although the Muhammedans highly acclaimed Mukunda Manikya's activity, they also doubted him and eventually captured the king along with his sons and his nephew.

On hearing the above noted Muslim onslaught Rudramani and his army made a sudden attack on the capital and failing to stem this heroic raid the Muslims in no time left the capital coming to terms. Rudramani (Jay Manikya) could not retain his hold over the throne due to a conspiratorial caucus which formed against him at the court of Murshidabad. It is known from a certain credible source that Panchkadi, the son of Mukunda Manikya who felt a grudge against Jay Manikya, approached Alivardi Khan (A.D. 1740-50), the Nawab of Bengal, for material help and succeeded in securing it. With the help of Muslim army which was obtained in lieu of Tripura elephants and other provisions, Panchkadi made a formidable raid on Udaipur, the then capital of Tripura and after routing Jay Manikya seized the throne of Tripura.

According to the Rajmala Vijay Manikya was appointed king by the Nawab of Bengal, Alivardi Khan (A.D. 1740-56) with a monthly salary of Rs.12000 on the condition of sending all the revenue to Murshidabad. He also promised to supply majestically elephants.

While Bijoy Manikya was ruling in Tripura a new figure appeared on the political stage. The internal feuds and the greed and weakness of some of the worthless kings of Tripura which had sapped the vitality of the Manikya realm, encouraged the Zamindars of the plain segment, of Tripura to raise their asorant heads. Samsher Gaji of Mehar was one such impetuous Zamindar who was above the others in respect of power and ability. The life and times of Samsher Gaji are known from Gajinama by one Manohar Seikh.

It is learnt from this work that samsher started his career as a Tahashildar under Nachir Muhammad, a zamindar of dakshinpara when Bijay Manikya II was the reigning king of Tripura. Attracted by his uncommon intellect and power, Nachir Muhammad appointed him Tahashildar of Baspada manor. Samsher became desirous of earning name and fame. With this end in view he wanted to marry Dayabibi, a daughter of Nachir Muhammad and sent to him a proposal to that effect. To Nachir this Tanta mounted to haughtiness of an over employee and for teaching him a lesson he sent an army against him. Samsher was not at all prepared for this sudden attack and so he fled to Bedarabad Pargana (Bangladesh) embracing an ignominious defeat. But he was not a man to pocket this insult. He soon organized a band of soldiers by collecting some people of that locality and dispatched it for raiding Dakshinik. The army of Nachir met with a terrible disaster sustaining a heavy loss in men and money and he himself was killed along with his sons. Thus Samsher succeeded in establishing his supremacy over Dakshinik and satisfied his desire of marrying Dayabibi.

The occupation of Dakshinik by Samsher was regarded as ominous by the king of Tripura who sent a mighty army against him without delay. Samsher submitted to Vijay Manikya from whom he received the zamindari sanad in lieu of a large amount of money as tribute.

Samsher Gaji next turned his attention towards Chakla Rosonabad with the aim of establishing his sway over it. The contemporary situation was in his favour. Vijaya Manikya who was appointed king of Tripura by the Nawab of Bengal on condition of supplying much desired elephants of Tripura (supra,p.221) failed to keep his promise. Taking advantage of this situation Samsher Gaji proposed to the Nawab Alivardi Khan that he would send the requisite animals provided the rulership of Chakla Rosonabad is given to him. The Nawab of Bengal readily accepted it and Vijay Manikya was summoned to Dhaka to have a discussion on this point. Accordingly Vijay Manikya went to Dhaka, but he shortly died there in confinement. Krishnamani (the heir apparent) who took shelter in the Hedamva Kingdom (present Cachar) now set out for Udaipur and proclaimed himself king of Tripura. Since Samsher was not of royal blood, the people refused to obey him. Samsher is said to have governed Tripura for three years in the name of Lakshana Manikya who was eventually dethroned by the Muslim upstart.

Samsher's oppressive and impudent activities gradually threw the people of Tripura to the camp of Krishnamani. The latter approached Mir Quasim, the contemporary Nawab of Murshidabad (A.D. 1760-63) and related to him the tales of samsher's oppression which had already reached Mir Quasim and

also convinced the Nawab regarding his legitimate claim over the throne. Mir Quasim immediately declared Krishnamani the king of Tripura and directed his army to capture Samsheer who was eventually sent to Murshidabad. The unspeakable atrocities that he actually did on the people thus brought about his ruin and we are told that he was put to death by being blown from the mouth of gun.

Samsheer proved himself an able administrator. He split up the plain portion of Tripura into some parganas which he placed under worthy officers. He appointed both the Hindus and the Muslims to the high ranking posts though the Muslims outnumbered officers. Of these Hindu officers, Gangagovinda and Harihar deserve special mention. Gangagovinda graced the post of Chief Dewan and Harihar had the good fortune to assume the high office of Naib dewan by dint of their merits and capabilities. The next important measure deserving notice in this connection is that he introduced the system of weights and measure. Apart from excavating large tanks he is said to have granted freehold lands in the territory of Chakla Rosonabad among the Muslims as well as the Hindus.

In view of what has been said above it is explicit that the occupant of the throne of Tripura was changed several times, but the influence of the Nawab of Bengal seems to have always been paramount. Tripura remained subject to the Muslim yoke, its king being made and unmade at the pleasure of the Muslim rulers of Bengal and hence it may be said that Tripura was virtually a Muslim province during the period under review.

Large-scale demographic movement continues to take place in the NE, resulting in demographic imbalance in states. In the state of Tripura imbalance has resulted in “demographic inversion”. After the partition, till 1971, there was a massive population influx caused by political, communal and economic reasons, which created serious ethnicity problems in these states. At the time of partition, in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) the Hindu population was 25.6 percent. It got reduced to 14 percent in 1991 and today it has come down to abysmal 7 percent.

Earlier the minority community were literally forced out of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), primarily due to religious reasons and now mass exodus is taking place due to 'economic reasons' by both the communities. Flow of illegal migrants though in small measure continues post 1971 and the progressive cumulative effect is acquiring alarming dimensions. However, when secular democracy was replaced by autocracy following the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, hard-core Islamic Fundamentalists were encouraged to infiltrate into North-eastern states to carry out anti national activities and destabilise the democratic system. The bulk of these migrants initially egresses into states bordering Bangladesh. In addition a large number have infiltrated into almost all parts of India including Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow and other cities for greener pastures creating economic and law and order problems. Vote bank politics as usual supersedes national interests. Assam, Tripura, North Bengal and Meghalaya face maximum threat to the security in this region due to illegal migration. Gradually, this malaise is spreading to other states like Sikkim, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland.

The unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh/East Pakistan has been continuing after Independence. In 1970, the population of East Pakistan was 7.5 crores but in 1974 it had come down to 7.14 crores. On the basis of 3.1 percent annual growth, the population should have gone up to 7.7 crores. The shortfall of 60 lakhs people can be explained only by large-scale migration. In other states there has been demographic invasion leading to demographic imbalance, whereas Tripura had to witness demographic inversion. From 1951, the others' population is growing in leaps and bounds defying the natural growth rate. At present a Mobile Task Force (MTF) is responsible to identify and deport the illegal immigrants from Tripura. From 1974 till mid 2006 the Task Force has deported approximately 1,78,000 illegal immigrants to Bangladesh. It is just a drop in the ocean.

The process of demographic transformation started over a century back described above. Initially it was a trickle when the Tripura kings invited the Bengalis for economic reasons and post 1947, it turned into a flood. The kings of Tripura welcomed the Bengalis to settle in the kingdom. “In fact, the peasants from the Bengal were brought by the Maharajah to develop settled cultivation.” From those early days, Bengalis of various walks of life made Tripura their home as administrators. The poverty of peasantry and famines in Bengal (1865-1943) “opened further floodgates of immigration”. Till 1947, mostly the Muslim peasants migrated to Tripura, though in 1946 many Hindus too flocked in because of the communal riots in Mymensingh.

Thus the state has undergone significant socio-cultural change in the last four decades. Besides located adjacent to the densely populated plains of Bangladesh, Tripura has attracted a continuous flow of immigrants. This process reduced the original inhabitants to a status of linguistic minority. The peasant hungry state Tripura needed peasants who would introduce settled cultivation in Tripura to raise the volume of revenues for the rulers. The Tripura rulers looked towards the Bengali peasants, mostly Muslims or neighbouring Bengal who had been evicted from land owing to the implementation of the permanent settlement of 1793 in Bengal, high rent level and the low landsman ratio and land hunger, and would be

attracted by the Tripura rulers, very liberal land grant policy and low level of rent. The Tripura rulers small zamindary called Chaklarosanabad in undivided neighbouring Bengal, mostly inhabited by Bengal Muslims and run officially by Bengali Hindu officials helped them in both. Tripura is the only state in India where successive migrants have reduced its original residents to a minority in their own land.

Thus the above discussion clarifies that the Muslims are the old dweller of this state and their history shows ups and down of their position in Tripura. The decline of population in 1961 -1971 was the result of 'push -back' operation policy of the government. Muslims became backward in different fields of the society. Their socio-economic condition became pathetic and their position became below the lower castes.

³Gustave le Beon : Les Civilizations de L'Inde, Book III, p.146

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⁸A. Hakim Shah Khullakpam, 2008, The Manipur Governance to Meitei Pangal, Imphal: Pearl (names are given in distorted forms as Sadik, Pala Koirang, Kutuwan etc); Dr Ko Ko Gyi's Blog, Autobiography of Dr Abdul Rahman Zafrudin, accessed on 10 Nov.2010.

⁹Farooque Ahmed, Silk Trade and Manipuri Muslims, in South Asia Politics, April 2009, New Delhi.

¹⁰B.K.,Roy Barman Demographic and socio-economic profile of the Hill areas of North East India,(compiled from the Census of India, 1961) p.208

¹¹Nalini Ranjan Roy Choudhury, 'The Historical Past' in Gan- Choudhuri, Jagdish(ed),'Tripura the land and it's people', Delhi, Leeladevi Publications. 1980, pp. 13-18

¹²Colved Prakash, 'Encyclopedia of North East India', Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, vol.I., p.44

¹³Singha,op cit,p.38

¹⁴Ibid, p.41

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¹⁶S. A. Rahaman ,The beautiful India: Tripura, ,Reference Press, New Delhi, p.34-35.

¹⁷Omesh Saigal,Tripura, p.29

¹⁸Rahaman, op.cit.p.36

¹⁹Ibid,p.45

²⁰Rahaman,op.cit,pp.37-38

²¹Singha, op.cit,p.43

²²Singha, op.cit.,pp.46-47

²³Ibid,p.47

²⁴Ibid,p.48

²⁵Rahaman,op.cit,p.39

²⁶Singha, op.cit.,p.49

²⁷Rahaman, op. cit,p.41

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²⁹Ibid,p.57

³⁰Rahaman,op.cit,p.43

³¹Singha, op.cit.,pp.58-59

³²Ranimohan Sharma, "Political History of Tripura",p.214

³³Ibid,p.216

³⁴Ibid,p.216

³⁵Rahaman,op.cit.,p.45

³⁶Singha,op.cit.,p.61

³⁷Ibid,p.61

³⁸Sarma,op.cit.,p.109

³⁹R.P. Tripathi, The Rise and Fall of Mughal Empire.

⁴⁰Cheitharol Kumbaba, notes about the Manipur and Mughals led by Sayyidi treaty in 1614.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Nongchupharam (ms.)

⁴³John Peter Wade, 1800/1927 ed. by Benudhar Sharma, An Account of Assam, Sibsagar, p. 297

- ⁴⁴P. Sensarma, The Military History of Bengal, Calcutta.
- ⁴⁵Ibid
- ⁴⁶Panerasa birasi saketa raja haila, RM, p.78;SRM, IV, I, p.6
- ⁴⁷A small silver coin of the collection of the Indian Museum wrongly attributed to Vishnu Chittadeva of the Kadamba dynasty of Goa (Smiti, CCIM, J, p.314, pl.XXX.No.6) has now been correctly attributed to Govinda Manikya.
- ⁴⁸N.R. Roychoudhury,1983, Tripura Trough The Ages, pp. 28, 29 ft. 1 (quoting the original letter in Deb Barma Samarendra Chandra, 1927, Tripurar Smriti, pp. 209–10); S.C. Dutta, 1984, The North East and the Mughals, Calcutta, p.41
- ⁴⁹Ibid , p. 29:(According to traditions in Tripura, Govinda Manikya after losing throne to Nakshatra Roy, fled to Arakan where he met Shah Shuja whom he presented a precious sword and a diamond, and thus friendship was established. It must be in around 1660 that Shuja made way for Tripura).
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- ⁵¹A. Hakim Shah, 2008, The Manipur Governance.
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- ⁵⁵Names of Mughal ambassadors can be known from P. Gogoi, 1961, The Tai and Tai Kingdoms who gave Dur Beg and Rustam; Kheiruddin Khullakpam, 1997, Turko-Afghangi Chada Naoda, Lilong: Circles, gives the Boggy clan ancestor as Noor Bakhsh that must be Noor Beg.
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- ⁵⁷Suhas Chatterjee, 2008, The Socio-Economic History of South Assam.
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- ⁶⁵SRM, I, IV, p.6;TI. P.84.
- ⁶⁶Singha,op. cit.,p.67
- ⁶⁷Ibid, p.65
- ⁶⁸E. F. Sandays, History of Tripura, p.20
- ⁶⁹Sharma,op.cit.,p.114
- ⁷⁰R.M. P.81
- ⁷¹HMB,p.97.
- ⁷²Kailash Chandra Sinha informs that since Ratna Manikya and his brothers Duryadeva and Chandramani were minor, Balibhima Narayan, Champaka Ray and Gauricharan governed the kingdom dividing it into three parts. They became the rulers of these divisions. Nurnagar and its adjacent places were placed under Champak Ray, TI, and p.97.
- ⁷³SRM, I, IV, P.20;JASB,XIX,1850,P.553; EBDG, DACCA,V,1912,P.13
- ⁷⁴HMB,P.166
- ⁷⁵RM, P.83
- ⁷⁶S.K. Bhuyan (ed) Tripura Buranji, 1938, pp.XII-XVI.
- ⁷⁷Sharma,op.cit.,p.118
- ⁷⁸SRM, I, IV, p.23
- ⁷⁹TDK,p.IX
- ⁸⁰RM, p.84
- ⁸¹Singha, op.cit.,p.72
- ⁸²RM, p.86
- ⁸³RM,p.86
- ⁸⁴Sarkar, J. N. (ed) HB,II, p.426.
- ⁸⁵Stewart, HB, p.485
- ⁸⁶RM, p.861, HMB, p.166
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- ⁸⁸Kailash Chandra Sinha, , Tripura Itibritta, p.105; HB,II, p. 426
- ⁸⁹Sharma, op.cit., p.123

- ⁹⁰SRM,I, IV, p.30;JASB;XIX, 1850, p.554;Hunter,SAB, VI, 1876, p.466
- ⁹¹SRM, I, IV, p.30;JASB,XIX 1850,p.554.
- ⁹²Sterart held that the province of Tripura which from time immemorial had been an independent kingdom became annexed to the Mughal empire. HB,p.485
- ⁹³Singha, op.cit.,p.73
- ⁹⁴Ibid p.74
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- ⁹⁹Sinha, op. cit., p. 113
- ¹⁰⁰SRM, I, IV, p.44;JASB,XIX, 1850,p.555
- ¹⁰¹This book is still unpublished.
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