

# CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF MANIKYA DYNASTY IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF MODERN TRIPURA – A PRECISE OVERVIEW

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## Abstract

Tripura, also known as Tripura Hills, is a small state in the North-east zone of India. There is 19 Tribal communities along with Bengali people. The state has a feudal structure. The feudal privileges of the state have a great impact on the people of Tripura. The king and his family and his high-level officials live in the cities and plains, while the majority of the tribe live in the hilly interior villages. The tribal system of Tripura is mostly patriarchal, where the family is dominated by the father. However, in the case of the Garo and Khasi tribes, the family structure is Matrilineal, and the family is the basic unit of the tribe. Raja Ram Mohan Roy & Lord William Bentick brought an end to the cruel caste system of 'Sati' in India in 1829. In AD 1829, The two Assamese Emissaries, Ratna Kandali (later known as 'Ratna Manikya' and Arjun Das 'Bairagi Katakai', wrote that Ratna. This is why 'Sati System' (burning alive Hindus' widows in hills Tripura) was prohibited and made a criminal act in AD 1889 after Mr D.R. Lyall's request. Bir also put an end to Tripura's slavery system in AD1877. Most of the tribal population was agrarian, and they used a system called 'Jhum cultivation'. The tribals of Jhum cultivation in hills Tripura were said to be self-sufficient economically, growing all they needed for their own Jhum. Jhum cultivation was mainly used for personal consumption and exchange purposes.

**Keywords:** Manikya Dynasty, Jhum Cultivation, Socio Economic Status, Tripura, Tribal Community.

**Literature Type:** A Precise Overview.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic status plays a major role in every individual's life. If we look at the socio-economic situation of tribes, their socio-economic condition is negligible. Therefore, priority should be given to improving their socio-economic situation to facilitate their overall development. Academic success depends on socio-economic status, which determines the level of achievement. It is believed that students from needy families cannot pay for their education. The standard of living as well as the opportunities and privileges that members of that society enjoy are referred to as socioeconomic status. A person's socioeconomic status can accurately and consistently predict many different aspects of life, including their physical and mental well-being. Northeastern India contains the small, hilly state of Tripura. Prior to the state's union with India, the Maharajas of Tripura ruled over this princely state. The kingdom's Maharajas have put in a lot of effort to ensure the welfare of the populace. According to the 2011 census report, the population of Tripura increased from 31.99 lakhs in the 2001 census to 36.71 lakhs. Historically, the economy of the tribal peoples of Tripura has been based on subsistence agriculture and jhum cultivation. However, after the tribal people started treating land as an ordinary resource, it became extremely rare for them to have land titles. As a result, most of them lost their land to foreigners when the misuse of forest wealth came to light. This has left most of them as small and unimportant landholders. This may be one of the reasons for their economic backwardness which has rendered them poor and very illiterate in this era. The emerging major issues in tribal areas are water scarcity, quality education and school infrastructure. The 2011 census report reveals the social and economic situation of tribals in Tripura. 5.66 of them are cultivators; 26.44 of them are agricultural labourers; 19.71 of them are household workers; 23.62 of them are other workers in Tripura. If we look at the education level, it also shows a low 79.1, whereas the overall state literacy rate according to the 2011 census was 87.2. However, in comparison to the overall tribal literacy rate in Tripura, the education

of tribals is somehow good. There are three levels of school education in Tripura. The tribal stage of Tripura has a high dropout rate. According to the 2011 census, Tripura's tribal stage of education has a dropout rate of 70.9. This is quite high compared to the national rate.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE OVERVIEW

- A. Assessment of Socio-economic condition of Tripura under Manikya Rule.
- B. Identification of the reasons in developing their Socio-economic position.
- C. Examining the issues and obstacles in development of socio-economic condition of Tripura.
- D. Analysing the educational background and economic background of people of Tripura.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data used for the purpose of analysis have been derived from secondary sources. Social and economic status is a combination of two terms. The term social status refers to an individual's position, prestige, and social influence within a social structure. It also increases an individual's access to information. Tripura is a small state in the Northeast region of India. It used to be a princely state. In 1949, the state was united with the Union government. In 1972, Tripura was declared a fully-fledged state. There are two ethnic communities in Tripura, Bengali and Non-Bengali. The indigenous community accounts for 31% of the total population in Tripura. Two more groups have recently been added to the population of Tripura. Kokborok is the most widely spoken language among the tribals. Tripura is connected to Assam and the international border with Bangladesh and is dominated by the Bengali community. During the princely era, Tripura's tribes were the majority in the state, but today, Bengali dominate the administration system and from minister to minister in the state. Tripura has a rich and diverse culture, with the Reang tribe, Tripuri tribe, Mog tribe, Chakma tribe, Halam tribe, Uchoi tribe, etc. being prominent. Tripura is divided into two parts: hill and plain, with the northern and southern parts of the state being hill areas. The tribes living in rural areas, especially those involved in jhum cultivation, used to stay in 'tong' houses made by bamboo. Music and dance form an integral part of the state. The famous singer Sachindra Devvarman and the soil son Rahul Devvarman belong to the royal family of Tripura. Tripura's tribes have a rich culture, with Hojagiri and Mamita being the most popular dances. These dances sometimes represent the emotions of the people in the state. Tripura is famous for its beautiful handicrafts products which are made from simple materials like bamboo, cane, plain yarn and palm leaves. Tripura was a princely state and considered one of the oldest independent states of India. The last King of Tripura kingdom, Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya, wanted or proposed the Indian Union government for the merger. As many independent states started accepting democracy and joined the Indian union, the death of the Maharajah upset the entire region. On the 15 October 1949, the Tripura merger agreement was signed with the Indian union government. Tripura has a total population of 36,71,032 as per the 2011 census report. The tribal population of Tripura accounts for 31.1% of the total population. There are 19 notified scheduled tribes in Tripura. Most of the tribal people in Tripura live with their own culture and history. One of the popular languages spoken in Tripura is Kokborok, which is the second language of the government of Tripura. Tribal groups in Tripura are: Mongoloid, Austro-Asian, Proto-Austroloid, Tripuri, Halam, Reang, Jamatia, Mog, Chakma, Lushai, Lepcha, Bhutia, Kuki.

The modern era in Tripura dates back to the time of King Bir Chandra. Bir Chandra is known as the founder of education. He was the first to believe that the people of Tripura should be educated. According to the Bengal administrative report of 1874 to 1875, there were only 2 schools in Agartala, which provided education to 103 students. However, financial services for education were not provided at the right time. During the reign of Maharajah Radha Kishore, he took initiative to provide education free of charge. King Radha was his son. Unfortunately, at that time, the uncertainty caused by the earthquake brought about economic change in the region as it damaged various properties in Tripura. After the reign of King Bir Chandra, the successor of Tripura in education is his son, King Radha Krishna Manikya. His Endeavour endeavour to build the educational institutes in Tripura changed the literacy level in the state of Tripura immediately from 1901 to 1921. The literacy level in Tripura from 2.5 % in 1901 to 1921 was 8.2 % after 20 years. The literacy rate of men and women also increased. In 1901, the male literacy rate is 4.5 % and in 1921, it is 14.3 % and in the same year, it is 1.15 %. Therefore, we can say that the educational system in Tripura has been very progressive within the hegemony of king Radha Kishore Manikya. Between the year 1931 and the year 1941, the regime of king Bir Bikram Manikya was known as the modern educator and architect of Tripura.



#### IV. CAUSES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBES DURING MANIKYA DYNASTY

Due to the fact that Tripura is one of the agrarian states, it is evident that agriculture plays a crucial role in Tripura's economy and in the development of Tripura's economy. As a result, the maximum number of people in Tripura are involved in agricultural activities and grow different crops; depending on these activities, the families run. However, the situation is slightly different in the case of tribe; the tribe of Tripura chose jhum cultivation for their livelihood, although now the maximum number of tribal are getting involved in the production of agricultural products. The tribe of Tripura, who are the first inhabitants of Tripura, practiced jhum cultivation from the time they migrated to Tripura. As for the cultivation of jhum, the cultivators have to change the place of production every year. However, it can be said that the basic requirements of tribal life were satisfied by producing surplus. The main output of jhum cultivation, or agricultural work, was rice, but there were many other products like corn, millet, and various vegetables produced according to the season. The non-tribal peoples produced various products, such as cotton, silk, ornaments of gold, silver, and ivory, brass and bells made from wood and bamboo. These activities improved the economy and commerce of Tripura. Cachar and Manipur were trading corridors for both the agricultural and the products produced from different industries. As mentioned earlier, in the later stage of the pre-colonial period, economic changes took place in Tripura, as the economy of the state declined, resulting in a lack of diversification in productive activities. From this period, the cultivation process brought about changes in Tripura's economy. Today, the state is shifting towards agricultural production through the cultivation of jhum cultivation and various other wood and bamboo-based products. The pattern of productive activity remains the same during the colonial period in the hilly regions of the state. During the Kingdom of Tripura, the king administration collected revenue from various sources of the peoples of Tripura, such as land, household income, forest income, manufacturing products, and import and export commodities. Later, the King of Tripura established the zamindar of Chakla Roshanabad to collect revenue instead of the pre-fixed amount of revenue which was collected by the rulers of Bengal during the late pre-colonization and the Early colonial period. The King of Tripura took no steps to reform revenue administration of Tripura during this period. The revenue collection system of the Kingdom of Tripura was ijarari or farming. However, the household revenue was collected through Ghar Chukti Kar and a particular Ijaradar took responsibility to collect all kinds of revenue from that specific Ijaradar. The Ijaradars delegated their authority for collection of revenue to chain of Dar - Ijaradars. During that time, land revenue was very important in other states but it was different in Tripura. In 1872, Tripura collected land revenue as a fifth of total revenue. Land revenue was collected as a taluk dari. The share of land product was taken by the king on behalf of him. The right to take share half of land product on behalf of him was taken as a meyadi based, qayemi based. The tax of the talukdar in the meyadi system can be revised after a certain period by the king. However, in the qayemi system, there was no possibility or possibility of revising the payable tax as it was fixed by the king at the time of settlement of the taluk. The Ijaradar (Tax Collector) of Tripura makes the settlement with cultivators either directly or through the sub-farmers and the sub-collectors depending on the requirement. The raiyat had the right to occupy the lands brought to the consideration of the king's subjects during the Manikya dynasty. The revenue collection during the reign of the zamindar Chakla Roshanabad accounted for two third of the total revenue system of the Tripura kingdom. The revenue collection of the state was made from forest products (ban-kar, cotton, til). Most of the area of Tripura was covered by forests and the revenue collection was made from household tax. In 1889-90, the total revenue of the state was 9.1%. The economic situation of Tripura was also based on forests even though the economic condition of the state was primitive. In the absence of industrial factories, whether to speak about agricultural activities that can improve the overall economic situation, it can be said that there are no established markets and business corridor so it cannot offer a good economic future for Tripura. Tripura's economic growth took place after the depression of the early 1930s and after the partition of India when a large number of people from different countries immigrated to Tripura illegally, which changed the overall socio-economic situation of the state. The two kings of the Tripura kingdom, named as Ishan Chandra and Bir Chandra, formulated the policy to motivate the tribal families to settle on the valley lands with plough cultivation according to the law of king. During the reign of the zamindari, the border area of various towns, including Agartala, was developed mostly in the form of transportation road and railway. The railway of East Bengal was only few kilometres away running north to Sylhet and Assam, and south to Chittagong which was called Tripura's entry port.

## V. OBSTACLES AND ISSUES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBES COMMUNITIES IN TRIPURA

During the monarchy of Tripura, several attempts were made to collect tax from the tribes but due to poverty, the tribals in Tripura were unable to pay tax. During Chakla Roshanabad, the economic situation of Tripura gradually deteriorated, and the King of Tripura faced a major crisis in the economy of the Tripura kingdom. Also, the dispute with Bengal Nawabs on Zemindary was responsible to meet the economic requirements of Tripura. Settlement in Tripura from various parts caused the peace of Tripura to break down and the economy of the region declined. In the later stage of the pre-colonial stage, many professionals, traders' artisans and manufacturers started to leave the region, which has affected the economic system of Tripura. During the colonial perception, the region experienced an economic boom. King Bir Chandra Manikya ruled the state until 1896 and took many initiatives to modernize Tripura. This brought about changes in the occupational pattern of Tripura. During this time, middle class people started working as royal employees and teachers. According to the 1931 census, Tripura's primary producers were 84.53 percent and 7.81 percent were manufacturers and the rest were involved in administration. From the time of the monarchy to the democracy and even after independence, which crossed many decades, tribals remain the same as before.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The Manikya dynasty is characterized by its visionary, progressive and illustrative monarchs, ranging from the visionary Bir Chandra Manikya (Maharaja Birendra Manikya) to the progressive and peace-loving Bir Bikram Manikya who initiated the urbanization of Agartala and progressive work in the countryside. The reform of all departments of administration of Maharaja Radha Manikya is considered as one of the most important steps of the Manikya Dynasty. He also established schools and colleges for education. His son, Birendra Manikya, initiated the scientific method of reformation in all sectors of the kingdom. The Manikya dynasty was epitomized by the immense wealth and grandeur of the East due to the kind and generous work done by him for the benefit of his people and other people. He was the first ruler of the dynasty to visit Europe and America from 1931 to 1939. He also reserved land for the Indigenous people of Tripura (native Tripuri) due to which the present autonomous district council area was established. All of them initiated various policies, schemes and reforms for the development of the society. Their contribution to the modernization of Tripura is much appreciated. In fact, they have contributed to the development of Tripura in all fields.

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