

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN TRIPURA

*With Special Reference to the
New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society
1938-1988*

SUKHENDU DEBBARMA

*Department of History
School of Social Sciences
Tripura University, Tripura*



INDUS PUBLISHING COMPANY
NEW DELHI

This One



NNHH-NUC-37Q3

Copyrighted material

natural that Tripura will have a typical tropical climate. It is neither too hot nor too cold. In the month of May and June the average maximum temperature is about 35°C - 40°C, while in the months of December and January the temperature sometimes falls to 10°C - 5°C.¹ The five principal seasons are: summer, monsoon, autumn, winter and spring. The summer is between March and May, monsoon between June and September, Autumn from October to early November and then winter up to January. Spring is only in the month of February.

The average rainfall is more or less about 200 cm. Generally rainfall occurs between June and September. The rainy season is accompanied by cyclones, hailstorms, thunder storms and lightning causing damages to houses, crops, trees including deaths of animals and human beings.²

Flora and Fauna

Varieties of trees, plants and herbs are available for the timber as well as medicinal purposes. In fact, Tripura is a paradise for those who seek medicinal plants. It is virtually an herbarium.³ Apart from these a large scale plantation of tea, rubber and coffee has been undertaken. There are about 280 species of trees found within the state.⁴ Crops like paddy, sweet potato, wheat, potato, mustard, Jute, etc. are cultivated in the flat low lands. Jhum or shifting cultivation is carried out in the slopes of the hills and crops like paddy, jute, cotton, chilli, maize, etc. are cultivated.

1. Gan Choudhuri, Jagadish, *Tripura, The Land and Its People*, Delhi, 1980, pp. 2-3.
2. Ibid., p. 3.
3. Gan Choudhuri, Jagadish, *Tripura, The Land and Its People*, Delhi, 1980, pp. 2-3.
4. Singh, Ram Gopal, *The Kukis of Tripura, A Socio-Economic Survey*, Agartala, 1985, p. 3.

The wild animals found in the forest include elephant, tiger, leopard, monkey, spotted deer, bear, porcupine, pig, jackal and Buck deer etc. Bison, white elephant and rhinoceros are now virtually extinct. Once upon a time, Tripura was famous for white elephant. In old days, the Tripura Rajahs used to present elephants to the Nawab of Bengal in token of allegiance.⁵ Birds include crow, bulbul, sparrow, mynah, parrot, wild cock, wood pecker, kingfisher, owl etc. Domestic animals include cow, goat, horse, sheep, buffalo, dogs and cats.

Mineral Resources

Tripura is not rich in mineral resources. Minerals of the state include clay, limestone, lignite, coal and ochre. Clay deposits appear to be the only deposits of workable value. The state is rich in oil and natural gas. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission (O.N.G.C.) have found gas and oil in the Boromura range. It goes without saying that the prosperity of Tripura depends largely on the exploitation of her oil resources.⁶ However, the mineral wealth of the state has not yet been systematically explored and scientifically exploited.

Agriculture and Industries

The state is primarily dependent on agriculture and is dominated by monsoon. Agriculture is not developed properly and presents a picture of extreme under development. Cultivation may be broadly classified into settled and shifting or wet land and jhum cultivation. During the plan period many measures such as wasteland reclamation, construction of minor irrigation project and activation for extend-

5. Ibid., p. 3

6. Chatterjee, S.N., *Tripura—A Profile*, New Delhi, 1984, p. 19.