ELECTION AND ETHNIC POLARIZATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TUJS (*TRIPURA UPAJATI JUBA SAMITY)*, AN ETHNO-NATIONALISTIC POLITICAL PARTY IN TRIPURA[*]

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Abstract:

Pluralistic societies like India have multiple ethnic compositions. Election as a democratic exercise should not bother about the existing diversities like religion, caste, lingual identity, ethnic identity etc. But in the field of real politics, these identities affect the electoral participation and outcome. Ethnic, lingual, religious, caste etc. types of identities influence the structure of leadership, decisions taken, type of mobilizations done before, during and after the elections in India. Such extra-democratic mobilizations lead to polarization in politics. Such polarization is more visible in the states of the North Eastern Region of India where division of demography is distinctly visible on ethnic lines. This paper is an attempt to understand the role of ethnic polarization in elections in North East India with special reference to the background in which TUJS, the most influential ethno-nationalistic political party in Tripura in the 1970s to 1990s.

Key-words: *Democracy, Ethnicity, Polarization, Voting Behaviour, North East India, Tripura, Electoral Politics, Tripura Upajati Yuba Samity (TUJS)*

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Theoretically democracy is concerned with a governance entirely based on the mandate of the governed i.e. consent of the common people. Free and fair election is the universally accepted mechanism to get the mandate of the voters. That is why electoral process is considered as the most vital for a healthy democracy. Very often elections are stigmatized by the use of money and muscle power in India. Of late polarization of elections on ethnic line has become a sharp point of criticism against the electoral process in various Third World Countries including India. Although ethnic polarization was there in the first General Election in India in 1952 in which the *Ram Rajya Parishad*, the *Hindu Mahasabha* and the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* – these three ethnic political parties on behalf of the majority Hindu community participated in the election (Chandra, 2005), yet frequent allegations on polarization as a political tool is an incident of recent decades. In actual electoral politics, political parties and leaders hardly hesitate to follow any technique that would catch votes for his/ her party even if it is not compatible with the principle of democracy or the ideological preferences of his/her party. In this context, this paper analyses the nature of party system as existed in the North Eastern Region of India and the type of electoral polarization visible in this part of the country with special reference to Tripura.

The presence ethnicity-based political parties has been a common feature in the history of electoral politics in Assam. *Asom GanaParishad* (AGP) emerged inthe aftermath of the Assam Agitationas a response to the perceived marginalization of the Assamese people and their demands for autonomy, recognition, and resource sharing within the political landscape in Assam. Similarly, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) successfully mobilized the Bodo community on the demand for a separate Bodoland state. It mobilized the support of the Bodo ethnic group and secured significant electoral victories in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The Mising community has formed organizations like the Mising Autonomous Council to advocate for their political and cultural rights. In Nagaland, the Naga People's Front emerged as an ethnic political party with an aim. The party expanded to the neighbouring state of Manipur, and has ambition for further expansions in other neighbouring states such as Assam and Arunachal Pradesh where there is substantial Naga populationin some districts of the two states.Major political parties in Mizoram like the Mizo National Front (MNF) also have shaped the state's political dynamics through their focus on ethnic identity, autonomy, and governance reforms, often alternating power with national parties. These parties gained prominence post-statehood in 1987, leveraging Mizo tribal sentiments and addressing local issues like famine relief, insurgency legacies, and development disparities. Almost all of these ethnicity-based parties often employ symbolic gestures, such as the use of traditional attire and language in campaigns, to resonate with their target communities. However, their success also depends ontheir ability to address practical issues like development and governance, which remain

critical for sustaining electoral support. But, the common thing in the policies, programmes and actions of these political parties is ethnic mobilization and polarization of support in favour of them. The growth and evolution of ethnic politics in Tripura is a vivid testimony of ethnic polarization vis-à-vis electoral mobilization by the ethnic political parties. To understand the dynamics, we need to explain the background that gave birth to ethnicity-based political parties in Tripura.

Partition of the Indian Sub-continent made Tripura a small hilly state bounded by international boundary. More than four fifth of Tripura's 1,001 km long frontier was just an imaginary line drawn by Lord Cyril Radcliffe in 1946-47 remained unguarded up to the early 1980s. So, the riot-victims of the then East Pakistan found their abode in Tripura. The New Delhi Government had no rehabilitation policy for the refugees from the then East Pakistan. The Government was convinced that the refugees migrated to Tripura would return back to their homeland in East Pakistan when the riot situation would be normalized. (Mohanta, 2004) In 1950, the Nehru-Liaquat Pact (also known as Delhi Pact) was signed for the eastern borderland on the basis of the assumption that influx from East Pakistan was just a temporary affair. (Ghoshal, 2012) Hence this Pact could not stop the influx of refugees. Influx of the Hindu Bengali refugees started to disturb the demographic balance of the state. From 1947 to 1971 more than 6,09,998 people were settled in Tripura from East Bengal (Bhattacharyya, 1988). Most of these people were skilled wet land cultivators. Some of them were rehabilitated in land-based occupations while the rest of the others were settled without any rehabilitation.

In 1931, the then King of Tripura Maharaja Bir Bikram reserved an area of 110 sq. miles in the Kalyanpur area of Khowai division as the 'tribal reserve area' for the five major tribal groups of the Kingdom. But very soon the royal administration realized the inadequacy of this and a new area of 1950 sq. miles from Kailashahar, Khowai, Sadar, Udaipur, Amarpur, Belonia and Sabroom was declared as the 'reserved area' for those five tribes in 1943 (Bhattacharjee,1993). This was obviously a benevolent drive for a section of the tribal subjects of the kingdom. But the same administration under the Regent Maharani, Kanchanprava Devi de-reserved an area of 300 sq. miles from this "tribal reserve" in 1948 for the rehabilitation of the refugees. (Bhattacharjee, 1993) The remaining 1760sq.km area of land remained 'reserved'. But a large area from this 'reserved' land also went into the hands of the non-tribal refugees through a tacit understanding with the corrupt bureaucrats (Mishra, 1976). This historical tragedy created a sense of being impoverished among the tribal youths in Tripura. The communist leadership exploited the situation in the form of the *Janasiksha* Movement to mobilize the youths under the banner of their party.

The legacy of the *Janasiksha* Movement inspired a section of educated tribal youths to give birth an organization called Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad in 1948. This organization mobilized the issues related with the question of the emancipation of the tribals in Tripura. It was basically inclined towards the communist ideology. In those days, the Communist Party of India adopted the line of

armed struggle to defeat the successors of the "Anglo-American imperialism" as per the December, 1947 Resolution, endorsed as the "Calcutta Thesis" in the Second Congress of the Party at Calcutta session in 1948. (Basu, 1996) Following this line the Tripura Rajya Mukti Parishad adopted the strategy of violent resistance against the non-tribal money-lenders, *joetdars* and also the feudal administration of the local king. The Mukti Parishad opened its armed wing called "Shanti Sena" and recruited the battle-tested ex-soldiers of the First Tripura Rifles who fought the Japanese during the Second World War but presently jobless (Ghosh, 1984). Similarly, a tribal women's force was also formed to act as an auxiliary of the guerilla unit. Such a guerilla warfare of the *Muktiparishad* under the aegis of the communist leadership established control upon the Khowai and the Sadar Sub-divisions. With the spread of the armed resistance, the government virtually lost its control over a vast area. A parallel administration of the *Muktiparishad* was started. (Sen, 1970)

Thus, the first phase of insurgency in Tripura was not motivated by ethno-nationalistic ideology. Rather it was a resistance against the exploitative State machinery and also against the autocratic ruling elite class. The post-colonial Indian State could neither assure the autonomy of the tribal people nor could it safeguard their land and language from the emerging non-tribal majority. In such a situation the communist leadership exploited the natural outrage of the tribal people and became its main vehicle of political mobilization.

Political mobilization of the tribals in Tripura was circulated around three principal issues-protection of tribal land, development of their own *Kokborak* language and assuring the autonomy of the tribal people. (Mohanta, 2004) So the Statist response against these issues during the period from 1950s to 1970s is reviewed here:

Land Issue: Alienation of tribal land and assuring autonomy of the tribal people became the main agenda of all the existing political parties in the then Tripura. On the hand, the refugee organizations and political parties were constantly demanding rehabilitation of the refugees. In such a situation, the Government brought legal change in the form of the Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reform Act, (TRL&LRA) 1960 based on the Assam Act-1886 which recognized only individual land registered with the State.

Such a legal change multiplied the misery of the tribals in Tripura for the ground that land was their main livelihood. Since the new law did not recognize the ownership of the tribal people over their village commons which was their main source of sustenance. So the hilly terrains of Tripura without any private ownership became the property of the State. The jhum cultivators used to cultivate those village commons for generations lost their right upon them.

Secondly, this newly enacted TLR&LRA-1960 was totally silent on 'tribal reserve' as stated earlier which frustrated the tribal leadership. (Basu, 1996)

Thirdly, in order to safeguard land alienation of the tribals from the non-tribals, the Act had a provision (article-187) according to which no transfer of land by a tribal to a non tribal would be

valid unless the transfer was made with the permission of the Collector after 1961. (Ghosh, 1984) But the legislation did not mention any penal section dealing with breaches of the aforesaid condition of land transfer. So, the poor tribal people became totally helpless to get justice due to the legal complications. And hence they fell prey to the urban brokers. (Bose, 1996)

Fourthly, due to the nexus between the land hungry non-tribal settlers and the bureaucracy, the tribals of Khowai, Amarpur and Kamalpur lost their land to the non-tribals. (Bose, 1996)

This TLR&LRA-1960 was amended in 1974 which was far deceitful than the original one. This amendment extended the cut-off year up to 1969 after which the takeover of tribal land by the non-tribals would be declared void. By doing so, this new amendment cleared way for dismissal of about thirteen thousand applications seeking redress in revenue courts. (Chakraborty, 1983) This amendment too was silent about the 'tribal reserve'.

Land right of the tribal people in Tripura also was violated by the government sponsored developmental projects like the Dumbur Hydro-electric project. The Dumbur power project was initially planned in 1960 as a medium range irrigation project. Subsequently it was converted into a huge hydro-electric project. After the completion of the dam in 1974, a large area covering 46.34 sq. km was submerged. Although according to the official records only 2558 tribal families were evicted from the area, yet the unofficial estimates claimed that the project ousted 8000 to 10000 families or about sixty to seventy thousand tribal people from the area. (Bhaumik, 2006) And the worst part of the story is that only a small percentage of those displaced tribal people have title deeds to prove their ownership. So, these fortunate people only could avail the rehabilitation facilities. And the rest of the bulk of people who used to enjoy using right over the vast common property resources were simply denied any rehabilitation facilities. The government used state police and CRPF to evict these people forcefully. The evicted people also complained about bribery and other corruption charges against the local officials to the team comprised of the members of the Public Accounts Committee and Estimates Committee of the Tripura Legislative Assembly went to do a field survey in 1974.

Similarly, the traditional right of the tribal people on forest products was curtailed by the Government during this period. The Forest Department imposed restriction upon felling of tree and collection of forest products like bamboo, cane, grass etc. (Bose, 1996)

Language Issue: The mother tongue of the common Tripuri people Kok Borok was neglected by the State for centuries. The kings of Tripura preferred Bengali language in their Courts and declared Bengali as the official language of the kingdom. The royal aristocrats used to hate both the hilly tribal people and their language i.e. the Kokborok.

Almost the same attitude continued after the merger of Tripura with the post-colonial Indian State. Because, the state legislature enacted legislation in 1964 called 'Tripura Official Language Act-1964' which recognized Bengali as the official language of the state. As a result, the development of

the *Kokborok* language was neglected. The first ethno-nationalistic political party in Tripura called *Tripura Upajati Juba Samity* (TUJS) came into existence in 1967 with a number of ethno-centric agenda among which the language issue was one of the most significant. One of their most favourite slogans in Kokborok was: "*Chini haoatang nahangklai, chini kagnamasrungnai*" which means "Those immigrants who reside in our land must know our language." If the mother-tongue of the tribal had provided sufficient respect in the above-mentioned Official Language Act, then it would not have been an issue to the TUJS. This political group adopted initiative to revive the language. *Tripura Kokborok Unnayan Sabha* and *Kokborok Sahitya Sabha* came into existence for this purpose. The later started to articulate a demand for the adoption of Roman script for the *Kokborok* language. (Ghosh, 1984, P-66) Subsequently when the *Kokborok* language was recognized as an official language of the state along with Bengali in 1979 through the Tripura Official Language (Amendment) Act, Bengali script was adopted instead of Roman script.

According to one recent study, the *Kokborok* speaking people of the state have hardly benefited by the official recognition of their language due to the lesser scope for vocationalization of *Kokborok* language. The tribal people face difficulty to reap the benefits of all the government sponsored development projects. They also have lesser access to modern professions due to the hegemony of the Bengali language. As a result the HDI (Human Development Indices) of tribal population is quite low as compared to the rest of the population of the state. (Deepak, 2014)

Autonomy Issue: Autonomy indicates the autonomous practices that give birth to the 'political subjects' whose existence is in contradiction to the governmental realities. It reflects on such patterns of power relations that propel the emergence of 'autonomous space'. (Samaddar, 2005) Existence of this kind of 'autonomous space' was a characteristic feature of the collective life of the Northeastern tribes before the advent of the colonial administration in the Subcontinent. On the basis of available historical documents, the scholars have traced a system of administration in fifteenth century Tripura in which there was a 'nominal authority of the predominant chief (king) over the other tribes who were completely independent in their self-administration.' (Bhattacharyya, 1986) The king hardly interfered in the community life of the tribes.

But after the merger of Tripura in the Indian Union the situation started to change. The tribal chiefs like Nishan Sardar and Purna Sardar were frightened by the influx of non-tribal in Tripura so they became the supporters of the *Ganamukti Parishad*. (Dev, 1987) In the post-merger phase, the ruling class of Tripura showed utter callousness in the autonomy question of the tribals. As stated earlier that in 1948 for the rehabilitation of the refugees the Regent Maharani, Kanchanprava Devi de-reserved an area of 300 sq. miles from the "tribal reserve" created by the royal administration for tribal subjects.

Secondly, the tribal subjects were proud of their own king and their kshatriya identity during the monarchical administration. With the merger of Tripura into Indian Union in 1949, political control

of Tripura went into the hands of the non-tribal elite. Due to the constitutional status of the state as the Part C category state, its administration went into the hands of the Union Government of New Delhi. As a result, the new administration was dependent almost wholly on the Bengali dominated bureaucracy. In such a situation, the tribal people of the state started to suffer from a 'sense of being orphaned'. (Bhaumik, 2012)

Thirdly, the builders of the post colonial Indian State were also indifferent about the ethnic autonomy issue of the tribals of Tripura. That is why they completely ignored the autonomy issues of the tribals of Tripura. The tribals of Tripura took arms much before the Nagas and unlike the later they did not fight for sovereignty but for the rights of the tribal people. In spite of all these, the makers of Indian State did not recognize the claim for autonomy of the tribal people in the new constitution of India. The Bordoloi Committee that was formed in the Constituent Assembly to draft the provisions of the Sixth Schedule for the autonomy of the tribal people of Assam only did neither include the autonomy issues of the tribals of Tripura nor did it visit the state. After a long struggle of nearly forty years full of bitter experiences the Union Government granted the Sixth Schedule status for the tribals of Tripura. (Bhaumik, 2005)

Fourthly, both the state and the Union Government adopted some initiatives to assure the autonomy of the tribals of Tripura. The Union Government adopted a rehabilitation scheme for the poor jhum cultivator tribes in Tripura in 1956. But the scheme could not become successful due to wide range of corruptions and poor understanding about the measures for rehabilitation of those nomadic *jhumias*.

In 1960, the Union Government appointed a commission to find out adequate measures for stopping alienation of tribal land and the means to bring them in the national mainstream under the Chairmanship of Shri U.N. Dhebar. The Dhebar Commission recommended the formation of Tribal Development Blocks on the experimental basis and further stated that if it failed to serve the purpose the provisions under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution could be invoked. (Bose, 1996) Similarly the Administrative Reform Commission under the Chairmanship of K. Hanumanthia also did not recommend the provisions of the Sixth Schedule for assuring the autonomy of the tribals of Tripura.

On the basis of such recommendations Tribal Development Blocks were established but they were of no use for the tribals of the state. That is why if we go through the Tripura Legislative Assembly Proceedings of 1960s and 70s then we will find plenty of references regarding the demands of the opposition parties to assure the autonomy of the tribal people either by creating a 'tribal compact area' as per the recommendations of the Dhebar Commission or according to the Fifth, Sixth or the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. But the Government of the then Tripura rejected the demand and even in some cases branded the Opposition parties as "anti-Bengali" (Majumder, 1997).

In such a situation, a pure ethno-nationalistic political party came into existence as a natural anti-thesis to such a political tug of war on the issues of the tribal people of the state. The newly emerged tribal educated middle class became frustrated by the anti-tribal policies and decisions of the Government. In the last half of 1950 and early 1960s, tribal leaders like Aghore Debbarma and Snehakumar Chakma captured the attentions of those youths for 'exclusive tribal struggles in the attainment of their own nationalist goal'. (Bose, 1996) Dasarath Deb, Birchandra Debbarma and some other communist leaders were also there behind the birth of the *Tripura Upajati Juba Samity* (TUJS) in June, 1967. The newly formed TUJS leadership maintained ethno-nationalistic line of struggle and challenged the communists in the tribal area. Their one of the favourite *Kokborok* slogans was: "*Kachak koofoor choong-chia, buinitala tanglia*" which means "Red and white we do not know; we shall not remain under anybody/party". The TUJS demands were four-fold:

1. Creation of district council in the hill tribal areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

2. Restoration of tribal land from the non-tribals which were illegally transferred.

3. Recognition of *Kokborok* language.

4. Adoption of Roman Script instead of Bengali for their language, i.e. the *Kokborok* language. (Ghosh, 1984)

Although this kind of inclusive mobilization of the tribal people was not a new thing in the political history of modern Tripura. After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya in 1947 his step-brother Durjay Kishore Dev Varman formed "*Bir Bikram Tripura Sangha*" to resist the inflow of the refugees into Tripura. It had its militant wing called "*Sengkrak*" which means 'clenched fist.' This organization wanted to drive the refugees away from Tripura to assure the inclusive rights of the tribal people over this state. That is why this movement was known as "*bangal kheda* movement". But in 1949 it was declared outlawed by the government. In spite of such legal sanction against the *Sengkrak*, the growth of such organizations was not stopped. From 1951to 1953, other such organizations like *Paharia Union*, *Adivasi Samity, Adivasi Sangha* etc. came into being with the similar agenda. Subsequently, these organizations merged into *Adivasi Sangsad* with the demands like: a) A tribal Regional Council in Tripura, b) Declaring Tripura an Autonomous District, c) merger of Tripura with Assam, d) Filling up of Gazetted posts by the non-Bengalees only. (Sen, 1970) In 1955 another such organization called "Tribal Union" came into being with the demand for a 'Tribal State' in the Northeast comprising of NEFA, Manipur, Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Mizo Hills, Naga Hills, Tripura and other tribal areas of Assam. In Tripura it adopted an anti-Bengalee stand. In 1967 the *Sangkrak* movement resurfaced again at Kanchanpur area of the then North Tripura with its previous agenda.

All these ethno-centric political platforms were nothing but some sporadic reaction against the influx of non-tribal people in Tripura. So, they could not maintain their influence among the

common people of the tribal communities and successfully mobilize them under their banner. On the other hand, TUJS could establish itself as an alternative to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM). This is evident from the data presented in the following Table No. 1.

Table No -1 Performance of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and TUJS in the State Legislative Assembly of Tripura Elections (1972-1998)

Year	TUJS				CPI(M)			
	Contested in the No. of seats	Total No. of Seats Won	Overall % of Votes	% of Votes in the Seats contest	Contested in the No. of seats	Total No. of Seats Won	Overall % of Votes	% of Votes in the Seats contest
1972	10	0	1.17	7.44	57	16	37.82	39.66
1977	28	4	7.93	17.02	55	51	47.0	51.10
1983	14	6	10.47	44.79	56	37	46.78	49.98
1988	14	7	10.52	46.13	58	26	45.82	49.92
1993	14	1	7.52	34.26	51	44	44.78	52.65
1998	10	4	7.19	46.95	55	38	45.49	49.93

Source: The data collected from the official website of the Election Commission of India: https://www.eci.gov.in/statistical-reports accessed on 28th January, 2024 and compiled by the author.

From the above data, it is clear that the TUJS gradually gained the support of more than 40% of the voters of the constituencies where they contester elections since 1980s onwards. This is because of the polarization of support in favour of the ethnic agenda as already mentioned above projected by the party. Communists who were the indomitable political force among the tribals of Tripura since the time of the *Janashiksha* Movement of 1940s gradually lost their support base in the reserved constituencies. In spite of their governance track record, they could not mobilize many youths in favour of them.

This is because unlike the ethno-centric political platforms developed before, the TUJS could successfully construct '*Tripuri* Nationalism' and mobilized the tribal voters largely to influence the state politics in Tripura. Since the outbreak of TUJS in the political landscape of Tripura, ethno nationalist politics not only remained a political jargon in Tripura, it started to influence electoral politics significantly.

Firstly, they inspired the common tribal people to be united on ethnic line and such an ethnic unity was channelized to undo all kinds of discriminatory perceptions in the civic and economic spheres of life. For this purpose, they abandoned the universalistic political strategy of the *Gana mukti Parishad* (GMP). The GMP leaders also demanded district council in the hill tribal areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. But they did not move on ethnic line – rather they welcomed the democratic and progressive sections of non-tribals in their struggle. Hence neither the ethnically neutral Communists nor the pro-Bengali Congress could further the interests of the tribals. The TUJS exhibited an attitude of ideological indifference as it was expressed by their slogan, "Red and white we do not know; we shall not remain under anybody/party" was nothing but a forceful ethnic

assertion in pursuit of their basic demands like land, language and autonomy. The newly educated tribal youths found an uncompromising tune in this new political platform which was as it were not going to be subsided in the game of number in the politics of first past the post system.

Secondly, emphasis upon the recognition and development of the Kokborok language was a unique drive by the TUJS. Although the Jana Siksha Movement and the GMP Movement took the initial efforts to popularize the Kokborok language, yet these movements did not accept the ethnic line and adopted Bengali script. The TUJS first demanded to introduce the Roman script and insisted to introduce the language in every sphere of life.

Thirdly, even in the use of traditional dress and ornaments of the tribal people an apathetic attitude generated among the youths due to the changes of demography and related socio-economic aspects. TUJS took initiatives to revive the traditional ones with modern design. They raised a popular slogan: "*Rignai Borok ma kanai*" which means "all have wear *Rignai Borok*."

In this way, TUJS engineered an identity among the tribal people of Tripura centred on "Borok". Their leaders and spoke persons sharply pointed out the "indifference" of the non-tribal dominated tribal movements in Tripura. As for example, one famous Kokborok speaking intellectual and a veteran TUJS ideologue, Shyamacharan Tripura while pointing out the "double standard character" of the legendary non-tribal communist leader of the state and the first Chief Minister of the CPI (M) led government of Tripura, late Nripen Chakraborty who enjoyed the office for ten years from 1978 to 1988 and known as a great champion of tribal right said: "Once Nripenbabu said that if he were a tribal, he would have become a terrorist. But the Communist Party never supported 50% seats for the tribals in the Legislative Assembly of Tripura. Why did Nripenbabu blatantly oppose the demand of the TUJS to introduce 'inner line permit' for the entry of the non-tribals within the area of the TTAADC? Why did he start *Anasan Satyagraha* when the Union Government decided to resettle the refugees in Dandakaranya in 1965?" (Tripura, 2005) Such a pure ethno-nationalist line spread the influence of the TUJS rapidly across the hills in Tripura and the party soon became the main opposition party in the state in 1978.

The TUJS started movement for the creation of autonomous district as per the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution along with other demands like amendment of land law by adopting 1949 as the cut-up year instead of 1969, adoption of Roman Script for the *Kokborok* language, introduction of the *Kokborok* language as the medium of instruction, introduction of quota system for government job for the tribals on a preferential basis.

In 1979 a large number of Chakma refugee from Chittagong Hills of Bangladesh sought rehabilitation in Tripura. But the government denied them. The tribals found this policy as an unfair one in compare with the rehabilitation policy of the non tribal refugees. Such an incident consolidated the ethno-nationalistic standpoint of the TUJS and ethnic mobilization of the voters became a regular feature of electoral politics in Tripura.

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