

## ‘Socio-Political Activities of Students in Tripura Before 1945 A.D.’

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### Abstract

Student agitations or participation in different parts of the country and at different times have been concerned with issues varying from educational problems to political issues. Student involvement in such activities are a part of the overall on-going economic, political and the changing the social order too. India has had a long and chequered history of student pro- test politics. Student participation in the Freedom Movement forms a glorious chapter of modern Indian history. The nationalist movement for the first time provided a semblance of political identity to the Indian youth in general and student youth in particular. The Northeast India also witnessed for various students movements from pre-independence to post-independence on different issues. The state of Tripura has faces various students movement or participation of students in different issues especially social issues. Due to a princely state before its merger to Indian union there were lack of school and colleges a small number of people get chance to become educate or literate. In 1905 after the Partition of Bengal agitation come out all over the country, the people of Tripura were participated in anti-partition activities. During the period the revolutionaries of Bengal came in Tripura for shelter in deep forest because the Hill Tippera never comes under direct British rule. They also trained to the youth of the State and in this way Tripura joined in freedom struggle. The students of Tripura involved in social, political, economic and educational issues under monarchical government. It was at the middle of the 1940s that a mass movement on education Janashiksha Andolan was launched by the Janashikaha Samiti, a non-governmental organisation. It is important to note that many political leaders of the State, namely ex-chief minister Dasarath Deb, Communist leader BirenDatta and Sudhanya Debbarma etc. were in the leadership of the Janashiksha Samity. The important motive of the Samiti was to mobilize the common man specially the poor tribal people of the State. The aim of this paper is to present an analysis of the student movement, their spirit, objective, achievements and weaknesses.

**KEYWORDS:** Society, Politics, Students, movements, Tripura.

Since the French revolution scholars have been very much concerned about the social movements of the different parts of the world, about the meaning and concept of social movements. Student activism is not divergent from social movements. There are various example of student movements in various countries may be developed countries or developmental countries from past to presents. In India the history of student’s political activities may be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when India was a colony of Britain. The student movements in India have emerged in critical historical junctures responding to issues and challenge faced by them and society at large. In 1905, Partition of Bengal can be traced as a landmark of student movement in India. This gave students a revolutionary outlook which called them to boycott colleges as well as British Goods, Student clubs. Between 1907 & 1917, 184 persons are convicted in Bengal in connection with revolutionary activities, 68 were

students<sup>1</sup>. In December 1920, All India College Student Conference (AICSC) was held at Nagpur under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Roy to provide coordination to the growing student political movements. In 1930's the All India Student Conference provided congressmen with leftist orientation with a platform and student movement was probably the most radical elements in Indian political life during the period.

The first national student organisation was set up in 1936, with the formation of All India Student Federation. Worse still, internal conflicts between communists and non-communists student over ideological issues led to the split in the All India Student Federation in 1940. In 1945, the non-communist groups, with the support of Gandhians and Sociologists formed the All India Student congress<sup>2</sup>. By and large student political activism during the freedom struggle had a noble and defined goal, achievement of political freedom for the country.

In the context of socio-political movement in Princely Tripura the role of student and student organization was vital. However the student organization also lack of support, resource, knowledge, training skill and opportunities to meet, share experience and acquire knowledge on how the effect to the society and in turn how to deal with them. The present paper will discuss elaborately how students of Tripura involved in socio-political activities before independence of India on the basis of specially primary and secondary sources.

The history of Tripura in the 20th century is also replete with many instances of student unrest and participation which could be traced back to the days of Swadeshi and anti-partition movement of 1905-1908. Responding to the call of Bengal leaders certain pockets of Hill Tripura adjacent to Bengal districts participated in the anti-partition agitation. Tripura was predominantly a tribal State in 1905-06. Hence the impact of the anti-partition agitation was not to be found among the tribal people in the hills. But among the Bengali people in the plains of Tripura it had a deep impact. As a day of protest by 16th October, 1905 was observed in Hill Tippera both by the Hindus and the Muslims by singing national songs and taking out procession with the slogans of Bandemataram. Students who participated in these activities looked towards Calcutta, Comilla and Sylhet for guidance. Such meeting were held at Kalidighi (Kailashahar) in the last quarter of 1905 which was attended by the students, males and females of both the communities, a resolution was adopted for renewing swadeshi vow to carry on anti-partition agitation till it was revoked by the British Government. The meeting was presided over by Durgaprasanna Ghosh<sup>3</sup>. Radha Kishore Manikhya (1896-1909) who was reigning monarch on the other hand monarch welcomed the make to Partition of Bengal which can be seen the Administrative Report of Tripura for the year 1905-1906<sup>4</sup>. The Monarch was influenced by British models of administration which were just in processing in the State; it was the reason behind his acceptance the Partition of Bengal. Similarly the death of Prafulla Chaki and Kshudiram Bose caused much excitement among the people of Bengal, Assam, Tripura and some other places. The students of Umakanta

<sup>1</sup>Shah, Ghanshyam, "*Social Movements in India*", Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2004, reprint 2013, p. 211

<sup>2</sup>Rajimwale, Anil, "History of the student movement in India", Manak publications, New Delhi, 2001, p-vii

<sup>3</sup>De, Ranjit Kumar, "*Socio-political Movements in India*", Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 1998, p. 18

<sup>4</sup>Chakravarti, Mahadev (ed.) Forwarded, Administrative Report of Tripura 1903-04 to 1910-11 A.D., Vol. 1, Gyan Publication, New Delhi, 1994

Academy, Agartala joined in a public sankirtan and paraded the main streets with flags bearing Bandemataram.

The socio-economic discontent provided a congenial atmosphere in Tripura. So a branch of Anushilan Samiti branch was established at Agartala in 1906 at the initiative of Nishikanta Ghosh, Priyanat Banerjee, Kshitish Banerjee, Satyaranjan Bose, Jnan Mukharjee, Matilal Mitra etc. Calcutta Anushilan Samiti (1902) of Pramathanath Mitra was the fountain head of all subsequent revolutionary currents in India. But a gap within the rank and the file led to the establishment of Dacca Anushilan Samiti in October 1905 by Pulin Das and Trailokyanath Chakraborty (Maharaj)<sup>5</sup>.

Tripura Branch of Anushilan Samiti established its link with Dacca and Barishal Samitis through Nishikanta Ghosh. In Tripura this secret Samiti encouraged Gymnastic exercises and the members took lessons in lathi-play, use of Swadeshi goods and social work in the slums. Some they were trained in boxing, cycling, military drill, sword-play and wrestling. Many underground activities of revolutionaries of Bengal used to come to Tripura not merely for political activities, but also for the fact that Tripura was a safer shelter for them as the British Police had ordinarily, no authority to enter Tripura. Regarding the activities of Anushilan Samiti in Tripura, Dr. R.C Majumdar remarked, "For the purpose of training of its members the Anushilan had two farms at Belonia and Udaipur in Hill Tipperah. These were outwardly and in part really, agricultural farms but they served mainly as centres for training. During daytime the members worked as labourers in the field but at night they were given training in the use of different kinds of arms, and practised shooting in the neighbouring hills. They had to work hard and lived under strict military discipline"<sup>6</sup>. Two training centres were set up by the revolutionaries at Belonia (Bogafa) in 1911 and the farm was situated at Mychhera. It is evident from the statement of Satish Chandra Bose regarding the origin of the Anushilan Samiti that a farm was set up at Belonia at the initiative of Naren Sen, Barada Kanta Nag of Barudizamindar family, Satishchandra Bose and others<sup>7</sup>. During the period active members of Anushilan Samiti at Belonia were led by Sarada Chakrabarty and his assistant Pulin Bihari Gupta. The Government also suspected about the underground activities of the revolutionaries. Sarada Chakrabarty acted as an informer and transmitted records of its covert work to the police and they searched where some members were arrested and some escaped. The activities of the farm were stopped temporarily. Finally Sarada Chakrabarty was killed for his faithlessness to the objects of the Samiti<sup>8</sup>.

Then in 1912, Udaipur became the main centre. Land of this farm was in the name of Dwarika Ray, an inhabitant of Lamchar village in Noakhali District who later became monk. Trailokyanath Chakraborty (Maharaj) and Pratul Ganguli were the main forces behind its establishment<sup>9</sup>. But according to Ranjit Pal, Ranjan Nath Roy one of the member of Comilla Anushilan Samiti formed this farm<sup>10</sup>. The house of this farm was

<sup>5</sup> De, Ranjit Kumar Op. cit. p-26

<sup>6</sup> Majumdar, R.C., "History of Freedom Movement", Vol-II", 1975, p-286

<sup>7</sup> Datta, Bhupendranath, 'Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram', (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1983, pp-187-88

<sup>8</sup> Pal, Ranjit, "Tripurar Sramik Andolan O Ganatantrik Sangramer Itihas", (in Bengali), Agartala, 1984, p-40

<sup>9</sup> De, Ranjit Kumar, Op. cit. p-31

<sup>10</sup> Ranjit Pal, Loc. cit

situated at Dhopaichhari jungle adjacent to present Matabari, Udaipur. Generally students of schools and colleges tested in the work of the samiti were usually sent there and they had to wear the dress of labourers towards their 32 mile journey on foot from Comilla town<sup>11</sup>. Like Belonia farm it was outwardly a model farm established privately by the revolutionaries. Local people show it as their source of employment as paddy, sugarcane, dal and vegetables were cultivated by them with close relationship to revolutionaries. So it did not draw the attention of the State and British police and also outside people for a long time. Guns and revolvers were being repaired and an effort was being made to make bomb and arms<sup>12</sup>.

Another Agricultural farm was set up at Murtichherra Tea Estate, Kailashahar with the initiatives of Madhablal Chatterjee, Girja Dutta and other revolutionaries during 1912. Same type of work that is cultivation at the day time and rifle-shooting at night was practised. It is presumed that a close relationship between the revolutionaries and the local people like labourer and peasant was established<sup>13</sup>. According to writer T. C. Sen that Anushilan Samiti had opened one secret branch at Raja Babu's house, Krishnanagar at Agartala in 1931. Another cell was also opened at 'Narsing Akhra', near the present Motor Stand at Agartala<sup>14</sup>.

The Non-Cooperation of December 1920 had its direct echo in Tripura. The boycott upsurge rocked the student community of Kailashahar, Belonia and Agartala of princely Tripura. In these places the student participated in strikes although the monarch of Tripura expressed his displeasure about such unrest. The active students in Gandhian programme included Prafulla Kumar Bose, Charucharan Chakraborty, Satish Chandra Sarkar, Baradacharan Chakraborty, Rohini Kumar Kar, Abdul Rahaman of Belonia, Barada Kanta Choudhury, Abdul Latif, Nagendra Narayan Chowdhury, Madan Mohan Singha, Sourindra Mohan Ghosh of Kailashahar. Most of them raised anti-British slogans like *Gandhiji ki joy, Mohammed Ali and Saikat Ali ki jai*. The strike wave and other activities of the students both in the State and in the Chaklaroshanabad were being recorded in the contemporary Administrative reports of the Tripura state in the following way '*Non-cooperation and khilafat movements...caused great excitement among the school going children, a large percentage of which were misled to leave the schools ...A large number of private schools in the zamindaris were also affected*<sup>15</sup>.

We can understand the sudden fall of student percentage in schools from the given tables between 14 April 1921 to 13 April 1922 in the High Schools, Middle English Schools, and Higher Vernacular Schools of Tripura when the Khilafat-Non-cooperation Movement reached its peak in India. It came down to 780, 545 and 28 in 1921-22 as against 936, 576 and 33 of the previous year respectively. In fact the Lower Vernacular schools and *Pathshalas* the influence was not felt.

<sup>11</sup>Chakraborty, Trailokyanath, "*Jele Trish Bachhar O Pak-Bharater Swadinata Sangram*", (in bengali), Calcutta, 1981, p-14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp-14-15

<sup>13</sup> De, Ranjit Kumar, Op. cit. p-32

<sup>14</sup> Sen, Tripur Chandra, "*Tripura in Transition*", Agartala, December, 1970, pp-56-57

<sup>15</sup>Chakravarti Mahadev (ed.), Administrative Report of Tripura 1911-12 to 1921-22 A.D, Vol. 2, Gyan Publication, New Delhi, 1994, p-26

**Table 1:**

Schools	1919-20		1920-21		1921-22	
	No.of students	Average daily attendance	No.of students	Average daily attendance	No.of students	Average daily attendance
H.S	903	603.001	936	694.81	780	603.85
M.E.S	561	360.10	576	404.87	545	389.54
H.V.S	46	38.39	33	27.21	28	20.94
L.V.S	905	620.36	992	667.50	1089	817.91
Pathshala	2041	1437.20	2209	1575.65	2633	2004.02

*Source: Tripura Administrative Reports, 1919-22, Appendix XXIV.*

The Muslim people and students of Tripura were not lagging behind their Hindu brethren as out of the total population of 304437 of the State, the Muslim population stood at 103720 in 1920-21<sup>16</sup>. A substantial number of students from Muslim community of the State were studying in various educational institutions from then. The number of the Hindu-Muslim student studying from 1920-22 were 4430 and 3156 respectively<sup>17</sup>. As there was communal harmony in Tripura, it can be imagined that the Muslim students cooperated with the other communities in Non-cooperation to the foreign rule.

The tribal people were the original inhabitants of Tripura and the students from various tribal communities including Manipuri's participated in 1921's Non-cooperation movement. It would be the evident from the following table-

**Table 2:**

Year	Thakurs	Tripuris	Reangs	Manipuries
1919-20	148	294	27	724
1920-21	158	335	36	818
1921-22	137	473	33	814
1922-23	136	480	30	819

*(Source:- Tripura Administrative Reports, 1919-23, pp-26-27).*

From table 2 it can be understand that student strength from Tripura community alone increased but a large numbers from the Reang and Thakur communities came out of the schools. Satyaram Tripura, Gopal Chandra Tripura, Rajaram Sardar Tripura, and Mohanta Tripura Chaukidar were some of them. But the reason behind drop out from the school is not everywhere connected with non-cooperation movement as we know the rising price as aftermath of the First World War which was an obstacle for taking education in schools for the students. But why was there such a remarkable drop-out in 1921-22 and not before particularly in the case of the Thakurs? Because they came in contact with the students of other communities frequently and entering imperial army and serving in the Mesopotamia during the First World War<sup>18</sup> had broadened

<sup>16</sup>Debbarma, Soumendra Chandra, "Census Biboroni", (in Bengali), 1931 Agartala, p-116

<sup>17</sup> Tripura Administrative Reports, 1920-22, Appendix XXV

<sup>18</sup>De, Ranjit Kumar, Op. cit. p-46

their political outlook. Living in an urban society where other sections of people felt excitement and they join to the Non-cooperation movement of Gandhi.

As all-India response to such boycott was not identical successful so Tripura was not an exceptional. There was an instance of boycotting honours by the students of Umakanta Academy, Agartala in the later part of 1920. After the successful conclusion of the First World War in favour of the Allies, King Birendra Kishore (1909-1923) of Tripura awarded the victory medals of the British among the people and students of the State who did various commendable services in during the wartime period. While most of the people received the medals with gratitude presented by the king, some also refused to accept. For example, Upendra Laskar, a student of Class ten of Umakanta Academy after receiving the medal, fastened that of the neck of a dog<sup>19</sup> and with others raised slogans like Bandemataram, Down with feudal-Raj, Allha-ho-Akbar, Bharatmata ki jai etc. The King could not even dream that a student of Class X only could behave such a way in front of him. The anger King Birendra Kishore, a real friend in need for the British, knew no bounds. The matter is not only resulted the expulsion of a meritorious student like Upendra Laskar, but all his associates both from the school and also from the Tripura State ultimately<sup>20</sup>. For the socio-economic uplift to the poor, Bipin Bihari Sarkar with some of his Muslim students like Abdul Rahaman, Abdul Bakhet Choudhury and some of the Muslims of Noakhali formed a volunteer crop and it also considered as a branch of the National Volunteers. Involving middle class youth, the Hindus and Muslim, Sarkar extended the scope of activities to interior areas of Tripura.

The movement against the conversion of hill-men specially the poverty-stricken Kukis and Hallam tribes of Kailashahar into Christianity by the Missionaries<sup>21</sup> through attraction was indirectly launched certainly against the imperialist power. The Christian Missionaries with the British patronage began to convert them into their religion. In the beginning the reigning monarch of Tripura stood against the onward march of the Christian Missionaries in the interior in the State<sup>22</sup>. But the First World War situation made the relations between Christian Missionaries and the King of Tripura more cordial and Missionaries got easy access to the hills. In order to check on the conversion of hill-men, people mostly the students of Kailashahar with active support of the local police officer organized a movement and contacted the supporters of anti-conversion agitation. Anti-British sentiment of the people in the wake of the Khilafat-Non-cooperation movement was thus easily channelized against the conversion process. The Non-cooperation movement was a joint endeavour of the Hindus and the Muslims, so the people and the students of both communities like Abdul Hussain Khan, Abdul Gani Majumdar, Nagendra Narayan Chowdhury, Chandramohan Singh, Surendra Majumdar took part in it.

Except these agitation, meetings and movements in various places were in news where along with students tea-garden labourer, peasant and tribal people willingly participate actively such moments which are connected with Khilafat-Non-

<sup>19</sup>Debbarma, Ajay, "*Rajdhani Agartalar Itibritta*", (in Bengali), Ganaraj, (Newspaper), 18 year, No-80, 21 July 1976, Agartala, p-3

<sup>20</sup>De Ranjit Kumar, Op. cit. p-47

<sup>21</sup>Datta, Brajendra Chandra, "*Tripura Rajye Trish Bochhar*", (in Bengali), Dharmanagar Division, p-4

<sup>22</sup>Chakraborty Mahadev, "*Growth of Christianity in Tripura and some Tribal Movements since independence*", in a Seminar on Social Movements in Societies of Tripura since independence, 10 February, 1990, Department of History, Tripura University, Agartala

Cooperation movement, these are awaking of Noornagar peasant, Simna Bazar disturbance, Chandpur Collie tragedy and its impact on Tripura, Kailashahar-Dharmanagar during Assam-Bengal Railway strike days and Agartala bazar boycott.

Anti-British activities in the wake of Civil Disobedience Movement by the people of the zamindari area of King had their modifying influence on the people of the State. The National Congress decided that 26 January 1930 should be observed all over India as the *Purna Swaraj* Day. Accordingly the Independence Day was observed in Tripura on 26 January 1930 with enthusiasm at the initiative of the student of Umakanta Academy and the Tulsibati Girls School. Some of them also illuminated their houses at night<sup>23</sup>. The local ChatraSangha also took part in it. In these procession men, women, labour peasant and even children came out to participate in it. People pledged themselves to get free of the multiply curse of imperial and feudal rule, economic, political, cultural and spiritual ruin<sup>24</sup>. When Gandhi reached the sea at Dandi on 5 April 1930 and broke the salt law, the students from Tripura did respond in their own ways. The members of the Abhaya Asram of Comilla and Vidyasram of Sylhet had some influence over the youth of the State. In April 1930 some of these students and youth specially Durga Prasanna Ghosh, Kirti Chandra Sigha, Sanat Dutta, Ajit Dutta, Trilokya Datta, Asit Bhattacharjee went to Noakhali to participate in the manufacture of salt defying the laws. It is also mentionable that Asit Bhattacharjee and Anantalal De also took part in breaking the salt laws at Contai, Midnapur during the latter part of April 1930<sup>25</sup>.

The students those were responsible for organizing strikes in their schools, are expelled. The Government issued various orders of the guardians of the striking students with a threat of expulsion from the State; dismissal from service, depriving of their pension facilities etc. with the increase of even peaceful law-breaking activities, the authority began to increase its reign of terror<sup>26</sup>. Both the King and the British Government of Bengal were scare-ridden at this development. They jointly concluded a treaty in 1930-31 by which the British police empowered to enter into the State with a view to arrest anyone whom they considered unwanted. Besides the Superintendent of Police for Tripura State were then recruited from the British police at their instance<sup>27</sup>. The repressive policy of the King and the Bengal Government's alarmed police all on a sudden entering into the State often in 1931-32 used to search many houses and seized documents relating to membership, subscriptions, notices, leaflets of any undesirable organization. They arrested many political activists who were who were jailed in various prisons of Bengal under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1930. Besides, many other political workers were arrested on various reasons in the name of various laws like Ordinance IX, the Bengal Emergency Power Ordinance and they were sent to Bengal Prisons<sup>28</sup>. These were some of the evidence of the authority real face to tackle the movements.

<sup>23</sup>De Ranjit Kumar, Op. cit. p-98

<sup>24</sup>Pal,Ranjit, Op. cit. p-45

<sup>25</sup>DasguptaTarit Mohan, "*TripuraySwadinataSamgramerSmriti*", Pilak Publication, Agartala, February 1992 (Falgun 1398 B.E.), p-8

<sup>26</sup>HarigangaBasak, '*Tripura RajyePrajaAndolonerGorarKotha*' (in Bengali), in DainikSambad, 5 January 1978, Agartala

<sup>27</sup>Battacharjee,Banikanta Tripura Administration, Delhi, 1986, p-193

<sup>28</sup>HarigangaBasak, Loc. cit.

The decade of late 1920s and early 1930s are most important in the history of Tripura for rising revolutionary activities. There were some few reasons behind its rise. These are (firstly) all around economic depression in the State. Secondly, there were one Sanskrit 'Tol' and one 'Laskar' boarding at Umakanta Academy in Agartala had some students having anti-authority feeling. The tribal student of the boarding and non-tribal student of the Sanskrit 'Tol' had established with the contact with the Bengal revolutionaries. Ramendra Bhattacharjee of Bejore, Sylhet, an active participant in the activities and the 'Tol' were under him<sup>29</sup>. Sachindralal Sinha, Umeshlal Sinha, Bireen Dutta, Debaprasad Sen, and other students were got initiation of patriotism from him. And these persons take important role for making secret organizations during the time in the State. Narayan Banerjee and Nilu Ganguly were connected with the Comilla branch of Anushilan Samiti from Tripura, studying in Victoria College, Comilla, they also encouraged to the said local students in Agartala. According to a revolutionary Debaprasad Sengupta, he remembered some of the name of student from Tripura who vitally participated in revolutionary activities during the early part of the nineteenth century was Jogesh Chatterjee, Atin Roy, Amulya Mukherjee, Prabat Chakrabarty, Sushil Bhattacharjee, and Harendra Bhattacharjee<sup>30</sup>. Thirdly there was a club name 'Lily Blossom' the earliest important club towards which a considerable section of Tripura youths gravitated. It was founded at the initiative of Jitendra Datta and Bireen Datta during the early part of 1920s at a site of present Agartala. It was originated as a football club which organised tournaments and became a common place for students. Bireen Datta has got some friends among these students who are interested to join political movements. From this time the home of Bireen Datta in Office Lane, Agartala became a permanent centre for revolutionaries and it connected with the Comilla branch of Anushilan Samiti<sup>31</sup>. The members of that club included Debaprasad Sen, Premangshu Choowdhury, Anantalal De, Laru Datta (alias Trailokya Datta), Amiya Chatterjee, Purnendu Chatterjee, Sudhir Deb, Sachin Majumdar, Nirmal Chakrabarty, Asit Chakrabarty and others. Fourthly, the Chittagong revolutionaries under Surya Sen were eager for immediate and dramatic action. The Chittagong Armoury Raid Case and the rich spectrum of the Civil Disobedience Movement of Gandhi provided the spark to ignite terrorist activities in Tripura in this phase. Fifthly, revolutionary leaflets were off and on smuggled out and into Tripura by secret hands; these prohibited publications exercised an extraordinary influence over the minds of the Tripura youths. The object of these publications was to arouse hatred and contempt against the British and incite the readers to the cult of violence.

During the 1920's many secret organization of the student and youths also started operating in Princely Tripura being of patronized by the Anushilan and Yugantar Parties of Bengal. Under Master Surya Sen's influence a student organisation called Chhatra Sangha came into existence in Tripura in 1927<sup>32</sup> on support of Anushilan Samiti, a group of students were met in the house of Lalbihari Ganguly (alias Nilratan Ganguly) at Agartala and formed it as one of the earliest student organization in Princely Tripura.

<sup>29</sup> Professor Chakraborty, Mahadev (ed.) "*Janma Satabarshe Bireen Dutta and Taar Rachana Sangraha*", Naba Chandana Prakashani, Agartala, 2011, p-6

<sup>30</sup> Sengupta, Debaprasad, "*Aandolito Somoy*", Tripura Darpan, Agartala, 2012, p.9

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Basu, Pradip Kumar, "*The Communist Movement in Tripura*", Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 1996, p-13

The object of this organization was to prepare the youths to organise armed insurrection against the imperialist power. During that time the leaders of Anushilan Samiti also worked secretly. Students from Tripura connected with it were Anil Chakrabarty, Akhil Dutta, Sachindralal Singha, Umeshlal Singha, Bireen Dutta, Debaprasad Sengupta, Nilmoni Ganguly (Nila), Probhat Roy, and many others.

But after sometime the member of the Chhatra Sangha dissociated themselves with the parent body and started another organization named Bhatri Sangh at the present Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital quarters area of Agartala under the leadership of Hariganga Basak, Sukhamay Sen, Trilokyanath Datta, Somendra Chandra Sen and Biren Dutta etc. Regarding its origin Hariganga Basak wrote that in order to commemorate the death of Lala Lajpat Rai on the street of Lahore by cowardly attack on him by the British police in February 1928<sup>33</sup>. It gives importance on welfare activities like setting-up of night schools, service to diseased and burning of dead by setting its sub-divisional branches all over in Tripura.

The members of such clubs were highly influenced by militant organizations like Anusilan Samity and the impact of the news of Chittagong coup in 1930 had been so great upon the mind of the young men<sup>34</sup>. Overtly it organised strikes on the Gandhian ways but covertly it adopted the policy of the revived Yugantar party of Bengal. The activities of this Sangha were divided into various ways; boys below the age of twelve were the external limb of the Sangha.

There were two circles; inner circles take final vow promised not to divulge the secrecy of the mantras of the Sangha. They were to carry out the orders of the Parichakak or the head of the Sangha. They had to sever the tie of affection to conceal nothing from the leader to cultivate self-sacrifice etc. Satyaranjan Bose in ordinary member of the Bhatri Sangha says that the inner circle consisted of members like Kshitish Chandra Bajerjee, Priyanat Banerjee, Nishikanta Ghosh, Prabodh Dasgupta, Jogesh Chakrabarty, Sachindralal Singha etc.<sup>35</sup> and outer circle promised not to separate them from the Sangha, to be diligent in drill, sword play, to collect money, to circulate prohibited books and bulletins and to do welfare activities among the general people. Hariganga Basak, Sachindralal Singha, Ramendra Bhattacharjee, Somendra Chandra Dutta of Bhatri Sangha has dedicated their life for anti-British activities. Sometimes they were arrested, interned under B.C.L.A. Act of 1930 and their parents were warned for their anti-British<sup>36</sup> activities.

The important Sangha was Chhatra Sangha, which was a contemporary organization of Bhatri Sangha and got inspiration from it. The majority of the members of it were originally the students of Tulshibati Girls Schools, Agartala. The leading roles were played by Purnima Mukharjee, Saraswati Basak, Kalyani Chakraborty, Manisha Gautam, Subha Sen, Arundhati Sarkar and others. The activities were listed in the following way, women are to be prepared for continuing the struggle for complete independence unto death, to keep in safe custody all the photos, leaflets, documents prohibited by the British, to come forward to collect fund for the revolutionary armies, to take up Swadeshi goods, weaving of charkas and to boycott foreign goods

<sup>33</sup> Halder, Shakti, "*Bidrohi Sachindralal*", Agartala, 1996, p.8

<sup>34</sup> Menon, K.D., "*Tripura District Gazetteer*", 1975, p.123

<sup>35</sup> Bose, Satyaranjan, "*Tripurar Biplobider Smriti*" in "*Tripurar Katha*, (newspaper), Agartala, 14 August, 1957

<sup>36</sup> Letter of S.P, Tripura to chief Dewan, Political Deptt, 19, Nov, 1932, B-6, S-12, TSAR

and to select areas for social service<sup>37</sup>. In the same time a group of members of Chhatra Sangha started the sensational acts of terror, however they were not yet in favour of murder tactics but of collecting money by means of political dacoity. Their support to Hindustan Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, led by Surya Sen was not unknown to the people and the branch kept contact with the members of Bhatri Sangha for collection money, arms and ammunition from Tripura, Indumati Debi and Ananta Singha made frequent secret visit. The members of Chhatra Sangha had to take up responsibility for distribution of prohibited publications like books which was influenced to the common people. Another Sangha called Matri Sangha formed during the latter part of 1920s which was come out from Chhatra Sangha. Indumati, a Chittagong revolutionary has established some link with the ChhatraSangha and MatriSangha<sup>38</sup>.

Bengal had witnessed terrorist activities during 1930-34 and Tripura terrorism also entered into an active phase during the same period when some dreadful activities began to follow. From 1930 Bengal women began to take active part in the terrorist movement<sup>39</sup>. In Tripura also the women participation though indirect was recorded and the members of the Bhatri Sanha encouraged the female students of the girls' schools and thus the Chhatra Sangha formed.

The early part of the decade also witnessed that most of the young members of the Sanghas were captured by state police or British police and sent them to various jails in British India. In jails the members of the Sanghas were influenced by reading various books on socialism, revolutionist, Gandhian etc. the late 1930s were the formative period of activities of the association which became possible as a result of the release of many political activists of the State from Bengal Jails in 1938. On the other hand on the outbreak of the Second World War the State Council government passed a resolution on the entry of hostile foreigners was stopped to keep the State outside the anti-British movements of the adjoining Bengal districts<sup>40</sup>.

Despite ban of the government the students of Tripura participated in strikes from the beginning of 1939. On January 1939, some students of Umakanta Academy and Tulshibati Girls School, Agartala hoisted the national flag in front of these schools. The organisers of these strikes included Purnima Mukherjee, Saraswati Basak, Fatik Sen, Bijoy Mukherjee and others. They were expelled from Tripura as it was too much for the King. In 1940, a circular was issued by the Minister of Education Department which strictly warns to students on conduct any political activities<sup>41</sup>.

In response to Quit India Movement in Tripura a strike was organised in Tulsibati Girls School at this time by the girls students of Agartala namely Basanti Das, Aparna Bhattacharjee, Manisha Gautam, Juthika Gupta, Praba Dasgupta. It was a very successful strike of the students in the State. Not single student entered into the school. The strike was organised mainly by some youths of Agartala namely PriyadasChakraborty, SarojChanda and ChittaChanda<sup>42</sup>. The Milan Samiti of

<sup>37</sup>Gupta,Baby, "*TripurarAgnikanya*", Agartala, 1986, p.48

<sup>38</sup> Notes on UmeshlalSingha, son of NishikantaSingha by C.I.D., Tripura State on 23 June 1932, Political Department, B-6, S-12, TSAR.

<sup>39</sup>Chandra,Bipan,Tripathy, Amares,De,Barun, (ed.) "*Freedom Straggle*", New Delhi, 1963, p-167

<sup>40</sup>SuprasannaBandopadhyaya (ed.) Tripura State GazzateSankalan, (in Bengali), Agartala, 1971, p.155

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. pp-28-29

<sup>42</sup>Gupta,Baby, Op. cit. p.77

Kailashahar organized group meetings to arouse consciousness in favour of the movement. The Samiti also organised student agitation in and outside the State as a protest to the arrest of the leaders of the Quit India Movement<sup>43</sup>.

The students of Brajendra Kishore Institution, Belonia, who became active members of the Noakhali District Congress, formed the core of the student's movement in 1942-43 at Belonia and other places. It's come out from a confidential letter of Santimay Bardhan, officer in charge, Belonia Police Station that the students of Belonia High School were in close touch with the students of Noakhali and wanted to start a movement of the type the British Districts in the State. They made a joint appeal to the students of Udaipur, Agartala, and Kailashahar for launching such movements<sup>44</sup>.

Finally in the late 1930s and the beginnings of 1940s the members of various Samitis and released person from jails, come forward and formed various organisation in the State on the basis of different ideology such as the Janamanga Samiti, the Tripura Rajya Ganaparishad, the Tripur Sangha, the Prajamandal, the Janashiksh Samiti, the Mukti Parishad etc. Among it the Janashiksha Samiti is important regarding extend the education into the remote areas of the State by educated youths, not only tribal a larger group of non-tribal get the light of education through Janashiksh Samiti. From then the students activities mixed with the political parties and after independence of India it continue their activities in the State.

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<sup>43</sup>Sen, Tripur Chandra, Op. cit. pp-60-61

<sup>44</sup>Report, B-53, S-9, Tripura State Assembly Records