

In Pursuit of 'Constitutional Solution': Resuscitating the Demand of Separate Statehood Movement in India's Northeast, Tripura


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The rise of identity movement marks the begging of identity politics among the indigenous Tiprasa people in the late 1960s. In recent times, identity movements resurfaced again in the form of separate homeland exclusively for the tribals. This movement popularly known as Greater Tipland Movement(GTM) emerge as a response to poly-crisis that have been unaddressed by the state agency over the years which ascended as a necessity for existential struggle among the indigenous Tiprasa peoples. Nevertheless, following the emergence of these separate statehood movements, it has been criticized as too unrealistic, and fragile demand. Through empirical research and available literature, the objective of this article endeavours to examine the resurgence of identity movement in the contemporary Tripura. It argues that unless and until existential crisis centered on land, language and identity are solved, movement like GTM are imminent.

Keywords: tiprasa peoples, tripura, kokborok, tipland, greater-tipland, indigenous

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1. Introduction

Contemporary identity politics is motivated by the pursuit of equitable recognition from groups that have been marginalized within the cultures they represent (Fukuyama, 2018). But when the dominant group fails to recognize the tangible existence of a group's identity, it leads to the emergence of social and political conflict. As a result, when the dominant groups do not acknowledge the identities of some groups, those groups experience a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, which hinders their ability to reach their full potential. Their search for recognition, rather than mere acceptance due to their divergence from the dominant group, frequently results in intergroup hostility that is evident in social and political establishments (Taylor, 1992; Honneth, 1996 as cited in Nagle, 2016).

As stated by John Nagle (2016), recognition is a necessary condition for political legitimacy and power. This is because, in communities that are severely divided, conflicts arise due to differing views on political sovereignty. He also describes that these politics of recognition frequently results in harmful confrontations rather than a process of mutual understanding and acknowledgement amongst individuals.

Whereas Nancy Fraser argues that advocating for 'social justice' requires more than just seeking redistribution of resources; it also necessitates addressing the issue of 'the politics of recognition'. She asserts that in order to achieve justice in the present, it is necessary to both redistribute resources and acknowledge the importance of different identities and experiences. Neither one alone is enough (Fraser, 2008). From this standpoint, the contention made by the indigenous Tigrasa communities can also be elucidated.

2. The Context

To comprehend the indigenous Tigrasa struggle, one has to evaluate and interpret the issue according to historical perspectives, encompassing the societal, political, cultural factors that have influenced people's lives and behaviors. Prior to 1949, Tripura was once a powerful kingdom governed by as many as 184 kings. According to the royal chronicles, the Tripura Kingdom was founded by Druhya, the third son of Emperor Jajati, in the Tribeg district of Benaras.

(Debbarma, 2019). Tripura was a princely state until October 15, 1949. After India gained independence, Tripura came under the jurisdiction of Indian Government and became a Territorial Council in 1956. It then became a Union Territory in 1963 and finally achieved statehood on January 21, 1972. Nevertheless, the transition from monarchy to democracy occurred parallel with a continuous flow of Bengali refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to Tripura, India. This inflow resulted in the refugees becoming the majority, outnumbering the host Tigrasa peoples in their own land. There are 19 tribes account for 11.66 lakhs out of the total population of 36.73 lakhs, according to the 2011 census. They have decreased from being the majority in the 1940s.

From 1946 to 1971, a total number of 638,976 Bengali Hindu refugees migrated from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to Tripura. It was estimated that around 1.3 million of refugees were sheltered in the tiny state of Tripura up to Bangladesh war of independence. It was reported that the number of refugees settled was approximately identical to the population of Tripura at that time, which was 15,56,342 (Debbarma, 2022, p.337). This marks the beginning of the State of Tripura encountering demographic intricacy. As a result, the immigrant settler surpasses the host society. In addition, the Tigrasa people were suppressed and exert dominance over their economic, political, administrative, and social aspects of life (Debbarma, 2018). This process inevitably promotes feelings of anxiety among the tribal, leading to a sense of discontent and renunciation of their fundamental entitlement to self-determination.

With this background the paper aim to examine the resurgence of identity-based movement in the form of separate statehood demand among the indigenous Tigrasa people in the post-independent India and their responses from the government as well as other concerned persons. Previous attempts initiated by the government to engage in peace negotiations with insurgent groups in addressing their demands within the constitutional framework of the Indian Union were unsuccessful in achieving long-term peace. The central argument of this paper is that unless and until existential crisis centered on land, language and identity are solved, movement like GTM are imminent.

3. Methodology

In terms of methodology, this study focuses on the utilization of field work as a crucial aspect of sociological research. In order to implement this research, qualitative research approaches were utilized. The research proceeds through unstructured, in-depth interviews with persons who engage in conversations with bureaucrats and members from civil society groups, political leaders, social movement organizations, intellectuals, community leaders, and others. In addition, this research also utilizes YouTube videos, social media platforms like 'X' (formerly Twitter) featuring social movement actors, activists and among others to assist their movement in pursuit of a shared objective. To maintain the privacy and reliability of the research, pseudonyms have been allocated, although I have only employed a limited number of notable names belonging to political leaders as well as stakeholders of the organizations.

Historical Indigenous Tiprasa Peoples Struggle

These indigenous Tiprasa peoples experiences an existential crisis when Bengali Hindu refugees arrived after India's partition, which was then followed by the Indo-Pak War of 1971 that resulted shift in politics and demographic changed structurally, outnumbering the tribal population in the state of Tripura. As observed by Ghoshal (2021), in 1971, the Liberation War provided a last blow to the indigenous peoples, since Tripura provided refuge to a large number of freedom warriors and other displaced individuals. Majority of the Bengali refugees chose to remain in the region due to socio-economic and religious insecurities faced by the people in East Pakistan. Nevertheless, this wave solidified the enduring existence of Bengalis and the imposition of their choices on the agriculture, politics, business, and culture of the state (p.202). Mitra and Bhattacharya contends that (2018), Tripura is the sole state in India where continuous influx of people has significantly disrupted the demographic equilibrium, to the extent that the indigenous tribal residents have become a minority. In addition to demographic and land-related concerns, language has played a crucial role in the mobilization and escalation of ethnic conflicts between the two linguistic identities: the Bengali and the Kokborok. The conflict in Tripura has also been a manifestation of the power struggle between two linguistically unequal identities, notably Bengalis and Kokborok speakers.

Approximately two-thirds of the population speaks the Bengali language, whereas less than one-third of the population speaks the Kokborok language. Although Kokborok language was recognized as official language of the state on 1979 after Bengali, yet the script issues are still alive as the former does not have script of its own (Singh, 2014). Furthermore, the Kokborok speakers view that their language is being ignored by the Government of Tripura (GoT) and 'deliberately' imposing the Bengali language on them (Singh, 2014).

Genesis of Identity Movements among the Indigenous Tiprasa Peoples

Nevertheless, these sudden shift to demographic genocide in the small state display a variety of issues that range from territorial autonomy to language rights, empowerment of the tribals and among others. To voice these concerns, three political organizations arose in the late 1960s. The initiation of identity politics among the indigenous Tiprasa peoples in Tripura was highlighted by three organizations: Tripura Upajati Juba Samity (TUJS), Tripura Student Federation (TSF, renamed Twipra Student Federation), and Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), a revolutionary group. Their demands comprised the creation of an autonomous council (Sixth Schedule), expulsion of the foreigners and among others (Debbarma, 2013). Although the indigenous Tiprasa peoples were largely receptive to their demands, they faced significant opposition from the Bengali settlers, particularly from the group known as 'Amra Bangali' meaning (We are Bengalis) to defend their case with their infamous slogan *Jan Debo Tabu Jami Debona* which meant "We are ready to part with our lives but not with our land" (De, 2005). Subsequently, it resulted an ethnic riot between the Tiprasa and the non-Tiprasa people that culminated in June 1980.

Following a series of democratic and revolutionary movement by the indigenous Tiprasa peoples, Tripura Tribal Autonomous Areas District Council (TTAADC) was initially set up in 1979 under the Seventh Schedule and later upgraded to Sixth Schedule in 1985 (Action Aid India, 2016). Notwithstanding being included within the sixth schedule, the council has failed to effectively address its primary purposes for the indigenous Tiprasa peoples which it was established (Mahato and Deb, 2017).

For example, the council lacks financial autonomy. Though the primary objective of establishing TTAADC under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution is to address the problem of land dispossession faced by the indigenous people of Tripura. As explicated earlier, the influx of immigrants into the tribal areas of Tripura has resulted in significant alterations to the state's demographic composition. However, the State Government has failed to provide sufficient legal authority to the TTAADC to oversee and supervise instances related to land under its jurisdiction (ActionAid India, 2016). Lamenting to these provisions of the autonomous council Kubui Debbarma, former general secretary of the Borok Human Rights Organisation, has to say this: "Absence of land rights, financial resources, inadequate capacity to meet the needs of indigenous communities render the current situation insufficient in fulfilling their objectives, which is why indigenous Ttiprasa people are advocating for the establishment of a separate state" (Personal Communication, 14 February, 2022).

Armed Struggle Movement and their Unsuccessful Agreement

On 12th August 1988, a three-party peace agreement (commonly known as Rajiv- Hrangkhwl Accord) was achieved between the Union Government, State, and TNV, despite the varying pace of advancement in the state. One of its achievements is the increase of reserved tribal seats in the Tripura Legislative Assembly from 17 to 20 (Debbarma, 2006). However, they were unsuccessful in attaining their other demands. For example, restoration of alienated land was not implemented even after signing the treaty. Though Government of Tripura (GoT) amended Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Acts time to time (Sixth Amendment) Bill 1994, which says, the law aims to protect the interests of the indigenous Ttiprasa peoples who have been negatively affected by the large number of immigrants. In accordance of the provision of the Act, notice served to the non-Ttiprasa peoples who had unlawfully acquired land instructing them to restore the land to its rightful owners. Despite amendment of the Bill, it receives massive opposition from the non-Ttiprasa people especially the Amra Bengali (Debbarma, 2018).

In a similar vein, the Government of India (GoI) and the GoT subsequently signed peace agreements with the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) in 1993 and

the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) in 2004. These agreements reaffirmed the government's dedication to restructuring the Tripura TTAADC to encompass all regions with a majority of tribal population, safeguarding and advancing the cultural and linguistic heritage of the tribal communities, and enacting laws specific to the tribal population (Vergese, 2004; Government of India, 2005). For instance, a faction of ATTF reached an agreement in 1993, with the GoT in which they committed to surrender their weapons and follow the policies implemented by the Government. Conversely, the GoI has pledged to implement measures to discourage unauthorized immigration from neighboring countries, reclaim property that was formerly owned by indigenous people, implement inner-line permits, and set up Bhasa commission for Kokborok language (Singh, 2014). This Bhasa Commission, also known as the Tripura Upajati Bhasa Commission established in 2004 under the leadership of Pabitra Sarkar. The Committee submitted its 102 pages of report in 2005 suggested adoption of Roman script. However, despite the committee's recommendations, the GoT (Left Front) adopted a modified Bengali script instead of the Roman for the Kokborok language (Bijukumar, 2023). Likewise, illegal immigrant has never been deported back to Bangladesh.

From Tipraland to Greater-Tipraland Movement

After the GoI banned the NLFT, the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) was established in 1996. Later, IPFT merged with the TUJS and TNV and rechristened themselves as the Indigenous National Party of Tripura (INPT) in 2003. Since 2003, following the state assembly election, INPT has experienced the emergence of many factions due to internal conflicts and ideological disagreements (Longkumer, 2021). Moreover, the indigenous Ttiprasa people experienced leaderless in their political sphere. Furthermore, it became apparent that a few indigenous political groups, which were seen as advocating for the interests of the indigenous population, engaged in corrupt practices and personal battles for self-interest (Tripura, 2023). It is in this context, IPFT revived again under the leadership of N.C. Debbarma in 2009 with a demand of Tipraland- a separate state exclusively for the indigenous Ttiprasa people that came into effect on August 23, 2009.

Representing Tiprasa nationalism, IPFT advocated for the establishment of a separate state encompassing the entire TTAADC territory of Tripura. Although, the term Tipraland first denoted land specifically for the Tipra people, but IPFT has made it clear that the proposed new state will encompass all tribal groups, irrespective of their ethnic origins (Mahato and Deb, 2017).

Following its revival, the IPFT party filed a memorandum to the Union Home Minister on two occasions: first in August 2009 and then in November 2009. Subsequently, the same agreement was extended in October 2010, March 2011, June 2011, December 2011, October 2012, and August 2013. According to the memorandum, IPFT asserted that the influx of foreign people into Tripura before, during, and after the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 had a significant effect on the demographic situation of Tripura (Deb Barman, 2014, para 6). However, it did not have a substantial effect.

Since 2016, IPFT has consistently emerged as the frontrunner in their campaign. The demonstration that garnered the highest level of notoriety, out of all their different events, took place on 26 August 2016, in conjunction with their affiliated organizations. On the same day, a conflict occurred between non-tribal individuals and their followers while staging a protest march in Agartala, the capital city of Tripura, to strongly urge for the creation of a separate state known as 'Tipraland' where some IPFT activists sustained injuries (Debbarma, 2017). Subsequently, on 10 July 2017, IPFT activists blocked state's lone national highways, participated in an uninterrupted strike at Khamtingbari in Baramura (now Hatai Kotor) lasting eleven days, to meet their demand and was intended to secure an assurance of a meeting with the government (PTI, 2017).

Coalition Government and the Constitution of High-Power Modality Committee(HPC)

In the 2018 state assembly election, the IPFT and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) forged an alliance to establish a coalition government. Therefore, putting an end to 25-years Left Front government in the State. The common indigenous people, particularly the youth, instantly experienced a surge of hope and excitement in dealing with the diverse challenges encountered by indigenous Tiprasa peoples.

In the same year, High-power Modality Committee(HPC) is formed. Accordingly, IPFT offered to withdraw their demand, while the Government promised to look into the issues of socio-economic, linguistic, cultural and among other things concerning the indigenous Tiprasa people as an alternative to the contentious demand of Tipraland (Parashar, 2023). The GoT issued a project proposal worth Rs 8882 crore to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), GoI. The proposal was based on the recommendations from a HPC and data from central ministries (Tribune, 2021). Neither the fund has been released nor the reports made available in the public domain. After coming into power for the second time in 2023 state assembly election, IPFT drifted off from their principal demand of separate state. It is noteworthy that centering on the Tipraland issue, IPFT was able to capture eight of the twenty reserved seats in the 2018 assembly election, which had been the CPIM's bastion for several decades. Moreover, the IPFT as a result of its structural flaws not only lost its political support in its traditional tribal-dominated areas, but internal conflicts negatively impacted the party.

Birth of TIPRA Motha

Amidst the tumultuous phase of uncertainty and leadership crisis faced by the tribal, a new era has commenced in the political landscape of the Tiprasa peoples following the ascension of Pradyot Bikram Manikya Debbarma- a prominent member of the royal lineage, commonly referred to as Bubagra, founded TIPRA (The Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance) as a social organisation on 24 December 2019. This TIPRA was formed as a movement against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 for the survival and existential crisis. The indigenous Tiprasa fear that, if the CAA is implemented in the state, then they will be more insignificant than the present minority status. Above all TIPRA as a social organisation was to bring about the 'Thansa'(unity) and consciousness among all the indigenous Tiprasa peoples irrespective of all different political background in the face of adversity and identity crisis. Under the charismatic leadership of Bubagra, the pursuit of 'Constitutional Solution' assumed a new form. In this manner, the idea of Greater-Tipraland (GT) came into existence, with their popular slogan 'puila-jati' (first community, later too community) and 'puila-jati, ulo party' (firstly community, party secondary) under Article 2 and 3 of the Indian Constitution.

Unlike IPFT's Tipraland, which advocates separate state within existing the jurisdiction of TTAADC, GT desires to include not only TTAADC but also areas with a significant Tiprasa population that are outside the purview of TTAADC. As elucidated above, due to the influx of non-Tiprasa people from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) the Tiprasa people not only became minority in their own land but also brought numerous problem. For example, according to Bubagra PB Debbarma, the indigenous Tiprasa people have experienced a loss of their languages, culture, and heritage due to the predominance of non-tribal populations. He further asserted that institutions including colleges and schools were reshaped to accommodate the preferences of non-tribal populations at the expense of the tribal people. Moreover, the indigenous Tiprasa peoples have been deprived of income opportunities and the crime rate against tribals has risen, they have been rendered "powerless" within their own state (Murasingh, 2022). The solution to this problem is only to establish a new separate state for the indigenous Tiprasa people. He claimed that his party's mission is to empower and strengthen the tribal community, but he does not hold any negative views toward other communities. He also asserted that "a substantial Bengali population resides in the tribal council region." Our desire is for them to coexist harmoniously and peacefully. Tripura was a princely state where Bengalis and tribals coexisted harmoniously; we aim to preserve this tradition (Murasingh, 2022).

On 19 February 2021, Chitta Debbarma, President of Tipraland State Party (TSP), Buddha Debbarma, President of IPFT- Ha (another faction of IPFT) merged with TIPRA, and former title TIPRA was rechristened as Tipra Ha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance to establish the TIPRA Motha Party (henceforth TMP). Former Chairman of the TMP, PB Debbarma asserted that, if we are to remain 'Thansa' (Unity) for the greater cause of Tipraland or GT, then we have to fight as one' (Kok Tripura, 2021). Later in the same year, just ahead of the TTAADC election 2021, INPT on April 6, 2021 merged with TMP. Pradyot Manikya Debbarma made this announcement on his 'X' (formerly Twitter) social media accounts which he praises the merger and says, 'it is with great joy that I am announcing that INPT and TIPRA have decided to merge as one single party! Unity #Thansa' (Tripura, 2021).

In the TTAADC 2021 election, they made their debut

and easily ousted the BJP. Bijoy Kumar Hrangkhawl, a former commander of TNV, became a prominent member of the TIPRA after joining (Debbarma and Haokip, 2023). After forming the government at TTAADC, TMP or the council unanimously approved a resolution that was subsequently forwarded to the Governor, the state government, and the Centre. The resolution called for the establishment of a "Greater Tipraland" to accommodate the indigenous Tiprasa peoples, who make up one-third of the four million inhabitants of Tripura. Throughout the year, TMP had organized many activities in the state and at the national capital New Delhi to voice their demand for 'GT' (The Meghalayan Bureau, 2022). In addition, they declined to form coalition unless an official written assurance was provided in advance to their demand for 'GT' by any of the national parties.

Presently, the TIPRA Motha holds the position of governing body within TTAADC. It subsequently functioned as the principal opposition party in the Tripura State Legislative Assembly up to March 7, 2024.

Peoples Intervention on Separate Homeland Demand

While the demand for Tipraland or GT is morally justifiable, its practical implementation is hindered by the need to reconfigure political structures and state borders. Controversies and conflicts have also emerged due to opposition from non-indigenous communities to indigenous Tiprasa people, and apprehensions regarding possible division and instability. Those who advocate for the unification of Tripura contend that development is only a single approach to resolving the problem faced by indigenous populations. For example, former deputy chief minister of the BJP Jishnu Dev Varma (2023) argued that demand-based politics ought to be reframed as development-based politics, or "Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikas," since all of these demands stem from the same fundamental causes. This demand-driven politics, according to Dev Varma, is an ongoing process of development; when it is unequally disseminated, numerous other demands—including those pertaining to identity, culture, politics, nationality, and land ownership—emerge. Additionally, he described how demand-driven politics originated with the Indira-Mujib treaty and have since expanded from Tipraland to Greater Tipraland, from inner line permits to fifty percent reservations in the assembly.

Demand for a solution is favorable, but state division is unnecessary (Dev Varman, 2023).

Seler Saha (personal communication, July 2, 2022) countering the demand for separate state asserted that, "Tripura is a small state with an area of 10,491 square kilometres; furthermore, how could this be possible when the state is subdivided?" The absence of cartography in the state's mapping resulted in the tribal areas being inaccessible even to the Bengalis. Though their demand is lawful and justifiable, it is not technically practicable.

Some build their narrative that they belong to greater part of undivided Tripura and an original inhabitant of the state. It is because of partition and religious persecution we had to settle here. In this context, a 70-year-old man, Kwak Das (personal communication, February 4, 2022) contended that "I hail from Meghnabari (presently in Bangladesh), being a subject of Tripura kingdom, I am also son of the soil, how can I be regarded as refugees, I am an internally displaced persons (IDPs), we came here due to religious persecution, given that it was formerly a part of Tripura".

While others are apprehensive about the non-tribal communities residing in autonomous areas regarding to their impending colossal issues. Reprehending on this contentious demand, General Secretary of the Amra Bangali organisation, Gouranga Rudra Pal said, "once the separate statehood is achieved, Bengali people residing in the autonomous region will be denied land ownership rights and ousted from autonomous region, so how can they think of developing by depriving another community?". Their demand is unscientific and illogical, though it is constitutional and justified but not feasible" (Personal Communication, 7 February, 2023). Others believe that it is a kind of political instrument especially raised during the elections.

In terms of population, the Bengalis hold a numerical advantage in the state legislature compared to the indigenous Tigrasa as their impact on state politics is negligible, and their ability to participate in the legislative process is contingent upon the dynamics of the dominant caste structure.

The Bengalis were consistently unsettled by the calls for the establishment of a separate state. When asked whether the projected new state would be solely for tribal communities, the royal descendant Pradyot Debbarma states.

We are demanding for a separate state not only for the indigenous people but also for all communities who live in the TTAADC areas and we believe that all communities- Hindus, Bengalis, Muslim, Buddhist, everyone should prosper and be given equal safeguards and rights that are not given right now in the state of Tripura (Barman, 2022).

The demand for the creation of Tigraland, which seeks complete autonomy and financial independence, is not as complicated as it may seem. It is not targeted against any specific community. The state has a single autonomous district council that represents many groups. This allows both the Tigrasa and non-Tigrasa people living in the autonomous districts to safeguard their identity and advance their socio-economic, cultural, and political rights. In such instances, it is necessary to establish a framework in which powers are evenly allocated between the state and the council.

Towards 'Constitutional Solution'

After the 2023 state assembly election, Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister, convened a meeting with TMP leaders in New Delhi. Shortly after this meeting, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) formulated a preliminary agreement. Nevertheless, the draft agreement was rejected due to its failure to include the fundamental requirement of TMP. Following that, there have been numerous iterations of debates, dialogues, and meetings with the central government. The Centre has appointed Amit Mishra, a former IAS official, as an interlocutor to investigate the issues confronting the indigenous Tigrasa community.

Subsequently, on November 28, 2023, TMP leaders met with A K Mishra in Agartala. During the meeting, they presented their proposal for the formation of Greater Tigraland, to address Tigrasa people's concern. Following the meeting, Pradyot Debbarma informed to the journalist that, "We have put forth our demand for a separate administration and Greater Tigraland. Our demand is within the Constitution of the country. Now it is up to the government to decide. The ball is now in the Centre's court" (Karmakar, 2023). Further, he also asserted that, "We believe that Greater Tigraland is the best possible solution to protect the indigenous people of Tripura. If the government thinks that there is a better solution, let them suggest, we will consider it".

Bubagra Pradyot Manikya Deb Barma commenced an indefinite fast-unto-death on 28 February 2024, with the objective of urging the Government of India to provide a constitutional solution for safeguarding the indigenous Tiprasa community in Tripura. After completing his three-day hunger strike, a significant number of indigenous Tiprasa individuals assembled at Hatai Kotor, previously referred to as Baramura, on 2 March 2024 to observe and endorse the demonstration.

An enduring struggle for a separate statehood movement has resulted in a tripartite deal with the Centre, State, and the TMP. The treaty was signed in New Delhi at North Block on March 2, 2024. In addition to the TMP and IPFT, several civil society organizations and community leaders have also expressed their approval of the agreement, which aims to address indigenous issues over historical, land, political, linguistic, and cultural rights, among others as an alternative to the separate homeland Tipraland or GT.

These events were regarded as a momentous occasion for the Tiprasa people, as the long-awaited tripartite agreement was officially signed between the GoI, the GoT, and the TMP together with other relevant parties in New Delhi. The agreement signing ceremony was live-streamed on digital media and was graced by the presence of Amit Shah, the Union Minister of Home Affairs, GoI, along with other prominent people including Manik Saha, the Chief Minister of Tripura, Biplab Deb, a sitting Member of Parliament, and J.K Sinha, the Chief Secretary of Tripura. The other participants in attendance are Bubagra Pradyot Manikya Deb Barma, the founder of TIPRA Motha, Jagdish Debbarma, the Chairman of TIPRA Motha, Bijoy Kumar Hrangkhawl, the President of TIPRA Motha, Animesh Debbarma, the Leader of the Opposition in the Tripura State Assembly, and Sukla Charan Noatia of the IPFT party.

4. Concluding Remarks

The demographics are the driving force behind the call for "Tipraland or Greater Tipraland". The continuous and uncontrolled arrival of refugees from Bangladesh has resulted in the indigenous population becoming a minority in their own territory. This demographic marginalization has had a multifaceted impact.

In democracy, this demographic marginalization leads to political marginalization, which means a reduction in control or influence over governmental power. The Tiprasa tribal peoples experience significant political marginalization, resulting in their little or negligible involvement in formulating government policies and programs that have an impact on their life. As such, identity-based tribal movements – with demands ranging from political autonomy to separate statehood – became pervasive in Tripura. The Indian state, along with the State government of Tripura, employed a multifaceted strategy encompassing military, political, and developmental measures to tackle the political aspirations of the indigenous population. These responses included the granting of limited autonomy, such as the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), and measures taken to meet the development requirements of the tribal communities. Nevertheless, the TTAADC and its development goals and programs still face constraints, bureaucratic inertia, and criticism from the non-tribal majority. Consequently, numerous policies and programs aimed at empowering and developing tribal communities exist mostly in written form, with little evidence of actual implementation.

The Indian state's responses achieved success in certain fronts – putting an end to violent insurgency. However, the autonomy, development, and land related grievances as well as script for Kokborok language remain unaddressed.

Due to the intricate nature of the demands and multiple debates surrounding them, the comparatively disadvantaged indigenous Tiprasa people are organizing themselves collectively using various means to achieve their rights from the dominant social structure. The pursuit of a constitutional solution by the indigenous Tiprasa peoples has become a significant subject of discussion in present-day Tripura. The indigenous Tiprasa people have encountered numerous hurdles in their pursuit of a constitutional solution. Though a tri-party agreement signed by Central agencies and other stakeholders, implementation of this accord is a big challenge. Yet, unless and until the existential crises revolving around land, language, and identity is resolved, movements like Greater Tipraland Movement are inevitable. Therefore, it is important to reflect and revisits indigenous Tiprasa people's struggle since merging with the new India.

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