

Chapter-4

PROFILE OF TRIPURA

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Profile of Tripura

Tripura is a State in North-East India. People emotionally address the State as '*Hira-Parboti*'. It is one of the seven sisters' States in North- East India. Now, in North East India there are eight States. It is the third smallest State of the country, which occupies only 10,491 km² areas (Directorate of Information & Technology, Government of Tripura, 2013). Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on the north, south, and west; and the Indian States of Assam and Mizoram lie to its east. A landlocked State, Tripura's geography is characterized by several north-south hill ranges with intervening valleys and plain in the western part, where the capital Agartala is located. The area of the modern Tripura was the part of an independent Tripura Kingdom that ruled for several centuries. Ethnic strife between the Tribes and Bengali population led to tension and scattered violence since its integration to India. Establishment of an autonomous tribal administrative agency and other strategies soothed such tensions to a great extent, and the state remained peaceful since 2011. Tripura lies in a geographically disadvantageous location in India as the only one major highway (NH-44) connects it with the rest of the country; this hinders the economic prospects of the State. Poverty and unemployment continue to plague the State that has limited yet improving infrastructural capacity. Most of the residents in Tripura are involved in agriculture and allied activities, although service sector is the largest contributor to the State's gross domestic product (GDP). Forests cover more than half the area, and provide remarkable bio-diversity for a small State and also a source of livelihood for many tribes. Scheduled tribes are about 30 per cent of the total population; and *Kokborok*-speaking *Tripuri* is the major tribe. Bengali speaking people are the ethno-linguistic majority. The mainstream Indian cultural elements led by Bengali culture co-exist with tribal traditional practices. Since the present study is initiated in Tripura, this chapter attempts to give a brief description about its history, geographical characteristics, and socio-economic scenario, etc.

4.1 Historical Background

The origin of the name Tripura is the subject of many myths. Tripura appears to be a Sanskritized version of *Tipra*, the name of the indigenous people inhabiting the area.

Tripura is derived from two Kokborok words 'tui' and 'pra'. *Tui* stands for water and *pra* means near (Wikipedia, 2015). The boundaries of Tripura extended up to the Bay of Bengal, when the kings of *Twipra* Kingdom held from the Garo Hills to the Arakan, so the name may reflect vicinity to the sea. According to another school of thought, the word 'Tripura' may have originated from *Tripura Sundari*, the presiding deity of the *Tripura Sundari* Temple at Udaipur, one of the 51 *Shakti Peethas* (pilgrimage centers of Shakti worshippers of Hinduism). Yet another myth attributes origin of the word 'Tripura' to the legendary tyrant king Tripur, who reigned in the region (Tripur Kshatriya Samaj). Tripur was the 39th descendant of *Druhya*, who belonged to the lineage of *Yayati*, a king of the lunar dynasty. The Indian epic Mahabharata, the *Puranas* (ancient Indian religious texts) and pillar inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka (third century BC) mentioned Tripura. An ancient name of Tripura is *Kirat Desh*, probably referring to the *Kirata* Kingdom or the more generic term *Kirata*. Kings of *Twipra* Kingdom have reigned in the region for centuries, but the historical beginning of the kingdom is not documented. *Rajmala*, a chronicle of Tripuri kings was first penned in the fifteenth century by Sinha, K. C. in the year 1876, provides a list of 186 kings from antiquity to the King Krishna Kishore Manikya (1830-1850). The boundaries of the kingdom changed over the centuries of reign at various points in time. The southern border reached to the jungles of Sundarbans on the Bay of Bengal, to Burma in the west, and to the borders of *Kamarupa* Kingdom in the north. Tripura was a princely State during the British rule in India. Udaipur, in the present day Gomati district, was the capital of the kingdom. The capital was shifted to Old Agartala by King Krishna Manikya in the 18th century, and then to the present Agartala in the 19th century. King Bir Chandra Manikya (1862–1896) modelled his administration on the pattern of British India and enacted various reforms including the formation of Agartala Municipal Corporation. The kingdom joined independent India in 15th October, 1949 with the Tripura Merger Agreement with effect from November 1, 1956 and a popular ministry was installed in Tripura on July 1, 1963. Tripura was heavily affected by the partition of India and the majority of the population now comprises Bengalis, many of whom came as refugees from East Pakistan after independence in 1947. The partition of India also resulted in major economic and infrastructural setback for the State, as the road transport between the state and other major cities of India became significantly longer and more difficult. The road distance between Kolkata and Agartala before partition

was less than 350 km, which became 1,700 km following partition, as the road now winded around East Pakistan (later Bangladesh). The geo-political isolation was aggravated by insufficient rail transport. Some parts of the State received shelling from Pakistan Army during Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. Following the war, Indian government reorganized the north-east region to ensure effective control of the international border — three new States namely Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura came into existence on 21 January, 1972. Migration of Bengali people and settlement by Hindu Bengali increased during the Bangladesh Liberation War. Reversal of demographics led to tribes becoming a minority. Ethnic strife between the tribes and largely migrant Bengali community led to scattered violence in the state since the independence of India, and an ebb and flow of insurgency spanning decades. The insurgencies gradually abated following establishment of a tribal autonomous district council and strategic counter-insurgency activities, aided by overall socio-economic progress of the State.

Table-4.1: State Administrative Profile of Tripura

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Sub Divisions</i>	<i>Blocks</i>	<i>Panchayets</i>	<i>TTAADC villages</i>
West Tripura	3	6	70	77
Shepahijala	3	5	103	52
Khowai	2	6	49	58
Gomati	3	7	62	95
South Tripura	3	6	90	70
Dhalai	4	6	34	96
Unokati	2	3	51	28
North Tripura	3	6	52	51
Tripura	23	45	511	527

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

The Government of Tripura has reorganized the administrative units in 2012 by creating 4 new Districts, 6 new Sub-Divisions and 5 new Blocks, in-order to further decentralize the administration for better and effective delivery of services as well as for effective implementation and monitoring of the development programmes. The State has now 8 Districts, 23 Sub- Divisions, 45 Blocks and one Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) created under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014). The Table-4.1 shows the State administrative profile of Tripura at a glance.

Table-4.2: Administrative Divisions of Tripura as of 2012

<i>Districts</i>	<i>H.Q.</i>	<i>Sub-Divisions</i>	<i>Development Blocks</i>	<i>Municipals/N. Panchayet</i>
Dhalai	Ambassa	1. Kamalpur 2. Ambassa 3. Longtarai Valley 4. Gandachera	1.a) Salema, 1.b) Durga Chawmuhani 2.a) Ambassa, 3.a) Manu, 3.b) Chamanu, 4.a) Dumburnagar	1.a) Kamalpur Nagar Panchayet, 2.a) Ambassa Municipal Council
Sipahijala	Bishramganj	1. Bishalgar 2. Jampuijala 3. Sonamura	1.a) Bishalgar, 2.a) Jampuijala, 3.a) Melaghar, 3.b) Kathalia, 3.c) Boxanagar	1.a) Bishalgar Municipal Council, 3.a) Melagarh Municipal Council
Khowai	Khowai	1. Khowai 2. Teliamura	1.a) Khowai, 1.b) Tulashikhar 1.c) Padmabil 2.a) Teliamura, 2.b) Kalyanpur, 2.c) Mungiakami	1.a) Khowai Municipal Council, 2.a) Teliamura Municipal Council
Gomati	Udaipur	1. Udaipur 2. Amarpur 3. Karbook	1.a) Matabari, 1.b) Kakraban, 1.c) Killa 2.a) Amarpur, 2.b) Ampu 3.a) Karbook, 3.b) Silachari	1.a) Udaipur Municipal Council, 2.a) Amarpur Nagar Panchayet
Unakoti	Kailashahar	1. Kumarghat 2. Kailashahar	1.a) Kumarghat, 1.b) Pecharthal 2.a) Gournagar	1.a) Kumarghat Nagar Panchayet, 2.a) Kailashahar Municipal Council
North Tripura	Dharmanagar	1. Dharmanagar 2. Kanchanpur 3. Panisagar	1.a) Kadamtala, 1.b) Yuvarajnaragar 2.a) Dashda, 2.b) Jampui 3.a) Panisagar, 3.b) Damchara	1.a) Dharmanagar Municipal Council
South Tripura	Belonia	1. Santirbazar 2. Belonia 3. Sabroom	1.a) Baagafa, 1.b) Jolaibari 2.a) Rhishamukha, 2.b) Rajnagar 3.a) Satchand, 3.b) Rupaichari	1.a) Santirbazar Nagar Panchayet, 2.a) Belonia Municipal Council, 3.a) Sabroom Nagar Panchayet
West Tripura	Agartala	1. Sadar 2. Mohanpur 3. Jirania	1.a) Dukli, 2.a) Mohanpur, 2.b) Hejamara 2.c) Lefunga, 3.a) Jirania 3.b) Mandai	1.a) Agartala Municipal Corporation, 2.a) Mohanpur Municipal Council, 3.a) Ranirbazar Nagar Panchayet

Source: Wikipedia, 2015; Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2015

Four new districts namely Khowai, Unakoti, Sipahijala and Gomati were carved out of the existing four in January 2012. Six new Sub-Divisions and five new blocks were also added. Each district is governed by a district collector or a district magistrate, usually appointed from the Indian Administrative Service (See Table-4.2).

4.2 Geographical Characteristics

4.2.1 Location

Tripura is situated between latitudes 22°56' and 24°32' north, and longitudes 91°09' and 92°20' east. Its' maximum stretch measures about 184 km from north to south and 113 km from east to west. Tripura is a land-locked State, surrounded four-fifth by Bangladesh that is on its north, south and west. The length of its international border with Bangladesh is 856 km (84 per cent of its total border), while it shares 53 km border with Assam and 109 km border with Mizoram.

4.2.2 Physiography

The physiography is characterized by hill ranges, valleys and plains. Tripura has five anticlinal hills running from north to south (Boromura, Atharamura, Longtharai, Shakhan), and Jampui hill as one moves from west to east. The intervening synclinal valleys are Agartala–Udaipur, Khowai–Teliamura, Kamalpur–Ambasa, Kailasahar–Manu and Dharmanagar–Kanchanpur valleys. At an altitude of 939 meter (3,081 ft), Betling Shib in the Jampui range is the highest peak of the State. The small isolated hillocks interspersed in the State are known as *tilla*, and the narrow fertile alluvial valleys mostly present in the western part of the State are called *lunga*. The rocks found in Tripura between the Oligocene epoch (approximately 34 to 23 million years ago) and the Holocene epoch (started 12,000 years ago) on a geologic time scale. The hills have red laterite soil that is porous. The flood plains and narrow valleys have alluvial soil. Flood plains in the western and southern parts of the state constitute most of its agricultural land. The State has a tropical savanna climate designated *Aw* under the Köppen climate classification (Tripura Forest Department, Government of Tripura). The undulating topography leads to local variations particularly in the hill ranges. The four main seasons are — winter (December–February), pre-monsoon or summer (March–April), monsoon (May–September) and post-monsoon (October–November). The south-west monsoon brings heavy rains during the monsoon season. The average annual rainfall of the state ranged from 1,979.6 mm to 2,745.9 mm during 1995-2006. The maximum and minimum temperatures during winter are – 27 °C (81 °F) and 13 °C (55 °F); and

during summer are – 36 °C (97 °F) and 24 °C (75 °F) respectively. Heavy rainfall during the monsoon causes frequent floods in Tripura.

4.2.3 Rivers

A number of rivers originate in the hills of Tripura and flow into Bangladesh. Rivers in Tripura are often classified into two broad groups – a few rivers of the State flow in the north direction and the rest of the rivers flow in the west. The main rivers at Tripura that flow towards the north are Khowai, Manu, Dhalai, Langai and Juri. The rivers of the State that flow towards the west are Gomati, Feni, and Muhuri. The Gomati is the biggest river of the State. Like the Ganges in the North India, the Gomati is considered as the most sacred of all rivers in Tripura.

4.2.4 Flora and Fauna

The geographical area of 10,491 square km in Tripura is predominantly hilly (60%); of which 6292.68 square km. (59.98%) is the forest area as per legal classification in the State and only 21.23 per cent are well stocked, the remaining forest areas are degraded (Tripura Forest Department, Government of Tripura, 2016). Tripura are divided into two major forest types. These are – (a) evergreen forest and (b) moist deciduous forest. There are 379 species of trees, 320 shrubs, 581 herbs, 165 climbers, 16 climbing shrubs, 35 ferns, 45 epiphytes and 4 parasites (Tripura Forest Department, Government of Tripura). Rare plants of Tripura have been put to 18 numbers. There are 266 species of medicinal plants in the State (68 trees, 39 shrubs, 71 herbs and 88 climbers). The forest is rich in timber too. *Sal*, *Chamal*, *Garjan* and *Kanak* exist in great numbers. Other secondary species are *Pichla*, *Kurcha*, *Awla*, *Bahera*, *Hargaja*, *Amlaki*, bamboos and other grasses. There are 90 mammal species in Tripura and in the aquatic ecosystem, 47 species of fish have been found. As per last Census of Wild Life (Tripura Forest Department, Government of Tripura, 2016), there were 39 leopards, 182 elephants and 92 bisons in the State. Wild life sanctuaries in Sepahijala, Trishna, Gomti, and Rowa are ideal reservoirs with its spectacular of flora and fauna. These sanctuaries are also home for other endangered and endemic species. The spectacled *langur* is also found in the sanctuaries. The tropical moist deciduous forest of Sepahijala sanctuary has five different species of primates. They are Rhesus macaque, Pig-tailed macaque, Capped *langur*, slow Lories and a lot of many other wild animals. Leopards, clouded leopard, jungle fowl, civets, barking

deer, wild pigs are also found here. About 100 species of birds are found here too. It attracts migratory birds such as whistling teal, white ibis and open billed stork. In Tripura, *Nagaswer* is the State flower; *Agar*, is the State tree; *Dukul* (green imperial pigeon) is the State bird.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

4.3.1 Population

The population of Tripura has grown steadily during the period of 1901 to 1951. The period from 1951 to 1961 was characterized by very high rates of population growth, influenced by large-scale immigration from Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan).

Table-4.3: Comparison of Demographic Profile of Tripura

<i>Description</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2001</i>
Approximate Population	36.74 Lakh	32 Lakh
Actual Population	3,673,917	3,199,203
Male	1,874,376	1,642,225
Female	1,799,541	1,556,978
Population Growth	14.84%	15.74%
Percentage of Total Population	0.30%	0.31%
Sex Ratio	960	948
Child Sex Ratio	957	966
Density/km ²	350	305
Density/mi ²	907	790
Area(Km ²)	10,486	10,486
Area mi ²	4,049	4,049
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	458,014	436,446
Male Population (0-6 Age)	234,008	222,002
Female Population (0-6 Age)	224,006	214,444
Literacy	87.22%	73.19%
Male Literacy	91.53%	81.02%
Female Literacy	82.73%	64.91%
Total Literate	2,804,783	2,022,099
Male Literate	1,501,369	1,150,707
Female Literate	1,303,414	871,392

Source: Tripura Population Census Data, 2011

The rate of growth of population was lower from 1961 to 1991, but still higher than all India rate. Population growth during this period was also affected by immigration from Bangladesh, particularly around 1971, when Bangladesh got independence. However, there was a striking decline in the decadal growth rate during 1991-2001, which is marginally down to 14.75 per cent for the State (see Table-4.3). After Assam, Tripura ranked 2nd as the most populous State in North-East India (Census

2011). The population density of Tripura in 2011 was 350 persons per sq. km, which means that now 45 more people live in a sq. km area in the State than they lived a decade ago (305 in 2001). The population density for all India was 324. The Census 2011 shows that Tripura ranks 18th position in terms of density of population at all India level. Tripura has a population of 36,73,917 with 18,74,376 males and 17,99,541 females (see Table-4.3). The population of Tripura has increased 4,71,829 during the decade 2001-2011. Back in 2001, the population was estimated at 3,199,203. Decadal growth of population in the State during 2001-2011 is 14.75 per cent, where males' growth is 13.98 per cent and females' is 15.55 per cent respectively. The provisional data of Census, 2011 reveals that the child population in the age group 0-6 is 4,44,055, out of which 2,27,354 males and 2,16,701 females. The proportion of child population in the age group 0-6 years is 12.5 per cent of total population in 2011 as against 13.6 per cent in 2001. Table- 4.4 gives details regarding district wise areas, population, literacy rate, sex ratio and density in Tripura, 2011.

Table-4.4: District-wise Areas, Population, Literacy, Sex Ratio and Density in Tripura

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Area in sq.km.</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Literacy</i>	<i>Sex Ratio (Females/1000 Males)</i>	<i>Density (per sq.km.)</i>
West Tripura	942.55	918200	91.07	970	974
Shepahijala	1044.78	483687	84.68	952	463
Khowai	1005.67	327564	87.78	957	326
Gomati	1522.80	441538	84.53	959	290
South Tripura	1534.20	430751	84.68	956	281
Dhalai	2400.00	378230	85.72	944	158
Unokati	591.93	276506	86.91	972	467
North Tripura	1444.50	417441	87.90	963	289
Tripura	10486.43	3673917	87.22	960	350

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

4.3.2 Sex Ratio

The sex ratio has increased by 13 points in the State and reached to 961. On the other hand, the similar sex ratio at the national level has increased by 7 points and reached to 940 in 2011, as 933 in 2001. This is a positive improvement in sex ratio in Tripura than the national sex ratio. In Tripura, sex ratio rose from 945 (per 1000 males) in 1991 to 948 (per 1000 males) in 2001 and further to 961 in 2011.

Table-4.5: Child Population in Tripura

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Child Population in the Age Group of 0-6 Years</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
West Tripura	47,773	45,305	93,078
Shepahijala	30,687	29,095	59,782
Khowai	19,657	19,002	38,659
Gomati	28,879	27,158	56,037
South Tripura	28,173	27,070	55,243
Dhalai	28,460	27,551	56,011
Unokati	19,059	18,442	37,501
North Tripura	31,320	30,383	61,703
Tripura	2,34,008	2,24,006	4,58,014

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

The child sex ratio in 2011 is 953 per 1000 males and has decreased as compared to 960 in the year 2001. Sex ratio in urban regions of Tripura is 976 females per 1000 males in 2011. Similarly, the child (0-6) sex ratio for urban region stood at 945 girls per 1000 boys. In rural regions, female sex ratio is 956 per 1000 males, while same for the child is 955 girls per 1000 boys (Census 2011). Table-4.5 shows the population of child in eight districts in Tripura as per Census Report, 2011.

4.3.4 Birth Rates and Death Rates

The latest Sample Registration Survey (SRS, 2013) of Registrar General of India reveals that the estimated birth rate in the Tripura is 13.7 per thousand populations, which is much lower than all India figures of 21.4/1000 populations. Similarly, the death rate of the population is 4.7/1000 population is lower than 7.0 at all India level. The infant mortality rate posted at 26/1000 population in the State against similar rate of 40/1000 population at all India level in 2013. The Tripura Human Development Report, 2007 indicates that in 2001 the life expectancy at birth for males and females in the State was 71 and 74 years respectively, which is higher than the national average of 61 years for males and 62.5 years for females respectively (Government of Tripura, 2007).

4.3.5 Literacy Rate

The literacy and education are reasonably good indicators of development in a society. Tripura made substantial progress in the expansion of literacy and schooling at all India level and ranked 3rd among the States after Kerala and Mizoram in 2011.

Table-4.6: District-wise Literates and Literacy Rate in Tripura

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Literates</i>			<i>Literacy rate (%)</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Persons</i>
West Tripura	3,93,423	3,57,973	7,51,396	94.04	88.01	91.07
Shepahijala	1,94,993	1,64,351	3,59,344	89.80	79.49	84.78
Khowai	1,36,183	1,17,408	2,53,591	92.17	83.17	87.78
Gomati	1,76,776	1,49,078	3,25,854	89.94	78.90	84.53
South Tripura	1,72,705	1,45,274	3,17,979	89.96	79.16	84.68
Dhalai	1,51,643	1,24,574	2,76,217	91.31	79.79	85.72
Unokati	1,10,146	97,575	2,07,721	90.92	82.79	86.91
North Tripura	1,65,500	1,47,181	3,12,681	91.27	84.39	87.90
Tripura	15,01,369	13,03,414	28,04,783	91.53	82.73	87.22

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

The literacy rate for Tripura in 2011 works out to 87.22 percent for the population (7 years and above), which was 73.19 per cent in 2001 and 60.44 per cent in 1991 (Government of Tripura, 2014). The corresponding figures in 2011 for males and females are 91.53 per cent and 82.73 per cent respectively (see Table-4.6). Literacy rate has improved sharply among females as compared to males in this State. At the State level, gap in male-female literacy rate in the Tripura has been reduced to 8.8 per cent in 2011 as against 17.01 per cent in 2001. Tripura has achieved a high level of literacy at all India level, which was 74.04 per cent in 2011.

4.3.6 ST/SC, Urban and Rural Population

The population of Tripura is characterized by social diversity. There are 19 scheduled tribes (ST) in the State with their own cultural identity, which includes Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Chakma, Lusai, Mog, Garo, Kuki, Chaimal, Uchai, Halam, Khasia, Bhutia, Munda, Orang, Lepcha, Santal, Bhil and Noatia. The people of schedule tribes comprise about one-third of the population. In 2001, the ST population of the State was 9, 93,426 i.e. 31.05 per cent of the total population. Out of total ST population, 5, 04,320 were males and remaining 4, 89,106 females. As per Census Report 2011, ST

population of the State is 11, 66, 813, which is 31.75 per cent of the total population of the State. Out of total ST population, 5,88,327 are males and 5,78,486 are females. In 2001, the largest tribal group was the *Kokborok* speaking *Tripuris* who had a population of 543,848 in 2001 census, representing 16.99 per cent of the state population and 54.7 per cent of the scheduled tribe population. The other major tribes in order of decreasing population are *Reang* (16.6% of the tribal population), *Jamatia* (7.5%), *Chakma* (6.5%), *Halam* (4.8%), *Mog* (3.1%), *Munda*, *Kuki*, and *Garos*. *Kokborok* is a prominent language among the tribes. Several other languages such as Hindi, Mog, Oriya, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Manipuri, Halam, Garo, and Chakma belonging to Indo- European and Sino-Tibetan families are spoken in the State. In 2001, the total literacy rate of ST population was 56.48 per cent, out of which male literacy rate was 67.97 per cent and female literacy rate was 44.60 per cent. The Census 2011 data reveals that the overall ST literacy rate reached to 79.05 per cent. The ST literacy rate has significantly increased during period of 2001-2011 in Tripura i.e, about 22.57 per cent.

The Census-2001 data revealed that total SC population was 5, 55,724, which consists 17.37 per cent of the total population in the State. Out of this, total SC males were 2, 83,186 and remaining 2, 72,538 SC females. In contrast, the Census-2011 data shows that Schedule Caste (SC) population of the State is 6,54,918 (17.8%). The total SC male is 3,34,370 and SC female is 3,20,548. The demography of Scheduled Castes in the State is not confined to any particular '*paras*' or '*bastis*'. The SC literacy rate has increased to 89.45 per cent in 2011 from 74.68 per cent in 2001. During the period of 2001-2011, an increase of 14.77 per cent is noticed in SC literacy rate.

The present rural population in Tripura forms about 73.82 per cent in 2011 against 81 per cent in 2001 and 84.70 per cent in 1991. Total rural population is 27,10,051 in 2011, out of which males and females population are 13,85,505 and 13,24,546 respectively. In 2011, 26.17 per cent of the State's population is living in urban areas as against about 19 per cent in 2001 and 15.30 per cent in 1991. Total urban population is 9,60,981 in 2011, out of which males and females population are 4,86,362 and 4,74,619, respectively.

4.3.7 Religion

The religion data has not been released in Census Report 2011. Table-4.7 shows the religious communities of Tripura in 2001. The religion figure for Census- 2001 reveals that 85.60 per cent of the population was the Hindu population in Tripura. The Muslims, Christians and Buddhists population were 8 per cent, 3.20 per cent and 3.10 per cent respectively in 2001.

Table-4.7: Religious Communities in Tripura, 2001

<i>Religious Communities</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Literacy rate</i>	<i>Female Literacy</i>	<i>Proportion of Child population</i>
Hindu	27,39,310	85.60	75.30	67.30	13.00
Muslim	2,54,442	8.00	60.90	51.40	18.60
Christian	1,02,489	3.20	67.90	57.30	15.70
Buddhist	98,922	3.10	49.20	37.40	17.90
Sikh	1,182	0.04	98.40	89.50	4.50
Jain	477	0.01	82.90	78.40	11.90
Others	1,277	0.04	75.40	65.30	12.10
Religion not stated	1,104	0.03	73.10	65.90	14.00

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

The Muslim percentage in the State gradually declined from 1971 due to heavy influx of Hindu populations from Bangladesh and the migration of Muslim population to Bangladesh. A majority of the tribes in the State are Hindu and practice Hindu religious rituals and rites. They believe in the existence of God in all the elements of nature as they are animistic. *Mogs* and *Chakmas* are the followers of Buddhism in Tripura. Christianity is chiefly followed by members of the *Lushai*, *Kuki* and *Garo* tribes.

4.4 Social Characteristics

4.4.1 Socio-Economic Status

Based on the result of National Sample Survey (2000), the Planning Commission estimates the state-wide incidence of poverty. According to its estimation, the population below poverty (BPL) in Tripura in 1999/2000 is 34.44 per cent, the sixth highest among all 32 Indian States and Unions (Saxena, 2001). The poverty trend in Tripura (Rural and urban combined) shows that it has decreased by about 20 per cent for the last two decades, but the total number of BPL population has increased from

approximately 8,00,000 to 13,00,000. The BPL population ratio decreased by nearly 29 per cent at the national level during the same period of time, which is much faster than Tripura. Apart from the national sample survey, the Tripura Government conducted the BPL census in 1997 (Tripurainfo, 2016). According to this census, out of the entire BPL households, about 50 per cent ST category and about 32 per cent SC category, the remainder 18 per cent belong to OBC and general category households. The number of families living below poverty line in rural areas was 5, 95,397, which accounts 67 per cent of the total number of the rural families. ST and SC account for 55 per cent of the BPL families in rural areas. Female headed house hold constitutes 11 per cent of the rural BPL families and 2 per cent of the rural BPL families are headed by the physically handicapped. The Table-4.8 shows the District-wise distribution of the BPL families.

Table-4.8: District-wise Distribution of the BPL Families

<i>District</i>	<i>No. of Rural Families</i>	<i>SC BPL Families (%)</i>	<i>ST BPL Families (%)</i>	<i>% of Total BPL Families</i>
West	277,294	23.0	29.8	63.0
North	104,802	19.6	24.7	65.2
South	148,181	21.4	33.7	73.0
Dhalai	65,120	20.0	56.5	71.4
Total/average	595,397	21.6	33.1	66.8

Source: Tripurainfo, 2016

4.4.2 Employment

The inclusive growth must create adequate livelihood opportunities commensurate with the expectations of a growing labour force. The late 2007 onwards, it shows that the entire world economy including the developed nation is suffering from the serious employment crisis due to economic recession. Generation of productive and gainful employment, on a sufficient scale especially in 12th Plan period (2012-13 to 2016-17) to absorb the growing educated labour force is one of the main strategies of the government for achieving the inclusive growth. The experiences in-acceleration of employment growth among educated people in the State during 11th Plan period (2007-08 to 2011-12) is modest.

The total number of workers (main & marginal) in Tripura is 14, 69,521 (Male-11, 59,561; Female-3, 09,960) as per the Census, 2011. Out of the total worker

(main & marginal), rural workers are 11, 16,076 (75.95%) and 3, 53,445 (24.05%) are in the urban areas. Out of the total population of Tripura in 2011, the proportion of total workers (main & marginal) is 39.99 percent, which was 36.24 per cent in 2001. The total main workers are 10, 77,019 in 2011, out of which 83.44 per cent are male and 17.56 per cent are female workers (Census, 2011).

On the other hand, job seekers have been increasing over the years due to higher literacy rates in the State and the employment situation has now become alarming. In 1990, there were 1,76,742 unemployed job seekers in the State, which rose to 2,50,729 in 1998 and further, raised to 3,66,207 in March 2002. In March 2005, it stood at 4,21,835 and in March 2008, the figure touched at 5,32,775 and further to 6,41,313 in 31st March 2014. The number of women seeking jobs is 2, 42,199. Till recent year, Government sector is only avenues for organized employment in this backward State. Tripura has almost no industry under the organized sector except brickfields and age old tea industry, wherein scope of organized employment for the educated persons are negligible. In order to increase the employment rate in rural and unorganized sector, various programs like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Tripura Urban Employment Program (TUEP), Prime Minister Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY), Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)) are in operation.

4.4.3 Education

There was a constitutional provision to provide free elementary education to all children in the age group 6-14 years in Directive Principles of State Policy. But, later it became a fundamental rights through amendment and accordingly, the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009" was passed and has come into force from April 2010. In order to achieve this, the State is implementing the national programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to enrol 100 per cent children of the 6-14 years age group. A new Scheme namely Rastriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhijan (RMSA) has been launched in 2009-10 under the assistance of the Government of India for universalisation of the secondary education. Tripura has made a comprehensive progress in the field of education since launching of first five-year-plan. Limited economic resources could not stiffen the Government's strong

attitude in providing adequate education facilities including higher education in the State. The State Government provides free education to all the school students up to Class-XII with the main thrust for universalisation of the elementary education.

(a) Pre-school Education under ICDS Project (Anganwadi Centre)

The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) Scheme has been recognized as a Flagship Programme by the Government of India considering its importance in National Development. The main aims and objectives of the ICDS project are to develop the health and nutritional status of the children as well as to build up the bright future of the future citizen of the country. An arrangement has also been made for pre-primary education in the so called *Anganwadi Centers* (AWCs) under ICDS programme. In AWCs, the children are also provided with basic nutrition and scope of amusement. It is found that the State has been running total 9906 *Anganwadi Centers* under ICDS 56 projects, where total 3,77,016 nos. of children are enrolled (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014). The following schemes have been implemented under the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme.

- 1) ICDS (General),
- 2) Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY),
- 3) ICDS (Training),
- 4) Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP),
- 5) Construction of Anganwadi Centre.

(b) School Education

The 7th All India School Education Survey (2002) revealed that in Tripura, out of total 7,538 rural habitations, there were 6,356 (84.42%) habitations having primary stage schooling facilities within 1.0 km. There are 6,213 (82.42%) rural habitations having upper primary stage schooling facilities within 3.0 km. There were 6,054 (80.31%) rural habitations having high State schooling facilities within 4.0 km. There were 5,541 (73.5%) rural habitations having higher secondary stage schooling facilities within 6.0 km (Department of Educational Surveys and Data Processing, Government of India, 2002). As per the Report (2015) published by the School Education Department, Government of Tripura, the total numbers of school in the State is 4850

including 335 English medium school and 80 Girls' school and total number of enrolment is 7, 89,146. The scenario of the school education of the State as on September 2015 is shown in the Table 4.9.

Table-4.9: Total Number of Schools and Enrolment in Tripura, 2015

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>
1.	J.B. (Primary)	2,408
2.	S.B. (Upper primary)	1,256
3.	High Schools (Secondary)	597
4.	H.S. (+2) Schools	409
5.	Madrasa	180
6.	Total Schools (1 to 5)	4,850
7.	Total Enrolments (including pre-primary)	7, 89,146

Source: Department of School Education, Government of Tripura, 2015

(c) Higher Education

The State Department of Higher Education is entrusted with the task of providing opportunities to the students for pursuing higher studies ranging from general education to sports and youth services and also for promotion of art and culture in the State. The State has four Universities namely Tripura University (Central University), Maharaja Bir Bikram University (State), NIT, Agartala (Deemed University) and ICFAI (Private University). Though the Maharaja Bir Bikram University (State) was established in 2015 and is to be operational shortly. In 2007-08, one State Government Agriculture College has been started, which is the only Agriculture College in the State, and namely as College of Agriculture at Lembucherra. In Tripura, there is also a Women's Polytechnic where different courses like Information Technology, Fashion Technology, Medical Lab Technology and Computer Science & Technology are offered. In 2008-09, a Government Veterinary College has been started which is the only Veterinary College in the State at R. K. Nagar, West Tripura. Tripura University (Central University) runs 13- post-graduate courses along with few integrated courses. There are 22 general degree colleges which run under-graduate courses in Science, Arts and Commerce streams at pass and honours level (Department of Higher Education, Government of Tripura, 2016). In total 26 (twenty-six) subjects are offered in under-graduate level at different degree colleges of Tripura having enrolment of more than 37,500 students. In 2005-06, the State Government has set-up a Medical College named as Agartala Government Medical College

(AGMC) and recently another medical college –Tripura Medical College (TMC) came up at Agartala. The Tripura Engineering College has been transformed into the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in 2005-06 after strong persuasion of the State Government with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The Tripura University, which was earlier started in 1987 as State run University has also been converted into Tripura Central University in 2007. Moreover, the State has also an outfit for the IGNOU-Regional Centre, which is a Central University for various degree, diploma and post graduate studies. The Tripura Polytechnic Institute has been converted into the Tripura Institute of Technology (TIT) in 2007-08 for both degree and diploma level programmes. The Tripura Institute of Technology is a modular institute wherein both degree and diploma education are taught. The degree level course includes Civil, Mechanical, Electronics & Tele-communication and Computer Science & Engineering. The diploma level course includes Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Electronic & Tele-communication, Computer Science & Technology, Food Processing Technology, Automobile Engineering and Architectural Engineering. In the private sector, the State has the ICFAI University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Science College, and a Holy Cross College at Agartala and Techno India College.

4.4.4 Health Status

Good health is of paramount importance for a socially and economically productive life. In fact, the well-being of a State depends on sound health of its people to a great extent. It is one of the primary functions of the Government to provide good health care facilities to all its citizens. Health Care in Tripura features a universal health care system run by the State Government. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) is a major partner and in conjugation with the State Health Department, are doing effective work especially at the grass root level, giving the entire health services in the State a major boost. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Tripura is responsible for healthcare administration in the State. Like other parts of the country, the health care infra-structure is divided into three tiers—the primary health care network, the secondary care system comprising district and sub-divisional hospitals and tertiary hospitals providing specialty and super specialty care. There are 23 Hospitals, 18 Rural Hospitals and Community Health Centres (CHCs), 84 Primary Health Centres (PHCs), 1,101 Sub-Centres/Dispensaries, 08 Blood Banks and 07 Blood Storage

centers (see Table-4.10) in 2013-14 (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014).

Table-4.10: District-wise Health Care Services Provided by State Government, 2014

<i>Name of the Institution</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Khowai</i>	<i>Sepahijala</i>	<i>Gomoti</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Dhalai</i>	<i>Unakoti</i>	<i>Total</i>
State Hospitals*	06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	06
District Hospitals	-	-	01	01	01	01	01	01	06
Sub-Divisional Hospitals	00	02	00	01	01	02	02	03	11
Rural Hospital & CHCs	02	04	02	01	01	03	04	01	18
PHCs	09	09	07	07	14	09	17	12	84
Sub-Centres	203	152	118	80	92	155	164	137	1101
Blood Banks	04	-	-	01	01	01	-	01	08
Blood storage	-	01	01	-	01	01	02	02	08
Telemedicine Centre	03	04	02	03	05	03	03	05	24

*Including Ayurvedic and Homoeopathy

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

Homoeopathic and Ayurvedic medicines are also popular in Tripura. The National Family Health Survey-3 (2005–06) revealed that 20 per cent of the residents of Tripura do not generally use government health facilities, and prefers private medical sector. This is overwhelmingly less compared to the national level, where 65.6 per cent do not rely on government facilities. Therefore, people of Tripura are more dependent on government run health care services. Tripura residents like rest of India also cite poor quality of health care as the most frequent reason for non-reliance over public health sector, but they are forced to avail due to their poor economic condition. Other reasons include distance of the public sector facility, long waiting time, and inconvenient hours of operation. Both the medical colleges are located at the State capital of Agartala. Tripura, being located in south-west corner of the North-Eastern Region, has suffered due to infrastructure and other bottlenecks, which has adversely affected the economic development of the State. The high incidence of poverty and backwardness are also indicators of poor the health condition of the State. Shortage of appropriate health manpower is another factor affecting the health care services in

Tripura. However, due to concerted efforts made by the State Government, there has been a positive change in the health scenario in recent years. Table 4.11 shows the birth rate, death rate and infant mortality rate in Tripura as well as in India.

Table-4.11: Birth Rate, Death Rate and Infant Mortality Rate, 2013

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Health Indices</i>	<i>Tripura (%)</i>	<i>All India (%)</i>
1.	Birth rate	13.7	21.4
2.	Death rate	4.7	7.0
3.	Infant Mortality rate	26.0	40.0
4.	Natural growth rate	9.0	14.4

Source: National Rural Health Mission, Tripura, 2016

4.4.5 Culture

The diverse ethno-linguistic groups of Tripura have given rise to a composite culture. The dominant ethnic groups are Bengali, Tripuris, Manipuri, Jamatia, Reang, Noatia, Koloi, Murasing, Chakma, Halam, Garo, Kuki, Mizo, Mogh, Munda, Oraon, Santhal, and Uchoi. Bengali people represent the largest non-tribal community of the State. Bengali culture is the main non-tribal culture. Indeed many elite tribal families which reside in urban centers have actively embraced Bengali culture and language. The Tripuri kings were great patrons of Bengali culture especially literature and Bengali language was the language of the court. The Nobel laureate Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore had notable friendship with the Tripuri kings. Music and dance are integral to the tribal culture of Tripura. Some of the indigenous musical instruments are the *sarinda*, *chongpreng*, and *sumui* (a type of flute). Each tribal community has its own repertoire of songs and dances performed during weddings, religious occasions and other festivities. The Tripuri and Jamatia tribes perform *goria* dance during the *Goria* puja. *Jhum* dance (also called *tangbiti* dance), *lebang* dance, *mamita* dance, and *mosaksulmani* dance are other Tripuri dance forms (Wikipedia, 2015). Reang community, the second largest tribe of the State, is noted for its *hojagiri* dance that is performed by young girls balanced on earthen pitchers. *Bizhu* dance is performed by the Chakmas during the *Bizhu* festival (the last day of the Bengali month of *Chaitra*). Besides tribal music, mainstream Indian musical elements such as Indian classical music and dance, *Rabindra Sangeet* are also practiced. Sachin Dev Burman, a member of the Tripuri royal family, was a maestro in the *filmi genre* of Indian music. Hindus believe that *Tripureshwari* is the patron

goddess of Tripura and an aspect of Shakti. Durga puja, Kali puja, Ashokastami and the worship of the Chaturdasha deities are some important festivals. Some festivals represent confluence of different tribal traditions such as Ganga puja, Garia puja, Kherchi puja and Ker puja. Unakoti, Pilak and Devtamura are historic places where large collections of stone carvings and rock sculptures are noted. These sculptures are evidence of the presence of Buddhist and Brahmanical orders for centuries. These sculptures represent a rare artistic fusion of traditional organized religions and tribal influence.

4.4.6 Media

As of 2012, 56 daily and weekly newspapers are published in Tripura. Most of the newspapers are published in Bengali, except one in Kokborok daily (the *HachukniKok*), one Manipuri weekly (the *Marup*), two English dailies (*The Tripura Times* and the *Tripura Observer*) and three bilingual weeklies (the *Yapri*, the *Chinikok* and the *Kaakai*). Notable dailies include the *Daily Desher Katha*, *Ajkal Tripura*, *DainikSambad*, and *Syandan Patrika* (Directorate of Information & Cultural Affairs, Government of Tripura). There are 84 telephone exchanges (for landlines) and 709 post offices in the State. As of 2011, the Central government run BSNL has 32,164 telephone connections and 3, 36,992 GSM mobile service connections in Tripura (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2013).

4.4.7 Sports

Tripura is a land full of traditional games and sports. The traditional games of Tripura are called *Thwgmung*. It is common in almost all the clans in Tripuri. The youths of Tripura are very fond of their traditional games and sports. Other traditional games of this State are *Achugwi Phan Sohlaimung*, *Bumanikotor*, *DwkhwiSotonmung*, *Kaldong*, etc (Wikipedia, 2015). Football and cricket are the most popular sports in the State. The State is a regular participant of the Indian National Games and the North Eastern Games. Tripura has produced some good sportsmen in the country. The names of Gymnast Kalpana Debnath and Mantu Debnath (Arjuna awardees), Diptanu (Gymnast), Chaiti (First tribal girl in the country to have successfully crossed over the Gulf of Torrunous in Greece), Rati Ranjan Dhar and many more shine in the sports arena of Tripura and the country as well. Dipa Karmakar is an India artistic gymnast representing the state of Tripura in upcoming Rio Olympic Games 2016 in Brazil. She

has brought laurels to the country by winning the bronze medal in women's vault final in the Commonwealth Games, 2014. She is the first Indian woman to win a gymnastic medal in Commonwealth games.

4.5 Economic Characteristics

4.5.1 Agriculture

Tripura is mainly hilly and extensively covered with forest during the erstwhile Maharaja's time and '*Jhum*' popularly known as shifting cultivation, was practiced in the hilly areas as the only form of agriculture. The plough cultivation was probably introduced in this State during 15th century A.D. when the plain land cultivators from adjoining districts of Bengal came to this State. The *Jhumias* coming in contacts with immigrants learnt the benefits of plough cultivation and became interested in owning land for cultivation. Agriculture and allied activities has been remained as the backbone of the State's economy. State's rural economy is entirely driven by this sector. The economy of Tripura is agrarian and rural based, where more than 50 per cent of population dependent on agriculture and allied activities. Agriculture and allied sectors in the economy of Tripura primarily refers to cultivation, animal husbandry, pisciculture, horticulture and floriculture. The State's favorable agro-climatic conditions, fertile soils, sub-tropical climate with pockets of temperate zones, large *tilla* lands and abundance of rainfall really offers immense scope for development of horticulture sector comprising of fruits, vegetables, spices, plantation crops, floriculture, medicinal and aromatic plants etc. Small and marginal farmers constitute 96 per cent of the total farmers in Tripura against all India 78 per cent (Census, 2011). During 11th plan period (2007-12), the annual average growth rate of agriculture and allied activities has been increased to 6.4 per cent as against 3.9 per cent in 10th plan period. The contribution of agriculture and allied activities to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is about 22 per cent in the terminal year of 11th plan. Food security as well as providing the gainful employment to the rural labor force is the main attention of the State Government. The activities of agriculture and allied sector in the State by and large are in the hands of small and marginal cultivators. The ongoing surge in prices of the food items in the State as well as in the country since 2006 has significant implications for the agriculture sector and overall macro-economic and financial stability. Agriculture growth has remained lower than

the growth rates witnessed in the industrial and services sectors in Tripura. Availability of cultivable land is one of the main constraints in the State. The 60 per cent of the geographical area is high land and only about 27 per cent is available for cultivation. There is hardly any scope of getting additional land for cultivation of food crops. The performance in agriculture continues to be essentially monsoon driven. On the other hand, increasing population in the State has posed a serious threat to agriculture scenario in the years to come. At present, there is a gap between actual production and requirement of food grains in the State. The annual requirement of food grains by 2013-14 was 8.66 lakh tons and the production of food grain was about 7.26 lakh tons. As per available data by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura (2014), the production of principle crops is shown in the Table-4.12.

Table-4.12: Production of Principle Crops (in MT) in Tripura, 2013-14

<i>Sl. No</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Production (2013-14)</i>
1.	Rice	in Metric Tons (MT)	7,11,831
2.	Wheat	in Metric Tons (MT)	300
3.	Sugarcane	in Metric Tons (MT)	49,598
4.	Cotton	in Bale (170 Kg.)	1,395
5.	Jute	in Bale (180 Kg.)	5,369
6.	Mesta	in Bale (180 Kg.)	7,003
7.	Total pulses	in Metric Tons (MT)	8,696
8.	Total Oilseeds	in Metric Tons (MT)	4,613
9.	Potato	in Metric Tons (MT)	1,53,803
10.	Maize	in Metric Tons (MT)	5,863

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014

4.5.2 Industry and Commerce

Economic development will be myth without industrialization. The Indian entrepreneurs has given much flexibility as they needed for faster industrialization through the economic reform process especially for taking their own decisions on technology, location, size of investment etc. and as result, the problem of these States were not adequately covered, who are basically industrially backward. Unfortunately, Tripura has not been able to attract investments in this sector and remained an industrially backward State due to its unique economic disadvantages arising out of remoteness and poor connectivity, hilly terrain, weak resource base, poor infrastructure, etc. as well as shallow markets. Although, industrial development has

always remained a thrust area in the State Government's economic policies, the industrial sector of Tripura continues to be highly underdeveloped - brick field and tea industry are the only two industrial sectors. Tripura has considerable reservoirs of natural gas, but has meagre deposits of other types of minerals like clay mineral, glass sand, lignite and limestone. The level of industrialization of the State is evident from its contribution to the State's GSDP at current prices, the contribution of the manufacturing sector both organized and un-organized combined together was 2.17 per cent in 2009-10, which itself shows low level of industrialization. The result of 6th Economic Census, 2013 reveals that there were 2,37,902 establishments in Tripura engaged in different economic activities other than crop production and plantation in the State. Out of which, 1, 44, 674 (60.81%) establishments are in rural areas and remaining 93,228 (39.19%) establishments in urban areas (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, 2013). Around 2, 46,565 (61%) of the establishments runs without any contractual workers and remaining 1, 57,650 (39%) establishments runs with at least one contractual worker in the State.

4.5.3 Energy and Resources

(a) Power

Electricity plays an important role in the economic and social development of a State. The progress in power sector in the Tripura has been quite impressive despite geographical, economic and infrastructural bottlenecks. The State has two sources of generation mainly hydro and thermal power. Out of the two major sources of power generation, thermal power accounts for 96 per cent, while remaining 4 per cent is generated from hydel power (i.e. Gumti Hydro Power Project). Present peak demand of the State is 266 Mega Watt (MW). Power generation from three generating stations (Rokhiya Thermal Power Plant, Baramura Thermal Power Plant, and Gumti Hydro Power Project) is about 113 MW. About 130-140 MW is imported during peak load period from North Eastern Grid and Palatana Project. There still remains a shortfall of about 15-20 MW. The shortfall is resorted by load shedding of one hour to one and half hour during peak load period. The installed capacity is 152.00 MW and total power generated within the State is 756.94 Million Unit (MU) and purchased from central sector grid is 1046.52 MU in 2014-15. The total unit sold to ultimate

consumers in 2014-15 is 1124.34 MU at 132 Kilo Volt (KV) Bus. Out of this, maximum power is sold for domestic consumption which is 430.87 MU followed by 107.12 MU for irrigation/ public water purposes, commercial consumption at 71.36 MU and industrial at 40.91 MU, respectively in 2014-15.

b) Natural Gas

Natural Gas is available in the non-associate form, with a high methane content of up to 97 per cent. However, hydrogen sulfide, sulfur and other noxious elements are almost entirely absent from these natural gases. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) of Government of India is the main gas producing company in Tripura. The current production potential is 4.5 Million Meter Standard Cubic Meter per Day (MMSCMD) which is fully committed for power projects. ONGC and GAIL (gas Authority of India Ltd) –Jubilant Consortium needs to speed up gas exploration, so that more gas becomes available for taking up gas-based projects. It is found that ONGC established gas reserves of 30.65 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM) and the present production Potential is 2.03 MMSCMD, where prognosticated reserves is 400 BCM and the net recoverable reserves is 16.91 BCM (Department of Industry & Commerce, Government of Tripura, 2016).

4.5.4 Transport

Tripura is having only one major road, the National Highway 44 (NH-44), which connects it to the rest of India. The national highway starts at Sabroom in southern Tripura, goes north to the capital Agartala, turns east and then north-east to enter the State of Assam. Locally known as "*Assam-Agartala Road*", the NH-44 is often called the lifeline of Tripura. However, the highway is single lane and of poor quality; often landslides, rains or other disruptions on the highway cut off the State from its neighbors. Another National Highway, NH-44A, connects the town Manu in South Tripura district with Aizawl, Mizoram. Tripura Road Transport Corporation (TRTC) is the government transport agency overlooking public transport on road. A hilly and land-locked state, Tripura is dependent mostly on roads for transport. The total length of roads in the state is 19040 km of which national highways constitute 448 km and state highways 689 km, as of March, 2012 (Table- 4.13). Rail transport was absent in the State until 2008–09, when a rail connection was established between the capital Agartala and Lumding junction in Assam. This is a meter gauge rail track

connecting to the usual Indian gauge at Lumding. Agartala Railway Station is located 5.5 km from the main city of Agartala. From the year 2016, the 413 km route connects to Lumding converted to broad gauge track and is on its way for a connection towards the extreme end point of the state at Sabroom. Agartala is the second capital city (after Guwahati, Assam) in Northeast India to be connected to the country's railway network. The total length of railway track in this State is 153 km (approximately) following which the territory of Assam starts. Residents in rural areas frequently use waterways as a mode of transport. Agartala Airport is the only airport of Tripura. The Agartala–Kolkata and Agartala–Guwahati flights are particularly important for rapid connectivity with the rest of India. Private helicopter services are available between the capital and major towns (Kailashahar, Dharmanagar) as well as to more remote areas such as Kanchanpur and Gandacherra.

Table-4.13: Distribution of Total Length of Roads in Tripura, 2012

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Communication through Road</i>	<i>Total Length (in Kilometer)</i>
1.	Nationality Highway	645
2.	State Highway	532
3.	Major Districts Road	90
4.	Other Districts Road	1,195
5.	Village Road(PWD)	9,674
6.	Village Road(RD/ ZillaParisad)	8,159
7.	IBB Road	726
	Total Roads	21,021
	Total Railway Linked	153

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2015

4.5.6 Banking

Banking is one of the important instruments for economic development. The Census, 2011 data reveals that proportion of households availing banking services in the State was 26.5 per cent that is low compare to all India level of 35.5 per cent. The Table-4.14 shows the distribution of bank branches in Tripura as on September 2013.

Table-4.14: Distribution of Bank Branches in Tripura, 2013

Sl. No.	Type of the Bank	Distribution of the Bank Branch			
		Rural	Semi Urban	Urban	Total
1.	Commercial Bank/ Nationalized Bank	151	86	70	307
2.	Regional Rural Bank (TGB)	97	31	10	138
3.	Tripura State Co-operative Bank	35	13	13	61
	Total	283	130	93	506

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2015

4.5.7 Possible Future Economic Prosperity

a) Rubber

India ranked third in terms of production of natural rubber in the world after Thailand and Indonesia. Tripura has taken the 2nd place next to Kerala in the natural rubber production map of India. According to the Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Tripura, total area under Rubber Plantation is about 63,223 hectares in the year 2013. Total Rubber Production during 2012-13 was about 37,339 MT (Tripura Forest Development & Plantation Corporation Ltd). The State Government has set-up a Rubber Park at Bodhjung Nagar over 90 acres of land with technical support of the Rubber Board, Government of India.

b) Bamboo

Endowed with rich and diverse resources of bamboo with traditional usage – Tripura is home to 21 species of bamboo out of 130 species available in India. While bamboo based economic activities are playing an important role in the economy of Tripura, their potential is significantly greater. According to the Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Tripura, the estimated value of the bamboo industry market in Tripura is Rs. 70.00 crores per annum and with appropriate sectoral intervention, it has potential to grow up to Rs. 400 crores per annum in next five years. A Bamboo Park is being set up, at a total cost of Rs. 24.94 crores at outskirts of capital city Agartala, to facilitate setting up of bamboo-based industries.

c) **Food Processing**

The agro-climatic conditions are favorable for growing various fruits and horticultural crops. An Agri Export Zone for Pineapple is being developed. There is a vast potential for setting up of food processing industries in the State. The State also has potential in the meat processing sector. There is an ample scope for area expansion under organic spice cultivation in Tripura. Major spices include Ginger, Turmeric, Chilli, Black Pepper, Cinnamon, *Tezpatta*. A modern food park has been set up at Bodhjungnagar near Agartala, to give a fillip to this sector. The total area of the park is 30 acres, out of which 20 acres have been earmarked for individual private units (Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Tripura). A Mega Food Park (MFP) has been approved by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Government of Tripura, which is being implemented by the private entrepreneurs. The State government has made available about 50 acres of land at Tulukona (near Agartala) for this project (Investors' Portal of MOFPI, 2016).

d) **Tea Industry**

Tripura is categorized as a traditional tea-growing State with about 55 Tea Estates and 4,350 small tea growers, producing about 8.9 million kg. tea per year. This makes Tripura the 5th largest, among the 14 tea-producing States, after Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. There is considerable scope to increase the productivity and area under tea plantation. The tea currently produced in Tripura is recognized for its good blending qualities. There is considerable scope for investment in the tea sector of the State, especially for blending units. The Tripura Government claims that the production of tea in the State is currently estimated to 7.5 million kg in 2013 (Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Tripura). There are 21 tea processing factories in the State including recently commissioned Dhalai Tea Processing factory.

e) **Handlooms and Handicrafts**

The handloom industry is playing an important role in providing large-scale employment in Tripura. There are about 1.19 lakh weavers in the State, out of which 17,637 weavers are in the clusters. The development of this handloom industry helps in the natural upliftment of the rural people including the weaker and backward

sections. Tripura has some unique traditional design and arts in handloom textile, which have its own place of pride even today. Both commercial looms and non-commercial looms operate in the State. Non-commercial looms are operated by the tribal inhabitants of the State. They weave fabrics for their own consumption, whereas the commercial looms are controlled by the Bengalis as well as Manipuri weavers. So the handloom industry of Tripura is the reflection of Tribal, Manipuri and Bengali artisans and culture. The handicrafts sector craved for growth since quite a few years, which has now actually turned prolific. The trends into this field have taken constructive efforts for swiftly raising the numbers of artisans in this sector for production of the handicrafts products commercially under an umbrella of a cluster approach. The Government of India is trying to organize and develop this sector fast by providing different assistance and support under central sector / State schemes for Common Facility Centre (CFC). The Tripura government has set an ideal target for increasing production to an amount of Rs. 30 cores.

f) Tourism

Tourism has emerged as one of the most important segment of the economics, which has significant potential in generation of employment opportunities. In India, tourism is the second largest foreign exchange earning sector. Endowed with rich variety of tourist attraction, Tripura also has vast potential for the growth of tourism. The legendary State with its natural beauty of lustrous green valleys, the hill ranges with its flora and fauna, the fascinating blend of cultural, glorious history and traditional unique craftsmanship is in a highly advantageous position for development of tourism. It is having Ujjayanta Palace – a palace of erstwhile Maharajas, many temples including Buddhist temple, Maharaja Bir Bikram College complex, Museum, Government complexes, etc. The famous *Chatturdas Devata* temple located about 6 km away from Agartala, is an old temple established by the then Maharaja of Tripura. The Sipahijala is a wild life century with distinctive flora and fauna, located about 23 km away from Agartala. *Neermahal*, built by Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur as his summer resort, is the only water palace in the North-East India. The 500 years old famous *Tripureswari* Kali Temple at Udaipur is another famous tourist spot for the Hindus, built by Maharaja Dhanya Manikya. This is one of the 51 pithasthan of the Hindu pilgrimage. *Pilak* is a place of attraction for its archaeological Buddhist remains of eight / ninth centuries, located at a distance of 100 km away from

Agartala. Number of terracotta plaques, sealing with *stupa* and stone images of *Avalokiteswara* including image of *Narasinha* have been found in *Pilak*, which date backs of Buddhist period. Kamalasagar Kali temple was built on a hill-top by Maharaja Dhanaya Manikya in the late 15th centuries. It situated about 30 km away from Agartala, just adjacent the Bangladesh Border. Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary located in South Tripura District, about 110 km away from Agartala, is famous for Bison locally known as '*Gaba*' and several species of primates. Unakokoti is the Lord Shiva Pilgrim dates back to 7th or 8th centuries (Tripura Tourism Development Corporation, Ltd., Government of Tripura). There are numerous rock-cut images available in the area and it is a good heritage location for the tourists. Unakoti is considered as the largest Bass Relief i.e. a kind of sculpture which shapes are carved in a manner that it is slightly higher than the flat background, in South-East Asia. Dumboor Lake has a water area of 41 Sq. km with unending spell of luxury and green vegetation all around having 48 islands. Migratory birds visit the lake in winter and Dumboor is a very good tourist location for the nature lovers as well as the tourists. Jampui Hills is the permanent seat of eternal spring situated at an altitude of 3,000 ft above the sea level. Jampui Hill is famous for its charming landscape and enjoyable climate. Therefore, having all these potentials for tourism, if the proper infrastructural and other facilities are developed by the State government, tourism may contribute hugely in the State economy.

4.6 Challenges and Problems

Tripura scores well in terms of literacy rate, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, total fertility rate, which are above the national level standards. But, Tripura is characterized by its unique geographical isolation, poor infrastructure facilities, communication bottlenecks, inadequate exploitation of natural resources (natural gas, rubber, forest, etc.), higher incidence of poverty, low capital formation, backward in industrialization and high level of un-employment. Beside this, the economy of this State has suffered disturbed conditions of extremism and insurgency over last two decades which directly or indirectly hindered the economic development process. Some of the major challenges and problems are discussed below:

4.6.1 Trans-Asian Highway/Railway

The Trans-Asia Highway should pass through Tripura to connect East/South East Asian countries, so that the entire North-Eastern Region becomes a hub for promotion of South-East Asia Growth quadrangle as per “Look East Policy” of Government of India.

4.6.2 Irregular Direct Bus Service between Agartala and Kolkata via Bangladesh

Influenced by the strong demand of the people of Tripura, the State Government submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India for introducing a direct bus service between Agartala and Kolkata via Dhaka to get the full benefit of both short journey i.e. saving of time and expenditure. Accordingly, after a few years an agreement has been signed in between Government of India and the Republic of Bangladesh for issue of double entry visa to the Indian Nationals. This will reduce journey time vis-à-vis the cost of travel. Although the same has all ready started during few years back but till it is not so regular.

4.6.3 Airports

Due to poor/tenuous road and rail infrastructure, the people in the State are dependent mainly on air services for traveling to the main land. Though the runway at Agartala Airport has been extended including night landing facilities by airbus, additional infrastructure are required to be created for new control tower cum technical block, extension of the existing apron and setting up of cargo handling facilities including cold storage. There is a need to have few more airports in the State.

4.6.4 Transit Facility from Agartala to Bangladesh Airport

Currently, direct Agartala-Dhaka air services are not available. The State Government has requested to Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India to consider air connectivity with Dhaka initially. This is likely to facilitate movement of foreign tourists especially in Tripura as well as other North Eastern States.

4.6.5 Border Trade with Bangladesh

The State had transport links with and through Bangladesh, before partition of India in 1947, which have been snapped after the independence of India. Official trade

between Tripura and Bangladesh started during 1994-95, but unofficial or informal trade has been going on for long. Official trade is only about Rs. 10 crores per annum, but the informal trade was estimated over Rs.100 crores (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, 2014). The volume must have significantly gone up since then. This indicates strong complementarities of the economies of Tripura and bordering areas of Bangladesh. In fact, the markets in towns of Tripura and the bordering towns of Bangladesh affect each other. However, since the trade presently goes on informally, it causes a lot of difficulties and distortions at present and puts a lot of strain even on security forces, who are to work to prevent such trade. In January 2010, an agreement was signed between India and Bangladesh for promotion of larger foreign trade with Bangladesh through Land Custom Stations of Tripura. In 2015, the first Indo-Bangla border *haat* in Tripura was inaugurated. Before this, the State border trade was going on at Moreh on Indo-Myanmar border and similar mechanism could be introduced for Indo-Bangladesh border in Tripura. Tripura Government had proposed to set up eight borders '*haats*' along the State's borders with Bangladesh, but the governments of the two countries have so far agreed to set up only four.

4.6.6 The Land Constraints

More than 60 per cent of the State is under forests and only 27 per cent land available for agriculture cultivation is and far below the national average of 43 per cent. At the same time, it presents a real challenge for development, as the development policies did not directly involve forests for the economic development of the State. The new legislation, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, has significant implications for land-use in forest areas, as well as, for the livelihood of tribal and forest-dwelling peoples.

In conclusion, it can be said that Tripura is a small State of India with people of multi-ethnic and multi-cultures, which adds immensely to the beauty of the country. As it is a hilly State, so it has very rich natural resources. Tripura has achieved significant progress in general education and overall literacy as well as in some health matters like having low birth rate, death rate as well as infant mortality. But the State is experiencing high rate of poverty, low per capita income, high unemployment, inadequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and communication bottleneck, inadequate exploitation and use of forest and mineral

resources, and low progress in industrial sector. Basic physical infrastructures like dependable transport system, power, etc. are prerequisite for economic development. Even though, there has been some improvement in the availability of infrastructure in the State during previous plan periods, the present state of infrastructure, both in terms of quantity and quality, has remained abysmally poor as compared to the national level and even in comparison to other north-eastern States. Tripura does not have facilities for inland water transport. Transport by road is, therefore, the only dependable means of transport. Extremely hostile, difficult, hilly terrain and high rainfall make construction and maintenance of roads and other transport network difficult and expensive. Condition of the State highways and district roads is not up to the mark and needs substantial investment. The State has not received significant investment from the Government of India or private sectors. The State is a net importer of capital, through Central transfers as Grants and Loans, but is unable to retain the transferred capital because of reverse transfers as payments for food and other essential imports. The present low Credit-Deposit ratio is a very serious constraint to the increase of labour productivity in the State. This is compounded by the practical collapse of both short-term crop credit and investment credit. It is clear that without institutional credit mechanism these sectors cannot develop up to the desired level. The industrialization in the State is yet to take off and industry sector is not able to open employment opportunities despite government's effort for comprehensive base for the industrialization. On the other hand, agriculture sector has become stagnant and not ready to absorb growing demand for employment. Further, development scenario of different districts within Tripura is also not balanced. Dhalai district is still remaining the most backward area among the other districts of the State. The challenge before the State is to maintain rapid sectoral transformation. The development strategy needs to concentrate on increased investments in infrastructure and human resource development particularly in health and education. The developmental policies should consider and address the local needs and aspirations of the people of Tripura.

Figure-4.1: Map of Tripura



Source: Directorate of Information & Technology, Government of Tripura