**Tripura Integration**

Tripura is claimed to be one of the oldest princely State of ancient India. The historical chapter of the Royal line of Tripura known as Manikya Dynasty had actually begun the reign of Maharaja Maha Manikya who ascended the throne in 1400 A.D. Maharaja Maha Manikya was the first ruler who started rulling the State under the Royal title of Manikya. The long period over 547 years altogether 35 Maharajas ruled the kingdom of Tripura. The last king Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur reigned for the period from 1923 to 1947.

The state of Tripura was a small tribal kingdom. During the British rule in India the kingdom did not come directly under the British but the king pay tribute every year and was counted as one of the princely states of British India. However, during the Partition of Bengal in 1897 many Bengali Hindus migrated to the state and occupy mainly the plains. The migration of people from Bangladesh continued even after independence. The Tripuri people, for instance, who constituted more than 85 percent of the population in 1947, are now less than 30 percent.

Tripura was never part of India. Even during British rule Tripura was never annexed to British India. Bir Bikram, the last independent king, died on May 17, 1947. Three months later, when the British left India, the situation was fluid enough for India to annex the kingdom. Indian agents spread the rumour that Muslim refugees from neighbouring East Pakistan were hatching a conspiracy to merge Tripura with Pakistan. As a condition for India's "help", the Queen of Tripura was made to sign the Tripura Merger Agreement, in September 1947. However, its final integration with India was given effect from October 15, 1949, and then Tripura became "Part-C state" state of the Indian Union administered by a Chief Commissioner as its administrative head. Tripura became a Union Territory without legislature with effect from November 1, 1956.

Under the Act of State Re-organization the Territorial Council was set up consisting of 32 members including 2 nominee members. Tripura Territorial Council was converted to the Tripura Legislative Assembly on 1 July, 1963 and Council of Ministers was formed for the first time under the Chief Ministership of Sri Sachindralal Singha. The first Legislature of the State began with strength of 30 members. The same democracy process continued up to 1971 and it attained statehood on January 21, 1972. However, the radical section of the Tripuris question the mode of integration of the state into the Indian Union and the increasing migration from Bangladesh.

Thus, mode of integration involved negotiations, promises, baits and even force. Some areas like Naga Hills and Manipur refused to merge with India and desired withdrawal from the Union. Even before the national government could stabilise itself, the fragility of the integration was visible. Secessionist demands and withdrawal declarations were voiced from several quarters of the union.