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Introduction

Tripura will go to the polls for electing a new State Assembly and Government early next year. The present Left Front has been heading the government continuously since 1993 and it is confidently seeking a mandate again. There had been a Left Front Government from 1978 to 1987 also. But this election in Tripura is no routine election.

The election takes place when the BJP-RSS combine is in power at the Centre and is using that power against all dissent and opposition, specifically targeting the Left led Governments in Tripura and Kerala. The BJP President Amit Shah has introduced a new form of politics, encounter politics, in which political principles, honesty, ethics, probity, democratic norms and so on are totally expendable and “encountered” in a no holds barred attempt to capture power at all and at any cost. In both these States, the BJP-RSS is using violence and divisive politics as an instrument to destabilize the situation. Under the Modi-Shah leadership the BJP seeks to subvert the democratic process and grab power.

Shah has declared that Tripura is their next target.

In Tripura, without winning a single seat in the elections, the BJP has grabbed the status of the main opposition party. In other States it uses the CBI or the Enforcement Directorate and Income tax department to threaten and blackmail. In Tripura the Modi-Shah duo is up against a highly respected and popular Chief Minister, Manik Sarkar against whom such methods will not work. Nor can they buy up communist MLAs. So they did the next best thing – they engineered defections from most of those elected on a Congress ticket in the last elections and who had shifted to the TMC. The BJP thus created what it thinks is a foothold for itself by swallowing up discredited and corrupt elements and is trying to unite all the anti-communist retrograde forces.

The tried and tested method of the BJP-RSS is to divide the people on the basis of religion. In Tripura with a small minority population, they

believe that communal hate based politics may not be that effective. But, 31 per cent population of Tripura is of tribal communities. So the BJP-RSS has resurrected extremist tribal groups. Specifically it is supporting and patronizing separatist outfits like the Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (NC faction).

The BJP-RSS has unleashed a divisive and incendiary policy of fomenting divisions between tribals and non-tribals in the state, organizing highly provocative forms of so-called protests, staging violent attacks on innocents, and pumping crores of rupees in to the state for spreading lies and rumours. Unprecedented amounts of money are being used by the BJP-RSS in Tripura to create disturbances and to fund violent activities.

The brutal murder of the young and progressive journalist Santanu Bhowmik by men allegedly belonging to the BJP supported IPFT faction, is the dreadful result of this politics being practiced by the BJP.

Create ethnic discord, destroy the unity of the people – this is the real face of the “nationalism” espoused by the BJP-RSS.

This is also an assault on the constitutional framework of our country. The principal of federalism is being attacked by the direct and indirect patronage given by the Central Government to the extremist elements in Tripura against an elected Government in opposition to the Central Government. The extremist elements had direct contact with the PMO and held talks with the Minister of State in the PMO and this was followed by a violent agitation when they returned to the State. What else is this but subversion of democracy and constitutional principles?

What is at stake here is not the Left Front Government or the base of a political party—what is at stake is the unity of the people in a sensitive border State in a region of the country where ethnic discord is the biggest hindrance to development.

Undeterred by the violent tactics being adopted by the BJP-RSS, the Left Front Government in Tripura is following a people-oriented development policy framework. This is the Tripura People First Model.

In this booklet we present a brief record of what the LF government has done in the past years in various fields. From the defence of tribal rights and cultures, to one of the highest rates of poverty reduction, to

record increase in agricultural yields, setting up of industrial units, spread of education—with the State achieving total literacy— opening of healthcare facilities, to record growth in electricity production, one of the highest road densities in the country, and so on.

It is clear from the data presented in this booklet that Tripura has put in place an alternative path or model of governance in a state, even while it is constrained by the unfair centralization of financial and political power exercised by the Central govt. This alternative path is imbued with a people oriented outlook that carefully and meticulously conceptualizes and implements policies that reach the poorest and most isolated communities, empowers them both economically and socially and promotes their political participation.

This policy has refused to accept the prevalent but erroneous premise inspired by the neoliberal policy makers that public expenditure needs to be curtailed and privatization of essential services is the panacea to bring prosperity and development. As we have seen in many countries across the world, and in India too, embracing such policies only increases inequalities and naked exploitation of people, concentrates wealth, and cruelly deprives people of most basic human needs like education, health, employment, social security, etc.

Tripura's Left Front govt. has, within the constraints of running a state govt. with limited powers and limited financial resources clearly shown that it is possible to bring some relief for suffering people, and ensure the basic and universal human rights of education, health, etc.

And, most of the time, the Tripura govt. has had to struggle against the Central govt. for getting its rightful share and resources or against unilateral measures that damage the state's work. This discrimination and high-handedness happened under the erstwhile UPA governments and continues with more vigor under the present Modi govt.

The people of Tripura will undoubtedly foil the BJP-RSS conspiracy. They will defeat this politics of hate. They will defend, protect and strengthen the bonds of unity and harmony which has been built up over years of sacrifice making Tripura a haven of peace in the entire north-east. They will support the path of alternative policies for development being followed by the Left Front Government.

The remarkable achievements of the Tripura Left Front Government need to be taken to the vast mass of people outside Tripura

as a model. The low level and dangerous anti-national politics being played by the BJP-RSS in a sensitive border State driven by partisan ambitions must also be taken to the people of India. The drum beats of BJP brand of nationalism is exposed for what it really is.

This booklet is being published so that a true picture of the struggle of Tripura's people can inspire and inform the struggle against the Modi Government and the BJP-RSS all over India.

We thank all those comrades whose research and writing made this booklet possible.

Brinda Karat

Member, Polit Bureau

12-10-17



Gana Mukti Parishad Rally

Peace Dividend – Curbing Terrorism

Like other North-Eastern states, Tripura too was once torn apart by an armed insurgency that took a horrendous toll of the people, ripped apart the social and economic fabric of the society and caused immense suffering, both from violence and from deprivation of economic development. But Tripura also stands out as an example of how such an insurgency can be defeated through sound political policy.

Briefly, the start of insurgency based on tribal identity politics can be traced to the formation of the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) in 1967, which claimed to espouse the cause of tribals by dividing the people of Tripura in the name of tribal identity versus the non-tribal people. TUJS received political patronage from the Congress which had ruled the state till then but was facing a growing challenge to its anti-people policies from the Left movement. TUJS was formed mainly to counter the Left backed Gana Mukti Parishad (GMP). Despite these efforts, the Congress lost the Assembly election in 1977 and the first Left front government came to power. In the rest of the country too, the people of India, expressing their anger against the Emergency, routed the Congress.

In Tripura the TUJS leaders secretly formed an armed wing in the name of 'Tripura National Volunteers' (TNV). In 1980, TUJS adopted more extreme and violent measures against the LF govt. TNV raised the slogan 'Swadhin Tripura' (Independent Tripura). It used to operate from across the Bangladesh border. At that time there was sufficient evidence to show that these groups had the backing of the CIA.

The Left Front went ahead with a progressive and people oriented path of governance. However, the armed extremist activities intensified with covert and overt support from parties like the Congress, plunging the state into increasing lawlessness. In 1988, these violent activities

paved the way to the Congress-TUJS snatching a 'victory' in the Assembly elections through terror.

The period of the Congress Government from 1989-1993 was one of the worst periods in Tripura's history. Not only were the development initiatives taken by the first Left front Government overturned, but lawlessness and Government patronage to criminals made the State most unsafe. At the same time terror was unleashed on Left and particularly communist cadre. During the 5-year regime, the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) was formed in 1989 followed by the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) in 1990, both declaring war against the state and the Indian govt., demanding secession from India. They had the overt and covert support then of the Congress. The Congress was defeated in the 1993 elections by the unity and determination of the people of Tripura. However the activities of the extremist groups continued.

They used sophisticated weapons in their cruel attacks on non-tribals, and also against all tribals who were supporters of the Left Front Government. Left and communist cadres were specifically targeted. Hundreds of people were killed by the extremists who operated from across the border, received arms from other insurgent groups in the region and even Western covert agencies trying to dislodge the Left govt.

By the mid-1990s, this predatory and sectarian insurgency was in full flow and the only forces fighting it were the Left Front. Various militant and divisive tribal outfits under leadership of NLFT joined together to form the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) during the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (ADC) elections of 2000.

At gun point they rigged the election and won a majority in the ADC. However massive corruption started. NLFT siphoned off crores of rupees of funds meant for tribals. Ultimately, the IPFT split and the moderate elements took control of the ADC with outside support from the Left Front.

The decade of 1998-2007 saw several hundred people killed in the state as armed gangs attacked and burnt villages, targeting non-tribals as well as tribals who were opposed to them. The Left Front Government was faced with what looked like an impossible situation with development

work being sabotaged, continuing bloodshed preventing any intervention and the economy in a tailspin. It was a scenario seen even today in many other states in the North-East as well as J&K and parts of some other states.



Com Dasarath Deb Barma

But Tripura, led by a pro-people Left Front government steadfastly implemented a multi-pronged strategy that can serve as a model for all other regions facing similar terrorist insurgencies. This strategy consisted of mobilization of people in favour of unity and peace and against the insurgents, a slew of strong measures to alleviate the economic distress, and careful use of security forces, mainly local and para-military, to isolate and weed out insurgent elements. Under very difficult conditions and threats to life, Left Front cadres mobilized villagers in far flung areas cutting the ground from under the insurgents' feet and isolating them. Hundreds of communist tribal cadre became martyrs, their homes burnt or were under severe attack. Tribal women cadre also played a most heroic role.

At the same time, extreme Bengali chauvinist forces like the Anand Margis were trying to rouse Bengali sentiments against the tribals. Here again, the CPI(M) and the Left forces and mass organisations played an active role in isolating such elements.

This steady and sustained effort backed by the full authority of the state government, the CPI(M) and the mass organisations of the Left led to the defeat of the secessionist forces and a large number of them surrendered with their arms. The govt. dealt with this process too with sagacity and helped in rehabilitation of these misguided youth. It is important to note that Tripura is the only State in the north-east where the use of the draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act has been scrapped.

The policies, approach and practice of the Left Front Government and the Left led movements resulted in the victory of peace and normalcy in a land which was in the throes of a very violent attack that had killed 3488 persons. The following decade of 2008-2017 has seen an almost 100% decline in killings due to insurgent activities. No other state in India has seen such a decisive and deep going defeat of divisive forces.

Deaths due to militant activity in N-E states					
	1992-97	1998-2007	2008-2017*	Total	Decline between current decade and previous (%)
Tripura	1239	2200	49	3488	-98
Arunachal Pradesh	24	266	91	384	-66
Assam	1793	4807	1677	8278	-65
Mizoram	4	33	12	49	-64
Nagaland	1338	835	348	2522	-58
Manipur	2029	2597	1478	6118	-43
Meghalaya	22	346	343	713	-0.3
*2017 data till 1 Oct.					
Source: SATP					



CPI(M) State Secretary Com Bijon Dhar Hoisting the Red Flag

It is a consequence of this defeat and the re-establishment of peace that the Left Front govt. has been able to implement its pro-people economic and social policies that have brought prosperity and wellbeing to the people.

In this context the present role of the BJP-RSS is all the more criminal. The BJP following the same strategy that the Congress adopted in the 1980s and 90s, though with the use of more money and resources is trying to divide the people along identity lines, instigating violence and bloodshed, and propping up divisive forces.

In the last year IPFT has been raising the demand for a separate state “Twipraland” made up of the present Autonomous District Council area. The BJP has established contacts with the IPFT. It is because of the huge funds being given by the BJP to the IPFT leaders that a split ensued with one faction blaming the other for taking money from the BJP. This faction headed by N.C.Debbarma is the main instrument for BJP.They are trying to woo other small tribal based parties also.

The IPFT (NC) is presently involved in violent activities in some of the tribal areas. In one of its pamphlets it gave details of the meeting their leaders had with the Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s office, Jitender Singh. He reportedly assured the IPFT delegation full support. It was following this that the IPFT held an 11 day blockade of the national highway on the demand of separate State.

This is not just a matter of political opportunism. It is an anti-national conspiracy that will unleash a violent threat to the unity of India’s people and its territory. The BJP is openly propping up a group which has terrorist links and has been waging a violent and bloody campaign against other people in Tripura, just to satisfy its hunger for power. It constantly chants slogans of patriotism and gives sermons on nationalism, but it is at the forefront of this anti-national conspiracy. This is the vile nature of their politics.

Peace is essential for development and development is essential for peace. The Left Front Government in theory and practice is implementing policies which are an inspiring example to other States, particularly in the north-east. The people of Tripura will no doubt uphold the values of harmony and solidarity.

Tribal Rights – Advances in All Spheres

About 31% of Tripura’s population belongs to tribal communities. Historically, tribal communities suffered intense economic exploitation, with subsistence level agriculture or collection of forest produce as their main source of livelihood. Tribals resided in remote villages and callous rulers had criminally neglected tribal rights and development.

It is the historic struggles of tribal communities led by legendary leaders like Comrade Dasarath Deb Barma who brought movements for literacy and rights to tribal communities through the setting up of the Gana Mukti Parishad (GMP). It was the early communist work among tribal communities in Tripura which developed powerful movements in which the rulers of Tripura could not ignore their voice. The Left has deep roots among all tribal communities going back decades, forged in struggles against land alienation, feudal oppression and for better living conditions. The GMP has not only championed the cause of tribal unity



Radha Charan Debbarma CEM TTAADC inaugurated the newly constructed building Khumchak Kala Kendra at Dayaram Para on 10/10/17 ICA Minister Bhanu Lal Saha & MLA Niranjan Debbarma also in the photo

in these struggles but also fought against vested political interests that sought to divert the tribals into the blind alley of separatism and armed insurgency.

One of the biggest achievements of Tripura’s Left Front has been transformation in the lives of tribal communities with the active leadership and participation of tribal communities. As detailed in other sections of this booklet, the LF govt. has taken planned and sustained measures to improve the socio-economic condition of tribal communities, while preserving their unique cultural heritage. It has also painstakingly built up the unity among tribal and non-tribal communities. This is unlike all other states with significant tribal population, whether in the North-East or in Central India.

Land and Forest Rights

One of the critical issues confronting tribals all over India is that of land rights and specifically tribal rights to forest land. In the rest of India in spite of the Forest Rights Act to “address historical wrongs” meted out to tribals, under the neo liberal regime followed by the Congress and now even more aggressively by the BJP, tribal communities are denied their rights to land. The worst and cruel forcible evictions and displacement are taking place especially in all BJP ruled States.

In sharp contrast, the Tripura Government has ensured that not a single tribal family will face eviction or displacement in Tripura. On the issue of recognition of tribal rights to forest land and entitlement to land titles, Tripura, under the LF Government, is among the best in the entire country. About 1.24 lakh tribal families have received titles to 4.34 lakh acres of forest land under the Forest Rights Act giving them a stable and secure source of livelihood.

Even more importantly, the

Share of individual forest land titles distributed (%)	
June 2017	
Tripura	64
India	43
Some other states	
Jharkhand	55
Chhattisgarh	44
Gujarat	44
Madhya Pradesh	39
Assam	38
West Bengal	32
Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI	

Tripura Government has followed up the implementation of the Forest Rights Act with economic assistance. Almost three quarters of the tribal families allotted land have also been given economic assistance. This is a very important policy, since in other states, there is no policy to provide loans or assistance to those who have got *pattas*, thus denying them any benefit from the land.

Tribal farmers have benefitted from increasing production facilitated by cheaper inputs like high quality seeds, cheap fertilisers, access to markets, support pricing mechanisms and infusion of modern technology. Can any BJP State such as Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, or Jharkhand claim that it has implemented a single programme which guarantees cheap inputs to tribal farmers?

Sixth Schedule

The other important issue for tribal communities is their rights guaranteed under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution. It is well known how these rights are being bulldozed by the present Central Government. Under the Sixth Schedule applicable for the north east, under the principle of autonomous self rule, councils are to be set up for tribal compact areas.

In 1982, the setting up of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution was a historic step towards ensuring substantial autonomy in the governance of tribal areas by tribals. In 1985, it was brought under the Sixth Schedule. It is an elected body that is responsible for governing all areas where tribal communities live. Through regular elections, including in the 527 village committees under the ADC, and through allocation of funds by the State Government the ADC represents the aspirations of long oppressed tribal people in the state and has gone a long way in improving their lives. This is in sharp contrast to the so-called autonomous councils under the Sixth Schedule set up in Assam for example, where the councils have been starved by funds.

In fact the only such autonomous council which is functioning with full financial backing from the state is the Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council.

Tribal Sub-Plan

The Modi Government has scrapped the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)

and the Special Component Plan (SCP) for scheduled castes. Tripura's LF govt. has rejected this undermining of the basic rights of tribals for a share of funds proportionate to their population. The state govt. has been consistently allocating 31% of its Plan outlay for the TSP expenditures which focus on tribal communities. It is one of the few States to follow this principle.

Health and Education

To ensure speedy and full access to healthcare, 499 health sub centres, 45 primary health centres and 7 community health centres have been established within tribal areas. These are manned by 135 doctors and 377 nursing staff, with no shortfall from the required standards. This deployment of health personnel in tribal areas is a significant achievement in Tripura because in most other states with tribal populations, there is always a shortfall of doctors and nurses.

Doctors in tribal areas			
	Sanctioned	In position	% shortfall
Tripura	135	135	0
India	5309	4298	19
Some other states			
Gujarat	679	271	60
MP	360	299	17
Odisha	426	221	48
Chhattisgarh	366	156	57
Manipur	130	45	65
Meghalaya	128	114	11
Mizoram	152	49	68
Source: Min. of Health & Fam. Welfare			

Tripura has the second highest literacy rate of 86.4% of tribal men among all states. It is dramatically higher than the all India average of 68.5% for tribal men. Similarly, for tribal women, the literacy rate is 71.6% in Tripura compared to just 49.4% for the country.

Nearly 30,000 school students are given pre-matric scholarships

and nearly 55,000 are given post matric scholarships in the state every year. Unlike other states there are no gaps or irregularity in this ensuring a sustained support for generations of tribal students. New colleges have been opened in predominantly tribal areas so that tribal students can gain much needed access to higher education. Coaching is also provided to secondary level dropouts, applicants for JEE and other competitive exams. It is shameful that the central Government has not set up any institutions to advance the educational rights of tribal students in Tripura.

Culture and Language

KokBorok, the tribal language is promoted and taught in educational institutions. This is extremely important given the trend in BJP ruled States to Hinduise and Hindi-ise education. In order to promote tribal culture, an Academy of Tribal Culture and a State Tribal Museum have been set up.



Member of Parliament Com. Jitendra Choudhury inaugurates the 39th Kokborok Day Celebrations

Agriculture – Farming Prosperity

Although Indian agriculture is in deep crisis with rising input costs robbing farmers of hard earned returns, increasing indebtedness, growing stranglehold of big traders and agri-processing companies and stagnating productivity, Tripura has made successful attempts to chart a different path. Within the severe limitations of its remote location, forested and hilly land and without getting sufficient central govt. funding for irrigation or agro-processing projects, the LF govt. has brought about far reaching changes for the state’s agriculture and farmers. Tripura is no longer one of the low-production, low-income farming economies that keeps a large number of people trapped in poverty.

Production of rice, the state’s main produce, has increased by over 40% in the last decade, rice yields are now among the country’s best at 2946 kg/ha, and there has been a massive shift to double crops instead of single crops as seen in the rise of cropping intensity to 192% in 2016-17. Production of fruits, vegetables and spices has shot up by 68% since 2009 while introduction of rubber as a cash crop has boosted Tripura to the second largest rubber producing state in the country after Kerala.

This is truly a remarkable feat. The so-called green revolution States like Punjab and Haryana where huge amounts of money was made available to State Governments to enhance food production or even in States considered among the more developed states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, Tripura has got absolutely no central Government support. Yet, through the efforts of the State Government and it's pro-farmer policies, including provision of extension services, and of course, because of the hard work of the kisans, the State has made tremendous advances in increasing the rice yield to fifth highest in the country.

These changes have increased the incomes of vast majority of state’s people who are dependent on agriculture. Tripura can now be counted among the more advanced states in agriculture, performing

much better than states like Gujarat, Maharashtra etc. This is all the more remarkable considering Tripura’s remote and isolated location, mediocre soil and water resources, and difficult terrain.

Increase in Rice Production (%)	
	2003/6-2013/16
Tripura	40
India	20
Some other states...	
Tamil Nadu	38
Gujarat	36
Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare, GOI	

Increase in Horticultural Production (%)	
	2009/10-2015/16
Tripura	68
India	27
Some other states	
Gujarat	51
Punjab	22
Rajasthan	20
Maharashtra	18
Source: Ministry of Statistics & Prog. Impl., GOI	

Under a well thought out policy, which keeps the small farmer and agricultural laborer at its focus, Tripura’s Left Front govt. implemented the following measures in the state:

- Agri-marketing: 554 primary rural markets and 84 wholesale assembling markets, including 21 regulated markets have been set up with link roads, and arrangement of transport facilities for farmers.
- Agri-credit: Credit flow to agricultural sector has increased from Rs. 1.36 cr. in 2000-01 to Rs. 1609.01 cr. in 2016-17 through

special initiatives like awareness camps, and regular monitoring by district and state level bankers' committees.

- Quality seeds for all: After training “registered seed producing farmers”, high quality seeds are being locally produced, stored processed and distributed in large quantities.
- Irrigation: Almost entire potentially irrigable area of 1.17 lakh hectares in the state is now under irrigation with users committees of farmers and local bodies supervising water use.
- Cheap fertilisers: Farmers are provided subsidy on 75% of their fertilizer requirement at state run outlets, a scheme unique to Tripura. In addition they get a 100% transport subsidy.

Rice Yield – All India Ranking (kg/ha)	
	2015-16
1. Punjab	3974
2. Tamil Nadu	3758
3. Andhra Pradesh	3465
4. Haryana	3061
5. Tripura	2946
India	2400
13. Gujarat	2205
Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, GOI	

- Technology spread: System of Rice Intensification (SRI) has been adopted at mass level through govt. efforts. Subsidies are provided for adoption of farm machines, with training and backup support. Latest research is taken from ICAR for adoption by farmers. Kisan call centres and SMS-alerts are used for helping farmers. An Agricultural College has been set up.
- Wages: The official minimum wage rate of agricultural labourer, both for male and female, is currently Rs.300 per day. Women's wages are amongst the highest in the country. During the main season, an agricultural labourer gets Rs. 400 to Rs. 450 per day. This is much higher than other states in the region and higher than many other states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhandetc.

Industry & Labour – Rewarding the Creators

Large, medium and small industrial units have doubled in the state in the past decade, with a consequent increase in industrial employment. The number of factories covered under the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) of the Government of India increased by 99% compared to an all-India average increase of 69% between 2004-05 and 2015-16. Number of workers employed in these units increased by 90% in Tripura for the same period compared to 63% increase at the country level. This pace of growth is more than that in many of the industrial states of the country and those experiencing recent mining led growth. Like agriculture, these policies show the possibilities of self-reliant industrialization based on govt. initiatives.

Increase in No. of factories (%)	
	2004/5-2014-15
Tripura	99
India	69
Some other states...	
Tamil Nadu	80
Gujarat	72
Jharkhand	70
Karnataka	65
Madhya Pradesh	40
Source: Annual Survey of Industries, GOI	

Increase in no. of workers (%)	
	2004/5-2014/15
Tripura	90
India	63
Some other states...	
Tamil Nadu	66
Gujarat	82
Jharkhand	22
Karnataka	74
Madhya Pradesh	57
Source: Annual Survey of Industries, GOI	

Despite not having a traditional industrial base, virtually no mineral resources, and it's very remote location far from sources of raw materials and users of industrial goods, Tripura has forged a path forward in industrialization due to some imaginative policies of the Left Front government. Over the years, it has received no help from the Central govt. through siting of public sector units, funds or concessions for industrial promotion and investment openings. Apart from the recent setting up of natural gas extraction and power generation units, successive govts. at the Centre have largely neglected Tripura.

Statewide development of infrastructure including power, roads and telecommunications has spurred this industrial growth (see Infrastructure section for details). Industrial parks (5) and estates (4) have been set up. Various subsidies and incentives are being provided by the govt. Other measures include time bound clearance for proposals, promotion of entrepreneurship among youth, promotion of self-employment, etc.

In a unique initiative, local resources like rubber, bamboo, tea, fruits and vegetables, and natural gas are being given priority by designating these as 'thrust sectors'. Small growers of rubber and tea have been organized for better commercial viability and value addition.

International trade with Bangladesh has been boosted from just

Rs.4.12 crore in 1995-96 to Rs.305 crore in 2016-17. Eight notified Land Custom Stations (LCS) and two Border Haats have been set up to facilitate this trade.

Ensuring workers' wages and social security are important considerations for the LF govt.'s industrial policy unlike most other states. Tripura has declared statutory minimum wages for several informal/small scale sector industries like incense stick (agarbatti), beedi, gold smiths, security guards, domestic workers, rice processing and rubber plantations besides mechanical workshops. The wages are highest among all North-Eastern states. The govt. has also initiated a scheme for social security of unorganized sector workers. Known as Asangathitha Sramik Sahaika Scheme (ASSP), it has 1.2 lakh members currently. Contributions are just Rs.50 per month. Unlike most other states, the Tripura LF govt. has declared enhanced wages for anganwadi workers and helpers.

Infrastructure – Providing the Tools

Significant changes in Tripura’s economy noted previously have come about through a transformation of basic infrastructure like power supply, roads and transport connectivity, telecommunication network, etc.

Power

Since Tripura’s location – surrounded on three sides by Bangladesh – is remote and it lacks major natural resources except natural gas, power availability has always been low. This was a bottleneck for industrial development. However, the LF govt. attention has led to an increase of 463% in installed capacity within Tripura between 2004-05 and 2014-15, one of the highest growth rates in the country, and three times that of the country average growth of 147%. Both state sector and central sector power plants were set up, mainly using gas turbines. As a result, Tripura is now a power surplus state and it is even exporting power to Bangladesh.

Besides providing much needed power to industrial development, this has also led to large scale domestic electrification, with 86% of all households getting electricity, including 81% of tribal households. Tripura is supplying 150 MW power to Bangladesh.

In Tripura, installed power generation capacity increased by 463% - from 189 MW in 2004-05 to 1063 MW in 2014-15.	
Increase in Installed Capacity (%) in some other states,	
	2004/5-2014/15
Chhattisgarh	852
Gujarat	219
MP	206
Odisha	175
India	147
Source: Central Electricity Authority and GOT	

Roads

Although length of National Highways, built by the central govt., increased by only 44% during 2004-05 and 2014-15, the LF govt. undertook a massive road building plan. Length of State Highways increased by 100% in this period, the third highest increase in the country and four times the national average. Similar efforts were done for rural and municipal roads down to the village level. As a result, road density (length of roads for every square kilometer area) in Tripura is now fourth highest in the country at 3.6 km, more than twice the country wide average of 1.4 kms.

Railway

People of Tripura have faced discrimination and criminal neglect from the Central Government as far as extension of railways is concerned. Numerous and sustained agitations in the State and also in the nation’s capital backed by the voice of CPI(M) members in parliament, ultimately forced the central Government to act. Over 40 years after Dharmanagar in

northern Tripura was connected to Indian Railways network, Tripura’s state capital Agartala got the rail connection in 2008. This meter gauge line was built with great difficulty and faced over 28 attacks by secessionist forces with 36 workers and security personnel killed and 67 kidnapped. In 2016, the line was finally converted to broad gauge. At present the line has been extended up to Udaipur in Gomti division. The Left Front govt. is pressing for extension of the line to Sabroom, the farthest corner of the state.

Airport

Agartala airport has been upgraded with extension of runways and night landing facilities. Modernization of Agartala Airport has started. Further work is ongoing to convert it into an international airport. It is the second busiest airport in the North East after Guwahati.

Road length (km) per square km area	
	2015
1. Kerala	5.0
2. Assam	4.2
3. Goa	4.0
4. Tripura	3.6
5. West Bengal	3.3
INDIA	1.4
Source: Ministry of Surface Transport, GOI	

Poverty Alleviation – Serious and Sustained Efforts

One of the most important achievements of Tripura’s Left Front government is the sharp reduction of poverty in the state. Between 2004-05 and 2011-12 (the last year for which GOI data is available), the share of population living below the official poverty line was brought down by 62%. This is one of the sharpest declines in poverty levels across all states. At the all India level, poverty declined by about 34% in the same period.

Change in Poverty (%)	
	2004/5-2011/12
1. Goa	-78
2. Andhra Pradesh	-67
3. Kerala	-63
4. Tripura	-62
5. Himachal Pradesh	-62
INDIA	-34
Source: Planning Commission; NSSO	

Tripura has less share of households living in poverty figures are calculated by the Government of India using a flawed methodology that pegs the poverty line at an absurdly low level. But even using these figures, the drop in poverty in Tripura is remarkable. As per this estimate, 14% of Tripura’s population is below the poverty line. This is far below the all India level of 22% people below poverty line. Tripura has less share of households living in poverty than many of the richer states like Gujarat (17%), Maharashtra (17.4%) and Karnataka (21%), and far lower than poorer states like Chhattisgarh (40%), Jharkhand (37%),

Bihar (34%) and Assam (32%). It is all the more remarkable if one considers the social demography of Tripura with a tribal population of 31 per cent and a scheduled caste population of 18 per cent.

This reduction in poverty has been achieved through various people oriented measures including rising agricultural income, spreading industrialization, better access to education and healthcare facilities. The Government is earnestly implementing special package for ST, SC, minorities and 33 social welfare and other schemes. The emphasis is on democratic participation in execution of govt. plans through genuine empowerment of local bodies. The Tribal Area Autonomous Development Council has ensured transparent and efficient focus on uplift of tribal communities, which formed the poorest of the state’s people in the past. Another important factor has been the political defeat and isolation of anti-national and terrorist outfits, which receive political patronage from parties like the Congress, and now the BJP.

Share of population Below Poverty Line (BPL) (%)	
Tripura	14.05
India	21.92
Some other states....	
Tamil Nadu	11.28
Gujarat	16.63
Maharashtra	17.35
Uttar Pradesh	29.43
Jharkhand	36.96
Chhattisgarh	39.93
Source: Planning Commission; NSSO; 2011-12	

Employment – Making Sure it Works

One of the key issues confronting India's people is employment. Years of neoliberal policies that favour the rich and propertied segment of population while impoverishing the vast number of working people and middle class have also created a cruel model of economic growth that is often described as jobless growth. So, while the economy has been 'growing' in terms of total output, jobs remain stagnant or increase by a very small number.

Tripura, while being part of this system and hence suffering from the same restrictions on real growth and prosperity, has tried to break out of the shackles by relying on state government spending and giving priority to people's economic uplift rather than profits of corporate houses and big landowners.

One of the most important consequences of this can be seen in the exceptional growth of jobs in the state. Data on employment is available only till 2011 Census but it clearly shows the stark difference between Tripura's path and that of the rest of the country.

In Tripura, growth in number of workers, after adjusting for natural population growth, was recorded at nearly 12% between 2001 and 2011. This is six times the national average of a mere 2%, and far ahead of all so called advanced or rich states like Gujarat, Punjab, Maharashtra and Haryana. It is also ahead of all the regional neighbors, except Nagaland which shows a higher growth in number of workers because of a statistical reason only – its population has actually fallen in the past decade and so growth in workers becomes high.

Growth in number of workers adjusted to population growth (%)	
Tripura	11.93
India	2.07
Some other states	
ASSAM	8.39
KERALA	8.08
GUJARAT	-2.78
PUNJAB	-5.47
MEGHALAYA	-5.69
HARYANA	-13.47
MIZORAM	-19.32
Source: Census 2001, 2011	

Rural Jobs Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

Tripura has been providing the most number of days of work under the rural job guarantee scheme compared to all other states. The number of days work provided under the scheme is double the average for the whole country. The scheme has been effectively implemented in all corners of the state including the tribal areas, workers grievances are minimal and the administration responsive to their needs. An independent study ranked Tripura the best performing state in the country using three key parameters: number of days of work, delay in wage payment and completion of work.

MGNREGS: Tripura out-performs all states (av. no. of days of work per year)		
	Tripura	India
2014-15	88	40
2015-16	94	49
2016-17	80	46
Source: Min. of Rural Dev., GOI		

The implementation of this important centrally funded scheme in Tripura has faced enormous obstacles from successive central govts., both under UPA and even more under the Modi govt. The Central govt. has repeatedly tried to squeeze and cut funding to the state govt. LF govt. chief minister had to sit on dharna in Delhi to protest against this discrimination in November 2014 after the Modi govt. cut Tripura's allocation from Rs.1400 cr to just Rs.650 cr.

Even this year the Modi Government has cut the labour budget so drastically that the funds allocated can provide only 32 days of work. At the same time, the Modi govt. is deliberately delaying the release of funds to the State which in turn affects the wage payments leading to delays. It then funds protests in selected places against the delays! The State Government in Tripura tries to compensate by advancing money from its own funds so that MGNREGS works to provide some relief from delayed wage payments imposed by the central Government.

Food Security – Important Initiatives

The Left Front Government in Tripura has upheld the principle of universal public distribution system and has used its own resources to counter the fraudulent calculations over the years of Above Poverty Line and Below Poverty Line families followed by successive Central Governments which denied food security to vast sections of our people.

In 2012, in contrast to the Central Government's policies, the Left Front Government had provided its own funds to increase the quantity of food grains to 35 kgs at two rupees a kg as well as increased the numbers of families over the restricted numbers identified by the Central Government. This brought some relief to the people. The State Government also provided subsidy for the provision of mustard oil and masur dal for ration card holders.

After the passage of the National Food Security Act and its late implementation under the Modi Government, Tripura has suffered cuts in allocations of foodgrains to the State. In spite of repeated protests, the Modi Government has refused to provide adequate foodgrains and has further cut the allocations from 3.23 lakh metric tonnes to 2.71 lakh metric tonnes. The State Government has increased its own subsidies but the policies of the Central Government have adversely affected food security system in Tripura.

Food grain allocated to the state from the Central Pool is distributed through a network of 1798 ration shops, and also for mid-day meals and other schemes. Tripura has built up a robust system of ensuring that food grain reaches all outlets in time and without any gaps. Offtake shows how much of the allocated food grain is actually being distributed. Tripura's offtake data shows it is consistently higher than the national average and better than all the other major tribal states. In the North-East region too Tripura is the better performer.

The LF govt. provides cartage subsidy for all goods covered under the PDS, including atta, rice, salt, etc. It is providing cash subsidy in case pulses are not available.

Offtake of rice and wheat as share of allocation (%)				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Tripura	102.7	99	96.6	102.9
India	88.9	85.7	94.8	96.4
Some other states				
Jharkhand	75.3	70.5	75.1	97.6
Gujarat	72.2	90.3	96.7	99.7
MP	91.8	91.1	93.9	91.1
Chhattisgarh	98.1	99.4	100	91.7
Assam	94.8	97.4	91.3	92.8
Source: Ministry of Cons. Affairs, Food & Public Distn., GOI				

The state has faced considerable difficulties because of insufficiency of storage facility for food grain and salt, primarily because of neglect by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) which maintains 7 godowns in the state with a storage capacity of 30,670 MT. The state govt. has built 118 godowns with a storage capacity of 46,130 MT to ensure adequate supplies for the PDS.

Health – Protecting the Body

Tripura has forged ahead in building a healthcare system that is caring and responsive to people's needs, without the usual high costs associated with healthcare these days and accessible for all. The effects of this are now visible in a range of parameters.

Infant mortality rate (IMR) has declined steeply by nearly 50% in the past decade and stands at 20 per thousand live births, putting Tripura at par with many advanced states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Punjab, and way ahead of others like Gujarat (33), Haryana (36) and less than half of Madhya Pradesh (50) and Assam (47). Maternal mortality rate (MMR) for Tripura (as derived from HMIS, GOI) is 62 per lakh live births, compared to the all India average of 174.

Both birth rates and death rates in Tripura have sharply gone down indicating a healthier and longer life. Tripura's birth rate of 14.7 per thousand is the third lowest in the country while its death rate is fifth lowest, both being far below the India average.

There has been a massive expansion of health infrastructure in the state, especially in the remote tribal areas. After taking a decision to have one Health Sub-Centre (HSC) for every village, their number has increased by 92% since 2005, the highest increase among all states. These HSCs provide primary healthcare services, free testing, transport, child and mother care and various other services.

The number of primary health centres (PHCs) and community health centres (CHCs) has also increased similarly. At the tertiary level, there are 12 sub-divisional hospitals (with 6 more under construction), 6 District Hospitals and another 6 State level hospitals.

Tripura healthcare system: Much ahead of India		
	Tripura	India
% Increase in		
Health Sub-Centres	92	6
Primary Health Centres	29	9
Community Health Centres	100	65
Health Outcomes		
IMR	20	37
MMR	62	174
Birth Rate	14.7	20.8
Death Rate	5.2	6.5
TFR	1.7	2.2
Child Sex Ratio	957	919
Institutional Deliveries	90%	79%
Source: NHM; SRS; NFHS-4; MoHFW		

Unlike many states in the country, Tripura does not have a shortage of doctors and nurses at the PHCs and CHCs. Even in the tribal areas, there are doctors and other personnel available. There is some shortage of specialists in these centres but the govt. has initiated several measures to tide over this like increasing the number of post graduate seats, relaxing the experience norms, opening more training colleges for para medical staff, etc.

One of the defining features of Tripura's state run system is that various prescriptions, tests, procedures, etc. are free of any charge. Medicines are freely available at all health facilities, as are all diagnostic tests. Diet is free to all in patients. All dialysis facilities are free of cost. Generic medicines are procured and made available at cheap rates at 17 counters in different hospitals.

Under a unique scheme, all patients with annual income less than Rs.1.5 lakh get Rs.10,000 transport cost and Rs.1.15 lakh medical

expenditure reimbursement if they are referred to a medical facility outside the state. Transport expenses are borne by the state for referrals within the state.

Cancer patients are given financial assistance of up to Rs.2 lakh if the state hospital does not have the needed facilities. BPL patients are given reimbursement up to Rs.2 lakh and all cancer patients with income less than Rs.1.15 lakh are given a monthly pension of Rs.600. HIV/AIDS patients are given a monthly pension of Rs.600. Leprosy patients are given free surgical treatment and Rs.8000 as compensation for wages lost.

Institutional deliveries in the state have reached 90%. To increase it further to 100%, 'Mayer Ghar' (mothers' room) have been set up in health facilities in remote areas where the expecting mother and one relative can stay from a week in advance of the due date of delivery, with free food for both. All expenditure related to delivery including the transportation of women in labour to the facility is free throughout the state.

All other programmes of the National Health Mission including immunization, home based newborn care, RBSK, JSSK, etc. are fully implemented.



Chief Minister greeting Olympic Bronze medalist Deepa Karmakar

Education – Enriching the Mind

The Left Front govt.’s multi-pronged strategy for providing education for all, with stress on access for tribals, dalits and other marginalized sections, has transformed the education scenario in the state. Notably, expansion and improvement of education has been done not by blind privatization but through public funding. The main focus of the Government has been on strengthening the public system of education. This has ensured that fees are kept in control.

Literacy

Literacy rate in Tripura is currently over 97%, one of the highest in country. In 2011, the country’s average literacy rate was 73%. The 2011 Census showed that literacy in Tripura increased by over 14% from 2001, compared to an all India increase of about 8%.

Literacy in Tripura	
97.22% in 2016	
	In 2011
Tripura	87%
India	73%
Source: Census 2011; GOT	

School Education

All children of the age group 6-14 years are enrolled in schools and enrollment of higher age groups is also steadily increasing. In 2001-02, there were nearly 94,000 out of school children in the state. This has now been reduced to just 601 children, most of whom are profoundly disabled and unable to attend school. Schools have been rationalized

and even children living in remote tribal villages have accessible schools. At present there are no single teacher schools in the state, compared to about 7.5% such schools nationally.

Dropout rates at primary and upper primary level are 2.19% and 2.87% respectively, significantly lower than the all India average of 5.13% and 11.72%.

Ensuring better quality of education has been a prime focus of the state govt. This has resulted in much better performance of school students as proved by the National Achievements Survey (NAS) conducted by the central Ministry of Human Resources Development. Class III students from Tripura scored 281 points in languages compared to average 257 for the whole country. Similarly, in mathematics, Tripura students scored 262 points compared to average 252 for India. Tripura students had the highest scores in these two subjects among all eight North-Eastern states. Similarly, Tripura Class V students were ahead of the national average for language, mathematics and EVS.

Performance of students in Tripura		
Class III scores		
	Tripura	India
Language	281	257
Maths	262	252
Class V scores		
	Tripura	India
Language	253	241
Maths	245	241
Source: National Achievement Survey 2014, 2015; MHRD		

Technical, professional and higher education

In higher education, Tripura used to be very deficient due to financial constraints and negligence by the central govt. in helping a remote and backward state. However, sustained efforts by the state govt. to allocate funds for setting up higher education institutions with an emphasis on professional courses has resulted in considerable expansion. Between

1998 and 2016, the number of universities has gone up from just one to three and the number of general degree colleges from 14 to 24. Dedicated institutions now exist for 11 different types of professional disciplines like teachers' training, pharmacy, agriculture, veterinary sciences, fishery, paramedical courses, nursing, law, music, etc. apart from engineering and medical colleges. Many of these are being set up in tribal dominated areas of the state like Khumulwng, Gandhacherra, L.T.Valley, Kanchanpur, etc. As a result, the Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education has increased from 7% in 2007 to nearly 17% in 2015-16.

Expansion of higher education		
	1998	2016
Universities	1	3
Nat. level Inst.	0	1
Degree Colleges	14	24
Engg. Colleges	1	3
Medical Colleges	0	2
Polytechnics	1	6
Other professional colleges	9	21
Source: Govt. of Tripura		



Students of Eklavya Model Residential School, Khumulwng ADC area

State Economy & Finances – Funding the Push

The increase in agricultural production, spread of industrialization, general increase in wages of working people and improvement in health and social welfare has naturally had an effect on the state's economy. Between 2004-05 and 2014-15 (the last year for which data is available for all states) Tripura's economy grew at 12.6% per year on an average ahead of the all India average growth of 11.3%. This growth rate is better and more sustained than many other richer states and most of the North-East region's states.

Per capita income growth in Tripura was also high at 10.3% per year in the same period compared to 8.1% for the whole country. This is the fourth highest income growth rate among all states.

Av. Annual economic growth (%)	
	2004/5 - 2014/15
Tripura	12.6
India	11.3
Some other states ...	
Tamil Nadu	13.7
Maharashtra	12.4
MP	10.8
W. Bengal	9.1
Punjab	9.1
Source: CSO, MoSPI	

The robust economic performance of Tripura's economy in recent years has been used by the Left Front government to fund development programmes in the state with very

Growth per capita income (%)	
	2004/5 - 2014/15
Tripura	10.3
India	8.1
Some other states ...	
Tamil Nadu	11.7
Maharashtra	9.5
MP	7.2
W. Bengal	7.1
Punjab	5.8
Source: CSO, MoSPI	

positive results. To take the latest year as an example, in 2014-15, the Tripura state government spent nearly 18% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) on social sectors like education, health, welfare programmes, etc. This is more than double the proportion spent by all states in the country put together, which stands at just 8% of the sum of all state GSDPs. Notably, with almost one third of the population belonging to tribal communities, Tripura is ahead in social sector spending than many of the states with big tribal populations like Gujarat, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and MP.

Social Sector Expenditure as % GSDP	
	2014-15
Tripura	17.9
All States	8
Nagaland	16.1
Assam	14.3
Chhattisgarh	12.9
Jharkhand	11.8
MP	11.3
Odisha	11.3
W. Bengal	7.7
Gujarat	5.6
Source: RBI	

Crime – Ensuring You're Safe

Besides the defeat of secessionist terrorist outfits and the resulting peace, Tripura's Left Front govt. has created an atmosphere in the state where crimes in general have declined. Comparison between 2010 and 2015 shows that in these five years, Tripura exhibited a decline of 19% in total cognizable crime while for the country as a whole, it increased by a whopping 33%.

For crimes against women too Tripura has shown a decline of 24% in the same period compared to a 53% rise at the national level.

These high rates of decline do not mean that crimes are wiped out in Tripura. It only means that sustained effort by the govt. and by people's organization have led to a successful fight for curbing crime in society.

Total Cognizable IPC Crime	
Change 2010-15 (%)	
Tripura	-19
India	33
Some other states ...	
Gujarat	9
MP	25
Maharashtra	32
West Bengal	38
Tamil Nadu	1
Source: NCRB	

Crimes against women	
Change 2010-15 (%)	
Tripura	-24
India	53
Some other states ...	
Gujarat	-5
MP	47
Maharashtra	98
West Bengal	27
Tamil Nadu	-13
Source: NCRB	

Conclusion

The national significance of the Tripura model lies in the context in which it is being developed. At the centre there is a Government aggressively following a set of policies which leads to huge inequalities. In the three years of Modi Government the richest one per cent of the population has increased their share in national wealth to 58 per cent – a jump of ten percentage points. The retreat of the Government from social sector spending and wholesale privatization of public services is another plank being aggressively followed. This has its own impact on the state government's finances. Resources from central Government are often conditional on accepting anti-people policies such as levying of user fees, hiking prices of water and electricity, implementing the so-called private-public model which in fact hands over resources to private sector while governments have to bear the burden of infrastructure, freeze in recruitments in government jobs and so on. The levying of the GST will further negatively impact state governments' powers and capacity to raise resources. If in spite of all this, Tripura has been able to overcome all the hurdles and present the kind of social and development indicators reported above, it is because of political will and commitment of the CPI(M) and Left leadership to use all resources available for an alternative people first model of development.

This is what the BJP-RSS seek to destroy.

The courageous people of Tripura will give a befitting reply to the forces of darkness and division represented by the BJP-RSS combine.

Let us support Tripura in their valiant struggle through a strong nationwide campaign exposing the lies and hypocrisy of the BJP-RSS.