

# THE ROLE OF EXTREMISM IN DETERMINING THE PRESENCE OF TRIBALS IN THE URBAN AREAS OF A STATE:

A Case Study of Tripura

Malabika Das Gupta

The paper attempts to examine whether extremism has brought about any changes in the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura during different episodes of extremist activities in the state. It examines the part played by extremism in determining the number of STs living in the urban areas of Tripura and the percentage of STs in the urban population of the state during the different phases of extremist activities in the state and predicts the likely size of the ST urban population of the state in future in view of the fact that the incidence of extremist-related violence has come down in the state in recent years.

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The Role of Extremism in Determining the Presence  
of Tribals in the Urban Areas of a State:  
*A Case Study of Tripura<sup>#</sup>*

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<sup>#</sup> *The paper is based on material gathered for a Senior Fellowship research project of the ICSSR entitled 'Urbanisation and the Tribals of Tripura'.*

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**The Role of Extremism in Determining the Presence of Tribals in the Urban Areas of a State: A Case Study of Tripura<sup>#</sup>**

**Introduction**

For the purposes of this paper, extremism is defined as the adoption of extreme measures including the unleashing of violence by its perpetrators to achieve their goals. Though it is interesting to examine whether extremism has a part to play in determining the presence of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the urban areas of a state and deserves the attention of scholars, no research has been done on this topic so far. The present paper deals with this question with special reference to one of the states of the north east, namely, Tripura.

The presence of STs in the urban areas of a state is measured by two indicators – (a) the number of STs residing in the urban areas of the state and (b) their percentage in the urban population of the state. Theoretically, it is possible for extremism to lead to either an increase or a decrease in the presence of STs in the urban areas of a state.<sup>1</sup> Extremism in the rural areas of the state or in a neighbouring state will lead to an increase in the number of STs living in the urban areas of the state if it prompts the STs residing in the areas affected by extremism to flock to the towns of the state concerned or to congregate in a rural area in large numbers so that its population and density of population rise and the area is designated as a new town and its inhabitants are labelled as urbanites. Extremism in the rural areas of a state or in the neighbouring states of the state in question will increase the percentage of STs in the urban population of the state if their influx into the urban areas of the concerned state as a result of extremism raises the relative share of STs in the urban population of the state. Extremism will lead to a fall

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<sup>1</sup> It is also possible that extremism will have no impact on the ST population living in the urban areas of the state.

in the number of STs living in the urban areas of the state if extremism in the urban areas of the state or in the rural areas surrounding them leads to an exodus of STs living in the urban areas of the state from the towns of the state to its villages. If the flight of STs from the urban areas of the state as a result of extremism lowers their proportion in the total population of these areas, there will be a decline in the percentage of STs in the urban population of the state.

### **Objectives and scope of the study**

The paper attempts to examine whether extremism has brought about any changes in the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura during different episodes of extremist activities in the state. It

- (a) Examines the part played by extremism in determining the number of STs living in the urban areas of Tripura and the percentage of STs in the urban population of the state during the different phases of extremist activities in the state and
- (b) Predicts the likely size of the ST urban population of the state in future in view of the fact that the incidence of extremist-related violence has come down in the state in recent years.

### **Rationale for the choice of the state for the study**

Tripura has been singled out for examining whether extremism has had an impact on the urban presence of STs in the state because the state has been a hotbed of extremist activities from the 1980s onwards though extremist activities are supposed to have abated somewhat in the state in recent years.<sup>2</sup>

There were two major episodes of extremist activities in the state during the period in question.<sup>3</sup> An ethnic riot took place in Tripura in 1980. It started in Mandai and spread to other villages mainly in the West and South Districts of Tripura. Atrocities were committed against the Bengalis in tribal-dominated areas and against tribals in the

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<sup>2</sup> The genesis, causes and the history of extremism in the state are not dealt with in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from these two major episodes of extremism in the state, Tripura has been affected by extremist activities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh that made Chakma refugees take shelter in the state. Extremist activities directed against the Riangs in Mizoram led to Riangs taking refuge in Tripura but these out-of-Tripura acts of extremism did not lead to the growth of tribal urban population in the state as the tribals taking shelter in Tripura settled in the rural areas of the state or were accommodated in refugee camps located in the rural areas of the state.

Bengali- dominated ones. Both tribals and non-tribals were affected by the killings, arson and looting that took place in the state and many had to abandon their homes for their own safety. Lives were lost in both communities and people became homeless but the situation was brought under control within a short while. The mid 1980s saw the rise of tribal extremism in the state followed by a Bengali backlash. The extremist uprising in the state that started in the mid 1980s continued for a long time and abated somewhat only after 2005 though even today, it has not died out completely. Tribal extremism and its Bengali backlash brought developmental activities practically to a standstill in the interior areas of the state where most of the tribals of Tripura live. Educational institutions became virtually non-functional particularly in the tribal areas due to extremist depredations but the situation has gradually changed for the better after 2005 and at present, extremism has virtually ended in the state. Tripura has been selected as the study area because till now, researchers have not explored the relationship between extremism and the presence of STs in the urban areas of this state.

The familiarity of the author of the paper with the ground realities prevailing in the state by virtue of the fact that she lived and worked in Tripura for a long time and the opportunity she got to do some field work in the state on the topic, thanks to her ICSSR Senior Fellowship research project, 'Urbanisation and the Tribals of Tripura' determined to a great extent her choice of the state on which the paper concentrates.<sup>4</sup>

### **Methodology adopted for the study and the data sources used for the study**

The Census provides data on urban population and ST urban population for the state of Tripura. It also gives data on the population and the ST population of the towns of the state. Since the census data on the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura as a whole from the year 1971 when extremism had not started in the state to 2001 when it was at its height in Tripura are not particularly illuminating for gauging the impact of extremism on the presence of STs in the urban areas of the state, an alternative was to look at the town wise census data on the presence of STs in all the urban centres of Tripura during the period from 1971 to 2001. However, because the presence of STs was not affected in all towns of Tripura as a result of extremism according to the knowledgeable individuals, elected members and officials of the urban local bodies and the officials of the Directorate of Urban Affairs, Government of Tripura, who were

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<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, the impact of extremism on the presence of STs in the urban scene of Tripura was just one of the aspects covered in this research project.

consulted for the study, the towns of the state where the number of STs and the percentage of STs in the town population were influenced by extremism were identified on the basis of secondary data collected from these informants. News items in the leading local newspapers of the state were also scanned for identifying these towns and these towns were identified as Agartala, Udaipur and Kamalpur. It was decided to narrow down the focus of the study to these three towns to examine the part played by extremism in determining the presence of STs in the urban areas of the state. Both census data and the impressions of the above-mentioned informants were used in an attempt to gauge the impact of extremism on the presence of STs in these urban areas. In order to flesh out the information gathered on the ST urban population of the selected towns in the face of extremism, a handful of ST families belonging to different social groups that had migrated to Agartala between the mid 1980s and 2001 from neighbouring villages were interviewed in 2008 to examine if they had moved to the city because of the threat of extremism in their native villages. It was examined what the plans of these households were with regard to their place of residence in future in view of the fact that extremism had died down in the state by 2008 when the interviews were held.

The interviewed households were residents of wards with a big ST population. They were chosen with the help of elected representatives of Agartala Municipal Council. To carry the story forward from 2001, a few ST households that had migrated to Agartala between 2002 and 2005, after which extremism gradually waned in Tripura were also interviewed in 2008 and similar information was sought from them. These households were also selected with the help of elected representatives of Agartala Municipal Council. Though the number of households selected for study was very small, the families selected represented the whole spectrum of rural to urban migrants in Agartala from its nearby villages during this period and increasing the size of the sample families would not have added more to our knowledge. Agartala was the obvious choice for conducting the case studies because the city had the largest ST population among the three urban centres where the study was ultimately restricted.

Information was gathered on the relationship between extremism and the presence of STs in the towns of Udaipur and Kamalpur from the elected representatives and officers of the Nagar Panchayats of these two towns.

### **Findings of the study regarding the impact of extremism on the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura from 1971 to 2001**

Table 1 gives the census data on the total urban population, ST urban population and the percentage of the total urban population contributed by the STs of Tripura from 1971 to 2001. It shows that both the total urban population and the ST urban population of the state had increased over the time period in question. It also shows that the STs formed a very small percentage of the urban population of the state during the entire period. However, these data pertaining to the state as a whole are not capable of analysing whether extremism had an impact on the number of STs living in urban Tripura or on the percentage contribution of STs to the urban population of the state. Therefore, the overall data disaggregated at the town level given in Table 2 were considered. It was found from discussions with knowledgeable individuals, elected members and officials of the urban local bodies and the officials of the Directorate of Urban Affairs, Government of Tripura; who were consulted for the study that extremism did not affect the size of the ST population and the percentage of STs in the town population of all the towns of Tripura.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the study was done in a few urban centres of Tripura, namely, Agartala, Udaipur and Kamalpur, as these were the towns in which the presence of STs had changed significantly as a result of the incidence of extremism in the state according to the people consulted for the study who have been mentioned above.

### **Findings from secondary sources and from the case histories of ST families regarding the presence of STs in Agartala as a result of extremism for the period from 1981 onwards**

As shown in Table 2, Agartala, the capital city of the state contained most of the urban ST population of Tripura. The table shows that though the ST population of the city increased in every census year from 1971 onwards the share of STs in the population of Agartala went down from 4.81 percent in 1971 to 4.61 percent in 1981. According to the knowledgeable people, elected members and the officials of the Agartala Municipal

<sup>5</sup> For example, as compared to 1971, the number of STs living in Belonia declined in 1981 because many ST government servants living in the town were transferred to other places in 1981. The decline in the number of tribals living in Sonamura in 1991 as compared to 1981 was due to the transfer of ST government servants from the town. In Kumarghat and Teliamura the ST population declined in 2001 as compared to 1991 because the area of these towns decreased in 2001. There was a decline in the number of STs living in Dharmanagar in 2001 compared to 1991 because a significant proportion of the tribal government servants bought land outside the town, built their own houses there and left Dharmanagar.

Council and the officials of the Directorate of Urban Development who were interviewed for the study, this decline in the percentage of the total population of Agartala contributed by the STs had some connection with the ethnic riot that erupted in the state in 1980. Though there were a few instances of tribal families of Agartala moving out of the city and taking shelter in tribal villages near Teliamura temporarily, there was no mass scale out-migration of tribals from the city as a result of the ethnic riot even though a fear psychosis was created among the STs of the town who tended to relocate themselves in tribal-dominated localities of the city like Banamalipur and Krishnanagar as they felt safer there. The percentage of STs in the population of Agartala went down in 1981 as compared to 1971 because there was a large influx of Bengalis in the town not only from villages where they were the victims of atrocities committed by tribal militants but also from the mixed population villages near Agartala where they felt threatened. Many Bengali refugees were also housed in temporary refugee camps in Agartala after the riot and a combination of both these factors led to the decline in the percentage of STs in the population of the state capital between 1971 and 1981. So, during the period in question, extremism in the state led to a decline in the presence of STs in Agartala according to one of the ways in which the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura is measured in this paper.

The wave of extremism that swept through Tripura from the mid 1980s onwards had a much more marked and lasting impact on the presence of STs in Agartala according to the contemporary newspaper reports and also according to the knowledgeable people and the elected members and officials of the Agartala Municipal Council and the Directorate of Urban Affairs with whom discussions were held. According to these sources of information, extremist activities perpetrated by both tribal and Bengali extremists caused many tribals to move to Agartala to escape extortions, arson, looting and threat to life in villages. As it was no longer safe for tribals to commute to urban centres for work from nearby villages because Bengali extremists could attack them when they passed through Bengali settlements, some tribal who were commuters from their villages found it safer to settle down in the urban centres where they worked. Educational institutions in tribal areas had become practically non-functional from the 1990s as a result of extremism because schoolteachers who were mostly Bengalis were afraid to travel to their place of work in tribal villages for fear of being abducted or killed by the extremists. As schools in many tribal areas practically closed down as a consequence of extremist activities, tribal students had to move to Agartala to ensure that they could attend classes regularly without any disruption. Some tribal students

also migrated to towns because young villagers were extremely vulnerable in their villages. Even if they did not subscribe to the extremist ideology, they were in constant danger of being forcibly recruited by extremists and were also in danger of being picked up by the police or by the para-military forces fighting extremism and tortured on the suspicion that they were extremists or were aiding or abetting them. Parents of many tribal children also moved to the town to ensure that the education of their wards would not be disrupted by extremism. Political activists belonging to the ruling party were hounded out of their villages by extremists and were forced to seek shelter in Agartala and the government rehabilitated the leaders among the surrendered extremists in the capital city. High ranking ST extremists who surrendered were also accommodated in Agartala when they were offered a rehabilitation package and this also played a part in swelling the number of STs in the city.

In order to examine if these general observations could be verified through primary data collection about migrants who came to Agartala during the period from the mid 1980s to 2001 when Tripura reeled under the extremist threat, some case studies were done in Agartala in 2008 among ST migrants to the city from its neighbouring villages during the study period. Altogether, 10 sample households that had migrated to the city after the second wave of extremism started in Tripura in the late 1880s were purposively selected for the study to capture the situation of typical tribal migrants to Agartala from the rural areas of the state between the early 1990s and 2001. The first four columns of Tables 3 and 4 summarize the data obtained on the place of origin and the socio-economic conditions of these migrants and the reasons for their migration. Out of the 10 households for which data were collected, 9 had migrated to Agartala because of extremism-related reasons. The student had become residents of Agartala because the educational system of the villages he came from had become virtually non-existent due to extremism. 3 of the employees had decided to settle in the city for the education of their children even at the cost of commuting to their places of work far away from the city everyday for 2 of them because the school system in the tribal villages of the state existed only in name due to extremism. The political activists of the CPI(M) who were interviewed had been forced to move out of their village by the extremists and settled down in Agartala under duress. So, during the period from the 1990s to 2001, extremism had affected the presence of STs in the city. To see if the same was the case in the period from 2002 to 2005 when extremism was rampant in the state, 4 ST households that had migrated to Agartala during this period were interviewed. Table 5 summarizes their case histories. As in Tables 3 and 4, the first four columns of

Table 5 give the place of origin of these households, the socio-economic particulars regarding these households and their reasons for migrating to Agartala from their villages. The sample consisted of a surrendered extremist leader, a government employee and two students. It can be seen from these case studies that all of them migrated to Agartala from nearby villages due to extremism related causes. So, in the period from 2002 to 2005 also, extremism played a part in increasing the presence of STs in the city of Agartala.

From the case studies reported in Tables 3, 4 and 5 it is obvious that the relatively well off sections of people who lived near the urban centres could migrate to Agartala when they were adversely affected by extremism.<sup>6</sup> This seems to be due to the fact that they had better chances of bearing the costs of relocating themselves in new surroundings, had a kin group in the urban areas on whom they could depend and could take the risk of settling down in a new area because of the political and economic clout they wielded.

It is interesting to observe that none of the STs interviewed had left the rural areas and settled in Agartala as a result of harassment and torture by security personnel in charge of containing extremism in the interior areas of Tripura although in Khowai some immigrants to the town after 1990 who were interviewed for the study reported harassment by the security personnel as one of the causes of their move to the town. It is possible that the comparative closeness of the extremism-affected villages to the state capital prevented the security personnel from indulging in excesses in them.

The study of the presence of STs in Agartala in response to the extremist threat in the state shows that the STs reacted differently to extremism at different points of time. As an aftermath of the 1980 ethnic riot, some tribals living in the state capital moved out of the town temporarily, though not in large numbers, while extremism which began in the state in the mid 1980s led to an increase in the presence of STs in the urban centre.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the jhumia tribals of Tripura, one of the most economically and socially backward groups of people in Tripura, who were exposed to grave extremist threats and had to flee their hamlets in the interior hills of the state camped in the open on the Assam Agartala highway for safety. The government rehabilitated these families in a number of regrouping villages located in forest areas near roads and police stations (Das Gupta 2006). The rank and file elements among the surrendered tribal extremists who were mostly recruited from poor families and had no training or skills, were housed in heavily guarded camps in rural areas in interior of the state and were given vocational education and training for their rehabilitation (Das Gupta 2008).

The difference may be ascribed to the fact that the ethnic riot was a sporadic incident confined only to certain rural areas of the state and was quickly snuffed out. It did not lead to a long-lasting disruption of normal life in the state and its rural areas. Though the ST dwellers of Agartala felt threatened in the town as a result of the ethnic violence that erupted in the state in 1980, there was no mass-scale and permanent movement of STs from Agartala to rural areas. The extremist problem that began in the state in the mid 1980s was a long-drawn out affair that is not fully over as yet. It has had a wide-ranging effect on the presence of STs in the urban area. Tribal villages have been vulnerable and the tribals of the state have been the victims of tribal and Bengali extremism. Since the urban areas have not suffered from extremist attacks and the educational and health care institutions have not come to a standstill in them as a result of extremist activities, the tribals who are in a relatively advantageous position have left the villages and have settled down in the comparative safety of the town in the wake of extremist activities that have racked the state since the mid 1980s.

#### **Findings on the basis of discussions with knowledgeable people and elected members and officers of Udaipur and Kamalpur Nagar Panchayats**

Although the population of Udaipur increased between 1971 and 1981, as shown in Table 2, the ST population of the town went down from 173 in 1971 to 102 in 1981, registering a 41.04 percent decrease between these two years. According to the sources consulted, the decline in the ST population of the town between 1971 and 1981 was due to the extremist activities let loose by the ethnic riots that swept the state in 1980. The villages surrounding Udaipur like Maharani and Hadra were badly affected by the riot and this made the tribals of Udaipur very nervous as they were in a minority in the town. Rajnagar village, situated across the Gumti River from Udaipur, had a big tribal population. Bengali extremists attacked the tribals of Rajnagar and torched their homes. This incident created a fear psychosis in the minds of the ST residents of the town who fled to the interior villages. Most of the tribal government employees who lived in Udaipur sought transfers to safer areas and left the town in the wake of the ethnic riots in 1980, lowering the number of tribals in the town in 1981 that is observed in the census figures. According to the informants with whom discussions were held, after the situation returned to normal in the state and also around Udaipur, many of the tribals who had left the town in panic returned to the town. Since the 1990s, some tribals living in nearby villages also migrated to the town in order to avail of better educational opportunities available there as the educational system of the tribal areas had broken down due to extremist activities in the state in general and around Udaipur

in particular. In addition to this, with the development of the town, its administrative and other functions increased and this led to the growth of the ST population in the town as some of the government employees posted in Udaipur belonged to the Scheduled Tribes. The combined effect of all these factors was to increase the presence of STs in Udaipur from 1991 onwards.

As shown in Table 2, the ST population of Kamalpur went down from 158 in 1981 to 133 in 1991. STs formed 4.28 percent of the population of the town in 1981 but this percentage dropped to 3.09 in 1991 (Table 2). Was the decline in the presence of STs observed in the town between 1981 and 1991 due to extremist activities in the state that began in the mid 1880s? Most of the tribal residents of Kamalpur were government servants who came from the surrounding villages and lived in rented accommodation in the town. In 1991 when extremist activities in Tripura had reached a peak, some of these government servants left the town and moved back to their native villages near the town where they felt relatively safe since tribals constituted a majority in these villages. The STs residing in Kamalpur expected a communal backlash against them in the town as a result of the atrocities that were perpetrated against the Bengalis of Srirampur village situated near the town by tribal extremists since they formed a minuscule percentage of the town population and felt vulnerable there. When extremists became less active in Tripura and a semblance of normalcy was restored in the state, many of the tribals of the town who had moved out of Kamalpur returned to the town though a handful of them also migrated to Agartala and Khowai. The tribal population of Kamalpur increased quite sharply in 2001 because some tribal government servants were transferred to the town and also because better educational facilities available in the town acted as a magnet, drawing more tribals into the town from the surrounding villages.

#### **The presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura as a result of the gradual petering out of extremism in the state : the likely scenario**

It is widely believed that extremism is on the wane in Tripura and the heyday of extremism is over in the state. How is this development likely to impact the extremism-related presence of STs in the urban areas of the state? One possible outcome is that the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura will decline as there will be an exodus of STs who had left their village homes and settled in urban areas under the threat of extremist depredations from the towns to the rural areas they came from once the incidence of extremism declines. Secondly, a decline in the presence of STs in the urban

areas of the state may occur as the incidence of extremism-induced migration of tribals to the urban areas of the state in search of safety and security falls when there is a gradual return to normalcy in the state. However, it is equally possible that though a part of the tribal migration to urban areas was induced by extremism, once the tribal migrants who were driven to urban areas by extremist depredations have stayed in urban areas for a certain length of time and have become used to living in the city and enjoying the facilities and the advantages it offers, they will not think of returning to the villages they came from even when conditions become normal in the state. Even if the first generation extremism-induced ST migrants decide to go back to the villages of their origin, it is quite likely that the children of these migrants who have very few links with and often no memories of their parental villages and are often city born and bred will not take part in the exodus. Besides, when peace is restored in the state and extremism ends, development of the state may lead to urban growth. New towns may emerge in the process and existing towns may become larger. With the restoration of normalcy in the state, the prospects of development of some interior areas with a large tribal population into urban centres may increase. For example, villages like Khumlung, the headquarters of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, may develop into a town in future with the demise of extremism in the state. STs who lived *in situ* in the villages that become towns with extremism becoming a thing of the past will then become urbanites, swelling the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura. Along with this, STs from the surrounding tribal villages can flock to these new towns to take advantage of the facilities and amenities offered by them and thereby increase the presence of STs in the urban areas of the state.<sup>7</sup> The growth of towns that have a relatively large ST population that are located in tribal majority areas may lead to a larger presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura in future. For example, towns like Kanchanpur and Ambassa, the new census towns of 2001 in Dhalai district, which is tribal dominated (54.03 percent of its population was tribal in 2001), where the percentage of tribals in the population was large compared to the rest of the towns of the state in 2001, may develop into full-fledged statutory towns in the 2011 census with a burgeoning tribal population. New towns may also develop in the tribal dominated areas located in the urban areas of the state with the demise of extremism in Tripura. Statutory towns like Sabroom, Khowai, Kamalpur, Kumarghat, Amarpur Kailashahar and the capital city of Agartala that had a relatively large percentage of ST population

<sup>7</sup> However, there is always a possibility that when an area where tribals form a sizeable portion of the population develops into a town, a large section of its native tribal population will leave the area and retreat into interior areas away from the town.

as per the 2001 Census as shown in Table 2 may experience more growth with the demise of extremism and less diversion of state funds for the maintenance of law and order in the state. Urban development in these towns may induce a further dose of ST migration into these urban centres so that the presence of STs in the urban areas of Tripura may increase in future.

Whether increased or decreased presence of tribals will prevail in future in the urban centres of Tripura as a result of the decline in extremism in the state is a matter of conjecture. The information given in column 5 of Tables 3, 4 and 5 makes it very clear that no definite answer can be given about the size of the ST population of Agartala when extremism ends in the state. It may increase or decrease. As can be seen from Table 4, two political activists interviewed who had been hounded out of their village by extremists and had taken shelter in Agartala have returned to their village and plan to stay there to continue with their political work in 2007 when conditions became more or less normal in the state but interestingly enough, the sons of one of the respondents have stayed back in the city and do not intend to return to their native village. On the other end of the scale is the case of two other party members of the CPI(M) in the sample who had to flee their homes in villages and seek safety in Agartala whose case histories are given in Table 3. They have stayed on in Agartala. One of these respondents continues to live in Agartala because her son goes to school there and commutes to the Block Headquarters every day. The other has built a house in Agartala and will continue to live in the city because he prefers to live there now. While the students in the sample who came to study in Agartala because the educational system in the tribal villages had broken down completely as a result of extremist activities want to stay on in Agartala after they finish their education, all the parents who migrated to Agartala to ensure that their wards could get good schooling facilities in a terror-free atmosphere in the city and endured quite a lot of hardship in the process want to return to their villages after retirement even though they feel that their children may not emulate them and become villagers.<sup>8</sup> The surrendered extremist whose case history is given in Table 5 expressed his preference for staying on in Agartala permanently

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<sup>8</sup> Tribal migrants to the city as a result of extremist depredation belonged to an older age group than the student migrants. They also maintained a close relationship with their families in the village and had fixed assets there. As older people and first generation migrants, they felt less at home in the city than the students who do not wish to return to the village. Probably because of their age also, they were less enamoured of the city lights than the tribal students and could think of returning to their villages after retirement.

probably because he was afraid of revenge killing by his former accomplices if he returned to his village. The probability of getting the best possible rehabilitation package and of being successful if he launches a fresh political career if he is based close to the seat of power in the capital city has been a factor in his decision-making.

### Conclusion

However, the increase in the number of STs who live in the towns cities of a state depends on the natural increase of the urban ST population and the ST population gained by urban areas through both net rural-urban migration of STs (which depends on a host of factors including the incidence of extremism) and the reclassification of rural settlements where STs reside into cities and towns. All these factors are likely to lead to an increase in the number of STs residing in the urban areas of Tripura in future.

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Table 1: ST Urban Population and ST Urban Population as a Percentage of the Urban Population of Tripura, 1971-2001

Year	Urban population		ST urban population as % of total urban population of state
	Total	ST	
1971	162360	5485	3.38
1981	225568	7668	3.40
1991	421721	14081	3.34
2001	545750	25429	4.66

Source: Census of India Different Years

Table 2: ST population and ST population as % of population of urban areas of Tripura, 1961-2001

State/town/city	ST population				ST population as % of town population			
	1971	1981	1991	2001	1971	1981	1991	2001
Agartala	4822	6100	8601	15616	6.13	4.61	5.47	8.22
Khowai	221	306	532	1443	2.37	2.85	4.24	8.16
Dharmanagar	77	182	358	232	0.46	0.87	1.38	0.75
Kailashahar	86	290	481	845	0.81	2.24	2.98	4.17
Udaipur	173	102	308	528	2.55	0.63	1.64	2.43
Belonia	106	72	75	202	0.93	0.59	0.57	1.28
Sonamura		178	77	154		2.79	0.95	1.53
Kamalpur		158	133	429		4.28	3.09	8.34
Sabroom		118	248	471		3.35	5.20	8.17
Amarpur		162	253	503		2.54	2.96	4.63
Kumarghat			1120	578			7.65	4.47
Teliamura			776	118			2.81	0.60
Jogendranagar			34	57			0.13	0.16
Gandhigram			55	93			0.72	0.87
Singarbil			136				1.48	
Barjala			72				0.42	
Pratapgarh			147	275			0.04	1.02
Badharghat			675	1136			1.90	2.38
Ranirbazar				6				(negligible)
Narsingarh				117				1.72
Kujaban(part)				236				3.21

Indranagar (part)				65				0.36
Gokulnagar				598				6.19
Kanchanpur				965				12.57
Ambassa				762				12.60
Total Tripura	5485	7668	14081	25429	3.38	3.40	3.34	4.66

Source: Census of India Different Years

Table 3: ST migrants who migrated to Agartala between 1991 and 2001

Respondent no.	Migrated to Agartala from	Socio-economic particulars about respondent or his/her family	Reasons for migrating from village	Preferred place of stay in future when extremism ends in the state
1	Jolaihari village	Respondent and his wife work in the Education Department, Government of Tripura. Respondent is posted in Lembucherra and his wife is posted in Esrai. Both have to commute to work from Agartala. Respondent lives in own house in Agartala and has agricultural land and rubber garden in native village. Father is a prosperous farmer in native village. Respondent moved to Agartala in the late 1990s.	For the education of the children partly because extremists have played havoc with the educational system in the villages of Tripura	Both the husband and the wife would like to go back to their native village when they retire but they are not sure that their children would like to go back to the village.
2	Madhabbari village	Respondent works in the Education Department and is posted in Uрмаi High School. His wife works in the Public Works Department of the Government of Tripura and is posted in Agartala. Respondent has to spend a lot of time in commuting to and from work every day. He lives in his own house in Agartala. He came to the city in 1998.	For the education of the children partly because extremists have played havoc with the educational system in the villages of Tripura	The couple would like to return to their village when both of them retire but the children may want to stay on in Agartala
3	Village near Teliamura	Respondent employed in a private school in Agartala. Has agricultural land in the village which he gets cultivated through sharecroppers. He lives in a rented accommodation in Agartala. He moved to Agartala in 1997.	For the education of his children partly because extremists have played havoc with the educational system in the villages of Tripura	Wants to return to the village after retirement.

4	Village near Agartala	The respondent is a college student in Agartala. He was a student of a school in Agartala also. His father is a prosperous farmer in his native village, He stays in a shared rented accommodation with other tribal students in Abhoynagar. His spends his long holidays in his native village. He moved to Agartala in the late 1990s.	He was sent to Agartala as a school student because the schools in his village functioned erratically due to extremist threat when he was in school.	He wants to stay on in Agartala even when he finishes his college education.
5	Village near Champaknagar in West Tripura District	Respondent is Senior Assistant to the Minister of Fisheries, Government of Tripura. He lives in a Government Quarters Complex in Agartala. His children study in Agartala. He has agricultural land in his native village which he has given out to sharecroppers. He came to Agartala in the early 1990s and was allotted government accommodation through the intervention of the Minister of Fisheries for whom he worked.	The respondent used to commute to work in Agartala from his native village every day by bus. In 1990, the bus he missed while coming to work was attacked by Bengali extremists near Teliamura. All the tribals who were in the bus were forced to get off and were beaten up. In the evening the respondent returned to his village along with other tribal government employees living in or near his village in a hired taxi with a police escort and he decided to shift his residence to Agartala to avoid taking the risk of travelling through areas where Bengali terrorists held sway. This incident shocked the respondent who decided to move to Agartala to avoid the risky journey to and from the village every day.	Respondent wants to settle down in his village after retirement but he is not sure whether his children would like to go back to the village with him.

6	Hezamara Block Headquarters	Respondent is the Vice-Chairperson of Hezamara Block Panchayat and is a local leader of the CPI(M). Has a house in Hezamara and has built a house in Agartala. Commutes from Agartala daily for her official and political work. One of her sons went to college in Bangalore and is now preparing to go abroad for a degree in Management. Her other son is in school in Agartala. The respondent moved to Agartala in the late 1990s.	Respondent was forced to leave her home in Hezamara by extremists in the 1990s	Respondent has decided to stay on in Agartala for her son's education
7	Hezamara Block Headquarters	The respondent is an Extension Officer of Hezamara Block Panchayat. Has built his own house in Agartala and commutes to work every day. His parents live in Hezamara. He moved to Agartala in the late 1990s.	The respondent was forced to leave his home by the extremists in the 1990s	The respondent wants to stay on in the city as he has grown used to living in Agartala.
8	Lembucherra village	Respondent was a landless agricultural labourer in the village. He works as a rickshaw puller in Agartala. He lives in rented accommodation in the city with his whole family. He came to Agartala with his whole family in 2000.	Respondent could not make both ends meet in village. He also migrated to give better educational opportunities to his children in the city	Respondent wants to return to his village when he becomes old.

Source: Field Study conducted in 2008

Table 4: ST respondents who had migrated to Agartala from a rural area and moved back to it after extremism abated in Tripura

Respondent no.	Migrated to Agartala from	Socio-economic particulars about respondent or his/her family	Reasons for migrating to and from Agartala	Preferred place of stay in future when extremism ends in the state
1	Hezamara Block headquarters	Respondent is Chairperson of Hezamara Block Panchayat. Is a local leader of the CPI(M) party in Hezamara. Has his own house in Hezamara and lived in Agartala as a tenant.	Respondent had to leave Hezamara due to extremist threat in the 1990s. He was forced to live in rented accommodation in Agartala till 2007 and commuted to Hezamara for work and organizational work of the party from Agartala during this period. He never spent the night at Hezamara for fear of being kidnapped by extremists. Now that conditions have become normal in the Block, he has returned to his native village in 2007.	Wants to stay on in Hezamara in future also but his sons are still living in Agartala.
2	Hezamara Block headquarters	Respondent is an elected member of the Hezamara Block Panchayat. He is a member of the CPI(M) party.	He was abducted by the extremists from Hezamara in 1990 but he escaped from their clutches and went back to Hezamara. He was abducted by extremists again and was taken to Bangladesh by them. He was freed by them on payment of ransom by his family. After he was released by the extremists, he decided to move to Agartala. Now that conditions have returned to normal in the Block, he has returned to Hezamara in 2007.	He wants to stay on in Hezamara.

Source: Field survey conducted in 2008 in Hezamara Block Panchayat

Table 5: STs who moved to Agartala from villages between 2002 and 2005

Respondent no.	Migrated to Agartala from	Socio-economic particulars about respondent or his/her family	Reason for migrating from village	Preferred place of stay in future when extremism ends in the state
1	Village near Teliamura	The respondent is a surrendered extremist leader. He was given a flat in a government officers' housing complex and provided with security round the clock. His wife has got training in tailoring as a part of his rehabilitation package and his children study in a missionary school in the city. He was rehabilitated in Agartala in 2005.	Did not divulge but it is a known fact that high ranking surrendered extremists are given rehabilitation in the capital city for their safety and for the relative ease of keeping track of their activities. The surrendered extremist leaders also prefer to live in the city because it is the foci of power.	Wants to stay on in Agartala.
2	Village near Jirania	The respondent is a school student who stays in shared rented accommodation with other tribal students in Abhoynagar. His father is a retired government pensioner. The respondent moved to Agartala in 2004.	The village school where he used to study earlier did not function because of extremist threat. Schools in Agartala are better and private tuition from school teachers was not available in the village because the school teachers who were mainly Bengalis did not stay back in the village after school hours as they feared that they would be abducted by the extremists.	Would like to stay on in Agartala after he completes his education provided he gets a job in the city.
3	Village near Mandai	The respondent studies in an open school. He lives with his college student	The village schools did not function because of extremist threat.	Wants to stay on in Agartala after completing his education

		brother in a rented accommodation in Abhoynagar which they share with other tribal students. His father is an affluent farmer in his native village. The respondent moved to Agartala in 2004.	Schools are better in Agartala and it is possible to get private tutors in the city.	
4	Village near Teliamura	The respondent works in a government school in Golaghati. He has to spend two hours every day travelling to the school where he works. He lives in a rented accommodation in Agartala. He moved to the city in 2005.	For the education of his children because extremism had played havoc with the educational system of the villages of Tripura.	Plans to go back to his native village when he retires but does not think that his children would like to accompany him.

Source: Field Study conducted in 2008