

## *Identity, Recognition and Terrorism: The Case of Tripura, India*

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### **Abstract**

Taylor's (1994) notion of "politics of recognition" construes identity as being a creation of existence of recognition or dearth of it. "Misrecognition" can result into undignified disreputable view of self. It is intriguing indeed that membership of a radical extremist group can create and escalate a sense of community, power and identity to people who might otherwise feel alone, powerless and insignificant (Schaefer, 2007). India is a land with diversified culture of multiple ethnic communities. The country is also witnessing various ethnic conflicts and forms of terrorism. The researchers thus fancied whether in political terrorism, subsistence of ethnic identity and search for "recognition" can play a role. The present research was thus conceived and conducted at Tripura, a North-eastern state of India that has been facing the problems of insurgency since 1980s. The present research was conducted on 16 groups, comprising of 6-10 members from three different age groups namely young adult (18-22 years), middle aged adult (45- 55 years), old adult (65 years above) who are members of either /or two different ethnic groups namely tribal people and non tribal Bengali people. The method of Focus group discussion was used for collecting data from them. The findings signifies that resentments against other ethnic groups, socio-economic problems experienced, improper practices of the political parties, unacceptable government policies along with pressurisation and external aid facilitating the enrolment of terrorists in the organizations etc. contributed to the rise of terrorism in Tripura.

Keywords: Terrorism, social reality, tribals, non tribals, ethnic identity

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## Introduction

Taylor's (1994) notion of "politics of recognition" construes identity as being a creation of existence of recognition or dearth of it. "Misrecognition" can result into undignified disreputable view of self. It is intriguing indeed that membership of a radical extremist group can create and escalate a sense of community, power and identity to people who might otherwise feel alone, powerless and insignificant (Schaefer, 2007). India is a land with diversified culture of multiple ethnic communities witnessing various forms of ethnic conflicts and terrorism. The researchers thus fancied whether in political terrorism, subsistence of ethnic identity and search for "recognition" can play a role. This search for "recognition" is the resultant of perception of the social reality of an individual which influences his learning, memory, expectation and attention.

Social Reality a product of human dialogue, emerges out of the accepted social tenets of a community, involving relatively stable laws and social representations (Bocking, 1995). Social reality calls for uniformities among observers (Luhmann, 2002) harboring one's enmeshed identity with the reference group. One can have several selves (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and multiple social identities derived from the perceived membership of social groups (Hogg and Vaughan 2002). The dialectical nature of identity influences the creation and maintenance of both collective social identities and individual identity which in turn depends heavily on the view as reflected through the majority culture. When people do not receive "recognition" or their identity is under threat, it can bear on their social and individual identities.

Social Identity Theory asserts that group membership creates in-group / self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group. The examples (minimal group studies) of Turner and Tajfel (1986) showed that the mere act of individuals categorizing themselves as group members was sufficient to lead them to display in group favoritism. After being categorized, individuals seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their in-group from a comparison out-group on some valued dimension. This quest for positive distinctiveness means that people's sense of who they are is defined in terms of 'we' rather than 'I'. The consequence of self categorization is an accentuation of the perceived similarities between the self and in-group members, and perceived differences between the self and out-group members. Social identity also involves a process of *depersonalization*, a cognitive representation where self is viewed as interchangeable with other in-group members (Turner 1982).

The progress of ethnic identity includes the identity formation in an individual's self categorization in, and psychological attachment to, an ethnic group. Ethnic identity is characterized as part of one's self concept and identification. Development of ethnic identity follows a process of the construction of identity over time, (Phinney, 1990) due to an amalgamation of experience and actions of the individual (Phinney and Ong, 2007) and includes attainment of knowledge and understanding of in-group, as well as a sense of belonging to an ethnic group. Ethnic identity is sometimes

interchanged with, held distinct from, or considered as overlapping with racial, cultural and even national identities.

“The Tribals of Northeast India like any other ethnic groups are also affected by identity crisis, in socio-cultural and political fields” (Pyal, 2006: 215). “Ethnic movements in North-East India involve the assertion of identity around certain social problems, historic cultural legacies and political exigencies by way of organizing themselves into an ethnic body to concretize their identity” (Rizvi, 2006: 17). The insurgent groups in Tripura emerged at the end of the 1970s, as ethnic tensions between the Bengali immigrants and the tribal native population who were outnumbered by the former bringing them down to minority status.

The researchers thus fancied whether in political terrorism, subsistence of ethnic identity and search for “recognition” can play a role. It was assumed that views of the two population the tribal and non tribal Bengalis, would not be same and also perception may vary in accordance with age owing to the difference in lived experience. The present study intends to get an idea of the social reality perception regarding the rise of terrorism in Tripura across ages (young adults, middle adults and old adults) and ethnic group (tribal and non tribal Bengalis).

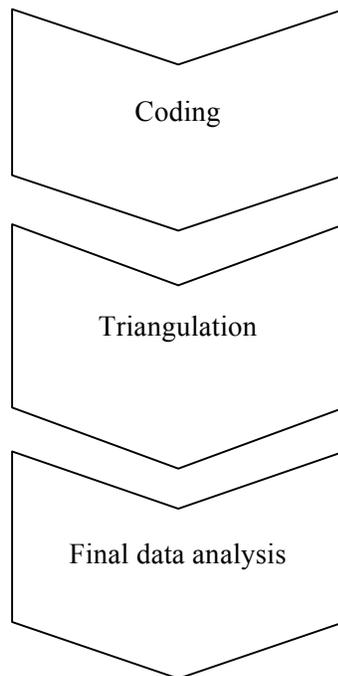
### **Research Objectives:**

The purpose of the present study is

- To explore the perception of Tribal Young Adults, middle adults and old adults of Tripura (having direct exposure) about the causes of terrorism of Tripura.
- To explore the perception of Non-Tribal Young Adults, middle adults and old adults of Tripura (having direct exposure) about the causes of terrorism of Tripura.

### **Method**

In the present research, an attempt was made to find out the differences in social reality perception regarding the development of terrorism in Tripura across ages (young adults, middle adults and old adults) and ethnic group along with the exposure to the events (Tribal, having direct exposure and Non-tribal having direct exposure to terrorism). As the study is regarding the perception of terrorism of Tripura, it is obvious that the population selected for the study will basically be the residents of Tripura. The tribal and nontribal adults from different parts of Tripura were selected for the study. The social reality of these people of different age and geographical areas are not same as there are differences in caste, language, geographical location, available facilities for normal livelihood and the most important, their exposure (direct, indirect or no exposure) to the terrorism. Therefore, their perception regarding the causes of terrorism of Tripura may also vary.



**Area selected for Study:**

The area of the study includes the capital city of Tripura, i.e., Agartala wherefrom the data of the non-tribal population were collected. Agartala is a place where the evidence of terror attacks is minimum, but has an impact of such activities. The data of the tribal population was collected mainly from Kulai and Ompi where the majority of the population is tribal. Ompi and Kulai is such a place where the terrorist activities were a daily affair at some time when the terrorist organisations were active in Tripura.

**Study Population:**

The research was conducted across people of different ages and belonging to different social reality. There were in total 16 groups taken for the research. Each group comprised of a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10 members according to the availability considering the criteria of selection.

**Sampling method:**

The sampling technique used in the present study is Purposive Sampling as diverse range of participants were selected depending on their age, caste, nature of exposure to the terrorist activities. Hence the Tribal or Non-tribal Young Adults, Middle Aged Adults and Old Aged Adults who were willing to participate in the process of the collection of data, were typically selected from the different parts of Tripura according to the requirements of the study.

## **Research Approaches, Tools and Techniques:**

### ***The Approaches:***

#### **Qualitative Research:**

Qualitative research is a system of inquiry which tries to build a holistic, largely narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon. Qualitative research is done in natural settings utilizing a combination of observations, interviews, and document reviews.

Qualitative research is effective to attain culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations. The potentiality of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often conflicting behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. The findings from qualitative data can often be extended to people with characteristics similar to those in the study population, gaining a rich and complex understanding of a specific social context or phenomenon typically takes priority over eliciting data that can be generalized to other geographical areas or populations.

#### ***Research Tools:***

#### **Focus Group Discussion:**

Focus Group Discussion is one of the important qualitative data collection method efficient in helping researchers learn the social norms of a community or subgroup, as well as the range of perspectives that exist within that community or subgroup. The researcher acts as a moderator in focus group who leads the discussion by asking participants to respond to open-ended question – that is, questions that require an in-depth response rather than a single phrase or simple "yes" or "no" answer. A second researcher i.e., the note-taker takes detailed notes on the discussion.

As focus group discussion was done; the research setting was prepared accordingly. The target respondents of each group were contacted, invited and informed separately about the panel discussion. They were given the required instructions. The initiator or moderator initiated the discussion asking the research questions. The respondents were interrupted by the initiator or moderator only when the discussion went out of track. The verbatim of discussion were recorded through audio tapes and later written transcriptions were made hearing the audio tapes. The verbatim of the Tribal groups were first written in Kokborok and then translated to English that of Non tribals from Bengali to English. Similarly for the non-tribal group translated from Bengali to English. Focus group discussions were conducted for each group and the discussion went on till it came to a saturation point. For each group at least two focus group discussions were conducted till the discussion came to saturation point. However, it was noticed that many a times the discussion came into saturation level in the 1<sup>st</sup>

discussion itself. But still the group was given a chance of discussion for second time with a viewpoint that after the discussion they might have missed out some points or the discussion has given some new inputs which the subjects might have realized later on. The data were interpreted with the help of meanings extracted through Open Coding, Focused Coding and Axial Coding which finally ended with Selective Coding.

**Questions for the focus group discussion:**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Possible outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the causes of terrorism in Tripura?</li> </ul>	<p>The participants may explore the various causes responsible for the development of terrorism in Tripura.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What led to the control of terrorist problems in Tripura?</li> </ul>	<p>The participants might have missed some points while discussing the first question. But when they discuss about the various factors of control over the problem they may add some new inputs.</p>
<p>Other questions were set according to the topics of the discussion. Some of these questions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why one brother of the same family chooses terrorism and the other not?</li> <li>• You said to fight against exploitation they choose terrorism, is it the right way?</li> <li>• Will getting independence solve all the problems?</li> <li>• Many educated persons too join terrorism, then is lack of education a prime cause of terrorism?</li> <li>• How deprivation leads to terrorism? Please explain.</li> </ul>	<p>The participants might think in a new direction and give some more inputs according to the questions asked.</p>

### **Research analysis:**

To analyze the data coding of the key trends that emerge from the discussion, was done. The codes went through three phases as delineated below : open coding, focused coding and axial coding (Corbin and Strauss 1990, Charmaz 2006). Following coding triangulation was adopted in the present research in order to validate the analysis procedure. In the present study, Investigator Triangulation has been adopted for validating the data and their process of coding. Here, other than the researcher and the supervisor, two more researchers analyzed the data collected. The researcher and the supervisor have been working with this present topic for the past nine years.

Other than the Supervisor and the researcher, there were two coders. The first coder though has done his Masters in Psychology and PhD in Psychology. The other coder is a postgraduate in Psychology and has been a helping hand to the researcher right from the beginning of the research.

### **Ethical Consideration:**

Identity of the respondents was kept confidential. Before the collection of data, the goals of the research were clearly explained to the respondents. While conducting the group discussion, the verbatim of the respondents were recorded in a voice recorder which was done with prior permission and consent of the respondents. As the topic of the research is a sensitive issue and might introduce some communal disharmony, the researcher was quite cautious not to use any such words of dialect which might otherwise effect the respondent's (especially the tribal respondents, as the terrorist population were mainly tribal and the researcher being a Bengali) emotions or impair the whole situation. Considering the research objectives and the occurrence of the terrorist activities, the tribal respondents were convinced not to deceive any kind of information, especially their attitudes regarding the Bengalis in Tripura and freely discuss about the issue.

### **Results and Discussion:**

The collected data had undergone the various stages of coding viz. Open Coding, Focused Coding and Axial Coding.

**Table 1: Tribal Young Adults (18-22 yrs) residing in Tripura**

<b>Focussed Coding</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To drive away the Bengali speaking people out of Tripura</li> <li>• Vengeance against Bengali community</li> <li>• Exploitation by Bengalis</li> <li>• Increasing migration of the Bengali speaking people from neighbouring places</li> <li>• Agartala, the capital city of Tripura being dominated in every spheres by Bengalis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of education and exposure of common people</li> <li>• Inadequate income of common people</li> <li>• Easy way of earning of the common people by joining the terrorist group</li> <li>• Inadequate facility to secure government job facilities</li> <li>• Gross unemployment of the tribal people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic problems experienced by the common people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation to create new nation</li> <li>• Lack of initiative by the government to improve the plight of the people</li> <li>• Inability of Government to stop migration of Bengali speaking people from neighbouring places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the Government</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anger against political leaders</li> <li>• Focus of the political leaders for electoral benefit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the practices of the political parties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maltreatments by the police</li> <li>• False legal suit filed against common people by the police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maltreatment by the authority</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarrels at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familial problems</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure created by terrorist outfits to join the organization</li> <li>• Using false legal suit to pressurize the common people to join the terrorist outfit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressurisation by the terrorist outfits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To fight for the development of the tribal people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betterment of tribal people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miscommunication among the Bengalis and the Tribals due to language diversity resulting into communal dispute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication gap due to language barrier</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Non Tribal Young Adults (18-22 yrs) residing in Tripura**

<b>Focussed Coding</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of socio-economic deprivation of the tribal people</li> <li>• Lack of education of the common people</li> <li>• Gross unemployment of the tribal people</li> <li>• Lack of proper socio-economic facilities for the common people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic problems experienced by the common people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of terrorist organization on own interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the practices of the political parties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jealousy against Bengalis which in turn initiated sense of inferiority among the Tribal peoples</li> <li>• To safeguard themselves against the exploitation of the Bengalis</li> <li>• Out of jealousy they consider themselves superior than the Bengalis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure towards terrorist activities by electronic media and subsequently its imitation</li> <li>• Spreading of communal hatred speech by certain religious institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated by hatred speech</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorist groups are motivating the youths to join the terrorist outfits creating peer pressure</li> <li>• Taking advantage of the turbulent adolescent nature the terrorist groups are motivating them to join the terrorist outfits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressurisation by the terrorist outfits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding from other countries has escalated terrorist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding from other countries</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of proper guidance and awareness about the negativities associated with terrorist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequacy of proper guidance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of initiative by the government to improve the plight of the people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the Government</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfilment of their demands of access to socio-economic facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betterment of the Tribals</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Tribal Middle Aged Adults (45- 55 yrs) residing in Tripura**

<b>Focussed Coding</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get their land back from the Bengalis who are at present dominating Tripura</li> <li>• Vengeance against Bengali community</li> <li>• Ethnic clashes between Bengalis who formed the majority of population and Tribals who became minority</li> <li>• Increasing migration of the Bengali speaking people from neighbouring places</li> <li>• Feeling of insecurity for the increasing number of Bengalis in the population</li> <li>• To protect the land of the Tribals from the possession of the Bengalis</li> <li>• Exploitation of the Tribals by the Bengalis</li> <li>• All the lucrative opportunities being possessed by the Bengalis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get facilities from the government after surrender from the terrorist organisations</li> <li>• Gross unemployment of the Tribal people</li> <li>• Problems in transportation leading to inadequacy of proper facilities</li> <li>• To earn money they join the terrorist groups</li> <li>• Lack of proper facilities for the Tribals</li> <li>• Lack of education of the Tribals</li> <li>• Deprivation of the Tribals from proper facilities</li> <li>• Low economic status of the Tribals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic problems experienced by the common people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of terrorist organization for their own interest</li> <li>• Focus of the political leaders for electoral benefit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the practices of the political parties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy means of shelter to neighbouring countries after carrying out different terrorist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interference of the neighbouring countries</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To protect the rights of the Tribals</li> <li>• To fulfil the demand of the Tribals in terms of education, money, right for land</li> <li>• They are fighters not terrorists who are fighting for the tribal rights</li> <li>• Improve the position of the Tribals in terms of getting required facilities for leading a better life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betterment of tribal people</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deprivation from the basic facilities of the Tribals by the government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the Government</li> </ul>
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**Table 4: *Non-tribal Middle Aged Adults (45- 55 yrs) residing in Tripura***

<b>Focussed Coding</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deprivation from the basic facilities of the Tribals by the government</li> <li>• Negative effect of capitalism in the sense that poor become poorer</li> <li>• Loopholes in the administrative system leading to underdevelopment of the Tribals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the Government</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To fight for the basic rights of the Tribals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betterment of tribal people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help from the neighbouring countries for providing shelter, weapons and hideouts</li> <li>• Funding from other countries to carry on the terrorist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External help from the other countries</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of proper guidance and awareness about the negativities associated with terrorist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequacy of proper guidance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of proper facilities to the Tribals</li> <li>• Lack of education of the Tribals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic problems experienced by the common people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of terrorist organization for their own interest</li> <li>• Focus of the political leaders for electoral benefit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the practices of the political parties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploitation of the Tribals by the Bengalis</li> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis for possession of all the facilities meant for the Tribals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provocation by other countries to carry on terrorist activities with a motive to expand their business of weapons</li> <li>• Spreading of communal hatred speech by certain religious institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated by hatred speech</li> </ul>

**Table 5: Tribal Old Adults (65 yrs above) residing in Tripura**

<b>Focussed Coding</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of terrorist organisation for own interest</li> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of terrorist organisation for getting their power back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the practices of the political parties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic clashes between Bengalis who formed the majority of population and Tribals who became minority</li> <li>• Increasing migration of the Bengali speaking people from neighbouring places</li> <li>• Unfair deeds by the Bengalis taking advantage of the innocence of the Tribals</li> <li>• Protection of the land of the Tribals from being occupied by the Bengalis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic deprivation</li> <li>• Lack of education of the common people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic problems experienced by the common people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the rights of the Tribals</li> <li>• For fulfilling the demands, the Tribals were bound to join the terrorist groups</li> <li>• Prevention of social menace like stopping early age marriage</li> <li>• Protection of the Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council areas from being occupied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betterment of tribal people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of initiative by the government to improve the plight of the people</li> <li>• Responsibility of the government for creation of terrorist organization in order to kill the villagers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the Government</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaccessibility of the police to dense forests which are suitable places of shelter of the terrorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortcomings of the police to control the situation</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Non-tribal Old Adults (65 yrs above) residing in Tripura**

<b>Focussed Coding</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploitation of the Tribals by the Bengalis</li> <li>• To protect the land of the Tribals from being occupied by the Bengalis by cheating</li> <li>• Increasing migration of the Bengali speaking people from neighbouring places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievances against Bengalis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic deprivation of the Tribals</li> <li>• Lack of education of the common people</li> <li>• Opportunity for high income of the common people in less time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic problems experienced by the common people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of misunderstandings among the Tribals and Bengalis ultimately resulting into formation of terrorist organisation</li> <li>• Responsibility of the political parties for creation of terrorist organisation</li> <li>• Focus of the political leaders for electoral benefit</li> <li>• Taking advantage of economic deprivation by the political parties</li> <li>• Provocation of the political parties by taking advantage of the sense of deprivation among the Tribals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resentment against the practices of the political parties</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provocations by the urban educated Tribals creating a miscommunication among the rural uneducated Tribals and the Bengalis</li> <li>• Spreading of communal hatred speech by certain religious institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated by hatred speech</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking advantage of economic deprivation by the terrorist organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persuasion by the terrorist outfits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy means of shelter to neighbouring countries after carrying out different terrorist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interference of the neighbouring countries</li> </ul>

A salient perception of all respondents irrespective of ethnic affiliation and age positions Bengalis as liable for the initiation of terrorism in Tripura with diverse interpretation of the phenomenon. The Bengalis perceived that, mistreatment of the tribals by their ancestors paved the way to terrorism by incubating grievances leading to radical outburst of terrorism. To them, dissidence of the tribals stirred up owing to fear of losing the land, culture, and language. It is the political parties, who benefitted out of the situation.

The Tribals however looked into the phenomenon from a differing perspective. The perceptions of the tribals about the Bengalis positions the latter as dominant usurpers with all conveniences, who exploited the Tribals, subsumed their lands tactfully employing cultural, symbolic and financial resources. For saving the land and to fight against exploitation the tribals resorted to terrorism. The terrorist groups are the “saviors” of the Tribals and must be called “fighters” not “terrorists”. The sole motive of these groups was to cleanse Tripura from the Bengalis, the foremost impediment of tribal development, for ensuring peace and eradicating all predicaments.

The differential perceptions may be attributed to the differing social reality perception and marginalized ethnic identity. Ethnic identity certainly impacts the development of self perception and other (members of other ethnic groups) perception. Thus search for “recognition” can play a role in triggering ethnic clashes as worse as political terrorism.

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