

TRIPURA UNIVERSITY

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Higher education in Tripura had a late start. Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) College, the first degree college in the State, started functioning under the University of Calcutta only in 1947. Not that there was no attempt in the past in Princely Tripura to establish any higher educational institution. As early as 1901, Radhakishore Manikya made an attempt to establish a degree college in the-then tiny capital town Agartala; but as the proposal did not fulfill the necessary requirements, it did not get approval from the Calcutta University. In 1937, Bir Bikramkishore Manikya, the last Maharaja of Tripura, had planned for establishing a college again at Agartala and an area of 254 acres of land, consisting of undulated tilla land having interposed lakes almost all around, in the eastern part of Agartala, was earmarked for that under the “Vidyapattan Scheme”. A committee under the name “Vidyapattan Governing Committee” consisting of 10 members with the Minister as its President was appointed by the Maharaja to carry out the scheme of higher education and a sum of Rs. 50,000 was placed at its disposal at the first instance. On 7 May, 1937, Maharaja Bir Bikram laid the foundation-stone of the college under the scheme. But with the outbreak of the Second World War (1939-45), the work of construction had to be abandoned. The vulnerability of Tripura became apparent after the fall of Burma to the Japanese in 1942. The ground floor of the unfinished College building was converted into an Army Hospital for British Army moving to and from Burma. When the Second World War was over, the construction work could not be started immediately due to certain difficulties and on 17 May, 1947, Maharaja Bir Bikram breathed his last and Tripura became restive for various reasons. As a result, the entire scheme of “Vidyapattan” could not be implemented into reality in time. The MBB College (popularly known as the “Dream College”), affiliated to the Calcutta University, was once the only college in the State. As time progressed, to meet the growing demands of a large number of students – who after the partition of the country had migrated to Tripura from the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)—some other colleges came into being at private initiatives, e.g. Ramkrishna Mahavidyalaya at Kailasahar in 1950; Belonia College at Belonia in 1964; Ramthakur College at Agartala in 1967 – and all were affiliated to the Calcutta University. That showed the urge of the people for higher education because, compared to the national average, along with the growth of population in the state, the literacy rate of Tripura was also higher since independence despite economic backwardness of the common people. As the students and people of the state were pressing hard for quite sometime since the seventies of the last century to uplift the existing three private degree Colleges of state into government colleges; in 1982 the three private degree colleges of Tripura were taken over by the state government, in spite of its limited means. Thus all the degree colleges in Tripura became ultimately government colleges at that time.