CHAPTER-V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Interface between folk custom and economy:

Different fields of Folklore are not independent from one another. No single field can be studied without being impacted or impacting the other. One field of observance automatically demands the need for the other; and in fact, it is difficult to classify some aspects where into they are to be included; As stated by Dorson-

_The four divisions sketched here are not all inclusive or mutually exclusive. Where do we place traditional gesture, for instances? They might be bracketed with “Folk speech” as a folk communication system, even though such placement leads to the paradox of subsuming gestures under oral folklore. How does one draw a firm line between festivals and the performing arts? Should beliefs and superstitions be considered as separate entity or be incorporated with legends, customs and folk religion? One can quibble endlessly over these matters, and folklorists usually do._

Fields of folklore have strong relation with economics. Economics, in turn, influences folklore in both ways; positively and negatively. It is evident in the field like performing arts and material culture. Owing to economic benefits culture retrieves from extinction, songs and music rebirth and facilitate with a new rhythm of expression. Similarly, high economic growth marches forward hand in hand with the replacement of age old materials of mankind by sophisticated alternatives; causing a net heritage loss to the society. Similar is the case with social folk customs as social folk custom
and economy are interrelated. Economic growth helps in promoting festivals in one hand but affecting other avenues on the other. The overemphasis of festival for economic benefit may also harm its originality.

Our study *Social Folk Customs and Economy of the Tiwas of Morigaon District of Assam* is attempted to observe some core issues of the community from the perspective of reading culture and economic aspects. The study finds out the following important points at the end of the analysis.

5.2 Social folk customs of the Tiwas of Morigaon district:

Tiwas have two basic categories i.e. hill Tiwa and plain Tiwa. Although most of them live in the west Karbi Anlong areas still have a close correspondence with the Tiwas people living in the plain and foothill areas of Morigaon district. The hill Tiwas still observe many of their traditional rituals, customs and traditions. The plain Tiwas have lost most of their age-old customs while mingling with the surrounding communities. Some of the thrust areas those have found significant in the study are as follows:

5.2.1 Strong areas:

• **Deity worship:**

During every important event of life cycle, the Tiwa people worship their deities and spirits and seek their blessings for a good and prosperous life. It is observed in many ceremonies and occasion that the Tiwas worship their prime deities, *Furimosa, Badalmaji*
Satbuni, Barobuni etc. This is a fine custom as it enables an individual as well as a society to keep it away from the misdeeds. Belief on God means belief on own selves and it provides them enough encouragement. It should be an ideal for the other communities also. They consider it as omen in their traditional belief system.

- **Belief itself is considered to be a custom:**

  The Tiwas believe everything very easily. They have strong belief upon God, the rulers and kings and as well as the seniors. The Tiwa people respect the king of Gobha equally with their deities. Deusal, Mahadeusal are their holy places. They believe in the fact that Pha Mahadeu is the supreme God of this world. That is why they worship him in their all their occasions. This is again, an important custom that keeps everyone psychologically happy. In the days of stress, frustration and tension other people can learn from this section of people how to be happy in life.

- **Respect to the elders:**

  Elderly people are respected by the Tiwas. This strengthens the bond of brotherhood among the members of the society. Young people learn the rituals, moral education and social norms and subsequently convey to the next generations. This is how Tiwa customs are rolling over generations to follow. It is a major area to be noticed. In the world of change, they are still holding and preserving their age old heritages.
• **Social Bonding:**

The Tiwas believe in social administration. A crime by any member of the society is justified by *khel*, their traditional assembly of social meeting. Everyone in the trial is given equal opportunity to prove his innocence. They have a democratic way to solve the problems arising out of breach and violation of social norms. Tiwa social court is a good example of such kind of justice, equity and indifference. Both the opposite parties in the trial are given equal opportunity to express their grievances, to justify their deeds and establish their stands.

• **Birth is special:**

Customs of child birth in a family are abided by all the clan members equally which enhance a sense of unity and togetherness among the clan members. Everyone wishes for a better future of the baby.

• **Marriage is a commitment:**

Marriage is regarded as a bond of spiritual unification of two souls. It is not result of a single life but a of several birth in the life cycle. It can not be broken easily and considered as life long relationship. Hence, very few divorce cases are noticed in the Tiwa society.

• **Death is pure:**

Death relieves the body from worldly sufferings. It takes the soul nearer to the God. After death the person becomes a deity for
the livings. In all rituals the deads are worshipped by every clan in a Tiwa society.

• **Festival lovers:**

  The Tiwas love festivals and ceremonies. They always put first priority on the celebration whether it is a family related ceremony or a social festival. They always find the source of merriment from these functions and observances.

• **Herbal healing system:**

  Tiwas believe in folk medicine. Most of the medicines they use have immense importance in their disease healing system. The massage therapy they use with every *tantra and mantra* (Chanting) has very importance in traditional treatment. The herbs they use for medicine are scientifically seemed to have significance. However, it needs further study.

• **Games are exercises in disguise:**

  Tiwa people have some traditional games where they use their muscle power. The games the Tiwa people play, are nothing other than some exercises. Some of their games are lost in the pace of advancement to globalisation and advent of modern games. However they need to be retrieved.
5.2.2 Weak avenues:

Some core and thrust areas of the Tiwas are still considered to be in weak fronts because these could not be disseminated from their prime socio cultural trends.

• **Loss of genuine taboos:**

In the plains, Tiwa customs and traditions are in the mouth of extinction. Most of them have converted to the *Vaishnavism*. There is a recent trend of conversion into the *Krishna Guru* cult in the plains and to the Christianity in the hills. Because of such movement, the Tiwas are indirectly affected to deviate from their age old traditions.

• **Urbanization, education is a curse to the Tiwas:**

People who leave their native place in search of education and job; if once settled, very few of them returns. Even if returns, he returns with an imitating culture which is ultimately spread out in the society and hamper the environment.

• **Endangered chamadi tradition:**

*Chamadi* is an icon for social integration. But this is seen normally in the hills. In the age of diversification, this may be a strong tool for social unification. Other communities have many things to learn out of *chamadi*. But unfortunately the plain Tiwas are seen to have lost the *chamadi* tradition.
• **Social delieation:**

   The Tiwa cultural life is full of energy and vigour. The primordial Tiwa consciousness responds to the vigour, glory and bounty of nature and captures the strength and energy of nature through its own energy of expression by way of festivities where songs, dances and all other rituals are integral. But the expansion of modernity brings a degradation of the social norms.

• **Imitating impact:**

   The Tiwas are bounded by ties of strong tradition and culture which determine their status within the household members, the village community, the clan households, the cluster of clans, society and the council of elders within the customary kingdom. The social order is hierarchically determined and the community subscribes to the order. There are checks and balances to maintain, preserve and sustain the traditional order. But now-a-days, an imitating wave of borrowed customs start harming their age old tradition.

5.3 **Economy of the Tiwas of Morigaon district:**

   Though some subtractions of customs and tradition of the plain Tiwas are observed, still there is also a sign of hope to preserve their age old customs and tradition by the forthcoming organizations among the youth promoting their culture into heritage tourism.
5.3.1 Positive areas:

- Economy retrieves lost customs through the expansion of the markets. The markets in the melas as well as the small and temporary markets open up the opportunities for retrieving customs and tradition along with the growth of income.
- Construction of a better Tiwa economy can be possible through fairs and festivals if proper care and management of the markets are taken. Also, there needs to protect the local shopkeepers from the outside competition by the authority imposing proper measures.
- Increased income is realised in recent years in favour of small businessmen. It can be sustained and promoted by developing mobility and transformation of the markets to the other areas also.
- Growth of tourism sector is not far behind if the various fairs and festivals are promoted in organised way.
- Favourable sex ratio is observed among the Tiwas, i.e., there are no shortage of females as compared to that of males which is normally inevident among the other communities.

5.3.2 Negative areas with some probable solutions:

- Poor literacy rate is observed among the Tiwas as has been displayed. This area needs to be taken care of.
- Low level of income is still a hurdle for the Tiwas. Idleness is a major cause in this regard. A work culture needs to be developed.
• Lack of innovations in agriculture keep it as stagnant. It is the need of hour to upgrade traditional method of cultivation.

• Idle workers in masses can be removed by opening self employing opportunities.

• Low capital invested in firming and manufacturing sector. An external support needs to enhance the micro credit facilities.

5.4 Other observations:

• Regarding the origin and history of the Tiwas:

Although there are so many opinions regarding the place of origin of the Tiwas was the Tibet region of China but, there is no scientific evidence of the claim. Even if it is true, it could not be ascertained as to how or when the Tiwa people migrated to the plains of the Brahmaputra. It could also not be ascertained whether the Tiwas came in a single flow of migration or there were successive waves of migration. It could not be decided as to whether the Tiwas actually settled in the hills or in plains first. There is a dichotomy in this issue. There is only linguistic and anthropomorphic evidence to support the view that the migration of the Tiwas to their present habitat was part of a larger migration of the Tibeto-Burmese group of Mongoloid people. Again, a thin possibility is to trace their origin can be observable among the customs and tradition they follow. From this angle, they are similar to the Boros in many occasions.
However, to go deeper into this matter a scientific study in terms using terracotta testing or carbon dating system would be essential.

- **Regarding internal migration:**

  Excluding their source of origin, there are differences in the prevalent opinions whether Tiwas migrated from the bank of the Brahmaputra to the hills or hills to plain. Here, it is clear from the study of customs and traditions that they migrated from the hill to plains. The proof in this regard is that there are some remains of the customs, traits and habits which signal about their ancient set ups.

  i) Festivals, fairs and rituals they perform in the plains are a part of those which are performed in the hills.

  ii) Birth rites, marriage rites and death rites in the plains are actually a prototype of rites performed in the hills.

  In this case, an example, — one can find easily the full version of the customs followed in the plains visiting the areas like Marjong, umsuai, Ulukunsi, tharakunsi of West karbi Anglong district. It proves, Tiwas certainly have migrated from the hills to plains.

**5.5 Conclusion:**

This work has made an observation between the social folk customs and economy of the Tiwas of a certain district of Assam. To a large extent, the study conforms to the observation of interface between these two aspects of the Tiwas of Morigaon districts, which is supposedly enriched with potential culture of their own, and a state of not-to-affluent economic state.
Frequency of observances of some customs show that these primarily thrive upon continuous economic system. These are included as festivals of greater tradition, like Borat festival. Jonbeel mela, which has spotted itself as a site of cultural tourism ‘within the state, perhaps, is the best example of still-to-be-existent barter system and a meeting place of brotherhood and camaraderie of different cross-sections of the people.’

Economy of the Tiwas is still agro-based one with no prominent sign of industry and technology based one. However, growth of such modern avenues, here and there, has made a change in the whole system of life and culture of the people.

Observations of such kind are achieved to some extents in our study. It is found that indifference of the commoners to interweave the economy with their cultural setting is the prime hindrance of uplift of both sectors. It may be suggested that an economic model may be adapted, which may be fruitful and suitable for upholding cultural values vis-à-vis a sound economic health.

At length, it is considered to be humble that, our study, due to its limitations, has remained within its constraints. Further studies on some core areas viz., relationship of economy with performing arts, development of cultural and economic tools in respect of physical folklore, remain to be prime sectors. Investigators of future time may throw lights on such areas.

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