The social folk customs and economy have always been vital parts of any society for they hold society in a solid bond of togetherness. Thus, the essence of the word ‘custom’ means the way of behaving that can be treated as usual or prevalent in a society. It is intensely associated with people or with the word ‘Folk’. Folk means people in general or a nation. As defined by Alan Dundes, Folk is, *...a group of people, whatsoever, who shares at least one common factor, it does not matter what the linking factor is.......*

Folk custom is thus a way of behaving or doing something associated to people or to a society or a nation. In broader sense, social folk custom deals with group interaction instead of an individual and is, in fact, an investigative area of folklore acknowledged by Richard M. Dorson. Dorson mentions different types of social folk customs such as *rites de passage* as birth, initiation, marriage and death. In social folk customs, he includes the folk beliefs, festivals and celebrations within which music, dance, costume and procession based on both religious and secular traditions may enter, certain games and recreation or pastime etc., mode of worship, folk religions and folk medicines.

Thus, social folk customs can be found out from the perspective of a community. When talked to the social folk customs of a particular community, it generally takes into account the aspects like festivals...
and ceremonies, beliefs and practices, games and pastimes, folk religions and folk medicines.

An economy covers all those agents like producers, consumers, distributors of goods and services of a community. Economy on the other hand means a large set of activities related to production and consumption that determines how the scarce resources are allocated within a certain region. Overall, an economy expresses the status of affluence or paucity of community from the material belongingness. Both social folk customs and economy are connected to each other. A prosperous economy always helps in performing folk customs in privileged way and *vice versa*. Most of the traditional fairs and festivals have been revived from the mouth of extinction because of its economic benefits. Again, the abundance of extraction of economic benefits may lead some customs to deteriorate over time. Economy is, thus, a sword blade with sharpness in both the edges in observing the social folk customs.

The social folk custom and economy of a small ethnic group have immense impact on building the contour stone of a greater community. At the same time folk customs and traditions, to some extent may be the domain behind the socio-economic and cultural image of a community. Folk customs and traditions are practiced primarily by small ethnic groups normally living in the remote and isolated areas. The most cultured and civilized society today also carries its current status, reflected traits from its root of origin after stages of evolution and transformation.
The Tiwa tribe, also known as the Lalung is one of the oldest tribes of Assam. It is an ethnic group inhabiting in the states of Assam and Meghalaya in north eastern part of India. They have a brief history of migration. According to a belief among the Tiwas, their forefathers have come down from Tibet region. But some other historians stated that their habitats was somewhere near Allahabad on the bank of the river Yamuna. They were pushed out by the Aryan invasion and forced them to leave Allahabad; and took shelter in the Himalayan passes in the distant past and there after gradually started inflowing to the north east India.

The present study is highly confined to the Tiwas living in the Morigaon district of Assam. An attempt has been made in the study to analyse the community from the perspective of the observances of social folk customs and the economy. Hence, study is entitled as, **Social Folk Customs and Economy of the Tiwas of Morigaon District of Assam**.

The study has a very important significance. The great Assamese culture and community has been composed of the contributions of all the small tribes and ethnic groups living in this land since the time immemorial. It would be easy to understand the great Assamese culture, customs and traditions and economy once it is intelligible to access the all underlying vivid and colourful facts, the feelings and emotions, inherited traits, fairs and festivals, rituals etc. of all small communities. Besides this, the advent of the Aryans and their mingling with the non-Aryan people formed a common society although both of them had completely opposite settings in terms of customs, culture and traditions.
The current shape of the work is a result of support, admiration and help of different persons. I hereby, acknowledge my sincere gratitude to all those who have offered their helping hands and encouraging words at different aspects. Here, I take the opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness to all of them.

I would like to offer my gratitude to Dr. Umesh Chandra Deka, Retd, Associate professor, Pub-Kamrup College, P.O.-Baihata Chariali and Research Guide, G.U. for his guidance and words of inspiration.

I pay my sincere gratitude to Dr. Anil Kr. Boro, Head of the Department of Folklore Research without whose encouragement it would not have come to an end. I am equally indebted to Dr. Prabin Chandra Das, former professor, department of Folklore Research, G.U, Professor Kishore Kumar Bhattacharjee, dept. of Folklore Research, and Dr. Dilip Kr. Kalita, Director, ABILAC for their guidance and valuable advice. My thanks also go to Dr. Pallabi Bora, assistant professor, Folklore Research department of Gauhati University.

I must be thankful to those who helped me in having theoretical knowledge collecting data from secondary sources. I am thankful to Mr. Utpal Ch. Hajong, Principal, K.B.R.D. College, Orang, Dr. Homen Baruah, Asst. Professor, K.B.R.D. College, Orang; Mr. Hemen Sarmah, Principal, Madhya Kampeeth College, Borka; and Mr. Dipak Chakravorty, G.U. for their kind co-operation. I am also indebted to Mr. Tarun Das, and Md. Mahibul Haque, office staff of Folklore Research Department, G.U.
Last but not the least, I express my gratitude to my parents Sri Prabin Saikia and Smt. Nirala Saikia, My brothers Mukesh Saikia and Kamal Saikia, my respected teacher Mr. Hareswar Deka, madam Smt. Jinu Bhuyan (spouse of my respected guide Deka sir) for their encouragement and valuable suggestions. I am also thankful to members of family, my friends and others, and those who in one way or the other have offered me their sincere co-operation, words of encouragement and support throughout the research work.

Date: 08-07-2018

( Tirtha Saikia )