

# Impact of Globalization and Modern Institutions in promoting the Tradition and Culture of the Tiwas of Assam.

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## Abstract

The life-world of the Tiwa community and their tradition and culture are affected by modernity and globalization. Some of the Tiwa people are neglecting their own tradition and culture in the name of modernity. Changes are visible in food habits, dress patterns, behaviours etc. which may constitute a threat to the cultural identity to the community in Assam. The modern institutions, organizations and the responsible personalities of the Tiwas of Assam are trying to popularize and to give proper publicity of the ethnic festivals and traditions. This paper is an attempt to look into the impact of globalization and modernity in the tradition and culture of the Tiwas and to mention the modern institutions are practicing and trying to promote it.

**Keywords:** Tiwa, Globalization, Tradition, Institution.

The word globalization bears wide ranging meanings. It is indeed a social construction that needs to be considered critically for the perspective of critical theory. The concept of globalization is ubiquitous and entails from the westernization of the word to the ascendancy of capitalism. Some people per globalization as increasing the homogeneity of societies, where as others see it as increasing the hybridization of cultures and diversity. For still others, globalization is an evolving operation and state power or the linchpin for environmental action, democratization, and humanization. Some see the concept of globalization as a contemporary ruse to describe the effects of imperialism or modernization; some claim that modernization would open a new “global age” that differs from the modern age. Moreover, references some theorists claim that globalization is the defining concept of a new epoch in the history of human kind, others claim that the novelty and centrality of globalization has been exaggerated. For the cultural theories globalization is all of the above and that, in many ways, the discourse of globalization can be articulated with modern and postmodern theories. In fact, we are in an interregnum period between and aging modern and an emerging post modern era. It is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that involves different levels flows, tensions and conflicts such that a

trans disciplinary social theory is necessary to capture its contours, dynamics, trajectories problems and possible future.

(Goshwami Kishore: 2012:197)

The economic and non-economic context of globalization broadly includes social, cultural, historical and political dimensions of globalization. However, the primary it also includes as a significant component of cultural exchange and emergence of a cosmopolitan culture creation of new habits thoughts and feelings, new behavior patterns and attitudes which are supposed to be in broad consonance with the operation of the logic of world market. Cultural aspects of globalization are tied up with modernity. It is a challenge to cultures in particular to marginalized communities and their identities.

Assam is the meeting ground of diverse cultures. The people of the enchanting state of Assam are an intermixture of various social stocks such as Mongoloid, indo-Burmese and Aryan. The Assamese culture is a rich and exotic tapestry of all these races evolved through a long assimilative process.

Assamese has a long glorious cultural history. The region is the habitat of heterogeneous population including various castes and tribes, each unique in its tradition, culture, dress and exotic way of life. Diverse Tribes like Bodo, Kachari, Tiwa, Karbi, Mising, Rabha etc. co-exist in Assam different art forms which are now visible in every sphere of the live of Assamese people. The rich and vibrant culture of Assam had experienced the impact of globalization. The world wide phenomenon affected the entire life style of the people of Assam and its tribes. It needs to look at globalization from the point of view of its impact on local indigenous cultures globalization has already made an inroad into the life and culture of its people. The globalization market economy as well as the entertainment industry has already encroached upon the traditional culture and lifestyle of the people of the region.

The Tiwas of the mongoloid group migrated to Assam and scattered into different parts of Nagaon, Morigaon and Karbi-Anglong districts and established several princely states known as kingdom of Pachoraja and Satoraja. Population at present of the Community is around three lakhs. There are some specific festivals of the Tiwas with their ethnic identity of dress and food habits. The Gosain Uliuwa Mela, Bihu festivals with slight variation, Jonbeel Mela and Barat festival are some specific festivals. The Sagra Misawa and Wansuwa (festival of Pounding rice flour) festivals are celebrated only by the Hill Tiwas of West Karbi Anglong district at present.

In case of the Tiwas, along with economic boost up and other positive impact, there are negative influences also. Some Tiwa people stated neglecting their own tradition and culture while welcoming the others cultural aspects of globalization tied up with modernity. Most commonly it is assumed that it is migrated and spreading from the west and produces uniformity and standardization through

technological commercial and cultural synchronization. The two sided permission of cultural influences engenders a new global hybrid culture.

The changes are visible in almost every aspect of traditional cultural practices as food habits, dress patterns or any other behavior, long time negligence ultimately corrupted the basic practices of their life style. Expansion of the telecommunication networks, additional exposures to entertainment and information through mass media, particularly television and cinema have brought about changes to the people. The use of modern cosmetics and colours have admitted to the performs in different performing in the festivals. The cosmetics, generally of western origin has become very fashionable these days and it also commands a big companies. The Indigenous people and the Tiwas are not lacking behind in the homogenization of consumption patterns and hypostyles. The prominent popular western cultural symbols such a coca cola, blue jeans, rock music, cheese, pizza and burgers are spread and over the region. The new changes have been noticed in the life style, consumption pattern, production of cultural objects and their marketing and usages.

To be an effective player in the global market under and industrial and technological regime, the smaller communities like Tiwa needs to put their acts together and should have adequate recourses and safeguards. The ethnic textiles do have an opportunity to be globally marketed along with other products such have food items indigenous herbal products beverages, dance and music. The colourful traditional textile of the ethnic community needs further expose whereby the cleavers and the entrepreneurs will be benefited economically like the textiles food products and beverages, the Tiwas produced can be patented and launched for the far Eastern and global market.

Like the Punjabi pop, modern Bihu songs have emerged as a very popular art form throughout North East India and in the rest of the country. Along with the Modern Bihu songs and dances, Tiwa '*Bisu*' (Bihu) dances, Bihu songs on Barat festival, Tiwa audio songs and Bihu songs have become very popular. The DVD's, audio and video albums in you-tube and in social media have also become good industry today.

In such a global phenomena and its impact the government of Assam promoted the concept of forming self help group. Self help groups are village based micro organizations.

The process of globalization does usher in many technological, economic social and cultural styles of the Tiwa tribe and the indigenous traditions of Morigaon. The extent to which it may constitute a threat to the cultural identities depends early on the manner in which globalization is perceived by the concerned people in the society. The challenge in this regard is and to see that instead of clamoring for unique identities, which are not out there turning the advantage of globalization to our benefit.

## Modern Institutions in promoting the Tradition and Culture of the Tiwas of Assam

As per constitution, the tribal people are included as the worker section and they become scheduled to receive all the benefits granted to them. From time to time there were commissions just to evaluate the changing situations as welfare state is supposed to do welfare to the groups of people circumstantially lagging behind or are downtrodden for centuries together. We are to accept that after independence more emphasis of the problems of the so called tribal people in more than one ways. (Bhowmik P.K 1990:31)

On 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1995, the Tiwa Accord was signed by the Assam government with the representatives of '*Lalung Darbar*' as a result of their 28 years demand for 'Autonomy' (Radukakati Narayan: Ringshang:2006:56).

As a result of this Accord, the Tiwa (Lalung) Autonomous Council was formed and the adhoc council took over charge on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2005. For overall development of the community, inflow of Government among is there and administrative machinery and with the representative bodies are also working harmoniously on that score. But the nature of development is not up to the exception of the needy people. The contribution of the Autonomous Council is limited in the construction of a few village Community halls, lump-sum donation to celebrate the festivals like Jonbeel Mela, Barat Festivals etc. No long term planning and for the sake of culture and tradition of the community.

A student organization of the Tiwa community, All Tiwa Students Union (ATSU) was formed on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1989 at Nagaon and Hemanta Kumar Deuri as general Secretary. This organization is also trying for the entire development of the community.

Many Organizations in their locality of the Tiwa villages have been practicing their culture, Songs and dances. In this regard the Tiwa cultural Society of Silchang and *Tiwa Bhasha Sanskriti Sarsa Samiti*, Barapujia, Morigaon is remarkable. "*Tiwa Mathonlai Tokhra*' (Tiwa Sahaitya Sabha) a literacy and socio-cultural institution of Tiwas has been trying for socio-cultural improvement and practicing and preserving the literature since its birth on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1981. In its ceremonial annual conferences organized every year in different places is also a function of integrity and enlightenment.

For the publicity and popularization of the programme the contribution of modern media and Journalism has a great contribution of modern media and journalism has a great contribution. Through the television channels the attraction of common people and the peoples abroad are attracted to the fairs and festivals of this region of middle Assam. The self help groups have gained wide spread popularity and have become one of the most visible organizations of women empowerment out of numerous schemes introduced by the Govt. India for women's economic independence and the empowerment, the

NABARD (the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development) sponsored self-help groups. Most of the Tiwa women in the rural areas are semi literate or illiterate. They have been promoting savings and credit activities by weaving of *Gamocha*, *Mekhela-Chador*, *Riha*, *Tagla*, *mafla* etc. and selling These items in different exhibitions organized by the district Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and in the fairs of Bihu, Jonbeal mela etc. in the district or rest of the state. They also prepare the food items of different kind of rice, cake, *Kharisa* etc and the folk crafts made of soil, bamboo and cane. The other benefits of the self help groups among the Tiwas are that they achieve the commonly perceive goal. The group activity enhances their confidence and self-esteem.

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