Chapter 4.

Changes in Social Institution

4.1. Marriage
   4.1.1. Marriage: The Concept
   4.1.2. Marriage: The Forms
   4.1.3. Changes in the Marriage System of the Trwas
   4.1.4. Present Scenario

4.2. Family
   4.2.1. Family: The Concept
   4.2.2. Changes in the Family of the Trwas

4.3. Clan
   4.3.1. Clan: The Concept
   4.3.2. Changes in the Clan of the Trwas

4.4. Conclusion
CHAPTER: 4

CHANGES IN SOCIAL INSTITUTION

A Social Institution can be defined as an organizational system which functions to satisfy basic social needs by providing an ordered framework linking the individual to the larger culture. 1 Social institutions are small units of a social system having cultural values. These small units carry the traditions of a particular cultural group as a result of which they survive. Changes in such small units can be result in the alteration of domestic and social spheres of a given culture. Marriage, family and clan are the institutions that best reflect such dynamics at work.

4.1. Marriage:
4.1.1. Marriage: The Concept:

Marriage can be defined as a socially and culturally recognized union between a male and female. Though such a definition can be taken as a universal definition of marriage, yet there are many problems to accept this as a universal norm as it does not address the situations relating to marriages universally. Many scholars have struggled to formulate a definition of marriage that would apply to all human societies, but it is difficult to arrive at a definition of marriage that will satisfy all situations in all societies as the meaning, functions and conditions are different in different societies. Regarding this matter Makhan Jha is of the opinion that the definitions related to the function such as the legitimating of children can not hold universally, because for any given function at least a few societies can be found that do not include it in marriage. On the other hand, a limited number of ends, including child rearing, economic partnership between husband and wife, and the formation of alliances between kin groups, are the characteristics of
marriage in many societies. The words ‘male’ & ‘female’ also do not match with some marriage systems as a few societies allow someone to marry a member of his or her own sex or even a ghost or spirit. For example, Azande society of Sudan allows a form of marriage based on homosexuality. Hence, it is difficult to arrive at a definition of marriage that will satisfy all situations in all societies. Karl G. Heider defines marriage as follows:

> Marriage is the socially recognized union of a male and female marked by some sort of public wedding ceremony that establishes a family, a social unit whose functions are to regulate sexual activity, to produce and raise children with a particular social identity and cultural skills, and to constitute a basic economic unit.

We can accept this definition of marriage as marriage is generally accepted as socially recognized union between male and female. Moreover, present study is also related to such type of marriage.

4.1.2. Marriage: The Forms:

Marriage is a universal institution found all over the world and its institutional forms have been accepted by all; however there are variations in form and nature. The system of marriage varies from culture to culture and society to society. There are variations even within a particular culture and to some extent within the same people and same society spread over different parts of a country. However, some of the common forms of marriage existed all over the world are- (i) Monogamy and (ii) Polygamy.

The forms of marriage depend upon the number of spouses involved in a marriage. If one marries a single person at any given time then it is called Monogamy. It has two sub-forms. Those are Serial Monogamy and Non-Serial Monogamy. In Serial Monogamy an individual has several spouses in succession after divorce and deceased of the mate. In Non-Serial Monogamy an individual has the same single spouse life long.
Polygamy is a form of marriage in which an individual has multiple spouses at any given time. It has three sub-forms. Those are Polygyny, Polyandry and Polygynandry. In Polygyny an individual has multiple wives at any given time. It has two sub-types: Sororal Polygyny and Non-Sororal Polygyny. In Sororal Polygyny the multiple wives of an individual are all sisters. In Non-Sororal Polygyny the multiple wives of an individual are not necessarily sisters. Polyandry is sub-form of Polygamy in which a woman has multiple husbands at any given time. It has three subtypes: Fraternal or Adelphic Polyandry, Non-Fraternal or Non-Adelphic Polyandry and Familial Polyandry. In Fraternal or Adelphic Polyandry the multiple husbands of a woman are own brothers (off-spring of the same mother). In Non-Fraternal or Non-Adelphic Polyandry the multiple husbands are either clan brothers or unrelated men. In Familial Polyandry the multiple husbands of a woman are father and son. Polygynandry is a sub-form of Polygamy in which a man has multiple wives and a woman has multiple husbands at any given time. It shows the coexistence of Polygyny and Polyandry.  

4.1.3. Changes in the Marriage System of the Tiwas:

Marriage is the accepted form of union between a man and woman among the Tiwas. Boys usually marry between the ages of 25 to 30 and girls 20 to 25. A union outside the marriage is supposed to be illegal. No illegal union, especially, incestuous relation gets social recognition; rather such relation is prohibited and considered to be ‘taboo’. Sexual relations between close relatives, extra-marital affairs are considered by them as incestuous relation. Clan exogamy is strictly adhered to. They are generally monogamous although cases of polygamy cannot be ruled out. The cases of widow remarriage and divorce are few and far between, although there is no bar for a widow and a divorcee to enter into marriage alliance again. Presently four types of marriage are found among them. These are: (i) Bar biya (ii) Joran biya (iii) Gobhia rakha biya and (iv) Poluai ana biya.
(i) **Bar biya:**

The *Bar biya* or marriage by negotiation involves long drawn formalities and traditions. It is very expensive and generally educated & well to do families prefer this type of marriage. Here guardians of the prospective couple take the initiative. The *Borjela* (the head of the clan) played an important role in such marriage. Many traditions are associated with this type. They are as follows:

(a) **Bata Bhaga:** The boy’s party carries one shoulder load (*Bhar*) of rice bear pot, betel leaves and nuts, *Bata* (a bamboo or cane made traditional plate with stand) and one basketful of rice cakes (*pitha*). Acceptance of this *Bhar* by the girl’s father indicates his consent to the marriage.

(b) **Soa Sui:** On a fixed day the boy comes to the prospected bride’s house to see her. The boy presents a gold ring to the girl and the girl reciprocates with a *Seleng Sadar* (a prestigious traditional cloth).

(c) **Kharumani phindhua bhar:** This is one of the formal stages of a *Bar biya*. On a stipulated date, the father of the boy accompanied by some villagers and relatives goes to the girl’s house. The *Bhar* contains one pair of *Bata* full of betel leaves and nuts, one pot of rice beer, two big baskets of rice and two small gourds and a gold ring for the girl. When the girl’s would be father-in-law hands over the ring to her, the girl bows before the elders and wears the ring in front of them.

(d) **Bar Bhar:** The boy’s father with some companions visits the girl’s house with a *Bhar* containing of 5 fowls, one big baskets of *Aangulipitha* (finger shaped rice cakes), one pot of *Zu* (rice beer), some betel leaves and nuts, two small gourds, two pairs of clothes and ornaments, just two or three weeks before the marriage. The girl’s parents entertain all the invited guests and boy’s party in a big feast. Items of the feast must include flesh of the five fowls brought from boy’s house. On this day the date for *Khatira bhar* is fixed.
(e) *Khatira bhar*: This *Bhar* has much significance as they fixed the date of the marriage on this day. A party consisting of elderly relatives along with *Borjela* proceeds to the girl’s house with a big *Bhar*, consisting of eatables. The *Borjela’s* of girl’s and boy’s village sit for a discussion regarding the marriage and fix a date for it. Earlier, the Bride price is also fixed by the *Borjelas* on this day. But, now a days, the system of bride price is totally vanished from the Tiwa villages.

(f) *Biya*: *Biya* continues for three days. Two days before the marriage the groom and the bride are ceremonially bathed in their respective houses. Marriage ritual is observed at the house of the bride on the third day. During the day sumptuous feasts are arranged for the villagers in both the households. *Zu* and pork are the essential items of the feast. In the evening the groom and his party and the *Borjela* proceed to the girl’s house. The marriage procession preceded by a *Garakhia bhar* which contains one stack of banana (*Bhim kal*), one pot of milk, three pots of rice and some betel leaves and nuts. The elderly villagers gather at the girl’s house and the bride and groom bow down before them who bless them for a happy conjugal life. After completing all necessary rituals, the couple returns to the groom’s house. 6

Nowadays, all these extensive traditions are not observed by the Tiwas in their *Bar biya* system of marriages. They do not prefer this marriage system due to its expensive and extensive traditions. Those who observe this system usually effect changes. They generally celebrate it in Assamese Hindu style with the traditions like *Bata bhaga, Soa-sui, Joran and Biya*. Three types of wedding rituals are included in Assamese Hindu marriages. Those are (i) pre-wedding rituals- such as *Angothi pindhua* (ring ceremony or engagement) and *Joran* (pre-wedding ceremony). After receiving the consent from both sides *Angothi pindhua* ceremony is solemnized as engagement. *Joran* is solemnized just before the wedding day. On this day both the bride’s and groom’s family exchanges gifts for the bride and the groom. (ii) The wedding rituals- marriage is solemnized on the wedding day, where elaborate wedding
rituals are observed by both the families. (iii) Post-wedding rituals—such as Khuba-khubuni and Aath-mongola. Khuba-khubuni ritual is observed on the third day of the marriage. The marriage is consummated on this day. Aath-mongola ritual is solemnized after seven or eight days of the marriage. On this day the newly married couple visits the bride’s family. It is the first formal visit of the new son-in-law to his in-laws house. Nowadays, it is found that such rituals are observed by the Tiwas too.

(ii) Joran biya:
This is an arranged marriage or marriage by negotiation. In this type of marriage the details of a Bar biya are not followed in toto. Generally poor people solemnized the marriage according to this type. When both the families agree to the marriage, a date is fixed for the Joran ceremony. On the stipulated date the boy’s party proceeds to the girl’s house with ornaments, dresses and three Bhars (two bar bhars and one Garakhia bhar), which contain Anguli pitha, Sandah (cake and other eatables prepared out of rice powder), pots of Zu, curd, molasses, betel leaves and nuts. The boy’s family offers the dresses and ornaments to the girl’s father. The bride is taken out to the place where the elderly villagers are sitting. The father of the girl gives her the dresses and ornaments and asks her to accept those in presence of all as acceptance of the clothes and ornaments amounts to consent to the marriage. The girl bows before the elders who bless her for happy conjugal life. After some entertainment the boy’s party returns to the groom’s house along with the bride which marks the end of the ceremony. This is the most popular form of marriage among the Tiwas due to its simple traditions and less expenses.

(iii) Gobhiya rakha biya:
The Gobhia rakha system of marriage or marriage by service signifies the existence of matrilineal system of inheritance in earlier times which has lost its significance at present. Generally, parents having only daughter prefers to have a Gobhia. If a boy maintains secret relationship with a girl and the parents of the girl when come to know about the secret liaison, the boy is
accepted as a *Gobhia* by them. Sometimes if a boy wants to marry a particular girl, he has to offer free physical labour in his would be in-laws house at least for one year. Then only the girl’s parents give consent to that marriage. There are not much traditional rituals related to this kind of marriage. On a stipulated date the parents of the girl invite the villagers and entertain them with a small feast. After the feast the couple is taken inside the *Borghar* of the bride’s clan and they bow before the villagers to take bless from them. The issues of such couple are regarded as the descendent of the mother’s line. The boy ceases to have the property-right of his parental home. The girl gets the property right from her parents and remains in the same clan.

Now a days, *Gobhia rakha* system of marriage has been few and far between among the Tiwas. Now for the growing importance of patriarchal system in every society, staying as a *Gobhia* in the in-law’s house is looked down upon and the practice has lost its practical utility, and is thus on the verge of extinction. Now a *Gobhia* enjoys the inheritance of property in his in-laws house and his children are known by their father’s line and they are considered to be the descendents of their father’s clan. It signifies the recognition of the patriarchal system in present Tiwa society.

*(iv) Paluai ana biya:*

*Paluai ana biya* or marriage by elopement is most popular form of marriage among the Tiwas because this practice is to be found less expensive and less traditional procedures involved in it. Traditionally Tiwa marriages are held in this system and no social disgrace is attached to it. Moreover, it is the only way for the lovers to get married who do not get the consent of their parents. Earlier the marriage by elopement was followed by such rituals, namely *Sajati dekhua, Bhar cinga, Gharcina bhar* etc. and invariably the bride price too should have to be paid. Now a days, an elopement marriage has to be formalized by offering a feast to the fellow villagers and relatives of the boys. The bride price is not seen to be paid by the boy’s family in this case.
Besides these marriage systems, some other types of marriages which are of late on the verge of extinction were also prevalent. Those are: (i) *Chowali dhari rakha or Balpurbak biya*, (ii) *Chowali dhari bandhi diya biya* and (iii) *Dhum biya*.

(i) *Chowali dhari rakha or Balpurbak biya*:
The *Chowali dhari rakha* or marriage by capture generally took place when the boy loves a girl and wants to marry her against her wishes and also against the wishes of the girl’s family. Sometimes it also happens with the consent of the girl. In this marriage the boy takes away the girl by force with the help of his friends and marries her. Here also the boy’s family has to entertain the villagers with a small feast and the couple takes blessings from the villagers. Thus, signaling the recognition to their conjugal life.

(ii) *Chowali dhari bandhi diya biya*:
The *Chowali dhari bandhi diya biya* or marriage by imposition by elders was another informal marriage prevalent among them. When a girl is given in marriage by force by her parents, it is a called a *Chowali dhari baandhi diya biya*. Here, in this case, the consent of the girl or the boy has not been taken into consideration by their respective families. Because this type of marriage was performed by the villagers only to legitimize a secret and illicit relationship taking place in a village. The cases are now rare amongst them.

(iii) *Dhum biya*:
In this type of marriage the consent of the girl was not taken into consideration. When a girl crossed the preferable age limit of marriage or she developed a relationship with some one, then the elder member of the family arranged her marriage with anybody whenever they get the consent of that person. Here, it is generally seen that groom is an aged person or a widower.
4.1.4. Present Scenario:

From the above discussion it is clear that the Tiwas have many distinctive traditions associated with the marriage system. Some of them are very elaborate whereas others are simple. The elaborate traditions related to the Bar biya, Joran biya have been lessening day by day. Now, the Tiwas have given up some traditional practices associated with these formal marriage systems like carrying Bhars to bride’s and groom’s houses, wearing their own traditional dresses of bride and groom and following the traditional recipes of the feast. The practice of taking Bhar still exists with some changes. Now, a Bhar contains only areca-nuts and Zu. The ceremonies associated with their Bar biya, Joran biya and Poluai ana biya etc. are no more elaborate. Although, the traditions related to their formal marriage have been modified vastly. Now a days Tiwa marriages have been greatly influenced by Assamese Hindu marriage system. In many areas marriages are solemnized in the same way as Assamese caste Hindus do. This is true in case of those Tiwas who are the followers of Sankardeva as well as Krishna Guru. It is a living example of the ongoing process of assimilation and syncretism among the Tiwas.

Changes could be observed in case of recipes too. Ordinarily Tiwas do not favour spicy food but now a days spice is used in case of non-vegetarian preparations. Tea and snacks are also finding a place among the Tiwas in their social interactions.

The ceremonial dress of a Tiwa groom includes Powal moni (an indigenous bead) and Gam kharu besides other things. Now-a-days thing have changed a lot and now such insignias no longer adorn the body of a Tiwa groom. Changes have been observed in case of bride’s dress too. A bride’s traditional dress consists of Jaskai or Phaskai, Thongali and Kamsa etc. But now a days, they wear the silk Cadar-mekhela of Assamese caste Hindus. Earlier, they wore their colorful dress but now they wear the white dress like
Assamese caste Hindu bride and groom. These changes have taken place due to the assimilation with neighboring Assamese caste Hindu society.

Besides these changes, the other forms of informal marriages like Chowali dhari rakhi pata biya or Bolpurbak biya, Soali dhari bhandhi diya biya and Dhum biya have been totally abandoned.

So far as the marriage is concerned the clan-exogamy is still maintained. Clan endogamy is not encouraged at all but some relaxations have been found during the field study. Endogamous marriage is considered as Gram-Cuwa (defiling of village). They considered that endogamous marriages defile a village and for purification of the village a series of actions are prescribed. A case is found during the field work in Bundura village of Nagaon district. A boy married a girl of same clan by elopement. Whenever the villagers come to know about the incident they catch a couple of pigs from a household of the village and arranged a feast. Except the families of the boy and girl, all of the villagers are invited to the feast. At last the families of the boy and the girl are made to pay the entire expenses of the feast. They are also informed to pay an amount of fine as a penalty for the offence. Thereafter the girl is inducted into her maternal uncle’s clan. Then both of the boy’s and girl’s families entertain the villagers with a feast and thus solemnized the marriage. The practice includes a penalty too. The couple pays obeisance to the villagers and invokes blessings from them.

Preferential marriage including cross cousin marriage is not in vogue amongst the Tiwas. Preferential marriages are often designed to promote inter-familial solidarity by making certain linkages imperative. For example, the MBD type marriage of the Karbis of Assam is a preferential marriage. The mother’s brother’s daughter (MBD) is the most preferred ‘girl’ for marriage amongst the Karbis. If a Karbi boy does not have his own maternal uncle, then the preference goes to the nearest maternal uncle’s daughter. The cross cousin marriage, as a form of exogamy is often explained to be a device for avoiding
payment of a high bride price and also for maintaining property in one’s own household. This type of marriage too is not found amongst the Tiwas. Example of taking bride price has become obsolete. But the groom has to pay an amount of money to the bride’s family in his first visit to his father-in-law’s house after marriage. It is as good as a bride price.

Levirate is not popular among the Tiwas. In this practice, a woman can marry her husband’s brother (younger brother) after the death of her husband. This practice is same with the fraternal or adelphic polyandry. As the sisters-in-laws for them are like ‘mothers’, this practice is socially not encouraged at all. Unlike Levirate, Sororate is socially accepted but the examples are few and far between. Sororate is practice where several sisters are the spouses of the same man. The practice of Levirate and Sororate, which emphasize the acceptance of inter-familial obligations and the recognition of marriage as a tie between two families and not only between two individuals, has presently lost its practical utility.

Alliances with other tribal groups like the Karbis, the Boros, the Misings, the Dimasas and the Kacharis are considered as normal phenomena. Even marriages with non tribals are common now. Marriages with non-Tiwas are acceptable subject to observance of purificatory rites like Gram-Cuwa and paying a penalty to the village council. These types of marriages are generally marriages by elopement. Marriages with Assamese general caste Hindus i.e. Kalita and Keot have also been found.

There is no bar in marrying widows and divorcees though the cases are rare. In the case of widow remarriage the man has to pay a fine fixed by the villagers along with a fee for social acceptance of a widow-remarriage. However in some parts of Kamrup district, the practice of widow remarriage is prevalent without any fine and there is no bar on such a marriage. System of dowry is absent in Tiwa society. Hence, there is no question of inflicting torture for dowry. Also child marriage is unknown among them.
4.2. Family:

4.2.1. Family: The Concept:

Family can be regarded as a universal human phenomenon facilitated by marriage. It is the smallest social unit in a social structure. Murdock states as:

Family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults.\(^9\)

The members of the family are bound together by kinship relationship based on marriage and descent. These relationships are: between husband and wife, between parents and children; and among siblings (children of the same parents). The second and third kind of relationships need not necessarily be tied with blood as children are often adopted.\(^10\) Each society has its distinctive culture and tradition as a response to the natural and ideological environment. The family is the agency through which the impressionable rising generation is made familiar with such traditions. Transmission of the cultural traditions proceeds from generation to generation through enculturation process inside a family. Enculturation is simply described as a cultural learning process. Thus, family functions simultaneously as an educative as well as a socio-cultural unit in a society. The systematic classification or typology of the families can be constructed on the basis of the criterion or form of marriage.

4.2.2. Changes in the Family of the Tiwas:

Amongst the Tiwas, family is a closely knit unit which is the basis for a well coordinated social system. A Tiwa family includes mother, father and children. They have both primary and joint family system based on monogamous marriage. Families are of mainly Patrilocal. Besides a father, his wife and unmarried children, the same homestead may also be occupied by the married sons. Moreover, when there is a Gobhia son-in-law, then he also
can occupy the same homestead. The following diagrams will elaborate the point sufficiently:

Kinship Symbols: 

- Male (Father/ Son)
- Female (Mother/ Daughter)
- Affinal or Marital tie
- Consanguineal tie
- Line of Descent

---

Fig. 6: Diagram of the Nuclear Family of the Tiwas

Fig. 7: Diagram of the Joint or Extended Family of the Tiwas
Both nuclear and joint or extended families are found amongst the Tiwas. The instances of joint families are less in comparison to nuclear families. The tendency to form a nuclear family has increased mainly after the later half of the twentieth century. It has something to do with the present economic system of the country. Matriline has lost its importance which was traced through the \textit{Gobhia Rakha} system of marriage. Now a days, the instances of \textit{Gobhia Rakha} have become few and far between, thus the institution of matriline is on decline. Patriarchy has gained its importance in Tiwa society. The father is the head of the family. All authority is vested on him and the lineage or descents are traced by him. Even in the nuclear family formed by the \textit{Gobhia Rakha} system of marriage, the \textit{Gobhia} is the head of the family. The inheritance of property gained from his in-laws house is enjoyed by him and the lineage or descent is traced by him. It signifies the recognition of the patriarchal system in present Tiwa society.

There is close co-operation between male and female in their daily walk of life in a family. Both husband and wife contribute to the maintenance of the family, but there is division of labour based on gender. Husband goes out for ploughing the paddy field, harvesting the paddy, carrying the paddy to home. Fishing, hunting and taking care of the domestic animals are men’s domain. Wife’s responsibilities include transplanting and harvesting, fishing and attending household chores including child care etc. Houses are built by men and women maintain them. The role of the wife in a family is important and responsible. Her main jobs include cooking, weaving and child rearing. The Tiwa women command high respect from their male counterparts.

Children hold an important position in a family. Of late, male children enjoy more importance in the society as compared to the past. There is also division of labour for male and female children. Male children help father in his work while female children help her mother in household works. These divisions are traced also from their age old traditions related to the birth of new born babies. While a male baby is born in a Tiwa family, then a pair of
bow and arrow is given in his hand with these utterances “Your battle field is outside the home”. In the case of a girl child a sickle and some parts of loom are given with these utterances “Your battle field is inside the home”. This tradition has symbolic meaning that reflects the inherent gender role. This practice reflects the expectations of parents from their children, which too is a construction of their cultural norms. They hope that boy should become a brave, strong and powerful person and the girl should be expert in weaving and household work in their future life.

Succession and inheritance of property bring about gender discrimination. Tiwa society used to follow a matrilineal system of inheritance in the past. However, it is no more in vogue now a days. Matriliny is practised by those limited few who keep ‘Gobhia’. Here the son-in-law cuts off all connections with his own family and lives with his wife in her house. In such cases the property goes from mother to daughter. But the son-in-law also enjoys the property right subject to the consent of his wife if he wants to transfer it. Under the prevailing patrilineal system of the Tiwas, the daughters do not inherit the property. The inheritance of the property is enjoyed by the male child after the father. Apart from the jointly owned family property, the individual members can acquire personal property. Earlier the property right was enjoyed by the female lineage. Sailendra Kumar Agnihotri wrote that:

The inheritance is through the male line among the Lalungs in the plains. In the hills, it is through the female line. The youngest daughter receives all the property after the death of the mother. The mother-in-law, when alive and residing in the house, is the head of the family. After the death of the mother, the youngest daughter becomes the next head.11

The adopted children also enjoy equal property right with other children. The issueless parents generally adopt children from their own family. Two cases of adoption were found during the field visit. In both the cases the child was adopted from their own relatives. One couple has adopted their elder brother’s son and another couple has adopted their elder brother’s daughter. They are now the legal parents of the adopted children.
4.3. Clan:

4.3.1 Clan: The Concept:

Almost the entire tribal group of India has reported the existence of clan organization. Clan is an exogamous group of selected kins by birth which comes next to family. The members of the clan can not change their clan by choice. It is only a pattern of unilateral social relationship within the tribe. Karl G. Heider states:

Clans ... are a larger unilineal descent group in which people believe that they can trace their descent back to some founding ancestor and therefore have a sense of collective identity. However, the line of descent is only assumed and can not be reconstructed. Clans are generally exogamous, marriage being forbidden between members of the same group. A distinction is often made between groups that are territorially bounded and own property in the name of the group is called clan.  

As clans are mainly exogamous, it plays an important role in settlement of marriage. Thus a clan performs many important functions in the tribal society not only at the level of negotiating marriages but also at the level of organizing ceremonies, rituals, fairs and festivals which are performed at the clan level.

4.3.2. Changes in the Clan of the Tiwas:

As it has been mentioned earlier, the Tiwas have twelve exogamous clans which have different sub clans. Those are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Sub clan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Macharang</td>
<td>Machereng, Magor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Madur</td>
<td>Ladur, Puru, Sagara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Maloi</td>
<td>Fangsong, Pumbe (Puma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dafor</td>
<td>Mithi, Lomfoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sukai</td>
<td>Kharai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Amfli</td>
<td>Aagara, Chanchara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lasa</td>
<td>Mithi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the clans mentioned above are not found during the field visit. The clans mainly found during the field visits are Ladur, Madur, Kholar, Khargol, Amchong, Pumbal, Samrang, Fasun, Sampol, Lorom Ali and Khorali. It is observed during the field work that all these clans have variation in the celebrations of their ceremonies, rituals, fairs and festivals which are performed at the clan level. The traditions and customs related to these rituals and ceremonies are not same across clans.

Every clan has their separate Borghars and religious heads known as Ghorbura or Borjela and Hari-kuwanri. Cognate families of same clan unite in one cluster known as Bangsha or Khuta. The Borghar and Khuta system plays a vital role in cultivating and regulating the domestic and social sphere of culture of the cognate families of same clan. It still plays as strong means of enculturation within the clan. Borjela and Hari-kuwanri play a vital role in religious and cultural affairs. No religious ceremony can be performed within the clan without the presence of Borjela and Hari-kuwanri. Among all the cited clans the Ladur clan or Bangsha is regarded as superior and known as Gurukul. Hence, the Ghorbura or Borjela of this clan or Bangsha can perform all the religious ceremonies of other clans. There is another institution made by different Bangsha or Khuta (clan) is known as Khel system. One village may have different Khels. Generally, village level ceremonies and festivals are organized by the Khels.

Clan exogamy is still maintained by them. The cases of clan endogamy and marriage with other caste are also socially accepted. But it is accepted after performing a purificatory rite and payment of fine as penalty to the village council. Due to the on going process of syncretism and assimilation with the Assamese Hindu section, inter caste marriages mainly with Tiwas are
taking place in Assamese Hindu villages too. It is found during the field visit that Tiwa girls are married to Assamese Hindu youths of neighbouring villages. These marriages are mostly marriage by elopement. In Assamese Hindu villages also these types of marriages are accepted after observing a purificatory rite which is followed by a community feast.

Earlier the clans are mainly matrilineal. It is evident from having matrilocal families formed by Gobhia rakha system of marriages. In such types of marriages descent are traced through mother’s lineage and the succession and inheritance of property is also enjoyed by the mother’s lineage. As already mentioned, patriliny has gained its importance in present Tiwa society; clans are now patrilineal and inheritance of property is also enjoyed by the father’s lineage. The existence of matriliny is evident from the functioning of the Hari Kuwari as a religious head. She cannot go over to her husband’s clan. The Hari Kuwari must remain in the same Bangsha or clan even after her marriage. In other words her husband must be a Gobhia. Moreover, the Hari Kuwari officiates in Pinda-dan ritual related to death ceremony known as Karam. The Karam is a community purification ceremony after death in which the pending death ceremonies of the families of a Bangsha are solemnized jointly in the Borghar. Hari Kuwanri offers Pinda (cooked food, meat etc.) in the names of the dead persons on whose behalf the Karam is held. In patrilineal society this right is enjoyed by the male person mainly the elder son of the deceased. Presently due to the assimilation with the other neighbouring patrilineal society this ritual in plain Tiwa society is performed by the elder son of the dead person.

4.4. Conclusion:

All living cultures or societies have their own distinctive cultures and traditions. With the passage of time these traditions march in to other directions of change. Some traditions and rituals remain intact and some have changed along with the changing time. Influence of other neighbouring
communities and the contemporary economic and social conditions are also responsible for this. In the case of traditional marriage system, family type and clan organization, the influence of neighbouring non-Tiwa Hindu groups and present economic and social conditions are factors that play a vital role. Modes of marriages are determined according to the economic conditions of people. Although the Joran biya and Poluai ana biya are popular among them, the rich section of the Tiwas still prefers the Bar biya system of marriage but with changed form. Selection of marriage system depends on the economic condition as well as education of the people. Educated and rich section prefers Bar biya system of marriage, but the illiterate and poor section of the people prefers the Poluai ana biya and Joran biya.

Matriliny has lost its ground and pratriliny has gained its importance now. The matrilocal residence is gradually giving space to patrilocal residence. The traditional joint family has changed over to the nuclear family during the last three decades. Patriarchy is the prominent feature in the Tiwa family now. Even the Gobhia also enjoys the right of the inheritance of property. From the earlier time the division of labour has been maintained in the family. Clan exogamy is still maintained but with some relaxation. Marriages have taken place with other non tribal communities. As both of the Tiwa and non Tiwa villages are influenced by each other, the syncretic process is well and truly underway.
Notes:


3 Ibid. 63-65.


5 Ibid. 71-72.


7 Cross-Cousin Marriage is a marriage between the children of brothers and sisters. It is of two types: one is Mother’s Brother’s Daughter (MBD) and the other is Father’s Sister’s Daughter (FSD).


11 Sailendra Kumar Agnihotri, op.cit. 40.

12 Karl G. Heider, op.cit. 178.