Chapter 2.

On the Concept of Culture Change

2.1. The Concept of Culture

2.2. On the Concept of 'Culture Change'
   2.2.1. The Concept of 'Culture Change'
   2.2.2. Factors of Culture Change
   2.2.3. Processes of Culture Change
   2.2.4. Evolution of the Theories of Culture Change

2.3. Review of Literature
   2.3.1. Studies on Culture Change in India
   2.3.2. Studies on Culture Change in North East India
       with Special Reference to Assam
CHAPTER 2

ON THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE CHANGE

2.1. The Concept of Culture:

The term culture is widely used in behavioural sciences. It has different connotations in different subjects like Anthropology, Sociology and Biology etc. For an anthropologist and other behavioral scientists, it refers to the full range of composite learned behavioural pattern of the human beings. *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* explains that:

Etymologically it is associated with the word like 'cultivate' and 'cultivation', 'agriculture' and 'horticulture'. What these different words have in common is the sense of a medium for growth, a meaning quite transparent in modern biological usage where a mould or bacterium may be grown in a laboratory in an appropriate 'culture'. In English in the seventeenth century it become common to apply this meaning metaphorically to human development, and in eighteenth century this metaphorical meaning developed into a more general term...In German (where the word was spelt first *Cultur*, and then *Kultur*), the term was used in works of speculative history from the second half of eighteenth century and, crucially, started to be used in the plural in the sense of humanity being divided into a number of separate distinct *cultures*.¹

The classic and most popular definition of culture was given by the 19th century English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* (1871):

Culture ......is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, low custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.²

This definition forms the basis of the most modern anthropological theories of culture. This conception of culture served anthropologists for nearly 50 years. Later on other anthropologists have given many definitions of culture but
those definitions show only different facets of culture and not culture as a whole. Anthropologist A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn cited 164 definitions of culture in their book *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952). These definitions are ranged from “learned behaviour” to “ideas in the mind”, “a logical construct”, “a statistical fiction”, “a psychic defense mechanism” and so on. Phillip Smith states that Krober and Kluckhohn managed to identify those definitions in six main understandings as follows:

1. **Descriptive definitions** tend to see culture as a comprehensive totality making up the sum of social life and to list the various fields making up culture. An influential starting point for this understanding was definition by Tylor from 1871...

2. **Historical definitions** tended to see culture as a heritage which is passed on over time through the generations...

3. **Normative definitions**. Those could take two forms. The first suggested culture was a rule or way of life that shaped patterns of concrete behaviour and action...the second form emphasized the role of values without reference to behaviour...

4. **Psychological definitions** of culture emphasized its role as a problem-solving device, allowing people to communicate, learn, or fulfill material and emotional needs.

5. **Structural definitions** pointed to the “organized interrelations of the isolable aspects of culture”...and highlighted the fact that culture was an abstraction that was different from concrete behaviour. In this respect such definitions could be contrasted with those which simply listed the things that were culture and made no distinction between the ideal and behavioural (e.g. that of Tylor given above).

6. **Genetic definitions** defined culture in terms of how it comes to exist or continued existing. These had little to do with biology, but rather explained culture as arising from human interaction or continuing to exist as the product of intergenerational transmission. (Cultural Theory: An Introduction: 2-3)

The definition preferred by Krober and Kluckhohn and also by a great many other anthropologists is that culture is an abstraction, or more specifically, “an abstraction from behaviour.” William A. Haviland, a cultural anthropologist opines as follows:
Culture consists of abstract values, beliefs and perceptions of the world that lie behind people’s behaviour and that are reflected by their behaviour reflects. These are shared by the members of a society, and when they are acted upon, these elements produce behaviour that is intelligible to other members of that society.6

Clifford Geertz tries to explain the concept of culture as thus:

The concept of culture...is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs, and the analysis of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning.7

Clifford Geertz again described culture as follows:

...culture...denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embedded in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitude towards life.8

Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron defined culture as thus:

...culture... is a way of life based on a signifying order developed originally in a tribal context that is passed along through the signifying order from one generation to the next.9

Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) described culture as follows:

... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyle, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.10

What is evident from these definitions is that culture stands for total way of life and everything created by human being is a part of culture. Hence, culture comprises all aspects life within a given society including material and non-material aspects. It includes all the conscious and unconscious creations of human being. From the sociological view point culture is the mutually shared
products, knowledge and beliefs of a human group or society. This concept is not limited to art, literature, classical music and other high elements. Instead sociologists consider culture to include all aspects of life within a given society. The study of culture is a hard task as it constitutes various aspects of human life. Herskovits wrote that who would comprehend the essential nature culture must resolve a series of seeming paradoxes, which may be stated as follows:

1. Culture is universal in man's experience, yet each local or regional manifestation of it is unique.

2. Culture is stable, yet is also dynamic, and manifests continuous and constant change.

3. Culture fills and largely determines the course of our lives, yet rarely intrudes into conscious thought.

2.2. On the Concept of 'Culture Change':

2.2.1. The Concept of 'Culture Change':

The study on 'culture change' was started during the late 19th century. The main perspective of these studies was trying to understand how manufactured things, such as tools, are invented and modified in design over time. Later on the concept of culture change has been formulated by many scholars in different ways. Anthropologist Herskovits said:

Change ... is a universal phenomenon and the processes of change over a period of time constitute the dynamics of culture. cultural change can not be studied as an isolated phenomenon, for change, by and of itself, is meaningless until it is projected against a baseline of human behaviour as of a given time and nature.

F. M. Keesing defined culture change as:

... reformulation in group behaviour. Such reformulation may be seen occurring from the level of individual experience to that of the total functional and integrational setting of a cultural system.
Loise S. Spindler and Goerge D. Spindler defined culture change as thus:

...culture change is any modification in the way of life of a people, whether consequent to internal developments (such as invention) or to contact between two peoples with unlike ways of life (acculturation).\textsuperscript{14}

The *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* defined the concept of culture change as:

Culture change is the conceptual formulation that refers to many ways in which societies change their patterns of culture.\textsuperscript{15}

The basic issues concerned here is how and why there are shifts in rate and type of change, than a question of static versus changing cultures.

The phenomenon that is opposed to culture change is the phenomenon of cultural stability or continuity. Continuity is an inherent part of any culture and the survival of culture depends on its continuity. Herskovits is of opinion that, if the culture stresses change, there is a tendency to slight the vast body of stabilizing elements that, lying beneath the changes that are actually in the process gives continuity in the way of life.\textsuperscript{16} These factors in the society encourage changeless stability. Herskovits again said:

Cultural change .... must be contrasted to the phenomenon that is always opposed to it, the phenomenon of cultural stability, which, in its psychological aspects, is called conservatism. ....the appraisal of either change or stability not only depends on taking both into account, but is dependent as well on the degree to which the observer achieves detachment from the culture in which he is studying change or stability.\textsuperscript{17}

It quite clear that culture change and stability is interrelated and it is necessary to taking both into account while studying culture change. The factors that result in resistance to change within a society include habit, and integration of culture traits, religion and ethnocentrism etc.
2.2.2. Factors of Culture Change:

All cultures change over time. The regular addition and subtraction of cultural traits results in culture change. However, the rate of change and aspects of culture that changes varies from society to society. Different factors are responsible for resulting change in a culture. The factors and process of culture change too are different from culture to culture, hence it a hard task to generalize the factors of culture change. The *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* states as follows:

The data on change do not yet permit any easy generalizations concerning the relative primacy of various factors that may generate significant shifts in rates and types of culture change. Some anthropologists favor a basically Marxist, or Neo-Marxist, interpretation and give primacy in their theories to such factors as "the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year" (White 1949). Some such as Steward (1955), place emphasis upon ecology and stress the "adaptation of a culture to its environment" as the primary factor. Other scholars emphasize the importance of "religious ideology" (Weber 1922), cultural "themes" (Opler 1945), and "cultural focus" (Herskovits 1955) or, like Geertz (1957), point to inherent incongruities and tensions in social and cultural systems that generate constant pressure for change. Still others have developed more specialized theories, such as Murdok (1949, p. 199), who concludes that "... social is a semi-independent system comparable in many respect to language, and similarly characterizes by an internal dynamics of its own," or Hallowell (1955) and Wallace (1961), who stress the psychological aspects of culture change. (*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences: 554*)

Here it has been clearly stated that, whatever special emphasis may characterize a theory, it is useful to isolate three general factors that influence change in a given culture. These are -

(i) Any change in ecological niche occupied by a society influences culture change. Such a change may occur as result of either (a) natural environmental changes; or (b) the migration of a society from one ecological niche to another. New cultural adaptations are always required for survival in the case of such shifts in ecological niche.
(ii) Any contact between two societies with different cultural patterns influences change in both societies.
(iii) Any evolutionary change occurring within a society is obviously a factor of critical importance. Here “evolution” is used simply to designate “process of orderly adaptive change.” For example, if a society (for whatever reasons) shifts from matrilocal to patrilocal residence, then again there are adaptive changes in a whole range of cultural patterns.19

The general factors of culture change as described by the anthropologists include some processes like innovation, diffusion, acculturation, cultural loss, transculturation and revolution etc. These factors can be divided into two broad categories- internal stimuli or internal factors and external stimuli or external factors. Internal stimuli originate inside a society such as innovation and cultural loss. The external stimuli originate outside a society such as diffusion, assimilation and transculturation etc.

Dennis O'Neil in Cultural Anthropology Tutorials described the factors and processes of culture change in a comprehensible way, which can be summarized as thus- all cultures are inherently inclined to change and, at the same time, to resist change. There are dynamic processes operating that encourage the acceptance of new ideas and things while there are others that encourage changeless stability. It is likely that social and psychological chaos would result if there were no the conservative forces resisting change. There are three general sources of influence or pressures that are responsible for both change and resistance to change. Those are –

(i) Forces at work within a society,
(ii) Contact between societies,
(iii) Changes in natural environment.20

The processes leading to change within a society include innovation and cultural loss etc. Innovation simply is a discovery or invention of an object in
a society. Innovation may be of four types: intentional, unconscious, technological and ideological. Cultural loss is process of abandonment of some existing element in a society. Intentional innovation includes deliberate inventions to seek solutions for some problems. Example of unconscious innovations are fire, wheel etc. the ideological innovations include such things as the invention of algebra and calculus or the creation of a representative parliament as a replacement for rule by royal decree. Technological inventions include new tools, energy sources, and transportation methods as well as more frivolous and ephemeral things such as style of dress and bodily adornment. Cultural loss is an inevitable result of old cultural patterns being replaced by new ones.

On the contrary, processes that result in the resistance to change within a society include habit and the integration of culture traits. Older people, in particular, are often reluctant to replace their comfortable, long familiar cultural patterns. Habitual behaviour provides emotional security in a threatening world of change. Religion also often provides strong moral justification and support for maintaining traditional ways. The fact that cultural institutions are integrated and often interdependent is a major source of resistance to change.

The processes leading to change that occur as a result of contact between societies are diffusion, acculturation, transculturation and assimilation etc. Diffusion is the movement of things and ideas from one culture to another. In this process cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture of the recipient group. When diffusion occurs, the form of a trait may move from one society to another but not its original cultural meaning. Diffusion may be direct or indirect. When a group or society is in contact with a dominant society, the weaker group is often obliged to acquire cultural elements from the dominant group, that process is called acculturation. It happens to an entire culture when alien traits
diffuse in on a large scale and substantially replace traditional cultural patterns. For example, Dennis O’Neil states:

....after several centuries of relentless pressure from European Americans to adopt their ways, Native American cultures have been largely acculturated. As a result, the vast majorities of American Indians now speak English instead of their ancestral language, wear European style clothes, go to school to learn about the world from a European perspective, and see themselves as being a part of the broader American society. As Native American societies continue to acculturate, most are experiencing a corresponding loss of their traditional cultures despite efforts of preservationist in their community.

Thus, acculturation is a process that happens to an entire culture. In contrast to it, transculturation is what happens to an individual when he or she moves to another society and adopts its culture. Immigrants who successfully learn the language and accept as their own the cultural patterns of their adopted country have transculturated. The word transculturation is first appeared in 1940. It was first preferred by Ortiz, a Cuban scholar, who gives the following reasons for its use:

I am of the opinion that the word transculturation better express the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word acculturation really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which would be called neoculturation. (quoted in Harskovits, Cultural Anthropology, 475)

When alien culture traits diffuse into a society on a massive scale, acculturation frequently is the result. The culture of the receiving society is significantly changed. However, acculturation does not necessarily result in new, alien culture traits completely replacing old indigenous ones. There often is a syncretism or an amalgamation of traditional and introduced traits. The new traits may be blended with or worked into the indigenous cultural patterns to make them more acceptable. This process is called syncretism.
Other process that can be mention here as a result of contact between societies is the process of trans-acculturation. In this process exchange of cultural traits takes place between two cultural groups. This is also a process in which we talk about 'give and take' as the process of Hinduization and tribalization operating in the Indian situation. 24

There are processes operating in societies that result in resistance to change. These are due to "us versus them" competitive feelings and perceptions. Ethnocentrism also leads people to reject alien ideas and things as being unnatural and even immoral. These in-group out-group dynamics commonly result in resistance to acculturation and assimilation. Assimilation is a process by which a minority adopts the patterns and norms of a dominant culture and it is incorporated into the point that it no longer exist as a separate cultural unit.

Change in a natural environment in which a society exists is another important factor of culture change. There is always a relation between the natural environment and culture. For example natural calamities and hazards always have had an impact on people's culture. Moreover, environmental degradation of fresh water supplies, arable land and energy sources historically have resulted in the creation of new invention, migration, even war to acquire adequate resources. Hence, the approach to understand culture change must also include consideration of changes in the environment in which a society exists. 25

Herskovits also gave emphasis on environmental factors along with historical and psychological factors while studying culture change and stability. He wrote:

Conservatism and change in culture are the result of the interplay of environmental, historical, and psychological factors. All must be considered when studies of cultural process are made. 26
2.2.3. Processes of Culture Change:

Scholars have studied culture change in different time from different perspectives and in different magnitude. The study of the culture change refers to the actual social mechanisms by which the change takes place. Some scholars take the position that the basis of all culture change is located in changes in the attitude and behaviour of individual member of a society. This point of view is found by Barnett in 1953. Other scholar like White, Kroeber and Murdock take the point of view that although individuals are the carriers of a culture, there are process of change in social and cultural systems which have dynamic properties of their own that can be isolated and studied. 27

Firth differentiates between “social structure,” which he views as providing the principle of continuity in society, and “social organization,” in which lies the principle of variation of change “…by allowing evaluation of situations and entry of individual choice.” Herskovits emphasizes “individual variation,” which is found even in the most isolated and primitive societies, and the importance of this variations in the mechanisms of culture change. Wallace attempts to combine individual personality and cognition with changes in cultural systems in his study of “revitalization” processes. 28

Other contributions to the conceptual mapping of process of culture change include Herskovits’ formulation of “reinterpretation”, Firth’s description of the process of “social conviction” and “social conduction”; and Vogt’s distinction between “recurrent processes” and “directional processes”. These contributions were made during the period of 1950 to1965. “Reinterpretation” is a process by which old meanings are ascribed to new elements or by which new values change the cultural significance of old forms. “Social conviction” is a process by which individuals not directly involved in a change in the first instance tend to modify their behaviour to adjust to the change and the “social conduction” is a process by which an innovation brings unforeseen results that must be adapted to. “Recurrent
processes” are found in micro time scales, which characterize the daily, seasonal, annual and generational life of a society, and the “directional processes”, are found in macro time scales, which involve non-repetitive, cumulative shifts in the structures of social and cultural systems. These contributions were made during the period of second half of the last century.29

2.2.4. Evolution of the Theories of Culture Change:

The growth of the theories of culture change is elaborately discussed in the Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 1, (1996) under the entry “Culture Change”. In this recent work the discussion is made in a historical sequence, which can be summarized as follows:

Theories of culture change heavily depend on the concept of culture embedded in them. For example, if one conceives of culture as a list of social and material traits, then the loss or replacement of an older trait by a newer one constitutes change. If, however, a culture is not the sum of its traits but rather the unconscious pattern that governs their arrangement, then change must be understood in a different way as argued by the anthropologist from Edward Sapir to Claude Levi-Strauss.30

Cultural Evolutionism was concerned with the states through which human societies had passed on the road to civilization and with the process that inevitably led from one stage to the next. It was reflected specially in the works of Edward Burnett Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan. The Victorian doctrine of progress assumed a uniform transition from a primitive or savage stage through a more complex era often labeled barbarism toward the highly evolved civilizations of the present. The specific stages organized by different theorists varied, but within a given stage, technological developments were linked with intellectual improvements and to growth in the scope of social organization. Some theories stressed the impact of improved tools and techniques on social and intellectual life, while other emphasized the role of
increasing rationality, as man put aside primitive notions of magic and witchcraft in favour of a logical, scientific understanding of the world. More recent advocates of an evolutionary approach to culture have tended to favour new technology as the basic cause of other changes. For example Leslie White and Elman R. Service view increasing control over energy resources as fundamental to the growth of culture and social organization.

Historicism rejected grand evolutionary theories in favour of more detailed, regional studies of culture and its process of change. Leaders of this approach included Franz Boas and Alfred L. Kroeber, who, despite their many differences insisted on the rigorous description and comparison of cultural traits within limited geographical areas. The goal was not to established general stages of cultural development but rather to chart the distribution of social and material traits in order to understand the processes (e.g., of invention, borrowing, rejection, adaptation and syncretism) that led to their presence or absence and thus to reconstruct their history. In later years, Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict and Kroeber came to emphasize the distinctive patterns that integrated traits from diverse sources into coherent, psychologically satisfying wholes in given societies.\textsuperscript{31}

Functionalism insisted on the intensive study of individual societies. Earlier, the practitioners of functionalism were simply uninterested in change, preferring a synchronic approach to description and analysis. Later on, the functionalist concerned themselves with a wide range of issues. Bronislaw Malinowski wrote on the dynamics of change, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown on social evolution and E. E. Evans-Pritchard insisted on the mutual relevance of history and anthropology. In a significant functional study that attempted to translate the synchronic into the diachronic, \textit{The Folk Culture of Yucatan} (1941), Robert Redfield described four communities lying along the "folk-urban continuum," suggesting the ways in which small, relatively homogeneous, isolated villages are transformed and incorporated into large,
relatively diverse and open societies, proposing processes such as industrialization and cultural disorganization as necessary correlates.

By using the theory of perception derived from Gestalt psychology, Homer G. Barnett (1949) studied innovation and its role in culture change. He analyzed the processes that gave rise to new cultural items and suggested some reasons for the acceptance or rejection of innovations within and between societies. Philip K. Bock (1969) later pointed out the similarities between cultural innovations and the processes of linguistic change and of genetic mutation.

George P. Murdock (1949) carried out his studies of cross-cultural correlations among traits, in terms of behavioral theory. He tried to establish correlations between kinship terminology and descent rules, or between residence and sexual taboos. Murdock’s studies led him to the hypothesis that changes in residential arrangements, usually adaptations to economic factors, most often led to changes in descents groups and marriage rules that, in turn, affected kin terminology. He thus unpacked a historical sequence from synchronic correlations. His hypothesis has been supported by a number of long term studies of change.32

The materialist approaches in anthropology stem from the theoretical formulations of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and most of these center on the notion of modes of production, whether or not they accept the doctrine of the inevitable progression from one mode to another (e.g., feudal to capitalist, or capitalist to socialist). In ethnology and archaeology, materialists look first to changes in the material base of social relationships for the key to all forms of cultural change. The dynamic of any society is unequal control of the means of production. This produces tension among the haves and have-nots as well as generating characteristic social relations of production and factors that set off a chain of other changes, either evolutionary or revolutionary.
The approach of cultural ecology in form of specific studies of societal adaptations to environmental conditions continues to be important. In the works of Julian H. Steward (1955) cultural ecology is represented as the adaptation of people to an environment that determines the makeup of the cultural core, those customs and institutions that are compatible with ecological requirements. Marshall D. Sahlins and Elman R. Service (1960) argues that such specific evolutionary studies complemented the general evolutionary trends hypothesized by White and Steward, that is, while cultural change always involves responses to local conditions, viewed over the long term the trend in a given region or worldwide is to greater size and complexity with accumulation of technological innovations.

The well-known contemporary inheritor of this tradition is Marvin Harris (1979), whose research strategy draws heavily on Marx and Steward. Harris presented a casual theory on which the material base “probabilistically determines” social structure, which in turn determines the superstructure. The causes of social change are, thus, always to be sought in the materially determined “modes of production and reproduction”, although Harris allows a degree of independence to the ideological superstructure. He presents ingenious, materialist solutions to cultural puzzles, such as Hindu “cow love” and Jewish “pig hatred”, as well as a sweeping account of the evolution of human society from small hunting bands to complex modern civilizations. He also systematically critiques cognitive, symbolic, or structural approaches in anthropology, but these theories still fascinate researchers concerned with the details of cultural change.33

Focusing on cognitive categories, which are deal with the changes in the modes of thinking, anthropologists have demonstrated systematic changes in ways of thinking about the plant or animal world or about the human body. Perhaps the best known anthropological study of cognitive evolution is the works of Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1969). While collecting and comparing the terminology used in hundreds of languages for classifying colors, Berlin
and Kay discovered a pattern that correlated with levels of social complexity and other behavioral and environmental features. What began as an investigation into the cultural relativity of cognitive categories became a universal theory of cultural linguistic change and stimulated study of its physiological roots.

Linguists have provided a model for other anthropologists in their investigations of cultural change and stability, which, it is now recognized, requires explanation as much as change. Levi-Strauss (1963) has drawn on concept of structural linguistics, such as opposition and transformation, to show how kinship systems and myths change over time and among neighboring groups. He is one of those anthropologists who seek universal structures at a very deep and unconscious level of the human mind.

Almost by definition, elites are content with the status quo and, as Marx thought; social change is most likely to erupt from an oppressed group or class that recognizes its exploited situation. The dominant class does not easily give up its privileges (wealth, power), but as James Scott has shown (1985), there are many things that the oppressed can do, short of revolutionary action, to improve their situation. Aihwa Ong (1987) brings together some of these newer ideas in a powerful way. Her study of Malaysian factory workers describes the means by which these relatively powerless women relieve some of their oppression.

Culture change remains an era in which historical, functional, materialist, structural and cognitive symbolic approaches struggle for convincing explanations innovations and stability, growth and decline. Internal and external causes, material and psychological factors may ultimately be seen to complement rather than to contradict one another and a systematic theory of change may someday be achieved.34
2.3. Review of Literature:

2.3.1. Studies on Culture Change in India:

Although major theoretical postulations concerning Indian culture and civilization as well as sound methodological exercises and hypothesis were initiated in India after Independence in 1947, but there were some early pioneers, who talked about the theory of diffusion in Indian Anthropology before Independence. For example, K. P. Chattopadhyay's studies on *Dharma Puja and Chadak Puja* (1935, 1942), Das's paper on *Sun Worship among the Tribes of Eastern India* (1927) and N. K. Bose's study of the *Spring Festivals in India* (1927) referred to the diffusion of culture traits in India. The credit for first field study of acculturation in religion among the tribes goes to S. C. Roy. In his work *Oraon Religion and Customs* (1928), Roy analyzed the nativistic and reformist Bhagat movements among the Oraons as a response to the pressures of acculturation. Bose's important article- *Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption* (1941) indicates how incorporation of Hindu religious symbols has followed the economic and power gradient from the dominant Hindu peasantry to the tribes.\(^{35}\)

However, the first systematic attempt to define the processes of change taking place Indian society was attempted by M. N. Srinivas in his study of the *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952). In this work, he postulated two concepts *Sanskritization* and *Westernization* as two types of sources of social change. Srinivas defines *Sanskritization* as the process by which a low caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, rituals, beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a twice-born (dwij) caste; and *Westernization* implies change resulting from cultural contact with the western countries. Western technology, improvement in communication system and industrialization etc. are some factors associated with *Westernization*. *Sanskritization* as a concept not only identified a very crucial aspects of the process of change in the Indian culture and institution but the use of this term soon led to the beginning of a debate in Indian
Anthropology, which has not yet come to a conclusion. Scholars like V. Raghaban (1959), Deva Raj Chandana (1961), Herper (1959), J. F. Stall, Mc Kim Marriot (1955) etc. conceived the different context and meaning of Sanskritization and also gave their interpretations.\(^3^6\)

Robert Redfield introduced the concept of *continuum* in his work *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* in 1941. Later on F. G. Baily (1960-61) presented a more systematic interactional model for considering the position of the position of the tribe viz-a-viz caste as two ideal poles in a in a linear continuum. However taking off from this interpretation of *continuum*, Surajit Singha suggested that the *continuum* be conceived simultaneously and yet distinctively, on the level of social structure and culture, both as ethnic groups and as local communities. Following Singha’s theoretical outline H. N. Banerjee (1969) has made a detailed study of the pattern of tribe-caste *continuum* among the Kora of Barrabhum.\(^3^7\)

Other two works of Redfield- *The Little Community* and *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach* was published in 1955 and 1956 respectively. Here he develops his propositions of *Great Tradition* and *Little Tradition*. According to him the intellectual influences that come from outside the village may be termed as *great tradition* and those coming from the local areas termed as the *little tradition*. Martin Orans, in his famous book *Santhal: a Tribe in Search of a Great Tradition* (1965) has emphasis that how a tribe has been looking towards great traditional elements of Hinduism, which have pulled the tribe towards emulating the caste pattern.

Mc Kim Marriott, a disciple of Redfield, applied some of the concepts of Redfield in the context of Indian villages, which he studied as a part of the complex Indian social system. Marriott studied a village in Kishangari, in 1955 and published this work in a book form as the *Village India*. Marriott while studying the Indian village modified the *great* and *little tradition*, and argued that the twin concepts of *Universalisation* and *Parochialisation* are
operating in the socio-religious systems of Indian villages. According to him the concept of Universalisation refers to the carrying forward of materials which are already present in the little tradition, which it encompasses. The opposite processes that of Parochialisation, is defined by him as the downward devolution of great traditional elements and their integration with little traditional elements. It is a process of localization. Thus, Marriot has perceptively christened two contrasting, yet complementary processes of cultural growth of the indigenous civilization in India as Universalisation and Parochialisation.  

Milton Singer has tried to understand the processes, unity and continuity of Indian civilization. His two books- *Traditional India: Structure and Change* and *When a Great Tradition Modernises* were published in 1958 and 1972 respectively. Following A. L. Kroeber and Robert Redfield, Milton Singer conceives Indian civilization as a coherent structure of rural networks and urban centers which at the same time acts as a medium for the mutual communication of great and little traditions and of other cultural differences between and among tribes and castes, linguistic regions, regions and centre, town and country.  

Some significant researches on the processes of transmission of cultural traits in Indian civilization have been done, among which special mention may be made of V. Raghavan (1959), Surajit Singha (1957), J. T. Hitchcock and Leigh Minturn(1963) etc. G. C. Ghurye and K. P. Chattopadhyay wrote on the traits of cultural diffusion operating in Indian civilization.  

In the study of Indian civilization B. N. Saraswati has made a significant contribution and is well known for his originality and penetrating insight into the concepts and themes related to Indian civilization. He is of opinion that in Indian society the tradition is cultivated, preserved and transmitted in three different ways namely- (i) Oral, (ii) Writing or Text, and
(iii) Self-realizing esoteric process. He argues that each culture adopts one of these ways as the essential mode of survival and changes effectively when the mode is changed. Therefore, what is most important in a culture is not its external manifestation but the inner mechanism which operates within the culture. According to him the structure of culture remains a meaningless entity so long as its function is unexplained. His best known works are *Contributions to the Understanding of Indian Civilization* (1970), *Khasi: Myth and Reality of a Classical Cultural Tradition* (1975) and *Brahmanic Ritual Tradition* (1977).

The *Indian Village* of S. C Dube was published in 1955. S. C. Dude and B. N. Swaraswati did not accept the view of Redfield in classifying Indian tradition into two water tight dichotomy. Dube holds the view that analysis of cultural change with the help of *little and great traditions* framework would be insufficient because traditions in India are organized not in a *bipolar* but *multi polar* system. He alternatively postulates a five fold classifications of traditions, which according to him, are more representative of the Indian cultural realities and offer better framework for analysis. Those classifications are: (i) the classical tradition, (ii) the emergent national tradition, (iii) the regional tradition, (iv) the western tradition and (v) local sub-cultural traditions of social groups. Dube’s view was again criticized by other scholars like Singh, and said that his view does not able to eliminate the basic limitations of the traditions approach to the study of change and his view was theoretically homologous to the approaches of Srinivas, Singer etc. He discussed on Indian culture and changing trends in other work *Indian Society* published in 1990. Dube’s another work named *Understanding Change: Anthropological & Sociological Perspective* published in 1996. It is a compilation of his UGC national lectures delivered in 1970. Here he discussed the concept of *change* from different perspectives like perspectives from anthropology, sociology and development etc. in a comprehensible manner.
Mention should be made here of some other publications related to the culture change studies on ethnic communities of India. Those are - *The Tharus: A Study in Culture Dynamics* (1958) of S. K. Srivastava and *Culture Change in Tribal Bihar of Sachchidanand* (1964) etc. P. C. Ray's *Socio-Cultural Process and Psychological Adaptation of the Santal* was published in 1975. This monograph deals with a comparative psychological adaptation of the Santals in their socio-cultural condition, typical personality structure as assessed by Rorschach Test. It has been found that out of the three levels of cultural contact, the most contact group was reported to be more productive, less critical and having poor relation with reality as compared to the least contact and in-between contact groups. *Impact of Industrialization on Tribe in South Bihar* of P. K. Dasgupta was published in 1978. The book describes how industrialization in a rural tribal belt of Bihar where a new industry has been established, has affected the socio-cultural life of the Ho tribe.

L. P. Vidyarthi and Binay Kumar Rai have published their book *The Tribal Culture of India* in 1976. This is the first major study on the tribes and their life in India. This work makes a comprehensive study of the economic, social, political and religious organizations of Indian tribes. The psychological factors in personality structure in tribal setting have been studied and discussed in detail. The other major aspects discussed here are: tribal village, customs of matriliny and polyandry, approaches, planning and programs for tribal development and more specifically the cultural change in the tribes of India.43

L. P. Vidyarthi and K. N. Sahay studied the *Dynamics of Tribal Leadership in Bihar* in 1978. Their studies of the tribal leadership of Chhotanagpur plateau have brought out significant contribution in the field of social change as revealed through political differentiation and structural changes taking place in the tribal societies of India. Earlier Vidyarthi had also studied the *Impact of Industrialisation on the Tribes of Chhotanagpur* in 1970,
which was conceived as the best methodological and longitudinal analysis of industrialization taking place in the primitive societies of Chhotanagpur.

Besides these studies taking place in Indian society, K. N. Sahay studied on the impact of Christianity and Hinduism on the Tribes of India. He published two books *Hindu Shrines of Chhotanagpur: A Case Study of Tanginath* in 1975 and *Under the Shadow of the Cross* in 1976. His works were considered as important works on social and culture change operating in the tribal societies of India.44

The *Continuity and Change in a Little Community* by A. M. Kurup was published in 1986. In this work he tried to focus on the nature and extent of change taking place among the Bharias of Patalkot, an ethnic group of Madhya Pradesh. The factors and forces responsible for changes and the directions of change are also discussed here. The main aspects observed in this study are material culture, economic life, social life, religious life and leadership.45

Another scholar K. S. Singh's stewardship of the People of India project yielded an excellent anthropological profile of the country. The *People of India* (POI) project, an undertaking of the Anthropological Survey of India initiated in 1985 and running into 43 volumes - all documenting the tremendous diversity that is India - would not have taken off without the determined efforts of its then Director-General Kumar Suresh Singh. His work *The Scheduled Tribe* under this project, published in 1994 covers all of the scheduled tribes of India. Moreover, it throws light on the trends of changes.

Yogendra Sing's *Modernization of Indian Tradition*, a work on the systematic study on social change was published in 1972. Here he made an attempt to analyze the processes of modernization in India from a systematic sociological perspective. The two key concepts which have been used here to
analyze the forces of modernization are social structure and tradition. The theoretical analysis of this volume not only places the existing concepts into their logical and meaningful context, but also offers an alternative conceptual scheme for the study of social change in India.

R. S. Mann’s *The Ladakhi: A Study in Ethnography and Change* was published in 1986. This study explains and interprets diverse parameters of Ladakhi cultural matrix. The focus remains on aspects of continuity and change. The book covers ethnographic features cauterized as - historical perspectives; ethnic composition and social stratification; family; marriage; status of women; rituals; economic structure; political organization; religion; and culture change. *Acculturation and Social Change in India* edited by S. C. Panchbhai was published in 1989. The book contains valuable information on the aspects of acculturation and social change among the diverse segments of Indian populations based on inter-disciplinary contributions made by anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, linguists, folklorists and ecologists.

Besides the above, some other works on culture change published recently are: *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalization*, a well known work of Yogendra Sing, published in 2000. Most of the papers included here were written by him in 1990s and delivered as national lecture and some of the articles were published in journals. Here he elaborately offers a critical evaluation of changes in cultural values, institutions and ideologies which constitute India’s response to the contemporary challenges from the forces of cultural and economic globalization. This book mainly concerns with challenges in cultural styles through exposure to global cultural pattern.

*India: An Illustrated Atlas of Tribal World* of Hrisikesh Mandal, Sumit Mukherjee and Archana Datta was published in 2002. Abhimanyu Mahto’s *Changes in Terrains and Socio-Economic Profile of an Oraon Dominated Rurban Centre in Chotanagpur* was published in 2006.
2.3.2. Studies on Culture Change in North East India with Special Reference to Assam:

Studies on the socio-cultural life of the ethnic communities in North-East India were started during the pre-Independence period, before 1947. Studies of this kind have been initiated by the British government officers, their wives stationed in India and Christian missionaries. Most of the anthropological works and monographs of them are related to the life and culture of the ethnic groups of this region. These works of Christian missionaries and British administrators and officials can provide us good knowledge about the socio-cultural life of these ethnic communities of this region and changes taken place in it.

Some of the monographs published by the British government officers and Christian missionaries before the Independence of India are: C. A. Soppitt's *A Historical and Descriptive Account of the Kachari Tribes of North Cachar Hills* (1885), P. R. T. Gurdons *The Khasis* (1907), Lyall and Stack's *The Mikirs* (1908), T. C. Hudson's *The Meitheis* (1908) and *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (1912), Major A. Playfair's *The Garos* (1909), Rev. Sydney Endle's *The Kachari* (1911), J. Shakespear's *Lusai-Kuki Clans* (1912) and *The Sema Nagas* (1931), J. P. Mills's *The Ao Nagas* (1922), *The Lotha Naga* (1923) and *The Rengma Nagas* (1937) etc. These works contains description on life and culture of the concerned ethnic groups.

After the Independence of India most of the native and foreign scholars have studied on the ethnic communities of India from the Anthropological as well as Sociological point of view. In North-East India also the systematic studies containing valuable ethnographic information on the ethnic communities has been started from this period.

*The Background of Assamese Culture*, a unique work of Rajmohan Nath was published soon after the Independence of India, in 1948. The second
edition was published in 1978. This book is a treatise on the cultural evolution that took place in the North Eastern region of India beginning from the prehistoric time. The author traced the cultural influences that affected the various ethnic groups and cultural entities that existed in this region right up to the late nineteenth century. The historical role of both physical and cultural migrations has been delicately discerned and placed in a proper chronological perspective.\textsuperscript{49} The \textit{Kirata-Jana-Krti} of Suniti Kumar Chatterji was first published in 1951. It is a profound work on the Indo Mongloid people- the \textit{Kiratas}. Though a major section of the volume is about the \textit{Kiratas} in general the main focus appears to have been given on the \textit{Kiratas} of North East India. The author has covered partly the ancient period and major emphasis was paid to the medieval and the modern period. The second revised edition of this volume was published in 1974.\textsuperscript{50}

D. N. Mazumdar's work \textit{Culture Change in two Garo Villages} was published in 1978. It is a comprehensive account about impact of adoption of settled cultivation on various social institutions of the Garos' life and culture. Though there has been large scale adoption of Christianity among the Garos, the basic household property holding pattern has not been adversely affected.

L. P Vidyarthi's good work \textit{Art and Culture of North East India} was published in 1986. This work gives a fair account of origin, history, rich cultural heritage, customs, traditions and beliefs of various tribes now settled in different parts of the North East India. The author has paid well attention to various segments of the region and concentrated on past researches, the life, economic conditions, occupational patterns, art and crafts, traditional dormitories and inherent concepts, dress, entertainment and rapidly changing cultural and economic scene of the North-East India.\textsuperscript{51}

The \textit{Society Culture and Ecological Adaptation among Three Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh} of Jayanta Sarkar was published in 1987. This is an ethnographic account of three tribal groups, viz. the Khamtis the Padams, and the Kamam Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh highlights degree of social change.
and adaptation of these tribes in different ecological settings through a study of material culture, economy, and social organization, cycle of festivals, political organization and contact with outsiders.

Apart from the above publications, there are many other publications that can provide an image of the changing situation of different ethnic groups of this region, notable amongst them are *The Tribes of Assam Part I* edited by B. N. Bordoloi, G. C. Sharma Thakur and M. C. Saikia; *The Tribes of Assam Part II* edited by B. N. Bordoloi and G. C. Sharma Thakur; and *The Tribes of Assam Part III* edited by B. N. Bordoloi was published in 1987, 1988 and 1991 respectively. These three series have covered life and culture of almost all of the tribal groups of Assam including the Tiwas. Some other publications are: B. N. Bordoloi's *Constraints of Tribal Development in North East India* (1990), S. R. Maitra's *Ethnographic Study of the Chakma of Tripura* (2002), Girindra Nath Das's *Tribal Tradition and Development in the Hill Areas of Assam* (2006) and N. A. Hazarika edited *Tribal Women and Development* (2007) etc.

Although no elaborate study was undertaken on the Tiwa community during the pre Independence period. But after independence, this tribal community attracted serious attention from the scholars. As a result, a few studies came into being. The first ethnographic study on the Tiwas is initiated by an anthropologist, during the 1955-1956. It was M. M. Das, who conducted this work under the guidance of N. K. Shyamchoudhuri. This work was taken as the most authentic account of this major ethnic group of central Assam, which was published as *The Lalung Society* in 1973. This analytical study of the Tiwas deals with their historical background, village organization, marriage system, family types, clan organization, economy, ecology and religion. G. C. Sarma Thakur's *The Lalungs(Tiwas)* was published in 1985. This book made a detailed account of this ethnic group. Three books published in Assamese *Tiwa Sampradayar Parichai* (1975) a collection of essays compiled by All Assam Tiwa Yuva-Satra Sanmilan, *Tiwa Samaj*
(1983) and *Tiwa Sakalar Chamadi (Dekachang) Anusthan: Eti Bislesanatmaka Adhyayana* (1997), written by a prominent Tiwa writer, Moneswar Deori. Other Two series published in Assamese are *Tiwa Sanskritir Ruprekha: Part I* (1985) and *Tiwa Sanskritir Ruprekha: Part II* (1986) of Lokeswar Gogoi. All of these four books deal with the social, religious and cultural life of the Tiwas. *Tiwa Sakalar Chamadi (Dekachang) Anusthan: Eti Bislesanatmaka Adhyayana* (1997) is an analytical study on the Dormitory institution of the Tiwas. *The Hill Lalungs* of Birendra Kumar Gohain was published in 1993. This book elaborately deals with the life and culture of the hill Tiwas. *Continuity and Change in the Hills of Assam* by Binendra Kumar Gohain was published in 1994. It was a systematic study on the changes and continuity that has taken place in the life and culture of the hill Tiwas. This study was based on the field work done in three villages of Karbi Anglong District of Assam. The study dealt with the social, political and religious changes of the Hill Tiwas. Another good work *The Lalungs* of S. K. Agnihotri was published in 1996. This book deals with the total way of the life and culture of this ethnic group. Other two works in Assamese language, were published recently are Mileswar Pator edited *Tiwa Sanskritir Jilingoni* (Glimpses of Tiwa Culture) in 2004 and Rupa Deka Pator’s *Tiwa Samaj Aru Sanskritir Acherenga* in 2007.

All of these publications related to ‘culture change’, ‘ethnic groups’ and ‘Tiwa community’ can provide a good understanding on the main areas of interest in the study, and also the process of culture change operating in the ethnic communities of India as well as North East India and Assam and its relevance to present study. The literatures available on the Tiwas can provide information on the changing cultural situations of this ethnic group over periods.
Notes:


5 The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, op.cit.


8 Ibid, 89.


12 Ibid., 446.

13 M. F. Keesing, Cultural Anthropology (New York: Rinehart & co., Inc., 1959), 381.


16 Melville J. Herskovits, op.cit., 446-447.

17 Ibid.


19 Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Dennis O'Neil, op.cit.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., 142-143.

Ibid., 145-146.

Ibid., 150.

Ibid., 150-151.

Ibid., 157-158.

Ibid., 163.


44 Makhan Jha, op.cit., 165-166.


48 Birendranath Datta, *Folkloric Foragings in India’s North-East* (Guwahati: Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture, 1999), 1-4.


53 Ganesh Chandra Sarma Thakur, *The Lalungs (Tiwas)* (Guwahati: The Director, Tribal research Institute, 1985).
