SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Culture within a particular time span is static to some extent, but it is not static permanently. It undergoes change with change of the time, which have been illustrated by the theories discussed in Chapter-I. In this study the preceding chapters show the changes that have taken place in the culture of the Tiwas residing in Morigaon district of Assam. The presents study is concerned with antropological theme of culture change. The theories of anthropology from evolutionism to acculturation deal with this theme of culture change.

In this study an attempt has been made to show the changes that have taken place among the Tiwas inhabiting in the plains of Assam, particularly in the Morigaon district and as such three villages namely, Natun-Kumuraguri, Kalbari-Bagariguri and Markangkuchi have been selected based upon two critetia- (i) the influence of the Assamese caste Hindu people upon them due to prolonged close contact and (ii) the distance from the urban areas.

The village Natun-Kumuraguri is situated near Morigaon town and has close contact with the Assamese caste Hindu people like Bamun (Brahmin), Kock, Kalita, Jugi etc. The second village Kalbari-Bagariguri is situated in a rural set up away from the urban areas having close contact with Assamese caste Hindu people like the first village. The third village Markangkuchi is situated in the urban area of Jagiroad and has no close contact with Assamese caste Hindu people as its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the people of Tiwa community.

In all these three villages, the villagers had the main occupation of agriculture in their earlier generations. But now in the villages having close proximity with the urban areas, it has been rapidly decreasing in comparison to the village away from urban areas, though in this village too the numbers of cultivating families have decreased in comparison to their earlier generations.
There are various causes of declination of agriculture as main occupation, like (i) the segmentation of cultivable land due to breaking down of the joint families into nuclear families, (ii) land alienation, (iii) lacking of man power necessary for agricultural activities in the family, (iv) increase in the production cost of agricultural products, (v) introduction of various new occupations attract the people to adopt these as the means of livelihood.

Other than agriculture the villagers (men) are engage themselves in the occupations like service, petty-business, daily labourer, driver, handyman, carpenter, mason, rickshaw-wala, thela-wala, hotel-boy, sonari, fish-selling, firewood selling etc. Beasides domestic activies the women (some) engage themselves in the occupations like service, petty-business, weaving, daily labourer, preparation and selling of country liquor, rearing of animals and birds to earn cash to provide economic support to their families. The women in all the three villages have associated themselves with the Self Help Groups which provide them ample opportunity to earn money to give the economic support for the maintainance of their families.

Due to the impact of monetary economy the self sufficienct tribal economy is existing in none of the study villages. Money plays the vital role in every economic dealing and has changed the attitudes of the people to earn more and more instead of former assistance in the economic activites of the other fellow villagers. The felt needs of the new commodities available in the markets lead them to adopt the items of luxury in their day to day life and have included these items in the list of their material culture.

At present they are acquainted with various items of luxury and comfort, if their economic condition permits, they use these items like pacca house, electrification of the house, running water systm, sanitary toilet, house hold apparatus, furniture, utensils, pressure cooker, cooking gas, TV set, direct to home
service (DtoH), mobile phone, computer (among educated youth), motor-cycle, car etc.

The growth of communication system and spread of education encourage the educated youth to move towards the towns and cities from the village in search of livelihood. Engagement in different occupations in towns and cities provides them opportunities of more income in comparison to those associated with village based occupations.

Family is the prime social group of them. Joint, extended and nuclear type of families are existing in their society. But the number of nuclear family is more than the other two types. Traditionally they were the matrilineal people. But due to the prolonged contact with the patrilineal Assamese caste Hindu people they have accepted the patriliny in their all level of social life. In a family the father becomes the head and the inheritance of the property transmitted from father to son. The children are affiliated into the descent and clan of the father. The girls till marriage are included as the members of the descent and clan of the father. After marriage they are included in the descents and clans of their husbands, through the ritual of severing clan called kulsinga. If the ritual of kulsinga is not performed in marriage the girl is considered as the member of her father’s descent and clan respectively.

Their clan is a kin-based group and every clan has some sub-clans. The clans and sub-clans are exogamous and the rule of clan exogamy is strictly followed in establishment of the marital relationship. The breach of clan exogamy was severely punished in the earlier days. But at present if the incident of clan endogamy occurs due to love affairs of the boy and girl of the same clan, then it is solved by the decesion of the khel (a group of neighbouring families) by adoption of either the boy or the girl by another clan and a feast and a fine is taken from the boy or/and his family. Besides clan endogamy a boy or a girl can’t marry into the clan of their mother. As such there can’t take place cross-causin marriage.
The members of family, whether they are of joint or nuclear family keep their kinship tie intact. The senior and aged persons are honoured by the young generations and in return the young are always behaved tenderly by the elders. The relation between husband and wife is quite heartily and both of them show requisite respect toward each other. The relations of the siblings are quite affectionate and are bounded by sense of responsibilities towards each others. Even after separation from the joint family, brothers living in their own nuclear family do not forget their liabilities of each other. The elder brother is always respected and young are tendered by the elders. The daughter-in-laws show the honour towards their parent-in-laws as their own parents. Similar is the behaviour of the son-in-laws towards the parent-in-laws. The parent-in-laws too consider their son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws as their own children. The both joking and aoidance behaviour are seen among different kinship relations.

In the study villages the Assamese language is spoken as the mother tongue. But in Markangkuchi village a few families speak in Tiwa language. As far as the kinship terminology is concerned, the Tiwa kinship terms are used by a very small section of the villagers of Markangkuchi village. In other two villages- Natun-Kumuraguri village and Kalbari-Bagariguri village, none of the villagers can speak in Tiwa language and the Assamese kinship terms are use to address their kin.

The traditional prayer house is known as barghar in which the family, descent and clan members pray to their barghar deities and souls of deceased ancestors. There are two priests associated with a barghar, one male called jela and one female called hari or hari-kunwari. They are selected from the descent and clan respectively. The jela and hari of the descent worship for the descent related functions and the jela and hari of the clan worship in the barghar clan related functions.
In earlier generations when they followed the matrilineal system, the residence after marriage was uxorilocal. The husband went to live in the house of his wife as resident husband called gobhia after marriage. The youngest daughter got the main house of the mother. The daughter became the hari of the barghar and the succession of hari was transferred from mother to daughter. The husband of the hari came to live with her as the gobhia and he might or might not had severed his descent and clan through the ritual of kulsinga. If he had performed the ritual of kulsinga he lost the descent and clan of his birth and got affiliated into the same of his wife. In that situation he could not become the jela of the barghar of the descent or clan of his birth. A man could become the jela of the barghar of his descent or clan if he had not performed ritual of kulsinga, though he lived as the gobhia in his wife’s house.

But due to the change from matriliny to patriliny at present a girl goes to live in the house of her husband and gets affiliated into the descent and clan of the husband. The change from matriliny to patriliny is the result of their close contact with the neighbouring patrilineal communities. Due to its impact no Tiwa boy wants to go as a gobhia to live in his wife’s house and similarly a girl does not want to live in family of birth after marriage. As the result of the acceptance of patriliny the role of hari of the barghar has to be played by the daughter-in-law of the family, which in the earlier generation’s succeeded from mother to daughter have changed from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law. Their inclination towards Hinduism due to the prolonged close contact with the Assamese caste Hindu communities the institution of barghar gradually replaced by family prayer house called Goshai-ghar and community prayer house called Namghar.

The khel is a social group based on locality. It is composed of the neighbouring families belonging to different descents and clans. This istitution plays the vital role in different socio-religious ceremonies related to different spheres of life like birth, puberty, marriage, death etc. During these occasions the active participation of the khel members is must. It plays the important role in the
purification ceremonies against the pollution caused by birth and death, because in
these occasions of pollution the members of the concerned family and descent
group are considered to be polluted and can’t do activities of purification by their
own. Besides these the *khel* controls the order among its members by imposing
fines to the wrong doers.

They have two categories based on the following of their traditional socio-
cultural and religious beliefs and practices and acceptance of the Hinduism
(*Vaishnavism*) due to the influence of the neighbouring caste Hindu communities.
The first category is known as the *bedang* and the second category is as *ved*. The
followers of the *ved* system are called as *uddhar-hoa* (get ascaped from their
traditional belief system) or *sanskar-hoa*. On the other hand the followers of the
*bedang* system are called as *uddhar-nohoa*. In cultural and religious matters these
two categories differ from one another.

The followers of the *bedang* system in their religious practices and worships
sacrifice pigs and fowl in front of the *barghar* or *than* deities with the offering of
lao (gourd-shell) containing rice-beer for their propitiation. They consume pork,
chicken, rice-beer or country liquor (*mod*) in their socio-religious functions and as
the items of food in normal family life. But the followers of the *ved* system avoid
these items in their religious and family life, instead they perform the prayer in the
*goshai-ghar* or *Namghar* through the recitation of the Holy books like *Bhagabata-
Gita* and *Kirtana* and through *Nam-prasanga*. The rearing of pigs and fowl and
consumption of pork, chicken and rice-beer or country liquor in socio-religious
and normal family life are avoided by them.

Other than this there are differences between these two groups of them in
the procedures of performing the rituals related to birth, puberty, marriage and
death ceremonies.

During the early days the child-births were held at home with the assistance
of the experienced village women. But due to the health awareness and the
facilities provided by the Government Medical Department attract the expectant mothers to the hospitals for child birth.

The celebration of the purification and name giving ceremony is observed in the *bedang* system on the 5th day of the birth or on any other convenient day but within the month. On the occasion of the purification ceremony the new born is given name by the family members which is declared among the guests present there. For the performance of this ceremony two persons one male and one female called as *giyatis* are selected from the *khel* other than the descent of the concerned family. The male *giyati* known as *sajati* and the female *giyati* is known as *hujuni*. On the other hand the followers of the *ved* system observe the purification and name giving ceremony is observed on the 21st day or 30th day of the birth. In this occasion the child is given name by family members with the help of the astrological calculation of the astrologer (*Ganak*). The purification ceremony is performed by khel members (*bhakat-bhakatani*) with prayer to god which is known as *Nam-prasanga*.

The followers of the *bedang* system observe no ritual at the first menstruation of the girls during the adolescent period. However the in the *ved* system there observe certain rituals of mock marriage of the girl which is called as *shanti-biya* or *tulani-biya*.

There are various forms of marriage among them. These are marriage by negotiation (*sudhan-biya or bor-biya*), marriage by elopement (*paluai-ana-biya*), marriage by keeping resident husband (*gobhia-rakha-biya*), marriage by capture (*sowali-dhari-ani-kora-biya*) were prevalent among the followers of the *bedang* system. Of these the mostly prevalent form of marriage among them is the marriage by elopement. The marriage by keeping resident husband is very rarely is in practice as they have given up the system of matriliny, but the marriage by capture is no more in practice in their society, as it now considered as crime of kidnapping. The performance of the marriage by negotiation is though main form of marriage,
most of the families do not organise this due to its high expenditures, only economically rich families perform it.

The followers of the Assamese Vaishnavism the occurance of marriage by elopement is more in comparison to marriage by negotiation. There is another form of marriage among them is known as marriage by giving dresses and ornaments to the bride (joron-biya). The marriage by keeping resident husband and marriage by capture are not found among them.

The followers of the Assamese Vaishnavism the occurance of marriage by elopement is more in comparison to marriage by negotiation. There is another form of marriage among them is known as marriage by giving dresses and ornaments to the bride (joron-biya). The marriage by keeping resident husband and marriage by capture are not found among them.

The rituals of marriage among the followers of the bedang system are performed by the male giyati called jela or sajati and the female giyati called hajuni. The marriage solemnised in the presence and through the blessings of the elderly members the khel of both bride and groom’s side.

The followers of the ved system the marriage is solemnised through the rituals performed by Vaishnava bhakats in Vaishnavite way, reciting the holy book Bhagabata or Kirtana with prayer called nam-prasanga in the name of Lord Vishnu.

There is another form of marriage called old-age marriage or bura-biya which is performed a few years after a boy elopes a girl to marry her and live in the house of the boy as husband and wife. This marriage is performed to legalise relation of the couple and the children born out of them. This marriage is performed by both the followers of the bedang and ved system, according to their norms.

In the matters of death the khel members play the active role regarding cremation of the dead and performance of the death ceremony. The death ceremony is called karam by the followers of the bedang system and shraddha by the followers of the ved system.

The purification ceremony is observed by the followers of the bedang system in the completion of the month. It can also be postponed for convenient period within the year. In such situation death ceremony of a person may be
celebrated together with the death ceremonies of other deceased persons of the same descent group in which the friends, relatives and descent members take part. The guests are entertained by a feast containing pork and rice beer as two main items along with rice and curries.

But the death ceremony or shraddha is performed by the follower of the ved system on the 11th or 13th day of death. On the 3rd day tilani and on the 10th day doha rituals are observed. The rituals are performed by the khel members (bhakats) by the prayer of nam-prasanga and recitation of the holy book Bhagabata or Kirtana. On the shraddha day a feast of vegetarian food is given to the friends, relatives and guests by the concerned family, which is known as vaishnava-bhojana. The khel members assist in the preparation of the feast.

The followers of the bedang system observe the religious beliefs in three levels like the family level, descent level and village level. There are some religious rituals performed in both family and descent levels like bhakat-sewa, death ceremony or karam, Bihu or Bisu etc.

On other hand the followers of the ved system have accepted the Hinduism especially the Vaishnavism, in which the belief in one god the Lord Vishnu, who controls the everythings in the universe. They have given up their traditional belief system in which the sacrifice of pig, fowl and other animals are offered along with rice beer to propitiate their traditional deities. They observe various Hindu ceremonies like Janmasthami, Holy, Tithies of Mahapurush, Sankardeva and Madhabdeva and other such Hindu religious ceremonies and festivals.

The Tiwa chiefs were called a known as (king) who controlled and administered their territories with the assistance of council of ministers other members of the village council like loro, doloi, saot, majhi, chang-doloi, chang-majhi etc. and the elderly members of the village council representing each clan.

But due the coming up of the educated elite group of youth the political consciousness grew among them during 1960’s. As a result of this the Lalung
Darbar was formed in 1967 to demand the Autonomous District Council for the self-administration of the community. After a long struggle with this demand, the success came in 1995 with the formation of Lalung District Autonomous Council, including 44 village councils and 401 revenue villages within its jurisdiction.

Thus in the present study, it is found that, there are two major areas of changes. The first one is related to the economic realm which is manifested first in the material culture and then it spread to the other related areas of organisation of labour, division of labour and related social relations due to different factors and happened to occur in all the study areas, common to all the study villages. The second area of change, happens to be religious change, which had occurred mainly due to the prolong contact of the Tiwa people with the Assamese caste Hindu communities.

*****