CHAPTER III: Traditional Tribal System of Social Education in Tripura and Cachar.

1. Folklore of the Tribal People.

2. Tribal Folk-songs, Music and Dance;

3. Tribal Art, Handicraft and Aerobatics, its impact.

4. Rituals and Sacraments
   (i) Ceremonies attending Birth.
   (ii) Marriage rituals,
   (iii) Worship of Deities.
   (iv) Other Tribal festivals.
So far we have discussed the Social Education prevailing in ancient India down to the reign of last Maharajas of Tripura and Cachar and also what was subsequently introduced anew by the Government of India towards mid-nineteenth century. The Governmental measures cover both tribal and non-tribal areas. There is no separate system of Social Education either for tribal or non-tribal people so far as Government system is concerned.

But apart from the Government system of Social Education there is a separate system prevailing among the tribals which is purely their own and as such cannot be lost sight of but must be brought into the limelight. Many writers on tribal history and culture have dealt with this aspect of the tribal life. Therefore, we deem it proper to give a pen picture of the traditional system of Social education of the tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar in this chapter so as to render the picture complete in all respects. It will be noted here that the tribals have developed a fair standard in a number of fields of culture and education in their own way.
The folklore, folk-tale, folk-songs, folk-music and dance, folk-arts and handicrafts of the tribal people of Tripura and Cachar and their countenance combine to offer them an aesthetic life and contribute a great deal to Social education. Therefore, these are worth-mentioning. Huge raw materials leisurely village life and law cost of labour contributed greatly to the growth of folk arts in these territories. Tripura is especially famous for its typical bamboo flutes. Handicrafts of this region also have a great tradition. The tribes have an ample time at their disposal especially during off agricultural season and the evening hours they utilise in their favourite arts and handicrafts. These arts present a vivid picture of their own traditional way of Social education.

The main characteristics of these arts are that they are oral and are transmitted from one generation to another. The most noted distinction of folk-art is the repetition of a particular act whether it is the working of a Song, a dance or a musical tune and so on. Another remarkable feature of folklore is that its form is stable. It reflects the culture of the people and brings solidarity, continuity and consistency in a cultural group. This spirit

2: L.P.Vidyarthi: The Tribal Culture of India, P 308, Delhi, 1977.
of Social consciousness is what is inculcated by modern Community Development planners.

The artistic-cum-education life of different tribal communities of both Tripura and Cachar includes in itself the following forms: 1. Folklore, 2. Folk music and dance, 3. Folk-art and handicrafts, 4. Rituals, 5. Worship and Festivals etc.

1: FOLKLORE OF THE TRIBAL PEOPLE
- A GREAT EDUCATIVE FORCE.

Folklore is the oral literature of the simpler societies and is perpetuated by oral traditions. However some select portion of the tribal folklore of Tripura and Cachar now-a-days may be seen in print also. The tribal people of both the territories usually sit in the village for chatting, dancing, singing and even talking serious matters of village. In some tribes of Tripura especially among the Chakma community there is Youth Dormitory - a place where all the unmarried youth of a village assemble

3: Tipra, Reang, Noatia, Jamatia, Halam, Chakma, Kuki, Kachari, Dimasa, Mech etc. for details infra vide, Appendix - II.


5: Nat Mandir- In connection with this it may be said a parallel to tribal dormitory. Natmandir is attached to big temples. In it the people assemble to sing devotional songs and dances (Nata Pkt (Skt ny t y a, dance) in front of the deity. Sometimes religious discourses are held here and some people retire for the night. A similar institution known as Namghar is there in almost all villages of Assam for carrying out religious and popular education. The Natmandir and Namghar are more associated with religion whereas the tribal dormitory is a Social and cultural institution.

The same practice prevails among the Kachharris is known as Deka Chang (bachelor-barracks).
at night after the day's toil. Before going to bed they tell stories, solve puzzles and give dramatic performances. Sometimes they sing and dance. This assembly is highly educative and helpful in many ways in the origin, development and transmission of tribal folklore in this region. There are some tribes with no system of dormitory. In that case also it may be done on village streets or men's houses in a non-institutionalized way.

The tribal folklore concern their hunting, agriculture (Jhum cultivation) other aspects of their daily life. Various other aspects such as their economic life, social life, sacred life, their thoughts and even their cattles are amply represented in their folklore. The tribal folklore also includes their tale, legend myths, proverb, riddles, drama, ballads etc. In other words folklore is the mirror of tribal culture and education. Anyone will appreciate them for the educative value of their culture in the form of songs, dance, fine arts, paintings and carvings etc.

For the tribals the functions of folklore are more important than the form. The lullaby is for putting children to sleep while a love-song gives enthusiasm to young couples. The old feel elevated by telling stories of their ancestors and try to educate younger generation and so on. There are

diverse functions of folklore viz aiding education of the young, prompting group feeling and solidarity, providing socially sanctioned ways for individual act etc. In true sense this is the traditional system of social education among the tribal population of this region.

From the study of folklore of these territories it is seen that any one item of folklore may have diverse functions. A worksong that helps the paddy planting men and women of a particular tribe synchronize their efforts may also be sung for entertainment of children in another tribe. The form is same but the function is different. The tribal folklore of Tripura and Cachar contains in itself the record of their cultural life and is highly educative.

Folksongs, folk-tales, legend myths, proverb, riddles etc. of Tribals incorporating morals are introduced to inculcate the general principles such as diligence and filial pity and ridicule laziness, rebelliousness and snobbishness. Some of the verbal instructions during the marriage ceremony of boys and the preparation of girls for marriage are given in the form of songs. Some illustrations are noted below.

When the bridegroom accompanied by his friends and relatives starts for marriage the sisters-in-law say,

(Tipra Marriage Song, Cāmāritumāni)

'Chāicūm thāhma na Kunui Kainani
Chāicūm tā kūnilbudī'.

Trans. You are going alone as you will come being two.
Do not come alone.

In another song a maiden addresses his Lover -

'Nūmile thākhlāy kā-na pagānu
Aile pagajāglāk na-na.
Abatāraga Ai
Tā cādi buini yāgni'.

Trans. On reaching there you will forget me, but I shall not be able to forget you .... Oh dear, do not take food cooked by others ......

Throughout the later life songs of ridicule are important as a means of censuring misbehaviour. Secondly the tribal folklore serves to validate censure, justify its rituals and instructions to those who perform and observe them. Thirdly, folklore fulfils the important but often overlooked function of maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behaviour. The fourth function of tribal folklore is permitting action that is usually not approved. Thus in every culture words that should not be spoken are dealt with.

8 Tipra, P 22, Agartala, 1962, published by the O.P., Tipra. 8§ Loc. cit.
The tribal folktales in vague in Tripura and Cachar are very simple in nature and cover a wide range of subjects. A sacred tale in the Tripuri tribal, for example, tells of justification of a ritual is of the greatest importance. Again, a legend or an incident in tribal arts may also contribute to the building up of morals. The folk songs of tribals with respect to its verse aspect is again of different types and nature. It reflects the joys and sorrows, problems and worries of common people of different tribes. Though most of the tribal songs are short, its words are often repeated during singing to prolong it. Sometimes, a song of a few lines are sung hours together by the tribes.

The riddles and proverbs prevailing among the tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar combine recreational and educational features to an unusual degree. Young people learn riddles and proverbs for the amusement they provide and people encourage their use because of their instructive value. Further, riddles and proverbs are socially very significant and, therefore, it is not surprising to find that almost many tribes of this region taboos are associated with their use.

The wide variety of content and form and their moral importance and great educative value make riddles and
proverbs a most interesting and inspiring subject of study. If one compares, the riddles and proverbs found in different tribal peoples of Tripura and Caedar one will come across frequent striking resemblances. The tribes are so fond of riddles, proverbs, cradlesongs, nursery rhymes etc. that each and everybody knows at least some but a few of them are famous for their repertoire.

According to Rajamala ballads, they were once very popular among the tribes of Tripura. Some of these riddles, proverbs, cradlesongs and nursery rhymes prevalent among the Chakma community of Tripura are cited below.

CHAKMA FOLKLORE:

1. RIDDLES ( BANA )
   (i) Uri Uri Jai dhari na pais: Battas.
   Trans. It flies and flies, nobody can catch it: Wind
   (ii) Maa Kande pola dangar aye: Charka
   Trans. Mother cries and the son grows: Spinning wheel

2. PROVERBS ( KAGTANG )
   (i) Jhike mari bouke sikhay
   Trans. The daughter-in-law is given lesson by punishing the daughter.

10: D. Sen, Tippera the most ancient of modern Indian States, Chunta Prakas, Extra-ordinary issue, 16.1.1920, Agartala.
(ii) Ye des'at briksa nei Se des'at eranda pradhan
Trans. The Aranda tree is the main tree in a country there there is no tree at all.  
12 cf.skt. Nirastahpadapah de'se erandra api drumayate .

(iii) Pāni nasta phena
Manus nasta Kānā
Trans. Water is spoiled by foam and man is spoiled when blind.

(iv) Pathat pelām Kāmār
Dā gare de āmār .
Trans. I met a blacksmith on the way and (I said) make a dā for me .
13 cf.Beng. Pathe pelām Kāmār
Dā gare de āmār .

3. CRADLE SONG : (CHRAI MUTHUMĀNI RUCĀPMOM )
Hādat laye bādol bās
Kumud laye guli ,
Lakso burā ghum yār
Sonār dhulnat pari .
Trans. The baby is sleeping in the cradle made of gold grid with a bamboo discharger in its hand and earthen bullets in the waist .

12 The Sanskrit proverb may have influenced the tribal ones , but one cannot be sure without further evidence . Further investigation may throw light on the matter to draw conclusions .
13 The Bengali proverb has probably influenced the Chakma one. The thing also be otherwise round . The matter is one which may be investigated, say, by Bangiya Sahitya Parisad .
4. NURSERY RHYME:

Moilā gharat pailā yāy
Kura-erā bhāginā Khāy.
Bada Khalā dudh midhā
Pāgānā Kalā bili pada.

Trans. When the nephew first visits the house of maternal uncle the maternal uncle takes great care of him. He is fed with chicken, eggs, milk, molasses, ripe bananas and cakes made of bini rice.

Use of charms for the protection of house and for the protection of individual against evil eyes causing diseases is very among the tribes of this region. The following spell which in Bengali scripts, is written and is inserted into a copper amulet along with a few pieces of turmeric.

REANG CHARMS: (Folklore)

Purbaro bando musrā
Dhanapati uttaro bando musrā
Dakhin kheter helerā bando musrā
Paschima musrā bando
Kākākāki musrā bando
Charkonā prithibi musrā bando
sisi-Māngji musrā bando

Ritibando, ratā bando
Khālibando elibando
Butibando butābando
tetriskoti debata mesrabando
Bārso mantri bando
Tharnso dimā bando
Soloso Dakini musrā bando
Soloso Jogini musrā bando
Hāto bando mukho bando
Chaksu bando āljib bando
Tāhāre musrā bando
Sulo bānnyā musrā bando.

Meaning: The spell is meaningful. It assumes the presence of evil spirits around. It is effective in closing the possible entrances including the directions and in binding the hand and feet, the eyes and the Uvula of an individual. In the spell Danapati is regarded as the master of Ghosts or demons, and Kakakaki as the spirit who causes cholera, Riti, Rata Khali, Eli, Dakini, Jogini etc. are the sulobanmya (sixteen evil spirits). The conception of tetriskoti (thirty three crores) deities is also there.

The folklore mentioned above are interesting and meaningful and from these we may learn many thing about their way of life, refinement of taste, depth of knowledge, sense of humour etc. and these help them in developing their traditional system of social education. Some more specimens of folklore will be noted below.
Folk-songs, music and dance of the tribes of Tripura and Caohar are a composite whole which is one of the dominant characteristics of their culture. In folk-songs, verse and music go together and the musical aspect is much more reflected in practice. The folk-poetry is merely a vehicle for folk-tune. The tribal peoples go on singing even small poems for a long time with the help of folk music. The simple folk-tunes conveying the feelings and sentiments of their ancestors, their lives and thoughts, their activities and achievements, their morals and discipline are of great value and highly educative.

The tribal songs of the region are of various kinds. There are life-cycle songs sung at different occasions like birth, marriage and death; moral songs for teaching morals; songs dealing with different seasons like the spring, the rains etc. and; songs connected with festivals and religions songs sung at the time of offering to deities. Moreover, there are historical songs narrating small stories or the heroic deeds of great heroes of the past which are very interesting, educative and inspiring to the younger generation.

Folk-songs of this area may be classified under two heads: Group and single. Group songs are generally sung by a group of tribal people working in the fields
at the time of sowing and harvesting or on the occasion of any other festival. These songs are very common among different tribes of these territories. The second category is represented by a single singer and this is found here everywhere. Some specimens of single song sung at the time of keeping watch over the Jhum are cited below.

Here a maiden (Barui) is addressing a nearby youngman (salā) who replies next.

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TIPRA JHOM-SONG, (Folk lore)
(Folktale)
(Natalaima)

MURUI: (Arāma a k)

Mini gāirīle cemomermo
Khāmpina perei perei,
Āmi gāiri le cemomcar
Nakbēr nākharchhar;
Mini gāirinaga a atni chjakhay
Āmi gāirinaga phādi.

Trans: The girl - (oh gold) your hanging watch-box is small, flies are buzzing. My watch-box is very lofty and airy. If you get drenched in rain, come to my shelter.

C a lā: Mini gāirinaga phainam tamana
Takhē magdēm cēn.
Trans: The youngman. I may come to your watch-box, but the crows will eat up the maize.

Durui:  Yā-ga bādukham gāga bādulehā
Takhā-nā īgibadi.

Trans: The maiden - you have a bow in your hand and earthen bullets in your waist, shoot the crows and some.

The musical instruments found here are mainly drum and flute. The flute is 25 to 80 cm in length and is made of hollow bamboo open at the bottom and with a slently cut mouth piece and 5 to 7 holes at the side each at a distance of one or two inches. Many Tripuri tribal boys play on the flute in the hilly jungle while grazing the cattle and this attracts both the cattle and other boys on similar grazing grounds.

Another instrument used by these tribes is known as Nagara, a big half spherical drum. It is beat with small sticks. In addition to these brass plates are also found popular in some tribes of these territories.

Among tribals the drumbeater is an important member of the dancing party. Sometimes, he is invited alone at the time of marriage and other festivals. At the time of marriage he gets some reward in Cash and Kind for his service rendered for 3 to 4 days by playing on the drum. He does not add to or suffer in his

*Note: The drum is made from the trunk of a tree. It is hollowed and its both sides are covered with goat skin, lightened and stretched by strong ropes through small brass rings.*
Social status because of this profession.

In the folk-dance too the tribals of these territories spontaneously participate. Dancing in a circle is the basic formation of most of the folk-dances. They are not mere entertainment for the tribal folk; they are part of their way of life. Amongst dances the group dance is very common in the tribals of this region. They are interwoven into the fabric of their life. It is a common sight to see in the hills and forests of Tripura and Cachar, three generations — father, son and grandson performing these dances with enormous enthusiasm. The wide variety of content and form of folk dance of this region has its social importance and great educative value.

The tribal folk-dances of Tripura and Cachar may be divided into three classes: Hunting, Sacred and Social.

1. Hunting dance: Dances belonging to this type are performed by only a few tribes of the region. In this dance the performers, by their actions and gestures demonstrate the various phases of the hunt and the way in which the Wild Animal is ultimately killed.

17: M.H. Brahman, Folk-songs of the Bodos, p 18, Publication Department, Gauhati University.
2. Sacred dance: The object around which this encircling dance is performed is a sacred one - an idol, an altar, or a holy tree.

3. Social dance: Dances belonging to this type are generally connected with seasonal festivals, marriage, etc. The Bātālāīmā dance of the Tripura tribes is generally performed during the harvesting seasons. Interesting marriage dances are also found common in this area. The sword dance during weddings may be a relic of the very ancient custom of marriage by capture.

The tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar thus organise their own culture through songs, music and dance, impart social education in their own way.

3. THEIR ART, HANDICRAFT AND ACRROMATICS: its impact.

These include art, drawing, painting, carving, wood-craft, metal craft, garment-making, etc. Fundamentally, the tribal art and craft of Tripura and Cachar correspond the following types.

(1) Ritualistic: It is used in the service of rites associated with some beliefs and mystical ideas viz. some stone, hut, poles etc.

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(ii) Utilitarian: Social customs here demand the object while modes of manufacture and material conditions determine the form e.g. basketry, pottery, carpet-making, garment-making etc.

(iii) Individualistic: It expresses the feeling and emotion of the craftsmen viz, weaving a cloth, preparing a mat etc.

Almost all forms of tribal religion in this region demand that offerings should be made to spirits and these may take the shape of animals viz bulls, pigs, elephants, horses etc. Figures are terracotta and are produced by priestly craftsmen who are members of the same tribe. Human figures or figures of Gods and Goddesses are rarely found.

What is significant about all these figures whether carved in wood or made of burnt earth is that there is no attempt to imitate what exists in nature. The vision of a demon or animal impresses the tribal folks of these territories with perhaps, one central quality which they like to reproduce in their art and take no attempt to make it realistic.

The artistic taste of tribal folk of both Tripura and Cachar also finds expression in the decoration of their houses, in cloths they weave and wear as well as in the simple ornaments with which they decorate their own bodies. The colour with which the textiles are dyed are of indigenous origin. Red, blue and deep black are much favourite to the tribals of these territories.

Aerobatics and animal players constitute another art which is a source of livelihood for few tribes of this region. Playing of animals like monkey, bear, snakes etc. is also another such art in which some tribes have mastery.

These arts, crafts and aerobatics of the tribals have great educative and cultural value and through these the traditional system of Social Education are spread among the tribal peoples of this area.

Folklore of the tribal people is an integral part of their culture. From some exclusive study of folklore of different tribes of Tripura and Cachar we get a clear picture of their habitat, their social and economic life, their religion and festivals, their rites and rituals, the ups and downs,
the migration and movements that have passed through the ages and their contacts with outside of all these the rites and rituals play a very important role in their culture and education. Before starting our discussion on rituals let us make a brief survey of their way of life.

The tribal village community is a historical as well as social fact. The villagers have intimate social, economic, ritual and political relationship regulated by age-eld traditions and institutions. The people of the tribal village are neighbours in house as well as in fields. They go together to the forest and use the same grazing fields, ponds, streams and springs and even share their crops in the Jhum together and so on.

One important consideration for the village—site which the tribals of this area prefer is nearness to the source of fresh water. The tribals of Tripura usually live in village or small hillocks known as tilla. The houses are generally thatched with mud wall. But unlike the hill tribes of Tripura the Kacharis build their house on the ground. The villages are generally situated in valleys and each village has a raised house called nôd râng which is used by the youth as

20: The thatched houses are thatched with 'San' i.e. 'Sun Grass' (a kind of grass produced in the local forests) that offers a very good shelter to the inmates of the house against the searing sun and rains.
The community living of the tribals of the region as noted above encouraged them in cultivating their own culture and tradition which also somehow or other helped in the development of Social education in them.

The tribal people have monogamous families and the chief means of their livelihood is Jhuming. But due to insufficiency of agricultural land they have to depend on forest products as well. The forest gives them fruits like jackfruits, mangoes, lichis, pineapple etc. besides many varieties of edible leaves. The staple food is rice, pulse and beans which are produced in the Jhum. These tribals also eat pig meat, chicken, mutton etc.

(i) CEREMONIES ATTENDING BIRTH

Among the tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar there are ceremonies attending birth (a  t i  •  n i ) of a child. On the sixth day of birth Sasthi Puja - (C h a d y a) is held. For about a month after giving birth to a child the period of ceremonial uncleanness is usually observed. This period is terminated by the use of the water of peace, 'Santijal', and ceremony for giving names to the newborn baby is held.


22: Santijal - (Water of peace) usually prepared by the immersing in water leaves of Tulsi Plant, Dubgrass, cow-dung, rice and sometime small silver coins and personal ornaments are thrown into this 'Santijal'.
In fact, the biggest pre-occupation of the Tipra boys and girls is the quest for mates—their main hunting ground being different festivals exhibitions and fairs. Usually parents of the boy choose life-partner for their son. Sometimes boys and girls are also given some freedom in the choice. Among the Kacharis marriage by capture was largely in vogue in earlier times, but is rapidly passing out of vogue at present and parents are entrusted with this. After selection the bride price (gāda nā) is settled. In case the bridegroom's parents are unable to pay the bride price the prospective bridegroom gives the equivalent in personal service in the house of bride's parents. This is known as 'Olāghhār jiyā'. A similar custom prevailing among the tribes of Tripura is 'Jāmāikhatā' or 'Jamaiotha'.

The actual marriage ceremony of marriage among the Kacharis is of the nature of a Social and festive fathering. As a rule Kacharis are a strictly monogamous race. Polyandry is absolutely prohibited. Divorce may take place by mutual consent.

25: Habananda Mukherjee, Note on the residence in Wife's house among the Reang of Tripura, Adibasi Vol. III, No.3 & 4. In the Reang marriage institution, Jamaikhata (Chāmarāikāmī) is an important custom which makes it obligatory for a man to stay and work in the house of his wife immediately after his marriage for three years. The custom is believed to have three significant aspects (i) mythological, (ii) ceremonial and (iii) socio-economic.

This cannot, however, be denied that there is some disrespectful attitude growing now-a-days towards the custom. From studies it has been found that 62.6% of the divorce cases occurred only due to this custom. So, to fit the changed circumstances the custom has been modified to some extent. The possibility of further modification in this regard cannot be ruled out.
The marriage ceremony among the tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar is performed with special rites. The most enjoyable thing of marriage is the presentation of marriage songs. The marriage customs and songs constitute an important element of tribal folk literature. Some specimens of songs sung during marriage ceremony of tribals are given below.

On the opening ceremony of marriage known as Kaptoilumi the priest advises the bridegroom to stay and work in the house of the bride hereafter for three years by uttering the spells as follows:

**REANG MARRIAGE OATH:**

Chāndiguru lag toilonga;
Basumati Kasiā tonga;
Sarga másāi tonga
Tinimimbar tinisalo, satva khewe;
Āchu Sibrāi Chowāi; Āchu Hāngrāi
Wāimi; names Khabaha Khobaha
Khemi hieve satyario

Trans: Taking the cha (chandiguru) in hand, standing on the earth, looking at the sky to-day on this auspicious moment I made Sibrāi (bride) and Hāngrāi (bridegroom) united.

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The priest takes some Rice in his hand and says,

'Bono māirong tāhindi Māinokmāsi
name bunghiāwlāie Khātunglāie
Tonkhēbu maiknokua angnai
hiāweākhe bahu ragaśāhānāi

Trans: It is not mere rice but the goddess of wealth we worship. If you do not live decently, then misfortune will visit you and many demons will haunt you—oh, people of twelve clans listen.

Again, he (the priest) holds a stone (hlong) in his left hand and strikes it continuously with his da, while addressing the couple thus—

'Hlongdi saiyyo rawye tondi,
Toibukdi aāiyoo lawe londi,
Tulādi Khānāi phuie aāiyoolw de
Wāphongkoie Wāphongā chāie
Toiku thai kāhāmnui loikumāināiā
Linglāthāi kāhāmnue ligīnlā māināiā.'

Trans: 'Let your longevity be hard like this stone,
Let your longevity be as long as the river,
Let your teeth grow worn, and you have them anew.
Let your hairs turn grey.
Take no bath in wayside pond.'
Take no rest in any other cool place.

On the occasion of departure (of bridegroom) with the bride (*Hāio p'āi mī*) from the father-in-law's house after completion of three years' stay (*Jāmāi khatī*), the parents of the bride bless them and address as such:

'Nāntho chātho hāpung māigmong
Toibūngnāng Sāichāiāle takhub Khubai;
Kong Khluēawē longlāide'.

Trans: You work in the Jhum and let the crops be bumper. Let the river in which you fish be never exhausted. Both of you have worked in the field and have fed us. We bless you.

It may be said that through these marriage songs and customs, social education is imparted among the tribal people of this area in an informal way. By marriage, not only the families of the bride and the groom are brought in contact with each other, but also their villages. The mutual love and co-operation between the wife and the husband do not end with them but are extended to their children and even to the grand children.

In this way the tradition and culture of the tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar are transmitted from one generation to the other and help in spreading the traditional.

system of Social education which is their own.

(iii) WORSHIP OF DEITIES.

The Tripuri and Kachari Pantheon is a very extensive one, though it seems probable that only a comparatively small number are strictly of tribal, many having obviously been borrowed from their Hindu neighbours. Some of the deities are worshipped in the yard of the house, some near the water source and the boundary of the hamlet and in the granary, Jhum field and forest. The popular deities fall naturally into two classes, (i) Household Gods (mā ṇ a d ā i) (ii) Village Gods (gā m ī n i mā d ā i). The former are worshipped inside the house and the latter by the whole village collectively. Among the Kachari deities Bāθ hāu Bū rā Mā hā d e o, M e r o Rāja, Jā l K u b e r etc. are famous. The main worship among the tribes of Tripura are Ganga Puja, Garla, Kār and Kharchi etc. Religious songs are also sung on these occasions. The specimen of a song is mentioned below. Here a householder is inviting a priest (Achai) for performing Garia Puja in his own house.

TIPRA GARI A PUJA SONG: Folklore

N a k p h a m -

' Oyāndāl imchāni chumui,
Nakhā talāmī cumui,
Khānā pham ālay matāi runāni
Achāi akphādi kumui,' 33

32: The Author has personally observed this Puja in the temple of Fourteen Gods (named Chaturdash Devata Bari) at old Agartala. The principal offering was a he-goat.
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Trans: House holder - The flute is made of a piece of Mrittinga Varieties of bamboo from one joint to another, there is cloud flying low in the sky. Oh brother-in-law (sister's husband) please come tomorrow and be ministrant of the worship.

Apart from these the tribes of this region being mainly agricultural communities observe two great worships (pujas) connected with the ingathering of two chief rice crops of the year i.e. Ahu and Sali. This is known as Mikhan gadan sanai, the eating of the new rice by the Kacharis and Maikatal camani by the tribes of Tripura. The gathering in these worships is more of the nature of village marry-making than a religious festival. Through the gathering of these religious festivals the tribal people consciously or unconsciously gather a kind of knowledge and information which may be termed as Social education.

(iv) OTHER TRIBAL FESTIVALS:

The aim of social festivals among the tribals of Cachar and Tripura is to provide an occasion for relaxation and break from daily routine and toil. They offer an excellent occasion for all members of the family together with their relatives to meet after all the joys and sorrows which the year brings to them. The Social festivals are -

34: Nabanna in the Bengalee communities.
generally accompanied by drinking of liquor and plenty of music and merry-making. It may be expressed in the following way.

'It is daily that we toil;
But it is for a day that we feast,
O dear, it is for a day that we feast'.
'I have survived the year
To celebrate the feast.' 35

One popular festival among the Kacharis is Maha hanai, i.e. the driving away of mosquitoes. This is a form of merry-making got up mainly by the young people of a village in the month of November-December, to celebrate the departure of the mosquito plague for the cold season. But among all the festivals Bihu is most prominent. This is observed in January and April every year. The former one is known as Magh Bihu (Mhogali Bihu). On this occasion 'Bihu huts' are built and are all set fire to amid much rejoicing, dancing, singing etc.

The latter one is known as Bohag Bihu (Rangali Bihu). This festival lasts for seven days, the period being given up to merry-making, dancing, feasting etc., corresponding to Mhogali and Rangali Bihu observed by the Kacharis, the tribals of Tripura also observe Makar Sankranti and Chaitra

Sankrantl which are much akin to their Hindu neighbours. The verses sung at these festivals seem to be little better than mere meaningless jingle-jingle rhymes though some of them give an insight into the peculiar humour of the Kachari character and temperament. Some samples are given below.

KACHARI BIHU SONG : Folklore

1. Agoi Boisagí, faidā nang
   Dāna bathar Jānai-khai rang zāgan zang.

2. Mā puā Rām laga laga thāngdang ;
   Gāmsā hādang fallāng māna brāh-dang ?

The above represents an exchange of playful banter between members (brother and sister) of a Kachari family who are about to take part in a Bihu festival. The general sense of the two couplets somewhat freely translated is given below:

Trans : 1. Sister Boisagi, come out and play;
   This is our Bihu holiday;
   Don't move inside the house all day.

2. Dear brother mine, I'll come anon
   I'm putting my best sari on;
   Five minutes' grace; don't harshly press;
   We ladies must have time to dress.
Through these festivals the illiterate masses can express their minds and enjoy their social life. The traditions, customs, mythology legends seem to be more living in this region than anywhere else in the country. It has tremendous influence upon the tribal society and help in the development of social education among them in their own way.

(V) FUNERARY RITES

Among the tribes of Tripura and Cachar there two recognised way of disposing of the dead i.e. (1) Burial and (2) cremation. The latter is looked upon as the more correct and respectable and is followed by most of the tribes of Tripura but the former is by far the more common among the Kacharis. But the child below one year is buried in all cases. When the burial or cremation is decided upon the corpse is carried to its last resting place which is often but not always on the banks of a running stream, by the nearest surviving relatives. The reverence for water is perhaps, especially marked among the Kacharis. Two ceremonies are held in this connection. These are broksokmi and Kothoincimi. The first concerns with the cremation or burial of the dead and the second with the post-funeral rite. The tribes believe in reincarnation. Those who follow right path are reborn as man and a sinful man, on the other hand, is reborn as animal. The funerary rite and the customs of their forefathers have some impact upon the social life of the people.

and are educative.

We have discussed above the special Social education activities of the tribal peoples of Tripura and Cachar. These are their folklore, folk music and dance, folk art, handicrafts and aerobatics and rites and rituals. The folklore includes myths, tales, legends, riddle, proverbs, song, verse aspect etc.; folk music and dance include folk-songs (musical aspect) folklore music, folk-dance etc. folk-art handicraft, and aerobatics include folk-art drawing, painting, carving, wood craft, metal craft, bamboo and cane work and garment-making etc. The rites and rituals include special interesting and educative functions in connection with birth, marriage, religious worships such as Kharchi Puja, Garia Puja, Ker Puja, Batham Puja etc. and funerary rites.

The folklore is mostly oral but now-a-days some folklores are being printed and published by interested scholars and by Govt. agencies. Some abstracts of these folklores are here presented by way of examples with English translation. This oral and unwritten literature when fully written down and published will, it is hoped, throw more light on the culture and education of the tribal people of this region. But whatever little is by now brought to the light is sufficient to show that the tribal people also are endeavouring in their own way to develop themselves from time immemorial educationally as well as in other aspects of social life.
The tribal people are developing through these literature, arts, crafts and rituals. These things contribute greatly to community development. Their occasional assemblies and group discussions held in dormitories and other places of Social gatherings are to a great extent serving the purpose of modern Social Education and its various organisational aspects vis, Community Centres, Youth Clubs, Mahila Samites and other Voluntary Organisations.

All these are very impressive Social education activities. The community feeling has been strengthened among the tribals by the above activities perhaps, far more than among the non-tribal with their Community Development Projects. So, we see that their traditional system of Social Education is highly effective.

To sum up, apart from Government efforts, the tribal themselves organised their own culture and education in their own traditional way through festivals, gatherings, dance, music etc. as stated above and thus imparted Social Education. Their socialisation programme itself is Social Education in its real sense. Some elements of that system may be studied thoroughly by future researchers and incorporated in modern Government system of Social Education.