The Tiwas are mainly a plains tribe of Assam. They are found in considerable strength in the south-western tract of the old Nagaon district which is now covered by newly constituted Morigaon district. Due to the lack of publicity they are not known outside Assam.

Among the tribals in the Morigaon district they occupy the lion's share. The percentage of Tiwa population varies from time to time. The reason is probably conversion of Tiwas into Koch. Further the assimilation process accelerated the acceptance of Assamese language by men and women folk. It may be mentioned here that while maintaining their tribal culture the Tiwas are trying to assimilate with the Assamese language and culture. Modern Tiwa people, both male and female in their dress and ornaments are same as those of non tribal Assamese people.

The traditional institutions of the Tiwas have been disappearing. The Tiwa society has undergone some tangible changes in the recent years, because in the fast moving world no society can remain static. These changes have been traced in traditional religion, social customs and
beliefs and practices as well as material culture and performing art form. However the degree of such changes varies from place to place and time to time. Wearing of traditional dress and maintaining traditionality in beliefs, customs, rituals etc. are now considered to be a symbol of backwardness.

The functions of the bachelor’s dormitory has changed considerably in the traditional villages while this institution is completely absent in some Tiwa villages. This institution functioned as an agency of non-formal education in the past.

Formal education has changed the way of life, the social aspirations, the attitude towards Tiwa culture both in material and non-material aspects and has a tendency towards the destruction of tribal norms. Hindu deities and customs too have been invading their ways of life and thought.

There is enough documented evidence that the socio-cultural transformation among Tiwas is much faster than that of the other tribal groups in the district. The differences between Tiwa tribe and non-tribes and within the tribals could be attributable to various factors. Education is one of the most crucial factor in the context of social change. The present study has attempted to highlight the impact of
modern education in the socio-cultural transformation of Tiwa community with special emphasis on material and non-material aspects of their traditional life in the Morigaon district of Assam.

The present study consists of nine chapters. The first chapter gives a glimpse of the whole research study and methodology. The second chapter deals with the land and the people – the nature of physical as well as cultural landscape of the study area. The chapter includes geographical outline of the Morigaon district, physical environment, educational profile, migration of Tiwa people to the district etc. Cultural and social life of a community is the key point of change. Therefore, the chapter third the Tiwa society which is related with clan, family and marriage system of the community. Folk customs, festivals and celebrations are discussed in chapter four. Tiwas traditional dormitory system as well as religious beliefs, oral literature, material cultures etc. are included in chapter five and six respectively. The chapter seven is related with status of women in Tiwa society and the ways how to empower them in modern society. The chapter eight is related with the impact of modern education on Tiwa society. The last chapter is the concluding chapter to summarise the study and to make recommendations for further studies.

(iii)
The writings of many folklorists, anthropologists and social scientists have been relied upon in carrying out this study. An extensive bibliography and glossary is also appended.

This study is based on diverse source of materials, which consists mainly field investigation, official and non-official reports and documents as well as records in addition to books and journals.

Guwahati

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(Hema Kanta Chutia)