

11. Tiwa Culture and Education

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Abstract:

The Tiwas are an ethnic group living primarily in the states of Assam and Meghalaya in northeastern India. It is also found in parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland. They are recognized as a planned tribe in Assam. Although they were known as lalungs in Assamese Branji, colonial literature and the Indian constitution, members of the group called themselves tiwas. A distinctive feature of the tiwas is their division into two subgroups of him, the Hirtiwas and the Plains his tiwas, with contrasting cultural characteristics. The founder of the Tiwa community is his Pha Poroi "Indrosing Dewri" who has made great contributions in building the Tiwa society. He also wrote the Tiwa national anthem titled "O Angé Tiwa Tosima". India's Tiwa population is about 371,000. (2011 Census). However, according to the 2001 census, about 161,000 are 'Tiwas/Lalungs'. This number includes only Plains his Tiwas. Hiltiwa was not included because they became a planned tribe after his 2001 census. Their population can be estimated at about 10,000. The total number of Tiwa speakers is only about 34,800. (2011 Census). Women's traditional dress is different between Hir Tiwa and Plain Tiwa. Women wear a faskai on their upper body, a nara (like a belt) around their waist, and a cachon on their lower body. Women wear rehab on the upper body and mekela on the lower body. Today's Tiwa eating habits are similar to those of neighboring non-tribal Hindus. However, to some extent, their diet still has its own peculiarities. As you said, the staple food is rice. In addition to rice, popular ingredients include leafy greens, bamboo shoots, meat, fish, dried fish, and eggs. The basic occupation of the Tiwas is cultivation of the land. Tiwa (Larun) is a Tibeto-Burman (Sino-Tibetan) language spoken by the Tiwa people of the states of Assam and Meghalaya in northeastern India. Tiwa is similar to Boro, Dimasa, Kokborok and Garo. Wanshuwa (tiwa: Wanshúwa) is an important religious festival of the Tiwa people of the villages of Amkha and Marjong in Karbi Anglong district. The festival is held once every five to six years. Generally, this festival is held from June to August. According to census reports, the literacy rate in Tiwa is 63.5%, and many people (36%) in the Tiwa community are illiterate. 54.5% of the illiterate are male and 45.4% are female.

Keywords:

Clans, Culture, Religion, Tradition, Education

11.1 Introduction:

The Tiwas are one of the major tribes of Assam. Like other tribes of the North-East, the Tiwas have their own district language, cultures, and traditions. Other people refer to the Tiwas as Lalungs. For this reason, people often refer to the Tiwas as a tribe with dual

identities. The Tiwas are of Tibeto-Burman origin and belong to the family of the ancient Bodo race. There is no specific record of their arrival in Assam. This suggests that their origins date back to the prehistoric period. Moreover, it is true that they were among the first settlers in Assam. They first settled in the Brahmaputra Valley.

Later, gradually, they moved towards the south, as far as Tripura. Another group moved back towards the north. Thini Moslong was the first Tiwa kingdom. Tipara or Tifra also inspired the name Tiwa.

11.2 Objectives:

- (i) To study the Culture and tradition of Tiwa Tribes
- (ii) To Study the Tiwas's Festivals

11.3 Tiwa Tradition:

According to Tiwa tradition, the son of Raja would not be his successor. The reason is that the Tiwas have a matrilineal system of society where a Tiwa boy goes to a girl to marry her. This system is called "Kobea Liwa." According to the matrilineal system, children follow the title of mother's clan. Usually the Raja (king) or Khonor (prince) goes to settle at the girl's house in marriage. So, in such a case, his son would not get the title of father's clan. But to become Raja, he should be from Malewa Khul, which is mandatory.

That is why, according to the traditions, Khunguri's (princess, i.e., any sister of Raja) son becomes Gobha Raja. The present Gobha Raja Dipsing Deoraja S/O Late. Kongsing Deoraja (the previous Gobha Raja) is the first Raja to break the

Tradition: But Dipsing belongs to Malewa Khul. But how? That is because Dipsing Deoraja's mother, Anarkuli, the wife of Lt. Kongsing Deoraja, came to Kongsing's house marriage. This system is called "Pohari Laba." There is also a tradition of such a system in Tiwa society. In such cases, sons and daughters inherit the title of their father's clan. The Raja appoints and installs himself.

"Pisai Raw". The Royal Council of Ministers, known as "Rajane Munthri Raw," advised Amsai and Balikhunji to take action. The Pisai Raw is a village council consisting of Loro, Doloi, Phador, Sangot, Dewri, Hadari, Phayokmul, Munsip, and so on. The Rajane Munthri Raw is the highest institutional body in Tiwa Society.

Koba (Gobha) was the largest ancient Tiwa State. Gobha encompasses various sub-states, including Chahari, Khala, Neli, Tetelia, Dimoria, and others, stretching from Umhi and Nungthungbura in the south (present Amri Block) to Topakhunji (Topakuchi) and Baropunji (Baropujia) in the north, bordering Ahom Kingdom (undivided Nagaon District), and Dimoria, Moronga, and Markhang in the west (present Kamrup District of Assam and Ribhoi District of Meghalaya). Gobha established favorable relations with Ahom King. The Jaintia king also attempted to build a relationship with the Ahom king in order to engage freely in trade affairs.

11.4 Culture of Tiwa:

Tiwa or Lalung is a culturally rich tribal community inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya in North East India. Tiwa community has a mythological and historical origin and migration. Indigenous narratives various accounts on the migration of the Tiwas to their present habitat. Some of them claim that Tiwa people are a group of Tibbeto Burmese tribe. They come down through the course of Brahmaputra and settled in some parts of Assam. Tiwas are divided into two sub-groups.

Hills Tiwa: The Hills Tiwa lives in the westernmost areas of Karbi-Anglong (Assam) as well as in the north eastern corner of Ri-Bhoi district (Meghalaya). They speak a Tibeto-Burman language of the Bodo-Garo group. They are divided into a dozen of clans recognized by specific names which they use as patronymics. Their descent system can be said to be ambilineal. In most cases, the husband goes to live in his wife's family settlement, and their children are included in their mother's clan. However, in 30% of unions, the women come to live with her husband. In this case, children take the name of their father. This trend is on the rise under the influence of neighboring populations who are mostly patrilineal. About the half of Hill Tiwas follow their "traditional" religion. It is based on the worship of local deities. The other half has been converted to Christianity since the 1950s.

Plains Tiwa: Plains Tiwa lives on flat lands of the Assam, mostly in Morigaon Nagaon, Kamrup districts and the vast majority speaks Assamese as their mother tongue, Tiwa language being still spoken on the foothills and in rare villages of the plains. Their descent system is definitely patrilineal. Their patronymics does not consist in their clan's names but in common Assamese names instead (mostly Pator and Bordoloi). Their religion shares many elements with Assamese Hinduism, but remains specific.

11.5 Festivals of Tiwa Community:

The Tiwa or Lalung is culturally very rich people. They love and respect their king and they obey the verdict of the king as he is on the supreme in Tiwa administration. Festivals constitute a significant part of the culture of the Tiwa tribes. There are many festivals of Tiwa people celebrate several occasions and festivals. The main festivals of Tiwa tribes are:

Tiwa Bihu: Tiwas of different areas observed Bihu in different days of the week. There is similarity with other communities as the main agricultural festival, the dance form and rituals of the Tiwa Bihu is distinctive. Some of the distinctive Bihu features of Tiwas are Baha nach, Jara Tola ceremony, Bheti karcha ceremony etc.

Jon Beel Mela: Jonbeel Mela is one of the most attractive festivals of Assam. Jonbeell Mela is held every year during winter season at a historical place known as Dayang Belguri at on beel. Jon and Beel are Assamese terms for the Moon and a wetland respectively. It is a 3-day –long community fair held at the weekend of Magh Bihu. This is traditionalliy the Gobhe Haat of bazaar exchange. On the Jon beel Mela, a huge market or bazaar is held where the people of different tribes interchange their merchandise with the local people in. The Mela starts with community fishing in the Jonbeel wetland. People from the tiwa community catching fish during the "Community fishing".

During the Mela, the king of the Tiwa tribe popularly known as Govaraja along with his courtiers visit the Mela and collect taxes from his subjects. During this festival people from various tribes perform their traditional dance and music.

Ushabaratsav: The word barat originated from Sanskrit word brata. The meaning of the word Brata is penance observed to satisfy the God. Barat utsav is a community utsav of Tiwa tribes, which bears a traditional religious cultural character. Barat ustav is celebrated in the full moon day called purnima of the month of puha. The festival is observed to make society free from pestilence, epidemics or aggression of wild animals. In this Barat Utsav, people sing their Barat songs with their flawless dance performances. There are two types of barat songs (i) Barat geet or Bharatar greet and (ii) Barat naam.

Sagramisawa: This is a spring festival of Tiwa community. This festival is observed in the month of Falgun. In this festival mainly the bachelors participate. This festival is full of dance and music. It is known that the bachelors dormitory samadai becomes the centre of this festival. This festival starts with worship of langkhun and mahadeo with sacrifices of goat and other birds. It is also believed that the people are not permitted to prepare their paddy field for the next harvest before sacra Miswa puja.

Langkhunpuja: Tiwas do not start their formal dances without performing the “Langkhun” and Mahadeo puja. The “Langkhun” puja is of two parts. One part is observed in the month of kati (October/November) while the latter is observed just after a week of the former. The Mahadeo puja is observed after the performance of the Tara Langkhun puja. The Tiwas sacrifice fowl, duck, pigeons and black goats before the deities while in the Mahadeo puja they sacrifice a white goat before the deity. Only after performing these pujas, Tiwas start their formal song and dance.

11.7 Education of Tiwa Society:

From the census report we know that 54.5 % of Tiwa males are literate and 45.4% are females are literature. It clearly shows that males are more literate than female. Tiwa autonomous council paid attention towards the development of education among the Tiwa to improve literacy rate. Due to the effort of the Tiwa Autonomous council the literacy rate of Tiwa increase from 39.3% in 1991 to 61.8% in 2001.

11.8 Conclusion:

Festivals are the life spirit of the Tiwa people. The tribe is considered to have one of the richest reservoirs of the folk dance and songs in Assam as well as North-East India. Festival is significant part of Tiwa traditional life. Their colorful festivals attract people from different parts of India.

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