

Post Independence reflection of ethnicity, identity and sociopolitical consciousness among the plain Tiwas of Assam

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Abstract:

The Tiwa society has been experiencing rapid changes and they have come in contact with other ethnic groups having distinctive socio cultural and economic dynamics. The changes of the plain Tiwas are visible in almost every aspect of traditional cultural practices, food habits, dress patterns and behaviours. The Bhakti Movement and Neo-Vaishnavism has a great impact on the lives of the Tiwas. This acculturation phenomenon is one of the most sensitive factors which the social changes of this major tribal group of the middle Assam have been experiencing.

In 1967, a political organization Lalung Darbarwas formed and their fundamental demand was to create a separate Autonomous District Council. Thereafter Tiwa (Lalung) Yuba Chatra Sanmilion, All Tiwa Students' Union etc formed and demanded for Autonomy. As a result, Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee and the other allied organizations signed the Tiwa Accord with the Government of Assam in 1995 to form a Tiwa Autonomous Council. Meanwhile some organization had been working to mobilize identity consciousness during post Independence period.

The sociocultural changes, identity crisis and the role of post Independence Tiwa, social and political organizations in creating the collective identity consciousness are going to discuss in this paper.

Key Words: Tiwa, acculturation phenomenon, identity consciousness.

The Assamese culture is the result of contribution of different ethnic groups. But, due to various reasons, some of them are dissatisfied wherein the cultural and linguistic factor becomes responsible factor for dissatisfaction and ethnic tension. On the other hand, the cultural change among them itself has also been creating a lot of problems among the indigenous population in the region and particularly in Assam. Cultural change/exchange/interaction was there as much widespread in comparison to other social processes. It has been creating problems in ethnicity when directed time and places towards undesirability. The change in original cultural pattern is replete of shortcomings according to the Anthropological and sociological studies. Instead of updating the prevailing original culture, values, ethical norms etc., unnecessary intrusion and exclusion has been allowed to occur in indigenous culture in time and places. The problem becomes more complicated when an indigenous group follows another

social life style. Thus it becomes the factor for identity crisis of various tribes and other ethnic groups in the contemporary social transformation.

The Tiwa tribe reveals the fact that cultural change in transitional stages was phenomenal in their social system like other ethnic communicates and acting as a continuous process throughout the courses of their history except some up and down. This is a reason for which the Tiwas have lost their culture, custom, language, distinct way of life and religion in time and places.

At present the Tiwas are a majority in Marigaon district. Besides, a subsequent amount of the Tiwa people are living in Nagaon, Karbi Anglong (majority in western part), Kamrup (few villages near Satgaon of Guahati and in Dimorita Mouza) Dhemaji block area, Titabar area of Jorhat, Sadia of Lakhimpur districts of Assam and east Khasi hill of Meghalaya. The Tiwas other than hills, foothill and some remote/isolated areas don't know their ethnic culture and identity. There were the rapid cultural conversion to other cultural fold and inclination to synchronized Assamese culture in the plain areas. It is also revealed that, by this process the followers have changed in their original culture in a unique direction and places have formed sub-tribe/caste culture. In other places specially in hilly areas .g. Amri and duarAmla Mouza of Karbi Anglong, in the state of Meghalaya, some villages of foothill areas like amsol, Silsang, Nellie, Jagiroad, Dimoria, remote areas of Kathiatoli, Kaki of Nagaon district and the villages like Theregaon near Howraghat, Ghilani, Bhaksong, Mindaimari, Amri etc. are still preserving their culture and linguistic identity. The Gobha, Khola, Nellie, Sahari and the '*Panchorajya*' and '*Satorajya*' were the dominated areas of the Tiwas where they have been living with distinct culture identity; but in the changing scenario they have been converted to other religion from their religion of Animism (Adi-Dharma). After the religious conversion there has been tribe/caste conversion by which they lost their distinct culture and consequently this leads to a diverse human extinction.

The Tiwas especially in '*Satorajya*' and '*Panchorajya*' adopted drastic cultural change in the form of Sanskritisation, have lost the original culture and identity as mentioned, very rapidly and have formed a separate ethnic-fold in their original tribe entity. Neither the newly formed ethnic-fold has the cultural similarity with their original one nor could they reach up to other caste culture. So the processes of social change; such as Sanskritization persists in their society as incomplete and imperfect process of transition. In recent period there has been a great controversy over the processes. There has also been criticism on mainstream culture; its purity, wholeness and authentically. So, it only overburdens the problems in the ethnicity and in multiculturalism as an ideology of the various ethnic groups in the region.

Historically, the first jolt in the indigenous tribal culture in Assam was received by the immigration of the Ahoms (Shan Tais) to Saumara (EastenAsom) through the Patkai range of mountains in 1228 A.D. It was due to the able leadership of Sukafa the cultural integration process was more or less peaceful. The protesting and agitating groups were dealt with severe actions during Ahom rule. It was Ahoms that in their six hundred years of rule annexed the princely kingdoms of Tiwas like other ethnic communities. Not only had they annexed their territory but had exchanged culture with other ethnic communities. The second jolt of thread was received during the imposition of Hindu faith and culture by Rani Phuleswari (Goldsmith, 2007). The indigenous faith (AdiDharam) and cultural tradition got converted by her

initiative to Hindu way of life and practices. Thirdly, the ethnic culture and civilization got the revolutionary transformation when Srimanta Sankardeva propagated *Vaishnavism*. The fourth jolt was the British occupation of the region in 1826 and entrance of the missionary culture of the Christian faith. Thereafter many processes or factors have been creating problems in existing tribal culture.

In all the smaller kingdoms in plain areas-*Satorajya* and *Panchorajya*, during the time of socio-cultural turmoil that has been created by *Vaishnavism* of Srimanta Sankardeva; there were a lot of social mobility. Due to the social mobility there was cultural mobility. So, the impact of *Vaishnavite* culture and religion is clear in Tiwa society especially in those areas which have followed the process. It is to be worth mentioning here that *Vaishnavism* attracted the communities like the Tiwas to have caste/tribe conversion. Accordingly, it is true that *Vaishnavism* converted them in religion through 'Sharon' (religious instruction) and 'Bhajan' (mode of worship) being imparted by the *Gosain* (preacher) to the willing tribal: through giving up of former habits and customs, such as eating pork and other forbidden foods and drinking strong liquor; undergoing 'Prayachit' (atonement) and receiving 'Shoron-bhajan' from a 'Gosain', the aboriginal could have admittance into the Hindu society with the status 'Sarukoch' (low Koch) (Bhagabati, A.C. 1997). It is worth to mention here that contrary to the social acceptance in third generation once Gait has wrote (Gait 1892-225) is not universal for the case of the Tiwas as there is the reverse process of desanskritization among them when not accepted. This is observed in recent period among the Tiwas in plains. In *Vaishnavism*, somehow after the religious conversion there was the caste and cultural conversion for the case of the Tiwas. They have converted into 'Sarukoch' as the Koch caste had been remarkably open for them at one point of time for receiving converts into Hinduism.

It was during the time of Ahom king Joydhvaj Simha that the Tiwas had accepted *Vaishnavism* as their religion especially in 'Satorajya' and "Panchorajya". In this regard the Raja powalee Satuwa of Mikirgaonya Rajya (Under *Panchorajya*) and the Raja of Tupakushi Rajya (Under *Panchorajya*) were the path makers (Senapati, G.1997) Both the Rajas had discarded their age-old cultural and religious practices. Firstly they accepted the religion and then converted their ethnic tribalism to Sarukoch. In the subsequent period the other Raja Powalees of 'Panchorajya' and 'Satorajya' accepted as the accepted 'Raja's Dharma is their Dharma'. It was also because of some other reasons that Tiwas consider themselves as 'Koch' after the acceptance of *Vaishnavism*. Certain amount of psychological stress and complexity were also working in this regard. It is due to this factor that the Tiwa speaking population reduced to a great extent in the subsequent govt. censuses. G.A. Grearson in his Linguistic survey of India report found 40,160 Tiwa language speaker in 1901, wherein the growth rate of Tiwa speakers has been reduced in latter period as opposite to the increase in number of population. There were drastic reduction in population of the Tiwas during 1940's and 1950's

Through their age long association with the rural Hindu masses, a large number of Lalungs (Tiwas) of the plains have been absorbed in the larger framework of *Vaishnavism*, propounded by the Assamese saint Sri Sankardeva (Shyam Choudhury and Das, 1973). When one talk the conversion it would not be free when disregarded the Tiwas entrance to Christianity. The Tiwas have entered to Christian culture especially in the hilly and recently in the foothill areas in recent period. It was in 1911 that Langtuk Hanse and his family came from NC hill to Marjong Tiwa village in west KarbiAnglong and converted into Christianity by Reverend Christofer Bekar (the Roman Catholic Salvadorian Missionary Intuition) with some of his friends in 1914. The saint Mary's church was established first in the Tiwa populated

area at the village Marjong in 1916. Araw Malang, Kathsala Amsong (Lukas), Talaw Amsong etc. are first group of the Tiwas converted to Christianity. In 1932 Saint Joseph Church was established in the area which converted the Tiwa villages; e.g. Pandurimakha, Sikdamakha, Amsobra etc. In the latter part the Catholic Celestial missionary established a school and the villages like Sinari, Umbarmon, Maupenjeng, Tipali, Mogoidhorom Morteng, Ulukunshi roman, Orlongluri, Khumkhunji, Chandraphali, Thaulaw, Sapali etc. villages were converted to Christianity. The Presbyterian missionary converted the village like Romphom, Maulen, Amsetri, Pantalu, Roman mayoung and Amkhashi (Borodoloi, T.: 2006) in Meghalaya State also the villages like Umsiang, Mayoung, Mauker, Lomlong etc. have also accepted Christianity and in PachimNagaon and Moloria village area of Morigaon district a number of Tiwas have converted into Christianity.

There are the phenomenal example of the Tiwas converted to Karbi and Khasi tribe. some sort of extent situations also compelled them in this regard. For example in the Marjong village after them accepting Christianity converted to Karbi, in some villages to get the social privileges and govt. benefits. Sometime acceptance of Christianity also led them to the conversion to Karbi and sometime because of their similarity in some social institutions and practices. This has a reference that in the census report Wadel wrote in 1881- 'The Lalungs got mixed up with the Garos (Khasi) and Mikirs; they have numerous exogenous clans'. In Meghalaya they converted to Khasi due to non-recognition of them as schedule Tribe. The Meghalays govt. also prefers the religion as the main religion of the state is Christian. Besides, the Khasis designate the non-Khasis as 'Utkhar' and sons of the soil generally wish to keep away from traditional resources (Bhagabati, A.C.: 1997). Thus so, the Tiwas converted into Khasi to get the govt. and other social benefits.

As a result of the conversion the ethnic tradition were discarded. After the conversion to *Vaishnavism*, there was the replacement of their age-old institutions like 'Samadi' (Dekasang-the village dormitory system) to 'Namghar', the 'Nobaro' (Barghar) the place of worshipping at home to 'Manikut' etc. The change in clan system, language, culture, rituals, ways of living etc. has been brought from the process. Further in the transition, they have accepted other titles like Deka, Hazarik, Baruah, Rajbongshi, Thakuria, Medhi, Koch, Bhuyan etc. Sri Rashmayi Rajbonshi who was the office bearer of Koch Rajbongshi Sanmilani and from the family Lakhan Singh (Tiwas only after the Baropujia conference of the Sanmilani (Senapati, G.: 1997).

The Tiwas were prone to rapid change in their cultural behavior in *Vaishnavism* than others. For example they are able to preserve linguistic identify, and dress habits after having accepted Christianity. But there was the lot of faith in folk culture and some other tradition. It is also observed that there is the gradual lost of Village dormitory 'Samadi' (Dekasang) even in hilly Christian Tiwa villages. The festive occasions are also not responded. However, once they accepted the path of Christianity they took the path of westernization or modernization. One important consequence of this is that it created internal division in the same ethnicity.

The religious and cultural synchronism is not clear for the case of the Tiwa tribe. There is on the other hand, a district cultural growth was inevitable between the hilly and the plain Tiwas. The hilly Tiwas were totally different from the rest in respect of their language, food, dress habits and performing rituals

and festivals etc. For example they perform cultural practices and religious festival like Jhankhong, Borot, Mala Uliuwa, Pishu etc. only in Plain areas and Sagra, YangliLangkhon, Wansuwaetc only in the hilly areas. The songs like *Khelchawa*, *Magromisawa*, *Panthairojawa* etc. are there only in hilly areas and *Godalboria*, *Pishu-Borot* etc. only in certain places of plains. Therefore, certainly a question rose whether there is not the formation of another tribe fold among the especially in the plains.

In the transitional stage this group of Tiwas along other practices might have initiated new custom, ways of life and social values with the theological and religious beliefs in the plains. The socio-cultural institutions like *Namghar*, Temple, *Manikut* etc. have also imitated. In the process they have avoided traditional and cultural institutions like *Samadi (Dekasang) Nobaro (Borghar)* or traditional house type. They have avoided the traditional dresses like *Kason*, *Faskai*, *Joskai*, *Tagla*, *Thana* etc. and the traditional festivals like *Yangli*, *Sagra*, *Lukhumi*, *Wanchuwa*, etc. on the other hand, observe the cultural festivals like *Borot*, *Chongkhong*, *Pishu* etc. in those plain areas. So, the process has great impact in their Socio-cultural aspect and in the plains they have been accustomed to a newly formed culture.

Meanwhile, the pre-British Tiwa society was such that the 'Rajas' had the power to impose the heterogeneous or extra-caste principles on their social practices. The Rajas were used to appoint the deputies and village heads like *Loro*, *Hatari*, *Doloi*, *Sangdoli*, *Sangmaji*, *Pator*, *Jela*, *Hari*, *Pisai*, *Pakhana* etc. who are to perform various socio-cultural, political and religious functions. The power was up to the Rajas whether they want to preserve or disregard the existing ethnic culture. Thus, the establishment of Ahom rule in '*Satorajya*' and '*Panchorajya*' is remarkable then the Jayantias domination in other parts. The impact of *Vaishnavism* had greatly accelerated the process of conversion or disregard to their own culture. It was under the influence of *Vaishnavism* the Tiwas living in this areas attracted towards Sanskritisation to have change in their culture and ways of life in the direction of high and frequently twice-born caste in the '*Varno*' dominated social order. The British rule over the kingdoms and the introduction of the bureaucratic administration, trade and commerce, along with the missionary culture had brought new factors to pay their role in the process of lost of culture, language and traditions.

It was since that point of time to till today the process is continuing. It is partly because of cultural discrimination and partly, the denial of the rights of ethnic groups of lower strata in caste hierarchy. Under this situation the only ways to achieve the higher status was to raise one's caste position through the cultural and social adaptations in the direction of recognized high castes.

The factors of motivation among the Tiwas behind this social process were the feeling of status in the social hierarchy and the aspirations of the enjoyment of influential powers which the other groups have enjoyed. This motivation comes from the sense of relative deprivation. This sense of feeling create two groups in the composite society of Assam. One group preserving the ethnic culture and tradition and other group, converting or Sanskritising themselves. Presently the number of first group is increasing because they are following the updating principle. The member of 2nd group has also joining the first on the plea that they have not been getting the desired status. But both the groups have been creating problems in ethnicity. The first group is on the pleas that their culture has been under exploitation from

several quarters. The culture doesn't find the place in various governmental and no-governmental schemes and it has been neglected by the advance and dominant groups.

There are replete of examples that ethnic culture contradicts the new entrance in its originality. It is due to the rigid nature of caste system the adoption of the acculturation in ethnicity or drastic conversion into other caste culture has an opposite effect. The age old tradition, custom, cultural pattern or their social blindness has been restricting the process in places and times. Besides, there has been other process such as Tribalization, De-Sanskritisation and Christianity etc. The multiplicity dominant groups as their reference model. Traditionally the Tiwas had occupied a social stratification and the over domination of other high castes. The dominant groups have further consolidated their culture base. It was partly because of the caste culture. Sometime it was because of psychological perception, the caste character or ethnographic reasons.

The study on Tiwas thus reveals the fact that the aspiring groups who have been changing and even abolishing language and cultural pattern could not get the desired status. Instead there was a great lost. The reference groups could not accept because of their ethnic behavior and partly because of the social psychology. Under such a situation the aspiring groups have been forming another caste-fold when they have failed in ultimate end. This has great evidence among the Tiwas living Satorajya and other plain areas. Their cultures have received a transformation which has no similarity at all with the original; still seen in the hilly and foothill remote areas. A great cultural variation has been observed in places even within a same ethnic group. Equally acculturation to their ethnicity is also observed among the Tiwas in plains. Thus so, there has been phenomenal conversion from converted tribal community to tribalism and vis-à-vis from tribalism to other community in the North East region. A section of Tiwa people living in the hilly areas have converted themselves in to Christianity and converted to Khasi or Karbis as mentioned above. So, the examples of conversion from one tribe to another are there. Under certain situation and certain amount of indigenous and heterogeneous stress the remaining part of Tiwas culture has undergone itself in certain changes. Thus there has been a visible unique pattern of cultural change in tribalism.

Therefore, the acceptance of other culture by the Tiwas at the cost of own is always backed by a desire and claim for a status. But the achievement of desire or claim depends on the extent to which the claim gets the social acceptance or on the process of socialization. In the case of the Tiwa the claim has not been socially accepted. The caste factor itself is limiting the process. Neither there is any time period within which the claim gets the acceptance as such the process depends on other factor or influences. Instead it may so happens that it may incur disapproval by others.

The conversion process was restricted in 1960's in an organized manner when Lalung Darbar-the organization of the Tiwas was formed. During 1970's the process by another organization i.e. Tiwa Sanmilan. Both the organizations were able to build national consciousness in certain extent and brought the Tiwas living in different parts into a single umbrella. In 1991's there was the movement demanding autonomy for them under the banner of all Tiwa the movement demanding autonomy for them under the banner of All Tiwa students Union. The other socio-cultural life of the Tiwas. It can be said to be the revivalism. Because the Tiwas who have converted the also started to adopt/practice original culture and

language. The Tiwa Sahitya Sabhab is also working in this regard. There are the establishment language training centers, Cultural centre, Samadi etc. and thus so there are active movements to desanskritize the life style and review and revivify modes of tribal culture once given up (Bhagabati, A.C). Now the plain Tiwas wearing their traditional like Kasong, Phaskai, Joskai, Thana, Tagla etc. is seen in most places in plain.

Thus the tribalisation or re-tribaisation process is seen for them. This thing is common for other castes in Assam as they are demanding ST status to get some political and constitutional benefits. The de-sanskritisation among those who have been sanskritised is also observed in our study of Tiwa tribe. It was because of the fact that it has not been socially accepted, the trend which evident of since recent past. In Assam, and for that matter in North East India as whole, tribal groups have been trying to come to grips with the problems of defining and externalizing their relationships and establishing new linkages with other neighboring groups (Bhagabati, A.C.1997). Now ethnic-cultural identity is most serious question for them.

The Tiwa community constructed a collective consciousness that put forward the thought of the formation of Lalung Darbar as a political organisation in 1967. The LalungDarbar's fundamental demand was to create a separate autonomous district council for the Tiwa people. To achieve this demand, they submitted a memorandum to the central and state government. For their economic and social development, another Tiwa organisation was formed in 1971, namely the Sodou Asom Tiwa (Lalung) Yuba Chatra Sanmillan (later, the organisation is known as Sodou Asom Tiwa (Lalung) Sanmillan). This student organisation tried to unify the hill Tiwa and plain Tiwa people and asked for the preservation of their culture and identity. However, the Lalung Darbarmobilised the identity movement in reference to the post-colonial socio-political influence of the ethnic groups of Assam.

The organised socio-political mobilisation by the All Tiwa Student Union (ATSU) led to a new dimension in the autonomy movement. First, it organised the creation of the separate autonomous district council under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution. Second, the Tiwa people, who live in the hill district of Karbi Anglong in Assam and Meghalaya, have been added to the list of hill tribes. The third is introducing the Tiwa language as a primary school subject. Also, the ATSU further enlarged the socio-political consciousness by forming the All Tiwa Women Association (ATWA) in 1990, followed by the Autonomy Demand Struggle Forum (ADSF) in 1994 under the leadership of ATSU (Kakati, 2019). Amidst the demand for autonomy among the Tiwa community, the formation of a Tiwa autonomous council in the subsequent period is a successful autonomy-demand struggle in the post-colonial socio- political formation. Two organisations, i.e., the Autonomous District Demand Committee (ADDC) and ATSU, worked together to form a separate autonomous council. In the autonomous district demand struggle, the ATSU has a significant role in persuading the government. As a result, the Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee and the other allied organisations signed the Tiwa Accord with the Assam government in 1995 to form a separate autonomous district council. It is noteworthy that based on the self-determination struggle, the Tiwa and other ethnic groups such as Rabha and Mising bought autonomy to their peripheral land. Meanwhile, some organisations have worked to mobilise identity consciousness during the post-colonial period.

The Lalung Dorbar: The Lalung Dorbar was formed in 1967 to work for the identity consciousness of the Tiwa people who lived in both plain and hill areas of Assam and Meghalaya. The post-colonial socio-political formation in Assam generated the identity consciousness under the Lalung Dorbar. The Lalung Dorbar organised a special convention to promote the collective mobilisation of identity consciousness for the Tiwa people to establish an autonomous council under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution in 1984. They decided to work with the All Assam Bodo Student Union (ABSU) and the United Tribal Liberation Front (UTLF). Meanwhile, during the Assam movement, the Lalung Darbar and Lalung Darbar Youth Front (LDYF) jointly submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, Mrs Indira Gandhi, to establish an Autonomous Hill District comprising the Tiwa people of the hill areas in Assam and Meghalaya. Simultaneously, the memorandum also demanded special initiatives for the development of the Tiwa people. In order to protect their identity, the Lalung Dorbar proposed a boundary line to the Indian government in this memorandum covering the Tiwa people living in the southern part of Nagaon district, the south western part of Karbi Anglong, the southern-eastern part of Kamrup District and the eastern part of the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. Furthermore, due to the post-colonial socio-political consequences, the Tiwa people were encouraged to form an autonomous council for self-determination rights and identity consciousness. The North Eastern Tribal Youth Festival was organised in 1985 by the All Bodo Student Union (ABSU) in the Udalguri district, which submitted a memorandum to both the state and central governments incorporating Tiwa autonomous district's demand. Followed by the Lalung Dorbar, ABSU and UTLF, comprising 2000 members, went to New Delhi to demand the autonomous council on November 6th, 1987. The agitation on November 26th and 28th, 1987, at Lucknow by blocking the railway station and in Assam by blocking the Chaparmukh Rail Junction under the leadership of Lalung Dorbar further emphasised the demand for identity recognition in Assam. The leaders of Lalung Dorbar also started a series of protests by blocking the highway on December 9th 1987.

Despite the police atrocities during protests, the demand for an autonomous district in the post-colonial period got strengthened. Subsequently, the Lalung Darbar submitted two memorandums to the government of India. On February 5th, 1991, a memorandum was submitted to the then Prime Minister of India, Chandra Shekhar. On October 14th, 1992, another memorandum was submitted to the then Prime

Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, demanding the creation of an autonomous district by carving out the areas of Tiwa and other tribes inhabited in the Assam districts of Nagaon, Morigaon, Karbi Anglong, and Kamrup. The memorandum also highlighted historical backwardness, lags in education, agriculture, language, culture, road communication, and economic backwardness, all of which are characteristics of the Autonomous Lalung District. Such post-colonial identity consciousnesses initiated by the Lalung Dorbar to preserve identity are notable until the formation of an autonomous council .

The Lalung Dorbar Youth Front (LDYF): The Lalung Dorbar Youth Front is a youth organisation of the Lalung Darbar, formed in 1977. The fundamental function of the youth organisation is to pressure the state and central government to create a Lalung Hill Autonomous District Council based on the other tribal people's demands in the post-colonial socio-political formation of Assam. The youth wing of the Lalung Darbar, in particular, is responsible for organising public meetings to unite the Tiwa people

living in North-Eastern India for a collective Tiwa identity, as other tribes do base on socio-cultural distinguishing features. Although the Lalung Darbar initiated the identity mobilisation process among the Tiwa community and demanded the formation of a separate autonomous district, the methods they followed, i.e., traditional and non-violent, were not supported by the Youth Wing. Thus, the youth wing leaders came out of the Darbar and formed a new organisation called the Lalung Youth Front in 1980. The Lalung Youth Front strengthened the demand of the autonomous district and organised the common masses to meet the demand from the government. During the anti-foreigner movement in Assam, however, the leaders of Lalung Dorbar and Lalung Youth Front gathered together to accomplish the peripheral demands of the tribe. They submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, requesting the establishment of the Lalung Autonomous District Council in India's North East. The Tiwa Youth Front also played an active role in the Tiwa youth's educational demand and other issues of Tiwa youth empowerment.

The Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee (ALDDC): With the association of Tiwa leaders from the different organisations in the Kilingporia High School in 1988, they resolved the formation of the Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee (ALDDC). Soon after the formation of this political organisation, which laid down the plan for the achievement of autonomy, The Lalung Dorbar and Tiwa Sanmillan became the branches of the ALDDC to mobilise the idea of self-determination within the periphery of Assam. By taking the objective of forming an autonomous district, the ALDDC organised a cultural convention on May 6th, 1989, to revive Tiwa culture and language (Baruah, 2001). It is to ascertain the cultures and language of the Tribe in the post-colonial scenario. Another cultural convention organised under the banner of ALDDC on May 30th, 1990, to discuss tribal people's problems contributed more explicitly to forming identity consciousness. In other words, the series of protests organised by ALDDC to the formation of an autonomous council has a significant role in the mobilisation of identity consciousness followed by all these cultural conventions. On October 3rd, 1991, a three member expert committee headed by Bhupendra Sing discussed the demand for a separate Bodoland Autonomous district. The three expert committees also meet with the leaders of ALDDC to look at the demands of the autonomous district council. The leaders of ALDDC submitted a memorandum to them to create an autonomous district. The following year, on May 10th, 1992, they submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Assam. They requested the government take immediate steps to resolve the long-standing demand for self determination. However, the issue continues. At the second biennial conference of the ALDDC on May 14th, 1993, the leaders discussed the autonomy issue with political parties such as Congress, AGP, BJP, CPI (ML), etc. The ALDDC submitted numerous memorandums to both governments of Assam and India. However, the episode of autonomy began after the formation of the Bodoland autonomous council (BAC) in 1993. Subsequently, the Mising, Tiwa, and Rabha autonomous councils were formed in 1995.

All Tiwa Student Union (ATSU): By realising the necessity of a student organisation for the Tiwas, it was decided to form a student organisation in January 1989 with the presence of three members, namely; Madan Bordoloi, Bhupendra Kholar, and Sadhuman Pator. The following month, on February 25th, 1989, a meeting at Tribal Rest House in Nagaon unanimously formed a student organisation for Tiwa students. Soon after, the ATSU organised the first conference on March 17th and 18th, 1990; the first conference set three main agendas. Firstly, the formation of an autonomous district by incorporating

legislative, administrative, and financial power. Secondly, recognise the Tiwa language in Roman script under the Indian constitution. Thirdly, to allot Schedule Tribe status to the Tiwa people living in the twin hill districts of Assam, namely the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill districts. The conference also discussed the protection of socioeconomic and political rights. The masses were mobilised in the name of self-determination, and several democratic movements were organised to get the status of the autonomous district to protect identity. They played the most active role in the identity consciousness of the Tiwa community. Several agitations were carried out, including mass rallies, bandhs, strikes, bicycle processions, and public meetings, to extend Tiwa autonomous district's claim. The tactics used by the ATSU to mobilise the demand in the Tiwa Autonomous District were path-breaking to the achievement of demand, particularly the mass rally and the mobilisation of the common masses, which ensured the demand for them.

Significantly, the memorandum submitted to the government by other Tiwa organisations since the beginning of the identity consciousness movement and the ATSU's constant pressure on the government resulted in the success of their postcolonial ethnic aspiration for socio-political protection. In reference to the memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister of Assam, Late Hiteswar Saikia, on June 8th, 1993, put forward the fundamental demands of Tiwas in front of the government of Assam. These are the creation of an autonomous Tiwa district in the southern bank of the Brahmaputra under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution; the reorganisation of the Tiwa language at primary level schools; ensuring the ST status of Hill Tiwa living in both Assam and Meghalaya; and finally, launching talks between the central, state, and ATSU for the recognition of such demand. For these demands, the ATSU also held talks with the political parties of Assam and tried to mobilise them to ensure their demands. Therefore, in the post-colonial socio-political identity revival struggle, the role of ATSU is monumental.

All Tiwa Women Association (ATWA): The Tiwa Women's Association was formed on July 24th, 1990, on the initiation of ATSU leaders to emancipate the Tiwa women from socio-economic and educational backwardness. In terms of the social mobilisation of identity consciousness done by ATSU, the women's wing also played a pivotal role in the mass mobilisation of this self-determination movement. The ATWA and ATSU jointly worked to achieve the demand and carried out several agitation programmes. On July 22nd, 1994, the All Tiwa Women's Association (ATWA) organised a mass rally at the premises of Gopinath Bordoloi Bidyapith, Raha, where more than 5000 women actively participated. In particular, this women's organisation is an outcome of the self-determination movement of Tiwa. Equally, the women's organisation represented the feminist and gender justice idea by fighting against the oppression and exploitation of the post-colonial socio-political formation. The demand for autonomy for the Tiwa people is inclusive by showing the women's participation in the self-determination struggle of the autonomous district. Hence, the identity consciousness among Tiwa has feministic support through this women's organisation.

Political organisations of the Tiwa people, which was formed on July 30th, 1994, with the initiative of the Lalung Dorbar, Lalung Youth Front (LYF), ATSU, and ATWA to strengthen mainly the demand for autonomy in the post-colonial socio-political formation of the self-determination movement. The primary demand of the ADSF was the creation of the Autonomous District by incorporating legislative, administrative, and financial power. They also agitated against the government and other organisations

of the Tiwa community. The members of the ATWA and LYF automatically become members of the ADSF. Following democratic principles, the leaders of the ADSF took a step toward the inclusion of members from other castes and attempted to open membership to other communities. Meanwhile, the ADSF assisted the ATSU and other organisations in the creation of political awareness. However, to shape the Tiwa community's identity, the ADSF became a Tiwa political party, and some of its members ran in the election. The leaders were defeated in the election because they failed to win the support of the common masses. However, the ADSF played a significant role in the identity consciousness among the Tiwa community based on the post-colonial socio-political formation.

Sanmilito Gana Mancha (United People's Front): The United People's Front is a political organisation of the Tiwa founded on May 15th, 2010 and claims to be the original organisation out of the factional groups. The organisation's fundamental demand is the recognition of the Tiwa autonomous council under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution. This political platform for the Tiwa community has the vision to win the election. Therefore, the candidates of this visionary organisation contested the election as independent candidates. Significantly, to win the election, this organisation made secret alliances with the other political parties in some constituencies inhabited by the Tiwa people in 2010. The political factions between ATSU, ADSF, ATWA, and TCS in the Tiwa organisations failed to achieve a good result. They failed in terms of collective ethnic sentiment to win in electoral politics. However, the Sanmilito Gana Mancha and Oikya Mancha were satisfied by winning three seats in the election. By realising the political factions within them, the other organisations of Tiwa come together. However, the credibility and acceptance of Gana Mancha and Oikya Mancha as Tiwa alternative parties were not fully realised afterwards and further led to the formation of another political organisation, namely the Tiwa National Solidarity Forum.

The TiwaJatiyaOikya Mancha (Tiwa National Solidarity Forum): Since the Oikya Mancha and Sanmilito Gana Mancha failed to gain the support of the people in electoral politics, They decided to form another party, namely the TiwaJatiya Oikya Mancha, on August 18th, 2013, and finally it was formed at Marigaon Gandhi Bhaban. The well-organised political platform of the TiwaJatiyaOikya Mancha is laid down by the various objectives of the Tiwaorganisation. The organisation was able to gain the attention of the common masses, and the Tiwa people supported it enthusiastically based on their national importance to fully fulfilling the aspirations of Tiwa. Some congressmen were also influenced by this organisation and joined the organisation at the initial stage. For the first time, the party contested the Tiwa Autonomous Council elections in 2015. In some constituencies, they signed pre-poll alliances and secret alliances to win the election. However, the party was able to get 10 seats out of 30 seats in the constituencies of the Tiwa Autonomous Council. Just after the election of the Autonomous Council election, an alliance was formed with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the assembly election in April 2016. From the Tiwa Jatiya Oikya Mancha side, Mr. Ramakanta Dewri contested the Assembly Election from the Morigaon Constituency on a BJP ticket and won the election. Nevertheless, the organisation got split into two fractions, and Ramakanata Dewri formed another Jatiya Oikya Manch instead of the Tiwa Jatiya Oikya Mancha. The fraction led by RamakantaDewri merged with the BJP in 2018, on the other hand, the Tiwa Jatiya Oikya Mancha loses the support of the people and failed to get a single seat in Tiwa Autonomous Council Election, December, 2021.

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