

Life and Culture in COVID-19: A Study of Tipra Community in Rural Comilla

Mihir Kumar Roy*

Abstract

The study was undertaken to analyse the life and culture of the Tipra community of Camilla Sadar Upazila, Bangladesh. In the collection of data, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The study revealed that the Tipra community in the locality enjoyed an identical culture compared to other ethnic groups. The urbanisation process has changed their identity and social life in line with the global forces. The study suggested more logistic support and cooperation retain their own culture in a diversified way in the locality.

Keywords COVID-19 · Tipra Community · Ethnicity · Culture · Globalisation

1. Introduction

From history immemorial, the blending of cultures has occurred in South Asia. These processes continue in South Asia and the global world. It is long a tradition of humankind and manifests deep-rooted heritages at local specific character contributed by the people of different origins. Bengal or Bangladesh is also included in that intermingled cultural heritage. Most people of Bangladesh belong to Bengali or Bangladeshi, constituting 98 per cent of the total population. Alongside, about 13 indigenous ethnic communities live in Bangladesh. Therefore, Bangladesh is a country of multicultural heritage. However, Bengali culture is the primary and dominant feature of this country. Recently awareness of the identity of the ethnic communities has created new dimensions in politics in the national, regional and globalise world. The indigenous people are likely to preserve their own ethnic identity, contributing altogether to global culture and civilisation.

The ethnic people of Bangladesh are generally characterised by their community living. The colonial regime changed the social stratification of the

* Professor & Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, City University; Life Member, Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA), Dhaka. E-mail: mihir.city@gmail.com

South Asian people. The partition of the South Asian subcontinent had also changed the community lives and brought new challenges for many identity-based communities. Apart from these, the livelihood pattern of ethnic people is being changed due to the shifting socio-economic perspective of Bangladesh. Gradual linkages of the ethnic people to Bangladesh's broader society have occurred due to the social inclusion process of development and mobility. Economic and social exchanges are increasing between the Bengali and ethnic people of Bangladesh in the span of the progress of development processes. The Tripura or Tipra ethnic community is one of the major ethnic communities of Bangladesh. The Tripuris live on the slopes of hills in a group of five to fifty families. Their houses in these areas are built of bamboo, or as it is called in *Kokborok* and raised five to six feet in height to save themselves from the dangers of the wild animals.

Nowadays, most households of this community live on the plains and erect houses like the plains people, adopting their cultivation methods and following them in other aspects of life such as dress, manners, and cosmetics. Tripuri women wear a scarp, called *rignai*, which reaches down just below the knee. They weave a small piece of cloth in their loin-loom, which they call *risa*, and they use this small piece of cloth as their best garment. In Bangladesh, the Tipra people live scattered in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. However, most Tipra people live in Ramgarh under Khagrachari Hill District. The Tipra is one of the major ethnic communities of Bangladesh and resides in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chittagong, Comilla and other regions of Bangladesh. The origin of Tipra derives from the Tooy-Pra word. Tooy is a Sanskrit word which means river or water. Pra means meeting place. Therefore, those who lived in the meeting place of the river they called Tooy – Pra eventually transformed into Tipra (Sattar, 1995).

In Comilla, they live with neighbouring Bengali people in plain lands and other ethnic communities in the hill tracts. Due to their relatively small size compared to other races and ethnic identities, they are at the juncture of the acculturation process, where a small group of subcultures submerged with dominant co-residents culture in their living patterns. Generally, ethnic communities are culturally conscious, governed by a headman, have kin group-based social relations and are characterised by a subsistence economic system. Today, most of the *Hindus* of Tripura and Bengali *Tripuri tribes* are adherents of *Animist-Shaktism, hybrid of Hinduism*. 'Tripura' is the name of a Bengali Hindu form of *Durga*. Bengali Brahmin priests (called *chantais*) are regarded as custodians of *dharma* and occupy an exalted position in Tripura Bengali society. Essential gods are *Shiva* and *Tripureshwari* (patron goddess of Tripura and an aspect of Shakti). Several fertility gods are also worshipped, such as *Lam-Pra* (the twin deities of sky and sea), *Mailu-ma* (goddess of corn, identified with Lakshmi), and *Khulu-ma* (goddess of the cotton plant) and *Burha-cha* (god of healing). Bengali *Durga Puja, Bijoyadosomi*, and the worship of the *Chaturdasah deities* are important festivals. The *Swarshati puja* is celebrated in a festive mood at the homesteads of the Tipra people. In all *puja* festivals of the

Tipra community, they like to slaughter a *pig*, *buffalo*, and *hen or rooster*.

The Tipra are generally *jum* cultivators, and both males and females cultivate *jum*, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They also grow cotton trees for making thread. Tipra's dress pattern is simple, which they generally make at the houses. Ornaments are trendy among females and males. Headman plays a significant role in mitigating the disputes among the Tipra. Tipra called houses as *nok*. Overall, Tipra is simple, and sources of simplicity are found in their essential behavioural manifestation. Beggars or thieves were absent in the Tipra community (Sattar, 1995). Cultural artefacts are alive in *Tipra* communities through social communication and networking.

2. Objectives of the Study

In specific terms, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To know the cultural practices of the Tipra community;
- ii. To identify factors of the occupational changes in the Tipra community;
- iii. To delineate their living styles, social communication and identity;
- iv. To suggest ways and means of improving the overall condition of the Tipra community.

3. Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Comilla Sadar Upazila, where the people of the *Tipra* community have lived for centuries. The study was based on observation cum interview with the Tipra people, which attempted to address the livelihood patterns and social communication process. Thus the variables like livelihood, ethnic culture, social communication and network, changing ethnic communities, adaptation processes and cultural environment were incorporated into the study. All households of the *Tipra* community inhabiting the study area were considered the study's sample population.

4. Key Concepts used in the Study

Tipra and Tripura are the same meaning, the former is locally called, and the latter is the original term for the identity of the tribal or ethnic community. In this study, *Tipra* and *Tripura* bore the same meanings. Both indicate the Tribal community and are also called *Tripura/Tripuri*. The two approaches, i.e. culture and social communication, were incorporated into the study. *Tipra*- as a community- has a distinct culture. On the other hand, the combination of cultures directly and indirectly touches and alters the social values of *Tipra*. They are small in size, and exogenous socio-cultural elements influence the largescale.

5. Data Collection and their Analysis

The qualitative methods, in-depth fieldwork, observation, discussions, and case study, were used to collect data. The collected data were then narrated using the own judgment of the researchers.

6. Results and Discussions

Living Styles and Identity of Tipra Community of Comilla Sadar Upazila: Tipra of Comilla Sadar Upazila is practising the dominant Bengali cultural gamut with its own identity. The language of *Bangla* influences very much on their lives due to survival. It helps them to communicate and share with the Bengali population. Living in the relatively developed areas of Bangladesh, the *Tipra* of Comilla enjoys opportunities like urbanisation and social amenities. On the other hand, spreading out of non-farm activities also hamper their traditional lifestyles. Moreover, the demand for high valued agricultural products (cow milk, poultry, fruits and vegetables), rising land prices, and connectivity with the big cities, towns, and growth centres provide opportunities for Bengali communities and their co-resident Tipra community. However, this change and communication process has forced to eliminate the nature-dependent community living of *Tipra* and their environment.

The Study Areas and Locations of Hamlets: Lalmai Dakhin Kashar is situated at the hillock of Lalmai hill range under the Kalirbazar Union of Adarsha Sadar Upazila in Comilla district. The village is located administratively under the Kalirbazar union of Comilla Sadar Thana. The Tipra tribal inhabitants of the hamlet introduce themselves as Tripura. They also have cultural ties with their communities that live in the Indian state of Tripura. There were 15 households found in Lalmai Dhakhin Kashar hamlet; the total population was about 80. The average size of a household was 5.33. The majority were day or wage labourers - working at *Eit Vata* (brick filed); jogali (construction work as an assistant provider of inputs to the mason). The peasantry on plain land was a relatively new occupation for the Tripura/Tipra communities, although the work in peasantry was mainly sharecropping and agricultural wage labourers. They sell their labour generally at Bengali farm households. Tipra speaks Bengali fluently. At the hillock, some land owned by the Tipra households poses the small holding mainly produces paddy and vegetables. Some engage in small trade, and some supply milk to the nearby Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) campus. Therefore, milch cow rearing is one of their secondary occupations for them. Cow fattening business is also taking place in the community. They traditionally depend on natural endowments for their livelihood. Legal ownership was introduced in the land during the British Colonial Period. Before that, the Tipra community did not consider land's legal rights due to customary ownership. The king of Tripura gave rights to land in written form to the subjects or *Praja*. Therefore, now the Tipra enjoys legal rights.

Due to a pattern of careless individual behaviour, some Tipra somehow

lost their land. They called it simply 'unplanned' wish or living styles without vision. During the field visits, it was reported that the inhabitants of one hamlet, Jammura, owned 15 Kani of land. Their land is situated mainly at the hillock. Some households owned small plots of cropland land in the valley of the hillock or plainland. Tenancy pattern of cultivable land is practising sharecropping and mortgage-in. Remittances earners of the neighbouring Bengali communities offer the cropland for sharecropping and mortgages.

The major horticultural works of Tipra are orchards, mainly bamboo, jackfruits, different types of potatoes roots, etc. The households may produce more fruits like papaya, banana and other fruits and vegetables. Many of the early traditions of the community have been lost due to a lack of practice. A substantial number of Tipra exodus from this land settled in Tripura state after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent. Their flight has created a vacuum for practising conventional cultural practices at large. The spirit of the socialisation process on traditional values is somehow lost momentum.

The Tipra people are changing themselves in terms of internal and external factors. In recent times the girls of Tipra are attending more schools which could contribute more to educating the children and community in future. Cow and goats graze at the top of the hillock and other available grazing spots nearby the hamlets. Suffice to say, the amount of grazing land is shrinking now due to the migration of Bengali people and the ongoing urbanisation process. However, the hamlets of Jammura and Dhakhin Kashar still have hillock grazing land. The domestic pigs of Tipra are cash husbandry. The pigs are kept on a homestead and fastened rope or chained at the corner of the courtyard of their households.

Tipra's skill in producing wine is indigenous work greatly attached to the cultural traditions. However, this locally has wine attracts some Bengali people to collect it. To reduce their hard work and depression or feel relaxed as the labourers, Tipra drinks homemade wine, which is mainly contrary to the neighbouring Bengali drink culture community.

Producing and drinking liquor is a cultural tradition of the Tipra community in the point of heritage and tradition. Traditionally, they continue to make folk or local liquor, generally non-available at the open market. On the one hand, high prices of wines in the bars of posh areas and the low prices of locally made wine attract some people to collect the Tipra-made local wine. The modern manufactured wine is also not commensurate with their cultural traditions, and the taste of the homemade wine is different and bears its cultural drink heritage. Labourers get relief from drinking liquor after their complex works. The ethics of ordinary Bengali Muslim people do not permit drinking liquor in an open place. So, there is a value-loaded life styles difference between the two co-located communities. Tipra is aware that very few households of Tipra produce wine mainly for their consumption, and the little market demand is interactive to make the local win. Other people criticise them. Sometimes police harass them.

The financial capital of the inhabitant's hamlet is low to invest elsewhere, especially in agricultural production. Rich of the hamlet is distinct due to their work at formal organisations and formal education. The hamlet has land consisting of 3.5 Kani, mainly operated by private levels. The wealthy family have an agricultural crop plot at the pathar (agricultural field). The rest of the hamlet lives with Anon ar Khayon which means bringing and eating. In other words, being alive from *hand to mouth* manifests the harsh reality of day or wage-labourers of Tipra.

The Tipra community of Comilla and their culture and communication networks: The culture and social network, social capital and network communication have been developed through the historical process of the Tipra community. It is found that although they lost their language, their cultural practices of marriage and religion are still alive.

The historical divisions in inter-community relations: To collect information on the Tipra people of Comilla, four nearby locations have been selected for documenting. These areas are hamlets, small areas with less than 60 households at the cluster of living. Tipra generally belongs to Mongoloid races, which appears visible in the facial and other ethnometrics of the Tipra people.

Living styles: The living style of the community or society denotes their livelihoods, occupational, or similar activities. It also refers to the cultural tradition and heritage of those traits passing through intergenerational mobility. Overall it indicates the complete way of life. In societal change, the Tipra also adopt a new process of living. However, the modernisation process halted some households' levels due to particular outlooks of those households. The root causes are feeling separate and dependent on nature-based livelihoods, which may be laggard. However, this is also rooted in the social dynamics and historical consequences. The ethnocentrism may mislead the social and cultural system of the Tipra. Tipra is a community capable of adapting to the process of civilisation. The activities of the Tipra community are commensurate with the reconstruction or modernisation process.

Moreover, the Tipra/Tripura/Tripuri having own civilisation and cultural traditions. Bangladesh poses mixed races and cultures, reflecting the Austirc, Dravidian, Aryan, Mongoloid, Semitic, and Nordic cultures. The modernisation and disintegration of traditional bound society gradually eroded due to the sudden shrinking of the population of Tipra on the one hand and the process of world cultural penetration on the other. Despite much confusion on the history of Tribal people living, the Tipra are very adaptive and accommodative and show their ability to be quick adopters. In the view of European value-loaded development efforts, the contemporary Tipra is not lagging as a whole.

Housing: The housing conditions of Tipra bear the tradition, which is climatically commensurate with the areas. With a bit of variation, the housing tradition of Tipra is similar to the houses of Bengali people. A separate kitchen is unique to the household. The Tipra of Comilla is like a relatively big courtyard. Boar shed is an additional difference from the adjacent Bengali communities.

Generally, the wall of houses was mainly constructed with muddy and bamboo. The roof was erected with tin and iron material. The door is usually made of timber, and the floor is generally made of clay.

Cloths: The Tipra of Comilla has lost its traditional clothes. The Tipra male folk wear shirt, trousers, lungi, Panjabi, fotua, and dhuti. Women wear shari, selowar kamij, and maxi. The rigwani is their traditional dress. However, the Tipra of Comilla lost the knowledge and skill of making it.

Furniture and utensil: Furniture is generally made of wood, bamboo, and other metals. Utensils of the houses are usually made of enamel, plastic, melamine, glass, and ceramic.

Arts, song and dance: Tipra's houses are decorated with *naksha* (design) of rice in mixed colours. Some women are free to perform dances and sing songs even before the outsiders who visit the locality, even not feeling shy to talk with them. Similarly, the male also likes to perform such events in the period Tipra, influenced by Hindi cultural expressions transmitted through the electronic media. During the festivals at the Radha Krishna Mandir (temple), the songs of spiritual origin were performed. Bengalis Hindus are the main organiser of the festivals and are also a significant part of the kirtan singers at the festivals. The famous kirtan sing performs by a group of singers, and they perform korus. The people of Tipra are generally audiences of the kirtan. Some of the mandir helpers sing kirtan. The tuneful kirtan and the religious bayan (interpretations) are the major attractions to the devotees and visitors. The Mandir offers mass lunch to the devotees and the visitors. It involved huge costs shared by donations from the Hindu community.

Healing of ill health: The people of Tipra use modern and folk medicines. The use of vegetation for healing is also practised. The spread of modern medicine was practised for a long, but because of poverty, the market-based medical services were difficult to avail for the Tipra community. In that case, folk medicine worked well, but vegetation-based folk medicine needed scientific exploration.

Marriage: By customs, mate selection for weddings among the Tipra people preferred to the same community. Male can marry other ethnic communities like Hindus. But for females, it is preferable to choose a groom from the same ethnic community.

Inheritances of property and gender relations: Inheritance of property is patrilineal. Women generally do not get an equal share of the father's property. Division of labour in Tipra is divided into social and gender. From the gender perspective, the Tipra women are low access to outside homework. The separate identity and the security concerns are the hindrances to taking duty to the outside.

Livelihoods: Hill agriculture was popular among the people of Tipra. The previous system of hill agriculture, popularly called jummu or jum, was eroded; now, they depend on non-peasantry workers at various places in the labour market. Now, they are mainly day labourers and seek suitable day labour work. Among the Tipra, few

are service holders. Outside these communities of Comilla, a few Tipras are working in high positions in government and non-government organisations. Sharecropping is the primary pattern of peasantry among them. They gathered hill potato (cassava type), bamboo shoots, fruits and animals like *sajaru* (porcupine), *bonroui*, etc.

Social stratification: Tipra communities were stratified by income, formal jobs and professions, education, socially linked network, gender, and behavioural pattern. Urban proximity and growing urbanisation have created opportunities for them. In this respect, the communities are divided into urban and non-urban situations. The relatively remote areas of urban hamlets are Jammura and Dhakhin Kashar. No distinct pollution and purity are found in the hamlets living. New sources of leadership emerge from the support of civil society's approval of the *adibashi* (indigenous) people of Bangladesh, NGO and development activities, and network with government administration and media. The cultural component of the Tipra attracts the press to disseminate their culture in the television and newspapers. Many tourists visit Tipra hamlets.

Savings habits: Savings habit is popular among the Bengali community of Tipra and adjoining locality areas. Several Samity or societies, either registered or non-registered, existed at the localities due to the Comilla development program model. However, it is found that the Tipra have less access to the farmer's cooperative system. On the other hand, they formed a Samity under the finance of government agencies. The presence of savings societies in the adjoining areas of the Tipra also assimilated the process of the savings model. They are now having access to micro-credit along with the overlapping. The nature and magnitude of poverty are different in the ethnic community. The outlooks of the governing classes are critical whether a particular group of the population segment is included or not in the target group development process. Non-economic factors of poverty are also the bottleneck for Bangladesh's development. The elimination of isolation and vulnerability can ensure only participation. Individual characteristics, as well as family position and family values, are essential criteria for poverty analysis. The poverty syndrome among the women also varies from place to community to community. Exploring poverty among ethnic communities is more related to the cultural dimension.

Principle norms related to social order and structure: Living through the social shared life from time immemorial is practised in the Tipra community. One elderly but knowledgeable person directs the society or community. He maintains the social order and coordinates with the neighbouring communities. Protect own culture is one of the functions of the community. If anybody violates the social order, they get a warning from society. Women are given special care in the community; they are not allowed to marry the outside community like a male from Bengali and other external communities.

The urbanisation process and the changing living styles: The Tipra of these places is now enjoying suburbs facilities and social amenities. The excellent

road communications and positional advantages of the Comilla Sadar Upazila give them opportunities to avail themselves some advantages for living like security-related jobs at different organisations, petty business, getting an education, and changing lifestyles. During the growing urbanisation period, they also benefited from the increase in the land price. The approximate growth centres and evolving growth centres of the living places of Tipra have also changed their attitudes despite their distinct identity. So many visitors and tourists came to see them, for which the growth of tourism could be flourished in these areas. The museum and archaeological sites preserved the ancient heritage of old Samatat and ancient Buddhist educational civilisation adjoining the Tipra's living places of Comilla Sadar Upazila. The region where Tipra is settled displays multicultural traits of Bangladesh, including the Tipra *adibashi* culture that may attract the tourists more if it offers a package of heritage, including the proposed community centre of Tipra by the Upazila administration, showing living folk traditions and its changing aspects, archaeological sites, museums, Sal forests, hillocks, and living patterns of the people who live here.

Indigenous knowledge: It is earlier mentioned that the people of Tipra have inherently gained the ability to make chuak /cholai mod or local win. They also make bamboo materials for household purposes and agricultural/horticultural activities. The other indigenous knowledge they practice is health medicine, rituals for marriages, birth, death, and other purposes.

The Adaptation Process: The family pattern of the Tipra community has changed in the last four decades, and the nuclear family system has been widely practised in recent times. The male wears a Western pattern of clothes like trousers and shirts, which indicates their attachment to the process of globalisation. They are mixing their culture with other sources of culture like Bengali, Indian, and Western. Their livelihood pattern has also been changed from hill based to the plain land peasantry, providing labour for wage-earning generally at the land-based labour market. The Tipra of these places is conscious of their land rights system. Due to Tripura Maharaja during British India, the Tipra are guaranteed their land rights. In this case, they are different from the other ethnic communities of Bangladesh, especially the northern districts of Santal and others. Their food habit has also been changed. And cassava is now an old history for their food habit.

Although slow in the process, mate selection for marriage has also changed. The young boys and girls show interest in selecting their chosen mate for marriage. Compared to the past, the Tipra people enjoy more access to formal education. The children of Tipra now know more Bengali languages than their mother tongue. The elderly Tipra are afraid of losing their language, like Kok-Borok. They lost their relative remoteness due to being densely populated by Bengalis as co-residence and next-door neighbours, especially in the Shalban Bihar areas. The Dakhin Kashar moderately separated from the Bengali neighbours; on the other hand, the Jammura notably separated from the Bengalis households.

Moreover, the Tipra hamlets are not extensively separate from the other community; therefore, they co-share the courtyards, ponds, drinking tube wells, orchards, labour market, educational institutions, etc. They more like to adopt the Hindu religious traits. Organisations from the Government and non-government sources extended their social development activities among the Tipra community. To get service delivery, they organised different groups to receive ends. They also manage their own identical folk cultural functions at the request of the Government officials. They are interested in inviting the local District, Thana officials, and other influential personalities to attend their cultural program and festivals. The district and Upazila administrations have also shown interest in participating in Tipra's socio-cultural functions and celebrations.

Tipra People Living with Hard Works: General masses of the hamlets lived with hard labour. One elderly Tipra said we give our labour-power to the other people's property and stakes which benefits the owner of the property or investors or alike comparable – "*Amra kaj kori operer jami ar itvatai-te, maliker lab beshi amra pai samanna ja diee amader poshai na*" (we do works in others land or brickfields, owners gets major but we get little which is not enough for a living). Providing complex labour-based livelihoods to the outside ethnic community members of Tipra is a new phenomenon compared to their history. Declining of Tipra people owing to out-migration squeezing the old patron-client relations or productive reciprocal relations at the community level. In other words, the moral community that is more reciprocal has been broken down. Rising day or wage labourers termed *onner janna kaj* (working in the other property and for other's benefit) signifies particular socio-productive relations that imply a stake less situation on the one hand and express sort of the alienated situation on the other. However, women are discouraged from working outside of the household because of fear of security and feel stigmatised. After hard work throughout the day and at the dawn of night, the homemade win drinks attract some workers or labourers Tipra. Home arrangement for that purpose requires community interaction and preparing chuak or cholai mod (homemade win), which is at risk of cultural clashes by some sections of Bengali communities. Especially gentry and Islamic religious-minded Bengalis do not like such drinking habits at the locality. Therefore, the new settlers can pressure the Tipra community by their size. Drinking Chuak endows with relief from the tiredness among the hard workers of the Tipra community. To attract the wine, some Bengali settlers came here and demanded drinks of wine -the chuak. The process of chuak making has indigenous knowledge and folk traditions. Undoubtedly, the Tipra speciality mixes indigenous intergenerational skills and bears a unique heritage.

The aboriginal Tipra makes local wine. This cultural habit gives them living energy. The scarcity of land and still land-based economic activities have created the residences' clash. Criticising wine taking is a social stigma for most people in the areas. Not understanding the different cultures prevails there, indicating the weakness of Bangladesh's multicultural patterns.

On the other hand, excessive addiction to land, money, and even simple addiction to drugs and wine are considered ethical problems. The former also conveys another form of corruption in a society that hampers the country's natural development. Clash of culture and values irrespective of class, creed, gender, and ethnicity displays various forms in Bangladesh due to power relations, ethnic-based superiority complex, scarcity of resources, and the global process's direct impact. The Tripura collectively is dispersed and perhaps lately showing their existentialism on ethno feelings. On the other hand, the Bengali community is the mainstream people of the Bengal region by adopting Western education early. The adaptability of Bengalis to other cultures is a profound feature in the past and present. The diverse nation produces the coordination of different ideologies. The ideology of animism, charbak, joino, Buddha, baisnab, Sufism, bou and others. In this process, the Bengali language is enriched by many sources. The diverse nation produces its languages through the Aryan influences on the alphabetic traditions. Racial identity played here important role in inter-social relations in terms of distance, maintaining and keeping own living by intra relations.

Other critical social facts on the Tipra community of the hamlets:

According to the opinions of the 'alphabets,' the Tipra community of Daudkandi and the Chandpur lost the 'alphabet' and their cultural heritage. The Dakhin Kashar village of Lalmai is now rearing the boars and porks. The Kirtan practices and performs at festivals like puja, especially the Swarshati puja in the evening. Like Hindu religions, an exception is when they practice pig rearing, indicating the lower caste in the Hindu religion. That is the potential division in the interrelations with the Hindu community. On the other hand, the neighbouring Bengali community accepts the business of boar rearing; they think if we export frogs, why not pig or boar. In addition, if we are rearing the crocodiles in a district, why not pigs

The army and cantonment administration influenced the Tipra and the Bengali communities. By expanding cantonment and security measures during the 2nd world war and the time to time following strategic points, the Tipra displaced hillock tops house dwellings and slightly down towards the lower portion of the hillock. The gradual expansion of military and border security installations and the firing range is one of the reasons for slow down the most accessible road connection to the hilltop Mandir and the locality of the hillocks at Dhakhin Kashar, its adjoining locality of the Tipra, which consists of Bengalis. The seasonal trial or mohora of the army in the locality has created expanding relations with the people. Through the Army's disciplined life and organised behaviour, the locals know how valuable, such disciplined life is in practical life. The Tipra Bajar- bears the old traditions of their market networks. It also indicates the spread market among the Tipra community. The process of globalisation touches the people who have some sort of connectivity even in the colonial periods.

The Mandir of Radha Krishna of the Hindu community and their traditional way of life influence the Tipra people. Religion symbolised unity that they valued and bonded with the Hindu community in the growth centre and the villages. It

has been observed that all regions are now changing rural-urban relations on the verge of growing urbanisation and linkages with the global centres by exporting labourers for remittances earnings. A few clashes of cultural practices and values also prevail in the locality despite global influence here on the issue of winemaking and drinking by Tipra. It is reported that even police harassed them in the face of allegations of the wine bearing. Due to demand, some Tipra may produce wine for other people. Differentiation of cultures in Bangladesh has also attracted the people in the locality.

Consequently, their hardship in life and dropping out of education are the community's public events. The tourists came here to see them; some purchased local wine in covert ways. The heritage of making wine like *haria* of santal as traditional practices was mentioned several times, and it is the distinct cultural traits and the community's skill.

Hamlet of Salban Bihar: The duration of settlement in the Salban Bihar's adjoining areas by some Tipra households has passed 36 years. They termed themselves adibashi of the Lalmai regions and settled in Salban due to land acquisition. They purchased the land with the compensation money. What does mean Adibashi? The Tipra tells the old inhabitants. The term adibashi denotes early settlers that were original and had entitlement to land possessions. Who came first means they must be countable in the development process. But the number is the factors which happened at the Australian aboriginals. Australian Australoyed Aboriginals gradually on the process of distinct. The adjoining of Salban Bihar is now pulling the people from different areas to settle here. Therefore, urbanisation is a crucial socio-economic phenomenon in these localities. The Tipra community is also on the way to changing its social relations in two spaces - its community level and neighbouring level. Government-sponsored organisational support also extended the assistance to them. NGOs also work in the community. The availability of micro credit has been expanded at the Salban hamlets. It indicates the broader opportunities for repayment of micro-credit. The diversity of micro credit is also found in the place.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of Salban hamlet

Number of Families	No. of Male	No. of Female	Education scenario	What are they doing now
26	28 Majority belongs to up to 45 years old. Above 50 + of age, number is 9.	32 no. of Elderly female (Above 50+) is 5.	Children now attend the schools. Majority complete primary education	Day labouring is the primary source of income. Most creditable matter is that 3 girls are now HSC student And one is a student of MBBS

Source: Fieldwork

Land ownership patterns and impact of urbanisation: The total land in Salban is 5.5 *Kani*. This land uses as home and homestead land; therefore, the cultivable land is nil at Salban hamlet. So they (Salban hamlet) are not distinctly peasants compared to the other hamlets (especially Jammura and Dakhin Kashar). They mainly work in the services and labour-based works. On the other hand, living at the edge of the town offers them opportunities to work in the city. The number of commuters has been increasing in the recent past. Developing town is going on the locality, due to approximate of Comilla town, and other trainings and, lastly the establishment of Comilla University boost up the process of urbanisation at the locality. The whole locality is now under the *Paurashava* (municipality areas). The locality's people, including the Tipra, pass through the new lives in the urban environment. Land ownership is crucial for getting direct and immediate benefits from urbanisation because the land prices are mounting. Some Tripura has no land; they live on others' land to survive. The land losing syndrome occurs due to the pressure of urbanisation and household demographic changes. On the other hand, out-migration and service-oriented migration is the cause to minimise the stress on the land. Pull factors in migration are the primary cause of changing demographic scenarios in the Salban areas.

Income: While day labouring is the primary source of income among the Tipra community, the per day labour wage was Tk. 150 in peak seasons and 120 in the lean seasons in the areas (in 2007).

Socialisation process: Socialising of own culture is practised in the Tipra community. Fostering ethics like obeying the parents and respectfully maintaining the kin relations are some of their codes of life. The family and community valued the good advice and distinctions between good and harmful elements of the society, how to behave and poses good things and some teaching. They also teach love and teach the children and respect for the elderly. How to minimise own interest in the competitive world is also trained as practical knowledge for survival. The living mechanism is also respectful of the neighbours and their sentiments.

Water sources: Hand tube well water is widely used for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing. No. of ponds is declining fast due to housing and infrastructure demand at the locality. The hand tube well is supplied by the government-funded project of *Upajati Kallayan Samity* (Tribal Welfare Society).

The organisation's participation-

Micro Credit and the *Adibashi* Organisation

The *Upajati Kallayan Samity* (Tribal Welfare Society) provide loan from its seed money for the welfare of the Tipra people. The organisation was formed to get assistance from the government's delivery system. Simultaneously some NGOs also operate their micro-credit in the different households. The source of micro

credit is many. A single borrower can borrow multiple sources of microcredit. The open market of the micro-credit operation is going on.

Table 2: Some of the social functions of Tipra

Social events	<i>Puja</i> , rituals on birth, a child born and died and others
Marriage	Intra community preferable
Major religious functions	<i>Puja – Durga, Swarshati</i> and <i>Radha Krishna mandir</i> festival.
Funeral	Burn the body at the <i>shashan</i> , combined with Hindu religious rituals.
Socialise rituals	Try to preserve your own cultural rituals
Attitudes towards romance	Liberal
Inter-community functions	Seek decision-making on the crucial matter through the people's representatives or knowledgeable <i>shalishkar</i> (mediator) outside the community. Significant community matters were tried to solve by the community members. Sharing the development activities with the neighbours. Tolerance shows to abstain and perform <i>dhol</i> and songs during <i>ajan</i> and <i>namaj</i> during the festivals of <i>swarashati puja</i> .

Source: Fieldwork

The *Swarshati puja* indicates their interest in education. The awareness of education has increased. Education is a tremendous upper mobility factor, although sustaining formal education is hard for the majority family of the community. Therefore, they continue to keep children's education at their level best. Expansion of urban facilities increases the number of schools and colleges in the locality. Generally, they do not go to the *madrassah*. On the other hand, *madrassah* does not include non-Muslim students.

Relations with Bengalis

Social Relations and Contact of Languages

Good social relations between both ethnic communities are prevailing – the majority Bengali identity and the small number of Tipra ethnic community. The Tipra of Bangladesh belongs to Bangladeshi nationality. The small community of Tipra is in transition with the process of acculturation and diffusion. The semi-pidgin trends are seen in the Tipra communities. Pidgin means a mix of languages, although they try to maintain their own language in the family and kin relations that belong to the same community. Bengali is essential for communicating to the neighbourhoods and larger society of Bangladesh. The educated Bangladeshi Tipra knows three languages: own Tipra at family and kin groups; Bengali at the societal level; and English. Some know some Hindi language due to media impact and contact with the Tripura communities in the Tripura state of India. They generally feel their marginal position in their own culture while the overwhelming majority Bengali population.

Preferences of songs: The children and the young are more adoptive to the Bengali songs. The next generations' choices are more globalised than the taboo-based choice or own cultural boundaries. It is happening due to their few numbers and separate settlement under the growing urban influences.

Folk entertainment and *chuak*: It was mentioned earlier that, *Chuack* is one kind of local product wine produced by the Tipra household as a part of their cultural symbol. The *chuack* is made of *chuang thui*; this cultural symbol practices drinking together *chuck*, which reduces the tiredness of the industrious people of Tipra. The *chuak* drink is together irrespective of elderly and younger male and female. Sometimes, the terrorist is forced to collect wine with the demand; some Tipra also sell the *chuak*. Gradually, the Tipra demand local wine among the Bengali people. The production of wine is restricted, and wine is prohibited under Islamic values.

The hill potatoes very much match the food habit of the Tipra Community. This variety is rare, while the forest cover has declined due to settlement and other vital installations. In this way, the wild animals also are in the process of extinction. The newly formed *Adibashi Kallyan Samity* leaders think about extending the sources of income. How to become self-reliant? The educated Tipra think them yet to receive the knowledge of development.

The micro-credit is insufficient for them, but it also helps generate some economic activities. Rearing a boar or pig 'beast' or goat is getting popular. In the long term, planting a timber-valued tree will give a benefit. Trees are gradually creating resources. In general, Tipra households have fewer plantations in the case of the Bengali Community. If a tree is planted on the occasion of a baby's born, that tree will be resourced one day, and that tree will be provided financial benefit for the baby's education and marriage. Above all, this development massage is not working correctly; it is found that some inertia is prevailing in a mentionable number of Tipra households.

According to an educated Tipra, cleverness is vital for living in society's competitive and relative hostile conditions. Competitions in everywhere. It is observed that accomplished training enhances cleverness. Intelligence is desirable in the present living styles for surviving. The credit they get must invest such a profit; otherwise, repayment generally will not be possible.

Bamboo Selling: Bamboo represents the cultural symbols of the Tipra. Bamboo shoots are used as delicious curry for meals. Selling bamboo is a coping mechanism for a bad period of family life. The availability of bamboo depends on the ownership and access to the hillock tops' natural resources, becoming very competitive and inventing market forces. Therefore, market forces benefit those who have good entrepreneurship quality.

Hamlet of Jammura: Jammura is a high hillock area relatively separate settlement situated at Lalmai hillock range of Comilla district. In Bengali, *Jam* means blackberry and *Mura* mean high land. *Mura* is a popular term for mentioning

payment and essential installation. *Kotila Mura, Itakhola Mura*, is a popularly known area where the late ancient Bengal Buddhist civilisations were found. These areas are characterised by high, hilly, Pleistocene soils, cultural civilisation, livelihood, and above all, way of life. The archaeological digging and its systematic exhibit at the archaeology and Moynamoti museum sites unveiled civilisation and form of life manifestations. As a locality, Jammura is situated under the nine no. Bijoypur Union. About 14 families live in the hillock hamlets, and only two families live in the downside plain land of the hillock. Ninety people are living in the Jammura Tipra Hamlet. The community named itself Tripura Upajati.

Table 3: Population distribution of the Jammura hamlet

Age groups	Female members	Male members	Educational statuses	Major works Performed by them
Up to 15 years	10	17	Girls and boys go to schools	Student
Up to 45 years	23	23	Only 2 males passed the SSC exam.	<i>Badla</i> (day labourers) brickfield labour <i>bandak</i> (mortgage in) based vegetable cultivate. Two families have peasantry. Services also found (2 persons)
UP to 54 years	12	12	Some have a primary level (in average class 3) of education	<i>Tuk tak kaj</i> (miscellaneous works which convenient for them), light works for a family
Above 60 years	-	-	-	-

Source: Fieldwork

Generally, women do not work outside the homestead areas; they collect water and fuel energy from nearby homestead areas. Hillock and downside of the hillock flora and fauna are fuel energy sources. Once these orchards and forests belonged to common property, the property was transferred to individual property due to the increase in population and scarcity of land. The privatisation of common property loses the shared access and leads to a shortage of fuel energy. The house consists of one roof of *akchala*, generally made of thatch/paddy straw and tin. Some Tipra families have faced and are facing land dispute trouble with non-tribal families. Tipra felt they were easily cheated and misguided. The young and capable males work in the brick field in winter and usually sell bamboo in the spring. Other activities include selling labour for earth cutting, digging, and tree cutting. The total land of the hamlet is 33 *Kani*, which mainly consists of homestead and orchards; two families have the cultivable land. Generally, Tipra rents land from the neighbour Bengali people; they usually grow vegetables there. Females and males of the hamlet also grow vegetables in the homestead areas. Wood and fallen leaf used as firewood for cooking and boiling water.

Sources of water: Once the inhabitants use ‘*Jarna*’ or stream water. Gradually those streams were dried up. The Tipra were bathed and cleaned dishes with stream (*nala*) water. Nala means water preservation with water follow. The tribal community gradually faced a water crisis due to drying up the creeks. Such little canals stream was transformed into walkways. Only a rainy season canal with water follows is visible briefly. Because water obstacles follow during the rainy season, the water logs the areas and damage homestead areas, orchards and even houses at the downside houses of the hillocks.

Table 4: The Sociability of the hamlet

Marriage	Use musical instrument, specially <i>dol</i>
Religious functions	<i>Durga Puza</i> , <i>Swarshati Puza</i> , and <i>Kali Puza</i>
Funeral rituals	After death, Son shaves his head hair on the 1 st day; After 13 days the death, <i>shraddo</i> (a meal-sharing-based get-together) is arranged.
Birth of a child	Generally born at home, going medical is a recent phenomenon.
Mate selection	Own mate selection is now practised more than arranged marriage. However, the mates seek permission from the parents. The consent of guardians is desirable.

Source: Fieldwork

Relation with Neighbouring Bengalis: Bengali and Tipra maintain social, economic, and cultural ties in many spaces. The Bengalis are generally the land owner, so Tipra rent land from the Bengalis land owner. The Tipra also depends on Bengali people to get work wages.

The Bengali and Tipra males drink tea at tea stalls. They also work together at the workplace like brickfields, agricultural fields and other wage work situations. Gossip is popular recreation among the people irrespective of Bengali and Tipra. They also maintain some reciprocal relations in the community life. The hamlet of Jammura holds interrelations to community life in the area on economic and social.

The *gormil* or difference of opinions, clashes of interests, land disputes, and creating pressure on the mind are some problems facing Tipra inhabitants. Due to their lower position in the economic hierarchy, they also live tense life. The tension arises in how to live, what will be eaten, and how to get food and work. Generally, they do not find reasonable solutions for these matters.

Access to Micro-credit: About 13 out of 16 households (81%) of Jammura are members of the Grameen Bank. Grameen Bank borrowers spread irrespective of Bengali and Tipra people. A person of Tipra Community remarks, “avoiding loan is beneficial, because of we are so poor & ‘*ababi*’ (poor) only six months I can do work; I fill ill many days; although I get not work in many days; so how can I repay the loan.” It has been reported that many households are facing traceability with repayment.

Even they are not able to continue the loan. The staff of the micro-credit hassle the borrowers if they do not get the *kishti* or weekly repayment of instalment.

Tripura people who live in Comilla Sadar (South), Jammura, Shalban, and Dhakhin Kashar have more access to micro-credit. Radhakrishna Mondir dwellers are mainly devotees and depend on charity from affluent neighbours.

Table 5: Total population of the community at Comilla Sadar (South)

Age group (years)	Distribution of population by sex		Total
	Male	Female	
0 – 5	4	1	5
6 – 10	11	7	18
11- 15	19	3	22
16 – 20	7	1	8
21 – 25	5	2	7
26 – 30	2	-	2
31 – 35	8	5	13
36 – 40	4	3	7
41 – 45	12	7	19
45 – 50	6	5	11
51 – 55	3	3	6
56 – 60	4	3	7
61 – 65	5	4	9
66 – 70	3	2	5
70-120	2	-	2
Total	93	44	141

Sources: Survey and Fieldwork

The Tipra community has more males than females. The key informants reported that “female girls born less in recent times during the field visit.” It may have some scientific causes. The economic ages consist of 11 to 65 years those contribute more to the economy.

Table 6: Number of households in different hamlets

Jammura	20
Shalban Bihar	34
Dhakhin Kashar	26
Rada Krishna Mondir	5
BARD campus	1

Source: Fieldwork

Table 6 depicts the majority of the households situated in Shalban Bihar. This place is more congested than others. The original living can be found in Jammura and Dhakhin Kashar areas. The separateness of living is visible here.

Table 7: Educational status of Tipra people

The level of education	Situation
Illiterate	-
Literate- able to own signature name	100%
Primary passed	70%
Secondary School Certificate passed	18%
Higher Secondary Certificate passed	7%
Graduate passed	4%
Postgraduate	-

Source: Fieldwork

Traditionally the Tipra people are educated and cultured. Due to their insolvency, the level of education is not higher. However, the Tipra children attend the schools, and parents have shown enthusiasm for sending their children to the school.

Table 8: Major occupation of the Tipra households

Type of occupation	Situation
Services	One-third of the community population
Day labourers	Three fourth of the community population
Business	One-third of the community population
Transport labourers	Nil
Sharecroppers	One-fourth of the community population

Source: Fieldwork

Day labouring is the primary occupational source of Tipra. So that they live mainly hand to mouth. At the fringe of living in the towns and city, the Tipra more enter the service.

Mobility chart: Tipra is mainly working in the Lalmai hill areas. They work at different organisations in the Lalmai areas. They visit relatives’ houses in Chandpur, Daudkandi, and the Tripura state of India. There are relations with their cultural roots. The desire to contact more with Indian Tripura is a felt need.

Table 9: Totality of the hamlets

No. of households	84
No. of population	150
Average household	1.78

Source: Fieldwork

The Notion of Tribe, Ethnicity, *Adibashi* among the Tipra of Comilla:

The present Tipra of Comilla is not totally tribe. They lost their horticultural and pastoral socio-political organisation. On the other hand, they adopted the peasantry and non and off-farm livelihoods. The spread of education also expanded the new forms of occupation, such as service-oriented occupations. Therefore, Tipra is now an ethnic identity but absorbed occupational diversification rather than horticulture and pastoralism. Adopting the peasantry, sharecropping, day labouring, wage labouring, small trades and other services. The old pattern of horticulture is declining, and a new form of horticulture has been introduced due to agricultural globalisation. The vast competition on limited land impacts the previous living on horticulture however reduces it. The personal and organised efforts to own the hillock land have changed the livelihood pattern. The women's movement to the hill gradually shrinks due to ownership problems. The Tipra also on the pauperisation process so that they lost their traditional occupation depends on hillock cultivation.

On the other hand, they also have an edge in new occupations due to expanding urbanisation of the locality. Living at the fringe of city life, the Tipra found some jobs that halted their further pauperisation. They are in a poverty trap but have several opportunities due to expanding urban-rural linkages. The Tipra of India and the state of Tripura pass through several dimensional lives. The Indian government developed several target group approaches for oppressed classes and the Tribes. Under the schedule tribe target approach, the *adibashi kallayan samity* plays a significant role in distributive justice among the Tipra of Tripura state of the Indian union.

Despite overall cultural homogenisation, Bangladesh also displays some significant heterogeneity. Bangladesh represents a mixed culture of Bengalis and other ethnic communities that live in Bangladesh. Cultural diffusions through the global process are also shaping the Bangladesh culture. Therefore, Bangladesh culture represents the mixed culture contributed by Bengalis' ethnic identities, religions, livelihood, cultural traditions, etc. Bengali religions or beliefs are: Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Animist, Jainism, Sikhism, Atheist, *charbak* (the secular form of world outlook formed in ancient India), and other believers contributed to the Bengali's cultural traditions. Side by side, the tribal culture also enriches the Bangladeshi culture. The mix of cultures is still going on, particularly in the era of cultural globalisation.

The Tripura of Comilla termed them as *adibashi*. Adibashi means the first settler in the region. First settlers represent the first users of natural resources like land and water bodies. Bengali settlers' view, they also live here from immemorial time. The formation of the plain land of the Comilla is embedded in their oral folk history. The age of the history of Bengali ethnic population spanned more than five thousand years. Therefore, the debate of adibashi, obscure in nature and fact, remains in the oral history, folk traditions, nature of the occupation, livelihood patterns, migration experiences, etc. According to an anthropological point of view, adibashi refers to the specific form of the living condition of ethnic people with cultural identity, social control through band or headman, etc. Tipra of Comilla, therefore, holds several identities, which are given below:

- Citizen identity – Bangladeshi
- Racial identity – Mongoloid
- Religious identity – *Sanatan dharma* of Tripura tribal
- Tribal identity – declining trends due to shrinks the horticulture and adopt the market-based pastoral
- Ethnic identity – on the process of Tipra identity with other Tipra of own country and outside country which may be called cultural affinity
- Settlement identity – claim as *adibashi* at the hillocks.

The Tipra of Comilla maintains social and cultural contacts with the Tripura state's Tipra or Tripura communities. The tribal character still prevails in the contact people and areas of that. The hill-based horticulture and pastoral are still there. So they adopt and mix two forms of livelihood patterns. Marriage ties are the weak ties among them. Bangladesh's situation is more market-oriented than rather the situation of those areas. The Tipra of Comilla is not more communicate with the Chittagong Hill Tracts Tipra. The causes are long-distance and fewer social ties. But feeling for cultural affinity is found. Some Tipra students of the hill tracts admitted at the different colleges of Comilla visit these hamlets occasionally. Some of the leading personalities of the Tipra community of Hill Tracts also visited these hamlets recently. What is the binding force to staying in Bangladesh? According to the leaders of the Tipra community of Comilla, patriotism and nostalgia for birthplaces are the significant causes for visiting Bangladesh.

On the other hand, Indian Tripura state offers some target-oriented development and service delivery mechanisms, such as a loan for *Tripura Adibashi Kallayn* (Tripura Aboriginal Welfare). In their opinion, the health facilities are also better in Tripura. The employment guarantee scheme also operates in Tripura state. On the other hand, Tipra of Comilla feels more access to the job by Tribal quota in Bangladesh. They also observed that the majority

Table 10: Mobility Patterns

Various forms of mobility	Patterns
Horizontal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seasonal migration ▪ Marital ties with the same community ▪ Attend religious festivals ▪ Stay in the same occupation through inter-generational mobility
Vertical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downward due to loss of land and traditional horticulture ▪ Downward due to lack of education and no access to education ▪ Downward due to lack of physical and financial capital ▪ Upward due to earn capability to join the labour market and service market ▪ Upward for the new generation due to their access to education ▪ Upward due to social development, especially credit and assistants.
Intergenerational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A considerable change occurred due to switching the horticulture to the peasantry and other occupations.
Intra generational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Day labourers change their earning methods and feel deprived (a form of universal alienation).

Source: Fieldwork

The differentiation of the Tipra community of Comilla is found in occupations, education, the intensity of cultural and social contacts, ownership of natural resources, and access to formal organisations. It is found individualism is developed among them. The suspicion was also found, which may relate to inter-ethnic value differences. Micro credit is not popular among the Dakhin Kashar hamlets and Jammura hamlets. The burden of repayment and the psychological pressures are why to avoid microcredit.

Once Tipra was not interested in mixing mud or clay of the peasant's works and engaging themselves in *jum* cultivation. Now they adopt the peasantry and join the wage labour market – these are the significant change in their lives due to the historical process of Nation States on the one hand and the demographical downwards of Tripura after 1947 and rapid increases of the non-Tipra population at the locality.

The Tipra was not tribal in the past. The market also penetrated that community in the process of human lives interplays with colonial and capitalist processes. The market of Tippera of Comilla indicated how the market developed among them based on their livelihoods and other exchange-oriented activities in the past, especially in the colonial period.

New Roles of Tipra (Tripura): Recently, they joined trust-oriented services – at present, they perform good security personnel at government and autonomous organisations. Women and girls mainly work within family boundaries. Work as a maidservant at a Bengali homestead was found (although one case in number). Sometimes, the shalish (conflict resolution) mechanism invites the Bengali

shalishker (conflict mediator). The Bengali language is cemented in their lives in Bangladesh and Tripura state of India. Tipra's fluency in Bangla indicates that they are Bengalis. Only racial identity and cultural traits, including food habits, differentiate them from the Bengali communities. Marriage with the Bengalis and other factors indicate their racial uniqueness is also transitioning.

Structural Transformation: The differentiation of the social system of Tipra is based on land ownership, education, good social network and style of life and pattern of responsiveness to the development and the market forces. The process of pauperisation was halted by wage-based hard labour, milch cow rearing, and the rearing of pigs. On the other hand, building links through the tribal societies associations, participation in the labour market, acquiring skills and capability, and using business opportunities. The decision-making process of the Tipra shifted to those persons of the own community who thought overall development of the four hamlets.

Relationship among four hamlets- a viewpoint from the exchange network: Tipra community of Comilla Sadar Thana Consists of three significant hamlets and one portion that mainly adjoins Rada Krishna Mandir, which is the service provider of the *mandir* in terms of *Sabayet* (dominant spiritual personality of the Temple or *mandir*) functions, assistants to *Sabayet* and *mandir* maintenances. The *mandir* adjoining settlement is situated at the top of the hillock and very near Dhakhin Gasha.

Relationships of these hamlets occurred in marriage, ceremonial functions, consulting and decision-making. The *puza* of Radha Krishna Mandir is an excellent opportunity to interact with each other. At the *puza* festival, the *pujari* (*puza* performers) participation come from different parts of Bangladesh, even occasionally outside Bangladesh. Especially in the Indian states of West Bengal and Tripura. The *Pujari* from India has decreased drastically in the recent past. The Hindu Zamindar who donated and built this *mandir* long ago sometimes came to the *mandir* in the past. So, the Radha Krishna Mandir opened avenues of extended relations with other Tipra communities, Bengali – Hindu communities. Festivals are great opportunities for assembles and share views, happiness and sorrows. The death and birth-related rituals also accelerate the interactions among the hamlet's inhabitants.

Exchange: Tipra people's downward situations provoke unequal dialogue with the resources riches persons of the community. Downgrade exchanges mean sustaining poverty. The historical causes are other matters to fall in the low position of the Tipra people. The Tipra passed through several historical shreds of evidence like band and tribal life, own monarchy, colonial, post-colonial, and Bangladesh periods. The constitution of Bangladesh is the safeguard for ethnic people – the question is the implementation.

Chart of Relationships

Table 11: Relationship Charts

Family	Social	Livelihood	Market	State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and kins relations. • Intergenerational and socialisation and symbol-based (language) relations. • Consanguine Marital relations • Fictions and storytelling of own cultural traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bari</i> and Inter <i>Bari</i> relations • Inter Para and Neighbourhood relations • Inter communities relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peasantry and Peasant relations' • own community's gathering • Inter-community relations on gathering on participation in natural endowments. • Labour market and 'Sardari' system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour production marketing. • Service seekers of health education • Dowry, but it has a market mechanism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Approval to cross the border to meet own community members. • State protection

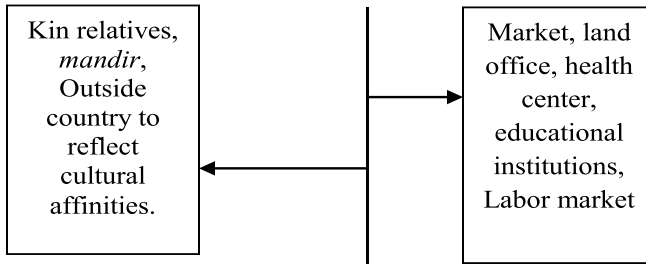
Source: Fieldwork

Coping Mechanisms: Migration is a simple way to cope with the Tipra community's livelihood mechanism. Cross-border social networks are beneficial for them during disaster times. Traditional social caring and guardianships for sharing adverse situations are practised during family or community crises. Still, some health problems meet up with the vegetation healing method. Older people of the community bear the knowledge of nature-based medicine and give advice and medications.

Inter hamlets relations on development matters: Ethnic-based community development and other initiatives or micro-credit programs shape their dyadic ties. They are assembling for getting loans and monitored by supervised credit mechanisms. To earn the development assistance like ring slab latrines and tube well under the Tribal Development Fund of Government, they showed their performances through organisational activities. Tribal Development Fund has created more interactions with the hamlet's inhabitants. The Tribal Welfare Monindra Tripura and Nokul Tripura leaders maintain relations with Boloram Tripura, Sanjib Tripura, and others in different hamlets. Monindra mentioned that the inhabitants of the hamlets are generally simple in living and the majority of them are not 'clever' or not aware of the reality.

After the shocks of the partition (1947) of British India and historical proceedings of out-migration from Comilla, the Tipra are trying to revive themselves by preserving and expressing their culture. The gate also has more support from Government administrations, civil society NGOs, micro-credit organisations and neighbouring people. The possible problem lies in the land disputes in increasing population and urbanisation.

Figure 1: Inter-Hamlet Relationship



Source: Fieldwork

Table 12: Declining traditions of Tipra of Cumilla

	Past Trends (65 years ago)	Present Trends	Special features
<i>Biju</i> (farewell to the year and welcoming new year)	Community Network-based	Hamlet based know each other’s programs of <i>biju</i>	Salban hamlet more organised capacity to quick performance of <i>biju</i>
Flame Candle at <i>Mondir</i>	Community participation	The <i>Mondir</i> located in remote and isolated areas	Dakhin Gacha hamlet near the <i>mondir</i>
Wear for own cloths	Own tradition	Lost tradition due to lack of community training	Chittagong Hill Tracts (Rangamati, Khagrachari, Bandarban) traditions are treated as symbols
Folk dance	Own Character	Mixed with modern dance	Influence of media (film)

In the process of historical consequences, the Tipra community sustained and reshaped its cultural symbols. Their spiritual belief exists only in their oral tradition and in the communities’ organisations shared by Mondir. The out-migration causes rapid fading of traditional practices of their own. The community revival comes from several sources like global civil society’s awareness, own community’s oral-based cultural tradition, and local support from administration and civil society. The influence of the peace accords of 1997 in Chittagong also benefits them.

The Festivals: Tipra observes ‘Biju Utshab’ on the last two days and opening day of the new year of the Bangla calendar year. Tipra called it *Boishabi*. On the first day of the *Boishabi* festival, the Tipra bathes domestic animals. They flame the candle at the holy places like Mondir. On the festival’s second day, they clean the home and homestead with water. They wear their own made clothes at the festivals. On the last day, they bathe the elderly persons of the community and seek an *ashirbad* (blessing) from them. However, the researchers found very few elderly people in the community during the field study periods. Tipra uses the flower at the festivals. They also dance during celebrations. They performed the

folk dance called Goya on that occasion. Recently Tipra welfare society of Comilla organised Biju utshab at Salban Bihar hamlet. The district administration promises to assist in constructing a community cum cultural hall for them to flourish the Tipra culture. The *Swarashati Puza* is another important festival for the young students of the Tipra community.

7. Suggestions and Concluding Remarks

Based on the preceding writings, suggestions and conclusions of the study are drawn for further improvements. While Tipra is one of the largest ethnic communities in Bangladesh, one portion is tiny in size compared to the entire community of Tipra lives at hillocks and its valleys in Comilla Sadar Upazila. This portion of the Tipra community bears the mongoloid race, but marital ties currently mix them. The majority of the inhabitants were wage labourers. Few were working in the service sector. About 12 per cent of households reared the boar or pigs. The Tipra had no written form of language. They were in the acculturation process, which was mainly influenced by the neighbouring Bengali language and culture. They follow the *Sanatan* Hindu religion, although distinct cast differentiation was not found among them. They have fond of song and dance, which may attract the tourists. They had the skill to make local wine (*chuak*) that they drink to reduce tiredness. Such cultural practice creates a cultural value clash with the sections of Bengali people. *Biju utshab*, *Swarashati puja*, annual function at *Radha Krishna Mandir* were some of the cultural and religious events of the community. They had social networks with inter hamlets, an occupational *sardary* system, neighbouring Bengali communities, micro-credit operations, and related livelihood and educational purposes. Watching television was popular among the Tipra community. Listening to record songs and watching videos are other aspects of their entertainment. The subscription to newspapers is very irregular and occasional based.

With acculturation on the way, the dominant Bengali inhabitants and the process of urbanisation and struggle in livelihood shape their cultural lives. A neighbouring culture that is Bengali culture actively influences the communication and cultural functions of the community. The significant change is that the Tipra gradually lost their language. The young Tipra speaks a good Bengali language. The community as such leaving with distinctive characteristics. Once, they live on hillocks and on the edge of the hillocks with geographical isolation. But now, due to the increase of Bengali population and settlement of Bengali population at the edge of the hillocks, creating opportunities for mixing culture and ideas. Tipra has no distinction caste system practising, although they have social differentiations based on occupation and power exercises. Primarily the community of Tipra is in transition. The Tipra of Comilla has more physical mobility. It bears the costs and energy. They also visit and make relations with outside Tipra of Tripura state of India. They enjoy the get-together and feel human energy with relatives, friends, and like-minded people.

The network of the modern world is characterised by global flavours articulated by civil society and plays its role in the Tipra community. Therefore, the Tipra of Comilla is keen to express their existence elsewhere in the country, especially in the Hill Tracks regions of Bangladesh. However, the Tipra still preserved their cultural identities in the social network line. Their social networks are in many folds- within communities with dominant cultural manifestations of Bengalis and outside the country – the Tipra community of the Tripura state of India. No sharp caste-divide system was not found in the community while the community differentiated the class, status and power relations. These social facts remain in the own community of Tipra and spread in comparison and manifest the Bengali population. Identity is indeed the post-modern manifestation that strongly prevails in the Tipra community, where they are like to revive and display struggle with the dominant culture – during the acculturation process.

Regarding class, they are overwhelming downtrodden people, mainly depending on wage labouring. The process of formal education is going on among the new generation. However, it limits due to financial incapability and living struggles in different seasons. They lag behind the quota system for tribal people's government jobs. From these perspectives, the Tipra community is in the process of dynamism on different dimensions. Passing out the tribal characters and going towards market-based production and livelihoods are significant features of the study communities. A tiny cultural gap also developed among the hamlets. The remote hamlets are lagging on that process. The basic amenities and living standards should be upgraded for all Tipra people.

The number of the Tipra of Comilla districts is less, which cannot create significant pressure on the authority. Only the racial appearances and the local languages at the familial levels are still alive. In the process of globalisation, the Tipra people were altering them and contributing their labour and energy for nation-building. They desire to live with their cultural symbols. On the other hand, they are in the process of the Bangladesh Government's inclusive development process. Despite such inclusiveness, they struggled hard for their access to higher education. The poor living condition and morbidity are some of the features that should be addressed. By and large, they are in the process of change. The most important thing is that they possess substantial homestead land so that the process of urbanisation that grows fast at the locality might benefit them by increasing land price, which needs the capacity to secure the land possession and enjoys the other opportunities of the growing town. The Tipra loves their motherland, especially the birthplace. Therefore, these hamlets are very much valuable to them. The Tipra of Comilla needs the recognition of Tribal to identify through documents from the government. The inclusive government process should be widened in respect of legal, economic, social and cultural irrespective of Hill Tracks and non-hill tracks, plain land and hillocks ethnic communities.

Bibliography

- Abercrombie N., S Hill., & B.S. Turner. (2000). *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* - fourth edition. London: Penguin Books.
- Berrigan, F. (1979). *Community Communications: The Role of Community Media in Development*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Bloomstorm, M., & Hetten, B. (1994). *Development Theory in Transition: The Dependency Debate and Beyond*. London: Zed Books.
- Crane Brinton. (1937). "Equality, Encyclopedia of the social sciences", vol.3, New York, pp.574-580
- Cohen I Sylvie. (1996). "Mobilising Communities for Participation and Empowerment", PP226-245, Sage Publications India Ltd. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London.
- Davey Brian (1993) "Negative and Positive Communication in Social Networks" Some Issues, PP 1-14, Internet Link C Brian Davey
- Festa, R., & Lind DaSilva, C.E. (1986). *Communication Popularly Alternativa*. Miami, FL: Ediciones Paulinas.
- Jacobson Thomas. (1996). "Conclusion: Prospects for Theoretical Development", Sage Publications India Ltd. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London.
- Kocke, E.A. (1991). *the Essence of Leadership* New York: Macmillan.
- Kottak, C. P. (1999). *Mirror for Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. McGraw- Hill College.
- Lamin, Silvanus. (2006). Adibashider Odikar Samporkito Gatishanga Goshonapatra abong Antarjatic adibashi ditio dosheker kormoshuchi. Dhaka: Barosic.
- Smith G. Alfred. (1966). P.Pv-7 *Communication and Culture*, University of Oregon, USA.
- Servaes Jan. (1996). "Introduction: Participatory Communication and Research in Development Settings", Sage Publications India Ltd. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London
- Servaes Jan. (1996). "Participatory Communication Research with New Social Movements: A Realistic Utopia", Sage Publications India Ltd. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London.
- Sobhan Rehman. (2004). "Structural Dimensions of Malgovernance in Bangladesh", Economic and Political Weekly, September 4, 2004.
- Schutz. (1960). "The Social World and the Theory of Social Action", Vol.27, PP.203-221, Social Research, New York, USA.
- Sattar Abdus *Oroney Janapade*
- Sattar Abdus (1995) *Kasher Manush Aponjon*, Bangladesh Shishu Academy
- Tilakaratra, S. (1989). ` Some aspects of local Social Development in Sri Lanka, Regional Development Dialogue, 10 (2), 78-94.
- Website Network:
<http://www.mapsofindia.com/tripura/society-and-culture/tribes.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripura>

<http://www.indiasite.com/tripura/fairs-festivals.html>
<http://tripura.nic.in/>
[http://www.bing.com/reference/semhtml/
 Tripura?qpv=tripura&src=abop&q=tripura&fwd=1](http://www.bing.com/reference/semhtml/Tripura?qpv=tripura&src=abop&q=tripura&fwd=1)
<http://tripurasociety.org/historyfinal.htm>
<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-->
<http://www.mapsofindia.com/tripura/society-and-culture/tribes.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripura>
<http://www.indiasite.com/tripura/fairs-festivals.html>
<http://tripura.nic.in/>
[http://www.bing.com/reference/semhtml/
 Tripura?qpv=tripura&src=abop&q=tripura&fwd=1](http://www.bing.com/reference/semhtml/Tripura?qpv=tripura&src=abop&q=tripura&fwd=1)
<http://tripurasociety.org/historyfinal.htm>
<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev>

Glossary

Kashar: adjacent to the hill areas.
shraddo : (a meal sharing based get together
gormil: difference of opinions
ababi: (poor)
kishti: weekly repayment of instalment
Mura: high land areas
Mandir: Temple
bari: houses
jogali: construction work as an assistant provider of inputs to the mason
kirtan: Hindu religious song based on folk elements.
bayan: analysis and explanations of the religious matters
Radha Krishna: Hindu sacred love matters
jummu: the inhabitants of shift cultivators
bonroui
sajaru: porcupine
samity: cooperative society
Kok-Borok: the language of the Tipra community
chuak or *cholai mod*: (homemade win)
shashan: funeral place
kani: unit of land measurement, generally 96 decimal make 1 *kani*.
Jarna: stream water
Dol: an instrument for music
Jum: shifting hill agriculture.
Sebakari: service provider
Sebayat: temple chief priest