



The Folk Beliefs And Customs Of The Karbi Tribe (Special Mention Of The Terang Village Under Deithar Area Of Karbi Anglong District, Assam)

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Abstract

The culture of Assam is the culture of Harmony. Assam is the home for people of different language and ethnic groups. Every ethnic groups in Assam is rich in folk culture. This diverse ethnic culture has enriched the culture of Assam. The Karbi people are one of the various ethnic groups living in Assam. The Karbi people also have their own culture. Their folk culture is especially rich. Folk beliefs and customs are belong to folk culture. This paper introduce the Karbi people of Assam. The main topic of this paper is to discusse the folk beliefs and customs prevalent in the Karbi Society. In this regard, the resources obtained through a field study among the Karbi people of Terang village under the Deithar area of Karbi Anglong district have been used.

Keywords: karbi people, folk culture, folk beliefs and customs, folk festivals of the karbi's, Karbi Anglong, Deithar.

0.1 Introduction

The state Assam is located in the North East of India. Assam is a melting pot of various ethnic groups. There are many ethnic groups in the country including Bodo, Miching, Tiwa, Deuri, Ahom, Garo, Rava, Hajong, Karbi etc. Each ethnic group has its own language, literature and culture which has enabled them to occupy an important place in the vast field of language, literature and culture of Assam. Assam is a combination of diverse and colourful cultures of different ethnic groups.

Folk culture is one of the parts of culture. Folk society and agricultural society are the basis of folk culture. Folk culture is the overall way of life of an ethnic group or community. Folk culture is a document of folk society and folk life. The four main components of folk culture are -

- Oral Folk Literature
- Social folk customs or folklore
- Physical culture
- Folk performing Arts

These elements include various aspects of social folk customs or folklore - festivals, folk beliefs, folk customs, rituals, folk religion, etc. There are many different customs and traditions that are celebrated in the folk society. There are some folk beliefs behind this folk custom. The Karbi people also celebrate various festivals like agricultural, religious, seasonal etc in conjunction with various aspects. The folk customs and beliefs associated with each festival are different. This paper discusses the folk customs and beliefs related to the festivals, religious, birth, death and marriage celebrations of the Karbi people. The identity and geographical location of the Karbi people is also discussed.

0.2 Aims and objectives

- Give an introduction to the Karbi people living in Assam and discuss their geographical location. Also discuss about the karbi people lived in Deithar area of karbi Anglong.
- Discuss the agricultural folk beliefs and customs prevalent among the karbi people.
- Discuss the folk beliefs and customs related to birth, death and marriage prevalent in the Karbi society
- Highlight the religious folk beliefs prevalent in the Karbi society

0.3 scopes:

The paper is based on field studies obtained from the Karbi people living in the Deithar area of Karbi Anglong district of Assam. It describes about the karbi people lived in Terang village under Deithar area and discusses the life of the Karbi people living there. The main discussion is about an identity of the Karbi people living in Assam and their geographical

location. The folk customs followed by the Karbi Society during festivals, birth, death and marriage are discussed in the paper. Also discuss the folk beliefs and customs followed by the Karbi people in religious matters.

0.4 Methodology:

The paper was prepared by collecting data from the Terang village under Deithar area of Karbi Anglong district of Assam through field studies. Descriptive method has been used in preparing the paper.

1.1 Short Introduction to the Karbi people of Assam :

The Karbi people, also known as the Mikirs, are one of the indigenous tribes of Assam. They like to identify themselves as Arheng. There are various opinions about the etymological meaning of the word Karbi. Some of them are - Most Karbi thinkers believe that the word Karbi is derived from "way thekar + bi". The purification rituals introduced by the god Langmingpo (Hemphu) are called 'Thekar'. Such as Klonko Thekar, Adam Athekar and Okhong, etc. It is believed that the people who raised such thekar are called 'Karbi'.

The origin of the word 'Karbi' is written by Jasnoram Gogoi as follows: The words 'fire and water' belong to the original word class of all languages. The Mikirs knew the use of fire and water from ancient times. In their language, fire is called 'May' and water 'Lang'. In ancient times, an early Mikir man made a fire inside his house. Catching fire is called 'May Car' in Mickey language. When Miki's husband left the burning fire, his wife said, "Me akar sanghay bikang kok?" In other words, why have you left the burning fire unquenched? The first Karbi man made 'May Akar B' and his descendants later took the name Karbi."

Other thinkers suggest that the word Karbi may also have originated from the word 'me + akar + bi'. In the early days there were no fire boxes for fires. The Karbi people rubbed bamboo tamal and rubbed stones on stones to catch fire with great difficulty. 'Meker + B' Means to keeping the fire burning constantly in the 'mehib' (fireplace) so that the fire does not have to be taken out again and again. For this reason it was suggested that the word Karbi may have originated from and word 'Maker + B'.

Professor Rangbang Terang wrote, "The Karbi people who love to identify themselves as Arheng are recorded in the history of Assam as 'Mikir'. The Karbi people are mainly Tibetan-Burmese and ethnically the vast mountainous region of central Assam".

The Karbi were formerly known as Mikir. There are also various opinions about the origin of the word Mikir. The word Mikir is not a Karbi word. The Mikirs do not refer to themselves as 'Mikir' but as Karbi or Arheng. In ancient times, the Karbi people, who lived by hunting in the mountain forests, were named Mikir by other people of Assam."

Another scholar, Surendra Barua, explains the meaning of the word 'Mikir' as follows: "There is also a meaning in calling the Karbi people Mikir. The word mi is a Kuki-Chinese "language word. It means people. The names of the Kuki-Chinese groups are often preceded by the word 'mi'. These include Miri, Mizu, Missing, Misimi, Mikir, etc. Some people define the word Miki as 'mi' means man and 'kir' means coward. The Mikir are actually cowards. In fact, it is because of their peaceful nature that they have become fugitives or cowards."

From the above discussion we learned that There are many legends and folklore about the origin of the name 'Karbi'. As mentioned in a chapter above.

1.2 Geographical location of the Karbi :

Linguistically, the Karbi are mainly Tibeto-Burmese and ethnically Mongolian. Some Karbi people are currently known to live in the mountainous regions of western Myanmar, ie western Burma (Kuki-China region) and northern Bangladesh. Most of them lived in Karbi Anglong district but others settled in Meghalaya Ri-Bhoi, South-East Kamrup, Nagaon, Morigaon, Golaghat, Jorhat districts and eastern Sonitpur district. Some also live in Lakhimpur, Lower Sowanisiri in Arunachal Pradesh, Barak Valley, Nagaland and Manipur.

From a geographical point of view, There are four geographical divisions of the Karbi people. Those four categories are - Amri, Ranghang, Chinthang and Dumurali. Among these four divisions the Amris are located in the western part. They are spread from Amri Development Zone in West Karbi Anglong, ie, in the western part of Hamren sub-division, to Ribhai district in Meghalaya, the foothills around East Guwahati, Chandrapur, Dimria and Mayang areas.

The Ranghang and Chinthang Karbi are basically the same. They came together from Myanmar via North Kachar. The main area of the Ranghangs is Rangkhang. Some say that Ranghang came from Rangkhang. Their other settlements are in Nagaon district and the Kapili Valley in North Kachar. The Chinthas live mainly in the Chinthang Development Zone of Hamren and parts of the Jaintia Hills district. They are probably called Chinthang because they migrated from Jaintia or Sinteng region or stayed in Sinteng region. In time, the Ranghang and Chinthang Karbis migrated east across the Kapili and spread to Hojai and later to the Lumbajang and Nilip regions, ie the entire Diphu and Bokajan sub-divisions.

The Karbi people, who live in the Jagiroad region to the west, Morigaon to the north, Jamunamukh to the east and Barpani valley to the south are called Dumurali or 'Thay Asr'. The Karbi people, who spread from Sonitpur district to Lakhimpur, are said to have started such settlements from the southern bank of the Brahmaputra.

They have five main clans. They are Teron, Terang, Timu, Inhi and Inti. Each main clan is again divided into sub-clans. For example, the sub-tribes of Teron are: Milik, Kankat, Langne, etc. The sub-tribes of Terang are: Terang, Bekro, etc. The sub-tribes of Inti are: Inti, Inglang, Kathar etc. The Inhi sub-tribes are: Rangpi, Ranghang, Tis', Hanche, Lekthe, Keap, Bangkong, Kramcha, etc. The sub-tribes of Timung are: Singnar, Tokbi, Rangfar, etc.

1.3 Introduction to the Karbi people of Terang village under Deithar region:

Deithar is located at a distance of [1.5](#) km from Numaligarh in Karbi Anglong district. Deithar is a predominantly rural area. Terang village is one of the Karbi villages in the Deithar area. Govt Model Degree College, Deithar is located near Terang village. The lifestyle of the villagers is very simple. Many of the Karbi people of Terang village depend on agriculture. The villagers mainly grow paddy, tea leaves and various fruits like jackfruit and coconut. Many of the villagers earn their living by farming and wage labour.

The Karbi people of Terang village have now converted to Christianity. The Karbi who converted to Christianity are divided into two categories catholic and Protestant. The villagers have built a public church to pray. Every Saturday and Sunday they go to the church and pray publicly to Jesus. The Karbi people of Terang village have converted to Christianity but still retain some traditional customs, festivals, folk customs and folk beliefs. In this study, we discussed the folk customs and folk beliefs prevalent among the Karbi people of Terang village.

2.0 Folklore and Beliefs among the Karbis :

The Karbis of Terang village in Deithar area observe various folklore related to agriculture and there are some folk beliefs behind it. They also observe various customs related to birth, marriage and death. And these folklore are based on folk beliefs.

2.1 Agricultural Folklore :

The Karbi people mainly cultivate Jhum. The Karbi people of Terang village mainly grow paddy. There are various rules and regulations to be followed before and during the harvesting of paddy. Before the village farmers start the Jhum cultivation, they hold a collective Rangker Puja (Puja is a ritual in which different gods and goddesses are worshipped) to avoid any disturbances while working in the Jhumtali and to ensure the prosperity of the crops. When drought, crop failure, disease, misfortune and famine occur in the village, Ranker Puja is organized collectively under the supervision of the village headman. One form of Ranker worship is Wofang Ranker. This wofang is held every five years. On the second day of Wofang Ranker, Lakhi Keku is worshiped and the Minu or Puja rice is distributed among everyone and everyone mixes the rice with their seed rice and sows it in the fields. The main deities worshiped in Ranker are Hemphu, Mukrang Rashinja and others. The main act of worship is performed by the Kurusar (priest).

In the past, the Karbi kings or royal councils held the Wolketer Puja on behalf of the common people before starting agriculture. In this puja, the high priest Katharbura invokes the weather goddess Haimu through songs and praises her for bringing rain to the earth.

They hold a puja to welcome Lakhimi(rice) during the paddy harvest, before the threshing of paddy . The role of the uncle called mama (mather's brother) is important in Karbi folklore. The first Lakhimi (handful of rice) in the paddy field it is believed that the handful of rice is harvested by the hands of the uncle. The custom of hanging the newly brought handful of rice at the main door of the house is common among the Karbi people of Terang village.

After threshing the rice, they bring Lakhimi home and celebrate the Na-Khowa festival. This festival of new food is called Ankimicho.

2.2 Folkbelief and customs related to birth :

In the Karbi society, reform rituals are observed before and after the birth of children. Folk beliefs also play a role in the birth of children. In the Karbi society, a child is welcomed with mantras as soon as he is born. Then, as soon as the baby reaches the age of six months, a worship of the forest gods should be performed to prevent the evil eyes of ghosts and demons.

Naming: (Osso Amen Kiir) : After the birth of a child, a ceremony is held to name him. This ceremony is called Osso Amen Kiir in Karbi language. This ceremony is performed through song-only. The purification of the mother and child is also performed at this ceremony.

The Karbi believe in reincarnation. According to Karbi folk belief, when a member of the clan dies, the deceased is reborn in that family. To know about the previous birth of the child born in this case, one looks Mangal (a type of astrological calculation) by Mangalati (a person who knows how to calculate astrology, who can calculate astrology and tell about the previous birth of the child). Mangalati is also called Deuri. Deuri or Mangalati calculates astrology with the help of rice and curry and the newborn is named according to the name of his previous birth. In addition, the relationship of the newborn to the father in the previous life is considered. After birth, a string is tied to the right hand of the child if it is a boy and to the left hand if it is a girl.

In fact, birth folklore is female-cantered. Such women-centric folklore has been practiced in the Karbi society since ancient times. They have been observing the unclean rites of birth through their own customs. Traditionally, from the moment a woman is confirmed pregnant, the elderly women of the household try to supervise the pregnant woman in all aspects. The elderly women of the household are responsible for taking the mother to a separate room as soon as labor pains begin and calling experienced women to provide appropriate assistance to the pregnant mother. Like other societies, pregnant women have to follow certain rules and regulations from the time their children take place in the womb. The father of the child to be born should also refrain from killing animals, lying, etc. They believe that failure to follow these rules has a negative impact on their children. They also believe that the baby will constantly salivate after birth if he does not get enough to eat. After three months of pregnancy, the Karbi people customarily sacrifice a red

chicken and offer a puja called 'Chamaju' to wish the pregnant woman good health and recovery. When the woman seems to be having difficulties during childbirth, another red female chicken is sacrificed and a puja called 'Hangthu Kefalk' is offered to the Lord.

As soon as the baby is born, the women in waiting chant a few mantras to welcome the newborn. They sing in mantras - "O Lord, the child born is a human child, not an animal. He was born to have a relationship with humans..." They believe that only after chanting this mantra does the newborn become a full human being. The baby is then bathed. After the birth of a child, a fire is constantly lit in the room where the child and mother are to prevent any evil force from harming the baby and the mother. Occasionally, garlic, mustard seeds, etc. are sprinkled on the fire. There is also a tradition of placing knives, garlic, and mustard seeds under the mother's bed to prevent any ghost from harming her and her child. After the birth of the child, the mother is always fed a variety of healthy vegetable soups for several days. They have believed that eating fish soup with black pepper after childbirth is a good food for dry navel of pregnant women. Black pepper is used in curries cooked to feed the mother of the child. They usually do not use oil and spices when cooking curry.

The baby is usually taken out on the day of the umbilical cord removal. The Karbi people celebrate this festival as a custom to bring the baby outside. This practice is called 'lightning showing' (baz dekhua). After the baby is born, the house is cleaned, the clothes are washed, the whole house is sprinkled with tulsi (basil) and duvari (Bermuda grass) and 'clunk thekar' is done to remove impurities. According to their folk belief, if this worship is not performed, the newborn will become unclean for life and God will not protect him. The women who helped the midwives during childbirth are honored with a meal on that day.

They also fix a good day and time for a newborn haircut. In their tradition, only the uncle (mother's brother) can cut the hair. Therefore, the householder should go to the house of the baby's uncle (mother's brother) and invite him respectfully to perform this haircut. When inviting, it is necessary to bring 'harlang' (laopani) and 'taman' (fire-dried senaphala fish) as prizes. On good days after the haircut, they perform two types of worship—'Phalanchar Ahis' and 'Ahap Afi'. They believe that after performing this puja, no ghost or evil force will fall on the baby. They also perform a ritual called 'Bormatha' for the welfare of their children. The kurusar (priest) takes the lead in this ceremony. Chickens are also sacrificed.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the Karbi people of Terang village observe various folk customs associated with various folk beliefs related to birth.

2.3 Folk beliefs and custom related to marriage : The Karbi marriage performed by mutual customs is called Adam-Achar. According to the customs of their society, if a young man is not married through the rules, he should be married according to the customs, at least in old age. Otherwise, the marriage of their stepchildren will not be recognized by the society. If a legal marriage is not consummated before the death of a person, then the marriage should be consummated according to custom before the funeral. Therefore, it can be seen that there are two types of customs in the Karbi society, 'Dekabia' (young age marriage) and 'Budhabia' (old age marriage). The Karbi society is divided into five clans and each clan has several sub-clans. It is important to note that people from the same clan and sub clan can always be related to uncles, uncles, brothers, and sisters. Therefore, they cannot marry into the same clan. Karbi women do not even accept their husbands' titles. Because if they accepted their husband's title, their relationship would be like that of brothers and sisters. Their society declares it illegal.

Boys from one clan or clan can only marry girls from four other clans. However, even among these four, in many cases some restricted practices are followed. For example, the bride and groom will be brothers and sisters even if they are of different races but have the same maternal lineage. Illegitimate love or marriage beyond such restricted limits is called 'lycenem' and illegitimate love or marriage between the same clan is called 'kursenem'. Offenders are expelled from society for such crimes. In the past, such criminals were sentenced to death.

One of the notable aspects of Karbi society is that if a marriageable boy has a daughter of his uncle (mother's brother), he can marry his uncle's daughter. And if his uncle have no daughter, or if he does not agree with her, he may marry another daughter of his uncle's family. Alternatively, he can marry the daughters of the other four clans without violating the forbidden custom. In this case The groom's uncle accepts the bride as his daughter and adopts her into his clan. Therefore, the role of the uncle (mother's brother) in marriage is important because of this custom in the Karbi society. Therefore, they also consider Momai (uncle) as a god, which is one of the most important aspects of the Karbi people.

In Karbi folk tradition, the wedding ceremony is held in five stages. The stages are: in

(a) Nengpi Nengso Kashinki (Bioni Mel) (Bioni mel means a conversation between the mother of the groom and the mother of the bride)

(b) Piso kehang (bride seeking or proposal)

(c) Lam Pathik (Final decision)

(d) Aj' Arani Kefa (Determination of Day and Time).

(e) Kapangri (marriage ceremony)

They celebrate this marriage in four ways:

a) Adam Asar,

b) Harhok Kanthur,

c) Adam Thankk and

d) Piso Kemen.

The rules for finding a girl are the same in all four methods. In the 'Nengpi Nangs' Kachinki' or Bioni mel stage, the groom's mother arrives at the bride's house with a bottle of wine and a couple of women and a conversation takes place between the two Bioni (the groom's mother and the bride's mother). Men have no role in this ceremony but the father of the bride may be present as a witness. After an understanding between the two bionis, the groom honors the bride's father by giving him a 'bankrak' (titalao pot) filled with 'harbang' (liquor bottle), areca nut (tamul), betel leaf (pan) or Piper betle and harlang (laopani). All the items are loaded into a 'hak' (a container or bag for carrying things, also called khang) and brought to the bride's house by the groom's sister on her back. At the wedding ceremony, the groom puts the ring on the bride and presents her with a pinny pack (traditional dress of Karbi women).

After arriving at the bride's house, the groom's host offers 'harbang' and 'bankrak' to the bride's host and father as per the rules. The bride and groom exchanged questions in the presence of the people. The bride's father takes the dowry harbang and sings prayers in the presence of the worshiped gods and other gods and goddesses for blessings. This is followed by an exchange of views between the lanceps (singers) on both sides through 'adam-alun' or wedding songs. The bride's father offers 'Harbang' (karbi traditional wine) and 'Bangkrak' to the household gods Hemmu-Mukrang and Rashinja Devi and the people present sing prayers. The bride and groom are then taken to separate rooms and seated on a bed decorated with 'pelu amang ked' (a floral bed sheet of the Karbi people). No one but the bride and groom can sit on this bed. The old woman sits on the bed and sings blessings and wishes the marriage. Food is served on the same plate to the bride and groom. After the meal, the bride offers areca nut (tamul) and betel leaf (pan) to the groom. Young men and women surround the bride and groom and rejoice in the ceremony. The next morning, the bride and groom perform a puja called 'Hemmu Abur Kamatha' to seek God's blessings and wish them a happy marriage. Then, according to custom, the bride's father sings a farewell song and bids farewell to his daughter. At the same time, someone sings on behalf of the bride and asks her father for the clothes she is wearing as according to Karbi custom, the bride is not allowed to take clothes or any property with her. The groom's father also wants to welcome the bride and groom to their new home by singing a song. There is no rule that the bride's parents go to the groom's house, but it is recommended that the bride's uncle or brother or a relative go. In Karbi folk tradition, there is an important custom of giving good advice to the bride through songs after returning from her husband's house.

It is customary for the bride and groom to rest in the middle of the road on their way from the bride's house to the groom's house. They open the bags of rice and porridge brought from the bride's house and eat them at a resting place. It is believed that when the bride and groom eat together from the same basket, their hearts are purified and their marriage becomes holy and happy. After arriving at the groom's house, 'Hemmu Abur Kamtha' is performed before the deity at the groom's house as is done at the bride's house. They believe that the bride is welcomed by the gods of the house only after performing this puja.

The Karbi people have been celebrating weddings through their own customs and traditions. There is no restriction on widow marriage in their society. After the death of the brother, the other brother can take her as a wife. In the event of divorce, both husband and wife may remarry if they wish. After marriage, Karbi women have to follow certain traditional restrictions. For example, a married woman can go before her husband, but she can never go before another man, sit down to eat with him, and address any man other than her husband or brother as 'you'. Married women cannot participate in dances, spread their umbrellas in front of royal officials, hold the position of village headman, or exchange goods with elders.

2.4 Folk beliefs and customs related to death :

In Karbi society, the dead are buried in two ways. Normal deaths are buried by cremation and those who die abnormally by burying them in the ground. Their society has five 'tipits' (cheetah burning places) according to the five clans. The body is only cremated in a 'tipit' designated by the clan. They consider some deaths unusual. These include m death, suicide, death from chronic disease, death by fire, snake bite, death by elephant, being eaten by tiger, etc. They believe that these deaths are the result of evil deeds. The deceased is buried separately away from the designated 'tipit'. Before that, the body is consecrated by the kapre (priest who releases the curse) or the ocha (reformer of the dead). The body eaten by tiger was removed from the cemetery and buried in an isolated place. They believe that the souls of the dead who are eaten by tigers never attain liberation. There is a popular belief among them that tigers only kill sinners. According to tradition, the Karbi people are unclean for three days when a person dies. It is also customary to keep the body of the deceased for more than one night while waiting for relatives. This rule is called 'Rankepadau'. The body of the deceased is placed in the main room of their large house. All the materials in the room is removed before the body is placed. Otherwise the materials are assumed to be unclean. Three women who know the rules and regulations are traditionally employed to assume duties for the deceased during the days of the funeral. They are Ochepi, Charhepi and Awkapi. Ochepi is the most important of these three. Everything for the deceased is done under his direction. Charhepi, on the other hand, is a woman who sings songs of pleading for the dead. Charhepi describes the virtues and virtues of the deceased during his lifetime, describes the hopes and aspirations, guides the soul of the deceased to Yampuri (heaven or hell) and stays there for a few days and prays for rebirth in his lineage. The woman who carries the bones of the deceased tied to her chest is called avkapi .

One of their most notable traditions is to offer rice, soup, water, wine, areca nut and betel leaf etc. to the deceased from time to time during the days of burial. In Karbi folk beliefs, this world and the afterlife are considered to be completely opposite. Therefore, when cooking or making offerings for the deceased, Osepi should do so with the left hand. Moreover, when the deceased is laid in the room of the big house, the bed is turned upside down. On the third day after the burial of the deceased, the impurities are expelled and the house is purified. However, it is essential to perform

Shraddha at least every few years according to the convenience of the householder. They can also perform shraddhas for several generations simultaneously. This shraddha ceremony is called Chamankan. They believe that the souls of the deceased do not go to heaven without performing this Chamankan ceremony.

There are three types of Chamankan- (a) Konflafla, b) Langtuk and c) Harne. Kanflafla Chamankan is an ordinary class of events. Through this Kanflafla Chamankan, most of the Karbi people or the economically weaker ordinary Karbis, hold shraddha ceremonies for the deceased of their families. Langtuk is the intermediate type and Harne is the high level Chamankan. These two types of chamankan are performed only for deceased persons of social status. The organizer must also be financially strong to hold this high-level Chamankan event. This is because the host has to spend a lot of money to invite friends, relatives, young people from neighbouring villages, old people, etc. to feed everyone, provide accommodation, dance and sing. However, the people actively participated and helped the organizers by providing essential items in many cases. Therefore, although family-oriented, the event becomes a public and national event. They believe that songs and dances bring liberation and eternal peace to the dead souls. Therefore, the youths perform the Nims' Kerung' dance to appease the Yama king during the Chamankan ceremony. The Karbi people of Terang village observe a week-long fast when a family member dies. There is also a tradition of cooking separate meals for relatives who come to visit the deceased. This tradition is called Langparai. They celebrate the Chamankan festival for three or four days. On the first day of the Chamankan ceremony, the bones of the deceased are collected by visiting the cemetery. Osepi and Sarhapi invite the souls of the dead to earth through song. The Chamankan ceremony involves going to the jungle and singing death songs. There are two types of songs: Sharhe and Lun-che-pi. Baskets of rice and water and wine are taken from the house for the deceased, and Osepi opens the bags for the deceased and offers rice and water, areca nut (tamul) and betel leaf (pan) to the deceased. When offering rice and water, Osepi should sing a song of pleading. After offering rice and water, Osepi announced that the collection of bones was complete, Avakapi tied the bones to his chest and carried them home. Several Avacapi are required in different areas depending on the number of deaths. It is recommended that one copy be of maternal lineage.

Osepi arrives at the house with a drum and a sword and places the bones in straw statues according to the names of the deceased. Afterwards, the idols are dressed in new clothes, prayers are sung and various memories of the life of the deceased are recalled.

On the second day of Chomankan, the charhepi sings songs about the faults and virtues of the deceased during his lifetime. Osepi offers rice and water to the dead or idols and occasionally sings sad songs. In the evening, after Osepi has bathed and purified himself, the host seats him on a new dhara, arranges for tea and drink, and asks him to conduct the festivities. He is honoured with five pairs of betel leaf (pan), areca nut(tamul), a package of boiled dried fish, wine, and a pot of titalao filled with laopani (traditional karbi wine).

On the third morning, Osepi dances in a special pose to the beat of the two drummers. Then there is dancing and singing among the youths of different areas for the full day. Before sunset, Osepi cooks together rice, mustard, eggs, chicken, and so on and offers food to the deceased. The drummer then beats the drums to a special rhythm, and Osepi takes a white cloth and binds it according to the number of the dead. At night, Osepi again cooks and packages rice with a mixture of flour, rice, potatoes, spinach, mustard, dried fish, and eggs and offers it to the deceased. Similarly, Avkapi also offers packages. At midnight, Osepi sacrifices a chicken, mixes the pieces of meat with potatoes, spinach, coconuts, bananas, etc., and places the remains in packages according to the number of dead and places them at the feet of the idol. The package should be taken to the cemetery and thrown away.

The bones collected on the first day are taken back to the cemetery on the fourth day and buried. Statues made of straw are imagined to be dead persons. These Statues are taken to the cemetery and burned. After completing all the work of the Chamankan ceremony, the host honors the Ochepi with rice.

Thus the Karbi people of Terang village have carried out their own folk beliefs and customs related to death.

2.5 Religious beliefs and customs of the Karbi people :

The Karbi people of Terang village also believe and worship various gods and goddesses. They have little need for temples, idols, and temples, although some traditional worship centered around various deities and ghosts is still practiced today.

The Karbi people believe in nature worship. This nature worship is called Longpri Langpat and involves the worship of trees, air, water and soil. The supreme deities worshiped by the Karbi are Hemphu, Mukrang and the only goddess Rashinja. They believe in the god Hemphu as the protector and the god Mukrang as the creator. Hemphu's sister Rashinja is the goddess of power on the one hand and the mother of peace on the other. Domestic deities and agricultural deities are also worshipped. These gods and goddesses are worshiped to protect against diseases, misfortune, death, wild animals, favorable weather and for the good of crops, villages and society. Chickens, pigs, etc. are sacrificed during the puja and harbang (bottle of wine) is offered. The Karbi people use rice, pithaguri (rice flour), basil, resin, palm leaves, turmeric, coal, bot tree, jari tree, small bamboo branches, wild trees etc. in their worship. Basil and resin are very sacred to [them](#). The priest who performs the worship is called the Kurusar. The royal priest is called Katharbura.

The Karbi people of Terang village celebrate Rangker Puja in the first week of January for the prosperity of village and agricultural crops. This Puja is celebrated in a community gathering in the middle of the village. The biggest puja held in Terang village is Sujun Puja. This Puja is held every five years. Sujun Puja is also known as Swarga Puja as the gods of heaven, namely Barithe (Indra), Arpi (Rudra), Biren (Agni), etc. are worshipped. Sujun Puja is celebrated for three days and pigs are sacrificed every day.

The Karbi also follow certain customs in building houses. Mangalati (a person who knows astrological calculations) determines whether a piece of land is suitable for building a house. Deus (ghosts) are believed to inhabit houses filled with disease and misfortune. Therefore, the Baurmatha ceremony is held to protect the house from disease and misfortune. The ceremony uses tamul(areca nut), pan (betel leaf) and wine. Every year, they celebrate Hemangtar Puja for the welfare of the household. This puja is held for three days and the main person of the household plays an important role in the puja. The person who plays the main role in the Hemangtar ceremony is called the Hemangtar Kirim. There are many different types of ceremonies and rituals that are performed by the Hemangtar Kirima few days before the Puja . In those days he fasts and does not eat anything that others eat. A red flower called Mirang is used on the last day of this puja.

The Karbi people believe that there are deus or sekema (ghosts) in bamboo trees, big trees and forests. So when they go to the forest, they take ginger, garlic and soybeans. They believe that ginger, garlic, soybeans, etc. protect people from the evil eyes of ghosts and spirits. The Karbi people of Terang village have been following religious beliefs and folk customs in various aspects mentioned above.

3.0 Conclusions:

The above discussions gives us an introduction to the karbi people of teranga village under deithar area of karbi anglong district, Assam. We also get some information about the folk beliefs and folk customs performed by the karbi people in various aspects. The following findings can be reached through this study –

- Terang village is one of the Karbi villages in the Deithar area. The people of this village are mainly agriculturalists. The economic status of the village is moderate.
- Some of the Karbi people of Terang village have converted to Christianity but the people of the village follow some traditional customs.
- The Karbi people of Terang village have traditional customs and traditions related to agriculture, birth, death, marriage and religion.
- The Karbi people of Terang village are associated with agricultural folk beliefs and customs, especially Jhum cultivation and paddy cultivation. Rangker Puja is celebrated in conjunction with agriculture.
- The Karbi people of Terang village observe Mangal (a type of astrological calculation) by Mangalati (a person who knows how to calculate astrology and can predict the past and future) in various fields.
- Folk beliefs and customs related to birth are observed before and after the birth of children. Mangalati looks Mangal with regard to the previous birth of the child and the newborn is named according to the name of the previous birth.
- The role of the uncle (mother's brother) is important in the Karbi society. The uncle takes the lead in cutting the hair of the children, harvesting the crops and weddings.
- Folk beliefs and customs associated with death are mainly those observed during the Chamankan ceremony. After death, the body is placed inside the house for relatives to arrive one day. This rule is called Rankepadou.
- The supreme deities worshiped by the Karbi are Hemphu, Mukrang and the only goddess Rashinja. These gods and goddesses are worshiped to protect against diseases, misfortune, death, wild animals, favorable weather and for the good of crops, villages and society. Chickens , pigs, etc. are sacrificed during the puja and harbang (bottle of wine, traditional karbi wine) is offered.
- The Karbi people use rice, pithaguri (rice flour), basil, resin, palm leaves, turmeric, coal, bot tree, jari tree, small bamboo branches, wild trees etc. in their worship. Basil and resin are very sacred to them. The priest who performs the worship is called the Kurusar. The royal priest is called Katharbura.
- The Karbi people of Terang village also believe and worship various gods and goddesses. The Karbi people also believe in nature worship.
- The Karbi people have their own folk beliefs and customs that enrich the folk culture of the Karbi people

3.0 Reference:

1. The research paper is based on data obtained through field studies among the Karbi people of Terang village under Deithar area. Several resource persons assisted in the field study. They are –
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6. Klarbangso Bey (Student)
7. Chartwell Singnar (student)
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