

The Politics of Festival-Tracing the origin and growth of Karbi Youth Festival: Search for identity.

Bandita Teronpi

Research scholar, Political Science
Assam University Diphu Campus
&

Dr. K.C.Das

Associate Professor & HoD, Political Science
Assam University Diphu Campus
Diphu : Karbi Anglong : Assam

It takes ten years to grow a tree but it takes a hundred years to establish the identity of a people'-confusius.

'Evens are now established method for promoting destination supplementing their traditional role as forms of exhibitions are performance' (roche 2000).

Introduction

It is not unknown that India is a land of Unity in Diversity. It is this country that we find multi-language, multiplicity of culture, mixed economy, mixed Government (coalition) and an overall plural society living together. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "I am standing in front of a mini-India, a miniature of India's future. Our country is full of Diversity and a national in Diversity is the beauty and strength of our Nation and this is what keeps inspiring us." The idea of unity of India is inherent in all historical and socio-cultural facts, as well as in its cultural heritage. India has one constitution, single citizenship providing guarantees for people belonging to diverse religions, cultures and languages. It covers people belonging to all socio-economic strata.

The North-East state of India is the house of diversity of ethnic community who were known either to have migrated from Burma, Tibet, China and Cambodia. The ancestral home of the various people speaking Tibeto-Burma languages was in Western China near the Yang-Tse-Kiang and the Howang-ho rivers and from these places they went down the courses of Brahmaputra the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy and entered India and Burma.

This gives an idea that the Karbi's might have come through the path described above, to know history about a community or tribe lead us to the folklores of it. As to understand 'To understand any people' one must necessarily understand their creation story, which recounts how the world was formed, how things came to be form, continued within creation stories are.

Karbi Anglong

Karbi Anglong is the largest districts amongst the 27 districts of Assam. History reveals that the “Karbis”, the then “Mikir” were the earliest inhabitant of Assam and which really constitutes an important ethnic group in the Hills Areas of Assam, but nevertheless, some Karbi’s also inhabits in North Cachar Hills, Kamrup, Morigaon, Nogaon, Sonitpur Districts, Arunachal Pradesh racially, the Karbis belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. But besides the Karbi tribe, there are also a large number of other communities residing in the district, such as Dimasa, Bodo, Rengma Nagas, Kuki/Thadou/Hmar tribes, Tiwas, Garos, Mna-Tai speaking communities, some Khasi tribes in areas adjoining Meghalaya mostly in Hamren Sub-Division and some scattered Chakmas. There are also Assamese, Bengali, Bihari etc. groups of people throughout the District.

Festivals

Talking about festival, it is very interesting to note that there are around 50 (fifty) greatest festivals in the world. It is the Harbin Ice and Snow Festival of China from Jan 5 – Feb 5 that lists the first. In this festival, we can witness the people build incredible things out of ice and snow, decorating them with lights and lasers. Next comes the Chinese New Year: Between Jan. 21 & Fe. 20. It is the biggest Chinese holiday with dragons, fireworks, symbolic clothing, flowers, lanterns and celebration, everywhere in China and even in other Asian countries. Likewise name can be taken of USA’s Sundance Fun Festivals, Magh Mela festival of India, Up Helly Aa Fire Festival of Scotland, Holi of India. The carnival of Rio De Taneiro of Brazil which is quite famous, La Tomatina Bund festival of Spain was people throw tomatoes to each other. What does all these festivals around the world signifies? What ideas do it gives us? Or what impression does it imprints? Each of these world famous festivals gives the impression or the identity of the place or country it belongs, what is the culture or practice of that particular region, it is through the festivals the people, the location or the country gets recognition. It becomes a place of attraction to the global community thus, inviting more and more expatiators which ultimately results in the identity of the place, the people and the culture. It becomes a place of destination for tourist.

Coming to the point of our festivals of North-East India, there 11 popular North East India festivals, which highlights the region's rich Indigenous culture with folk songs, tribal dances, food and crafts. Name can be coded of the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, Sanghai festival of Manipur, Bihu festival, Assam, Brahmaputra Beach Festival, Assam, Dehing Patkai Festival, Assam Torgya Monasty Festival, Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong Autumn Festival, Meghalaya, Nongkrem Dance Festival, Meghalaya, Wangala Festival, Meghalaya, Chapchar Kut, Mizoram, Kang Chingba, Manipur, Kharchi Puja, Tripura. The Horn Bill Festival is held at Naga Heritage village, Kisama, 12 km from Kohima. The tribes of Nagaland celebrate their festivals with appreciation and fervor. The objective behind the festival is to encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote culture heritage of Nagaland, usually held between 1st and 7th of December. The Festival is name after the Indian Hornbill, the large and colorful forest bird which is displayed in folklore in most of the state's tribes. Assam, most famous for its one-horned Rhinoceros and tea gardens is also famous for its Bihu a national festival of the people of Assam, marked particularly on the agricultural period which is Sub-Categorized into three. The biggest and the most colorful of the three is Bohaag Bihu (also known as Rongali Bihu) celebrated at seeding time in Spring with lots of singing and dancing. Kaati Bihu, is another one, which is celebrated at the completion of paddy transplanting. The last is the Maagh Bihu (Bhogali Bihu) celebrated at the end of harvest season, with bonfires feasting, buffalo fights and pot breaking. Another festival of Assam is the Brahmaputra Beach festival, held at the bank of river Brahmaputra, entrance of Sonaram field, Bharalu in the month of Jan. & Feb. It this festival one witness traditional Bihu Dances, food crafts, cultural exhibition, paragliding, boat cruises, canoeing, rafting, beach, volleyball etc.

Yet, another Assamese festival that worth highlighting is the Dehing Patkai Festival. Name after the Dehing River and Patkai range in Eastern Assam. Attraction of the festival includes fairs, tea heritage low, golfing adventures sports, wildlife and trips to still well road and World War-II Cemeteries'. This festival is held at Lekhapani, in the Tinsukia districts of Assam.

The fifth festival of North-East India is the three day Monastery festival of Arunachal Pradesh. It is observed by the Monpa tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. The rituals, including the performance of sacred dances by brightly costumed monks in the Monastery's country yard in a faith to ward off evil spirits and bring prosperity to the tribe.

Like wise all those other festivals represents a particular tribe, a country, the traditionalism, the religion, the rich culture and how a festival is similar or different from the other, while each making a unique identity of its own.

Karbi Youth Festival: in darkness.

When the discussion is on the festivals of North-East India and of India, the Karbi Youth Festival cannot be left untold. As the Karbi Youth Festival is now 41 years old and it claim to be the oldest and the largest ethnic festival not only of North-East India but the country itself. The Karbi Youth Festival is the festival of the Karbi, a Hill tribe of Assam. The Karbi's mentioned as the 'Mikir' once in the constitution order, govt. of India, constitute an important ethnic group of Assam. Through sometimes the Karbi's, called them 'Arleng' which literally mean a 'man'. The birth of the Karbi Youth Festival has its own long historical background. This festival of the Karbi's depicts the entire Karbi Culture. Before tracing the origin of the karbi youth festival, that let us know something about the youth. Youth has always a shared a great place in the development activity of a race, a community or a nation. Youths are the backbone of a country. They are the future, who can materialize the dreams of a community. Dr. Abdul Kalam spoke 'on the role of youth in realizing the progress of India, to the Karbi Society, the Karbi Youth has always played a very important and imminent role in the progress of Karbi culture and identity. It is because of those groups of youths, the Karbi Youth Festival has its existence. Prof. U.B. Pandey, commented on Karbi Youths that "this is much praiseworthy and mature on the part of the Karbi Youth that they didn't take to the culture of gun, guitar and girls which is very often associated with the tribal youth in the rest of the Eastern Indian region.....I would call the Assam movement a turning point in the life of the Karbi Youth who made the presence felt at all India level and earned out a niche in the political history". But its origin history flash backs to 'The Roman Script movement' organized by Karbi Student Association (KSA) for Karbi language and demanding the retention of English as the medium of instruction against the Gauhati University's decision to introduce 'Assamese' as the language of education in the colleges under its jurisdiction. A landmark decision was adopted for writing 'Karbi national literature' and 'Karbi text books to be used as Karbi Vernacular subjects in the lower Primary School Level in Roman Script. According a 'Script Implementation Committee' (SIC) was

formed in 1973 with Sri Bronson Engti as President and Roy Enghi as General -- Secretary. The 'SIC' through separate resolutions sent appeals to the council to adopt a resolution in the Council Session and the Karbi Lammet Amei adoption of Roman Script. But there was a difference of opinion between some groups of Karbi rulers. A series of agitation programs took place meanwhile; the leaders of the movement toured the entire Karbi Anglong district to mobilize the people. Karbi Adorbar was also Parallel to oppose the Roman Script along the male and the Karbi female folk too were actively participating in the 'Roman Script Movement.' Section 144 was imposed in the entire district. It became a very hectic time; as volunteers all over the district were moving towards the district headquarter 'Diphu'. The volunteers arrived at a village named 'Kehai Timung' village (Presently Chotianala), where food was arranged and from where they could not move ahead to Diphu due to the imposition of 144. So, on 27th December'1973, a procession was taken out from Kehai Timung village, but the police arrested the --volunteers at 'Rongkhelan' near present Donbosco School. Another procession took place on 28th December'1973, where the police again arrested some of the leaders of the procession including Dr. Sarsing Terang, Sri Dhoniram Tisso, Sri Monsing Rongpi, Sri Mensing Rongpi, and Roy Enghi. They were all put in Diphu jail for two (2) days. It was in the moment that these youths first discussed about the necessity of a "Youth Festival" of the Karbi's. A house-to-house donation of Rs.10/- was raised from Diphu for the preparation of it.

The Diphu Government College students took active part in the movement. They smear signboards carrying Assamese Script (1972-73) with black paints. They also organized 'one-act plays' to expose corruptions and generated public opinion.

There was also the issue of Karbi dress code for Karbi girl students, raised by "Karbi Lo Charli Asong", which means Karbi Student Association. They decided dress code for Karbi female students was "Pini" and "Seleng". Slowly cultural realization started to take place amongst the Karbi's. Sri Harsing Engti wrote the first chorus for Diphu Government College Week, which begged 2nd prize in 1973. "Kangsip" was the Best Drama and after when Harsing Engti; continues writing and performing the 'One Act Plays.' Engti also took part in 'Youth against Famine Campaign' from Diphu Government College in 1973. Being an active performance, he became a great promoter of Karbi culture. His 'One Act Play' gained popularity as it was a form of exposure in exposing 'corruptions of politicians.' The then ruler of District council enforced ban on his one-act-plays 'Kangsip' and 'Kai Kirla', a full-

drama. It is very interesting to note that the iconic chorus of the Karbis “Kardom dengtha o Karbi an.....was composed by him and was first performed at Diphu club in 1971.” In spite of such setbacks, the leader of the Roman Script Movement became able to review the movement. Though many of those youths were behind the bars, yet their spirit never went damp. And there, the ‘idea’ to launch a cultural movement, taking the shape to frame in the name of “Karbi Youths Festival took place”. Their goal was to do something ‘New’ in order to unite and rejoin the upcoming Karbi Generation, immediately after coming out of the jail; they started more vigorously mobilizing the mass in general and youths in particular. So, after much hardship and complexity the first ‘Karbi Youth Festival’ was held by the end of January in 1974 at ‘Karbi Club’, Rongnihang, and Diphu with about 300 participants. After that the growth of Karbi Youth Festival became visible. The 3rd Karbi Youth Festival was held at Karbi Anglong Sport Association (KASA) playground as there was the demand from the growing participants throughout the district. In 30 January 1977, the Karbi cultural Society (KCS), a body was instituted who takes the responsibility to organize, determine and redefine the Karbi Youth Festival annually in the month of February. In 1992 the Karbi youth festival grew to the extend in forming zonal committees who has the responsibility of organizing Karbi youth festival in its small or mini form every year in the month of October. From 1994, the venue was shifted to a permanent beautiful and evergreen hilly area of 1086 bighas, Taralango, calling it the ‘Karbi People’s Hall’. Since then the “Karbi Youth Festival” is been regularly held at Taralango every year in the mid February month and has now become the largest ethnic extravaganza of Assam, North-East and the whole of India.

Why and what is Karbi Youth Festival?

It became an important issue during those years of 1972’s, when the Karbi youth took up the ‘Roman Script Movement’. It was during the cultural movement and along the struggle for Karbi nationalism that the psychology to create a common cultural platform was thought to be important and the idea to create and organize a ‘National Festival’ of the Karbis was adopted and thus the first “Karbi Youth Festival” was held in 1974. Beginning with some 300 people, now the Karbi Youth Festival welcomes expatriators nearly in lakhs. The Karbi Youth Festival is important as it has become a forum to determine and redefine the traditional Karbi Art and culture. It is also important because it is a celebration of Karbi heritage and rich culture. Karbi Youth Festival is also important because it is the ‘dream come true’ of those youths who dreamt of an independent identity for the Karbi’s through this cultural

festival, as the motto of Karbi Youth Festival says “CULTURE IS ALWAYS THE FACE OF THE COMMUNITY (KARBI) and “THE LITERATURE THE LIVE OF THAT COMMUNITY”. Thus, when a culture is alive, that community to which the culture belongs is also alive. The Karbi Youth Festival is not only a festival entertainment but a full study on the rich Karbi culture and heritage. If one has to study on the Karbi’s, the Karbi Youth Festival is the hub of knowledge. It is the knowledge of the traditional Karbi customs, knowledge on the Arts and craft and which gives light of how the Karbi’s were well equipped and sufficient. The various use of bamboo, right from making Karbi ‘Hemtun, Hemtaps, i.e. the Karbi house and to the smallest useful objects of live is very fascinating, the knowledge of ethnic foods, the Herbal medicines, the pindeng sumpot’ i.e. the dresses of Karbis, the ornaments, which also highlights how rich the Karbi Society was and is. The knowledge of Karbi traditional political system, the presence of Karbi Rechos i.e. kings, the Karbi folk songs, the traditional dances, ways of cultivation displayed through dance etc is all witness and known through this youth festival of the karbi’s.

Talking about the Karbi Youth Festival, it would be very significant to discuss the programs of it. The program starts with “RONG KETONG”, a traditional cultural procession, where participants from various twenty six (26) zones of Karbi Anglong, come in procession with their colorful traditional dresses each with their banner of identity and holding the “Jamili athong” from the Artists village (a place in Taralangso, where the participants are halt) to the Hemphu-Mukrang-Rasingja Aklam or stage name after the “God of the Karbis”, He is the Jutang ‘Kuru’. He though the Karbis the ceremonies like marriage i.e. ‘Adam Asar’ “Rasinja” was the sister of “Hempu”, who got married to “Mukrang”. After the traditional cultural procession, the “Tirim Kangduk” is observed which means paying homage to all the martyrs of Karbi’s. This occasion is declared to be opened by the Karbi Recho (King). The “rong ketong” is the opening ceremony of the four days long festival. The karbi cultural society’s flag is hosted by the president of the karbi cultural society.

After that the different type of folk dances are displayed in the form of competition for the rest of the days such as

1. Ritnong Chingdi and Hen-up Ahi Kekan : It is a traditional dance form of the Karbis, which is related with one of the seed sowing festival a cultivating festival celebrated in the first part of the month of April. Both male and female perform together. This dance not only demonstrates but also gives the idea of the various stages of the process of

cultivation sight from cleaning the cultivating area, sowing the seeds up to the reaping of the crops. In short, it displays the cultivation procedures of the Karbi's. This dance is followed by the 'Hen-ooop' ahi kekan, which is again a fascinating folk dance of the Karbi's. 'Hen-ooop' means bamboo shoot, out of the specific period of presentation and 'Kekan' means dance. It late summer, boys and girls from villages go to the jungle to collect the bamboo shoots and gather them in a place in their village. Though this is two different type of dance yet in the festival and competition point of view the participants perform in a mixed form.

2. Lingpum Sokchon: It is another dance form, which can be called as the 'Bamboo Dance' of the Karbis. Bamboo is the prop used in this dance. It is also a harvesting festival dance.
3. Nimso Kerung: It is the most colourful and fascinating dance of Karbi culture. It is performed during the occasion of Karbi "Chomkan" festival, held in the honour of the departed soul of the family. The word 'Nimso' means maiden and 'Kerung' means choosing and picking up the maiden for the dance. During this dance, the 'Duhuidi-Duhuijang', the two drummers, beats the drum.
4. Hacha Kekan: It is performed during harvesting. The Karbi community celebrates "Sok Keroi" Festival after the paddy is harvested. The "Lunsepo" is the singer, who sings song remembering the Great Social reformer "RUKASEN" by singing the song of "Lokhi Keplang", meaning the origin of wealth. This dance is performed by "Boys" only.
5. Chong Kedam: It is an action oriented dance form of the Karbi. It is a warrior dance. It is generally equipped with 'Nok', and swords and a 'chong' a shield.
6. Banjar Kekan : It is also performed during the "Chomkan Festival". "Banjar" means a 'Bamboo Pole' and "Kekan" means dance. This Banjar Pole is skillfully earned and displayed, which lights on the richness of art and craft activities of the Karbis. A number of folk songs are also highlighted through the Karbi Youths Festival like – i) Bong-oi Alun, which means romantic song sung by young boys and girls in the form of dialogue between them exchanging their feelings. ii) Mosera Kihir : It is recited in the form of song during the 'Chomkan' festival recounting the past history of the Karbi's. iii) Kurdidi by male and Oso Kebai (Female) is a song sung while making a baby sleep or. iv) The Sar Kebat Alun (Male) and Bor-et (Male/Female) are songs recounting the historical events of the Karbi's. The origin story and so on.

Through these dances and folk songs, we find that the Karbi's in every occasion and parts of life has expressed its riches through these dances and folk songs. Imagination can be made how these traditional people could recite and memorize their history and can pass it to their generations without any written form but only through chanting.

Besides the traditional forms, there are also modern songs and dance like Lun Cheto, means chorus, Lun Chethak, meaning a duet song, Lun Sampung, which means solo song, Hamphang Kekan, the modern dance etc.

We can also witness and be cherished through this festival, the performer playing the folk musical instruments like Muri Tongpo, meaning a flute like instrument, Krong Chui, meaning a lyre-shape musical instrument made out of bamboo and Iron, played by blowing with the mouth, Kum Li-eng means a wind instrument, like a violin, made out of gourd and wood.

Besides music, song and dance, the traditional sports of the Karbis are also interesting. The traditional sports are - 1. Hambi Kepathu, 2. Kengdongdang Kekat, a riding race on bamboos. 3. Bathili Ke-ap means handmade tools to shoot or aim at some objects. It's more or less like a catapult. 4. Hon Kejeng, bangphu Soktok Chingdi and Horling Kek.

Other attraction of Karbi Youth Festival is the traditional fashion show where we get the idea of Karbi traditional dress, like the male has a varieties of costumes like 'Choihongthor'- a jacket generally worn by married males. There are also other types of jackets like 'Choi-ang'. Choi kelok/choi umso, choi-ik.

Peseleng : Though Peseleng is worn by both male and female, it depends on the heaviness of the design that differentiates and the pattern of use of it while wearing between the male and female. It is generally white in colour. 'Rikong' is a small or slim piece of both worn by males. It is generally used by elderly person and in villages. 'Poho' is yet another product of Karbi wears. It is a head turban worn by Karbi men. The Bachelor wears the white colour Poho while the married male wears the red one. The white colored 'poho' carries more cultural significance as it worn by the Karbi Recho (King), the Pinpos/the countries, 'Habe' and the village Headman. 'Chepan' is a longer piece of cloth with less broadens and decorated with beads and shells and straps around the waist by the Karbi male. 'Vojaru Ani' is the head gear for Bachelors who are in the statue of 'Klengsarpo' and 'Klengdun' or the chief of the youth dormitory or 'Tir'. It is made out of the tail of a 'Racket tailed drongo'. 'Pelu' is a thick woman rectangular cloth used as traditional bed sheet and a important worn

product in traditional wedding and death rituals. Differentiating in design, both male and female use Pelu, 'Pelu' wore by male is called 'Pelu Marak' and that for female is called 'Piniku'. Through there is wide varieties of female costume, but most commonly used are 'Pekok', worn in upper body, slinging on the right shoulder to knee above length. There are varieties of pekoks based on the material and design texture. 'Pini kamphlak' a rectangular piece of thick cloth worn over the lower body tied from the waist, by a 'Vamkok', a belt and same the purpose to fasten the 'Pini'. 'Tir' ik' is pieces of cloth shorten than a 'Piba' worn by an adolescent girl till her marriage. 'jiso' is a chest cloth worn in older days etc.

In the part of ornaments, Karbi man used to put on brass made ear-ring called 'Norik', a silver bracelet called Prinsoroi and heavy silver necklace called lekrooa and lek-enji. Though these items are rarely found now. The women folks wore 'Nothengpi', big heavy ear-rings made of silver, its diameter about half inch. Silver bracelets are called Rup-Aroi and the necklace made of white beads is called Lech-ho-so, and the other made of silver coin and coloured beads is called 'Lek-chike'.

Another attraction of the karbi youth festival is the "Phu linglang", a rock concert competition earlier named as "No toklet". The inclusion of the programs highlights on the progressive mode of the karbi youth festival towards modernization. This has attracted a number of persons both as participants and the crowd. Thus the karbi youth festival holds the grip of tradition as well as modernity.

Thus, through this Karbi Youth Festival, we can know about the entire part of Karbi culture, through which each category would just lead to a research study.

Observing the origin and growth of the Karbi Youth Festival since its inception up to this date, we can feel its growth both in number, activity and publicity. There is a great growth of it. The Karbi Youth Festival (KYF) was a challenge in reclaiming and repairing the rich Karbi heritage and culture. Focusing on the ritual infrastructure, the framing, the symbols, the ethnic nomenclature of the four stages viz. Long Mirjeng Achetai, Sing Mirjeng Achetai, Semson Sing Engti and Hemphu-Mukrang, one can depicts the culturally rich Karbi's. Question generally arises in our mind as to who is Sing Mirjeng or Long Mirjeng or Semson Sing Engti or Hemphu Mukrang-Rasinja. As noted earlier Hemphu-Mukrang, Rasinja. Hemphu is the legendary God of the Karbi's, Rasinja the sister of Hemphu and Mukrang to whom Rasinja got married. It is through them that the Karbi culture and identity flourished. Likewise Sing Mirjeng and Long Mirjeng by the name of whom the two stages of

Karbi Youth Festival are named after are the two sons of “Songsar Richo.” It is through them the Karbi song, music and dance flourished. Earlier, in the Karbi history, there was not any song, music a dance. It is also through them that the naming of the Karbi started like the name of person ending with the rhyme long, song, tong includes into the category of ‘Senglong’ and the word rhyming teng, meng includes into ‘cheteng’, such as tot, not, bot, includes in ‘bolong’ and to, ko, lo etc. includes in ‘langno’. The third stage is named after the founder of Karbi Anglong (earlier known as Mikir Hills) Lt. Semson Sing Engti.

Besides the stages, the bamboo traditional house built at several places of Taralangso, symbolises the social structure of the Karbi. How, a particular national resource becomes a part and parcel of a community can be understood. The Karbi house has two open spaced so called ‘Varandas, one at the front and other at the rear. A bamboo ladder is used as an approach to the front varanda. Cattle a other domestic animals are generally kept under the bamboos platform.

Since its inception, the Karbi Youth Festival holds its programme in the name of certain important historical Icons like one of them in the 41st Karbi Youth Festival’2015 was Dirchumai Arani which means ‘Dircumai’s Day’. ‘Dirchumai is an’ important personality as He was the first who hold an important designation under the Tradition Institution of the Karbi. He was the first ‘Jirsong Kleng Sarpo’ that means the first youth Leader of the male Dormitory of the Karbi’s. Not only that, it was also first ‘jir Kedam’ tradition system established among the Karbi’s, where young boys and girls go out for cultivation to other place. The ‘jir Kedam’ has 10(ten) office bearers with its leader ‘Kleng Sarpo’ and its Deputy leader ‘Klengdun’. Though this ‘jir Kedam’ became impossible with the changing of time, yet we find the tradition of ‘Kleng Sarpo’ and ‘Klengdun’ in each villages of Karbi Anglong.

The Karbi Youth Festival also tell us about the prevalence tradition political system of the Karbi’s. From the view point of habitation, the Karbi’s are divided into three groups namely Chinthong, Ronghang and Amri. The Karbi’s shifted their Capital to Ronghang from Socheng, this place is also known as Ronghang Rongbong, situated about 16 kms from Hamren, a Sub Divisional Head Quarter of Karbi Anglong. There is a parliament called ‘Pin Pomar’. The ‘Pin Pomar’ selects the traditional Karbi King ‘Lindokpo’, who exercise the traditional authority in respect of Socio-Religion matters. The village headman is called ‘Rong Sarthe’. Several contiguous Karbi Kingdom constitute one ‘Longri’ and the administrative officers of a ‘Longri’ were

called the 'Habe'. The Kingdom has 12 (twelve) such Longri's and these Longri's were constituted into 4(four) 'Arthus' and each arthus were governed by an officers called Lindok and the apex of the four Lindoks was the King called "Recho" or "Lindokpo". The traditional political system of the karbi's is in the form of hierarchy.

But one significant knowledge about the karbi's which the Karbi Youth Festival gives, is the "Jambili Athon".A big "Jambilli Athon" is fixed at Hemphu-Mukrang Rasinja Aklam at Taralangso. The Jambilli is a wooden rod which carries a symbolical rod with the five Branches, at the end of each there is a wooden bird called in Karbi "Vo-Rali".It represents the five Clans of the Karbi's, which are the Terang, the Teron, the Enghee, the Engti, and the Timung. Each of this Clans has as number of sub-clans. The Jambilli represents the unity of the all the clans of the Karbi's. All the five clans are socially equal.

Thus the Karbi Youth Festival has grown all throughout the years without any official recognition, state presence or patronage.....but it became successful in inspiring the passion of young generations ahead. Beyond the fun, entertainment and the Festiveness, the Food and the Fashion, the music and the Dance, the dream and the struggle of identity continued and flourished. The Karbi Youth festival became a resonant symbol of identity of the Karbi and a very unique way to presence, promote and showcase the rich Karbi Heritage. This Festival is playing the role of an agent of socialization of the Karbi culture, its history to the new generations. Each activity, the design, the farming, the symbols, the Ethnic nomenclature of stages depicts the culturally rich Karbi's. The Karbi Youth Festival signifies the particularity of the Karbi's, its clans and Kinsfolk and reinforces the Karbi identity as a unique tribe in India's federal Union.

Though, being such a culture Hub of the Karbi's, the Karbi Youth Festival could not reach to the level of publicity compared to 'hornbill' and 'sanghai'. There are many who recognizes the neighboring state festival of Assam, but do not have any knowledge about the 41 years old Karbi Youth Festival of the Karbi's in Assam. The Karbi Youth Festival is never included in one of the major festival of the state, till then the state have not recognize the social and political sovereignty of the Karbi. The Electronic and print media also could play an active role all this years and the lack of publicity and improper government support has made this great festival of the Karbi's a hidden and close story to the other part of India and the World.

Since its inception in 1974, the festival mission has been to promote and share the culture and heritage of all the people of the Karbi descent with the Global Community. The 41st karbi youth festival had been sponsored by karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Assam Tourism, which we can say that it took 41 years for the state to recognize this largest festival of Assam. Now it is the pride and beauty of it. With the motive of unity and larger interest of the community, the karbi cultural society had its theme composed.....*culture that unites and thrives through unity*. The karbi youth festival has spread the sense of brotherhood amongst the Karbi's' and now the Karbi's' comes under one roof of unity, in despite of different ideology, political background etc.

The first Assam Ethnic festival was also held at the very place Taralango from March 13-15, 2015. With the greater interest to recognize, honour, unite, integrate and cherish all the ethnic groups of Assam. The holding of this festival at Taralango, Karbi Peoples Hall, is a great honour and opportunities to the area and also signifies the importance of the place and the institution holding it which is the karbi cultural society (KCS), which is again the organizer and guardian of Karbi youth festival. It is because of this society that the karbi culture stands bold and has kept its objective in organizing and redefining and also educating the coming generation beyond all the political movements and instability.

As C. Hubert H. Pary said “folk –music supplies an epitome of the principles upon which art is founded”. Russian classical musician told “it is the people who create music. We only arrange it”, which the first one means that folk music narrates the entire principle from which the art and the culture are founded. Whereas the second statement reveals that it is the general people who create music but the musicians arrange it to the best. Both the statements just give one combination telling us the importance of traditional songs or music on the base of which the modern music beholds.

Thus through this paper, the origin and growth is thoroughly traced, along with examining what the karbi youth festival is all about. The ' karbi riso nimso rong aje' which means the karbi youth festival shows us how the politics of culture played the role of politics of identity of the karbi community. The paper on the reclaiming of cultural identity of the karbi through the karbi youth festival concludes with its slogan,

“Jutang henlo kheh aharchi
Kachingrum henlo kheh atiri”.

“Culture is the reflection of a society and the unification of the society is the pillar of it.”

Kardom.

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