

This chapter introduces the collective identities of the respondents in the context of their communities and customs. Therefore, an attempt is made to analyze the social background of the respondents belonging to the two tribal communities, i.e, Karbi and Kuki in terms of age, sex (gender), religion, marital status, languages known, educational qualification, type of schooling, level of education, occupation, monthly income, family type, size of family, housing status, assets & liabilities, household durables etc. Both the tribal communities are found among major ethnic groups of Assam with distinct culture, tradition, language, customs and tradition, rules and obligations etc. Basically both the tribal communities were animistic before coming in contact with Christian Missionaries and Hindu people. The social background of the respondents along with community structure and customs is being discussed below.

RELIGION

There are two major religions found in these two tribal communities; namely, Hinduism and Christianity. The third religious faith found among them is Animism, but the people having animistic beliefs follow Hinduism without hampering their age-old traditional beliefs and rituals. Basically both the tribal communities were used to follow their own traditional religion, animism. But in course of time, due to activities of Christian Missionaries, a good portion of tribal population has converted into Christianity. However, the remaining, who have close contacts with the Hindu people, the pro animistic attitude of Hindu religious organization convinced them to consider themselves as Hindu with their traditional beliefs. Thus, a portion of tribal people become Hindu with the intention of preserving the age-old animistic belief. The following table shows the religions of the respondents from two tribes.

Table 3.1
Religion among the Karbi and Kuki Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Religion	No. of Households		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Hinduism	178 (62.68)	0	178 (35.46)
Christianity	106 (37.32)	218 (100)	324 (64.54)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that near about two thirds (64.54%) of the respondents belong to Christianity, followed by over one third (35.46%) of the respondents who are Hindu. All (100%) of the Kuki and near about two fifths (37.32%) of the Karbi respondents and their family members have converted into Christianity. Over three fifths (62.68%) of the Karbi respondents and their family members recognize themselves as Hindu without compromising with their age-old animistic beliefs. In the process of conversion into Christianity, traditional rituals of Karbi and Kuki were discarded whereas, on the other hand, without discarding animistic rituals and beliefs, the rest, over three fifths (62.68%) of the Karbi respondents and their family members, followed both animism and Hinduism. That is, conversion of tribal people follows two different processes in the two communities.

The ratio of Christian followers to Hindu followers in the Karbi community is about 65:35. Campaign for adoption of Christianity is continuously going on in the Karbi villages. Long ago in the past, the process of conversion of Kuki people into Christianity was completed, but among the Karbi people the process is still going on. The reasons for adoption of Christianity include (i) the location of habitations in each tribal village with the poorest communication resulting in their deprivation from getting basic requirements like education, health etc. under schemes of the government and on the other hand, the facility provided by Christian missionaries for education (western) with minimum price;

and (ii) sometimes, the compulsion of performing traditional rituals caused discard of animism: In Karbi, Rexarpi is a character of senior women (preferably widow) who is entitled to perform major role in the funeral ceremonies of a dead person; however, in Cachar district there is found no Rexarpi and the poor Karbi people cannot afford huge expenditure to invite such trained person from Karbi Anglong where Karbis are in huge number, while, the people who failed to complete the funeral ceremony in traditional way were imposed various social restrictions. So to get rid of such harassment, a good number of Karbi families have quit their traditional animistic religion and converted to Christianity. Though, any positive impact of such conversion is visible very less in various aspects of their life.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Both the tribal communities (Karbi and Kuki) use their own traditional kinship terminologies and even after adoption of western culture through Christianity (100% Kukis and 37.32% Karbis), have not discarded their own terminology used for addressing their relations. The following table highlights the kinship terminology used by the two tribes:

Table 3.2
Kinship Terms Used in the Karbi and Kuki Tribes

Sl. No.	Term	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents
1	Father	Phu	Apa
2	Mother	Phi	Anu
3	Sister (Younger)	Nichou	Sangnu
4	Sister (Elder)	Bai	Unu
5	Brother (Younger)	Mu	Sangpa
6	Brother (Elder)	Eik	Upa
7	Uncle	Punu	Apate
8	Aunt	Tulu	Anute
9	Grand Father	Phu	Apu
10	Grand Mother	Phi	Api
11	Sister-in-law	Mehei	Mak pa
12	Brother-in-law	Korpi/Teppi	Didi
13	Mother-in-law	Nihai (addressed by husband)/ Ni (addressed by wife)	Tarpi
14	Father-in-law	Anghai (addressed by husband) / Lokhai (addressed by wife)	Tarpu

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that both communities belong to the same Tibeto-Burmese linguistic sub-group, but they have distinct kinship terminologies.

Like the kinship terminology, the two communities have their distinct material and non-material cultures.

CLAN

Sib or clan, an exogamous social group, and is an important structural unit in both the tribal communities. A clan is constituted by all the relatives of either the mother's or the father's lineage and all the offspring of the ancestors of such a lineage. Thus, many lineages together constitute a clan. A clan is never constituted by combining the lineages of both mother and father. It is unilateral. It may consist either of matrilineal or of patrilineal lineages. Besides, clan is an exogamous division of a tribe, the members of which are held to be related to one another by some common ties. In brief, clan is that collection of unilateral families whose members believe to be the common descendants of a real or mythical ancestor. Majumdar and Madan have defined clan by saying that, "A sib or clan is often a combination of few lineages and descents which may be ultimately traced to a mythical ancestor, who may be a human or animal, plant or even inanimate". Clan differs from tribe as it has no definite language and geographical boundaries.

Tribal communities of north-eastern states are known for their variety of cultures and traditions. In the two tribal communities, Karbi women always use a surname of their father, even after the marriage. Thus, according to the Karbi tradition, women always recognise themselves as member of the clan where they were borne like their male-folk. However, a Karbi girl uses 'pi' after her surname, e.g., 'Hansepi', 'Beypi', 'Phanghchupi' and so on. On the other hand, after marriage a Kuki woman uses the surname of her husband and identifies herself as the member of her husband's clan. The following table enlists the clans among the Karbi respondents:

Table 3.3
Clans among the Karbi Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Sl. No	Name of Clan	Number Respondents
1	Terang (Hanjang)	83 (29.23)
2	Teron (Krojang)	25 (8.80)
3	Enghee (Ejang)	43 (15.14)
4	Ingti (Lijang)	69 (24.30)
5	Timung (Tungjang)	64 (22.53)
Total		284(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table speaks that of the members of all the five Karbi clans who are settled in various villages in Cachar district, Terang (Hanjang) is the largest Karbi clan with over one fourth (29.23%) of the total Karbi respondents. Ingti (Lijang) is the second largest clan with about one fourth (24.33%) of the Karbi respondents, followed by Timung (Tungjang) with about one fourth (22.53%) of the Karbi respondents. However, about one seventh (15.14%) of the respondents belongs to Enghee (Ejang) clan. Teron (Krojang) is the clan of the smallest number of the Karbi respondents, comprising about one tenth (8.80%) of the Karbi respondents.

In Kuki community, there are 37 different groups with the same language, culture and tradition found in Assam ([www.nchills.nic.in/ NCHILLS – Kukis.htm](http://www.nchills.nic.in/NCHILLS-Kukis.htm). accessed on 06.08.2015 at 1.31 pm). These groups are generally considered as the clans of the Kuki tribe. 14 Kuki clans are found in different Kuki villages of the Cachar district. The following table shows the clans of the Kuki respondents:

Table 3.4
Clans among the Kuki Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Sl. No	Name of Clan	Number Respondents
1	Khochung	14 (6.42)
2	Changsen	97 (44.50)
3	Chongloi	05 (2.29)
4	Songte	01 (0.46)
5	Kholhou	05 (2.29)
6	Vaiphei	02 (0.92)
7	Singson	10 (4.59)
8	Thangew	17 (7.80)
9	Kipgen	02 (0.92)
10	Haokip	15 (6.88)
11	Doungel	02 (0.92)
12	Thomsong	43 (19.72)
13	Singsit	02 (0.92)
14	Sitlhou	03 (1.37)
	Total	218 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that of the 14 Kuki clans, Changsen is the largest one, having over two fifths (44.50%) of the total Kuki respondents, living in various Kuki villages, mainly in Tupidhor, Toulpi, Bagbahar, Ngente, Songhlu etc. of Cachar district. Thomsong is the second largest clan having about one fifth (19.72) of the respondents mainly from Phaizol and Bethal punjee of Joypur block, followed by Thangew with about one tenth (7.80%) of the Kuki respondents from Saihmar and Kharzol punjee of Lakhipur block. Haokip is the fourth largest clan having less than one tenth (6.88%) of the Kukis living only in Lalpani Haokip punjee of Lakhipur block and Khochung is the fifth largest clan with 6.42% of the respondents. The other clans have not the remarkable existence in the Kuki community of the Cachar district as each one is having less than 5% of the total Kuki respondents.

Age Group

The respondents are classified into seven age groups: (i) 14 - 23 years, (ii) 24-33 years, (iii) 34-43 years, (iv) 44-53 years, (v) 54-63 years, (vi) 64-73 years,

and (vii) above 73 years. The distribution of the respondents in age groups is shown in following table:

Table 3.5
Age Groups among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Age Group (in years)	No. of Respondents		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
14- 23	48 (11.90)	25 (11.47)	73 (14.54)
24-33	81 (28.52)	69 (31.65)	150 (29.88)
34-43	66 (23.24)	59 (27.06)	125 (24.90)
44-53	53 (18.66)	35 (16.06)	88 (17.53)
54-63	24 (8.45)	17 (7.80)	41 (8.17)
64-73	9 (3.17)	9 (4.13)	18 (3.59)
Above 73	3 (1.06)	4 (1.83)	7 (1.39)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table depicts that the highest number (29.88%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 24-33 years. About one third (29.88%) of the respondents belong to the group: near about one third (31.65%) of the Kuki and over one fourth (28.52%) of the Karbi respondents. About one fourth (24.90%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 34-43 years: over one fourth (27.06%) of the Kuki and about one fourth (23.24%) of the Karbi respondents. The third highest populous age group belongs to 44-53 years, and comprising about one fifth (17.53%) of the respondents: about one fifth (18.66%) of the Karbi respondents and over one sixth (16.06%) of the Kuki respondents. About one seventh (14.54%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 14-23 years where almost the same percentage of respondents is found from both the communities. About one tenth (8.17%) of the respondents are from the age group of 54-63 years, followed by 3.59% from the age group of 64-73 years. Only 1.39% of the respondents belong to the age group of above 73 years and almost the same percentage of respondents are drawn from both the communities in this group.

Thus, 68.66% of the Karbi and 70.18% of the Kuki respondents belong to the age below 44 years. So it may be assumed that approximately 70% of the

females in the Karbi and Kuki villages are below 44 years of age. Naturally the rest (almost 30%) belong to the age of above 43 years. While doing the field work, females above 43 years of age were found very less in their households as compared to males. Various socio-economic factors like early marriage of girls, large number of pregnancies among mothers, not taking nutritious food during pregnancies and post-delivery period are primarily responsible for this. This may be understood from the following discussion.

FAMILY

Family, is the smallest social unit of the society, is a domestic group made up by people related to each other. Both types of tribal communities follow the patrilineal family where father heads a family. Though females always play a vital role in all spheres of life in the two communities, decision making in important matter is always reserved for a male head of family. Generally nuclear families are preferred in both the tribal communities. Family generally consists of the parents and their children. But in some cases it is also observed that when sufficient space is available, new rooms are added for residence of a newly married son and his wife. In some cases, daughters are also accommodated, but they have to make separate food arrangement. Daughters and sisters generally leave their parental houses after marriage. But to parents and their unmarried children, family provides social and economic security. All adult family members in the Kabi and Kuki tribes constitute it's economic workforce. Even the children of the age of eight years and above also contribute to family income according to their capacity. Purchasing of daily commodities is generally managed by wife in consultation with husband. Children can be asked to purchase essentials for their family.

Social control is also observed strictly in both the tribal communities. Adult people, particularly male adults are highly respected by the young ones. In family matters, children always obey their parents and act according to their guidance. Conflict and tension are very rare in the families of the two

communities. In the families, congenial relationship among members is maintained lifelong. Husband and wife also maintain their relationship in a very respectable manner, showing respect to each other; even they never use their respective name in front of other family members. Except in few cases, husband and wife seek each other's advice in all social and economic affairs of family. Family head and his wife lead their congenial life by rearing children and training them for economic activities, leading to economic freedom during adult hood.

In both the tribal communities, clan always plays a remarkable role in maintaining their relationship in family and the society at large. Both the communities belong to patrilineal society wherein descent always traced through male's line. Family being very important social institution, types and size of family are also being discussed here.

(i) Types of Family

In the two communities, both types of family, nuclear and joint, are found. The respondents' distribution into these types of family is shown in the following table:

Table 3.6
Types of Family among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Family Type	No. of Family		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Nuclear	179 (63.03)	155 (71.10)	334 (66.53)
Joint	105 (36.97)	63 (28.90)	168 (33.47)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table tells that nuclear family is the predominant feature of both the communities. About two thirds (66.53%) of the respondents belong to the nuclear family and the rest belong to joint family: Over two thirds (71.10%) of the Kuki respondents and over two fifths (63.03%) of the Karbi respondents are from nuclear family. While, over two thirds (36.97%) and over one fourth

(28.90%) of the respondents from the Karbi and Kuki communities are from joint family respectively.

Thus, the nuclear family largely prevails in both the communities. However, more Karbis belong to joint family than Kukis, perhaps, due to less number of conversions into Christianity, and, hence, retaining the traditional culture and beliefs, whereas Kukis may have adopted nuclear family thoroughly under the influence of Christianity. This difference may exist at the level of family size. Let the family size of the two communities be examined.

(ii) Size of Family

The respondents are divided into three sizes (small, medium and large) of family size among the respondents. Size of family among the respondents is given in the following table:

Table 3.7
Family Size among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Size of Family (No. of members)	Karbi Respondents			Kuki Respondents			Total Respondents		
	Nuclear Family	Joint Family	Total	Nuclear Family	Joint Family	Total	Nuclear Family	Joint Family	Total
1-4 (Small)	80 (28.17)	--	80 (28.17)	69 (31.65)	--	69 (31.65)	149 (29.68)	--	149 (29.68)
5-8 (Medium)	99 (34.86)	55 (19.37)	154 (54.23)	86 (39.45)	32 (14.68)	118 (54.13)	185 (36.85)	87 (17.33)	272 (54.08)
8+ (Large)	--	50 (17.61)	50 (17.61)	--	31 (14.22)	31 (14.22)	--	81 (16.14)	81 (16.14)
Total	179 (63.03)	105 (36.97)	284 (100)	155 (71.10)	63 (28.90)	218 (100)	334 (66.53)	168 (33.47)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table shows that the medium family (5-8 members) has over one third (36.85%) of the respondents: about one fourth (39.45%) of Kuki and over one third (34.86%) of Karbi respondents. However, about one third (29.68%) of the respondents families are in nuclear families with small size (1-4 members) each: about one third (31.65%) of Kuki and over one fourth (28.17%)

of Karbi respondents. Over one sixth (16.14%) of the respondents belong to large family: 17.61% of the Karbi and 14.22% of the Kuki respondents.

However, both the communities prefer medium family (5-8 members). Over half of the respondents from both the communities belong to the medium families and the same pattern is observed in both the communities. But due to the impact of education, Kuki people are more aware about family planning and prefer small family and therefore, more Kuki respondents are from small families than the Karbi respondents. On the other hand, large families are more among the Karbi than the Kuki respondents. Lack of education and tendency of underage marriage of girls are responsible for large families in the Karbi than the Kuki respondents. Due to more education and influence of Christianity, Kuki respondents are more aware about planning of family than the Karbi respondents. Also, more Karbis have large family due to continuity of tradition and less impact of Christianity.

Thus, influence of Christianity is reflected among the Kuki respondents in respect of family type and size. The Kukis have more nuclear and medium size families as compared to the Karbis.

Marriage

Marriage, an important institution in every society, performs the primary role for establishing a family. Monogamy is the prevailing practice of marriage in both the tribes. There are 5 clans in Karbi tribe: Terang, Teron, Enghee, Ingti and Timung. Each clan has several sub-clans. In Karbi tribe, marriage between male and female of the same clan is prohibited because boys and girls from the same clan are considered brothers and sisters. So, Karbi culture doesn't allow the marriage between the Karbi boy and girl having the same clan and surname. However, they prefer cross-cousin marriage. In Kuki community, also cross-cousin marriages are prevalent. In Karbi tribe, people prefer marriage in their own tribal community but in the Kuki tribe, there is not such a feeling.

According to the Karbi culture, neither cash nor kind is transacted as bride price. Both the tribal communities use clan or sub-clan names as their surnames. The Karbi male use surnames like Hanse, Teron, Ronghi etc, whereas, Karbi females use 'pi' after surname like Hansepi, Teronpi, Ronghipi etc. A Karbi woman uses her father's surname with 'pi' even after marriage. But a Kuki woman uses her father's surname before marriage and husband's surname after marriage. If any inter-community marriage occurs in Karbi community, then the newly married bride has to use the surname of her mother-in-law.

There are found three types of marriages in Kuki society: (i) Dankhatna (Danthienglim), (ii) Danhnina and (iii) Danthumna. First one, Danhnina, is most precious and holy type of marriage. This marriage is arranged in Church in the presence of priest (Pastor) and guardians of both, bride and groom, as well as responsible persons of the community, followed by all traditional formalities. During Kuki marriage, articles like furniture, utensils, clothes etc. are given by kins to the bride where no cash is transacted as dowry. But bride price is the part of the Kuki tradition and cash or animal or both are given to the father or the guardian of the father's side of the bride, according to the capacity of the parents of the husband. A part of bride price is paid during the marriage according to the wish of the bride's parents and this is distributed among relatives and villagers. The remaining part of the bride price is left in the custody of the husband's parents as the guarantee or the symbol of loyalty and understanding between the two families. The remaining part of this has to be cleared after demise of the bride, at the time of her Roipei or Lungphun (erected ceremony). If unfortunately divorce of the wife occurs, then, the said bride price should be refunded to the husband's family otherwise the second marriage of the bride becomes illegal, according to the Kuki customary law. Bride price and the procedure and percentage are part of all forms of marriages. The second type of marriage Danhnina is the most popular type of marriage. It is solemnized only according to the will of the bride and groom. In this marriage parents of both sides as well as community are totally or partially ignored. This marriage is not so much sacred as Dankhatna. Hence, for recognizing this new relationship, various restrictions

are imposed for accepting a new couple in the society. For that, first of all, a team is set up as the third party by the parents of the husband for negotiation. If the other side agrees for negotiation, then, that group approaches to select a date and try to settle the bride price. After the settlement of date and bride price, a small party is generally arranged by the parents of the husband. In that party, the maximum of the proposed bride price in cash or kind is handed over to the father or relatives of the bride in front of the community. The third type of marriage in the Kuki society is Danthumna. This type of marriage is meant for widows or widowers or divorced persons.

In Kuki community, Danhnina marriage is the most popular practice, in spite of various restrictions imposed in the marriage. Divorce is very rare in Kuki community. But this is totally restricted in Dankhatna (Danthienglim) type of marriage which is considered as the permanent bondage between the couple.

Marital Status

So far as the marital status of Karbi and Kuki women is concerned, it is observed that there exist three different status groups: married, unmarried and widows. The following table presents the marital status of each category in the Cachar district of Assam:

Table 3.8
Marital Status among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Marital Status	No. of Respondents		Total Respondents
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	
Married	223 (78.52)	202 (92.66)	425 (86.26)
Unmarried	33 (11.62)	9 (4.13)	42 (8.37)
Widow	28 (9.86)	7 (3.21)	35 (6.97)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The table reveals that most (86.26%) of the respondents are found married: almost all (92.66%) of the Kuki and about four fifths (78.52%) of the Karbi respondents. Traditionally both the communities supported early marriage.

About one tenth (8.37%) of the respondents are unmarried: over one tenth (11.62%) of the Karbi and 4.13% of the Kuki respondents. Generally, the Karbi community has some marital restrictions like prohibition of marriage between the boys and girls of the same clan. The community is very strict in the matter of its social norms and rules. Karbi people are very conscious about mate selection. Inter - religious marriage is also restricted and inter-community marriage is rarely found in this community. Hence, the marriages are made within the limited population of the tribe in Cachar district.

But the Kuki community observes no such restriction; even they encourage inter-community marriages. As a result, there are more unmarried persons in the Karbi than the Kuki community. The third group comprises widows: About one tenth (6.97%) of the respondents are widows: About one tenth (9.86%) of the Karbi and 3.21% of the Kuki respondents. Due to more possibilities of mate selection, however, widow remarriage is more common practice in Kuki community and hence very less number of widow are found in the Kuki than the Karbi community. Moreover, because of the least restrictions in mate selection, Kukis have less unmarried women (14 years and above) than Karbis.

Age-at-Marriage

Like marital status, age at the time of marriage is very important determinant of the social status of women. Age-at-marriage of a person always indicates the level of development, gender attitude, proper education etc. and significance accorded to the institution of marriage in a given society. According to the Indian Constitution, womenfolk below the age of 18 years are considered minor. Hence, marriage of a girl before the age of 18 years is strictly prohibited. But in the case of Karbi and Kuki tribal populations, the situation is completely different. The married respondents are divided into nine age groups. Total 42 (8.37%) respondents were unmarried, out of whom 33 (11.62%) were Karbi and

9 (4.13%) were Kuki. The following table shows the age-at-marriage among the respondents of the two tribes:

Table 3.9
Age-at-Marriage among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Age Group (in years)	No. of Respondents		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
14 -15	19 (7.57)	7 (3.35)	26 (5.66)
16 – 17	73 (29.07)	25 (11.96)	98 (21.30)
18 – 19	53 (21.12)	88 (42.11)	141 (30.65)
20 – 21	34 (13.55)	49 (23.44)	83 (18.04)
22 – 23	20 (7.97)	19 (9.10)	39 (8.48)
24 – 25	20 (7.97)	6 (2.87)	26 (5.65)
26 – 27	13 (5.18)	3 (1.44)	16 (3.48)
28 – 29	7 (2.79)	4 (1.91)	11 (2.39)
Above 29	12 (4.78)	8 (3.82)	20 (4.35)
Total	251 (100)	209 (100)	460 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that the ignorance plays vital role in the case of marriage of a girl child in both the tribal communities. Near about one third (31.30%) of the married respondents were married in the age group of 16-17 years, followed by about one third (30.65%) of the respondents who married in the age group of 18-19 years. Then, about one fifth (18.04%) of the respondents were in the age of 20-21 years at the time of marriage. About one tenth (8.48%) of the respondents got married in the age group of 22-23 years of age. Almost the same trend is observed in both the communities. Only 5.66% of the respondents got married in the early age group of 14-15 years, followed by 5.65% who married in the age of 24-25 years. Only 4.35% of the respondents married in above 29 years, followed by 3.48% of the respondents who got married in the age of 26- 27 years. Only 2.39% of the respondents married in the age of 28-29 years. This is found in both tribal communities.

Hence, about one fourth of the respondents from both the communities were married in the age under 18 years. Legally this is child marriage. The trend of underage marriage (15-17 years) is more in Karbi i.e., double the Kuki respondents. The largest size, i.e. about half (48.69%) of the respondents married

in the age of (18-21) years: 34.67% of the Karbi and 65.55% of the Kuki respondents. Here, the percentage of the Kuki respondents is about double the Karbi respondents.

Thus, the child marriage is prevailing more among the Karbi respondents than the Kuki respondents. This owes to higher literacy rate among the Kukis, as 71.31% Karbi and 80.86% Kuki respondents married in the age of (15-21) years. On the other hand, about one fourth (24.35%) of the respondents were married after attaining the age of 21 years and the rest, three fourths (75.65%), married in the age below 21 years in the two communities. This shows a tendency for early marriage. However, the factors like education have obvious impact on the age-at-marriage as seen in the case of the Kuki respondents. The negative impact of girl's underage marriages is often visible in almost every aspect of their life like less education, more pregnancies, ill health etc.

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

In both the tribal communities, there are certain customs, rituals, belief, rules, obligations etc. In animistic belief, male always performs the family rituals and only a male can become a priest to perform worship. However, on death, major traditional rituals performed by a widow, who is popularly called *Rexarpi* in Karbi community. On the other hand, after conversion to Christianity, Kuki women are also not able to perform any ritual as priests or Pastors. However, in several Christian groups, various works are allotted to women in the religious sphere.

In both the tribes, parental lands are distributed among male children. In the Kuki community, elder son becomes custodian of the parental property. In case of having no son, brother's son is eligible to get the property. But in the Karbi community, though paternal land is distributed among sons, but practically, according to need, a portion may be allotted to girls also. Thus, Karbi customs are more flexible than Kuki's.

Customary law in both the communities has discriminatory role with regard to ownership of property. Women have least decision making in domestic and public sphere. They have many duties and responsibilities. Besides, all kinds of household activities, collection of drinking water, participating in the family economic activities, collecting and marketing of firewood, forest products etc generally fall in the domain of women in both the communities.

In the Kuki community, in spite of adopting western culture through Christianity, bride price and dowry still prevail. But in Karbi community, neither bride price nor dowry is part of their customs. Marriage between a Karbi boy and a girl of the same clan is strictly prohibited. In the Karbi community, boys and girls of the same clan are considered as brothers and sisters. Even the converted Christian Karbi people also follow this custom. On the other hand, Kuki community does not have such a custom. However, both the communities prefer cross-cousin marriage.

Ornaments

Like other traditional communities, men and women of Karbi and Kuki communities wear various types of ornaments. However, more Karbi women in Cachar district of Assam use ornaments than the Kuki women.

Karbi men generally wear a brass made ear-ring called, Narik, and silver bracelet, Prinsoroi, and heavy necklaces, Lekrooa and Lek-Enti, on traditional and social occasions, whereas Karbi women wear a different type of ornaments like a large necklace of white beads called Lech-lo-so another necklace with silver coins and red beads called Lek-Chike, and a large silver ear-ring, Nothenpi. Karbi girls wear a traditional silver bracelet, Rup-Aroir (Hazarika 2015). However, the usage of wearing ornaments has gradually declined. Karbi girls now wear minimum ornaments like other tribal and non-tribal girls. Karbi women folk are generally found engaged in various economic activities and therefore except for any festival or social ceremony they use the least or no ornaments whereas a very few Karbi women, due to the effect of acculturation

from the nearest non-tribal society, also use modern gold and silver ornaments in social ceremonies.

As majority of Karbi people in Cachar district follow animistic beliefs, an age old traditional culture that still, exists among them. They use some items like Jambili Athon, Bongkrock, and Langpong with their ritual values as ornament, where Jambili Athon is about a seven feet long wooden stick decorated by fixing five wooden or bamboo made Bojaru bird, a national bird of Karbi at the top of the stick. This is highly prestigious craft item used in all festivals of animistic Karbi society. Jambili Athon is also considered very important part of most significant Karbi festival, Chomangkan or Karhi, observed for the welfare of the soul of dead person in the traditional Karbi society. In rituals of the Karbi community, Bongkrok which contains a bottle of local made wine with a ground shell plays a vital role, and a ritual cannot be considered as complete without proper participation of holy Bongkrock. Bong plays an important role in worshipping, celebrating festival, organizing wedding ceremonies (Adam-Asar) as well as day-to-day life of the animistic Karbi society. But Bongs of different sizes when filled with 'Horlank' or rice beer are also called Horbongs (Hor is homemade wine or alcohol).

In every festival, the people of Karbi community always use Langpong, a bamboo made hollow pot, to serve tea, water, homemade wine to the family members and guests. At home, they generally use utensils made of aluminum, brass, tin, plastic etc but, in festivals and even in a stall of any traditional programme, Karbi conference etc., they use Langpog in place of glass or cup (Hazarika 2015).

Due to adoption of Christianity, Karbi and Kuki communities of Cachar district have also adopted some habits of western society. Thus, wearing of ornaments is gradually on decline. Young generation likes to remain free from

the burden of ornaments. However, due to acculturation, it is also found that very light and small pieces of ornaments have now become the part of new culture of the Kuki society.

Dress

Karbi men and women have separate traditional costumes. Karbi man's most popular traditional dress comprises Pini, Pekok, Wankok etc. Woman's popular traditional dress includes Choi, Poho, Sator etc. However, both male and female wear traditional dress with suitable combination according to occasion and age. Karbi women wear traditional dresses in all rituals and to their day-to-day life, whereas Karbi men rarely wear traditional dresses in their daily life and rituals. Karbi dresses worn in daily life as well as on various occasions are shown in the following table:

Table 3.10
Traditional Dress among Karbis by Sex and Age

Sl. No	Name of Traditional Dress	Sex		Age			Occasion
		M	F	Y/A	O/A	Any	
1	Pini-Pekok, Wankok	--	F	Y/A	--	--	All times
2	Pini-Pekok, Wankok, Khongiri	--	F	--	--	Any	All times
3	Pini-Pekok, Wankok, Dokherso	--	F	Y/A	--	--	Death ceremonies
4	Choi-Angru and Choi-Hongthor	M	--	--	--	Any	Traditional ceremonies and Cultural programmes
5	Choi-nangpo, Sator, Pohu	M	--	--	O/A	--	All times
6	Rikong Wedbot	M	--	--	O/A	--	All times
7	Choin Thor with Pohu	M	--	Y/A	--	--	During marriage, worn by husband
8	Choi-hongthor	M	--	Any	--	--	Marriage and puja

M= Male, F= Female, Y/A= Young Age, O/A= Old Age

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015 and www.karbianglong.gov.in/main-web/tribes-culture.htm accessed on 20th Nov at 6.00 am

Pini is a piece of cloth generally black in colour worn round the waist tied with a belt. Pekoke is a piece of cloth (square in size) tied on right shoulder, Wankok is the belt used to tie the pini tight at the waist. Khongiri is a colorful Endi scarf worn during winter. Dokherso or coloured and striped scarf is worn on death ceremonies. Choi is Jacket for men, Poho is a piece of cloth worn around the head or used as muffler. Sator is a white piece of cloth worn round the waist as dhoti, covering the whole length of the legs. Choi-angru – shorts for men, Choi-nangpo and Choi-hongthor – artistically designed shirts for aged and young men respectively (www.karbianglong.gov.in/main-web/tribes-culture.htm accessed on 20th Nov at 6.00 am).

The above table mentions the variety of dresses that Karbis like to wear in their day-to-day life as well as during traditional ceremonies. In traditional ceremonies and cultural programmes, Karbi men generally wear shorts and shirts locally known as Choi-Angru and Choi-Hongthor respectively, and also they wear most prestigious head gear called Poho. It is decorated and designed with red and black motifs with animal figures at the fringes similar to the most popular traditional Assamese or Manipuri Gamocha (towel). Karbi womenfolk always wear Pini-Pekok. For covering upper part of body, Karbi women wear Pekok and Pini wrapped round the waist whereas Vamkok, a waist band, is also used by Karbi women. For tying baby on back or in the front during domestic and economic activities, Karbi mothers use a piece of cloth, Piba, with colourful motifs embedded on it. Traditional Karbi dresses were generally made in homes, i.e., on handlooms (Hazarika 2015). But now-a-days people are found less interested in handlooms in Karbi villages of the Cachar district. Very few Karbi families are found to have looms at their homes. Instead of using woven traditional costumes, Karbi womenfolk like to use ready-made dresses purchased from market. Sometimes, Karbi people bring woven traditional costumes from Karbi Anglong but due to cost factor very few can now afford these.

Kuki villages of Cachar district have already adopted Christianity as their way of living since long. Hence, the traditional material culture of Kukis has

largely disappeared. However, in some of their traditional ceremonies Kukis like to wear their age-old traditional dresses with some modern outlook. There are nine types of traditional dresses they wear on different occasions. Black is the most common colour, found in most of the traditional Kuki dresses. Kuki women generally wear multi colour (generally three and above) dress, whereas Kuki males never wear any traditional dress, having more than three colours. Age wise, sex wise and occasion wise distributions of traditional dresses among Kukis are shown in the following table:

Table 3.11
Traditional Dress among Kukis by Sex and Age

Sl. No	Name of traditional Dress	Sex			Age			Occasion
		M	F	B	Y/A	O/A	Any	
1	Nampoun	--	--	B	--	--	A	All Festival
2	Saipikhup	M		--	Y	--	--	As gift with honour
3	Thangnang	--	F	--	--	O	--	Festival
4	Khamtang	--	F	--	--	--	A	Any
5	Pounmongvon	M	--	--	Y	--		Any
6	Pondum	--	--	B	--	--	A	As gift for the parent of the bride from the parent of the groom during the first step of engagement.
7	Lengte	--	--	B	--	--	A	General dress, also used in making various material like, bag, napkin etc.
8	Komkhamtang	--	--	B	Y	--	A	As gift with respect
9	Komthangnang	--	F	--	--	--	A	Any

M= Male, F= Female, Y/A= Young Age, O/A= Old Age

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

Nampoun is the complete dress of both, males and females, in the Kuki community with the tiny print of white, red, and other in black colour cloth. Saipikhup is the multi-colour complete Kuki dress for females only; black is the principal colour. Thangnang is also a complete dress for Kukis (both male and female). This is also black in colour with yellow, white and green colour border.

Khamtang is the sky colour, mainly for females with small (poun-jeh) touch of other colours including black. Pounmongvom is the complete dress of both males and females in the Kuki community with comparatively large print than the other Kuki dress of white, red, and other colour in black colour cloth.

Pondum is also a black colour valuable (costly) and prestigious cloth with dark colour print in the base. Lengte is the common Kuki cloth for multiple use, on head (luhren), swal (poun-baat), bag (sahkhao), Napkin (poun-veih). Kom-khamtang is the general dress particularly for Kom subtribe of Kuki community (both males and females) which is differentiated by number of colours from other dresses. Kom-thangnang is the general dress particularly for Kom subtribe (renowned boxer Mery Com belongs to the sub tribe) of Kuki community (for females only) which has more colours than other dresses.

The above table shows that Nampoun, Saipikhup, Pondum and are treated as highly prestigious traditional dresses among Kukis. These also reflect the gravity of the festival as well as the community. There are found handlooms in various Kuki villages or Punjees in Cachar district to prepare these traditional dresses. These dresses are generally more costly in comparison of the other traditional dresses. But practically due to the impact of modernity and adoption of western culture by the Kuki society, popularity of traditional dresses is on decline. However, Kuki womenfolk still maintain the fragrance of their rich tradition and culture by wearing these dresses on various religious and traditional occasions.

Housing Pattern

Traditional houses of Karbis and Kukis are neither too big nor too small. These houses in both the communities are typical huts consisting of a separate rectangular room, a small room behind the first room and verandah. There are two verandahs: one in the front and the other in the backyard of the house. The front one is larger than the backyard verandah. These traditional houses generally neither very large nor very small, are have two sloppy, thatched roofs about two feet above from the ground which helps them resist cold winds in their houses and keep their houses warm even in the winter. Four walls of a house are made of closely arranged lattice bamboo splits. Previously, all houses in the two communities were similar, built upon a bamboo or wooden platform. But now-a-

day, most of these have been replaced by soil platform. The base of the house and walls are nicely plastered with a mixture of mud and cow dung. In a traditional house, there are maximum three doors of 3.5' to 4' height. But there is no provision for windows. In order to restrict wild rats and snakes' entry into rooms neither windows nor ventilators are found in these typical huts. Therefore, sunlight cannot enter in these houses. In some Kuki Punjees, located in the border areas of Assam - Mizoram and Assam – Manipur borders, the traditional houses have more wooden platform than other Karbi and Kuki Punjees. In these houses, living room is constructed at certain height of wooden platform, under which domestic animals are sheltered. Now-a-day, both the types of traditional houses with thatched roof are being replaced by ones built with tin sheets. Like all hill tribes, Karbi and Kuki people also have a tendency to live on the top of hill.

Their houses are divided into three different types as shown in the following table:

Table 3.12
House Types among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of House	No. of Respondents		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Pacca (RCC)	02 (0.70)	01 (0.46)	03 (0.60)
Semi-pacca (Assam-type)	33 (11.61)	25 (11.47)	58 (11.55)
Kachcha (Hut)	249 (87.68)	192 (88.07)	441 (87.85)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table shows the economic condition and living status of the Karbi and Kuki respondents. Most (87.85%) of the houses of the respondents are kachcha and almost the same pattern is found in the two communities. Over one tenth (11.55%) of the respondents' houses are semi-pacca (Assam type) and the remaining (0.60%) an insignificant proportion, are pacca. Almost the same patterns are observed in both the communities in respect of semi pacca and pacca houses.

It is observed that the conversion to Christianity has failed to create a big change in their living condition. Most of the houses (87.85%) are traditional houses. The Kukis have more traditional kachcha houses than the Karbis. Overall living condition of Karbis in Cachar district is slightly better than Kukis, as is evident from the data for the pacca and semi pacca houses.

SANITATION

Disposal of feces and urine in a safe and scientific manner is very important for healthy living. The facilities and provision of disposal of urine and feces of people is called sanitation. Unhealthy practices of sanitation always make a severe effect on environment and human health including women specially. Still, a portion of Indian people especially in rural areas defecates in open area. Types of latrine generally indicate the level of health consciousness among the villagers. There are found three types of latrine in rural areas; namely, low cost latrine, Kachcha latrine and sanitary latrine. These are as follows:

- (i) Kachcha latrine is a very common semi hygienic latrine found in rural areas. In this type of latrine, a kachcha temporary shed is constructed near a kachcha well (pit) about 6' deep. The excreta are deposited in the well through a pan made up with tin sheet fitted in wooden structure. The deposition is shifted to the new pit after it is filled.
- (ii) Low cost latrine: Pit latrine is costs the lowest, used in rural areas. To control the spread of the pathogens (present in human excreta responsible for diarrhea, intestinal worm infections etc.) from the human faeces through flies to the environment and also to food, the construction of such latrine is now improved. The present low-cost latrine is a twin round shaped pit pore-flush-latrine, which is generally made with bricks leaving pores for allowing water and gas to be absorbed by the soil. Two leach pits are connected with a Y shaped pipe to a junction chamber linked to the pan. In these latrines, pits are connected alternatively, when first one gets filled up, the flow of excreta has to be diverted into the second one

through the junction chamber. After 3-4 years, the excreta of first pit become dry and is removed from the pit, for use as manure in agricultural fields. It is also a Government aided low-cost latrine for the poor people. The estimated cost of such latrine is Rs. 12000/- only. These latrines are constructed by Non-Government Organizations in villages mainly for poor people under the Government of India wherein the implementing agency is Public Health Engineering (PHE). Now, it is going on all over India through Swaccha Bharat Mission.

- (iii) Sanitary latrine is a costly latrine. Its safety tank (water proof) for deposition of excreta is generally a rectangular body with a number of partitions inside (inlet-outlet arrangement) for deposition of solid and liquid. A separate pit (soak pit) is also made outside of the main tank with number of the pores on the sides wall which absorb the excess water deposited in the tank. The estimated cost for such latrine is more than Rs. 50,000/- (fifty thousand).

The following table shows the type of latrine used by the respondents' families in the two communities:

Table 3.13
Types of Latrine among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of Latrine	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Kachcha	224 (78.87)	172 (78.90)	396 (78.89)
Low cost	29 (10.21)	37 (16.97)	66 (13.15)
Sanitary	03 (1.06)	03 (1.38)	06 (1.19)
Open defecation	28 (9.86)	06 (2.75)	34 (6.77)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The table reveals a picture of health consciousness among the people in the Karbi and Kuki tribes. Over four fifths (78.89%) of the respondents have reported of having Kachcha latrines in their houses. This pattern is the same in the two communities. Over one tenth (13.15%) of the respondents have low cost

latrines, followed by about one tenth (6.77%) having no awareness regarding sanitation and therefore practicing open defecation. This pattern is found more prominent in the Karbi than the Kuki families. About one tenth (9.86%) of the Karbi and 2.75% of the Kuki respondents have no latrines in their houses - they defecate in open space. However, over one tenth (10.21%) of the Karbis and about one fifth (16.97%) of the Kukis have low cost latrine in their houses. Around 1% families of Karbis and Kukis have sanitary latrines.

The data indicate health awareness and mindset of the respondents regarding construction of latrines in their houses. Most alarmingly, open defecation is still practiced in various Karbi and Kuki villages of the district. Most of the families of Rupachera (more than 80%), and a few from Madhurapar, Boalchera and few families of Shaimar Kuki village have no basic awareness about sanitation and so they are practicing open defecation.

ENERGY SOURCE

Energy source, the most essential for cooking and lighting, has an impact on the status of women. There is no electricity in most of the Karbi and Kuki villages. So, for light at night most of the villages have to depend on kerosene. For light at night, the villagers have kerosene, solar and electricity as sources. The following table shows the sources of light tapped by the respondents' families:

Table 3.14
Source of Light in the Houses of Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Sl. No.	Source of light	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
1	Kerosene	112 (39.44)	41(18.81)	153(30.48)
2	Solar energy	23(8.10)	29(13.30)	52(10.36)
3	Kerosene and Solar energy	78(27.46)	97(44.50)	175(34.86)
4	Electricity supply	71(25)	51(23.39)	122(24.30)
Total		284(100)	218(100)	502(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015

The above table shows the condition of the Karbi and Kuki villagers with respect to light at night. Over one third (34.86%) of the respondents use solar energy and kerosene as the sources of light, followed by about one third (30.48%) who use only kerosene. However, about one fourth (24.30%) of the respondents use electricity as the source of light and the same pattern of electricity use is found in both the communities. Only one tenth (10.36%) of the families of the respondents depend upon only solar lamp as the source of light.

Comparatively, over two fifths (44.50) of the Kuki respondents depend on kerosene and solar lamp for light at night, whereas over one fourth (27.46%) of the Karbi respondents use kerosene and solar lamp at night. However, about two fifths (39.44%) of the Karbi respondents use only kerosene for light at night, whereas about one fifth (18.81%) of the Kuki respondents use it at night. But over one tenth (13.30%) of the Kuki and about one tenth (8.10%) of the Karbi respondents use only solar lamp at night.

The data reveal that kerosene and solar lamps are two important sources of light in both the communities because free solar lamp is provided by YMA (Young Mizo Association) in the Kuki villages of Assam-Mizoram border area. That is why the use of solar lamp is found more in Kuki villages than the Karbi villages. Then, one fourth of the houses are electrified and therefore electric current is the major source of light there. Electricity has reached in three Karbi villages; viz., New Malidhor, Ratachera and Konapara Grant and three Kuki villages- viz., Saihmar, Phaizol and Lalpani Kuki villages.

Besides the lighting, cooking requires use of energy. As most of the Karbi and Kuki villages are located on forest land, most of the families depend on forest firewood. Almost all the firewood required for a family is collected by womenfolk. The following table shows the source of fuel in the families of the two communities:

Table 3.15
Sources of Cooking Fuel among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Sl. No.	Source of Fuel	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
1	Fire wood	276 (97.18)	205 (94.04)	481 (95.82)
2	L.P.G	03 (1.06)	11 (5.05)	14 (2.79)
3	Electricity + Kerosene + firewood	05 (1.76)	02 (0.92)	07(1.39)
Total		284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that most (95.82%) of the respondents use firewood collected from forest; 2.79% of the respondents use LPG and the remaining (1.39%) use firewood, kerosene and electricity for cooking food. Here, almost the same trend is observed in the two communities.

Comparatively, Karbi people use more firewood for cooking than Kuki people. Almost all (97.18%) of the Karbi respondents and 94.14% of the Kuki respondents use only firewood for cooking food. Firewood is the most important source of fuel due to the location of these tribal villages. However, due to awareness as well as advantage of their location, a few people use LPG, instead of firewood. LPG reaches to the villages which are located on the road side like New Malidhor Karbi Punjee and Saihmar, Phaizol, and Lalpani Kuki Punjee.

EDUCATION

Education is another principal and prime determinant of social status among women. It is also one of the major factors influencing the socio-economic quality of a village or a community. Education also contributes positively to quality of living, habits, population control, life expectancy, maternal mortality, infant mortality, morbidity etc. The educational level of the Karbi and Kuki respondents is categorized into seven different groups: (i) Illiterate, (ii) literate, (iii) up to primary school, (iii) upto middle school, (iv) up to high school (IX pass), (v) HSLC pass (vi) higher secondary pass and (vii) graduate. The following two tables sequentially show the educational levels of the family members of the respondents in the two communities:

Table 3.16
Educational Qualification of the Family Members of the Karbi Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Educational Qualification	No. of Persons		
	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	267(31.12)	285 (38.36)	552(34.45)
Literate	88 (10.26)	146 (19.65)	234(14.62)
Primary School	191(22.26)	143(19.25)	334(20.86)
Middle School	203(23.65)	103 (13.87)	306(19.11)
High School (IX pass)	68(7.93)	49(6.59)	117(7.31)
HSLC Pass	24(2.80)	11(1.48)	36(2.25)
Higher Secondary pass	13(1.51)	5(0.67)	17(1.06)
Graduation	04(0.47)	1(0.13)	5(0.31)
Total	858 (100)	743(100)	1601(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that over one third (38.85%) of the Karbi people are illiterate: 31.12% males and 38.36% females. So, the literacy rate of the Karbis in Cachar district is 65.55%: male – 68.88% and female – 61.64%. About one fifth (20.86%) of the family members in the Karbi community have primary school pass members and almost the same trend is found among males and females. Then, about one fifth (19.11%) of the persons are Middle school pass: 23.65% males and only 13.89% females. Over one third of the persons can only read and write without having any school qualification, i.e. only literate:10.26% males and 19.65% females. About one tenth (7.31%) of the Karbi people high school (IX pass) and never passed the HSLC. Almost the same trend is visible in both males and females. Very few people have passed the HSLC (2.25%) and higher secondary examination (1.06%) and almost the same patterns are found for both males and females. Only 0.31% people mainly from New Malidhor and Konapara grant Karbi *punjees* are graduates.

Thus, the overall status of the Karbi people's education is very low. From the table it is clear that, Karbi women are trailing behind their menfolk in all levels of education. Comparatively, more (38.36%) Karbi women are illiterate than their menfolk (31.12%). Lack of awareness about education plays a vital role in this respect.

Now, let the education status of the Kuki people be observed. The following table presents the educational level of the family members of the Kuki respondents:

Table 3.17
Educational Qualification of the family members among Kuki Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Educational Qualification	No. of Persons		
	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	296 (19.92)	301(23.07)	597 (21.39)
Literate	133(8.95)	221 (16.94)	354(12.68)
Primary School	405(27.25)	298 (22.86)	703(25.19)
Middle School	384(25.84)	281(21.53)	665(23.83)
High School	152(10.23)	106(8.12)	258(9.25)
HSLC	71(4.78)	63(4.83)	134(4.80)
Higher Secondary	36(2.43)	31(2.34)	67(2.40)
Graduation	09(0.60)	04(0.31)	13(0.46)
Total	1486(100)	1305(100)	2791(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above reveals that about one fourth (25.19%) of the Kuki people are lower primary pass: 27.25% males and 22.86% females. About one fourth (23.83%) of them upper primary: 25.84% male and 21.53% female. About one over one fifth (21.39%) of the Kuki people are illiterate: 19.92% males and 23.07% females. Here, almost the same trend is found in the male and female members. About one tenth (9.24%) of them studies upto high school level and almost the same trend is visible in both the genders. Only 4.80% of the people are H.S.L.C qualified and the same trend is also visible in both the genders. Very few have qualification of Higher Secondary school (2.40%) and graduation (0.46%).

Thus, the picture of educational status in the Kuki villages is also low. Comparatively, illiterate Kuki women (23.07) are more than their illiterate menfolk (19.92). But from primary to graduation level of education, the achievement of Kuki men and women are almost the same. Due to the attitude of the Kuki community towards their womenfolk, generally Kuki women are getting almost equal opportunities along with their menfolk in the field of education.

KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Besides their mother tongue the respondents of the Karbi and Kuki tribes can speak and understand other languages. This reflects the level of their external exposure as well as freedom of movement. Then distribution by the languages known among the respondents is shown in the following table:

Table 3.18
Language Known among the Respondents (other than mother tongue)
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Other Languages Known	Karbi	Kuki	Total
Assamese	02(0.70)	0	02(0.40)
Bengali	196(69.01)	0	196(39.04)
Khasi	05(1.76)	0	05(1.00)
Hmar	0	116(53.21)	116(23.10)
Assamese and Bengali	02(0.70)	0	02(0.40)
Assamese and Hindi	01(0.35)	0	01(0.20)
Bengali and Hindi	42(14.79)	0	42(8.37)
Bengali and Hmar	0	57(26.15)	57(11.35)
Hindi and Hmar	0	12(5.50)	12(2.39)
Khasi and Bengali	14(4.94)	0	14(2.79)
Assamese, Bengali and Hindi	06(2.12)	0	06(1.20)
Bengali, Hindi and Hmar	0	33(15.14)	33(6.57)
Khasi, Bengali and Hindi	16(5.63)	0	16(3.19)
Total	284(100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that Bengali is a common language for the Karbi and the Kuki other than their mother tongues. Hmar is a common language of Kukis other than their mother tongue (Kuki). However, over two thirds (69.01%) of the Karbi respondents are as fluent in Bengali as in Karbi due to their education in Bengali or regular transaction with Bengali speaking people. Similarly, Kukis are fluent in Hmar language. Over half (53.21%) of the Kuki respondents are equally fluent in Hmar language along with their mother tongue, Kuki. But Hmar and Bengali constitute the third most popular combination of languages. Over one fourth (26.15%) of the Kuki respondents know these languages and they speak fluently. About one seventh (15.14%) of the Kuki respondents know and speak Hmar, Bengali and Hindi. Besides, Bengali and

Hindi are also known by over one tenth (14.79%) of the Karbi respondents. Khasi is also known to a few people, particularly those who are living in New Malidhor Karbi Punjee. So, a few (5.63%) of the Karbi respondents know Khasi, Bengali and Hindi and 4.94% of them know Khasi and Bengali. 5.50% of the Kuki respondents know Hmar and Hindi along with their mother tongue.

From the table it is clear that the Kuki people know more languages of tribal community than their Karbi counterparts. As Kuki, Hmar, Mizo etc. are very close languages having almost the same alphabets, the Kuki people understand all these languages and also marital relations of other tribal groups with Kukis are largely found. On the other hand, Karbi people know limited languages and Bengali becomes the medium of conversation with other tribal people like Dimasa in Cachar district. Notwithstanding this, in New Malidhor, border village of Assam-Meghalaya, a large number of Karbi people can speak Khasi language, as Meghalaya is the main land of Khasi people.

ECONOMIC CONDITION

Economic condition of a community, living in rural area, generally depends upon the occupational pattern, monthly income, land holding etc. People of the two communities in the study generally depend upon cultivation. Also, a few villagers are engaged in some other occupations like handicraft and handloom, trading, collection of forest products, vegetable vendors etc. Let the landholding size be known here.

Land Holding Size

In both the communities, most of the families have land for cultivation. Most of the land is given to the people of both the communities for Jhum cultivation with permission from the Government of Assam. So all the families in a village are equally distributed the Government land and it is leased out against the name of family head (male). Further, a few families have purchased some land from non-tribal besides the Government land, or in a few cases the headman

has arranged land for Jhum cultivation to the newly migrated people of their communities. The land holdings of the families of the respondents are shown in the following table:

Table 3.19
Land holding Size among the Respondents' Families
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Landholding Size (in bighas)	Number of families		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
1- 6	137(48.24)	69(31.65)	206(41.04)
7- 12	81(28.52)	42(19.27)	123(24.50)
Above 12	66(23.24)	107(49.08)	173(34.46)
Total	284(100)	218(100)	502(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that the Kuki families have more cultivable land than the Karbi families. Over two fifths (41.04%) of the families have 1-6 bighas of land, followed by over two thirds (34.46%) who have above 11 bighas and about one fourth (24.50%) who have 7-12 bighas of land.

About half (49.08%) of the Kuki families have the largest size of cultivable land (above 12 bighas), whereas only about one fourth (23.24%) of the Karbi families have this size of land holding. On the other hand, about half (48.24%) of the Karbi families have the small landholding (1-6 bighas), and about one third (31.65%) of the Kuki families have this size of land holding. However, over one fourth (28.52%) of the Karbi and about one fifth (19.27%) of the Kuki families have the medium landholding size of land (7-12 bighas).

Due to comparatively older habitations in remote location, the Kuki families hold more cultivable lands than the Karbi families. So, in the Kuki villages there are a few people who are now engaged with rubber plantation as well as cultivation of pineapples along with their traditional cultivation. However, in the Karbi villages, beetle nut and pineapple cultivation is done along with their traditional cultivation.

Occupation

Both the communities are pursuing various occupations for livelihood: shifting cultivation, settled cultivation, handicraft and handloom, forest collection, wage labour, horticulture, animal husbandry, trading etc. On the basis of their primary occupation the respondents are divided into 11 categories; viz., (i) students, (ii) housewives (iii) cultivation, (iv) shop keeping, (v) wage labour, (vi) cultivation and part time wage labour, (vii) collecting and selling of forest and other goods, (viii) handloom and handicraft works, (ix) Government job (x) private service works and (xi) unemployed.

Table 3.20
Primary Occupations among the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Occupational Category	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Cultivation (Jhum and settled)	167 (58.80)	106 (48.62)	273(54.38)
Shop keeping	06 (2.11)	11(5.05)	17(3.39)
Vegetable vender	09(3.17)	05(2.29)	14(2.79)
Wage labour	45(15.85)	29(13.30)	74(14.74)
Handloom and Handicraft work	12(4.23)	35(16.06)	47(9.36)
Jhum and part time wage labour	37(13.03)	24(11.00)	61(12.15)
Collecting and selling of forest and other goods	6(2.11)	4(1.83)	10(1.99)
Government job	00(00)	03(1.38)	03(0.60)
Private job	2(0.70)	1(0.47)	03(0.60)
Total	284(100)	218(100)	502(100)

Source: Field Survey conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that over half (54.38%) of the families of the respondents mainly depend on agriculture: 58.80% of the Karbi and 48.62% of the Kuki respondent's families. About one seventh (14.74%) of families have the main sources of income from wage labour and almost the same pattern is found in both the communities. Over one tenth (12.15%) of the respondents' families' primary income source is jhum cultivation and part time wage labour and the same pattern is found in the two communities. About one tenth (9.36%) of them have handicraft and handloom as the primary occupation, whereas only 3.39% of

them have income source of business (shop keeping). Only 2.79% of the families' primary source of income is vegetable selling (vegetable vender). A negligible portion of their families is in the jobs in Government and private sectors.

Thus, major occupation of the respondents is cultivation. But more Karbis depend on cultivation and about three fifths (58.80%) of the Karbi families mostly depend on this. About half (48.62%) of the Kuki respondents' families depend on cultivation. However, shift in occupation is clearly visible in the Kuki community. Over one sixth (16.06%) of the Kuki respondents' families have major occupation of handloom and handicraft, whereas only 4% of the Karbi families depend upon the income from handloom and handicrafts products. 1.38% of the Kuki families have Government employees, whereas no government servant is there in the Karbi community.

So, effect of education and occupational transformation is found here. Karbi community is more or less lagging behind.

Monthly Family Income

In a Karbi or Kuki family, maximum members are engaged in various economic activities. All members of a family are not primary workers; sometimes they help a senior member in their economic activities. About one-fourth of the respondents are secondary workers or helpers. In both, Karbi and Kuki families, very less number of family members are found living without doing any economic activity. The following table shows the income of respondents' families in both the communities:

Table 3.21
Respondents Monthly Family Income
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Family Income (in rupees)	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
<5,000	117(41.20)	84(38.53)	201(40.04)
5001-10,000	84(29.58)	61(27.96)	145(28.88)
10,001-15,000	53(18.31)	48(22.02)	101(20.12)
15,001-20,000	19(6.69)	14(6.42)	33(6.57)
20,001-25,000	06(2.11)	05(2.29)	11(2.19)
25001-30,000	04(1.41)	02(0.92)	06(1.20)
30,001-35000	00(00)	01(0.46)	01(0.20)
35001-40000	01(0.35)	01(0.46)	02(0.40)
>40,000	00(00)	02(0.92)	02(0.40)
Total	284 (100)	218 (100)	502 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The table demonstrates that over two fifths (40.04%) of the respondents have monthly family income of less than Rs. 5000: about two fifths (38.53%) and above two fifths (41.20%) of the Kuki and Karbi respondents respectively. Over one fourth (28.88%) of the respondents have family income of Rs. 5001-10,000 followed by over one fifth (20.12%) who have monthly family income of Rs. 10,001-15,000. Rest of the respondents has monthly family income that ranges from Rs. 20001 to more than Rs. 40,001. The families having the highest income per month (Rs. 40,000 and above), are found in the New Malidhor Karbi Punjee near Meghalaya border.

Thus, the family income of the Karbi and Kuki respondents' families reflects the economic status and living condition.

LIFE STYLE AND FOOD HABIT

People of both the tribes are always early risers. They have to come out from bed within 4.30 am. Generally, after getting fresh and taking light breakfast males walk to their nearest agricultural field to check overall condition of fields and plants but the girls and other females of family, after washing utensils, engage in preparing food. In-between 7.00 am and 8.00 am they take their first meal. Like the nontribal villagers, people of both the communities take meal

thrice a day. Within 2.00 pm they like to take their lunch either in their work place or at home. In the evening they complete their dinner before 7.00 pm. Both the tribal communities are non-vegetarian, but they cannot afford to manage non-veg food regularly, due to their economic condition and its non-availability. While working in a field, the food prepared in the morning is taken for lunch. Generally, it is either dried fish or freshly cooked green vegetable with chilly. A small open shade with thatched roof at the high end of each field is used to keep watch on the field to save crops from animals day and night and also to prepare liquor and food items for the family members engaged in the field in day time. In the field and at home, all Karbi family members sit together to take the food served by a female. But at home self-service is preferable and senior male members are given priority in this regard.

Household Assets

Household assets are very important for determining the status of family. These also reflect the economic condition of family. Household equipments are also very important for house. These are generally kept in the ceiling like platform made by pieces of bamboo under the roof in the kitchen. Earlier, earthen pots were widely used for storing water and other household items. But, now a day, most of these tribal families are using utensils made of aluminum, brass, plastic etc.

The list of asset of the respondents' families is shown in the following table. The household equipment are excluded from the list.

Table 3.22
Household Items in the Respondents' Families
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Household Item	Number of Families		
	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Chair, Bed	81(28.52)	58(26.61)	139(27.69)
Chair, Table, Bed	59(20.77)	38(17.43)	97(19.32)
Chair, Table, Bed, Radio	18(6.34)	4(1.83)	22(4.38)
Chai, Table, Bed, Almirah	41(15.14)	32(14.68)	75(14.94)
Chai, Table, Bed, Almirah, Radio	03(1.06)	00	03(0.6)
Chair, Table, Bed, Almirah, Solarcell	38(13.38)	41(18.81)	79(15.74)
Chair, Table, Bed, Almirah, Loom	07(2.46)	09(4.13)	16(3.19)
Chair, Table, Bed, Almirah, Television	37(13.03)	28(12.84)	65(12.95)
Chair, Table, Bed, Almirah, Television, Radio	02(0.70)	00	02(0.4)
Chair, Table, Bed, Almirah, Television, Chargeable Battery	06(2.11)	04(1.83)	10(1.99)
Chair, Table, Sofa set, Bed, Almirah, Refrigerator, Television, Chargeable Battery, Computer	03(1.06)	04(1.83)	07(1.39)
Total	284(100)	218(100)	502(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The above table reveals that most of the respondents' families in both the communities are poor as their household items reflect it. Over one fourth (27.69%) of the respondents have only bed and chair and almost the same pattern is found in both the communities. The combination of second most available household items among the families of the respondents comprises chair, table and bed. About one fifth (19.32%) of the respondents have these items, followed by the combination of household items comprising chair, table, bed, almirah and solar cell. Over one sixth (15.74%) of the respondents' families have the above household items. The items like chair, table, bed, almirah and solar cell are found in the houses of about one seventh (14.94%) respondents. The same pattern is observed in both the communities. However, over one seventh (12.95%) of the respondents have chair, table, bed, almirah, and television set and the same pattern is shared by both the tribal communities. Besides television, radio is also found in few Karbi houses. Looms are also found in a few families in both the communities. The household items chair, table, bed, almirah, and loom are found in 3.19% of the families with the same pattern for both the communities.

However, in spite of solar-cell, many people of the two communities use solar lamp for light in their houses due to the less cost.

The data also show the presence of valuable and essential household items in the houses of both the communities. However, for keeping costly household items like chargeable battery and computer, the Kuki families are slightly ahead of the Karbi families. But, the Karbi families have more television sets than the Kuki families.

Beside the household assets, people of both the communities have a good number of assets for communication; viz., bi-cycle, motor-bike and car. Over half (54.78%) of the respondents' families have transport vehicles: over two fifths (46.13%) of the Karbi respondents and about two thirds (66.06%) of the Kuki respondents' families. The following table presents the different categories of such assets owned by some of the respondents' families:

Table 3.23
Transport Vehicles among the Families of the Respondents
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Transport vehicles	Karbi Respondents	Kuki Respondents	Total Respondents
Bi-cycle	123 (93.89)	134 (93.06)	257 (93.45)
Motor-bike	02 (1.53)	03 (2.08)	05 (1.82)
Bi-cycle and motorbike	03 (2.29)	06 (4.17)	09 (3.27)
Motor-bike and car	02 (1.53)	00 (00)	02 (0.73)
Motorbike, car, and bi-cycle,	01 (0.76)	01 (0.69)	02 (0.73)
Total	131 (100)	144 (100)	275 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during June 2014 - December 2015.

The table reveals that most (93.45%) of the respondents' families have bicycle and the same trend is observed in both the communities whereas only 3.27% of the respondents' families have motorbike and bicycle: 2.29% of the Karbi and 4.17% of the Kuki respondents' families. Only 1.82% of the families have only motor-cycle for transportation. However, very negligible section has motor-bike and car or motorbike, car, and bi-cycle (0.73% of each).

Comparatively, due to having remote location of their habitation, the Kuki families own more transport vehicles than the Karbi families. However, bi-cycle is very common among those respondents' families which have any such assets, whereas only 10 (6.94%) Kuki and 8 (6.11%) Karbi respondents' families have motorbike. On the other hand 3 (2.29%) Karbi (all from New Malidhor) and 1 (0.69%) Kuki (Naxatilla) families have car. Due to having Government employee and advantage of good or average road in a few Kuki villages, Kuki community has more motor bikes than the Karbi community. Also, in spite of having less distance of the Karbi villages from the highway to their habitation, except New Malidhor, there is no proper road communication for other Karbi villages. So, luxurious transport vehicles (car and motorcycle) are mostly found in New Malidhor. On the other hand these assets were found in six Kuki villages.

Now, the social background of the Karbi and the Kuki respondents may be summarized by recapitulation of the following points:

1. About two thirds (64.54%) of the respondents follow Christianity: all (100%) Kuki and near about two fifths (37.32%) of the Karbi respondents. Over three fifths (62.68%) of the Karbi respondents and their family members recognize themselves as Hindu and carry on their age-old animistic beliefs. Thus, both the communities have undergone religious conversion and acculturation.
2. One finds various clans in the two communities (5 in Karbi and 37 in Kuki). All 5 Karbi clans are found in various Karbi villages. However, Terang (Hanjang) is the largest Karbi clan, having over one fourth (29.23%) of the total Karbi respondents; Ingti (Lijang) is the second largest clan with about one fourth (24.33%) of the Karbi respondents, followed by Timung (Tungjang) with about one fourth (22.53%) of the Karbi respondents. However, about one seventh (15.14%) of the respondents belong to the Enghee (Ejang) clan. Teron (Krojang) is the clan of the smallest number of the Karbi respondents, comprising about one tenth (8.80%) of the Karbi respondents.

However, people of 14 Kuki clans in the Cachar district have Changsen as the largest one, having over two fifths (44.50%) of the total Kuki respondents settled in various Kuki villages mainly in Tupidhor, Toulpi, Bagbahar, Ngente, Songhlu etc. Thomsong is the second largest clan of about one fifth (19.72) of the respondents mainly settled in Phaizol and Bethal Punjee of Joypur block, followed by Thangew with about one tenth (7.80%) of the Kuki respondents from Saihmar, and Kharzol Punjee of Lakhipur block. Haokip is the fourth largest clan, having less than one tenth (6.88%) of the Kukis living only in Lalpani Haokip Punjee of Lakhipur block. Then, Khochung is the fifth largest clan with (6.42%) of respondents and their families. The other clans do not have the existence in the Kuki community of the Cachar district, each having below 5% of the total Kuki respondents.

3. By age, 68.66% of the Karbi and 70.18% of the Kuki respondents belong to the age below 44 years. So, approximately 70% of the female respondents of the Karbi and Kuki communities are below 44 years of age. The rest (almost 30%) belong to the age of above 43 years. In the field it was also observed that the females above 43 years of age were very less in every household as compared to males. Various socio-economic factors like girls early marriage, high pregnancy rate, not taking the nutritious food during pregnancy and post-delivery periods etc are primarily responsible for this.

4. Nuclear family is very popular in both the communities. About two thirds (66.53%) of the respondents belong to nuclear family and the rest belong to joint family. Over two thirds (71.10%) of the Kuki respondents and over two fifths (63.03%) of the Karbi respondents are from nuclear family. On the other hand, over two thirds (36.97%) of the Karbi respondents and over one fourth (28.90%) of the Kuki respondents are from joint family. However, by size of the family, over one third (36.85%) of the respondents belong to medium family (5-8 members) with nuclear family type: about one fourth (39.45%) of the Kuki and over one third (34.86%) of the Karbi respondents. However, about one third (29.68%) of the respondents' families are nuclear with the small size of 1-4

members each: about one third (31.65%) of the Kuki and over one fourth (28.17%) of the Karbi respondents are having nuclear families. There is no joint family found in the small family category. However, over one sixth (16.14%) of the respondents belong to the large families: 17.61% of the Karbi and 14.22% of the Kuki respondents. Thus both the communities prefer medium families having 5-8 members each with nuclear type.

5. In the Karbi community, marriage between males and females of the same clan is prohibited as they are considered brothers and sisters. But both the communities prefer cross-cousin marriage. In the Karbi community, people prefer to marry in their own tribal community but, on the other hand, in Kuki community, there is not such a feeling. According to the Karbi culture neither cash nor kind is taken as bride price. Both the tribal communities use clan or sub-clan names as their surnames. A Karbi woman uses her father's surname even after marriage. But a Kuki woman uses her father's surname before marriage and husband's surname after marriage. If any inter-community, marriage takes place in the Karbi community, then the newly married bride has to use the surname of her mother-in-law.

6. By their marital status, most (86.26%) of the respondents are found married: almost all (92.66%) of the Kuki and about four fifths (78.52%) of the Karbi respondents. Traditionally both the tribal communities prefer early marriage. About one tenth (8.37%) of the respondents are unmarried: over one tenth (11.62%) of the Karbi and 4.13% of the Kuki respondents. Besides, 6.97% of the respondents are widows: about one tenth (9.86%) of the Karbi and 3.21% of the Kuki respondents. The Karbi community is very strict in respect of its social norms and rules. Inter-religious marriage is also restricted and inter-community marriage is rarely found in this community. Therefore, marriage is made within a limited population of the tribe in the Cachar district. But for the Kuki community, there is no such restriction; rather, they encourage the inter-community marriages. As a result, there are more unmarried persons among the Karbis than the Kukis.

7. Child marriage is prevailing in both the communities. Over fourth (26.96%) of the respondents from both the communities were married in the age under 18 years: 36.64% of the Karbi and 15.31% of the Kuki respondents. Legally this is child marriage. The trend of underage marriage (15-17 years) among Karbis is found more than the double one of the Kuki respondents. The lower level of education among the Karbi community including their womenfolk is mostly responsible for it. However, the largest size, i.e. about half (44.62%) of the respondents have married in the age of 18-21 years: 34.67% of the Karbi and 65.55% of the Kuki respondents.

8. In both the tribal communities, there are certain customs, rituals, belief, rules, obligations etc. In animistic beliefs, male always performs the family rituals and only a male can become priest to perform worship. However, on death major traditional rituals are performed by an aged woman preferably widow, popularly called Rexarpi in the Karbi community. On the other hand, even after their conversion to Christianity, the Kuki women are not able to perform as priests or pastor in any ritual. However, in several Christian groups, various works are allotted to women in religious sphere. For distribution of paternal landed property, both the tribes have the same beliefs. Parental lands are distributed among male children. In the Kuki community, the elder son becomes the custodian of the parental properties. In case of there being no son, brother's son is entitled to get the property. But in the Karbi community, though paternal land is distributed among sons, if there arises a need, a portion may be allotted to girls also. The customs of bride-price and dowry prevail in the Kuki community. But in the Karbi community, neither bride price nor dowry is part of their customs.

9. The customary law of both the communities discriminates in the matter of ownership of property and gives the, least decision making power to women in domestic and public spheres. But more duties and responsibilities than they are given. All household activities like collecting of drinking water, participating in

all family economic activities, collecting and marketing of firewood/ forest products are generally fall in the domain of women in both the communities.

10. Of the houses in both the communities, most (87.85%) are kachcha or traditional houses. Kukis have more traditional kachcha houses than the Karbis. The same pattern is found in both the communities. Over one tenth (11.55%) of the respondents' houses are semi-pacca (Assam type) and the remaining (only 0.60%) are pacca. Almost the same pattern is found in both the communities in respect of semi-pacca and pacca houses. The overall living condition of the Karbi people in Cachar district is slightly better than the Kukis.

11. Over four fifths (78.89%) of the respondents use Kachcha latrines in their houses and the pattern is the same in both the communities. Over one tenth (13.15%) of the respondents have low cast latrines, followed by about one tenth (6.77%) of the total families having no awareness about sanitation, and therefore practice open defecation. This pattern is found more prominent in the Karbi families than the Kuki families. About one tenth (9.86%) of the Karbi and only 2.75% of the Kuki respondents have no latrine in their houses and they defecate in open space. Most of the families of Rupachera (more than 80%); a few from Madhurapar and Boalchera and a few families of Shaimar Kuki village have no basic awareness about sanitation and so they are practicing open defecation. However, only around 1% families of the Karbi and Kuki respondents have sanitary latrines.

12. Over one third (34.86%) of the respondents use solar and kerosene for lighting in houses, followed by about one third (30.48%) of the respondents using only kerosene. However, about one fourth (24.30%) of the respondents use electricity for lighting and the same pattern of electricity use is found in both the communities. Only one tenth (10.36%) of the families of respondents depends on solar lamp for lighting. Comparatively, over two fifths (44.50) of the Kuki respondents depend on kerosene and solar lamp for lighting at night, whereas over one fourth (27.46%) of the Karbi respondents use kerosene and solar lamp at

night. However, about two fifths (39.44%) of the Karbi respondents use only kerosene for light at night. About one fifth (18.81%) of the Kuki respondents use the same at night. But over one tenth (13.30%) of the Kuki and about one tenth (8.10%) of the Karbi respondents use only solar lamp at night.

13. For cooking, most (95.82%) of the respondents use firewood collected from forest; 2.79% of the respondents use LPG and the remaining (1.39%) use firewood, kerosene and electricity for cooking food. Here, almost the same trend is observed in both the communities. The Karbi people use more firewood for cooking than the Kuki people. Almost all (97.18%) of the Karbi and 94.14% of the Kuki respondents use only firewood for cooking food. Due to advantage of location a few families use LPG instead of firewood. LPG also reaches to the villages which are located on the road side like New Malidhor Karbi Punjee and Saihmar, Phaizol and Lalpani Kuki Punjee.

14. In both the communities, female education is much lower than their menfolk. Further, literacy rate of Karbi people (65.55%) is comparatively lower than the Kuki people (78.61%). Adoption of Christianity by the total Kuki community is the major reason for it. Due to this, more Kuki women are literate (76.93%) as compared with their Karbi (61.64%) counterparts. But from primary to graduation level of education, the achievement of Kuki men and women are almost the same. Due to the attitude of Kuki community towards their womenfolk, generally Kuki women get almost equal opportunity along with their menfolk in the field of education.

15. Bengali is the common language for the Karbis and the Kukis other than their mother tongue. Hmar is a common language of the Kuki other than their mother tongue (Kuki). Kuki people know more languages of tribal community than Karbis. As Kuki, Hmar, Mizo etc are languages very close to each other with almost the same alphabets. So, Kuki people understand all these languages and the marital relations of other tribal groups with Kukis are largely found. On the other hand, Karbi people know limited languages and only Bengali becomes the

medium of conversation with other tribal people like Dimasa in the Cachar district. Notwithstanding this, in New Malidhor the people in a large number speak Khasi language as the village is in the Assam-Meghalaya border.

16. With Regard to land holding, one finds that about half (49.08%) of the Kuki families have the largest size of cultivable land (above 12 bigha), whereas only about one fourth (23.24%) of the Karbi families have this size of land holding. On the other hand, about half (48.24%) of the Karbi families have the small landholding (1-6 bighas), and about one third (31.65%) of the Kuki families have this size of land holding. However, over one fourth (28.52%) of the Karbi and about one fifth (19.27%) of the Karbi families have the medium landholding (7-12 bighas). Due to comparatively older habitations in remote location, the Kuki families hold more cultivable lands than the Karbi families and most of these are government lands given to both communities (in the name of male head of family) with permission for jhum cultivation.

17. Major occupation in the both communities is cultivation. Over half (54.38%) of the families of the respondents mainly depend on agriculture and about one seventh (14.74%) of the families have main income from wage labour. Almost the same pattern is found in both the communities. Over one tenth (12.15%) of the respondents' families have primarily income from jhum cultivation and part time wage labour. The same pattern is found in the two communities. About one tenth (9.36%) of them have handicraft and handloom as the primary occupation: 4.23% Karbis and 16.06% Kukis, whereas only 3.39% of them have business (shop keeping). Only 2.79% of the families' primary source of income is vegetable selling (vegetable vender). Only 3 (1.38%) Kuki families have government employees, whereas no Karbi family has any government employee.

18. By monthly income, over two fifths (40.04%) of the respondents' families have monthly income of less than Rs. 5000: about two fifths (38.53%) of the Kuki and above two fifths (41.20%) of the Karbi respondents. Over one fourth

(28.88%) of the respondents have family income of Rs. 5001-10,000, followed by over one fifth (20.12%) who have monthly family income of Rs. 10,001-15,000. Rest of the respondents has monthly family income that ranging from Rs. 20,001 to more than Rs. 40,001. The families having the highest income per month (Rs. 40,000 and above), are from New Malidhor Karbi Punjee. Thus, more Karbi (70.78%) respondents' families have the monthly income (up to Rs. 10000/-) than the Kuki families (66.49%), whereas, one third (33.51%) of the Kuki and over one fourth (29.28%) of the Karbi respondents' families have monthly income of more than Rs. 10000/- per month. So, engaged in various occupations, the Kuki families have more monthly income than the Karbi families.

19. Household items also reflect living condition, financial capacity and location of habitation in the two communities. Over one fourth (27.69%) of the respondents' families have only bed and chair and almost the same pattern is found in both the communities. The combination of second most available household items among the families is chair, table and bed. Over one fifth (21.71%) of the respondents have these items, followed by the combination of household items comprising chair, table, bed, almirah and solar cell. Over one sixth (15.74%) of the families have the above household items. The items like chair, table, bed, almirah and solar cell are found in the houses of over one seventh (14.94%) respondents. The same pattern can be observed in both the communities. However, about one seventh (13.35%) of the respondents have chair, table, bed, almirah, and television and the same pattern is shared by both the tribal communities. Looms are also found in a few families in both the communities. The household items like chair, table, bed, almirah, and loom are found in 3.19% of the families with the same pattern for both the communities. However, in spite of solar-cell, many people of both the communities use solar lamp as the sources of light in their houses due to the less cost.

20. For remote location of the habitation Kuki families own more transport vehicles than the Karbi families. Bi-cycle is very common among those respondents' families which have any such assets, whereas only 10 (6.94%) of

Kuki and 08 (6.11%) of the Karbi respondents' families have motorbike. On the other hand 03 (2.29%) Karbi (all from New Malidhor) and 01 (0.69%) Kuki (Naxatilla) families have car. Due to Government job and the advantage of road condition in a few Kuki villages, have more motor bikes than the Karbi community. Also, there are less distance of Karbi villages from the highway, but except New Malidhor, there is no proper road communication for other Karbi villages. So, luxurious transport vehicles (car, and motorcycle) were mostly found only in New Malidhor, whereas, these assets were found in six Kuki villages.

Thus, from the above findings it is clear that due to adoption of the western culture through Christianity, Kuki people are more conscious about education. So, Kuki people (male and female) are more educated than Karbi. Impact of education is visible in almost every area in both the communities. Families of maximum (62.68%) Karbi respondents still follow animistic culture and beliefs in the name of Hindu religion. But in, Hindu and Christian Karbis, there exists some restrictions for selection of couples for marriage. So, more Karbi women remain bachelor than the Kukis, whereas, due to lack of education, child marriage is widely practiced in Karbi than the Kuki. However, both the communities prefer nuclear families with medium size (5-8 members) but comparatively, more Kuki families are nuclear with the medium size. Kuki people know more languages of other tribal communities. So, there exist cordial relation between various tribal groups like Mizo, Hmar etc. with Kuki community and intercommunity marriages are also very common in Kuki community. But Karbi community is very rigid in this respect and Karbi community hardly allows inter community marriages, even between couples having the same surname. Kuki habitation in Cachar district is much older than Karbi habitations and so land holding of Kuki families is comparatively more than Karbi land holding. However, Karbi people prefer traditional cultivation than Kukis. Transformation of occupation is very limited in Karbi. But Kuki community has adopted various occupations like rubber plantation, pineapple gardening, handicraft, government and private jobs etc. But except a few families, both the communities are very

poor and most of families have monthly income up to Rs. 5000/-. So, most of houses in both the communities are kachcha. About sanitation, Kuki people are more aware than Karbi people. About one tenth of the Karbi families are still practicing open defecation. But for cooking and lighting, most of the families are depend on firewood and kerosene respectively.
