

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

One of the important tasks in the field of the social science research is the review of the literature related with the topic of the research. In a research proposal, the review of literature is a partial summary of the previous works related with the focus of the study. It is a “critical analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies reviews of literature, and theoretical articles” (University of Wisconsin Writing Center). In other words, a literature review is a critical and in-depth evaluation of previous research. It is a summary and synopsis of a particular area of research, allowing anybody reading the paper to establish why a researcher is pursuing a particular research programme. A good literature review expands upon the reasons behind selecting a particular research question. Moreover, a review of literature gives both the theoretical and methodological direction to the research work. In a world where we find vast store of knowledge, it is necessary to examine what has already been done before we boast a new achievement.

II.I. Review of Literature on Karbi Middle Class:

In pursuance of the research proposal entitled “The Role Of Karbi Middle Class in the Politics of Karbi Anglong District of Assam” the research work on the second chapter entitled the ‘Review of Literature’ has been taken up with the objective of making acquaintance with the different books and other published materials related to the topic of the research, i.e. the Karbi Middle Class and also for making maximum use of these materials during the course of the research. The first task in the field was to explore and identify the different published materials related with the topic of the research and to have an in-depth study of them. This provided ample options to the researcher regarding the books which are to be selected and which are not to be selected for guidance during the course of the research.

During the course of our study of the various published materials relating to the topic of the research it was found that though a large number of books have been written on the politics of the North East India and on tribal politics of the region, yet only a few of these books have been Karbi specific. Most of the books written by different renowned writers on the tribal politics of North East India have conspicuously avoided to pounce upon the Karbi tribe in general and Karbi politics in particular. Among the few early writers who had worked on the Karbis with authenticity include, A.J. Moffat Mills (Report on the Province of Assam)¹, William Robinson (Notes on the Languages of Various Tribes Inhabiting the valleys of Assam and its Mountain Confines)², R. Stewart (Notes on Northern Cachar)³, Major Jhon Butler (Travels and Adventures in the Province of Assam)⁴ and Rev. R.E. Neighbor (A Vocabulary in English and Mikir)⁵. All these scholars brought out published works on the Karbis during 1842 to about 1880. After 1880, another group of scholars came up who include B.C. Allen (Gazetteer of Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Lushi Hills)⁶ and his 'Assam District Gazetteers'⁷ Edward Stack and Sardoka Perrin Key (Papers on the Mikirs)⁸ and Charles Lyall ((The Mikirs)⁹. Among these people the name of Sarkoda deserves a special mention. He was the chief aid to Edward's writings on Karbi language. During the first decade of the last century, the American Baptist Mission at Tika, Karbi Anglong also published a number of books on Karbi Language for the purpose of teaching the Bible and the language among the Karbis themselves.

Most of the above mentioned authors originally undertook publications of papers on the Karbis and contemporary tribes of Assam in the Journal of the 'Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta'. Some information were also published in the government land revenue records. These records supply some information about the language, economy, social custom and habits, distribution and habitat and also a short history of the Karbis. Majority of them took up the philological and linguistic analysis as their primary objects. G. A Grierson for his 'Linguistic Survey of India'¹⁰, took the help of Stack's writings. Among all the early published works, the book of Charles Lyall, entitled 'The Mikirs' is the most elaborate one. He also took a substantial amount of help from Stack's and Sarkoda's writings. Infact, Lyall, who officiated as the Chief Commissioner of Assam for a while was given the task of writing a monograph on the Karbis (then known as Mikirs). Lyall had very little time to investigate in to the

theme due to his preoccupation in the administration but he produced an unique account on the tribe. Among various aspects that Lyall has dealt with, the chapters on the distribution, settlement and house types and the racial cultural and socio-economic affinities of the Karbis are most valuable from the geographical viewpoint. This work provides some linguistic and cultural clues to build up an idea as the place of origin and the routes of migration of the early Karbis. However, despite his serious attempt to deal with the tribe in an elaborate manner in his monograph, Lyall's work is considered to be incomplete as the monograph was written under definite official direction and its main purpose was to expose the tribe to the administration. Therefore the work can not be considered as a real attempt to study the tribe for research purpose.

From about the middle of the 20th century, some of the scholars started publishing some books and articles dealing with certain important aspects of the Karbis. Among those who deserve special mention, are Edward Gait and Lakshmi Devi. Gait in his book 'A History of Assam'¹¹ has touched upon the history of the Karbis in which he mentions that the Karbi villages were there in and around the Kopili river valley during 1765 and the Ahom carried out an expedition against them. Lakshmi Devi in her book 'Ahom-Tribal Relations'¹² has given a description in chronological order about the migration of the Karbis from the Khasi and Jaintia Hills to the plains of Nagaon during the Ahom regime. However as most of these works were only early works when politics among the Karbis was yet to take a formal shape. It is therefore quite natural that all these works did not contain any information about the political life of the Karbis. In the words of Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharjee, "The Karbis had no definite administrative area of their own before independence. They did not have any worthwhile political role. The old time monographs were truly an exercise in status-quo with hardly any role to play for the growth of the tribe in social, political and economic fields."¹³ It was only after the independence of the country that a large number of published materials in the forms of books, research papers or journals began to come up on the tribal politics of the North East and the politics of the Karbi tribes also began to find place in the writings of some of the important writers on the tribal politics of the North East.

It is in the backdrop of such hardships and scarcity of written materials on Karbi politics, an attempt has been made to review certain important books written by some of the renowned authors on North East politics in this chapter:-

I. Among all the writers on tribal politics of North East India, Professor V. Venkata Rao undoubtedly occupies the most important position. In his book *'A Century of Tribal Politics In North East India'*¹⁴ V. Venkata Rao has dealt in details about the inception and development of the tribal politics in different parts of the North East including among the Karbis of Karbi Anglong (formerly known as Mikir Hills) district of Assam. In this particular book which is divided in to total Eighteen (18) chapters, Prof. Rao has thrown light on conditions that led to the evolution of a different administrative system for the different hill areas of the North East during the British period. According to him, "The British thought that the complicated procedure adopted for the administration of the plains was unsuitable for the hills".¹⁵ He has further mentioned that the Britishers after going through different recommendations of different committees, commissions and also of the district officials evolved a different administrative system for the hill tribes of the North East. As a part of this, Karbi Anglong, then known as the Mikir Hills was put under system of the Partially Exclude Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. In this regard Prof. Rao has mentioned about the recommendations of Dr. Hutton regarding the Karbis when he viewed that, "the Mikirs (presently Karbis) are some ways that most backward tribe in Assam and they are totally incapable of protecting themselves against exploitation."¹⁶ It may be mentioned that Dr. Hutton who was consulted by the British authorities before evolving the system of excluded and partially excluded areas for the hill areas of the North East. The book also deals with the traditional political systems of the Karbis which was based upon a hierarchical order with the Karbi Riso occupying the position of the constitutional monarch in the Karbi society. One of the most remarkable features of the books is that it tries to trace the genesis of the Karbi politics as it has elaborately discussed the circumstances that led to the formation of the Karbi A-Darbar, the first political organization of the Karbis in the year 1946. The book also throws light on the political activities of the Karbi-A-Darbar during the initial years of its formation and thereafter. When the Mikirs (Presently Karbis) heard of the departure of the British and of the impending

constitutional changes they formed the Karbi-A- Darbar, the Mikir jatiya mahasabha in May 1946. A meeting of the Mikirs in Assam was held in Habiapur Huzar(present Hawaipur). It was attended by about 2,000 persons. The meeting constituted Karbi-A-Durbar. It had no written constitution. It elected Sarsing Teron Haboi as its president and Semson Sing Engti as its Secretary. Both of them were Sibsagar Mikirs . Both of them were co-opted by the Bordoloi Committee to represent the Mikir Hills.”¹⁷. The book has discussed in details about the political activities of the Karbi-A-Darbar and its role in the formation of the Karbi Anglong district and securing a District Council for the tribe under the 6th Schedule of the Indian constitution . The personalities that were mentioned as the main organizers of the Karbi-A-Darbar, like Khorsing Terang and Semson Sing Engti and others were the first generation of the Karbi middle class that began to surface in the arena of the Karbi politics.

Apart from throwing light on the role of the Kari-A-Darbar in the formation of the Karbi Anglong (then Mikir Hills) district and securing a District Council for it, Prof. V. V. Rao his book ‘A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India’ has also discussed at length about the political development of the district from the initial period of the formation of the District Council up to 1974. The powers and functions vested to the Karbi Anglong District Council under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution was also discussed in details in the book. To book has further dealt in details about the political opportunism displayed by some Karbi leaders for the sake of either becoming the Chief Executive Member (CEM) or an Executive Member (EM). As a keen observer of the Karbi politics ,the author has further devoted considerable amount of space in this book to discuss how a few families of the district controlled the entire political process of the district . It becomes clear from the following observation of the author, “A keen observer of Mikir politics will find that in the Mikir Hills power is concentrated in a few families although there is political rivalry between them. Khorsing Terang , the first CEM and the first MLA elected under the Government of India Act ,1935, constituted the Executive Committee consisting of his step brother , Soi Soi Terang . Khorsing had two daughters and two sons. One of his daughters was married to Chatrasing Teron who was the CEM from 1955 to 1957, Chairman of the District Council from 1958 to 1962 and a Cabinet Minister in the state Cabinet. Khorsing’s second daughter was

married to Chandrasing Teron who was a member of Nihang Rongpher's cabinet and after dethronement of Nihang Rongpher he became the CEM and then the Chairman of the District Council . After his death , his brother Mohansing Teron became a member of Dhaniram Rongpi's cabinet in 1971. Dhaniram Rongpi married the sister of Mohansing Teron. Again, Joysing Dolloi, the present CEM, gave his daughter in marriage to the brother of Dhaniram Rongpi. Again Sarthesing Terang, the son of Khorsing Terang , one of the richest persons in the Mikir Hills , is the Chairman of Diphu Town Committee and a prospective CEM.”¹⁸ The observation is a clear indication of the dominance of the middle class in the Karbi politics from the very beginning of the District Council . In another context i.e. while referring to the hill state movement for Meghalaya , that author himself has generalized the role of the tribal middle class in the politics of the hills . According to him , “ In the Hill areas , a new class has come in to existence - the middle class – with the progress of education and economic development . It is this middle class that demanded the separation by skilful manipulation of the will of the people. A close analysis of the persons behind the movement indicates that the Hill State demand was a middle class movement.”¹⁹

In short, the book , *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India (1874-1974)* written by V . Venkata Rao, former Professor –Emeritus, Guwahat University is a masterpiece in tribal politics of the North East . The book appears to be the result of rigorous and prolonged research of the hill politics in North East India by the author. For any researcher intending to go for research in tribal politics of NE India, the book will serve not only as the guide to travel through the tribal politics of the region but at the same time it is an inevitable volume that the researcher must study to have a true understanding of the hill politics of the North East India.

II. *‘Sociology of the Karbis’*²⁰ written by Dr. Tanmay Bhattacharjee is another of the most authentic books ever written on the Karbis . The book is found as the outcome of the author's close study of the tribe as a resident of Karbi Anglong district during his stay as a teacher of Political Science at Diphu Govt College . The book is an in-depth study of the Karbis from the sociological perspective. Altogether divided in to total Nine (9) chapters, the book has dealt with different sociological

aspects of the tribe in different chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the origin and growth of the tribe. The migration route of the tribe is traced in this chapter. According to the author, “Of all the tribes in Assam, the Karbis have perhaps given the researchers widest varieties of possibilities so far as their migration and affinities are concerned.”²¹ The author has further cited the reasons for this. According to him, “They do not have written history of the good old days and hence, most of the conclusions are drawn from the folklores which play an important role in their existence.”²² The demographic position of the tribe is also compared with that of other tribes like the Dimasas, Kacharis, the Kukis, the Rengama Nagas, Mizos and the Bodo Kacharis in this chapter. In the Second Chapter of the book, the author has thrown light on the social system of the tribe. The existence of different clans, their physical features, dress, ornaments, the system of house construction, marriage and death are elaborated in this chapter. In the Third Chapter of the book has been devoted to the traditional political system of the Karbis. Stress is laid on the three tier system which is persisting in the Karbi political arena. The author has also discussed how the Karbi traditional political system is coping with the demands of the modern political attitude which is represented by the District Council and its wide network of powers. In the Fourth Chapter, the evolution of the political consciousness among the Karbis has been traced and how a new generation of middle class Karbis led the tribe in securing a District Council has been discussed in this chapter. The political consciousness of the tribe surfaced formally when “In 1937, Khorsing Terang, founder of the district led a group to meet the visiting Governor Sir Robert Neil at Monungdijua. This was the beginning of an agitation to achieve a district of their own. Fortunately, at that time a group of people emerged among the Karbis who could provide genuine leadership to the tribe. Two persons who played distinct role in the formation of the district were Semson Sing Engti and Khorsing Terang. The first was a college educated and worked as the Sub-Inspector of schools in the District of Nowgong. This gave him the opportunity to study socio-economic problems of the region. The Karbi Adorbar which played an important role in later years was established mainly at his initiative.”²³ This clearly indicates the emergence a new middle class among the tribe. Apart from discussing about the emergence of the Karbi Adorbar and the Karbi Riso Adorbar and their role during the initial periods of their formation the chapter also deals with the debates on different issues such as, role of the Christian Karbis and the role of the Hindu Karbis in the politics of the district.

In the Fifth Chapter traditional and nontraditional economic system of the Karbis are discussed. Special coverage has been given to the Jhuming system of cultivation which the tribe has been practicing since time immemorial and the adverse effect of this system on the ecology of the region . The author has preferred terrace cultivation as an alternative of the jhum cultivation. He has further suggested the modern scientific methods of cultivation for a better economic development of the region. In the Sixth Chapter, Karbi Anglong's educational progress is reviewed. The author has observed that the emergence of the Karbis as a socio-political community depends on education among the masses. Emphasis is laid on the spread of education as the essential ingredient and the only barrier breaker of social backwardness. In the Seventh Chapter, the religion of the Karbis is described in details. In this chapter, the author further tried to trace the circumstances that led the tribe to worship different traditional deities at different occasions. In the Eight Chapter, the tradition of folktales of the tribe has been discussed in details. These stories give us some insights in to the cultural development of the tribe. In the Concluding Chapter, all the points that were discussed in the above chapters are further enumerated.

In brief, 'Sociology of the Karbis' by Dr. Tanmay Bhattacharjee is an in-depth study of the Karbis from the sociological perspective and takes in to its purview their origin and growth , social and political system , economy and education , customs and traditions, beliefs and superstitions legends and language . All put together, the enormous range of aspects makes this study truly and overview of the Karbi hilly people. Though, the discussion on Karbi life cannot be full proof but an attempt has been made to project the different sides of the Karbi life and therefore the books is able to serve the purpose of the researchers intending to take up research on the Karbi tribe.

III. '*The Karbis of North East India*'²⁴ written by Dr. Phukan Ch. Phango, a prominent Karbi writer of Karbi Anglong district is in fact the publication with minor modifications of his Ph.D. thesis entitled, *The Karbis: a Spatio- Temporal Analysis in Tribal Geography* which was approved by the Gauhati University in the month of May 1990. In this book the author has tried to study the Karbis from a geographical

point of view where he has discussed in details about the geographical basis of the Karbi Anglong , the present habitat of the Karbi tribe . The book is altogether divided into nine (9) chapters wherein the author has tried to touch different geographical aspects of the Karbi tribe. According to him, “The Karbi Plateau represents the North Easternmost extension of the stable Gondwana Massif. The plateau however was partially subjected to subsidence in different geological periods and hence it contains younger rocks also.”²⁵ Apart from the geographical basis, physiography, climate, soils, rainfall, humidity and temperature vegetation etc. are also discussed in details in the book.

Considerable amount of space has been given to trace the historical base of the Karbis in the second chapter of the book . The historical geography , particularly migration , settlement , economy religion and geo-politics of the Karbis etc are discussed in details in this chapter . The migration of the Karbis to their present habitat is evident from the observation of the author when he said that , “ It is a popular belief among the Karbis that they have come to their present abode , especially the district of Karbi Anglong from the east. This migration must have been during the first and second millennia before Christ. They belong to the Tibeto- Burman ethno-linguistic family. Controversy however, arises as to exactly to which group they belong.”²⁶ Apart from this, the author briefly mentions about the establishment of the first Karbi Church at Tika in 1906 and the role of the Tika Church in spreading modern education among the Karbis and subsequent emergence of an elite class among the tribe. This chapter further deals with the emergence of the political consciousness among the Karbis with the formation of the Karbi-A- Darbar , the first political organization of the Karbis . The author has also briefly focused on the role of the Karbi Adarbar in the formation of the Karbi Anglong district and securing the District Council for the Karbis under the 6th Schedule of the Indian constitution .

Briefly speaking , the book entitled ‘The Karbis of North East India’ written by Dr. Phukan Ch. Phangcho gives a geographical interpretation of the various aspects of the Karbis such as, their ethnology and origin , history , migration and distribution , politics , economy , demography and so on . In the concluding part of the book, the

author gives suggestions for the systematic and faster development and progress of the tribe. Beautiful maps, diagrams and photographs have also been incorporated for illustrations. In short, the book is a fine example of tribal studies that has become so important in our contemporary time.

IV. ‘The Enchanting Karbi Hills’,²⁷ written by Nazmeen Anam, who was working as the officer in charge of the District Museum, Diphu is a compilation of articles on socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of the hill people inhabiting in Karbi Anglong district . In the book which is divided into total thirteen (13) chapters, the author has tried to study the different tribes inhabiting in the district from an anthropological point of view, though the main study revolves around the Karbis . In this context, mention may be made of the Second Chapter, entitled, the Colorful Karbis where the author has discussed in details about the regional groups of the Karbis , the different clans prevalent among the tribe , the traditional marriage system of the Karbis , their traditional political system with the Lingdokpo (the Karbi King) occupying the highest position in the functional hierarchy. Apart from it the dress and food habit of the tribe, its rites and rituals etc. is also discussed in details in the chapter. Special mention has been made on ‘Chomangkan’, the rituals performed in memory of the dead souls. “The Karbis have a unique system of performing death rites. They firmly believe the concept of rebirth. Therefore, every Karbi family has the responsibility to perform the death ceremony of the deceased. This ceremony of the Karbis is Called Chomnagkan”²⁸

In the Chapter, entitled, *Semsonsing Engti: The Architect of Present Karbi Anglong*, the author has thrown light on life and political activities Semson Sing Engti, doyen the Karbi middle class and the main person behind the formation of Karbi Anglong district for the Karbis . The chapter discusses about the advent of Christianity at Tika Hills of Baithalangso and its impact on the life of Semson Sing Engti, “His father was Late Thengkursing Engti who was also the first Christian convert Karbi. During that period, the Christian missionaries established their first Church in Tika Hills . Thengkursing Engti was appointed in the task of preaching their religion. When Semson Sing Engti was a year old , he accompanied to Golaghat Mission party with

J.M. Carwel, a missionary personnel for preaching Christianity . As a result he got the opportunity to start his academic career at Golaghat . He got through his primary classes with scholarship in Mission Primary School and also came out of the local Bezbaruah High School..... he later completed his studies from Murarichand College , Sylhet (Bangladesh) in the year 1993 and became the first Karbi Graduate .”²⁹ Later , in the same chapter, the author has also thrown light on the role of Semson Sing Engti in the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the first political organization of the Karbis and also on his selfless devotion towards the cause of the upliftment of the Karbis through the creation of the District Council .

A maiden writer, Nazmeen Anam, who was in charge of the district museum in her book ‘The Enchanting Karbis Hills’ provides a firsthand information about the Karbi hills. Even though the writings are not research based and some facts are misrepresented in the books, a student of anthropology, Nazmeen Anam has tried her best at least to provide a source of information and encouragement to the new generation who might take up studies in future.

V. The book, ‘*Karbi Studies- Memories, Myths, Metaphor- Vol.I*’³⁰ edited by Dharam Sing Teron , Ex- MLA is a compilation of various articles written by different Karbi writers on the Karbis . A wide range of subjects such as the origin of the term Mikir (Karbi), the tradition and culture of the tribe, it’s migration and settlement in North East , the customary judicial system of the Karbis , the indigenous means of communication among the social dignitaries of the tribe and its trans ethnic entities etc. are discussed in the book which altogether contains nineteen (19) articles contributed by total eight(8) writers . In other words, the book is an anthropological study of the tribe from the point of view of the tribe itself. In the words of Dharam Sing Teron himself, “The Karbi Studies was conceived as a series of books which would feature upcoming Karbi writers, activists and researchers and contribute to the understanding of the Karbis and their colourful world . The idea was to create and spread intellectual exercise among young activists and to develop awareness about their own culture and historical background.”³¹ He has further asserted that “Representing Karbis and their socio-anthropological psyche is a serious matter and

anybody without ever understanding our finer cultural sensibilities and vision can be allowed to indulge in the politics of mis/representing us. The Karbi Studies, therefore is intended to cover entire gamut of Karbi life to the farthest and deepest extent possible. And doing So the Karbi Studies does not attempt to fit in what Edward Said called the ‘protocol’ labeled as ‘scholarly and ‘academic’.’³² In short , Karbi Studies is a sincere attempt to represent the Karbis by Karbi writers in their own perspective . The book contains enormous amount of information on the above mentioned topics and that’s too provided by the upcoming Karbi writers themselves and therefore it will be of great help for the readers to understand the tribe and also researchers undertaking research on these topics.

VI. *The Tribal Women*³³ edited by Dr. B.C. Bhuyan, former Head of the Department, Political Science, Diphu Govt. College is essentially a collection of papers presented to a seminar on the Status of Women in two tribal societies of Karbi and Dimasa organized by the Political Science Department of Diphu Govt College in the year 1989 under the auspices of Indian Council of Social Science Research,(ICSSR) Shillong. The book is altogether divided in to two sections, namely, The Karbi Section and the Dimasa Section. The eminent contributors in the Karbi section include, Dr. G.C. Sharma Thakur, Dr. P.C. Phangcho , Dr. G.C. Medhi and Prof. Rong Bong Terang , while Dr. Tanmay Bhattacharjee is the most prominent contributor in the Dimasa Section .

Almost all the articles in the Karbi section of the book primarily deals with the social status of the women in the Karbi society, of course from different angles. If someone has dealt with social status of the Karbi women from the socio-cultural life of the tribe, some other has dealt with the role of the Karbi women in society both in the past and the present . Prof. Rong Bong Terang in his article has discussed the place of the women in Karbi society as found in the folk tradition of the tribe . In this context, he has given narration of different folk songs and folklores prevalent among the tribe since time immemorial . He has viewed the Karbi society as a male dominated one unlike the Khasis with whom the Karbis share much similarity in so far as their language and culture is concerned. “Like other patriarchal societies, in the

Karbi society also the control of the household remains in the hands of the males. From this point of view, the place of women in Karbi society is not equal to her male counterpart.”³⁴ It is therefore very clear that the book, *Tribal Women* has tried to explore in a hitherto unknown subject, i.e. the Karbi women to the outside world and hence the book will be a great help for the people trying to have an idea on the Karbi womenfolk .

VII. The book , entitled, ‘*The Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North East India*’³⁵ , edited by Dr. B. Datta Ray, one of the pioneers in the institutional social science research in the North East is the one of the rare books that this researcher found to be directly related to his topic of research i.e. the middle class . The work is a collection of papers presented in a seminar held in Shillong under the joint auspices of North Eastern Regional Centre of the Indian Council of Social Science Research(ICSSR-NE Region) and North East India Council for Social Science Research in the year 1978. Therefore, contributors in the book is comprised of the academicians of various disciplines like Sociology, History, Anthropology , Political Science, Economics etc. Some of the well known contributors in the book include the imminent scholars on North East like, Dr. Bani Prasanna Mishra, Dr. Shibani Kinkar Cahube, Dr. Monorama Sarma, , Udayan Mishra and Dr. Heramba Kanta Barpujari, etc.

The various thought provoking articles in the book try to study the middle class in North East India from different perspectives . The books altogether contains a total of seventeen (17) articles. In some of the articles it is observed that there has been a search for a definition of the middle class . Some authors have taken some academically accepted definitions, while some others have devised their own definition to suit the needs of their subject matter . For example , Bani Prasanna Misra’s article ‘Middle Class-Concepts and Issues’ tries to examine the significance of the middle class from a Marxist point of view . While quoting from Marx, he has viewed that “ Marx himself had substituted sometimes the petty bourgeoisie and peasant classes for the middle class , as in fact he did in the *Class Struggle in France and Revolution and Counter Revolution in Germany*.”³⁶ The same author in his

another article entitled , “Society and Politics In the Hill Areas of North East India”³⁷ tries to make an assessment of the tribal solidarity movements . In this article the author has tended to develop his theory about the vested interests of the tribal middle class , who according to the author have joined hands with the bourgeoisie of the other parts of India . To him , tribal movements spearheaded by the new elites are for the interest of a ‘special class’ only. Shibani Kinkar Chaube , in his article discusses about the rise of the middle class in the hills of North East India in the broader perspective of the middle class in general and middle class in India in particular. Like other writers in the same book, Chaube also arrives at the same conclusion that the middle class in the hills has emerged as a result of British administration and has played a vital role in politics of the region. He has viewed that, “Consequently , the growth of the middle class in the hills of North East could only be through education . The only avenues open to this class were service and profession . The only source of service in the hills is government. This may be one reason for the intensive political orientation of the middle class in the North East hills . Statehood and growth of administration can absorb only a part of the pressure.”³⁸ The other prominent contributors of the book like Manorama Sarma Barua and Dr. H.K. Barpujari have dealt with the Assame middle class while Jharna Dutta has dealt with the emergence and role of the middle class in South Cachar in the 18th century.

In short, the book entitled ‘The Emergence and Role of Middle Class In North East India’, edited by B. Datta Ray is a collection of excellent articles by some of the best scholars of the North East India. The book throws light on the emergence and role of middle class in the North East in the broader perspective of middle class in India . The summary of the different articles in the book is that economy of the North East India was not conducive for the growth of middle class in the pre-independence period . The rise of middle class in the plains of the North East broadly followed the lines of the middle class elsewhere in India , while in the hills the middle class is an independent development growing mostly as a result of changed economy, western education and Christianity. The book shows how the traditional leadership in the North East Indian society has been ousted and their place in the socio-political sphere has been taken over by the emergence of middle class. It can easily be said that the book is one of rarest endeavours ever made on the tribal middle class of the North

East. The book well acquaints the readers about the emergence and role of the most influential class , i.e. the middle class among the different tribes of North East. It may be termed as one of the most precious work in the context of North East India which really serves the purpose of researchers seeking information on middle class of the area . B. Datta Ray deserves credit for working on one of the most interesting and important topics concerning the region.

VIII. *Social and Economic Change in Assam: Middle Class Hegemony*,³⁹ written by Manorama Sharma is another important books written on the Assamese middle class. Altogether divided in to total seven chapters, the book primarily deals with the emergence and the hegemonic role played by of the Assamese middle class in the plains districts of Assam in the pre and post independence period of the country.

In the first chapter of the book titled ‘conceptualizing the Middle Class: Problems and Prospects’ the writer has given a theoretical perspective of the middle class. In this chapter the author has particularly discussed two opposite views of the class as put forwarded by the pro change Marxian school and the statuesqueist Weberain school of thought. In this context, the author has quoted the observation of W.G. Runcinan who has elaborated this controversy in the following words, “the theory of social classes has raised much debate and controversy amongst social scientists. But, in general, amongst all this controversy two main theoretical trends can be seen in the study of social classes. These two trends emphasize either change or stability in the social systems. The theoretical norms for the first were set by Karl Marx, while Max Weber, followed by the functionalists such as Emile Durkheim, Kingsley Davis, Wilbert Moore, Talcott Parsons etc. represented the second. It is interesting to note here that the followers of Max Weber tried in all their theoretical works to build a system of social analysis which would be able to counter Marx’s analysis of society.”⁴⁰ In this chapter the author has further countered the criticisms leveled against the Marxian concept of class by Max Weber and his supporters in the following words, “It must be emphasized here that in Marxist theory classes are not merely economic entities as defined by Max Weber and later by C. Wright Mills. For Marx the concept of class was a totality, in the determination of which the economic situation did play a prominent role, but the ideological and political aspects were also very important in class formation. This

concept of class encompassing the economic, ideological and political strains had to be viewed in its totality and not split into separate parts as non- Marxists have done.”⁴¹ It is therefore evident that the author has adopted the Marxist definition of class and middle class in this book.

In the subsequent six other chapters of the book, Manorama Sharma has focused on different aspects of the Assamese middle class such as the advent of the Britishers in to Assam and its impact upon the Assamese society, the social origins of the Assamese middle class, the role of the Assamese middle class in the peasant uprisings of 1893-1894 and the hegemonic role of the Assamese middle class in the socio-political life of the state. According to her, the advent of the Britishers in the Assam led to the disintegration of the old social order in Assam which was based upon the feudalistic pattern, where nobles and officers of the Ahom kind enjoyed position of prominence in the socio-political life of the Assamese society. She viewed that with the advent of the Britishers this position of influence were taken by a new class of people such as the revenue collectors like Mauzadars and Chaudhuris and the bureaucratic clerks were the direct product of the British system of the administration. In this book the author has also discussed in details about the social origins of the Assamese middle class where she has tried to prove that unlike the middle class in totally urbanized capitalist system, the Assamese middle class had definite rural ties as according to her, the development of the truly urban centers was almost absent in Assam even in the early 20th century. Because of its strong rural ties the Assamese middle class was able to gain support of the Assamese society and it was able to rise to a hegemonic position in the Assamese society.

Thus, Manoram Sharma’s book, ‘Social and Economic Change in Assam: Middle Class Hegemony’ is an important book written on related with the topic of the study of the researcher. However, except the first chapter of the book which has made an attempt to conceptualize the middle class, the other chapters of the book has no link with the topic of the researcher and therefore the book cannot fulfill the needs of the student of a tribal politics studying the tribal middle class. As the book exclusively deals with the emergence and the role of the middle class in the districts of Brahmaputra valley of Assam has not

dealt with the middle class of the hill areas of Assam for a student going for the study of the Karbi middle class the book does not possess any information.

IX. The book '*Political Development of the North East India: Vol-I*',⁴² edited by Dr. B.C Bhuyan, is a collection of papers presented at a seminar on the 'Recent Trends on Political Development of North East India' held at Diphu Govt. College under the auspices of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, North East Regional Centre, Shillong in the month of November, 1986. The book altogether contains seventeen (17) different articles which throw light on the political development in different parts of North East India from different perspectives. Some of the important contributors in the book include, Prof. V. Venkata Rao, Barrister Pakem, Niru Hazarika, S. Jacob George, Sibapada Dey, Monirul Hussain, Phukan Ch. Phango and B. C. Bhuyan etc. Some of the subjects that find prominence in the volume include, the interstate boundary disputes in the North East, the regional political parties of North East, leadership and role of political parties, the demand for autonomy and statehood in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills (now Dima Hasao) and the working of the District Council under the 6th Schedule in Karbi Anglong. Importantly, the book contains four (4) valuable articles on the politics of Karbi Anglong. For example, S. Jacob George, in his article 'The Demand for Autonomy/Statehood in NC Hills and Karbi Anglong : An Overview' has given a brief account of the circumstances that led to the intensification of a demand for autonomous state in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills under the leadership of Karbi Anglong and NC Hills Autonomous State Demand Committee (KANCHASDCOM) the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) and the Karbi Students Association(KSA). He has termed the Secondary Education Board of Assam's (SEBA) circular of 1986 introducing Assamese as a compulsory third language in all the schools of Assam and the circular making mandatory the knowledge of Assamese language for recruitment to government services as the immediate cause for sudden spurt of the demand for autonomous state under Article 244(A) of the Indian constitution in Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills(Dima Hasao). In his own words, " The Language issue spurred by the SEBA circular, the employment questions and the other socio-economic problems are the major causes for the movement for autonomy/statehood. The Karbi Anglong and NC Hills Autonomous State Demand

Committee was constituted comprising all the major political and non political parties to demand an autonomous state for Karbi Anglong and NC Hills , under Article 244(A) of the Indian Constitution.”⁴³ On the other hand, Monirul Hussain in his Article ‘Tribal Movement for Autonomous State In Assam’ while tracing the origin of the autonomy demands in the North East India has laid stress on the mass appeal of the autonomy movement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills. To quote him, “ The new movement for the creation of an autonomous state has attained a mass character in the two hill districts of Assam.”⁴⁴

In short, the book, ‘Political Development of the North East : VOL.I’ edited by B.C. Bhuyan is a valuable book on the political development in different parts of the North East India . The importance of the book lies on the fact that it has devoted a considerable amount of space to the political development in Karbi Anglong and therefore for a researcher on Karbi politics the book can be of great help.

X. The book, ‘*North East India: Problems, Politics & Prospects*’⁴⁵ written by Dr. H. K. Barpujari, the doyen of the Indian historians and an authority in North East Indian history is the product of the author’s vast hold over the political history of the North East. Divided in to total eight (8) chapters, the book deals with a wide range of subjects relating to the political history of the region with an enormous amount of ability and authenticity. Some of the crucial and sensitive topics such as, the reorganization the states in the independent India on linguistic basis and its impact in different parts of the Hills of the North East including the demand for a hill state , the reorganization of Assam at different periods of time under different circumstances, the problem of immigration in the post-independence period in the North East and the question of identity crisis, the anti- foreigners movement and its aftermath , the quest for identity among different tribes of Assam and the demand for autonomy and the rise of the insurgency etc. are eloquently and realistically discussed in the book. The author has attributed the different ethnic assertions and the subsequent divisions of the undivided Assam to the big-brotherly attitude of a section of the Assamese politicians and administrators. In his own words, “A chauvinistic section of the Assamese went further and sought to hasten the process of ‘Assamisation’ of extension of Assamese

influence in the neighboring hills. They could make no distinction between integration and assimilation and here lies the tragedy, the fragmentation of Assam . Constant harping of assimilation and ‘Greater Assam’ alarmed the unsophisticated hillmen of losing their culture , language and even their main prop namely land .”⁴⁶ In the chapter , entitled ‘Quest for Identity’, the author briefly throws light on the autonomy demands of different ethnic groups in Assam including the Boros, Karbis and the Dimasa Kacharis . The autonomy demands of the Karbis spearheaded by the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) and the Karbi Students Association (KSA) finds special mention in this chapter.

In a nutshell , the book *North East India: Problems, Policies & Prospects* written by- H.K. Barpujari seeks to identify the problems of the North East India and analysis the policies of the Union and State Governments to ensure peace, stability and security of the strategically important sensitive region . In the book the author tries to give the message that the restructuring of the states on linguistic basis did not find favour with the emerging middle class of the ethnic groups both of the hills and the plains. To satisfy the political aspirations of the tribesmen, the balkanization of Assam was set in motion and the process continued, but an appropriate solution of the problem is still not in sight. The entire region is seething with secessionism , militancy and insurgency bred by a sense of alienation , deprivation and neglect . Under these circumstances , the author strongly feels that the government should follow a conciliatory but firm policy towards the demands of secessionism raised by the insurgent groups . He has further viewed that if conciliation fails, the divisive and secessionist forces must be brought under control with an iron hand .

XI. The book, ‘*Hill Politics in North East India*’⁴⁷ written by S.K. Chaube appears to be the product of a labour of the author during nearly ten years of his working experience in the region . In this book, the author makes an attempt to present maximum amount of information and facts about the political development and political turmoil of the North East India . The book contains fifteen (15) different articles on different aspects of the hill politics in the region . In these articles, the author while discussing the various problems about the region tries to focus on

political development of the area during the British periods and proceeds to discuss the present scenario on the basis of the historical development. A wide range of subjects, like the advent of the British in to the North East, the advent of the Christianity in the region, the genesis of hill politics, background of the special provisions recommended by the Bordoloi Sub- Committee of the Constituent Assembly concerning the hill areas of the North East , the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution , the hill state movement, the Naga and Mizo politics of secessionism etc. are discussed in details in the book. Though the different articles of the book try to cover the politics of almost all the major hill areas of the North East , but the main focus of the book is on Khasi and Jaintia politics . Perhaps, the authors close familiarity with the Khasi politics because of long association with the district went on in to influencing him to lay extra stress on Khasi politics in the book. However, as far as Karbi politics is concerned, the author only provides a brief account about the inception of the Karbi politics with the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the first political organization of the Karbis. “The partially excluded areas of the Garo Hills and Mikir Hills Tracts of the Nowgong and Sibsagar Districts has some common political experience , at least since 1937, and considerable connections with the plains. The Mikir(Karbi) MLA, Khorsing Terang and the son of a Mikir Pastor at Golaghat , S.S. Engti took the lead in early 1947 in setting up a Karbi Adarbar (Mikir assembly) mostly with the plains Mikirs . They desired consolidation of the Mikir areas, protection of customs and extension of franchise .”⁴⁸. The book also throws light on the emergence and the role of the tribal middle class in the region when the author views , “ The modernist leadership , it has been pointed out , come from an embryonic middle class comprising teachers , local pastors , professionals, contractors and traders , and was symbolized in the Khasi National Conference , The Mizo Union and the Naga National Council(before Phizo). When they spoke of autonomy of the hill people through the district council, they aimed at destroying the vested interests of the chiefs and brining the hill people closer to the national mainstream.”⁴⁹

The book as a whole tries to present the maximum amount of facts that one could gather about the politics and problems of North East India . The problems have been seen in the perspective of the theory of nation building . The argument of the book is

that the tribal situation in the North East India cannot be properly understood except in its historical perspective. Although the method of the study is basically political, the author has made use of history, geography and sociology to throw light on various facts. Above all, the book reflects the author's deep understanding about the problems of North East India and his vision for confronting the problems at their very roots.

XII. The book entitled, '*Autonomous District Council*',⁵⁰ edited by L.S. Gassah is in fact a collection of papers presented in a seminar on the topic 'Autonomous District Councils' held in Shillong under the auspices of North East India Council of Social Science Research. The book contains a total of thirty two (32) articles contributed by a large number of scholars specialized in the field of research, members of the district councils, teachers and government officials who have thrown light on different aspects of the autonomous district councils operating in different parts of the hill areas of North East India. The 6th Schedule is the main constitutional pillar on which the Autonomous District Councils stand. Thus, the structure, contents, other legal and constitutional aspects as they appear in the Schedule have been thoroughly and critically examined in different articles contained in the book. The problems of Autonomous District Councils, the question of their autonomy and contribution towards development of the areas under the jurisdiction of the Autonomous District Councils were also discussed in details in the different articles of the book. Besides, these issues, a number of scholars dwelt at length with the historical developments leading to the creation of the Autonomous District Councils in the hill areas of the North East.

Importantly, total four articles in the book, namely, 'The Sixth Schedule- Some Amendments in Execution(Assam Experience)',⁵¹ by B.C. Bhuyan, 'Constitutional Background, Development, Powers and Functions of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council',⁵² by R.P. Athparia, 'State Government-District Council Relationship in Karbi Anglong District',⁵³ by Abhijit Baruah and 'Area Restriction-The Constitutional Constraint in Tribal Development in the Autonomous District of Karbi

Anglong⁵⁴ by G.C.Sharma Thakur specifically deal with different aspects Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Councils in the context of Karbi Anglong politics.

Many other crucial aspects and burning issues relating to land , forest, market , management of primary schools education or in short,the working of the Autonomous District Councils in the legislative, executive and financial fields were also critically examined in this book by scholars from various disciplines. The question of leadership, relationship between traditional institutions and that of the elected representatives of the District Councils and State Legislative Assemblies, as well as crucial relationship between the Autonomous District Councils and the State Government was brought in to focus. The much talked about question of relevance of the Autonomous District Councils today also becomes a serious issue for discussion in the book.

In a nutshell, the book, 'Autonomous District Councils' , edited by L.S.Gassah focuses not only on the historical development leading to the creation of autonomous District Councils but also contemporary problems and dilemma faced by the tribes of the North East despite constitutional safeguards available to them. The book will surely serve the interests of the academicians , both of the teaching and research levels, political leaders , government officials and the public in general.

XIII. The book, '*Ethnic Autonomy Question in N.E.India: Search of an Answer*'⁵⁵ written by Niru Hazarika is a work which deals with the cultural pluralism , one of the basic features of North East India. The book is broadly divided in to total five(5) chapters where the fifth chapter entitled 'Ethnic Based Youth Organizations'⁵⁶ deals with the students politics of among the different ethnic groups in Assam . The organization structure, aims and objectives, activities of the students bodies of the different ethnic groups of Assam , like the Bodos,Deoris, Mishings Rabhas and Tai Ahmos etc. are discussed in this chapter and also the ethnic question raised by these students bodies in the context of the latest development find mention in this chapter. The organizational structure, aims and objectives and the demands raised by the Karbi

students bodies like, the Karbi Student's Association(KSA) and the Karbi Students Union (KSU) also find special coverage in the book. Apart from this , in the earlier chapters of the book , the concepts of autonomy, integration and development in the areas inhabited by the ethnic communities mainly of Assam get importance . In short, the book provides first hand valuable information regarding the background of the ethnic autonomy questions raised by different plain and hill tribes of present Assam .

XIV. The book, *'Reorganisation of North East India Since 1947'*⁵⁷ jointly edited by B.Datta Ray and S.P.Agarwal is one of one most informative books ever published on the different aspects of the reorganization North East India since the days of country's independence .The book consists of total twenty nine (29) informative articles contributed by some of the prominent scholars in North East politics . The different articles in the book try to go in to the historical background of that led to the reorganization of the North East India in a number of times in the post independence period. While, dealing with the question of reorganization of the region, different writers have attributed the fragile nature of administrative unity given to the erstwhile province of Assam by the British, the partition at independence and the question of ethnic identity including the role of language to the demand for the reorganization of the region. One particular article in the book entitled , *'Reorganisation of the Hill Areas of Assam: A Study of Karbi Anglong District'* ⁵⁸ by R.P.Athparia deals with the reorganization of the hills of Assam in the context of Karbi Anglong politics. This particular articles while throwing light on the status of the Karbi inhabited areas of the Assam in the pre- independence period goes to discuss the background of the creation of Mikir Hills (now Karbi Anglong)District Council. The article throws light on the formation of the Karbi-Adarbar, the first political organization of the Karbis and its role in the formation of the Karbi Anglong District Council. It also deals with the attitude of the Karbis vis-a-vis the hill stare movement . "The Karbis did not participate actively in the hill state movement because , first , there was always an apprehension of the Christian domination in the hill state . Secondly, the Karbis felt that they had relatively greater alignment and closer ties with the greater Assamese society and they considered themselves to be

basically a part of it.”⁵⁹ Apart from it, the rise of the youth politics in Karbi Anglong in the form of the Karbi Riso-A-Darbar was also discussed in the article .

As a whole, the book, ‘Reorganisation of North East India since 1947’ edited by B.Datta Ray & S.P. Agarwal contains a rich varieties of information regarding the reorganization of the different parts of the hills of the North East in the post independence period. The book also lays stress on the role of the emerging middle class in the hills towards reorganization . In the words of B.Datta Ray himself, “The Government of India Act, 1935 and the Constitution of India kindled the aspirations of the middle class leadership of the Brahmaputra valley for an expanded Assam. The inner contradiction of the society , the emergence of new middle class in the hills , ethnic and linguistic assertions , the lack of sensitivity for equitable economic development in the leadership led to the breakup of Assam as it stood on the coming of Constitution of India which released new social forces all over the North East ⁶⁰

II.II. Deficiency in above Literature and Significance of the Research Work:

It is thus clear from the above review of the literature that though a large number of books have been written on the politics of the North East India and on tribal politics of the region, yet only a few of these books have been Karbi specific. In other words, most of the books written by different renowned writers on the tribal politics of North East India have conspicuously avoided to pounce upon the Karbi tribe in general and Karbi politics in particular. Perhaps, the tendency on the part of the Karbi tribe to avoid any sort of limelight or publicity has made the authors in N. E politics to ignore the tribe in their writings. The handfuls of researchers and authors who have tried to make a systematic study of the Karbi tribe in their writings have completely ignored to study the politics of the Karbis in the context of the middle class. In other words, the emergence of the Karbi middle class and its role in the politics of Karbi Anglong has not been studied systematically by any of the writers on tribal politics though some of the writers have tried to throw some light on the Karbi politics during its initial period. It is therefore very difficult for a researcher on Karbi politics to find out sufficient reliable published materials for furthering his research. Under such

circumstances, the research study of the researcher entitled, '*Role of Karbi Middle Class in the Politics of Karbi Anglong District of Assam*' assumes immense significance as the study is expected to discover certain hitherto unknown aspects relating to the Karbi tribe in general and Karbi politics in particular. Despite the fact that middle class has always been the guiding force of the Karbi politics, the fact never attracted the attention of the writers on the tribal politics of the North East or of the researchers. Therefore, this particular study will trace the factors behind the emergence of the middle class in the politics of Karbi Anglong and also the role played by this important class in the politics of the district. It is hoped that the findings of the research will definitely reveal certain important facts about the politics among the Karbis .

However, despite the dearth of the published materials on the Karbis, one thing that works in favour of the researcher on the Karbi politics is that the Karbis being an important hill tribe of the North East share much similarity with most of the other hill tribes of the region in so far as their politics is concerned . Therefore most of the terms and conditions applicable to the politics of other hill tribes of the region are found as applicable to a great extent in the Karbi politics and this particular factor provides a great advantage for a researcher on Karbi politics and this research study is not an exception in this regard.

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