

## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusion

The research study entitled “Role of Karbi Middle Class in the Politics of Karbi Anglong District of Assam” has dealt with the various aspects of the Karbi middle class and its role in the politics of Karbi Anglong district of present Assam. The final chapter of the study contains a summary of the main findings, identifies the important limitations of the study and suggests avenues for the future research. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

#### VI.I. Summary of the Main Findings:

As set out in the beginning of the research study, the main purpose of the study was to ascertain the causes of the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis and the role of this middle class in the politics of the district. On a more specific scale, the main objectives of the study were

- (a) To ascertain the causes for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis.
- (b) To assess the role played by the Karbi middle class in the creation of a District Council for the tribe and
- (c) To study the role of Karbi middle class in the politics of Karbi Anglong district including in the autonomous and separate state movements in the district.

These objectives were pursued through the research reported from Chapter I to V.

Chapter I of the study entitled, ‘Introduction’ serves two purposes, firstly, it gives a brief idea about objectives of the study, the hypothesis adopted and the methodology

adopted for conducting the research. Secondly, this chapter gives a theoretical explanation of the term 'middle class' and also about the origin of the term. Various prevailing definitions of the term middle class were discussed in this chapter and on the basis of these definitions a working definition of the middle class in the context of the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam was adopted in this chapter.

The 'review of literature' in Chapter II served two purposes, firstly, it helped to identify the important limitations of the previous studies on Karbi politics in general and the Karbi middle class in particular. Secondly, it pointed the need for a systematic study about Karbi politics and the role of the Karbi middle class in it.

The emergence of the middle class among the the Karbis and the reasons for the emergence of the Karbi middle class was the subject matter of the Chapter III. This chapter has studied the existence of the middle class among the Karbis and has established the fact that a middle class as defined in the first chapter of the research do exists among the Karbis of the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. Thereafter, the chapter has helped us to identify the different factors which had contributed towards the emergence of a middle class among the Karbis in the pre-independence period of the country and thereafter.

Chapter IV of the research study has dealt with the role of the Karbi middle class in the formation of the then Mikir Hills district (now known as Karbi Anglong) for the Karbis and also a district council for the Karbis. In this regard the role played by the 'Karbi Adarbar' the first national organization of the Karbis formed by the first generation of the Karbi middle class was studied in details.

The Chapter V has studied the role of the Karbi middle class in the politics of Karbi Anlong district after the creation of the district and a district council for the tribe. The role played by the Karbi middle class in the various autonomous state and also in various separate state movements launched a different periods of time in the district

has been the special focus of this chapter. The chapter has helped us to study the evolution of the Karbi politics since the creation of the district and the district council and the role played by the Karbi middle class in this evolution.

**VI.II. The major findings of the research study can be summarized as follows:-**

(i) A middle class as accepted in our working definition do exist among the Karbis of the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The Karbis are engaged in different professions which are said to be professions of the middle class. The government and non government office workers including bureaucrats , writers, teachers, the entrepreneurial classes, the professionals - such as engineers , pleaders , preachers , doctors and journalists etc. are found in abundance among the Karbis and therefore the existence of the middle class among the tribe has been proved . The Karbi middle class possesses the traits of the middle class which we have accepted in our working definition.

During the course of our study we found that most of the sample respondents had the basic idea about the meaning of the term middle class and the primary attribute of the middle class. Further the majority of the sample respondents were of the opinion that a middle class do exist among the Karbis.

Out of the 350 sample respondents, 276 (78.86 %) respondents viewed that they are aware of the meaning of the term middle class, while the remaining 74 (21.14 %) of the respondents viewed that they were not aware of the meaning of the term middle class.

The responses received from the sample respondents are shown in the following table.  
(Table. 48)

Table 48: Response of the sample respondents in respect of question nos. 1,2 and 3 of the questionnaire.

Total respondents	Aware of the meaning of middle class	Not aware of the meaning of middle class	Percentage of awareness	Percentage of on awareness
350	276	74	78.86 %	21.14 %

Again, out of the 276 sample respondents who viewed that they were aware of the meaning of the term middle class, 238 (86.23 %) of them indicated the option no.(E) which included the attributed of the middle class as - (a) the middle position between the capitalist and the manual workers. (b) Non manual occupation. (c) Education and (d) Status in the society as the main attributed of the middle class . On the other hand, the reaming 38 (13.77 %) of the sample respondents viewed the other options as the main attribute of the middle class. The data received from the sample respondents in this regard are shown in the following table. (Table: 49 )

Table 49: Data regarding the attributes of middle class

Total respondents aware of the meaning of middle class	Attribute of middle class as option (E)	Attribute of middle class as any one of the options, A,B,C or D*	Percentage of respondents choosing option (E)	Percentage of respondents choosing any one of the options, A,B,C or D*
276	238	38	86.23 %	13.77 %

*(\*The options given to the questionnaire were: (A) Middle position between the capitalist and the manual workers,(B) Non manual occupation (C) Education (D) Status in the society and (E) All the above factors )*

As regards the existence of the middle class among the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam, the overwhelming majority of the sample respondents viewed that middle class as we have accepted in our working definition exist among the Karbis of the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. Here, out of the total 350 sample respondents,

271(77.43 %) of them viewed that a middle class exists among the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam while the remaining 79 (22.57 %) replied as 'No' as their answer. The opinions received in this regard are shown in the following table. (Table.50 )

Table 50: Views of the sample respondents regarding the existence of a middle class among the Karbis.

Total respondents	'Yes' middle class exists	'No' or 'Can not say'	Percentage of 'Yes'	Percentage of 'No'
350	271	79	77.43 %	22.57 %

Further, with a view to collect the class position of the sample respondents and relate that position to our study, we asked the sample respondents whether they think themselves as the representatives of the Karbi middle class or not. The respondents were asked to indicate their answer from three options given in the questionnaire itself which included- (a) yes or (b) no. Out of the total 350 sample respondents, 235 (67.14 %) of the respondents indicated option (a), i.e. 'Yes' as their answer while the remaining 115(32.86 %) of the respondents indicated either 'No' as their answer. The response received from the sample respondents is a clear indication of the existence of the middle class among the common Karbis of the present times. The views of the respondents in this regard are shown in the following table. (Table. 51 )

Table 51: Views of the sample respondents regarding their own class position:

Total respondents	Number of respondents replying as 'Yes'	Number of respondents replying as 'No'	Percentage of 'Yes'	Percentage of 'No'
350	235	115	67.14 %	32.86 %

These views of the sample respondents is a clear indication of the existence of the middle class among the Karbis as the majority of the sample respondents claim themselves as the representative of the Karbi middle class

(ii) The main factors which have contributed towards the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis included, the Traditional socio-political system of the Karbis, the impact of Colonial Administration, the advent of the Christianity among the tribe, spread of the modern education and the granting of the district council to the Karbis.

During the course of our study, the questionnaire which were circulated among the respondents to collect information contained a question regarding the factors responsible for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis . The respondents were asked the following question- “according to you, which one of the following factors is responsible for the emergence of middle class among the Karbis?” The respondents were requested to select any one of the following options- (a) traditional socio-political system of the Karbis, (b) British Administrative system, i.e. appointment of mauzadars and other similar officials (c) advent of Christianity among the Karbis,(d) spread of Modern education among the tribe, (e) modern means of communication,(f) urbanization, (g) formation of the District Council, (h) all the above factors (i) none of the above factors .

Out of the 350 sample respondents, 269 (76.86 %) respondents choose the option number (i), i.e. ‘all the above factors’ as their answer, while the remaining 81(23.14 %) of the respondents choose other options as the factors responsible for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The views of the sample respondents in this regard are shown in the following table. (Table.52)

Table 52: Factors responsible for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis

Total respondents	Total number of respondents choosing option (H)*	Total number of respondents choosing any one of the options A,B,C, D,E,F,G and I*	Percentage of respondents choosing option( H)	Percentage of respondents choosing any one of the other options
350	269	81	76.86 %	23.14 %

*(\*Option (H) of the question number 5 of the questionnaire set included the options: (a) traditional socio-political system of the Karbi, (b) British Administrative system, i.e. appointment of mauzadars and other similar officials, (c) advent of Christianity among the Karbis, (d) spread of Modern education among the tribe, (e) modern means of communication, (f) urbanization and (g) formation of the District Council.)*

The Traditional socio-political system of the Karbis provides for the existence of the elite class of a type among the Karbis in the form of the Lindokpo(king), Dili(commander), Habe(minister), Rong Sarthe (village headman) etc who enjoyed considerable amount of clout in the traditional Karbi society from the time immemorial. A large number of the first generation of the Karbi middle class emerged from the families of these traditional elites. Moreover, the advent of the Colonial Administration in to Assam is one of the most important factors responsible for the emergence of middle class among the Karbis. Soon after the assumption of power in Assam, the colonialists introduced the British model of administration in the region. As a result, some reformatory measures in respect of land settlement and the collection of revenue from that time onward was introduced. The enterprising sections of the locals managed to get appointment as tehsilders, mauzadars (revenue collector), mandlas,(village accountant and surveyor) interpreters, vaccinators etc. and thus they became the pioneers for the emergence of a middle class among the Karbis. The Karbi middle class began to emerge initially from among the section of the Karbi mauzadars and their subordinate officials. In the subsequent years, a number of Karbi mauzadars or their children went on become the destiny makers of the Karbi

community as a whole. Further, the advent of Christianity among the Karbis also found to have contributed largely towards the emergence of the middle class among the tribe. The Karbis first came in to contact with the Baptist Christian missionaries of Nagaon in 1858 when some of the Karbi boys got admitted at Nagaon Mission School established in 1846. Miles Bronson, the legendary evangelist of the region of that time baptized the first Karbi named Rong Bong in the year 1863. Christianity was not only responsible for the eradication of the aged old prejudices and superstitions from the Karbi converts but being an international religion, Christianity inculcated a global outlook among the members of the tribe who so long lived in isolation almost completely cut off from the rest of country. The Christian missionaries were the first to establish schools in the inaccessible and densely forested Karbi inhabited areas when communication with these areas was almost unimaginable for a common man of the plain areas of the country. Their main objective was to spread their religion but they also undertook to spread literacy, render medical aid, open schools and other educational institutions, etc. among the Karbis. Thengkur Sing Ingti who was one of the earliest Karbis to adopt Christianity became the symbol of this Renaissance among the Karbis. The impact of modern education was another most important factor that is responsible for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis. In the pre-independence period, a few Karbis who were able to get modern education played an important role in the formation of the Karbi-Ararbar, the first national organization of the Karbis and the district was formed because of the effort of this organization. Apart from the above factors, the granting of a District Council(now autonomous council) to the Karbis under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution is one the most landmark event in the history of the Karbi tribe as it provided an opportunity to the tribe to directly take part in the developmental activities of the district and formulate policies for the rapid socio-economic of the ethnic group. The district council also helped the Karbis to directly avail the benefits of the development activities meant for them which paved the ways for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis in the post independence period of the country.

(iii) The Karbi middle class formally surfaced in the arena of the Karbi society with the formation of the 'Karbi Adarbar', the first national organization of the Karbis formed in 1946. The Karbi Adarar was an organization of the Karbi middle class.



Karbi Adarbar, the first national organization of the Karbis played the most important role in inculcating a feeling a nationalism among the Karbis and also securing a district for the tribe. With a view to find out whether , the Karbi Adarbar was an organization formed by the Karbi middle class or not, we requested the sample respondents to answer whether the Karbi Adarbar , the first national organization of the Karbis was formed by the Karbi middle class or not. While replying this question, the majority of the sample respondents viewed that the Karbi Adarbar was an organization formed by the Karbi middle class. In this regard, out of the total 350 sample respondents, 270 (77.14 %) of them viewed that the Karbi Adarbar was formed by the Karbi middle class while the remaining80 (22.86%) of the sample respondents replied in negative. The responses of the sample respondents in this regard are shown in the following table. (Table. 53 )

Table 53: Views showing Karbi Adarbar as a Karbi middle class organization:

Total respondents	‘Yes’ Karbi Adabr is a Karbi middle class organization	‘No’ it is not a middle class organisation	Percentage of ‘Yes’	Percentage of ‘No’
350	270	80	77.14 %	22.86 %

The first generation of the Karbi middle class as organized under the banner of the Karbi Adarbar had the vision to work for the betterment of the Karbis and unite the hitherto scattered Karbi inhabited areas in to a in a single political entity in the form of a district of their own. With the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbi aspiration for a separate district of its own received the form of a systematic movement under the leadership of the first generation of the Karbi middle class. Karbi-Adarbar, became the sole mouth piece of the Karbis in its bargaining with the Britishers and later with the Constituent Assembly for securing maximum political benefits for the Karbis. It was because of the untiring effort of the Karbi middle class under the banner of the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbis were granted a district of their own when the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district was finally created by the

Assam Government *vide Notification No. TAD/R/31/50/201* dated 3rd November, 1951 as per Clause 3 of the Assam United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills (Administration) Regulation of 1951 and the district was formally inaugurated on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1951. The Karbis were also given a district council under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1952. Karbi Adarbar mainly a nationalistic organization led by the middle class was able to unite the Karbi people who were then scattered in different parts of the then Assam. Because of the bale leadership of the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbi people won the right of autonomous administration in the form of a district and a District Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution

(iv) The Karbi middle class has continued to play a dominant role in the politics of Karbi Anglong even after the creation of the district. After the formation of the district, the first generation of the Karbi middle class as organized under the banner of the Karbi Adarbar continued its unabated dominance over the politics of the district until a new generation of Karbi middle class emerged to challenge its authority and dethrone it from the power in the District Council.

During the course of our study, we asked the sample respondents to give their views regarding the role of the Karbi middle class in the politics of the district. The respondents were asked to indicate any one the options out of total two options mentioned in the questionnaire. The options given in the questionnaire were, (a) not active in Karbi politics and (b) dominates the Karbi politics. In this case, out of the total 350 sample respondents, 254 (72.57 %) indicated option (b), i.e. ‘dominates the Karbi politics’ as their answer, while the rest, 96 (27.43 %) respondents indicated option (a) as their answer. The views of the sample respondents in this regard can be shown in the following table. (Table.54 )

Table 54: Views of the sample respondents indicating domination of Karbi politics by the Karbi middle class.

Total respondents	Respondents viewing domination of middle class	Respondents viewing middle class as not active	Percentage of respondents viewing 'domination'	Percentage of respondents viewing 'not active'
350	254	96	72.57 %	27.43%

This response received from the sample respondents is a clear indication of the fact that there is a general opinion among the Karbis that the Karbi middle class has been dominating the Karbis politics of Karbi Anglonng district. Therefore, on the basis of the opinion received from the sample respondents, we undertook our study in that direction and found that as viewed by the sample respondents, the Karbi politics in Karbi Anglong district of Assam has always been dominated by the Karbi middle class .

In the first general election held in 1952 for the 12 seats of the Mikir Hills District Council, Karbi Adarbar managed to secure absolute majority and formed the first government in the council under the leadership of Khorsing Terang. Most of the elected MDCs of the first council were the founders of the Karbi Adarbar. The organization had an unchallenged supremacy in the politics of the district in the subsequent general elections until in the fifth general election to the District Council held in 1978 when for the first time in the history of Karbi Anglong District Council the Karbi Adarbar was dethroned from power by a new generation of the Karbi middle class who were supported by the Janata Party. Right from the days of the Karbi Adarbar to the rise of the Janata party in the district and then the rise of the Congress party and the ASDC in the politics of the district, the Karbi middle class is found as the most dominating factor in the politics of Karbi Anglong district. The

study about the background of all the 17 CEMs of the then Karbi Anglong District Council and the present Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council(KAAC) has proved that fact that all of them emerged from the Karbi middle class. The following table (Table-55) showing the background of all the CEMs of the Karbi Anglong Council has proved the fact that the Karbi middle class has always dominated the politics of the Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

Table 55: List of information about the backgrounds of the C.E.Ms (From 1952 onwards)

Sl. No.	Name of the C.E.M.	Period	Educational Qualification	Profession	Father's Profession
1	Sri Khorsing Terang	23-06-1952 to 30-11-1955	7 <sup>th</sup> standard in 1937	Mauzadar	Mauzadar
2	Sri Nihang Rongphar	1 <sup>st</sup> term 16-12-1955 to 24-05-1956 2 <sup>nd</sup> term 23-06-1957 to 03-12-1957	B.A. final exam appeared in	Social service	LP school teacher
3	Sri Chatra Sing Teron	24-05-1956 to 20-04-1957	B.A. & was admitted in to M.A.	Social service	Mauzadar
4	Sri Chandra Sing Teron	03-12-1957 to 25-06-1962	I.A.	Assistant Secretary, KADC	Traditional Karbi chieftain and MDC-KADC
5	Sri Dhaniram Rongpi	1 <sup>st</sup> term 25-06-1962 to 21-3-1972 2 <sup>nd</sup> term 24-3-1971 to 22-9-1972	P.U.	High School teacher	School teacher
6	Sri Joysing Doloi	12-12-1972 to 11-05-1978	Matriculate	LP School teacher/business	Mauzadar
7	Sri Kharsing Bey	11-05-1978 to 28-09-1979	B.A.	Govt. clerk	Social service/farmer
8	Sri Bidya Sing Engleng	1 <sup>st</sup> term 28-09-1979 to 13-12-1979 2 <sup>nd</sup> term 18-01-1980 to 01-01-1981 3 <sup>rd</sup> term 26-02-1983 to 27-07-1983 4 <sup>th</sup> term 28-07-1984	B.A.	Business /social service	Sarkari Gaonbura

		to 07-08-1985 5 <sup>th</sup> term 15-12-1986 to 24-01-1989			
9	Sri Biren Sing Engti	03-03-1981 to 26-02-1983	M.A.,LL.B.	Business /social service	Farmer
10	Sri Khorsing Engti	1 <sup>st</sup> term 09-08-1985 to 11-09-1985 2 <sup>nd</sup> term 19.03.2002 to 17.05.2006	B.A.	Clerk at Assam Secretariat , Shillong	Mauzadar
11	Sri Mongal Sing Engti	1 <sup>st</sup> term 15-11-1985 to 26-11-1986 2 <sup>nd</sup> term 23.01.2007 to 31.12.2008	P.U.	Business	Farmer
12	Dr. Jayanta Rongpi	25-01-1989 to 20-06-1996	MBBS.,DGO	Doctor	Superintendent of Excise
13	Sri Jotson Bey	21-06-1996 to 09-07-2000	PU	Social service	Pastor
14	Sri Mojari Hanse	31-07-2000 to 15-03-2001	BA	Govt. clerk	Farmer
15	Sri Sum Ronghang	03.06.2013 to 21.12.2006	B.A.	Sub Inspector of Schools	Farmer
16	Joy Ram Engleng	1 <sup>st</sup> term 13.01.2009 to 19.01.2012 2 <sup>nd</sup> term 20.01.2012 to 15.10.2013	B.A..	Clerk	MDC-KADC
17	Tuliram Ronghang	16.11.2013 to till date	B. Com.	Contractor	Farmer

(v) The autonomy and the separate state movements that have been launched from time to time in Karbi Anglong district have always been the middle class movements. With a view to find out the opinion of the sample respondents if the Karbi middle class had any role in the various autonomous and separate state movements launched in the district at different periods of time, we asked the sample respondents whether they thought that the autonomy movement/ separate state movement in Karbi Anglong is led by the Karbi middle class or not. While replying this question, overwhelming majority of the sample respondents viewed 'Yes' as their answer. Out of the total 350 sample respondents, 259 (74 %) replied as 'Yes' and the remaining 91(26 %) viewed 'No' as their answer. The information received from the sample respondents in this regard can be shown in the following table. (Table.56 )

Table 56: Views of the sample respondents regarding role of the Karbi middle class in the autonomous /separate state movements :

Sl No.	Total respondents	Total number of views	Total percentage
1	350	350	100 %
2	Total respondents viewing domination of the Karbi middle class in the Autonomy/Separate state movement	259	74 %
3	Total respondents viewing no domination of Karbi middle class in the autonomy/separate state movement	91	26 %

A close look in the background of the different leaders of the movement has proved this fact. The autonomy movement in Karbi Anglong started way back in 1960 under the banner of the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC). The APHLC movement in the district was led by Raidang Ingti, Bareleng Terang, David Long Enghee etc. all of whom emerged from the Karbi middle class. It is also found that almost all the pro-autonomy/separate state organizations formed in the district in the subsequent years were formed and dominated by the Karbi middle class. Some of the important organizations that were formed in this regard included Mikir Hills Progressive Party (MHPP) formed in 1970; All Party People's Conference (APPC) formed in 1978; Separate State Demand Committee (SSDC) formed in 1980; Central Autonomous State Demand Committee (CASDC) formed 1986; Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) formed in 1986; Karbi Anglong Autonomous State Demand Committee (KANCHASDCOM) formed in 1986. These organizations are

found to be the organizations of the Karbi middle class. The study of the history of the development of the autonomy /separate state movements in the district and the leaders of these movements has established the fact that the autonomy/separation movements in the district are led by the Karbi middle class. The Karbi middle class launched these movements sometimes to oppose against the expansionist policy of the state government and sometimes to fulfill their political aspirations.

In this connection, we further asked the respondents if they thought that the autonomous and separate state movements of Karbi Anglong are the outcome of the political aspirations of the Karbi middle class or not. Here also, the majority of the respondents replied in positive. Out of the total 350 sample respondents, 244 (69.71%) replied in positive, while the remaining 106 (30.29 %) of the respondents replied this question as 'No'. The information received in this regard are shown in the following table. (Table.57 )

Table 57: Autonomous state/ separate state movements as the outcome of political aspirations of the Karbi middle class.

Sl. No	Total respondents	Total number of views	Total percentage
1	350	350	100 %
2	Autonomy/Separate state movements are the outcome of political aspirations of the Karbi middle class	244	69.71 %
3	Autonomy/Separate state movements are not the outcome of political aspirations of the Karbi middle class	106	30.29 %

The middle class being an opportunist class always hankers after the corridors power and the Karbi middle class is found as not an exception in this regard. They have used the issue of autonomy or separate state for the Karbis to suit their political requirements from time to time. While referring to the role of the tribal middle class in the hill state movement for Meghalaya, V. Venkata Rao observed that, "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.<sup>1</sup> During the course of our study we analyzed the persons behind these movements and we found the above observation of Prof. V.V. Rao as completely true in the case of the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district.

(vi) One of the important features about the dominance of the Karbi middle class in the politics of the district has been that in most of the times the Karbi politics has been dominated by a few Karbi middle class families. This is particularly true when the Karbi Adarbar or the Indian National Congress is power in the Karbi Anglong council. As it has already been found that the Karbi Adarbar worked as the agent of the INC in the district till the district council election of 1989. In this regard few examples may be cited. In the initial period, the Karbi politics was completely dominated by a few Karbi middle class families which become evident from the following observation of V. Venkata Rao, "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 Sarthe Sing 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.<sup>2</sup> The same trend continues even today as in the present ruling Congress party in the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) is under the full control of the Engti family. Biren Sing Engti, present MP from the Diphu Parliamentary constituency is the most powerful politician of Karbi Anglong of the recent times. His youngest son, Klengdun Engti, who is an engineer by profession is the MLA from the Bokajan Assembly constituency of the district. On the other hand, his nephew Ashok Teron and his sister-in-law, Kache Rongpipi are two of the powerful Executive Members (EM) in the present Executive Council (EC) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC). His brother in law, Lt Bhuban Chandra Terang was also a powerful EM of the KAAC till his death in 2013. Again, Biren Sing Engti's father in law Lt. Joysing Doloi was the CEM of the then KADC. On the other hand, Khorsing Engti, present the Hill Areas Department (HAD) Minister of the Government of Assam and the second most powerful Karbi leader of the recent times is the cousin brother of Biren Sing Engti. Khorsing Engti's wife Premola Beypi and his elder sister Alice Engtipi are two of the most powerful EMs of the present Congress led KAAC. It is found that in Karbi Anglong no Congressmen can become an MAC or EM or even CEM without the blessings of Biren Sing Engti and Khorsing Engti. Since the Congress party assumed power in the KAAC in 2001 three CEMs, namely, Sum Ronghang, Mongal Sing Engti and Joy Ram Engleng had to relinquish their posts as they developed differences with the powerful Engti brothers. The present CEM Tuliram Ronghang has attained his present political stature only with the direct blessings of the Engti brothers. Apart from the Engti brothers, another important leader of the ruling Congress party in the district is Bidya Sing Engleng who is a strong rival of the Engti brothers in the Congress politics of the district. Bidya Sing Engleng is the present MLA and a Parliamentary Secretary, Government of Assam, while his wife Kuntala Ronghagpi was an important EM of the KAAC till her defeat in the KAAC election in 2011. It is alleged by the supporters of Bidya Sing Engleng that the Engti brothers were instrumental in the defeat of Kuntala Ronghagpi in the KAAC election of 2011 as they are afraid of the political ascendancy of the Englengs' in the

Congress politics of the district. The same point was also disclosed by Bidya Sing Englung himself during his interactions with the researcher.

(vii) The study about the trend of the Karbi politics gives a clear impression that the middle class domination in Karbi politics will continue even in the days to come. The educated Karbi with the new found economic power resulting from the creation of the district council for the tribe is easily attracted towards the district council politics because of the huge money, power and status associated with it . One of the immediate outcomes of the creation of the District Council for the Karbis was the emergence of a political middle class among the tribe. The Council provided an opportunity to a section of the politically ambitious Karbis who could hardly imagine to take part in the political decision making process in the pre- District Council period to try their luck in the politics of the district and most of the time earning quite a success in the endeavor .The respect and power associated with a Member of the District Council (MDC) or an Executive Member (EM)was difficult to ignore for a Karbi having some sort of organizational skill or leadership quality. For such kind of people, to become a Member of the District Council (MDC) and later to become an EM turned to be the ultimate goal of the life. This resulted in rampant manipulation, nepotism and favoritism in the politics of the District.

In this context, we further asked the sample respondents to give their views regarding the future role of the Karbi middle class in the politics of Karbi Anglong district. In this regard, we asked the sample respondents the following question- “what is your view regarding the future role of the Karbi middle class in the politics of the district?” and requested them to select their answer from the following two of the options mentioned in the questionnaire itself, (a) “will continue to dominate the Karbi politics” and (b) “will have no role in Karbi politics in future”,. While answering this question, out of the total 350 sample respondents, 247 (70.57 %) of them indicated option (a) i.e. “will continue to dominate the Karbi politics” as their answer while the remaining 103 (29.43 %) sample respondents viewed option (b) i.e. “will have no role in Karbi politics in future” as their answer. The views of the sample respondents in this regard can be shown in the following table. (Table.58 )

Table 58: Views of the respondents regarding the future role of the Karbi middle class in the district politics

Sl. No	Total respondents	Total number of views	Total percentage
1	350	350	100 %
2	Karbi middle class will continue to dominate Karbi politics	247	70.57 %
3	Karbi middle class will have no role Karbi politics	103	29.43 %

The opinion of the sample respondents clearly correlates the findings of our study that the Karbi politics of Karbi Anglong district of Assam will continued to be dominated by the Karbi middle class even in the days to come.

#### **VI.III. Limitations of the Study and Avenues for Future Research:**

The present study has not ascertained the role of the other classes of the Karbis i.e. the upper classes and the lower classes in the politics of the district. It was because of many reasons. Firstly, as the study was aimed to ascertain the role of the Karbi middle class in the politics of the district, it was believed that the inclusion of the other classes of the Karbis in this particular study might deviate our study from its main purpose for which it was taken. Secondly, it was believed that the inclusion of the other classes in our study would make the study a rather bulky one and it would have become impossible for us to deal with such a bulky topic due to time and monetary constraints. We therefore deeply feel that as there is much scope in the study of the role of other classes of the Karbis in the politics of the district and the future researchers might take up the study of these classes of the Karbis in the politics of Karbi Anglong district of Assam in the days to come. Moreover, in our study about the autonomy and separate state movements in the district we felt that the

autonomy and separate state movements in the district possess immense potential for a separate research study as this particular study could touch only one aspect of these movements, i.e. the role of the Karbi middle class in these movements. We therefore urge the future researchers to undertake an independent study on these movements in Karbi Anglong .

#### **VI.IV. Concluding Remarks:**

The research has fulfilled the objectives as it has elaborately ascertained the causes for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis and has studied the role of the Karbi middle class in the politics of the district .Further the study has testified the hypothesis which were adopted at the beginning of the study. The research has testified the fact that a middle class do exists among the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam . In the study it is found that the Karbis with modern education are engaged in different professions which are adopted in our working definition as the professions of the middle class. The government and non government office workers including bureaucrats , writers, teachers, the entrepreneurial classes, the professionals - such as engineers , pleaders , preachers , doctors and journalists etc. do exist among the Karbis and therefore the existence of the middle class among the tribe has been fully proved. The first generation of the Karbi middle class consisted of the government servants and agents like the mauzadars and mondals etc. and slowly, the intelligentsia like the doctors, engineers, college teachers, lawyers, writers, and journalists began to emerge among the Karbis and thus the number of the Karbi middle class began to expand with the passage of the time. It is this Karbi middle class that has been dominating the politics of the district even prior to the formation of the district and continuing its dominance still today. The study has testified the hypothesis that (i)the factors, such as the traditional socio-political systems of the Karbis, the impact of the British administration , impact of Christianity, the impact of modern education and the creation of the District Council(now autonomous Council) are responsible for the emergence of the middle class among the Karbis. The study has also testified the hypothesis that-(ii) the s middle class of the Karbis that has become the guiding force of the Karbi political activities and has been dominating the Karbi politics from its very inception. It has also been found that the Karbi

middle class formally surfaced in the political arena of the tribe with the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the first national organization of the Karbis formed in 1946. Further the research has testified the hypothesis that-(iii) the even after the formation of Karbi Anglong district and granting of a district council to the tribe, the Karbi middle class has continued to dominate the politics of the district. Right from the days of the Karbi Adarbar to the rise of the Janata party in the district and then the rise of the Congress party and the ASDC in the politics of the district, the Karbi middle class is found as the most dominating factor in the politics, i.e. electoral and non electoral politics of Karbi Anglong district. Moreover, the different autonomy and separate state movements of the Karbis launched at different periods of times are led by the Karbi middle class. Right from the days of the APHLC to the movement under the banner of the ASDC and KANCHASDCOM, the leadership of the movement is in the hand of the Karbi middle class who tried to ventilate their political aspirations through all these autonomy or separate state movements. It is the Karbi middle class which has always dominated and guided the Karbi politics and in a sense it has become the ruling class among the Karbis. Not only in the political filed the domination of the Karbi middle class is found in every field of the administration. The middle class occupy all the positions in the district from where they operate the gears and steering wheels of machinery of the district council. The politicians formulate policies, the bureaucrats supervise their implementation and the subordinate workers who carry out their implementations and all these class of the Karbis in the district belong the Karbi middle class. As a result of this, the Karbi middle class has availed the benefits of the district council to the maximum extent while the lower classes of the Karbis are found to living a life of utter misery. Manorama Sharma's view regarding the role of the Assamese middle class "Whether in the sphere of ideological influence or in the sphere of parliamentary politics or in mobilizing support for movements launched for various demands, the dominant role has always been that of the middle class"<sup>3</sup> is found to be applicable to the case of the Karbi middle class also. Apart from playing a dominant role in the politics of the district, the Karbi middle class is also found to be playing an important role in the multi social framework of the Karbi society. It is found that the literary, cultural and social fields of the Karbi society is also dominated by the Karbi middle class. Karbi Lammet Amei (KLA), the apex literary organization of the Karbis founded in 1966 was formed and dominated by the Karbi middle class This organization is responsible for establishing

a distinct identity for the Karbi language . Padmashree Prof. Rongbong Terang was the founder secretary of the organization. Likewise, the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), the apex cultural organization of the Karbis founded in 1977 was also formed and dominated by the Karbi middle class. The Karbi Youth Festival(KYF) the annual cultural extravaganza of the Karbis is annually organized by the KCS since 1978. This cultural organization of the Karbis is mainly responsible for securing a reorganization of the Karbi culture from the outside world

During the course of the study, it has also been found that the Karbi middle class has been the harbinger of modernity among the tribe and in the process it has also indirectly paved the way for a detribalization among the Karbis. The Karbi middle class has become urban centric and Diphu, the headquarter town of Karbi Anglong district has become the destination of Karbi middle class. There is tough competition among the Karbis to own a plot of land at Diphu. Some of the Karbis are found to have started to settle down in Guwahati, the capital city of Assam. These classes of the Karbis, in order to distinguish themselves from the rest of the indigenous masses tend to uncritically imitate the modern values and life styles which can never be considered as a healthy sign for the tribe.

Moreover, the middle class domination in the politics of the district is responsible for the centralization of political power in the hands of a few families in the district which can never be considered as a healthy trend for the success of democracy. For an egalitarian society and to establish democratic norms in the true sense of the term, it is necessary that the domination of certain selected families in the politics of the district is reduced and leadership among the downtrodden section is promoted. This should be done through the generation of mass consciousness among the people about their rights and duties and inculcating among them a sense of attachment to their culture and traditions.

**Notes and References:**

1. V. Venkata Rao, (1976), *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India (1874-1974)*, S.Chand & Company Ltd, New Delhi, P.262

2. *Ibid.*, P.362

3. Manorama Sharma,(1990), *Social and Economic Change in Assam: Middle class Hegemony*, Ajanta Publications, India, New Delhi, P.X