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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

A Monthly News Bulletin

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"If I am asked which nation had been advanced in the ancient world in respect of education and culture then I would say it was – **India**"

Max Muller German Indologist

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COVID 19 and the tribal communities of North East

The world today is passing through a great turmoil, unparalleled in the history of mankind. In past decades, there were several annihilation of humanity due to epidemics, large scale mortalities due to unknown diseases, nature's upheavals etc., that killed millions of people, but there was never one that is not only invisible to the human as well as scientifically devised highly powerful mechanised eyes but is also beyond all comprehensions including medical. In an age when the humanity is nearly on the verge of matching the almighty creator of the universe with its innumerable inventions and discoveries in all spheres of human activities, the present unseen predator is bent on teaching a lesson or two to human kind.

The recent developments arising out of COVID-19 viral attack, is not only endangering the human lives around the world but is also slowly crippling the economies of both the affluent as well as the poorer nations thus pushing them to penury. The consequent death toll due to the viral onslaught is rising alarmingly destroying the individual families and rupturing the social fabric of most of the affected countries around the globe. The disease spread and death toll in our country, though less in comparison to many other economically and scientifically advanced countries, cannot be construed as our invincibility because science is yet to find a sure shot way to eradicate or control the menace. We have only achieved a limited success in containing the rapid proliferation of the disease because of the fast imposition of lockdown regime in our country by the ever alert Narendra Modi Government. However, there is nothing to cheer about this limited success because the Islamist Jamatis' of Nizamuddin have shown us how fragile is our defence and deterrence and how dangerous is the Islamic design to destroy our country.

When we look at the overall results vis-a-vis the Government efforts to combat the life threatening disease in our country, we cannot but bow our heads to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and those at the helm of affairs of our states, for their commitment to the cause of our countrymen. At the same time we should not overlook the enormity of their task of saving the lives of 135 Crores of our countrymen spread over hills and plains, Urban and rural areas, easily accessible

areas and difficult terrains. We are also aware that there are inadequacies of health infrastructure in our country, shortage of Doctors and Para medical staff, shortage of hospital beds and life saving equipments. The opposition of a section of religiously motivated people and callous attitude of the ignorant mass of our country also makes it very difficult to enforce the lock down to arrest the spread of the disease. Despite all these shortcomings, what the Government of India has done so far is nothing short of magic. We must acknowledge this unless we are ungrateful, pea brained or anti-national.

In the backdrop of COVID-19 scenario in our country where do our tribal brethrens of Assam and the North East living in the Hills and the Plains stand? As we all know the tribal communities of India are all children of nature and genetically strong in physique and life force. Their life style is more nature centric and for generations they have kept themselves far removed from adulterated and artificial foods, modern medicines and harmful urban indulgences. They lived in groups in villages located far away from each other, which helped them avoid contagious diseases to affect them from outside. Cleanliness and hygiene were their hallmark. Unfortunately, with so called modernity making inroads into their societies, the tribal communities are abandoning their time tested lifestyles and foraying into the uncharted territories. Consequently, malnutrition, alcoholism etc. is rising and their natural immunity to fight urban area friendly diseases is diminishing. In addition to that people like the Nizamuddin Jamatis' are encroaching upon their territories rendering them vulnerable to the life threatening diseases. They should note that the Corona virus has reached the remote and deep Amazon rainforests, the Andamans, Meghalaya, Manipur, Chattisgarh and Uttaranchal and are waiting at their doors. If they are really interested to save themselves, their families and their community from the onslaught of this deadly disease, they should educate themselves about the do's and don'ts and religiously follow the regimes prescribed by the Government. If they fail to do so or try to defy the rules of social distancing and other precautions, their extinction is certain.

Chief Editor

Importance of Value Oriented Education System

Partha Pratim Mazumder

Children are made for the universe, not university. “Factory schools” are trying to preparing kids for a future and miss out on teaching them how to live in the present and excel. I feel the child learns best when he is allowed to explore on his own. Education is the development of an all round and well-balanced personality of the students, and also to develop all dimensions of the human intellect so that our children can help make our nation more democratic, cohesive, socially responsible, culturally rich and intellectually competitive nation. But, nowadays, more emphasis is unduly laid on knowledge-based and information-oriented education which takes care of only the intellectual development of the child. Consequently, the other aspects of their personality like physical, emotional, social and spiritual are not properly developed in providing for the growth of attitudes, habits, values, skills and interests among the pupils. It is here that we talk in terms

“Broadly speaking, we are in the middle of a race between human skills as to means and human folly as to ends. The human race has survived owing to ignorance and incompetence, but given knowledge and competence combined with folly, there can be no certainty of survival. Knowledge’s is power for evil as much as for good. It follows that, unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.”

- Bertrand Russel

of value-education. A complete description of what value-education is, could entail a study in itself. Value-education is a many sided endeavour and in an activity during which young people are assisted by adults or older people in schools, family homes, clubs and religious and other organizations, to make explicit those underlying their own attitudes, to assess the effectiveness of these values for everybodys’ long term well-being and to reflect on and acquire other values which are more effective for long term well-being. Value- education is thus concerned to make morality a living concern for students. Hence, what is needed is value-education. Despite many educators and educationists description regarding value-education, it cannot be denied that continuing research will

continue to making the description of value- education more adequate.

Traditionally the objectives of value-education were based on religion and philosophy. There was no secular value-education; but in today’s modern world, this has been taken as very much essential. Again and again, like a boomerang, the question that bursts out is “where have the values gone?” While making an attempt for answering this question, one notices a conscious and conspicuous shifts in the latter-day educational philosophy from a cognitive to kinetic development of the pupil. A wide range of values of moral, aesthetic and social nature that have evolved during the marathon march of the human civilisation

is posing before us a crisis of priorities: which of these values is to be cultivated and what is the appropriate stage of doing so? Hence, the issue becomes all the more jumbled when it comes to fixing up of the responsibilities: who

is to inculcate values? — parents, leaders, the affluent, the business tycoons, thinkers, artists, teachers? The easy and obvious answer is — “the teacher is the prime inculcator of values because the young are under his or her formal care”. Whatever may be the answer! Really speaking, it is not enough just to know about values, because values have to be practiced. Our country is undergoing radical, social changes. So, the students who are the future citizens of tomorrow have to be oriented to respond to and adjust with these social changes satisfactorily by equipping them with desirable skills and values. The Modern India has committed to the guiding principles of socialism, secularism, democracy, national integration and so on. These guiding principles should be emphasised in the

educational system and suitable value; are to be included in the students for promoting equality, social justice, national cohesion and democratic citizenship. With these aims in view, radical reforms in the present lop-sided education are to be introduced and all attempts need to be made for developing well-integrated personalities for our individuals. Hence, the need for inculcating desirable values. India is known for its rich cultural and spiritual heritage, and the need for a value-system through education has been felt and recognised through centuries. Value system play an important role in any decision making process. In fact, every human action is the reflection of personal and social values. Modern age of science and technology has created many evils. Violence, immorality, egoism, self-centeredness, frustration are rampant everywhere. It has been the victim of passions and evils like violence, jealousy, national superiority and arrogance. That is why, in spite of wonderful, scientific achievements the world is a place of violence, gloom and unease. In the midst of material prosperity, a large section of humanity is under the grip of immorality, poverty and corruption. Thus, man has been the monarch of entire world. Now, such unsatisfactory situations have arisen due to crises of values.

Dr. M. T. Ramji, in his book entitled as 'VALUE ORIENTED SCHOOL EDUCATION' has mentioned that in the context of modern India which is moving towards industrialisation and technology, we need education that is based on spiritual, moral and social values. According to him, the important spiritual, moral and social values which form part of the Indian Cultural Heritage are: Courage, Truth, Universal love, Respect for all religions, Dignity of manual work, Service, Purity, Courtesy, Peace and Joy. All these values are to be taught in Primary and Secondary Schools and it is imperative on the part of the teachers as well as teacher educators to understand the school situation and also the potentialities of school activities in promoting the values in schools. The schools can definitely play an important role in inculcating desirable values in the pupils through effective organisation of different, curricular and co-curricular programmes. Now, such a task must necessarily be the joint responsibility that is to be shouldered by all teachers and not just the

assigned duty of one or two teachers. Such "a growing concern over the erosion of essentials and an increasing cynicism in the society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make the system of education a fore full tool for cultivation of social and moral values". Love, compassion, sympathetic joy and even mindedness have obviously an unbalanced scope like wisdom and require a long, strenuous training and dedication of creative imagination and intuition. Such training in the East has been both emotional and intellectual. In the West, little attention has been paid to the cultivation and training of moral feeling, imagination and intuition. In countries where there was but one official religion, the church, temple or mosque could provide the necessary authority to impose a common moral code on schools. But in most countries there are number of religions and cultures which, from time to time may have come into conflict. To assume peace and national unity, mostly countries have established secular public education system.

Today, we all are living such a society where we find anxiety-stricken parents, frustrated jobless degree holders, teacher's strikes, dowry deaths, attraction of students towards private coaching classes, inability of our teachers to keep control over the overcrowded classes, etc. etc. On account of the said circumstances, there is very much a strongly felt need to develop value-education policies and programmes which will seek to eliminate all types of discrimination in education. For this a planned action will be such where rights of minorities will be taken care of, where intellectual understanding will be promoted, where there will be tolerance for other religions. It is better to state in one sentence that we need to place the melting pot model by a mosaic, rich in diversity but nonetheless having a clear unifying pattern based on 'global ethics'. The matter that has been discussed so far, brings out adequately the need for value education which will lead to the re-generation of values that have been lost in the process of search of knowledge, power and material progress during this century and preceding ones. It is because of this, it seems, Kothari Commission has rightly stressed — "A National System of Education that is related to life, needs and aspirations of the people cannot afford to ignore this

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Re-Exploring Barak

Dr Ranga Ranjan Das

Assam, geographically possess a unique identity due to the presence of two important river valleys apart from hilly terrain known as Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong districts. The significance of these two valleys emerges as I grow and developed in the socio-cultural environment of Brahmaputra valley. Two regions distinguish each other in terms of prevailing language, society, culture and vibrant heritage. Barak valley is significant by the presence of so many ethnic groups- with lesser in population with a trans-border presence with Tripura and Mizoram being its border in many of the segments of Assam. I have no hesitation to reveal that I hardly got an opportunity to explore Barak until I came close to a community residing in the Barak valley and accomplished some exploratory work in the line of partial ethnography and auto-ethnography. However, during student days, I have lost opportunities twice. Father was posted in Karimganj at the end of his service life under Assam Police. He retires from Karimganj district Headquarters. Due to paucity of time outside academics, I never visited his boarding place. He narrated about cordial relations and family like environment with his house owner and immediate neighbours. There is a personal narrative. In home we used to arrange Satyanarayana puja in the auspicious *tithi* of Buddha Purnima every year. That is a huge congregation of devotees in our own backyards every year involving a permanent priest solemnizing the rituals. Once, my father was absent during the puja. He had made all arrangements for the puja in his rented premises of Karimganj where he had managed a huge congregation with the same enthusiasm. He found a very cordial immediate neighbour with whom he maintained communication after his retirement till he lost his memory in a fatal accident. He possesses a good articulation of local speech with an accent of 'Sylhet'. There is other way of connection with Barak as we recovered our stolen car from the Katigorah, in Karimganj district subsequently. That apart, the next

phase of association was highlighted in an essay entitled '*Border Calling*'- where I made an attempt to narrate a journey to border areas-adjacent to Tripura and Mizoram, in order to finalize an exploratory work on Halam- a less known group, with different sub-groups who is under serious threat of identity particularly in Assam due to intermingling with 'Kuki' groups. The book came as '*Discourse of a less known group of Assam: The Halams: Ethnography, Heritage and Customary Law*'. The small effort on my part transformed into a book that brings lots of joy and happiness among a section of the populace in the hinterland. This endeavour 'Re-exploring Barak' is an attempt to provide an account of the journey of three days- that touches state of Tripura and three important districts of Barak: Karimganj, Hailakandi and Cachar while travelling and reminiscences of an extravagancy witnessed particularly during that particular book release function in one way or the other. It encompasses the brief journey where various known and unknown people came across- their sort interaction and unconditional admiration, love, space in their heart and my particular observations.

This narratives, has its' own base at its' backyard. Efforts and hard work starts shaping and it is at the final phase. The peoples' perception and anticipation has some limitations followed by my own limitations. Little delay of publication due to technical reason has brought some tense moment among the community crew. They are eagerly waiting for the book and want to release it ceremonially. The work was accomplished under the direct supervision of All Assam Halam Tribal Welfare Association (AAHTWA), head office at Manikbond, Karimganj. Due to other problems, it took time to finalize the date. On 11th February, Jayanta Halam and Uttam Ranglong, President and General Secretary of AAHTWA came to my office. We finalize the date as on 25th February considering all the logistics. We had to leave Guwahati as on 24th early morning by

train Sealdoh-Agartala Express that was right in the time. Suryanarayana ji accompanied me. I also have to oblige the service of Mrinmoy and Nayan who had no hesitation to drop us in their Scootties in a windy chill morning. The journey as revealed earlier was quite fascinating. The serene beauty of Dima Hasao district made it more refreshing. It was added by the taste of local fruits available when train stopped in the Haflong. I had fresh fruits of pineapple, cucumber and ripe papaya. Our destination was Sobri, a forest village located under the Lowarpuai Development Block in Karimganj district. Most of the villages under this block are adjacent to Tripura border. The nearest train station is Dharmanagar, in the North Tripura district of Tripura. Train stopped at Dharmanagar at 4.30 pm. We had a cup of tea to refresh ourselves. The kind hearted Manjoylal Chorei and Ratan Chorei (Bulte) came to pick us up. They have been a key part during my earlier visit. Bulte, is an expert driver who possess own alto. He said he had to visit in the border area of Mizoram in the early hours of the day. As, our journey started from Dharmanagar to Sobri, the places started appearing as I had a close connections. It took less than an hour. We travelled through some segment of national highway 8, in the north Tripura district. The road condition is very nice. We came across places like Bagbassa, seen one English medium school- Radiant, Tongcherra, Sanicherra, Chandpur, Churaibari, in Tripura; perhaps Shiphinjan in Karimganj, later on reaching Hatikhera tea estate, I felt we were very close to our destination. As, our car diverted through a sub-way in the midst of forest like environment, and finding a sand extracting place, I felt Sobiri was close at hand. The car was running parallel to Longai river. We stopped near a hillock- that was the abode of Jayanta Halam. It was about 5.35 pm. Jayanta Halam was waiting to receive us. I felt an extra energy standing and looking the surrounding and his warm greetings. It is exceptionally a beautiful place that I always admire. Just adjacent to his residence, I had seen the glimpses of the venue of the function scheduled on 25th February. I walked following him to his small hillock enriching beautifully with horticulture-like battle nut, battlevines trees, lemon tree, and other plants with economic value, and domestication of fowls. Young

daughter-in-law, with her small son and her sister and wife were there to entertain with water and tea. Mangal moni Halam, young son of Jayanta Halam stays with him as a part of joint family. His elder son resides separately in the same village. He is a teacher in a local government school. Mangal moni is associated with an NGO, he helped me a lot during my first stay. During the period, his wife was in her parents' house. I met her for the first time. The service that she was rendering is praiseworthy that I had seen. Her son seems just started walking and seen most of the times in the seat of his three-wheeler without any complain. Six months ago, there was no electricity connection. Now, the villagers got electricity. It was nice to witness. But, solar panel that I found earlier was still there utilized when there was power-cut. Knowing our arrival many people came to welcome us. Some of them I met earlier. There were new also. We shared our thoughts. I had the opportunity to share my thoughts to Nirendra Reang. He came there with packets of books to be released in the function. He shared also the problems of the Reangs residing in the Barak valleys and also functioning of traditional village control mechanism. I also reveal about meeting his fellow mate Birbahu Reang in my office. I also interacted with two fellow villagers of Sobri: Ringsum Ring Halam and Bula Halam. Ringsums' livelihood is based upon agriculture. Bula, on the other hand shared his past and present. How he had managed adverse circumstances in his childhood where his parents got separated and ties separated nuptial knot? He had no choice to accept new father who was also from the same group but profess Christianity. Now, he professes Catholic and educated enough to fetch a job of L.P school teacher at East Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya. Uttam's wife is his father's sister. He has two daughters and a son, came mostly during winter vacation. He stayed back for another day due to the function. Khonril moni Halam, (Moni) a young boy who helps the Uttam's family appeared in the scene by announcing dinner. I, felt tired and hungry also. I was told that D.C of Karimganj will be the chief guest where I was a special guest. It was confirmed as revealed with some special arrangements for him. In later hours, due to some other administrative emergency, he had to skip the function. They were a little bit upset but it was

consolidated. We had earlier dinner and felt asleep quickly. Next day, on 25th February, as usual I got up early, did morning task, had a cup of tea and went out for a walk to look the places around and also to see the venue. As I reached the venue, it was surprised. There was an atmosphere of festival. The sound system, playing of Hindi songs, indigenously builds stage, two separate spaces, and builds with bamboo one – in a portion of elevating soil and other is like small pile dwelling house. Except sound system and plastic chairs, all the decorations were built by themselves under the banner of AAHTWA. Looking at an out glance, I had made a move forward. I found Moni joining me in the walk. After a few steps, I had to stop. I had seen a new concrete religious structure which was absent during my first visit. It is established on 8th July 2019, as a part of Ramkrishna Mission with a sign board inside, reflected as Sri Ramkrishna Coaching Centre, vill-Sobri, F.V, p.o. Isabheel and p.s Bazaricherra, pin 788720. I have located Sivalinga inside along with portraits of Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa As informed, a section of Halam youth had celebrated Sivaratri as on it's specified date. Besides, there is a weekly congregation for ritualistic prayer. It is a wonderful development in religious perspectives. Near the prayer hall, there is a patch of land where *rahar* (a variety of pulse) locally known as Khoukhlei, seen growing. Moni explained me about a local dish prepared out of it by boiling, adding dryfish, onion (purum), chilly and tomato. He also reveal about another ethnic dish out of *jongsa* also known as *longsa*, seen growing in the horticulture garden of Uttam Halam's residence, a big tree- vegetables hanging as a branch- it is long and flat with pod inside it. The matured one is prepared as curry adding dry fish and rice flour. I have seen selling of the fruits in Manipur as well as by Meitei women near Manipuri basti of Guwahati city. It possess high demand among Meiteis to prepare their ethnic food item-*eramba*, as I heard from my Meitei neighbours.

The phase of late morning began on 25th February. I returned back and sat sometimes in the courtyard. Many people started coming and seen some familiar faces like Bijay and his family from Balia, Manjaylal from Magura, Binay Chorei from Kodomtola village, Manik Chorei from Rangamati village, Leina Halam

from ST morcha of Karimganj and his wife, Sreedharji and Rajesh Das associated with Banabasi Kalayan Ashram in Silchar and north east, Babu ril Halam who brought some edibles for me and many others. It was a nice congregation at the courtyard appreciating my effort. After a heavy breakfast, we proceed towards the venue where the atmosphere was electrified with the assembling of the people from the various villages in the districts and some neighbouring villages of Tripura. The enthusiasm of people is quite indescribable. It is a festive like occasion with displaying of swords and other gifts items received as gift from Tripura king by the community, some rituals performed by Halam priest (ochai) by sacrificing hen and purifying the gift items by smearing the raw blood and chanting of hymn, prayer and worshipping, people's participation by offering money followed by dance performances of different forms of *vailam* of different groups in the rhythm of traditional musical instruments. There were performances of *sapitalam*- which is actually performed during Lakshi puia in traditional context, done by preparing artificial context by a young and aged couple to express their joy and happiness. Other guests along with me, the portfolio bearer of AAHTWA, and the various other headman and key members of traditional social control mechanism from different villagers were invited to sit on the dice and ceremonially welcome us with traditional towel and flower garland. Without wasting any further time, the organizers announced for the release of the book kept confined in a covered bamboo basket. Nei lo lian Chorei, a leading person from the community residing in Manikbond, in Karimganj have open the lid and uncover the seal of book in the midst of large round of the applause from a massive gathering. I could not belief my own eyes, is it real or virtual. I thank god almighty who provides such an opportunity to witness such an event in my life time. I delivered a long speech focusing on the particular book and its' significance in the contemporary context and revealing it is not conclusive, there are many more to areas to explore in the context of Halam society. I received the blessings and love for my hard work. I had little time. As soon as meeting was over, I had to go to Silchar for the night. The journey from Karimganj to Silchar via land route was the first time.

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Donyi Polo Nyedar Namlo Movement

Er. Pai Dawe

The **Donyi Polo Nyedar Namlo**; **Donyi Polo** (Sun & Moon); **Nyedar** (purified) and **Namlo** (House/Temple); is a movement aimed at spiritual renaissance for the Nyishi Indigenous Faiths and belief system. Its motto and objective is to revitalise and resurrect the respect and faith in Donyipoloism as also to guide the believers in realizing the ultimate Truth through the philosophy of DonyiPoloism and Mother Nature.

The Nyishi practices of indigenous religion had long been cultivated and is basing on its customs, traditional practices of rituals on faith line revolving around Three Truths. The Tribe believes in the creation of Universe and worship the Ane Donyi as creator. She created Sun (Donyi), the Moon (Polo) along with other planetary bodies including the Earth. This creation is supreme & Centre of philosophy of Ane Donyi called **Hibu Donyi** and **Gyobu Donyi** meaning (Creator), is far beyond the physical Sun, which had been created to give light and energy to Universe. Hence the bodily existence of the Sun and Moon is merely a symbolic representative of Creator and objective replica of it.

The Universal Law is regulated by five fundamentals viz (1) Wjwng (Sun), (2) Auju (Air) (3) Hayi (Water) (4) Changte (Earth) and (5) Dote (Sky). These five elements are incarnation of Ane Donyi through Wjwng Paanam. The spiritual role of Ane Donyi is **Paanam or Pabuq bo** (to incarnate to any form including the above five fundamentals). Thus playing the role of **Wjwng Ane** as omniscient in her work of creation. And the above five elements constitute the Mother Nature and our belief revolves in nature so we are also known as nature worshipers since his evolution as a human being. The basic of our culture and faith is omni-presence of Almighty. We feel, we sense, we see and we experience Her presence everywhere in all forms through **Wjang Ane** (the Planner and Creator). We human beings

are the best creation of the Ane Donyi. Therefore we respect the rest creation of the Ane Donyi the righteousness, peace. Cohesion and mutual coexistence of diverse communities and its practical practice is an ultimate aim to personality and human development mission behind the worshiping of the nature. Therefore the faith and believes system and all the cultural and traditional characteristics and moral values of the community are been driven from the characteristic and behaviorist of the nature. And there has been a deep philosophy, spirituality, logic and science behind the worshiping of the Mother Nature.

The prime philosophy of Donyi Polo and Mother Nature is the unconditional services and life to every animate or inanimate matter in the universe, Nyishi believes that same is the reason behind the creation of the human being; to give unconditional life and services to the fellow beings. As such to imbibe upon these characteristics of nature and expressing profound gratitude for giving life to all creatures the Nyishi worship nature.

But in due courses of time this worshiping turned into a prayer (**Yullo**), wherein various forms of sacrifices in terms of animals began to involve which was negotiated through a specific gifted section of people called **Nyubu** (Priest). Gradually with the advancement of modernity these priests became limited and other involvement during animal sacrifices in **Yullo** (Rituals) became expensive. Moreover performing **Yullo** became materialistic oriented ie either to get healed from sickness or to be prospered, healthy and wealthy. Hence slowly and gradually the philosophy of unconditional services imbibing from the Donyi Polo and Mother Nature had taken a back seat and the individual and community urge for prosperity gotten over coupled with the expensive economical involvement in rituals (**Yullo**).

Thus taking the advantage of dying philosophy and spiritualism coupled with the growing expensive economical involvement in Nyishi traditional rituals (**Yullo**) system. During 1920 Christianity came into and offered an alternative way of faith and believes with a spiritualism of Jesus Christ in Nyishi community and **Sensu Nar** became the first Nyishi believer in 1919 who was baptized in 1920. And today after 100 years the percentage of Nyishi practicing Christianity has gone upto 75%. The Nyishi Christian found the Christianity spiritualism in platter through the best of the Bible preaching and other relevant documents of the Christianity which played vital role in the transformation of behaviorism and living standard of Nyishi Christian. But at the same time they had been made to develop a sense of doubtful on Nyishi Indigenous Faiths and Believes system and its philosophy as well spirituality. Whereas the philosophy and spiritualism of Nyishi Indigenous Faiths and believes system is beyond the doubt; The Ane Donyi the Creator, Tani (Inheritor and Preserver) and the Swchangne (Mother Earth), the Supreme Abode of all human beings after their deaths. One or other day all decadence of living organism is bound to enter into the lap of the Swchang ne. This is the Absolute Truth of all souls realized in philosophical understanding by the believers of the Ane Donyi.



But unfortunately the conversion had blinded the philosophy, spirituality and morality of our own indigenous faiths, believes and traditional system, rather they have been criticized and desecrated in the garb of adopting Christianity. As such younger generation has been drifted far away from the

philosophy of our ancestral faiths and believes system.

Therefore with the principle of Change and continuity, the intellectuals and pioneers of the community started a movement of an intense and continuous search for a true and meaningful platform or an institution from where a man or women grow step by step in spirituality and to provide alternative way of prayer to heal the sick without sacrifices and with minimal economical involvement. As useful and responsible member of the society our faith and beliefs can be practiced and awaken the power of

Ane Donyi and transform into a spiritual way of life to every individual and Donyi Poloism as religion. Today this oldest surviving religion is facing the crises that may end up in destruction, because it lacks the inner depth of organized consciousness.

Hence, to identify the destiny of Tani society, particularly Nyishi Community, a few intellect members of the society had tried and put lot of efforts to reform the society through various social organizations like All Nyishi Youth Association (ANYA), Nyishi Elite Society (NES), Nyishi Cultural Society (NCS) etc.

But through these organizations the required objective of the of the society could not be achieved.

It was in the year 1999 when a group of voluntary social workers namely; Shri Techi Tedi, Shri Techi Gubin, Shri Nabam Atum, Shri N.E Tana, Shri Rekhi Tana Tara and Shri Tana Showren along with other likeminded intellectual members of Nyishi Society formed a platform called Nyishi Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society (NIFCS). Through this organization the social and indigenous cultural movement started to grow stronger and stronger in the society.

Ultimately, by the blessing of almighty Ane donyi and under the initiative of Shri Nabam Atum, our dream turned into reality. On the basis of spiritual method and ideology conceived by Shri Nabam Tata and Smt. Nabam Mekha the historic and first ever Donyi Polo prayer system in Nyishi started on 27th January 2001 at the residence of Shri Tana Tochu and Smt. Tana Kuka at Doimukh. Thus the desired Ideological based platform called Nyedar Namlo came into being.

Therefore, it is an attempt of Nyedar Namlo, being an institution, to start a small beginning for continuous flow of our age-old faith and belief in an organized way and disciplined manner in the hearts of every soul. Esteemed efforts are also being made to enhance our physical, intellectual and moral values in every individual to face the life with self-confidence and moral uprightness. It is to convey the world that our faith and beliefs are as old as this universe and ours is one of the greatest religions on this green planet. The present attempt is to organize the unorganized, systematize the unsystematised and to manifest permanent living power of almighty Ane Donyi.

Nyedar Namlo is also trying its best to develop our age-old cultural heritage to be seen purely from the viewpoint of true faith of its own indigenous belief and not to mix up with parochial and consideration of Westernization. Another effort of Nyedar Namlo is also to help an individual to organize its life in order and in consonance with its potential, aspirations for a good, peaceful and elevating existence at a given context. Though Nyedar Namlo a pattern of dynamic Donyi Polism and spiritualism an individual disciplines and chastens his/her mental and ethical faculties and subdues the animal and carnal desires. He/She in whatever capacity one is called to serve, enhances the harmony of group living and makes the way for a total cultural and spiritual elevation of the society to which he/she belongs.

Time has drawn its relentless curtain over us. Because of a tragic absence of organized platforms

for spiritual urges and running of the material world has tended to disgrace from the path of a value-oriented pursuit of being and becoming. Human society while galloping on the road to material progress has lost its way in perceiving an inner harmony and peace so essential for its upward evolution. An enquiring mind with a curiosity to know the physical and the spiritual phenomena of Donyi Poloism is the need of the hour for all believers of its own faith and the Ane Donyi. They must have the urges to develop new found of spiritual faculties within its own deeper soul. Characters are to be stabilized, rational thinking is to be naturalized and acquire the power of Ane Donyi. Her energy is the source of all living beings. Peaceful co-existence and harmonious living is the motto of Donyi Poloism, for the larger interest of socio-religious aspects of society in order to protect its identity.

Today Donyi Polo Nyedar Namlo movement is not only limited to the religious aspects, but also with creating sense of spiritual awareness among the people to preserve and document the rich socio-religious, socio-culture and traditional knowledge of the Nyishi that has been handed down to us by our ancestors from the earliest times.

In the Nyedar Namlo the documentation of folk lores, folk tales, Crafts, Art facets, hymns and Chantings of the Nyishi are being done with extensive discussion and research. It also became a social institution wherein the important information and messages for the community is disseminated amongst the masses; provides a platform to share the individual sad as well as happy occasions of the fellow Nyishi members and extend physical and financial support to the needy thereby rediscovering the age old tradition of the Nyishi culture. The ultimate motto of Nyedar Namlo movement is promoting peaceful co-existence and harmonious living, advancing the cause of socio religious cohesion in the larger interest of Nyishi society and thereby protect its identity for the posterity. ■

(The author of this article is the President of Nyishi Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society)

Karbi's Marriage System at A Glance

Dhaneswar Engti

Karbhis are one of the major and most indigenous but highly scattered communities, living in different parts of Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and almost in all parts of Assam. They are also found living in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and other parts of the North-East India. They are a major tribal community to hold a very distinct culture and social order that are exclusive. Preservation of the interesting tradition and culture of the community for the posterity is not only essential for continuation of their identity but also for scientific research and investigation to understand more about the deeper meanings of the philosophy of this particular indigenous tribal community of the north-east India.

As per the legend, Welirbon, the queen of king Rangmukrang visited Langmingpo's house one day seeking Rasinja's hand for marriage to her son, Longmukrang. Langmingpo sought Rasinja's consent and after obtaining so, asked to come with 'Bongkrok', the container she has made from the dried wild guard in which she stores rice beer that her daughter Kareng and Kading had learnt to make the wine. Then Welirbon went to Langmingpo's house

several times with the gift of wine in 'Bongkrok' and finally fixed for the marriage and thus whole procedure had ended with 'Peso Riso Kachethon. And thereafter, the first people to follow this system of Karbi marriage were two friends named Welongbi and Harlongbi, also known as Sumphong and Sumphi, who were on the way to wage war against the enemy. But they met an old woman on their way by the bank of Marley River. Then the old woman asked them to accompany her to witness a marriage ritual that took place at Miring Rongsopi. So, both of them, Welongbi and Harlongbi, accompanied her to witness the marriage rituals at Miring Rongsopi and returned home the next day. They introduced the marriage rituals and popularized among the Karbis. Hence, they are called the inventors of the Karbi marriage system and thus they became immortal in the Karbi society. In Karbi marriage rules, there is a close relationship of the kinship terminology with the Karbi matrimonial cross-cousin marriage system consisting of a man to marry his maternal uncle's daughter. At every generation a man is advised to choose his wife from the same clan of his mother's clan. Such a

regulatory rule of association unites a whole series of distinct clans or lineages of marriage on the basis of wife-taking and wife-giving relationship. It was strictly followed during the olden days in the Karbi society.

Karbhis have 5(five) major clans which is called as 'Kur' and marriage is prohibited between the same clan. The five major clans of the Karbis are – Lijang, Hanjang, Tungjang, Kronjang and Ejang. Thus Lijang clan has four sub-clans and those sub-clans are Engti Hensekh, Engti Kathar, Engti Taro, and Engti Killing. So also, Hanjang and Kronjang clans have 6 (six) sub-clans each while Tungjang and Ejang clans have 30 (thirty) sub-clans each. It is worth mentioning that these Karbi clans are completely exogamous and marriage between a boy and a girl belonging to the same clan never takes place as per the Karbi customary Laws, because, the children of the same clan are considered to be brothers and sisters of their own. And violation of this Customary Law obviously leads to excommunication of the couple involved from the Karbi society and has to encounter a severe punishment. It is still in vogue in the Karbi society and this marriage taboo is rarely violated by the Karbis due to fear of

excommunication from the society.

It is necessary to state that even in the cremation ground of the Karbis also demarcated for each clan. The Karbi cremation ground is called – Tipit or Thiri which is also known as ‘Hemthurlangno.’ There is no inequality amongst the Karbi clans, all the five clans are socially treated as equal and there is no discrimination amongst the five clans. However, Engti clan is considered as Priestly Clan and they are also called as ‘Hemphu’ clan. Hence, Engti clan is supposed to have a higher status in the olden days. In the Ronghang Rongbong, Rong Arak, Katharbura is the head priest of the Karbi Customary king which still exist in Rongkhang Rongbong, located in the West Karbi Anglong. Katharbura is entrusted to perform ‘Botor Kekur’ for invoking timely monsoon in the Karbi traditional kingdom. No other clans except Engti Kathar sub-clan of the Karbis can perform this sacred ritual in Rong Arak, the capital of Karbi Traditional Kingdom.

Songsar Recho or God, the Almighty, is considered to be the creator of this universe and the Karbis or Arleng, Hence, Karbis call themselves as the sons and daughters of Songsar Recho, the Hemphu Arnam and also worship Hemphu Arnam regularly as the Almighty God.

In Karbi marriage system, monogamy is a prevailing practice

and there is no bar of polygamy in the Karbi society. The cases of polygamy are very rare in the Karbi marriage system. Further, widow remarriage is not prohibited and it is allowed to remarry the widow in the Karbi society. In this case, the unmarried younger brother is required to marry the widow of his elder brother, but under no circumstances the elder brother can marry the widow of his younger brother, it is not allowed to remarry the widow of his younger brother by the elder brother and this marriage taboo is never violated.

While solemnising Karbi marriage, they have to attend six stages of established customs which are essential to be performed as per the established customs and traditions. These six stages of Karbi marriage system must be fulfilled as per the established customs and traditions. The six stages of Karbi marriage system are as follows, –

1. Nengpi Nengso Kachingki,
2. Piso Kehang
3. Kepatini,
4. Ajo Arni Kepha,
5. Adam Asar or Adam Asar Kangthur, and
6. Peso Riso Kachithon.

In Karbi marriage system, rice beer, wine, Bongkrok and betel leaves and nuts are the essential items to be arranged, that the rice beer and wine are to be prepared first and bongkrok, a dried bitter guard, is necessary to be arranged

from the very beginning of the marriage ceremony. This item, Bongkrok, filled with rice beer and a bottle of wine are required to be offered with high esteem and obeisance to the father of the girl by the groom’s side. It is impossible to perform Karbi marriage without ‘Bongkrok’, filled with pure rice beer and a bottle of wine with ‘banta’ means a packet of betel leaves and nuts to the maternal uncle, the father of the girl; and a bottle of wine with ‘Banta, to be offered to the mother of the girl. Bongkrok is not required to be offered to mother of the girl; in Karbi customary law there is no such provision to offer ‘bongkrok’ to a woman. It is regarded as the sacred prayer items through which the Hemphu, Mukrang and Rasinja give blessings to the newly married couple when the marriage takes place.

Now, let us try to know how Karbi marriage is performed as per the established customs and tradition since time immemorial:

1. Nengpi Nengso Kachingki: -Nengpi Nengso Kachingki is the first stage to be attended for asking a girl to get married. This first stage of Karbi marriage is called ‘Nengpi-Nengso Kachingki’; it is a preliminary discussion between ‘Nengpi’ and ‘Nengso’ means an informal discussion between the mother of the boy and the mother of the girl to give marriage. At this stage it is not required to carry ‘Bongkrok’ or ‘Horbong’ and ‘Horhe’ by the mother of the boy

to oblige the mother of the girl to be given in marriage to her son. She generally goes to her brother's house for asking his daughter for marriage to her son. She also tries to enquire about her willingness to marry her son. She makes an effort to know whether she is free from any engagement with any other boy or not from nearby village. It is a preliminary process of confirmation about the possibility of getting marriage between a boy and a girl. It is a crucial phase for both the parties to ascertain precisely about the possibility of giving marriage of a girl to a boy or not. At this stage no formality is required to be observed and 'Bonkrok' and rice beer are not offered to the mother of the girl, however a bottle of wine is to be offered to her during this preliminary stage. The importance of the father of the boy and the maternal uncle or father of the girl is out of reckoning at this stage.

In the olden days, there was a ritual of 'honjeng kekok' wherein a girl, much before her marriageable age, has tied with five round of white cotton thread on the hand of the girl and six round of white cotton thread on the boys hand as a mark of betrothal between the two young cousins as per the Karbi custom. It was the custom for a man to marry the daughter of his maternal uncle which is a non existent ritual now.

2. Piso Kehang: - 'Piso Kehang' is the second stage of

Karbi marriage system to be carried out immediately after 'Nengpi Nengso Kachingki,' provided that no disagreement has come up between the parents. This stage is called seeking of a girl for marriage to a boy. At this stage of Karbi marriage system, the parents of the boy must carry with them a Bongkrok (a dried bitter gourd) filled with pure rice beer and Horbong, a bottle of homemade wine, especially prepared for this purpose with betel leaves and nuts duly placed on a pure banana leaves and is to be offered with due respect and honour to the father of the girl, while a bottle of homemade wine (Arak) and betel leaves and nuts are to be offered to the mother of the girl by the bridegroom's side. At this stage, the Village Headman or 'Rong Asar' and others dignitaries are invited to the function as witnesses. The role of 'Klengdun and Klengsarpo' is essential and indispensable part of duty to be performed during the celebrations of Adam Asar; they have to carry the 'Horbong-Horthe', other cereals and betel leaves and nuts to the maternal uncle's house, as per Karbi traditional custom.

At this stage, the opinion of the girl is sought whether she is ready for the marriage to be entered with and if she has no objection against the marriage, then only the father of the girl can perform 'Bongkrok Arnam Kepu' means he can start chanting

sacred montros seeking permission and blessings from Hemphu-Mukrang and Rasinja Arnam for solemnizing the happy marriage between the boy and the girl by pouring of horlang from the womb of the dried gourd in the name of Almighty God, Hemphu Arnam. It is a very solemn occasion to witness and people eagerly wait for this auspicious moment to take place.

3. Kapatini: - Kapatini is another important stage of Karbi marriage system to be performed by the Karbis; this stage is called final confirmation of the girl's consent of her marriage with the boy. During the Kapatini stage, Horbong-horthe, cereals and betel leaves and nuts are required to be offered to the parents of the girl as did during the Piso Kehang stage. Kapatini is the third stage of Karbi marriage system which is carried out immediately after 'Piso Kehang,' provided there is no any divergence between both the parents. This stage is called seeking of the girl for marriage with the boy. At this stage of Karbi marriage system, the parents of the boy must carry with them a 'Bongkrok', a dried Gourd, filled with pure rice beer in the womb and 'Horbong', a bottle of homemade pure distilled wine and a good numbers of betel leaves and nuts, which is especially prepared for the marriage purpose and it is to be offered with much respect and honour to

the father of the girl, while a bottle of homemade 'Arak', wine and betel leaves and nuts are also offered to the mother of the girl by the parents of the boy. At this stage, the village headman and others dignatories are invited to attend the Kapatini ceremony as the chief guest and guests of honours. The role of 'Klengdun and Klengsarpo' is essential and indispensable part to attend kepatini ceremony at this stage. They have to carry the 'Horbong' and 'Horth'e' gently covered with white cotton 'Pilu', a Karbi traditional cloth. It has to be carried to the maternal uncle's house, as per Karbi traditional custom and belief. During this stage, exchange of gifts between bride and groom takes place; this is called 'Asim Kebi' in Karbi. Now a day exchange of golden rings is made between the girl and the boy.

At this stage, the opinion of the girl is sought whether she is ready for the marriage or not and if she has no objection against the proposal, only then, the father of the girl can perform 'Bongkrok Arnamn Kepu' means he can seek blessings from Hemphu-Mukrang and Rasinja for solemnizing the happy marriage between the boy and the girl by pouring of horlang from the womb of the gourd after chanting the holy mantras from his mouth incessantly.

4. Ajo Arni Kepha: - Another important stage of Karbi marriage system is 'Ajo Arni

Kepha' which means finalization and fixation of marriage date. This process .of the Ajo Arni Kepha is to be performed as done in the second and third stage of 'Piso Kehang' and 'Kapatini'. The essential materials required for the purpose of 'Ajo Arni Kepha' are the same with the Piso Kehang and Kapatini which were already performed before this stage. 'Horbong' and 'Horth'e' with betel leaves and nuts are required to be offered to the parents of the girl as was done in the 'Piso Kehang' and 'Kapatini' stage. Bongkrok Arnamn kepu is an essential part of the Karbi marriage, which is to be carried out by the Ong Nihu Arnamn or Maternal Uncle, the father of the girl, with high esteem and spiritual regard to the Almighty God..

5. Adam Asar or Adam Asar Kangthur: - Adam Asar Kangthur is the marriage day. It is final and most important stage of the Karbi marriage system. The groom's party shall have to reach the bride's house before sunset. At this stage, Karbi marriage is solemnized in a grand way as per the Karbi custom and tradition. The objective of the 'Adam Asar Kangthur' is to unite two souls and it has to continue during the whole night till the final stage of 'Kepangri' of bride and bridegroom are completed. After the 'Kepangri', 'Hemphu Avur Kematha', a Hemphu ritual is performed the next day in the

morning at the bride's house. This ritual is performed for calling upon the tutelary deity, Hemphu, Mukrang and Rasingja arnam to give blessings to the newly married couple with intent and purpose on the occasion of this auspicious occasion of Karbi marriage ceremony and it is a procees of blessing seeking rituals to be performed by the priest who has full knowledge to do the rituals as per the Karbi ritual beliefs and spiritual incantations. This kind of 'Hemphu Avur Kematha' is also performed at the house of the groom's house the next day morning after reaching their house. It is required to perform calling upon the deities to remain witnesses and never be separated including seeking of blessings for bearing uncountable numbers of children for protection and promotion of future generation of his clan. Thus 'Adam Asar Kangthur', an auspicious occasion of Karbi marriage ceremony is performed as per the Karbi customary law since time immemorial. Adam Asar Kangthur is also called as 'Piso Kepangri', which means Wedding Ceremony of the Karbis. During adam asar kangthur, the groom's side must show obeisance to the maternal uncle and his family members by offering Horbong and Horth'e, Arak, (wine), other cereals, betel nuts and leaves as insisted by the Maternal Uncle or the Bride's side.

(Contd. to Next Issue)

The Evolution of Modern Assamese Poetry since the 1980s to the Present

Subhajit Bhadra

(Contd. from Previous Issue)

Bipuljyoti Saikia (born 1966) started writing poetry since middle of 1980s and his poetic oeuvre is colorful. His poetic universe consists of a quest to understand the meaning of existence and the bitter and sweeter experiences of life. His poetry bears witness to the Assam agitation movement of the 1980s and the communal strife which gives a historical framework to his works. He has never tried to be apolitical in his poetry and his poetry acts as the sentinel of contemporary society. Some of his poetry can be called protest poetry but he never degenerated to slogan or clichés. Many of his poems bring forth the theme of war and it is known by everyone that war is harmful and that is why his poems talk about peace.

Nilima Thakuria Haq (born 1961) is a familiar name in the domain of Assamese poetry. Her poems bring out fresh images and she tries to deal with contemporary society in her poetry. She also talks about the evil tendencies of human beings but she is thoroughly grounded in her root. She has painted the picture of death, dread and violence in her poems but she has also tried to transcend those. She had satirized the evil trends of consumerism and its bad effects.

The basic tone of **Lutfu Hanum Selima Begum** (Born 1962) is romantic. She is not conscious of the harsh realities of life and she speaks about the bitterness and happiness of human life. Her language is lucid and one can find a picture of rural life combined with a romantic spirit on her poetry.

Among the post 'Ramdhenu' poets of second phase **Ajit Gogoi** (born 1968) is remarkable for his simplicity of style. But he seems to be serious against the lighter tendencies of some of his contemporary Assamese poets. He has satirized the artificial culture of contemporary society. He has also given voice to the sense of pain, anguish and desolation felt by

people. He has portrayed a picture of the loneliness and broken dreams of modern life. Even though Gogoi basically talks about the melancholy of human life yet he is optimistic about man's future on earth. He can be called a painter of the darker realities of rural life and he has been able to exhibit a strong sense of realized experiences of life.

Gangamohan Mili (born 1968) has exhibit a sensitive style, a lucid language and expression of folk culture in his poetry. He has himself said about his poetry, 'I feel it unethical to betray people by portraying the false realities of life.' He depicts the rural realities of life and brings alive river, forest, trees and parallel to this he talks about the sorrows and broken dreams of people.

He has expressed the lived realities of rural people who basically live on the basis of agriculture and that is why a tone of regionalism can be found in many of his poems. There is a touch of sensitivity to fellow human being in his poetry and he basically sympathizes with the oppressed class of society. He belongs to the Miching Tribe and their culture customs are revealed in his poems. He had given expression to the lived realities of his own tribe which has added a unique charm to his poetry.

Jeeban Naraha (born 1970) has expostulated a fresh idiom and subjects matter in his poetry. He also depicts rural life and that is why his poetry is devoid of artificiality. The folk life portrayed in his poetry is his strength and his poems appear to be natural. He has advanced towards a sense of modernism through the use of contemporary images and symbols. Even though there are regional portrayals in his poetry yet he is free from provincialism. His poems are universal in nature and some of his poetry brings out a sense of desolation. His poetry also shows social awareness.

Rajib Borah (born 1970) has portrayed in his poetry the human response to life and the world. He

avoids complexity but uses the experience derived from the knowledge of nature and human life. His poems have a smell of the soil and he feels unique attraction to common man. He has used tradition in a modern way and his poetry can be a mirror of contemporary Assamese rural life. It would not be an exaggeration to call it Assamese life-scape. Some of his poem emanate from a strong sense of history.

Kushal Dutta (born 1975) is a significant name in the realm of contemporary Assamese poetry. His poetic sense has evolved from a combination of emotion and intellect. He has discarded complexity and experimented with new subject matter and technical innovation. He has consciously attempted to break tradition and he had tried to weigh certain philosophical ideals in his poetry. He tries to move closer to the spoken language of common people. He does not give place to unnecessary images and symbols.

Biman Kumar Doley (born 1971) is another significant name in this context. He has given expression to childhood experience based on the rural life. Even though he lives in urban location yet he has taken recourse to the imaginative life. His poetic universe consists of folk life and its various nuances. He has also dealt with Miching life and its various rituals in his poetry.

Mridual Haloi has adopted a different trait in his poetry. Harkrishna Deka says about Haloi's poetry that, 'His poetry has created faith in my being and he is a strong contender to take a major place in the domain of Assamese poetry.' His poetic expression, his language and his sensitivity appealed to the seasoned readers of poetry.

Kabita Karmakar (1987) has expressed the confluence of life and youth in her poetry. The most significant point to that she has expressed the lives of common man and she can be considered as the daughter of the soil. She has also expressed the terrible picture of violence and dread, exploitation and subjugation.

Pratim Baruah is serious poet who has been quite consistent regarding the quality of his poetry. He has been writing in various magazines for quite some time now and he has a unique style which has been inculcated through his reading of various kind of

poetry. In one of his poems titled '*Time*' he began with a line by the Mexican poet Actavio Paz which reveals his grasp of western poetry. He has also written a few experimental poems and we can say that his poems will be more mature over the years.

Bivarani Talukdar is a strong voice in the realm of recent Assamese poetry and she seems to combine both tradition and modernity in her poems. A strong feminine sensibility dominates her poetry but she cannot be called a feminist. There is a balance between subject matter and style in her poetry and one has to wait for the complete flowering of her poetic talent.

Apart from the poet discussed above some other poets are also writing good poetry since middle of the 1980s to the present time. Some of the names of those poets are Arup Kumar Nath, Anupama Das, Alokesh Kalita, Ajit Bharali, Ajit Kumar Bordoloi, Ankur Rajen Changmai, Abedul Rehman, Amrita Basumatary, Archana Baruah, Uday Kumar Sharma, Uajjal Paogam, Utpola Bora, Kaustav Mani Saikia, Prem Narayan Nath, Cheniram Gogoi, Junmoni Das, Mira Thakur, Prajal Sarma Basistha, Bijoy Shankar Barman and others.

Kamal kumar Tanti also hails from a tea tribe community and in his poem we find materials drawn from folk life. There is also reference to history injustice and he looks at this from a post- colonial perspective. He also reacts in his poems to the immediate socio-political incidents. He has at the same time, experimented with theme and technique.

Ranjit Gogoi's poem present before readers a sense of despondency and through such melancholy he indulges in self- introspection to find out the difficult answers of life. The familiar folk-life of Assam is reflected in his poetry and the smell of soil emerges thoroughly. He has given a Mobile dimension to his poetry which he derives from a deep sense of rootedness. A Sense of inquisitiveness dominates the texture of his poems. It has given him a sense of realization regarding the gains and losses of life. His imageries are drawn from the rural life of Assam and he can intricately design the form of poetry. His poems are also popular because he is deeply rooted in a particular socio cultural milieu.

Debaprasad Talukdar is remarkably original

poet who has exhibited his reaction to the changing pattern of society and he graphically chronicles his heart-felt realizations. He has not written cheap poetry for the sake of popularity and he has written stronger poems based on his own experiences. In some of his poems he has offered a pan- Indian panoramic view and his poems offers a sense of freshness. He has been able to cement his place in the realm of contemporary poetry through his grasp over both traditional and modernity. He also laments the loss of something vital from the life of Assamese people and their culture.

Jyotsna Kalita writes intellectual poems which have cerebral appeal. She never writes poetry for the sake of writing it or for the sake of mass consumption. Her poetry shows the contemporary urban landscape and her total output can be judged on the basis of quality, not of the basis of quantity as she writes only when she feels the urge to write. She is well read poet and that reflect in her poetry. She has never drifted apart from the particular standard of poetry.

Ajit Bharali is another addition to the list of the contemporary Assamese poetry. He does not write sensational poems but his poetry reveals a deep realization of life's varied experiences. He does not commodify poetry; rather he tries to present contemporary life as it is. Some of his poems are full of sensitivity and compassion as he writes from the core of his heart. In some of his poems the nostalgic streak manifests itself.

We can also identify some of the major trends in contemporary Assamese poetry. Globalization has made the world a global village but it has also given rise to a new sort of opening up of economic structure and these things are reflected in Assamese poetry of the recent time. The rise of consumerism is a major factor in this context.

The cultural invasion of English has also affected contemporary modern Assamese poetry. Some of the words found in present Assamese poetry reflect this development. Poets are unhesitatingly using English words in their poems.

The Proliferation of knowledge ushered in by the internet is also a major factor in this context and this has affected recent Assamese poetry. Even small

children are playing complex games through internet and recent Assamese poetry is not altogether silent about this. More and more people are driving their children to study in English medium and internet is used to a large extent by these small kids. Recent Assamese poetry is highlighting these issues.

The rise of Ambedkarism during the 1990s affected Assamese poetry of the time. The exploitation of the so called lower caste and communities gave birth to an awareness of Dalit paradigm. The poets wiring during that period gave full expression to those sensibilities in their poems.

Some of the other trend which have been observed in recent Assamese poetry are as follows;

1. The number of poet writing in newspaper and magazine has increased though there is a lack of quality. Emotion has become the predominant motif and it seems as if the recent poets are cut off from the tradition.

After the 1990 there is a sense of stagnation in Assamese poetry. There is very little experimentation regarding form and technique. But it does not mean that contemporary Assamese poetry is bereft of substance. Some of the contemporary Assamese poets are not well read. That is why some of the poems are ordinary. Recent Assamese poetry has become more and more attuned toward societal issue which is a good sign.

In the conclusion we can say that Assamese poetry since the mid 1980s to the present has presented to us a wide spectrum of poetry which is both original and thought provoking. The effect and impact of globalization can be evident in recent Assamese poetry. The economic liberalization which gave a different hue to Assamese poetry in the post 1990 scenario is to be considered cautiously. Popular culture brought about by the cross- current of post modernism becomes evident in recent Assamese poetry. Recent Assamese poetry of the contemporary period displays a wide hue and the prospect seems to be optimistic. However, one has to be on guard to make any generalization about recent Assamese poetry. This entire survey is a humble attempt to make the non-Assamese reader aware of the cross-current to Assamese poetry from the mid-1980 to the present. There may be many short-comings as it

is not a definitive survey, nor it claims to be one. ■

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(Contd. from Page 6)

Importance of Value Oriented Education System

purposeful force — viz. VALUE”.

Schools should be induced to create a climate of values which should run various activities and would be conducive to the promotion of values among students, teachers, parents and educational administrators. Programmes of value-education should incorporate values of integral personality in all its dimensions — physical, vital, intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual. The question now jumps up How exactly the implementation of such value-education could be done in schools and what are the various activities to be undertaken in different classes? The process of valuing is what we go through when we make judgement about things, events and people that we encounter in our day-to-day life. ■

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Re-Exploring Barak

It was a journey of about more than hundred km where I have explored new places in the three districts of Barak. The places are right from Lowairpua, Dengarbong, Kanibazar via Kalibari road, Baraigram, Nilambazar, Kayasthagram, Suprakandi, Chorgola, Bhanga, Srigouri bazaar, Badarpur, some places in Hailakandi district- Panchgram, Kalinagar, Katakhal bazaar, thereafter Silchar of Cachar district, seen Sri Kona daily bazaar, Ramnagar, Taramandir Kali mandir near railway gate, Sani Mandir at Tarapur, Ukil Bazar and the tennis club. Near the club, I stated the night at Banabashi Kalyan Ashram admist a group of school going children and their well articulated behavior. The warm hospitality of Sridharan ji who takes care of the entire hostel of the north east was quite illuminating. On the 26th we had the train in the morning. Re-exploring Barak within a day is really impossible. It is just a testament of a journey. While leaving, it was felt that it needs actually many more days to explore the rich and vibrant heritage of Barak created by the ancestors residing in the valley and prevailing different ethnic groups. ■

Arunachal commits to develop the bonded labour community

Shri Alo Libang, Social Justice Empowerment and Tribal Affairs (SJETA) Minister informed that the government of Arunachal Pradesh is concerned about the socio-economic emancipation of the Puroik community (bonded labour) and is committed to developing them at par with other communities of the State.

Responding to a request for short duration discussion on the issue of the socio-economic backwardness of the community by JD (U) MLA Hayeng Mangfi in the Assembl, the Minister admitted that Puroiks are subjected to social and economic discrimination. Shri Libang informed that the state government during 2017 had constituted the Puroik Welfare Board to carry out welfare activities for the community.

The Puroiks, erstwhile called Sulungs, has a total population of 8, 977 as per census data and is one of the indigenous tribes of the state who have been identified as a slave tribe.

Empirical shreds of evidence suggest them as socially, economically and educationally backward which resulted mainly due to exploitation. The very inhumane practice of slavery, though it was officially banned since 1976, reportedly still exists in different parts of the state. Owing to this, the overall livelihood of the Puroiks is severely affected. They are deprived of the privileges that is rightfully entitled and endowed by laws. The marginal community is found in East Kameng, West Kameng, Kurung Kumey, Kra Daadi, and Papum Pare districts of the state.

Initiating the discussion, Mangfi lamented that the community is being suppressed politically, socially and economically as they are deprived of the privileges. "They are treated like an animal and they can be sold and purchased by the owner to meet up domestic and other needs," Mangfi said adding, though the community members have economic independence they live at the mercy of

their owners. The JD (U) member added that the community members even do not have the right to exercise their adult franchise and so far only 34 people from the community are employed in the government sector. "The high powered committee constituted by the government had recommended for providing them housing facilities. Though the government settled them at Naharlagun and in other places, their houses were taken away by other communities at throwaway prices or forcefully," Mangfi pointed out and added that the resettlement of Puroiks was a futile exercise by the government.

Mangfi suggested the government for acquisition of land to settle the community with the proper demarcation of boundary besides providing better health care, education and road infrastructure in their settlement areas. He further suggested for job reservation in Group C and D category of posts for the community members.

Responding to Mangfi, Shri Libang informed that the state government had imparted vocational training to 80 Puroiks for their livelihood while 8 members of the community were selected for skill development training and already engaged in jobs.

"We are constructing one Boys' and one Girls' hostel with intake strength of 50 students each. The government is also planning to provide two lakh each to 120 members of the community as one time grant to start a business," Libang disclosed adding, five girls of the community were sent to Karnatak to undergo GNM course who would be recruited soon.

The minister appealed to the MLAs of the Puroik inhabited districts to initiate efforts to motivate the people so that the community members are not treated as their property. He also asked them to forward suggestions on how to improve the status of the community members and

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“The Meghalayan Age” Tourism Conclave – A gamchanging event

A gamechanging event titled “The Meghalayan Age Conclave” was recently organised by the Government of Meghalaya to popularise the state as tourism destination in presence of tourism stakeholders and government officials. While attending Conclave at Thadlaskein, near Jowai, the Union Minister of State DoNER Dr. Jitendra Singh said, “The ‘Meghalayan Age’ is an event that would go a long way in positioning the State of Meghalaya as a much sought after tourism destination.” During the conclave, a book on tourism titled ‘Glimpses’ was also released.

Talking about the concerns across the country due to the coronavirus, Dr. Singh said, “The event was planned in a very big way but due to the advisory issued by the MoHFW, the event has been scaled down to a conclave, where different stakeholders were given an opportunity to delve deep into the immense potential that Meghalaya can open up to the visitors.”

Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dr. Singh said, “In the last five years, the Government of India has provided adequate thrust for creating better infrastructure and promote the development of the Northeast. It is through a synergistic approach of the government and the right motivation from the States, the vision of the Prime Minister would be accomplished.”

Dr. Singh said that under the leadership of Modi, the Ministry of DoNER’s budget was increased two-fold. “Prior to the formation of the NDA government, the budget for NEC was roughly around Rs 700 crore. However, we have today increased the budget to about Rs 1,400 crore. We have different plans to promote and ensure the welfare of the region,” Dr. Singh emphasized.

Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma in his address, said that the Government of India has accorded top priority to the Northeast and this is paving the way

for concerted development and growth of the region.

The Chief Minister said, “The Meghalayan Age is an attempt by the Government to provide an opportunity for visitors to experience Meghalaya.” “We had big plans for the event. However, due to the health advisory on Corona virus, we restricted the event for invited stakeholders, which comprised of media professionals, tour operators, bloggers, etc., who will share our stories to the world.” Talking at length about the ‘Act East Policy’ the Chief Minister stressed the need to explore the possibility of working collaboratively with India’s neighbouring countries in the field of tourism, boosting cultural and economic ties. “We as a government have realized the potential we have with our immediate neighbour Bangladesh. The country is moving very fast; they have a growth rate of almost 8 percent; its GDP is about 400 billion dollars. We have to look at the opportunity next door and build relations that would economically benefit our people.”

On initiatives Meghalaya has taken to take the State forward, the Chief Minister said that emphasis is being laid to attract investments and ensure sustainable development model of growth in sync with nature. “We are blessed with nature and we want to work on initiatives that would be economical for our people as well as promote growth and development,” the Chief Minister exhorted. Talking about tourism being one of the priority sectors, the Chief Minister said that the government is working on models to boost high-end tourism infrastructure in the State that would be remunerative for the people and also ensure that Meghalaya being labeled as the sought after tourism destination not only in the country but globally.

During the 10-day event, renowned cave explorer Brian Kharpran took selected guests on a unique

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Tripura celebrates spring festival of the Mizos

As part of the cultural integration among the north eastern states, Mizoram's biggest festival "Chapchar Kut" was celebrated in Tripura on Saturday. The most popular spring festival of Mizos, "Chapchar Kut" is celebrated in Mizoram every year in March. Chief Minister attended the festivities during "Kut Pa" (father of the festival).

Mizos in Tripura with financial and logistical support from the Tripura government's Tourism and Tribal Welfare Departments are organizing the day-long festival in northern Tripura's Jampui hills adjoining Mizoram. Tripura wing of the Young Mizo Association (YMA), the most influential youth body of Mizoram, is also the key partner of the colourful festival.

Tripura government's Information & Cultural Affairs Department's Senior Information Officer Chandan Sarkar told IANS that since last year, the mega "Chapchar Kut" festival is being held in Tripura to promote ethnic and cultural unity among the two neighboring northeastern states.

Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Magistrate Chandni Chandran graced the Saturday's "Chapchar Kut" festival event, which was organized in Mizo dominated Sabual areas, as chief guest. Thousands of people, comprising tribals and non-tribals, took part in the carnival, where Mizo youths and girls displayed their artistic skills and traditions. The gaiety and fervor of "Chapchar Kut", the biggest among the festivals of the

Mizos and Mizoram, shines through with plenty of mass dancing and music to keep everyone in good spirits. "Chapchar Kut" is a spring festival celebrated usually in March after completion of the most arduous task of "Jhum" farming (slash and burn method of cultivation).

According to historians, "Chapchar Kut" is said to have originated 1450-1700 AD in a village called Suaupui in Mizoram. When Christianity came to Mizoram in the late 1890s, they discouraged the festival citing it as detrimental to Christian values. However, it was revived in 1973 on a mass scale against animistic practices and alcohol. ■

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"The Meghalayan Age" Tourism Conclave – A gamchanging event

caving experience. Kharpran, who spoke during the conclave today said that in the past two decades they have explored 1,700 caves of about 514 km, which has led to discoveries of unique and exclusive species, the latest being the discovery of the largest cave-dwelling fish.

Rothell Khongsit from the Khongthong, popularly known as the 'whistling village' talked about the uniqueness of their culture and lifestyle of the people. He said that the event has given them the platform to tell the stories to a very wide audience. ■

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Arunachal commits to develop the bonded labour community

how to provide a platform so that members from the community could contest in panchayat elections.

"The government will accelerate the socio-economic development of the Puroiks. I urged upon the members to forward necessary schemes to the government to be taken up for the welfare of the community," Libang said adding, awareness should be created among the owners so that Puroiks are freed from their custody as a bonded labourer. ■

Visva Bharati - an untold story of the benevolence of Tripura kings

It is not known to many that the royal family of Tripura had contributed immensely towards the blossoming of the Visva Bharati, an world University of holistic education dreamt by Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore. The BJP-led Tripura government has therefore decided to take steps to recognize the contributions of Tripura's kings for the development of Visva-Bharati University, Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb said on recently.

The Chief Minister told a delegation of The "Purvaudaya", a socio-cultural body, that the Tripura government would take necessary steps so that the contributions of Tripura's kings are recognized by the Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan in West Bengal's Birbhum district. CM Deb announced this when a delegation of "Purvaudaya", led by its President Alka Sinha met him at his official residence.

The "Purvaudaya" delegates urged the Chief Minister to take appropriate step by the state government for recognition of erstwhile Tripura Kings' contributions to Visva-Bharati University, which is run by the Government of India.

"The Purvaudaya delegation informed the Chief Minister that on February 21 a team of the organisation led by its General Secretary Niti Deb had visited Visva-Bharati University and had requested Vice Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty to recognise former Tripura King's contributions towards the development of the Visva-Bharati," an official release said. Niti Deb, a bank official-turned-social activist, is the wife of the Chief Minister. The "Purvaudaya" team had requested the Vice-Chancellor to take appropriate steps so that the contributions of Tripura Kings from Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya Bahadur to Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur are properly and adequately recognised by the Visva-Bharati. "The Vice Chancellor of Visva-Bharati varsity assured the Purvaudaya delegation that

he would take necessary initiatives in this regard," the release added.

The Chief Minister in his response to the "Purvaudaya" delegates said, "Our government already working to take forward the ideals and contributions of the former Tripura Kings and will also take necessary steps to meet the demand."

According to the historians, many Tripura kings had given huge funds to world famous bard Rabindranath Tagore for the development of Visva-Bharati University. Historian and writer Salil Debbarma told that at the end of the 1355-year-rule by 184 kings, on October 15, 1949, the erstwhile princely state of Tripura came under the control of the Indian government after a merger agreement was signed between regent Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi and the Indian Governor General. Another historian and writer Pannalal Roy said that Rabindranath Tagore had visited and stayed in Tripura capital Agartala and Meghalaya capital city Shillong several times between 1899 and 1927. "Tagore's close relations with the princely state of Tripura and its successive Tripura kings form an important chapter in the state's history. This relationship prompted him to visit the state as many as seven times between 1899 and 1926." He said : "Tripura had a special place in many of Tagore's songs and he wrote a number of novels based on the then princely state's history as the theme. Some of these are 'Bisharjan', 'Rajarshi' and 'Mukut'."

The 103-year-old "Pushpavant Palace", which until recently was the Raj Bhavan (Governor's house), is proposed to be turned into a museum and research centre dedicated to Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore. The Nobel laureate during his last visit to the state in February 1926 stayed in the "Pushpavant Palace", which was built in 1917 by then king Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya (1909-1923). ■

Pitapool celebrates Nyokum Yulow – The pride of the Nyishis

Nyokum Yulow –the pride of the Nyishi Tribe, the celebration that conveys the message of ‘Being Human’ is ‘Being Nyishi’, was recently celebrated at Pitapool, a small town in Lower Subansiri district in the august presence of Shri Pema Khandu, the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh. Incidentally, Pitapool is the hallowed location where the first ever centralised Nyokum Yulow festival was celebrations 53 years ago.

The grandeur and pride of the Nyishis attached to their culture was in full bloom as every ritual that were conducted in its original form and men, women and children defied all barriers to join the celebration.

To add to their joyous celebrations, Chief Minister Pema Khandu arrived from Itanagar along with Namsai legislator Chow Zignu Namchoom at the General Ground decorated to the teeth. It needs a special mention that the ground was developed and dedicated to the people years ago by former Chief Minister Late Dorjee Khandu, the father of the incumbent Chief Minister. CM Khandu lauded the Nyishis for zealously preserving their tradition and culture and taking pride in their roots. He, however, urged the younger generation to continue the tradition and preserve their culture for posterity. He proclaimed that “No one from outside can help. If Nyishi culture is to be preserved, only the Nyishis can do it.” Khandu underscored the significance of practicing local dialects, which he pointed, is the strongest connect to one’s culture. He started that while it is necessary for today’s generation to go outside for higher and technical education, it is also necessary that they learn and and speak in their native languages.

CM Khandu informed that “The state government is committed to preserve and promote indigenous culture through promotion and teaching of local dialects’ and appealed that “I request community based organisations and intellectuals to come forward and suggest or help us in this endeavour.” While assuring all out support in development of the region, the Chief Minister congratulated the people for having an able leader

in Taba Tedir, the local legislator and present Education Minister.

The Chief Minister however regretted that due to various reasons the lifeline of Lower Subansiri, Kra-Dadii, Kurung Kumey, Kamle and Upper Subansiri districts – the Potin to Pangin stretch of Trans-Arunachal highway is still waiting to see the light of day. Speaking frankly without mincing words, Shri Khandu cautioned those going for ‘illegal’ land compensation and urged those who have already taken huge compensation amounts against non-existent land and property, to return the amount to the government voluntarily. He further cautioned that “I announce here today that the state government is serious on the note and soon law will take its course. I request those who have received excess payments for land compensation without having any land or property, to return the same before police arrive at their doors.” Reiterating his uncompromising stance on corruption, Khandu regretted that few government employees mislead the people, who are actually innocent.

Referring to the recent Staff Selection Board (SSB) fiasco, the Chief Minister said ‘he was hurt the most’. “I was in Tawang attending a meeting when I came to know about the incident. I immediately left by road and reached Itanagar late at night. I couldn’t sleep properly,” he revealed. Khandu said that SSB was constituted to offer a level playing field for educated unemployed youths irrespective of social background. “How could few employees dare to indulge in corruption in this, is beyond my comprehension. I reiterate no-one involved will be spared,” he said.

Taking advantage of the celebrations, Shri Khandu felicitated the local priests of the festival and also those who were members of the organising committee of the first ever centralised Nyokum Yulow celebration at Joram in 1967. The festival also witnessed and enjoyed the renderings of the melodies presented by popular yesteryear singers Bengia Hemanta and Bengia Tab. ■

Chaitra Puja observed in Tripura

The traditional Chaitra Puja, a ceremony mainly patronised by the Jamatia community of Tripura state was recently celebrated with devotion and dedication at the Mata Tripureswari and the Shiv Bari temples in Udaipur, in presence of thousands of devotees attired in their traditional dresses congregating there to participate in the august celebration.

Pradyot Bikram Kisor Debbarman, the scion of the State's royal family was the main attraction of the day as people in large numbers gathered there to have a look at the royal representative. Executive Member of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council Shantanu Debbarma, members Joy Kishor Jamatia and Jay Bahadur Jamatia also offered puja in the Tripureswari Temple along with thousands of devotees.

Describing the history and tradition, secretary of Jamatia Hoda Biswajit Jamatia said soon after Maharaja Krishna Manikya shifted the capital of the then princely Tripura from Udaipur to Agartala in 1760, Jamatia Hoda incepted this long-established tradition of performing an annual Chaitra Puja for the welfare of society.

It is learnt that earlier, Bengali priests used to perform the much-awaited annual Chaitra Puja but this erstwhile tradition was changed by Jamatia Hoda in 1988 and since then, it is the Jamatia priests who have been performing the rites and rituals of the aforementioned festival.

The month of Chaitra is the month of worshipping Baba Garia and it is in this month that Lord Shiva and Maatri Shakti Devi is worshipped in the form of Baba Garia, Jamatia said. According to the social custom of Jamatia Hoda, people never worship any other deity during the 7-day long festival. During the royal era, the festival was popularly referred to as Ram Puja. This puja is also performed in Gomati, Burima and Kasma (Khowai) rivers with a view to not only establish peace and harmony in Tripura but also to enrich the State with crops, fodder, flora and fauna.

Above all, there is no tradition of animal sacrifice in Chaitra Puja and it is in this way that Jamatia Hoda performs the worship of both Lord Shiva and Maatri Shakti Devi in the form of Baba Garia Puja. ■

Kalyan Ashram Project 'Nirman' Registers Success

Project 'Nirman' run by Vanvasi Kalyan Kendra Ranchi was started on 15 November, 2016, the Birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda with an objective to train janjati students for the various competitive exams & administrative services conducted by the state government. The project is being run at free of cost at Ranchi, the capital city of the State of Jharkhand.

As the project started, 40 aspirants from janjati community were selected for the first batch. Experienced teachers have been conducting classroom coaching regularly to train such students. Later it was thought to provide coaching to the students belonging to economically backward families along with the janjati students. As of now, the three batches of students have been trained at Nirman.

Weekly exam and evaluation pattern is followed to assess students' grasping regularly. Student's hard work and dedication and teachers' commitment is leading to desired outcomes. Shri Vikas Sharma, Shri Krishnakant Choubey, Smt. Garima Chaudhary, Shri Sanjeev Jorad & Shri Amit Kumar have been providing services at Nirman with dedication.

Till date 10 students have been recruited in the Jharkhand Public Service Commission and other administrative services. Recently declared result of JPSC exams Praksah Hembram and Manisha Tirkee both belonging to the janjati communities have been added to the tally. Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram congratulate the both.

In the past two years, four students were selected for the post of Police Sub-Inspector. Also one was selected in CRPF-UPSC exam, one was selected in Air Force and one more was selected in the Audit service.

We cannot forget the mentor Late Mohansingh Muda, Vice President of Vanvasi Kalyan Kendra who conceived the idea of Nirman Project. Presently the Management Committee of Nirman involves Dr. Sukhi Uraon, Vice-President, Shri Sajjan Sarraf, Vice-President, Shri Satendra Singh, Organizing Secretary, Shri Alok Gupta, Secretary, Shri Omprakash Agarwal & Shri Pranay Dutt. ■



Indian Army and Police Personnel Distributed Food Items to Needy People during Lockdown Period



Karbi Community of Assam