INTRODUCTION:

“There was a time when Karbi forefather could speak in endless verses— the language he so fluently used to express his worldviews, his religion, and to communicate with his exotic surrounding— and his descendants. The Karbi forefather’s verses, sung in simple repetitive tones but in strict metrical order, told tales of creation of the universe, the origin of the first Karbi parents, the elaborate wedding and funerary rituals, the ordeal of migration and so on.” —Dharamsing Teron, p 15.

The ‘Karbis’, popularly known as the ‘Mikirs’ in the government official records and notifications of pre-colonial as well as independent India and the state of Assam till 1976, (vide Govt. of Assam Notification No. TAD/115/74/47 dated 14/10/1976)[1], and dubbed, willy-nilly, as the ‘Vasco de Gama of Assam’ by Bishnu Prasad Rabha, ethnically are believed to have descended from the Kuki-Chin stock of the greater Indo-Mongoloid race, and linguistically belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. Depending on the geographical and topographical divergences of their habitats the Karbis are known by various names; such as, ‘Inglong aso’, ‘Doomra aso’, ‘Thoi aso’, ‘Bhoi’ and so forth, though they prefer to identify themselves as ‘Arleng’[2]. At present they are reported to inhabit in Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills[3], Golaghat, Sivasagar, Nagaon, Morigaon, Kamrup, Sonitpur, and Lakhimpur districts of Assam; Ri-bhoi district of Meghalaya, Papumpare (Lower Subansiri) district of Arunachal Pradesh; Nagaland; Manipur; and Sylhet district of Bangladesh with disproportionate demographic density or distribution.

Statement of the Problem:

Although none can exactly locate the original homeland where had the Karbis migrated from and categorically or chronologically demarcate the accurate period of their migration to the present habitat, or none can hitherto identify the actual reason for such a mass exodus, albeit as conjectured by a few historians and researchers and
one migration myth (i.e. Karbi Keplāng), the Karbis might have migrated to their present homeland from the South-west of China (Asia Minor) leaving the fertile river banks of Yangtsekiang and Howangho in around between 1000 B.C. to 200 B.C. However, what could be advanced as probable hypotheses in this regard is that they might have migrated in small groups, not in great throngs, probably owing to the contemporary despotic rulers or kings, or some massive natural calamities like flood and earthquake, or might be just because of their predilection for nomadic lifestyle occasionally shifting their rickety makeshift huts or natural caves from one location to another in quest of adequate fertile and arable lands in sight. Thus, no definite option is left for a historian or researcher in gaining a comprehensive knowledge about the original homeland or the migration of the community other than gleaning possible information from the oral narratives, and to fortify them through little available historical and archaeological evidences haphazardly scattered at various undetectable and intractable places. The problem gets magnified and complicated further for even dedicated and tenacious scholar or historian because only a scanty amount of information can be culled from the existing secondary sources, archaeological and anthropological evidences or remnants. On the other hand, the Karbis had created a plethora of myths, legends, sagas, wonder-tales and riddles in striving to preserve and commemorate their wonderful experiences with the enigmatic mysteries and indecipherable phenomena of Nature. Their proximity, confrontation, weal and woe, fear and hope, reverence and amazement at the variegated manifestations of the elemental forces of Nature are found to be recorded in the ambit of such folk narratives. The motifs and morals enshrines in these narratives once used to serve as guiding force to their community life since birth till death, and as ritualistic means for appeasing and worshipping the fury and inscrutable mysteries of life and Nature. But, unfortunately, these age-old rites and rituals, beliefs and practices, customs and traditions forming the corpus of their cultural and racial identity bequeathed to them by a good number of farsighted social thinkers and reformers by creating various oral narratives now are rapidly on
the wane, and definitely will soon cease to exist, unless timely measures are taken to preserve them in written forms or audio-visual documentations by undertaking scientific research works. In this context the following observation made by Mr. Dharamsing Teron, a noted Karbi writer and socio-political activist is, sans any inkling of doubt, worth-mentioning:

"Myths, legends or hearsays- are the stuff that 'oral traditions' are made of from where 'history' emerges. Or at least so for the Karbis, it cannot be otherwise. The Karbi migration myth as an important genre of folk narrative is therefore a possible guide to trace the tribe's history, which had never gained the significance, as it should have. Instead of regretting the lack of written history of the tribe, these 'memories of the past' could well serve the purpose as meaningful starting point. I believe that 'No one in oral societies doubts that memories can be faithful repositories which contain the sum total of past human experience and explain how and why of present day condition.' The practitioners of the rich 'oral traditions' among the Karbis have rapidly dwindled in the past decade or so and unless the Karbi 'elites' wake up to the situation, in a few more years hence, there will be no 'history' left of the Karbis."[4]

Significance of the Problem:

The Karbis as a community do still possess an inexhaustible bonanza of oral narratives which can be helpful enough in making them decent, disciplined and civilized individuals as well as social beings, and in boosting a strong moral and spiritual energy, and above all in building a solid and integrated racial and cultural identity. What is of paramount importance is that such a huge repertoire of the oral narratives so carefully preserved and lovingly treasured by the Karbis in the past are often whimsically being distorted and neglected. As a natural consequence, they are on the wane and are about to be merged into oblivion, partially due to disinterest and apathy shown by the budding generation, and mainly because of the deplorable lack
of proper exploration and studies, scientific analyses and data-based or purpose-oriented research in this field. Thus, the crying need of the hour is to give a serious thought on the preservation of these precious gems of folk wisdom because these narratives are intrinsically pregnant with a great amount of mundane, spiritual, and philanthropic knowledge and ideals. They may be of immense help in retracing the ‘roots’ of migration, ethnological, linguistic, cultural and religious past associated with the tribe, if studied and analyzed methodically. Such an endeavour will help in reinforcing the ever-eroding beliefs and worldview of the Karbis, and will propagate keen awareness about them in the minds of the coming generations. This venture further will grow in their minds a sense of love and patriotism, and will help them live a well-ordered, decent and civilized life at par with the valuable teachings of the past by many social thinkers, reformers and prophets of the yore. Most importantly at last, such studies and the findings thereof will de-intensify the growing propensity of many modern Karbis for deviating from the traditional religion and culture practiced and believed in since time immemorial by their forefathers.

Review of Literature:

It goes without saying that the inexhaustible bonanza of the oral narratives of the Karbis contains a huge mosaic of mundane and spiritual wisdoms and tales of their migration and panoramic cultural spectrum. However, despite having such a fascinating history of migration (insofar as folksongs and oral narratives say) from their imagined but erstwhile original homeland and tremendous possibility and scope of being explored and redrafted, nothing substantial has been done so far in this regard. It was Charles Lyall who tried to make a pioneering venture in collecting some of the oral narratives through his seminal work entitled, *The Mikirs* in 1908, published by the United Publishers, Guwahati, Assam. After a long interval *Wojaru Ahir*, the souvenir of the 49th session of the Asom Sahitya Sabha held in Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam in 1982, which was a concerted effort to analyze some of the oral narratives from holistic angles. Then *Kuntiri*, the mouthpiece of the
Karbi Anglong District Mahila Samiti, appeared in 1982, which tried to assess the role and importance of the Karbi women in the society. *Tribal Folk Tales of Assam (Hills)*, 1982, was really a praiseworthy attempt where the esteemed author, S.N. Barkataki, tried to compile the popular folk tales of the hills tribes of Assam of which ten belong to the Karbi community. *The Sociology of the Karbis*, the master thesis of Tanmoy Bhattacharjee, published in book form in 1986, was also another attempt to highlight brief synopses of the major oral narratives of the Karbis. The most pioneering and dedicated work on the major oral narratives, perhaps, was the small but compendious book entitled, *Karbi Kimbadanti Sankalan*, published by Diphu Sahitya Sabha, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, Assam in 1982 in which a good number of Karbi myths, legends and sagas are compiled and categorized into specified genres. *The People of Assam (Origin and Composition)* by the noted anthropologist, B.M. Das published by Gyan Publishing House, 1987, is a study on the racial elements of the various tribes of Assam focusing basically on their pre-historic migration and probable routes they had might have taken. *Karbi Sanskritir Utsa*, co-edited by Longkam Teron and Karen Das, published with financial assistance extended by the Assam Institute of Tribal and Scheduled Castes, 1988, is an informative compilation of various Karbi folk tales pertaining to the origin of many of their rites, rituals and taboos. *Prabandha Sankalan* by P. C. Phangcho, published by the Phukan Prakashan, Howraghat, Karbi Anglong, Assam in 2000, is a collection of articles of authors published earlier in various leading dailies and magazines of Assam touching upon various socio-political, religious and economic aspects of the Karbi lifestyle. *The History of Karbi* by Barelong Terang, published by Kaweso Rongpipi, Diphu in 2003, tries to bring out a comprehensive history of the origin, migration and the contemporary state of the socio-political life of the Karbis recounting the bulk of oral narratives in near-systematic manner by citing many noted historians, though the erudite author resorts to imaginative concoctions in many cases. *Karbi Sanskritir Prabah* by Sainen Das, published under financial patronage of the Assam Institute of Tribal and Scheduled Castes, Assam in 2003,
offers a brief analysis of some of the most important rites and rituals, customs and traditions of the Karbis. *The Karbis of North East India* by P. C. Phangcho published by AngGik Prakashan, Guwahati in 2003, is yet another book advancing scientific and holistic approaches towards spacio-temporal analysis of tribal (Karbi) geography. *Oral Songs of Tribal Communities of Assam* by N. C. Sarma, published by J. Patgiri, Ex-Director of the Assam Institute of Tribal and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati, Assam in 2006, is basically a research-based study on the oral songs of various tribes of Assam dwelling upon the migration histories contained by the folk ballads, nursery songs and lullabies. *Karbi Loka Geet* by Longkam Teron (source text by Bonglong Terang), published by Diphu Sahitya Sabha in 2006 is a collection of Karbi folk songs ranging from the origin myth of the race to that of the chilies. *Karbi Studies* by the Karbi Young Writers’ Guild (a group of budding and promising writers of the Karbis), published in 2008 by AngGik Prakashan, Guwahati, Assam, is one of the most inspiring and thought-provoking books of its kind ever produced by Karbi writers dwelling on various socio-cultural, historical and myriad other relevant issues associated with the community, especially highlighting on their migrating memories and ethnicity. Since its inception Asom Sahitya Sabha has been taking praiseworthy initiatives to give ample room for writings about the Karbis through many of their souvenirs, mouthpieces and other miscellaneous editions. Apart from these works a good number of studies also were being carried out in Gauhati University by research scholars and M. Phil students touching upon the socio-cultural and historical vistas of the Karbi community. Some of these theses for Ph. D. are:

1) *Sociology of the Karbis* by Tanmoy Bhattacharjee, 1982.


5) *Megalithic Ruins of Karbi Anglong District of Assam: A Study in the Context of Karbi Culture* by Dwipen Bezbaruah.

In addition to these theses the Project Reports for M. Phil degree carried out and submitted in the department of Anthropology, Gauhati University are:


3) *Study of the Rites and Rituals Connected with the Life Cycle of the Karbi Villages of Karbi Anglong District, Assam* by Purabi Dutta Baruah, 1988.

4) *Brief Study of Man-Plant Relationship in a Karbi Village of Karbi Anglong District* by Bimal Chandra Mahanta, 1994.


6) *Brief Study of the Role and Social Status of Women Among the Karbis of Morongabari Village, Kamrup* by Anita Basak, 1995.

The numbers of the works hitherto accomplished and those being carried out till date can be multiplied, but the perspectives and the contexts from which these are undertaken alone, not the quantity, are within the purview of my research. The works that have been done so far are the in my perception are either synchronic studies, mere presentation of facts with a view to showcasing or popularizing the people and their socio-cultural and politico-geographical history of the Karbi community as a whole. These works are more or less descriptive and inconclusive, and barring few exceptions, are not analytical or critical. Nor does anyone of them
appear to be exhaustive by delving deep into the state of things so far as the oral narratives of the Karbis are concerned. And this allows enough scope for any interested scholar and researcher to explore deeper and deeper into the profound entrails and broad trajectory of this area.

Objectives of the Work:

Oral narratives, the cake of the customs, generally are the priceless assets of a particular community, which are usually rendered in prose, but in Karbi the main genres of oral narratives, such as, myths, legends, sagas and other folk tales are in most cases sung or recited as songs, verse or ritualistic chants, and thus are inseparably and thematically interlinked with the folk songs sometimes converting them all into a nondescript. However, this thematic affinity enhances the level of authenticity and credibility of the actual existence of those old narratives in the long past. So, while undertaking any study in the vast vistas of the Karbi oral narratives one cannot help referring to the folk songs for better understanding and fuller appreciation. Apart from the Karbi cosmogony and the creation myth of the race from a mythical bird, 'Vo' plākpi in particular, they also own a good number of mythological narratives stating as to how the various objects and creatures existing in this mundane world originated in the long past, how the multifarious social rites and rituals, customs and traditional institutions came into existence, and how the various taboos came into force, and why they are being adhered to and perpetuated with utmost reverence till this age of globalization. Thus, the purview of this research work will make passing references to these folk songs for corroborating the points in question apart from undertaking a systematic collection and symmetrical arrangement of the oral narratives of the Karbis, which are on the verge of being merged into the quagmire of oblivion. However, the main focus of this research work will primarily be to attempt an analytical study by interpreting the oral narratives collected from the sources at hand and field-works adopting altruistic perspectives. Further since there is paucity of written records of these oral
narratives, any version proposed to be rendered shall be strictly purpose-oriented without giving any distorted form of the existing ones preserved and perpetuated since time immemorial through oral tradition and popular beliefs. Attempts also shall be made to analyze them from various logical perspectives to gain multidimensional meanings and significances likely to be enshrined in their vast ambit by referring to written historical records and extant archaeological evidences, and above all, without hurting the beliefs and sentiments of those whom they represent.

The oral narratives of the Karbis are not only the science of the pre-scientific age, but some of them are even histories of the pre-historical era. With so many of their mythical, legendary or historical and epic personalities endowed and gifted with many good and ideal qualities can certainly serve as suitable models and inspirations for the gradually disintegrating and stranded Karbi society, if we can siphon out the elixir out of them. One of the great objectives of this research work will, therefore, is to inspire the Karbi people to look at the things from new and logical perspectives and to induce them to preserve and follow their primitive ways and manners, rites and rituals, and customs and traditions as shown by Hemphu and His chosen messengers with utmost reverence and a sense of belongingness. This work will also beget a re-awakening in the hitherto hibernating consciences and sensibilities of the Karbi people to nurture the ideals of unity, mutual trust, peace and co-operation while living in the society as the equal and proud children of Hemphu[6] discarding animosity, mistrust and ill-will. Another most important objective of this work will be to help the Karbi people to identify themselves as a united race and a uniquely civilized community not only among the Indo-Mongoloid descendants, but also among much advanced races and nationalities across the globe. Lastly but not the least, this work will help them in re-looking and re-examining the past culture and tradition and in redrafting their own history out of them, which will serve as source of knowledge and inspiration for the coming generations in future.
Working Hypotheses:

With a view to gaining first-hand knowledge on the oral narratives, and facts and circumstances that might have shaped them, the researcher had to visit many far-flung localities inhabited by the Karbis within the state, both hills and plains, and even outside it. Playing basically the role of the participant observer, he had resorted to many useful methodologies during field-works and consequently adopted the following working hypotheses:

(i) The Karbis, as a community, are unbelievably fertile in poetic imagination and that their oral narratives are structurally melodious poetic rendition. The oral narratives of the Karbis are intrinsically pregnant with elements of folk-ballads both in their form and content. They bear witness to the pleasure and pathos, joys and sorrows, sense of owning and bereavement that the community had experienced throughout their migration ordeal, which in its ultimate analysis appears to be the symbol of their journey of life.

However, when they are given written forms, the oral narratives are told in prose in order to simplify and amplify the thoughts originally embodied in their poetic forms tinged with ingenuity and intuition, and unfortunately they lose original grandeur and beauty because of inadvertent omissions and distortions. Nevertheless, the narratives as recounted in the folk songs and the ballads are thematically interconnected with that of the prose versions in the form of tales and stories.

(ii) The oral narratives of the Karbis unmistakably advocate for liberalism and democratic spirits. They speak of such a democratic, egalitarian, and liberal social order in which, despite having a hierarchical structure, everyone can enjoy the freedom of thought and expression.

(iii) The oral narratives guarantee and recognize sufficient freedom and equal status to women in the society. They may be depicted sometimes as crooked and stony-hearted conspirators or as the unfortunate victims of sinister plots and fraudulent machinations, but never are they treated as commodities or objects for
exploitation and discrimination, rather in most cases, they are glorified and deified as goddesses and saviour to the whole community as and when it is fated to be beleaguered and marooned in catastrophic and unfavourable circumstances.

(iv) The oral narratives of the Karbis are not only folk ballads retracing their illusive migration memories and long lost genealogical roots of the race, but also a compendium of mundane and spiritual wisdoms acquired by them throughout their pilgrimage of life. The incorporation of the mundane and spiritual wisdoms in the gamut of the oral narratives betokens their recognition as well as acceptance of the inevitable and the indispensable coexistence of the biological and elemental dichotomy: Body and Soul, Earth and Sky, Heaven and Hell, Good and Evil and so forth.

(v) The oral narratives of the Karbis in reality are a storehouse of edifying tales and parables, which acquaint us with the memorable feats and beliefs of the people of the past emerging in and belonging to the community from time to time. However, those feats and beliefs are not regarded merely as phenomena of the forgotten past, but on the other hand, are remembered and perpetuated by the descendents of Hemphu as their ways of life and through them they try to get on with their struggle and journey of life no matter how strenuous they might appear seeking peace and prosperity, happiness and blessing, success and salvation.

Scope of the Work:

The research work had to be carried out under constraints and ineffable adversities. At the initial the researcher had to undergo acute disappointment seeing the deplorable paucity of written records and materials pertaining to the oral narratives and those few available were found not only insufficient, but confusing and contradictory. Thus, the only option left for him, first of all, was to form an overall idea and knowledge about the people and their beliefs by developing a close rapport with them by visiting remote Karbi villages, spending long time with them,
exchanging and sharing views, learning and caring their feelings and sensibilities, beliefs and practices during hazardous field works. The unavailability and inadequacy of secondary sources, the lack of candid co-operation of the common folks owing to their illiteracy and ignorance, the apathy and obstinacy of the major chunk of the people toward accepting any novel or scientific approach to the subject, more often than not posed insurmountable problems and ethical dilemma of representation to him. Even the priests and many people belonging to spiritual pursuit and supposed to be the guardians and protectors of Karbi religion and culture appeared to be either ignorant or parochial in their views about facts, and some of them were doubted to be responsible for misinterpretation of a good number of rites and rituals representing Karbi social customs and traditions handed down to them since time immemorial. Quite surprisingly further, the erudite section of the society too were found to show their lack of dedication and seriousness in exploring them from logical and scientific perspectives as if they were afraid of change and apprehensive of losing their position in the society by opposing. A good number of variations were marked even among the hills Karbi so far as their beliefs and practices, customs and traditions were concerned, not to speak of those inhabiting in the plains. Writers devoting to the field in question can be numbered and their writings cannot be called sufficient, if not plenty, and the scanty number of authors and writers do not seem to try to be analytical and exhaustive in presenting facts, rather have a natural predilection for showcasing their culture as it is, and as a natural consequence, the precious oral narratives fail to attract the attention of the young people reducing them to oblivion and utter neglect. Thus, there is ample scope for undertaking a scientific and systematic research as well as a methodical study in this field by gleaning relevant information from history and other secondary sources available at hand by corroborating with existing archaeological evidences, if Karbi religion and culture in general, and the Karbi oral narratives in particular are to be given a new and vibrant lease of life.
Research Methodology:

Being a researcher in the somewhat vast vistas of social science, the basic methodology I had to employ while undertaking this research work was the basic scientific methodology striving at all times to discover and establish the hidden kernel of truth of all kinds of abstract facts and beliefs embodied by the Karbi oral narratives. During field works I was convinced that much can be said on the same thing and that there are divergent ways of looking at reality, and further that every new approach reveals novel possibilities or mysteries illuminating new facets associated with facts. The rendering of written form to the oral narratives was really a Herculean task for me (for it is likely to be distorted, unwittingly though) and to analyze them seemed doubly hazardous, for though I presumed to have a kind of poetic license it did not mean absolute freedom empowering to be irresponsible in giving a true and unbiased representation of the beliefs and practices, customs and traditions, religion and culture contributing to the enrichment of the unique cultural and racial identity to which I do not belong. In that way I was beleaguered by the labyrinth of ethical dilemma, the question of authority and representation, and so could not think of understanding and analyzing the oral narratives, the priceless assets of the Karbis, by distancing myself from their bona fide owners and progenitors. However, I could overcome all those hindrances after learning to create a rapport with the old and wise Karbi people, by conducting structured interviews with those unlettered yet wise philosophers of the community living in far-flung villages in Karbi Anglong district of Assam, and holding personal interviews and symposia (on-the-spot informal discussions) with the erudite sections of the Karbis. Many of the oral narratives were collected from available secondary sources, some of them through individual versions after confirming the fact that there is no seeming thematic and contextual difference between the written sources and the oral collected from the aged Karbi people especially from those dwelling in the remote
outskirts of West Karbi Anglong, the acknowledged hub of Karbi socio-cultural and religious identity.

In order to corroborate further the veracity of the facts stated in some of the oral narratives of the Karbis concerned historical sites consisting of stone monuments, monolithic and megalithic structures lying scattered and half-neglected in various parts of Karbi Anglong district and at Nartiang[7], Meghalaya, were visited and photographed for further analysis and to unearth the real truths hidden in them. The sites bearing witness to the feats and achievements of some of the Karbi legendary heroes and heroines, which are to be seen in Socheng[8], the early capital of traditional Karbi kingdom till date, and other places within Hamren sub-division were also visited to understand the reality about the information encapsulated in the oral narratives. Various rites and rituals performed by the aboriginal Karbi people in keeping with the socio-religious traditions bequeathed to them by various ideal legendary thinkers and social reformers of the mythical past were photographed on-the-spot through digital aids in order to gauge the amount of influence those legendary personalities had exerted upon them.

However, in most cases my role during the field works was similar with that of a participant observer very carefully maintaining equidistance from the liberty of the actual narrators of the myths, sagas and legendary tales and the performers of various rites and rituals, but always striving to get into their psyche and feelings with a view to drawing the most logical, analytical, acceptable and impartial corollaries from them.

Format of the Thesis:

The thesis entitled, "Oral Narratives of the Karbis: An Analytical Study" is consisted of the preliminaries, i.e. Preface and Acknowledgement, Certificate and Declaration; the contents; maps and photographs etc. The main corpus of
the thesis encompasses the main text and the contexts comprising introductory and analytical chapters. There are five main chapters in the thesis excluding the Introductory and the Concluding Remarks. The last part is allocated for bibliography.

The format of the thesis is shown as under:

**Introductory:**

Chapter-I: The Oral Narratives and the Poetic Ingenuity of the Karbis.

Chapter-II: The Karbi Oral Narratives and their Liberal and Democratic Spirits.

Chapter-III: The Karbi Oral Narratives and Recognition of Freedom to Women.

Chapter-IV: The Karbi Oral Narratives: The Amalgamation of Mundane and Spiritual Folk Wisdom.

Chapter-V: Karbi Beliefs and Practices and Perpetuation;

Concluding Remarks.

**Conclusion:**

The proximity and oneness of feeling I had developed with the Karbi people during field works and the amount of knowledge I had garnered of them during those unforgettable moments shared and spent with them taught me one noteworthy thing that Karbis are not in the position of tracing their actual ‘roots’ related to their genealogy and original homeland they once had migrated from in spite of possessing a sharp and retentive mass memory. The most revered ‘Moserā Kihir’[^9], ‘Lunsē Keplāng’[^10], ‘Kāchārhe’[^11], ‘Kārbi Keplāng’[^12], ‘Lakhi Keplāng’[^13], Bong Keplāng,[^14] and a number of such myths and legends appear to have had a very recent origin, and there is a strong room to believe that they originated only after the
entry of the community into Northeast. Thus, it provokes a researcher in this field to come to the corollary that the myths of the Karbis might have been the intellectual and purpose-oriented creations of some fertile brains to propagate order and unity, peace and patriotism among the Karbi people during their trying and turbulent phases of life throughout their migration period from their imagined but original homeland. It appears more so because the migration as well as the creation myths all bespeak of a diasporic experience and an emotional attempt to retrace their long lost 'root' through memory and reminiscence at a very later date and after a long gap. The geographical and topographical descriptions we come across in 'Moserā Kihir', 'Kāchārhe' and the analogous concept embodied in the 'egg'\textsuperscript{[15]} and 'ladder' \textsuperscript{[16]} cosmogonic concepts can be considered as unique and universal at the same time. They are unique because the oral narratives are the priceless assets of the community far away from the affectations and sophistications of the so-called pedantic scholars, and universal because of their affinities with that of the archetypal and popular worldviews of a good number of communities and races across the world. However, what is worth observing is that despite all those coincidental similarities of concepts and experiences the Karbi oral narratives can still serve as guiding principles, pathfinders and saviour to the disintegrated and deviating Karbi people for rebuilding faith and confidence in the efficacy, indispensability and urgency of resuscitating those old good ways, principles, morals, beliefs, practices, rites, rituals, customs and traditions expounded by Great Hemphu and by many a noble prophets and social thinkers and reformers. The sooner it is, the better.
Notes:

1. However, the term 'Karbi' is the birth right of the people, since it is mentioned in many of their oral narratives, but ‘Mikir’ is a derogatory exonym and misnomer.
2. Real people (i.e., the Karbis).
3. Recently re-named as 'Dima Hasao'.
5. The mythical bird from which the Karbis are believed to have originated.
6. The great house-deity of the Karbis, the sustainer of life.
7. The site for the archaeological conservation of megalithic remains in Meghalaya contiguous to Khanduli bordering Assam.
8. The old capital of the traditional Karbi king before it was shifted to Ronghang Rongbong.
9. Incantation giving a vivid picture of the Karbi cosmogony myth and the migration ordeal the community had once undergone.
10. The myth recounting the origin of the artist and music and songs in the Karbi society.
11. The traditional dirge crying.
12. The origin myth of the Karbis and other races.
13. The myth recounting the origin of the paddies.
14. The myth about the origin of the bottle-gourds.
15. Indicating ‘Vo’ plākpi’ myth.
16. Signifying the ‘Long-le’ āchete’ cosmogonic concept upheld by the Karbis of Chinthong region.
Works Cited:

