

# Family Settings of the Plain Karbis Inhabiting at Kenduguri Village in Greater Guwahati of Assam- an Investigation

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**Abstract:** *The Karbis residing in the plains of Kamrup and Morigaon district of Assam, and the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya are identified as the Dumrali or Plain Karbis. The Karbis are scattered in various parts of Guwahati. They are found especially in different parts of Guwahati city. The purpose of the present study is to identify the existing family structure of the plain Karbis ; explore the fascination for language among the plain Karbis; and ascertain their opinions towards education. The study is descriptive in nature consisting of 62 numbers of households. The study revealed that 1) Nuclear type of family is most popular among the households. 2) Father holds the position of the head in more than 80 % of the households. 3) Wide variation of age is found and also a variety of relationships exists among the respondent households. 4) Percentage of married persons is more than that of unmarried ones. 5) Majority of the household members are either businessmen or service holders. 6) The range of earning varies from Rs. 6000-Rs.30, 000. 7) Except for personal, on all other matters, before taking any decision more than 80 percent of the respondents do agree that advice of the head is sought by the members of the households. 8) Mother tongue is usually spoken by majority (61.2%) in both Assamese and Karbi languages. 9) There exists a difference of mother tongue spoken by Karbi Hills and Karbi Plains people either in terms of accent, style or words expressed by the respondents. 10) Among the respondents, nearly, 81% of the respondents do know Hindi language followed by Assamese language. 11) Majority of the respondents did study till primary education. 12) Opinion of 75 % of respondents shows that Assamese medium of instruction preferred in school. 13) The level of attainment to be reached by the younger generation is higher education. 14) More than 80% of them are in favor of imparting of Vocational training to the younger generation. 15) All the respondents are in favour of education of girls*

## 1. Introduction

One of the ancient communities of Assam is the Karbi community. Racially they belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically of the Tibeto-Burman group. The Karbis residing in the plains of Kamrup and Morigaon district of Assam, and the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya are identified as the Dumrali or Plain Karbis. Their social head is located at Dimoria Linguistically they are a sub-group of Mikir Groups of the Greater Tibeto- Burman family and the class as Amri. Guwahati is the major city in the North Eastern India. It is considered as the gateway to the North East Region of the country. It is the largest city within the region.

The Karbis residing in the plains of Kamrup and Morigaon district of Assam, and the Ri-Bhoi districts of Meghalaya identify themselves as the Dumrali or plains Karbis. The Karbis are scattered in various parts of Guwahati. They are found especially in different parts of Guwahati city. In the city there are still some villages with heterogeneous populations which were formally purely tribal villages. It is seen that people from different parts of the state have now settled in these areas permanently. In the present study an investigation is undertaken to assess the existing condition of the plain Karbis residing in the city.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To identify the existing family structure of the plain Karbis
- 2) To explore the fascination for language among the plain Karbis
- 3) To ascertain their opinions towards education

## Delimitation of the study

The present study is confined to three numbers of places namely Dumbari, Ghuligaon and Kenduguri located in the city of Guwahati.

## 3. Methodology of the Study

### Research Design:

The study is descriptive in nature.

### Population of the study

The population of the present study comprised of more than hundred numbers of households.

### Sample of the study

In the present study 62 numbers of households as shown in table 1.

**Table 1:** Data of sample households

Place	No. of Households	%
Dumbari	22	33.9
Ghuligaon	19	30.6
Kenduguri	21	35.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A peculiarity exists with this place is that there are three different localities and for all these three there is only one Gaonburah depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Single Gaonburah for three different localities

**Tools used for data collection**

The tools comprised of a Opinion Questionnaire

**4. Analysis and Interpretation**

**Obj. 1 Identification of the existing family structure of the plain Karbis**

There are three different villages namely Dumbari, Ghuligaon and Kenduguri. Though the villages are separate yet one thing to be marked is that for all these three villages there is only one Gaonburah and for this reason all these three are considered as one unit in this study. In this section a general idea about the respondents is highlighted.

**Households**

In the present study out of 62 numbers of respondents, nuclear type of family is most popular in around 88 % of the households and the remaining are Joint type (depicted in table 2).

**Table 2:** Type of Households

Type of Households	No. of Respondents	%
Joint	7	11.3
Nuclear	55	88.7
Total	62	100.0

**Head of the Households**

In more than 80 % of the households, father holds the position of the head (table 3) which indicates plain karbis follow patriarchal system.

**Table 3:** Head of the Households

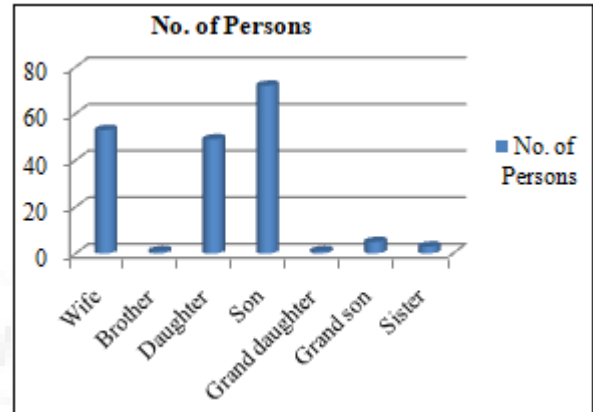
Head	No. of Persons	%
Father	52	83.9
Mother	9	14.5
Son	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

**Relationship with Head of the Households**

A variety of relationships are observable among the respondent households. Percentage of relationship with Head of the Households is presented in table 4.

**Table 4:** Relationship with Head of the Households

Relationship with Head	No. of Persons	%
Wife	53	28.9
Brother	1	0.5
Daughter	49	26.7
Son	72	39.1
Grand daughter	1	0.5
Grand son	5	2.7
Sister	3	1.6
Total	184	100.0



Variation in age of the households is illustrated in table 5. Maximum (61.4%) number of household members ranges in between 21-50 years of age.

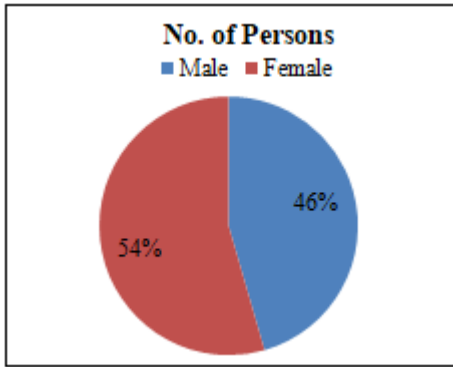
**Table 5:** Variation of the age of the households

Age (years)	No. of Persons	%
01-05	06	2.4
06-10	11	4.5
11-15	17	6.9
16-20	15	6.1
21-25	32	13.0
26-30	32	13.0
31-35	21	8.5
36-40	23	9.3
41-45	21	8.5
46-50	22	8.9
51-55	17	6.9
56-60	9	3.7
61-65	8	3.3
66-70	7	2.8
71-75	4	1.6
76-80	0	0
81-85	1	0.4
Total	246	100.0

Out of the total of 246 household members, 45.5% are males and 54.5% are females shown in table 6.

**Table 6:** Distribution of Sex

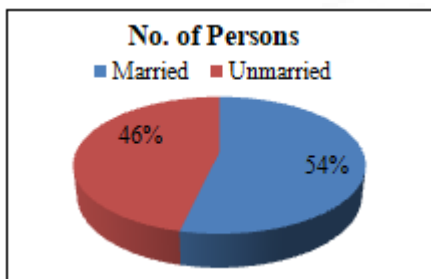
Sex	No. of Persons	%
Male	112	45.5
Female	134	54.5
Total	246	100.0



Percentage of married persons is higher than that of unmarried ones as is evident from table 7.

**Table 7:** Marital Status of the households

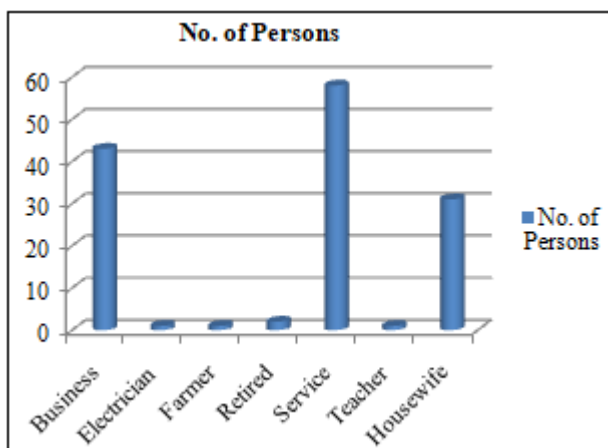
Marital Status	No. of Persons	%
Married	132	53.7
Unmarried	114	46.3
Total	246	100.0



With regard to the occupational status of the earning members', majority of the household members are either businessmen or service holders (table8).

**Table 8:** Occupational Status of the household members

Occupation	No. of Persons	%
Business	43	31.4
Electrician	1	0.7
Farmer	1	0.7
Retired	2	1.5
Service	58	42.3
Teacher	1	0.7
Housewife	31	22.7
Total	137	100.0

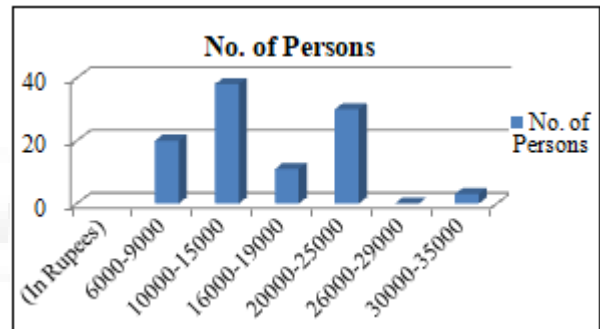


**Monthly Income**

Out of 246 members only 102 members are earners and the maximum percentage (table 9) lies in between Rs. 6000-Rs.25000 per month.

**Table 9:** Monthly Income

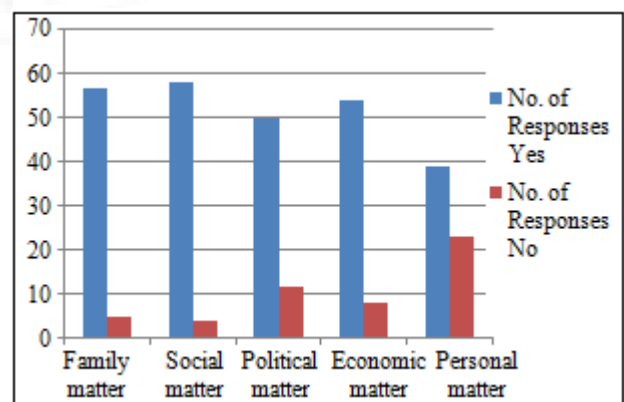
Monthly Income (In Rupees)	No. of Persons	%
6000-9000	20	19.6
10000-15000	38	37.3
16000-19000	11	10.8
20000-25000	30	29.4
26000-29000	0	0
30000-35000	3	2.9
Total	102	100.0



Enquiring on the need to consult the head of the family before taking any decision on different matters like – family, social, political, economic or personal, it is revealed from table 10, that except for personal on all other matters, before taking any decision more than 80 percent of the respondents do agree that advice is sought by the members of the households.

**Table 10:** Matters on which head of the family being consulted before taking any decision

Matters	No. of Responses			
	Yes	%	No	%
Family matter	57	91.9	5	8.1
Social matter	58	93.5	4	6.5
Political matter	50	80.6	12	19.4
Economic matter	54	87.1	8	12.9
Personal matter	39	62.9	23	37.1



**Obj. 2 Fascination for language among the plain Karbis**  
 Besides mother tongue, various other languages are found to be popular among the plain karbis.

**Mother Tongue**

Out of 62 numbers of respondents, mother tongue is usually spoken by majority (61.2%) in both Assamese and Karbi languages shown in table 10.

**Table 10: Mother Tongue spoken**

Mother Tongue spoken	No. of Respondents	%
Assamese	4	6.5
Assamese, Karbi	38	61.2
Karbi	20	32.3
Total	62	100.0

**Existence of difference of mother tongue spoken by Karbi Hills and Karbi Plains people**

There exists a difference of mother tongue spoken by Karbi Hills and Karbi Plains people either in terms of accent, style or words expressed by the respondents. From Table 11, it is clear that maximum (69.35%) number of respondents opined that the basic difference found is with regard to accent.

**Table 11: Difference of mother tongue spoken by Karbi Hills and Karbi Plains people**

Difference	No. of Respondents	%
Accent	22	35.5
Style	3	4.8
Words	8	12.9
Accent, Style	15	24.2
Accent, Words	5	8.1
Style, Words,	8	12.9
Accent, Style, Words	1	1.6
No difference	0	0
Total	62	100.0

**Languages known besides mother tongue**

Figures obtained from table 12 reveals that 80.65% of the respondents do know Hindi language. This is followed by Assamese language which is known to 32.25% of the respondents. There is a variation of languages known besides mother tongue among the respondents, as is evident from table 12.

**Table 12: Languages known**

Languages known	No. of Respondents	%
Assamese, Bengali	1	1.6
Assamese, Boro	4	6.5
Assamese, English	1	1.6
Assamese, Hindi	9	14.5
Hindi, Bengali	1	1.6
Bengali, Nepali	2	3.2
Boro	1	1.6
Assamese, English	1	1.6
English, Hindi	3	4.8
Hindi	8	12.9
Hindi, Assamese	4	6.5
Hindi, Bengali	4	6.5
Hindi, Boro	7	11.3
Hindi, English	8	12.9
Hindi, Nepali	6	9.7
Nepali	1	1.6
Nepali, Karbi	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

**Obj. 3 Opinions towards education**

**Qualification of the Respondents**

In this section, a general view of the respondents shall be looked into their reaction towards education. All the respondents are residing in the city, their opinion towards education is necessary in order to highlight the present trend of outlook possessed by them. Majority of the respondents do possess primary education qualification. Only around 10% are graduates depicted in table 13.

**Table 13: Qualification of the household members**

Qualification	No. of Persons	%
Illiterate	47	19.1
Primary	115	46.7
Secondary	58	23.6
Graduate	26	10.6

**Medium of instruction preferred in school**

With respect to the medium of instruction preferred in school it is visible from the responses that more than 75 % of the respondents are in favor of Assamese language and the remaining in English (illustrated in table 13).

**Table 13: Medium of instruction preferred in school**

Medium	No. of respondents	%
Assamese	47	75.8
English	15	24.2
Hindi	0	0
Total	62	100.0

**Education level preferred by respondents**

It is quite encouraging to note that the importance of education is well understood by the respondents and for this reason they prefer their younger future generation to obtain higher education as is evident from table 14, wherein around 70% of the respondents want to educate up to higher level.

**Table 14: Education level preferred**

Level	No. of respondent	%
Primary	12	19.4
Secondary	06	9.7
Higher	44	70.9
Total	62	100.0

**In favour of imparting Vocational training to the younger generation**

Nearly 81% (table 15) of the respondents are in favour of imparting Vocational training to the younger generation.

**Table 15: Impart of Vocational training**

Favour of Vocational training	No. of Persons	%
Yes	50	80.6
No	12	19.4
Total	62	100.0

**In favor of education of girls**

All the respondents did opine that they are in favor of education of girls highlighted in table 16.

**Table 16: Opinion towards education of girls**

Favour of education for girls	No. of Persons	%
Yes	62	100.0
No	0	0
Total	62	100.0

## 5. Findings

- [1] Nuclear type of family is most popular among the households.
- [2] Father holds the position of the head in more than 80 % of the households.
- [3] Wide variation of age is found and also a variety of relationships exists among the respondent households.
- [4] Percentage of married persons is more than that of unmarried ones
- [5] Majority of the household members are either businessmen or service holders
- [6] The range of earning varies from Rs. 6000-Rs.30,000.
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- [11] Majority of the respondents did study till primary education.
- [12] Opinion of 75 % of respondents shows that Assamese medium of instruction preferred in school
- [13] The level of attainment to be reached by the younger generation is higher education.
- [14] More than 80% of them are in favor of imparting of Vocational training to the younger generation.
- [15] All the respondents are of the opinion of education of girls

## 6. Conclusion

Plain Karbi tribe residing in Guwahati is found to be simple and progressive one. The style of living of the plain Karbis in the city is greatly influenced due to the amalgamation of different communities. Patriarchal system is popular among the residents which are mostly nuclear. The family size in majority of the cases is confined. The percentage of married persons is found to be higher. Either business or service is mostly preferred by the plain Karbi people residing in Guwahati city, the reason being job opportunity is more. Decision making rests mainly on the shoulders of the head of the family in almost all type of matters. Mainly dual language (Assamese and Karbi) system is prevalent among the tribe as mother tongue and in addition they do know other languages. They do send their children to schools with the aim to provide higher education in future. This is quite appreciating one that due importance is offered to educational sector. Even they are in favour of vocational courses for their family members. They do offer due weight age to girls' education.

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