

Kummoi-Umm:
A Unique Harvesting Festival of the Maring Tribe of
North-east India

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Abstract

The Maring tribe, also known as the “Keepers of the Eastern Gate” is one of the oldest and most primitive tribes of the North-eastern states of Manipur. From time immemorial, the community has been known for its valour and prowess in guarding their ancestral land and the eastern border of India from external incursions with great pride and honour. Agriculture being their chief occupation and source of income, there has been a long-standing tradition of celebrating each season of the calendar year with activities related to agriculture, signifying its impact on the life of the community. “Kummoi-Umm”, one of the biggest harvesting festivals in the Maring community, is celebrated at the end of every harvest season. The festival embodied the success of a yearlong labour of toiling day and night, expressing the joy of a bountiful harvest. This article is an attempt to chronicle the inherent traditional harvesting festival of “Kummoi-Umm” passed down by their forefathers, wherein they preserved and followed intact every idea of the community it defines. It also highlights the changes that follow with the imbibitions of industrial cultures, impacting the originality of the ancient culture as witnessed by the present generation.

Keywords: Maring tribe, Harvest festivals, Rituals, Agrarian, Identity.