

# Cultural changes in tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh: *A special reference to Galo Tribe.*

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**Abstract:** The Galo society is governed by its customs and customary laws since time immemorial. Their socio-cultural system reflects the prevailing traditional codes of the tribal and also based on the custom and usages of the tribal societies. In the absence of government authority, the tribe's man began to regard themselves as their own master and evolved a set of traditional laws based on myths, legends, folktales, folklores, rituals, oaths and ordeals to deal with socio-cultural and civil affairs, without any extraneous interference. They are transmitted from generation to generation through oral traditions and practical by society. Through cultural and traditions the people feel a sense of pride in their past and maintain their self-respect and dignity.

As a result of development in Lhasa in August 1910, Chinese activities on the Tibet and murder of Neol Williamson Assistant political officer in March 11 at the hand of Abor (now Adi) British's policy of non-interference was replaced by a policy of loose political control. This was become turning point, and then gradually series of development was started such as the road communication and modern political institution and administration set up which was equipped with modern system justice. The establishments of administrative centre's expansion of communication and rapid political development have brought in new institution and process. Since the advent of Christian missionaries and modernization socio-cultural practices of Galo was extorted. These have exerted enormous pressure on traditions, customary laws and its value system. There have been various attempts to protect, preserve and to promote the traditional value system of the society with the help of various socio-cultural and political arrangement.

**Key words:** - custom and customary laws, cultural extortion, loose political control, traditional, administrative expansion.

**INTRODUCTION:** The Galo society is governed by its customs and customary laws since time immemorial. Their socio-cultural system reflects the prevailing traditional codes of the tribal and also based on the custom and usages of the tribal societies. In the absence of government authority, the tribe's man began to regard themselves as their own master and evolved a set of traditional laws based on myths, legends, folktales, folklores, rituals, oaths and ordeals to deal with socio-cultural and civil affairs, without any extraneous interference. These practices are transmitted from generation to generation through oral traditions and practical by society. The Galo people has its own way of living, cultural, tradition, belief systems, myths, religious ethics, philosophy, rituals, song and dances etc. transmitted from one generation to another. Through cultural and traditions the people feel a sense of pride in the past and maintain their self-respect and dignity. In the olden days Galo had child marriage, force marriage and there was no recognized religion. The clans and sub-clans of the Galo are generally exogamous and strictly in maintaining this principle. The society of Galos is patrilineal and patriarchal. They had also institution of slave and counted slave as live property. Thus, social division was prevailed in the traditional Galo community.

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As a result the indigenous leaders started resorting to defense of their cultural practices, Galo perceived threat to their tribal cultural identity. Formation of cultural and literary associations formed an important agenda for cultural defense. The Adi (Adi and Galo) cultural and Literary Society' was formally inaugurated at Along, the district headquarter of Siang now Aalo district headquarter of West Siang with a two-day programme on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

November 1971. Their objective was to preserve the traditional cultural heritage. They observed that the prevalence of two trends- party politics and alien culture, are eroding the traditional culture and thus affecting the cultural identity of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the alternative for them was to preserve their traditional culture. In fact, the intellectuals were aware of the fact that their folklores, myths etc. were not only important for sustaining their identity but also a great source of their cultural history. Thus, numbers of locals' authors written books to preserved their own unique culture and rich heritage of indigenous people. Thus intellectual of Galo society used their cultural heritage and explain it to the young one and impart knowledge to them and their importance in the past and impact of the future generation. In order to know the reason for intellectual movement it is equally important to know the historical development of this movement.

### **ADI INTELLECTUALS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY MOVEMENT**

The Adi intellectuals felt the need to develop Adi (common for all the sub-tribes including Galo) language and literature and a suitable script for it. It led to the formation of Adi Agom Kebang (Adi Sahitya Sabha) on November 12, 1981. Talom Rukbo a leading literary personality and vanguard of cultural movement among the Adi groups was one of the prominent founding members of this organization. Among the Galo Tumpak Ete was one of the prominent literary personalities who realized the importance of cultural identity and its eroding nature of indigenous system of socio-cultural and economic. The movement was resistance to the dominance of other cultures and a feeling of a sense of pride into own culture and also to preserve it. They had written many song, poem and short story etc. However, their movement was not response to the modernity rather it was a manifestation of modernity itself. Their movement deals with the defense of cultural practices as well as economic development of their areas. In fact they were against the negative aspects of modernization and considered positive aspect as sign of civilization.

Like other tribes, Galo have its own unique cultural practices based on custom and derived it from ancestral practices and mythology and they feel proud to their own culture. Before advent of British and modern government, there were no sign of domination by other culture because of lack of contact with other people. Even after independence government policy was that tribal should be develop their own genius and not to interfere internal matter. However, with coming up of modern education system and development of road communication which led to intermingle with other culture has change the cultural scenario of Galo society. The new way of development creates an ambiguity in cultural practices of Galo society. The development brings conflict between native society and outsiders, between literary production and social reality. This creates certain contradiction within individual and between native people and outsiders. Thus literary society wants to preserve traditional values, rich cultural values at the same time welcoming the positives aspects of modern development. Their objectives were to keep historical values of tribal people especially Adi-Galo society for their self-identity.

### **REFORMATION OF POPULAR CULTURAL PRACTICES**

The reformation of popular cultural practices has been another mark of new cultural identity of educated groups. In the name of social evil the cultural practices which were unsuitable to contemporary societies are rejected and it has been eliminated from social status and practices. So, the traditional practices are of selective process. The child marriage, force marriage, bride price and excessive sacrifices of animals etc are eliminated. The institution of slave is no more existed because it contravention to the modern law of Indian constitution. Whatever is suitable for present society has been transmitted to younger generation. The sacrifices have been important aspects of tribal cultural practices. Most of their rites and rituals revolve around sacrifices of animals. The sacrifices are made to spirits with the hope of receiving blessing and help in various sphere of life. The intellectual have been trying to bring about reform in this aspect. They feels that the practices of these sacrifices of the mithuns, pigs etc can be retained only on the occasions of festivals since it forms an important tradition but it should be confined to a very limited scale and it must be completely banned on other occasions. Likewise different scholars have suggested different ideas on sacrifices system of Galo society. The people's development and their realization led to do away some of the unsatisfied cultural practices of Galo society. Growth and development in education opens up the people's mindset and realize the social and cultural evil practices. So, in the name of evil practices and growth of development, several social practices have been eliminated, such as force marriage child and womb marriage.

Child marriage, force marriage and bride price have been the social evils which the intellectual among Galo tribe have been eliminate from their society. There are instances of returning of the bride price and this reflect against the social

and cultural practices of Galo society where young and educated men rise voice against the evil practices of society and through which society realize their mistake done in earlier and trying to change it but keep positive aspect of socio-cultural practices.

## WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The development in education of women in Arunachal in general and Galo women in particular made them realized the evil practices against women in tribal society in general and Galo society in particular led to struggle against the social evil affecting the women folk and taken up by themselves. They started organizing themselves state to district levels. They form women welfare society so that they can take up question of women's status in the society. The women association has taking up various issues affecting women such as violence against women and children, issues related to child marriage, force marriage, bride price and widows. Thus educated men and women struggle against the cultural hegemony as well as exercised the hegemony of new educated class over the rest of the society.

Thus, the cultural practices of Galo society which affect the social status of society as well as individual has been curb out in the name of social evil and development of society as well. These social evil has now only remain in story and some of them are totally eliminated from societal practices by educated men who realized the social status and in doing so they also rise voice for the preservation of cultural practices which are good for society. Such selective system of the preservation will remain as identity of Galo society. It is found that some of the evil practices have been eliminated from Galo culture and if such selective system continues in future days it will led to preservation of positive aspect of culture and there is also a chance of total elimination of Galo culture as people's mindset is toward modernizing. But as of now it has been found that Galo has its own rich cultural heritage and also various movement has been started in the form of literary work and showing their cultural in festival. After independence government of India come out with positive programme to help the remote part of the country for the social, economic, and educational development.

There is various Women organization, such as karka women organization and Mother Vision etc. had been form to eliminate social evil against women and encourage young girl for the development of the society. Initially their main objective was on the question of social evil against women, such as womb marriage, child marriage and force marriage. However, now they are not only confining to question on women safety, but they are now raising voice against drug, alcohol and other development of the society. Another implication is the interface with Hindu cultural which gradually exhorted the tribal culture day by day through their various festival and RSS organization. The cultural value of other tribe attract the tribal people and they become soft target of the other tribe

Education and administrative development have brings momentum changes in term of socio and cultural development of the areas. Though illiterate person are conservative in nature but today young generation have change various thing in social and cultural life of Galo people. There is a question of lost of the identity of their own, so various sub-clans have formed an association to develop and maintain their own areas and preserve rich cultural heritage. These association even talks about their origin, and migration and even started research on it. The elite people realize the importance of their cultural heritage and want to preserve it, even in record such as publish book etc. However, school going student are not willing to follow the working of the elite of the society. Their mind set is only modern way of living and they do not realize the importance of their identity.

## CONCLUSION:

The movement for the preservation of the indigenous culture and faith which started in 1970s is spread to whole of Galo inhabited area but the movement has not in violent way rather it is peaceful. Even today intellectual are trying hard to preserved their rich culture and faith. They used the tactic of inviting expert and resource person in the indigenous faith day and impart knowledge to the young generation about their rich cultural value. In the name of religious identity they stress spread of Donyi-Poloism into the whole of area. Now all non-Christian automatically became the follower of Donyi-Polo in the Galo society. They even write their religion as Donyi-Polo which did not happened earlier. Thus, the indigenous identity and cultural movement resulted in formation of the development of Donyi-Polo as their religion. Today every village and town has their own Gamgi-Dere- place of worship and few Gamgi-Dere at village. The Donyi-Polo flag has been found every village of Galo inhabited area which signifies that people have belief and obedience toward Donyi-Polo so as to develop their own separate religion through which they preserved their cultural and indigenous customs, practices and values.

But it is surprising to see that even after such development of such popular movement; Christianity is increase day by day in the Galo inhabited area. The people who used to take flesh of sacrifices animals and drink (Apong-rice bear) have been avoided after he/she convert to Christian religion. Now one of most dangerous message goes around the society is that inter-marriage between two religions is difficult because of their difference in faith and system of marriage. The Christian want to do Church marriage and Donyi-Poloism by traditional system. In traditional system of recognition, the priest performs ritual which is called Layap(recognition). So, Christian people have different system of recognition and do not even take food if priest perform ritual.

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