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A Study of Tribal Council: Keba

Its structure, function and power

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Abstract : Keba is a village council of Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh with immense power over the villages of the tribe. It governs from distinct level from the dolu keba, bango keba, and bogum boka in the society. This paper explores the institution and its importance in the life of the Galos,, even in the days of modern political system.

Keywords: Keba, Dolu Keba, Bango Keba, Bogum Boka, Local Self Government, Arunachal Pradesh

Introduction

The village was the basic unit of administration in ancient India. References to village councils are found in Vedas and the Jatakas. The traditional rights of the village communities and their powers of self-government were found protected under Mauryan Empire¹. The villages continued to organize works of public utility and recreation, resolve disputes of residents and act of trustees for properties of minors. Kautilya gave an elaborate classification of the villages for revenue, economic and defences purposes with no reference to village councils. The local government have flourished in India since the times immemorial. The early history of India gives evidence of villages as the basic units of social and economic life and of the existence of some kind of village government. They may be elective and non-elective but carried out local affairs in an open assembly and received a great degree of habitual obedience from the villagers. As village government, the local government functioned like little republics. They enjoyed a considerable number of powers in financial, administrative, development, commercial and socio-culture spheres. This body politic of village communities lived autonomously like tiny states.

Even during the medieval period, the Local Government institutions functioned as usual with some minor changes. As the Muslim rulers (especially the Mughals) had to concentrate all powers in their hands to retain their control over the country, they established a highly centralized system of government. So not much change in the local system of governance could be introduced. The local government institutions, though existed in India both during the ancient and medieval period, were not constituted periodically on the basis of elections. Credit goes to the British who introduced Local Self Government institutions in the modern form in which they currently exist in India. Prior to them, the Local Government were constituted on hereditary or caste considerations. The element of election and formal sense of accountabilities are the British contributions.

Like the Mughals, the British were also foreigners and settled themselves away from the village communities in cities and this led to the panchayat system to its disintegration. The process of disintegration was further accelerated by migration of the village population to cities, improvements in communities and a spirit of individualism².

THE AREA OF STUDY AND ITS PEOPLE

Arunachal Pradesh- The land of downlit mountains, inhabited by some 20 schedule tribes with a number of sub-tribes or groups each having its own culture, customs, languages, practices and beliefs.

The diversity of India gives their tribes a unique identity. It is so well occupied that we can see it developing in aspects. One such exotic aspect of Indian diversity is the Galo tribe from Arunachal Pradesh.

A large chunk of tribe in the majestic state of Arunachal Pradesh is occupied by Galo Tribe, they are also known as Duba, Dobah, Abors, Gallong Abors and Galong in different areas of the state³. Galo tribe has been listed in the Indian Constitution as a separate tribe or scheduled tribe by the name Galong. Galos is the central Himalayan tribe, who are descendants of *Abo Tani* and speak Tani and Galo language. The Galo People primarily live in the west siang, Leparada, and lower siang districts of modern-day Arunachal Pradesh state in North-east India, but they are also found in the south-western side of east siang district, the south-eastern side of Upper Subansiri district as well as in some small pockets of Itanagar, lower Dibang valley and Changlang districts. The Galo population is estimated at 1.3 lakhs according to 2011 census, which makes them one of the largest tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

So far, the migration is concerned, there is no evidence of written document pertaining to the migration of Galos. Whatever work has been done is based on interpretation of stories, folklore and narration of elderly persons of the society. It is clear that migration from the north sounds more appropriate than other routes. The following legendary terms such as *Yomsi-Libu*, *Tade Dege*, *Manga* etc clearly indicate that Galos come from the North. Yomsi (Koshi) is a combination of two words *Siyom* and *Ahi*, *Siyom* means the present river which originates from the border of Tibet and *Ashi* or *Ahi* stands for the origin of river. *Libu* means Gap in rock. The combined meaning hence indicates the origin of Siyom river near a gap or pass. The explanation tallies with the present Monigaon. From this, we can make a hypothesis that major group of Galos, crossing the present Mac Mohan line at Tunga pass came downward through *Tase Dege* and present Monigaon. Taking the river course as a main route they came up to present Tato. Some of them continued to move eastwards along the Siyom River, while other might have moved westwards along the river Yargaphsu, one of the main tributes of Siyom.

A few of them moved southward taking to Tagur- as a route and crossed the Bayor Adi and then entered the river Hirik and to present Siyom Valley. Some Galos migrated from the present east siang district to west siang along the river Siyom. Likewise, some of them migrated from the present West siang to east siang district.

Some people migrated to the foot hills and even up to the plains of Assam. But they did not like the foothills for their higher temperature, humidity and swampy surface and for safety reasons. They always considered the hill tops to be safer during clashes and retreated to their present settlements. Thus, the present pattern of settlement is an outcome of varied natural, social, cultural processes which took place centuries back.

According to dialectical variation and culture the people of Aalo circle are called '*Pugo Galo*'. The people of Basar, Likabali and Nari circle of East siang are called '*Lare Galo*'. The people who reside in Tirbin, Darak, Yomcha and Liromoba are '*Bogum*'. Again, sub-groups of the Galo tribe are further sub-divided into smaller groups each inhabiting a compact area and each group has its own village⁴.

Keba, the traditional village council

The Ancient Administration of Arunachal Pradesh was very peculiar. The people knew no kingdom and every village was independent of the extraneous authority⁵. Each village functioned like a sovereign state and its neighbouring villages like the foreign powers. Each village had its own Head or chief styled as 'Gam'. The management of the affairs and its political relationships with the neighbours vested in the traditional village councils. Each village councils were powerful and independent of all external influences. However, the composition and functioning of the village councils differed from tribe to tribe. Galo tribe is one the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and as that of the other tribes, Galo community of *Leparada District and other Galos* has also its own traditional village council known as 'Keba'. Since the time immemorial in the Galo tribe 'Keba' is dealing with every administrative works in their society. All the Legislative, Judicial and Executive powers are vested in it. Important decisions are taken on matters affecting the general interest of the community. It is the supreme authority of the village. The head of the Galo traditional council 'Gam' was hereditary and wielded more power and influence. The village disputes, inter-village disputes and political decisions were within the jurisdiction of the Gams.

A Democratic form of Government has been existing among all the Galo community as such as Galo villages of Leparada District has its own village council. All economic, social and religious are directed and supervised by the traditional village council called the 'Keba'⁶.

Lepa Rada District, with its headquarter at Basar, is one of the 25th districts of Arunachal Pradesh State in north-eastern India. Leparada falls under 29-Basar Assembly Constituency and 1- West Constituency. The district is Centrally located, hence the name Lepa Rada (Lepa means Centre and Rada means bulls-eye like in Archery). Basar, Tirbin, Dari and Sago are 4 administrative circles of the district. It was created from the West Siang District by bifurcating its southern areas along Assam border into a new district. At the time of the 2020 census, Lepa Rada district has a population of 20865. Scheduled Tribes made up 11,235 (77.54%). Basar is a census town in Leparada district in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India. Basar is abode of Galo People. Basar is the Headquarter of the Leparada District. It is also famous for GRK-BASCON, ICAR. Basar has three rivers namely *Kidi*, *Hii* and *Hiile* With the elevation of 578m (1,896ft) Basar is located at 27° 59'N 94° 40'E. it has an average elevation of 578 meters above mean sea level and has pleasantly cold weather⁷. The dialect spoken by the Galo people in Basar is Galo (Iare), which is one of the sub-dialects of Galo Tribes. Hindi is also popular language of Galo Tribe. Most of the Galo in Basar speak Hindi even in the villages. The staple crop of the Galo people of Basar is rice, maize in slash-and-burn agriculture practice. The plains of Basar valley have wet rice cultivation. Oranges and pineapple have grown abundantly and kiwi fruit and apple are tried in the higher ridges of the mountainous ranges like in the sago village or circle. Basar is originally place of Riba, Basar and Riram clans of Galo tribe⁸ and they live in over 65 villages, traditionally each keeping to itself under a selected chief styled Gaon Bura (Gam) who moderates the village council, which acts even as the traditional court. The olden day councils consist of all the village elders and decision were taken in a *Dere* (traditional village council). The mother of festival "Mopin", an agricultural festival performed before or after the sowing of seeds for bumper crops, is celebrated in Basar in wider ways. The "Donyi-Polo" practice of the Galo has the majority following, which involves the chanting of rhymes to appease the ancestors to invoke the blessings of the sun and the moon, where the priest is called "Nyibo" (priest) plays a crucial role as an intermediary between the Donyi-Polo and the people.

STRUCTURE, FUNCTION AND POWER OF KEBA

The origin of the traditional tribal village council of Galo is very nearly impossible to be traced out. Regarding its origin, different people have given different views to its origin. According to Tumpak Ete (Ex. M.L.A.):

“The traditional tribal Village council (Keba) begins with ancestral father Tani (Abo Tani), the first Homo Sapien, who is not only the forefather of Galos, but Also of the Adi, Nyishi, Apatani and Tagin. The Tani lived in a place beyond the great hill in the north (probably in the present-day Tibet) which was also inhabited by Taki’s son. Taki was the brother and the rival of Tani and also ancestor of the Gods and Goddesses. That place was inhabited by other terrestrial, aquatic and aerial creatures along with some semi-divine groups known as Kabo-Yabo and Jene-gone, there were twelve sons of Abo Tani Namely; Nidum, Nipak, Nito, Nimak, Nidom, Nibe, Nime, Nikar, Nijom, Nishi, Nigom and Nita.⁹ As Tani’s children grew into adult, they started quarrelling over their shares of their father’s vast property. Gradually their quarrels became a fracas and used to happen almost regularly. In consequences of the quarrels among the Abo Tani’s sons, the peace and harmony of the land was getting disturbed. At last, in a situation like that, the other inhabitants of the place decided to bring an end to the disturbing brawl. They all assembled in a communal meeting to settle the disputes and after a prolonged discussion and debate, they along with the twelve sons of Abo Tani, reached on a mutual agreement about the sharing of father Tani’s property and in this way, the historic myth of the origin of the Keba was set Up”. Tumpak Ete, 2009 Aalo.

According to Boken Ete (Ex. M.L.A.):

“Once upon a time an archery competition was held in the father Tani’s habitation amongst the Tani’s and Taki’s children and population of monkeys to measure their power. A body of judges was also set up and in this way a council of similar nature of Keba was set up”¹⁰. Boken Ete, 2009, Aalo.

Whatever the mythology tells about the traditional tribal village council, it is true that in the early stages of socio-cultural development, every society, from hunting-gathering to settle agriculturist, has its own system of control on the basis of its own socio-religious values and customs, traditions and modes of behaviour.

Srivastava (1962) opined that “we can hardly talk of codified law in primitive societies and this holds good for the Galos too. Equally, we are unable to categorize their ways of punishment as civil and criminal. It is the moral values together with traditional ways of behaviour, sanctioned by mythology which come into play in these societies.

In the process of the social changes, once upon a time, the headship or the or the chieftainship faded up by the coming of the democratic feeling among the tribes. They set up a democratic institution, the Keba, which could be attended by any adult persons of the village and without any hesitations they could express their views over the cases. This Keba was maintained and carried out through their social norms, value system and their world views. In the course of change, this Keba institutions got some official ingredients too, after the penetration of the British in this Land. The British rulers introduced the official Gams as the Headman for every clan in a village who had considerable amount of authority in a Keba reducing the role played earlier by the Priest and Shamans. They also introduced a few officials and representatives of their government like political interpreters, Jamadars, etc. After independence, our national Government also took steps for strengthening the traditional village councils without disturbing and distorting this age-old custom and recently the state Government allowed the Keba to continue as a primary Judicio-Administrative or court without influenced by any political party. For further strengthening the traditional village council, the Government also started appointing an administrative officer to all the circles as the circle’s officers whose one of the main duties is to share his expertise and verdict with the local sentiment in respect of the age-old Keba procedures and bridge their activities with the modern administrative code when it is needed by them. With a view to pay more respect the Government started giving honorarium to the Gams who have

considerable number of responsibilities in the Keba. In this way the Keba system for Administrative of Justice evolved and developed to the present stage.

The village councils (*Keba*) of Galos are informal in character deriving their authorities and powers from accepted social norms and traditions. Every adult man is the member of the of the council by right. He can take part in the deliberations of the council and is at liberty to express his opinions openly. Women had no share in the Government as they are regarded as weak and unfit for such jobs. A woman was allowed to participate in the proceedings of the council only when she herself was involved in the case to be decide.

Although all the adult men are certain individuals who are accepted by the villagers as their leader. The proceedings are conducted under their guidance and supervision. They are, in fact, regarded as the repositories of old-age customs and traditions and they are addressed as *Keba-Abos*. They are formally neither elected nor selected. They assume informal leadership by virtue of their certain qualities. These leaders can be divided into two categories:

- (a) The person processing leadership qualities are known as '*Nyi-Kok*'.
- (b) Those processing wealth are known as '*Nyi-Tes*'.

Under the first category come the leaders who had acquired recognition for their wider knowledge of the traditional conventions, customs, law, oratory skills, witty arguments and their impartiality. Leader who are above the equals are known as '*kok-Tes*'.

Nyi-Tes are the individuals who have assumed leadership because of their wealth in terms of cattle, wives, slaves, land, ornaments etc. But wealth alone is not enough. He must extend hospitality and entertain visitors¹¹. In the past, wealthy persons commanded the highest respect and obedience as they could bestow material benefits in difficult times.

The numbers of members of the *Dolu-Keba* (village council) is never fixed. It rests on the availability of the persons processing the requisite qualities. The composition is also not affected either by the death of any member or by inclusion of new member. Membership of the councils is not hereditary. Any individual processing requisite qualities and taking part in the deliberations is informally accepted and recognized as the ember of the council. And he continues to have his influence as long as he enjoys the confidence of the fellow villagers and delivers the goods. There is no fixed terms of the office for the council and its members. No status or rank is involved in its membership. They work collectively as equals. However, they pay heed to the advice of the most experienced persons.

Since most of the Galo villages are single clan village the question of clan representation does not arise. However, where the village is of mixed clan it is endeavoured to see that all clans are represented in the village council. But it is not mandatory or obligatory that each and every clan should be represented. It sometimes happens that a particular clan goes unrepresented because of non-availability of person having leadership quality.

Although members of the councils do not receive any substantial material benefits, they are respected and held in high esteem by the villagers. They receive only a nominal fee (*Urgoni*). *Urgoni* is the fee charged for dispensing the case. It is realized in cash or kind from both the parties involved in the case and shared by all the members of the councils engaged in deciding that particular case. They are also entertained with tea or *Poka* (locally brewed beer) in-between the sittings by both the disputant party. In the past, some neighbouring villages requisitioned the services of the outstanding *Keba-Abos*. In such cases, they enjoyed certain privilege like safe passage through their territories even if the relation between the two villages was not cordial¹².

The members of the council try to administer justice in return to the respect accorded to them and the fees they received from the villagers. The council studies the whole gamut of the case in detail and gives

judgement in accordance with their customary laws or precedencies set forth. Once the verdict is pronounced, it is assiduously carried out by all the parties concerned. No one can defy the structures of the council. They are obeyed for fear of being socially boycotted. It is because of this reason that there has been no instance of taking revenge on council members even when a party feels that justice has not been done.

While discussing the formation of village councils, it would not be of place to discuss other institutions of recent origin like as *Bango-Keba*, *Bogum-Boka-Keba*.

STRUCTURE OF KEBA

The traditional village council of Galos in Leparada district is known as *Keba*, has essentially a democratic structure. It is in fact essentially a court of the people. So far, the organization is concerned the *Keba* system organizes just like a pyramid. At the village level there is a *Bane* or *Dolu Keba*, the *Bango Keba* is at *Bango* level (inter village council), at appendix there is a *Bogum Boka Keba* (inter district council). Generally, all the structures, functions and powers of Galos does not differ. Since the highest council in Galos is *Bogum Boka*, they follow one set of codes called *Galo Customary law*. To understand the *Keba* structure¹³ there are some following given below:

1. Bane or Dolu Keba: The *Bane* or *Dolu Keba* is a lowest village council of Galo society which is at the village level. It is regular village council body where meeting of all men takes place at regular intervals. In the *Bane* meeting (*Keba*) Gam (village Authority/Gaon Bura) takes leading role and the women are usually not permitted to take part as they are considered weak and are busy as house wives. The meeting is held or conducted at *Dere* (Bachelor-Dormitory) in presence of Gaon Buras. The *Dolu Keba* takes a decision on peace, war, agriculture, communication, education etc. or any problems pertaining to the *Dolu* (village).

Even governmental plans of development are also discussed here and government also takes cognizance of such decision. In *Bane* meeting or *Keba*, trial continues unless the matter is resolved. In case both the parties and persons do not agree with the *Keba* decision at *Bane* or *Dolu* level, the case is referred to the government court. In *Dolu Keba*, any member can speak for whatever length of time he chooses to speak as it is in *Bango* and *Bogum Boka Keba*. But generally, the senior members are given more importance in the meeting.

Before the holding of *Keba* session, (*Bane Keba*), the complaint has to report or lodge to H.G.B (Head Gaon Bura) and accordingly HGB informs the Gaon Buras, the time and place to be held. No session of *Dolu Keba* can be held until and unless the Head Gaon Bura permits. In *Bane* or *Dolu Keba*, generally the meeting discusses about administrative and welfare measures concerning the village only. Though women are not allowed to take part in the meeting, they are also appointed as Gams these days by the district administration.

1.Bango Keba: The *Bango Keba* is at *Bango* level. It is inter-village council for inter village disputes. Any cases or disputes which arise at inter village level, the cases are brought directly to the *Bango* level *Keba*, where many distinguished persons, Gams representing the respective villages assemble together. It is rather more fully organized than the village *Keba*. The *Bango Keba* works in terms of welfare of the member villages and makes people to think in terms of larges commitment above the village level. The jurisdiction of *Bango Keba* extends to all the villages which agree to work together.

In order to convene a meeting of *Bago Keba*, the date and place is fixed some months ahead by the *Bango* secretary who is elected or selected one. The *Bango* secretary is appointed by the Deputy Commissioner, either from the Gams of respective villages or any person having the knowledge of customary laws. But now a days, the *Bago* secretary is elected in most of the cases though appointment is to be made

later on by district Administration. A separate Dere (dormitory) is constructed for conducting a meeting for inter village disputes at Bango level.

In Bango *Keba*, no women Gams represent the village because it is believed that, they don't have enough knowledge of customary laws despite of being Gam. All villages are divided into several groups for determining the jurisdiction of each Bango Keba. If the decision taken by the Bane Keba is not satisfied, the case can be referred to either Bogum Boka (inter-district) level or the Government court.

In Bango level *Keba*, no separate Gams are appointed for its members other than Bango secretary. The Gams of respective villages, the distinguished persons and reputed public leaders become the members. The number of the members of the Bane Keba is never fixed. It depends upon the Bango secretary. He calls the Gams of respective villages as per the nature of the cases. In addition to Bango secretary, it has also president and treasurer who are either selected or elected from among themselves by the representative of the entire village falling under the same Bangos. In Lepa Rada district, there are four administrative circles namely Basar, Tirbin, Dari and Sago. In Tirbin, the name of Bango is called Yema Bango, In Dari circle it is named Ego Bango and in Basar and Sago Circles it is called Rego Bango.

1. Bogum Boka Keba: The Bogum Boka Keba is sometime known as Galo Parliament. It is the highest body of Keba. It is the apex. It has jurisdiction over whole district. The Bogum Boka is an inter Bango Keba. Here *Kebas* (meetings) are held which has high importance concerning the Galo society. The schedule and agenda are fixed months or weeks before. The main difference between the older council and the modern Bango or Bogum Boka is that the later do not have the supernatural or social authority. They are more sophisticated and official and already we find minutes being kept and resolutions typed out in English and forwarded to the administration.

In Bogum Boka Keba, the representatives of each Bane and Bango Keba come to attend its meeting. This highest Keba enacts the law of society. This Keba also formulates policies for Galo community, discusses matters relating to war, peace, culture, religion, language and development. The resolutions are sometimes even passed and forwarded to the Government for implementation or necessary action. At the Bogum Boka level the P.I (Political Interpreter) and P.A (Political assistant) are also appointed by Deputy Commissioner.

In Bogum Boka *Keba*, the participation of Gams and distinguished persons are decided by the political assistant. He may or may not direct them to take part. As that of Bane and Bango Keba, a nominal fee (*Urgoni*) is charged for dispensing the case. It is realized in cash or kind from both the parties involved in the case shared by all the members of the councils engaged in deciding the particular case.

At Bogum Boka level, political interpreters and political Jamadars known locally as *Katakis* appear to have been in existence from even before 1890. When numerous local dialects caused inconvenience to the officials the services of the political interpreters were needed especially in the early days of administration. The interpreters were handpicked persons for their bilingualism, willingness and sustainability for cooperation with and for the Government while the administration at the lowest level was left to be carried on by the indigenous authorities. It was strengthened through the appointment of interpreters. The interpreters were to interpret the administrative policies to the people not always within the frequent touring beat of the administration and to provide a representative of the administration at the discussion held by rival parties, to adjudicate local disputes and crimes, and to help in disposal of criminal and civil suits in accordance with the judicial powers delegated to the local bodies.

Earlier they were under the jurisdiction of political officers. Their appointment was also under the control of political officers. But now a days, they are controlled by the Deputy Commissioner. The appointment was made on the basis of high integrity, honesty, and maturity. The political Jamadars and

interpreters made enquiries and investigated cases and helped in communication between the village authorities and political officers. Thus, they had to act as Liaison between administration and village.

The political Jamadars and political interpreters were to keep touch with the local people, their headman, local parties and disputes. It was their duty to report all important matters and occurrences of charge. But unfortunately, the post of political Jamadars has been totally abolished and in place of it, a new Gazetted post namely political assistant at district level has been created.

At Bogum Boka level. P.I and P.A are given preference for sitting even in the session of Keba. The district administration also provides one separate room for P.A, however there is not fixed. They remain office during the pleasure of the administration. Thus, the Keba of Galo is organized just like a pyramid.

FUNCTIONS OF KEBA

Before the advent of modern administration, both the judicial and development functions were carried out by the village councils. It will be worthwhile to enumerate them:

Judicial Function

In principle, Galo justice does not recognize any distinction or discrimination in its dispensation towards any member of the society. Every one, irrespective of wealth, position or one's command over traditional knowledge, is equal in the eyes of their law and no one is considered above it. Even those who are ordained by the society to sit in the deliberations on justice cannot claim any special treatment or immunity by virtue of their office.

The meetings of the council are invariably held in the village *Dere*. It meets as and when required. There is no fixed date or time for its meeting. Whenever a case is brought before them for settlement or an issue affecting the welfare of the village as a whole is to be discussed, the meeting is convened. Announcement of the time of meeting; serving summons to the parties and witness involved in cases; realization of compensation or fines; conveying of council's decision are all entrusted to the young lads of the village. These are done orally as they have no script Evidence is must and the decision virtually depends upon it. Evidence is taken for the purpose of identification of a person who has committed the crime. Four kinds of evidence are taken viz: -

1. The direct evidence.
2. The circumstantial evidence.
3. The evidence based on the result of omens and divinations.
4. Evidence based on the result of an oath or an ordeal.

After the evidence is taken the elders, accepted as the bench for that occasion, come out with their opinions separately and also examine and cross examine the persons involved in the case and the witness too. The whole gamut of the case is discussed threadbare, debated upon by the member of the council. The deliberation, continues till all the members reach a consensus. The decision or verdict is then pronounced in front of everybody present. It sometimes happens that a charge is denied or it could not be proved on the basis of available evidence. In such situation, Supernatural guidance or interference is sought through oath/ordeals. It is their belief that the person who has been charged with the commission of a crime but has been denying the allegations but has his or her involvement in the crime will be punished by the supernatural agency. In order to seek the truth through supernatural powers he is made to undertake an oath or to go through an ordeal whose effect determines the guilt or proves the innocence of the person concerned. Here the Nyibo (priest) plays very important role. All the show is conducted by the Nyibo. He is paid his fees by the person engaging him.

The Galos resort to various kinds of oaths and ordeals of which the following are most common¹⁴.

1. **Nyodhu Nyoi:** In this test, the priest invokes the spirit/God to be the witness to it and to inflict the guilty with illness or death. The suspect is made to declare that, in case of having committed the crime he/she should fall sick or meet his/her death within a stipulated time. Saying this, the suspect is required to bite the teeth of tiger. The teeth of a tiger are regarded scared by them and believed to possess hidden powers. If he suffers from anticipated effect within the stipulated time, he is declared guilty, otherwise innocent. There the work of propitiation or invocation is wholly conducted by the priest. He is paid fees for administering oath or conducting ordeal. The persons under-going the ordeal are to bear all the expenses involved in it.
2. **Dhinam:** Here the Nyibo(priest), in presence of the villagers, invokes the particular deity or spirit to be the witness to the ordeal. After chanting incantations for some time, a piece of molten lead is poured on the palm of the person undergoing the ordeal. If the molten lead does not burn or cause scar on his palm, he is declared innocent, otherwise he is proved guilty of the offence.
3. **Pipe Roksin:** Here the examination of chicken liver is done. With the priest invoking the supernatural power, a chicken is sacrificed by him and its liver examined by a team of experts. And then declared who is guilty and who is innocent. The act of reading chicken's liver is not revealed to outsiders. Sometimes egg is used in place of chicken.

But now-a-days, unless the case is of very serious nature the above-mentioned ordeals are not restored to as it causes severe physical injury to the person undergoing the ordeal. The suspects are only asked to take oath in the name of *Donyi Polo*. Oath is undertaken by a suspect with the help of a priest who goes on reciting invocations to the supernatural power to seek its intervention and punish the guilty.

Once the person is convicted of a crime, he is treated according to the customary law irrespective of wealth, prestige or status. The parties involved in the case are then conveyed the decision arrived at. Once the decision is given, it is obeyed assiduously by all the parties involved as, disobedience amounts to challenge the age-old customs and traditions and also for fear of being socially boycotted or ostracized. While deciding the case, the council members, on their part, see that justice is done to both the parties. But sometimes it happens that the members of the council come under the influence of a particular party because of its wealth or position in the society and decide the case in its favour. In the past, there was no other way than to accept the verdict, whatsoever. But with the introduction of modern administration, people have acquired the right to appeal against the decision of the council. Appeal is made to the circle officer or the extra assistant commissioner who is the judicial magistrate. Appeal is also made in the higher courts of law.

It would not out of way to say that, in the Galo society, the principle behind the enforcement of law has been to impart justice and redress the grievance by compensating the damages acquiring from the loss of life, property or prestige rather than to award corporal punishment to the offender. Punishment and penalty varies depending upon the motive of culprit. They no more believe in the maxim "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth". Compensation for any loss of life or property is made through the imposition of fines on the offender equivalent to the loss is caused to the individual the fines realized is given to the offended or aggrieved. If the damage is caused to the community as a whole, the fine realized is used for the general welfare of the population.

Punishment

The objective of awarding punishment in the Galo society¹⁵ is to check breach of their customs and practices; to check crime by inflicting exemplary sentences on the offenders so as to act as a deterrent for others; to reform the offender and to compensate the aggrieved of his loss or damages or the disgrace he had subjected to.

In the past, the punishment in their society ranged from throwing the offender alive into the river to a simple token fine. But now only fine is imposed. The following lines would give an idea of punishments awarded in the Galo society.

1) Murder: In former days, in case of murder it was a common practice for the clan men of the murdered person to take revenge if the culprit's clan failed to pay the compensation as demanded by the aggrieved party. The following articles or live-stock are demanded as compensation in case of murder: -

- a. Five-ten Mithuns are demanded for commissioning the crime and to make up the loss of manpower (*Nyidhum*).
- b. One *Dachi/Chiku* (Brass saucepan) for digging the grave.
- c. For preparation of stretcher, a string of beads (*Dong-ne/Lichum-Likir*) is demanded from the murderer's family or clan.
- d. One *Barte* or *Barko* (costly Brass plate) for preparation of bed in the grave where the dead body is laid at rest.
- e. One *Roksi* (sword) for erection of shade over grave.
- f. unintentional murder or mistake is categorised in 2nd category crime. A fine of 5 cows and 5 Mithuns, *Barte/Barba* for mental shock and agony, one Mithun for maternal uncle is demanded.
- g. Intentional murder is categorised in 1st category crime. A fine of 10 cows and 10 Mithuns, *Barte/Barba* for mental shock and agony, one Mithun for maternal uncle, *Chiku* (local precious bowl) as *DEPUR* and *Dogne* – 2/ *Dokso* -2 chains (local precious beads) as *MAYEN*.

In the by-gone days, if the murderer couldn't be avenged by the relatives of the murdered person it was taken as an act of cowardice and insult to clan as a whole. It was a prestige issue. Hence, a Mithun or a cow was demanded to make up the loss prestige.

If the compensation as demanded by the murdered person's relatives could not be paid any fellow clan men of the accused was captured and held as a hostage against payment of compensation. But now the cases of murder are heard by the District Magistrates or are referred to higher courts.

2) Theft: It is termed *Dhoccho* or *chonam*. Punishment or penalty varies depending upon the magnitude and the kind of theft committed¹⁶.

- a. If anyone steals grains from the granary and is discerned, he is to restore the stolen grains or its equivalent value in other kind and is required to give one sword (*Roksi*) to the owner of the granary for breaking the door of granary (*Nahu*). It is called *Huba-Namba*
- b. A ritual is performed (*Nahu-Rinnam*) for cleansing the granary. The offender is required to sacrifice a Mithun (*Hobo*) or a cow (*Ho*).
- c. If a Mithun is stolen, the offender is required to return the original Mithun or its equivalent and give another Mithun as fine. This is known as *Ho-tem*.

Like the above two cases of the theft in other cases of theft also, different punishments 'are awarded with corporal punishment.

3) Adultery: In case of adultery, the offender is required to give Mithuns as a fine to the aggrieved person commensurate to his status.

If a man divorces his wife on the ground of adultery, her parents have to pay double of the bride-price paid for her at the time of marriage. If she is allowed to stay in the same family, the person having committed adultery is to give a Mithun or a metal disc or a bowl to the aggrieved as a fine.

In case of elopement, the offender is required to pay double of the bride-price paid to her.

4) Incest: In the Galo society it is not only forbidden but is also regarded as sin of the highest order and a heinous crime. Persons committing this crime are sometimes excommunicated. It is believed that such action could invite the wrath of supernatural power on all the villagers. Whenever such incident comes to light the offenders are required to sacrifice a cow or a supernatural punishment on the village as a whole. Only aged men of the village can have the meat of the animals sacrificed on such occasions. Sometimes it is thrown into the river also.

The most important and the most elaborate function of the *Keba* is the administration of Justice in the village. All disputes arising in the village is Adjudicated upon by the *Keba* according to set procedures. The cases decided may be theft, assault, murder, adultery, and non-clearance of dues, non-payment of bride price, divorce, encroachment, trespass and so forth. In *Keba* all these types of cases are decided as per the set codes.

The session of *Keba* are usually held in the village council, called *Dere*. It is also the bachelors' dormitory wherever such an institution still exists. A session of the *Keba* may also be held in any other convenient place. The *Keba* is generally convened by the *Gam* or *Gams* whenever necessary. It may on its own initiative or at the request of some aggrieved party.

There is no presiding officer of the *Keba* of leparada district or any other Galo *Keba*. Discussions are formally opened by one of the experienced and elderly *Keba Abo* with an introductory speech. Normally the senior members present are given precedence in speaking and among them also, those who have acquired recognition for their oratory, status and wisdom are spontaneously allowed to lead the deliberations. The juniors in age and status observe differences to the seniors. Capable young man with an ambition for leadership, however never miss an opportunity to address the *Keba* soon after the elders have spoken. The entire audience observes an unperturbed, non-chalet and patient silence even if they are bored and tired. As soon as one concludes, another rises to speak and this goes on till all the members willing to speak are exhausted or till a general agreement or a consensus on the issue emerges. The leaders of the *Keba* guides the proceeding and one of the elder leaders of *Keba* pronounces the decision in in mistakeable terms. While deciding a case the *Keba* follows a slightly different procedure. Here the opinion of those who are well-versed in customary laws and traditional practices get due importance.

In Basar and in another Galos, a leader of a *Keba* is never selected formally or informally¹⁷, except a *Gam*. Even in the case of a *Gam* he is already an accepted leader of the village as a *Keba Abo*. In the times of British India, the most influential of the *Keba Abos* were appointed by the Government as the *Gam*. After the independence the *Keba* has started choosing the most experienced and public minded from among the *Keba Abos* as the *Gam* of the Village. He is then formally appointed by the Deputy Commissioner of the district as *Gam* and is given a certificate and a red coat as insignia. A *Gam* enjoys office as long as he enjoys confidence of his village. If he became unpopular, he may be removed if the *Keba* conveys lack of confidence in Him. In the four circles of leparada district, namely Basar, Tirbin, Dari and Sago there are total numbers of approximately 214 *Gams* according to the collected data.

ROLE OF GAM

Since the time immemorial the disputes in the Galo society has been settled through a set of persons who are prominent, wise, knowledgeable and have personal integrity in the society¹⁸. The system has been also adopted after independence by the government to continue for effective Administration of Justice in the village society through appointment of *Gams* from amongst the villagers who is most wise, knowledgeable and have personal integrity in order to lead the society into peace and prosperity. The *Gams* are appointed with soaring expectation of fairness, clean personality, highly integrity and judiciousness in delivery of justice, irrespective of rich and poor, in the society.

Gaon Buras plays very important role in Keba system of Galo community. In any meeting or *Keba*, *Gam* takes a leading role. The meeting cannot be conducted without the presence of *Gams*. It is the *Gams* who conduct the meeting and makes a decision in any meeting of Bane/Dolu, Bango and Bogum Boka *Keba*. Therefore impartial, able and experienced persons are generally appointed as *Gams*.

1. Procedure for Selection of Gaon Burah

1. A person to be proposed for an appointment as *Gam* of the village will be unanimously selected by prominent village elders, panchayat leaders and every adult member of the village in a meeting. The selected person will only be eligible for proposal to the Deputy Commissioner/SDO for his appointment as *Gam* of the village

2. Appointment based on political grounds or by nepotism is not recognized by the society.

2. Duties of Gaon Burah

1. *Gams* shall be neutral in giving decisions.

2. Shall not commit any offence that effect moral turpitude.

3. Shall not abet and instigate any crime also and encouragement any kind of dispute within society.

4. While meeting with officers/dignitaries, they should not carry weapons like Dao, gun lathis etc.

5. In the *Keba* or in any official program they should not be in inebriated condition.

6. They should wear their official red dress on all official occasions.

7. Shall not use official dress in their daily activities, neither should they lend nor give their official red dress to anyone.

8. Shall not play active role in politics.

9. Must be well versed in customary laws.

10. They should be literate enough to read and write in Hindi or English.

11. Shall not accept or receive gratifications of any form from the disputing parties.

12. Shall not visit or participate at the feast arrange by the disputing parties before *Keba* is settled.

3. Charges (Urgoni) and Fine in the Keba

1. *Keba* charges (*URGONI*) shall be deposited by the parties before the commencement of the *Keba* proceeding.

2. *Keba* charges will be depends on the magnitude of the dispute.

3. After the issue of summon (*PORWANA*), the parties who are unable to attend the *Keba* should intimate the *Keba* authority before two or three days in village level *Keba* and five to six days in case of Banngo/district level *Keba*.

4. In default of appearance a sum of Rs. 1000 shall be imposed if proved that the summon (*PORWANA*) has been duly receipt by such defaulter.

5. If the opposite party/Dependant does not respond the summon/*Porwana* for three consecutive times, on the fourth occasion the dispute shall be proceeded in his absent.

6. If any person found to be disobedient with the *Gams* or the habitually indiscipline in the society, his or her matter shall not be entertained in by the village authority. But if the complaint is lodges against him the *Keba* may be conducted against such person.

REPEALED RULE AND PRACTICES OF GALO COMMUNITY BY BOGUM BOKA

1. Naval marriage, marriage fixed in the mother womb is prohibited.

2. A girl cannot be married forcefully without her consent or willingness.

3. Without the willingness or consent of a boy or girl, marriage proposal cannot be done.

4. Marriage to a daughter in lieu of a debt is abolished.

5. The system of traditional civil war or waging war against each individual and society thereby trespass their respective perimeter of dwelling place is abolished/banned.

6. Conduct of critical hosting and chanting by priest in between the family of bride and bridegroom during the marriage ceremonial of Mithun sacrifice shall be strictly prohibited/banned.
7. Conduct of tedious ritual ceremony (puja) against each individual and society shall be strictly prohibited.

2.5. RESTRICTION BY BOGUM BOKA

1. Slaughter of more than 10 (ten) Mithuns is restricted.
2. Love affairs between same clan are prohibited.
3. Traditional puja performed to stop the continuous rain is prohibited.
4. More than 3 (Three) Mithun shall not be claimed by the bride party from the Mithuns sacrifice in the marriage proceeding (Togu Panam).

Likewise, above mentioned customary laws, there are many others customary laws of Galos for the wellbeing of the community. By the field study, records and observation, the Galos of leparada district and the other Galos in different Districts, there is one common Customary Laws of Bogum Boka in every village community. It is said that, when the Siang district was not separated, in the year 1947. For the first time Bogum Boka Keba was held in Pasighat¹⁹ and then in Panging after that in Dipa and lastly in Likabali. On that meeting every knowledgeable, wise, and who had personal integrity persons from circles and villages of Siang district discussed about many aspects like matrimonial activities, cost of Mithun and bridal, immovable properties, rate of fine in every crime, rate of brass bowl and plates, *Pipe-Roksin* (chicken liver examination) and so forth. After listening to the meeting of Bogum Boka Keba all villages and circles of the Galo community adopted the Bogum Boka. It is the reason behind the working of village council Adis and Galos are almost alike. After West and East Siang districts carved out of Siang district in 1996. At that time, the district headquarter of West Siang, Aalo under the chairmanship of Ex. M.L.A. Shri Boken Ete Bogum Boka Keba was held where every person with leadership quality, knowledgeable person from every village and circles of West Siang gathered and wrote the Bogum Boka (West Siang Customary Law) book and later they wrote 2nd and 3rd edition of Bogum Boka and Recently, in 2014 they brought 4th edition of the Bogum Boka in meeting held at R.K. mission, Aalo. where every knowledgeable and thoughtful people of West Siang gathered. Till, today leparada is following the Bogum Boka (Galo Customary Law) 4th edition in the village council/ Keba in the district since leparada is newly carved out from West Siang District in 2014 and finally from Lower Siang in 2018 by Arunachal Pradesh (Re-organization of Districts) Amendment Act.

POWERS OF KEBA

Traditionally, the *Keba* has the power to regulate all aspects of community and individual life in the village, accordingly to the set codes of conduct and to punish who transgress these codes. This was ordained by the first *Keba*. It has no power to change or amend the society. However, on rare occasions a *Keba* modifies an outdated traditional code or develops a new one to meet new situations. Legally, the *Keba* as the village authority under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945, has the power to maintain watch and ward over the village and to try some civil and criminal cases. In respect of criminal cases over which it has its Jurisdiction, the *Keba* can impose a fine (murder) up to a maximum of two lakhs and in case of civil disputes; it has the power to settle a dispute. It has the power to settle a dispute without any limit as to its value.

In principle, almost every happening in the village, whether it primarily concerns the individual, family, clan, or the entire community, falls within the Jurisdiction of the *Keba*²⁰. An illustrative list of subjects, generally dealt by the *Keba* is given below:

- A. **Subjects concerning the community**
 1. Community Hunting (*Kiruk Rugnam*)
 2. Damming of streams (*Hibok penam*)

3. Community fencing (*Lub-Lura*)
4. Prevention of epidemics (*Ali-Ternam*)
5. Crop prevention (*Dir-Tachi/Ampu-Yulu*).
6. *Donyi-bo-nam* (community rites for sun during continuous rain for days together).
7. *Gumin Hoyin Keba* (deliberation for welfare of the community).
8. Purification rites and segregation for killing a tiger. (*Nyoho-Honam*)
9. All-important agricultural and religious ceremonies. (*Ridum-ame*)
10. All development activities concerning community.

B. Subjects concerning the individuals, Families and Clans

1. All disputes on land, financial transactions, ownership of cattle and marriage.
2. All crimes occurring in the village.
3. Inheritance and division of property.
4. Disobedience, approbation, injustice, divorce, separation, bride price etc.

C. Subjects with Jurisdiction of the Kebas

1. Works related to sessions of the *Keba*.
2. Execution of the decision of the *Keba*, wherever necessary.
3. Meeting the emergency in the village, such as fire accident etc.

The above list is illustrative and by no means of exhaustive. Nothing that concerns the village and the villagers is outside the Jurisdiction of the *Keba*. The *Keba* directs all the activities in the village. It watches over the wellbeing and welfare of the village community. All matters of common interest are placed before it for decision and nothing can be done without its approval and sanction. The opening of an agriculture plot, building of new houses, settling of new comers, and whatever else that concern the village, either individually or commonly, are discussed and decide by the *Keba*. It punishes the wrong doers and those who deviates from the right path in any way. Traditionally, the *Keba* looks after the day-to-day administration of the village.it decides where and when to clear the jungle for cultivation, where and in what manner the festival and the taboos are to be observed, where and when to conduct the community hunting and fishing and so on. It extends relief and help to person in distress. It also receives Government circulars and notices and informs the villagers of its concern. The *Keba* involves itself in all the developmental activities of the village such as construction of roads, paths, tracts and bridges, reclamation of lands, water supply, construction of school houses and the *Dere* etc. it also deals with all the political problems of the village. In the past, the *Keba* conducted war with other villages whenever necessary and organized the villagers in case of a threat to the village. Today, it maintains co-operation among the neighbouring villages and response the village in all forums outside the village²¹.

political institution of Galo society in west siang (*Leparada is a new district curved out of West siang*) and Arunachal Pradesh in general. It has given a new orientation to politics in Arunachal Pradesh. It has made it a political unit in the real sense of term instead of a group fragmented tribes and communities. It changed the political outlook of the leaders of the district and trained them to think in terms of district and the territory instead of village, community or the Tribe. It also broadened the political horizon of the people by forcing them to look beyond their community and brought them closer to the administration by filling the void between the Agency and the Village. It has succeeded in creating a set of state level Leadership through the various Panchayat bodies in the district that has served and brought many changes in the society.

These changes in the outlook of the Galos Tribe are accompanied by the similar changes in their traditional political institutions. The two higher level *Keba* the *Bango Keba* and the *Bogum Boka Keba* became the first casualty of the Panchayat Raj. Before the Panchayat Raj was introduced there 23 approx. recognized *Bango*

*Keba*²² functioning in the West siang District (now presently, separated into three Districts). The *Bogum Boka* for the erstwhile Siang District was Meeting with some regularity. The *Bangos* had certain definite villages within them and it even dealt with some developmental problems of the areas. Similarly, in the absence of popular bodies the *Bogum Boka* used to discuss the problems of the tribe and advice the administration in matters concerning the tribe. But after the introduction of Panchayats especially the Anchal Samiti the *Keba* became virtually defunct. Their developmental functions being taken over by the Anchal Samitis which enjoyed more prestige and there being less and less of inter-village disputes nowadays, the *Bango Keba* have ceased to function, although on occasional *Bango Keba* meeting is still held and although the villages in a former *Bango Keba* is still referred to as a group by the name of that Bango.

Similarly, the *Bogum Boka* which grew in importance under encouragement from the NEFA administration suffered a serious eclipse following the constitution of the Zila Parishads. In the village the panchayat have set in motion a number of changes in the political operatives of the *Keba*. Before the introduction of the new system the *Keba* operated to the basis of the solidarity of the village, unflinching loyalty of the individuals to the community, unanimity decisions and respect for age, experience and knowledge of the village elders.

The arrival of the new concept of election, representation, adult franchise, majority decisions and instant leadership has brought a lot change in the village politics. Although many Gams and intellectuals in these days are unwilling to accept this fact, some of the elder Gams of Piri, Sago and Pagi accept that there were a lot of changes in the working of the *Keba* after the Introduction of the Panchayats, Education and also enlightened villagers. The Panchayat Elections have paved the way for the political parties to enter village politics. The imposition of the newly formed Panchayat has made the *Keba* to share its one-time Unrivalled authority in the village. Many villages share a single Gram Panchayats among two or three of them. This has led to a clash between the long-standing independent status of the village and it's *Keba* with the newly constituted common body. There is also erosion of Jurisdiction and Authority. In many village *Keba* is now only left with Administration of justice and performance of religious rites. Although it still discusses certain issues relating development of the village yet the functions of the *Keba* are mainly confined to settling of disputes, decision to work on agricultural plots and performances of religious rites. This is due to the overtaking of developmental and some of the administrative functions of the *Keba* by the Gram Panchayat. There is also a growing tendency to evade or by pass the authority of the *Keba* noticed in many villages. Many villages in Leparada district these days does not always abide by the decision of the *Keba*, a situation almost unthinkable in pre-panchayat days. It is also found that the in some villages, these days, people take their judicial complaints to the court by passing the village *Keba*. Thus, the introduction of Panchayat Raj has brought a lot of changes in the *Keba* system of Galo community.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the traditional village council of Galo society in Leparada district, known as *Keba*. It essentially has a democratic type of council. It is in fact essentially a court of the people. The organization is concerned the *Keba* system organizes just like a pyramid. At the village level there is a *Bane* or *Dolu Keba*, the *Bango Keba* is at *Bango* level (inter village council) known as *Rego*, *Ego* and *Yama Bango* in the District, at appendix there is a *Bogum Boka Keba* (inter district council) still at Aalo H.Q. West siang District. Generally, all the structures, functions and powers of Galos does not differ. Since the highest council

in Galos is Bogum Boka. The leparada District adopted it too; Bogum Boka (Galo Customary Law) since before the separation of Districts.

Traditionally, the *Keba* has the power to regulate all aspects of community and individual life in the village, accordingly to the set codes of conduct and to punish who transgress these codes. This was ordained by the first *Keba*. It has no power to change or amend the society. However, on rare occasions today, a *Keba* modifies an outdated traditional code or develops a new one to meet new situations. Legally, the *Keba* as the village authority under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945, has the power to maintain watch and ward over the village and to try some civil and criminal cases. In respect of criminal cases over which it has its Jurisdiction, the *Keba* can impose a fine for murder up to a maximum of two lakhs or 10 Mithuns and in case of civil disputes; it has the power to settle a dispute. It has the power to settle a dispute without any limit as to its value.

The first modern political institution introduced in Arunachal Pradesh, has made a profound impact on the Traditional political institution of Galo society in *Leparada district* and Arunachal Pradesh in general. It has given a new orientation to politics in Arunachal Pradesh. It has made it a political unit in the real sense of term instead of a group fragmented tribes and communities. It changed the political outlook of the leaders of the district and trained them to think in terms of district and the territory instead of village, community or the Tribe. It also broadened the political horizon of the people by forcing them to look beyond their community and brought them closer to the administration by filling the void between the Agency and the Village. It has succeeded in creating a set of state level Leadership through the various Panchayat bodies in the district that has served and brought many changes in the society.

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The arrival of the new concept of election, representation, adult franchise, majority decisions and instant leadership has brought a lot change in the village politics. Although many Gams and intellectuals in these days are unwilling to accept this fact, some of the elder Gams and Piri, Sago and Pagi accept that there were a lot of changes in the working of the *Keba* after the Introduction of the Panchayats, Education but also enlightened villagers. The Panchayat Elections have paved the way for the political parties to enter village politics. The imposition of the newly formed Panchayat has made the *Keba* to share its one-time Unrivalled authority in the village. Many villages share a single Gram Panchayats among two or three of them. This has led to a clash between the long-standing independent status of the village and it's *Keba* with the newly constituted common body. There is also erosion of Jurisdiction and Authority of the *Keba*. In many villages of Leparada District it is now only left with Administration of justice and *Kebas* are mainly confined to settling of disputes, decision to work on agricultural plots and performances of other solemn ceremony or act. This is due to the overtaking of developmental and some of the administrative functions of the *Keba* by the Gram Panchayat. There is also a growing tendency to evade or bypass the authority of the *Keba* noticed in many villages. Many villages in Leparada district these days does not always abide by the decision of the *Keba*, a situation almost unthinkable in pre-panchayat days. It is also found that in some villages of Leparada District and in others, these days, people take their judicial complaints to the court by passing the village council. Thus, the introduction of Panchayat Raj has brought a lot of changes in the *Keba* system of Galo community.

There was no appellate body where one could appeal against the verdict of the village council or *Keba*. One had to obey the decision of the *Keba* whether he liked it or not. The concept of appealing to the higher authorities was made known to the people with the implementation of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. Because the regulation though recognised the traditional village council yet it did not empower them as the supreme authority. The regulation had made many additions and deletion in the customary norms of the Galo society of Lepa Rada District.

In the past, punishment in Galo society of the district ranged from throwing the offender alive into a river as a simple token of fine, to the principle of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth was mostly practiced. However, at present only fine is imposed depending upon the motive of the culprit to commit crimes. There are two types of fine imposed; first, if the damage or loss is caused to an individual the fine collected is given to the victim. Second, if the damage or loss is caused to an individual but at the same time, if the culprit violates the general principles of the society, the person has to pay dual fine once to the individual victim and other to the community as a whole.

A regulation was amended, it did not entirely brought tribal people into a modern legal system but it was an attempt to make the tribal people aware of the modern legal system so that gradually they would be acquainted with the uniform legal mechanism of the country. The regulation was amended in 2005 which is known as Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, Amendment (Act) 2005. The amendment brought many changes. The administration of justice in the state in general and Galo tribe in particular and is still guided by the principles of Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945.

However, over time the modern legal system in operation in India started to function in the state with the establishment of a permanent branch of the Guwahati high court at Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh) in 2001. There have been a gradual development of a system in the state, and the state government in consultation with Guwahati high court has created many other sub-ordinate courts. It has changed the aged practice of justice deliberation in the state. Thus, today both Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 and formal legal system in operation in India co-exist in Leparada District, Arunachal Pradesh.

However, some sort of function adjustment has taken place between the old and new leaders. Hence there are no serious conflict among them. In order to understand whether introduction of Panchayats have brought some modernizing effects on the functioning of the Gaon Burahs, Panchayat leaders, and villagers and intellectuals were asked about their perception on Traditional village council. Most of the respondents accepted that *Keba* has a very immediate decision and friendly for the villagers. The expenses are not much as compared to even the session court of a state. But some had criticism on that saying, though, it is more affordable and friendly to villagers. *Keba* is effective for only minor crimes but less effective for major crimes. For example, they mentioned for murder or rape a council will ask for fine's when found someone guilty for the crime and after paying the fine, the guilty just have to do some rituals. Somewhere it is the cause of people today choosing to approach Governmental Courts rather than the *Keba*.

Recently, the Arunachal Pradesh Gazette, the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in the sixth session of the Seventh Legislative Assembly on the 12th April 2021 passed the Act, The Arunachal Pradesh Civil Court Act, where the Village councils of the State to be the Lowest Court. It is an Act to consolidate the law relating to Civil Courts and for establishment of various Civil Courts for speedy disposal of Civil Cases in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and matters connected there with.²³

SUGGESTIONS

The Functioning of the Tribal Village Council have great potentialities. Established in history and tradition, supported by social and religious sanctions, expression of a genuine democracy representing the cooperative and communal temperament of the people, they can be used not only to support law and order but also to further the progress of development throughout the tribal areas. The *Keba* plays a huge in the deliberation of justice in the Galo society of Leparada District. Every type of cases are tried by it in the leparada District. But in these modern days, in terms of serious crimes *Keba* sometimes leaves the justifications on the Hands of higher authority (Government courts). Crimes like Murder and Rape has a very ease punishment in Codified Rules. A criminal ruining the lives of others are easily left and forgiven by the Tribal Council after some fines of Mithuns, Cows, Brass Plates, Bowls and Beads. Some of the suggestions for the strengthening and revival of the tribal council are as follows:

1. The punishment for the major crimes should be remodelled.
2. Abuse of *Keba* as a means of Income should be checked.

3. The punishment of Keba has not been changed since times immemorial, the punishment awarded by it should be changed with the Modern times, specially that of the crimes like Rape and Murder.
4. According to AFR 1945, the retirement age of Gams/Gaon Buras is not mentioned. The Gams should be retired after a certain age. Due to none retirement of Gams, some of the old Gams of 70-80 years of age lose hearing and have no boldness in speaking. Therefore, sometimes they just agree with the majority and qualifications of Gams should be minimum matrix pass in order at least they can read and write.
5. There is no uniformity in punishment system. There should be strong body who looks after the implementation of the Bogum Boka (Customary Law Book).

¹ Dubey Sanjay "Local Government and Tribal Indigenous Governance". 1991 pp. 2.1-2.2.

² Opcit....1991. p. 2.3

³ <https://www.ne.cab.the-galo/>. retrieved, 25th June, 2022.

⁴ Tobom Riram, V.P. GHSS, Basar interviewed on, Basar interviewed on 25th June,2022.

⁵ Lego. N "Local Self Government in Arunachal Pradesh". Jumbo Gumin Publishers and Distributors, Itafort Road, C-Sector, Arunachal Pradesh.2018. p. 11.

⁶ Momar Riba: G.B. office secretary, Leparada District interviewed on 24th June,2022.

⁷ <https://www.ne.cab.the-galo/> retrieved, 1st July, 2022

⁸ Henka Basar. General secretary, AAPATSU interview on 21st June, 2022.

⁹ Eshi, Genya. Research entitled "impact of Grassroot level of modern political institutions on traditional village council of Galo society. 2020. pp. 29-31.

¹⁰ Marbom Angu: Ex Anchal Samiti member, Sago Circle, Leparada district interview on 28th June,2022.

¹¹ Momar Riba: G.B. office secretary, Leparada District interviewed on 24th June,2022.

¹² ibid....interviewed on 24th June,2022

¹³ Eshi, Genya. Research entitled "impact of Grassroot level of modern political institutions on traditional village council of Galo society. 25th August 2020. pp. 33-37.

¹⁴ Danggen, Bani. "Logical Approach to Local self Government in the light of Independent Council and panchayat Raj of Arunachal Pradesh". Preety Publishers and Distributors, Itanagar. Third Edition:2017. pp.46-48.

¹⁵ Ete, Liya. "Galo Customary Law". Fourth Edition, pp. 1-4.

Momar Riba: G.B. office secretary, Leparada District interviewed on 24th June,2022

¹⁶ Danggen, Bani. "Logical Approach to Local self Government in the light of Independent Council and panchayat Raj of Arunachal Pradesh". Preety Publishers and Distributors, Itanagar. Third Edition:2017. Pp.49-50.

¹⁷ Momar Riba: G.B. office secretary, Leparada District interviewed on 24th June,2022

¹⁸ Ete, Liya. "Galo Customary Law". Fourth Edition, pp. 1-4.

¹⁹ Ete, Liya. "Galo Customary Law". Fourth Edition, pp.00. Menji Hinam Agom.

²⁰ Pakjum Lendo: PRT teacher GHSS, Basar. Leparada District interview on 26th June 2022.

²¹ Momar Riba: G.B. office secretary, Leparada District interviewed on 24th June,2022.

²² Eshi, Genya. Research entitled "impact of Grassroot level of modern political institutions on traditional village council of Galo society. 25th August 2020. pp. 51-79.

²³ Gamken Bam. Advocate, interviewed on 29th June.