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TRIBAL MARRIAGE: A STUDY OF RECIPROCAL GIFT-GIVING AND BRIDE PRICE OF GALO TRIBE OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Abstract

Like various other tribal people, for Galo people also marriage is a very special occasion for merriment and feast. As a significant part of Galo cultures and traditions, it reflects the singularity, uniqueness and richness of the Galo as a separate tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. The reciprocal gift-giving and bride price are the two important components of Galo marriage system which are exchanged during and after marriage ceremony between bride and groom's parents and kin. These two also act as one of the determinants of matrimonial relationship between the two families in the olden days. Likewise, dissatisfaction or discontentment arising out of these components sometimes become a serious bone of contention leading to a discord in the conjugal relation. On the whole, there are two categories of reciprocal gift-giving namely edible and non-edible items while only one type of bride price exist in Galo marriage system. These are given in the form of livestock, goods, etc. and in modern times, even money is also given as bride price instead of live animals.

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Introduction

Among the Northeast States of India, Arunachal Pradesh is one such state which has highest number of diverse ethnic groups each having their own distinct cultures, traditions, indigenous religions and languages. And of these tribes, the *Galo* is one of the major tribes in the state having a total population of 1, 12,272 as per 2011 Census. They belong to Tibeto-Burman group of Mongoloid stock. Their rich and age-old cultural heritage and oral traditions have been continuing through words of mouth from generation to generation. *Jimi* better known as *Jimi Ane* (mother) is considered as their creator and they claim to have originated from her progeny *Tani* better known as *Abo Tani*. This claim is corroborated in their origin myth which clearly

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stipulates that *Jimi* created *Medo* (sky) and *Sichi* or *Sisi* (earth), and from their union *Medo* and *Sisi* emerged and they started the human race. Their first offspring was *Sibuk* who gave birth to *Buksin*, *Buksin* was succeeded by *Sintu*; *Sintu* was succeeded by *Turi* and *Turi* was succeeded by *Rini* or *Tani* (*Abo Tani*), the father of human race (Nyori 1993:40). There are also other versions of their origin but their evolution from *Jimi* and counting of genealogy from *Abo Tani* onwards are not different in all other versions. Therefore, such variations in all these versions do not make any difference in their origin myth. Before 2012, the *Galo* tribe was one of the major sub-tribes of *Adi* tribe and for that reason British used to call them *Abor*, *Doba-Abor* and *Gallong Abor* during their regime in India. But these terms or nomenclatures were regarded as derogatory by them. Hence, after independence, these terms were removed and changed to *Adi* which simply means “Hillman” (Nyori 1993: 25) and all sub-tribes of *Adi* tribe were called *Adi-Gallong*, *Adi-Minyong*, *Adi-Padam*, *Adi-Bori*, etc. From ‘*Adi*’, ‘*Adi-Gallong*’ or ‘*Galong*’ to finally ‘*Galo*’ was done vide the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2011, (No. 2 of 2012) on 8th January, 2012. At present, the majority of the *Galos* are living in four districts such as Lower Siang, Lepa Rada West Siang and Upper Subansiri of Arunachal Pradesh. In addition, they have started to settle in many other parts of the state like the Capital Complex, Papum Pare, East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, Namsai, East Kameng, Changlang, etc.

Marriage is a very special ceremony in the *Galo* society. It is called *Nyim Lanam* or *Nyib Inam* in *Galo* dialect. The *Galo* marriage system is significant as it reflects the singularity, uniqueness and richness of the tribe and stand apart from several other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh as well as India. So, it is one of their important identity markers that make them socially and culturally different from rest of the *Tani* tribe.¹ Of the different attributes of *Galo* marriage system, gifts and bride price exchanged between *Daapo* (bride’s group) and *Daane* (groom’s group)² are very interesting and important as well.

The main purpose of this paper is to present the ethnographic account of the gift-giving and bride price prevalent among the *Galo* people. A *Galo* marriage popularly known as *Togu Panam*³, in particular, can’t be thought of without mutual exchange of gifts between the two marriage groups. Many elders even recollect historical facts related to past marriages which materialised largely to receive traditional and valuable antique items as gifts and bride price in return.⁴ Thus, gift-giving and bride price have been the significant constituents of *Galo* marriage system since time immemorial.

The institution of marriage occupies an important place in the *Galo* society as it is with all other societies. Indeed, it is an essential part of their socio-cultural system. Basically, the *Galo* marriage is a civil social contract with mutual consent between man and woman not only for sexual enjoyment and legalised procreation, but also for establishment of wider social relationship. In the past, marriage was treated as a permanent one among

them because in the event of death of husband, unmarried brother used to become husband of the widow though it is hardly continued in the present time. Their society is purely patriarchal in nature and many of them also practice polygyny, a system of marriage in which a man can have more than one wife at a time. Nevertheless, polygyny has also become a thing of the past now.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the paper are:

- i. To understand the *Galo* marriage system,
- ii. To understand the reciprocal gift-giving and bride price of the *Galo*,
- iii. To examine the significance and impact of reciprocal gift-giving and bride price on the *Galo* society in the present time.

Methodology

This paper is the result of an empirical study carried out on *Galo* marriage system among the community people. The main and primary source of study is based on oral literatures and traditions of the tribe. Undeniably, there is no any detailed anthropological works on their marriage so far. A few articles related to some aspects of their marriage have been written by some research scholars and academicians as insiders but no exhaustive works are available on the theme. Hence, the researcher relied on primary source of data and had to do some fieldworks for this study. For the fieldworks, the research investigator visited a few selected *Galo* villages such as Seren, Old Deka, New Deka and Garu in Lower Siang district; New Dari in Lepa Rada district; Bagra, Angu, Doji, Kombo, Kamba, Potom and Liromoba in West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. And as many as thirty reknown community elders have been met and interviewed to collect the required data. These community elders are knowledge-holders who are better and locally known as *Nyibo* (Priest) and *Nyikok* (Orator).⁵ Some marriage ceremonies especially *Togu Panam* organised by some familie at different points of time were attended and observed to know the details of the topic under study. In addition, a few scanty secondary sources partly related to the topic were also checked and studied thoroughly.

Literature Review

Marriage, in most of the societies, is viewed as a social institution and entry into marriage is seen as a response to social norms. According to Paul (2007: 13-14), the word 'marriage' may be meant to signify action, contract, formality or ceremony by which the marital union is formed or the union itself as a lasting condition. Marriage is one of the universal social institutions.

According to Nyokir (2019: 4) the novel *Bride Price* written by Lummar Dai which was translated by Jogendra Nath reveals the system of bride price and its evil effects on the society as its major thematic concern. The issue of child marriage and disgusting social practice of giving and taking bride price prevalent among the *Adis* have delineated through the protagonist Gumba who becomes a victim of social custom of child marriage. Her marriage was fixed at such tender age when she was hardly able to understand anything. The novel tells a poignant story of a woman who stands against the patriarchal chauvinism to make her own identity.

In context of institution of marriage and family in India, Kapadia (1966: 167-168) described marriage as “a socially approved union of men and women aiming at ‘dharma’, procreation, sexual pleasure and observance of certain social obligations”.

The foundation for the scientific study of kinship and marriage has been laid by Morgan in his *System of Consanguinity and Affinity of Human Family* (1871: 16-70). In his work, Morgan collected data on the terminological systems from his collection for almost all major parts of the world. He assembled the terminologies into great categories, the ‘Descriptive’ one, which he attributed to the Aryan, Semitic and Uritic linguistic families, and the ‘Classificatory’ one which he considered were characteristics of the American Indian, the Polynesians, and many other people of Asia.

Peter B. Hammond (1971: 176) remarks in his book that, “The majority in every society live most of their lives in domestic groups formed and maintained in response to the fundamental human need to co-operate sexually and emotionally, economically and socially in bearing and raising children. The most elementary and widespread of these domestic groups (or residential kin groups) is the nuclear family, composed of a man and his wife and their children”.

Yankappa in his *Dowry System among the Scheduled Castes in India* (2000: 79) specifies the three purposes that transacted gifts may serve: Firstly, they are means of directly compensating the daughter for her lack of right of inheritance. In Indian context, the relationship between the father and daughter is so delicate and affectionate that to transfer her from the natal household to the conjugal household needs some inducements and it cannot be empty handed. Secondly, the parents of girl hope that if they send enough gifts or dowry to her in-laws, the latter will treat her well. Thirdly, the richer and heavier the quantum of gifts that a family is able to give to bridegroom and his kins, the greater will be its prestige and fame in the relations and the better its chances of marrying other daughter(s) off, if any into the families of higher esteem or standing. It is noteworthy to mention that whatever things are transferred, along with her to bridegroom’s household, will be at public gaze. It is to be displayed to the kith and kin, assembled in her conjugal household.

Mauss (1970: 37-41) traces the gift making to antiquities. The central hypothesis he holds for his study, the Gift is that the archaic forms of exchange with its three obligations of giving, receiving, repaying is an aspect of almost all societies and it strengthens social bonds. Any type of gift exchange is viewed as at once, religious, legal, moral, economic, aesthetic, morphological, and mythological in significance.

With regard to marriage payment and bride price, Murdock (1967: 92-93) in his *Ethnographic Atlas* highlighted that most societies, at some point in their history, have been characterised by payments at the time of marriage. Such payments typically go hand-in-hand with marriages arranged by the parents of the respective spouses. These marriage payments come in various forms and sizes but can be classified into two broad categories: transfers from the family of the bride to that of the groom, broadly termed as “dowry,” or from the groom’s side to the bride’s, broadly termed as “brideprice.” Brideprice occurs in two-thirds of societies.

Anderson in his paper *The Economics of Dowry and Brideprice* (2007: 154) has written that the marriage payments are pervasive though many empirical studies haven’t been done on marriage payments. These marriage payments can be large enough to affect savings patterns and have implications for the distribution of wealth across families and generations. He provides a sense of the magnitudes involved and shows marriage transfers from the groom’s side and vice versa.

Some secondary works on *Galo* marriage system are available but works on marriage gifts and bride price are almost scanty. A few works related to *Galo* tribe though not related to theme under study have been reviewed. L.R.N. Srivastava’s *The Gallongs* (1988), T. Nyori’s *History and Culture of the Adis* (1993), Tomo Riba’s *The Tribals and Their Changing Environment: A Case Study of Galos of West Siang District* (2003), T. Mibang and M.C. Behera edited *Marriage and Culture: Reflection from Tribal Societies of Arunachal Pradesh, Vol - I & II* (2006) and S.H.M. Rizvi and Shibani Roy’s *Adi Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* (2006) have been consulted. However, none of these works provide much information about the marriage gifts of the *Galo* marriage system. Hence, this research has tried to begun the process of filling the gap as there has been no comprehensive research study or systematic data-collection on the issue by any scholar or researcher to date.

Reciprocal Gift-Giving

Before understanding the details and various attributes of reciprocal gift-giving and bride price, it is important to know about the types of *Galo* marriage ceremony as these also determine the number and kind of gifts that would be reciprocated. However, it has no direct link with bride price of the community. Generally, there are four ways to organise a marriage ceremony in the *Galo* society. These are briefly outlined below:

a) ***Karte***

This type of marriage ceremony is mostly organised and performed by rich and eminent people since it involves *Hob Panam*.⁶ Both bride and groom perform many rituals in this marriage ceremony particularly if it is a *Togu Panam*. Many valuable ornaments like *Lisum*, *Likar*, *Bati*, *Barte*, *Barko*, *Bere*, etc. and other traditional items are also exchanged for *Hob* (mithun), *Ho* (cow), *Erek* (pig), *Opo* (rice beer), etc. *Togu* is performed after a confirmation through performance of *Piip Chikanam* (egg divination) or *Ro Kokkanam* (hepatoscopy) and it also depends on the consent of bride's parents and willingness of village folks to cooperate. Different rituals are mandated to be performed in this marriage ceremony.⁷

b) ***Karo***

Karo is another marriage ceremony which is almost similar to *Karte* but *Togu Nyida* is not mandatory. However, expenditures incurred in *Karo* do not differ vastly from *Karte*. The only difference is that *Hob Panam* (mithun sacrifice) is excluded in this category.⁸

c) ***Karmik***

In *Karmik* marriage, *Guddu Jete* (a kind of ritual) related to *Uyu* (deity) of the marriage is performed but *Togu* is not a part of the ceremony. *Guure Bagre* which is similar to *Guddu Jete* in creating enthusiasm is the main attraction of *Karmik*. Since *Togu* is not a part of *Karmik* most of the ritualistic performances mandatorily performed in *Togu Panam* are conspicuously absent here. There is a provision of reciprocal gift-giving in *Karmik* but it is limited in comparison to *Karte* and *Karo*.⁹

d) ***Karsuk***

This is the last but simplest of all types of marriage ceremony. At its easiest way, one can just arrange a feast by performing a simple ritual known as *Laayap* in which a fowl (white one) popularly called *Agam Porok* is sacrificed by a priest who blessed the couple and also connect the bride's genealogy with the genealogy of groom's family and clan. And two bunches of fowl's feathers are pasted in the hair of both bride and groom using a *Yirken* (traditional adhesive used for religious purposes). It is done to signify that the couple has been recognised and they can stay together for rest of their lives. Generally, poor people perform *Karsuk* for lack of traditional ornaments and money. According to Ori (2011: 39-41), this type of marriage ceremony does not require any special place to organise while the other three types of marriage stated above can be organised only where there is provision of *Udu Nyode*, *Iju Reebuu* and *Reete Bakte* (portions of house used for religious ceremonies).¹⁰

According to *Galo* customary law, all movable properties especially traditionally valuable objects such as beads, brass plates and bowls belong to the daughter(s). On the other hand, all immovable properties such as parental home, land, jhum fields and gardens, etc. belong to the son(s). These traditionally valuable items are gifted to daughter either during or after their marriage. But this tradition of gift-giving between the families of bride and groom are reciprocal in nature. In other words, gifts given by bride's parents have to be reciprocated with live domestic or semi-domestic animals, meat, fish and local beer, etc. in accordance with the customary law. In fact, reciprocal gift-giving and bride price are important components of *Galo* marriage system as a whole, and gift-giving, in particular, was instrumental in determining the matrimonial relationship established between two families in the pre-industrial stage of *Galo* civilization. This gift-giving is commonly known as *Lamo-Monam*. Basically, there are two major categories of gift-giving among the *Galos*.

1. First gift items comprised of edible items only. It can be meat of mithun, pig, cow, fowl, fish (either raw or dried meat or fish) and local beer (*Opo* and *Poka*) offered to bride's parents by groom's parents. These gift items can be offered by the daughter and son-in-law continuously in their life-time not only to her parents but also to their kith and kin. All these gifts are presented by the groom and his family (*Daapo*) and these need to be reciprocated with traditional objects mentioned in second point given below. In this connection, the traditional valuable items fixed for each *Hob* (mithun) during *Togu Panam* may be taken as an instance. As per *Galo* customary laws, each mithun sacrificed at the *Hogi* (altar) by bride's family and relatives is reciprocated and compensated with equivalent traditional valuable items by bride's parents. The value of one mithun is equivalent to one *Hotam* (brass item), one *Ponyo* (brass item), one *Dumbo* (brass item), one *Hopin* (a *Jera*, cloth), one *Egi* (axe) and combination of forty numbers of *Churgen*, *Tekom* and *Nyaar* (brass items). Precisely, a *Hotam* should be a best *Barko* (brass plate) if possible, but at least, it can also be a good *Barli* (brass plate). The highest one is a *Barte* (brass plate). A *Ponyo* should be an *Iri* and a *Dumbo* can be a *Rolo Bati* or *Tarbuk Bati* or *Talo* (brass bowls). It means if ten mithuns are sacrificed then the bride's parents and kins have to offer traditional valuable items corresponding to ten times the value of a single mithun as stated above.¹¹
2. Second gift items comprised of non-edible items. Generally, there are three kinds of traditional valuable objects which are grouped here:

a. *Hib-Bembo*

It includes traditional valuable items such as *Barli*, *Barko*, *Barte*, etc. (brass plates), *Rolo* or *Tarbuk Bati*, *Talo*, etc. (brass bowls).¹²

b. **Aj-Ape**

It includes other variety of traditional valuable items such as *Churgen / Hurgen, Tekom, Iri, Nyaar*, etc. (brass items).¹³

c. **Gums-Dogmin**

It includes all varieties of costly beads such as *Bugji-Bukka, Dogne, Duli, Hij, Haar, Lisum, Mampu / Chumpu / Dogpin, Namsi-Taya, Taor*, etc.¹⁴

All these traditional valuable items mentioned above come under the domain of bride's parents (*Daane*). During marriage ceremony, bride's parents offer several traditionally valuable objects in accordance with their customary laws in return for all edible items and live animals they have received from groom's parents. Even after marriage, when both daughter and son-in-law come and offer edible items like meat and local beer, they have to be gifted with traditional objects in return. Hence, the tradition of gift-giving among the *Galo* is purely reciprocal and not at all free of cost. Of all these gift items, the most important ones for daughter is that of *Gums-Dogmin* especially *Lisum-Likar* which again include several varieties of costly traditional beads. Hence, the information in terms of exchange or reciprocal values of these traditional beads calls for abridgment as discussed herein.

Lisum-Likar

As already discussed above *Lisum-Likar* comes under the umbrella term *Goms-Dogmin* and it is also commonly known as *Tadok*. It is highly priced and valued gift items inherited by daughter from her parents as a rule from a mother during or after marriage ceremony. But it has also to be reciprocated with edible items and live mithuns or cows. Precisely, if a daughter and son-in-law and their parents want to take the ownership of these valuable items, then required numbers of live mithuns, live cows, roasted pig (whole body) and huge quantity of *Opo* have to be offered to bride's or daughter-in-law's parents. This *Lisum-Likar* as special gift has three other sub-types which correspond to the reciprocal gifts received:

i. ***Lisum-Sumken/Humken***

The transactional or reciprocal gifts such as two live mithuns and two cows have to be offered by the groom's family (or daughter and son-in-law) to bride's parents to get one set of traditional expensive beads called *Lisum*. In this case, a variation is seen among the *Galos* of Aalo and Kamba areas. In contrast to *Galos* of other areas, groom's family used to offer brass plates and bowls like two *Iri*, two *Malo*, two *Barko* and two piece of *Bele* along with two live mithuns and two cows to bride's family and kins.¹⁵

ii. ***Lisum Sumken and Likar Karken***

The reciprocal gifts such as six live mithuns and six live cows have to be given to daughter-in-law's or bride's parents by the son-in-law and his family to receive one set each of traditional costly beads called *Lisum* and *Likar*.¹⁶

iii. ***Lisum Sumnyi and Likar Karnyi***

Ten mithuns and ten cows are offered by groom's family (or daughter and son-in-law) to bride's family to receive two sets each of traditional expensive beads called *Lisum* and *Likar*. In this case too, a variation is found as groom's family in Aalo and Kamba areas used to offer brass plates and bowls such as four *Barko*, one *Barte*, one *Barli*, four *Malo*, four *Iri*, and eight pieces of *Bele* in addition ten mithuns and ten cows to bride's family as specified above.¹⁷

In addition to above discussed gifts, some more traditional items like *Malo*, *Ugi*, *Tompila*, *Pason*, *Golpot*, *Rajbelle*, *Lemen*, *Kope*, *Kopulagbu*, *Teloh*, etc. are also gifted to *Dune-Magbo* (daughter, son-in-law and even to their children) from time to time when they visit daughter's parental home.¹⁸

Bride Price

The term 'Bride Price' is the transfer of livestock, goods and nowadays even money extended by the groom and his parents to the parents and relatives of bride. It is also called differently as bride wealth, bride token or marriage wealth by different communities of the world. There are reasons for removing the term from the ethnological literature as it underscores only one function of this wealth, an economic one, and excludes the other important functions; and at worst, it urges common people to consider that 'price' used in this perspective is similar to 'purchase' in general English parlance. Hence, we find people believing that wives are bought and sold in Africa in much the same manner as commodities are bought and sold in European markets (Evan-Pritchard, 1931: 36). According to Evan-Pritchard, there has been a considerable amount of discussion of late about an alternative expression for "bride-price" to refer to the wealth which is handed over by a groom or his parents to the parents or kin of his wife before and during marriage. Several African educationists and ethnologists took part and a number of terms were proposed in the discussion. Nowadays, even *Galo* people especially women intellectuals and activists question the authenticity of using this term and suggest alternative expressions. They considered it derogatory as it gives a sense that a bride is a kind of commodity similar to other commodities available in markets.

1. In *Galo* dailect, it is called '*Ome Arreh*' or '*Ome Hojo*'. Here the word '*Ome*' literally means daughter, '*Arreh*' means value or price and '*Hojo*' means cost of upbringing. Accordingly, it implies – (i) the value or price of a daughter and (ii) the cost of parental upbringing. According to *Galo* customary law, bride price is a common and mandatory price

which is given to bride's parents by groom's parents. It is fixed and uniformly applies to all *Galos*. It consists of two live domestic cows and two semi-domestic mithuns (*bos frontalis*) respectively. However, nowadays, money is also given instead of these animals. And the monetary values of these animals have also been fixed by the *Galo* elders.¹⁹

Impact of Gift-Giving and Bride Price

As evident from the field data, reciprocal gift-giving and bride price are integral part of marriage ceremony and have profound impacts on *Galo* society as a whole. Both positive and negative impacts are discernible, although some of these become irrelevant today.

Positive impact

- i. Reciprocal gift-giving and bride price are important components of *Galo* marriage system. While reciprocal gift-giving is mandatory in three forms of marriage ceremony except *Karsuk*, bride price has to be paid mandatorily to bride's parents. But nowadays, some parents decline it and blessed the newlywed couples to have a blissful conjugal existence.²⁰
- ii. The practice of gift-giving and bride price is a true reflection of continuing *Galo* cultures and traditions. Any marriage ceremony bereft of these two aspects is not considered a true marriage socially and traditionally.²¹
- iii. The reciprocal gift-giving and bride price also build a stronger marital bond between wife and husbands and their families as well. Moreover, as per the customary laws of their society, it is not easy to snap the marital bond once the gifts are transacted and bride price is paid because whosoever (husband or wife) is responsible for marriage discord or breakup and discontinuance of conjugal relation shall have to return all gifts received or forfeit the bride price paid during marriage. Such penalty is an established convention among them.²²
- iv. It not only create festive milieu during marriage ceremony but also foster healthy attachment, fellow-feeling, sense of belongingness and familial obligation not only between the two families and their kins but also among the members of two clans. It is not just a 'give and take' kind of practice but done in a systematic and convincing way to satisfy the aspirations and expectations of two marriage groups. Generally, bride price and more specifically the gifts are transacted through *Yaan* (marriage song) which adds charm and pleasant entertainment to the ceremony. And in doing so, it also sustains the age-old traditional marriage songs concurrently.²³

- v. Transaction of some gifts is optional for the marriage ceremony in which mithuns are not sacrificed. As such, the bride's parents are not under compulsion to offer all kinds traditionally valuable gifts to groom and his family. However, the bride price is mandatory for all marriage ceremonies.²⁴
- vi. Gift-giving upholds the value and utility of traditionally valuable objects among the community people.

Negative impact

- i. Sometimes reciprocal gift-giving and bride price also become a cause of discord and discontentment between the two marriage families. It happens when poor quality or counterfeiting traditionally valuable items are offered or required quantity of valuable items are not given to groom's family. At times, controversy also crop up because of shortfall in edible items.²⁵
- ii. In modern time, money also started to play a crucial role in *Galo* marriage ceremony. Many affluent *Galos* without inheriting any traditionally valuable objects from their parents also started to purchase counterfeiting ones available in the markets of neighbouring states and country like Assam and Myanmar and use them during their marriage ceremony. It is the influence of consumer culture in the lives of *Galos* today.²⁶

Consumer culture and Galo Marriage

Consumer culture focuses on the spending of the customer's money on material goods to attain a lifestyle in a capitalist economy (wikipedia: accessed on 24 September 2020). The term consumer culture points to the impact of mass consumption on everyday life which has led to the gearing of social activities around the accumulation and consumption of an ever-increasing range of goods and experiences. New modes of cultural representation ensure the proliferation of images which saturate the fabric of social life with a melee of signs and messages which summon up new expressive and hedonistic definitions of the good life. Consumer culture cannot however be equated with contemporary culture per se, its transformative efforts encounter stubborn resistance from both the residue of tradition and the new set of oppositional practices and counter-tendencies it generates (Featherstone, 1983:4). The impact of market and consumer culture on gift-giving and bride price of *Galo* tribe is well discernible especially in the contemporary marriage ceremonies. Both positive and negative aspects are evident. The availability and accessibility of beads and brass items in the markets of neighbouring areas of Assam and Myanmar led to their enormous procurement and use in marriage ceremonies nowadays. As a result, today, many well-off families can give their consent for

organising *Togu Panam* without having any original and traditional valuable items in their possession. Whereas five or six decades ago, it was only those socially recognised and affluent families who agreed to organise *Togu Panam* for their daughters. Similarly, only wealthy parents of groom could ever think of organising it for the number of mithuns and several other expenses required which again had to be paid only in the form of traditional valuable items in those days. Another resultant outcome of consumer market is the use of money in the whole arrangement of marriage ceremony. The age-old practice of giving live mithuns, cows, etc. as bride price can be replaced with money nowadays. And many gift items available in the markets such as gold ring, gold chain, clothes, etc. have started to be presented to the marrying couple during their marriage ceremony. Thus, several new trends have set in the traditional *Galo* marriage which conspicuously manifests the influence of modern markets and consumer culture. The negative aspect of consumer culture on *Galo* marriage are perceptible in terms of common use of counterfeiting beads and brass items as gift items, extensive use of foreign liquors and disposable plastic items with utter disregard to indigenous knowledge and locally available products. Such recourse to consumer market has blatantly attenuated the flavour and brilliance traditional cultural practices like marriage ceremony in the contemporary times.²⁷

Conclusion

Reciprocal gift-giving and bride price are part and parcel of *Galo* marriage system in particular and *Galo* cultural traditions in general. They are as old as the existence of the tribe and play important role in upholding their traditions and cultures. These cultural practices result in building better and stronger familial relationship between the two families, and do facilitate in arranging and resolving conflicts when they arise in marriage. In fact, it also confirms the validity of a traditional marriage because a marriage is generally considered invalid in the *Galo* society if bride price has not been paid and gifts have not been exchanged. However, in contemporary times, many parents do not accept bride price for their daughter although they do offer gifts abundantly during marriage ceremony. Literally, a marriage ceremony is not possible at all and thought of without having these two important components. Nevertheless, a few costly items like *Inji Papuk*, *Dachi*, etc. are not exchanged instead they remain with son(s) as family heirloom.

This paper underscored the significance of *Galo* marriage system and attempt to present the worth and utility of gift-giving and bride price transacted during and after marriage ceremony. It also tries to show their positive and negative impacts on community people as a whole. One of the interesting findings in terms of gift-giving is seen in two rituals such as *Yokshi-Talo Jinam*²⁸ and *Namra Kachanam*.²⁹ In general, traditionally valuable items are offered by bride's parents and kin to groom and his parents in return of edible items

received from them. However, these two rituals are performed by the *Galos* of Aalo and Kamba areas of West Siang district. With them the grooms's parents also offer gifts to bride's parents and kin unlike the *Galos* of other areas. In this paper, both positive and negative impacts of consumer culture on *Galo* marriage in the current time has also been analysed succinctly.

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Notes

1. *Tani* tribe include some tribal communities such as *Adi*, *Apatani*, *Galo*, *Nyishi* and *Tagin* of Arunachal Pradesh who consider *Abo Tani* as their ancestor and trace their genealogical origin from him. They share some similarities in terms of their dialect, religion and other cultural aspects.
2. *Daapo* means members from groom's group attending a marriage ceremony while *Daane* composed of the members from the bride's group.
3. A marriage ceremony in which ten mithuns are sacrificed is known as *Togu Panam*.
4. Tagi Riba, Resident of Old Deka village, PO – Nari under Lower Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 10 March, 2019.
5. *Nyibo* is the priest or shaman and *Nyikok* is the orator. They have abundant knowledge and vast wisdom on *Galo* cultures and traditions. Both of them are highly respected persons and considered as repository of *Galo* cultures and traditions.
6. *Hob Panam* means mithun sacrifice. It is generally called *Togu Panam*. Mithun is sacrificed because it is considered as the most sacred animal gifted by *Ane Donyi* to *Abo Tani*. *Hob Panam* ranges from one to ten mithun in any *Galo* marriage. Sacrifice of single mithun in a marriage is called *Batu Panam* which does not require all rituals that are mandatorily performed in *Togu Panam*.
7. Boya Potom, Resident of Potom village, PO – Darak under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 14 December, 2018.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Tagi Riba, Resident of Old Deka village, PO – Nari under Lower Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 10 March, 2019.
12. Moi Bagra, Resident of Bagra village, PO – Bagra under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Eli Doye, 22 August, 2020.

13. Tunge Noshi, Resident of Kambu village, PO – Kamba under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 21 November, 2018.
14. Dakkar Angu, Resident of Angu village, PO – Bagra under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 28 November, 2018.
15. Tabin Karlo, Resident of Garu village, PO – Gensi under Lower Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 17 November, 2018.
16. Jummar Lollen, Resident of Aalo Town, PO – Aalo under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 24 November, 2018.
17. Ponyir Bagra, Resident of Bagra village, PO – Bagra under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 23 November, 2018.
18. Marge Doji, Resident of Doji village, PO – Bagra under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 25 November, 2018.
19. Yanga Yomcha Poyom, Resident of Poyom village, PO – Darak under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 16 October, 2018 & Tama Mindo, Resident of Liromoba Town, PO – Yomcha under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 6 November, 2018 & Tobin Riba, Resident of Seren village, PO – New Seren under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 4 January, 2019
20. Bomyom Niri, Resident of Kambu village, PO – Kamba under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 20 November, 2018.
21. Tomar Ninu, Resident of Dego Kamki village, PO – Kamba under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 21 November, 2018.
22. Marto Doye, Resident of Seren village, PO – Nari under Lower Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 22 March, 2019.
23. Goken Bagra, Resident of Bagra village, PO – Bagra under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 7 November, 2018.
24. Miken Doye, Resident of New Dari village, PO – New Dari under Lepa Rada District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 16 January, 2018.
25. Marte Kadu, Resident of Seren village, PO – New Seren under West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Gerik Ninu, 5 January, 2019.
26. Ibid.
27. Bato Riram, Resident of New Deka village, PO – New Seren under Lower Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed by Eli Doye, 16 July, 2020.
28. In *Yoksi-Talo Jinam* the groom's parents give one traditional sword known as *Yoksi* and one brass bowl known as *Talo* in addition to different edible items to bride's family as gifts. It is a kind of advance engagement of the bride by groom's parents.
29. *Namra Kacha* means the visit of wouldbe bride's parents to the house of the groom where their daughter will stay rest of her life. *Namra Kacha* or *Abir-Bonyi Kacha* or *Peba Kacha* is literally different but their essence and purpose are same.

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