SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study sought to examine the societal significance of myths of the *Galo* tribe inhabiting West Siang, East Siang and Upper Subansiri districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The *Galo* tribe has rich heritage of oral literatures and traditions such as ballads, folksongs, folktales, proverbs, myths and legends which date back to the beginning of their world. Like other tribal people of the world, *Galo* tribe has own mythological system such as myth of origin of the universe and human, myths relating to marriage, myth of origin of *Mopin* festival and death. These myths have been orally transmitted from one generation to another.

Precisely, this research pertains to the study of myths of the *Galo* tribe and its change and continuity in the current period of transition. It is found that various contemporary practices and beliefs of the tribe relates to these myths.

One striking fact about this study is that it has used a multiplicity of approaches in analysing the data collected and this in turn has made a multi-disciplinary enterprise possible. The sources for the study were collected from oral interviews, conducted across a wide assemblage of respondents who in most cases answered the questions they were asked coupled with the use of secondary sources as well as participant observation methods adopted for data collection. Furthermore, to accomplish this dissertation in a systematic way, the researcher divided the whole work into seven chapters.
The introductory chapter presents the statement of the research problem, review of literature, significance of the study, objectives of the study, methodology, frame of analysis, planning of the study, organization of the study and limitations of the study.

The second chapter deals with review of literature which has covered three different areas of literature such as international, national and state.

Chapter three presents the land and people which includes the topics such as the Galo habitation, physical features of the Galo areas, origin of the nomenclature, origin of the tribe and migration, dialect and dialectal variations, unique naming pattern and kin terms, economy, festivals, religion and belief system, and socio-political life.

In chapter four, the theoretical consideration of myths in general has been explained. Various approaches to myth like allegorical, rational and euhemerism, psychological study of myth, functionalist and structuralist have been examined. The functionalist approach to the study of myth particularly advocated by Bronislaw Malinowski has been applied to some myths and its resultant practices and rituals of the Galo selected in this study.

Chapter five discusses the myths of the Galo under which focus has been laid on the different types of Galo myths such as myth of origin of the universe and myth of origin of human, myth relating to marriage, origin of Mopin festival and death.
Available narratives of these myths from different groups of *Galo* have been collected from primary sources through intensive fieldworks using interviews and discussions. Relevant secondary sources of myths have also been consulted and collected.

Chapter six of the study examines the change and continuity of four myths and different practices, beliefs and rituals of the *Galo* tribe derived from these myths.

Finally, the concluding chapter provides a summary, major findings, conclusion, limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

**Major Findings**

This research work is designed to study four *Galo* myths and different practices and beliefs which evolved from these myths. These were further analysed to find out the changes and continuity in the present age.

The very purpose of understanding and analysing the myths of the *Galo* as they are told and interpreted by the informants was met in the sense that the informants’ views and descriptions of the myths were conveyed. Although each myth is unique and has more than one account or version, similarities are found in the narratives which are described in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

During the course of this research it has been discovered that *Galo* myth of origin of universe has two divergent versions which are the cosmogony myth\(^1\) and creation
myth. The cosmogony version states that universe evolved itself out of fog and mist which slowly formed the earth and the sky. These earth and sky, in turn formed Jimi or Jimi Ane. On the other hand, creation myth states that Jimi is the mother creator who created Hichi/Hisu or Medo, sun, moon, humans, plants, animals etc. However, there is unanimous acceptance of Jimi as the mother creator despite variation in the chronology of evolution of universe in these two versions.


Since counting of genealogy by all clans or clan groups begin from Abo Tani, who is considered as the first human being on earth and father of humanity, no change is
visible in the genealogical origin. In the present age, study and documentation of
genealogy and tracing of genealogical origin have almost become a mania among
the Galos. Hence, identity formation of clan groups or formation of clan groups and
clan fraternity has become a common phenomenon leading to formation of more
than twenty seven umbrella group of clans. Nevertheless, such enthusiasm and
documentation of genealogy have other ramifications too. Because it resulted into
disintegration of the age-old exo-clan fraternity maintained by many clans despite
having different genealogical origin. Another prominent change noticed is that many
clans or clan groups have broken their kinship and started to develop matrimonial
relations despite their same genealogical origin. It is also seen that some individuals,
clans or clan groups have started to change their own genealogical line by keeping
the name of their child not only after their brother but also after their sister.10 Apart
from this, a few Galo individuals resort to change their clan identity by keeping the
name of their village in their own name.11

Influence of Christianity or Hinduism on Galo people is visible but that could not
distort the traditional genealogical link the Galos still have with Abo Tani. Like the
Jung’s concept of single archetype ‘the hero’, Abo Tani has almost attain the status
of demi-god to every Galo. By virtue of continuity of such legacy they still keep real
Galo names in addition to their English or Hindi pet names in order to continue their
genealogical counting.

Galo myth of origin of marriage has only one narrative but two other myths related
to marriage are also presented here. Undoubtedly, the three myths are similar among
all three sections of the *Galo*. But almost all practices and rituals of marriage which have evolved from these myths have undergone remarkable changes. One of the important factors responsible is the large scale practice and acceptance of love marriage in the *Galo* society.

Today selection and role of *lampo*(s) has just become a provisional arrangement because his position is almost reduced to a simple messenger and manager for marriage ceremony. *Hob panam* in marriage ceremony has also manifested change in modern age because maximum number of *mithun* that can be sacrificed in any marriage is ten which was again determined only through *pip chikanam* or *ro kokkanam*. But in contemporary age, rich people tend to ignore such established rules and sacrifice *mithun* even up to forty-fifty numbers.

Similarly, qualitative aspect of the ornaments as well as the value of each *mithun* has also lost its primordial grandeur and beauty because rare and valuable antique pieces are hardly available now. One of the most important marriage rituals i.e. *nyame layap nam* has also undergone changes because use of *yirken* during ritual is replaced with the use of an adhesive item or gum available in the markets by many people today. Different materials used and menus prepared during marriage ceremony have changed. *Pette* and *oko/ekkam* have been replaced with the market accessible items like bottle and disposable plastic and steel glass, cups and plates. The special dishes of *Galo* like *amin, eyup-adin, penam adin-ngoi, eku-adin-ngoi, adin-banam* etc. have been supplemented and in many cases replaced with modern
Indian and western dishes. The *Galo poka* is replaced and supplemented in many cases with foreign liquors like whisky, brandy and beer etc.

There are more than one narratives of the myth of origin of *Mopin* existing with the *Galo*. Slight changes are perceptible in these available narrations which are because of differences in the plot and sequence of events particularly related to *Takar-Taji’s* mithun sacrifice ceremony, *Abo Tani’s* role in that ceremony, *Abo Tani* and *Diyi Tami*, *Diyi Tami’s* departure as well as incidents of seeds of corn for agriculture. Rest of the plots is same in two narratives.

But like that of practices and rituals emanating from marriage myth, practices and rituals originating from myth of *Mopin* undergone changes in many aspects. The conduct of divination of egg or hepatoscopy is must for selection of *Mopin nyibo*, date of celebration, *pinge-leri/neri*, sacrificial animals etc. for celebration of *Mopin* in villages but it is not the case in urban areas. The *yidum* (sacrificial animals) of *Mopin* festival are also decided through divination of egg or hepatoscopy in the villages but in urban areas, mithun sacrifice has become the permanent sacrificial animal. The performance of *riga nam, tadok neenam, layap nam* and *litup tubnam* are still performed in most of the village celebrations but it is seldom performed in urban celebrations. Unlike in rural areas, the significant aspect of *iti* in the *Mopin* celebration has also been tempered with the use of flour available in urban markets. Ethnic dishes or cuisine of *Mopin* festival has been supplemented with different edible items like liquors, beers, fried fishes, fried chickens, salads, papars, snacks, dried kajus and paneers among others. In addition, the use of *pette* and *oko/ekkam* as
plates and cups have also been replaced with modern glass, plates and cups as well as the most accessibly available disposal glass, plates and cups etc. The construction of Mopin Liin to mark the 50 years of Mopin celebration started on community basis in the year 1966 in 2016 by the Golden Jubilee Central Mopin Celebration Committee Aalo and construction of permanently cemented Mopin Hogi for sacrifice of mithun during Mopin celebration at Mopin-Solung Ground Itanagar by Mopin Celebration Committee Itanagar are some spectacular changes in the celebration of Mopin festival today.

It is also found that there is an emerging intellectual interpretation of Mopin by some Galo intellectuals and scholars. They have interpreted the significance of Mopin drawing comparisons with the deities of other religion, especially Hinduism. Padu has drawn similarity between Mopin Ane (Mother Mopin) with Goddess Lakshmi and Annapurna Devi. Like Hindu Goddesses, Mopin Ane is the embodiment of food, wealth and prosperity for the Galo tribe. Some intellectuals also equated Mopin celebration with that of Holi celebration of the Hindus. Like the revellers apply powders of different colour during Holi festival, revellers of Mopin festival also apply iti (rice paste) to their fellow revellers’ faces. But use of iti during Mopin celebration is different in the sense that it is traditionally used to seek ai-agam (blessing) from Mopin Ane. But in the contemporary time, applying iti/colours in both these festivals have become kinds of merrymaking deviating from traditional significance. Similarly, Kakki and Kohli have made a scientific rendering of the Mopin chants made during Mopin celebration and its impact on plants. According to them, there are many verses chanted during Mopin celebration, in which kind words
are spoken to the plants. They feel that these chanting and prayers produce a particular note of frequency of sound waves which might prevent the matting of male and female brown plant-hopper or any other pest and thereby prevent the destruction of paddy by plant-hoppers and other insects. Such emerging intellectual tradition among Galo intellectuals may be taken as kind of change in the practices and beliefs of Mopin in the contemporary period.

Regarding death, three different versions of myth of origin of death have been collected which may be presumed as a kind of change of this myth. The first and second versions of myth are thematically similar but differ in plots. The third version vastly differs from the other two because unlike in the other two, the plot revolves around Donyi, Tapen, Abo Tani and his daughter Niya. Generally, it is believed that all practices, rituals and funeral rites etc. started by Abo Tani who was guided by his mother’s urom (soul) as narrated in the second myth of death. But now these different practices and rituals of death initiated by Abo Tani have changes although fundamental procedures are intact and still followed continuously. It is found that white clothes and incense sticks, citronella and other perfumes are used instead of use of ashes from fireplace to dispel the fume of the corpse. The smearing of iti on the face of the deceased and singing of hen-nyilen by a nyikok stand discontinued in most cases. The dead body is laid straight on the cushion with pillows and the legs of the person are not folded over the chest in order to shorten the corpse. A marap (bier) is still used but it is a straight one with four handles on sides. Four persons carried the corpse and the handle of the right side of the head is hold only by the person who performs the funeral rite. There is no hard and fast rule
regarding the *hima gedene* nowadays. Any one of the sons can perform the funeral rite. No new *koba* (ladder) and *mero* (bundle of burning firewood) is used. Similarly, the tradition of *dig-mercho nam* (first digging by a member of the deceased’s family) is not maintained rather village folks jointly dig the grave. Instead of two separate rectangular chambers in L-shaped, a single and big rectangular chamber grave is constructed. The use of *mahen* still continues but encircling of the grave with a killed dog, cutting of one nail of right hand and putting an egg on it, and throwing away of another egg are no longer performed. The head of the deceased is still made to point towards the west. A shed for grave is still constructed but transfixing of bow and arrow over the sticks pointing towards the sky and other features like different shapes of bamboo shavings to signify the individual quality of the dead as *nyikok* and *nyigam* are not practiced. But a live cock is still kept at the grave for *nyijik-nyibo*. Taboo like entry to the house of the deceased for certain days is no longer observed but *dune* and *magbo* are restricted for at least five nights. *Doga-onam* and burning fire near the grave are followed but burning fire near the grave has undergone change as some people used to connect electric bulbs and illuminate the grave for five nights. All taboos prescribed for the *hima gene*, the *udu-nyope* and *peder-hoko* rituals are also still performed. But the *layap* ritual for the grave-diggers is not performed as per the tradition because of the fact that all village folks particularly youths jointly dig the grave and all activities of the grave. Almost all practices, rituals as well as taboos such as entry restriction in the house of the deceased, restrictions on *dune-magbo, doga-onam, udu-nyope, peder-hoko* and *layap* etc. are not observed by the *Galo* Christians today.
From the forgone analysis, it can be said that all myths of the Galo tribe studied in this thesis have various versions. Of course, some of these are only relative in nature while most of these are the direct accounts of these myths. The reasons for such diverse versions of myths could not be ascertained by the researcher from the field visits. It can be said, precisely, that all rituals and practices emanating from these four myths have remarkably changed to accommodate and imbibe new traits but without jettisoning the essential and unique aspects inherited from time immemorial.

Thus, although most of these practices, beliefs and rituals are still continuing but certain aspects of these are found to have changed with the change of time. In fact, it can be said that some of these changes are the result of natural processes like migration and settlement of the tribe in different places, influence of neighbouring tribes etc. while others may be the designs of external influences exercised by the modern education and science, and different religions particularly Christianity and Hinduism.

Galo myths, more or less, remain the same in that they continue to refer to unverifiable places and events while they also tend to include some aspects that are verifiable. In this way, myths continue to maintain the society by creating a deep sense of belonging within the Galo people through the kindling of sentiments. These bonds are a means for maintaining society and ensuring the survival of the society as long as the myths are still accepted by the members as truth. Therefore, the continuity of the myths and its narratives do rest on internal validity as determined by the tribe. As long as the Galo people continue to believe the myth, it continues to exist and continues to play its role of keeping society intact.
It is found that *Galos* follow some practices and have the beliefs which are rooted in the myths. At the same time, *Galos* also follow some practices and beliefs which do not have a known myth or which do not form a part of the myth. For these new practices and beliefs, the myths have not been created and modified. So it can be deduced that the new practices and beliefs have emerged so rapidly that for their rationality myths have not been created or modified. The rationality lies in areas other than the myths which need further investigation. Myths or its variants are not exclusive in justifying the way of life of *Galo* people. Many practices do not draw on the myths but have their justification in the changing need of day to day life because of modernisation of the traditional society. Most of the myths remain in the realm of feeling for *Galo* identity without practical significance in the modern *Galo* society.

Lastly, it may be added that some changing versions of myths under study have been there among different *Galo* groups as shown in the previous chapter. The reasons for these changing versions could not be ascertained from the field study. However, the present researcher has his own supposition. It is mentioned in chapter three, the migration of different group had different route. Obviously, there was no contact or very less contact among these groups. Because of relative isolation from each other these individual group in course of time developed distinct features. For example, myths being orally transmitted might have incorporated additions or dropped some elements by narrator to the following generations.
In short, it may be stated that Galo myths have a functional role of maintaining Galo identity. But changes in social structure, ritual practices do not have corresponding realisation in myths. This gap needs theoretical explanation beyond functionalist perspective. Functional approach has its limitation of explaining ‘change’ because of its presupposition that societies are in a state of equilibrium.

**Recommendations for further research**

The research study undertaken here is confined to only four areas of Galo myths: cosmogony myths and myth of the origin of man, myth relating to origin of marriage, myth of the origin of Mopin festival and finally, myth of the origin of death. While pursuing field trips, the researcher has also heard about some other relevant myths of Galo. Among them, mention may be made of the heroic myths of Abo Tani or better termed as Abo Tani as a culture hero, myth of origin of keba, myth of the origin of mithun sacrifice, myth relating to the origin of tongu panam (a kind of marriage ceremony), myth of the origin of iti and pobor-opo. These are some areas of Galo myths where further studies may be pursued in the coming years by the research scholars and folklorists. Among these areas, the heroic myths of Abo Tani assumes utmost significance because of its variety, vastness and multiplicity of themes as most of the practices and beliefs maintained and continued by the Galo evolved from the heroic deeds and valorous acts of Abo Tani. Moreover, he is hailed as the great ancestor not only of the Galo but also of all other Tani tribes such as Adi, Apatani, Nyishi and Tagin of Arunachal Pradesh.
Another area for further research concerns the further development of theoretical framework for the analysis of myth started in the study and the application of this framework to the critical examination of other myths. The study acknowledges that through such further research of myths, the theoretical model for the analysis of myth developed by the study can be re-evaluated, re-constructed, improved upon and re-utilised.

The researcher also feels that instead of considering many myths, in-depth study can be made on one myth across the Galo groups to enumerate changes and continuity factors in details and the reasons thereof. Such ethnographic data will be the basis of formulating theoretical perspective to understand causal relationship between change and continuity.

**Notes and References:**


2. Among different clan groups some like such as Begam, Belo, Gachi, Heche, Japo-Jaka, Jisi-Jilen, Kaga, Kalom, Kara, Karga, Lappa, Lego, Leno, Lobom, Lodu, Memo, Mita, Pumbo, Tunyik, Tutem and Yubo believe in this myth of origin of universe.


4. Other groups of clans who believe in creation myth are Baag, Bogum, Nyochi, Karko, Nyoi, Dirkar and Mara clan.


10. Today, it is a common practice among some clans belonging to *Pugo* section of *Galo* to keep their children’s name after the brothers or sisters.


12. *Galos* of Upper Subansiri District are included in the *Lare* section because many of their clans are scattered and settled in Gensi, Sibe, Likabali and Kangku circles of West Siang District.