Chapter - II

KEBANG: THE EVOLUTIONARY PHASE.

Indigenous Village Councils:

The village and the village councils were the basic political units of all tribes of Arunachal Pradesh till the introduction of the Panchayati Raj\(^1\). In Arunachal Pradesh, till 1969, there were no representative institutions, except the village councils. Though far behind in political development, the people of Arunachal Pradesh were not entirely unfamiliar with self-governing institutions at the village level. Each tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has its own village council reflecting its own nature and requirement, which still exists and continues to function side by side with the statutory panchayat system. The political organisation of the tribal community is based on traditional system way in which the society recognises the exercise of authority. This authority may be vested in a single individual acting as the head man of the village or it may be entrusted to a few chosen representatives of the village forming a council of elders and acting on behalf of the whole village community whose confidence they may command, as it is supported by social and religious sanction\(^2\). The centuries’ old popular forms of village council were evolved as an administrative mechanism for fulfilling local needs\(^3\). This village council, as Sir Charles Metecalf writes, "the little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of foreign relations, they seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of village

---

communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself is in a high
degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great
fortune of freedom and independence⁴. Further, Mr. V. T. Krishnamachari
wrote, "Owing to the life in the village communities and the measures of
autonomy they enjoyed, that we achieve social cohesion and stability and
succeeded in preserving our traditional cultural values over many
centuries. This survival of our values during long period of foreign
dependency is certainly due to the continuity of the village organisations.
We must, therefore, recognise that modern democratic government can
have a solid foundation only in villages."⁵

Thus these popular forms of centuries old village councils
were evolved, as an administrative mechanism for fulfilling social needs.

**Types of village councils:**

The traditional village councils have been very strong and
the village often acted like sovereign bodies deciding all internal matters.
Basically the village councils performed three types of functions – judicial,
administrative and developmental. The functions of the village councils of
all the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were more or less the same. However,
functions of the village councils of some tribes were more elaborate than
the others. The character and social policy of the tribes were different and
this was responsible for variation in the role and function from tribe to tribe.
Hence, chieftaincy system was found among Noctes, Wangcho, Tangsa,
Singphoo and Khamtis and the theocratic types of village council was
noticed among almost all the Buddhist tribes such as Monpas,
Sherdukpen and Khamtis, while the democratic type of village council were found among Adi, Hill Miri, Apatani, Monpa, etc.

The village council is known by different names in different tribes. In organisational matter also the village councils differ considerably. The variation in the tribal councils was due to the social outlook and psychology of the tribes. Thus, some villages were least organised while others were well organised. The Sherdukpens, the Akas, the Monpas, the Tangsas and the Adis were better organised than the others.

**Mangmajos of Monpas:**

The Monpas have a well-developed village self governing institutions existing for at least past thousand years with democratic tradition. There is evidence to suggest that the Monpa village councils existed as far as 11th century. The village council of Monpa is called "Mangjombana" or "Mangmajon" in which Mang or Mangma means people and Jom or Jombana means assembly. The village council, besides the Tsorgen (Gam), Thumis (next to Tsorgen in rank) and Gamins (Messenger), as members, also has some elderly members having knowledge and experience in tribal justice. Their opinion is often the final verdict of the council, which is promulgated by Tsorgen.

Tsorgen is elected from a panel of names of persons suitable for election and is drawn by Tsobla (local headman) after making a consultation with the villagers. The most suitable person who is considered

---

7 Elwin, V. Democracy in NEFA, Shillong 1965, P - 56
8 Echo of Arunachal (Daily News Paper), Itanagar, December, 1988, P – 3, quoted by S. Dubey op.cit, P - 41
9 Dubey, S. op.cit, P – 42
fittest to become the Tsorgen, from the panel of names, is finally elected through deliberation. The person elected is approved by Tso-Tsangzon (general assembly) by an election process through the use of ballot box and ballot paper. Finally Tsorgen is recognised by the Deputy Commissioners in modern days. The Tsorgen is elected for a period of three years. Generally he is re-elected every three years. So once elected, he remains the chief until he dies or resigns. However, Tsorgen can be removed from office for inefficiency or wrong action by Tso-Tsangzon (general assembly). As head of the village council, the Tsorgen has to perform manifold duties with the help of his officials and other elders. He is guide, friend and philosopher in all the matters to the villagers. He has to see that the religious ceremonies, festivals are duly celebrated and the maintenance and the repair works of Gompaare regularly done.

Tsobla and Gomin assist the Tsorgen in day to day administration. Tsobla is also elected for a period of two or three years and Tsoblas are the local representatives of Tsorgen. The functions of the Tsobla are generally analogous to those of the Tsorgen. Gomins (messengers) usually hold office for a year. In most villages, owing to the arduous nature of its duties, the appointment is given to each householder in turn by year.

All the heads of the families are the members of the General Assembly. However, right to attend the meeting of the general assembly and the right to cast vote are strictly confined to those who have made regular contribution to the Khrein (Village Fund). The household, whose head does not attend the general assembly when it meets, or fails to take part in the voting, is fined. Nonetheless, a family, whose head is unable to attend, may depute any adult member or even minor or servant

10 Elwin, V. op.cit, P - 59
11 Dubey, S. op.cit, P - 62
12 Elwin, V. op.cit, P - 62
representing him to exercise all or any of its functions in the general assembly. But in case of minor or servant, they cannot take part in the discussions or cast votes.\textsuperscript{13}

**Jumba of Sherdukpen:**

The Sherdukpen are a small tribe and the society is divided into two classes, the royal and subject class. The royal class is known as Thongs, and they claim to be the descendent of the king Japtang Bura, while the subject class who is called "Chaos" is said to have the descended from the attendants of the king\textsuperscript{14}. The village council and the village affairs are controlled by the royal class.

The village council of Sherdukpen is called as "Jumba". The council "Jung" consists of Gaon Bura (Thik Akhao), the ordinary members of the council (Jung Me), courier (Kachung) and Chowkider\textsuperscript{15}. The members of the village council are elders of the village and elected by the villagers. All the heads of the family participate in proceeding of the village council meeting. The head of the village council or Gaon Bura after selection or election is later recognised by the administration. There may be more than one Gaon Bura and the Gaon Bura must belong to the Thong class. The office of the Gaon Bura is not hereditary. There may be two or more Kachungs in a village to help the Gaon Bura in discharge of his daily duties and Chowkider assists the Gaon Bura\textsuperscript{16}. However, the final decision rest with the Gaon Bura.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. P – 60.
\textsuperscript{14} Dubey, S. op.cit, P - 47
\textsuperscript{15} Elwin, V. op.cit, P - 67
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. P - 68
Melley of Aka:

The Aka society has developed a kind of democratic form of local government from chieftaincy which was prevalent prior to independence. The last vestige of chieftaincy still evinces the lineage of the presence of Aka 'Ranis' (Aka queen) who are the successor of the lineage of the former chiefs. The 'Ranis' occupy a respectable position and their advice is always given weight. However, their role is now primarily advisory.\(^{17}\)

The village council of the Akas in local language is called 'Melley' but the Akas now have a preference for the Assamese word 'Riaz', which signifies the people.\(^{18}\) In Aka society, age is respected and importance is given not so much to wealth or property. Therefore, while selecting a village head or Gaon Bura, age, knowledge and experience are seen and not the wealth and property. The selection of Gaon Bura is made by the people of the village themselves, particularly elder members of the village and later recognised by the local administrative authority.\(^{19}\) All the elder members of the village are the members of the Aka village council. In the local language, the Gaon Bura is called 'Nuggu' (Greatman). Generally he is the most popular, competent and influential person of the village. The Gaon Bura is helped by two junior associates who are called 'Borah' and the 'Gibba'. The function of the Borah is to hold the responsibilities of the Gaon Bura in his absence and he is next to Gaon Bura in authority. The Gibba keeps a watch over the people, their activities and movements as well as character and informs the Gaon Bura where necessary.


\(^{18}\) Choudhury, J. N. Arunachal Panorama, Shillong 1973, P - 70

\(^{19}\) I.K. win, V. Democracy in NEFA op.cit, P - 74
The meeting of the village council is presided over by the Gaon Bura. However, decision is taken by consensus or by majority votes because the ultimate authority of the village council is the people of the village who form the general assembly. Apart from village council meeting, the Akas have the meeting of the neighboring villages, which is convened periodically in order to promote cordiality and goodwill among the neighboring villages. Such meeting usually takes place every sixth or seventh year. But in case of emergency, it can be convened when necessary\(^{20}\).

**Nele of Nishis**:  

Nishings are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and are basically individualistic\(^{21}\). The traditional council of Nishing is called 'Nele'. However, Nele is not a regular body. It is convened only when there is a conflict or dispute\(^{22}\). Another institution of Nishing is called 'Gindgung' (intermediaries). V. Elwin writes that the Gindgung (messenger or intermediaries) in the old days used to arrange for the ransom of captives and still represent the parties in any dispute. They go to and fro in the interest of peace and compromise and finally convene a council or Nele, which consists of the people particularly, the Gindgung, local elders and official headmen. The council debates the matter in a very informal way and compensation is decided according to the wealth of the defendant. Oaths are taken and there are ordeals to test a man's innocence or guilt\(^{23}\).  

\(^{20}\) Ibid., P - 68  
\(^{21}\) Ibid., P - 87  
\(^{22}\) Dubey, S. op.cit, P - 49  
\(^{23}\) Elwin, V. A. Philosophy for NEFA, op.cit, P - 154
Buliang of Apatani:

Apatanis are one of the most fascinating tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Dr. C. Von Furer Haemindrof who visited the Apatani plateau twice, first in 1962, wrote in his book "The Apatanis and their Neighbour" about the village council or traditional political system of the Apatanis that Apatanis village lacks a centralised authority mechanism but they manage their village affairs in a somewhat informal way by a council of clan representative known as Buliang. The representatives of the clans who in their plurality constitute a kind of village-government, are the Buliang, men of the character and ability, drawn from among members of a lineage, owing to its wealth and status, always furnishes one or two Buliang, or chosen on account of their personal standing in the community.

The Buliangs were collectively the upholders of the laws and justice of the Apatanis, but they are primarily the spokesmen of their clan or clan group and not village headman with absolute authority. Their duties are those of arbiters rather than of judges, and they usually do not take action unless a dispute has become a public issue which has to be dealt with by the community as a whole, be it by mediation or the use of force. The power of Buliangs, no doubt, is limited and they neither constitute a tribal government, nor do they function in the manner of judges as in a court of law, but even in such cases there is provision for a strict limitation of the use of force.

There are three types of Buliang. The Aka Buliang, the Yapa Buliang and the Ajang Buliang. These are the branches of the Buliang or council.

25 Elvin, V. Democracy in NEFA, Shillong, 1965, P - 81, 82.
26 Ibid., P - 83.
The Aka Buliangs are the old men who are wise, aged and experienced persons. They are consulted on all-important matters. The Yapa Buliangs are middle aged men, who are most active and lead the day today conduct of the village affairs. The Ajang Buliangs are the young boys, who act as messengers and guards of the village. As messengers, they help the Buliang in many ways.\(^{27}\)

Normally, the meeting of the Buliang takes place in public platform, called Lapang. Another system of maintaining peace among the 7 (seven) villages of Apatani and neighbouring Nishing villages is called Dapo (non-aggression).

This centuries old Buliang system, today has become weak. The modern political institutions like Panchayat Raj, party politics, education and modernisation have eroded the value and importance of Buliang.

**Abala of Idu Mishmi, Pharai of Digaru Mishmi:**

The Mishmis are another individualistic tribes, who live in widely scattered villages. The traditional village council of Idu Mishmi is called Abala. It is usually composed of elderly men of repute, influence, knowledge and experience. Its jurisdiction is restricted to judicial matters only, and does not include village administration.\(^{28}\) In old days, there was no village authority in Mishmi society because one or two or three houses constituted a village.

\(^{27}\) Personal interview with Mr. Bamin Kani at Itanagar on 02/02/1999.

The Kaman Mishmi who are also called Digaru Mishmi have their village council known as 'Pharai'. The members of the village council have a great responsibility because they are supposed to scrutinize the claims of both the parties and then come to a provisional decision. They have a hard task to persuade the parties about justness of their decision and to bring about a settlement. This naturally entails long discussion and endless coming and going to the house of the plaintiff and the defendant, until at length the decision is accepted by both the parties. The members of the village council are entitled to a portion of the compensation demanded from the accused, and they get a remuneration from the complainant for their service. However, the Kaman Mishmi believe in settling their dispute by negotiation. Their temperament is very different from that of the Idu Mishmi and when necessary they approach some men of substance and influence of the area and who summon what they call Pharai, a gathering of local elders representing each clan from several villages in the vicinity as well, of course, as parties to the disputes. The matter is publicly discussed and normally the chairman, after ascertaining the views of the elders present, gives his decision and decides the compensation to be paid.

Mokchup of Khamtis:

The Khamtis' political authority vests in the village chief, who normally belongs to the royal clans. "The Chief occupies highest position in the social hierarchy and is regarded as fountain of justice." The chief is the political head, but he exercises his authority through a council of

31 Dubey, S. op.cit, P 52.
members recruited from the people of various social status, and this
council is called Mokchup\textsuperscript{32}. According to the Thamasat (Sacred text), the
members should not be less than six for deciding any legal case. The
office of the chief is hereditary in the clan, but not in the family. A chief
continues to hold his office till he either dies, or is incapacitated by old
age\textsuperscript{33}.

The Thamasat, (sacred text) contains a good deal of secular
laws such as criminal law, law of contract and civil law. The chief and his
council while deciding the case, consult the sacred books Thamasat to
determine the nature of any punishment to be administered. In Khamti
society still, Thamasat (sacred text) is highly respected.

\textbf{Ngothun of Nocte:}

Once the Noctes were a tribe of warriors and headhunters, who were involved frequently in inter village disputes and raids. The
political life of the people was maintained by the chief and elders, a body
which is called Ngothun. This council maintains law and orders, decides
disputes within the village and with other villages and also organise
developmental activities\textsuperscript{34}. The chief is the head of the village council and
presides over the meeting of the council. The chief is called Lowang and
he is hereditary. The members of council are head of the important clan of
the village.

\textsuperscript{12} Elwin, V. Democracy in NEFA, 1965, p 167.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. P - 167.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., PP - 170, 171.
The next to chief is called Ngoriwa, who is normally a senior member. In a village there can be two or three Ngonwas, it depends upon the Chief\textsuperscript{35}. The Ngonwa in all-important matter has the privilege of private discussion with Chief. Tenwa (Priest), is allowed to attend the meeting when council discusses the matters of cultivation only. Remwa (announcer), has the function, to inform the villagers about any activities or decision taken by the council. The common people are not allowed to attend the meeting of the council. However, in the Nocte society, there is variation in the structures of the village council from village to village\textsuperscript{36}.

Normally, the meeting of the village council takes place in the chiefs' house. But in case of theft, marriage, murder and divorce, the meeting takes place in the Morung (Community Hall), in local language it is called 'Paang'.

**Wangchu-Wangcha of Wancho:**

Wancho is another tribe of Arunachal having chieftaincy or authoritarian types of village council. The chiefs of the Wancho are same as that of Noctes, each controls a number of villages. The chief of the village council is called Wangham. Every village has a council of elders called the Wangchu-Wangcha. The members of the council represent each clan. The members of the council assist the chief in different functions. However, the number of the members and their designation, vary from village to village\textsuperscript{37}. Generally, the council meets at Morung or Chiefs' house where all the members are invited. The main functions of the council are to maintain law and order, warfare, settle disputes,

\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Wanghawn Lowang, who is one of the most educated Nocte today.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Elwin, V. Democracy in NEFA, 1965, op.cit, P - 177.
development and welfare activities. The decision of the council is final in respect of village disputes. Nevertheless, the council is a consultative body, totally dependent on the chief, specially if the chief is powerful and dominating.\(^{38}\)

**Kebang of the Adis:**

The village council of the Adis, is called Kebang. Verrier Elwin, in his book 'A Philosophy for NEFA' (1964) writes that "the most highly developed and effective of all tribal councils is the Adi Kebang, which may well become a model for the whole of NEFA."\(^{39}\)

S. Dutta Choudhury, former Editor Gazetteer of East and West Siang Districts also writes, "of all tribal councils in Arunachal Pradesh, the Kebang or village council of Adis of Siang is the most remarkable in many ways. It is a highly organised and powerful self-governing body, exercising effective control and authority over the residents of a village sanctioned by centuries of tradition of the people. The Kebang is essentially a democratic institution in its character, the composition and function. In fact, the socio-political life of the Adis, is inconceivable without their Kebang."\(^{40}\)

Since the present study is aimed at the study of Kebang in particular context of the Padams' Kebang of the Adi tribe, the attempt is made to provide a detailed account of the evolution of the Kebang system.

---

38 Ibid, P 178.
39 Ibid., P 178.
40 Choudary, S. D. op.cit, P 254.
Evolution of Kebang:

For convenience of the study, the evolution of Kebang can be divided into three phases. However, first, let us have a clear idea about the term Kebang.

In folklores and folksongs of the Padams, the term Kebang or Keling Kebang or Tumi-Lonmo, etc. are present. The term has got two meanings. First, the village council of the Padam and second, it refers to a person who is a good orator and a wise man who has got knowledge of tradition. In Padam language, bui kebang ko or bui Tumilotmo Ko, it means he is a great orator⁴¹.

Kebang is a term in Adi dialect with a much wider connotation and socio-ethical significance than it is usually understood by the common people, especially the people from outside the Adi tribes. Original meaning of the term 'Kebang' is an intelligent, wise-man well versed in history, tradition and having the knowledge of mundane and spiritual world. A man with such knowledge is supposed to exert considerable influence over the society he lives in and he used to sit in high position in all aspects of the society. A council consisting of such member/members and the common people is also known as Kebang; and it is this connotation in which Kebang is commonly understood today⁴².

Generally, common people know Kebang as the village council. Nevertheless, the orators or wise men are also called Kebang in Padam society.

⁴¹ Personal interview with Kangkong Berang Head Gam of Ayeng village, on 22/03/99.
First Phase: Kebang in its early years (before the advent of the British Rule).

We have no clear idea regarding the growth or origin of Kebang. The origin of Kebang is shrouded in mystery. There is no historical evidence as to when and at what point of time in history it came into existence. However, there are various interesting myths and legends, narrating the emergence and growth of Kebang.

Though there are many oral traditions in the form of myths and legends in existence among the Padams but very few writers have attempted to trace the first Kebang and the circumstance that led to its origin. In fact, so far no scholar has tried to discuss the origin of Kebang in detail.

According to the tradition of Padam, this institution has been with them from time immemorial. One story tells us that in the beginning there was no light and darkness was everywhere. So Sedi (God of Padam believed to be the creator of universe) created Donyi (sun) and Polo (moon) and set them in space in order to radiate light on earth. Accordingly, with equal power and energy, both the sun and the moon gave light to the earth round the clock i.e. when one set in the west, other used to rise in the east. There was no night and the heat was so high that all plants, great rivers dried up, there was drought everywhere and everything came to a standstill. As a result, they fell into despair and to save themselves from the terrible ordeal, they called a Kebang and all living creatures of the universe assembled in the Kebang. In the Kebang, they decided to destroy luminous celestial body i.e. the sun and the moon. But the great question confronting them was that who would do it? After a prolonged discussion, the great expert in archery, Etung Tiklung (frog) was selected and deputed to perform the task of killing the sun. Thus, Etung-Tiklung killed the Moon. Therefore, moon does not have light as sun, and
day and night started in the universe. According to this version of legend, this is regarded as the beginning of Kebang and the origin of Kebang.

According to another version of story, in the beginning, people used to live on various kinds of Yams, jungle potatoes and fruits. The staple food like paddy, maize, millets, etc. were neither known to them nor it was in their possession. This led the mankind to think seriously about their food problem. In the meantime, they heard about a land called KINE-DENE (land of prosperity and plenty) which was rich in staple food. But the location and route of the land was unknown to them. So it was difficult to procure seeds from that unknown land. Hence, they called a Kebang of all mankind. In the Kebang, they selected a representative to collect seeds from that unknown land. First they sent KORI (small squirrel), but KORI could not impress the queen KINE-NANE. The KORI returned with empty hand. So they sent another representative BUNGKO (rat). The approach of Bungko impressed the queen, as a result, queen gave an assurance to supply the seeds free of cost. Mankind waited for a long time, but queen of KENE-DENE did not supply the seeds. Therefore, they had to send another representative, the most expert Dog, SANYI was selected this time. Sanyi went to the land of prosperity and plenty, and approached the queen. As she had already promised the Bungko, queen decorated the ears of Sanyi with seeds of paddy, maize, millets, etc. and the Sanyi (dog) returned home with a sense of accomplishment and pride. Thus, staple food crops were introduced on the earth successfully. This version of story also tells us that this was the first Kebang on the earth.

The above legends suggest that the Kebang was started to discuss and settle socio-economic problems of all living beings.

---

43 Personal interview with Shri. KangKong Borang of Ayeng villages on 23/03/99.
44 Ibid.
Another story, describing the origin of the Kebang is that in the beginning, there was no distinction at all between Gods, men and animals. They all lived together, inter-married and shared one another's joys and sorrows. But as they multiplied rapidly and began to cross the hills, mountains and rivers spread on both the banks of the Siang (Imaginary River), there was great congestion everywhere. As a consequence, chaotic conditions prevailed everywhere. It was necessary, therefore, to establish peace and order in the world. Wise men, from all parts of the world held a Kebang and decided that it was high time that things should be apportioned so that all would know which belonged to whom. In the Kebang, SUSUN MITE (small bird) and LERO RONDUNG MIGAM (sparrow) were selected to make an equitable distribution of the land and wealth of the world. As the Susun Mite live in the ground and Lero Rondung Migam live on the top of the trees, they were able to obtain a very wide view of things from ground level and from top, so they were in a better position to do the job than others. Accordingly, Susun Mite and Lero Rondung Migam distributed the land, river and wealth of the world among all the people.

According to Legin Bomjen, 'Abotani had five human sons. As these sons grew up they started quarrelling among themselves over their shares of their fathers' property. The quarrel disturbed the peace of other inhabitants of the land. So they gathered in a meeting with a view to bring an end to their quarrels and to settle their disputes. After a prolonged Keling-Kebang (discussion) the Kebang arrived at a consensus on the apportionment of the property of Abotani among his sons. In order to avoid such quarrels in future and to maintain peace and order in the land, the Kebang drew a code of conduct for all, to follow and a schedule of

45 Personal interview with Apok Modi of Mikong, on 20/03/1999.
punishment for those who violate these codes. This story is also said to be the origin of Kebang.

A slightly different version of legend describes how Kebang first originated. According to this version, once there was a dispute between KEYUM DADDI BOTE (god of domestic animals) and GINE ROPUNG MONE (evil spirit) regarding the ownership of first mithun (a precious and auspicious cow like animal). To settle the dispute amicably, a Kebang was called. Many personalities like TUSIN RO DONG, NOMGU NOMRANG and AGUNG AGAM attended the meeting. However, Kebang could not resolve the matter. Therefore, ultimately the case was referred to the court of DONYI-POLO for final settlement. DONYI-POLO after hearing the views of both the parties asked the KEYUM DADDI BOTE and GINE ROPUNG MONE to construct a wooden bridge (TADUK RAKSAK EGO) of their own and let the mithun cross the bridge. They were also told that the bridge of the wrong claimant will break when the mithun will cross the bridge. Accordingly, they constructed the bridge and first Ropung Mone was asked to prove, but the moment mithun stepped in, bridge broke down and then Keyum DADDI BOTE was asked to prove. The mithun crossed the bridge of Keyum Daddi Bote without any problem. So after examining them, Donyi-Polo gave the verdict in favour of Keyum Daddi Bote and said, "ngo Donyi mikmi serine,ngo polo migo serone.Seko-lumem-imem dudi takam em ngo karola dudung". Meaning, I am omniscience and omnipresent. I see and know all those who say and do wrong. It is said that since then, in matters of serious problems or cases, the Padams perform oath and ordeal in the name of Donyi-Polo to prove oneself innocent. These stories suggest that Kebang was originated to settle the property related disputes.

47 Personal interview with K. Borang of Ayeng Village on 22/03/99.
According to another legend, Kebang originated to solve cases related with sexual infidelity. According to this myth, there was KARDUK & KARPUNG brother and sister who were having incestuous relation. Both Karpung and Karduk were smitten with desire at the sight of the finely shaped legs of Karpung. Karpung's pretty hands also aroused his passion and the two started having immoral relation\(^{48}\). The Engo Takar people (descendant of Abotani) called a Kebang, as they regarded it as heinous and exiled them to one corner of the world, Engo siken keenyung (a deadly corner of the world) and enforced complete excommunication. Since then, the Padams excommunicate those who indulge in inter-course with cattle, own sister or close relative or mother\(^{49}\).

The first part of the stories indicates that Kebang originated as a meeting to resolve the socio-economic problems arising within the society. This must have been the case at a time when all members of a tribe lived together in a well-defined area and also as a result of increase in the population of the tribe, its members went out of its original area of habitation.

The second part of the story i.e. dispute over the distribution of the land and wealth of the world, dispute between five sons of Abotani over the share of their father's property and dispute between Keyum Daadi Bote over the ownership of first Mithun suggests that the Kebang had developed at a time when the Padams had developed the concept of private ownership of property.

\(^{48}\) Guha, B. S. Mushup Abang, op.cit, PP – 55, 56.
And the last part of the story i.e. related to sexual infidelity, is definitely not the origin of the Kebang, if we see the sequences of the above myths and legends. However it has got its own importance, as it is the first Kebang of its kind. Therefore, according to this legend of the Padams, Kebang started with the story of Karduk and Karpung.

From the above legends, it is understood that the Kebang of the Padam is a very ancient institution having social and divine sanctions\textsuperscript{50}. It has been with Padams, perhaps, for the past several centuries. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the time of its origin. Kuttik Moyong, an experienced political interpreter who had been to Tibetan border many a time, is of definite opinion that the Kebang system was there even when they were in Tibet\textsuperscript{51}. Thus, the above stories suggest that Kebang has been with the Padams from time immemorial and it originated as problem solving and dispute settlement mechanism.

**Second Phase: Kebang during the British period.**

Padams had been nomadic in nature till recent time\textsuperscript{52}. However, when the British came in mainland of the Adis in 1912 at Pasighat and created an administrative centre for the first time, Padams were almost in settled way of life and no longer nomads, though, people continued to move from hilly region to plain within their territory. During this period, the age-old village council was also well developed.

However, during the British time, another tier of Kebang had developed, which might almost be described as the Adis' Parliament, for all the Adi groups, has come into being\textsuperscript{53}. From the point of hierarchy,

---
\textsuperscript{50} Talukdhar, A.C. op.cit, P - 37.
\textsuperscript{51} Nath, Jogendra. op.cit, P - 213.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. P - 211.
\textsuperscript{53} Elwin, V. op.cit, P - 159.
Bogum Bokang Kebang is apex or highest body and Banggo Kebang is the intermediate or middle tier in the Kebang system of the Adis. But from the chronology of the events, it is found that the Bogum Bokang developed earlier than Banggo Kebang and therefore, present study first, deals with the Bogum Bokang Kebang:

The idea of Bogum Bokang Kebang was first mooted by Kuttik Moyong in 1945\(^54\). Mr. Kuttik Moyong in his autobiography, "My life and my People" (1978) writes, "no social and political organisation whose control could include the entire Adi community and the different villages of the district and effectively settle social disputes and inter-clan and inter-tribe disputes as those frequently occurred between Bori-Bokars, Galong and Tagins, Panggi Padams and Pas; and Minyongs, etc. therefore, it was felt that the Adi should have an organisation that could exercise effective control over the different members of the Adi community. A series of discussions and meetings were held at different places, which brought together the influential public leaders of the Kebangs of different areas. I consulted Subuk Tasung, ex-SO, Pasighat, Tamik Dabi, Base Superintendent Basar, Okek Tayeng, Boken Ete, a retired PA and Lumi Lollen, PI of Kombong and proposed that such an organisation should be called 'Bogum Bokang'. They agreed unanimously and approved the name I have put forth"\(^55\).

"The Bogum Bokang thus function like an Adi Parliament, composed of the leading men from the Adi groups. It attained great significance in the eyes of the people and besides dealing with inter-village disputes, it also took up important questions of progress and development"\(^56\).

\(^{54}\) Moyong, Kuttik. 'My life and my people' Autobiography of Author, P 18.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.
\(^{56}\) Ibid. P – 211.
The first meeting of the Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Pangin on 21st and 22nd March, 1949. It was initiated and presided over by Kuttik Moyong and attended by many Gams of different areas of the Adis\textsuperscript{57}. The subsequent meetings of the Bogum Bokang were held in the following locations and dates:-

2nd Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Pangin on 18/03/1954.
3rd Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Ledum on 02/02/1955.
4th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Along on 22/01/1957.
5th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Mangak (Dosing) on 01/05/1958.
6th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Likabâli on 06/11/1961.
7th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Taruk Kelek (Pasighat) on 15/03/1965.
8th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Parbuk in 1972.
9th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Pasighat on 14/04/1983 to 16/04/1983.
10th Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Pasighat on 7th & 8th May/2000.
11th Extra-Ordinary Bogum Bokang Kebang was held at Naharlagun (Itanagar) on 19th & 20th August/2000\textsuperscript{58}.

In the beginning, all the leading personalities in the Bogum Bokang belonged to the Pasighat area. The stalwarts from Galo and other Adi sub-tribes were just participants. Later, of course, it became popular in other areas of the Adis and thus, the Bogum Bokang has stayed and taken

\textsuperscript{57} Nyori, T. op. cit., P – 141.
\textsuperscript{58} Key notes addressed by T. Dabi, Secretary General Bogum Bokeng Kebang, BBK meeting at Naharlagun, 19 – 20 August ‘2000.
root in the minds and socio-political structure of the tribe as an informal arrangement without statutory sanction⁵⁹.

**Third Phase: Development of Kebang after Independence.**

From the records, it is found that just after India's independence in 1947, the Banggo Kebang was introduced in the Adi areas. Mr. P. L. James (1947-1949), the Political Officer of Abor Hill District called a meeting of all the Adis at Pasighat after celebration of the first Independence Day. In that meeting, he suggested that whole Abor Hill District (Bogum Bokang area or present three districts of Siang) should be divided into a number of divisions for the developmental works⁶⁰.

Kuttik Moyong writes, "The entire Abor Hill Districts were divided into the Banggos under Bogum Bokang. After detailed discussion and careful considerations, the villages were divided into twenty one Bangos."⁶¹

The following are the names of the Bangos:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Banggo</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01. YIBE PADAM BANGGO</td>
<td>1. Mebo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Siluk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Bolung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Sigar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Silli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ponging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Sibum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁵⁹ Nyori, T. op.cit, PP - 142, 143.
⁶⁰ Ibid. P - 141.
⁶¹ Moyong, Kuttik. op.cit, P - 18.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Villagers</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Villagers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 03. YAPSI BANGGO | 1. Adi Pasi  
                   2. Damro  
                   3. Millang  
                   4. Dalbing  
                   5. Peki Modi  
                   5. Komkar | 04. MORI BANGGO | 1. Gette  
                   2. Rengging  
                   3. Gido  
                   4. Peging |
| 05. BOGO BANGGO | 1. Balek group  
                   2. Rottung  
                   3. Sika Lali  
                   3. Yeamsing  
                   5. Taki Lalung  
                   5. Tarak | 06. ROTGO BANGGO | 1. Riw  
                   2. Kebang  
                   3. Koreng  
                   4. Lokpeng  
                   5. Oyan  
                   6. Tero |
| 07. NUGONG BANGGO | 1. Riew  
                   2. Babuk  
                   3. Komsing  
                   4. Sisen  
                   5. Pang  
                   6. Mopit | 08. MAGO BANGGO | 1. Jorsing  
                   2. Pareng  
                   3. Sine  
                   4. Pangkang  
                   5. Masing  
                   6. Lising |
| 09. DOGO BANGGO | 1. Riga  
                   2. Meng  
                   3. Sitang  
                   3. Subsing  
                   4. Sine  
                   5. Yibuk | 10. SONGO BANGGO | 1. Yeksi  
                   2. Damda  
                   3. Deku  
                   4. Debut  
                   5. Rumgong  
                   5. Tomo |
| 11. SIRIT BANGGO | 1. Mori  
                   2. Ing  
                   3. Resing  
                   3. Rolging  
                   4. Molom  
                   2. Ledum  
                   3. Sido  
                   4. Bamin  
                   5. Mikong  
                   5. Maknang |
| 13. RAMLE BANGGO | 1. Korang  
                   2. Damda  
                   3. Rina  
                   3. Namey  
                   4. Kadu  
                   4. Debing  
                   5. Tene  
                   5. Rayang  
                   6. Telam  
                   6. Lingka  
                   7. Pam  
                   7. Potte  
                   8. Telam  
                   8. Seren  
                   9. Ngorlung  
                   9. Potte  
                   11. Detak  
                   10. Debing  
                   15. Ruksin  
                   12. Rayang  
                   11. Ngorlung  
                   13. Debing  
                   1. Korang  
                   14. Lingka  
                   2. Rina  
                   2. Soa  
                   3. Kadu  
                   3. Tabi-ripo  
                   4. Tene  
                   4. Kakki  
                   5. Telam  
                   5. Potte  
                   6. Pam  
                   6. Seren  
                   7. Korang  
                   7. Soa  
                   8. Telam  
                   8. Ama  
                   9. Ngorlung  
                   9. Debing  
                   10. Debing  
                   10. Ama  
                   11. Ngorlung  
                   11. Debing  
                   12. Debing  
                   12. Ama  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Yabi</td>
<td>4. Repong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Baro Tarajan</td>
<td>6. Dipa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bali</td>
<td>2. Bame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. IGONG BANGGO</td>
<td>1. Daring</td>
<td>4. Sreing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Basar</td>
<td>5. Rilu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Modo</td>
<td>6. Zardo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Garu</td>
<td>8. Genssi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Lombi</td>
<td>2. Doje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Yomcha</td>
<td>4. Yonggam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Modo</td>
<td>6. Gamlin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gamkak</td>
<td>8. Mara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Liro-moba</td>
<td>10. Likra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ronya</td>
<td>12. Tirbin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. PAKTU BANGGO</td>
<td>1. Tadin</td>
<td>2. Kombong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Wale</td>
<td>6. Beney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Eshi</td>
<td>8. Nyorak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ngomdir</td>
<td>12. Doli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bokar</td>
<td>3. Tate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gaseng</td>
<td>5. Payum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gia</td>
<td>7. Tumbin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Dupa</td>
<td>11. Karko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ramsing</td>
<td>3. Gosang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Yogeng</td>
<td>1. Bomdo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Janbo</td>
<td>3. Pango</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mosing</td>
<td>5. Migging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tutung</td>
<td>7. Ningging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gelling</td>
<td>1. Popuk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Roying</td>
<td>3. Gasi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gayi</td>
<td>5. Gesar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Thgins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kuttik Moyong, "my life and my people" (1978)

Later, in the Adi areas more Banggos were created and at present, there are thirty-four Banggos in the Adi areas of Arunachal
Pradesh. The division of Banggo is done more or less on the basis of area inhabited by a sub-tribe or by a big clan of Adi tribe.

Thus, the Banggo is a group of villages grouped together for the convenience of administration and developmental activities and a platform for settling the inter-village disputes. It is mainly concerned with settling inter-village disputes. The Gam or headman of various villages within the control area of the same group constitute a Banggo council, with a Secretary in Charge of the office, whose chief function is to look after the welfare of the entire area under the Banggo.

The Banggo Kebang is more organised than the Bogum Bokang, for it has a Secretary and it maintains fund. Verrier Elwin, writes, "it is the beginning of a modern political organisation which must certainly be guided and encouraged".

**LEADERSHIP:**

When a group of migrants come to lead a more settled way of life, development in the organisation of their polity also takes place. During the course of migration, each group would have been led by a strong man specially appointed to explore good land and other

---

62 Nyori, T. op.cit, P - 18.
63 Ibid.
64 Elwin, V. op.cit, P - 159.
65 Moyong, Kuttik. op.cit, P - 11.
66 Elwin, V. op.cit, P - 160.
resources. The leading man of this group became the accepted leader. A variety of leadership emerged in primitive society. In Arunachal Pradesh, there had been different types of leadership like autocratic among the Nocte and Wancho, individualistic among the Mishmi and Nishis, theocratic among the Monpas and Khamtis, and collective (republican) among the Adis and Apatanis.

The leadership of the Kebang, however, is a collective one. No individual member is allowed to shoulder the responsibility of the leadership alone. It is always rested with the whole Kebang. The leader cannot take a decision for the Kebang, he is only to guide the deliberation in its session and, of course, influences the decision of the Kebang. The Kebang leadership is also not hereditary but is acquired by an elder by virtue of his personality, wealth, influence and ability to present a case in traditional manner. The leader of the village was called Kebang Abus or Milum. Traditionally, all influential and experienced elderly orators of the village, were respected as Kebang Abus. The members were chosen from within the village on the merit of their personal influence, their knowledge of tribal law and custom and their oratorical skill.

It was only the village council (Kebang) which controlled whole affairs of the village, and it was the highest authority in the hierarchy of social institutions of clan and family, both vertical and horizontal. Its

---

68 Pakem, B. 'State formation in Pre - Colonial Jonitla' article contributed to Tribal Politics and State Systems in Pre- Colonial Eastern and North Eastern India, Edited by Surjit Sinha, Published by Centre for studies in Social Science, Calcutta, 1987, P - 245.
69 Talukdhar, A. C. op. cit, P - 40.
70 Nyori, T. op. cit, P - 133.
71 Roy, Sachin. op. cit, P - 219.
72 Talukdhar, A. C. op. cit, P - 40.
73 Moyong, Kuttik. op. cit, P - 11.
authority was over the whole village community, and its rulings and decisions were final and binding upon all.\textsuperscript{74}

But since 1912 when the British Government took over the charge the administrations of the Adi areas, a number of change has been introduced in the system of leadership, too\textsuperscript{75}. During the British period, the leaders of the village were appointed by the Government and they were called as Gam / Gaon Bura. At the same time, the British administration had also created two more new posts called Kotoki and Jamadar.\textsuperscript{76}

The official Gams, as the headmen were appointed, one for every clan in a village. They were not paid anything, but were given red coats as an insignia of their office and, were recognised by the Government and thus gained a certain amount of authority\textsuperscript{77}. Specially, the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation of 1945 recognises their (Gams) importance and authority and gives them many powers. Normally senior most Gam was designated as the Bor Gam / Head Gam and the office of the Gam was for life long. But he could be removed from his office, if he lost the confidence of the people and the appointing authority. Though the Gam held honorary post, they also acted as intermediaries between the administration and the people\textsuperscript{78}. The aims of the Gams were to make the people obey the orders of the Government\textsuperscript{79} because Gam owed his position and importance to the Government. Thus, their appointment changed the Kebang to some extent\textsuperscript{80}. In this way,

\textsuperscript{74} Pandey B. B. 'Leadership, Pattern in a Tribal Society', Published by Spectrum Publication, Guwahati, 1991, P – 51.
\textsuperscript{75} Nyori, T., op. cit, P – 51.
\textsuperscript{76} Moyong, Kutik. op. cit, P – 11.
\textsuperscript{77} Elwin, V. op. cit, P – 158.
\textsuperscript{78} Srivastava, L. R. N. op. cit, P – 88.
\textsuperscript{79} Pandey, B. B. Genesis and Evolution of leadership among the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA) with special reference to the Gallong Tribe of Siang (Ph.D) Thesis, Patna University, 1981, PP – 107, 123.
\textsuperscript{80} Elwin, V. op. cit, P – 158.
### Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI. NO.</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>H/GBS</th>
<th>GB/GBS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dibang Valley</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tirap (including Changlang)</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East Siang</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>West Siang</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Upper Subansiri</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>East Kameng</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>West Kameng</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>563</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>1163</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### District of Arunachal Pradesh of the Year 1987

| LIST OF THE HEAD CAM BURAS / CAM BURAS IN EVERY VILLAGE |

- **Gan Bura**, who invariably respects the consensus of the public opinion, decided cases by majority. The final decision, however, rests with the council, which assists the head CAM Bura. The council, which is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the village, is assisted by the village council. The council usually presides over the village and is responsible for the representative of the administration.

- The people of the plains of Assam during the days of the Ahom rulers, the first time to Adivasi, when the Adivasi and the non-Adivasi came into contact with the first time to Adivasi. The world Cam or Gan Bura were known for their village democracy was weakened and the governmental control was...
Although Gams were the backbone of the society in the past, today it is declining. The 1987 Committee on incentives to Gam Buras also points out, "there appeared to be some erosion in the authority and importance of the institutions of Gam Buras".  

There are many factors responsible for the decline of the institution of the Gaon Buras.

1. **Appointment and selection of the Gaon Buras:** This is one of the major factors for the erosion of these age-old institutions. After the introduction of the party politics, the appointment and selection of the Gaon Buras have been politicised. Traditionally, Gams were appointed or selected on the basis of personal influence, wealth, knowledge of customary laws, experience in Kebang, age and oratorical skill. However, after the coming of the party politics, the qualification for the appointment and selection of Gam Buras is age and loyalty to party in power. It has been seen at many occasions that the appointments of the Gam Buras have been challenged by the opposition parties or by the general public of the village.

**Case:** In 1994, in the Simong village of Present Upper Siang District, Shri Tagin Litin was appointed as Head Gaon Bura. The appointment of Tagin Litin was challenged by one Bijom Libang whose name was also in the panel. According to Libang and general public of Simong village, first, Libang was selected by the Dy Commissioner, Pasighat, on the basis of the public opinion and he was already there as Asstt. Gam. However, later with the directives from the politicians his name was deleted by the Dy. Commissioner and Mr. Tagin Litin was appointed as Head Gam. So, Bijom Libang challenged Litin’s appointment.
in the Guwahati High Court. In the High Court, Libang won the case but Tagin Litin appealed to the Supreme Court. Bijom Libang did not go to Supreme Court as he could not bear the legal expenses, so he was defeated and Tagin Litin won the case in the Supreme Court.\textsuperscript{86}

2. **Appointment of Gam Buras without proportionate ratio:** The 1987 Committee on incentives to Gam Buras rightly observed that, "there should be a restriction on the number of Gam Buras to be appointed so that their authority is not diluted by the sheer number of them in a village"\textsuperscript{87}. Further, they suggested that there should be one Gam Bura per 100 population in a village.\textsuperscript{88}

The presence of a large number of Gam Buras is affecting the working of this institution, because there is groupism within the Gam Buras. Former Administrative Reform Minister, Takam Sanjoy, regretted that, "in some villages the number of Gam Buras is more than the actual needs. In a particular village, in Lower Subansiri District, the number of Gam Buras is 75."\textsuperscript{89}

3. **Another bottleneck is the lack of training and education about their responsibilities and powers:** It is necessary to impart training and education to the Gam Buras for protecting the traditional ethics of imparting the natural and real justice within the framework of the customary laws and also to make them conscious of their duties and powers conferred on them under Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945.

\textsuperscript{86} Informed by Tagin Litin, Pasighat, on 07/05/2000.
\textsuperscript{87} Report of the G. B. Committee, 1987 on incentives, p - 5.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Echo of Arunachal Pradesh, dated 08/04/99.
State Government has been trying time and again to make this institution strong, viable and reliable. In 1987, state Government appointed a Committee comprising of D.C. Tezu, D.C. Pasighat and D.C. Ziro. The scope of the Committee was restricted to looking into the issue of incentives to the Gam Buras. However, the Committee went into various aspects of the institutions of Gam Buras as well as, made certain recommendations relevant to the subject.

On the basis of the recommendation of the 1987 Committee, after slight modification, the state Government started giving honorarium to the Gam Buras who selflessly served the villagers. Vide Government notification no. GA (B) 32/88 PT dtd. 11/08/1995, an honorarium @ Rs.250/ per month to Head Gam and Rs.200/ per month to Gam Buras were to be paid w.e.f. 15th August 1995.90

Following are the recommendations of 1987 Committee on Gam Buras :-

1. More care should be exercised by the appointing authority in the selection and appointment of the right type of person for the job. G.B.s should be persons with influence and acceptability in the village and should possess knowledge on customary laws, as well as should have an interest in the development of the village.

2. There should be a restriction on the number of G.B.s to be appointed so that their authority is not diluted by the sheer number of them in a village. The Committee felt that there should be one G. B. per 100 population in a village. However, in village with less than 100

---

90 D.C. offices Kebang Branch, Pasighat.
population also, it may be desirable to appoint at least one G.B. A head G.B. could be selected from amongst the existing G.B.s for every village, which has a population of not less than 500.

3. The G.B.s should be made aware that the District authority, in exercise of the power under section 5 of the Regulation 1945, can not only appoint G.B.s but also dismiss any person so appointed, if his performance is not satisfactory.

4. G.B.s could be given badges apart from appointment letters. Withdrawal of this badge would automatically follow dismissal.

REMUNERATION RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE :-

1. The Committee suggested that Rs.100/ per month might be considered as honorarium for the Head G.B.s and Rs.50/ per month to G.B.s.

2. The G.B.s are often called by the authorities to the Circle Headquarters, Sub-Divisional Hqrs. and District hqrs. for which they incur certain expenditures. This is, for all practical purposes, Government duty, for which the Committee felt that the G.B.s should be given journey expenses / daily allowances. It is recommended that TA/DA may be paid to the Head G.B.s as per the entitlement of Zilla Parishad Members and to the G.B.s at par with that given to Anchal Samiti Members.

3. The Committee noted that G.B.s be given woolen red coats in all districts in Arunachal Pradesh irrespective of the weather conditions. It was felt that G.B.s could also be considered for cotton red coats for summer months.
In addition to suggesting the financial incentives, the Committee was of the opinion that the powers and the responsibilities of the G.B.s may also be suitably modified.

01. The present provision in the Assam Frontier Regulation 1945, section 12, sub-section 2, empowering the village authority to levy fines up to Rs.50/- may be enhanced by suitable amendment of the Regulation to Rs.1000/-.

02. Some GBs felt that the district authorities overlooked them while arresting a person and taking him to police. It was felt that GBs should be allowed to use their authority under Regulation 1 of 1945 and should be encouraged to discharge their judicial functions.

03. The Committee felt that it was necessary to define the zone of selection for the GBs. A GB should not be less than 30 years and not over 60 at the time of initial selection.

04. It should be emphasised that a GB should not disobey the commands of the district authority and should not indulge in activities prejudicial to society. They would be appointed by Dy. Commissioner and will continue in service subject to the satisfaction of the Dy. Commissioner.

05. The Committee also felt that the district authorities should advise and educate the GBs about their duties, responsibilities and power.\(^{91}\)

---

Status of Women in Kebang:

Every society accords social status to women members as per its own perspective. The status and role of women in Padam society is also governed by their own norms and values with respect to interaction within the family and the family roles of men and women.

Although women generally do not participate in Kebang, it is not a social taboo. They are sometimes seen distributing among or edibles among the deliberating members of the Kebang. But women do not normally participate in the Kebang in the capacity of a member. Of course, occasionally an aggrieved woman comes to the Kebang to voice her grievances or when a woman feel feels it necessary, she does not hesitate to make her voice heard and her opinion felt in the Kebang.

Why did women not participate in Kebang? On this question, Mrs. Bormoty Dai, first lady graduate of the state, was belongs to the Padam sub-tribe, responded to the questionnaire in the following manner:

(a) In early days, the women of Padam society were generally neglected in the field of politics.

(b) The male members also did not approach the female members to participate in Kebang.

(c) There were no voices of women in public gathering fearing negligence to their ideas and speeches.

---

92 Talukdhar, A. C. op.cit, P. 38.
93 Ray, S. op.cit, P. 206.
94 Personal Interview with Bormoty Dai, Pasighat on 25/03/99.
Mr. Bodong Yirang, a Padam intellectual also in his response to the questionnaire, attributed the following factors responsible for lack of women’s participation in the Kebang:

(a) The Adi Society is patriarchal and patrimonial. The role of male is always predominant in almost all spheres of life.

(b) The females with their inherent household affairs find it inconvenient to attend the sitting of the Kebang.

(c) Because of the traditional belief, the women during unclean period or at the time of Childbirth cannot enter the Mushup in which the Kebang is usually held.  

Mr. Oshong Ering, a retired IAS officer feels that the aloofness of the women from the Kebang is mainly because of the patriarchal nature of the Adi society, where a man plays the dominant role in the political life of the society. He ascribes this aloofness to various social taboos and the inherent difficulties of a mother in a traditional society.  

Mr. Kangkong Borang, Head Gam Ayeng Village is of the opinion that the women are not barred or prevented from the participation in the Kebang and also there is no social taboo. He is of the opinion that it is the lack of time, lack of knowledge and training in Kebang and of course, negligence of the menfolk, that has kept women away from Kebang.

Professor A. C. Talukdar, in his book “Political transition in the grassroots in the tribal India (1987)” writes that “the real reason for non participation of the women in the Kebang appears to be the fact that the

95 Personal interview with Bodong Yirang, Mebo on 23/03/99.
96 Ering, Oshong. op.cit, P - 14.
97 Information given by Shri. K. Borang, II/Gam Ayeng during interview scheduled on 22/03/99.
main economic activity of the family, among the Adis, is entrusted to the women folk, leaving little time for them to attend the other activities of life". Further, he writes, "participation in the Kebang demands enough knowledge of the customary laws, ability to speak and convince and a fair knowledge of the procedures to be followed. This require years of training and observation of the Kebang at work". Therefore, in general participation of women in the proceeding of a Kebang is quite rare.

**Kebang: A democratic institution?**

Before we analyse whether Kebang is a democratic institution, it would be proper to look at some of the definitions of the term democracy. Democracy has been defined in different manner by different authors, and its definitions differ from context to context.

George Orwell is of the opinion that, "in the case of a word like democracy not only is there no agreed definition but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. The defenders of any kind of regime claims that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning." 99

Sartori writes, "democracy could be defined as a high flown name for something which does not exit." 100

---

98 Talukdhar, A. C. op.cit, PP – 38, 39.
99 Orwell, G. “Politics and the English language”, in selected Essays (Beltinese 1957), P – 149.
100 Sartori, G. Democratic theory (New Delhi, Oxford and IBIT, 1965), P 3.
According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, Democracy is, "Government that allows freedom of speech, religion and political opinion, that upholds the rule of law and majority rule and that respects the rights of the minorities."  

Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as, "the Government of the people, by the people and for the people."  

According to Professor Seeley, democracy is, "Government in which everyone has a share". According to Dicey, "democracy is form of Government in which the governing body is a comparatively large fraction of the entire nation."  

In the 19th century, however, the concept of "democracy included representative parliaments, separation of power, the rule of law, civil rights etc." Later on, democracy came to be identified with popular sovereignty, majority rule, protection of minorities, constitutional liberties, participation in decision making process and egalitarianism, among others.  

Thus, from above definitions, it may be assumed that as a form of Government, democracy implies popular sovereignty, representative Government, responsible Government, and rule by the majority and Government through discussion. The liberal democracy assumes an individual as a rational and moral being. All individuals are regarded as equal.

---

103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
When we look at the broad features of democracy we can say that Adis' Kebang has been a democratic form of administration right from its origin. Over centuries, the element of democracy of Adi Kebang attained near perfection to fit in the Rousseauvian concept of democracy\(^\text{107}\). Even before the new concept originated in the later part of 18th century, the Padam group of tribes in Arunachal evolved and practised a similar democracy\(^\text{108}\). It appears from their nomadic nature that the Adis did not welcome the Kingship concept even when they were in Tibet. As nomads, these people did not come under the spell of any chief or king. They might, perhaps, be under the wider canopy of some authority without any tangible impact. When they had to escape the dictatorial imposition of a Tibetan king, they developed a natural antipathy towards kingship.\(^\text{109}\)

Mr. Sachin Roy, writes, "the administrative structures of the Adis is essentially democratic, autocracy in any form has not been known to them and in the absence of distinct class of nobility, oligarchy has remained equally unknown. Their's is, in a true sense, a Government by the people and for the people. The structure is very simple and effective. Every village is an independent unit by itself, and knows no extraneous authority. It has a council of elders, which exercises the highest legal and judicial powers. This is known as Kebang and all social and political control of the village rests with it."

\(^\text{107}\) Nath, J. op.cit, P - 216.
\(^\text{108}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{109}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{110}\) Roy, Sachin. op.cit, P - 218.
The following points also indicates the democratic nature and character of the Kebang :-

01. Clan System.

As a system of administration, Kebang involves all people. The Padams are a closely-knit people known by different names. Each group is composed of a member of clans which in their turn are formed by a number of sub-clans and sub-clans are group of families. So, each group feels greater closeness within itself than it feels with the other groups. As such, over the centuries, the village council and the inter-village council emerged as a well-knit self-administrative institution amongst the Adis of the Tani group.\(^\text{111}\)

02. Membership.

All the adult members of the village, when they attain the age of reason, automatically become the members of the Kebang and involve themselves in the affairs of Kebang. There is no specific criteria, when and at what age one should become the member of Kebang. However, to become the member of Kebang, one must spend four to five years as a Mushup Ko (Dormitory Boy). Normally, young members used to give LERUM. It is called Lerum Pitnam (membership fee). Generally it is in kind like rice beer, salt, smoked meat and egg, etc. If somebody gives money it is Rs.5/- only\(^\text{112}\). But, one should not be stupid, dumb, insane and when one grows up he should be able to take responsibility.\(^\text{113}\)

\(^{111}\) Nath, J. op.cit, P – 217.

\(^{112}\) Personal interview with D. Perme (Former Gaon Buya), Ayeng on 23/03/99.

\(^{113}\) Borang, Katon. “Traditional and customary laws of Adis, How to preserve them”, a paper presented in the seminar organised by the research Department, Arunachal Pradeshhat Pasighat.
03. Leadership.

Another salient feature which makes Kebang a democratic institution is the process of its leadership selection. The Gamship is not a hereditary institution, though the son of a Gam stands a better chance of becoming a Gam. A consensus selection of a man as a Gam depends on the worth of the man himself. To get oneself selected, one should be a Kebang expert. The Kebang expert is one who is well versed in the tribe's mythology, customary laws and traditional history of the tribes. Another term used for Kebang Abu in the past is Mikok, a man who can speak in a dominating tone like the leader cock in the herds of fowls. Such a man is the consensus Gam.\textsuperscript{114}


Another democratic element present in Padam Kebang is the consensus method of decision making. The decisions in Kebang are generally made in a consensus manner. Kebang formulates plans and policies according to public opinion. Thus, it is a form of self-government based on people's participation, free debate, consultation and consensus. The decision of the Kebang is never based on majority votes, in the cases where there is a scope for injustice meted out to the minority. "It is always a consensus based on truth arrived at thorough dialectical method of Greek catechism."\textsuperscript{115}

If democracy stands for rule of law, equality before law, people's participation in decision making and response to the nature and needs of the individuals, then all the above features seem to be present in the Adi's village council, i.e. Kebang.

\textsuperscript{114} Nath, J. op.cit, PP – 217, 218.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.