Since the leaders are usually considered as precursors to change and development, the study of leadership is an important dimension to understand the emerging sociopolitical system and the nature of transition taking place in the society. This study is an attempt to understand the emerging trends of leadership in Arunachal Pradesh with special reference to Gaiy society. Arunachal Pradesh being a late entrant into the modern democratic and representative politics, the traditional political institutions of the respective tribes were the only forum for community decision-making and mechanism to regulate the society. The functioning of these tribal councils were guided by the traditionally influential village leaders like Gaon Panchayats (commonly known as Gaon) and others, and the decisions were based on the customary laws of the land. But with the introduction of statutory panchayats and the emergence of party politics, a new trend has emerged in the grassroots leadership pattern. Now, what we observe in the village is the emergence of multiple centres of power and decentralized decision-making authority, and in the process, the status of the Gaon and other village elders is appeared to be significantly eroded.

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The study of leadership has attracted the interest of the sociologists, political scientists and social psychologists alike because the growing complexities of life, advancement in science and
technology, increasing role of the government, rising expectations of the people and other similar factors have exalted the social significance of the study of leadership. However, there is no unanimity among the writers on the concept of leadership. Basically, there are three popular theories of leadership. Firstly, the Trait Theory tends to view the leadership as a special trait or in-born qualities, which predestine him to be a leader. According to this concept, the leaders are born; not made. Secondly, the Situational Theory maintains that leadership is a relationship that exists between persons in a social situation. It does not reside in a person; rather, it is the function of whole situation. A person who is a leader in one situation may not necessarily be a leader in other situation. Thirdly, the Group Theory of leadership maintains that leadership is a functional relationship between three basic variables viz. the leader, the group and the situation. However, each concept taken separately reveals only a part of the total phenomenon but they have their share of contribution to the study of leadership.

The present work is an attempt to study the emerging trend of leadership at the grassroots level under the impact of the forces of modernization. Besides that, the study also throws a light on the process of socio-political transition taking place at the village level. The real value of such a study does not necessarily lie in the degree of
validity of its conclusions for wider areas rather, it is of particular
value in that it spotlights the complexities of the emerging situation.
Apart from the participant observation of an insider, this study is
basically based on the responses of 221 respondent leaders selected
from fifteen different Galo villages spreading over five administrative
circles of both the East and West Siang districts.

As the study reveals, the socio-economic background of an
individual has significant bearing on the emergence of leadership;
but many of the traditionally important determinants of leadership
are no more significant especially for the emerging pattern of
leadership. Hence, there has been perceptible change in the
leadership pattern in terms of its determinants, though certain
traditional factors are still relevant. The leadership in Galo society is
predominantly a male affair, however, the emerging leadership have
relatively more women representative among them. The seniority in
age is no more an important criteria of leadership as it used to be and
the rural leaders are not necessarily drawn from the large family and
it is true especially of the emerging leaders. However, the educational
background of an individual, which was never a factor of leadership
in the traditional Galo society, is one of the most important
determinants of leadership in the emerging situation. The occupation
and income too is not a significant factor for general leadership
formation, because, almost all of the leaders are agriculturist by occupation. Besides, most of them are from low and moderate-income group in terms of rupees, which is a general characteristic of a rural economy. However, the comparative analysis shows that the modern leaders have slightly higher income and multiple sources of income, because, many of them are found to be engaged in allied occupation apart from the agriculture. The economic status is necessary not only for emergence of the leadership but also for the maintenance of leadership status. As indicated by the study of variables like movable property, landholding, mode of cultivation, type of dwelling house, 'Togu' celebration and the generosity of the leaders etc., the leaders are usually drawn from the higher economic status. At the same time, there is significant difference between the modern and the traditional leaders so far as the indicators of the economic status is concerned. For example, the modern leaders relatively own more modern assets and live in modern house in comparison to the traditional leaders. The assets of the modern leaders are mostly inherited rather than acquired by them. The study further reveals that the traditional leaders are wealthier in terms of the indigenous items like cattle, poultry, traditional properties (Adam-Todok) etc. and that is supported by the study of 'Togu' performed by the leaders in their lifetime. Though the 'Togu' celebration is an
expensive affair, those who perform 'Togu' twice or thrice is proportionately higher among the traditional leaders, which suggest that they are wealthier in the traditional perspective than the modern leaders. The leaders are found to be generous because, the majority of them have donated generously on many occasions in the village, which also suggest that they are economically sound to do so. It is rightly stated that shortsightedness or selfishness may make a person rich and influential but not a leader in any case. This is especially true of the party-based new leaders who are supposed to maintain their support base for future political career. Thus, generosity is an important aspect of the rural leadership. Our analysis on some aspect of political socialization of the leaders reveals that they are politically active and conscious. The leaders are active participants in the modern political process. Unlike earlier, their level of influence is no more confined to the respective village only and that is true especially in case of the modern leaders. Apart from being a member of one political party or the other, the leaders have membership in various clan-based or welfare-based or the religion-based associations or unions. However, the modern leaders are found to be more secular and broad-based in their institutional affiliation. Further, the leaders have satisfactory access to the radio, which is supposed to bring progressive orientation among them. However,
they have limited exposure to the newspaper due to the low level of educational attainment and the lack of circulation. The modern leaders are likely to have better awareness and knowledge about the contemporary situations, because, they are relatively better informed and more adequately exposed to the mass-media. The close study of the socio-economic backgrounds of the leaders shows that the leadership of an ascriptive kind tends to disappear, and it gradually gravitates into the hands of groups, which are a little more advanced in occupation or slightly better placed in regard to economic power than the rest. The power and authority in the village tends to shift into the hands of those who are neo-rich or educated, or have 'connections' with the government officials or influential members of the ruling political parties.

The study further reveals that the attitudes and perceptions of the leaders are basically in tune with the changing socio-political environment except in few issues where the traditional values still hold strong position. The attitude and perception of the leaders in regard to some important customary practices and other social issues like marriage, marriage celebration (Togn), status of women, social taboos, etc. reflects a progressive change towards modernization and rationality. The leaders are ready to accept the inter-tribal marriage and none of them prefer child marriage. This is certainly a great
breakthrough in the traditional outlook and values of the rural community. A look at the leaders perception on Nyame-Renam and Omeh Areh (bride-price) indicates that most of them are in favour of giving up the derogatory social practices, and the emerging leaders are more progressive in outlook in this connection. However, the substantial proportion, generally, of the traditional leaders are in favour of the retention of these system and hence, are nostalgically backward looking. There are certain people who are not conversant with the modern ideas and persistently sticking to old ideas and institutions and stand for the old values. The majority of the leaders do not like the practice of slaughtering of mithun in the name of marriage celebration and existing social taboos. On the basis of our study, we are inclined to say that the emerging leaders are more progressive and broadminded in their outlook. On the question of the sex of the first child and daughters' right to inheritance, the leaders relatively maintain a rigid stand in favour of the male child, which is a clear reflection of the traditional patriarchal society. However, in matters of giving formal education to the children, the majority of the leaders do not discriminate between the male and female child. Further, our findings in regard to the leaders' perception on some gender-related issues like widow-remarriage, role of women in Keba, appointment of women as Gam and reservation for women in the
panchayat bodies indicates that the women are never treated lowly in the Galo society. The majority of the leaders have positive opinion in favour of the widow-remarriage, though few of them did not give clear answer. Though the women practically do not take part in the Keba deliberation, most of the leaders are not averse to their taking part in the same. The capability of the women to participate in the process of arbitration is recognized by the majority of the leaders. Most of the leaders do not have biasness against the recruitment of women to the post of Gaon Burah/Gam, which suggest that the women too can play a leading role in the decision-making process in the Keba. The leaders are equally liberal on the question of reservation of seats for women in the panchayat bodies. Majority of them are in favour of the reservation. Thus, our analysis indicates that many traditional moorings attached to the status of women are sinking in the waves of the present environment. The majority of the leaders are gender-neutral. However, few of them were found to be trapped between the traditional ethos and the modern sense of justice and equality. In almost all the variables, the emerging leaders are found to be more progressive and broad-minded than the traditional leaders. The study reveals the forging of a new synthesis between the old and the new without major emotional disturbance or turmoil in the inter-group behavioural pattern. Though the traditional belief
system still holds importance inspite of the changing environment, there is a definite shift in the value-orientation and perceptions of the leaders. The social outlook of the leaders shows sign of an appreciation for modernization and change. The new ideas have gradually penetrated into their social structure, which slowly found root in their value perception. Further, the leaders' perception on the village leadership and the present state of the Keba reveals that the popularity and acceptance of the Gam as leader of the village has diminished to a great extent and consequently, the status of the traditional village council (Keba) as the mechanism of arbitration and decision-making, is gradually declining. Though the Gams remains to be relatively more popular and influential leader in the village affairs, but with reduced acceptance. The party-based new leaders are emerging as powerful and influential at the cost of the status of the Gams. Thus, our analysis shows the emergence of multiple centres of power at the grassroot level. However, there is tendency among the different types of leaders to assert their own status, which indirectly suggests that a sort of competition is going on between the traditional and the modern leaders. Among other factors, the introduction of the statutory panchayats in the rural villages have been instrumentally responsible for the erosion of power and prestige of the Gams and the majority of the Gams themselves openly or tacitly accepted this fact.
The institution of village *Keba*, which was responsible for the regulation of village lives is changing its character. Moreover, where they were once guided by the *Gams* and elders, they have now become progressively subjected to democratic control at least in principle. But, in spite of the diminishing authority of the traditional leaders, the common people have still faith on *Keba*, may be due to the lack of alternative indigenous forum of conflict resolution. Our analysis further confirms that there has been major shift in the leadership pattern in terms of its determinants. The educational background is found to be the most important determinants of leadership followed by integrity-honesty, party supports and others. The family background and the knowledge about tradition is no more the guiding factor of emergence of leadership in the village, rather, leadership, at present or in future, tends to shift towards those who are educated and dynamic.

The analysis of the decision-making process in context of changing pattern of leadership reveals a significant shift in the methods of decision-making process and the ways and means to execute the decisions. Though the leaders usually adopt the democratic method of decision-making, the traditional method of decision by consensus is being slowly replaced by the modern method of decision by the majority and at times, by the decisions
arbitrarily taken by the leaders. Since the traditional customs are exposed to modern values and the old relationships are strained, the Keba decisions are not always guided by the traditional spirit of simplicity and truthfulness, rather, there are instances of arbitrary decisions. In the present context, the decision by consensus is not always practically feasible or possible. Further, due to the informal nature of the village Keba and the absence of separate organ for execution of its decisions, the leaders usually resort to persuasion method to execute the Keba decisions. The leaders usually adopt the democratic method of influence while discharging leadership role in the village Keba. However, the substantial proportion of them admitted that they adopt undemocratic means like political and family-clan pressure. One of the important finding of our analysis is that in terms of decision-making process, the traditional leaders are more democratic in approach than the modern leaders. This can be attributed to the fact that in developmental issues in which the role of the modern leaders are more prominent, their decisions are often guided by the party interest or the dictates of the so-called high command. Thus, the decisions sometimes become undemocratic and arbitrary because the diverse and conflicting interest of the political parties, influential people, official formalities, etc. are to be accommodated while taking a decision on developmental issues. On
the other hand, the village *Keba* being a customary institution facilitates relatively greater scope for discussion and deliberation, which paves the way for more democratic decision-making. However, the majority of the leaders openly or tacitly conceded that there is a growing tendency among the common men to disobey the *Keba* decisions. The *Keba* decisions are sometimes, challenged and appealed for adjudication at the higher forums which indicates that there is a gradual decline in the influence and legitimacy of the village *Keba* and its leadership. In the process, the tribal mode of justice is no more quick, simple and free of cost as its used to be, because, the ‘money’ and ‘power’ also play a significant role in the process of adjudication of justice in the *Keba*. Besides this, the *Keba* decisions are not always free from the influence of the party politics. The role of the politician is very much extended. They are gradually elbowing out the leaders of the society; and a democratic polity can hardly avoid the influence of the ruling party politician representing the villages. Further, the rich and wealthy people can also exert significant influence over the decision-making process of the *Keba*. To a great extent, they can influence or mould the *Keba* decision. The power system in the village has a tendency to incline in favour of the individuals or groups who can control the economic expectations of the people. Thus, the emergence of multiple centres of power has
facilitated the gradual intrusion of the maladies of influence, favouritism and nepotism in the indigenous decision-making mechanism. Moreover, the loyalty of the people, which was previously fixed in one corporate determinant body of persons, has now been split into ‘loyalties’ to a number of bodies and persons. The village Keba is under intense pressure from the influence of money, power and the party politics. The instances of favouritism and partiality in the Keba decision are on the rising trend. The sense of unity and cooperation in the village is being slowly replaced by jealousy, envy, division and internal competition. Collectivism and cohesiveness, which was the basic characteristics of the rural areas, has gradually eroded. Hence, under such circumstances, the decision of the Keba is not always transparent and conducive to the social harmony and justice. There is every possibility of justice being doctored, delayed or denied. However, in spite of the declining level of egalitarian character of the Keba, almost all the leaders prefer to settle their dispute in the village Keba because, disputes when taken to the higher forum becomes complicated and expensive. The study further reveals that the emerging leaders have better understanding about the emerging realities; and the traditional leaders have relatively greater degree of reverence for the traditional Keba. Another perceptible change in the decision-making process is the
diminished role of the elders. The majority of the respondents agreed that the educated could take better kind of decision. In the rapidly changing rural scenario, the decisions of the Keba is not necessarily guided by the customs and conventions alone, but on many occasions, the decisions are influenced by the other factors like modern concept of justice and equality, official norms, party interest, etc. Under such circumstances, the educated are likely to play a more effective role in the decision-making process. Our study further reveals that the decision-making process is more democratic in the traditional Keba when compared to the statutory panchayat because; there are greater instances of arbitrary decisions in the panchayat meetings. Most of the Keba decisions are taken through the consensus method, but in the panchayat, most of the decisions are taken through the majority. This is so, because, the Keba decision being the product of lengthy deliberation facilitates greater scope for consensus decision. But, in panchayat, the decision is more often influenced by the party interest and the governmental supervision. So, there is a greater chance of arbitrary and discretionary decisions in the panchayat. Though the consensus decisions seem to be the most appropriate, the majority of the leaders admitted that the majority decision is practically more reliable. Inspite of the certain difference in decision-making process between the traditional Keba and the
statutory panchayat, they can influence one another or they are not totally independent from one another.

The emergence of leadership in the rural and tribal society is basically based on ascriptive factors. However, our study indicates that the primordial loyalties do not play as effective a role in the leadership formation in the Galo society anymore, though we cannot completely ignore the same. The traditional determinants of leadership have not been totally jettisoned though the trend is towards new direction in the pattern of leadership and authority in the village. As far our analyses, the parental position has important bearing on the emergence of leadership, because the majority of the respondent leaders' father held some position or status in the village. This finding subscribe to the proposition that 'the son inherit the father's quality' which is popularly accepted in the traditional Galo society. Further, the parental position has greater significance for the modern leaders. However, the leaders' fathers were basically poor in terms of monetary income though they might have been wealthy in traditional perspective. Almost all of them were agriculturist by occupation and it was their source of income too. So far our study is concern, the most important base of leadership is the personal achievement, followed by the party support and the family background. A person with good reputation of honesty and integrity
and social service coupled with other positive qualities usually emerge as leader in the village in long run. The integrity and honesty is important not only for the emergence of leadership, but also a crucial factor, which determines the voting behaviour of the respondent leaders in the elections.

The integrity of the candidate and the party factor usually determine the leaders voting behaviour in both the panchayat and the Assembly elections. The family, clan and the economic factor have very limited role in determining the leaders’ political decision in the election. The similar factor determines the leaders behaviour in different situation of choosing a leader.

The study further reveals that the majority of the leaders’ in-laws held some position in the society, which imply that the in-laws social position also contribute to the leadership formation. The substantial proportion of the respondent leaders admitted that they got support from the in-laws in acquiring and maintaining the present status. Thus, the socio-economic status of the in-laws has also bearing on the leaders’ status though not instrumentally. The analyses further indicates that the traditional leaders who represent the village Keba are, ironically but slightly, more broad-based than the modern leaders who represent the democratic institution of the panchayat and the parties. However, our analyses could not clearly establish the influence of primordial loyalties in the leadership formation in a big way. The Galo being a classless society, the leadership rests with a collectivity of individuals in the village. The birth and descent do not necessarily determine the leadership formation because of the relative homogeneity of the society.