

VISHNUIAS.COM

WE PROVIDE A PATH FOR YOUR SUCCESS

ANTHROPOLOGY SNIPPET-275

(Welcome To Vishnu IAS online)

(Research and Training Institute for the best civil services preparation in India)

<http://vishnuias.com/>

An anthropological approach to lockdown

Anthropology has always been interested in knowing different cultural aspects of different societies. The approach of cultural relativism has advocated the field workers to collect data out of field by preceding local people's view point. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the whole country has been in lockdown since 24th of March, 2020 for at least 21 days or it might even extend more than that. Surprisingly the Galo tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh follows an equivalent system of lockdown among them when an epidemic strikes. This Galo community resides in the West Siang district, being one of the 26 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The distinctive ritual practiced by them is known as 'Arr Rinam', followed by 'Ali Ternam'.

Where Ali means epidemic and Ternam means forestall or prevent, so it's a ritual to protect the whole community against the epidemic or in other words to prevent the epidemic to occur. This Arr- Rinam is imposed for 48 hours

whenever an epidemic strikes by following a consensus of the community head. The Galo community lastly practiced this Arr-Rinam almost four decades ago when a water-borne disease occurring in their community and affected few individuals. The ritual creates a line of demarcation by sealing five entry points to their village done by some village headman. Even this ritual is also followed periodically for their livestock, primarily for their semi-wild mithuns, which are prone to contagious disease. At present the situation of COVID-19 pandemic has imposed lockdown throughout the country, and definitely this community is also following. Apart from the Galo tribe, another North-eastern tribal group follows this kind of ritual.

It's Adi tribe which perform a pattern of customary laws of self-restriction as well as prevention of entry of outsiders to their village. They share a system of belief that within this period of restriction the Shamans (religious priest) derived a legendary power to locate wild herbs

and prepare medicines out of it which could help them to overcome the epidemic. Here's the importance of ethno-medicine has been raised, which is an integral part of the discipline of anthropology. Science has a greater impact on us since ages, but the importance of traditional knowledge cannot be ignored. Societies and different communities have always shown instances of traditional practices which carry an important scientific background.