

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-54517

Title: Impact of Patriarchal Customs on Women's Land Ownership Among Galo Tribe in West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality			✓	
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity			✓	
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Dr. ABDUL HASEEB MIR

Reviewer's Comment

This paper represents a thoughtful and empirically grounded exploration of the intersection between gender, customary law, and land rights among the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. It contributes meaningfully to the growing scholarship on indigenous legal systems and gender inequality in India's northeastern frontier. The author skillfully balances ethnographic depth with methodological rigor, revealing how customary institutions, particularly the *keba* (village council), perpetuate patriarchal norms that exclude women from ancestral inheritance. The research also foregrounds the voices of women who, through education, self-reliance, and social awareness, are negotiating limited spaces of empowerment within a traditional framework. The article is timely and relevant, addressing the urgent question of how gender justice can be reconciled with cultural preservation in tribal societies. With some refinements—such as deeper theoretical contextualization within feminist legal theory and tighter articulation of the implications for policy—the article is highly suitable for publication.

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Detailed Review Report

This paper provides an impressive synthesis of sociological and legal perspectives to investigate how patriarchal customs shape women's access to and ownership of land among the Galo tribe. The study demonstrates academic maturity through its comprehensive engagement with literature, clear research objectives, and integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings. The introduction effectively situates the Galo community within the broader discourse on tribal governance and gendered land rights, emphasizing that land in such societies is not merely an economic asset but a core symbol of lineage, identity, and belonging. The discussion of legal pluralism—where statutory laws coexist with customary authority—adds depth to the analysis, making the paper conceptually strong.

The methodological approach is commendably detailed. The mixed-method design, which combines household surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, strengthens the reliability of the findings. The study's inclusion of women's narratives enriches its interpretive quality, allowing the reader to grasp not only structural inequalities but also lived experiences of exclusion and resistance. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and cultural sensitivity, are appropriately highlighted, which enhances the study's credibility and fieldwork integrity.

The findings are striking and convey a powerful story of systemic exclusion. The author shows that none of the women surveyed inherited ancestral land, with only a negligible 2% receiving land as gifts from parents. A remarkable 98% acquired land independently, underscoring both the rigidity of patriarchal norms and women's determination to achieve economic independence. The analysis of patrilineal inheritance, patrilocal residence, and male-dominated decision-making within the *keba* offers a nuanced understanding of how customary law sustains gender hierarchies. The quantitative tables and qualitative insights are well integrated, providing clarity and balance between data and interpretation.

The study's strength lies in its portrayal of Galo women as neither passive victims nor mere subjects of custom, but as agents navigating structural barriers. Their voices—expressing both acceptance and subtle defiance—highlight the evolving dynamics of gender in tribal contexts. Women purchasing land through their own effort emerges as a powerful symbol of autonomy, even if such ownership lacks full social legitimacy. The paper insightfully observes that education, financial independence, and NGO support serve as enabling factors, while illiteracy, fear of social backlash, and the dominance of customary law remain significant constraints.

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The discussion section synthesizes the results effectively, situating them within a wider comparative frame that includes previous studies on other tribes such as the Adi, Tagin, and Nyishi. By engaging with works like those of Doye (2020), Neba (2019), and Borang (2014), the author underscores the continuity of patriarchal structures despite increasing modernization. However, the discussion could be further enriched by explicitly linking these findings to feminist legal theory—especially perspectives on the politics of recognition and the intersection of law, culture, and gender. Incorporating voices like Martha Nussbaum, Bina Agarwal, or Ratna Kapur would enhance theoretical grounding and global relevance.

Stylistically, the paper reads well. The writing is clear, precise, and professional, maintaining an academic tone without losing human sensitivity. The transitions between empirical sections are coherent, and the presentation of results is systematic. A few paragraphs could be condensed to avoid repetition, especially where statistical and narrative findings overlap. The referencing is thorough, with credible use of recent studies and official reports, which lends the paper both authority and scholarly integrity.

The conclusion effectively consolidates the argument, calling for a multifaceted strategy that combines legal literacy, economic empowerment, and engagement with customary institutions. The emphasis on working *with* traditional authorities rather than against them is both pragmatic and culturally sensitive. This balanced stance reflects the author's deep understanding of the delicate equilibrium between respecting indigenous governance and promoting gender justice. The call for including women's names in land records and for fostering awareness of legal rights provides actionable recommendations that strengthen the paper's policy relevance.

Overall, this research stands out for its originality, empirical rigor, and moral insight. It transcends a mere descriptive account of inequality to highlight how women are actively reshaping customary boundaries in subtle but meaningful ways. The author demonstrates not only competence in fieldwork but also the analytical depth of a reflective scholar attuned to the complexities of culture and justice.

Recommendation

Accept with minor revisions.