

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 59054

Title: INHERITANCE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS OF GALO WOMEN IN WEST SIANG DISTRICT.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

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

Reviewer's ID: Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This paper looks at a very important legal question in India: do women from Scheduled Tribes (specifically the Galo community in Arunachal Pradesh) have the right to inherit family property?

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 gives Hindu women equal inheritance rights, but Section 2(2) explicitly excludes Scheduled Tribes from this law unless the government decides otherwise. Because of this, many people assume that tribal customs automatically control property inheritance, and that these customs only allow men to inherit.

The author does a great job explaining why this assumption is wrong from a legal standpoint:

- **Section 2(2) is just an exclusion:** It says the Hindu Succession Act doesn't apply automatically, but it doesn't say "only sons can inherit."
- **Customs must be proved:** Just because people in a village usually pass land to sons doesn't mean it's an enforceable legal custom. Under Supreme Court rulings (*Thakur Gokalchand* and *Ram Charan*), if someone claims a custom excludes women, they must actually prove it in court. Courts cannot just assume women are excluded.
- **Courts can't rewrite the law:** At the same time, the Supreme Court (*Nawang*) made it clear that judges cannot simply force the Hindu Succession Act onto tribes without an official government order.

To support this legal argument, the paper includes survey data from 150 respondents in West Siang District. The survey shows that male dominance in land ownership (64%) and property decisions (60.7%)

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is very common, and that many women lack land documents or access to legal forums. The author correctly uses these numbers to show how hard it is for women in practice, without mistaking these everyday practices for valid legal customs.

Improvements to Make

- 1. Clear up details about the 150 respondents:** The survey part is brief. It would help to add a short note explaining who these 150 people were (e.g., age groups, whether they were from towns or villages) and whether the author collected this data directly or used an existing dataset.
- 2. Explain how customary councils (*Keba*) connect to formal law:** The paper mentions the local village council (*Keba*), but it should briefly explain what happens when a *Keba* decision gets taken to a government officer or a court. This would make the discussion on constitutional equality (Articles 14 and 15) much clearer.
- 3. Merge repetitive legal sections:** Sections 3, 4, and 7 repeat similar points about Supreme Court cases (*Ram Charan* and *Nawang*). Combining these into one clean section will make the paper flow much better and cut down on length.
- 4. Fix small typos:** Clean up minor typos, such as the repeated word on line 504 ("material material").

Final Recommendation & Note to Editor

Recommendation: Accept with Minor Revisions

The paper is well-written, timely, and offers a strong legal argument that balances tribal customary practices with constitutional rights.

Note to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I recommend accepting the manuscript "**Inheritance and Property Rights of Galo Women in West Siang District**" subject to minor revisions.

The paper clearly explains how Section 2(2) of the Hindu Succession Act works alongside recent Supreme Court cases. It makes a strong, practical distinction between social habits and binding legal custom.