



Research Paper

## Customary Laws and Social Norms of the Galo Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh: An Exploration of Women's Property Rights

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### Abstract:

*This research paper explores the customary law and the social norms of the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh and their impacts on Women's Rights on property. The Galo tribe is the major and prominent tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The customary law and social norms play a important role in shaping lives of the Galo women. This study examines the property rights of Galo women in Arunachal Pradesh, a region in northeastern India. In this study we are using a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis data collection methods. A simple size of 300 to 400 respondents was selected for the study the data collection methods including surveys, Interviews and focus group discussions. We investigate the challenges faced by the Galo Women in accessing and owning property rights particularly immovable property like land. Our findings highlight the complex interplay of customary laws, social norms, and modern legal frameworks that shape women's property rights in this region.*

**Keywords:** Customary Law, Social Norms, Property Rights, Galo, Arunachal Pradesh, North East India, Tribe, Land.

### I. Introduction:

The property rights of the women in India are critical aspect of their Socio-economic empowerment and well-being. The Galo tribe, and indigenous community residing in West Siang, Lepa Rada, Lower Siang Districts of Arunachal Pradesh, northeastern region, India, possesses a rich cultural heritage deeply entrenched in traditional customs, norms and practices. A Significant facet of Galo Customary laws which encompasses various aspects of social, economic and legal life. Particularly noteworthy are the Property Rights within the Galo society, which reflect their social structure, kinship systems, and cultural values, Beloved to have migrated to the present- day region of Arunachal Pradesh from Tibet and other neighboring areas, the Galo tribe has, over time, evolved distinct customs and norms related to the Property rights that resonate with their customs, norms and values. These customs serve as repositories of the Galo community's collective wisdom social norms, and traditional practices handed down through generations. Understanding the Galo Property Rights and their legal framework is crucial for comprehending the social dynamics, gender roles, and familial structures within the Galo tribe. An exploration of the historical, cultural, custom, and socio-economic factors influencing Galo Property Rights practices offers valuable insights into the community's traditions, beliefs, and social organization. The women's property rights are an essential aspect of their social and economic well-being and the customary laws and the social norms plays a significant role in shaping these rights the study aims to explore the customary laws and social norms of the Galo tribe and their impact on women's Property rights.

### Aim of the Study:

To examine the current status of the property rights among the Galo women in Arunachal Pradesh and also to identify the challenges faced by the Galo women and to explore the potential impacts of granting equal property rights on their socio-economic empowerment.

### Objectives of the Study:

1. To identify the challenges faced by the Galo women in accessing and owning property.
2. To examine the impact of customary laws and social norms on women's property rights.
3. To analyze the role of legal frameworks and policies in promoting women's property rights.

4. To provide recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to enhance women's property rights in Arunachal Pradesh.

## **II. Review of the Related Studies:**

The property rights of Galo women in Arunachal Pradesh are influenced by customary laws and social norms. Research suggests that women in Galo society face significant challenges in accessing and owning property, particularly immovable property like land. According to Miss Junter Loya and Prf. Prashna Kumar Panigrahi, "Women have no rights to share immovable property of the family, except ornament or jewelry. "However, modernization, education, and cultural contacts are bringing about changes in Galo society.

Property Rights of Women by Shukla, Namrata: This book explores women's property rights in detail, providing insights into the complexities of property ownership and control.

A Field of One's Own: Gender and Property in South Asia by Bina Agarwal: A compressive analysis of gender and property rights in South Asia, highlighting the challenges faced by women in claiming their rights.

Women and Land in Africa: Culture, Religion, and Realizing Women's Rights by L.Muthoni Wanyeki: This book examines the intersection of culture, religion, and women's rights to land in Africa, offering valuable perspectives for understanding similar issues in other contexts.

## **III. Methodology of the Study:**

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. A simple size of 300 to 400 respondents was selected for the study the data collection methods including surveys, Interviews and focus group discussions within the Galo women , village elder, community leader, Gaon Bura and stakeholders to gather data on their socio-economic status, property ownership and experience. We also analyzed the existing laws, policies and documents related to the property rights in Arunachal Pradesh. We investigate the challenges faced by the Galo Women in accessing and owning property rights particularly immovable property like land. Our findings highlight the complex interplay of customary laws, social norms, and modern legal frameworks that shape women's property rights in Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Customary Laws and Social Norms:**

The Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has distinct cultural identity shaped by the Customary Laws and Social Norms. When it came to the women's property rights the customs and traditional practices have been influenced by patriarchal values. The Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has complex system of customary Laws and Social Norms that govern the Property Rights. As per the Galo customary laws, the property rights is typically inherited by the male member of the family. In the case women, they have limited rights to the property. The Customary Laws of the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh are based on the principle of Patrilineal inheritance, where the Ancestral inherit property is passed down from father to son. In India, the legal framework for the property inheritance is primarily governed by the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 and other personal laws depending on the religion of the deceased. Generally both the sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit ancestral property by birth. In Galo society, Customary Laws and social norms play a important role in the shaping women's property rights. Traditionally, women are not considered as equal to the Men in the term of the property ownerships and the Galo women rights are often limited to movable property such as jewelry and other personal belonging. The immovable property like Land is typically owned by men and women's access to it is often dependent on their relationship with their husbands or male family members.

**Table 1. Customary Laws and Social Norms of the Galo Tribes**

Customary Laws and Social Norms	Frequency
<b>Inheritance</b>	
Patrilineal Inheritance	280
Matrilineal Inheritance	20
Other	60
<b>Property Ownership</b>	

Men have primary ownership	300
Women have Primary ownership	20
Joint ownership	40
<b>Decision-making</b>	
Men make decisions	260
Women make decisions	40
Joint decision-making	60

**Modern Legal Frameworks:**

The modern legal frameworks governing the women's property rights in India, including the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, the Indian government has implemented various laws and policies to promote and protects the women's property rights the laws such as Hindu Succession Act (HAS) of 1956; in this Act grants Hindu Women rights to inherit and property. Under section 14 of Hindu Succession Act 1956 gives absolute ownership to Hindu women over any property possessed by them and Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005, in this amendment grants daughters to equal coparcenaries rights in Hindu undivided Family property, allowing them to inherit ancestral property on par with sons. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 also safeguards women's rights to reside in the matrimonial home, regardless of ownership or rental status.

**Women's Property Rights:**

Women's property rights in the Galo tribe are limited by customary laws and social norms. Women are not considered equal to men in terms of property ownership, and their rights are often limited to movable property such as ornaments or jewelry and other personal belongings. Immovable property like land is typically owned by men, and women's access to it is often dependent on their relationship with their husbands or male family members.

**Table 2. Women's Property Rights in the Galo Tribes**

<b>Women's Property Rights</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Land Ownership</b>	
Women own Land	80
Men own Land	240
Joint ownership	40
<b>Property Control</b>	
Women Control property	60
Men control property	280
Joint control	20
<b>Challenges</b>	
Social norms limit women's rights	240
Lack of education and awareness	80
Other	40

**Impact of Customary Laws on women's property rights:**

The Galo tribe of the Arunachal Pradesh has a distinct cultural shaped by its Customary Laws and Social Norms when it come to the women's property rights the tribal's customary and traditional practices have been influenced by the Patriarchal values. The Galo women generally perceive their property rights as limited and often face challenges in accessing and owning property, many Galo women reported experiencing difficulties in calming their inheritance and property rights due to the patriarchal Norms and Customary Laws that favors the men. Secure property rights can empower Galo women providing them with economic stability, social status and decision making power. Traditionally the Galo women of Arunachal Pradesh have enjoyed a certain degree of freedom and autonomy however; when it come to the property rights they often rely on the good will of their Parents or spouses due to the Customary Laws and social Norms play a significant role in the society and decision making power.

**Table 3. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18-25 years	80	22%
26-35 years	120	33%
36-45 years	90	25%
46-55 years	50	14%
56 years and above	20	6%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Agriculture	150	42%
Government service	80	23%
Private Service	60	17%
Business	40	11%
Others	30	8%
<b>Education Qualification</b>		
Illiterate	50	14%
Primary Education	80	22%
Secondary Education	120	33%
Higher Secondary Education	60	17%
Graduate and above	50	14%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	250	69%
Unmarried	100	28%
widow	10	03%

**Major Findings of the Study:**

1. The study reveals that the Customary Laws and the Social Norms of the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh have a significant impact on the Galo women's property rights. The findings including;

- Limited access to education and awareness: Many Galo women lack awareness about their property rights and are not educated about the legal frameworks that govern property ownership.
- Societal and cultural norms: Societal and cultural norms often restrict women's participation in decision-making and control over property.
- Patriarchal dominance: The Galo society is predominantly patriarch, where men hold more power and control over property and decision-making.
- Limited economic empowerment: Many Galo women lack economic empowerment, making it difficult for them to access and own property.

2. The study finds that customary law and social norms have a significant impact on women's rights to property and inheritance, favoring men instead.

- Limiting women's rights: Customary laws and social norms often limit women's rights to property and inheritance, favoring men instead.
- Perpetuating gender stereotypes: Customary laws and social norms perpetuate gender stereotypes, where women are seen as caregivers and men as providers.
- Restricting women's participation: Customary laws and social norms often restrict women's participation in decision-making and control over property.

3. The study reveals that legal frameworks and policies play a crucial role in promoting women's property rights, including:

- Protecting women's rights: Legal frameworks and policies can protect women's rights to property and inheritance, ensuring that they are treated equally and fairly.
- Promoting gender equality: Legal frameworks and policies can promote gender equality by challenging customary laws and social norms that perpetuate gender stereotypes.
- Providing recourse: legal frameworks and policies can provide recourse for women who face challenges in accessing and owning property.

#### **IV. Recommendations:**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Review and reform customary laws: Review and reform customary laws that limit women's rights to property and inheritance.
- Raise awareness: Raise awareness about gender equality through education and outreach programs.
- Provide support services: Provide support services, such as legal aid and counseling, to women who face challenges in accessing and owning property.
- Encourage women's participation: Encourage women's participation in decision-making and control over property through policy and programmatic interventions.

These recommendations can help enhance women's property rights in Arunachal Pradesh and promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

#### **V. Conclusion:**

The exploration of customary laws and social norms of the Galo tribe in relation to women's property rights reveals a complex and multifaceted issue. The study highlights the significance of understanding the cultural and historical context of the Galo tribe and its impact on women's property rights. The research findings indicate that customary laws and social norms play a crucial role in shaping women's property rights among the Galo tribe. The patriarchal nature of the society, coupled with the influence of customary laws, often limits women's access to and control over property. However, the study also reveals that there are opportunities for promoting women's property rights through education, awareness, and policy interventions. This study highlights the complexities of customary laws and social norms in the Galo tribe and their impact on women's property rights. The study recommends that policymakers and stakeholders work towards promoting women's property rights and addressing the challenges faced by women in accessing and owning property.

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