

DECONSTRUCTING CUSTOMARY LAWS OF INHERITANCE IN BIRHOR SOCIETY: SPECIAL FOCUS ON BIRHOR WOMEN

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Abstract

Tribal women are victims of double discrimination. They are discriminated because they are tribal and they are women. Across the globe indigenous women are marginalised and exploited. Various factors like depletion of forest resources, intrusion of industries, alteration in traditional means of occupation have threatened the basic social structure of tribal society. Along with these threatening conditions some additional conditions experienced from internal social structure like customs, traditions, folkways, norms etc. exclude tribal women from the process of land inheritance rights, absence in decision making process, withholding the right to choose sustenance skills. In comparison to their male counterparts, they lack in every sphere of human development indicators like basic education, healthcare facilities, sanitation, employment etc. tribal women though are significant contributors in economy have been at the juncture of marginalisation when it comes to property ownership and inheritance. This paper tries to explore the customary laws of inheritance among the Birhors of Mayurbhanj and the changes that have ushered in due to sedentarization process. This paper tries to examine in detail the notion of property among the Birhors of Mayurbhanj. The Birhor women and their perception towards the property in various dimensions viz. Family property, community property and individual property has been explored. The Birhors notion of property along with it the mode of transmission of property has also been enquired. The shift in the perception and practise of Customary laws of inheritance in Birhor society has been examined from the perspective of Birhor women and their stated responses.

Key Words - Birhor, Inheritance, Corporeal property, In-corporeal property, Sanction, Primitive Tribal Group, Customary Law, Community Property Resources (CPR), Equigeniture, Ultimogeniture.



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Customary law encompasses those rules, regulations, conducts, actions etc. which are acknowledged by the members of the society. Customary laws help in maintaining social

order in Primitive societies since there is no codified written law and established judiciary. These laws are the mechanisms for maintaining the social equilibrium.

Customary law is a set of rules, practises, customs, norms that are central to the identities of indigenous people and they are abided by these informal laws which become obligatory for them. These laws are no less important than the codified laws. The violation of these customary laws draw different types of coercive actions like ostracism, ridicule etc. Customary law is the integral part of tribal life. Their culture, worldview, community sentiments, social and personal relations are governed by customary laws. Customary laws function as guardian to the age-old tradition in the simple societies.

All societies whether simple societies or modern societies have legal systems which are in sync with their cultural patterns. The disputes which arise in simple societies are mediated by informal laws which encompass established rules, regulations, norms, public opinion. Every society has certain enforced mechanisms which suppress the disturbing elements through some prescribed social action because societies have inherent mechanism to maintain the solidarity and equilibrium.

The sanction behind enforcement of custom to enact as customary law is important. Radcliffe-Brown (1934) talks about positive sanctions and negative sanctions. Rewards, honour, praise, awards etc. are manifestations of positive sanction. Negative sanctions are directed through punishment. Ostracism, disapproval, ridicules etc. are manifested in public opinion which comprises nothing but negative sanction.

Radcliffe-Brown (1940) while elaborating on customary law distinguishes between moral coercion and physical coercion. In moral coercion the individual wrong doer is subjected to reprobation or ridicule by the fellow members.

For Mair (1962) in Primitive societies there are certain rules which everybody thinks right to obey. She further elaborates that the members of a single tribe are governed by rules and conventions.

Hoebel (1979) conceptualises property as a web of social relations with utilization of some object (material or nonmaterial) in which a person or group tacitly or explicitly recognized to hold quasi-exclusive or limiting rights of use and disposition.

According to Smith (1986) 'Patterns of inheritance and transfer of property between the generations constitute an important element in social organization in those societies where

there is considerable accumulation of property, which may take the form of land rights, cattle or animals, or money and other valuables’.

Goswami (1979) takes into account traditional norms and practices as well as the socio-cultural ethos of the group concerned while considering transmission of property and offices which is generally governed by certain rules and procedures. Thus, the categorisation of inherited property and self-acquired property emerges.

Bekker (1989) sees customary law as “an established system of immemorial rules which had evolved from the way of life and natural wants of people, the general context of which was a matter of common knowledge, coupled with precedents applying to special cases, which were retained in the memories of the Chief and his Counsellors, their sons and their sons’ son, until forgotten, or until they became part of the immemorial rules.”

Customs per se are not laws. When custom gets social sanction i.e. accepted by the members of society, then only it acquires the status of law. In simple societies customs and usages acquire the status of law after certain period of time.

Review of concerned literature-

Williams (1968) talks about filiation. The Birhor society as a territorial group partilocal-lineage band responds to seasonal scarcity by splitting into smaller, non-territorial family bands. The idea behind inheritance can be inferred ‘Most of the males of a given band will be members of a single patrilineal descent group. These descent groups are differentiated in having slightly different pantheons, slightly different ceremonies concerning these deities, and different sacred mountains.’

According to Sinha (1999) the Birhor world witnesses two types of property viz. private and community. Landed property in the form of land, houses, kitchen garden, ornaments, household utensils are considered as private property. Hunting ground, pasture ground, cultivable land etc. come under community property. Mode of transfer of private property is from father to sons.

According to Narwani (2004) the acceptance of customary law is a gradual process covering a long period of time and involves the acceptance by community. If the community as a whole feel that the customary laws do not hurt community sentiment and are for betterment of their society, then only application of customary law is possible.

Sinha (2006) corroborates the fact that planned change has ushered in changes to the customary laws of inheritance among the Birhors of Chhattishgarh. Among the erstwhile nomadic Birhors with limited possession materials and movable property, in case of deceased father according to customary laws equal division of property among sons was the norm. The planned development with settlement colonies with immovable land and house does not sanction for applicability of customary inheritance laws. The second generation finds it difficult to continue in the colony in the life time of their father and also after his death.

According to Visto (2007) among the Chakhesang Nagas a married woman can exercise her control over the properties of her family, but this right can be exercised while sharing the same roof along with her husband. When the woman becomes widow or gets divorce, she loses all control over the property. Under no circumstances a Chakhesang Naga woman can inherit the property. Land is usually owned by the clan.

Fernandes and Bharali (2008) have tried to analyse the interface between customary law and formal law in the Northeast. The customary laws govern the entire gamut of marriage, property rights, community ownership over resources etc. But with the growing enforcement of formal laws begin to dilute the customary laws which in turn affects the worldview, culture of the tribes in Northeast. The clutches of modern culture leave deep impact on the socio-cultural behaviour of the tribes. Despite encounter with modern formal law the great majority of North-eastern states have been able to maintain their customary laws. Even constitutional Amendments like 13th Amendment of 1963 and 53rd Amendment of 1986 gave recognition to the customary laws of Nagaland and Mizoram through Article 371A and 371G respectively. The laws governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, rights like community ownership and various socio-cultural rights are accorded recognition by the Constitution. Until and unless the legislative assemblies agree no Act of Union Parliament can be applied to socio-religious practices, procedures, administrative justice, ownership and transfer of land and resources can be applied to these states.

Adhikary (2009) while elaborating on the customary inheritance rights of the women in Birhor society maintains that women by birth inherit the clan of their father. Women by descent cannot claim as a property holding unit, they are like exogamous unit. For disposal of property inheritance claim the authority is vested primarily in the hands of father, husband or older male member according to the composition of the household. Adhikary chooses the

term 'agnate' over patrilineal social structure possibly because he finds no evidence of exercise of male superiority through any evidently formal manner.

Mohanty (2009) examines the inheritance among three Primitive Tribal Groups of Odisha with specific reference to the influence of customary laws behind these phenomena. In the context of the Bondos the author has put the notion of property of the Bondo tribe into two broad categories viz. corporeal property (movable) and incorporeal (non-tangible) property. The movable material property of the Bondo society include household appliances, dress ,ornaments, musical instruments, hunting weapons, food items, agricultural implements, livestock etc. The incorporeal property of the Bondos include non-tangible items like dance, music, folk tales, myths and legends etc. The property in the Bondo society further divided into private property and public property. Under private property both the corporeal and incorporeal property has been envisioned .The corporeal and incorporeal property whether self-acquired or inherited both by individually or communally constitute the sphere of private property in Bondo society. Under public property the authors have placed forest, stream, and infrastructures in the form of schools or office buildings. Among the Bondos there is prevalence of equigeniture principle that guides the inheritance. The family in Bondo society is said to be patriarchal and patripotestal and the customary inheritance principle is inclined towards male descendants in vertical line. Under no circumstances unmarried or married girls are entitled to parent's property.

According to Mohanty (2009) amongst Kutia Kandha though both the sexes have contribution towards the acquisition and management of property, but the males have exclusive right of inheritance and ownership of property. The patriarchal, partilineal and patrilocal nature of Kutia Kandha society mandates the inheritance of traditional position, property and statuses along male lines. The rules of kinship and descent provide the doctrine for private property inheritance and maintenance.

Mohanty (2009) observes that among the Lanjia Saora tribe the inheritance laws are customarily decided. Principle of ultimogeniture is prevalent in Lanjia Saora society in the context of inheritance. Under this practice of inheritance, the common family property is equally shared by the sons except the parental house which is inherited by the youngest son. Though the property in Lanjia Saora community is inherited along the male line, the partition of the family's corporeal property does not happen during the lifetime of the father who is considered as the head of the family as well as the owner of the family property.

Chand and Kumar (2014) while examining the inheritance laws among the Pangwala tribal community of Himachal Pradesh finds the overpowering influence of customary laws on this Western Himalayan tribal community. The district wise and village wise data proclaims that the tribal customary law which is patrilineal always holds the stand that immovable property like land to pass on to the male members of the family after the death of the head of the family. Though the customary law leaves room for the widows to inherit in case there is no male offspring, but this practise is not followed in essence. Eventually male members become the occupants of the property ascertaining the idea of patriarchal hegemony.

Saboo (2019) explores the case of Munda women of Jharkhand and their position in land ownership and consequent awareness and acceptability of modern land ownership right. Cultural and customary practises, gender inequalities inherent in land markets exacerbate the deprivation of Munda women in land ownership. Though Munda women are bestowed with usufructuary land rights, they are not fully aware of their right to claim land ownership. The difference between customary law and codified laws has landed the vulnerable Munda women like widows, destitutes, barren and spinsters to resort to pitiable condition.

Madhu Kishwar sees the exploitation of tribal women through the lens of their tradition where no entitlement to land rights has resulted in the gloomy condition of the Tribal women.

Inheritance according to Mitchell (1979) ‘denotes the procedures which apply to the transmission of property, either material or immaterial, from person to person at death. In many societies these procedures are patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral. The practice of testamentary disposition is relatively new and hardly known in simple societies where the norms governing inheritance are usually strict. Inheritance rules therefore tend to indicate the obligations a person has towards others, usually relatives.’

The conventional notion of inheritance is not applicable to simple societies where inheritance sphere spans across nonmaterial things. Names, titles, rituals etc. can be put under the folds of inheritance signifying the importance of non-material culture.

Birhors -

Birhors are one of the most backward tribal communities and little-known forest dwelling tribe of Odisha. The term Birhor is a combination of two terms-‘Bir’ means jungle and ‘Hor’ means man which literally means forest dwelling man. In Odisha they are addressed by different names in different districts. In Sundargarh, Kalahandi and Keonjhar they are called

as Mankidi. In Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur they are called as Mankirdia. Since the tribe possesses a unique characteristic of monkey catching therefore it derived its name as Mankidi or Mankirdia. Birhors have been categorised into two i.e. Uthlu Birhors (nomads) and Jhagi Birhors (the settlers). The Birhors fall in the category of Primitive tribal group and this tribe used to be a nomadic and hunting-gathering group who used to maintain exchange relationship with the local peasants.

According to the 1971 census the Birhor population in Odisha is very less due to the separate enumeration of Birhor, Mankidi and Mankirdia. As they have been enlisted as separate tribal groups in the Scheduled Tribe list of Odisha. However, taken together the Birhors, the Mankidi and the Mankirdias number 1,307 persons in the 1971 census. They are mainly found in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Kalahandi districts of the Odisha state.(Singh:401)

To cater to the needs of PTGs both the central and state govt. Of Odisha have come up with the idea of setting up of micro projects for the upliftment of the most vulnerable section of tribal communities of India. During the fifth Five Year Plan period a Micro Project named Hill-Kharia and Mankidia Development Agency (HK&MDA) was established at Mayurbhanj in 1987. With the establishment of the HK&MDA the wandering habits of the Birhors of Mayurbhanj has come to an end. Now they have been settled by the government .Two colonies one at Durdura village of Jashipur and one at Kendumundi village of Karanjia block comes under the purview of this micro project.

Apart from these two villages with concentration of Birhor population within the Micro project, there are also more villages within the district which have not been covered by the Micro Project. At least four such Birhor settlements have been purposively chosen for the present study .Other than Durdura, Kendumundi Micro Project areas Dengam , Mahalibasa,Uthanisahi and Baliposi Birhor settlements are selected. While Durdura comes under Jashipur block, Kendumundi comes under Karanjia block,Dengam and Mahalibasa comes under Khunta block and Uthanisahi and Baliposi comes under Udala block of Mayurbhanj district. The study has both theoretical and empirical connotations. The study has been both descriptive and explanatory in nature with survey method. The sample of this present study consists of all married women of Birhor communities belonging to the settlements of these four blocks of Mayurbhanj district. For eliciting response, the researcher

has chosen participant observation and focused group discussion where ever the situation arose. The sample selection type was simple random sampling.

Inheritance among the Birhors some findings

Table 2 reveals the inclination towards eldest child preference while deciding on non-movable assets. The patrilineal system prevalent among the Birhors is reflected clearly through the choice of responses directing towards preference of male over female .

Table 3 indicates that around 59 percent of the respondents are aware that there is perceptible change in customary laws of inheritance. It shows that Birhor women have started developing the awareness about the changes that have ushered in due to development interventions. They could sense the fact that they too are shareholders in land related records.

The respondents awareness on women being given land rights, land records for owning homestead land etc. have inculcated the shift in customary laws of inheritance. The customary laws of inheritance hither to has precedents of only male successors as stereotype has been replaced by the fact that women too are considered potential heirs following implementation of Constitutional laws in sedentarized colonies of Birhors.

The list of factors indicated by female Birhor respondents which they deem fit as the perception of change in Customary laws of inheritance has been included in table 4. While 39 percent of the respondents have identified women gaining property inheritance has been a blow on the face of Customary Laws of inheritance. 35 percent of respondents have shown that their participation in decision making process has been acting as a stimulus in altering the Customary laws of inheritance. Around 26 percent of respondents have acknowledged the emergence of land and house as fixed assets has been helping in bringing about changes in Customary laws of inheritance.

The notion surrounding table 5 can be summed up in the following manner. For a nomadic community like the Birhors the conception of family property has been of great importance .Since the nomadic community had only few movable assets ,the utilitarian motive behind possessed domesticated animals is a misnomer. The settled Birhors in majority around 30 percent of respondents kept domesticated animals in the list of family property. Since they utilise these domesticated animals and birds viz. goats,pigs,poultry birds in their family which they primarily use for sustenance purpose i.e. by selling those in market place to fetch some money. The other important reason for listing domesticated animals in priority amongst family-owned possession directs towards their socio-religious realm where for rituals or

community feast they use these domesticated animals' meat .Clan deity as the second preferred item while listing of family property indicates the customary practice of adherence to Clan God .No family lives in the government provided houses in settlement colonies without placing Clan God just outside the house. Around 19 percent respondents told land or homestead land as the family property indicating the primacy over religion on usufructuary land rights. Since Birhors were nomads, land has never been their primary consideration .Though they have developed some sort of consciousness about inheritance laws. But customary laws always guide their nurtured vision about inheritance. Hearth and food items coming to fourth place in family property can be summed up by acknowledging the fact that no family in Birhor society allows to touch its hearth ,cooked rice and cooking vessels to any one from other clan or family belonging to same Birhor settlement. Hunting net as a priced possession of any concerned Birhor family reminiscences the fact that it's a hunting gathering community .Empirically though Birhors are no more hunter-gatherers, but the ethos remains there. The Birhors still possess hunting net. Each family owns a hunting net and in no circumstances, outsiders can touch the hunting net of one family.

Table 6 corroborates the fact that around 38 percent of the respondents were aware that mode of transmission of family property was from father to eldest son followed by thirty three percent respondents indicated the mode of transmission of family property was from father to any son in case of more than one son or for more number of children .This indicated patrilineal structure still persists in the Birhor society. Though significant change is noticed in this watertight framework of patrilineal structural setting which mandates male offspring preferred over female off springs when thirteen percent of the respondents have answered that family property now can be passed on to wife in case husband's death.

Table 7 indicates that highest percentage of respondents i.e. around 26 percent of the respondents have told settlement place or place of abode as their perceived notion of community property. Settlement place as indicative of the notion of community property is not the reflection of materialistic orientation of Birhor people. The place of settlement though allotted by the government but prior consensus of Birhor people before deciding upon their settlement is sought after the Dehuri or religious head of the Birhor examines the land and after performing some magico religious rituals the decision of finalising the settlement place is arrived. So it still revolves around the customary laws and tradition which govern the Birhor world. They associate with the settlement place their Bonga or God, ancestral spirits,

mountain, forest and stream nearby. Around 22 percentage respondents told forest and siali creepers as their common perceived notion of community property. This is indicative of the customary practices of the Birhor community. As a nomadic hunting gathering community they always relied on the forest and shared a symbiotic relationship with the forest. Siali rope manufactured from the siali creepers with handmade technology with domestic labour has been their primary mode of sustenance. The advent of planned development and permanent habitation still could not destroy their customary practises.

17 percent of respondents have identified Deity as their community property. To imagine Birhor people sans deity is not possible. Festivals and rituals are told to be community property by thirteen percent respondents. Ten percent of respondents have opted for language, dance and music as community property since they follow distinct type of dance, musical instruments and the folklore and songs are unique to their tribe. They neither immitate nor approve of any dilution to their language, dance and music. Around seven percent of the respondents have answered that their customary tribal head and religious head as their perceived notion of community property. Rope making skill as distinctive feature of the Birhor community has been identified as community property by around five percent respondents.

The inferences from table 8 reiterates the fact that majority of the respondents i.e., around 69 percent of the respondents said that the mode of transmission of communal property is ascriptive. Only when an individual is born in Birhor community, by virtue of his or her birth that individual enjoys his or her duties and perform obligations towards the protection and maintenance of community assets. 31 percent of respondents have indicated that by both birth and marriage if one individual attains the membership of the Birhor community i.e., he or she is entitled to share the commonly held resources which is otherwise referred to as communal property.

In a nutshell table 9 is the broad category which lists the perception of the Birhor women on their customary forms of inheritance. The indicators have been clubbed up together, but one umbrella term has been used i.e., customary forms of inheritance. Bihors are known for their distinctive mode of sustenance i.e., making ropes and rope made products from the barks of siali creepers which they sell to peasant communities and nearby villages. 26 percent of respondents have told rope making and selling skill is what they have inherited from their community. Around 18 percent of the respondents have indicated their customs and rituals

are passed down to them by virtue of custom. Forest has been an integral part of the Birhor life. Since they were erstwhile hunting gathering community forest has been the base of their lives on which the entire Birhor society revolves. Though the mode of production has been altered but the forest dependency of the Birhors has not declined. 15 percent of respondents have told festivals, dance and music unique and distinctive to Birhor society has been handed down to them through socialization. Formal socialization has no role in the percolation of customary practises but informal modes of socialization like family, peer group, community members help out in inculcating the Birhor specific customs and rituals to be followed in daily basis and occasion specific. Around 13 percent of the respondents who are still practising siali rope twisting and manufacturing of siali rope made products have answered that siali fibre collection has been inherited by them customarily. Around 12 percent of respondents have opted for skill in household affairs as they inherit customarily being part of the Birhor community.

Table 10 fairly rounds up approximately 25 percent of respondents have indicated bangles and vermilion as their personal property which they don't share with anyone under no circumstances. Around 20 percent respondents have pointed out that hearth and rice cooking vessel are the most pivotal possession for a Birhor woman which is not allowed to be touched by anyone other than own family members. Around 17 percent of respondents have said children, whereas 16 percent respondents have opted for utensils and household articles are very personal to them. While 12 percent of respondents have opined clothes and bedding items, 10 percent of respondents have said spouse as the closest choice for personal belonging. For around 17 percent respondents their children are held high when it comes to perception of personal property which they held are not supposed to be shared.

Table 11 puts forth the inferences for mode of transmission for personal property which reveals that 82 percent respondents have stated that the inheritance right of personal property is passed on to children. About 11 percent respondents have indicated that the personal property is passed on to daughter-in-law and 6 percent of respondents opted for no transmission. The items which were meant to be transferred to children and daughter-in-law include utensils and some jewellery items. Those who have opted for no transmission of personal belongings are basically widows.

In conclusion it can be said that the intrusion of modernisation should take into account the prevailing cultural ethos and community property rights should be maintained.

With the enforcement of modern law and land tenure system the tribal women suffer a lot. Since the Birhor is a hunting gathering tribe and specifically in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa the Bihors have been sedentarized ,but settled agriculture is not their mode of occupation. According to Menon(1995) if natural resources like land, forests and water bodies are community owned, then women have a say in their management. The relatively high status of women is based on their role as economic assets in the family, but not inherent in their society. Family production and economy if controlled by women then it confers on them higher status. Ramnathan (1999) substantiates that with the initiation of government drive of converting community land into individual land the colonial government started strengthening patriarchal system in the hither to egalitarian societies. The concentration of land and power over land from the community to few men helped in formation of class. Fernandes and Bharali (2006) reiterates that with the onset of land alienation caused because of development induced displacement in tribal areas like water resources, refugee rehabilitation, environment protection ,defence ,transport ,industries etc. the community property resources (CPR) have been overused for commercial use. The tribals who practise sustainable use of natural resources confronted shortage and impoverishment and tribal women are the main victims since they worked on land and in the forests. Due to development intervention, they lost their economic utility and consequently social status. Therefore, the customary laws of inheritance should not be thrown into oblivion just for the sake of implementation of Constitutional laws. The customary laws related to community property resources(CRP) must be protected because these ‘community ownership was basic to intra and inter-generational equity as well as the relatively high status of women.’(Fernandes & Bharali,2008).The shift from community property to individual property i.e., transferring land rights from community or forest land to individual land rights must be carefully guarded to include more and more women as land record holders. These processes must be abided by the culture and ethos of the entire tribal community. If the customary law sanctions for constructive dependence on forest, it must be taken into account.

List of Tables and figures-

Table 1 : Respondents in terms of possession of homestead land

Possession of homestead land	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	179	88.18
No	24	11.82
Total	203	100.00

Figure 1: Figure showing percentage of respondents in terms of possession of homestead land

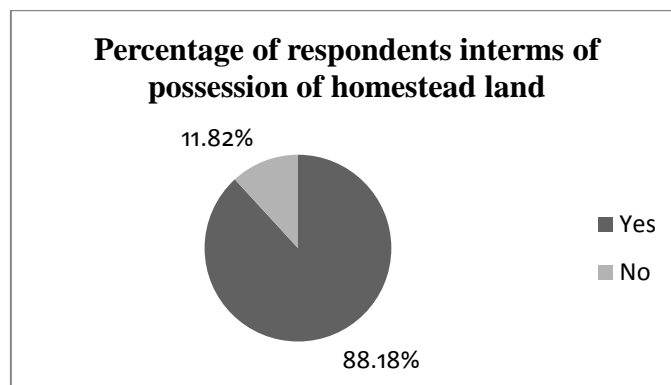


Table 2: Respondents in terms of customary mode of inheritance

Customary law of inheritance (Fixed assets)	Frequency	Percentage
Eldest child(son/daughter)	108	53.20
Eldest son	95	46.80
Total	203	100.00

Figure 2 : Percentage of respondents in terms of customary law of inheritance.

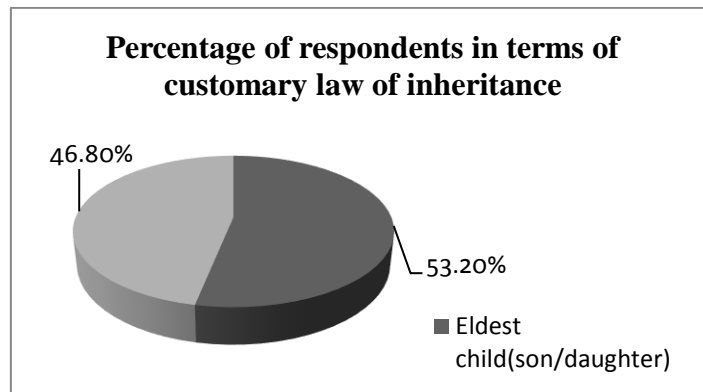


Table 3: Respondents in terms of perception of change in customary laws of inheritance

Perception of change in customary laws of inheritance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	59.11
No	83	40.89
Total	203	100.00

Figure 3: Figure showing percentage of respondents in terms of perception of change in customary laws of inheritance

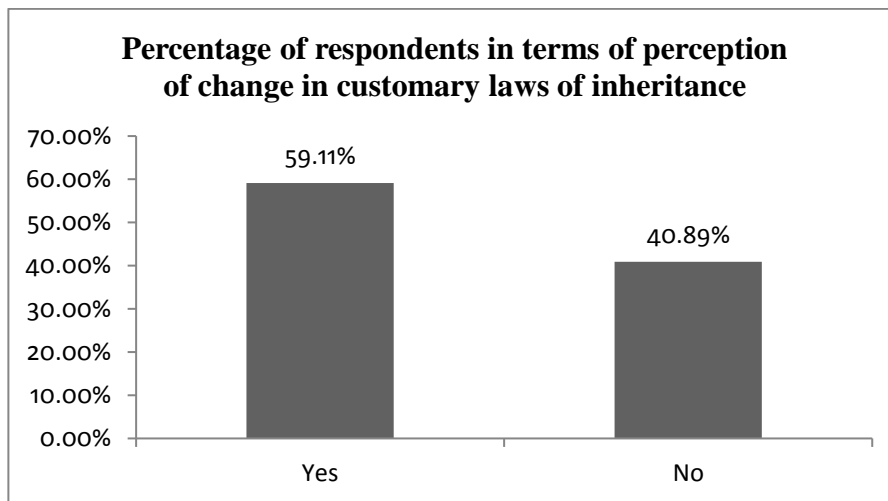


Table 4: Respondents in terms of broad specification of changes perceived in customary laws of inheritance

Broad specification of changes perceived in customary laws of inheritance	Frequency	Percentage
Emergence of land and house as fixed assets	31	25.83
Shift in decision making	42	35.00
Women property inheritance gaining prominence	47	39.17

Figure 4 : Percentage of respondents in terms of broad specification of changes perceived in customary laws of inheritance

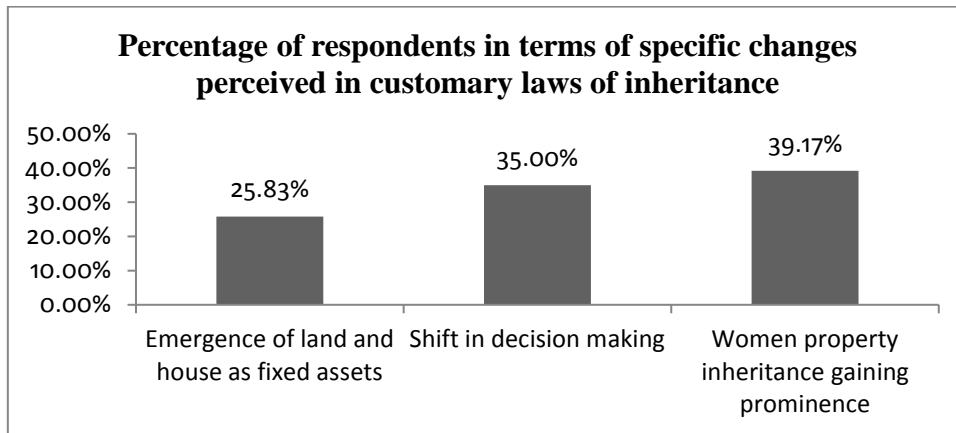


Table 5: Respondents in terms of their perception of family property

Perception of family property	Frequency	Percentage
Clan deity	41	20.20
Domesticated animals	62	30.54
Hearth, food items	31	15.27
House, homestead land	40	19.70
Hunting net	29	14.29

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents in terms of their perception of family property.

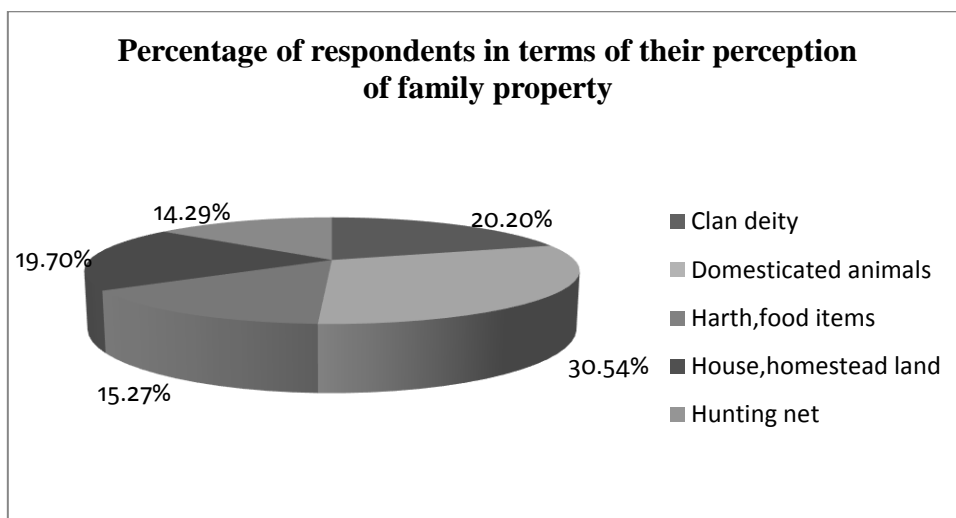


Table 6: Respondents in terms of notion of mode of transmission of family property

Mode of transmission of family property	Frequency	Percentage
Father to any son	67	33.00
Father to Eldest son	78	38.42
Husband to wife	27	13.30
No transmission	31	15.27
Total	203	100.00

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents in terms of notion of mode of transmission of family property

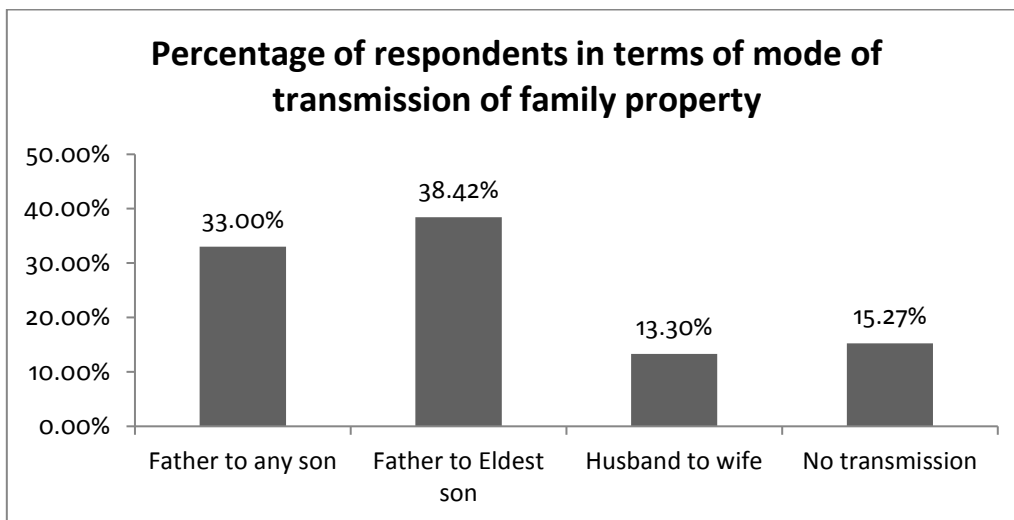


Table 7: Respondents in terms of perception of community property

Perception of community property	Frequency	Percentage
Customary tribal head, religious head	15	7.39
Deity	34	16.75
Festival, rituals	26	12.81
Forest, siali creepers	44	21.67
Language, dance, music	21	10.34
Roap making skill	11	5.42
Settlement place	52	25.62

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents in terms of perception of community property

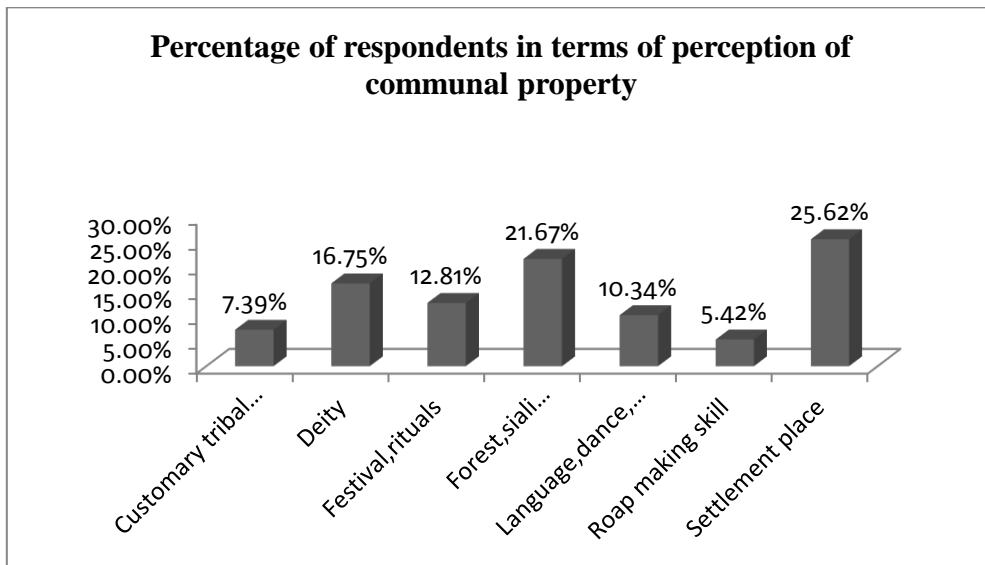


Table 8 : Percentage of respondents in terms of mode of inheritance of community property

Mode of transmission of communal property	Frequency	Percentage
Ascriptive only	140	68.97
Both ascriptive and affinal	63	31.03
Total	203	100.00

Figure 8: Percentage of respondents in terms of transmission of community property

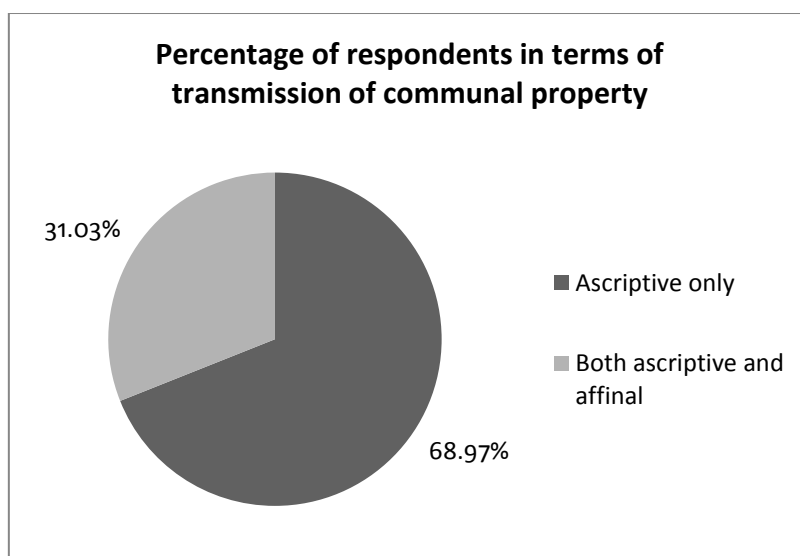


Table 8: Respondents perception of customary form of inheritance

Perception of customary inheritance	Frequency	Percentage
Customs & rituals	36	17.73
Festival,dance,music	30	14.78
Forest dependance	34	16.75
Roap making & selling skill	53	26.11
Siali fibre collection	26	12.81
Skill of household affairs	24	11.82

Figure 9: Percentage of respondents in terms of perception of customary form of inheritance

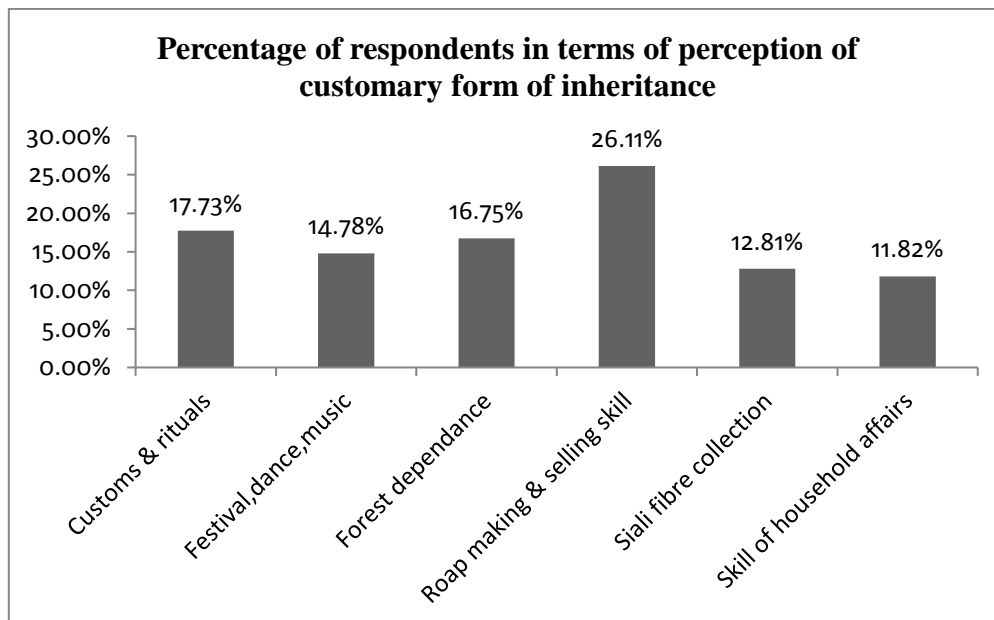


Table 9: Respondents perception of personal property

Perception of personal property	Frequency	Percentage
Bangles & vermilion	51	25.12
Children	34	16.75
Clothes & bedding items	25	12.32
Hearth and rice cooking vessel	40	19.70
Spouse	20	9.85
Utensils & hh articles	33	16.26

Figure 10 : Percentage of respondents in terms of perception of personal property

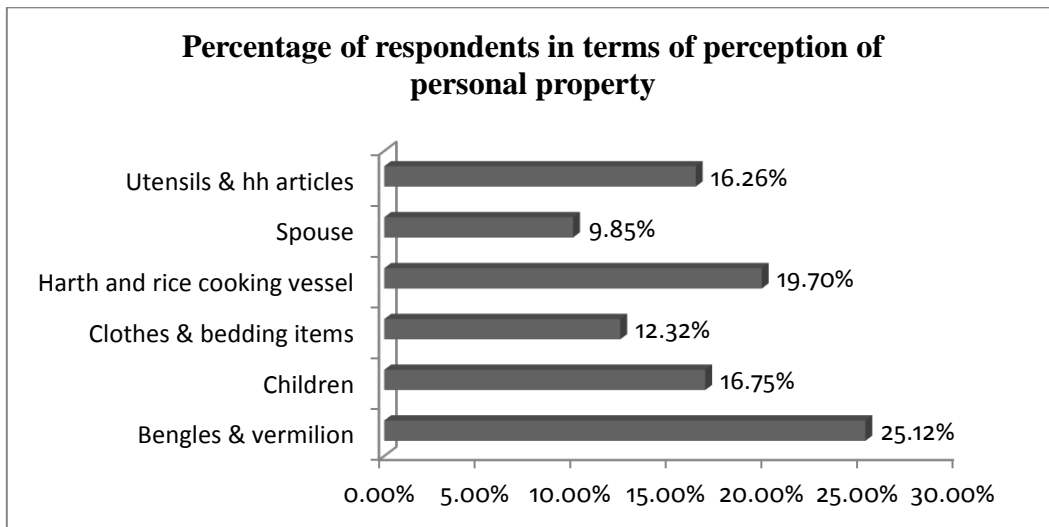
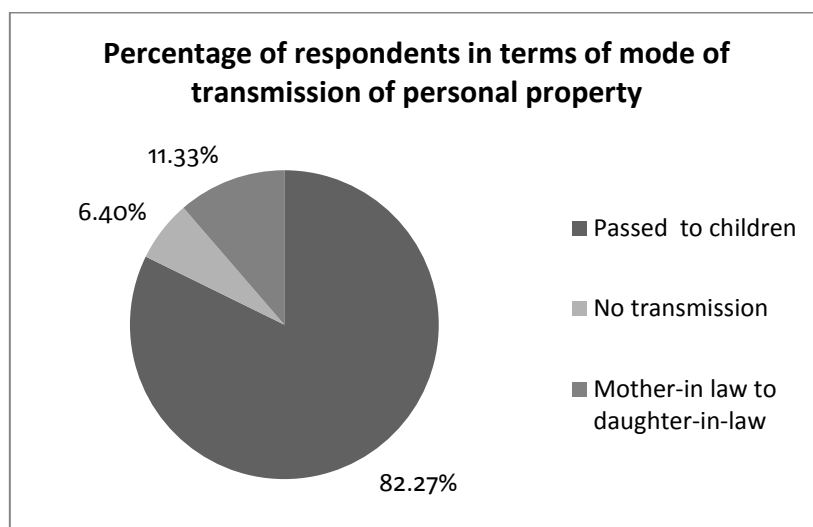


Table 10: Respondents on of mode of transmission of personal property

Mode of transmission of personal property	Frequency	Percentage
Passed to children	167	82.27
Mother-in law to daughter-in-law	23	11.33
No transmission	13	6.40
Total	203	100.00

Figure 11: Percentage of respondents in terms of mode of transmission of personal property.



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