

## **Dynamics of the Tribal Women Leaders: A Case Study of Nilgiri Itda Block of Balasore District in Odisha**

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Date of Submission: 18-09-2017

Date of acceptance: 30-09-2017

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this study is to find out different types of problems that the tribal women PRI leaders are facing. The problems may be broadly social, cultural, political and administrative in nature. Pam Rajput finds three types of barriers in women's political participation such as, social, economic and political. Social barriers include double responsibilities of women; traditional division of labour where women's role are restrictive ; lack of social services and support network; illiteracy; and social gendered roles. Economic barriers may be categorized as change in global economic market; biased theories and practices of development; and feminization of poverty. Political barriers include types of electoral system; structures and agendas of political parties; lack of sufficient training and communication skills; and access to technology.<sup>(1)</sup> The unequal participation of women in power and decision making structures at the local, national, regional and international levels reflects structural, attitudinal and cultural barriers prevailing in all societies. Stereotypical gender roles remain a major obstacle in women's political empowerment.<sup>(2)</sup> The problem of the women while doing political roles are described as the "four Cs" –cultural, child care, cash and confidence.

But obstacles to the realization of PRIs transformative potential are many. There continue to be resistance to really developing power and funds from centre of (male) power to the periphery. Women still face considerable handicaps to their involvement in politics ; for example , inadequate education, the burden of reproductive and productive roles, lack of self-confidence and the position of entrenched cultural and religious views.

There are also administrative obstacles to overcome. The current administrative framework has a departmentally administered sectoral funding pattern which conflicts with the women-led area derived programmes arising from PRIs

Again this general background of the different nature of problems faced by the women leaders, an attempt has been made here to find out the problems that the women PRI leaders face in tribal areas of Odisha.

The problem of personal insecurity

Violence against women is no more confined to family and domestic domain only. It has become more bold, brutal and direct and it is done right in the streets in the broad day light. In view of this , the sample PRI tribal women leaders were asked as to whether they faced any problem of personal insecurity while going outside for discharging their duties as PRI leaders. Their responses in this regard have been furnished in Table No .1

**Table No .1**

Distribution of Leaders by their response regarding the Problem of Personal Insecurity

Sl No	Response	Total
1	Yes	43 ( 14.33)
2	No	254 ( 84.66)
3	Didn't reply	03 ( 1.00)
	Total	300 (100.00)

Source: Computed

It is heartening to note from the Table No .1 that about 85 percent of the respondents do not face any problem relating to personal insecurity while going outside to discharge their duties. This indicates that violence against the women in the outside is not so rampant in tribal area. Of course, about 14 percent of the sample leaders feel in-secured in the outside. These women leaders were further asked to mention the the nature of problems they faced relating to their personal security. To this , they stated the problems like eve-teasing, vulgar comments by the male persons when they find the women leaders alone or with one or two friends on the road. They felt in-secured particularly when they passed through the forest areas. However, they stated that when they

were accompanied by their husbands or any other male persons of their family, they faced no such problems. Thus it is found that most of the sample leaders have no problem of personal in-security in the outside. This may be attributed to the fact that they hardly travel alone. They generally travel with their husbands or male family members.

### **Problems of communication**

Lack of adequate provision for transport and communication is one of the major problems in tribal areas. Most of the people in these areas generally travel on foot or by bicycle. In view of this, sample women leaders were asked whether they faced any problem of communication when they went to attend a meeting or any programme outside the village.

**Table No .2**  
Distribution of leaders by their response regarding problem of communication

Sl No	Response	Total
1	Yes	43 ( 14.33)
2	No	257 ( 85.66)
3	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

Table No 8.2 shows that about 86 percent of sample respondents do not face any problems of communication as either their husbands or family members carry them by bicycle or motor cycle wherever there is no other means of road communication. This indicates that without the help of their family members the women leaders will face problem of communication for attending any meeting or any programme outside the village. About 14 percent of the sample leaders stated that they faced the problem of communication. This might be mostly due to either absence of any family members to carry them to the meeting place or non-cooperation of their husbands and family members in discharge of their (leaders) duties. Rama Sing a Ward Member of of Jadibali Panachayat said, "I face difficulty for going outside the village. I am unmarried lady. I have no brother. My father is an old man. There is no bus service from my village. At times village people give company". Thus, it is evident that the women leaders depend on their family members for going to Panchayat meetings and programmes.

### **Problem during election campaign**

Now-a-days election campaign have become not only very much expensive but also very hectic and full of insecurity and danger. Quarrels, conflicts, threatening, manhandling and even murders have become very common phenomenon during election campaign. As Panchayat elections are very much direct and face-to-face, such incidence generally takes place in large number in rural areas. Whether the women PRI leaders faced any such problems during their election campaign was next point of enquiry.

**Table No .3**  
Distribution of Respondents by their response regarding the Problem faced during the Election Campaign.

Sl No	Response	Total
1	Yes	17 ( 5.66)
2	No	279 ( 93.00)
3	Didn't reply	04 ( 1.33)
	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

It is apparent from Table No .3 that an overwhelming majority (93%) of the respondents did not face any problem during their election campaign. This indicates that their election campaigns were peaceful and no un-to-wards events took place. Only about six percent of the respondents faced some problems during their election campaigns. The problem included undue pressure and threatening by the rival candidates and their supporters to withdraw from election contest. These women leaders also reported that there were incidents of physical assault between their supporters and supporters of their rival candidates although the leaders themselves were not involved in these incidents. Although most of the sample leaders did not face problem during the election campaign, yet during informal discussion they said that they were facing a lot of problems from the side of the defeated candidates after the elections. Some of the supporters of the defeated candidates had become revengeful towards the sample leaders.

### **Problems faced by the leaders in Panchayat meetings**

It has been mentioned earlier that about 97 percent of the sample leaders are the first timers and have no political experience. Keeping this in view, they were asked whether they were facing any problem during Panchayat meetings. In such meeting they are to act as Chairperson or take part in the discussion as members.

**Table No .4**

Distribution of Lead4rs by their response whether they face problems in the Panchayat meetings

SI No	Response	Total
1	Yes	30 ( 10.00)
2	No	261 (87.00)
3	Didn't reply	09 ( 3.00)
	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

It is found that only 10 percent of the sample leaders face problem in the Panchayat meetings. When asked to mention their problems, these leaders put forward some practical problems which may be summarized as follows:

1. The women leaders feel an inferiority complex and fear I front of male members due to their lack of political knowledge and experience.
2. The women leaders can not understand the difficult provisions of various Grampanchayat schemes, programmes, circulars and provisions of Panchayat Raj laws, manual etc. due to lack of adequate education.
3. The numerical strength of women leaders in a Panchayat meeting is only one-third of the male members. Therefore, the male members dominate in Panchayat meetings.
4. The voices/opinions of the women leaders are, most of the times, suppressed by the male members as they generally talk and shout louder than the women members.
5. Women Chairpersons while presiding over the Panchayat meetings feel nervous in front of educationally more qualified government officials and politically more experienced higher level leaders like M.L.A. and M.Ps . In Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha meetings, it is the Sarpanch and the Panchayat Secretary who dominate. The opinions of the Ward Members are generally not heard.

However, it is very much encouraging to note from the Table No 8.4 that as much as 87 percent of the sample leaders do not find any difficulty or problem in either conducting the meeting as Chairperson , or actively participating in Panchayat meetings.

#### **Problem of little education:**

Illiteracy or less education is major handicap for political participation on the part of the tribal women. An attempt was made to know the opinion of the sample leaders on how far less education poses problem in the discharge of their functions as PRI leaders.

**Table No .5**

Distribution of Leaders by their opinion whether Less Education is a problem

SI No	Response	Total
1	Yes	254 (84.66)
2	No	46 ( 15.33)
	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

It is very pertinent to note from the Table No .5 that on the part of 85 percent of the sample leaders little education is a handicap. They can not perform their duties efficiently as they fail to understand government circulars and records which are mostly written in English. Besides, they also face difficulty to write something either in Odia or in English. The magnitude of this difficulty may be well understood by referring v to the educational background of the sample leaders discussed earlier in Chapter VI . Among the sample leaders , 36.6 percent are just literate , 22 percent have completed Primary education and only 20 percent are above Matriculation level. During informal discussion, the leaders opined that there should be minimum qualification criteria for each level of PRI leaders although they do not have unanimous opinion about the minimum qualification.

However, the relevant Table shows that in the opinion of about 15 percent of leaders, little education is not a problem. According to them , it is not formal education, but political experience which is most important for a leader.

Notwithstanding the difference of opinion among the sample leaders, Illiteracy or little education is a stumbling-block in the path of women participation in politics and their leadership.

#### **Burden of Household work as Problem of the Leaders**

In a patriarchal society like ours, it is generally held that doing household works, bearing and rearing children and caring all the family members are the main duties of the women. Their role is mostly confined to doing domestic works. But recently, particularly after the enactment of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, they have to assume an additional role as PRI leaders. They are now required to perform dual roles-both private

and public. Moreover, in tribal areas, the women have been playing dual role as house keeping and co-earners of the family. So, for them the new public role as PRI leaders is still more difficult task. But how do the women PRI leaders in tribal area perceive and perform their role? Do they think it is a problem or an opportunity? Do the household works pose problems in the discharge of their duties as PRI leaders? Their opinion on these questions have been furnished in Table No 8.6

**Table No 6**  
Distribution of Leaders by their opinion whether Household Work is a problem

Sl No	Response	Total
1	Yes	34 ( 11.33)
2	No	265 ( 88.33)
3	Didn't reply	01 ( 0.33)
	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

Table No .6 indicates that in the opinion of 88.33 percent of the sample leaders, burden of household work is not a problem in the discharge of their duties as PRI leaders. That means they are capable of managing the household work as well as duties of PRI leaders without any difficulty. This may be attributed to the fact that about 73 percent of the sample leaders have come from either small or medium sized families (Table No 6.7) in which the burden of household works is comparatively less. Table No 8.6 further indicates that 11.33 percent of the sample leaders find the burden of household works as a problem which hinders their work as PRI leaders. When asked how they overcome this problem, most of them (25nos) said that their husbands and other members of their families helped and co-operated them in doing the household works as a result they could get time to do politics.

Some of them (6 nos) told that they overcome the problem by working hard, cutting short their period of rest and leisure. Rest three of such leaders said that they had to neglect their household works and sometimes care of their children and family members for discharging their work as PRI leaders.

Thus, overall situation in this respect is that most of the leaders do not think household works and family burden as problems and those who think so, manage it somehow though with much difficulty.

#### **Problems at the time of issuing Work Orders.**

It is generally found that a lot of conflicts and controversies arise at the time of issuing work orders to execute development works in the village. A lot of pressures and counter pressures are put on the Panchayat leaders from the side of political parties, higher level leaders like M.L.As and M.Ps even Ministers to issue orders in favour of their own supporters. At that time, it becomes really a problem to take decision and issue work order. An attempt was made to know whether the sample leaders faced any problem in issuing work order.

**Table No 7**  
Distribution of Leaders by their opinion whether they face problems in issuing Work Order

Sl No	Response	Total
1	Yes	39 (13.0)
2	No	251 ( 83.00)
3	Didn't reply	10 (3.33)
	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

Table No 7 shows that 13 percent of the sample leaders face problems at the time of issuing work orders. Most of the leaders of this category said that in Panchayat and Gram Sabha meetings, the finalization of work order is done and at this time there takes place a lot of conflicts, arguments and counter arguments. Sometimes the members do not hesitate to engage themselves in physical assaults also to get work orders in favour of their supporters. Some of the Ward Members said there were unholy alliances among the Sarpanch, Panchayat Secretary and Contractors.

Many times, Panchayat meetings are adjourned over the issue of finalizing the work orders. However, for about 84 percent of leaders, issue of work order is not a problem. About three percent of the sample leaders did not wish to reply this question. Thus, a large majority of the sample leaders do not face any problem in the matter of issue of work order. It is found that work orders are given to those contractors who promise to give or actually give more bribes (percentage) to the Sarpanch and Panchayat Secretary. In most of the time, the work orders are issued in party line. Sometimes decisions regarding work order are changed later by false signature of the members and given to the person favourable to the Sarpanch and Panchayat Secretary.

### Problem of non-redressal of Public grievances

Generally at the time of election campaign the candidates make the promises to redress various local grievances. Voters also keep high hopes in the candidates and expect a lot of personal and community gains from the leaders after they win the election. But when their expectations are not fulfilled, they sometimes abuse the leaders and create different types of problems. The leaders have to face the wrath of the people. The opinion of the sample leaders were sought on this matter. They were asked whether they faced any problem from the side of public for non-redressal of their grievances. Their opinions are furnished in Table No 8.8

**Table No 8**

Distribution of Leaders by their opinion on whether they face Problems for non-redressal of Public Grievances

Sl No	Response	Total
1	Yes	86 ( 28.66)
2	No	214 ( 71.33)
	Total	300 ( 100.00)

Source: Computed

It is revealed from the data shown in Table No 8 that about 29 percent of the respondents are encountered with problems for non-redressal of public grievances. The people criticized, abused, insulted, argued and quarreled with the leaders for non-fulfillment of their expectations. Most of the sample leaders of this category complained that Sarpanchs were doing partiality to those villages from where they got more votes. The relevant Table also reveals that about 71 percent of the sample leaders face no problem for the side of the people for non-redressal of their grievances. This shows indifferent attitude of the people towards the PRI leaders. People are not so much conscious of their local needs and problems and even if they are conscious, they hardly put forth their demands before the PRI leaders.

### Attitude towards leaders

Sometimes non-co-operative, antagonistic or even indifferent attitude of the people towards the leaders is considered as a problem of the leaders. Such type of attitude put constraints in their effective functioning. Similarly, attitude of the family members, friends and relatives, people of own caste/religious groups, government officials, higher level leaders are also important for the successful working of the leaders. A positive attitude of these people and groups towards the leaders helps where as a negative attitude hinders their work. Keeping this in view, a question was provided in the schedule to elicit the opinion of the sample leaders about the attitude of various groups and persons towards them. Table No 8.9 furnishes the data in this regard. Sample

As regards the attitude of male members (other than husband) of the family towards the women leaders, Table No 8.9 indicates that 66 percent of the sample leaders feel co-operative attitude. For 32.33 percent of the leaders their attitude is indifferent, 4.33 percent of the leaders feel antagonistic or hostile attitude of male members of their families. Thus, it is evident that the male members of the family do not pose problems for the leaders. Most of them extend co-operation to the women leaders of their family. Sometimes father-in-law or son accompanies the leader to the meeting place. This is very healthy and positive trend for more and more women participation in politics.

**Table No 9**

Distribution of Leaders by the attitude of various groups and Individuals towards them.

Sl No	Group /Individuals	Co-operative	Indifferent	Hostile	Din't reply	Total
1	Male members(other than husband) of the family	188 (66.00)	97(32.33)	13(4.33)	2(0.66)	300(100.00)
2	Female members of the family	209(69.66)	85(28.33)	04(1.33)	2(0.66)	300(100.00)
3	Husband(if married)	289(96.33)	04(01.33)	----(--)	---(---)	293(100.00)
4	Villagers	266(88.66)	19(06.33)	14(4.66)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
5	People of own caste	238(79.33)	22(7.33)	39(13.00)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
6	Male PRI members	206(68.66)	55(18.33)	38(12.66)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
7	Higher level leaders	261(87.00)	24(8.00)	14(4.66)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
8	Govt. officials	168(56.00)	91(30.33)	40(13.33)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
9	Friends & relatives	285(95.00)	04(1.33)	10(3.33)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
10	Political opponents	05(1.66)	41(13.66)	253(84.33)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
11	Rich and elite class people	113(37.66)	158(52.66)	28(9.33)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)
12	Traditional caste and religious leaders	258(86.00)	30(10.00)	11(3.66)	01(0.33)	300(100.00)

Source: Computed

As regards the attitude of the female members of the family, it is still more co-operative towards the leaders. About 70 percent of the sample leaders get co-operation from the female family members of the family.

The mother-in-laws take care of the children when the leaders go to attend Panchayat meetings. Other female members relieve their leaders from household works in order to enable them to discharge Panchayat works. However, the Table shows that 28.33 percent of leaders feel indifferent attitude and only 1.33 percent hostile attitude of the female members of their families. Thus, attitude of the female members towards the leaders is most encouraging.

The attitude of the husband of a leader is most crucial. Unless the husband extends necessary help and co-operation and gives adequate independence and opportunity, it will be very much difficult for the wife to become a successful leader.

The opinion of the leaders in this respect shows that as much as 96.33 percent of the sample leaders get co-operation from their husbands. Not a single sample leader feels hostile attitude of her husband although four of them feel that their husbands are indifferent towards their participation in politics as PRI leaders. It was revealed during the field study that the husbands of the leaders helped them in many matters carrying them to the meeting place by bicycle or motor cycle, assisting them in village meetings and solving village conflicts, helping in taking decisions etc.

PRI leaders win the election on the support of the villagers. Although the PRI leaders like Sarpanchs, Samiti Members and Zilla Parishad members are elected by voters belonging to more than one village, yet the support of people of their own village is crucial. It is found that these PRI leaders try to give more benefits to their villagers to get the continued support and co-operation of the villagers even after election. It is seen from Table No 9 that in the opinion of about 89 percent of leaders, the attitude of villagers is quite co-operative. About 81 percent of the leaders feel indifferent attitude of the villagers and about five percent of them face hostile attitude. Similarly, about 79.33 percent of the leaders get cooperation from the people of their own caste. 7.33 percent feel indifferent attitude and 13 percent face hostile attitude of their own caste people. Thus, it is apparent that the leaders get fewer co-operations from the people of their own caste than the village people in general. Whereas, only about five percent of leaders feel hostile attitude of the villagers, 13 percent of them feel hostile attitude of the people of their own caste. This indicates that the leaders get more support from the people of their own village/Sahi(hamlet) than that of their own caste people.

As regards the attitude of the male PRI members, about 69 percent of the leaders feel co-operative attitude, about 18 percent indifferent attitude and about 13 percent feel hostile attitude of the PRI members. Those who feel hostile attitude say that the male members under-estimate them (women leaders) and suppress them in Panchayat meetings. The male PRI members dominate the meeting and do not allow the women leaders to express their views freely.

In comparison to the male PRI members, the higher level political leaders exhibit more co-operative attitude towards the women leaders. Thus 87 percent of the sample leaders feel that the higher level leaders have co-operative attitude, 8 percent indifferent attitude and about 7 percent hostile attitude towards them.

The attitude of co-operation among the government officials towards women leaders is much less than that of the higher political leaders. Thus, 56 percent of the sample leaders feel co-operative attitude of the government officials. About 30 percent feel indifferent attitude and about 13 percent hostile attitude of the government officials towards them, The leaders said that most of the government officials were indulged in corruption. The Ward members were most vocal against the Panchayat secretaries who always dominated over them.

It is found from the Table next to husband; friend and relatives extend largest support to the sample leaders. 95 percent of the leaders are of the opinion that their friends and relatives harbour co-operative attitude towards them. Only about three percent feel antagonistic attitude of the friends and relatives.

Political opponents of the leaders harbour the highest hostility towards the leaders. About 84 percent of sample leaders feel that their political opponents harbour hostile attitude and try to create problem for them. However, 13 percent feel indifferent attitude and about two percent feel co-operative attitude of their political opponents towards them.

It is further seen from Table No .9 that rich and elite class people are not so much co-operative towards the women leaders. A majority ( 52.66%) of the sample women leaders feel that the elite class people are indifferent towards them and even about 10 percent feel their hostile attitude. Only about 38 percent of leaders feel that elite class people have co-operative attitude towards them. Traditionally, the elite class people were enjoying monopoly over the political powers. But at present, the people belonging to poor and middle class are elected as leaders in rural areas. So naturally they are not happy over the emerging leadership pattern in rural areas. They feel that their traditional image and status are ruined due to emergence of such leaders.

In rural areas, we find caste and religious heads who have been traditionally enjoying power over their caste and communities. As for example Santhal have their own traditional institutions known as "Santhal Samaj". The head of the Samaj is known as 'Majhi Halam' or 'Majhi Baba'. The post of Majhi Halam in most of the villages is hereditary. He enjoys authority and respect in the community. His decisions are obeyed by all the members of the community in a village. Other tribal communities also have their own caste and community

heads. Although, their authority is confined only to social and religious matters, they have much influence over their respective communities. An attempt is made to know the attitude of these caste and religious leaders towards the sample leaders. It is revealed that 86 percent of the sample leaders feel co-operative attitude, 10 percent of them feel indifferent attitude and about four percent of them feel hostile attitude of these caste and religious leaders (heads) towards them. So there is not much antagonism between the traditional caste leaders and women PRI leaders. This may be attributed to the fact that the PRI leaders do not interfere in the social and religious matters of a caste or community.

#### **Other problems.**

Besides asking questions about above particular problems, an open ended question was asked to the sample leaders to know the other problems, if any, faced by them. To these , the leaders the leaders mentioned a number of problems and handicaps. Some of the problems are discussed below.

Poverty is a major problem for the leaders. They are always busy to earn their livelihood. They have little time to spend for politics. One of the Ward members of village Jadibali of Nilgiri Block said, "Here all the women are going to forest. Ward members are also going. Where is the time to do politics ?"

The second problem mentioned by the sample leaders is that most of the time they are ignored by higher level PRI leaders and officials. They are not always informed of the government letters, circulars, money sanctioned for particular development work. Some of the Ward Members complained that the Sarpanch along with the Panchayat Secretary hides things from them. They take decision first and then ask them to sign on the Resolution Book. In the meetings of Palli Sabha the opinion of the Ward Members are suppressed. But opinion and decision of the Sarpanch and Panchayat Secretary ultimately prevails.

Thirdly, money is the problem for the leaders to contest election. In order to win the election, a Ward member generally spends an amount of at least Rs 8000/- to Rs 12000/- , a Sarpanch and Panchayat Samiti Member around Rs 50000/ and a Chairperson of Panchayat Samiti around Rs 100000/-. They spend money for giving feast to the voters (rice, meat and wine) . A Panchayat Samiti member in order to be Chairperson generally influences the voters by distributing money and taking them to places of visit for some days before the date of election. (perhaps in view of this , tickets in Panchayat elections are generally given on the basis of one's money –spending capacity)

Fourthly, most of the leaders are worried that they face the wrath of the villagers for not being successful in getting funds sanctioned for developmental work in their village. So insufficient fund for developmental work is a problem for the leaders for which they lose their popularity u=in the constituency.

#### **Summing Up:**

A review of analysis of data collected with regard to the problems and handicaps of the sample leaders women PRI leaders suggest the following findings.

1. As regards the problem of personal insecurity, 85 percent of the respondents do not feel insecure while going outside to attend the Panchayat meetings or to discharge their duties. This may be attributed to the fact that they hardly travel alone. They generally travel with their husbands or other male family members.
2. Although there is problem of transport and communication in tribal; areas, 86 percent of the respondents do not face this problem because their male family members (mostly husband) carry them by bicycle or motor cycle. However, without the help of family members they will face problems of communication.
3. With regards to the problems faced during election campaign, 93 percent of the respondents said that there was no problem and their election campaigns were peaceful. However, most of the respondents mentioned that they were facing many problems after the election due to the revengeful attitude of the defeated candidates and their supporters.
4. Regarding the problems faced in the Panchayat meetings, 87 percent of the respondents reported that they faced no problem either in conducting Panchayat meeting or taking part in discussions. However, 10 percent of respondents faced problems like inferiority complex and nervousness before the male members and higher level leaders as well as government officials present in the meetings.
5. 85 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that little education is a major handicap in their role-performance as leaders. They find it difficult to understand the government circulars which are generally written in English. Therefore, they opined that there should be minimum qualification criteria for each level of PRI leaders. However, 15 percent of the respondents feel that political experience is more important than formal educational qualification.
6. As regards the burden of household works, 88.33 percent of the respondents do not think is as problem. They are capable of managing the household work along with the work of PRI leader without any difficulty.
7. On the part of 84 percent of the respondents, issue of work order is not a problem. However, 13 percent of the respondents mentioned that a lot of conflicts and discords rose at the time of issue of work orders. In most of times, the work orders were issued on political considerations.

8. Regarding problems arising out of non-redressal of people's grievances, 71 percent of the respondents do not face any problem. However, as much as 29 percent of the respondents encounter problem as the people criticize abuse and insult them for non-redressal of their needs and demands. These leaders point out that the Sarpanchs do partiality in distributing development works to different wards.

9. As regards the attitude of the family members, villagers, friends and relatives towards the sample leaders, it is found that a large majority of the respondents get co-operation from these groups of people. However, highest co-operation comes from the husbands of the respondents, 96.33 percent respondents feel co-operative attitude of their husbands. People of the own caste, male PRI members, higher level leaders, traditional caste and religious leaders, government officials have also more or less co-operative attitude towards respondents. However, most of the problems come from the political opponents of the leaders. 84.33 percent of the respondents feel that their opponents harbour hostile attitude towards them. The rich and elite class people do not extend much co-operation. They rather are indifferent towards the respondents. Thus, except the political opponents, most of the respondents get help and co-operation from all other people both inside and outside of the family.

After discussing the problems of the tribal women PRI leaders, an attempt has been made in the next chapter to elicit their opinions on the present system of Panchayati Raj.

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International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 4593, Journal no. 47449.

Gadadhar Behera. "Dynamics of the Tribal Women Leaders: A Case Study of Nilgiri Itda Block of Balasore District in Odisha." International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI), vol. 6, no. 9, 2017, pp. 24–31.