



# **DYNAMICS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, LEGISLATIVE INTENTS AND CHALLENGES TO GENDER EQUALITY**

*A Study of Kendujhar Parliamentary Constituency*



**PROJECT 'GARGI'**  
POLICY PERSPECTIVES FOUNDATION

# ABOUT PPF

Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF) was founded in 2005 as a non-profit apolitical think tank on matters of national interest and issues. The organisation's activities focus on complex and inter-connected challenges to internal peace, stability and development in India. It promotes debates and dialogues with scholars, development practitioners, civil society, government organisations and other stakeholders, and implements training, research and advocacy programmes on issues of national interest. Our activities broadly fall under three categories namely spreading awareness, building capacity and promoting resilience.

## DYNAMICS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, LEGISLATIVE INTENTS AND CHALLENGES TO GENDER EQUALITY

*A STUDY OF KENDUJHAR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY*

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# CONTENTS

Preface	3
Acronyms and Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5-7
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>8-13</b>
Background	8
Justification and Relevance	9
Objectives	10
Methodology	10
Brief Note on Kendujhar Parliamentary Constituency	12
General Profile of Women in Kendujhar PC	12
<b>Chapter 2: Education</b>	<b>14-16</b>
Educational Attainment of Women	14
School Attendance	15
Distance of Nearest Primary School	15
Essential School Infrastructure	15
<b>Chapter 3: Health</b>	<b>17-22</b>
Attainment of Motherhood	17
Access to Family Planning Methods and Healthcare during Pregnancy	18
Childbirth	18
Access to Healthcare Services	19
Freedom in matters of Personal Health	19
Women availing Benefits of Anganwadi	19
Household Sanitation and Water	20
Incidence of Abortion	21
<b>Chapter 4: Social Status and Personal Freedom</b>	<b>23-27</b>
Age of Marriage	23
Freedom of Movement	23
Nature of Social Ban on Women	24
Discrimination against Girls	24
Prevalence of Black Magic	25
Political Participation	26
Participation in Household Decision Making	27
<b>Chapter 5: Economic Status</b>	<b>28-32</b>
Occupation	28
Income of Self and Family	29

Skill Development Training	30
Daily Wages of Women and Difference with Wages of Men	30
Credit for Economic Enterprises	31
Access to Banking Facility and Saving for Old Age	31
Access to Government Schemes	32
<b>Chapter 6: Safety</b>	<b>33-36</b>
Perceptions regarding Safety	33
Incidence of Crime	33
Prevalence and Nature of Domestic Violence	33
Level of Awareness and Reactions to Crime against Women	35
<b>Chapter 7: Right to Land</b>	<b>37-39</b>
Ownership of Land by Families	38
Women with Ownership of Land	38
Awareness on Land Ownership Rights	38
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusions</b>	<b>40-42</b>
<b>Chapter 9: Recommendations</b>	<b>43-44</b>
<b>Annexure: Research Tools</b>	<b>45-54</b>

# PREFACE

Project Gargi has been designed by Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF) as a country-wide research initiative on empowerment of women. It has certain unique components like coverage of rural parliamentary constituencies, as geographic units of study, that are represented by women parliamentarians and adoption of a framework of analysis that looks into women's empowerment keeping in view the legislative intents and programmatic interventions.

Considering the macro dimensions of analysis and pan-India nature of the study, it was considered logical to first conduct the study in only one parliamentary constituency that meets the criteria noted above. This will help the research team test and fine-tune the nuances of research like nature of research tools, the extent to which legislative intents will be covered under the framework of analysis, coverage of stakeholders and the shape of research output. Accordingly, Kendujhar parliamentary constituency in the State of Odisha was selected for the purpose. With project Gargi, PPF intends to strengthen its agenda on women's empowerment by successfully highlighting the challenges faced by women on the countryside that inhibit their empowerment.

Field work in the parliamentary constituency was conducted with the help of only female researchers who were responsible for interviewing women and key informants, organising focus group discussions and preparing research notes. Despite field-level challenges in covering remote areas of the constituency, the research team could gather desired inputs according to the plan. The report has been prepared keeping in view the objectives and scope of research. Since this is the first study under Project Gargi, it is expected that the analyses in the report will contribute to the process of future research to be conducted on the subject.

PPF is thankful to Ms. Mausumi Mishra who led the research team, ensured quality of data and provided inputs on research tools and clarifications for data cleaning and analysis. The two researchers namely Ms. Rashmi Rekha and Ms. Dipika Nayak, who worked diligently in the field, deserve appreciation for their efforts. We are also grateful to Ms. Swati Srivastava who took the trouble of going through the manuscripts and made a value addition. Ms. Pooja deserves a special thanks for her unflappable attitude as coordinator of the project. Lastly, we would like to place our deep appreciation for guidance given by Dr. Anil Kumar Das to the research team throughout the project.

We are indebted to women and key informants who freely shared their experiences and views on the subject. This study could not have been completed without their support.

We welcome feedback from the readers which will be instrumental in helping us shape future research by the PPF on empowerment of women in India.

**P C Haldar**  
President  
PPF

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLFP	Female Labour Force Participation
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
PC	Parliamentary Constituency
PMAY	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
PMUY	Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
PPF	Policy Perspectives Foundation
RTE	Right to Education
RTE Act	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHGs	Self Help Groups
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations
WEF	World Economic Forum

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The process of development of women in India is replete with many paradoxes. On one hand we attach divinity to women and on the other hand, they are subjected to persistent familial and social subordination. While women scale new heights of success in multiple domains like education, sports, culture and technology; they are often denied adequate access to productive assets and freedom to act according to their choices, and are subjected to domestic violence under the guise of family pride and social status. While shares of qualified women like teachers' training graduates, engineers etc. have increased manifold since 2001, the country's female labour force participation (FLFP) rate continues to be abysmally low at 27.2% in 2017. Despite constitutional guarantees and legal safeguards for equality, women in India continue to face the contradictions of divinity and disempowerment, which remain at the core of project Gargi.

## Objectives and Focus

Named after the famed Vedic philosopher Gargi Vachaknavi- a known epitome of women's empowerment, project Gargi intends to explore the extent of women's empowerment in rural India and examine concerned legislative intents and programmatic interventions in the light of dynamics at the grassroots. The focus on three inter-related domains of analysis namely level of women's empowerment, legislative intents as reflected in important laws, and programmatic interventions for development of women makes the study unique and holistic, and different from existent studies and literature on gender equality and women's empowerment. Selection of a rural parliamentary constituency (PC) namely Kendujhar, which is presently represented in parliament by a woman legislator, further adds to its uniqueness and contextual relevance.

## Methodology

As a problem-oriented, exploratory and participatory research, the focus of data collection remained on gathering of inputs from multiple stakeholders with the help of appropriate methods and tools. To understand the nature of available literature on gender equality and women's empowerment in general, the research team also collected data through secondary desk review. The field work in Kendujhar PC involved interviews with 401 randomly selected women of different age, social, religious, economic, education and occupation groups, focus group discussions (FGD) with victims of domestic violence and other crimes, and key informant interviews with representatives of civil society, officials and concerned citizens. Application of multiple methods helped in triangulation of data and quality assurance.

## Salient Findings

**Status of Implementation of Specified Laws on the Ground:** Inputs collected from the field show the status of implementation of some key laws as under.

- Minimum Wages Act, 1946: With most of the women earning a paltry sum of ₹250 or less in a day, the Act is being violated blatantly.
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976: Women mostly receive less daily wage than men.



- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: Practice of dowry is prevalent in the PC.
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971: Termination of pregnancies in conformity with the conditions of the Act is extremely rare.
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987: People of the PC do not practice Sati.
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005: Incidence of domestic violence against women is high in the PC, but the victims hesitate to admit it publicly.
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006: Child marriage is practiced in the PC and is generally accepted by the people.

**Education:** The reach of education, especially the higher education, among women in the PC is inadequate. However, younger girls of below 18 years of age have better access to education than older women in the age group of 46 years or above. While mid-day meal, better school infrastructure, enactment of RTE Act etc. have contributed to low dropout rate of girls, quality of educational infrastructure remains an area of concern.

**Health:** The healthcare challenges faced by women of the PC include, inter alia, underage motherhood, unwanted pregnancies and inadequate access to modern methods of family planning, healthcare during first trimester and postnatal care within 48 hours of childbirth. While people's faith in black magic is very high, there are gaps in services of anganwadis and ASHA, household sanitation and access to water.

**Social Status and Personal Freedom:** Acceptance of child marriage is a reflection of people's low level of education, cultural practices and social system in the PC. However, more women enjoy freedom to visit public places and relatives, and social ban on women like widow, barren etc. are almost non-existent. Discriminatory practices like son preference and lack of decision making power among girls on their marriage exist less in the society. While political participation by women is very high, their understanding of political dynamics is very low. Also, extent of women's participation in household decision-making is low.

**Economic Status:** Occupations in which women are engaged in include daily wage labour, wood collection, fishing etc. These occupations lack potential for high income. Inability of women to earn a decent income and become financially independent is clearly evident in the PC. Women have very little access to skill development training; they earn less than men, and are mostly deprived of the minimum wages. The process of financial inclusion of women is incomplete due to their inadequate access to banking services. Penetration of programmes like PMAY, MGNREGA, old age pension, etc. is low with two-third women not availing these benefits.

**Safety:** Despite overwhelmingly perceiving their areas as safe, the study found a latent concern in minds of some due to rising incidence of crimes against women. Domestic violence is prevalent, although few women prefer to share it openly. Since women are mostly ignorant of laws that promote their rights, there is inadequate scope for them to legally redress grievances like domestic violence.

**Right to Land:** Very few women in the PC own land. With lack of awareness and patriarchal and patrilineal social order, women do not have higher level of ownership of land. As a result, land can hardly be considered as a tool for women's empowerment in the PC.



## Recommendations

The study recommends the following measures to offset disabling factors that women grapple with and would contribute to gender justice and women's empowerment.

**Education:** There is a need to promote higher education in the PC, and to ensure retention of girls at higher grade levels.

**Health:** The healthcare services in general and maternal healthcare in particular should be made more effective and efficient. There is a need for administrative authorities and people's representatives at various levels to work in unison to address the gaps in household sanitation, water, healthcare, reproductive rights of women and underage pregnancy.

**Social Status and Personal Freedom:** Challenges like child marriage, discriminatory practices against girls and women, black magic etc. need to be addressed through effective grassroots-level campaigns. People's representatives, governmental administration and civil society should join hands, with the Member of Parliament playing the lead role, in organizing the campaigns periodically.

**Economic Status:** Besides building productive assets base, imparting training on skills and ensuring financial inclusion, there is an immediate need to stop violation of the Minimum Wages Act, 1946 and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 in the PC. The Member of Parliament and governmental administration at district and block levels should ensure maximum reach of development programmes in the constituency.

**Safety:** There is a need to implement targeted interventions for fighting alcoholism, lack of awareness of laws etc. that are challenges to safety of women. People's representatives, administration and civil society should join hands for this purpose.

**Right to Land:** There is a need to explore scope of giving land ownership right to women either solely or jointly and distributing surplus land, if available. Women should be aware of their rights to ownership of land and available legal remedies in case their right is violated.

**Awareness of Laws:** Campaigns for legal awareness should be launched in the PC for each of the six domains of women's empowerment noted above. The lead role in this regard should be played by the Member of Parliament of Kendujhar Constituency with the active participation of administration and civil society.

1.

# INTRODUCTION

*“Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value system leads to the development of a good family, society and ultimately a good nation.”*

**A P J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India**

## Background

Empowerment of women carries holistic connotation, as conveyed through progressive thought of India's former President, touching multiple aspects of life, including personal freedom, social status, economic independence, decision making, educational attainment and political participation. A country that is personified as Bharat Mata (or Mother India), whose rivers carry feminine names like Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Kaveri and Godavari, where Lakshmi, Saraswati and Durga are revered as Goddesses of wealth, learning and power, respectively, whose Constitution guarantees equal fundamental rights to both women and men, and which has multiple laws for protecting and promoting rights of women as equal citizens; empowerment of women continues to be an issue of intense and often polarizing public debate, scholarly research and social action. The attention that the issue receives is a result of women's persistent familial and social subordination, inadequate access to financial and productive assets, limited political participation and many other disempowering circumstances that are conditioned by patriarchy, ignorance and obscurantist social practices.

The paradoxes and challenges that one witnesses in the process of development of women, who constitute nearly half of the country's population, are hard to ignore. According to the Census of India 2011, the shares of women with teachers' training graduate degrees and nursing/medicine degrees went up by 122% and 157% respectively between 2001 and 2011. During the same period, the number of women engineers grew by 326%—from 4.8 lakh to over 20 lakh, and the number women with technological and engineering degrees increased by 182%. According to a study conducted in 2017, the share of female employees in India's top 100 companies increased by 5%—from 25.25% in 2016 to 30.55% in 2017. The same study also found 11% surge in women workforce at the entry

level positions.<sup>1</sup> However, the country's female labour force participation (FLFP) rate continues to be low. According to the International Labour Organisation, FLFP in India was 42.7% in 2004-05, 32.6% in 2009-10, 31.2% in 2011-12 and 31.1% in 2013-14.<sup>2</sup> The FLFP rate decreased further to 27.2% in 2017, which is also very low in comparison to most of the neighbouring and western countries.<sup>3</sup> The gender gap in labour force is strikingly visible with 75.7% male labour force participation rate in 2013-14. According to the India Development Report of the World Bank, released in 2017, FLFP rate has been on the decline since 2005 although 42% women are Graduates.<sup>4</sup>

The multiple challenges faced by Indian women are reflected in high rates of crime against women. According to the *Crime in India 2016*, the country witnessed as many as 39 crimes against women every hour, which was up from 21 in 2007.<sup>5</sup> Among all the crimes committed against women, 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' with 110378 reported

1 <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/women-representation-in-india-inc-up-5-this-year-study/article9909874.ece>. Retrieved on 25 April 2018

2 *India Labour Market Update* (July 2016), International Labour Organisation. Available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_496510.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_496510.pdf). Retrieved on 25 April 2018

3 According to the estimate of ILO, FLFP rate for women above 15 years of age was 61.5% in China, 55.7% in the USA, 82.7% in Nepal, 33% in Bangladesh and 35.1% in Sri Lanka in 2017. Available at [http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBI\\_ID=27](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBI_ID=27). Retrieved on 31 July 2018

4 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-ranks-120th-among-131-nations-in-women-workforce-says-world-bank-report/story-Q5AVD5aRImLHA1RAFPnZuJ.html>. Retrieved on 25 April 2018

5 <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/crime-against-women-up-83-conviction-rate-hits-decadal-low-18239>. Retrieved on 25 April 2018

cases (32.6% of all crimes) occupied the top position in 2016. This was followed by three other crimes namely 'assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' (25%), kidnapping and abduction (19%) and rape (11.5%).<sup>6</sup> The year 2016 also witnessed the lowest conviction rate (18.9%) in a decade for crimes against women. Apart from safety and security, paradoxes and challenges that undermine empowerment of women in India are evident in multiple other domains such as access to resources, political participation, status in society and access to healthcare.

An important determinant of women's empowerment, apart from the ones noted above, is the 'prescriptions of the Constitution of India and laws of the land'. While the Fundamental Rights, the Directive Principles of State Policy and other sections of the Constitution guarantee equality before law and equal protection of law, and prescribe affirmative actions for empowerment of women; the country also has the Indian Penal Code and many laws that protect and promote rights and dignity of women and act as safeguards against social evils and exploitative practices like dowry, child marriage, domestic violence, trafficking, female foeticide and unequal wage. Some of the important laws on women's welfare and equality are following:

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956;
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976;
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961;
- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961;
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971;
- Minimum Wages Act, 1946;
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986;
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987;
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005;
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006;
- The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994; and
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act, 2013.

Despite enactment of the above laws, existence of enabling provisions of the Constitution and other legal safeguards; violation of women's rights and dignity, and denial of opportunities and entitlements continue unabatedly in Indian society.

<sup>6</sup> *Crime in India 2016*, p.29

## Justification and Relevance

Studying paradoxes of divinity and disempowerment that women in India are subjected to, despite legal safeguards and guarantees, remain at the core of Project Gargi. It aims to explore the extent of women's empowerment in rural India and examine concerned legislative intents and programmatic interventions keeping in view the dynamics on the ground. It has been titled after the celebrated Vedic philosopher Gargi Vachaknavi - a known epitome of women's empowerment, who is remembered for her profound knowledge of the Vedas and for engaging in a scholarly debate with Rishi Yangyavalka on the issue of soul.

The intent of research noted above shows three inter-related domains of analysis that the study has looked into namely level of women's empowerment, legislative intents as reflected in important laws, and programmatic interventions of the government for development of women. The framework of analysis adopted for the study is unique as well as holistic, as it delves deep into the enabling factors that contribute to the process of women's empowerment. This, in turn, provides justification for the present research, and makes it different from available studies on the issue. Nevertheless, the existing publications, some of which are noted below, are invaluable as they contribute to our understanding of the nature of women's empowerment in India.

**Nayak, Sarojini and Nair, Jeevan. (2005). *Women's Empowerment in India*. Jaipur: Pointers Publishers:** The book traces "the journey of the status of Indian women in society from the Vedic period to the 21st century", and deals with marriage in India, man-woman relationships, egalitarianism, the new millennium, and empowerment at work. It also looks into key indicators of empowerment like legal status, political status, woman's education, right to work, institutional changes, constitutional amendments and government's welfare programmes for women.

**Rao, M. K. (ed.). (2005). *Empowerment of Women in India*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House:** With 20 contributions by eminent scholars, the book helps one understand many key aspects of women's empowerment like gender dimension in economic reform, gender discrimination and poverty, women's participation in rural non-farm employment, conditions of Scheduled Caste women in social sector, and strategies for empowerment.

**Krishan, Gopal (eds.). (2015). *Empowering Women- The Indian Perspective*. New Delhi: Authors Pride Publisher Pvt. Ltd.:** The book discusses empowerment of women in a multidisciplinary perspective keeping in view the contemporary events of violations of rights of women.

**Sen, Amartya. (October 10, 2013). India's**

**Women: The Mixed Truth. *The New York Review of Books*:** Written against the backdrop of the infamous rape of a paramedic on December 16, 2012 in Delhi, the article deals with some of the key issues concerning gender justice like insecurity of women, legal reform and social change, missing women, and boy preference. **Kapadia, Karin. (1995). *Siva and Her Sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in Rural South India*. Boulder: West View Press:** This is another useful reading for understanding gender issues in a rural context. **Rege, Sharmila. (1999) *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonies*. New Delhi: Zubaan Books:** The book offers a powerful counter-narrative to the mainstream assumptions about development of feminism in India in the twentieth century. **Halder, Baby. (2006). *A Life Less Ordinary*. New Delhi: Zubaan. Translated by Urvashi Butalia:** This autobiographical book describes realities of domestic workers in India, which are invisible in middle and upper-class peoples' everyday consciousness. **Menon, Nivedita. (2012). *Seeing Like a Feminist*. UK: Penguin Books:** Dealing with the issue of feminism, the author explains complex concepts with the kind of accessibility that is very rare in most academic works. **Asthana, N.C. and Nirmal, Anjali. (2016). *Women's Security in India*. Jaipur: Aavishkar Publishers:** This scholarly work presents a comprehensive analytical picture of multiple components, which include, inter alia, psychological analysis of different types of rapists, sociological analysis of rape and molestation, historical reasons of the Indian male's twisted notions of manliness, societal factors responsible for sexually aggressive behaviour, and media's role and responsibility.

Besides contributing to the body of literature on women's empowerment, justification and relevance of present research can also be located in its framework of analysis that includes analysis of grassroots level dynamics by studying six independent variables namely education, health, social status and personal freedom, economic condition, safety and land rights in a rural parliamentary constituency. The intent is to ensure that the recommendations of study remain in sync with the needs and priorities of women. Selection of Kendujhar parliamentary constituency of Odisha, which meets the criteria of coverage namely rural constituency and representation in parliament by a woman parliamentarian, further adds to the relevance of research.

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Explore the nature of women's empowerment by analysing their status in regard to education,

health, social status and personal freedom, economic condition, safety, and land rights

- Understand legislative intents on women's empowerment in reference to the laws and provisions of the Constitution
- Identify the extent to which legislative intents and programmatic interventions have contributed to empowerment of women
- Recommend policy options and other remedial measures that would address the challenges faced by women and would contribute to their empowerment

## Methodology

Project Gargi is a problem-oriented, exploratory and participatory research that focuses on analysis of views of women at the grassroots and other stakeholders to understand their status in society and the extent to which laws and programmes have ensured women's empowerment. In view of availability of literature on women's empowerment in general, the research team also collected data through desk research. Since the purpose was to obtain inputs from multiple stakeholders like women in general, victims of domestic violence, civil society organisations, government officials and concerned citizens; it was considered necessary to adopt multiple methods for data collection. This also helped in triangulation of data, which was necessary for quality of analysis. The specific methods employed for data collection and data analysis are noted in the following sections.

### Methods for Data Collection

**Desk research:** Desk research was conducted for collection of available literature on six variables of research viz. education, health, social status and personal freedom, economic condition, safety and land right. The research team consulted a wide array of data, reports and articles, including reports and publications of the National Family Health Survey, Census of India, National Sample Survey, International Labour Organisation, National Crime Records Bureau, and different Ministries of the Government of India. The inputs so collected contributed to data analysis and its quality.

**Interviews of Women:** Interviews with women in general covered women of different age, social, religious, economic, education and occupation groups. The sampling plan used for conducting these interviews is elaborated below.

- **Sample design:** Since seven assembly constituencies viz. Champua, Patna, Kendujhar, Telkoi, Ghasipura, Anandapur and Karanjia fall under Kendujhar

parliamentary constituency, it was decided to conduct interviews in each assembly constituency in order to make the sample geographically representative. According to the design, each assembly constituency was divided into five geographic zones namely north, south, east, west and central; and certain number of women from each geographic zone, as specified in the sample size noted below, in the age group of 15 years or above were identified and interviewed. It was further decided to make the sample broadly representative of the social categories namely Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and others (other backward classes and general).

- **Sample size:** As per the initial plan, interviews were slated with 385 women covering the entire parliamentary constituency (55 women in each assembly constituency) considering 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, wherein the size of universe of study is 1015527 - the total female population of Kendujhar parliamentary constituency according to Census of India 2011. Since each assembly constituency was divided into five geographic zones, 11 interviews were planned for each zone. However, during the course of fieldwork, the research team conducted some more interviews anticipating data gaps and rejection of some schedules due to unwillingness of few women to answer all the questions. Thus the **sample size** became **401**, and there were some variations in the coverage in zones of each Assembly constituency. The tables below contain distribution of the sample among Assembly constituencies and social categories.

Table 1.1: Distribution of sample among assembly constituencies

Assembly constituency	Number
Telkoi	55
Patna	53
Champua	64
Kendujhar	42
Ghasipura	62
Anandpur	61
Karanjia	64
Total	401

Table 1.2: Social category of women

Category	Number	Percent
Scheduled Castes (SC)	41	10
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	177	44
Other Backward Classes	163	41
General	20	5
Total	401	100

The sample size is broadly representative of the social categories, as the shares of SC and ST women in total female population of Kendujhar parliamentary constituency were 11% and 48.8%, respectively according to Census of India 2011.

- **Sampling method:** The selection of respondents was made randomly. The researchers interviewed only those women who agreed to share their views with them, as the process of interview was voluntary in nature.

**Research tool:** A structured interview schedule with both close and open-ended questions was used for interviewing the women.

**FGDs with victims of domestic violence and other crime against women:** The research team conducted three FGD with women who have faced or are facing challenging situations such as domestic violence, alcoholic husband, separation etc. Over five women participated in each FGD. A FGD guide containing salient points for discussion was used for conducting the discussion.

**KII covering Representatives of Civil Society, Officials and Concerned Citizens:** Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted to obtain views of concerned citizens, scholars, and officials of police and civil administration who work on women's development. The research team conducted six KIIs with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule. Conditions of women in general, their level of empowerment and social dynamics of the areas in which the key informants live are some of the issues that came to light during KIIs.

## Methods for Data Analysis

**Data Cleaning and Entry:** Following completion of field work, each completed interview schedule was checked for inaccuracies, inconsistencies and omissions, and necessary corrections were made in consultation with field researchers to make it fit for data entry and analysis. This was followed by data entry in MS Excel, and another round of checking for wrong entries.

**Analysis of Quantitative Data:** Analysis of quantitative data was done with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). This resulted in preparation of necessary tables containing frequencies and percentages of various components of six variables of research.

**Analysis of Qualitative Data:** Interpretation and analysis of qualitative data such as views of key informants and inputs collected during FGD were done in light of the objectives of study. Cases of women who



have experienced different types of disempowering situations have also been appropriately cited to strengthen the analysis.

## Brief Note on Kendujhar Parliamentary Constituency

Kendujhar parliamentary constituency has seven assembly constituencies, as depicted below in the outline map. Except Karanjia, which is part of neighbouring Mayurbhanj district, all other assembly constituencies are part of Kendujhar district.<sup>7</sup>

Map: Kendujhar PC



Kendujhar PC is predominantly inhabited by tribal population, whose share in the total population (2038860) is 48% as per 2011 Census of India. While Scheduled Castes constitute 11% of the total population, the remaining people belong to OBC and general category.<sup>8</sup> It is also a predominantly rural constituency with 98.8% people living in rural areas. Women constitute nearly half of the total population (49.8%), and the shares of ST and SC among them are 48.8% and 11%, respectively. While the parliamentary constituency has 57.2% literate people, the rate of literacy among women is 42.4% and that of men is 57.5%. As regards sex ratio, the share of Kendujhar

district is 988,<sup>9</sup> which is higher than the country's sex ratio i.e. 940 females per 1000 males according to 2011 Census.

Out of the total 494510 main workers (employment of more than six months in a year) of the constituency, 18.8% are females. Among the total female main workers, 37% are agricultural labourers. While the share of men among main workers is more than women, the share of women is more than men in case of marginal workers (employment for less than six months in a year). According to the Census of India 2011, women constitute 58.6% of the total 386223 marginal workers of the parliamentary constituency. This shows inadequate access of women to work of longer duration. Besides agriculture which is the principal occupation, people are also engaged in collection of minor forest produce and wood, and wage labour.

It is important to note that Kendujhar and Mayurbhanj districts are in the list of 250 most backward districts of the country which receive funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) programme of the Government of India.

## General Profile of Women in Kendujhar PC

The following sections contain salient aspects of the profile of women who were interviewed during field work to understand the nature of women's empowerment at the grassroots.

### Age of respondents

As the table below shows, the age group with the highest share of women (37%) in the sample is 18 to 30 years. This is followed by women in the age groups of 31 to 45 years (35%) and 46 to 60 years (18%) in descending order. The combined share of the above three age groups is 90% of the total sample. While this shows that most of the women interviewed are in the age group of 18 to 60 years, the sample also has 7% elderly who are above 60 years of age and 2% adolescent girls in the age group of 15 to under-18 years.

<sup>7</sup> In view of the above, the research team had to add population data of Kendujhar district and Karanjia assembly constituency (includes Karanjia NAC, Karanjia block, Thakurmunda block and nine gram panchayats of Kaptipada block viz. Padmapokhari, Ramachandrapur, Labanyadeipur, Dewanbahali, Ranipokhari, Sarat, Nota, Saradiha and Kalamgadua) in order to arrive at figures for various population indicators of Kendujhar PC, as noted in different sections of the report.

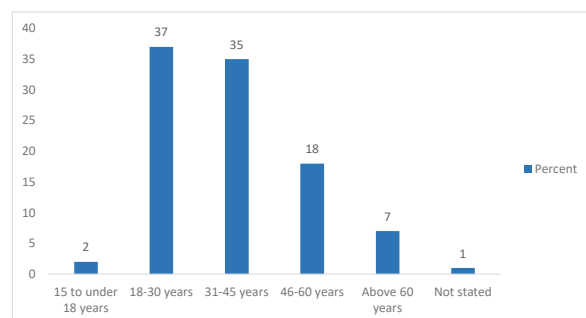
<sup>8</sup> Census of India 2011. [http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2106\\_PART\\_B\\_DCHB\\_KENDUJHAR.pdf](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2106_PART_B_DCHB_KENDUJHAR.pdf), and [http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2107\\_PART\\_B\\_DCHB\\_MAYURBHANJ.pdf](http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2107_PART_B_DCHB_MAYURBHANJ.pdf). Retrieved on 2 May 2017

<sup>9</sup> Sex ratio of Karanjia assembly constituency is not available. However, Mayurbhanj district in which Karanjia falls had 1006 females per 1000 males, according to 2011 Census.

Table 1.3: Age of women

Age	Number	Percent
15 to under 18 years	7	2
18-30 years	150	37
31-45 years	139	35
46-60 years	73	18
Above 60 years	29	7
Not stated	3	1
Total	401	100

Chart 1.1: Age of Women



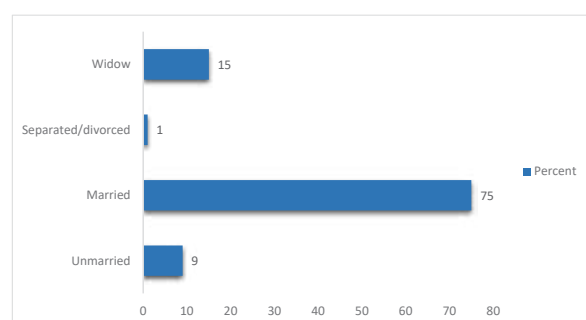
## Marital status of women

Marital status of women shows that most of them (75%) are married. While widows occupy second position (15%) in the sample, 9% women are unmarried and only 1% or 5 women are separated/ divorced.

Table 1.4: Marital status of women

Status	Number	Percent
Unmarried	37	9
Married	299	75
Separated/divorced	5	1
Widow	60	15
Total	401	100

Chart 1.2: Marital status of women



## Size of family

As the table below indicates, majority (41%) of women are living in families that have more than five members. While 23% women live in four-member families and 19% live in five-member families, the shares of women living in small families are less- 11% in three-member families, 3% in two-member families and only one woman has none in family except herself.

Table 1.5: Size women's families

Size	Number	Percent
One	1	0.2
Two	13	3
Three	43	11
Four	93	23
Five	76	19
More than five	164	41
Not stated	11	3
Total	401	100

## Status of Religion of Women

The women covered under the study are mostly Hindus (97%). This is also in tune with the 2011 Census of India data, according to which Hindus constitute 97.28% of the total population of Kendujhar district. The share of Hindus in Mayurbhanj district is also high (83.86%).

Table 1.6: Status of women's religion

Status	Number	Percent
Hindu	390	97
Muslim	0	0
Christian	2	1
Others	9	2
Total	401	100



## 2.

# EDUCATION

Education is an important determinant of women's empowerment as it not only opens up opportunities for employment and enhances their status in family and society but broadens their intellectual horizons. With the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act), education in India has become a fundamental right, thereby ensuring free and compulsory education for every child from class I to class VIII. The government also implements several programmes like the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Mahila Samakhyas etc. which are meant for promotion of education in the country. Mahila Samakhyas programme is especially important for women's empowerment as it considers education as a tool for achieving the purpose. Launched in the year 1988, the MS programme has been promoting women's self-esteem and self-confidence, creating learning opportunities for out-of-school girls through community-level interventions like alternative learning centres, early childhood development centres and residential camps, ensuring women's equal participation in development processes, imparting knowledge and skills for economic independence, and promoting rights of women through access to legal literacy and entitlements. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme, an important intervention that contributes to school attendance and retention, is the world's largest among such schemes serving 10 crore students in 11.5 lakh schools according to data available with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.<sup>10</sup> Besides, there are other interventions like the National Scheme of Incentives to Girls that provides scholarships to school girls, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme, scholarships for girls attending higher education at the rate of ₹5000 per annum, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas etc. which focus on education and empowerment of women in the country. Notwithstanding the legal and programmatic interventions, the key aspects that need to be looked into are the level of educational attainment of women and the enabling factors that contribute to promotion of and access to education at the grassroots.

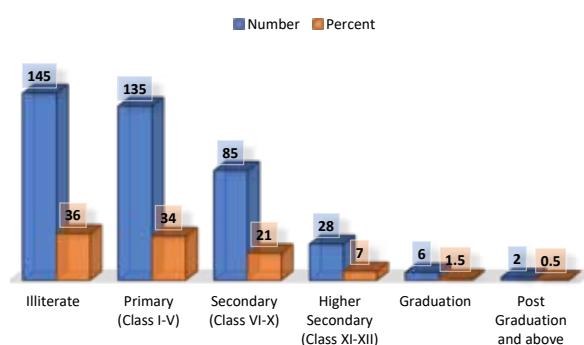
<sup>10</sup> [http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/upload\\_document/threeYearsAchievement.pdf](http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/threeYearsAchievement.pdf). Retrieved on 28 April 2018

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMEN

The study found that among women who participated in the survey, the share of illiterates is the highest (36%). This is followed by 34% women who have studied up to primary level and 21% women who possess secondary level education, in descending order. In other words, 91% women are either illiterate or have studied up to secondary level. As the table below shows, the shares of women who possess higher educational attainment are either low, as in case of those with higher secondary level of education (7%), or negligible as in case of Graduates (1.5%) and Post Graduates (0.5%).

The above findings clearly indicate inadequate reach of education amongst the women, especially those living in rural and tribal-dominated areas.

Chart 2.1: Educational attainment of women



The relationship between status of education and age of women, as presented in the table below containing cross-tabulated data, further shows that illiterate, primary level, Graduates and Post Graduates are all in the age group of 18 years or above. While all the Graduates are in the age group of 18 to 30 years, the two Post Graduates are in the age group of 31-45 years. In other words, younger respondents of below 18 years have better access to education than the older women. It also shows that older women in the age group of 46 years and above are either mostly illiterate or are qualified only up to higher secondary level- the share of women is increasingly less in case of higher level of education.

Table 2.1: Relationship between status of education and age

Age	Status of Education											
	Illiterate		Primary (Class I-V)		Secondary (Class VI-X)		Higher Secondary (Class XI-XII)		Graduation		Post Graduation and above	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
15 to under 18 years	0	0	0	0	4	5	3	11	0	0	0	0
18-30 years	41	28	56	41	35	41	12	43	6	100	0	0
31-45 years	46	32	50	37	31	36	10	36	0	0	2	100
46-60 years	36	25	20	15	14	17	3	10	0	0	0	0
Above 60 years	19	13	9	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not stated	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	145	100	135	100	85	100	28	100	6	100	2	100

## School Attendance

The study found that girls of school going age in most of the families (96%) are attending schools. Only 4% families have girls who are not attending schools despite being of the school going age. This shows the high level of reach of education in the constituency. Significantly, dropout of girls is nearly absent as only 6 out of 401 women (or 1%) have such girls in their families. While one girl dropped out of studies because of her marriage, the reason cited for two other girls is poverty.

Table 2.2: Families with girls of school going age but not attending school

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	17	4
No	384	96
Total	401	100

Table 2.3: Families with school dropout girls

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	6	1
No	395	99
Total	401	100

Table 2.4: Reasons for girls dropping out of school

Reason	Number	Percent
Poverty	2	33
Marriage	1	17
No reply	3	50
Total	6	100

## Distance of Nearest Primary School

Distance of school has a strong bearing on the level children's access to education. According to Section 6 of the RTE Act, government and local authority are required to establish a school within the prescribed 'area or limits of neighbourhood'. The Model RTE Rules notified by the Central Government in 2009 provide for a distance of one kilometer for children in classes I-V and three kilometres for children in classes VI-VIII.<sup>11</sup> The study found that the distance of the nearest primary school from residence is in conformity with the prescribed rule in case of 98% respondents. Only in case of the remaining 2%, the distance is more than a kilometer.

Table 2.5: Distance of the nearest primary school from residence

Distance	Number	Percent
Half a km. or less	246	61.3
More than half to 1 km.	148	37
More than 1 to 2 km.	4	1.0
More than 2 to 3 km.	2	0.5
More than 3 to 4 km.	0	0.0
More than 4 km.	1	0.2
Total	401	100

## Essential School Infrastructure

As regards availability of essential infrastructure in the nearest schools, 98% women said that toilets for

<sup>11</sup> Rule 4 (1)(a) and (b) of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2009

girls are available in the nearest schools. According to 96% women, water facilities are available in the nearest schools. The study further found that Mid-day meals are provided in most of the nearest schools (98%).

magic, and for them education of their children is not a priority. As a result, children often only complete schooling, and the reach of higher education continues to remain low in the constituency.

Chart 2.2:: Status regarding toilets for girls in the nearest schools

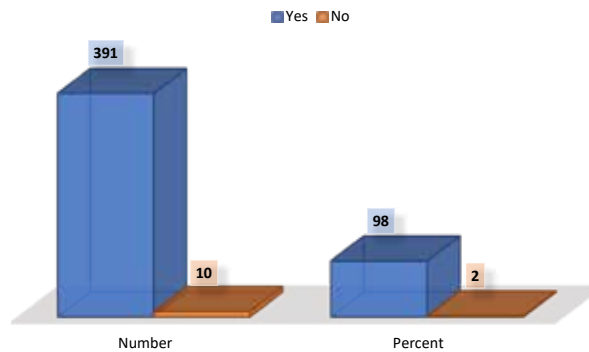
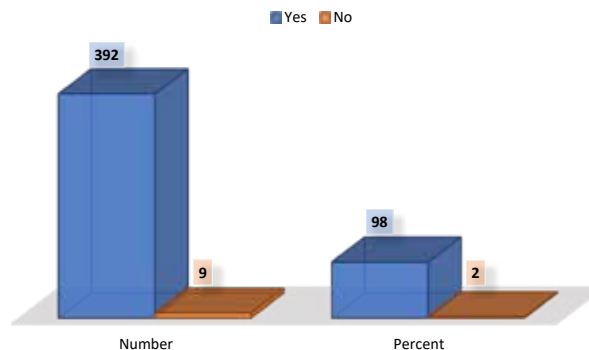


Table 2.6: Status regarding water facility in the nearest schools

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	383	96
No	18	4
Total	401	100

Chart 2.3: Status regarding provision of mid-day meal in the nearest schools



The above findings indicate availability of key enabling infrastructure in most of the schools in the constituency, which in turn contributes to high degree of school attendance and low rate of dropout. Notwithstanding the availability of essential infrastructure in schools, toilets and water facilities are often not properly and regularly maintained, as reported by respondents, making them unusable and unhygienic. Interactions with women during FGD also show that many people still do not understand the worth of education. The research team interacted with women who believe in superstition and black

### 3.

## HEALTH

According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index 2017, which measures the 'magnitude of gender-based disparities' and progress of countries towards gender parity across four thematic dimensions namely economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, India occupied 108<sup>th</sup> position in a list of 144 countries which were included in the index.<sup>12</sup> The extent of gender disparity is, however, more manifest in the health and survival sub-index in which India occupied 141<sup>st</sup> position.<sup>13</sup> Since the above sub-index uses two indicators viz. sex ratio at birth, which measures the phenomenon of 'missing women', and healthy life expectancy, which captures the gap between women and men in regard to their expectations to live in good health, the rank that India occupied is indicative of the country's abysmally low achievements in the domain of women's health. Health is one of the two (the other being economic participation opportunity) most challenging gender gaps identified by the Global Gender Gap Report 2017, as health gender has widened since 2006 when the Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the WEF.

The findings of India's National Family Health Survey-4: 2015-16 (NFHS) further highlight the state of women's health in the country, and the associated challenges. According to the survey, sex ratio (females per 1000 males) at birth for children born in the last five years stood at 919 (sex ratio of total population was 991), 7.9% women in the age group of 15-19 years were already mothers or pregnant (at the time of survey), 58.6% mothers had antenatal check up in the first trimester, only 21% mothers had full antenatal care, and 30.3% mothers consumed iron folic acid for 100 days or more during their pregnancies. These findings, and many other indicators of NFHS clearly show the importance of reproductive health and access to healthcare services for women's empowerment. While the extent of women's poor access to healthcare and the country's low ranking in the Global Gender Gap Index demonstrate the disempowered position of women in our society, the

<sup>12</sup> *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, World Economic Forum. Available at [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf). Retrieved on 25 April 2018

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

survey of Kendujhar parliamentary constituency not only brings out the health status of women but also reinforces the challenges they face in this regard.

### Attainment of Motherhood

Out of the total women interviewed during the fieldwork, 90% are mothers. The findings in regard to the age at which they became mothers show that 81% of them were in the age group of 18 to 30 years when their first child was born. While the corresponding share of women who attained motherhood at the age of 15 to under 18 years is 13%, 3% became mothers even before attaining 15 years of age. This is not so surprising considering the fact that cases of boys and girls eloping or marrying at a very young age are not uncommon in the constituency. According to women and key informants, underage motherhood is not considered socially unacceptable especially among tribal and less educated people. The share of women who became mothers after 30 years of age is very less, as the concerned table 3.2 indicates.

Table 3.1: Status of women as mothers

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	359	90
No	42	10
Total	401	100

Table 3.2: Age of women when the first child was born

Age	Number	Percent
Under 15 years	9	3
15 to under 18 years	48	13
18 to 30 years	289	81
31 to 40 years	1	0.2
41 to 50 years	0	0
Above 50 years	3	1
Not stated	9	3
Total	359	100

## Access to Family Planning Methods and Healthcare during Pregnancy

According to 64% married respondents, they use modern methods for family planning. However, 35% married women do not have access to these methods as shown in the table below.

Table 3.3: Use of modern methods for family planning in family

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	233	64
No	128	35
No reply	3	1
Total	364	100

The study also found that 74% women had access to healthcare during their first trimester, as they were registered in healthcare facilities during the period. However, the status of 26% women who were not registered in healthcare facilities indicates their vulnerability to health complications as women's body undergo critical changes during first trimester.

Table 3.4: Women who were registered in healthcare facilities during first trimester

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	265	74
No	94	26
Total	359	100

The study found that 75% mothers received postnatal care within 48 hours of childbirth. While this share is a positive sign, lack of access to postnatal care for 25% mothers is a major healthcare challenge.

Table 3.5: Women who had received postnatal care within 48 hours of childbirth

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	268	75
No	91	25
Total	359	100

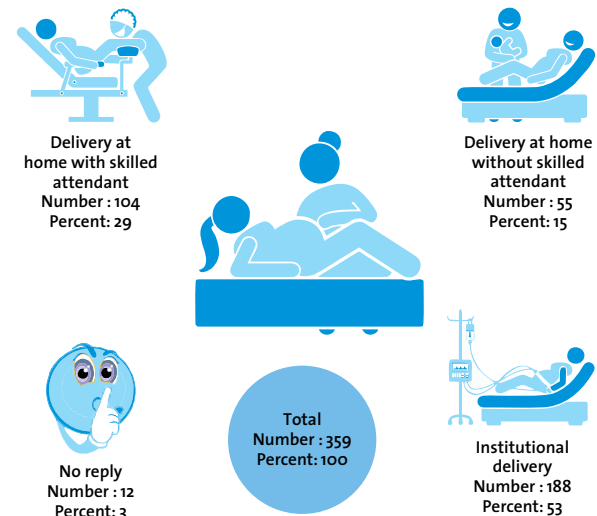
## Child Birth

Child birth is linked to maternal mortality, as heavy blood loss (post-partum haemorrhage) often causes death of women. Although maternal mortality rate (MMR) (maternal mortality per 100000 live births)

has come down in India from 254 in 2006 to 167 in 2015<sup>14</sup> as a result of interventions like Janani Suraksha Yojana and Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram which entitle mothers to receive cash transfer and 'free and no expense delivery' in public health institutions respectively,<sup>15</sup> the achievement is far behind the target of 100 which the government intends to achieve by 2020. India's MMR is also much higher at present than the target of 70 set under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>16</sup> According to the World Health Organisation, five women die every hour during child birth in India.<sup>17</sup> Institutional delivery under the care of trained physician is, therefore, important for reducing maternal mortality.

The survey of the constituency found that 53% mothers had institutional delivery, which is less than the shares of Odisha (85.4%) and the country (78.9%),<sup>18</sup> and 29% have given birth at their homes with the support of skilled attendants. While 15% childbirths have taken place at homes without skilled attendants, which is indicative of the vulnerability of these women to critical health conditions, 3% women did not share the place and nature of their delivery.

Infographic 3.1: Place and nature of child birth



14 <http://niti.gov.in/content/maternal-mortality-ratio-mm-100000-live-births>. Retrieved on 28 April 2018

15 <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=160828>. Retrieved on 28 April 2018

16 SDG 3

17 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/5-women-die-every-hour-during-childbirth-in-India-WHO/article-show/52781552.cms>

18 National Health Profile 2017, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, (National Family Health Survey- 4). Available at [http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports\\_and\\_publication/statistical\\_publication/social\\_statistics/WM-17Chapter2.pdf](http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/statistical_publication/social_statistics/WM-17Chapter2.pdf). Downloaded on 24 Feb 2018

## Access to Healthcare Services

Access to healthcare services is closely linked to improvement in public health, which is not only an important component of human development but also a directive to the State under Article 47 of the Constitution of India.<sup>19</sup> The study found that 96% women avail healthcare services provided by the government hospitals and dispensaries. Only 1% women each visit village doctors and private healthcare facilities.

Table 3.6: Healthcare services availed for normal treatment

Healthcare services	Number	Percent
Government hospital/ dispensary	384	96
Village doctor	5	1
Private hospital/ dispensary	3	1
Quack	0	0
No reply	9	2
Total	401	100

Although the respondents did not mention the role of quacks for healthcare during one to one interviews, people's belief in superstition and black magic could be known during FGD and key informant interviews. The research team came across many women who shared their faith in practices like searing of body with hot iron for stomach or other ailments. They also seek cure from faith healers who use hymns and magical practices for the purpose. Narrating the situation in this regard, Tulasi Munda, a social activist and a Padma Shri awardee highlighted the ignorance of women and people in general about the need of treatment in modern healthcare facilities.

Some key informants, like Panchanan Raut who teaches in a college in Anandapur Assembly constituency, expressed their concerns regarding poor healthcare infrastructure and non-availability of patient transport facilities in interior areas, which adversely affect accessibility and health of people, especially of women. During interactions in remote villages, many women particularly blamed bad roads that make movement of Janani Suraksha vehicle and ambulance impossible, thereby depriving expectant mothers of institutional medical care during childbirth. People in general are also deprived of the benefits of healthcare services.

<sup>19</sup> According to Article 47 of the Constitution of India, "The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties ..."

## Freedom in matters of Personal Health

One key aspect of empowerment is the extent of freedom that women enjoy in regard to matters concerning their personal health. While 86% women have the freedom to decide matters of personal health that implies the importance of their views in this regard, the remaining 14% do not have that kind of freedom. In other words, women in the latter category do not take decisions regarding their own health.

Table 3.7: Status regarding freedom to decide matters of personal health

Enjoy freedom	Number	Percent
Yes	345	86
No	56	14
Total	401	100

## Women availing Benefits of Anganwadi

*Anganwadi*, or 'courtyard shelter', is a country-wide government programme for welfare of children in the 0 to 6 years age group and mothers. The outreach activities of *anganwadis* provide services to expectant and nursing mothers like contraceptive counseling, antenatal and postnatal care, supplementary nutrition etc. which have great bearing on women's empowerment, as these activities, together with activities for children like supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, immunization etc., help women not only in childcare but also in maintaining their own health. The services of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), which is an important component of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), also contribute to women's empowerment in rural India. ASHA acts as an interface between community and public health system in the country, as she is responsible for creating awareness about healthcare, promoting universal immunization and services for reproductive and child health, and ensuring access to healthcare services at the grassroots. Interviews of women revealed that 84% of them have benefitted from the outreach activities of ASHA or *anganwadi* workers. However, 16% women have not received these services although most of them are living in rural areas and at the bottom of social ladder. This is indicative of the gap in access to services in the parliamentary constituency under the two governmental interventions.



Table 3.8: Status regarding outreach activities of ASHA/anganwadi workers benefitting women

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	338	84
No	63	16
Total	401	100

## Household Sanitation and Water

Water and sanitation are closely linked to women's empowerment, as lack of household sanitation and independent source of water in the family often puts women in a disadvantageous position. Women, for historical and cultural reasons, are often responsible for collection and transportation of water. Walking a distance to collect water and carrying water back home, as water is basic to household activities that women are engaged in, result in loss of education, less time for childcare, entertainment and household activities, and disruption in women's employment. According to a 2016 press release of UNICEF, women and girls spend '200 million hours' every day globally for collecting water leading to wastage of time for other meaningful activities.<sup>20</sup> Consequences of lack of household sanitation are even more disastrous for women, as the situation has strong bearing on education of girls, and employment, health and dignity of women. Absence of household toilets forces women to use only night time to ease themselves, which in turn exposes them to physical and sexual abuse, mental stress and infections. In view of the linkage women's empowerment has with household sanitation and water, the study looked into the status in this regard in the parliamentary constituency.

As the table below indicates, 49% have toilets in their houses. In other words, majority of women are deprived of the benefits of having toilets in their houses. The situation exposes them to the challenges of lack of sanitation facility noted above. The study further found that 90% women, out of those who do not have toilets in their houses, feel the need of having the facility. This shows their desire to fight inconveniences and challenges that they face on daily basis.

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_g2690.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_g2690.html). Retrieved on 10 May 2018

Chart 3.1: Status regarding toilet in house

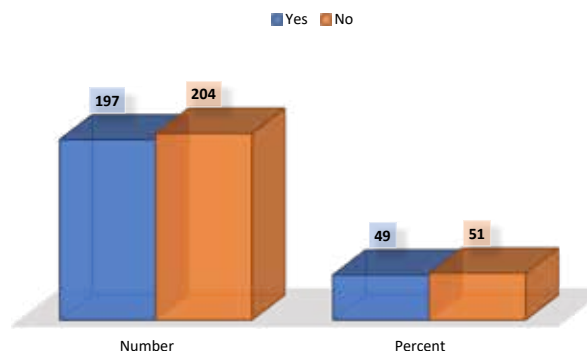
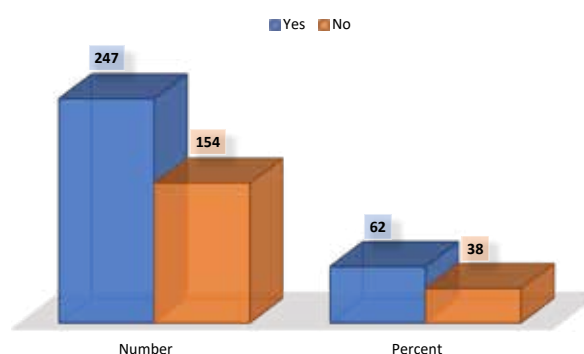


Table 3.9: Status regarding need of toilet in house

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	184	90
No	20	10
Total	204	100

As regards water, families of 62% women have independent sources of water for household consumption. However, this leaves 38% families without the facility, which in turn forces the women to face inconvenience of fetching water from outside.

Chart 3.2: Status regarding family having independent water source



According to 29% women, out of those who lack independent source of water in the family, procuring water from a distance is a physical challenge for them. While 31% reported occasional quarrel and conflict, 38% do not face inconveniences even if they procure water from outside.



Table 3.10: Inconveniences caused due to lack of independent water source in family

Inconvenience	Number	Percent
Procuring water from a distance is a challenge for women	45	29
No inconvenience caused	59	38
Occasional quarrel and conflict	48	31
Others	6	4

The study also found that 58% women, out of those who procure water for the family, do not receive any help from their family members. This reinforces the role that women traditionally play in this regard, as noted in the earlier section.

Table 3.11: Help received from family members in procuring water

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	65	42
No	89	58
Total	154	100

The above findings clearly indicate the gaps in the status of household sanitation and independent sources of water for families in the constituency, which force women to face inconveniences and even occasional conflict.

## Incidence of Abortion

According to a study conducted jointly by the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, Population Council, New Delhi and Guttmacher Institute, New York, and published in *The Lancet Global Health* in December 2017, 15.6 million abortions at the rate of 47 per 1000 women aged 15-49 were performed in India in 2015.<sup>21</sup> The study also found that 'medication abortion' was used in case of 81% abortions, 14% cases were performed 'surgically in health facilities' and 5% used unsafe methods outside the health facilities.<sup>22</sup> While reasons for abortion could be many as noted in the infographic below, it has a bearing on the extent of women's empowerment in regard to assertion of their reproductive rights.

Out of total women interviewed, 6% reported abortion. While 54% of them are medical abortions

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2017/national-estimate-abortion-india-released>. Retrieved on 8 May 2018

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

done at hospitals, 19% are conducted under the assistance of a local *dhai* or nurse and 8% cases are surgical abortion. In other words, all the women still do not have access to safe methods of abortion.

Table 3.12: Status regarding incidence of abortion

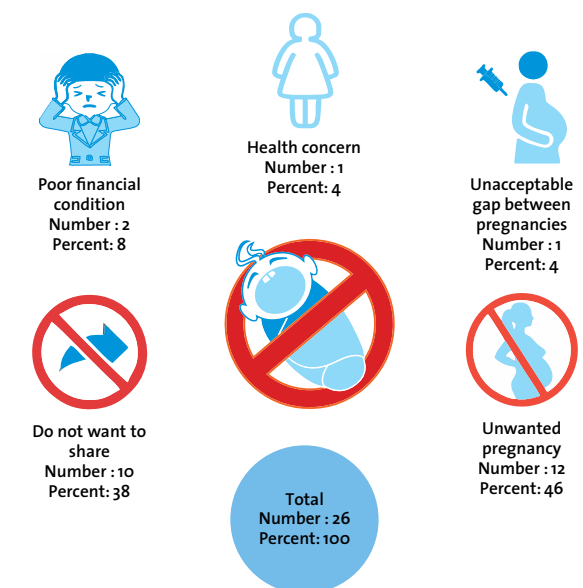
Status	Number	Percent
Yes	26	6
No	375	94
Total	401	100

Table 3.13: Methods used for abortion

Method	Number	Percent
Dhai	5	19
Surgical abortion	2	8
Medical abortion in hospital/home	14	54
No reply	5	19
Total	26	100

As regards reasons, 46% abortions (the highest of all reasons) have happened due to unwanted pregnancies. Poor financial condition (8%), health concern (4%) and unacceptable gap between pregnancies (4%) are hardly important reasons due to their low shares. However, 38% women did not want to share the reason for abortion. It may be inferred from the above findings that women do not enjoy their reproductive rights to the extent they should have in view of high share unwanted pregnancies.

Infographic 3.2: Reasons for abortion



The reasons for abortion cited by women are not in accordance with the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971- the Indian law that allows conditional abortion. According to Section 3 of the law, a registered medical practitioner can terminate pregnancy if it involves a risk to the life of pregnant woman or injury to her physical or mental health, and

if there is substantial risk to the child in the form of physical or mental abnormalities. As the infographic above indicates, only one case of abortion could be linked to concern for health of the woman. This shows the extent of gap in implementation of the law governing abortion in the country.

## 4

# SOCIAL STATUS AND PERSONAL FREEDOM

The importance of social status and personal freedom for women's empowerment can be judged from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, the most progressive blueprint ever on gender justice and advancement of rights of women. While Declaration 13, that notes "Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace", emphasises social equality; Declaration 23, which reads "Ensure the full enjoyment by women and the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms",<sup>23</sup> accords primacy to personal freedom of women. Empowerment of women is closely linked to their status in society and the extent of freedom they enjoy to express their thoughts and engage in actions of their choices.

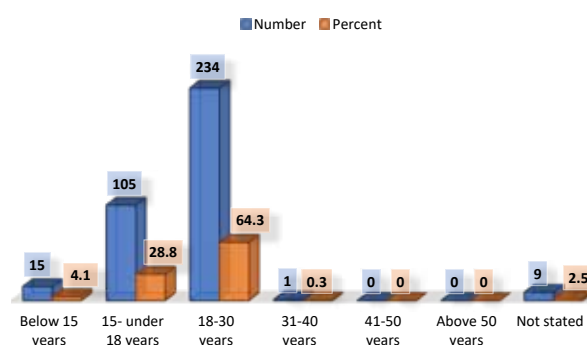
Although Constitution of India guarantees right to equality as a fundamental right under which women and men are equal before law and women cannot be denied social equality and access to public areas, the prevailing dynamics of social and familial relationship need to be looked into in order to understand the nature of social status and personal freedom that women enjoy in Kendujhar parliamentary constituency. This is necessitated in view of the strong influences of culture, social practices, social institutions and other immediate contextual factors on social status and personal freedom of women. Accordingly, several key determinants of women's social status and personal freedom have been analysed in the sections below keeping in view the inputs received from women and other stakeholders in the constituency.

<sup>23</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome, UN 1995 and UN Women 2014. [http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf). Downloaded on 15 May 2018

## Age of Marriage

According to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, a girl cannot marry before the age of 18 years. This is, however, not the case for 33% married respondents who were less than 18 years old at the time of their marriages. Out of the total cases of child marriages, 4.1% were married off when they were under 15 years of age. While 64.3% women were married off when they were between 18-30 years of age, age of marriage of only one woman was between 31 to 40 years. Although prevalence of child marriage is legally not permissible in the country, it is generally not considered as such in Kendujhar parliamentary constituency. This is a reflection of people's low level of education and prevailing cultural practices and social system in the predominantly tribal society, wherein marriage of girls before attaining 18 years of age is acceptable to many. The study could not find anyone getting married after completing 40 years of age.

Chart 4.1: Age at the time of marriage



## Freedom of Movement

Freedom to visit different public places and relatives is an important barometer of women's empowerment, as it is indicative of the extent of familial control on their movement, their self-sufficiency, and the safety and security that they enjoy in the society.

While 31% women have freedom to visit public places like market, health centre, community events etc. unescorted, this is not so in case of 3% women. In other words, more women enjoy the freedom to visit public places unescorted than those who do not have the freedom to do so. As regards visit to places of relatives, more women are allowed to do so alone (38%) than those who are not (31%). These findings indicate high degree of freedom that women of the constituency enjoy in regard to visiting different public places and relatives.

Table 4.1: Nature of freedom that women enjoy for visiting different places

Nature of freedom	Number	Percent
Have freedom to visit market, health centre, community event etc. unescorted	123	31
Do not have freedom to visit market, health centre, community event etc. alone	12	3
Allowed to visit relatives alone	151	38
Not allowed to visit relatives alone	123	31
No reply	7	2

## Nature of Social Ban on Women

One indication of conservatism in society and subordinate status of women is the prevalence of social ban on women to visit certain places. Social ban is also practiced for women like widow, barren etc. who are considered inauspicious. It is important to note that Constitution of India prohibits such an action, as noted earlier. The study found that social ban on women in general is nearly absent in the constituency, as only 2% women replied in the affirmative.

Table 4.2: Status regarding social ban on women

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	9	2
No	392	98
Total	401	100

While 67% women, out of those who reported prevalence of social ban, said that it is practiced in regard to visit to market, school and houses of relatives, 33% reported ban on visiting community events and only 1 (11%) reported religious place as a banned place.

Table 4.3: Names of places banned for women

Places	Number	Percent
Religious place	1	11
Market, school and houses of relatives	6	67
Community events	3	33

The study also found prevalence of social restrictions for certain categories of women like widow, barren etc., as indicated in the table below. However, only 4% women reported such restrictions in the society. These women are not allowed to participate in religious and other auspicious occasions.

Table 4.4: Status regarding social restrictions for widow, barren etc.

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	18	4
No	383	96
Total	401	100

Table 4.5: Nature of restrictions for widow, barren etc.

Restriction	Number	Percent
Not allowed to participate in religious and other auspicious occasions	9	50
No reply	9	50
Total	18	100

## Discrimination against Girls

Discrimination against girls manifests in various forms, which in turn undermine their empowerment. Practices like 'son preference', preferential treatment of boys and lack of freedom to express own choices are some of the manifestations of discrimination against girls that one comes across in the society. The sections below contain the findings in regard to some important forms of discrimination against girls.

'Son preference' is a blatantly patriarchal form of gender discrimination according to which people prefer son in the family rather than girl who is considered a burden. The practice gives rise to many other forms of discriminatory, and sometimes harmful, practices like denial of education, healthcare and nutritional support to girl, sex selective abortion and female infanticide. This is also a symbol of patriarchy, which results in subordinate status of girls and women in society.

According to 10% respondents, son preference exists in their families, and 6% women said that it exists in the society. Among those who denied existence of the practice, 59% reported its non-existence in the society and 24% noted its absence in the family. In other words, son preference is a reality in the parliamentary constituency, although majority of the sample denied its prevalence.

Table 4.6: Practice of son preference in the society

Status	Number	Percent
Exists in society	26	6
Exists in family of respondent	39	10
Does not exist in society	238	59
Does not exist in family of respondent	95	24
No reply	8	2

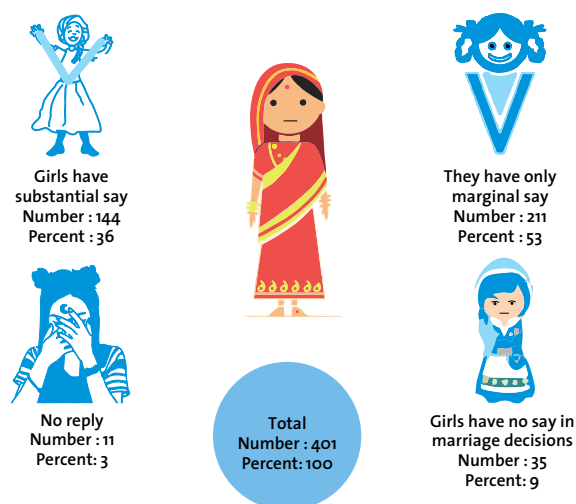
Preferential treatment of boys over girls in regard to education is another form of discrimination which families of 8% respondents practice.

Table 4.7: Status regarding families giving preference to education of boys

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	31	8
No	363	91
No reply	7	2
Total	401	100

The extent to which views of girls are considered while deciding their marriage is another indication of their empowerment. Participation in decision-making is the only way they can express their views and make choices on the matter. The study found that views of girls are considered only marginally in 53% families. While they have no say in the matter in 9% families, participation in decision making about marriage is substantial in case of 36% families. With such high number of families ignoring the views of girls in matters of marriage, the status portrays subordinate position for girls in regard to marriage, although it has substantial bearing on their later life.

Infographic 4.1: Status regarding girls having a say in marriage



## Prevalence of Black Magic

In the tribal dominated districts of Odisha, black magic or witchcraft is often practiced as a form of cure by invoking gods and goddesses and performing various types of acts that defy logic. While the practitioners of black magic are mostly women, reports of violence against sorcerers are not uncommon as black magic, when fails to deliver the desired results, leads to resentment among people. According to 83% women, out of the total sample, black magic is prevalent in their villages and areas. Interviews of women further revealed that 90% of them participate in black magic. These findings clearly indicate high degree of acceptance of black magic among women in the constituency.

Chart 4.2: : Prevalence of black magic in village/area

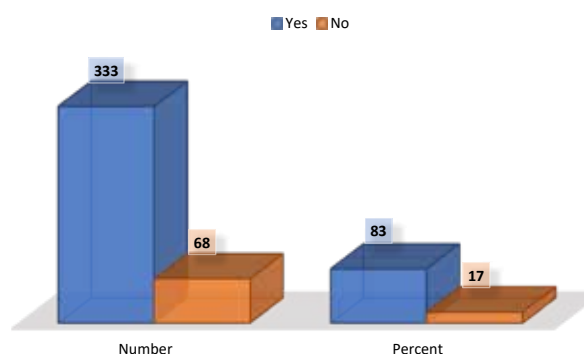


Table 4.8: Women's participation in black magic

Participation	Number	Percent
Yes	299	90
No	34	10
Total	333	100

## Political Participation

Adoption of universal adult franchise allows each adult citizen of India the right to vote without any discrimination on the basis of caste, class, colour, religion or sex. Following sixty-first amendment of the Constitution of India under the Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Act, 1988, a citizen having completed 18 years of age has the right to vote. Since each eligible voter is required to register with the Election Commission of India in order to exercise the right to vote, the study looked into the share of registered voters in the sample.

While 92% women are registered voters, majority of them are in the younger groups of 18 to 30 years (34%) and 31 to 45 years (37%), as shown in table containing cross-tabulated data. Relationship between age and status as registered voter also shows that there are women who, despite completing 18 years of age, are currently not registered as voters. Out of total non-voters, 74% (23 out of 31 non-voters) are in the age group of 18 to 30 years.

Chart 4.3: Status of women as registered voters

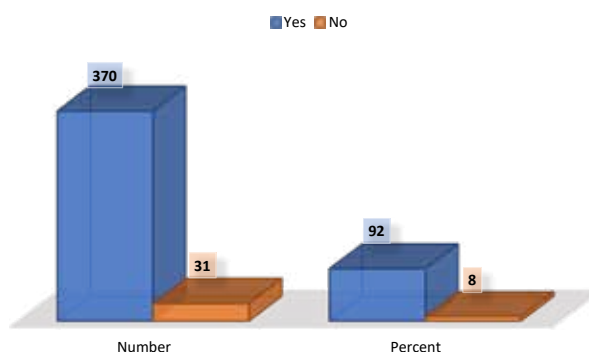


Table 4.9: Relationship between age and status as registered voters

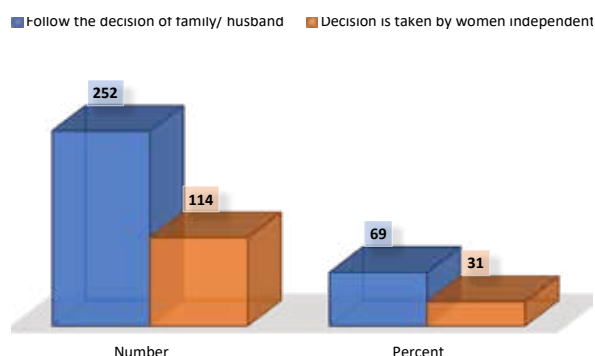
Age	Registered voters			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%age	No.	%age
15 to under 18 years	0	0	7	23
18-30 years	127	34	23	74
31-45 years	138	37	1	3
46-60 years	73	20	0	0
Above 60 years	29	8	0	0
Not stated	3	1	0	0
Total	370	100	31	100

As regards participation in the process of elections, nearly all (99%) registered voters take part in the voting process. While this can be interpreted as a sign of political awareness, inability of women to choose the right candidate shows their inadequate understanding of the prevailing political dynamics. As the concerned table below shows, 69% of those who vote during elections follow the decisions of their families or husband in regard to choosing the candidates. In other words, only 31% women are capable of deciding the candidates independently.

Table 4.10: Status regarding participation in elections

Voting status	Number	Percent
Yes	366	99
No	4	1
Total	370	100

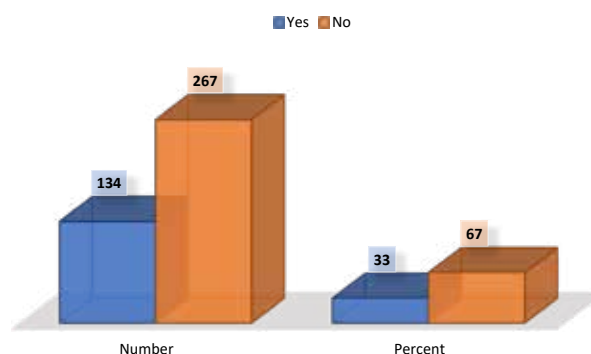
Chart 4.4: Status regarding the way women take decision as to whom to vote



## Participation in Household Decision Making

If women's empowerment is all about gaining control over the circumstances of their lives, participation in household decision making is an important determinant of their empowerment as it allows them to express their views and manage the household. The study found that only 33% women participate in household decision making. This leaves majority of them (67%) without any say household matters.

Chart 4.5: Women's participation in household decision making



Interviews of women further revealed that 93% women, out of those who participate in household decision making, share their views in regard to all household matters namely health, education, finance and marriage. The remaining 7% women participate in only certain specific matters like health (2%), education (2%) and marriage (3%).

Table 4.11: Household matters for which women's views are considered

Household matters	Number	Percent
Health	2	2
Education	3	2
Finance	0	0
Marriage	4	3
All of the above	125	93
Total	134	100



# ECONOMIC STATUS

Declaration 26 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, which was agreed to by 189 Governments, reads “We are determined to ... Promote women’s economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunity and public services”.<sup>24</sup> ‘Economic participation and opportunity’ is also one of the four thematic areas (sub-index) which the Global Gender Gap Index 2017, prepared by the World Economic Forum, has used to measure gender gap in 144 countries. The sub-index covers three concepts namely participation gap (difference between women and men in labour force participation rates), remuneration gap (ratio of female-to-male earned income and wage equality between female and male), and advancement gap (ratio of women and men among legislators, senior officials, managers, and technical and professional workers). With India occupying 139<sup>th</sup> position in the ‘economic participation and opportunity’ sub-index, that leaves only Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Syria behind it, the gender gap is all too apparent. The Beijing Declaration and the Global Gender Gap Index clearly shows the linkage that economic status of women has with their empowerment. Notwithstanding cases of economic exploitation and domestic violence that even economically independent women are subjected to due to patriarchy and non-inclusive social order in India, women having income of their own are potentially better placed to express their views independently and to engage in actions for fulfilling their needs without pressure from family members. It is, therefore, important to capture the position of women in the parliamentary constituency in regard to their economic status and other related dynamics.

<sup>24</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome, UN 1995 and UN Women 2014. Op.cit.

## Occupation

Housewives, with 51% share, are at the top of all occupations that women of the constituency are engaged in. Among the other occupations that have visible economic returns, unlike the activities of housewives which are not counted as remunerative, daily wage labour occupies the top position (17%). While the self-employed women engaged in activities like tailoring, fish selling etc. and students occupy second (8%) and third (4%) positions, respectively; *anganwadi* workers, farming, and other occupations like teaching, politics etc. have only 3% share each. The sample also has 2% women who are members of self help groups which are engaged in different income generating activities, 2% women who collect wood from the forests, 1% who are ASHA workers, and another 1% who do not do anything at present. It is evident from the occupations of women that nearly all of them are engaged in activities that do not have potential for generating high income either for self or for family, as can be observed in the following section.

Table 5.1: Occupations of women

Occupation	Number	Percent
Anganwadi worker	13	3
Daily wage labour	67	17
Farming	12	3
Housewife	205	51
Business (tailoring, fish selling etc.)	31	8
Member of SHG engaged in income generating activities	8	2
Study	17	4
Not doing anything	5	1
ASHA worker	5	1
Wood collection	10	2
Others (teaching, politics, mine worker, weaver etc.)	14	3
No reply	14	3
Total	401	100

## Income of Self and Family

As the table below indicates, 75% women do not have fixed monthly income. The shares of women who earn ₹5000 or less and between ₹5001-10000 in a month are 22% and 2% respectively. In other words, no one in the sample earns more than ₹10000 a month. This also shows the inability of women to earn a decent income and become financially independent.

The relationship between occupation and income, as given in cross-tabulated data in concerned table below, shows that most of the women who do not have fixed monthly income are housewives (65%), daily wage labour (11%) and students (6%). Women, who earn ₹5000 or less in a month, are mostly daily wage labourers (36%), self-employed who are engaged in different businesses (25%) and *anganwadi* workers

(13%). Their low level of income is indicative of the inadequate potential of the occupations to generate monetary return.

Table 5.2: Monthly income of women

Income	Number	Percent
No fixed income	301	75
₹5000 or less	88	22
₹5001-10000	8	2
₹10001-20000	0	0
₹20001-30000	0	0
₹30001-50000	0	0
More than ₹50000	0	0
No reply	4	1
Total	401	100

Table 5.3: Relationship between occupation and income

Occupation	Income					
	No fixed income		₹5000 or less		₹5001-10000	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Anganwadi worker	0	0	12	13	1	12.5
Daily wage labour	34	11	32	36	1	12.5
Farming	9	3	3	3		0
Housewife	196	65	6	7	1	12.5
Business (tailoring, fish selling etc.)	7	2	22	25	2	25
Member of SHG engaged in income generating activities	7	2	0	0	1	12.5
Study	17	6	0	0	0	0
Not doing anything	5	2	0	0	0	0
ASHA worker	2	1	3	3	0	0
Wood collection	7	2	3	3	0	0
Others (teaching, politics, mine worker, weaver etc.)	4	2	8	9	2	25
No reply	12	4	0	0	0	0
Total	301	100	88	100	8	100

As regards the monthly family income, the situation is marginally better in comparison to individual monthly income of women as there are at least some families in each income bracket. However, the share of families of respondents which earn a meagre ₹5000 or less in a month is the highest (85.6%) of all income categories. While about 9% families earn ₹5001-10000 in a month, only about 2% families are in the monthly income slab of ₹10001-20000. Very few families, as the table below shows, are in the higher income brackets.

Table 5.4: Monthly family income of women

Income	Number	Percent
₹5000 or less	343	85.6
₹5001-10000	35	8.7
₹10001-20000	7	1.7
₹20001-30000	4	1.0
₹30001-50000	3	0.7
More than ₹50000	2	0.5
No reply	7	1.7
Total	401	100

## Skill Development Training

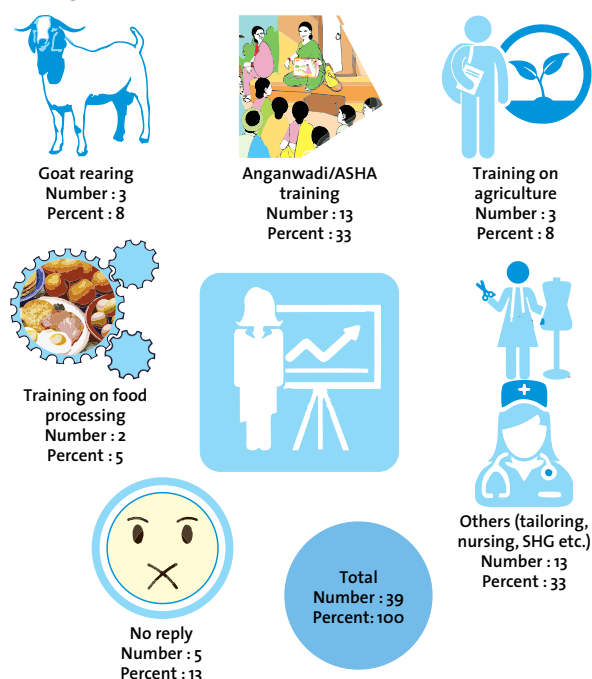
Vocational skills, like education, enhance a person's ability to secure gainful employment. Skill development training is especially important for women in view of their low participation in labour force which was 31.1% in 2015-16,<sup>25</sup> and the potential positive impact the training has on women's income and status in family and society. Interviews of women revealed that only 10% of them have received skill development training. Despite its need for empowerment, vast majority of women in the parliamentary constituency have no access to skill development training.

Table 5.5: Skill development training of women

Vocational/skills training	Number	Percent
Yes	39	10
No	352	90
Total	401	100

The skills on which women have received training are linked to available local needs and resources. While 33% women, out of those who have received skill development training, have received training on role of ASHA or functioning of *anganwadi*; the shares of goat rearing and training on agriculture are 8% each, and 5% women have been trained on food processing. There are also 33% women who have received training on tailoring, nursing and other skills.

Infographic 5.1: Vocations/skills on which women have received training



## Daily Wages of Women and Difference with Wages of Men

As noted above, among the non-housewives who are engaged in different income-generating activities, the share of daily wage labourers is the highest. It is, therefore, logical to understand the quantum of difference in wages received by women and men in order to determine the extent of gender inequality prevalent in the constituency. The study found that 58% women, out of total daily wagers, receive a paltry sum of only ₹150 or even less per day. While 33% receive over ₹150 to 250 a day, the daily wage of only 3% women is more than ₹300-400 and another 3% do not have any fixed wage. If the latest 2018 order of the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India,<sup>26</sup> which has fixed ₹318 as daily wage for unskilled agricultural labour, is considered as a benchmark, nearly all the women in the constituency are receiving substantially lower daily wage as mandated. Denial of minimum wage is a violation of the Minimum Wages Act, 1946.

Table 5.6: Daily wage received by women

Amount of daily wage	Number	Percent
₹150 or less	39	58
More than ₹150-250	22	33
More than ₹250-300	0	0
More than ₹300-400	2	3
More than ₹400-500	0	0
More than ₹500-700	0	0
More than ₹700-1000	2	3
More than ₹1000	0	0
No fixed wage	2	3
Total	67	100

In comparison to women, men are receiving better daily wages in the constituency as only 18% of them receive ₹150 or less per day, which is much less than the corresponding share of women. As the table below shows, the shares of men who receive more than ₹150-250 (51%), more than ₹250-300 (10%), and more than ₹300-400 (3%) are higher than the daily wage of women. These findings indicate that women receive less daily wage than men for performing the same work, which is contrary to the prescription of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. They also show the extent of deprivation and gap in daily wages paid to women, which has a disempowering influence on women.

26 Order No. 1/10(1)/2018-LS-II dated 03.04.2018, Office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India. Available at <https://clc.gov.in/clc/node/572>. Retrieved on 27 May 2018

25 India Labour Market Update (July 2016), International Labour Organisation. Op.cit.

Table 5.7: Daily wage received by men for the same work

Amount of daily wage	Number	Percent
₹150 or less	12	18
More than ₹150-250	34	51
More than ₹250-300	7	10
More than ₹300-400	2	3
More than ₹400-500	2	3
More than ₹500-700	0	0
More than ₹700-1000	0	0
More than ₹1000	0	0
Not known	10	15
Total	67	100

## Credit for Economic Enterprises

Access to credit, including micro credit, for economic enterprises assumes importance for women of the constituency who are mostly engaged in occupations that accrue low income. As the table below shows, 53% women have availed credit for starting economic enterprises. While most of them (92%) have availed credit from SHGs, 7% women have received credit from institutional lenders like banks, cooperative credit society etc., and moneylenders are the source of credit for only 2% women.

Table 5.8: Women availing (micro) credit for economic enterprise

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	214	53
No	187	47
Total	401	100

Table 5.9: Source of (micro) credit availed by women

Source	Number	Percent
Bank, cooperative credit society etc.	14	7
Private moneylenders	4	2
Friends and relatives	0	0
SHGs	196	92
Total	214	100

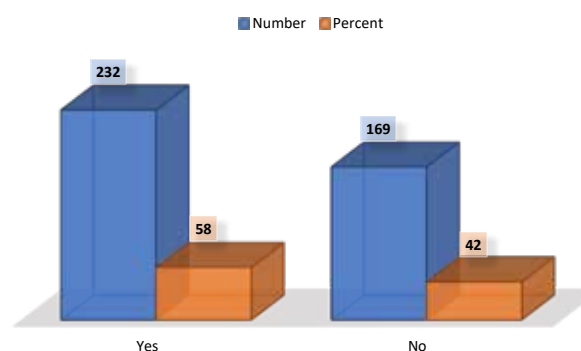
Although over half of the sample have availed credit for economic enterprises, data on occupations shows that only 2% women are engaged in SHG-operated income generation activities. In other words, women engaged in different other occupations have also

availed credit from SHGs for economic enterprises. Considering their present occupations, it is not possible to conclude that the credit has been utilised for the intended purpose. Therefore, access to credit is not resulting in financial empowerment in case of all women.

## Access to Banking Facility and Saving for Old Age

For women with very meagre income and inadequate access to economic opportunities, owning a bank account is potentially empowering as it allows them to save and perform other banking transactions that have long term economic benefits. The study found that 58% women have bank accounts in their names. However, this leaves 42% women without the facility despite implementation of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) for financial inclusion of people since August 2014 and coverage of 31.60 crore people under the scheme till May 2018.<sup>27</sup>

Chart 5.1: Women in possession of bank accounts



Interviews of women revealed that 68% bank account holders have their last transactions done a month ago or less than that. While 16% account holders had their last transactions done over a month to six months ago, 6% reported transactions in their account over a year ago and 3% have done so between six months to a year. There are, however, 6% women who could not recall the time of their last transactions and 1% had it done just few hours before they were interviewed by the research team. Operational status of bank accounts indicates regular access in case of most of the women, which is a positive sign in regard to their empowerment.

27 <https://www.pmjdy.gov.in/account>. Retrieved on 27 May 2018

Table 5.10: Operational status of women's bank accounts

Status of last transaction	Number	Percent
Few hours ago	3	1
A month ago or less	157	68
More than a month to six months ago	37	16
More than six months to one year ago	6	3
Over a year ago	14	6
Cannot recall	15	6
Total	232	100

As regards saving for old age, 42% have savings that would help them during their old age or post retirement years. The remaining 58% women have no saving for their old age. Since most of the women are either housewives or are engaged in unskilled labour and access to skill development training is very low in the constituency; lack of saving for old age is indicative of future uncertainties.

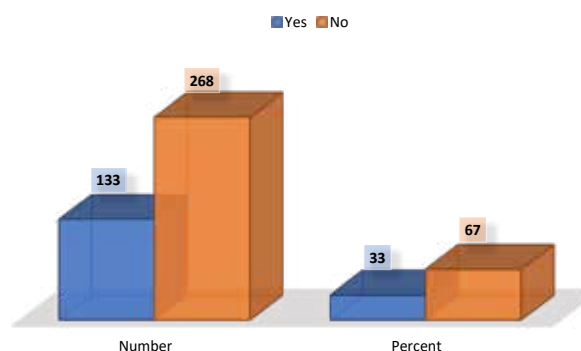
Table 5.11: Women with savings for old age/post-retirement

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	167	42
No	234	58
Total	401	100

## Access to Government Schemes

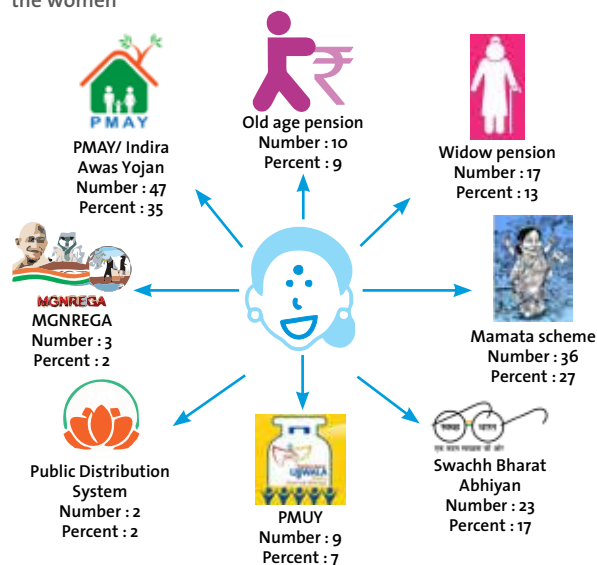
Government of India and the state governments implement various development schemes targeting the poor and disempowered people including women. While some schemes like Mamata of the Government of Odisha and widow pension target only the women, others like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) target poor and deprived people irrespective of gender identity. Interviews of women revealed that only 33% of the total sample have availed the benefits of various development schemes of the government. In other words, penetration of government schemes is far from satisfactory.

Chart 5.2: Women availing benefits of government schemes/programmes



The scheme that has benefitted the highest number of women (47 or 35%) is the PMAY under which poor and economically weaker sections are provided affordable housing facility. This is followed by the Mamata yojana (27%) of the Government of Odisha under which pregnant women and lactating mothers receive monetary support for improved nutrition and health seeking behaviour, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (17%) that focuses inter alia on cleanliness and construction of household and community toilets for eliminating open defecation, widow pension (13%), and old age pension (9%) in descending order. While 7% women have benefitted from Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) which 'aims to safeguard the health of women & children by providing them with clean cooking fuel- LPG',<sup>28</sup> 2% women each have benefitted from MGNREGA and Public Distribution System that provides household ration at subsidized prices.

Infographic 5.2: Government schemes/programmes benefitting the women



<sup>28</sup> <http://www.pmujiwalayojana.com/about.html>. Retrieved on 26 May 2018

## 6

# SAFETY

Safety, like social and economic wellbeing and freedom, is a vital precondition for achieving women's empowerment. This assumes added importance in India, as safety of women is a perennial concern not only in public places but also at homes and in the community spaces where women should find the environment as the safest. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, offenders of rape are known to the victims in 94.6% cases in the year 2016.<sup>29</sup> The latest data on crime against women, noted in background note in the chapter on introduction, indicates an alarming rise of such cases in the country and very low rate of conviction. A woman who feels threatened, and whose rights are violated even by persons known to her, cannot be said to be empowered. The following sections deal with some of the important aspects of safety of women in the Kendujhar parliamentary constituency.

### Perceptions regarding Safety

The study found that 90% women perceive the area and village they live in as safe for women and 2% consider it very safe. While perception of 5% women shows lack of safety for women, no one perceives her area and village unsafe and 3% remained indecisive on the matter. Interaction with key informants also reveals prevalence of general sense of safety for women in the constituency.

But some of the key informants like Dolagobinda Panda, who works for an NGO named Pradan, and Panchanan Rout, who teaches in a college in Anandapur Vidha Sabha constituency, shared their concerns about increasing cases of crime against women like chain snatching, attack on women during evening hours etc. which are indicative of the safety challenges women face. Social activist Tulasi Munda puts the blame on outside interference and impact of commercialisation for making the constituency unsafe, as people of the area are by nature tolerant and respect for women is culturally ingrained.

<sup>29</sup> *Crime in India 2016*, p.147

Table 6.1: Perception on area/village in regard to safety of women

Perception on safety of women	Number	Percent
Very safe	8	2
Safe	360	90
Neither safe nor unsafe	14	3
Unsafe	19	5
Very unsafe	0	0
Total	401	100

### Incidence of Crime

As regards women facing any kind of physical or mental violence, other than domestic violence which has been separately looked into by the study, only 4% out of total sample replied in the positive. This shows that incidence of crime against women is low in the parliamentary constituency.

Table 6.2: Status in regard to women facing crime in general

Crime against women	Number	Percent
Yes	16	4
No	385	96
Total	401	100

### Prevalence and Nature of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has been defined in the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 as 'any act, omission or commission or conduct' that causes 'physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse' of a woman, and 'harasses, harms, injures or endangers' a woman or any person related to her for the purpose of securing 'dowry or other property or valuable security'.<sup>30</sup> Interviews of women revealed that the share of victims of

<sup>30</sup> Section 3, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005



domestic violence is 5% of the total sample. However, interactions with women during FGD and interviews of key informants highlighted high prevalence of domestic violence in the constituency, and most of such cases remain unreported. It is important to note that women were reticent about domestic violence during individual interviews, but were forthcoming to share their experiences during FGD.

Table 6.3: Status in regard to women facing domestic violence

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	22	5
No	379	95
Total	401	100

Relationship between occupation of women and domestic violence, as can be observed in figures in

Table 6.4: Relationship between occupation and domestic violence

Occupation	Domestic violence status			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%age	No.	%age
Anganwadi worker	1	4	12	3
Daily wage labour	7	32	60	16
Farming	1	4	11	3
Housewife	9	42	196	52
Business (tailoring, fish selling etc.)	0	0	31	8
Member of SHG engaged in income generating activities	1	4	7	2
Study	0	0	17	5
Not doing anything	0	0	5	1
ASHA worker	0	0	5	1
Wood collection	0	0	10	3
Others (teaching, politics, mine worker, weaver etc.)	0	0	14	4
No reply	3	14	11	3
Total	22	100	379	100

Table 6.5: Relationship between income and domestic violence

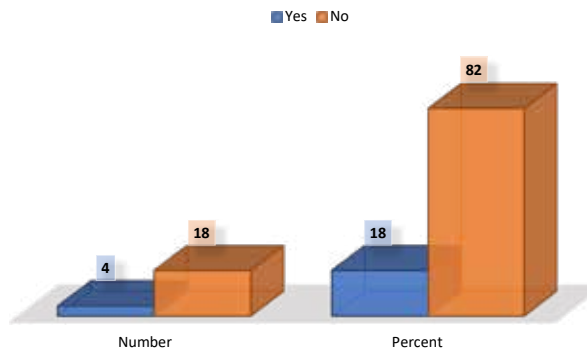
Income	Domestic violence status			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%age	No.	%age
No fixed income	17	77	284	75
₹5000 or less	3	14	85	22
₹5001-10000	1	4.5	7	2
₹10001-20000	0	0	0	0
₹20001-30000	0	0	0	0
₹30001-50000	0	0	0	0
More than ₹50000	0	0	0	0
No reply	1	4.5	3	1
Total	22	100	379	100

following table, shows the housewives as the worst sufferers of domestic violence (42%). Daily wage labourers, with 32% share, are a close second in this regard. Although very less in number, women engaged in anganwadi, farming and SHG-led activities are also victims of domestic violence. These findings imply high vulnerability of women, who are not earning or earning less like housewives and daily wage labour, to domestic violence. Relationship between income of women (income of self) and domestic violence, as observed in the table 6.5, also clearly shows that the higher income results in lower vulnerability to domestic violence. Out of total victims of domestic violence, 77% have no fixed income. While 14% of them earn ₹5000 or less in a month, only one women victim (4.5%) is in the monthly income category of ₹5001-10000.

The hesitation of victims to share their ordeal, as noted earlier could be corroborated from the study finding that only 18% cases of domestic violence were reported to the police or people in family and community. Despite the fact that separate arrangement for dealing of crime against women, like handling of such cases by a woman officer, exists at police station level as in Joda police station, the scenario on the ground remains unchanged. As noted by Mridula Mohanty, Principal, Joda Women's College in Champua Assembly constituency and Tulasi Munda, cases of domestic violence are hardly reported as women consider the crime as fait accompli and they are not mentally prepared to go against their husbands and family members.



Chart 6.1: Status regarding victims of domestic violence reporting to police and others



As regards nature of domestic violence, majority of victims (59%) did not share the details. Out of the remaining, 32% are victims of physical and mental torture and 9% were confined in their houses. Importantly, reluctance to share the nature of domestic violence is a reflection of the acceptance of male chauvinism on the part of women and covert fear the victims have for bringing the matter out in the open which would lower social status of the family.

Table 6.6: Nature of domestic violence faced by women

Nature	Number	Percent
Confinement	2	9
Physical and mental torture	7	32
Do not want to share	13	59
Total	22	100

The extent of reluctance is such that half of victims of domestic violence did not share the reasons of violence with the interviewers. Out of the remaining half, 36% cited alcoholism of husbands and misunderstanding with husbands is the reason in case of 14% victims. The views expressed by the key informants corroborate the reasons for domestic violence shared by women during individual interviews. According to Mridula Mohanty, the academic who lives in Champua Assembly constituency, *handia*- the locally-made liquor is a major cause of increasing domestic violence in the constituency. This was also cited as a major reason by police officers working at the level of police stations. Other contributing factors in this regard are the influence of money in case of some, and lack of education and awareness.

Table 6.7: Reasons for domestic violence faced by women

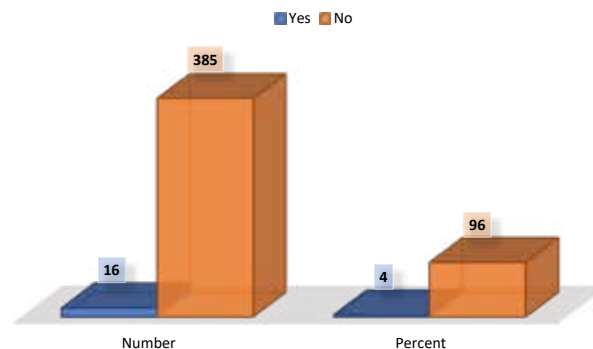
Reasons	Number	Percent
Alcoholic husband	8	36
Misunderstanding with husband	3	14
Do not want to share	11	50
Total	22	100

## Level of Awareness and Reactions to Crime against Women

The prevailing patriarchal social order and cultural practices, which contribute to subordinate position of women in family and in every other sphere of life, get accentuated due to inability of women to counter the critical and disempowering situations. One of the factors that inhibit ability of women to protect their rights is their lack of awareness of laws on rights, safety and security. As the sections above indicate, gender stereotypes are more at work than the power to counter them. Interviews of women show only 4% of the sample are aware of laws that promote their rights, and ensure their safety and security, as the table below shows. Such overwhelming ignorance of laws implies inadequate scope for women to legally redress grievances like domestic violence and other forms of crime that are committed against them.

Interaction with women also found near total absence of any campaign on women's empowerment in the parliamentary constituency, as only 2% women have knowledge of campaign in their areas. The challenge of low level awareness is also magnified due to women's limited educational attainment, as 91% of them are either illiterates or have studied up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

Chart 6.2: Women's awareness of laws on their rights, safety and security



Among the women who are aware of laws on their rights, safety and security, no one is aware of any specific law, as they could not share title of any Act in the domain currently in force. While 69% of aware women know that they have legal and fundamental rights and 31% are aware of laws on divorce, 56% know that there are laws that protect their rights, which indicates awareness of only general nature.

Table 6.8: Laws on women's rights, safety and security that women are aware of

Laws	Number	Percent
Legal and fundamental rights	11	69
Laws on rights of women	9	56
Laws on divorce	5	31

As in case of domestic violence, reaction of women to crime in general is one of indifference as 60% respondents would not react to such incidents in case they face any. While 22% would report the matter to village or community elders, only 10% would report to police and 6% would share it with their family members. There are, however, 2% courageous women who would fight it out without reporting to anyone. In

other words, the share of women who would address the crime through law and order machinery of the State is very negligible.

Infographic 6.1: Reaction of women to crime against women in general



# RIGHT TO LAND

One of the targets of 'Goal 5: Gender Equality' of the SDGs of the United Nations, which came into force in January 2016, is to 'undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.'<sup>31</sup> 'Goal 1: No Poverty' of SDG also deals with land rights to women as it pledges to achieve the target 'By 2030, ... all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, ... ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, ... including microfinance.' Land is an important productive asset and its ownership impacts the lives of women in multiple ways, as research on the issue indicates. According to Shelter Report 2016, aptly titled *Level the Field: Ending Gender Inequality in Land Rights*, published by Habitat for Humanity, USA, ownership of land strengthens women's position and rights in the domains of housing, economic and social empowerment, health and wellbeing of self as well as children, safety and resilience.<sup>32</sup> Quoting Landesa, which works for land rights, the Shelter Report 2016 states that women who own land 'earn up to 3.8 times more income', 'devote more of their (family) budget to education', save money 'up to 35 percent greater', are capable of checking possibility of their children's severe underweight up to 35%, are eight times less likely to experience domestic violence, and can check up to 10% the likelihood of family children falling sick.

Despite its significant impact on empowerment of women, right to ownership of land is severely skewed in favour of men. According to an article, which was part of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, 2017, 'women own less than 20% of the world's land'.<sup>33</sup> The

status of developing countries is worse than the global share. A survey of 34 developing nations, noted in the above article, by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization puts the share of women's ownership of land at only 10 percent. Despite contribution of women to the world's food supply, as more than 400 million women are engaged in the farm sector, they do not enjoy 'equal rights to own land in more than 90 countries'.<sup>34</sup>

The situation in India is no better, as data on land ownership in general and ownership in favour of women in particular indicate. According to the Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011, 56.41% households in rural India do not own any land.<sup>35</sup> According to the Agriculture Census 2010-11, Indian women operate 12.78% of total operational holdings that include 10.34% of the total operational holdings of the country.<sup>36</sup> The average size of land holding of women is 0.93 ha, as compared to 1.18 ha for men and 1.15 ha. for all.<sup>37</sup> There is, however, significant regional variations in size of landholding by women as indicated in an index developed recently by a management consulting group.<sup>38</sup> According to the index, only 12.9% Indian women hold land on average. While averages for southern and northeastern states are 15.4% and 14.1% respectively, the corresponding figures for northern and eastern states are 9.8% and 9.2% respectively.

The present scenario in terms of ownership of land is, therefore, heavily skewed in favour of males

31 <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-5-gender-equality/targets/>. Retrieved on 25 May 2018

32 Shelter Report 2016. *Level the Field: Ending Gender Inequality in Land Rights*. Habitat for Humanity (Atlanta, USA). Available at <https://www.habitat.org/sites/default/files/shelter-report-2016.pdf>. Retrieved on 31 May 2018

33 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/women-own-less-than-20-of-the-worlds-land-its-time-to-give-them-equal-property-rights/>. Retrieved on 31 May 2018

34 Ibid

35 <http://secc.gov.in/statewiseLandOwnershipReport?report-Type=Land%20Ownership>. Retrieved on 31 May 2018

36 Agriculture Census 2010-11, p.6. Available at <http://agcensus.nic.in/document/agcensus2010/completereport.pdf>. Retrieved on 31 May 2018

37 Ibid. p.59

38 The index has been developed by the Centre for Land Governance of NR Management Consultants by using data on operational holdings from the Agriculture Census of 2011, the share of adult women owning agricultural land from the Indian Human Development Survey of 2011-12, the share of women-headed households owning land from the Socio Economic Caste Census of 2011, and the share of women owning house and/or land (alone or jointly) from the National Family Health Survey of 2015-16. Available at [https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/more-women-in-southern-states-hold-land-than-rest-of-india-reveals-survey-118022000139\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/more-women-in-southern-states-hold-land-than-rest-of-india-reveals-survey-118022000139_1.html). Retrieved on 31 May 2018.

despite substantial contribution of women to Indian agriculture.<sup>39</sup> The sections below contain the status Kendujhar parliamentary constituency in this regard.

## Ownership of Land by Families

Out of the total sample, families of 87% women own land and the remaining 13% are landless families. While 13% families have only residential land, the remaining families own both agricultural and residential land. The share of families having commercial land is nil.

Table 7.1: Families owning land

Land ownership	Number	Percent
Yes	348	87
No	53	13
Total	401	100

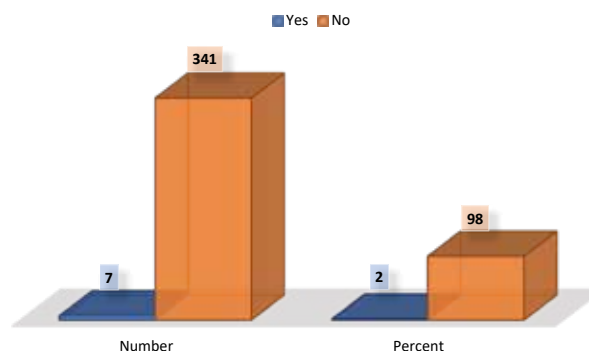
Table 7.2: Type of land owned by families

Type of land	Number	Percent
Only residential	44	13
Both agricultural and residential	304	87
Commercial	0	0
Total	348	100

## Women with Ownership of Land

In 87% families which own land, ownership lies almost entirely in the names of male members, except 2% families which have women as owners of land. This is much less than the share of women who hold ownership of land at the all-India level (12.9%).

Chart 7.1: Women as owners of land



Interviews of women also revealed that only 3 women (1%) have received land in form of gift during

marriage. Even ownership of this gifted land lies not with the women, but with their husbands or other family members.

Table 7.3: Land received by women as gift during marriage

Status	Number	Percent
Yes	3	1
No	336	96
Not applicable	9	3
Total	348	100

## Awareness on Land Ownership Rights

The study found that very few women (only 5%) out of total sample are aware of the legal rights and remedies in regard to land ownership. Of those who are aware, 55% could not specify the legal right that they are aware of. While 45% know about their right to buy and sell land, 40% of them are aware that they have the right to own land. With such high degree of lack of awareness, which is also a reflection of the low level of education and exposure to knowledge, women cannot be expected to have higher level of ownership of land. In a situation like this, even the land gifted to women at the time of marriage is not under their ownership.

Chart 7.2: Women's awareness of legal rights and remedies regarding land ownership

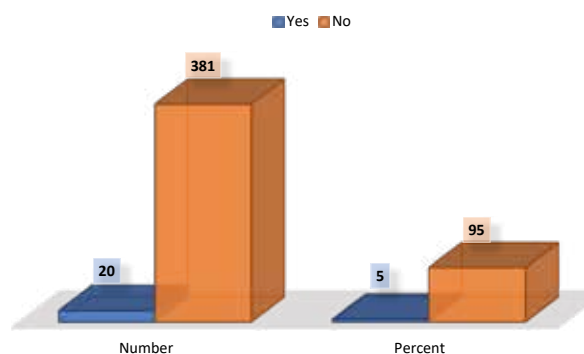


Table 7.4: Legal rights and remedies on land ownership that women are aware of

Laws	Number	Percent
Legal right (not specified)	11	55
Right to buy and sell land	9	45
Right to ownership	8	40
Not specified	3	15

<sup>39</sup> According to Census of India 2011 data, the share of female agricultural labourers to total workers is 41.1%, and female cultivators constitute 24% of the total workers.

Not just lack of awareness and education, the patriarchal social order is also largely responsible for women's deprivation of land ownership, although laws and amendments indicate progress towards gender equality in this regard. Following amendment of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, which governs succession of property among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, in 2005, daughters now have same right like sons to inherit parental property including land. Under Section 14 of the Act, women who have ownership can transfer the land to persons of their choices, and Section 24 deals with inheritance of husband's property by a widow till she remarries. According to the Muslim Personal Law, a wife or a widow is entitled to one-fourth of her husband's property and one-eighth in case of joint family. It also says that a daughter is entitled to half of her parental property if she has no brother. But a male heir receives double of what a female heir receives. A Muslim mother also has right over her son's property. The Indian Succession Act, 1925, under which the issue of inheritance for Christians is governed, prescribes for equal inheritance for both males and females, and a widow receives one-third share of her husband's estate.

Notwithstanding the prescriptions of law in regard to inheritance, denial of ownership of property to women is endemic in Indian society. According to a study conducted by UN Women in India in collaboration with Landesa, the barriers to women's ownership of land are not just inadequate legal awareness, but obscurantist social norms and attitudes, lack of recognition to women's land ownership by religious and village leaders, and cumbersome process of property documentation.<sup>40</sup> Keeping in view the macro scenario in the country in regard to women's ownership of land and the position of women in this regard in the constituency, land can hardly be considered as a tool for women's empowerment in Kendujhar parliamentary constituency.

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<sup>40</sup> *Challenges and Barriers to Women's Entitlement to Land in India*, UN Women (2012). Available at [http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20easia/docs/publications/2015/southasia/reportstudies/o6\\_economic%20empowerment/landesa\\_un%20pdf.ashx?la=en](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20easia/docs/publications/2015/southasia/reportstudies/o6_economic%20empowerment/landesa_un%20pdf.ashx?la=en). Retrieved on 30 May 2018.

# CONCLUSIONS

While the status of women in the parliamentary constituency presents disempowering dynamics in the context of six domains of study namely education, health, social status and personal freedom, economic condition, safety, and land right; there are some enabling indicators that highlight the progress of women in the direction of empowerment. The conclusions presented below have been arrived at

keeping in view the dynamics on the ground and the interpretation of legislative intents, which play a crucial role in shaping women's empowerment. Since this is the first research under Project Gargi, some aspects of analysis and interpretation will be dealt with in subsequent studies, which will be shaped keeping in view the lessons and conclusions of this study.

## Status of Implementation of Specified Laws on The Ground

The table below presents some important Indian laws pertaining to empowerment of women, their key provisions, and the status of women on the ground keeping in view the prescriptions of laws.

Laws	Key provisions	Status on the ground
Minimum Wages Act, 1946	Enjoins upon the government to fix minimum wages payable to employees, and prescribes for payment of wages at a rate not less than the minimum wage.  The Act also prescribes punishment in the form of imprisonment of up to six months or fine or both for paying less than the minimum wage.	With only 3% women each in the daily wage categories of 'more than `300-400' and 'more than `700-1000' and the remaining women earning ₹250 or less in a day, violation of the Act is nearly complete.
Equal Remuneration Act, 1976	Payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work or work of a similar nature  Prevention of discrimination while recruiting men and women workers	Women of the constituency mostly receive less daily wage than men for performing the same work.
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	Defines dowry as 'any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly' for solemnising a marriage  Prescribes penalty for giving or taking and demanding dowry. It also bans on advertisement that promotes dowry in the name of marriage.	The practice exists in the constituency, as interactions with key informants reveal.
Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971	Allows termination of pregnancies by registered medical practitioners under the following conditions:  length of pregnancy does not exceed 12 weeks or exceeds 12 weeks but not 20 weeks, and the continuation of pregnancy would cause risk to life of pregnant woman or her physical or mental health and chances of physical or mental abnormalities in the child after birth.	Termination of pregnancy due to the conditions noted in the Act is an extreme rarity in the constituency. Only one such case could be found among all the cases of abortion.
Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987	Prescribes punishment for attempting to commit sati, abetting sati and glorifying the practice.	This is not practiced in the constituency.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005	Defines domestic violence as ‘any act, omission or commission or conduct’ that causes ‘physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse’ of a woman, and ‘harasses, harms, injures or endangers’ a woman or any person related to her for the purpose of securing ‘dowry or other property or valuable security’	While the prevalence of domestic violence is high in the constituency, women often do not admit it in the public due to fear of lowering the status of family, and their acceptance of male chauvinism.
Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006	<p>The Act makes child marriage void, and prescribes for maintenance and residence to female contracting party to child marriage.</p> <p>It prescribes punishment for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• male adult marrying a child</li> <li>• solemnizing child marriage</li> <li>• promoting or permitting solemnization of child marriage</li> </ul>	Child marriage is practiced in the constituency, as 33% women were married off before completing 18 years of age. People in general consider child marriage acceptable.

## Education

The reach of education among women is grossly inadequate in Kendujhar parliamentary constituency, as 91% respondents are either illiterates or have studied up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard. However, the younger respondents of below 18 years of age have better access to education than older women- those in the age group of 46 years or above are mostly illiterates or have studied only up to higher secondary level. In view of the interventions like mid-day meal scheme, better school infrastructure etc. and enactment of RTE Act, dropout rate of girls has substantially come down.

## Health

Notwithstanding the progress in some healthcare indicators, women of the constituency face multiple challenges in the domain of healthcare. Underage motherhood is not considered unacceptable in the predominantly tribal society, as the study found that 16% women became mothers before completing 18 years of age. Facilities and services like access to modern methods of family planning, access to healthcare during first trimester, and postnatal care within 48 hours of childbirth are not available (in the range of one-fourth to one-third) to all those who need them. Expectant mothers are a vulnerable lot as institutional delivery is a reality only in case of little over 50% women. Although government healthcare services are accessed by women overwhelmingly, their faith in superstition and black magic is also high. There are also gaps in the services of *anganwadis* and ASHA. In regard to household sanitation and water, gaps are more visible and disempowering for women

as over 50% houses have no toilets, and 38% houses have no independent source of water. Women of the constituency do not enjoy their reproductive rights as could be observed from high incidence of unwanted pregnancies, and abortions happening mostly due to reasons other than health in violation of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.

## Social Status and Personal Freedom

Although Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 makes child marriage in the country illegal and punishable, it is not considered so by people of the parliamentary constituency in general, as 33% women in the sample were married off before they completed 18 years of age- a reflection of people's low level of education, cultural practices and social system. More women enjoy freedom to visit public places and relatives, an important barometer of empowerment, than those who do not; and social ban on women like widow, barren etc. is almost non-existent. Discriminatory practices like son preference, preferential treatment of boys in matter of education, and non-consideration of views of girls on their marriage exist in the society, although their supporters are less in number. However, acceptance of black magic or witchcraft is quite high in the constituency. While political participation is very high in the constituency, inability of more than two-third of the registered voters to choose the right candidate shows their inadequate understanding of the political dynamics. Empowerment of women is also constricted in regard to household decision making, as two-third of the sample have no say in deciding household matters.



## Economic Status

Occupations of women, who are mostly housewives or are engaged in daily wage labour, wood collection, anganwadi workers, tailoring, fishing etc., shows that nearly all of them are into activities that do not have potential for high income. With no one earning more than ₹10000 a month and three-fourth having no fixed income, inability of women to earn a decent income and become financially independent is clearly evident. Although skill development training is closely linked to empowerment, women of the constituency are overwhelmingly (90%) deprived in this regard. They are also deprived of a decent daily wage (91% earn ₹250 or less daily, of which 58% earn ₹150 or less), which is much less than the minimum wage fixed by the government- a violation of the Minimum Wages Act, 1946. Women are also paid less than men for performing the same work, which is not only a violation of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 but also discriminatory and disempowering. Even if over half of the sample have availed credit for economic enterprises, it may not empower women as very few seem to have utilized credit for the intended purpose. The process of financial inclusion of women in the constituency is incomplete- 42% still do not have bank accounts. However, operational status of bank accounts indicates regular access, which is a positive sign of empowerment. Penetration of the government programmes like PMAY, MGNREGA, old age pension, widow pension etc. which accrue economic and other benefits to women is hardly satisfactory as two-third of the sample have not availed any of these benefits.

## Safety

Notwithstanding the overwhelming perception of women that shows areas and villages as safe for them, and low incidence of crime against women; there is an increasing latent concern in the minds of some about safety of women due to rising incidence of chain snatching, physical attack etc. Domestic violence is a reality in the constituency, although very few women replied in affirmative as they consider it as fait accompli and are not mentally prepared to go against their husbands and families. Alcoholism is an important reason for domestic violence, besides misunderstanding with husbands, influence of money, and lack of education and awareness. Women are overwhelmingly ignorant of laws that promote their rights, and ensure their safety and security. This is indicative of the inadequate scope for women to legally redress grievances like domestic violence and other types of crime. Besides inadequate education, near total absence of any campaign on women's empowerment contributes to their ignorance of laws.

## Right to Land

In India, ownership of land is heavily skewed in favour of males although women's contribution to agriculture is substantial. While land owning families are low in the constituency, share of women who own land is very low (only 2%). In view of their lack of awareness about rights and legal remedies, low level of education and patriarchal social order, women cannot be expected to have higher level of ownership of land. Considering the socio-economic context and possession of land by very few women, land can hardly be considered as a tool for women's empowerment in the parliamentary constituency.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following measures which would address the disabling factors faced by women of Kendujhar parliamentary constituency that preclude gender justice and women's empowerment. The recommendations have been categorised keeping in view the six indicators of empowerment that the study looked into and the priorities of women that emerged as a result of analysis of data.

## Education

There is a need to promote higher education in the constituency, which is a logical progression for development of education. As enrolment of girls at primary level is very high and dropout rate is very low, the focus should increasingly move towards retaining them at higher grade level. This is especially because most of these girls are first generation learners with limited scope for receiving inducements for education from family members and presence of factors like poverty, inadequate learning space at home etc. that have the potential for dissuading them from pursuing higher education.

## Health

The healthcare services in general and maternal healthcare in particular should be more effective and efficient in the constituency in order to ensure easy and total access to these services by all women. The focus should especially be on making essential and critical services like healthcare during first trimester, postnatal care within 48 hours of childbirth etc. available to all those who need them. There is a need for administrative authorities and people's representatives at various levels to work in unison to address the gaps in household sanitation, water, healthcare, reproductive rights of women etc., and other challenges like underage pregnancy. Concerted actions for strengthening programmatic reach and campaigns for changes in attitudes and thoughts hold the key to better healthcare and empowerment.

## Social Status and Personal Freedom

As Kendujhar is a predominantly rural and tribal constituency, the challenges that its women face in

the domains of social status and personal freedom like child marriage, discriminatory practices against girls and women, faith in black magic etc. require effective grassroots-level campaigns for social change. Three key stakeholders namely people's representatives, governmental administration, and civil society and non-governmental organizations should join hands for this purpose with the Member of Parliament playing the lead role in organising the campaigns periodically.

## Economic Status

Economic empowerment is not possible unless opportunities for income are created through building productive assets base, removing anomalies like denial of minimum wage, and imparting training on appropriate skills keeping in view the locally available resources, potential for market linkage and scope for women's participation in the training. There is an immediate and strong need to stop violation of the Minimum Wages Act, 1946 and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, which will result in increase of income of women. This will be possible by making people aware of the laws and implementing the provisions of laws through appropriate administrative and enforcement initiatives. Banks and financial institutions of the constituency should also be more proactive for making the process of financial inclusion of women as complete as possible. The Member of Parliament and governmental administration at district and block levels should ensure maximum reach of development programmes in the constituency. The gap in implementation needs to be filled with focus on women in remote areas who are usually left out and feel disempowered.

## Safety

Domestic violence and challenges to safety of women in general require adoption of multi-pronged approach that should have elements of action and advocacy with the intent for sustainable change. These initiatives require concerned stakeholders viz. people's representatives, administration, and civil society and non-governmental organisations to join hands for interventions at the grassroots. Since

challenges to safety of women have their roots in factors like economic condition, alcoholism, lack of awareness of laws etc., there is a strong need to implement targeted interventions for each of the causes with focus on participation of women and concerned citizens, which should be ensured by the three stakeholders noted above.

## Right to Land

Keeping in view very low share of women with ownership of land, the administration should look into the scope of giving ownership right to women either solely or jointly with any other family member. The possibility of distributing surplus land, if available, to women members of households may also be considered by the administration. There is a strong need to make women aware of their right to ownership of land and available legal remedies in case their right is violated. This can be possible by

launching periodic campaigns by the administration, civil society and non-governmental organisations of the constituency.

## Awareness of Laws

Campaigns for legal awareness should be launched in the constituency for each of the six domains of women's empowerment with a view to making women aware of the prescriptions of laws and the remedies that they can avail for their development and for getting their grievances redressed. The lead role in this regard should be played by the Member of Parliament of Kendujhar Constituency with the active participation of administration at various levels. These campaigns will result in gradual decrease of violations of laws, increase in level of women's legal awareness, administrative responsiveness, better access to services and facilities, and social and economic empowerment of women of the constituency.

## ANNEXURE

# RESEARCH TOOLS

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WOMEN

PROJECT GARGI- A STUDY OF KENDUJHAR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, ODISHA

Conducted by Policy Perspectives Foundation, New Delhi

Respondent No.:

#### 1. SURVEY DATA

Name of Assembly Constituency in Kendujhar: .....

Name of respondent (Optional): .....

Village: .....

Telephone/Mobile No. (Optional): .....

Panchayat: .....

#### 2. GENERAL DATA

2.1. Age (in completed years): .....

2.2. Marital Status: 1. Unmarried 2. Married 3. Separated/ divorced 4. Widow

2.3. Social group: 1. Scheduled Castes 2. Scheduled Tribes 3. Other Backward Classes 4. General

2.4. Number of members in family: .....

2.5. Religion: 1. Hindu 2. Muslim 3. Christian 4. Others (specify): .....

#### 3. EDUCATION

3.1. Your Education: 1. Illiterate 2. Primary (Class I-V) 3. Secondary (Class VI-X)  
4. Higher secondary (Class XI-XII) 5. Graduation 6. Post Graduation & above

3.2. What is the distance of the nearest primary school from your residence?

1. Half a km. or less 2. More than half to 1 km. 3. More than 1 to 2 km.  
4. More than 2 km. to 3 5. More than 3 to 4 km. 6. More than 4 km.

3.3. Does your family have any girl of school going age (6-15 years) who has never gone to school?

1. Yes 2. No

3.4. If yes to q. n. 3.3, give reasons for the same: .....

.....

3.5 Does your family have any girl who has dropped out of school? 1. Yes 2. No

3.6. If yes to q. n. 3.5, give reasons for the same: .....

.....

- 3.7. Does the nearest school have toilet for girls? 1. Yes 2. No
- 3.8. Does the nearest school have water facility? 1. Yes 2. No
- 3.9. Is mid-day meal provided in the nearest school? 1. Yes 2. No
- 3.10. Keeping in view the kind of infrastructure (i.e. toilet, water facility, furniture, meal etc.) the nearest school has, do you think the available facilities deter girls from attending the school? 1. Yes 2. No

#### 4. HEALTH

- 4.1. Are you a mother? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.2. If yes to q. n. 4.1, what was your age when the first child was born: ..... (In completed years)
- 4.3. If yes to q. n. 4.1, had you registered in a health facility in your 1<sup>st</sup> trimester? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.4. If yes to q. n. 4.1, had you received postnatal care within 48 hours of childbirth? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.5. If married, is any modern method for family planning/birth control used in family? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.6. Indicate the place and nature of childbirth/delivery. 1. Delivery at home with skilled attendant  
2. Delivery at home without skilled attendant 3. Institutional delivery
- 4.7. Where do you go for normal treatment? 1. Govt. hospital/dispensary 2. Village doctor  
3. Private hospital/dispensary 4. Quack 5. Others: .....
- 4.8. Do you enjoy the freedom to decide matters regarding your personal health? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.9. Have you benefitted from the outreach activities of ASHA/anganwadi workers? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.10. Do you have toilet in your house? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.11. Do you feel the necessity of toilet? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.12. Does your family have independent water source? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.13. If no to q. n. 4.12, please share the inconveniences caused due to **not having** independent water source.  
1. Procuring water from a distance causes inconvenience for women  
2. No inconveniences caused 3. Results in occasional quarrel and conflict  
4. Others (Specify) .....
- 4.14. Does anyone from the family help you in procuring water to home? 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.15. If yes to q.n. 4.14, who in your family helps in procuring water? .....
- 4.16. Have you ever resorted to abortion 1. Yes 2. No
- 4.17. If yes to q. n. 4.15, what was the preferred method to abort? 1. Dhai 2. Surgical Abortion  
3. Medical abortion in hospital/home 4. Others (specify): .....
- 4.18. If yes to q. n. 4.13, please share the reason for the same: .....  
.....

## 5. SOCIAL STATUS AND PERSONAL FREEDOM

5.1. If married, your age at the time of marriage: ..... (in completed years) *leave blank if unmarried*

5.2. Please share the nature of freedom that you enjoy in regard to visiting different places.

1. Have the freedom to visit market, health centre, community events etc. unescorted
2. Does not have freedom to visit market, health centre, community events etc. alone
3. Allowed to visit relatives alone    4. Not allowed to visit relatives alone

5.3. Is there any social ban on you as a woman for visiting certain places?    1. Yes    2. No

5.4. If yes to q. n. 5.3., please share the names of banned places: .....  
.....

5.5. Is there any restrictions in your society towards widow, barren or any other specific women to temples and other specific places?

1. Yes    2. No

5.6. If yes to q. n. 5.5, please elaborate the nature of restrictions: .....  
.....

5.7. Please share your view in regard to the practice of 'son preference'.

1. Exists in our society
2. Exists in my family
3. Does not exist in society
4. Does not exist in my family

5.8. Does your family give preference to education of boys over girls?    1. Yes    2. No

5.9. Do girls in your family have a say in matters of marriage (selection of groom, age of marriage etc.)?

1. Girls have substantial say    2. Only marginal say    3. No say in decision making

5.10. Are widows allowed to participate in religious and family events like marriage, festivals etc.?

1. Yes    2. No

5.11. Is there any practice of magic, witchcraft in your village/area?    1. Yes    2. No

5.12. If yes to q. n. 5.11, do you participate in those activities?    1. Yes    2. No

5.13. Are you a registered voter?    1. Yes    2. No

5.14. Do you vote?    1. Yes    2. No

5.15. While voting, how to you decide to whom to vote?

1. Follow the decision of family/husband    2. Decide independently

5.16. Do you participate in household decision making process? 1. Yes 2. No

5.17. If yes to q. n. 5.16, please indicate the household matters for which your views are considered. (multiple answers possible)

1. Health 2. Education 3. Finance 4. Marriage 5. All of them

5. Others (specify): .....

## 6. ECONOMIC CONDITION

6.1. Monthly income of self: 1. No fixed income 2. ₹5000 or less 3. ₹5001-10000 4. ₹10001-20000  
5. ₹20001-30000 6. ₹30001-50000 7. More than ₹50000

6.2. Monthly family income: 1. No fixed income 2. ₹5000 or less 3. ₹5001-10000 4. ₹10001-20000  
5. ₹20001-30000 6. ₹30001-50000 7. More than ₹50000

6.3. Have you received any vocational/ skill development training? 1. Yes 2. No

6.4. If yes to q. no. 6.3, please name the vocation/skill: .....

6.5. Your occupation: .....

6.6. If you are a daily wager, how much is your **daily wage** (in Rupees)? ₹ .....

6.7. Please tell the amount of **daily wage** received by males for the same work: ₹ .....

6.8. Have you availed (micro) credit for any economic enterprise? 1. Yes 2. No

6.9. Please indicate the source of (micro) credit? 1. Bank, cooperative credit society etc.  
2. Private money lenders 3. Friends & relatives 4. Others (specify): .....

6.10. Do you have a bank account? 1. Yes 2. No

6.11. When was the last transaction (deposit, withdrawal etc.) made in your bank account?

1. Few hours ago 2. A month ago or less 3. More than a month to 6 months ago  
5. More than 6 months to 1 year ago 6. Over a year ago 7. Cannot recall

6.12. Do you have any savings for post-retirement use? 1. Yes 2. No

6.13. Are you a beneficiary of any government scheme/programme? 1. Yes 2. No

6.14. If yes to q. n. 6.12, please indicate the name of the scheme/programme: .....

## 7. SAFETY

7.1. How would you view your area/village in regard to safety of women?  
1. Very safe 2. Safe 3. Neither safe nor unsafe 4. Unsafe 5. Very unsafe

7.2. Have you faced any kind of crime (physical or mental or emotional)? 1. Yes 2. No

7.3. Are you a victim of (domestic) violence perpetrated by someone in your family? 1. Yes 2. No

7.4. If yes to q. n. 7.2 or 7.3, have you reported the crime to anyone like police? 1. Yes 2. No



- 7.5. Please elaborate the nature of violence faced by you: .....
- .....
- 7.6. If you are a victim of domestic violence, please elaborate the reasons for the same: .....
- .....
- 7.7. If you are a victim of domestic violence, share your reactions to crime: .....
- .....
- 7.8. How would you react to crime against women in general?
1. Report to police
  2. Fight it out
  3. Report to family members
  4. Report to village/community elder
  5. Not react/report
  6. Others (specify): .....
- 7.9. Are you aware of any campaign run in your area on women's empowerment, domestic violence etc.?
1. Yes
  2. No
- 7.10. If you are a victim of domestic violence, have you sought help from any NGO or activist on the matter?
1. Yes
  2. No
- 7.11. Are you aware of any law(s) that support rights, safety and security of women in India?
1. Yes
  2. No
- 7.12. If yes to q. n. 7.11, please shares names of such laws: .....
- .....

## 8. LAND RIGHT

- 8.1. Does your family own any land? 1. Yes    2. No
- 8.2. If yes to q. n. 8.1., what is the type of land your family owns?
1. Only residential
  2. Both agricultural and residential
  3. Commercial
- 8.3. Are you the sole owner of the land? 1. Yes    2. No
- 8.4. Have you been gifted land during marriage? 1. Yes    2. No    3. Not applicable
- 8.5. If yes to q. n. 8.4, who owns the gifted land? 1. Solely by you    2. Solely by your husband
3. Jointly by you and your husband
  4. Others (specify): .....
- 8.6. Do you own any household assets? 1. Yes    2. No
- 8.7. Are you aware of the legal rights and remedies regarding ownership of land? 1. Yes    2. No

8.8. If yes to q. n. 8.7, please elaborate the legal rights and remedies: .....

.....

.....

Date:

(Signature of interviewer)

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)

PROJECT GARGI- A STUDY OF KENDUJHAR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, ODISHA

Conducted by Policy Perspectives Foundation, New Delhi

Respondent No.:

### 1. SURVEY DATA

Name of respondent: .....

Designation: .....

Name of Village/ Department/NGO/Panchayat: .....

Telephone/Mobile No. (optional): .....

### 2. EDUCATION

2.1. School enrolment rate for girls: ..... (to be asked to officials dealing with education)

2.2. School dropout rate for girls: ..... (to be asked to officials dealing with education)

2.3. School retention rate for girls: ..... (to be asked to officials dealing with education)

2.4. Schools with separate toilets for women (%): ..... (to be asked to officials dealing with education)

2.5. Schools without toilets for women (%): ..... (to be asked to officials dealing with education)

2.6. Please share key details of the schemes for promotion of education, vocational training and remedial education in Kendujhar:

.....  
.....

2.7. What are the challenges to promotion of women's education in Kendujhar?

.....  
.....

2.8. Suggest measures for promotion of women's education in the PC

.....  
.....

### 3. HEALTH

3.1. Share your views on status of women's health in Kendujhar (key focus may be on maternal health/mortality, women's access to healthcare services etc.)

.....  
.....

- 3.2. Healthcare challenges in the PC (key focus may be on healthcare infrastructure, rural and urban scenario, health of tribal and marginalized women)

.....

.....

#### 4. SOCIAL STATUS AND PERSONAL FREEDOM

- 4.1. Please highlight conditions of women in general with focus on social customs, traditions, taboos etc. that inhibit/hinder women's empowerment

.....

.....

- 4.2. Please highlight women's participation in political process (representation in panchayats, voting, awareness of political rights etc.)

.....

.....

- 4.3. What is the extent of women's participation in activities of grassroots-level NGOs, anganwadi etc.?

.....

.....

- 4.4. Status in regard to women's access to development entitlements under different programmes of government

.....

.....

#### 5. ECONOMIC CONDITION

- 5.1. Your views on economic condition of women in general (focus can be on women in informal & formal sectors of economy, occupations of tribal women, extent of destitution among women, women's contribution to economy etc.)

.....

.....

.....

- 5.2. Level of women's access to vocational training, entrepreneurship, self help groups (SHGs), micro credit etc.

.....

.....

.....

## 6. SAFETY

6.1. How safe are women in Kendujhar? Please substantiate your answer with data and real life examples.

.....

.....

.....

6.2. Please comment on status of domestic violence in the PC. Are women forthcoming in reporting this crime?

.....

.....

6.3. Are you aware of any past or on-going campaign or activities against domestic violence in the PC?  
Elaborate

.....

.....

.....

## 7. LAND RIGHT

7.1. How important is ownership of land to women's empowerment?

.....

7.2. Are you aware of any communities in Kendujhar that are known for giving priority to women's ownership of land? Please elaborate your answer

.....

.....

7.3. Please share data in regard to women's ownership of land in the PC? (to be asked to block or district level government officials)

.....

.....

Date:

(Signature of interviewer)

## FORMAT FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

With victims of domestic violence and other crime against women

PROJECT GARGI- A STUDY OF KENDUJHAR PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, ODISHA

Conducted by Policy Perspectives Foundation, New Delhi

**Instructions:** Focus Group Discussions (FGD) will be conducted in an informal and interactive environment. Each FGD will have participation of 5 to 10 victims of domestic violence and other crime against women. This can be organized with the help of local NGOs, police or welfare department at block and district level which are working with such women, as they would help in locating the targeted women.

We should conduct 2 to 3 FGDs with women of the above category.

### Key Areas for Discussion

- ✓ Level of education and women's empowerment
- ✓ Reasons for domestic violence/ other crime against women
- ✓ Women's reaction to domestic violence/other crime (acceptance, rejection or counter action)
- ✓ Challenges to women's safety in general (focus of discussion may be on unemployment, ideological extremism, social customs, traditions, taboos etc.)
- ✓ Support to women from government and NGOs
- ✓ Women's position/freedom in family and community/society
- ✓ Women's participation in economic activities, contribution to family income, extent of their economic dependency
- ✓ Views on women's ownership of land (present status) and its bearing on empowerment

The above is an open-ended list. New areas may come up for discussion during the course of discussion.



*Note*

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*Note*

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*Note*

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K-51, First Floor, Green Park Main, New Delhi- 110016, India