



## AUTONOMY & DECISION MAKING ROLE OF TRIBAL (KANDHA) WOMEN: - A STUDY OF KANDHAMAL DISTRICT OF ODISHA

### ABSTRACT

*The present paper studies about the Autonomy & decision making role of tribal (Kandha) women in their process of participation & empowerment in PRIs. It analyses the effectiveness of tribal women's participation in PRI affairs & their capability of decision making in a most tribal populated, underdeveloped & backward area of Odisha State. The sample size of the study is 286 (ST) out of the total 572 ST women representatives of the three tiers PRIs of Kandhamal District of Odisha. The Study shows that poverty, economic dependence, socio-cultural constraints, lack of education, knowledge, awareness, patriarchy, hostile attitude of PR Bureaucracy, male members, restriction on freedom of movement of women representatives severely limits their autonomy & decision making role in PRIs of the Kandhamal District.*

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**KEY WORDS:** *Kandha Women, Decision Making, Autonomy, Political Participation, Empowerment, Leadership, Panchayat Raj, Gender Disparities.*

### INTRODUCTION

Political participation of women is the pre-condition of socio-economic development and enrichment of the quality of life in the society. It is an unavoidable fact that rural / tribal women are struggling hard to attain space in the political arena. Women participation, therefore, is recognized as a catalyst in the process of change. It is proposed to study the nature, types and forms of women participation in the new setup of Panchayati Raj working in the most tribal backward District of Odisha. Realizing the significance of women participation both central and state government have implemented various innovative and women friendly programmes, plans and policies for political participation and development of women in the tribal area.

In the meantime, there has been a considerable change in the situation due to enactment of 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Indian

Constitution in 1992. The Act is likely to usher in a new mass awakening and upsurge in the political scene of rural India. The Amendment Act has introduced some innovative, progressive and bold provisions in matters of enhanced statutory representation to women, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. Together with other provisions, the Act is likely to become a catalytic agent in the social and political transformation of the rural India. It has evaluated women's awareness, participation in different activities and their ability to take decisions in public affairs. The reservation of women at the grassroot level has reflected the growing participation of these sections changing the political pattern at the village level, enhanced and strengthened the political status of women.

This is indeed a welcome gesture for we can not make democracy successful in a traditional society, like ours, without full involvement of women.



The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment has definitely empowered rural women in terms of numbers. The minuscule figure of 2-4 percent has been increased to 33-40 percent rural women into decision making process. Mere increase in number does not guarantee any radical change in the status of rural/tribal women. Still the male dominance, patriarchy, caste, class discrimination, illiteracy, deep rooted cultural beliefs affects participation of women. Amidst such social and cultural constraints, it becomes important to study the nature and effectiveness with which women members are able to participate in the 3 tier PRIs.

In a democratic society the political participation and development of women is as much important as of men. It is a growing realization among the developing countries that the more the political participation of women the greater is the degree of socio-economic development. It may lead to an assumption that the more the political participation of the women the greater the effective democratic governance and performance.

The study is based on the researcher's own micro-level study on women's participation at PRIs of Kandhamal District. The main inferences of the study indicate that women's political participation is largely less than their participation in other activities of life. The masses of tribal and rural women, who present the majority of women in our country, spend most of their time in the grim "Struggle for Survival" they have little time and resources to participate in the public affairs. Further- more, their status in society, their level of literacy and awareness of their right as well as their limited knowledge about Panchayati Raj Institutions account for their low participation and political development.

### RESEARCH PROBLEM

Past research shows that Global Participation of women has gained lot of impetus there by plans, policies & programmes are designed & implemented at all level of State affairs to enhance the status & to empower the women in general & the rural tribal women in particular. It is observed that tribal women are capable of shouldering political leadership position & have great potential to take independent decision in managing PRIs. Still then it is seen that the goal to empower tribal women in tribal area is not yet foolproof.

In tribal society women are said to be doubly burdened - being women & tribal too. Their status is

determined by level of education awareness, income earning, health & control of resources. Despite they are the perennial source of breeder & feeder of tribal economy; they face numerous challenges in & outside their family. A general perception that to what extent these factors influence their political participation & autonomy in decision making process of the PRIs. Above all raising the status of tribal women is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic one. The strategy for tribal women's development within the frame work of democratic policy has been the major thrust of our govt. in recent periods. In an era of globalization, autonomy & empowerment of tribal women has been recognized as a central issue in determining their status.

### AIMS & OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to investigate the political participation & Autonomy of Tribal (Kandha) women's role in the decision making process of the PRIs. The study aims to explore how far participation of tribal women in PRIs facilitates them to take independent decision in PRIs? Is the process of political participation is inclusive & empowering? Does formal participation means actual representation of Kandha women? On this backdrop one micro study has been undertaken in Kandhamal district, on the basis its huge tribal population, underdeveloped & backwardness for further investigation. In this context it is imperative to know in detail the patterns of political participation of Kandha women, their leadership quality, behavior perceptions & host of other related issue.

### Major objective of the study

- i) To examine the dynamics of Kandha women's Political Participation & effects on their decision making process.
- ii) To examine why the tribal Kandha women are participating? How they are participating.
- iii) To examine the relation between PRIs & Political Participation with regard to participation in meeting, raise of voices and participation in development programs.
- iv) To explore the extent to which the decision making role of the tribal Kandha women is affected by their socio-economic status.
- v) To make a comparative note on decision making role of Kandha women & non-tribal women.

- vi) To find out the factors promoting & hindering the Kandha women's effective Political Participation & independent decision making process.
- vii) To suggest strategy for their effective role in the decision making process.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research questions of the present study are:-

- i) How far tribal community particularly the Kandha community allows autonomy to their women.
- ii) What is the role of socio-economic factor on decision making role of the Kandha women?
- iii) Is there any difference between tribal & non-tribal women in the context of Political Participation & autonomy?

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study is empirical in nature & based on the election data of the elected women leaders of the 3 tier PRIs of the Kandhamal District of Odisha 23012-2017. The researcher adopted the case study method & collected data by method of survey, questionnaires, interview & observation (both participant & non-participant).

### **SELECTION OF THE AREA**

The study covers the entire Kandhamal District's 152 Gram Panchayat 12 Panchayat Samiti & 1 Zillaparishad.

### **SAMPLING**

Sampling implies the selection of few out of total to be investigated in such a way to secure information to draw conclusion. Keeping in view of this total 286 Kandha women leaders of 3 tier Panchayati Raj of the study area was selected as sample respondents out of the total 572 Kandha women representatives of the PRIs.

### **TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION**

In this study the researcher used interview technique in Odia and Kui language (the mother language) of Kandha with the help of his Ex-students. Rapport building was not difficult as the researcher serving in this tribal area as a lecturer since last 16 years or so, with some rudimentary knowledge on Kui he illicit much information from the sample respondents.

### **THE GENESIS**

The status of Indian women & their problem are linked to the history & social system of the country. Women in India by large have been linked to home & hearth. It results in low socio-economic & political status of women. In India low level of education, illiteracy, economic dependence, falling sex ratio, unemployment, poverty, negligence of medical care, alarming atrocities against women, rising MMR & IMR are further perpetuate their low status.

As we know 80% of India's population lives in villages. Rural & Tribal women constitute fifty percent of the total population. The rural & tribal women are hard working in matter of agricultural production, animal husbandry, storage & marketing of forest produce. She is said to be the backbone of tribal economy & family & share the larger part of food supply & income earning. They substantially contribute to the working force than the non-tribal's in India.

### **ODISHA SCENE**

Coming to Odisha women were treated as an appendage of man with distinct & meekly accepted the conception her family duties & obligations. In Odisha more than 80 percent of women are agricultural laborers. A hundred million women work on the margins of life in the vast unorganized sector. The majority of women toil in fields, forests, factories & mines. In spite of the social reality, women are toiling as hard as men do, frequently carrying heavier burden of physical labour than men, on the top of the breeder, feeder function, they remain insignificant in the social milieu. On this backdrop the study of autonomy & decision making role of Kandha women in PRIs in a state like Odisha is a difficult task for a variety reasons. Women in Odisha like other states begin their national life with certain handicaps. The historical colonialism, destruction of agricultural system & impact of alien rule & value affect their participation & role in decision making bodies. The burden of exploitative rule of princely states, feudal culture & late exposure to west slowdown their political participation in comparison to rest of the country. The socio-cultural constrains caste & gender discrimination, lack of education awareness, economic dependence, social taboos affects their role & participation in state affairs.

Odisha is known for tribal dominated area containing all the specific features & attributed of rural area. Besides this certain features can also be identified which are specific to the tribal areas. For example the tribal's life pattern, food, dress, habits, custom, rites, rituals, festivals & way of life is different from the non-tribal population. Tribes are more closely knit together & socio-religious consideration play an important role in their political participation & decision making process.

## TRIBES OF ODISHA- KNOW THE PEOPLE

There are as many as 62 tribes living in Odisha. The Indian constitution recognizes these 62 tribes as genuine Scheduled Tribe. Odisha contains some of the most primitive tribes of the country like Kutia Kandha, Lanjia Soura, Bonda, Paraja, Koyas & Gadabas. More than 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total area is covered with inaccessible hills & under developed areas & about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total area of the state has been declared as Schedule areas (under 5<sup>th</sup> schedule of Indian Constitution) largely inhabited by the tribal communities. The ST population of Odisha at present is 22.4 percent, out of which more than fifty percent are women who are largely uneducated & engaged in agricultural activities.

## STUDY AREA

The present Kandhamal District is made up with some segments of three erstwhile principalities of Boudh, Ghumusar & Khemundi, reigned by the Bhanjas & the Gangas from the ancient time. Their reign came to end when the British came to this region in 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the Kandhamal area which was a part of Boudh witnessed a chequered history during the same period. After Odisha became a separate state in the wake of the amalgamation of the princely states with Odisha in January 1948 Boudh & Kandhamal was constituted as new district with its head quarters at Phulbani. In 1990's Boudh became a separate district. In 1994 the SC & ST ethnic conflict gave rise to a separate ethnic identity to the district. Realizing the common feelings of the majority Kandhas the Odisha Govt. rechristened Phulbani as Kandhamal signifying the dominant status of the Kandhas.

The Kandhamal District at present consists of 152 Gram Panchayat 12 TD Block, 1 Zilla Parishad, 2 NAC, 1 Municipality, 3 ST Assembly Constituency and 1 UR Parliamentary Constituency. Kandhamal is

located in central Odisha & bounded by Boudh district in the north, Rayagada in the south, Ganjam & Nayagarh in the east & Kalahandi in the west. Phulbani is the district head quarter of Kandhamal.

As per 2011 census the total population of Kandhamal was 7,31,952 out of which the female population was 3,72,551 almost 50.89%. The sex ratio was 1037 per 1000 males. The total ST/SC women population of the Kandhamal was 5,46,102 or 84.25% of the total population. The level of male literacy was 76.93% while the female literacy was 51.94%.

## CENTRAL FOCUS- THE TRIBAL (KANDHA) WOMEN

The Kandhamal district is predominantly inhabited by a tribal group- the Kandhas. The present Kandhamal is unsubtly a derivative from the word 'Khondistan' from the books, epics and official records. In a general usage the word 'Khond' appears in half a dozen of names Kandha, Khond, Khanda and Konds etc. But inwardly the Kandhas identify themselves as 'Kuinga' in plural usage and 'Kuenju' or 'Kuilaku' in singular form. All these terminological variations are synonymous, referring to the same generic tribe. In Kandhamal more than half of its population is the Kandhas.

From the social point of view they are of three types- (i) Desia Kandha, (ii) Kutia Kandha and (iii) Dangaria Kandha. They were as whole a militant race of primitive, who formerly used to bows and arrows for hunting and famous for their horrific human sacrifice. But all kandhas in general are simple, truthful, skillful in work, faithful, courageous and highly hospitable, polite, generous, reserved and cheerful to talk with one who knows their mother tongue 'Kui'.

The Kandha women are healthy, tidy and beautiful to look at. They are rather dwarfish; in stature with piece of cloth that they wear remain just and above their knee. Their fond of ornaments particularly silver ornaments. However educated & rich Kandha women are fond of gold ornaments. In the past it was a common practice for Kandha young girls to tattoo their faces before marriage. With the spread of education and modernization the fashion, style, habit practice of the Kandha women underwent a radical change in recent years.

## CONSTITUTION & WOMEN IN INDIA

The Indian constitution offers the best fruits of democracy by making so many innovative

provisions for women empowerment, gender equality and abolition of discriminations. The preamble, part-iii Fundamental Rights (Art- 12-35), Part-iv-(Art- 36-51) DPSP, Reservation of seats in national parliament, state legislature and PRIs for SC,ST and women as a step forward for their emancipation and empowerment including the tribal and marginalized groups of our country.

Despite constitutional provisions for emancipation & empowerment of women and to ensure gender equality the socio-economic status and political position of women is very low in India. During the last six decades or so of democracy the role, status and position of Indian women has not improved. Still they are confronted with the vexed problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, malnutrition and excluded from the sphere of formal political power. The opportunity for education and employment affects their status and decision making role both in society and public affairs. These two factors are the prime conditions not only for improving the status of women but also for moving towards emancipation, empowerment and gender equality.

### **The Foundation**

Socio-economic and political empowerment of women is a critical issue in India and Odisha is not exception to it. Development of women in general and empowering tribal women is a major thrust of Odisha Govt. Equal participation of women with men in decision making process, free expression of their views and participation in the community life help them to get recognized in the society. The power of expression and ability to solve problems through their views and ideas, makes women capable of getting attention from every one. In tribal society the women are the perennial source of family and economy. But they are hardly allow to participate in the political decision making process. The concerns lies with the fact whether increase in decision making role of Kandha women help them in their socio-economic development process.

On the line of communist Revolutionary leader Lenin India is perhaps the first country to recognize & have taken positive steps to bring women into leadership position & thereby gyring one-third reservation in PRIs. Women are considered extremely pivotal in the process of change in rural & tribal areas. Reservation to tribal women in PRIs has provided them opportunities to participate in the decision making process.

In an era of globalization the Indian polity is focusing more on participatory development and independent decision making role of tribal women to ensure social justice and equity. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Indian constitution 1992 open a new era for women participation, empowerment and autonomy in decision making process. To quote 'J.L Nehru when a woman moves forward, then the entire family and village moves forward and when village moves then the entire nation moves'.

Panchayati Raj institutions are considered as the vehicles of socio-economic transformation in rural India. Effective and meaningful functioning of these bodies would depend on active involvement, contribution and participation of rural men and women. In this respect the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1993 is a historic step towards empowering rural/tribal women ensuring equal share of power in the three tier Panchayati Raj institutions in India

Effective political participation and representation of specific groups, women in particular, and the terms of their inclusion- as voters and representatives have been a critical matter to the women's movement for a long time. The earlier campaigns centre on women's emancipation, equality, justice / fairness and human rights. The empowerment approach to political representation was the product of 1980's. The National perspective plan for women emphasized reservation up to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> seats in grass root bodies to throw up new leadership from below and reject reservation in State Assemblies and Parliament.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act 1993 provided constitutional recognition and status to both rural and urban local elected bodies. Apart from putting in place institutions of local governance and decentralizing power structures these two Amendments also sought to deepen democracy by ensuring that hitherto excluded social groups like women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are adequately represented in these bodies.

More than 10 lakh women had entered the Panchyats all over the country after the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act comes in to effect. Such entry of women in this grass root democratic structure did not go unnoticed particularly because of their presence in the one third positions of chairpersons. This especially at the village Panchayat levels gave them a chance not only of chairing the meetings but also allowing them to play a major role as executive

authority. Despite caste, class gender discrimination and women's innate disability in shouldering the new responsibilities women were able to take the new challenges at the grass root level. The reservation facility provided a new look to women representation in the Panchayati Raj institutions.

### 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act of 1992 was passed in the Lok Sabha on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1992 and in the Rajya Sabha on 23<sup>rd</sup> December to revamp the Panchayati Raj system. The President of India assented the Bill on April 1993 and it came into effect on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1993.

### Salient features of the Act

- i) Uniform three tier Panchayati Raj system in India.
- ii) Free and fair periodical elections of these institutions.
- iii) Setting up of State Election Commission and Finance Commission to monitor these institutions.
- iv) Reservation of seats for SC,ST and women in these institutions.
- v) Direct election to these institutions.
- vi) Inclusion of 29 items in the XI schedule (Art 243-G) of the constitution to provide effective role to Panchayati Raj institutions.
- vii) Not less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the seats shall be reserved for women in three tier Panchayati Raj institutions.
- viii) Not less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the seats shall be reserved for SC and ST women.
- ix) Adoption and practice of rotation in the reservation policy for women (Art 243 D(1))
- x) Not less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the seats of chairperson shall be reserved for women.

### NEED FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

- i) To ensure equality, end exploitation and discrimination.
- ii) To develop self-esteem and confidence to realize their potential and enhance their collective bargaining power.
- iii) To aware women of their status, rights, and opportunities towards ensuring gender equality.
- iv) To ensure development of skill to manage these elected local institutions.

- v) To ensure greater participation in decision making process for the women in these institutions.

The role and status of men and women are governed by traditions and cultural practices and studies in this respect show that all over the world women do not have equal rights and status with men. This difference in role is determined not by their biological differences but by their access to socio-economic and political resources. The social constraints like illiteracy, poverty, cultural stigmas and violence and atrocities against women deny them equal role with men. As a result women continue to have lower status in the society. To raise their status and grant them equality with men they must be socially, economically and politically empowered. Since the operation of 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the constitution there is no significant change is visible so far the empowerment of women is concerned.

Odisha enacted the Grampanchayat Act in the year 1948 as way towards democratic decentralization. Then Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act was enacted in 1954 and came in to force from 1961. Before the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act 1993 came into operation, Biju Pattnaik the late Chief Minister (1990-95 Janata Dal Govt.) of Odisha took a landslide step to empower the women in Odessa by declaring 1/3<sup>rd</sup> reservation of seats for women in three tier PRIs. In Odisha Biju Pattnaik is said to be the Brain Child of women empowerment and emancipation specifically that of the SC/ST downtrodden and marginalised women groups of Odisha by popularizing a slogan "Work to Village and Respect to Mother". Later on Odisha brings structural changes in tune with the provision of 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution to give more meanings to women empowerment. Later on in the year 2011 the Chief Minister of Odisha Sri Naveen Pattnaik declared the enhancement of women reservation in three tiers PRIs from 33% to 50%. At present Odisha has three tiers Rural Local Self Govt. such as:-

1. Gram Panchayat at village level having 6,236, electing 93,787 representatives. ( Ward members, Naib Sarapanchs and Sarapanchs) (50% Women)
2. Panchayat Samiti at Block level having 314 Panchayat Samiti with 6235 elected Panchayat Samiti member.(50% Women)
3. Zilla Parishad at District level having 30 Zilla Parishad electing 854 representatives out of which 50% percents are women.

**Table-1 Showing women Representatives of Kandhamal District in PRIs.**

Sl No.	Name of the PRI	Total nos.	Total Wards	SC	SC(W)	ST(W)	BCC	BCC(W)	UR	RW	ST
1	Gram Panchayat (village Level)	153	2083	239	139	482	169	76	12	62	790
2	Gram Panchayat Sarapanchas	153	-	-	-	55	-	-	-	-	98
3	Panchayat Samiti (Block Level)	12	153	17	10	31	21	14	6	-	54
4	Zilla Parishad (District Level)	1	18	2	1	4	3	2	-	-	6

### Inter pretation of data

The data collected were analyzed keeping in view of various aspect of tribal women such as their socio-economic profile level of knowledge, awareness and perceptions. Political participation, empowerment, role in decision making process, autonomy in PRIs, level of family support, attitude of male members and PR bureaucracy, attitudes of non-tribal women, raising of voice and other related issues which are effecting autonomy and decision making role in the PRIs.

### Socio-economic profile of women respondents

In order to study the perception orientation, participation and opinion of tribal women in PRIs, it is necessary to know the socio-economic status of

the sample respondents. The socio-economic factors determine the attitude and role in decision making process. The present study is conducted in Kandhamal District of Odisha. 286 ST women respondents of 152 Gram Panchayat, 12 Panchayat Samiti and 1 Zilla Parishad were selected for the study. These women respondents are in PRI office since Feb 2012 as per the PRI Act 1992. In the present study, 286 ST women (out of 572) were interviewed and details of their age, education, religious composition, income, marital status, family size, occupation have been analyzed to understand their socio-economic status. As all respondents are ST women, caste and sex is not a factor to be analyzed.

**Table-2, Age Composition**

Sl No.	Category	Nos.	Percentage
1	From Age 21-30	186	65.03
2	From Age 31-40	90	31.46
3	From Age 41-50	10	3.51
4	Above 51 Age	0	0
	Total	286	100.00

**Table-3, Level of Education**

Sl No.	Level of Education	Nos	Percentage
1	Literate	21	7.34
2	Primary Education	158	55.24
3	Upper Primary	95	33.21
4	High School	12	4.21
	Graduation	0	0

**Table-4, Religious Composition**

Sl No.	Name of the Religion	Nos.	Percentage
1	Hindu	281	98.26
2	Christian	5	1.74
3	Muslim	0	0
4	Others	0	0
	Total	286	100.00

**Table - 5, Annual Family Income**

Sl No.	Annual Family Income	Nos.	Percentage
1	Up to Rs.15,000	34	11.88
2	Rs.16,000-30,000	164	57.35
3	Rs.31,000-50,000	60	20.98
4	Rs.51,000-1,00,000	28	9.79
5	Above 1,00,000	0	0
	Total	286	100.00

**Table-6, Marital Status**

Sl No.	Marital Status	Nos.	Percentage
1	Married	270	94.41
2	Unmarried	10	3.49
3	Widow	6	2.10
	Total	286	100.00

**Table -7, Family Size**

Sl No.	Family Members	Nos.	Percentage
1	1 to 5 members	151	52.80
2	6 to 10 members	125	43.71
3	Above 10 members	0	0
4	Unmarried	10	3.49
	Total	286	100.00

**Table-8, Occupation**

Sl No.	Occupation	Nos.	Percentage
1	House wives	250	87.42
2	Social Work	10	3.49
3	Service	00	00
4	Business (Shop)	26	9.09
	Total	286	100.00

**The study reveals the following facts**

1. Regarding age, a high percentage of leaders are belongs to younger age. This means people prefer younger leaders then the older one (Table-2)
2. Regarding education, all women respondents are educated and literate but majority of them educated up to primary level only(Table-3)
3. In regards to, religion majority of women respondents belongs to Hindu religion, only 10 are Christians and Muslim nil. (Table-4)

4. In regards, to family income majority of women respondents have annual income in between Rs.16,000-30,000/- (Table-5)
5. In regards to, marital status more than majority of women respondents are married. Only 10 are unmarried and 6 are belong to widow category. (Table-6)
6. Regarding family size, due to two child norm to contest PRI election in Odisha majority of women respondents have 1 to 5 family members. (Table-7)
7. Regarding occupation, more than majority of women respondents are house wives few of them are in NGO's and having their own small business shop. (Table-8)

**Table-9, KNOWLEDGE PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTION OF WOMEN RESPONDENTS - AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT**

Sl No.	Items of Survey	Yes	No
1	Do you know anything about 3 tires PRI	78	208
2	Do you know the percentage of reservation for women in PRI in Odisha	62	224
3	Do you know the Total nos. of GP, PS and ZP of Kandhamal District	18	268
4	Do you know anything about 73 <sup>rd</sup> AmendMENT Act 1992	18	268
5	Do you know the term of PRI in Odisha	90	196
6	Do you know anything about two child norm to contest PRI election in Odisha	55	231
7	Do you know your Panchayat Raj Minister Govt. of Odisha	15	271
8	Do you know the SC/ST Development Minister Govt. of Odisha	26	260
9	Do you know the Women and Child Development Minister Govt. of Odisha	22	264
10	Do you know your MLA	160	126
11	Do you know your MP	120	166
12	Do you know your Chief Minister	190	96
13	Do you know your Prime Minister	76	210
14	Do you know NRHM, JSY, RKS Mamata Yojana, MGNREGA etc.	42	244
15	Do you know the qualification to contest PRI election.	68	218

**Table-10 Political participation of women respondents**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Active	58	20.28
Passive	192	67.13
Not at all	36	12.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-11 PRI and Tribal women's empowerment**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Positive	168	58.75
Negative	118	41.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-12 Autonomy and role in decision making process of the PRI.**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Yes	38	13.28
No	248	86.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-13 Level of family support**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Yes	42	14.68
No	244	85.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-14 Attitude of male members**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Supportive	37	12.94
Hostile	249	87.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-15 Freedom of movement**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Encouraging	46	16.08
Restricting	240	83.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-16 Attitude of non-tribals**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Positive	218	76.22
Negative	68	23.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-17 Involvement in decision making process**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Not involved	172	60.14
Same way involved	28	9.79
Ignored	42	14.68
Full Involved	44	15.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-18 Independent conduct of PRI meetings and raising voice for fellow tribal women**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Good	168	58.74
Very Good	38	13.28
Indifferent	80	27.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-19 Impact of domestic life on participation and decision making in PRIs.**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Affirmative	236	82.51
Negative	50	17.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table-20 PR bureaucracy and independent decision making in PRI.**

Response	Nos.	Percentage
Hindering	159	55.60
Promoting	127	44.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source-Field survey 2014-15

The survey results have been analyzed in detail and the major findings from the analysis have been presented here in brief.

1. The study reveals that the knowledge and awareness of the tribal women is very low in the district. Without this, effective participation in decision making process is difficult for them. (Table-9)
2. Regarding political, participation in PRIs, Assembly and Parliament Elections, they express their willingness to confined themselves to PRIs. Lack of knowledge, education and resources becomes a stumbling block for their effective participation in assembly and parliamentary elections. (Table-10)
3. Regarding PRI and Tribal women's empowerment majority of women respondents replied in affirmative, while others considered without socio-economic empowerment it is meaningless for them.(Table-11)
4. In regards to autonomy and role in decision making process more than majority women representatives replied in negative. They justified their argument as lack of knowledge awareness, education, family restriction and unnecessary interference of the PR bureaucracy affects their autonomy to work independently in PRIs. (Table-12)
5. In regards to support of the family more than majority of women respondents replied in negative. Due care to family and PRIs is hindering their effective role in decision making process in PRIs. (Table-13)
6. Regarding attitude of male members, majority of the women respondents replied in negative. The pressure of family members and male representatives still hostiles to their effective functioning in PRIs. (Table-14)
7. Regarding freedom of movement outside their family and village more than majority of women respondents replied in negative. Spread of education and modernization is not yet brought any tangible changes in the socio-cultural attitude of tribal family particularly the male members. (Table-15)
8. In regards to attitude of non-tribals towards them and vice-versa more than majority answered in positive. (Table-16)
9. Regarding their involvement in decision making process in PRIs, majority of them attributed their non-involvement to lack of freedom to do so. (Table-17)
10. In regards to conducting PRI meetings and raising voices for their fellow women folk majority of them considered their role as good but only 13.28 percent considered it as very good while 27.98 percent are indifferent to this issue. (Table-18)
11. In regards to impact of domestic life on participation and decision making process, majority of the women respondents replied in affirmative. They opined that in their society breeding and feeding cannot be comprised to any other activities. (Table-19)
12. In regards to PR Bureaucracy and decision making process more than majority of the women respondents still considered PR bureaucracy is interposing to an extent for their effective role in PRIs. (Table-20)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Empirical findings reveal that the elected Kandha women representatives are treated as 'puppets' in these institutions. Most of them are silent spectators to the proceedings of the PRI meetings. Active participation in the form of involving in the decision making process, budget preparation, planning, identifying, beneficiaries, locating development projects is found to be rare in case of the women representatives of the study area. Lack of education and knowledge, poor economic conditions, lack of leadership quality, exposure to the law of PRIs, self confidence, excessive bureaucratic interference, domestic responsibility, patriarchy above all lack of orientation and training severely limits their effective political participation and autonomy in the decision making process of the PRIs.

On this back drop the researcher offers the following recommendations for their effective political participation and autonomy in the decision making process of the PRIs.

1. The Kandha PRI women representatives need to be trained with regard to their newly "acquired roles".

2. The training should install and encompass knowledge, awareness building, aptitude team spirit, self confidence, skill and personality building to shoulder leadership position.
3. Steps should be under taken both in Governmental and Non-Governmental levels for promotion of female education according to their needs and acceptability.
4. More income generation programme should be implemented to help them to self reliant and to eradicate poverty in the study area.
5. More over emphasis should be laid on implementation of policy rather on simply formulation of the same for their effective role in decision making process.
6. Attitudinal change is also needed from local politicians, political parties, PR Bureaucracy family members and male members for their autonomy and independent functioning in PRIs.
7. Further more research activities on tribal women's participation and decision making behavior should be encouraged.

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