

# **local women development practitioners**

a study of rights based approaches in  
Odisha, India

Nita Mishra, University College Cork,  
Ireland

# Women SHGs

- Self Help Group stories from Balianta,
- Banapur Mid Day Meal scheme Helpers
- Tangi women- panchayat leaders
- Urban Slum in Bhubaneswar
- Anganwadi Centres (AWC)
- What are the challenges they face?
- Individual stories bring in different facets of women's role in empowering communities

# Health workers

- AWH stories; of ASHA health workers
- What are the challenges they face?

# AWW

- AWW stories- from Banapur, Balianta
- What are the challenges they face

# Lipina teacher

- Her story
- Commitment
- A vision

# Challenges, competing interests of women practitioners

- Market prices
- Caste
- Existing power dynamics; social hierarchies difficult to bridge
- Poverty; belong to BPL themselves;
- Familial responsibilities of multiple roles;
- Male biased society
- Social taboos;
- Corruption; trust; social capital; commitment;

# The learnings

- Demands of AWW for pensions, salaries on time, other dues that are granted to other state officials
- Provide an AWW for health work, and another one for educational services to pre-school children at AWCs
- Expected work burden is demanding; be realistic
- Women workers have multiple responsibilities as seen in the stories of the women; policy has to take into account;
- Distances to be commuted for bank work for SHGs, e.g.,
- Take into cognizant market food prices, e.g., for eggs for MDMs and for AWC meals; inflation be kept in mind

# NGOs

- NGO field level coordinators from Koraput, AESS; 3 women
- Challenges
- Empowerment process;

- The **findings** focus on -
- (a) the **challenges, conflicting and often competing interests**, that weigh upon the decisions of women development practitioners' in the practice of rights' based advocacy;
- (b) **the learning** for making deliberative and participatory democracy a reality based on insights from the work of women development practitioners.