

## Case Study

Interview unique number: 01  
Interview date: 22/11/2019  
District: Ganjam  
State: Odisha

Name: **Renubala Gouda**  
Age: **41**  
Gender: **Female**  
Education: **12<sup>th</sup>**  
Marital Status: **Single**  
Highest education: **12<sup>th</sup>**  
Current self-employment/ employment status: **Anganwadi Worker**  
Type of impairment: **Locomotor (Orthopaedic)**  
Any other members with disabilities in family: **No**

Renubala is a 41-years-old single woman with disability who had encountered several harassments, struggles and hardships to live a decent life. Since her birth, she was unable to walk. Her parents used to bodily lift her to take her to the school. As she grew up, she started to go with her friends. Her neighbors and school mates used to comment on her gait. She complained and her father scolded everyone and they stopped taunting her. In order to complete high school, she used to travel 30 km by bus every day.

Renubala stated, "I was humiliated because of my disability. In my district girls were encouraged to get higher education, but when my parents did so, I was taunted. Every time I wanted to give up, I saw my parents desire to get me empowered through education, hence I continued beside all odds."

Albeit the external situations kept testing her strength, her parents always stood beside her and supported her. For example, her parents are very sensitive towards her presence in family/social functions. However her brother always opposed her and dominated her so that she could not get her right to the family property.

Renubala states, "My brother has tortured me for the property. I even complained against him in the police station. After getting tired of his abuse, I and my parents got separated and started to live away from him. I am taking care of my parents and ensure that they do not feel neglected."

Renubala explains her incidents of harrassement with local police.

*"On my sister's marriage, my brother got a necklace for my sister in law and I also asked for one. I gave money for the same and asked them to sell my share of rice for extra amount. However, brother shouted at me and father and took away the rice and money. My brother called me 'thief' and launched a police complaint. I fought back, but police did not bother to take me seriously as I was disabled. My brother kept troubling me because of property and assets which my father wanted to give me. Police also supported him and I was threatened by them. I wish police was aware of vulnerability of disabled women and undertake twin track approach in integrating disability-sensitive measures."*

Currently, she is working as an *Anganwadi* worker. She was insisted by her family members to marry a divorcee, which she rejected. She refused because she was asked to leave the job and live in Bhubaneswar and she also got to know that they were planning to take her property.

Renubala narrates, "In 2001, I applied for *Anganwadi* job and I was denied from the government due to political pressure created by my uncles. My uncles won and I did not get the job. I re-applied and was supported by *Jan Jagaran* NGO and got the job under disability quota."

Renubala aspires to run a business when she will no longer have a job. She expresses her disappointment in accessing employment opportunities by people with disabilities. She states that, 'there is no powerful voice of women with disabilities (WwDs) who are employed/self employed as there is no support systems for WwDs'.

From her experience, she shares the following recommendations:

- Opportunities for employment/self-employment of WwDs is utmost necessary. There should be loans available on low interest rates and flexibility in paying back
- Awareness regarding the opportunities of government job as there is 4% reservation available, however information is not available to WwDs
- Self Help Groups (SHGs) of persons with disabilities exist; however, should be recognized by government officers as there is lack of awareness on such SHGs. Hence, there are issues faced by WwDs due to such negligence
- Vocational training and availability of funds to WwDs
- Awareness and sensitisation of police and availability of women police at 'mahila desk' (women desk) with know how on amendment act of Government of India on right to justice for WwDs
- Community awareness on reducing and ultimately eliminating stigma and discrimination. This awareness should be ongoing system built at grass root level including pgram panchayat to ensure an inclusive culture that recognizes and values WwDs