Trafficking of Tribal Girls And The Role of The Panchayati Raj System- A Study of Deprivation of Tribal Girls In Sundergarh District of Odisha

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Abstract
The PRI system has the potential to bring radical changes in the life of the masses living in rural areas, particularly the life of the deprived and marginalised like the tribals. But the functioning of the PRIs is not independent of the larger political, economic system of the state in which it operates. The trafficking of young tribal girls from the district of sundergarh in the last decade is a sorry tale of the failure of the development policies in the state. The functioning of the grassroots level institutions like Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat has failed to intervene in this regard. The policies of the state have created and sustained such an unequal and exploitative environment that the young tribal girls are easily trapped into the web of trafficking. The PRI system in this tribal dominated district does not have enough democratic space for the marginalised tribal. A well-coordinated chain is in work from placement centres in Delhi to remote villages in sundergarh. The middlemen sell dreams to these innocent girls and sell these girls to placement agencies. When majority of the tribals face deprivation and marginalisation, they face difficulties in fulfilling their daily needs. The women are the worst victims as they are excluded first. The trafficking of the young tribal girls becomes easier as their parents are compelled to accept the offer of the middlemen. The tragedy is that the PRIs, particularly the Gram Panchayats, the civil society, police and government agencies treat it as normal migration in search of jobs and are insensitive to the difficulties and exploitations of these young girls. This paper tries to analyse the causes of trafficking of young girls and the role and potentialities of the PRIs in preventing it. It arrives at the understanding that the deeper the democratisation in the structure and processes of the PRIs, the more inclusive will be the development at the grassroots level.

Keywords: Decentralisation, Democratisation, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Inclusive Development, Deprivation, Trafficking

Introduction
Deprivation, Dispossession and Discrimination have become synonymous with tribals and tribal areas in the state. Tribals have been a self-sufficient community dependent on forest and agriculture. Historically they have been subjected to displacement, dispossession and repression for more than a century. They have been transformed from a resourceful community to the most marginalised and poorest of communities in the state. The development paradigms implemented in different times in the state have only accelerated the process of marginalisation of the tribals. The deprivation of the tribals in the state is going on in the name of development. In the current phase of development there are more searches for natural resources like land, forest water, minerals which are sufficiently available in areas inhabited by the tribals.

The exploitation of these resources is leading to the displacement, deprivation and further marginalisation of the tribals. The two major sources of livelihood of the tribals, land and forest are being taken away from them in the name of development though they could not become beneficiaries in this development. These natural resources, which support the life and livelihood of the tribals, are being commoditised and this process is leading to the deprivation and exclusion of the tribals. The advocates of the Neo-Liberal Development model including the government are using languages of inclusion to exclude the tribals. This has become a strategy to weaken the resistances of the tribals against attempts to snatch away their sources of life and livelihood. The tribals live in unequal and exploitative power relations despite constitutional commitments of equality and justice.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions act as extended institutions of the government and its agencies and are devoid of meaningful spaces for participation of common tribals in planning and implementation of development projects and policies at the Gram Sabha level as well as in the GP level. Though the PRIs, particularly in tribal areas like Sundergarh have enough potential to bring in radical changes in the life of the tribals yet these possibilities is neither being explored nor potentialities of these grassroots institutions not being fully utilised. Rather the available democratic spaces are being squeezed in the name of development. The trafficking of the young girls in large numbers from the district of Sundergarh to metros like Delhi is a case of the utter failure of the policies of development of the state. Unfortunately this exploitation and deprivation of the tribal girls is neither in the
agenda of the development policies of the PRIs nor in their deliberations. This is one of the worst forms of marginalisation of one of the marginalised groups, the tribal women. There is a need to study trafficking in this place as it involves many issues and questions like inclusive development, democratic spaces in institutions of local democracies, gendered survival, gender equality and justice, marginalisation of the tribals etc. Finding a clear perspective of trafficking in Sundergarh and its dynamics is a challenge as there is huge gap in research on this issue. On the one hand there is a continuous rise of this incidence and on the other hand there is a lack of its scientific and methodical study. The anti-trafficking strategies by the government and its various agencies are incomplete and lack a long-term vision and approach.

The institutions of decentralised governance like the PRIs are deliberately kept out of this problem, though they have the potential to give a meaningful check to it. This is why its study is urgent to develop feedbacks and suggestions for the development of inclusive policies to check deprivation, alienation and further marginalisation of the tribal girls.

Objectives and Methodology
This paper studies the trafficking of the tribal girls in the district and attempts to situate the problem in the context of political economy of tribal development in the state. It tries to identify the factors responsible for trafficking. It attempts to examine and analyse the experiences of the victims and their parents. It tries to analyse the role of the PRIs in preventing the trafficking and their potential in this regard. It attempts to develop an inclusive strategy to combat the menace.

The paper is based on primary and secondary data. Women, particularly of the villages from where girls have been trafficked, have been interviewed and also the members of the Gram Sabha of those villages to match the versions of PRI representatives on this issue. The study is based on the interviews of some rescued girls, of some of the parents whose girls are under trafficking, some of the relevant officials, members of the civil society, some GCRP (Gender Community Resource Person), members of Gram Sabha, members of NGOs engaged in anti-trafficking activities, elected representatives of PRIs etc.

A structured questionnaire was prepared to identify the reasons of girls becoming victims of trafficking, to know their socio-economic profile, the responses of the parents of the victims, the awareness level of the girls and of their parents regarding the various developmental programmes of the government, the role of the GCRP (Gender community Resource Person) in preventing trafficking and the difficulties they face, the role and responsibilities of PRI representatives. Three GPs, Rampur, Balisankara and Kinjirikela in Balisankara Block of Sundergarh District have been selected as samples considering the intensity of trafficking in these three Panchayats. Getting information and responses from the victim’s families and other respondents was difficult as nobody was willing to share because of threat perception and other reasons. The sample size is 270 consisting of rescued girls, parents of trafficked girls, PRI representatives and others mentioned above. The data collection process has taken more than six months and then they were compiled and analysed.

The Problematisation
Human trafficking is illegal in every modern society but yet it happens everywhere. ‘Some 2.5 million people throughout the world are at any given time recruited, entrapped, transported and exploited-a process called human trafficking’, reported a press release by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2007). Human trafficking is a global concern today and the visibility of trafficking is more prominent in recent times as millions of people were reported to be enslaved and exploited.

Concerns with human trafficking are inseparable from the establishment of an area of security, freedom and justice. Trafficking is taken to refer to the transportation of the people within countries or across international borders using force, trickery or the abuse of power. Trafficking is an attack on the dignity of the human race. (Obi N.I.Ebbe:2008). It’s a gross violation of basic human rights.

The UN protocol defines trafficking as : the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of a threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for purpose of exploitation.(UN Protocol:2000) The problem of trafficking in different places varies in terms of reasons, intensity, and tactics of the traffickers. Some common causes can be identified as the reasons for trafficking of girls and women like poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, war, corruption, toleration of the violation of human rights, discrimination against minorities and lower economic groups, low prioritising of this problem by the govt., weak legislation, lack of cooperation and communication among different agencies engaged in anti-trafficking, existence of sophisticated criminal networks, lack of resources to combat this crime etc.

The objective of problematisation here is to contextualise the issue of trafficking in Sundergarh from socio-economic cultural perspective and from a perspective of
interventions by the institutions of local governance. There are various representations of trafficking in different places conditioned by the local factors. Specific study will help in developing meaningful interventions to check them. Trafficking as a violation of human rights can be prevented or at least checked through empowerment measures and other interventions by the PRIs. So far there has been no such study of trafficking and the development of strategy to check it through the PRIs. All available anti-trafficking strategies have not tried to utilise the potential of the PRIs nor have tried to deepen the democratic space in it to mobilise against trafficking.

Political Economy of Tribal Development

Land and Forest

The question of tribal development in Odisha is central to the question of its inclusive development because any paradigm of development in a democratic system of governance cannot neglect the development of about one-fourth of its total population (22.13%) (Census, 2011).

There are sixty two tribes in the state and about forty of them are found in the district of Sundergarh. Seen from a historical perspective, the non-tribals have established their hegemony over the tribals in different periods of history. The colonial state appropriated the resources like the land and the forest which was under the communal ownership under the tribes and transformed the character of the land from communal to individual private property. (Dungdung, 2010)

The development paradigms that the governments in post-Independent times implemented with focus on investments in industry and infrastructure brought disastrous consequences for the life and livelihood of tribals. Industrialisation and allied activities, mainly in areas largely inhabited by the tribes have destroyed forest land and have displaced a large number of tribals from their land and livelihood. Forests don’t only provide livelihood resources to the tribal people but they are an integral part of the tribal life and culture.

The systems of forest management that were developed in different times failed to comprehend this aspect and defined the tribals as encroachers. The cries of the displaced could not be heard under the beating of the drums of the development. The tribals, particularly the displaced tribals have become victims of development. (Carnea & Mathur, 2008, Fernandes&A.Raj, 1992)

Land has been central to the existence of the tribals. It is an integral part of their life, society, culture, religion, economy and identity. But land is a mere commodity in the capitalist discourse of development. So, acquisition of land for development by the state fails to understand the significance of land in the tribal economy and culture. The alienation of the tribals from their land has led to their disempowerment. The democratic content in the land ownership pattern of the tribals is squeezed by the democratic state. Despite six decades of development by the democratic state, the tribals in the state have become poorer in terms of their ownership of land. 22.84% of the tribal households are landless, 19.23% are owners of less than one acre, 21.23% households own land between 1 to 2.5 acres, 21.2% own land between 2.5 to 5 acres, 5.86% own between 6 to 15 acres and only 2.37% tribal household own land between 15 to 25 acres. Thus 63.5% of the tribals are landless or marginal landholders where as 84.54% are owners of less than five acres of land. This explains the widespread poverty and inequality among the tribals in the state in terms of their control over the resources like land. (Dharitree: 2007)

Displacement and Tribals

In the tribal district of Sundergarh displacement has been a traumatic experience. More than half of the population of the district are tribals. The survey conducted by the state government before the establishment of the Rourkela Steel Plant found that 82.3% of the families in the district are agricultural and only 17.7% are non-agricultural. The landless agricultural labour in the surveyed area is only 4.6% and 9.9% in the district, 21.6% in the state. Thus, the tribal families of this region were more agricultural in comparison to others. (Meher, 2004)

The establishment of the Rourkela steel plant in this background not only displaced the tribal families in the area but destroyed their livelihood. The steel plant provided employment directly and indirectly to thousands of families but tribals became a negligible force in this employed category. 33 villages and 19,722 acres of land were acquired for the plant. 2901 families were displaced out of which 1974 (68.05%) were tribal families and 279 (9.62%) were dalit families.

Again, the water reservoir for the steel plant was constructed over the Sankha River, known as Mandira Dam, thirty kilometres away from the plant. The dam displaced 1193 families and 70% of them are tribals. The most painful aspect of the displacement here is that many of the displaced have not received their compensation due to apathy and negligence of the administration. Another problem is that many of the displaced could not get the compensation because they did not have proper record of rights.

The tribes migrating from neighbouring areas were allowed to settle by the kings. (Meher, 2004) The studies of the living conditions of the displaced, mainly of the tribals have shown that there has been no qualitative improvement in their lives in living as displaced for decades. (Meher, 2004)
The judgement of the Hon. Apex court (July, 2010) in the case of Mahanadi Coal Fields Ltd. vs. Mathias Oram and others of Sundergarh (Special Leave Petition (c) no 6933 of 2007) is an eye opener for the policy makers and exposes the weaknesses of the state in dealing with the problems of displacement and compensation. The court has underlined the fact that exploitation of natural resources for development involves human factor as most of the mineral wealth lies in areas ‘inhabited by the oldest dwellers of this ancient country’. In the court’s own words, though development seems simple and logical, yet to millions it is a dreadful and hateful word that is aimed at denying them even the source of their sustenance.

The lands of a poor tribal Mathias Oram and others were acquired by the Navaratna public sector company, MCL in the revenue village of Gopalpur in the district of Sundergarh in 1987. Mathis Oram and others were never paid any compensation for their land and ‘after a futile run from pillar to post for about fourteen years’, they knocked the doors of the Court for justice.

The Hon. Court’s observation that ‘for a people whose lives and livelihoods are intrinsically connected to the land, the economic and cultural shift to a market economy can be traumatic’; is not only relevant but sufficient to be the guideline for any policy of development particularly for the marginalised like the tribals. Industrialisation, mining, dams and other developmental activities have transformed tribals from owners of land to marginalised workers and have pushed them to deprivation and alienation. The neo-liberal paradigm of development has accelerated this process.

**Trafficking Of Girls in Sundergarh**

The trafficking of young tribal girls from the district of Sundergarh in the last decade is a sorry tale of the failure of the development policies in the state and in the district. The policies have created and sustained an unequal, exploitative and oppressive environment in which the girls are trapped. The conditions in which these young girls are compelled to work are nothing less than the conditions of bonded labour.

According to an unofficial estimate about forty thousand tribal girls, (Pragati:2008) mostly of about 14-18 years of age and even less, have been victims of trafficking in metros like Delhi and adjacent areas. 960 girls have been victims of trafficking of Balisankara GP alone in last year. Similarly more than 1000 girls in Kinjirkela GP and almost equal number in Rampur GP have been victims of trafficking in last one or two years. Even this is a conservative estimate considering the absence of a systematic survey by the government agencies and refusal of the families to share information in this regard and non-registering of the girls with GCRP working at the GP level. But most of the girls are going away without informing anybody. Most of them are dropouts at the secondary or primary level in the age group of 14 to 18. Some of them are even less. 90% of the families of these girls are daily wage earners without work for the total year. All of them are unskilled workers. Some collect Mahula(a forest produce) flower in the season but sell in a deficit price to the businessmen from whom they had taken advance. The girls are not allowed to return to their homes. When majority of the tribals face deprivation and marginalisation, they face difficulties in fulfilling their daily needs. The women are the worst victims as they are excluded first from education and health.

Again they have to share the responsibility of providing food to the family. The tragedy is that a large part of the civil society, police and govt agencies treat it as normal migration in search of jobs and are insensitive to the difficulties of these young girls. So they do not get timely help in times of need from the concerned agencies and departments.

**Major Findings of the study**

a) Most of the trafficked girls are within the age group of 14-20
b) 90% of them are school and college dropouts
c) 97% of them are tribals
d) All had dreams of completing education
e) Before being victims of trafficking they have explored other possibilities and opportunities of employment and livelihood
f) Middlemen and their agents have misinformed them of employment in metros with a good salary package and better service conditions
g) All of them don’t know about their destination nor the phone numbers or address of the house owners where they will work
h) They are unaware of facts like non-payment of wages, misappropriation of wages by the middlemen, agreement between the middlemen and placement agencies, physical violence, confinement and even sexual harassment.
i) All have been approached through their relatives or known persons
j) 89% of them are not aware of insurance, survey or Identity cards
k) 92% of them did not come informing others like GCRP(Gender Community Resource Person)
l) To them MGNRGA is insufficient to provide jobs to them
m) All of them did not feel the necessity of telling these things to their ward members and Sarpanches or GP office as they think that the PRIs do not have any role in it.
n) All the GCRP are under threat perception from the middlemen and their agents and work under pressure

o) They do not get salaries regularly from their employer, DRDA

p) The district administration as well as the state government have not yet decided to bring the agenda in the meetings of PRIs from Gram Sabha to Zilla Parishad

q) 93% of the respondent’s and surveyed families are unskilled wage earners

r) 67% of the families surveyed are debt ridden. They have taken loans for marriage and other requirements.

s) Only 8% of the workers have 100 days of work under MGNREGS in these GPs selected

t) The workers have not been paid their wages since last six months

u) In the Gram Sabha meetings of these three GPs on April this year there was no discussion on trafficking issue

v) In case of communal ownership of land not a single case of title has been settled under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

Analysis

Poverty and Deprivation

A deeper analysis of the responses reveals interesting facts. All factors of the concept of FAMINE (food insecurity, alienation, marginalisation, inequality, negative impact on tribals, particularly the girls due to failure of state policies, and their exclusion from the development process) are present in this study. Acute Poverty and diminishing purchasing power is obviously the single most important factor behind trafficking of these innocent tribal girls. All respondents agreed that due to poverty and lack of purchasing power, parents are willing to send their girls to far off places like Delhi for earning.

The parents of the girls also said that their conditions are decreasing in terms of real wages, employment opportunities, access to education, health and other basic amenities.

MGNREGA is of no help to them. As per the survey of one NGO (CIRTD) only 8% of the workers have 100 days of work under MGNREGS in these GPs selected for survey. Again many workers have not been paid wages since last six months. They have job cards but they did not have any idea about the time of work. They are under the impression that work will come automatically to them.

Most of the eligible beneficiaries under employment guarantee scheme complained that except the sign board everything in the MGNREGA is in English which they do not know and understand. As about 70% of them are debt reason for different reasons, this puts them more into positions of insecurity and pushes them for trafficking. The scheme of rice at rupees 2 per kg is of great help to them but this is insufficient in the absence of employment guarantee throughout the year to meet the expenses of education, health, clothing, festivals etc. The standard of living is declining and the demands of life are increasing.

Middlemen and the Mechanism of Trafficking

But this alone is insufficient to explain trafficking in these GPs. The active and powerful presence and role of the middlemen is another equally important factor responsible for trafficking. Because, trafficking in some other GPs of other Blocs is not as severe as it is in these GPs, although in terms of poverty and deprivation of the tribals they are almost equal. A well-coordinated chain is in work from placement centres in Delhi to remote villages in Sundergarh. They use the services of the relatives and known persons of the girls to allure them and their parents. The middlemen sell dreams to these innocent girls and sell these girls to placement agencies. The invisibility of both the state and of the civil society is clear otherwise the increase in trafficking of these girls is not possible.

The pro-active role and mobilisation of the middlemen and their network, remains unchallenged. The middlemen enter into agreement with placement agencies and take away the entire wages of one year or more of the girls as their share without the knowledge of the victims or their parents. The victims are not aware of their destination nor are the addresses of their future employers. There is no information regarding placement agencies. The experiences of the rescued girls throw light on the mechanism of trafficking. In one case, a girl has to clean the marble floor of a three storied marble building in her hand in the chilled winter in Delhi and blood came from her hands. She did not get any medical help nor could return home.

PRI System and Trafficking

Out of the three GPs surveyed, two Sarpanches are women and tribal, other is also tribal male. All the three PS members are tribal but one of them is a woman. More than 70% of the ward members are tribal and more than half of them are tribal. There cannot be a better situation than this where almost all the PRI representatives are tribal and the problem is affecting the tribals. Not only this, the entire PRI system in the district is represented largely by the tribals. Out of 260 Sarpanches, 170 are tribal and 142 are women. And all 260 PS members are tribal of which 134 are women. Out of 35 Zilla Parishad members 23 are tribal and 19 are women. This means the
issues that affect the tribals and that to women should have been in the top agenda of the development discourses in the PRI system. It should have forced the government to take pro-active measures against trafficking of the tribal girls. But unfortunately this has not been the case. The elected PRI members confirmed that there have not been discussions on this particular problem in the meetings of Gram Sabha, nor in GP meetings etc. But all said that they are aware of the problem. The women elected members are sensitive to the issue and felt the need of doing something in this regard but showed their helplessness because their male cousins have to take the decision.

Majority of the adult members of Gram Sabha confirmed this by saying that they don’t have a say in the Gram Sabha and there was no discussion on this issue of trafficking. Even in the recently held Gram Sabha meetings in April, 2016 there was no discussion on the issue of trafficking in the three GPs selected for study though the problem is acute there. All the PRI representatives are of the opinion that the top level officers including police should do something in this regard. Interviews and personal discussions with the PRI representatives from ward to Zilla Parishad level reveal certain important and relevant observations. Majority of PRI members are not aware of their roles and capabilities in intervening for the development of their areas. They feel themselves subservient to the officials and did not feel confident of initiating or taking lead in a matter that comes under their jurisdiction and power. Most of them do not know that the issue of trafficking can be discussed in the meetings of PRIs and anti-trafficking strategy can be developed with the leadership of PRIs in coordination with police and civil society.

Another interesting fact is that the influence of middlemen (Dalal) on many PRI members is there. They did not want to challenge them or mobilise public opinion against them. Again many of the PRI members do not treat this as cases of migration, rather they are of the opinion that they are going in search of more money. When asked about the horrible conditions and exploitation that these girls are facing as expressed by the victims themselves in their GPs, they did not have any rational answers. The female PRI representatives are more sensitive to this issue but all of them expressed their helplessness. Most of the female representatives admitted that they are dependent on their male relations in decision making.

The responses of the victims as well as of their parents regarding the role of PRI representatives shows the position they occupy in the minds of the public, particularly of the victims on this sensitive issue. They did not feel the necessity of requesting for the intervention of the PRIs because they had a clear opinion that these elected representatives are no way concerned with the problem rather they are concerned with their votes, support base, politics, works like roads and buildings etc. This is a general perception that emerged from these responses on the role and responsibility of these elected representatives. This is a clear reflection of the alienation of the marginalised tribals from the grassroots democracy and its processes. The local administration and the political leadership have co-opted the tribal PRI representatives and the process of participation has squeezed the democratic space instead of expanding and deepening it. This has proved that mere election of tribal representatives will not automatically bring tribal development into the institutions of decentralised governance nor will lead to tribal empowerment.

Mass Mobilisation and Trafficking

In one GP, one SHG (Self-Help Group) raised the issue and mobilised women against trafficking and there was tremendous response mainly from women. The issue came up because the SHG was spearheading anti-liquor movement and found that in a particular village most of the men have become victims of alcohol for which the responsibility of managing families is on women and the girls leave their studies and become victims of trafficking. But this cannot be the prime reason behind trafficking. The significance of this movement is that it had a positive impact on trafficking. The collective bargaining power of women forced the govt agencies and police to search for the girls victimised by trafficking of that village (Lingdih in Rampur GP). The team went to Delhi and found the girl who was unable to return after seven years and was kept under inhuman conditions. A case was registered against the middlemen and it was revealed that the wages of one year was taken as advance by the Middlemen from the owner where the girl was working as a domestic worker. Again from the monthly wages the middlemen have their fixed share. But the movement subsided and could not spread in the absence of leadership and long term strategy. But it has a clear message that a democratic movement based on violation of basic rights and on deprivation will yield result.

Role of GCRP

Gender Community Resource Person (GCRP) is a women resource person appointed by the DRDA in Gram Panchayats to monitor trafficking and register the names of possible victims of trafficking so that rescue will be easier in future. But they don’t get any cooperation from the Gram Panchayat, or from the elected representatives. In Rampur GP the GCRP surveyed 1900 families to sensitise them on this issue of trafficking of girls and they were requested to register the names of the girls with them so that in case of any trouble in future steps can be taken to rescue them. But names of only 67 girls were
registered. Girls and their families are not willing to share information on their trafficking because of the pressure of the middlemen. In the beginning they were not aware of the dangers ahead but they are apprehensive of losing their livelihood due to sharing of any information. The middlemen have a strong network and mechanism to exploit the deprivation and marginalisation of these families. They use the services of the close relatives, cousins and known persons of the girls to lure them. All the three GCRPs expressed that they are under threat perception from the middlemen and their agents. They don’t feel free and fearless to work against trafficking. They also complained that they are not getting their wages regularly. The situation is worst in one GP as the GCRP could not function independently.

The Administration and Trafficking

There is a special project named as anti-human trafficking pilot project under NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission) monitored by DRDA, Sundergarh. This confirms the admission of the fact of trafficking in Sundergarh by the district administration. But this is confined to identification of GCRPs in four GPs, creation of database of households prone to distress migration, training to GCRPs and PRIs towards building community vigilant groups. Two rescued female survivor of human trafficking from Delhi of two GPs, Balisankara and Rampur were given support under NRLM project. One is given financial support from OLM (Odisha livelihood mission) for running a grocery shop and another was linked with DDUGKY.BNMs (Bharat Nirman Volunteers were asked to give specific attention to the At Risk HH (House Holds) and GCRPs were asked to maintain safe migration register. (DRDA, Sundergarh information Brochure on OLM, 2016) But all these initiative were ad hoc approaches and incomplete. Despite all these, the PRIs were not able to take the issue of women trafficking in a meaningful manner neither in their deliberations nor in their policies and decisions. The government agencies like DRDA have not cared to take initiatives for putting this major problem of deprivation and exclusion in the agenda of the PRIs nor does it attempt to explore their potential in this regard. The approach of the local police is callous and many a times a corrupt. They don’t consider it as a crime unless there is pressure on them. They have links with the middle men. This creates problem before trafficking and after report of torture.96% of the respondents are dissatisfied with the functioning of the police in this regard.

Conclusion

The trafficking of the girls in Sundergarh in large numbers is the result of widespread marginalisation and deprivation of the tribals, particularly the tribal women. They are vulnerable because of the socio-economic situations in which they live and which allow them limited control over their life and livelihood. The environment of silence regarding their exploitation and denial of the fact of trafficking by the civil society and others worsens the situation further. The absence of an autonomous tribal movement weakens their bargaining position. The development process has created a neo-middle class among the tribals who act as junior partners of the ruling class in the state and does not provide the leadership in building a movement to bring inclusive development for the tribals. The potential of the PRIs have been left untapped in this regard, rather the opposite has happened. The democratic spaces available in the PRIs are being further squeezed. Unless this is reversed, there will not be any radical changes. The PRIs should be involved in anti-trafficking strategy and a pilot project should be taken up with their involvement for providing livelihood to these girls and their families on an urgent basis.

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