



# WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTERS

## ODISHA, INDIA

### GOAL

Supporting the government of Odisha to secure land rights for poor, rural, and landless single women, including widowed, abandoned, and divorced women.



### PROGRESS

The state government of Odisha has established 23 Women's Support Centers with Landesa's assistance. The Centers, the first of their kind in India, aim to ensure that widows, abandoned women, and other single women can access government services including opportunities to gain ownership of a small plot of land. The state government, with Landesa's assistance, is opening another 26 Centers.

### OVERVIEW

Given the fundamental importance of land rights, the government of Odisha has introduced progressive land distribution laws and programs. But none of them dealt specifically with women's widespread landlessness.

Working with government partners through research, policy advocacy, and program design, Landesa has helped to provide direct assistance to rural women. There are nearly 500,000 single landless women in Odisha. Studies show that if these women are provided with secure rights to land, they can better provide for their children.

### WOMEN'S FACILITATION CENTER

#### ***Ensuring land rights of single women***

In partnership with the Ganjam district administration, Landesa designed a Women's Land Rights Facilitation Center and piloted it in one tehsil (sub-district).

The primary objective of the program is to establish a responsive institutional delivery system to ensure women's

access to and control over land. The program relies on government Angawadi workers (primarily, child and mother health workers), who travel door to door, to identify eligible women and help them receive government services through the Center. The Center is staffed by specially trained women revenue officers.

The program has helped to educate government officials about the needs of local women, many of whom are dependent on support from their brothers or fathers to survive.

The district administration, with Landesa's support, scaled the program as a Women Support Centre (WSC) to all the 23 tehsils of Ganjam district to ensure that all eligible women are identified and included in the government's land allocation and social security programs. Centers in another 26 tehsils of Mayurbhanj district are being developed.

The initiative not only introduces a separate, efficient, and effective enumeration method for identifying eligible women, but also allows the women beneficiaries to receive information about all government services they and their children may be eligible for (health and nutrition programs, welfare programs etc) through a single provider. A robust management information system, designed by Landesa, helps ensure that the women identified in the house to house surveys are tracked as they move through the various application processes and receive government support and services.

#### LANDESA'S HISTORY IN ODISHA

Landesa, in partnership with District Administration Ganjam, designed the Women's Land Rights Facilitation Center to secure women's land rights and piloted it in one tehsil of the district. It has since been scaled up to all sub-districts.

#### LANDESA'S HISTORY

Landesa partners with governments and local organizations to ensure that the world's poorest families have secure rights over the land they till. Founded as the Rural Development Institute, Landesa has helped more than 100 million poor families gain legal control over their land since 1967. When families have secure rights to land, they can invest in their land to sustainably increase their harvest and reap the benefits – improved nutrition, health, and education – for generations.

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