Legislature remains the fulcrum of decision-making in all democracies. The importance of legislative studies, therefore, has increased in the recent decades; and studies made along newer methodological lines have made innovative developments in research in political science. Legislative behaviour has become an important area of study which has given rise to much of the outstanding political behaviour research. Role theory, as one seminal approach, studies Legislature in its structural and functional Perspectives, and focuses on the individual legislator's behaviour in the Legislative system. The present study is an attempt at applying role-analysis to the modernising non-Western political setting of the Indian State of Orissa.

India after her Independence created a new political order in which the constitutional infrastructure guaranteed equal rights of political freedom and equal opportunities for political participation to all, both men and women. But in reality, women, in general, have remained away from the centres of power, exceptional cases of Indira Gandhi or Nandini Satpathy notwithstanding. The inbuilt inhibitions of the Indian traditional society and the constancy in the perpetuation of male dominance in politics have led to marginalisation
of women's role in politics of India. But, however, the world-wide ferment and the process of creation of awareness about the advancement of women, obviously generated by the U.N. declaration of International women's Year in 1975 and the women's Decade starting in the same year, culminated in a new focus on women in India's future. Even then, no serious attention has been given to the role of women legislators, and no sincere steps have been taken to increase their participation in the political process. Actually, the inferior position of women cannot be changed without their large-scale participation in the decision-making process, the nerve of government.

In the present study, I have made an analysis of the role of Orissa women Legislators on the basis of their role perceptions and overt performances, examined from a variety of perspectives. This study may contribute to the legislative behaviour studies in India.

For a systematic treatment of the topic of research, the present dissertation has been carefully organised into eleven main chapters, and a chapter at the end that records our concluding observations.

Chapter I presents an introduction of the subject matter; the review of literature, the concept of the Legislative Role; the scope, objective and method of this study along with the data base and analysis; the sample population, and the hypotheses.
Chapter II: "Political Culture of Orissa" provides the setting in which the women legislators of Orissa play their political roles. It presents the geographical and demographic characteristics, and the historical background of the State of Orissa. An analysis of the socio-economic conditions of Orissa's population, and growth of their political consciousness and participation has been also attempted in this Chapter. Finally, it portrays the course of political development in Orissa, and the role of the elite in it.

Chapter III entitled as "Legislature and the Role of Legislators" gives the theoretical construct upon which the present study rests. This has dealt with the idea of the Legislative system, the Role of the Legislature, and finally, the Role Theory.

Chapter IV: "Orissa Legislative Assembly: A Structural and Analytical Study" mainly makes analyses of the compositional and political characteristics, and the leadership structure of the Orissa Legislative Assembly, with a brief historical study of the institution in the first place, of course.

Chapter V: "Socio-Economic Profiles of Women Legislators of Orissa" has been primarily devoted to a systematic treatment of the socio-economic milieu of Orissa women legislators.
Chapter VI: "The Political Socialisation of Orissa Women Legislators" presents a study of the variety of agents of socialization of the women legislators of Orissa involving the making of political women in Orissa.

Chapter VII: "Political Recruitment of Orissa Women Legislators" deals with the political ascent of Orissa women legislators based on a study of their induction into legislative life.

In Chapter VIII: "Orientations of Orissa Women Legislators" is presented the spectrum of political attitudes of the Orissa Women Legislators, laying bare the motley motivations underlying their pursuit of legislative office.

Chapter IX: "Role of the Women Legislators of Orissa: Their Own Perceptions" is based on an analysis of the self-perceptions of the women legislators about their legislative roles, particularly their Purposive, Representational, Ombudsmanic, and Women-Interest Role Orientations in Orissa Legislative Assembly.

Chapter X: "The Issue Orientations of Orissa Women Legislators" deals with the orientations of the women legislators towards some political, social and economic issues pertaining to the women, and towards some of the general issues linked to the legislative role performance.
Chapter XI: "Performances: Congruence between the Role Concepts and Role Behaviour of Orissa Women Legislators" examines the extent of the women legislators' adaptation to legislative life, and attempts to find compatibility between their role perceptions and role performances.

And finally, the last Chapter records my concluding observations in reference to the hypotheses of this study.

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